



# The Spark

## [Intlansi yaBasebenzi]

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## A PROPOSED WAY FORWARD FOR #FEESMUSTFALL



*March to parliament 2016 #feesmustfall*

Newspaper of the **Workers International Vanguard Party**: website [www.workersinternational.org.za](http://www.workersinternational.org.za)

Email: [workersinternational@gmail.com](mailto:workersinternational@gmail.com) ph/sms/whatsApp +27 822020617

1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Community House, 41 Salt River rd, Salt River, 7925. South Africa [we are also on Facebook]



# Book Review- Solidarity Road by Jan Theron

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One of the gifts of the Communist tradition in South Africa was the impeccable minutes of the Food and Canning Workers Union (FCWU). The union was founded in 1941 under the leadership of CPSA member Ray Alexander (Rachel Simons). It was one of the main founding unions of SACTU (SA Congress of Trade Unions). Jan Theron uses the FCWU minutes as the foundation of a historical critique of the union movement in South Africa from 1976 up to about 1990. He declares his bias upfront as an active participant in this period. Thus, in part, his work is also autobiographical. There are so many activists that have been absorbed into the capitalist apparatus. Jan consciously turned away from these trappings and presents a class struggle critique of the period. Such honesty is a rarity and we hope that others will also put pen to paper to enrich the debates and struggles ahead.

As activists today we are grappling with the questions around what went wrong in 1994; how did we land up in this mess, where 3 people have the equivalent wealth that 50% of the masses have, where imperialism still dominates everything and the vast majority of the masses live in poverty in this land of plenty. Solidarity Road provides us with a record of the crucial period that preceded the political negotiated settlement. It raises a number of questions and challenges to the workers' movement, especially at the time that some are exploring a new trade union federation around Numsa as well as the setting up of a new workers party. We explore some of the questions raised, as a contribution to the necessary debate. We present our interpretation of the book and take responsibility for any inaccurate representations thereof. Our hope is to inspire you to study the book and to take its reflections into the workers' movement. The book carries the label "Fanele", which sums up the essence: 'This is a necessary book'.

We do not subscribe to the racial categories used in the book as they stem from an apartheid classification. All who are born in Africa, are African. Efforts should be made to break down such apartheid classification. However, for the sake of understanding the period, we use the terms 'African', 'coloured', 'Indian' and 'white', in the same context of the book, when these terms had a particular meaning and helped explain the divisions in the masses. We think the author had a similar motive in the use of the terms.

## **Alternative model of trade unionism**

By 1976 the state had not only decimated the trade union movement through bannings and other other forms of repression, it had co-opted a decisive group of unions, while also dividing the workers' movement on racial lines. African workers could not belong to the same unions as coloured and white workers. They had no right to strike nor any of the benefits of the registered trade unions. Overall, the bosses still had the right to dismiss, even if workers went on a 'legal' strike. The more privileged craft workers belonged to TUCSA (Trade Union Council of South Africa), which was notorious for siding with the bosses and the state. TUCSA was fully integrated in the state labour apparatuses. One of the biggest affiliates of TUCSA at the time was the Garment Workers Union, where wages were very low. Although SACTU had long collapsed, the Food and Canning Workers Union, FCWU and the African Food and Canning Workers Union (AFCWU) still existed. When the state had passed legislation preventing African workers from belonging to registered unions, the union tried to bypass it by registering FCWU as a coloured workers union and set up the AFCWU as an unregistered union, with separate structures for African workers. The 2 unions then had joint meetings both at shopfloor and higher levels. In practice however, this unity was difficult to maintain as coloured workers had legal control of the union while African workers depended on solidarity and consciousness of the coloured workers for the joint control to be practiced. In 1976 a small bureaucracy was in control of the union. Racial divisions existed in the



union and in the workplace. This was in part due to the coloured preference policy in the Western Cape province being enforced by the state and the bosses. Notable in the domination of the food sector were US and UK imperialist companies. The super-exploitation of the working class and the oppression of the African masses primarily benefited imperialism, who harshly enforced apartheid laws.

In the face of all these obstacles, there were, nevertheless, strong elements of workers' control that still existed within FCWU and AFCWU. Workers in the branches controlled the union. The branches controlled their own finances and paid a percentage over to the union head office. The branches hired and fired officials. There was an annual branch general meeting at which all the members of the union could attend. The union had an annual elective Congress (they called it a Conference) at which leaders had to account. There was a strong delineation between workers and paid officials. The salaries of paid officials were close to that which members were earning. Shopstewards were able to be held to account instantly by any meeting of members at the shopfloor. At that stage they had no full time shopstewards. In fact the rise of the full-time shopsteward occurred in the larger, imperialist controlled firms, where the capitalists needed someone as a full-time controller of the conflict within the workplace. These full-time shopstewards were paid by the bosses; they did not work and they could be removed only with the permission of the bosses. FCWU would have regarded the full-time shopstewards as officials rather than workers, Thus, from their perspective, no full-time shopsteward would have been able to hold an elected position in the union, other than that of an official, such as Secretary-but even then the union would not probably have allowed it as this official was on the payroll of the bosses and not of the union. It is significant that among the first office bearers of Cosatu, Chris Dlamini was a full-time shopsteward, while Elijah Barayi was a Personal Assistant (pa) of a mining monopoly boss. A blatant breach of the principle of workers' control. In FCWU and AFCWU, leaders had to be workers, not full-time shopstewards nor officials (except for the secretarial positions). The FCWU/AFCWU had monthly management committee meetings where the activist worker leadership and officials gave reports and effectively steered the union. These monthly meetings would have in the order of 50 workers present and provided a training ground for worker leaders as well as providing a real organ of workers' control over the union.

**Decentralised control by the branches** did not in itself prevent corruption by officials and other leaders. It brought control closer to the members. The fight against corruption still required a conscious effort.

What underpinned the structures of the union was a **class struggle approach**. The deliberate exclusion of African workers from labour legislation also meant that whatever gains the union made, had to be through what they could gain through direct struggle against the bosses. The approach of workers' unity in action thus reinforced a class struggle approach. They won access for union officials among other gains. Their class struggle approach was based on strong shopfloor structures and workers' control, direct workers' democracy.

The union was always **political**. That Sactu and other organizations had been banned, meant that the union support for the ANC by 1976 had been indirect. The union used a class struggle approach to combat racial discrimination in the workplace and to fight for the **principle of non-racism**. Since inception there had always been a tolerance of different political beliefs of the members. There was a strong tradition that **workers structures of the union was independent of political party control**. This independence would be compromised by 1990.

### **Control by imperialist corporations of the food sector**

What we learn early on is the imperialist corporations had decisive control of the food sector. This control was to become more consolidated over the years as fewer and fewer monopolies tightened their control over the sector. While workers militancy was growing and the class was starting to win significant economic and social gains, the monopolies hit back through devastating retrenchments.



As imperialism has done in other countries, their control was disguised through taking on local name brands for their companies and products. For example Del Monte controlled SAPco (SA Preserve co) while Anglo American controlled RFF (Rhodes Fruit Farm).

Thus, for us, the question of workers' control of the food sector and even of the most basic advances on workers' rights is tied to the working class having to confront imperialism capitalism. On the other hand, the control by imperialism of the food sector shows that the near-slave conditions on the farms was a key component of imperialist capitalist relations in South Africa.

### **The 1979 Fattis and Monis strike- the principle of non racism in practice**

In 1979 the bosses at Fattis and Monis in Bellville, dismissed 5 coloured workers who had been at the forefront of building the union there. The bosses expected that the African workers, who formed the majority of the workforce, would do nothing. Instead, the majority of the workers came out on strike, demanding their reinstatement. The bosses responded by dismissing all of them. The strike dragged on for 7 months during which various communities and schools pledged support. The campaign to boycott Fattis and Monis products went national. The turning point came when the African traders stopped selling bread from the bakery that was linked to the company. All workers were reinstated and the union recognised. Although the workers from the company did not play a leading role in building the union, the example of a class struggle approach to breaking down artificial racial barriers at the workplace and the establishment of workers' unity, was seen as a shining example to the rest of the working class. In our opinion, this struggle contributed to a wave of strikes, including sit-down strikes, over the next few years. This wave of strikes not only won economic gains but began to break the barriers to discrimination at the workplace. While these strikes were economic, they were also political. The wave of strikes were, in a sense, a continuation and generalisation of the 1973 Durban strikes. These wave of strikes forced the apartheid regime to not only lift the ban on African workers belonging to registered unions but also smashed the racial categories that the regime had initially wanted to maintain. Such was the strength of the strike wave that the larger imperialist-owned companies started to concede recognition and breaking down of racial barriers on the shopfloor. The end of formal discrimination at shopfloor level was not achieved by the ANC govt nor Cosatu, but by the mass action of the organised working class. This is our conclusion from studying the text of **Solidarity Road**.

### **The role of revolutionary women in the rebirth of the workers' movement**

There were a number of women who played a leading role in building the union. We list only some of them: Ray Alexander, Miss Yon, Nellie Kilowan, Hester Adams, Liz Abrahams, Lizzie Phike, Spasie Saaiman (worker leader at Fattis & Monis), Mrs Cloete, Aletta Amon, Athalie Crawford, Virginia Engel.

Jan reports that in the period 1976 and beyond, except for one workplace, the women workers played the leading role in building shopfloor structures that were the backbone of the union.

This strong workplace organization must have been a factor in the strong support from the Cosatu base in the Western Cape for the many general strikes/stayaways that were called in the late 1980's. Rather interestingly, it is also reported one of the highest levels of recruitment for the ANC military wing, Mkhonto we Sizwe, came from the coloured workers in Paarl, a base of the union.

### **Ray Alexander**

Ray played a fundamental guiding role in setting up worker controlled structures in 1941 and establishing a tradition of rigorous recording of proceedings. Forced into exile, the FCWU went into decline but somehow managed to survive. While the union was being rebuilt from 1976 onwards Jan did reach out to Ray for advice and guidance. However the rebuilding of the union was largely through the efforts of those who were inside the country.



When the internal democracy of the union was under attack from the ANC leadership Ray did not take a stand in support of the workers in the union. She chose to remain silent and accepted party discipline.

### **Oscar Mpetha**

One of the founding members of FCWU, a strong and dedicated member of the ANC, was Oscar Mpetha. He was never afraid to disagree with any leadership, be they in the union or the ANC. To him, workers' interests was always placed first. While others went into exile Oscar remained in the country. In 1978 when the union was being rebuilt, Oscar was working as a watchman. The union had the good sense to offer him a role in the union and at the age of 70 he became its national organiser. He was also a community activist so when he was done with his union work he started with his community meetings. His honesty and integrity was widely sought after and he was busy until the last of his days. The state fabricated charges against him in 1980 which effectively ended his involvement in the union.

We recall that in 1988 when the ANC had spread a rumour campaign against the leaders of the Unemployed Workers' Movement (UWM), it was to Oscar Mpetha that they turned. From his wheelchair he was still able to assist the UWM and many others.

### **Neil Aggett- the death of a Socialist**

Neil Aggett was one of several medical doctors with a social conscience. He had no desire to serve a 2 year conscription in the apartheid army. In effect, he was on the run from the system. He worked as a volunteer organiser and then interim branch secretary of the FCWU Johannesburg branch. He did locum work for a public hospital and then every spare moment he devoted to rebuilding the union. A committed Socialist, he was sympathetic to the ANC but placed worker's control above all else.

It was the sloppy approach of Barbara Hogan who passed on his name, along with others, to the apartheid regime (They had supposedly set her up by sending someone claiming to send details of the ANC work in the unions, to Lusaka, the then Headquarters of the exiled group). Neil, Sisa Njikelana (of Saawu) and others were arrested while on union work. He had been assisting Saawu to get a foothold in the Johannesburg area. He died in detention on the 5th Feb 1982 after a period of brutal torture at the hands of Lieutenant Steven Whitehead. Neither Whitehead nor any other policeman were brought to book at the TRC over his death. An inquest later that year blamed a fellow detainee for not reporting Aggett's traumatised state! (The state reported his death as a suicide). Such was the level of organization at shopfloor level, that the union called a political strike of 30 minutes for the 11th Feb 1982 from 1130 to 12 noon, to protest his death. It was reported that several other unions and workplaces also adhered to the call although it is difficult to prove the scope. Many unions, from Fosatu, to CCAWUSA, General Workers Union came to give solidarity at his funeral. Here was a white medical doctor being saluted for his role, by the organised black working class. To the worker it did not matter what label he was, only that he was a fighter, a revolutionary, that gave his life for the emancipation of the working class. The capitalists and imperialists had benefitted from the smashing of the unions. In our opinion, now that the organised might of the working class was stirring against the system itself, the capitalists began to make concessions, in order to save the system.

