We are fighting a class struggle

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Does Employment Tax Incentive Work?

On the 16th October, NUMSA and the communities around Kathlehong, Duduza and Kwa Thema marched under the banner of a UNITED FRONT against what we consider a “fishy” R50-billion Transnet tender, awarded wrongfully by Transnet to the Chinese, France and US firms; and will benefit a host of powerful and well-connected politicians and individuals.

Striking Workers locked out Collective Bargaining & Freedom of Association under attack

Since the NUMSA led engineering strike ended over 500 workers have been locked out of work by the National Employers Association of South Africa (N easa) owned companies throughout the country. These workers went on strike with other engineering workers and when the strike ended their employers refused to allow them to return to work. Some of these N easa employers have said that the workers can only return if they abide by the following conditions:

N easa Demands

• Resign from NUMSA in order to return to work
• Accept an increase lower than that signed in the bargaining council
• Interdicted NUMSA and employers from extending the Engineering agreement
• N easa is attempting to break down centralised collective bargaining and stop workers freedom of association to the union.

Support for the locked out workers

These workers have not had any income since the start of the engineering strike nor have they had any increase implemented. This has had a devastating socio-economic impact on their households. The union is exploring all bargaining and legal avenues to deal with this including ensuring:

• That all the affected comrades receive grocery vouchers. However we conscious that this may not be sufficient as the struggle with N easa drags on
• Some regions have arranged their own donations in additions to the vouchers
• What has really stood out in terms of solidarity has been the very generous donations of some staff in some regions.

NUMSA National meeting recently resolved

• Regions undertake an audit of the companies locking out our members so that we can organise against them and their products
• All NUMSA staff and members continue to show solidarity with the locked out workers

What is to be done

• NUMSA members should unite and defend their hard won gains
• NUMSA must fight back against N easa and all those like the Free Market Foundation who are trying to reverse the hard won collective bargaining gains of workers
• NUMSA members must join picket lines in all the identified companies that have locked out workers
• Plan local or regional campaigns against these companies
• Refuse to handle the goods of these companies

Forward to Centralised Collective Bargaining Forward!
An injury to one is an injury to all!
Editorial

Welcome to the 4th edition of NUMSA News.

Our main focus is on our 500 plus members who have been locked-out by NEASA for demanding a decent wage and decent working conditions. Read more about this on the front page story.

On a positive note, we have made strides in implementing the NUMSA Special National Congress resolution on the scope. We have successfully made progress with Rand Refinery company, Transnet and other new sectors. Please read about the Rand Refinery Agreement in this edition.

International solidarity is always a key feature of NUMSA, this year: we have participated in campaigns supporting the people of Palestine. NUMSA was active in this campaign both in Gauteng and Western Cape. Nazeema Samuels reports about the Western Cape March.

Please be sure to read about shopfloor issues on the SHOPFLOOR section. SHOP FLOOR is the space for workers’ battles, victories, innovations and more. These pages highlight shopfloor issues across all nine regions. SHOP FLOOR was born from a media workshop, earlier this year, in which shopstewards decided to pen and share stories on what’s happening in your area. So, please write for SHOP FLOOR...

And, as always, you’ll also find a mix of news, events and resources from across the regions to keep you informed and up to date on a range of issues affecting our members.

We hope you enjoy this edition. If you would like to contribute an article for a forthcoming issue, please write to sundreh@numsa.org.za. If you’ve found this newsletter useful, why not forward it on to a friend or colleague? Solidarity is strength.

Comment

We are fighting a class struggle

People always have been the foolish victims of deception and self-deception in politics, and they always will be until they have learnt to seek out the interests of some class or other behind all moral, religious, political and social phrases, declarations and promises. Champions of reforms and improvements will always be fooled by the defenders of the old order until they realise that every old institution, however barbarous and rotten it may appear to be, is kept going by the forces of certain ruling classes. And these ruling classes are so organized and the resistance of those classes, and that is to find, in the very society which surrounds us, the forces which can—and, owing to their social position, more readily constitute the power capable of sweeping away the old and creating the new, and to enlighten and organise those forces for the struggle. 

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin

The South African working class has driven our revolution

The working class has been the motive force of the South African revolution since the early struggles resisting colonization of a special type. This working class that I speak about includes the organized and the unorganized, the working man who is employed and unemployed.

The South African working class fought all the racist regimes and governments. It made the apartheid government of both Botha and de Klerk completely unenforceable. It led the Numsa to defend and put the ANC government into power. It did this through bringing together as revolutionary forces the working class and the youth of our country. It did this through the four pillars of our struggle: mass mobilization, underground structures of the liberation movement, Umkhonto we Sizwe and the South African economy.

We demand full implementation of the Freedom Charter

The levels of the triple crisis can be seen in the mass poverty and unemployment and the deep levels of inequality. This crisis must make us go back to basics. We must mobilize the working class from below to take up the just cause of defeating it by demanding the full implementation of the Freedom Charter. We must make clear that we absolutely reject the hot pursuit of neoliberal policies. They have failed the country and the world. They are directly responsible for the deep global recession and for the mass poverty in our country.

NUMSA Special Congress called on NUMSA to take the lead

The working class must organise as a class

The NUMSA Special National Congress in December 2011 called on the working class to organize itself as a class for itself and to take full responsibility for its interests. It was clear that capitalists are currently running the ANC, with their destabilizations and the poor of our country.

What has happened since these NUMSA resolutions?

There were two concrete results of NUMSA’s revolutionary commitments. On the one side, many workers across various sectors and the working class in general applauded NUMSA with love. On the other side, the leadership of Cosatu and all those affiliated to Cosatu and SACP, labelled NUMSA and in particular its leadership, the enemy within. We became public enemy number one.

The tried to divide us

Just on the eve of the NUMSA Special National Congress in 2013, our President, Cedric Gina resigned and immediately started attacking us in a coordinated fashion with the SACP. They visited our locals, stirring revolt on the ground and spreading propaganda. They have attacked NUMSA in a coordinated fashion, the ANC, NUMSA and in particular its leadership, it was the ANC that empowers the SACP to start attacking us.

The tried to expel us from Cosatu

From the beginning of this year we have been threatened with expulsion from Cosatu. The leadership of Cosatu and all those affiliated to Cosatu who worked hard to punitively suspend Cosatu General Secretary Zwelinzima Vavi have championed this threat.

They have spread lies about NUMSA and others

They have attacked NUMSA leadership in a propaganda campaign of absolute lies in newspapers and on radio and TV. The leaders of the SACP do exactly what they have done on the issue of NKandla. They tell bare-faced lies. They say a swimming pool is a fire pool with a straight face. They say publicly that Thuli Madonsela is a CIA spy. On the same day, they say that the NUMSA General Secretary and his Deputy are business partners who are looting the money of workers. They take no notice of the fact that NUMSA books and financials are audited by an external firm of accountants.

They continue to attack us despite agreeing to stop

In the last NUMSA News we told you that the ANC had started a facilitation process in Cosatu. As part of that process, they asked affidavits and leaders to cease hostilities. But we quickly learned that this white flag of peace was only meant for NUMSA. They did not stop attacking us. NUMSA and Nehawu used their constitutional structures and congresses. To our surprise, the very ANC facilitators themselves forget about their call to cease hostilities when they were given a platform.

Leaders of Cosatu affiliates have been purged

At the same time, a number of Cosatu affiliates have started openly removing their activists and leaders who support the NUMSA leadership. Those who have struggled for an independent Cosatu have been dismissed and suspended and some, like Thobile Nola from SADTU, got their membership taken away for 10 years.

NUMSA News No 4 • October 2014
Numsa leaders have been assassinated

We witnessed a terrible situation where our shop stewards in KZN were brutally murdered at gun point. This was nothing else except a clear intimidation against the Numsa movement.

At the same time, Cedric Gina and a former Numsa employee went public claiming that they have launched a union which will take over Numsa members. They tried to cast doubt on the current leadership of Numsa, spreading propaganda. Their meetings have been exposed.

What they are doing is similar to what Inkatha’s Uwusa did in the late 1980s. They will form a union that will not criticize the ANC. It will be a praise singer of Jacob Zuma’s government as Uwusa was a praise singer because it is directly involved in the continuing paralysis of government for the triple crisis. We conclude that the unity of Cosatu is paramount. And we will fight to save it. We haven’t forgotten that Cosatu was built on solidarity. We stand, divided we fall — endamagang mak. We are fighting for a united, militant, socialist Cosatu that is independent, and not a conveyor belt of any political party.

We have made it clear from the beginning that the ANC cannot be a political competitor, because it is directly involved in the continuing disunity in Cosatu.

The neoliberal policies of the ANC / SACP government are at the centre of these divisions. Under these policies, the triple crisis of poverty, unemployment and inequality gets worse. Factories have closed. Our industries employ less people today than they did in 2009.

We, together with other affiliates, reject these policies. We blame the ANC / SACP government for the triple crisis. We conclude that the National Democratic Revolution was completely off the rails. The other affiliates, who want to say that we have a good story to tell, are saying that the NDR is on track.

In the bilateral with ANC we had to be frank and honest. We told them clearly that the ANC has no capacity to facilitate the unity of an independent federation that will fight for workers and challenge the ANC government in power. The facilitation can only support the interests of the ANC in Cosatu. They have already said, at the Cosatu CEC, that the rest of the affiliates want to stay in the Alliance and to have a federation based on one industry one federation. The victims of this so-called facilitation can only be Numsa and Zwelenzima Vavi.

We will continue to fight. But it looks more and more likely that Numsa will be targeted as it’s organisations are deeper, more radical and resolute. We have spoken truth to power. We have challenged the current paralysis of government that is deepening day by day. We have rejected the President’s referendum. We put back the money that was spent fraudulently on Nkandla. We are vocal against etolls and labour brokers. We will be launching the United Front in December that will challenge the neoliberal policies that have plunged the country into crisis.

For all this consistent struggle in the interests of the working class, Numsa and its leadership have been labelled by the alliance as Public Enemy Number One.

We will not be intimidated from our struggle for socialism

We stand firm against the senseless killing of our members, as we showed in the mass funeral for our fallen heroes. We are clear. There is no enemy within. The enemy of workers is the capitalist class that exploys the working class.

Workers in Numsa across the length and breadth of the country must unite and refuse to be divided by some unsavoury Johnnycome-lately who might be sponsored with money to cause violence between workers. The only weapon we have as workers is to unite and isolate outside our ranks such a reactionary core that will sponsor such stupid violence.

We warn the enemy: do not provoke us. We will never accept any form of intimidation or subjugation through violence. We will fight any such attempt and we will defeat them. They must try us. We have called on the police to find and arrest such a “Ntovela Boya”

Numsa is a growing union committed to servicing our members

We have not been side-tracked by these reactionary forces. We have remained focused on our core business which is to service Numsa members and to build the organisation. As a result, Numsa is indeed growing.

Remember that we have taken a decision not to throw away workers who are dismissed or rejected from any union. We shall keep those workers within Numsa. Any worker outside Numsa or Cosatu is to us unorganized. We will take up the fight to defend and represent all workers who join Numsa.

We will fight to keep the right to strike

We have noted the ANC/SACP government’s latest attacks on the working class. We will take up battle against them. They are now following Margaret Thatcher again by attacking workers’ right to strike. And they are threatening workers’ retirement funds with what is called “preservation”.

We fought in the streets for the right to strike and all the provisions of the Labour Relations Act. They were not delivered on a silver platter by government.

They are threatening us with two assaults on the right to strike. Compulsory ballots: they are saying that before we strike there must be a ballot

Compulsory arbitration: they want their government, through the CCMA, to intervene in a strike action if they think the strike is destructive. They want the power to stop the strike. Workers’ demands being met. Then they want the CCMA to impose what they call compulsory arbitration. In other words the CCMA will then tell workers what they must settle on.

The right to strike in this country is a constitutional right. It is strange to us that the ANC/SACP government is happy to propose constitutional change which attacks workers. But when we call on them to use their majority to attack the dominant exploiting class by removing the property clause from the Constitution, they refuse.

We will fight for a minimum wage

They have also failed to introduce a national minimum wage to protect the working class and the poor. There was no commitment in their election manifesto. They only promised to investigate it.

But this was decided more than 50 years ago in Kliptown in 1955: when the democratic government is in power, it will break the backbone of the apartheid colonial wage by introducing a national minimum wage. That is why we call for the full implementation of the Freedom Charter.

We reject the anti-working class proposals of the ANC/SACP Government

These proposals fall on from the massacre of our comrades in Marikana and the adoption of the National Development Plan. They show us by their actions that this is a right-wing, conservative government. We can only say “Basabeni Phukamani the call us! We wake up, and Cyril Ramaphosa “to introduce limitation on the right to strike. It is a dangerous right-wing onslaught on the organized working class.

