

WORKERS' UNITY

Organ of the South African Congress
of Trade Unions

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**"We will not move!" say
the people of Crossroads**

SIYAHLALA!

The men, women and children of Crossroads, through their courageous resistance, are advancing the struggle of all the oppressed people in South Africa. Crossroads, like Soweto, has become a beacon of mass struggle — a battlefield in which issues affecting the lives of millions of black South Africans are being fought out.

The struggle for Crossroads represents the struggle of the oppressed to live and work where they choose, without restriction. It represents their struggle to live together as families, against a system which draws the men into the urban areas as labourers, and restricts the women and children to the rural areas.

Crossroads is a symbol of defiance; of the determination of working people to live in Cape Town in spite of the government's laws.

Fight

The people of Crossroads have shown that they will stay and fight rather than give in to the government's pressure and go to the reserves. The government is using all sorts of tactics to push the people out — the constant threat of bulldozers is coupled with repeated pass raids, police harassment and arrests. But the people have stood firm, organising, campaigning, and building solidarity.

To break this unity and determination, the government is now introducing new tactics of harassment and oppression. New regulations have been introduced against African workers in the Western Cape, which strike a blow at the heart of the Crossroads community.

These new regulations lay down that the service of a contract worker can be ended if:

- ★ he does not occupy accommodation approved by the labour officer;
- ★ his wife and family are found

illegally present in the Peninsula;
★ he travels to the Peninsula by means of unauthorised transport;
★ he did not return to his "home address" (which for most contract workers means the reserves) after his previous contract of service.

Raids

To implement this new scheme, the Bantu Affairs Administration Board is stepping up raids against workers and taking away the jobs of those found "guilty". At the same time general pass raids continue, with R50 fines being imposed on "offenders". This heavy penalty is another way of trying to force people to leave Crossroads.

These new restrictions are intended to undermine the unity of the Crossroads community. They mean that workers can only keep their jobs if they force their families to go to the reserves. By threatening the jobs of the male workers, the government hopes to divide them from the women, and force them to send their families away.

If the government succeeds in driving the women out of Crossroads, the soul of the community will be destroyed, and the struggle for Crossroads, the struggle of workers all over South Africa to live with their families, will be set back.

Risk

Most of the women of Crossroads are there "illegally". It is they who risk most through harassment and arrest by the police. But it is also they who have no future outside Crossroads, away from their husbands and families. For them it is Crossroads or nothing. To leave and return to the Transkei or Ciskei means poverty and death. To stay in Cape Town means police harassment, but also the chance for survival.

It is because they have nowhere

else to go that the people of Crossroads, and most particularly the women, have fought with such determination to remain.

In many parts of South Africa, African communities are facing eviction and the demolition of their homes, either by local authorities or by the government. But Crossroads has become the national focus of resistance against these attacks.

Siyahlala

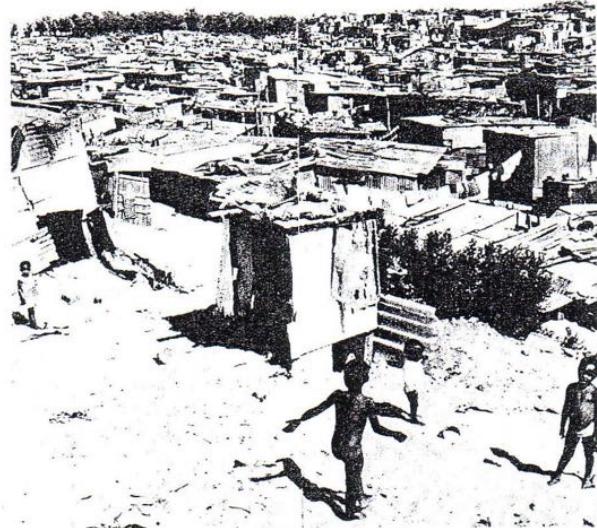
The people of Crossroads have made their stand. "SIYAHLALA" — we will not move. They are challenging the whole system of apartheid and revealing the great crisis which is undermining it.

Crossroads is a test of strength between the rulers and the oppressed, and workers throughout South Africa must add their muscle to the struggle for Crossroads. Cross-

roads is not only a battle for those who live there — it is a battle for every working class family in South Africa.

