

SPECIAL TRIBUTE ISSUE

December 2013 Voice of the South African Communist Party



Umsebenzi



**Comrade
Nelson
Rolihlahla
Mandela**

**HAMBA
KAHLE
MADIBA**

SACP STATEMENT

Cde Nelson Mandela: Hamba kahle Mkhonto!

SACP statement on the passing of Madiba, 6 December 2013

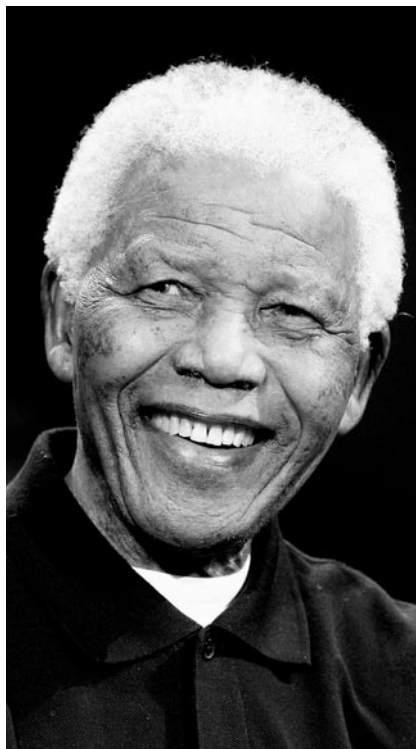
Last night the millions of people of South Africa, the majority of whom are the working class and poor, and billions of people the world over, lost a true revolutionary, President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, Tata Madiba.

The South African Communist Party (SACP) joins the people of South Africa and the world in expressing its most sincere condolences to Ms Graca Machel and the entire Mandela family on the loss of what President Zuma correctly described as South Africa's greatest son, Comrade Mandela.

We also express our solidarity with the African National Congress, an organisation that produced him and that he served with distinction, as did all his colleagues and comrades in our broader liberation movement. As Tata Madiba said: "It is not the kings and generals that make history but the masses of the people, the workers, the peasants..."

The passing away of Cde Mandela marks an end to the life of one of the greatest revolutionaries of the 20th century, who fought for freedom and against all forms of oppression both nationally and globally. As part of the masses that make history, Cde Mandela's contribution in the struggle for freedom was located and steered in the collective membership and leadership of our revolutionary national liberation movement, led by the ANC – for he was not an island. In Cde Mandela we had a brave and courageous soldier, patriot and internationalist who, in the words of Che Guevara, was a true revolutionary guided by great feelings of love for his people – an outstanding feature of all genuine people's revolutionaries.

On his arrest in August 1962, Nelson Mandela was not only a member of the then underground South African Communist Party, but was also a member of



Nelson Mandela: "...the true revolutionary is guided by great feelings of love"

our Party's Central Committee. To us as South African communists, Cde Mandela shall forever symbolise the monumental contribution of the SACP in our liberation struggle. The contribution of communists in the struggle to achieve South Africa's freedom has very few parallels in the history of our country. After his release from prison in 1990, Cde Madiba was a great and close friend of communists to his last days.

The one major lesson we need to learn from Mandela and his generation of leaders was their commitment to principled unity within each of our Alliance formations, as well as the unity of our Alliance as a whole and that of the entire

mass democratic movement. This generation struggled to build and cement the unity of our Alliance, and we therefore owe it to the memory of Cde Madiba to preserve this unity. Let those who do not understand the extent to which blood was spilt in pursuit of Alliance unity be reminded not to sling mud at the legacy and memory of the likes of Madiba by being reckless and gambling with the unity of our Alliance.

The SACP supported Madiba's championing of national reconciliation. But national reconciliation for him never meant avoiding tackling the class and other social inequalities in our society, as some would have us believe today. For Madiba, national reconciliation was a platform to pursue the objective of building a more egalitarian South African society free of the scourge of racism, patriarchy and gross inequalities. And true national reconciliation shall never be achieved in a society still characterized by gaping inequalities and capitalist exploitation.

In honour of this gallant fighter, the SACP will intensify the struggle against all forms of inequality, including intensifying the struggle for socialism, as the only political and economic solution to the problems facing humanity.

For the SACP, the passing away of Madiba must give all those South Africans who had not fully embraced a democratic South Africa, and who still in one way or the other hanker after the era of white domination, a second chance to come to terms with a democratic South Africa founded on the principle of majority rule.

We call upon all South Africans to emulate his example of selflessness, sacrifice, commitment and service to his people.

The SACP says Hamba kahle Mkhonto!

MANDELA

Life and contribution of Comrade Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela

“During my lifetime, I have dedicated myself to the struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.”

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela
18 July 1918 – 5 December 2013

On 5 December 2013, at 10 minutes to nine in the evening, a true revolutionary went to rest forever, following a lengthy illness. This was a moment of great loss to his family and the revolution to which he dedicated his life and made it clear that “if needs be...” he was “...prepared to die” for. The true revolutionary lived up to this oath and commitment without a hint of desertion.

Mandela was a revolutionary, not a saint!

To properly commemorate the life and struggles of Cde Madiba, it is important that we respect and honour the way in which he understood his own role and contribution in the liberation and reconstruction of our country. Cde Madiba always insisted that he was part of a collective, and therefore that his own contribution must not be subtracted or placed above the collective that he belonged to. This is very important, so that as we remember Cde Mandela, we also remember and honour the masses, and the many leaders and comrades that he worked with: Lilian Ngoyi, Dora Tamana, Walter Sisulu, Moses Kotane, Yusuf Da-



Cde Mandela shares a laugh with Cde Fidel Castro and SACP General Secretary Cde Blade Nzimande during the Cuban President's visit in 2001

doo, Andrew Mlangeni, Govan Mbeki, Joe Slovo, Chris Hani and many others.

Another important lesson to learn out of Madiba's life is that his own personal popularity did not go to his head. He never regarded himself as being above the organisations that he served. Madiba enjoyed all the qualities and devotion to make a personality cult of himself. But he never did. It is therefore important that, as we honour Madiba, we commit ourselves to fighting any tendencies towards personality cults in our movement. As leaders and cadres, we must aim to always be humble and to serve our people with humility.

Cde Mandela always insisted that he was no saint, but a cadre of our move-

ment who in the course of struggle made mistakes. Madiba would occasionally admit to his own mistakes. A key feature of genuine revolutionaries is not that they must never make mistakes per se, but that they are able to timeously recognise and admit when they have made mistakes, and to seek ways to correct them. All of us should learn from these profound insights and experiences.

Mandela and the SACP

On his arrest in August 1962, Nelson Mandela was not only a member of the then underground SACP, but of the Party's Central Committee. To us as South African communists, Cde Mandela shall forever symbolise the monumental contribution of the SACP in our liberation struggle. The contribution of communists in the struggle to achieve South Africa's freedom has very few parallels in the history of our country. After his release from prison in 1990, Cde Mandela remained a great and close friend of communists till his last days.

