

WASP on the...

Economic Freedom Fighters

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The EFF: populism not socialism

June 2014

The Economic Freedom Fighters received 1,169,259 votes (6.35%) in the 2014 national elections, with 48% of those votes coming from the urban metros, giving them 25 MPs in the National Assembly. In the provinces they won 30 MPLs and are now the official opposition in the North West and Limpopo. In addition the EFF holds six seats in the National Council of Provinces. This election result is of enormous significance because it marks the first electoral breakthrough for a party to the left of the ANC in the twenty years since the end of apartheid.

Izwi Labasebenzi editorial board

But, notwithstanding this achievement, the EFF does not answer the key strategic task faced in this period by the working class, the poor and the youth – the creation of a mass working class party on a clear socialist programme. On the contrary, the EFF's breakthrough at the 2014 elections could complicate the birth of such a party. Therefore, in what follows, we offer an analysis of what the EFF represents – its ideas and social support base – and possible perspectives for its future development. This is not to score petty points against a 'rival' political party, but to help arm WASP members and EFF members themselves, as well as the wider working class, with an understanding of what the EFF represents.

This is all the more necessary given the EFF's electoral breakthrough. History is already littered with failed political parties that were rapidly lifted up by the desperation and hopes of the masses only to collapse as rapidly. We owe it to the working class and poor to point to some of the warning signs already present within the EFF that could ultimately lead to the same fate. Further, at this juncture, when the air is alive with talk of the imminent birth of a mass working class party, it is crucial to understand the implications of the EFF's breakthrough for the development of such a party. Regardless of the EFF's successes in the 2014 elections we do not believe this task can be postponed.

A product of social conditions

Clearly the EFF's demands for nationalisation, wealth redistribution and job creation have gained a significant echo. Yet

the EFF's leader – Julius 'Juju' Malema – is facing charges of fraud, corruption, racketeering and money-laundering. During his time as leader of the ANC's Youth League he amassed a fortune as the original 'tenderpreneur'. For many, Malema is the best example of everything wrong with the corrupt politicians in this country. But to others he is the radical voice standing up for the impoverished black masses *against* those politicians.

Why have so many given support to the EFF despite the question mark over their leader? The answer is to be found in the poverty faced by millions and the glaring inequality in South African society. Amongst young people in particular, who suffer over 50% unemployment, but also among the poor, support for the EFF reflects the burning desire to change their situation. It is this desire that means a section of society is willing to overlook the shortcomings of Juju and invest their hope and energy in the EFF. For some workers, voting for the EFF is seen as a way to hit back at the ANC and behind them the capitalist system that they defend.

The advances the EFF has made in its short life have been helped by inheriting structures from the ANC Youth League and making use of the connections to the new black elite that EFF leaders' years inside the ANC have provided. This has given them the resources to capture some of the enormous potential for an alternative to the left of the ANC and to turn it into membership, structures and electoral support.

WASP's attitude to the EFF

It is the objective social conditions driving support for the EFF among the youth and the poor that first and foremost determines WASP's attitude to the EFF and especially ordinary EFF members. WASP has a base amongst the young and poor constituencies attracted to the EFF through our work with the Socialist Youth Movement, the Johannesburg street traders and the Congress of South African Non-racial Civic Movements (COSANCOM). But to those among these constituencies who have aligned themselves to the EFF banner, we will patiently explain that the EFF, on the basis of its current manifesto, the background of its leadership and its general approach, does not offer the genuine working class socialist alternative so desperately needed by the working class and poor.

But for the majority the proof of the pudding will be in the eating. WASP must demonstrate in practise that our ideas are based on

a clear socialist programme which can be the foundation for uniting the struggles of the working class, communities and the youth in a powerful mass movement that can change society. This is why when WASP was approached by the EFF leadership in August 2013 we proposed an electoral collaboration. We proposed registering a new banner for the purposes of standing joint lists of candidates in the 2014 elections, named either EFF/WASP or WASP/EFF. This would have allowed us to unite the anti-ANC left vote, a key strategic objective. But what was crucial for WASP was the necessity to protect our independent identity given the clear differences on programme, including, crucially, on the understanding of nationalisation and socialism. We insisted on the right to debate these questions openly in front of the working class and poor in any collaboration.

But this was not out of a desire for theatre or to satisfy the egos of WASP leaders. We believe that revolutionaries must always remain open to the potential need to change tactics as the class struggle develops. For example, the founders of WASP operated as the Marxist Workers Tendency (MWT) *within* the ANC from the 1970s through to 1996 even though we understood that the ANC was not a working class party and in fact had a pro-capitalist leadership. At that stage however the ANC had a mass support base within the working class. Working within the ANC was therefore the best tactic to attempt to win the masses to genuine revolutionary socialist ideas. The EFF's following does not demand such a tactic at this stage.

But more fundamentally, the Marikana massacre and the heroic struggle of the mineworkers for a R12 500 minimum wage that led to it, posed a whole number of crucially important questions that the working class needs to strive to answer. Why did 'our' organisations betray us? Why has 'democracy' not delivered for the working class? How do we reorganise ourselves industrially and politically given the betrayals we have suffered? What sort of society do we need and how will we create it?

We had intended that an electoral collaboration based on the right to engage in the fraternal debate of each other's policies, would have helped clarify the answers to some of these crucial questions as well as allowing the working class to debate the different understandings of nationalisation and socialism on offer from the EFF and WASP. Such a democratic approach would have placed an EFF/WASP electoral collaboration on a firmer foundation and armed it with clear policies.

Unfortunately the EFF leadership's counter proposal would not have allowed such debates. They demanded the effective takeover of WASP by the EFF and WASP's ideological and political liquidation with the restriction of any criticisms by WASP leaders to internal leadership meetings. This was an impossible demand to agree to. Debates, however fraternal, held behind closed doors would have been of no benefit to either EFF or WASP members and supporters, nor to the broader working class.

When our proposals for an electoral collaboration were rejected by the EFF, we were left with no alternative but to campaign independently as WASP because as important as unity is, at this stage in the struggle, assisting the working class in achieving political clarity is absolutely crucial. WASP views the responsibility of establishing a clear reference point for revolutionary socialist ideas in order to try and shape the next period as fundamental. Even so, we wished to continue the engagement and an exchange of documents was agreed to. In good faith we wrote to the EFF leadership to explain our position on the questions posed by Marikana and to seek clarity on the EFF's views. Nine months later we are still awaiting a response.

Notwithstanding the failure of the first discussions between WASP and the EFF and our view that there has been a rightward drift in the EFF in the months since our initial engagement with the watering down of the EFF's nationalisation policy (more below), WASP remains open to further leadership discussions. For example, we would welcome a reply from the EFF leadership to the points we are raising in this article.

On the ground, WASP members will strive for fraternal relations with EFF members and unite in struggle where possible. Not to do so would be to act in a sectarian way and put party interests ahead of the unity of the working class and poor in struggle. We only have to look at the disastrous rivalry between the NUM and AMCU leaderships which leaves ordinary mineworkers divided and struggling separately against the onslaught of the mine bosses to see the result of sectarian rivalry.

But this does not mean WASP will write the EFF a blank cheque. There have been a number of occasions when EFF members have turned up to events they were not involved in organising, or struggles led by others, and demanded an automatic right to leadership. The working class will not tolerate such arrogance and neither will WASP. If EFF members want to offer genuine support to the struggles of the working class they are welcome but attempts to hijack struggles for narrow electoral purposes will be rightly condemned. WASP approaches struggle with the understanding that leadership must be won and respect earned.

Where WASP members find themselves working alongside the EFF on such a genuine basis we will nevertheless clearly maintain WASP's independent banner and explain firmly to EFF members and all those watching the two organisations that only WASP's programme, offers a genuine revolutionary socialist alternative.

Who supports the EFF?

The EFF's main base of support is the youth and the urban poor. However the EFF also enjoys the support of sections of the black middle class and sections of the black capitalist class. This means that the EFF has a mixed character and cannot be regarded as a working class party.

The working class remains sceptical of the EFF in the main. For example, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), the largest trade union in the country that recently withdrew support from the ANC, took the decision not to support the EFF due to the background of the EFF's leadership and the limitations of the EFF's programme (discussed below). However, because WASP has only partially filled the vacuum to the left of ANC at this stage, and in the absence of a mass working class alternative, some workers will have voted for the EFF as the best way to deal a blow against the hated ANC.

The leadership of the National Council of Trade Unions (Nactu) called on its members to vote EFF (or, contradictorily, the Pan Africanist Congress!). But this call was little more than a propaganda victory reflecting an alignment of views between the pro-PAC Nactu leadership and the Africanists in the EFF leadership. The two most significant unions in Nactu are the National Transport Movement (NTM) and the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU). The NTM is an affiliate and staunch supporter of WASP and the AMCU leadership is notorious for their 'anti-political' position. WASP had AMCU members and shop stewards as well as NTM leaders standing as candidates in the 2014 elections

What is the EFF?

At this stage in its development, the EFF is best described as a left-populist party. Populism is characterised by a radical appeal to 'the people' against 'an elite'. It is an 'us' and 'them' view of the world but one where exactly who 'us' and 'them' are, is a moving target. *Left*-populism has a generally progressive character because it uses a dividing line that is primarily economic, making an appeal to the poor against a wealthy elite.

Left-populism is in keeping with the Freedom Charter's ideas of nationalisation and a non-racial democracy. There is a clear 'Charterist' trend within the EFF leadership that wants to return to an undiluted Freedom Charter following the ANC's abandonment of every principle of this historic document. Like the Freedom

Charter, the EFF is making an appeal to all black people, whether workers, ‘professionals’ or capitalists, against the white capitalist class and white land owners (the same thing given the commercial character of the big white owned farms).

