

# Numsa and the question of a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist political organ of the working class in South Africa today

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*It is obvious that the black middle and upper classes who take part in a broad liberation alliance will jostle for hegemony and attempt to represent their interests as the interests of all Africans.*

*It is obvious that (like their counterparts in every part of the world) the black middle and upper strata, who find themselves on the side of the people's struggle, are often inconsistent and vacillating. They are usually the enemy's softest targets for achieving a reformist, rather than a revolutionary, outcome." (Joe Slovo, 1988)*

It has become necessary, and quite urgent, to emphatically re-state and explain the December 2013 historic Numsa Special National Congress Resolutions, especially the ones that talk to the formation of the United Front, the Movement for Socialism, the ANC and its alliance, and the formation of an independent revolutionary socialist vanguard party of the working class and the role of Numsa in all this.

The Resolutions adopted in our Special National Congress were a culmination of more than 26 years of working inside the

South African Liberation Movement (LM) in general, and inside and building the ANC and its alliance in particular.

Over more than two decades of struggle inside the LM and the ANC and its alliance, by December last year, Numsa came to the inescapable observation and conclusion that there is no chance of winning back the ANC led 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 and society.

As for the South African Communist Party (SACP) it was clear that its leadership had become embedded in the state and it was failing to act as the vanguard of the working class. Nor, for that matter, has the SACP any revolutionary programme, post 1994, for the struggle for socialism for South Africa.

By December last year, we became convinced that the chances of winning back the ANC onto the path of radical implementation of the Freedom Charter and the SACP onto the path of genuine working class struggles for working class power had become very remote, truly, had actually evaporated!

We therefore correctly resolved to call on Cosatu to break from the ANC led alliance. We stated that the need for looking for a political alternative had arrived.

We then resolved that NUMSA was going to lead the establishment of a ***new United Front***, which 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 neoliberal policies such as the NDP***. For this to happen, the Special Congress charged our members and shopstewards to be active on all fronts and in all struggles

against neo- liberal policies, wherever these policies were being implemented.

Clearly, the United Front is not a political party – it is simply an **organisational weapon against neoliberal policies and for the demand for the radical implementation of the Freedom Charter**. The fundamental purpose of the United Front is to **coordinate struggles in the workplace and in communities**.

We have noticed that some creative journalists have gone so far as to announce for us that Numsa's political party is called the United Front. Nothing could be further from the truth. In our Resolutions, we clearly stated that the United Front will be an organization similar to the United Democratic Front (UDF) – a democratic umbrella coordinating structure of the shopfloor and community struggles of the working class bringing together all sorts of working class and progressive community organisations and individuals.

Again and for the record, the United Front **is not a political party!**

Side by side with the establishment of the new United Front, we resolved that Numsa would 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**.

We said that Numsa would conduct discussions on previous and current attempts to build socialism. We resolved to 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.

In our Special Congress we even mentioned countries such as Brazil, Venezuela, Bolivia, Greece – as potential sources on socialist experiences we would study. We then said the whole learning process would lead to the union **convening a**

## ***Conference on Socialism.***

We said that the work to explore the formation of a Movement for Socialism must be regularly reported to our Numsa constitutional structures and the work must be finalised by ***the first NUMSA Central Committee in 2015.***

In the meantime, in all the work being done, whether on building a new United Front or exploring the formation of a Movement for Socialism, we said that ***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.*** We charged the NUMSA constitutional structures to continuously assess these developments and possibilities.

It is in pursuit of this objective that we have recently announced that we will consider the possibility of the working class fielding candidates in Metros and Municipalities, in 2016 Local Government Elections, such as in the Nelson Mandela Metro.

The "Movement for Socialism" is not the name of a political party Numsa has formed. The name of such a political organ (could be a broad coalition of revolutionary socialist formations) or party (could be a straightforward revolutionary socialist workers party – not necessarily of that name!), and how such an organ or party will be formed, ***all will be determined in the theater of struggle*** – the working class, once sufficiently mobilized and united behind the demand for socialism, will determine the programme, form and name of such a structure.

