



Numsa Media Monitor

Tuesday 12 July 2016

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

Numsa

Workers must reject proposed agreement between government and Cosatu

Irvin Jim, Daily Maverick, 12 July 2016

The reported agreement between the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) and the government threatens to undermine the independence and constitutional rights of trade unions.

Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan has told London's Financial Times that the government is close to a series of "reforms" to the labour market which would include "the minimum wage, balloting before strikes, and compulsory arbitration, so that strikes don't last forever".

Cosatu President Sidumo Dlamini says Gordhan was premature in stating that the government was close to announcing labour legislation reforms, and concedes that negotiations on a minimum wage were still at "a delicate stage", but that talks about other labour reforms, such as those relating to pre-strike balloting, were "nowhere near closure".

This however confirms that Cosatu and government are in the process of negotiating on proposals which threaten many hard-won trade union rights, supposedly on the basis that they want to "balance pay with job security".

The Times, on 5 July 2016, under the headline "Cosatu: Save the jobs", reports that "in an effort to help turn the tide on unemployment and continuing job losses, labour federation Cosatu has called on the unions affiliated to it to tread carefully when

negotiating pay increases. For the first time, Cosatu is calling for restraint. It says there should be a balance between wage demands and the preservation of jobs.”

The Times quotes Sizwe Pamla, Cosatu’s national spokesperson, as saying that “we have called on our affiliates not to over-promise and demand wages that will lead to workers losing their jobs down the line. What we are saying is that workers should not be misled and promised increases that will affect their jobs. We are approaching a recession and if this economy collapses it will affect all of us. We are all in danger”.

Cosatu general secretary Bheki Ntshalintshali is reported to have called for a “rethink” by unionists involved in salary negotiations. “You don’t want to get an increase and then thereafter people are retrenched and only a few remain to enjoy the benefits of that increase.”

“Cosatu,” reports The Times, “said it would advise its affiliates to push for above-inflation increases for those at the bottom of the pay scale. It said better-paid workers would negotiate for increases in line with inflation, which was at 6.1% in May.

“Ntshalintshali said that ‘for the lower grades it really has to be inflation-plus. We don’t determine how much above inflation [the demand should be] but it can’t be at inflation level, it can’t be below inflation’.”

Cosatu President, Sidumo Dlamini, echoed the same theme when he told Power FM listeners that he is encouraging workers to moderate the salary demands with the need to preserve jobs.

Numsa has rejected this proposed agreement and the false arguments used to justify it. It is a move by government and the employers to make workers pay for the capitalist crisis of mass unemployment, poverty and inequality by plunging themselves into even greater poverty by accepting wage settlements that in real terms mean a wage cut.

The 6.1% level of inflation referred to is well below the level in the rate of food price inflation, which according to Stats SA rose from 5.2% year-on-year in the fourth quarter of 2015 to a massive 11.3% in April/May 2016, while the petrol price rose by nearly R1.50 (13%) between March and June 2016.

Poor households spend a proportionally larger share of their budgets on food and transport costs compared to higher income households and therefore typically suffer most from the impact of higher food and fuel prices.

Of course, saving jobs and creating ones is a top priority for unions at a time when jobs are disappearing daily and whole industries, like steel, are in jeopardy. The mining sector alone has shed more than 35,000 jobs since 2012 as commodity prices have slid over the last few years.

But I reject the false argument of the bosses, government and now Cosatu that the way to save jobs is to cut the real wages of those who still have jobs.

On the contrary, by reducing workers' disposable income they reduce spending on goods and services, which forces even more employers to shut down and makes the current recession even worse. Not only will it not produce jobs for the unemployed but it will reduce the small amounts that thousands of them now receive from employed family members.

How can Cosatu even talk about wage moderation by workers when the incomes of their bosses soar upwards with no moderation at all? In 2015 CEOs were earning 725 times more than workers. The CEO of South African Breweries Alan Clark will shortly be in line to receive a payout of £55-million (R1,100-million) when SAB Miller is taken over by Anheuser-Busch InBev.

This is the same company which in 2014 was paying its CEO R122-million a year (over R1,010,000 a month). Compare that to the average wages of over half of full-time working people who were earning of R3,640 a month (R43,680 a year) or less in 2015?

The union is also utterly opposed to other so-called 'reforms' put forward by Gordhan – balloting before strikes, and compulsory arbitration.

Numsa prides itself on its insistence on democratic worker control. No decisions can be taken by leaders without a mandate from the members concerned. This is particularly the case with strikes, which for workers are always a last resort when every possible way to negotiate a settlement has been tried but failed.

Many unions already hold ballots on strikes, but others prefer the members to be consulted at workplace mass meetings, where questions and objections can be raised from the floor. Meetings also give the leadership a platform to counter the employers' propaganda in the media, which can be more difficult with ballots.