Workers in every factory and work place should meet together and discuss ways of supporting the people of Crossroads. All trade unions and community organisations should meet to prepare concrete forms of action.

Workers should consider the possibility of threatening strike action in support of any workers in the Cape who lose their jobs as a result of living with their families in Crossroads.



In their own words ... see page two

Crossroads —

In their own words ...

A woman who was endorsed out of Cape Town after her home in Modderdam was destroyed, and who then returned to Crossroads illegally, was asked if she was afraid of being arrested again:

"I did think about such things, but they came secondary to my mind because the most important thing was the starvation I was experiencing and my children were in school, and time and again I would get letters that fees are being demanded by the Principal, and also they wanted some money for uniforms, and all such things. Myself, I was finding myself in a horrible situation where I would go for months with one dress, and other days with practically nothing to eat. So I forced my way down to Cape Town."

Asked about police raids she said: "... they are raiding this place time and again, you know what we are doing, we would hide under the beds, hide in the bathrooms, and hide, and just run away, I mean we are just living that type of life ..."

Asked about the people in Crossroads, she said: "You find people like me in Crossroads, widows who have children to educate and to clothe, you find women who have come down to stay with their husbands as families together with their children."

Asked whether she thought demolitions of homes would force people back to the Transkei and Ciskei: "... I am a hundred per cent sure that if they do go home, if they will be forced to take the tickets and go home, still the conditions will force them to come back, because they did not come to Cape Town simply because they like it, they came to Crossroads because of pressing needs that were there and



Crossroads is a symbol of defiance; of the determination of African working people to live in Cape Town in spite of the government's laws.

are still existing in Transkei and in Ciskei."

Said another resident of Crossroads: "What we see now is these arrests, dogs set on us, shock, bullet wounds, and last week they came about 1 o'clock on Thursday morning the police came, but because a week ago this raid started and we are waiting for them every night from then. At that 1 o'clock we were standing on hills waiting for them to come. Actually every night we wait for them. Another thing they were so angry to see us waiting for them that's why they shot us. Tear gas, and they shot one of us dead, and we buried that one on Sunday. Others are sick from that raid, lying in their beds."

"There's one thing that does not make us happy, if they came and told us what they wanted, then we wouldn't worry, but they came like animals, they came and they started fighting with us, hitting us, setting dogs on us, and shooting. When they came in they didn't even demand for passes, they came and started to fight with us."

"... They told us when these passes started, they told us when a man works 10 years in one place then the wife qualifies as well. But now I think that law is not working any more, I don't know. When we bring them our certificates of marriage or divorce they don't want to know. What I mean is that even though they want to separate us from our husbands, that is divorce, even you or the wife, you've no rights. They send you to the country and the man must stay in Cape Town. That is divorce."

[The raid which this woman referred to was carried out by 600 police soon after 1 a.m. on 14 September 1978, when Sindile Ndlala was shot dead. The police withdrew at 4 a.m. and returned at 7 a.m., arresting over 500 people.]

She explained how, after being endorsed out of Cape Town, she was forced to return. "... I spent a short time at home in the country, only I'm not used to that life. I lost many children in the country. It was very hard with me, life was

hard with me, so I had to force my way to Cape Town."

"When I came to Cape Town my husband stays with another lady, so I couldn't blame him, he's also a human being. I had to struggle a lot to get them apart, so we stayed in different places, in bushes. From the bushes the Inspectors sent us to Crossroads."

"I was so glad to see the white people themselves sending us to Crossroads because they told me they belonged to the law. So I was pleased about it, because I knew that if the white people send us here then it is all right we can stay here. But now things are happening the opposite side. They arrest us now. But now I think this is the last. We shall not move to any other place. They can do whatever they like, we have no other bush now."

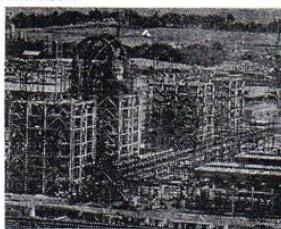
Said another woman: "Comparing life in the country to life here, I would prefer to stay here because the hardship which I felt in the country is still there if I go back. Life in the country is hard, especially with children, because we do not work. And you only have money when your husband sends it. You write a letter to your husband. By the time it reaches him you or the child is sick. By the time he writes back the child is very sick or has died. And then I decided for myself it is better to stay with my husband."

