

The Marikana Massacre and Lessons for the Left

Mary Smith

TV coverage of the Marikana massacre had a sickening sense of *déjà vu* about it; uniformed men, rifles aimed, the crack of gunfire, black bodies in the dust - Sharpeville, Soweto, iconic images of South Africa under Apartheid. But this was August 16th 2012, not the last century; the killers took their orders not from the old racist Apartheid regime of Botha or de Klerk, but from the state headed by the 'liberators' - the African National Congress (ANC).

Another image of South Africa: the long patient queues, waiting since dawn to vote for the first time; hope and pride and joy in the faces. That was 1994 - the year the struggle had smashed through Apartheid and ushered in a government led by the ANC, pledged to 'peace, jobs, freedom'.

So how could it have come to this, to state-sponsored murder, eighteen years later? One of the leading unions in the Confederation of South African Trades Unions (COSATU) commented that '..[Marikana] must go down in our history as the first post-apartheid South African State massacre of the organised working class, in defence of the local and international mining bosses and their profits.'¹ This article attempts to explain not only why such a thing could happen but why it was almost inevitable that it should. But first we look at the massacre itself the events surrounding it and the wider relevance of the strike.

A local reporter describing the events of August 16th 2012 writes:

Of the 34 miners killed at Marikana, no more than a

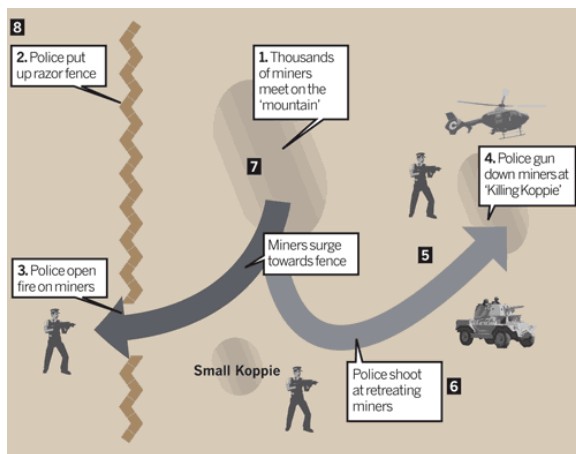
dozen of the dead were captured in news footage shot at the scene. The majority of those who died, according to surviving strikers and researchers, were killed beyond the view of cameras at a non-descript collection of boulders some 300 metres behind Wonderkop.

On one of these rocks, encompassed closely on all sides by solid granite boulders, is the letter 'N', the 14th letter of the alphabet. Here, N represents the 14th body of a striking miner to be found by a police forensics team in this isolated place. These letters are used by forensics to detail where the corpses lay.

There is a thick spread of blood deep into the dry soil, showing that N was shot and killed on the spot. There is no trail of blood leading to where N died the blood saturates one spot only, indicating no further movement. (It would have been outside of the scope of the human body to crawl here bleeding so profusely.) Approaching N from all possible angles, observing the local geography, it is clear that to shoot N, the shooter would have to be close. Very close, in fact, almost within touching distance. (After having spent days here at the bloody mas-

¹<http://numsa.org.za/article/numsa-central-committee-cc-press-statement-2012-09-02>

sacre site, it does not take too much imagination for me to believe that N might have begged for his life on that winter afternoon.) And on the deadly Thursday afternoon, N's murderer could only have been a policeman. I say murderer because there is not a single report on an injured policeman from the day. I say murderer because there seems to have been no attempt to uphold our citizens' right to life and fair recourse to justice. It is hard to imagine that N would have resisted being taken into custody when thus cornered. There is no chance of escape out of a ring of police.²



This interpretation of the killings is supported by an investigating team comprising Peter Alexander, chair in Social Change and Professor of Sociology at the University of Johannesburg, and researchers Thapelo Lekgowa and Botsang Mmope, outlined below:

²<http://dailymaverick.co.za/article/2012-08-30-the-murder-fields-of-marikana-the-cold-murder-fields-of-marikana>

Follow the numbered events on the accompanying map to understand how shocking was this premeditated slaughter.