But we are adamantly opposed to government dictating to unions how they should or should not seek a mandate from their members. It strikes at the heart of unions' independence and worker control and creates a precedent for government to control all other unions' rules and render them powerless.

The same applies to compulsory arbitration. Workers always prefer to settle disputes through negotiations, and so do many employers; the big majority of disputes are resolved with a negotiated settlement. Strikes are always a last resort when employers are intransigent or even want to provoke a strike as an excuse to sack workers.

But strikes can, and must, never be averted by some government-appointed arbitrator acting as a referee with red cards to wave at workers. Governments in

capitalist societies, and the arbitrators they appoint, will always be biased in favour of their capitalist class allies and rule in their favour.

This proposal opens the way to workers who remain on strike in defiance of an arbitrator's ruling facing being told either to return to work or else end up facing civil legal action and being dismissed for being on an unprotected strike.

This is a clear breach of the right to withdraw one's labour which is enshrined in South Africa's Constitution and many international conventions which our government has signed. It would amount to forced labour and turn workers into slaves.

It is outrageous that a trade union federation can even discuss such proposals, let alone agree to them. These are the policies of the Democratic Alliance, the Free Market Foundation and all the other enemies of the workers and their organisations. If ever introduced and enforced they would provoke an unprecedented explosion of rage from the working class.

I call on every union to fight these plans and refuse to be bound by any of the proposals.

As well as the unions which are coming together to form a new militant and independent federation, who we are confident will reject these plans, I call on all members of unions still affiliated to Cosatu also to abandon this once proud federation, which has become the police service of the government and employers.

It has joined the ruling class in seeking to place the blame for the global crisis of a rotten capitalist system on the very workers who produce the world's wealth in the factories and mines, and provide the essential services in our schools and hospitals.

This agreement proves that Numsa and others who saw Cosatu degenerating into a labour desk of government and the ruling party, and now also the capitalist bosses, were right and now is the time to build the new democratic and revolutionary workers' federation and political party.

<http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2016-07-12-workers-must-reject-proposed-agreement-between-government-and-cosatu/#.V4Sask3lrIU>

New Federation

Workers need strong support organisations

Irvin Jim, The Star, 11 July 2016

On 30 April 2016, at the Workers Summit, 1406 representatives of 51 trade unions, and civil society and community organisations, committed themselves to building a new, worker-controlled, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist, independent, financially

self-sufficient, internationalist, socialist-orientated and militant union federation. This is the fourth of five articles about policy discussion documents.

When COSATU was launched it seemed destined to become a mighty weapon of the working class. Yet 31 years later it is in decline with less than 30% of South Africa's workforce unionised. This spells disaster for the working class. There are many benefits to belonging to trade unions for individual employees, but as a united force, they ought to be at the forefront of campaigning for an end to the jobs bloodbath and for the revolutionary implementation of the Freedom Charter.

The stronger the labour sector, the more able it is to attack the triple crisis of inequality, unemployment and poverty in society. This is particularly true when it comes to income inequality. A 2015 IMF discussion document argues that at least 40% of the excessive rise in CEO pay globally can be linked to a decline in unionisation.

Given that South Africa has the highest Gini coefficient in the world, it is clear that workers' voices must be heard and that strong organisations are their only home. Sadly for us, neoliberalism's triumph over economies all over the world and its demand for greater labour flexibility continue to erode the labour sector. Union membership in South Africa declined by 196 000 members between the third quarters of 2014 and 2015.

One of the biggest obstacles to unionisation is the growing casualisation of the workforce. The South African workforce has an increasing number of workers that are categorised as informal workers. This has contributed to the decrease in unionisation. According to data from Stats SA, the informal sector (excluding those working in agriculture) makes up about 17.1% of South Africa's estimated 15.8 million workforce. This is equivalent to more than 2.7 million people. An upward tick over six successive quarters tells us that the informal sector is expanding.

The real picture is even bleaker than presented by Stats SA because the way it collates its data essentially hides the true extent of the informalisation of work in South Africa.

Stats SA's figures disguise the creeping informalisation of the formal sector. This is due to their differentiation between the broader category of "informal work" and the narrower one of the "informal sector", whilst providing data for the "informal sector" only.

In defining the "informal sector" Stats SA focuses on whether a business is formal or not, as opposed to examining the working conditions of employees hired by that business.

To illustrate the point, street vendors tend not to be formally registered and can be categorized as working in the informal sector. But casual workers at a supermarket

(for example, PnP) will be reflected as formal sector workers because they work at a formal business.

Nevertheless, as casual workers they are amongst the most vulnerable employees and may even be worse off than those in the informal sector due to their precarious conditions of employment.