We reject the attacks from the bosses

We are also facing lockdowns by NEASA, as you will see in the section below on Collective Bargaining. We are seriously under attack.

Our militancy has caused all right-wing conservative groups to gang up against us. They are attacking our right to use Collective Bargaining as part of the class struggle. If we are going to be able to defend our gains and improve our members’ conditions, we will have to be more seriously committed.

Right now the employers’ are trying to cut workers in both the auto and components
Dear Numsa News

It has been 20 years since we have buried apartheid in South Africa but the ghost of apartheid still haunts us.

In the past our forefathers were exploited by employers during the era of apartheid, they were paid with meal and in some instances by second-hand clothing regardless of the size. Due to the struggle of our leaders, that ceased after we elected the democratic Government in 1994.

It is surprising to see that some employers have reverted to the old ways of apartheid.

I am referring to the employers who are the members of National Employers Association of South Africa (NEASA) that do not want to better the conditions of the employees. They are going as further as trying to persuade other employers' representatives to resign from the Centralized Bargaining Chamber. These actions show that they are not accepting the changes taking place in this country.

This ghost called apartheid will not die easily, since it is now disguised under BBE. Our fellow comrades are being used in some instances to oppress our fellow comrades. The only hope we have as a working class, in defending our rights, is Numsa.

Qina Numsa gina!  

Thulani S. Xulu, Numsa Shop steward, BHP Billiton-Richards Bay

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Dear Numsa News

We cannot afford to lose the battle against the intransigent National Employers Association of South Africa (NEASA) as theirs is not only an attack on Numsa members but also a direct onslaught on collective bargaining.

After the mouthpiece of the Capstans of Capital in the form of The Confederation of Associations in the Private Employment Sector (CAPES), failed to sabotage collective bargaining, they devised a new tactic to strengthen the war and advance exploitation. (CAPES, formed in 2002, acts as lobby organisation for staffing associations, representing small, medium businesses and corporate staffing companies.)

While Numsa is busy with court proceedings, it is not going to be as expeditious as we might have loved to see. It's time to organise civil society against the brutal attack on workers.

We need to mobilise a consumer boycott against all NEASA affiliated companies and share the list with all fraternal organisations.

Further, we should share information on the customers of NEASA affiliated companies—approach and target them, and boycott their products.

I think until such time that we don't go all out and take the war to NEASA we will always be found wanting.

Xolani Nyamenze, Regional Education Officer, writing in his personal capacity.

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Dear Numsa News

So easy! Yes, comrades, everything seems so easy for you as members and workers in our different plants when it comes to shop stewards and leadership.

Members have a mind-set and tendency that worker-leaders don't want to work hard. Members forget they voted for their leaders to engage and fight against bad conditions in the workplace.

Employers, on the other hand, smile when members behave in such ways as they (employers) like instability within the workplace.

Unity amongst workers comes first. An army cannot go to war and shoot its own (soldiers) in the back while moving forward. Leadership must not allow a few 'rotten capitalist' to cause in fighting amongst militant revolutionary unionists!

Metalworkers, let us unite with our leaders in companies and shopfloors.

Lucien Windhouw-P.E Local, Shopsteward, Bel-Essex Engineering

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Dear Numsa News

Comrades in our companies we work amongst friends and colleagues but as soon as they get an administrative or office job, they move away from the shopfloor — their accents and language changes to those of their employers.

The capitalist class brainwashes their minds. These people are now ruthless computer-slaves (and work) against us. They think they are better than the blue-collar overall operators, watch when we arrive.

Nkandla, the Youth Wage Subsidy and the people behind the ‘Makrikan assassinations’.

We will fight for workers. We should work as a united force in order to face our challenges and we will achieve more. In our movement there is no room for liberalism we will combat individualism in favour of collectivism.

There is no room for emotions — being emotional will lead to mistakes being committed that we cannot afford.

There is no room for personal achievements — if comrades believe they can solve worker problems alone then they’re in the wrong organisation.

Shopstewards, organisers, office bearers, members of the organisation must uphold principles of constructive criticism. We do not have heroes and we don’t have the luxury to engage in petty squabbles.

We must be untied and serve our members to the best of our ability.

Mfundo Maphutha, Numsa writer, Eastern Cape Region

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Letters

Do you have something to say? Write to us at: Numsa News, PO Box 260483, Excom 2023. The editor will receive Numsa gifts.

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Name:  
Address:  
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(NB: this rate is for workers only. Write to Numsa News for rates for salaried individuals and companies.)
Dear comrades,

The September Numsa News Letter emerges against a backdrop characterised by growing political hostilities towards Numsa and continuous political onslaught from the ranks of the ANC, SACP, YCL, Young Communist League, employers, business as well as the South African Government. The unleashing of this political onslaught is informed by the radical, ideological consistency of Numsa — seen as a real political champion of the working class — in the midst of class collaboration and also betrayal of the working class by the ANC-led allied social forces that have become “full-time political shop stewards” of white monopoly capital and imperialist forces.

“Class struggle in a period of capitalist hegemony is, in the long run, a political struggle for the ultimate winning of power by the working people. Nevertheless, the content of this class struggle does not remain fixed for all time; it is dictated by the concrete situation at a given historical moment. We cannot confine the meaning of class struggle to those rare moments when the immediate winning of socialist power is on the agenda. When workers engage in the political struggle to destroy race domination they are surely, at the same time, engaging in class struggle.”


Brutal Killing of Num sa Shop stewards in KZN

Recently, Numsa bid farewell to some of its gallant fighters — three Num sa shop stewards, brutally murdered in Kwa-Zulu-Natal. These comrades served in the Isipingo Local and their cowardly political assassinations took place in the aftermath of Numsa’s December 2013 Special National Congress which provided a radical paradigm shift in the South African political chemistry since the new political dispensation — the ANC.

The political intentions are clear, that of instilling political fear into Numsa leaders and members in general, to capitulate from pursuing radical revolutionary struggle which seeks to fundamentally bring a “New World Order”, that of a Socialist South Africa, free of class exploitation.

The blood of the three shop stewards will nourish the tree of freedom that will bear the fruits of a free Socialist South Africa. We dare not betray their legacy and their political and economic aspirations.

To their families, friends, colleagues and fellow comrades, the family of Metal Workers of SA wishes to salute all those who rendered political and spiritual support during the dark moments in the context of human solidarity.

Comrades, we must remain highly, politically vigilant as agent provocateurs and class traitors are crisis-crossing the length and breadth of our Numsa-organised-factories, across all sectors, localities and regions in an attempt to destabilise and paralyse Numsa. To weaken us by establishing a ‘New Right Wing Union,’ in the Metal Industry under the “BENONI” project, funded by the Right Wing within the ANC-led alliance. Our members will defeat their notorious agenda.

Our members know Numsa is the reliable, dependable, trustworthy, political home of all metal workers in South Africa.

I call on all metal workers to set prejudice aside and defend Numsa in honour of our late heroes of this giant workers movement: Honorary President, Cde Harry Gwala “IBhubesi loze Midlands”, Vincent Mabuyakhulu, Mthuthuzeli Tom, Mbuyeiso Ngwenya, John Gomomo, Philemon Bokaba, Stanford Ndobe, Charles Buijendehout, John — John, Njabulo Dube, Nobeko Maphumulo — the list is endless. We will never be defeated, as political history is on our side.

Numsa National Engineering Strike

The National Engineering strike was a watershed and resounding political success. It was one of our major political battles in the aftermath of the Numsa December 2013 Special National Congress which emphasised the need to improve the working and living conditions of our members. Indeed, Collective Bargaining is the political cornerstone of any revolutionary trade union movement.

Numsa members in this sector demonstrated the political, organisational, ideological unity and cohesion against the ruthless, intransigent employer organisation, SEIFSA. The political militancy, resilience and supreme sacrifices by the metalworkers also drew the attacks from the ANC-led government, its Secretary-General, Gwede Mantashe and big corporates. Some quarters characterised the strike not as an industrial action, but a so-called “Political Strike” with ulterior motives. This led to a call by these class forces for a review of the Labour Relations Act, to reduce the long duration of strikes to appease Foreign Investors at the expense of the workers, brutally exploited for more than 300 years.

We call on all our members and all workers, across all sectors of the economy in South Africa, irrespective of political persuasions, to unite and rollback the Neoliberal Agenda imposed by the ANC bourgeois government. Their political mission is to champion the interests of White Monopoly Capital, foreign capital and the Black parasitic bourgeoisie.

As the Union, we must seriously take stock of political victories, setbacks, lessons and organisational threats manifested during and post-strike action. There is a comprehensive and coherent Programme of Action against NEASA, an employer organisation, demonstrating the backward tendencies of racism and union bashing we witnessed during the Apartheid era. Political and organisational strategies must be explored, in defence of our members locked out by this racist employer. Although, Numsa was disappointed by the court ruling (Numsa vs NEASA), we will do everything to advance the interests of our members. The ruling is a temporary political setback. The class war is not over.

I want to make a revolutionary clarion call to all Numsa members to be in a state of political combat readiness for “the Mother of All Wars” against NEASA and other employers in other sectors. They might use this court ruling to achieve their self-centred interests and reverse the hard-won gains, including destroying the collective bargaining power of workers across all sectors. Therefore, we must consolidate our organisational strength and re-position Numsa to deal effectively with the post-strike repercussions or onslaught from employers, which will manifest as:

• Misconduct Charges against the members for activities during the strike
• Short Time and Lay Offs as the punitive measures to punish our members
• Bogus Plant Closures
• Application & Interviews by number of companies as to avoid compliance with the collective agreement

Union bashing tactics in order to organisationally paralyse Numsa

Numsa International Symposium

Numsa’s International Symposium was historical, a watershed and a resounding political success judged by the nature and character of the revolutionary credentials of the organisations that attended and participated from Europe, Latin America, Asia and our own African continent. This was a political milestone in the aftermath of the Numsa historic December 2013 Special National Congress, “Building Our Own Movement for Socialism.”

“Learning from the Struggles of Others,” this political theme was visionary and consistent with the process of exploration, including that of a Political Study Tour by the National Office Bearers, in drawing the historical lessons from current working class parties and those who were in power in other parts of the world, especially the Latin American experience. This historic international political platform managed to sharpen the revolutionary tools of the metalworkers based on the wealth of information, lessons, successful case studies shared during the symposium from different experiences from different countries.

What was common was the system of capitalism was undergoing a crisis globally and that it is not a solution to the acute social problems facing humanity in developing nations and internationally. A strong political view was the need for a radical working class movement, internationally, to confront the logic of global capitalism as the working class currently was under siege due to the ideological fragmentation of the working class movement.

I salute the sacrifices and qualitative participation especially by Numsa Youth Desk, Mbuyelo Brigade Members, AZAPO, WASP, Democratic Left, PAC of Azania, Progressive Informatics, “Friends of Numsa” and some ANC Veterans, Cde Sjake and Ronnie Kasriel, and our fellow comrades across the length and breadth of Africa. This strategic political work was dialectically linked to the noble goals of the Numsa Moment, that of establishing a United Front and Movement for Socialism to take forward the working class struggle.

Historic Women’s Day

The year 2014, marks 60 years since the historic Women’s March, August 9, 1956, protesting against the Pass Laws imposed by the Apartheid Government. The struggle for the full participation of women against social and economic injustices are indeed an integral part of the class struggle. As we celebrate the reforms of the 20 years of political democracy, women in the workplace and in society continue to face the brunt of the patriarchal and capitalist brutality daily.

Continued on page 6

PS — you can write to me at c/o Numsa, PO Box 260483, Excom 2023, fax to 011 834 4320 or e-mail to AndrewC@numsa.org.za

FAREWELL: Numsa leadership at the funeral of the three shop stewards in KZN.

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Letter from the president

From page 5

namely, gender oppression, class exploitation, gender based violence including social exclusion from the mainstream economy.

Although “gender parity” or 50/50 exists in a number of public institutions, this has not translated into the emancipation of the majority of women. Women continue to face triple oppression, in particular, in rural areas and towns. Women face bleak economic futures in places like De Doornings farm workers, the widows of Marikana, etc., the list is endless. Therefore, the Numsa Gender Subcommittee and the organisation as a whole has intensified the gender struggle on all fronts, forging class alliances with other working class formations and progressive social movements and NGOs.

While there is a need to intensify gender struggles in SA, we must share the trenches with women on the African continent who face the worst brutalities and social scars. For example, the recent abductions of more than 200 school girls by Boko Haram in Nigeria. Women and children are the victims of the barbaric civil wars; all the social forces example, the recent abductions of more than 200 school girls by Boko Haram in Nigeria. Women and children are the victims of the barbaric civil wars; all the social forces assigned to power, its worst political butchery must uproot this barbarism. Women’s rights, human rights are class issues that would be permanently resolved through class struggle.

We humbly appeal to all Numsa members across all sectors and all workers not to resign because of rumours.

