A Marxist reflects on the death of Nelson Mandela

What a pilgrimage, as the world bourgeoisie's political chiefs rushed off to South Africa to show their respects at Nelson Mandela's funeral! Bush, Obama, Clinton, Sarkozy, Hollande, Cameron et.al.: the whole lot – friends and enemies, old and new – all reverently joined together to canonise him. Even their enemies (declared or nominally non-aligned), from the Chinese delegate to Castro from Cuba, or Lula from Brazil, not to mention "socialists" like Tony Blair, would not have missed this pious communion for the world; attendance was a point of honour! Which raises the question: How on earth can you explain this planet-wide assembly to celebrate a dead man?

August Bebel was a lathe-operator and outstanding leader of the German working class and the Second International in the 19th and early 20th centuries. "What have I done wrong now?" he used to wonder whenever the bourgeois press had anything nice to say about him. But Mandela was made from different stuff. It did not bother him to be smothered in glory by a grateful bourgeoisie. He knew perfectly well why it was; he even said as much when they gave him a Nobel Prize. He made no bones about telling the jury: "Forgiveness frees the soul, it makes fear evaporate. That is why forgiveness is such a powerful weapon."

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

inspired psychological virtue.

But you would be wrong to say or think that he was always so accommodating towards the possessing class and the oppressors of his people. Immediately after World War II he founded the Youth League together with Walter Sisulu and Oliver Tambo in an attempt to radicalise an ANC (African National Congress) that was pledged to Gandhi's old conciliatory opportunism based on non-violent resistance to British imperialism. They launched a more combative and assertive policy on the part of African nationalism. With the banning of the Stalinised South African Communist Party (SACP) in 1950, there was a rapprochement between that party and the ANC, of which Mandela became the unchallenged leader in 1952. This alliance was strengthened by the Sharpeville massacre in 1961, when the leaders of these allied organisations launched the armed struggle. Later they were also all in gaol together on Robben Island.

And that was where Mandela – the radical rebel of African nationalism – and his companions adapted their outdated and compromised radical Gandhism to the very latest modern version of class-collaboration embodied in Stalinism, which has just emerged triumphant from World War II. It was not a difficult adjustment; Trotsky had already exposed the complicity between Gandhism and Stalininsm in 1939, for example. When he wrote:
"… the Comintern has completely gone over to Gandhi's position and the position of the conciliationist colonial bourgeoisie in general." ("India Faced with Imperialist War", Writings of Leon Trotsky 1939-1940, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1977, p.31)
Indeed, this shift flowed directly from the dreadful policy of the Popular Front which Khrushchev and company further extended and generalised into the lying and suicidal policy of "peaceful co-existence".

There is little point speculating which way the ANC and Mandela would have gone without the close link to the SACP.

However, reality reveals very close collaboration culminating in the as it were natural conversion of the ANC from its own homespun Gandhism to the very latest version of class collaboration represented by Stalinism – with all its cruel consequences. The Bolsheviks of old used prison and exile to sharpen a Marxist understanding of their revolutionary tasks. The 27 painful years spent together with Stalinists on barren Robben Island were the complete opposite, and thoroughly moulded Mandela into an evangelist for the Stalinist gospel of a social peace dominated by the powerful. The criminal pimp who thus prostituted what was – for all its hesitations and shortcomings – a great liberation movement into a resolute instrument of social conciliation was none other than the Stalinist SACP.

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

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

No-one can say that Mandela and his associates gave way without getting anything in return. Like their Stalinist models who between 1940 and 1945 rescued the bourgeoisie from the threat of revolution in return for a few real but clearly limited and temporary improvements, Mandela too negotiated a price for acting as fireman. Nor can anyone say the price was

worthless, when in fact a whole mortally offended nation felt the abolition of racist apartheid very positively.

From the outset, however, we Marxists very severely criticised this agreement; not just because it was limited – as if we gamble all or nothing, which is completely alien to our methods – nor because we disagree with its anti-apartheid content, which a great and long-suffering nation wanted. We were and are utterly opposed to this pact between the bourgeois South African state and Mandela's ANC because the latter substituted their anti-apartheid demands in place of more fundamental social demands. They purely and simply replaced class demands with general anti-racism, as if racist apartheid was not the immediate and natural product of essentially colonialist, rapacious and parasitical South African capitalism.

