

BULLETIN

September 2012

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Message from Greece

6 September 2012

“Today’s opinion poll shows Golden Dawn is now the third largest party in Greece with 10.5%, overtaking PASOK which is trailing with 8%. New Democracy is in the lead with 25% closely followed by SYRIZA with 24%.

Sadly, everything will be played out in the next two or three months. After that it will be too late ... the catastrophe will have come about for the Greeks but also a little bit for Europe as a whole.

Are we going to sit back passively and watch as the tragic history of the inter-war period is repeated?

Anti-fascist greetings,
Y.”

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Answers to Erik Hane

from Namibia

Dear Erik

I am sorry for not responding to your request/questions earlier. Our visit in Germany and Scotland was good. We were in Elleringhausen Twistetal and the surrounding area, at the Edrisse, in Bonn, in Bethel bei Bielefeld and in Nordhorn/Nieder Sachsen. I visited my two friends and we had a reunion with the other women who did the training with us in Bethel from 1970 to 1975.

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 has 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.)

Members of WIRFI should work to make the events mentioned in the call below as successful as possible. Strong contingents of workers involved in struggles across Europe would significantly improve the political character of what promises to be a very large demonstration. The conference the following day will, we hope, establish a firmer basis for unity between those fighting the effects of austerity all over Europe. Delegations from Greece and Catalonia are already signed up and many more are expected.

London Actions - 20/21 October 2012

CALL FOR SUPPORT :

TUC demonstration and Europe Against Austerity Action Conference

On Saturday October 20th the British Trades Union Congress is holding a march against austerity 'For a future that works'. Hundreds of thousands of people will take to the streets of London to oppose the cuts being forced upon them. The Coalition of Resistance will be at the heart of this demonstration with its message of 'No Cuts'. The participation of delegations from across Europe will hugely strengthen the significance of what will be a massive mobilisation.

In 2011 our organisation initiated the Europe Against Austerity conference which issued a call for joint action against austerity throughout Europe. More than 600 people attended the conference in October 2011, with 150 coming from other parts of Europe.

Since that conference we have seen big struggles in Greece where there have been many days of general strike action and in Spain where the Asturian miners have inspired the support of millions throughout Europe.

The nature of the onslaught on the peoples of Europe means that such actions will continue and escalate. Further solidarity work and coordination is now urgently needed.

We appeal for anti-austerity organisations throughout Europe to come to London on 20th and 21st October to participate both in the London demonstration and to meet the following day to discuss common action to turn back the tide of austerity. We must build co-ordinated action to enable victories against a common enemy.

There will be an open preparatory meeting in early September to prepare for the October 21st conference and all those who wish to be involved are welcome, whether or not they attended last year's event. The date and venue will be notified shortly. Please contact us if you plan to attend.

We urge organisations and organisations from across Europe to come to London in October - to show that the strength of the working class movement is in its unity and solidarity.

Let's make October 20/21st the next step in our common struggle against austerity.

Andrew Burgin

Secretary, Coalition of Resistance

(email andrew@andrewburgin.com)

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

The national question (2)

“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 bosses" 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.

Two vital pamphlets by Balazs Nagy



***Stop the Destruction of Social Gains* (isbn 978-0-9564319-1-2) and *Back to Mass Poverty + Organise a Euro-March on Brussels* (isbn 978-0-9564319-2-9) are both available at £2 plus postage and packaging. Orders to info@workersinternational.org**

Black Thursday at Marikana

By Radoslav Pavlovic

While a heat-wave and panic in the northern hemisphere have set off rocketing corn prices, in the southern half it's supposed to be winter. But the seasonal silence has been shattered by the gunshots of the South African police on Thursday 16 August 2012. 34 miners at the Marikana platinum mine were killed, some 80 wounded and more than 250 arrested.

It was a bloodbath of a kind not seen since the days of Apartheid, but with the difference that the killers and their victims are both black, while the mine owners and those giving the orders are still white.

The miners were killed because they were on strike demanding an increase in their poverty wages and rejected the management's **instruction** to go down the mine. So capitalism, which long since entirely entered its second stage of rotten decay, is now passing over to its third stage where free collective bargaining of wages reverts to slavery.

There is just one nuance in this new class relationship: power is still in the hands of white capital, but they work through black sub-contractors in the African National Congress (ANC) and the majority union, NUM, whose leader is on the platinum mining company's board of directors.

Remember how the lords of German capital bought the services of the socialists Ebert and Noske when they needed to behead the proletarian revolution? Well the same thing is happening today in South Africa.

