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inqaba YA BASEBENZI

Journal of the Marxist Workers' Tendency
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South Africa —
How close
to revolution?

Special supplement

plus
Southern Africa
after Nkomati
PART TWO

NUM settlement ● Lenin on strikes ● Zimbabwe ● India ● Latin America

inqaba

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Editorial Supplement

South Africa— How close to revolution?

A magnificent movement of resistance by the black working class is now sweeping over South Africa.

After the success of the two-day general strike in the Transvaal, the regime's arrest of workers' leaders and the SASOL sackings have led to calls for a national strike.

On 12 November, the *Inqaba* Editorial Board issued a 4-page statement analysing the situation in South Africa, the stage which the struggle has now reached, and the tasks which are now posed.

This statement was immediately circulated in limited quantities in South Africa.

In place of our usual editorial, we are reprinting the Editorial Board Statement of 12 November, together with translations, as a special supplement to this issue of *Inqaba*.

AFTER NKOMATI— Where is Southern Africa going?

PART TWO

In the first part of this article, published in our last issue, BASIL HENDRIKSE explained the pressures which drove the Frelimo government of Mozambique into the 'Nkomati Accord' with South Africa. Comrades are urged to reread Part 1.

It outlined the course of the Mozambican revolution and showed why it resulted in the overthrow of capitalism, even though this had not been the conscious programme of Frelimo.

The advantages resulting from state ownership of the economy and planning could not, however, overcome the pressures exerted by the capitalist world market, particularly on an extremely underdeveloped country, in this epoch of crisis. Illusions of building 'socialism in one country' collapsed as the regime battled to maintain even basic supplies of food to the towns and essential manufactured goods to the rural areas.

Without democratic workers' control and management of society, the ruling elite, based on the former guerilla army, developed into a hardened bureaucracy.

Meanwhile, South Africa's industrial dominance in the region allowed it slowly to strangle the Mozambican economy, while the rebel MNR was built up to carry out devastating attacks on the economic infrastructure and undermine mass support for Frelimo in

the rural areas.

To this was added the nightmare of floods, drought and the deaths of 100 000 people from starvation.

Nor could aid from the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe or China rescue the 'Marxist' Mozambican government. The Stalinist bureaucracies, facing a crisis of their own system, are deliberately drawing back from supporting weaker allies. They are reluctant to repeat the lifeline of aid given to Cuba and some other countries in the past.

These circumstances finally drove the Machel government into the Accord with South Africa.

Why did SA sign the Accord and what will be the consequences? Is it an expression of strength or weakness on South Africa's part?

Will capitalist rule be restored in Mozambique?

Even if the armed rebellion eventually ends, can SA 'friendship' really overcome the problems of Mozambique and other countries of Southern Africa? Do agreements like the Nkomati Accord offer a route to 'peace and progress' in the region, as is claimed?

What should be the policy of the ANC and of the working-class movement throughout Southern Africa in the light of these events?

These are questions tackled in this second part of the article, written jointly with PAUL STOREY.

In the text of the Nkomati Accord, signed by President Machel and the SA Prime Minister Botha on 16th March, there is not a word about economic co-operation between South Africa and Mozambique, or material assistance to the latter. Yet, to gain respite from its

crushing economic problems was plainly as important a motive on the part of Frelimo as to end South Africa's support for the MNR.

We shall return below to look at the likely economic consequences of



Will the Nkomati Accord with South Africa lift the burdens on the Mozambican workers and peasants?

the Accord. On paper, however, it is no more than a 'non-aggression pact'.

In effect, Mozambique undertook to close its territory to ANC guerillas, whether as a base or as a route into South Africa, to reduce the ANC's presence to a diplomatic mission alone, and not to allow its territory to be used for "acts of propaganda" inciting "terrorism" or "civil war".

South Africa made, in effect, reciprocal promises in regard to the MNR rebels.

The consequences for the ANC were immediate—with activists forced to leave Mozambique and the government going to the lengths of well-publicised police raids on ANC homes and offices in Maputo.

As ANC fighters tried to make their way through to South Africa, persecution by the Swaziland regime reached new depths in arrests, shootings and expulsions.

Both the Lesotho and Botswana governments retreated further than ever under SA intimidation, in closing off access to the ANC.

On the other hand, however, the effect of the Accord on the counter-revolutionary MNR in Mozambique was not immediately apparent. In fact, brutal mass murders, attacks on convoys, and sabotage of electrical installations have mounted.

Whether or not South Africa continued after 16 March to supply the MNR (by sea, air drops, and via Malawi), it is clear that the rebels have massive stocks of arms, equip-

ment and money with which to carry on their 'war'.

These reserves were probably built up immediately prior to the Nkomati Accord. (The scale on which the SA regime has supplied its agents of counter-revolution in Southern Africa is shown in reports that supplies to UNITA in Angola are running at 40 tons of material a day.)

To maintain pressure on the Machel regime in the hope of forcing a compromise and admission to a coalition government, the MNR has concentrated forces in the Maputo province surrounding the capital.

Military and economic

The military and economic problems facing Frelimo interlink. Provinces such as Inhambane, Tete, Manica and Gaza are threatened—or again threatened—by famine. Relief work is crucially affected by the virtual collapse of the transport system, through shortages of lorries and spare parts as well as MNR sabotage.

The governor of Tete province stated recently that, among the problems facing the province were the shortage both of transport and fuel and of consumer goods needed to attract peasants in the north of the province, unaffected by drought, to sell their agricultural surpluses.

"There is plenty of maize and

other agricultural produce in the northern districts, but since we are unable to supply certain basic goods, such as salt, the peasants cross the border (to Malawi or Zambia) and exchange their produce for what they need. We are the losers in this process." (AIM, 24&26/10/84.)

Among the shortages faced by the peasants are basic tools such as hoes, as well as seeds, rice, sugar, beans, soap, pumps and various spare parts.

This crisis situation, military and economic, led to statements by Frelimo officials that South Africa had not kept its side of the Nkomati bargain and that the future of the Accord was thereby thrown in doubt. In particular, South Africa was failing to bring the MNR dog to heel.

What in fact is the policy of SA imperialism towards the Machel government?

South Africa has made efforts to broker a compromise between Frelimo and the MNR, with Pik Botha shuttling between the rival delegations sent to Pretoria.

A joint 'declaration' was issued in early October, expressing an intention to "work for" a ceasefire, and acknowledging Samora Machel as President of Mozambique. But further negotiations soon collapsed for lack of any underlying basis of real agreement.

It became clear that the rebels' demands for privileged positions in the army and civil service and for ministerial portfolios—including for former agents of the Portuguese PIDE (secret police)—were unacceptable to Frelimo.

Assuming South African imperialism were able to topple the Machel government and install an MNR-dominated regime, does it wish to go so far at this stage? The course of events suggests not.

Reacting bitterly to the SA government's refusal to back up its demands for a coalition government, an MNR spokesman said that Pik Botha "has always demonstrated himself to be an unconditional ally of the Marxist-Leninist regime" and did not merit confidence! (*International Herald Tribune*, 3/11/84.) In general puppets can expect no gratitude from their masters, and puppet masters none from their puppets.

In reality South African imperialism has a longer term strategy in mind—closely co-ordinated, in fact, with the United States.

American foreign policy towards

Southern Africa undoubtedly hinges on the defence of the South African state as the main bastion of capitalism in the region. This has remained true through successive US administrations, despite pious pronouncements against apartheid.

Nevertheless US policy is more sophisticated than the cowboy image of Reagan suggests.

At the same time as the US is preparing military intervention against revolution in Central America, there is an understanding, both in Washington and in Pretoria, that the social basis for bourgeois regimes has been practically eliminated in Mozambique and Angola.

Had South Africa invaded Mozambique in 1974 or 1975, and installed puppets in power, it would have faced an endless nightmare of trying to sustain a regime without a social basis, under mounting guerilla attack, and with the proven inability of capitalism to develop the country.

Napoleon himself discovered—after he had successfully invaded Spain and put his brother on the throne—that, whatever else you can do with bayonets, “you cannot sit on them”.

The South African generals—tinpot Napoleons—boast of their ‘expertise’ in ‘blitzkrieg warfare’. But military strength and conquest is only one side of the matter. To hold down a whole people by direct military **occupation** would be a different matter entirely—all the more so when the oppressors are hard-pressed even to hold down their ‘own’ population.

This was the main consideration staying an imperialist military intervention in Mozambique after the collapse of Portuguese rule.

So what alternative do the imperialists have in mind as a strategy for counter-revolution? **Crucially this must depend on establishing within Mozambique an adequate social basis for bourgeois rule.**

The passage of time and the accumulation of economic problems have disappointed the hopes of the masses in Machel’s ‘socialism’.

The dependence of the Frelimo government on foreign aid has become increasingly pronounced.

It was when the prospect of **adequate support** from the industrialised Stalinist states was finally cut off, that Machel made a decisive turn

toward greater dependence on Western aid.

The Nkomati agreement was preceded by a ‘toenadering’ with US imperialism, and months of negotiations with the Western powers, with visits by Mozambican officials, including Machel, to Portugal and other parts of Europe.

The Portuguese social democracy played an important role in lubricating the process towards Nkomati.

In general, the right-wing ‘socialist’ leaders in Western Europe act in foreign affairs as a soft soap for imperialism, getting into the crevices that the outright capitalist politicians find hard to reach. This is especially the case in regard to relations with the under-developed countries—a role pioneered in the past by the Scandinavian social democracy.

Strings attached

For Mozambique, like every other dependent country, economic ‘assistance’ comes with strings attached.

The United States has made it clear that it is not prepared to aid the development of state farms, co-operatives, or even poor peasant agriculture in Mozambique. Its aid is to be used to develop private farming by larger peasants, with the aim of recreating an economic and social basis for capitalism within Mozambique.

In September, Mozambique was obliged to join the International Monetary Fund.

At the end of that month, Frelimo gave 53 amnesties to people previously arrested as CIA spies—including some who gave information leading to the Matola raid by South Africa! In October it was announced that Mozambique should “prepare itself for the integration of former rebels into society.” (*Star*, 29/10/84.)

In fact, the Portuguese and South African governments have demanded that Portuguese ‘retornados’—the bourgeois who ran away from Mozambique as a result of the revolution—should be allowed to come back and reclaim their abandoned and nationalised properties. (*AIM*, 25/10/84.)

Meanwhile, lest the ‘cooling’ of SA government backing for the MNR—

or its apparent ‘support’ for the government of Machel—should be interpreted as weakness, South Africa retains a reported 18 000 MNR troops in training camps on its soil. (*New Statesman*, 19/10/84.) This is for the purpose of future military blackmail or intervention, as and when that might be necessary.

Taken together, these facts suggest that the preferred strategy of imperialism is to sustain and develop a range of mainly economic pressures upon Mozambique, and to extend a social and economic foothold within that country, with the aim of preparing a ‘creeping’ capitalist counter-revolution.

However, the character of Mozambique as a deformed workers’ state—a state resting essentially on a system of nationalised property, but without democratic workers control—would not be immediately altered by this.

The mere fact of imperialist ‘co-operation’ with the Frelimo government does not mean that the social conquests of the revolution have yet been reversed, or that the Mozambican regime has suddenly become ‘bourgeois’.

In fact, capitalist powers are able to ‘co-exist’ with deformed workers’ states—and in fact co-operate fairly easily with the weaker ones—provided they do not act as a yeast for the spread of revolution.

The American banker, David Rockefeller, for example, after a visit to Southern Africa not long ago, stated that he did not regard ‘Marxist’ regimes like Mozambique and Angola as a threat to US interests. This showed his perception of the essentially nationalist and conservative self-interest of the Frelimo and MPLA bureaucracies—a feature typical of Stalinist regimes.

Moreover, there are certain advantages for SA imperialism in the continuation of a weak and dependent ‘socialist’ regime in Mozambique—whose continuing problems serve to sour the vision of ‘socialism’ throughout the region, while it is constantly bribed and threatened.

On the other hand, even if it were possible to replace the Frelimo government with the viciously reactionary and pro-capitalist MNR, that would merely lead to a renewed development of revolutionary guerilla war and a further fomenting of revolution, this time in town as well as countryside.



Harvest in the Limpopo River valley. State farms in this area are now being broken up into individual peasant holdings.

But, if the imperialists are hoping for a gradual restoration of capitalism through pushing their economic tentacles more deeply into Mozambique, they are likely to be disappointed.

Likewise, if Machel dreams of overcoming Mozambique's problems and finding a way to healthy economic development by means of capitalist aid and investment, he is—as a Zimbabwean worker aptly put it—“betting on a dead horse”.

It is true that, in the short term, the consequences of the Nkomati Accord may be some easing of Mozambique's critical foreign exchange shortage, some recovery of the transport network, and so on. To a country in so desperate a predicament this will be like a crust to one who has no bread. But it is a very long way from even half a loaf.

Capitalism incapable

It will soon become apparent that capitalism is fundamentally incapable now of developing Mozambique. Even during the post-war upswing of world capitalism, most of the 'Third World' countries stagnated and the living standards of the mass of their people actually fell.

Even with the forced labour regime under the Portuguese, Mozambique and Angola had virtually no investment, despite the fact that towards the end of the colonial period South Africa enjoyed a virtual economic

open door there.

Now all the capitalist countries are gripped, to a greater or lesser extent, by crisis. Economic crisis is now eating at the vitals of South African capitalism too.

While the SA economy towers over Mozambique and over the whole of Southern Africa like a giant, nevertheless **in world terms** it is a weak and struggling third-rate industrial power.

It retains many features of a 'Third World' economy, depending on exporting, in the main, minerals and agricultural produce.

Its further industrial development is stifled because it cannot make its manufactured products competitive with the major industrial countries in export markets, or even defend the domestic market against cheaper imports from overseas.

This is because, on the one hand, its domestic market is inevitably limited by dependence on the apartheid cheap labour system—and cannot provide the advantages of large-scale production in cutting costs. On the other hand, the whole world market is stagnating in the grip of the giant multinational monopolies which are now unable to develop productive forces and trade, and instead are competing more intensively for each other's markets.

Less and less are capitalists in SA able to invest productively the surplus extracted from the labour of the working class.

In a period when SA capitalism must more and more measure up to the test of the world market if it is to

survive, the lack of investment means that the productivity of industry is more and more lagging behind its competitors.

1983 saw the SA economy go into its steepest decline since the Second World War, with production falling by 3%.

The revival of the economy in the last part of 1983 and the first part of 1984 depended on a temporary surge in the gold price, and proved even more short-lived than we had anticipated (see *Inqaba* No. 12).

Now the country is in the grip of recession once more, while the new economic downturn setting in in the USA is likely to further depress the entire world economy.

As the experience of 1974-5, 1979-80 and now 1983-4 has shown, even if the gold price rises steeply in the next period, this will not alleviate the underlying economic contradictions.

The earnings from gold cushion the SA capitalists from the worst effects of world recession—but, because of the lack of profitable opportunities for investment, they no longer offer a basis for rapid industrial development as was the case in the past.

It is becoming characteristic of SA that gold price rises are associated with stock market 'booms', astronomical bank profits, bubbles of speculation in property, 'consumer credit booms'—co-existing with declining real productive investment and stagnating industry.

A high gold price tends now, in other words, to contribute to an excess of 'liquidity' in the economy—money sloshing around looking for an outlet. The quantities of finance capital unable to find an outlet in productive investment have fuelled the economy's persistently high inflation rate.

Looking for investment avenues, the biggest SA monopolies have long been channelling vast sums towards investments (some productive and some speculative) in Latin America, Europe and even the USA. The Anglo-American Corporation, for example, has operations in 45 countries.

Under the pressure of these economic problems, the government has in recent years relaxed exchange controls to allow more funds to flow out of the country and seek more profitable avenues of investment abroad.



SA capitalism cannot develop the rural areas of South Africa itself. How will it solve the problems of Mozambique or the rest of Southern Africa?

Low investment and stagnating productivity cause an underlying tendency for the real value of the currency to decline against its competitors. A high gold price and even 'excess liquidity' itself may temporarily prop up the rand's exchange rate. But then the outflow of capital, as we have seen recently, leads to a dramatic fall of the rand on foreign exchange markets.

From an exchange rate of US\$1.30 to the rand in 1981, the rand has recently fallen to below 60 US cents. Even against the weak sterling, the rand has slipped as low as R2.35 to the £.

The decline of the rand, making imports more expensive, further fuels inflation—and without having a corresponding effect in boosting exports because of the crisis of world trade.

At the same time the government, while proclaiming the virtues of 'monetarist' restrictions on spending, in fact allows its own spending and credit in general to rise well beyond what the (capitalist) productive base of the economy can afford.

There is the pressure on it, on the one hand, of spending to enforce apartheid and the cheap labour system (military and police, the bureaucracy, etc). And, on the other hand, there is the pressure exerted on it by its white supporters and, increasingly, by the black working class too for spending on housing, education, transport, etc.

While this spending—in its amount and in its character—is totally inadequate to meet the basic needs of the majority—it is at the same time more

than SA capitalism can afford. This, equally, is a constant spur to inflation.

Seeking for a 'solution', the government tries to squeeze more and more revenue in taxes from those who can least afford it—the black workers, the aged, the homeless and the unemployed.

In a world dominated by monopolies and gripped by capitalist crisis, SA capitalism has come up against the suffocating limits of the market; the limits of the market retard investment; stagnating investment undermines productivity so that even the cheapest labour cannot prop it up; inflation is fuelled by 'excess liquidity', 'unproductive spending', and government deficits and debts; the value of the currency falls; imports become more expensive and the whole vicious spiral threatens to repeat itself on higher and higher levels.

The solution will lie only in public ownership of the means of production under workers' control and management, with production on the basis of a democratic plan. In other words, the solution lies in the struggle of the working class to end apartheid and capitalism, and establish its own democratic socialist rule.

In the present condition of chronic disease—which, we must stress, is only in its early stages—the propagandists of capitalism have the nerve to sneer at the 'failures' of planned economy and of so-called 'socialism' in backward Mozambique.

Hard-pressed to expand or even

sustain its existing industrial base in the major urban centres, SA capitalism has already shown itself incapable of developing the backward areas of South Africa itself—let alone of taking on the task of developing the Southern African region.

The decades-long exodus of population from countryside to town—clearly an irreversible development—is the product precisely of the ruin of small-scale rural production.

This has been speeded up in SA by the historic conquest of the African population, their forced removal from most of the land, and their confinement to overcrowded and barren 'reserves'. Nevertheless rapid urbanisation is a phenomenon of the entire underdeveloped world today.

Essentially it shows the impossibility, in this epoch of capitalism, of making a living with the cow, the plough and the hoe. More and more plainly, the Bantustans become mere 'dumping grounds' for 'surplus population' forcibly driven out of the urban areas, to be ruled by monstrous black police-puppet regimes.

'Separate development'—the claim of the Pretoria regime that it would 'develop' viable economies in the Bantustans—has been shown up as the hopeless failure which not only Marxists, but even liberals, predicted that it would be.

God of profit

The capitalists bow before only one god, the god of profit. Unless there is profit enough to be made, no capitalist will invest. Oppenheimer and the rest of the capitalist class are adamant that investment decisions cannot be made in the first instance on political grounds, but on economic ones, i.e., on the basis of whether they would make a profit.

Since the end of the 1970s, in fact, the SA government has been obliged to alter its 'economic decentralisation' policy to an attempt to create 'balanced growth points' mainly in or nearer to important urban centres. The East London and Bloemfontein areas are examples.

To maintain the fiction that Africans can exercise political rights

in the 'homelands', workers are obliged to commute or 'migrate' daily from townships situated within the Bantustans to neighbouring 'white' industrial areas.

All the major studies of projected population growth and movements over the next 25 years show a massive increase of urbanisation, especially to the Pretoria - Witwatersrand - Vereeniging (PWV) area.

In reality, the regime's present industrial decentralisation policy is almost entirely a defensive one—designed no longer to reverse the tide of urbanisation (an idea which went out with Blaar Coetzee) but slow it down and divert it as far as possible from the PWV area. (See *South African Review*, 1, 1983.)

The same forces which 'prevent capitalism developing the rural areas of South Africa to overcome the poverty of the masses will prevent such a development equally through the rest of Southern Africa. The region will remain characterised by islands of development amidst a sea of poverty—so long as capitalism has us all in its grip.

Benjamin Pogrund writes in the *Rand Daily Mail* (7/9/84): "the Government has made the awful discovery that Mozambique's economic problems are so horrendous that it is beyond the capacity of South Africa to do much to be of help, especially when South Africa is itself in the midst of drought, inflation and recession.

"It doesn't seem the West, either, is able or willing to give what Mozambique—or for that matter, Angola and others in the region—need so much."

