

What lessons must we learn?

On this workers day, as we march, sing and toyi-toyi to celebrate our proud working class traditions, we must also prepare ourselves for the struggles ahead – we must learn the lessons of the past to draw the map that lead us to the socialist future.

Capitalism cannot deliver! For the last twenty years the ANC has ruled in the interests of the capitalist class – the bosses in other words! That is why unemployment is over 35% and over 70% amongst the youth. It is why millions still live in poverty without adequate housing, water, sanitation or electricity and why inequality is greater today than under apartheid. There is nowhere in the world where capitalism can deliver for the working class. Africa still suffers poverty, under-development and conflict. Across Europe austerity is pushing down workers' living standards with war is raging in Ukraine. In the United States millions are unemployed. And the Middle East is burning in civil wars created by imperialism.

We must rely on our own strength as workers! Militant struggle wins victories. Last year the platinum workers and the metalworkers won significant pay rises due to their heroic struggles. The bosses will never volunteer to give us a pay rise or improve our terms and conditions. They will only do this if they see that we are organised and if we are prepared to struggle. But our organisations – trade unions, civics etc. – must be firmly under our democratic control and the leaders must be strictly accountable.

Workers must be class independent AND politically organised! We need our class and political independence! After twenty years the verdict is unchallengeable – the Tripartite Alliance was a disaster for the working class. It destroyed Cosatu and completed the degeneration of the SA Communist Party. Across the world, wherever workers parties have thought they could come to a compromise with the capitalist class and create a 'nice' capitalism they have betrayed the working class. We need a party of the working class that refuses all compromises and collaboration with the capitalist class – we need our political independence!

Socialism is the only alternative for the working class! Socialism sums-up the interests of the working class. It is the only programme the working class can fight on if we are not to be conned by the capitalist class into taking only the crumbs of society's wealth – wealth that the working class creates.

A socialist society is a society that is run **in** the interests of the working class **by** the working class. The key demand we must struggle for to create socialism, is the nationalisation of the banks, the mines, the commercial farms, the big factories and big businesses. We must take these out of the hands of the profiteering capitalists. But for nationalisation to be **socialist** nationalisation, we need democratic working class control of these parts of the economy. If we have that we can draw-up a democratic economic plan to provide everyone with a job at a living wage and adequate and high quality housing, water, sanitation and electricity.

**These lessons are written into the foundations of WASP.
If you agree with us then join us!**

What are the tasks we face?

Organise! This is the main task facing the working class. There are three 'theatres' of struggle – the workplaces, the communities and the university campuses. The struggles in each theatre must be united.

Unite the workplaces – NUMSA and its allies must continue with their plans for a new trade union federation. Learning the lessons of the past it must be built on the solid foundations of a socialist programme and worker-control. The new federation must work to win over the remaining members of Cosatu with a clear programme of struggle, fighting **against** retrenchments, labour brokers, e-tolls etc. and fighting **for** wage increases, a national living minimum wage and job creation. It must also reach out to Nactu and other unions and take-up the task of organising the unemployed.

Unite the communities – we need a new country-wide socialist civic federation that can unite all the independent civics, community forums and crisis committees that have been created to replace the degenerated ANC-led SANCO and the corrupt and useless local councillors. Such a civic federation could unite and coordinate service delivery protests making them more effective. Upon the basis of a socialist programme it can show how the issues of service delivery, housing and unemployment can be addressed.

Unite the struggles of the youth – WASP supports the Socialist Youth Movement (SYM) which has set itself the task of building a revolutionary youth movement to fight against financial and academic exclusions and build links with the unemployed youth in the townships.

Build a mass workers party – the three theatres, where the day-to-day struggles of the working class, the poor and the youth take place, must be united by a mass workers party with a socialist programme. Only a party can fight for political power for the working class. We must support NUMSA's steps in the direction of workers party and encourage all trade unions, community structures and genuine youth movements to do the same.

Why we must prepare

Capitalism is in crisis in South Africa and across the world. Reflecting that, the ANC finds itself in deeper and deeper crisis. In the 2014 elections only 36% of their votes came from the cities and urban areas. Their efforts to dominate the working class by capturing Cosatu have backfired and they lost control of the situation. A period of deepening economic and political crisis is on the horizon. Unless a re-organised working class takes up the struggle for socialism other reactionary forces will step in to the vacuum. The ongoing xenophobic violence is an example of the choices we face – either the struggle for socialism or a descent into barbarism. But the working class of South Africa is strong. We can become stronger if we struggle to reorganise ourselves as we have explained in this pamphlet. The struggle for socialism is the only option if the working class is to enjoy a future of high living standards and full employment. Join WASP and help us build support for our ideas.