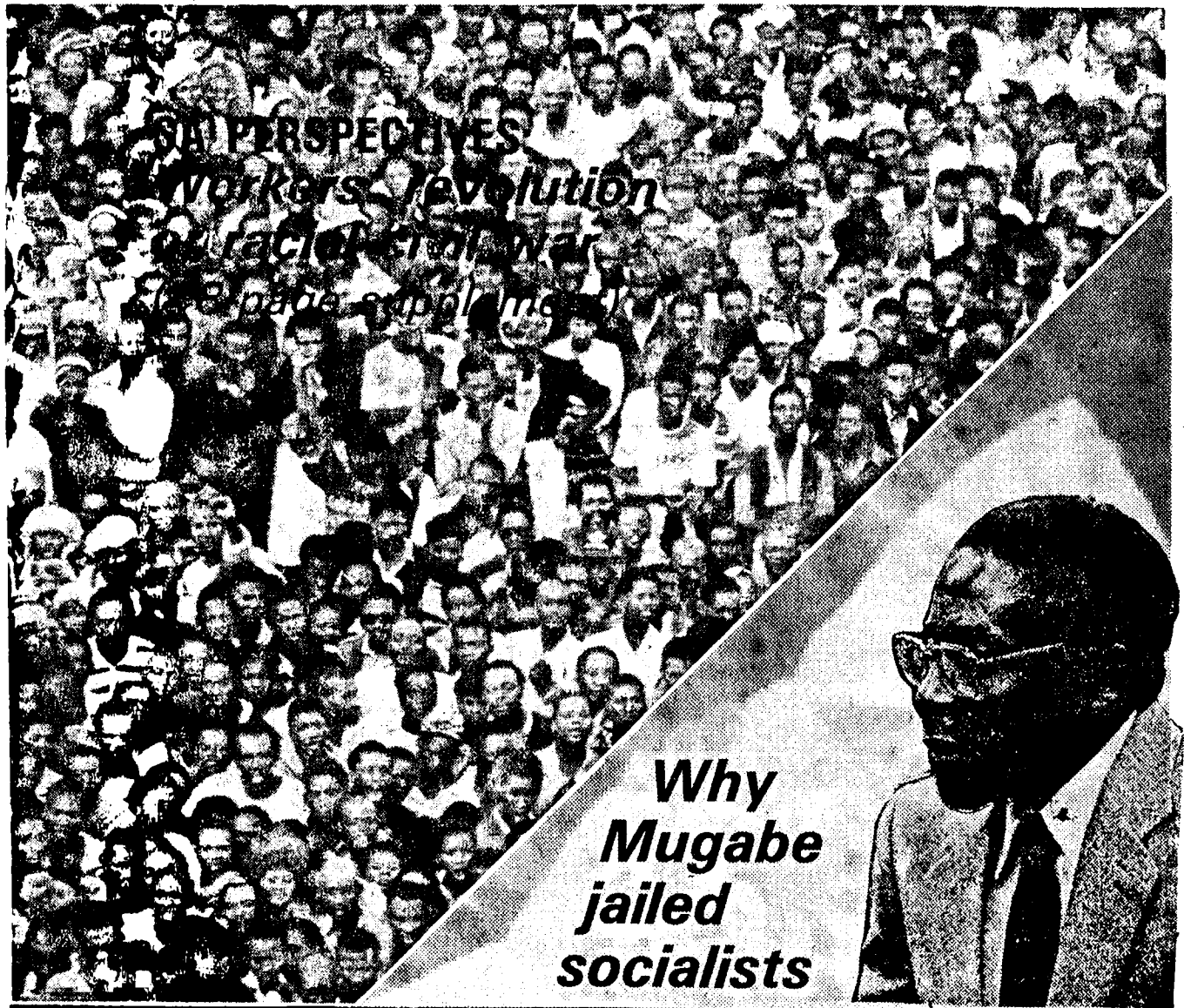


inqaba YA BASEBENZI

Journal of the Marxist Workers' Tendency
of the African National Congress



SA PERSPECTIVES
*Workers' revolution
or racial civil war
the page explains it*

**Why
Mugabe
jailed
socialists**



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—Editorial Board statement
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Scarcely a year ago the new constitution, with its coloured and Indian "parliaments", was presented to the whites as a way of securing their political privileges, by definitely excluding the African majority from the vote. Now, in the very first session of the new "parliaments", P.W. Botha is forced to concede that the question of the political rights of the African people cannot be avoided.

The new constitution has had a still-birth. The magnificent movement of all sections of the black working people—on the political plane even more than on the industrial—has ensured this.

Intended to divide the coloured and Indian people from the Africans, it provided instead a focus for unity in action between the coloured, Indian and African workers and youth. Instead of avoiding the issue of majority rule, it has accentuated the question, intensifying the struggle of the Africans and all oppressed people for democratic rights.

Faced with deepening economic crisis; with the growing challenge of the black workers; with the revolt within the communities and among the youth; faced above all with the prospect of mounting political strike action headed by the organised workers—all sections of the capitalist class are having to recognise that the new constitution is impotent.

Botha's January 25th speech has been hailed as the most "reformist" of his career. It has been made, moreover, against the background of an apparent shift in the regime's position on the question of negotiations with the ANC and the release of Nelson Mandela.

But the proposals contained in

Can negotiations bring majority rule?

Botha's speech share with all previous schemes one common purpose: to prevent majority rule.

Whilst the regime officially acknowledges that the Verwoerdian dream of a "white South Africa" free of blacks is unrealisable, it proposes yet another device for warding off the demand for one-person-one-vote in an undivided South Africa.

It also hopes to create a climate of acceptability amongst whites for the idea that Africans would have to be included in the future governing of South Africa. But which Africans?

Not the majority.

The regime seeks a formula for fragmenting the African majority by dividing "legal" urban Africans from the "illegals", and dividing those considered "permanent" from those considered "temporary", as well as from their fellow-Africans in the "homelands". Conceivably, some such African MINORITY might then be conceded rights to the administration of their so-called "own affairs", with some voice in the apparatus of central government. Plainly, only stooges and sell-outs would collaborate in any such scheme.

The political representatives of capitalism in SA may have their differences but over one question all are united: the African majority shall not be allowed to bring to power through their votes in an undivided South Africa a government whose character corresponds to their numerical weight. This is the basis of all the "confederal", "federal" etc schemes of the ruling class.

This is not accidental nor the product merely of the vile prejudices among the whites.

Black working people who constitute the majority in South Africa demand majority rule in order to solve the problems of starvation wages, unemployment, housing, health, education, etc. Capitalism in South Africa, weak and crisis-ridden,

suffering acutely from the convulsions of a diseased world capitalist system, is utterly incapable of satisfying these demands.

The ruling class knows full well that, were a government elected democratically, the demands placed on it by mass pressure would present an irreconcilable challenge to the profit system itself. Capitalism is the enemy of democracy in SA. To achieve majority rule in an undivided SA, it is necessary to break the power of the capitalist class.

In a vain attempt to conceal the anti-democratic character of the present initiatives from the masses, the ruling class is fuelling speculation about negotiations with the ANC and the release of Mandela. In this way they hope to present their present proposals as part of an "evolutionary process" of "power-sharing" that will culminate in a peaceful settlement with the ANC.

Were a peaceful negotiated solution of the democratic question possible, every worker would welcome it. But, behind every new constitutional scheme, the real power of the ruling class rests ultimately on its state machine—i.e. in essence armed bodies of men making up the army and the police, aided by the judiciary and the bureaucracy of the public service. This same state defends, and must defend, white domination also. In South Africa capitalist power and white domination are bound together in the state.

There is no route to democracy, therefore, except through disarming and dismantling this state—and replacing it by a democratic workers' state. Only a revolution can achieve this.

There can be no sharing of state power—no "power-sharing"—between two classes whose interests are irreconcilably opposed to each other. There can be no democratic sharing of power among the people of South Africa irrespective of race

on the basis of genuine equality unless state power is in the hands of the working class.

In their attempts to promote the utopia of peaceful settlement, the capitalist press in South Africa has published reports by journalists giving their version of informal discussions held with ANC leaders, and suggesting a measure of "common ground".

It is a vital task of the leadership to clear up the confusion which could be created by these reports.

The leadership must make clear that the ANC will accept nothing less than majority rule in an undivided South Africa, and rejects all schemes (such as "federalism") for frustrating

this aim.

The only basis for a peaceful settlement by negotiation in South Africa would be for the state to lay down its arms and surrender power without a fight. It is the implacable hostility of the whole South African ruling class to democracy, enforced through its ruthless state machine, which rules out the possibility of a peaceful negotiated settlement.

The ANC must make clear that it is only the conscious movement of the working class, leading all the oppressed, which can develop the strength to take on and defeat this state, and establish in its place genuine democracy on the basis of workers' power.

It must make clear that all the

energies of the masses need to be devoted to building this movement, around a programme for democracy and socialism. This will not only be the most powerful rallying point for all the oppressed, but the only way to split the whites, and to prepare the ground for a mass armed insurrection which will defeat apartheid and capitalism.

The basis for this movement is already arising in the explosion of class consciousness among the workers and youth in the recent struggles, and in the enormous thirst that exists for the ideas of Marxism. By building on this the way can be prepared for victory.

Na lipuisano li ka tlisa Puso Ea Bongata?

Selemo ha se so fele ho fanoe ka Lengolo la Motheo ho makhooa, le sireletsang menyetla ea ona ea lipolotiki, ka ho lumella batho ba 'mala le ma-Inliea ho kena Parlamenteng; feela le khetholla bongata ba ma-Afrika ka ho se a fe matla a ho vouta. Joale, qalehong ea tema ea pele tšebetsong ea Parleme e ncha, P.W. Botha o tlameha ho lumela ho re litokela tsa lipolotiki tsa ma-Afrika li ke ke tsa qobuo.

Lengolo la Motheo le lecha le fololitse. Hobane tšisinyeho e kholo e entsoeng ke lihlopha tsohle tsa batho ba batšo ba basebetsi e bontsitse ho re lipolotiki ho feta le mafapheng a mesebetsi li matlafalitse tšisinyeho ena.

Boikemisetso ka lengolo lena, e ne e le ho arola batho ba 'mala le ma-Inliea ho ma-Afrika; ho na le ho etsa joalo le bakile tšisinyeho e kopanyang batho ba 'mala, ma-Inliea hammoho le basebetsi ba ma-Afrika le bacha. Bakeng sa ho qoba puso ea bongata le chorisitse cheseho ea puso e ananeloang ke bongata, le matlafalitse boitseko ba ma-Afrika le batho bohle ba hateletsoeng, ho loanela litokela tsa puso e sa

khetholleng.

Ho talimana le moruo o tebetebeng ea tsietsi; o futuhetsoeng ke basebetsi ba batšo; bofetoheli ka hara metse; bofetoheli ba bacha; ka ho fetisisa, ho talimana le lipolotiki tse kukutullang literaeke tse etoang pele ke basebetsi ba nang le makholla—tsena tsohle li supa ho re linoamali li tlameha ho ela hloko ho re Lengolo la Motheo ha le na matla.

Puo ea Botha khoeling ea pele selemong ha e le matsatsi a 25, ea na ea amoheloa ka litlatse ho thoe e tlisa "liphetoho", tsa bohlokoa tse kholo tšebetsong ea hae. E entsoe ke 'Muso ho bontša ho sutha ha ona boemong ba khale e itšetlehile ka lipuisano le African National Congress (ea sechaba) mabapi le ho lopolla Nelson Mandela.

Empa seo Botha a faneng ka sona puong ea hae se tšoana le mecha ea khale e hananang le puso e ananeloang ke bongata.

Le hoja 'Muso o amohela ho re toro ea Verwoerd e mo bontšitseng "Afrika Boroa e leng ea Makhooa feela", e se nang ma-Afrika, e le ntho e ke keng ea etsahala, o tsitleletse ka ho phephetha kopo e hatellang ho re

motho ka mong a be le voutu e le 'ngoe, Afrika Boroa e sa arohanngoang.

O leka ho thea lebatama le ka amohelhang mahlong a makhooa, ho re ma-Afrika a tla amoheloa bobusing ba Afrika Boroa ea kamuso. Empa ke ma-Afrika a feng?

Ha se a bongata.

'Muso o batla mokhoa o arolang bongata ba khokana phiri ea ma-Afrika ka ho arohanya metse litoropong ea ma-Afrika a tsitsitseng ka khaho e le ba molaong ka bojaki—le a bajaki ba sa tsitsang ka molao; esitana le hona ho arola ma-Afrika a tsoang maha-boona ka thoko ho a mang feela a litoropong. Ho bonahalang ke ho re makumane a tjena, a bonyenyaneeng ka palo, a tla fuoa litokela tse amanang le boitaoli ba makumane a joalo feela, e seng boipuso—empa a e na le monyetlana oa lentsoe khubung ea 'Muso; ke manyeka thipa le barekisi feela ba ka lumelang mokhoa o tjena oa puso.

Baemeli ba linoamali lipolotiking tsa Afrika Boroa ba ka 'na ba bapana mahareng a bona, empa ntlheng e le 'ngoe kaofela ba kopana: e leng ho re bongata ba ma-Afrika bo feke-etsang, bo ke ke ba lumelloa ho nka matla ka livoutu Afrika e Boroa e sa tsekolloang, pusong e lumellanang le boima ba bongata ba bona. Hona ke motheo oa mokhoa le mecha e sebelisoang ke fapha la babusi ho aha likhatampinyana tsa litsiketsi tse ka kopaneloang ka lilekane tsa litsiba

feela.

Hona ha se kotsi feela kapa kotulo ea bokhopo le khethollo e hlalisoang ke makhooa.

Basebetsi ba batšo hao e leng bona bongata ba matšoele Afrika Boroa, ba tseka ho busa ka puso ea bongate ho re ba felise mathata a ho phela ka meputso e bolaisang tlala, ho felisa ho se be le mesebetsi, matlo, bophelo bo botle, thuto, joalo joalo. Bonoamali Afrika Boroa, bo tebetebeng ea litsietsi tse bakoang ke khanyapetso. Bo hleketsoa ke li-qakabetsi tsa boleng ba bonoamali, Ho hang bo ke ke ba khotsofatsa takatso tsa basebetsi.

Babusi ba tseba ka ho phethahala ho re hoja 'Muso oa bongata o no o ka khethoa ntle le khethollo ea 'mala, litakatso tse hlakang ho matšoele li ka imela linoamali, tsa li hlolisla ho etsa liphaello khoebong. Bonoamali Afrika e Boroa ke sera sa puso ea bongata e se nang khethollo. Ho fihlella puso ea bongata Afrika Boroa e sa arohanngoang, ho hloka hlahla ho pshatlua ha fapha la linoamali.

Ba lefapha la puso ba lekile ka bohohle ho pata bonokoane ba ho sitisa puso ea bongata. Nakong ea ha monyengetsi oa lipuisano tsa bona le African National Congress li rarolla mehoasa e amanang le ho re Nelson Mandela a ka lopolloa. Taba ena e kukutollotse mehoasahali ea tse etsahalang ka lenyele. Ho pata ha ho ba thuse letho. Ka mokhoa ona ba tšepa ho re seo ba lekang ho fana ka sona se tla ba atlehisa ho liehisa puso ea bongata, e tla qetella e le tumellano

ea bona ea ho arolelana boipuso le African National Congress.

Ha e ne e ba lipuisano tsa khotso e ka felisang mathata a ho thea 'Muso oa bongata li ne li ka etsahala, mosebetsi e mong le e mong o ne a ka li amohela. Empa, ka sekhukhu lengolo le fe kapa le fe le lecha la Motheo, le na le methathi e baballang matla a ba seng ba le pusong; ke ho re, litsiea tsa 'Muso: sesole, sepolesa, le litsiea tsa makhotla a molao le bo 'mampoli ba puso. 'Muso o tjena o sireletsa 'me o tlameha ho baballa bompoli ba makhooa. Afrika e Boroa matla a khanyapetso a matakane le bompoli ba makhooa hammoho le litsiea tsa puso.

Ha ho na tsela ka lebaka lena, ntle le ho heletsisa 'Muso ona—re o amohe le libetsa. Ke ntoea ea bofetoheli feela e ka fihlellang qeto ena.

Ha re lumele karolelano ea matla a puso—kapa ho arolelana matla—mahareng a mafapha a mabeli, ke ho re: a bahanyapetsi le bahanyapetsuo a leng mafapha a hotolelaneng mahlo, ha ho na kutloano. Ha ho na karolelano ea matla mahareng a lichaba tsa Afrika Boroa ntle le ho re matla a puso a be matsohong a basebetsi.

Makhobonhithi a linoamali ho aha khotso e therekelang Afrika Boroa a bonahala ka ho phatlalatsoa likuranteng, ba bontša ho ikemisetsa ho kena lipuisanong le African National Congress—ba boka kutloano.

Baetapele ba tlameha ho hlakisa ho re litlaleho tsa likuranta li fupile eng, ho felisa pherekanyo e bakoang ke

likuranta.

Boetapele bo tlameha ho hlalosa ho re ANC e ke ke ea lumela letho le sa lekaneng le boipuso ba bongata, Afrika Boroa e sa arohanngoang. Le ho re bo hanana le ho tsekolla naha litsibana kapa ho aha boipuso bo lekang ho kopanya tsibana tsena, bo qhale makhobonhithi ana.

Tsela e 'ngoe feela ea ho phethelana ka khotso ka lipuisano Afrika e Boroa, ke ho re 'Muso o khaohane le libetsa o nehelane ka tsona o sa loane. Khalefo ea 'Muso e ke keng ea rithibanngoa ke eona e sitisang puso ea bongata. O buso ka lere la tšepe, e leng boemo bo sitisang lipuisano.

African National Congress e tlameha ho hlakisa ho re ke basebetsi feela ka kutoisiso ea ho eta pele batho bohle ba hateletsoeng, ba entse makhotla a bona a basebetsi selelekela seo ka sona ba ka ahang matla a ka hlolang 'Muso, 'me ba thea 'Muso oa bongata o busang ka matla a basebetsi.

E tsoanetse e hlalose ho re matla a matšoele a tsoanetse ho bokellana ho aha makhotla ana ho ntsetsa pele lethathamo la puso ea boja 'mojo. Ntla ena ho feta ho kopanya matšoele ka matla a ona, e tla be e arole makhooa e ahe bofetoheli bo nkang lihlomo, e be e felise khethollo lichabeng e fenethe bohanyapetsi.

Motheo oa tšusumetso ena o so o qalelletse ka ho babunyeha ha lefapha la basebetsi le bacha meferereng ea matsatsi a sa tsoa feta, le ho nyoreloa ha bona ho tseba lithuto tsa Karl 'Makeke. Ha re ikhaha ka mokhoa ona re tla hlola.

Ingaba ukuthetha-thethana kuza kuzisa inkululeko na?

Kwisithutyana nje sonyaka ophelileyo imigaqo yomthetho omtsha, kunye "neepalamente" zayo zamakhaladi nama-Indiya, ibelwe phambi kwabelungu ngenjongo yokomeleza amalungelo abo ombuso, ngokushiya amAfrika ngaphandle kwevoti ngokucacileyo. Ngoku nje, kweyo kuqala kanye in-

tlanganiso "yezipalamente" ezintsha, uP.W. Botha uye wanyanzeleka ukuba avume ukuthi inkinga yamalungelo obupolitika amAfrika ayinako ukuphepheka.

Umthetho omtsha uphunzile. Intshukumo enobuqaqawuli yamaqela onke abantu abantsundu abasebenzayo—ngakumbi kwidabi

lobupolitika kunela semashishinini—ithe yawuphunzisa.

Lo mthetho onjongo zokwahlulahlula amakhaladi nama-Indiya ema Afrikeni, uthe endaweni yoko walungiselela isenzo sokulwela umanyano phakathi kwabasebenzi nolutsha lamakhaladi, lama-Indiya nolamAfrika. Endaweni yokuphepha

inkinga yombuso womndilili, uthe wagxininisa lenkinga, waqinisa umzabalazo wamalungelo amAfrika nawabantu bonke abacinezweyo.

Ejongene nengxaki zendyebonyesizwe; nomngeni oqinayo wabasebenzi; abantsundu; novukelo labantu nolutsha; ejongene, ngaphezu koko, nengomso lokuqina komzabalazo wobupolitika ukhokelwe ngabasebenzi—onke amaqela oongxowankulu aza kuqonda ukuba lomthetho umtsha ulikhoba.

Intetho kaBotha ngoJanywari 25 ibabazwe nje ngenyona “yenguqulo” ebomini bakhe. Le ntetho, ngaphezu koko, yenziwe phantsi kokushenxa okucacileyo ngurhulumente kwimo yokuthetha-thethana neANC nokukhululwa kuka Nelson Mandela.

Kodwa izindlululo zentetho kaBotha zihambisana namayelenqe angaphambili enjongo enye: yokuthintela umbuso womndilili.

Ngelixa urhulumente evuma ukuba iphupha lika Verwoerd “le South Africa yabelungu” enganabantu abantsundu lingamampunge, ubeka futhi isindululo secebo lokuchitha ibango levoti-enye-ngumntu-omnye kwiSouth Africa enye.

Uthemba futhi ukwenza isimo sengcamango ezokwamkeleka ebalungwini yokuba amAfrika nawo aqukaniswe ekulawuleni iSouth Africa. Ngawaphi la mAfrika?

Asingomndilili.

Urhulumente ufuna icebo lokuhlekehlekeza amAfrika angumndilili ngokwahlula ahlala “ngokomthetho” ezidolophini kwahlala ezidolophini “ngokungekho mthethweni”, nakuba ntakwabo abahlala “emakhaya” emaphandleni. Ngengcamango, amAfrika AMANCINCI ka njalo anganikwa amalungelo okulawula okubizwa “imicimbi yabo” kunye nelizwe ezikweni likarhulumente wombindi. Ngokucacileyo, ngabangcatshi, naba thengisi abangavuma ukuhambisana neyelenqe elinje.

Abameleli bombuso wobungxowankulu eSouth Africa banganako ukungevisisani, kodwa bamanyene ngento enye: ukuba amAfrika ngobuninzi bawo angavunyelwa ukungenisa emagunyeni ombuso ngevoti yawo kwiSouth Africa enye urhulumente osimo salatha ubunyahiso bobuninzi bawo. Esi sisiseko

sawo onke amayelenqe oongxowankulu “ekhonifedelesi” nawe “fedelesi”.

Oku akunge ngangozi okanye ukungcola ngxam’ngwebe ebalungwini.

Abasebenzi abantsundu ekungabo abangumndilili omkhulu eSouth Africa bafuna umbuso olawulwa ngobuninzi babo khona ukuze bacombulule iingxaki zemirholo, zendlala, zokungabikho komsebenzi, zamakhaya, zempilo, zemfundo, njalo njalo. Ubungxowankulu eSouth Africa, obubuthakathaka, bubanjwe zingxaki, obugula sisifo sokuwa sobungxowankulu emhlabeni wonke, abunako ukwanelisa ezimfuneko.

Oongxowankulu bayazi kakuhle ukuba xa urhulumente engonyulwa ngokomasilingane womndilili, iimfuneko eziza kubekwa phezu kwakhe yimfumba yabantu ziya kudala umngeni kwisimo sepolofithi ngokwaso. Ubungxowankulu eSouth Africa bulutshaba lombuso womndilili womasilingane. Ukufumana inkululeko phantsi kombuso womndilili womasilingane kwiSouth Africa engahlekehlekezwanga, kuya nyanzela ukuba kwaphulwe amagunya oongxowankulu.

Ngelinge elingenamsebenzi lamanyathelo aqalisiweyo ngoku nje okufihla ebantwini isimo sobungxowankulu esichasene nombuso womndilili womasilingane, oongxowankulu baphephezela ingcamango yokuthetha-thethana neANC nokukhululwa kuka Mandela. Ngale ndlela bafuna ukubeka izindululo zabo nje ngenxenyane “yenkqubo yenguqulo” neyo “kuphathisana emagunyeni” eza kuphelela esivumelwaneni ngoxolo neANC.

Ukuba ngaba inkinga yombuso womndilili womasilingane ibinokucanjululwa ngokuthetha-thetha ngoxolo, umsebenzi ngamnye ube zakuyamkela. Kodwa, ngaphaya kweyelenqe ngalinye lomthetho omtsha amagunya ngenene oongxowankulu aqamelele phezu kwesigqeba selizwe sabo—oko kukuthi, umongo waso ngumkhosi oxhobileyo wamajoni namapolisa encediswa zinkundla zemithetho nomaqhuzu bakarhulumente. Esiqigqeba selizwe sona kanya sikhusele, kunyanzelekile sikhusele, futhi umbuso wabelungu. ESouth Africa amagunya oongxowa-

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nkulu abotshelelwe kunye nombuso wabelungu esigqebeni selizwe.