1. On the day of the killing about 3,000 striking miners were gathered on and just below the 'mountain' (actually a small hill). Joseph Mathunjwa, president of the union, the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU), came and pleaded with them to leave to avoid a police attack. The miners refused.
2. Within 15 minutes of Mathunjwa leaving, the police and army laid razor wire, separating the strikers from the Enkanini informal settlement, where many of them live. Casspirs (armoured cars), horses and water cannon moved up to encircle the workers.
3. Some workers walked down to the razor wire to see if they could still get out through a gap. Witnesses say police near the 'small koppie' (hillock) opened fire on them, probably with rubber bullets. Some workers fled through a five metre gap in the razor wire. They were met with a barrage of live fire from the police and many died. Images of this shooting were broadcast around the world.
4. Terrified strikers scattered in all directions, with a large number heading for cover by a koppie about 300 metres in the opposite direction from the wire. This 'killing koppie' is where the largest number of strikers died. No cameras recorded this slaughter. But evidence remained on Monday, four days after the massacre. There are remnants of pools

of blood. Police markers show where corpses were removed. We found markers labeled with letters up to 'J'.

5. -8 Other strikers were killed as they fled across the fields. Some examples are marked on the map. Shots were fired from helicopters and some workers, heading for hillock, were crushed by Casspirs. By Monday the whole area had been swept clean of rubber bullets, bullet casings and tear-gas canisters. We also saw patches of burned grass, which local workers claim are the remains of police fires used to obscure evidence of deaths.³

Following the massacre, the community of Marikana lived under a virtual state of emergency, with police patrols, raids and reports of unlawful arrests and harassment. Most of the miners who were killed and badly injured were sole breadwinners, and the loss of their earnings has left many of their dependents in a desperate situation. The State has set up a Commission of Inquiry under retired judge Ian Farlam, that already, less than two months into its expected six month duration, is cruelly flawed. A new publication based on first hand accounts of the killings and their aftermath by the miners themselves makes the following observation:

[The commission] aims to provide 'truth and justice' on the basis of evidence presented to the commissioners, but it has not observed working conditions underground and operates in a courtroom environment alienating for ordinary

people. In fact, key leaders of the workers' committee have been arrested, intimidated and tortured during the time in which the commission has taken place, and we therefore question the extent to which the commission is able to provide a space that is not biased against the workers' perspective.⁴

Initially, half of the Lonmin Strike Committee, due to testify before the Commission, were charged with the murder of their own colleagues, under an old Apartheid era law of 'common purpose'. These charges were subsequently 'provisionally dropped', after public protest and threatened unrest but not one police officer or official has been charged in relation to the massacre. Meanwhile relatives of those killed make long, difficult journeys to attend the Commission. UK-based barrister James Nichol traveled to South Africa to participate as one of the legal team supporting the miners and their families. As well as formal duties attached to this role, he sends to his friends and colleagues back home, brief 'reflections and impressions', as he describes them, of the day-to-day proceedings in the court. He sent the following before Christmas:

Finally, after 3 weeks and a 1000 kms, grieving widows, mothers sisters and brothers have arrived. Their neglect shameful, and continues...Video footage shown without warning, machine guns, dead bodies Weeping, uncontrollable fills the auditorium, most have not seen be-

³<http://socialistworker.co.uk/art.php?id=29403>

⁴Peter Alexander et al, *Marikana: A View from the Mountain and a Case to Answer*, London, Bookmarks Publications, 2013, p19.

fore, most have no television, most have no electricity. There are no shoulders to cry on, no one to hug, only one person per family, allowed too expensive. We warned the Commission - many times ignored. They rejected trauma and bereavement councilors paid for (by many of you) from the Marikana Support Campaign.