The Freedom Charter was a progressive document but it always had a contradiction at its core. It simultaneously tried to please the working class and poor with demands such as the nationalisation clause, but it also tried to please the aspiring black capitalist class who wanted to have the chance of competing with the white capitalist class on a level-playing field in a way that apartheid prevented. As Mandela himself explained, the Freedom Charter was “not a blueprint for a socialist society”. The founders of WASP, as the MWT, always pointed out that unless the nationalisation clause of the Freedom Charter was fully implemented, and then upon the basis of worker and community control as part of a planned socialist economy, the other freedoms of the Charter could never be fully realised. The EFF must not repeat the ANC’s historic mistake and suffer from the illusion that they will succeed in implementing the Freedom Charter without a complete break with capitalism.

In ‘democratic’ South Africa, the racist legacies of colonialism and apartheid are fertile ground for populist politics. Echoing the Freedom Charter, they allow the EFF to make an appeal to all black people regardless of class using the left economic demands of nationalisation and land expropriation. When the problem is seen to be the domination of the economy by *white* capitalists, the demand for nationalisation can be supported across classes, though with very different expectations of what the outcome of such nationalisation will be. For the black working class, nationalisation offers the chance to end the uncertainty of every-day life by giving them democratic control in the workplace and unlocking the wealth that they themselves create in order to develop society. For the aspiring black capitalist class, nationalisation is a means to rebalance economic ownership and the distribution of wealth *within the capitalist class* by using the state to dismantle the white capitalists’ control of the economy. These two understandings are fundamentally incompatible. Unfortunately the EFF’s position on nationalisation (see below) is more in keeping with the latter, capitalist version.

However, even sections of the black working class, facing racism and discrimination in the workplace and the frustration of their career prospects by white-owned and white-managed enterprises, can be attracted to this mistaken capitalist version of nationalisation without a clear alternative explanation for the conditions they face and the tasks necessary to improve them. In particular, the EFF is focusing on the recruitment of black ‘professionals’ and the upper layers of the working class with the promise that they can take over the currently white dominated professional jobs and managerial positions. Whilst WASP wants to win over the middle layers in society – the middle class, ‘professionals’, small business owners and small farmers – we do so by campaigning to place them on the standpoint of the working class in the struggle for a socialist society, not by repeating capitalism’s broken promise that they too can become a wealthy elite.

The errors of left-populism

It is of course absolutely true, that in South Africa, even after twenty years of democracy, class divisions closely mirror racial divisions. The working class remains overwhelmingly black and the capitalist class remains overwhelmingly white. White ownership of the economy was carried over from apartheid to ‘democratic’ South Africa because of the ANC’s compromise with apartheid. They negotiated taking political power in exchange for leaving the capitalist economic foundations that apartheid had rested upon intact. The ANC’s answer to this problem was to attempt to create a *black capitalist class* through their Black Economic Empowerment policy. But even by the ANC’s own standards they have failed – ownership of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange is still dominated by white capitalists.

That means that on the surface it can appear that the cause of the problems in society is the domination of the economy by *white* capitalists. The implication being that a black ‘patriotic’ capitalist class would somehow live in harmony with their black workers. But left-populism only tells half the story. The fundamental division in society is specifically between the *working class* and the *capitalist class*. The ethnic composition of the capitalist class, whilst not unimportant, especially in the impact it has on consciousness in society, is ultimately secondary to this class division. The real lesson after twenty years of democracy is that the desperate situation of the working class and poor is the result of the continuation of the capitalist system from apartheid to ‘democracy’ with nothing but a partial black face-lift in between.

WASP bases itself firmly on the working class. We understand that it is the working class that has the decisive role to play in the struggle for socialism because of their immense social weight and their crucial role in the economy. The working class and the capitalist class have opposed interests that cannot be reconciled. Capitalist profits are nothing more than the unpaid wages of the working class. If the share of wages goes up it eats into the share of profits for the capitalists. This dynamic is the motor of the class struggle. Even if every capitalist in South Africa was black and every white capitalist chased off the African continent, the living standards of the black working class and poor could still not be improved. WASP is clear that a black capitalist class would be as much of an enemy of the working class as the present white dominated capitalist class. It will be a terrible waste if the EFF project only proves in the future what WASP is warning today: capitalism itself is the fundamental problem not the domination of white capitalists.

The dangers of nationalism and right-populism

The EFF’s ‘anti-white’ populism is largely implicit at this stage. For example, Malema has had an article in the Afrikaans language newspaper Beeld titled, “Why Whites Should Vote for Me” and the few white individuals in the EFF’s ranks have been promoted in the media. The EFF’s manifesto talks about benefiting “all the people of South Africa” and restricts its description of the elite the EFF is opposed to, to “those who owned before 1994”. But no one can have any doubt that this means whites.

However there is another trend within the EFF leadership under the influence of black nationalism. This influence can express itself as *right-populism* using the ideas of race and nation to define ‘us’ and ‘them’, casting those in the ANC as ‘collaborators’ who have betrayed a so-called ‘black nation’. This could see the moving target of ‘us’ and ‘them’ in EFF rhetoric shift away from ‘the poor’ and ‘an elite’ and more explicitly to ‘black’ and ‘white’. The EFF has comfortably absorbed the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), the September National Imbizo (SNI) and parts of the Pan African Congress (PAC). All of these movements are based on the ideas of ‘Africanism’, which is a black nationalist ideology. But the problem with Africanism is that it is not principally opposed to capitalism, but rather, the domination of the economy by *white* capitalists. It does not therefore offer anything fundamentally different for the working class and poor and repeats the mistake of the ‘Charterist’ wing in the EFF but from a different standpoint.

Any elite minority needs to try and find a mass support base to rest upon if it does not want to have to resort to the extremely costly methods of dictatorship and a police-state. Nationalism has always been a crucial tool for the capitalist class which they use as a weapon to fool the working class and poor into supporting their exploiters. Nationalism attempts to mobilise the working class and poor behind the capitalist class who claim that they are speaking for *all* people regardless of class to defend a shared cross-class ‘national interest’. This of course suits the aspiring black capitalist class who can use populist rhetoric to advance their class interests against the white capitalists and divert the legitimate anger of the working class and poor onto whites *in general* rather than the capitalist system which they themselves aspire to rule.

In the struggle against apartheid, black nationalism had a relatively progressive character because *all* black people, regardless of class, *were* oppressed because of the colour of their skin. It was therefore possible for a cross-class struggle of all black people in the liberation movement to win democratic rights for all. The founders of WASP supported this joint struggle but warned that the working class must maintain its independence within the movement because whilst there was a common interest in struggling for basic democratic freedoms across the classes, there was a fundamental divergence of economic interests.

However the situation is very different in 'democratic' South Africa. The new context changes Africanism from the relatively progressive movement it was under apartheid, to a *reactionary* one today that diverts the working class and poor away from the real ideas and methods needed to change their situation – the struggle for socialism based upon the *independent* struggle of the working class. The pressure in 'democratic' South Africa toward the class differentiation of Africanist forces can be observed in the differing attitudes within the PAC towards the EFF. The conservative pro-capitalist leadership of the PAC is attracted to the EFF and is taking the PAC into ever closer collaboration with them. However, among the working class youth that dominates the PAC's youth wing – the Pan-Africanist Socialist Movement of Azania (PASMA) – WASP has made significant gains with our clear call for a genuine mass workers' party, a break with capitalism and support for socialism upon the basis of working class control of nationalised industry.

Antagonisms within the black elite

The ANC continues to make use of nationalist rhetoric, but now has more in common with the white capitalists than the black working class and poor. Today, the main way to join the black capitalist class is through the patronage of the ANC – whether through BEE, tenders, nepotism or cronyism. The ANC have turned themselves into the doormen of capitalism, admitting into the club only those they think deserving. But because of the continued domination of *white* capitalists, the ANC's capitalist club is very exclusive!

But Africanist ideas can still find genuine support among the black petty bourgeois and black middle class reflecting their social conditions under 'democracy'. In the eyes of this aspiring elite the ANC has failed them, though in a different way to the way the ANC has failed the working class and poor. Given the ANC's compromise with the white capitalists in 1994 and the resulting failure to allow a wider section of the black population to join the ranks of the capitalist class, it was only a matter of time until a political movement emerged to express the frustration of the aspiring black elite, now blocked by the ANC rather than apartheid.

These 'middle' layers are characterised by vacillation between the two major classes in capitalist society – the working class and the capitalist class. They cannot make up their mind where their interests lie and are incapable of taking a genuinely independent position that does not either lean on the capitalist class or the working class for support. On the one hand they are squeezed and blocked by the competition of the big capitalists, but on the other hand they mistakenly fear the working class as a threat to the small privileges they enjoy under capitalism. That is why populism fits like a glove on the hand of this layer. It allows them to make radical demands on capitalism but without the revolutionary determination and leadership of the working class they are incapable of developing that position into a genuine revolutionary programme for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of socialism. Reflecting this, the word 'socialism' is used by some EFF leaders and appears in the EFF manifesto, but as is characteristic of populism it is never given a clear definition. To define socialism as WASP does, as the nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy, organised on the basis of economic planning, all under the democratic control of the working class, would require a complete break with capitalism and the capitalist class. The middle layers will only take this step if given bold leadership by the working class, in the absence of this they will vacillate and equivocate over the question of capitalism or socialism.

This aspiring elite dominates the EFF's leadership who are at ease with Africanist ideas because of the ideological justification they provide for vacillating on the question of capitalism or socialism. Reflecting the interests of this layer, the EFF's manifesto supports Black Economic Empowerment (BEE), adding the condition that the EFF will "radically review" BEE and broaden it out. But the BEE policy was never primarily about 'affirmative action' but was the means by which to elevate select black people into the ranks of the capitalist class. The only way to genuinely place the economy in the hands of the black majority – by which we understand the working class and poor – is through nationalisation under worker and community control. A genuine democratisation of the economy through such measures by definition places ownership and control of society with the black majority since the working class is both overwhelmingly black and makes up the majority of the population. Only socialism means freedom.