Meanwhile, of course, the thaw in relations with Mozambique provides opportunities for SA capitalists to make a fast buck.

This is not only from prawns and fishing again in Mozambican waters! *African Business* (September, 1984), describes what has been taking place.

"South African-based commodity traders and manufacturers became substantial beneficiaries of the international relief operations launched in Mozambique last year, when they began to supply food and other emergency goods to aid organisations.

"The benefits began accruing to the South African economy well before the signing of the Nkomati Accord in March this year. As the

more ambitious investment plans for Mozambique's tourist, transport and agro-industrial sectors were unfurled by giants like Tiny Rowland's Lonrho, Sol Kerzner and RENNIES, trade was quietly growing in South African manufactured foods, drugs, tools and a range of other basic commodities."

SA companies also benefitted from the MNR's sabotage of Mozambique's road and rail links.

"In December 1983, the EEC contracted Cliff Products, a South African commodity trader, and the airfreight company Saffrair, to supply their multimillion-dollar relief operation in the one-time South African holiday playground of Vilankulo on the northern Inhambane coast. Here, since the previous August, tens of thousands of starving Mozambicans had sought refuge from drought and insurgent attacks in the interior.

"In December alone, the EEC made a grant of over \$500,000 for 'locally purchased relief supplies'. Disruption of the transport network made Johannesburg the only feasible 'local' source, and airlifts became the only possible means of transport. The operation is now entering its eighth month. Airlifts are extremely costly and can absorb over 50% of a relief project's budget."

Caution

It cannot be ruled out that some significant investment projects by South African and international monopolies may be carried out in Mozambique in the next period. However, it is necessary to view these announced 'plans' with great caution. The bourgeoisie is normally extremely wary to make investments in workers' states, however bureaucratically deformed, because of the danger that once such regimes recover strength they may easily turn to nationalise or renationalise the enterprises in private hands.

Under an agreement signed in July with the US Overseas Investment Corporation, Mozambique has undertaken to abide by "certain conditions relating to nationalisation, expropriation and dividend remittances" in respect of American investment. (*Financial Gazette*,

10/8/84.)

Nevertheless, if the imperialist monopolies have a business interest in investing in Mozambique, despite the character of the regime, it is because the avenues for profitable investment anywhere in the underdeveloped world are so hard to come by.

This investment is likely to remain extremely limited. The same pressures of the world market which have strangled Mozambique in the past, will tend also to stifle capitalist enterprises.

The Mozambican government is offering to rent 8 000 hectares of state land to South African farmers in an area planned for irrigation. This may be intended to improve food supplies to the capital, Maputo—recently reported to be down to less than 3 days' stocks—and to help ease the country's foreign exchange shortage.

In the Limpopo River valley, state farms are now being broken up into individual peasant holdings. But a regeneration of peasant agriculture by means of the capitalist market seems ruled out.

In every underdeveloped country, peasant agriculture is in crisis. Manufactured goods, particularly imports, rise constantly in price while the prices of minerals and agricultural commodities stagnate on the world market. The power of the monopolies ensures the super-exploitation of the 'Third World' countries through the terms of trade.

This has its effects on the price structure within each economy also. In Zambia, for example, a peasant now has to produce more than three times as much maize to buy the same shirt or plough as in the 1960s. In Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon), a given quantity of tea produced can now only buy one-third the amount of imports that it could buy in the mid-1950s.

And so the pattern is reproduced around the world. Prices of agricultural raw materials have been in decline since the end of the Second World War.

Even in the United States itself, farmers have fallen into crippling debt. In Denmark, half the farms are threatened with bankruptcy over the next 3-4 years.

In South Africa, agriculture is now indebted to the tune of R10 bn, and bankrupt small farmers (whites) are rapidly giving way on the land to the

monopoly corporations.

In this situation, what can be the prospect for viable peasant farming anywhere in the colonial world?

In Mozambique, capitalists are likely to be interested only in a few profitable projects, particularly where they can parasite upon international aid and state-provided facilities. The mass of the population will remain largely outside the benefits of any such development.

The Mozambican government's plans for rapid industrialisation will prove as unattainable with the post-Nkomati 'assistance' of the West as they were previously when the country depended upon assistance from the Soviet bloc alone.

While the crippling foreign currency shortage may be temporarily eased, chronic crisis in this area is likely to reassert itself the more Mozambique succeeds in importing its needs and becomes dependent upon them.

Increased South African use of Mozambique's port and rail facilities will not provide a permanent solution. The reduced use of these by SA over the last ten years was not entirely the result of deliberate boycott by Pretoria. Within that ten-year decline there was a very sharp fall between 1979 and 1983, a period coinciding with and reflecting the recession in South Africa.

In response to the contraction in the world market, the capitalists have seen to it that their own interests are secured first. An undeclared trade war has therefore erupted between the major industrial countries in order to protect their own markets.

South Africa itself has been a victim of this, having been ordered to cut steel exports to the USA. South African steel exports were among the most important sources of tariff income for Mozambique.

One tangible economic concession South Africa has made is to agree to purchase electricity from Mozambique at a higher tariff and in greater quantities than before. A part of South Africa's purchases will be used to resupply electricity to Maputo—and this need not be paid for by Mozambique in foreign currency.

Even if the problem of sabotage of the power lines is overcome, it will leave Mozambique critically dependent on South Africa for revenue earned from its own Cahora Bassa scheme, and even for supplying its capital with power.



Maputo docks—depending on South African traffic

South Africa, however, would depend on Cahora Bassa for only 8% of its electricity needs and could switch to alternatives at relatively little cost whenever it proves politically expedient to do so.

On the other hand, however, Mozambique needs South Africa to buy almost 70% of Cahora Bassa's generating capacity.

South Africa's consumption of electricity has been growing at a markedly slower rate than its increase in production. A serious slump in the next period could result in cut-backs in electricity consumption—and in the termination or reduction of purchases from Mozambique.

Mozambique's hopes of increased recruitment of migrant labour by SA will also leave it even more a hostage to Pretoria.

The mines have been cutting back on labour, cutting costs in order to boost profits. Profits will be the main consideration on which any decision to increase recruitment will be based.

So far, SA has 'legalised' the presence of 150 000 unregistered Mozambican workers on South African farms. But that is merely a recognition of an already existing state of affairs.

With no major expansion plans in the SA mining industry, any massively increased recruitment of labour from Mozambique would only take place at the expense of the jobs of other migrant workers from

neighbouring countries or even South Africa itself.

There are signs already that the SA government and employers hope to use Mozambican workers as strike-breakers by employing them during the course of major struggles, especially on the mines.

Mozambican workers have been demoralised by the horrific conditions and starvation in the areas they come from, as well as disappointed by the failure of the 'socialism' of the Machel government to transform their lives.

This makes it all the more important for unions such as the NUM in South Africa to make a conscious drive to organise Mozambican workers, to raise their consciousness, and to knit them together with other Southern African workers into a united labour movement.

Meanwhile the SA regime and ruling class is able to use the migrant labour system to divide the workers and to play the different member-states of SADCC off against each other.

For all these reasons, it is extremely doubtful whether the economic hopes Frelimo has invested in the Nkomati Accord will pay the dividends they expect. In fact the Nkomati Accord increases their dependence on South Africa when this dependence has been the major source of their problems. This is like the alcoholic who tries to overcome his addiction by increasing his consumption.

Restoration?

Though, as we have argued, capitalism will be unable to develop Mozambique, the question still arises whether Frelimo's turn to South Africa and to the West, and the increased implantation of capitalist investment and capitalist relations within the Mozambican economy, will lead to the restoration of a bourgeois regime—to the gradual transformation of the ruling bureaucracy either into a conscious agency of capitalism or into a 'new bourgeoisie'.

Marxists were confronted with a similar question in the 1920s and 1930s, in relation to the Soviet Union.

There, unlike in Mozambique, the revolution had taken the form of a

classical proletarian revolution, in which the working class itself took power, demolished the feudal-bureaucratic and bourgeois apparatus of the old state, and created a democratic workers' state, organised through elected soviets.

But, after the terrible depredations of the civil war, in which the vanguard of the proletariat was decimated defending the gains of the revolution against imperialist invaders, power was gradually usurped by a state bureaucracy, headed by Stalin. Eventually nothing remained of workers' democracy, and all power became concentrated in the hands of the bureaucracy, with the dictator Stalin as its personification.

The last years of Lenin's life coincided with the dying stage of genuine soviet rule. The struggle mounted by Lenin and Trotsky against bureaucratism proved incapable of arresting this decline.

After Lenin's death in 1924, the bureaucratic counter-revolution went into full swing. Trotsky was driven into exile and finally murdered. Tens of thousands of 'Old Bolsheviks' and supporters of the Bolshevik Left Opposition, many of them tenacious fighters to the last for the original ideals of the October Revolution, were purged, imprisoned, and executed.

Lenin's 'New Economic Policy'—an unavoidable concession to market forces, which had been intended as a temporary measure to revive peasant agriculture and provide a basis for state industry—was turned by the Stalinist bureaucracy into a caricature. Abandoning all hope of the international spread of the revolution, they manoeuvred in a blind and empirical fashion to defend at all costs and by any and all measures, the basis of their own power.

Striking blows at the proletariat, they encouraged the rich peasants (kulaks) to enrich themselves and cultivate a luxuriant growth of capitalist relations on the land.

But when the rise of the kulaks gave the latter confidence and ambition for power, threatening ultimately to restore capitalist rule in Russia, the Stalinist bureaucracy made a 180-degree turn.

It embarked on a policy of slaughter of the kulaks, the forced collectivisation of agriculture (at the cost of millions of lives), and rapid industrialisation by means of the

state.

Trotsky, in his writings in exile, took up the question whether an "imperceptible, 'gradual' bourgeois counter-revolution" was conceivable. "Until now," he pointed out, "... feudal as well as bourgeois counter-revolutions have never taken place 'organically' but they have invariably required the intervention of military surgery." (*The Class Nature of the Soviet State*, 1933.) The ideas of reformism are as inapplicable to counter-revolution as they are to the process of revolution. Only a forcible restoration of capitalism would be possible.

Although the attacks on the working class by the Stalinist apparatus, and its blind zig-zagging from one mistaken policy to the opposite, placed the gains of the October Revolution in constant jeopardy, the Bureaucracy itself still ruled in the final analysis by the defence of the system of nationalised property created by the revolution.

A **political counter-revolution** had undoubtedly taken place—but had this amounted to a **social counter-revolution** too? Had the basic **class nature** of the **state** been changed?

Forms of property

Fundamentally, wrote Trotsky, the "anatomy of society is determined by its economic relations. So long as the forms of property that have been created by the October Revolution are not overthrown, the proletariat remains the ruling class."

The bourgeoisie remains the ruling class in a capitalist country even when political power has been usurped by a bonapartist dictatorship. This is because private ownership continues as the basic form of property on which the economy and state rest.

In the Soviet Union, although the working class had lost political power, it nevertheless remained the ruling class **in the final analysis**. The Stalinist dictatorship was—and is—a **proletarian bonapartist** regime, resting on state ownership of production as the basic form of property.

The political counter-revolution in the Soviet Union destroyed workers' democracy (the actual, direct rule of the working class), and Stalin's 'left turn' did nothing to restore it.

Without workers' democracy there could be no move in the direction of

genuine **socialism**, the ending of inequality and the dissolving of the state into society. On the contrary, as a result of the 'left turn' the bureaucratic dictatorship was immensely strengthened and hardened. Nevertheless, it had the effect of eliminating once again any social basis for bourgeois restoration in the Soviet Union.

So long as the state retained ownership of the commanding heights of the economy, and so long as the state apparatus itself rested upon nationalised property and not upon a class of private property owners, the state remained a (**deformed**) workers' state.

This peculiar form of regime could only arise because of the backwardness of Russia and the isolation of the revolution. It could only consolidate itself because of the delay of the socialist revolution in the industrialised West—and because capitalism on a world scale was diseased and was no longer capable of developing backward countries at the pace which, potentially, state ownership of the means of production and economic planning could achieve.

In a country embracing one-fifth of the world, the advantages of state ownership and planning were conclusively demonstrated in the industrialisation of the Soviet Union under Stalinist rule.

In the case of the Soviet Union, the danger of a **forcible bourgeois counter-revolution**—through foreign military intervention—was only finally eliminated after the Red Army had defeated Hitler's invasion and the Soviet Union emerged after the Second World War as a super-power.

In all the deformed workers' states which have arisen since the War—where capitalism has been overthrown but without the working class itself taking power—the new bureaucratic regimes have, in one way or another, repeated zig-zags to 'left' and to 'right' in the course of consolidating their power and attempting to overcome economic obstacles, but without the restoration of capitalism itself.

In China, today, for example, the bureaucracy has turned to promoting forms of 'private enterprise', especially on the land. Recently, the first 'yuan millionaire' was a cause for celebration in Peking. Nevertheless, there is no question of the restitution of bourgeois power in China. The bureaucracy continues to

rest fundamentally on state ownership.

At a certain point, when an emerging Chinese 'bourgeois' class enters into conflict with the social basis of the regime, there would be a new sharp turn involving savage attacks to repress it once again.

However, there are important differences which have to be considered in the case of Mozambique: particularly the extreme weakness of the economy, the strength of South African imperialism on its border, and the weakened social base of the Frelimo bureaucracy. Unlike the Russian revolution, the proletariat played virtually no part in the Mozambican revolution and is now atomised, demoralised and confused. It is not in a position, at present, to mount any serious defence against the counter-revolutionary consequences of the Nkomati Accord.

There would thus be more scope for the 'imperceptible', 'gradual', bourgeois restoration which Trotsky ruled out in the case of the Soviet Union.

The restoration of capitalism as the ruling system in Mozambique cannot be theoretically ruled out in future. But it is not the most likely perspective.

The main factors are the inability of capitalism to develop Mozambique and the fear of the South African ruling class to go so far as to use its military power to install its own puppets in Maputo.

Certainly we are at the beginning of a new period of turbulence and instability within Mozambique. Machel's turn to the West, and its consequences in economic policy, have already involved splits within the ruling Politburo and the demotion or removal of dissenting voices.

The next period is likely to see the regime racked by much deeper splits, and possibly even by bloody purges.

The root of the division within the bureaucracy is, on the one hand, the failure of the illusions in 'socialism in one country', and, on the other hand, the impossibility of the country achieving an all-round economic development and any genuine national independence on the basis of capitalism.

With every direction for the bureaucracy now a blind alley, it must begin to lose cohesion. This would become much more evident if the threat to the whole regime from



Top: Admiring the pomp and ceremony at Nkomati are the wives of Samora Machel and P.W. Botha. Bottom: Trotsky arriving at Brest-Litovsk, December 1917, to negotiate with the German imperialist General Staff for the survival of Soviet Russia. The Prussian General Hoffman noted: "With Trotsky's appearance here, the easy social intercourse outside the conference hall has ceased."

the MNR faded.

One section pursuing its own self-interest in the narrowest terms, will probably try to 'make the best' of its new friendship with South Africa and the West. There will be increased opportunities for corruption and personal self-enrichment, through acting as bureaucratic 'comprador' agents of the monopolies now penetrating into Mozambique.

But, on the other hand, other sections of the bureaucracy, particularly those more closely in touch with

the proletariat and the poor peasants, will be driven to mount a resistance against this trend, and will try and defend the system of state ownership and economic planning as the fundamental source of their power and privilege.

They would have to lean on and even, at times, seek to mobilise the proletariat and peasantry in struggle, while trying to confine it within the narrow national limitations of Stalinism and the bureaucratic system itself.

Most likely, as the 'supreme arbiter' over the regime, Machel's policy will be one of blind zig-zags—leaning now on one section against the other, and then vice-versa.

In the final analysis, however, the bureaucracy as a whole is likely to be compelled to defend its position by defending state ownership of most of the means of production in Mozambique.

It is necessary for Marxists in Mozambique to distinguish themselves clearly from all wings of the ruling bureaucracy. Our policy there, as everywhere else, is based on the independent organisation and movement of the working class to fight against capitalist restoration and carry forward the revolution.

However this regime presents itself publicly, it has nothing in common with genuine Marxism.

Nothing could more plainly illustrate that than the approach which Frelimo took to the negotiations with South Africa and the manner in which the whole question of the Nkomati Accord was presented.

Machel went to Nkomati like the man who (in Lenin's words) goes to a funeral singing wedding songs.

He dressed up in a brand new Marshal's uniform, (specially flown out from England) and rode in a Rolls Royce to the sound of trumpets.

Here was a general who chose to mark a defeat by celebrating a victory. He told diplomats during the negotiations that these were "the result of the political and military victory of the Mozambican people"! (*Rand Daily Mail*, 16/3/84.)

Even if this were believed by the masses—which it isn't—what possible advantage could such a deception bring to the workers, youth and the peasants struggling for the transformation of society throughout Southern Africa?

Even worse than Machel's conduct at Nkomati, however, is the fact that all the decisions leading up to the Accord were taken in secret. It came as a shock, and shows the chasm that has opened between the bureaucracy and the masses, as well as Frelimo's lack of confidence in them.

This is further shown by the propaganda campaign mounted within Mozambique by Frelimo, involving numerous public meetings where a compulsory 'Solemn Act of Homage' was made to President Machel. The Frelimo Central Committee and the Peoples' Assembly endorsed the Ac-

cord after the fact, and an enforced nation-wide 'political study' of Machel's speeches on the issue took place.

Just how unaccustomed the regime is to any democratic criticism was illustrated by Machel's enraged outburst against a black South African journalist at a press conference some time after Nkomati, where the slightest criticism of his conduct was even implied.

Pressures

At the same time, of course, it would be ridiculous to suggest that Mozambique can cut itself off from South Africa or the pressures of the world economy. Even a genuine government of workers' democracy could have found itself in a very similar position of crisis in Mozambique. But, instead of distorting the true state of affairs, the workers and the population as a whole should have been told the truth no matter how unpalatable, and a debate initiated about the way forward.

When the young workers' state of Russia was threatened with invasion and the possible defeat of the revolution by German imperialism, the Bolshevik government had no choice but to go into talks at Brest-Litovsk and there negotiate from a position of weakness.

In order to buy time for the Bolshevik government in Russia, the revolutionaries had to concede space—agreeing to give up large amounts of territory and pay heavy indemnities for the Tsar's war with Germany which they had always opposed.

But they told the workers the truth, explaining why the negotiations had been forced upon the government, why it was necessary to gain some respite for the Russian workers' state and allow time for the German revolution itself to mature.

There was a full and democratic debate in the Central Committee, throughout the Party, and outside the Party as well about the position which should be adopted, and even Lenin, with all his authority, did not get his position accepted initially—and never automatically.

When the negotiators, led by Trotsky, disembarked from the train at Brest-Litovsk, they distributed

leaflets among the German soldiers, explaining the position of the Bolshevik government, describing the German government as the "robber capitalist government" that it was, and calling upon the German working class to come to the aid of the first workers' government in history by overthrowing their capitalist oppressors.

The whole policy of the Bolsheviks—in contrast with Stalinism, and in contrast with the policy of Machel—was based on raising the consciousness of the proletariat, imbuing it with an understanding of its capacity to change society, linking the struggle of the workers together internationally, and involving the workers consciously in every step, whether advance or retreat.

In contrast with this, Machel goes to the lengths of promising the South African ruling class that he will help to maintain labour discipline among the Mozambican migrant workers!

The absolute gulf between the Frelimo bureaucracy and genuine proletarian internationalism was already shown after the Lancaster House agreement, and the independence elections in Zimbabwe, when Machel declared Thatcher to be "the best Prime Minister" of Britain.

Now, in the Nkomati Accord, Machel has put his signature to statements which strike a blow at the very basis of the struggle by the black majority in South Africa for national liberation and democracy.

The preamble to the Accord solemnly declares that the governments of Mozambique and South Africa **both** accept "the right of peoples to self-determination and independence and the principle of equal rights of all peoples ..." Yet it is precisely the inability of Mozambique to exercise genuine self-determination and independence from the stranglehold of South Africa which drove it into the Accord!

It is one thing to hand over your wallet when a robber holds you up at gun-point. It is another thing entirely to present him with a signed testimonial as to his character and honesty! Yet this is what Machel has done.

And, on top of that, the South African government is recognised as upholding the principle of "equal rights of all peoples"! This amounts to conceding separate development and the Bantustan scheme as a fulfill-

ment of democratic 'principle'. What else can it possibly mean?

In contrast with the approach of the Machel regime, a genuine revolutionary workers' government—while it might also have been forced to make concessions to the power of South Africa—would have taken a fundamentally different approach. A revolutionary approach would have involved an explanation to the masses both in Mozambique, South Africa and throughout Southern Africa as to why some 'non-aggression' and economic treaty with the SA regime could not be avoided.

