

The Worker: Namibia's proletarian newsletter

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Numsa launch new paper

**Numsa News: We say No to handouts,
we need real jobs**

Highlights include:

Numsa congress: Breaking new ground

Parliament: So, what is the state of the nation when it comes to policy and direction?

Numsa striking for youth jobs against false solutions

ANC vision: An Assessment of Vision 2014

Shop floor: Eskom salary report

Benefits: Will the government take workers' pension fund

money?

The meaning of Marikana tragedy

Issue One here!

NUMSA President Opening Speech: “Numsa National Bargaining Conference’

10 March 2014, Posted in Press Releases, Speeches

“The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionising themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirit of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle cries and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language...” (Karl Marx, 1984, Eighteenth Brumaire).”

NUMSA President Opening Speech: “Numsa National Bargaining Conference’

Central Committee members

The officials of Numsa present here

Our invited guest

Most importantly the delegates of the Bargaining conference,
Numsa shop stewards

On behalf of the National office bearers of our red Union I

greet you all and welcome to the Numsa National bargaining conference 2014. Once again the time for ear to the ground in preparation for the 2014 class war against the bosses in our Engineering sector and house agreements like Eskom has arrived. Collective bargaining remains central to our revolutionary work to reclaim the surplus value that is stolen daily by the bosses at the point of production, as part of our program to take war to capital.

The National bargaining conference take place in the context of the:

- State of the Nation address
- The Budget speech
- The coming election
- Cosatu in the intensive care unit
- The working class under seige

Political developments

The bargaining conference takes place at the time when our country is still facing difficult challenges, the devils of unemployment, poverty and inequality, the truth of the matter is that no matter how many times we keep on talking about the triple crises, it will not go away unless if our country takes a new political and economic path to address this challenges. The old solutions no matter how many times they get recycled they are not capable to deliver the required results which is a new economic path, in these regards i do wish to borrow from Karl Marx on the Eighteenth Brumaire;

“The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionising themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirit of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle cries and costumes in order to present the new

scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language..." (Karl Marx, 1984, Eighteenth Brumaire).

The results of the failure to implement the freedom charter is the stubborn triple crises we facing today, all what is left is to lie to our people that we have a vision 2030(a good story to tell) and south Africa will be a better place (workers and the poor in these country have a bad experience and story to tell). We have a bad history of shifting goal post in defence of the right wing agenda that our movement have accepted. Today we want to tell our people that they must forget about vision 2014 that we all supported and even refuse to make an honest assessment of ourselves.

The truth of the matter is that we only replaced white man with a black man, the system is still the same, and the South African capitalism continues to flourish with cooption of few black capitalist, whilst majority of our people continue to be excluded from the economy. The Anc government continues to be the supervisor of white monopoly capital, and that's why they will fail.

The Sona provides nothing as part of taking forward the second phase of radical transition and the budget speech was even more decisive giving the bosses free grants with a an illusion that they will create jobs.

The developments in Cosatu

The enemies of our people and our revolution have intensified their campaign to isolate and defeat us; the forces of capitalism are now plotting to dismiss us from cosatu, under the pretext that our congress resolutions are not consistent with that of cosatu, as if we are not an independent trade union with all rights to take decisions.

Numsa has been given 7 days to respond why we should not be suspended or dismissed and we complied last week Friday. The letter from cosatu was very clear that the CEC has resolved to

dismiss us to complete their master plan.

- To paralyse cosatu
- Get rid of Vavi
- Dismiss Numsa

Finally you have cosatu of your dreams and aspirations but not cosatu of the workers, a conveyor belt of the Anc alliance, while the Anc is clear about serving their masters which is capital, while Cosatu of Sdumo grouping is paralysed the Anc government is forging ahead with anti worker policies.

This grouping does not care about workers issues anymore, the CeC of casatu is now a circus, and for the whole year now cosatu is still stacked on the same old matter.

They are now resorting to tribalist divide due to their desperation to divide workers for their selfish ends.

The SACP was quick to go all out in defence of misuse and theft of tax payer's money used at Nkandla project but is quite like an Egyptian mommy on zwelinzima vavi and cosatu.