Indeed the relationship of Mandela and the SACP had both personal and organisational dimensions. Mandela's early history with the SACP in the late 1940s into the mid-1950s was that of hostility towards the Party, like many other nationalist leaders of the time. But by the time of the Rivonia trial, Cde Mandela had had a different experience and relationship with the SACP, which he eloquently explained in his speech at the trial:

“It is perhaps difficult for white South Africans, with an ingrained prejudice against communism, to understand why experienced African politicians so readily accept communists as their friends. But to us the reason is obvious. Theoretic-

cal differences amongst those fighting against oppression are a luxury we cannot afford at this stage. What is more, for many decades communists were the only political group in South Africa who were prepared to treat Africans as human beings and their equals; who were prepared to eat with us; talk with us, live with us, and work with us. They were the only political group which was prepared to work with the Africans for the attainment of political rights and a stake in society. Because of this, there are many Africans who, today, tend to equate freedom with communism...”

The relationship between the SACP and the ANC is further captured by Madiba in his message, as President and on behalf of the ANC, to the SACP’s 9th Congress in Johannesburg in 1995:

“It is not given to a leader of one political organisation in a country to sing praises to the virtues of another. But that is what I intend to do today. If anything, this signifies the unique relationship between the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party.

“It is a relationship that has detractors in abundance; a relationship that has its prolific obituary scribes. But it is a relationship that always disappoints these experts. Because it was tempered in struggle. It is written in the blood of many martyrs. And, today, it is reinforced by hard-won victory.

“Individuals and groups who profess to be democrats lose all rationality when gripped by the venom of anti-communism. We in the ANC are driven by a different logic.

“And we do not apologise for the fact that our alliance with the Party is also based on the warm sentiment of experience in struggle against apartheid. It is only natural that we should feel the welling of emotion, when we remember heroes and heroines of the calibre of Bram Fischer, Malume Kotane, Alex la Guma, JB Marks, Moses Mabhida, Yusuf Dadoo, Ruth First and others. Whatever seemingly powerful friends we might have today, the ANC cannot abandon those who shared the trials and tribulations of struggle with us”.

Cde Mandela refused throughout his prison life and thereafter to denounce or distance himself from the relationship between the ANC and SACP, even during difficult times such as during the adoption of the policy of GEAR by the ANC government, a policy the SACP considered, and still does so, as inappropriate for our country. We shall forever cherish

Madiba’s principled stance and commitment to the Alliance, even when faced with problems.

Mandela, our Tripartite Alliance & an overwhelming ANC electoral victory

The one major lesson we need to learn from Mandela and his generation of leaders was their commitment to principled unity within each of our Alliance formations, as well as the unity of our Alliance as a whole and that of the entire mass democratic movement. Their generation struggled to build and cement the unity of our Alliance. We therefore owe it to the memory of Cde Mandela to preserve the unity of our Alliance. Let those who do not understand the extent to which blood was spilt in pursuance of Alliance unity be reminded not to sling mud at the legacy and memory of the likes of Cde Madiba by being reckless and gambling with the unity our Alliance.

The SACP respected Madiba’s commitment to our Alliance because he knew, from his own practical experience that our Alliance was built through struggle. His very statement in Rivonia emphasised the importance of our Alliance in taking forward our struggle. In memory of Cde Madiba and his legacy of commitment to our Alliance, let us defend the unity of Cosatu! A divided Cosatu can only serve the interests of the bosses. As a special recognition to the sacrifices of Cde Madiba, we call upon all Cosatu affiliates’ members to defend the unity of the federation and all its affiliates!

In honour of Cde Madiba, let us also protect the unity of the ANC and the SACP!

As a tribute to Cde Madiba, let us defend and deepen the unity of our Alliance and expose the wedge-drivers who want to divide and weaken our Alliance!

In celebrating the life and times of Cde Madiba, we must go all-out to build our organisations. An important part of building our organisations is that of consistently waging mass campaigns for the benefit of the workers and the poor of our country. We need to revive our Alliance ‘Know Your Neighbourhood Campaign’, as a permanent door to door campaign where we live.

The most important and immediate campaign that we should wage in honour of Cde Madiba is that of the 2014 Election Campaign. There can be no better celebration of the life of Cde Madiba than to win next year’s elections with an overwhelming ANC majority. ANC electoral victories always made Cde Madiba

happy. For Cde Madiba, a life-long ANC cadre, who committed himself to continued ANC membership “after death”, let us go all-out as the Alliance to campaign for an overwhelming ANC electoral victory in 2014. As the leading formation of our Alliance and National Liberation Movement, the ANC is the only organisation that is capable of addressing the needs of the overwhelming majority of our people. Its record of governance speaks for itself, and that is why South Africa today is a much better place than it was in 1994!

National reconciliation and the struggle for political and economic equality

The SACP supported Madiba’s pioneering of national reconciliation. But national reconciliation for him never meant avoiding tackling the class and other social inequalities in our society, as some would have us believe today. For Cde Madiba, national reconciliation was a platform to pursue the objective of building a more egalitarian South African society, free of the scourge of racism, patriarchy and gross inequalities. And true national reconciliation shall never be achieved in a society still characterized by gaping inequalities and capitalist exploitation.

In honour of this gallant fighter, the SACP will intensify the struggle against all forms of inequality, including intensifying the struggle for socialism, as the only political and economic solution to the problems facing humanity.

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We call upon all South Africans to emulate his example of selflessness, sacrifice, commitment and service to his people.

In his *Selected Works*, Mao Tse-tung reminds us of a Chinese writer Szuma Chien who wrote: “Though death befalls all men alike, it may be weightier than Mount Tai or lighter than a feather.”

Mao added: “To die for the people is weightier than Mount Tai, but to work for the fascists and die for the exploiters and oppressors is lighter than a feather.”

Comrade Madiba died for the people, and his death is indeed weightier than the highest mountain! ●

YCL ON MANDELA

We seize the spear fallen from his hands

*The Young Communist League of South Africa mourns the loss of Comrade Nelson Mandela, declaring:
Hamba kahle Mkhonto! It is now our turn to fight!*

The YCLSA learned with great sadness of the passing away of a revolutionary freedom fighter, Commander in Chief of Umkhonto weSizwe, leader of the ANC and of all South Africans, and Isithwalandwe, Tata Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela.

Tata Mandela's peaceful passing, although after a long illness, remains a wound in the hearts and minds of South Africans of any race, class and gender, as he played a crucial role in the defeat of apartheid and became the first democratically elected President in 1994.

Tata's death also comes only months before the 20th Anniversary of our democratic dispensation, and on the eve of the 5th national general elections next year.

Although Tata dedicated most of his life after his release to the unity of our country, and the building of a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous society, the social ills imposed on our society by apartheid still remain prevalent.

These challenges, and those of unemployment, poverty and inequality, do not represent a defeat on the legacy and struggle of Tata Mandela, but a clarion call to the current generation that "It is our time to Fight" to ensure that his ideals live on.

In the name and legacy of Nelson Mandela, the mantle of struggle falls on the current generation of youth to take forth the struggle to build the type of society that Nelson Mandela said he was prepared to die for.

As others proclaim that in his death the spear has fallen, as the youth of this country we should be the first to ensure



YCL shares the vision – but also the militancy – of Tata Madiba

that we pick it up and continue with the struggle.

As others say that the candle has been blown by the strong winds of death, we the youth know that the source of the light of our candle comes from that of Tata Mandela and, irrespective of our race, class and gender, shall use it to brighten a better South Africa.

A South Africa of Tata Mandela, even in his death, shall be that of common prosperity, peace, democracy and national unity.

