

# South Africa: Declaration of the Democratic Left Front

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***Post apartheid capitalism is leaving a trail of hunger, poverty, anger and misery. The wealthy elite, the bosses and their hangers on refuse to concede a single inch to the urgent needs of the majority. They label even the most modest reforms as the thin edge of the wedge of communism. And as always the government shakes and concedes ... And a new round of suffering begins for our people.***

From the 20 - 23 January 2011 at Wits University 250 delegates from around the country representing a diverse range of social movements, popular organisations and anti-capitalist formations gathered to forge a united political front to break this cycle which has made SA the most unequal country on earth. The cry of the Conference of the Democratic Left is KWANELE, KWANELE, ENOUGH IS ENOUGH, GENOEG IS GENOEG.

Every progressive programme, strategy and intention is either abandoned or rejected by the government in the face of the brutal logic of managing a capitalist state. The ANC has shied away from confronting capital and white privilege that was left largely intact when the end of apartheid was negotiated. This has resulted in a situation where the ANC leadership has adapted itself to the power of capital. Many of our former comrades are now comfortable members of the business elite.

Our recent history could have been different: if the productive potential of our economy and the spirit and traditions of resistance and organisation had been harnessed to overcome the deprivation of the past. But this would have required breaking with the logic of profits over people, capital accumulation over human need, competition over solidarity, and breaking with trickle down economics and thinking. And it would have required continued and continual struggle, organisation and mobilisation. In the face of the global crisis and the generally unfavourable international balance of forces it would have required a courage and boldness capable of sustaining the confidence of the oppressed in an alternative vision of socialism.

With a great sense of urgency we have come together as the democratic left and are uniting our separate and often fragmented efforts, to build solidarity, restore confidence and hope amongst the masses of this country. The building of working class and popular power lies at the heart of our initiative. We come together convinced that a re-awakening of struggle is at hand. The so-called service delivery protests and the recent public sector strike are just the first signs of what is to come.

We are activists with a long history of building trade unions, civics, women, youth, student and political formations. We have been at the forefront of building a many of the new movements that have been formed to resist neoliberalism and have struggled too rebuild the broader popular movement. We are activists who see as our first and main task to build these movements and to unite them in resisting retrenchments, cut-offs, evictions, violence against women, discrimination and abuse of gays and lesbians, the collapse of our education and health systems and the retribalisation of the countryside. We are activists that believe racism has not been eradicated from our society and continue to struggle against all forms of discrimination, prejudice and injustice. We are activists that believe the oppression of women is deepening as the economic and social crisis

unfolds in our country and must be central to all our efforts for social justice.

We are for a new, united and democratic mass movement of the oppressed and exploited that builds a counter power to the power of capital, the market, the investors, the black bourgeoisie, the state functionaries and other social layers that the capitalist state in South Africa rests upon.

In coming together and building this anti-capitalist front we hold up a mirror to ourselves as the left. We have many weaknesses, frailties and deficiencies. We have made many mistakes over the last two decades of struggle. We are conscious that it is not enough to be enough to be against, it is not even enough to have a programme spelling out what we are for. For us the ends do not justify the means. Our practice, our organisations and methods of struggle must reflect the new world we aim to create. Integrity, justice and democratic practice shall be methods by which we seek to fulfil our aims.

We believe that our anti-capitalism must be green as well as red. Global capitalism threatens our world with disaster. If it is left to plunder the natural resources of our planet and pollute the atmosphere, the oceans and the soil, life itself will be under grave threat. The current global economic crisis represents the exhaustion of a system that is driven by profit and competition. The basic tenet of capitalism is to grow endlessly with no regard to natural limits, to concentrate wealth in the hands of a few. It explains why wherever we look we see the crisis and decay of the system: be it financial, energy, food, environment, cultural and social. War, global warming and health pandemics threaten the annihilation of humanity within a couple of generations.

We are internationalists. We have no illusions that the crisis and contradictions of post - apartheid capitalism can be resolved without transforming our region, Africa and the world. For us as the democratic left there is no alternative but to unite our struggles with our compatriots in our region, across the continent, South and North, East and West. Most urgently we pledge our solidarity with our sisters and brothers fighting for democracy and social justice in Zimbabwe, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia and Sudan, to name just a few of the most urgent situations in Africa. We understand that an urgent task for us is to fight the curse of xenophobia and Afrophobia. We welcome into the formations of the democratic left refugee and immigrant communities from our continent who, like ourselves know that globalised capitalism and imperialist aggression is making us refugees and migrants on our own continent.

The continuing crises in the core countries of globalised capitalism will affect the structural vulnerabilities, and aggravate the unemployment, hunger and suffering of the masses in countries throughout the world. The deepening of the global economic and climate-change crises will aggravate these problems even further and result in spreading popular protests, uprisings and even revolutionary situations as in Tunisia recently.

Globally a new period of resistance to capitalist crisis is gaining momentum. From Athens to London, from Tunisia to Egypt, from indigenous and peasant mobilisations to the reawakening of the traditional labour and social movements, there has been a renewal of struggle and organisation to the harsh attacks of capital. The reverberating call is we shall not pay for your crisis. As the democratic left we will use all our energies and resources to ensure this call echoes across our villages, towns and cities.

We call on the workers, the unemployed, women and youth, shack-dwellers, back yarders, landless and the dispossessed, to organise, mobilise and unite. It is not yet UHURU. As the democratic left we pledge our solidarity in your resistance and struggle. Ours is a movement of hope!

***An injury to one is an injury to all.***

***Aluta Continua***  
***Forward to socialism***

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