



Numsa Media Monitor

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A daily compilation of local, national and international articles dealing with labour related issues

NUMSA

Workers' demands for a living wage are reasonable

Irvin Jim, Daily Maverick, 24 Apr 2016

Workers are bargaining for higher wages within a difficult context in South Africa this year. This point was made repeatedly at the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa's National Bargaining Conference held from 22-24 April 2016 in Johannesburg, under the theme "End the Economy for the 1%, Secure our Jobs on a Living Wage!".

Given the country's poor economic outlook, employers are hardening their positions, citing the recession and South Africa's looming junk status to dampen workers' expectations for better wages and working conditions. But Numsa members are undeterred. Ours is a revolutionary union that will be celebrating its 30th birthday this year. We are South Africa's biggest trade union and are among the top three fastest growing unions in the country.

Our stature as South Africa's biggest trade union and continued expansion after three decades is evidence of our relevance not just in a challenging economic and political climate, but also in a persistently changing work environment.

The issues that affect our members will be familiar to you. Numsa members, like breadwinners all over the world, are doing their best to provide for their families, while campaigning for workplaces that treat people with respect. Our members want to live and work with dignity and have a sense of security for themselves and their children. For us this means that it is not just wages that must increase, but working conditions that must improve too.

Time and again at our bargaining conference, Numsa members highlighted the challenges of meeting their monthly expenses. With food prices sky-rocketing this

year, decent salary increases are going to be important for families to avoid reducing vital nutritional intake and worse, to ward off hunger. The year-on-year increase on the food basket from January 2015 to January 2016 was 14.6%. Similarly the year-on-year increase in the price of electricity in February 2016 was 12.6%.

Our members also highlighted healthcare and housing as special areas for attention. Numsa members fall into the unfortunate category that many black families in South Africa find themselves in – the so-called “missing middle”.

South Africans would have heard about the stresses facing “missing middle” families when large numbers of predominantly black students at our universities embarked on the #FeesMustFall campaign. These students come from families that typify the average Numsa member’s circumstances. These are working and middle-class families that earn too much to qualify for government support, but too little to qualify for financial loans from private banks (also highlighting the need for public banks, which is something that Numsa seeks to pursue in the long term).

Many of our members emphasised the significance of receiving better medical aid benefits from employers. As such Numsa members demand that employers cover up to 80% of their medical aid costs while members pay for the remaining 20%. Members also felt strongly that employers must provide housing allowances, as many don’t qualify for mortgage finance. Numsa members demand a housing allowance of R5,000.

These are not unreasonable demands.

Of course, the most important issue for workers is wages. This is true for our members too. In this regard, Numsa members demand a living wage. This year we are calling for 20% wage increases across the board.

For too long we have been told that raising wages will lead to layoffs. This is a myth. For every conservative think tank study that makes this case, an alternative study states otherwise. In fact, the evidence that raising wages does not lead to job losses is so strong that in 2014, 600 US economists, including seven Nobel laureates, wrote a letter to President Obama arguing the following:

“In recent years there have been important developments in the academic literature on the effect of increases in the minimum wage on employment, with the weight of evidence now showing that increases in the minimum wage have had little or no negative effect on the employment of minimum-wage workers, even during times of weakness in the labour market. Research suggests that a minimum-wage increase could have a small stimulative effect on the economy as low-wage workers spend their additional earnings, raising demand and job growth, and providing some help on the jobs front.”

In the South African context, given our history of wage suppression for black workers (which continues today), we remain the most unequal country in the world with a clear racial fault line. Sixty-five percent of the South African economy is owned by just 10% of the population. A staggering 80% of the owners of our economy are white.

South Africa’s CEOs earn obscene amounts of money. The vast majority are white. In fact, the top 10 highest earning CEOs in South Africa are all white. At the top of

the list is Alan Clark of SAB Miller who earns R152-million per annum. Johan Rupert is at the bottom end of this top 10 list, earning R49.4-million. One wonders what Clark is doing in his office on a day-to-day basis that he needs to be rewarded R152-million for his efforts?

