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*The Interests Of The Workers And Landless Peasants Shall Be Paramount*

## WOMEN'S OPPRESSION AND RESISTANCE AGAINST CAPITALIST VIOLENCE

Neoliberal capitalism has reproduced and deepened women's oppression, exploitation and inequality in South Africa. The recently released Living Conditions Survey and Poverty Trends in South Africa report by Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) details the ongoing capitalist violence meted out against women and children. According to the Poverty Trends report approximately "five out of ten poor South Africans were women (52.7%), while 66.8% of children below the ages of 17 were living in poverty. Households led by black women, as well as people living in the rural areas were the most vulnerable to poverty" (The Daily Vox, 23 August 2017). If we add the everyday violence at a household, community and societal level working class women bear the brunt of gender based violence, exploitation, inequality and oppression. Injustice is fundamental to capitalist accumulation shaped by the exploitative wage relations. The manifest injustice and barbarism was exemplified recently when seven female workers, one pregnant, of the retail giant Shoprite were reportedly arrested for accepting tips from customers. As one of the arrested women who earns R20, 40 per hour and works on average between 32 and 35 hour a week, attested: "I am the only one working [in the family] so by Thursday my money is up and if a customer gives me a R50, I am going to take it" (The Daily Vox, 16 August 2017). The selfsame Shoprite that makes billions of rands per annum off the backs of these workers paid its former CEO more than R100 million in salary and bonuses with shares worth R1, 8 billion. Capitalism is a system that produces and reproduces the most inhuman conditions of existence in particular for working class women.

Working class women are not only the most oppressed/exploited social group within society but are also a revolutionary force that is integral to and at the forefront of resistance against the brutality of neoliberal capitalism. Whilst often written out of history, women played a central role during the monumental Marikana mineworkers strike, the farm workers strike, resistance against tribal chieftaincy and mining capital in rural areas as well as in the myriad of service delivery protests.

These struggles in South Africa and beyond are not just against the old exploitative system but they represent a clamouring for a fundamental reorganisation of society. In Rojava, situated in the northern parts of Syria women are the backbone of the Kurdish militia engaged in a war of liberation against the brutal violence of the reactionary "Islamist fascists" in the region. Whatever our disagreements or the limitations we see in this libertarian project that working class women are the ones who are carrying the torch of emancipation where feminism is at the heart of their liberation struggle. All these different examples point to a long tradition of working class women struggling against patriarchy, gender based violence and capitalism, calling for fundamental change.

A hundred years ago, as a Marxist feminist contends, it was women workers that sparked the 1917 Russian revolution. On 8 March 1917, on International Women's Day, women workers downed tools and staged a walkout that culminated in a mass strike in Petrograd, forcing Tsar Nicholas II to abdicate.

It is to the most oppressed and exploited layers of society – women workers and landless peasants - to whom we have to turn if we are serious about the struggle for revolutionary change and the fundamental reorganisation of society. This requires an emancipatory political praxis within the organisations of the oppressed that often, like conveyor belts, carry the existing oppressive social relations within society into their own organisations.

*The Interests of The Women Workers and Landless Peasants Shall Be Paramount*

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# AUSTERITY MOVES INTO HIGHER GEAR

Finance Minister Gigaba's recent 'Inclusive Growth Action Plan' (IGAP) is a disgraceful statement of a loyal servant of local and foreign capitalists. It is also an assault on working people as this plan shifts fiscal austerity into a higher gear. Malusi Gigaba has promised to elaborate on budget cuts when he makes his medium term policy statement in October.

President Zuma urged the Finance Minister to prioritise the plan after a June cabinet meeting. Cobbling it together became so urgent that Minister Gigaba and his delegation withdrew from participation in a G20 Africa Partnership Conference held in Berlin, Germany, on 12-13 June.

A skeleton version of IGAP was publicised in mid-July but it was evidently hatched in the lead up to the ANC's chaotic National Policy Conference. It is hard to trace the imprint of the policy conference on Gigaba's plan. What overshadowed the policy conference were squabbles, smear campaigns and internecine rivalries aimed at snatching the leadership of the ANC at its December elective conference. The thick and obfuscating policy documents, like Strategy and Tactics and Organisational Renewal, attempted to put a positive spin on the ANC's catastrophic mess in governing the country and gloss over the rot, corruption and scandal that pervades the party.

