

## SOUTH AFRICA

### Solidarity campaign with South African students

#### From Mauritius

Dear comrade Vasudevan,

LALIT in Mauritius joins the International call from OWC Mumbai 2016 and expresses our solidarity with students in South Africa in their struggles against repression imposed by the South African Government.

We support their demands for free higher public education.

Education is a basic right and not a commodity that will benefit the ruling class only.

Long live student's struggle!  
Long live worker's struggle!

Yours in struggle,

**Rada Kistnasamy**  
**For LALIT**  
**Socialist Revolutionary Party in Mauritius**

#### From Guinea-Bissau

To Your Excellency Mr Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa

We send this letter to the President of the Republic of South Africa and to the whole of South African youth to voice our support to the demands of South African students.

From Guinea-Bissau we share in their struggle for public, free and quality education in the service of building a free, sovereign and integra-

ted Africa. Education Reform in South Africa is more than due, it is a fundamental historic correction. The neoliberal education model implemented by apartheid must not be allowed to stand. That is were the legitimacy of our friends', the South African secondary and university students' and professors' struggle is grounded.

We demand that the government's Department of Home Affairs immediately stop the shameful repression that has been going on in South Africa for over a week. At every occasion our continent's governments chose repression rather than dialogue, they paved the way to emergency rule leading to arrests and torture of social militants, including many students. The history of Guinea Bissau's National Student Union, itself subject to severe repressions, was shaped by the defence of freedom and international solidarity with all those who struggle for quality education, real democracy and freedom.

We demand that all arrested students be immediately freed and repudiate the police assault on South African students and every human rights violation against the citizens of that brother country. We support every legitimate demand of South Africa's education movement.

**National Student Union**  
**of Guinea Bissau. ■**

#### ORGANISING COMMITTEE FOR THE MUMBAI CONFERENCE . MARCH 9, 2016 .

##### AFGHANISTAN

**Nasir Loyand**, Left Radical of Afghanistan.

##### BRAZIL

**Claudio Ribeiro**, labour lawyer, former trade unionist in the Bank sector and founding member of the Workers Party (PT) in Brazil.

##### BURUNDI

**Paul Nkunzimana**, Workers Party for Democracy (Parti des travailleurs et de la démocratie - PTD).

##### FRANCE

**Daniel Gluckstein**, national secretary of the Democratic independent workers Party (POID).  
**Bernard Saas**, trade unionist.

##### GREAT-BRITAIN

**Ian Hodson** National President BFAWU ( Bakers Food Allied Workers Union )

##### INDIA

**Nambiath Vasudevan/Franklyn D'Souza**, Joint Convenors, Trade Union Solidarity Committee (TUSC), Mumbai.

**M. A. Patil**, President; SarvaShramikSangh President; New Trade Union Initiative, Maharashtra State, Mumbai.

**Milind Ranade**, General Secretary KachraVahatuk-ShramikSangh (KVSS), Mumbai.

##### PAKISTAN

**Rubina Jamil**, All Pakistan trade union federation APTUF.

##### RUSSIA

**Mark Vassilev**, historian and activist.

##### USA

**Alan Benjamin**, executive committee member, San Francisco Labor Council (AFL-CIO)

**Baldemar Velasquez**, President, Farm Labor Organizing Committee FLOC (AFL-CIO).

**Nancy Wohlforth\***, OPEIU, Secretary treasurer Emerita.

*\*For id. only.*

## BRAZIL

***"For my part, I am for an extraordinary congress, to give the activists a chance to speak"***

**An interview with Ney Jansen, a Workers Party (PT) activist from the state of Parana and delegate to the Mumbai Conference**

The first round of the municipal elections just taken place on 2 October and was marked by massive abstention – to which must be added the blank and void ballots. The party that has most suffered from this wave of "vote for no one" – to use the expression that is currently going round – is the Workers Party, the PT. How should these results be assessed?

**Ney Jansen:** The workers, the landless

peasants and the young people have delivered a message: the rejection of the institutions that are still there, inherited from the dictatorship and into which the PT has sunk, and the politics that have been implemented by the PT leadership for the thirteen years that it has been in government (two terms for Lula and one for Dilma Rousseff).

That's thirteen years of government

during which the choice was made to abandon land reform, to abandon the re-nationalizing of enterprises that had been privatized, like the mining company Vale do Rio Doce, to abandon the reducing of the working day without a reduction in wages, to abandon the wealth tax, to abandon the auditing of the debt in view of its non-payment, to abandon reforming the political system, etc.

Of course, nobody can close their eyes to the ravages of the campaign that has been led for months, for the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff. Neither can anybody deny that the criminalization of the PT and its leaders has been in the aim of destroying this party, and the CUT.

But are these attacks the reason for the immense frustration felt by the workers, the landless peasants and the young people who for thirteen years have been waiting in vain for the PT to engage in policies that conform to their interests?

Or rather, on the contrary, haven't these attacks benefitted the increased distancing of the PT from the thousands and thousands of workers, landless, activists and youth?

**If we are to believe the 5 October statement by the national leadership of the PT, the PT's catastrophic election results are the result of "a conservative advance throughout the country".**

**N.J.:** No! The numbers don't say that. Moreover, the putschist right has not drawn any benefit from the PT's electoral fall. Today there is only one winner, the "vote for no one"; the abstention, the blank and the void ballots.