It would have made an open and honest appraisal, not only of the strengths, but also of the weaknesses of the South African imperialist enemy.

It would have pointed to the rising struggle of the South African black working class, to the coming revolution in SA, to the way in which the social base of capitalism is progressively being undermined, to the struggles of the proletariat throughout Southern Africa and internationally, and affirmed that the progress of the Mozambican Revolution would lie not through this Accord but through the victory of the socialist revolution in South Africa itself.

For every concession wrung from it in favour of South Africa, a revolutionary government in Mozambique would have doubled and redoubled assistance to the organisations and movement of the black proletariat inside South Africa.

In place of narrow, national, bureaucratic self-interest, it would have been guided fundamentally by the interests of the Mozambican and international proletariat.

For this, a regime of genuine workers' democracy would have been necessary in Mozambique—with a clear understanding of the forces that had driven South African imperialism to the conference table.

The signing of the Nkomati Accord with Mozambique marks, of course, a major new turn in the foreign policy of the apartheid regime.

South Africa's foreign policy has evolved under the pressure of three inter-connected forces: the mounting pressure of the class struggle at home; the successive advances of the revolution in Africa; and the increasing need of SA industry to find a

market in Africa for its exports.

It was in the early 1970s that the Vorster regime made a clear turn from SA's former isolationism towards a search for 'detente' with black governments of Africa. This was for economic and political reasons.

If the South African government could become 'acceptable' in black Africa, its diplomatic and trade relations with Europe and other countries overseas could also be lubricated. Moreover, by these means the Vorster regime hoped to weaken the ANC in international forums.

Nevertheless, the central pillar of its policy remained the 'Unholy Alliance' of colonial or white minority regimes in the Portuguese colonies, Rhodesia and South Africa itself.

Collapse

The collapse of Portuguese rule in Angola and Mozambique had tremendous repercussions on SA policy. As already explained, intervention in Mozambique was ruled out. In Angola, where full-scale intervention was attempted, SA suffered a sharp setback when it had to withdraw with its tail between its legs.

This period was also the aftermath of US defeat and withdrawal from Vietnam. Together with Vorster, the US strategist Kissinger carried out a reappraisal of policy towards Rhodesia.

It was decided that the Smith government could not be sustained in the long run. Its defeat, they feared, could lead to the overthrow of capitalism in this strategically important country—if the guerilla war there was fought to a final conclusion. Thus Smith was shaken by the scruff of the neck and told to give concessions. This resulted, by 1978, in a coalition government, nominally led by Muzorewa.

But the forces for revolution in Africa cannot be laid to rest by mere manoeuvre. The revolutionary war intensified, and the imperialists ultimately conceded at least the Lancaster House constitution.

From this, again, they hoped to produce an election result leading to a coalition, which they could manipulate through Muzorewa. But again the plan came unstuck, and the election resulted in a sweeping victory

for ZANU and (in Matabeleland) ZAPU.

If the leadership of the Zimbabwean national liberation movement had had a Marxist policy, and if they had mobilised and armed the workers and peasants to carry through the revolution, capitalism would have been overthrown in Zimbabwe in 1980, and the South African imperialists would have faced a very serious dilemma.

Had they invaded Zimbabwe, they would probably have been able to take, at least for a time, the main urban areas. But having invaded a revolution, and having to suppress a mobilised and armed population, their 'victory' would rapidly have been turned into a further source of weakness and prepared the way for a big defeat. The consequences of this for revolution in South Africa would in turn have been profound.

Even as events turned out, however, the maintenance of capitalism by the Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe amounted to small comfort for South Africa. ZANU's election victory gave an enormous boost to the confidence and combativity of the South African proletariat.

South Africa's international isolation seemed greater than ever. The formation of SADCC, though itself no solution to the problems of Southern Africa, has raised the spectre of future difficulties in the way of expanding South Africa's export trade.

Although the Zimbabwean government from the outset refused bases to the ANC, the SA regime felt more encircled and vulnerable than ever before. While SWAPO could not win the guerilla war in Namibia, neither could it be defeated by South Africa, and so this too has turned into an unending drain on the occupying power.

From Vorster's failed 'detente' strategy there evolved the 'total strategy' of Botha/Malan.

Military aggression against neighbouring states became a pronounced feature of SA's foreign policy, and although some large-scale interventions (for example into southern Angola) have been made, the attacks have deliberately stopped short of attempting directly to remove and replace the governments of the 'front line states'.

The use of guerilla forces such as UNITA and the MNR, as well as SA-trained bandits in Zimbabwe, for ex-

ample, has been an 'innovation' of SA policy in this period.

Together with this there has been the increased systematic use of the economic 'carrot and stick', to force the neighbouring governments into more and more open dependence upon and compliance with SA capitalism.

Foreign policy is an extension of domestic policy. The foreign policy aspects of 'total strategy' are part and parcel of the measures being worked out by the regime to deal with the mounting challenge of the black proletariat within South Africa.

Botha's plan for a 'constellation of Southern African states' (first mooted in 1979) has the aim of reducing the 'independence' of the states of Southern Africa to the level of Bantustans—while legitimising the SA Bantustans as 'independent' equals with them.

White rule over the whole of South Africa has long been recognised by the ruling class as too narrow a basis for the political defence of capitalism. But equally they recognise that to concede genuine democratic rights to SA's black people would merely open the floodgates of the socialist revolution.

The concentration of the massive industrial working class in SA, combined with the rising demand of the black majority for democratic rights, threatens to explode not only the regime's schemes of political divide-

and-rule, but the foundations of capitalist rule itself.

As one of the bourgeoisie's academic advisors, Professor Lombard, put it: "If an unqualified one-man-one vote election was held today in the Republic a non-white leader with a communistic programme would probably attain an overall majority based on a pledge to confiscate and redistribute property of the privileged classes." (Speech to FAK, 16/7/80.) This is precisely why capitalism cannot live with democracy in SA.

Thus the Bantustan scheme and the further break-up of South Africa along 'federal' or 'confederal' lines forms a basic element of the policy of all sections of the bourgeoisie. But to establish any viability for this, even in the short-term, they must carry it beyond the borders of South Africa and impose it upon the region as a whole.

Military attacks on Lesotho, Mozambique, etc., have not had the purpose merely to eliminate ANC guerilla operations from those territories. Their essential purpose has been to weaken and subdue all the neighbouring governments with the aim of forcing them eventually into the 'constellation'.

South Africa's attitude to SADCC is also governed by these aims. As Cornelis Human, chairman of Federale Volksbeleggings, put it: "the concept of a constellation of southern African states (has) a better chance of success if the SADCC could be brought into the fold." (*Rand Daily Mail*, 25/9/84.) Hence the attempts of the regime and the capitalists to penetrate into SADCC and take it over have a combined economic and political aim—an aim which has been significantly advanced by the Nkomati Accord and its aftermath.

This also explains why the SA regime is so determined to force the governments, for example of Lesotho and Botswana, into an Nkomati-type agreement also. Not surprisingly, even these right-wing governments resist the spider's invitation.

"We are no threat to you!" they cry. "We have closed our territory to the ANC. There is no need in our case for a non-aggression pact. Why do you insist on humiliating us by requiring us to sign away even the pretence of independence?"

Yet nothing less than this can satisfy the SA imperialist strategy.

While it will not be automatic that these or other Southern African governments will enter into Nkomati-type treaties with SA in the next period, it is quite possible that they ultimately will. Probably Zimbabwe, because of its relatively greater strength, will be able to hold out longest. But it too is in the grip of SA economic domination and it will find its position in the region constantly weakened by South Africa's power.

Paradoxically, if Zimbabwe was a stronger rival to capitalist South Africa, the two countries would now be on the brink of war.

Weakness

But the important thing to understand is that the Nkomati Accord is the result as much of the weakness of the SA regime as of its strength.

To have any chance of carrying through his programme of constitutional 'reform' and further schemes of divide-and-rule directed against the black majority within SA, Botha's regime could not rely solely on a policy of aggression towards its neighbours. It, too, needs a period of so-called 'peace' in foreign affairs.

On the one hand, aggressive 'destabilisation' of SA's neighbours raises such a stink that it makes 'compromise' with collaborators at home more difficult. On the other hand, the ruling class calculates that the co-operation of Machel, whose standing in the eyes of the SA masses is still high, elevates compromise within SA to a level of respectability.

In addition the Nkomati Accord has enabled the Western imperialist powers, at least for a short period, to enter into more open friendship with South Africa—and the opportunity was in fact quickly seized by the Thatcher government and others to bring Botha over for a 'lap of honour' round some European capitals.

But all these schemes and manoeuvres will be exploded by the force of the revolutionary struggle now mounting within South Africa.

And, as they are exploded internally, they will be exploded externally also under the pressure of movements of mass resistance, against capitalism and against SA domination, which will develop in all the Southern African countries.



SA collaborators like the Labour Party's Rabie (above) felt bolder after Nkomati.

The Nkomati Accord marks not the beginning of a period of 'peace and stability' in Southern Africa, but, on the contrary, the beginning of a new phase of enormous instability and upheaval in which the struggles of the working people throughout the region will be more consciously linked together.

We are in the early stages of an unparalleled world crisis of capitalism, and of unparalleled economic, social and political crisis in South Africa and Southern Africa as a whole.

Any gains made by the SA regime as a result of the Nkomati Accord will prove short-lived. Undoubtedly Botha hoped to demoralise the SA black masses by forcing Machel to the conference table. But instead, the result has been the opposite. It has only hardened the conviction (at this stage among the active layer of the proletariat) that "We are our own liberators" and that no external forces can take the place of the mass struggle.

The magnificent mass resistance movement now spreading all over South Africa is a brilliant answer to the Nkomati Accord!

Nevertheless the SA regime will have to try to proceed with its Nkomati strategy until that itself reaches its limits and breaks down.

In the crisis which will grip South Africa and the whole region in the years ahead, it is entirely likely—even inevitable—that SA imperialism will resort to major new aggressions and even war against one or more of its neighbours.

But that again would only mark a new and more intense crisis for the regime—for the SA state has its main enemy not abroad but at home, in the black working class of South Africa. Resort to new policies of war in Southern Africa could open the way, at some point, for the South African revolution itself.

For anyone prepared to think the situation through, the Nkomati Accord should have made it clear that the oppressed workers and people of South Africa cannot rely on the regimes of the Southern African countries for real support.

What is necessary is to join forces consciously with the working class, with the youth and with the poor peasants of these countries—whenever necessary against their own governments—to fight together in solidarity for our common liberation.

Unfortunately the ANC and CP



South African township in revolt—the masses' answer to Botha's Nkomati "victory"!

leadership have not drawn these conclusions. Because of their reliance in exile, over more than twenty years, upon diplomatic and material support from African governments for their strategy of guerilla warfare—and not upon the movement of the workers in these countries—the response of the leadership to the Nkomati Accord has been disappointing.

The statement of the ANC leadership shortly after the signing of the Accord certainly implied a criticism of Machel's action. But very soon this was overtaken by the "Final Communiqué" from the front line states' summit meeting at Arusha, Tanzania, on April 29th, in which the ANC and SWAPO participated.

This document, to which the ANC President lent his authority, amounts to a simple whitewash of the Nkomati Accord.

It declares that the liberation struggle in South Africa "receives, and will continue to receive, the full support" (!) of all the governments present, including, e.g., Mozambique and Botswana!

Specifically, "the Liberation Movements reaffirmed their understanding of steps which are taken" by the Front Line States for their own "freedom" and "security". **This could only mean the Nkomati Accord—which was allowed to pass without criticism.**

Still more important, however, is the question whether the ANC/CP

leadership have realised the need to abandon the failed guerilla strategy of the past twenty years and go over genuinely to a policy based on the revolutionary movement of the working class.

Unfortunately this is not the case.

In the *African Communist* (No. 98) the CP has conceded that the restriction or withdrawal of facilities by countries of Southern Africa has "adversely affected" the freedom of the guerillas to operate. "But of themselves, they do not demand of us any new policies"!

What is implied (but not clearly spelled out) is that guerilla actions of Umkhonto we Sizwe should in future be combined with the actions of the mass movement within South Africa.

That is certainly the idea recently put forward by the leadership of the ANC: "The dependence of the regime on repression, intimidation and terror is clear demonstration that the way forward to victory lies in a systematic combination of mass action and organised revolutionary violence within the framework of a growing people's war." (Quoted in *Herald*, 6/9/84.)

This idea contains a fundamental confusion, which, if it not cleared up, will lead to disasters in the future.

Firstly, it should be openly acknowledged that no basis exists or has existed in South Africa for a genuine guerilla war. A guerilla or 'people's' war means fundamentally a peasant war, such as we have seen,

for example, in Vietnam or in Mozambique and Angola.

In industrialised South Africa, the peasantry has been all but completely eliminated and the objective conditions do not exist for a guerilla war.

It should be pointed out, in any event, that a policy of peasant-based guerilla warfare would be correct, even in a very backward country, only as an **auxiliary** to the movement of the urban proletariat. **Only the proletariat, even in the most underdeveloped country, can ensure the carrying through of the revolution on healthy lines.**

The consequence of the absence of leadership by the working class is shown in the way the revolution has stalled in Zimbabwe. In South Africa, on the other hand, the revolution can only develop as a proletarian revolution or it will be defeated altogether.

In a country such as South Africa, the notion of 'guerilla warfare' can only lead in practice to actions such as those carried out by Umkhonto in the past—bombings and sporadic armed attacks in similar style to the IRA in Northern Ireland and Britain.

Taking place in urban areas, these do not advance the movement of the proletariat, but on the contrary retard it. They are intended as a substitute for the revolutionary force of the mass struggle. This can only weaken the understanding of the working class that it is their task to organise and arm themselves for the transformation of society.

As explained in material in *Inqaba* in the past, the unintended result is also to strengthen the state apparatus into an even stronger force for use against the working class.

It also consolidates the forces of reaction in the middle class and the working class itself. In the case of South Africa, this means playing into the hands of ultra-right white racist reaction against the black working class.

That reaction, if it takes on mass proportions, would create conditions for a disastrous racial civil war, capable of destroying millions of lives and laying in ruins the productive forces of South Africa.

On the other hand, organised armed actions by the masses themselves, headed by the organised working class, have an entirely different and revolutionary significance.

But a policy of armed struggle by the mass movement can only become

effective once the movement is sufficiently strongly organised and clearly led—and once the forces of the state and of reaction have been politically split and weakened so that armed action can be sustained without immediately leading to massive defeats.

That point is approaching in South Africa, but it has not yet been reached.

Nevertheless, support should clearly be given to the insurrectionary action, including armed action, for example of the youth in the townships, whenever it is possible to create barricades and temporarily defend demonstrations, etc., from attacks by the police.

This marks a step in the development of the capacity of the movement to arm itself, first for defensive purposes and then to pass over eventually to the offensive, arms in hand.

Terrible complications

But to 'combine' an unarmed mass movement with the actions of **separately organised guerilla bands** would give us the worst of all possible worlds. It would lead to terrible complications for the organised movement of the workers and the youth, and expose this movement to unnecessarily savage attacks and defeats.

Instead of clinging to confused and mistaken ideas of the past, the ANC and CP leadership should be prepared to draw the conclusions which are made so clear by the Nkomati Accord—and to turn away from the ideas of guerillaism altogether.

The accumulated military material and expertise, as well as the heroism of the young MK cadres burning for a fight, should be turned to a conscious policy of preparing the way for the future organised arming of the proletariat in South Africa for revolution.

That would have entirely different consequences than continuing with the policy of spectacular explosions and individual combat actions within SA (something which the Nkomati Accord has rendered more 'difficult' but will certainly not totally prevent).

At its forthcoming "consultative conference" in exile, the ANC leadership has the opportunity to make a

fundamental correction and realignment of its policy—and to gain the full support of the fighters in the camps for such a turn.

Unfortunately, the ANC and CP leadership remains determined to silence the voice of Marxism within the ranks, and it is unlikely that these policies will gain a hearing at the conference.

Nevertheless, the movement will not be able to escape the realities of the struggle in Southern Africa so brutally brought to light at Nkomati.

This is already beginning to be shown within South Africa where the most advanced sections of the workers and the youth are rejecting the old arguments of a 'two-stage' revolution which the ANC and especially CP leaders continue to put forward.

Among the pro-Congress rank-and-file within SA itself there is now an increasing recognition of the need to overthrow capitalism in order to carry through and secure national liberation and democracy. The 'two-stage' illusion of a democratic South Africa on a capitalist basis is more and more being seen as undermining the unity and revolutionary force of the movement of the working people.

This will become the predominant understanding of wide layers of workers and youth who move to build the ANC in South Africa as a fighting mass organisation to transform society.

In the period ahead, difficult strategic and tactical problems of the revolution in South Africa—including the problem of arming the revolution—will have to be confronted. There will be many opportunities for the ideas of Marxism to gain mass support while false and confused ideas are cast aside within the movement.

And in time to come it will also be seen that the Nkomati Accord itself—for all its adverse effects—will have only helped to prepare the revolutionary movement throughout Southern Africa for its eventual victory.

Then the way will be open for all the peoples of Southern Africa, under democratic workers' rule, to unite their countries voluntarily in a Socialist Federation and begin to overcome the legacy of problems left by imperialism, racism and capitalism.

MINeworkERS' WAGE STRUGGLE:

Why the NUM settled

By Richard Monroe



On Sunday October 16, hours before 80 000 members of the National Union of Mineworkers were due to strike, the Chamber of Mines offered concessions which were accepted by the union leadership.

In addition to the 13% wage increase originally offered, the Chamber offered holiday bonuses on the seven Anglo-American mines involved in the dispute. This, stated the NUM negotiators, amounted to an added 2,3% in pay and fringe benefits.

This climb-down by the Chamber is of historic importance. For the first time ever in SA the mine bosses retreated in the face of union organisation.

The offer, it is true, did not come near to meeting the December 1983 NUM conference demand for a living wage of at least R450 a month, nor the original NUM demand in these negotiations for a 60% increase, nor the revised demand for a 25% increase.

But, in the circumstances, the decision by the union leadership to settle, and to recommend calling off the strike, was entirely

correct.

Strike action in the mining industry takes place under conditions very different from the rest of SA industry. Firstly, black mineworkers are confronted with the combined forces of the most powerful monopolies, unwilling to tolerate any challenge to their authority and long used to enforcing their will by brute force. Secondly, gold is the country's single most important and consistent export earner, and has been the key to SA capitalism's growth.

The armed police stand at the ready to back up the mine bosses at the first sign of 'trouble'—to attack workers savagely with dogs, gas, buckshot and bullets, as has happened repeatedly in the past.

Most oppressed

The black mineworkers, for their part, are among the most oppressed by the apartheid regime—migrant workers, who, as NUM general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa has stated, "in many senses...have nothing to lose. If management threatens them with loss of food or jobs, well they don't seem to care that much. In this country they don't have a lot at stake. Nothing belongs to them anyway...they feel that they must go all the way."

In these circumstances, with the stakes so high, there is an in-built tendency for any struggle between the bosses and black workers on the mines to develop into an all-out confrontation.

Recognition of the factors involv-

ed, and preparing the workers to cope with them, is essential for the development of any successful strike strategy.

The last union-led mine strike took place under the banner of the African Mineworkers Union in 1946. This strike was rapidly and brutally suppressed and defeated—and the defeat resulted in the crushing of the union, and of all union organisation on the mines for 36 years.

Looking back, it can be seen that a key factor which led to the defeat of the 1946 mine strike was inadequate organisation and preparation by the union leadership.

Police

In 1946 the police shot and killed at least twelve workers, injured well over a thousand, and went underground to drive out workers conducting a sit-in in the stopes. But the Rand police commander at the time had only 1 600 police at his disposal, and stated that he did not find it necessary to use the whole of this force, or call up reinforcements. (*Argus*, 16/8/1946)

Concerted industry-wide action at the time might have paralysed the police. But in fact in 1946 what was intended to be an all-out strike proved solid at no more than 12 out of 45 producing mines, with some brief action at no more than 12 others.

The strike was launched on the night of Sunday August 11, and was all over five days later. Different mines came out at different times, and only on one mine did the workers stand firm throughout.

The Transvaal Congress of Non-European Trade Unions, claiming (according to press reports at the time) 600 000 members, had promised to call a general strike in support of the action by mineworkers. The date for the mine strike was known well in advance. But the first CNETU leaflet launching this call was issued only at 9pm on Wednesday, August 14—by which time the mine strike was already collapsing.

Between 1946 and 1982, black mineworkers had no union.

