

# inqaba



# YA BASEBENZI

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***For a united  
mass trade union movement!***

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# For a United Mass Trade Union Movement

The last ten years have seen an historic development—organised black workers taking matters into their own hands. Now there are mighty struggles daily against low wages, rising prices, high rents, fare increases and the whole system of oppression.

In the last two years the numbers in independent trade unions have almost trebled. This is a magnificent achievement in the face of persistent and intensifying police raids, victimisations, arrests, detentions and bannings of trade unionists.

Yet membership of the independent unions is still only a tiny proportion of the workforce. That shows the huge potential of the workers' movement still to be mobilised in organised struggle.

The armchair critics of the working class who argued that workers can never become a match for the power of the bosses' state are having to swallow their words.

The increase in working class activity has polarised the classes in South Africa. Among the blacks everybody wants to define themselves as workers.

The powerful pull of the trade union movement affects the oppressed middle classes. Some are attracted to it by ambition to enhance their own prestige. But the healthiest elements are drawn to the workers away from middle-class strivings for respectability and a privileged place in the sun.

Ever-increasing membership and success in struggle also draw the most conscious youth towards the essential productive and revolutionary force: the working class.

In this period, victories and defeats alike have been a training

and a spur for greater organisation and further struggle. The initiative is still moving to the working class.

This weakens and divides the ruling class all the more. They are hopelessly split on the trade union question as on every vital question of the day. In desperation they fall back on their old, futile policies of vicious and naked repression.

This sharpening of class struggle firmly underlines the revolutionary potential of the black workers' movement when organised in mass trade unions behind a fighting programme of working-class demands. But even more important, it stresses the absolute need for unity of trade unions.

Trade union unity is the basis of strength of the working class, for defence and struggle both against the bosses and their oppressive state.

The recent mass arrests, detentions of trade unionists and deportations to the barren ghettos of the Transkei bring out more clearly than ever that the state is inseparably linked to the bosses and is the ruthless enemy of the trade union movement.

With the migrant workers (the most oppressed mass of the workers and main source of cheap labour for the South African capitalist system) still largely unorganised, workers' unity between migrants and non-migrants is the key to the future strength of the trade union movement.

Already positive attempts towards united trade union action are under way. This is a milestone in the progress of the movement. But much more remains to be done.

What would be the effect, for example, of a national campaign around the demand for a minimum

wage as a basis for uniting the trade unions and workers all over the country?

Given a clear lead by the unions on these and other problems, unorganised workers would flock to join the struggle. By launching an all-out drive to recruit the unorganised masses, the independent unions could realistically set themselves the target of a million members by the end of 1982.

United and strengthened, the trade union movement could go far beyond the bosses' fear of a "spate of sympathy strikes". Effective campaigns to force the release of political prisoners, an end to the pass laws and police repression, through all means including the general strike, could then be on the order of the day.

This is the strategic course which comrades of the ANC and SACTU need to explain and promote within the workers' movement.

Such a clear programme of action would unite all the oppressed around the workers' movement, preparing the struggle to smash the capitalist state.

Essential in this struggle will be the development in the workers' movement of a political leadership with a clear programme and perspective which can guide the movement against the bosses and their state to a revolutionary conclusion. This is the task which faces the advanced workers in building the ANC as a fighting mass organisation, above all of the working class.

On this basis every effort towards building the trade union united front would cut short by many miles the road to a successful socialist revolution in South Africa.

# Kopanelong ya Mokgatlo wa Sephara wa Babereki

Leshome la dijara tse difitileng le ntile tswelolepele ya kgakgamatso—babereki ba bantsho baipopile mme ba ikemisitse ka maoto. Jaanong, malatsi otlhe go gathabanelwa tuelo e e ko tlase, gotura go go tlathogang, dirente tse dikogodimo, tlathoso ya madi a dipalamo le kgatelelo kagotlhe.