We are aware that there are those who have been spreading a "swart gevaar", suggesting that when Tata Mandela dies there will be an attack by black South Africans on white South Africans.

This is misplaced and naïve. Irrespective of the inequalities, poverty and want in which we find ourselves as a society, we also shared in the vision of Tata Mandela, of resolving our racial, class and gender contradictions in the most peaceful of avenues available.

We shall not allow his legacy to be ruined in exchange for temporary political fortunes.

On behalf of all YCLSA members, we extend profound condolences to Tata Mandela's family and to those dearest to him, ordinary South Africans.

Gomotsegang!
Robala ka Khotso!
The Struggle Continues! ●

COMMUNISTS PAY TRIBUTE

We will remember him as a true friend

As news of Cde Mandela's death broke, Communist Parties throughout the world paid tribute to him, and sent their condolences to the SACP

Here are some of the tributes received by the SACP since the death of Cde Nelson Mandela.

The Communist Party of Cuba

Mandela will live on – in the hearts of our people

It is with deep sorrow that we have learned the news about the death of comrade Nelson Mandela. Please receive our most heartfelt condolences and solidarity.

Mandela will continue to live in the heart of our people, who will remember him as a true friend, and who, through his friendship with comrade Fidel, summarised the links of brotherhood between South-Africa and Cuba.

Please convey the condolences, respect and solidarity of the Communist Party of Cuba and of the Cuban people to South Africa's communists, to all forces of the Alliance, and especially to Nelson Mandela's family.

Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba

The Communist Party of Bohemia & Moravia

One of the greatest fighters for Africa's liberation

The Communist Party of Bohemia & Moravia expresses its deep grief over the death of Nelson Mandela, one of great

fighters for African people's liberation and against South African apartheid.

Despite spending decades incarcerated in apartheid jails, he remained unbowed and unbroken. His determination for freedom remains the pattern for all those who struggle for the real freedom and equality of all mankind.

With his passing, we also remember the thousands of progressive and freedom-loving people, both inside and outside South Africa, who, by all the power of their solidarity and over many decades, struggled for his release as well as for the abolition of the apartheid regime.

With the death of Nelson Mandela, mankind as a whole has lost a deeply humanitarian and dedicated major freedom fighter. We pay homage to him as well as to every great leader and fighter struggling for both freedom and emancipation with his heritage in their hearts.

Honour the memory of Nelson Mandela!

**Comradely in solidarity,
Vojtěch Filip,
Chairman of KSČM's CC**

Communist Party of the USA

Comrade Nelson Mandela, an appreciation & farewell

On 5 December 2013, the former President of South Africa, Comrade Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, universally known in South Africa by his clan name, Madiba, passed away peacefully at his home in Johannesburg. South

Africa's president has announced that Madiba will be buried in his mother's village, Qunu, in the Xhosa heartland, as he wished.

Mandela's death came as no surprise, as he had been ill for months, and was in his 95th year. Nevertheless, there is an outpouring of grief not only in South Africa, but worldwide. Countless messages of love, condolences and solidarity have poured in, from the great and powerful and from ordinary people on every continent. Some of the messages from political leaders may be suspect, but there is no doubt that the grief expressed from the grassroots, in the multi-racial crowds gathered in front of Mandela's Johannesburg home to our own country, are absolutely sincere. Mandela stands as one of the greatest political figures of the 20th and early 21st century, and the peoples of the world show they recognise this by their response to his departure.

The Communist Party of the USA shares in the mourning, and sends its heartfelt condolences to Ms Graca Machel, to all Madiba's other relatives and friends, to the African National Congress, the South African Communist Party and the Congress of South African Trade Unions, and the South African people.

Furthermore, we urge all to study the life of Nelson Mandela and to absorb the lessons it offers.

Mandela was influenced by many currents of thought. As a child, he was exposed to Xhosa traditional history and philosophy, and also Protest Christian theology and ethics. As a young man, African nationalism influenced him for a while. As he developed as an activist

and political thinker, the revolutionary ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin, and of the great liberators of oppressed people such as Ho Chi Minh and Fidel Castro, made a strong impression on his thinking. The heroes of South Africa's freedom struggles, from the 19th Century Xhosa leader Hintsa, to his predecessors and colleagues in the leadership of the African National Congress such as Chief Albert Luthuli, James Moroka, Oliver Tambo and Walter and Albertina Sisulu, were always in his thoughts and utterances. The heroic leaders of the communist movement in South Africa, such as Moses Kotane, Yusuf Dadoo, Joe Slovo, Ruth First, Govan Mbeki, Ahmed Kathrada, Elias Motsoaledi, Harry Gwala, Moses Mabhida and Chris Hani were Mandela's closest allies and personal friends. Many of these activists were also trade unionists. The fact that many leading communist, ANC and labour union activists were imprisoned along with Mandela on Robben Island for many years enhanced Mandela's stature and effectiveness as a leader, as he organised and led outstanding political education sessions among the prisoners.

Mandela's involvement in the freedom struggle began before the apartheid era, during the government of Prime Minister Jan Smuts. But the coming to power, after the 1948 elections, of the infamous Dr Daniel Malan and his National Party showed that things were getting rapidly worse. There followed more repressive legislation, much of it in the name of "suppression of communism", and brutal acts by the police against passbook protesters and others. Mandela and his comrades fought back hard, through peaceful protest and civil disobedience similar to that of the contemporaneous Civil Rights Movement in the United States, but the government was thorough and relentless in its repression.

In 1961, in response to the government's suppression of all legal forms of protest, Mandela became one of the main organisers of the armed struggle wing of the African National Congress, Umkhonto weSizwe (Spear of the Nation). Mandela explained that this was a necessary step to channel the blazing anger of the African majority into a coherent strategy; otherwise it might have dissipated itself in random acts of violence. But in 1963-1964, with the aid of the United States Central Intelligence Agency, Mandela was tracked down, arrested and, along with a number of col-

Mandela did his job ... Now we must roll up our sleeves and do ours

leagues, sentenced to long prison terms. Mandela himself served 27 years, much of it on bleak Robben Island in the South Atlantic. The Reagan administration declared the ANC and its leaders to be terrorists, a designation that was only lifted in 2008, 17 years after Mandela was freed from prison. Mandela's colleagues are still sometimes harassed at U.S. airports because of this vicious policy.

Mandela was a fighter and a revolutionary, ready, as he said, to lay down his life for the struggle. But he always believed that the broadest possible unity was essential to winning his people's freedom, and to build the nation thereafter. This led him to distance himself from narrow African nationalism and anti-communism, to emphasise reconciliation with the white population, and to firmly oppose all calls for violent revenge. When a key ANC and Communist Party leader, Chris Hani, was murdered by white racists in April of 1993, Mandela made a special point of emphasising that the gunman had been captured with the aid of a white woman of Afrikaner descent. He said: "Tonight I am reaching out to every single South African, black and white, from the very depths of my being. A white man, full of prejudice and hate, came to our country and committed a deed so foul that our whole nation now teeters on the brink of disaster. A white woman, of Afrikaner origin, risked her life so that we may know, and bring to justice, this assassin ... Now is the time for all South Africans to stand together against those who, from any quarter, wish to destroy what Chris Hani gave his life for - the freedom of all of us."

