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SOCIALIST VOICE OF WORKERS AND YOUTH

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# FROM CAIRO TO CAPE... ...SOCIALISM IS THE WAY FORWARD

## North African workers and youth put revolution back on world agenda

by Liv Shange

The revolutionary uprising by Egyptian workers and youth toppled president Hosni Mubarak on February 11, 2011, less than a month after the Tunisian revolution forced president Ben Ali to flee the country on January 14. Since January, mass movements are shaking the dictatorial regimes in Yemen, Syria, Libya, Bahrain, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Algeria, Morocco, Djibouti, Lebanon... A wave of revolt has spread across North Africa and the Middle East touching, in one way or the other, every single Arab regime, striking fear into the hearts of ruling elites from China to Zimbabwe and inspiring mass movements in Africa south of the Sahara – notably in Burkina Faso, Swaziland, Cameroon, Gabon – as well as protests all over the world, including in the ‘belly-of-the-beast’ the United States of America.

The North African revolutions mark a historical turning point – the first gush of wind ahead of a storm, unleashing the process of world revolution from its long captivity in the chains of defeat, demoralisation and reaction. Regardless of the immediate outcomes of the struggle between revolution and counter-revolution (which at the time of writing has gained some ground in e.g. Libya and Egypt) in these countries, and the inevitable backlash in the absence of working

class-led revolutionary parties taking up the battle for state power, the world will not be the same again.

The corporate media has tried its best to portray the unfolding turmoil around the Mediterranean as yearnings simply for democratic rights. But the calls for an end to repression, torture, and the dictatorial regimes themselves, are just on the immediate surface of a profound outcry against the mass unemployment, exploitation, poverty and oppression which result from the dead-end of exhausted ‘national liberation’ within the confines of the capitalist system and the sharpening of these contradictions in the wake of the global crisis of this same system.

The organised workers’ stepping onto the scene was decisive for the revolutionary break-throughs in Tunisia and Egypt. This shows that it is the working masses who alone hold the power to overthrow dictators. When organised and overcoming all fear, no amount of bloody repression can stop them. The United Nations-backed bombing of Libya by Western regimes – which backed Gaddafi as well as Ben Ali and Mubarak until a few weeks earlier and continue to support the region’s remaining despots such as the Saudi monarchy – is dangerous and counter-productive. There is no substitute for the power of the



Tahrir Square, Cairo, on February 8.

PIC: MONA SOSH

working class. The only way forward for a genuine change in Libya is the independent, democratic self-organisation of workers and poor people across tribal and regional divisions. While the movement must arm itself in the face of the regime’s armed resistance, the most important weapon to defeat Gaddafi is not heavy artillery or an air force but a revolutionary programme that could unite the movement in the East and West through a class appeal and thus break through Gaddafi’s remaining support base. Such a programme should call for real democratic rights, an end to corruption, privilege and tribal, regional and racist divisions, the safeguarding and upgrading of the social gains made since the discovery of oil, opposition to any form of re-colonisation and for a democratically controlled, publicly

owned economy planned to use the country’s resources for the future.

The leadership of the Libyan struggle, which has fallen into the hands of largely middle class pro-imperialist elements and ex-Gaddafi officials, has in its fear of the masses allowed Gaddafi to retain and regain some support, and opened the door to the bombings. The NATO powers’ intervention is based on Libya being the world’s 12th largest oil producer which they now hope to make into another ‘client state’ in the mould of e.g. Saudi Arabia. The hasty call for recognition of the rebel leadership in the East as a transitional government proves this. It will derail the revolution, not assist it.

The successful overthrow of the despots in Egypt and Tunisia constitute not the end, but the starting point of a revolutionary process

that will rock the world in the new period of capitalist crisis and social turmoil that is opening up. The key task of socialists is to create independent working class organisations and revolutionary parties that can take the struggle forward at every turn, steering it away from the stalemates which inevitably open up for counter-revolution, and replace not only corrupt dictators but their state machineries (still largely intact in Egypt as well as Tunisia) and the dictatorship of the market – capitalism itself. In a socialist society based on workers democracy the choice will not be between different oppressors every five years as under capitalism, but over how to democratically plan the use of the collectively owned wealth, without privileges for elected reps, who must be subject to immediate recall. > More on page 8-9



Ficksburg residents protesting at the police killing of community leader Andries Tatane

## South Africa: local government elections – an opportunity to build a new mass workers party

In South Africa, 17 years after the birth of democracy, the social and economic conditions have gone worse for workers and poor. Local government elections are held against the backdrop of working class communities once again erupting in widespread mass protests, which have been met with violent repression by the state. The brutal murder of Andries Tatane by the police in a protest for clean water in Ficksburg, in front of TV cameras, has graphically exposed this to the world. Following on the

protests for decent and equitable delivery of basic services like housing and sanitation, which are continuing, the latest wave of unrest is focused around working class communities’ desire to select and control their own political representatives. These sentiments constitute the main basis for the conflicts over the ANC’s local government election candidate lists. Bourgeois analyst Moeletsi Mbeki predicts that SA’s ‘Tunisia Day’ – revolution – should be here by 2020. > More on page 2-3

# Local government elections: more active search for working class alternative



Public sector workers demanding a R1560 housing allowance at Dept of Housing, Johannesburg, August 26 2010. PIC: MIRIAM DI PAOLA

The 2011 local government elections represent a turning point in the post-Apartheid political situation. Although the African National Congress (ANC) will once again emerge as the biggest political party by some distance, developments point to a qualitatively new stage in the disillusionment in the ANC government, the decline of its political authority and the working class' search for an alternative.

The background to these elections is the brutal slaying on April 13 of Andries Tatane, a community leader from Ficksburg who tried to protect an elderly man from police violence during a service delivery protest. Police brutality, legitimised by the 'shoot to kill' policy, is not new, with nearly 1800 deaths at police hands last year.

But the murder of Tatane was shown on prime time news by SABC TV. His murder has had a profound effect on consciousness and clarified, alongside the rampant corruption and self-enrichment, the class character of this ANC government. While the people of Ficksburg do not have access to adequate water supplies, the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Sicelo Shiceka spends state money on his family to stay in luxury hotels and flies to Switzerland, hires a limousine and visits a girlfriend in jail on a drug offence.

In the most unequal society on the planet, the huge social gulf between the masses and the political and economic elite is increasingly also becoming a political one. The parliamentary arithmetic shows the ANC enjoying a 65,9% majority. But it conceals a different reality: that from 2004 to 2009, the ANC's share of the vote of the eligible voting population fell from 38% to 34%, losing votes in every province except KwaZulu-Natal. All the factors that produced the decline in the ANC's vote – cor-

ruption, nepotism, incompetence – have only become worse under the Zuma administration.

It is therefore not surprising that the number of independent candidates in 2011 has increased by 14 percent compared to 2006. They almost certainly include opportunists who also want to board the gravy train. But there are many who are genuinely disenchanted with the ANC because of rampant corruption and poor service delivery and are attempting to provide an alternative political voice for poor working class communities. Despite the 'independent' label, they often account to an organised constituency. In addition to these 754 independents, over 1000 are contesting as candidates of various concerned residents- or ratepayers associations and community forums.

Ironically, the internal ANC revolt followed an attempt to give communities a greater say in candidate selection only for the outcome to be ignored and candidates imposed on communities anyway. Disillusionment that previously expressed itself passively, with low voter turnouts especially in local government elections, is now beginning to take a more active form. That ANC members have decided to stand as independent candidates against their own party despite coming under immense pressure from the national leadership is a measure of the depth of the anger simmering against the ANC government. Zuma's promise to reinstate candidates chosen by the communities but rejected by the ANC, is a desperate attempt to recover from this debacle. But it will not arrest the ANC's decline.

Significantly, organised formations with a more left profile have appeared. In Balfour, Mpumalanga, a new Socialist Civics Movement is standing. In the North West, the Lebaleng Communist Party has broken from the SACP to stand.

In Merafong, site of the Khutsong uprising against municipal boundary re-demarcation during which it was declared a no-go area for the ANC, a new civic is standing in 24 out of the 28 wards. In KZN, the Socialist Green Coalition is standing 109 candidates. In the informal settlements of Thembelihle and Motsoaledi, Gauteng, the DSM is supporting the election campaign of the Thembelihle Crisis Committee (standing as part of the Operation Khanyisa Movement) and Motsoaledi Concerned Residents which consciously advocate socialism and whose policies include the right of recall and a workers representative on a workers wage.

So evident is the disillusionment with the ANC that it has itself all but given up hope of winning back Cape Town. Worse, the divisions in the Eastern Cape, an ANC fortress, run so deep that the loss of Port Elizabeth, previously unthinkable, is feared. So emboldened is the Democratic Alliance that this party of big business can contemplate the unlikely feat of winning Johannesburg despite its apartheid era baggage. In every province there are divisions, rivalries and factions so bitter that there have even been assassinations; the head of Crime Intelligence, out on bail on murder charges is claiming an ANC conspiracy to unseat Zuma. As the ANC's 2012 conference approaches, these conflicts will escalate.

The fact that the ANC was excluded from the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) organised civil society conference is of enormous political significance. The Cosatu leadership may believe that it has succeeded in blocking the emergence of a left wing working class alternative by bending with the wind and giving voice to the growing discontent within society only to steer the masses back into the ANC. But the very holding of the conference

without the ANC has legitimised the idea of a political alternative outside the ANC. The municipal workers' union SAMWU's decision to launch nationwide strike action over what are really political demands just days before the local government elections, after the leadership announced it would be impossible to convince workers to vote ANC, has hiked the tensions dramatically (see article on p. 10).

The culture of the hyena that engulfs the ANC, which Vavi has so stridently (and correctly) denounced, is no aberration. This culture is rooted in the fact that the class interest the ANC represents – of the aspirant black capitalists to become the economically dominant class – cannot be fulfilled. They have come onto the scene of history too late. Too impotent to dislodge the still predominantly white capitalist class, there is no other route towards self-enrichment but to loot the state. Pleas to end corruption will continue to fall on deaf ears. Corruption is the lifeblood of capitalism. The culture of self-enrichment has infected every level of government, every organ of state, trade unions such as Popcru (Police and Prisoners Civil Rights Union), and, not least, as the competition authorities' investigations are revealing, every sector of the corporate world – the fountain that is the source of all that is corrupt in society. The Cosatu leadership is therefore, unfortunately, sowing confusion with its threat not to vote for corrupt candidates. They argue that the problem is not the ANC but certain leaders who are allowing it to be run-over by opportunists and careerists. The source of the rot, however, is the ANC's capitalist policies. As we had warned, the Cosatu leadership would have no place to hide once the character of the Zuma administration as no less capitalist than Mbeki's became clear.

The brazen culture of entitlement and self-enrichment that has so feverishly infected the ANC seriously undermines the credibility of Cosatu's support for the ANC, damaging the federation in the eyes not only of its own members, but of the wider working class who increasingly see Cosatu as part of and responsible for the problems of the ANC's capitalist rule. The leadership's unprecedented plea to workers to vote for the ANC 'despite everything' will only damage the federation further. The confusion of the Cosatu leadership is revealed in their support for standing Tony Ehrenreich as Cape Town ANC mayoral candidate despite initially criticising the Cosatu Western Cape decision to do so.

The economic front holds no relief. Capitalism is unable to make even a half-convincing escape from its deepest crisis since the 1930s. The polarisation between the classes will deepen as the bosses and their government attempt to load the crisis onto the shoulders of the working class. The militarisation of the police, the attempt to ban soldiers' unions, the call for education and health to be declared essential services and restrict workers' trade union rights, the determination to press ahead with the Protection of Information Bill, and the threat of a Media Tribunal – all these are unmistakable signs of the rightwing pressures within the ANC that will become more and more pronounced as the capitalist crisis continues. The only way out of this social and political crisis is for rank and file Cosatu members to take the federation out of the Alliance; joining forces with working class communities in struggle, workers fighting for decent jobs and conditions and student fighting against financial and academic exclusion to launch a mass workers party on a socialist programme.



# Thembelihle Crisis Committee contesting elections through Operation Khanyisa Movement:

by Siphwe Segodi

Thembelihle Crisis Committee chairperson

**Thembelihle Crisis Committee, which organises the community of Thembelihle 'informal settlement' south of Johannesburg, explains how the organisation has decided to use participation in the elections to further their struggle. The TCC is contesting May's local government elections as part of Operation Khanyisa Movement, which already has a councillor in the Johannesburg City Council:**

The Thembelihle Crisis Committee (TCC) was established in early 2001, inspired by the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC), out of the need for a struggle for the installation of electricity in the area. We are affiliated to the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF). TCC is leading the struggle in resisting the forced removal of the entire informal settlement. It is fighting for other basic needs such as running water for each yard, water-borne toilets, a clean environment and development of the area into a proper township with houses. Most importantly the TCC also struggles with raising political consciousness, particularly

on the importance of community control of community issues. The TCC also now includes supporting workers more generally as a principle in our struggle. For example we supported the Shoprite workers in 2006 and SAMWU strikes in Johannesburg in 2010 and others.

The TCC was part of founding Operation Khanyisa Movement (OKM) in 2006 as an electoral front for the contestation of the local government elections in that year, together with the majority of the APF affiliates in the Johannesburg region including the SECC, Motsoaledi Concerned Residents, Kliptown Concerned Residents, Wynburg Concerned Residents and Marlboro Crisis Committee. The APF had taken a position which left it on affiliates to decide how they wanted to approach those elections. We believed that the APF position was problematic since it opened its affiliates to political confusion which would result in some voting for parties that have no working class interests at heart. Ordinary members of the TCC also thought that it was important to challenge the ANC in the ballot as well and

to fight from inside the council chamber rather than 'making noise' from the streets only – the noise must also come from within. We also wanted a councillor that would be accountable to its constituencies. Looking around there was no organisation offering this.

Currently the OKM is made up of the TCC, WCR and SECC. As community based organisations we are some of those who are engaged in daily struggles around resisting electricity cut-offs, evictions, prepaid water metres and for delivery of basic services through direct action such as 'Operation Khanyisa'. The OKM is a socialist electoral front which takes the working class, socialist voice inside the chamber. Our belief is that our struggle must not go on a 'holiday' when a particular day, so called Election Day has come – we need to have coordinated action that takes our struggle forward at all times, be it election period or normal times.

The experience of having an OKM councillor in the Johannesburg City Council quickly exposed the TCC members to where and how exactly

decisions were made about our lives and basic services. The OKM is made up of mostly poor people, most of whom are uneducated in the bourgeois sense and that knowledge had not been obvious to them. We used our only seat attained during the 2006 local elections to bring a socialist voice into the bourgeois chamber and this obviously frequently resulted in business being 'unusual' to the bourgeois councillors. We encourage each other to ensure that we wear our APF/OKM T-shirts when going to hear our councillor presenting our mandate which was prepared by all affiliates of OKM with their issues included where it is appropriate. Most importantly what one learned was that mere trust on an individual is not enough in politics, we certainly need some degree of control mechanism on those we give the responsibility to lead.