Mo dijareng tse pedi tse difitileng makgotla a babereki a aitshwereng a atile gararo. Go gase thaka yamotho fa re seba ditlhaselo tsa mapodisi tse diatang disafele, gotlhrisiwa, gotshwarwa, gotswalelwa kante go tsheko, le go lidiwa kopano ga maloko a makgotla a babereki le baetapele babona.

Legale bontsi jwa babereki ga ise bo tsene mo makgotleng. Ke sesupo sa gore mokgatlo wa babereki o na le thata e e bobileng, e e tshwanetseng go tsosiwa ke thulaganyo ee bopilweng sentle.

Basupa-ka-monwana ba setlhopa sa babereki, ba bane bare babereki ga ba kake ba shebana ba lekana le thata ya mmuse wa bo rraditshete, jaanong ba kometsa mafoko a bona.

Goitsosa ga setlhopa sa babereki go kgaogantse seemo sa ditlhopa mo Afrika-Borwa. Mo bantshong mang le mang o batla gotwe ke mmereki.

Kgogo e bodipa ya mokgatlo wa babereki wa babereki e ama setlhopa sa baema-gare ba ba gateletsweng. Babangwe ba tliwa ke goikgopolela, go leka goikgoromeletsa kwa pele. Mme gontse jaalo mathaka a siameng a setlhopa sona se baipopa le babereki, balesa go rata bokopele le gojagotlhe ga setlhopa sa baema-gare.

Koketso ya bontsi le tswelolepele ya tlabano le tsone di goga lotsha lo lo bonang goipopa le motlakase wa legadima, ke gore setlhopa sa badiri, babereki.

Mo nakong ena, gofanya le gofengwa entse e le thuto le

nonofatso ya boipopo le tlabano. Mme ntsha e wela ka mo setlhopeng sa babereki.

Ke ka moo babusi bantse ba koafala mme ba ntse ba kgaogana kagona. Ga ba lentswe-lengwe ka tsa makgotla a babereki; fela jaaka dilo tsothe tse di babang gompjeno. Se baseitseng ke go boela mo mekgweng ya kgatelelo e e setlhoko ya boitlhobogo.

Goata gantwa ya kganetso ya ditlhopa gosupa nonofo e e bobileng ya go tsubukanya mo mokgatlong wa babereki ba bantsho, feela fa ba kopane mo makgotleng a sephara, a na le letheo la ntwala dilelo tsa babereki. Le gale se se leng botlhokwa tota, ke kopano ya makgotla a babereki.

Kopano ya makgotla ke mmoko wa thata ya babereki, goitshireletsa mo go bo-rra-dikhumo, go lwantshana gape le bone, le mmuso wa bone wa kgatelelo.

Ditshwaro tsa bontsi jwa batho tsa maloba, go tshwarwa ga ba makgotla a babereki kante ga tsheko, le go kojelwa ko makweteng a bo-Transkei go bontsha sentle gore muso o kopa-kopane le borradikhumo, mme gape ke mmaba wa kopano ya babereki.

Go ntse jaalo, babereki ba di-joini, ba eleng bone ba ba gateletsweng gofeta, mme e bone ba ba emisitseng ya bokapitalisti, ga baise ba tsene makgotla ka bontsi, kopano ya babereki ba di-joini le babangwe keyone feela tsela ya tswelolepele ya mokgatlo wa babereki.

Ebile go setse gona le maiteko a go kopanya diemo tsa makgotla. Ke tswelolepele tota! Le gale go gontsi tota go goiseng go diriwe. Go ka nna jaang fa go ka nna le pitso e ralalang sechaba ee bakang tuelo-nyane, e nne setshwaraganyi sa makgotla le babereki lefatshe phara.

Babereki ba kaitshela mo tlabanelong fa makgotla a ka tsa

seemo se se popota mo dilong tse le mo matshwenyegong otlhe a mangwe. Ka goithaopa go kgobokanya babereki ba ba fokolang, makgotla a ka nna le maloko a le-millione sentle fela ka bofelo jwa ga 1982.