A high point of his early work was the bringing together, in 1955, of the Congress of the People, a gathering of all major ethnic groups in South Africa, which produced the supremely important Freedom Charter. This document,

which is still the basic document of the African National Congress, calls for a non-racial South Africa based on equality and justice, as well as the people's control of the nation's subsoil and other wealth. The largest scale organisational fruit of Mandela's work is the Tripartite Alliance of the African National Congress, the South African Communist Party and the Congress of South African Trade Unions, which is still the governing political alliance in South Africa today.

Both when he was negotiating his freedom with the government of President PW Botha and after he was freed, he firmly adhered to the principle of not betraying those who had helped the South African struggle. This included the South African Communist Party. He was particularly emphatic in his declarations of thanks and support to Cuba and to its then President Fidel Castro, who had played such an important role in forcing the apartheid regime to understand that the game was up, when Cuban and Angolan troops defeated the South African Army at the battle of Cuito Cuanavale in Angola in 1987 and 1988.

Like his country, Mandela still faced many tragedies and crises. But when he left the South African presidency in 1999, he continued, while he was physically able, to work for social justice worldwide. He made a major contribution to changing South African policy toward HIV-Aids sufferers, and continued to speak out on international issues, notably the rights of the Palestinian people.

We in the United States are personally grateful to him also. The South African struggle, and particularly the worldwide "Free Mandela" campaign, struck a chord here, especially but not only with the Civil Rights Movement and the African American community. Millions of Americans made the inevitable connection with our own Dr Martin Luther King Jr, another outstanding revolutionary figure who stood both for peaceful but radical change and for reconciliation. The coalitions that were built in the movement of solidarity with South Africa, notably including major sections of organised labour, have served us as a model and inspiration for our own ongoing work for social justice here. Now that he is no longer with us physically, his transcendent figure and example will continue to inspire people here in the United States and everywhere who

yearn for freedom. We and they learn from Mandela that even in the most barbarically repressive states, unified struggle brings victory.

We also owe a debt to Madiba's memory, and to his people. Many of the goals in the Freedom Charter have yet to be achieved, and the single greatest obstacle to this is the stranglehold of international monopoly capital over the economies of poor countries such as South Africa. Corporate pirates continue to plunder the subsoil and agricultural resources of South Africa and other poorer countries, in Africa and elsewhere, leaving the working class and peasant majorities destitute and angry. Political leaders in the United States and the other wealthy industrialised countries are complicit in this situation. Progressive people in the United States need to study and understand that and act accordingly, in the many political spaces available to us.

Some of the commentary we hear and read, both from the right and from sectors of the left, is less than useful. The situation of South Africa today is comprehensible only in this international context. What is needed is solidarity, not back seat driving.

Mandela did his job and has departed in peace. Now we must roll up our sleeves and do ours.

Peruvian Communist Party

We honour his contribution to the struggle for socialism

The Peruvian Communist Party shares the feelings of grief of the people of South Africa and the Communist parties, leftist, nationalist, democratic fronts and people's organisations from all continents of the world, on the death of the great leader Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, global stature, also known affectionately as Tata Madiba. We feel his death because it was one of ours.

President Nelson Mandela, along with other comrades like Oliver Tambo, Govan Mbeki, Walter Sisulu, Chris Hani and other revolutionaries, struggled, resisted and defeated the apartheid regime and its nefarious politics.

He was arrested and jailed in August 1962, after years of organising, struggles and uprisings against the shameful and

inhuman apartheid or "separate development" system of racial, social and economic segregation. For this reason he was imprisoned, and stoically endured 27 years of harsh jail terms.

An SACP member and member of its Central Committee at the time of his arrest, Madiba along with other leaders of his day knew creatively how to constitute advocacy organisations of workers and people of South Africa, the African National Congress (ANC) and Sactu.

We honour and recognise the contribution of such illustrious revolutionary world leaders to the struggles of the international communist movement and of the people, for their sovereignty and independence from US imperialism and capitalist powers of Europe, Japan and Israel.

We reaffirm our support for the South African Communist Party, and his people will follow the example of the great undying revolutionary Nelson Mandela. Remain united in the struggle and for the construction of socialism worldwide.

Workers' Party of Belgium

Nelson Mandela, indefatigable fighter against injustice

It always seems impossible until it's done". With these words of Nelson Mandela, Peter Merten, president of the PTB, opened a meeting last night in Antwerp. Barely an hour after the news had broken that "Madiba" was gone...

The PTB expressed its condolences to the family and friends of Nelson Mandela, the South African people and their organisations struggle, the African National Congress, the union COSATU and the South African Communist Party.

Since its inception, the PTB is committed fully to the fight against the apartheid regime and solidarity with the South African liberation struggle.

Nelson Mandela was a model of determination and tenacity on key principles such as freedom, equality, anti-racism, and democracy. He had the perseverance to seize the rights due to his people; ingenuity and inventiveness in the forms of organisation and struggle; the way to find allies and make friends in a wide circle, in his own country and abroad; his solidarity with other peo-

ples who fight against oppression, such as the Palestinian people; his opposition to war, from Kosovo to Iraq, and against nuclear weapons. And he had hope and optimism: "It always seems impossible until it's done."

The liberation of South Africa was the work of millions of South Africans who fought for many years against the white minority regime, a heavy and bloody price of thousands of martyrs. These fighters were organised and inspired by Nelson Mandela, but also by others such as Steve Biko (Leader of the Black Consciousness Movement, assassinated in 1977) and Chris Hani (Secretary General of the South African Communist Party, assassinated in 1993). They also had solidarity and active support of all the Third World. And there were Cuban troops who provided assistance to give the coup de grace to the apartheid regime, beating South African army at Cutie Cuanavale in 1987 in Angola. "A decisive battle in the struggle for liberation of the continent turning, and the whip of apartheid in our country," according to Mandela.

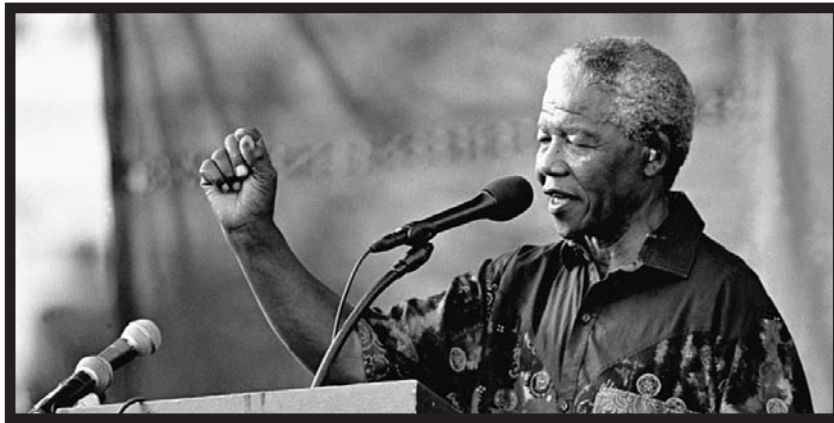
Today, worldwide, leaders and politicians from across the political spectrum sing the praises of Nelson Mandela. However, do not forget that even Mandela remained on the FBI's list of "terrorists". Do not forget that in Europe, especially in Belgium and Flanders, there existed for decades a fan club fanatical pro-apartheid, with supporters and ideas are continuing today in several political parties. And do not forget that Mandela not only fought against apartheid and racism, but against all forms of injustice.

