

ANC'S ARROGANT NEW MEC TELLS EPWP WORKERS: YOU ARE "NONE OF MY BUSINESS!"

At meetings with EPWP workers towards the end of last year, the ANC's new Gauteng MEC for Infrastructure Development, Ms Tasneem Motara, said she "will not keep any" of the EPWP workers from the Zivuseni and NYS schemes when contracts end on 31 March.

Ms Motara became an MEC following the 2019 National & Provincial Elections. EPWP workers have said she made them "feel like criminals". When workers challenged Ms Motara and explained that they had been with the EPWP for five or six years she said that this "was none of my business! – Whoever kept you here, it is their responsibility". In other words, she thinks that the EPWP workers should have been sent back to the streets long ago! Ms Motara asked workers: "Why did you allow yourselves to stay? It is your problem." She made it clear that she wants all current EPWP workers out "to make room for new people to benefit from the programme."

This shows that Ms Motara knows what the EPWP is for from the point of view of the ANC politicians – to pressure the poor and desperate to vote for them! No one else "benefits".

It is true that EPWP 'contracts' usually only last one year. In that time, 'participants' are supposed to receive skills development and training. But the Gauteng government failed year after year to do this. In 2019, after EPWP workers threatened court action, they paid Rmillions to the corrupt Bosasa company to provide training – that lasted only three weeks! It has been protests by workers that have kept them in the EPWP scheme. They are only demanding that the Gauteng ANC government do what it had promised.

But EPWP workers views have developed. They have spent years doing

useful work in schools, clinics, hospitals, on the roads and elsewhere. Their work is needed by society. If the EPWP workers had been employed via a labour broker company, rather than the EPWP programme, the different municipal and provincial departments would have been required by law to employ them as permanent workers long ago. This is what the EPWP workers demand now – permanent jobs in the departments where they work.

Ms Motara, the situation facing EPWP workers **IS** your business and it **IS** your problem!

If Ms Motara feels we have in any way misrepresented her, we challenge her to attend any of the EPWP Workers Forum meetings and clarify her position and that of the ANC Gauteng government.

Every year, the ANC Gauteng government boasts about the "work opportunities" they will create. In the last budget of March 2019, the ANC's Finance MEC, Barbara Creecy, said that R23.8 million would be used to create 7,000 EPWP "work opportunities" and R81.2 million to create 7,000 Zivuseni and NYS "work opportunities".

How does this fit with Ms Motara telling EPWP workers that on 31 March they will be sent back to the street with nothing to show for their time in the EPWP? Why can't this money be allocated to employ existing EPWP workers in the departments they currently work in?



Ms MOTARA MEC

DETERMINED STRUGGLE

Ms Motara's arrogance is not unusual amongst the career politicians in the Provincial Legislature. **She receives a salary of R1,977,795 per year.** This is the same as 82 EPWP workers receiving a R2,000 stipend!

The Marxist Workers Party says that all elected representatives should be paid no more than the wage of a skilled worker.

However, Ms Motara's new hardline arrogance is not simply down to her as an individual. The ANC government of Cyril Ramaphosa is preparing to take the axe to the public sector. The government is borrowing more and more money to pay the wages of teachers, police officers, nurses and other government workers.

The international ratings agency companies that represent the interests of US and European big business in particular, are threatening to pull the plug on lending by downgrading South Africa to "junk". This puts pressure on the ANC government not to fill job vacancies, to cut the pay, pension and benefits of public sector

workers and even to make retrenchments. It is also why they are prepared to let South African Airways collapse and want to 're-structure' Eskom and other state-owned enterprises – all of which will lead to job losses.

However, it is the ANC government's **choice** to go along with this austerity programme. They do so willingly because they represent the interests of the rich and the bosses here in SA – the capitalist class. Many ANC politicians are business-owners or share-holders themselves and so defend the capitalist profit-system that leaves the majority suffering unemployment and poverty.

In this environment EPWP workers will never **persuade** the municipalities and departments to employ them – they will have to force them to by mass action. Crucial to this will be building alliances with other groups of workers, especially the permanent workers in the public sector and state-owned enterprises like Eskom who will soon face attacks on their jobs, wages and conditions.

An injury to one is an injury to all!

A WORKERS PARTY?

In a resolution adopted at their November Central Executive Committee meeting the Saftu trade union federation said: "Saftu once all the discussions have been concluded about the modalities and the platform through a bottom up and democratic process, will catalyse the formation of a Workers Party."

EPWP workers should debate this issue. The Marxist Workers party thinks that the EPWP workers should play a key role in founding a mass workers party with a socialist programme that is built by workers to lead struggles to end unemployment and poverty. All the other parties support capitalism and have failed the EPWP workers. If what you need does not yet exist – create it!

APPEAL TO NEHAWU, SADTU, SAMWU, DENOSA AND POPCRU MEMBERS

We ask all permanent public sector workers to take the issue of the employment of EPWP workers to their trade union structures and mobilise to support their demands.

The axe will soon fall very heavily on public sector workers. Those workers in the Coastu-affiliated unions need to be prepared. Their ANC-aligned trade union leaders will try cover-up and make excuses for the ANC government and persuade workers to accept job losses and pay cuts. A policy of genuinely revolutionary trade unionism – that demands class independence from the bosses, including the capitalist ANC government – will have to be fought for if a fightback against attacks on the public sector is to be successful

**The Marxist Workers Party says:
Cosatu out of the Tripartite Alliance!**

MARCH TO UNION BUILDINGS

For an all-night vigil during Ramaphosa's State of the Nation Address

12/13 February