Ours at this moment is to mobilise the base of the working class to stand up and reclaim their federation from this power hungry grouping that has no regards for Cosatu constitution.

The court date for our long awaited trial on the unconstitutional suspension of Vavi is on the 27 and 28 march, we call on all workers and activists who care's about the unity of the federation to join us on the picketing line in South Gauteng high court.

The battle lines are clearly drawn now.

Socio Economic context in which the takes place

Indeed comrades we still bedevilled by the stubborn crises of capitalism, and we shall not pay for the crises.

More than anything else, what makes the current systemic and structural global crisis of capitalism more dangerous and frightening than in the past is the total intellectual, ideological, political and moral bankruptcy of the world capitalist leaders and their capitalist theorists: they have no answer to what increasingly appears to be the world's relentless progression towards mass poverty, worldwide unemployment, growing extreme global inequalities within and between nations of the world, vicious and extremely violent civil and international wars, global warming, environmental destruction – all pointing to the eventual destruction of our Earth and all life on it.

Today 26 million South Africans who live in abject poverty, 25 million are Africans

- Unemployment grew from 36% in 2007 to 37% in 2012; among Africans it grew from 40% in 2008 to 46% in 2012
- For every 1 unemployed white workers, there are 80 unemployed African workers.
- Between 2008 and 2012 the number of “discouraged work-seekers” nearly doubled (from 1.2 million to 2.3 million)
- 71% of those employed are not unionised,
- 54% of workers do not receive regular wage increases,
- 24% of workers work for more than 48hrs a week, average working time is 44 hours a week
- According the General Household Surveys, 77% of the unemployed rely on employed workers for survival.

This is just part of the state of the working class in this country; it is a bad story to tell.

Collective Bargaining

Numsa has begun our Ear to the Ground Campaign in workplace to develop our demands for 2014

In collecting these demands our key and strategic objective is

to improve the benefits and conditions of employment. The demands from our 9 Numsa Regions shall be consolidated and tabled for discussion in this Numsa National Bargaining Conference.

We must be upfront that we are preparing for the mother of all battles as we shall champion the struggle for a living wage for workers in the Engineering Industry and Eskom in particular and other house agreements.

The union will use this round of negotiations not only for wages but also take up a very important campaign of defending existing jobs and to fight for more jobs. In extending our work beyond the factories,

We shall on the 19th of March 2014 embark on a national strike to demand the scrapping of the employment tax incentive act or the so called youth wage subsidy. We shall do so in defense of existing jobs as we have reason to believe that the current spate of retrenchments notices across various sectors are directly linked to this senseless incentive scheme.

We refuse that the working class of SA must be forced to pay for the global crisis of capitalism.

With respect to Eskom, Numsa shall not rest until workers at Eskom receive a fair increase. We view the arbitration award that imposed 5,6 % as an insult that constitute a wage freeze.

We do need equity of pay. Currently white workers sit at the top of their pay grades while many black workers still languish at the bottom of their grades.

We can no longer tolerate Eskom and Government hiding behind Nersa to justify paying lip service to a negotiation process while the power (the only power) of workers to withhold their labour is removed.

We calling on all workers at Eskom to unite behind their

legitimate right to demand a living wage if in these round of negotiations Eskom management doesn't move swiftly to make a real offer that will settle workers' demands and hide behind essential service but pay workers peanuts, they would have to take full responsibility of the consicoensies.

Workers continue to receive low wages as there is no National Minimum Wage that can guarantee them a living wage.

Workers are taking loans from loan sharks in-order to make a living.

There is poor or virtually no assistance from the employers.

Unemployment which makes those who are working to support those not working imposes a heavy burden on our members as a result of the triple crises poverty and inequalities.

It is not in the nature of capital to give, the working must be prepared to wage a class war to advance their interests.

In conclusion

We must use this moment to mobilize for unity of the working class and even recruit those workers who are still non Union members to Numsa.