"As long as poverty exists, there is no true freedom", Nelson Mandela said at the launch of the Make Poverty History demonstration in London in early 2005. Not to meet the challenge of eradicating poverty would be a crime against humanity, he added, calling on humanity to stand up for this fight: "I ask all humanity now to rise up." But instead of an uprising against poverty, humanity has been hit by a severe economic crisis and anti-crisis measures that have created even more poverty. This makes it still more imperative to continue the fight for the values and ideals of Nelson Mandela.

**Bert De Balder,
Head of Department of International Relations, on behalf of the national leadership of the PTB**

POETIC TRIBUTE

Nelson Mandela: A life less ordinary



DIKOBE WA MOGALE BEN MARTINS

laduma libalele !

to the thunderous roll of thunder lightning struck from a clear blue sky!

sending heart rending tremors of grief and pain into the soft earth of our bleeding hearts.

an unspeakable truth has come to pass today.

nelson rolilahlala madiba mandela the world statesman, the righteous son of africa, our beloved father and esteemed leader from the verdant rural plains of mvezo, the beacon and steadfast rock of our hopes is dead.

bound as one with the world in grief, like dying flowers at the end of spring, we pause under the weight and burden of our loss, to ponder the political moral equivalence of the globally important message communicated by nelson mandela's compassionate life of service and self sacrifice.

it seems like only yesterday, when on that historic sunday, at three o'clock, on 11 february 1990, nelson mandela was to be released from victor verster prison, where he had spent just over a year, after he had been incarcerated for twenty six years on robben island.

it seems like only yesterday, when motor vehicle cavalcades were criss-crossing streets country wide, in

celebration with their hooters blaring joyously and with thousands of clenched fists bobbing in and out of their windows in harmony to throaty shouts of "amandla nelson mandela is free at last"

it seems like only yesterday, when in a mass celebration black and white democrats and south africans of goodwill in general hugged, danced, sang and cried tears of joy together spontaneously at the news of nelson mandela's release from prison.

it seems like only yesterday, when south africa simply refused to sleep that night. when thousands upon thousands sat glued and entranced in front of their television sets, to watch news bulletins on mandela's release over and over again.

and those with radios only, hung onto every word uttered by news readers who could hardly suppress or hide the joy in the tone and timbre of their voices.



Ben Martins

it seems like only yesterday, when our excitement reached fever pitch when nelson mandela and winnie mandela appeared holding hands and waving to the joyously delirious crowd, as they walked the last few steps towards the gates of victor verster prison, beyond which freedom beckoned.

it seems like only yesterday, when pandemonium broke loose as gazelle footed journalists, fish eagle-eyed photographers and the eager curious crowd of thousands surged forward for a glimpse of the face that epitomised the south african struggle, the face that

the world had been wanting and waiting to see for two decades and seven years.

is it such a long time ago, since that glorious day when nelson mandela stopped in his regal gait, to give a clenched fist salute to thunderous applause?

alas, nelson mandela is dead, he who taught us much about so many things.

but the heart is a keeper of memories.

in prison, on robben island, in those dark empty moments when confidence leapt into the hollow pit of doubt, he reminded us that when you are surrounded by vultures, try not to die

he taught us to be free even behind prison bars.

he reminded us studiously that we still had the freedom and responsibility to decide how to respond to the brutality, inhumanity and injustice of the apartheid regime.

he taught us to have the courage to critically review our experience and failures, to retrace our steps when necessary and to absorb the tough lessons of adversity, and not to lose the lesson of why we lost whenever we lost.

and never to underestimate the power of stupid people in large groups.

he also taught us the capacity for introspection, self criticism and grasping the nettle of corrective action, to ensure that we remain relevant and capable of anticipating potential points of tension and conflict, and to manage contradictions produced by our own policies.

but he also cautioned that the greatest of all faults is to be conscious of none and that there is no idea so true and no movement or political party so pure that it does not require scrutiny.

and he also reminded us, time after time that true leadership is not the gift of hindsight but vision, commitment and integrity.

he taught us not to allow the violence and moral bankruptcy of the apartheid regime to weaken our resolve and fortitude to act justly.

he taught us to marshal the lessons of experience and to remember that for long hours of hard work there is no substitute and that nothing is impossible with

perseverance and courage.

similarly he prevailed on us not to poison our hearts and minds with racism, as we endured physical, psychological and emotional abuse, isolation, degradation and torture.

yes, through the prescripts of the freedom charter he taught us to clarify and sharpen our vision, and gave us principled leadership, hope and strength to be free of hatred even when it was not easy to do so.

and with the fall and demise of the decrepit apartheid regime, he reminded us that war is a bad chisel with which to carve out tomorrow and taught us not to be triumphalist in victory, but to be reconciliatory and compassionate in order to bring the former oppressed and oppressors together in the new-fangled democratic dispensation.

in pursuance of this noble ideal he showed us how to embrace our common destiny as south africans humanely and with compassion and humility.

our beloved former president, revolutionary leader, father figure, spiritual and moral leader is dead. he who taught us that from values come value.

our greatest monument to him should transcend the artistic beauty of grand and majestic busts and statues in marble and granite.

our greatest tribute to his life and work should be for us to dedicate our lives to embrace the noble ideals and values that he espoused.

to do so is to remember that a life spent in service is like the life journey of a fine vintage, which carries echoes of its native soil and its hardy roots enshrine the spirit of the place where it was planted and finally harvested making it both unique and truly inimitable.

very sadly death has robbed us of nelson rolihlahla mandela whose time has finally come to sleep forever beneath the dry earth of mvezo but death's fist is not big enough to hide the sky, because he was a meteor of a man who consumed himself to blaze a path for others

stunned by this horrific turn of events, mourners will gather where well wishers once stood to lay wreaths and flowers to memorialize a beloved president ...

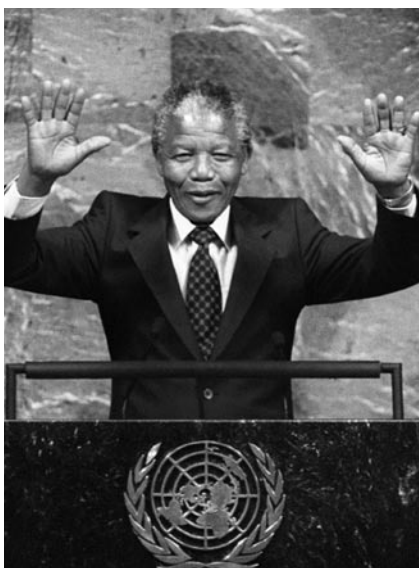
Cde Martins is an SACP politburo member and the Minister of Energy

COMING IN JANUARY:

Special YCL 10th anniversary YReds issue

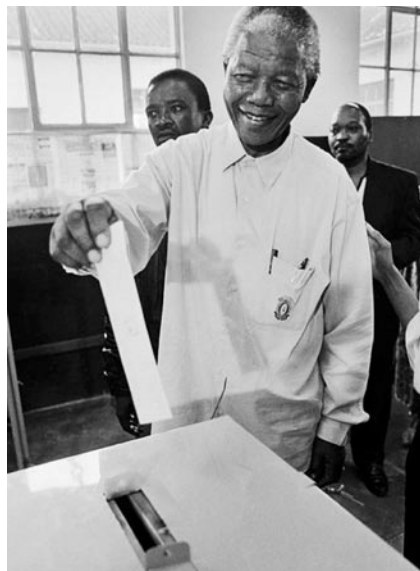
PHOTO TRIBUTE

Nelson Mandela in pictures



Top left: Mandela, 19, at Healdtown Methodist College, Fort Beaufort (1937).