Negotiations of this sort normally turn on what is at stake in the confrontation and the relative strengths of the two sides. From this point of view, the result of these negotiations fell clearly short of both the colossal stakes involved in the confrontation between the revolution and the authorities and the regime's congenital weakness in the face of the overwhelming strength of a proletariat fully standing up for itself. These exceptional conditions are the proper yardstick against which to judge the agreement and understand its inevitable and logical consequences. Exactly like their Stalinist mentors who previously allied themselves with the so-called "democratic" bourgeoisie against its twin brother, fascism, Mandela and the ANC demanded a "normal" capitalism without apartheid. Separated in time but close in their content, their negotiations and agreements were praised to the skies by the enthusiastic bourgeoisie, but merely put a brave face on what the Bible calls "selling their birth-right" (the revolution and power) "for a mess of pottage".

Set aside the slightest hesitation about describing this pact of complicity in these terms. It would be wrong and dangerous

to imagine that the same mistaken and cruel illusions which had seized the great masses also nourished the ANC leaders. Unlike the former, Mandela and friends were not dupes. They acted deliberately to get this agreement, fully conscious of what it meant. That is proved perfectly well by two major phenomena.

First is the immediate stampede by a good number of the cadres and leaders of the ANC and the unions jostling for lucrative positions up there with the bourgeoisie. The well-known ANC and miners' union leader Cyril Ramaphosa, who was catapulted straight onto the board of directors of various mining companies, is undoubtedly the most repulsive of these newly-rich, but by no means the only one. There may be some ANC leaders who never got involved in bourgeois businesses, but almost all of them are up to their necks in enormous corruption, starting with President Jacob Zuma. South Africa is regularly reported to be one of the countries where corruption is most widespread.

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

If any more eloquent proof is needed, then look how from the start there were massive protests from the unions and within the ANC against this real treachery and for a return to the movements' original Charter of demands. On this we must mention our Comrade Mkhungo Bongani, Durban engineering worker, NUMSA trade union representative and ANC member who tried to prevent this rightward turn, raising his voice and

organising workers against this treachery. While seeking support from British trade unions in his search for a revolutionary way forward, he recognised the correctness of the revolutionary orientation of Trotskyism. It was then as our close comrade that he returned to Durban to rally workers and revolutionaries into a fighting political organisation. Sadly, illness and poverty defeated this fighter, who died prematurely. But the South African working class can be proud to have had in its ranks a Marxist revolutionary of his temper, as perspicacious in understanding the tasks as he was firm and resolute in his convictions. This class has great need of the stimulating example of Comrade Bongani in its current struggle to build its revolutionary party.

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

poverty.

It is therefore completely understandable that the working class and in particular the miners have taken up a struggle against their decline. Not long since, the whole world discovered with astonishment and indignation how the bourgeoisie and its state allied to a corrupt trade union bureaucracy responded with a brutal gunfire and savage, cruel massacre to the demands of the Lonmin miners at Marikana. There were also several trade union leaders among those who provoked and organised this revolting massacre, most prominently the same traitor Cyril Ramaphosa in his capacity as one of the bosses of Lonmin, the firm responsible for laying this murderous trap. The trade union bureaucracy then covered the whole thing up in complicity with the employers. The working class learnt its lesson. A series of strikes broke out and the actions and demonstrations organised showed that, though they had been paralysed by illusions for a while, the working class had started a fight. Its best elements radicalised the trade unions, which are now seeking their independent working-class road, while the most far-sighted have got involved in building the revolutionary workers' party.

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

So it is hardly surprising that the world bourgeoisie got concerned and mobilised all its various courtesans and underlings to rush off to South Africa. Their sure class instinct sensed the danger. The looming peril had to be countered immediately, and they thought that poisoning the consciousness of the working class and working people with

Mandela’s toxic doctrine of general human brotherhood without class distinction was the best way to do it.

But if the bourgeoisie seem determined to raise this lie to the level of international generalisation, they risk colliding head-on with the very thing that working people in South Africa are experiencing. So to open the road to its revolutionary proletarian party, the South African working class needs first of all to complete and deepen the process of learning from this precious experience. The key to success in founding its party is critically surpassing and transcending Mandela’s ideology and practice.
A Marxist reflects on the death of Nelson Mandela.
By Balazs Nagy December 2013

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.

Black Thursday at Marikana

By Radoslav Pavlovic,
Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International

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 unknown 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 “national security”, 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!

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

———-

“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.

Draft Unified Programme of the Namibian Working People

DRAFT PROGRAMME

Our programme will be titled the Unified Programme of the Namibian Working People to take political power.