From the above, a few things that are very important must now be very clear.

Numsa is and will remain a trade union, inspired by Marxism Leninism. It will not convert itself into a political party. It cannot do so, anyway.

Numsa sees itself playing **a leading role** in the formation of the United Front and **a revolutionary and catalytic role** in the formation of the revolutionary socialist organ of the working class – it is theoretically and factually wrong to assert that **“Numsa will form a political party”** or more ridiculously and quite incorrectly, that **“Numsa has formed a political party”** in the same way that Julius Malema or Bantu Holomisa formed their parties!

The political organ to logically arise out of the processes outlined above (whether it be a socialist movement or a socialist workers party, and called by whatever name) cannot be about **“beefing up, or providing credible opposition to the ANC”** precisely because the process we have outlined above are processes of **the immense majorities** – the South African working class, both black and white, in all their workplaces and communities!

All other previous and historic political formations, including the birth of the ANC itself, were movements of minorities!

The ANC and SACP are everyday reminding Numsa that the working class organised in Cosatu unions and Cosatu itself will always remain in the ANC and its Alliance. This is arrogance of the highest order, and it reveals shocking ignorance and abandonment of Marxist-Leninist class theory and analysis, on the part of the leadership of both the ANC and SACP, about why the working class both organized in Cosatu unions, and those not organised in any union, have tolerated a clearly dysfunctional and anti-working class alliance for more than 20 years!

Simply stated, the working class, are not the political property of either the ANC or the SACP – their presence in the ANC and SACP **is premised on the sole fact that these organisations are able to protect and advance the class interests of the working class**. As more than 27 years of our

Marxist-Leninist analysis and revolutionary work has shown, both these organisations no longer champion the interests of the working class or socialism. And the advanced working class has, and continues to, abandon these organisations.

The revolutionary strategic objective of all these processes is for the advanced detachment of the working class to rally the immense majority in order to win economic and political power for ***the immense majority of South African working class*** in all its manifold manifestations, for a socialist South Africa as the only solution to the human crisis in South Africa, and the world, today.

There are no individuals among the Numsa national leadership who harbor ***illusions of personal grandeur, or who want political power in order to advance their personal economic interests***. Only a malicious and extremely ignorant imbecile would make such a mischievous and unashamedly false accusation.

Numsa as a revolutionary trade union inspired by Marxism-Leninism, will play its revolutionary part in solving the human crisis in South Africa by advancing the cause for the only alternative and solution available to us: socialism.

Writing in 1988 at a time when many left and revolutionary socialist formations condemned the SACP's strategy of working inside the ANC led Alliance for many reasons, including the possibility of the SACP abandoning the struggle for socialism in favour of the struggle for bourgeois nationalism, Joe Slovo then SACP General Secretary warned the working class thus:

***"It is obvious that the black capitalist class favours capitalism and that it will do its best to influence the post-apartheid society in this direction.***

***It is obvious that the black middle and upper classes who take part in a broad liberation alliance will jostle for hegemony and attempt to represent their interests as the interests of***

all Africans.

***It is obvious*** that (like their counterparts in every part of the world) the black middle and upper strata, who find themselves on the side of the people's struggle, are often inconsistent and vacillating. They are usually the enemy's softest targets for achieving a reformist, rather than a revolutionary, outcome."

Twenty years into our neoliberal capitalist democracy, it has become clear to us, the working class, that ***sections of the black petit-bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie who took part in the broad liberation alliance are viciously jostling for hegemony and attempting to represent their interests as the interests of all Africans by claiming that the Black and African working class will forever remain in the ANC and the SACP, and in the neo-liberal and capitalist ANC led Alliance.***

The SACP, when it was still led by Marxist-Leninists, further warned the working class about these tendencies of the vacillating strata among Black people, in its 1989 Programme:

*"In the period after the seizure of power by the democratic forces, the working class will need to continue the struggle against capitalism. It will need to strengthen its organisations and build the bases of working class and popular power in the economy, in all sectors of the state and in the communities where the people live.*