Above: President Mandela acknowledging the applause of the United Nations General Assembly (1994)



Top right: With SACP General Secretary Cde Chris Hani at the new Mandela house in Soweto (1990).

Above: ... and with his people in Soweto (1991).

Left: Voting in the first democratic election (1994).

AUGMENTED CENTRAL COMMITTEE STATEMENT

Advance the radical 2nd phase of our democratic transition

The SACP CC analyses two decades of democracy and looks ahead to a decisive 2014 ANC Alliance victory

The South African Communist Party (SACP) Augmented Central Committee met in Johannesburg over the weekend of 29 November – 1 December 2013.

The first day of the Augmented Central Committee (CC) was devoted to the presentation and discussion of a secretariat Political Report. The report covered an analysis of two decades of democracy in SA, key current issues confronting the South African working class, and our plans for on-going campaigning, including support for an overwhelming ANC-alliance election victory next year.

The CC agreed that enormous gains have been notched up over the past two decades, particularly in terms of significantly lifting the floor of poverty through, amongst other things, the rollout of social grants to 16 million South Africans (compared to 2,4-million in 1994). Notwithstanding these and many other important advances, the balance of class forces has shifted unfavourably for the working class and poor, with monopoly capital being the principal beneficiary of our hard-won democratic breakthrough. Monopoly capital has used our democracy and the ending of apartheid-era sanctions not to invest in reconstruction and development within our country – but to disinvest. The equivalent of 20 to 25% of GDP has been disinvested out of SA since 1994, some of it illegal capital flight.

The draining of productive capital out of our country has been exacerbated by erroneous economic policies particularly in the decade after 1996 – including the dramatic relaxation of exchange controls and the permitting of dual listings

of major, born-and-bred South African companies (Anglo, De Beers, Sasol, SAB, Old Mutual, etc.). The South African government now confronts these giants as if they were foreign investors that have to be wooed on their own terms. Compounding all of this is that the surplus that is being retained within South Africa is overwhelmingly not being invested in productive sectors.

Stop the sale of Afgri to North American speculators!

The CC noted one of the latest developments on this front – the proposed de-listing of Afgri from the JSE and its sale to a little-known North American financial speculator group, registered in the tax haven of Mauritius. Afgri is an agricultural services company that dates back 90 years. It was originally an agricultural co-op handsomely supported by successive white minority governments. After 1994, instead of transforming this cooperative to service emerging and subsistence farmers, government liberalised agriculture. Like other former agricultural co-ops (KWV, Clover, Senwes) it transformed itself into a private company and listed on the JSE in 1996. Financial speculation and profit maximisation began to displace agricultural production and food security concerns.

Today, Afgri remains a major player

Afasa must not be tossed into the casino economy

in our agricultural sector, and therefore, in theory, also a key asset in ensuring rural transformation and South African food security. It owns a vast proportion of South Africa's grain storage capacity, it provides services to 7 000 mainly commercial farmers through its rural-based retail outlets and silos. It is the largest supplier of John Deere tractors in Africa and was recently subsidised through governments' tractor support programme for emerging farmers. Afgri also acts as an agent for the Land Bank, distributing some R2-billion a year on behalf of the bank.

The SACP expresses its full support to the African Farmers' Association of South Africa (Afasa), representing some 30 000 black smallholder farmers, in taking the proposed sale to the Competition Commission. This critical cog in South Africa's food security cannot be tossed into the casino economy.

Let us build a patriotic, non-racial anti-monopoly capital front

The Afgri trajectory once more underlines the importance (and possibilities) for the formation of a broad, non-racial unity in South Africa against the ravages that monopoly capital is wreaking on our economy.

While the black majority are the principal victims of monopoly capital, virtually all South Africans are victims in varying degrees. Black and white South Africans suffer under the predatory role of the financial sector. Black and white South Africans are suffering under excessive banking and communication charges. Black and white South Africans

are the common victims of the collusive behaviour of the construction companies and of the investment strike by monopoly capital. Black and white family farms are the victims of the growing monopolisation and financialisation of the agricultural sector.

This is why the SACP calls for a radical second phase of the democratic transition that prioritises the struggle to roll back the dominance of monopoly capital and its narrow BEE comprador collaborators.

Let us build a non-racial, patriotic unity against the ravages of monopoly capital!

Taking forward our campaigns

The CC resolved to carry forward and intensify the financial sector campaign as our flagship campaign. Among the key points of focus of the campaign is the fight against:

- Reckless and unsecured lending;
- Evictions of families from their homes;
- Irregular garnishee orders – affecting thousands of workers.

On the broader transformation front, the SACP will continue to call for:

- The massification of consumer education programmes;
- Community re-investment programmes, particularly around housing; and
- The full licensing of the Postbank.

Other key pillars of our SACP campaigning will be the struggle for land and agricultural transformation, especially in rural areas; and work within the trade union movement.

The Office of the Public Protector

The Central Committee has noted Public Protector Advocate Madonsela's condemnation of the Mail & Guardian's publication of a leaked report (allegedly from her office) on the Nkandla matter. The Public Protector has characterised the Mail & Guardian's action as "unethical and illegal", and, contrary to how the commercial media continues to report on the issue, she has also disowned the document. While we accept her assurance that she was not personally responsible for any leaking, we are concerned that there has been a pattern of premature leaks of other reports from her office in the recent past, and indeed, once more today.

There have also been other concerning issues. We were puzzled by her earlier public statement that some people

Be vigilant against those concealing their greed & corruption behind pseudo-leftism

"would be disappointed" with her final report on Nkandla, as if this important investigation was about playing to a gallery and dishing up a particular predetermined outcome. We hope that the Public Protector will have also paused for a moment of self-reflection on the fact that all political parties in Parliament expressed concern at the way in which she handled the investigation into the IEC matter.

The Office of the Public Protector is a critically important institution for the defence and deepening of our democracy. Anything that undermines confidence in the office, or that gives the impression of over-reaching or limelight seeking will weaken the office and, paradoxically, it will create a smoke screen behind which those who are corrupt will seek to hide. As a public custodian of the values of good governance we urge the Public Protector to deal decisively with a pattern of premature leaking of reports from her office. In terms of the Constitution the Public Protector's Office must report to Parliament and not, in the first instance, to a sensation-seeking commercial media. The time has come for an independent investigation into the leaking from the office, and to establish whether all those within the office have the appropriate security clearance.

The Nkandla matter has dragged on for far too long. Without compromising legitimate security concerns, the Central Committee calls for the public release of the reports of both the Department of Public Works and the Public Protector – the sooner the better. So far the public has been fed with rumours, snippets, allegations and counter-allegations. It is common cause that there have been serious irregularities of over-pricing and the inflation of the scope of work required. We believe that both reports will come to fundamentally similar findings. Let the truth come out. Those responsible for serious irregularities in this case must be named, shamed and dealt with appropriately.