Commemoration of the Marikana Massacre
The historic commemoration of the second anniversary of the Marikana Massacre, the first massacre of the ANC-led government in a new dispensation, brought memories of the political scars and miseries inflicted on Black workers by the Apartheid government.

The Farlam Commission has also exposed the naked class collaboration between ANC Deputy President, Cyril Ramaphosa, the ANC-led Government, Ministers and Mining Chamber. Indeed the ANC-Government and Ministers have become the “Political Surrogates” of the imperialist forces. This also vindicates Karl Marx assertion, which characterised the Bourgeois State as an organ of class rule.

The Smuts Government brutally killed white miners in the 1922 miners’ strike and almost 92 years later (and only 18 years since the new dispensation); Black workers were brutally murdered by the ANC Black majority Government. This was a gross political insult to the noble sacrifices of Cde Oliver Tambo, Chris Hani, and Elijah Barayi.

The ANC has become openly the “Political Agents” of the Imperialist Forces, the “Good Story of the Working Class/NDR Betrayed.” Indeed the workers and the working class are on their own against White monopoly capital.

Preservation Fund
Numsa has vowed to mobilise its members and the rest of workers/workers class across all sectors in opposing the unilateral political stance taken by the South African government imposing the new proposed legislation without engaging the trade union movement in bonafide genuine political negotiations in exploring the best options in our members’ interests.

We humbly appeal to all Numsa members across all sectors and all workers not to resign because of rumours.

Ours is a collective struggle in defence of our hard won revolutionary gains. Numsa will be embarking on organisational programmes very soon to deepen members’ awareness on the nature and character of these introduced amendments, including communicating a political stance of the organisation. Numsa is exploring the possibilities of triggering Section 77 Notice in terms of the LRA to put political pressure on Government to review its reactionary stance. The only political guarantor is the mobilisation of all workers for the continuous offensive against the state and until our noble demands are met unconditionally.

Pending Review of the Labour Relations Act
The recent political developments in the country are a clear indication of attempts by big business and the ANC-led government to rollback hard-won revolutionary gains, made through huge political sacrifices during the era of Apartheid government.

A continuous call made by the ANC-led Government, Ministers, ANC S-G and the State President in a number of political platforms to regulate strikes, to curb trade union militancy was to serve the interests of the ruling class, White monopoly capital and foreign investors. This is a direct political attack on political victories won during the 1973 Durban Strike. It is an attack on the 1988 Labour Relations Amendment on workers struggles, detentions, and disappearances, brutal political assassinations of leaders and political activists of the workers movement during the Nationalist Party reign.

We must reject this neoliberal offensive by the ANC, big business and the state. Alan Hunt once warned: “Under Bourgeois Democracy, working class every five years of elections assigns to power, its worst political butchers.”

The metalworkers will spare no energies in defence of our hard won revolutionary gains.
President Jacob Zuma has finally signed the Labour Relations Amendment Act (17 August 2014) ending months of speculation and uncertainty. Although a date for the commencement of the Act has yet to be set, the amendments seek to provide more protection for vulnerable workers, particularly those employed by labour brokers and temporary employment services.

Mohammed Ismail from Numsa’s Western Cape office looks at the substantive changes to the Labour Relations Amendment Act and its impact on the lives of ordinary workers.

According to Ismail, several changes to the Labour Relations Amendment Act deserve attention:

- Temporary employment services
- A typical employment/ Fixed Term Contract
- Strikes and Lockouts

Temporary employment services (TES) / Labour Brokers

We were unsuccessful in banning Labour Brokers despite the labour movement’s persistent calls on Government to do so. However, a new section 198A has been introduced which limits the use of labour broking as opposed to outlawing it. Many of these regulations were achieved in the industry collective agreement.

Significant inclusions are as follows:

- Regulated amendments include the limitation of the period for which a labour broker can employ a worker, by introducing the “temporary service” concept.
- The amendments introduce an equal treatment principle and
- Address the uncertainty as to what the workplace is.

What is problematic about these amendments is that there is an earnings income threshold. Those above the threshold will not benefit from the new inclusions and can be employed indefinitely by a labour broker.

A principle of equal treatment between labour broker employees and permanent employees will also not be applicable to those earning above the income threshold.

A typical employment / Fixed term contract

The Act, now provides for a new section 198B:

- The above inclusion in the LRA requires temporary work to be defined.
- No employee may work more than six months on a fixed term contract or successive fixed term contracts for longer than six months of employment.
- A fixed-term contract longer than six months will only be allowed for specific reasons, interalia, if the nature of the work the employee is engaged in is of a limited or definite duration and if the employer can demonstrate any other justifiable reason for fixing the term of the contract.
- A new subsection 198B(4) (a) — (i) in the Act, provides further specific guidelines when the fixed term contract will be justified.
- Any fixed-term contract concluded or renewed in contravention of the above section will be deemed indefinite. The worker might be regarded as being employed on a permanent basis.
- An employer must provide a worker employed on a fixed term contract with the same access to opportunities to apply for vacancies as it provides to an employee on an indefinite basis.

Part-time employees

Insertion of a new section 198C:

- For purposes of this section, a part-time employee is an employee who is remunerated wholly or partly by reference to the time that the employee works and those who work fewer hours than a comparable full-time employee.
- An employer must not treat a part-time employee less favourably. An employer must not treat a full-time employee doing the same or similar work unless there is a justifiable reason for different treatment.
- Provide part-time employees with access to training and skills development not less favourable than that provided to comparable full-time employees.
- Same access and opportunities for vacancies to employees on an indefinite contract must be provided to part-time employees.

As the above exclusions as well as those in the case of fixed term contracts are positive inclusions in the LRA as it seeks to target and limit the abuse of rolling contracts and part-time work. However, the downside is that it is only applicable to the following employees:

- those earning below the stipulated income threshold
- to an employer that employs less than 10 (ten) employees; or
- that employs less than 50 (fifty) employees and whose business has been in operation for less than 2 (two) years, unless the employer conducts more than 1 (one) business.
- to an employee’s first six months of continuous employment with an employer.

 Strikes and Lockouts

A new section 696(6)(a) is inserted allowing for the Commissioner to grant permission to hold a picket on a property that is owned or controlled by a third party who is NOT the employer.

This was one of the few provisions on industrial action introduced to further workers’ rights.

Workers can now picket in shopping malls — previously, retail sector workers were denied. Accordingly, it constitutes as a major victory for workers.

Earlier drafts of the Bill included the following problematic and contentious amendments intended to restrict strike action.

- Compulsory balloting for strikes. Majority of those voted are required to support a strike through a ballot prior to the strike commencing.

From our experiences in the past, the above provision resulted in tedious processes and technicalities that frustrated the workers’ right to strike. Furthermore, it introduces the opportunity for employers to interdict strikes based on technicalities related to the balloting process. It also serves to intimidate workers, as management would be present as observers when the ballot is conducted.

- Empowering the court to suspend a protected strike or picket in respect of picketing disputes. Those who support this clause argued that it would be relevant in dealing with acts of violence committed in the course of industrial action.

- Prohibiting solidarity action in support of a picket by civil society organisations or other supporters.

The above-proposed amendments were fortunately, deleted from the version passed by Parliament. March 2014.

Furthermore, the Labour Department recently began circulating proposals regarding the possibility of introducing compulsory interest arbitration. This would limit the duration of a strike to a maximum period beyond which a compulsory arbitration process would be imposed.

The above provisions, reportedly, were withdrawn and excluded from the amendments.

While we regard these exclusions as a victory for workers, constitutional rights to strike, is always the possibility of government re-introducing amendments to make strike ballots and compulsory interest arbitration a reality.

On July 15, 2014, Mining Weekly reported that ‘South Africa’s Department of Labour is considering making compulsory strike ballots and arbitration in the resolution of protracted strikes’.

More on the LRA Amendments in the next edition of Numsa News:

Definition of dismissal
Auto-matically unfair dismissals
Retrenchment 5189

Signed, sealed and delivered: Labour Relations Amendment Act

In the previous edition of Numsa News (No.3, July 2014) Vanessa Le Rosoux from our Research Project, Stellenbosch University and UNISA) were commissioned to share their research findings on the subject of a NMW.

In the current editions of Numsa News, we hope to have more discussion on the NMW and perhaps we should begin to question whether the ruling party, ANC, is serious about the implementation of a NMW. Where does it stand on the NMW when the elections are over? For starters, why have they not put up a policy document? Alternatively, will the ANC continue to support a fragmented labour market giving rise to more flexibility and an opportunity for capital to exploit further marginalised workers, women and youth of this country? There are many unanswered questions … Let the debates begin!
**National**

**EVRAZ**

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

This Memorandum records the terms of settlement of the 2014 — 2016 House Agreement Negotiations and serves to confirm that the parties have reached agreement in respect of wages / salaries, other conditions of employment and other matters as listed below. The content of this memorandum will be incorporated into the final Agreement, except for the provisions of clause 8 below.

1. **Duration of the Agreement**
   The Agreement is for a 2 (two) year period i.e. from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2016.

2. **Wages / Salary increase**
   2.1 Employees on lower grades, i.e. H8 to H5, B1 and B2 and A level will receive 3% increase in 2014 and 2.5% increase in 2015.
   2.2 Employees on higher grades, i.e. H4 and H3, B4 and B1 and C1 and C2 will receive 7.5% increase in 2014 and 6.5% increase in 2015.
   2.3 Refer to attached Salary / Wage Schedule (Annexure 1, 2 and 3).

3. **Implementation and backdating**
   3.1 Wage increases will be implemented as from 1 July 2014 and 1 July 2015 respectively.
   3.2 The backdating for July and August 2014 will be paid out during the second week of September 2014, i.e. 12 September 2014.

4. **Maternity leave policy**
   It is agreed that the maternity leave policy shall comply with the Men Agreement.

5. **Allowances**

   5.1 Nightshift allowance
   Hourly paid employees will receive 21% nightshift allowance.

   5.2 Shift allowance for salaried staff
   Salaried staff will receive 9% shift allowance.

   5.3 Housing allowance
   The current housing allowance will be increased by 7.5% and 8% respectively for the year 2014 and 8.5% for the year 2015. Refer to attached Salary / Wage Schedule (Annexure 1, 2 and 3).

6. **Agreements reached in principle**
   It was agreed that the details of the following matters will be discussed at separate forums:
   6.1 Move from hourly paid to salaried, including leave reduction in conversion. Implementation to be finalised within 3 months from date of signing this agreement.
   6.2 Grading system. It was agreed to align with the Main Agreement once the industry negotiations on this item have been concluded.
   6.3 Labour brokers. The company will continue to comply with legislation in terms of labour brokers. It was agreed to align with the Main Agreement once the industry negotiations on this item have been concluded.

7. **Category B, C and D items**
   The discussions for category B, C and D items are to be finalised by no later than December 2015.

**Way Forward**

It is said that Numsa’s gains are reversed every time a demand is won workers are quickly retrenched. It is sad that temporary workers, (our brothers, sisters) are treated badly. Who will do the work of 110 temporary employees?

As stated time-and-time again, companies force their suppliers to reduce prices resulting in company closures, for example, Venture, Johnson Controls, a global diversified technology and industrial leader, lost contracts for WWSA and VWSA 92 employees would become permanent.

The company is now dithering on this.

**Anticipated retrenchment**

WWSA’s response was that they wanted to activate Section 189 (3) and 189A of the labour relations – a large company. It is absent from the final Agreement, except for the provisions of clause 8 below.

**Restructuring/Retrenchments**


In 2013 wage negotiations, Numsa won a demand of permanent employment for temporary employees after striking for two-and-half-days.

The demand stipulated that at the end of an agreement between Schnel lecke SA (logistics services provider for VWSA) and VWSA 92 employees would become permanent.

The national of this is nothing new.

**What’s happening?**

VWSA and Krom berg & Schubert, one of the global leaders in the supply of electrical system, cables and plastic one of the global leaders in the supply of employees and relocated to Botswana.

**What is known is that**

- 7.3% — Macrovest
- 7.7% — traded on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange
- Very limited information was available on the Macrovest 147 empowerment company. It is absent from the business database, Who Owns Whom, an independent research organisation producing high quality, original research on the African business and economic environment. Who Owns Whom, started 32 years ago by the late Robin McGregor, research covers over 300 key industries across 57 African countries as well as ownership by major groups and takeover and merger activity and investment into Africa.
- Other internet searches yielded insufficient information.
- What is known is that Macrovest is a local South African investor.
- Barend Petersen, a chartered accountant, was appointed non-executive director and chairperson of Evraz Highveld Steel & Vanadium upon the completion of the sale. Izak Johannes Burger and Andrew Phillip Maralack were also appointed as non-executive directors.
- Petersen is also the executive chairperson of De Beers Consolidated Mines, and a non-executive director of De Beers Group, Ptonaola Group, Anglo American South Africa, Alexander Forbes, Sizwe Business Recoveries, and Curro Holdings.
- Petersen and Maralack are also executive directors of Sizwe Business Recoveries.
- The Department of Trade and Industry welcomed the sale of 34% of shares to the Macrovest Company as well as all the subsequent changes in non-executive directorship.