This ridiculous situation highlights the importance of using wages and salaries as redistributive instruments to address South Africa's unjust legacy of inequality.

South Africa's crisis of inequality is further highlighted by the recent release of the Panama Papers, which exposes how the rich hide their wealth. Apart from the obvious fact that the rich have too much money, the Panama Papers exposé also reveals that they are cheating us further by not paying their fair share of taxes.

One of the most compelling arguments for significantly increasing the wages of workers is that they don't hide their money in Swiss bank accounts or exotic island tax havens. Workers spend their money in the local economy. This invigorates productive sectors of the economy and further stimulates job creation.

For too long working people who simply don't earn enough have carried the South African economy. Numsa will address this situation with focus and determination. We are determined to win the struggle for racial and economic equality in South Africa. At the forefront of this struggle is leading the charge for decent living wages for all South Africans.

<http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2016-04-24-workers-demands-for-a-living-wage-are-reasonable/#.VyD9IU3IrlU>

SA Unions

Lily Mine workers bemoan April non-payment

Siphephile Kunene, SABC, 25 April 2016

Mine workers at Lily Gold Mine in Barberton have not been paid their April salaries which were supposed to have been paid last Thursday.

The mine suspended operations two months ago after three employees got trapped in a container that plunged into a massive hole.

The village is in distress as most of the locals are workers at the Lily Gold Mine and since February 5, they have been idle at home.

The workers were advised to stay at home until their co-workers, Pretty Nkambule, Yvonne Mnisi and Solomon Nyerenda are found and brought to surface.

Apparently, workers were instructed not to talk the media.

The mine management promised to look after them but workers claim they haven't done so. Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU), the majority union at the mine, is concerned about the latest development but remains hopeful that the mine will keep its promise.

According to AMCU regional chairperson, Frans Mkhabela, "The mine has asked us to bear with the mine rescue practitioner, as he solicits some funds. They said we should be paid on the 29th."

The mine has applied for business rescue and the appointed Business Rescue Practitioner remains hopeful that funds to pay the workers will be forthcoming.

It is almost three months since the mine disaster. Management is still to find ways to recover the container.

<http://www.sabc.co.za/news/a/7418c0004c88b5499fb29f2e33d6c236/Lily-Mine-workers-bemoan-April-non-payment-20160425>

Solidarity union says 58,549 jobs at risk across sectors

Ed Goddard, Reuters, 25 April 2016

JOHANNESBURG, April 26 (Reuters) - South Africa's Solidarity union said on Tuesday that 58,549 workers could lose their jobs this year, with more than 29,000 jobs on the line in the mining sector and 8,000 in the metal and engineering industry.

Lay offs are a thorny political issue in Africa's most industrialised economy where the jobless rate is around 25 percent and the ruling African National Congress (ANC) faces a stern test in local elections in August.

In a presentation, the union, which mostly represents skilled workers, said companies where its members work had received 88 lay-off notices the past 12 months.

"The current pattern and wave of retrenchments are very similar to the situation at the end of 2008 and the beginning of 2009 which was the precursor to the recession," Solidarity General Secretary Gideon du Plessis said.

South Africa's economy is barely growing, hobbled by power and skills shortages and depressed commodity prices.

<http://af.reuters.com/article/southAfricaNews/idAFL5N17T27V>

Zuma to address workers on May Day

Lizeka Tandwa, News24, 25 April 2016

Johannesburg – President Jacob Zuma will be among the speakers at Cosatu's May Day rally in Moretele Park, Tshwane, on Wednesday [sic].

Cosatu general secretary Bheki Ntshalintshali said this year's May Day theme was "celebrating 30 years and defending collective bargaining, workers jobs and rights".

He said workers should use the day to remember victims of the May 2003 bus crash in which 53 Cosatu members were killed while on their way to a May Day rally in Qwaqwa. The bus plunged into the Saulspoort dam, near Bethlehem.

He listed Cosatu's achievements and said bigger battles lay ahead.

