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



AFTER THE CRACKDOWN -- HOW TO ADVANCE?

Special section: Fightback against Inkatha

Plus: Freedom Charter ■ Religion and Marxism ■ SA economy ■ School students ■ Defeat SA imperialism! ■ Palestinian revolt ■ Nigeria ■ Armenia



EDITORIAL BOARD STATEMENT

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

15 March 1988

After the crackdown—How to advance?

Defy the bans! Build the locals! Build the ANC!

Botha's February 24th crackdown on 18 organisations including COSATU, SAYCO and the UDF, is not a sign of strength. It is a sign of the crisis of the government.

Behind it lies the collapse of Botha's "reform" programme. It therefore marks a turning point of the greatest significance.

The crackdown confronts our movement with many additional problems, that is true. But, by defying the crackdown and fighting back, we can show where the real strength in this country lies. It lies with the millions of black workers and youth, women and men, who have begun rising to their feet and will not submit to slavery again.

A new stage

Botha's crackdown in fact marks a stage in the development of the South African revolution. It shows that the regime, for all its talk of "reform", cannot live with any genuine democratic organisation of the black majority.

The UDF, SAYCO etc are only allowed to keep their books, look after the furniture, and consult the lawyers! Everything else is illegal (except with the Minister's permission). In effect, they are banned.

The government aims to restrict COSATU to the narrowest shopfloor issues. It is banned from campaigning for the release of prisoners or against death sentences. It may not resist apartheid constitutional schemes or puppet authorities. It may not call for protests on June 16th, or other days of historic significance to our movement. It may not demand sanctions. It may not hold public meetings to discuss any of these things.

Labour Relations Bill

At the same time the trade unions are threatened by coming changes in the Labour Relations law. These:

- * will make it impossible to call a strike legally so long as a government inspector wants to delay it;
- * will prohibit solidarity strikes;
- * will make it easier for bosses to victimise shop-stewards after strikes;
- * will allow union funds to be seized, and make unions pay the bosses for losses during strikes;
- * will enable the bosses legally to recognise splinter unions and UWUSA when these are rejected by most workers.

All these measures against the unions and COSATU show that the government simply cannot live with a workers' movement that fights for -- or even expresses -- the most basic aspirations for freedom and a better life.

The latest crackdown, taken together with the State of Emergency and the Labour Bill, proves that the majority of the people of SA can expect

The Sharpeville Six

We salute the comrades facing death by the hangman Botha.

They were found guilty, not of killing, but of "common purpose" with those who killed the puppet deputy mayor of Sharpeville, a hired gangster of the regime. We all have a common purpose with them in fighting for the overthrow of the regime.

We demand the executions be stopped.

By murdering these comrades, Botha wants to terrorise opposition to his black puppet authorities and get black people to vote on 26 October. The result will be the opposite.

If Botha rejects clemency, if the executions take place, we can best avenge them by ensuring the biggest boycott campaign SA has seen.

The message must be carried all across the country:

* Whoever registers for Botha's elections will be registering in the blood of the Sharpeville Six.

* Whoever votes on October 26 will be making a cross in the blood of the Sharpeville Six.

The campaign for a total boycott must begin now.

In this way we can build a monument of struggle to all the martyrs of our movement.

COSATU'S TASKS

We urge COSATU to:

- * Make the days of action proposed for 11-13 April a national protest strike (with SAYCO and the UDF) to signal defiance of the crack-down and the Labour Relations Bill.

- * Relaunch the Living Wage Campaign by naming a figure (e.g. R180 for a 40-hour week) as the national minimum wage demand.

- * Speed up mergers into big industrial unions. Complete the organisation of transport workers, as far as possible joined in one union.

- * Step up efforts to organise farm workers, and the unemployed.

- * Set targets for doubling the strength of COSATU over the next two years.

- * Declare readiness to go on an illegal footing if the government continues to make lawful functioning of COSATU impossible. Declare an intention to disobey the crack-down and the Labour Relations Bill. Implement the plans for meetings in every

workplace to mobilise resistance.

- * Threaten specific reprisal actions by workers in the factories, etc, if the Bill is implemented.

- * Go further than the present demand that bosses state their opposition to the Labour Relations Bill. Workers should demand a public undertaking from every boss not to use the provisions of the new Bill against the unions. They should promise in writing not to sue unions for damages, not to victimise militants through selective rehiring, not to recognise splinter unions or UWUSA, or take advantage of the new definitions of "unfair labour practices". Denounce them strongly when they refuse to sign.

- * Call on the township youth to join directly with shop-stewards everywhere in building industrially-based locals to lead the campaigns.

FORWARD COSATU!

nothing from this government but the boot. It must be overthrown. Millions more will see this clearly now.

Confession of bankruptcy

The crackdown is a public confession that Botha's stated policy of "power-sharing" is bankrupt. In fact it always was a lie.

No power has been given to the black people. Instead the white ruling class has merely "shared" the job of oppressing us with some black dogs.

For every welcome step away from old apartheid -- in hotels and cinemas, job reservation, passes and so on -- they have trampled further upon the basic human rights of the black majority. Repression is more savage, poverty worse, unemployment higher, exploitation more naked than ever before. White domination is just as bad as when the "reformer" Botha came to office, and all the more intolerable.

No genuine democratic reform is possible under this government.

Negotiation useless

Those leaders in Congress who have argued that democratic progress could be won through negotiation are proved wrong. They should now correct their position. The Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC has been right to insist all along that democracy through negotiation would be impossible.

It was said by some Congress leaders in the past that a policy of negotiation was all right because only the "handover of power" would be negotiated. Who in Congress could oppose a peaceful transfer of power to the majority? But it is not possible. The crackdown proves it. We should not spread illusions in the impossible. Those who would negotiate "a settlement" with this regime, will be negotiating their own surrender.

The regime and the ruling class cannot and will not concede power to the majority; they cannot even "share" it. They must be overthrown. That is the clear message of this crackdown.

We must have unity throughout

Congress on the basis that our movement's task is to prepare and organise the overthrow of the regime. It cannot be less than that.

Blunder by the regime

The crackdown is in fact a blunder by the regime, which our movement must take advantage of.

With a stroke of his pen, Botha may restrict public leaders of the Congress organisations in SA, and hamper legal activities. But his laws cannot un-write what is written by the organised strength of the working class. **This is the stronger law.**

He seems to have forgotten something. We did not ask or get permission to build the youth and community organisations in the first place, or to make the schools centres of struggle, or to organise the boycotts and rent strikes.

We did not ask or get permission from the government or the bosses to launch industrial action or build inde-

pendent unions, establishing worker organisation under democratic control in thousands of factories, mines and shops.

The strength of our movement comes from that. It has never depended on legality, or tolerance of the leadership by the bosses or the state. We have built our movement despite their laws, despite their repression.

We must show, by organising effective resistance, that they are trying to exercise a power against us which they do not have.

Then millions more black working people will take new confidence in their own strength; the enemy will be more deeply demoralised and split; new retreats will follow from a position of greater weakness of the regime; and the road towards victory in the revolution will open once again in front of our struggle.

Motive behind "reform"

It was when our enemies found they could not stop us by their old methods of repression, that they turned to "reform".

The 1979 Wiehahn reform of trade union laws was brought in to try and control what they could no longer hope to crush. Their hesitation to ban the UDF over five years was because they knew they could not thereby stop the hundreds of grassroots organisations, built beneath.

The movement has used the space of legal "tolerance" to advantage. But (as the Marxists in Congress always warned), that situation could not last.

The millions of oppressed people entering the unions, the youth and community bodies, have seen the horizon of freedom lighten ahead -- and have pressed forward again and again to use their new-found strength. But the government, the ruling class, and the whites generally, have no intention of giving up minority domination. They have tried to change some little things so the big things would not have to change.

This is what they hoped. But it has not worked. The confidence and determination of black people to struggle has risen again and again. For this reason each "reform" and retreat by our rulers has been matched by repression harsher than before.

Yet that too has not solved their crisis. In 20 months of the State of

Emergency they have failed to make the black working people knuckle down again under their dictatorship. Tens of thousands of arrests, horrific tortures, massacres by vigilantes -- for all the suffering and setbacks they have caused -- have failed to instil a sense of defeat among us. Nor will this crack-down do so now.

Resistance hardens and spreads

1987 saw industrial battles unmatched in our history. The railway workers have risen; the mineworkers have tested their muscle; even shop-workers today can be proud of their power. The mood of industrial militancy continues now, helped by the present upturn in the economy.

The rural areas are seething. Farm strikes have already broken out in Natal and the Western Cape.

Round Pietermaritzburg since August, the armed defence and fightback of Congress youth against the Inkatha and UWUSA gangsters' reign of terror, has broken the spell of Buthelezi's "invincibility". The regime has to send in police and kitskops by the thousand as a last hope of propping up their servant.

White supremacy has long leaned on the supposed "conservatism" of rural black people -- in reality a reflection of the helplessness and isolation felt in rural life.

But the struggles of town and country are being drawn together as never before. The links of migrant labour, the breakdown of influx control, all strengthen the sense of a unified power and a common destiny as one proletariat and one people able to fight the miseries of the system.

At this very time the white state power is forced to compensate for its weakness of numbers by gathering round it, especially from the rural areas, unemployed blacks to serve as "greenflies" and kitskops against the movement. Brutal as their methods are, they remain a very unsure footing for the white regime.

That has been shown by the municipal police "riot" in Sebokeng; by the mutinies of SWATF troops in Angola; and above all by the Bop coup. It will yet be shown in Natal, and all over the country. It will turn into a factor of yet greater crisis for the regime, once these forces are shown our movement's greater force, and helped

to realise their common interest with the rest of their people and class in the overthrow of white supremacy.

Government policy crumbling

The building blocks of Botha's policy are crumbling one by one.

In 1984-86, the township revolt shattered the system of black puppet councils. These discredited bodies survive now only by the strength of the white state. They have to be held together with clamps.

The revolts in the Winterveld, in KwaNdebele, and last year in Botshabelo, showed how far the foundations of the bantustan system have eroded away. The coups and attempted coups in Transkei, Ciskei, Venda and Bophuthatswana bear witness to the underlying instability.

Only 6% voted in the Bop "elections". Now the February rebellion by troops in this "showpiece" bantustan, which had to be put down by the SADF, has exploded forever what remained of the myth of independence.

Centrepiece of Botha's policy wrecked

The "tricameral" parliament, with its stooge chambers for coloureds and Indians, has already shown itself useless either to satisfy the needs of the coloured and Indian people or to save the regime from demands for full political rights for all blacks. Now the spreading revolt in the rural areas of the Western Cape indicates that new elections for the coloured chamber would produce an even more absolute rejection of Hendrickse and such collaborators than in 1984.

At the same time Botha's "National Council", planned as the vital next stage of constitutional "negotiation" and "reform", has run onto the rocks. This fact is of the greatest significance, a turning point in the crisis of the present government and system.

Among the factors which have shipwrecked the NC is the heroic fightback of the Natal youth. With his political base evaporating, Buthelezi has feared all the more to expose himself by entering the NC now.

Not only Buthelezi, but even the head of QwaQwa, has declined to take

part. Mayor Mahlatsi, the crawler who gave Botha the "Freedom of Lekoa" and was personally invited to participate in the NC, has also turned it down! Even the puppets refuse to be raised higher.

