

Congress Militant

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Paper of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC

Vote ANC for a better life for all ... Campaign for jobs, houses and peace ...

Kick out the Nats!

IN JUST over two months the Nats will be kicked out of power. In April the masses will have the chance to get rid of the NP and its corruption.

The NP is now trying to remove all the bloody stains from its past record. It is posing as a party of democracy and prosperity. But their list of candidates shows what a

lie this is.

It is topped by ministers like Pik Botha and Hernus Kriel, who for years presided over apartheid. Then there are the *Witdoek* leaders -

Ngxobongwana and Mali Hoza, who did the Nats' dirty work for them in the Cape townships.

The Nat's system of apartheid was responsible for keeping the majority of our people in slavery.

In their dying days as a government, the NP have exposed how hollow and false their 'democratic' credentials are. They stand idly by as the ultra-right sabotage railway

tracks and electricity pylons and bomb ANC and union offices.

Right-wing terror

Terre' Blanche threatens to plunge the country into "total war". He boasts that "more explosions will occur".

This government, as Nelson Mandela says,

"are a pathetic collection of weaklings who are unable to take any decisive action to protect the interests of the people."

Both he and Cosatu have warned that the movement will retaliate if right-wing attacks continue.

No-one is going to rob us of our election victory at the last minute. We have waited 300 years for

the right of everyone to vote.

The time has come for us to put the NP where it belongs - in the dustbin of history.

The elections give us the chance to crush the party of apartheid and dictatorship. Every vote must be used to close the door on the old South Africa.

Now is the time!

Hamba Kahle Comrade Barayi

Comrade Elijah Barayi was elected the first president of Cosatu in 1985 at the age of 55.

He joined the ANC in 1961 during the Defiance Campaign.

From 1960 he worked on the mines and became one of the first workers to join the NUM in 1981. In 1982 he was elected NUM vice-president.

At the founding rally

of Cosatu comrade Barayi warned NP president, PW Botha, to scrap the pass laws within six months or Cosatu would call for a mass pass burning campaign.

Comrade Barayi will be remembered as a workers' leader who fought in the interest of his class against oppression and exploitation.



Inside

★ End of Inkatha?

★ Election reports

★ Reconstruction Programme

★ Mexico uprising

Editorial

End of Inkatha?

Inkatha has exposed itself as a bloody force campaigning against the interests of the majority of South Africans. Buthelezi wants to prevent people from breaking free from centuries of racial oppression. He wants to rob Zulu working people of their hard won right to vote.

At the time when the oppressed are looking with hope to the first one-person-one-vote elections Buthelezi wants a boycott. He threatens to disrupt elections in alliance with parties of the far-right and plunge SA into a bloodbath. This is in spite of the concessions made by the ANC - including the reported willingness of the ANC leadership to consider a two-ballot system.

The truth is the IFP fears democratic elections. Repeatedly polls show that they have only about 5% support nationally. The IFP is in third place even in Natal. The election result would bury forever the myth that the IFP enjoys popular support.

Whatever decision the IFP takes, ultimately they are faced with ruin. If they boycott they will be isolated and excluded from the new government. If they participate their lack of support will be exposed.

It is even possible that the IFP may split. Some central committee members want to contest elections, even without Buthelezi! Most IFP supporters want to vote!

Since the 1970s Inkatha has been used by Big Business as a battering ram against working-class unity. The bosses hoped it would become a strong, conservative ethnic party, creating divisions and stopping the ANC from winning a clear majority. Now they have deserted it.

Under the protection of the NP it always relied on violence, directed from its base in the KwaZulu state, to enforce 'support'. Hostels are still used as barracks from which to attack communities where ANC support is strong.

The IFP works closely with racists in the SAP and SADF. Its outrage at the ISU's withdrawal from Katshehlong and Thokoza confirms their alliance with these thugs.

In Natal's rural areas Buthelezi uses the 'authority' of the King and the chiefs to control people. He demands recognition of the monarchy in the new constitution. But agreeing to this would mean accepting an unelected, undemocratic institution responsible for the continued oppression of women and youth.

The IFP has no political programme that can win mass support. That is why they will resort to intimidation - either to try and disrupt the election or to force people to vote IFP. Already, they are training assassins at Umfolozi. Recently a group of them was deployed at Port Shepstone to enforce an Inkatha-imposed curfew.

Who can take seriously an organisation in alliance with the AVF and AWB - with racists who have bombed ANC offices and attacked ordinary blacks?

Strategy for defending elections

If we are going to get a two-thirds majority the ANC and Cosatu must make plans now to defend people during the election campaign and on the days of the election.

The ANC should demand that:

- The TEC immediately closes down IFP and right-wing military camps.
 - The KwaZulu and Bop police should be dissolved.
 - Government funds to Buthelezi and Mangope be cut.
- These demands should be backed with mass mobilisation.

In Natal the ANC's election campaign is lagging behind. The campaign here must concentrate on popularising the plans in the RDP. If the oppressed masses in Natal are confident that an ANC government will carry out reforms promised in the *Manifesto* they will be more determined to break free from the stranglehold of Inkatha shackles and chiefs.

In the townships, election committees must be set up and street meetings revived. Cosatu must be involved in all our plans. On election day we should organise people to go to vote in groups. In areas where intimidation is expected mass marches should be organised to the polling booths, with proper protection.

The National Peace Keeping Force will not be able to keep peace in all areas during the elections. Community-based Peace Corps need to be set up urgently. They should include self-defence units and be accountable to the community. The ANC must demand that they be recognised by the TEC and given arms strictly for the purpose of self-defence.

Election round-up:

Two months left to bury the NP



Every vote counts! Every comrade an election organiser! Campaign for a two thirds majority! Send reports to: Congress Militant, P.O.Box 596, Newtown, 2113, Johannesburg

Use your last bullet!