I have a brother living in those far-off lands in the south, but I feel closer to my black brothers who are the Marikana miners, because ties of class are stronger than

ties of blood.

I know that on the football terraces of Zagreb, Belgrade, Warsaw and Moscow hordes of fascist football fans hurl racist abuse at black players and call them monkeys, because they are deluded into believing that they themselves belong to a blue blooded and blond-haired white master race.

They go on from abuse to physical attacks on black immigrants on the underground, like the Golden Dawn do in Greece ("Black Death" would be a better name). If there are no migrants where you live, you can always pick on your own local Roma.

Then you graduate to organising militias, like the Serb tigers, eagles and wolves in the war in Bosnia and elsewhere, before ending up with regular military units for "special operations", "anti-riot" squads or "counter-terrorism" units, in the small Balkan countries as much as in South Africa.

If capitalism really is guided by a "hidden hand", it is the white hand of capital operating behind the scenes. If workers get disobedient, there are plenty of the unemployed, thirsting for violence, to turn into uniformed killers.

President Zuma, Commissions of Enquiry, reporters asking "who shot first" are just so much hot air to divert public opinion.

What they did is, on the orders of white capital, they shot black miners down like sparrows.

May the memory of our black miner brothers of Marikana live for ever!

Speech at a picket in Namibia

Solidarity with the Marikana workers in South Africa

We, as concerned Namibians, relived our shared history of Apartheid-Colonial police brutality and state repression, while watching the cold-blooded massacre of at least 34 Marikana workers who this time were shot at by the South African Police Force, under a democratically-elected government.

It has now been one week since the brutal and merciless killing of the mine workers by the South African Police. However, it is important to put this massacre in historical context and to understand that mining has been central to the history of repression in southern Africa.

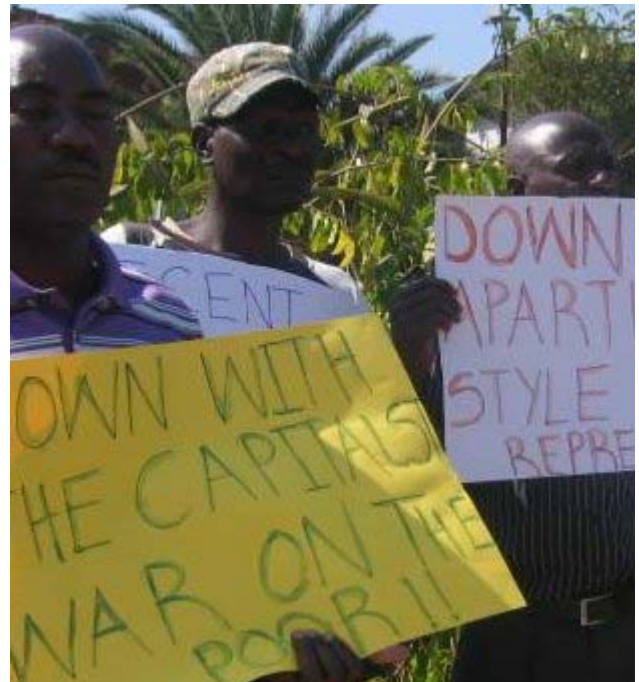
The Marikana Mine is one of the richest platinum mines in the world and yet its workers live in shacks. Most of the slain workers were rock drillers, the most difficult and dangerous work in the mine. Yet they earn only R4 000 a month.

We salute the courage of the miners. They were prepared to take a real stand. They were prepared to face real risks. The workers who occupied the hill near the mine came from many places including Swaziland and Mozambique. But most of them came from the rural Eastern Cape, from the former Bantustans where people live their lives as the living dead under the traditional chiefs, without work, without land and without hope.

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the SACP have made it very clear which side they are on. By supporting the massacre and calling for further repression against the workers they have made it quite clear that they are on the side of the ruthless alliance between capital and the politicians. They have declared, very clearly, that they support the war on the poor. Their reactions to the massacre are a total disgrace. No credible left forma-



The South African Police murderers at work (left). Solidarity picket with the Marikana miners in Windhoek, Namibia (below right) and Harry Boesak addressing the picket (below left)



tion in South Africa or anywhere in the world can work with the NUM or SACP again. The decision of the miners at Marikana to delink from the corrupt and ruthless politics of the alliance has been vindicated.

Things will not get better but will get worse. When the elite's power is threatened they will respond with more and more violence. War has been declared on the poor. We are our own liberators. We must organize and continue to build independent organizations.