Voices of an old-guard that claim to uphold the liberation era legacy of the party want to rid it of corruption, pleading for its traditions to be salvaged and renewed. But is it possible to accomplish this aim without sanitising the ANC's history which is steeped in opportunism and betrayal? This salvaging mission through sanitisation smacks of political duplicity, as but another desperate shenanigan to arrest the ANC's decline! In his policy conference closure speech, Jacob Zuma, arguably the most scandal-ridden figure of the lot, retaliated against his detractors. This embattled tribalist echoed a thinly-veiled censure of party loyalists that oppose and condemn his self-enrichment from state coffers (Nkandla and so forth) and cosiness with the Gupta tycoons.

The rhetoric in the ANC policy conference documents matches the overtones of Gigaba's IGAP pronouncements. Both rehash the good-story-to-tell or silver-lining-in-the-clouds myths. In reality,

thunderous storm clouds have darkened South Africa's economic horizons. The country is not only in the grip of a recession but has been relegated into a class of junk-debt borrowers – with working people having to pay the astronomical costs of the unfolding devastation.

The debt downgrade shifts neoliberal policies more firmly into the control of overseas debt rating dictators and deepens South Africa's subordination to competing imperialist powers. Speculation that the state must borrow more to repay old debt on conditions more favourable to foreign creditors is more likely to become a reality but not without a social cost to be paid by the poor majority.

That Gigaba executes fiscal policy at the behest of his capitalist masters is common knowledge. A speech he delivered on IGAP in June attests to this: 'We continue to reiterate that the fiscal framework is the policy of government; we support it, we are bound to it, we will implement it.' (Minister Malusi Gigaba, 15 June 2017) This pledge to budgetary austerity reiterates the reassurances that Gigaba's predecessors also handed to the bourgeoisie. Gigaba, like the typical petit bourgeois opportunist, has learned but not completely mastered the tricks of doublespeak, sloganeering about 'radical economic transformation' when the audience or occasion so demands.

We might be repeating the obvious to assert that IGAP is a knee-jerk reaction to the junk-debt crisis and the recession. But Gigaba has also reminded his audiences that the economic storm engulfing South Africa will raise inequality, unemployment and poverty to new heights, which in turn, might inflame social instability or threats thereof. What does the new Finance Minister's paranoia about social instability mean for anti-neoliberal militants? Does it foreshadow stepped-up repression and state terror to criminalise and crush anti-austerity protests? History tells us that the convergence of acute economic and political crises with internecine feuds tearing apart a governing petit bourgeois party, is the harbinger of naked state violence against anti-capitalist forces. Therefore, let us not ignore history's prescient answers to these questions. ●

# FOOD PRODUCTION IN THE MODERN WORLD

A few multinational companies like Monsanto, Syngenta and DuPont Pioneer own most seeds available in retail stores. Sometimes these seeds are genetically modified through a process of genetic engineering, ostensibly to meet the huge global food demand. Genetically modified seeds are apparently produced to withstand harsh weather related conditions as a result of climate change.

Research has shown that genetically modified organisms can be toxic to microbes in the soil and when planted, these GMO seeds can compete with and destroy indigenous weeds that usually grow naturally next to the planted seeds. Therefore such GMO seeds can affect the biodiversity adversely. Among these indigenous weeds that grow naturally we find stinging nettle (tllaba), and many others. ➔

➔ The GMO and hybrid seeds can also attract a lot of harmful insects during crop production. The introduction of these GMOs and hybrid seeds are rendered uneconomical since it makes farmers dependent on buying pesticides and herbicides. The prices of pesticides and herbicides keep on increasing through inflation that keeps on hiking prices.

In the 19th century a large numbers of farmers were using non-GMO/hybrid seeds which are simply called open pollinated and heirloom seeds. The open pollinated and heirloom seeds species are those that have been pollinated openly and naturally by pollen from other plants of the same species. Traditionally, people used to call those seeds heritage seeds because they used to get them from their grandparents. But now that US based multinational companies like Monsanto controls those seeds and modify traditional seed to be hybrid and genetically modified seeds, farmers suffer a lot in practicing sustainable farming through seed saving banks. They are dependent on buying seeds that fail to produce seeds that are productive for the next season.

