



NUMSA GENERAL SECRETARY IRVIN JIM

SPEAKERS NOTES FROM THE MBUYISELO NGWENDA MEMORIAL LECTURE

19 MARCH, 2017

Greetings comrades!

We are gathered here in Port Elizabeth to reflect on the life and times of the great revolutionary leader, Mbuyiselo Ngwenda. Comrade Mbuyi was a humble man who cared deeply about workers, and he fought tirelessly until his last day on earth, to free the workers of South Africa.

When he was alive, comrade Mbuyi made a clarion call to NUMSA members, to working class formations in the labour movement and to the working class in general. These were his words:

"There is just no better cause like a cause of building organizations of the working class, and mobilizing the working class as a class for itself "

Mbuyi was among the few rare communist who didn't buy the confusion and the scheme manufactured by many in the liberation alliance led by the ANC, which is that globalization is something different. He was clear that globalization, was just like imperialism, however he pointed out that the increasingly dominant neoliberal agenda was going to gradually make it impossible to address the historical mission of the revolution which was to:

1. Uproot imperialism
2. To defeat colonization of a special type
3. Dealing with the restoration of the land question
4. Addressing the Freedom Charter and demanding that the mineral wealth beneath the soil, banks and monopoly industries should be restored to the ownership of the people. Nationalizing South Africa's mineral sectors and all commanding heights of the economy
5. To deliver free, compulsory and decolonized education
6. Addressing the fundamental restructuring of the South African economy. Insure ownership and control by both black and white workers and

simultaneously dealing with the fundamentals of changing relations of production as the only way to change power relations in society.

Comrade Mbuyi knew that the IMF, World Bank, TNC's, Multinationals, WTO, White monopoly capital, were hyenas with a huge capacity, not just to take over governments of nation states but to ensure the dominance of capitalism and the maintenance of imperialism and neoliberalism. He knew that their agenda is to use their influence to impose structural adjustment programs. At that time, South Africa's structural adjustment program was not imposed, the state simply surrendered and volunteered to have it imposed.

The ANC leadership had already done a deal with capital through a negotiated settlement. Through this deal the white population secured for itself ownership and accumulation of wealth, whilst Africans were to be kept at the bottom of the food chain. The status quo was maintained through the property clause in the constitution.

The rest is history. This 'settlement deal' is directly responsible for the current national crisis, which constitutes the stagnation in the present, as a result of the revolution that has been sold out!

The implementation of right wing policies destroyed jobs and led to serious levels of de-industrialization. As a result they furthered the aims of the enemy camp, which is both local and international in character and also seeks to destroy the moral fibre of society through imperialism and colonization. This system has always relied on super exploitation of black and African labour, from as far back from slavery to today's super exploitative labour practices.

Comrade Mbuyi was very clear about the crisis facing our revolution. That's why he fought until death separated him from us. He passed on making a clarion call that all of us must advance and champion a belief and a commitment that will save the South African revolution. And it is only the South African working class that is capable of carrying the revolution to its logical conclusion.

Mbuyi was produced by resistance and fighting back in the community of Kwazakhele, New Brighton in Port Elizabeth. He was produced by a combination and intersection of Uitenhage, Somerset, and Ado Park in VW South Africa. He was produced in the shop floor. He was produced by the Port Elizabeth Youth Congress during the apartheid banning. Comrade Mbuyi was produced by the history of our struggle where he resisted and fought back against an oppressive regime. He showed us that fighting back is the best form of defence.

Comrade Mbuyi was anti-imperialist, anti-colonial, anti - patriarchal, anti - racist, anti - war and a champion of common principles and goals to build a political common platform. We must be united and struggle to defeat imperialism and to win the struggle of socialism. Comrade Mbuyi fought for a classless world.

Therefore NUMSA must succeed in its resolute stance to crystalize the working class alternatives of the:

- **United Front**

- **Workers Party**
- **And The New Federation**

NUMSA should and must succeed because the ANC leadership under Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki destroyed millions of jobs. Under Jacob Zuma, and Gwede Mantashe it has more than doubled the mess. We are now facing the worst forms of corruption and dictatorship because their generation failed to address the economic property question. As a result they are bringing back to power even worse adversaries than the DA. But we must remember that the ANC itself has become part of the axis that exploits the working class.

What doesn't this mean? This means that NUMSA can't build another stupid COSATU with its own hands and money. We are building a new socialist federation! We are building a United Front, which is not another reformist organization, that's why it's activist and councillors must be socialist. The Workers Party must be the Vanguard Party with a mass base. Its loyalty both as an attitude of mind and a way of life should be to overthrow capitalism. It must organise the working class as a class for itself to pursue class struggle. This is the only guarantee for change.

This means taking no chances with the New Federation. Both its content and leadership should and must be led by the industrial proletariat. We can't have another Sdumo Dlamini. The movement can't demand socialism from workers but its perspective is not socialist.

