

Editorial:

Political springtime in South Africa

This issue of *Workers International Journal* is devoted to developments in South Africa.

Articles include the dramatic *Resolution on Challenges Facing the Alliance* passed at the Special National Congress (SNC) of the metalworkers' trade union NUMSA and the *Statement* published at the end of the Congress.

We also print Balazs Nagy's reflections as a Marxist on the death of Nelson Mandela and two reprints from the archives. The first of these is an article that was written on behalf of the Executive Committee of Workers International in 1990, when the ANC / SACP leadership was negotiating the hand-over of power in 1990, *An End to Apartheid or a New Form of Slavery?* by J.T. Barney. This was first published in *The International* no. 2, July 1990. The second is an obituary of the South African trade unionist and Workers International member Bongani Mkhungo published in *Socialist Studies* no. 6 of January 2010.

Workers' International entirely welcomes the decisions of the December 2014 Special National Congress of the NUMSA trade union in South Africa and looks forward to collaborating in the course of action NUMSA proposes.

NUMSA has broken with those forces in the African National Congress (ANC) and South African Communist Party (SACP) which used the necessary and longed-for ending of apartheid in order to smuggle in an accommodation with the world and South African bourgeoisie (as described in articles in this issue of *Workers International Journal*).

Political party

NUMSA calls for progress towards a political party which can represent and organise the working class and working masses in general. In the *Statement* issued following the SNC, NUMSA emphasises: "For the struggle for socialism, the working class needs a political organisation committed in theory and practice to socialism".

Workers International thoroughly agrees that this is the case. But what gives

us even deeper grounds for optimism is the Marxist political tradition evoked in relation to this development.

NUMSA Deputy General Secretary Karl Cloete (in *Numsa Marxist Leninist Political School 26 January to 2 February 2014: A brief talk on the Numsa 2013 SNC Resolutions*) reiterated:

"NUMSA must explore the establishment of a MOVEMENT FOR SOCIALISM as the working class needs a political organisation committed in its policies and actions to the establishment of a Socialist South Africa."

He then reminded listeners: "I hope that in the readings you picked up how ... the concept of the United Front was adopted by the Communist International (Comintern) in 1922", and he went on to make a number of points about the application of the United Front under present-day conditions.

The leaders of NUMSA are thus raising matters of vital importance for workers everywhere.

(Ctd. p. 2)

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The struggle by Lenin, Trotsky and other Communist leaders expressed in the work of the first four congresses of the Communist International was about how to construct the revolutionary world party of the working class.

They understood that the struggle for socialism was a struggle to defeat and destroy the bourgeois class all over the world.

Socialism

Also, socialism cannot be achieved by an accumulation of reforms or minor, incremental, gradual changes; it has to involve the destruction of those social, political and state structures which embody bourgeois class relations.

Obviously that cannot be accomplished all in one stroke and obviously the struggle will take different forms in different countries, but the Communist organisation had to be internationally centralised and the strategy which guided it had to be international. Without these, the struggle is doomed to defeats and setbacks.

Without the power of a working class actively and consciously organised in its workplaces, communities and social arrangements, the enemy class cannot be beaten; without its political leadership gathered in a Marxist party, such a movement cannot realise its political mission.

Foundations

The leaders of the early Communist International knew that their party had to rest on the foundations of an active, organised, interconnected movement which embraced not only organised labour but beyond that the wider masses of working people of every kind.

(In this respect we can only welcome comrade Cloete's words when he says: "All our Regions must convene meetings of mass-based organisations and social movements to brief them on the SNC. This we are calling Provincial Consultative Conferences").

One of the issues we hope to discuss with NUMSA leaders and activists is how this tradition of the Communist International was interrupted and per-

verted, how the Stalinist degeneration of the Comintern culminated in the sell-out to the world bourgeoisie which they experienced at the hands of the ANC / SACP alliance.

We further note that various NUMSA statements refer to neo-liberalism as the enemy, as if that was merely one policy among others that the bourgeoisie had simply adopted on a whim.

For example, the 25 February *Joint Statement of NUMSA – Trades Unions and Progressive Social Movements* explains:

"We all agree that we live in a country that is engulfed by the crisis of capitalism which manifests itself in mass unemployment, deepening poverty and widening inequalities, mostly affecting the Black African urban and rural working class and youth of our country"

World crisis

(Our own study of the theoretical advances made by the early Comintern leads us to add: This is a world crisis of the capitalist system in its imperialist phase. It is not a crisis confined only to South Africa or only to other former colonies, although it certainly manifests in drastic form the huge inequalities that are built into imperialism as a world system.)

The 25 February *Joint Statement* continues:

"We collectively acknowledge that the current waves of unemployment, poverty and inequality are a manifestation of the neo-liberal economic policy choices being fostered and entrenched over the past 20 years of our political freedom by the African National Congress (ANC)-led government."

Now it is clear that since at least the late 1970s the imperialist powers have been pursuing the policies described as "neo-liberalism", and it is true that the leaders of the ANC and SACP "chose" to follow them instead of socialist policies which could advance the cause of the masses of people. The question is, however, whether these policies were an "option" which imperialists could "choose" to follow or not.

It is our view that such policies are a necessary expression of what capitalist imperialism is. The imperialist ruling class is driven to apply them out of inner necessity. To say, therefore, that it is just a "choice" can encourage illusions that another path is possible without destroying imperialism as a system and achieving socialism.

Advance

We hope to advance the discussion on this point by referring to Lenin's disagreement with Karl Kautsky expressed in his vital work on *Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism*:

"The fundamental ideas expressed in our definition of imperialism were very resolutely attacked by Kautsky ... when he said that imperialism must not be regarded as a 'phase' or stage of economy but as a policy, a definite policy 'preferred' by finance capital ..." and a few pages later: "... Kautsky detaches the politics of imperialism from its economics, speaks of annexations as being a policy 'preferred' by finance capital and opposes to it another bourgeois policy which, he alleges, is possible on this same basis of finance capital ... the result is bourgeois reformism instead of Marxism".

We believe that NUMSA has entered a trajectory which leads it away from bourgeois reformism, and we believe that as an organisation it is engaged in refreshing its Marxism at its sources in the work of the Communist International (and of course Marx and Engels themselves).

Nourishment

At every crisis in the workers' movement, these sources have provided essential theoretical nourishment for those who want to take the working class and the masses forward to victory. We strongly recommend profound and careful study of them.

We are preparing a proposal to put forward to NUMSA in due course which, we hope, will lead to a fruitful discussion and collaboration.

Challenges Facing the Alliance

1. Noting that;

1.1. The Alliance is dysfunctional, in crisis and paralysed. It is dominated by infighting, factionalism and fails to meet regularly.

1.2. Although there are protests everywhere and every day in the country, the Alliance is not an instrument in the hands of these struggling masses nor does it provide leadership to these struggles which is largely leaderless struggles. The reality is that there is a political vacuum and the working class is on its own.

1.3. The Freedom Charter which we understood as the minimum platform of the Alliance has been completely abandoned in favour of rightwing and neo-liberal policies such as the National Development Plan (NDP).

1.4. There exists little common understanding within the Alliance of the real objectives of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR).

1.5. The Alliance operates and works during election periods and it is our experience that the working class is being used by the leader of the Alliance – the African National Congress (ANC) – as voting fodder.

1.6. The Alliance has been captured and taken over by rightwing forces. Those who are perceived to be against neo-liberalism or advocates of policies in favour of the working class and the poor are seen as problematic, isolated or purged.

1.7. Dominant classes in society have swayed the Alliance in their favour.

1.8. The ANC has resisted the reconfiguration of the Alliance into a strategic political centre where issues of policy, deployments into government and programmes are jointly decided upon by all components of the Alliance.

1.9. The strategy of swelling the ranks has not worked and all resolutions of COSATU congresses in relation to how the Alliance should function have not been implemented by the leaders of the Alliance.

1.10. In practice the Alliance is still in the hands of one alliance partner, the ANC. The ANC is the centre and implements government programmes and policies alone with little or no consultation with other components of the Alliance.

1.11. There is strong opposition from the ANC to an alliance agreement or pact. The movement has told us in no uncertain words that the ANC is the political centre. They have also argued against the pact, quoting O.R. Tambo when he said at the SACP's 60th anniversary in 1981: "Ours is not merely a paper alliance, as created at conference tables and formalised through the signing of documents and representing only an agreement of leaders".

1.12. As NUMSA we have been detecting an abuse by the ANC of other Alliance partners.

1.13. The alliance is used to rubber stamp neo-liberal policies of the ANC and not as a centre of power that debates policy issues and implementation.

1.14. The treatment of labour as a junior partner within the Alliance is not uniquely a South African phenomenon. In many post-colonial and post-revolutionary situations, liberation and revolutionary movements have turned on labour movements that fought alongside them; suppressed them, marginalised them, split them, robbed them of their independence or denied them any meaningful role in politics and policy-making.

1.15. The recent alliance summit still failed to make fundamental changes to the current proposed NDP and had no significant impact in changing policies in favour of the working class and the poor.

2. Further noting that;

2.1 There is no chance of winning back the Alliance to what it was originally formed for; which was to drive a revolutionary programme for fundamental transformation of the

country with the Freedom Charter as the minimum platform to transform the South African economy.

2.2 The South African Communist Party (SACP) leadership has become embedded in the state and is failing to act as the vanguard of the working class.

2.3 The chance of winning back the SACP onto the path of working class struggle for working class power is very remote.

2.4 For the struggle for socialism, the working class needs a political organisation committed in theory and practice to socialism.

3. Therefore resolve that;

3.1 In light of the above as NUMSA, we should call on COSATU to break from the Alliance. The time for looking for an alternative has arrived.

3.1.1. that our members and shopstewards must be active on all fronts and in all struggles against neo-liberal policies whether these policies are being implemented in the workplace or in communities.

3.1.2. that in all our constitutional structures, there should be a standing agenda item on community struggles, their nature and NUMSA's attitude to these community struggles.

3.2 As NUMSA, we must lead in the establishment of a new UNITED FRONT that will coordinate struggles in the workplace and in communities; in a way similar to the UDF of the 1980s. The task of this front will be to fight for the implementation of the Freedom Charter and be an organisational weapon against neoliberal policies such as the NDP. For this to happen it requires:

3.3. Side by side to the establishment of the new UNITED FRONT, we in NUMSA must explore the establishment of a MOVEMENT FOR SOCIALISM as the working class needs a political organisation committed in its policies and actions to the establishment of a socialist South Africa.

3.4. In order to execute the task of exploring the establishment of the

MOVEMENT FOR SOCIALISM, as a union we must do the following:

3.4.1. In line with the existing NUMSA resolution, convene a Conference on Socialism

3.4.2. Leading up to this conference, NUMSA must conduct a thoroughgoing discussion on previous attempts to build socialism as well as current experiments to build socialism

3.4.3. Commission an international study on the historical formation of

working class parties. As part of this study we need to explore the different type of parties – from mass workers parties to vanguard parties. We must look at countries such as Brazil, Venezuela, Bolivia, Greece and any other experiments.

3.5. This work to explore the formation of a MOVEMENT FOR SOCIALISM must be regularly reported to constitutional structures and the work must be finalised by the first NUMSA Central Committee in 2015.

3.6. In all the work being done whether on building a new united front and exploring the formation of a Movement for Socialism, as NUMSA we must be alert to gains that may present possibilities of either the new united front or any other progressive coalition or party committed to socialism standing for elections in future. The NUMSA constitutional structures must continuously assess these developments and possibilities.

Numsa Special National Congress December 17 to 20, 2013

Declaration

1. Introduction

Numsa's Special National Congress convened from December 17 to December 20, 2013. It was attended by 1,200 delegates representing 338,000 metalworkers from 50 Locals throughout the provinces of South Africa. Numsa was proud to announce in the Congress that it is the biggest union in the history of the African continent. In the last 17 months, since our 9th Congress in Durban, we have grown from 300,000 members to 338,000 members. We are ahead of schedule in our goal to organise 400,000 workers by the time of our 10th Congress in 2016.