The Strike

There is heavy, and growing, government interference in the media in South Africa⁵. So it is no surprise that from the outset, Marikana was presented as a sectional strike by an irresponsible group of unorganised, unskilled 'renegades' with criminal intent. The reality is very different. The backbone of the strike were the rock drill operators (RDOs) in the platinum mines; South Africa holds 88 percent of the world's platinum reserves and accounts for over three quarters of global platinum production. Platinum plays a crucial role in South Africa's economy, particularly since the decline in gold extraction, but has been hit by the drop in demand with the onset of global recession. Lonmin⁶, the British owned company at Marikana, were determined to avoid a repeat of events at the neighbouring Impala platinum mine where, in January, a militant strike lasting six weeks, cost Impala €200 million and stopped almost half of national platinum output. The Impala

strike also saw the growth of the new union AMCU, and of its power to shut down production. This terrified the mining bosses as well as the corrupt leadership of the now discredited National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), who openly collaborated with the industry and the State against the striking miners.

The ANC government had identified platinum as central to its resource-based development strategy; planning for a new 'platinum valley' to concentrate platinum-based manufacturing industries. But these plans were severely hit by the global crisis and a dramatic fall in the price of platinum. According to Gavin Capps, a specialist at the University of Cape Town, the earlier scramble to expand production has now led to a situation of global oversupply⁷.

The demand by the Marikana strikers was for a tripling of their wages to R12,500 a month, which on the face of it sounds surprising, until you realize that these men work ten to twelve hour shifts underground, in the dirtiest, most dangerous conditions (the RDOs are among the lowest paid), in 35 degree heat and all for less than the equivalent of €90 per week. (Over the last century, the mining industry in South Africa has had a notorious safety record with well in excess of 50,000 deaths).

Claire Ceruti, South African socialist and solidarity activist explains that the workers organized their strike without an established union presence - the AMCU stepping in only in an advisory role only

⁵ David Smith, 'Media bridles at attempt to curb conference coverage', *The Guardian*, Dec 12 2012 (p33)

⁶ Lonmin is the renamed British company Lonrho. The name change hides a shameful history even for an industry as brutal as mining. The firm was originally set up in 1909 to grab mining rights in what was then called Rhodesia. Even British Tory prime minister Edward Heath called Lonrho's boss Tiny Rowland 'the unacceptable face of capitalism' in 1973. This was amid allegations of tax avoidance, bribing African leaders and breaking UN sanctions against the racist regime in Rhodesia. *Socialist Worker UK*, Issue 2317

⁷ *Socialist Worker UK*, Issue 2317

as the strike progressed. The action was organized by an elected strike committee who were incredibly democratic so much so that solidarity action was initially difficult to initiate as everything had to be discussed first with the committee, and then by the strikers themselves⁸. The courage, tenacity, and organizational strength the rock-drillers have shown, and continue to show, in the face of State repression, has inspired workers not only in mining but right across the industrial spectrum, and previously unorganized, 'unskilled' workers like security guards and grape pickers have gone on the offensive for their own minimum wage demands.

The Unions under Apartheid

Marx explained over a century and a half ago that capitalism creates 'its own gravedigger' the working class. The Apartheid state shaped, and was shaped by, this process in a very particular way. Ever since gold and diamonds were discovered in South Africa in the 1880s, a constant supply of cheap, migrant labour was the condition on which the mining industry depended for its profitability. Apartheid was not just a system of cruel, racist laws that made black people second class citizens in their own country, it was, most importantly, a way of managing the huge battalions of black migrant labour necessary to this process. Racism, the denial of rights to black Africans and paying poverty wages, had been practiced by the colonial powers in South Africa, both British and Boers but it wasn't until 1948 that the system of Apartheid was formalised and codified. The hated Pass Laws, the creation of the artificial 'homelands' or Bantustans, the enormous (white run) bureaucracy that policed the movement of black

people all enforced with pitiless repression this was the Apartheid state. From 1948 to 1993 over 2000 people who fought against it were hanged, thousands were imprisoned and millions were arrested and/or displaced to distant 'homelands' to languish there in abject poverty as surplus or 'unproductive' labour. The bitterness of this legacy helped fuel the militancy of one of the most impressive contingents of the world's workers the black South African working class.