While they lick their lips at the thought of the rewards, they realise there is no real power on offer; they know they would be reviled everywhere; and they can see the scheme is unworkable and wouldn't last.

They say that Nelson Mandela and other prisoners must first be released and exiles allowed to return. This is allegedly so that the Congress leadership would be "free" to enter the NC too! That would supposedly give Buthelezi and company their excuse. But this is a fantasy of the collaborators.

Regime caught in contradictions

The Botha regime would like to release political prisoners... if there would not be an upsurge of mass struggle as a result! But even the extreme caution of comrade Govan Mbeki after his release proved too "provocative" for Botha, who has restricted him again cruelly.

The regime would like to release political prisoners... if they would be prepared to negotiate a surrender to white supremacy in a disguised form! But it is hardly for that that Congress leaders have stayed steadfast in prison all these years.

The regime is not now, and never has been, prepared to negotiate a transfer of real power into black hands, let alone into the hands of the black masses.

Because of the revolutionary pressure of the black working class (on the one hand), and the reactionary pressure of the white Conservatives (on the other), the regime cannot now even afford to give the impression that real power is up for negotiation.

All they have hoped for in proposing the National Council was to ensnare African collaborators into the "reformed" structures of white supremacy at national level, into further constitutional organs of divide-and-rule, on the promise that something further would develop later by "evolution".

They have hoped, once in that position, to try and entice more credible "black leaders" - even some Con-

gress leaders - into the "reformed" constitutional system, on the argument that it had become established and could not be undone.

That has been the scheme of deception. But in fact they cannot even achieve a respectable beginning for the

National Council itself.

Some of the collaborators may yet enter the NC, to get their snouts deeper into the trough. But it will never amount to more than a stinking pig-sty, of no credit to the government or to them. *(continued next page)*

Fight the wage freeze!

COSATU, SARHWU and POTWA should organise a public sector strike of black and white workers together

The crisis of Botha's government and the capitalist system is shown by the wage freeze imposed on public sector workers. He has also called for the private sector to follow suit.

Inflation is running at 15%. Food prices have trebled since 1980. But this doesn't count with the ruling class. People don't count. Profits count.

There is a small upturn in the economy after years of recession and greater hardship. But the benefits are to be grabbed by the rich.

Workers are expected to pay for increased government spending on police and military repression. Workers are expected to tighten their belts and accept redundancies so the state corporations can be made attractive for private sale to the monopolies.

White public sector workers are in revolt. But their union leaders are weak and cowardly. They shrink from action. Where has their racism got them? The government no longer protects them. The ultra-right Conservatives stand for "the state and law and order". Will they back an illegal strike on the railways, in the post office and other parts of the state?

Some white workers are beginning to look to SARHWU, to POTWA, to COSATU. They admire the fighting strength of the black workers. We must show them that their future lies in breaking with racism, in fighting together with us.

There are more black workers than white workers in the public sector. Our wages are also frozen.

The wage freeze will mean black railway workers will lose the gains made in last year's strike. Real

wages will be back to 1986 levels.

Black postal workers' wages will be less than half the value they had in '86.

Our unions have to fight. So let us fight now! Take advantage of the revolt among white workers. Put the white union leaders and the ultra-right on the spot. Break white workers from the bad tradition of scabbing on black workers' strikes.

Organise a national strike of public sector workers for higher wages. Call on the white unions to join in. Let the rank-and-file black workers go to their white fellow workers over the heads of the union leaders and urge them to take united action on a joint program of wage demands.

Organise solidarity action from all workers. Private sector wages will also be driven down if Botha's wage freeze in the public sector succeeds. The freeze must be broken. All COSATU unions should combine in a campaign of explanation and a program of action now.

Draw in the youth movement to help in the campaign. Strike a blow at Botha, the bosses and the ultra-right. Divide the white workers from their racist exploiters. Draw them into COSATU. Draw them into the struggle against the Labour Relations Bill.

Against privatisation!

For a national minimum living wage for all workers!

Automatic increases in all workers' wages to match inflation! Across the board increases to make up for past losses and get some benefit from the economic upturn while it lasts!

For non-racial unity in action of the working class!

Division among whites

Botha's regime is becoming reduced to tricks and dodges. He has made promises on all sides which he cannot keep. This is being exposed relentlessly.

He promised whites to preserve their supremacy by taming the blacks with "reform". Instead he has inflamed black anger everywhere. Now his blunders will show up the fact, once again, that repression cannot tame the blacks either.

He promised that "reform" would improve economic growth, and enable the living standards of all to rise. Instead he has presided over a capitalist crisis of inflation, unemployment, hunger and industrial decay, which has spurred on the revolution.

While the rich get richer, it is not only black poverty which has worsened. There are now thousands of unemployed and destitute white families. Also, the wages of large sections of the white working class have begun to fall. Now Botha has imposed a wage freeze on the public sector!

The white working class can never again be reconciled to the Nationalist government, which presides over the most vicious anti-working-class policy (against both black and white workers).

The blind revolt of the white ultra-right, under the Conservatives and the AWB, shows in outline the horrible race war that would be unleashed if the black workers' revolution in South Africa does not triumph. But it is necessary also to point out that the advance of the ultra-right is a symptom of the break-up of the old cohesion of white society, and shows the underlying weakness of the white supremacist regime.

On the "left" of white politics there is an absolute farce of splits and splinters among liberals left high and dry as society polarises for revolution.

If the liberals are bankrupt, it is equally the case that the ultra-right fanatics cannot rescue white working people from the crisis of the system. This will be exposed in time. Even in the present struggles developing in the public sector many lessons will be learned, that racism offers workers no future.

Our movement has to show the white working class forcefully that their only way out lies in solidarity with the black working class, for a non-racial democratic and socialist future.

Combined with armed self-defence of our movement, a policy of non-racial class struggle against the government and bosses is the way to defeat the Conservatives and fascists, and prepare the overthrow of the state itself.

The class division and revolt opening up among the whites meanwhile adds enormously to the contradictions in which the regime is trapped.

Unbridgeable gulf

The regime's plans are wrecked in reality by the immense gulf in society which has been created between white and black, rich and poor, capitalist and worker. The interests of the masters and the slaves cannot be reconciled. Only a revolutionary reconstruction of society can reconcile the people of South Africa.

It is the determination of the black working class to fight for majority rule -- the only road forward to freedom from oppression and exploitation -- which ultimately bankrupts the schemes of the government and all its would-be collaborators.

This determination to fight is stronger than ever, needing only clear leadership and a definite plan of action to draw the forces together. **It is upon this rock that Congress strategy for resisting the crackdown must be based.**

We can defeat Botha's aims

The present crackdown on the mass Congress organisations is the direct result of the collapse of the government's so-called "reform" programme. This understanding must be carried the length and breadth of South Africa, to help inspire confidence that a fightback can succeed.

Trying to make the best of the mess his policy is in, Botha hopes by displays of *kragdadigheid* to slow the drift of white voters to the right during 1988. At the same time, he cannot admit the failure of his "reform" policy. Therefore he is attempting to reconstruct what has already failed -- starting with the local authorities due for election in October.

The main objective of the banning is to hamper Congress from campaigning effectively for a boycott of these

elections, and of elections for the racist tri-cameral parliament which may have to take place before September 1989.

Despite the bannings -- indeed, all the more because of them -- we have every possibility of inflicting more humiliating defeats on this government by rousing and spreading mass opposition still further.

To achieve success, Congress needs to build on its real strength. By means of a clear plan of action, the thousands of grassroots working-class bodies organised in the workplaces, townships and schools must be mobilised to the full and set to work without delay.

A position of absolute defiance of the crackdown by the whole Congress leadership is the necessary starting-point for a successful fightback.

A strategy of defiance

Since the 24th February crackdown, the most defiant attitude to the government has actually been expressed by bishops and priests.

The UDF's proposals for a stay-away on March 21st, welcome as they are, could and should have been made a lot earlier. As of today, the call had still not been made public. **COSATU should urgently declare full support.** Only a matter of days will be available for activists to organise a mass response.

It is urgent that our movement's recognised leaders -- if necessary, yes, by breaking the law -- must give a clear signal to the entire movement that a **policy of resolute defiance and resistance** is the only realistic response to these attacks.

Secondly, clear guidance must be given to the tens of thousands of active strugglers in the Congress organisations, of **what to do, when to do it, how to do it.**

The emergency COSATU conference of 2000 delegates, called for 9th/10th April, will be a good opportunity to spread the message and provide a co-ordinated national lead. But it is also possible that the conference may be banned. A fighting policy by the leadership should therefore be announced in detail, and discussed now in the workplaces without waiting for or simply depending on the conference to take place.

As it is impossible to operate effec-

tively and comply with Botha's law, the leadership of the movement will have to operate underground to a much greater extent than before.

The crippling of the UDF's legal leadership by Botha's restrictions makes it all the more important now for the African National Congress to directly assume the leading role in the movement from the underground.

The correctness of the Marxists' slogan is confirmed. It is time to build a mass ANC!

Build underground cells and networks

There should be ANC cells established in every workplace, every school, and every locality. These should usually consist of between five and ten comrades each.

These cells should take the lead in organising and guiding self-defence units to protect strikes, demonstrations and meetings against vigilantes like Inkatha and UWUSA, and against attacks by police and troops.

Many of the needed arms can be locally obtained, improvised, or even

manufactured by workers. At the same time, it is now urgently necessary for the ANC leadership to begin supplying arms it has obtained over 25 years, to the developing self-defence organisations of the workers and youth.

ANC cells in the workplaces, schools, etc, should give constant attention to discussing developments in the political situation; consulting their fellow workers and youth; passing on their own and others' opinions to the ANC leadership; and in turn receiving, discussing and passing on the advice of the leadership.

ANC cells should take an active part in gathering material for publication in the movement's papers

Unfortunately, over the past twelve years since the Soweto uprising, not enough has been done to prepare all the necessary facilities and networks for printing and distributing pamphlets and papers clandestinely, on a mass scale. We must turn all available resources towards doing so without further delay.

The ANC should be built to function as a revolutionary party organised among the mass of the black working class.

Build the locals as centres for the fightback!

The main strength of our movement is the organisations of the workers in the workplaces, where it is impossible for the enemy to root them out.

All organised workplaces, irrespective of union, should be linked together in every industrial area through the building of industrial locals.

While our enemies attack and restrict COSATU from above, we can strengthen and build COSATU from below. Strong locals will mean an invincible COSATU.

Strong locals will be the most effective way of organising and leading the fightback against the crackdown and the Labour Bill.

The locals should be organised by workers and youth together. The township youth organisations, now forced underground, should be directly involved in and linked to the industrial locals nearest to them. Along with this, the women of the townships should be drawn in, to couple their fighting strength with the strength of the workers at the point of production.

Our workplace strength must reinforce the townships movement, while the revolution in the townships is carried to the workplaces.

The ANC cells, as they grow, would also be linked in at every point, able to guide and inspire the whole development.

By these means we can make the regime regret it ever imposed this crackdown on the legal Congress structures.

We can turn this blunder of Botha's into a severe political setback for the regime and for the bosses.

We can make it a turning point for our movement, organising more strongly at the base, and preparing for a new advance.