**See MOU Evraz to go with this article**

Author: Mishack Robertson, National House Agreement coordinator

WHERE? National

WHAT’S HAPPENING? SA Ownership Cast in Steel

Evraz announced the sale of 34% of its shares to local investor, Macrovest 147 Proprietary Limited (Macrovest) for R 289 million.

Up until August 2014, Evraz Highveld Steel and Vanadium was 84% owned by Evraz Group — the Russian steel manufacturer. Since March 2013, there were talks about Evraz selling shares to local investors.

For almost a year, the negotiations between the empowerment group Nemsacore and Evraz Group took place, with no results.

A breakdown of Evraz Highveld Steel and Vanadium shares as of August 13 2014 was as follows:
- 51% — Evraz Group
- 34% — Macrovest
- 7.3% — RBM Securities
- 7.7% — traded on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange

Very limited information was available on the Macrovest 147 empowerment company. It is absent from the business database, Who Owns Whom, an independent research organisation producing high quality, original research on the African business and economic environment. Who Owns Whom, started 32 years ago by the late Robin McGregor, research covers over 300 key industries across 57 African countries as well as ownership by major groups and takeover and merger activity and investment into Africa.

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- Petersen and Maralack are also executive directors of Sizwe Business Recoveries.
- The Department of Trade and Industry welcomed the sale of 34% of shares to the Macrovest Company as well as all the subsequent changes in non-executive directorship.

**Restructuring/Retrenchments**


In 2013 wage negotiations, Numsa won a demand of permanent employment for temporary employees after striking for two-and-half-days.

The demand stipulated that at the end of an agreement between Schnel lecke SA (logistics services provider for VWSA) and VWSA 92 employees would become permanent.

The company is now dithering on this.

**Anticipated retrenchment**

WWSA’s response was that they wanted to activate Section 189 (3) and 189A of the labour relations — potentially affecting 127 employees comprising of Logisticians, Tow Motor Drivers, Stacker Drivers, Data Analysts and Data Controllers.

Retrenchments was avoided if temporary employees were released and not replaced by people who leave the company via “natural attrition or by those occupying non-essential positions,” according to VWSA.

**Way Forward**

It is said that Numsa’s gains are reversed every time a demand is won workers are quickly retrenched. It is sad that temporary workers, (our brothers, sisters) are treated badly. Who will do the work of 110 temporary employees?

We anticipate existing workers would be overloaded because of the dismissals.

Numsa ought to meet Minister of Economic Development, Ebrahim Patel and VWSA management.

As stated time-and-time again, companies force their suppliers to reduce prices resulting in company closures, for example, Venture, Johnson Controls, a global diversified technology and industrial leader, lost contracts with VWSA and Kromberg & Schubert, one of the global leaders in the supply of electrical systems, cables and plastic components, retrenched about 200 employees and relocated to Botswana.

Work is becoming scarce in South Africa and workers face increasing job-insecurity.
**SHOP FLOOR** is a new section. **SHOP FLOOR** is the space for workers’ battles, victories, innovations and more. These pages will highlight shopfloor issues across all nine regions. **SHOP FLOOR** was born from a media workshop, earlier this year, in which shopstewards decided to pen and share stories on what’s happening in your area...So, please write for **SHOP FLOOR**...

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**Gauteng, Kwa-Zulu Natal and mostly, East London and Eastern Cape**

**Author:** Mduduzi A. Nkosi, Chemical & Battery Sector, Acting Co-ordinator  
**WHERE?** Gauteng, Kwa-Zulu Natal and mostly, East London and Eastern Cape  
**WHAT’S HAPPENING?** Workers Victory — FNB Agrees  

Numsa wins and signs a comprehensive agreement with First National Batteries (FNB) after lengthy negotiations.  
FNB has a footprint in Gauteng, Kwa-Zulu-Natal and mostly in East London and Eastern Cape.  
While negotiations were tough, Numsa declared a dispute with the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA), a dispute resolution body established in terms of the Labour Relations Act, 66 of 1995, and obtained for members the following:  
- The duration of agreements reduced from three to two years. It ties in with the resolution that all companies within the battery sector negotiate at the same time. This was in-line with the MSC.  
- July 2014 resolution, namely, to seek synergies in negotiations, especially for the big companies, like FNB and Willard Batteries.  
- Achieved, for the first time, increases on an ascending scale (10% for 2014/15; and 10.1% for 2015 and 2016 respectively.)  
- Secured Full Time Shop Steward (FTSS) status for shopstewards’ committee chairpersons in the Benoni and East London plant, with weekly Fridays dedicated exclusively for union work.  
- Transport extended for night shift workers to include workers who report for the 22H00 night shifts  
- Employer’s provident fund contribution was increased from 0.5% to 9.0%  
- Achieved increases in Long Service Awards  
- Achieved a 40-hour working week for all employees, without loss of pay  
- That the CCMA facilitate the Resolution Building Exercise and the company will pay for this process.  

General meetings were held for feedback and members gave an overwhelming mandate to go-ahead and sign. The agreement was signed, August 18, 2014, East London.  

We thank our members for the dedication, passion and resolve showed during these negotiations. It was absolutely a pleasure negotiating knowing that the masses of Numsa members stood together all the way. A united membership achieves a lot. The struggle continues! Amandla!

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**Ekurhuleni**

**AUTHOR:** Lethu Nkosi  
**WHERE:** Ekurhuleni  
**WHAT’S HAPPENING?** The Refining of employers  

Numsa members downed tools at Rand Refinery, since the 27th of August. In the list of demands of the workers is a 12% annual increase, the end of random polygraph tests, which see most employees fail the test that is known not to be 100% accurate and lose their jobs in the process. The demand of affirmative action to help black people climb the ladder, which has become increasingly difficult for the black workers to achieve, at Gold Refinery. They also want the company to put more safety measures, and better compensation when employees are injured.  

Rand Refinery management has offered a 7% increase, one female worker said “we deserve better than a 7%, when considering the harsh conditions we are working in.” These newly joined Numsa members also had some demands for the union; they would like for their union to fight government on the no work no pay policy when they are on strike. They also feel that unions need to put more pressure on government to ensure that all private sector companies comply with the Affirmative Action policy. One worker added that, it is time unions engage workers more to find permanent solutions to ensure that the next generation of workers fight for new issues; she said “I believe this will move us even closer to a socialist country. We should not be fighting for annual increase after 20 years of democracy. That should be part of the merit system in all businesses”. She said. The workers also want the unions to push the department of labour to regularly monitor private businesses. “We want government to invest their energy more to the needs of the working class, instead of making life better for these capitalist employers, this will insure the levelling of the playing field”, a worker said. These comrades are prepared to sit this one out until their entire demands are met. After a month of striking, an Agreement between Rand Refinery and Numsa was met.  

The agreement states the following:  
- **Duration of the Agreement:** 1 June 2014 to 31 May 2016  
- **Polygraph Testing:** Both parties agreed that routine periodic polygraph testing will be suspended for the period of the 1 June 2014 to 31 May 2016 (making any polygraph done during the 1st June till the end of strike null and void). The only time a polygraph test may be conducted, is during the on-boarding process of all new applicants and contractors of Rand Refinery. And during the intelligence-driven investigations, if there is a need.  
- **Pay for work on Sundays:** The Company also agreed to pay employees who earn below the earning threshold.  
- **Long service awards:** The Company agreed to give an option between cash and a Minted Gold Bar to employees with long service.  
- **Non-wage related items:** The parties also agreed that the following items will be dealt with at company level within six months of the signing of this agreement:  
  - Medical aid subsidy.  
  - Shift allowance.  
  - Benchmarking for both grades.  
  - Union representation during interviews.  
  - Graduates must not be employed as operators.  
  - Graduate program.  
  - Different pay for different duties or departments must be paid according to their work demand, danger exposure, and experience.

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**WORKERS VICTORY:** Numsa members picketing at Rand Refinery.
At the time of the sale of the Trust’s shares, the share price had doubled their average annual income — for life. However, both Ruukki and the Trustees agreed that, the shares would not be sold (for reasons benefiting themselves and not the Trust) and therefore not legally liable in the way the Trustees are.

Since then the beneficiaries have not received one cent from the Trust in the following four years.

We will argue that the Trustees failed to act in the best interest of the Trust and aim to claim damages against the Trust.

The union believes that Arafak/Ruukki/Mogale is as much to blame as the Trustees. They colluded with the Trustees not to buy the shares but they had no “duty of care” to the Trust and therefore not legally liable in the way the Trustees are.

After the sale, they have further acted in a manner that has prejudiced the trust but again without the consequence of legal liability.

Background: The Issues

In June 2002, Mogale Alloys created an employee trust, which then held 10% of the equity of the Company. A Shareholders Agreement was concluded between the Trust, the Company, and the other shareholders. The trustees were the same persons who represented a majority of the shareholders and the board of the Company.

A term of the shareholders’ agreement provided that if a shareholder received an offer for the majority of the shares, the other shareholders could elect to sell their shares at the same price. The trust represented by the trustees therefore held an option to sell the Trust’s shares if the majority sold their shares.

In 2009, an offer was received for 84.9% of the shares in Mogale. The total consideration for those shares was R2.2 billion. This placed a value of all the shares at R2.355 billion and a value on the Trust’s shares at R215 million (being 10%).

The Trustees considered the Trust’s right to put their shares at that price and then declined the option.

The controlling shares were acquired by Ruukki SA, which is wholly owned by a foreign registered company. Ruukki is now renamed Arafak.

Since that acquisition, there have been no dividends declared by the Company and the Trust has received no further value. The employees/beneficiaries have not benefited at all.

As part of the same sale, Metmar Limited indirectly which held about 11% of Mogale wrote to its shareholders advising that accepting the offer was in the best interests of Metmar as the purchase consideration far outweighed any reasonable future flow of dividends. Metmar clearly had access to the shareholder notice making that clear to the transaction details and the valuations. It also held a Board position on Mogale. It clearly understood the financial implications of the transaction.

It is reasonable to assume that if Metmar considered the transaction to be the best deal then the trustees having similar information would have considered likewise. Therefore, the Metmar decision serves as a proxy for a reasonable and objective opinion on the merits of accepting the proposed sale or not.

Had the Trustees accepted the offer the Trust would have received a payment (in tranches) of about R215 million. The trust had at that time about 245 beneficiaries who were employed at Mogale.

If this money was invested at 8% per year the trust would derive interest income of about R19 million per year, that would equate to about R76 000 per beneficiary per year, which is almost, double their current income — for life.

However, since 2009 the trust has received no dividends at all.

The intention is to sue the trustees for negligence, making the wrong decision not to sell the shares. The Trustees probably have sufficient personal wealth to fund such a claim.

What do we have to prove

1. That the Trust/Trustees had a right to sell the Trusts shares at the time of the sale. We are certain that there was a shareholders agreement and this was a right provided in that agreement.

2. That the Trustees declined to accept that right and did not sell the shares. We have minutes of the Trust meeting where they decided not to accept the sale option.

3. That a reasonable man in the position of the Trustees would have understood that the financial (and other) benefits accruing to the trust from the sale of the shares far outweighed any benefit of retaining the shares i.e. dividends.

This is the major challenge. We must obtain documentation available to all the parties prior to the sale. The negotiations, valuations by the parties, financial analysis of Mogale, production capacity of Mogale, market analysis, Post transaction analysis — production, profit, global markets etc.

Who is responsible for the losses

The Trustees had mixed feelings in that they were also the sellers of the majority shares. It is alleged by the Trustees that Arafak did not want to buy out the Trust. The Trustees ought to have required both the sellers and the buyers to find a suitable accommodation.

There are numerous examples of what they could have done.

Arafak obstructed the sale of the Trust’s shares. They wanted to keep a BEE equity position, as the legislation requires. For a number of reasons this was shortsighted. Firstly, the Trust is closed to new employees after the sale — over time the majority of the employees would not be beneficiaries.

Secondly white people held 50% of the benefits of the Trust and therefore the Trust was not an ideal BEE vehicle. Arafak’s self-interest bore no consideration for the employees (see also 3.3 below). It wanted a façade of compliance with the BEE regulations.

After the sale, Mogale/Arafak did two things that materially affected the value or benefit of the Trust’s shares.

Firstly, they introduced a R24 million per year management fee which appears on the papers of a subsequent High Court action by the Trustees as a means to strip value out of the Company for the shareholder Arafak.

Secondly, notwithstanding the fact that Mogale made after-tax profits in the years following the sale, Mogale did not declare dividends. Over four years the accumulated, after-tax profit amounted to R1.48 million yet no dividends were declared.