The black trade unions first made their presence felt during World War Two. This was when the then radical National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) was formed, leading its members in a demand for ten shillings (this represented a 500 percent increase!). The strike, which mobilized thousands of workers eventually won, but the state machine also went on the offensive against the workers' movement. Alex Callinicos, writing of the period says that, 'The destruction of black political and trade union organization was both the condition of apartheid's success and its objective'⁹. Over the following decades, despite the repression, struggles emerged that were political as well as economic bus boycotts, the women's movement, township revolts, student rebellions, community struggles - all fed into the industrial struggle which in turn fuelled the political one. But the core was the black working class.

Charlie Kimber in his review of literature dealing with the struggle against Apartheid writes:

The modern union movement was born after a wave of strikes in 1973 centred on the area around Durban. Despite immense repression it grew, slowly, during the 1970s so that

⁸<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZZUUSgg0FU4&feature=em-uploademail-new>.

⁹*South Africa between Reform and Revolution*, Bookmarks, London 1988, p15

by the end of the decade it clearly posed a real potential threat to apartheid's rulers.¹⁰ The trades union movement had 'given powerless people a chance to wield power for the first time in their lives'¹¹.

Kimber makes the crucial point that

The state could torture and murder activists, it could infiltrate and repress community organisations, it could murder the guerillas sent to challenge its military might. But it could not destroy the unions or blunt their economic power.¹²

Politics and the workers' movement

The so called Tripartite Alliance of the ANC, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and COSATU, runs the SA State. This political marriage was (and remains) based on a shared notion that an all-class alliance of progressive forces in South Africa was necessary to achieve 'national liberation' from the Apartheid state and establish 'normal' bourgeois or capitalist democracy, where black and white would be treated as equals. Eighteen years on from the ending of Apartheid, this is still the underpinning ideology all classes must work together to establish the type of state than can deliver on its promise of equality and prosperity for all.

Meantime South Africa remains one of the most unequal societies on the planet; unemployment is double what it was when the ANC were elected, one in four South African children are malnourished, one in

ten people still use stinking bucket toilets. The black middle class has grown and a tiny black elite has made itself fabulously wealthy. Anti-apartheid activist archbishop Desmond Tutu famously said that the ANC government had 'stopped the gravy train only long enough to get on'. But the situation that obtains is not just down to the personal failings of greedy individuals. The explanation for why it has come to this is a political one.

Here it is instructive to look at the politics of the SCAP - it was they who provided the ideological cement that held the nationalist ANC and the workers' movement together. Their political strategy is based on a 'stages theory' approach to achieving social change where workers demands are put on the back burner until the bourgeois democratic revolution has been won. Its origins are part of the legacy of Stalinism a legacy that required that the Communist Parties which developed internationally under the inspiration of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, would serve as 'outposts' of Russias foreign policy, rather than fomenting revolution at home. This started in the 1920s in China, could be seen at work in Europe in the thirties in the struggle against fascism, and in the anti colonial struggles in India, Africa and beyond.