Comrades, with the Congress leadership subject to heavy restrictions by the state, the responsibility rests directly on each and every militant in the workplaces, the schools, the townships and villages to act.

**Defy the crackdown!
Fight the Labour Bill!
Build the locals!
Build the ANC!**

WHAT WE STAND FOR

The Marxist Workers' Tendency of the African National Congress stands for the overthrow of the racist South African government.

We stand for the overthrow of the bosses, too, and for common ownership of their wealth.

We stand for national liberation, democracy and socialism.

We are part of the ANC, and of the Congress movement -- COSATU, SAYCO and the UDF.

A "tendency" in politics means a definite line of thinking. The Marxist Workers' Tendency is the group-name for comrades in Congress who share the following ideas, and work together to further them. We say that:

* Freedom for the black people can come only through majority rule.

* Majority rule will not be given by the racist oppressors or the masters we work for; it will have to be taken by force.

* This means armed revolution is necessary, and cannot be avoided

by negotiations.

* Victory depends on the power of the black working class (workers united, together with youth) to conquer the state and the bosses.

* We must aim to split the white army, to isolate the bosses, pulling working-class and other less-privileged whites towards our struggle.

* We will need an ANC government of working-class power, based on an armed people.

* This will be necessary to crush the resistance of the racists and the bosses, so that the Freedom Charter can be carried out.

* Such a government alone can ensure democracy, and with such a government the socialist reconstruction of South Africa will begin.

* In this way, and by uniting with the working class world-wide to change society, we can build a future of freedom, prosperity, dignity and equality for all.

Do you agree? If so, we urge you to join us in building the ANC and the Congress movement to achieve these aims.

THE FIGHTBACK AGAINST INKATHA

**ALSO:**

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Remember Ivin Malaza! Defeat UWUSA! p. 22

Since the end of last year a definite change has developed in the situation around Maritzburg. The militant youth have turned the fighting against Inkatha around. From trying to escape the terror of that outfit, they have organised and armed for self-defence and gone on the offensive in many areas.

**Compiled from
reports by *Inqaba*
correspondents
in Natal,
February 1988.**

With resources gained mainly from illegal manufacture and from weapons taken away from Inkatha gangsters, the youth have retaliated and, with much more confidence than before, driven Inkatha back.

The fightback has made many people think twice who previously were prepared to fight under Inkatha's banner. In one known case an Inkatha

gang literally ran away when a group of youth came down a street and showed that they were not going to shrink from a fight, despite the fact that the gang was superior in numbers.

The fighting youth have gained enormous belief in the fact that Inkatha can be destroyed. The 15 000 strong UDF-COSATU rally of mid-December was ample evidence that Congress has overwhelming majority support over Inkatha -- who could only mobilise 500 to their rally held at the same time. "Inkatha should not really be this big problem to us if you look at the support for UDF", said one youth involved in trying to build strong mass organisation in his township.

A letter from Maritzburg

Dear Inqaba,

We are the comrades around in PMB right now. We have got problem.

Problem No 1. We haven't got printed material.

Problem No 2. We haven't got money.

Problem No 3. We haven't got no support and weapons in order to defeat Inkatha and the State.

Inkatha killed comrades. Inkatha and Zulu Popai and SAP and the SADF attack us in our township and shoot the comrades.

Now we are still trying to organise people in order to win our FREEDOM.

PLEASE HELP US COMRADES.

PHANSI SAP PHANSI!!

PHAMBILI NOMZABALAZO PHAMBILI!

VIVA UDF VIVA!

Mandla Ngcobo

This is a reflection of the determination of the youth, but above all of their desire for leadership and a clear plan of action in this period. Many youth say how, if there was a definite plan to put -- explaining what is to be done and how to do it -- they could immediately mobilise masses to join the organisations.

They understand that Inkatha is not the final problem and that it cannot be defeated without facing the state as well. So they believe that we must incorporate in our strategy and our thinking also how to deal with the state in the long run.

Around Maritzburg the youth who are organising and fighting against Inkatha and the state operate virtually entirely underground. In many smaller townships youth are on their own initiative and inspired by stories from Maritzburg, considering how to start a youth organisation.

Around Maritzburg, especially Edendale, where the youth have managed to organise and fight back, the areas are renamed Moscow, Cuba, Angola, Zambia, Lusaka, Bulgaria etc. Here all elements that are suspected of furthering the work of Inkatha or the state are severely dealt with. More Inkatha members than anyone else were killed until the state stepped in with more than two times the force normally deployed.

Many youth throughout Natal who believed that we can pull the teeth of Inkatha simply by killing off the warlords are now realising that it will take considerably more and will require a thorough programme. As well as

arming for self-defence, we need to mobilise the full strength of the working class on an action programme of social demands. Despite fierce fighting and despite the fact that Inkatha enjoys no popular support, the movement has not managed to remove all the warlords nor have all Inkatha's thug elements been disarmed.

These elements have been emboldened by Inkatha's control of local police stations. In fact the Zulu Police is doing a lot of the beating up, taking over where the vigilante gangs could not continue. They are patrolling the streets, and randomly raid houses and try to weed out Congress supporters. In a typical patrol there would be 8-10 ZP's and one trained SAP member.

Full mobilisation

All of this has and is showing to the militants that nothing short of the full mobilisation of the masses and their arming will stop the terror. But still the leadership refuse to provide the movement with what it needs.

In many factories in Natal workers have been resisting Inkatha. In the township of Ashdown, Maritzburg, in February, after an invasion by Inkatha thugs, workers stayed away from work to defend their homes. But in many townships the youth are taking the brunt and few workers are so far involved in the fightback. The structures of the militant youth are not being

What is Inkatha?

- * A counter-revolutionary gang, based on KwaZulu bantustan 'state'. Backed by big business; armed with police powers by Pretoria.

- * Buthelezi formed Inkatha to promote wealth and power of a Zulu middle-class clique. Falsely claims to be a "liberation movement". Promotes tribalism and division among blacks.

- * Is totalitarian. Rules by terror. Inkatha warlords head 'impis' which torture and murder dissenters.

- * Impis forcibly 'recruit' door-to-door. People have to show Inkatha membership cards to get land, houses, pensions, flood relief -- even to get children into school.

- * Wraps itself in Congress colours -- while launching war to the death against the Congress movement.

- * Proclaims capitalism. Owner or partner in low-wage companies. Formed UWUSA scab-gangs to attack COSATU unions. Has killed many worker leaders.

- * Long history of violence, always against the struggle. In 1976, set Zulu migrant workers to attack Soweto students and try to break stay-away. Inkatha since broken in Transvaal (but UWUSA is still active with bosses' help).

- * Unleashed impis against 1980 schools boycott in KwaMashu, Durban. Impis rampaged at Ngoyi, 1983, killing students who opposed Buthelezi.

- * Murders of Msize Dube and (probably) Victoria Mxenge; murders of BTR and Hlobane strikers; rampages in Lamontville, Umlazi and many other areas due to Inkatha.

- * Now Inkatha death squads responsible for slaughter of hundreds round Pietermaritzburg, as Congress youth and workers arm to fight back.

Crush Inkatha!

Defeat Inkatha!

linked up, or themselves linking up with, the factory organisations. Nor are they incorporating workers directly into the underground groups.

The position of the COSATU leadership seems to be that the workers must build factory organisations and try to persuade the bosses to help us. "We should not escalate the violence that already exists", is what they

tell the workers. As a result there is no worker-youth unity organised to fight against counter-revolution. Nor is the UDF leadership explaining to the youth the need to enlist the aid of the organised workers in this fight.

Instead, until the clampdown, they have been talking to the Maritzburg Chamber of Commerce, trying to bring Inkatha leaders to peace talks. The last

lot of discussions with the Chamber was held at a "secret venue". All this talking about talking, and the way that it is done, is removing it further from the agenda of the class of how to forcefully crush Inkatha.

Although most people do not really follow these discussions and talks with interest or at all, they are by no means harmless. In St Wendolins, near Dur-

THE WARLORDS: GATSHA'S LEADING GANGSTERS

Thomas Mandla Tshabalala: member of Inkatha's Central Committee and KwaZulu Legislative Assembly; 'Shacklord' of Lindelani squatter camp, Kwa Mashu. Has personal *impi* of 208, who receive R24 per mission. Exacts monthly contributions of R3 from each of 9 000 households in Lindelani as well as enforced Inkatha membership fees of R10, and (for workers) UWUSA fees of R10.

In May '87 said he "longed for the day that there will be open war between the UDF and Inkatha--it will prove who is who in the political field". Said "his gun alone would leave hundreds of UDF supporters dead on the battlefield."

Leader of squad that attacked Victoria Mxenge's funeral in August '85 resulting in death of 17 mourners. Responsible for brutal slaying of KwaMashu Youth Congress members in March '87; and for rape, torture and murder.

David Ntombela: induna; Inkatha regional chairman in Mazwazi, Mpumaza, Maritzburg. Leader of squad which killed Mrs Mkhize, her daughter Petronella, aged 11, and one other on night of 9 October '87. Wages war on members of TGWU in Elandskop. Has own private army.

Told Inkatha rally on 31 January, '88, "anyone who did not belong to Inkatha should be killed. Said he "was prepared to go anywhere and kill all those who are not Inkatha...asked permission to stop the meeting so that he could lead the people out and drive the UDF and COSATU from the area."

Philip Zondi: Brother of a KwaZulu chief; told Inkatha rally, 31 January '88, "to drive the UDF and COSATU from KwaZulu to Xhosa areas...[They] were 'Indian' organi-



Thomas Tshabalala and his hired thugs threaten a teacher with death.

sations and all who belonged to them should go and live with the 'Indians'... Advised parents whose children had joined the 'other camp' to kill their children."

SA regime leaves them free to torture and kill

Joseph Mabaso: Inkatha national youth organiser; accused by MAWU members in Mpophomeni of ordering torture and death of BTR strike leaders, Simon Ngubane, Phinias Sibiya, and Flomena Mnikathi on 6 December '86.

Jerome Mncwabe: UWUSA member, Maritzburg; instrumental in killing TGWU bus driver, Colin Doble,

in May '87.

Chief Zuma: Inkatha regional chairman, Slangspruit, Maritzburg; armed by Security Police; instrumental in death of TGWU bus driver, Phineas Mdluli, on 16 January '88.

Sichizo Zuma: chairman of Inkatha's Harewood branch; instrumental in attacks on UDF members; in murders and attempted murders, acts of arson and assault in Maritzburg.

Vitus Vusumuzi Mvelase: urban representative of KwaZulu Legislative Assembly; member of Inkatha's Central Committee. Responsible for armed mob which, together with police and army, attacked UDF stronghold Ashdown on 31 January '88 resulting in several deaths.

ban, for example, some community leaders have taken the complacent attitude: "Inkatha has no support in the area, so the problem doesn't exist here."

However correct the first part of that might be, it did not stop Inkatha from terrorising the people. During the first three weeks of January 1988 six youth activists in the area committed suicide when they could see no way out of the violence.

Fighting between Inkatha thugs and Durban youth and workers goes back at least to 1980 when Buthelezi tried to crush the schools boycott in Kwa Mashu. The brutality of Inkatha and the heroism of the Congress youth was graphically demonstrated in 1985 in Lamontville and Umlazi.