Premier milling bosses met with the union to offer their condolences. However they had a history of collaborating with the security police against unions and against FCWU in particular. In our opinion, the capitalist class was beginning to reach the conclusion that in order to prevent a workers' revolution, they had rather negotiate with the pliable leaders of the ANC- that is why the capitalists sent a delegation to Lusaka as part of seeking a way to retain exploitation but with a new face. This is what we deduce from our reading of **Solidarity Road**.

As an aside, we discover some of the tactics of the security police against activists. One was the inflating of a tire of a vehicle of an activist, to the point of bursting, while the pressure of others were reduced. We wonder



how many activists lost their lives in road 'accidents' in this way. The TRC delivered no justice to these and other victims of the system.

### **The struggle for workers' unity at a time of generalised working class revolt**

FCWU, under leadership of Jan Theron, Oscar Mpetha, among others, played a leading role in convening meetings of various trade unions, with the aim of building a new trade union federation.

There were a number of trends within the workers' movement at the time. 2 unions broke from the conservative TUCSA over their refusal to blame the state for Neil Aggett's death. They (Tucsa) had also publicly disassociated themselves from the political strike on the 11th Feb 1982. This was a progressive split.

Fosatu (Federation of SA Trade unions) was syndicalist in that they restricted themselves to only economic issues at shopfloor level and refused to take up political struggles. This was to change under pressure of the rising workers' revolt.

The General Workers Union based itself on setting up workers committees at shopfloor level while operating an advice office in support of worker organization.

Then there were the general 'community' unions. Many of them, like the SAAWU (SA Allied Workers Union) were aligned to the ANC. To them there was a blurring of the class lines in the union; to them officials could become President. They took their mandates from general mass meetings (where workers from different workplaces attended) and subjugated the union to the calls from the ANC leadership. These unions raised the demand that all unions not register, as a means to delay the formation of a new trade union federation. To them the formation of the UDF (United Democratic Front) and the instructions from the ANC were paramount. Several of these unions affiliated to the UDF while trying to delay the formation of a new federation.

Despite all the obstacles, in a meeting in Cape Town held over the 9-10 April 1983, a decision was reached to launch a new federation. [The UDF aligned unions withdrew from a unity feasibility meeting in March 1984.- one example of delaying tactics by the ANC leaders].

Interestingly, the Anglo American bosses allowed NUM (National Union of Mineworkers) to be formed and gave them full access and rights, as a means to pre-empt the formation of a radical union on the mines. NUM did not have members on the mines at the time. This granting of access was after a meeting between Cyril Ramaphosa and Anglo American. The imperialist capitalist class realised that working with the ANC was an effective mechanism to keep the working class under control.

FCWU used strong shopfloor organization as a basis from which to advance workers' interest and opened the structures of the union to discuss politics as well as building to take a workers' perspective on political events. By contrast, SAAWU and other such general unions subjected the union structures to calls from the ANC. In our opinion, therefore the ANC call 'to make the country ungovernable' translated into mass strikes, with little or no shopfloor organization, with no workers' control, no consideration of the balance of forces. Many times these instigated strikes resulted in mass dismissals. The result was that SAAWU and other general unions were decimated by the response of the bosses.

What was decisive in the turn for the launch of Cosatu to become a reality was the decision by the leadership of Fosatu to support the ANC.

The ANC activists formed an active minority within the unions. They had gained control of Cosatu at its launch in 1985 by a number of bureaucratic and anti-worker measures. These included insisting that only a criteria of signed up members was sufficient. If only paid up members were allowed then the weight of the ANC would



have been much less. Further, key unions paraded full-time shopstewards as workers. Elijah Barayi, the first president of Cosatu was actually a personal assistant of one of the Anglo bosses who had likely become a full-time shopsteward; Chris Dlamini, the first Deputy President of Cosatu was also a full-time shopsteward at US multinational Kelloggs. Thus right from the top, the principle of workers' control was breached. Except for the CTMWA (Cape Town Municipal Workers Association) and FCWU, all the other unions that made up Cosatu were dependent on funding from imperialism. In this sense, our conclusion is that imperialism aided the control of the new federation by the ANC. The funding of the Cosatu unions also drove an agenda towards the increased use of the courts rather than building shopfloor organization. While paying lip-service to opposing the imperialist-aligned ICFTU, often Cosatu affiliates had their legal fees paid by the ICFTU. The purchase of Cosatu house, despite the protestations of the FCWU leadership, was through imperialist funding.

From then onwards, control by the ANC in the affairs of the unions in Cosatu was the guiding factor.

[There were a number of struggles within various unions, where the voices that were critical of ANC control over the internal life of these structures, were silenced. CCAWUSA (Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union) was deliberately split and the Cosatu leaders sided with the ANC faction against the majority of the workers. ]

Those who opposed the ANC line were labelled Azapo, CIA or traitors and they were subject to harassment and rumours campaigns.

In FAWU (FCWU had since merged with SFWU-Sweet, Food and allied Workers Union, among others) the ANC minority had wanted to protect an official who had been found to be corrupt. Although, through a special FAWU Conference/Congress the official was eventually dismissed, the ANC faction consolidated its position. By the National Conference of 1989 the bureaucratisation of FAWU was far advanced. No longer would there be annual conferences- they would take place only every 2 years; only the NEC could call a special congress, the branches had their power removed. Power went to the national office bearers and the management committee had its worker base removed. Activists and other workers in the union launched the 'campaign for democracy' within FAWU. They launched a court proceedings which they withdrew after Cosatu mediation. After this, the FAWU leaders went back on the agreement to reinstate the branch leadership, who had been unfairly removed from their positions.

Such was the integration of Cosatu into the ANC (government in waiting) by 1990, that Cosatu had already become a new TUCSA. The attacks on the workers movement by the capitalist class from 1990 onwards continued, virtually unchallenged by Cosatu (the new TUCSA). Many ex-Cosatu leaders went into business or took up government positions. [Jay Naidoo, who had claimed at the founding Congress of Cosatu that he would never sit next to a capitalist, became a Minister of the watered-down ANC programme, called the RDP, Reconstruction and Development Programme. This was de facto a disguised start of an IMF Structural Adjustment Programme. Naidoo went on to become a head of a leading IT telecoms capitalist company, that gained foothold in several parts of Africa as a whole.]

Imperialism, since 1990, was in effect governing through the ANC-SACP-Cosatu alliance.

There were a number of struggles against the rule by the alliance. This is not touched on in the book. For example, there was the Mercedes Benz strike of 1990 when workers discovered that part of the factory was used to make military weapons for the apartheid state. These workers were dismissed and Cosatu failed to launch a defence of them. Many have died since then. Similarly in 2000 when 1346 VWSA workers went on strike against the company and Numsa imposition of their selection of full-time shopstewards and on the union signing agreements behind the workers' backs. Hundreds of the workers have died while the rest are in



destitution, after a mass dismissal in which Vavi failed to revert back to the workers on the 3rd Feb 2000, the day of the ultimatum.

The book correctly refers to the Marikana massacre of 16th August 2012, as a turning point in our struggle.

What economic gains were made through mass struggle by the working class were often weakened or destroyed by the mass retrenchments from the increasing concentration of ownership. There has been a wave of de-industrialisation worldwide.

There were times, such as 1990 and 2000 when sleep-in strikes/ factory occupations occurred. This had raised the level of class response to the mass dismissals by the capitalists, to a higher level. However, the subjugation of the working class to ANC meant that these struggles were not supported and were left to defeat.

### **Some questions for the working class to consider**

Jan raises important questions over the principles of workers' control and control directly in the hands of workers. These are important questions in the struggle for ultimate workers' control over society. A key obstacle in the way of a class struggle approach has been the rise of a trade union bureaucracy. The very organizations of workers' struggle have been turned into organs of preserving the capitalist system. How do we solve these questions? We could also have explored other examples of trade unions such as political slates of the Brazilian trade union movement under the CUT. This was where in each town all the workers of an industry set up competing political slates that there is open discussion and contest over. Even this progressive model did not prevent the rise of a union bureaucracy. The CUT proved to be the base through which the Workers' Party, the PT, chained the workers in Brazil to capitalist relations. The CUT had become a 'TUCSA' of Brazil.

The ANC and SACP as an active minority, were able to gain and retain control of what became Cosatu. In the process the federation became bureaucratized as a means of suppressing the workers' voice and an instrument of control over the working class.

Numsa and the proposed new federation is faced with the same challenges. In order for workers' voices to be not only heard but for real workers' control, the model of Numsa, which is based on the Cosatu bureaucratic version, needs to change. There needs to be re-organising of structures so that there is real control by workers at plant, local and structural level. The principle of instant recall of any elected leadership is fundamental. The aligning of officials salaries and conditions to be close to that of the members is another principle. The principle of independence from the state and capital is another principle.

However, what is fundamental is the principle of free political debate in the structures of the union. The acceptance that workers have the right to freely campaign for and defend their views within the union structures. The holding of regular plant, local, regional and national meetings and limiting the terms of office bearers to one year at a time, are all considerations for turning our unions into schools of working class ideas and practice, of class struggle.

Having a democratic internal structure in the union is a mechanism of ensuring that any workers' party that is formed would not be easily able to rule over the union and the workers. Independence of trade union structures from direct party political control needs to be ensured. This does not mean that the trade union should be apolitical. On the contrary it has to be political. What is fundamental is that the union as an organ of working class struggle needs to be protected.

Otherwise any new federation or the old ones, will remain conveyor belts to the state apparatus and continued capitalist relations.



The question of the role of full-time shopstewards also needs further debate. Activists such as Abraham Agulhas and others, were able to use the positions of full-time shopsteward to advance workers' interest, supporting strikes and workers' struggles. Having workers freed from full-time work in the workplace can be to the advantage of the working class. What needs to be changed is the control over the shopsteward. It should be free from management control and only workers should have the right to recall such leaders, at any time. There were times when the workers at VWSA wanted to recall John Gomomo, one-time President of Cosatu. They were not able to do so because of management and union top leadership opposition. Such privileges of protection by the bosses and union bureaucracy, should end.

When Neil Aggett gave a copy of Lenin's *What is to be done?*, to Jan Theron, he showed that he was far-sighted and not as naive as Jan thought he was. It is not sufficient to build militant, democratic, workers' control within the unions. We need to build a real, revolutionary working class party. Having a healthy revolutionary minority that is organised is essential to counter the reactionary, nationalist minority that came to hold sway in Cosatu and other unions.

We salute Jan Theron for placing a lifetime of work under the gaze of the international working class. This was no easy task. It is a timely contribution to working class culture, our culture of resistance.

**Fanele**, 'This is a necessary book'.

25.1.2017 amended 11.3.2017



Students and workers confront parliament over its failure to provide free education for all



# Abolishing racism

Racism is not a natural phenomenon. It has been deliberately cultivated as a tool by ruling classes to divide the masses. The separate group areas that still exist today in South Africa is a direct result of a conscious political policy of the apartheid state to maintain a system of cheap labour for exploitation by imperialism capitalism (monopoly capital, primarily the mines and the banks and the industry controlled by them).

Today, 22 years after the first democratic election and 40 years since the 1976 uprising, the group areas remain intact. The policy of the ANC and the DA has been to deliberately sustain these separate group areas. Thus, despite abolishing of racial barriers in govt departments, the separate group areas remain. The Codesa agreement that determined the basis of the Constitution, namely the protection of the rights of monopoly capital to retain their ill-gotten gains, thus sustains the racist framework that the apartheid regime erected. The ANC and DA sustain the provinces that are largely on the lines of the old bantustans, assisted by the massive payments to entrench the system of unelected tribal chiefs.

Students, whose parents can afford it (and many make huge sacrifices for this to happen), depart after school, back to the same apartheid ghettos they came from.

