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# SOUTH AFRICA WINS THE WORLD CUP...



# ...OF INEQUALITY

 ...see page 8

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# 2 EDITORIAL

## TIME FOR A MASS WORKERS PARTY

by Weizmann Hamilton

**It is a measure of the depth of the crisis in the ANC that what any reasonable person would consider the entirely legitimate efforts to save the ANC from the damage inflicted on it with reckless abandon by ANC Youth League president Julius Malema, should divide the organisation even further. But the truth is that Malema is not an alien infestation in the ANC. He is home grown; a creature of the leadership – the ANC's own Frankenstein monster, threatening to destroy its maker. His vulgarity was condoned when it was a convenient factional weapon in Zuma's struggle against Mbeki. Malema's indignation over the hypocritical self-righteousness of his accusers is therefore understandable.**

### First open rift

Thus an attempt to demonstrate sensitivity to public outrage over Malema's repugnant behaviour is not only unlikely to succeed in its primary objective, but is having the unintended consequence of taking the divisions in the ANC to a new level. It has accelerated the decline

Mokonyane, imposed as Gauteng premier by Luthuli House, in her challenge for the chairpersonship of the provincial ANC against Paul Mashatile. The Zuma coalition is now unraveling spectacularly.

Zuma is not solely responsible for this upstart's political rise. Malema is the issue of the loins of the Tripartite Alliance as a whole. Cosatu general secretary Zwelinzima Vavi, condoned, even mimicked his behaviour, exposing himself to public ridicule by defending his "I will kill for Zuma" statements. Zuma's administration differs from Mbeki's only in that all the latter's worst features are much more pronounced now. The latest meeting to repair intra-Alliance relations resolved nothing, agreeing only that there had been "blood on the floor". Corruption, nepotism, cronyism and incompetence seep out of every pore of the new administration.

### Horns of the dilemma

Malema personifies the horns of the dilemma on which Zuma is impaled. He was rejected by seven out of nine provinces at the chaotic 2009 ANCYL conference where delegates disgraced themselves, baring their bottoms and attacking each other with urine-filled bottles. That the Eastern Cape is challenging him and that his Limpopo



President Jacob Zuma and his wives are getting plenty of both bread and cake.

its outcome, the ANC will emerge from Malema's disciplinary controversy politically further weakened. With his moral credibility already undermined by the naked manipulation of the judicial process to protect him from prosecution for corruption, Zuma is paralysed. Despite presiding over a single centre of power, Zuma is a leader without authority, in political bondage to an empty-headed demagogue.

### After Zuma, nowhere left to hide

The backdrop to the open disagreements over Malema is the free

the cornerstone for rebuilding the ANC as pro-poor and to reunify the Alliance, stands exposed as mere delusion.

### Basis for persistence of factions

The material basis for the division between the "nationalists" and the "communists" is the irreconcilable conflict between the different class forces on which the Zuma coalition partners rest. They are obliged to articulate these competing interests but are incapable of fulfilling them. The "nationalists" speak for the black capitalists; the "communists" for in the name of the workers.

The insurmountable obstacle to the fulfillment of the aspirations of both is that the epoch of globalisation and imperialism is the epoch of capitalism's decline. Capitalism is incapable of addressing humanity's most basic social problems. Consequently the progressive role the bourgeoisie played during the rise of capitalism – developing the productive forces with a resultant relative increase in living standards for the working class mainly in the advanced capitalist countries – is exhausted on a world scale. The aspirant black capitalist class has come onto the scene of history too late and cannot compete with white capital. They can enrich themselves only by looting the state.

The conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie that indirectly produced the ANC's split continues to sharpen as the capitalist crisis deepens. The pre-Polokwane divisions that had threatened to tear the ANC apart have been reproduced in a new form.

Cope was a right-wing split. But this did not mean the ANC had been purged of its right wing and had shifted left. In fact, under Zuma, the right-wing has regained the ascendancy. However, in facing down the "communists", the right-wing has dressed itself up in the ideological clothing of left wing populism (see box).

### "NDR" failing

At the same time the nationalists' radical posturing reflects the aspirant black capitalists' frustration at the failure of the "National Democratic Revolution" (NDR) to

"transform" (place more Africans in senior positions in state institutions) and, particularly, to dislodge white capital from the commanding heights of the economy.

Black ownership of Johannesburg Stock exchange shares has slipped back to less than 2%. (*City Press*). Venting the political elite's bitterness over their impotence, MP Ngoako Ramatlhodi complains: "The white nation... has surrendered political management of the country to black people whilst holding on to all other levers of power... Look at the ownership of land... of factories and the banks, the schools and universities that produce the best results... The strategic objectives of the NDR are far from being achieved." (*Business Day* 22/04/10)

The emergence of the "nationalists" confirms that the Zuma faction's triumph did not mean the ANC had been re-invented. Dedicated to the same aims as the ANC's founding fathers in 1912 – the creation of a black capitalist class – it did not have the slightest intention of fundamentally changing economic policies adopted under Mbeki. On the contrary this "new" faction arose out of the need to mount organised resistance to the Cosatu/SACP attempt to shift the ANC to the left hence allegations of an alleged communist plot to take over the ANC. Malema is the nationalists' figure head, proclaiming self enrichment as a "right" and denouncing opposition to it as racist, claiming an alleged communist plot to take over the ANC.

### Ruling class alarmed

Zuma, the centripetal force around whom the anti-Mbeki forces had been orbiting, has become the centrifugal force driving them into collision with each other. Those who had been prepared to kill for Zuma yesterday want to die with embarrassment over his leadership today.

Front page headlines such as "Rebellion" referring to the escalation of violent service delivery protests, (*City Press*); "Shame of a Nation" Zuma's fathering of a child with the daughter of a friend outside his polygamous marriages (*Sowetan*); "Foul Stench of a Rotting Cabinet" clashes between cabinet ministers over corruption in government (*The Times*) – all explain the growing sense of alarm within the capitalist establishment over the ruling ANC's ability to maintain stability, for the "centre to hold".

### Zuma's honey-moon over

As the examples of Italy's Prime Minister Berlusconi, French President Sarkozy and former US President Bill Clinton show, the capitalist class is not overly concerned with the sexual comings and goings of their political hirelings – so long as these do not get in the way of their ability to defend their interests, maintain stability and



Julius Malema, with a monthly salary on R20 000, owns two houses valued at R4.6m, several luxury cars, a R250 000 Breitling watch... He is involved in four different companies (The Star 10/02/19).

in Zuma's personal authority and blown the Zuma coalition apart. Representing Malema is not merely a case of Matthews Phosa affording the accused the rights due to him in terms of the ANC's constitution. It is a calculated act of defiance of Zuma's (and secretary general Mantashe's) authority. It is the first open challenge against Zuma by a prominent member of the faction that brought him to power, reinforced by the defeat of Nomvula

supporters retained power this year only after police used tear gas to disperse his opponents, confirms that he is not in total control. He is president by imposition rather than election, installed, ironically, by a team led by ANC secretary general Gwede Mantashe whom Malema and his cabal now wish to oust.

In exchange for the presidency of the Youth League he led the campaign that gave Zuma the presidency of party and country. Whatever

trade in political insults amongst those who only yesterday were comrades united against Mbeki. Zuma is no different from Mbeki says Cosatu; Cosatu behaves like the opposition says the ANC. The ANC Youth League on the one hand, and SACP/Cosatu leadership on the other, are now on opposite sides of the barricades of inter- and intra-Alliance divisions. The SACP/Cosatu leadership's illusion that Zuma would be

# ON A SOCIALIST PROGRAMME

ensuring the credibility of their system.

For a period Zuma's accession to the presidency led to the vile upper class prejudices, dinner table sniggering about his sexual habits and questions about his suitability for high office giving way, with effortless hypocrisy, to gushing admiration for his newly discovered virtues – ease amongst the masses and his reputation as a reconciler. However, Zuma's honeymoon with the establishment is over.

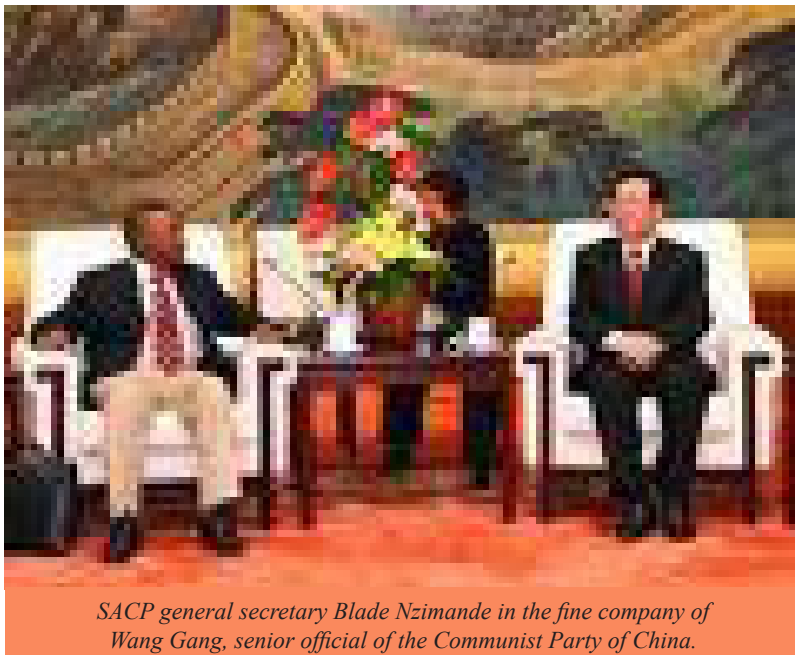
On the moral front he is now a figure of ridicule, the butt of comedians' jokes, Irvin Khoza's "father-out-of-law". The Times columnist Justice Malala describes the Zuma administration as "mired in scandal and persistent reports of corruption. Zuma himself is emerging as nothing but a priapic nonentity, a man laughed at behind his back by his cabinet ministers as he fumbles from one disaster to another." (02.02.2010). The Times editor Phyllicia Oppelt says she is tempted to write him off as a 'dirty old man (with) more sperms cells than brain cells'.

Zuma has continued where Mbeki left off, further damaging the credibility of key institutions. Appointments to the judiciary, the National Prosecuting Authority, the police, the National Intelligence Agency etc are clearly intended to make them more politically pliable to further the aims of the Zuma faction and that of the black elite as a whole. Western Cape Judge President Hlophe's attempt to influence constitutional court judges in Zuma's favour has brought SA to the brink of a constitutional crisis. The general political crisis is symbolised by the corruption trials of ex-National Police Commissioner Jackie Selebi, and the spectacle of the wife of the Minister of State Security Siyabonga Cwele facing charges of drug smuggling; by the ANC leaders' squabble over the ANC money making machine, Chancellor House's investment in Hitachi Africa, the winner of a R25bn Eskom contract, and public in-fighting amongst ministers over corruption charges against the Transnet CEO, Siyabonga Gama.

Just how deep into the gutter the level of the ANC's politics has sunk, is shown by the fact that Malema, an intellectual pip squeak and ideological imposter whose trade mark is vulgarity, insult, racism and misogyny, bestrides the party's political stage like a colossus. This buffoon's political authority has risen in inverse proportion to the decline of the standing of the party the president tells us he will one day lead.

## Anger of the masses

In the meantime the seething anger of the masses, already on fire in the dramatically escalated service delivery protests, is set to take on explosive proportions as the heavy battalions of the organised workers prepare for battle in the wage



SACP general secretary Blade Nzimande in the fine company of Wang Gang, senior official of the Communist Party of China.

negotiations season. Nor are organized workers' concerns limited to legitimate wage issues. The SA Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) victorious national strike was in defence of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value which directly contradicts the bosses' demand for a two-tier labour market. Numsa is preparing a national strike for a 20% wage increase. Cosatu has served a section 77 notice at Nedlac to protest over the massive hikes in electricity tariffs.

## SACP as capital's managers?

Across all classes today there is a palpable sense of crisis. So alarmed has capital become about the ANC's ability to contain the masses' anger, they are contem-

plating the previously unthinkable – entrusting responsibility for the management of capitalism to the SACP, supported by Cosatu, as a possible alternative to the ANC.

Without even an anti-capitalist programme, let alone a socialist one, the Cosatu/SACP leadership has no answer to the growing frustration over deepening poverty and intensified exploitation under the ANC government's unashamedly pro-capitalist economic policies. Consequently the service delivery protests have over five years, reached new heights. The annual clashes on campuses over financial and academic exclusion and workplace resistance against attempts

to make workers pay for the crisis of capitalism, take place largely spontaneously, without leadership, programme or coordination. The danger facing the organised working class is that the Cosatu leadership will capitulate to the pressure of capital and accept attacks on workers' rights as an "unavoidable necessity", accepting the bosses' argument that the economic crisis is, like a natural phenomenon, nobody's fault. This is the underlying idea of the Nedlac Agreement and Vavi's joint statement with former Eskom Chairperson, Bobby Godsell appealing for wage restraint. In the meantime the opposition is attempting to organise itself into a reserve team for the management of capitalism. The working class is on its own.

12 million people did not vote in the last elections. This is more than those who voted ANC. Analysts who attribute this to the apathy of a maturing democracy are whistling in the dark to keep their spirits up. Those who did not vote are disillusioned, bitter and angry. It is a reflection of how acutely the necessity for a party of the working class is felt. Dedicated to the creation of a black capitalist class, the ANC is not only incapable of fulfilling the aspirations of the working class, it is obliged to defend the capitalist system, the very system the working class must overthrow to achieve its emancipation. The interests of the aspirant black capitalist class

*Layered over the corruption, brazen abuse of state resources, incompetence particularly in local government, is a new level of callous indifference towards the plight of the masses. The insolent exhibitionism with which newly and often corruptly acquired wealth is flaunted, and the apparent incomprehension over and indifference towards the burning resentment of the masses, are the classical symptoms of decay that over the ages, have been exhibited by ruling elites that have exhausted their capacity to play a progressive historical role.*



Billionaire Robert Gumede dances with his wife Portia at their extravagant wedding held inside the Mbombela stadium.

plating the previously unthinkable – entrusting responsibility for the management of capitalism to the SACP, supported by Cosatu, as a possible alternative to the ANC.

## Unbridgeable gap masses-ANC

What is now indisputable is that the distance between the masses and the ANC has widened into a chasm. The ANC's relationship with the masses is determined not by its 66% majority in parliament, but by the fact that in 2009 only 34% of

are diametrically opposed to those of the working class.

A mass workers party is necessary to unite the struggle across its three main theatres – the townships, tertiary education institutions and the workplace. Channeling these streams of working class struggle into one mighty river – a mass workers party with a socialist programme – is the best guarantee for the eradication of capitalism and the socialist transformation of society.

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## Left and Right Wing Populism

So terrified of the rumblings of the volcanic anger of the masses is the Zuma faction that it has rummaged through the dustbin of history to which the apartheid regime has been consigned, for its tried and tested (and failed) ideas: right wing populism and *kragdadigheid*.

On the face of it the simultaneous exhibition of both right wing and left wing populism appear to be contradictory. In reality, they complement each other in serving particular aspects of the interests of the same elite the ANC represents. Right wing populism – calls for limits on trade union rights for doctors, health workers, police, soldiers and lately, teachers; the "shoot to kill" police policy and the militarisation of the police – is intended to contain the struggles of the working class and to weaken the Left.

Unchecked, this tide of right wing populism threatens trade union rights across the entire public service. The private sector would be next. This is exactly what government proposals announced by Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan, echoing the neo-liberal think tank, the Centre for Development Enterprise's ideas, entail. Under the pretext of solving youth employment, he proposes the rolling back of the Labour Relations Act. This would lead to an official two-tier labour market.