2. The passing of Madiba

The congress started by paying tribute to Comrade Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela as a giant in our struggle for liberation. His passing marks the end of a political era in our journey towards full freedom. The congress agreed that, if we are to truthfully and fully honour Mandela and his Comrades, his passing must herald the birth of our renewed commitment to intensify the struggle for full economic sovereignty, for complete economic freedom of the working class and the rural poor. His passing must spur us to fight even harder for the attainment of all the ideals he stood for: liberty, freedom, dignity, democracy and full social and economic equality of all human beings. Not to do so, will be to betray him and his Comrades.

The Congress remembered vividly the words Madiba offered to the Cosatu

Special National Congress in 1993, when he said:

"You must be vigilant! How many times has a labour movement supported a liberation movement, only to find itself betrayed on the day of liberation? There are many examples of this in Africa. If the ANC does not deliver the goods you must do to it what you did to the apartheid regime."

3. Unity

There was a lot of talk, in the build-up to our Special National Congress, about how divided Numsa is. Much was made of the resignation of our former president, Cedric Gina. Stories were spread of a union dominated by a single individual. There were even stories, which became the subject of much humour in the congress, of Numsa's leadership comprising business people who were simply firing up the militancy of the union for personal gain.

In the last five days Numsa has shown those stories to contain not one atom of truth. The most notable feature of the congress has been its unity. Even independent analysts and media commentators have confirmed the remarkable unity of the membership and the leadership in the congress. The delegates have been solidly united in their approach to the current crisis of the working class. There has been vigorous debate on detail, but absolute agreement on the key decisions that the congress faced.

Numsa emerges from the congress in the same condition as we went in – united in our militant determination to

use our strength to win fundamental change in the policies and strategies of government as the only way to solve the triple crisis of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

4. Origins of the Congress and its democratic process

In the view of the Numsa National Office Bearers and the Central Committee, the situation in the Alliance and in Cosatu had reached a point which required the leadership to consult our members. The decisions of our 9th Congress were no longer enough to guide us. The situation had changed to a point where we needed a new mandate from the membership.

The Numsa Central Committee therefore called this Special National Congress and Numsa's democratic process swung into gear. Discussions were held in all 50 Locals and all 9 Regions. The debate was consolidated at national level and sent back for further discussion. By the time we arrived at this Special National Congress on Monday evening, the delegates were all well aware of the issues on which there was agreement and the issues on which there was a need for more debate. The congress was founded on a solid base of discussion and debate throughout the structures of the union.

5. The crisis of deindustrialisation and unemployment

Both the Numsa President and the General Secretary set out very clearly and at length the context for the deliberations of the Congress.

The global crisis of capitalism continues and offers a bleak future for any emerging economy that fails to build its own manufacturing industry. South Africa is not only failing to increase industrialisation, the ANC government, including its component from the leadership of the SACP, has presided over a dramatic decrease in the levels of industrialisation in the country.

This is not an accident; it does not come from incompetence or inefficiency on the part of the ANC and SACP leadership. It comes from the fact that the leadership of the ANC and SACP is protecting the interests of white monopoly capital and imperialism against the interests of the working class. The ANC and SACP leadership defends the ownership and control of the mines, banks and monopoly industries in the hands of white monopoly capital and imperialism. The manipulation of the resolution by the ANC branches on nationalisation by the leadership, the Deputy President of the ANC (and others), exploit the black working class in alliance with white monopoly capitalism and imperialism.

That is why South Africa has been steadily deindustrialising. It is not in the interests of mining and finance capital to invest in manufacturing industry, especially that part which does not affect the MEFC. That is why South Africa has such high levels of unemployment. It is in manufacturing industry that large numbers of jobs can be created. That is why our comrades died as they did at Marikana and de Doorns. It was not incompetence on the part of the police. It was the conscious, deliberate support, by the armed forces of the state, for the interests of shareholders and against the interests of workers.

6. Four key developments since Numsa's 9th Congress

Many things have happened since Numsa's 9th congress. We will highlight four of them in this declaration:

The NDP

The ANC has adopted a strategic programme – the National Development Plan. The fault of the NDP is not that it is technically flawed or in need of adjustment and editing. On the contrary, it is a very competent and detailed document. Its fault is that it is the programme of our class enemy. It is a programme to continue to feed profit at the expense of the working class and the

poor. It is a strategic plan that will benefit white monopoly capital, imperialism and the comprador black capitalist class, not us.

In the order of priorities of the ANC, the NDP has replaced the Freedom Charter. A militant, popular programme which challenged property relations in South Africa has been replaced by a neo-liberal programme which entrenches existing property relations and attacks the working class and the poor in the interests of mining and finance capital.

The ANC leadership has clarified that it will not tolerate any challenge

The ANC leadership has demonstrated without doubt, at Mangaung, that they will not allow anybody else to challenge their direction. The National General Council of 2010, and Policy Conference which preceded the Mangaung Conference, had a clear majority in favour of nationalisation. That majority was transformed by the ANC leadership into majority support for a fundamentally opposed position in which the National Development Plan focuses on reducing the role of the state rather than increasing it.

Cosatu has experienced a sustained, vicious attack on its militancy and independence

Cosatu has become consumed by internal battles between forces which continue to support the ANC and SACP, with its neo-liberal agenda and those which are fighting for an independent, militant federation which stands for the interests of the working class before any other. In the process Numsa has been continuously vilified and smeared by those opposed to its militant approach, in Cosatu itself, in the ANC and in the SACP.

The state attacked and killed workers on behalf of capital

Both at Marikana and in the farmworkers strike in the Western Cape, the armed forces of the state intervened in support of the owners of capital against striking workers. In both instances the result was the murder of workers whose only crime was to refuse to sell their labour for less than a living wage.

In summary

The ANC has been captured by representatives of an enemy class. It has adopted the strategic plan of that class. Its leadership has shown that it will not let the small issue of democracy get in

the way of defending its control. As well as the continued poverty of the majority of the working class, the result of this has been the slaughter of workers.

It is clear from this picture that the working class cannot any longer see the ANC or the SACP as its class allies in any meaningful sense.

7. The tasks of the congress

The Congress had to discuss how to respond to this situation. Numsa has a proud record of support for the ANC and SACP over the last 20 years that it has been in government and for long before that during the struggle. For more than 20 years we have been urging our members to swell the ranks of the ANC and SACP. We have been convinced that it is in our power to move the ANC and SACP in a direction that supports the working class and the poor.

The evidence, leading up to this special congress, was that our existing strategy was becoming outdated. Swelling the ranks has merely resulted in delivering more working class victims, like lambs to the slaughter by the ANC's bourgeois leadership.

8. Marikana

Marikana is a turning point

Since the first post-apartheid massacre took place in Marikana, it has been the view of Numsa that what happened on that day, similar to the 1922 Rand Revolt and the 1960 Sharpeville massacre, marked a turning point in the social and political life of South Africa.

What happened in Marikana is one of the reasons why we convened this Special National Congress. As a union we said that after the mowing down of 34 miners in Marikana, it can't be "business as usual" in South Africa. How do we explain the killing of striking workers in a democracy? As a union we have conducted a sustained and thorough analysis of the political meaning of Marikana.

What we wanted to do at this Congress was to look closer to home and ask what Marikana means for trade unions and the entire labour movement. We wanted to do this introspection because as Numsa we sincerely believe that as a union we are not immune from the mass desertion by members of a traditional union to a new union.

Marikana was a deliberate defence of mining profits and mining capitalists!

Delegates at this Congress were shown a new documentary that gives an

alternative narrative to what we have been fed; that the police in Marikana were acting in self-defence. What we saw was that Marikana was a well-planned and orchestrated strategy by the state to defend the profits of mining bosses.

The Congress resolved

With all this evidence, delegates at this Special National Congress resolved as follows:

- To call for a full and impartial investigation of the causes of what happened in Marikana as the 11th National Congress of Cosatu had called in September 2012. This investigation, unlike the Farlam Commission, would look not only at who pulled the trigger or who gave instruction to murder the workers in Marikana but would also investigate the root causes of the massacre such as the persistent migrant labour system and super exploitation of labour by capital in South Africa.

- To call upon the South African government to make available all the necessary resources and requirements to the Farlam Commission of Inquiry into the massacre, and more especially, accede to the demand for necessary assistance to the families of the miners and the injured miners and their lawyers.

- To call for the dismissal of the Commissioner of Police, General Riah Phiyega.

- To demand that all the politicians and individuals who are in complicity with the police and state in the murder of the Marikana miners be brought to book.

- To demand that the mining bosses accept full responsibility for the deaths of all the workers on the mines, and that where appropriate, necessary prosecutions must follow.

- To demand the immediate absolute dropping and withdrawal of police charges against all the arrested Marikana miners.

To call on our trustees to investigate how workers, through withdrawal of pension fund monies, can punish those involved in the massacre.

A word to the media

The Special National Congress had a word for the media. It noted the poor media coverage of the massacre, which in the main serves the interests of private capital. You as media, like us, need some introspection.

International Day of Action

The Special National Congress committed, on behalf of the entire membership of NUMSA, that if the above demands are not met, we commit ourselves with our allies to an International Day of Action in support of our demands.

Numsa and delegates and staff raise R350,000 for Marikana families

Through personal pledges by worker delegates at this Congress and the entire staff of Numsa, we collected an amount of R80 000 from worker delegates, R70 000 from Numsa staff and R200 000 from the Numsa Investment Company (R350 000 in total) which will be donated to victims and the children of victims of the massacre. The National Office Bearers (NOBs) have been asked to investigate what is the best trust in this regard.

9. On the Alliance

Analysis

The congress noted the history and current situation of the Alliance and its partners:

The Alliance is dysfunctional and captured by rightwing forces

The Alliance is dysfunctional, in crisis, paralysed and dominated by infighting and factionalism. It has been captured by rightwing forces. As a result:

- The Freedom Charter, which we understood as the minimum platform of the Alliance, has been completely abandoned in favour of right-wing and neo-liberal policies such as the National Development Plan (NDP).

- Those who are perceived to be against neo-liberalism or to be advocates of policies in favour of the working class and the poor are seen as problematic, isolated or purged.

- There exists little common understanding within the Alliance of the real objectives of the National Democratic Revolution.

The Alliance does not lead struggle

Although there are protests everywhere and every day in the country, the Alliance is not an instrument in the hands of these struggling masses, nor does it provide leadership to these struggles, which are largely leaderless struggles. The reality is that there is a political vacuum and the working class is on its own.

The Alliance is just for elections

The Alliance operates only during election periods. It is used to rubber

stamp neo-liberal policies of the ANC and not as a centre of power that debates policy issues and implementation. It is our experience that the working class is being used by the leader of the Alliance – the African National Congress – as voting fodder.

The ANC is the only strategic centre

The ANC has resisted the reconfiguration of the Alliance into a strategic political centre where issues of policy, deployments into government and programmes are jointly decided upon by all Alliance components. Our strategy of swelling the ranks has not worked and all resolutions of COSATU congresses in relation to how the Alliance should function have not been implemented by the leaders of the Alliance.

In practice the Alliance is still in the hands of one alliance partner, the ANC. The ANC is the centre and implements government programmes and policies alone, with little or no consultation with other components of the Alliance. It has made it very clear that it has no intention of allowing this situation to change. As evidence of this, the recent alliance summit still failed to make fundamental changes to the NDP and had no significant impact in changing policies in favour of the working class and the poor.

This is a common development in post-colonial countries

The treatment of labour as a junior partner within the Alliance is not uniquely a South African phenomenon. In many post-colonial and post-revolutionary situations, liberation and revolutionary movements have turned on labour movements that fought alongside them, suppressed them, marginalised them, split them, robbed them of their independence or denied them any meaningful role in politics and policy-making.