How can there be equality when black students spend 4 hours or more travelling to and from school every day, while the white student walks up the road to get home? The white student gets home to a meal and a wifi environment while the black student goes hungry and has to rely on 'please call me' to communicate. Social integration is reduced to a liberal, school feeding scheme project. The role and contribution of black people to history and science is expunged from the curriculum. Hamilton Naki was the first person to perform a heart transplant surgery but Christiaan Barnard gets the credit; Sona Geometry from Angola, which has use in modern, advanced computing, is totally ignored in the mathematics and science curricula.

More students do not complete matric now than before 1994, mostly black students. The racial profile of poverty is sustained by the schooling and tertiary education system. 70% of those who receive NSFAS funding do not complete tertiary studies, because of academic exclusion. This structural violence is based on monopoly capital maintaining SA as a primary exporter of raw materials, thus suppressing the need for skilled labour and enhancing the need for unskilled labour.

In June 1976, the spark for the widescale revolt against the system was the imposition of Afrikaans onto black students. The revolt broke out because the entire system of slave capitalism was no longer tolerable to the masses. The superficial form was the question of language. Later, there were 2 general strikes, in August and September of that year. This marked the arrival of the broader working class onto the political scene yet again. It was this working class revolt that broadened into the revolutionary uprising in the 1980's. Then the ANC and SACP were able to gain control over the movement and turn it into bourgeois parliamentary elections, essentially maintaining the exploitative relations intact.

2012 and 2013 saw the mineworkers and farmworkers revolts; 2013 saw Numsa adopting a resolution calling for the breaking of the alliance with the ANC and SACP and for a revolutionary working class party formation to be launched; 2015 saw the student-worker alliance of #feesmustfall.

August-Sept 2016 has brought a revolt in high schools, against racist rules, starting on what appeared, on the surface, to be about the right to have a natural hairstyle. In reality, at root, the revolt is about the continuation of racial/slave capitalism that condemns the vast majority of black youth to lives of poverty and hunger.

#scrapracistschoolrules

#decoloniseschool&universitycurricula

#scrapthegroupareasinpractice #forimmediateintegrationofallcommunities



#masshousingschemesintheCBDs&wellresourcedareas  
#replaceallracistleaders at schools and universities  
#reinstateallsuspended/expelledstudentleaders  
#forparentstudentteachercommittees at all schools and tertiary institutions- with broader co-ordination committees uniting all schools and tertiary education institutions.  
#endoutsourcing&casualization  
#raisetaxoncompanyprofitsbackto45%asitwasin1990  
#free,qualityeducation4all #freequalityhousing&healthcare4all  
#openthebooksofthemonopolies #bringbackthestolenwealth  
#expropriatethemines&banks,withoutcompensation&placingthemunderworkers'control  
#expropriatethelargecommercialfarms,foodmonopolies and large supermarkets, without compensation, placethemunderworkerscontrol;

### **Workers International Vanguard Party**

4.9.2016 email [workersinternational@gmail.com](mailto:workersinternational@gmail.com) sms/call/whatsApp +27822020617

## On the state's monopoly of violence

Revolutions are processes that are inherently violent with respect to the status quo ante. In class society, from slave to feudal to capitalist, no advance has taken place without violent revolutionary action.

The Anglo Boer war consolidated imperialist control over SA, through violence and concentration camps. The colonial Union of SA, through various governments, from Smuts to Verwoerd did not hesitate to use brute force, from bombing of strikers, to massacres of those who rose up arms in hand. The switch to a nominal republic in 1963 did not bring the slightest lessening of violence against the masses. In other words the capitalist state sustained itself through its monopoly of violence. What brought the apartheid state to its knees was the threat of violent revolution by the masses.

Ironically, what saved the state from destruction was the negotiated settlement, an alliance between the ANC and the NP, both nationalist and tied by their coat tails to the dictates of big capital. It may well be asked, what role did the Rivonia trialists play in saving the capitalist state? Before 1994, the organs of the state that exercised the monopoly of violence against the masses were the police, the prisons, the army, the schools, the universities.

After 1994 when the masses tried to seize land that had been stolen through previous capitalist and colonial regimes, the state clamped down to sustain the violence of hunger and starvation.

The schooling system still forces out more than half the children who start school, before they even reach matric. Of the few survivors who get matric, only half of those who qualify for university are actually accepted. Of this tiny group only a quarter actually graduate. 77% of those students who receive NSFAS assistance, drop out before completion of their studies, often due to debt and academic exclusion. Thus, 22 years after the democratic regime was established, only 3% of the population are graduates. The humanities have been drastically cut down and research is largely dictated by the same monopolies that are still in control since before 1994. Thus the education system is structurally violent by perpetuating the capitalist system, which in SA is still based on the export of raw, unprocessed materials and minerals. Through various mechanisms, as exposed by researchers such as Susan Newman, Sam Ashman and Ben Fine (Journal of Southern African Studies), the monopolies have stolen, directly and indirectly trillions of Rands of wealth from SA. This theft has



accelerated since 1994. The state sustains the system that causes the death of hundreds of thousands through diseases of poverty.

As everywhere in the world, Democracy represents the dictatorship of the rich. It has already outlived itself. Since 2011 the world masses have begun to break from this democratic dictatorship of big capital. In SA, the rise of the mineworkers strikes, the farmworkers strikes and now the worker-student uprising at the universities are all signs of growing revolutionary developments. The traditional leaderships of the masses have been increasingly cast aside. The moment cries out for a new revolutionary working class party to unite the activists to lead the growing torrent of the masses to sweep away the old capitalist structures and to begin to set up direct control mechanisms of the working class and broader masses on an international scale. Indeed as production has been organized internationally, the moment is ripe for an international leap of unity of the masses.

Adam Habib tries to hide behind an old man from Limpopo:

*'how would you have enabled the grandfather from Limpopo to register his grandson?'*

The point is that if the worker and student masses had not risen up last year and this year and posed a threat to violently overturn the university structures the state would not have allocated R2 bn to write off the debt of 71 000 students and a further R8 bn for debt to be written off for the next 3 years of the NSFAS recipients. In all likelihood, due to the efforts of the workers and students, the old man from Limpopo would not have even made the journey to Wits as his grandson's debt would have been written off. What Habib betrays is his hankering for the old state of institutional violence to continue, namely, he would quietly accept the life savings of an old worker from Limpopo, only to exclude his grandson sometime later and then to pursue both the old man and his grandson for debt still owed.

It was the universities that spearheaded the mass dismissal of thousands of workers, the halving of their wages, the stripping away of their pension, medical and study benefits. This violence is euphemistically called outsourcing and was pioneered by the universities leaders and spread throughout SA and beyond. It was the workers and students mass uprising that has begun to bring an end to this violence. The university leaderships are trying to reverse this gain.

No, Mr Habib, you have no right to claim being a victim of violence, you are part of the structural violence against the masses, that the state rests upon.

*'And even if they are conservatives, why should their rights not be protected by the university like those of all others?'*

Here Habib demonstrates that he stands with the forces of reaction in the universities. The disrupting of the grip of the capitalist conservative staff at universities is not going to be a peaceful process.

*'I will never remain silent and allow a culture of violence and ungovernability to prevail within an institution of learning.'*

In other words, Habib stands for the maintenance of the current structural violence of the university institutions.

*'Finally, the issues facing the entire university system are access and funding. These cannot be resolved immediately and independently by Wits as an institution. We do not have the resources to do so. The issue needs to be dealt with in a coordinated way – involving students and management and other actors in the national system.'* (Adam Habib, *Daily Maverick* 18 Jan 2016, *Open letter to colleagues critical of campus security*)

Instead of directly confronting the state over the lack of resources for free education for all and a freedom to research issues of social interest, Habib shields the state and big capital by putting the burden for change on the management and students. Again, the maintenance of structural violence of the universities.



Blade Nzimande betrays his true role when he goes around to the universities with the Minister of Police. Not one word is said nor a single step taken against Anglo American and other monopolies whose theft of trillions have stolen the future of the youth and the masses.

*'The pair "agreed that the current destruction of national assets on campuses, that is crucial to the empowerment of the next generation of South Africans, must stop at once", the statement said.*

A few lifeless paintings and buses are regarded as national assets while the lives of the masses are discounted as nothing.

*They reportedly also agreed that while order without "the interventions of law enforcement agencies" would be preferable, "in instances of criminality" they "must intervene firmly without fear or favour".' (Blade Nzimande and Minister of Police on visit to Wits, 29 Feb 2016 - DispatchLive)*

They say nothing of the criminality of the monopolies as clearly the state violence is to protect them.

A last quote by Habib, ironically, criticizing the ANC:

*'It is one thing to be forced by the realities of the moment to temporarily compromise one's economic agenda. It is quite another to wholeheartedly buy into a conservative macro-economic programme and then start to believe that it will achieve the ends it promises' (Adam Habib, South Africa's suspended revolution, Hopes and Prospects, 2013)*

Quite appropriately applied to the role of Habib and indeed the other heads of the untransformed centres of state violence, the universities.

Blaming the workers and students for violence is like blaming a child for the violent pangs of birth of the mother. We remember DUT student, Lindelani God's Love Myeza.



*'The foundation of every state is the education of its youth'*



# A proposed way forward for the #feesmustfall movement

What made the breakthrough in 2015 was the beginning of a mass presence of parents alongside the students on the campuses; there were also deep alliances of students and outsourced workers who had in many cases embarked on spontaneous strikes. The entry and threatened entry of the broader masses was decisive.

## **What is the situation now, (24th October 2016)?**

Hundreds of students started this year having charges hanging over their heads. These cases have been ongoing as the Universities have refused to drop the charges. These cases placed a damper on protests for a number of months. The presence of cases did not remove the initial basis of the conflict, namely the systemic violence of the capitalist system towards school and university students.

Whereas in 2015 the #feesmustfall movement united students across colour lines, the movement started this year divided by the 'black first' ideology. Thus a huge section of the student movement were alienated before the broad resurgence of protests. The black nationalist fervour has been reflected also in the popularising of the national anthem, which basically a hymn, now sung to a more catchy tune but still nationalist in perspective. The black nationalist trend currently dominates the leadership of this wave of feesmustfall. Not only is it divisive but it has thus far kept struggles isolated and localised, and thus not anti-system. This leadership has argued that no protest should be made against government as this is 'our black govt'. The BLF has forgiven Zuma for Nkandla, are they going to forgive Ramaphosa for Marikana? Are they going to forgive Zuma for deploying the police onto all the campuses and for all the shooting and arrests? (after all, the arrests and shootings have been done by 'our black government').

The self isolation of the student protest movement has led to it morphing from free education for all and an end to outsourcing, to a demand for free, decolonised education for all and by the way, end outsourcing. An education that is decolonised and Afro-centric is not anti-capitalist nor is it Socialist. The history of Africa shows the development of deep class divisions at various stages of development before being colonised. Thus the emphasis on a decolonised education is the war cry of the radical petty bourgeois, appealing to big capital to recognise and employ them. Decolonisation is necessary but not sufficient for liberation from the shackles of the capitalist system.

The radical black petty bourgeois calls for students to embark on an indefinite boycott and then through magic, free education for all, decolonised and all, will appear.

The state has deployed the riot squad (Public Order Police, POP) and TRT (tactical response teams) onto campuses; at the same time highly militarised security (such as Vetus Schola, which has DRC mercenaries and ex-Koevoet staff) have been called in. Students are being randomly and systematically targeted. More than 600 arrested in the latest wave of protests; the mass media and other state organs are deliberately criminalizing the protests. Students have been denied bail using flimsy excuses while being imprisoned together with hardened criminals. There are small cores on all campuses of a few hundred students. These students do have the support of a broader layer of students but there are huge numbers of students who are increasingly being turned against the protest movement. Most of the academic staff didn't support the protest last year; even less do so now. Some staff have even gone over to the point of supporting militarization of the campuses. The majority of parents support the movement for free education but have not yet actively come out onto the streets. Some parents have openly and actively opposed the movement due to the emphasis by the mass media on isolated cases of burning buildings. The state is proceeding with random arrests and shootings



in university residences, now even going over to arrest of lecturers who stand in support of peaceful dialogue and protests. In essence, a state of emergency reigns over all universities. Bail provisions are restrictive and exorbitant.