Public communication on this matter from the side of the executive could have been much better. Likewise, the Central

Committee believes that the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence made little attempt to engage either Parliament or the broader public on its findings, and, of course, the commercial media largely ignored it.

There are other lessons to be learnt going forward. Government needs to establish much clearer norms and standards around its responsibilities in regard to the private accommodation of serving and past Presidents. In the light of some of the recent missteps, the new 2014 Parliament might wish to review the Public Protector Act of 1994. Amongst other things Parliament should consider Clause 9 (1) (a) which makes it unlawful to "insult the Public Protector or a Deputy Public Protector." While we certainly have no intention of insulting any Public Protector, past, present, or future, this Clause of the Act strikes us as vague, excessive and out of kilter with our Constitution which recognises all South African citizens as equal before the law.

The youth sector

The CC congratulated the Young Communist League of South Africa and its Progressive Youth Alliance partners for their clean sweep of all SRC university elections. PYA election victories under the banner of Sasco included winning back Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, the University of Cape Town, and the University of Zululand. The PYA has also won in a majority of FET colleges. This resurgence of progressive youth forces on South African campuses underlines two key points:

- The importance of unity in action of progressive youth formations; and
- The damage that was done to progressive unity on our campuses by the arrogant and factionalist activities of former ANC Youth Leaguers now expelled from that formation and pursuing their pseudo-left, tenderpreneurial activities in the EFF.

The SACP urges the youth of South Africa to remain radical, to remain organised and militant in the struggle against the scourge of poverty, unemployment, inequality and capitalist exploitation. Let us all be vigilant against those who seek to conceal their own greed and corruption behind empty pseudo-leftism.

The labour movement

The SACP remains deeply concerned at the on-going ructions within our alliance partner Cosatu. We once more pledge our commitment to working for a united,

militant labour federation. We once more assert that while Alliance partners must play a constructive and supporting role, the internal processes of Cosatu must be respected.

The Central Committee noted and condemned the persisting disruptive behaviour of a leadership clique within Numsa. For a long while now the SACP has endured an endless string of personalised insults and lies from these quarters. We have patiently endeavoured to engage with the Numsa general secretary and his clique in a constructive if robust ideological debate. However sceptical we might have been, we decided to take him at his word that he was seeking to advance an anti-capitalist, left-wing perspective and line of action. We have even opened up the columns of our own publications for him to vent against us. Irvin Jim has consistently abused all of these sincere endeavours. It is now glaringly obvious that he and his clique have another agenda. It is not an agenda of building working class unity. It is not an agenda of respecting left-wing diversity. It is an agenda informed by unbridled personal ambition and personal wealth accumulation.

Numsa is convening a Special Congress later this month, ostensibly to obtain a democratic mandate from its membership on the future of the union's participation in the ANC-led alliance and the role of Numsa in next year's elections. But despite all the rhetoric about worker democracy, the leadership clique has already predetermined its strategy. Last week on Thursday the clique convened a secret, off-the-record meeting with selected journalists to tell them that Numsa would launch an independent workers party in 2015. It is time that the rank-and-file membership of Numsa calls an end to this cynical manipulation

of the union's strategic direction over their heads.

We call on Numsa rank-and-file members to ask this leadership clique to come clean and to account:

- Irvin Jim and his deputy general secretary and long-standing business partner Karl Cloete should be challenged to undergo independent life-style audits. While SACP members serving in parliament and the executive are constantly maligned by the Numsa leadership clique, they are all accountable to parliament and to the public, and are required to submit annual disclosures of interest. There is no such transparency when it comes to the Numsa leadership clique.

- Irvin Jim must be asked to explain what his role was when he chaired the Eastern Cape tender board, and whether he benefited personally in any way.

- Irvin Jim and Karl Cloete must be asked to come clean on the work of the Numsa investment arm and its relationship to its holdings in Dove, the funerals, insurance and finance company. What is the relationship between Numsa's Doves Absa account, the Eriotrax FNB account and Brevity Trade 12? Have the membership of Numsa, or broader leadership collective, even heard of these entities?

- Irvin Jim must explain his individual role in December 2010 in allotting Preference Shares from Brevity Trade to Eriotrax, and what was the purpose of so doing?

- Comrade Cedric Gcina, in his resignation letter as Numsa president last week referred to a Numsa Absa account and his differences with Jim in this regard? What exactly was Cde Gcina referring to?

- Can the Numsa leadership clique assure Numsa members that funds earned through Dove and other Numsa Investment arm activities are not being di-

verted into a web of personal accounts, businesses and war-chests? What is the role of Khandani Msibi, Mahlubi Mazwi, Mphumzi Maqunqo, and Azwell Banda and their private businesses?

These are some of the questions that, we believe, the rank-and-file membership of Numsa must pose to the leadership clique. They must do so in the name of worker democracy and in the name of taking back control of their union and their own retirement funds. Related to all of the above, the SACP calls on the Minister of Labour to institute an audit of the flow of millions of rands of agency shop funds into Numsa. Where do these funds end up?

The SACP has consistently warned that much of the turmoil within Cosatu has little to do with differences on policy or on working class issues, and everything to do with business-unionism and the class capture and privatisation of worker retirement funds. As part of the SACP's financial sector campaign, working closely with Cosatu, we will be calling for the socialisation of worker retirement funds.

The SACP has a long and honourable history of building progressive trade unionism in our country, dating back to the very launch of the Party in 1921. The SACP and its activists pledge to continue this tradition. We pledge to fight for a principled unity of our alliance partner, Cosatu.

16 days of activism against violence against women and children

In marking today as World Aids Day, and at the beginning of the 16 days of activism against violence against women and children, the CC joins all South Africans in condemning recent horrific actions against infants, young children and older women. We also condemn violence directed against gay and lesbians.

We salute the Department of Justice for re-introducing Sexual Offences courts and the Department of Social Development for the establishment of places of safety for victims of sexual and domestic violence, known as "White Doors."

As we move towards the close of the year, the Augmented CC wishes our membership, the working class and all South Africans a peaceful and safe festive season. Let us gather our strength for an overwhelming ANC-alliance election victory next year, let 2014 be a year in which we make a decisive steps forward in advancing a radical second phase of our democratic transition. ●

Umsebenzi

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YOUNG REDS

YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE

A proud record of cutting-edge action

A well-carved niche in SA politics of the Left and the youth in 10 years

BY KHAYE NKWANYANA

Many YCL comrades assume that the imperative for re-launching the Young Communist League was the result of the 11th Congress of the SACP in 2002, in Rustenburg, where the resolution on this was taken.

The re-launch was a cumulative outcome of a long outdrawn discussion that began in 1991 led by young cadres of the Party, notably comrade Dan Nkosi who produced a discussion document for the Party arguing the case for YCL re-establishment. They did not succeed.

When the 10th Congress fell short of passing the resolution for re-establishment in 1998, and instead directed the provinces to establish youth desks as exploratory mechanisms to evaluate the case for the re-establishment, some of us saw this as an important opportunity to make such structures work in terms of beginning to take up youth issues including a greater role played in the South African Youth Council.

Moving towards the 11th Congress of the Party, it was not hard to lobby for the resolution to be taken, as it already had quasi-structures to varying degrees in certain provinces.

The most interesting time in the work of building the YCL was the work towards setting a framework that took us to the Vaal Technikon Re-establishment congress, when I was in the interim provincial leadership in KZN.