Some researchers already show that the ANC can win the elections by 70%. The question is how can we make sure this happens? What will stop the people from voting on that day?

1. People will not vote because they do not know how.

2. Violence may stop some people.

3. Some will think if the ANC is going to win they need not go to the polling station.

To overcome these problems we must make sure that every comrade is prepared to be a volunteer for democracy.

We must sell the ANC to the people, and make sure that we reach every voter who is undecided to convince them to vote ANC. If we can do that I am optimistic the ANC can get 85%.

We must convince people to vote for one liberation movement. If we are divided let us watch out for the NP-DP-IFP combination.

Let's be realistic. Everyone must know that the last bullet to remove the NP regime is your vote. Make your cross (X) next to the ANC.

By an ANC election organiser, Khayelitsha

Recruiting in the Reef hostels

Johannesburg East ANC has recruited more than 600 new members since the election campaign began.

Most join at street tables on Saturdays. People literally queue up to join.

The biggest breakthrough has been recruiting workers in the local hostels - Eskom, PPC, Haggie Rand.

30 joined from Primrose Gold Mine in the same week that many of them were affected by a leak of cyanide gas. Many more are expected to follow them.

The branch's biggest problem is some of the

other hostels in the area - Jeppe, Denver and George Goch - which are dominated by Inkatha. Their reign of terror makes open ANC work virtually impossible.

Their intimidation has spread to surrounding areas of Jeppetown and Belgravia. In December an Actstop tenants' activist was shot dead, allegedly by Inkatha gunmen hired by a slum landlord.

But the branch is determined to campaign in these areas. We will not be intimidated.

ANC member
Johannesburg East

We fight them on the beaches

In December most of our constituency goes to Monwabisi beach. Before our campaign there was violence on the beaches. When we arrived the election campaign was the focus.

We know that the majority in Khayelitsha will vote ANC. Central to our plans is to make sure that people know how to vote and get to the polls. Then Khayelitsha will be delivered to the ANC. This is what motivates us.

Our campaign at the beach was very exciting. People enjoyed it. We did mock elections over and over. A lot of questions were asked. A group of

Moslems wanted to know if the ANC will take their businesses. We said No! Coloureds asked if under the ANC there will be a change in their lives as well. We said Yes! Vote for the ANC because we have a Reconstruction Programme.

Domestic workers are being intimidated to vote DP. We had to emphasise the secrecy of the vote.

We met people from Transkei, Natal and farms outside Cape Town. They were all impressed. We gave them material and exchanged addresses. A video was made of the event.

By ANC volunteers,
Khayelitsha

NUM calls for migrant workers to be given SA citizenship

As elections draw closer thousands of migrant workers who want to vote are being refused SA identity documents. Congress Militant received a letter from a comrade in Bophutatswana concerning this problem. He writes:

"I have been an ANC supporter since I was in Zimbabwe. So right now I am staying in Boputhatswana and want to vote in the coming elections.

"There are thousands of foreigners who are in Bop and according to what I see these thousands of people are not going to vote because they don't have IDs.

"I am one of those people. I need help to go through this problem so that I can show the light to other friends and other thousands who do not have IDs.

"All these people are here to stay and stay for good. Some of them are married. Some have more than 15 years but no ID."

At its Congress in February the NUM passed a resolution to the TEC demanding that migrant workers who had helped create South Africa's wealth over decades should have the right to vote. They pointed out that white migrants are granted citizenship after five years, whereas blacks are still classified as contract workers.

Congress Militant supports this resolution. We call on comrades in ANC and COSATU to pass similar resolutions in your branches.

ANC Political Prisoners still behind bars

"I gave my life to fight apartheid. I have been a political prisoner for eight years. I will be very sad if I cannot cast my vote to bury apartheid. My message to voters is 'Don't trust De Klerk.'"

This is the message of one of the more than 20 ANC political prisoners at Leeuwkop Maximum Security prison. These comrades are still behind bars despite several agreements reached with De Klerk that were supposed to guarantee their release.

They are at the mercy of De Klerk and the three white judges who sit on the Indemnity Council. Six months after their last application for Indemnity the Numsa Six have received a letter asking them to be patient.

All these comrades are still in prison for "offences" they committed in the struggle to free us from apartheid. Many are former death-row prisoners, and some have been behind bars since 1985.

One comrade, Joseph Koetle, is a commander of MK. His trial for the murder of a security policeman in 1987 is due to start on March 21. Even a 17-day hunger strike in January was not enough to get him free.

It is a crime that these comrades who have given so much to our struggle should still be in prison. It is an even greater crime that De Klerk has denied political prisoners the right to vote.

We call on all ANC and Cosatu branches to pass resolutions demanding their release now.

Fax your letters of protest to:
T D Rudman,
Executive Director, TEC:
(012) 325 6318

Why coloured people should NOT vote NP

Now is the time for all oppressed people to unite against the oppressors.

The Nats are going to lose in the coming elections. The Western Cape is the only region where they hope to win. This is because they think that coloured people will vote for them. I want to give some reasons why people should NOT vote for the NP:

■ If we vote for the NP Hernus Kriel will be Prime Minister for the Western Cape. This is the man that bosses depend on to beat us and break our strikes. His police has just set dogs, fired tear-gas and rubber bullets at South African Nylon Spinners workers.

■ The Nats are responsible for the huge housing backlog in our communities. A family in Mitchellsplain have been living at the back of a bakkie for more than a year. This caused the death of a

young child. This family has been on the waiting list for too long.