Mokgatlo wa babereki, o kopane mme o thatafaditswe jaalo, tota o ka feta molelwanyana o o tshabawang ke borra-dikhumo bahiri, "go emisa pereko fa babereki babangwe ba kobilwe kgotsa babaka ditshwanelo". Go ka tse: "a go gololwe batho ba ba tshwaretsweng go ganetsa muso wa kgatelelo"; "a go fedisiwe dipasa le kgatelelo ka mapodisi"; go diriwe gotlhe, go emiswe tiro lefatshe phara; dilo tse e ka nna borotho jwa malatsi.

Ke yone tsela ya boithaopi e makolwane a ANC le SACTU a tshwanetseng go etlhalosa le go e atisa mo mokgatlong wa babereki.

Tsela e e tlhamaletseng jaana ya go tlabana e ka kopanya botlhe ba ba gateletsweng go ipopa mo mokgatlong wa babereki, ba bangkanya ntwala ya go thuba puso ya bo-rra-dikhumo.

Mme se se batlegang mo ntweng e, ke go bopiwa ga boetapele jwa bo-politiki mo mokgatlong wa babereki o o nang le maikemisetso a tlhamaletseng, a a ka supang tsela go babereki mo ntweng ya kganetso le bo-rra-dikhumo bahiri ba kopane le mmuso wabona, gore go fele ka phenyo ya tswelolepele ya ntsha ya babereki.

E ke yone tiro e e emetseng babereki ba ba kopele mo go ageng ANC jaaka lekgotla-sephara la ntwala, thata-thata ya setlhopa sa babereki.

Godimo ga motheo ono boiteko jolthe jwa go aga kopano ya makgotla a babereki bo ka dira tsela kgautshwane ya go aga muso-tlabanelo ya boja-mmogo mo Afrika Borwa.

# Okwenhlangano Ebambheneyo

## Yamabutho Abasebenzi

Iminyaka elishumi edlulile isibone ukuqhubeka kwezinto okubalwayo—abasebenzi abamnyama bethatha izindaba ezandleni zabo. Manje sekunezimpi ezinkulu mihla yonke ezilwela imihlo eyehlile, ukubiza kwempahla okuqakemeyo, imikhokhelo yezindlu ephezulu, imbhadalo yokugibela eqakanyiswayo, nendlela yonke yokucindezela.

Eminyakeni emibili edlulile inani labantu abakumabutho angabotshiswa ngu hulumende seliphose lakhulu okufika kathathu inani lakuqala. Lokhu yikuphumelela okubabazekayo kakhulu phakathi kokuhlukuluzwa njalo-njalo nguhulumende okujulileyo, ukuthunjwa, ukuboshwa, ukuvalelwa emajele ungagwetshwanga njalo nokubanjelwa inkululeko amabutho abasebenzi.

Kepha inani lababhalisa kumabutho angabotshiswa nguhulumende lisaseyingcosana nje yenhlangano yonke yezisebenzi. Lokho kubonisa ubukhulu lnhlanganiso yabasebenzi engaba yikho, obusamele bubunjwe empini yokulwela inkululeko.

Abasoli bemindeni yabasebenzi ababephika ukuthi abasebenzi bangephinde bawamele amandla ababusi bakahulumende sebesala beginya amazwi abo.

Ukukhula kwemisebenzi yemindeni yabasebenzi sekusehlukanisa iminde ye Zansi Africa, phakathi kwabamnyama wonke muntu usethanda ukuzitshengisa enjengowabasebenzi.

Amandla adonsayo awamabutho abasebenzi azwiwa langumdeni waba phakathi naphakathi ocindezelwayo, abanye bahugelwa kiwo yizifiso zokuyaphambili, ukuthi bakhweze inhlalakahle yabo. Kodwa sikhathi sinye abalushwana abaqondile badonselwa kuzisebenzi besuka ekukhathaleleni komdeni wabaphakathi naphakathi odinga ukuhlonipheka nendawo ekhethiwe elangeni.