"... If they demolish our pondoks here at Crossroads, I will remain here because I have no other place to go. Because they will not allow us to stay in the men's quarters. I will stay here even if I have to stay under a bush. I have no intention of going back to the country. Because at home I will be facing hardship and starvation."

Police called against workers

Police were called in to the SASOL 2 construction site on 30 October when two hundred black workers refused to work until their employer had paid them bad weather allowance for the previous week.

In another incident about 10 days previously, on an Anglo American-owned LTA construction site near Sibasa, 26 workers were sacked for refusing to work overtime. Police were called in to deal with the strikers, although management denies it. "They were here but I think they were arresting pass offenders at the gate," said the boss.



SASOL 2 plant under construction.

Profit before safety!

Academic researchers in South Africa have confirmed what we have long been saying in "Workers' Unity": the bosses' profit system is to blame for the accidents that take place at work.

These researchers predicted in September that over the next year: ★ 2,000 will die in industrial accidents;

★ 110,000 hands, 50,000 feet and 40,000 eyes will be destroyed.

These predictions do not include deaths from gases or chemicals used on the job.

The researchers place the blame for this terrible toll in life and limb squarely on the shoulders of the industrialists. They say it is cheaper to replace unskilled workers who die or are maimed than to introduce safety measures to protect them.

The migrant labour system and the lack of trade union rights provide the bosses with an abundant supply of cheap labour. Only through trade union organisation can the workers improve their

conditions at work and defend their lives against the bosses' attempts to cheapen production.

As part of our struggle for health and safety at work, SACTU demands:

★ elected safety officers or committees at every work place, with access to workers, management and trade unions;

★ complete access to all information concerning health and safety in the work place;

★ free access by workers to any experts and doctors they choose for advice;

★ authority to the safety officers and committees, working with the trade unions, to close down any part of production which is dangerous to health, with full protection to workers' pay and benefits;

★ overall direction of industrial health and safety throughout South Africa by a central national body under workers' control, to lay down standards and carry out inspections.

Strike forces reinstatement

On 17 November, 160 black bus drivers and conductors took strike action in support of one of their leaders, Mr. J. Zungu. Mr. Zungu, chairman of the works committee, had been dismissed by the Johannesburg municipality, which employs the drivers and conductors.

Mr Zungu was fired for a "technical irregularity", say the employers, in that he passed a bus queue without stopping.

The workers say that Mr. Zungu was justified in passing the queue as he was late and there were other buses behind them. They insist that this was a case of straight victimization, and that Mr. Zungu is the third chairman of the works committee to be sacked in the past year. "We won't allow him to suffer on our behalf," said the workers.

As a result of the pressure of the workers, whose strike action cost the municipality 45,000 fares that day, Mr. Zungu was reinstated, but with three days loss of pay.

Bosses' law

What kind of law is it that allows the guilty to go scott free, and the innocent to suffer? This is what we ask about the case of the meat packers in the Transvaal who laid charges against their employer.

In April last year, 37 meat loaders laid charges against their employer, Transvaal Wholesale Meat Supply. The workers accused the management of unilaterally reducing their wages; of making them work long hours of overtime and not paying them accordingly; and of failing to register a large section of the work force under the Unemployment Insurance Fund.

As a result of refusing to accept the wage cut, the workers were sacked. They complained to the Labour Department, who at first refused to do anything about it. When they finally succeeded in having the charges laid, it took 19

months for the case to come to court. The employers paid an admission of guilt fine of R100 and so went off almost scott-free. After all, what is R100 to a rich capitalist?

For the workers it is a different story. Despite the fact that they were illegally sacked, they have not got their jobs back. Of the 25 workers who gave evidence in court against the employer, 7 had been out of work for more than a year. Another 7 had been unemployed over six months. Many others were unemployed and starving in the reserves.

So even though the boss is in the wrong, the system lets him off lightly — because it is in his interest that the laws are made. For the oppressed workers, we can be as right as can be, we will still suffer for it!

Eighty sacked for striking

Dissatisfaction over a wage increase resulted in 80 black municipal workers in Amanzimtoti going on strike. They put in for more wages, which would have added between R5 and R15 to their average weekly pay packet of R27.