Our objective is to consolidate and strengthen the socialist movement in this country through a Unified Demand of the nation engendering the following two tasks:

1. Rebuilding the working class's basic organisations, the trade unions and civic organisations, and,
2. Consolidating and strengthening the socialist movement in this country through rallying the working people around a Unified Demand of the nation.

The Unified Demand comprises the transitional demands of the working class, individual demands of the various national groupings (peasants) and the general demands of the nation. These constituent (individual) demands will be more significant, more empowering and all-embracive as they will be different facets of the same National Demand. They will be unifying and not distinctive, as separate demands tend to be.

Organisation of the Socialist Social Movement.

It was resolved in a meeting in February 2013 by Workers International members, the Forum of the Future, the NAMRIGHTS and individuals to call on the various working class groups we are working with and other groups fighting on individual issues to unite in a social movement. The necessity to form it as and call it socialist was unanimously agreed.

The groups we are working with are:

The former Goldfields South Africa (TCL) miners and mineworkers;

Members of the teachers' strike committee.
The Southern Peoples Allegiance.
Women and youth groups.
The Mboroma Camp Committee.
Housing and homeless groups.
Poor peasants in the struggle for reparations and land.
Fundamental rights groups.
The leadership of this movement will initially be comprised of representatives of each group in a national committee. This committee will begin the centralisation of the movement by propagating and organising around the Unified Demand and Programme. The leadership is formed on the principle that the working class leadership is independent and leads the poor peasantry and articulates the land and national issues in correspondence with working class interest.
It will assist the poor peasantry to organise independently and to develop appropriate demands wherever they endeavour to do so such as in the current land struggles, land seizures and demands.

The Unified Demand

The following demands amongst others constitute a summary of demands informing the propaganda and organisational work of the SSM.

1. In general it is true that the capitalists seek to load off their intensifying woes and their falling profits onto the working class these days by labour rental and waning benefits and wages. However, in Namibia profits are maximised by the legacy of apartheid and by a new servile caste of officials which sell for example US$80 billion worth of mineral reserves for a million dollar kick-back or give it away free through their courts to international firms. It is guessed that fishing companies make 800% profit. Banks run uncontrolled scams such as housing loan schemes. Companies, banks and mines do not go bust in Namibia. Rio Tinto Zinc declared in 1980 that it had long-term uranium contracts until 2025 and it would not be affected by periodic slumps in demand as were others. Since independence it periodically threatens to close

shop due to unrealistic workers' demands and the world economic situation.
The national government does not know nor endeavour to know the extent of the extraction of mineral reserves and fish and the GNP and GDP.
Thus, the SSM demands a public inquiry into the natural and national resources of the country and the opening of books of all mines, corporations and business in general.
2. Nationalisation of oil and gas.
3. The working class seeks immediate measures for full employment with a living wage. Such a programme of allocating quotas of employment to the various branches of industry and commerce to fill, public works, renationalisation of rail and road transport services, postal services for expansion of employment and work security, and collective and co-operative farming, shall be financed through levies on large scale mining and industry.
4. The derogation of labour rights through a corruption and derogation of labour supervisory state mechanism through the changes in labour legislation and employment of semi-literates shall be reversed by the establishment of workers councils in each town and city.
5. Education will be reviewed to remove it from the control from Cambridge and to put it under national control through the various communities.
6. The SSM encourages and assists workers to organise to remove their trade union functionaries who are stifling each struggle and assisting the derogation of rights and conditions by the capitalists. The trade union experience at Marikana should caution against short-cuts of forming new unions instead of fighting for the expulsion of corrupt and reactionary leaderships. However in mergers with the state and the old unions such as at Marikana the only way may to substitute the union for new organisations.
National question and the Contract Labour System
The SSM spearheads the conceptualisation and formalisation of demands of national groups/nations into a comprehensive

coherent demand for national self-determination and in the process uniting the working class. (Recent experience has amply illustrated that the peasant leadership comprised by the tribal chiefs is unable to formulate consequential demands and create appropriate strategies in their demands and struggles for land and reparations against the incumbent regime directed and assisted by the German Government.)