Inani lababhalisayo elikhula njalo-njalo, nokuphumelela kokulwa njalo kudonsela abasakhulayo abavuke engqondweni bedonselwa kusigaba esiyiso esiphumelelayo nesigukukayo—umdeni wabasebenzi.

Ngalelithuba, ukuphumelela nokwehlulwa ngokufanana kube yi-

mfundo nenqubela phambili ekukhuliseni ukubumbana nokulwa okuyaphambili. Isikhuthazi silokhu siyikusondelela kumdeni wabasebenzi.

Lokhu kuncibilikisa njalo kwehlukane umdeni wababusi kakhulu. Batshayana amakhanda bengavumelani ngendaba yamabutho abasebenzi, nangazo zonke izindaba eziqakathekile eziyimbuzo yakulezinsuku. Ekwehlulekeni kwabo babuyelela kuziga zabo ezindala zokuhlukuluzwa nokucindezela abantu okungenamusa.

Lokhu kucija kwempi yemideni kubonisa ngamandla imfanelo yengukho yenhlangano yabasebenzi abamnyama, ma ibumbene emabuthweni abasebenzi, bonke bemi ngemva kwamalungiselelo amele ukulwela izifiso zomdeni wabasebenzi. Kodwa into eqakathekile okungaphambili ikuthi lqonqosela imfanelo emqoka yokubambhana kwamabutho abasebenzi.

Ukuhlangana kwamabutho abasebenzi yiwo amandla omdeni wabasebenzi ekuzivkeleni nekulweni lababusi kanye nohulumende wabo ocindezelayo.

Ukuboshwa kwabantu abaningi okusanda kwenzeka, ukubanjwa kwabasebenzela amabutho abasebenzi, nokulahlwa enkangala yase Transkei kuveza kasobala manje okwedlula kugala ukuthi uhulumende angeke ehlukane nababusi, nokuthi nguye isitha esibi samabutho abasebenzi.

Abasebenzi magoduka (okuyilo iqembu labasebenzi elicindezelwa okwedlulayo, njalo eliyilo elinika uhulumende we Zansi Africa umthombo wezisebenzi ezibhadalelwa phansi) elokhu ngendlela enkulu engakumbani, ukuhlangana kwabasebenzi phakathi kwabasebenzi magoduka nabasebenzi nje yiso isivulamnyango samandla azadingeka kunhlangano yamabutho abasebenzi.

Khona manje imizamo ebonakalayo ekuhlanganiseni amabutho abasebenzi isikhanya lsondela. Lokhu yisiboniso esihle ekuqhubekeni kwenhlangano. Kodwa kuningi okusasele ukuba kwenziwe. Kungazala nkomoni kambe ma kungaba nemvukela yezwe lonke ilwela imbhadalo engehlanga ngaphansi kwenani ethile — njengenjongo

yokuhlanganisa amabutho abasebenzi nabo abasebenzi ezweni lonke?

Ma bengaboniswa ukhokhelo olukhanyayo ngamabutho abasebenzi kulezi nezinye izindaba ezidubayo, abasebenzi abangakahlangani bangeza ngamandla ukuzangena impi yokuqhubekela phambili. Ngokuthatha imizamo emikhulu ukunxusa abantu ezweni abangakahlangani, amabutho abasebenzi angabotshiswa nguhulumende, yisifiso esingenzeka esokuba nenani lababhalisileyo abafika isigidi ekupheleni komnyaka ka 1982.

Ibambene njalo inamandla, inhlangano yamabutho abasebenzi ingafika khatshana ngaphambi kokuthandabuza kwababusi nge "ncozana yabasebenzi abenza isiteleka ngenxa yenzwelo". Imvukela ezwayo yokubambelela ukukhululwa kwezibotshwa zepolitiki, ukuqeda imithetho yamapasi, nencindezelo kahulumende ngayo yonke imizamo kunye ne "Siteleka Esikhulu" (General Strike) isingaba yindaba yanamuhla.