These two factors cost each beneficiary R25 000 each year. The Company has acted to the prejudice of the beneficiaries, purely for self-interest.

Prior to the sale to Ruukki in 2009, a sale agreement had been concluded with Kermas. Kermas controls Ruukki (now Arafak). In that agreement Kermas was to acquire all the Mogale shares i.e. including the Trust’s shares.

This transaction was valued at R3.3 billion (the trusts value being R3.3 billion). The agreement was assigned from Kermas to Ruukki, which then re-negotiated the transaction resulting in the price being materially reduced, and Arafak now declined to buy the Trust shares as Arafak wanted to retain a BEE component.

Action to date

We have reviewed the documents that we have, researched the legal issues, and the financial information available. We are confident that the Trustees have a claim to answer.

We have met with the employees three times, gathering information, understanding their needs and obtaining a mandate to proceed and updating them on progress.

We have met with the Trustees and their accountants and reviewed a complete set of payments made to the Trust and payments made to beneficiaries prior to the sale. There is no irregularity during this period. We have corresponded with the Trustees numerous times requesting the documentation supporting their decision not to sell the shares. They have failed to provide these.
We have met with Arafak on four occasions. Each time we have requested documentation necessary to prove our claim. Each time they have agreed only for their attorneys to subsequently advise them not to. It is possible that this is a deliberateploy on their part, as they want to cooperate yet hiding behind their attorneys not to. We are convinced that Mogale/Arafak does not want us to have sight of the documentation — logically it must imply that this document would compromise Arafak.

We have suggested to Alistair Ruitters of Arafak that they now purchase the shares at the market value and that any shortfall of the R2.5 million is funded by the Trustees. Arafak can then set up a new trust for all employees.

However, Arafak clearly wants the benefit of the shares free. They like to have them, to acquire control of the shares of the Trust (not pay for them) and then create a new benefit scheme for employees where the employees receive a profit share. Alistair Ruitters has also indicated that if we agreed then Arafak/Mogale would pay back to the Trust 10% of the post-sale profits (profits that they did not declare as dividends). This would amount to a total of about R15 million (once off). One needs to compare that with the interest on the sale funds if they had bought the shares which would amount to R18 million every year. This is not an acceptable option for employees/beneficiaries.

We have met with the Executive Director of Metmar Limited to request documentation in their possession and to facilitate cooperation of the Trustees. Metmar facilitated a meeting between Metmar, Johan Oosthuizen, the majority seller and Trustee and us. This was a particularly interesting meeting:

Oosthuizen and Metmar are particularly angry at Arafak/Mogale — there is bad blood between them.

They are adamant that Arafak prevented the sale of the shares at the time. They wanted to sell the trusts shares. They would say that Arafak has deliberately prevented sub-divisional dividends to flow to the Trust. The Trustees went to court against Arafak after the sale but they used an action that the Trust was a party to settle their own disputes without any benefit to the Trust;

Oosthuizen is unlikely to have the stamina to face a long and costly legal battle — he will capitulate.

They believe that Arafak MD is hard, callous and unyielding. He is interested in nothing but his profits.

We put the same proposal to Metmar and Mogale, too — Arafak buy the shares at market value and the Trustees pay the shortfall. While there was no commitment, to this proposal, we believe that if Arafak agreed then so would the Metmar/Trustee.

Interestingly Metmar was due to meet Arafak the same day we met Metmar and the expected topic was the Trust. The risk is that Arafak is attempting to take control of the Trust from the Trustees (the settlement agreed to above allow Arafak to achieve that).

**What we are now doing**

We have now prepared applications under the Public Access to Information Act (PAIA) and will serve these on Mogale/Arafak and the Trustees.

If we need to we will add Metmar but we would like to have their cooperation. We believe Arafak and the Trustees will oppose these applications and that will result in a court application. This will take time but we will probably succeed, as the courts have been supportive on access. It could however take 6 months, as there are various parts to the process.

We are continuing obtaining information from various sources relevant to the valuation of the transaction. Once we have the balance of the documents we need these will be analysed and prepared for presentation by an expert witness.

We will then launch an action against the Trustees for damages. A trial will be a long and costly process with the Trustees challenging each step of the way.

We will simultaneously seek a settlement between them all but not at the expense of the employees.

**Proposed strategy**

We believe we should adopt the following strategy:

**Pressurise Arafak/Mogale.** The workers with support of NUMsa apply pressure to Arafak/Mogale. At the same time, we use the press to do the same. The prejudice suffered by employees is huge and came about by an abuse of the rights and interests of employees.

**Sue the Trustees.** Ultimately this is where legal recourse is. We believe they will buckle but not without an equal contribution by Arafak who they believe was the cause of the prejudice.

**Seek a settlement.** A settlement remains the best outcome. We believe that Arafak should be pressurised to buy the shares at current market value on condition the Trustees pay a corresponding amount. If this can be achieved the Trustees should then buy an annuity through which beneficiaries would then receive an annual or monthly amount in perpetuity. Arafak can then set up a new trust or benefit scheme for its employees.

**Risks**

We are concerned that the Trustees and Arafak/Mogale make a deal, which together they will obstruct, our action. Arafak will move to take control of the Trust, change it terms and use it in a new BEE structure.

Arafak/Mogale will block access to information we need to succeed. They will hope we run out of energy and commitment. The Trustees would obviously support that.

**Next steps internally**

It would be useful if within NUMsa we could discuss the implications and strategy around this.

Prepared by Nick Lionel

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**Numsa does not waiver...**

ALFRED MOTANE

**Victory, for NUMsa members dismissed unfairly, was realised — granted it took several years. In fact, NUMsa’s dogged determination to hold IPS Projects to account, spans five years, and more.**

**Background**

IPS Projects dismissed workers October 29 2009, due to operation reasons leading to a legal battle. This matter between NUMsa obo SIMON SEKETE and SIX OTHERS v IPS Projects (case no 317/10), was referred to the Metal and Engineering Industries Bargaining Council (MEIBC, Dispute Resolution Centre) on November 9, 2009. Conciliation took place on the December 4, 2009 but remained unresolved. A certificate of non-resolution was issued.

A Statement of Case, filed with the Labour Court and a copy for IPS Projects, on April 1, 2010, stated the dismissal was unfair. Seeing there was no response to the union’s statement of case, an application for Default Judgement was made on May 10, 2011. The matter was then set down for default for November 2, 2011 when suddenly IPS Projects appeared at the Labour Court, opposing the matter. An order, November 2, 2011, removed the matter from an unsuccessful to oppose roll. IPS Projects was ordered to file an answering statement and an application for condonation by November 9, 2011. Nearly three years later, (September 20, 2012) parties completed and signed pre-trial minutes. A copy was filed with the Labour Court. IPS Projects as per the minutes, had to do, “... bring a proper application for condonation of the late filing of statement of defence.”

IPS Projects did not comply with the court order to the fullest, in that it purported application for condonation was not served with NUMsa and some answering affidavit was filed instead in court and not a proper condonation application in terms of the both the court order and the pre-trial minutes. The same affidavit was nineteen (19) months late. Such application was opposed. On December 4, 2013, the matter was set down for a hearing and NUMsa raised a preliminary point that IPS Projects purported condonation application was not a proper application and should be dismissed.

**Court Agrees with NUMsa and puts IPS Projects on terms**

The court agreed with NUMsa and put the Respondent to terms:

That the matter was postponed sine die (indefinitely). The parties could approach the Registrar for an earlier date of enrolment. IPS Projects should file its condonation application (proper) by close of business on November 22, 2013.

**IPS Projects fails to comply**

The Respondent still failed to comply and instead filed and served a Notice of Motion and a Founding Affidavit on November 23, 2013. Such an affidavit did not comply with the requirements of a proper condonation application. NUMsa’s answering affidavit was filed on December 3, 2013.

A condonation application was set down for hearing on February 5, 2014 and was dismissed with costs. NUMsa filed an application for Default, March 12, 2014.

**Ruling in NUMsa’s favour**

A judge, in favour of the union, ordered:

The dismissal of the Second to Further Appellants was unfair.

IPS Projects was ordered to restate the Second to Further Applicants into its employment retrospectively from October 29, 2009, on the same terms and conditions no less favourable than those that governed their employ before their dismissal.

There was no order as to costs.

The court ordered the re-instatement of individual members from June 9, this year, the 10 members attempted to force workers to sign new contract of employment but they refused.

Only one member declined to go back to work on the basis that he was happy with his current employment. He reported at IPS Projects premises on June 9, 2014 and later abscended. He still benefits on his lost income.

**IPS Projects fails to comply again**

Although IPS Projects had promised to pay the lost wages and other benefits retrospectively, it has since failed and/or refused to do so. NUMsa is currently filing an application to the labour Court with a view to quantify the monies owed to members. The battle continues.
Marching in solidarity with Palestine

Nazema Samuels

August 9, 2014 arrived in her glory in near-perfect weather conditions in the Mother City. On this day, the largest protest took place as protesters pounded the streets of Cape Town in solidarity with the people of Gaza and Palestine.

People flocked from all corners of the country to the city centre. They came in busloads, taxis, cars and some by plane. They came in all shapes, sizes, colour, race and religions.

Cape Town did not disappoint.

Travelling to town on the N2 freeway was an experience packed with cars bump-to-bumper. Red, green and white colours dotted the highway, as passengers waved the flags of Palestine from cars and busses. Hooters blared everywhere.

We arrived in Keizergracht Street in District 6 at 9.30am sharp. The streets were abuzz with marchers hoisting, flags, posters and banners. The electricity jogged a notch furter as Bicycle Riders for Palestine revved their bikes, joined by the Habibia Brigade and the boom, boom sounds of the Jewish Drummers.

The National Coalition for Palestine (NCP) organised the march as part of the activities of the International Day of Rage. NCP is an alliance of more than 30 religious and civil society organisations, trade unions and political parties including the Muslim Judicial Council, the Congress of South African Trade Union and the African National Congress Youth League.

The group demanded decisive action from the South African Government against Israel’s brutal and inhumane attacks on Gaza, to stop the killing of civilians (many of those killed during the siege were children and women) and an end to the occupation of Palestine. NCP called for an international inquiry into Israel’s attack on Gaza.

Two prominent clergymen opened prayers followed by the much loved and respected Nobel Peace Laureate, Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town, Desmond Tutu. In his bold style, the Archbishop condemned the cowardly and inhumane actions of Israel, its allies — the United States of America, and condemned the silence of our own Government.

Mandla’s grandson, Mandla Mandela, called for unity and commitment in support of Palestine and other countries affected by war.

Nkosifikaile reverberated through the streets as people sang the anthem before the procession got underway. As the march snaked through the city down Keizergracht, Chris Barnard, Adderley and Plein Street, protestors punctuated the air with shouts of Allahu Akbar (God is Greater), chants, “Free, free Palestine” “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free,” and slogans: “Forward we shall march.” It took more than three hours to reach Parliament and-handed a memorandum to Government representatives. A display of Unity in Action. Stand Together.

With love, compassion, humility, unity of progressives — Peace was Possible. I was proud to be a “Cape Townian”.

Nazema Samuels is a NUMSA WC Culture and Regional Deputy Chairperson.

Global eye on working class struggles

International workers’ experiences in the struggle for socialism dominated the discussions at Numsa’s International Symposium. Brazil, Bolivia, South Korea, Egypt, Nigeria were some of the countries represented at the event, held August 7-10, Johannesburg.

Delegates explored ways to deepen the struggle for socialism, internationally. The nature and character of organisations seized with the task of challenging Capitalism in their respective countries, strategy and tactics in dealing with Capitalism drew robust discussion.

The symposium urged participants to analyse and learn from Russia’s socialist experience. It challenged the logic of trans-national corporations and promoted the circulation of ideas. Participants explored views on capturing strategic economic components like minerals under state control to ensure economic development. It was important to build a political instrument to seize power, accelerate social and economic transformation and establish a new social order.

Lessons from Africa, they symposium heard, point to the lack of building African-oriented states in the post-colonial dispensation. Most economic structures remained intact, driven by mineral exports and big conglomerations breeding political elites. Corruption and patronage, rapid collapse of state institutions, all destroy social and economic transformation. Some successes on the continent included greater access to health care, education, skills development, trade relations and economic growth.

Delegates agreed to promote democratic principles constantly and nurture a culture that embraces dissenting views and encourage debate at all levels. It was important to foster organisational transparency, accountability, discipline, self-criticism and openness.

Hard work, selflessness, sacrifice, humility, respect, empathy, diversity were critical components of a dynamic and vibrant organisation. There was an agreement that research was of paramount importance to address contemporary challenges and guide innovative practice. Socialist formations that lead embracing dissenting views and encourage debate at all levels. It was important to foster organisational transparency, accountability, discipline, self-criticism and openness.