More significantly it reveals the ruling elite's yearning for the *kragdadigheid* of the apartheid state with which they could impose the authority they have lost amongst the masses, and their growing impatience with human rights in legislation and the constitution and their tendency to side-step them.

Malema's left wing posturing seeks to entrench capitalism, not to bury it. It is also designed simultaneously to arrest the slide in the ANC's support and to outflank the SACP and Cosatu on the left. Consistent with Mandela's 1956 explanation of the Freedom Charter's nationalisation clauses (to create a rich black capitalist class, not socialism), the demand is being put forward to enable the aspirant black capitalists whose impotence in the face of the power of white capital which continues to enjoy a crushing dominance of the economy, exposes them as mere baas boys and girls of the white capitalist class, to get a helping hand from the state in their quest for self enrichment.

## 4 WORKPLACE

# Dismissed Rustenburg miners march for nationalisation

About 1500 mine workers from the Kroondal-Marikana platinum shaft in the North West, marched on the Union Buildings in Tshwane on April 17 demanding their reinstatement after over 4000 of them were summarily dismissed by mine operator Murray and Roberts Cementation in August 2009. The marchers demanded the nationalisation of mines under democratic control and management of workers and poor communities. *Izwi labasebenzi* interviewed former M&R employees, comrade **Chris Mashaba**, who was persecuted and victimised accused of various trumped-up charges including assault and public violence, and comrade **Benny Leema**, who together played a leading role in the battle against M&R. They drew attention to one of the most politically significant aspects of the struggle – that the dismissal resulted directly from the National Union of Mine workers (NUM) leaders' collusion with management leading to one of the biggest protest resignations from a Cosatu affiliated union in recent times:

"On Friday August 21, 2009, we received a loud announcement that the union had acquired a certificate to strike from August 23. As a result on the 23rd August, the night shift (the first for the day) did not report for work. The following day, Monday, NUM's chief negotiator and regional chairperson addressed a mass meeting at the Silahlwe hostel telling us that the strike had been suspended for five days but not called off. They promised to give us feed-back on the ongoing negotiations at 10 am the following day, but they never showed up.

Then the workers decided to go to the central shaft where the negotiations were being held. The NUM sent two representatives to meet us at the gate. One of them, Sizwe Nkosi, told us that the strike was over, that the M&R management and NUM had agreed on a 10,2% wage increase and whether we liked it or not, we were going back to work immediately. As they addressed us, Nkosi, who was armed, made sure he put his firearm on display. They also came accompanied by company security personnel driving a Hippo. As soon as Nkosi had made the announcement, he and the other rep got into the Hippo and left without giving us a chance to question or comment.

Angered by this behavior, workers pulled down the gate and demanded that Nkosi should come back and clarify the matter. Instead the security personnel chased us with their Hippo. Very quickly a police helicopter and police Hippos filled with white police came and fired rubber bullets and tear gas at us. Fleeing workers were arrested and detained. Realising that the action by the company security and the police had been planned in advance, the workers retaliated by burning a security office.

The next day, NUM leaders came to the hostel, accompanied by the police with guns drawn and read out the wage agreement to us. Our most important demand had been that our lowest paid workers should earn a basic salary of at least R5000 (R4200 excluding allowances – up from R2552). However, the NUM negotiators had unilaterally agreed to R2850. We were unhappy with the 10,2% increase, and that our many other grievances had not been addressed (including the gap between "Category A" official employees and "Category B" casuals; abnormal "tax" deductions apparently done by M&R, not SARS, though we earn below the tax threshold). When we told the union bosses to go back and tell management that we would not

## Striking workers were betrayed by NUM

back off from our initial demands, they told us we were dismissed with immediate effect.

We approached the NUM regional offices, but they were not prepared to deal with the matter as urgently as was needed given that thousands of us had been dismissed. We then approached Cosatu but only got empty promises from them too.

M&R never notified us that we were no longer wanted in the hostel after being dismissed. Without any warning, the Red Ants, the police and management showed up with six buses, some headed for Mozambique, others for Lesotho. The management demanded that we get on the buses and leave the country. They said "you, the South Africans, you'll see how you are going to survive". The workers refused. We all wanted our provident funds, medical exits and all our belongings from the company.

The Red Ants started their work by breaking the lockers; then they threw everything out into the yard. Many of us lost IDs, passports, clothes etc. They destroyed all the buildings. No longer having access to medical aid, 20 workers' health was placed at serious risk as they could not get their prescriptions.

Stranded without money for food or rent, we went to a nearby location to ask for help from the local councilor. The councilor arranged with Bojanala municipality which donated tents and food for only one week. There was no water or toilets. Later we moved to the Circle Labour hostel after the councilor had arranged a meeting with NUM leaders. The NUM leaders, who were now calling us criminals, claimed that M&R had agreed to provide us with accommodation and food until the year 2016. That's the last we saw of them. At the new hostel we found many workers who had been dumped in the same way

as us.

When we were called by the company to collect our UIF letters and records of service on November 19, 2009, we were told by the M&R acting manager, Gravet McKenzie, that he had no powers to give us money, that we had "no respect" and that we should never return to the company. When he told us to leave, we refused because we had used money to travel there and we did not want to leave without what belonged to us. He then ordered the mine security to forcefully disperse us and also called the police.

The heavily armed security guards attacked us with sjamboks and shot at us with rubber bullets. The only escape route available to us was to go underground into the mine shaft. When the police arrived our request to negotiate a peaceful return to the surface was rejected. The police followed us underground and drove us out using tear gas and live ammunition. Nine workers were seriously injured. Some still have bullets lodged in their bodies.

The community of nearby Matebeleng, dependent on the income of the mineworkers and recognising that the dismissals would have a devastating effect on the local economy, was sympathetic. But the police, in collaboration with the mining bosses, refused to grant us permission hold a rally. However, we were determined to protest publicly over our dismissal. We marched together with the community in February despite the refusal of the police. Eventually we succeeded in getting permission to march to the Union Buildings in Tshwane. Again, we were joined by community members, demanding reinstatement, development of the poor communities which suffer despite being situated on top of huge deposits of the world's most precious metals, and nationalisation

of the mines so that the wealth can be used for the needs of the people.

For us the most shocking aspect of these developments is the role played by the NUM. Cosatu unions have an inspiring tradition of struggle against the bosses and apartheid. Unfortunately the biggest Cosatu affiliate has betrayed us by colluding with management. A union whose leaders enter into deals with management behind the backs of the workers, which fails to lift a finger to defend them or to protest against police and mine security brutality, and whose leaders find it necessary to carry guns in meetings with their own members is no longer a workers organisation – it is a tool of the bosses.

We continued to organise regular mass meetings and our strike committee is still functioning. When we sent a delegation of our dismissed workers to protest and lobby delegates at the Cosatu congress in September 2009, we fortunately met the Democratic Socialist Movement, who provided us with a way forward. Through the DSM we met the Metal and Electrical Workers Union of SA (MEWUSA), an affiliate of the National Council of Trade Unions, which has succeeded in bringing management back to the table to negotiate our reinstatement. We feel reasonably confident of our case. The NUM's acceptance of management's offer without a mandate from the workers trampled upon a fundamental principle of trade union struggle which Cosatu has fought for – worker control. It also contravened the recognition agreement and was unlawful by the standards of the capitalist courts.

We have resigned *en masse* from NUM in disgust and have joined MEWUSA. We salute the DSM and the CWI whose messages of solidarity from many countries have inspired us.

## The Royal Ascot Super Spar vs Cosawu obo Vusi Khumalo:

# Victories in legal battles but war not over

It is now five years since Vusi Khumalo, independent union Cosawu (Commercial Services and Allied Workers Union) shop steward and member of the Democratic Socialist Movement was unfairly dismissed by Royal Ascot Super Spar, in Milnerton, Cape Town. Despite winning reinstatement and compensation for loss of earnings at the Commis-

sion for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) in 2006 and the rejection of Super Spar's review application (appeal) by the Labour Court in 2007, he still does not have his job back, nor has Super Spar paid a cent of the money owing to him. Comrade Vusi reports on the latest developments in his David vs Goliath struggle against Super Spar:



Vusi Khumalo

"In the five years that I have been battling Super Spar, I have become the proud father of a son. My partner, son and I survive through part-time jobs in the exploitative services industry working in coffee

shops and retail stores, paying my own way for my studies.

I was dismissed for exposing the wanton defiance of the country's labour laws and the dictatorial managerial regime at Super Spar's Milnerton outlet. I exposed its slogan "Spar Good for You" as sheer hypocrisy. Management complied with the Basic Conditions of Employment Act only after I had reported them to the Department of Labour. My success in obtaining an enforcement order to pay workers the legal minimum wage for the industry sector as prescribed by the Department of Labour was the last straw for management. They used an article I had written in *Izwi labasebenzi*, paper of my organisation, the Democratic Socialist Movement, exposing them for breaking the law, and oppressing

and exploiting workers, as a pretext for dismissing me.

To the consternation of Spar, I won reinstatement at the CCMA. In a precedent-setting arbitration award (Case no. WEI5954 dated 09/05/06) which was cited by Legalbrief Today (18/05/06) a daily electronic newsletter reporting on important legal developments in SA and internationally) the arbitrator, Soewyba Flowers, re-affirmed the central role of the working class in the struggle against apartheid and the workplace as a critical site of struggle. The Freedom of Expression Institute gave evidence in my defence to support the principle of freedom of speech.

My case is another example amongst many of the price the working class has had to pay for the compromises in the negotiated

# Labour broking: posturing leaders let workers down

by Thamsanqa Dumezweni and Liv Shange

In their support for Jacob Zuma's presidential campaign, Cosatu leaders rallied workers around demands for a ban of the hated practice of labour broking and held up this issue as evidence of the influence the unions would enjoy as thanks. The Zuma administration fuelled the flames, with Labour Minister Membathisi Mdladlana and new head of the Department of Labour Jimmy Manyi joining labour federations Cosatu and Fedusa in condemning labour broking as "modern day slavery" and saying that "the department was in the process of amending laws to ban labour broking" (*Business Report*, 09/10/27). To the disappointment of the Cosatu leadership, however, Zuma soon made it clear that no ban was on the cards. Instead, new regulations of labour broking are to be made into law by October 2010.

Labour brokers, who like to call themselves "placement agencies", "recruitment groups", "personnel services" and so on, are essentially parasitic middlemen. The labour broking industry spokespeople claim they employ 500 000 people on a daily basis in SA (a figure which is far above the records of Stats SA) (*Pretoria News*, 09/10/12).

Labour broking is the practice of companies employing workers supplied to them by other companies (the labour broker). The worker is thus not employed by the workplace, but by the labour broker. Labour brokers sell their services to company bosses so that they have no legal obligations to the worker in terms of the LRA, Basic Conditions of Employment Act etc. The boss pays the labour broker to provide labour power; the broker then pays the worker who supplies the labour power a fraction of that money.

A writer quoted in *City Press* (09/10/04) explains what labour-broking is all about: "To companies, brokers meant less

industrial action, less labour costs, less costs for judicial processes, disposable labour, no payments of benefits to labour and lack of adherence to the Labour Relations Act."

Workers employed by labour brokers become disempowered in addressing problems they face at work – the boss is not their boss, but in an office or bakkie somewhere else, and if you become a "problem" s/he will simply replace you with another pair of hands that can provide the "service". Salary levels are generally far below those of workers employed directly, plus the labour broker employee often gets paid only for occasionally filling up gaps. During last year's parliamentary hearings, a worker "brokered" to the Post Office testified of wages as low as R2,72 per hour (a third of those of permanent employees) (*Daily News*, 09/10/08).

The company that contracts the labour broker does not have to comply with the hard-won labour laws, or collective agreements with the unions, but can hire and fire people by simply buying services from another firm. As casual, temporary staff, those employed by labour brokers are generally also in effect excluded from union activism. The workforce as a whole is divided – different pay, different conditions and different boss – and its collective strength weakened.

Capitalists use labour brokers to attack the wages and conditions of all workers. A common practice, not just in SA but worldwide, is to retrench all or some of the workers in a firm only for them to be immediately hired by a labour broker which then sells their services to the old workplace. The workers will perform exactly the same job, but for much lower wages, higher insecurity and worse conditions.

For capital worldwide, the use of labour brokers is an important weapon in its fight to maximize profits at the expense of job security, living wages, conditions of service, and shielding it from the strength of organised workers. It has been one of many conscious attempts to roll back the gains won through working class struggles. The growth of labour broking, a parasitic fungus on the already parasitic capitalist body, has been part of an offensive against the working class which intensified with capitalist profit crises, the neo-liberal wave following the collapse of the Stalinist planned economies and Keynesianism in the past thirty years. Privatisation, out-sourcing, casualisation, labour broking and permanent mass unemployment are symptoms of a rotting system begging to be replaced. In SA, the explosion of labour broking is an attempt by the bosses to regain the untrammelled exploitation of workers complicated by post-apartheid labour laws.

Capitalism is a socio-economic system founded on thievery and run by thieves. The essence of capitalism is that the surplus value produced by workers is appropriated by the capitalists. Labour broking is not some aberration or unfortunate exploitative excess outside of this, as the state and the capitalist media would have us believe. It is simply one of the mechanisms to maximize the capitalists' share of this surplus value (profits).

All the capitalists and their hangers-on, including political parties like the ANC, DA, COPE etc., are of the view that labour-broking should not be banned. Scare-crows of dramatically increased unemployment, investors running away, and dodgy underground practices are used to argue for the practice to be regulated.

It is not surprising that the fight against labour brokers has been at the fore of workers struggles



Cosatu members protesting against labour broking.

internationally in recent years. Izwi labasebenzi/ Democratic Socialist Movement supports the call to ban labour broking. It must be understood, however, that such a concession, which is akin to cutting off a limb from the body of capital, could only be won through mass struggles directed not only against labour broking as an isolated issue, but as part of a coherent response to the capitalists' and their governments' attacks on workers.

Cosatu's protests at the Zuma government's backtracking on the labour broking ban, as part of its de facto abandonment of the grand promises of "decent work", are all the more bitter as they have been robbed of a soft target which would deflect attention from the bigger picture of which labour broking is a part. Non-compliance with labour laws is an enormous problem in SA. Labour broking and outsourcing enable the bosses to get around the law which they abuse by exploiting loopholes to stall legal processes. It is not a coincidence that the state is failing to enforce compliance with the Labour Relations Act or the Basic Conditions of Employment Act. Legal loopholes, severely understaffed inspectorates at the Department of Labour, etc, make up a sys-

tem constructed so that bosses are allowed in effect to defy the law of the land. These problems will unfortunately remain even as tighter regulations are applied to labour broking, for as long as Cosatu and other unions keep running away from the recognition that class struggle will not be mediated by laws on their own. Laws protecting workers can only be enforced through mass action campaigns.

The reformist labour movement leaders held up Namibia's ban of labour broking as an example in support of a SA ban. In January this year, however, Namibia's Supreme Court overturned the ban on labour broking, in defence of one of the fundamentals of the capitalist system: "free labour", that is, anyone should be "free" to sell her or his labour power commodity as they please. As Zuma has made clear, the ANC government cannot and will not ban labour broking. Even the proposed new regulations, which include guaranteeing labour broker employees the same wages and conditions of service as permanent employees, will prove to be empty posturing unless the unions force them into practice in workplaces and streets.