Differently

When we spoke to some COSATU members in Durban, it was clear that they saw things differently to what the leadership was doing. In one factory, for example, with 500 workers, there are only about 20 UWUSA members. "In the beginning they tried to intimidate and recruit workers", one worker told us. "But workers approached them and made it very clear that if they continued they could lose their lives."

"We have one enemy here in Natal -- Inkatha. We must fight them", he added. "Inkatha and UWUSA are the same thing -- they are here in the factory and all over in the townships."

"In KwaMashu there are different sections. Inkatha controls some and Congress others. In section G Congress is very strong. If Inkatha tries anything they are beaten up or killed."

In Maritzburg many people are still fleeing from the townships looking for refuge from primarily the state at this point. Apart from those who go to other townships, many go into the PFP offices. Some sleep there. The Maritzburg Association for Christian Social Awareness (PACSA) office is flooded every day by people who were either wounded or are looking for help.

People take any assistance they can get. For most of them political ideas do not immediately determine where to go. But this does not detract from the conviction of the militant youth that we have to procure arms in order to rid

Maritzburg bus drivers fight back

This year at least 8 bus drivers employed by Sizanani Mazulu Transport in Maritzburg have been murdered by Inkatha thugs. They have been singled out by Inkatha because of the crucial role they played in the area in the May 5-6 national general strike last year.

On 17-18 January the city's bus drivers, Transport and General Workers' Union members, fought back by coming out on strike in protest at the murder of driver Phineas Mdluli. Gangsters in two cars had chased his bus and shot him.

The drivers demanded bullet-proofing of cabs, two-way radios and the arrest of all those suspected of the killings.

In response, the bosses and the police at first prepared to dismiss 140 out of 200 drivers. Later, they withdrew the dismissal notices, but management has conceded none of the workers' demands. And Alfred Ndlovu, the TGWU vice-president and COSATU Natal regional chairman, together with at least seven other leading TGWU drivers, has been detained indefinitely.

ourselves of the problem.

The state, having witnessed that the fighting is weakening Inkatha, and fearing that the youth are becoming too bold and determined, has decided to try to crush the resistance of the militants with its armed might.

Whereas in the past it has armed the vigilantes and left them to the job, the state cannot any more afford to leave Inkatha to try to divide and weaken the revolutionary proletariat. They realise that the more the movement fights and beats Inkatha, the greater becomes the determination and confidence of the movement to go on the offensive not only against puppets but against the state and the capitalist class itself.

The smashing of Inkatha will be a great setback for the ruling class. Their only recourse now is absolute rule by the sword to turn back the youth movement and to prevent the workers and youth from combining in armed

revolution in the region -- to try to show the movement nationally that the state cannot be overthrown.

Armed force

The superiority of the armed force of the state, the disarming of the movement by the leadership, and COSATU's failure to use the industrial might of the workers will mean that the militants can go little further in smashing Inkatha. They have reduced the outfit to bloodhounds that can only run in front of the real hunting party pointing to the target but unable to subdue it themselves. However, the movement or rather the youth presently cannot finish off these "theleweni". Not with the state giving the dogs cover with its firepower and the leadership not organising the fightback.

Now the thugs are allowed to enforce their control over the schools by standing at the schools' gates demanding that pupils have Inkatha membership cards before enrolling. But the schools are going to turn into battlegrounds as pupils are planning to retaliate. It will be very difficult because so far the youth have generally not been able to develop the fightback beyond guerilla tactics. Although large groups of youth are frequently involved in acts of violence against Inkatha elements, it will require wide mobilisation of pupils, workers and parents generally to get Inkatha out of the schools given the fact that schools are under the KwaZulu Education Authorities.

Immediate

The most immediate issue in the mind of the working class in the region remains how to end the terror of the Inkatha gangs, but it is now more closely linked to the overthrow of the state itself. Many people who might not have recognised that arming against fellow blacks is a part of solving the problem of Inkatha, now realise

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and admit that it is a fight against a murderous and intransigent state. And talking peace to them does not bring peace. Above all the youth are interested in getting arms.

No convincing

The active workers and youth need no convincing that Inkatha is a counter-revolutionary outfit in the service of the ruling class and the state. Only those activists who have been too close to the middle-class circles in Congress are reluctant to admit that peace talks with Inkatha did the movement no good.

Events fully confirm the position that Inqaba has taken: of the need for an effective national fightback to defeat Inkatha, mobilising the working class masses into action; for armed mass self defence and campaigns on the social and economic issues -- building for the destruction of the present state and the establishment of a state of the armed proletariat as our only guarantee of achieving national liberation and socialism.

THE ANC MUST ARM THE MARITZBURG YOUTH!

Dear Comrades,

In South Africa the revolution has already begun. There are obstacles that the masses come across in their way towards socialism and national liberation.

To name some of those obstacles we have first of all the state power which is a boss's upon which the workers' movement comes across whenever they go out striking. It's a wall that separates us from socialism because it consists of armed bodies of men i.e. the police and the army who have guns.

How are we going to smash the state with stones, broom sticks, petrol bombs and in some instances bare knuckles? Is this possible?

In as far as I am concerned those who think it's possible should have their heads examined. If it's then impossible to smash the state with stones and bare knuckles what needs to be done?

We have counter-revolutionary agents like Inkatha as one of the obstacles in the way forward to national liberation.

Presently the leadership of ANC is put in high esteem by the masses. It is this very leadership that helped Buthelezi with the formation of Inkatha in 1975 with the hope that Buthelezi will mobilise the masses against apartheid and that his Bantustan base could be used as a launching pad for guerilla warfare against Pretoria.

What have Buthelezi being doing since the 1976 Soweto school riots? In 1987 almost 300 people were slaughtered in Pietermaritzburg's townships' violence. The latter has become a war zone in which most barbarous methods of slaughter are employed. People are beheaded by Inkatha monsters.

From my own point of view I think since ANC helped in the formation of Inkatha it should help to bury it before it's late.

How can ANC leadership help? It can simply supply the youths in Pietermaritzburg with arms for defence and I swear that will be the end of Inkatha.

Edward Tlou



UDF and COSATU youth toyi-toyi after a service where their leaders called for peace with Inkatha.

For an effective national fightback to defeat Inkatha!

**Editorial Board Statement, 16 December 1987, *Inqaba Ya Basebenzi*,
Journal of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC.**

On 10 December Gatsha Buthelezi broke off "peace talks" with COSATU and the UDF, declaring that "the only reconciliation there will ever be in this country is the reconciliation of the most powerful with those who pay homage to the powerful". Against COSATU and the UDF, he boasts, "we are talking about a life and death struggle ... We are talking of all or nothing victories".

It is true that Inkatha and our movement cannot be reconciled. Inkatha is the instrument of gangsters, serving counter-revolution. Buthelezi is vigilante-in-chief. COSATU and the UDF are organs of the rising revolutionary movement of the working class. For his political survival, the 'non-violent' Buthelezi is compelled to fight our movement to the death.

It seems to many that Inkatha is invincible. But the truth is the opposite. Both Buthelezi's entry into "peace talks" and his warlike bragging are signs of desperation. The grip of the murderous mafia in Natal is slipping because of the heroic fightback by Congress youth over the last months.

The COSATU and UDF leadership must now mobilise an effective national fightback to bury Inkatha once and for all! Let us show that there is no power stronger than the power of the working class united in action!

Buthelezi and his collaborators have hidden behind the claim that Inkatha is a "liberation movement". That has always been a pretence. Inkatha could not, and cannot, do anything for the masses in Natal. It defends capitalism, using the Bantustan state of KwaZulu.

Together with the government and the bosses, Inkatha is responsible for mass unemployment, homelessness and poverty wages.

Inkatha was built to its claimed million members only by forcing people to join it, and by mis-leading Zulu people that freedom could be achieved through tribal organisation and negotiations with the apartheid state.

Now the lie is exposed. Even to their own followers Buthelezi and his thugs reveal themselves as state agents supported by the big bosses to try to divide the revolutionary movement. Inkatha corruption extends to manipulating flood relief funds, earning the hatred of the masses.

Buthelezi has resorted to the barbarous reign of terror of the last months because, more and more, the working people in Natal are joining the revolution and taking the side of Congress. The launch of COSATU, the massive participation of Natal workers in the May 5-6 national general strike, the prolonged resistance of the BTR workers and its profound effect in the Maritzburg area—have been decisive in beginning to

break the grip of Inkatha. In the tradition of 1973, the Natal working-class is again moving to the forefront.

Terror alone cannot hold down a rising class. Despite the casualties suffered, the courageous organisation of self-defence against the impis by Natal youth and workers has begun to turn the tide against Inkatha. Many of its former supporters are coming over to the side of Congress. There are even instances of policemen and prison warders turning against Gatsha.

The bosses are desperate for peace in Natal. The Chamber of Commerce, supported by the police, has tried to make itself 'peacebroker' in the civil war. They see that Inkatha's terror tactics, instead of cowing the working class, are now arousing its militancy.

But Buthelezi is in a dilemma. On the one hand, continuing his reign of terror is rebounding against him. But if he agrees to peace and calls off his impis, he will end up losing Natal to Congress.

Of course people want to live in peace. But we have to be realistic. The UDF and COSATU leaders who engage in peace talks fail to see that Inkatha cannot abide by peace. It uses peace talks in the hope of paralysing the Congress youth and workers. Buthelezi will return again and again to war, although a war policy cannot save him. Nor can the occupation of Natal townships by the SADF secure Inkatha. Gatsha is destined to be reduced to a pathetic puppet.

Congress policy must be to carry through the political and physical destruction of Inkatha. The conditions for this are there. But, because the big bosses and the state will continue to back their most reliable black ally, it will require the mobilisation of the full forces at the disposal of our movement, if Inkatha terror is to be eliminated.

The defeat of Inkatha would be a huge victory. It would show that vigilantes everywhere in the country can be defeated. It would raise the confidence of millions of working people in the prospects for defeating the main enemy: the vicious apartheid state.

The Congress leaders' policy of 'peace talks' with Gatsha has failed. Since the October "truce" more than 70 people have been killed. Now another attempt at 'peace' has broken down, and the killings continue.

Conciliation cannot end Inkatha terror, nor strip away Buthelezi's remaining base of support. As youth in Natal are saying, organisation of self-defence committees is the only way we can stop them killing us. *Inqaba* salutes the fighting youth and workers of Natal.

With them, we say what is required is a policy of **action** on the part of the whole movement. If the COSATU and UDF leadership has such a policy, they

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must spell it out now. The leadership must lead.

The following measures are urgently needed on the part of the national and regional leadership. Activists must win support for this policy in every local body of the movement and ensure immediate implementation by the leadership.

● COSATU, the UDF and SAYCO must organise throughout Natal self-defence committees linking the youth with the organised workers.

● COSATU, the UDF and SAYCO must jointly organise nation-wide action around basic social demands. This would strip away Inkatha's remaining base of support by convincing working people throughout Natal that the only solution to their problems lies in joining Congress in a fight to the finish against the bosses and the state.

Name a specific figure for the minimum living wage to rally the widest sections of the working-class in action! Extend the struggle against rents to all parts of the country!