*A deliberate effort will have to be made to prevent attempts by the bourgeoisie and aspirant capitalist elements – and their imperialist supporters – to dominate state power and divert the revolution. Constant mass vigilance will also have to be exercised and action taken against such negative tendencies as the stifling of popular democracy, the bureaucratisation of the state and corrupt practices in government or in society as a whole.*

*In order to prevent the emergence of a seed-bed for capitalist*

*resurgence and ensure an advance to socialism, the working class must win to its side other sections of the working people, both now and after the popular seizure of power. The landless rural masses, sections of the intelligentsia, students, large contingents of youth and women (as social groups) and some small businessmen and other forces stand to gain from the victory of the socialist revolution.*

*The transition to socialism will be neither completely separate from nor contradictory to the tasks of the national democratic revolution. On the one hand, consistent implementation and defence of the national democratic programme constitute a major guarantee for progress towards socialism. On the other hand, many of the major objectives of the national democratic revolution will be fully accomplished in the process of socialist construction. Among these tasks are complete national liberation and equality, elimination of sex discrimination, and, more significantly, the elimination of monopoly domination over the economy."*

As Numsa we have consistently maintained that the NDR is not on track. The only track for the NDR is towards socialism because we believe many of the major objectives of the NDR can be fully achieved in the process of socialist construction. Our call for a United Front of the working class and a Movement for Socialism is precisely a defence of the national democratic programme, the Freedom Charter, which remains the only programme that is capable of laying the basis for socialist transformation of South African society.

There is no turning back, for us in Numsa. We will do whatever it takes to contribute to uniting the working class behind the demand for the radical implementation of the Freedom Charter, for the struggle against a neoliberal capitalist post-Apartheid South Africa, and for Socialism. As the Marxist-Leninist SACP said in 1989; "in the aftermath of the democratic forces assuming political power, the working class has the duty to continue the struggle against capitalism, for

socialism”.

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## **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. 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 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 these struggles. 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 part 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 Co-ordination 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. This 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. This 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.**

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# The Workers Charter

## Workers' Charter

adopted by National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) 1987

### Preamble

We, the working people of South Africa, the main producers of our country's wealth, declare:

*That, as workers, we are daily robbed of a rightful share of the fruits of our labour.*

*That, as black workers, we are subjected to even more intense exploitation by a system of capitalism which uses national domination to keep wages low and profits high.*

*That, as part of the black oppressed whose forebears were conquered by force of arms, we continue to suffer all the social, political, economic and cultural deprivations of a colonised people.*

*That, the most urgent task facing us as workers, as black workers and as part of the black oppressed, is to use our organised strength both at the point of production and among our communities, to put an end to the race tyranny and to help bring about a united, non-racial, non-sexist democratic South Africa based on one person one vote, as broadly defined in the Freedom Charter.*

*That, 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.*

*That, 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.*

*That, we extend a hand of friendship to our white class brothers and sisters whose long-term interests lie in the unity of all labour – black and white.*

**In order to ensure:**

*that victory in the national liberation struggle is not hijacked by a new exploiting class, of whatever colour;*

*that the immediate interests of the working people are fully safeguarded in the post-apartheid state and;*

*that we are not prevented from asserting our democratic right to win the majority of the people for a socialist future;*

*we, the working people, adopt this charter (as an elaboration of the Freedom Charter) and pledge ourselves to strive together, using our organised strength, to guarantee its implementation.*

**Ownership and control of the economy**

*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 ensure active participation in the planning and running of the enterprises by workers at the point of production and through their trade unions.*

*Economic policy shall aim to generate the resources needed to correct the economic imbalances imposed by race domination and bring about wealth redistribution for the benefit of the people as a whole. More particularly, steps shall be taken to do away with the white monopoly of ownership and managerial control.*

