
Crisis? What Crisis Say Government!
Down With Business As Usual, Time for the People to
Speak Out and Act:
Time for the Working Class to Get Up Off Our Knees!

Statement by the Committee to Form a New Trade Union Federation
12th October 2016.

The crisis in our society is deepening by the hour! Not a day now goes by without another serious scandal or Government misdemeanor coming to light. While our invisible President stays out of the country to allow his lieutenants to work overtime to cover his tracks on so many fronts, the South African people are right to ask themselves a key question... who exactly is running our country, and in whose interests! It is time for the People to take back the power that has been stolen from them.

The Crisis in Education : How to Win!

While students continue to campaign for free education, the state has responded with repression. Not only are protesting students subject to extreme riot control policing, but are now being attacked for simply being in groups on campus, whether they are protesting or not! The indiscriminate use of force on students, and on those seeking to provide shelter, for example the deliberate shooting in the face of Father Graham Pugin, is adding to the maintenance of a crisis situation where force is being justified to crush the student campaign.

The announcement of an Interministerial Task Team, convened by Minister Radebe, to address the question of fees, looks more like a gathering of the security cluster. The Task Team is made up of the Minister of Police Nhleko, Minister of Justice and Correctional Services Masutha, Minister of State Security Mahlobo, Minister of Defence and Military Veterans Mapisa-Qakula, Minister of Home Affairs Gigaba, Minister for Science and Technology Pandoor, and for Minister of Higher Education and Training Nzimande.

If the Task Team is genuinely to look at fees, and especially the economic implications, why is the Finance Minister excluded?

We now know that he has been excluded because of the charges that were laid against him this morning by the NPA. **This is not a Task Team to resolve the education crisis. This is a task team to discuss how best to break the student protest.** The General Secretary of the SACP, now known as the Invisible Minister of Higher Fees Education and Training should be ashamed of himself, hiding behind tired and completely discredited 'third force' excuses to justify campus repression.

We therefore call upon all those who support the noble aims of the student campaign, including their magnificent victory against outsourcing of workers, to be mobilization ready. Now more than ever we need to do the following :

- (a) To support the students and encourage them to focus on the central demands of the campaign, and not to be distracted by the provocations of private security guards and the riotous police, but focus instead on building the active involvement of the mass of students.
- (b) To encourage our student comrades to strengthen the linkages within campuses between the workers, the academic and administrative staff, and parents.
- (c) To strengthen the linkages between campuses so that a genuine national mass democratic student movement can be established, and to call for decisive national action.
- (d) To be ready to engage with Tertiary Administrations and to place clear and practical demands on the table, and most importantly, to emphasis that they expect Tertiary Admins to support the campaign for free education, and to direct their campaign at those who can resolve this crisis, which is the Government!
- (e) To win wide spread support for the demand that Government can and must find the resources for Education as it does for bailouts, repression, wastefulness, tax breaks for the rich, and unchecked corruption.
- (f) We also call upon all those who support free education to insist that it be free at the point of delivery, and that students must not be subjected to 'means' tests, or other wasteful and bureaucratic restrictive practices. The most effective way for the rich to pay for education is through taxation, and the tax system must be adjusted accordingly.
- (g) We also call upon our student comrades to consolidate their power, and to call mass assemblies in every campus, and invite workers, parents and guardians, civil society, faith based organisations, trade unions, and management to get behind a mass campaign against austerity in education and to campaign for Government to make resources available. We must not allow the divisive tactics of the Minister of Higher Fees Education to hold sway!
- (h) Finally we must all demand an end to the militarisation of our tertiary institutions before another 'Marikana Moment' is before us. The police and privatized repressive forces must be withdrawn from all campuses immediately, and all those who have been detained must be released.

The students are our children. They are the future of our country. We cannot allow them to be subject to forms of repression more befitting what their parents confronted under apartheid. They should be supported by all those who want to see a fair society.

The Crisis in Government 1 : Treasury Being Prepared for Looting!