We have been testing out control measures, how we prepare our councillor for chamber meetings and use her in community mass meetings to expose what is happening there. OKM candidates now sign a pledge committing



them to account to their community, take the struggle forward, to be subject to the right of recall, and to hand over the councillor salary to the organisation which then pays them a living wage.

The way forward for the OKM as a working class organisation is to struggle towards the formation of a mass workers party on a socialist programme, a party that will lead the working class to a genuine revolution. In the interim the OKM must add weight to other socialist initiatives of organising and uniting other struggling communities such as those that form OKM. As an electoral front it must assess the political situation and working class mood each time election time comes and decide firstly whether to contest or resort to another tactic, such as spoiling the ballot, and also whether to insist on the name or allow changes to accommodate other working class formations interested in collaborating.



Residents of Wesselton, Ermelo in protest, February 2011.

The Conference of the Democratic Left, initiated in 2008, launched under the new name the Democratic Left Front at its national conference in Johannesburg in January 2011. The Democratic Socialist Movement/Izwi labasebenzi has participated in the CDL/DLF from early on, hoping to contribute towards clarifying the way forward for the many workers, community activists and youth searching for a political alternative to the ANC/SACP/Cosatu alliance.

The DLF's founding conference unfortunately reinforced the DSM's concerns over its leading layer's detachment from the main currents of the unfolding class struggles in the workplace, in the education sector and in service delivery protests.

Although intensifying, these struggles are isolated from each other, spontaneous and uncoordinated. They cry out for a political pole of attraction to unite them. The DSM believes the DLF should reach out to these struggles, mobilise for joint mass action and propose the formation of a new mass party which could unite workers, youth and struggling working class communities around a socialist programme. Although such a way forward has not yet been clearly formulated in

these struggles, the instinct towards unity and rapid changes in consciousness amongst working class people are preparing the way.

The masses in these struggles are not looking towards the DLF. But a layer of genuine activists does so hoping it is a step towards the development of a political voice independent of the parliamentary parties and to the left of the Tripartite Alliance. Many of the conference's nearly 200 delegates will be let down both at the undemocratic manner in which it was conducted and, more importantly, the missed opportunity to contribute towards uniting and mobilising class fighters into a true mass force that can fill the political vacuum on the left.

The CDL was initiated late 2008 by comrades victimised in the South African Communist Party (SACP) for criticising party policy on eg support for Zuma, together with left-leaning academics and non-governmental organisation (NGO) activists. Its birth took place against the background of the global economic crisis gathering force. At the same time the ANC was experiencing the worst crisis in its history with the unprecedented recall of Mbeki precipitating its biggest split ever and the formation of

by Liv Shange

the Congress of the People (Cope). Since then, the economic crisis has exposed capitalism's rottenness to millions, sparking in North Africa the first stirrings of a reawakened world revolution. The class consciousness of SA's workers and poor has also been raised by Zuma's government 'anti-working class bias', in particular its response to the 2010 public sector strike. The possibility of a new mass workers' party is hanging so heavily in the air that bourgeois strategists have felt compelled to urge the SACP and Cosatu leaders to form a 'social-democratic' party both as a stand-in party of capitalism if the ANC implodes and to act as a gate-keeper to prevent the development of a left alternative.

Unfortunately the DLF leadership, like their Cosatu counterpart, appears to go pale in the face of the logic of the social processes that pushed them to take the initiative in the first place. Instead of mobilising activists involved in 'service delivery' struggles and the union rank-and-file for the January conference, the leadership focused on seeking legitimacy from inward-looking left circles and Cosatu leaders.

These problems were worsened by an agenda that pandered to pet projects like the light-minded idea of a 'solidarity economy'. The conference was an opportunity to identify key points for a programme around which a united front could indeed be established and the adoption of a programme linking demands of day-to-day struggles with the need to overthrow capitalism. The DSM raised these issues consistently within the CDL, suggesting mobilisation for a conference of service delivery protest and the calling of a 'service delivery general strike'.

## Democratic Left Front: opportunity missed

The CDL leaders appear to have pre-planned the conference outcome on key questions such as the political situation in SA and the world, as well as the political programme and organisational form of what is now the DLF. Obligated to criticise capitalism given the economic crisis, DLF leadership still lacks confidence in socialism as an alternative. The implication of their position is that a better capitalism is possible, adorned with solidarity economies and backyard cooperatives. Lacking a scientific understanding of the origin of the collapsed Stalinist regime they simply regurgitate SACP claims that what existed in these countries was 'really existing socialism.' Unable to distinguish between Socialism and its Stalinist perversion, they fail argue the case for socialism convincingly, and impose their prejudice that building a socialist party equals Stalinism.

The local government elections coming up in May, which many delegates wanted to contest, were not even on the agenda; the issue was 'too divisive' according to the steering committee especially as Cosatu luminaries had been invited. That the unfolding revolutions in North Africa were also left out is an indictment of the leadership. It shows a huge distance separates them from the masses not only in North Africa but in the first instance in SA itself! The intervention's by the DSM's small delegation and others managed to push these two issues onto the (margins of) the agenda. In fact there was an upheaval which left the organisers with no choice but to rearrange the programme substantially.

Unfortunately the conference ended without concluding most key

discussions but there was agreement to continue them afterwards. Despite this the steering committee has proceeded to present a range of resolutions as if they had been unanimously adopted. Pre-empting the inconclusive debate, Mazi-buko Jara has stated in the media that the DLF is 'not interested in being a party'. Masked behind the 'super-democratic' decision-making approach of consensus (instead of majority vote, get all to agree through persuasion and compromise), is a form of minority rule that actually reflects a deep-seated fear of the very masses the DLF purports to base itself on.

At a time of revolutionary reawakening and renewed interest in socialist ideas worldwide, and increasingly politicised unrest in SA, with the question of an alternative to capitalism being posed louder and louder, the DLF may argue that it proclaims itself as 'anti-capitalist', 'non-bourgeois' and 'Eco-socialist'. While the environmental catastrophe unfolding offers amongst the most striking arguments against capitalism and for socialism, the 'eco'-prefix in the CDL's socialism is an attempt to please both the 'non-political' environmentalists and the socialists without offering a serious answer to this problem.

History has no time for late-comers. Unless it orients decisively towards the mass struggle the DLF will be left behind as the working class draws conclusions from the struggle and marches towards reclaiming its ideological, political and organisational independence. The DSM continues to work with the DLF and argue for a mass workers party on a socialist programme.

# 4 struggles

## Vusi Khumalo vs. Superspar: VICTORY AT LAST! Not so good for Spar as DSM activist defeats bosses

by Weizmann Hamilton

In an historic victory, Democratic Socialist Movement activist and former Commercial Services and Allied Workers Union shop steward Vusi Khumalo has prevailed in his six-year dispute with retail giant Super Spar. On February 8, 2011, the Labour Court eventually put an end to the company's abuse of the legal system by in effect upholding Vusi's reinstatement with back pay and re-validating the order for the Sheriff to attach the company's goods to raise the nearly R100 000 owed in back pay to comrade Vusi.

It has taken an enormous amount of political courage, perseverance and patience to wait for the slow turn of the legal wheels for comrade Vusi to secure this victory. Super Spar went into this David vs Goliath battle smarting with self-righteous indignation, determined to avenge themselves on this 'upstart' who they claim had tarnished their reputation as a company that did its bit for the poor and was fully committed to the new democratic order and transformation.

In the first skirmish in 2005, comrade Vusi had injured Super Spar where it hurts the most – in the pocket. As a Commercial Ser-



The scene of the crime: Royal Ascot Super Spar in Cape Town.

vices and Allied Workers' Union (Cosawu) shop steward he led from the front fighting the company's violation of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act and defiance of the minimum wages for the retail sector. Comrade Vusi rejected with contempt an attempt to bribe him with a 13 percent wage increase, demanding instead that this offer be made to all workers. Through a Department of Labour compliance order Super Spar was forced to raise the wages of all workers affected.

For management the article comrade Vusi wrote in *Izwi labasebenzi*, exposing not only these facts but also an incident where armed

security was called in to intimidate workers, added insult to injury. They dismissed comrade Vusi convinced they had rid themselves of a troublemaker who did not understand, in the words of the company representative in the subsequent Labour Court review application (appeal) hearing, the 'master-servant relationship.' After failing by fair means they resorted to foul ones. They ignored the arbitration award despite the fact that it was made an order of court, with one manager stating defiantly comrade Vusi would never work there again even if it cost Spar R10 million.

When the Labour Court dismissed

their appeal, they insolently demanded that the judge give his reasons in writing. In the end they sold the company. Despite the fact that in terms of the LRA the new owners inherited the former owner's liabilities, the new owners made a serious but ultimately futile effort to evade comrade Vusi's reinstatement and back-pay.

This is not just a personal triumph for comrade Vusi. It is an enormous achievement for the small independent union Cosawu and the entire labour movement. Many shop stewards and ordinary employees are victimised for blowing the whistle on employers guilty of breaking the law.

The significance of this case was appreciated by the arbitrator who wrote a groundbreaking award: Rejecting Super Spar's claim that its reputation had been damaged by the article comrade Vusi had written in *Izwi labasebenzi*, CCMA commissioner Soewyba Flowers gave a ringing endorsement of the freedom of expression. 'Historically', she argued, 'this country's democracy was born, amongst other, [...] in the schools, [and] also in the workplace. It was the workers who fought discrimination, authoritarianism and oppression. They contributed much to the labour laws... and for this they used the workplace as a forum. It is the place where culture of Apartheid and racism was crushed although consequently many lost their lives...it was the place where workers aspired towards democracy although it was never granted to them. Why now, would freedom of

expression in the workplace be denied, after democracy had been obtained?' (*CCMA Arbitration Award WE15954-05 11th May 2006*).

Equally, the Freedom of Expression recognised the significance of this case as a threat to freedom of expression and wrote an open letter to the Super Spar management. By testifying in a workplace labour dispute the FXI also set a new precedent for its approach to the fight to defend the democratic gains of the struggle against apartheid.

So clear-cut was the case that, before the formal hearing had started, the Labour Court judge summonsed the company's advocate and Vusi's lawyer (from Denys Reitz who represented comrade Vusi *pro bono*) to inform them that he was not interested in hearing arguments in open court. The law was clear; the new owners were legally responsible for implementing the arbitration award. With the company's backs against the wall, Comrade Vusi decided to put an end to the saga and offered the new owners an out-of-court settlement which they accepted.

The Democratic Socialist Movement (DSM) wishes to thank the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) for the solidarity shown to comrade Vusi. The letters not only inspired comrade Vusi and his fellow workers, it also shocked the management who had never experienced something like this. The DSM also wishes to thank the FXI for testifying in comrade Vusi's defence and for the open letter which was sent to every Super Spar outlet in the world!

by Thamsanqa Dumezweni,  
Cosawu organiser Eastern Cape

## Cosawu: organising in the midst of extreme exploitation

The former Transkei was created by British imperialism as a reservoir for cheap labour, initially to supply the mines and farms and later factories, gardens and kitchens of whites. But 17 years of bourgeois democracy, politically supervised by the African National Congress (ANC), have not brought any significant relief to the majority of workers and poor people of this wretched part of the Eastern Cape.

Their conditions of life are worse than during the horrors of both the colonial and apartheid eras. Then at least, some contract to the mines or elsewhere offered a flicker of hope. Now, this is dead-end country – a cruel epitome of unemployment, poverty and disease that ravage the poor working people in SA. Organising under these conditions, it is important to understand what has given rise to them.

### Backward capitalism

As a racist-engineered Bantustan, the Transkei had no modern industries. As the discovery of diamonds and gold thrust SA belatedly into the world economy, and mining houses and financial institutions mushroomed followed by a very limited manufacturing industry, the Transkei became a site for the mere reproduction of workers – at no cost to the capitalist thanks to the migrant labour system. Backward agriculture and retail businesses became the economic mainstay. To artificially create its running dogs, the black middle class – a sinister

means of divide and rule by the white capitalist class to strangle the working class – the apartheid regime turned over the retail businesses to a small layer of Africans. Capitalism, however, abhors late-comers, particularly manufactured ones. This class had no financial backbone. In time it went bankrupt. To survive, it has had to rent out business buildings to other, racially disparate, sets of the middle class – white, Indian and Chinese.

It is this very oppressive and exploitative crop of primitive capitalists which the Commercial, Services and Allied Workers Union (COSAWU) is up against in this area. The few African petty propertied elements degrade and dehumanise African workers. Most of them pay a miserly R100 to R120 a week, in brazen defiance of government sectoral wage determinations. Workers work more than the time stipulated in the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA), without overtime payment. In short, the entire BCEA is disregarded. That there are no penalties for these exploiters is an indictment on government. The labour inspectors seem to be casting a blind eye. The old established labour unions seem to have no interest in organising workers,

employed or unemployed, here.

Against this background, the entire population here is trapped in poverty, backwardness and superstition. While huge service delivery protests and strikes have exploded in the face of the ANC government and its capitalist bosses elsewhere in the country, the East of the Eastern Cape remains dormant. Socio-economic backwardness, unemployment, poverty, disease and lack of revolutionary leadership have all rendered the working and poor people hopeless.

Worst is sky-high unemployment. The lucky few are employed in twos, threes, fours etc in very small shops. With huge armies of unemployed knocking at the door of each shop, those inside are, at the slightest complaint, easily dismissed and replaced. Employers project themselves as having the power to employ and dismiss at will, even arguing that they employ these poor people to help them.

Many workers are not aware of the existence of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) which in most cases is of no use. Workers also do not know the labour laws that are meant to offer some protection against employers. This ignorance is sponsored by

the ANC government through the Department of Labour, rendering workers perpetual victims of this rotten capitalist system.

### Cosawu rallying workers

Nevertheless, workers do not cease to be workers. They do not lose their class consciousness that propels them to defend themselves against the shop floor horrors perpetrated by these petty representatives of capitalism.

Cosawu has been operating in the East of the Eastern Cape since 2004, when we led over a hundred workers on a May Day march in the rural town of Bizana. From there Cosawu's membership spread to Flagstaff, Lusikisiki and Port St. Johns, covering retail shops, resorts, funeral parlours and the Majola Tea plantation.

By 2008 membership had reached 500. This, unfortunately, could not be sustained or improved on due to the permanent economic recession gripping this area. Some shops and resorts have shut down and others reduced staff and working hours. Dismissals are the order of the day. CCMA cases are often frustrated -- their outcomes invariably dependent on the whims of the commissioner who identifies, by education and social status, in class

terms with the employer. Despite the near impossibility of challenging abusive behaviour of commissioners, Cosawu has on a number of occasions succeeded in having workers reinstated or compensated.

Recognising the debilitating effects of a backward area, Cosawu has recently adopted a tactic of involving labour inspectors in organising workers. In Flagstaff and Ntabankulu, Cosawu organises workers' meetings on a regular basis and invites labour inspectors to explain to workers the labour laws they are supposed to enforce.