Their work is unsteady and despite the provisions of the Labour Relations Act, they often work for lower wages and poorer conditions of employment. There is huge pressure, in a period of such high unemployment, not to join unions.

It can't be long before some profit driven employer attempts to introduce zero hour contracts!

Ironically, the engagement of casual workers by formal business entities is used to swell employment figures. This always happens in the last quarter when the retail sector hires a large number of temporary workers. It is, of course, a distortion of true facts on the ground.

Other forms of triangular employment - in other words, employment contracts that do not take place directly between an employer and employee, but are mediated via a third party - such as subcontracting and outsourcing, have also been on the increase.

More people, 5.1 million in 2015 compared to 4.8 million in 2014, were employed under limited or unspecified contracts, an increase of 6.2% over just one year. Whilst it's hard to pinpoint the exact number of workers employed by labour brokers, in 2015 over two million South Africans worked under limited contracts and over three million were hired under unspecified contracts.

Outsourced work via labour brokers and other forms of sub-contracting is extremely unfair to workers who fall prey to greedy intermediaries. The recent example of South African fire fighters deployed to Canada, who were grossly exploited by the company Kishigu Holdings that employed them on behalf of government's Working on Fire extended public work's programme, is a case in point.

As the casualisation of the workforce grows, organising becomes more difficult for unions to achieve. Vulnerable workers, such as domestic workers and farm workers are amongst the most difficult to organise.

Not only are union organisers presented with problems of access, but low and irregular incomes also limit the possibility of building sustainable membership-driven unions amongst these workers. It is clear that both business and government see a minimum wage being set at the lowest possible rate.

Certain groups such as women, youth and foreign migrant workers face additional challenges of vulnerability in being able to unionise. Members of these groups often find themselves in atypical work arrangements that undermine worker solidarity.

It is for these reasons that the new labour Federation's birth must signal a new commitment to the working class and to all those who are employed in South Africa.

As it forges ahead, it is grappling with difficult questions of how to stem the tide of casualisation. A key task will be the fight for "secure jobs" alongside living wages to realise "secure livelihoods".

The familiar refrain is, "Organise or starve."

The new federation, however, must not simply write good articles and make fine speeches. The time has come for action.

The new federation must be - as the steering committee is already planning - a campaigning organisation. The office bearers and officials of the unions involved cannot be "office workers". Their place is on the streets.

Neither should they become the mouthpiece of government wandering the world persuading ratings agencies not to downgrade the country. It is not workers' fault that the economy is in chaos. It is the neoliberal policies of the government that has brought us to this position.

What the new labour federation clearly understands is that it has an obligation to protect the working class and to struggle for a society where workers enjoy the fruits of their labour.

South African workers

South Africa girding for another platinum strike

Andrew Topf, Mining.com, 10 July 2016

In what seems like an annual event, platinum mining companies in South Africa are bracing for what could be another year of labour unrest.

The firms that mine the precious metal and the labour unions that represent their workers are in talks next week, trying to hammer out a deal that could avert a strike of similar magnitude to 2014.

That year, a strike led by the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU) forced major producers Amplats (LSE:AAL), Implats (OTCMKTS:IMPUY) and Lonmin (LSE:LMI) to shed over 70,000 jobs. The strike lasted 21 weeks, cost the industry R24 billion, and resulted in 1.3 million ounces of lost production – about a third of global output. South Africa and Russia combined account for close to 80%

of global supply of palladium and 70% of platinum output which are mainly used to clean emissions in automobiles.

BDLive, via Reuters, reports the AMCU is demanding a pay rise of 56%, in line with a "living wage", while the National Union of Mineworkers is asking for a 20% wage hike – well over the 6.1% rate of inflation. The mining companies say they can't afford the pay increases, arguing that last year they were forced to tap shareholders to raise cash, and that the unions' demands are unrealistic:

"We have ensured that shop stewards have been appropriately trained and have a good understanding of our business and the challenging environment in which we operate," Implats spokeswoman Alice Lourens told Reuters.

The unions however will no doubt argue that the market is turning. Platinum prices are up by 22% this year and the World Platinum Council said earlier this year that the market will be in a deficit supply situation for the fifth year in a row.

In a weekly newsletter last year, reported by Mineweb, Metals Focus explained the problems with the South African platinum mining industry are many, and include:

- narrow and deep underground mines that are both labour and capital-intensive.
- poor working conditions due to the high temperatures in the mines and cramped conditions.
- the Big 3 major platinum mining companies prefer to keep unprofitable mines operating and subsidize them from more profitable ones, rather than close them. This often leads to a philosophy of maximizing production despite high costs, thus exacerbating losses when prices are low.