In Bellville South they made white Bellville attractive. They said to us

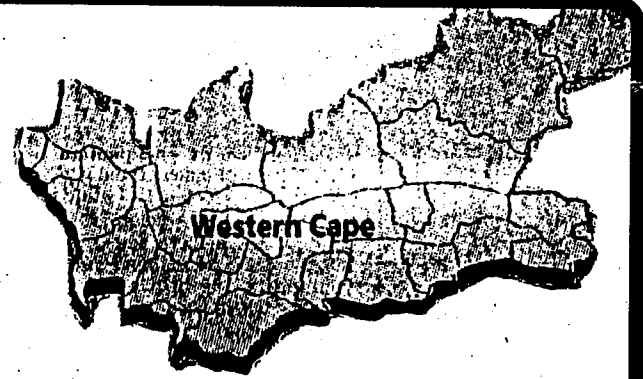
they don't have money to build houses. The last houses built in Bellville South were in 1979. This is also the situation in Bishop Lavis, Belhar, Mitchellsplain, and

Western Cape has the highest incidence of TB in the whole of SA. It can be treated if every family has access to a decent house, a living wage, a nutritious diet and a job. Our health cannot be

Atlantis. The Nats have made 7 million people homeless.

■ Our children are without teachers, classrooms are overcrowded. Nats have closed down our schools and made many teachers unemployed. They call this their rationalisation policy. In most schools our children are sitting with very few teachers, whilst so many teachers are sitting at home.

■ The



separated from our poor housing conditions. In Tafelsig, Bellville and Belhar 15 people are forced to live in two-bedroomed houses.

■ Unemployment in this country is 46%. Many coloured youth who passed matric have no future. They cannot further their studies, because there is no money. They cannot find a job because bosses are retrenching. The result is a rise in crime.

Our social problems and all the evils of apartheid lies with the NP and De Klerk.

Our future for improving our lives lies with the ANC. Nats had 46 years to do something for us, but what did they do? Why must we believe their promises now?

Many coloured people fear a strong ANC government.

They fear domination by blacks. **But ganging up with those who oppressed us is not the way forward.**

If we vote for the Nats, Witdoeke murderers on the NP list like Ngxobonwana and Mali Hoza will rule in the Western Cape. They are responsible for the chaos that left dozens of people dead and thousands homeless at Crossroads in 1986.

There is no reason to fear unity with the blacks in the ANC. We have suffered together in the struggle for justice and equality. We should not betray that struggle now by voting for the Nats.

Josie Abrahams
Bellville ANC
(personal capacity)

How we won our area back

A few months ago our area was dominated by the so-called Western Cape Squatters Association (Wecusa). Jerry Tutu, a local Wecusa leader who joined the PAC, is very unpopular in Khayelitsha.

Wecusa were fighting the Civics. When Tutu was in Greenpoint he used to extort money from poor people.

When the ANC branch engaged on an electrification campaign for the shack area he tried to sabotage it. He told Eskom to install electricity only in his area so that he can take credit for it.

We had to counter him. We started building Sanco. We took up a campaign to build a creche. This was successful and the community felt what they can achieve with their unity. This cut across the Jerry Tutu and the PAC.

Bandwagon

He joined PAC at the time when all Wecusa leaders were jumping on the band wagon of ANC and PAC.

PAC opportunistically allowed his membership. We had a campaign in the ANC against these people. We are

ANC members in Macassar report

fighting the political mis-education of the youth by the PAC.

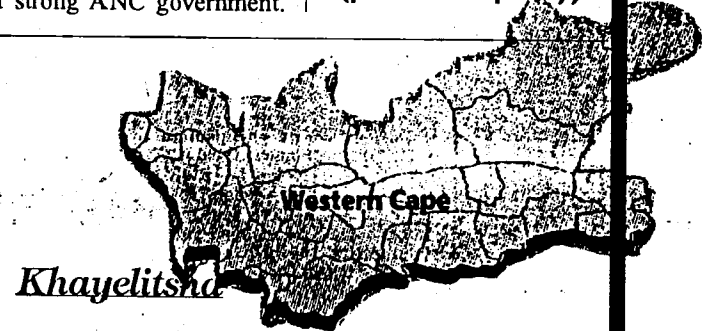
Youth are praising the killing of the whites in St James massacres and so on. The turning point in this political battle came recently when we won an ex-PAC local leader to the ANC. He is now the Secretary of Sanco.

We met him in a meeting called to curb a feud between Paso and Cosas at Chris Hani

High School. The PTSA at the school called us as the situation was getting out of control. Local ANC and PAC intervened.

PAC local leaders were very impressed by us. We had political discussions after the meetings. *Why are ANC leaders compromising with the whites? What is wrong with bombing a lot of whites are they not the enemy? Why did the ANC leaders abandon the armed struggle?* These were their questions.

No comrades! We explained patiently, the problem is not the colour of people but the capitalist



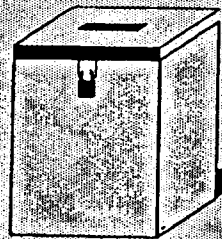
system that exploits the working people as well as the middle class.

We must unite against the capitalists and their state. Bombing the whites is not helping us, but the enemy. You drive people who could support us to the NP and DP. The capitalists will use them against us.

We told them that we do not agree with all the

compromises by our leaders. After elections we will fight together with the working class to reverse them.

After a long battle we won them. Now the PAC is intimidating them. Serious death threats have been made. On January 8 at the ANC birthday meeting they took a platform to explain why they joined the ANC.



Inside the ballot box

Self-interest

X Recent opinion polls have shown that a majority of bosses now say they support the ANC - even in Natal! Most want Nelson Mandela to be the next President. Does this mean the bosses have suddenly been converted to democracy? *Business Day* thinks not.

"They favour him because his election would be in their own best interests ... The business community may be fickle, even hypocritical, and it seldom speaks with one voice, but when it comes to survival it has powerful basic instincts."

They added: "There were times when it was expedient to kowtow to John Vorster and P.W. Botha, because they seemed to offer the best chance of a stable business environment, but businessmen also saw the writing on the wall for an untenable apartheid system long before it began to crumble." (6/12/93)

Walter Felgate for the Seychelles!