There is no chance of winning back the Alliance or the SACP

There is no chance of winning back the Alliance to what it was originally formed for, which was to drive a revolutionary programme for fundamental transformation of the country, with the Freedom Charter as the minimum platform to transform the South African economy.

The South African Communist Party (SACP) leadership has become embedded in the state and is failing to act as the vanguard of the working class. The chance of winning it back

onto the path of working class struggle for working class power is very remote.

The working class needs a political organisation

For the struggle for socialism, the working class needs a political organisation committed in theory and practice to socialism.

Decisions

The Congress therefore resolved the following:

Call on Cosatu to break from the Alliance

Numsa calls on COSATU to break from the Alliance. The time for looking for an alternative has arrived.

Establish a new United Front

NUMSA will lead in the establishment of a new United Front that will coordinate struggles in the workplace and in communities, in a way similar to the UDF of the 1980s. The task of this front will be to fight for the implementation of the Freedom Charter and to be an organisational weapon against neo-liberal policies such as the NDP. For this to happen our members and shopstewards must be active on all fronts and in all struggles against neo-liberal policies, whether these policies are being implemented in the workplace or in communities.

Explore establishment of a Movement for Socialism

Side by side with the establishment of the new United Front, Numsa will explore the establishment of a Movement for Socialism as the working class needs a political organisation committed in its policies and actions to the establishment of a socialist South Africa. Numsa will conduct a thoroughgoing discussion on previous attempts to build socialism as well as current experiments to build socialism. We will commission an international study on the historical formation of working class parties, including exploring different type of parties – from mass workers parties to vanguard parties.

We will look at countries such as Brazil, Venezuela, Bolivia, Greece. We will examine their programmes with the aim of identifying elements of what may constitute a revolutionary programme for the working class. This entire process will lead to the union convening a Conference on Socialism.

Set a deadline for this process

This work to explore the formation of a Movement for Socialism must be regularly reported to constitutional structures and the work must be finalised by the first NUMSA Central Committee in 2015.

Look for electoral opportunities

In addition, in all the work being done, whether on building a new united front or exploring the formation of a Movement for Socialism, we must be alert to gains that may present possibilities of either the new united front, or any other progressive coalition or party committed to socialism, standing for elections in future. The NUMSA constitutional structures must continuously assess these developments and possibilities.

10. Special resolution on possible inappropriate use of taxpayers' money to upgrade the President's home in Inkandla

Analysis

There are allegations of inappropriate use of public funds on the President's property

There are allegations that taxpayers' money has been inappropriately used to build a home costing more than R200 million for the President of the Republic of South Africa. This alleged use of the taxpayers' money takes place in the sea of poverty in our country. When asked in Parliament in 2012, the President told the whole nation that development of his house was from his family's own pockets.

There is an attempt to squash the truth

Since the allegations on use of taxpayers' money for renovations of the President's home, there have been concerted attempts to squash the truth about the expenditure including the classification of the Inter-Ministerial Report on Inkandla, the use of the notorious and apartheid-style legislation such as the National Key Points Act of 1980 as well as the attempt by the Security Cluster Ministers to interdict the Public Protector. NUMSA's National Executive Committee has called on all facts on Inkandla to be put on the table and in public.

This is not an isolated instance

President Zuma's administration has been marked by one scandal after the other if one considers the landing of the Gupta Group from India at a National Key Point which posed security risks for the country and the presence of the President's family in business deals.

President Zuma's administration continues to be characterized by lack of transparency and attempts to hide the workings of the state from the Public. An example of this lack of transparency is the passing of the so-called Protection of Information Bill or Secrecy Bill.

Neo-liberalism dominates

President Zuma's reign has seen the continuation of neo-liberalism through policies such as the National Development Plan (NDP), the Employment Tax Incentive Bill, Youth Wage Subsidy, Labour brokers and E-tolls.

This raises the question of calling for the President to resign

It was correct that the NUMSA President in his opening remarks raised the question of whether it is appropriate to agitate for the recall of the State President if the final report of the Public Protector proves that taxpayers' money was used inappropriately.

As a country, we have a recent experience where the former State President was recalled for pursuing neo-liberal policies. The Zuma administration not only pursues neoliberalism but it is characterized by scandals, nepotism and patronage.

The Public Protector's report has the potential to destroy the image of the State President and send a negative image about this country.

Decisions

The Congress condemns attempts to hide the truth

The congress condemns all the attempts that have tried to block the truth on Inkandla, such as the classification of the report by Minister of Public Works Thulas Nxesi as well as the interdict of the Public Protector by the Security Cluster Ministers.

President Zuma must resign

The congress called on President Jacob Zuma to resign with immediate effect because of his administration's pursuit of neo-liberal policies such as the NDP, e-tolls, labour brokers, youth wage subsidy, and the track record of his administration which is steeped in corruption, patronage and nepotism.

11. The situation in Cosatu

Analysis

The federation is paralysed

The federation is currently in a complete state of paralysis and about to implode if no serious measures are undertaken to save it, unify it, rebuild it

and reclaim it from forces who want to destroy or liquidate it. COSATU is no longer a campaigning federation. There has been a failure to implement congress resolutions such as the resolutions for a campaign against the banning of labour brokers, against e-tolling and the proposed youth wage subsidy.

Since September 2012, there has been a failure to carry out the revolutionary programme adopted in COSATU's 11th National Congress.

There are two voices

There are two voices, crystallised into two camps, coming from within and amongst COSATU's top leadership:

- a camp that wants COSATU to continue to fight for socialism and against neo-liberalism
 - another camp that wants a COSATU that acts as the "labour desk" of the ANC, thereby consciously or unconsciously advancing the neo-liberal project underway in South Africa.
- The divisions in COSATU are about the soul and the character of the federation.

There is an attempt to turn Cosatu into a conveyor belt

At the centre of these problems are concerted efforts to turn the federation into a conveyor belt that feeds ANC-led government policies into the working class and thus turn COSATU from a revolutionary, militant and independent union movement into a "yellow federation".

Certain leaders of the Alliance are deeply involved and are in fact the main drivers of the divisions in our federation.

The SACP is leading this attempt

Instead of uniting the labour movement, the South African Communist Party (SACP) has been the leader of criticising those who are for an independent and campaigning COSATU, labelling them as counter-revolutionary. Motivating the SACP to launch this attack is the official criticism that COSATU levelled at the Party, arguing that since Party leaders went into government, the SACP has been absent in mass struggles and has become an apologist of the government. Irritating the Party more than anything else was the call for the General Secretary and Provincial Secretaries of the Party to leave government and be fulltime in the organisation.

The SACP Congress in Ongoye openly resolved to intervene in COSATU, which is supposed to be an independent

formation of the Alliance, to isolate and defeat us. Ever since then, the political crisis in COSATU deepened and COSATU divisions worsened.

We need unity in action around a revolutionary agenda

There is no priority more important than safeguarding the capacity of the working class to act in its own interests. The unity of the working class is critically important, but it has to be based on unity in action.

We need to continuously assert, in action, that we need a united, independent and campaigning COSATU that is able to implement its own resolutions without favour or fear. For this assertion to happen in action, the unity and independence of COSATU is sacrosanct and of paramount importance.

COSATU must at all times advance a revolutionary agenda. We need to capture the masses through the Freedom Charter and its implementation because many people and affiliates want to see that happening.

We need an accountable Cosatu leadership

We need COSATU leaders that are first and foremost accountable to the federation, who adhere to its constitution and are committed to implementation of the federation's policies, resolutions and programmes. COSATU leadership, affiliates and members should champion policies agreed upon in constitutional meetings and not turn them into individual members' or leaders' mandates. There must be immediate implementation of both the 11th National Congress and March 2013 Collective Bargaining Conference resolutions of the federation.

Decisions

We must fight for a militant, independent, unified Cosatu

Numsa shop stewards must continue to be visible and active in all COSATU structures and leadership positions in order to deepen our ideological perspectives, to change mindsets and to develop a clear understanding of the challenges confronting COSATU. We must fight for the unity and independence of COSATU. It should not be influenced by outside forces and that we must resist COSATU from being reduced into a toy-telephone. As Numsa, we should continue driving and championing all COSATU campaigns

that are relevant to the workers and the working class at large.

With all our strength and intelligence, we must continue the fight to keep our federation independent and on the path of militant action in the interests of the working class. We must guard against any splinters in COSATU and the fragmentation of the federation; instead we must continuously engage other affiliates of COSATU, winning over those that are on the other side of the trenches.

In striving for unity within the federation, we must ensure that we alleviate the social distance between the leadership and the general membership.

We must fight for a Cosatu Special National Congress

Only a Special National Congress of COSATU can help us move out of the current crisis in the federation. Failing the convening of the COSATU Special National Congress by the President we will invoke clause 3.3.2.2. of the federation's constitution. This clause states that the COSATU Central Executive Committee (CEC) can appoint a convenor for the Special National Congress. In case we fail to have the CEC appoint a convenor, as NUMSA we must explore other routes beyond possible legal avenues that will lead to the COSATU Special National Congress being convened.

We must develop a better understanding of Cosatu's crisis

Numsa must conduct further work in order to deepen our understanding of the crisis in COSATU. This work must explore, among others:

- * The evolution and historical development of the Federation
- * The history of and the developments around different unity talks.
- * COSATU's strategies of engagement and its programmatic manifestations
- * The shifting class composition and the shifting values within the federation

We will withhold affiliation fees until the Special Congress is convened

As part of the fight, Numsa should adopt the tactic of withholding our subscriptions to COSATU as an ultimatum for the convening of the Special National Congress of COSATU.

We will mobilise around a programme of action for a militant, united Cosatu

While we want to guard against splinters in COSATU and the fragmentation of the federation, we may not under the circumstances succeed. We must continuously engage other affiliates of COSATU, winning over those that are on the other side of the trenches. If COSATU is incapable of remaining united around a militant programme of action we should begin the process of forming a new federation. But not before embarking on the following programme of action:

- We will organise a march to COSATU House to push the COSATU leadership to accede to the clarion call for a Special National Congress and the withdrawal of charges against the COSATU General Secretary. The march should coincide with the 1st COSATU CEC in February 2014.
- We will consistently mobilise the rank and file to build capacity and enhance confidence amongst all workers and encourage other affiliates who support the call for an independent, militant and campaigning COSATU to follow Numsa's approach in terms of ensuring a wider and broader involvement of members. This must include producing a pamphlet about the crisis facing COSATU, for circulation to the rank and file across all affiliates.
- We will engage the broader mass democratic movement to appraise them about the impact of the challenges facing COSATU together with the collective affiliates behind the COSATU Special National Congress.
- We give a mandate to the Numsa Central Committee to assess and to make strategic decisions from time to time towards the COSATU 12th National Congress in 2015 as part of our struggle to reclaim the federation.

12. Elections

Analysis

This is how the Congress summed up Numsa's view of the ANC:

We have traditionally supported ANC in elections

Since 1994, Numsa has invested resources and person-power towards ensuring an ANC victory in elections. The Alliance led by the African National Congress (ANC) expects the working class as the motive force of the revolution to go all out and campaign and mobilise communities to vote for it,

and to put resources into its 2014 election campaign as they have done in the past.

ANC dominates its Alliance partners

The ANC continues to undermine the Polokwane resolutions to make the Alliance a strategic centre of power. In addition, its national leadership is part of the agenda to turn COSATU into its labour desk through targeting loyal working class leaders within COSATU.

ANC imposes anti-working class measures

It has just passed anti-working class laws and policies such as e-tolls, the Employment Tax Incentive Bill, and the regulation instead of the banning of labour broking.

ANC has abandoned the Freedom Charter and any change in property relations

The Freedom Charter, as the basis of our existence as an Alliance, the glue that brought the Alliance together, has not found expression in government policies. In fact the ANC no longer adheres to it. The ANC has not only departed from the Freedom Charter, but also from the Morogoro Conference core values and the Reconstruction and Development Plan (RDP).