The bosses regard demands for decent wages with horror. Said the Amanzimtoti Town Clerk of the modest wage demand put forward by these workers: "They were making all sorts of wild demands."

The workers had been given a 5% across-the-board increase from 1 November, but with prices rising at well over 12%, workers just cannot come out on such low wages. That is why SACTU puts forward a demand of R50 a week, with further increases automatically to make up for price rises, as the only way of fighting poverty and starvation.

The Amanzimtoti Town Council sacked the 80 strikers.

Eveready boycott

The Motor Assembly and Rubber Workers' Union, which is involved in the Port Elizabeth Eveready dispute (reported in the last issue of "Workers' Unity") is briefing British unionists on the present situation.

About 200 workers have now been sacked for striking in support of the demand for recognition of

their union. In the meantime management have taken on other workers to replace the sacked strikers.

The union has launched a national and international campaign for reinstatement of the sacked workers, and has issued a call to boycott all Eveready products. The boycott campaign has got off the ground in several centres in South Africa. Some stores in Port Elizabeth, where many of their customers support the union struggle, have stopped stocking Eveready products and taken them off their shelves.

The boycott campaign is being run in Port Elizabeth by the sacked strikers who have already been accosted by police for distributing leaflets. Other unions who have pledged support for the strikers have circulated their members, calling on them to join the boycott.

The union has asked the 15-million-strong International Metal Workers' Federation, to which it is affiliated, to take international action to have the workers reinstated. As the secretary of the union has said: "Our struggle is not the struggle of 230 sacked workers. It has become the struggle of workers all over the world."

Fire kills 41 black miners

Forty-one black mineworkers were killed on 2 December when a fire broke out 8,000 feet underground at Anglo American's giant Vaal Reefs gold mine.

Workers immediately organised nine rescue teams to reach the 121 men working in the affected area, and 80 managed to escape before management ordered the rescue operation to stop. The area was then sealed off under management's orders to prevent the fire

from spreading to damage other parts of the mine. This left no hope at all for the 41 men still trapped underground.

Altogether 223 mineworkers, including many from the rescue teams, had to be treated in hospital after the disaster. The heroic action of the workers in the rescue teams, willing to risk their lives to save their brothers, shows the spirit of solidarity which exists among mineworkers.



It is not only at Vaal Reefs that miners face constant danger, to produce gold and profits for the bosses. Accidents and disasters are frequent. Here a team of rescue workers waits to go underground at the Buffelsfontein Gold Mine in April last year. They managed to save 43 of the 66 miners trapped more than 2.5 km below the surface. The others died.

Swiss multinational in recognition dispute

For a long time now a union recognition dispute has been raging at the Durban plant of the Swiss-based multinational, Forbo Krommenie.

A petition signed by 84 of the firm's workforce of about 100 Africans was presented to management requesting recognition of the Transport and General Workers' Union. Despite the fact that the vast majority of the workers are union members, management refuses to grant recognition.

A liaison committee has been formed at the plant by management. But so strong is the demand for union recognition that five of the six worker-members of the liaison committee are now union shop stewards, and have been pushing the claim of the union. Management's response has been to try to dissolve the existing liaison committee and hold fresh elections but workers at the plant have refused to participate.

Matters came to a head on 20 October, when a worker in Krommenie's Novilon plant was sacked. Management says this worker resigned, but the workers insist he was sacked without warning in breach of management's own disciplinary "rules".

As a result of the sacking, 13

workers left the plant, which sparked off a work stoppage in the factory. Now 12 of the 13 have been taken back on condition that they have nothing to do with "outside parties" — meaning of course the union. The worker who has not been taken back is a union shop steward who has clashed with management in the past. He claims he has been locked out, and is threatening court action for reinstatement.

In spite of the fact that the vast majority of the workers are union members and are demanding recognition of their union, management say they are not prepared to discuss it until after the Wiehahn Commission reports.

This is one of many trade union recognition disputes being fought at the moment, and indicates the resistance of the employers to any form of independent organisation by the workers.

Caution

Readers in South Africa should take care not to be found with "Workers' Unity" in their possession, as it is banned.



Eveready workers in Port Elizabeth have launched an international appeal to boycott the company's products.