Ayikho indlela eya kumbuso womndilili kamasilingane, ngoko ke, ngaphandle kokoyisa nokuphahlaza isigqeba selizwe songxowankulu—endaweni yaso kwakhiwe isigqeba selizwe sabasebenzi somndilili womasilingane. Yintshukumo yenguqulo kuphela engenza kufumaneka oku.

Akungeke kubekho ukwahlulelana ngamagunya esigqeba selizwe—akukho ukwahlulelana ngamagunya okulawula—phakathi kwendidi zabantu ezinemidla echaseneyo. Akungeke kubekho ukohlulelana ngamagunya ombuso womndilili womasilingane phakathi kwabantu base South Africa, ubuhlanga bucala, phezu kwesiseko sokulingana ngenene, de kube igunya lesigqeba selizwe lisezandleni zabasebenzi.

Emalingeni awo okukhuthaza intsomi yemvumelwano ngoxolo, amaphephandaba oongxowankulu eSouth Africa apapashe iingxelo zamajenalisi enika okwawo ukuqonda ngengxoxo ebeziphethwe neenkohlakali zeANC, ephakamisa “ukuqondana”.

Ngumsebenzi kanobomi weenkohlakali ukucacisa le mbidaniso edalwe zezingxelo.

Inkohlakali ma ziyibeke icace into yokuba iANC aynakwamkela nto engaphantsi kombuso womndilili kwiSouth Africa enye, ma zikhake futhi onke amayelenqe (anje ngawo “bufedelesi”) athintela le njongo.

Isiseko ekukuphela kwaso sentlalo yoxolo ekungathetha-thethwana ngaso eSouth Africa siya kuba kukuba isigqeba selizwe songxowankulu sibeke phantsi izixhobo sinikele amagunya ombuso ngaphandle kokulwa. Bubutshaba bongxowankulu bonke eSouth Africa obuchasene nombuso womndilili womasilingane, obunyanzelwa ngesigqeba selizwe esingenanceba, obenza kungabikho ndlela ekungathetha-

thethwana ngayo ngoxolo.

IANC ma iyicacise into yokuba yintshukumo ngokuqonda yabasebenzi kuphela, ikhokele bonke abantu abacinezweyo, engenza kukhule ukomelela okuza kuthathana koyise isigqeba selizwe songxowankulu, yakhe endaweni yaso umbuso wenene womndilili womasingane phezu kwegunya lombuso wabasebenzi.

Ma kucace mhlophe ukuba onke amandla abasebenzi kufuneka alahlelwe ekwakheni lentshukumo, phezu kwenqubo yombuso womndilili kamasilingane nesoshiyalizim. Le ngongoma ayizuba nje kuphela ibenamandla okuhlenganisa bonke abacinezweyo, kodwa futhi yiyona ndlela ekukuphela kwayo yokucazulula abelungu, ilungiselele umhlaba wokwakha uvukelo ngeziphanga le-

mfumba yabasebenzi, oluza koyisa umbuso webala nobungxowankulu.

Isiseko sale ntshukumo sele siphakamile ekudubuleni kokuqonda ngobudidi phakathi kwabasebenzi nolutsha kwimizabalazo yakutsha nje, nasekunxanelweni okukhulu okukhoyo iingcamango zeMakisizim. Ngokwakha phezu koku, indlela yempumelelo iza kulungiseleleka.

Kan onderhandelinge meerderheidsregering bring?

Skaars 'n jaar gelede is die nuwe grondwet, met sy kleurling- en Indiër-“parlemente”, aan die blankes voorgelê as 'n manier om hulle politieke voorregte te beveilig, deur definitief die swart meerderheid van stemreg uit te sluit. Nou, in die allereerste sessie van die nuwe “parlemente”, word P.W. Botha gedwing om te erken dat die kwessie van die politieke regte van die swart bevolking nie ontvlug kan word nie.

Die nuwe grondwet is doodgebore. Die manjifieke beweging van alle dele van die swart werkende bevolking—op die politieke vlak selfs nog meer as op die industriële vlak—het dit verseker.

Die nuwe grondwet, wat bedoel was om die kleurling- en Indiërbevolking van die swart bevolking te verdeel, het in plaas daarvan 'n brandpunt vir eenheid in aksie tussen die kleurling-, Indiese en swart werkers en jeug verskaf. In plaas van die kwessie van meerderheidsregering te vermy, het dit juis die vraagstuk benadruk, en die stryd van die swart bevolking en alle onderdrukte groepe om demokratiese regte verskerp.

Gekonfronteer met 'n verergerende ekonomiese krisis; met die toenemende uitdaging van die swart werkers; met die opstand in die gemeenskappe en onder die jeug; gekonfronteer veral met die toekomstbeeld van groeiende politieke stakingsaksie onder annvoering van die georganiseerde werkers—moet alle gelede van die kapitalisteklas

nou insien dat die nuwe grondwet impotent is.

Botha se toespraak van 25 Januarie is begroet as die mees “reformistiese” toespraak van sy loopbaan. Bowendien het dit plaasgevind teen die agtergrond van 'n skynbare verskuiwing in die regering se standpunt oor die kwessie van onderhandelinge met die ANC en die vrylating van Nelson Mandela.

Die voorstelle in Botha se toespraak het egter één doel, in gemeen met alle voorafgaande planne: om meerderheidsregering te voorkom.

Terwyl die regering offisiel toegee dat Verwoerd se droom van 'n “blanke Suid-Afrika” sonder 'n swart bevolking onmoontlik is, stel dit weereens 'n ander plan voor om die eis om een-persoon-een-stem in 'n onverdeelde Suid-Afrika af te weer.

Boonop hoop die regering om 'n klimaat van aanvaarbaarheid onder die blankes te skep vir die idee dat swartmense in die toekomstige bestuur van Suid-Afrika ingesluit sal moet word. Maar watter swartmense?

Nie die meerderheid nie.

Die regering soek 'n formule om die swart meerderheid te versnipper—deur “wettige” stedelike Afrikane van die “onwettiges” te verdeel, en deur die wat as “permanent”, van die wat as “tydelik” beskou word, sowel as van hulle

mede-Afrikane in die “tuislande” te verdeel.

Dis denkbaar dat so 'n tipe swart MINDERHEID dan regte om hul sogenaamde “eie aangeleenthede” te behartig toegestaan sou kan word, met een of ander inspraak in die apparaat van die sentrale regering. Dis duidelik dat net handlangers van die regering en verraaiers saam sal werk in enige plan van dié soort.

Die politieke verteenwoordigers van kapitalisme in Suid-Afrika het onderlinge verskille, maar op een punt staan hulle saam: die swart meerderheid sal nie toegelaat word om deur hul stemme 'n regering in 'n onverdeelde Suid-Afrika aan die mag te bring wat ooreenstem met hulle getalsterkte nie. Dit is die grondslag van al die “konfederale”, “federale” e.d.m. planne van die heersende klas.

Dit is nie toevallig nie, en dis ook nie alleenlik die gevolg van van die veragtelike vooroordele onder die blankes nie.

Swart werkende mense, wat die meerderheid in Suid-Afrika vorm, eis meerderheidsregering om die probleme van hongersnood, werkloosheid, huisvesting, gesondheid, opvoeding ens. op te los. Kapitalisme in Suid-Afrika, swak en deur krisis geteister, ly in hewige mate onder die stuiptrakkings van 'n versiekte kapitalistiese wêreldsisteem, en is absoluut nie in staat om hierdie eise te bevredig nie.

Die heersende klas weet baie goed dat, as daar 'n regering demokraties

verkies sou word, die druk van die massa eise daarop sou plaas wat 'n onversoenlike uitdaging vir die winssisteem self sou beteken. Kapitalisme is die vyaand van demokrasie in Suid-Afrika. Om meerderheidsregering in 'n onverdeelde Suid-Afrika te behaal, is dit nodig om die mag van die kapitalisteklas te breek.

In 'n vergeefse poging om die anti-demokratiese aard van die huidige inisiatiewe van die massa weg te steek, moedig die heersende klas bespiegeling oor onderhandelinge met die ANC en die vrylating van Mandela aan. Op so 'n manier hoop hulle om hul voorstelle te laat voorkom as deel van 'n "ontwikkelingsproses" van "magsdeling" wat sal uitloop op 'n vreedsame ooreenkoms met die ANC.

As 'n vreedsame oplossing van die demokratiese vraagstuk deur onderhandeling bereik kon word, sou elke werker dit verwelkom. Maar, agter elke nuwe grontwetlike plan, berus die werklike mag van die heersende klas uiteindelik op sy staatsmasjiën—d.w.s., in wese, gewapende liggame wat die weermag en die polisie vorm, bygestaan deur die regterlike mag en die burokrasie van die staatsdiens. Dieselfde staat verdedig ook blanke oorheersing, en moet dit verdedig. In Suid-Afrika is kapitalistiese mag en blanke heerskappy saamgebind in die staat.

Daar is dus geen manier om demokrasie te bereik nie, behalwe deur hierdie staat te ontwapen en dit

af te breek—en te vervang deur 'n demokratiese werkersstaat. Slegs 'n revolusie kan dit moontlik maak.

Daar kan géén verdeling van staatsmag—geen "magsdeling"—plaasvind tussen twee klasse wie se belange onversoenlik teenoorgesteld is nie. Daar kan geen demokratiese verdeling van die mag onder die bevolking van Suid-Afrika ongeag ras, op basis van werklike gelykheid, plaasvind tensy staatsmag in die hande van die werkende klas is nie.

In hul pogings om die utopie van vreedsame skikking aan te moedig, het die kapitalistiese pers in Suid-Afrika verslae gepubliseer deur joernaliste wat hul eie vertolkings van informele samesprekings met ANC-leiers gee, en die indruk wek dat daar 'n mate van "gemeenskaplike grond" bestaan.

Dis 'n noodsaaklike taak van die leiding om die verrigting wat hierdie verslae kan skep, op te helder.

Die leiding moet duidelik maak dat die ANC niks minder as meerderheidsregering in 'n onverdeelde Suid-Afrika sal aanvaar nie, en alle planne om hierdie doel te verydel (bv "federalisme") verwerp.

Die enigste basis vir 'n vreedsame skikking deur middel van onderhandeling in Suid-Afrika sou wees dat die staat sy wapens neerlê en sonder weerstand die mag oorgee. Dis die onwrikbare afwysing van die hele Suid-Afrikaanse heersende klas van demokrasie, afgedwing deur sy meedoënlose staatsmasjiën, wat die moontlikheid van 'n vreedsame skik-

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king deur middel van onderhandeling uitsluit.

Die ANC moet duidelik maak dat slegs die bewuste beweging van die werkersklas, aan die hoof van al die onderdrukte mense, die krag kan ontwikkel om hierdie staat aan te pak en te verslaan, en in sy plek regte demokrasie op basis van werkersmag te vestig.

Dit moet duidelik maak dat al die energie van die massa daaraan gewy moet word om hierdie beweging op te bou, rondom 'n program vir demokrasie en sosialisme. Dit sal nie alleen die kragtigste saamtrekpunt vir die hele onderdrukte bevolking wees nie, maar ook die enigste manier om die blankes te verdeel, en die weg voor te berei vir 'n gewapende massa-opstand wat apartheid en kapitalisme sal verslaan.

Die basis vir hierdie beweging ontstaan reeds in die uitbarsting van klassebewussyn onder die werkers en jeug in die stryd van afgelope maande, en in die geweldige begeerte vir die ideë van die Marxisme wat daar bestaan. Deur hierop te bou, kan die weg na oorwinning voorberei word.

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Zimbabwe

DETAINED

S. Nyamhunga—President of General Engineering and Metal Workers' Union, chairman of L.H. Marthinusen workers' committee;

M. Mashayamombe—Chairman of Kwekwe regional executive of GEMWU, former vice-chairman Lancashire Steel workers' committee, local ZANU(PF) leader, arrested under the Smith regime in 1971 for leading ZANU opposition to the Pearce Commission;

Mrs E. Mashayomombe—District Committee member, Kwekwe, ZANU(PF) Women's League;

Rabi Down—activist in the Workers' Campaign for a Democratic GEMWU;

Nicholas Mlauzi—member of Harare Municipal Workers' Union;

James Kachisi—executive member, Harare region of the engineering union, secretary of Tandem Engineering workers' committee;

Patrick Musona—ZANU local leader in Kwekwe;

John Mahara—secretary of Kwekwe regional executive of GEMWU, Birch and Molloy workers' committee office bearer;

Brothers Chikwekwete; A. Tagwirayi; and Makusha in Kwekwe;

David Hemson—teacher, former banned SA trade unionist, a founder of SALEP (a project conducting socialist education in the Southern African workers' movement), British Labour Party member;

Darcy du Toit—teacher, refugee from South Africa, co-worker of Southern African Labour Education Project, British Labour Party member;

Anneke Poppe—teacher, Dutch citizen, co-worker of SALEP, Dutch and British Labour Party member.

'Socialist' Mugabe detains fourteen socialists

On 1 March this year, fourteen trade unionists, socialists and ZANU(PF) members were detained without charges in Harare and Kwekwe. They were held by the CIO (Central Intelligence Organisation) under 'emergency powers' taken over from the white minority Smith regime.

Among those detained were the President and other leaders of the General, Engineering and Metal Workers Union, a number of local ZANU(PF) leaders, and co-workers of the Southern African Labour Education Project. (See box)

Some were severely beaten in detention, and at least one of them subjected to electric shock torture.

Their 'crime', in the eyes of Mugabe's ZANU(PF) government, was that they were campaigning for democratic trade unions and organising socialist workers' education. All supported the socialist aims on which the ZANU(PF) government was elected to office by the masses at independence in 1980.

Condemned

These detentions were widely condemned at all levels of the labour movement internationally. In a letter typical of the protest, a British National Union of Public Employees branch wrote to the Zimbabwean High Commission: "Your government came to power on a 'socialist' ticket. What sort of socialists are you to imprison trade unionists?"

As a result of the flood of protests all the Zimbabweans were released within two weeks. The two women detainees, Anneke Poppe and Ernesi Mashayamombe (both of whose children had been placed in a children's home by the CIO), were

released after a week.

David Hemson and Darcy du Toit, both refugees from the SA apartheid regime, were held for seven weeks, and then deported with their families.

For 26 days the Zimbabwe government was silent over the detentions. Then, in London, Minister of Information Shamuyarira issued a "justification" riddled with distortion, falsification, and contradictions. (See box, page 10.)

Again, on May Day—international workers' day—Prime Minister Mugabe repeated these shameless 'excuses' for his government's action to an audience of 30 000 workers in Rufaro Stadium, Harare.

Among the "offences" of the detained comrades, according to the Zimbabwe government, was their belief in a workers' "utopia"!

What lies behind these actions? Why is Mugabe's ZANU(PF) government moving so viciously against workers within its own ranks, and against trade unionists campaigning to democratise their unions?

In fact the detentions are just one part of an ominous, spreading pattern of repressive actions by the regime—against workers fighting for better conditions; against landless peasants struggling for land; against political opposition among the Ndebele national minority.

The regime has unleashed political thuggery and military violence

By L. Reed



Five of the detained: from left to right, James Kachisi, M. Mashayamombe, Nicholas Mlauzi, Rabi Down and S. Nyamhunga

against the Ndebele masses, pointing at the need to counter the terrorism of armed 'dissidents'.

All the opposition parties—except Ian Smith's 'Conservative Alliance of Zimbabwe' (formerly the Rhodesian Front)—face systematic intimidation by pro-ZANU gangs. Hundreds of their members have been arrested and tortured by the police and CIO.

Now the repression is being turned against ZANU members also.

These moves towards police dictatorship are the real meaning of the official policy of setting up a 'one-party state'—a regime that will give the ZANU(PF) leaders unbridled power, at least in theory.

Compromise

All these developments can only be explained in the light of the basic policies of the ZANU(PF) leadership. **Their increasingly repressive actions are the inevitable result of their policy of compromise with the capitalist class—a policy that has turned this 'socialist' government into the policeman of the decrepit capitalist system in Zimbabwe.**

The independence of Zimbabwe, a historic victory, fuelled the expectations of the masses. It was greeted with huge enthusiasm by the oppressed throughout Southern Africa and the labour movement internationally.

30 000 lives had been sacrificed in the liberation war, which the masses hoped would bring to power a government able to solve the problems of land, jobs, housing and hunger.

Tragically, this hope was to prove false.

ZANU(PF) was voted to power on a programme promising many vital reforms. But the leaders of all the nationalist parties, including ZANU(PF), had agreed with representatives of imperialism at Lancaster House in 1979 that, in an independent Zimbabwe, the capitalist system would be guaranteed.

This has left the ZANU(PF) government responsible for imposing a neo-colonial profit system in all its harshness on the workers and peasants of Zimbabwe. It left the government unable to carry out most of its election promises.

In the short economic boom following the lifting of sanctions the government was able to grant some temporary reforms to working people, such as a legal minimum wage and improvements in health care and education.

In education, for example, the number of youth at school increased from 800 000 in 1980 to 2,5 million by 1985. Secondary school enrolment rose from 72 000 to 420 000. Nearly 1 000 new secondary schools have been built in the last 5 years.

However, the government has been unable to sustain these reforms. Increasingly, since independence, it has bowed under the pressure of the capitalist class, and of capitalism in increasing crisis within Zimbabwe and world-wide.

Thousands of workers have been dismissed in the last two years in key industries, eg. engineering, mining and textiles. "The jobs are very few now," said one worker. "It will not get better."

Nearly one million workers are unemployed and every year 80 000 new work seekers enter the job market, with very little prospect of getting a job.

Since 1980 the cost of living for urban workers has doubled. Prices are currently rising, officially, at 17% a year. Basic goods such as cooking oil are often in short supply and price increases for basic foods are running at 20% a year.

Real wages fallen

But wage increases have not kept pace: real wages have fallen over the last two years.

One quarter of a million children are officially described as malnourished, and more and more children between 8-11 years scavenge in the streets.

House-building programmes have almost come to a standstill. The majority of workers do not have their own homes, and tiny houses are crammed with lodgers.

Since independence thousands have moved into the urban areas hoping for jobs, or have been forced off the land by drought. Many have no option but to become "squatters", in self-erected dwellings.

The government has a simple policy to deal with these squatters called, officially, the "bulldozer policy". As in South Africa, thousands of shacks have been smashed on the orders of the authorities. Local Government and Town Planning Minister, Enos Chikowore, as a result has gained the

Zimbabwe Trade Unionists Defence Campaign: Press statement 27/3/1985

After 26 days of silence over the detention of 14 trade unionists, ZANU(PF) members, and socialists in Zimbabwe, the Minister of Information has issued a "justification" of the government's actions which is factually false and absurd.

The claim that those detained were organising workers for "a generalised insurrection against the government and state of Zimbabwe" is completely without foundation.

Their sole activity has been to assist in the organisation of workers in the unions and the factory committees, and to promote socialist workers education.

All believe that the implementation of real socialist policies will be the only way to preserve the unity of the country, defend the gains of the independence struggle, solve the problems facing working people, and put an end to the economic blackmail waged against Zimbabwe by South African and Western imperialism.

For this purpose, they have argued that the organised workers should assert conscious leadership within the ruling ZANU(PF) party to carry out the socialist promises on which the ZANU government was elected and which the mass of workers and peasants still look to the Mugabe government to carry out.

To call this "a subversive role of destabilisation" is a shameless slander against socialists, designed to throw a smokescreen around the failure of the Zimbabwean government to honour its promises to the masses while carrying out instead a policy of compromise with capitalism.

Twelve of the fourteen detained have been released without any charges being preferred. The Zimbabwean government would not be able to produce a shred of credible evidence to support its claims—despite reports of the beating and torture of the comrades under interrogation.

The two who are still detained, and the others still being continually harassed and intimidated by the security police, are presently prevented from giving their own complete rebuttal of the Minister of Information's statement.

Will the Zimbabwean government permit them a press conference in Harare with full guarantees of no persecution as a result? What credibility can the Minister's statement have while the government continues to prevent its prisoners from answering!

The Minister should at least have taken the trouble to check his facts.

Fourteen, not "eight" persons have been detained.

The detentions and investigation have taken place not only in Harare but also in Kwekwe.

How can the Minister say that those arrested "have no direct contact with the party or the trade unions"? One is the President of the General Engineering and Metal Workers' Union. Three others serve on regional executives of the engineering union. Another is a member of the Harare Municipal Workers' Union. Several are office-bearers of officially recognised workers' committees.

A number of those detained are leading office bearers in ZANU(PF) in Kwekwe. One of these has been a ZANU member since he was 16, and was arrested in 1971 under the Smith white minority regime for leading opposition to the Pearce Commission. His wife, also detained, is a ZANU(PF) District Committee member, an elected leader of 10,000 ZANU members.

How could eleven Zimbabweans, the overwhelming majority of whom have never left the country, have been "sent to" Zimbabwe by anyone, as the Minister claims?

The three non-Zimbabweans are co-workers of the Southern African Labour Education Project, and members of the British Labour Party. Two are exiled from South Africa as the result of persecution by the apartheid regime, and one of these was banned for playing a key role in the organisation of non-racial unions among the black workers in Natal in

ironic nickname: "the Action Man."

Land is an urgent priority for the peasant masses, and was the central demand on which the war was fought. However, land for resettlement is only taken over from the capitalist farmers on a "willing buyer, willing seller" basis. So far, even according to official claims, no more than 35 000 families out of the 350 000 needing land have been resettled in the last five years.

At this rate it will take another 50 years for even the existing landless families to be resettled—let alone allowing for increase of population.

The capitalist press in South Africa and elsewhere has blamed the problems of Zimbabwe on the "socialism" and "Marxism" of the government. In reality these pro-

blems are the result of the government's failure to break with capitalism, which has inevitably driven it to the right, to a policy of counter-reforms rather than reforms.

Socialist?

Asked recently by white commercial farmers "Is the country socialist?", Prime Minister Mugabe replied:

"I honestly don't know. There are non-socialist modalities in the country which must be promoted and given incentive. The state must enable them to have funds to keep them going."

Government policies, the Prime

Minister continued, "are not meant to disrupt the economy"—and went on to draw the conclusion: "nationalisation would lead to that kind of disruption". (*Financial Gazette*, 1/2/85)

This revealing statement sums up the position of complete dependence on the capitalist class into which the government has manoeuvred itself—abjectly tamed, and actually encouraging capitalist development. Its promises of 'socialism' are becoming more and more cynical, intended to pacify the masses with false expectations.

In fact, with hardly a word even of protest, it has put the economy even more under the control of the international banks and their policeman, the International Monetary Fund.

the 1970s.

They gave wholehearted support to the liberation struggle against the white Rhodesian regime, always fighting against the international capitalist class and right-wing elements in the labour movement who gave underhand support to Smith and Muzorewa.

They have wholeheartedly supported the British mineworkers' strike, and every demand on the British labour leadership to back the strike by mobilising mass action.

The Minister of Information's attempt to smear these comrades with association with the Rhodesian regime or betrayal of the British miners' strike is the grossest slander.

The implication that they "want to install a neo-colonial coalition of reactionary tendencies in Zimbabwe" could not be further from the truth.

This claim is in any case completely contradicted by the Minister's allegation of a connection of these comrades with the "Militant Tendency of the Labour Party."

The attitude of those detained to the *Militant* newspaper in the British Labour Party is for them to say. But it is clear that they share the view that there is a need for the workers' organisations in all countries to be built and transformed in the struggle for the socialist transformation of society.

It is precisely because the Zimbabwean government has drawn back from the task that it finds it necessary to persecute socialists and invent the most incredible amalgam of falsehoods to hide its shame.

Faced with a budget deficit of Z\$691 million for 1984-85 the government has been forced to turn once again to the IMF whose conditions for loans entail continued cuts in public spending, wage freezes, etc.

Now a point has been reached where Finance Minister Chidzero can declare without fear of contradiction from his colleagues that there is "no real disagreement" between the government and the imperialist IMF! (*Africa News*, 25/3/85)

Inevitably, under these circumstances, the government is placing itself in increasingly open opposition to the aspirations of the workers and peasants.

Occasionally some of the most arrogant upstarts in the ruling elite will reveal their contempt for the work-

ing class quite unashamedly. In the government-controlled *Herald* (9/3/85), for example, an editorial scandalously put the blame for the nation's problems not on the capitalists squeezing the workers for profit, but on "workers who are lazy and generally lack a sense of direction". It adds: "they are the scum of the nation in a hurry to develop"!

These crudities reflect the government's approach to labour policy in coarse but accurate terms. Under pressure of the capitalists, the chief concern of the government is to provide employers with 'labour peace' and 'responsible' trade unionism.

Labour Bill

In 1982 the government published a draft Labour Bill which was finally enacted, after many 'improvements', in late 1984. This is a draconian measure which makes virtually all industrial action illegal and lays down vicious penalties for 'illegal' action.