● COSATU, the UDF and SAYCO must campaign in every workplace, school and community to win political

and financial support for the comrades fighting against Inkatha. Joint COSATU-UDF-SAYCO meetings must be organised.

● COSATU, the UDF and SAYCO must ensure the building of locals based in every industrial area of the country, as a powerful instrument for linking the organised workers and the fighting youth to carry this campaign forward.

● Every possible initiative must be taken to procure arms for self-defence. At the same time we call on the ANC leadership to supply arms urgently to the fighting youth and workers in Natal.

No truce with Inkatha!

For workers and youth armed self-defence!

For joint COSATU-UDF-SAYCO action on social demands!

For workers' power, democracy and socialism!

Impi yokuziphindisela ephumelelyayo yezwe lonke ezokwehlula Inkatha!

Isitetimenti sebhodi yabahleli, 16 December 1987, Inqaba ya Basebenzi Ijenali Yesoshiyalizimu Yabasebenzi beANC

Ngomhla ka10 ku December uGatsha Buthelezi wanqamula "izinkulumo zokuletha uxolo" neCOSATU kanye neUDF, ememezela ukuthi "ukuzwana okukodwa okungaba khona kulelizwe ngukuzwana phakathi kwalabo abanamandla amakhulu ukwedlula kanye nalabo abakhulekela labo abanamandla amakhulu". Maqondana neCOSATU kanye neUDF, uzigabisa ngokuthi, "sikhuluma ngempi yokufa nokuphila...Sikhuluma ngokunqoba konke noma ize".

Kuyiqiniso ukuthi Inkatha kanye nomzabalazo wethu angeke kukhoneke ukuzihlanganisa. Inkatha iyisisetshenziswa sezigcwelegcwele, esebenzela ukulwisana nempi yokuletha izinguquko. UButhlezi ungungqongqoshe wesigebengu. ICOSATU ne UDF zingumlomo womzabalazo wokuletha izinguquko okhulayo wesigaba sabasebenzi. Ukuze akwazi ukuphila isikhathi kwezepolitiki, uButhelezi "ongavumelani nempi" ucindezeleka ukulwisa umzabalazo wethu ukuyogcina ekufeni.

Kwabaningi kubonakala ungathi Inkatha angeke yehlulwe. Kodwa iqiniso ngokuphambene nalokhu. Kokubili ukungenela kwakhe "izinkulumisano zokuletha uxolo" kanye nokuzigabisa kwakhe kokuthanda impi, yizibonakaliso zokuphelelwa ngamandla. Umnansela wezigebengu zakhe ezibulalayo eNatali uyaphunyuka ngenxa yokuziphindisela ngobuqhawe kwabasha beNkongolo ezinyangeni ezedlule.

Abakhokheli beCOSATU neUDF manje bafanele ukuvivela impi ephumelelayo yezwe lonke yokuziphindisela ukuze Inkatha ingcwatshwe nakanye! Masitshengise ukuthi awekho amanye amandla aqine ukwedlula amandla abasebenzi abahlanganele into abayenzayo!

UButhlezi nalabo abasebenzisana naye bazifihle ngemuva kokuthi Inkatha 'ingumbutho wenkululeko'. Mihla yonke lokhu yisu lokukhohlisa. Inkatha beyingeke ikhone, futhi akukhoneki, ukuthi yenzele uquqaba lwabantu baseNatali nanoma yini. Ivikela ihlelo labaqashi ngokusebenzisa umbuso weBantustan yaKwazulu.

Kanyekanye nohulumende nabaqashi, Inkatha yiyona enecala lokuletha ukusweleka kwemisebenzi okukhulu, ukusweleka kwezindlu kanye nemiholo yendlala.

Inkatha yakhelwa ukuyofika kumalungu ayisigidi ezisho ukuthi inawo ngokucindezela abantu ukuthi bazixhume nayo, nangokudukisa abantu baKwazulu ngokuthi inkululeko ingatholwa ngombutho wobuzwana nangokukhulumisana nombuso wobandlululo.

Manje lamanga avezwe obala. Nakubo abalandeli babo, uButhelezi nezigebebu zakhe baziveza bengabenzeli bombuso abasekelwa ngabaqashi abakhulu ukuze bazame ukuwehlukanisa umzabalazo olwela izinguquko. Ukukhohlakala kweNkatha kuqhubekela ekusebenziseni ngokukhohlisa imali

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yoncedo lwezikhukhula, yazuza inzondo yabantu abaningi.

Ezinyangeni ezedlule uButhelezi uphendukele ekusebenziseni unya lokubusa ngobudlova obuvusa uvalo ngoba, ngokweqile, abasebenzi eNatali bazixhuma nempi yokuletha izinguquko futhi bangena ehlangothini lweNkongolo. Ukuqanjwa kweCOSATU, ukuhlanganyela isitrayiki sikawonke-wonke sezwe lonke ngoMay5-6 okukhulu kwabasebenzi baseNatali, ukuzabalaza okuqhubeka isikhathi eside kwabasebenzi baseBTR kanye nomphumela kwako okukhulu-kakhulu eMaritzburg-zibe semqoka ekuqaliseni ukuphulwa komnansela weNkatha. Ngokufana ngo1973, isigaba sabasebenzi baseNatali siyaphinda futhi ukuthatha indawo ephambili.

Ukushayisa uvalo kukodwa angeke kukhona ukunyathelela phansi isigaba esivukayo. Nanoma kuvele izingozi, ukwakhiwa ngesibindi kokuzivikela emabuthweni ngabasha nabasebenzi eNatali kuqale ukuhlehlela emuva kweNkatha. Iningi labasekeli bayo bangena ehlangothini lweNkongolo. Futhi kunezikhathi lapho amaphoyisa nabalindi bamajele baye bafulathela uGatsha.

Abaqashi bafuna uxolo kakhulu impela eNatali. IChamber of Commerce, incediswa ngamaphoyisa, izame ukuzenza "umlamuli" kulempi yezigaba. Bayabona ukuthi amasu eNkatha okuvusa uvalo, esikhundleni sokuthusa abasebenzi, avusa ubuqhawe babo.

Kodwa uButhelezi usengxakini. Kwenye indlela, ukuqhubekisa kwakhe ukubusa ngobudlova obuvusa uvalo kubuyela kuye. Kodwa uma evumelana noxolo ekhipha amabutho akhe, uzophelela elahlekelelwa yiNatali kwiNkongolo.

Kuyiqiniso ukuthi abantu bafuna ukuhlala ngoxolo. Kodwa kufanele siveze okuyikho. Abakhokheli beCOSATU ne UDF abangenela 'izinkulumo zokuletha uxolo' bahluleka ukubona ukuthi Inkatha angeke igcine isivumelwano soxolo. Isebenzisa izinkulumo zokuletha uxolo ngethemba lokuthi izokhubaza abasha nabasebenzi beNkongolo. UButhelezi uzophindela futhi-futhi empini, nanxa indlela yempi ingeke imsize. Nakho ukuhlala kweSADF emalokishini aseNatali angeke kuvikele Inkatha. UGatsha umiselwe ukuncishiselwa ekubeni yincelankobe enomhawu.

Indlela yeNkongolo kufanele kube ngukuqhubekisa umfela-wafuthi wepolitiki namandla omzimba weNkatha. Isimo sokwenza lokhu sikhona. Kodwa, ngoba abaqashi nombuso bazoqhubeka ngokuncediswa umlekeleli wabo omnyama othembeke kakhulu, kuzodingeka ukuthi kuvivwe amandla wonke akhona omzabalazo wethu uma ukushayisa uvalo kweNkatha kuzoqedwa.

Ukwehlulwa kweNkatha kuzoba ngukunqoba okukhulu. Kuzotshengisa ukuthi izigebengu kuyo-yonke indawo ezweni zingahlulwa. Kuzovusa ithemba ezigidini zabasebenzi lokuthi isitha esikhulu singaqotshwa: umbuso okhohlakele wobandlululo.

Indlela yabakhokheli beNkongolo 'yezinkulumisano zokuletha uxolo' noGatsha ihlulekile. Kusukela 'ngesivumelwano sokuyeka ukulwa' sikaOctober, abantu abedlula u70 babulewe. Manje omunye

umzamo 'wokuletha uxolo' uphahlazekile, nokubulawa kwabantu kuqhubekela phambili.

Ukuhlanganiswa angeke kuqede ukushayisa uvalo kweNkatha, noma kuhlubule isisekelo sikaButhelezi esisekhona. Njengoba basha besho eNatali, ukwakha amakomiti okuzivikelayiyona yodwa ndlela esingabavimbela ngayo ekusibulaleni. Inqaba ikhuleka abasha nabasebenzi abalwayo baseNatali.

Kanye nabo, sithi okufunekayo yindlela yokwenza evela emzabalazweni wonke. Uma abakhokheli beUDF neCOSATU benayo indlela enjena, kufanele bayiveze khona manje. Abakhokheli kufanele bakhokhele.

Lezinyathelo ezilandelayo zifuneka ngokushesha engxenyeni yabakhokheli bezifunda nabezwe lonke. Labo abakhokheli kufanele balwele ukuthi lindlela ivunyelwe emabandleni ezifunda zomzabalazo wonke futhi kuqiniseke ukuthi abakhokheli bathatha izinyathelo zoqobo ngokushesha.

● ICOSATU, iUDF neSAYCO kufanele zakhe amakomiti okuzivikela azohlenganisa abasha nabasebenzi abaqoqene eNatali yonke.

● ICOSATU, iUDF neSAYCO ngokuhlangana, kufanele bakhele ukwenza ezweni lonke ngezibizo zomphakathi ezijwayelekile. Lokhu kuzohlubula isisekelo seNkatha esisekhona ngokubonisa abasebenzi eNatali yonke ukuthi umxazulo wezingxaki zabo ulele ekuzixhumeni neNkongolo empini eyofika ekugcineni ebhekiswe abaqashi nombuso.

Makuvezwe inani loqobo leholo elanele ukuphilisa lezwe lonke ukuze ngalo kubuthwelwe ndawonye iziqephu ezibanzi zesigaba sabasebenzi empini! Impi ebhekene namarenti kufanele iqhutshekiselwe ezindaweni zonke zezwe!

● ICOSATU, iUDF neSAYCO kufanele ziyoviva ezinaweni zokusebenza zonke, ezikolweni nasemphakathini ukuthola usizo lwepolitiki nolwemali ukuncediswa abangane bethu abalwisana neNkatha. Kufanele kuhlelwe imihlangano ehlanganelwe yiCOSATU, neUDF kanye neSAYCO.

● ICOSATU, iUDF neSAYCO kufanele zilungisele ukuthi kwakhiwe amabandla ezindaweni zonke zokusebenza ezweni jikelele, kube yizona zikhali zokuhlanganisa abasebenzi ababuthene nabasha abalwayo ukuqhubekisela lomsebenzi phambili.

● Wonke amathuba okwenzeka abe khona kufanele asetshenziselwe ukuthola izibhamu zokuzivikela. Kunjalo-nje sibiza abakhokheli beANC ukuthi banikeze abasha nabasebenzi abalwayo baseNatali izibhamu ngokushesha.

Makungabi nesivumelwano sokuyeka ukulwa nenkatha!

Ukuzivikela ngezikhali kwabasebenzi nabasha!