Monsanto is a clear demonstration of how capitalism controls natural resources such as seeds. Farmers are faced with a huge challenge and another terrain of struggle because Monsanto patents the majority of the world's seeds; suing farmers who save seeds or don't farm using certified seed. A recent case in Tanzania showed how local farmers

could face up to 12 years prison sentences for being unable to prove the seeds they used were not an infringement of Monsanto's "intellectual property." Even the Department of Agriculture in South Africa is providing hybrid seeds to households who practice small scale gardening in Khayelitsha, located in Cape Town. The generation of heirloom seeds is approaching a stage of extinction particularly for the farmers who have minimum education about seed evolution.

Monsanto is a very powerful multinational company that has a long history spanning 110 years and its effect is global. They have extended their influence in the education system because at high school level, colleges and universities there is a Monsanto crop breeding programme in the curriculum. There are many organisations that are resisting and who are vocal about the corporate control of seed and the forced use of GMO seeds. Organisations such as Tyisa Nabanye and many others have joined the struggle against corporate driven agriculture.

Agro-ecology, as an alternative to the dominant corporate agriculture model, promotes seed saving and the creation of natural pest control methods which is the only way to advance sustainable agriculture. This requires the complete smashing of the corporate controlled agricultural sector whose primary objective is profit and not the feeding of the population. ●

## **THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA ACCORDING TO ITS HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Understanding historical developments is vital in being able to grasp the post-colonial social, political and economic dynamics in contemporary South Africa. Understanding a phenomenon according to its historical development allows us to clearly comprehend how things have occurred over the years dating back from colonialism to post-apartheid South Africa. In short, historical injustices are still shaping the current situation in South Africa today.

The introduction of the so called "Native Policy" meant the intensification of oppression and exploitation of the African population. This policy masterminded all the laws and acts such as the "Hut Tax", "Poll Tax", the Glen Grey Act and the introduction of more drastic measures such as the Land Act of 1913. This Act meant that the African population could not buy land except in the overcrowded reserves. It was illegal for the African population to occupy land on "white farms" either on a rental system or squatter system. This Act basically made it impossible for the African population to acquire land or own land.

From 1936 to 1937, the "Native Acts" were passed which included the "Native Representation Act", the "Native Trust"; and more Land Acts. These "Native Acts" were supposedly "to give land" to the African population but instead conditions got even worse.

This "Native Policy" was to force the African population off the land to go work in cities as cheap labour and to support capitalism in terms of consuming the products of capitalism.

In contemporary South Africa the symptoms of the draconian laws that were imposed by the "white oppressors" are still vivid. There has been a huge number of peasants migrating from the countryside to big cities for economic reasons. A lot of informal settlements are established next to these big cities effectively serving as reserves of cheap labour. These are the present symptoms of the labour migrant system that was established to exploit the African population as cheap labour. Today the proletariat, separated from the land, are forced to sell their labour power cheaply without rabid, political draconian means. They do not have a choice because of the conditions that were created in the past that are still affecting them even today.

The constitutional preservation of tribalism, giving authority to organisations such as the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (CONTRALESA), is further deepening the oppression of women in particular and the rural poor more broadly. The system of chieftaincy is not democratic because few people are involved in ➔

➔ decision making. The Kings and Chiefs in the countryside still control vast tracts of land while the peasantry owns small patches of land that is not arable for food production or livestock grazing. South Africa's constitution protects minority rights and the property clause means those who acquired land during colonialism are protected by law which further promotes the privatisation of land ownership. Moreover, the official Land Reform Programme subscribes to the willing-buyer willing-seller approach.

In a paper written by Jane Gool Tabata entitled *The Land Question and the Struggle for Freedom*, 1991, she noted that the Herrenvolk stated they would scrap the 1913, and 1936 Land Acts and also the Group Areas Act, but nothing else. This explains

why we are still facing the current struggles in society against the continuing oppression and exploitation of the proletariat and peasantry.

To change the current conditions it is important for the peasantry and proletariat to unite in order to advance the struggle for land and freedom. The two classes need a clear political understanding in order to build a revolutionary approach to change the current conditions. Political education is one approach in engaging these two classes. As I B Tabata stated in his 1962 Presidential Address to Apdusa "Without them we are nothing. With them we are everything and nothing can stand in our way". ●

## **A RUDE REMINDER FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN WORKING CLASS**

The petty bourgeoisie Government of the ANC is riddled in all spheres with one scandal after the other. They used their propaganda around the Extended Public Works Programme to secure votes in the local government elections and so secure positions for some political thugs who back them up in their factions. Their Provincial Conference in East London, Eastern Cape took place at the end of September. After having been postponed on numerous occasions due to internal squabbles, it turned into a nightmare.