The argument, which always tends to appear in anti-colonialist struggles, goes like this: first we need maximum unity of all classes to get rid of the colonial power and achieve national liberation. Thus talk of socialism, or workers' power, must be put on hold, lest the non-worker elements - the middle classes, and 'progressive' or 'national' capitalists, take fright. Once we have gotten rid of apartheid (or the colonial power), we can then move on to build

¹⁰<http://pubs.socialistreviewindex.org.uk/isj64/kimber.htm>

¹¹(S Friedman, *Building Tomorrow Today*, Johannesburg 1987

¹²<http://pubs.socialistreviewindex.org.uk/isj64/kimber.htm>

the society we want. The same logic was at work in the post 1916 liberation struggle here in Ireland, illustrated in Ken Loach's film *The Wind the Shakes the Barley*, when workers' gains during the incredible wave of militancy during the 'War of Independence', were curtailed and then rolled back by the nationalist leadership, with the instruction that 'labour must wait'. For us in Ireland there is an important parallel between the trajectory of the ANC and that of Fianna Fáil which also has implications for Sinn Féin now. Fianna Fáil in the 1920s said and did much more radical things than Sinn Féin do today and then went on to become Ireland's leading capitalist party with consequences we all know about.

Writing about the relationship between the ANC and SACP, Peter Dwyer and Leo Zelig put it this way:

The history of building multi-class popular alliances goes back to the African nationalist leadership of the ANC under Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and Oliver Tambo in the 1950s. Recognizing that industrialization and urbanization were changing the social composition of African society, they sought to build alliances with trades unions and working class township communities. This strategy dovetailed with that of the Communist Party, which, under orders from Moscow, pursued a 'peoples front' that brought together differing social groups to strengthen national liberation.¹³

The sad history of 'stagism' in national liberation movements is that it never

moves beyond the first stage – the establishment of 'normal' capitalist democracy – neither in Africa nor Ireland nor anywhere else. The second stage – the struggle for socialism, when the working class can have their day well that comes later. When? When the nation state is properly established. When the economy has become stable. When the industrial base is developed. When we've attracted enough investment for jobs 'tomorrow'. Despite the apparent 'common sense' appeal of the stagist approach, history shows that the postponed 'tomorrow' for workers never comes, or when it does it's Marikana. This is because regardless of whether the administration of a capitalist state is black or white, (or whether they wear the 'green jersey' or once led the IRA), when capitalism itself is the basis of economic relations in the society then it's the interests of capital that will dominate.

In the years of the freedom struggle, the politics of the SACP bridged the gap between the aspiration to 'socialism' of the rising workers movement and the nationalist politics of the ANC. Like all national liberation movements, the ANC's political aspirations were primarily for a national (capitalist) state, free from colonial domination. Apartheid was theorized by the SACP as a form of 'internal colonialism'; liberation then was the ending of Apartheid, which, once gotten rid of, would allow for 'business as usual', and could include 'normal' left versus right politics. The SACP strategy chimed with COSATU on the basis that once the national democratic state was established, then the task of getting a workers, or socialist democracy in a free South Africa would /should be taken up. NUM leader Cyril Ramaphosa opened the founding conference of COSATU in 1985 with the following statement:

¹³Peter Dwyer and Leo Zelig *African Struggles Today*, London 2012

If workers are to lead the struggle for liberation we have to win the confidence of other sections of society. But if we are to get into alliances with other progressive organisations, it must be on terms that are favourable to us as workers. When we do plunge into political activity we must make sure that the unions under COSATU have a strong shop floor base not only to take on the employers but the state as well. In the next few days we will be putting our heads together not only to make sure we reach Pretoria but to make a better life for us workers in this country. What we have to make clear is that a giant has risen and will confront all that stand in its way.¹⁴

By its second conference, COSATU had adopted the ANC's Freedom Charter a document containing no mention of socialism, and certainly no primacy of place for workers. The same Cyril Ramaphosa incidentally is today a multi millionaire and among his directorships is included the platinum mining corporation at Lonmin!

Could it have been different?

Nelson Mandela, jailed for 27 years, in his first speech after his release said: 'There must be an end to white monopoly on political power and a fundamental restructuring of our political and economic systems to ensure that the inequalities of apartheid are addressed and our society thoroughly democratised'. Yet the very first act of the ANC-led interim government was to accept an \$850 million loan from the In-

ternational Monetary Fund. Patrick Bond said of it: 'The loans secret conditions included the usual items from the classical structural adjustment menu: lower import tariffs, cuts in state spending, and large cuts in public sector wages'.