Not only capitalists, but also government, are increasingly

► Continued on page 6

settlement. By signing an agreement to leave the commanding heights of the economy in the hands of the capitalists, protected by the property clauses in the constitution, the ANC/SACP leadership provided the economic dictatorship of the capitalists with the mask of democracy. Because they have money, the bosses are at liberty to violate the labour laws of the land and defeat workers not in law, but because they have financial muscle. The Spar management made it clear that I will never be allowed to work for Spar again even if it costs them R10 million.

Despite the uneven playing field, Super Spar may eventually be staring defeat in the face. Throughout this protracted legal battle they have treated the labour laws with contempt. After their latest setback,

the dismissal of their review application by the Labour Court, they failed to comply with the requirements of the law yet again by not submitting a review application to the Labour Appeal Court on time. The Spar manager concerned was on holiday overseas! It remains to be seen whether the Court will condone a late appeal on the grounds that the boss was sunning himself on the beach in Cyprus.

The employer's arrogance may yet cost them hundreds of thousands of rands not to me, but in legal fees. Cosawu would not have been able to carry the cost of the legal battle. For being able to still be in the ring so to speak, I have to acknowledge the role of the Cape Law Society who agreed to take this case on a *pro bono* basis. Without them I would have been forced to throw

in the towel, not because I had no case, but because I had no money.

My lawyers have now instituted proceedings to enforce the arbitration award, to attach Spar's assets, recover the money owing to me and the terms of my reinstatement.

One of the most important lessons I have learned from my case is that, although the labour laws and the justice system as a whole no longer discriminate on the basis of race, they still do so on the basis of class. In spite of improvements such as providing easier access to e.g. the CCMA for ordinary workers, the playing field is far from level. Employers are able to exploit loopholes and to drag out the process as long as legally possible because they can afford it. The Spar management is clearly embarrassed by how they have been exposed and

are determined to try and clear their name by fair means or foul.

This is an important case not just for me personally, but for Spar employees, Cosawu, the DSM, and for the labour movement as a whole. It has set an important precedent on the right of workers to expose law-breaking by the bosses without the fear that they can hide behind "confidentiality" and claims of a "breakdown in trust in the employer/employee relationship" – a cynical legal ploy they often use to intimidate workers into silence.

My battle against Spar has also strengthened my socialist convictions. I will never forget the letters of solidarity sent by comrades of sister sections of the Committee for a Workers International. Apart from the boost to my morale, it gave me a concrete understanding of the

importance of internationalism and workers unity in the struggle to crush the injustice and inequality that the capitalist system causes. The only way to abolish racism, xenophobia, discrimination, and to defend freedom of speech and association, is through the socialist transformation of society. This is why I am proud to be a member of the DSM and the CWI, and remain committed to building a mass workers party on a socialist programme."

# Cosatu leadership embraces bosses' bail-out of capitalism

By Mametlwe Sebei

**THE WORST CRISIS** that capitalism has experienced since the Great Depression of the 1930s has dealt a shattering blow to the ideological confidence of the capitalist class. With the collapse of the former Soviet Union, their thirty-year propaganda war against socialism had reached dizzying levels of triumphalism. Now the notion of the alleged superiority of the "market" over the state lies in ruins as a number of capitalist governments have been left with no alternative but to defy their own neo-liberal faith by using the state to save the economy by nationalising key financial institutions.

**FOR SOCIALISTS** this presents an enormous opportunity to drive home the lessons of the crisis – that capitalism is incapable of providing for the basic needs of all, and can only spread the poverty, misery, deprivation war and environmental degradation hitherto experienced mainly in the ex-colonial world, throughout the globe. It is an opportunity to make the case for the abolition of capitalism and the socialist transformation of society.

**NEARLY A MILLION JOBS** were lost in SA in 2009 alone. In the collapsing manufacturing sector, one in every five workers is on short time. House repossessions have literally removed the roof over the heads not only of workers but also of so-called black diamonds – the new black middle class. Millions are being spent on new road works ahead of the World Cup, yet repossessions have left tens of thousands without vehicles. Everywhere workers are coming under savage attacks as the capitalists cut costs not only to weather the storm of the economic crisis, but to maintain or increase profits margins.

**YET, THE MOST SENIOR** leader of the biggest organisation of the labour movement in SA, Zwelinzima Vavi, has issued a joint declaration with Bobby Godsell, former chairperson of the Eskom board, urging workers to accept wage cuts and short time. Preaching love across the class lines, Vavi has nothing to offer the workers but a patriotic appeal to make sacrifices for the sake of some "common national interest". In effect this means that workers must surrender their class independence just when they



need to assert it most. Godsell, one of the more cunning representatives of big business, has seduced Vavi into buying into the utopian notion that capitalists and workers, exploiter and exploited have common interests above the antagonistic class relations they have in society.

The mounting job losses, short-time and wage cuts are neither acts of love nor of patriotism on the part of the capitalists. They are acts of class war. The bosses are making workers pay for the crisis of their system. The duty of the leadership is to expose this reality, and to use the crisis to demonstrate the necessity for the abolition of capitalism and to make the case for socialism. Cosatu should organise campaigns around its congress resolutions demanding the nationalisation of Sasol, Mittal Steel etc and extend the demand for nationalisation of the banks, mines and factories under the democratic control and management of the working class.

**THE NEDLAC AGREEMENT** is a classical example of subordinating the interests of the workers to those of the bosses in the name of compromise. It provides for a lay-off training scheme and a fund for companies in distress. At best the lay-off training scheme postpones the inevitable. Firstly the training is of limited duration only. Secondly workers who manage to get onto them have to take a wage cut (eg from R15 000 to R6 000 month). Thirdly it promotes the myth that there is no shortage of jobs; only a mismatch between skills and jobs. The reality is that factories are shutting down or going on short time to cut production because the market, domestically and internationally, has contracted.

Those workers who have acquired new skills are mostly being cruelly disappointed. This is why there has been an enormous increase in the Unemployment Insurance Fund claims.

**IT IS A SCANDAL** that tax payers' money has been used to set up a fund for companies in distress. Millions are being set aside to bail out the capitalists, whilst workers have no guaranteed jobs at the end of their training. Although the government has pledged that UIF payments are to be increased and will be paid out for longer periods, these improvements will be minimal. Payouts will still be well below earnings and, like the training lay-off schemes, merely postpones the period when workers will have no income at all. The company distress fund has seen very little take up as government representatives have complained.

**HOW SHOULD THE WORKERS RESPOND TO THE CRISIS?** In contrast to the abject surrender of the leadership, workers have no choice but to fight resolutely to repel attacks on wages, jobs and benefits. Although the frontline in this battle is the workplace, the crisis of capitalism affects society as a whole. Factory closures, short time and lay-offs not only impact immediately on workers and their families' income, they result in a decline in tax revenue for the state and therefore on cuts in social spending.

**IN SA THIS SITUATION** has been worsened by the fact that the government has prioritised spending on World Cup infrastructure. This is having a direct impact on public spending on essential

services such as housing, water and health. At the same time, huge hikes in electricity tariffs will result in an escalation in the cost of food and transport.

**RESISTANCE** to the capitalist offensive offers the opportunity to unite the struggle of workers in the workplace with those of students fighting exclusions and communities fighting poor service delivery and corruption. The tactics must include occupation of factories earmarked for closure. In the 80s this was an important tactic which reflected the understanding that the struggle in the townships and the workplace is one struggle. This must be extended to schools and tertiary education institutions. Factories must be retooled to produce socially necessary goods.

**JOINT GRASS ROOTS** based campaigns to defend jobs and to oppose cuts of essential services must be initiated to unite organised labour, the student movement and communities that currently are fighting separately.

**THIS ECONOMIC CRISIS** demonstrates above all the absurd contradictions of the capitalist system. The capacity exists to satisfy social need, to produce all the food for the minimum amount of nutritional needs for a healthy diet, to calculate demand for all basic needs and services and to meet them by building decent houses, schools and hospitals. Yet millions are homeless and illiterate, dying from curable diseases.

**THE IRRECONCILABLE** contradiction between the private profits of the bosses and the needs of society as a whole can be resolved only by re-organising production so that

it takes place on the basis of social need and not private profit. This in turn requires that the means of production, distribution and exchange be placed under the democratic control and management of the working class. This is not possible unless the economic dictatorship of the capitalist class is broken and replaced with workers' democracy -- the democratic control and management of the economy and government by the working class.

The founders of Cosatu understood that apartheid and capitalism were two sides of the same coin, that capitalism could not be reformed, it had to be dismantled. The experience of the past 16 years has confirmed this: because capitalism has not been overthrown, all the racial disparities of the apartheid order that subjugated the black working classes remain.

They viewed Cosatu not as an instrument for the reform of capitalism, but to overthrow it. Cosatu was far more than a trade union federation – it was the embryo of mass revolutionary workers party. The present leadership has trampled on those traditions. Instead of drawing the conclusion that it is time for Cosatu to free itself from the political prison of the Tripartite Alliance, the Cosatu leadership is instead flirting with the direct representatives of capital itself. Disillusioned with the apprentice, they are seeking refuge in the arms of the master. This is the meaning of the joint declaration issued by Zwelinzima Vavi and Bobby Godsell on the economic crisis.

**THE UNNECESSARY** violence, including the vandalism of public property, the often mindless attacks on people and other horrifying images that have become trademarks of protests in communities, campuses and often also in industrial action, are a desperate cry for revolutionary leadership. Only a mass workers party on a socialist programme has the potential to unite all sections of the working class, and to link their immediate demands for jobs, decent wages, and decent free education and health and housing, public education, to the struggle for the abolition of capitalism and the socialist transformation of society.

## Labour broking... Continued from page 5:

complaining about "labour market rigidity". Even cabinet members, such as Nosiviwe Maphisa-Nqakula, complain that they are unable to discipline thieves in their ministries because of the alleged "rigidity" of the labour laws. Both the capitalists and the government would actually be salivating at any chance to do away with the labour laws.

The government itself is a major contributor to the mushrooming of labour broking. During the

financial year 2008/9, the departments of Health, Public Service and Administration, Social Development, Justice, Transport, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Communication, and the Treasury together spent almost R124 million on labour brokers (Pretoria News, 09/10/19). The parastatal South African Post Office last year spent R350 million on labour brokers, who employ over 30% of SAPO's total workforce (at as little as a third of the pay, according to the

worker quoted above) (City Press, 09/10/04)!

Government's labour broking and outsourcing constitutes a massive drainage on tax payers money into the pockets of capitalist middle-men. It is justified as providing employment and filling staffing gaps according to the fluctuating needs of organisations (e.g. shifting hospital staff between wards according to patient pressure, filling in for employees on

maternity-, sick leave etc, using special expertise only when it is specifically needed). These are all valid needs. However, they could be met much better in a planned and coherent way, by a public service.

The Cosatu, SACP and YCL leaders' belief that the ANC would deliver a ban on labour brokers without a fight was more than a mistake. They actually called for the ban in the hope of channeling

workers' anger towards an isolated symptom of the problem, not to link it to a wider struggle, but on the contrary with the aim of avoiding taking their responsibility as working class leaders, and mobilise a genuinely workers-controlled political mass struggle against the full range of the capitalist offensive, which is represented politically by their own partner, the ANC. The ANC's abandonment of Cosatu and the SACP on the labour broking issue again exposes the futility of

# CONFERENCE OF THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT 7

## Towards a genuine left alternative?

By Liv Shange and Weizmann Hamilton

The Conference of the Democratic Left (CDL) is an initiative to bring together left organisations, social movements and activists to confront the disastrous social, economic and political crisis in SA. In the making since late 2008, a national conference is to be held in the coming months. The Democratic Socialist Movement welcomes the CDL as an attempt to address the most critical challenge facing the working class in SA and internationally – the development of an independent working class political voice.

From Brazil to Britain, Iceland to India, the working class has begun to recognise the need to create its own authentic political voice. This is the political significance of the intensification of class struggles in recent years also in SA, in the workplace, educational institutions, and in black working class townships.

The militant mass “service delivery” protests throughout the country demanding electricity, sanitation, water, decent housing, an end to corruption, and a say in the running of their communities express this most sharply. In the workplaces, three times as many strike days were recorded in 2009 as in 2008. After sixteen years, poverty and mass unemployment are still rampant. SA is now the most unequal society on earth. This is the fundamental reason for the revolt of the masses.

### Vacuum on the left

The political crisis is reflected in the open divisions in the ruling ANC, and its SACP and Cosatu allies on the one hand, and the opposition parties’ own internal tensions as well as the attempt to form a super opposition on the other. Despite sitting on opposite sides of the parliamentary benches, on the fundamental question of economic policy, the ANC and the opposition parties share one thing in common – they are all pro-capitalist and therefore occupy the same side in the class divide in SA. The turmoil on the right of the political spectrum accentuates sharply the ideological and organisational vacuum on the left.

### Fragmented struggles must unite

Both within and across the three main terrains of struggle – in education institutions (against financial

and academic exclusions), townships (against poor service delivery and corruption) and the workplace, the battles are fought separately. What is clearly required is coordination of these struggles. This is why the DSM campaigns for a mass workers party.

The emergence of the CDL is ultimately a response to the working class’ search for its own voice. Provided it can develop clear positions on the critical ideological, programmatic and organisational tasks posed, we believe the CDL has the potential to develop into a working class independent, class-based, political force that can coordinate struggles and challenge capitalism on all fronts, including elections.

The CDL’s call to “Unite to make another South Africa and World Possible” commits it to “work towards developing a grassroots democratic eco-socialist, feminist, political programme”. The Call includes good points on the crisis of capitalism and emphasises the need for independent working class organisation. The CDL “aims to create a united front around a programme of action while preserving the autonomy of constituent organisations”. This open and democratic approach, together with its generally anti-capitalist position, is a good starting point and will be crucial to the CDL’s progress and vital in developing a programme of action that addresses the key challenges facing the working class.

However, while supporting and participating in the CDL, the DSM has several comradely criticisms which we put forward to contribute towards theoretical, ideological and organisational clarification.

### Struggle oriented programme needed

The CDL initiators correctly recognise the need to be concrete. However, the DSM believes that the basic outline for a programme of action has already been developed in action by the working class itself – in the service delivery, education and workplace struggles. While it may be possible to graft some of CDL’s ideas onto existing struggles, we believe that this should be debated by the workers, students and youth leading these struggles themselves.

As a new formation, the CDL first has to earn the right to be taken as a serious force by workers in

struggle. The CDL should therefore refrain from imposing an agenda of struggle from without where one already exists. The DSM believes the CDL should rather focus on working towards assisting unification of mass struggles.

We believe the CDL should propose a national service delivery conference to agree on how to coordinate these struggles in preparation for a national service delivery general strike. Communities should be encouraged to appeal also to students and organised workers to elect delegates to such a conference and for rank-and-file union members to get their unions’ support.

The DSM believes the CDL should also raise for debate the political issues the existing struggles are already posing – that is, the political representation of the working class and the broader struggle against capitalism. The fact that service delivery protests are directed against council officials, councillors and mayors, shows that workers have already drawn political conclusions from their struggles.



Demands for the resignation of councils or mayors are not a rejection of representative democracy as such. Those who make such claims are jumping over the existing stage in the level of consciousness by exaggerating the level of political clarity. Such claims are ultra-left, confuse the first month of pregnancy with the ninth, and substitute nihilistic and anarchist prejudices for the actual consciousness of the working class. Workers are in fact struggling for a form of representation over which they have control – the first step in the recognition of the limitations of capitalist democracy and the need for workers democracy – the basis for a socialist society.