It must also be mentioned that the burning of libraries, buildings and vehicles of universities and of lecturers plays into the hands of the state, who use these incidents to crack down hard and to win many students and parents away from supporting the movement. Some of these actions could possibly be blamed on state provocateurs but there is an anti-social trend within the protest movement that is actively fanning the flames of isolated burning of buildings etc. These individualistic acts are reflective of petty bourgeois methods of struggle that sees the masses as passive participants in the struggle and seeing individual guerilla actions as the way to advance the struggle. It hands the high ground to the state to crack down further. In fact the ultra-left individualistic actions by this antisocial trend could lead to the movement being severely weakened or defeated. We distinguish the individualistic actions from the defensive acts of students against the brutal police lockdown and state of terror on campuses. It is not for nothing that the Farlam Commission called for the retraining of the TRT divisions in the wake of the Marikana massacre. The fact that the state has not retrained the TRT to equip them for de-escalating conflict, nor have the members who shot down the 34 mineworkers in cold blood even been arrested or charged, shows that the deployment of shocktroops on campuses are nothing to do with 'protection of property or life' but everything to do with the use of brute force to attempt to smash the student movement.

Internationally, as the traditional leaders within the workers' movement lose their grip over the masses, imperialism capitalism has increasingly turned to fascistic methods, eg in Egypt, Philippines, Ukraine, Zimbabwe, Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, India, China, in the USA (with Trumpism), the attempted coup in Turkey, the suppression of the Palestinians mass, etc.

Thus the turn to police occupation of campuses, the withdrawal from the ICC, are all indicators of an international trend towards more fascistic, brute force methods of suppressing the mass.

Last year, the SACP, Cosatu and several unions used their structures to publicly criticise and break the movement. Once again, these formations have come out against the protest movement but they have been forced to publicly issue statements in support of the movement's aims. Numsa, the United Front and the elements of the new proposed federation constituencies have only issued statements in support of the protest movement but have not mobilised any substantial numbers of their members into solidarity action. Their failure to lodge even an application for a socio-economic strike in support of free education, speaks volumes. Will the new federation really be a fighting formation that champions the working class cause?

### **Proposals for a possible way forward**

The struggle needs to be broadened to the rest of the working class as the fight is not only for free university education but for free, quality education for all, education that is liberatory and anti-capitalist. It is fundamentally against the capitalist system itself. Thus an important step would be to mobilise the high and primary schools, for free, quality education. This opens up the possibility of their parents, the broader working class to enter the movement.

At the same time there needs to be consideration of winning a broader base of support on campuses, namely the broader student mass and the parents. A possible set of demands could be:

In return for a partial -reopening of campuses, eg, Mon, Tuesday, and Friday classes, with Wed protest action at parliament and central government organs, Thursdays campus-wide discussions on decolonisation and liberatory, relevant education. The following set of demands could be posed:



1. Immediate withdrawal of police and militarized security from campuses
2. Immediate release of all arrested students and dropping of all charges against them,
3. Insourcing immediately;
4. Scrap the student debt of the past 3 years;
5. Free, quality decolonised, liberatory education for all , from cradle to tertiary level
6. Increase the tax on company profits from 28% back to 43% as it was pre-1994;
7. Tax the rich
8. Set up a unit to reclaim all the wealth that was illegally taken out of the country through transfer pricing and other devices as well as the relevant taxes that were left unpaid
9. If the mining corporations and banks refuse to comply, there is sufficient ground to expropriate them and place them under workers' control. [The wealth is sufficient to meet all our needs on free, quality housing for all, free, quality health care as well as free education and all our other needs and still have plenty of spare change for real development.

24.10.2016

## Assessing the balance of forces in the #feesmustfall struggle

The march of 4000 students, workers and supporters to parliament on 26th Oct 2016 showed that, despite the heavy repression from the state, the movement has not been broken, it is alive and has broad support. A number of universities around the country are still facing revolts by students, despite heavy state repression. The police has a #feesmustfall unit that is working closely with the courts and prisons. These units are working under close instruction from the political leaders in government. The standing orders that students facing charges have heavy bail conditions and banning orders from physically entering university premises, comes directly from the Minister of Justice. The bourgeoisie, their writers and media, usually kick up a fuss about the so called separation of powers and independence of the courts. Here they are silent. In reality there is no separation of power. We have a dictatorship of the capitalist class, carried out by the political wing, its judiciary and prison system.

### **Why do the capitalist class want to crush the #feesmustfall movement?**

Around the world, there are unprecedented attacks by big capital on the masses, as they try to rescue their falling profits in a period of stagnation of the capitalist economy. The masses are resisting. This process has led to the loss in credibility of the traditional leaders in the eyes of the masses. Imperialism capitalism faces world wide revolt from the masses. In the extreme case, in Syria, the entire reactionary forces of the world, from US imperialism, to Russia, to the reactionary regimes of Saudi Arabia, Emirates, Iran, Hezbollah, German and French imperialism, the UN, Nato, all stand, from different angles against the revolutionary Syrian masses. In other cases, in Egypt, Ukraine, Philippines, Argentina, Brazil, etc, there are more and more fascist regimes being installed. In other words, there is a trend, worldwide, of imperialism capitalism using brute force to crush revolts, where their traditional leaders are not capable of controlling the masses. Thus, the state of emergency on the universities are not an accident but part of a world trend. These are part of the desperate measures that capitalism is currently using to maintain its hegemony.

### **The role of students in the struggle for Socialism**

Students on their own are impotent, they cannot, on their own, take over state power. Students are not directly connected to the means of production. Even if the students boycotted for a year the capitalist machinery would still run smoothly, especially in the case of there being a number of unemployed graduates and millions being unemployed. The outsourced workers at universities are supportive of the student struggles, which have raised



the demand for their insourcing. The level of activity of these workers vary as there is the ever present threat of them being dismissed, especially now that the numbers of students at the picket line is dropping.

In 1976 students acted as the spark; then the broader working class entered the field of battle through general strikes in August and September. The backbone of the initial movement were the high school and to an extent the primary school students, backed by their parents. There are isolated cases of high school students joining the movement but this has not taken off on a broad and deep scale. Where shutdowns have occurred at high schools, they have not been linked to the broader #feesmustfall movement. This linking up is still a challenge for the movement.

### **A note on decolonisation and abolishing all oppression**

The world is controlled by giant imperialist monopolies. It follows that the independent development of indigenous culture has been suppressed, across the globe. Indigenous culture exists to the extent that the imperialist monopolies have use of it, eg the existence of unelected tribal chiefs and sheiks that assist in shackling the masses for exploitation by capitalism; also sectarian and tribal divisions are used as a means of dividing the masses to facilitate the domination by the imperialist-capitalist class.

Decolonisation on its own, means a fight against the domination by the current monopolies. It does not follow that a defeat of the monopolies and the the development of indigenous culture means the abolishing of classes. On the contrary, within indigenous culture are class divisions- this is why imperialism capitalism could exploit these divisions to use them as a means of control. We are not fighting that a system of elected leaders is replaced by unelected chiefs. We are fighting for indigenous knowledge systems be valued and incorporated into science; for the incorporation of the best aspects of indigenous knowledge into proletarian culture and world culture.

We cannot define decolonisation only as a process against white monopoly capital because it implies that somehow black monopoly capital is progressive; this is to trample the 34 mineworkers killed at Marikana, into the dust. We are not fighting for monopoly capital to be replaced by black monopoly capital. The bulk of black capital since 1994 has been around labour brokers. Thus to define the fight as against white capital only is to align yourself with the labour broker capitalists. How can indigenous culture develop if the masses are enslaved to capitalism? Can indigenous culture develop when millions live in shacks and in overcrowded conditions, and in semi or total starvation?

Decolonisation can only gain full flourishing if we shatter the capitalist system and replace it with direct democracy based on workers' power. All forms of oppression will continue if class relations of capitalism still exist. On the other hand, the total abolishment of oppression is not guaranteed by the overthrow of capitalist relations, the platform is only set for this necessary step of ending all oppression. It still needs a conscious fight.

Thus it implies that a genuine struggle for decolonisation must extend to the overthrow of capitalist relations. In other words, the fight for decolonised education must be linked to a fight against the capitalist system itself. It follows that the struggle has to be led by the working class. Unfortunately the movement has as yet not managed to mobilise the broad working class into open mass action.

### **Assessing the march to parliament and some of its implications**

There were many **positives** in the march to parliament: It forced all the factions in the #feesmustfall movement to prepare a consolidated list of demands to government and thus has the potential of providing a platform around which to gain the broader masses to support the struggle; the call for increased measures against the rich signalled an anti-capitalist direction of the movement; the revolt against parliament has the potential to sharpen the political struggle against the state; a new, broader layer gained experience in an aspect of directly



the organs of political power; it begins to break the struggle from the confines of an economic, sectoral struggle only focused on university students towards that of confronting the capitalist system as a whole; thus it opens up the possibility of students taking up their rightful place in the struggle, namely as supporting the broader working class in the struggle for Socialism; the tasks that arise from this step is to begin to win the support of the working class and the broader masses; that faction in the #feesmustfall movement (eg the BLF) that did not want to oppose the ANC govt, were dragged kicking and screaming from their asylums and forced to join the march against their allies. There was the start of open support by a number of working class formations, pro-working class activists and a number of high school students who came out in numbers- this opens up the possibility of broadening the struggle and deepening it.

There were a number of **negatives**, however: During the march, the riot police (POP) and the TRT (Tactical Response Team) adopted an aggressive, combative, provocative stance. Several times they threatened to cut the generator power if protestors did not get off their vehicles. This exchange was ongoing throughout the speeches at parliament. Despite seeing that the state forces were looking for an excuse to act and break up the march so that the state narrative of 'violent students' could be continued, a handful of protestors, when most people had left (approximately 3-400 remained), and in direct defiance of the march organisers call to march back to the starting point, openly sought to make a show of bravado. They played right into the hands of the state. They burnt a cardboard 'coffin' and threw it in front of the police. Boxes and flags have been burnt at marches before but it was rather obvious that the police would shoot and they did. The bourgeois media was largely able to continue the narrative of 'violent students'. There was also a case of some students throwing stones towards a shop window where a child was sitting. This type of misguided attack stems from the racist notion of characterizing the fight as being against 'white capital' and lumping all 'white' people as the 'enemy'. The main responsibility for this attempted attack lies on the leadership of the trends that promote this idea.

The notion of 'black first' directly leads to covering for Zuma, Ramaphosa and the ANC government. This BLF has already forgiven Zuma for Nkandla. It follows that they also forgive Zuma for the imprisonment and shooting of students.

There are some forces among the middle class that may be won over to the cause of Socialist revolution. The upper layers of the middle class most often can not be won over. Sections of the middle class can at best be won to neutrality. In other words, while they do not openly support the movement, they do not openly oppose it.

What the perceived and real violence by some students did, is drive sections of the working class and the middle class away from supporting the movement. Many are even supporting a violent state crackdown with live ammunition.

In short, the poorly thought out, provocative actions of the trends that sees a 'student revolution' and not a working class revolution, has strengthened the forces of reaction and helped to further isolate the #feesmustfall movement. Admittedly some of those provocateurs are possibly state agents but more likely they are from the radical petit bourgeois faction that sees the masses as passive agents in the struggle for Socialism. They see the students or the radical black middle class as the agency of leading the struggle and that the working class will follow them and indeed be used by them to advance their objectives. Thus from these factions come the false notion that campuses can be closed down until 'free, decolonised education' is achieved, even if the working class is not openly supporting, nor are most of the students openly supporting.

The call by these factions to make the country 'ungovernable' is an identical cry as the ANC. The fundamental character of this is for the radical middle class to disrupt the operations of capitalism, attempting to use fellow students and the broader working class as its battering ram until they as a section of the black middle class are incorporated into the capitalist system. Decolonisation does not imply anti-capitalism as class divisions were developing in Africa independently of capitalist development in Europe. Decolonisation by itself is in reality an



African brand of capitalism. Real liberation in Africa has to be tied with the overthrow of world capitalist relations. There can be no 'Africa only' solution. We are all part of the international army of the world proletariat and our struggles against the capitalist relations are all interconnected.