- NUMSA should organize all critical centres of the economy, for example, mining, manufacturing, transport, airports, telecommunications, manufacturing and the entire value chain. This includes organizing workers in the canteen, security, material handling and logistics.
- NUMSA is the only union that is building a revolutionary movement. It is not doing this alone. It is with FAWU and many other unions. It is the only union whose mission and interest can save workers and the working class. In all political parties in South Africa, the ANC constituency and its leaders, the working class in the EFF, the working class in the DA, and the rest of the other political parties will not be safe if NUMSA's mission and vision of the new Workers Party we are building is realised!

This imposes a serious revolutionary task on every NUMSA member, on every NUMSA staff member and activist.

Our immediate challenge is to call our own members and staff to be loyal to the revolutionary cause of NUMSA. There is no time for tolerating 'iMpimpi' in our ranks. We only need comrades without changing nature, form and character of NUMSA as the union. This means that NUMSA members and staff should be vigilant and must be both a shield and a spear for working class interest and struggle.

NUMSA needs to replicate itself, its vision and perspective both in the shop floor and communities. By communities we mean rural villages, rural towns, and urban areas and all metros.

Our task is not just to build, we must be active and ensure that we replicate what Mbuyiselo Ngwenda has done. That means being prepared to once again, rebuild the four pillars of our struggle:

- Build a civic movement lead by the youth and women who are political.
- Build a new organization that is anti-imperialist, anti-colonial and anti-patriarchy. We must be champions of gender equality, champions of non-racialism and class struggle.
- Building our struggle through mass mobilization.
- Building support for our revolution internationally.

In addition we must build underground structures and build a revolution that can defend itself and be led by all other means. In preparation for the launch we should start discussing how we will defend the revolution and how we will pursue class struggle as defined by NUMSA, and stop being prisoners of history, regalia, and symbols.

Lastly we acknowledge that we got our political revolutionary consciousness from ANC, SACP and the Cosatu Alliance of the past. In the past these organisations were revolutionary. But we must remember that we are and have always been the torch bearers of a revolutionary agenda, both inside and outside of the alliance. The same revolution agenda that they have since dumped in favour of neo-liberalism.

A revolution with a liberation mission for the total emancipation of the majority of our population, which is black and African.

WHAT DID THE ANC AND ITS ALLIANCE PARTENERS DO?

1. They secured a deal for white monopoly capital in the form of the negotiated settlement. They adopted a bourgeois constitution that maintained the status quo, and protected not just capitalist interest but minority cultural rights as well.
2. They allowed capital to be outsourced. They killed the capacity of the state by introducing tenders that led to endemic corruption.
3. They destroyed manufacturing by opening the economy through tariff relaxation, the removal of exchange controls and allowing money to leave the country both legally and illegally through capital flight. This is money that we desperately need so that it is invested into sectors of the economy to create jobs.
4. They left the Reserve Bank in private hands. Instead of the Reserve Bank targeting jobs it embarked on a failed policy of inflation targeting, through the maintenance of high interest rates which has resulted in job losses and de-industrialization.

5. The Alliance got given a mission to implement the imperialist Washington Consensus that underpinned their macro-economic policies. As we speak this Consensus has collapsed into what is now defined as the deep global crisis of capitalism. In fact the capitalist orthodox have run out of ideas on how to stimulate economic growth. They run back and front to failed ratings agencies for prescriptions and dictates!

The failure by any liberation movement including the ANC to take a revolutionary path has led us to corruption and if we continue on this path we are on our way to a dictatorship. This has been our experience in recent years. We witnessed the corruption of the Nkandla scandal, cronyism in SOE's and SASSA, the introduction of slave wages in the form of the national minimum wage of R3500, as well as retrenchments and plant closures in the last two decades!

We are now faced with the closure of the poultry industry which is about to lose 17 500 jobs. In 2016, in the steel industry we lost 10 thousand jobs as a result of the closure of High Veld Steel and the value chain that was negatively affected. They have now, against this background, selfishly gone to COP 17 and COP 21 where Water Affairs minister Edna Molewa, President Jacob Zuma, and Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa made foolish commitments on the reduction of carbon emissions. As a result, without any regard for the plight of South Africans, and to satisfy their own greed they have taken the decision to close 5 power stations. This will destroy six thousand jobs in Eskom, but in total this decision will destroy not less than 30 thousand jobs in all the related sectors. The big question at this point is, when do we say enough is enough? And who must relinquish political power?

We say it is both the ANC and the DA because they have no interest in this nation, its people, and workers of South Africa

They allowed capital at the point of production to restructure the workplace. They have privatized, outsourced, and casualized jobs. They overload workers through so-called multi-skilling, when in fact they are increasing the burden on workers and they have absolutely no care. Every day we experience scandals.

That is why workers and the poor should build the new Workers Political party. We must make sure that it's formed by men and women who are completely incorruptible. It is time for all South Africans to say:

Zuma and his cronies must go!