The ANC-led government continues to ignore and duck the question of how to fundamentally change property relations in the country.

ANC imposes neo-liberal policies including the National Development Plan

The African National Congress as the ruling party, particularly since 1996, has and implemented, and still implements, neo-liberal policies against the wishes of its Alliance partners, particularly organised labour. The ANC-led government has imposed the National Development Plan (NDP), which is a neoliberal policy embedded in the failed Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy of 1996. It will not address the triple crisis of unemployment, poverty and inequality. In fact, it has the potential to reverse working class gains, even those secured under apartheid.

As the NDP is now the policy of the ANC it has been made abundantly clear by the ANC leadership that the National Development Plan will be the ANC government's strategy until 2030. It will be the government's blueprint according to which all government departments

and ministries must develop their budgets for 2014.

Part of neo-liberal policies is the South African Reserve Bank's continued targeting of inflation instead of jobs. This has produced massive joblessness.

There is a history of broken ANC promises

Given its track record of not delivering on its manifesto promises, there is no guarantee that, even if the ANC comes up with a "progressive" platform for 2014, that manifesto will be implemented.

Decisions

Therefore the Congress decided the following:

- NUMSA as an organization will neither endorse nor support the ANC or any other political party in 2014.
- Although endorsing no political party, the union however recognizes the constitutional right of its members to vote.
- Officials and shopstewards who feel the need to campaign for the ANC or any political organization will have to do this in their own time and using their own resources.
- Any individual member is entitled in their own time to be active in any political party including getting elected to leadership positions. However, no NUMSA Office Bearer is allowed to hold any office bearer position in any political party.
- Numsa will cease to pay into the COSATU/SACP political levy.

13. Positioning Numsa as the Shield and Spear of workers

Analysis

There is no such thing as core and non-core workers

Outsourcing "non-core functions" through breaking up different services within a workplace has weakened unions and shopfloor organisation. Employers are using the concept of "non-core" to deal with the strength of the union. In most cases this strategy of employers is not based on financial reasons but is an attempt to deal with the power of the union within a workplace.

This fragmentation of the workforce makes it difficult for outsourced workers to join the union because employers threaten them and tell them that they will terminate their contracts if they join.

The split of jobs and outsourcing affects us as Numsa as it undermines the principle of workers' unity and the principle of one industry one union. A consequence of outsourcing is the emergence of many unions within a single workplace and the creation of multi-bargaining forums in a single establishment

Pressure in the value chain prejudices workers

Primary employers and original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) dictate to component companies and providers of outsourced services in terms of pricing. This leads to the cheapening of the labour of those who work in outsourced services and the entry of labour brokers.

We cannot ignore workers who want an effective union

Numsa is not poaching members from other unions. Workers are coming to Numsa on their own accord. It is difficult to turn away workers who want to voluntarily join Numsa particularly when, if we do turn them away, they are likely to go to non-Cosatu unions.

Decisions

All workers in our workplaces must be Numsa members

While our first goal should be to intensify our fight against labour brokers and oppose any new outsourcing in production processes, where outsourcing takes place and where we are unable to block it, we must reject management's division of workers into "core" and "non-core" and organise every worker in workplaces that are in our sectors, whether they are in cleaning, security, catering, health services or any other service that is provided in support of activities in our sectors.

We must move to organising along value chains

Technological changes, changes in production and restructuring of sectors and the impact of value chains necessitate new organisational strategies. Over time we should move from organising along industrial/sectoral lines to organising along value chains.

We will study value chains

NUMSA's Research and Policy Institute will thoroughly investigate the value chain linkages relevant to our industries, including the possibility of having one collective bargaining for the same value chain. The outcome of such

research will be fed into constitutional structures.

We will register the change of scope from our 9th Congress

We should register the amendments of Numsa's scope of operation from the mandate of the 9th National Congress in June 2012 which called for the inclusion of the following:

- Glass production, sale and fitment
- All car valet and wash bay establishments
- the manufacture of jewellery
- the refining of petrol, wholesale transportation, extraction and distribution of petrochemicals
- refining of petrol,
- The mining and smelting of both base and precious metals

We will register the following additions to our scope:

- Drivers that provide support to activities of NUMSA sectors'.
- Building and construction;
- Auto industry textile workers (car seatmanufacturing);
- Security, cleaning, canteen workers and health services that are employed in all sectors covered by our scope.'
- Kiosks linked to garages and forecourts along with ancillary businesses such as shops, wash bays, restaurants, attached to garages irrespective of whether they are owned by a franchisee and/or any third party'.
- Industrial Chemicals
- Alternative energy
- Information and Communication Technologies

14. Service Charter

Numsa is a revolutionary union and as such plays a leading role in the defeat of capitalism and the exploitation that is associated with it. We are democratic centralist – we believe in robust, vigorous and democratic debate leading to a united decision and action. We are going into a period of intensified struggle both with the bosses and with the state that is supporting them. As we lead our members in these struggles, they constantly confront management, and management fights back, disciplining and harassing them.

If we are going to expect our members to continue the militant fight which we have planned, we must make sure that we constantly improve our ability to protect and defend them. We believe

our service to our members is good; but we know that it can improve

We realized that even though we have a Numsa constitution and policies, there is no document that sets out clearly what a member can expect from Numsa and what Numsa expects from its members.

The congress produced drafts of a summary service charter and also a more detailed document. The basis of the documents is to outline what service members can expect from the staff and structures of Numsa and what, in turn, are the responsibilities of a Numsa member. These drafts will be finalised by the Numsa Central Committee in 2014. The summary versions of the charter will be posted on the wall of every Numsa office.

15. Section 77 Campaign

Background

The 9th National Congress of Numsa adopted a set of socio-economic demands that were meant to reverse neoliberal policies that were being implemented. The socio-economic demands were also to address the plight of the working class and the poor in our country. NUMSA took these demands to the September 2012 National Congress of COSATU with the call for the federation to serve a notice to go on a socio-economic strike as stipulated in Section 77 of the Labour Relations Act (LRA).

Although the federation filed the notice for a Section 77 with the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) at the end of 2012, little energy has been injected into the campaign. The situation has been made worse by the political and organisational paralysis that exists in COSATU.

Numsa will take forward its own programme

After detecting that there was no enthusiasm within COSATU to mobilise for the socio-economic strike, the union's July 2013 National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting took a decision that as NUMSA we should have our own programme of rolling socio-economic strikes that will be taken on the basis of Section 77 notices.

The union has established its own Section 77 Task Team led by the General Secretary. The role of this task team is to coordinate the programme of rolling socio-economic strikes.

Employment Tax Incentive Act

Despite labour's objection and opposition by the Young Communist League, the Employment Tax Incentive Act was tabled in Parliament without National Treasury having taken the Bill to NEDLAC. It has since been signed into law by the President. The Act provides for tax incentives:

- To employers who employ workers earning less than R6,000 per month and who are 18 to 29 years of age,
- To employers who employ people in "Special Economic Zones". No age restrictions would apply in the tax incentives meant for SEZs.
- To employers who employ workers within sectors that the Minister of Finance has the power to designate. No age restrictions would apply in the tax incentives in these designated sectors.

NUMSA has lodged a Section 77 application on the Employment Tax Incentive Act as the union believes that the Act will have negative consequences for workers and the working class. It will not encourage real employment creation. On the contrary it will discourage decent work and will lead to the displacement of unsubsidised workers, as the protections for unsubsidised workers are wholly inadequate. It will exert a dramatic downward and negative pressure on wages, the provision of benefits and other terms and conditions of employment, resulting in an increase in the numbers of working poor. It will negatively affect orderly collective bargaining by creating multi-layered labour markets and result in the exploitation of both subsidised and unsubsidised workers. It will not promote skills development and training as there is no mandatory requirement in the bill to link the incentive with issues of skills and training. By reducing the amount of money that government is able to raise

through taxes it will negatively affect government's capacity to provide for basic services. Finally, the Act's provisions are not properly aligned with the provisions of the Labour Relations Act and other employment laws.

NUMSA is also currently seeking legal guidance regarding bringing the Minister of Finance to court for not bringing the Bill to NEDLAC. We will endeavour to convince labour federations (COSATU, NACTU and FEDUSA) and also SANCO to join the legal matter

Decisions

Numsa's rolling mass action

The Numsa programme will unfold in 6 phases:

Phase 1: Employment Tax Incentive Act; beneficiation of all strategic minerals, a ban on the export of scrap metals and rebuilding of foundries, import parity pricing and an export tax on all strategic minerals.

Phase 2: an increase in import tariffs on certain goods to the maximum allowed by the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Phase 3: Nationalisation of the Reserve Bank, exchange controls and an end to inflation targeting

Phase 4: de-commercialisation of state owned enterprises and the re-nationalisation of SASOL and Arcelor Mittal South Africa

Phase 5: Labour market issues and low wage employment including the minimum wage.

Phase 6: Nationalisation of the mines

Mass action against the Employment Tax Incentive Act

After exhausting all the procedures within NEDLAC, NUMSA has targeted Budget Day (26 February 2014) as the day when our members will embark on the first of our protected socio-economic strikes. NUMSA will engage

other COSATU affiliates and urge them to join us in the Section 77 notice on the Employment Tax Incentive Bill so that we can turn the action on 26 February 2014 into a general strike. The NUMSA Youth Forum has agreed to spearhead the campaign amongst young people and expose how inadequate the legislation is, in solving the issue of youth unemployment.

As NUMSA we will build a broad coalition against the law, bringing into the campaign community organisations, faith based organisations and other social movements.

16. Numsa's new leadership collective

A vacant position was created when Numsa's former President Cedric Gina suddenly resigned on 25 November 2013. Cde Andrew Chirwa was unanimously elected as the new President of Numsa. Before his election on the first day of this Special National Congress, Cde. Chirwa who is a worker and shopsteward at Ford assembly plant was the First Deputy- President of the union. Cde Christine Olivier who was the Second Deputy-President takes over from Cde Chirwa as the first woman First Deputy-President of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa). A new face in this collective is Cde Basil Cele who takes over as the Second Deputy-President. Cde Basil is a veteran worker leader. Until his election, he served as the Chairperson of KwaZulu-Natal region of Numsa and until recently was the Chairperson of COSATU in that region.

17. Eskom Dispute

We note with serious concern the failure of Eskom to give a decent increase for workers. Eskom is pushing for a wage cut for all workers and this might set a precedent for paying workers increases even lower than the rate of inflation. If the dispute is not resolved, Numsa will have no option but to take action against Eskom, which might include a black out.

Marxist Considerations on the Crisis - Part 1

Book event

Workers International member **Balazs Nagy** will present his new book with a talk in The Russell Room, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL, at 7pm for 7.30 on Monday 31 March 2014.

Marxist Considerations on the Crisis is available at £9.99 from Workers' International, PO Box 68375 London E7 7DT or email info@workersinternational.info

A Marxist Reflects on the Death of Mandela

What a pilgrimage! The world bourgeoisie's political chiefs fell over themselves to get to South Africa to show their respects at Nelson Mandela's funeral. Every man jack, Bush, Obama, Clinton, Sarkozy, Hollande, Cameron et.al. – friends and enemies together, old and new – all reverently helped to canonise him. Even their enemies – acknowledged or otherwise – from the Chinese delegate to Castro and Lula, not to mention “socialists” like Tony Blair, would not have missed this for the world; It was a point of honour to be there! Which raises the question: How on earth can you explain this planet-wide assembly to celebrate a dead man?

“What have I done wrong now?” August Bebel used to wonder whenever the bourgeois press said anything nice about him. He was a lathe-operator and outstanding leader of the German working class and the Second International in the 19th and early 20th centuries. But Mandela was made of different stuff. He had no qualms when a grateful bourgeoisie smothered him in glory. He knew perfectly well why they did it; when they gave him a Nobel Prize, he told the jury straight out: “Forgiveness frees the soul, it takes the fear away. That is why forgiveness is such a powerful weapon.”