A lumpen from ward 13 in an area called Dice in East London - who is the husband of ward councillor Nonkululeko Matiwane - killed two women, Nomboniso Ntwana and Bulelwa Mpitipiti, respectively 54 and 50 years old. After their execution style killing he threw their bodies over a cliff on the narrow Buffalo Pass near the Buffalo River.

The two women from this poverty stricken area, worked in the Extended Public Works Programme within the Buffalo City Metro. One of them died on the scene and the other died a day later in hospital on Wednesday, 23rd August 2017. Nomboniso Ntwana died after revealing that Mabuto Matiwane shot her and Mpitipiti, believing that this was after she had failed to pay a monthly kickback to his wife for a

job. She had to pay a monthly kickback of R2000.00 to this councillor from the R3700.00 stipend she received from the Eastern Cape Extended Public Works Programme.

It was confirmed by the department of Public Works in the Eastern Cape that the councillor worked as a supervisor at the EPWP. She left the post of supervisor after last year's local government elections when she was sworn in as a councillor and she allegedly offered her post to Ntwana in exchange for R2000.00 every month.

In response to their ordeal, the residents went to torch the house of the councillor, resulting in the death of a young girl between the age of 15 and 17, who was trapped inside the house.

This is a rude reminder to the South African Working Class that neither the ANC nor any other party in the South African Parliament can ever solve their socio-economic problems. The negotiated settlement ensured that S.A is governed by its current Capitalist Constitution that is not in the interests of the working class and landless peasantry. We therefore call for a new Constituent Assembly that will and must address the interests of the working class and landless peasantry. ●

## **THE WESTERN CAPE WATER CRISIS**

The Western Cape is experiencing one of its severest droughts in a long time, not that this is a new phenomenon. Water scarcity in Southern Africa has indeed been in the headlines for many years. Drought conditions are therefore not restricted to the Western Cape alone but occurs across the entire region, also affecting other provinces in South Africa. Although a number of experts warned the Western Cape provincial government for the last 15 years of the impending crisis, no one took pro-active

steps against the threat. The situation last year forced the City of Cape Town (CCT) to introduce various water restrictions on the community, because of the drought. Clearly, poor planning and sheer incompetence lies at the basis of this situation.

The restrictions are of such a nature that people felt aggrieved by certain calculations that the CCT made to determine excessive use by households. There are vast differences between a "middle class" ➔

➔ family consisting on average of 4 people, and a working class household that has backyard wendy-houses and where extended families live on the same plot. One water usage meter services between 10 – 20 people, and this is not taken into account when letters warning of excessive use and fines are issued to these households.

In her reply to an article (politicsweb, 19 September 2017) by a journalist from the Cape Times, Helen Zille conceded that the usage calculation of the CCT is problematic because people do not take into account that there is daily, plus-minus 30 people at the premier's house. This is an indication of how the

water crisis impacts on large groups of people within one household, who are then abused by government officials.

The constitution of South Africa recognises that Housing and Water are basic needs. All spheres of government write nice policies, but fail to plan and implement these plans to the benefit of the whole population. The Western Cape water crisis is but one struggle around which progressive forces can organise and rally across the country to rid society of self-serving elites. ●



## *From Around the World*

### **KENYA'S PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION TURMOIL**

Facts and figures regarding the situation in Kenya are fairly representative of African countries who are suffering under the yoke of neo-liberalism. Executive presidential political systems dominate, with ruling parties and their imperialist backers keeping millions of African workers and peasants in perpetual economic bondage and political repression. Such was the case again with the August and late October presidential elections held in Kenya. Political contestation between the two mainstream parties, the Jubilee Party (led by Uhuru Kenyatta) and the National Super Alliance (NASA), led by Raila Odinga, saw fierce battles inside and outside of the corridors of power playing themselves out.