This work continued until we built a real organisation on the ground in terms of branches and districts, and held congresses in all provinces.

It was not easy to build a new or-

ganisation for the youth when ANCYL, SASCO and COSAS were already well established.

Some poured scorn on us for being potential rivals to the ANCYL. And so, as coordinators we had to be organisers, commissars and leaders so that young people understood the YCL. We had to underpin this understanding with the politics and the ideology of the YCL.

We were selfless and driven daily by the passion to deliver this Left youth formation under the tutelage of the Party.

One of the YCL's strongest achievements has been its emphasis on campaigns that have responded to the social challenges facing youth. These include:

- The ID Campaign, which we named the Kabelo Thibedi ID Campaign, was a success and Home Affairs was persuaded to adopt a turnaround strategy on its lax services, including the slow pace of providing IDs.

- The Joe Slovo Right to Learn Campaign, where we visited schools in wards and districts across the country. The SACP adopted this month, including Joe Slovo lectures and related activities.

- Related to the above, we campaigned for shebeens to be moved away from schools and argued for Liquor Boards to amend their laws in provinces in this regard. In some provinces such as Gauteng and Northern Cape, seminal achievements were recorded, including YCLSA cadres assuming roles in the Provincial Liquor Boards.

- The transformation of SABC as a public broadcaster to be balanced and its programming to be pro-education in prime time, instead of the "Jika ma Jika" type of programming aimed at the youth.

- Campaign in government to provide Sanitary towels to the poor female youth, especially in schools. The Department for Women, Children and People with Disabilities is managing this programme.

In 2005 one of the National Committees of the YCL initiated a debate on the SACP's attitude to State power.

This became an engagement that later dominated in the Party. It was not an easy debate, as some elements entered it from various templates in the Party, some of them with more heat than light.

The debate mutated to become a melange of fierce contestation. But this was a salutary ideological contribution by the YCL that it must treasure always. The SACP's Special Congress directed the Party to create a commission come up with various scenarios on this issue and strengthen the quality input on what today is called SARS, as adopted by 12th Congress, and reaffirmed by the Party's 13th Congress in 2012.

We have made a strong showing on national political issues, at times setting a national tone in various discourses.

Many pioneer comrades, (who now contribute in various public and political arenas in the country) are proud products of the YCL. Many former YCL leaders are either leaders of the SACP or are in the ANC at various levels and some hold public office foregrounded, in the main, by the revolutionary leadership schooling and exposure acquired in the YCL. This makes up a proud record in our ten-year existence. ●

Cde Nkwanyana was the first elected Provincial Secretary in KZN and is former Deputy National Secretary.



**SOCIALISM
IN OUR
LIFETIME!**

Y-REDS

VOICE OF THE YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE OF SOUTHERN AFRICA ● DECEMBER 2013

Looking back on a young, red decade

BY BUTI MANAMELA

When I was asked to write for “Umsebenzi” on the 10th anniversary of the relaunch of the YCLSA, uFasimba, I decided to break with tradition and write this article in the first person.

This is for two reasons.

The organisation is finalising its 10th anniversary message that will reflect the collective energy that all of us have invested in building the organisation. So that is covered. But I also want to encourage cadres, both current and former, to tell their personal stories on their role in building a strong, vibrant, activist and fighting youth movement. When I was asked to serve as YCLSA national secretary in mid-July 2003, a lot of emotions and “communist searching” went through my mind.

Although I joined the SACP in 1998 in Mamelodi, and was an SACP activist for two years before, I felt that there are better placed cadres who could do this who were already involved in the YCLSA national leadership and were much more senior to me in the SACP. I also felt that this would be too much pressure put on a 23-year-old (it was a few days before my birthday).

But there was another consideration. I was the local organiser at South African Commercial and Allied Worker’s Union (Saccawu), and was getting my way around this work and the excitement involved, the political education classes I had started, and the CCMA cases I was winning.

I was on the roll and I loved what I was doing working for the union. Then these communist cadres said: “But this is an order”. It has been a 10-year-long order.

When we started many of the cadres in the National Committee were at the twilight of their youth. Though some of them had different leadership preferences at the Vaal Congress, they all threw their weight behind the task of building a renewed organization.

We recruited a group of fairly young cadres to be at the centre of establishing YCLSA provinces and districts, some

of whom are either still in the YCLSA as “veterans” or have graduated and become leaders in SACP structures.

We grew the YCLSA in the first year to more than 20 000 members.

We launched many districts, and had some 300 branches.

Together with some of the National Committee members, I travelled the length and breadth of the country, meeting eager and anxious teenagers with confused hopes about what the YCLSA would become. I went to areas where I did not imagine they were, and shared bread and struggle with the most destitute of our people. Things were not always rosy. We sometimes had to bully our way into the struggle. From one community hall to the next, sometimes with fewer than 20 people turning up, we soldiered on. We went from relaunch straight to the 2004 election campaign.

We rushed around the country during that period, and also used the election platform to engage young people who were in Progressive Youth Alliance (PYA) structures to dedicate themselves to the communist cause. Many are still with us.

I remember being in a car accident on my way to an ANC Election Rally in Mahikeng, and leaving the hospital bed straight to a YCLSA rally in Kimberley to commemorate Chris Hani.

These 10 years also had their downside. We had internal fights and sometimes had to abandon some cadres and friends in the collective struggles we were waging.

We were robbed of some by death, but most by age, whilst others found themselves at an ideological crossroads with us.

This was part of our birthing pains.

But what became the life-support of this organization were the well of ideas and the fountain of energy to put them into action.

The Kabelo Thibedi ID Campaign. The call for young boys to be circumcised. The inquest on the assassination of Chris Hani. Our Joe Slovo Right to Learn Campaign. These ideas were rooted in the daily struggles that we were immersed in. They struck

a national note that said: “The young Com-mies have arrived”.

I burned my youthful fingers, and so did many. But we had to, and used the freedom and support that the SACP gave us to swell the life of this organism.

The scars that are imprinted on this 10 years old body are also our bragging right, our stripes of success. We may not be where our imaginations transported us – both the YCLSA and the SACP – to be because we set no limits to our dreams and idealism, but if we allowed ourselves to think only of the immediately possible, the realistic, and the achievable without stretching our imagination, the YCLSA idea would have suffered the death of pragmatism.

I have been labelled, insulted, scorned. But this was not because the YCLSA or I did not deserve some of this derision. If we called Mbalula and the ANCYL (at the time) lapdogs of the ANC, we deserved to be called the poodles of the SACP.

But I am proud of what many cadres of the YCLSA and the SACP have done for the last 10 years to be where we are. The YCLSA would be nothing without them.

But what is more important is that we regard this as no credit to this fighting force. We made no history, but would be grateful if our efforts and of those in the national steering committee result in a socialist South Africa. We have prepared the ground for a new breed of unrestricted, vibrant and active teenagers to take up the baton. We know that they will enjoy the freedoms of dreaming and imagining the socialist idea, and of radically pursuing it.

As for me, just as many others guided me through that tumultuous early period, I will continue to play that role.

But for now, I’m off to party to celebrate this 10th anniversary. It will be the best party the young communists ever threw.

Ufasimba Rocks!

Adios! ●

Cde Manamela is the YCL National Secretary and an MP. The story was written before the news of Cde Mandela’s death was released