We therefore call on the CDL to campaign for communities to put up independent working class candidates to contest the 2011 local government elections. The DSM believes this would demonstrate in

practice the necessity for independent working class representation.

### Need for a bold socialist programme

Unfortunately, some of the CDL’s leading lights are reluctant to embrace socialism boldly. This reflects the lingering doubts over the credibility of socialism as a viable alternative that gripped the left following the collapse of the former Soviet Union. The official left especially was ideologically demoralised by the restoration of capitalism, the triumphalism of the capitalist class and the intensification of the neo-liberal offensive against the working class that followed worldwide. The process of capitalist restoration in China reinforced this.

Yet what collapsed was not socialism, but a bureaucratic perversion of it – Stalinism – the outcome of a political counter-revolution that entailed the smashing of workers democracy, while preserving state ownership of the economy.

For this reason the DSM strongly rejects the CDL declaration’s description of Soviet, (Cuban or Chinese) society as “really existing socialism” as the SACP does.

Both Stalinism and imperialism, despite their antagonism, had a vested interest in this misrepresentation, the former to justify the political counter-revolution in the name of Lenin and the leadership of the October Revolution; the latter to discredit socialism by pointing to the monstrous authoritarian dictatorship of Stalin. The importation of the SACP’s bankrupt ideas into the CDL will make it impossible to defend the genuine ideas of socialism particularly to those workers and youth who want answers to questions as to how a socialist society would work and degeneration avoided.

The capitalist counter-revolution in the former Soviet Union initially undermined socialism ideologically. But the global economic crisis has in turn dealt a devastating blow to the credibility of capitalism. Workers and youth are once again seeking out socialism. Latin America, where in a number of countries governments critical of neo-liberalism have been elected, most spectacularly in Venezuela where Hugo Chavez is implementing a programme he refers to as “Socialism in the 21st Century”, and Bolivia where Evo Morales’

Movement Towards Socialism is now in government, is in the forefront. Despite serious limitations in their approach to socialism, the fact they have embraced it, shows the extent of its rehabilitation as a legitimate ideology.

Because of the CDL initiators’ doubts about socialism, they entertain reformist ideas such as “parallel or alternative economies”. Any programme not based on the understanding that capitalism is incapable of developing society and must be abolished, fosters the illusion that socialism can be achieved by gradual in-roads into capitalism through cooperatives, township vegetable gardens and ultimately a “parallel mode of production”. If the CDL does not break with such ideas, it will end up as a mere “SACP Lite” – propagating reformism rather than revolution.

New left parties like the Party for Socialism and Liberty (PSOL) in Brazil, SYRIZA in Greece, die Linke in Germany, Rifondazione Comunista in Italy have arisen. However, these formations are in crisis precisely because their leadership has no confidence in socialism and oppose the idea of workers parties.

The mass of the working class has not yet drawn clear socialist conclusions. But the crisis has exposed the bankruptcy of capitalism, providing the best opportunity to make the case for socialism since the October Revolution. The DSM proposes a transitional approach, linking the everyday struggle for reforms to the overthrow of capitalism and the socialist reconstruction of society.

### For a service delivery general strike

The DSM tabled for debate a resolution at the 20 March Gauteng CDL consultative conference entitled “For a general strike for service delivery and a campaign for the formation of a new socialist mass party!” (see the DSM website [www.socialistsouthafrica.co.za](http://www.socialistsouthafrica.co.za)). We propose the CDL campaigns for a conference of all communities in struggle, appeals to rank-and-file unionists, for a national day of action – a service delivery general strike. We propose that the CDL campaigns for communities to contest the 2011 local government elections independently. We also call on the CDL to commit to the formation of a new mass workers’ party on a socialist programme. These proposals received support from many activists at the meeting.

their reformist two-stage approach and the notion of a “progressive bourgeoisie”.

As long as the working class and the youth are led by charlatans in the labour movement and in youth formations, their hands are tied behind their backs, making it impossible to defend the gains made in the great struggles of the 1970s and 1980s. This then throws the spectre of revolution into a distant future. In other words the

struggle against labour broking can only succeed if we struggle at the same time to get rid of the current leadership in Cosatu and an unequivocal rejection of the SACP as a working class organization.

Workers, unions and social movements should continue to fight for a ban of labour brokers as part of campaigns to enforce the full spectrum of hard-won legal protections for workers. Transitional demands could include

the banning of profiteering from outsourced government services, equal pay for equal work, workers’ control over inspections and enforcement of any regulations, which need to be formulated much more strictly and clearly, the expropriation of any labour broking company failing to comply with regulations, compensated only according to proven need. A labour movement with a socialist programme would fight for the replacement of private labour brokers with publicly owned

employment agencies, which should be democratically managed and controlled by workers and community organisation. They could provide the flexible, temporary staffing needs without any profit motive, draining the public sector of resources, or undermining workers’ pay or conditions.

The DSM must play a leading role in mobilising workers and youth against labour broking. As long as workers are not yet ready to

get rid of capitalism, the ultimate culprit for every socio-economic evil, the struggle to defend workers’ gains – better working conditions and better wages for a decent living – has to be intensified.

# LET THEM THE UGLY BACKDROP TO



## “NO MARCHES IN 2010”

Unofficial directives from government departments and the Metro Police not to allow any street protests in the run-up to the World Cup have become obvious to social movement activists.

- As the Motsoaledi Concerned Residents we tried to get a permit to march in January, but the municipality kept telling us that because of “2010” and the fixing of the roads for the BRT (Bus Rapid Transit), we cannot march, says Lucky Ngobeni from the MCR.

- It was the same for the Orlando youth group I’m involved with. Then when we had no choice but to embark on a protest without a permit, the police shot us with rubber bullets without any provocation from the community.

The Metal and Electrical Workers’ Union (MEWUSA) had been trying to organise a march of Rustenburg mineworkers since November, 2009. The Rustenburg Metro Police kept on coming with excuses, until the workers and their community finally went ahead with a march anyway in early February, which however had to be terminated prematurely, as heavily armed police ordered the workers to disperse. When the workers attempted to move forward with a march to the Union Buildings in Pretoria, getting a permit was a nightmare:

- No one ever picks up the phone when we call the Metro Police, said a frustrated administrator. They have even removed the contact details for applications from their website.

It was only after the NGO Equal Education took the government to court for its ban on marches at the Union Buildings, that the Rustenburg miners could go ahead with the march (see article on page 5). Equal Education exposed in court that the Presidency’s Director General Vusi Mavimbela had in November 2009 issued a directive that “all marches to the Union Buildings and the Presidency [will] be suspended until further notice” (Mail and Guardian, 10/03/17). Such a ban is illegal, but clearly just the tip of an iceberg as other departments or the police themselves have not yet been exposed for doing the same. In other words, in a time when police are ordered to “shoot to kill”, public protests are criminalised. Anticipating the World Cup, the police has spent R665 million on 10 water cannons, 100 BMWs and 40 helicopters, in addition to millions on +/-50 000 extra police officers.

## OUT OF REACH

The recent PR-afterthought to hand out free tickets to all workers involved in the stadia construction does not take away the reality that taking part in this event is just a pipe dream to most South Africans. The majority of the workers who built the billion-rand new stadia would have to save several days of earnings just to be able to buy the cheapest possible ticket to a group stage game (R140). For the finals, a place on one of the best of the seats they built would cost the lowest-paid workers up to 7 months saved-up pay (a team-specific-ticket for the final costs R19 096). Millions of South Africans do not even have electricity to be able to watch games on TV.

## CONCENTRATION CAMPS FOR THE POOR

The City of Cape Town is evicting poor people around the city from their homes, rounding people up in Blikkiesdorp; what the City calls a “Temporary Relocation Area” made up of 1 300 3x6m tin shacks in the sand. People staying in informal settlements, hostels, squatting in abandoned buildings, and in the latest development, refugees of the 2008 xenophobic pogroms, are being dumped here. Many were forced to Blikkiesdorp as a direct result of staying too close to World Cup sites, such as the Athlone stadium which will be used as a training ground. The City’s claims that the forced removals to Blikkiesdorp has nothing to do with the World Cup ring hollow as many others waiting for houses have been sidelined, brewing conflict. Blikkiesdorp is but one of countless examples of forced removals of shack dwellers across the country as it is airbrushed to according to FIFA’s detailed instructions.



Nothing symbolises more graphically the ugliness that forms the backdrop to the beautiful game than all the scandals, corruption and greed surrounding the mega event on which the entire world’s media is focused – the 2010 World Cup. The first to be held on the African continent, it is being presented as an opportunity to contribute to the development of sport and the economy. Through amongst others, “football Fridays” (when the national anthem should be sung by all and the national football jersey worn), and the special “diski” World Cup dance, it will brighten up the fading colours of the “Rainbow Nation”, boost “nation building”, provide redress for historical injustices, a panacea for all social and economic ills, create jobs and help SA escape the effects of the global recession and kickstart economic recovery.

However, even before a ball is kicked, SA has already beaten Brazil, winning the World Cup of inequality – the only cup it will win. The World Cup has sharpened the already acute contradictions produced by the increasingly desperate efforts of the political elite around the ANC leadership to rapidly become a rich black capitalist class and to impress Western and white capital which still overwhelmingly dominate the economy. Investment in vanity projects like the World Cup during the worst economic crisis since the 1930s depression adds insult to the injuries the working class is suffering. In fact, the expenditure will worsen prospects of economic recovery because of increased state debt and the displacement of expenditure on more socially and economically useful projects.

Even the promises made during the bid for the World Cup to use a sport historically supported by the black working class to leave a development legacy, lie as empty as the stadiums will be once the event is over. Only a handful of clubs, Orlando Pirates, Kaizer chiefs an Bloemfontein Celtic attract decent crowds. As with every other of the government’s alleged economic and social development programmes, the main motivation for the 2010 World Cup is to provide the elite opportunities for self-enrichment. Everything to do with soccer has attached to it a ‘for sale’ sign.

The Mbombela stadium in Mpumalanga, widely seen as the most corrupt province in the country, was built on land acquired by a BEE consortium from a community for a couple of rands and unfulfilled promises of investment. Consumed by the insatiable ambitions of “tenderpreneurs”, conflicts over tenders have brought ANC factions into bloody conflict with each other. Several leading politicians named on hit lists have been assassinated. The Mpuma-

langa ANC is split; the premier a target for removal but supported by powerful allies including the presidents of the ANC and ANC Youth League, Jacob Zuma and Julius Malema, respectively.

The almost R800 billion set aside for infrastructure development in roads, airports, highways and stadiums, is many times the amount spent on the World Cups by Korea and Japan (2002) or Germany (2006). Despite the then economic boom, return on investment for those countries has been, at best, negligible. The climate is much less favourable for SA currently. The total cost of SA’s hosting the World Cup is unclear. Present estimates are 757% above the original guesstimates! Apart from the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems being introduced, World Cup expenditure displaces investment in projects with more meaningful and long-term benefits such as health and education. For example, World Cup-related infrastructure expenditure equals ten years of housing investment. Only 7% of SA’s schools have functioning libraries. Yet for every seven seats in the new stadia a fully equipped school library could have been built. Much revenue generated in South Africa is siphoned off in returns on investment by FIFA and other overseas investors.

The main beneficiaries of local investment in infrastructure and stadiums have been the construction industry bosses. Between 2005 and 2006 their pre-tax profits sky-rocketed 56%. Company executive pay rose on average by 39%, the highest in all economic sectors. Profits of a top earner such as Group 5 rose by 73% and those of their Black Economic Empowerment partners by 21.6%. Murray and Roberts’ CEO’s remuneration rose 40% to R7.4 million/year.

Construction workers, on the other hand, officially earn

between R1 144 and R4 576 per month. In reality many workers are paid far less – down to R5,50 per hour (half the minimum rate) (SA Labour Bulletin, Vol. 32, nr. 1). The majority of workers in the industry are not unionised and are employed on so-called limited duration contracts (LDCs). There have been 26 strikes on World Cup sites of which 20 were wild cat strikes. The strikes were complicated by the fact that the companies involved have BEE partners with prominent political profiles. These individuals could use their influence with union bosses to settle disputes without undue pressure on their lucrative profit margins. The short term nature of the jobs has done little for the training and skills development promised. At most 50 000 temporary jobs are likely to have been created once the World Cup; government had claimed it would bring 415 000.

FIFA will be laughing all the way to the bank with an expected €1.2 billion in media rights alone. Earnings for 2010 have already exceeded €1 billion – a first despite growing concerns that ticket sales will fall well below target. Having been stubbornly indifferent to pleas to open ticket centres for over-the-counter sales, to make them accessible to the majority of SA supporters, FIFA and SAFA have been forced do so from April 15.

The irony is not lost on those protesting on the streets and the more than 2.8 million youth aged between 18 and 24 years who are neither working nor in any kind of education and training. Working class people are asking why the government has succeeded in completing the building of brand new stadiums in record time when they still don’t have decent houses; why they have embarked on a massive highway improvement scheme when there is such rampant pover-

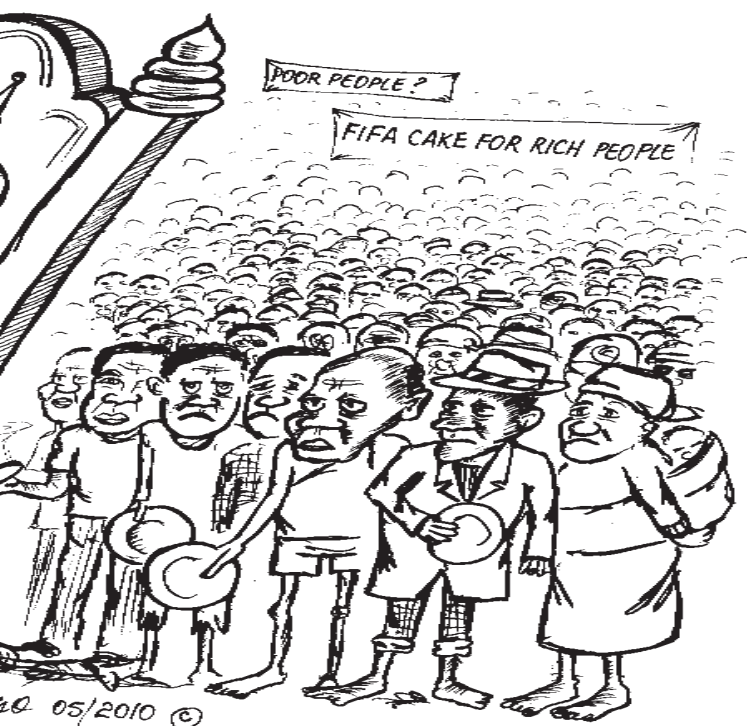




# ER WORLD CUP

# EAT CAKE!

## THE BEAUTIFUL GAME:



ty. 900 000 in 2009 alone lost their jobs as a result of the recession taking the total to between 6 and 8 million jobless (35%). The government pleads financial constraints when it comes to delivery of basic services, houses, access to health and education. Yet it has found R30 billion to build stadiums and a further R787 billion for infrastructure development. Failing to address the crisis of homelessness, local government has instead embarked on quick “fixes” to hide street kids and other unwanted people (see accompanying article).

The country is being drowned in a deluge of patriotism to numb working peoples’ sensibilities towards the harsh class realities at work in the most popular working class sport in the world. Whilst the tiny elite of BEE tycoons and white capital make fabulous profits from World Cup contracts, the working class is being asked to accept their lot – poor wages, mass unemployment, poor service delivery and deepening poverty – for the good of the country as patriotic South Africans. Patriotism, as Samuel Johnson said, is the last refuge of scoundrels.

