



Straight to the point: 12% or never! Public sector workers on the march in Johannesburg

July 2007



Class and ideological struggles in the state and the economy

Some lessons from the public service strike and beyond

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We are still in the midst of what is clearly the biggest and longest public sector strike in the history of our country. Perhaps it is too early to undertake a comprehensive analysis and understand its full meaning.

While it can be regarded as a normal dispute between employers and employees, it would be a mistake not to tease out some of the key underlying issues. The strike is a normal employer-employee dispute, but simultaneously about deeper class and ideological struggles in the state and the economy.

Some have been trying to locate the strike in what they have referred to as the 'ANC succession battle'. This habit of wanting to explain everything, especially in government and within the Tripartite Alliance through the prism of the so-called 'succession-battle', is not only an expression of increasing intellectual laziness and sensationalism engulfing our media, but also has the danger of blurring very critical policy and political issues and

contemporary struggles shaping our democracy.

Some journalists and analysts even went to the extent of explaining the intensity of the special day of intensified action by strikers in KwaZulu-Natal as a reflection of the fact that ANC Deputy President Cde Jacob Zuma has the 'largest backing in this province'. A number of critical issues are lost through this succession paradigm.

These sensationalist analyses obscure the nature and character of class and ideological struggles during the second decade of our freedom. Perhaps this is not an accident, as the very debates around the 'succession battle' have themselves become a platform for intense (class and gender) ideological struggles and agendas.

Some of our international allies have asked us as to how a government led by an allied formation faces such a massive public service strike led by an allied trade union federation. Firstly, it could mean that control of government does not mean control of the state and its orienta-

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