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Ebola hits workers hard — Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone recorded a total number of 1,179 Ebola confirmed cases and 404 confirmed deaths nationwide in September, reported the Sierra Leone Labour Congress.

Citizens, in August, staged a National Stay At Home. Parliament passed a law, the Public Health Amendment Act, 2014 to allow enforcement of new Public Health Regulations

The Ministry of Health and Sanitation first declared an outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in Sierra Leone, May 25th, following a laboratory confirmation of a suspected case from Kailahun District. The District, located in the eastern region of Sierra Leone, shares its borders with Guinea and Liberia.

Despite, measures put into place by Sierra Leone Government and its partners to stop the virus, EVD continues to spread. President, Ernest Bai Koroma in his initial broadcast to the nation, July 30, proclaimed a state of Public Health Emergency to enable the Government and its partners to address the outbreak.

The Government ordered people to use chlorine solution to wash their hands prior to accessing public facilities, including banks, insurance facilities, health facilities and other corporate and private offices as well as in homes.

At the time of going to press, the government intended to shut down the country for three days (19th — 21st September) and ordered citizens to stay at home so that a nationwide house-to-house check could be conducted. About 21,000, trained personnel were employed to detect early signs of the Ebola disease.

EVD affects the labour movement

The Sierra Leone Traders Union recorded 87 deaths by August 13, countrywide. EVD’s impacted on workers in the formal and informal sector, in terms of deaths and ill-health, restrictions earning capacity, daily living and working operations and social taboos.

The Government banned market day activities at specific places nationwide. Access to funds was limited because of restrictions on banking hours.

The epidemic affected the Commercial Motorbike Riders whose operations were limited from 7:00am to 7:00pm. This meant a considerable loss of income.

The virus also affected bus drivers. Restrictions on the movement of people from one place to another affected bus drivers transporting passengers.

Commercial motorbike riders and motor drivers issued a press statement early September on the deaths of Bike Riders (14) and Drivers (28). They intended halting operations for two weeks.

Fishermen recorded low catch because of limited period of stay at sea.

Since the outbreak of the epidemic in Sierra Leone, health workers were the most severely affected sector in terms of exposure, deaths, displacement, and stigmatization by communities.

Reports early in September showed 48 health workers died. Nurses, laboratory technicians, porters, burial teams and doctors accounted for the deaths. Low morale was prevalent amongst health workers. There were claims that landlords forcefully evicted people considered Ebola virus carriers. The Municipal Workers Union recorded 23 deaths of its members in two districts.

Unions operating in the manufacturing, tourism, agriculture, fisheries and mines suffered redundancy or pay cuts. The outbreak of the epidemic accounted for the partial or complete closure of some business institutions.

According to the General Secretary of the Security Union, KBJ Conteh, the redundancy rate of members reached about 45% since March 2014.

Sierra Leone’s tourism industry was hurt badly. About 98% of hotel and flights bookings were cancelled since the outbreak in May.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU NEED TO CLAIM?

Visit your nearest DOVES office or call the NUMSA Financial Services Call Centre on 0860 11 22 66 for more information. Please ensure you have the following documents with you:

- Certified copy of death certificate
- Certified ID copy of the deceased
- Certified ID copy of the claimant
- Certified marriage certificate copy (where applicable)
- Proof of bank account (if cash claim)
- BL-1663 notification of death

Terms & Conditions apply.
Escom’s manager gets away with Racism?

Accusations of racism reverberated in the corridors of Escom in August. And, what’s more, the culprit confessed to being a “dictator” in a formal disciplinary hearing.

Twelve Numsa members accused a White Senior Manager in Escom, Ben Klaassen, of unfair discrimination, harassment, victimisation, dictatorship, strong-arm mentality, divide-and-rule and racism.

Klaassen confessed to being a ‘dictator and stepping over the toes of black workers,’ in a formal grievance hearing chaired by Pravind Oriie in August.

Numsa called for Klaassen’s dismissal, if not, the Union would take action against him.

Klaassen, the complainants said, wrote letters to Black employees asking them to “rethink their jobs and questioned if they were appointed in the correct positions.”

Escom management failed to take the grievance seriously, according to Num sa. The Energy Body failed to hear the grievances within five days as provided for in its Collective Agreement with Organised Labour, said Num sa.

Adding salt to the wound, Escom failed to show seriousness and due regard for its own procedures and agreements as Num sa members had to wait in vain for feedback and the outcome of their grievance as per the deadline agreed by the parties.

Some of the twelve Numsa grievants testified how Klaassen’s ‘reign of terror’ affected them and that they said they did not want to work under him. According to their testimonies, Klaassen was re-located several times from a number of posts following a spate of complaints lodged by Black employees against him.

Workers do not see prospects of promotion or capacity to perform to their optimum — they accused Klaassen of practicing favouritism, abusing managerial powers and treating Black workers unfairly.

The workers requested Escom help them with counseling as Klaassen’s conduct injured their dignity.

Klaassen allegedly also disciplined a Black female worker, Pinky Gumede, and issued her 14 days unpaid suspension for paying a contractor for an incomplete project while congratulating a white male employee, Hannes Olivier, in a similar example.

In another incident, a white female employee, working “only half days was rewarded for excellence,” while a Black female worker who worked harder was not even recognized for her output.

Workers accused Klaassen of publicly reprimanding and embarrassing them in front of clients, leaving them frustrated and afraid.

Numsa believed Escom did not care for its Black workers and that Escom must: “shoulder vicarious liability for the sufferings brought by Klaassen.

“We feel that Ben Klaassen demonstrated gross incompetence, unsuitability and that he must leave Escom.”

“This is a gross violation of the Constitution as well as the stated intentions of the legislators spelled out in the Human Rights Commission Act, Equity Act, Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, etc. and it never be condoned.”

Escom was behaving like a ‘white firm in a white man’s country.’

If Klaassen was not dismissed the union was considering declaring a dispute against Escom as well as lodging a complaint in the Equality Court and Human Rights Commission against Klaassen and Escom.

Opting for the best?

Locked-in Negotiations

The National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Num sa) since early this year was tied-up in negotiations with Escom on improving the conditions of service.

A deadlock was un-avoidable as Escom refused to give a positive appropriate response. Both Numsa and National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) declared a dispute on the one hand, and Escom on the other.

A referral made to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA), a dispute resolution body, June 2014.

For Numsa, the issues in dispute, included:

• Duration of only one year for Agreements
• Annual wage increase of 1.2 percent
• Additional Housing Allowance of R1000 to the current R2000
• Additional increase in the current Incentive Bonus from 10 percent to 16 percent of annual profits
• Additional increase of R100 to the current Standby Allowance

Escom’s settlement offer, CCMA July 30

The first day of the CCMA conciliation did not produce any progress as the parties stuck to their positions. The contending parties accepted the CCMA Commissioner’s suggestion of a 3-side to try to break the deadlock between the parties for the second day of the conciliation.

On the second day, after tough negotiations, Escom accepted:

• An ATB annual increase of 8.5 percent for both years
• A duration of only two years for the Agreement
• An increase of R300 for Housing Allowance for both years
• An increase of the Standby Allowance of 8.5 percent
• Annual increase of the Incentive Bonus from 10 to 12 percent

The total package deal incorporating the wage increase, Housing and other Allowances was no less than 10 percent increase in the conditions of (exploitation) our members.

Escom was getting away with Racism?

Vuyo Bikitsha is a Numsa Eskom and Electricity Industry Sector Co-ordinator

Num sa had to secure a ‘safety valve’ for the poor, so Num sa Regions wanted an increase in the Housing Allowance.

Signing off Escom wage settlement offer...

Contrary to media reports, Numsa did not sign the Settlement Agreement and the Union was waiting for this Special NEC to ratify it before signing the Agreement.

Numsa had to secure a ‘safety valve’ on Friday in the eventuality of an increase in the Consumer Price Index in 2015, above the agreed 8.5 percent. A Special CBF negotiations meeting would have to agree on an appropriate response to protect members’ interests.

All other parties signed the Agreement.
Putting Gender on the Agenda

JOHN MANANA

Dozens of articles speak to gender issues, Numsa developed policies and programme, but the issue remains wanting. A series of collective bargaining processes have taken place in various sectors but there was no emphasis of locating gender demands within negotiations. In the engineering sector, Numsa won the demand for childcare facilities, one day paid leave for Pap smear tests and saw on the demand for childcare facilities, there exists a certain degree of confusion on six-month paid maternity leave. How ever, establishing a structure on gender.

Gender struggles are about empowering women and liberating men from patriarchal values, stereotypes and misconceptions about gender roles and relations in the society.

In this context, Numsa should develop an over-arching strategy to address the evident sexual division of labour within the trade union, which often manifests itself between women and men in terms of job categories and benefits respectively.

Generally, in the trade union it is ‘expected’ that women occupy ‘administrator jobs’ while men are more likely to occupy ‘organizer or strategic positions or (senior positions) as heads of departments’. There are women occupying senior positions but this is a drop in the ocean.

Numsa should develop recruitment policies to facilitate the upward mobility of women. Transformation and gender parity should reflect or find expression in Numsa, structurally.

Numsa’s constitution preamble seeks to fight and oppose discrimination in all its form within the Union, the factory and in society, yet there lacks commitment in addressing the sexual division of labour, decisively within our ranks.

While Numsa adopted a 20 percent quota policy aimed at encouraging women in leadership positions from plant, local, regional, and national level, this policy has not been exhausted. More women work in the textile, retail and domestic sectors, however there lacks a clear strategy of recruiting women into Numsa’s ranks, at all levels.

Numsa missed excellent opportunities of addressing or advancing significant demands namely:
1. Demand to train women artisans and boilermakers
2. Compel employers to incorporate sexual harassment policy to the collective agreements in order to eliminate sexual offences.
3. Compel employers to provide psychological and legal support for women employees who suffered sexual or other degrading offences in the workplace
4. Fight for a month paternity leave, which will encourage men to share the responsibility of raising children
5. Compel employers to adopt recruitment policies, which will empower women in our industries
6. Ensure the implementation of childcare facilities in engineering industries as per the previous agreement

Numsa and its gender structures and conferences should develop a clear framework on gender issues and demands and mainstream these within negotiations processes.

John Manana is a Numsa Secretary, JHB Central Local

Women inspire change

PERCY NHALPO

"Women inspiring Change," was the way Numsa, through its gender structure, chose to commemorate Women’s Day, in Saldiberg region.

Women inspired positive change in the past and must continue to do so. This was the constant message of all speakers. Women must unite today as they did in 1956 when 50,000 women of all shades and hues staged a grand march to Pretoria on August 9.

Lillian Ngoyi, Ruth Venter, Helen Joseph, were some of the many women leaders who marched against the paws forces that forced black people to carry the hated ‘Dom Pass’, an identity document restricting movement.

Numsa’s First deputy, Comrade Christen Olivier reminded the audience that women and revolution go together and the emancipation of women was an integral part of the working class struggle. She said women must engage and be active in the public sphere. ‘‘Matlize zizakhezi, wastimi’Dizaboda’’ (If you strike a woman you strike a rock) was and still is a song that continues to serve as a source of inspiration for women.

Olivier reflected on the tragedy, which struck Numsa in August, with the gruesome loss of three slayed comrades and one shop steward still fighting for his life in hospital in Isithebe Local region, Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN). Olivier said: ‘‘The suppression of views that have senseless killing of the comrades is not necessary. Despite the killings the struggle of the working class continues.’’

Olivier lamented the abduction of girls reportedly by Boko Haram in Nigeria. “The abduction of girls was used as a political bargaining tool for the selfish interest of male ego when they fight among themselves and use women as soft targets to ensure they get what they want from government.”

Numsa’s President, Andrew Chirwa, spoke of the spirit of collectivism in addressing social ills and encouraged workers to participate in community struggles.

He added that 20 years into democracy South Africa still sees no noticeable evidence of a reduction in the gender and class gap.

Chirwa re-capped Numsa’s Special National Congress resolution: To break the alliance with the ANC, explore the formation of the movement for socialism and build the United Front.

Numsa decided to break the alliance with the ruling party because the ANC failed the working class for past 20 years of democracy, he said.

Black working class women form a large portion of unemployed people in South Africa. Women work in precarious jobs and are a vulnerable group. More women than men are employed.

Numsa’s National Gender Structure Chairperson, Ruth Nkoleko, said women could play a role in nation building by raising children to be responsible citizens. ‘‘My child is your child and your child is my child, that is the spirit and principle of Ubuntu,” she said.

Nkoleko defined and explained the difference between gender and sexuality: “The society sees and uses the terms gender and sexuality interchangeably, whereas they are different. Gender is a socially constructed role for each sex. Whereas sex, is the biological distinction between men and women.”

Parents ought to raise children in a manner that ensures that a child’s innocence does not diminish as he/she grows. The Ubuntu principle says a child also belongs to the community. She urged people to apply this principle.