That president Zuma has fathered a child with the daughter of soccer boss, Irvin Khoza, not only shines a light on Zuma’s moral and cultural hypocrisy, but for what it reveals of the intercourse between the ANC political elite and the soccer mafia to promote their mutual interests. The greed, corruption and naked self interest that lie at the root of the divisions threatening to tear the ANC apart are mirrored in the SA Football Association (SAFA) without the fig leaf of political pretensions.

Rivalry between the warring factions – led respectively by the Local Organising Committee’s Danny Jordaan and the Professional Soccer League’s Irvin Khoza – deteriorated to such an extent

that it threatened preparation for the World Cup itself as both parties insisted on holding elections to the SAFA presidency before the event. The truce negotiated by Sepp Blatter and Zuma will hold until after the World Cup. After its all-out war for the presidency of SAFA and the billions that will fill the pockets of the winner. So consumed by the opportunities for self-enrichment, is the SAFA bureaucracy – widely regarded as incompetent and corrupt – that they disregarded all advice to pour the billions that make SA football the richest on the African continent, into development. What could have been an opportunity to develop young soccer talent and more generally to let the World Cup leave a legacy of health, fitness and a sporting culture, has been subordinated to greed, the pursuit of power and prestige.

The national team, Bafana Bafana, is now ranked in the lowly 80s having dropped like a stone from the heady days of the 1996 African Cup of Nations (Afcon) victory. The indignity of Bafana Bafana failing to qualify for the January 2010 African Cup of Nations in neighbouring Angola, meant the national team was deprived of playing against the type of tough opposition they can expect in the World Cup. Bafana are not expected to progress beyond the preliminary rounds. The team’s preparations have been an absolute shambles. Emergency training camps in Brazil and Germany saw them playing against lower league and reserve teams. In China cancelled the friendly match in Germany citing travel difficulties because of volcanic ash. In the end SA had to settle for matches against North Korea and Jamaica. After all these failed efforts to give Bafana Bafana at least the semblance of a football team worthy of the name, the team is left to rely on home support for inspiration to progress.

Marx said famously that religion is the opium of the masses. The same can be said of sport today. But as with all drugs, the effects of opium wear off. The ruling elite are using the World Cup like the emperors of the Roman empire, who tried to distract the attention of the masses from their miserable lives with “bread and circuses”. But there could be protests during the event by township residents demanding basic services and taxi associations whose livelihoods are threatened by the new bus transport system in the major cities and by other workers as the World Cup coincides with the annual wage negotiations season. Whatever the outlook of union leaders, workers will not be blackmailed by accusations that they are unpatriotic for demanding decent increases. Street traders have already organised several protests against their forced removal from stadium precincts and even roads leading to them for the duration of the games. Even the Congress of SA Trade Unions, hitherto loyal choristers in the desperate attempt to whip up a phony SA patriotism, going so far as to call upon workers to fill the stadiums during the Federations Cup “dress rehearsal” to “avoid embarrassing the country”, have had to protest against the draconian actions of local government against small traders. Cosatu was also forced to protest against the production of the World Cup mascot in Chinese sweatshops and the virtual colonisation of the country during the World Cup by Sepp Blatter and FIFA, whose salary is protected from scrutiny by Swiss banking secrecy laws. After the distraction of the World Cup, the intensity of the class struggle will go into a higher gear.

Service delivery protests reached the highest level since 1994 in the first three months of this year and have spread to almost every part of the country, most intensely across Gauteng and Mpumalanga townships. Youth are leading residents in burning tyres, blockading roads and destroying government facilities in scenes reminiscent of the anti-apartheid struggle; expressing the massive frustration and resentment over the continued lack of services.

The ANC government is aping the insolence and contempt for the masses displayed by French queen Marie Antoinette whose infamous response to their demands for bread was to say ‘Let them eat cake!’ In response to the demand for houses and basic services, the government appears to be saying ‘let them have stadiums!’ It is time for a real alternative that will prioritise the interests of workers and youth and not those of the bosses.



### CLEANING AWAY STREET KIDS AND HOMELESS

Across South Africa, city authorities are busy with various so called “clean-up” efforts ahead of the Soccer World Cup. In the City of Johannesburg this entails removing 15 000 homeless people from the streets into temporary shelters out of town so that “we can be up there with the rest of the world” (City spokesperson Virgil James, *Saturday Star* 10/02/06). In Durban, street children are rounded up by Metro Police on a daily basis and dropped far outside the city; sometimes at “safe houses” or with relatives, sometimes just on the roadside. At the safe houses and shelters the children are kept with homeless adults, and very vulnerable to abuse according to NGOs involved. Most immediately find their way back to town. The trauma of the often brutal, repeated arrests leaves the kids increasingly vulnerable to coping mechanisms involving drugs etc, and disrupts rehabilitation programmes run by NGOs, such as uMthombo which is teaching Durban street kids to surf. (*Mail and Guardian*, 10/01/22)

### WOMEN FOR SALE

The World Cup “clean-ups” have also meant more police harassment of sex workers. In times of recession, many had hoped for boosted incomes during the World Cup. Instead, more policing of the streets means more bribes to police officers, more arrests and more abuse and rape in the police cells. Hopes had been raised partially by the possible decriminalisation of prostitution following a review by the South African Law Reform Commission which was released last year, suggesting that prostitution may be partially or totally legalised, and regulated. If the government goes ahead with such changes, it will not be before 2011, however. While sex workers naturally hope that decriminalisation and regulation by the government rather than organised crime will relieve them of constant police harassment and stigma, and any such relief must be supported, the implications of such law changes for women’s status and gender and class relations in general must be carefully examined also by socialists, trade unions and social movements broadly. There is a risk that government regulation, which was introduced in Germany ahead of its 2006 Soccer World Cup, legitimises the attachment of “for sale”-tags to women’s bodies in general, while decriminalisation does not automatically remove social stigma and lower levels of police harassment still leaves other problems, such as drug dependency and gender based violence, unresolved.

Human trafficking, present-day slave trade, is an integral part of the prostitution industry. Women and children from rural areas in SA, other Southern African countries and Asia are recruited, often on false pretenses, or abducted and forced to work, most commonly selling sex. In response to the possibility of increased trafficking activity linked to World Cup-tourism, Justice Minister Jeff Radebe now claims that the law criminalising human trafficking, the drafting of which has been dragging since 2003, is to be “fast-tracked” ahead of the June kick-off.



Street traders marching in Johannesburg, Aug 5 2009 (Pic courtesy of Thabo Koole).

### WORLD CLASS VICTIMISATION

Street traders have been targeted not only at, around and along the routes to soccer stadiums, but the FIFA-imposed by-laws also outlaw what they label “ambush marketing” – any vending other than by FIFA’s corporate sponsors (e.g. McDonald’s, Coke, Budweiser) along most busy major roads, and virtually all public spaces where tourists can be expected. Street traders have always been harassed through brutal evictions and confiscation of goods, but across the World Cup host cities, the authorities have stepped up the attacks markedly in the past year and months. Vendors at Johannesburg’s Park Station were brutally evicted on Human Rights Day. Vending at Cape Town’s Grand Parade has been prohibited already from May 1. The street traders are overwhelmingly black African women who support many dependants with their earnings.

# 10 EDUCATION

## Free education proposals: tinkering or transformation?

At the start of the second term, the Durban University of Technology was paralysed by student mass action over issues of residences, facilities, transport and corruption since the beginning of the year. Like the DUT, the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) Soshanguve campus was closed down for a

period in an attempt to contain a student strike. TUT students were protesting for access to financial aid, decent residences and transport. Mangosuthu Technikon students also protested against fee increases and lack of facilities. When Sasco in March staged protests at the University of Johannes-

burg, the University of Zululand and the University of KwaZulu-Natal demanding free education, they were capitalising on students' concerns over financial exclusions, financial aid etc. Regardless of the opportunism that often motivates the leadership of such protests, they are partly an expression of genuine

problems that over the past few years have become a regular part of the academic year. In schools, meanwhile, the crisis in the education system and in working class communities create a tense situation in which localised conflicts and protests are sparked nearly on daily basis, the latest one receiving

media attention being the torching of mobile classrooms by learners at Naphakhade school in Malmesbury, Western Cape, in protest against the education department's failure to respond to their complaints of overcrowding.

By Liv Shange

Eruptions like these, indicating the critical state of an education system close to meltdown, helped push the ANC's December 2007 Polokwane congress to resolve to "progressively introduce free education for the poor until undergraduate level". The Zuma faction identified education as one of its five key priorities critical to resolving the country's broader social and economic problems. As a demonstration of its seriousness, the education department was disestablished and replaced with two new departments, basic and higher education respectively, to allow for a tighter focus on specific areas of the general education crisis. The appointment of SACP general secretary Blade Nzimande as Higher Education and Training minister was partly calculated to symbolise the government's determination to tackle the troubling question of inequality of access.

In mid-March 2010 Nzimande announced he will propose "full state subsidisation of students from poor and working class backgrounds" according to the recommendations of the ministerial review committee he had tasked to conduct a thorough examination of the crisis in education funding. The committee's report pointed out what protesting students have been saying for years: "that NSFAS funding falls far short of demand (with) significant gaps between the NSFAS award and the full cost of study for many students" (Business Day, 10/03/17). Nzimande's "free education" is to be "introduced progressively"; realised step by step at a pace determined by the "budgetary constraints" of the government.

### NSFAS mess

The report also detailed the complete mess that makes up the NSFAS (National Student Financial Aid Scheme). The scheme is currently able to provide for less than half of all qualifying students. Of the almost 3 million young people aged 18-24 who are neither studying nor employed, 98000 have university entry matric passes. Of NSFAS recipients who are no longer studying, only 28% have graduated; the remaining 72% pushed out before finishing due to

lack of academic support and the fact that for most students the NSFAS award is simply too small.

R50 million of the NFSAS budget is routinely left unspent every year, because of the overly complicated and inefficient loan application system. How much financial aid students get varies wildly as institutions and their respective financial aid offices operate according to practices based on their own interpretation of the rules. Knowing that the state funding it receives is not enough to provide for all eligible prospective students, the NSFAS has resorted to try and keep the fund viable through a ruthless debt collection approach, consciously contradicting the National Credit Act by continuing to pursue "expired" debts, ignoring rules limiting how much interest can be charged on loans, forcing employers to deduct repayments from former students' salaries, and blacklisting those who fail to pay. Half of these 10 000 former students have been blacklisted by the scheme for debts that can no longer be claimed legally. In addition to the R10 billion on the NSFAS loan books (a substantial part of which is probably impossible to recover, according to the Review), higher education institutions are owed another R2,7 billion by students.

The Review recommends changes which appear aimed at a complete overhaul, even a shut-down of NSFAS in its present form. The recommendations include a name change; new head office; new organisational structure; new policies; amendments of the NSFAS Act; responsibility for loan recovery is to be shifted to SARS; and there is to be a new central applications process.

### Free for the poor?

The remodeled NSFAS should, according to the Review, administer financial aid in new ways: qualifying students from the poorest back-

grounds would get a subsidy of R43 000 a year (the average "full cost of study" at higher education institutions). The recommendations include extending assistance to the "missing middle" students – those not deemed poor enough to qualify for the NSFAS loan/bursary (family income under R122 000 per year), yet unable to afford tuition fees and other costs of studying. It proposes new loan schemes directed specifically at the children of public sector employees earning under R300 000 a year, on the one hand, and at other "lower middle-income" families on the other. Nzimande announced that the Review Committee will continue investigating other higher education issues, while public consultation on the proposals is undertaken.



Learners in a classroom in Gazankulu.

A finished proposal would be made to the government in August 2010.

An expanded definition of the financially needy and bursaries for the full cost of study for such students; allocation of funds to HEIs according to the number of poor and working class students rather than their racial composition; making loans accessible to those currently "stuck in the middle"; tightening up and modernising the administration and the recovery of loans – these are the main positive traits of the proposals, which, however, still have to be debated, approved, funded and implemented.

The attempts to open up access to higher education follow on the introduction of "no-fee-schools" beginning in 2006. 60% of state

schools situated in poor areas are now declared as free of charge. Just like any easing of the pressure on working class youths and their families will be welcome in higher education, the concessions in basic education are a step forward.

### Why we need free education for all

Partial abolishing of fees, however, still leaves inequality in the education system almost undented. The education system reflects and reproduces the massive class rift in SA society – the most unequal on Earth. The division within education may even be exacerbated by reserving certain schools for "the poor" while the better-off are free to top-up the state funding at schools in wealthy communities

with ever-increasing fees which pay for extra staff and equipment, and yet others go for exclusive private schools. This diversion of resources amounts to a robbery of the schools and communities that need the most support – taking from the poor and giving to the rich. What is needed is a massive upgrading of a single united fully state-

funded education system to which all learners, educators and parents would have to commit and contribute according to ability.

Genuinely free education would mean that the state would have to provide the funding currently coming from students. Those opposed to free education, such as Higher Education SA (HESA – the vice-chancellors' association), argue that free education for all would amount to "subsidising the rich" and as such be unaffordable and unfair. Abolishing higher education tuition fees would cost R7,7 billion at the present enrolment levels, according to Dr Saleem Badat, Vice-Chancellor of Rhodes University (The Star, 10/03/23). Abolishing residence fees would cost another R1,3 billion. The Review Committee

estimates the cost of their proposal of full bursaries for "the poor" at R5,2 billion at current participation levels.

Free education for all would also eliminate the need for the inevitably messy, multiple and often contradictory, bureaucracies that accompany any means-tested scheme such as the NSFAS, campus-based or private loan and bursary schemes, or school fee exemptions. A new system without fees altogether would also remove the stigma attached to the NSFAS loans as a label of poverty and the huge gap in status and quality between different Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and schools. What is required is a fundamental transformation of the entire education system from pre-school through to university.

### Tinkering or transformation?

The ANC government is not prepared to take such bold measures. This is the Achilles' Heel of Nzimande's free education proposals. Education is in fact not intended to be free. Nzimande is attempting to win the support of working class students by relying on arguments such as those of HESA that the government's obligations are merely to level the playing fields so that there is equality of access for the deserving poor. Under the pretext of ensuring that the rich pay their way, Nzimande is in fact leaving the fundamental class-based framework of the system intact, while polishing the surface.

But the rich could pay for free education through taxes instead of fees. In addition, sustaining free education would require using the wealth that is currently locked up in the private safes and accounts of the capitalists – taking over the major corporations, banks, mines etc into public ownership, with the working class majority democratically managing both operations and the use of the wealth created according to the needs of society.

### Carrot and stick

While Nzimande's free education proposals are dangled as a carrot he hopes will be able to restore the youth's confidence in higher education and the future in general; a stick is also wielded at basic edu-



Equal Education-led march to parliament for libraries in all schools.

cation by the government and the political establishment in general. This increasingly authoritarian approach seeks to blame the poor and the working class for their own plight, discourage dependence on the state, emphasise the need for greater discipline and pointing the finger at teacher union Sadtu in particular for the crisis in schools. It has been expressed in calls to go back to “rote-learning”, sweeping condemnation of the OBE-curriculum, a narrow and competitive perspective on performance (e.g. listing the “best” and “worst” schools), calls to ban political activity and Learners Representative Councils in schools. It is also reflected on the ground in schools: learners being prevented from proceeding to higher grades (where it is assumed they will fail) to make the school’s pass rate look better; being steered away from “difficult” subjects, depriving children of classes in arts, culture and sports in the interest of market-viable “basics”.