Government in tight spot over labour

The Wiehahn Commission has been at work for eighteen months, trying to find a solution for the government to two important questions. Firstly (as we explained last issue) the factory and mine owners, faced with a crisis of their profit system, need to employ more black labour in skilled jobs, as well as clerical, technical and supervisory positions — while continuing to pay these workers lower wages than the whites who have previously monopolised these jobs. So the Commission has been trying to find ways of adjusting the job colour bar, without causing the white unions to revolt.

Secondly, the government and the bosses have found that their old policies — the Industrial Conciliation Act; the Bantu Labour Relations Act — have in the long run failed to prevent the growth of independent trade unions of black workers. They now have to consider what other means they can use to bring the unions and their leaders more tightly under the control of the bosses and the state. The Wiehahn Commission has also been given the job of advising the government how to do this.

As we go to press, it is still not clear whether the Commission has yet completed its interim report. The Minister of Labour told a white mineworkers' meeting in November that "two days previously he had received a copy of the Wiehahn report... This report had still to go to the State President." ("Star" 24.11.78) But a week later, Professor Wiehahn told the newspapers that the report was still incomplete, that the Commission was making "certain refinements to a number of crucial questions" and hoped to submit it to the government "early in the new year." ("Rand Daily Mail" 1.12.78.) They can't both be telling the truth!

The government finds itself in a tight spot over the Wiehahn Commission's report. That is the reason for all the delays and public confusion surrounding it. The big-capitalist "verligte" wing of the government and the Nationalist Party are afraid that the Commission's report will be a red rag to a bull as far as the white workers are concerned, and play into the hands of the "verkrampies".

Already a reactionary revolt is mounting in the white unions against any relaxation of job reservation. Professor Wiehahn and the heads of the Labour Department are relying on deals-behind-the-scenes with officials of the white unions to get the white workers to fall in line with government policy. The difficulty they are having in doing so explains the last-minute "refinements" which Wiehahn says he has been making to his interim report.



These workers from the Western Transvaal are classified as "foreigners" and citizens of "BophuthaTswana" under apartheid law. In order to divide the workers, the Wiehahn Commission is expected to recommend excluding "Foreign" African workers from trade unions.

Wiehahn Commission plans new t

HANDS OFF TR

The information which has come to light about the Wiehahn Commission makes at least one thing clear: The main aim of the Commission's proposals on trade unions will be to bring the workers' organisations effectively under state control. In particular, their purpose will be to attack the independence of the black workers' unions.

Wiehahn's proposals will be presented to the public as a great "reform". It has been widely predicted that the Commission will advise some kind of "legal recognition" for African workers' unions. But this will only be the sugar-coating on a poison pill.

Aim

The whole history of apartheid and capitalism in South Africa has involved one attack after another upon the attempts of the black workers to organise. Today, the bosses and the government are working out new tactics — but their aim remains the same.

Capitalism in South Africa is seriously torn by crisis; profit rates have fallen, and unemployment has been growing by leaps and bounds. If profit levels are to be restored, it can only be done by causing even more hardship, unemployment, price rises, homelessness and hunger for the black workers and their families. Capitalism can only be maintained in South Africa at the expense of the people.

It is for this reason that free and independent trade unions represent such a threat to the bosses and the apartheid regime. The workers use these organisations as weapons in the struggle for a living wage, for decent conditions at home and work, and for an end to dictatorship. Our enemies know this — but they also know that it has proved impossible for them simply to break and ban the trade union organisations which the workers have built.

Anxious

They are anxious not to frighten off foreign investors with more signs that South Africa is "politically unstable". They fear the power of the international labour movement when aroused to action in solidarity with the workers of South Africa. But most of all they fear the determination of the black workers themselves to organise and mobilise, with or without "legal" permission. This has been shown in the Natal strikes of 1973, the general strikes of 1976, and in fact in all the militant industrial struggles of African workers over the past five or six years.

If the Wiehahn Commission recommends "legal recognition" of African unions, it will be for these reasons and not on account of any "change of heart" by the ruling class.

They cannot reconcile themselves to genuine independent unions uniting in struggle the mass of the working class. If (as seems to be the case) the government has decided to hold back at the present time from a head-on attack on the unregistered unions, it is because they are working out ways of creeping up on these unions, under the cover of "reforms", in order to strangle their independence.