"In our fight against labour brokers, we forced government to change the law to protect vulnerable workers. Through our united struggle, we forced government to stop the provident fund reforms," he said.

Cosatu president Sdumo Dlamini called on Cosatu and its partners to unite at a time of increased attacks on the working class.

<http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/zuma-to-address-workers-on-may-day-20160425>

Cosatu eases Metrorail workers' concerns around disciplinary action

Xolani Koyana, EWN, 26 April 2016

CAPE TOWN - The Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) says businesses across Cape Town promised not to take disciplinary action against workers affected by train delays, cancellations and disruptions.

The trade union federation says it has received hundreds of complaints from members who had been threatened by their employers, because they were late for work.

It says its officials have met with Metrorail and the Cape Chamber of Commerce today to discuss the matter.

Cosatu Western Cape Secretary Tony Ehrenreich says the union federation's encouraged that business will not be deducting wages as a result of delays and cancellations on the rail service.

He says despite a Metrorail briefing on a plan to fix the situation, Cosatu is still concerned.

"We're not happy with the urgency applied and we want more resources allocated to the Western Cape."

Metrorail's Richard Walker says the rail operator alerts all major businesses when there are disruptions.

"We request them to please be patient with the employees who are affected by the delays."

Walker adds commuters affected by delays can also collect notes at all stations.

<http://ewn.co.za/2016/04/26/Cosatu-assures-Metrorail-workers-there'll-be-no-disciplinary-action>

Cosatu accuses Pick n Pay of racism over broken chocolate incident

East Coast Radio, 26 April 2016

Cosatu yesterday demanded Pick n Pay make a formal apology to a family, accusing the national supermarket chain of victimising and being racist toward a grandmother and her grandson.

The federation union in a statement said it was outraged at the "victimisation and intimidation" of an elderly woman and her grandson at a Pick n Pay in Mitchells Plain.

A picture of the clearly upset grandmother on the floor, cradling the boy, was shared on Facebook at the weekend.

Another picture showed a slab of Dairy Milk broken in half, with the wrapper still intact. Facebook users expressed their outrage over the way the two were treated at the store on Saturday.

Cosatu called the store's behaviour "high handed" and said the type of treatment the family experienced only occurred in black working class areas.

"Cosatu calls on Pick n Pay to make a formal apology to the family and shoppers and to compensate them for the stress endured. Cosatu also demands that the child and the grandmother be provided with counselling to deal with this traumatic experience.

"This kind of behaviour is entirely unacceptable and it is clear that securities [sic] are directed to treat people on the Cape Flats in this manner. This type of behaviour would however never be carried out in the wealthier suburbs, where mainly white shoppers are," the union said.

Cosatu added that if the matter was not settled by Friday it would take action against the supermarket chain.

Pick n Pay on Monday said it had met the Mitchells Plain woman who was reduced to tears over a demand that she pay for a slab of chocolate her grandson had apparently broken in one of its stores.

<https://www.ecr.co.za/news-sport/news/cosatu-accuses-pick-n-pay-racism-over-broken-chocolate-incident/>

SA society still a work in progress – Sadtu

Kaveel Singh, News24, 26 April 2016

Johannesburg – The SA Democratic Teachers Union (Sadtu) called on South Africans to understand building a new society was "still a work in progress".

In a statement on Tuesday, the union said Freedom Day, celebrated on April 27, marked the beginning of transformation for South Africa.

"As we reflect on the 22 years of democracy, we realise that building a new society is still a work in progress. This year's celebration comes at a time when the country is preparing for another milestone in our history – the local government elections that are due to take place in August."

The union called on local government to work with communities to find sustainable ways to meet “social, economic and material needs and improve their lives”.

“Even though non-racial municipalities have been established, the divisions of the past are still prevalent as we see imbalances in terms of physical infrastructure and in provision of services. Let this day give us another opportunity to strengthen solidarity, tolerance, national identity and social cohesion.”

Freedom Day will be celebrated on Wednesday.