“Capitalism can rob us of our legacy of Ubuntu,” she warned.

She condemned the recent deaths of three children. A child was drugged to death when his father’s car was hijacked. Another child was killed by a stray bullet and a third raped and left to die in the Eastern Cape.

She added the senseless killings of the three male shop stewards in KZN had left children without fathers and role models.

Women must participate in the Numsa movement and be a part of the United Front. Nkoleko said because women are the most affected by socio-political ills of the country.

The women in Numsa’s gender structure must: “develop a culture of destroying our patriarchal society for the emancipation of women.”

Nkoleko condemned the brutal killings of women and children in Gaza by Israeli forces in August which seen more than 2,100 people killed, most of them civilians, including about 500 children.

Cosatu’s Gauteng province official, Conrade Nomsa Moyo-Ndlovu said Cosatu was worried about the escalation of violence, crime and abductions and called on South Africa’s law enforcement authorities to enforce the law without fear or favour.

OPEN DEBATE: Taking the struggles of women to the center stage of debate.

Cosatu’s Gauteng province official, Conrade Nomsa Moyo-Ndlovu said Cosatu was worried about the escalation of violence, crime and abductions and called on South Africa’s law enforcement authorities to enforce the law without fear or favour.
Women’s Rights not just in August

By Percy Nhlapo

We paid tribute to women in August to celebrate the courage of women in 1956 when 50,000 women marched to the Union buildings in Pretoria to petition against the extension of Pass Laws to women. The laws served to maintain population segregation, control urbanisation, and manage migrant labour during Apartheid. The Population Registration Act compelled “Black” people to carry the hated ‘Dom Pass’—a document that severely restricted movement of the bearer. Each “pass” designated specific urban/ metropolitan areas in which the bearer was authorised to live, work and travel. “Black” people faced arrest if caught without the pass.

Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Rahima Moosa and Sophia Williams, led the women’s protest on August 9 against the proposed amendments to the Urban Areas Act (commonly known as the Pass Laws) of 1950. They left bundles of petitions, more than 100,000 signatures, at the then Prime Minister J.G. Strijdom’s office door.

They stood silently for 30 minutes. Many carried children on their backs. They sang Washing the cloth andfields.

This song represents women’s courage, strength and continues to inspire. Strijdom stood up to make a speech. It was the turning point in the role of women in the struggle for freedom and society. However, there are still too many stories of too few women cracking the glass ceilings in the workplace. There still too many circumstances of violence against women in the family, workplace and fields. Women face unequal relations in the home and in the factory. More women than men are unemployed. Women carry multiple burdens. So, while we have reason to celebrate since that eventful day, it is not enough, the battle still rages.

We should unite and continue the struggle for a non-racial and non-sexist South Africa.

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Is it ok to debate African culture?

“T”hey go again, questioning African culture and tradition,” this is the kind of reaction elicited when discussions or debates on African traditions arise, more so amongst proponents of African culture. You could be labelled ‘westernised’, or worse ‘denier of the African identity’ or ‘betraying our people’.

Culture, by definition, is a way of life. Traditions are the customs, rituals and beliefs that underpin culture and passed on from generation to generation. By its very nature, culture is a product of social interactions. Practices born out of these interactions are the traditions that define members of cultural groups.

The eco-socio-political environment, societal relations, power relationships impact on the way people engage and have engaged. Our media, the languages we speak, the words and meanings we attach, how we define ourselves, are the ingredients that make up culture.

If the variables that inform and lead to the creation of culture are subject to change, then it follows that culture is adaptable. Indeed nature demonstrates that failure or inability to adapt may lead to extinction.

Innovation, technology, environmental forces, globalisation and urbanisation affects people.

Debates on culture and traditions are not acts of disrespect. There can be no progress without critical reflection. It is incumbent that Africans take the lead in such discussions. The changing world compels us to consider doing things differently.

During initiation seasons, there is an outcry about the many unnecessary deaths of young men and boys. The practice in most cultures is to conduct the circumcision procedure without using the technologies advances by medical science, but why do we hold on to methods that endanger lives? We could use modern medical practice without undermining tradition?

We live in a time when sexual perversion abounds. Women are often the target of sexual violence and exploitation. Does the parading of bare-breasted virgins in front of congregations of men not perpetuate exploitation and commodification (sexually or otherwise) of women more so in the age of cameras and social media?

Ukuthula, the mandatory period of mourning for widows, with its accompanying rituals including the wearing of black clothing, limited social interaction and sometimes the expectation to marry into the deceased’s family is another practice that could infringe on the freedoms and rights of widows.

The case of Mvumeleni Jezile, who is appealing a 22-year sentence for rape, assault and trafficking a 14-year-old girl because he married her through the practice of ukuthula calls for debate. What are the prescriptions of this practice? Who can carry it out and under what circumstances? In addition, what is the age of consent? It seems to me that there is a very thin line between ukuthula and forced marriage if it is not equivalent to the latter.

This is a platform to take the debate forward, frankly, and with an open mind.
Fix Our Schools!

Six-year-old Michael Komape fell into a pit latrine toilet at his school and drowned. His mother, Rosina found him with his little hands sticking out, reaching upwards. Komape came from Chebeng Village, outside Polokwane. Komape was not alone — many other South African children attend schools which lack basic facilities. Thousands of schools lack access to water, electricity or proper sanitation. In rural areas, especially, schools have pit latrine toilets.

The National Education Infrastructure Management Systems Report, 2011, paints a bleak picture of of South Africa’s 25,000 public schools. The report shows:

- 3,544 schools do not have electricity and 804 have an unreliable source of electricity.
- 2,401 schools have no water supply and 2,611 have erratic water supply.
- 913 schools do not have any ablution facilities while 11,450 are still using pit latrine toilets.
- More than 20,000 schools do have access to stocked libraries, laboratories and computer centres. Those schools that do have these facilities are in the suburbs, the former “whites-only” Model C schools attended by middle-class children.

While school infrastructure backlogs are a result of Apartheid’s racist education policy and the deliberate under-spending on the education of black children, this Government has a responsibility to lead society. Government should marshal the resources needed — public and private — to use its power, enshrined in the Constitution, to make pro-poor laws and policies. This Government needs to address the school infrastructure crisis.

It is for this reason that Equal Education (EE), a grassroots movement of students, parents and community members, campaigned for more than three years to get a law passed which gives the Minister the power to adopt norms and standards for school infrastructure.

In 2007 Parliament amended the South African Schools Act to include Section 5A, which gave the Minister power to adopt norms and standards for school infrastructure, textbooks and school capacity. In 2008, the then Basic Education Minister, Naledi Pandor, released a set of draft norms and standards for school infrastructure. However, these were never finalised.

After Minister Motshekga took over in 2012, he promised to finalise and adopt the norms. However, this did not happen and in 2010, EE began to organise.

In the past three years, EE has held mass marches in Cape Town, Johannesburg, Bisho and Pretoria. EE protestors kept outside Parliament in Cape Town and conducted workshops and public hearings in Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Limpopo, KwaZulu Natal and Limpopo.

EE engaged the broader public via traditional media and social media and sent letters and petitions to the Minister. The organisation also held meetings with the Minister, Deputy Minister and Provincial Education MEC’s. Eventually in 2012, after all else had failed, EE decided to take the Minister to court. Fortunately, however, the Minister decided to settle the case and on November 29, 2013, the norms and standards for school infrastructure were set. These norms and standards state:

- By November 29, 2016, schools made of mud, steel wood or asbestos must be replaced. All schools must have water, electricity and sanitation.
- By November 29, 2020, schools should have an adequate number of classrooms, electricity, water, sanitation, electronic connectivity and fencing.
- Within 10 years (2023), all schools must have libraries and laboratories.
- Within 17 years (November 29, 2030) schools must, as stated in the Norms and Standards, have school halls, sport fields, and kitchens.

The norms and standards states that this year (November 29, 2014), all Provincial Education Departments must produce and implement and submit progress reports, annually.

Students, parents, teachers and principals need to know whether their provincial education department has the correct information for their schools to be included in the planning and implementation phase.

Equal Education encourages everyone to contact his or her local education district office, or provincial education department to check this information. The Provincial Education Departments’ infrastructure information is available on the EE website (www.equaleducation.org.za).

Call Equal Education on 021 387 0022/3 or email info@equaleducation.org.za

Dear Panyaza Lusufi... Education lacks lustre

The Education system never inspires hope in pupils/students. The system never inspires hope in the hearts of the African child. The system fails to bring productive meaningful rationality to teaching and learning in schools.

While you might be determined to bring fun and excitement in Gauteng classrooms you fail to see that is our education system is outdated and designed to respond to the educational revolution. Education fails to accommodate current challenges. It fails to inspire future generations. This education system is dead.

The education system does not meet the needs of the present and future generations. It teaches subjects the youth will never use in reality. Education should embrace individuality. Why after 20 years of democracy do we still focus on exams? This kind of assessment fails to acknowledge different abilities and levels of learners.

The education system continues to glorify Shakespeare. What is the imperative about feeding the young mind of an African child with poetry such as Ozymandius? (Ozymandius is a sonnet written by the English romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley.) The content of such literary work does not inspire hope.

Why do we not analyse poems such as ‘ekasi lam’ or ‘love in tsemba’?

The education system does not support innovation. Is Education not supposed to be adaptive? Is education not supposed to inspire experiential learning? Is the system not supposed to inspire to think the best? Education should foster curiosity and meet current challenges.

The Government pours billions into this dead education system — let’s burn the textbooks, and demand the promised TABLETS.
Does Employment Tax Incentive Work?

by Elena Konopelko

Youth unemployment crisis persists despite Government interventions. The new Employment Tax Incentive Act (ETIA) promulgated in 2014 and backdated to October 2013 is no exception either.

The previous quarter.

No new jobs were created since ETIA, according to Statistics South Africa. Contrary to expectations, there were more unemployed youth than before the Act.

The Act stipulates that employers stand to receive compensation of up to R1000 (or less) for hiring 18-29-year-olds at R6000pm. However, research shows ETIA failed to solve youth unemployment.

Unemployment on the Rise

For the 1st quarter of 2014, youth unemployment spiked, according to Statistics South Africa Labour Force Survey. The number of 15-34-year-olds employed decreased by a staggering 201 000 people. The unemployment rate for this category increased by 2.75% — pushing the total to 41.35%.

Unemployment figures for 15-24-year-olds was significantly higher than 25-34-year-olds. For every two people aged 15-24, only one was employed. Two of three 25-34-year-olds were employed in the first quarter of 2014. These figures were worse than the previous quarter.

Numsa Shopstewards say no

Numsa strongly opposed the ETIA. Numsa’s shopstewards observed no new hiring under ETIA, except in 11 retrenchment cases in which younger employees were hired to replace those older than 34. The results of younger employees enjoying the same benefits as regular salaried workers, was disappointing.

Only 40% of Numsa-organised companies employed anyone after ETIA. Among those companies, an overwhelming — 66% — paid workers the minimum wage (the wage negotiated during bargaining councils) rather than an actual wage enjoyed by regular employees. Only 14% of those hired under the ETIA received the same salary as previously employed workers, and information of the remaining 20% was unknown.

Sixty-five percent of young workers hired under the ETIA do not receive employment benefits compared to regular workers.

The Employment Tax Incentive Act:

Fails to Create new jobs

Numbers showed a decline in the youth labour market contrary to Government claims of ETIA beneficiation.

Former Finance Minister, Pravin Gordhan said since ETIA there were “56,000 beneficiaries in its first month.” President Jacob Zuma, in the State of the Nation Address earlier this year said: “Within five months 133,000 employees have benefitted and 11,000 employers have participated in the scheme.”

ETIA was a government-businesses cost-sharing mechanism in the absence of new job creation.

Failure to address apartheid wage gap

ETIA has maximum limit of R6000 Band. Therefore, it serves employers’ interest to pay less money and prevent Apartheid wage gaps from narrowing.

Puts downward pressure on salaries

Currently, most companies pay their ETI workers’ less than salaried workers. Given this trend, Numsa feared ETIA would “cheapen labour” and push salaries downwards across industries.

Fails to address the rise of limited-duration contracts

There was a 10% increase in the number of limited-duration contracts during the period of 2008-2014. It benefits employers to hire someone only for one year (ETIA reduces the amount by half in the second year of employment). Therefore, Numsa expects a higher percentage of youth on limited-duration contracts with less job security.

Creates two-tier labour market system

ETIA disempowered working youth and made working conditions bleaker compared to salaried workers. The overwhelming majority of ETIA workers received less money than those doing the same amount of work. (They receive only the bargain minimum, not the actual company pay rate). About two-thirds of the workers do not receive the same employment benefits.

As Numsa predicted the Act does not stimulate real employment, instead it creates a two-tier labour market, widens the wage gap, creates unequal work conditions, pushes salaries downward and disempowers young South Africans.