#### Witch-hunt against teachers

A particularly worrying aspect of this is the virtual witch hunt on teachers, particularly the SA Democratic Teachers’ Union (SADTU), and the right to strike. This followed almost immediately on the announcement of the disastrous 2009 Matric results; a cheap but dangerous attempt to find scapegoats. Teachers make remarkable efforts despite a confusing curriculum, dire lack of resources, low pay and a violent and extremely stressful working environment where they are also compelled to try and fill in as social workers, counselors and administrators. While the proposal to declare education an “essential service” (i.e. a no-strike-sector) came from the Democratic Alliance (DA), there clearly is sympathy for this among sections of the ruling class and the ANC, following on last year’s attempts to ban unions in the army. This would be a serious infringement of the hard-won democratic rights of all workers in SA and a major step backward in the struggle for an education system geared towards self-liberation instead of conditioning us into new oppressors and oppressed. The

government’s approach is influenced by a reaction against these very ideals which were championed by the emerging teachers’ unions in particular.

#### Attacking symptoms, fuelling the causes

Sharpened class contradictions, largely unresolved racial tensions, rife gender oppression, a roll-back of class consciousness in the wake of betrayal of those previously regarded as fighting for working class liberation, widespread feelings of hopelessness about the future, escapism into drug abuse or other self destructive behaviour – all these features of the brutal social system are reflected in brutal human relations, including among learners and staff. The resulting partial break-down of social relations is expressed in absenteeism among learners and teachers, drugs, violence, bullying and sexual abuse at school, and a common generally loveless approach to poor learners.

Overcoming this situation and getting “teachers in class, teaching” and “learners, learning” will take much more than top-down discipline. The lack of resources and huge inequalities contribute directly to problems of “discipline” as well as to the poor quality of education in general. The 2009 matric results, the worst since the ANC came to power, highlighted the full extent of the crisis: the official failure rate, 39.4%, was just the tip of an iceberg of shattered dreams. Of the 1 550 790 learners who started grade 1 in 1998, only 551 940 made it through to last year’s matric exam. The real failure rate, in other words, is 78% (Sunday Independent 2010/01/10). Fifteen year into democracy, only 7% of schools in SA have a functional library as the Equal Education campaign points out. The lack of basic infrastructure like water, sanitation, electricity as well as laboratories, decent playing fields and properly trained teachers are all problems that were inherited from apartheid. As Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga conceded, the children and youth who are confined to this disaster zone are almost exclusively black, as class divisions continue to closely trace racial lines. It is clear that the Zuma government has reconciled

itself to the idea of eternal class divisions (“the poor will always be with us” as former deputy president Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka said) and a class-separated education system as part and parcel of capitalism. The problems in schools are merely symptoms caused by the unequal distribution of resources in the education system and in society at large.

The focus on higher education suggests the government accepts that the capitalist system is inherently hostile against the poor and that higher education reform is designed to increase the chances of those who manage against the odds to make it to tertiary education, to complete their studies. In the context of the economic crisis, the end of which is not in sight despite the optimistic perspectives every other economic analyst and government is putting forward, means that the resources to finance a complete overhaul of the education system – a massive provision of proper infrastructure for schools, including solid buildings, electricity, and sanitation, improved education and training for teachers – do not form part of the programme. In the present economic climate, even those fortunate enough to benefit from tertiary education reform, will only improve the educational level of the unemployed.

Mass based campaigns are needed to pressure the government to implement the free education proposals, and to build a movement that can go further than that and fight for an education system in which, amongst others, learners are not hungry or exhausted in class after walking long distances, feel confident and secure at school and at home, are given chances to develop all their diverse talents; believe their education is going to make a change in their lives, see a way forward after primary and secondary school; and teachers have the time and resources, energy and motivation to give every child individual attention, are remunerated according to the enormous value they add to society. Such an education can only be created in the context of a struggle to break the dictatorship of the market and to create a socialist society.

# Malema, music and murder

By Liv Shange

*The murder of Eugene Terre’Blanche a week after the Johannesburg High Court banned ANC Youth league president Julius Malema’s new found signature tune, Dubhul’ ibhunu (“shoot the Boer”) revealed beneath the racialised, legalistic and narrow-minded surface, important political currents at play.*

Citing unofficial figures of 3 000 farm murders since 1994, the right-wing party Freedom Front+ (FF+) claims “Dubhul’ ibhunu” (“Shoot the Boer”) directly incites violence against Afrikaners, farmers especially.

Terre’Blanche’s gruesome death led to open howls for Malema’s blood. There is no evidence of a political motive or of Malema’s influence in the murder – only conflict over

unpaid wages or sexual abuse or both. Although a majority of whites probably detest the song, only a loud but small, racist minority hold Malema responsible. In truth Malema does not have to sing provocative songs to cause racial tensions any more than Bok van der Blerk has to by singing De La Rey. Racial tensions are caused by the deteriorating social conditions affecting the working class majority, both white and black, the polarisation between the classes and therefore between the races. Although crime affects all races, poor urban blacks are the most vulnerable despite the horrors of farm killings.

Banning the song will solve nothing and must be opposed. It risks creating a more authoritarian social climate. The arrogant opportunist Malema deserves what he gets. But the banning sets a dangerous precedent. It curtails freedom of speech and can be used against activists, striking workers, or protesting students and township residents. Increased state control over free speech must be resisted. Social movements, unions, community, youth and student organisations should use mass action to expose actual hate speech, and isolate

those who try to use it to divide us. Dubhul’ ibhunu has very little relevance today. In the struggle against apartheid, it rallied the black oppressed against a white minority regime dominated by amabhunu – Afrikaners. The painful truth is that for all the MK (and Apla) cadres’ heroism and willingness to make the ultimate sacrifice, the armed struggle played very little role in the overthrow of apartheid. Nor was it ever the ANC leadership’s objective to take over Pretoria with tanks. The armed struggle was intended to no more than persuade the regime to come to the negotiating table. The ANC leadership argues that “ibhunu” is a metaphor for white minority rule. But that



“Boer” has been dead and buried for 16 years. The song is an anachronism (outside its time).

Malema is highlighting disparities in racial income and wealth not so much to “inflare racial

tensions” for its own sake as suggested by the FF+, but to justify the self-enrichment of the aspirant black capitalists and to divert attention from the controversy over his own tenderpreneur wealth. Critics of black self-enrichment must be discredited as racists who want to deny blacks the same “right” as whites to get rich. His vulgar abuse of BBC journalist, Jonah Fisher, televised worldwide was for drawing attention to the hypocrisy of this champion of the poor, residing in Sandton – the richest suburb in Africa.

Malema’s radical posturing entails the use of racialised rhetoric, invoking emotional struggle slogans mixed with sexist insults to portray himself as a rebel articulating the frustrations of youth tired of the compromises with white capital. Focusing on the fact that the racially charged class divide in SA has actually widened 16 years after the end of Apartheid, Malema tries to radicalise the youth with battle cries that are as loud and crude as they are anti-working class. He poses as a left-wing populist rebel, but is no more than a spokesperson for aspiring black capitalists, a clown of little more relevance to working class youth than the late Terre’Blanche.

► See article on the Terre’Blanche murder on page 14

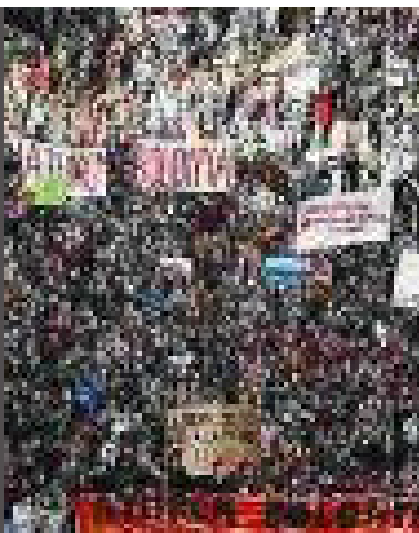
# 12 INTERNATIONAL

# capitalist crisis:

# the masses arise

by Weizmann Hamilton

In increasingly desperate attempts to overcome the crisis of their system, capitalist governments the world over, with the European bourgeoisie in the forefront, are stepping up their attacks on the working class to force us to pay with job losses, pay cuts, fewer social welfare benefits, pension freezes, and longer years in work to qualify for pensions.



Massive protests against spending cuts in Spain.

Panicked by the possibility that Greece might default on its debt repayment, the next installment of which is due on 19th May 2010, the European Union and IMF have agreed to lend Greece €110bn of the €300bn Greece owes banks. This is the biggest bail-out in history. It is conditional on Greece forcing a savage austerity package on the working class. The budget deficit is to be reduced by 11% over 3 years, from 13,6% last year to 3% in 2014. Government spending measures are to yield savings of 5,25% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and tax measures 4%. To make this possible the government will have to make cuts of €30bn. The bail-out is not a grant but a loan whose repayment will consume 7.5% of GDP in interest payment alone for years to come.

to stimulate economic growth. Nor is there a way out in the export market. As a member of the Euro zone, Greece cannot devalue the currency to make exports cheaper. The only alternative would be savage private sector wage cuts to make goods cheaper for exports. But even if the Greek workers were prepared to accept slave wages for the “good of the country” it is still not a way out because Greece’s main export market, Europe, is the slowest growing region of the global economy.

The bail-out has been presented as necessary to save the Greek economy from ruin. A vicious propaganda campaign in the capitalist media has blamed the crisis on the Greek working class for enjoying working conditions, wages and benefits the country allegedly

Greece, but covertly bail-out of the banks” (*Business Day* 06/05/2010). In fact the crisis was triggered by the actions of the financial markets, the dominant force in the economic dictatorship of the capitalist class. As Joe Higgins, member of the European Parliament for the Socialist Party of Ireland, explains: “For months now the dictatorship’s hit squads – Hedge Funds, predatory investment banks and bond holders, aided and abetted by their scouts in the Rating Agencies – have laid siege to the Greek economy.”

The Greek working class has reacted with volcanic rage. There have been five general strikes in six months. In the words of one participant in the May 5 general strike, the capital, Athens, was “sunk” under the weight of nearly 300 000 marchers – the largest number since the fall of the junta in 1974 (*socialistworld.net* 06/05/2010).

“All of us are angry – very, very angry,” bellowed Stella Stamou, a civil servant. “You write that – angry, angry, angry, angry. Angry with our politicians, angry with the IMF, angry with the EU, angry that we have lost income, angry that we have never been told the truth” (*Mail & Guardian* 7-13 May 2010).

The dam of Greek working class rage was broken by the realisation that they are being made to pay for the crimes of the capitalists and their government. As the British paper the *Guardian* admits, “This is not a recovery plan. It is an economic death spiral” (quoted in *Mail & Guardian* 7-13 May 2010). “Why should we, the little man, pay for this crisis? said Giorgos Didimopolous, a 55-year old jeweler who belongs to a communist-backed union that stormed the Acropolis. “Let the plutocracy pay” was the demand of demonstrators on the general strike. In repeated surveys the vast majority said they would take to the streets to oppose these ‘barbaric’ measures. (*Mail & Guardian* 7-13 May 2010).

Greece is the epicentre of the economic and political earthquake that has triggered a tsunami of working class revolt throughout Europe. Immediate threats of sovereign debt default hang over Portugal, Italy, Ireland and Spain, shaking the foundations of Europe. With the Greek working class now on its feet, the battle lines against the bosses and their government are being drawn with mass resistance beginning to spread globally.

Even in normally tranquil Iceland, a referendum on whether the government should repay the debt claimed by the British and Dutch banks registered a 93% no-vote. 95% of Portuguese transport workers held a national strike in protest against austerity measures that that included privatisation on 27th April. Spanish workers embarked on a general strike in protest against proposed spending cuts of €55bn. 2010 has also seen general strikes in Turkey (4th February) and Italy (2nd March).

The government of Kyrgyzstan, a former Soviet republic, was overthrown in a mass uprising. Thailand has been paralysed by an eight-week long campaign by “Red Shirt” demonstrators demanding the government’s resignation and fresh elections. In Britain, as we go to press, the crisis is expressing itself on the electoral plane, in the form of the first “hung” parliament (no party has overall majority). The voters are so disillusioned with all the main political parties that none could gain sufficient votes to form a government – in effect all the parties are losers.

The Greek crisis has struck fear into the heart of the capitalist class

ing back to haunt the capitalists. Derisory references to the countries affected as “PIIGS” (Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Spain) or “STUPIID” (including Turkey and Dubai) are intended to create the misleading impression that the contagion is limited to these. The truth is that both the US and Britain have massive national debts and cannot escape the consequences. In the convulsions after the May 5 Greek general strike, world markets were shaken by seismic convulsions. US intra-day stocks fell 1000 points – the largest one day fall ever.

The 2008 financial crisis dealt a shattering blow to the neo-liberal ideology that had enjoyed a crush-



“Red Shirts” on their way to a rally in Bangkok, Thailand.

and their government worldwide. US president Barack Obama exerted pressure on the European capitalist governments to resolve the Greek crisis as a matter of urgency. Despite the agreement on the bail-out, the payment of the first installment of €30bn is no guarantee that the entire €110bn will be granted. It depends on whether the Greek government is able to enforce the savage spending cuts that are a condition for the bail-out.

World markets have been convulsed by the fears of the capitalists. The threat of a Greek default may have been triggered by the actions of financial speculators, but they are the consequences of the very actions taken in response to the crisis in the financial markets 18 months ago. The massive bail-outs of financial institutions created the debt problem that is now com-

ing 30-year domination globally. Workers and youth the world over are once again seeking out the ideas of socialism. At the same time the traditional organisations of the working class, like the “socialist” Pasok in Greece, have placed themselves at the service of capitalism and capitulated to market terrorism. The way is being cleared for the establishment of new mass workers parties on a socialist programme. Like their counterparts internationally the SACP and Cosatu leadership, having abandoned socialism, are campaigning for policies to manage capitalism for the benefit of the working class – a utopian idea that deflects attention of the working class from the main task: the overthrow of capitalism and the socialist transformation of society.



Police and marching workers at the May 5 general strike in Greece.

This can only be reached through a full-scale assault on the working class. Pensions and wages will be reduced and then frozen over three years and seasonal bonuses abolished. VAT is to be increased to 23% from 19% and taxes hiked. The combined effect of these measures will be to reduce workers’ income and living standards by between 20% and 30%. As the *Guardian* reports, this “tough regime ... has not been seen since the country emerged from the privations of civil war in 1949.” (quoted in *Mail & Guardian* 7-13 May 2010)

The Greek economy is expected to decline by a total of 8% before it begins to recover in 2014. However, low wages, pension freezes, higher taxes and job losses mean that domestic demand will be depressed because people will simply not have enough money to spend

cannot afford. But Greece is not in the premier league of developed countries. Wages and pensions are low compared to their counterparts in the richer European countries. As the Greek section of the CWI, Xekinima, points out, responsibility for the crisis lies entirely with the government and the banks. To qualify for membership of the Euro, the government cooked the books to hide the reality of the budget deficit and national debt. At the same time the government made huge transfers from the state budget by measures such as tax relief to the bosses to maximise profits and to aid them in exploiting cheap labour in the Balkans.

Not only is the diagnosis of the crisis a deliberate misrepresentation. So also is the cure. As the capitalist paper, the *Financial Times*, admits, the bail-out is “overtly a rescue of



A torched car in Athens during the Greek general strike on May 5.