Right-populism and xenophobia

In a panel radio interview that included two WASP leaders and Floyd Shivambu, an EFF leader, Shivambu attempted to undermine WASP by saying that the EFF did not want to be "dominated by Europeans" which they dishonestly say is the case in WASP. This was a reference to the white ethnicity and Swedish background of Liv Shange, one of the WASP leaders taking part in the show. Shivambu was trying to rally the support of the listeners, not by winning the argument, but by appealing to the idea that *he* was like *them* – a black person – and Shange was not.

In this incident we can see the dangerous seed of xenophobia – the twin of right-populism – within the EFF's politics. On that radio show, 'us' and 'them' was 'black people' and 'white Europeans', tomorrow it could become 'black South Africans' and 'non-black South Africans' or even 'Zulus' and 'Xhosa'. EFF members must condemn such cheap shots from the leadership and insist that they engage with WASP's ideas instead. The unity of the working class and poor will be at stake if we allow xenophobic ideas to take root. That will only benefit the capitalist class as working class and poor people fight each other over differences in background rather than uniting in struggle against our common enemy – the capitalist class.

Unfortunately, at a number of public events, EFF members too have been heard making xenophobic remarks and shouting xenophobic insults, for example against Indians and Pakistanis. Given the barbaric conditions of capitalism it is inevitable that amongst the masses there will be backward xenophobic ideas, as well as sexist and homophobic attitudes and other prejudices. But it is the role of leadership in a genuinely progressive movement to combat these ideas and attempt to raise the political understanding of members and supporters. This is the way that WASP approaches the issue.

But whilst the EFF manifesto says that the EFF is opposed to xenophobia, there is not sufficient evidence that there is a real attempt to tackle such attitudes within the party. In fact WASP is concerned that there is an intentional silence from the EFF leadership on this issue because they are more confident to appeal to the backward prejudices of the masses and lean on those ideas for support rather than advancing a genuine revolutionary socialist programme based on the maximum unity of the working class regardless of background.

The limitations of the EFF's manifesto

These characteristics of the EFF inevitably translate into important mistakes in their manifesto. In general, the EFF's manifesto is radical and contains many demands that, individually, WASP could support. But taken as a whole, the EFF's manifesto is not a revolutionary programme for the socialist transformation of society because it leaves the foundations of capitalism intact. It does not therefore offer a genuine solution to the problems of the working class and poor.

The EFF leadership has a confused understanding of the role of the state, how fundamental social change comes about as well as the key issues of nationalisation and workers' control.

The state and struggle. The EFF describes itself as 'Marxist-Leninist' (adding 'Fanonian' to please their Africanist wing). However, one of the core ideas of 'Marxism-Leninism' is an understanding of the *class character* of the state. This says that the state in any society is always the state of the ruling class. From that understanding flows Marx's idea that "*the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes*". On the contrary, the capitalist state will be used to defend capitalism and crush the democratic will of the masses. This has been proved again and again in the revolutionary struggles of the working class in many different countries and was graphically demonstrated here on 16 August 2012 when police murdered 34 striking mineworkers at Marikana in defence of the profits of the mining capitalists.

However, for the founders of WASP, Marikana, whilst a brutal shock, was not a complete surprise. Basing ourselves upon the Marxist understanding of the class character of the state, and recognising the compromise the ANC made with capitalism, we warned in May 1994, one month after the ANC assumed power, that it was only a matter of time "*before an ANC government sends in police and army units against striking workers or rebellious inhabitants of the African townships*". We were proved correct. Unfortunately, on its current trajectory we would be forced to issue the same warning about the EFF if they ever formed a government.

WASP actively works to help clarify the role of the capitalist state in the eyes of the working class and poor. Unfortunately, the EFF leadership sows illusions in the capitalist state and does not explain what it will take to bring about fundamental change in society. Winning a majority in the National Assembly, and even all nine Provincial Legislatures, is not the same as winning political power in the genuine 'Marxist-Leninist' sense as is implied by the EFF. These capitalist institutions by definition do not encroach upon the real foundation of the capitalist classes' rule: their ownership of the economy. The ANC has already proved the dead-end that awaits a party without a clear understanding of the class character of the state.

WASP bases itself upon the understanding that the present capitalist state must be dismantled and a new *working class state* put in its place. This can only happen as the outcome of a revolutionary struggle led by the working class. Working class MPs must use the capitalist state institutions – like the National Assembly and Provincial Legislature's – as platforms to raise the voice of the working class and poor, fighting for every improvement possible in the lives of the working class and poor, but acting as an ancillary to the decisive struggles that will be waged in the workplaces, the communities and the institutions of learning.

Crucially, WASP points the working class and poor toward the tasks that will be necessary to construct a working class state by raising the need for worker and community control of nationalised industry – the banks, the mines, the commercial farms, the big factories and big businesses. Drawing the mass of the working class and poor into the day-to-day running of society through the formation of worker and community committees linked up at sector, industry and national level will be the foundation of a working class state that can begin the construction of a socialist society. But the EFF's leadership does not seem to understand any of this. In the introduction to their manifesto Malema says that the aim of the EFF is to "[c]ontrol the state through electoral politics in order to transform it..." Some 'Marxist-Leninists'!

The struggle for nationalisation. The EFF's position on nationalisation has the potential to demobilise the working class and poor to spectators in the struggle to change society. Their message amounts to: 'vote for us, and we will sort it out for you', suggesting that the EFF leadership views struggle through the prism of the potential to enhance their electoral chances. This was shown when Juju assured 'international investors' (capitalists) that nationalisation would "be done through legislation".

Whilst a socialist majority in the National Assembly might be able to vote through nationalisation legislation, unless such legislation was backed-up by a mass movement of the working class and the poor to implement it on the ground it would become a dead-letter as the capitalist class engaged in sabotage to defend their power and wealth. Even passing nationalisation legislation might not be possible within the capitalist state's 'rules' given the capitalist property clause in the constitution.

WASP believes that the working class, the poor, communities and the youth must be mobilised in struggle to use our collective power to complete the tasks necessary for the socialist transformation of society. WASP explains in the introduction to our manifesto that "*ultimately we believe that the fundamental changes needed in this country will be won in the struggles in the workplaces, the communities and institutions of learning*". WASP's manifesto is "a guide to struggle". Accordingly we devote an entire chapter of our manifesto to the issue of working class organisation to assist the working class, the poor and the youth to prepare for the struggles ahead.

Workers' control and nationalisation. Flowing from their confused understanding of the class character of the state is the even more confused posing of workers' control by the EFF leadership, its belated appearance in EFF policy almost certainly a response to the criticisms made by WASP and NUMSA. The EFF's manifesto only raises the issue of workers' control when it talks about the mines. But the EFF's manifesto only calls for the nationalisation of a "minimum of 60%" of the mines, as it does for the banks and other strategic sectors of the economy. But how is genuine workers control going to be exercised when the capitalist class continues to own 40%? What you do not own you cannot control. The enterprise as a whole will have to make profits in order to pay dividends to the capitalist owners of that 40% who would enjoy it in the form of private wealth.

The EFF's nationalisation policy is in reality a *partial* nationalisation policy. When this confused position is linked to the failure to call for socialist economic planning to replace the capitalist market, it is clear that if ever implemented, the EFF's policy would end up being window-dressing for a capitalist, not a socialist, economy. In practice 60% 'workers' control' is no real control at all. It could only ever be implemented as some form of employee share ownership scheme or the participation of trade union representatives on the board. Around the world, both of these models have been tried and they have failed. The capitalist character of industry would remain and force workers to police themselves because the rules of the game will still be dictated by the laws of capitalist economy. In such a situation the state would of necessity maintain its capitalist character in order to defend the capitalist 40%. The theft of wealth from the working class would continue, taking the form of the planned looting of the economy by the capitalist class via their state's control of nationalised industry regardless of the fig-leaf of so-called 60% 'workers' control'.

WASP stands for a genuine socialist nationalisation policy. That can only mean 100% nationalisation under democratic workers' control as part of a democratically planned socialist economy brought about through mass struggle led by the working class. For the EFF to claim that 60/40 is a 'socialist' policy is to destroy the meaning of the word!

The land. The anger felt by the black majority at the wholesale theft of land by white colonialism and then the apartheid regime is entirely justified and demands urgent redress. But the EFF's centrepiece policy on land nationalisation suffers from the same problem as their nationalisation policy in general. The EFF say that "the state" is to become the "sole custodian" of the land and lease it to those wishing to use it. But again, the question of which class interests the state represents is left unanswered.

In addition, the EFF's policy does not take account of the reality of land ownership. There are over 1.3 million small and subsistence farmers in South Africa, predominantly black and predominantly in the former homelands. Whilst sounding super-radical, borrowed wholesale from the Africanists, if implemented by a capitalist

state, the EFF's land policy could see land theft happening all over again, this time through black expropriating black.

Further, the EFF's policy of land nationalisation *without compensation* risks alienating small and subsistence farmers from the struggle for socialism. This policy would introduce unnecessary divisions among the masses and make a united struggle against the capitalist classes' control of the land more difficult. In reality, WASP has a far more radical land policy that calls for the nationalisation under workers' control of the 36,000 commercial farms that control 95% of agricultural land; support and debt cancellation for small and subsistence farmers; and community committees to determine the use of non-agricultural land with home owner occupiers and small business premises exempt. This policy breaks the capitalist classes' control of the land and places it, through nationalisation, under the democratic control of the black majority, whilst simultaneously attempting to win over the small and subsistence farmers to the struggle for a socialist society.

Where is the EFF heading?

Any party that challenges the capitalist classes' power and wealth in society will come under enormous pressure to accommodate themselves to the capitalist class regardless of any radical rhetoric. Unless that pressure is understood and the tasks necessary to end capitalist rule faced head-on the result will be capitulation. This is even more the case in a cross-class party such as the EFF. The class contradictions will at some point be forced into the open. The potential for the EFF to be pushed to the right has already been demonstrated in the watering down of the EFF's nationalisation policy to the present 60/40 formula and the assurances that Malema has made to 'international investors'.