7. SSM supports unconditionally the demand for War Reparations by the Herero and Nama groups. However, it puts forward a more comprehensive demand centring on the land and properties (corporeal (movable and immovable), and incorporeal) within Namibia which had been expropriated or engendered and on which untold wealth is continued to be produced with the labour of the expropriated. Moreover, our demand is not for war reparations alone, but for restitution of property expropriated by Imperial Germany from 1884 to 1915. It forms a significant part of the land issue and is based on the demand for socialisation of land without compensation. The demand serves further as a propaganda tool to focus on Germany's imperialist role and relations in Namibia to maintain colonial bondage and to shackle all and any development tending towards the material and social emancipation and development of the Namibian nation. With it, it tends to publicly highlight imperialist relations generally as it has already achieved with sections of both the Namibian and German peoples.

8. A similar demand against South African colonialism as the above by national groups in particular the Nama, the San, the Damara and the Baster.

9. A demand for restitution of the abuse under the contract labour system which has displaced whole communities from especially Ovamboland and Kavangoland to southern Namibia where independence released the administration from the responsibility of provision of proper shelter, food, healthcare and employment. The compounds had been imploded and the masses of contract labour ejected into cities of squatter camps where they are left to their own devices for survival, and where they continue to serve the objectives of the

contract labour system, but without its liabilities and responsibilities. Farm labourers both contractual and traditional are ejected from commercial farms where the latter had for generations created the wealth on these farms and had served the landlords with kith and kin in production, maintaining and serving the households. The vast majority are unemployed. The demand for provision of permanent proper shelter, free food, healthcare and permanent employment issues against the self-same mines, corporate commercial and industrial concerns, commercial farms or their successors and the State. Failure to meet the demand must be met with confiscation, compensation and socialisation.

10. The demand for return of Namibian remains from Germany killed during the wars of extermination and shipped to Germany is extended to the Angolan, Zambian and Tanzanian States and the SWAPO for the remains of Namibians killed by themselves and by the SWAPO leadership in exile until 1990.

11. The institution of a public inquiry into the period of 1962 to 1990 into the abuse and extermination of political fighters and refugees for a full report on the circumstances and causes of the treacherous period in the life of the Namibian nation.

12. A demand to the same instances for accounting of the unaccounted missing persons. This is a continuing crime against the Namibian nation whose resolution is intimately linked to the struggle against the obscenities and abuses of the imperialists and the abuses of their surrogates.

13. The high profile international publication and propaganda around the last four demands are absolutely necessary as part of a concerted effort to preclude the revisiting of the continual, extreme and punctuated tragedies perpetrated on a resistant people by imperialism.

Most of the above demands are at least partially articulated as single issues by particular groups.

Through the Unified Demand and Programme we will unify the nation.

The inaugural meeting of the SSM will be on 12 October 2013

Nelson Mandela's Legacy by Bronwen Handyside



"The ANC has never at any period of its history advocated a revolutionary change in the economic structure of the country, nor has it, to the best of my recollection, ever condemned capitalist society."
(Nelson Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom, p. 435)

How is it that UK Prime Minister David Cameron can say of Nelson Mandela: "A great light has gone out in the world. Nelson Mandela was a hero of our time"?
How is it that newspapers like the Daily Telegraph, the voice of the British ruling class, can express their regret at Mandela's passing?
Contrast this with Maggie Thatcher's opinion that Mandela and the ANC were nothing but a bunch of murdering terrorists.
Some might say the British ruling class is just jumping on a bandwagon and hoping to bask in some kind of reflected glory from the international outpouring of praise directed towards the ANC leader.
I think their approval of Mandela's history goes deeper than that. It fits in with the world bourgeoisie's global narrative of how the world's brutal inequalities should be solved, which is pumped out on a daily basis by their lackeys in the mass media. It is also propped up by the remnants of the grip that Stalinist ideas retain on the international working class (in particular the idea of "peaceful coexistence" between capitalism and socialism, which arose out of the deal the Stalinist bureaucracy made with imperialism to divide the world between them after the Second World War. This line

constantly tended to limit and hamper struggles against imperialism, including those against colonial domination, and blunted them by stifling revolutionary socialist forces and working through handpicked bureaucratic leaders. This is why uprisings of ANC militants demanding to wage the armed struggle in South Africa were violently, sometimes fatally, suppressed by the ANC's security apparatus(1).)

Brutal systems like apartheid are based on deliberate divisions created between working people across the world. Over centuries they have enabled imperialist countries and capital to exploit labour power and natural resources belonging to other nations and peoples. Apartheid stands out as a particularly anti-human system of institutionalised racism.