The newly elected government quickly abandoned such policies as nationalization, particularly of the mines, that could have given them control over wealth accumulated in private hands. More and more, neoliberalism came to dominate economic policy and more and more the new government sought to squash any systematic opposition to it. One of the best organised and most militant working classes in the world was held back as the Communist Party's leadership justified the ANC regime's shifts. Trade union militants became caught up in a process of stopping strikes rather than encouraging them.

What was required to counter this was politics that sought to harness the power of workers *in the interests of workers themselves*. The theoretical basis for such politics was to be found in the theory of permanent revolution developed by Leon Trotsky, first in response to the 1905 Revolution in Russia and then in direct opposition to the stages theory of Stalinism in the 1920s. This argued that the working class should take the lead in the democratic or anti-colonial struggle so that the national revolution could 'grow over' into the socialist revolution. In South Africa it was the threat posed by the militancy of black workers in their factories, mines and communities that forced the hand of the ruling class into getting rid of apartheid. This power could have been channeled not in the direction of a weak (stagist) compromise, but in a much more thorough-going challenge to the capitalist bosses. Tragically, the political forces that could have given this lead were too small and too weak

¹⁴J Baskin, *Striking Back, a history of COSATU*, Verso, 1991

to challenge the hegemony of the SACP.

A song from the heroic battles of miners in the USA in the 1900s poses the question ‘Which side are you on?’. Settling for a stagist solution ultimately places those who have advocated social change on the side of the capitalists, despite themselves. The logic of securing the ‘first stage’ the bourgeois democracy means that stability of the capitalist state is paramount. This is what makes events like Marikana almost inevitable, especially when the system is facing crisis. Profits in South African platinum mining have seen a decline since the onset of global recession. The last thing the platinum bosses need is a newly invigorated movement of mineworkers. It is also the last thing the corrupt leadership of the NUM want to see. And if the platinum industry isn’t kept happy, it can threaten the state with disinvestment, with repatriating even more of its profits than it does already, or laying off workers (in a country where unemployment currently stands at around 40%). In such circumstances, the state does what it has to do and if that means Marikana, then that what it means.

Keeping capital happy also means particularly vile tendencies get free reign; thus we see the former firebrand, miners’ leader Cyril Ramaphosa, grabbing multiple top directorships including a directorship of Lonmin. An email he sent to one of his fellow Lonmin directors on the eve of the massacre at Marikana was presented as evidence at the Farlam Commission of Inquiry into the killings of the striking miners. It read: ‘They are plainly dastardly criminals and must be characterised as such...There needs to be concomitant ac-

tion to address this situation.’¹⁵

The response of the SACP to the massacre speaks for itself. At its congress in September, just after the killings, general secretary Balde Nzimande pledged his party’s support for ‘the government’s crackdown’, adding that ‘the ringleaders must be dealt with and separated from the mass of misled strikers’¹⁶. The NUMs leaders are also part of the SACP leadership and the party is closely identified with the Zuma faction in the ANC¹⁷.

Victory for the miners

The Marikana miners have paid dearly for their victory. They won a 22% increase in pay far short of the original demand but unprecedented in industrial claims in the past forty years. But it is in the wider implications of the outcome that their true victory lies as the Alexander-led research team remarked ‘worker organizations in the mines will never be the same again. Thousands of workers have rejected their old union [the collaborationist NUM] and many of these have linked strike mobilization to politics in a new way’.¹⁸ In addition, since the strike, hundreds and thousands of South African workers have been inspired to take militant action, particularly in securing minimum wage deals across a range of industries reliant on ‘unskilled’ workers. Crucially Marikana has called into question the role of the government and the deference with which the ANC has been treated hitherto. The Marikana miners took on the bosses, armed police, the government, corrupt union officials and beat them. Despite thirty four killings, hundreds of ar-

¹⁵ Communication from James Nicholl, barrister on legal team supporting miners and their families at the Farlam Commission of Inquiry.