<http://www.mining.com/south-africa-girding-for-another-platinum-strike/>

Sibanye - 2 500 jobs on the line

Dineo Faku, Business Report, 12 July 2016

Johannesburg - Sibanye Gold rallied 4.38 percent on the JSE to R58.81 a share early yesterday after it announced it would begin talks with unions on the future of its loss-making Cooke 4 underground mine and Ezulwini gold and uranium processing plant, signalling job cuts.

Shares closed at R58.38, 3.62 percent higher on the day.

The move would put about 2 500 jobs on the line if the country's biggest gold producer decided to close operations due to underperformance and continued losses after the 60-day consultation period with the labour unions.

There were 1 700 permanent employees, and 800 contractors at the affected operations.

René Hochreiter, a mining analyst at NOAH Capital Markets, said the consultation on the future of Cooke 4 underground mine and Ezulwini came as little surprise.

Hochreiter said it was from an investor point of view.

Bleeding

“It stops the bleeding because Cooke 4 is an old shaft and is difficult to operate.

“It has had lots of underground fires over the years and high-cost multiple reef stopes that have threatened its viability and I am not surprised that the company has taken these steps... The mine is not ‘working’ even when the gold price has reached R600 000 a kilogram,” he said.

Wayne Robinson, the chief executive of Sibanye Gold’s gold and uranium division, said yesterday that the Cooke 4 operations were unable to meet its targets.

“Ongoing financial losses threaten the viability of the rest of Cooke 4 operations and we have regrettably had to give notice to affected stakeholders and begin the consultation processes,” Robinson said.

Sibanye acquired four underground mines and two processing plants including Cooke 4 as part of a plan to get exposure to low-cost uranium and gold reserves in the Cooke surface tailings facilities. But the operations made a R4 million operating loss last year.

Sibanye led consultations in September 2014, which resulted in the company and unions deciding to implement certain measures to return the operation to profitability.

However, the interventions and the even firmer gold price this year has not helped turn around the Cooke 4 operations.

“Despite intense monitoring and interventions by a joint management and labour committee over the last 17 months, since the previous section 189 consultation was concluded, the Cooke 4 operations have continued to fall short of production targets and losses have continued to accumulate,” the company said.

James Wellsted, Sibanye’s spokesman said it was too early to say what the outcome of the section 189 would be. “As you know, we need to consult with stakeholders and try to find alternatives if possible before making a decision,” he said.

Any job losses were a blow for the mining industry, which has shed more than 30 000 jobs so far this year as companies were under pressure amid the subdued economic environment, soft commodity prices and rising costs.

Retrenchments

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) said it was shocked with the section 189 notice to retrench about 1 702 permanent workers at Cooke 4 and would be calling on government intervention.

“The NUM requests Minister of Mineral Resources Mosebenzi Zwane to intervene immediately to stop this drastic action by the company that will leave hundreds of mineworkers in a dire situation, as well as the surrounding communities in the West Rand,” it said.

Gideon du Plessis, the general secretary at trade union Solidarity, said there was hope the consultation process would bring alternatives to job cuts.

“There was a period where we explored all alternatives for almost two years. It did not yield results. We believe there are more alternatives to be explored. We believe people will be accommodated elsewhere in the business.”

<http://www.iol.co.za/business/companies/sibanye---2-500-jobs-on-the-line-2044348>

Commuters stranded as Metrobus continue strike action

Neo Goba, The Times, 12 July, 2016

Thousands of Johannesburg commuters had to seek alternate transport again on Tuesday as attempts to negotiate an end to the Metrobus drivers strike failed.

The drivers have vowed to intensify their unprotected strike if the decision to outsource bus inspectors is not reversed.

This is according to a bus driver who has been working for the bus service for over 10 years.

"The biggest problem here is that the managing [director Mavela Dlamini] wants to outsource the work for ticket examination from passengers. All these years there has been a promotion amongst the drivers especially for inspection because they know the job very well," said the father of three children who asked not to be named.

When TMG Digital visited the Metrobus head offices in Braamfontein, bus drivers were seen socialising and others were playing music from their cars.

On Friday and Monday, commuters were left stranded as the drivers downed tools.

"So the fight is that there will no longer be progression. He [Dlamini] is closing that department and people will no longer progress because he is closing that department completely. There is a better way of looking after the revenue of Metrobus," the driver said.

The driver said they had no issues with salaries or wages. He told TMG Digital that the basic salary for a Metrobus driver is R7,000 per month. He is earning R18,000 before deductions. With overtime, he makes almost R24,000.

Sources told TMG Digital that they were only informed last week on Thursday by an unnamed manager that the inspection department would be outsourced.

At least 200 Metrobus routes have been shut down due to the unprotected strike.

Efforts to get hold of Metrobus representatives were unsuccessful as they were in a meeting with South African Municipal Workers Union shop stewards. Samwu is the union representing the bus drivers.

That meeting reportedly failed to bear fruit.