This has made Cosawu's name appealing to workers. But because of the numerical weakness of workers in some businesses, they have not yet felt working class power flowing through their veins. To counter this weakness, Cosawu is building shop stewards councils in Flagstaff and Ntabankulu. The aim is to organise marches, led by shop steward councils, to protest against the monstrous cruelty perpetrated by these petty employers.

Cosawu stands and fights for a revolutionary class unity of the entire working class – unity that will enable workers to build their mass workers' party for socialism that will be built on the ruins of the decadent capitalism.



# Mine Line factory occupation: breaking a new path of struggle

by Wilson Makola, chairperson  
Mine Line Workers Committee



Mine Line workers blockading the factory gates, October 22 2010.

**On the 20th of October, 2010, the workers of Mine Line and Tap Engineering decided to take over the management and control of the factory and put it under workers control as a cooperative. Situated at Doornkop Harmony mine on the outskirts of Krugersdorp, it employs 107 workers. It produces and manufactures a variety of valves and locomotives used in the mines. After months of challenging struggle, a break-through might be at hand with the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) promising to urgently look into funding to restart of production.**

## Fraud and deadly accident

The factory occupation followed the application for liquidation by the previous owner, Wynand Mulder, who defrauded the company of millions of Rands before placing it under liquidation. He borrowed money from Absa in the company's name to pursue business interests elsewhere.

Due to the employer's non-compliance with occupational safety and health regulations, on the 4th August 2010 there had been a fatal accident at the factory where three of our colleagues lost their lives. In an endeavour to run away from his responsibilities, on the 18th August 2010, Mulder vanished into thin air. This was after he

had not paid workers' provident fund contributions for the past three years, 2007-2010. He also owes workers their leave pay and outstanding wages and bonuses.

## Factory occupation

On 20th October 2010 when workers assembled at the factory, we found two trucks standing outside the factory ready to load the machines. We told the drivers to go away as it was illegal for them to take assets from the liquidated factory before the process of liquidation was finalised. After lengthy debates it was decided that the guarding of the factory should start with immediate effect to stop further asset stripping by Mulder in collusion with the liquidator, Commonwealth Trust, and the security company guarding the factory. Lots of stuff had been taken from the factory – castings, machines, patterns and moulds – in the presence of the security guards.

## Solidarity campaign

The struggle at the Mine Line factory is enjoying the support of various organisations and institutions. Soon after its inception a Solidarity Committee was formed. It comprises the Metal and Electrical Workers' Union of South Africa (MEWUSA), the union organising at Mine Line, the Cooperative, Policy and Alternative Centre (Copac), the Democratic Socialist Movement (DSM), the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF), Landless People's Movement (LPM), the Zabalaza Anarchist-Communist Front (ZACF), the Democratic Left Front (DLF) and students from Wits University. The Mine Line factory occupation has also received international support, such as from the 10th congress of the Committee for a Workers' International held in December 2010 in Belgium. That was through our

DSM delegation that participated in the conference. The National Union of Metal Workers of SA (Numsa) regional leadership have also visited the factory in support.

On 20 November 2010 we held a solidarity rally at the factory premises. Through this rally people got to know exactly what was taking place. Often people had not understood when we told them about the occupied factory. They came in numbers to see for themselves what was taking place there. Numerous organisations and institutions attended the rally. Every speaker and every organisation supported our course of action. They regarded it as a good step to fight job losses, liquidations and retrenchments.

## Significance of Mine Line factory occupation

The economic crisis and recession that swept across the globe has impacted heavily on economies all-over the world. After and during the recession millions of jobs were shed through retrenchments, wage cuts, short-time, liquidations and factory closures. The bosses or the employers want the workers to carry the burden of a crisis that they did not create. They are no more making profits as they anticipated. And they want working people to pay by slashing down salaries and wages. It is against this background that Mine Line workers decided to occupy their factory to take the fight back to the bosses. For the working class to wage an effective war against capitalists and bosses, the workers across South Africa and the whole world should organise themselves and form a united front to fight capitalism. In South Africa Cosatu, Nactu and Fedusa must unite in a fight against job losses. They must set aside their ideological differences and take the working class struggle forward.

## We are demanding that:

- >Absa, SARS and others from whom Wynand Mulder borrowed money must pursue him, not the occupied company to recover their monies.
- >Wynand Mulder to be criminally charged for the death of the three deceased workers and the injury of one.
- >Wynand Mulder to bring back all the assets that he has stolen.
- >The government to nationalise Mine Line under the democratic control and management of our workers' cooperative.
- >The government, through the IDC and other institutions, to recapitalise the company with start-up and working capital.
- >The trade unions' Job Creation Trust assist with funding as its funds were paid by us workers in order to contribute to saving jobs.

## Challenges

Our struggle has many challenges. On the 24th November we were served with an eviction order – the liquidators wanted to sell all the assets at the factory on auction. On the 26th November 2010 we went to Pretoria High Court to oppose the eviction and auction order. We did this without a lawyer as we did not have money to pay the lawyers and we succeeded in stopping the eviction and auction!

The major problem we are having is that we are no more getting financial support from the union, because of the internal problems in the union (see p. 12) and the workers are now starting to get demoralised because there is no money to buy food for them while guarding. In the beginning we used to guard the factory day and night. The guarding is still continuing but at a very small scale, and this is opening the struggle up to other challenges.

## Financial support

We need start-up and working capital to start production. We have approached the IDC, the

department of trade and industry (dti), the Department of Economic Development (DED) and the Job Creation Trust (JCT) to give us financial assistance. The IDC has shown a lot of commitment to assist, committing to try to speedily arrange start-up capital for us. We eventually made this break-through after being held back for months by the liquidators of Commonwealth Trust who did not want to give us the company's financial statements which the IDC needed to make a decision. They finally handed over the statements after being threatened with a march to their offices on 28 March 2011.

We are calling on all the workers across South Africa and world wide to learn from Mine Line/ TAP Engineering workers that there is an alternative to defend and protect jobs. As the working class we must unite and educate one another on how to fight back the job losses, retrenchments, liquidations and factory closures. Emancipation of the working class must be the act of the working class itself.

*Forward with the working class struggle!*

## Aurora workers let down by union leaders

by Liv Shange

Thousands of workers at the Grootvlei and Orkney gold mines have not been paid since February 2010 and are now owed more than R12million by Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) company Aurora Empowerment Systems which took over management of the mines in 2009 when the previous owner Pamodzi Gold was placed in liquidation. Aurora is owned by Zondwa Mandela (Nelson Mandela's grandson), Khulubuse Zuma (President Zuma's nephew) and Michael Hulley (President Zuma's attorney). The unions organising at the two

mines, the National Union of Mine Workers (NUM) and Solidarity, have also accused Aurora of asset-stripping. The new owners have also completely disregarded environmental regulations, allowing heavily contaminated water to flow straight into sensitive wetlands.

While Khulubuse Zuma, known for his extravagant life of luxury which includes a fleet of 19 top-of-the range cars, pledged a R1-million donation to the ANC on April 8, the union leaders have failed to mobilise the workers, who enjoy massive public sympathy, in a campaign to have these parasitic

bosses thrown out once and for all. On the same day, Solidarity revealed that one of the workers had committed suicide. While the union leaders have left the workers to despair and wait for food parcels, they have fixed all hopes on a passive wait for a capitalist saviour.

Since 2009, a string of prospective international buyers have figured in the media, the latest being Chinese-owned multinational mining company Shangdong Gold. So far all have disappointed. Even if a successful sale is carried through, it holds no guarantees for the workers' jobs and wage claims.

Instead of organising a community-based solidarity campaign, the NUM has begged the ANC to return the donation to Khulubuse and to hand the money to the workers. The ANC's response was they had no obligation to do so! The obvious response should be a mass campaign for the nationalisation under workers' control and management of these mines. The failure

of the NUM to even raise, let alone mobilise around, this demand is one of the most concrete signs yet of the deadly danger posed to the workers' movement by the Cosatu unions' alliance with the African National Congress; all the more tragic as the Aurora case itself exposes the pro-capitalist character of the ruling party beyond all doubt.



Defaced sign at Grootvlei mine.

# 6 labour broking

## Open letter: Post Office workers call for permanent work

by Desmond Moeketsi, secretary Cosawu Workers Committee of Labour Broker Employees SAPO

Dear Minister Mildred Oliphant

We work at the South African Post Office but are contracted by different companies working for the post office. For the past twelve years, SAPO has been using labour brokered workers starting with one company T&L and now there are more than six companies. While government is in the process of amending labour laws we are still suffering. We no longer believe in the management of SAPO who have been promising to incorporate us into the permanent work force for over six years now. In 2005 there was an agreement between SAPO and the Communication Workers Union that was meant to absorb permanent part-time employees (PPTE) and fixed term contractors into permanent full time positions and after that to address the plight of workers employed by labour brokers. The PPTE's in Gauteng have been incorporated but the fixed term contractors were sub-contracted to labour brokers.

SAPO has always promised to uphold the 2005 agreement with the CWU but this has not been fully implemented. As the Department of Labour has done in relation to addressing some of the worst forms of exploitation suffered by farm and

domestic workers, we as workers employed by labour brokers also need protection. We are fired at any time for any reason. Supervisors insult us every day and treat like we have no human rights. We are forced to work like slaves delivering post to large geographical areas in all kinds of weather without protection – only in the last four years have we been getting protective clothing against the rain – worst of all is that we do the same work as permanent workers but do not enjoy any of the benefits of security of employment and earn less than 1/3 of their average wages. The majority of the workforce in the post office is employed by labour brokers. Yet all sorts of bonuses go to permanent employees only. After the latest increases, a permanent worker



now earns R7200 at entry level, R8200 at mid-level and R9500 at the top level, with benefits, for exactly the same work that labour broker employees do for no more than R2000 without any benefits.

Our work, like that of any other worker is important. We deliver

important letters, traffic fines, summonses from court and so on but even government does not appreciate the work we do and only recognises the significance of the Post Bank section of the SAPO. The minister can help us to enforce the new labour law amendments by ensuring that companies comply with the laws as proposed with regard to workers employed by labour brokers. We urge you to avoid any further delays in implementing these amendments because each delay continues the discrimination, exploitation and suffering of employees of labour brokers in the post office.

Immediately following your first announcements about the amendments to the labour laws, more than 1000 workers in the employ of labour brokers in the post office

have lost their jobs. SAPO immediately terminated the contracts of about 500 cleaners and another 500 general workers. This has continued in the mail handling section where the mail is received and sorted where a further 500 workers who work for HABS had their contracts terminated. In total, more than 4000 workers have lost their jobs through retrenchments and more are to follow as part of management's 'cost-cutting' measures.

Given government's commitment to job creation, how can the post office, a government owned enterprise, be allowed to undermine such commitment? SAPO is treating us like slaves, like we do not have families. President Zuma talks about providing subsidies for companies in distress, and the post office is receiving subsidies from government but we do not know how this assistance is being utilised because it is not improving the lives of the workers in the post office who are employed by labour brokers.

On behalf of the Commercial, Services and Allied Workers Union (Cosawu) Workers Committee of Labour Broker Employees in the Post Office

/ Desmond Moeketsi

## Labour broking: only mass struggle can enforce a ban

by Weizmann Hamilton and Liv Shange

**The Department of Labour has put forward amendments to labour legislation which touch on a number of issues, including amongst others tightened controls against workers from outside South Africa, which could fuel xenophobia. In this issue of *Izwi labasebenzi*, however space permits us only to comment on the proposals on of labour broking. They are important as labour broking has served to roll back the gains the organised working class had made through past struggles, expanding the precarious 'second tier' of South Africa's de facto two-tier labour market. *Izwi labasebenzi*/ the Democratic Socialist Movement supports the demand for a banning of this parasitic practice. However, we believe the formulation of these amendments should be recognised as a concession to the mass discontent over labour broking which Cosatu and other unions have reflected. If the proposals were implemented, they would actually mean an effective ban of the industry, even if it is not spelt out like that. But labour broking is a key mechanism for capitalists to maximise exploitation, and they will resist them vigorously. The only way these amendments will be implemented is therefore by the force of mass action – a**

**sustained campaign of mass action against labour broking and all forms of precarious work, led by the organised workers, should hold the government to its word and counter the capitalist lobby which is relentlessly campaigning against the amendments.**

The Department's proposals on labour broking can be summed up as follows:

- prohibiting discrimination in remuneration and benefits between workers performing the same or substantially the same work

- redefining of the concept of 'employer' such that the one who receives workers supplied by a labour broker is defined as the primary employer instead of the labour broker company (eg the post office is the employer of labour received from T&L in the case referred to in the letter above)

- deeming all employees permanent unless the employer can demonstrate reasons for why they should not be

- registering all employment agencies and establishing a state employment agency to which all vacancies must be reported and which will develop a data base of all unemployed workers

- enforcing much harsher penalties for non-compliance with labour legislation

If this was implemented, the redefinition of the concept of employer

would prevent labour brokers from claiming they are the employers. This will make it virtually impossible for both labour brokers and employers to continue depriving workers of the remuneration, benefits and labour law protection available to permanent workers. Combined, the effect of the implementation of all these amendments would make the labour broking industry unprofitable and remove the incentive to continue functioning – a ban in all but words.

However, implementation of the amendments will not come about on the basis of the parliamentary process but only through sustained pressure of workers' mass struggle. The amendments were immediately met with strident denunciation by employer organisations including the association of labour brokers, pro-capitalist political parties and commentators. Labour brokers are already responding with mass retrenchments, as seen in the above article. The African National Congress (ANC) will most likely retreat under the pressure of the bosses – as the representatives of interests of capitalism, to whom labour broking is an important tool to press down the cost of labour power and drive up profits.

The ANC government has only made these concessions on labour broking in response to mass pressure and to enable its ally Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) to present them as

evidence of the mutual benefit of the Tripartite Alliance, in exchange for Cosatu's support in the coming local government elections. Still, ANC secretary general Gwede Mantashe and Minister of Labour Nelisiwe Oliphant could not help but sabotage the Cosatu leaders' best efforts by retreating from the commitment to the concept of 'decent work' – that is work for a living wage, under dignified, secure conditions in which workers human rights are respected (International Labour Organisation definition). The ANC's retreat from its own commitment to decent work alone exposes the fact that it has in fact already renounced the amendments on labour broking in the bill authored by its own labour department. In addition, existing labour laws supposedly protecting workers are blatantly ignored by many employers with the silent blessing of the Department of Labour which employs nowhere near the number of inspectors that would be needed to enforce compliance, apart from not having the political will to do so. (see for example the article on p. 4).

It is therefore understandable that the proposed amendments have been met with suspicion from labour broker workers especially, assuming that 'regulation' instead of 'ban' is a step backward. The Cosatu leadership has tapped into this suspicion and the widespread resistance to labour broking by

rejecting the amendments and counterposing them to its demand for a ban of the industry. Radical as this stance may sound, it has the potential to do great harm to the struggle against labour broking. It distracts attention from the labour broking aspects of the amendments and risks providing the government with an excuse for the withdrawal of the amendments in their entirety and thereby handing the labour broking industry a further lease on life.

