

More urgency needed! Capitalist crisis demands politically organised working class

SA capitalism is in crisis. The first half of 2015 saw 0% economic growth. In steel and mining tens of thousands of jobs could be lost (see pages 8-9). If capitalism continues there will be no end to the poverty, inequality and mass unemployment suffered by the working class.

The capitalist bosses recognise that this poses a danger to their rule. In August the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) said that, "the levels of inequality and unemployment we have in this country and the lack of opportunity for millions of young people mean change might not occur gradually. It might not. You wake up every day to the possibility of an explosion in South Africa". They can see the threat of a mass rebellion against them.

On this point *Izwi* is in full agreement. But it is not guaranteed that this rebellion will be a workers' revolution leading the socialist transformation of society. As yet the working class is not prepared for such a struggle. The urgent task of building a socialist mass workers party as a step toward creating a mass revolutionary party is a struggle that continues.

A workers party would massively assist workers struggling against job cuts. It could organise the working class to support and

struggle for a socialist alternative based on nationalisation under democratic workers control for job shedding industries.

Struggle & politics
In SA, the forces necessary to take rapid strides towards a new party have been present since first the mineworkers and later the metalworkers broke from the ANC over the Marikana massacre. But instead of these heavy battalions being led into battle to forge a workers party their generals have parked them on the grass.

The leadership of the metalworkers' union NUMSA went furthest in re-evaluating the world post-Marikana. But unfortunately, nearly two years have passed since their Special National Congress which broke from the ANC and as yet there is very little progress towards a working class political alternative. The potential destruction of the steel industry should be acting as a major wake-up call to the NUMSA leadership, now joined by their 'nine plus' allies from Cosatu. They do not have all the time in the world.

A new union federation?
Following their defeat at the Cosatu Special Congress in July, NUMSA's Irvin Jim said that, "the time has arrived to

start with the building blocks of forming a new independent, democratic, worker controlled, militant and anti-imperialist trade union federation". In August, Vavi said that concrete steps are being taken to prepare a workers summit in October that will decide whether or not to launch a new federation. *Izwi* calls on delegates to endorse launching a new **socialist** federation.

But building a new federation and building a workers party are not separate tasks. The two should go hand-in-hand. This is

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the most effective way to ensure that a workers party has a mass base. The question of a new workers party should therefore be on the agenda of the workers summit.

The ANC government and behind them the capitalist class will use the time given to them. Ramaphosa is preparing attacks on the right to strike. Heeding the ISS's warnings, the ANC government understands that the subordination of the labour movement is a key political question for the survival of capitalism. This is what lay behind the splitting of Cosatu.

Unfortunately, the NUMSA leadership and the 'nine plus' unions do not appear to be moving with the same urgency.

A new workers party?
Irvin Jim has said that NUMSA is "forging ahead with the formation of a political organ of the working class" committed "in theory and in practise" to socialism. NUMSA initiated a Movement for Socialism (MfS) to take forward the formation of this "organ". Its April conference, which WASP participated in, elected a steering committee to develop a 'road map' towards the formation of a mass workers party on a socialist programme. But regrettably there is no indication that any of this is being acted upon with the necessary urgency.

When NUMSA broke from the ANC they raised expectations that a new workers party would be established in time for the 2016 elections. But with the repeated postponement of the launch of NUMSA's other political initiative, the United Front, the failure of the MfS steering committee to meet, and the unresolved debate within NUMSA's central committee over whether a new "political organ" should be a 'mass' or a 'vanguard' party, it seems almost certain

that there will be no mass socialist working class force contesting the 2016 elections.

Continue the struggle
We have pointed out before that the necessity for a socialist mass workers party is determined by the impasse of SA capitalism and the consequent sharpening of the class contradictions in society. If the road to a new party is blocked in one direction, the working class will find another. In this we can have complete confidence.

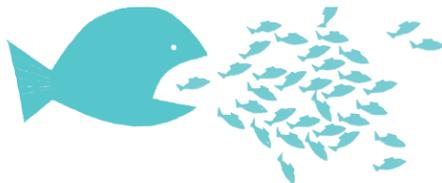
Even so, we must warn that repeated disappointment can dissipate the energy of the masses allowing space for reactionary forces to gather their strength. A lack of urgency and wrong tactics can complicate the struggle for socialism unnecessarily.

Working class activists and socialists must continue the struggle to organise our class for the socialist revolution. Join WASP and work with us to popularise the idea of a socialist mass workers party using all arenas and platforms where we can win the ear of the working class.



Izwi labasebenzi is published under the leadership of the Executive of the Workers and Socialist Party. It is produced, edited and laid out by the editorial sub-committee of Weizmann Hamilton, Liv Shange, Mametlwe Sebei, Sheri Hamilton and Shaun Arendse. Contact us on 081 366 7375.

Them...



Millions... billions... No wait, trillions for me, a pittance for you!

Today South Africa has 46,800 dollar-millionaires with a net worth of at least R13 million each. This 0.01% of the population has a combined personal wealth of R1.84 trillion! The super-super-super rich are also increasing in number. Between 2007 and 2014 the number of individuals with assets of over R400 million rose from 526 to 639.

The accumulation of super-wealth by this tiny group may have something to do with the 5.5 million 'working poor' in South Africa –

people with jobs where the wage is so low they and their families still live below the poverty line unable to meet their basic needs. This includes 95% of all domestic workers. As Karl Marx explained, profits are nothing but the unpaid labour of the working class. Is any more proof needed?!

Globally, things are just as extreme. Some 211,275 individuals, mainly in Europe and North America, have combined personal wealth of R390 trillion. This 0.004% of the world's population have bagged 13% of its wealth!

Giving with one hand...

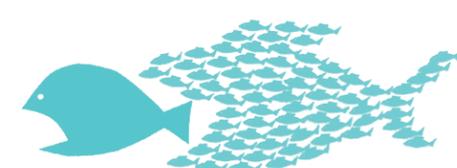
...and taking back twice as much with the other! This is what a Global Financial Integrity report says is happening in Sub-Saharan Africa. Between 2002 and 2012 \$529 billion left the continent in 'illicit financial flows' – tax

dodges, corruption etc. This is twice the amount that came into the continent in foreign aid. Thanks for nothing!

Cost of corruption

The Institute of Internal Auditors estimates that R700 billion has been lost to corruption in the 21 years of ANC government. This is likely a conservative estimate. To put this in perspective, in 2013 the entire tax income of the country was only a little higher at R900 billion! Corruption is a bread and butter issue for working class and poor families. This money could, and should, have been spent building houses and water and sanitation infrastructure.

...and Us



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