<http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/sa-society-still-a-work-in-progress-sadtu-20160426>

Cosatu disappointed about fewer black people in top management positions

TimesLive, 26 April 2016

The Congress of South African Trade Unions expressed disappointment that a few black people occupied top management positions in the workplace.

A report issued by the Department of Labour’s Commission for Employment Equity on Monday showed that 68.9% of positions were occupied by the white group, while black people held 14.3% of those position. Indian people occupied 8.6%, Coloured 4.7% and foreign national 3.5%

“We are not shocked by this, as COSATU, because we have seen the open defiance and stubborn resistance by corporate South Africa and other various institutions to transformation in this country.

“From big business, to universities and other many sectors, there is open resistance to transformation,” Cosatu spokesman Sizwe Pamla said in a statement.

He said South African companies and institutions had proven they had no appreciation or simply did not care about the historical realities that had led the country to embark on a transformation journey.

“They are flatly refusing to abandon their old practices and are not prepared to reform the structure of the apartheid labour market.”

Cosatu said the enactment of the Employment Equity Amendment Act 2013, had not done much to convince these companies or institutions to embrace the principle of employment equity and affirmative action, in order to redress the racial, gender and other injustices inherited from our past.

<http://www.timeslive.co.za/local/2016/04/26/Cosatu-disappointed-about-fewer-black-people-in-top-management-positions>

South Africa

Malema planning a coup - Cosatu

Lizeka Tandwa, News24April 2016

Johannesburg – Cosatu on Monday accused EFF leader Julius Malema of planning to overthrow the government.

"For us, we can see the issue is not about elections, the issue is about a long-planned activity of how they are going to take over the country," the union federation's second deputy president, Zingiswa Losi, said at a briefing on its May Day events.

"They are cooking now. The DA, Vavi all of them, they are cooking."

Losi suggested that the arms Malema had threatened to take up against the government were being sponsored by a third party.

Losi said Cosatu called on all citizens to be responsible.

Malema told Al Jazeera's Jonah Hull last week that if the ANC continued to respond violently to peaceful protests, "we will run out of patience very soon and we will remove this government through the barrel of a gun".

"I mean it literally. We are not scared. We are not going to have a government that disrespects us," he replied when asked if it meant people should literally take up arms.

Cosatu said the "marriage" between its former general secretary Zwelinzima Vavi and the DA began in 2012.

First deputy president James Tyotyo said they found DA pamphlets at Cosatu House and that former DA leader Helen Zille had attempted to convince Vavi to join the DA in 2012.

"She said to him if you can come over, we can make a formidable partnership. The DA needs you. Subsequent to that, we found DA pamphlets at Cosatu House. It's nothing new. He must deny this one as he has denied he had a meeting," Tyotyo said.

Cosatu president Sdumo Dlamini said they would oppose "marriages of convenience".

The Sunday Times reported that the official opposition had been courting Vavi.

The paper claimed DA leader Mmusi Maimane and Vavi met at a Johannesburg hotel on February 1 to discuss forming a coalition government in the highly-contested Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality in the Eastern Cape, should the ANC fail to win an outright majority there.

Vavi said on Sunday dismissed the report as an effort to sell newspapers.

Comment and opinion

ANC hides behind 'unity' facade while SA crumbles

Natasha Marrian, Business Day, 28 April 2016

THIS week, the African National Congress (ANC) used a funeral service of 10 members who died en route to the party's manifesto launch to call for unity. The service last Saturday exposed the true extent of the war between party factions, but I am done caring about ANC factions — SA is bigger and more precious than that.

Unity for the sake of unity is a common theme in the Jacob Zuma presidency. It is part of his arsenal of weaponry to force the party faithful to toe the line. "Unity" in the ANC today is Zuma's defence, and his weapon to silence dissent.

During his term, there has been a number of splits in the party, all allowed under the mantra of preserving "unity" for the rest. The Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) suffered its largest split since its formation, with the November 2014 expulsion of the 320,000-strong National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa).