In 1972, the real wages of black mineworkers were lower than they had been in the 1890s. Only the spontaneous strike movement of 1974-5 succeeded temporarily in raising wage

levels.

With no union organisation, a tradition of struggle developed among black mineworkers of sudden eruptions of anger against the bosses, and all who stood on their side. Strikes have been sporadic and uncoordinated. Every action has escalated rapidly into attacks on mine property, into brutal police response, shootings and killings, and mass deportation of workers to their homes.

A decisive turning point was the formation of the National Union of Mineworkers in 1982. The NUM is only two years old. Its main task—and its main difficulty—has been to build strong industry-wide organisation based on democratic workers' control, rooted firmly in shaft and hostel-level organisation—in order to prepare systematically for the huge battles which loom inevitably ahead.

Only light-minded adventurers would seek to take on the Chamber of Mines and the state machine in an all-out confrontation before the ground has been thoroughly prepared.

At the same time, faced with



On 25 November, NUM general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa was arrested in Lebowa for organising an 'illegal meeting' of mineworkers, and was held overnight. He was released when it turned out that the Bantustan police had charged him under the Riotous Assemblies Act—which was repealed two years ago! Within hours of his arrest, NUM members were preparing to take strike action in protest.

atrocious wages, appalling living, safety and health conditions, and with the whole slavery of migrant labour, black mineworkers are compelled to struggle. Any delays or hesitations by a union leadership which appeared to the workers as reflecting an unwillingness to lead a fight would lead rapidly to the discrediting of a mine union, and to its inability to create the necessary 100% concerted organisation.

Well aware of the problems, the NUM leadership has tackled the tasks soberly and with boldness.

Winning from the Chamber the formal 'recognition' of the 'right of trade union organisation' on the mines was itself an important victory.

But, despite this, the NUM has had to battle with stubborn mine managements every inch of the way on every mine—for access to workers, the right to hold meetings, etc. With the mines often inaccessible and spread around the country, the NUM has nevertheless grown to 90 000 members—on average by over 4000 a month.

The NUM leadership faced its first serious test on the wages question when less than a year old. In July 1983 the Chamber confronted it with a unilateral announcement of a 13% rise—an insult to workers when inflation was running at about this figure.

At that time the union had only some 30 000 members and had won recognition on only 4 mines.

While denouncing the smallness of the rise, the NUM leadership had to recognise that it did not yet have the muscle for a fight and should not allow itself to be provoked prematurely by the cynical mining bosses.

No alternative

Therefore it had no alternative but to accept the increase, and to ensure that the membership clearly understood the reasons and were not swayed by stupid accusations of 'cowardice' from some quarters.

The December 1983 conference of the union noted that "the Chamber of Mines did not bargain in good faith during the 1983 Wage Review in that it set an artificial date deadline". The conference demanded that, this year, the Chamber should begin negotiations in May and conclude them by June 1st, and that

if it failed to do this or to agree to the union's demands, the NUM would call a Special National Congress to consider the issue. A living wage demand of R450 a month was also adopted.

Despite the rapid membership growth, 85% of mineworkers are still unorganised. By mid-1984 the NUM was not yet strongly enough organised to risk an all-out confrontation with the Chamber. The union's strength was still largely confined to mines of the Anglo-American Corporation—which, because it has the most profitable and the commanding position in the industry, has been more able to give concessions.

Need for training

At the shaft-steward level there is still considerable inexperience and need for education and training.

Doubtless, once an all-out strike began, massive support would have come from non-NUM mineworkers also (as was manifest even in the way that events actually unfolded). But, without time to thoroughly **organise** and **prepare** this support in advance, an all-out strike at this point, however heroic, would have had a high probability of defeat—and the dissipation of the gains already achieved by the union.

Strategically, it was better to defer the fight for another year.

However, if it should fail to give battle when battle was forced upon it, the union leadership ran the risk of discrediting itself and the very idea of trade union organisation in the eyes of its members and black mineworkers as a whole.

The Chamber bosses were well aware of this, and manoeuvred to try and face the NUM leadership with a choice between a humiliating climb-down or launching a fight on unfavourable terms.

In these conditions, the union leadership pursued skilful tactics, with considerable success.

The initial negotiations were a stand-off, with the Chamber not budging from its initial position and with the NUM leadership standing by its demand for a 60% increase. During the "conciliation" procedures the NUM reduced its demand to 25% but the Chamber refused to move, claiming that the NUM was "unrepresentative".

The NUM had no option but to prepare for the fight as best it could, while trying to force the Chamber into making, before the strike was under way, sufficient concessions to convince the workers that, through organisation, the bosses could be forced to back down.

In other words, it had to try to create a result which would increase support for the key strategic task of building a mass democratic union powerful enough for the inevitable confrontations of the future.

Ironically, in this instance, the NUM leadership was able to use the cumbersome procedures for calling a legal strike to the advantage of the union.

Marxists oppose all the state's restrictions on the right to strike because they are designed to hamstring the workers. When grievances spark a strike call in a single factory, a legal 'cooling-off period' almost invariably serves to demoralise the workers.

In the case of this national dispute with the Chamber, however, it gave time to prepare, organise and educate a dispersed workforce on the issues—and to stay the hand of any volatile section that wished to launch into local action on its own.

Equally, to organise a ballot of workers on the mines in dispute (though not a required part of the 'legal strike' procedure) was a good move.

Nowhere do workers have a fetish for individual balloting—the democracy of the mass meeting is far more effective (and, in fact, the NUM held very successful mass meetings). But in this case, the over 80% support for a strike shown in the ballot served to surprise and frighten the bosses—and became a main factor in the decision for last-minute concessions.

Also, the organisation for the ballot served to keep up the momentum towards action, and its result signalled to other mineworkers that their solidarity action would reinforce a solid and determined core.

In other words, the use of the ballot had enormous **organisational** and **propaganda** value.

So, at the eleventh hour the Chamber—or, strictly speaking, the Anglo bosses—climbed down. (The Anglo bosses made the concession for the same reasons that they had earlier been more ready to concede recognition).

It was because the same concessions were refused at non-Anglo mines that strike action went ahead at a number of them, even though these were not (legally) "in dispute".

On these mines the bosses exacted ruthless and despicable retribution. Already before the strike, Consolidated Goldfields bosses showed their contempt for their own law by issuing a pamphlet stating that "management will not tolerate a strike and strikers will be dismissed whether the strike is legal or not."

By calling in the police, Rand Mines (Barlow-Rand), Johannesburg Consolidated Investments, Gencor and Anglovaal washed their hands in blood once again.

The overall casualty toll was at least ten workers shot dead and up to a thousand injured. The hospitals found many mineworkers had horrific injuries to eyes and limbs as the result of police shotguns, whips and dogs.

Anglo-American, too, showed characteristic capitalist hypocrisy by bringing in police against mineworkers on strike at one of their Free State mines in dispute.

These so-called 'liberal' employers wailed: "The police acted with restraint over a period of time and it was only when serious trouble seemed inevitable that they were forced to take stronger action.... It is deeply regretted that many workers sustained injuries, some serious, during the dispute."

Difficulties

Yet a spokesman for these same employers had admitted the difficulties for the NUM in securing ratification at the disputed mines for the settlement at such short notice: "at noon on Sunday and with only a few hours in hand, details of the renegotiated offer had to be conveyed and clarified to some 75 000 workers at 233 different shafts and in 22 separate hostels hundreds of kilometres apart." (*Rand Daily Mail*, 19/9/84)

These savage attacks on workers gave another warning, if one were needed, that the capitalists will not relinquish their control over the working class without a fight, and that the labour movement must prepare with all deliberation for the all-out confrontations which will

ultimately be unavoidable.

Correctly, the leadership of the NUM has set the task, before next year's wage negotiations, to build a mass union—with a target of 200 000 members. On the basis of the reputation that the NUM has already created for itself among workers, this is a realistic target, and a minimum one for success in strike action.

A vital task also identified by the union is the education of a cadre of shaft stewards. This is a key to strong, democratic unionism.

A militant mass NUM, able to take on and win against the bosses is vital not only for mineworkers themselves, but for the whole labour movement.

Because of the depths of their oppression and the unbending militancy which this creates; because of their strategic role in the economy—black mineworkers have a key role in the struggle of the whole working class and all the oppressed for democracy and socialism.

One notable and unfortunate absence in the course of the present dispute was a clear statement by other trade unions and federations of their own commitment to an NUM victory

in this dispute, and the preparation of action to assist in its success.

To prepare the ground for country-wide solidarity action with the mineworkers next year, or when the occasion arises, is now an important task, which needs to be taken up both by the NUM and the leadership of the whole trade union movement. To strengthen links between the mineworkers and the rest of the organised working class is a responsibility of every activist.

Solidarity action

The bosses must be warned that resort to the gun to settle disputes on the mines will be met with general industrial action—with a 24-hour national general strike to prepare the ground and, if necessary, more prolonged action.

The tremendous response of workers to the November 5-6 Transvaal general strike call by the trade unions and the youth shows what is now possible.

For its part, and despite all the

special difficulties affecting mineworkers, the NUM will have to be prepared to mobilise full support for political strikes that are called by the unions, and give active backing to other sections of workers in struggle.

The impending formation of a new trade union federation will provide a stronger vehicle through which solidarity action can be organised.

Any action taken by black mineworkers to fight for their demands will be immensely strengthened, too, by support from workers' internationally. This year, for example, despite the intense pressures upon them in their bitter and prolonged struggle with the Coal Board and the Thatcher government, many British miners followed the course of the dispute in South Africa with close interest and concern.

In the months ahead, the NUM leadership has the opportunity to transform these and other expressions of instinctive internationalism into strong links, developing mutual education and understanding, as a basis for the concrete support that is needed.



About five hundred NUM shaft stewards formed strike committees during the dispute.

V.I. Lenin —

May Day Action by the Revolutionary Proletariat

Lenin, the great Russian Marxist, published this article (which we have slightly shortened) in June 1913. It appeared in *Sotsial-Demokrat*, the official paper of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, which Lenin edited.

In it, he appraises the significance of the huge revolutionary strike movement then gripping Russia, and at the same time explains what was involved in the development of a revolutionary situation.

There are important parallels (though not, of course, exact ones) with the situation developing in South Africa today.

One important difference is that in Russia in 1913 the movement was only just emerging from a period of defeat and complete illegality (roughly 1907-1912). Therefore—within an overall strategy of combining legal and illegal methods of organisation—far greater emphasis than in SA today had to be placed by revolutionaries on underground and illegal forms of organisation.

The "liquidationists" against whom Lenin is arguing, were a tendency in the Russian workers' movement who, while "calling themselves Social-Democrats" (the name used by Marxists at that time), in fact wanted to *dissolve* underground methods of work in favour of *purely* legal and open methods of organisation.

Even after these revolutionary events, the mass movement in Russia (and the workers' movement internationally) experienced further serious defeats—before the recovery which brought about the Russian Revolution in 1917 and opened up a revolutionary period throughout Europe.

The article shows how even conditions of illegality cannot prevent the working class from asserting its leadership and creating a mass movement when the ruling class and its social system is in crisis. The period of reaction following the 1905 revolution is here seen to be reversed—just as the working class was later to transform the

defeat of 1914 into the revolution of 1917.

At the same time, seen in its context, the article shows how the development of a revolutionary situation, and of the revolution itself, is a drawn-out process, with many twists, turns, and surprises.

Unlike in SA today, the working class in Tsarist Russia was a small minority in society. All the more striking, therefore, is Lenin's implacable emphasis on the *leading* role of the working class in the revolutionary movement of all the oppressed.

If Russia's "bourgeois-democratic" revolution could only be victorious through the taking of power by the working class, how much more is it the case in our own revolution in SA today that the achievement of national liberation and democracy depends on the winning of power by the working class—and must be consciously linked with dismantling capitalism and beginning to lay the foundations for socialism!

A year has passed since the Lena events and the first, decisive upsurge in the revolutionary working-class movement since the June Third coup. The tsar's Black Hundreds and the landowners, the mob of officials and the bourgeoisie have celebrated the 300th anniversary of plunder, Tatar incursions, and the disgracing of Russia by the Romanovs. The Fourth Duma has convened and begun its "work", though it has no faith in that work and has quite lost its former counter-revolutionary vigour. Confusion and tedium have beset liberal society, which is listlessly making appeals for reforms while admitting the impracticability of anything even approximating reform.

And now comes a May Day action

by Russia's working class, who first held a rehearsal in Riga, then went into resolute action in St. Petersburg on May 1 (O.S.); this action has rent the dim and dreary atmosphere like a thunderbolt. The tasks of the approaching revolution have come to the fore again in all their grandeur, and the forces of the advanced class leading it stand out in bold relief before hundreds of old revolutionaries, whom persecution by hangmen and desertion by friends have not defeated or broken, and before millions of people of the new generation of democrats and socialists.

Weeks before May Day, the government appeared to have lost its wits, while the gentlemen who own

factories behaved as if they had never had any wits at all. The arrests and searches seemed to have turned all the workers' districts in the capital upside down. The provinces did not lag behind the centre. The harassed factory owners called conferences and adopted contradictory slogans, now threatening the workers with punishment and lock-outs, now making concessions in advance and consenting to stop work, now inciting the government to commit atrocities, now reproaching the government and calling on it to include May Day in the number of official holidays.

But even though the gendarmes showed the utmost zeal, even though they "purged" the industrial suburbs, even though they made arrests right and left according to their



Lenin in 1918

latest "lists of suspects", it was no use. The workers laughed at the impotent rage of the tsar's gang and the capitalist class and derided the governor's menacing and pitiful "announcements"; they wrote satirical verses and circulated them by hand or passed them on by word of mouth; they produced, as if from nowhere, fresh batches of small, poorly printed "leaflets", short and plain, but very instructive, calling for strikes and demonstrations, and reminding the people of the old, uncurtailed, revolutionary slogans of the Social-Democrats, who in 1905 led the first onslaught of the masses against the autocracy and against monarchy.

A hundred thousand on strike on May Day, said the government press the next day. Bourgeois newspapers, using the first telegraphed information, reported a hundred and twenty-five thousand.... A correspondent of the central organ of the German Social-Democrats wired from St. Petersburg that it was a hundred and fifty thousand. And the day after the whole bourgeois press quoted a figure of 200 000-220 000. Actually the number of strikers reached 250 000!

But, apart from the number of May Day strikers, much more

impressive—and much more significant—were the revolutionary street demonstrations held by the workers. Everywhere in and around the capital crowds of workers singing revolutionary songs, calling loudly for revolution and carrying red flags fought for several hours against police and security forces frantically mobilised by the government. And those workers made the keenest of the tsar's henchmen feel that the struggle was in earnest, that the police were not faced with a handful of individuals engaged in a trivial Slavophil affair, that it was actually the masses of the capital's working class who had risen.

This was a really brilliant open demonstration of the proletariat's revolutionary aspirations, of its revolutionary forces steeled and reinforced by new generations, of revolutionary appeals to the people and the peoples of Russia. Last year the government and the manufacturers were able to take comfort from the fact that the Lena explosion could not have been foreseen, that they could not have made immediate preparations to combat its consequences; this time, however, the monarchy had displayed acute foresight, there had been ample time for preparation and the "measures" taken were most "vigorous"; the result was that the tsarist monarchy revealed its complete **impotence** when faced with a revolutionary awakening of the proletarian masses.

Indeed, one year of strike struggle since Lena has shown, despite the pitiful outcries of the liberals and their yes-men against the "craze for striking", against "syndicalist" strikes, against combining economic with political strikes and vice versa—this year has shown what a great and irreplaceable weapon for agitation among the masses, for rousing them, for drawing them into the struggle the Social-Democratic proletariat had forged for itself in the revolutionary epoch. The revolutionary mass-scale strike allowed the enemy neither rest nor respite. It also hit the enemy's purse, and in full view of the world it trampled into the mud the political prestige of the allegedly "strong" tsarist government. It enabled more and more sections of the workers to regain at least a small part of what had been achieved in 1905 and drew fresh sections of the working people, even the most backward, into the

struggle. It did not exhaust the capacity of the workers, it was frequently demonstrative action of short duration, and at the same time it paved the way for further, still more impressive and more revolutionary open action by the masses in the shape of street demonstrations.

During the last year, no country in the world has seen so many people on strike for political ends as Russia, or such perseverance, such variety, such vigour in strikes. This circumstance alone shows to the full the pettiness, the contemptible stupidity of those liberal and liquidationist sages who tried to "adjust" the tactics of the Russian workers in 1912-13, using the yardstick of "European" constitutional periods, periods that were mainly devoted to the preparatory work of bringing socialist education and enlightenment to the masses.

The colossal superiority of the Russian strikes over those in the European countries, the most advanced countries, demonstrates not the special qualities or special abilities of Russia's workers, but the **special** conditions in present-day Russia, the existence of a revolutionary situation, the growth of a directly revolutionary crisis. When the moment of a similar growth of revolution approaches in Europe (there it will be a socialist and not a bourgeois-democratic revolution, as in our country), the proletariat of the most developed countries will launch far more vigorous revolutionary strikes, demonstrations and armed struggle against the defenders of wage-slavery.

This year's May Day strike, like the series of strikes in Russia during the last eighteen months, was revolutionary in character as distinguished not only from the usual economic strikes but from demonstration strikes and from political strikes demanding constitutional reforms, like, for instance, the last Belgian strike. Those who are in bondage to a liberal world outlook and no longer able to consider things from the revolutionary standpoint, cannot possibly understand this distinctive character of the Russian strikes, a character that is due entirely to the revolutionary state of Russia. The epoch of counter-revolution and of free play for renegade sentiment has left behind it too many people of this kind even among those who would like to be called Social-Democrats.

Russia is experiencing a revolu-

tionary situation because the oppression of the vast majority of the population—not only of the proletariat but of nine-tenths of the small producers, particularly the peasants—has intensified to the maximum, and this intensified oppression, starvation, poverty, lack of rights, humiliation of the people is, furthermore, glaringly inconsistent with the state of Russia's productive forces, inconsistent with the level of the class-consciousness and the demands of the masses roused by the year 1905, and inconsistent with the state of affairs in all neighbouring—not only European but Asian—countries.

But that is not all. Oppression alone, no matter how great, does not always give rise to a revolutionary situation in a country. In most cases it is not enough for revolution that **the lower classes should not want** to live in the old way. It is also necessary that **the upper classes should be unable** to rule and govern in the old way. This is what we see in Russia today. A political crisis is maturing before our very eyes. The bourgeoisie has done **everything** in its power to back counter-revolution and ensure "peaceful development" on this counter-revolutionary basis....

A nation-wide political crisis is in evidence in Russia, a crisis which affects the very **foundation** of the state system and not just parts of it, which affects the **foundation** of the edifice and not an outbuilding, not merely one of its storeys. No matter how many glib phrases our liberals and liquidators trot out to the effect that "we have, thank God, a constitution" and that political **reforms** are on the order of the day (only very limited people do not see the close connection between these two propositions), no matter how much of this reformist verbiage is poured out, the fact remains that not a single liquidator or liberal can point to any reformist way out of the situation.

The condition of the mass of the population in Russia, the aggravation of their position owing to the new agrarian policy (to which the feudal landowners had to snatch at as their last means of salvation), the international situation, and the nature of the general political crisis that has taken shape in our country—such is the sum total of the objective conditions making Russia's situation a revolutionary one because of the impossibility of carrying out the tasks

of a bourgeois revolution by following the present course and by the means available to the government and the exploiting classes.

Which is the social, economic, and political situation, such is the class relationship in Russia that has given rise to a specific type of strike impossible in modern Europe, from which all sorts of renegades would like to borrow the example, not of yesterday's bourgeois revolutions (through which shine gleams of tomorrow's proletarian revolution), but of today's "constitutional" situation. Neither the oppression of the lower classes nor a crisis among the upper classes can cause a revolution; they can only cause the decay of a country, unless that country has a revolutionary class capable of transforming the passive state of oppression into an active state of revolt and insurrection.

The role of a truly advanced class, a class really able to rouse the masses to revolution, really capable of saving Russia from decay, is played by the industrial proletariat. This is the task it fulfils by means of its revolutionary strikes. These strikes, which the liberals hate and the liquidators cannot understand, are (as the February resolution of the R.S.D.L.P. puts it) "one of the most effective means of overcoming the apathy, despair and disunity of the agricultural proletariat and the peasantry, ... and **drawing them** into the most concerted, simultaneous, and extensive **revolutionary actions.**"

The working class draws into revolutionary action the masses of the working and exploited people, who are deprived of basic rights and driven to despair. The working class teaches them revolutionary struggle, trains them for revolutionary action, and explains to them where to find the way out and how to attain salvation. The working class teaches them, not merely by words, but by deeds, by example, and the example is provided not by the adventures of solitary heroes but by **mass** revolutionary action combining political and economic demands.