Captivity

The die was cast the moment he emerged from his long captivity. Mandela cared more about the opulent South African bourgeoisie's “soul” and their “fear” than he did about the real suffering of millions of urban and rural proletarians outrageously exploited and crushed by fear every day. His forgiveness freed the bourgeoisie's soul while thinly gilding the chains of exploitation with a varnish of fictitious equality. And “Bob's your uncle”: the venomous fruit of social and political class collaboration mutated into a Christian-inspired psychological virtue.

But he was not always so accommodating towards the possessing class and the oppressors of his people. Immediately after World War II, together with Walter Sisulu and Oliver Tambo, he founded the Youth League in an attempt to radicalise an African National Congress (ANC) that was

pledged to Gandhi's old conciliatory opportunism based on non-violent resistance to British imperialism. They launched a more combative and assertive policy on the part of African nationalism. With the banning of the Stalinised South African Communist Party (SACP) in 1950, there was a rapprochement between that party and the ANC, of which Mandela became the unchallenged leader in 1952. This alliance was cemented by the Sharpeville massacre in 1961, when the leaders of these allied organisations launched the armed struggle. Later they were also all in gaol together on Robben Island.

Compromised

And that was where Mandela – the radical rebel of African nationalism – and his companions adapted an outdated and compromised radical Gandhism to the very latest modern version of class-collaboration embodied in Stalinism, which had just emerged triumphant from World War II. It was not a difficult adjustment; Trotsky had already exposed the complicity between Gandhism and Stalinism in 1939, for example. When he wrote:

“... the Comintern has completely gone over to Gandhi's position and the position of the conciliationist colonial bourgeoisie in general.” (*India Faced with Imperialist War*, *Writings of Leon Trotsky 1939-1940*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1977, p.31)

Indeed, this shift flowed directly from the fatal policy of the Popular Front which Khrushchev and company extended and generalised into the lying and suicidal policy of “peaceful co-existence”.

There is little point speculating which way the ANC and Mandela would have gone without the close link to the SACP. What actually followed was very close collaboration culminating in the, as it were, natural conversion of the ANC from its own homespun Gandhism to the very latest version of class collaboration represented by Stalinism – with all its cruel consequences.

Sharpen

The Bolsheviks of old used prison and exile to sharpen a Marxist understand-

ing of their revolutionary tasks. The 27 painful years spent together with Stalinists on barren Robben Island were the complete opposite, and thoroughly moulded Mandela into an evangelist for the Stalinist gospel of a social peace dominated by the powerful. The criminal pimp who thus prostituted what was – for all its hesitations and shortcomings – a great liberation movement into a resolute instrument of social conciliation was none other than the Stalinist SACP.

Towards the end of the 1980s the whole South African socio-political system was rapidly deteriorating in line with the worsening world crisis of capitalism and ultra-liberal attempts to find a way out. In South Africa, the whole bourgeois edifice was spectacularly ablaze and proletarian revolution was imminent, especially since that South African version of fascism, apartheid, had ruled out any intermediate formation that might have acted as a buffer to soften the violence of the collision between the fundamental classes.

The terrified leaders of the bourgeoisie panicked, revoked the bans on the ANC and SACP and rushed off to implore the gaol leaders to put the fire out. The enormity of this self-abasement in so proud and arrogant a class gives some measure of the scale of the revolutionary threat and the trouble the system was in.

Negotiated

No-one can say that Mandela and his associates simply gave in without getting anything in return. Between 1940 and 1945 their Stalinist models rescued the bourgeoisie from the threat of revolution in return for a few real but clearly limited and temporary improvements. Mandela, too, negotiated a price for acting as fire-fighter. Nor can anyone say the price was worthless, when in fact a whole mortally offended nation felt the abolition of racist apartheid very positively.

From the outset, however, we Marxists harshly criticised this agreement; not just because it was limited – as if we gamble double or quits, which is completely alien to our methods – nor because we disagree with its anti-apart-

heid content, which was what a great and long-suffering nation wanted. We were and are utterly opposed to this pact between the bourgeois South African state and Mandela's ANC because the latter substituted their anti-apartheid demands for more fundamental social demands. They purely and simply replaced class demands with general anti-racism, as if racist apartheid was not the immediate and natural product of essentially colonialist, rapacious and parasitical South African capitalism.

Negotiations of this sort normally turn on what is at stake in the confrontation and the relative strengths of the two sides. From this point of view, the result of these negotiations fell clearly short of both the colossal stakes involved in the confrontation between the revolution and the authorities, the regime's congenital weakness in the face of the overwhelming strength of a proletariat fully standing up for itself.

Yardstick

These exceptional conditions are the proper yardstick against which to judge the agreement and understand its inevitable and logical consequences. Exactly like their Stalinist mentors when they allied themselves with the so-called "democratic" bourgeoisie against its twin brother, fascism, what Mandela and the ANC were asking for was a "normal" capitalism without apartheid. Separate in time but closely similar in their content, their negotiations and agreements were praised to the skies by the enthusiastic bourgeoisie, but merely put a brave face on what the Bible calls "selling their birth-right" (the revolution and power) "for a mess of pottage".

Put aside any hesitation about describing this pact of complicity in these terms. It would be wrong and dangerous to imagine that the ANC leaders shared the same mistaken and cruel illusions which had seized the great masses. Unlike them, Mandela and friends were not dupes. They acted deliberately to get this agreement, fully conscious of what it meant. Two major phenomena prove that completely.

First is the immediate stampede by quite a few cadres and leaders of the ANC and the unions jostling for lucrative positions up there with the bourgeoisie. The well-known ANC and miners' union leader Cyril Ramaphosa was catapulted straight onto the board of directors of various mining companies. He is undoubtedly the most

repulsive of these newly-rich, but by no means the only one. There may be some ANC leaders who never got involved in bourgeois businesses, but almost all of them are up to their necks in enormous corruption, starting with President Jacob Zuma. South Africa is regularly reported as one of the countries where corruption is most widespread.

Proof

The other irrefutable proof that they sold out the revolution and workers' plans cheaply is that this huge shift by the ANC leaders and cadre into the ranks of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a profound re-adjustment on the part of leading ANC members, led by Mandela, in the objectives of their programme. At the beginning of the 1990s they were already turning its collectivist social orientation into a catalogue of demands shorn of any reference to the labouring classes, meticulously weeding out demands raised by rank and file workers and peasants.

If any more eloquent proof is needed, then look how from the start there were massive protests from the unions and within the ANC against this real treachery and for a return to the movements' original Charter of demands. On this we must mention our Comrade Bongani Mkhungo, Durban engineering worker and NUMSA trade union representative, who tried to prevent this rightward turn, raising his voice and organising workers against this treachery. While seeking support from British trade unions in his search for a revolutionary way forward, he recognised the correctness of the revolutionary orientation of Trotskyism. It was then as our close comrade that he returned to Durban to rally workers and revolutionaries into a fighting political organisation. Sadly, illness and poverty defeated this fighter, who died prematurely. But the South African working class can be proud to have had in its ranks a Marxist revolutionary of his temper, as perspicacious in understanding the tasks as he was firm and resolute in his convictions. This class has great need of the stimulating example of Comrade Bongani in its current struggle to build its revolutionary party.

Already started

Indeed, that struggle has already started. The catastrophic situation into which they have dragged working people all over the country is decisive, irrefutable, historically established proof of how treacherous Mandela's

pact and his whole policy were. Even official figures reveal what a disastrous situation the super-exploited urban and rural working class are in, eking out a painful living with basic conditions of daily life (work, wages, housing, water, electricity, transport, services, etc.) not met. Social inequality had widened further. Even government statistics – which are probably somewhat flattering – mention that 85% of the population only get 22% of gross income. Unemployment is over 25% of the active population, but over 40% of young people (these statistics, too, are probably embroidered). The Mandela leadership also backed off in the face of the white rural bourgeoisie. There was a rather timid attempt at agrarian reform in 1994 which anticipated that 30% of land would be redistributed by 2014. But by 2009 only 6% of land had been redistributed! So the Mandela leadership completely abandoned the agrarian revolution, a central pivot of the revolution and, in its shameful retreat, renounced practically all the significant tasks even of a consistent bourgeois revolution. The great majority of black farm workers live in absolute poverty.

So it is completely understandable that the working class and in particular the miners have taken up a struggle against deteriorating conditions. Not long since, the whole world learnt with astonishment and indignation how the bourgeoisie and its state, allied to a corrupt trade union bureaucracy, responded with a brutal gunfire and a savage, cruel massacre to the demands of the Lonmin miners at Marikana. There were also several trade union leaders among those who provoked and organised this revolting massacre, most prominently the same traitor Cyril Ramaphosa in his capacity as one of the bosses of Lonmin, the firm responsible for laying this murderous trap.

Complicity

The trade union bureaucracy then covered the whole thing up in complicity with the employers. The working class learnt its lesson. A series of strikes broke out and the actions and demonstrations organised showed that, though they had been paralysed by illusions for a while, the working class had started a fight. Its best elements radicalised the trade unions, which are now seeking their independent working-class road, while the most farsighted have got involved in building the revolutionary workers' party.

The whole country is in ferment and South African workers, with their Namibian sisters and brothers, are taking their first difficult and cautious but also decisive and promising steps towards the rebirth of their class party. Our comrades in Namibia are in the front ranks of this general ferment and we salute them as our brothers and sisters. This is a powerful groundswell which will surely grow soon to shake the whole world.

So it is hardly surprising that the world bourgeoisie got concerned and

mobilised all its various courtesans and underlings to rush off to South Africa. Their sure class instinct sensed the danger. The looming peril had to be countered immediately, and they thought that poisoning the consciousness of the working class and working people with Mandela's toxic doctrine of general human brotherhood without class distinction was the best way to do it.

But if the bourgeoisie seem determined to raise this lie to the level of international generalisation, they risk

colliding head-on with what working people in South Africa are experiencing in practice. So to open the road to its revolutionary proletarian party, the South African working class needs first of all to complete and deepen the process of learning from this precious experience. Critically surpassing and transcending Mandela's ideology and practice is the key to success in founding its party.

Balazs Nagy,

December 18 2013

An end to apartheid or a new form of slavery?

This article examines the background to the talks between leaders of the African National Congress and the South African government in the early 1990s. Based on discussions at the executive of Workers International, it was written by J.T.Barney. It was first published in *The International* no. 2, July 1990

South Africa is the leading capitalist country in Africa and a major ally of world imperialism. A successful proletarian revolution here will be a turning-point for Africa, and its effects will be felt throughout the whole world.

Thus today the main issue gripping the attention of everyone in the country is the talks that have begun between the National Party and the African National Congress. These talks are aimed at creating a climate for negotiations which are supposed to lead to the dismantling of apartheid.

The unbanning of the ANC and all the other political organisations, together with the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners, are steps forward which all revolutionaries support. But what is the political programme of the ruling class? Why did they unban the ANC? And why are they now willing to talk to an organisation which until recently was said to be the 'main enemy'?

The hated apartheid system has never known a time when it was not under

attack from the oppressed and exploited masses. Not even the state of emergency – which has not been lifted – and the detention of tens of thousands of activists has been able to break this spirit of resistance. But as the class struggle has intensified, with the working class organised in COSATU and NACTU playing the leading role, so the pressure on the racist ruling class to change their form of rule in order to ensure their survival has intensified.

The ruling class are determined to prevent the destruction of their system of oppression and exploitation. Their political power, profits, wealth and privileges are all bound up with maintaining apartheid and capitalism. But how are they to save this system when the masses have shown so clearly that they are no longer prepared to live under it? This is the key to understanding their willingness to talk to the ANC.