<http://www.timeslive.co.za/local/2016/07/12/Commuters-stranded-as-Metrobus-continue-strike-action>

SABC

We won't do it, says the SABC

Luyolo Mkentane & Tebogo Monama, Daily News, 12 July 2016

Johannesburg - "We are not going to change anything, you must forget!" This is how SABC strongman Hlaudi Motsoeneng greeted the Icasa ruling directing the public broadcaster to withdraw its ban on visuals of violent public protests.

The SABC remained defiant on Monday, saying it was prepared to go to the highest court in the land to defend its controversial editorial codes.

This after the Independent Communications Authority of SA ordered the public broadcaster to withdraw the censorship policy, and called on SABC board chairman Professor Mbulaheni Maguvhe to confirm in writing within seven days that the sanction had been complied with.

Failure to withdraw the censorship policy could result in Icasa cautioning fining, and ultimately revoking the SABC's broadcasting licence, Icasa acting chairman Rubben Mohlaloga told a media briefing in Johannesburg.

But the SABC's defiant stance suggests the powers that be at the broadcaster are growing even more confident of high-level political backing. The SABC is now effectively in defiance of both the ruling party and the country's broadcast regulator.

On Monday, Communications Minister Faith Muthambi defied an ANC summons to attend a meeting with the party's subcommittee on communications to explain the mess at the SABC.

Her continued defiance of the party might bring the issue to a head. The ANC was expected to call another media briefing to address the SABC crisis today. This time, party secretary-general Gwede Mantashe was expected to address the media and try to assert the ANC's authority over the government it's meant to lead.

The complaint against the SABC was lodged by civil society organisations, including the SOS Coalition.

The organisations argued that the broadcaster's policy was in conflict with the Broadcasting Act. It was also in violation of freedoms of expression and to receive information or ideas, especially in the build-up to the local government elections on August 3.

Unperturbed, the SABC held its own media briefing after Icasa's, where the corporation's management effectively said they would not comply with Icasa's ruling.

"We are within the Broadcasting Act. We are within the regulations. The Icasa ruling, we are challenging that ruling," said Motsoeneng.

They were prepared to go to the Constitutional Court to challenge the ruling, he said, stressing they were unapologetic about their stance on news censorship.

He mocked "clever people" who challenged the controversial policy, which he dismissed as one big "hullabaloo".

Motsoeneng, whose leadership style has been described as dictatorial, said he didn't know why people wanted to dictate to the SABC how to run its newsrooms.

Board chairman Maguvhe said the controversial policy was both a "moral and conscious" decision they had taken.

Jackson Mthembu, chairman of the ANC subcommittee on communications, has said they were not happy with the expertise the SABC had at its highest level. "No wonder you get such decisions being made," he said.

Maguvhe said the SABC would consult its legal team on the Icasa ruling, adding: "I still believe we were right. We did not impose a blanket ban on visuals."

SOS Coalition national co-ordinator Sekoetlane Phamodi said they felt vindicated by the Icasa ruling.

However, Phamodi said he would not count on the SABC to comply with the order.

"The SABC is notorious for failing to comply with even high court judgments for that matter, never mind the rulings of a tribunal such as the regulators.

"Nevertheless, we will watch the space, and if the SABC still continues under Mr Motsoeneng's unlawful instruction, as premised by the unlawfully revised editorial policies, we will definitely take the matter further up to a higher court if need be," he said.

"We'll perhaps even seek direct access to the Constitutional Court, because we are three weeks away from the local government elections, and the freeness and

fairness of our elections this year is going to depend on the independence, credibility and stability of the SABC.

"It is the single largest mass communication medium in the country," added Phamodi.

<http://www.iol.co.za/dailynews/news/we-wont-do-it-says-the-sabc-2044311>

South Africa

Reform or lose, top leader warns ANC

Sam Mkokeli, Independent Media/Bloomberg, 12 July 2016

Johannesburg - Reform or slowly die. That's the message a senior official of the African National Congress says South Africa's ruling party must heed.

"If the ANC does not change, it will see itself gradually out of power," Paul Mashatile, the 54-year-old chairman of the party in Gauteng province, which includes the capital, Pretoria, and Johannesburg, the economic hub, said in an interview. "Many of our leaders and members know we have to change."

Africa's most industrialised nation is facing an intense contest for the August 3 local elections that has exposed the weaknesses of the party's practices. Five people died in protests sparked by the competition over the nominees in the Tshwane municipality, which includes Pretoria. About 10 ANC members have been killed in KwaZulu-Natal province amid intense disputes over competition for council posts and control of local resources.

While the ANC has won more than 60 percent of the vote in every election since the first multiracial poll in 1994, the party's succession battles since icon Nelson Mandela stepped down as president have led to internal strife and splits. Its popularity in urban areas has been dented by a series of scandals that have embroiled its leader, President Jacob Zuma, and discontent over a 27 percent unemployment rate and widespread poverty.