Instead of engaging in quasi-revolutionary phrase-mongering, Cosatu should be organising a mass action campaign to demand the implementation of the labour broking amendments including a strengthened inspectorate and the fining and jailing of employers under the more stringent penalties for non-compliance by employers. Cosatu's left-wing posturing is allowing an important opportunity to crush labour-broking to be squandered.

*Izwi labasebenzi*/ the DSM actively supports the struggle by labour broker employees to unite, organise and fight for equal pay for equal work, permanent employment and decent conditions. We also support the call for a banning of labour brokers – the first step in that fight, however, should be a mass campaign by workers, unions and social movements for the immediate enactment and enforcement of the amendments concerning labour broking.



# New Growth Path: pasting over crisis cracks with 'social pact'?

by Liv Shange

**Late last year, the Department of Economic Development unveiled the New Growth Path (NGP) as a recipe for completely restructuring SA's economy from the world's most unequal society, dominated by finance capital, based on mineral extraction and export, with mass unemployment, a chronic current account deficit, a volatile and over-inflated currency, to the 'developmental state'. The first phase is to be implemented during 2010-2011. By 2020 five million 'decent' jobs should have been created, and the official unemployment rate, today just under 25% (in reality close to 40%), should be down to 15%. Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan's February budget was hailed as a balancing act in line with the NGP, promising more jobs while reassuring capital that 'SA's public finances remain in safe hands' (Business Day, 2011/02/24).**

## Key elements of the NGP:

- The transformation of SA into a 'developmental state'
- A national consensus on wages, prices and high savings through compulsory pension schemes
- Support for more diverse and labour-intensive production; raising economic growth to 7 percent/ year by 2020
- Measures to curb currency volatility and the flow of 'hot money' which is inflating the value of the Rand making exports expensive and uncompetitive
- Accumulating the state's capital reserves
- Encouraging Foreign Direct Investment

The NGP is an attempt to manage SA's conflicting class forces through a national consensus. Key is a 'social pact' between government, capitalists and workers: government will provide infrastructure and incentives for growing private businesses; capitalists will commit to job creation, and workers will accept 'moderate' wages.

Admission into the "BRICS" group of emerging market economies (Brazil, Russia, India, China, SA) is a springboard to achieve SA's developmental objectives.

## The NGP's prospects

But what are the NGP's prospects? Technically the recession ended in late 2009, but SA's, and the world's, recovery has been very weak. SA's 2010 GDP (Gross Domestic Product – the total value of all goods and services produced in a year) growth was 2,8 percent, and is expected to be 3,4 percent this year – based on hopes of continued world economic recovery. Net job losses continued into the first quarter of 2010. Last year, jobs creation totaled +93 000 – far short of the NGP's 500 000 a-year target. At the current growth rate, jobs lost in the recession will be replaced only in 2014. Those employed support an average eight people, so unemployment impacts on immediate and extended families and whole communities. Most households are still battling the effects of the recession. Now many bourgeois analysts recognise there is a high risk of a new global crisis.

World food and commodity prices are at their highest levels ever, driven by speculation and demand, especially China's, and global warming-linked disasters like the drought in Russia and flooding in Australia. Wheat prices rose 76 percent over the last year, maize 88 percent and soybeans 47 percent. The United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has warned that agricultural commodity prices may rise by a further 20 percent this year. High food prices are an important factor fuelling uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East which have sent oil prices soaring. With the imperialist attack on Libya and popular unrest spreading in the region, including in Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil producer, the oil price continues to rise.

In the two years up to February 2011, SA's petrol prices rose 36

percent in July, followed by another 25,9 percent next year. Bread prices shot up 24 percent in the past year alone. Consumers are battling just to keep their noses above water. Household debt remains at 78 percent of disposable income despite interest rates at 30-year lows. Now inflation is increasing while demand decreases. SA's working class and poor have not experienced any recovery.

## New global downturn ahead?

Economic analysts concede SA's recovery is limited to a few sectors like finance and retail – both fueled by consumer borrowing. Despite low interest rates, the corporate sector is not borrowing enough to create jobs. Similarly the near-zero interest rates in the major economies have not stimulated investment and growth. Instead, the massive stimulus packages have created a new threat of sovereign debt defaults; that is, whole economies unable to pay their debts and going bankrupt. In the US this is made worse by a crippling trade deficit and a budget deficit so high special laws had to be passed to avoid the government from running out of money. Rating agency Moody's has downgraded US debt outlook to negative, sending world markets panicking.

The prospects for the world economy are, in short, very dim. Eisuke Sakakibara, Japan's former top currency official, believes that the world is headed for a major downturn that will last until 2018. The Committee for a Workers' International (CWI – the international socialist organisation DSM is affiliated to) predicted the likelihood of a 'double-dip' recession. Nouriel Roubini, one of the few bourgeois economists who foresaw the financial crisis, warns that rising oil prices are likely to trigger a new crisis comparable to the drawn-out depression of the late 1800s.

## Organic crisis of capitalism

The unprecedented worldwide government stimulus packages aimed at countering the effects of the economic meltdown (the R110 trillion global bank-bailout, the US' latest 'quantitative easing' of \$600bn or China's combined stimulus packages totaling over R40trillion) only postponed the crisis. Capitalism has no solution to the periodic crises that grip it. It attempts to overcome them by destroying the very wealth it has created. In 2008-10 wealth worth \$50 trillion – equal to the value of one year's world production of goods and services – was lost, says the International Monetary Fund (IMF). After decades trying to avoid a major crash, world capitalism has no way out now. The few growth pockets in Germany, Brazil and some Latin American countries are exceptional occurrences and cannot counter the tidal wave building worldwide. Despite the hype surrounding China, it cannot act as a 'reserve engine' pulling the world out of the depths. We have entered an era of

drawn-out economic depression.

## 'Developmental' dawn for capitalism impossible

SA's aspirant black bourgeoisie believe that a new 'developmental' capitalist dawn will rise out of the ashes of the crisis. Sadly, the SACP and Cosatu leaderships in fact play a key role in promoting this myth, claiming that the capitalist state can be directed to take SA onto a new 'growth path' through an 'industrial policy', direct state intervention, limited nationalisation, increased state regulation of employment, the devaluation of the Rand, price controls and lower interest rates to industrialise the economy. The 'developmental state' would thus drive a kind of second edition of 'primitive accumulation' – Marx's term for the original accumulation of capital, the creation of a capitalist class – this time including the aspirant black capitalists.



Workers from Honda's factory in Guangdong, China, on strike in June 2011: China's 'developmental state' is not as harmonious as some in its SA fan-club like to believe.

The NGP is based on the illusion that the SA economy can be managed to navigate the stormy seas of a world economy in crisis. However, just as SA's economy contracted due to the global financial crisis and mimics the failure worldwide to stimulate economic growth through low interest rates, so too global economic forces (higher food and oil prices) are pushing up inflation. Increased interest rates therefore loom, possibly even before December.

The SA economy is as exposed to the world market now as it was before the recession. Despite the former Finance Minister's ridiculous claim of SA immunity, the country was hit very hard. Industrial production shrunk by 7,2 percent in 2009, and total GDP fell nearly 2 percent. From the end of 2008, when SA officially entered recession (negative GDP growth at least two quarters in a row) to mid-2010, 1,2 million jobs were lost – more than in the previous ten years put together! SA shed the most jobs in relation to the impact of the global crisis, an OECD study reveals; a world record in retrenchments, in other words!

## Union leaders' missing the socialist alternative

The SA government, the SACP and Cosatu leaders do not understand that SA, and the world, is caught in an insoluble contradiction which

can be resolved only through the socialist transformation of society. Unable to look beyond the capitalist framework, union leaders like National Education Health and Allied Workers Union (Nehawu) general secretary Fikile Majola, for example, call for increasing the budget deficit to finance more social spending (*Mail & Guardian*, 2011/03/25-31). This means borrowing and merely leaves the debt to be paid by future generations. Instead of putting forward a working class position in line with Cosatu's socialist traditions, they find themselves acting more or less as the government's 'labour desk', taking sides in a quarrel amongst capitalists who are deeply divided over how to handle the crisis. The neo-Keynesian faction of capital favours deficit financing to at least postpone a second economic crisis and social turmoil – for them the lesser evil.

Despite the leaders' illusions in capitalism, Cosatu remains a workers' organisation. The clash between NGP propaganda and the reality of the implications of a social pact – including capped wages – and social spending limits has left Cosatu no choice but to strongly oppose the policy. But there is confusion in Cosatu. The SA Clothing and Textile Workers Union (Sactwu) supports the NGP because Minister Ebrahim Patel is their former general secretary! This is an example of the disunity we have warned the Tripartite Alliance will cause Cosatu.

The attempt to conceal the NGP's real agenda – to make workers and the poor pay for the crisis - with developmentalist rhetoric shows that no solutions to mass unemployment, poverty and underdevelopment will be offered by capitalist governments. There can be no social solidarity and shared sacrifices between workers and bosses, rich and poor, exploiter and exploited. It will be impossible to impose the NGP on the world's most unequal economy, particular at a time of economic crisis and social turmoil. The working class must provide the solution by liquidating this system and replace it with socialism – workers democracy, social ownership and democratic planning.



'Labour-intensive activity': workers tarring a road in Limpopo by hand.

## SA and the global economic crisis

The NGP is government's response to the "severe economic downturn." In upbeat tones, the global crisis is presented as an opportunity for SA and the conti-

percent. There have been another three increases since with more to come. Also in the past two years, municipal service charges increased by 62 percent and electricity by 38 percent. Electricity will rise a fur-

cont. from p. 1

articles on this spread by Inshan September, Liv Shange &amp; Sheri Hamilton

## Revolution in North Africa and the Middle East

The big media companies have dubbed the revolts in North Africa and the Middle East 'protests for democracy'. Some right-wing groups have labeled them protests against 'Islamic socialism' and manifestations of a desire for more 'open and free markets'. Religious fundamentalist groups have claimed that the CIA is involved, having decided to simply topple the regimes due to some 'fall-out'. The Libyan leader, Gaddafi, accuses al-Qaeda of being behind the revolt against him.

The multi-national media companies are not just reporting, they are driving home a political point. While they during the first few days of international coverage of the Tunisian revolution made much of the country's high levels of unemployment and poverty, they never genuinely exposed their causes. The only explanation given was that all levels of government were permeated by corruption. This implies that the economies in these countries could provide enough for the masses if only the dictators who have impoverished their countries by looting their wealth could be removed. By winning free and fair elections the material conditions will change and the citizens of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Yemen, Bahrain, Jordan, etc, will experience 'A better life for all'. But as we have seen in South Africa, as long as the capitalist ruling class retains control of the economy, democratic rights offer cold com-



Tahrir square, Cairo. The burnt headquarters of Mubarak's NDP in background.

fort to the mass of unemployed, the working poor, the youth who today feel they 'live for nothing'.

### Social roots of the uprisings

The outcry for democratic rights, against police brutality and torture, and for regime change stems from the urgent sense among youth and workers in the region that change has to come. The corporate media conglomerates are however missing what conditions brought this about. On the streets and workplaces, beyond the newsroom experts, a simple truth is exposed: the people want jobs and those who have jobs want a living wage. 'Bread, Freedom, Dignity' was a common slogan in Tunisia in January. The spark that literally and figuratively set Tunisia, and soon the whole region, alight was unemployed graduate-turned-street-vendor Mohamed Bou'Azizi's desperate act of

setting himself on fire after being harassed by police for trying to make a living selling in the street. Unemployment in the Arab world is among the worst in the world affecting up to 50% of youth – the 'waiting generation'. The rising food prices have also been a key trigger of the revolts. The backdrop was set by decades of neo-liberal attacks on the social gains that had been implemented under the likes of Nasser in Egypt and Bourgiba in Tunisia, including real wage cuts, more precarious jobs, and looting of the economy by both multi-national companies and corrupt politicians – all accelerated in the wake of the 'global recession'.

The countries now in upheaval have had relatively high GDP growth rates in the past few years. Mubarak's regime, a very close ally of the US and Israel, spearheaded

the neo-liberal 'reforms'. These didn't create jobs, but widened the divide between rich and poor.

### Revolution & counter-revolution

The fundamental conditions that led to revolution in Egypt and Tunisia are not just present across the Arab world, but all over the neo-colonial world and increasingly also in the centres of imperialism. The historical defeats of the workers' movement during the 20th century – the defeat of the international revolutionary wave following the Russian revolution of 1917, the subsequent isolation and bureaucratic degeneration of the Russian workers' state, the rise of Stalinism and reformism and the collapse of both in the past 20 years – however weighs heavily on the present. The precious experiences of struggle and theoretical advances which need to guide the way forward have been largely forgotten. The new period holds unprecedented opportunities for their quick revival though, as is shown e.g. by the experience in Tunisia where the revolutionary ferment has only cooled down slightly after not only forcing out Ben Ali but also the interim government that replaced him, and where strikes and all forms of social protests have bloomed. The CWI is working to root branches of conscious revolutionaries on the ground to build further on this magnificent basis.

## United States: Anti-union bill wakes 'sleeping giant'

The United States' working class, counted for down-and-out by many including 'on the Left', rose to its feet in February as public sector workers in the state of Wisconsin fought back against the state's governor Walker's attack on collective bargaining rights. In a matter of two weeks, a militant and largely spontaneous mass movement erupted, involving not only public sector employees, but their families, students and workers from nearly all sectors of the economy. 200 000 marched in Madison, Wisconsin on March 12.

Solidarity pro-



## Portugal: government falls amid ferment not seen since 1974 Revolution

On March 12, about 300 000 people marched across Portugal in a 'day of rage' organised mostly over Facebook. The marches were dominated by young people who suffer mass unemployment and casual, precarious work. Strikes and other mass actions are also taking place in several sectors. The protest movement, which is ongoing, follows on a November general strike which was the country's biggest since the 1974 revolution. The mass struggle has stifled the attempts by the Portuguese government to push through yet another austerity package to appease the IMF, the EU and the international bond markets – 'reforms' which would make it even easier to 'hire and fire', cuts and freezes to pensions, increased VAT – as parlia-

ment rejected the package under pressure from the rage on streets and workplaces, the prime minister resigned at the end of March. While the government is in limbo, and expected to be Europe's next bankruptcy working class Portugal is boiling. A sustained movement, involving general strikes and the setting up of democratic mass assemblies and committees could defeat the capitalist offensive. The current trade union leadership is however trying to hold the struggle back. Socialismo Revolucionario, the CWI in Portugal, is campaigning for a united socialist front to challenge the capitalist offensive also in the new elections in June.



Workers and police in Lisbon.

