

Statement

South African Democratic Left Front 2nd National Conference: “We are looking forward to the mass workers party to challenge the neoliberal ANC government and its capitalist allies”

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Statement of the Democratic Left Front (DLF) on the outcomes of its 2nd National Conference 27-30 March 2014.

On the eve of the May national elections the Democratic Left Front held its Second Conference since its formation in 2011 at Stay City in Berea, Johannesburg from March 27-30 2014.

140 delegates representing a number of important popular movements, independent trade unions, women, youth, socialist and environmental organisations from around the country met and were decisive in embracing the NUMSA (National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa) break with the Tripartite Alliance, the building of a mass united front and a movement for socialism. We believe that this represents the most significant opportunity for placing democratic, left socialist politics at the centre of our country's political system.

Suddenly politics has become interesting. The dominance of the ANC's exhausted nationalism and the DA's regurgitation of big business interests will be decisively challenged and, we have no doubt, defeated. Tweedledee and Tweedledummer will meet their match.

We are entering a new political period. The ANC's hegemony is eroding. In the coming years there will be opportunities for the recomposition of the labour movement, possibilities for the re-emergence of united workplace and community struggles and the potential for these to create a dynamic towards the formation of a genuine left alternative to the ANC with strong roots in the working class.

The on-going global capitalist crisis and the changing international balance of forces are conditioning developments in SA and will continue to do so. However, there is a strong internal dynamic to intensifying class struggle and conflict. As we mark 20 years since the end of Apartheid and the advent of democracy, there is a deep rupturing of the post apartheid social consensus. The signal for its end were the Marikana massacre and the great mineworkers' strike and farm workers' rebellion of 2012/13, as well as intensified service delivery revolts that have spread to all corners of the country. As a consequence, the legitimacy and effectiveness of the ANC and the Tripartite Alliance as the political guarantors of the 1994 historic compromise are being challenged.

The NUMSA's break with the politics of the SACP, the EFF's formation and the role the DLF has been playing on the mines, farms and in working class communities is contributing to the growing ferment among rank and file members of the ANC and SACP. An increasing number of honest and militant activists are looking for a new political home on the left. A mass working class political alternative is being built through mass working class struggle and the rupturing of the Tripartite Alliance.

The current platinum mineworkers strike for R12,500 is a revolutionary demand and has the potential to revolutionise wage negotiations and place the living wage demand at the centre of radical trade unionism. It has united the Chamber of Mines, the South African State, the mainstream media and even the sweetheart sections of the labour movement in their determination to defeat this critical struggle for a living wage. The strike requires the greatest and broadest solidarity from the entire labour movement and working class community. It will be necessary for AMCU to consider strategies to broaden the strike by extending it beyond the platinum industry, including solidarity with communities fighting for decent services and against the impact of mining on their communities. As the DLF we call on all progressive forces to stand with the striking platinum workers and build solidarity with the strike. We need to give unconditional solidarity, especially at this critical time.

Though the DLF is not standing in the 2014 elections we will not be mute. The DLF supports the NUMSA position which says NUMSA will not support the ANC in this election. This is a major step forward in breaking with support for parties that collaborate or represent capital and its interests. The DLF will explore the forming of alliances with other anti-capitalist forces in advancing socialist alternatives and propaganda during the elections. While we will not call for support for any party standing in the elections we support those wanting to spoil their ballot, save their ballot for a future mass workers' party and/or vote for anti-capitalist forces as a first step towards the building of an anti-capitalist electoral platform for the 2016 local government elections.

Statement ends.

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