How plain, how clear, how close these thoughts are to every honest worker who grasps even the rudiments of the theory of socialism and democracy! And how alien they are to those traitors to socialism and betrayers of democracy from among the intelligentsia, who revile or deride

the "underground" in liquidationist newspapers, assuring naïve simpletons that they are "also Social-Democrats".

The May Day action of the proletariat of St. Petersburg, supported by that of the proletariat of all Russia, clearly showed once again to those who have eyes to see and ears to hear the great historic importance of the revolutionary underground in present-day Russia. The only R.S.D.L.P. Party organisation in St. Petersburg, the St. Petersburg Committee, compelled even the bourgeois press ... to note that St. Petersburg Committee leaflets had appeared again and again in the factories.

Those leaflets cost colossal sacrifices. Sometimes they are quite unattractive in appearance. Some of them, the appeals for demonstration on April 4, for instance, merely announce the hour and place of the demonstration, in six lines evidently set in secret and with extreme haste in different printing shops and in different types. We have people ("also Social-Democrats") who, when alluding to these conditions of "underground" work, snigger maliciously or curl a contemptuous lip and ask: "If the entire Party were limited to the underground, how many members would it have? Two or three hundred?" (See No. 95 (181) of *Luch*, a renegade organ, in its editorial defence of Mr. Sedov, who has the sad courage to be an outspoken liquidator. This issue of *Luch* appeared five days before the May Day action, i.e., **at the very time** the underground was preparing the leaflets!)

Messrs. Dan, Potresov and Co., who make these disgraceful statements, must know that there were thousands of proletarians in the Party ranks as early as 1903, and 150 thousand in 1907, that even now thousands and tens of thousands of workers print and circulate **underground** leaflets, as members of **underground** R.S.D.L.P. cells. But the liquidationist gentlemen know that they are protected by Stolypin "legality" from a legal refutation of their foul lies and their "grimaces", which are fouler still, at the expense of the underground.

See to what extent these despicable people have lost touch with the mass working-class movement and with revolutionary work in general! Use



Mass demonstration in St. Petersburg (now Leningrad) during the Russian Revolution in 1917

even their own yardstick, deliberately falsified to suit the liberals. You may assume for a moment that "two or three hundred" workers in St. Petersburg took part in printing and distributing those underground leaflets.

What is the result? "Two or three hundred" workers, the flower of the St. Petersburg proletariat, people who not only call themselves Social-Democrats but work as Social-Democrats, people who are esteemed and appreciated for it by the **entire** working class of Russia, people who do not prate about a "broad party" but make up in actual fact the only underground Social-Democratic Party existing in Russia, these people print and circulate underground leaflets. The *Luch* liquidators (protected by Stolypin censors) laugh contemptuously at the "two or three hundred", the "underground" and its "exaggerated" importance, etc.

And, suddenly, a miracle occurs! In accordance with a decision drawn up by **half a dozen** members of the Executive Commission of the St. Petersburg Committee—a leaflet printed and circulated by "two or three hundred"—**two hundred and fifty thousand** people rise as one man in St. Petersburg.

The leaflets and the revolutionary speeches by workers at meetings and demonstrations do not speak of an "open working-class party", "freedom of association" or reforms of that kind, with the phantoms of which the liberals are fooling the people. They speak of revolution as the only way out. They speak of the republic as the only slogan which, in contrast to liberal lies about reforms, indicates the change needed to ensure freedom, indicates the forces capable of rising consciously to defend it.

The two million inhabitants of St. Petersburg see and hear these appeals

for revolution which go to the hearts of all toiling and oppressed sections of the people. All St. Petersburg sees from a real, mass-scale example what is the real way out and what is lying liberal talk about reforms. Thousands of workers' contacts—and hundreds of bourgeois newspapers, which are compelled to report the St. Petersburg mass action at least in snatches—spread throughout Russia the news of the stubborn strike campaign of the capital's proletariat. Both the mass of the peasantry and the peasants serving in the army hear this news of strikes, of the revolutionary demands of the workers, of their struggle for a republic and for the confiscation of the landed estates for the benefit of the peasants. Slowly but surely, the revolutionary strikes are stirring, rousing, enlightening, and organising the masses of the people **for revolution.**

The "two or three hundred"

“underground people” express the interests and needs of **millions and tens of millions**, they tell them the truth about their hopeless position, open their eyes to the necessity of revolutionary struggle, imbue them with faith in it, provide them with the correct slogans, and win these masses away from the influence of the high-sounding and thoroughly spurious, reformist slogans of the bourgeoisie. And “two or three” dozen liquidators from among the intelligentsia, using money collected abroad and among liberal merchants to fool unenlightened workers, are carrying the slogans of that bourgeoisie into the workers’ midst.

The May Day strike, like all the revolutionary strikes of 1912-13, has made clear the three political camps into which present-day Russia is divided. The camp of hangmen and feudal lords, of monarchy and the secret police. It has done its utmost in the way of atrocities and is already impotent against the masses of the workers. The camp of the bourgeoisie, all of whom, from the Cadets to the Octobrists, are shouting and moaning, calling for reforms and making fools of themselves by thinking that reforms are possible in Russia. The camp of the revolution, the only camp expressing the interests of the oppressed masses.

All the ideological work, all the political work in this camp is carried out by underground Social-Democrats alone, by those who know how to use every legal opportunity in the spirit of Social-Democracy and who are inseparably bound up with the advanced class, the proletariat. No one can tell beforehand whether this advanced class will succeed in leading the masses all the way to a victorious revolution. But this class is fulfilling its duty—**leading** the masses to that solution—despite all the vacillations and betrayals on the part of the liberals and those who are “also Social-Democrats”. All the living and vital elements of Russian socialism and Russian democracy are being educated solely by the example of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat, and under its guidance.

This year’s May Day action has shown to the whole world that the Russian proletariat is steadfastly following its revolutionary course, apart from which there is no salvation for a Russia that is suffocating and decaying alive.

BOTSWANA —

Tshilo ya matlapa ya Kgale:

Ntwa ya go aga lekgotla la babereki

By Bashi Nkwe

Except for the sign “Kgale Quarry” along the Lobatse road near Gaborone, Botswana, few people know where the quarry is or how hard the workers are struggling for their daily bread.

This article describes the conditions of the workers, and how the employers oppress and exploit them with the assistance of the “independent” government.

It also discusses the complaints of the workers about the neglect of their problems by the executive of their union, the Botswana Mining Workers’ Union. It explains the need to build the union on strong foundations and bring it under the democratic control of its members.

Ko ntle ga sesupo sa “Kgale Quarry” mo tseleng ya Lobatse le Gaborone, ke batho ba le mmalwa fela ba ba itseng gore tshilo ya matlapa e fa kae le gore babereki ba tshwere ka thata go lwantsha go bona phalitshi ya bone ya letsatsi.

Tshilo ya matlapa ya Kgale e ka nna dikilomitara di le tlhano go tswa Gaborone. E simolotse go bereka ka 1972, e rekisetsa dikhampani tsa kago, tsa ditsela le tse dingwe. Mong wa tshilo eo ke L. J. Whyte (Botswana) (Pty) Ltd.

Bontsi jwa babereki bo nna mo Gaborone. Ba rwalwa ka dikoloi tse di bulegileng tsa khampani. Babereki ga ba nne sentle mo dikoloing tse, ba ema ka dinao mosepele otlhe.

Go na le mechine e meraro e e silang matlapa. Tshilo e na le babereki ba ka nna 200. Ba bereka dioura tse di fetang 8 ka letsatsi. Fa ba fetisetse nako ba duelwa le tlhakore (1½ times) go feta selekanyo, le fa bontsi ba babereki ba ngongorega gore ba a tsiediwa.

Matlapa a a dirwang a rekiwa

malatsi otlhe, nako tse dingwe babereki ba patelesega go bereka le ka Sontaga, e le gore dikoloi diemetse go rwala matlapana ao. Ka nako e nngwe e e fetileng, babereki bangwe ba ne ba bereka go tloga Labotlhano mo mosong go fitlha Sontaga mo mosong, ba kgona go robala dioura di sekai mo tshilong.

Dingongorego tse ditona di simolola ka dituelo tse di ko tlase, go tlhokafala ga diaparo tse disireletsang le go bereka dioura tse di leele, go ya mo go tlhokeng matlo, go tshoswa le go kobiwa mo tirong go sena molato ke mohiri.

Bontsi jwa babereki ga ba itse go bala le go kwala. Ba se kae ba kgona go bala le go kwala Setswana. Botlhe ba ngongoregela gore Khudu-Thamaga ya Botswana Mining Workers Union (BMWU)—lekgotla la bone—ga e ba direle sepe le ga lekala le rometse dikwalo tse dintsi tse di nang le dingongorego.

Babereki ba tshwenyegile thata gore ba pateletse mohiri gore a ba fe dioverall le di-glove—tse gompiano di onetseng. Ba kgonne go bona dilo tse morago ga go sena go agiwa lekala la lekgotla. Bontsi jwa babereki bo dumela gore lekgotla le tlhokafala gore go lwantshiwe mohiri, mme ba re mathata ke gore baeteledipele ba lekgotla la sechaba (BMWU) ga ba thuse maloko.

Babereki ba re lengwe la mabaka ke gore ba Khudu-Thamaga ya BMWU ba amogela dituelo tse di kanang ka P700 go ya ko go P900 ka kgwedi—madi a a fetang ga 8 dituelo tsa bontsi jwa maloko. Ka moo, baeteledipele ga ba bone mathata le matshwenyego a bonwang ke maloko a lekgotla.

Babereki ba ngongoregela gore ga ba nke ba bona maloko a Khudu-Thamaga, kontlé fela ga baeteledipele ba tla go ba bolela gore go tla nna le Phutego-Kgolo. Babereki botlhe ba re ba tlhokana le go rutwa ka go aga lekgotla la babereki, le ka melao yotlhe e amang babereki.

Nako le nako fa mmereki a tshosiwa e bile a lebagane le go kobiwa mo tirong, lekala le kopa Khudu-Thamaga gore e thuse, mme ga go diragale sepe. Fa, ka lesego, mongwe wa Khudu-Thamaga a tla,

o tshwara dipuisanyo le mohiri pele a le nosi, morago a tle go bolelela babereki gore ba phoso, mohiri ene o tsamaisitse dilo ka ga mokgweng.

Lekala la lekgotla ga le nke le nna teng mo dipuisanyong gare ga mohiri le leloko la Khudu-Thamaga, le fa e le ene mmereki yo o tshositsweng kana a lebagane le go kobiwa. Ga go tshwarwe dipuisanyo gare ga mohiri le lekala.

Mohiri a re ga a na sepe le lekgotla, ene o buisana le ba Khudu-Thamaga ka dingongorego fa ba tlile.

Ka lobaka la gore lekgotla le bokowa, mohiri o kgonne go kgaoganya babereki. Mohiri o na le batlhodi kana dimpimpi. Ba bangwe ba bone ke maloko a lekgotla. Mmereki mongwe o rile maloko mo diphuthegong ga ba a gololesega go tlhagisa dingongorego tsa bone ka gore ba tshaba go kobiwa mo tirong. Mohiri oa bolelelwa ka se se neng se diragala, e re ka moso a bitse ka bongwe le bongwe ko ofising go mmotsa ka se a neng a se bua ko phuthegong.

Ba ba ratwang ke mohiri ba fiwa dikokeletso tse di botoka ebile ba nna mo ditirong fa maloko a lekgotla one a kobiwa. Mohiri a re o patelesega go koba ka go nne "go sena tiro", mme babereki ba itse sentle gore tiro e tsweletse pele jaaka malatsi otlhe. Maloko a lekgotla a batla gore go nne le molao wa gore 'go tswe pele mo tirong ba ba tseneng morago'.

Nako e nngwe mmereki yo o kobilweng o romelwa ko go ba lephata la khiri go ya go tsaya dituelo tsa gagwe teng. Koo o bolelelwa gore mohiri a ka se kgone go emela maitseo a gagwe. Ga a fiwe nako ya go ikarabela. Babereki ba re lephata la khiri le emetse bahiri, e seng babereki jaaka go tshwanetse.

Molao wa khiri mo Botswana o thusa bahiri.

Molao o mosha wa Makgotla a babereki le makgotla a bahiri (Trade Union and Employers' Organisation Act), oa re fa mmereki a kobilwe mo tirong, ga go kgonegore a emelwe ke lekgotla la babereki ka gore ga a sa tlhole a le leloko. Babereki ba a gakgamala go bona gore baeteledipele ba makgotla ba dumetse selo se. Ga go a buisangwa le maloko ka mola o.

Bontsi jwa babereki mo tshilong e ga ba itse gore ba hirilwe ka mabaka a a ntseng jang. Ba na le malatsi a le 15 a boikhutso ka ngwaga. Ba fiwa malatsi ao ka December fa tiro ya go aga gongwe le gongwe e tswalwa ka Christmas. Go fiwa malatsi fa ba lwala ke selo se ba sa se itseng, mme ba berekela mo leroleng le mo seemong sese lwatsang.

Ga go dimpho tse ba di fiwang (gratuity and bonus) morago ga go bereka dingwaga tse dintsi kana morago ga go bereka thata. Babereki bangwe ba re e sale ba bona dimpho tse ba sa ntse ba bereka ko Afrika Borwa. "Kea go bolelela, maburu ebile a botoka", go bua mmereki mongwe.

Lefa mathata a le mantshi, babereki ba bona go tlhokafala gore ba iphe tiro ya go aga lekgotla gape ba le dire mokgatlo wa babereki tota.

Mo diphuthegong tsa lekala, babereki ba ema ba bua gore ba tlhoka kopano go lwantsha mohiri, ebile ga gona sepe se se ka ba latlhegelang fa ba kopana le babereki ba makala a mangwe ba rulaganye dithuto-se-ka-dipuisanyo le diphutego.

"Kopano ke thata babereki", ke nngwe ya dipina tsa babereki tse di opelwang mo diphuthegong-kgolo.

Makgotla a babereki a tshwanetse go rulaganya dithuto go tla go buisana ka tiro ya lekgotla la babereki, tiro ya modulasetilo, mokwaledi, baemedi ko tirong (shop steward) le ka melao e e amang babereki mo Botswana.

Se e tla nna tshimologo ya go thatafatsa BMWU le go e fetola gore e nne mokgatlo wa babereki tota, ko dikeletso tsa babereki le dingongorego tsa bone di tla buisangwang ke babereki ba bo ba dira sengwe ka tsone.

BMWU e tla kgona go tsaya dikgato mabapi le dikeletso tota jaaka dituelo, matlo, malatsi a boikhutso a a duelelwang, le go sireletsa ditiro tsa babereki botlhe.

Fa babereki ba ba seng mo makgotleng ba bona dingongorego tsa bone di buisangwa ebile di tselwa kgato kगतlanong le mohiri, mo go itumedisang, ba tla tsena lekgotla go tla golwa le go nnela ruri.

In the capitalist press in South Africa and the West, Malawi is presented as a great success story of economic development and 'stability'.

As this report by a Motswana trade unionist who visited Malawi shows, the reality for the masses is desperate poverty, and fear of Dr. Banda's bizarre and brutal tyranny.

Even the thousands of Malawian migrant workers in other Southern African countries are cautious in expressing their views on the situation, for fear of reprisal against their families. Banda has built a wall of isolation, from which only stories of horrible suffering and extraordinary happenings escape. Many important facts are hard to come by.

Malawi became independent in 1964 and, say the statistics, had a consistent growth rate of 5-6% per year until 1979. This was based on the earnings from its export crops, mainly tobacco, coffee, and sugar; remittances from migrant workers; and an inflow of South African and other foreign capital to prey on the semi-enslaved masses.

But Malawi remains one of the 20 poorest countries in the world. In 1976 there were still only 7 250 hospital beds and 80 doctors for a population of 5 million.

The benefits of this growth have all been going to foreign companies—such as Brooke Bond, Lonrho, and British-American Tobacco—to Banda himself, and to the clique around him running the regime. Banda himself is estimated to own up to 35-40% of the economy. He has frequently said "every minister should own an estate"—and why stop at one?

British journalists investigating tea plantations in Malawi in 1979 found workers earning only the price of a loaf of bread for a day's work, and children as young as nine years old being employed. Skin complaints, open ulcerated sores, 'flu and pneumonia were rife. There were "few guards on dangerous machinery, and nothing in the way of protection for those liable to inhale tea dust or for steam-generator operatives subject to spurts of scalding water from leaking valves." (*Observer*, 27/5/79).

Banda boasts of the "assistance" he has provided to the peasantry. But most of this has gone to the governing elite, in easy loans and credits to secure their estates and businesses.

There have been much-publicised World Bank, etc., schemes for agricultural development—such as Lilongwe, Karonge, and the Shire Valley. But in 1974 it was estimated that in *all* these schemes, only 3-5% of the peasantry involved were securing any credits at all.

Consistently, production on the exploitative estates has risen much faster than on the small peasant holdings. Income per head among the mass of peasants is probably only K20 a year.

Only the most severe repression—one of Africa's most savage one-party states—has preserved the stability of this regime. Disgracefully—and ominously—this dictatorship is not only condoned, but actually looked upon favourably by other Southern African political leaders.

Attending the 'national convention' of the Malawi



Congress Party this year, Zimbabwean Minister of State Maurice Nyagumbo stated that the MCP and ZANU "shared the same history and destiny and the convention's success was of great interest to ZANU." (*Herald*, 7/9/1984). The one-party system in Malawi is openly held up as a model for 'socialist' Zimbabwe to follow!

But now, under the impact of world capitalist crisis, economic conditions are worsening. In 1980 Malawi's growth rate fell to less than 1%. At the same time 'His Excellency the Life President' grows into his 80s. All his efforts to acquire the stature of a god will not make him immortal!

In 1980 declining export prices, etc., led Banda to call on the IMF for loans. As elsewhere, the conditions imposed have led to further hardships for workers and peasants.

Once Banda's grip is released—as is shown, for example, by what happened when Sekou Toure died in Guinea—it will be difficult for any successors to re-consolidate their rule with the same authority and ferocity.

At the same time, the fate of the working people of Malawi is inseparably bound—through the regime's collaboration with South Africa and through the ties of migrant labour—with the course of the Southern African revolution.

Malawian workers at home and abroad need to link up with their fellow-workers in other Southern African countries, particularly South Africa, to plan the way to democracy, social liberation, and workers' rule throughout the region.

MALAWI

— In the grip of fear and poverty

“People live under fear. That is the first thing you find out about Malawi. Banda is so tough on them. If you voice out against anything that is wrong, you can find yourself imprisoned or even killed.

Even so, some people react at certain times. There was one incident, for instance, whereby a woman openly complained: “Things are not good here. First we had to line up for mealie-meal; now, it is for bread.” She was still in prison when I left. They had not decided what to do about her.

She had been overheard and reported by a member of the Malawi Young Pioneers. They are Banda's eyes and ears. They are recruited from poor families, and some are just delinquents. They are trained in different arts and then sent into different firms, companies and workplaces as spies.

Forced to meetings

The MYP are given much power and they are immune from arrest. They go about forcing people to meetings of Banda's party. If they come across a drinking party, they spill away all the booze forcing people up and to the meetings.

Of course, there are some trade unions there, but they do not operate freely. That is why you can find a situation where four workers complained about low wages and hence, were chased from work.

Salaries as such are very low. You can find labourers earning around Kwacha 9. Skilled workers, like mainline railway drivers are earning K150 a month, whereas those on the shunt earn K115.

Even police and security guards are not well off, earning K18. Soldier's salaries are very low, around K28 I was told.

Workers are always complaining of the way they are being treated by the bosses. They say they are always being forced to do things they don't want to do.

For instance, I was told that some skilled workers complained about working conditions. The senior foreman said to them: “You are just nothing. You can go.” This is in a so-called ‘publicly-owned’ company.

Workers live in a very poor state. There are good houses only for those in high positions. For the rest there are slums. These are made worse by the problems of the many people coming into the towns from the rural areas. Everywhere, you find people begging on the streets looking for a few tambala (cents).

But they are being arrested by the cops who are always looking for people. “Are you working?” they ask. “If not, go back to the rural areas because you are causing a lot of inconvenience here”, they say.

There is plenty of crime. A lot of stealing goes on. But this is because

of hunger. Unemployment is very high.

You see many people with polio and elephantiasis. It's just terrible.

There are plenty of shops around. Food is quite cheap, especially local products. The expensive things are furniture, cars and such like. A Peugeot costing Pula 9 000 in Botswana would sell for P13 000 in Malawi.

The PTC chain has shops throughout the country. Banda is involved in it as one of the bosses.