1. 1. History has imposed on Numsa a huge responsibility as can be seen from the outcome of our ground breaking Special National Congress
2. 2. Forces of evil are plotting and planning to destabilize Numsa from within and from without
3. 3. All Numsa Regions are expected to rally the broadest possible support for our S77 national strike action on 19 March 2014
4. 4. The Numsa Moment calls for absolute maximum unity

Forward we go and backward never.

NUMSA Sedibeng statement on SACP Gauteng futile exercise!!!!

We are therefore calling on the SACP to swallow its pride and accept that we are no more within their alliance , and do not regard them as vanguard of the working class and the poor anymore ,and we are forging ahead to establish a United Front that will be the vanguard of the working class and the poor South Africans.

7 March 2014, Posted in Press Releases

The current action and so called mobilization exercise of the Gauteng Province of the SACP is another attempt to discredit Numsa and a distortion of facts.

The SACP is moving around companies organized by Numsa in what they term as mobilization to encourage Numsa members to vote for the ANC in the coming national and provincial elections.

Numsa Sedibeng region view this as nothing but another attempt to create confusion amongst its members and discredit us. These dirty tricks will not succeed; our members have taken the decision and are firm and running with speed to see implementation.

We are aware that the SACP will be in Sedibeng from Monday 10th March 2014 where meetings have been arranged with our members in Arcelor Mittal Vereeniging Works. We are further

aware that towards our Special National Congress, the same SACP tried in vain to use the same members who are employed by a labour broker called Workforce and PPO to rebel against Numsa through a fabrication on unsubstantiated lies. Those attempts drastically failed as we marched through our Special National Congress and took resolutions that are to emancipate the working class and the poor from neo-liberal economic exploitation they are currently faced with.

We want to set the record straight especially for the attention of the SACP in the District of Sedibeng and Gauteng Province. The Numsa Special National Congress resolution is very clear and says "Numsa as an organization is not going to endorse any political party going to elections in 2014, we are not going to release any funding and any of our resources to mobilize support for any political party, but however, our members have the right to vote for any party of their choice in the coming elections". Finish and klaar!!!

We are therefore calling on the SACP to swallow its pride and accept that we are no more within their alliance , and do not regard them as vanguard of the working class and the poor anymore ,and we are forging ahead to establish a United Front that will be the vanguard of the working class and the poor South Africans.

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Numsa General Secretary's presentation to The Cape Town Press Club

Find the link to this on our Global Pages > South Africa.

Nine South African unions don't have unconditional support for the ANC

www.bdlive.co.za/national/politics/2014/01/30/cosatu-affiliates-speak-out-against-unconditional-support-for-anc;jsessionid=9C0FAB3112D042B0EECD04019A2D9E89.present2.bdfm

"NINE affiliates of the Congress of South African Trade Union (Cosatu) on Wednesday accused the federation's leadership of going against policy by giving the African National Congress (ANC) their unconditional support in the upcoming election.

"They also demanded the reinstatement of suspended Cosatu general secretary Zwelinzima Vavi . . . "

"The nine affiliates wrote to Cosatu president Sdumo Dlamini last year, asking him to convene a special congress to iron out the divisions in the federation. They have accused him of delaying.

"Workers have never agreed that Cosatu should give the ANC a blank cheque," South African Municipal Workers Union (Samwu) general secretary Walter Theledi said at a joint media

briefing with the leaders of the eight other unions.

“Mr Dlamini and the Cosatu leadership have repeatedly said the federation’s support for the ANC was unconditional, and it would throw its weight behind the party in the upcoming election.

“But Mr Theledi said Cosatu had resolved at its 2012 national congress that its support for the ANC should not be unconditional, but be based on “advancing” the demands of its members and the broader working class.

The nine unions include Samwu, the Food and Allied Workers Union, the South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union, nurses union Denosa, the Communication Workers Union, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa), football union Safpu, the Public and Allied Workers Union and the South African State and Allied Workers Union.”

See the joint statement here: <http://www.numsa.org.za/article/press-statement-of-the-nine-cosatu-affiliates-calling-for-the-reinstatement-of-comrade-zwelinzima-vavi-and-for-a-special-national-delegate-congress-as-a-matter-of-urgency/>

An end to apartheid or a new form of slavery?