Yiyona le ndlela esicacisiwe engaveza ngamaqembu enkululeko awe ANC ne SACTU, njalo ikhuliswe kunhlangano zabasebenzi.

Indlela yokwenza izinto ecacile kanje ingahlanganisa bonke abacindezelweyo ngakunhlangano yabasebenzi, ilungisela impi yokuphumelela engadiliza umbuso wenotho.

Okuzadingeka kakhulu ekulweni lokhu yikubumba phakathi kwenhlangano yabasebenzi inkokhelo yepolitiki enendlela yokwenza izinto ecacile, nendlela ebona izinto kahle, engakhokhela inhlangano ma isilwa nababusi nohulumende endleleni egcina ngenguqulo yokuyaphambili.

Yiwolo umsebenzi omkhulu okhangele abasebenzi asebeqhubekile ekwakheni i ANC ukuba yinhlangano elwela abantu ezweni lonke—umdeni wabasebenzi.

Phezu kwalenjongo, wonke mzamo oqhubekela ekwakheni lbutho labasebenzi eliyinkokhelo ebambeneyo ingaphungula ngomango omkhulu indlela eqonde nguqulweni ephumelelayo yenhlalakahle e Zansi Africa.

# Vir 'n Verenigde Massavakbeweging

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Die laaste tien jaar het 'n historiese ontwikkeling gesien—georganiseerde swart werkers vat sake in hulle eie hande. Daar is nou daaglikse geweldige stryd teen lae lone, prysstygings, hoë rent, busgeldverhogings en die hele sisteem van onderdrukking.

In die laaste twee jaar het die aantal werkers in die onafhanklike vakbonde amper verdriedubbel. Dit is 'n groot prestasie gesien die aanhoudende en toenemende polisieaanvalle, viktimisasies, arrestasies en huisarres van vakbondslede.

Tog is die ledetal van die onafhanklike vakbonde nog maar 'n klein deel van die werkmag. Dit wys op die kolossale potensiaal van die werkersbeweging wat nog gemobiliseer moet word in georganiseerde stryd.

Die mense wat die werkende klas uit die studeerkamer kritiseer, en glo dat die werkers nooit opgewasse kan wees teen die krag van die base se staat nie, moet nou hulle woorde insluk.

Die versterkte beweging van die werkende klas het die klasse in Suid-Afrika teen mekaar gepolariseer. Onder swart mense wil almal hulleself nou werkers noem.

Die kragtige trek van die vakbonde het 'n uitwerking op die onderdrukte middelklas. 'n Paar word aangelok deur die ambisie om hul eie aansien te verhoog. Maar die beste van hulle word na die kant van die werkers getrek, weg van die strewe van die middelklas vir 'n bevoorregte plek in die son.

'n Groeiende ledetal en sukses in die stryd trek ook die mees bewuste jeug na die werklik produktiewe en revolusionêre mag: die werkende klas.

In hierdie tyd is oorwinnings en

neerlae albei 'n opvoeding vir die werkers en 'n aansporing tot groter organisasie en stryd. Die inisiatief beweeg nog altyd in die rigting van die werkende klas.

Dit verswak en verdeel die heersende klas nog meer. Hulle is hopeloos verdeel oor die vakbondskwessie en alle ander belangrike kwessies. In wanhoop val hulle terug op hulle ou, mislukte politiek van oop en bloot onderdrukking.

Hierdie verskerping van die klasestryd onderstreep die revolusionêre potensiaal van die swart werkersbeweging, georganiseer in massavakbonde agter 'n strydprogram van werkersense. Belangriker nog, dit lê nadruk op die absolute noodsaaklikheid van vakbondseenheid.