X All is not well in the IFP. Inkatha is unable to hide its divisions. The pact made between its Vaal region and the AWB was criticised by Ulundi; the King's children attended the ANC's Sonke Peace Festival; now the assegais are being sharpened for Buthelezi's best friend Walter Felgate. In January an unnamed Inkatha central committee member told the *Sunday Star* (9/1/94):

"Walter Felgate could become a patriot and emigrate to the Seychelles. He served us badly at negotiations. Cyril and Roelf went off trout fishing together and struck deals. Felgate just irritated everyone ... We were badly let down by him."

Who never killed anyone?

X The DP is owned by big business, and Anglo American in particular. It claims "We never killed anyone ... only apartheid."

Miners who work for Anglo-American disagree. In the last 90 years nearly 90 000 miners were killed making people like Zac De Beer rich. Those that survived lived on miserable wages, separated from their families, in hostels provided by Anglo. We think the DP should change its slogan to: "We never invented apartheid ... we only benefitted from it."

Brothers in arms?



X Misery likes company! Is there truth in reports that the PAC is considering an alliance with the IFP? PAC leaders should remember that an Alliance with the IFP is an alliance with the AWB and the KP.

What the Reconstruction & Development Programme offers

- One million houses within five years. At least 200 000 new homes to be built every year.
- 72% of population to be supplied with electricity by the year 2000. All schools and clinics to be electrified as soon as possible.
- Telephones to be provided to all schools and clinics within two years.
- 20 to 30 litres of clean water to every person per day.
- Improved antenatal care and supervised deliveries for all women by 1999. All these facilities to be free within three years.
- Every woman will have the right to choose to have an abortion.
- An immunisation programme which covers 90% of the population within three years.
- An odourless toilet system, appropriate on-site sanitation and communal refuse collection for all within two years.
- A national public works programme to build roads, schools, clinics and other basic infrastructure. This programme aims to provide 2,5 million jobs in ten years.
- Redistribution of 30% of agricultural land within five years. To ensure that land can be effectively used a water supply programme will begin in the first year of the RDP.
- Redlining (refusing loans to poor areas) and other forms of discrimination by banks against the poor will be prohibited by law.
- The establishment of a safe, convenient and affordable public transport system.
- Zero-rating of VAT on basic necessities.

Cosatu must lead the struggle for

Vote
ANC
for

Jobs, Peace

In less than three months the ANC will be in government. A massive ANC victory in the elections will make it possible to tackle the poverty and deprivation experienced by our people. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) contains many of the demands which our movement has fought for over decades. If it is implemented it will lead to significant improvements in the lives of millions.

Yet the bosses and their parties, the NP and DP, have criticised the RDP for raising the expectations of people. They say that the ANC's *Election Manifesto* is a "shopping list" which "would blow the country's financial resources out of the water."

Bosses' interest

In their response to the RDP the ruling class has again shown their true colours. While giving verbal support to the "new South Africa", they do not want the ANC to adopt policies which would affect their wealth and economic power.

The bosses' newspaper *Business Day* agrees that reconstruction is necessary, but says that "if anything should inhibit economic

growth, the programme should be aborted." (18/1/94)

Their plan for economic growth and reconstruction includes wage restraint, retrenchments and no interference with profits.

Big bankers say that they will only finance reconstruction if it is "financially feasible!" They argue that there is not enough money to pay for the ANC's social plans.

This is a lie. Under NP rule they have accumulated enormous wealth on the basis of cheap labour and the impoverishment of the majority. The 20 richest families in SA own over R14 billion in shares!

Last year the bosses were responsible for taking R15 billion out of the country. The leading international bosses' magazine, *The Economist*, says, "If South



Africa merely needs capital as such, it can find plenty at home. White institutions have some R40 billion to invest every year ... Hence the littering of white suburbs with superfluous shopping-centres" (1/12/93).

Moreover, during the four decades of NP rule the bosses willingly financed the NP's massive military budgets.

Over the last decade they invested very little into the domestic economy. The

essence of their policy was to get profits first ... then address the needs of the people with what's left over.

This is going to be the key problem faced by the new government. While the bosses may be prepared to make some concessions in the future, it will be a mistake to think that they will co-operate with plans to bring about fundamental changes. On the contrary, they will use their economic power to try to force the ANC leadership to adopt

Education

Vanessa Merkel, a Sadtu teacher, argues that the RDP should provide for free and compulsory education up to the present matric level and that the state should provide free educare facilities in all areas.

Since the publication of the ANC's education policy document, teachers have had intense debate about its implications for education in the country. The RDP proposes a complete overhaul of the Apartheid education system and aims to challenge the high rate of illiteracy in the country.

Free education for 10 years, a single education

department and a total revision of the curriculum will ensure a basic and dynamic education for all. Such a plan, which includes the building of more schools and training more teachers will dismantle an important tenet of the apartheid system.

However, to only provide compulsory education only up to Std. 7 will still leave

many working class youth without further education. Many poor people will not be able to afford to pay for further secondary and tertiary education.

Every child must have the right to a basic education which goes up to the present matric level, in whatever field they choose. Unless this is done poor youth will remain at a disadvantage.

Lift women's burdens

The RDP has many excellent ideas on empowering women. In the new SA women, who form

the majority of the population are looking forward to playing a leading role.

This is why women must be freed of all family burdens placed on them. It is necessary that the state should provide free educare facilities in all areas. There are very few creches in the townships and workplaces. Where they do exist they are too expensive.

These facilities are necessary to ensure a good start to our children's education. But they will also relieve women from having sole responsibility for rearing children.

ANC government should lead Wage of R300 for

reconstruction and development

Justice and Freedom



main obstacle to social reforms. What they give with the one hand they try to take back with the other.

Working class action

It is for this reason that organised workers, the rural poor, youth and women must be ready to struggle for the demands of the RDP.