Negotiated agreements can be overruled by the Minister of Labour. Under the Act, the Minister also has almost unlimited powers to interfere in and control trade unions, without regard for the members' wishes.

The situation now faced by trade unions in Zimbabwe is a vivid confirmation of the arguments put forward by Trotsky on the character of trade unionism in underdeveloped countries:

"The trade unions of our time can either serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism for the subordination and disciplining of workers and for obstructing the revolution, or, on the contrary, the trade unions can become the instruments of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat." (*Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialism*)

While the bosses and the government attack the living standards of the masses, the whites and the black middle class enrich themselves. Immediately after independence the whites feared the government's "socialist rhetoric"—but now they recognise that it is just talk.

Whites who fled to South Africa are now—as the crisis worsens there—even returning to Zimbabwe in increasing numbers.

At the same time they justify their own continued privilege by pointing

to the hypocrisy of the ZANU(PF) elite. As one white farmer said of the new state and party bureaucracy: "They're capitalist to a man. I mean all this 'every-comrade-will-have-his-little-plot'...500 acres by the way...and 'co-operate in the national interest' is just a laugh."

A 'Leadership Code' had to be adopted at the 1984 ZANU Congress as a gesture against the corruption and privilege rife at the top levels of the government and party.

Among examples which have surfaced, Minister of Transport Kangai was involved in a Z\$4 million misappropriation of maize intended for famine relief during the drought.

The former Zimbabwe High Commissioner in London used £104 000 of public money to buy himself a house there. Discovered, he was recalled—and given another official job with the same grade!

This reckless search for self-enrichment by many of the leaders is polarising opinion in the party and the country as a whole, as the eyes of workers and youth are increasingly opened to the need for genuine socialist policies.

Seeing the accelerating swing towards capitalism by their leaders, there is growing disappointment, frustration and bitterness among the masses. As one former guerrilla is reported to have said recently:

"We were the ones politicising people during the war, but what the peasants see happening is now different from what we told them. We told the people they would have land and many things, but the people still have nothing."

Mounting discontent

Inevitably, in time, the mounting discontent against harsh conditions will turn into anger against the government and its policies. **It is this factor—its fear of mass opposition in the future, and its greedy determination to cling to the spoils of office—that explains the increasingly dictatorial policies of the ZANU(PF) government.**

The harshness with which it has clamped down on even the beginnings of socialist criticism in the ranks of the ruling party is a measure of its uneasiness.

But, on the other hand, there are huge problems for the masses in



Mineworkers' housing in Zimbabwe. The Mineworkers Union says most of its 68 000 members live in "structures which could not be classified as housing"—many paying rents of up to Z\$54 a month.

organising to express their discontent. ZANU(PF) is controlled with increasing rigidity from the top. The trade unions, already little more than empty bureaucratic shells, are being brought under even tighter state control.

Despite the many important past struggles of Zimbabwean workers, the history of the trade union leadership is largely one of class-collaboration, contempt for the membership, and corruption.

Under the Smith regime, the majority of trade union leaders made no effort to struggle for improved conditions in the workplaces or for majority rule. For the most part they cooperated with the bosses against the workers, and supported Muzorewa or other political hangers-on of the old regime.

At independence in 1980 workers enthusiastically looked forward to liberation from the old colonial system, and a wave of strikes followed. High hopes were invested in their 'socialist' government, whom they expected to support them against the bosses.

But these hopes were dashed. Employers, conservative trade union leaders and the ZANU(PF) leaders formed a common front to attack the strikers and their "excessive" demands. The Labour Minister, Kangai, warned: "I will crack my whip if they do not get back to work. They must go back to work now."

However, the strike wave did win the workers some gains. It also led to the formation of workers' committees in many workplaces. The govern-

ment encouraged these committees, hoping to use them in isolating the non-ZANU union leadership.

But, on the other hand, the government did not intend to encourage the democratisation of the trade unions. Instead they attempted to construct, from the top, new unions dominated by ZANU(PF) supporters. These unions would then serve as 'transmission belts' for the policies of the regime.

But the new "splinter unions" failed completely to get off the ground. The leadership of the government-created Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions proved an absolute farce and disgrace. The government's plans back-fired as the ZCTU lurched from one crisis of corruption and mismanagement to the next.

Scandals

In July 1984, for example, it was reported that the ZCTU sold bicycles and a car worth Z\$6 500 donated by the French CFDT (socialist trade union federation). In October more scandals came to light over financial mismanagement, no accounting in the books, scholarships from the USSR going to relatives and close friends, and cheques being unconstitutionally signed.

Top ZCTU officials were found to be on the pay roll of international companies as personnel officers, or 'advisers'.

What has been the case at the very top has characterised the trade union leadership almost across the board. Time and again the leaders have sold

out the workers to the bosses. Instead of mounting campaigns against redundancies, they have simply signed redundancy agreements behind the backs of the workers.

Elections of officials, report-back meetings and congresses are held either very irregularly or not at all. Some leaders regard the dues which are collected from the workers as their own personal property.

In disillusionment and disgust many workers refuse to join the unions, or have left them. Less than 10% of Zimbabwe's 1 million workers are presently members of unions.

The Department of Labour (which by law is meant to check on financial mismanagement) has now settled on a policy of tolerating the old leadership, and ignoring complaints or suggestions for change—unless matters threaten to get out of hand.

To protect their positions the ZCTU bureaucrats have ensured that no Congress has been held since its formation in 1981. There were few meetings even of its General Council until late last year.

But eventually the corruption became too blatant to be hidden any more. After prolonged in-fighting, the General Council on 10 March 1985 suspended the General Secretary and three other top officials.

After further delays, new ZCTU leaders have been elected. But this on its own will not resolve the crisis of the unions—where the pattern of bureaucratic leadership has become deeply entrenched, and where the government is determined that the

unions should be under state control.

Moto, a monthly publication mildly critical of the government, wrote in March 1985: "A weakness in Zimbabwe's liberation struggle was the lack of union input. This meant that Zimbabwe entered independence without unionists seasoned in struggle, negotiations, and organisation, or able to articulate clearly a working-class position from the struggles of the shop-floor."

Weakness

"For socialist transformation, a strategy to rectify this weakness in the trade union movement as quickly as possible is necessary."

But genuine trade unions will not be constructed from "the top". The workers will have to struggle to build them—against the combined resistance of the bosses, the government, and the leadership of most of the unions themselves.

At present very few workers regard the bureaucrats' 'unions' as organisations that can in any way represent them. However, many excellent workers' leaders have emerged in the workers' committees, and the best of these committees have been transformed into organisations of struggle.

But the workers have no means of combining their struggle across the different workplaces except by taking up also the struggle to transform the trade unions.

It was their involvement in this struggle that led to the detention of the 14 trade unionists and socialists by Mugabe's police.

The full details of the struggle in the General Engineering and Metal Workers' Union are contained in two documents reprinted here: the 1984 Report of the President of GEMWU, and a background to this report published by the Workers' Campaign for a Democratic GEMWU.

What they reveal is:

- * the collaboration of the General Secretary of GEMWU and his cronies with the engineering employers;
- * financial mismanagement and corruption by the officials of the union;
- * protection of their position by the officials by means of bureaucratic and unconstitutional intrigues;
- * that, under threat of removal from their positions by the membership,

they sought (and were readily given) the protection of the regime's police.

In the end, unable to sustain their position within the General, Engineering and Metal Workers Union, they simply "wound up" this union unconstitutionally, and created another one!

The government connived at this unlawful manoeuvre and registered this union—while those in the leadership of the struggle to bring GEMWU under democratic workers' control were detained!

There could be no more definite indication to workers that the regime does not intend to tolerate genuinely democratic trade unions—and that, in reality, it will use its police powers against workers who struggle for this.

Clearly, the struggle for democratic trade unionism, whether in the engineering industry or elsewhere, has been declared "illegal" and can no longer be continued in an open form.

While the new National Engineering Workers' Union that has been formed by GEMWU's previous General Secretary is a purely arbitrary creation, it will be the only union permitted by the government to exist in that sector—and this, in due course, will compel the workers to join.

But, in the future, workers will increasingly be forced to struggle for control over the new union, to use it as a weapon in the fight for jobs and decent living conditions. Whatever methods they resort to, in the end there is no escape for the 'leaders' from the revolutionary pressures of the workers.

The regime's attacks against any form of opposition will also be unleashed against any form of opposition in ZANU(PF) itself. But in an atmosphere of brutality and intimidation, "excesses" occur—going further even than the party leadership wants.

In the *Herald* (4/4/85), it was reported how a loyal ZANU-PF youth was beaten to death, despite his undisputed party loyalty, simply because he spent too much time doing homework and not in Youth League meetings.

The ZANU leadership has no socialist policies to solve the problems of the masses, and no answer to socialist criticism. That is why it resorts to totalitarian 'solutions', and openly flouts the more radical resolutions passed at party congresses.

Last year's ZANU(PF) Youth Congress, for example, called for socialist study circles among workers to be established on the widest scale.

The Youth Congress also called for the purging of the CIO which is riddled with survivors from Smith's days—such as its head, D. Stannard. As a Security Branch officer boasted to one of those detained: "We worked for Smith, we worked for Muzorewa, and now we work for Mugabe."

Yet the government, far from purging the CIO, instructed it to detain local leaders of its own party, who were involved in organising workers' socialist education and campaigning for a ZANU victory in this year's elections!

To further intimidate opposition, in case the arrests and beatings were not severe enough, some of the detainees have since their release been expelled from their trade unions on the orders of the CIO and threatened and victimised in ZANU(PF).

The international response to the detentions—from capitalist spokesmen on the one hand, and the labour movement on the other—is dealt with elsewhere in these pages (see pages 18-21).

Workers' opposition

One perceptive commentator in the capitalist UK *Sunday Times* (17/3/85), however, pointed out that by his actions, Mugabe was bringing into the open the fact of workers' opposition in his own party. For the first time workers were being armed with genuine Marxist ideas and not merely fobbed off with 'socialist' rhetoric.

"It was criticism that led to the arrests of the left-wing unionists. They had been leading a campaign for 'free and democratic' trade unions, and had begun to criticise the Zimbabwe government for betraying the socialist ideals on which it swept to power in 1980."

The report added:

"Mugabe, already meeting opposition from rival political parties, now faces what looks like a serious rebellion from the left-wing of his ZANU Patriotic Front party. The results of his wrath against trade unionists who voice opposition to his one-party goal have damaged Zimbabwe's socialist image abroad, com-

ing on top of the prime minister's bloody military campaign against dissidents in the southern province of Matabeleland."

These early signs of opposition will grow in the future, within the trade unions and ZANU, to mass proportions—as the regime shows it can offer nothing else than further attacks on the conditions of the masses.

Nevertheless, in the forthcoming elections ZANU will be overwhelmingly re-elected, except in Matabeleland. The masses have no alternative but to vote for ZANU, since any alternative being presented at the moment would have a reactionary character.

Muzorewa is openly capitalist; while the ZAPU leadership, putting forward essentially the same bankrupt reformist programme as Mugabe, has nothing to offer to the Zimbabwe masses.

The votes ZAPU will win in Matabeleland represent a strongly-felt but futile protest vote against Mugabe's national oppression of the Ndebele.

But victory for ZANU in the June elections will not bring 'peace' for Mugabe. The economic crisis will worsen and workers and peasants will be compelled to struggle.

Spearpoints

Workers' committees in the factories will become the spearpoints of resistance as they move into struggle again and again against the reactionary bosses. In the course of these battles they will have no option but to struggle also to democratise and transform the trade unions.

In ZANU-PF also, in the years ahead, there will be moves to establish control by the working people who form the mass of its members, and commit the party to a fighting socialist programme. Armed with correct ideas to combat the national oppression of the Ndebele minority, this could act as a pole of attraction for workers in ZAPU also.

One of the most important tasks for the independent non-racial trade unions in South Africa and activists in the ANC will be assist this struggle, to build direct links between workers, and take forward the common struggle for a socialist federation of Southern African states, ruled by the working people.

WORKERS' CAMPAIGN

Those detained were all active in the Workers' Campaign for a Democratic GEMWU, established in the course of last year.

The two documents reprinted here (the first one cut to avoid repetition) were first issued in Zimbabwe in January 1985.

They describe the struggle which took place between the members and the corrupt leadership of GEMWU during 1983-4, and the aims which the campaign had set itself—to build GEMWU as a fighting instrument democratically controlled by its members.

By the detentions and public attacks, the government has now effectively declared the campaign illegal, forcing it to stop functioning.

Also, by registering the National Engineering Workers Union in place of GEMWU, the government has endorsed the unconstitutional winding up of that union. This means workers have no option now but to join NEWU, and struggle as they are able to, to transform it.

BACKGROUND TO THE CRISIS IN GEMWU

The crisis in GEMWU has its origins in the real problems of the workers. Despite the officials' attempts to interpret the struggle for democratic control as 'a personality problem', the division between officials and workers has opened up around the question of job grading, worker participation in official negotiations, and democracy in the union.

In the engineering industry job grading is a burning question, as employers strongly resist the upgrading of experienced and capable black workers to keep labour cheap. Workers who qualify through the government trade testing schemes are either shown the door or forced to carry on at the old rates.

The GEMWU worker leadership in the National Industrial Council (NIC) negotiations insisted that the skills of experienced workers be adequately rewarded. When the employers rejected these demands, instead of a report-back to members being made, the trade union officials concluded that the outspoken President of GEMWU, Brother Nyamhunga (a winder) should be removed from the negotiating team.

In the struggle between officials and members which followed, gross mismanagement of the union was revealed:

- * Withdrawals were being made from the union funds without authorisation;
- * No financial report had been made since 1980 and it was estimated that \$65 000 had been spent without authorisation;
- * Officials of the union had been appointed and dismissed without the agreement of the National Council; and, most seriously
- * Secret meetings were being held with the employers.

Unconstitutional

Up to that time (March 1984) the workers did not even know these practices were completely unconstitutional as access to the constitution was denied to the worker leaders!

Late in 1983 matters came to a head when the General Secretary of GEMWU (D. Chimusoro) complained that the President (S.N. Nyamhunga) was 'interfering' in the local affairs of the union.

The President offered to resign as Chairman of the Harare Branch of GEMWU to avoid being too involved in branch affairs, but then discovered that according to the constitution (denied to him until he made efforts of his own to get a copy) he would not be able to continue as President once he was no longer Chairman of Harare Branch.

A full story of the struggle which followed would fill a book, so a simple chronology of the main events now follows:

Feb 1984: Standpoint of President on grading repudiated by Chimusoro at NIC. On 22 February President is replaced on the negotiating team.

17/3: National Council of GEMWU agrees to amend the Constitution to allow the office of President to be held by an ordinary member of the union and not necessarily by the Chairman or Vice Chairman of a branch.

28/4: This decision was not carried out by Chimusoro. National Council meeting held in Kwekwe appoints committee to amend the constitution and to call a Congress of the Union.

2/5: Press statement appeared in *Herald* that elections had been held at a Kwekwe 'meeting' and that an Acting President had been appointed in Nyamhunga's place.

June: Study circles of engineering workers formed to learn more of trade unionism and how to defend jobs.

FOR A DEMOCRATIC GEMWU

3/7: Mass meeting of Harare Branch repudiates press statement of 2/5. Members report officials charging members \$10 to take up complaints. Officials call police and allege that the Branch meeting was a cover for a political meeting. Chairman of meeting taken for questioning. Meeting disrupted.

5/7: President ordered to report to Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) for questioning. CIO allege that members of GEMWU are being 'forced' to join a minority party, and admit that their 'evidence' came from an official of the union. At the same time CIO refuses to investigate corruption of union officials.

6/7: Assistant General Secretary unconstitutionally dismissed for associating with President.

14/7: Mass meeting of Harare Branch receives resolutions from 34 factories calling for dismissal of officials. Resolves to suspend the officials until the National Council meeting of 21 July.

21/7: National Council meets to get explanation of press statement and report of elections. Doors of office locked, and Chimusoro says police have ordered the offices closed. He refuses to attend the meeting. National Council held in nearby hotel. Police deny ordering offices closed.

National Council resolves that officials be dismissed and that keys and books be handed over to the President so offices can be used and books audited. It was agreed that legal action should be sought if officials obstruct this decision.

23/7: Chimusoro refuses to hand over keys and books, and produces false minutes of National Council meeting of 28/4.

26/7: Legal advice sought and interdict applied for to put books in hands of auditor and keys in control of President. Interdict made by judge on 31/7 puts books and keys in hands of Court Messenger.

Demonstration

9/8: Interdict opposed by Chimusoro's lawyer. Judge returns books and keys to Chimusoro as he considers issue too cloudy to decide, but hopes National Council meeting of 18/8 will resolve the questions. Employers' Association lawyer assists Chimusoro. Demonstration held outside *Herald* offices to force press to report on struggle for democratic union.

18/8: National Council meeting frustrated by Chimusoro, who locks offices and says an alternative meeting will be held in Bulawayo. He later calls police to disperse the delegates. Police told to

'expect a disturbance' and order delegates and members to leave the vicinity of the offices.

20/8: Press statement appears that a 'merger' has been agreed between GEMWU and ZEISWU (a union which split off from GEMWU in opposition to Chimusoro's leadership) on the day that National Council was meant to have met. Statement promises immediate elections, formation of branches, and a Congress. This 'merger' receives support from ZCTU and Department of Labour, who says they are making arrangements for elections, but workers remain completely in the dark.

Campaigning

Sept: Workers involved in the struggle for a democratic union meet to form a campaigning body: the Workers' Campaign for a Democratic GEMWU. The campaign receives support from a number of Harare, Mutare, Chinoyi and Kwekwe factories. Campaign meetings held to discuss crisis in union, job grading, sick benefit schemes etc.

13/12: President taken in by CIO for questioning. They claim to have a report that he was organising political meetings under cover of the Campaign. He is threatened with detention.

A shocking state of affairs was revealed when Chimusoro boasted that he had read the CIO report (marked 'Secret') which led to the interrogation of Brother Nyamhunga. To the supporters of the Campaign for a Democratic GEMWU, it seems quite clear that the CIO (or sections of the CIO) openly supports the current leadership, and is assisting it by threatening the lives and freedom of workers' leaders who dare to oppose corruption, mismanagement, and a complete lack of democracy in the union.

A disgraceful situation now exists in the merged National Engineering Workers Union. Thousands of workers have resigned from the union because of a complete absence of any defence of their interests.

Chimusoro now boasts that he has managed to secure the finances of the union despite these resignations by applying successfully through the NIC for a levy on every engineering worker, whether a trade union member or not!

Workers' leaders who have gone to the union offices to find out what is happening have been assaulted.

No elected leadership exists at any level. An 'Interim Executive Committee' of the 'merged' union reportedly has not met since the merger was announced, and no

branch executive committees exist. The elections promised in August last year have not taken place and there are no plans for them to take place.

Officials are now saying that because workers are not joining the 'merged' union, no elections are possible!

Despite assaults by officials, threats of detention by the CIO, and poison pen letters to employers suggesting workers' leaders should be dismissed, the Campaign continues.

The Campaign is demanding election of branch executive committees, an immediate convening of the National Council thereafter, and a Congress to be held in March. A meeting is being planned to put these demands to the 'Interim Executive Committee', but it is obvious that the officials will never agree to any form of elections or democratic control unless a mass campaign is conducted nationally (as is being developed) and internationally.

The Campaign for a Democratic GEMWU has set as its aims not only improved wages, working conditions, grading and pensions in engineering, but the building and strengthening of GEMWU on a democratic basis as a weapon of the workers.

We believe that unless the Campaign succeeds, GEMWU will be destroyed, and the engineering workers, and the engineering industry in Zimbabwe, will suffer.

The Campaign for a Democratic GEMWU deserves the support of all who believe in genuine trade unionism.

ANNUAL REPORT OF GEMWU PRESIDENT

1984 has been a difficult year for the engineering workers of Zimbabwe, but it has also been a year of hope.

We have suffered a terrible blow from thousands of workers being made redundant and factories closed. Wages have stood still while prices have risen quickly.

Everywhere the workers have had to suffer the blows from a sick capitalist system, which is forcing the workers out of jobs.

But 1984 has also been a year of hope.

In many factories the workers' committees were able to defend jobs where the leadership was strong. Many more jobs could have been saved, and bankrupt factories taken over by the government, if only the union leadership had fought a

campaign to defend the industry.

In other factories where workers met in study circles, there were successful campaigns to win benefits like proper canteens, recognition of workers' committees and Christmas bonuses. In these factories many workers were saved from victimisation and redundancy.

The tragedy was that officials in GEMWU did nothing to assist defend the jobs in engineering.

A trade union is a defence organisation of the workers, and every redundancy should have been fought to the finish. Instead we have had the terrible situation where union officials have signed redundancy forms without even telling the workers what they were doing.

No struggle

Workers have been charged \$10 by officials for complaints to be handled, but nothing is done. There has not been one struggle against redundancies which has been actively supported by union officials. As a result workers have resigned from the union in their thousands.

The Department of Labour also has done nothing to assist the struggle to defend jobs. It is not surprising that the Minister of Labour, Comrade Shava, has reported that some 54 officials of the Department of Labour have resigned. These officials, especially those at the top, have been given jobs with fat salaries in the big companies.

Many workers feel that those who have remained are in the bosses' pockets, and unless workers elect strong leaders to make sure that their union is truly in workers' hands, 1985 may meet the worst.

All this has reflected badly on the leadership of our union.

By rights, the workers are the bosses of the union, and yet they find that there are no financial reports, job grading has not been changed, and their jobs and skills are not defended, let alone transferred from Paterson plan to classes 1,2,3 and 4.

This year there has been a crisis in the leadership and a strong struggle to put power back in the hands of the members. Instead of the officials obeying the instructions of the workers, there has been a fight between members and officials. When the leaders were suspended after a resolution was passed by 34 factories in Harare Branch on 14 July 1984, they refused to obey the workers' decision.

This decision was confirmed by a Meeting of the National Council of GEMWU held on 21 July 1984, which authorised action to be taken to implement its decisions.

Instead of appearing at these meetings and obeying the instructions of the

workers, the officials refused to attend and ignored these decisions. Every effort was tried by the National Council to get the decisions carried out.

Eventually the National Council was forced to take legal action. Although we know that judges are not known for favouring the workers and the poor, legal action was taken on 26 July 1984 to get the union office keys in the hands of the workers, and the finance books in the hands of an auditor. Legal action was **not** taken to put officials in prison!

All the National Council wanted was to have the power to carry out its decisions and let the union defend the industry from employer domination.

As many workers now know, the democratic decisions of the union were frustrated by clever lawyers employed by the officials. These lawyers did not defend the way the union is being run. But they stirred up so much mud that the judge could not make up his mind about who was right without a full trial.

The workers had no money for a long trial, and the officials got the keys and books back. **No meeting of the National Council has been held since then.**

Instead, the offices were locked and no workers allowed in. On 18 August 1984 no meeting could take place because of threats by police called by the officials and the offices being locked. Instead workers read on 20 August that a merger of GEMWU and ZEISWU had taken place in Kwe Kwe that day!

No elections

Elections were promised for GEMWU which was now to be called the National Engineering Workers Union, but up to this day no elections have been held.

Workers! Do not be confused by these events! Keep in mind the following points:

- * No executive committee exists in the engineering industry;
- * There are no financial accounts to show how the money of the workers has been spent;
- * Trade union officials are not defending the workers against the bosses.

In order to put the struggle for democracy and decent conditions on an organised basis, the Campaign for a Democratic GEMWU was formed in September. The Campaign has already got support from factories in Harare, Mutare, Chinoyi and Kwe Kwe, and is raising money also to pay for the court case last July.

Late last December a meeting was held between myself and Brother Chimusoro in the presence of Brother Mawere of the Agricultural Union, to try and revive our union. I did not give the whole history of

the struggle, but asked for the following points:

- * That branch elections be held in every town in January;
- * That a congress of the union should be called by March;
- * That the finances should be checked by an auditor.

Chimusoro said that he thought the main problem was the struggle among workers, and not between himself and the workers!

Dissatisfied

He did not want to agree to any points but said that the leaders of the workers who were dissatisfied with the way the union is, should meet his 'Interim Executive Committee'. This was agreed on.

We are now trying to arrange a date on which delegates from many Harare factories, from Chinoyi, Kwe Kwe, Mutare and other industrial towns can meet with this 'Interim Executive Committee'. The delegates will be demanding firm dates for branch elections, the National Council, and a congress of the union.

At the same time we will be demanding that the books of the union be audited so that the workers can find out just what has happened to their subscriptions.

Workers may have seen in the newspapers of 14 January 1985 that three new agreements have been negotiated in the engineering industry. The workers know nothing of agreements and we hear that one of them is an agreement to take a levy (a deduction) from every worker in the industry to support the union, **whether they are members of the National Engineering Workers Union or not.**

Workers must voice their strongest protest against this.