Corruption everywhere

Corruption is just everywhere. All the development projects are named after Banda. The “Old Man” says he gives his money to the building of roads and bridges. His palace near the new capital, Lilongwe, took 10 years to build.

Everyone has heard of the secondary school, Kamuzu Academy, which is like Eton, the private school for the English upper class. Not one Malawian is employed there as a teacher. They all have to be English.

Banda opened the school with a speech in Latin, which he often speaks at public meetings and ceremonies. He is contemptuous of the people whose ignorance of the



Workers on a Lonrho tea plantation in Malawi



Most supervision and management in "independent" Malawi is still in white hands

language he mocks openly. He says it proves how well-educated and knowledgeable he is.

However, try and imitate him and you are gone. People who have waved a fly-whisk like him, have been arrested.

Like passbook

His mark is everywhere. Membership cards of the ruling party can be demanded of anyone. The MYP enforce recruitment. It is just like the South African "pass book". Without one, they can arrest you. Even pregnant women can be asked: "Has it (MYP member pointing at her stomach) got one?"

Together with the "tax card" and "identity card", you go without it at your peril. You cannot even buy at some markets or board some buses without them.

Oppressed and poor though they are generally, at least one section of the women are one of Banda's main sources of support. He tells them to report any abuse they suffer from their husbands to him.

They are chosen at random, but

mostly they are those who hold an influential position over other women. He gets their support by bribery and favours. One woman, blind in one eye, underwent an operation paid for by Banda.

The Women's League have had 4 planes bought for them. He builds them houses and gives them protection. Prostitutes are allowed to report to the police any customer that

refuses to pay.

These advantages can be attractive, especially if you come from the rural areas. There is too much poverty there. Despite the favourable climate, people are going hungry. It is common to see men wearing just a loincloth, or even just shorts because they can't afford long trousers.

People then are very glum. They don't show much reaction. Should they try anything, well, you leave the country and go join the liberation movements. But then your relatives are tortured to give out information about your whereabouts.

Liberation

The two liberation movements are LESOMA and MAFREMO. The older and more popular of the two is LESOMA, which says it is socialist and whose leader Banda had assassinated in Harare. MAFREMO was formed by ministers sacked from Banda's cabinet, where he now holds four jobs.

He boasts openly of trading with South Africa. And in fact South Africa is just everywhere with plenty of companies.

Things are bad there, but if the workers could rule, I am sure it would become a very rich country."

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LETTER FROM A BRITISH WORKER

Boss profiteering from apartheid

Dear comrades,

As a trade unionist, Labour Party member and *Militant* supporter, imagine my disgust when I found out that my managing director, D.W.Salt, had been charged with illegally exporting guided missiles to the apartheid state of South Africa.

Now the Tories, by releasing on bail the four South Africans involved, have allowed guilty people to go scot-free. I wouldn't be surprised if Salt and his co-conspirators didn't get away with it too.

The Tory government is really just not interested in stopping these illegal deals: its part of their whole approach to the working

class.

Salt and the others owned seven or eight different firms. And it seems they were making one or two components each in different places, and then shipping them to South Africa through West Germany.

We found out we had been making, for example, swivellings for a gun-turret, but we didn't know. A lorry driver who had been a paratrooper came in one day and said "that's a bullet-mould", but we weren't sure.

How many other trade union members are working in firms where they are not sure what they are producing, and for whom. They should wake up.

Over the last three years, too,

wage rises, job security and normal working practices had all gone in our firm and the work force were told, "Its the recession, falling orders, etc., it can't be helped."

But behind our backs we find that the capitalist is profiteering at the expense of the working class and the oppressed blacks in South Africa.

Because Salt was exposed, 12 of us were made redundant. I'm glad to be out of it, but I've been lucky enough to get another job. This sort of thing will go on until workers run the factories, organise production, and establish a government of our own.

Fraternally,
Just a worker.

A WORKERS' ANTHEM

(To the tune of "Nkosi Sikeleli Afrika")

A contribution from three readers in Zimbabwe:

Vashandi batanayi mu Afrika
Ngariparidzirwe inzwi renyu
Inzwayi zvichemo zvedu
Vashandi batanayi muno nepasi rose

Uyayi mose, uyayi mose batanayi (2x)

Uyayi mose, uyayi mose batanayi
Kuti tirwise mhandu
Isu vashandi tose

Workers unite in Africa
Let our voice be spread
Let our demands be heard
Workers unite here and in the whole world

Come all, come all unite (2x)

Come all, come all unite
So that we will fight the enemy
All workers together

The working class of Zimbabwe faces very serious problems. As the article on page 32 shows, capitalist crisis has resulted in the loss of tens of thousands of jobs. Thousands of youth now face a future without work when they leave school.

Prices and taxes have risen steeply, while government spending on housing and services is being cut back.

At the time of independence most workers hoped that the government which they elected would be able to solve their problems. Mugabe promised to bring 'socialism'.

But because the working class did not make or lead the revolution which won independence for Zimbabwe, but merely

gave support to the middle-class leadership of the national liberation movement, the workers found themselves powerless when this leadership failed to carry out its promises.

The workers have not even had strong independent trade unions with which to fight for their rights and for the future of their children.

The unions which existed under the Smith and Muzorewa regimes were under right-wing leadership, many of whom collaborated openly with the bosses and the state.

After independence the ZANU government tried to create 'new unions' loyal to the party, but these merely split the ranks of the workers and substituted a new cli-

que of bureaucratic leaders for the old. Most union members have remained, on paper at least, in the established registered unions.

With few exceptions, however, the unions are empty shells, never strongly organised on the shop floor and never really built or controlled by workers themselves.

For decades workers have seen their money taken in deductions for 'union dues' and squandered by self-seeking officials who would not dream of organising a fight for their members' interests.

As a result, many workers are deeply distrustful of trade unions altogether, thinking that anyone who wants to help them organise must be after their money.

Workers' Campaign for a

DECLARATION

Metal and engineering workers! Our industry and the future of every worker in it is threatened.

Thousands of workers have lost their jobs; dozens of factories closed. Most metal and engineering workers are on short-time. Capable hands and good machines are forced to stand idle when they could be producing wealth, not only for ourselves, but for all working people in Zimbabwe. We are declared "redundant" by the capitalists who can no longer make profits enough to satisfy them from exploiting our labour. Every worker suffers hardship of low pay and harsh conditions.

Whose job will be the next to go? Whose children will be the next to starve? *We must organise together and fight back!* That is the responsibility of every worker—to himself, to his family and to his class and people.

FOR A DEMOCRATIC, FIGHTING UNION

Metal and engineering workers need a union that truly belongs to them, that they can use as a weapon in the struggle—and a union leadership they can really trust. But workers face a problem.

GEMWU, the biggest union in the industry, has been hijacked by a small group of unelected officials, headed by the general secretary Chimusoro, who have a history of taking the side of the bosses, failing to fight for the workers, and misusing the union funds. The decision of the National Council of GEMWU on 21 July 1984 to remove Chimusoro for corruption and misconduct has been ignored by him. He has been able to cling on to the union office and the workers' subscription money because a court case to stop him failed. Chimusoro pulled off a legal trick. Instead of replying to the workers' case, he was able to convince the judge that Brother Nyamhunga was not the right person to bring this action on behalf of the union, and therefore he, Chimusoro, should not have any case to answer.

So, on top of the crisis in our industry, we now have a crisis in our union. All workers *need* the union. We *cannot* and *we will not* give up the fight to restore GEMWU to the workers and to save the industry from ruin by the capitalists. Every metal and engineering worker must actively join this fight.

The vast majority of workers in our industry are totally opposed to Chimusoro and his friends. Thousands have refused to join GEMWU for that reason. Many are talking of leaving the union in disgust.

WE SAY DO NOT GIVE UP! DO NOT LEAVE THE UNION! STAY AND FIGHT!

To those who are not members, we say **JOIN AND FIGHT TOGETHER WITH US!**

Chimusoro is not the union. The workers are the union. Workers must reclaim the union as their own. This *can* be done and it *will* be done.

The crisis exists because workers have not been strongly organised in every factory, in every workers' committee, in every branch of the industry. This task must be tackled *now!*

FOR THE UNITY OF ALL METAL AND ENGINEERING WORKERS

Workers need a single union in each industry to unite their efforts. Workers' interests are not served by splits or by starting splinter unions. Workers want unity!

We want to join GEMWU and ZEISWU together. But this must not be done by officials making secret deals for their own benefit behind the workers' backs. There must be open discussion involving all union members, all branches, the National Council, as well as the workers' committees.

Positions of leadership in the workers' movement are not a matter for making deals. Every leader must be chosen by democratic election and constantly controlled by the membership

Once GEMWU has been cleaned up, and placed

But the pressing problems are forcing increasing numbers to turn towards organisation and begin a fight for jobs and for a living wage. This awakening movement, beginning with democratic organisation in the factories, has no alternative but to turn to trade unions to link the forces of the workers together.

This inevitably involves a struggle to transform existing unions into genuine workers' organisations, under democratic control, and with a fighting programme and leadership.

In the main union in the engineering industry, the General Engineering and Metal Workers' Union, the membership is demanding new leadership. Under the pressure of the workers, the National

Council of the union suspended the general secretary for misconduct and misuse of funds. But this bureaucrat was able to cling on to the union office with the help of lawyers, although he can no longer show his face in many of the factories in the industry.

Rather than split to form a new union—which would only confuse the thousands of unorganised workers already sceptical of both GEMWU and the government's 'splinter-union' ZEISWU, the rank-and-file activists in GEMWU have launched a campaign to rebuild the union from the factory base and bring it under democratic workers' control.

We publish here the 'Declaration'

issued by the founders of the campaign in September, who include the worker-president of GEMWU as well as chairmen and secretaries of workers' committees in a number of areas. We also publish the 'Pledge of Support' used to enrol workers in the campaign.

Trade unionists in South Africa and abroad are urged to give full support to this first concerted effort to transform a key trade union in Zimbabwe into a genuine workers' organisation. Links can be made with the campaign committee through the address below.

Democratic GEMWU

P.O. Box ST 233
Southerton
Harare

under democratic control by the workers, we would support immediate steps towards formal unity with ZEISWU.

Meanwhile we urge all workers in ZEISWU to join in a common effort to build strong united organisation in the factories under democratic control. As workers we all have the same needs. We must stand together and struggle for common demands and for a common *socialist future*.

MOBILISE THE WORKERS IN EVERY FACTORY!

Supporters of the **WORKERS' CAMPAIGN FOR A DEMOCRATIC GEMWU** pledge themselves to work

- ★ to mobilise every metal and engineering worker and every workers' committee
- ★ to build strong branches of the union under democratic control
- ★ to promote workers' education so that workers are better able to control and lead their organisation in their own interests
- ★ to remove any corrupt and treacherous elements from positions of responsibility in the union
- ★ to make culprits account for the misuse of union funds
- ★ to elect at every level a leadership which is loyal to the workers, and willing and able to fight and defend the union members
- ★ to raise funds to carry out the tasks of the Campaign
- ★ to win support for a fighting, socialist programme to save the industry, to defend jobs, to raise wages and improve conditions for all workers.

We pledge ourselves to work for these aims without fear or favour until they are achieved.

We endorse the attached Rules for the running of the Campaign and the control of its funds.

We support the programme of demands endorsed by the National Council on 21 July 1984 and we recommend it for discussion and support in every fac-

tory in the industry.

WE CALL ON EVERY METAL AND ENGINEERING WORKER TO STAND UP AND JOIN US IN THIS CAMPAIGN!

Signed

Factory or union position

PLEDGE OF SUPPORT

I am a worker in the metal and engineering industry. I want a strong democratic union, so that workers can organise together and fight effectively to save our jobs and improve our wages and conditions.

I support the aims of the **WORKERS' CAMPAIGN FOR A DEMOCRATIC GEMWU** set out in the founding Declaration.

I reject those officials who have refused to obey the decisions of the National Council and GEMWU.

I want to help build a democratic GEMWU and unite all metal and engineering workers in one union, controlled by the workers, with a fighting socialist programme and leadership.

For this purpose I will do everything I can to support the Campaign.

I also promise to contribute \$... every month out of my wages to the funds of the Campaign.

I understand that this money is to be controlled strictly under the Rules of the Campaign, and that I can demand an account to see that it is being properly used at all times.

I understand that, so long as I fulfil this Pledge, I have the democratic right under the Rules to control by election the Steering Committee of the Campaign.

FORWARD TO A SOCIALIST ZIMBABWE!

..... (Signature)
Name

Factory

Town.....

Date

ZIMBABWE—

IN THE CLUTCHES OF THE IMF

In 'socialist' Zimbabwe, the truth about the economy can take a long and roundabout route before it gets to the working class.

For over a year a blanket of secrecy was maintained over the government's relations with the International Monetary Fund, the money-lending agency run by the major imperialist powers. Then, in August, the London *Financial Times* reported that Zimbabwe's standby borrowing programme with the IMF had "collapsed"—and official silence in Harare could no longer be maintained.

Finance Minister Chidzero hurriedly "assured the business community and the country as a whole" that there was nothing to be alarmed about. Zimbabwe's programme with the IMF had only been "temporarily suspended"—in fact after the mini-budget in February had increased the budget deficit. (*Herald*, 23/8/84)

What is the IMF and why is Zimbabwe involved with this notorious capitalist agency?

The IMF has become a world-wide lender of last resort for states already overburdened with debt, and it imposes savage conditions to ensure that it gets its money back. These conditions invariably mean a sharp increase in poverty, above all for the working class.

The ZANU government has gone to the IMF because, since independence, state spending has built up to a level far beyond what taxes can sustain.

Some of this money has been spent on much-needed, though limited, reforms especially in health care and education. At the same time, in terms of the compromise with capitalism agreed at Lancaster House, the government has had to fork out money for every square inch of capitalist land that has been taken over, as well as to pay pensions in foreign currency to reactionary bureaucrats of the Smith regime who have left the country.

While talking the language of

'socialism', the ZANU leadership have pinned their hopes on an expansion of the capitalist economy to provide the resources with which to finance this growing spending.

But the economy since 1982 has slid into deep recession. This is basically because of world-wide capitalist crisis. Even the upturn, mainly in the US, which has followed the 1979-82 world recession has been too weak to drag Zimbabwe along with it.

As a result, the government has been forced increasingly to borrow money, much of it from abroad, to cover the gap between its income and its spending.

Debt

From 1980 to 1983, the total public sector debt shot up from Z\$400 million to \$2 500 million. In June 1983 the total foreign debt was Z\$1 005 million. By 1984 debt servicing (interest and loan repayments) was the biggest single item of state spending, swallowing up one-fifth of the state budget.

Debt servicing, moreover, eats up valuable foreign currency. In 1982 the Zimbabwe balance of payments—the difference between money leaving and entering the country—showed a deficit of Z\$185 million. In 1983 the deficit on current account was Z\$449 million, while net capital inflow was only Z\$69 million. This deficit makes it more difficult

By Daniel Hugo

for the country to import goods needed for development.

In 1983 Z\$350 million of the money leaving the country was paid to foreign bankers, as interest and debt repayments.

Floundering amid the problems of the capitalist system, the government in 1982 turned for more money to the IMF—thus tying itself even more closely to the dictates of the capitalist class.

The IMF agreed to make the equivalent of US\$283 million available to the Zimbabwe government in instalments over 18 months—**on conditions which were kept entirely secret from the masses in Zimbabwe.** One overseas report, however, revealed their harsh nature (see box).

So that the IMF and the bankers could get their pound of flesh, the Zimbabwe government was required to deprive working people of services and improvements they need and to siphon money from their pockets into those of the capitalist class.

The IMF claims that this leads to the capitalists investing more, producing more and exporting more. But that has not been the result, in Zimbabwe or elsewhere.

Terrible suffering was inflicted on working people in the effort to meet IMF conditions. In the July 1983 budget, government spending was slashed. Food subsidies were cut, and wages held down, while inadequate funds for drought relief spelled starvation in some rural areas.

Despite this, the government was unable to satisfy the vicious targets laid down by the IMF and the capitalists—hence the 'temporary suspension' of the programme, intended to force complete obedience.

The July 1984 budget continues with the same methods and policies recommended by the IMF. Its cosmetic features and talking points,



Mugabe with Reagan during his visit to the USA in September 1983. "We see things through the same glasses," said Mugabe.

such as the slight reduction in sales tax (still almost twice the level of South Africa), do not soften its main effects at all.

With prices rising at over 20% a year, only two budget items show an increase in real terms: 'finance' up 272%, and the 'vote of credit' (a sort of emergency fund) up from Z\$31 711 to a staggering Z\$204 527 000 (over 6% of the total budget).

Of the finance vote, 70% (Z\$326 million) will be used, essentially, to compensate the capitalists for their foreign shareholdings which had been taken under government control in March. This will consume more than 11% of total state expenditure.

In comparison, a mere Z\$9,2 million is available for that key plank in the government's policy for 'building socialism'—state participation in the economy.

Vital areas of public spending are slashed to the bone. Examples of the cuts in **real** spending (assuming an inflation rate of 20%) are:

- * industry — 37%
 - * education — 27%
 - * lands and resettlement — 32%
 - * labour, manpower planning and social welfare — 62%
 - * energy and water resources — 33%
 - * national supplies — 90%
 - * construction and housing — 49%
- Even defence spending has been cut, in effect, by a third.

Cuts

The cut in the social welfare vote includes a cut in drought relief from Z\$57 million to Z\$25 million—at a time when the sufferings resulting from the drought are at an unprecedented level.

Only Z\$1,7 million is made available for welfare organisations providing sheltered employment, etc. Yet, at the same time, Z\$4,5 million goes into the totally superfluous new luxury hotel and conference centre in Harare.

Even more scandalous is the slashing of the housing budget by effectively **one-half**, when lack of housing is one of the worst burdens suffered by millions of

IMF loan conditions

Africa Confidential, (5/10/83) stated that the conditions imposed on the Zimbabwe government by the IMF in 1983 included the following:

★ On the balance of payments—

"The current account deficit must fall from 13,3% of GDP (Gross Domestic Product)...this year to 10% of GDP next year.... Thereafter the IMF projects this deficit at 9% of GDP(1985), 7% (1986) and 6% in 1987..."

"Overall balance of payments deficit...must drop...from 4% to 2,8% of GDP in 1984."

This meant that imports had to be cut drastically.

★ On state spending—

"1983's budget deficit must be held at 5,5% of GDP, though the IMF would prefer 4% in 1984.

"Private and public salary increases may not rise by more than half the rise in the cost of living index in the preceding 12 months."

This meant that the government had to spend less, slashing social spending, and reducing the standard of living of workers.

★ On government borrowing—

"Ceilings on net government credit over the loan period will be set quarterly. The June '83 ceiling was at Z\$500m....

"The government's commercial

borrowings abroad this year have been limited to SDR 220m...."

(1 SDR = approximately US\$1)

In other words, the government must borrow less money.

★ On the management of the economy—

"There should be no effective appreciation in the Zimbabwe Dollar until at least September 1984....

"The government must give a commitment to reach 'periodic understandings' with the fund on exchange rate policy, fiscal policy and interest rate policy for 1983/4...."

In crucial matters of economic policy, in other words, the government must be bound by the wishes of the IMF.

Zimbabweans.

In spite of these features, which should make the budget a 'model' one from the capitalist point of view, it nevertheless fails to cut back spending enough to satisfy them.

Dr. Chidzero has ended up budgeting for a staggering **deficit** (excess of expenditure over income) of \$648 million. **This is three times the percentage set as a limit by the IMF.**

The massively increased 'vote of credit' is a safety measure which shows that the government is afraid to pursue 'monetarism' to its logical conclusion. Out of this fund, money can be made available to various departments 'when necessary', i.e. when the demands of the masses become too pressing to ignore and crises threaten to explode. With the conditions being faced by working

people, there is likely to be no shortage of these.

No doubt the examples of mass revolts recently against IMF-dictated policies in the Dominican Republic, Tunisia, Morocco, and now building up also in Zambia, have left a strong impression among the Zimbabwean leaders.

Thus Dr. Chidzero, while attempting to pander to the capitalists' desires, prudently leaves a back door open to placate the proletariat. In this he acts as a representative of the impotent national petty bourgeoisie, tossed to and fro in the struggle between the two major classes—the capitalists and the workers. Such a balancing act ends up satisfying nobody.

Wage 'increase'

The Z\$10 a month wage increase decreed by the government after the budget has, of course, like any wage increase, been welcomed by the workers. But it covers only one-third of the rise in the cost of living over the past year. Even the IMF agreement would have 'permitted' more than this!