# Brutal police killings in Ajegunle, Lagos

**DSM-Nigeria activist Dagga Tolar arrested, threatened with murder after taking a lead in the fight against police brutality**



*Cde Dagga Tolar*

Residents of the poor working class neighbourhood of Ajegunle, Lagos, had long been raising complaints about constant harassment by the local police, who in comrade Dagga's words have turned the area into their private goldmine; rounding up and indiscriminately arresting youths in daily raids, extorting outrageous amounts in bail money. Those whose families cannot pay are sent to jail for crimes invented by the police. When Charles Okoroafor, a young man from the area, was murdered by the police during one such raid on April 1, the community responded with a massive, peaceful protest two days later. Without provocation, the police chief Kenneth Ebrimson ordered the police to shoot at the protestors and four young people were shot

dead. The police then embarked on a virtual manhunt, spreading propaganda about residents being armed criminals, while systematically arresting community activists.

The Lagos State chapter of the Labour and Civil Society Coalition (LASCO) held a press conference protesting against the police killings on April 5, demanding amongst others the removal and prosecution of Ebrimson for ordering police to shoot at protesters. The conference was addressed by its secretary Dagga Tolar, who is also a leading member of the Democratic Socialist Movement (DSM) in Nigeria (like the DSM in SA affiliated to the CWI). Two days later Dagga Tolar was arrested along with two comrades after having been lured into a trap by

the Local Government Chairman. The three were eventually released on bail after a storm of protests hit the police and authorities, not least from many CWI sections across the globe. Comrade Dagga was treated with particular hostility while in police custody and also received a death threat from the Area Commander. He is now exposing the death threat.



**Daily updates, news and analysis plus links to CWI sections across the world can be found at the CWI website: [www.socialistworld.net](http://www.socialistworld.net)**

The DSM and LASCO in Lagos are continuing to campaign for, amongst other demands:

- an immediate public inquiry into the circumstances that led to the death of Charles Okoroafor and the four other youths, made up of representatives from the trade unions, human and civil right organisations, community organisations, etc
- immediate arrest and prosecution of all the police officers involved in the raids when the killings took place; the immediate and unconditional release of all residents arrested in connection with the protest
- an end to all forms of exploitative activities and police brutality in Ajegunle and other communities across the country where such indiscriminate raids, extortion of money, and false imprisonment persist daily
- a living wage of not less than N52, 200, as demanded by the trade unions for all workers, all rank and file police officers and members of the armed forces to discourage extortion activities by the police

- a democratic police union so that rank and file police officers can use this as a platform to struggle for better welfare and living condition

- democratic controlled community policing wherein officers in charge will be elected by the rank and file police officers and the community representatives and subjected to recall anytime and will earn the average wage of a skilled worker

- the establishment of Local and State public funded Legal Service Unit to provide free legal services for all in need of it so that the underprivileged will have access to justice.

The DSM also calls for the immediate formation of democratically run community defence committees that should be composed of trade unions elements, socialists, community and youth activists.

Further information and solidarity appeals can be found at the DSM Nigeria website [www.socialistnigeria.org](http://www.socialistnigeria.org), and the CWI website [www.socialistworld.net](http://www.socialistworld.net).

## Committee for a Workers International: Building the fightback!



*The masses of Kyrgyzstan overthrew the government in a single day!*

The Committee for a Workers International (CWI) has parties, groups and individuals in over 35 countries around the world, of which the Democratic Socialist Movement in South Africa is one. We are part and parcel of the fightback which is developing internationally as millions have taken to the streets saying "we won't pay for their crisis!" in response to the worst economic since the 1930s. Mass struggles and strikes, including waves of general strikes in Greece and France in the last period have shown in action the immense power of the working class. The CWI argues for the transformation of the trade union movement internationally into a fighting

movement that can offer a militant effective strategy to the working class movement in the fight against attacks and for improved conditions and living standards. Our members play a key role in the trade union movement, and have been instrumental in leading victorious struggles against sackings and attacks on trade union rights in the recent past.

The trillions of dollars of taxpayers' money thrown at the banks have not been aimed at lessening the impact of the crisis on working people internationally, but are a desperate attempt to save crisis-ridden capitalism from total collapse. They way capitalist governments have responded to the crisis has enraged millions worldwide. But the actions of these governments, in attacking the living standards of the majority – with mass unemployment and savage attacks on public services – while bending over backwards for the bosses and bankers, has proved no surprise to socialists. The CWI has a long and proud tradition of fighting for a socialist alternative to

the crisis-ridden capitalist system. Capitalism is based on the control of a super-rich elite – big businesses and corporations – over the wealth of society. Their reckless management of the economy, in the pursuit of maximum profit at any cost is the source of the major problems of mankind today, such as crisis, unemployment, poverty, hunger, war and environmental destruction.



*Massive demonstration in Greece.*

On the basis of a socialist society, where the economy is planned democratically, with the resources of the planet under the control of the majority, we could begin

to solve these fundamental problems. We completely reject the grotesque distortion of "socialism" which existed in the Stalinist former USSR and Eastern Europe, where planned economies were presided over by privileged bureaucratic dictatorships.

In all of the movements and struggles that have developed, a striking feature has been the absence of political representation for working people. The parties which workers looked to as "theirs", such as the various labour and social democratic parties of Europe have now been completely transformed into capitalist parties. The CWI fights for the formation of new mass parties that can give a political voice to workers and youth in struggle and galvanise the mass opposition to the bosses and their parties. In the 2009 European elections, the Socialist Party, our section in Southern Ireland achieved a magnificent victory, getting Joe Higgins elected to the EU parliament, with over 12% of the vote, beating the main government party, Fianna Fail. This is an example of



*Greek workers are refusing to pay for the bosses' crisis.*

the potential for a force that poses a clear socialist alternative to the establishment to achieve success.

To be successful, the struggle against capitalism requires ideas, a political programme, and an organisation that is able to unite workers and oppressed people across the globe. The CWI aims to build such an organisation. We think that organised workers and youth in their millions are stronger than the millionaires. That is why we need more people to join us in the struggle for socialism!

The media's pre-occupation with sensational details surrounding Terre'Blanche's murder, including speculation about sexual abuse, has obscured the two main issues his death has highlighted: the continued oppression and exploitation of black workers especially on farms, and the negotiated settlement's dismal failure to create a non-racial, non-sexist society.

# The Terre'Blanche murder and the national question

By Liv Shange and Weizmann Hamilton

The ANC government's panicky reaction to Terre'blanche's murder was one of the clearest examples of the ANC leadership's political bankruptcy on the national question. Police minister Nathi Mthethwa and "General" Bheki Cele hurried to the murder scene. President Zuma called for calm on television, expressed his condolences to Terre'Blanche's "friends and comrades" and personally called his family. Zuma described him as "a man of standing" and condemned the suspects as violent criminals. His appeal for an end to "inflammatory statements" (The Star, 10/04/05), implicitly gave credibility to the white right's ridiculous claims that the murder was linked to Julius Malema's singing the song *Dubhul' ibhunu*.

This nauseating respectfulness for a repugnant figure is justified to defuse an imaginary threat of imminent racial conflict. This cowardly appeasement of the right wing-extremist, racist Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB) will not contain, but legitimise, the white right. It risks boosting the credibility of a defunct organisation.

As long ago as 1989 already, it was clear that the AWB had very dim prospects. A majority of whites voted "yes" for negotiations with the ANC in De Klerk's referendum. The last whites-only vote showed a majority had no appetite for a racial civil war. Portuguese colonial rule had ended in Mozambique and Angola in 1975; Zimbabwe had attained independence in 1980 and Namibia followed in 1989. The buffer of colonialism and white minority rule on SA's borders had been broken. The tide of black majority rule could not be held back.

A black policeman's on-the spot execution of three AWB "generals" in full view of the world's TV cameras during the botched putsch in Bophuthatswana, exposed its impotence – a stark symbol of the end of white supremacy. It burned into the consciousness of whites the futility of resisting black majority rule.

The first democratic elections in 1994 placed SA under ANC rule by an overwhelming black majority. Isolated even within the Afrikaner population, the AWB's remnants settled in their rightful corner of history's dust heap. To suggest that twenty-one years later, the idea of a racial civil war would appeal to most whites is either a paranoid delusion or deliberate attempt to manipulate reality.

**Terre'Blanche's bloody record**

Founded in 1973, as the mighty struggles of the black working class revived, the AWB's mobilisation failed to attract a significant following for resisting black majority rule and establishing a *Boerestaat*. Its harassment of liberal whites, alleged abduction and murder of black anti-apartheid activists and the storming of the Codesa negotiations in an armoured vehicle, symbolised weakness not strength.

Terre'blanche's successful application for amnesty from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission – for the 1994 bombing spree which killed 21 – represented a repudiation of what the AWB stood for. Terre'blanche the "liberator" became Terre'blanche the coward. He assaulted petrol attendant John Ndzima. He left Paul Motshabi, his security guard, severely brain damaged in an attempted murder. Already reduced to a figure of public ridicule by falling off his horse and his tryst with journalist Jani Allan, (*'n Engelse meisie nogal!*) his jailing, for six years for these crimes, completed his humiliation. The AWB, now a spent force sparking derision rather than fear, could not lift a finger for their hero.

Nevertheless, for rural blacks, the extreme-right is more than just a grotesque relic of apartheid. Whites on horseback beat up township residents in an around Ventersdorp. In 2008, teenage AWB supporter, Johan Nel, killed three residents including two children in the Skielik informal settlement, North West. Chris Hani's murderers had AWB links. The AWB is politically isolated, ideologically incoherent and organisationally impotent. But it is a threat because it provides a reference point for individual acts of terror.

## Farm terror

Workers on Terre'blanche's farm report that he regularly underpaid them, referred to them as "flies", demanded to be addressed as "Morena" (king/ lord), was unpredictable and sometimes violent, constantly carrying a sjambok wielded on "bad days".

A woman farm worker from Tshing, the township outside Ventersdorp, reported her employer to the police for brutally raping her "in revenge" two days after Terre'blanche's death. A day later, another gun-wielding North West farmer assaulted seven workers with an iron bar. In January this year, a three-year-old boy was mauled to death by the dogs of a Klerksdorp farm owner and denied care at the town's private Yusuf Dadoo clinic as his unemployed mother could not pay. Between

2005 and 2009, six North West farm workers were mauled by lions. Several other farm tenants were attacked by dogs, according to Cosatu.

The courts bend over backwards for white farmers. North West farm owner Mark Scott-Crossley served a mere two-and-a-half years of a five-year sentence for "defeating the ends of justice" for throwing his former worker Nelson Chamisa, who had been severely beaten allegedly by two of Scott-Crossley's employees, into a lions' den. Only Chamisa's skull and gnawed bones remained. Scott-Crossley's life sentence for murder was quashed on the grounds that it could not be proven beyond reasonable doubt that Chamisa was still alive when he was fed to the lions!



No tears for Eugene Terre'lanche

## Racism feeds on exploitation

While Terre'Blanche and his reactionary followers may seem stuck in the past, they are actually living proof that the past is stuck with us. Farm workers are among the lowest paid in the country. Caught up in patriarchal relationships with their employers, most of their wages are often deducted for rent and debt. Over a million farm workers/ tenants have been evicted by owners since 1994. A mere 6% of land has been transferred to blacks.

Farm worker oppression, while experienced as racism, is rooted in the economic marginalisation of most white farmers. The extremely exploitative wages, poor working conditions and oppressive labour relations keeping their often precarious businesses afloat, prove that class exploitation and racism remain intertwined in SA's capitalist society.

Apartheid capitalism was given a democratic makeover to restore stability for the implementation of neo-liberal economic "reforms". The abolition of agricultural

control boards and regulated prices ended guaranteed markets and profits. Farmers were exposed to the cold winds of international competition as prices for farm produce were determined abroad at eg the Chicago international agricultural exchange. Monopoly capital, spearheaded by Anglo American and finance capital invaded, plunging the smaller farmers into debt squeezing many out of business.

A resurrected AWB provides the ANC leadership with the perfect imagery for the frightful tale of resurgent racial conflict. Inflating the AWB threat and generating hysteria about the racism also serves to deflect attention from the reality that the fastest growing division in society today is amongst blacks – between the elite and the working class.

The notion of nation building, while focused on reconciliation between the races, is intended to obscure the main line of division in society – the class division between rich and poor, the capitalist class and the working class. Class divisions cut across races; white and black capitalists have much more in common with each other than with white and black workers. Racial reconciliation hides the class divisions within society, obstructs class solidarity between white and black workers and reconciles them to oppression by their "own" – the harmony between slave and slave owner.

Behind the madness of the ANC leaders' clumsy attempts at giving leadership there is method – recycled from negotiations strategy. The concessions, including the "sunset clauses", the property clause in the constitution and the suspension of the armed struggle, were justified as an unavoidable necessity to prevent a racial civil war.

Maintaining the myth of the strength of the racist white enemy, the negotiated settlement – an agreement to continue the exploitation and oppression of the mainly black working class by largely the same white elite – was presented as a "democratic breakthrough" and even a miracle that saved the country from the bloodbath of a racial civil war.

Although the threat posed by the white right is wildly exaggerated, its racist venom finds an echo because, so intertwined is race and class in SA, that the polarisation of classes ensures the polarisation of the races. Whilst, post-apartheid, the conditions of the majority of whites remain unchanged, white poverty is much more visible on the scrap heap of unemployment,

in squatter camps and on street corners begging. The black working class is the most marginalised but poor whites yearn for the flesh pots of the Egypt of apartheid, and blame their misfortune on black majority rule.

The disparities in income between white and black – with the average white family earning six times more than the average black family, the fact that only 6% of black Africans have a chance of succeeding at university compared to 65% of whites, that whites dominate top matric honours every single year, that black unemployment is between 35% compared to 5% for whites – all of these are daily reminders that the negotiated settlement was a betrayal of the black majority. Although "nation building" has failed dismally, the ANC leadership has no choice but to replay the conciliatory tunes to try and soften the class divisions reinforced by the greed of tenderpreneur.

## Expose, isolate, mobilise

The AWB should be exposed and isolated, not embraced. Encouraged by the publicity spotlight and the audience with the Minister of Police himself, the AWB now intends to form a "self-protection unit" to patrol Ventersdorp.

Terre'blanche's murder has laid bare the class and racial contradictions which the negotiated settlement could never have resolved. Whatever the murder investigation reveals, it has exposed the betrayal of the black working class – leaving farm workers to face continued child labour, racial- and sexual abuse, and poverty without protection from labour laws or the state. Desperate acts in these desperate conditions are not surprising.

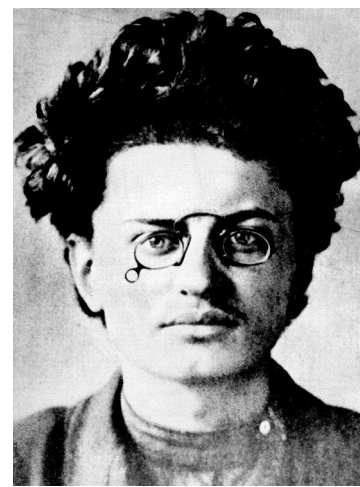
The strategic objective of the negotiated settlement was to divert the struggle from socialism – viewed by most advanced workers in the 80s as the objective of the struggle. The compromise cost the capitalist class nothing. Their wealth and property was safe, their economic dictatorship legitimised and the racial disparities preserved. A backlash against whites is held in check not by the political elite's failed nation building project, but by the class instincts and non-racial traditions of the organised working class in Cosatu.

The labour movement must prioritise the battle against farm exploitation. As the "nation" fails to materialise and the fault lines of class division widen, the organised working class must raise the banner of socialism and workers unity.