The charges that have now been levelled against the Minister of Finance indicate the depths the Presidency is prepared to sink in order to ensure that capturing of the

state can proceed without interruption. The Presidency knows full well that this will have negative effect on the markets, and will probably tip the balance in terms of ratings, and weaken the Rand. But they are clearly very prepared for this to happen as long as it allows unfettered control and access of the Treasury.

It is known that Minister Pravin Gordham has been scrutinizing and even blocking finance to Presidents Zuma's patronage projects in state owned enterprises and elsewhere. While we are not under any illusions about the negative anti-worker neo-liberal austerity policies being pursued by Minister Gordham, we oppose his removal because we know it is being done to ensure that the predators can have free reign to Government coffers. We therefore demand :

- (a) An end to the use of state institutions like the NPA to settle internal factional scores within the Ruling Party and Government.
- (b) An end to patronage and rendering state institutions captive to private interests.
- (c) Treasury to make a full and immediate disclosure of attempts to capture the resources of the country for those bent on state capture, and related predatory activities.

The Crisis in Government 2 : Captured State Continues!

The continuing mistreatment of the Public Protector by the Presidency indicates just how determined the President is to avoid the string of more than 750 charges that are currently levelled against him. The Presidents unwillingness to face the courts is abundantly clear. His insistence that the investigations by the Public Protector be stalled, side-tracked and tampered with by his office is designed to once again to forestall the fateful date when he will actually be called to account.

We therefore call on the retiring and the new Public Protector to publicly commit to ensuring that the investigation into state capture be continued with haste, and the results reported to the public, to empower our people with the truth! In the meantime we say, 'Hands Off' the public protector, and all state institutions for private gain and advantage.

Crisis in Government 3 : An Unprecedented President....for the Worse!

The tragic death of Fezekile Ntsukela Kuzwayo, known to the public as **Khwezi**, who has passed away while in enforced exile in the UK while studying early childhood development is a stark reminder of the need for all of us to be mindful of several important issues.

- (a) That never again must any of us allow ourselves to be duped into supporting a prominent politician on the basis that unknown forces are attempting to undermine the ANC Government or its leaders without a shred of evidence being provided.
- (b) That we must uphold the view that victims of rape must be given the protection necessary, both in terms of their personal security while court

- proceedings are unfolding, and afterwards so that they can be in a position explain their case, and pursue it further without intimidation if they so desire.
- (c) That the behaviour of President Zuma, both in terms of combatting the scourge of HIV/Aids, and, given his marital status, as someone who is supposed to set an example of appropriate behaviour towards women has been woefully lacking.
 - (d) The President is simply not fit to serve, and those who continue to protect and cover-up for his wrong-doings must also be called to account.

We offer our unreserved condolences to the loved ones of Fezekile Ntsukela Kuzwayo, and especially her mother who has carried the burden of her daughters appalling treatment in the courts, and the exile that she was forced to endure. May her soul rest in peace.

Forward with a United, Working Class

We have set ourselves the task of rebuilding a united, democratic, independent and representative trade union movement. We know this is not an easy task, given the class forces arraigned against us. However, every day, more unions and workers are approaching us to be part of our ranks. We know for certain that there is a great thirst amongst workers for a new home within a trade union movement that is not politically compromised, that is prepared to provide an alternative to the austerity policies of the ruling party, and that is capable of representing workers and ensuring that they are protected from the worst excesses of exploitation. The workers of South Africa may be anxious about the future. They may be frustrated at the absence of representation in both their workplaces, union and in the country as a whole. They may be demoralized because of unacceptably high levels of unemployment, poverty, inequality and corruption. They are disappointed by the failure of manifesto promises to be implemented, and the lack of basic services in our poor communities.

However, we know from our own every day experience that workers are ready and willing to fight for their rights, and to campaign for a society that is based on the sharing of the wealth of our country. What they lack is clear and committed leadership. We are therefore unapologetic about our attempts to provide a home for workers to do just that. We urge all workers, regardless of where they currently stand, to examine what we are trying to achieve, and throw off the shackles of class compromise and join us in building a new future for the working class.

Issued on behalf of the Steering Committee for the New Federation.

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