Elena Konopelko, Numsa national research intern

Our Provident Funds in 2015

Join Numsa to defend your provident fund. Numsa has declared a dispute and will be calling a mass action against preservation of pension fund.

Workers have been asking questions about the government pension reform. We simplify the issues in the following frequently asked questions and answers so that workers can understand the government proposed changes.

1. Will government nationalise our pension fund?

Not Government will not nationalise anybody’s provident fund benefits instead it wants every working person to preserve their provident money if they leave employment.

2. What is preservation?

Preservation of provident fund means if you leave your employment you will not withdraw your money but the funds will be kept for you and be available on retirement.

3. What about the social age grant?

Government want to make social grants accessible only to those who are not employed.

4. What if I retire?

If you retire (go on pension) they expect you not to withdraw your money in a lump sum but to annuitize it (earn it every month).

5. What if I want to take a cash lump sum?

You will not be allowed to take a cash lump sum but you will be allowed only ten percent of your money per year.

6. Who will be allowed to take all their money when they leave employment through dismissal/resignation and retrenchment?

Anybody who is older than fifty five years on P. day will be allowed to withdraw her/his lump sum.

7. What is P. Day?

P. Day is the day when this change will take place which is 1 March 2015.

8. What does COSATU say about this?

COSATU is rejecting this government proposal.

9. What next is going to happen before 2015 (P. Day)?

COSATU is trying to ask government not to force workers to preserve but it looks as if government is not agreeing with workers which then it means we may go on strike.

Join Numsa to defend your provident fund. Numsa has declared a dispute and will be calling a mass action against preservation of pension fund.

We will communicate the date at a later stage.

We are calling for a comprehensive social security system for all!

ELENA KONOPELKO
Connecting with child-headed households

Cynthia Machaba

Over 100,000 children live in child-headed households. Government in an attempt to reach out to such households called on South African citizen to assist in ensuring that existing and new child- and youth-headed household receive the necessary support from government. Informing the Department where they are.

The call, made during Child Protection Week (1—8 June) an annual campaign, aims to promote the safety, well-being, care and protection of children. Child Protection Week is hosted under the theme "Working Together to Protect Children", which calls on all citizens to play a part in ensuring the well-being of South African children.

The Department mainly assists child- and youth-headed households through the Isibindi Model — an initiative that deploys trained community-based child and youth care workers in communities and, through an outreach programme providing care, protection and developmental support to vulnerable children and families.

During the 2013/14 financial year, the Isibindi Model reached nearly ninety thousand (90 000) orphaned and vulnerable children with its services.

In 2006, This Children Count — Abantwana Babalulekile (child advocacy group)UCT project, presented a report showing that 0.67 % of children under 18 years lived in child-headed households. This is equivalent to roughly 1,220 000 children out of 18.2 million children in South Africa.

Most child-headed homes have between one and three members with at least one child over 15 years of age. Most children attend school (95%).

Most children living in child-headed households have two living parents (61%) and 80% have a living mother. Children that have lost both parents — double-orphans (8%) live in households with adults and this, suggests that kinship networks continue to provide care. So, in this instance, the spirit of Ubuntu lives.

However, the living conditions of child-headed households tend to be bleaker than children in mixed-generation households, for example, access to water and sanitation and infrastructure is minimal, probably as a result that most of these dwellings are located outside of cities. Majority of child-headed households — 90% — were located in Limpopo, KwaZulu Natal and the Eastern Cape.

The study found that very few children in child-headed households earn an income. Social grants remained an important source for millions of people in South Africa.

A common assumption, the found was that HIV/AIDS was a major contributing factor that caused a spike in the increase in child-headed households. This was not evident. The HIV epidemic left many children orphaned. It doubled the orphaned population from 2002 to 2006 from 2% (157 000 children) to 4% (660 000). However, this increase did not automatically cause a rise in the number of child-headed households.

We studied to the need for more research to guide appropriate interventions. The Department of Social Development’s focus is to locate every child- and youth-headed household. Its compiling a register of child- and youth-headed households and, by May this year, had recorded 885 households.

If you know of child- and youth-headed households inform social workers, local authorities and community leaders such as chiefs, traditional leaders and faith-based leaders or contact the Children’s unit of the Department of Social Development on 082 786 4961 or at ssdhm@dsd.gov.za.

Cynthia Machaba is a Numsa shop steward, Joburg North local

Corruption overshadows Nelson Mandela’s Legacy

Ziwitwafo Radanii

Our beloved late Nelson Mandela’s legacy which saw him receive a Nobel Peace Prize award (1993) is being shattering by the yolk of injustice, exploitation of the working class and corruption by the same people who claim to be custodians of Mandela’s legacy.

Mandela once said, “Education is the most powerful weapon which can be used to change the world.” He promulgated sustainable solutions and promoted education, especially in rural Africa. Education is becoming less relevant because institutions, public and private would rather ignore skills and qualifications when employing someone instead of African worker. This, I scratch your back you scratch mine, view has meant people hired are incompetent, under-qualified and ruining the economy bit by bit.

A case in point is the recent example of Hlaudi Motsoeneng, controversial operations chief of the SABC, showed five matric subjects on his job application at the public broadcaster which he obtained — 4 E’s and one F. Yet, Motsoeneng earned R2.87 million in 2013 alone. Such hiring will increase this country’s illiteracy and add to the downfall of the economy. To add to such shameful conduct, women are the ones who are usually at the receiving end of this unfairness.

When like Public Protector Thuli Madonsela — she handles her job with passion — work well, then such women are seen as threats. How many Women’s Days and/or 16 days of activism against women abuse should occur for women to be recognised as equals.

The moment opposition parties think that there’s no other way to hold the ruling party accountable for their actions, except through violent measures. Anarchy and resistance will become the rule of law, then we are on our way to the path of civil war in this country.

Recently in Mozambique, an opposition party, Renamo, pulled out of parliament under the ruling party, Frelimo party. They then went underground, and are said to have been committing guerrilla wars on the government and civilians ever since.

In the case of our very own South Africa, our president, Jacob Zuma, has refused to answer and account on allegation and findings of his corrupt activities, which have been done by the public protector, Thuli Madonsela, on his Nkandla Home renovations. This persistent behaviour by our President has brought opposition parties together.

In a press conference held in August, due to the chaos which occurred in parliament caused by the EFF’s actions. Both opposition parties pointed out in frustration an ongoing trend by the ANC, to use its majority members of parliament to stifle any concerning questions from the opposition parties, which the rest of the country would like to know also.

To rub salt in the wound, the parliament speaker, Baleka Mbete, seems to be siding with and protecting the ANC, instead of running the affairs neutral, as a parliament speaker is mandated to do. If the opposition goes to court for intervention, the courts only send them back to parliament for solutions. This is one of President Zuma’s delay tactics, when it comes to accountability to the nation, he has done this on the Arms deal, the spy tapes inquiry, and now, the Nkandla gate.

It is funny how the president uses the law to successfully avoid accountability.

We will end up having ‘freedom fighters’ like Boko Haram, and links with the Al Qaeda. Then our beloved country will not differ from any other war torn country in Africa such as the DRC, CAR, Burundi, Sudan, Nigeria and Mali. And why? Because Jacob Zuma failed to answer a straight forward questions, that ‘his people wanted to know’, REALLY!?! Mr President.

Pinky Ramokoka

Sustainable solution: “Education is the most powerful weapon” Mandela.

Ziwitwafo Radanii is a membership administrator, Ekurhuleni region

South Africa on the path of terror?

Pinky Ramokoka

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Pinky Ramokoka is a Numsa Youth from national treasurer...
The Mother of All Eating, the play and its title grabs attention. It captures the strong symbiotic relations between Ministers and public officials and corrupt practice within the public sector. It exposes the extent in which mal-administration and the allocation of resources undermines the capacity of the state to meet the basic needs of the society.

The play, based on Zakes Mda’s book (1982), on Lenoso’s public sector, shows how public officials mislead ministers in signing contracts and approving projects by skipping over details. It shows procurement policies and tender processes flouted in favour of those with high political connections expecting equally high kickbacks in return.

In the play, a Minister’s lack of vigilance on a project translates in more power rests with his Principal Secretary, the link within a chain of beneficiaries, comprising of engineers, owners, members of tender boards and political figures. The Principal Secretary benefits from deals and recommends tenders for his road-construction company, which produces sub-standard work and leading to a spate of accidents. Eventually an accident on the road the company builds claims the life of his pregnant wife. The play examines a culture of corruption emerged in which diligent state officials were dismissed, state resources exhausted, citizens’ rights eroded and access to basic services denied.

The Mother of All Eating relates to the South African State that has transformed into a site of self-enrichment as opposed to a site of pursuing developmental agenda, undermined by socio-economic rights for citizens. In our country, the Auditor General’s report (Terence Nomtembe), in 2011-2012 reflected on corrupt elements and stated “nine municipalities of 278 had a clean audit. Irregular expenditure amounted to R9,82 billion while fruitless expenditure reached R568 million more than double the previous year.” Nomtembe continued to raise concerns about the lack of leadership action and deterioration of financial management in various municipalities.

Nkandlagate, is a case in point of the excessive expenditure — R216 million — in building up President Jacob Zuma’s home security. Public Protector, Thuli Madonsela in her report, Secure in Comfort, raised serious concerns on the Nkandla saga — tender processes were flouted and the President’s name mis-used by his architect to inflate project costs at the expense of taxpayers’ money. The report spoke to how Zuma unduly benefited.

A parallel lies between the play and the national project aimed at liberating and Better Life for All. The South Africa state is often purported to be a developmental state, yet the question of building a dynamic and strong public sector is questionable.

What we see is a gradual movement towards a predatory state and the negation of the national project aimed at liberating Africans, and Blacks, in particular, from socio-economic bondage.

The strength of Mother of All Eating lies in showing corruption, opulence and the looting of state resources. The play emphasizes the importance of incorporating art with education in imparting information and creating awareness about corrupt activities.

A consultative workshop on the United Front

JOHN MANANA

Numsa Gauteng region, held a Consultative Workshop composed of different forums and held on 24th September. The workshop was to give confidence to the township based United Fronts, subsequent to a series of workshops held across all locals from different regions on the United Front.

Amongst other issues explored in the workshop, were the bottle necks which frustrate the implementation of the United Fronts at community level. These include logistical challenges, lack of clearly defined communication channels and over and above the lack of well-structured co-ordination between the local and community based organisations.

As a consequence, procrastination sets in and paralyses the urgency of creating the formation of the township based United Front, staid with the responsibility of mobilizing the community on pressing issues, and creating momentum to tackle the dominance of capitalism beyond service delivery related issues and socio-economic campaigns.

Dinga Sikhwelwa the United Front Desk Head raised the following issues in the workshop, “Comrades we are not building the ostrich which in essence is big at the upper structures of its body and relative small in lower parts of the body. As such we must build the dynamic and functional structures of the United Front at all levels” he said.

He proceeded to say “There is no need to advocate big theories. Instead what is required here is actions towards the full implementation of the township based United Fronts. This meeting must among other things share experiences and chart the way forward”.

The workshop established commissions which represented areas such as soweto, Alexander, Dipsloot, Germiston and Tembisa.

The commissions are tasked with the responsibility to identify areas of contention, set time frames for the township based United Fronts, establish steering committees to address the logistical issues, strategy and tactics, with the help of various mediums. Timelines identified by commission evolve around the month of October.

The workshop further appreciated the need to elect at least two comrades from other community based organisations that will provide report of the experience of launching the township based United Front at, the next Gauteng Consultative Workshop Scheduled to take place on the 15-16 November 2014.

“We are not just gathering under banner of the United Front, we are building the social forces and reviving the struggle from below and exploring the possibility of forming the political party with a clear political programme.”

John Manana is a Numsa Local secretary, JC Bez region.

Warriors of my class

Roar ferociously, crush them, sideways and down, that is the kind of lion that fights defending their territory. I’m talking to you working class, I’m talking to you unemployed Wake-up open your eyes, can’t you see the enemy is in front of you. Can’t you see E-Tolling is here, Incentive Tax, Youth Wage subsidy, land distribution e.g. Nkandla and many more implementation of the NDP.

Hey warriors wake-up before is too late

Are you happy with popcorn protest of everyday municipalities from province to province? Unite, organise and advance to socialist state it is your future! What kind of class are you? Capitalism has divided you Capitalism is brutal; it makes our own leaders forget our mandate. Let’s fight one another our target is the system.

Our own leaders now they are more dangerous than those of Apartheid era.

They are protecting material gains they accumulated from our blood; they are so quick to react to defend the titles they occupy.

You can ask yourself where’s Cosatu and Sacp? The vanguard of our own class? Warriors don’t despair The militancy displayed by Mamombe in Marikana demanding only living wage I will not forget it.

Forward we go, backwards never.

Calvin Baloyi, Madibeng, Hillanganani Region