At the same time, for employers concerned only with more exploitation to increase their profits, any wage increase is too much. Ominously, the Minister of Labour has quickly put out the word as to how employers could get exemption from paying this increase.

In the matter of wages, as in the budget, the government can satisfy neither the working class nor the capitalist class. This problem will continue to torment them; and each time their 'solutions' will seem more and more threadbare to the workers being pushed into struggle.

It will be left to the workers to show the only way out of this dead end: to open the struggle for the implementation of full-blooded socialist policies.

Dr. Chidzero is reported to be "confident" that this deficit is only "temporary". However, there are no grounds whatsoever for this, and it is most unlikely he believes it.

'Monetarists' all proclaim a belief in balanced budgets. But this is now impossible under capitalism. Even the most resolute practitioners of monetarism, Thatcher and Reagan



This boy of 11 in Harare has to try to earn a few cents every day by selling cigarettes because his family are unemployed



cannot balance their budgets either, but run up ever larger deficits.

Perhaps Chidzero is hoping that, after the present slump, the Zimbabwean economy will improve so spectacularly that huge amounts of extra revenue will flood into the coffers of the state?

The world capitalist economy, to which Zimbabwean capitalism is inescapably tied, is already approaching a new and deeper downturn than that of 1979-1982. If the economy here has not been taken forward through expansion of exports in the current weak world upturn, it will face, within the next year or two, an even more severe slump.

This is clear to every serious capitalist economist, and is one reason why the government cannot, and will not be able to attract any significant new foreign investment: there is little profit to be made.

Can the deficit be eliminated by increasing state income while production remains stagnant? Can taxation be boosted not merely by the 20% or more needed to eliminate the current

deficit, but increased still further in order to pay for the many further services that are necessary but are not budgeted for at present?

Wage and salary earners are already taxed to the hilt; indirect taxation (e.g. tariffs, sales tax) are at ruinous levels.

As for the real owners of wealth, the big capitalists and the farmers—these are also the owners and managers of the economic system, who are able to play cat and mouse with the government, and in many cases avoid paying taxes at all.

Profits

Just 50% of the present gross operating profits of the capitalists would cover the entire budget deficit. But, committed to upholding the laws of capitalism, vainly hoping that appeasement of the capitalists will encourage them to invest more, the government fears to tap that wealth.

Indeed, so long as they have the

economic power, the capitalists will vigorously resist new burdens on them—through investment strikes and other forms of economic sabotage.

Before any **planned** use of the wealth produced in Zimbabwe can be made—to provide more housing, social services, education, etc—nothing less is needed than a state take-over of the banks, big industries, mines and farms.

Superficial wounds only arouse a hunted animal to new fury: what is required is to finish off the beast. The government's present "transitional plans" to achieve 'socialism' by degrees are completely utopian and meaningless, since you can't plan what you don't control, and you can't control what you do not own.

Zimbabwe's insoluble fiscal problems sum up the bankruptcy of capitalism in the ex-colonial world, bringing ruin for the masses.

A choice must be made as to the interests of which class, the capitalist class or the workers, will be systematically enforced.

It will be up to the working class,

whose interests form the basis for the socialist transformation of society, to enforce this choice by organising to take over from the capitalists the control of the banks, big industries, mines, and farms, and reorganise production and society under their own democratic control.

In the meantime, the government is likely to try every short-term remedy which the capitalist system has to offer in the attempt to deal with each problem as it arises—while sliding deeper into a morass of economic and social crisis from which it has no perspective of emerging.

Already, it is again clutching at the straw of more borrowing from the IMF. With the new budget finalised, **negotiations have started with the IMF "on the possible resumption of the programme or the negotiation of a new one"**.

Chidzero admits that the IMF has been "rather rigid" in the past on the conditions which it laid down for loans (i.e. those which the government agreed to in 1982)—but now, he claims, it is becoming "more flexible".

No doubt, from the experiences in the Dominican Republic and elsewhere, the IMF will have noted that a debtor country pushed into revolutionary crisis is the worst credit risk of all. But, with massive defaults on debt repayments threatening throughout the 'Third World', this is likely to make the IMF more careful

than ever in deciding whether to make loans.

In the case of a country such as Zimbabwe, threatened by SA and with serious internal problems, cast-iron guarantees of repayments are likely to be demanded—through the imposition of conditions spelling more deprivation and impoverishment for the mass of working people.

"Blue-eyed boy"

Zimbabwe's Finance Minister is not one to shirk this task. "We", he proudly states, "have had a superb(!) record of meeting the (IMF) criteria...." Zimbabwe had been "something of a blue-eyed boy" to the IMF until the current problems about the unfortunate budget deficit—but, luckily, the IMF "understood the problems facing the country."

Nor is he ashamed to take personal responsibility for the cuts imposed under the past IMF programme—these were carried out, he states, "because the government had decided that they had to be taken for the benefit of the economy as a whole."

This only shows how firmly present government policy is wedded to keeping Zimbabwe within the framework of capitalism.

Far from bringing benefit to the working people, this policy will in-

evitably give rise to increasing mass opposition, to organised struggle by workers, peasants, youth, women, etc. All the present unease among ZANU's rank-and-file supporters at some of the policies followed by the government will only add to the anger and outright opposition that will inevitably build up at a certain stage.

Even the establishment of a one-party state will not enable the leadership to ride out the storm of mass opposition which will develop.

The petty-bourgeois politicians will be pushed to and fro under the pressures of the main classes in society, as long as the lack of working-class leadership allows them to fill the political vacuum at the head of the mass movement.

As the vicious logic of the capitalist system, as well as the unreliability of the petty bourgeoisie in government, becomes ever clearer to the leading activists in the working class, they will draw revolutionary conclusions. Events will impress these on wider and wider layers.

In the workers' committees and trade union branches, in ZANU and ZAPU cells, this process is already beginning. Correct policies and leadership will need to be developed in the coming period to guide the movement towards its task of completing the democratic and socialist revolution that opened up with independence in 1980.



Zimbabwean mineworkers employed by Rio Tinto

Letter— The self-employed need a workers' government

Dear comrades

It is sometimes said that to be self-employed is better than to work for a boss. But it is quite hazardous to venture into self-employment with the hope of accumulating something—or even of maintaining the standard of living one is used to.

In fact, quite often people are driven to self-employment out of sheer desperation. Either one has been working and got out of work, or never had a job at all. In both cases, even the least is better than nothing.

Take myself. In 1976 I couldn't find employment. Because I hadn't taken my O-level exams there seemed no hope for me to get a job. After a year looking and not getting anywhere I decided to engage in selling clothes.

I hoped I would easily be able to maintain myself at a basic living standard. But I found that self-employment is one of the most demanding occupations.

From week to week there is no guarantee of earning the same as last week. In struggling to keep up the pace one tends to overstretch oneself, with no limits on time of work.

When I started I bought three pieces of cloth a meter in size each at Z\$2,20 a piece and got some skirts made. I sold them at Z\$7,50, half the price charged in the shops, within less than a week.

For what I got I went and bought more pieces of cloth and had some more skirts made.

I had no problem getting the skirts made at first. But as demand increased, production slowed down, because I had been relying on one person who was making them for me at a very low charge.

Since I couldn't afford to be charged more for producing the skirts, I decided to try making them myself. Because I could not afford to pay for my lessons in sewing, I decided to learn on my own. Fortunately I had an aunt with a sewing machine to teach myself on. It was not easy. But

nothing can be harder than being unemployed.

By the end of 1976 I could make skirts that I could sell. That was very lucky for me. Because already the cost of a piece of cloth had gone up to Z\$3,00 per metre.

Though I had to rent a sewing machine to use I had the chance of making more profit then.

By 1978 I could sell my skirts at Z\$9,00 each—still half the price in the shops. Business was fine. I had no problems then.

1980 was still a good year too. More people were getting jobs. School fees were less than before. Generally more people had more money than ever before. With the introduction by the Mugabe government of the minimum wage, and of guarantees against victimisations and redundancies in the factories, it was time for everyone to relax after the long years of liberation struggle.

That year and 1981 were the best years in my life.

In 1981 all the benefits that people had won started dropping one by one. People started getting out of work. Prices went up. Rents and rates got higher. Everything once again became expensive. The 'business boom' after independence was nowhere to be found.

As a result I have lost business. In addition I am now married, and blessed with a baby son, and need more to support my family on.

Now some places where I used to buy cloth have closed. The clothes I make no longer sell. Doing repair work, which I never did before, is the only chance of survival, but even here there are fewer customers.

Everyone who has any money at all is going into town to buy from the closing factories and shops.

Nowadays what I earn is rarely enough even to pay the rent for where I work, and the costs of running the business.

My ability to earn a basic living has been hit (1) because the prices get higher; (2) because less customers come; (3) because liabilities increase.

(1) When prices get higher, it means that the costs of operating the business go up too. To keep up the pace, one must increase the cost of one's service. Then the number of customers gets less.

(2) When more people get out of work, the number of customers surely falls down. This factor alone is a catastrophe for the self-employed as well as the workers.

(3) Also the government increases its tax demands etc.

All this means the standard of living for the self-employed is also affected by the crisis of capitalism which is being loaded on the workers. There is no way one can increase the costs of one's service and be able to attract customers at the same time. Its a question of operating at a loss or closing down. Its cheaper to close down.

The crisis of capitalism hits the self-employed, just as it hits the big factories, driving the capitalists out of business, and the workers out of jobs.

End capitalism

The only solution is for the workers to organise to take power, establish a democratic workers' government, and end capitalism.

If the workers take over the productive resources, then redundancies and victimisations will no longer be necessary.

If the workers control and manage the economy they will certainly have money to spend. They will be better clothed and fed.

Then the self-employed like myself can also manage to live better than now, on the increased demand from workers because they have more money in their pockets.

Till that day, God help me!

Fraternally,
Umali Nkwanda
Harare

Brighton bomb— who gains?

What is the attitude of Marxists to individual terrorism as a method of struggle against oppression?

Recently, the IRA (the "Provos") attempted to assassinate the British Tory Prime Minister and her cabinet during their party conference in Brighton.

The editorial statement of the *Militant Irish Monthly*, which we reprint here, explains why this bombing could only damage the cause of the working class—Irish and British—and puts forward instead the Marxist alternative to terrorism.

Editorial statement *Militant Irish Monthly* November 1984

The bombing of the Grand Hotel is to be opposed and condemned by all socialists. This senseless act has played into the hands of the British ruling class and the Tory Party.

Thatcher's government is a vicious anti-working class government. It is a government which is rightly detested by millions of working class people for its policies of cuts in living standards and its repressive methods. Over the past seven months Thatcher has been faced with a mighty and growing movement of opposition—from the miners, from the dockers, from the railwaymen, from sections of the Civil Service and the Health Service, from Labour authorities like Liverpool and now from the car workers.

At the Tory Party conference the strains were obviously beginning to tell. The prospects of a miners' victory threatened to wreck the government's entire strategy, probably resulting in the removal of Thatcher and possibly shortening the life of the government.

What has the Brighton bomb achieved? From the Tory point of

view, and particularly that of Thatcher, it has been a godsend. It provided the perfect cover for Thatcher in her conference speech to divert attention from the real issues of mass unemployment and the miners' strike. Like the Falklands war it has given the right-wing press the opportunity to embark on a pro-Tory crusade.

For the working class absolutely nothing has been gained. Quite the reverse! The bomb, by temporarily strengthening the government, will only make it more difficult for the miners to win their strike. There is not one word which can be said in defence of this stupid and counter-productive act. Its effects have been completely reactionary. The Provos claim to be proud of their achievement. But assisting Thatcher, allowing Norman Tebbit to be presented as a national hero and possibly lengthening the lifespan of this reactionary government is nothing to boast about.

Marxism is opposed to individual

terror as a method of struggle. It is by mass action, using the methods being used by the miners, that the working class can fight against right-wing governments such as this and can move to change society. A decade and a half of individual terror in Northern Ireland has proven this point. It has achieved absolutely nothing. The Provo objectives are not one step closer than they were in 1969.

On the contrary, individual terrorism, far from weakening the capitalist state, vastly reinforces it. In Northern Ireland the Provos' campaign has been the excuse for the huge centralisation of the state apparatus and the application of repressive methods which the ruling class dare not use yet in Britain. The Brighton bomb will not weaken the state in Britain but will provide it with an opportunity to apply further repressive measures there. Those who will bear the brunt will be workers in struggle—such as the miners.

As far as the Irish question is con-



cerned the Provos' justification for this bomb—that it will force the British ruling class to rethink their position and withdraw—is sheer fantasy. It is the class interests of British imperialism which force them to retain a presence in Ireland. Disturbing the sleep or even killing a few of the political representatives of the capitalists does not change their interests.

Partition was imposed on Ireland by British imperialism as a means of dividing the struggles of the working class, and safeguarding their vital economic and military interests. Today, in the era of multinational companies and nuclear missiles, many of these reasons have receded. Capitalism in Britain would have no fundamental objection to the establishment of a united Ireland.

What stands in their way is the opposition of Protestants in the North, and the chronic weakness of capitalism in the South of Ireland. The Irish bosses cannot effect any changes in the border, and neither can imperialism simply withdraw. A bomb in Brighton does not alter the balance of forces.

A solution can only be found through the movement of the working class, Catholic and Protestant, North and South. Partition can only be ended on a socialist basis, and only on this basis is it possible to achieve the removal of the troops. A united

working class struggling for socialism would join hands across the border. The artificially encouraged fears planted through successive generations by the bosses could be removed. A socialist united Ireland and a socialist federation of Britain and Ireland would be possible. Individual terrorism cuts across this struggle both in Britain and in Ireland.

The more 'successful', in their terms, the Provos would have been in killing members of the cabinet the worse it would have been for the working class movement in Britain and the North. Trotsky once explained that the individual terrorist is like a liberal with a pistol. Both believe that problems can be resolved by removing a few individuals, the one by voting them out, the other by assassinating them. The effect of killing some members of 'Thatcher's cabinet would not be the return of a socialist government but their replacement by even worse versions of themselves. If Thatcher had been killed the working class would have had to suffer someone like Tebbit as Prime Minister—courtesy of the Provos.

In July 1981, the Moujhaddeen in Iran bombed the headquarters of the ruling Islamic Republican Party killing 150 people including the No. 2 to Khomeini. Two months later they smuggled a bomb into a secret government meeting and blew up the

President and Prime Minister. All that was achieved was a strengthening of the hand of the right-wing Mullahs, years of bloody repression, and the virtual wiping out of the Moujhaddeen.

Individual terrorism mistakes individual representatives of capitalism for the system itself. It substitutes acts of revenge against these individuals for the class struggle against capitalism.

Fortunately the effects of the Brighton bombing in cutting across the class struggle will be short lived. The media will not be capable of sustaining their efforts to turn this into a 'Falklands Mark II' for long. The miners are still most likely to defeat the Tories, opening the way for a huge round of battles against this government. The real struggles of the working class will continue and develop despite this diversion and despite the brief period of breathing space which Thatcher and Co. can now enjoy thanks to the Provos.

In the North, in the months ahead, this class reality must be built upon. Only a mass socialist Labour Party can unite workers politically and defeat the Tory bigots. Only this can draw the mass of the working class into effective political activity. As the smoke clears from the debris of the Brighton bomb, it is in the direction of mass action that the working class must set its face.



Terrorism has strengthened the Tory assault on striking British miners

INDIA IN CRISIS

By Steve Morgan

The communal rioting and bloody reprisals against thousands of Sikhs following the assassination of Mrs. Gandhi have highlighted the chronic instability of Indian society and the nightmarish future it faces on the basis of capitalism.

A question mark now hangs over the ability of Rajiv Gandhi and the Indian army to control the conflagration of communal massacres sweeping India. In the longer term the Balkanisation of the Indian state is posed.

The only force capable of arresting this process and unifying the Indian sub-continent is the large and powerful Indian working class, equipped with a Marxist programme and leadership.

After three decades of independence, Indian capitalism has proved totally incapable of achieving the democratic tasks posed by history—in particular distribution of land and the creation of a nation state. India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are products of an artificially divided sub-continent, which are themselves fragmenting.

The vision projected by the Congress Party of a modern, democratic India in which local particularism, communalism, casteism, poverty and disease would be overcome, has exposed itself as a mirage on the basis of capitalism. The "Gandhi dynasty" reflects the need of the Indian capitalist class to personify the concept of a united India.

The "successor" to the throne, Rajiv Gandhi, however, now presides over a country in the throes of disintegration, turmoil and in many areas open civil war. The consciousness of national Indian identity which developed during the independence struggle and to a limited extent afterwards is now evaporating. National, ethnic, religious, linguistic and caste disturbances are epidemic. India now records nine riots per hour!

Disillusioned in the Congress party and without a clear socialist alternative offered by the main workers parties, the middle classes, peasants and lumpen-proletariat in particular have looked to the mushrooming

regional parties and movements which have appeared, and have become fodder for frenzied racial and religious riots, which are not confined to Sikh-Hindu clashes, but Muslim-Hindu, Hindu-Bengalis and so on.

This year more than 200 were killed in Hindu-Muslim riots in Bombay. Similar clashes occurred in Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Kashmir. 5 000 have died in anti-Bengali pogroms in Assam, Tripura and Mizoram. Muslim pogroms have been inspired by the Hindu communalist RSS in Pune and against Christian fishermen in Kanyuskaman.

There have been linguistic riots in Bangalore, secessionist struggles in Nagaland and Manipur, and demands for new states in Jhark and for Khalistan amongst sections of Sikhs in the Punjab.

Vast areas of the country live in the Dark Ages with tribalism, religious cults and savagery such as widow

Reprinted from *Militant*,
Marxist paper in the British
labour movement (9/11/84)



The 'Gandhi dynasty': Rajiv is second from the left. Sanjay (left) was originally groomed for the succession but died in a plane crash.



Home of an 'untouchable' family. The 'untouchables' (Harijans) form over half India's population, but are subjected to appalling discrimination and oppression.

suicides, bride burnings and ritual child slaughter. The 'modern India' of Congress is in reality a society where pre-capitalist forms of production and culture have not been overcome.

Impasse

At the root of the crisis lies the impasse of the capitalist economy. Mrs. Gandhi was fond of boasting that India is the world's tenth industrial power. There is no doubt that India, despite its backwardness, does represent a major capitalist power. However, it is also one of the poorest on the planet with *per capita* income averaging only \$230 a year.

To put things in perspective, India, despite having enormously rich natural resources and a population greater than the USA, USSR, and Europe combined, produces only

1,1% of world output.

The vacillations of the world economy hit India with particular severity. India has now become a permanent debtor nation. In 1982 its per capita indebtedness reached the same figure as per capita income!

Most importantly India's industrial development has done nothing to improve the position of the masses. More than half the population live below the poverty line. At least 50% are landless and mass unemployment has reached astronomical levels.

For those in work life is little better. Real wages for factory workers are no higher than in 1857!

No objective basis now exists for reforms. The ruling class are attempting to drive down wages and smash the trade union movement. The Indian working class have responded with wave after wave of strikes. A quarter of million textile workers struck for over a year, and the same number of Jute workers. 300 000 dockers won a great victory recently.

On 19 January, 12 million Indian workers struck in a General Strike which represents the single biggest mobilisation of workers in world history. Even Gandhi's secret police have been on strike! India now has the highest strike record in the world.

These struggles have a revolutionary significance, and represent the prelude to the developing revolution in India and the emergence of the working class as the leading independent force in society.

Mass unrest

The strikes and the unrest throughout the country have rocked the government and caused turmoil and divisions within Congress(I) and the conglomeration of Opposition parties. Although it is most likely that Rajiv will win the coming elections on the basis of the mass revulsion to his mother's assassination, the new Congress government can solve nothing.

The rabid dog of communalism is the result of decades of divide and rule by Indian capitalism. Simultaneously, there is the even greater threat to Rajiv of an increasingly revolutionary working class.

The most likely perspective therefore is that Rajiv will cautiously attempt to continue the move toward Bonapartism—personal rule—begun by his mother. Indeed, her assassination affords him an opportunity to introduce new repressive laws in the name of "combatting terrorism"—in reality to be used against the labour movement.

Indira Gandhi had already introduced laws allowing for arbitrary arrest and detention without right of appeal, the right to sack strikers and imprison anyone who calls for a strike or gives it support. Earlier, in 1974, she called a State of Emergency, suspended civil liberties, introduced press censorship, carried out forced sterilisation and imprisoned 160 000 political opponents, especially trade unionists and left leaders.

At the moment, because of the electoral support for Congress(I), the ruling class are unlikely to play the dangerous card of military dictatorship. The State of Emergency of 1974-77 in the end collapsed, such was the lack of social support, the rottenness of the state machinery and the emerging power of the working class.