The soothing myth the politicians and media are peddling is that such systems do not need to be violently overthrown, but can be resolved peacefully to the benefit of the oppressed through a "negotiated settlement". It says that the protracted and deepening problems of gross inequality between different countries, and different classes within those countries do not emanate, as the siren voices of socialism say, from the capitalist system. They do not require the overthrow of the system of private property (progressing through a programme of nationalisation of the banks, industry, and land) but a process of "civilised" negotiation in which big business (aka capital) preserves the lion's share of the wealth while permitting a minority of the country's bourgeoisie to participate in the feast. The bourgeois narrative tells us that the brutal inequalities we see today (where an Indian child of 11 can be sold into a brothel for life, while on the other side of the world boys like David Cameron and Boris Johnson are born to wealth and power) are nothing to do with the class system, where the majority who produce all the wealth through their labour are exploited by a minority who own all the industries and the land.

This narrative declares that the violence of each side during the oppressed classes' struggle for equality can be brushed over with the "bland screen of moral equivalence"(2) as it was in South Africa at the so-called "Truth and Reconciliation Commission" (a useful model the bourgeoisie rolled out across the world, notably in Northern Ireland). The just violence of the masses in their fight for the equal redistribution of wealth of their nation is declared to be the same as the reactionary violence of those preserving their right to exploit others.

It says: not only is there no necessity for class antagonisms, there are actually really no class divisions in society. It is just that some people are born clever and resourceful and naturally grow rich, while others are not. The British ruling class, on a roll with its austerity measures and full of confidence, has started articulating much more clearly what really lies at the heart of this fairy tale.

Tory London Mayor Boris Johnson, now positioning himself for the Tory leadership – treading the ground where the rest of the Tories still do not quite dare to go – says: "Like it or not, the free market economy is the only show in town. Britain is competing in an increasingly impatient and globalised economy, in which the competition is getting ever stiffer.

"No one can ignore the harshness of that competition, or the inequality that it inevitably accentuates; and I am afraid that violent economic centrifuge is operating on human beings who are already very far from equal in raw ability, if not spiritual worth."
Tory Prime Minister Cameron now calls for permanent austerity – "a leaner state" – in other words a country in which the hogging of resources by a tiny elite will plunge millions into poverty, illness, despair and degradation. He wants a world in which such inequality is simply accepted – as a kind of natural phenomenon.

Negotiated settlements such as those in South Africa are the plan B the bourgeoisie rolls out at the point where it realises it can no longer govern with the iron fist, murdering and torturing to repress dissent, and that it is under threat by a militant working class which is looking to the redistribution of wealth from the despoilers to the toilers. It needs to collaborate with a selected layer of the oppressed which it feels will do business, and cheap MLB jerseys in particular will collaborate in the suppression of the working class and its political programme of socialism.

This plan appeared in South Africa in the mid-1980s, when the country had become ungovernable, brought to its knees by a popular uprising led by an extraordinary and brand new trade union movement – which above all, and most important of all, had at its heart a conscious workingclass socialist current which produced theWorkers Charter, demanding the redistribution of the wealth and the land to the masses of South Africa. “The scent of revolution was in the air”3. The Workers Charter was founded in opposition to the ANC’s 30 year old Freedom Charter (which as Nelson Mandela explains, was never a socialist document, but rather a programme for the establishment of a black bourgeoisie).

The plan appeared as it became clear to big business and AngularJS,□□□filter□□□□□□□□□□ the banks inside and outside of South Africa that the productivity and therefore the profitability of South home African workers had plunged into terminal decline as a result of the mass resistance against apartheid.

The suppression of the socialist Workers’ Charter in favour of the reformist (i.e. aimed at reforming capitalism and not overthrowing it) Freedom Charter inside the trade union movement, after the formation of COSATU in 1985, was the signal to South African capital that the way was open to a deal with the ANC.

Talks about the possibility of such a settlement had begun in late 1984, between exiled ANC leaders (in Lusaka and in London) and representatives of South African big business.

Some may say: what's the problem? Didn't that negotiated settlement bring about the enfranchisement of the black masses, and the creation of the "rainbow nation" so highly praised throughout the world's media? But that deal between the white bourgeois exploiters of South Africa and a new and very small black bourgeoisie, together with the violent repression of the working class and its socialist programme, is precisely what is currently bearing fruit in the "new" South Africa. Its government openly pursues the worst of the neo-liberal policies (fiscal discipline, deregulation, free markets and trade liberalisation, privatisation, low taxes and secure property rights) and instructs its police force to shoot down unarmed striking miners in the back (not the first time its police force has shot down protesters against its policies). It is clear why the rhetoric of Thatcher and her political allies was different from Cameron's, because when she was making her pronouncements, the South African ruling class was still hesitating between the iron fist of repression and the necessity of a settlement.