*Participation in the state sector by domestic or foreign private capital, where judged necessary, shall not give such capital a controlling share and all enterprises, whether state-owned or private, shall be compelled to safeguard the interests of the workers and the nation as a whole. The continued operation of market forces in the functioning of the economy shall not prevent state intervention in areas relating to the people's basic needs.*

*In the period after the defeat of the race tyranny, the fundamental perspective of working class political and trade union organisations shall be to work for the creation of economic and social conditions making possible a steady advance towards a democratic socialist society.*

### **The right and duty to work and to a living wage**

*Every adult person has a right and duty to work and to receive remuneration according to his or her contribution. The new state shall, as a matter of priority, work to create economic conditions in which jobs are available to all. Until this is achieved the state shall ensure that social support is provided for the unemployed and members of their families.*

*All managerial and administrative posts and other jobs shall be open to every qualified citizen irrespective of race, colour, sex or religion. The equal right of access to jobs, managerial and administrative posts shall be subject to positive measures necessary to correct the imbalances inherited from the era of race discrimination. Public and private institutions shall have a duty to provide facilities*

*for training and opportunities to apply the acquired skills.*

*The State, in consultation with the trade unions, shall adopt and enforce a national minimum wage.*

*Child labour and all forms of forced and semi-forced labour shall be prohibited. Special attention shall be paid to redressing the*

*oppressive situation of workers involved in farm-work, domestic service and those trapped in the so-called homelands.*

## **The right to organisation and struggle**

*There shall be no restrictions on the rights of workers to organise themselves into political parties or trade unions. Trade union organisation shall be based on the principles of “one industry – one union” and “one country – one federation”.*

*Trade unions and their federation shall be completely independent and answerable only to the decisions of their members or affiliates, democratically arrived at. No political party, state organ or enterprise, whether public, private or mixed, shall directly or indirectly interfere with such independence.*

*The state shall ensure that the trade unions, as the key mass social organisation of the organised working class, are given the opportunity to participate at all levels of economic planning and implementation.*

*All workers, in every sector of the economy, shall have the right, through their trade unions, to engage freely in collective bargaining and to use the strike weapon.*

*All legislation dealing with procedures for collective bargaining, including any limitations on the right to strike*

*in exceptional cases, shall require the consent of a majority in the trade union movement.*

*In the case of all other labour legislation there shall be prior consultation with the trade union movement whose views on such proposed legislation should be timeously tabled in parliament.*

### **The right to media access**

*Steps shall be taken to break the existing media monopoly by big business and the State and to ensure effective workers' access to all sections of the media.*

### **The right to family life and social facilities**

*All legislation and labour practices which prevent or interfere with the right of families to live together shall be outlawed. Migrant labour shall be phased out or, in cases where it is unavoidable, provision shall be made for family accommodation during any period of service exceeding three months.*

*The state shall aim to make adequate accommodation and children's schools available to all workers and their families, close to their places of work. All enterprises shall help to create local or regional recreational facilities for the work-force as well as creches and primary health care facilities.*

*No parent, male or female, shall be disadvantaged or disabled from any form of employment by virtue of his or her duty to help rear children and, where necessary, this should be ensured by the creation of special facilities including provision for paid maternity and paternity leave.*

### **The right to health and safety**

*Conditions of work shall not threaten the health, safety and*

*well-being of the work-force or of the community at large, or create serious ecological risks.*

*All workers shall have the right to paid annual leave and paid sick leave.*

*Those injured at work shall receive proper compensation for themselves and their families. Provision shall be made for the rehabilitation of all disabled workers including, where necessary, the provision of alternative employment.*

### **The right to security in old age**

*All workers shall be entitled to an adequate pension or retirement, provided either by the state or the relevant enterprise.*

### **The rights of women workers**

*The state shall aim to integrate all women workers as full and equal participants in the economy. Any form of discrimination against women workers in regard to job allocation, wages, working conditions, training, benefits, etc., shall be prohibited.*

*Positive steps shall be taken to help correct the discrimination suffered by women both in the work-place and the home.*

*Opportunities shall be created to enable women to acquire skills for employment outside the home.*