Hindus seeking communal revenge on Sikhs and their property in Delhi after the assassination of Indira Gandhi

The Indian ruling class could not at this stage establish a dictatorship, like that of Chile or Turkey. It would be inherently unstable from the beginning and would inevitably blow up in the faces of the ruling class.

However, without the decisive intervention of the labour movement, reaction will take the form of religious pogroms and frenzied communal massacres—an orgy of barbarism making the holocausts of the Independence period pale into insignificance in comparison.

This would threaten the unity of the working class and result in the disintegration of India. However, the most encouraging development during the attacks on the Sikhs were the formation of joint Hindu-Sikh defence forces. This must now be emulated across India by the workers' organisations forming workers' defence committees of Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, etc, without caste prejudice and drawing in representatives from poor peasants' organisations.

Only the working class is capable of cutting across communalism and offering a way forward for the oppressed nationalities and minorities of India. Indeed, the divisions and violence have only reached these levels because of the failure of the traditional workers' parties (the CPI and CPM) to take a clear class stand and put forward a bold socialist programme. They have consistently fail-

ed to field candidates and instead have courted alliances and electoral pacts with Congress(I) and other reactionary parties.

Where they have taken power, in states like West Bengal, they have refused to break with capitalism and appeal to workers throughout India to follow their lead.

For Marxists the correct approach to the national and minority question in India is the key to the socialist revolution. Marxists champion the rights of the oppressed nationalities and minorities and stand for full democratic rights and autonomy. The organised terrorism of the state forces and the repression and exploitation of nationalities by the Indian state bureaucracy and big business, must be opposed.

It is necessary to fight for every possible democratic reform and economic advance. In the Punjab, for instance, Marxists would inscribe on their banner demands for greater autonomy, religious freedoms, reforms in use of scarce water resources and linguistic rights for the Punjab.

It is possible that as a result of continued massacres of Sikhs, an exodus back to the Punjab could begin and the demand for self-determination—at present without a strong base of support—gain widespread popularity. Marxists under such conditions would be duty bound to support the right of self-determination for the

Punjab.

However, a genuinely independent, democratic Sikh state or "Khalistan" is a utopia on the basis of capitalism. The "Muslim" state of Pakistan is in the process of disintegration racked by poverty, disease and the jackboot of Zia's dictatorship. A capitalist Sikh state in the Punjab would be no more viable.

However, on the basis of a Socialist Federation of the Indian sub-continent with a central plan of production utilising the rich resources of the continent, together with full democratic rights and guarantees for all minorities and nationalities, the material basis could be laid for the voluntary union of the peoples of India.

Within this, full autonomous rights would be guaranteed to the Punjab. Even the right to secede, if the majority wanted, would be guaranteed, although Marxists would argue for states to remain part of one economic unit.

The only force capable of achieving this is a united working class, Sikh, Hindu, Muslim, Christian, in alliance with the poor peasantry and oppressed nationalities and minorities. Mobilised around a socialist programme the powerful and combative Indian working class could sweep aside the rotting carcass of Indian capitalism within hours.

ARGENTINA AND THE LATIN AMERICAN REVOLUTION

The Alfonsín government came to office in elections in October 1983 following the collapse of the seven-year old military dictatorship in Argentina. The downfall of the junta followed its defeat in the South Atlantic War of 1982, but was basically caused by the social crisis of capitalism in Argentina.

The junta had seized power in 1976 to suppress the working-class movement, which was searching for the way to carry through the socialist transformation of society. The military subjected the masses to a counter-revolutionary reign of terror in which at least 20 000 were kidnapped, tortured and murdered.

Repression

But repression could not solve the crisis of capitalism, nor indefinitely destroy the workers' movement. Under the junta, overall production, investment and employment slumped, while prices soared—by 1983 at over 600% a year! The invasion of the Falklands/Malvinas was a last desperate attempt by the junta to divert the working class from revolutionary action by whipping up 'patriotic fervour'.

The fall of the junta and the election of a civilian 'democratic' government raised the hopes of the Argentinian masses that their problems would now be solved. But the capitalist government of Alfonsín is no more able than the junta to halt the crisis of inflation, or create jobs for the unemployed.

The September general strike is the first major outburst of the discontent of the working-class movement with the government they helped put into office less than a year ago. It signals another step forward in the

(continued on page 45)

SEPTEMBER GENERAL STRIKE

ON 3 SEPTEMBER Argentina had the first general strike since the election of Alfonsín last November.

The government sought to avoid this confrontation, making a last-ditch attempt to reach agreement with trade union leaders, but none was possible.

From a correspondent in Argentina

The trade union bureaucracy called the general strike in the hope that they would shortly be able to end it with the government allowing a small rise in wages. But Alfonsín's room for manoeuvre is so small that the government can't even satisfy the smallest economic needs of the workers. Today we need a minimum wage of 32 000 pesos instead of the present minimum of 16 000 pesos.

The government's Employment Minister, though, maintains that it is fulfilling its electoral promises of increasing the buying power of wages. What is happening, says the minister, "is that prices rise so quickly that people don't notice the increase in wages." Only pure ignorance or the deliberate intention to drive down workers' living standards can explain these statements. No matter how much you increase wages, if the rise is smaller than the increase in prices, real wages go down. Workers understand that without a degree in economics.

The government refuses to recognise inflation at around 30% per month is an uncontrollable problem for them.

Instead of attacking the causes of inflation, the government has attacked the effects, artificially holding back price rises to 16%. In this form, it is preparing the basis for an inflationary explosion in the coming months, whose effects will be far

more catastrophic.

Naturally the bosses are totally against these actions. They have even warned that they will break negotiations for a national social agreement. The weakness of the government is that it is incapable of developing a satisfactory policy, for either the workers or bosses. The government is losing much of the support it obtained during the elections both from sections of the capitalists and from those workers who voted for the government on the basis of promises of social change.

Right wing

On the one hand, the party of the right, headed by Alsogaray, has been slowly reorganising itself, and on the other hand hundreds of thousands of workers who voted for Alfonsín have participated in the general strike.

Sections of the government and the majority party (the Radicals) sharply criticised the action, which they baptised "a political strike", trying to prevent the workers from following the strike call. The industrial workers paid no attention, and 95% of them came out, particularly in the industrial belt of Buenos Aires, Córdoba, and Rosario.

The strike met with its least support—around 50%—among the state employees, service workers, and teachers, precisely those sections

(continued on page 44)

(GENERAL STRIKE—continued from page 43)

which provided the broadest electoral base of Alfonsín.

Large sections of these employees still entertain some hopes that Alfonsín can get the country out of economic difficulties and so regarded participation in this action as premature.

On the other hand, among these sections many felt the union leadership, represented at all levels by the extremely bureaucratic apparatus of the CGT, was taking advantage of the general strike call to consolidate control of its positions, where it had previously seen a widespread loss of support.

If the strike had not been called with a mere two days' warning (and notified by articles in the press!); if it had been preceded by a campaign to explain the need for the strike, throughout all the workplaces; if the trade union leadership had been made up of people representative of the workers, many of these employees would also have stopped work. Their wage level is not much better than that of the industrial working class.

Bureaucracy

Industrial workers also bear much resentment about the trade union bureaucracy, but their attitude was to support the strike **despite** the way in which it was called. In meetings just before the strike, chants such as "critical support" or "we should strike 24 hours more against the bureaucracy", showed the popular basis of this much-needed strike, but at the same time workers' enormous distrust of the top union leaders.

The most important aim was to tell the government that we can't live on present starvation wages and that we are ready to struggle for a decent wage. The union fight against the bureaucracy will continue afterwards, but we cannot wait until the bureaucracy disappears to fight for decent pay.

The trade union bureaucracy organised neither meetings nor marches for fear of losing control. The mood amongst the workers is very



Alfonsín at the time of his election. Now the honeymoon is over.

tense so the officialdom weren't prepared to take any risks for fear of their positions. After all, in the last months there has been an average of **two million workers** in conflict. In many of these conflicts, the bureaucracy has been overthrown and replaced by leaders who are far more representative!

This strike opened a new period in the Argentinian revolutionary process. The capitalist press has tried to present the strike as a partial defeat, given that only something like 50% of the state employees, etc, participated, while in previous strikes support within these sectors has been total. But previous general strikes occurred against the military dictatorship which was hated by **all**.

"Democracy"

This general strike is the first in a "democracy" and this weighed heavily amongst certain sections of workers particularly when they were told by the government that this strike was "destabilising". Certain official government deputies even said the strike was encouraging a coup. The government could argue like this because many sections of the union leadership made a pact with the army during the dictatorship. Many workers are conscious of the dangers from "leaders" such as this. The government has tried to exploit these fears but with only limited success.

The workers are not out to destabilise this government and far

less to create the conditions for a coup. Only the weakness and desperation of the government led to such ideas being raised. The workers have struck because nine months of this democratic government have not led to any rise in living standards and they have begun to tire of endless speeches and promises. They need such simple things as a minimum wage that will provide them with a decent life, but this government is unable to guarantee even that.

United

Now the government knows the working class remains united and willing to fight. The workers also have raised the level of political consciousness. But the strike, in itself, and in the way in which it was oriented by the bureaucracy, will not resolve any of the working class's problems.

The day after, the CGT leaders sat down at the negotiating table to find a new solution to the dispute between unions, employers, workers and the government. No solutions exist that can satisfy at the same time bosses and workers.

Workers will continue to fight in their factories and in their areas. Even the bank employees who only participated to a small degree in the general strike are today developing a strike of five hours a day, demanding higher wages and a law to guarantee job stability, a law which the dictatorship took away and which

Alfonsín personally refused to implement after it was reintroduced by the senate.

For the majority of workers, every day new conflicts appear, first over living standards and soon passing on to a higher plane. Women protesting against workers being sacked, the fight against the IMF, etc. All these strikes and struggles have an anti-bureaucratic component. It is a wave which every time and every day grows stronger.

The bureaucracy does everything in its power to maintain its position, utilising the most dirty methods imaginable—threats with arms, beatings, even murder. For workers, the struggle against the unions' rotten apparatus will be a hard one and possibly a bloody one, but there is a determination to take it forward. They know very well how necessary it is to get rid of so-called leaders who place obstacles in their path. In the next period, life in the unions will be in constant turmoil.

Lessons

The Argentinian working class is rapidly learning through experience and struggle. The Argentinian bosses try to impress the idea of "national unity", that "everybody together" can take the country forward. But all the struggles show there are two nations, those who work (or need to work) and those who live very well without working.

The Peronist trade union leadership, both political and union, is also not in the least interested in creating or fighting for an independent policy of the working class. Each time it's the workers themselves who feel the need to eliminate those class collaborationist prejudices created by the doctrine of Peron, the former military dictator.

From some sectors, talk is beginning of a "Peronism of the workers", which is committed to socialism. In the future this idea will grow in the consciousness of the whole working class and lead to the conclusion that it must organise on the basis of its own socialist programme to transform Argentinian society.

**Buenos Aires,
September 1984**



Police clash with demonstrating youth in Chile

Argentinian revolution.

These developments in Argentina are part of a continent-wide process of social revolution in Latin America, whose convulsions are increasingly gripping every country.

This is the consequence, on the one hand, of the absolute bankruptcy of capitalism in the 'Third World', now massively deepened by the world crisis of capitalism. On the other hand it reflects the enormous development of the working class in every Latin American country, and particularly in Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Argentina.

For generations, the economy of Latin America has been fettered by the domination of the world market by the monopolies of the advanced capitalist countries. Growth in the modern world depends on the development of modern industry. But Latin America entered into the world market as an exporter of 'primary' products—agricultural and mineral raw materials—produced by a highly

exploited and oppressed cheap labour force. The home market was small, and vulnerable to the cheap goods produced by the mass-production methods of the world monopolies: opportunities for profitable investment in industrial development were severely constrained.

Particularly during the post-Second World War upswing, a number of Latin American countries, attempted, through policies of state intervention, to broaden their base of production into industry. Barriers were set up against imports, and state revenues were used to subsidise industry and invest directly in it—on somewhat the same pattern that the South African regime has pursued.

With the upswing in world production, and with world trade growing at an average of 12% a year, there was a rising demand for their exports, the earnings from which could be used to finance the capital goods required to develop industry. However,

through the period, the unit costs of their manufactured imports increased far more rapidly than those of their exports. More and more coffee, or sugar, or copper was required to purchase a tractor, or a fork-lift truck, or a machine tool.

On the basis of such measures industry was able to develop, in countries like Brazil for example, at a stupendous rate—though, as was to become apparent when the world capitalist economy entered its new period of organic crisis in the 1970s, this development was on a highly artificial basis.

Nevertheless this industrial growth led to a huge development in the size and power of the working class. In Brazil the working class grew from some 3 million in 1960 to 10,6 million in 1980.

While on the land thousands of peasants remained using primitive agricultural techniques like the hoe, in industrial centres like Sao Paulo huge factories have emerged, concentrating the working class. Six factories in one Sao Paulo district employ 100 000 workers.

Brazilian 'miracle'

The Brazilian ruling class talked about this industrialisation as the 'Brazilian miracle', and patted themselves on the back that Brazil would become a major world power by the end of the century. But the world capitalist crisis has exposed the hollowness, on a capitalist basis, of these aspirations and similar ones in other Latin American countries.

Growth meant a chronic trade deficit, with payments for imports exceeding earnings from exports. Partly covered during the boom by new foreign investment, come to exploit the cheap labour systems, this has increasingly been financed by loans from the imperialist banks. As interest rates have risen, this has created insurmountable problems for Latin American capitalist development.

Today Latin America's debt to the banks totals \$350 billion. Even during the present temporary world upturn, when there is increased demand for Latin American exports, interest payments on this debt consume 67% of Argentina's export earnings, 39% of Brazil's and 35% of Mexico's.



Slum housing in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

To finance these interest payments, imperialism's economic policeman, the International Monetary Fund, demands 'austerity programmes'—cutting back imports, reducing state spending, etc. Between 1981 and 1983 imports to Latin America were slashed by 50%.

The result is a huge slump in production, with the consequences inflicted by the ruling classes on the working masses. On average, factories in Latin America are working at 50% capacity. In Argentina in 1983 alone, production fell by one third. In Chile, where 'monetarism' has been most severely applied, production in 1983 had fallen back to its level in 1965.

The rich use their power to increase their wealth, while unemployment soars, and millions go hungry and starve. In Brazil the consumption of beans, a staple of diet, has halved since 1960. At least 20 million children, it is estimated, have been abandoned by families too poor to feed and sustain them—and this on a continent whose resources, properly utilised, would enable it to feed not only its own people but the whole world.

While there can be temporary and marginal improvements in the economic situation, there is no solution to these problems on a capitalist basis. Increasingly even the 'Brazilian miracle' is stripped away and reduced to—the 'miraculous' development of the power of the working class, and its consequent ability to lead the

transformation of society.

Even during the boom, the backwardness of capitalism precluded the possibility of stable bourgeois democracy. Government consisted of a cycle of weak parliamentary 'democracies' followed by ruthless but unstable dictatorships.

Opportunities

In the course of these cycles a number of opportunities arose for the working class to lead all the oppressed to overthrow landlordism and capitalism and establish workers' democratic rule. Such opportunities existed repeatedly in Bolivia for example. They existed in Chile between 1970 and 1973, and in Argentina between 1974 and 1976.

But the working class has been saddled with a leadership (in the social-democratic parties and in the 'Communist' parties also) adamantly opposed to socialist revolution and insisting that the task for the working class is to ally with the 'progressive' section of the capitalist class to 'consolidate democracy'.

Invariably these policies have resulted in missed revolutionary opportunities, have frustrated and divided the masses, and have prepared the way for bloody counter-revolutionary coups and dictatorships.

Today, throughout Latin

America—with Argentina and Chile in the vanguard—revolutionary opportunities are opening up again, and on a higher scale than ever before.

While in Argentina the movement of the working class has already toppled the dictatorship, in Chile the brutal Pinochet regime still hangs on by the skin of its teeth. The working class and the youth have, over the last years, recovered from the crushing defeat imposed by the counter-revolutionary coup in 1973, when Pinochet's dictatorship dismantled the workers' organisations and slaughtered 50 000 workers and activists. Faced with a collapsing economy, they have launched into wave after wave of demonstrations, strikes and street-fighting against the dictatorship.

Reformist leadership

While a section of the capitalist class seeks an accommodation with the reformist leaders of the workers' organisations, Pinochet and his clique cling desperately to power, terrified of the retribution that will be launched against them by the workers' movement once they fall, and terrified also of the revolutionary explosions that their departure will unleash.

In Brazil, also, the revolution is beginning to unfold. The working class has shown its power in the strike wave of 1979-80, the general strike in July 1983, as also in the huge demonstrations against the military dictatorship earlier this year. These involved, in total, some 10 or 20 million people—in the capital alone 1 million. This was a scale of action not seen even in the Russian Revolution itself.

In Brazil, as has been the case in Argentina, the military dictatorship which has ruled since 1964 is being compelled, reluctantly, to abdicate to the civilian politicians. Terrified of conceding a 'victory' to mass pressure, however, the military withdrew its original promise of direct elections.

The new president will now be chosen, on January 15, by an unrepresentative 'electoral college' openly stacked in favour of the generals, the landowners, and the capitalists. This college will choose between two candidates, one of a

party (the PDS) created by the military, and the other backed by a so-called 'Democratic Alliance' (the PMDB). "Ideology," comments the London *Financial Times* "plays little part in the contest. To date neither man has produced a specific platform".

Whichever wins, their attempts to resolve the crisis within the framework of capitalism will only sharpen the struggle of the working class. In this sense, the handover will signal the beginnings of the revolution in Brazil.

The crisis of the economy, the crisis of the dictatorships, the crisis of 'parliamentary democracies', the rising power of the working class—these are the main ingredients of the Latin American revolution. The key question is the 'subjective factor'—the arming of the working class with the perspectives, the programme, and the leadership capable of carrying the democratic and social revolution to its conclusion.

The road to this, for the working class, will be a convulsive and tortuous process, as it looks first to its historic organisations, floods into them in a search for united class action, encounters the brick wall of class-compromise of the present leadership, and struggles to transform and place its own stamp on these organisations.

Huge conflicts

Huge conflicts within these organisations, mass splits, etc, are inevitable. The course of events will contain many surprises.

In Argentina, we had anticipated that the downfall of the dictatorship would lead to an electoral victory for the Peronist movement, the bourgeois-led movement which has nevertheless been the traditional vehicle of the Argentinian working class.

Instead the previously insignificant middle-class Radical Party led by Alfonsín was victorious. This reflected the disgust felt by large sections of workers, and of the middle class, with the Peronist bureaucracy, and with the 'deals' that the right-wing Peronist leaders (including trade union leaders) were trying to strike up with the generals.

Nevertheless, as the discontent with Alfonsín grows, it is likely to ex-

press itself in a turn to the Peronist movement, to splits within Peronism and the vomiting out of the right wing, and the testing and retesting in struggle of new layers of leadership.

In Brazil, Chile, etc, the process of the revolution is being protracted and delayed by the policies of the workers' leaders who, rather than mobilising and preparing the working class for power, continue to seek compromises and deals with the 'bourgeois opposition'. In Brazil, for example, the Communist Party is an uncritical backer of the pro-capitalist PMDB 'Democratic Alliance' presidential candidate.

The crisis of Latin American society will however deal harshly with any leadership which tries to hold back the workers' movement. The terrible conditions which are driving the masses into struggle, the absolute failure of any policy of the capitalist class to alleviate the situation, are generating an enormous heat which, applied to the crucible of the workers' organisations, will begin to separate the pure metal from the slag.

Further step

The 3 September general strike in Argentina is a further step in the Latin American revolution. Each such step, in each country, encourages the mass movement and teaches lessons elsewhere. Because the fundamental crisis is the same throughout the continent, because each country is inescapably bound up with world capitalism and its crisis, the revolution has an integrated and continent-wide character. The return to civilian rule in Argentina raised the mass pressures on the dictatorships in Uruguay, Brazil, and Chile.

A victory for the working class in one country in Latin America would light a fire across the continent—and indeed have enormous repercussions throughout the world.

At the present time, Latin America is in the forefront of the world revolution, but it foreshadows developments in every part of the world, including South Africa. Once Marxism takes root in the workers' movement in Latin America, it can rapidly become a mass force able to guide the working class to its victory.

Contents

SA: How close to revolution? After Nkomati (Part Two)	Supplement page 2
NUM settlement	page 16
Lenin: political strikes	page 20
Botswana quarry workers	page 24
Malawi	page 26
Zimbabwe union struggle	page 30
IMF and Zimbabwe	page 32
Tory Conference bomb	page 38
India in crisis	page 40
Latin America	page 43

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