"We are already struggling as it is where everybody says, well, this is no longer the same, it's no longer the ANC of Nelson Mandela," said Mashatile. "When there's a lot of noise it does affect the ANC and its support base. These things do take the energy of our members away from where we want that to be."

Three recent polls by research company Ipsos on behalf of broadcaster eNCA show that the main opposition party, the Democratic Alliance, is ahead of the ANC in both Pretoria and Johannesburg, but will fall short of winning a majority. The ANC believes it has 50 percent support or more in many municipalities, Mashatile said.

Mashatile is part of a younger, urban generation of leaders who're calling for more modern practices, coming up against conservatives who're comfortable with the party's traditional ways of operating.

"My view is that the ANC must bring its electoral processes from the 'underground'," said Mashatile.

Vote buying

Past elections have been tainted by allegations of vote buying and gerrymandering. The US style of primaries and public debates are the kind of model the ANC should consider, he said.

"I like the American style; it's very transparent," he said. "If you want Donald Trump, you know what you are looking for."

The ANC will hold its five-yearly conference in December 2017, when a new leadership will be elected and the party's policies reviewed by about 4 000 delegates from the nation's nine provinces, and three leagues that represent youth, women and members of the former military wing.

"We have to ensure there is huge renewal of the ANC come 2017," he said. "Otherwise we will not survive."

Zuma's replacement

There have been calls from ANC members for the replacement of Zuma as party president when his second term expires next year. He won control of the ANC from Thabo Mbeki in December 2007 and was sworn in as president in May 2009, just weeks after prosecutors dropped charges against him of taking bribes from arms dealers.

Businessman Cyril Ramaphosa, who is the ANC and country's deputy president, will probably come up against Zuma's ex-wife, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, a former minister who's now chairwoman of the African Union Commission.

"There's no fait accompli, the contest is open," Mashatile said. "We must discuss all candidates openly when the time comes."

<http://www.iol.co.za/business/news/reform-or-lose-top-leader-warns-anc-2044376>

Cosatu protests shabby Cape transport

Heidi Giokos, Independent Media, 11 July 2016

Johannesburg - The Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) will embark on mass protest action against rail and bus services in Cape Town on Tuesday.

The protest will see Cosatu and its affiliates march against entities such as Metro Rail and the City of Cape Town over a slew of issues with the city's transport infrastructure.

Demands listed by the union include the call for the Provincial Government to develop transport infrastructure between rural towns and ensure trains are reliable and better maintained.

The union is also demanding the Cape Flats be included on the My CiTi bus routes.

Cosatu has also demanded employers stop disciplining workers who come in late because of train delays.

The union said workers have been losing their jobs because they were arriving at work late due to the poor state of the rail services.

Cosatu's Western Cape secretary Tony Ehrenreich said in a statement on Monday that workers will be legally protected to participate in the protest and have the right to leave workplaces and proceed to Cape Town City Council offices.

Ehrenreich said Western Cape officer bearers will hand over a memorandum on Tuesday at 14h00.

<http://www.iol.co.za/business/news/cosatu-protests-shabby-cape-transport-2044053>

International

#Brexit: A socialist perspective by a former Brit

Patrick Craven, Daily Maverick, 11 July 2016

The British people's vote to leave the European Union (EU) on 23 June 2016 – by 52% against 48% – was a massive blow against monopoly capitalism in Britain, Europe and the world. The wealthy capitalist elite are aghast that ordinary people could dare to challenge their right to rule the world through their control of the economic levers of power, of which the EU is a key component.

They clearly expect to win and continue with business as usual, and are now panicking to manage the chaos which has hit their stock exchanges, currencies and investment strategies. The Brexit vote wiped out a record \$2.1-trillion on the world stock exchanges, with more money disappearing than in any single market day ever. The value of the British pound crashed 12% in just two days to its lowest levels for 30 years, and Barclays Bank lost one-third of its value.

Britain has already suffered something that South Africans are familiar with – a downgrading by ratings agencies which have lowered the outlook for the UK's credit rating from stable to negative.

As in most referendums, the outcome reflects not just people's response to the specific question on the ballot paper – whether to remain inside or leave the EU – but their feelings about other issues. The 17-million who voted for Leave were expressing their anger at big business making the working class pay for the economic crisis in recent years, through low pay, zero-hour contracts, benefit cuts, the lack of affordable housing, public service cuts, growing unemployment and the virtual destruction of the manufacturing industry.

The biggest votes for leaving were in the poorest working-class areas, where people used the referendum as an opportunity not only to oppose the undemocratic, remote capitalist EU and to protest against its effects on their lives, but to condemn attacks on jobs, living standards and the quality of their lives.