Ukuhlanganela ukuthatha izinyathelo kweCOSATU-UDF-SAYCO

Ngezibizo zomphakathi!

Amandla abasebenzi, idemocracy, nesoshiyalizimu!

"Peace talks" with Inkatha - a wrong policy

Events have delivered their verdict on the policy of peace talks with Inkatha, pursued by the UDF and COSATU leadership: A TOTAL FAILURE.

The civil war goes on -- now with the UDF virtually banned, COSATU restricted, and the murderous Inkatha warlords not only untouched by Botha's crackdown but openly aided by thousands of police and kitskops.

Force alone can settle the people's 'differences' with Buthelezi, his gangsters, and his backers -- big business and the apartheid state. This conclusion, long understood by the fighting youth of Natal, should be acknowledged also by the leadership.

Instead, comrade Winnie Mandela is reported now (25/3/88) to have offered to meet Buthelezi in an attempt to "unite" Congress and Inkatha forces in the struggle against apartheid! She said at Wits University: "It is necessary for us to look at our own ranks, clean up our own house to see whether we have the unity to fight this racist regime."

Comrade, the fighting youth of Natal don't need "cleaning up". (Isn't that what the police are trying to do?) **The youth need unwavering support, a fighting leadership at regional and national levels, a definite programme of action on the social issues, and arms from the ANC to make their self-defence units more effective.**

When will Congress leaders learn that peace with Inkatha is impossible? Can they not see now that a policy of trying to make peace with these tribal gangsters is **wrong and damaging** to the liberation struggle?

The basic argument against peace talks with Inkatha -- the argument of the Congress activist who really means to **overthrow** the regime -- is set out in the article by Neville Jacobs on the opposite page. Read it, comrades, and think it over.

Why have "peace talks" failed so far? Is it accidental? Or perhaps because the authority of Mandela was not involved? No, the cause lies deep. And a name which stands as a symbol of defiance, for our whole movement and around the world, should not be associated with this dirty business of trying

"The comrades, the amaqabane's, are saying it unashamedly and loudly, that from '85 we are on the receiving end until August ('87) when we decided there is no turning back - we have got to fight it out. Why now call for peace talks when we feel that we are winning?"

- quoted by SABC, 13/1/88

to make so-called "peace" or achieve "unity" with warlords, thugs, oppressors and exploiters of the working people.

All the 'powers' of official society, starting with the state, could not impose 'peace'. The Chamber of Commerce proved impotent. All the pleadings of the Church fell on stony ground. This although Archbishop Tutu was mandated (as he put it) by "Jesus Christ" (*City Press*, 8/11/87) -- and also had a personal mandate from cde O.R. Tambo to try to reconcile the UDF leaders with the "Christian" Buthelezi! (*Weekly Mail*, 27/3/87.)

The UDF and COSATU leaders appealed again and again for non-violence. The Congress rank and file paid as little attention to them as a swimmer, confronted by a shark, would pay to a boat's captain who preached the sanctity of all living creatures instead of throwing him a spear. And the sermons had just as much effect upon the shark.

Impossibility

The impossibility of peace between Congress and Inkatha results from the fact that revolutionary torrents have begun sweeping away society's middle ground. The mass of the black working people are no longer prepared to live under the oppression and misery endured in the past. Even the rural areas of Natal/KwaZulu are now gripped by this remorseless process.

Inkatha's true character as a counter-revolutionary organisation on the side of the bosses and the state can no longer be disguised. On the other hand, the Congress movement's character as the chosen vehicle of the working-class revolution stands out in ever sharper relief. This despite every attempt of middle-class Congress leaders to hide it.

The essentially opposite characters of the two organisations makes it impossible to reconcile them. Buthelezi and his cronies have to fight against the revolution; Congress youth and workers have to fight against the counter-revolution. This has become a matter of political and physical survival on each side. The peace-makers are suspended in mid-air.

The same will happen to comrade Winnie Mandela's efforts.

The unity we need is not "unity" between Congress and the Inkatha killers. We need unity of understanding, and unity of revolutionary purpose, between all the Congress leaders and the fighting Congress ranks.

Failure to understand what is at stake in Natal has already led to serious wrong-doing. Scandalously, for instance, the UDF Natal Midlands chairman, A.S. Chetty, actually called on the SA Police to arrest UDF members if they were responsible for attacks on Inkatha or UWUSA leaders. (See *Natal Witness*, 24/12/87.) For his pains he has now been banned from publicly uttering even that! And UDF co-president Archie Gumede, that ardent peace-maker, has been banned along with the UDF from even engaging in "peace talks" without government permission.

The death toll in the civil war has mounted to well over 500. Of course this is a tragedy.

Contrary to the image of Marxists painted in the bourgeois media, we don't revel in violence and death. We are absolutely against undisciplined atrocities, or the criminal settling of personal scores and vendettas under the screen of political struggle. We deplore the spilling of one single needless drop of blood. Even necessary bloodshed is a matter for regret. But regret does not make a policy.

We start from the position that vig-

Defeat Inkatha!

orous self-defence is necessary against Inkatha's forced recruitment, extortion and terrorism. It is likewise necessary against the forces of the state. All Congress leaders should applaud the bravery of the youth and workers who are taking on themselves this dangerous task. Armed defence units must be organised and extended systematically in every workplace and locality. These must be under firm political discipline and guidance.

Effective defence includes reprisals -- and pre-emptive blows -- against

clearly identified thug-leaders of Inkatha/UWUSA. Essentially, the violence of the Congress youth has been selective and directed. It is necessary to strike at the head of the snake. That does not turn a policy of general defence into an immediate armed general offensive -- something which would be premature at this stage, and would recoil on the movement.

At the same time, politically, we must go on the offensive. The former mass base of Inkatha has all but evaporated. Yet we need to remove every last

residue of it. We must rouse the confidence to fight amongst formerly submissive layers of the masses. That is why a massive campaign on social issues like wages, housing, education and pensions is so vital in the struggle to destroy Inkatha, build COSATU, SAYCO and the ANC, and really mobilise the forces for revolution against the bosses and the state.

At the UDF/COSATU rally in Pietermaritzburg on 6 December, UDF leader Skhumbulo Nwenya "told the crowd that they must make it easy for Inkatha people to join the UDF by making it clear to them that they were not the enemy and that they were struggling for their liberation as well. He called for discipline and restraint, concluding thus: 'If we are confident of our ideas as we surely are, then it is clear that we cannot physically force anybody to join our organisation. We need to show in practice that we are not like the warlords.'" (*Natal Witness*, 7/12/87)

We agree with this, for the struggle is to separate the masses completely from Inkatha's vicious grip, and destroy the gangster-apparatus, isolated politically from the people.

But comrade Nwenya's points appear, unfortunately, as an argument for passivity when not combined with a fighting lead from the national and regional leadership -- when put forward together with a policy of "peace talks" and "reconciliation" with Inkatha instead of a declared policy of smashing it through social action and armed defence.

It has been argued that a policy of "peace talks" is necessary to "expose" Inkatha's violent nature. That is not so. The civil war in Natal took off when Inkatha's violence had reached such a scale that the youth had no alternative left but to take up arms, or perish. Buthelezi was already exposed by a decade of thuggery, and what was needed was to break the spell of his so-called "power". That the youth have done -- so well, in fact, that Buthelezi now craves to be recognised by Congress as "legitimate"!

In December this blood-soaked gangster boasted of "all or nothing victories" against COSATU and the UDF, and said he would only be reconciled to those who bowed down to him. By February he was writing to Archie Gumede, saying: "I was asking you to consider the fact that both the UDF

Stopping at a green light

What is wrong with peace talks with Inkatha? Everything is wrong with these talks!

They are like motorists who stop at green lights and drive when it's red, causing those behind them to swerve and collide into each other.

The movement is now capable of defeating Inkatha. Inkatha is on the retreat politically; Gatsha is losing his base and since the comrades in the townships armed themselves in self-defence the cowardice of these gangsters has been revealed.

Through a strategy of organised armed self-defence and a clear campaign on the national minimum wage we could physically and politically defeat Inkatha.

Throughout the country youth and workers will not only be prepared to make material and financial contributions but will even volunteer to fight alongside our comrades in Natal when a clear strategy is put forward.

The leaders have been conducting the peace talks as if it is some kind of "family squabble", even refusing to go out and explain to the masses in general the counter-revolutionary role Inkatha plays. That to Gatsha "this is a matter of life and death" and he wants to "smash UDF and COSATU in Natal". That he is making an open appeal to Strauss, the hyena capitalist from West Germany, for "financial aid to assist him in the fight against the UDF". This last appeal made while they were supposedly having peace talks.

The peace talks give legitimacy and credibility to Inkatha and Gat-

sha. They disarm workers and youth that could have joined the already fighting youth. Those sections moving towards struggle, or thinking of breaking with Inkatha organisations can be held back. Why risk their lives by resisting if they are told by Congress leaders not to worry, that it's just a "difference of opinion" that can be settled by peace talks?

In the meantime there is an increase of activities on the side of Inkatha, shooting bus drivers, intimidating school students returning to school, etc.

Any "peace" could only be temporary. The tasks of the revolution will still remain: to defeat the counter-revolutionary forces; to win away Inkatha's old base through a bold political programme and organised armed self-defence.

If we don't do that now, we will later have to pay a higher price. Our leaders who are trying to lead us into peace talks today will have that responsibility like so many leaders of the past -- in the revolution in Germany 1923, in Spain 1936, in Chile 1973 and many others -- who did not understand the tasks and held back the revolution at a crucial point.

Everything today points to the realisation of victory over Inkatha.

No truce with Inkatha!

For workers' and youth armed self-defence! The ANC must supply arms.

For joint COSATU-SAYCO-UDF action on social demands!

This will lead to a defeat not only of Inkatha but of vigilantes throughout the country, as well as taking the movement forward decisively toward victory of the revolution.

by Neville Jacobs
February 1988

Defeat Inkatha!

and Inkatha are here to stay!"

And instead of a fighting policy to drive home the advantage and sweep Buthelezi & Co. into political oblivion, Congress leaders are still conceding his claims to permanence. That must stop. The policy must change.

Despite all Buthelezi's atrocities over more than a decade, the bourgeois media cynically presented him as a "man of peace and non-violence". Instead of combatting this bourgeois public opinion vigorously and exposing his true nature, our leadership spent these precious years hoping for reconciliation. Now, when the youth are smashing Inkatha (and through the titanic events of the civil war forcing even the world press to reveal that Buthelezi's organisation is basically a murder-gang) -- now we hear the argument that "peace talks" are needed to "expose" Inkatha's violent nature!

Realities

Sometimes the representatives of the big bosses can see things more clearly than leaders of the middle class. They are more prepared to face the sharp realities of the class struggle.

Christo Nel, a Johannesburg business consultant and a director of a Maritzburg company gave this ominous warning to his class (in the *Star* 15/1/88):

"Reports indicate that Inkatha has been losing the struggle for power during the past few months. It is therefore becoming a test of Inkatha hegemony that could have serious repercussions for its perceived following ... in other areas in Natal. If Inkatha were to lose the struggle for control, it would open up the real possibility of a struggle in the greater Durban metropolitan area."

