

DEFEND NUMSA! STRUGGLE FOR AN INDEPENDENT, SOCIALIST WORKERS' MOVEMENT

In December 1985, millions of oppressed and exploited in South Africa and indeed across the world celebrated the birth of a giant of the working class – COSATU. Forged in struggles on factory floors, mine shafts, farms and homes of the rich across the country, the independent trade union movement became a powerful expression of the unity of the working class. COSATU embodied the principles of workers' democracy and unity, fought for improvements in the lives of ordinary workers and played a leading role in the struggle against apartheid and for socialism.

On the eve of its thirtieth anniversary, COSATU's rich legacy of independent workers' struggles is being torn asunder. The expulsion of NUMSA by the leadership clique of COSATU threatens the very existence of the federation.

How did this tragedy come about? The answer lies in the SACP's celebration of NUMSA's expulsion. Blade Nzimande has spewed venom at the more than 300 000 workers in NUMSA, calling their union a 'stinking corpse'. The leaders of the SACP are prepared to destroy COSATU and divide the working class in order to defend the Tripartite Alliance under whose rule inequality has deepened, the ranks of the unemployed continue to increase, corruption has become widespread, food insecurity has reached alarming levels and the Marikana massacre happened.

Unfortunately, the COSATU leadership has now become an active partner in this betrayal of the working class and poor. NUMSA was expelled because it refused to be silent in the face of COSATU's continued transformation into a sweetheart federation, to be used by the ANC & SACP.

Already the praise-singers of capital are wringing their hands in delight and urging them to use the opportunity created by the divisions in COSATU to push for labour policy reforms. No doubt, the ANC bosses will similarly forge ahead with the neoliberal National Development Plan.

The future of the workers' movement is at stake. Ordinary members of COSATU will have been shocked by the SACP-led attack on their federation. The seven unions that have taken a principled position to defend NUMSA have made it clear that workers' independence and democracy are under threat in COSATU. Together with NUMSA they have undertaken to struggle for the heart and soul of COSATU, to rebuild the federation on the foundations that were laid thirty years ago. We must support the struggle of COSATU workers to reclaim their unions.

As socialists, we stand firmly behind the campaign to defend NUMSA. We support NUMSA's call for the immediate convening of Special Congress of COSATU where the members of the federation can openly debate issues and hold the leadership to account.

We call on workers in COSATU to:

Demand the convening of a national congress and the unconditional re-instatement of NUMSA. Support NUMSA in breaking from ANC and the SACP and join it in building a United Front.

We must stand together to build a new COSATU, a new union movement that is worker-controlled, democratic, independent and socialist.

FIGHT TO BUILD A NEW COSATU! BUILD THE UNITED FRONT FOR SOCIALISM!



SOLIDARITY PICKET OUTSIDE MEETING OF NINE COSATU UNIONS JOINT NEC MEETING
- IN CAR
PARK 9AM SHARP 22 NOV SOUTHERN SUN GARDEN COURT, OR TAMBO, HULLEY ROAD
- TURN OFF
AT BARBARA ROAD JUNCTION ON AIRPORT ROAD