It is a rejection that is currently to be seen in the strikes and demonstrations that are developing in diverse sectors. The bank workers have just begun their fourth week of strike, to wrench salary increases from the bosses in that sector, salary increases to compensate for the accumulated losses over all these past years. There are strikes in the schools of Parana against the reform that is exacerbating the dismemberment of public education.

**What is the connection between the municipal elections and the on-going strikes?**

**N.J.:** These are the same workers, peasants and young people who voted for the PT for twelve years, expecting the PT to take the measures that would enable the bettering

of their lot. Now, this time, they are showing their anger by abstaining or by casting void or blank ballots. To be convinced, you only need to observe the PT results in the major industrial centres of the country, in the industrial belt of Sao Paulo particularly, where the PT was born.

**What conclusions do you draw?**

**N.J.:** An assessment must be made; a balance sheet must be drawn up. A discussion is now being engaged in the PT, amongst its different currents. This is all the more necessary as the very existence of the PT is now at stake. On what terms? For my part, I am for an extraordinary congress, to give the activists a chance to speak, to enable them to take back a workers' party that is really theirs.

**Highlight:**

**In the first round of the municipal elections on 2 October, the Workers Party (the PT) lost ten million of the seventeen million votes it got four years ago! And 60% of the municipalities that it won in 2012.** ■

## KOREA

**On September 22nd, 50,000 workers of the three Hyundai car-making factories stopped work.**

**Han Su Kim, secretary of the KCTU Gumpo regional trade council and Woo Hyun Ok, a delegate to the Mumbai World Conference spoke to us:**

**Han Su Kim, secretary of the KCTU Gumpo regional trade council:** First, it is important for us to meet comrades from other countries in this conference. There is one single world working class up against the capitalists. The KCTU organises 800,000 workers. It has a twin structure: by industry and geographically. At the level of industry federations, we have sixty national unions, nine provincial unions and sixteen regional unions.

In our region, 70,000 workers are KCTU members. They are spread out in fifty local workplaces. This city, Gumpo, has 250,000 inhabitants, but it is part of a larger group comprising five cities, totalling two million people. The membership of the other trade union federation, the FKTU (1), is roughly similar in number.

The president of the KCTU – elected by the members – was recently sentenced to a five year prison term after a series of mobilisations organised in 2015 against the government's policies and especially after the November 14th 2015 march in Seoul during which 20,000 policemen used tear-gas and water cannons against 100,000 workers. Fifty-five activists are also serving prison terms.

**Woo Hyun Ok, union official in charge of organisation at the regional council level:** In the continuity of the events that occurred when the military dictatorship fell, in 1988 the bureau of the KCTU regional council was set up and took its quarters in the office where we are now. We have to go over those events which were the origin of the reconstitution of the labour movement during the dictatorship. The KCTU came into being after those events.

There was a protest mobilisation on the campus and the police opened fire. A student was killed. After, a leader was abducted by the secret services and actually pushed through the window of a room on the fifth floor. The police tried to spirit away the body, but 20,000 people took to the streets and a regular fight, during which Molotov cocktails were used, ensued.

This is the same pattern today with the case of peasant leader Baek Nam-Gi, who has just passed away at the university hospital centre, after remaining many months in a state of coma caused by the blast of the water cannons that the police forces used against him during the November 14th 2015 demonstration.

**Han Su Kim:** At the moment, we are in the heat of the struggle and this very important fight is actually the continuation of the movement that was launched against the government's agenda last year.

Strikes have been called, especially in the public sector. The first one took place on July 20th. On September 22nd, the 100,000-strong federation of public sector unions again called a strike. A huge rally was organised in front of the Seoul railway station. On the same day, 20,000 workers of the bank sector rallied in Seoul, on the initiative of the KFIU (Korean Financial Industry Union) against the institution of incentive wages.

Then on September 27, a general strike was organised on this demand and against the destruction of the public sector through the introduction of subcontracting and precarious employment.

The rail workers and Seoul underground train workers unions joined the strike. Right now, a number of marches are being staged in the Seoul region. Pickets have been organised in front of the Congress Hall.

One must add that, on September 22, 50,000 workers of three Hyundai car-making factories stopped work. The agreement that had been negotiated between the management and the union in the month of August was submitted to workers for approbation and 78% of the employees rejected it, because it did not meet their demands. This has been the first total strike in twelve years.

Concerning peasant leader Baek Nam-Gi, the authorities have been trying to abduct the body so there could be no funeral ceremony and to prevent people from assembling, as this murder caused a huge protest movement. A permanent sit-in has been organised at the University hospital where the body is kept.

The government is also determined to modify the Labour Code, just as in France. They want more flexible working hours, they want to permit employers to deregulate, including in the employer-union relationships, to facilitate lay-offs and lengthen the trial period from two to four years.

We are very much interested in information on what is going on in France and in the world to compare with what is going on in Korea. ■

**(1) FKTU, the Federation of Korean Trade Unions. It reputedly is closer to power. For a long time, the FKTU was the only authorised trade union and was close to power at the time of the military regime.**

**=> If you wish to receive more information, if you wish to get in touch, please send your contact details to :**

**[owcmumbai2016@gmail.com](mailto:owcmumbai2016@gmail.com)**