¹⁶Blade Nzimande, ‘Defend the gains of the working class. Take responsibility for the national democratic revolution’, speech distributed at the 11th COSATU Congress.

¹⁷Peter Alexander. Op. cit. p140

¹⁸Peter Alexander. Op. cit. p148

rests, torture and intimidation they held their own organization, and their strike, together. As the researchers said of it 'This was one of the most remarkable acts of courage in labour history, anywhere, and at any time.'¹⁹

In a 'Special Report' on the ANC in the Guardian David Smith states 'Bishop Jo Seoka, president of the South African Council of Churches, recently warned that a revolution could go from mines and grape farms to townships and suburbs. Moeletsi Mbeki, a political economist and brother of the former president Thabo Mbeki, predicted South Africa's 'Tunisia Day' will come in 2020'²⁰. He might need to revise the timescale! Since 2005, South Africa has probably had more strike days per capita than any other country.²¹ In addition, South Africa's level of ongoing urban unrest is greater than anywhere else in the world, and there were more community protests in the first six months of 2012 than in any previous year.²² Meanwhile, the Marikana widows and families endure with courage and dignity the State-sponsored Farlam Commission of Inquiry; they are determined to get 'justice' for their loved ones and their communities. The Marikana Support Campaign has issued an appeal for solidarity internationally. The appeal is reproduced below.

Marikana and Ireland

Marikana has particular relevance for Ireland. Nelson Mandela was a heroic leader; he and his comrades pursued the fight against apartheid with courage and tenacity under the banner of national liberation. He was co-founder of the ANC's 'armed

wing' Umkhonto we Sizwe (or MK), translated 'Spear of the Nation'. They were branded as terrorists and reviled in the media. Eventually the more far sighted members of the South African capitalist class saw that apartheid could no longer deliver in the same old way and that the struggle to end it was helping to create what it feared most a militant working class. And so they did a deal with Mandela and the ANC; history shows that nationalists, however radical, always do a deal with capitalism. The deal was to get rid of the apartheid state but to leave the capitalist order intact the first stage in the 'stages theory' thus achieved. The next stage has become the consolidation of the 'free' South African state, in which 'labour must wait'. And when labour gets impatient with poverty wages and rotten living conditions, Marikana shows what the ANC are now willing to do.

Many Irish workers today look to as a radical alternative to the sell-outs of the Labour Party indeed Sinn Féin's provenance would have many similarities with that of the ANC. But what is most important is the politics they share the politics of nationalism - that ultimately put the interests of capital, before the interests of workers, of the platinum bosses before the miners. Of course Sinn Féin would reject the notion that they would sell-out working people in this way. But we need only look to what they do in office in the North, implementing Tory cuts, to see where they are likely to go in the South. Moreover, it is significant that they refuse to rule out coalition with Fianna Fáil. As the old joke goes 'Whats the difference between Fianna

¹⁹Peter Alexander. Op. cit. p150

²⁰David Smith. Special Report ANC leadership. *The Guardian* Dec 12 2012 (p32)

²¹Peter Alexander, 'Barricades, ballots and experimentation: making sense of the 2011 local government election with a social movement lens'. In Marcelle C. Dawson and Luke Sinwell, *Contesting Transformation: Popular Resistance in Twenty-first Century South Africa*, Pluto Press, London 2012.

²²Peter Alexander. Op. cit. p146

Fáil and Sinn Féin? Answer: About seventy years!’

The struggle for workers’ power and real democracy must be informed by different politics revolutionary socialist politics in order to have a chance of success. The project is the same, from Durban to Dublin, from Cape Town to Cork. The spirit of the Marikana miners will live in all these struggles. It is our duty as socialists to see that these struggles are imbued with the politics that can lead them to victory.