Workers! Do not believe the story that the problems of the engineering union are between two individuals.

The supporters of the Campaign are demanding:

- * An immediate increase in wages to \$150 a month, fair grading and good wages for skilled workers;
- * No redundancies;
- * Nationalisation of bankrupt companies;
- * 40 hour week;
- * A national pension scheme under workers' control.

These are demands every worker in the industry supports; the problem is that the officials are not prepared to fight for these demands.

Workers unite to fight against exploitation, and for a democratic engineering union!

S.N. NYAMHUNGA
President

18 January 1985

Interview with two of the deported comrades

● David Hemson, who was detained in Harare, says:

"I've been involved in the trade union struggle in South Africa and I had the knock on the door there, and now the same experience in Zimbabwe. There is a difference of course—one is under a white regime and one a black regime—but the security forces in both countries are defending the rights of property, the capitalist system itself, against the workers:

Cowboy attitude

"The attitude of the CIO was extremely hostile. There is a cowboy attitude—reeking of privilege and repression. They have complete contempt for ordinary people, asking how can I, as an educated man, associate with these 'povo'. They're very proud of their walkie-talkies and all their paraphernalia of power. They are the mainstay of the regime. They know the difference between the public 'socialist' rhetoric of the government and what they are enfor-

cing as the government's real policy.

"In Harare, they tortured comrades quite badly—beatings, and in one case electric shocks. The main way they softened up people before questioning was to hold them down and pour water into their mouths while holding their noses closed, and jump on them, forcing them to breathe in the water.

"In the police cells and again inside Chikurubi maximum security prison there was a very warm reception for us from other prisoners.

"In prison we taught classes. Many people, especially the youth, were former guerillas. They had sacrificed everything during the war to win against Smith. Many started off as guerillas at 15 or 16 years old and are now 24-25 years old after having spent all their time in the struggle or in prison under Smith. Now they are in prison under Mugabe without having been tried or convicted.

"Some are trade unionists. One of the ZAPU stalwarts had spent 13 years under Smith and virtually since independence only one year out of detention. This is the bleak outlook

they faced when they'd given their blood to free their country.

"The situation in Zimbabwe is a challenge to the SA independent unions. It shows what happens to workers if they are not involved in determining a government, a state, and actually controlling that state.

Build links

"We feel it is essential for SA workers to have links, not so much with the trade union leadership in Zimbabwe (at which many SA workers would be quite aghast)—the worst is outright gangster unionism under the thumb of the state—but to build up links in the factories, for example AECI and Dunlops.

"Zimbabwe workers are facing a heavy burden under the government which should have brought them full freedom and all the material advances—jobs, houses, education, instead of the dead-end workers feel led into. From these links they can gain the confidence the workers have got in South Africa and the unions can be built and transformed.

"Now the regime thinks it has smashed the voice of Marxism in Zimbabwe, but in the future they will have to eat their words."

● Darcy du Toit, who was detained in KweKwe, says:

"We came off fairly lightly when you look at people who have spent months in solitary confinement, people who have been detained for three years, people who've had their teeth knocked out and covered with electric burns.

"The question is why we got off so easily. Most of our comrades were released within two weeks, and all of us within seven. They could have kept us there forever. It is obvious that the regime is totally opposed to our ideas and what we stand for.

"Probably the most important factor is the international support we got from the labour movement. We were very much heartened by the reports we got of the messages of support, in particular from SA trade unions. We think it is really magnificent for the

SA unions to see the issues so clearly in class terms and to have no hesitation in seeing which side represents their interests, and to say to this independent black government: 'We protest against you detaining trade unionists in Zimbabwe.' That is the real spirit of internationalism which vindicates what we stand for.

"The conditions in the cells in Kwekwe were identical to what they had been under Ian Smith. All prisoners, with very few exceptions, were being mistreated with some horrible tortures. There the CIO specialised in beating people on the feet, using what they called rubber 'candlesticks', little rubber rods.

"In one case a man's feet were laid open, with flesh hanging out, swollen to twice their normal size. He was

abandoned there to sit in a two-metre pool of blood with flies gathering around the wound. He was not given any treatment. When we objected and offered to bandage his feet ourselves, the police refused, saying it was none of their business as it was a CIO case and they dare not touch it.

"Eventually after 4-5 days he was finally treated. That man was accused of not reporting dissidents. Although others were detained and beaten for having reported dissidents!

"We were up to ten to a cell with seldom more than three sleeping bags to share. The blankets were infested with lice.

"A complete social revolution will be needed to begin to change these horrors of colonial society which the

Smith regime and the British established. To their shame the present government has done nothing to improve things.

"We were questioned in offices which did not have books or pens lying around, but instruments of torture on the shelves. Some comrades were beaten, but not the whites. The morale of all the comrades in detention was high. At night there was singing of the *Chimurenga* ZANU songs, as well as socialist songs, like the "Red Flag."

"In Chikurubi what struck me was the morale among the detainees despite the really terrible experiences most of them had been through. Many of them could have no hope of any release because they had been there for years. Every six months it is back to the tribunal for the rubber stamp for another six months' detention, and so on indefinitely.

Organised

"The detainees had organised themselves well. They'd organised a school. In an organised way they would take up their grievances and problems with the prison authorities and send delegations to discuss the problems they had and putting pressure on the Minister.

"We are very worried about some of our comrades who have been released—particularly some of the local ZANU(PF) leaders in KweKwe. We have reports that not only those who were detained but many others who were seen as sympathetic to the ideas of Marxism have been paraded in front of mass meetings and falsely denounced as 'Super-ZAPU' terrorists. In the Midlands this is an invitation to gangs of the Youth Brigades to visit their homes to beat them up, to set their houses on fire, to even kill them.

"We've heard they are being constantly humiliated and attacked. I think that shows the total hostility of the pro-capitalist leadership towards the rank-and-file.

"If news reaches us of further victimisations there will be more protests and the government will not get away with this kind of thing. We want the comrades to know they will be vindicated in the eyes of the working class."

Workers internationally protest detentions — but right-wing backs Mugabe

News of the detentions brought widespread protest from the labour movement internationally—from trade union and party branches, shop stewards, left-wing trade union leaders and parliamentarians, and in some cases from the leading bodies of the mass organisations. Letters and telegrams went to the Zimbabwean authorities from South Africa, from Britain, from other major European countries and the United States, and from further afield.

Immediate pickets and demonstrations were mounted in London, Bonn, Brussels, Copenhagen, Stockholm and Dublin.

The list opposite, supplied by the Zimbabwe Trade Unionists Defence campaign which was formed to mobilise in support of the detainees and of trade union and democratic

rights in Zimbabwe, gives an impression of the extent of the protest.

The capitalist press in South Africa and internationally was taken aback by the scale of the protest. Coming from the organised labour movement, this far exceeded the international outcry against the Zimbabwe regime's brutalities in Matabeleland.

The SA press in particular noted that the voice of Marxism was being raised in the Zimbabwe workers' movement—in opposition to a so-called "Marxist-Leninist" regime.

"Mugabe hauls in exiles from SA"

In response to one picket, Zimbabwean officials were quite blatant about the class interests they were defending. Belgian Young Socialists protesting outside the Zimbabwe Embassy in Brussels were told by those inside: "So, you are young socialists. Well, we are young capitalists."

headlined a report in the Johannesburg *Star* (25/3/85), which highlighted the detentions of David Hemson and Darcy du Toit.

It noted that Hemson had been a "key figure in organising black trade unions in Natal in the mid-1970s", and had been "suspended from the ANC" for favouring "a class-based revolutionary outlook." He was, they claimed, one of the founder-members of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC.

"In Marxist terms", the report explained, "it is the proletariat, or wage labouring class, which should be the main driving force in a socialist revolution."

"But in Zimbabwe", it continued, "the trade unions have been in disar-

"As an active member of the Labour Movement in this country I did attend a number of rallies over the years in respect of political freedom and democratic rights for Zimbabwe workers and we expected that any incoming government would support basic trade union rights and political freedom in complete distinction to the odious policies that were carried out by the Smith regime..."

"Such actions that have recently taken place can only be a severe blow to the aspirations of working people internationally and particularly to those committed brothers and sisters who are struggling in their countries against exploitation."

—Bill Connor, National Officer, and candidate for General Secretary, of USDAW, Britain.

ray for years...There have been accusations of corruption and misuse of union funds...What role, if any, Hemson and du Toit have been play-

ing in trade union affairs in Zimbabwe had not been made clear. But it seems there is a suspicion that an overlap of trade union activities into

the political sphere was at the root of the detentions...

"...it is said that Hemson and du Toit had been taken in for question-

Labour movement protest

The following list of protests against the detentions of trade unionists and socialists by the Zimbabwe government contains only those about which information was received by the Zimbabwe Trade Unionists Defence Campaign. Indications are that several times this number of protests were mounted.

SOUTH AFRICA:

From unions in different federations, including the National Union of Mineworkers.

BRITAIN:

Trade unions: Trade Union Council; General Secretary, BIFU; National Communications Union; General Secretary, NUPE; General Secretary, NALGO; National Executive, TGWU;

TUC Women's Conference: petition with 98 signatures, from members of 31 trade unions;

Kevin Mullins, NEC, COHSE; NEC member, Fire Brigades Union; W.J. Connor, National Officer, USDAW;

AUEW: Ashton-under-Lyne District Committee; North London District Committee; Manchester North District Committee; Divisional Organiser, No. 11; Keighley No. 6, West Yorkshire; Lincoln 15; Ryde, Isle of Wight;

AUEW-TASS: No. 10 Division, Salford Branch;

APEX: Brighton;

ASTMS: Brighton; Liverpool Shipping;

COHSE: Pinderfields Branch;

CPSA: Blackpool; Brighton; Controller of Stamps, Cardiff; London North; DHSS Branch Executive member, Poole; office representative, Poole;

GMBATU: Cambridge 2 Branch; Senior shop steward, Hamworthy engineering, Poole;

NALGO: Knowsley, Liverpool;

NGA: Liverpool;

NUM: St John's Lodge;

NUPE: Poole Health District Branch;

Tower Hamlets Health District Branch;

NUT: Poole branch secretary;

TGWU: Sussex District Committee; 1/1647 International Hotel and Catering Workers' Union; 6/897 Lancashire West; members at Metal Box, Poole; members at Millers Pie, Poole;

Trades Councils: Edinburgh and District; Keighley;

Joint Shop Stewards Council: Hackney; London Bridge.

Labour Members of Parliament: Early day motion moved by Dave Nellist and seconded by Ernie Roberts, sponsored also by Terry Fields, Tony Benn, Joan Maynard, Max Madden, Robert Parry, Allan Rogers, Allan Roberts, Tony Lloyd, Jeremy Corbyn, Bob Clay, Peter Pike, John D. Taylor, Gerald Bermingham, Ted Garrett, Martin Flannery, Eddie Loyden, Terry Patchett, R. Kilroy-Silk, Harry Cohen; Bill Richie; Martin Redmond;

Labour Parties: National Executive; NW Region annual conference; Manchester District City LP's; Armley CLP, Leeds; Blakely CLP, Manchester; Briggs and Cleethorpe (Humberside); Brighton Kemptown CLP; Brighton Pavilion CLP; Bristol CLP; Chorley (Lancashire); Dingle ward (Liverpool); Gillmoss ward (Liverpool); Hackney South CLP; Heywood and Middleton CLP; Hove CLP; Maesteg ward (South Wales); Moorside (Newcastle); Oxford East GMC (petition with 62 signatures); Peckham CLP; Poole CLP; Riverside (Liverpool) CLP; Selby ward; Shipley CLP; Stafford Labour Party; Westdene ward (London);

Labour Party Women's Sections: Manchester Women's Council; Bootle; Chorley; Gorton;

Labour Party Young Socialists: National Executive; S. West and Wales National Committee members; at least seven branches;

BELGIUM:

Socialist trade union federation; Young Socialists National Committee;

CANADA:

Teaching staff support union;

CYPRUS:

Socialist Party members;

DENMARK:

Aarhus Dockworkers Union; Building apprentices, Copenhagen; Bricklayers union, Aarhus; Apprentice school members, Aalborg, Copenhagen; petition of 60 signatures

collected on labour movement demonstration, Aarhus.

FRANCE:

CFDT (Socialist trade union federation); CFDT, St Denis area;

GREECE:

PASOK (Socialist Party) members; Presidents of Ambulance Workers' Union, Michalis Factory Workers Union; Velka Factory Workers Union; Executive members of Softex Factory Workers Union, Berkshire Factory Workers Union, Olympic Airways Stewards Union, National Bank of Greece Workers Union.

HOLLAND:

FNV (Socialist trade union federation); General Secretary, PvdA (Labour Party);

IRELAND

(South) Irish Distributive and Allied Trade Union; Irish Labour Party; Irish Labour Youth; (North) Derry Trades Council;

PORTUGAL:

Oporto District Young Socialists;

SPAIN

PSOE committees, Campanillas, Malaga;

SWEDEN:

Swedish Council Workers Union, Section 14, Stockholm; Swedish Metalworkers Union; 10-15 other protest letters from labour movement representatives;

UNITED STATES:

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Local 444, District Council 57, California; United Auto Workers, District 65, Boston.

(Footnote: SACTU leaders in exile, approached by the Campaign to protest the detentions, stated that they "did not interfere in the domestic affairs of other countries.")

Continued support and donations needed by Zimbabwe Trade Unionists Defence Campaign, c/o 28 Martello St., London E8.

"The Oporto YS joins its voice and solidarity to the international labour movement for the unconditional liberation of the 15 trade unionists imprisoned, who are members of Mugabe's own party, ZANU(PF), that committed the "crime" of opposing the one-party-state dictatorship and "accusing" the Mugabe government of betraying socialist ideals."

—Oporto Young Socialists, Portugal.

ing after word got around of discussion groups that had been organised at which the failure of Mr Mugabe's government to implement socialism came under heavy fire."

The detention by Mugabe of socialists was taken as a signal for "guarded optimism" by the right-wing British Tory newspaper, the *Daily Telegraph*, (3/5/85).

This paper, previously an open supporter of Smith's white minority regime, has been bitterly hostile to the ZANU(PF) government for its proclaimed "Marxism-Leninism". But, now detaining Marxists, Mugabe has shown himself, in the eyes of this newspaper, a more secure defender of

"We demand immediate and unconditional release of arrested trade unionists in Zimbabwe. Defense of trade union and all democratic rights in Zimbabwe."

—Dockworkers Union, Aarhus, Denmark.

capitalism.

"The expulsion of these men", it states—in reference to the deportation of Hemson and du Toit—"hints too that in many ways he (Mugabe) is not a man of the far Left himself. Hemson and du Toit were evidently made unhappy by the absence of real socialism in Zimbabwe. They found only the appurtenances. Perhaps they could not easily bear the prosperity of the country's thriving white farmers and of white-owned businesses."

"One up for Mugabe", was the editorial headline!

The fearful reaction of the capitalist press to struggles for the democratisation of trade unions and the organisation of socialist workers' education is unsurprising. But it was not only from these quarters that there came a defence of Mugabe's

actions.

What, for example, was the response of the International Metalworkers' Federation—the body established to represent and defend the interests of metalworkers worldwide, such as those detained in Zimbabwe?

Under pressure from its affiliates, the IMF sent an official from Kenya to "investigate" the detentions. But the report he submitted was a purely uncritical defence of the government's actions. It was quite explicitly based on the "arguments" of the former GEMWU General Secretary Chimusoro—the very ringleader of the clique of officials suspended by the GEMWU National Council for corruption, mismanagement and anti-democratic behaviour; the very person who had then defended his position by calling in the police, and by unconstitutionally dissolving GEMWU!

Many of the allegations in the IMF report could have come, whether directly or indirectly, only from Mugabe's security police.

Not once throughout the report is there even the suggestion that those detained, who included the elected President of GEMWU, had a case to present, or a right to present it—even though, at the time of the investigation, some had already been released.

The history of events in the union is completely distorted, suppressing everything damaging to the rotten little official clique. Instead a scurrilous attack of gross slanders is launched against the detained union President.

The report totally ignores the class issues involved—the struggle of

"British AUEW activists follow closely the affairs of our brothers and sisters throughout the world. The old saying that an injury to one is an injury to all applies whether it's against workers in Britain, Zimbabwe, or any other country."

"What causes us most surprise is how a 'socialist' government can imprison trade unionists some of whom belong to ZANU. The traditions of the labour movement have always been to resolve differences of policies, strategies, etc. by debate. We sincerely hope that the transition taking place in Zimbabwe is in the direction of Socialism and not Stalinism."

—Keighley No 5. branch, AUEW, West Yorkshire, Britain.

union members against a leadership collaborating with the capitalists—and instead misrepresents the crisis in GEMWU as a "power struggle of personalities."

On the basis of this completely one-sided and falsified account of the evidence, the report concludes—quoting from CIO sources—that the campaign to democratise GEMWU was "a cover-up." The organisers, it says, "were in the process of forming or had formed a political party to be known as Leninist—Marxist Workers' Party." (sic)

This comes as news to the detainees themselves. Nevertheless, the IMF report alleges the existence of "a Central Committee composed of 23 members"—10 blacks, 6 whites, 4 coloureds and 3 Asians. This is all from "scanty information one was

"Workers in the United States looked with hope to Zimbabwe as a nation that would finally bring equality, democracy and justice to its people. But instead we hear about repression of workers...and detentions of those who speak out. Thousands did not die in Zimbabwe's struggle for independence so that injustice and persecution would live on."

"With the voice of international solidarity we call for the immediate release of our brothers and sisters you have unjustly imprisoned."

—United Auto Workers, USA, Boston District 65.

able to gather"—gathered, needless to say, not from the detainees, who were not asked.

Written in March, the report claimed that some of those detained were "likely to face criminal charges for indulging in secret and unauthorised political activities, plus publishing documents, hostile and likely to bring into disrepute the legally established Government of Zimbabwe. By the time I left, the charges had not been fully framed up, but there was a strong feeling among informed sources that charges may be brought against the top leaders."

"Framed up" is precisely the phrase! But in fact the CIO found it impossible to "frame up" any evidence to support these hysterical allegations against those they had detained and tortured. The regime would have looked ridiculous having to present—as a document "likely to bring into disrepute" the Mugabe government—SALEP's June 1983

analysis and critique of the repressive and anti-trade union Labour Relations Act!

Not content with this, the IMF report goes so far as to echo the views of the SA regime on one of the detainees. David Hemson, it states, "fled South Africa for creating unrest (sic!) among the black workers". If this is a reflection of the attitude of the IMF to the heroic struggles of black SA workers against the apartheid regime, its affiliates in SA (particularly MAWU) will be appalled.

Metalworkers internationally should reject this crude whitewash of the Zimbabwe government's actions and call for a genuine inquiry into the attack on trade union rights.

But, unfortunately, the IMF's was not the only apology for the Mugabe government's actions within the leadership of the international labour movement.

Shamefully, and in defiance of a

"We express our grave concern that the socialist policies on which the government was elected should be tarnished by this attack on campaigning trade unionists. We recognise the damage such actions will do to the reputation of ZANU. Therefore we wish to record our protest..."

—National Executive, British Labour Party.

resolution of the National Executive, British Labour Party General Secretary Mortimer "blamed" the detentions, not on the government—but on the detainees themselves!

The NEC pointed out "the damage (Mugabe's) actions will do to the reputation of ZANU." Mortimer, in contrast, claimed that the activities of the detainees—of campaigning for democratic trade unions and socialist workers' education—were "detrimental to Britain's relations in Southern Africa." (*Guardian*, 3/5/85).

But "Britain's relations" with Southern Africa are the relations of **British imperialism**. The relations of the **British labour movement** with Southern Africa should be the relations of workers and comrades resisting dictatorship and fighting in a common cause.

How did Mortimer justify his statement?

He was responding to the absurd charges made by Mugabe on May Day at Rufaro Stadium that the

British Labour Party—and particularly its "Militant Tendency"—had "infiltrated" some of those detained into Zimbabwe with "subversive" intent.

Instead of defending the democratic rights of campaigning socialists internationally, Mortimer washed his hands of the matter by stating that *Militant* "receives no backing or support from the national executive of the Labour Party". Moreover, he continued, SALEP (co-workers of whose had been detained) was "Militant-linked", and "the NEC was advising its affiliated organisations to have no contact with the group."

For this he quoted the authority of a hostile "report" on SALEP endorsed by the right-wing majority of the NEC on March 27, 1985—at the same time that SALEP co-workers were in prison in Zimbabwe.

In Britain, the right-wing leaders of the Labour Party virulently oppose the ideas of Marxism put forward by the *Militant* newspaper in the labour movement, and are terrified of the growing support for them. This is at the root of their witch-hunt against Labour Party supporters of *Militant*.

But what has provoked the extension of this witch-hunt to an organisation—SALEP—conducting socialist workers' education in Southern Africa and encouraging direct links between workers in Southern Africa and internationally?

As explained by SALEP in their reply to the NEC's scurrilous report (*Salep's socialist education work—why does the Labour Party NEC*

"We are appalled that your government, which claims to speak in the interests of the workers of Zimbabwe, should have taken this draconian action against people trying to defend the rights of Zimbabwean workers."

—Hotel, Allied and Restaurant Workers' Union, Johannesburg.

want to ban it?, SALEP, May 1985) the right-wing is here the battering-ram for an attack initiated by the South African Communist Party and its supporters in the British labour movement.

The SACP, putting forward the utopian programme of achieving democracy in South Africa without alienating the "progressive" capitalists, is implacably hostile to the

conscious socialist development of the workers' movement, or to the building of direct links among workers internationally.

Thus, in their attack on genuine Marxism, these so-called "Marxist-Leninists" place themselves in the same camp not only as the "Marxist-Leninist" Mugabe, but as the right-wing of the international labour movement.

Labour movement activists in Britain and internationally will be appalled by Mortimer's apologetics for Mugabe's repression and torture. The magnificent international labour

"Members of the British Labour Party have strong links with Zimbabwe, supported the struggle against white minority rule when it was Rhodesia, and welcomed the election of the ZANU government on a socialist programme. Equally, today, we call for the defence of trade union and democratic rights in Zimbabwe and the release of these detained trade unionists."

—NW regional conference, British Labour Party;

Manchester Labour Women's Council;

No. 10 District, AUEW—TASS; and other labour movement bodies in the British North-West.

movement response to the detentions—instinctively defending trade union and democratic rights—will be carried forward in strengthened support of the struggle for democracy and socialism throughout Southern Africa.

How clearly even this one episode in the working-class struggle highlights the conflicting class positions taken up in the movement internationally, on the one hand by dedicated socialists rooted among the rank and file, on the other hand by right-wing officials leading isolated, privileged lives at the top.

Workers worldwide moving into struggle to oppose capitalist attacks and to bring the leadership of their organisations into line with the demands of the active rank and file will be at one with the struggling masses of Southern Africa. Side by side, building links, they will gain the power to end once and for all the horrors of capitalism and establish workers' socialist governments in every country of the world.

South Africa



Protestors, mainly from AZAPO, against Senator Edward Kennedy at Regina Mundi.

Historically, youth have been at the forefront of every great movement for change.

In the Russian Revolution, Lenin was mocked by his opponents for leading a party of 'boys and girls'. In the recent British miners' strike, it was especially the young miners who provided the backbone of that magnificent struggle.

In South Africa the black working class youth have been in the vanguard of the struggle over the past ten years.

Nation-wide schools boycotts have involved a million students at their height. Through fearless action the youth have been at the forefront of mass campaigns against rent and fare increases, for example—and have now succeeded in crippling two-thirds of the regime's community councils.

Most significant has been the involvement of youth organisations in the Transvaal two-day political general strike last November.

By initiating and then vigorously mobilising support for the stayaway, the youth showed their tremendous advance in tactics and organisation

Is AZAPO a way forward for socialist youth?

by Alan Green

since 1976.

Recognising that it is only the working class which has the power to take on the state, the youth made a direct class approach to the unions and got an overwhelming response from the workers.

Typical was the statement of one of the 6000 workers fired from SASOL: "As a parent I felt I had to support the call of COSAS."

The militant black youth are now searching for a clear revolutionary

programme which can mobilise the workers and rally behind them all the oppressed people.

Behind this is the recognition which even bourgeois newspapers are pointing to: "In the eyes of the young, apartheid is equated with capitalism." (London *Financial Times*, 26/3/85.)

This understanding is shown in the movement of the youth toward socialist ideas.

At the founding conference of the UDF in August 1983, youth delegates enthusiastically applauded speakers who attacked capitalism and called for workers' power in order to take the means of production into common ownership.

But the UDF leadership has not taken this socialist understanding as the basis for action campaigns. At the same time the unions have not given the lead—which they could have done by going into the UDF with a worked-out plan to mobilise the power of the organised workers in a series of actions along with the youth.

This has disappointed the expectations of many of the most militant black youth.