Dissent from the dominant view led to the expulsion. The end of 2013 was by no means the first time Numsa had called on Cosatu to distance itself from the ANC. The party's head economic guru, Enoch Godongwana, was the general secretary of Numsa from 1994 to 1997, when his mandate prescribed that he argue on the floor of a Cosatu conference for the federations to part ways from the ANC alliance.

At a special national congress in 2013, Numsa called on the ANC to part ways with the alliance, a call it had made once before in 1993. Its then general secretary, Irvin Jim [sic], argued at a special national congress in November 2014 [sic] that the federation should change its policy — in other words calling on the federation to vote on whether Cosatu should remain in the ANC-led alliance.

During the central executive committee meeting at which Numsa was removed permanently from the alliance, Jim presented a report in which he said: "We are calling on our federation to change its policy. That is not just a right as an affiliate. That is our revolutionary duty. We did exactly the same in 1993.

"The only difference in 1993 was that we weren't threatened with expulsion for doing so. In 1993, the debate was handled properly, by leaders who were interested in democratic debate leading to unity in action."

The removal of the leadership of the ANC Youth League years before was under similar circumstances. The split-offs that led to the Congress of the People and

Economic Freedom Fighters were allowed for the sake of "unity" under the ANC leadership. Yet, the party faithful today still seem hamstrung by this concept.

ANC secretary-general Gwede Mantashe addressed the nation a month ago, saying removing Zuma was tantamount to a call for the ANC to "tear itself apart". Principle aside, it boils down to holding together a divergent group with varied interests, from good governance to patronage.

The call by some ANC branches around the country for Zuma to step down was silenced swiftly, with the governing party said the matter should be dealt with internally.

The funeral last weekend was used to stamp out dissent. This seems to be the primary preoccupation of the party leadership and it is playing directly into the hands of its enemies. These enemies are not the Constitutional Court chief justice, as Mantashe would have us believe, or Julius Malema, as Zuma's cronies David Mahlobo and Nkosinathi Nhleko would have us believe, but those who have hijacked the organisation including Zuma and the Guptas.

Unity is defined as a state of being united and joined as a whole. Defending one family — be it that of Zuma or the Guptas — does not spell unity.

Jobs are being lost on a huge scale and deindustrialisation is taking place under our noses. Junk status looms, but ministers fiddle with decisions taken by banks instead. According to new research by Statistics SA, African youths aged 25-34 are less skilled than their parents and every other race and age group. The latest report by the Employment Equity Commission shows that white males continue to dominate the upper echelons of the corporate hierarchy.

And yet, unity continues to be a function of the political — a preserve of the powerful to maintain their hierarchy. If only Mantashe and others could see there are more important issues to unite around than Zuma and his cronies.

• Marrian is political editor

<http://www.bdlive.co.za/opinion/columnists/2016/04/28/anc-hides-behind-unity-facade-while-sa-crumbles>

Has the “Numsa moment” passed?

Weizmann Hamilton, WASP, 26 April 2016

This article appears in the current issue of Izwi Labasebenzi.

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa's, (Numsa) December 2013 Special National Congress was historic. In announcing that it would not campaign for

the ANC in the 2014 general elections, denouncing the SA Communist Party and withholding its Cosatu subscription, Numsa took the first political step on to the other side of the historic fault line created by the Marikana massacre. It meant the end of Cosatu's historical role as the political centre of the working class, the demise of the Tripartite Alliance and cleared the way for a political alternative for the working class. The "Numsa moment" had arrived.

The SNC adopted resolutions committing Numsa to building a United Front (UF), Movement for Socialism (MfS) and a workers party to be launched in time for the 2016 local government elections. Three years later, unfortunately, none of these have been built. It is now legitimate to ask the question: has the "Numsa moment" passed?

Well before the SNC, WASP contributed towards the debates in Numsa, supporting its efforts to have Cosatu reclaim its political and class independence. But we pointed out that Cosatu's degeneration had developed to the point that reclaiming its original traditions of solidarity, workers control and socialism would require a new federation. We argued that the main strategic task was the creation of a mass workers party on a socialist programme to unify the working class within and across the three main theatres of struggle – in the service delivery protests, in the struggles of tertiary education students and in the workplace.