According to a UNICEF report (<http://www.unicef.org/kenya/overview>) the top 10% of Kenyans earn 44% of the national income while the bottom 10% earns less than 1%. According to latest government figures 46% of the population live in poverty. Unemployment stands at 40% while 70% of jobless people are aged between 15 and 35. Figures from another study conducted by a Nairobi based research and communications company called Well Told Story reveals that there was an increase from 49% to 63% (2016 – 2017) in youth respondents who say that they do not have money to cover basic needs.

According to World Bank figures, Kenya experienced a 5.9% economic growth rate in 2016, which was a five year high. The contradiction here is crystal clear: the much touted high economic growth rates desired by ruling elites, translate into economic benefit for

a few, not the poor majority. The new post - 2010 constitution introduced a system whereby 15% of the national budget is shared amongst 47 counties. These are devolved political units established for the purpose of mediating potential ethnic/tribal conflicts. They came about due to the perennial ethnic/tribal based political conflicts that have bedevilled Kenyan politics since independence in 1963. The deliberate and conscious perpetuation of the British colonial and neo-colonial divide and rule strategies by certain Kenyan political leaders has to be roundly condemned. We only have to remind ourselves of the mass 1994 Rwanda and 2007/8 Kenyan political killings (see Waki Report, October 2008) to appreciate the toxic politics these so-called leaders practice. These reactionaries today form part of elaborate national and international patronage networks; networks buttressed by UK and US imperialist interests. Together they represent the custodians of capitalist-barbarism who have no scruples to commit crimes against humanity under the guise of false political narratives.

Such then was the political climate that prevailed at the time of the August and late October 2017 presidential elections. The Jubilee government led by Uhuru Kenyatta used a deliberate system of the manipulation of electoral processes to secure an “election victory”. In this instance however, the transgressors were brought to order by the Kenyan Supreme Court who nullified the election result. The incumbent then won the rerun election with a 98% voter share of a 38% election turnout. Clearly many of the ➔

➔ “irregularities and illegalities” that accompanied the August election and the legal complexities they imply, still remain to be addressed and resolved. The final official result will also do little to resolve the insecurities, land disputes and grievances than Kenyan workers and peasants face. For many it has become clear that the Kenyan example points to continental crises in which political opportunists use

religion, so-called racial identities, gender, regionalism, constitutionality and other criteria to rally people in the name of reactionary, backward political agendas. This they do because the capitalist-imperialist system they defend is incapable of offering any progressive electoral alternatives. ●

## **ORGANISATIONAL APPROACHES TO THE KENYAN POLITICAL CRISIS**

One of the political solutions offered by Kenyan parliamentary parties, to the country's protracted class based social and political conflicts, is for the formation of a federal state; or splitting the country in two. Another is the formation of a government of national unity. These ideas originate from the mainstream political parties in tandem with the mainstream media which acts as an echo chamber for them. Are these practical solutions for the millions of Kenyans who have to bear the onslaught of a state hell-bent on protecting minority interests? The neo-colonial political heritage brought in its wake the effective creation of Bantustan entities in Kenya; of certain regions being associated with certain ethnic groups. Hence we find the Mount Kenya region, the Rift Valley region, the Mombassa/Coastal region and the North-eastern region being the main ones. As such, the development of a national political outlook was always a problematic one for progressives involved in Kenyan liberation politics. One initiative that started in the 1990s was the creation of Bunga la Mwananchi (the People's Parliament) as an inclusive, loosely structured forum aimed at debating and discussing Kenya's political-economy. It aimed

at combatting the ethnic exclusivity that arose in the country's politics, especially during election times.

The emergence and operations of the World and African Social Forums during the early 2000s dovetailed with this organisation's very broad “un-hierarchical” and “grassroots” orientation. The eventual demise of the Social Forums raised the question as to which gains African resistance struggles have made at the time, and how a much needed continuity in coordinated struggle could be organised. Campaigns and struggles of the People's Parliament in conjunction with NGOs over time focussed on the 2010 constitutional reforms as well as attempts at raising the level of struggle to a more overt political level.