Radicalization is not a one step process. There is no guarantee that the high school students and other broader masses who came to the march will continue to support the struggle in the same or stronger ways. If anything, they may think twice about openly supporting this struggle in future.

Thus those groupings who promoted the provocative confrontation with the police, have actually done the state a favour- the movement is again self-isolated and the unifying of broader forces in a political struggle against the state and the capitalist system as a whole is made more difficult.

These factions are now calling for masses of students to descend on police stations to demand that they be arrested. This is an opportunist move from a faction that has run out of ideas. They want to 'excite' the broader student and working class mass into another provocative action against a group that has already shown itself to be trigger-happy. What is the aim? Do they want to show that students are 'violent'? Will this help the release of those locked up? In reality it merely shows the impotence of a student-only struggle.

Instead of developing a programme that speaks to the demands of the high school and primary school students and the rest of the working class, these factions are again engaging in self-isolation activities. Including broader forces means that the first step is to have meetings with the school students, listening to them, listening to the workers. This means going out to them and going into the communities and factories. This hard work cannot be side-stepped. It has to be done. What these factions are doing, is using students and the broader masses to promote the self-advancement of a section of the black middle class who have thus far been excluded from privileges under capitalism. This is the essence of their conception of 'decolonisation'.

The self-isolation, non-class methods of this section of the black middle class trends must be rejected. No to the using of students and the broader masses for the self advancement of another elite. The capitalist system is the central enemy and we need to build on the work achieved so far to intensify and advance this struggle.

### **A Proposed way forward**

Given the self-isolation of the movement thus far, we consider that it is necessary to regroup and refocus the struggle on an anti-capitalist basis. This regrouping has been forced on the movement, partly through the actions of the state and all its organs, but also through some of the ill-considered strategy and tactics of some of the #feesmustfall leadership. All factors considered, we propose a temporary retreat and reflection so that the movement can consolidate its gains while preparing for a further refocused struggles in the next period.

Despite all the months of struggle, the broader masses have not come out in active support. In most part it is due to the leadership of unions and other mass working class formations, including Numsa, having not called out their members in direct support of the demands for free education. Thus there needs to be creative means of getting the broader working class to come out in support. There is a need to get the high schools out in broader support. This requires groundwork. On the other hand many students and their parents are panicking over completion of the academic year. In some universities like Wits and Stellenbosch students have been largely repressed by the state apparatus. There is a growing groundswell of academic staff in support of brute force methods of crushing the movement. The actions of some of the trends of student leadership has reinforced self-isolation.

Under these conditions, we propose a temporary retreat.



**Possible scenarios could be around a phased re-opening of universities considering the following:**

- The immediate withdrawing of police and militarized security from campuses;
- The facilitation of the release of students who have been arrested; a process of dropping the charges and consideration of measures such as community service and other measures short of suspension and expulsions; all students should be granted access to universities to study and for tests;
- The scrapping of student debt and the moving towards the principle of removing of debt as a reason for withholding graduate certificates; The state must contribute to this
- Insourcing adopted as a principle and concrete steps towards this including seeking further state funding to assist this process;
- The adoption of the principle of free, decolonised education and the beginning of measures to discuss the changing of curriculum to be more relevant and Afro-centric;
- The adoption by the movement of campaigning for:
  - a. Increase the tax on company profits from 28% back to 43% as it was pre-1994;
  - b. Tax the rich
  - c. Set up a unit to reclaim all the wealth that was illegally taken out of the country through transfer pricing and other devices as well as the relevant taxes that were left unpaid
  - d. If the mining corporations and banks refuse to comply, there is sufficient ground to expropriate them and place them under workers' control. [The wealth is sufficient to meet all our needs on free, quality housing for all, free, quality health care as well as free education and all our other needs and still have plenty of spare change for real development.

This would provide the necessary space to consolidate what was won so far and create the platform to regain and broaden support for the deepening of the struggle in the future.

**WIVP** 30.10.2016



Picket at American corner in Cape Town against imperialist genocide in Syria, Burma, DRC, etc



# Memorandum to the US Consulate over your terrorising of the Syrian masses

The US Consul General  
South Africa

Dear Sir/Madam

## **Re: Concern over the terrorising of the Syrian masses by Russia, US government forces and Israel**

In September this year your government signed an agreement with the Russian regime to jointly co-ordinate the fight against 'terror'.

1. For months now, the Russian military, the Assad militias, the YPG (which is supported by you) and allied forces have laid siege to Eastern Aleppo; the more than 200 000 people there, cannot leave, nor cross the street to get a slice of bread due to the threat of being either bombed by Putin's and your forces or shot down by your alliance militias. We note the Assad leaflets that go hand in hand with the bombings from yourselves and the Russians, namely that if the masses do not leave, they will be obliterated;

In other words, the masses are being terrorised into submission by yourselves and the Assad regime; the same siege methods are being applied by you and your allies in several parts of Syria. We note also that US imperialism has laid siege to the Cuban masses for over 50 years. Here you are again, trying to break the revolutionary spirit of the Syrian masses.

2. The Economist reports that the Kurdish YPG, that is also besieging Aleppo, is supported by 300 US military officials. Thus the terror being dished out to the masses in East Aleppo, is also done by US imperialism as the YPG forces (supported by US troops) are also laying siege to the masses. The weapons and funds that Isis has received, comes from the US imperialists, yet here we have the same US imperialists fighting side by side with the Russian and the Assad forces to lay siege to Aleppo. This shows that the September agreement is not about fighting terror but to terrorise ordinary masses who are protesting against the Assad regime;

3. In 1948 hundreds of Palestinian villages were demolished and over 700 000 Palestinians expelled from their lands by the Zionist forces. This Nakba was a huge act of terror against the Palestinians. Today there are over 6 million Palestinian refugees who are being prevented by the Zionist elite from returning home. The millions of Palestinians who remain in historic Palestine are subject to arbitrary bombings, arrest, torture, their houses are demolished at will, land is seized daily, the illegal wall in and around the West Bank is still being extended, the Palestinians do not have freedom of movement; the destruction of the housing in 2014 in Gaza has still not been repaired due to the ten year blockade by the Zionist state and another winter is upon us. The Zionist elite annexed the Golan Heights from Syria and still occupies it even today. In other words, the biggest terrorist in the Middle East is the Zionist state. However you take no punitive action against them. On the contrary, you send many of your citizens to live on land stolen from the Palestinian, you purchase weapons and drones from the Israeli elite, you step aside and let the Zionist jets fly into Syria to bomb a Hezbollah convoy on the 29-30 Nov (Who gave the Zionist the co-ordinates and times of the departure of this convoy?). One thing is crystal clear is that if you had to choose between the Zionist terror regime and Hezbollah, you will always choose the Zionist regime. The US regime gives \$3bn each year to the Zionist army. The US regime has waged countless coups against the masses around the world; the US regime is about to demolish the water protectors in North Dakota. Yet your alliance partner in Syria, on the ground in Aleppo, is the fascist Assad regime, the Russians and their allied militias. The facts speak for themselves; The Sept agreement is indeed being implemented and its aims are to terrorise the masses into submission.



4. It is on record (for example the case of Maher Arar) that Assad has rendition prisons of the CIA. You are in effect funding the zionist terrorists occupation of the Golan Heights. The Assad regime has been responsible for the vast majority of deaths; his regime is responsible for the displacement of half the masses in the entire country and yet you assist his on the ground and through your support of Isis; you do not assist the masses against the terror regime of Assad but assist the terror regime of Assad against the masses.

5. The Saudi regime has been terrorising the masses in Yemen. You are in partnership with this butcher regime of Saudi Arabia.

We note further, that the zionist regime also discriminates against black people. Yet this regime is your alliance partner.

**We call for the immediate withdrawal of all US (and Russian) troops and allied militias from Syria, an end to your support of the Assad regime, an end to your support for Isis and for an end to the bombings.**

If you do not, we pledge to continue on a national and international campaign, listing all the responsible members of your regime as continuators of modern day apartheid and slavery. We call for the masses in the USA to hold your regime to account. We note that you have not joined the ICC yet you claim to uphold 'universal human values'. This looks like universal hypocrisy. We call for Bush, Obama, Putin, Netanyahu and Assad to be put on trial for crimes against humanity. Your courts are silent over the war crimes by the regime, the Russians and yourselves in Syria. In other words, the courts are not there for justice but to maintain imperialist hegemony that keeps the vast majority of humanity in chains.

We stand with the Water Protectors in North Dakota as we stand with the Syrian revolutionary masses. We remember that 2017 brings commemorations of 100 years since the October revolution. May a new spring blossom in all corners of the globe.

3.12.2016

**Defend the Revolutionary Syrian masses committee @ [workersinternational@gmail.com](mailto:workersinternational@gmail.com)**



Picket at Russian consulate against their slaughter of the Syrian masses



# Memorandum to the Russian Consulate over your terrorising of the Syrian masses

The Russian Consul General  
South Africa  
Dear Sir/Madam

## Re: Concern over the terrorising of the Syrian masses by Russia, US government forces and Israel

In September this year your government signed an agreement with the US regime to jointly co-ordinate the fight against 'terror'.

1. For months now, the Russian military, the Assad militias and allied forces have laid siege to Eastern Aleppo; the more than 200 000 Syrian masses there, cannot leave, nor cross the street to get a slice of bread due to the threat of being either bombed by your forces or shot down by your alliance militias. We note the Assad leaflets that go hand in hand with the bombings from yourselves, namely that if the masses do not leave, they will be obliterated;

In other words, the masses are being terrorised into submission by yourselves and the Assad regime; the same siege methods are being applied by you and your allies in several parts of Syria.

2. The Economist reports that the Kurdish YPG, that is also besieging Aleppo, is supported by 300 US military officials. Thus the terror being dished out to the masses in East Aleppo, is also done by US imperialism as the YPG forces (supported by US troops) are also laying siege to the masses. We remind you that this same US imperialist forces have laid siege to Cuba for over 50 years. Yet here you are, partners in sieges against the Syrian masses. The weapons and funds that Isis has received, comes from the US imperialists, yet here we have the same US imperialists fighting side by side with you and the Assad forces to lay siege to Aleppo. This shows that the September agreement is not about fighting terror but to terrorise ordinary masses who are protesting against the Assad regime;

3. In 1948 hundreds of Palestinian villages were demolished and over 700 000 Palestinians expelled from their lands by the zionist forces. This Nakba was a huge act of terror against the Palestinians. Today there are over 6 million Palestinian refugees who are being prevented by the zionist elite from returning home. The millions of Palestinians who remain in historic Palestine are subject to arbitrary bombings, arrest, torture, their houses are demolished at will, land is seized daily, the illegal wall in and around the West Bank is still being extended, the Palestinians do not have freedom of movement; the destruction of the housing in 2014 in Gaza has still not been repaired due to the ten year blockade by the zionist state and another winter is upon us. The zionist elite annexed the Golan Heights from Syria and still occupies it even today. **In other words, the biggest terrorist in the Middle East is the zionist state.** However you take no punitive action against them. On the contrary, you send a million of your citizens to live on land stolen from the Palestinian, you purchase weapons and drones from the Israeli elite, you step aside and let the zionist jets fly into Syria to bomb a Hezbollah convoy on the 29-30 Nov (Who gave the zionist the co-ordinates and times of the departure of this convoy?). One thing is crystal clear is that if you had to choose between the zionist terror regime and Hezbollah, you will always choose the zionist regime. The US regime gives \$3bn each year to the zionist army. The US regime has waged countless coups against the masses around the world; the US regime is about to demolish the water protectors in North Dakota. Yet your alliance partner in Syria, on the ground in Aleppo, is US imperialism. The facts speak for themselves; The Sept agreement is indeed being implemented and its aims are to terrorise the masses into submission.



4. It is on record (for example the case of Maher Arar) that Assad has rendition prisons of the CIA. Assad did not call you in to clear out the zionist terrorists from the Golan Heights. The Assad regime has been responsible for the vast majority of deaths; his regime is responsible for the displacement of half the Syrian masses in the entire country and yet he calls you in; you do not assist the masses against the terror regime of Assad but assist the terror regime of Assad against the masses. The very drones you purchased from the zionist terror regime, you use against the Syrian masses.
5. The Saudi regime has been terrorising the masses in Yemen. You have not lifted a finger against this terror regime.