As well as the economic turmoil, the referendum has further destabilised the increasingly “DisUnited” Kingdom, with both Scotland and Northern Ireland voting to remain in the EU, while England and Wales opted for leaving. This has led to calls for a second independence referendum in Scotland and another for Northern Ireland, which will be the only part of the UK with a land border with the EU, as the Republic of Ireland remains inside.

It has also led to chaos within the main political parties. David Cameron has resigned and his Conservative Party is voting for a new leader who can unite their deeply divided ranks. The Labour Party's left-wing leader, Jeremy Corbyn, has suffered a motion of no-confidence from right-wing MPs who condemned his luke-warm backing for the party's campaign to remain in the EU, though this may well be reversed by the party's rank and file members at the National Conference in September.

Worryingly however, right-wing politicians, on both sides of the debate, created a dangerous atmosphere by using racist and xenophobic propaganda, which increased the danger of hatred towards immigrants and racist and far-right attacks like the murder of Labour MP, Jo Cox.

This sends out a warning to the labour and socialist movement to ignore this danger at their peril, and to counter it with an internationalist campaign against the EU around the slogan “For a united socialist Europe”.

Interestingly, one of the shrewdest responses to the Brexit vote was published across the Atlantic in the New York Times on 28 June 2016 by Bernie Sanders, the left-wing Democratic Presidential contender, who viewed Brexit from an international perspective.

“Surprise, surprise,” he wrote, “Workers in Britain, many of whom have seen a decline in their standard of living while the very rich in their country have become much richer, have turned their backs on the European Union and a globalised economy that is failing them and their children.”

“And it’s not just the British who are suffering. That increasingly globalised economy, established and maintained by the world’s economic elite, is failing people everywhere. Incredibly, the wealthiest 62 people on this planet own as much wealth as the bottom half of the world’s population – around 3.6-billion people. The top 1% now owns more wealth than the whole of the bottom 99%. The very, very rich enjoy unimaginable luxury while billions of people endure abject poverty, unemployment, and inadequate healthcare, education, housing and drinking water.

“Could this rejection of the current form of the global economy happen in the United States? You bet it could.”

“In the last 15 years, nearly 60,000 factories in this country have closed, and more than 4.8-million well-paid manufacturing jobs have disappeared... Despite major increases in productivity, the median male worker in America today is making \$726 dollars less than he did in 1973, while the median female worker is making \$1,154 less than she did in 2007, after adjusting for inflation.

“Nearly 47-million Americans live in poverty... Frighteningly, millions of poorly educated Americans will have a shorter life span than the previous generation as they succumb to despair, drugs and alcohol. Meanwhile, in our country the top one-tenth of 1% now owns almost as much wealth as the bottom 90%; 58% of all new income is going to the top 1%”.

But Sanders also warns about the negative aspect of this rejection. “We need real change. But we do not need change based on the demagoguery, bigotry and anti-immigrant sentiment that punctuated so much of the Leave campaign’s rhetoric — and is central to Donald J. Trump’s message.”

Some of those who voted for Leave were undoubtedly motivated at least partly for racist or nationalist reasons, but it would be wrong to suggest that the voters had a predominantly racist view. Even many of those using anti-immigrant arguments were not directed so much at people who have come to Britain, but at employers using workers from other countries to drive down wages.

The fundamental character of the exit vote was that it was a working class revolt. There was a correlation between the levels of poverty in an area and the size of the vote for Leave. And this was the case not only in white working class areas, but also in more ethnically diverse working class areas like the city of Bradford.

It is crucial that socialists in Britain, the US and here in South Africa step up their campaign against racism and xenophobia and for workers’ unity, which can build on the support that the British vote against the bosses’ EU has received from workers all over Europe.

One of the biggest decisions now facing British workers is how to respond to the crisis in the Labour Party, which the majority have supported for decades. A left-wing grouping, Momentum, the organisation initially set up to organise support for Jeremy

Corbyn, reacted by correctly saying that: “Millions appear to have chosen ‘Leave’ to vote against the unfettered globalisation that has seen living standards stagnate or fall, as the cost of living rises.” But it was late in the day to recognise that truth after their leaders spent the referendum campaigning for Remain!

Although Jeremy Corbyn did refuse to appear alongside Conservative politicians, his support for Remain was exploited by David Cameron to try to win a majority for Remain in the EU. He declared that he couldn’t “be accused of an establishment stitch-up” because he was “saying listen to Jeremy Corbyn and the Green party”.

And unfortunately the majority of trade union and Labour Party leaders who did support Leave failed to campaign on an independent working class platform and adopt a socialist, internationalist campaign for Leave and oppose the “Little Englanders” of United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) and right-wing Conservatives who opposed the EU for fundamentally opposite capitalist reasons.

