

We were astonished to be greeted on Monday by a factionalist press statement of NEHAWU. This comes after a meeting, of all affiliates, initiated by the NEHAWU provincial secretary in conjunction with the FAWU provincial secretary. This meeting was attended by 12 affiliates.

It is now clear that NEHAWU had a hidden agenda and misled us by acting as if it was concerned about the state of affairs in COSATU. NEHAWU may have managed to mislead a few affiliates in the Western Cape in their endeavors to create a false sense of peace, unity and cohesion in the federation but we will not allow the working class and the public to be misled by NEHAWU.

As much as we would like to keep peace among affiliates in the Western Cape, whilst we find ourselves under grave attack from NEHAWU in our province, we find it very difficult to keep quiet. We have now decided to respond to NEHAWU.

On behalf of 9 affiliates in the Western Cape, we are expressing our extreme disappointment on NEHAWU's extremely factionalist and divisive press statement released on the 3rd March 2014. We see this statement as nothing else but deepening the crisis faced by the federation which will not be up rooted unless a COSATU Special National Congress is called.

As 9 affiliates we have chosen to use this statement in order to expose NEHAWU's hidden agenda which is concealed under the struggle for ANC victory in the upcoming elections and to defend the alliance so as to deflect from the real debate i.e. the fight for an independent militant working class oriented COSATU. The press statement of NEHAWU Western Cape seems to suggest that it has no interest of the working class struggle within COSATU but focusing on elections as if it is the only solution to the working class challenges in this country.

We have always believed that the battle in COSATU is not a classless battle but a reflection of class contradictions within the liberation alliance. There are tendencies in the federation which are intent on turning the federation into an extension of the ANC or the SACP and not to defend and build a strong independent COSATU to take forward the fight of the working class. We require the COSATU national office bears to be truthful. If the COSATU national office bearers were honest about the crisis in COSATU and its origin, surely affiliates such as NEHAWU would not be calling other leaders renegades or traitors, rebels, charlatans, loose cannons, etc.

It appears that NEHAWU seems to be suffering from selective amnesia when it was they who in our first 2014 PEC led the call for NUMSA to be expelled from the PEC, and it was they who led the attack on the Provincial Secretary of COSATU, comrade Tony Ehrenreich "because there is a leadership problem in the Western Cape". They continued to isolate comrade Tony from the collective.

If we continue to hide the fact that we are in a crisis in the Western Cape by uttering such baseless and divisive statements, COSATU will never be saved from the current situation. We shall never allow any attack on our COSATU provincial secretary which is aimed at destroying his person.

We know that some leaders had been mandated by the outside forces to deal with the lingering irritation in COSATU. We know that a decision was taken somewhere in one of the alliance partners' constitutional meetings that COSATU must be a centre of focus because it is a threat to those who had been deployed to government. The first point of departure was its elective 11th National Congress in 2012 and work of the failed individuals started at provincial level. A decision to remove its revolutionary General Secretary, comrade Zwelinzima Vavi, was taken outside COSATU structures. It is for that reason that today we have a toothless COSATU.

What happened in the last PEC of COSATU in the Western Cape is foreign to the federation. We therefore re-iterate that NEHAWU and 4 unions led a failed attempt to dismiss NUMSA in that PEC simply because of NUMSA's special national congress resolutions. NUMSA was successfully defended by these 9 affiliates. It was therefore not due to NEHAWU that NUMSA remained in the PEC but by the nine affiliates insisting on defending the democratic practice of open debate, that has been a proud tradition of COSATU, that ensured NUMSA remained in the PEC for the duration of the discussions. An unnecessary intervention by one of the National Office Bearers was called for and the COSATU president came. However his presence did not help because PEC still could not proceed.

We are therefore surprised to hear NEHAWU saying, they never dismissed NUMSA from the PEC, a position that now seems to betray the 4 unions that supported them. It is thus clear that it is NEHAWU that is guilty of untrue and misleading statements.

We want debates on what is happening at COSATU, not just transmission of national decisions. We are still waiting for a platform to debate this crisis and its source of origin as per the resolution taken at the NEHAWU coordinated meeting which was attended by 12 affiliates on the 24th February 2014. This meeting mandated NEHAWU and FAWU provincial secretaries to meet with COSATU provincial secretary and convey the decision that, a PEC Bosberaad must be called to debate fully the crisis in COSATU.

Comrades attend the PEC with a clear mandate to isolate NUMSA from other affiliates in the federation. You may call it NUMSA and the allies or NUMSA and the 8 others, but what remains clear to the public is the fact that the nine affiliates which includes NUMSA stand for the interest of the working class, and are not only worried about an "electoral" alliance which dies a month after elections. They stand for a united, militant, independent, anti-colonial, anti-imperialist and pro-working class COSATU.

We also note the press statement released by COSATU national office bearers on the 4th March 2014 which is most divisive, marking the final death of the workers' federation in the hands of Comrade Sdumo and his fellow office bears. In our view this statement had been used to do the following;

- To deal with the unions that had constitutionally called for the Special National Congress to deal with paralysis in the federation.
- To deal with the National Union of Metalworkers' of South Africa
- To gain sympathy on a failed attempt to assassinate the character of the COSATU General Secretary, comrade Zwelinzima Vavi

- To smear the name of the General Secretary of COSATU

We condemn this statement and reiterate our call for:

- A special national congress of COSATU,
- Lifting of the unconstitutional suspension of the general secretary.
- We are determined to defend comrade Tony in the Western Cape from the attack which is manufactured from outside COSATU structures.
- We call for open debate at provincial level on the crisis in COSATU

The above is called so that truth, as demanded by NEHAWU, can be told instead of labeling other affiliate leaders as having serious ideological deficit and see them as candidates for political education which is not a trade union language but an imported style of lambasting from outside forces.

Statement prepared collectively by 9 affiliates;

Affiliates and Contact persons;

FAWU.....Mlungiseleli Ndongeni....082 493 2019

SAMWU.....Andre Adams.....074 177 2344

CWU.....Sam Kalane.....082 710 6556

NUMSA.....Vuyo Lufele.....072 389 0408

PAWUSA.....Faraah September.....084 2089 027

SACCAWU...Croby Booie.....082 336 5731

DENOSA.....Angelique Hunter.....021 949 1180

CEPPAWU....Chinaman Melani.....083 398 1905

SADSAWU...Myrtle Witbooi.....071 855 9568