We note further, that the zionist regime also discriminates against black people. Yet this regime is your alliance partner.

**We call for the immediate withdrawal of all Russian (and US) troops from Syria and for an end to the bombings.** If you do not, we pledge to continue on a national and international campaign, listing all the responsible members of your regime as continuators of modern day apartheid and slavery. We call for the masses in the Russian Federation to hold your regime to account. **We call on the working class masses of the world to come to the defence of the Syrian revolutionary masses.**

If the ICC had any real standing then Obama, Putin, Netanyahu and Assad would be facing charges of war crimes in Syria. The ICC silence shows that it is an instrument of imperialism.

We remember that 2017 brings commemorations of 100 years since the October revolution. May a new spring blossom in all corners of the globe. 3.12.2016

**Defend the Revolutionary Syrian masses committee** % [workersinternational@gmail.com](mailto:workersinternational@gmail.com)  
28/11/2016



Down with the axis of imperialism- US-Russia-Assad-Iran-Hezbollah



## Syria Breaking news- the invasion of Aleppo has started

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Today, the troops of Al Assad and 5 mercenary armies, with the bombs of Putin and the umbrella of Obama have entered into several neighborhoods of the besieged Aleppo, the capital city of the resistance. The genocidal troops and mercenaries of Bashar the dog entered to the neighborhoods Sakhur, Haydariya, Sheikh Khodr and Seikh Fares. They entered with their rearguard and flanks covered by the Kurdish YPG and PKK.

These neighborhoods, as well as those who remain besieged are being sold out by those who claim to defend them. The FSA went with Turkey to the North of Syria long ago to “confront ISIS” to keep the route of Al Bab. The FSA went to defend the business deals of Turkey and what’s left of it is selling out the northern neighborhoods of the city of Aleppo to the YPG. Los generales del ESL se están preparando para ser integrados nuevamente al ejército de Al Assad. [The FSA generals are preparing to be integrated back into Assad’s army]. Al Nusra shows its true colors. It has negotiated the sellout of Aleppo with the UN. They want to keep the business deals of Idlib for themselves.

**The Sunnite bourgeoisie has fully entered to the business of the partition of Syria, together with Al Assad.**

Obama came to the presidency in 2008 with operation “cast lead” killing the Palestinian masses with its Zionist gendarme. It arrived by crushing the masses of Middle East with blood and fire and now he leaves also making of the Syrian revolution a massacre and bloodbath by the hand of its agents and hired killers like Putin and Assad, so his successor Trump comes later to consolidate victory.

**Aleppo is falling. In there, there are no US marines. There were only starving oppressed who ran out of bullets.** The entire reformist left said that the rebel masses were supported by the USA. They even invented there was an ongoing war between USA and Russia. They said everything in order to hide that there was a massacre on the masses that were making a huge revolution.

**What will this treacherous left say now? Will they say USA is losing world war three against Putin? Now it is clear that they have isolated the Syrian revolution from the world working class. They have a stain in their forehead, since they supported the executioners of the revolution and have freed the area for Assad’s genocide, under the protective umbrella of Obama and the UN.**

They said that the only progressive in Syria were the Kurdish areas and the YPG. They said that ISIS was THE enemy. This way, this smoke-seller left hid Al Assad’s massacre. **What will they say now, when the genocidal forces of Assad are based in the Kurdish areas in Aleppo to move forward on the rebel besieged masses, with the YPG covering their backs?**

This left is a piece of trash. This blood won’t let them speak ever again on behalf of socialism, which by the way they have betrayed long ago.

**Today they are crying because of the death and they pay tribute to Cain Fidel Castro, the ally of Al Assad.**

**We, Trotskyists, are in grief for our martyrs and we pay tribute to the massacred masses in Aleppo and the entire Syria.**

The Syrian revolution hasn’t written its last chapter yet. This chapter will be written by the working class of the Middle East and internationally.

**Only the workers and poor peasants, leading their revolution, can take it to victory, supported in the strength of the workers and oppressed around the world.**

**The renegades of Marxism closed this path for them... the masses will reopen it, over their ruins.**



Carlos Munzer and Abu Muad Authors of the book "Syria Under Fire"

## **YPG and Hezbollah, under Obama's command, enter with fire and blood to take over the rebel Aleppo together with Al Assad and Putin**

The YPG are in alliance with Israel and have within their ranks 300 US military 'advisors'. This shows that the siege of Aleppo is an implementation of the September US-Russia agreement. It also shows that this attack on North East Aleppo is directly under US-Russia military command and Hezbollah is carrying out their instructions. This exposes the lie of Nasrallah who claimed that the crushing of the masses in Aleppo was a continuation of the 2006 war against Israel. Despite numerous invasions of Gaza by the Zionists since 2006, the weapons of Hezbollah in South Lebanon have fallen silent. Perhaps this has something to do with the leadership enjoying the fruit of being in government.

## **For a worker and poor people's leadership for the war!**

24 July 2016

### **Syria**

*From May to July: a giant mass offensive in Khantoman, Aleppo, Daraya...*

*The masses begin to take the destiny of the fighting against genocide by Bashar the dog, in their hands.*

*While the exploited break the siege to Aleppo (the capital of the resistance), reach the center of the city and taking over the banks, the FSA generals are busy making agreements with Al-Assad to save the property of the bourgeoisie as a whole.*

**The leftists servile to Obama** (US imperialism) continue with their siege of silence and slander against the Syrian revolution.

**If the Syrian masses are subordinated to bourgeois generals, only blood, misery and hunger is achieved**

**We must break with these businessmen who lead us to defeat!**

**Let's set up again the coordination committees!**

**A man, a gun! Militias elect their leaders!**

**Let's expropriate without payment and under workers control, the oil companies, banks and all capitalists to solve the problem of bread and put all these resources to win the war!**

**Let's defeat Bashar the dog in Damascus! Let's break the siege to Aleppo!**

It was 2010, in Tunisia, a young unemployed computer engineer had his cart of fruits and vegetables for sale, confiscated by the police. Seeing in despair that he couldn't do anything to earn a living, he decided to immolate, spraying fuel and setting himself on fire. His circumstances symbolized the conditions of all the exploited of the Maghreb and the Middle East, who no longer had bread due to a brutal generalized price increase of between 200% and 400%, notably on food. Thus, Mohamed Bouazizi was the flame that ignited the fire throughout the region, where the exploited won the streets in amazing revolutions that toppled Governments and brutally autocratic regimes. Ben Ali fell in Tunisia, Mubarak in Egypt and Qaddafi in Libya. In the latter country masses armed themselves and set up their militias, destroying the bourgeois state.



Syria was on its way to become like Libya, in the sense that the army split and a huge section went over to the side of the masses in revolt against the regime, to destroy the bourgeois state. In a string of local insurrections, the masses ousted the dog Bashar's troops and liberated almost 60% of the Syrian territory. They were at the gates of Damascus. US imperialism saw that the last mainstay of Zionism was falling, which threatened its borders; however imperialism also faced a huge limitation: due to the reaction of its own working class after the recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, it was impeded from sending its army to launch new invasions.

The US Government had a new "Vietnam syndrome". So it sent its agent Bashar to wage a brutal massacre, which still continues with a genocide of more than half a million dead and half of the Syrian population was forced to leave their homes and live as refugees in tents or in the middle of nowhere, inside or outside Syria. So Bashar al Assad performed the dirty work for all imperialist powers, and had his hands free to do it thanks to the fence of silence and slander that was set up around the Syrian masses, which resulted in its isolation from the world proletariat. This siege was carried out on behalf of imperialism by the WSF (World Social Forum) and the Renegades of Marxism and the left of Obama (the pro-imperialist 'left').

**But the Syrian masses remained standing despite facing massacre after massacre. Imperialism concentrated all their counter-revolutionary forces in Syria to break that chain of revolutions engulfing the entire region, that even put in question the borders of the Zionist enclave and began to unify with the actions of the working class in Europe and the United States [against the imperialist-capitalist regimes].**

**Imperialism instructed its different agents to take care of the property of the bourgeoisie**, first of all the oil companies. Some of these agents (FSA and Jabhat al Nusra, and even ISIS) presented themselves as friends of the people (either "democratic" or "Islamic") and went to the interior of the mass movement to control it, to dissolve any attempt by the masses to put up organs of dual power and prevent them from expropriating the property of capitalists. Others (the Iranian ayatollahs, the mercenaries of Hezbollah and Putin's White Army), were sent in to support and help the Al Assad regime when it was falling, while others were commissioned to maintain the siege of silence and slander so that no worker in the world dares to send aid to his/her Syrian brothers and sisters (this role was played by the global left and the Renegades of Marxism and reformist-without-reforms parties).

***Imperialism has a plan: dividing the exploited and subjecting them to their various torturers to end up in supporting Bashar the dog***

Six and a half years Obama takes steps to begin openly supporting his watchdog Bashar, the most genocidal government in recent decades. That was the aim of the Geneva conferences, including the division of the exploited masses to stifle the revolution.

The first counter-revolutionary Covenant to begin suffocating the Syrian revolution was the "non-aggression" pact between the Kurdish bourgeoisie and Bashar the dog, which separated the heroic Kurdish masses from their Syrian class brothers and sisters, who had grown up side by side and fought together shoulder to shoulder against the Assad regime. This covenant imposed not only "non-aggression" but also the collaboration between the YPG (the military arm of the Kurdish bourgeoisie in Syria) and the forces of Bashar.

Another counter-revolutionary Pact that divided the front of the Syrian revolution against the regime was an undeclared covenant of "non-aggression" between the ISIS and Bashar... which proved to be a real pact of aggression against the masses. ISIS had been commanded by imperialism to control Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor provinces when the masses there rose up, expelling troops from the regime. Isis was sent to prevent them from taking over the oil wells located there. ISIS men could enter, demagogically waving fake anti-imperialist credentials of 'fights' against the US they had allegedly waged and carrying lots of money to give alms and contain the masses.

But all that was to be mounted to impose a strict control based on its military apparatus and its narrow interpretation of Koranic law. Thus, they not only guarded the property of the imperialist oil companies; they were responsible for controlling and suffocating the insurrectional process, also gutting the best rebel



vanguard. In the hands of the ISIS, Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor went from being insurgent provinces against dog Bashar to be a dead weight in the struggle to reach Damascus.

From that position, ISIS made a deal with Al-Assad and turned their weapons against rebel areas instead of marching on Damascus. They only faced, very occasionally, Bashar's troops when there was business in dispute. So at the beginning of January 2014 Isis launched an attack on the masses of Aleppo and Idlib, who, in addition to confronting Al-Assad, now also had to resist ISIS' incursions.

**This concentration of agents had to be centralized. For this, the imperialism Yankee led the so-called "Geneva Conferences".** From there, Obama directed the operations of each of the agents on Syrian territory. His goal was to make Assad massacre the masses as much as he can; but he was not permitted to completely progress and impose himself over the entire Syrian territory. US imperialism wants to be in control of which group dominates and they want to determine how to advance the colonization of Syria. On the other hand, it knows the genocidal Government of Bashar would be too unstable to ensure imperialist business in a colonized Syria. Bashar's role is that of an assassin, and once he reaches the end of his work, imperialism will cast him off as it did before with Milosevic. It needs to clean its bloodstained hands before the masses of the world. For that it plans to put in place a replacement Government, and for that it was preparing an agreement with the FSA, whose role is subduing and controlling the masses to impose on them a surrender and to force them to accept this agreement.

**Ultimately, the Geneva plan was the Covenant between the different agents involved in Syria to impose, while sharing business, a defeat on the masses of the Syrian revolution and throughout the region – what amounts to a severe warning not to rise up again, so that imperialism lays the basis for a "democratic transition" between the FSA and Bashar through a common Government and army.**

**But they could never impose any of these agreements on the masses. The FSA could never finish containing the masses sufficiently. The masses are adamant in not accepting genocidal Bashar as their government, or even letting anybody agree with him.** Thus if the FSA appeared next to Al-Assad, it would immediately lose all credibility as a mechanism of control of the masses in the areas the latter had freed from the presence of the troops of the Bashar the dog.