To preserve their system they desperately need to co-opt a section of the black petty bourgeoisie who still have credibility among the majority of the

oppressed. And the section of the black petty bourgeoisie they have turned to is the ANC led by Nelson Mandela. But even before agreeing to hold these talks with the ANC, de Klerk made it clear that the only basis on which he was prepared to negotiate was the protection of group rights and the preservation of the system of private property – as the bourgeois press was quick to point out:

'De Klerk spoke again on Friday [2 February 1990, in his speech announcing the unbanning of the ANC] of a "basic principle" being one of "no domination" in the new South Africa, which [means] his insistence on "group rights". That in turn effectively means a white minority veto on any substantial changes to the socio-economic system ...' (*Observer*, 4 February 1990).

In other words, the ruling class will not be negotiating about dismantling apartheid-capitalism, but about how to extend the life of apartheid-capitalism. The bourgeoisie is talking to the ANC about how to save itself from the working masses.

How has the ANC responded to the plan of the apartheid rulers?

The ANC has nothing but praise for this plan of the ruling class. In the first press interview after his release, Nelson Mandela spoke highly of de Klerk: 'I am on record as saying that I regard Mr de Klerk as a man of integrity. And I sincerely believe in this and I believe that he himself wants to have a new chapter in the history of this country'.

But Mandela did not stop here. He went further, saying that he did not rule out 'the possibility of a future coalition between the ANC and the National Party in government ...' Why? Because according to Mandela, there was no such thing as a 'non-negotiable' issue. The ANC had to be 'flexible over fundamental issues – even minority rights.' (*Weekly Mail*, 16-22 February 1990).

Mandela was even more positive about talking to the bosses, stressing that they would have a very important role to play in the future South Africa: 'It is a natural thing to have discussions with businessmen ... and our struggle has been supported by (some) businessmen from all over the world. There is nothing so logical as meeting them, exchanging views and trying to allay their fears. Sanctions and disinvestment were specific political tactics ... but once the situation is settled, investment in the country is the normal development – which we will want.' (*Weekly Mail*, 23 February – 1 March 1990).

Mandela has now also dropped all talk of nationalisation of the big multinational companies, saying that this was something for the 'experts' to decide upon, and that the ANC would follow the advice that it was given. But what is clear is that Mandela will not be following the advice of the workers for workers' control of the economy.

Mandela himself made this absolutely plain in a speech to capitalists in the Transkei: 'Regarding the ANC's position in relation to businessmen, Mandela said the organisation was not anti-capitalism and rejected the commonly-held belief that the Freedom Charter was fundamentally socialistic. Mandela said the youth had perpetuated the belief that the ANC opposed businessmen.' (*Weekly Mail*, 27 April - 3 May 1990).

The political programme of the ANC is no different from that of the ruling class. That is, no fundamental change and no attack on the system of private property. This programme is in direct conflict with the struggle of the working class and oppressed masses, who are

seeking an alternative to apartheid and capitalism, and whose most politically conscious sections put forward a Workers' Charter aimed at ending both oppression and exploitation.

How does the ANC defend this betrayal of the oppressed masses? And how does it hope to carry out this betrayal when it knows that the masses will not accept it without a fight? To understand the confidence of the ANC and its ability to confuse and deceive large sections of the oppressed and exploited masses it is necessary to understand the role that the Stalinised South African Communist Party, led by Joe Slovo, has played – and continues to play – in the liberation movement.

The role of Stalinism

Stalinism has its roots in the betrayal of the Russian Revolution of October 1917. Under the leadership of Joseph Stalin, the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky was transformed from an instrument of the working class into an instrument against the working class and for the ruling class.

Using the Soviet Union's immense standing among the international working class as the first workers' state, Stalin also transformed the Third International from a world party of socialist revolution into an agency of the international bourgeoisie. Marxism was abandoned and trampled upon, and substituted by a crude and vulgar falsification of revolutionary theory.

One such theory to emerge was that the working class of the so-called 'Third World' – Asia, Latin America, Africa – had to subordinate their struggle against their national bourgeoisie to the struggle against colonialism and imperialism. The working class had to give up its political independence, and not only accept the political programme of the bourgeoisie but also fight under the leadership of the national bourgeoisie.

This theory was given the name 'two-stage revolution', which meant that the working class had first to struggle for democracy, and only after this had been achieved could the struggle for socialism begin.

This political strategy had disastrous and tragic consequences in China between 1925 and 1927. The Chinese Communist Party was ordered by the Stalinist bureaucracy to accept the leadership of the Kuomintang – the political organisation of the Chinese bourgeoisie – and dissolve their own independent political party into this organisation.

But when workers began to put forward their own demands and occupied the factories, the Kuomintang turned on them and massacred thousands of communists. Completely disarmed by Stalin's two-stage conception of revolution, the Chinese Communist Party was unable to defend itself and the masses that supported it.

This theory became a central part of Stalinism.

The modern examples of this theory are Nicaragua and Zimbabwe. In these countries the working class was also told: first overthrow colonialism and only then can you struggle for socialism. And with what results?

In Nicaragua a bourgeois government firmly allied to American imperialism is now in power; and in Zimbabwe the multinational companies are as powerful under Robert Mugabe's 'black majority government' as they were under Ian Smith's 'white minority government'.

The two-stage revolution has not meant an end to imperialism, but the consolidation of the power of the bourgeoisie.

Today it is this very same theory that the South African Communist Party is defending on behalf of the ANC in South Africa. As the self-appointed 'vanguard' of the South African working class the SACP says to the workers:

'First overthrow apartheid. But to do this you must first accept the leadership of the ANC. You must give up any ideas of an independent political programme and an independent political organisation. Only after apartheid has been destroyed can the struggle for socialism begin.'

But what does this mean? Is the SACP saying that apartheid can be destroyed without destroying capitalism? That there can be democracy in South Africa without socialism? These are life and death questions for the South African working class, and the fate of millions in our country and the rest of the world depends on the answers that we give to them.

Permanent Revolution and the Fourth International

The Fourth International arose as a challenge to the betrayal of Marxism by Stalinism. Its political programme is based on the continuity of revolutionary theory and practice. For this the members of the Fourth International were slandered and persecuted by the Stalinists, and tens of thousands of its best fighters were murdered by Stalin's gangs.

Its leader and founder, Leon Trotsky, was assassinated by an agent of Stalin's. But Stalinism did not succeed in destroying the Fourth International, and in May 1990 in Budapest, Hungary, a Workers International was founded with the main aim of rebuilding the Fourth International as the World Party of Socialist Revolution.

At the centre of this theory is an uncompromising struggle against the bourgeoisie and the influence of bourgeois ideology in the working class movement. The theory of permanent revolution does not ignore the anti-colonial and democratic struggle or underestimate their significance. Just the opposite.

Because the theory of permanent revolution attaches so much importance to these struggles, it insists that it is only the working class that can provide the leadership for them. Why? Because the working class is the only revolutionary class in society. But to lead the anti-colonial and democratic struggle, the working class must be organised into their own independent political party, and must struggle on the basis of its own independent political programme.

The alternative to this political independence of the working class are the Popular Fronts and People's Governments that Stalinism imposed on the working class, which resulted in betrayals and bloody defeats (as happened in France and Spain in the 1930s, and in the present day is happening in countries like Angola, Mozambique and Nicaragua).

But once the working class takes leadership of the anti-colonial and democratic struggle, it will carry this struggle through to the very end. It will not stop at any so-called 'first stage', but proceed to the socialist reconstruction of society because it is on this basis that colonialism can be destroyed and genuine democracy achieved. Trotsky outlined the perspective of permanent revolution as follows:

'The theory of permanent revolution ... pointed out that the democratic tasks of the backward bourgeois nations lead directly to the dictatorship of the proletariat and that the dictatorship of the proletariat puts socialist tasks on the order of the day. Therein lay the central idea of the theory. While the traditional view was that the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat lay through a long period of democracy, the theory of the permanent revolution established

the fact that for backward countries the road to democracy passed through the dictatorship of the proletariat. Thus democracy is not a regime that remains self-sufficient for decades, but is only a direct prelude to the socialist revolution. Each is bound to the other in an unbroken chain. Thus there is established between the democratic revolution and the socialist reconstruction of society a permanent state of revolutionary development.' (L. Trotsky, *The Permanent Revolution*, New Park Publications, 1997, p.2.)

The correctness of the theory of permanent revolution was proved during the October Revolution of 1917. The Russian working class showed concretely that it was only under their dictatorship, exercised through the Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies, that democracy could be won and the land question solved. But to break the power of the bourgeoisie the working class was forced to attack the system of private property. Thus the revolution grew over into its socialist stage. The phrase that Lenin used to describe this process was 'uninterrupted revolution'.

The position of the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International

1. On a negotiated settlement

The ANC-SACP lies to the South African masses, saying that fundamental change can come through negotiating with the racist ruling class.

The Workers' International says that fundamental change can only come through the revolutionary overthrow of this ruling class. This means the revolutionary mobilisation of the working class on the basis of its own political programme and under the leadership of its own independent political party.

Why must the masses believe that their oppressors and exploiters will willingly hand over power to them? When and where in history has this ever happened?

The very nature of the talks between the National Party and the African National Congress is itself a clear indication of the kind of democracy that the masses can expect from a negotiated settlement. The talks are profoundly anti-democratic and a negation of all the democratic demands that have been advanced by the South African masses over the years.

No free and open election of delegates took place. The ANC simply appointed people to speak on behalf of the masses.

The talks were closed and secret. The ANC agreed that there would be a news black-out while the discussions were still in progress. The talks went on for three days, but at the end only a one-paragraph communiqué was released. Why can the masses not decide their own destiny? Why can they not know what the ANC has been saying on their behalf?

The masses have spared nothing in their struggle for democracy. They have been detained, tortured and killed. But now the ANC says to them: 'Leave everything to us. We are your leaders. We will decide for you.' To this, the Workers International replies:

The talks are a swindle. They are the main means to prevent a revolutionary outcome of the struggle against apartheid. This is the only meaning of the negotiations. Therefore the working class has to build its own party to achieve democracy. Workers have to take into their own hands the struggle for democracy that is being betrayed by the ANC.

This means putting forward the demand for a Constituent Assembly with full powers, elected by universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage, which excludes all fascists and racists. But who can convoke such a genuinely democratic and representative assembly? The racist ruling class who has no interests in democracy? The ANC that is prepared to share power with this racist ruling class? No! Only the mobilisation of the working class can lead to the convening of such a Constituent Assembly.

In Russia it was only after the working class had taken power that it was possible for such an assembly to be convened. Thus for the South African masses to convene a genuinely democratic Constituent Assembly they need to build their organs of struggle. That is, they need to build their own party and they need to build soviets (workers' councils).

But even if the racist ruling class were to convene a Constituent Assembly, which is highly unlikely, such an assembly would be powerless to implement any of the democratic demands – one person, one vote; a non-racial united South Africa; the expropriation of the land and its redistribution to those who work it – so long as economic power remains on the hands of the capitalists.

Only the working class organised in factory committees, locals, trade unions and soviets can break the power of the

capitalists and ensure an end to the injustices and repressions of apartheid perpetrated against all of the oppressed.

In Namibia it has been seen what happens when the bourgeoisie convenes a Constituent Assembly. There the Constituent Assembly did not advance the struggle of the working class against imperialism, but was used against the masses to strengthen imperialism. And the most important democratic demand of the Namibian masses – the expropriation of the big landowners – was not, and will not, be carried out.

In all great revolutionary struggles the masses strive to take their destiny into their own hands. This happened in South Africa during the uprising of 1984-1986 when the masses created their own street and area committees. Is it a surprise that the ANC remains silent about these committees? That any attempt to learn the lessons of these events is suppressed?

For contained within these street and area committees was the germ of soviets, that is, the revolutionary councils of the working class.