We like the rest of the working class support the demands of the Marikana workers for better living conditions and all other demands of workers for a sustainable living. We therefore demand:

- Arrest of the police and their commanders who perpetrated the massacre
- The arrest of the Lonmin mine owners and board of directors (Lonmin met the police before the massacre and are thus complicit in the slaughter of workers)
- The arrest of all the mine-owners guilty of transfer pricing (including Anglo American)

- The return of all assets stolen through transfer pricing over years

- A R12500 minimum wage for Platinum mineworkers (the Platinum price has increased 300% over the past 10 years, while workers get starvation wages)

- Compensation of the families of the mineworkers slaughtered by the police

Further, immediate preparations should be made towards an indefinite general strike whose demands could include:

- A living wage for all workers
 - Reducing the working day, without loss of pay, so work can be shared among all who can work
 - An end of casualization and labour brokering
 - Open the books of the mines to a workers' inspection
 - An end to all transfer pricing
 - We demand reparations for the hundred years of exploitation by the mines in southern Africa. We demand the socialization of the mines under workers' control.
- Forward to Socialism!

Notes on the situation in South Africa

What is going on in South Africa and Namibia (following the massacre) is very important. On the basis of the available documents, it seems to me that the response to the massacre of the miners indicates a large-scale mobilisation.

Currently it is affecting many many political activists, but it seems to me that it will (or certainly should) emerge as an issue for the mass of workers in which all the criticisms which have built up over many years, all the disappointments and discontents over anti-working class policies, are now exploding. And we will see a re-awakening of the masses.

It is no accident that Cosatu and President Zuma are doing everything they can to appease and turn away the workers' anger, which is focussed in the first place on the NUM but will extend to class collaboration as a whole.

I propose a discussion among ourselves (among us comrades) in order to work out the policy we should put forward to the African comrades. For my part I propose:

a. From the outset, establish close collaboration between workers of several nationalities (countries) affected by the whole thing (South African, Namibian, Zimbabwean, Botswanan, etc.) in all actions.

b. The first of these actions should be to organise meetings of workers in all these countries, in their workplaces (factories, farms) if possible, to explain and denounce the class collaboration that the massacre is an example of,

c. but also to explain what they should do, i.e. to work out and get moving a Charter of workers' policies of a general movement which should also include the main demands.

d. Immediately in order to work out such a Charter or list of demands, the decisive importance of the self-organisation of the class should be emphasised. It is therefore important to launch the movement for the organisation of the workers in committees (councils), and to concentrate these on the workplace, as well as in the localities, at different levels (town, area, etc.) .

I believe that adopting this schema we could discuss how to concretise it better in greater detail, but the essential thing is: denounce the class collaboration and explain the need for the class itself to organise itself with its demands. On this basis, working out the Charter of this movement and organising its committees (councils).

Balazs Nagy 29 August 2012

Report just received via ex-miners network in UK:

Mining Unions in Spain threaten new mobilisations

The Unions CCOO and UGT have warned that they will begin new mobilisations if the Industry Ministry doesn't agree to their demand to call for the urgent setting up of the Follow-up Commission of the Plan for Coal. They have given 14th Sept as the deadline for receiving a response from Minister Soria.

This was agreed on Thursday by representatives of the mining sector of FITAG-UGT and the Industry Federation of CCOO headed by their respective General Secretaries, Antonio Deusa and Felipe López, during a meeting held in the UGT headquarters to analyse the real situation of the sector at the moment.

The first measure they have announced is that today, Friday 7 September, they will ask the Ministry to abide by its commitment to call a meeting of the Follow-up Commission of the Plan for Coal. If they don't receive a positive response from the Ministry by 14th September, both Unions will meet together to set up a calendar of

mobilisations.

Whilst waiting for a response from Soria's Ministry, CCOO and UGT will be carrying out an institutional campaign at both national and regional level in which they will ask for meetings with parliamentary groups as well as the owners, Carbuni3n and ACOM, to sound out their positions and to secure support.

Both Unions have valued positively the mobilisations carried out up to now, seeing them as having made the public aware of the reality of the Mining Sector and its strategic role as a source of nationally produced energy. They stressed "Unity of Action as the cornerstone in the defence of the future of Coalmining and of the Mining Regions".

Finally, CCOO and UGT have asked that the Government reconsider and open up a process of dialogue which will permit both coalmining and the mining regions a future.

Please send articles, letters, photographs and any other materials for the WIRFI Bulletin to info@workersinternational.org