Individual EFF members have assured WASP members that these compromises are only being made to maximise electoral support and are not the 'real' position of the EFF. The belief seems to be that when there is enough support, the fully revolutionary EFF will reveal itself, reversing its compromises and firmly committing to socialism. On the one hand this sentiment reflects a genuine radicalism amongst some EFF members, but it also demonstrates how unprincipled populism is, where you say whatever needs to be said to win whatever support you can! The momentum the EFF has built up helps to maintain the illusion amongst the membership that this is the leadership's 'strategy'.

But even assuming that this was true, it is wrong on two counts. Firstly it sows confusion by not preparing the working class and poor for the tasks necessary for the socialist transformation of society. Secondly, whatever the intention, winning the support of non-working class forces on the basis of adapting the EFF's message in order to appease them will have consequences. Influence will not be a one way street. Such forces will influence the EFF themselves and make their own demands. History is littered with parties that adapted themselves to prevailing class prejudices, prioritising expediency over principle, leading to them being taken over by the very forces they were supposed to fight.

But it would be naïve to think that there is any such 'strategy' given the dominance of the aspiring black elite within the EFF's leadership and the absence of any serious indication that they intend to break from their past. It is no accident that Malema, thrown out of the capitalist club and into the gutter by the ANC doormen, is the central figure in the EFF. Significant sections of the EFF leadership have been turned away at the door of capitalism by the ANC but wants to be let in.

Now lifted into the National Assembly and the Provincial Legislatures by the votes of the youth and the poor, the parliamentary caucuses of the EFF will come under great pressure from the capitalist class at the same time as they take a step away from the masses. It is to be applauded that the EFF will require their public representatives to use public services. However this policy should be taken further with the requirement that all elected representatives take only the wage of a skilled worker. This policy is necessary to tie the living standards of elected representatives to that of the working class and poor, a tie which the inflated salaries for elected representatives are intended to dissolve as part of the capitalist classes' policy of co-option of working class leaders.

The EFF leadership will come under relentless pressure from the young and poor constituencies that have been attracted to the EFF's banner. This will be the case particularly as the South African economy continues to deteriorate and the ANC rolls-out the National Development Plan with all the consequences that will have for the living standards of the working class and poor. Enjoying the luxury of opposition, there will be few consequences for the EFF leadership to respond to this pressure by increasing their radical rhetoric and talking even further left.

On the other hand, the illusions of the EFF leadership in the capitalist state and their mistaken understanding of nationalisation, workers control and their failure to clearly call for socialism will make them susceptible to pressure to move to the right at the top. In the future the EFF will come under pressure to form coalitions with other capitalist parties to unseat the ANC. To accept this role at any stage would be the signing of the EFF's suicide note. Additionally there will likely be leadership conflicts between the Charterists and the Africanists at the same time as attempts to appease the two sides produce an eclectic mix of left and right populist policies.

The EFF leadership may be able to contain these contradictions and continue to grow for a period, especially on the basis of their strong performance in the 2014 elections. But as a result of these contradictory pressures we can expect zig-zags in EFF policy as they move to the right under the pressure of the capitalist class through parliament and move to the left, at least verbally, under the pressure of their base. The lack of democratic structures within the EFF means that there is no genuine mechanism for the membership to control the leadership or express their dissatisfaction. This could see a falling away of active support in the medium term as unhappy members vote with their feet.

The rapid development of the EFF is an expression of the deep anger in South African society and a product of the search amongst the downtrodden masses for a vehicle that can lead struggle and change their situation. But the EFF leadership has a long way to go to live up to the expectations that have catapulted them forward. Nevertheless, the EFF has demonstrated the enormous potential that exists for a left political alternative to the ANC and the enormous support that exists for a different way of running society. WASP will continue to doggedly argue that that alternative must be socialism and strive to keep the ear of EFF members genuinely committed to struggling for a socialist society, helping them understand developments in the EFF at each stage. We will continue to argue, including amongst EFF members, for support for the crucial task posed for the working class, the poor and the youth in this period – the creation of a mass working class party on a clear socialist programme.

Has the EFF presented the Left with a Revolutionary Moment?

A reply to the EFF

December 2015

In the October 2015 (no.42) edition of the left magazine, Amandla, Economic Freedom Fighter deputy president, Floyd Shivambu, bemoans the “Failure of the Left to seize the revolutionary moment presented by the EFF” warning that this “might inhibit the struggle for socialism”. Under the sub-head “Theoretical purity leads to isolation from the masses” comrade Shivambu argues that the mistake NUMSA and the United Front will make will be to “self-characterise as super revolutionaries, with the utmost ideological, political and theoretical clarity on everything confronting South African society and the world.”

Weizmann Hamilton

He forecasts that NUMSA and the United Front, “like WASP in SA and Popular Unity in Greece ... will end up in bookshops and coffee table discussions and analysis of the balance of forces, yet with no real voice in society.”

In support of his assertion that the “EFF has always tried to unite the Left” Shivambu claims that the EFF could not establish a working relationship with WASP “due to the fact that WASP has a controlling relationship with an organisation somewhere in Europe, and made unreasonable demands such as “50% of all public representatives to be exclusively WASP members.”

We will deal with the question of the relationship between theory and practice in a separate article. Here we wish to set the record straight on the collapse of the talks between WASP and the EFF and to answer the EFF’s challenge to the Left on unity and on the “revolutionary moment”.

The WASP/EFF Talks – the facts

The claim that we demanded 50% of all seats is quite simply false. It is an invention by the EFF leadership to distract attention from the facts. WASP’s proposal was that we register a joint EFF/WASP entity with the Independent Electoral Commission which would campaign on the following platform: (i) nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy under working class control and management (ii) free education (iii) free healthcare (iv) the election of all representatives subject to the right of recall (v) the limitation of the income of all representatives to that of the average income of a skilled worker. The EFF proposed the addition of two of their Seven Pillars including expropriation of the land without compensation. WASP agreed to this. The formula for the distribution of seats would be discussed once the proposed joint entity was registered.

We further proposed that WASP and the EFF, whilst campaigning jointly on this platform, would retain their separate identities, party organisation and activities. We further proposed to arrange a series of fraternal debates amongst our respective members. This was to enable us to narrow the differences between the parties, and to give the membership of both parties the opportunity to

decide which of our positions on a range of important matters of difference were correct. In our campaigning the EFF accepted our invitation to appear on the platform, for example during our victorious campaign in support of the Johannesburg hawkers after they had been thrown off the streets by the ANC-controlled City of Joburg.

After our first and only meeting, it was agreed that we would report back to our structures, exchange documents and have a follow-up meeting. The EFF did not respond to inquiries for a further meeting. We followed this up with an Open Letter to the EFF membership, sent a message of congratulations upon the EFF’s launch in Rustenburg and a second Open Letter. None of these was acknowledged or responded to.

This was disappointing but not surprising. In the meeting the EFF made it clear that it did not “do coalitions”. It counter-proposed that we second two members of our leadership onto the EFF central command on condition that they put forward only EFF positions irrespective of whether they contradicted WASP positions. This would have meant that WASP leaders would be obliged to support the dictator Mugabe, who remains in power illegitimately, by violence, intimidation and electoral fraud as the Kampempe Commission has found, and whose hands are dripping with the blood of 30,000 Ndebele people slaughtered in the Gukhurahundi massacre in the 1980s. We would have had to endorse Malema’s visit to Nigeria to seek the blessing of the corrupt Pastor Joshua where over 100 died (including 80 South Africans) in the Synagogue Church of All Nations that collapsed after building regulations had been flouted in its construction. The EFF further demanded that WASP members should join the EFF and that we should campaign in the election as the EFF. The EFF was in effect demanding the political liquidation of WASP in what would be called in the corporate world a ‘hostile take-over’.

Has the EFF presented SA with a Revolutionary Moment?

In an article in which the plumage of the EFF’s sense of self-importance is on full display, Shivambu claims that it is the biggest Left party in Africa, whose establishment has presented a “revolutionary moment” in SA. The EFF could do its political health a great deal of good by substituting the bombast on which it is feeding itself, with a sense of proportion and acquainting itself more closely with the meaning of the phrases from its dictionary of left-wing phraseology.

It is not political parties that create “revolutionary moments”; they are created by the class struggle – by the actions of the masses in conflict with the ruling class when their willingness and self-confidence in their collective strength inspires them to rise up in revolt and challenge for power. Such moments do not endure indefinitely amongst other reasons because in the conflict between the classes the balance of forces fluctuates in accordance with the capacity of the working class or the capitalist class to gain the ascendancy. The duration of such moments is determined, amongst others, by the presence or absence at the head of the masses, of a party steered in the ideas of Marxism – with yes, theoretical clarity

– and an understanding of strategies and tactics to overthrow the capitalist state and construct in its place a workers’ democracy to commence the socialist reconstruction of society. It requires in other words, the confluence of the objective and subjective factors to consummate the revolution.

The EFF’s rather dismissive, if not contemptuous attitude to what it regards as WASP’s pre-occupation with clarity in matters of theory will incline it to disregard our views on “revolutionary moments”, the role of parties, that of the masses and the relationship between them. But perhaps they will take more seriously what Trotsky, leader alongside Lenin, of the greatest event in human history, the October Russian Revolution of 1917, has to say on the subject.

In the preface to his magisterial *History of the Russian Revolution*, Trotsky points out that “the most indubitable feature of a revolution is the direct interference of the masses in historical events. In ordinary times the state, be it monarchical or democratic, elevates itself above the nation, and history is made by specialists in that line of business – kings, ministers, bureaucrats, parliamentarians, journalists. But at those crucial moments when the old order becomes no longer endurable to the masses, they break over the barriers excluding them from the political arena, sweep aside their traditional representatives, and create by their own interference, the initial groundwork for a new regime. ...The history of revolution is ...first of all a history of the forcible entrance of the masses into the realm of rulership over their own destiny.”