We supported the proposed role of the United Front as the unifier of community and workplace struggles and that of the Movement for Socialism to unite all the left formations seeing in this the assembling of the forces for a mass workers party.

We were conscious of the fact that the Numsa leadership had received their "socialist" education in the SACP's Stalinist school for the falsification of Marxism. But to have stood aside from these developments and criticise from the sidelines would have been the height of sectarianism. It would have meant turning our backs not only on the workers in Numsa, but the millions of workers outside both it and Cosatu looking for direction towards their political and class emancipation from the political prison of the Tripartite Alliance.

As Marx pointed out, we have to look to the lines of struggle calculated to move decisive sectors of the class into action – into movement against the established powers of the system (state, the bourgeoisie and their agents including the labour lieutenants inside the workers' movement). Every genuine democrat and socialist had a duty to contribute towards the efforts to ensure the SNC fulfilled its political potential and this historic opportunity was seized.

Whilst criticising the Numsa leadership, we participated in efforts to bring the UF and MfS to life, linking up with unions that had broken from Cosatu to support the initiative for a new socialist trade union federation. We called upon Numsa to take its rightful place in WASP and to occupy a position within it that corresponds to its size

and political weight within the working class – a call, in other words for Numsa to take over WASP even if that meant that we would be a minority within it.

Despite the leadership's prejudices against Trotskyism, WASP was warmly welcomed by Numsa workers and shop stewards, recognised as a "friend of Numsa" and was the only party given speaking rights at the SNC 2014 elections commission. We warned that it was a mistake for Numsa to delay the workers party's launch to 2016. This was to demand that history should march not to its own rhythm but to Numsa's drumbeat. The 2014 elections demanded that a workers party be launched immediately. Cosatu's 2012 shop steward political survey showed overwhelming support – 67% – for a workers party even before Marikana.

Failure to launch immediately would mean the loss of an historic opportunity. Numsa could not turn the hands of the clock of history. Should Numsa block the historic process from flowing through it, history would find another conduit. The SNC 2014 elections commission unanimously supported our proposal that the SNC should advise workers to vote for a party whose programme conformed to their criteria to evaluate new political formations. Although WASP met these criteria – it is working class, democratic, socialist with a track record of struggle – Numsa limited itself to ruling out Agang and the EFF, remaining silent on WASP. Unfortunately the commission's recommendation that the proposal be referred to plenary was overruled, the chairperson arguing that it would amount to calling for a vote for WASP.

WASP retained its orientation to Numsa after the 2014 elections. But the leadership stood in the path of the implementation of the SNC resolutions on the UF, MfS and the workers party. The leadership opposed the UF adopting socialism as its ideology, made it clear that it was not to consider itself a political party and encouraged it strongly to adopt the Freedom Charter as its programme. At the same time the UF leadership was allowed to fall into the hands of a largely ideologically demoralised middle class leadership hostile to socialism, far removed from the working class and unable to connect with service delivery protests or link them to the organised labour movement.

We warned that the imposition of the Freedom Charter would be divisive, arguing that the best way to overcome the divisions between the pro- and anti-Freedom Charter positions would be to acknowledge, as Numsa had done, that it was not a socialist programme but to extract from it those elements compatible with transitional socialist demands, like nationalisation, free education, housing and health and a 40-hour working week thus converting it into a Socialist Freedom Charter.

In all the provinces UF structures voted overwhelmingly for socialism. Faced with the loss of ideological control, the leadership repeatedly postponed the launch of the UF until it led to demoralisation. It is of the greatest significance that very few Numsa members and shop stewards bothered to attend UF meetings throughout, ignoring

all appeals by the leadership. There are no UF structures on the ground today. All that is left of it is the National Coordinating Committee – a head without a body. The UF has been left to wither on the vine of malign neglect.