This is the great danger which the Wiehahn Commission's report will present to the trade unions.

Leaks

In April last year, the right-wing TUCSA bureaucrat, Arthur Grobelaar (himself a member of



There is nothing the bosses fear more than the political strength of organised black workers

the Wiehahn Commission in open collaboration with the government and the bosses), confided to a meeting what he "predicted" the findings of the Commission would be. His speech was "leaked" to the Financial Mail, which published reports of it on 7 and 14 April, and 23 June.

Grobelaar made it clear that the proposals of the Wiehahn Commission would subject the trade unions to far greater state control than ever before. He spoke, on the one hand, of a likely extension of the present liaison/works committee system, which was introduced by law to undermine the influence of independent unions. At the same time he expected trade unions, including those organising African workers, to be given legal "recognition" subject to strict state controls.

"It is likely," said Grobelaar, "that...workers' committees, workers' councils, enterprise councils, etc., will be provided for, covering all races and all employees, and whilst it will be officially denied, that these councils are to be an alternative to trade unions, it can also be expected that they will

tics against workers' organisations

ADE UNIONS!

be vigorously encouraged to become just that."

"... (We're) going to get a more sophisticated form of works liaison committee system, which could well put the trade union movement completely out of business," he said.

Past

In the past, African workers in some areas have, for tactical reasons, made limited use of elected works committees under the law, in order to build up a basis in the factories for trade unions. But workers have never accepted these committees as an alternative to trade unions, and have always conducted a strong campaign against the government's committee system as a whole, demanding instead the recognition of their own unions.

We should now step up that campaign among our fellow workers, to make it clear that whatever "benefits" may be offered to workers by the government under an extended committee system, this system must be denounced! It is a system developed by our enemies to bring the workers' organisations and leadership under the supervision and control of the bosses and the Labour Department.

Mr. Grobbelaar thinks that the trade union movement can be "put out of business" by such a system. He makes the mistake of judging the workers by his own inclination to collaborate. Led by the struggle of the black workers, the working class of South Africa will continue to build its independent unions,

whatever the obstacles and however long it takes.

"Recognition"

In his speech, Grobbelaar made it clear just how much "recognition" the Wiehahn Commission is intending to give to the workers' trade union rights. He spoke of very strict rules for registration of unions and penalties against those failing to register (e.g., being prohibited from entering into agreements with employers).

"Foreign" African workers (presumably including those stripped of their South African citizenship under the Bantustan system) would be denied trade union rights—a measure aimed to weaken and further divide the workers' movement.

Training courses (a vital part of trade union work) would have to be registered with the government, which would exercise "control over the nature, type and form of the training schemes." The "curricula and course structure for the various training exercises will have to be approved by the controlling authorities before any training is engaged in." Every worker knows what that means! This is a direct attack on the training courses presently run by the independent unions.

Politics

One of the main aims of the Wiehahn Commission has been to build a wall between the trade unions and the liberation struggle. They are determined that politics and the workers' movement shall



Workers training courses are to be strictly controlled by the government, according to information leaked from the Wiehahn Commission.

not mix!

The bosses are keenly aware that their system of exploitation is maintained in South Africa through the national oppression of the black majority. Apartheid and capitalism are bound up together. They know that the black workers will use their trade union organisations as weapons in the struggle, not only for higher wages, but also against all oppressive laws and practices.

There is nothing the bosses fear more than the political strength of organised black workers. In their proposals to the Wiehahn Commission, they have been demanding measures to prevent the trade unions from giving voice to the workers' political demands.

The bosses of Anglo American, for example, (famous "liberals" who pretend to be on the workers' side) told the Commission they favoured "strict control of trade unions to avoid misuse for political ends, through legal requirements

as well as additional restrictions laid down by employers." (Cape Times 30.5.78) Grobbelaar's speech later confirmed that the Wiehahn Commission would ensure that trade unions "will not become subject to disruptive actions by any political, social or economic extremists."

Conspiracy

The Wiehahn Commission is a conspiracy between the bosses, the government and reactionary officials of registered unions to hold back the rising struggle of the black workers in the stormy period ahead.

To defeat this conspiracy and strengthen the independent unions in the face of the coming attacks, it is important for all workers to discuss and understand the real aims of the Wiehahn Commission, and see the hidden dangers in all its "reforms".