Vakbondseenheid is die basis waarop die krag van die werkende klas berus vir selfverdediging en stryd teen sowel die base as hulle onderdrukkende staat.

Die massa-arrestasies van vakbondslede en deportasies na die Transkei het die laaste tyd duideliker as ooit laat sien dat die staat heeltemal verbind is met die base, en die genadelose vyand van die vakbondsbeweging is.

Met die trekarbeiders (die mees onderdrukte massa van die werkers en die vernaamste bron van goedkoop arbeid vir die Suid-Afrikaanse kapitalistiese sisteem) nog grotendeels ongeorganiseer, is eenheid tussen die trekarbeiders en ander werkers die sleutel tot die toekomstige krag van die vakbondsbeweging.

Positiewe stappe na verenigde vakbondsaksie is al aan die gang. Dit is 'n mylpaal in die vooruitgang van die beweging. Maar baie meer moet nog gedoen word.

Wat sal die gevolg wees, byvoorbeeld, van 'n nasionale veldtog

rondom die eis vir 'n minimumloon as 'n basis om die vakbonde en die werkers dwarsdeur die hele land te verenig?

As daar duidelike leiding gegee word deur die vakbonde by hierdie en ander probleme, sal die ongeorganiseerde werkers toestroom om by die stryd aan te sluit. Deur met alle mag te probeer om die ongeorganiseerde massa by die vakbonde te betrek, kan die bonde hulleself realisties die doel stel van 'n miljoen lede teen die einde van 1982.

Verenig en versterk kan die vakbondsbeweging baie verder gaan as die base se vrees vir "n golf van simpattestakings". Die stryd om bevryding van politieke gevangenes en 'n einde aan die paswette en polisie-onderdrukking, met alle middele inklusief die algemene staking, sal dan op die program staan.

Dit is die strategie rigting wat die lede van die ANC en SACTU binne die werkersbeweging sal moet verklaar en aanmoedig.

So 'n duidelike aksieprogram sal die hele onderdrukte bevolking rondom die werkersbeweging verenig en die stryd voorberei om die kapitalistiese staat te vernietig.

Noodsaaklik in hierdie stryd is die ontwikkeling in die werkersbeweging van 'n politieke leiding met 'n duidelike program en perspektief wat die beweging teen die base en hulle staat na 'n revolusionêre einde kan voer. Dit is die taak wat die bewuste werkers afwag by die opbou van die ANC as 'n veggende massa-organisasie, veral van die werkende klas.

Op hierdie grondslag sal elke poging om 'n verenigde vakbondsfront op te bou, die pad na 'n suksesvolle sosialistiese revolusie in Suid-Afrika met baie myle verkort.

# Build the trade union united front!

By Jake Wilson  
and  
Rocco Malgas

**Despite sharp crackdowns by the police there has been a magnificent increase in the activity and struggles of the independent trade union movement. Through strikes, and the consolidation of union membership, workers are winning a whole spate of recognition ballots and agreements, shop steward elections and wage increases.**

**The latest Labour Relations Amendment Bill and the whip of the police, far from taming the movement, have already led to new steps to unite the workers' ranks against the bosses and the state.**

The growth of worker militancy comes at a time when South African capitalism is entering a period of crisis following on the general decline of world capitalism. In the coming year it is anticipated there will be no growth in world trade on which South Africa is so dependent.

The world-wide recession has meant increasing unemployment, higher prices, shut-down factories, and cuts in social spending. It has in turn thrown millions of young people into the ranks of the jobless.

But throughout the world, recession has been made even worse by the monetarist policies of many capitalist governments. In Britain Thatcherism (cutting social spending and raising interest rates) has brought about an economic slump even deeper than the depression of the 1930s. Hence the widespread rioting of the unemployed youth. The United States is now on the same road.

Internationally the workers have met the deepening social crisis with an unprecedented increase in trade union and political struggles to defend their living standards against the constant attacks of the decaying capitalist system.