After the successful boycott of the 'elections' in 1984, a powerful mass action campaign could have been built countrywide—for example, round a demand for R120 a week national minimum wage; over jobs and unemployment benefit; or to cripple the pass laws.

Platforms

Instead, having organised platforms for the US Senator Kennedy, the UDF leadership decided to prepare mass opposition to... the All Blacks rugby team! Without having given clear direction to the mass movement—and while opposing revolutionary socialist ideas from a middle-class standpoint—the UDF leaders are nevertheless facing trial now for treason.

Some sections of the youth, looking for a 'left' alternative to the UDF, have turned to the National Forum and to AZAPO.

Those who take this path however, will find themselves travelling in the opposite direction to the mass movement. Their revolutionary energies will be squandered.

Black working people are being practical in wanting unity in one political organisation, against the murderous power of the state.

It is to the ANC, the established, traditional movement, and therefore also to those organisations in its tradition, that the great majority of the black working class will inevitably turn, looking for a way forward in action.

This is where conscious socialists need to work, if they are to gain support for the Marxist policies upon which the successful outcome of the revolution will depend.

At one time AZAPO and its Black Consciousness forerunners could claim the allegiance of the youth movement. But that was up to the mid '70s when the movement was still reawakening from the defeats of the 1950s and early '60s.

The black youth blamed those defeats on the ANC leadership's fraternisation with 'whites'. This was only a half-truth since, as *Inqaba* has explained ('Lessons of the 1950s', Issue No. 13), it was **class-collaboration** which lay at the root of the problem.

The failures of the ANC leadership

were at root the product of reformist policies put forward by the black middle-class leaders and the SACP Stalinists alike. This led them into a search for 'allies' among the white liberals, and into holding back the black working-class movement for the sake of it.

The black youth, determined to prevent any dilution of their struggle again, declared "Black man, you're on your own."

Initially, BC had a positive influence by raising the self-confidence of black youth. It began to turn into its opposite however, revealing petty-bourgeois features of its own, once the youth movement began to link up with the organised working class.

The current support for the National Forum and its main ideological force, AZAPO, is because of the increasing 'socialist' rhetoric spoken by many of its leaders. But what does this speechifying amount to in practice?

Incredibly, AZAPO's Fifth Congress late last year was characterised by denunciation of the November stay-away.

Delivering a central committee critique, AZAPO's 'labour secretary', Rev. Joe Seoka said:

"The two-day stayaway, far from advancing the working class struggle in the country, had antagonised and alienated a sizeable portion of the working class." (*Sowetan*, 19/12/84).

That general strike was the biggest mobilisation of the working class in our history—in the industrial heartland of South Africa. Even the bourgeois press was forced to note its significance because of "the active involvement and leading role of organised labour." (*Star*, 26/11/84)

A series of town-wide general strikes had been the stepping stones to this regional action; as had mass meetings involving workers and youth to discuss their demands and plan what action to take.

400 000 leaflets and 5 000 posters, the production and distribution of which was a marvellous achievement in the circumstances, agitated for the strike.

The strike had revolutionary significance. In days it illuminated for millions of working people their potential strength, but also what tasks would have to be undertaken to prepare the movement for future battles.

Thami Mali, a local UDF leader,

was chairman of the Stayaway Committee. Interviewed in the *Sunday Express* (11/11/84), he said his objective was a "workers' state" based on the Freedom Charter. "So you want a socialist SA?" he was asked. "Exactly," Mali replied.

Mali explained: "...the economy of a country is its backbone, no matter how powerful it may be politically. It depends on the working class which comes predominantly from the African areas in which the stayaway was called."

How this power was to be used, and to what end the movement should work, Thami Mali made clear when he said: "More than ever, before people have realised that their struggle ... will never be solved until the whole system of government is changed." (*Financial Mail*, 16/11/84.)

These ideas, once they are taken up by the mass of working people as the expression of their own needs and will to change society, will become an unstoppable force.

The Transvaal strike ended with a sense of achievement and purpose among the workers and youth who had participated.

Transvaal shop stewards have told *Inqaba* that the workers were saying: "We've fixed them (the employers) in Transvaal, let's do so elsewhere."

Inspired by the action, workers were prepared to make sacrifices. A sacked worker boarding a bus for the Transkei said: "There is no time for us to feel sorry or afraid. We must show SASOL we are brave."

Hostility

AZAPO's hostility to this magnificent action contradicted their often repeated statements that the black working class are "the driving force of the revolution".

'Disgusted Black, KwaThema', in a letter to the *Rand Daily Mail* asked: "AZAPO, if you write off boycotts as non-events, then how do you propose (besides your liberation of the mind) to achieve liberation?" (9/1/85)

This sarcasm was fully deserved. Just as the Africanist leader Peter Raboroko condemned the stayaway called by SACTU and the ANC in 1958, so today the black middle class leaders of radical nationalism have shown their remoteness from and

hostility to the **real class movement of the workers.**

Despite their rhetoric, they are afraid of any independent movement of the working class, and the fact that such a movement inevitably raises the standard of a socialist democracy, of real working-class power, and presses forward to its practical achievement.

Clearly socialist policies are necessary to smash apartheid and capitalism. But, to rally and mobilise the overwhelming numbers of the working class, these policies must be raised and struggled for **within the mass organisations**—the organisations into which the majority of the workers will turn to take forward the struggle.

Thami Mali's statements are evidence of a left wing within the UDF which will more and more make its presence felt at rank-and-file level. This confirms the perspective of Marxism that it is within the mass organisations that the key debates on programme, strategy and tactics are going to take place.

Conscious socialists among the youth only waste precious time and energy by trying to cultivate their ideas on the fringes of the working-class movement—in the radical petty-bourgeois milieu of Azapo and the National Forum—instead of plung-

ing into the mainstream of the mass organisations.

There have been many opportunities to develop a strong left wing **within** the UDF, opposing in a constructive way the confused class-collaboration policies of the middle-class UDF leaders, and putting forward a clear alternative.

Polarisation

There was evidence of a polarisation within the UDF with the visit of the US Senator, Edward Kennedy. In the Western Cape, the UDF general council refused to be associated with his visit.

But the opportunity to galvanise the mass of UDF supporters—especially among the workers—into opposition to the visit, and so shift the whole movement decisively to the left, was lost because of the **senseless tactics** used by the Azapo/National Forum supporters in their campaign against the Kennedy visit.

They succeeded in gaining much media attention—not least from the pro-government press. But did they succeed in turning this into a conscious understanding on the part of black workers as to **why** the UDF leaders were wrong in inviting Kennedy? Did they succeed in explaining

why a liberal bourgeois and representative of imperialism like Kennedy should **never** be dignified with a platform in the movement even when he denounces the apartheid regime?

We think they failed, because of their **sectarian approach**, to make use of the opportunity to get clear socialist ideas across to the mass of workers marching under the UDF banner. Instead, their tactics played into the hands of the organisers of the Kennedy visit—as was shown at the meeting at Regina Mundi on 13 January.

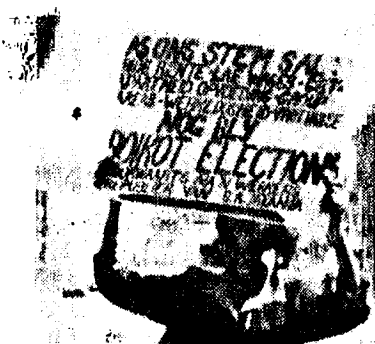
The agitation of the Azapo/National Forum contingent at that meeting that Kennedy should not be heard, failed to gain the support of the majority present. Tutu was able to outmanoeuvre them by putting the issue to the vote. **Then the vocal minority proceeded to try to break up the meeting!** A fine advertisement for 'socialism'! Not surprisingly, they were sharply dealt with by the assembled crowd.

Nor should the eventual calling off of the meeting by Tutu be counted a success. Many hundreds of workers, who would have been sympathetic to socialist arguments, were alienated by the behaviour of the 'left'.

How different the position could have been if, as a section within the UDF itself, the socialist youth had demanded the right to be heard from the platform, either before or after Kennedy spoke. Probably a majority of the audience was sceptical towards Kennedy, and would have welcomed seeing him put on the spot in this way.

With a little preparation and some tactical sense, Kennedy could have been well and truly exposed in this way. The arguments against giving





Youth active in the election boycott last year: "If we vote, high rents, low wages, sales tax, apartheid education, Group Areas, unemployment, rotten housing will still remain. Boycott elections! Forward to a workers' republic of South Africa/Azania."

Kennedy a platform would have been overwhelmingly accepted and understood if they had been presented properly, instead of being reduced to a few shrill slogans.

Terror Lekota justified Kennedy's visit on the grounds that "... on the immediate question that is eating our people today—that of apartheid—the Kennedy's have taken a stand." (*SPEAK*, March 1985)

But what does it mean to take a verbal 'stand' on apartheid? The 'liberal' bosses in SA do this all the time. Should they be given a platform in our movement to help them deceive black working people into thinking they can be 'trusted'?

The real question is which are the forces that have the interest and the power to overthrow apartheid—and these include neither the liberal capitalists at home nor the imperialist Kennedy's abroad.

Terror says the UDF does not "question the fact of American imperialism and even the involvement of the Kennedy family as a whole in American imperialist design." So why invite him? This is the equivalent of giving a known arsonist a certificate as a fire warden!

He may be on the left wing of the American Democratic Party, but that is a capitalist party. Whatever its short-term interests might be, or the disagreements it may have with other capitalists, its defence of private property and the US imperialist 'national interest' are fundamental in the final analysis.

At Boston University in 1979, Kennedy described himself as "an unabashed partisan of our own political and economic system". In the United States the system is capitalism which forces 34 million

people to go to bed hungry each night in the richest country in the world.

A year earlier, he supported President Carter's policy of wage controls.

In 1983, Kennedy voted in favour of Reagan's policies on four out of every ten occasions.

On international issues, Kennedy may have a different 'style' to other American bourgeois leaders, but his purpose is the same.

When he opposed the lifting of sanctions against white-minority ruled Rhodesia as it was then, this was because doing so would "set back our (i.e., US imperialism's) political and economic interests throughout Africa, including those with Nigeria, which is our second largest supplier of oil."

This great 'democrat' said in 1966: "I am 89% in favour of the Johnson Administration's policies in Vietnam."

What possible consistency can there be in his opposition to apartheid, when he voted in favour of the US marines' occupation of the Lebanon; voted in favour of a grant for the counter-revolutionaries opposing the Sandinista government in Nicaragua; visited the Shah of Iran in 1975; and continued to support economic aid and military grants to Turkey after its occupation of northern Cyprus.

Loyal

Kennedy is also one of the most loyal supporters of the Israeli ruling class. The ANC leaders spend enough time twinning apartheid and Zionism, and yet they and the UDF leaders are prepared to support a visit to South Africa by such a man.

Kennedy can appear at present as a great moral crusader against apartheid—but the US imperialist interests he defends do not allow him to campaign against the national oppression of the Palestinians.

These are the facts upon which socialists should have campaigned to expose the opportunism of Kennedy and of those who organised the visit. Had these arguments been put across with the right tactics, Kennedy would have slunk off without a grain of credit in the eyes of the masses.

By their policies and methods—whether on the question of the Transvaal general strike or the Kennedy visit—the National Forum and

AZAPO reveal themselves as essentially sectarian groupings.

By this term we mean no abuse, nor simple reference to their numerical size. Lenin once described a Communist Party 300 000 strong as a sect.

For Marxism, a sect is a political grouping that is unwilling or unable to build strong links with the mass of non-Marxist workers. Remaining aloof from the real living movement of the masses, with all its 'warts' and imperfections, in the name of proclaiming 'profound' and abstract 'principles', a sect condemns itself to inevitable degeneration and irrelevance.

The militant youth have too vitally important a part to play in the strategy and tactics of the revolution to hitch themselves to the bandwagon of the National Forum and AZAPO leaders.

At the same time it must be added that the problems that exist in the movement today—whether of the reformism of the UDF leaders, or the sectarianism of AZAPO—will not be solved by physical assaults or petrol-bombs. These methods only play into the hands of the regime—which is already making propaganda use of them.

Nor does the answer lie in a patched-up 'unity pact' among the leaders, whether sanctified by Tutu's prayers or otherwise.

Neither of these approaches deals with the real political questions which underlie the differences. The answer lies in the development, among the youth and among the workers, of a conscious Marxist cadre, armed with the perspectives, the programme, the strategy, and the methods of Marxism—willing and able to patiently explain and struggle for these positions in the ranks of the mass organisations.

In the UDF today, and the ANC tomorrow—as well as in the trade unions—there is very fertile ground for a conscious Marxist youth movement. It would play a very important part in the transformation of these organisations into vehicles of revolutionary working class struggle.

Inqaba supporters need to devote as much attention as possible to the youth movement. Comrades should send in to the editorial board many more comments of the youth and reports about their activities.

Lenin said: "He who has the youth has the future."

BRITAIN: SCHOOL STUDENTS STRIKE

On April 25th, a quarter of a million British school students revolted! They came out on a half-day strike to express their dissatisfaction with the Tory government and the capitalist system it represents.

They went on strike to show their pupil power, and let everyone else know that they are as much affected as the rest of the working class by the effects of capitalism in crisis and the measures of Thatcher.

For years the youth have been feeling the effects of cuts in education—as well as watching unemployment rise unchecked and thousands of school leavers each year join, and remain on, the unemployment queues.

Now they say enough is enough and start to fight back.

Conscription

The Tory government is not stopping short at robbing the workers of a proper living standard, but is now onto the youth as well. It is trying to force school leavers to serve for two years on the so-called Youth Training Scheme.

The YTS was set up, it was said, to "combat unemployment". All it means is that those on YTS are farmed out to the bosses as cheap labour.

They either do the 'dirty jobs' that other workers won't do, on poverty-level wages, or else they are used to replace older, better-paid workers who are made 'redundant'.

Very little 'training' is involved—and after two years on the scheme, those who have passed through it have very little chance of a job anyway, with unemployment standing at over four million.

Now the Tories want to compel school-leavers to go on this scheme—by refusing to pay them social security benefits if they refuse.

The Tories have destroyed youths' job prospects by their savage attacks on Britain's industrial base—and now they go even further by kicking out workers and employing youth at half or less their wages.

But the school youth know what is

By Anna Svoise

in store for them—hence the fightback. They are no longer prepared to be exploited on slave-labour schemes or be the next package on the dole.

In cities and even small towns throughout Britain thousands of school students marched to different rallies and shouted out their demands: an end to the Tory's YTS; an end to slave labour; no cuts in education; support for the teachers on strike for better pay; for the right to vote at 16.

Once again the call "Maggie, Maggie, Out, Out, Out!" rang loud and clear across the country—even from the voices of a new and even more angry generation.

The school youth had learned the lesson from the struggle of the miners—the only way to fight against Tory policies is to organise and act. In one town in Wales, the youth marched to the NUM office, and called on a miners' leader to head the march and give a speech at the end.

The strike was overwhelmingly successful despite all the condemnation it got. The Tory press went hysterical—launching a concerted attack on the strike for days ahead. They tried to place the blame on small groups of 'agitators', and warned 'decent children' not to be taken in!

After the strike, they tried to claim that it had 'failed' and that those on strike didn't know what they were doing and were just playing truant. "What a giggle!" said one headline in the press.

But then one wonders why the police were called in in a number of places—using the same brutal methods they used against the miners.

'Small groups' could have had no effect at all. The truth is that 250 000 came out—despite all the propaganda of the media and the actions of school officials and the police.

In at least one town the headmaster of a school wrote around to the parents to try to get them to condemn the strike. Instead they wrote back saying that they supported it!

Unfortunately the political maturity and determination of the school students did not extend to the leadership of the British labour movement.

Both the General Secretary of the British Trade Union Council and Neil Kinnock, leader of the Labour Party, condemned the strike.

Kinnock thought he was very clever when he called the strike organisers 'dafties' (mad). But who is the real 'daftie'?

He is so 'daft' not to even see that it is the Tory government and the crisis of capitalism that is forcing the students to come out. Only 'dafties' like Kinnock and the other cynics in the Labour Party leadership don't see that a real fight is needed to solve the problems of the youth.

Even the fact that these youth are tomorrow's workers and voters doesn't seem to register with the Labour leadership, so out of touch with the mood and aspirations of the masses have they become.

Blind

They are blind to the importance of the fact that these youth have begun to fight back even before they have joined the labour market—or, more correctly, before they have joined the ranks of the unemployed.

The youth will be as disappointed in this attitude as were the miners in the failure of the TUC and Labour Party leadership to throw themselves full-bloodedly into a victory for that strike.

The fact is that the workers as well as the youth are ready to be organised and fight against capitalism, but the labour leadership is failing to organise the masses through all their struggles.

The School Students Action Committee, the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign, and the Labour Party Young Socialists who organised and supported the strike are to be commended on what was achieved. So are those Labour M.P.s who stood up against the Labour leaders and supported the strike.

Most of all it is the Marxists grouped round the *Militant*



Terry Fields, Labour M.P. and supporter of Militant newspaper, addressed striking school students at a rally in Liverpool.

newspaper in the British Labour Party—leading the YTURC and the LPYS, and with supporters in Parliament—who understand the despair, frustration and anger of the youth, and the vital role they can play in changing society.

Without organisation, and a clear programme around which to organise to solve their problems and those of all working people, the anger of the youth would just be channelled into fruitless rioting—the frustration into crime, and the despair into alcoholism, drug addiction and suicide.

But instead of commending the strike organisers, the Labour Party leaders are attacking them! Before the school strike, the Labour Party 'tops' were wanting to become sponsors of YTURC because of the role it was playing in campaigning on youth unemployment.

But now it has helped to unleash the force of the youth in battle against the Tories—the Labour Party leaders have launched an 'enquiry' into YTURC and banned it from

Labour Party headquarters! This goes along with a general witch-hunt against supporters of *Militant*.

But the youth will draw from this their own conclusions. They will see that they share with the Marxists the understanding that it is only through the organised power of the labour movement, fighting on class lines, that their problems can be solved. They will see more and more that there is no way out under capitalism.

Rally

Despite the attitude of the Labour leadership, the youth will rally to the Labour Party and force the question of the youth on its leadership. They will fight for the election of a Labour government that will bring in votes for 16-year olds, will guarantee a job for all school-leavers, and finance a decent education system. This means a Labour government committed to socialist policies.

Tomorrow's power depends on the

working-class youth and whatever steps are taken against them, the youth will have that power.

The Labour Party Young Socialists now has the task of transforming itself into a mass organisation, and of winning the fight for the interests of youth in the programme of the Party.

The LPYS is helping the students build up a national school students union which will represent the views of school youth, and be a campaigning organisation to impress on the whole of society that the youth are determined to have a better future than what is offered to them today.



Postscript: Since the school strike, the Tory government has backed down on its plans to make the YTS compulsory.

THE GENERAL STRIKE:

Vital weapon in our struggle



Workers at the May Day 1985 rally in Maritzburg.

Once again—in the Transvaal in November, in the Eastern Cape in March, and then again in the Transvaal in May—the stay-away (or general strike) has been brought to bear as a weapon in the struggle.

The two-day November strike in particular, involving up to a million workers in SA's industrial and financial heartland, was the most important political action in the whole history of the labour movement.

These displays of the power of the working class have terrified the bosses and the government—even forcing concessions, such as the settlement of the Simba-Quix dispute and the temporary freeze on rents.

Taken together with the general ferment in society—the uncertainty of the ruling class, and the huge and near-insurrectionary mass struggles taking place up and down the country—they are a clear indication of a new stage in the unfolding of the South African socialist revolution.

But many battles have yet to be fought—by organised millions rather than hundreds of thousands—before the revolution can be victorious. In the process, the general strike will become an increasingly vital tactic. It

will be indispensable for the workers' movement to have a crystal-clear conception of how to use this weapon most effectively, and its place within the struggle to transform society.

Its increasingly obvious importance is already provoking intense debate about general strike tactics in the unions and among the youth.

Thus, despite the huge success of the November action, some union leaders have expressed caution about repeating it, or extending it on a wider basis. On the other hand, many workers argued for carrying forward the momentum with an 'all-out' general strike.

In November, the unions, youth and community organisations combined in a concerted mobilisation. But in the Eastern Cape strikes many

By Richard Monroe

of the unions held back from official participation—leaving the initiative to PEBCO.

Uncertainty over tactics has also been revealed in the protest at the murder of Andries Raditsela. At first, the unions called a two-hour national stoppage; at the last minute, under pressure from below, the FOSATU regional committee extended this, to a call for a one-day strike in the Transvaal.

Stored within the fighting traditions of the labour movement internationally is an immense wealth of experience on the use of the general strike—on successes and setbacks. Every activist in the workers' and youth movement should try to get hold of this experience, study, absorb, and apply it. Here we can only draw out some of the main lessons.

Just as the strike is an indispensable weapon in the daily struggle against the employer, so mass and general strike action is indispensable

for the working class in preparing to lead the struggle for power.

Not only can mass and general strike action wrest concessions from the ruling class. More important still, they give a sense to the working class of its own strength, and at the same time test the forces of the enemy.

Through mass strike action, as the great Marxist Trotsky wrote, "various groups and strata of the proletariat announce themselves (and) signal to one another... Only through these strikes... does the proletariat rise to its feet, assemble itself as a unity, begin to feel and conceive of itself as a class, as a living historical force."

Fresh layers

The recent general strikes have also reaffirmed how a lead taken by the organised workers (particularly with the assistance of the youth) can draw huge fresh layers of the unorganised into action—and, through that, into organisation.

But any generalised strike action is a serious matter for the working class. The collective power of the working class to withdraw its labour is a fundamental threat not only to the profits, but also, ultimately, to the survival of the ruling class.

Because the SA ruling class has such limited room for manoeuvre in making concessions to the workers' movement—because it must defend the cheap labour system at all costs—it views general strike action with the bitterest fear and hostility.

Hence the same threats are repeated time and time again: docking of wages, mass sackings—and, behind them, the threat of the murderous state machine.

In the struggle to end oppression and exploitation, the workers are prepared to make huge sacrifices—provided that the purpose of each collective action is explained, and linked to a clear strategy and goal. This is what needs to underlie the working out of general strike tactics.

It would be fundamentally wrong, for example, in preparing and organising general strike action, to draw any distinction between so-called progressive and reactionary bosses—or between the bosses and the regime. On the contrary, the collective responsibility of the whole ruling class for the system in South

Africa needs to be emphasised and emphasised again.

The apartheid regime is the fundamental defence of the bosses' system of cheap labour, and any attack on it is inevitably an attack on the bosses also.

Only on the basis of this understanding, and all the implications which flow from it, can the working class prepare itself to lead the struggle for power.

On the lessons of the November general strike, "Fosatu sources" are reported by the *Financial Mail* (26/4/85) as saying, "the organising committee was too small, and its members did not have sufficiently clearly defined ideas of their functions, responsibilities and limits. Fosatu will in future be wary of the terms on which it co-operates with organisations made up of activists who are not directly answerable to a constituency..."

"...the stay-away weapon is unlikely to be used by Fosatu again...except in the case of an 'absolutely immediate, clear-cut objective.'"

It would be entirely correct for the trade unions to maintain that the actions of the working class cannot be determined by the requirements of middle-class political leaders. In the 1950s middle-class Congress movement leaders called the workers into stay-aways, and then called off the actions—turning on and off the tap of the workers' movement in vain attempts to arrive at political compromises with the 'liberal' bosses.

But in the case of the November strike, the middle-class UDF Transvaal leadership did not initiate the strike call—it merely gave it support after it had been called.

Moreover, the only guarantee against attempts by middle-class leaders to manipulate the workers' movement for its own ends, is for the organised working-class to establish its political leadership in the struggle through assuming control of the UDF on the basis of a programme and strategy to rally all the oppressed.

In fact the real pressure for the November action came from the union membership (as Fosatu sources themselves state in the same *Financial Mail* article): "its constituency has also widened to include increasingly politically-concerned workers. The federation structure made it inevitable that workers concerned

about the roots of township and educational unrest would pressure their leadership to act." (Our emphasis)

If there was additional pressure from outside the union movement, it was the pressure of the youth organisations—who, in that, were reflecting the urgency felt by the working class masses themselves, and particularly the non-unionised workers.

The youth movement is a priceless asset for the working class movement, with its fearlessness and adventurousness complementing the solid foundations of organisation which have been built in the factories, mines, docks, etc.

It was the combined strengths of the organised workers and the youth which made the November strike such a success in raising the confidence of the working class in its own power, thus fuelling discussion about further and escalated action.

It would be a big mistake for any leader of the democratic unions to imagine that it will be possible to renounce the weapon of the stay-away. Indeed, attempts to do so by the unions themselves would only drive workers and youth to find other leadership for political strike action. It will be useless to complain, in that case, that the leadership concerned is "not directly answerable to a constituency".