The Congress movement, with a fighting lead, can extend the heroic achievement of the Maritzburg youth and workers to all parts of Natal and KwaZulu. We can drive Inkatha from the townships of Durban, and finish it as a force. We can destroy the UWUSA danger once and for all.

All over South Africa the oppressed people will stand taller as a result!



"This does not go far enough!" Inkatha warlords, V Ndlovu and VV Mvelase study the full-page repudiation of *Inqaba* in the *Natal Witness* (16/12/87). Mvelase then demanded a public rally be called to repudiate the journal.

Inkatha chief attacks Inqaba

It wasn't the first time (or the last) that peace talks with Inkatha collapsed. But what made headlines in the weeks before Christmas was that an "obscure document" (so the *Sunday Star* called it), unexpectedly introduced and denounced by Buthelezi, brought the talks to a sudden halt. The document was the October issue of *Inqaba ya Basebenzi*.

What enraged Buthelezi was that a publication "which clearly identifies itself with the UDF and COSATU" (*Star* 12/12/87) did not echo the UDF/COSATU leaders' calls for reconciliation--but attacked him and declared that Inkatha could and should be smashed.

It openly saluted the youth who had "begun to turn the tide against Gatsha and Inkatha's reign of terror." It drew on the experiences of workers who had successfully fought UWUSA, and proposed a strategy of armed defence and a vigorous social action campaign to destroy the counter-revolutionary gangs.

Now was the time, it said, "for Congress leaders to drive home the

advantage, and go on a determined political offensive against Inkatha." Peace talks now could only hamper Congress youth and workers, helping Inkatha to hold onto support.

Buthelezi demanded public repudiation of this by the Congress leadership. (See *New Nation* 17-22/12/87.) Inkatha Youth Brigade chairman, Musa Zondi, whined: *Inqaba* "advocates methods to strike at UWUSA and ultimately to destroy Inkatha" (*Natal Mercury* 7/12/87). "It is this desire for the annihilation of Inkatha which demands public repudiation," Gatsha wrote (*Weekly Mail* 18-23/12/87).

At once complying privately with Inkatha's demand, the UDF/COSATU leaders shrank at first from doing so publicly. They said it could create a precedent whereby "Inkatha could produce other documents, even going as far as the Freedom Charter, which they also might want repudiated." (*Sunday Star* 13/12/87; *Financial Mail* 18/12/87)

But after a week's hesitation they gave in, actually paying for a full-page advertisement in the *Natal Witness* (16/

Issue No. 24/25 October 1987 Price R1

inqaba

YA BASEBENZI

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

If it's irrelevant, condemn it

I REFER to the issue of the Weekly Mail (December 11) in which the interests of their countries be-
those of Africa. Our duty
that our interests

UDF/Cosatu placate Inkatha
MARITZBURG — Peace talks between Inkatha and the UDF/Cosatu are back on stream after senior Inkatha officials yesterday thanked the opposing sides for publicly repudiating a document which calls for the annihilation of Inkatha.

Addressing a rally at KwaZulu urban representative base said: "I would like to see Cosatu leadership for the peace process of the new South Africa."

You could have asked for a public statement from certain ANC townships which made that point as most possible. If you condemn the irrelevancy of the Workers' Tendency National Congress why did the UDF have difficulty in repudiating the hideous views? Surely it would be easy for UDF and Cosatu to dictate somebody who had thrown out?

The harsh reality of the tendency reflected in the statement was presented for the first time among core ANC members and leaders alive and well in the UDF and Cosatu. They want more killing. They want the annihilation of Inkatha and it is this desire for the annihilation of Inkatha which demands public repudiation.

— MG Buthelezi, president of Inkatha, Ulundi
We presume Chief Buthelezi is a working class person.

request made
"I hope the
beloved Pieter-
maritzburg ar-
riving "Burk-
of the Kwa-
Zulu Natal

Inkatha welcome UDF repudiation

Owa Correspondent
MARITZBURG — Inkatha peace

LIVES ARE AT STAKE—



LET US WORK FOR PEACE



UDF and COSATU say: We are still committed to the talks and the peace process. We believe the talks should continue.

At the last meeting between UDF/COSATU and Inkatha, Inkatha wanted us to repudiate the publication "Inqaba Yabasebenzi" (October 1987).

We said:

- ★ that the publication did not reflect our policies or views
- ★ that it did not emanate from any of our structures
- ★ that as far as we knew it had not been circulating in the Pietermaritzburg area
- ★ that it was not relevant to the discussion about how peace could be brought to our townships

We made these points repeatedly during the meeting and again made them in a statement to the Press afterwards.

Inkatha was not satisfied with these assurances.

SO IN THE INTERESTS OF PEACE AND THE PEACE PROCESS WE REPEAT:

WE REPUDIATE THIS PUBLICATION. IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH US. IT DOES NOT REFLECT OUR VIEWS.

OUR ORGANISATIONS ARE SERIOUS ABOUT PEACE.

To bring about peace UDF/COSATU

- ★ met with Inkatha on two occasions to discuss bringing about a climate for peace
- ★ distributed many pamphlets regularly to urge restraint and discipline
- ★ called a report-back meeting attended by over 10 000 people where we called for peace and where our peace proposals were fully endorsed
- ★ we will continue to pursue all avenues to peace

WE APPEAL TO ALL THOSE WHO ARE GENUINELY INTERESTED IN PEACE

- ★ work for the release of those who are detained so that they can participate in the peace process
- ★ call on the police to arrest warlords
- ★ act with restraint and discipline

In this period let us remember all those who have fallen victim to vigilante attacks in our townships.

Let us remember all those who have died in the struggle against Apartheid.

Let us remember all those in detention.

Let us make this Christmas a time of Peace!

Mailed by UDF COSATU P.O. Box 3080, Cumberland 3235 — 525 Berg Street, Pietermaritzburg

"... and hoped the result would be peace in the beloved Maritzburg".
The rally was attended by hundreds of Inkatha. A large police contingent was present in armoured vehicles, a helicopter and plainclothes and Reaction Unit per-

nkatha leader, Mr. Velaphi Ndlovu, told that the organisation was "very happy" with the UDF repudiation of the anti-Inkatha document and suggested peace talks be resumed early next year.

However, Mr. Ndlovu expressed grave reservations over the presence of non-Africans in the UDF peace talk delegation in particular, Midlands chairman Mr. A S Chetty and organiser Mr. Martin Wittenberg.

New row wrecks peace talks

Jeremy Mages 18.12.87
AREA 5100

HOPE of a settlement being reached in Pietermaritzburg before Christmas are fading fast.

Leaders of Inkatha and the United Democratic Front/Congress of South African Trade Unions have clashed over an obscure document, and have failed to address any of the matters on their agenda.

It was hoped at least an interim solution to stop the violence would have been found when the second round of the peace talks were held on Wednesday.

However, the delegates spent all their time discussing a document, called Inqaba ya Basebenzi (The Workers' Tendency), a publication of the Marxist Workers' Tendency, an ultra left grouping expelled recently from the African National Congress.

The meeting, held against a backdrop of increasing violence and intensified police action in the area, was "bitter, long winded, and acrimonious", a well-placed, neutral source said.

The night before the talks seven people, including a 67-year-old man — who was stabbed 120 times — were killed.

Inkatha introduced the document at the meeting and wanted it repudiated.

The full-page advert which pieced the peace talks together

Weekly Mail Reporter, Durban

thousands of members. But I have been told that many of our members have been intimidated not to come to the UDF's court."

"... was conciliatory: 'Let us work for peace. We in Inkatha are committed to peace and the talks. Talking is the only way to peace.'"

"The hideousness of this violence is that it dishonours the struggle for liberation from apartheid."

"So, I appeal to you to assist the police in tracking down the perpetrators of violence. We call on the state president to speed up radical political change; release all political prisoners and let us all work for peace."

He did not foresee Inkatha releasing similar documents.

All parties indicated that negotiations for a settlement could be reached before Christmas. A further round of talks is expected to be held soon.

Defeat Inkatha!

12/87) dissociating themselves from *Inqaba* and saying "that the publication did not reflect our policies or views."

UDF/COSATU peace delegates at first told the press that *Inqaba* "had not been circulated in Pietermaritzburg." (*Weekly Mail* 11-17/12/87) But the *Financial Mail* reported (12/2/88) that *Inqaba* was "distributed in the townships".

Various learned commentators (closer to the circles of the leadership than to the embattled Congress rank and file) hastened to assure everybody that *Inqaba* was, after all, "irrelevant".

Historian Tom Lodge -- an "expert" evidently more in touch with the past than with the present -- claimed that the journal and the tendency behind it were "not very significant". Steven Friedman meanwhile gave his *Worm's Eye View* that the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC has "very little influence on anti-apartheid politics within or outside the country". (*Weekly Mail*)

But Buthelezi was having none of that. In a stream of letters and statements to the press he insisted that *Inqaba* represented a far from insignificant trend. To say otherwise, he said, gave "an entirely misleading slant to the facts of the matter..."

"If your emphasis on the irrelevancy of the 'Marxist Workers' Ten-

dency of the African National Congress' is correct, then why did the UDF and Cosatu have difficulty in publicly repudiating the hideous views it expresses? Surely it would have been very easy for UDF and Cosatu to repudiate somebody you claim the ANC had thrown out?

"The harsh reality is that the tendency reflected in the article which was presented for repudiation, is a tendency which is alive and well among core ANC National Executive members and activists. It is alive and well in factions of the UDF and COSATU." (*Weekly Mail* 18-23/12/87. See also *Natal Witness* 15/12/87; *Sunday Tribune* 17/1/88.)

Yes, this tendency is alive and well in Congress! But on the NEC? Does Gatsha know something we don't?

He certainly knows who his most dangerous enemies are. He knows *Inqaba's* policies, far from being "irrelevant", precisely match the militancy of Congress ranks -- not only in Natal but throughout SA.

That is why he demanded our repudiation. And that is why *Inqaba* could not remain "obscure".

The repudiation by Congress leaders was a repudiation not just of ourselves, but of tens of thousands of Congress workers and youth. Upon them the future of this tendency, of Congress, and of the revolution rests.

UDF Natal Midlands Chairman A.S. Chetty described *Inqaba* as "a group of nuts". But this is the response *Inqaba* received from Congress youth...

Dear comrades,

"We are the comrades in PMB. We got a problem of Inkatha and State.

In Pietermaritzburg many comrades died because of Inkatha and the State.

So we need a support of your, by the sponcers, like money, material, something to defend ourselves.

We have read the pamphlets, *Inqaba ya Basebenzi*. We feel glad to get some views from other comrades like you. All the views in the pamphlet is exactly what we need.

We got only the problem of Zulu Police (Zulu Popays), SAP, Inkatha, SADF. We will be very glad if this can be accepted.

And it will be easy to organise the community and the workers, youth as well. If we have the resources.

We are looking for support from the working class in the world.

A luta continua. Viva ANC. Forward with workers' struggle.

Sipho Dladla

Since Gatsha Buthelezi obviously reads *Inqaba*, comrade Diliza Mayosi decided that a letter to the editors might be a good way to confront him with some plain truths.