Three slogans to resist Wiehahn

There are three important slogans which we should bring forward among our fellow workers in preparation for a struggle against any proposals of the Wiehahn Commission which undermine the trade unions.

*** INDEPENDENCE FOR THE TRADE UNIONS!**

*** DEMOCRACY WITHIN THE TRADE UNIONS!**

*** BUILD THE UNDERGROUND!**

1. INDEPENDENCE. There is always a struggle in trade unions between two opposing forces. On the one side are those who, whether deliberately or through ignorance, promote the aims of the bosses by turning the unions into organisations for controlling the struggle of the workers. On the other side are those who try to make the unions into really effective weapons of the workers' struggle against the bosses, for an

end to exploitation and oppression.

The proposals of the Wiehahn Commission will aim to strengthen the first of these forces against the second; to strengthen the influence of the bosses within the unions against the will of the workers.

Through the control of the state over the unions, the influence of the bosses on the worker's struggle is enormously strengthened. That is why we must struggle for the independence of the trade unions as genuine workers' organisations: independent from all forms of control by the bosses' state. We must struggle also to make our unions independent from all influences of the bosses and their class agents, from reformists, within the unions.

2. DEMOCRACY. To defend the independence of the trade unions, we must have democracy within the unions. Without democracy, how can we ensure that the union leaders and officials carry out the will of the rank-and-file, and do not

use their position to hold back the struggle?

We must be vigilant against any proposals by the Wiehahn Commission that will undermine democratic control by the workers over the union leaders and officials.

Our unions should be built on the basis of committees in the factories, democratically elected by the workers. The factory floor, not the union office, must be the centre of the union's life.

Our leaders and officials should be regularly elected, and we must be able to recall those who are elected and insist on new elections at any time.

We must ensure that our leaders are not tempted to raise themselves above the rank-and-file, but always maintain the outlook of the ordinary worker. That is why it is important that union officials should earn no more than the average union member, plus reasonable expenses on the job.

3. THE UNDERGROUND. What-

ever "reforms" the Wiehahn Commission may propose, the government and the bosses will continue also to use the old methods of arrest, victimisation and so on against militant workers and trade unionists who oppose them.

Increasingly, in South Africa, the foundations of truly independent trade unions will have to be organised underground. From this base, revolutionaries will have to work to influence and effectively lead the open unions, using both legal and illegal methods to advance the struggle.

Whatever legal changes are introduced as a result of the Wiehahn Commission, we must concentrate on building underground organisation as the basis for the trade unions.

By these means we can prepare ourselves to overcome whatever obstacles the government, the bosses and the Wiehahn Commission may throw in our path.

Revolution in Iran rattles apartheid

Amid scenes of jubilation all over Iran, the Shah, the once all-powerful "Light of the Aryans and King of Kings," has been forced to flee the country for a permanent "holiday" in exile, probably in the USA. The downfall of the Shah brings to a close the first brilliant chapter of the Iranian revolution—a resounding victory for the mass struggle of millions of workers and peasants.

Placed in power through a coup organised by the American CIA, the Shah exercised a dictatorship of blood and iron, relying on a well-equipped army of 350,000 soldiers and on the notorious SAVAK secret police. SAVAK is believed to have carried out 8,000 political murders for the Shah in the past 20 years, and inflicted the most horrifying tortures on the estimated 25,000 political prisoners locked up in the Shah's jails.

Pillar

The Iranian regime has served as a pillar of imperialist influence in the oil-rich area of the Middle East, its army acting as the "policeman of the Gulf states". \$20 billion have been spent by the Shah on arms in the past six years, and Iran presently has uncompleted arms contracts with the Western powers to the tune of \$10 billion.

But even this mighty military machine was not equal to the determined resistance of the people of Iran. After months of mass demonstrations, involving at times more than a million people in the streets of Tehran alone—and months of massive political strikes, including particularly the strikes by workers on Iran's oil fields—the army began to crack. Troops who at first obeyed their officers' orders and shot down hundreds of demonstrators in cold blood (crowds were even machine-gunned from helicopters), later began to desert to the side of the people.

Useless

The military government



The Iranian revolution puts a question mark over petrol supplies in South Africa.