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

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

Thus today the main issue gripping the attention of everyone in the country is the talks that have begun between the National Party and the African National Congress. These talks are aimed at creating a climate for negotiations which are supposed to lead to the dismantling of apartheid. The unbanning of the ANC and all the other political organisations, together with the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners, are steps forward which all revolutionaries support. But what is the political programme of the ruling class? Why did they unban the ANC? And why are they now willing to talk to an organisation which until recently was said to be the 'main enemy'?

The hated apartheid system has never known a time when it was not under attack from the oppressed and exploited masses. Not even the state of emergency – which has not been lifted – and the detention of tens of thousands of activists has been able to break this spirit of resistance. But as the class struggle has intensified, with the working class organised in COSATU and NACTU playing the leading role, so the pressure on the racist ruling class to change their form of rule in order to ensure their survival has intensified.

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

To preserve their system they desperately need to co-opt a

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

‘De Klerk spoke again on Friday [2 February 1990, in his speech announcing the unbanning of the ANC] of a “basic principle” being one of “no domination” in the new South Africa, which [means] his insistence on “group rights”. That in turn effectively means a white minority veto on any substantial changes to the socio-economic system ...’ (Observer, 4 February 1990). In other words, the ruling class will not be negotiating about dismantling apartheid-capitalism, but about how to extend the life of apartheid-capitalism. The bourgeoisie is talking to the ANC about how to save itself from the working masses.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The political programme of the ANC is no different from that of the ruling class. That is, no fundamental change and no attack on the system of private property. This programme is in direct conflict with the struggle of the working class and oppressed masses, who are seeking an alternative to apartheid and capitalism, and whose most politically conscious sections put forward a Workers' Charter aimed at ending both oppression and exploitation.

How does the ANC defend this betrayal of the oppressed masses? And how does it hope to carry out this betrayal when it knows

that the masses will not accept it without a fight? To understand the confidence of the ANC and its ability to confuse and deceive large sections of the oppressed and exploited masses it is necessary to understand the role that the Stalinised South African Communist Party, led by Joe Slovo, has played and continues to play in the liberation movement.

The role of Stalinism

Stalinism has its roots in the betrayal of the Russian Revolution of October 1917. Under the leadership of Joseph Stalin, the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky was transformed from an instrument of the working class into an instrument against the working class and for the ruling class. Using the Soviet Union's immense standing among the international working class as the first workers' state, Stalin also transformed the Third International from a world party of socialist revolution into an agency of the international bourgeoisie. Marxism was abandoned and trampled upon, and substituted by a crude and vulgar falsification of revolutionary theory.

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

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

This political strategy had disastrous and tragic consequences in China between 1925 and 1927. The Chinese Communist Party was ordered by the Stalinist bureaucracy to accept the leadership of the Kuomintang the political organisation of the

Chinese bourgeoisie and dissolve their own independent political party into this organisation.

But when workers began to put forward their own demands and occupied the factories, the Kuomintang turned on them and massacred thousands of communists. Completely disarmed by Stalin's two-stage conception of revolution, the Chinese Communist Party was unable to defend itself and the masses that supported it. This theory became a central part of Stalinism. The modern examples of this theory are Nicaragua and Zimbabwe. In these countries the working class was also told: first overthrow colonialism and only then can you struggle for socialism. And with what results?

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

The two-stage revolution has not meant an end to imperialism, but the consolidation of the power of the bourgeoisie. Today it is this very same theory that the South African Communist Party is defending on behalf of the ANC in South Africa. As the self-appointed 'vanguard' of the South African working class the SACP says to the workers:

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

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

Permanent Revolution and the Fourth International

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

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

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

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

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

But once the working class takes leadership of the anti-

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

'The theory of permanent revolution ... pointed out that the democratic tasks of the backward bourgeois nations lead directly to the dictatorship of the proletariat and that the dictatorship of the proletariat puts socialist tasks on the order of the day. Therein lay the central idea of the theory. While the traditional view was that the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat lay through a long period of democracy, the theory of the permanent revolution established the fact that for backward countries the road to democracy passed through the dictatorship of the proletariat. Thus democracy is not a regime that remains self-sufficient for decades, but is only a direct prelude to the socialist revolution. Each is bound to the other in an unbroken chain. Thus there is established between the democratic revolution and the socialist reconstruction of society a permanent state of revolutionary development.' (L.Trotsky, *The Permanent Revolution*, New Park Publications, 1997, p.2.)

