

12 building Building the SYM

by Trevor Shaku

Within short space of its formation, Socialist Youth Movement (SYM) is gaining traction amongst the working class youth and students in particular. Since its establishment in Tshwane in May this year, SYM has already built points of support and is creating branches in campuses of Universities of Tshwane, (TUT), Vaal (VUT), Pretoria (Tukkies), Rhodes, Limpopo (Turfloop), Free State (UFS) and College of Sekhukhune FET, etc. The rapid development of SYM is a reflection of the objective desire for a genuine fighting, democratic and mass political alternative for the working class youth and students.

The dramatic collapse of the traditional student organizations such as Sasco, Pasma and Azasco is a result of degeneration of these organizations, ideologically and politically into puppets of university managements and havens for opportunists looking for lucrative careers in campuses, government and corporate world. Whilst students are facing increasing attacks in the form of academic and financial exclusions, with universities and colleges hardly admitting students at the beginning of the year, these organizations are paralyzed like their mother bodies by factional struggles over seats power and positions in the SRCs and tender boards.

Consequently, the masses of the students are leadersless and even where they dare to fight, led into a blind alley of isolated and episodic rioting, instead of a disciplined, united and well co-ordinated national campaigns to defeat increases in student fees, academic and

financial exclusions, for a free education, linked with community and trade union struggles around a program to fight for decent jobs for all, the youth in particular who make over 70% of the 7,6 million army of the unemployed and to open doors of learning in public institutions of higher learning and further training to all.

Build the SYM

The challenge remains for students and young people to establish SYM branches in their campuses, workplaces and communities. There is going to be a national conference before the end of this year to bring together all young people committed to this process to adopt a constitution, platform and work-out political program and tactics for the struggles of youth. The conference will also be an important platform to discuss the mass revolutionary movements unfolding everywhere today, from North Africa, Middle East, Europe to Latin America, Brazil, their lessons and perspectives for the south African and world economy, revolutionary movements of the working class of the mineworkers, farm-workers, communities and students.

Students and young people generally interested in forming part of this conference must to contact us on our facebook page, Socialist Youth Movement and start building now.

Reading Circles and actions

This semester SYM establishes reading circles at the universities. It developed a reader with socialist classics. In studying socialist classics we aim to empower young people,

deepen our understanding of this society, sharpen our analysis of the current situation and form a program how to act and to develop struggles. The Reader contains texts about economy, history, philosophy, racism, the national question and many more.

We ask you to join us, read, establish a reading circle and SYM branch to discuss the works in this booklet on a regular basis and engage with us in the struggle for socialism. Capitalists have not wasted the current economic crisis. In a nutshell, we are paying for the crisis, not of our creation. Lets fight for nationalisation of the mines and the whole commanding heights of the economy to fund free education, cancellation of student debt and creation of decent jobs for all. Profits of just 9 mine companies only in 2010 would have been enough create 2,3 million jobs, paying each worker R12,500 workers are demanding. These shows how much can be achieved if these companies were taken into public ownership and democratic control and on the basis of a socialist alternative to the capitalist crisis, with its high levels of unemployment, poverty, etc. For this we need a fighting and democratic youth, workers and community organizations independent of the main capitalist parties, ANC, DA, PAC, etc. And above all, to build WASP to unite all these forces on the basis of a fighting and socialist programme.

It is time for SYM to live and lead. Build it now. Phambili nge Revolution Forward with International Socialism!

Funding the revolutionary party

The DSM is campaigning to transform society. We are fighting against the power of big business which destroys the lives, health and livelihoods of millions. We are fighting for a socialist world where the wealth and resources will be democratically planned and controlled by working-class people and the poor.

There is more than enough food produced in the world to feed everyone. There is enough wealth to give everyone not just basic rights like clean water, a home and education but a good standard of living. The enormous wealth that exists is created by the labour of working class people and, in many countries, peasants and agricultural labourers. Yet under the capitalist system we live in it is stolen by big business to provide profits for the ruling class.

To change the system we need a revolutionary party. Trotsky described a revolutionary par-

ty as being like a steam engine, where the masses are the steam that drives it. Without direction, the enormous energy of the masses will dissipate into the air. But with a revolutionary party to help guide the movement this energy will be directed to where it is most needed, with enormous effect.

A revolutionary party has also been described as the "memory" of the working-class. A party which keeps alive all the lessons of past movements and revolutions - the accumulated political experience of the working-class - in order to put this at the service of future movements. Ultimately it is only through a revolutionary party that the working-class can come to power and begin the construction of socialism.

Revolutionary finance

It is impossible to build a revolutionary party without a serious attitude to finance. Everything requires money, from the

simplest leaflet to acquiring a press, offices and paying full-time party workers. As Lenin explained, discussing the campaign to raise funds to start a daily workers' paper in 1912:

"From the point of view of the initiative and energy of the workers themselves, it is much more important to have 100 roubles collected by, say, 30 groups of workers than 1,000 roubles collected by some dozens of 'sympathisers'. The newspaper founded on the basis of five-kopeck pieces collected by small factory circles of workers is a far more dependable, solid and serious undertaking (both financially and, most important of all, from the standpoint of the development of the workers' democratic movement) than a newspaper founded with ten-thousand hundreds of roubles contributed by sympathising intellectuals." **Lenin, The results of six months' work, July 1912 (Collected works)**

what we stand for:

★ Work

- Immediate moratorium on retrenchments
- Massive programme of public works
- Retool factories for production of socially necessary goods
- R12500 minimum monthly wage
- No to privatisation! - for immediate re-nationalisation of all privatised services and assets
- No time limit for unemployment benefit
- Abolish labour broking and casual work

★ 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 worker control

★ Gender

- Equal pay for work of equal value
- Combat gender-based violence, rape - gender-trained staff in all police stations and courts
- Access to shelters for all abused
- Decriminalise prostitution - end police harassment

★ Youth and education

- Free, quality public education for all - no fees from pre-school to tertiary level
- End academic and financial exclusions; cancel student debt
- Restore privatised services to university/ school control
- Reopen all eacher 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 toll roads or privatisation of roads
- No job losses due to the BRT 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 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 SA, a socialist Africa and socialist world