There is no doubt that the EFF’s election campaign caught the mood of sections of the oppressed masses in the country. The EFF’s impact is reflected in its over 1.1m votes – an astonishing achievement for a party less than a year old. It is also indisputable that the EFF’s performance in parliament has shaken the ANC to its core particularly through its #paybackthemoney campaign. The parliamentary ANC’s rallying around Zuma to defend him against corruption allegations in the face of overwhelming public sentiment has not only inflicted severe damage on the ruling party; it has also deepened the ANC’s internal crisis and, along with it, that of its Alliance partners. It has also damaged the credibility of parliament, revealing that far from it being the pinnacle of the achievement of the so-called ‘National Democratic Revolution’, it is no more than a stage for political theatre where the interests of the economic and political elite are managed under the pretence that they are concerned with the interests of the people.

But in politics one must have a sense of proportion. It is of course true that the divisions in the ANC are at least as deep as they were pre-Polokwane and will deepen even further with the new succession debate ahead of its elective conference in 2017. The worst case electoral outcome its scenario planners were factoring in for 2014 – falling below 50% of the vote – cannot be ruled out in 2019. The capitalist class’s attempt to create a reserve party in AgangSA ended in a spectacular failure. The DA has had a black leader foisted on it in a palace coup dictated by its big business financiers in a desperate attempt to appeal to the black electorate but remains deeply divided despite its increased vote in 2014. There is a pervading sense of crisis in society and a steady draining away of electoral support for the ANC. The disillusionment is reflected in a mass abstention in elections on the one hand, and unprecedented but completely uncoordinated number of service delivery protests on the other. Despite the EFF’s spectacular vote, the level of abstentions increased in 2014. That the EFF vote was no larger than that of Cope in the 2009 elections in far more favourable conditions, shows that the EFF did not convince the abstainers that it offered a genuine alternative.

Lenin outlined four main conditions for the development of the socialist revolution. Firstly, splits and divisions amongst the ruling class and its political representatives are necessary. Secondly, the middle class needs to be vacillating with a significant section of it supporting the revolution. Thirdly, the working class needs to be organised and clearly willing to struggle - putting itself at the head of the revolutionary process. Fourthly, a mass revolutionary socialist party with a clear leadership is necessary with broad support for its ideas amongst wide sections of masses - especially the active layers of workers. (Where now for the Iranian revolution? Tony

Saunois, CWI (www.socialistworld.net, 22/06/2009 - website of the committee for a workers’ international)

Lenin said of revolutions that they demonstrate two things. The first is that the people cannot go on being ruled in the old way. The second is that the rulers cannot go on ruling in the old way.” This is not where we are today, nor where we were in 2012, much less on the day the EFF was launched. It is the music of the future.

Trotsky continues:

“The masses go into revolution not with a prepared plan of social reconstruction, but with a sharp feeling that they cannot endure the old regime. Only the guiding layers of a class have a political programme, and even this still requires the approval of the masses. The fundamental process of the revolution thus consists of the gradual comprehension by a class of the problems arising from the social crisis, of the active orientation of the masses by a process of successive approximations...

“Only on the basis of a study of the political processes in the masses themselves can we understand the role of parties and leaders, whom we are least inclined to ignore. They constitute not an independent, but nevertheless a very important, element in the process. Without a guiding organisation, the energy of the masses would dissipate like steam not enclosed in a piston box. **But nevertheless what moves things is not the piston or the box, but the steam.**”(emphasis added)

The implications of the EFF’s rather loose understanding of the concept suggest that its gaze is fixed firmly on its naval and not on the masses. It seems to believe, moreover, that it is the embodiment of the “revolutionary moment”; even that its lifespan corresponds to that of the EFF itself – a notion that is, to say the least, delusional. Even if we were to accept this cavalier language of self-aggrandizement, we would have to point out that it is not the EFF that created the “revolutionary moment” but the “revolutionary moment” that created the EFF. In fact the EFF’s understanding of the events that gave rise to its own birth reflects a view that belittles the role of the masses in general and the mineworkers in particular.

The political significance of Marikana

The period following Marikana did not constitute a “revolutionary moment” in the sense that the conditions for a mass insurrection and the challenge for power existed. It would be far more accurate to say that what was created by the uprising of the mineworkers in Rustenburg in 2012, the Marikana massacre, and the profound changes in consciousness this produced amongst mineworkers and the wider working class, were the conditions for the establishment of a mass revolutionary workers party. Along this chain of events the mine workers strike evolved from a wage revolt into a political uprising against the mining bosses, the ANC government and its allies in the Tripartite Alliance.

The ANC had revealed itself as a conscious agent of the mining bosses and the wider capitalist class willing to use the state – the armed bodies of men (and women) to adapt Frederick Engels’ definition – to settle accounts with the working class on behalf of the bosses in a bloody show of force. The ANC government’s actions burned away the illusions that had tied the masses to it. That illusion – that it was the party representing the class interests of the working class and the poor -- suffered a crippling blow from which it has not recovered. How rapidly the ANC declines will of course depend not only on the speed of its own inner degeneration, but on the urgency with which an alternative – a mass workers party – will be created to fill the vacuum that has developed to its left. This vacuum developed incrementally at first in the preceding period. Since Marikana which was the tipping point at which the accumulated quantitative changes in consciousness became qualitative, that vacuum has become even more acute.

The mood of the working class after the Marikana “moment” could have left an even greater imprint politically had, for example Cosatu called a general strike in support of the mineworkers. A call for the formation of a mass workers party from Cosatu would have found a widespread support. But the mineworkers uprising was actively opposed by both Cosatu and the SACP who both organised what could have resulted in a bloodbath - the bussing in of workers to “take Rustenburg out of the hands of counter-revolutionaries” that is the independent strike committees and the Democratic Socialist Movement (DSM – one of the founders of WASP).

Although the mineworkers strike spread from the North West to Gauteng, Free State, Mpumalanga, Limpopo and the Northern Cape, and inspired the farm workers in the Western Cape into action, it would be a gross exaggeration to say that this constituted a “revolutionary moment” in the sense that it posed the possibility of an uprising against the state and the overthrow of capitalism. The mineworkers were in conflict not only with the government and the capitalist class a whole but with the official leaders of the organised labour movement. The rest of the working class looked on in sympathy with the mineworkers and were even enraged by the massacre, but there was not even a spontaneous generalised movement of the working class. The launch of the EFF was in reality one of the aftershocks of the Marikana earthquake registering lower on the political Richter Scale than NUMSA’s break with the ANC at its Special National Congress in December 2013.

Until 1996 when the ANC adopted GEAR (Growth Empowerment and Redistribution) policy, the DSM had operated as the Marxist Workers Tendency (MWT) of the ANC campaigning for a mass ANC on a socialist programme. From the ANC’s adoption of GEAR, the MWT recognised that this represented the conversion of the ANC into a conscious party of capital and that a collision with its working class electoral constituency was inevitable in the future. The MWT abandoned the tactic of orientation towards the ANC, and began to function as an independent formation. Anticipating that events would demonstrate to the working class the antagonism between their interests and those of the ANC, the MWT established the DSM and campaigned for mass workers party on a socialist programme.

Marxism, as Trotsky explained, is the science of perspectives, providing the advantage of foresight over astonishment. As long ago as 1994, Peter Taaffe, general secretary of the Socialist Party, the England & Wales section of the CWI, predicted, in his pamphlet, *From Apartheid Slavery to Freedom*, that a time would come when the ANC would turn its guns on the black working class. No-one could have foreseen that this would happen at precisely 15h17 on the 16th August, 2012. But foreseeing that the working class would come to understand the irreconcilability of their interests with those of the pro-capitalist ANC could have been, and was foreseen, by the DSM.

The DSM therefore took steps to give the conclusion workers had drawn organised political expression. Over a series of meetings between the DSM and the strike committees, beginning in December 2012, the national strike committee agreed to back WASP which was launched on Sharpeville Day, March 21st 2013. By August of that year the EFF was launched, followed in December of the same year by NUMSA’s historic Special National Congress (SNC) which resolved to break with the ANC and SACP, to form a United Front, a Movement for Socialism and a workers party. It was the mineworkers uprising that gave the class struggle a sharpened political edge after Marikana and produced the change in consciousness of the working class in general preparing the conditions for the subsequent decisive changes on the political landscape.

The Economic Freedom Fighters were at that stage no more than a vociferous opposition group announcing itself to the world with left wing demagoguery. Its soon-to-be Commander-in-Chief, Julius Malema, was in fact initially resistant to the idea of stepping outside the ANC and forming a party. We believe it is no exaggeration to say that the launch of WASP and its registration

as a political party acted as a catalyst in the political process that unfolded subsequently with the launch of the EFF and the character of the resolutions adopted by the NUMSA SNC.

In the election itself, WASP performed below expectations partly because the EFF was propelled into prominence by the considerable resources that came its way from donors with deep pockets. This in all likelihood, included aspirant black capitalists and not its members. With the considerable help of the media, the EFF was elevated into the most prominent left opposition to the ANC. Nevertheless WASP was the first party to emerge to the left of the ANC in the post-apartheid period with a revolutionary socialist programme. This fact cannot be erased from history. The catalytic role it played in placing socialism in the main stream of the electoral campaign, and sharpening the ideological contours of the debate in NUMSA, was the historical justification for its launch. It is by this criterion – its ability to act as small cog able to turn the big wheel of broader historical processes – and not so much the number of votes it received, that WASP must be judged.

Socialism, internationalism and the EFF

The EFF’s claim that the talks broke down because WASP is “controlled by an organisation somewhere in Europe” is not only factually incorrect, but exposes the shallowness of its understanding of internationalism. Socialism is international or it is nothing. Anyone who does not understand this does not understand the first principle about socialism. The EFF delegation might have muttered about European control under their breath amongst themselves, but certainly never raised the issue in the talks. Had they done so, we would have set them to rights on the character of the international they are referring to, the Committee for a Workers International.