Wells up

In the nature of things, the mood for general strike action cannot be tested by calling national referenda or putting matters to the vote in conferences well ahead of time. It wells up among the unorganised as well as the organised, and is reflected through the activists in the workers', youth, etc. organisations. Despite the difficulties involved in assessing mood and working out tactics, the leaders of the trade unions cannot escape that responsibility.

In the Eastern Cape it was in the context of a near-insurrectionary ferment in the townships that a mood for general strike action asserted itself and, because the unions stood aside from mobilising it, expressed itself in PEBCO's call.

The Eastern Cape general strikes were also successful—but they did not have the same force, or leave the same sense of a new and higher

achievement of unity in action, as was the case in the Transvaal. Had the trade unions involved themselves fully in preparing and organising the actions, they could have had a more tangible direction, and clearer demands. The outcome would have been a greater sense of organised power and common purpose among the workers and youth.

Victimisation

It is true that the state, by its victimisation of the Transvaal regional strike committee in November, signalled that, in future, members of such open committees are likely to be arrested **before**, rather than after, organising a strike. Undoubtedly the trade union leadership—which is of necessity wholly in the open view of the repressive state—must protect itself against unnecessary reprisals.

At the same time it is vital that the trade union movement is fully involved in deciding on, preparing, and organising, general strike actions—along with the youth and other activists. The means must be developed for representatives of the trade unions, youth organisations, etc., to

meet systematically, but secretly, together to plan coherent strategy.

The importance of this mobilisation of **combined strength** of workers and youth is shown also by the results of the strike call to protest Andries Raditsela's death. Called by the unions alone, and not with the added forces of the youth, etc., it fell short of the success of the actions in November and March.

Undoubtedly, against the propaganda of 'failure' in the capitalist press, Joe Foster was correct to point to the measure of success that was achieved at short notice—with at least 130 000 workers responding nationally to the call, and the funeral attended by many thousands of workers.

But the response of the working class was by no means so overwhelming, whether within the Transvaal or outside it, as was the case in November. In November even the capitalist press could not hide the overwhelming success.

The lesser response of the workers was not because the bosses or the regime were taking a tougher attitude than in November. On the contrary.

Knowing that mass struggles were continuing unchecked, more or less nation-wide, despite the vicious

repression of the police and the army, they realised that they must supplement repression with subtler tactics of trying to 'limit the damage'.

In fact spokesmen for SATS, one of the toughest employers in the land, admitted before the strike in May that they would be unlikely to take reprisals—of the kind meted out by the SASOL bosses in November. The bosses were hoping that the union leaders themselves would play the role of limiting and containing the movement.

Strength

But in any event, if the need for general strike action arises, the only recourse at the disposal of the workers against sackings, shootings and massacres is to their own organisation and strength—and in no wise to the goodwill or 'restraining hand' of any section of the employers.

The statement, issued by the FOSATU regional Transvaal executive together with the one-day strike call, for **one additional day of strike for every worker shot** was entirely correct.

But for that threat to be effective,



An unusual sight since the Second World War: two unemployed white families, with less than R3 in their pockets, arrive in Johannesburg from PE to look for work. The workers' movement, to neutralise and defeat racist reaction from whites hit by the economic crisis, needs to put forward the alternative of a struggle for non-racial socialist equality.

it would have been necessary to make thorough and determined preparations—otherwise it would be exposed as mere bluff, and increase the boldness of reaction.

In contrast to November and to March in the Eastern Cape, there was no attempt to enlist the revolutionary energy and determination of the youth to mobilise for the May action.

The hundreds of thousands of leaflets and posters distributed by the youth in November were a vital factor in the solidity of the strike.

The call by FOSATU for a two-hour strike was also questionable. The problem with strike calls limited to a matter of hours is that they do not really signal to the working class the strength of its forces, they do not have the same ability to galvanise the unorganised workers, and they do not seriously test the state of the enemy.

The working class is inspired most to sacrifice when it sees a clear purpose, and clear gains to be made, in doing so.

In Italy the powerful Italian Communist Party has over the last years frittered away the energy and morale of its members and supporters through endlessly repeated 'demonstration' strike calls, sometimes of only half an hour or ten minutes duration. In the end workers are bound to say: 'What's the point. What are we gaining, at the expense of merely irritating the bosses?'

Confuse

When general strike action is limited to a 'demonstration' effect, and repeatedly called on such a basis, it can in the end only confuse and divide the workers' movement and give heart to the ruling class.

While Raditsela's funeral was a powerful demonstration of the workers' anger, in the end, the unfortunate consequence of the May strike call was to follow up the hugely successful November strike...with something that fell far short of it.

After the November strike, *Inqaba* stated the view that the best possible follow-up would be a call for a two-day national strike.

In our view, subsequent events have confirmed this. The mood for further and more widespread action clearly existed after November 5-6

not only in the Transvaal, but in the Western and Eastern Cape at least.

While such a call would have become more difficult the closer that Christmas approached, events this year have created again and again conditions for such an action: after the shootings in Uitenhage, and at the time of the mass sackings of mineworkers.

Conditions for mobilising such an action are likely to recur in the months ahead.

A successful national general strike would represent a huge and qualitative leap forward for the workers' movement. **Never before has this been achieved.** In the 1950's, and in 1976-7, though national strikes have been called, they have been solid only in one region or another, and never everywhere at once.

Such a call, thoroughly prepared, would be a real test of the strengths and weaknesses of the workers' movement on a nation-wide basis. Its success would give an enormous impetus to the confidence of the working class in its own power—the power whose development at the head of all the oppressed can alone make the South African revolution.

But why not a call for an 'all-out' general strike—as was raised in some quarters of the movement last November?

If 'all-out' means simply 'everybody out', then who could disagree? But if this was intended to mean a call for an **indefinite general strike, until victory or defeat**, then, in our view, the call is mistaken.

Undoubtedly, such a call will sooner or later come on the agenda of the struggle. Moreover, should such an action be called at any time by the workers' leadership, supporters of *Inqaba* would throw themselves into ensuring its greatest success.

But an indefinite general strike inevitably is a **total** confrontation between the working class on the one hand, and the capitalist class and its state machine on the other.

Without labour, the factories grind to a halt, docks and transport are at a standstill, and food, power and other necessities can be distributed only with the agreement of the workers. Even were all white workers to scab on such a strike, the overwhelming majority of production would soon come to a standstill.

Such a strike would almost certainly evoke, on the one hand, all the ef-

forts of the ruling class to crush it by repression—and, on the other, would depend for its effectiveness on nation-wide uprisings in the townships and the countryside on a scale many times larger than that of the last months.

Two powers

In practice, an indefinite general strike, to the extent that it is effective, creates two different powers confronting each other in society: the power of the ruling class (reduced to the power of its armed state machine), and the hugely expanded power of the working class.

The country, under such conditions, would become 'ungovernable' by the ruling class.

But this immediately poses sharply in practice the question 'WHO IS TO RULE SOCIETY?'

If the working class is not in a position to take power and the capitalists are not willing to make concessions, a very dangerous situation unfolds.

The strike movement cannot remain at white heat indefinitely. Within a week or two at the most, the masses would have to feel that the action is getting somewhere, or they begin to doubt that it is worth the cost. Progress begins to be measured very concretely. The working class has to obtain and distribute food once the stored supplies in the townships run out.

The necessary actions involved drive the working class again and again to test its power against the enemy in a struggle to reorganise society and take hold of the levers of production itself.

If this does not happen, eventually the capitalist class will recover itself and inflict a severe defeat on the movement. The workers, having given their all in the strike, will be a hundred times more reluctant to embark on such a venture again.

Thus a failed indefinite general strike can serve as a turning-point, opening up a period of reaction, under which many of the previous gains made by the workers come under attack, and can be taken away.

Under certain conditions, the capitalist class may try to effect a 'compromise' when faced by an indefinite general strike—but, given their limited room for manoeuvre and the challenge posed by such a

movement in SA, this cannot be counted on.

Thus the 'all-out' general strike raises the stakes of the struggle to their highest point—and is a risky undertaking unless thoroughly organised and prepared by a leadership with a clear perspective and strategy for the taking of power by the working class.

Democratic organs

The working class needs to be prepared, not simply for making the country ungovernable by the ruling class, but for taking on, defeating, and smashing the murderous capitalist state machine of apartheid—and replacing it with its own democratic organs of power.

These organs begin to take shape in the strike itself and the movement that accompanies it: in the democratic organising committees which form in the workplaces, townships, etc., to plan strategy, maintain communications, regulate food distribution, and so on. But they can become linked together into an alternative state power—the democratic state of the working class—only through an all-out struggle to overthrow the existing state machine.

All this depends on a long period

of prior preparation—of deliberate mobilisation of the power of the working class through a series of partial and limited actions in order to prepare the movement for revolution. The crisis of capitalism and its regime are creating the objective conditions for this preparation to occur—but to end in victory it must be **undertaken consciously**.

An all-out general strike would have to move forwards towards a mass armed insurrection against the regime, or face the prospect of defeat. Its course would be determined by the extent to which, beforehand, and through the experience of preliminary skirmishes and huge battles, the masses in their overwhelming majority were prepared for a fight to the finish, and confident in a leadership which could take them to the end.

It is for this reason that, at this stage, *Inqaba* has put forward the call—**under appropriate conditions**—for a national general strike called for a **limited** duration (one, two, three days, etc.—the exact length is not the decisive question).

If properly prepared, such a strike would be a big step forward in cementing unity in the workers' movement, in testing the balance of forces, and in drawing new layers into organisation. It would be a dress rehearsal for future battles that lie ahead. It could be enormously im-

portant in strengthening the unity between the workers' and youth movements, which will become even more crucial in the future.

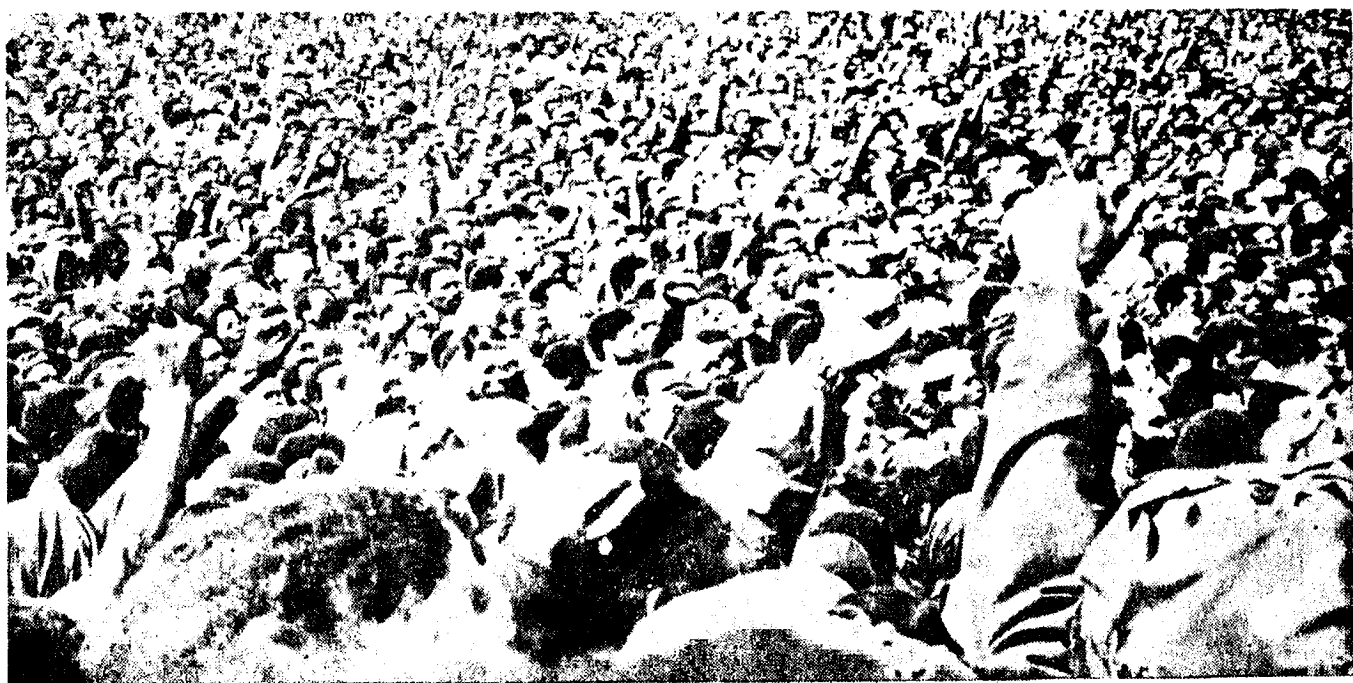
For maximum success in even a limited general strike, what is indispensable is a clear programme of action around which the largest forces of the workers can unite. Each potential general strike situation emerges out of specific issues and events. But there are nevertheless demands which are to the fore continually—for a national minimum wage linked to rises in the cost of living, for work and homes for all, etc.

Action

It is such demands which will rally the unorganised and weaker sections of the class into action.

With the imminent formation of a new federation, an even greater responsibility for perspectives, programme and strategy will fall to its new leadership. This applies also to the need for clarity on the tactic of the general strike, and the determination and will to use this tactic.

It is important for all activists to discuss the lessons of the general strike actions of the last few months, in order to prepare the movement for the bigger and more bitter battles which lie ahead.



Uitenhage, March: working people rally to protest against the police massacre. The turnout was the largest for any funeral in SA history.

Labour M.P. protests suspension of Marxists by ANC

When invited to contribute to discussion at an ANC meeting in London on 8 January, British Labour M.P. and Militant supporter Dave Nellist raised questions about the suspension of four South African Marxists from the ANC in 1979—but received no satisfactory answers.

The meeting, held on the 73rd anniversary of the founding of the African National Congress, was addressed from the platform by several ANC and SACTU spokesmen on the current situation in South Africa.

These speeches were followed by discussion from the floor, in which only three people had the opportunity to intervene.

The first was a young black ANC supporter, who expressed his disappointment with the contributions from the platform. "We've only heard facts that we know. We don't just want to hear how horrible things are, but what the way forward is for the South African masses," he said—and asked if it was the case that ANC leaders were talking with the regime's politicians.

To this, the platform responded by stating that talks had been offered by the Nationalist government, but on the basis of unacceptable conditions. Talks were not ruled out in the future, however.

Dave Nellist then spoke of the recent visit by striking British miner Roy Jones to the South African NUM, and how what shone out from Roy's report of his trip was the determination of workers, men and women, to take on the task of organising to overthrow the regime.

He referred to the huge mass strug-

gles that had been taking place, and how events like the two-day general strike in the Transvaal not only brought to the fore the massive power of the organised working class, but the basic demands of the movement.

The aspirations of the black SA workers for democracy and socialism, he continued, they shared with workers everywhere—and it was this which made worker-to-worker contact so vital, of which the Roy Jones visit was a striking example.

Dave said he had argued the case for direct links for a number of years, but unfortunately people in the British labour movement sometimes argued against such links, claiming the authority of the ANC and SACTU for this.

"We are not helped in building these links by articles such as this, from SACTU's paper *Workers' Unity* which has the headline 'Direct Links—Stinks'. I would like the platform to make some comment on that."

Undoubtedly, Dave continued, workers in South Africa were looking to build the ANC to implement the programme for democracy and socialism around which they were increasingly rallying. Therefore, he said, it was disturbing to realise that Marxists were unconstitutionally suspended from the ANC in 1979 for putting forward ideas which were becoming more and more widespread within South Africa.

He looked forward to continuing to assist the struggle against apartheid and capitalism in South Africa, and to assisting the ANC in every way he could.

In response to these remarks, the SACTU spokesman stated that SACTU were the genuine messengers who knew what was going on in South Africa, and that links should be established only through them.

"We know each individual in South Africa, what they stand for, and how far they are prepared to go. Colleagues outside South Africa are not in a position to know that, so they should do things through us."

Amazingly, the exiled SACTU leadership still is putting forward this position—despite the imminent formation of a new trade union federation in the country, and despite the overwhelmingly expressed desire of the organised black workers in South Africa to establish worker-to-worker

contact overseas solely under the vigilance and control of their own democratic organisations within the country.

The last speaker from the floor, a founder of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, also took up this point. Over the last months, she said, she had been in contact with a lot of British miners because of doing support work for the strike. They would want to have direct links, particularly with workers doing the same kind of jobs.

They had a strong dislike for bureaucracy, particularly what they saw in the top levels of the Labour Party. She thought they would dislike this attitude taken by the ANC. They would want to build links themselves and find out what was going on.

Communist Party

Regarding the suspended Marxists the SACTU spokesman replied to Dave Nellist: "The ANC is in an alliance and has been for many years with the South African Communist Party. All questions that revolve around Marxism-Leninism the Party is able to relate to but not the ANC which is not a Marxist-Leninist forum. If your friends are suspended, they must be aware of that."

Francis Meli of the ANC denied that the suspensions had been unconstitutional. Those suspended had "started pushing a line that was not SACTU policy." Because of these political differences, he added, "the position came when no more discussion was possible." But if they "rethought" their political position, they could come back.

These answers confirm what was argued by the suspended Marxists themselves in their pamphlet, *The Workers' Movement, SACTU and the ANC*—that the suspensions had been carried out for political reasons, and as a result of the domination of the ANC-in-exile by the sectarian interests of the SACP, hostile to the assertion by the South African working class of its leadership in the liberation struggle.

Inqaba joins with all socialists and genuine democrats in the movement in South Africa and internationally, in protesting against the suspension of these Marxists, and in calling for their reinstatement by the African National Congress.

THE HAZARDS OF PESTICIDES

Where labour is cheap, life is cheap. That is the experience of workers in Southern Africa when it comes to safety at work or control and prevention of occupational disease by the bosses or their governments.

Throughout Southern Africa, as workers are moving into struggle against oppression and exploitation, they are raising demands not only for decent wages and an end to redundancies and unemployment, but for safe and healthy conditions of work.

As a contribution to this struggle, Inqaba will publish occasional articles on hazards at work which we hope will be useful to activists in the workplaces.

Pesticides are chemical poisons used to spray over weeds, insects, and other pests that carry disease, or eat or destroy food crops.

But pesticides can also poison workers—the workers in the chemical industry who make them, workers who transport them, agricultural workers, workers in the food processing industry, any other workers who spray them around their workplaces, and of course anybody else who breathes air or eats food containing the poisons.

In the case of about 50 different chemical pesticides, workers using them are recommended by the manufacturers to wear respirators, gloves, rubber boots, overalls and face shields.

In many cases workers are not told these recommendations, let alone supplied with protective clothing.

Even if they were, wearing that sort of gear on hot sunny days when most of the spraying is done is nobody's idea of fun. (Even in not-so-sunny Britain, only a quarter of workers wear protective clothing for spraying, because of the heat.)

There are a lot of other ways that spraying could be made safer, for example air jets running over the spray

By Vivien Seal

to keep it down. But that means investment by the manufacturers, more cost for the users, and less spray used so less profits for the chemical firms.

It's cheaper for the bosses to risk workers' lives.

The two most important groups of pesticides are the **organo-chlorines** (OCs), like **DDT**, and the **organo-phosphates** (OPs), like **Parathion**. Both affect the nerves. Indeed they were developed as a spin-off from nerve gas research during the Second World War.

The USA and Sweden have banned several OCs, such as **DDT**, **Aldrin**, **Chlordane** and **Chlordecone**, and their use has been restricted in many other countries, as a result of the damage to the environment and to people that they caused.

These pesticides have been found to cause cancer in animal tests. They also cause headaches, dizziness, nausea, abdominal pains, sleeplessness, weight loss, tremors, and convulsions.

Male workers at Dow Chemical Co (USA) who were making dibromochloropropane (DBCP)—an ingredient in OCs—discovered they were sterile.

Poisoning

If you work with pesticides and have any of these symptoms, maybe your job is poisoning you.

Some governments have said the serious side effects of OCs have not been "proved"—but then they haven't done the medical checks that would supply the proof.

Organo-phosphates (OPs) cause headaches, dizziness, fatigue, trembling, speech disturbance, blurred vision, loss of appetite, sleeplessness, twitching, disorientation, apathy and sometimes coma.

They are also responsible for birth defects. The US journal *Science* reported tests on 36 pesticides and

they all damaged foetuses. Among the most commonly used pesticides with this effect are **Diazinon**, **Parathion**, and **Phosphamidon**.

In South Africa, 61% of deaths and casualties resulting from pesticide use are caused by organo-phosphate poisoning, 7% by organo-chlorines, and the rest by other types.

Mental confusion and difficulty in concentration, caused by chemical poisoning, also causes accidents with machinery—which therefore are not "accidents" at all, but preventable.

The most serious poisoning has been caused by handsprays using highly concentrated chemicals; and spraying from helicopters. Workers have been affected even while wearing protective clothing, so clearly the whole approach to protection needs to be drastically altered.

There are some practical steps workers can take to protect themselves from pesticides:

1. If you suspect that you are working with dangerous pesticides, get your union to demand that all the necessary facilities (e.g. for washing) are available and that regular health checks are made.
2. Find out if there are other ways of doing the job, e.g. hand-weeding instead of spraying; and find out if there is safer equipment. Get the union to campaign for its use. If there are no other ways of doing the job, make sure your employer supplies adequate protection.
3. To find out with more certainty what hazards are involved with the pesticide you are using, first look at the label on the container to find out the common name, trade name, or active ingredient.
4. From this, you will need to find out what chemicals are being used, and what their hazards are. This information is not widely available. The best book is *The Encyclopaedia of Manufacturing and Toxic Materials Control*, by M. Sittig, published by Noyes Publishing Co. (USA), which contains information on many products used world-wide. This book is expensive (about R150!), but any union whose

members are handling pesticides would find it extremely useful, if it could be afforded. Otherwise, some libraries have it.

5. To find out the dangerous properties of the chemical and the precautions you should take, you will need to consult *Dangerous Properties of Industrial Materials* by N.I. Sax, or the U.S. National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)'s *Toxic Substances List*. The Sittig book contains some information on toxicity, but Sax or the NIOSH list have more details, with advice on precautions and protection.

These books are not quite so expensive as the last one, and contain information on lots of materials beside pesticides. Like the last one, it would be useful for your union to buy them; otherwise they are available in libraries.

Without union assistance, or help from, e.g. educated youth, many workers working with pesticides will have difficulty getting hold of this information. *Inqaba* will pass on to those with knowledge in the field any enquiries received on particular substances, and publish the results. Included with this article are some examples.

Multinational employers want us to believe that massive use of pesticides is essential for food production. In the USA 30 years ago, 7% of the grain was lost before harvest. Now they use 12 times as much pesticide and lose twice as much of the crop. There are other ways of keeping pests down, but they mean employing more workers, and so cost more. So the capitalists are not prepared to use them, or invest in developing new, safer ways of controlling pests.

Millions of people in the world are starving, many of them in Southern Africa. Don't we depend on pesticides to increase food

There are other ways of keeping pests down, but the capitalists are not prepared to use them, or invest in developing new ways of controlling pests.

production?

No! It is the capitalist system that lies at the root of starvation. **Enough food could be produced in the world by today's farmers even with today's methods to feed everybody.** In fact one country alone (the USA) could feed everyone in the world without any advance in technology. But the advanced capitalist countries allow food to rot or be destroyed or pay farmers **not** to grow, in order to keep prices and therefore profits up.

Pesticides make the chemical companies richer, mean more profits for the rich farmers and force the poor

off the land. But they don't feed the starving.

Pests that carry disease have become resistant to some of the chemicals, which has meant an increase in diseases like malaria.

To end this madness we must end the capitalist system that creates it.

Under workers' rule, in the transition to a socialist society, it will be possible to guarantee plenty of food for everybody while cutting the use of pesticides and moving towards methods of pest control which do not endanger human life and health.

Summary of the hazards

ORGANOCHLORINES

Name	Other names or trade-names	See Key
Aldrin	Murphy Aldrin, Alderstan, Aldrex, Octaleno	1
Camphechlor	Toxaphen, Hercules 3956	*
Chlordane	Synchemicals Sydane, Octachlor	1
Chlordecone	Kepone	1
DBCP	Fumazone, Nemagon	*
DDT	Bugges/Chafer/Murphy DDT, Didimac	1
Dieldrin	Dilistan, Octalox	
Endrin		L*
Endosulfan	Thiodan, Cyclodan	2P
Gamma BHC	Lindane, Gammexane, Gamma HCH.	*

Other CCs include Dichloropropane, Dicofol and Tetradifon.