## Burkina Faso: student's death sparks growing uprising

A mass movement, mainly led by student organisations but also involving informal traders, workers, and now soldiers, is now spreading across Burkina Faso after being sparked by the death in police custody of student Justin Zongo on February 20. Inspired by Tunisia and Egypt, people expressed their anger against Blaise Compaoré's repressive regime, mass unemployment and poverty, by attacking town halls, governors offices and police stations. Arms were captured at numerous police stations and many burnt down. Prisoners were set free by demonstrators storming jails. The movement spread from Koudougou in the central-west, where the governor and chief of police were sacked on February 28 in an attempt to pacify the protestors. The regime has combined such carrots with the stick of bloody repression. The

army, police and gendarmes were deployed to stop a mass demonstration called by the student union in the capital Ougadougou on March 11. In response to the university students' strike, the government on March 14 closed down all public universities, residences, canteens and financial aid facilities; leaving students on the streets.

The repression is failing to stop the ferment spreading. The movement is now re-linking to 2008's 'food riots' - world food prices now exceed the 2008 level and are rising, along with fuel. A new 'local development tax' provides further provocation. On April 13, protests against the high cost of living were organised in ten cities. The following day a mutiny by Compaoré's Presidential Guard over unpaid allowances set off a wider army mutiny. Street traders and stu-



School students protest in Ougadougou, April 7.

dents joined in the mass protests. Compaoré briefly fled the capital, the ruling party headquarters and other symbols of the regime were burnt down. Trying to quell

the unrest, Compaoré dismissed his cabinet and appointed a new one as well as a new army chief on April 15. Trade unions have called countrywide mass protests against the regime for April 30.



The Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) is the international organisation of which the Democratic Socialist Movement is the South African affiliate. The CWI organises revolutionary socialists in 45 countries, for a united struggle against capitalism and for the socialist transformation of society. Our comrades are directly involved in most of the mass struggles referred to above. 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)





tests of tens of thousands have also been held in other states, where similar anti-union laws are mooted. When the Wisconsin government passed the anti-union bill the anger exploded and protesters briefly occupied the state Capitol Building, as well as the square in

front of it, inspired by Cairo's Tahrir square. The trade union leaders have refused to call a strike to stop the bill and are instead trying to channel the struggle into a campaign for the Democratic Party, which is also attacking public sector workers. However this struggle ends, the attack has sparked a widespread fight-back spirit among American workers. As a metal worker commented to comrades from Socialist Alternative (the CWI in the US), Walker and the elite 'awoke a sleeping giant. Now they're feeding it breakfast, coffee and steroids'.

## Greece: 8th general strike in less than a year

Greece came to a standstill on February 23 as workers, and also small shop-keepers, came out on the country's eighth (8th!) one-day general strike in less than a year. The social-democratic government has carried out four massive rounds of spending cuts, which include privatisations, wage cuts and attacks on pensions, in exchange for the financial bail-out which was agreed with the EU and the IMF in May 2010. Workers are made to pay though government bail-outs of failing banks alone account for 25 percent of Greece's budget deficit. The financial bail-out has not ended the economic crisis; on the contrary, it is worsening, with GDP shrinking 6 percent in the last quarter of 2010.

The trade union leaders have called the series of general strikes in the hope that they will ease some of the pressure they are under from rank-and-file

workers and 'scare' the government to make concessions. They are failing on both fronts. The government is forcing through the cuts, while the sense of anger and alienation are deepening among wide layers of workers and youth. The level of fury and determination is indicated by other mass movements such as the mass non-payment campaign – working class commuters are refusing to pay increased public transport fares and road-tolls. The extent of the defiance is so great that the government has been unable to take action. At the same time, public transport drivers have been involved in industrial action for months in protest against wage cuts and privatisation. Xekinima, the DSM's sister organisation in Greece, is at the forefront of several of these struggles and reports that "the economic, social and political situation is becoming explosive".



The Trades Union Congress (TUC) organised march, London March 26.

PIC: KEVIN HAYES

## Germany: anti-nuclear mass protests switch off reactors

During the last weekend of March, Germany saw the biggest ever manifestation against nuclear energy as 240 000 marched across the country. The government has now closed down its nuclear reactor. The Fukushima nuclear disaster injected mass outrage in a situation where rolling mass protests both against nuclear transports and against the building of an elitist new train station (Stuttgart 21) have been going on for more than a year, with regular demonstrations of up to 100 000 people. Sozialistische Alternative (SAV), the CWI Germany is playing a leading role in these events.



## Britain: Workers take lead from youth as fight-back begins

A million people, according to al-Jazeera, marched against government spending cuts in London on March 26 – the biggest workers' demonstration in 20 years. The trade union leaders could eventually not withstand the pressure from members to act against the massive cuts, after the stunning effect had been broken by November's mass student movement against the trebling of tuition fees and cutting of school students grants.

## Swaziland: first wave of revolt suppressed

Swaziland's planned April 12 uprising was met with a vicious crackdown by King Mswati III's regime and suppressed, for now. Leading activists of unions, student and youth organisations as well as journalists were arrested even before the planned action, which was also banned. On April 12, military and police blocked entry to the main urban centres and hounded down participants in the mass action in Manzini and Mbabane, injuring several protesters. Unionists were arrested *en masse*, or disappeared. Offices of major trade unions were placed under siege. At the time of writing, although the regime's preemptive actions have for now frustrated a take-off of the uprising, there is a qualitative change in the struggle to end the dictatorship.

The material basis for a Swazi revolutionary uprising has been laid by the ongoing crisis of world capitalism. The country's main export earnings from sugar and wood pulp fell sharply. The fall in trade volumes was reflected in a 60 percent decline in income from receipts from SACU (Southern African

Customs Union – the revenue sharing scheme under which SA effectively subsidises the economies of Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and



Mswati's security forces beat demonstrators, Manzini April 12.

PIC: ANONYMOUS

Swaziland). The SA government is now demanding a renegotiation of the SACU terms which would mean SA winning and all other states losing; with Swaziland's receipts falling from R4,3bn to R1,3bn. The receipts from SACU have in fact masked the structural retardation of the Swazi economy with an artificially prosperous top-layer weighing upon very low levels of economic activity. The feeble private sector is largely dependent on government tenders. 70 percent of the population survives through subsistence farming.

With a budget deficit of 13 percent, the royal government has effectively been under administration by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the past six months.

IMF-led cut-backs on government expenditure have resulted in a general slow-down in economic activity. The IMF's control is now to be stepped up further in exchange for bail-out loans from the World Bank and African Development Bank. The latest prescription from IMF's doctors is a public sector wage cut of between 10 and 4,5 percent (wage freeze for the lowest-paid) which was to take effect in April. Workers are encouraged to follow the example of MPs, royal advisers etc who have taken a 10 percent cut – hard to swallow when the obscenely exorbitant lifestyles of the king, his households and their patrons use 60% of the annual national revenue!

The government's attempts to make workers and poor pay for the crisis also include cuts in medicine supplies to hospitals and hikes in electricity tariffs. These attacks could provoke the begin-

ning of an uprising that could lead to the downfall of Mswati.

Of Swaziland's total population of just 1,4 m, the bottom 20 percent receive 4 percent of the country's GDP of \$6 billion. The country suffers the world's highest HIV/Aids infection rate at 26 percent of 15-49-year-olds, and the lowest life expectancy at 32 years. Meanwhile, king Mswati estimated personal fortune stands at \$200m. Despite the dire economic situation, the royal households' (Mswati's lavish lifestyle includes 13 wives and three fiancées) budget was increased by R40m, and the king and his cronies are planning new boastful expenditure such as the building of a new airport.

April 12 marked the anniversary of Mswati's father's suspension of the constitution in 1973. Although the constitution was formally reinstated in 2005, the repressive measures enacted in 1973 have since been bolstered by 'anti-terrorism' and the 'suppression of seditious activities' laws which have ensured that political parties remain banned and activists routinely arrested, tortured and even killed.

Overthrowing this repressive regime would be a big step forward, but the conditions which have led to the uprising in Swaziland will not be overcome simply through

the overthrow of Mswati, or even less by converting him to an officially ceremonial add-on to democracy like SA's tribal kings. The dire poverty and desperation experienced by the majority of the Swazi population is much the same in rural SA, where, also, the colonial-/Apartheid installed chiefs often still act as local despots. The aspirations of the Swazi people can only be satisfied through the democratic control and ownership of the economy based on planning for the needs of the country in co-operation with the South African working class as part of a socialist federation of southern Africa. Preparations should now be made for systematically organising, intensifying and coordinating mass action.

The DSM supports the demand to end the monarchy, and for the unbanning of political parties. Pressure should be intensified on the ANC government, which is propping up Mswati's regime, to cut its diplomatic protection. Cosatu's solidarity action with Swazi campaigns for democracy are a first step. Going forward, the best support SA workers and youth can give to brothers and sisters in Swaziland, alongside solidarity action, will be to struggle for not just political liberties but economic liberation.

# SAMWU strike a challenge to the ANC

by Weizmann Hamilton

The South African Municipal Workers Union's decision to embark on a rolling mass action campaign to commence in different provinces building up towards a national strike on 13th May, 2011 – two days before the ANC's planned 100 000-strong final election rally – represents the most serious breach in Cosatu (and the Tripartite Alliance) since the ANC came to power. The strike will go ahead despite accusations of sabotage by the ANC. The SAMWU decision follows a public announcement by its general secretary that it was no longer possible to call upon their members to vote ANC. SAMWU has taken this stance despite once again, along with Cosatu, pledging its support for the ANC in these elections.

## Open challenge to ANC

Not since the resolution by the Wits region of the Chemical, Paper, Wood, and Allied Workers Union (CEPPWAWU) in 2002 calling for a referendum on the whether the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) should remain in the Tripartite Alliance, has the African National Congress (ANC) faced such an open challenge by a Cosatu-affiliated trade union. The CEPPWAWU Wits region resolution led to a vicious witch-hunt, the beheading of the Wits regional leadership and the resignation of 6000 Ceppawu members who followed their leaders into the General Industrial Workers Union



Workers during SAMWU's strike at Pikitup in Johannesburg in April.

(GIWUSA) – an independent union. In the face of what is in reality a revolt against the ANC, there is absolutely no possibility of such a witch-hunt against SAMWU. Any such action would threaten the unity of the federation itself. In fact SAMWU claims that Cosatu is supporting its action.

As ANC spokesperson Jackson Mthembu intimated in despair, the demands of SAMWU's action – opposition to the Municipal Systems Amendment Bill, the sacking of Corporate Governance and Traditional Affairs Minister Shiceka, the abolition of provinces, an end to political dismissals, an end to privatisation and the transfer of municipal functions to

provinces – are not typical trade union demands; they are political.

The ANC has, until now, always been confident that no matter how bitter its disputes with Cosatu may appear to be in public, in the final analysis the union leaders would always capitulate to the ANC, at the expense of their own members, as has happened repeatedly in the public sector.

## Class collaborationist prison

For all Cosatu's insistence that it is an autonomous body within the Alliance, the reality is that it has long surrendered its political- and therefore class independence. As the Democratic Socialist Movement (DSM) has pointed out before, be-

cause the ANC is a party of capital, and remains, for now, the main vehicle for the maintenance of the capitalist order, the Tripartite Alliance is a coalition of incompatible class forces which acts as a class collaborationist prison for Cosatu members. The Cosatu leadership's role is to defend the ANC from the wrath of the working class.

## Political strike

Despite the leadership's denials that the strike is aimed at disrupting the elections, it is a strike against the ANC government by a Cosatu-affiliated union in support of consciously political demands in the critical stages of an election campaign. Even if some in the leadership may not be aware of it, this is an embryonic political challenge to the ANC's rule, pointing to the need for the Cosatu workers to break out of the Alliance prison and thereby show the way for the working class as a whole, in other federations, in struggling communities and in institutions of learning. The repercussions of SAMWU's action will be enormous; especially if the ANC vote suffers markedly in these elections, as seems likely. The recriminations that will follow are likely to place further, increasingly unbearable strains, on the Tripartite Alliance.

It is no accident that it is through the actions of SAMWU that this breach in the Tripartite Alliance has occurred. It is at the coalface of the

incompetence, nepotism and corruption in local government. Over the recent period, relations with the ANC have deteriorated sharply with local government leaders taking draconian action through victimisation of whistleblowers, sackings of workers and shop stewards as was the case recently in Ekurhuleni. More than any other Cosatu affiliate, Samwu has had direct experience of the increasingly brutal manner in which service delivery protests have been suppressed with a SAMWU member killed by police in a recent strike in Tshwane. Although hitherto loyal to the Alliance, SAMWU has always sharply criticised ANC's capitalist policies, and was the first to question support for Zuma.

## Reclaim Cosatu's class independence!

No doubt, with the South African Communist Party (SACP) in the forefront, strenuous efforts will be made to rein SAMWU in, and to prevent the logic inherent in its action from threatening the Alliance. But, even if not immediately, such efforts are bound to fail in the end. A rank and file network organising to reclaim the class independence of Cosatu should be set up as soon as possible, to counter any such attempts to stop the workers of SAMWU and elsewhere in the labour movement from drawing the political conclusions of their action.

# Nationalisation and the struggle for socialism

by Weizmann Hamilton



SACP's Cronin and ANCYL's Malema: both defending capitalism.



The Democratic Socialist Movement/ Izwi Labasebenzi will in June publish a pamphlet looking at the various aspects of South Africa's nationalisation debate from a socialist perspective, explaining amongst other things the development of the ANC's economic policy from the Freedom Charter to Gear and BEE, and now the NGP; the ANCYL's intense nationalisation campaign; Cosatu's failure to rally workers for nationalisation even as the situation facing its members literally spells it out right in front of their noses, as in the case of the threatened closure of textile factories not complying with minimum wages or the disastrous Aurora take-over of the Grootvlei and Orkney mines. It will also analyse the global economic crisis and the effective nationalisation of banks through bail-outs by capitalist governments and make the argument for socialism. Below follows a brief edited extract on the debate between the ANCYL's Julius Malema and the SACP's Jeremy Cronin:

## Ideological cross-dressing?

The main protagonists of South Africa's nationalisation debate, African National Congress Youth League president Julius Malema and South African Communist Party deputy general secretary Jeremy Cronin, each appears dressed-up in the other's ideological costume. The unapologetically pro-capitalist Malema argues for nationalisation

– normally a left policy. Supported by National Union of Mineworkers general secretary and SACP central committee member Frans Baleni, Cronin opposes nationalisation – a position normally of the right.

Whilst there is an aspect of comedy to this, for the working class it is in fact a tragedy mixed with farce. The debate has failed to clarify the class issues or to

locate the issue in the context of capitalism's deep global economic crisis. At a time also of ideological crisis of capitalism, neither the elected trade unions leaders nor the SACP, which poses as the official voice of the working class, have used the opportunity to make the argument for socialism and to develop a programme for the overthrow of capitalism.

## Way out of capitalist dead-end

Despite claims of an economic recovery by various analysts, the economic crisis is not over. Mass social deprivation is the nightmare facing millions not only in the former colonial world but also, increasingly, in the advanced capitalist countries. Given this perspective, working class leaders should place the crisis of capitalism at the centre of the nationalisation debate, providing a theoretical analysis and programmatic solution for their constituencies on how society in South Africa and internationally can find a way out of this disaster. Instead the debate has been polluted with pseudo-radical rhetoric and playground insults which may have generated much heat but very little light.