Only in this way will the working class overcome the obstacles which the bosses will put up. Nothing must stand in our way of eliminating poverty.

By winning these demands the working class will be in a better position to struggle for the full implementation of the demands in the Freedom Charter. Every reform which can be extracted from the ruling class will be an advantage to us.

For example, a mass campaign by Cosatu for a national minimum wage would rally millions of workers behind its banner and can break the bosses' opposition to it.

MERG proposes a minimum wage - even though their figure of R400

a month is well below what the majority needs to ensure a decent living. Winning a minimum wage of R300 a week will raise the living levels of the majority.

On the basis of a campaign for the RDP the ANC will be able to inflict a massive defeat on the Nats in the elections.

But after elections the ANC leadership must not fall into the trap of being dictated to by the bosses. When popular leaders in other countries have done this, they inevitably retreated on the demands of the people.

The bosses are campaigning relentlessly for their policies. The working class must apply pressure to prevent them from undermining the RDP.

Clear socialist policies are necessary to struggle for lasting reforms. Ultimately this can only be achieved when the working class takes control of the commanding heights of the economy.

by Noor
Nieftagodien
(Newclare ANC,
Personal capacity)

policies which favour them.

No more compromises

The ANC leadership has unfortunately shown a preparedness to compromise under the pressure from the bosses. Thus the demand for nationalisation of the monopolies has been scrapped.

So too has the proposal from the ANC-aligned

Macro Economic Research Group (Merg) that the Reserve Bank should be under government control.

Strong state intervention in the economy is still essential to ensure reconstruction plans are carried out.

These retreats by the leadership only serve to strengthen the hand of the bosses - and will hold back the campaign to eliminate poverty.

The bosses are always the

For a Free National Health Service

Apartheid and capitalist policies have left the majority of South Africans in poor and unhealthy conditions.

The RDP's proposal to eliminate apartheid wastage and bring health facilities closer to people, especially in the rural areas and squatter camps, will be a tremendous advance.

The RDP promises that health care will be free for children under six, the aged, disabled, unemployed and students.

The question is why not make the whole health

service free? Health is a right and not a commodity to be sold. The state has a responsibility to provide proper health care to everyone.

An increasing number of unionised workers are getting medical aid and can therefore use private institutions. But these schemes are rip-offs. Every month money is deducted but workers do not get the full benefit of this. Rather use this money to build an efficient public health system which would be free for all.

High medical costs is a big problem. This is because medical suppliers make huge profits from our health needs. They should be brought under public control to ensure production for people's needs not profit.

Improve working conditions

Medical staff form the backbone of the health service. Under NP rule their conditions deteriorated drastically.

Nurses work long shifts and earn a pittance. Yet they don't have the right to strike to improve their conditions. This right must be guaranteed under the ANC government.

Training more health workers is essential to overcome the present burden on overworked staff. A living wage and decent working hours will go a long way in making our new health service among the best in the world.

By a Natspruit
(Nehawu) doctor

Under the NP

The rich got richer ...

☛ In 1993 South Africa's 20 richest families together owned R14,14 billion in shares. This marks an increase of about R4 billion from 1992.

☛ The Oppenheimers remain the wealthiest family in the country. They own R4 billion worth of shares alone.

☛ Douw Steyn, one of the richest men in the country, owns a mansion worth R30 million.

☛ Nicky Oppenheimer, heir to the Anglo empire, owns his own helicopter, cricket team and cricket ground.

☛ De Klerk earns more than R200 000 a year. Now the NP government is proposing a pay hike of 20% for leading civil servants compared to the 5% increase for the rest of the civil service.

and the poor got poorer ...

☛ 17 million people live below the Minimum Living Level. 11 million of these in the rural areas.

☛ About 3 million households and 17 000 clinics are without electricity.

☛ Less than 1% of black people have telephones.

☛ More than 12 million black people do not have access to clean drinking water.

☛ 21 million do not have adequate sanitation (toilets and refuse removal).

☛ 60 000 children die every year from malnutrition and starvation.

☛ About 7 million people live in shacks.

☛ Most farmworkers still only earn about R250 per month

☛ 7 million are without jobs.

legislate a National Minimum
a 40 hour week

Sweden:

For many years the welfare state in Sweden was said to prove that it was possible for a "mixed economy" to bring lasting improvements in the conditions of the working class. It was said that in Sweden great reforms had been achieved through co-operation – rather than conflict – with the capitalists.

In November 1993 Congress Militant reporter SHARON EKAMBARAM visited Sweden at the invitation of the Swedish Marxist organisation, *Arbetsförbundet Offensiv (AFO)*. She reports on the political background and what she found.

The first impressions I got was the quality of people's apartments. Every flat has central heating, so even in freezing conditions, people can walk around with a T-shirt! There are no beggars on the streets, and no spaza shops.

But these were just my first impressions.

I soon realised that Swedish society is in a crisis. I witnessed demonstrations by striking workers, and protests against racism. I felt a growing anger, especially among women and the youth.

Welfare state

The history of Sweden this century seemed to make it unique among capitalist countries.

In the early 1930's it was the first country to implement Keynesian economic policies. This helped to boost its economy at a time of economic crisis across Europe.

Its neutrality in the Second World War, meant that it could trade with both sides. At the end of the war its industry was undamaged – unlike the rest of Europe which was devastated by

bombs.

This meant that the Social Democratic government was able to take advantage of the post-war economic upswing. They met many of the demands of the strong workers' movement, but at the same time capitalism was able to make big profits. This was where the idea of "consensus politics" came from.

They built a welfare state, which was the best in Europe, and created a social security system that gave generations of youth, women and workers the fifth highest living standards in the world.

- Housing was provided for all, including unemployed youth.

- A free and compulsory education system was created.

- Greater equality between men and women was achieved. By the 1980s 90% of the women were working – mainly in the public sector.