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

The position of the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International

1. On a negotiated settlement

The ANC-SACP lies to the South African masses, saying that fundamental change can come through negotiating with the racist ruling class. The Workers' International says that fundamental change can only come through the revolutionary overthrow of this ruling class. This means the revolutionary mobilisation of the working class on the basis of its own political programme and under the leadership of its own independent political party. Why must the masses believe that their oppressors and exploiters will willingly hand over power to them? When and where in history has this ever happened?

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

No free and open election of delegates took place. The ANC simply appointed people to speak on behalf of the masses. The talks were closed and secret. The ANC agreed that there would be a news black-out while the discussions were still in progress. The talks went on for three days, but at the end only a one-paragraph communiqué was released. Why can the masses not decide their own destiny? Why can they not know what the ANC has been saying on their behalf? The masses have spared nothing in their struggle for democracy. They have been detained, tortured and killed. But now the ANC says to them: 'Leave everything to us. We are your leaders. We will decide for you.' To this, the Workers International replies:

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

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

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

But even if the racist ruling class were to convene a Constituent Assembly, which is highly unlikely, such an assembly would be powerless to implement any of the democratic demands one person, one vote; a non-racial united South Africa; the expropriation of the land and its redistribution to those who work it so long as economic power remains on the hands of the capitalists. Only the working class organised in factory committees, locals, trade unions and soviets can break the power of the capitalists and ensure an end to the injustices and repressions of apartheid perpetrated against all of the oppressed.

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

In all great revolutionary struggles the masses strive to take their destiny into their own hands. This happened in South

Africa during the uprising of 1984-1986 when the masses created their own street and area committees. Is it a surprise that the ANC remains silent about these committees? That any attempt to learn the lessons of these events is suppressed? For contained within these street and area committees was the germ of soviets, that is, the revolutionary councils of the working class.

To struggle for the Constituent Assembly therefore means to rebuild these organs of struggle. It means to build soviets. That is why the ANC chose secret negotiations and not the struggle for a Constituent Assembly. The ANC knows that if the working class was mobilised on a revolutionary democratic programme, it would struggle against both apartheid and capitalism. Thus the ANC presents itself as the 'saviour' of the masses, but only in order that it can prevent the independent organisation of the working class.

2. On apartheid and capitalism

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

The average income of a white person in South Africa is R14,000 a year, compared to R1,400 for a black person. For the blacks it has meant misery, poverty and human degradation. Out of every 1000 black children born, 63 die at birth compared to 9 white children. Over 60 per cent of black people are illiterate, compared to 7 per cent of white. Black unemployment is over 40 per cent, while white unemployment is hardly known. The racist legislation, physical separation of people, and so forth, are there to keep all this in place.

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

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

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

The ability of the capitalist class to prevent any advance to democracy while it still owns the means of production is easily realised when it is seen just how powerful this capitalist class is. The ownership and control of the major sectors of the economy mining, finance, banking, manufacturing and transport is in the hands of a tiny number of big corporations. Close to 70 per cent of the South African economy is controlled by eight private corporations. Of these private corporations, the biggest, Anglo-American, controls assets worth more than the combined income of the nine member countries of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference.

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

Agriculture has also been heavily penetrated by the monopolies. For example, today 80 per cent of the sugar

industry is controlled by two of the country's biggest monopolies, Anglo-American and Barlow Rand. These big corporations, in turn, are completely integrated into foreign monopoly capital. Anglo-American, for example, is the largest single investor in the United States.

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

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

Today Zimbabwe has trade union legislation which is no different from that which it had under Smith's regime. The domination of Zimbabwe's economy by the multinationals and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has also meant that it has not been able to assist the poorer countries of the region to overcome their chronic problems. Angola is on the brink of economic collapse and Mozambique has become one of the poorest countries in the world. It is clear that while monopoly capitalism still has the economies of southern Africa in its grip, there can be no hope of a solution to the problems in the region.