*It shall be the duty of the state, trade unions, workers, political parties and all other mass and social organisations to ensure effective*

*women's participation at leadership, management and other levels and to take measures, including educational campaigns, to combat all forms of male chauvinism both in the home and*

*outside.*

*We declare that the above immediate and long-term objectives are in the best interests of all the working people and of society as a whole. As individuals and as part of the organised working class, we pledge to struggle, side by side, for their full implementation.*

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## **Two articles on the national question**

**Replies to Questions from Erik Hane** by *Erica Beukes*

And

**“One Namibia One Nation”** by *Hewat Beukes*

**Replies to Questions from Erik Hane** by *Erica Beukes*

Dear Erik

I am sorry for not responding to your request/questions earlier. Our visit in Germany and Scotland was good ...

Your questions:

**1. Are the German Colonial period and the genocide still present in your mind and in the mind of the Nama people?**

– Yes, my grandmother used to tell us as children that her mother or grandmother perished in the Kalahari desert, when they fled from Aroab.

**2. Do all the people know about it, especially the younger ones amongst you?**

Not all the people know the full extent, some regard it only as part of history. Those who lived with their grandparents had a better chance to know.

**3. How do you think about the genocide?**

It had a great impact on the composition of our country's

population. We are now a minority.

**4. How do you deal with it?**

We feel deprived of our ancestors who would have had a greater impact on what is happening now, especially culturally.

**5. Do the German colonial period and the genocide still affect today's life of the Nama?**

Yes, tragically so. They are disowned, deprived of human dignity disorganised and unable to cope with the challenges of modern society, i.e. poverty, alcoholism etc.

**6. Do you still see consequences for you?**

I feel powerless at times, a much greater force/organisation needs to step in to have an impact that is a structural intervention. The working people will need to organise themselves politically to intervene.

**7. How is your relationship with Germany in general and at the moment?**

The German State is maintaining the same policies as it had a hundred years ago in that it assists this corrupt and decadent state to maintain its all pervasive corruption and oppressive administration. Its agencies are assisting the decadent judiciary for example to maintain the colonial legal system and to suppress the bill of fundamental rights. In this way the continuing and worsening effects of the German State's dispossession and atrocities are intensified multi-fold.

**8. How do you think Germany should or have to deal with the shared past?**

The present German State cannot solve the problem, it is the problem together with its bilateral relations with the Namibian government (and for that matter an illegitimate state that has been rigging elections since its inception). The German People must align with the Namibian People to support the latter's political struggle.

**9. Is there need for reconciliation?**

We need contact and co-operation with the German people to ensure that the atrocities perpetrated by the German state never happen again. No reconciliation is needed between the Namibian People and the German People. As for German

imperialism, it is irreconcilable with the Namibian people.

**10. Are there possibilities for reconciliation between Germany and the Nama?**

There should be contact, exchange, interaction between the German people and the Nama people. The German working people did not do harm to the Namibian People. We will not contribute to the imperialist and opportunist crime to hold the German People and for that matter the German working people at ransom for the crimes of a class state. They were victims of the German State too. The graves of German soldiers from Rehoboth throughout the south show that the German State used children of 17,18,19,20 and early twenties to fight their wars of greed and dominance, to increase their ability to oppress and exploit their 'own' people.). The German and Namibian peoples must establish co-operation to shackle the ability of their respective states to commit crimes against humanity under secrecy, which they continue to do in Namibia.

**11. Do you and your people have any demands and claims against Germany?**

Yes, claims against the German's state. The main claim is that we need our land back and to stop its interventionist politics in Namibia.

**12. Are there different opinions amongst the Nama clans?**

Not fundamental.

**13. How is your relationship with the Namibian Government regarding the genocide?**

This Government is decadent and has still to answer on the whereabouts of our people tortured, jailed and killed in exile. Many are unaccounted for. It rules without mandate and with the assistance of amongst others the German State. The estimated N\$7 billion which the German State granted purportedly for development and "special initiative" to the "affected" peoples have not even reached the 'unaffected' peoples, but went straight into the pockets of the presidents and a small clique around them. The German State is well aware of this, but takes the money that it gives as bribery. (The 7 billion in itself is patronage and a measly amount for the

untold wealth it has expropriated. Nevertheless, it could have gone a long way to uplift the community and their self-respect.)