Capitalist crisis

But all of these improvements depended upon continued growth in the world economy. After the war Swedish industry came

to rely greatly on exports. Therefore when the post-war boom ended during the 1970s Swedish workers began to face new attacks on their living standards.

The capitalists blamed the crisis on the trade unions, high taxes and public spending.

As usual the bosses' response was to look after themselves.

Giant monopolies like Volvo and Wallenberg shifted their investments to other countries.

Between 1974 and 1990 manufacturing output in Sweden increased by only 16% – while that of Swedish owned multi-nationals abroad grew by 180%!

Industry stagnated. In the engineering sector, productivity fell by 20% between 1985 and 1990.

The working class became disillusioned. In 1976 the Social Democratic party (the party traditionally supported by the working class) lost power in the elections.

For the next six years an openly capitalist government attempted to reverse many of the gains. It provoked mass opposition and a strike movement that became

at the end of an era of reform



known as the *Storkonflikten* ("Great Conflict") in 1980.

Workers rallied once more behind the Social Democrats, and in 1982 they were elected back to power.

But in conditions of recession the new government was faced with a choice of either carrying out the policies of the capitalists – or leading a mass struggle to defend the gains of the past. *It chose to defend capitalism.*

The cuts began in the late 1980's. In 1990 a "crisis package" was introduced which included a strike ban!

Workers were angered when the leadership of the LO – the main trade union federation in Sweden – agreed to this. Unfortunately the trade union leadership had grown comfortable during the boom years. Their close relationship with the government led them to forget the militant traditions on which the Swedish labour movement was built.

The only union that objected was the Council Workers Union, where a supporter of *Offensiv* led the opposition.

As a result of such proposals workers' disillusion with the SD grew. In 1991 they lost power to Carl Bildt, Sweden's Conservative Prime Minister, leading a new coalition of capitalist parties.

Social conditions

Under Bildt attacks on people's living standards were stepped up. In 1993 severe austerity measures were introduced; with cuts in welfare benefits such as housing subsidies, and sickness benefits. This included drastic cuts in spending on schools.

Unemployment is rising rapidly, with the youth and

women being hit the hardest.

In October 1993 it reached 9.4%, one of the highest levels in Western Europe. Five years ago it was less than 2%. 1994 will see 80 000 people without a job.

Women's gains have also been undermined. They have been especially hard hit by cuts in the public sector.

Fightback

90% of the workforce are unionised in Sweden. But for

demonstration against the racists and fascists was banned.

Elin Gauffin, the leader of *Elevkampanjen* told me: "The new reaction from the state is frightening. They have realised that what started off as a small demonstration was enough to light the fire."

"Because we are the only organisation with a programme for fighting the racists they are aware of the potential threat this poses to them. They have launched a massive propaganda campaign against us and accused us of inciting the youth."

1994

The high standard of living and the advanced welfare state are now a thing of the past.

During 1994 there are likely to be major struggles as people fight to defend their

jobs and living standards. Opposition to Bildt is growing.

Once again there is a big swing to the Social Democrats. In the election later this year they will probably get a majority.

But the masses will be voting for a government that will fight for them – not defend the bosses.

In Sweden it is becoming clear to more people that their problems cannot be resolved without the ending of the bosses' economic system.

For as long as the wealth of Sweden is concentrated in the hands of the 20 monopolies that control the economy there will be unemployment and suffering.

That is why support for *Arbetsförbundet Offensiv* is growing. It campaigns for working class unity and socialism. It explains that there has to be a proper plan to run the economy in the interest of the majority.

Racist parties stir hatred

In the last few years there has been a rise of racism and fascism across Europe. In Sweden racist parties like the New Democrats blame the social crisis on immigrants. Their leader Ian Wachtmeister, is openly sympathetic to the fascist movement. DOREEN FRANCIS, formally from Uganda, speaks about what it means to be black in Sweden.

When my family arrived in 1984 we felt welcome, and people cared about us. The government ensured that you will not fall out of the system and your basic needs were met.

For me Sweden was a dream country.

Today, things are really bad!

The New Democrats are stirring up hatred of foreigners. They spread lies about immigrants. They create fear by saying that foreigners are committing all the crime and taking away jobs. They say: "There are too many foreigners in Sweden, we must stop them from coming here."

Sadly people believe these lies.

Unfortunately the government seems to support the racists. The newspapers too are creating a bad picture. Recently the government gave the police 200 million Swedish crowns (R380 000) to hunt down "illegal" immigrants.

Most foreigners are forced to live on the welfare of the state – even though you have to beg for this.



This makes people suffer from depression. It is difficult to get a job so amongst us there is about 45% unemployment even though many people are qualified doctors, lawyers, and teachers. There is big competition for jobs like cleaning as these are the only jobs available for us.

I think that the present government must go. Under a thriving social welfare state, people felt confident. Now the government's policy is to allow the rich to get richer, while the situation gets worse for poor people. I say that socialism is definitely the answer, to stop all these wars against ordinary people.



"Make Bildt (Sweden's Prime Minister) unemployed!"

Mexican uprising

REVOLUCION
O MUERTE

Revolution or Death – slogan painted on a wall in Chiapas

"For the government it doesn't matter that we possess nothing, absolutely nothing; not a home, not land, not work, not education ..."
– ZNLF leader

The signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between USA, Canada and Mexico on 1 January 1994 helped to spark a mass uprising in Chiapas, the poorest of Mexico's 31 States.

1 000 armed Indian peasants belonging to the Zapatista National Liberation Front (ZNLF) came down from the mountains and took over four towns. They declared they would fight until death, unless there was an improvement in their lives.

The rebellion was brutally repressed. Over 400 were murdered. The Mexican army used helicopter gunships to hunt down the rebels. Prisoners were shot in the head with their hands tied behind their backs. Their bodies were left in the street to intimidate local people.

