

DEMOCRATIC LEFT FRONT

www.democraticleft.za.net

30 August 2012

The Democratic Left Front (DLF) is shocked, disgusted and angered by the decision of the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) to charge the 270 workers from the Lonmin platinum mine in Marikana currently in custody with the murder of their 34 fellow workers, comrades and strikers who were callously mowed down by the South African Police Service on 16 August 2012. The NPA has the audacity to justify this decision on the basis of the common law doctrine of common purpose where “suspects with guns or any weapons and they confront or attack the police and a shooting takes place and there are fatalities” (as stated to the BBC by an NPA spokesperson, Frank Lesenyego). Infamously, the common purpose charge was last used in a high profile case by the apartheid regime with the Upington 6 case. So much for all the last week's meaningless platitudes and crocodile tears over the Lonmin massacre from the ANC and government!

Clearly, President Zuma's Judicial Commission of inquiry has been rendered irrelevant by this charge. Why waste money on a Judicial Commission when the state has already decided that the workers are responsible for having themselves shot at and their comrades killed by the police? What a travesty of justice! This amounts to cynical cruelty and a flagrant contempt for truth. This opens the door to an official cover-up of the publicly witnessed shooting of the striking workers by the police. Already, there has been wanton destruction of evidence at the crime scene. All this, together with today's problematic decision of the Garankuwa Magistrate's Court to grant the State permission to postpone the bail application of the workers for another 7 days. These workers have been in jail for more than 15 days. All this militates against a fair trial of these workers.

On the basis of a doctrine of common affront, and solidarity, the DLF calls on all people in South Africa who stand for the truth and social justice to all line up at police stations demanding to be charged with murder. We call for this action for Thursday, 06 September when the arrested workers next appear in court.

The DLF calls on the NPA to withdraw the charges of common purpose against the Lonmin workers. The DLF calls on the NPA to lay charges of murder against the police. We say no to a police cover-up. We say no to a Judicial Commission of Enquiry that will whitewash the police.

The DLF calls for solidarity and the mobilisation of all legal, financial and other resources in order to ensure effective legal assistance to the charged workers as well as to ensure that the stories, voices and interests of the affected workers and communities are effectively heard in a transparent and unbiased process. The DLF reaffirms its support for an independent commission of enquiry as endorsed by various Marikana solidarity campaigns launched in Johannesburg and Cape Town in the last week.

ENDS