The MfS conference, when eventually called, resolved to establish a steering committee to work out a roadmap towards the launch of a workers party. WASP's proposal that such a party should be a mass workers party on a socialist programme and should contest the elections, with the election of all representatives subject to the right of recall and an income limited to that of the average wage of a skilled worker, was agreed unanimously. The Numsa leadership simply ignored the resolution and failed to convene the steering committee. They unilaterally established a MfS Media Committee which started producing an online journal with the Stalinist ideological line supported by the Numsa leadership. This was done without any consultation with the Left formations that had participated in the MfS conference.

The leadership has ensured that the resolution on a workers party does not escape from the central committee where, starved of the oxygen of open democratic debate within the membership and with left forces in the MfS, it is trapped in a sterile, meaningless disagreement over whether it should be a "mass" or "vanguard" party. The dominant Stalinist faction in the Numsa leadership is instead campaigning for the outlandish idea that the workers party will be built by 100 hand-picked shop stewards – the "Red One Hundred" who will be schooled in "Marxism" through "cadre" schools from where they will presumably emerge with certificates to present themselves to the working class as leaders of a party that workers have had no role in creating. To invite the Chinese Communist Party – a one party totalitarian dictatorship committed to the restoration of capitalism – and Samir Amin who argued that socialism is off the agenda for a thousand and possibly two thousand years – demonstrates a light mindedness on something as important as theory.

The formation of new trade union federation is an objective necessity precipitated by Numsa's expulsion. But we are concerned that the ideological confusion and political methods of the Numsa leadership will handicap the new federation's potential.

The Numsa mountain has roared... and produced a mouse. The sum total of the SNC resolution is a UF head without a body; the MfS replaced by a media committee that meets every Monday morning to read the bourgeois press to identify issues to write articles on... for the bourgeois press; the workers party to be formed from the top by the "Red Hundred" graduates of a school of dubious Marxism who will initiate the formation of a workers party from the top; and the "Numsa nine" reduced to two.

The Numsa leadership's approach to the SNC resolutions has its origins in their ideological commitment to the Stalinist ideas of the SACP which have fatally contaminated all three SNC initiatives. Their stubborn adherence to the notion that the National Democratic Revolution is the shortest road to socialism is merely the

reincarnation of the discredited two-stage theory that has resulted in catastrophic defeats for the workers revolution internationally in China, 1925-27, in splitting the working class in Germany clearing the path to power of Hitler and the horrors of the Second World War, the defeat of the Spanish Revolution of 1936-39, the genocidal decimation of the Indonesian Communist party in 1965 with the slaughter of over one million communists and trade unionists, the triumph of Pinochet in Chile 1973 and last but not least the betrayal of the working class in SA over the past 22 years.

To argue that socialism will come later is to raise the question as to which class will be in power in the meantime under the so-called “national democratic” regime. A revolution that sets itself the task of establishing “national democracy” before workers democracy and socialism can have the practical result only of the preservation of the dictatorship of the capitalist class – a regime that would differ from its predecessor only in name. Far from such a “national democratic revolution” constituting the “shortest road to socialism”, it will become a gigantic fortress from the walls of which the cannons of the same national democratic regime will be trained on the working class.

What in essence would be the difference between a NDR regime and the one of the past twenty two years? For all their strident denunciation of the SACP, the Numsa leadership is charging it with failing to vigorously implement a bankrupt programme. The Numsa leadership’s real aim is a “Herstigte” SACP – the true defenders of the Stalinist faith.

From bankrupt ideas flow false methods. In keeping with Stalinist traditions the leadership has ensured that it maintains an iron grip on the formations that the SNC resolutions envisaged to ensure that no ideas that question theirs is tolerated.

As the ANC implodes, the need for a mass workers party has become even more urgent. It has the potential for providing a home for hundreds of thousands of workers and may have been delayed by Numsa’s abdication of its historic responsibility, but it remains firmly on the agenda. WASP will continue to contribute towards its establishment.

<http://workerssocialistparty.co.za/has-the-numsa-moment-passed/>