To struggle for the Constituent Assembly therefore means to rebuild these organs of struggle. It means to build soviets. That is why the ANC chose secret negotiations and not the struggle for a Constituent Assembly. The ANC knows that if the working class was mobilised on a revolutionary democratic programme, it would struggle against both apartheid and capitalism.

Thus the ANC presents itself as the 'saviour' of the masses, but only in order that it can prevent the independent organisation of the working class.

2. On apartheid and capitalism

Apartheid has grown up together with capitalism and is inseparable from it. It has served capitalism well by providing it with cheap black labour; dividing the working class; policing the oppressed masses; and ensuring that 87 per cent of the land remains in the hands of a small Afrikaner bourgeoisie. The army, police force, legal system and state bureaucracy are all in the direct service and pay of the apartheid system. For the whites it has meant one of the highest standards of living anywhere in the world.

The average income of a white person in South Africa is R14, 000 a year, compared to R1, 400 for a black person. For the blacks it has meant misery, poverty and human degradation. Out of every 1000 black children born, 63 die at birth

compared to 9 white children. Over 60 per cent of black people are illiterate, compared to 7 per cent of white.

Black unemployment is over 40 per cent, while white unemployment is hardly known. The racist legislation, physical separation of people, and so forth, are there to keep all this in place.

What perspective therefore can there be of eliminating apartheid without a radical change in the material conditions of life of the oppressed and exploited? But this means attacking the very foundations on which apartheid rests. That is, the capitalist system of exploitation.

On the basis of their own experience, the workers have already identified the inextricable links between apartheid and capitalism. And on the basis of these experiences, they have put forward demands which not only call for the destruction of apartheid, but also for the destruction of the capitalist system.

Thus a main demand of the Workers' Charter put forward by NUMSA was that the mines and banks had to be brought under workers' control. For the workers knew that while capitalism survives, the conditions of apartheid will survive. That is, cheap labour will remain, unemployment will remain, racism will remain, poverty will remain and the land will remain in the hands of a small minority.

The ability of the capitalist class to prevent any advance to democracy while it still owns the means of production is easily realised when it is seen just how powerful this capitalist class is. The ownership and control of the major sectors of the economy – mining, finance, banking, manufacturing and transport – is in the hands of a tiny number of big corporations.

Close to 70 per cent of the South African economy is controlled by eight private corporations. Of these private corporations, the biggest, Anglo-American, controls assets worth more than the combined income of the nine member countries of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference.

In other words, Anglo-American on its own has more assets than Zimbabwe, Angola, Mozambique, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Malawi, Zambia and Tanzania put together.

Agriculture has also been heavily penetrated by the monopolies. For example, today 80 per cent of the sugar industry is controlled by two of the country's biggest monopolies, Anglo-American

and Barlow Rand. These big corporations, in turn, are completely integrated into foreign monopoly capital. Anglo-American, for example, is the largest single investor in the United States.

How then does the ANC hope to eliminate apartheid, while not disturbing the existing economic structure? A handful of monopolies control our lives and the ANC promises fundamental change without taking power out of the hands of those monopolies!

The working masses of southern Africa have direct experience of what it means not to break the power of monopoly capital. In Zimbabwe over 80 per cent of the economy is still in the hands of the bourgeoisie. This means that the bourgeoisie have the power to prevent any advance of the working class. As a result, most of the gains from independence have been lost.

Today Zimbabwe has trade union legislation which is no different from that which it had under Smith's regime. The domination of Zimbabwe's economy by the multinationals and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has also meant that it has not been able to assist the poorer countries of the region to overcome their chronic problems. Angola is on the brink of economic collapse and Mozambique has become one of the poorest countries in the world.

It is clear that while monopoly capitalism still has the economies of southern Africa in its grip, there can be no hope of a solution to the problems in the region.

3. On democracy and socialism

South Africa is a highly developed capitalist country which has advanced to the stage of imperialism – the rule of monopoly and finance capital. But capitalism has reached this highest stage of development without introducing democracy in South Africa. Thus indissolubly bound up with the socialist revolution is the struggle for democracy. That is, the overthrow of the apartheid state and its replacement by a democratic state based on majority rule. But the question is: how are the democratic tasks of the revolution to be solved and who alone can solve these tasks?

The working class has already made clear that the struggle for democracy is at the same time the struggle for socialism. On the basis of its own living experience under apartheid, it put forward a Workers' Charter which challenged the ANC's Freedom Charter.

In opposition to this bourgeois nationalist programme of the ANC, the Workers' Charter advanced the position that there could be no democracy in South Africa while economic power still remained with the bosses. The working class was thus consciously moving towards a socialist solution to the democratic struggle.

But what has been the response of the ANC to the demands of the working class?

Since its unbanning the ANC, with the full support and backing of the SACP, has been making every effort to take over COSATU and subordinate it to its structures. This work is being carried out mainly through the trade union bureaucracy. In Natal it is NUMSA that is used as the main recruiting agency for the ANC, and in the Transvaal this same role is being played by NUM. And this is the same ANC which only recently said that it is prepared to integrate Umkhonto We Sizwe into the SADF.

In other words, by subordinating the trade unions into its structures, the ANC is preparing for the physical integration of the trade unions into the bourgeois state that will emerge from the negotiated settlement.

The class independence of the trade unions has always been a big problem for the ruling class. Since the formation of independent trade unions in the 1970s and 1980s, the apartheid state has used every means to break the trade union movement.

It has used violence to suppress strikes; harassed and detained union organisers; bombed union buildings; and only recently, introduced the Labour Relations Act to try and curb the militancy of the working class. But every effort failed, and the independent union movement continued to grow in size and strength.

But now the ANC has come forward to do the job of the apartheid state. Through using the trade union bureaucracy, the ANC hopes to smash the class independence of the trade union movement. But the ANC can only have confidence to attempt this because it knows that it will have the complete support of the Stalinist South African Communist Party.

To dupe and confuse the working class, the SACP has put forward its own so-called 'Workers' Charter'. But this Workers' Charter is a complete fake. Unlike the Workers' Charter of the trade

union movement, it says nothing about the inextricable links between the struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism. Instead, it tries to spread the illusion among the working class that there can be democracy while economic power still remains firmly in the hands of the big capitalist bosses.

This fraudulent 'workers' charter' has therefore nothing to do with the struggle for democracy, and even less with the struggle for socialism. What it is quite simply is a Stalinist manoeuvre to save the bourgeoisie.

Only the working class can lead the struggle for democracy. It is the only class that is able to unite all the oppressed behind it on the basis of a programme for permanent revolution. The working class has no interests in seeing any vestiges of apartheid remain.

Take a concrete example. Mandela says he wants justice for all. Everybody will support this demand. But who is to apply this justice? Who are the judges going to be? Are the courts going to remain in their present form?

Who is going to be in charge of the army? Mandela says that the present executioners of the people can be relied upon to bring about this justice. But it is only the working class, by smashing the apartheid state, that will be able to guarantee justice for all.

The examples could be multiplied. How is the chronic housing shortage to be solved if the building industry is not taken out of the hands of the profit-hungry capitalists and brought under working class control? How is unemployment to be tackled if the power of monopoly capital is not broken? How is migrant labour and the compound system to be ended if gold mining is not organised on a different basis?

And the killings in Natal? The unbanning of the ANC and the release of Mandela has not brought an end to the vicious cycle of violence. Instead, Mandela has given his approval to the deployment of the South African Defence Force in the Natal townships. His only concern is that the ANC should have been consulted before the troops were sent in. Is this then the justice for all that Mandela wants?

Like every other problem, only the working class can solve the problem in Natal. But in order to do this it has to take the lead. COSATU has to set up its own peace committees in the factories which bring together all workers, and not entrust the solution of this problem

to those who do not wish to see an end to the violence.

It is only the working class that will be able to solve the land question. A minority group of private white landlords holds 87 per cent of the land. The rural working class is paid starvation wages and not allowed to organise into trade unions. Landlessness is an acute and growing problem. All the 'homelands' are overcrowded and unable to support the people living in them. In Bophuthatswana, for example, 142,000 families are living on land that can only support 26 000. Environmental problems, like soil erosion, are spreading rapidly.

How else is the land question to be solved except through large-scale nationalisation and re-distribution of the land? But the ANC has already promised the big white landlords that they have nothing to fear from an ANC government, that the ANC does not intend to take the land away from them.

But the position of the working class will be that only those farmers who work the land themselves will be allowed to keep their land, the big capitalist farms and the agribusinesses will be nationalised and the land will be redistributed to the landless. The precise way in which this will be carried out will be decided by the agricultural workers and peasants themselves in their own freely-elected organisations.

It is also only the working class that will be able to protect the small businesses and traders against the banks and the big capitalist conglomerates. By nationalising all the banks, a workers' government will be able to provide easy and ready credit to these small businesses and traders who are presently at the mercy of finance capital.

Trotskyism and Stalinism - two roads

Given the betrayal of the masses that is being prepared by the ANC-SACP, what is the programme of the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International? The starting point for the Workers' International is the principle that the liberation of the working class is the task of the working class itself.

This means that the working class has to build its own organs of struggle and its own independent political party. Only on the basis of its political

independence will the working class be able to fight for its class interests and for the interests of all the other classes and groups who also suffer because of the control that finance capital has over every aspect of the lives of the oppressed and exploited.

Thus apartheid cannot be overthrown in South Africa without the overthrow of capitalism. The working class will have to attack the power and rights of the capitalist class in order to secure its own power and rights.

But the South African revolution, while beginning on national terrain, cannot succeed as a national revolution. It forms an inseparable part of the international struggle of the working class and can only be completed as part of the world revolution for socialism. In the immediate term the South African revolution will have to be spread to Southern Africa.

While imperialism divides southern Africa, imposing austerity programmes on the working masses, the programme of the Workers International strives to unite southern Africa in a Union of Workers' States. This United Workers' States of Southern Africa will be based on the principle of self-determination of all the countries and nations of southern Africa.

The ANC-SACP turns to the world bourgeoisie and the IMF to solve the problems of southern Africa. Is this international policy of the ANC-SACP merely a mistake? To believe this

would be dangerous. This policy is the other side of Stalinism's theory of two-stage revolution, that is, peaceful co-existence with imperialism. This is the logical consequence of Stalinism's abandonment of the struggle for socialism.

Today, as Stalinism decomposes under the blows of the working class in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, its dependence on the international bourgeoisie becomes even stronger. In fact, it is the profound crisis of Stalinism which has led to the present situation in southern Africa. To protect its position in the Soviet Union, the Stalinist bureaucracy needs the support of imperialism.

But to get this support, Gorbachev has to give something in return. Thus Cuban troops were withdrawn from Angola, and a deal was made in Namibia. Pressure is now being exerted on the ANC to make a deal with the racist South African government that will not threaten the interests of monopoly capital in the region.

That this means sacrificing the masses of southern Africa to the IMF and the World Bank is of little concern to the Stalinist bureaucracy. In a meeting with Kaunda of Zambia in November 1987, shortly before leaving for talks with Regan in America, Gorbachev made clear what his new political thinking will mean for southern Africa:

'The principle of political settlement is fully applicable to the solution of

issues in southern Africa. If guarantees are needed for reaching a political solution, it might be a good idea to think of such guarantees being made by the United Nations and the permanent members of the Security Council. As for the Soviet Union it is ready to play a positive (?) role in this matter.' (*Novosti Press*, Moscow, p. 82)

The Stalinist bureaucracy has made it clear that socialism is not on the agenda in southern Africa, and will not be on the agenda for at least a century! Thus on the one side of the struggle in South Africa is imperialism and its main agency in the working class movement, Stalinism.

Together with the ANC, Stalinism and imperialism are working to politically disarm the South African working class and smash any movement for democracy and socialism.

On the other side is the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International as the World Party of Socialist Revolution with its section now being established in South Africa. The Workers International has no other interests but those of the working class, and no other class to serve but the working class. It is still weak and its numbers are still small.