**Leon Trotsky (1879 -1940), with Lenin leader of Russia's 1917 October Revolution, formulated the Theory of Permanent Revolution. It is the opposite of the SACP's so called National Democratic Revolution ("NDR"). The "NDR" is used to justify the indefinite postponement of the fight to end capitalism and its replacement with socialism. It is a version of the two-stage theory championed by Stalinists and reformists alike. It is also a legacy of the political counter-revolution which followed the degeneration of the Russian Revolution.**

# THE PERMANENT REVOLUTION

AN EXTRACT FROM THE INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST RUSSIAN EDITION (1931) OF THE PERMANENT REVOLUTION WRITTEN BY LEON TROTSKY:



Trotsky in a 1900 police photo.

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In its essential features, the theory of the permanent revolution was formulated by me even before the decisive events of 1905 [the first, defeated, Russian Revolution / IL]. Russia was approaching the bourgeois revolution. No one in the ranks of the Russian Social Democrats (we all called ourselves Social Democrats then) had any doubts that we were approaching a bourgeois revolution, that is, a revolution produced by the contradictions between the development of the productive forces of capitalist society and the outlived caste and state relationships of the period of serfdom and the Middle Ages. [- - -]

In the question of the decisive significance of the agrarian revolution for the fate of our bourgeois revolution, I was, at least from the autumn of 1902, that is, from the time of my first flight abroad, a pupil of Lenin's. That the agrarian revolution, and consequently, the general democratic revolution also, could be realised only by the united forces of the workers and the peasants in struggle against the liberal bourgeoisie, was for me, contrary to all the senseless fairy tales of recent years, beyond any doubt. Yet I came out against [Lenin's] formula 'democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry', because I saw its shortcoming in the fact that it left open the question of which class would wield the real dictatorship. I endeavoured to show that in spite of its enormous social and revolutionary weight the peasantry was incapable of creating a really independent party and even less capable of concentrating the revolutionary power in the hands of such a party. Just as in the old revolutions, from the German Reformation of the sixteenth century, and even before that, the peasantry in its up-risings gave support to one of the sections of the urban bourgeoisie and not infrequently ensured its victory, so, in our belated bourgeois revolution, the peasantry might at the peak of its struggle extend similar support to the proletariat and help it to come to power. From this I drew the conclusion that our bourgeois revolution could solve its tasks radically only in the event that the proletariat, with the aid of the multi-millioned peasantry, proved capable of concentrating the revolutionary dictatorship in its own hands.

What would be the social content of this dictatorship? First of all, it would have to carry through to the end the agrarian revolution and the democratic reconstruction of the State. In other words, the dictatorship of the proletariat would become the instrument for

solving the tasks of the historically-belated bourgeois revolution. But the matter could not rest there. Having reached power the proletariat would be compelled to encroach even more deeply upon the relationships of private property in general, that is to take the road of socialist measures.

'But do you really believe,' the Stalins, Rykovs and all the other Molotovs objected dozens of times between 1905 and 1917, 'that Russia is ripe for the socialist revolution?' To that I always answered: No, I do not. But world economy as a whole, and European economy in the first place, is fully ripe for the socialist revolution. Whether the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia leads to socialism or not, and at what tempo and through what stages, will depend upon the fate of European and world capitalism.

These were the essential features of the theory of the permanent revolution at its origin in the early months of 1905. Since then, three revolutions have taken place. The Russian proletariat rose to power on the mighty wave of the peasant insurrection. The dictatorship of the proletariat became a fact in Russia earlier than in any of the immeasurably more developed countries of the world.

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The permanent revolution, in the sense which Marx attached to this concept, means a revolution which makes no compromise with any single form of class rule, which does not stop at the democratic stage, which goes over to socialist measures and to war against reaction from without: that is, a revolution whose every successive stage is rooted in the preceding one and which can end only in the complete liquidation of class society.

To dispel the chaos that has been created around the theory of the permanent revolution, it is necessary to distinguish three lines of thought that are united in this theory.

First, it embraces the problem of the transition from the democratic revolution to the socialist. This is in essence the historical origin of the theory.

The concept of the permanent revolution was advanced by the

great Communists of the middle of the nineteenth century, Marx and his co-thinkers, in opposition to the democratic ideology which, as we know, claims that with the establishment of a 'rational' or democratic state all questions can be solved peacefully by reformist or evolutionary measures. Marx regarded the bourgeois revolution of 1848 as the direct prelude to the proletarian revolution. Marx 'erred'. Yet his error has a factual and not a methodological character. The Revolution of 1848 did not turn into the socialist revolution. But that is just why it also did not achieve democracy. As to the German Revolution of 1918, it was no democratic completion of the bourgeois revolution, it was a proletarian revolution decapitated by the Social Democrats; more correctly, it was a bourgeois counter-



Trotsky and Lenin (centre) with Red Army soldiers in 1921.

revolution, which was compelled to preserve pseudo-democratic forms after its victory over the proletariat.

Vulgar 'Marxism' has worked out a pattern of historical development according to which every bourgeois society sooner or later secures a democratic regime, after which the proletariat, under conditions of democracy, is gradually organized and educated for socialism. The actual transition to socialism has been variously conceived [...]. But both [the avowed reformists and the formal revolutionists] considered democracy and socialism, for all peoples and countries, as two stages in the development of society which are not only entirely distinct but also separated by great distances of time from each other. This view was predominant also among those Russian Marxists who, in the period of 1905, belonged to the Left Wing of the Second International. Plekhanov, the brilliant progenitor of Russian Marxism, considered the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat a delusion in contemporary Russia.

The same standpoint was defended not only by the Mensheviks but also by the overwhelming majority of the leading Bolsheviks, in particular by those present party leaders, without exception, who in their day were resolute revolutionary democrats but for whom the problems of the socialist revolution, not only in 1905 but also on the eve of 1917, still signified the vague music of a distant future.

The theory of the permanent revolution, which originated in 1905, declared war upon these ideas and moods. It pointed out that the democratic tasks of the backward bourgeois nations lead directly, in our epoch, to the dictatorship of the proletariat and that the dictatorship of the proletariat puts socialist tasks on the order of the day. Therein lay the central idea of the theory.

While the traditional view was that the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat led through a long period of democracy, the theory of the permanent revolution established the fact that for backward countries the road to democracy passed through the dictatorship of the proletariat. Thus democracy is not a regime that remains self-sufficient for decades, but is only a direct prelude to the socialist revolution. Each is bound to the other by an unbroken chain. Thus there is established between the democratic revolution and the socialist reconstruction of society a permanent state of revolutionary development.

The second aspect of the 'permanent' theory has to do with the socialist revolution as such. For an indefinitely long time and in constant internal struggle, all social relations undergo transformation. Society keeps on changing its skin. Each stage of transformation stems directly from the preceding. This process necessarily retains a political character, that is, it develops through collisions between various groups in the society which is in transformation. Outbreaks of civil war and foreign wars alternate with periods of 'peaceful' reform. Revolutions in economy, technique, science, the family, morals and everyday life develop in complex reciprocal action and do not allow society to achieve equilibrium. Therein lies the permanent character of the socialist revolution as

such.

The international character of the socialist revolution, which constitutes the third aspect of the theory of the permanent revolution, flows from the present state of economy and the social structure of humanity. Internationalism is no abstract principle but a theoretical and political reflection of the character of world economy, of the world development of productive forces and the world scale of the class struggle. The socialist revolution begins on national foundations – but it cannot be completed within these foundations. The maintenance of the proletarian revolution within a national framework can only be a provisional state of affairs, even though, as the experience of the Soviet Union shows, one of long duration. In an isolated proletarian dictatorship, the internal and external contradictions grow inevitably along with the successes achieved. If it remains isolated, the proletarian state must finally fall victim to these contradictions. The way out for it lies only in the victory of the proletariat of the advanced countries. Viewed from this standpoint, a national revolution is not a self-contained whole; it is only a link in the international chain. The international revolution constitutes a permanent process, despite temporary declines and ebbs.

[- - -] The epigones [the emerging Stalinists / IL] mechanically separate the democratic and the socialist dictatorships. They separate the national socialist revolution from the international. They consider that, in essence, the conquest of power within national limits is not the initial act but the final act of the revolution; after that follows the period of reforms that lead to the national socialist society. [...] In 1917, they preached the self-sufficing democratic revolution in Russia and spurned the dictatorship of the proletariat. In 1925-27, they steered a course toward national revolution in China under the leadership of the national bourgeoisie. Subsequently, they raised the slogan for China of the democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants in opposition to the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat. They proclaimed the possibility of the construction of an isolated and self-sufficient socialist society in the Soviet Union. The world revolution became for them, instead of an indispensable condition for victory, only a favourable circumstance. This profound breach with Marxism was reached by the epigones in the process of permanent struggle against the theory of the permanent revolution.

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# DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST MOVEMENT



## WHO WE ARE:

The Democratic Socialist Movement is the South African affiliate of the Committee for a Workers International – an international workers organisation fighting for a democratic socialist world. The CWI has sections and groups in 35 countries in Africa, Asia, North and South America and Europe.

We were formed as the Marxist Workers Tendency of the African National Congress in the 1970s when the South African working class began to strike back against oppression and exploitation by the apartheid regime and the capitalist bosses. Its founding adherents came from the independent trade unions that led 1973 strikes and comrades from the Black Consciousness Movement, the revolutionary youth of the 1970s drawn to the working class, who had drawn the conclusion that Marxism rather than petty-bourgeois nationalism showed the way to emancipation

from national oppression and capitalist exploitation.

As the MWT of the ANC, we argued that the SACP's two-stage theory – democracy first and socialism in the future – was false because it implied that democratic capitalism could solve the problems of poverty, jobs, education, health, housing and land. Lasting prosperity is possible only through socialism.

We opposed the ANC leadership's secret 1979 discussions with Gatsha Buthelezi – an agent of the apartheid regime and capitalism – was a tragically mistaken policy that would be paid for in blood.

Both these warnings were borne out: the bloody conflict in the 80s and 90s; the enduring and deepening poverty of the masses; the continued homelessness, landlessness, hunger, Aids and illiteracy exposing the "NDR"'s bankruptcy.

From exile, in the 1980s, we

campaigning for the isolation of the apartheid regime, fought for direct links with the emerging independent unions. We made a contribution to the formation of Cosatu – at the time the greatest advance of the working class in SA.

The government's 1996 adoption of the neo-liberal economic policy, Gear, completed the ANC's evolution into in a consciously pro-capitalist party. It meant the ANC would be compelled to side openly with the bosses and adopt anti-working class policies. There was no longer any room for a Marxist tendency in the ANC. We wound up the MWT, reconstituted ourselves as the Democratic Socialist Movement – a name we share with the Nigerian section of the CWI.

As conscious defenders of capitalism, the ANC is compelled to adopt policies that bring it into conflict with the working class. The work-

ing class has no alternative but to organise themselves independently as a class to achieve their political and social objectives.

The political and class independence of the proletariat can only be achieved through the establishment of a mass workers' party with a socialist programme. We believe the formation of such a party is the most important historical task of the working class. Without it we face the long-term threat of division within the working class and the break-up of Cosatu itself. Splits arise within affiliates as the leadership dabbles in privatisation and investment funds on the stock exchange, become trade union millionaires and find it impossible to represent their members.

The SACP leadership is sowing ideological confusion, defending the maintenance of the Alliance and the subordination of Cosatu's inter-

ests to the ANC's -- that is, the interests of the working class to those of the bosses. Thus Cosatu is paralysed by the conflicting demands of its political loyalty to the ANC on the one side and its obligations to its members and the wider working class on the other. Cosatu can play a central role in the formation of a mass workers party and thus preserve the unity of the working class. But this requires Cosatu to leave the Alliance. A mass workers party will be born through struggle – by uniting campaigns against job losses, privatisation, labour brokers, etc with the struggles of working class communities, youth and students for service delivery and access to education.

Socialism cannot be built in one country, only as a world system through workers internationalism. This is why the Democratic Socialist Movement is affiliated to an international socialist organisation – the CWI.

## WHAT WE STAND FOR:

### ★ Jobs

- An immediate moratorium on retrenchments
- A massive programme of public works
- Retool factories for production of socially necessary goods
- For a minimum monthly wage of R3500
- No to privatisation - for the immediate re-nationalisation of all privatised services and assets
- No time limit for unemployment benefit

### ★ International Solidarity

- No to defending South African bosses against foreign bosses
- For socialist internationalism and workers' solidarity through direct links of workers and trade unions
- Development of joint programmes to defend jobs and conditions across borders

### ★ Health

- For an accessible, decent single state-funded health service free at the point of use
- Increase enrolment of medical and health students in expanded training and learning facilities and increase doctor and nurse patient ratios in line with World Health Organisation norms
- Set CD4 count eligibility for all for anti-retrovirals at WHO-level

- Nationalise all pharmaceutical companies under democratic workers control

### ★ Gender

- Combat gender-based violence, rape and abuse - staff all police stations and courts with gender-trained personnel
- Make available decent shelters for all abused women and children
- End police harassment of sex workers - decriminalise sex work

### ★ Youth and Education

- Free, quality public education - end tuition fees from pre-school to tertiary level
- End all academic and financial exclusions and cancel student debt
- End privatisation of education, business sponsoring of courses
- Restore privatised services to university/ school control - reemploy workers on pre-privatisation conditions
- Re-open all closed teacher training colleges
- Mass mobilisation for a national campaign to end illiteracy
- Stop police harassment of street children - for humane care and shelter

### ★ Housing and basic services

- Nationalise all major construction companies

- Decent houses with standard modern sanitation, cooking and washing facilities

- Scrap all rent-, rates-, electricity- and services arrears for working class communities

- No to evictions, water- and electricity cut-offs in working class communities

- No to pre-paid meters

### ★ Transport

- A massive public works programme to develop cheap, efficient and integrated public transport
- No job losses due to the Bus Rapid Transport System - guaranteed jobs for taxi industry employees
- Minimum living wage, unionisation and condition of employment rights for taxi industry workers

### ★ Trade Union Democracy

- Election of all worker representatives - from shop steward to highest decision making structures including general secretary and president - subject to the right of recall
- Salaries of union officials to be based on the average of the skilled workers in the sector
- End all cabals; no to witch-hunts - for democratic debate of candidate manifestos
- Close down union investment companies; for democratic control of investment decisions by democratically elected rank-and-file

- worker committees

- For a rank-and-file campaign to reclaim Cosatu's class and political independence

- Cosatu out of the tripartite alliance

- For a single trade union centre with a socialist programme

### ★ Workers' Unity

- Fight xenophobia - solidarity with exploited immigrant workers
- Trade unions must organise migrant workers and defend equal pay, conditions and rights for all

### ★ Victims of Apartheid

- No amnesty for perpetrators of apartheid atrocities
- Support to the campaign for reparations from multinationals that collaborated with the apartheid regime

### ★ Land Reform and Agriculture

- Expropriation and nationalisation of monopoly-owned commercial farms under democratic control and management of farm workers. Compensation on the basis of proven need only
- Restore food security through abolition of import parity pricing and introduction of state-controlled prices for domestic commerce

### ★ Socialism

- Nationalise the top-five companies on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, the Reserve Bank and commercial banks under democratic worker control and management. Compensation only on the basis of proven need.

- Cancel the apartheid debt - do not pay twice for apartheid

- Scrap the arms deal

- For a democratically worked out plan of production for social need, not profit

- Sustainable and harmonious use of the environment through green technology in energy production

- For a mass workers party on a socialist programme

- For a socialist South Africa, a socialist Africa and socialist world

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