But although it was defeated, the Zapatista rebellion was a serious blow to the government of President Salinas. It was a warning that bitter opposition lies ahead.

Counter reforms

Salinas was elected in 1988 under the banner of the Institutionalised Revolutionary Party (PRI). The PRI has been in power since 1929, but has long stopped being 'revolutionary'.

Salinas's programme of privatisation of land and industry has made him the darling of the USA and capitalism internationally. Many big bosses in SA see it as a model which they hope the ANC will follow!

Mexican workers think differently. A copper miner expressed the feeling of most people: "The current government is perhaps the most reactionary that we have had for many decades ... wrapped up in the slogan of 'modernisation', it is actually trying to take us back..."

Since 1980 wages have fallen by 50%. There have been mass retrenchments. On the other hand Mexico has 13 billionaires today, compared with one in 1988.

The desperation of workers and peasants has been increased by Nafta. Under this agreement a huge free trade zone has been created between these three countries.

But while the bosses will benefit from Nafta – the poor

will suffer. Mexican peasants will not be able to compete with cheaper and better American farm produce. American workers will find production being moved to Mexico where wages are low and trade unions weaker.

Many people feel that this agreement bears no lasting green future for them. It is a weapon to be used against their living standards in the years to come. There will have to be a struggle.

Mexican peasants and workers have a militant history. But in the past mass uprisings by the peasants were defeated because they failed to link up with workers in the cities.

Today, there is a different situation. Mexico has a strong urban working class. On January 13 a demonstration of 60 000 was held in Mexico City in solidarity with the ZNLF.

To defeat Salinas the peasants will have build on this unity.

They must also look for solidarity with workers in the USA and Canada who will also suffer because of Nafta.

Across North and South America working people need to join hands to fight their common enemy. We need unity for the overthrow of capitalism in all three countries.

The future is socialism. Unity is the weapon to struggle for Land, Peace and Democracy.

The peasants see this. They have said, through one of their leaders, Jesus, "Our thinking is that we have to build socialism... along the lines of Cuba but better." ●

Giving the land back – to the landlords

Mexico's population of 90 million consists of several different nationalities: 30% Amerindian, 60% Mestizo and 9% White.

In Chiapas state 80% of the inhabitants are Mayan Indian peasants.

The Salinas government has failed to address their problems.

Instead it has reversed progressive land-reforms that were won in the past.

In 1991 a law was passed which privatised land which for years had been used communally under the "ejido" system.

This led to the majority of peasants being turned off the land into towns where there is no work.

Anger has also built up because of the way the Indian peasants are treated by the Spanish-speaking 'white' Mexicans who govern the region – although they are a small minority of the population.

Local people are cheated out of their land by the Spanish-speaking landlords, who have their own private armed thugs working closely with military police and the soldiers.

Most of the land is mountains and jungle. The majority of peasants live in huts, working under cold conditions on the landowners' timber and coffee farms.

They depend on low wages so there is a rate of severe malnutrition of 46.6% among children.

Those peasants who depend on their own small farms, till the land with primitive equipment. They are not able to compete with the landlords. ●



"Better to die on your feet than live on your knees"

The ZNLF takes its name from Mexican revolutionary Emilion Zapata, who led a peasant uprising early this century. Zapata fought for land reforms for the Indian peasants.

He declared: "Rebels of the south, it is better to die on your feet than to live on your knees." The cry of the revolution was "Land and Liberty".

Zapata's army seized six states and proclaimed his Plan Ayala – meaning immediate destruction of hacienda (privately-owned) lands. Land was taken from the rich and redistributed. Democratic governments were set up in the states they controlled, schools established and some industry, such as sugar mills, were nationalised.

The constitution introduced by Zapata in 1917 stated that the nation owned land, water and mineral resources. Trade union rights were granted, an eight-hour day introduced with a minimum wage, and the church and state were separated. Reforms in public health and education were also promised.

Unfortunately, Zapata and his movement did not build an alliance with the urban workers. Central power remained in the hands of landowners and the bosses. The constitution was ignored. Eventually the revolution was defeated and Zapata was killed. ●

Feature by J. Mogale,
Alexandra

Letters

Send your letters to:
Congress Militant,
P.O.Box 596, Newtown,
2113,
Johannesburg.

Still not safe on the trains

Dear comrades,

Spoornet is now having its own security guards. They are at selected railway stations and in the trains. The big question now is, is it really safe to travel by train to Johannesburg? My answer is "no", especially if you are from Stretford station (Orange Farm or Palestine).

They are not there to protect commuters or search for weapons. They incite violence and they always check your ticket six or more times.

If you don't have the right ticket from your destination or nothing at all, then you are in big trouble. They are going to punch, kick you and do whatever they feel like doing. They put you in a room and handcuffed so tightly to an extent that your wrist are dislocated. They don't want anyone to pay the fine for you.

The comrades felt that it is enough. But when they took action one morning the train was stopped for more than 20 minutes. They were shooting at us. Those they could identify were chased and arrested.

What happened to them, nobody knows. The following morning even the comrade who leads the coach with toyi-toyi could not get the information from the Johannesburg police.

One chilly evening when we were from work we heard one comrade screaming, begging for forgiveness. When looking through the window of the torture room we saw he was naked and handcuffed to the table.

After seeing us they chased us like dogs, telling us that he was a good example to those who don't buy tickets.

Most people at Orange farm are not working and those who do have to feed a family of more than seven out of their meagre salary. How can you afford R6.60 a return fare ticket? Why are we victims of apartheid especially us from Palestine? We deserve to be treated as humanbeings not as animals.

By Nelson, Orange Farm

What must we pay rent for?

Comrades,

I am very much concerned about the agreement that our leader Mr Nelson Mandela and F.W De Klerk have reached about the ending of the rent boycott.