But the Workers International is the only international organisation that has a revolutionary programme and that is committed to an uncompromising struggle against both imperialism and Stalinism.

Tribute to a South African Trotskyist

Bonginkosi E Mkhungo

('Bongani') 1953-2009

This tribute from London members of the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International is reproduced from *Socialist Studies* no. 6 January 2010

The story of our dear comrade Bongani is the story of an extraordinarily brave man, dedicated to the cause of socialism and the victory of the South African masses.

As he would be the first to say, his history was not the story of an individual, but more truly the story of a class –

the South African working class, on its long march to self-emancipation. His life was about the struggle first against apartheid, which Bongani almost from the outset understood must be transformed into the fight for socialism, and the subsequent sidelining of that fight in the selfish interests of a developing

black bourgeoisie. Bongani understood very clearly that the derailment of the struggle for socialism in South Africa has opened the door for further brutal exploitation of the black masses.

His father was the first generation to leave the land to work in domestic service in Durban to acquire the pass

which would enable him to live in the city and find work in a factory. He worked for 10 years for the British Tyre and Rubber company – one of the many British owned corporations in South Africa using the savagery of apartheid to super-exploit their black employees. When he fell ill, he was sent home by the factory to die – the family could not afford hospital treatment. Bongani left school to become a bread-winner, ending up at the same BTR factory where his father had worked.

His father's life, and his own, showed the remarkable swift and savage transformation by capitalism of a rural peasantry into a layer of brutally exploited city workers. This was swiftly followed by their radicalisation and transformation into the powerful, organised, class conscious trade union movement which made South Africa "ungovernable" and was instrumental in the smashing of the apartheid system. When the Boer businessmen saw their profits leaking away as the trade unions stood up for workers' rights, they knew they had to change the way South Africa was governed, or risk losing everything.

In the 1970s and 1980s Bongani assisted at the birth of the South African trade unions. He witnessed the first unorganised expressions of resistance – the Coronation Brick Factory strike in 1973 when the workers marched through the streets shouting Zulu war cries. He helped organise the strike for trade union recognition in the British Tyre and Rubber Company, led the strike, and was instrumental in organising the series of strikes for trade union recognition in the 1970s in Durban.

The union he helped found and build was the Metal and Allied Workers' Union (MAWU) which became the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), and helped form the Federation of South African Unions (FOSATU), which in turn became the Congress of South African Unions (COSATU).

As MAWU and the other new unions came into being, the stewards met regularly to discuss how they could take forward all aspects of their struggle. Because of the apartheid-imposed curfew, the only time they could meet and talk was overnight, on the way home from work. As the world opened up to them as a result of their new organisations, one of the main topics they discussed was socialism.

Bongani played a leading role in ensuring that MAWU from the outset

was the most consciously socialist element in FOSATU as shown by the following resolution adopted by the union in 1983:

"(the union will) develop amongst metal workers in particular, and the organised working class and its allies in general, a coherent understanding that the demands of the Freedom Charter, and all other demands of the workers, can only be realised in the lives of the working-class masses through the practical leadership of the industrial working class in the struggle for the establishment of a socialist society where workers' control of government and industry will be enforced in the practice of a liberated South Africa (1987 NUMSA Congress resolution)."

Workers in NUMSA, including Bongani, fought for the Workers Charter – against the ANC's Freedom Charter. The Workers Charter maintained that in order to achieve a just society, South Africa needed to evolve further from the overturn of apartheid and the winning of universal franchise to socialism "In order to ensure: that victory in the national liberation struggle is not hijacked by a new exploiting class, of whatever colour . . ."

NUMSA said: "We see the winning of such a non-racial democracy as part of a continuous process of creating conditions for the building of a socialist society which will be in the interests of all our people; a society free of all exploitation of person by person which alone can complete the liberation objectives in all spheres of social life."

Bongani was among the workers who drew up the charter who understood the central role of their class in the fight for liberation and for socialism: "We are the most vital social constituent of the broad liberation movement in which we play a part both as individuals and through our trade unions and political organisations. We stand ready to work together with all other classes and groups genuinely committed to a non-racial democracy, at the same time safeguarding our class independence and our right to propagate and mobilise for a socialist future."

The Workers Charter demanded: "The commanding heights of the economy shall be placed under the ownership and overall control of the state acting on behalf of the people. Such control shall not be exercised in an over-centralised or commandist way and must involve active participation in the planning and running of the enterprises by workers

at the point of production and through their trade unions."

Bongani's life story graphically illustrates how the ANC, with the collaboration of the SACP, supplanted the South African workers in the leadership of that powerful uprising with the result that a black middle class was added to the white ruling class – equally as determined to exploit the South African masses to maintain their own privileges.

The ANC leaders acted out of conviction that this was the way forward for South Africa – that there is no socialist path, and quickly jettisoned those elements of their own "Freedom" Charter that spoke of redistribution of wealth and land. They went on to become a privileged elite which allied itself with the old apartheid bosses to continue the same exploitation of the black masses – this time with black exploiters as well as white.

The South African Communist Party (SACP) acted out of their ideological convictions, handed down from the old Soviet union: the two stage theory, which said "First we must have "democracy" (the same kind of democracy that George Bush and Tony Blair brought to Iraq) which puts a black middle class in power, and then much, much later, we don't know when, we will fight for socialism and the rule of the masses".

Mourners at this funeral will know, when apartheid fell, 90 per cent of land was owned by the white elite, and 10 per cent by black people. Fourteen years later, just four per cent more land has been acquired by black South Africans. A recent UN report showed the cities manifesting the most unequal distribution of wealth in the world are in South Africa and Namibia – following economic "liberalisation" after apartheid. Unemployment stands at 23 per cent, [40 per cent if those too discouraged to seek work are included]. There is a huge crisis in health, especially the continuing spread of HIV/Aids; decent housing, education and other public services are out of reach for millions and prices of food, power and water are going through the roof, and crime is rampant.

During the 1980s Bongani was centrally involved in the campaign to defend Moses Mayekiso – at the time also very much a part of the struggle between the forces for socialism, and those for the creation of a black middle class to help exploit workers.

Mayekiso, an official of NUMSA (which evolved from MAWU), was detained by

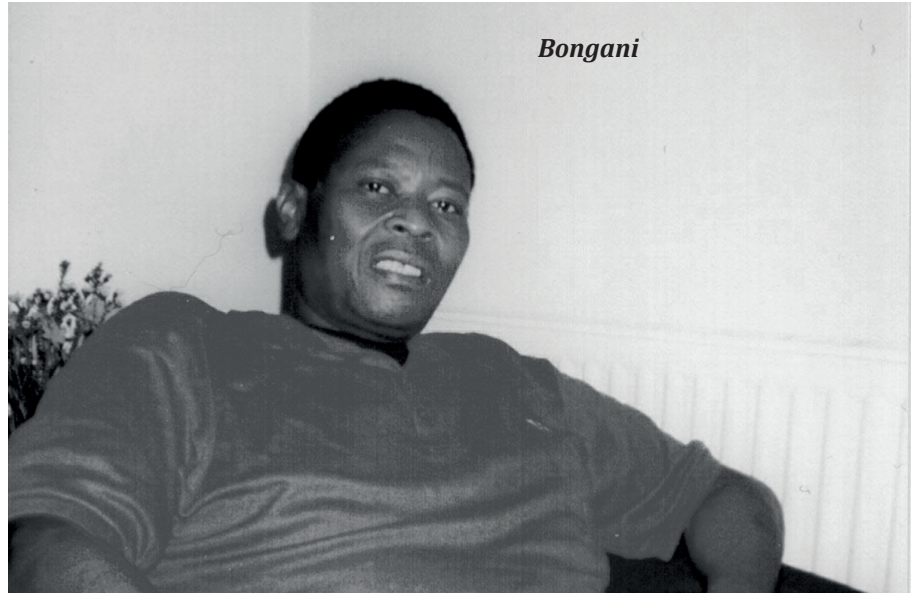
the apartheid regime in 1985. The regime charged him with treason in 1987. NUMSA elected him national secretary, and appealed to the international trade union movement for a campaign to release him. This was supported by the bulk of the international labour movement – but opposed by the ANC, along with the SACP and its trade union wing, the SA Congress of Trade Unions (Sactu). Now of course Moses Mayekiso has also joined the ruling elite in South Africa.

Let us emphasise here most strongly the fact that there were many individuals who started out as part of the workers' movement (like Moses Mayekiso) who at a certain point sold out their dedication to the working class. They went on to gain personal benefit from the sacrificial struggle of thousands of ordinary people and acquired prominent positions and personal advantage in the new South Africa. Bongani himself on many occasions was offered the chance to reject his socialist principles, and join the exploiting elite. Each and every time he refused.

During this period, from 1985 onwards, while the masses were fighting – and dying – to overthrow apartheid, and finding their way towards the conviction that socialism was the only path to social justice, the ANC leaders started negotiating with representatives of the apartheid regime behind their backs.

The period of savage violence in the townships between the UDF and Inkatha supporters was used to divide and demoralise the workers. The African National Congress and South African Communist Party took advantage and moved in to take control of workers' organisations.

Key to this process was the merger of FOSATU with the non-FOSATU unions, and the discussion on whether to adopt the ANC's Freedom Charter, or the Workers' Charter as the expression of the workers' independent voice. Cyril Ramaphosa, then leader of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) of South Africa used the numerical strength of his union to oppose the adoption of the Workers Charter. Bongani explained that workers were persuaded that in the interests of unity (with the background of terrible divisive violence), that a sub-committee would be set up to merge the two Charters. The committee was never set up, and the workers'



Bongani

demand for socialism and that their victory over apartheid did not simply result in the addition to their white oppressors of an extra layer of privileged black oppressors was sunk.

The defeat of the Workers' Charter reflected the side-lining of those like our dear friend and comrade Bongani Mkhungo who had fought for socialism in that workers' movement. The leadership of COSATU agreed to the tripartite alliance with the ANC and the SACP which went on to completely subordinate the interests of the working class to those of a rising black middle class.

In the 1990s Bongani participated in South Africa and the UK in the campaign to publicise the ANC's torture and murder of its own young militants in its camps in the so-called mutinies in Angola in the 1980s.

(He stood as a Workers' International candidate in the first post-apartheid election and gained 8 000 votes – Ed.)

It was during this time that Bongani (and other socialists) were increasingly singled out for persecution in the workers' movement. He was sacked by the British Tyre and Rubber company. He leafleted a big ANC gathering in Durban about socialism and was physically attacked by ANC members. He went to the UK and worked with the British Transport and General Workers' Union for a while, but when he made clear that he was a socialist and did not support the ANC, he was sent back to South Africa with the promise of a job in the South African TGWU. The job turned out to be doing extremely dangerous conciliation work between the warring factions in the townships. Bongani could see no other way of making a life

and a living for his family but returning to the UK, where he worked as an "illegal" agency worker, suffering dreadful abuse and exploitation. His greatest frustration was that he couldn't organise a trade union for his fellow workers, who he saw suffering the same oppression as himself.

While he was in the UK, despite ill-health and lack of money, he worked on building the workers party that South Africa needs above all – a party embedded within the working class, and expressing the independent interests of that class.

In 2009 he decided to return to South Africa and work to build that party in the place he knew best, in the way he knew best. As he returned he was more certain than ever that the goal for his class was socialism, and he set out once again to fight for it.

Now his friends and comrades in the UK are shocked and saddened to hear of his sudden and untimely death.

Bongani was a remarkable individual in that he understood the importance of socialism for the working class so clearly, and he held to that principle unswervingly, with enormous dedication and courage.

What sustained him in his socialist conviction was the magnificent struggle of the South African masses.

He is a huge loss to the workers' movement both in South Africa and internationally. He is also a personal loss to all of us – who valued him as the very best of friends.

We send our great love and condolences to all his family, friends, and comrades.