On the basis of the SACP's claims to stand for communism, the responsibility to provide a programme of action to overthrow capitalism and bring about the socialist transformation

of society should be pressing particularly sharply on the shoulders of its leadership.

## Pro-capitalist ANCYL champions nationalisation

Yet it was the unashamedly capitalist ANCYL that stormed the stage at the ANC's September 2010 National General Council (NGC), in an attempt to force the adoption of nationalisation of the mines as official policy. The leadership succeeded in sidestepping the issue at the NGC referring it for research and debate at the ANC's 2012 conference. This has enabled them to reassure big business that economic policy remains unchanged for now. However in itself this decision represented an important turning point in the debate. The fact that even Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) mining tycoon Patrice Motsepe openly supports nationalisation of the mines is perhaps the clearest evidence that the ANCYL's position on this question represents that of an increasingly dominant faction within the larger ANC. The debate was deferred because it can no longer be suppressed.

However, anti-communism that is now a major feature of the League's ideological profile, as reflected in its strident opposition to the 'communist takeover' of the ANC. It supports nationalisation

not as a step towards the expropriation of the capitalist class and the socialist transformation of society, but from the right. Despite BEE, black-owned shares make up less than 10 percent of the JSE. Representing the impotent black capitalist class, which has failed after 17 years even to get a permanent seat at the capitalist table let alone dislodge white capital, the League's call is not the bellow of the powerful, but the bleat of the meek.

## SACP blocks route to socialism

The SACP leadership's ideological cowardice, in contrast, goes beyond its offensive against nationalisation as captured in the words of the Young Communist League's Buti Manemela, who describes the idea of any attempt at advancing towards socialism now, as suicidal.

As Cronin confesses in the *Sunday Independent* (17/04/11), the SACP abandoned socialism as a revolutionary objective not long after its birth in 1921. As long ago as the late 1920s, Cronin informs us, the SACP, after 'self critically interrogat[ing] its own tendency towards a narrow "workerism"' embraced, in the place of the socialist revolution, the 'national democratic revolution', instead.

When the SACP today cham-

# women and the struggle for socialism



## it doesn't have to be like this!

by Sheri Hamilton

In the next few editions of *Izwi labasebenzi* we will be featuring a regular column on women and the struggle for socialism. In this issue, we review the new book *It doesn't have to be like this* by Christine Thomas. Thomas is a longstanding member and former national women's organiser of one of our sister organisations in the Committee for a Workers' International, the Socialist Party of England and Wales. While the majority of women have in common the experience of oppression, it is differently lived depending on class, race, country, ethnicity and religion. As Thomas' book relates in the main to the experiences of working class women in Europe, we will as far as possible link these to the South African context.

8th March 2011 marked the 101st anniversary of International Women's Day which this year was celebrated against the backdrop of the momentous upheavals in North Africa and the Middle East. The upsurge of working class struggles, including general strikes and occupations of workplaces and government buildings, now also in the industrialised countries of Europe and the US as well as in Asia is testify to a major re-awakening of the working class. Because many women in North Africa and the Middle East suffer some of the most extreme forms of oppression, their visible presence in fighting alongside their male counterparts is of particular significance and an inspiration to women all over the world.

In South Africa too, women have been at the forefront of many of the service delivery- and other community protests. Women were also a vocal and militant component of last year's bitter public sector strike because of their numerical weight in the nursing and teaching professions. These struggles will re-build the confidence of women to fight also against the problems that are of particular concern to them. This will in turn draw in significantly greater numbers of women into struggle. It is through these struggles that women will begin to seek out the ideas of socialism to fight the backlash seen in the growing acceptance of images and behaviours that objectify and degrade women; in the rise of both increasingly overt and more subtle forms of women's oppression.



A female worker leads a contingent of health care workers in the massive Johannesburg march on August 26 during the 2010 public sector strike.

PIC: LIV SHANGE

It is women who carry the greatest burden of the reality that has earned SA the world's number one spot for inequality between rich and poor. SA's high and increasing levels of infant and maternal mortality are worse than those in many poorer countries. Women make up half the labour force but still only earn two thirds the salary of men, as they predominantly work in low wage sectors such as domestic work. Women in domestic employment have been among the hardest hit in the 'blood bath' of job losses totaling over 1.3 million as a result of the 'Great Recession'. They are also more likely to head the poorest households. In 2003, 75 percent of black African women under 30 were unemployed – a figure most likely worse now after the recession. Moreover, unemployment, at an unparalleled 53% of the working age population, increases pressure on women whose main responsibility it becomes to fend for an increasing number of extended family members dependent on one wage earner or the meagre income of a pensioner. Thus, despite an impressive array of legislation concerning women's rights in South Africa, they still disproportionately battle poverty and economic hardship and are, especially in the home, subjected to amongst the highest levels of physical and emotional abuse and

violence in the world. An estimated 50 000 women are raped every year in SA – that is one every ten minutes. A girl-child born in SA is more likely to be raped in her lifetime than make her way through school. In a study of the attitudes among women and men the Centre for the Study of Violence found that most black women believe a man has the right have sex with his wife or partner whenever he wants. In a study among black teenagers, it was found that the majority believed that it is fine for a man to force himself on a woman if he knows her or if she accepted a drink from him. In a World Health (WHO) study 40% of the girls interviewed said that their first experience of sex was non-consensual. Gender inequality and oppression are linked to the capitalist system itself and the world economic crisis now threatens to reverse the gains women have achieved over the last period. Although there may be no immediate success in outlawing the protections women have in laws against discrimination, abuse and violence, attempts to undermine them by appealing to religion and tradition cannot be ruled out as has been seen in the US and elsewhere with efforts to re-assert control over women's bodies through proscribing or limiting their rights to abortion. This is also evident in the reappearance of increas-

ingly bold affirmations of outdated religious and cultural practices that subordinate women's role, status and position in society.

**It doesn't have to be like this**  
In the Introduction to Thomas' book, she explains that although the oppression and exploitation of women have been in existence for thousands of years, this has not always been the case and indeed, because of the conditions that exist now, 'it does not have to be like this' today. For the overwhelming majority of human history men and women lived in equality and although there was a sexual division of labour, this did not in any way bestow upon women an inferior status. Thomas poses some of the questions that women may have when they enter into struggle to try and change the way things, are such as: *should women try to transform themselves? Should they try to alter men, or is fundamental change of the economic system needed? Should women fight on their own, together with other women or united with men? Can we change bit by bit or is a more radical transformation of necessary?*

Thomas' book is a succinct and

well argued answer to these questions. It is accessibly written and packs in just 75 pages what every woman and man should know about the oppression and exploitation of women and how to struggle for socialism. The first part of the book traces the history of women's oppression until the present and shows how oppression was connected to the emergence, around 10, 000 years ago, of class-based societies in which the family became a key social structure. Women and men have lived for the greatest part of the history of their humanity in harmony and co-operation with each other and with nature. In early human society, there was no ownership of private property and production was socialised, hence its characterisation by Friedrich Engels, Marx's trusted friend and comrade, as 'primitive communism' in his book *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. Thomas explains how capitalism, the dominant form of class society today, underpins and reinforces the problems which women continue to face and how ending oppression is linked to ending capitalism and class society.

Part two looks at how women can organise to fight for women's liberation. It argues that it is important to fight for every improvement possible in the lives of women but, because of the way in which capitalism is structured and organised, real liberation cannot be achieved through the gradual reform of the current system. A radical transformation of the way in which society is structured is needed. Therefore, as Thomas maintains, the main struggle is not of women against men, or of women changing themselves but of women organising and uniting with working class men to end capitalism and replace it with a socialist society.



Christine Thomas' *It doesn't have to be like this – women and the struggle for socialism*, Socialist Publications, 2010 can be bought online from [www.socialistbooks.org.uk](http://www.socialistbooks.org.uk) or by emailing [bookshop@socialistparty.org.uk](mailto:bookshop@socialistparty.org.uk)

pions the idea that 'socialism is the future', and calls on us to 'build it now' the party means that socialism can be achieved through incremental reforms over an undefined period, renouncing the necessity for a socialist revolution. This explains why the SACP supports black economic empowerment; why its leaders sit in a capitalist cabinet; why it is opposed to separating itself

from the capitalist ANC and operating as an independent political entity; is committed to the preservation of the Tripartite Alliance and to subordinating itself to the ANC within it. The SACP's socialist rhetoric is a mask to conceal its real role – to block the path to the overthrow of capitalism and the socialist transformation of society. When the working class rises up to overthrow capitalism, the logic of the SACP's present policies means that it will play a counter-

revolutionary role, siding with capital against the working class. The condemnation of the actions of the public sector workers during the 2010 strike is a sign of the role the party will play in the future.

### Socialist argument for nationalisation

For any communist worthy of the name, the capitalist crisis provides more ample ammunition than ever to demonstrate that society's problems cannot be solved on

capitalist basis. Capitalism itself proves that the permanent eradication of poverty and war require the reconstruction of society on the basis of a democratically planned economy laying the foundations for prosperity for all, genuine equality and social solidarity.

Neither the ANC /YL nor the SACP/YCL is putting forward such a socialist programme in the nationalisation debate. Their battle is, in the final analysis, a phoney

war between the rival capitalist factions they represent. There are no fundamental ideological differences between them. Genuine socialists on the other hand raise the demand for nationalisation, understood to mean placing ownership and control of the means of production distribution and exchange in the hands of the state under workers democratic control, to point to its potential as an absolutely indispensable first step in the construction of a socialist society.



# Crisis in MEWUSA: the DSM responds

by DSM executive committee

## We stand accused...

In the run-up to the Metal and Electrical Workers Union of South Africa (MEWUSA) congress held March 18-20, members of the union's outgoing National Executive Committee (NEC) – outgoing General Secretary Eddie Thobejane and President Dan Lengoabala – engaged in a propaganda campaign claiming that the Democratic Socialist Movement was conspiring to take over the union. This is our response.

## What we really stand for

The DSM is a revolutionary socialist organisation that fights to unite the struggles of workers, poor communities, students and youth with the aim of bringing about the socialist transformation of South Africa and the world. We are the South African section of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), a worldwide revolutionary party which exists in almost 50 countries. The formation of a new, socialist mass workers' party, is, we believe, the most important task facing the working class in SA and internationally.

Wherever we have members – in trade unions, community- and student organisations – we work openly to win maximum support for our ideas through democratic debate. We actively participate in the building of the working class movement – trade unions, and the organisations of the youth, students and communities. We strive to revive the traditions of democratic workers control of unions and all

working class organisations, to turn them into instruments to fight for concessions from the bosses and the state while also explaining that poverty, exploitation and oppression can only be eradicated by ending the dictatorship of the capitalist market and replacing it with workers' democracy and socialism.

We make no secret of wanting to recruit those workers who share our ideas, not through conspiracies but by patient explanation of our ideas on theory, strategy and tactics, and testing these out in struggle.

## Our record in MEWUSA

It was the DSM which encouraged the over 4000 mine workers from Murray & Roberts in Rustenburg who had been betrayed by leaders of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), a Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu) affiliate, to join MEWUSA, an affiliate of rival National Council of Unions (Nactu) to fight against their unfair dismissal. This has placed MEWUSA on the map as a champion of working class solidarity. It also opened up a whole new region and industry enabling rapid membership growth for MEWUSA whilst other unions suffered from the retrenchments escalating in the recession.

The DSM has also played a key role in the Mine Line factory occupation. As the first workers' occupation post-Apartheid it has re-tied the historical knot between the struggles against the capitalist bosses under white minority rule and those now tak-

ing place under democracy. The occupation is acting as a beacon for other workers facing the onslaught of the bosses who are determined to make workers pay for the crisis of their system.

Our small forces within MEWUSA have begun efforts to mobilise the membership to reclaim democratic control of their union from leaders who do not support these and other key struggles. As part of these efforts we supported a range of resolutions focused on workers' control and a fighting programme for the union as well as an alternative leadership slate, which included some of our members, at the congress.

## Roots of crisis in MEWUSA

The outgoing NEC's blatant looting of the union finances, failure to organise struggles to fight the bosses' offensive – short-time, lay-offs, retrenchments etc – speaks volumes about how they see their role in the union movement. This is from unique to MEWUSA. This has become common practice in trade unions internationally. The basis for this lies in the ideological demoralisation of the leadership of the labour movement: their lack of an alternative to capitalism precisely when this system stands exposed as historically bankrupt. World capitalism is in its worst crisis in 80 years, with economic stagnation, social welfare cuts and mass impoverishment. Still, SA trade union leaders try to take cover behind reformism – the idea that the capitalist system can be changed step by step to end poverty and provide jobs, education, hous-



MEWUSA members in a DSM mass meeting in Rustenburg, June 2010.

ing etc – while betraying the members with incompetence, corruption and collaboration with the bosses.

This outlook explains the actions of the outgoing NEC-clique. As the congress approached, it became clear they would cling onto their positions by fair means or foul, even at the cost of splitting the union. In a glaring admission that they had lost the confidence of their own membership, they massaged delegation sizes, upwards in regions where they hoped to get support based on ignorance of their role, downwards where their crimes were known. Certain regions were starved of resources to attend the congress. In an attempt to conceal their crimes and confuse the membership into thinking that there was a power struggle between ambitious individuals, the outgoing NEC suspended, without charge, Media and Campaigns Organiser, Mametlwe Sebei and Legal Officer, Ivor Mokwena.

At the congress, clauses never adopted at any congress mysteriously appeared in the version of the constitution distributed. There were no financial reports for the last two years, no reports of the outgoing leadership, no entertaining of constitutional amendments, any resolutions or debate.

This cabal even called in the police, hired private security and bouncers (at R10 000/hour according to one of the security firms), to protect them from their own members! Resorting to the biggest crime in trade union tradition – class collaboration – the outgoing NEC invited bosses of companies where MEWUSA organises, including the Mine Line liquidator, who is determined to liquidate the company and therefore destroy workers' jobs and livelihood, who allegedly paid for the bouncers and openly tried to bribe delegates into voting for the outgoing leadership! The congress ended inconclusively allowing the outgoing-NEC to retain office by default. Those who want a genuine democratic conference, to unite the union and to fight the bosses have had no alternative but to elect their own leadership in the interim to prevent the collapse of the union, continue to servicing members by seeking the interventions of the Labour Court.

The ex-NEC in the meantime, blinded by their determination to

stay in power at all costs, are arbitrarily suspending staff, withholding travel allowances to selected organizers and holding secret meetings behind the backs of the workers. Some officials like comrade Sebei are even receiving threatening anonymous phone calls.

## The socialist alternative

As we point out above, the developments in MEWUSA are not unique. Cosatu affiliates such as Popcru and CWU are deeply divided over corruption and misrepresentation of workers' interests. While over a million jobs were lost in SA during the 2008-09 recession, not a single general strike was called! Instead union leaders place themselves at the head of struggles that break out from below only to betray them, as happened during the 2010 public sector strike. The crisis has put the leadership of all working class organisations to the test, and most, including the outgoing MEWUSA leadership, have failed.