As it happens WASP is not a section of the CWI – only the DSM, its founding affiliate is (though as of February 2015 WASP has expressed its intention to affiliate to the CWI). We will not comment on the insulting suggestion that we are “controlled” by any organisation. The DSM is proud to be an affiliate of the CWI which has close to 50 affiliates across the world on every continent. Our international comrades are not unsavoury characters, enemies of democracy and oppressors of the working class like the Mugabes or this world, or those preying on the poor for their self-enrichment like Pastor Joshua – one of the five richest religious leaders in Nigeria working in close collusion with the corrupt oligarchs that rule that country.

Our comrades are the Nigerian CWI affiliate, the Democratic Socialist Movement, which has successfully met all the onerous conditions for registration of the Socialist Party of Nigeria which was launched in November 2013. This included the electoral authorities raising of the “processing fee” to Naira 1million as soon as the SPN announced its intentions to register. Our US comrades are Socialist Alternative (SA). SA has just managed to get Kshama Sawant – dubbed by some media as “the most dangerous woman in America” – the first socialist to be elected into office in the US in over 100 years, re-elected without accepting a cent from corporate donations.

She was elected on the principle of a workers representative on a workers wage and takes home only \$40 000 of her \$120 000 salary – the remainder going back to the party to support working class struggles. Comrade Kshama was elected on a campaign for a minimum wage of \$15/hour. After her success in getting the Seattle Council to adopt the policy, the \$15Now campaign has become a nationwide movement with a number of cities implementing it. In the Republic of Ireland one of our leading Socialist Party MPs, Paul Murphy, is facing trumped up “kidnapping” charges for leading a mass campaign of non-payment of water charges as the government tries to implement privatisation. By July 57% (860 000 out of a total of 1,52m households) were refusing to pay. A similar campaign is underway by our comrades in Northern Ireland

Syriza betrays Greek working class; the EFF endorses Syriza as anti-imperialist

Who, besides, Mugabe and Pastor Joshua, are the friends of the EFF internationally? It turns out to be Syriza in Greece which the EFF describes as “anti-establishment and anti-imperialist”. The EFF maintains this position months after this party, elected on an anti-austerity programme, had committed one of the most monstrous betrayals of the Greek working class in modern history. The savage austerity measures imposed on the Greek masses by the imperialist troika of the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund have resulted, according to the former Finance Minister, Yanis Varoufakis, in the worst depression anywhere since the 1930s. The economy has contracted by 20%, debt is up to 174% of Gross Domestic Product, unemployment has increased to 30% (60% amongst youth), wages are down by 30%, and the masses have experienced a decline in living standards so catastrophic that the country now has one of the highest suicide levels in Europe.

The Troika demanded the Syriza government pile even more misery onto the backs of the Greek working class by cuts in the minimum wage and pensions, privatisation, household debt repayment policies that would lead to increased house repossessions and homelessness, and attacking the right to strike. All of these measures, to force Greece to repay a debt created by the Greek oligarchs and recognised by even the IMF as impossible to settle, were part of conditions to enable to qualify Greece for even more loans plunging it into even further debt – conditions so punitive that it turned Greece into a virtual colony. Syriza responded by calling a referendum on whether it should accept the Troika’s demands, and recommended the people reject the Troika’s demands.

An energised working class gave Syriza a 62% mandate to reject the Troika’s demands – nearly double the size of its vote in the general elections. Within less than a week Syriza capitulated to the Troika’s demands, becoming handmaidens of European imperialism in the enslavement of the Greek masses. This is the party the EFF defends against Popular Unity (UP) which split from Syriza in disgust. We hold no brief for UP or the incurably sectarian Greek Communist Party. But the split in the face of such treachery was entirely understandable and certainly stripped Syriza of the mantle the EFF had draped across its bowed shoulders as “anti-establishment and anti-imperialist.” On Thursday, 19th November, the Greek working class embarked on its 41st general strike since the austerity offensive began 5 years ago, this time against the Syriza government. On which side of the barricades would the EFF have stood?

The question is why did Syriza, having been elected on an anti-austerity programme, end up betraying the people by implementing an even worse programme than the one they had asked the people to reject? The reason is that the Syriza leadership is not socialist. It does not understand that the impasse in Greek society can be overcome only by the overthrow of capitalism, by placing the commanding heights of the Greek economy under the democratic control and management of the working class.

This was the choice the Syriza government faced – to repudiate the debt, nationalise the banks, break from the Euro and issue its own currency. Once they had embarked on this road they would have had to proceed with the nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy, the dismantling of the capitalist state machine, the construction of a workers state and commencing with the socialist reconstruction of society. But Syriza was never a revolutionary socialist party. Its leadership has no confidence in the working class or socialism. In fact in the words he used in an article in the British Guardian last February, Varoufakis, an academic who calls himself an “erratic Marxist”, said it is the job of Marxists “to save capitalism from itself”!

Thus when the Syriza leadership was faced with the choice to submit (to European imperialist tyranny) or fight (for the overthrow of capitalism) the Syriza’s leadership turned their back on the working class and bowed before the European bourgeoisie. Syriza’s capitulation and betrayal stem, apart from the middle

class composition particularly of its leadership, directly from a lack of theoretical clarity. It regarded the class struggle not as a life and death conflict between two opposing social forces with irreconcilable interests, but as a misunderstanding that can be resolved over a cup of tea.

This betrayal had repercussions across Europe. It disappointed the working class of Spain, Portugal, Ireland and Britain across which countries there is a growing determination to resist austerity. As our analysis in an accompanying article on the evolution of EFF’s economic policies will show, along the current trajectory it would, in similar circumstances, become SA’s Syriza.

A mass workers party an urgent necessity

To conclude with Trotsky once again: “The different stages of a revolutionary process, certified by a change of parties in which the more extreme supersedes the less, express the growing pressure to the left of the masses – so long as the swing of the movement does not run into objective obstacles. When it does, there begins a reaction: disappointments of the different layers of the revolutionary class, growth of indifferentism, and therewith a strengthening of the positioning of counter-revolutionary forces.”

All analogies are lame. We have quoted extensively from Trotsky not because we believe there are exact parallels between the situation Trotsky is describing which applies to the period between February and October in the Russian Revolution; far from it. We cite Trotsky to learn from his method, his understanding of the role of the class, the party and the masses, the relationship between them and the rhythm of the revolutionary process.

The curve of the struggle is currently in an upward direction. The leading layers of the working class are further to the left than its most radical spokespersons. There is amongst the leadership an ideological conservatism, and consequent underestimation of the potential in the situation to make far more rapid advances towards the creation of a mass workers party on a socialist programme than the pace they have set allows for.

The EFF’s approach to the question has been to proclaim itself in advance as the standard bearer of the Left and wants unity with the Left on its terms, marching according to its loud drumbeat. It has treated the rest of the Left with disrespect including NUMSA, which has a specific political weight and revolutionary potential far in excess of the EFF’s.

Unfortunately NUMSA itself has let important opportunities slip. NUMSA’s failure to accept our invitation to take its rightful place inside WASP during the election campaign period was a disappointment not so much to the WASP leadership, but to the working class as a whole. There were wide expectations, reflected even in the media, amongst NUMSA’s own members who have tremendous respect for WASP and who see in our party a far greater ideological and political compatibility with their outlook than the leadership is prepared to acknowledge and who were perplexed as to why comrade Jim would say on television when asked pointedly whether Numsa would support WASP, answered that there was no workers party in SA. Even more regrettably, the NUMSA leadership’s approach has seen the UF paralysed, ideologically disoriented, politically rudderless, and incapable of fulfilling its primary mandate – to unite the struggling working class masses outside the labour movement uniting in common purpose with their comrades in the workplace.

The MfS disappointingly appears to be aiming less to serve to unite the Left on a commonly agreed ideological and political basis, but to whip the Left behind Numsa’s ideological line. That line, if the editorial by comrade Jim in the second edition of the online bulletin of the MfS is an indication, points in the direction not of the total rejection of the revisionist Marxism of the SACP but the refurbishment of its ideological traditions and organisational culture. The stubborn adherence to the theoretical concepts of the National Democratic Revolution, Colonialism of a

Special Type and the Freedom Charter, point in only one direction – the resurrection of the bankrupt Stalinist theory of the two-stage revolution. The comrades are approaching the question in the manner of political prisoners freed from incarceration in the SACP, but voluntarily returning there as ideological re-offenders. What the situation demands is not a Herstigte SACP, but a mass workers party on a socialist programme.

The student rebellion is an indication that if the revolutionary process finds no outlet in the ideological cul de sacs of either the EFF or NUMSA, it will find another outlet. Much has been made of the success of the EFF's march on the JSE. But more sober estimates suggest that the sea of red represented considerably lower numbers than frightened media pundits suggest. Whatever the case may be on the numbers, the truth is that the EFF became airborne that day not so much on the thrust of its own engines but was lifted by the slip steam of the student revolt.

Of far greater significance is that the student movement occurred completely independently of and bypassed both the EFF and NUMSA. The search for a mass workers party will find expression elsewhere if the EFF and NUMSA turnout not to be pathways but obstacles to it.

All the ingredients of a social conflagration are present to bring SA to the cusp of enormous social and political upheavals. The economic crisis is worsening as the country edges towards the fiscal cliff bourgeois economists have been warning about.

Enormous counter-vailing pressures are being exerted on the fiscus for rising expenditure from nuclear power stations and presidential jets on the one side to demands for free education and decent wages for public servants on the other. Yet there is a budget deficit edging closer to the 4 – 5% that could trigger a downgrade of the economy by rating agencies that would worsen the country's credit-worthiness, and result in the steady outflow of capital turning into a flood. The drought and even the possibility of famine in some parts of the country as thousands of cattle die; the possible collapse of the steel, engineering and mining industries; rising inflation, a weakening Rand, anaemic economic growth, a widening current account deficit and escalating government and personal debt – all these together are providing the explosive material for a social conflagration.

The bosses, acutely conscious of the ANC's decline, would have no hesitation in discarding it like a squeezed lemon, or assist a split in it as they desperately look for an alternative force on which to rely to protect their interests including a coalition. What an irony it would be if such a bourgeois coalition were to include the EFF. As the accompanying article on the evolution of the EFF's economic policies suggest, its leadership's policy revisions would, on this trajectory, not be incompatible with those of capitalist class.