ORGANOPHOSPHATES

Azinphos-Methyl	Gusathion, Guthion	3PL
Chlorfenvinphos	Burlane	3P
Demeton S Methyl	Metasystox, Azotox, DSM, Demetox, Duratox	3P
Diazinon	Basudin, Diazitol, Neocidol, Nucidol	
Dichlorvos	DDVP, Nogos, Nuvan, Vapona, Dedevar	*
Dimethoate	Agrichem/Campbells, Hoechst etc. Dimthoate, Rogorn Cygon, Dimetate.	*
Malathion	Malaston, Malathiozol, Cythion	
Mevinphos	Phosdrin	2L
Parathion	Fosfex, Fosferno, Niran, Bladan	2PL
Phosphamidon	Dicron, Dimecron	3P
Phorate	Thimet	2

Other OPs include Carbophenothion, Chlorpyrifos, Demephion (3), Dimefox (1), Disulfoton (2), Dioxathion (3), Fenitrothion, Fonophos (2), Menazon, Mephosfolan (2), Methadathion (3), Omethoate (3), Oxydemeton-Methyl (3), Phosalone, Phosphamidon (3), Pirimiphos (3), Pyrazophos, Tetrachlorvinphos, Thionazin (2), Thiometon (3), Trichlorphon, Vamidithion (3).

Key to US laws

- 1 Banned in the US.
- * Use being revised by the US Environmental Protection Agency.
- L Use to be limited to well-trained workers.

OTHER PESTICIDES

Organomercurial (Trosan, Harvesan, Cersol, Panogen, Leytosan): interfere with central nervous system, cause pins and needles of extremities, apathy, fatigue, effects of sight and hearing. One of the authors of this article suffers from these effects after working with these substances for three years.

Paraquat & Diquat: small doses swallowed cause diarrhoea, difficulty in swallowing and ulceration of the tongue. There is no known antidote to larger doses, which have killed about 100 people. Irritates the skin and delays healing. Causes nose-bleeds and damage to the nails. During its production is known to cause skin-cancer. Breathing it in can cause lung-scarring.

Pyrethrum. A manager once coated himself with it to prove how harmless it was and promptly developed very bad dermatitis, much to the pleasure of the already afflicted workers.

Rotenone (Derris): convulsant, causes dermatitis and vomiting.

Nicotene: dizziness, nausea, headaches, vomiting, stomach-pains, mental disturbance.

Carbamates (Carbofurn, Methomyl, Carbaryl(*), Benomyl(*), EBDC(*)): affect the central nervous system, cause stomach-cramps, and hot and cold flushes.

Thiocarbamates (Zineb, Mancozeb, Maneb): cause the thyroid gland to produce too much. Associated with liver and lymph cancers; and may damage the foetus.

DNOC: this 'phenolic' is absorbed by the skin. Can cause weight-loss, sweating, anxiety, chest-pain, kidney-damage.

Hormone weedkillers (24-D, 245-T, MCPA, CMPP, Mecroprop): irritate the eyes, may cause liver-damage. Frequent use produces hypertension, and respiratory depression which may lead to coma.

Key to UK laws (Agriculture Regs)

- 1 Use full protective clothing and respirator.
- 2 Use full protective clothing and face-mask.
- 3 Use full protective clothing only when applying.
- P Covered by the Poisons Act 1933.

OBITUARY —



Lawrence Jongintaba Notha

On 8 January 1985, Lawrence Jongintaba Notha, activist and Marxist for many years, passed away in Serowe, Botswana at the young age of 57.

Born in Mount Ayliff in the Cape, he completed his formal education, in which he had excelled throughout, by obtaining a B.Sc. at Fort Hare. After teaching in high schools for several years, he was fired by the apartheid regime for his opposition to Bantu Education.

With the defeat of the workers' movement in the early 60's, LJ, like many others, fell victim to repeated harassment and detention by the state. Early in 1965 he went into exile in Botswana, where he taught at Swaneng Hill School, retiring in 1976 due to ill-health.

In his student days he became a leader of the Society of Young Africa (SOYA), and later joined the African Peoples Democratic Union of Southern Africa (APDUSA). Both these organisations were Unity Movement affiliates.

Through his work amongst the migrant workers, LJ early drew the conclusion that apartheid existed essentially to defend capitalism and the cheap labour system on which it is based—enforced through the migrant labour system.

The task of overthrowing apartheid, he realised, was inextricably

bound up with that of overthrowing capitalism itself. Only the working class was equipped to lead this struggle.

Conflict over conception of the revolution

This brought him into conflict with the conception of the nature and tasks of the SA revolution held by the middle-class leadership of the Unity Movement. LJ rejected their characterisation of the migrant workers as peasants, their call for solving the land question by capitalist methods, and their failure to put forward a class position of non-racial workers unity.

He also argued that the programme put forward by the Unity Movement leadership (the so-called 'minimum programme') failed to link the struggle against apartheid with the struggle against capitalism.

Such a programme, tailored round the utopian dreams of black middle-class leaders for a place in SA's capitalist sun, did not prepare the working class for its necessary leading role in the struggle both for democracy and socialism—and also did not explain to the mass of the middle class that the solution to their problems lies in the unity of all the oppressed behind the working class.

However, the UM leadership refused to change their position and suppressed debate on it. This convinced Lawrence that the Unity Movement could not serve as a vehicle for the liberation of the working class.

Long isolation ended

LJ's years of isolation in exile as one of a handful of activists with an unshakeable faith in the working class came to an end when he

established contact with labour movement activists in Europe who had continued in the genuine traditions of Marxism, and when he helped to found *Inqaba Ya Basebenzi*.

His understanding of the tasks posed for the liberation struggle was reflected in its first editorial:

"The coming period will see the ANC transformed into a mass organisation of workers and youth. All comrades should be clear that once the workers' movement reaches the stage of moving into the ANC, no-one will be able to avoid assisting the process because failure to do so will make them obstacles to liberation.

"The ANC like all other organisations faces immediately the task of bringing its policies into line with the work of preparing the working class for rule. The method, perspectives and programme of Marxism, developed by the working class movement internationally, over many generations of struggle, will provide the indispensable guidelines for carrying this task into practice."

Contribution to Marxist ideas

As sad as his premature death was the fact that Lawrence withdrew from political activity in the last years of his life.

Nevertheless *Inqaba* wishes to place on record the contribution he made to the struggle and the ideas of Marxism in the Southern African revolution.

Those who struggled with him and with whom he shared his knowledge and ideas will carry forward the work begun together with him.

We will remember him also by the slogan which he proposed, and which appears on the last page of *South Africa's Impending Socialist Revolution—Perspectives of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the African National Congress*:

"Ngesandla sakho, msebenzi, elilizwe lakhekhele!"

Botswana

SELIBE PHIKWE MINEWORKERS STRIKE, JULY 1975

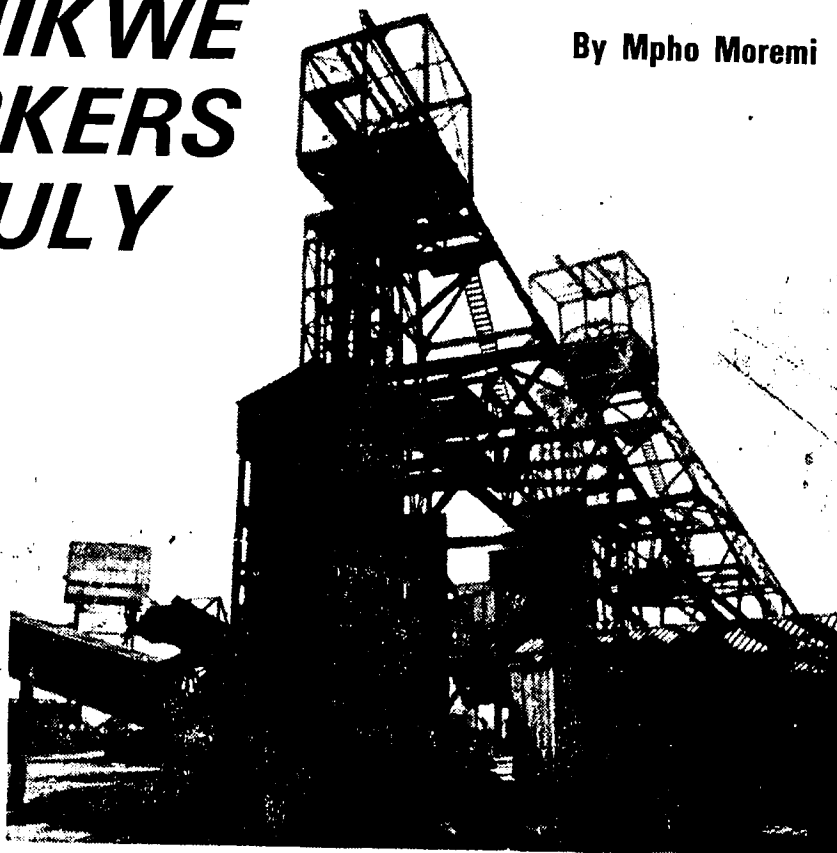
By Mpho Moremi

Ten years ago, in July 1975, 2 000 mineworkers at Botswana's Selibe Phikwe copper/nickel mine shook the country when they went on strike to press for a wage demand. The myth that independent Botswana was a 'peaceful and democratic' country was completely shattered as the bosses mobilized the full might of their state to crush the strike. The wounds inflicted upon workers during that period have still not fully healed.

The following ten years have brought with them greater and greater hardships for Botswana's workers. Unemployment has been rising and living standards continuing to fall. At the same time, the government has introduced new legislation geared at undermining the trade unions.

Today, Selibe Phikwe is threatened with closure because it is operating at a loss: thousands of workers will lose jobs. Multinational companies should not be allowed to squeeze workers to the last drop when they can still make profit, then dump them to the scrapheap when they are unable to satisfy their greed.

Against the background of mounting problems like these, many workers in trade unions will be discussing ways in which they can defend themselves. The Selibe Phikwe strike and the lessons that can be drawn from that, should form a part of these discussions.



The mines in Botswana are owned largely by multi-national companies, especially the South-African-based Anglo American Corporation and De Beers. Their aim is to suck as much profit as possible for themselves, and not use the wealth created to develop the country and better the lives of its people, especially the toiling masses. Each year, 41% of the total wealth produced in Botswana goes to foreigners. This is one factor that angered workers in Selibe Phikwe.

Production in the mine was undertaken by a company called Bamangwato Concessions Limited (BCL), which was owned 85% by Botswana Roan Selection Trust (BRST), and 15% by the Botswana government. BRST itself is owned: 30% by American Metal Climax (Amax) and 30% by Anglo American Corporation (AAC).

Amax, AAC and other shareholders provided the initial capital of about P35 million. They and the government have since provided massive

additional funding because of the company's losses due to poor copper prices in the world market.

At the same time, P52 million was loaned by West German banks. In return, BCL had to sign a 15 year contract to sell 55% of the nickel and all the copper to Metallgesellschaft, a West German firm which stood as guarantee for part of the loan.

Processing

But, before being sold in West Germany, all the ore had to be transported via Johannesburg to Maputo, and shipped to the Amax refinery in the USA for processing. Amax and AAC preferred this arrangement than to process the ore in the then Rhodesia, which is nearer Botswana and would therefore cost less, because Amax's Port Nickel plant in the USA was operating

below capacity.

Another P13,5 million to BCL was provided by South Africa's Industrial Development Corporation Investment Bank at a low interest rate. The condition for giving the loan was that P13,5 million of SA goods were purchased for mine construction equipment.

Triomf Fertilizer, a South African company owning shares in this bank, contracted to purchase most of the sulphur by-product of the mine, used to make fertilizer. In turn, Botswana has to buy fertilizers from the same company at very high prices.

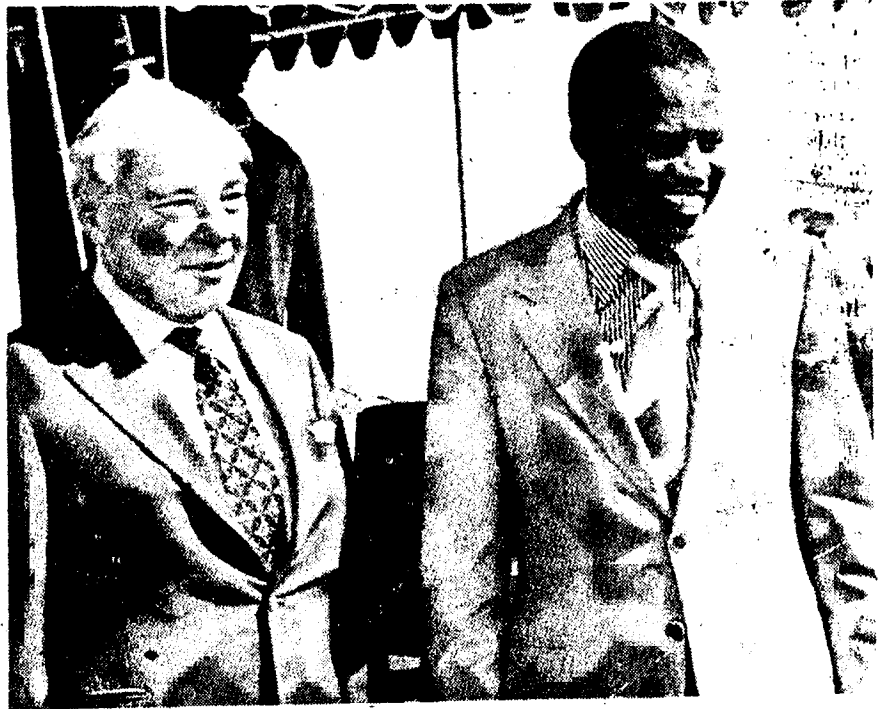
Meanwhile the Botswana government had to take responsibility for the general infrastructure in Selibe Phikwe—roads, water and electricity facilities. To finance these projects, it borrowed money from the USA and Canada. The Canadian loan was tied to Botswana purchasing Canadian equipment for the power station that was to be constructed in the area. The costs were very high—and the loans have to be repaid by the Botswana taxpayer.

The reason behind involving companies from different countries in this project was clearly stated by one Amax official when he said: "It has become an axiom of US government and international development agencies that projects involving investment from several national sources are to be preferred to projects having a single national source of finance... The finger of nationalistic anger or political animosity is not as apt to be pointed in different directions at once... This safeguard has been built into the structure of the Selibe Phikwe deal..."

Nationalisation

Such devilish calculations and blatant robbery has angered many workers, and has increased support among workers for BNF's call to nationalize all industries that are "important to the country". But nationalization can only benefit workers and the whole of society if the running and control of these industries is taken into the hands of workers themselves.

To achieve this, workers will have to overthrow capitalism. Because of



Botswana President Masire with Anglo American and De Beers boss Oppenheimer in 1982. Hand in glove with capitalism.

Botswana's domination by South African and world capitalism, and because of the threat they pose against a workers movement geared to this goal, it is essential that Botswana workers link their struggles to those taking place in South Africa and internationally against the same enemy. Only in this way will Botswana achieve real independence, and open the road to real development and a better life for all.

Discrimination

As long as capitalism exists, workers in Botswana will only be used to serve the interests of foreign companies and their governments. These investments and loans always go together with the employment of large numbers of expatriate skilled workers, with discrimination against local workers in wages, housing and conditions.

The capitalists are not prepared to invest properly in educating and training African workers. At the same time, to control the local workforce, they use foreign artisans and administrators for the top positions, and are prepared to pay the extra costs involved in order to 'divide and rule'.

The expatriates are paid very high salaries and enjoy many privileges.

By 1975, Selibe Phikwe had a population of about 1 200 foreigners. 52% held U.K. citizenship, 31% South African and 17% were from Europe and the USA.

At the mine, the lowest grade expatriate artisan earned a basic salary of P500 per month. No Motswana worker earned more than P330 per month. The lowest 78% (grades 1 to 3) earned between P40 and P80 per month, the middle 20% (grades 4 to 6) earned between P85 and P200 per month, and grades 6 to 8, only 2%, earned above P200 per month.

This was despite the fact that Botswana workers carried the biggest load of the work. Many Botswana who had qualified in different skills remained as trainees. This was to avoid promoting them, because that would mean sending expatriates back.

Subsidized housing was provided for everybody, though those of whites were bigger and more beautiful, built in an area away from where the rest of the Botswana stayed. No workers, except for domestic servants, visited the area which they called 'Tshaba Ntsa' (beware of the dog).

The overwhelming majority of unskilled workers could not stay in the company houses because they could

not afford the rent. They went to squat in an area that came to be known as Botshabelo (place of refuge), staying in shacks built of mud, old cardboard and plastic. Not many expatriates knew this place either.

In addition, expatriates had the usual inducement allowance, used company cars and enjoyed free flights for each family four times a year for a weekend in Johannesburg. Even white workers in South Africa do not enjoy such privileges.

Consequently, Batswana workers came to hate the expatriates as they hate the employers. They saw them as one common enemy. This was reflected during the strike itself when many expatriates got a hiding.

Discrimination of this kind will only come to an end when capitalism is destroyed throughout the world. It would then be possible for the people of Botswana to exercise the right of self-determination. Together with workers internationally, they would then see and enjoy the advantages of entering into voluntary agreements in planning the development of industry and sharing human resources.

A common struggle against capitalism will be the only basis to develop real solidarity among workers of different races and nationalities.

In the short term, the urgent task is to build links with workers in South Africa and internationally and begin the preparation of a common programme of self-defence against the bosses who are dividing the workers so as to smash their resistance.

Government

Workers cannot rely on the government to assist them. The Botswana government's priority has always been to attract as much foreign investment as possible. In order not to jeopardise this, it has succumbed to the conditions laid down by the investors and has protected them by oppressing workers.

It is government policy that every expatriate should have a Motswana worker whom he is training in his job, the intention being to have that job localized after a certain period. But the government takes no measures to enforce this policy. Many companies do not train

workers, and those who were trained and got qualifications remain as trainees, for up to ten years in some cases.

The same applies to wages—the government holds them down. Its policy is that, 'basic local wage and salary levels, in the private and parastatal sectors, should generally conform to, and on no account significantly exceed, those paid by government to comparable grades of public employees.'

In 1974, government skilled workers, those with a Junior Certificate, earned P60 a month, the breakpoint being P200. Semi-skilled ranged from P45 to P120 a month and the unskilled were started at P40 a month. All these measures guaranteed the capitalists maximum profit while many workers and their families languished in extreme poverty.

To retain this situation, legal restrictions were imposed on trade unions, rendering them ineffective as workers' weapons of self-defence. Strike action is illegal unless a series of cumbersome procedures are followed.

As a result, the strike in Selibe Phikwe was illegal and not organised by the union which in the eyes of workers was useless because there was nothing it could do on the basis

of the law, and its leaders were unwilling to go further.

The strike

In May 1975, without the knowledge of the trade union leadership, the underground workers went on strike demanding higher wages. Most of them had previously worked in South Africa, and found their wages far lower than what they got there. Statistics showed that the BCL workers were 20% worse off than their counterparts in SA. This raised much discontent.

The response of management was to call the chairman of the union and other officials for discussions. They were instructed to request the strikers to elect six representatives to negotiate with management. This was done.

But a few days later the workers walked out again because there had been no results from representations to management. Again union officials mediated and convinced the striking miners that their case would be considered in relation to the annual general wages review at the end of July.

In mid-July, at a mass meeting



A new militant generation. Working class youth are on the move now in Botswana.

held outside the mine by the union, there was massive pressure from the rank-and-file for a strike at the end of the month if there were no wage increases. Faced with this pressure, the union leadership agreed with the workers.

On July 25, when workers were paid, they found that increases had been awarded on a selective basis. It was only to workers who had been recommended by their expatriate heads of department.

A meeting was then organized, mainly by unskilled workers, to discuss these developments. It was held in Botshabelo, where many of these workers stayed. The trade union officials were not informed of this meeting. The skilled workers were also not informed because they were not trusted. As the unskilled workers put it: 'they sit in offices with the whites, we do not know what they tell them.' At this meeting, a decision to go on strike was taken.

The next morning all the gates to the mine were closed. Only the unskilled workers themselves knew what was happening. They were carrying sticks and chanting. One entered the mine to instruct the clerks and other office workers to join.

During the process, the expatriates were evicted from the smelter plant and other sections. The unpopular ones were lashed with sticks and their cars overturned. The union officials were given no role to play at all, and were constantly shouted down at the gates: 'no union here, you always quote the labour laws for us!'

On that same day, the government sent the then Vice-President, Dr Masire, who is now President, to speak to the strikers and persuade them to call off the strike. All he got in reply were a few lashes on his back as he was running to safety.

Ultimately the Police Mobile Unit was sent to the area and they managed to disperse the strikers with tear-gas. The whole area came under heavy police security for some days and construction of a police station began soon afterwards.

At the end, 622 workers lost their jobs and 100 were detained. Two months after the strike 60 male and 2 female workers were charged with rioting, intimidation and malicious damage to property. In December 1975, 34 were convicted and received jail sentences ranging from 3 to 12 months.

In a radio broadcast after the strike, the then President, Sir Seretse Khama, summed up the reaction of his government. '...the irresponsible action of a handful of Batswana caused a complete closedown...It is essential for Botswana's development that we should retain foreign investment. It is also necessary for us to import expatriate skills to aid us in our development. This can only be done if the companies who invest here obtain a reasonable return on their investment and if skilled expatriates feel that their lives and property are safe...illegal and unnecessary strikes have continued to such an extent that Botswana will lose its reputation as a stable and safe country in which to invest money.'

The strike, and the particular response of the President, showed clearly how the state is there to attack the working class and defend the interests of the capitalists.

Building Unions

This fact should be clear in the mind of every worker who today is trying to transform the present unions into democratic and fighting organisations of the working class, independent of control by, and in opposition to, the state. Every step in this direction will be viciously opposed by both the employers and the government.

Because capitalism is incapable of developing production and improving the living standards of the majority of the working class, democracy is an intolerable liability on the shoulders of the bosses and their state. The right to form trade unions and to strike will always be attacked.

If the workers are to preserve their living standards and the democratic rights that they have, they need to carry through the overthrow of capitalism and transform society. It is with this perspective that trade unions should be built.

The workers in Selibe Phikwe demonstrated their power and preparedness to struggle. Undoubtedly, in the coming period more and more Batswana workers are going to show similar strength and determination. The task of the activists is to prepare themselves and the labour movement for these coming battles.

SUDAN



Numeiri—at the end, his only friends were the noose and the amputating knife.

This article sketches the background to the coup which toppled Numeiri in April, and assesses likely future developments.

Already it is clear that the new junta offers no solutions to the economic crisis, famine, corruption, and national division which drove the masses into action.

At a rally called by the powerful Trade Union Alliance in May, a succession of speakers called for more strikes and civil disobedience "to safeguard our revolution."

The new regime—delaying elections until next April—has stalled on carrying out the promises on which it came to office. Corrupt top officials are re-confirmed in posts; members of the security police, jailed after the coup, have been released.

The brutal "Islamic laws" introduced by Numeiri in 1983 have not yet been repealed.

Before the coup mass demonstrations chanted "We won't be ruled by the IMF" (International Monetary Fund): yet the government is already bowing to Western pressures.

Even the *British Times* (4/6/85) is forced to concede that "the complaint everywhere is that things are moving too slowly."

The ground is being prepared for new mass explosions, and splits and turmoil at the top: the Sudanese revolution is only beginning.

After Numeiri, what way forward?

Reprinted from *Militant*,
(19/4/85), voice of Marxism in
the British labour movement

Sudan is going through a period of workers and peasants revolution.

The worsening conditions caused by the world capitalist crisis set the scene for massive discontent. The corruption, repression and economic stupidity of the Numeiri regime led to its crumbling away and now has led to its overthrow.

One group after another of the Sudanese people were rapidly drawn into a massive revolutionary movement.

After prices of petrol, food etc were raised yet again last month, riots, huge demonstrations and a general strike paralysed the city for ten days.

The mood of the population forced the Army to intervene to replace the hated Numeiri before the situation went out of their control.

General Abdul Rahman Swar-al-Dahab made a radio announcement: "The armed forces unanimously decided to respond to the will of the people and take over power and hand it back to the people after a limited transitional period".

The *Times* reports on the wild jubilation which greeted this announcement. "Suddenly it seemed as though most of the inhabitants (of Khartoum) were on the streets, cheering, dancing and waving flowers and branches torn from bushes". People shouted to soldiers "the army and the people are one". The soldiers raised their rifles and grinned. Even the riot police were forgiven, but not the vicious secret police who had helped Numeiri to rule by fear.

100 000 workers and slum dwellers marched on the Kober prison which held 2 000 political prisoners, ripped off the outer gates and a barbed wire fence. The prison guards swung open the gates and cheered the crowd as they let them in, past the gallows where executions and amputations had recently taken place under Islamic law. The imprisoned opposi-

tionists were released.

In the city thousands attacked the identity card centre where the 30 000 strong secret police were based. Some of the crowd were shot as they broke down the gates until soldiers and riot police arrived and dragged away the secret policemen.

Striking workers started to return to work expecting changes from the new regime. The military leaders demanded that the strikers end their action. They hoped that the working class and the slum dwellers, having played their part, would now just fade into an admiring chorus of support for the military. But revolutions are not political soap operas where inconvenient characters and classes can be written out of a plot at will. The ruling class are worried. Not only Numeiri's rule but capitalism is threatened.