These attacks have been marked by many capitalist parliaments frantically enacting legislation to curb the powers of trade unions and outlaw strikes. In America, India, Britain, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Zambia, for example, trade union controls or arrests are the order of the day.

The trade unions are the first line of defence of the working class against attacks by the bosses and the state. They bear the brunt of the ruling-class attack, but are also a powerful weapon in the hands of the working class to fight back.

In every country of the capitalist world, the class struggle will be driven to new levels of intensity in the period ahead.

It is no different in South Africa. Since the mass strikes of 1973, the bosses and the regime have used every possible measure to frustrate or repress the independent organisation of the black workers.

But there is an added thrust to trade union struggles in South Africa. Unlike in Europe where the trade union movement came of age during the rise of world capitalism, the independent trade unions in South Africa have been

born in struggle against a capitalist class which has always been too narrow-based and economically weak to concede the reforms which the workers in Europe have won.

Today the independent trade union movement has entered a period of explosive growth precisely as capitalism in South Africa and on a world scale is moving into decline.

Dependent on cheap black labour and a violent police state, capitalism in South Africa can provide no reforms on any lasting basis. It is this which removes any foundations for stable reformist policies within the unions of the black workers and pushes the mass trade union movement in South Africa in a revolutionary direction.

The ruling class understands this only too well, yet is powerless to halt the forces which are being unleashed by the decline of the capitalist system.

## Drastic powers

In its attempts to bring the independent trade unions under control through the whip in one hand and carrots in the other, the Botha regime has got itself deeper and deeper into trouble.

The latest Bill in Parliament is just another attempt to bring the quarrelling between the government, the bosses, and the bureaucracy of the registered unions to an end. But this Bill drops nearly all the carrots intended to encourage registration and vigorously cracks the whip against the independent unions.

Inspectors are provided with drastic powers to search the offices of trade unions, registered and unregistered, and seize documents.



All trade unions must have their constitutions available for inspection, as well as their finances and membership lists.

Other controls maintain the ban on strikes and now all trade unions are prohibited from using their funds to support 'illegal' strikes! A further sting is the re-introduction of the liaison committees, called 'works councils', as a weapon against the unions.

Another Bill requires all worker education to be brought under the control of the Registrar of Manpower Training.

This whole parcel of anti-union measures in Parliament, which have been supported by the PFP and NRP, are reinforced by unprecedented police attacks in the factories and townships. Trade unionists in Port Elizabeth, East London, and elsewhere hardly have time to get home before being arrested again.

In East London the Security Police have even drawn up a secret document on how to break trade union power.

The document provides detailed advice to the bosses on how to smash the unregistered unions generally, and particularly "to act as a millstone around the neck of SAAWU and to prevent the acceleration of the success of SAAWU".

In the secret document the fear of the regime of the unions' power to call a general strike shows through!

"Management cannot dismiss the workers because it will not be only one or two firms involved, but the whole of East London. The result is very clear—one would have to give in to the demands of the workers however extravagant or ludicrous these may be"!

The whole document eloquently testifies to the power of the working class when it is organised on an industry and city-wide basis. It proves once again how the initiative is moving into the hands of the black working class.

This power should be multiplied by organisation on a national level!

This decisive shift in class forces confirms the perspective of Marxism that the black working class, organised on a mass basis, will be the main force in the South African revolution.

While in South Africa the political and industrial organisation of the black working class has to be secured on underground foundations, the open trade union movement has a huge potential as a vehicle for mass struggle against the exploiters and oppressors.

Every step forward by the trade unions proves again their capacity to serve as centres of organisation of the oppressed masses.

The independent trade unions are becoming the focus for all the organisations of the oppressed: community organisations, legal defence committees, student groups, rural organisations and even some church organisations.

But this power can only be realised to the full through the massive consolidation of the trade union movement itself—through building trade union unity and developing a clear-sighted working-class leadership.