Based on Marxist analysis of the world situation, our perspective for the period ahead is of a long economic down-turn with continued and intensified attacks on workers' jobs and living conditions. The only way forward in this situation is to fight! Mass action is the way to combat increased casualisation, to defend jobs and wages. But there can be no lasting gains under capitalism especially during a crisis such as this one. Worker leaders need to chart a way out of this dead-end, for the socialist transformation of society. The alternative to socialism is declining living standards, division and demoralisation among workers, increased racial and gender oppression, wars and environmental destruction.

To arm itself to lead this battle, the working class needs to reclaim and rebuild its organisations. This is why the DSM supports the call for reviving the traditions of democracy and workers' control of MEWUSA, for ending all privileges, for the right of recall, for the election of a new leadership to be held to account by these principles, and for arming the union with a fighting, socialist programme. If this is what we are accused of, we plead guilty!

## What is reformism?

The material basis for reformism was the upswing in the capitalist economy 1950-1973. In the advanced industrialised countries the workers' movement won significant gains such as the 'welfare state'. Worldwide, leaders of trade unions, workers' parties and liberation movements such as the ANC, came to believe the working class could be liberated from exploitation and oppression through gradual improvements within the framework of capitalism. But this was an exceptional period for capitalism. When the boom came to an end, the capitalist class unleashed a neo-liberal onslaught against the working class which intensified further with the collapse of the Soviet Union and other Stalinist dictatorships. Across the world, 'Communist', 'Social Democratic' and 'Labour' parties, trade union leaders and other left-wing formations capitulated to the capitalist ideological propaganda that 'There Is No Alternative' and the false claim that 'really existing socialism' had failed.

Unable to understand the difference between genuine socialism and its Stalinist perversion, such leaders threw out the socialist baby with the Stalinist bathwater. Unlike most trade union- and political leaders internationally, the SACP and Cosatu

leadership, which uneasily dominate SA's trade union movement, retained much of the radical rhetoric from the apartheid-era workers struggles under apartheid. This radical rhetoric was used to mask their ideological demoralization about the prospects for socialism from the workers who, at a time of the near-insurrectionary upheavals of the 1980s, had drawn the opposite conclusions from their leaders: that the struggle against apartheid was simultaneously against capitalism; that the aim of the struggle for democracy also was for socialism.

Without a revolutionary perspective for socialist transformation of society, trade union leaders are bound to confine themselves to deals with bosses and governments. In times of capitalist crisis, the veil of reformism is torn away revealing such leaders as class collaboration and strike breakers. As seen in MEWUSA, such (mis)leaders view strikes, factory occupations and mass struggles in general as disruptive nuisances to which they respond with hostility. The logic of this position is to undermine workers' control of unions, abuse unions as stepping stones towards elevation into government positions and the corporate world. Corruption and looting of union coffers inevitably follow.

# Ukuhlala ngenkani eMine Line: kuvula indlela yokuzabalaza

NguWilson Makola, ushilo we-NguWilson Makola, ushilo we-



Mine Line workers blocking the factory gates, October 22 2010.

alekela igunya, mhla ziyishumi nesishagalombili kuAgasti 2010, uMilder wanyamala. Lokhu kwenzeka emveni kokuthi en-gakhokhanganga iminyaka emithathu edlule (2007-2010) isikh-wama sokuhlalazeka abasebenzi. Uvamise ukukwela abasebenzi iliv, amaholo namabhonasi.

### Ukhlala ngenkani embonini

Abasebenzi bahlanganela efekthri olunzulu ngokugqhubekayo efekthri. Abantu ababekhona bathola ulwazi wobumbano emagcekeni efekthri. 2010 saba nomhlangotho omkhulu zingamashumi amabili kuNovemba 2010 saba nomhlangotho omkhulu ngobumbano emagcekeni efekthri. Ukhlala ngenkani embonini ngokubambisana nomhlakazi wenkampani, iCommonwealth Trust kanye nenkampani yonogada ukuc bangaqhubeki nokuhlolisa impahla efekthri. Kuningi okwase-kubenomthetho osindayo kwimi-notho yaseMhlabeni jikelele. Emva nangesikhathi sontengo imisebenzi eyizigidi yalaleka ngenxa yokudlulizwa, ukhulishulwa kwamaholo, ukusebenza isikhathi esincane, uhlakazo lwezimbongi kanye nokulawwa kwamafekthri. Abaqashi batfuna ukuthi abasebenzi bathwale icala ekungelona elabo. Abasayenzi inzuzo elindelile.

### Izinselelo

Umzabalazo wethu unezingqinam- kanye neJob Creation Trust (JCT) ukuc basinike uxhasomali. I-IDC ikhombiwe ukuzimisela okukhulu mayelana nokusimka usizo, iz- iphuzwele ngokushesha ukusini- abafuna ukufaka endalini impahla yasefekthri. Zingamashumi amabili nesithupha kuNovemba 2010 saya eNkantolo Ephuzulu yasePitoli ukuc siphikise ukukhishwa kanye kwamaholo, ukusebenza isikhathi esincane, uhlakazo lwezimbongi kanye nokulawwa kwamafekthri. Abaqashi batfuna ukuthi abasebenzi bathwale icala ekungelona elabo. Abasayenzi inzuzo elindelile.

### Ukubaluleka kokhulala ngenkani eMine Line fekthri

Ukuntengantenga komnotho ngokubambisana nomhlakazi wenkampani, iCommonwealth Trust kanye nenkampani yonogada ukuc bangaqhubeki nokuhlolisa impahla efekthri. Kuningi okwase-kubenomthetho osindayo kwimi-notho yaseMhlabeni jikelele. Emva nangesikhathi sontengo imisebenzi eyizigidi yalaleka ngenxa yokudlulizwa, ukhulishulwa kwamaholo, ukusebenza isikhathi esincane, uhlakazo lwezimbongi kanye nokulawwa kwamafekthri. Abaqashi batfuna ukuthi abasebenzi bathwale icala ekungelona elabo. Abasayenzi inzuzo elindelile.

### Wobambisano

Umzabalazo wase Mine Line fekthri uthola ukwasekwa yizinh- langano nezimiso ezahlukahlukeno. Emveni kokugaliswa komzabalazo ikomiti lobambiswano lasungulwa. Emalungeni ekomiti kubalwa kuwo abasebenzi beMEWUSA (Metal and Electrical Workers' Union of South Africa, inyunyana ehlela eMine Line), Copac (Cooperative Policy and Alternative Centre), DSM (Democratic Socialist Move- ment), APF (Anti-Privatisation Forum), LPM (Landless People's Movement), ZACF (Zabalaza Anarchist-Communist Front), DLF (Democratic Left Front) kanye nabafundi baseNyuvesi yaseWits. Ukuhlala eMine Line fekthri kuphinde kwathola ukwasekwa emazweni omhlaba, kakhulu- kazi kwinqunquthela yeshumi yeCommittee for a Workers' International (CWI) eyayibanjliwe

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### Gozi ehlasimuliso

Ukuhlala ngenkani efekthri ku- landelwa wukufakwa kwesicelo sokuhlakazwa kwenkampani ngumqashi wangaleso sikhathi uWyand Mulder obesekhwabani- izigididi zamakandi ngaphambi kokufuna ukuthi inkampani ihlaka- zwe. Waboleka imali eAbsa nge- gama lenkampani ukucze aqhubeka nokwenza amanye amabhizinesi akhe kwezinye izikhungo. Ngenxa yokuthi umqashi en- gavamanga ukuzimbanda- kanya nemithetho yokuphepha neyezempilo, ngomhla zizine kuAgasti 2010 kwaba nengozi eyaphetha ngokubalala abasebenzi abathathu. Emzawweni yokuc-



Imashi eThunisiya ngoJanuwari 2011: abe- sifazane babandq elibaleleke emza- balazweni yaseNyakatho ne-Afrika.

## > Iyabqhubeka olwasekhasini 1:

# Kusukela ekhayiro kuya ekapa...

bezwe namacebo okwusebenzisa, bashintsshane ekuphatheni izik- hundla, kungabi khona amalung- elo amakhulu alabo abakhethiwe futhi kubenomthetho wokubasusa ezikhundleni uma bengenzi kahle. > Okuningi ekhasini 8-9

kuphela ozwakaliphikiswa abak- hohlakele kodwa baphinde ba- ngqale izicubu zombuso (njengoba ingakabi khona namanje ikhambi eGibhithe naseThunisiya), baphinde babhukunge izimakethe zobungx- owankulu ugobo ukucze bakhe imphakathi yobudlelana dawonye lapho abantu bengceke bakhethiwe ubuholi bobungxoxwanakulu njalo emveni kweminyaka emihlanu, kodwa bahlanganyele ekuphatheni umnotho, futhi ngenlando yeningi

Impumelelo ekubhukqeni umbuso wabacindezeli eGibhithe naseT- ubungxoxwanakulu buxakanisekile esazokhunjathela umhlaba njengoba futhi kuvuleleka nezinkcinga emiphakathini. Inqikithi yamadle- landawonye ukwakhahla inhlangano ezimile yesigaba sabasebenzi kanye nezinhlangano zemzabalazo ezinqunquthela phambili ukulwa, ziqinisekise ukuthi akubi khona ukubuyela emuva, bangaketuli

Sibiza bonke abasebenzi base Mzansi ne Afrika naseMhlabeni wonkana ukuthi batunde kubase- benzi base Mine Line/TAP Engi- neering ukuthi ikhona enye indlela yokukwela imisebenzi. Siyisigaba sabasebenzi kumele sikhlangane futhi sifundisane ukuthi silwa kanjani nokulahlakeka kwemisebenzi, ukudlulizwa, ukulahlakazwa kwe- imboni kanye nokulawwa kwama- fekthri. Ukuhlululwa kwesigaba sabasebenzi akube wumsebenzi wabo ukukwenza lokho.

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### > I-Job Creation Trust yezinyunyan kumele ilikelele ngoxhaso mali njengoba izimali zakhokhwa yithina basebenzi ukucze kuvikelwe imisebenzi.

> Ukuhlala ngenkani embonini ngokubambisana nomhlakazi wenkampani, iCommonwealth Trust kanye nenkampani yonogada ukuc bangaqhubeki nokuhlolisa impahla efekthri. Kuningi okwase-kubenomthetho osindayo kwimi-notho yaseMhlabeni jikelele.

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# Ukudayiswa komsebenzi:

## Wumzabalazo woquqaba kuphela ongakuqeda

nguWeizmann Hamilton noLiv Shange

**Umnyango weZomsebenzi uphakamisa ukushintshwa komthetho okubalwa kuwo ukuqinisa ukulawula abasebenzi abaqhamuka emazweni angaphandle kwaseMzansi neAfrika, okungabhebhethela ukuzondwa kwabezizwe. Kulo mucu weZwi labasebenzi, noma isikhala sisivumela kuphela ukuthi siphawule ngokuphakanyiswayo mayelana nokudayisa umsebenzi. Kubalulekile nokho ngenxa yokuthi ukudayiswa komsebenzi sekube nomthelelo wokuhlehlela emuva mayelana nezinto ezatholakala ngenxa yokuzabalaza kwesigaba sabasebenzi. Konke lokhu kuqhakambisa isimo esinobungozi sokuthi uMzansi neAfrika unwebe uhla lwesibili lwemakethe yomsebenzi. Izwi labasebenzi/i Democratic Socialist Movement, iyesekeka isimemezelolo sokuqeda kwalesi sincelagazi sohlelo. Sithemba ukuthi ukuphakanyiswa kwalolu shintsho kufanele kubukwe njengemvume kaHulumeni kwizikhala zoquqaba mayelana nokudayiswa komsebenzi okukade kuphakanyiswa yiCosatu nezinye izinyunyana. Uma iziphakamiso zenziwa njengokunqunyiweyo lokhu kuyosho ukuqalwa kwale mboni, noma kungaphimiselananga kanjalo. Kodwa ukudayiswa komsebenzi kuwukhiye wongxiwankulu ukuthi baphakamise izinga lokuxhaphaza abasebenzi, futhi yindlovuyangena kuphela engaqinisekisa ukuthi lezi ziphakamiso ziyenziwa. Lokhu kusho umkhankaso oqinile woquqaba oluholwa izinhlangano zabasebenzi olwa nokudayiswa komsebenzi nakho konke okungaqondakali, konke kufanele uHulumeni ampintshelwe ekhoneni ngalokho akushilo futhi kuphikiswe umkhankaso wongxiwankulu wokuzama ukuthi ushintsho lomthetho lungenzeki.**

Kafishane nje, iziphakamiso zoMnyango eziphathelene nokudayiswa

komsebenzi zithi:

- Ukuvimbela kocwaso kumabheneffithi kanye nasemiholweni phakathi kwabasebenzi abenza umsebenzi owoodwa.

- Ukubuyekeza kwegama elethi 'umqashi' kangokuba lowo owamukela abasebenzi abalethwe wumdayisi womsebenzi kumele achazwe njengomqashi wokuqala (njengokuthi- iPosi hhayi i-T&L njengoba kuchaziwe encwadini esekhasini 6).

- Kuthathwe ngokuthi bonke abasebenzi basebenza ngokugcwele ngaphandle kokuthi umqashi engakhombisa izizathu zokuthi yinindaba bengaqashiwe ngokugcwele abanye.

- Kubhaliswe zonke izinkampani ezingabameli bomsebenzi bese kwakhiwa inkampani kaHulumeni emele umsebenzi lapho zonke izikhala zemisebenzi zizoyiswa khona futhi kwakhiwe uhlabo bonke abasebenzi abangaqashiwe.

- Kuqiniseke isigwebo lapho umthetho ophathelene nokusebenza uphuliwe khona.

Uma lesiphakamiso senziwe, ukubuyekeza kwegama umqashi kuzokwenza abadayisi msebenzi bangasabizwa njengabaqashi bese abaqashi bangakwazi ukuqhubeka nokuncintsha abasebenzi imiholo, amabheneffithi kanye nokuvikelwa wumthetho wabasebenzi ovuleleke kuphela kubasebenzi abaqashiwe ngokugcwele. Sekuhlanganiswe konke, umthelela wokwenza njengoba kunqunyiwe mayelana noshintsho kuzokwenza izimboni zokudayiswa komsebenzi zingayenzi inzuzo bese kuzenza zingak-



Iningi labasebenzi basePosini baqashwe ngabadayisi msebenzi futhi liholelwa yimali encane kakhulu njengoba kuchaziwe encwadini esekhasini 6.

wazi ukuqhubeka nokusebenza.