3. On democracy and socialism

South Africa is a highly developed capitalist country which has advanced to the stage of imperialism the rule of monopoly and finance capital. But capitalism has reached this highest stage of development without introducing democracy in South Africa. This indissolubly bound up with the socialist revolution is the struggle for democracy. That is, the

overthrow of the apartheid state and its replacement by a democratic state based on majority rule. But the question is: how are the democratic tasks of the revolution to be solved and who alone can solve these tasks?

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

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

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

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

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

The class independence of the trade unions has always been a big problem for the ruling class. Since the formation of independent trade unions in the 1970s and 1980s, the apartheid

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

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

To dupe and confuse the working class, the SACP has put forward its own so-called 'Workers' Charter'. But this Workers' Charter is a complete fake. Unlike the Workers' Charter of the trade union movement, it says nothing about the inextricable links between the struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism. Instead, it tries to spread the illusion among the working class that there can be democracy while economic power still remains firmly in the hands of the big capitalist bosses.

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

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

Take a concrete example. Mandela says he wants justice for all. Everybody will support this demand. But who is to apply

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

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

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

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

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

Environmental problems, like soil erosion, are spreading rapidly.

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

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

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

Trotskyism and Stalinism two roads

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

This means that the working class has to build its own organs of struggle and its own independent political party. Only on the basis of its political independence will the working class be able to fight for its class interests and for the interests of all the other classes and groups who also suffer because of the control that finance capital has over every aspect of the

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

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

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

The ANC-SACP turns to the world bourgeoisie and the IMF to solve the problems of southern Africa. Is this international policy of the ANC-SACP merely a mistake? To believe this would be dangerous. This policy is the other side of Stalinism's theory of two-stage revolution, that is, peaceful co-existence with imperialism. This is the logical consequence of Stalinism's abandonment of the struggle for socialism.

Today, as Stalinism decomposes under the blows of the working class in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, its dependence on the international bourgeoisie becomes even stronger. In fact, it is the profound crisis of Stalinism which has led to the present situation in southern Africa. To protect its position in the Soviet Union, the Stalinist bureaucracy needs the support of imperialism. But to get this support, Gorbachev has to give something in return. This Cuban troops were withdrawn from Angola, and a deal was made in Namibia. Pressure is now being exerted on the ANC to make a deal with

the racist South African government that will not threaten the interests of monopoly capital in the region. That this means sacrificing the masses of southern Africa to the IMF and the World Bank is of little concern to the Stalinist bureaucracy. In a meeting with Kaunda of Zambia in November 1987, shortly before leaving for talks with Regan in America, Gorbachev made clear what his new political thinking will mean for southern Africa: 'The principle of political settlement is fully applicable to the solution of issues in southern Africa. If guarantees are needed for reaching a political solution, it might be a good idea to think of such guarantees being made by the United Nations and the permanent members of the Security Council. As for the Soviet Union it is ready to play a positive (?) role in this matter.' (Novosti Press, Moscow, p. 82)

The Stalinist bureaucracy has made it clear that socialism is not on the agenda in southern Africa, and will not be on the agenda for at least a century! Thus on the one side of the struggle in South Africa is imperialism and its main agency in the working class movement, Stalinism. Together with the ANC, Stalinism and imperialism are working to politically disarm the South African working class and smash any movement for democracy and socialism.

On the other side is the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International as the World Party of Socialist Revolution with its section now being established in South Africa. The Workers International has no other interests but those of the working class, and no other class to serve but the working class. It is still weak and its numbers are still small. But the Workers International is the only international organisation that has a revolutionary programme and that is committed to an uncompromising struggle against both imperialism and Stalinism.[/threecolumns]

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 Stalinism in 1939, for example. When he wrote: "... the Comintern has completely gone over to Gandhi's position and the position of the conciliationist colonial bourgeoisie in general." ("India Faced with Imperialist War", Writings of Leon Trotsky 1939-1940, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1977, p.31)

Indeed, this shift flowed directly from the 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