Being a member of the ANC and living in Alex I think that this thing will worry most of the people who are living there. Yes, we will pay rent, but first we must see something to pay for.

I fully support the Freedom Charter saying the land shall be shared amongst those who worked it. We worked for this land – but we are still suffering because of water system, toilet system. It was better before having those bucket system because now people kill each other because of the sewerage system.

We have to give each other a chance to even use a water tap which is most important. If someone is doing washing you have to wait. There is no privacy in our yards, no grounds for the kids to play around in that dirty place.

In a torn township like Alex we thought there will be houses for everyone. But now we see people are staying in shacks near the death zone when going to the grave yards. Those people are there because they are suffering and they don't have any where to stay. Most of them are from the area which the police gave to their friends (IFP).

I've been struggling from '86 for the improvements. I was hoping that by the year '94 we will be living in at least four roomed houses with electricity, but finding that we did that for nothing.

Talking about the other township won't help because most people are shack dwellers. They are sick and tired that they have to pay for something that they don't understand.

Does the agreement means that all the people who were on the boycott have to pay for the services? I wonder what those services are because most of the people who are staying have built their own shacks.

Yours in the struggle,

From Mpedi Semanya, Alexandra

1994 Wage Negotiations



Photo: William Matlala

“Employers should brace themselves for the toughest bargaining round yet, with workers’ heightened expectations pitted against managements’ recessionary budgeting for 1994 ...”

**Business Day,
26 January
1994**

Make the bosses pay!

At the beginning of 1994 workers have started to move onto the offensive again.

Unity in action forced ABI bosses to raise their offer from 10% to 13%. Nehawu members at Baragwanath hospital forced the TPA to pay a R500 bonus to all workers. Their struggle started a fire that spread to hospitals all over the country.

Recently strikes over wages have broken out at Carlton Paper, Unilever, Imperial Car Rental and Nettex.

Workers can feel the recession is over. An ANC government is only three months away. The bosses arguments for below inflation wage increases stink. Now is the time to struggle for better wages and working conditions! S’khokhele Cosatu!

Victory at SBH!

Striking workers at SBH, a textile factory in Cape Town, have scored a significant victory over their bosses. Our strike united coloured and African workers around a demand for increased wages.

We hope our victory will inspire all other factories engaged in wage negotiations at present. It must send a signal to the bosses that workers are no longer prepared to accept poverty wages or the bosses arguments that wage increases have to be sacrificed in favour of job security.

Our wage negotiations started at the end of last year. The bosses think workers will not engage in industrial action at this time: thinking that after the holidays workers have no money and

are not prepared to sacrifice their wages.

Despite the disadvantages SBH workers shocked the bosses. 73% of the work force voted in favour strike action. But even after this the bosses were still confident that we will not come out on strike. They were wrong! On 18 January the majority of workers went on strike over wages.

Consensus was reached on all our other demands but we had a deadlock over our final wage demand of R25 across the board with management sticking to R21.

Management thought they could break the strike. They refused us our backpay after the first week of the strike. They also locked us out of the factory. But instead of demoralising workers this only increased their anger.

The bosses called the Internal Stability Unit to disperse us from the front gate. But we negotiated with the ISU saying that workers had to demonstrate because management had broken our strike rules by locking us out.

They allowed us to remain at the gates while we made an urgent application for permission to demonstrate outside the factory. This permission was granted on the same day but with a number of conditions. No loudhailers are to be used, only 100 people would be allowed to demonstrate and there should be no blockading of the front gate.

One night we were forced to picket all night outside the factory to prevent management bringing in scabs. Once again the bosses

had to rely on De Klerk’ army to bring in strikebreakers.

One day after the lockout workers armed with sticks and sjamboks decided to implement a lock-in in protest. For 4 hours we locked-in management and the strike breakers allowing nobody to enter or leave the premises.

Solidarity action for us was organised by the ‘Committee of 10’. It consists of leading stewards in the textile industry elected by the textile stewards’ council to ensure that proper solidarity action is organised for workers engaged in disputes with the bosses.

A picket was held at the Austrian embassy. We delivered a protest letter because many of our directors are coming from Austria and Switzerland. At this demo we had support from workers from TBS and Nettex.

During the strike we were addressed by Cosatu and Allan Boesak supporting our action, and explaining to workers why they should vote for the ANC.

On the 10th day management decided to raise their final offer of R21 to R22.50! We decided to accept. Although we did not reach our bottom line of R25 this was a victory for us because we forced the bosses from their final offer and we are returning to work united.

In conclusion we have to remember our fallen comrade Raymond Mqalo. His death shocked us. He died of a heart attack after collapsing while we were toyi toyi at the factory. The bosses are to be blamed – of that there is no question.

**By Citness Ndovu,
Chair SBH Shopstewards committee
(personal capacity)**

Stop press: Nettex workers in Cape Town have gone on strike after voting in favour of a strike by 77%.

During the recession ... the rich had a party

For the last four years the bosses held down wages because they said their companies could not afford big increases in conditions of recession.

But while workers

suffered their wealth grew. Here are a few examples:

● Bill Venter, owner of Altron, increased the value of his shares by R259m to R894m! When he got

divorced he paid his wife R12m as a settlement!

● The two owners of Rainbow Chicken say they had a bad year in 1993. The value of their shares

slumped to R477m!

Is this why they decided to retrench hundreds of workers when they closed their plants in Malmesbury and eZakheni? Unfortunately because Lilian Methven lives in Monaco in France she was too far away to feel the workers’ suffering.

● Christo Wiese, the owner of Pepkor (which controls Shoprite-Checkers) increased the value of his shares to R475m. That makes him the 7th richest man in SA. He owns one of the best

bungalows on the exclusive Clifton beach in Cape Town. In addition his family acquired an estate in Stallebosch, and restored the old manor house for their personal use.

... while the poor got poorer