DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST MOVEMENT STATEMENT AUGUST 17, 2012:

UNITED WORKERS SOLIDARITY ACTION MUST BE CALLED TO END THE MASSACRE IN MARIKANA

– FOR A GENERAL STRIKE – FOR NATIONALISATION UNDER WORKERS' CONTROL

The Democratic Socialist Movement condemns the massacre on the striking Lonmin workers. The massive assault by thousands of police using live ammunition against mostly unarmed workers was not an accident. This is the capitalist ruling class' premeditated effort to restore their order – the dictatorship of the bosses – by crushing the mine workers' uprising in blood. United on one side in this class war are the police, army, government, the Lonmin bosses and the whole capitalist elite, and, we unfortunately have to add, the NUM bosses. For them the death toll – to which another twelve have been added only in the last few hours at the time of writing – is just a slightly irritating threat to the value of their shares and the size of their profits. They get filthy rich through the working class' sweat, tears and hunger – and blood, when required. It is time for the working class to stand up and fight back – for a general strike of all North West mines and working class communities.

The police may drown the Lonmin strike in blood for the time being but this will not end the war that has broken into the open in Rustenburg. The roots of the conflict are the capitalist system's global economic crisis and the crisis of working class leadership. The platinum price has fallen sharply as a result of the economic crisis and the mine bosses are going on the attack to make workers pay. By shutting down production they hope they can drive up the platinum price and their multi-billion profits. The NUM and Cosatu leaders do not have any defence to put up against the attacks by the capitalists, because they see no alternative to the logic of the capitalist system which they are increasingly part of managing as part of the ruling ANC's Alliance. Cosatu's policy of class collaboration, from officials down to shop steward level being in the pockets of management to the Nedlac talkshop, is the suicidal result.

By betraying every key principle of the workers' struggle the NUM leaders turned into the mine bosses reliable agents. Over the past few years, workers at Murray and Roberts, Lonmin, Impala, Samancor, Anglo, have again and again been forced to strike in rebellion against the NUM leaders because they have struck deals with management behind the workers' backs. This forced the NUM officials into the habit of addressing workers gun-in-holster or shielded by police armoured vehicles. They NUM leaders have killed the union by allowing themselves to be used as the bosses line managers, getting bought houses and cars and investing the workers money in joint ventures with the bosses.

Failing to provide a way forward for the workers based on class unity, the NUM has also allowed the survival of dangerous tribalist tendencies based on the mine bosses' maintaining a migrant labour system aimed at dividing workers amongst themselves, and workers from local communities.

Today when Lonmin workers stand up for a R12500 living wage, the NUM calls for the police and the army, while the NUM GS Baleni just got a R40 000 monthly salary *increase*. By going in to actively break the Lonmin strike, allowing its members to be used as cannon fodder by the bosses to divide the struggle, and calling on the bosses, the police and army to step in to suppress the strike, the NUM leadership crossed the class line.

The Association of Mine workers and Construction Union (AMCU) has stepped into the vacuum left by the NUM leaders' betrayal but it has yet to prove it can unite workers behind a real alternative.
The DSM believes that for AMCU to be able to provide a way forward it would have to base itself on a programme that recognises that what is flaring up in Rustenburg is a more intense

phase of the class war in which the platinum bosses, along with their likes all over the world, are trying to offload the burden of the escalating global economic crisis onto the backs of the workers. In that situation trade unions must either take the side of the bosses, as the NUM has in effect done, or take up the battle and turn it against the bosses, fighting against closures, retrenchment and short-time until the end while launching a mass campaign for the nationalisation of the mines under worker control and management.

A union worth the name should also call for the all workers, whether they belong to AMCU, NUM or another union, to unite behind the demand for a living wage for all. The crisis can only be resolved by workers uniting across union and tribal lines.

We have no doubt it was the police and mine security that first attacked the striking workers, as so many times before in Rustenburg and elsewhere in the country. Last, three workers at M&Rs' K5 shaft in Marikana were shot dead by police and mine security as their protest march was attacked on August 1. Another two of about 20 injured workers have since died of their shot wounds. We stand for workers' right to defend themselves, in a disciplined way. It was a mistake for Lonmin workers to respond by killing first two security guards, on Saturday, and then two police officers on Monday. This did not move the workers' struggle forward but divided it. It gave the police, the mine bosses and the state cover behind which they could crush the strike.

The DSM is urging workers inside AMCU and the NUM to demand of their unions:

- - To organise immediate solidarity strike action on all the North West mining operations uniting behind the Lonmin workers' demand for a living wage and for the withdrawal of the police and army
- - To appeal to all the surrounding working class communities to join in mass action in solidarity with the demand for a living wage and for the platinum wealth to be used for the needs of society, not for profit
- - To call and prepare for a general strike in protest against the massacre and for a living wage
- - To set up a joint trade union and strike committee-led investigation into the Marikana massacre
- - To organise disciplined and accountable self-defence committees and put an end to the killing of fellow workers

- - To start a campaign of rolling mass action for the nationalisation of the mines under workers democratic control and management

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