Seeking safe alternative

Observers from USA, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, capitalism's policemen in North Africa, had previously been trying to discuss with Numeiri's opponents—those who were not in prison. They saw Numeiri was doomed and wanted a safe alternative.

Every section of society except the rich had suffered. The drought in the Sahel area has led whole communities to move in search of food and water. New desert areas have been created, aided by government agricultural plans which uprooted trees over 5 000 square miles eroding the soil irreversibly. Roads and irrigation have been neglected.

The food price riots came after the effects of thirteen devaluations in just over six years. The leaders of the trade unions were imposed by Numeiri but such has been the pressure from below that even they had to ask for some concessions from the regime. But capitalism's room for manoeuvre and compromise is restricted.

At the end, Numeiri's only friends

were the noose and the amputating knife, using the "Islamic laws", the Sharia, he imposed in 1983 as a means of repression. Even amongst faithful Moslems Sharia has proved unpopular. Many welcomed it at first, hoping political life would be cured of the corruption found at all levels.

They hoped in vain. Islamic banks backed by Saudi Arabian capital make a huge profit even though they charge no interest. They have been stockpiling food regardless of the famine. A few rich Moslems and Numeiri's tottering dictatorship were



After the coup: a donkey representing Numeiri is led through Khartoum.

the only beneficiaries.

In the south, a black Christian area, the Ethiopian-based Sudanese Peoples Liberation army, a guerrilla movement, had been building support especially after 1983. The area had been given some autonomy in 1972 ending a long civil war but this concession was snatched back through Islamicisation and last year's state of emergency.

The guerrillas say they are not just a movement for regional autonomy; they demanded Numeiri's replacement throughout Sudan. Colonel John Garang, the SPLA leader must have echoed many fears when he says that Swar al Dahab "treacherously stole Sudan" from the workers, white collar workers, professionals and slum dwellers who had brought the dictator down. He called for the strikes to continue and even threatened to resume the war unless the general gave civilian power immediately.

The United States may put pressure on to conciliate the south with its oil fields, and US bases. Throughout the whole country they hope that the new regime will preempt a more radical overthrow later. Events though will not be totally under their control.

The new 15-man junta has been discussing with the alliance of unions, professional associations and political parties which organised the strikes.

'Democratic' words

The junta promised civilian power after twelve month's transition. But how can this be ensured? There can be no faith in the "democratic" words of the capitalists and landlords. They backed Numeiri.

The general secretary of the Sudanese Communist Party Ibrahim Nogoud told the magazine *Africa Asia* that the CP had for some time called for the end of the Numeiri regime, an improvement in the economy, a fight against famine and a just settlement in the south. Noble sentiments but nowhere did Nogoud spell out the policies they would fight for. There was no mention of socialism and no suggestion as to who would lead this movement towards democracy, no mention of the role of the working

class in particular.

The CP leader says that individual parties are too weak on their own, so the Communists are ready to unite with other forces in Sudan. But what forces? What attitude will the CP take towards Swar al Dehab's junta or the capitalist groups in the alliance? Will they trust the junta's progressive credentials as they did, fatally in 1969-1971?

In May 1969 a bloodless coup against a reactionary government made Numeiri, an army colonel, defence minister and effective leader. There was a civilian figurehead with personal support from the Communist Party, which then had a million members and could mobilise far more in demonstrations.

It was the second largest Communist Party in Africa and the Middle East. The CP backed Numeiri for his "progressive" statements against imperialism. The regime had diplomatic relations with East Germany for instance.

Numeiri relied on this support as first of all he ditched the civilian figurehead, then sacked CP sympathisers from the government and armed forces. Finally in July 1971 Numeiri provoked an attempted coup which failed. Party leaders, trade unionists and other "dangerous" people were executed and the movement beheaded.

The Communist Party were strong enough for a relatively peaceful transformation of society if the working class organisations had taken the lead in the '60's. But as on many occasions before, the Stalinist theory of two stages, first of capitalist "democracy" then socialism, has led to tragedy.

The strategists of capitalism, despairing of resurrecting Numeiri, probably hope they can trap the Communist Party and other representatives of the workers and peasantry into similar mistakes this time. After the coup, *The Times* suggested bringing the Communist Party into a government.

US imperialism

Sudan is vital to US plans. After Numeiri became an open agent of capitalism, he offered help in the Chad dispute against Libya and aided opponents of the Stalinist regimes

in Ethiopia and South Yemen amongst others.

US imperialism wants to protect its military bases and access to its oil interests. They recently negotiated another loan, on the conditions of even more austerity in a starving country and allowing America to install a nuclear waste dump in the Darfar desert.

Haunting

But haunting the minds of the capitalists must be the memory of the Ethiopian revolution of 1974 when the reactionary landlord regime of Emperor Haile Selassie was brought down. The emperor's total indifference to the conditions of the 1974 famine together with the colossal backwardness of a state in pawn to western capitalism pushed comparatively junior officers to a coup.

At the start, this was fairly "moderate". But the spark of political change ignited mass movements, first in the small working class in Addis Ababa and middle class town dwellers. Then the peasantry moved to gain land reforms and overthrow their feudal oppressors.

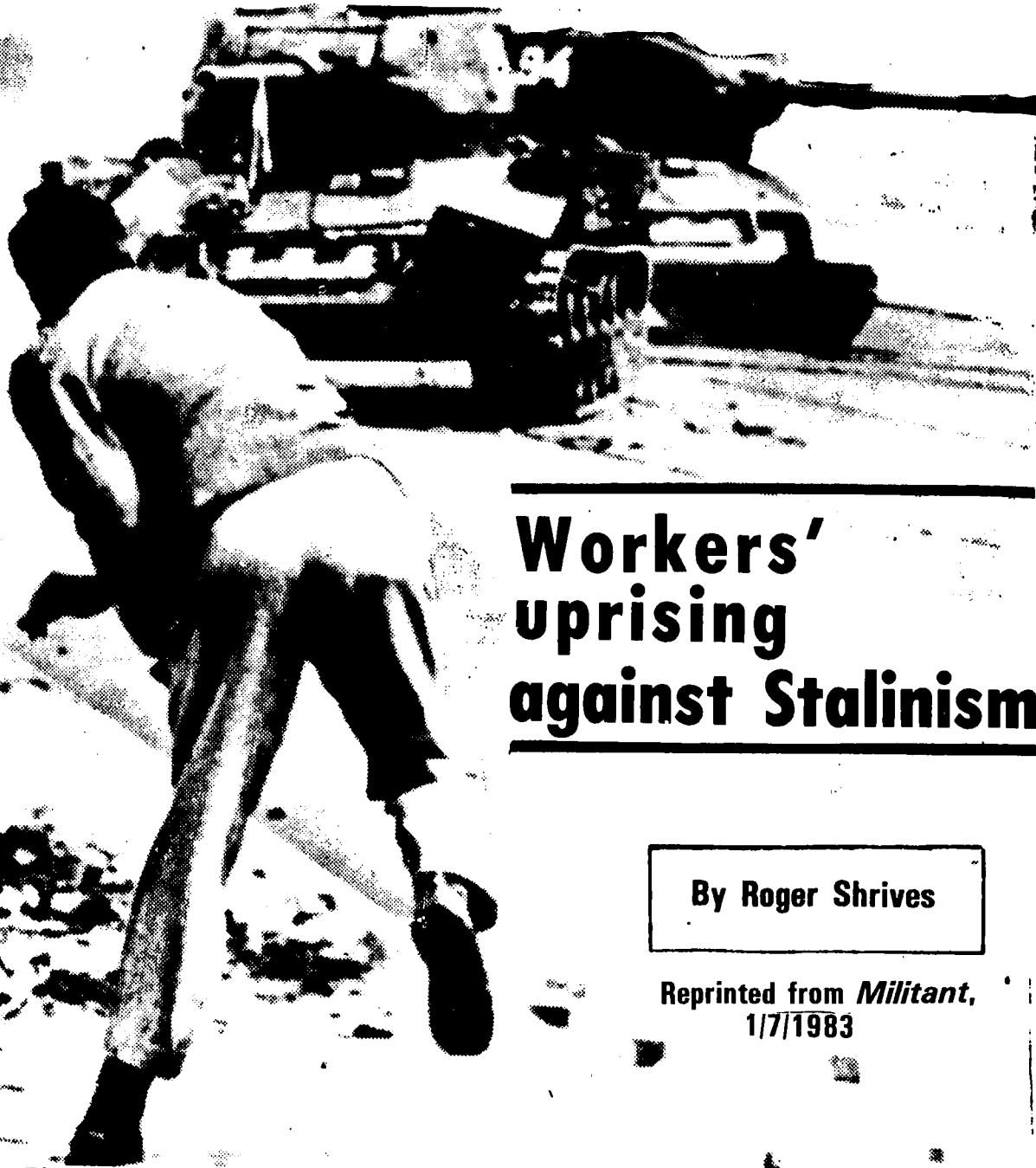
The opening up of class divisions was mirrored within the armed forces and a section of them broke totally with capitalism and landlordism and took the revolution through to the formation of a Stalinist regime modelled on present day Russia.

Capitalism could not develop Ethiopia or in any other African state. Despite the lack of a conscious working class leadership and despite the smallness of the proletariat, a regime based on nationalisation and land reform but with a military-police dictatorship instead of a genuine workers democracy was installed in Ethiopia.

What happens in Sudan depends on the role which the working class plays. If the junta or the workers political leaders can make them abstain from active intervention in the struggles a repeat of 1971 is not ruled out.

The setting up of a workers democracy in Sudan, though, would transform the situation in this part of the world and lay the basis for a socialist federation of Africa and the Middle East.

32 YEARS AGO IN EAST GERMANY:



Workers' uprising against Stalinism

By Roger Shrides

Reprinted from *Militant*,
1/7/1983

Between 16 and 19 June 1953, in East Berlin and all major industrial areas of East Germany, over 300 000 workers struck and demonstrated in the first major working-class uprising against Stalinism in Eastern Europe.

The demonstrators were almost 100% from the working class; often the leaders had been members of the Communist Party and Social Democratic Party before Hitler came to power 20 years previously. The demonstrations were clearly aimed at

the dictatorial regime of the bureaucracy and not at the economic base of East German society, the nationalised economy and return to capitalist ownership.

The mass movement was eventually defeated by the tanks of the Rus-

sian bureaucracy. In the purge which followed, 71% of all the local party secretaries of the 'Communist'-dominated Socialist Unity Party (SED) were fired for supporting the uprising.

Today East Germany is seen as the most stable and affluent of the East European Stalinist states, the second largest economic power in COM-ECON, the economic community of the Eastern bloc, and the eighth largest economic power in the world. It has a per capita Gross National

Product larger than that of Britain.

Neither in 1953 nor today are the East German workers campaigning for a return to capitalism; instead, the June 1953 uprising shows the instinctive demand for workers' democracy.

The workers' revolt began, significantly, only three months after the death of Joseph Stalin whose monstrous rule, with its slave camps and show trials, represented the narrow caste in power in the USSR, a bureaucracy completely parasitic on the working class who had made the revolution in October 1917. Throughout the USSR and even more in Eastern Europe, Stalin's death was the signal for some of the hidden opposition and anger at the bureaucratic regimes to come to the surface.

At the beginning of June 1953, in the industrial centre of Pilsen in Czechoslovakia, troops had to be brought in from the capital, Prague, to disperse a demonstration against currency reform. But within a week a far larger insurrection was developing in East Germany.

In East Berlin about sixty building workers stopped work on 15 June at the Friedrichshaim Hospital building site to draw up a letter, signed by all the workers, complaining at huge increases in work norms imposed from above by the government. In an attempt to increase the productivity of labour, workers were threatened with a fall of wages of a third or more if they did not increase their output by more than 10%.

Economic protest

The uprising began as an economic protest by building workers who had been hoping for larger wages in the longer daylight hours of summer. Their decision was mirrored by workers on a neighbouring site, building a police barracks, and on the Stalinallee construction site.

The next morning, 16 June, two groups of workers marched from Stalinallee and Friedrichshaim. By the time the two groups of marchers had toured the other building sites to call workers out on strike the whole of the Stalinallee complex came to a halt. It was estimated that the protestors by then numbered around 10 000.

Leaders of the procession had a



Banners raised in the 1953 uprising demand workers' democracy: "We are workers and not slaves...we want free elections"

crudely painted banner, reading, "Down with 10% rise in the norms". The building workers were joined by other factory workers, clerks, minor officials, even shoppers, shouting in chorus, "We are workers and not slaves, put an end to the extortionate norms, we want free elections, we are not slaves."

The demonstration was now taking an overtly political form, protesting not only against the norms but against the government, the Communist Party and in particular Communist Party leader Walter Ulbricht.

The demonstration was growing and gaining support from the population. Those watching shouted and waved encouragement from the windows of blocks of flats and offices, with people demanding, "To the government, to the Leipziger Street".

Heinz Brandt, then secretary of the SED in Berlin, said, "The building workers have thrown a spark into the mass. The spark burst into flame. It was like Lenin's dream come true, only this mass action was directed against a totalitarian regime ruling in Lenin's name and headed by those who called themselves Lenin's followers..."

"The Party and the state officials were overwhelmed by the events and increasingly paralysed. Something monstrous was going on before their eyes, the worker was rising against the worker-peasant state."

Amongst these officials a small

section went over immediately to the workers, reflecting the tremendous mood of antipathy to the government and the determination to achieve the aim of genuine socialism, power to the working class.

The demand for free elections was given added strength by the large number of members of the Social Democrats (SPD) whose party had been forcibly grafted onto the Communist Party (KPD) to form the Socialist Unity Party, in which the Communist Party was totally dominant. But the demand gained support also from many activists from the KPD from before the Second World War. The demonstrators congregated outside government buildings where a building worker conducted the choruses, "We want to talk with the government. Pieck and Grotewohl!"

Scorned

KPD officials and minor SED politburo members were scorned, with demands that the government should come and answer questions from the working class in whose name it was supposedly governing. One worker called for a general strike if the government had not shown up in half an hour, and when this did not materialise the workers marched away and started to spread the strike.

When the government loudspeaker

The strike spread to the majority of industrial cities in East Germany, involving 150 centres and 300 000 workers.

cars approached and tried to explain the position of the Party leadership, the crowd seized the cars and marched with them, broadcasting through the loudspeakers, that all workers in Berlin should join a general strike the next day.

The Politburo of the SED issued a statement speaking of the need for higher production and higher norms if living standards were later to rise, and said that workers who accepted norm increases would be able to have wage rises in the near future. Yet even the Politburo had to concede that the norms "may not and cannot be pushed through with administrative methods, only through free will."

By the next day the strike had spread to the majority of industrial cities in East Germany involving 150 centres and 300 000 workers, particularly in the older industrial areas, with over 120 000 on strike in the industrial area of Bitterfeld, Halle, Leipzig and Merseburg and tens of thousands in Magdeburg, Jena, Brandenburg, Goerlitz. All of these had been known as "red" centres in the pre-war Weimar republic.

In all cases the strike spread outwards from the big factories into the smaller industrial areas. Only in one major heavy industrial area, Stalinstadt, was there no strike; this was a new industrial area with no pre-war tradition of struggles and where workers were relatively highly paid.

In Berlin more than 60 000 workers were on strike. In factory after factory workers organised meetings not only about norms but leading to detailed discussions about the crimes of the SED regime, including arbitrary arrests of many workers from their ranks. Worker councils were elected to represent workers' economic and political interests and calls were made for demonstrations. Most of the demonstrations were forcibly dispersed and the so-called trouble makers arrested and in many cases beaten up by the police.

In Merseburg 10 000 workers from Leuna works, singing revolutionary songs, marched into the city where they met thousands of workers on the Buna plant, stormed into the police station, ransacked party offices and broke into the jails to release

prisoners. In Leipzig, workers occupied youth headquarters and destroyed all the portraits except those of Karl Marx. At Halle, 8 000 railway workers seized the SED headquarters, the council offices and the prisons.

In Brandenburg the so-called "People's judges" and the public prosecutor were beaten up by demonstrators, and in Rathenow an informer was beaten so severely that he later died. Only the specially trained elite "People's Police", kept in separate garrisons, and their notorious informers, sided with the Ulbricht regime.

By now Russian troops and tanks were moving into Berlin as the East Germany government could not handle the situation on its own. On 17 June martial law was proclaimed, banning demonstrations and meetings.

Despite the enormous heroism of workers armed with nothing but crowbars, bottles, sticks and building bricks, the uprising was crushed and its leaders imprisoned or executed. 1300 were brought to trial, four were sentenced to life imprisonment, six sentenced to death and some reporters estimated that as many as 260 died from Russian bullets.

Even this repression did not immediately end the protests. Three weeks later there were still reports of sit-down strikes in East Berlin demanding the release of strike leaders, higher wages, lower prices, a change in government and free elections.

The government made some temporary economic concessions. A vast stockpile of food and clothing material was made available for sale. Early in July 1953, the wages of the lowest paid workers were increased and wage reductions dated from the beginning of the year were cancelled.

But many of these reforms were short-lived. As soon as this revolutionary crisis had passed many of the concessions were removed, increased norms were reimposed and party and trade union leaders who had taken seriously early instructions to "stand up for their members" were reprimanded or sacked.

The purge of SED members after the uprising found that one-third of

those in leading positions in the demonstrations had been members of the old German Communist Party prior to Hitler's succession to power in 1933.

In East Berlin 68% of the leaders were former Communist Party members. Many saw this uprising as a continuation of the same fight for workers' power they had waged against both Hitler and the other capitalist governments before the Second World War.

What had led to this insurrection? A socialist Germany had been the aspiration of the Marxists from the days of Marx himself. Lenin and Trotsky, in the early days of the Russian revolution, understood the vital importance of this industrial giant of Europe for the socialist transformation of the world. A socialist Germany was a means of escape from isolation for the backward peasant economy of Russia after the 1917 revolution.

Bureaucratic caste

But the bureaucratic caste which came to rule Russia under Stalin was in constant fear of a genuine revolution developing in the industrial west. Stalin expressed contempt for the German working class. During the Second World War, he said that Communism fitted Germany "like a saddle fitted a cow".

The Second World War had wrought havoc in the USSR and over 20 million Russian workers are estimated to have died. Stalin publicly denounced the German working class, alleging that they did not fight the Nazis, even though an estimated 800 000 German trade unionists and political activists from the working class were executed or imprisoned in the early years of Hitler's power.

It had in fact been Stalin's own policies, followed by the German Communist Party, that had allowed Hitler to come to power "without a pane of glass being broken".

The state of East Germany was formed after the war not as a result of a revolution, but through conquest by the Red Army. After the defeat of the Nazis, largely as the result of the colossal sacrifice of the Russian working class, the imperialist powers, in particular the United States and Britain, saw as their main concern the

Western capitalists understood very well that the East German working class were not demonstrating for the return of capitalism.

division of Europe into spheres of influence.

Germany was divided and occupied by the conquering armies. The Potsdam agreement in 1945 allowed the individual powers occupying Germany to decide how far they wanted to destroy German industrial strength through claims for reparations.

They had been huge losses by Russia during the war, but whereas after the First World War Bolshevik Russia under Lenin mercilessly attacked the capitalist powers for their reparations policy—which penalised the German working class for the crimes of the ruling class—after the Second World War Russia demanded \$10 000 million recompense for war losses.

Until 1946 they took equipment away from the Russian occupied zone of Germany and reassembled it in Russia. 26% of all industry was taken. War and reparations reduced East German workers to penury.

Many of the old capitalists were tainted by their involvement with the Nazi occupation. As they fled the advancing Red Army, new regimes were installed throughout Eastern Europe in the image of the USSR—not in 1917 but as it was in 1945 under Stalin.

These regimes, with the same social base of that of the USSR, rested entirely on the Red Army. They were able to erect false “popular” governments using the shadows of the old capitalist class to keep in check any independent movement of the working class and peasantry, at the same time as they started to oust the leaders of the capitalist parties. In East Germany the Russian commanders picked out “reliable” people from any background which was not obviously Nazi and placed them in state positions such as police officers, mayors, etc.

In 1946 a number of leaders of the Social Democrats (SPD) agreed to merge their party with the Communist party in the Russian occupied zone. One of these, Grotewohl, was given a leading position in the new Socialist Unity Party (SED).

Many workers kept their allegiance to the former SPD rather than the

new hybrid, as Stalinist control of Eastern Germany had done little to change their views. The Communist Party opposed strikes, and agitation about low wages, even though industry was still largely privately owned to begin with.

Instead the Stalinists used bribery, such as special ration cards for SED members, to convince political enemies. At the same time, former Social Democrats were often arrested.

Although many Communist Party members from before the war retained their membership, the party ranks were swelled by many place seekers, including many from the middle class who saw Stalinism as a better guarantee of the future than the dead end of capitalism.

At no stage did the East German Stalinists encourage direct participation of the working class. This was no repeat of 1917. There were no workers’ soviets, and no independent movements of workers.

Despite the waste and mismanagement of the bureaucracy, the state ownership of the economy provided the basis for considerable economic growth.

The East European economy had been very poorly developed before the war, and after it some areas practically doubled their industrial output in a few years. But all of the development was in heavy industry; consumption goods were totally ignored and this lopsided economic development saw its results in the lowered living standards of the working class.

In 1950, following the war and reparations, workers’ living standards in East Germany had reached only 46% of the level of 1937. In 1953 this had grown to 89%, and by then industrial production was way over the level in 1937 for Germany as a whole.

Numerically, the working class in East Germany was by far the most powerful force in society, and they soon began demanding their reward for the growth rate of 20% per year.

The situation was made even more explosive by divisions developing within the ruling bureaucracy following the death of Stalin. Throughout Eastern Europe and the USSR the bureaucratic caste seemed paralysed.

They depended on the atmosphere of fear developed by the secret police and the purges during the rule of Stalin. But equally, they were afraid that the working class, which had grown enormously in size since the 1920s, would explode and end their rule completely unless certain cosmetic changes were made.

In Russia itself, in that same summer of 1953, half a million prisoners in the Vorkuta slave labour camp struck in the most difficult and dangerous conditions despite the shooting of 120 strikers.

In East Germany the government at first carried on totally subordinating consumption to the building up of heavy industry, but at the beginning of June only a few days after the norm increase for workers had been decreed, the Russian high commissioner ordered the East German government to adopt a more conciliatory policy, including a drastic cutback in the plan for heavy industry.

The debate within the Communist Party leadership on whether or not to give concessions to the working class

Workers demonstrate in Potsdamer-platz, East Berlin, 17/6/1953.



Special supplement with this issue

SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES:

Workers' revolution or racial civil war

- The economy — basis of perspectives
- Character and tasks of the revolution
- Reform, reaction and civil war
- Strategy and tasks

Comrades are urged to read and systematically discuss this document in study circles. Make photocopies and pass Inqaba and the supplement on to others.

helped to foster an atmosphere of hope lacking in earlier years.

Western capitalist leaders understood very well that the East German working class were not demonstrating for the return of capitalism. The West German government was content to make propaganda points on the radio but certainly not to offer any real support to the workers.

The leaders of trade unions in the West were also unwilling to offer any support. When East Berlin workers marched through the Brandenburg gate into West Berlin, they received the sympathy of the working class and gifts of cigarettes and chocolates.

In Magdeburg, railway workers told East German workers, "We negotiate neither with Adenauer (Chancellor of West Germany) nor

with Ulbricht, but only with Ollenhauer (the leader of the SPD)." Ollenhauer was following the lead of the West German and the American ruling classes, who would prefer, whatever their differences with the Russian bureaucracy, for them to maintain control of the East German state, rather than to have genuine workers' democracy.

Although the Berlin uprising was crushed, it showed the bureaucracy that it could no longer treat the working class with contempt. When Polish workers came onto the streets in 1956, the East German bureaucracy rapidly acted to lower consumer prices by up to 50%, to ward off any workers' protest.

In the 1960s there were growth rates of 5-6% in East Germany, and far more was spent on the improve-

ment of living standards than in most other East European countries, with large subsidies for consumer goods.

But regardless of these reforms, East Germany remains a state in crisis and the development of society will come up against the obstacle formed by the bureaucracy with all its waste, incompetence and mismanagement. Eastern Europe needs workers' democracy to develop fully, like a living body needs oxygen.

The memory of the 1953 uprising will serve as an inspiration to East German workers as their struggles inevitably impel them towards political revolution, the successful overthrow of bureaucratic control of society, and the implementation of real workers' democracy, in East Germany and throughout all Eastern Europe.

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For security reasons, fictitious names have been used by writers of articles in this issue of *Inqaba ya Basebenzi*. In every case, however, care has been taken not to give a misleading impression of the background and experience of the comrade concerned. Details about writers are provided only when security considerations make this possible.

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