Neither the EFF nor NUMSA have their hands on the clock of history. Left unity would help the working class to resolve this impasse provided it is united in a mass workers party on a socialist programme. The need for this has never been greater.

How to defeat outsourcing and win R10,000?

A critique of EFF Student Command's abuse of APSA

June 2017

A strike of outsourced workers is underway at the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT). It began on 22 May and is now in its third week. It has been organised under the banner of #OutsourcingMustFall (#OMF), not least because it is impossible to organise a protected strike of workers under the neo-liberal capitalist regime of outsourcing. The division of workers under many different contractors is designed by the bosses to weaken workers' organisation and leave the few pro-worker laws worthless.

But over the past two years #OMF has pioneered tactics to build principled unity across the divisions encouraged by the bosses at a time when the workers' movement itself is fragmented and divided.

Unfortunately however, in Tshwane, EFF Student Command activists, using (or rather abusing) the Academic and Professional Staff Association (APSA) have acted in an extremely divisive manner, weakening the struggle against outsourcing at TUT. This is very dangerous, as a defeat at TUT against the background of the current ebb in the student's struggle for free education will embolden managements across higher education to snatch back the gains made by workers and students.

We have no doubt that the vast majority of APSA members are genuine trade unionists only interested in furthering the interests of the working class. Neo-liberalism has stripped away many of the privileges of previously 'professional' occupations and pushed sections of the middle class into the working class. We must celebrate that academics are taking their rightful place in the labour movement. But the way that EFFSC's Tshwane leadership is using APSA on the ground is proving divisive and damaging.

#OutsourcingMustFall

#OMF was launched in November 2015 following the highly successful #FeesMustFall mass movement of students. Building on that momentum, #OMF organised outsourced workers across the higher education sector in Tshwane. Heroic, unprotected strike action in 2016 defeated outsourcing in the Tshwane universities. Agreements were won to insource all workers on increased wages. In some cases wages would climb as high as R10,000 p/m.

There has never been any secret that #OMF was initiated by the Workers and Socialist Party working closely with our members in the General Industries Workers Union of South Africa (GIWUSA). However, we were clear from the start that #OMF could never succeed as the narrow property of any one organisation. We always welcomed anyone, or any organisation, as long as they supported the struggle against outsourcing.

Introducing division

Unfortunately, the EFFSC's Tshwane leadership abused #OMF's open and democratic approach from the start. Early in the campaign, they broke the outsourced Unisa workers away from the Tshwane-

wide #OMF campaign. They encouraged a strike at Unisa that took place in isolation. Among many avoidable mistakes, more than 200+ security workers lost their jobs under the EFFSC's leadership. The other serious consequence of this student-led 'adventure' was to weaken the Tshwane-wide campaign which began a united strike some weeks later.

From the point of view of the EFF students this 'manoeuvre' had one purpose: to prove their credentials as 'the most radical' and 'the most militant'. This is the very definition of sectarianism, which means to place the interests of your own organisation ahead of the interests of the working class as a whole. It was a scandalous abuse of workers' willingness to struggle. It seems that it was during this episode that EFFSC leaders caught sight of APSA.

At that stage APSA was an organisation that only existed at Unisa. Even now, APSA does not claim more than 1,500 members nationally. To our knowledge, all of their members are in Tshwane. APSA did not begin life as a trade union but, as the name indicates, a 'staff association' open only to Unisa academics. To its credit, the 'old' APSA leadership had decided it was necessary to have a process of 'transformation' within the organisation, and to move away from its narrow focus on academics. With EFFSC's Tshwane leadership calculating that they could use university workers to boost their 'militant' credentials, and APSA looking for a more radical direction, the two began working together to break APSA out of Unisa and into other institutions.

Across Tshwane today, APSA is the project of EFFSC. Indeed, it is impossible to tell where the leadership of APSA ends and where the leadership of EFFSC begins. On the ground their activists are one and the same.

The EFF and the workers movement

Many in the workers movement have made an accurate characterisation of the EFF and whose interests it represents. Its programme is ultimately the programme of the frustrated black middle class/aspiring capitalists. Whilst their programme is dressed up in radical, even socialist rhetoric, it ultimately aims to use the capitalist state to shift power (and wealth) from the still dominant white capitalist class to their aspiring black counterparts. As is always necessary for a movement that represents the interests of a minority class, it is necessary to dress-up their programme in order to try and mobilise the masses behind it.

The EFF's attitude to struggle confirms this. Whilst they are effective at organising 'show pieces', such as their march to the JSE, or even their disruptions in parliament, the EFF has zero interest in mobilising a genuine mass movement, let alone one based on the working class. The democratic traditions of the working class, its experience and capacity for self-organisation, are viewed as a threat to the EFF's demagogic style of leadership, which unfortunately their student leaders mimic. The EFF's focus remains tightly on electoral politics and the institutions of the capitalist state.

The EFF's cadre is overwhelmingly drawn from the black middle class (including students and ex-students) rather than workers. Its 'mass' base, to the extent that it can be said to have one,

rests on the unemployed and middle class youth. Reflecting this social base, the EFF, especially its Student Command is most comfortable with crude anti-working class nationalist ideas. But these ideas have always been a dead-end for workers' struggle because they prioritise and even counterpose racial solidarity over class solidarity.

The EFF's leader, Malema, has consciously kept the EFF at a distance from the workers movement. On the other hand, whilst some organised workers will have voted for the EFF as a 'radical' alternative, the EFF has made no serious inroads into the organised working class (beyond a certain impact among the Rustenburg mineworkers under unique circumstances, though again, this has been consciously limited by the EFF leadership to simply asking for the mineworkers' votes). Most conscious workers do not trust the EFF; and the EFF does not trust organised workers. The role the EFFSC's Tshwane leadership is playing in APSA is the exception that proves the rule. It is no accident that given these characteristics of the EFF, it is finding its point of entry to the workers movement via the middle class milieu of the universities. It confirms the above analysis.

It goes without saying that the engagement of young people and students with the workers movement, from whatever class background, should be welcomed and encouraged. Indeed, it was #FeesMustFall that pushed the issue of outsourcing firmly onto the agenda of the workers movement. During that mass movement campus assemblies uniting students and workers were a common feature. This was central to what made that movement so powerful.

But unfortunately, as the mass movement ebbed, an unhealthy attitude from some of the politically affiliated student structures emerged towards workers and workers' struggle. These structures came to view workers struggle as a tap to be turned on and off for their own benefit. A competition over 'who could lead the workers?' developed. This mistaken and arrogant approach unfortunately informs the EFFSC leadership's campaign to build APSA – as an auxiliary to their student structures. Winning the 'leadership' of university workers would strengthen the EFF's student base and their ability to grab headlines by disrupting the campuses. Such a strategy can never work in the long-term. Workers will not long tolerate such methods. But in the short-term it can cause significant damage to the struggle.

The 2017 TUT strike

Throughout 2016 all the workers struggling under the #OMF banner (with the exception of Unisa as explained above) took the decision to join GIWUSA. But despite GIWUSA having an overwhelming majority amongst TUT workers, #OMF's open and democratic approach remained a principled position. Before the strike began, TUT's student structures were approached to support the workers, as were the campus unions organising permanent staff. As long as they supported the struggle against outsourcing they would be welcomed.

Inevitably, GIWUSA organisers and shop stewards would play an important role in the leadership of the strike, having organised TUT workers since early 2016. But they would lead not as GIWUSA officials, but rather as members (or even simply as advisors) to the workers committees elected to lead the strike. These committees were open to workers from any organisation, or none, to ensure the broadest and most united leadership possible.

But from day one EFFSC worked to undermine this tried and tested framework for unity in struggle. This included ignoring the workers' committee and the elected strike leadership, calling their 'own' meetings of workers and spreading gossip and lies to undermine workers' confidence in GIWUSA. They have disrupted meetings between workers and management, meetings that were demanded by workers, dragging the strike on longer than necessary as meetings are suspended in chaos.

Even in the build-up to the strike, EFFSC activists were moving around TUT's campuses, and in the name of APSA, lying to workers that they were #OMF whilst agitating against GIWUSA. This weakened #OMF's work to unite and prepare workers for the strike. The main role of EFFSC at this time should have been to mobilise students in support of the workers. But this was something they never even attempted because, by their own admission, it would have made them "unpopular" during exam time!

Poaching not struggle

EFFSC's and APSA's *genuine* support for the current TUT strike would have been welcomed. Indeed, it *was asked for*. If APSA has the ideas and strategy capable of beating the TUT management then we will be the first to listen. We want to hear how this stubborn management, linked by a thousand threads to the ANC's kleptocratic BEE elite, mired in nepotism, and willing to use hired thugs to attack striking workers, can be defeated. If, after hearing that, workers decide to leave GIWUSA for APSA, how could we possibly complain?

But this is where the real agenda of EFFSC's Tshwane leadership is exposed: *never once have they put forward an alternative strategy to defeat outsourcing at TUT*. They simply agitate for 'more militant' and 'more radical' action – code for committing acts of violence against workers not on strike and students and vandalising TUT property. This is not an alternative, it is just posturing. Instead of keeping the focus on management, EFFSC leaders put their energy into diverting workers' legitimate frustrations with the hardships of the strike, against GIWUSA.

The reality is that the EFFSC Tshwane leadership *does not support the current strike at TUT*. They do not see the strike as an opportunity to defeat outsourcing. For them it is nothing more than an opening to poach members from GIWUSA for their APSA project. Their opportunistic calculation is that they must shatter the unity of the workers in order to do that. The struggle against outsourcing is entirely secondary to that agenda. Indeed, the defeat of the strike would be the best outcome for the EFFSC Tshwane leadership's agenda. If that happens, we can predict now that they will work tirelessly to lay the blame at GIWUSA's door. They will then come to the workers with a 'solution' – join APSA.