The "new" South Africa has resulted in:
The second most unequal society in the world – more unequal now than before Mandela came to office. The greatest inequality exists between blacks and other racial groups. Black income has virtually flat-lined since the ending of apartheid, wholesale NBA jerseys in contrast to that of other racial groups, particularly white South Africans.

- 40% unemployment. Importantly, 70% of SA's unemployed are younger than 35, while the unemployment rate among people aged less than 25 is around 50%50% of the population living below the poverty lineMore than half of black children are growing up in povertyAverage life expectancy declining from 62 years in 1990 to 52.6 years

in 2012A crisis in public services including housingA collapse in social structures which means the highest rate of rape, gang rape and child rape in the worldThe highest rate of HIV infection in the worldThe slaughter of 34 striking miners at Marikana, shot for demanding a living wage, after ex-NUM and current ANC leader Cyril Ramaphosa urged both the ANC Police Minister and the mining company Lonmin to deal with them, referring to them as "criminals".The fabulous enrichment of a tiny minority, like Cyril Ramaphosa, (currently worth $700m, which the ANC explains he made out of his business acumen – see Boris Johnson's explanation for the divisions in society), and current ANC president Jacob Zuma who recently did up his residence to the tune of 17.2m of public money

Was it for this that the black masses fought and died?

And was it for this that the millions in the international workers' movement, students and others waged their decades-long campaign against apartheid, and gave unstinting political and financial support to the exiled ANC, SACP and SACTU (the South African Congress of Trade Unions)?

Confusion

Mandela was surrounded by political forces from the 1960s to the 1980s which sowed confusion by representing him as a "communist" – including the South African and British ruling classes, and the South African Communist party (SACP) (under instructions from their international leaders). The SACP now declares that Mandela was a secret member of their Central Committee at the time of the Rivonia trial, which completely fits with their theory of the necessity for a two-stage revolution for South Africa. First a revolution in which the native bourgeoisie would come to power, followed many, many, many years later by a socialist revolution against capitalism, bringing the working class to power.

But Nelson Mandela never pretended that the ANC was a socialist organisation, with any desire to attack capitalism. He himself said at his Rivonia trial:

“The most important political document ever adopted by the ANC is the Freedom Charter. It is by no means a blueprint for a socialist state. The ANC has never at any period of its history advocated a revolutionary change in the economic structure of the country, nor has it, to the best of my recollection, ever condemned capitalist society.”. Later, speaking about What the Freedom Charter’s demand for the nationalisation of the mines and industrial corporations, Mandela said:

“The charter strikes a fatal blow at the financial and gold mining monopolies that have for centuries plundered the country and condemned its people to servitude. The breaking up and democratisation of these monopolies will open up fresh fields for the development of a prosperous non-European bourgeois class. For the first time in the history of this country the non-European bourgeoisie will have the opportunity to own, in their own name and right, mills and factories and trade and private enterprise will boom and flourish as never before.”.

When the constitution of the “new” South Africa was negotiated (by Cyril Ramaphosa and Thabo Mbeki, ANC leader following Mandela), a clause was inserted which, according to the ANC leadership, entirely negates that section of the Freedom Charter which calls for nationalisation of the land, the mines, and the banks. Throughout his life Mandela acted completely in accordance with his principles, which were to build a society in which a black South African bourgeoisie could partake of power and wealth along with the white owners of the banks, industry and the land.

Unfortunately that has produced a society of brutal inequality.

In 2006 Tory leader David Cameron was able to say: “The mistakes my party made in the past with respect to relations with the ANC and sanctions on South Africa make it all the more important to listen now. The fact that there is so much to celebrate in the new South Africa is not in spite of Mandela and the ANC, it is because of them – and we Conservatives should say so clearly today.” Fortunately the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) and other forces in South Africa continue the battle for the working class and its socialist programme. We should lend them every possible support in their fight against the violent repression promoted by the likes of Cyril Ramaphosa and the other bourgeois rulers of South Africa.

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2. Terry Bell. Unfinished Business: South Africa, Apartheid and Truth. 2001.

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4. http://www.economist.com/blogs/graphicdetail/2013/12/daily-chart-6

5. http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2013-10-25-marikana-massacre-ramaphosas-statementrevisited/#. Uqm2gPRdV8E

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7. Anthony Sampson. Mandela: The Authorised Biography (1999)