**14. Do the Nama communities have access to the debate and do they feel represented?**

No. It is only gaining momentum now. A working class community of 400 families has seized their own land for homes in Keetmanshoop and is the first well-organised leadership to conduct the struggle to repossess themselves. They are debating the full programme of the Nama restitution struggle.

**15. How do you see the future of the Nama people regarding these issues?**

They should through organisation lay claim to repatriations demands from German's state and actively seek cooperation with the German people. This struggle is necessary to re-establish a proper leadership to eventually repossess their property here in Namibia, both corporeal and cultural (their aesthetics).

Greetings

*Erica Beukes*

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**"One Namibia One Nation"**

By HEWAT BEUKES

Over the past year or so we have had what its participants call a debate on socialism, tribalism, coloureds, culture, the national question, reparations and so on in "The Namibian".

This group of proclaimed socialists seems to be seeking to become the mouthpiece for the populist slogans of the SWAPO, in particular "One Namibia. One Nation". This slogan is frozen, a given tenet to which the people shall subscribe just as they were forced to subscribe to Stalinist precepts such as, "The Party is everything, the individual nothing", and "the People is SWAPO and SWAPO is the People" during the liberation struggle. Tie to it "the Sole and Authentic Representative of the Namibian People" and you have the full

set of Commandments to which the people shall subscribe if they do not wish to be labelled as tribalists, or reactionaries, although the latter lost its meaning long before independence due to irony. The former never had any meaning until now when the "socialists" are trying to elevate it as an indictment against the struggles of individual groups.

I have thought long on whether I should respond or not. Given the present struggles of a number of groups on many issues which I consider crucial I believe it is necessary.

Leaving aside the serious misrepresentations on, amongst others, what Lenin had said on the national question, I will simply reserve my comments for now on their insistence that "One Namibia, One Nation" was and is the correct slogan for Namibia.

Let me begin by saying that I believe a socialism which has no consonance with the actual history of peoples cannot be a proper socialist theory.

The slogan "One Namibia One Nation" linked with "The People is SWAPO and SWAPO is the People" (note the singular tense) was brandished shortly after SWAPO was declared "Sole and Authentic Representative of the Namibian People" by the United Nations, the "Five Western Powers" and the "Communist" countries in the beginning of 1971.

On 13 November 1970 the various groups including SWANU, SWAPO, NUDO, The Herero, Nama, Baster and Damara nations had formed the National Convention in Rehoboth as a united front to fight for independence. The said declaration was clearly to disrupt the Namibian peoples' attempt at a united front. It was a clear declaration against the right to self-determination of the Namibian People.

After the General Strike in 1971/72 against the terrible Contract Labour System, and public floggings resulting thereafter, four thousand youth fled the country and swelled the ranks of external SWAPO.

In 1974, the paramount chief of the Hereros, Chief Clemens Kapuuo travelled abroad to meet with the United Nations, and

member states. He was rebuffed as being unrepresentative. In 1975, Chief Kapuuo broke from the National Convention, which then formed the Namibia National Convention (NNC). The UN immediately reiterated SWAPO's 'Sole Authenticity'.

During this period the SWAPO Youth League and Peoples Liberation Army (PLAN) was in an intense fight against the SWAPO leadership in which they had formed an "Anti-Corruption Committee" to investigate why weapons, food, medicines and clothes donated by groups and governments for the 'armed struggle' were diverted by the leadership for business and UNITA. Fighters were dying of hunger while warehouses were stacked to the roofs with donated provisions.

This group's leadership expressed themselves clearly against the "Sole Authenticity" of SWAPO on the basis that it was not representative of a Namibian nation.