Note: it is with some pride that we record the fact that James Nichol, one of the lawyers representing the miners and their families, is a long standing member of the SWP in Britain, that Peter Alexander, co-author of the report, now published as *Marikana: A View from the Mountain and a Case to Answer*, Bookmarks, 2013, was a long standing member until his move to South Africa and that they, together with Claire Ceruti and Rehad Desai, activists in the solidarity campaign, are all supporters of the International Socialist Tendency.

Marikana Support Campaign- An Urgent Call for International Solidarity

On the 16th August, South African Police fired live ammunition at striking miners at Lonmin’s Marikana mine, killing 34 and injuring 78. Many were killed were shot at close range while trying to surrender. The Marikana miners were demanding a tripling of their salary to R12,500 (£950 or €1100) per month.

In the following days, 270 of the Marikana strikers were arrested and charged with the murder of their colleagues under the Common Purpose doctrine, a law last used under Apartheid. They were released on bail after public pressure forced the National Prosecuting Authority to pro-

visionally drop the charges. Since the massacre the community of Marikana has lived under a virtual State of Emergency, with police patrols, raids and reports of unlawful arrests and harassment. Over half of the Lonmin Strike Committee due to testify before the Commission of Inquiry have been over the past days charged with murder.

To date not one police officer or official has been charged for the massacre at Marikana. Yet some of the miners still face the prospect of long prison sentences as the State intends to blame the miners themselves for the violence. Most of the miners who were killed and badly injured in Marikana were sole breadwinners and the loss of their earnings has left many of their dependents in a desperate situation.

The Marikana Lonmin miners secured a 22 percent pay rise. It was short of the R12,500 demand but the deal was hailed as a victory. What the miners have actually done is fight a brave fight for a living wage. They have drawn public attention to the gap between the wages of mine workers and platinum and gold sector bosses, many of whom earn 1000 times more than the average miner. The massacre and the victory have inspired strikes in other mines across the country. The Marikana Support Campaign has been endorsed by the various strike committees and this has raised the demand for campaign material.

What the Campaign has achieved so far

The campaign and legal representatives have kept vigilant watch on the State sponsored Farlam Commission of Inquiry, pushing for transparency and forcing a postponement to ensure the presence of families so that the restorative objective of the commission can be met more effectively. In addition the campaign has organised legal

representation for twenty six of the families, paid for a private forensic pathologist, kept close watch on biased media reporting and offered alternative analysis, mobilised for practical support and resources for the families of the strikers, organised placard protests of the loco inspection of the killing site as well as nationwide pickets and demonstrations demanding an end to police harassment and intimidation of the Marikana community, brought large numbers of people to Marikana to bolster locally organised protests and to attend strike and community meetings, produced campaign materials, badges, leaflets and T-shirts etc; organised striker and community representative speaking tours in cities and townships across the country.

All of this costs money. In the coming months we need to increase the pressure on the Farlam Commission of Inquiry through a coordinated national and international campaign that presses for a just outcome for the Marikana families of the deceased, the scores injured, and hundreds arrested.

Account Name:HRMT 1 for Marikana Support Campaign

Bank: Nedbank

Branch: Constantia

Branch Code: 101109

Account No: 1011102366

Reference: Marikana Support Campaign

SWIFT: NEDSZAJJ

NB: HRMT stands for Human Rights Media Trust The Marikana Support Campaign is supported by many organisations including:Amnesty International SA, Centre for Applied Legal Studies, Advocates For Transformation Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation, Equal Education Law Centre, Human Rights Media Trust, Lawyers for Human Rights, Legal Resources Centre, RAITH Foundation, Right To Know, Section 27, Social Justice Coalition, Socio-Economic Rights Institute, Treatment Action Campaign, Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union, National Council of Trade Unions, Marikana Development Forum, Wonderkop Women's Group, Wonderkop Tribal Council, Alternative Information Development Centre, Soweto Concerned Citizens.