Imperialism tried to, but never could settle this plan of Geneva due to the action of the masses. Similar deceptions were attempted with some success in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and until 2014 in Yemen, with Governments that were only channels (or agencies) to go back imposing the old autocracies that had ruled those countries for decades, by submitting the masses to imperialism and handing over all those nations' wealth to them. In Syria they could never do that, since imperialism was never able to create another government different from that against which the revolutionary uprisings had gone. Moreover they always supported Bashar the dog, because he was carrying out the counter-revolutionary attack by means of genocide, on account of all the imperialist powers.

Imperialism did not want to remove him prematurely from the Government, because it knows that there are more than 10 million of internally displaced Syrians out of a population of 24 million. So, if imperialism had removed him, the masses could have seen that as their own triumph and returned to their destroyed homes and even called into question the property relations by which the Syrian bourgeoisie control, which is almost in its entirety still intact; meanwhile if that had happened the FSA would not have had sufficient control over the masses to prevent their eruption. **Then, Obama played its part to keep Bashar in the Government, for the massacre to continue.** So it does, even now. Yet the revolution is still alive. Neither the FSA nor Jabhat at the Nusra or any other agent whom imperialism commanded, controls it. ISIS is the only one containing the revolution in the areas it is established. But this could not imposed outside Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor.

Because of this, the unprecedented suffering of the Syrian masses intensifies every day. Hunger and despair pushed the masses to fight for survival, and they sought to solve these problems by directly attacking the property of the bourgeoisie. Having the FSA (together with Jabhat to al Nusra) caring for the bourgeois private property (factories, banks, etc.) in the areas that the masses had liberated, the exploited were earning a wage



of only 20 dollars monthly. The same hardships are also endured by those who live in the areas dominated by Al-Assad.

The capitalist economy follows its course, even during war. The means of production continue to be privately owned, there is super exploitation of workers in factories and workshops (both in the areas of Bashar as in areas of the FSA and Jabhat al Nusra, not to mention in ISIS' areas). Trade goes on, even between the different areas. The factory bosses in the liberated areas sell to everybody, Bashar included. He feeds his war machine by buying gasoline and diesel oil from ISIS areas. In short, FSA and ISIS also cater to Bashar and his genocidal army of mercenaries.

The movement of goods is ensured by checkpoints controlled by each of these groups, which are true bourgeois army-parties. In those checkpoints they also charge their taxes. Everything is bought and sold in Syrian liras, the official currency, which is printed on the central bank in Damascus. Through banks and exchange houses, the currency reaches all areas of Syria, whether they are controlled by Bashar or the FSA, Jabhat al Nusra or ISIS.

***Driven by their unprecedented sufferings, and trying to stop the massacre, from May to July this year the masses returned to combat with their insurrectional method as in 2011, despite and against their leaderships***

The situation of extreme deprivation could not be endured anymore. The trigger was early last May with Putin's bombing of the tents in Sarmada where many Syrian IDPs lived. There was not only hunger and unprecedented misery... not even the refugees were safe from the massacre. And with all the anger and the will to succeed as only form of surviving, the masses marched from Idlib and from the West of the province of Aleppo (both "liberated areas") to sweep Assad's and their allies' troops, and caused a huge defeat to the regime and to their Iranian allies in the village of Khantoman, early last May.

From there, **a new phase of Syria's civil war has been opened, in which the masses are trying to take in their hands the lead of the war and fight with their methods and not those which the FSA (leaders) were trying to impose.** They sought to solve the problem of bread, which the FSA was preventing. They sought to have the weapons required to win the war, which the FSA zealously kept away from the frontlines and only used to subdue the masses. They sought to liberate their brothers and sisters who were crushed under the boot of the regime in the areas it still controls... something that the FSA has refused to do, because they don't want to move a meter more towards Damascus.

But for each action that advanced the masses in this sense, there was a counter-revolutionary response almost immediately and to the same level that the action that they had made.

The masses who had been victorious in Khantoman had imposed on them a leadership that diverted them toward exhausting and meaningless battles in an attempt to take away territory of towns and villages of neither military nor political or geostrategic importance; and at the same time, a fierce campaign of co-opting them to the military campaign of the FSA (under Turkish command) aiming to combat in the Syrian North confronting only ISIS and not Bashar.

The masses expropriated a textile factory under workers control in Urem al Kubra, a liberated zone west of Aleppo. The generals of the FSA could not prevent this takeover or evict the workers. Then came Assad's aircraft and reduced the factory to rubble in the middle of June.

Fifteen hundred militiamen marched at the end of June to the barracks and arsenals of a division of the FSA Generals, announcing that they would break away from its command, but wanted their weapons, since these generals are far from the front and the militiamen are the only ones fighting the dog Bashar. Then a group of corrupt officials from the FSA disguised themselves as friends and accompanied the mobilization to take over its leadership from within; thus they achieved that, despite the rupture, the militiamen remain under their command and therefore linked to the FSA, at the same time as the clerics came out to defend the leadership position of those 'generals without battle\*'. [\* 'generals without battle' refers to those generals who are leading the FSA but why do not go to the frontline where the battles are taking place, but give instructions from a



distance. These FSA generals are all part of the Assad army but 'defected' to the side of the masses, to control from within].

Close to Damascus is the town of Daraya, a rebel area that was isolated for four years while resisting the advances of Bashar the dog. A few months ago the heroic masses of this area launched an attack on Hezbollah positions in the airport of Mazzah (on the outskirts of Daraya) where they inflicted a significant loss to the Lebanese group, killing one of its major political and military leaders, Mustafa Badder-eddin. After this action, the siege of Daraya was broken when the exploited were able to open a corridor to another of the rebel areas that was also fenced off, Moadamiya. But the FSA, from the Southern front, where it has huge armament and men as in the province of Dera'a and Swaidiya, called on them to maintain positions in their areas and not advance on Damascus nor did they join up with the rebel masses in Daraya and Moadamiya. It left them at the mercy of Bashar and especially Hezbollah, which launched a huge counter-attack with heavy forces returned to reimpose the siege on Daraya and set it on the verge of falling.

The District of Waer, in the city of Homs, had been the last bastion of insurgent masses before the fall of that city. At the end of this quarter last year the masses rose up again but were sold out by the FSA generals to Bashar's troops in exchange for UNO crumbs.

However, the masses refused to withdraw, even despite being under fierce direct attacks carried out by Assad's mercenary occupation forces. In early May in the Waer neighborhood the masses rose again, entering into hard engagements with Assad's mercenaries, through house to house and street to street battles, forcing them to withdraw from the city. As immediate response Bashar launched a military siege and a fierce aerial bombardment, and no general of the FSA launched any counter offensive against the dog, to join nor support the insurrectionists in al Waer.

### ***Aleppo insurrection of July 11, marked a turning point***

One of the most malicious betrayals the heroic masses of Syria have suffered, happened some weeks ago. The Dog Bashar, supported by thousands of mercenaries from Hezbollah and Russian aircraft, took by storm the last route linking Aleppo liberated neighborhoods with the suburbs, a route even reaching the border with Turkey through Bab al Hawa pass.

Evidently the dog Bashar sought surrender by famine of the resistance in Aleppo by cutting off the last supply road. In their turn the bourgeoisie of the FSA and their generals needed that route to continue trading and performing business. A gap opened of negotiation between al Assad's men and the FSA. The masses' desire to survive was stronger than any need for negotiating of these bourgeois, so they stormed through those gaps. Several young people and workers from various fractions of the FSA and Islamist wings unified and coordinated their forces, despite and against their leaderships, and launched a fierce attack against Bashar's artillery, which was on the sides of Castello road (North of Aleppo). These young men were able to break the siege and advanced across the city, merging with a spectacular uprising of the masses within neighborhoods, even those controlled by al Assad's scourge. They returned to the insurrectional methods of 2011. The fact is, in areas controlled by Al-Assad, the situation also is unendurable. So the fighting arrived at the centre of the city and called into question the banks and embassies, as well as also one by one the barracks, where the mercenaries had been stationed to concentrate their attacks on the masses, were overrun.

While this was happening, the FSA, for fear of losing their businesses and their property immediately drew all the militiamen to leave the city with the excuse that there were no conditions for victory nor to hold on to any possible victory; they even withdrew, at gunpoint, ambulances and support vehicles that were backing the vanguard men fighting in the streets of Aleppo.

The FSA didn't give a damn about handing out their business route to Bashar, as the bourgeois are clear that when the poor masses are fighting, the whole property of capitalists is at risk.



Not content with this, they gave time to the dog Bashar to occupy completely Castello road, even with infantry and cavalry. And after that the FSA began to launch a war of positions in overall inequality of conditions, regardless of the life of those who went to fight. Today, al Assad's siege has been closed again on the rebel Aleppo. And the fronts are receding where the masses had advanced.

***The infamous agreement between the generals of the FSA and genocidal Bashar***

**The generals of the FSA care first and foremost for capitalist private property, i.e. that the masses do not expropriate the capitalists. They are capitalists, owners, bourgeois, businessmen. Hence before the mass offensive, that arose independently of their control in Aleppo, joined the exploited masses in the other neighborhoods, the FSA generals teamed up with Al Assad's troops to close gaps and stop that onslaught. The FSA generals saw the masses taking banks, they trembled to such an extent that they made a deal with Assad quickly. They sealed a deal to safeguard their property, as an expression of the covenant between Turkey and Russia (their respective allies) that the latter had made public just a few days before.**

**The aim of this deal is closing ranks before an advance of the masses which also came together both in the liberated areas and the areas controlled by the dog Bashar.**

In fact the method of the insurrection of 2011 was returning, the way that the exploited used when they defeated al Assad's army and liberated cities. The immediate possibility of reaching Damascus was on the order of the day, the possibility once again, to expropriate the bourgeoisie of both al Assad and the FSA, and above all the imperialist oil companies guarded by ISIS. The revolution was regaining its drive and coordinating committees and the struggles of the masses were setting up embryonic bodies of soviets. **It was time to win the war**, because again the militiamen ignore the orders of the FSA generals and joined the exploited in the zones of the regime, which is being held solely in place by its occupation forces (Hezbollah, Iranian guards, etc), proving that it no longer has any social base. **That is what the Turkey - Russia Covenant came to prevent, i.e. Assad's fall by a revolutionary action of the masses.**

Each one of them played its part. Al-Assad was reinforced again by Russian forces and Hezbollah and launched a redoubled offensive, both in Aleppo and other rebel areas, while Putin's aircraft are massacring without mercy. The FSA calls for holding, to maintain positions and not advance to the forefront and so patrols are left isolated in the front; FSA sends small groups to wars of position with inferiority of men and weaponry to deal with Assad's troops and their allies. In each territory that they advance, if the FSA fails to impose its leadership, they call for immediate withdrawal, it leaves only a small number of fighters so that they are destroyed by Assad and Putin's artillery and aviation, against which they have no weaponry or way to stop it, and always have to go back and seek refuge.

Through this latest deal, the FSA generals and Bashar al Assad's heads are negotiating to restore the officers corps. They want to put an end to the Syrian revolution and impose a decisive defeat for the masses. But they cannot do this together. The generals of the FSA are now largely viewed as full members of the Geneva talks but no longer have authority in the eyes of the Syrian masses. The FSA need a top layer of officers that have enough authority as to make the masses swallow their deals of surrender; they need them for marching together with Assad's genocidal officers to a "new Syria". That's why a plan has begun to be implemented to try to break and corrupt the best of the rebel vanguard in Syria. Amidst the situation of misery they offer money, cars, equipment, and a trip to Qatar and Turkey for their "training". Many fighters have already withdrawn from the front. And others have been led to die in FSA side battles in inferior conditions, leaving them lonely and isolated in battles, etc.

***Jabhat the Nusra and Ahrar Sham in the agreement: two real "left" obstacles to the masses' drive***

Ahrar al Sham and Jabhat al Nusra leaders have come to publicly denounce the FSA as traitors. Thus, they have put themselves on the left, because they want to try to contain anyone who breaks with FSA's control. But at the same time, they justify their inaction in the present fighting with this statement. While the militiamen break the control of the FSA and go to fight against al Assad and break the siege to Aleppo, while the masses



under the boot of Bashar revolt, Jabhat al Nusra and Ahrar al Sham armies remain inactive with all their heavy weapons in the neighboring province, Idlib.