There have been recent calls from activists in Kenya, as well as academics and media workers for, amongst other things, the formation of a united front to oppose the repressive policies of the government. Other calls have been for “a people's revolution” and for “socialism”. These calls represent a challenge to all progressives on the continent to forge closer organisational links with their Kenyan comrades. ●

## **CORBYN AND THE LEFT AFTER 2017 ELECTIONS**

The snap elections called by Theresa May in Britain in June and the unexpected result of a hung parliament, has increased the widespread feelings of uncertainty of where the country is going. She emerged as prime minister of the most right wing government in modern British history following the split in the Tory Party and the result of the referendum with a vote in favour of leaving the EU. Theresa May's gamble to increase her parliamentary majority and give her a freer hand against her critics in the Tory Party and the opposition parties in the negotiations to leave the EU (Brexit) failed. The Labour Party (LP) under Jeremy Corbyn's inspired leadership wrested enough seats from the Tories for the latter to have to sign an agreement of understanding with the most reactionary party in parliament, the Democratic Unionist Party of

Northern Ireland. The DUP, without a formal coalition, promised to vote for the Tories on crucial legislation to enable them to stay in power. There is a polarisation of forces politically in Britain, with the Tory Party at the one pole and the radical left wing forces led by Corbyn at the other pole.

The neoliberal agenda driving the programs of the big capitalist governments is the only one on offer and has landed Britain in having to leave the EU in a wave of xenophobia and anti-immigrant feeling. Disaffected LP supporters, particularly in the north of England, who had felt betrayed by LP pro-austerity policies before the advent of Corbyn and some of whom had been caught up in the racist and anti-immigrant rhetoric of UKIP and right wing Tories in the referendum, voted to leave the EU. Their vote mattered in the defeat of the ➔

➔ Remain Campaign in the referendum. Theresa May's government has adopted policies championed by UKIP and is set on doing away with the free movement of people from the EU and reducing immigration. On internal policies it is starving the NHS of funds, despite being warned by its own administrators that the NHS needs extra funding immediately to hire nurses and provide more beds. Otherwise, the NHS will face an even more severe crisis this winter than the last one. Its housing policy favours landlords pushing up rents and instead of engaging in a program for councils to build more social housing to deal with the housing crisis, it is promoting the privatisation of housing, boosting private contractors and speculators.

With a big increase in membership topping the 500 000 mark, very many of the younger generation and making it the largest political party in Europe, the LP contested the 2017 elections on an anti-austerity program directed at reducing the huge inequality in living standards. Their election manifesto promised full employment, employment legislation abolishing zero hour contracts and ensuring a living wage for six million workers earning poverty wages. It also committed the LP to repeal anti-trade union legislation. The manifesto promised a building program to provide a million new homes, half of them council homes and to control private rent. It vowed to properly fund a strong public NHS and social care and to provide a national education service for all. It promised to take the railways back into public ownership and restore public ownership and control of services. It endorsed action on climate change.

The anti-austerity policy laid out in the LP manifesto constitutes a challenge to the neoliberal agenda of the EU as well as the Tory party. Contrary to the expectations of the Tories in the elections, many previously disaffected LP supporters warmed to the LP election manifesto and voted Labour. If there had not been so much division in the LP with

the Blairite wing of the party supported by so many MPs, councillors and the party apparatus in opposition to Corbyn's policies, the LP might well have won the election. The internal struggle in the LP, to democratise the party and for it to reflect the views of the majority of its members is ongoing. Left wing socialists outside the LP, by joining the LP can play an important part in the struggle to promote the policies championed by Corbyn.

The LP needs to strengthen its policies on the economy, doing away with the Fiscal Credibility rule excluding borrowing for current spending in education, healthcare, etc. It needs to remove the independence of the Bank of England. The LP will have to rethink its policy on Scottish Independence. Without supporting the right of Scotland to independence from Britain, it will not be able to rebuild the support it previously enjoyed in Scotland. The two party system is breaking up in Britain. There are multiple parties and without an alliance with the other anti-austerity parties, the Scottish National Party, Plaid Cymru (Wales) and the Greens it will not be able to win a majority in Parliament. The LP must commit itself to doing away with the First Past the Post System in elections and embrace Proportional Representation. On negotiations to leave the EU, having accepted that the referendum binds the political parties to leaving the EU, the LP must oppose the policies of the right wing Tories of a hard Brexit, building a tax haven based on low wages, a race down to the bottom for employers to exploit. It has to support an alternative Brexit, one based on remaining in the single market, retaining free movement of peoples and guaranteeing the rights of EU citizens already in Britain. It must be committed to working with the other left wing parties in the EU struggling against the neoliberal agenda pursued by the EU governments. ●



## Letters

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WOMEN'S DAY

On 9 August 1956 history was made in South Africa, when more than 50 000 women marched to the Union buildings in Pretoria. The aim of the march was to fight for freedom and women's rights in South Africa. Outside they stood silently for 30 minutes, many with their children on their backs; the women sang a protest song that has since become to represent women's courage and strength in South Africa: Wathinta abafazi, wathinta imbokodo which translates to "you strike a woman, you strike a rock".