As the Socialist Party of England and Wales said: “The political situation would have been transformed if Jeremy Corbyn had stuck by his own historic position of opposition to the EU because, as he said at the time of the Maastricht Treaty: ‘It takes away from national parliaments the power to set economic policy and hands it over to an unelected set of bankers...’.

“The complete absence of a mass working class voice in the referendum has left the ground free to the ex-Conservative, ex-stockbroker and [now ex-]leader of the UKIP, Nigel Farage to falsely pose as the voice of the “little people’. In reality, of course, the divisive Little Englander ideas of UKIP offer no way forward for working class people.”

Corbyn’s election as Labour leader reflected the growing anti-austerity mood in society. There is now a serious challenge from the right wing in the party, which could lead to the re-emergence of a new leadership like that of Tony Blair, whose policies became indistinguishable from those of the neoliberal Conservatives.

Now, with labour, and indeed the whole country in turmoil, there has never been a better opportunity to build a genuine socialist party of the workers which will challenge the power of monopoly capital and its political mouthpieces in Britain, Europe and the world.

<http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2016-07-11-brexite-a-socialist-perspective-by-a-former-brit/#.V4SZpE3lrIU>

Comment and analysis

A prescription to end the info muddle

Terry Bell , Fin24, 8 July 2016

TODAY we seem to be surrounded by much deliberate obfuscation of critical issues by official sources and, all too often, by a swirl of lies, innuendo and fear mongering. It is a recipe for confusion, peppered with mind-numbing bigotry.

And it serves the interests of governments and political parties, along with others with vested interests in the system. It is they who create the confusion as they constantly try to corrupt and manipulate public information and its dissemination.

With the world in turmoil as the economic crisis deepens, these practices have become more intense. And they create an environment that provides a fertile breeding ground for demagogues of every stripe as political and economic elites battle - often desperately - to cling on to or improve their positions.

There is only one counter to this: upholding the right to freedom of expression and freedom to disseminate information and analysis that is honest and factual. This is something enshrined in South Africa's justly hailed Constitution. Yet last week, the South African government joined Russia and China - hardly paragons of human rights - in opposing a United Nations move to win an international commitment to respect freedom of expression and privacy online.

Here was an international aspect of what is an ongoing war where, in South Africa, the current battle is centred on the SABC. This in a domestic media environment where public relations practitioners - spin doctors - probably outnumber journalists, the men and women tasked with providing factual news to the print and broadcast media on which most people rely.

Fourth Estate now more crucial than ever

For the mass of ordinary citizens such news, when it is as accurate as possible and encourages critical thinking, is the only antidote to that which can be socially poisonous and politically debilitating. This is why the role of the Fourth Estate, of journalism, is probably more crucial now than it has ever been.

Yet today the workers - the fact finders, writers broadcasters and analysts - in this sector in South Africa are organisationally weak and under increasing pressure, as competition for a shrinking pool of jobs increases. Perhaps ironically, it is the SA National Editors' Forum that is the major industry standard bearer for freedom of expression and the free flow of information.

The former journalists' union collapsed in financial ignominy; the leading media union from the struggle days, the Media Workers' Association (Mwasa), has economic problems and is on the brink of deregistration, while the Communication Workers' Union (CWU), which has some journalist members, appears to have struck up a cosy relationship with the SABC.

Mwasa, although it still has members in the SABC, has been "derecognised" in what has been described as a "reign of terror" by broadcast boss, Hlaudi Motsoeneng. He

has acknowledged the CWU, which hosted him last week at a gala dinner, as the SABC union.

Given the disarray and disgruntlement within the public broadcaster, a newly-formed National Trade Union Congress is also making a pitch for members at the SABC and elsewhere, attacking both Cosatu and the putative federation headed by the metalworkers' union, Numsa. The SA Communist Party has now also joined the fray, picketing the SABC.

Lost in the resulting cacophony of news and views is the fact that journalism, properly practised, is not "just a job". It is the only craft where the practitioners operate as the eyes and ears of the public at large. This is both a privilege and a serious responsibility.

An obvious factor here - and the single most important skill for any journalist - is critical thinking. It is also, arguably, one of the most important skills for every human being to master and one that good journalism should encourage.

So working journalists clearly need to get their organisational act together to ensure the free flow from all media outlets of information that is honest, accurate and encourages critical thinking. In this, they deserve the widest support from a public that needs such information to remain politically and socially healthy.

As the American sociologist William Sumner perceptively noted: "[Critical thinking] is our only guarantee against delusion, deception, superstition, and misapprehension of ourselves and our earthly circumstances."

<http://www.fin24.com/Economy/Labour/InsideLabour/inside-labour-a-prescription-to-end-the-info-muddle-20160708>