The betrayal of the generals of the FSA gave the perfect excuse to the leaders of these two groups in Idlib to impose what they always have guaranteed: the division between the fronts in Idlib and Aleppo, i.e. the separation of the fights against Bashar.

Nor are they interested in getting to Damascus or winning the war. They only trade for their own pockets from the areas they control. They are businessmen. They also are part of the agreement. They are a cap which controls the masses where they have presence; they want anyone who breaks with the FSA to fall under their aegis, and at the same time they refuse to coordinate the forces they lead, with the battles that the masses, that break with the FSA generals, are waging.

***The generals of the FSA, Jabhat al Nusra and Ahrar al Sham are now an absolute brake against the victory of the revolution***

All the defeats suffered by the dog Bashar and his troops, all the areas liberated where the masses advanced, all attacks that put the regime of al Assad on the verge of falling in these last six years and half were due to the revolutionary action of the exploited. They are the masses fighting with their insurrection methods. Whenever the FSA imposed its methods of isolated patrols that contested territory, all they have got are defeats and demoralization of the masses.

**FSA generals did not liberate any area. Nor did Jabhat al Nusra generals. Only the masses did, looking for not only defeating Bashar and freedom, but being able to eat, having bread, fulfilling the demands of the revolution for which they had taken the streets of every city in 2011. The fighting that still remains is because the masses know that they don't have another solution save for advancing on Bashar and arriving in Damascus. They know that the only way to have food, a home, a job... a life... is winning the war. And as they suffer, they are over and over again going into combat.**

**The officialdom of the FSA and Jabhat al Nusra weaken the offensive. Beside each one of them there are the Muslim clerics to manipulate the masses, imbue them of a consciousness of submission to those generals.** This combination of generals and clerics who have expropriated the revolutionary processes is what guarantees the imposition of not only military policies and business agreements with Bashar. Generals and clerics are responsible for imposing the conditions of misery in the liberated zones. There are no schools; the wages are meager \$ 20 monthly for 12-hour workdays. Food and basic resources are scarce. Medical care is very poor for a war zone. No one can even express discontent with their government; they have destroyed and dissolved the coordinating committees, and all organs of direct democracy of the masses, of workers and poor farmers' alliance... Why is it that there are so many millions of refugees and displaced persons who are not fighting? Because they do not see any reason for giving their life for these generals, that impose conditions of misery even worse than they had before the 2011 uprising.

**Any proletarian leadership in this war would expropriate the property of capitalists and banks everywhere, ensuring that the masses and territory are liberated from the troops of Al-Assad, to solve the problem of bread and put everything available to the service of winning the war. It would ensure that those establishments don't cater to Bashar by trading with him, as FSA and Jabhat al Nusra's businessmen do. It would give each man [and woman] a rifle. It would put up coordinating committees, i.e., organs of direct democracy. It would call on all the refugees to return to recover their houses, their lives, to combat together, and would give each one of them a weapon and a place in the committees of coordination.**

**It would add massive forces to combat -not only Syrian and refugee masses, but those of the world working class, today unable to intervene together with their class brothers and sisters in Syria due to the encirclement of the revolution by the treacherous leaderships.**



The leadership of the working class is the cause why victory has not been achieved... both inside Syria in the hands of the bourgeois generals of the FSA and Jabhat at the Nusra, as of the international working class under the spell of the WSF and the new left.

Precisely this is what Trotsky had warned about what the Republican bourgeoisie did in the Spanish civil war of 1931-39: *"The masses who had assured all the previous successes of the revolution still continued to believe that the revolution would reach its logical conclusion, that is, achieve an overturn in property relations, give land to the peasants, and transfer the factories into the hands of the workers. **The dynamic force of the revolution was lodged precisely in this hope of the masses for a better future. But the honorable republicans did everything in their power to trample, to besmirch, or simply to drown in blood the cherished hopes of the oppressed masses.**"* (León Trotsky, "The tragedy of Spain", January 30, 1939, our emphasis)

To unleash the "dynamic force of the revolution" in Syria, it is necessary to get rid of the "Republican gentlemen" of the FSA. For a proletarian leadership of the war! Let's set up again coordination committees!

### ***On conditions for victory***

Obviously the policy of the Syrian bourgeoisie, which is an expression of the policies of the global imperialist bourgeoisies, is to save and protect property at any necessary cost; it doesn't matter if they have to massacre hundreds of thousands (as already they have done) and even millions of people. Leon Trotsky defined it in writing on the Spanish civil war apropos Franco-Assad:

*"On Franco's side there is neither a staunch army nor popular support. There is only the greed of proprietors ready to drown in blood three – fourths of the population if only to maintain their rule over the remaining one – fourth. (...) Franco's great superiority lies in this, that he has a clear and definite program: to safeguard and stabilize capitalist property, the rule of the exploiters, and the domination of the church; and to restore the monarchy."* (León Trotsky, "The Tragedy of Spain", January 30, 1939)

The agreement... today the plan of imperialism and its agents boils down to this. It will bring not more democracy, but a deepening of the massacre and a graveyard. More fascism will come. This they need to impose. Even ISIS is too soft for them. For this reason they are already agreeing on its departure and this leaves the masses at the mercy of the mercenaries of Al-Assad and the bombings not only of Russia but also of the U.S.-led coalition. They just bombard civilians. The masses oppose these counter-revolutionary forces because they already know what will happen if the latter enter: they will impose a fascism ten thousand times worse than that of ISIS, as already happened in Palmyra.

**Down with Geneva conferences and all the covenants among the businessmen made behind the backs of the poor people and those who are fighting! Down with the deals between the FSA and Bashar! Let's march to Damascus for defeating the dog! It is imperative to break the siege to Aleppo!**

The FSA does not represent the Syrian exploited masses. No one voted them or mandated them. They boast of representing the Syrian people, but they are, on the contrary, who gave up on them. Let's ignore all the generals-without-battle and the authority from other agents that control different parts of Syria. For a Syrian National Assembly with a delegate each 10 thousand inhabitants in all the liberated areas, the refugee camps and the areas occupied by Bashar and ISIS and the Kurdish area!

**Let's bring back standing coordination committees neighborhood by neighborhood, village by village! Let them centralize and coordinate at the national level! That is the true power of the workers and poor people.**

**In their militia, they must choose their own leaders in assemblies! Enough of the weapons hoard by the FSA, Jabhat the Nusra and other groups! A man, a gun!**



**Let's expropriate oil wells, banks, factories and the entire property of the bourgeoisie [and place these under workers' control]! There the funds are to solve the problem of bread and win the war.**

**To succeed, the head of Bashar must roll in Damascus! For the military defeat of his mercenary troops and all those who support him as Putin, Hezbollah and the Iranian ayatollahs! We socialist revolutionaries affirm that this can be achieved only starting from the insurrectionary method.** So it was that all the cities were freed in 2011 / 2012 from the presence of Bashar's troops; thus the center of Aleppo was reached on July 11; this is the way to move forward all across Syria.

**We call the exploited masses to follow this path and fight for their interests, in order to have a home, a salary equal to the family shopping basket, bread, decent jobs. They must rise up both in the liberated areas and the areas still occupied by Bashar, expropriating the capitalists to ensure those demands. In areas that ISIS controls, the masses should disarm those guardians of the imperialist oil and expropriate those businessmen.** Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor should once again become bastions of the Syrian revolution in the fight against the dog Bashar and his allies. The masses, taking oil wells, refineries and power plants can cut the supply of energy and hydrocarbons to Bashar... depriving his army.

**Let's restore the revolutionary front of 2011! We call on the Kurdish people to break all the agreements sealed by their own bourgeoisie and the leadership of the PKK and the YPG both with Bashar the dog in Syria and with US imperialism in Iraq, and to march to Damascus, raising the same demands of all the exploited, which are also his, and which they have failed to get in Rojava. For only in a worker and peasant Syria of the poor people, they may have even their right to national self-determination. In it all the minorities will be respected.**

**Let's unite and coordinate with our Palestinian, Iraqi, Yemeni brethren and those in the entire Maghreb and Middle East! From Tunisia to Aleppo to Jerusalem to Baghdad, a same intifada!**

**We call on the European, Russian, US, and Iranian working class to revolt and stop the murderous war machinery of their Governments, assassins on account of imperialism.** Beware that for each bomb they drop in Syria, they will wage a top attack within your countries.

The key to victory is in the hands of the workers today rising up in Europe, as in France, and in the United States against Obama, the head of the Geneva Conferences' agreements and so many counterrevolutionary henchmen, paid agents that have gotten to the interior of the mass movement to make it surrender, acting as Trojan horses. In Assad's banks, from where vast fortunes are drawn, all the Middle East-looting US-UK imperialist oil companies launder their money. All of us are facing the same enemy.

**From the world proletariat the best help will come for the Syrian revolution and the victory of the World Socialist Revolution.**

Brigada León Sedov





## *Joint Statement of Workers International Vanguard League (WIVL, South Africa) and the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT)*

We declare our unconditional support for the brave striking brothers and sisters at CPUT ([Cape Peninsula University of Technology](#)). The University workers and staff are on strike because, the bosses choose to ignore the unions and they don't want to raise the wage sufficiently (because they claim – wrongly - that they have no money). They are also refusing to implement the basic principle of equal work for equal pay. The struggle of the workers and staff shows us the way forward: class struggle action and industrial action! We support the demands of the workers, including higher wages, equality and an end to outsourcing! We salute the heroic struggle of the students who have forced the write-off of debt and the lowering of fees. Education was supposed to have been fully subsidized by the state. The writing off of the debt has nothing to do with the workers' wages/salaries and conditions of service. We say no to the militarisation of universities and call for an end to victimization of the students. We say no to suspension and expulsion of students who were advancing the cause of free education.

We support the strike as it is part of the growing resistance against the government. Why do we say this: It is because even though we have all been fighting for free, quality education for all up to the highest level, the government have cut funding to universities every year since 2000. At the same time, while Anglo American and other monopolies have been stealing trillions before and after 1994, they have not been prosecuted and in fact their level of tax on profits have dropped from 48% in the days of apartheid, to 28% now, under a supposedly democratic regime. The government and its allies deepen exploitation and show they are incapable of achieving true equality. They were responsible for the massacre of the heroic brothers in Marikana and heat up xenophobia to divide the oppressed. Therefore we fight for the formation of a new revolutionary, workers party. Such a party would concentrate to unite and coordinate the struggles of all workers and oppressed and not like the capitalist parties to get seats in parliament and money from the bosses!

We call for joint committees of workers, staff and students (and even parents) to be formed to support the strike. It is intolerable that there is no end to discrimination, that there is still outsourcing and younger workers have fewer benefits. It is intolerable that the curriculum and university structures are untransformed. University leaders should be directly elected and subject to instant recall; they should not earn more than the average staff member. We demand an end to cronyism and nepotism.

Our class is international and the battles we fight are also international, a victory for the workers in South Africa is a victory for all of our class! Therefore we call for international solidarity with the workers struggle in South Africa, not just for our brothers and sisters at CPUT, not only in support of the students, but also for the miners, agricultural workers and all those who are exploited by the bosses! The struggle for an end to exploitation and oppression is international.

***Long live international solidarity! Victory to the CPUT workers!***





### *Internationale*

Arise ye workers from your slumbers  
Arise ye prisoners of want  
For reason in revolt now thunders  
And at last ends the age of cant.  
Away with all your superstitions  
Servile masses arise, arise  
We'll change henceforth the old tradition  
And spurn the dust to win the prize.

So comrades, come rally  
And the last fight let us face  
The Internationale unites the human race.

So comrades, come rally  
And the last fight let us face  
The Internationale unites the human race.

No saviour from on high delivers  
No faith have we in prince or peer  
Our own right hand the chains must shiver  
Chains of hatred, greed and fear  
E'er the thieves will out with their booty  
And give to all a happier lot.  
Each at the forge must do their duty  
And we'll strike while the iron is hot.



# The Spark

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### **Where to contact us:**

1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Community House, 41 Salt River rd, Salt River, 7925. Cape Town, South Africa Ph 021 4476777 Ph or sms: 0822020617, Email: [workersinternational@gmail.com](mailto:workersinternational@gmail.com) website:

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