Nomakuthiwani, ukwenza ushintsho emthethweni ngekekuze ngezindlela zePhalamende kodwa ngendlela kuphela yomzabalazo oqinile woquqaba lwabasebenzi. Ngokushesha iziphakamiso zatholana nokuphikiswa yizinhlangano ezimele abaqashi okubalwa kuzo usoseshini wabadayisi msebenzi, izinhlangano zombusazwe ezimele ubungxowankulu kanye nabahlaziyi. Abadayisi msebenzi sebeqalile ukuphendula ngokudiliza izinkumbulu zabasebenzi, njengoba sibonile embhalweni ongenhla. uKhongolose (iANC) uzohlehlisa izinyawo ngenxa yengcindezi evela kubaqashi – njengoba sibazi ukuthi bangabameli bezifiso zesigaba sobungxowankulu abamnyama abasafufusa, bamele ukuvikelwa kobungxowankulu kanye nokubhebhethekiswa kwenqubo yesigaba sobungxowankulu yokuba wozwi lakhe ekulawuleni umnotho, kubona ukudayiswa komsebenzi

kuyithuluzi elibalulekile lokucindezela ukubiza kwamandla omsebenzi bese bekhuphula inzuzo.

Okokuqala wukuthi uHulumeni kaK-hongolose wenze lesi sivumelwane mayelana nokudayiswa komsebenzi ngenxa yengcindezi efakwe wuquqaba kanye nokwenzela ozakwabo iCosatu ukuze ikhombise njengobufakazi ukuthi umbimbi luyasebenza, ukuze iCosatu ikhankasele uKhongolose kukhetho lohulumeni basekhaya oluzayo. Kusaqhubeka ukubhantshiswa kwabaholi beCosatu ngokuthi unobhala jikelele kaKhongolose uGwede Mantashe kanye noNgqongqoshe weZomsebenzi uNel-

isiwe Oliphant bayaphika ukuzibophezela kwigama 'lomsebenzi ongcono' -lokhu kusho umsebenzi weholo eliphilisayo, elinesidima, izimo ezivikelekile lapho amalungelo abantu ehlonishwa khona (ngokwe-International Labour Organisation). Ukuhlelela ku-kaKhongolose ezibophweni zawo zomsebenzi ongcono kukodwa kukhombisa ukuthi akahambisani noshintsho emthethweni okhulumela ngokudayiswa komsebenzi. Ukuthasisela, abaqashi abaningi abayigqiziqakala imithetho ekumele ivikele abasebenzi bese uMnyango weZomsebenzi unikezele ngezibusiso ngokuthi uthule uthi du kanti futhi uqashe inani elincane kakhulu labahloli okwenza kubenzima ukuqinisekisa ukuthi abaqashi benza ngakho (bona umzekeliso wombhala ekhasini 4). Siyakuqondisa ukuthi isiphakamiso soshintsho ekudayisweni komsebenzi sithathwe ngezinsolo

kubadayisi misebenzi – nabanye abasebenzi, becabangela ukuthi ukufakwa 'kokumiswa' esikhundleni 'somthetho' kuyigxathu eliya emuva. Abaholi beCosatu bavumelene nalezi zinsolo besekeka ukulwa nokudayiswa komsebenzi ngokuthi baphikisane nokushintshwa komthetho bethi akumiswe abadayisi msebenzi. Noma le nkulumo yeCosatu ingabonakala ibhodla umlilo kangakanani, ingaba nomthelelo omubi kumzabalazo olwa nokudayiswa komsebenzi. Lokhu kususa amehlo kushintsho oluphathelene nokudayiswa komsebenzi bese linika uHulumeni ithuba lokuyikelele zonke iziphakamiso zoshintsho lokhu bese kunikezela impilo ende kwimboni yokudayiswa komsebenzi.

Kunokuba ilokhu ilwa impi kama-buyaze mayelana nemisho, iCosatu kumele ilungiselele umkhankaso woquqaba ozofofaka ingcindezi ukuthi iziphakamiso zoshintsho kumthetho ophathelene nokudayiswa komsebenzi mazenziwe kanye nokuqinisa kwabaholi kanye nokuhlululisa futhi nokuboshwa kwabaqashi abangahambisani nemithetho. Abazenza zisho-shovu beCosatu bafuna ukuyekela ithuba elibalulekile lokugandaya ukudayiswa komsebenzi.

Izwi labasebenzi/iDSM iyaweseka kakhulu umzabalazo wokuthi bonke abasebenzi abangaphansi kohlelo lokudayiswa komsebenzi bahlangane, bahleleke futhi balwele iholo elilinganayo kumsebenzi olinganayo, ukuqashwa ngokugcwele kanye nomsebenzi osesimweni esingcono. Siphinde siseke umkhankaso wokuqeda kwabadayisi msebenzi – igxathu lokuqala kulokhukulwa kufanele kube wumkhankaso woquqaba lwabasebenzi, izinyunyana kanye nezinhlangano ezilwela inhla-lakahle ukuthi zifune iziphakamiso zoshintsho emthethweni ophathelene nokudayiswa komsebenzi zenziwe ngokushesha.

## democratic socialist movement

what we stand for:

### ★ Jobs

- Immediate moratorium on retrenchments
- Massive programme of public works
- Retool factories for production of socially necessary goods
- R3500 minimum monthly wage
- No to privatisation – for immediate re-nationalisation of all privatised services and assets
- No time limit for unemployment benefit

### ★ Health

- An accessible, decent single state-funded health service free at point of use
- Expand training and learning facilities and enrolment of medical and health students; fill all empty posts
- Nationalise all pharmaceutical companies under democratic workers control

### ★ Gender

- Equal pay for work of equal value
- Combat gender-based violence, rape and abuse – gender-trained staff in all police stations and courts
- Access to decent shelters for all abused women and children
- End police harassment of sex workers – decriminalise sex work

### ★ Youth and education

- Free, quality public education for all – end tuition fees from pre-school to tertiary level
- End academic and financial exclusions; cancel student debt
- Restore privatised services to university/ school control
- Re-open all closed teacher training colleges – fill empty posts
- Mass 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, electricity, water, modern sanitation for all
- Scrap all rent-, rates-, electricity arrears for working class communities
- No to evictions, water- and electricity cut-offs
- No to pre-paid meters

### ★ Transport

- An affordable efficient and integrated public transport system
- No job losses due to the Bus Rapid

Transport systems – guaranteed jobs for taxi industry employees

- Minimum wage, organising and legal rights for taxi industry workers

### ★ Trade union democracy

- Election of all worker representatives - from shop steward to highest decision making structures – subject to right of recall
- Salaries of union officials to be based on average of skilled workers in the sector
- Close down union investment companies; for democratic control of investment decisions by 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 immigrant workers
- Equal pay, conditions and rights for all
- No to defending South African bosses against foreign bosses

- Socialist internationalism and solidarity through direct links of workers and trade unions

- Joint programmes to defend jobs and conditions across borders

### ★ Land reform and agriculture

- Expropriation and nationalisation of monopoly-owned commercial farms under democratic worker control and management. Compensation on basis of proven need only
- Restore food security through abolition of import parity pricing; for state-controlled prices for domestic agricultural produce

### ★ Socialism

- Build a mass workers party on a socialist programme
- Nationalise top-five JSE companies, the Reserve Bank and commercial banks under democratic worker control and management. Compensation only on basis of proven need
- For a democratically worked-out plan of production for social need, not profit
- End global warming, no to fossil and nuclear energy – for green technology in energy production and transport
- For a socialist South Africa, a socialist Africa and socialist world





MAY  
- JUNE  
2011

# IZWI LABASEBENZI

SOCIALIST VOICE OF WORKERS AND YOUTH



INTENGO  
R4

## KUSUKELA EKHAYIRO KUYA EKAPA... ...UBUNDLELANDAWONYE BUWUMHLAHLANDLELA

**Abasebenzi baseNyakatho neAfrika babuyisele ubundlelandawonye kwibhalazwe lesombusazwe**

nguLiv Shange

Umzabalazo wabasebenzi nabantabasha baseGibhithe uketule uMongameli uHosni Mubarak mhlazaneziyishuminanye kuFebhuwari, 2011, esikhathini esingaphansi kancane kwenyanga emva kokubhukuqwa kombuso kamongameli waseThunisiya uBen Ali owaze wabaleka ezweni mhlaziyishuminane. Kusukela ngoJaniwari, imizabalazo emikhulu izamazamise imibuso yozwi kaliphikiswa izamazisiwe eYameni, eSiriya, eBhareyini, eLibhiya, eJodani, eSawudiArabhiya, eIrakhi, eAlijeriya, eMorokho, eJibhuti, eLebhanoni... Igagasi lomzabalazo lisabalale kusuka eNyakatho yaseAfrika naseMphakathi neMpumalanga la yezwekazi; lathinta cishe bonke oHulumeni bamaArabhu, abaphathi bamazwe aseShayina kuya eZimbabwe bangenwe yitwetwe futhi lokhu kugququzele imizabalazo emikhulu eAfrika nasemazansi neSahara – kakhulukazi eBhukina Faso, eSwatini, eKhameruni, eGabhoni – kanye nemibhikisho emhlabeni wonke, yisho nase-'siswini-sesilwane' eMelika phela.

Imizabalazo yaseNyakatho neAfrika iqophe umlando – yisivunguvungu somoya wokuqala ngaphambi kwesichotho, ivulele inqubekela yemizabalazo emhlabeni ebikade ibanjwe ngamaketanga okuhlulwa, ukuphelelwa wumdlanla kanye nokubuyiselwa emuva. Noma imiphumela ingathini phakathi komzabalazo

nemizamo yokuyivimba (okungukuthi ngesikhathi salo mbhalo besekuqalile eLibhiya naseGibhithe) kula mazwe kanye nengcindezi yokungabi khona kwezinhlangano ezimele imizabalazo yezigaba zabasebenzi ezizimisele ukuqhubezela impi yobulungiswa yokuhlwitha umbuso, umhlaba awusoze wafana nasekuqaleni.

Izinkampani zezindaba zizame ngakhokonke okusemandleni ukuthi zichaze lemibhikisho yase-Meditheraneni njengeyokuhlazela amalungelo entando yeningi. Kodwa izimfuno zokupheliswa kwencindezelo, ukuhlukunyezwa, kanye nemibuso yozwikaliphikiswa qobolwabo, konke kuliqeqeba elivalele izikhalo zokuswela ukuqasheka, ukuxhashazwa, ububha kanye nengcindezelo konke okuqubuka kwimizabalazo yenkululeko eyaphela yase iqhubeka nohlaka lobungxowankulu kanye nokubebhetheka kwezinxushunxushu ezidalwa ukuntenga kwezomnotho emhlabeni wonkana okwenziwa wubungxowankulu.

Ukungenelela kwabasebenzi abayinhlangano kwaba wumhlahlandlela kwimizabalazo yaseThunisiya kanye naseGibhithe. Lokhu kukhombisa ukuthi ngabasebenzi abayizinkumbulu bebodwa abanamandla okubhukuqa ozwikaliphikiswa – uma beyinhlangano futhi besuse konke ukwesaba, alikho igazi lengcindezelo elingabavimba.



Isikhwélé se-Tahrir eKhayiro ngoFebruary 8.

ISITHOMBE: UMONA SOSH

Ukubhonjwa kweLibhiya ngamazwe aseNtshonalanga okugququzelwa yinhlangano Yamazwe Ahlangene – abebe kade beseka uGadafi noBen Ali kanye noMubarak kwaze kwaba amasonto amalwa ngaphambi kwezibhelu futhi basaqhubeka nokweseka ozwikaliphikiswa abasasele njengobukhosi baseSawudi-Arabhiya – ngeke kulethe ikhambi. Awekho amandla angathatha isikhundla samandla abasebenzi. Kumele umhlahlandlela waseLibhiya uqinisekise ukuthi kuba nenhlangano yabasebenzi yentando yeningi ezimele ehlanganisa nabantu abaphofu abaqhamuka ezinhlangeni kanye nezinkolweni ezahlukahlukene. Noma uquqaba kufanele luhlome ebusweni bukhulumeni ohlomile, isikhali esikhulu sokunqoba uGadafi akuzona ezempi zasemoyeni kodwa wuhlelo lomzabalazo eluzohlanganisa

izinkumbulu bese liphula isisekelo sikaGadafi esisele. Lolu hlelo kumele lufune amalungelo entando yeningi angempela, ukupheliswa kwenkohlakalo, ukupheliswa kwamalungelo abasezikhundleni kanye nokupheliswa kwenhluka nongobuhlangana ngezifunda kanye nokupheliswa kukucwasana ngokwebala, ukuvikela impucuko nentuthuko eyabakhona kusukela mhlazane kutholakala uwoyela, ukuvimba ngayo yonke indlela ukuthi kungabuyelwa kwingcindezi yamakholoni kanye nokubakhona komnotho ohleliwe ophethwe wumphakathi ngentando yeningi ukuze usetshenziselwe ukwakha ikusasa. Ngubuholi bomzabalazo waseLibhiya, obakhiwe kakhulukazi yisigaba esiphakathi nendawo somphakathi esihambisana nobungxiwa kanye nabasebenzi

bakudala baGadafi, ngokwesaba uquqabalwa babhikishi kanye nokukhalela uqhekeko lwezifunda babesebeyekelela uGadafi ukuthi athole ukwesekwa okuncane, futhi lokhu kwase kuvula iminyango yokubhonjwa. Ukungenelela kwamandla eNATO kusukela ekutheni iLibhiya iyizwe leshumi nambili elikhiqiza uwoyela emhlabeni futhi manje bathemba ukuthi bazolenzela elinye lamazwe abazohlomula kuwona emfanekisweni weBhareyini neSawudi-Arabhiya. Lokhu kubonakala ngobufakazi bokuthi ubuholi balabo abaphikisayo empumalanga basheshe benziwa uhulumeni wesikhashana. Lokhu kuzoba nomthelelo wokuthi umzabalazo uphuze ukwenzeka.

> iyaqhubeka ekhasini 4



Abahlali baseFicksburg babhikisha emvu bokubulawa kukaAndries Tatane ngamaphoyisa

## eMzansi neAfrika: ukhetho lwasekhaya malube ithuba lokwakha iqembu elisha labasebenzi

eMzansi neAfrika, emveni kweminyaka eyishumi nesikhombisa kwatholakala intando yeningi lena ekuthiwa iyafunakala enyakatho yezwekazi, isimo senhlalo kanye nomnotho sikhomba ukuba sibi esigabeni sabasebenzi nabampofu yize sekwaba khona ivoti. Emiphakathi lapho kuhlala khona isigaba sabasebenzi sekuqubuke imibhikisho. Kulandela imibhikisho ephathelene nokuhambisa izinsiza ezingcono emiphakathini njengohlelo lwemizi kanye nokuhanjiswa kwendle.

Okuqhubekayo yimibhikisho yakamuva eqondiswe ezifisweni zesigaba sabasebenzi ukuthi siziqokele futhi sizilawulele amaxusa ezombusazwe – lona umongo wezinxushunxushu okhungethe uKhongolose mayelana nohlalwa bazongenela ukhetho lwasekhaya. Umcwani wezobungxiwa uqagula ukuthi izwe laseMzansi neAfrika uzoba 'nosuku lwaseThunisiya' – uMzabalazo – kufanele lifike ngo-2020. > okuningi ekhasini 2