The need for trade union unity is being hammered home by practical experience. In periods of lull, the unions could be picked off and strangled one by one. The confused reaction by some trade union leaders to the issue of registration,

with a drift to place themselves under state control, opened the unions to this danger.

But the relentless pressure of the state through the police and laws to extinguish all trade union independence has made it impossible for even these trade union leaders to avoid the question of unity in the struggle to defend their survival.

## Common programme

It is this growing confrontation which brought leaders of the independent unions, including SAAWU, FOSATU, GWU, FCWU and CUSA, to a meeting held in Cape Town early in August. The trade union leaders pledged themselves to a common programme of action in opposition to the trade union laws of the regime and the bosses.

The registration of trade unions was rejected "insofar as it is designed to control and interfere in the internal affairs of unions." The unions demanded the right to strike and decided collectively to defy restrictions on strike pay to members. Also the industrial coun-



*In strike after strike workers are demanding a living wage and trade union recognition*



*Alexandra, 21 June 1981: hundreds march with the ANC banner*

cil system was rejected.

And most importantly, the unions decided to establish inter-union solidarity committees in the regions to assist organisation, develop financial support, and organise consumer boycotts.

Despite the limited programme (unfortunately, for example, not every aspect of the new Bill was rejected), the meeting marks one of the most important steps forward in the history of the workers' movement in South Africa.

## Tests of strength

The panicky reaction of the Ciskeian puppets to the spectre of trade union unity, by arresting 205 activists from East London, has propelled the independent trade unions further along the road of political opposition to the state.

Despite the previous 'non-political' stance of some of the unions, a joint statement by all those involved in the unity talks condemned the arrests and the whole Bantustan policy of the regime.

But as these arrests show, if we study the situation carefully, the working class is clearly heading towards an inevitable sharper confrontation with the state.

The trade union movement therefore has to take adequate steps to prepare the workers for the tests of strength which lie ahead.

Despite the tremendous step

taken at the Cape Town meeting, the defensive pact still falls short of what will be required.

What is needed is a programme of concrete action capable of mobilising the largest possible forces for the struggle ahead. The unionisation of 7% of African industrial workers has been a big stride forward, but the task remains to organise the mass of unorganised workers into a mighty nation-wide force.

The programme would need to be made up of demands on which all the independent unions could agree as a basis for a mass campaign to expand and advance the gains made by the workers.

This can only successfully be decided by full freedom to discuss policy and strategy within the common front around the workers' fighting demands.

With the broadest mobilisation of the rank and file, any differences can be put to the test of experience. This should lead to growing clarity on the direction of the struggle and greater unity.

At this preparatory stage some demands on which the trade union movement could draw in unorganised workers by the tens and hundreds of thousands would be:

- \* A basic minimum wage demand of R2 an hour (R90 a week) to be taken into every factory, mine, docks and farm. (The exact demand should be decided with a view to getting the widest possible unity of workers.)

- \* Defiance of laws which control

the trade unions, prohibit strikes, and divide worker from worker. Now is the time for the initiative to pass into the hands of the workers against the latest Bills. Concrete plans need to be made for mutual defence against arrests, mass dismissals, and deportation of migrant workers.

Particular attention should be given to mobilising migrant workers. No full scale mass campaign is possible without mine workers and the youth.

Steps towards the amalgamation of different trade unions, or towards the creation of a single trade union federation must be supported; this organisational unity will be the stronger, the fuller the agreement on the fundamental questions of programme, strategy and tactics on which it is based.

The growing unity of the workers around the fighting demands of the trade union united front would strengthen the trade unions' ability together to defend workers against victimisation and police harassment.

The solidarity committees agreed upon at the Cape Town meeting, armed with the demands of the united front, could attract thousands of unorganised workers, especially the youth, into the trade union movement.

A target of 1 million members by the end of 1982 would be entirely possible.

The independent union movement would then be on granite foundations. It would then become possible to go further, to take up