In the nearly two-year old struggle against outsourcing across Tshwane's higher education sector the efforts to build a broad and united campaign have been constantly undermined by EFFSC leaders who repeatedly force 'organisational rivalry' on to the agenda at the expense of the struggle itself.

The way forward

At the University of Pretoria, GIWUSA is calling for a university assembly of all progressive students and workers, and their organisations, to build principled unity. On the issue of union 'competition', we are clear: *whatever can increase the organisation and unity of workers for victory in this struggle is progressive*. Organisations must bring their ideas and in an open and democratic way submit them to the judgement of workers and students.

Even now, #OMF would welcome the support of EFFSC and APSA on a *genuine* and *fraternal* basis. Not just for the current TUT strike but in the general struggle against outsourcing. However, we think it extremely unlikely that the *leadership* of the EFFSC can change given the politics of their 'mother body'. Therefore our appeal is aimed firstly at APSA members: *defend your union and build it in on the genuine ideas and traditions of the workers movement. Struggle! Solidarity! Socialism! Unite with progressive organisations and together struggle to defeat outsourcing and win R10,000*.

EFF silent on metro job losses

A dress rehearsal for propping up capitalism after 2019 elections

August 2017

This article appeared as the editorial in the August 2017 issue of Izwi Labasebenzi.

In 2016 the EFF assisted the DA to power in Tshwane, Johannesburg and Nelson Mandela Bay (NMB). In recent weeks they have threatened to collapse the same DA-led minority administrations. This has raised important questions about the tactics needed for using elected positions in the capitalist state to push forward the interests of workers, the poor and youth.

Izwi Labasebenzi

The working class needs its own party. But it could not be 'like all the others' – asking for a vote once every five years and then simply leaving everything to councillors and MPs in between. A party genuinely representing the interests of the working class and poor majority would first and foremost be a party of struggle – organising and mobilising workers, the poor and the youth to campaign for permanent jobs, living wages, decent service delivery and free education.

The role of workers' MPs and councillors would be to support struggle. Elected positions would be used to *expose* the capitalist parties and politicians; to reveal how *undemocratic* today's 'bourgeois' (i.e. capitalist) democracy is; and, to "speak to the windows" – to the masses outside, popularising the ideas of socialism and the methods of struggle.

Is the EFF the kind of party that the working class needs? Unfortunately, we would have to say no. We believe that the recent experience, especially in Tshwane, has given hard evidence that the EFF is not fundamentally different to the other capitalist parties.

Some might ask: then why talk about them? That is determined by the EFF leadership. It is they who insist that the EFF is a radical alternative. Further, within the new Saftu trade union federation EFF supporters are positioning themselves against the idea of a new workers party on the basis that "we have the EFF". It is therefore our duty to examine this claim.

Tshwane

The DA-led City of Tshwane is terminating contracts with outsourced security companies. As a result up to 3,000 workers will lose their jobs. But workers have organised to fight. Many are EFF members and expected the EFF councillors to come to their defence. So it came as a shock to find out that the EFF supported the DA's plan! This is not an isolated episode. The Jozi@Work and Ace Parking workers in Johannesburg also faced job losses at the hands of the DA, with the EFF remaining quiet.

At a mass meeting in June senior EFF leaders and councillors pleaded with workers to agree that new tenders should be issued. The only 'strategy' they offered workers was to go and apply for jobs with the new companies! But workers were clear that they wanted to be insourced. EFF leaders were forced to abandon their speeches, shouted-down by a furious crowd. We believe that the EFF leadership hopes to benefit from the new security tenders. But we stand to be corrected. We would welcome a statement from the

EFF clarifying that they are opposed to outsourcing *in principle* and that none of their councillors or leaders will benefit from this super-exploitation of workers.

The EFF was nevertheless forced to place itself at the head of the security workers campaign but at each step they have acted to divert attention from the inaction of the EFF councillors. When WASP members pointed out that the EFF holds the balance of power in Tshwane, and should use that to save jobs, we have been accused of "playing politics". We asked the simple question: is the DA mayor's job more important than the jobs of 3,000 workers? The EFF believes so.

Workers understood that the EFF had the power to force the hand of the DA. At WASP's suggestion it was agreed to draft a council motion guaranteeing the workers' jobs. It would only take two councillors to force the council to debate it. We argued that surely the EFF would sponsor the motion. Then it would be for the DA and ANC to vote it down. However, we suspected that the ANC would support the motion in order to frustrate the DA. This was a danger for the EFF leadership – that the motion might succeed!

Confirming our suspicions, WASP members were then removed from the security workers' WhatsApp group and the committee meeting venue changed. To our knowledge the motion was thrown in the bin to protect the EFF councillors and their business aspirations.

Contrast

But the EFF was willing to threaten the collapse of all three DA-led minority administrations over the sacking of NMB UDM deputy mayor Bobani. In response to this, EFF councillors boycotted council meetings paralysing the DA administrations. They said this was to teach the DA how to work with small parties. But this was posturing and not part of a serious strategy to bring down these anti-working class administrations. The EFF were in their seats for the September council meetings without any explanation of why they were again able to work with the DA.

In Mogale City, Julius Malema himself publicly threatened disciplinary action against EFF councillors who voted with the ANC to pass a budget. It was not the content of the budget that was the problem it was that the councillors gave support to the ANC.

The EFF's tactics are focused entirely on squabbles with other capitalist parties over who is to profit from control of the capitalist state. They have no vision for how to use their councillors to advance the struggles of the working class. On the contrary the EFF appears to be using its local government positions as a dress rehearsal for the role they hope to play nationally after the 2019 elections. There is a strong possibility that the ANC may not be able to win enough votes to govern on its own, forcing it to look for coalition partners. The EFF's actions in Tshwane, Joburg and NMB show that their leadership has no problem with bending principles to fit opportunist objectives. If the EFF is prepared to prop up neo-liberal administrations in the metros why would they not be prepared to play the same role in a pro-capitalist coalition at a national level where the spoils of office are much greater?

The need for a socialist mass workers party with accountable and recallable public representatives, earning no more than the average wage of a skilled worker, has not been answered by the EFF.



Political Education Programme



Topic 1

**Introduction to Marxism:
who were Marx & Engels and what did they say?**

Reading 1: Marx the Revolutionary (MWT)

Reading 2: The Three Sources and Three
Component Parts of Marxism (Lenin)

Reading 3: Ninety Years of the
Communist Manifesto (Trotsky)

Reading 4: The Communist Manifesto,
Chapters 1 and 2 (Marx & Engels)

Topic 2

**How do Marxists understand the world?
Marxism's dialectical and historical materialism**

Reading 1: Dialectical Materialism: the Foundation of
Revolutionary Theory (WASP)

Reading 2: The Preface to "A Contribution to the
Critique of Political Economy" (Marx)

Reading 3: The Materialist Conception of History (Engels)

Reading 4: How Europe Underdeveloped Africa,
Chapter 2 (Rodney)

Topic 3

**How is the working class exploited?
Introduction to Marxist economics**

Reading 1: Capitalism's Big Con:
Understanding Marxist Economics (CWI)

Reading 2: Value, Price and Profit (Marx)

Reading 3: Capital, selected chapters (Marx)

Topic 4

**Social grants & police brutality
– the Marxist theory of the State**

Reading 1: The State (Lenin)

Reading 2: The State and Revolution, extracts (Lenin)

Reading 3: Should We Participate in
Bourgeois Parliaments? (Lenin)

Topic 5

**How can we win the working class
to revolutionary socialism?**

Trotsky's Transitional Programme

Reading 1: The Transitional Programme (Trotsky)

Reading 2: Founding the Fourth International (CWI)

Reading 3: On the Radicalisation of the Masses (Trotsky)

Topic 6

**When the working class took power
The lessons of the Russian Revolution**

Reading 1: The Russian Revolution and the
Rise of Stalinism (MWT)

Reading 2: The Lessons of October (Trotsky)

Topic 7

**The rise and fall of Stalinism: how and why did the
bureaucratic dictatorship fail?**

Reading 1: The Rise of Stalinism, (MWT)

Reading 2: The Nature of the Soviet Regime, (MWT)

Reading 3: The Crisis of the Stalinist States, (MWT)

Reading 4: From Perestroika to Capitalist Restoration (CWI)

Topic 8

**The socialist revolution in the neo-colonial world
– Trotsky's Permanent Revolution vs the SACP's
National Democratic Revolution**

Reading 1: The Theory of the Permanent Revolution (MWT)

Reading 2: The "New" SACP's Explanation
of Stalinism (MWT)

Reading 3: Results & Prospects (Trotsky)

Reading 4: The Right of Nations to
Self-Determination (Lenin)

Topic 9

**Lenin's theory of imperialism: why was Africa
colonized and how is it exploited today?**

Reading 1: Imperialism: the Highest
Stage of Capitalism (Lenin)

Reading 2: The Colonial Revolution (MWT)

Reading 3: A History of Pan-African Revolt,
excerpts (CLR James)

Reading 4: Draft Theses on the National and Colonial
Questions (Lenin)

Topic 10

Apartheid and the liberation struggle

Reading 1: The Nature and Tasks of the Revolution (MWT)

Reading 2: Lessons of the 1950s (MWT)

Reading 3: The Soweto Uprising (MWT/WASP)

Reading 4: Tasks of the South African Revolution (MWT)

Reading 5: Letter to South African Revolutionaries (Trotsky)

Topic 11

Africanism vs. Marxism

Reading 1: Class & Race: Marxism, Racism
and the Class Struggle (WASP)

Reading 2: Africanism vs. Marxism (WASP)

Reading 3: The Third International After Lenin,
selected chapters (Trotsky)

Reading 4: African Socialism Revisited (Nkrumah)

Topic 12

**The revolutionary party & democratic centralism –
organising a Bolshevik party**

Reading 1: Our Organising Principles (WASP)

Reading 2: A Letter to a French Syndicalist (Trotsky)

Reading 3: The Class, the Party and the Leadership (Trotsky)

Reading 4: Tactics & Revolution,
selected articles (Lenin & Trotsky)