By 1976, on the reported insistence of Henry Kissinger and the intervention of Kaunda of Zambia and Nyerere of Tanzania, thousands of youths and fighters were liquidated politically and physically. In 1978, a day before the Cassinga massacre the so-called dissidents kept at camps in Zambia were brought to Cassinga dressed in soldiers' uniforms, but without weapons. They were massacred by South African forces the next day. Thus a whole generation of political fighters was defeated.

A system of terror was then instituted by the SWAPO leadership from 1978 to 1989, when Namibia was declared independent. People were arrested on charges of being spies, kept in holes in the ground where many died from hunger and malnutrition; regularly culled by firing squad and thrown off a mountain cliff in southern Angola to make space for new prisoners, while parading under the farce of "scientific socialism".

From 1984 to 1990, parents and relatives of the victims exposed the atrocious farce and caricature of freedom and revolution. On 1 April 1989, the SWAPO leadership sent more than 500 PLAN fighters to be massacred by South African forces misinforming them these had withdrawn and that the United Nations Peace Keepers were in control of the North of Namibia.

This was a stupid and psychopathic miscalculation to draw sympathy for SWAPO whose credibility had collapsed due to the action of the relatives. The relatives had in fact paid put to the credibility of the international churches, the symbiotic relation between Imperialism and Stalinism in particular, and also the latter's subservience to imperialism. It affirmed in bloody script the correctness of Trotsky's theses on the relation of Stalinist counter revolution and Imperialism, from his analyses of the failures of the German communists against Hitler to the Spanish Civil War. It paid put to the Post World War II theories revising Marxism as a pure science of history. It affirmed Trotsky's analyses that the productive forces was not only stagnating but had become rotten.

Thus, "One Namibia, One Nation" was manufactured in a crucible filled with the blood of Namibian young people, an entire generation. Instead of imperialism breaking up pre-capitalist social relations it tied itself to the most decadent, moribund sections of society, the tribal hierarchy, just as it had tied itself to religious fundamentalists worldwide. I believe this is the clearest indicator that the productive forces are rotting.

Namibia is a microcosm of the fact that since the advent of imperialism it has not broken up property and social relations in favour of indigenous peoples in South America, Asia and Africa. It has instead used those relations in the most perverted forms to put primordial political species in charge in favour of imperialist property relations.

Namibia is important in the sense that here peoples' organisation against imperialism's pre-emption of the right of nations to self determination took its clearest form.

Despite this national tragedy, a group of what I consider petit bourgeois theorists (if one can call them that) try to create an ideology for a group of caretakers in this Namibian state. These caretakers stop all but short from addressing their corporate bosses as "Ja Baas" or "Bwana".

But these "yes bossers" have brought this country to the brink of tribal war.

The so-called legislature is dysfunctional, the so-called Executive is dysfunctional, the Judiciary is a cesspool of corruption, the hub of corporate rule of this country.

Our puritan "socialists" call this process "One Namibia, One nation".

Nay, they insist that Namibians rise to the call of "One Namibia, One Nation" while each have paid in blood for its institution.

Namibians will unite as a nation – in particular as a working people – in the process of coming to understand their history of catastrophes including the present one in the context of imperialism. (The same goes for the world's working classes) Socialists endeavouring to lead this working class theoretically may not cowardly navigate their theories (moral preachings) around the crimes committed against this nation, and for that matter a nation which has always stared its fate squarely in the eye, and met its tormentors blow for blow.

The 'debates' in "The Namibian" on issues of socialism are pathetic distortions of Marxist thought in my opinion. They ignore the fact that a group of petty criminals have been foisted on the Namibian nation and that the scale of extraction from this country is obscene. They instead blame victims of tribalism for tribalism. That's how absurd the 'debates' have become.

The declared socialists ignore the glaring fact that the imperialists and capitalists have turned this country into no-man's land and its people are dangling over the precipice.

This is typical petit bourgeois. They have disrupted the Marxist movement worldwide since 1990 in the most unaccountable and treacherous manner. They now seek to hand the working class in the colonies bound hand-and-foot to colonial ruling classes.