The march was led by four remarkable women who believed so much in the rights of women, those women are: Lillian Ngoyi, Hellen Joseph, Rahima Moosa and Sophie William De Bruyn.

The story of 9 August 1956 is a story of courage and inspiration, and it is a story that shows that ordinary people like you and I have the ability to do extraordinary things.

On that day women came together, they fought side by side for freedom, for dignity and for their ➔

➔ families and most importantly for our country. Hand in hand with the men of South Africa they fought for a country where we could all be free.

To us the new generation of South Africa, this is just a public holiday, a day to relax and unwind because we lack the knowledge of this significant day. We as young South African women are not aware that these women were opening doors for us. It is our responsibility as young South African women to be fully aware of our rights and learn how to take a firm stand in fighting for our rights.

We, the women should learn to start challenging ourselves more and not limit ourselves. Let us become the next Lillian Ngoyi, and make our own history by becoming more aware of ourselves as women. We need to know our capabilities and

become an inspiration to the next generation by standing together as women like the women of 1956.

Today, we use this public holiday to celebrate the remarkable achievements and the ongoing lively spirits of the fearless females who continue to advocate for change, defy norms and stand up for what they believe in. I say to those women: Aluta Continua. Let the struggle continue.

Happy Women's month to all the women of South Africa: Mothers, grandmothers, sisters and daughters. Nizimbokodo

*WATHINTA ABAFAZI, WATHINTA IMBOKO!*

*YOU STRIKE A WOMAN YOU STRIKE A ROCK!*

Asanda

## APDUSA

### *THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES*

Despite the gain of political rights for all, the compromise of 1992 has not fulfilled the democratic aspirations of the labouring majority and they continue to suffer in conditions of abject poverty and subjugation to the will of the rich who command the economic resources of the country. In the ongoing struggle we therefore demand:

- The convening of a democratically elected **Constituent Assembly**, charged with the task of drawing up a new constitution, governed by the interests of the oppressed and exploited working class and peasantry, based on the demand for full, unfettered political rights for all with majority rule in a unitary state, the removal of all artificially created regional political boundaries, the liquidation of all special minority rights and privileges which militate against the interests of the majority. The Constituent Assembly must have full powers to discharge these duties, untrammelled by any directions and constraints designed to serve self-interested minorities.
- A resolution of the **land question** in accordance with the needs of those who work and live off the land. This means the destruction of all existing tribal and feudal relations in the rural areas and the nationalisation of the land, without compensation. A new division of the land and its management, which excludes forced collectivisation, the payment of rent and the expropriation of small peasant farmers, must be undertaken by committees that are democratically elected by and answerable to the people.
- The **expropriation** of all major industries, banks and institutions of credit and their management by the state and representatives of the workers in the interests of the population as a whole.
- The revision of labour legislation for the liquidation of all discrimination against the worker. This also means:
- The **right to work**, which must be implemented both via the institution of necessary adjustments to the length of the working week to provide employment for all, without a reduction in wages, as well as by the institution of a progressive **public works program** with the full representation of the unemployed in its management.
- The fixing of a living **minimum wage** as well as a sliding scale to compensate for any price increases.
- The unconditional right to **strike** which includes the right of occupation of the workplace.
- Free and **compulsory education** for all up to matric with free books for the needy.
- Free **health services** for the needy.
- A single, progressive **tax system**, the abolition of vat and all indirect taxes that fall so heavily on the poor.
- The elected representatives of the people, at organisational level or in the local, regional or national political institutions of state, must be fully **accountable** to those who elect them and they must be fully bound by the demands and aspirations of the working class and its allies, the landless peasantry.

APDUSA calls for the self-organisation and united independent struggle of the labouring masses. We believe that the struggle can only advance decisively via the greatest ideological and organisational unity between the workers in the urban centres and the peasants in the rural areas under the leadership of the working class.

*The democratic demands and aspirations of the oppressed workers and peasants shall be paramount.*

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