In the early stages of the mass movement in Iran, troops shot down demonstrators in cold blood. But as the struggle gained strength soldiers began to disobey their officers and side with the people. Many joined the celebrations as the Shah fled Iran.

appointed by the Shah to crush the revolution proved useless and, under pressure from the anxious imperialists, the Shah has been forced to hand over to a new civilian government under the conservative Dr. Bakhtiar, and quit the "Peacock Throne". US advisers have been frantically warning the Iranian generals against the lunacy of attempting a military coup under present circumstances.

Under the tremendous pressure of the masses, Bakhtiar has been forced to release political prisoners and promise to disband SAVAK and punish "all who had encroached upon the rights of the people." The people have been taking their own action to crush SAVAK, burning its headquarters, flushing out its torturers and attacking their homes:

The new regime is without popular support and continues to rest uneasily on the army. Great struggles still lie ahead in Iran.

South Africa

The shock-waves of the Iranian revolution have been felt as far afield as South Africa, causing serious difficulties for the apartheid regime. In the past Iran has supplied over 90% of South Africa's vital oil needs.

The strike by the Iranian oil workers was so effective that the Shah was forced to import oil to cope with Iran's own needs! Now the Bakhtiar government has announced that Iran will no longer supply oil to South Africa.

The South African government

has been forced to prepare petrol rationing plans and further price increases, while trying to find oil supplies on the international "spot market" (where it costs a lot more).

SASOL 1, the oil-from-coal plant, provides only 5% of South Africa's oil requirements. Even when SASOL 2 comes into use in the early 1980s, only 28% of the fuel demands of South Africa will be produced at home.

Exploitation

Like South Africa, Iran is a rich field for exploitation by profit-hungry foreign capitalists. In both countries exploitation has been maintained through the violent oppression of the workers and people. In both, the majority of the people are denied trade union and political rights.

While South Africa is rich in minerals, Iran is rich in oil. A consortium (or "club") of oil companies based in Britain, the USA, Holland and France, together control 90% of oil production in Iran. The British-owned BP is the biggest share-holder in this consortium, with 40%.

A number of these companies are also involved in fuelling the South African economy, for example: BP; the American-owned Mobil; Shell (60% Dutch and 40%

British-owned); and Total (66% French-owned). Along with the American-owned Caltex, they own three of the four oil refineries in South Africa. The fourth refinery is controlled by SASOL, with a share being owned by the Iranian National Oil Company.

The big oil companies are so powerful that the turnover of each one world-wide is greater than the whole national output of most of the world's countries. These vast financial interests have fiercely resisted attempts to cut off South Africa's oil supplies. The involvement of BP, Shell, Total and Mobil in supplying oil to the Rhodesian regime has recently been exposed.

Deals

While Iran has supplied 90% of South Africa's oil needs, it has also supplied about 80% of Israel's. (This oil is also now to be cut off.) The regimes of Iran, South Africa and Israel have been linked together in a number of economic and military deals. For instance, South Africa has been involved, along with Israel and the USA, in providing training and equipment for SAVAK, the monstrous Iranian secret police.

While the foreign oil companies siphon off fabulous profits from Iran, the workers and people of that country suffer hardship and poverty. Prices are rising by 30% each year and there are serious food shortages. 65 out of every 100 Iranians cannot read or write. 85 out of every 100 dwellings are built with mud, not cement, which explains why so many people (26,000) died in the Tabas earthquake last year.

While \$11,669 million has been spent on the army and secret police each year, a mere \$693 million has been spent on housing.

While there is hardship for millions of Iranians, there is wealth and luxury for the elite. Ten per cent of the population takes 42% of the total wealth produced.

Shaken

Now the Iranian masses, and most particularly the workers, have shaken this system to its foundations. In doing so, they have also helped to shake the system of apartheid.

The struggle of the Iranian workers and peasants shows how the fate of working people all over the world is bound together. It is the responsibility of workers throughout the world to support the workers and people of Iran. In doing so they will at the same time be strengthening the struggle of the workers and people of South Africa.

"Workers' Unity" is intended for workers and trade unionists both in South Africa and abroad. To continue producing this and other publications, SACTU urgently needs financial support. Readers outside South Africa are asked to send donations to SACTU's London Office at 38 Graham Street, London N1 8JX