Dear Mangosuthu Buthelezi,

I decide to talk it out. What have you been born for? As I see in the first place you were born to be the shield of the Botha government. Secondly, to kill, thirdly, to cause the fight between black brothers and fourthly to try to form a big organisation to crush the peoples' organisation. And those who don't know about freedom of the people, they join for the sake of you.

In 1955, the people adopted the Freedom Charter so that Verwoerd's government must know what the people are dying for.

Read here Gatsha:

The people shall govern! The country's wealth shall be shared

amongst us all! The land shall be shared amongst us all!

The doors of learning and culture shall be opened to all! All shall be equal before the law! There shall be houses, security and comfort for all! There shall be peace and friendship!

You don't support this because you want to be the boss of the people. We launch the UDF, Inkatha attacks us. We launch COSATU, you form UWUSA to attack us; we launch SAYCO, you have Inkatha Youth League to attack us. This is what you are there for: to be the shield of the state!

How many black brothers have been killed by your Inkatha vigilante impis? Remember how you killed Mrs

Mxenge and for what? How many black brothers had you killed from January to December 1987 and what for too? See what I mean when I say you are there to kill us?

Inkatha, UWUSA, Inkatha Youth League, vigilantes and impis are our black brothers because what we want, we want for them. But they are still killing us because of you. You kill members of COSATU because they fight for a living wage. You kill members of the UDF because they want democracy and socialism. When will you stop this?

You know what, one day God will show us a plan to protect our lives from you and at the same time, time will tell! You think you are living in heaven but you are living in hell!

From a worried comrade,

Diliza Mayosi,
Queenstown.

An appetite for violence

By Jake Wilson

Mare and Hamilton's book on Buthelezi, *An appetite for power*, will be very useful to anyone active in the fight against Inkatha. It has been bitterly attacked by Buthelezi -- surely its best recommendation!

But, despite its thorough collection of the facts, it is not organised to explain the underlying processes that brought Buthelezi to prominence and make for his demise. The reader must go to and fro to get the whole picture.

It documents how the Inkatha gangsters cannot co-exist with any opposition, and how dangerous it is to raise the unfounded hope that Inkatha murderers can mend their ways.

It explains how Buthelezi's strategy is based on the supposed "powerlessness and disunity" of the black masses in the face of "a massive military-industrial machine and a huge bureaucracy...[which makes] simple strategies of protests and rebellion pathetically ineffective". The logic: if white domination can't be overthrown the only strategy for the black middle class is to take what they can through collaboration with the enemy. Buthelezi participates in Bantustan politics: claiming "a system is most easily changed from the inside." (p.82)

Inkatha rejects democracy and majority rule, in favour of "one federal multi-national state" (p.166).

Inkatha opposes the Freedom Charter (p.142). It is tied by a thousand threads to exploiters of black people. Buthelezi does more than defend capitalism in words -- he is a rich man, directly tied to monopoly capitalism.

Buthelezi fiercely opposed those among the Zulu middle class, such as B.I. Dladla, who wanted to use the Bantustan to launch themselves into small business (pp. 108-109), and who relied on sympathetic links with the Zulu workers to help them compete with the big companies.

Gatsha preferred Inkatha businessmen to become partners in joint schemes of the KwaZulu government, the old BIC (now KwaZulu Development Corporation), and big business. Khulani Holdings (pp.113-116), launched with the Natal and Zululand African Chamber of Commerce, is propped up by Anton Rupert and Harry Oppenheimer (p.115).

Buthelezi sits on the boards of

many companies which pay starvation wages to 'his' people. He appoints the directors of the KDC (p.112), which, in 1984, had assets over R336m. Inkatha leaders have more than a passing interest in the future of capitalism!

Still the masses live in poverty and squalor. What benefits in jobs, wages, housing, etc can Buthelezi point to to 'justify' this collaboration? His only answer is that the KwaZulu Government "is powerless" (p.108)! This explains the methods of Inkatha. Because it is "powerless" to improve people's lives it can "recruit" members only through violence. It's structure is rotten within: it claims a million members, but admits only about 5% are paid-up! (p.72) Every Inkatha chief and induna adds fees and taxes to the subs (p.73), adding to mass hardship.

Every movement of the working class challenges Inkatha and prompts it to increasing violence. These, as the authors show, have led to splits at the top -- where it is held together only by corruption and patronage from KwaZulu finances, and the praise lavished by capitalist politicians on Buthelezi.

Denounced

Dladla supported the 1973 strike wave and the trade unions, wanting to lean on the workers against big business. Buthelezi denounced and removed him from his position (pp.120-124). Other splits took place in 1978 (p.184), 1980 (p.197), 1985 (p.175/6).

Unfortunately FOSATU leaders (and now COSATU) missed many chances to use the splits to prise open the cracks and win ordinary people from Inkatha by showing it is nothing except a gangster organisation.

The ANC leadership had a key role in spreading confusion about Inkatha. At the 1985 Kabwe conference Cde. Tambo admitted it was launched with their agreement and co-operation -- and its claims to be in touch with the ANC were true (p.145). He said, "in a way he [Buthelezi] is our fault".

After the 1969 Morogoro conference the ANC decided for contact with Buthelezi, who they encouraged to enter Bantustan politics. The idea was that Inkatha should be a 'mass democratic organisation' in KwaZulu!

By 1980 the character of Buthelezi

and Inkatha was crystal clear. The suppression of the KwaMashu schools boycott by impis was overseen by Buthelezi (p.185-6). He urged vigilante groups to be formed to 'shoot to kill' anybody 'interfering' with build-ings (p.202).

Still the FOSATU leadership hoped to get by without a fighting policy against Inkatha -- even inviting Inkatha to speak at union meetings: Buthelezi, in 1981, to launch the Richards Bay shop stewards council (p.125). In 1982, the KwaZulu chief labour officer spoke at the opening of FOSATU's northern Natal branch (p.126). As late as 1985 FOSATU appealed to Inkatha for support in an Empangeni bus boycott (pp.211-212).

CUSA and AZACTU leaders also (Norman Middleton, is a 'long-time friend and political ally' of Buthelezi), still had close and friendly relations with Inkatha in 1985 (p.117 and 130).

The response of the Inkatha gangsters to the BTR dispute drew a line of blood between it and the FOSATU unions. After the Maritzburg general strike of 18/7/85, Inkatha 'declared war' on FOSATU. Alex Erwin was threatened with death unless the boycott of businesses was called off. As it gathered momentum, the FOSATU leaders complied (pp.130-131, 212).

This left trade union ranks wide open to the death squads: unfortunately Mare and Hamilton don't mention the murders of 3 MAWU shop stewards in December 1986, or the crimes of the scab 'union' UWUSA.

For all its strengths, the main weakness of the book is not drawing the fundamental conclusion which flows from the facts: **that the working class has enormous strength and can and will overcome the obstacle of Inkatha.** It documents Inkatha's crimes but fails to identify the weakness which will lead to its destruction. Now Zulu workers and youth, with an instinctive grasp of these, are turning the tide themselves.

These developments were consciously anticipated only by *Inqaba* which, in February 1986, explained Inkatha's weakness and put forward a co-ordinated policy of self-defence and social demands by COSATU and the UDF. Mare and Hamilton don't mention this. Nevertheless they have shown bravery in writing this book. I recommend it to all the comrades.

(G. Mare and G. Hamilton, *An Appetite for Power: Buthelezi's Inkatha and the Politics of 'Loyal Resistance'* (Ravan Press, R24,95)

Remember Ivin Malaza! Defeat UWUSA!

After the murder of worker-leader Ivin Malaza by an UWUSA gunman last year, *Inqaba* supporters set up a Memorial Fund to help his family and continue the work he had begun.

Donations have come in from the labour movement in a number of countries.

We print here a letter of thanks from one of Ivin's comrades, as well as letters from other workers involved in fighting UWUSA.

"Donations must not stop coming until we win" — please send them c/o Councillor L. Faulkes, 143b Amhurst Rd, London E8, UK.

Viva msebenzi! viva! Amandla!

The year 1987 did not come well for members of NUM because we had to fight members of UWUSA who are supported by the bosses. We lost comrades in that struggle. The bosses took UWUSA to Vlakfontein but later on they brought them back again.

At night when we were sleeping they attacked one of the compounds, disrupting the electricity supply. They entered with guns, injuring five who, by some luck, managed to escape.

Viva with the workers struggle!

UWUSA never came back again. Workers never retreated in their fight against the bosses' UWUSA.

Forward with the workers' struggle — the land is ours! Viva NUM! Forward workers forward!

Lonyaka ka 87 awuzange usi phathe kammandi thina mbutho we NUM kuba besisilwa nombutho we iUWUSA ohlangene nambhunu, apho salahlekelwa yizimiphefumlo yama comrade kuthe kusenjalo amabhunu ayithatha iUWUSA ayoyifihla eVlakfontein ixhesa elingenza inyanga. Aphinda ayilanda futhi ayiphindisa emsebenzini. Akuzange kube ntsuku zingaphi, ebusuku silele iUWUSA yahlasela ieneji yezindlu bacisha ugesi ngaphandle, bangena ngezibhamu badubula kwalima -- 5 eyasinda nge nkosi.

Viva ngomzabalazo wabasebenzi!

Abazange babuyele emva. Bayoyisa iUWUSA ngalondlela ihambisana namabhulu.

Phambili ngomzabalazo phambili! Ilizwe lethu! Viva NUM Viva!

Phambili basebenzi phambili!

Ho Lahlehwa Ivin Malaza (To lose Ivin Malaza)

E ile yo ba masisa. Pelo tahlehelong ya rona ke e mong wa balekane ba rona. Se na sere bontshise hantle hore ho lwana ke maikemisetso a Botho.

Sena re se ngola e le teboho e yang mekgatlong ya the M W T, e le kamohelo ya dimpho tse tswang mekgatlong ka ho fapana. Ha ho potang hona keletshwao le bontshang hore re tla hlola ebile re ata. Ha ile batswadi ba mofu ba ile bathaba haholo hammoho le balelapa la mofu.

Ba ileng ba rekgothatsa ka hona eile yaba hore. E seka mokgatlo wona wa rona oka hola oka hlola. Le ho dimpho ekaba dintho tsa ka mehla. Ha se ka dikgoka feela ntwaka hlolewa empa ho batleha mahlale.

Mongadi mosebetsi wa morapo
Karabo Tshotetsi

We were sorrow stricken when we lost one of our comrades who was murdered. This loss clearly shows that the people are prepared to fight.

We write this thanking all the Marxist Workers' Tendency for their contributions, which we warmly accept. There is no doubt that this is a sign that we will develop and at the ultimate end win. The parents of the deceased as well as the family were happy.

Those who encouraged us said that our tendency should flourish and win. Donations must not stop coming until we win.

Its not only through might that we can achieve national liberation, but through political wisdom as well.

A mineworker
Karabo Tshotetsi

Implhakathi kwe UWUSA kanye ne NUM (The fight between UWUSA and NUM)

Amacomrades,

Ekusukeni kwempi eyaqala ngezithuba zantambama libantu-bahle, sabambana kwaze kwa shunga uthuli. Yathatha ihoralinye kuphela. Kuthe kusenjalo sayingoma iUWUSA.

Ngoba yona ingumkhandlu wamabhunu, sayibekela ecelenei. Singayazi ukuthi lapho iyakhona, kwatholakala ukuthi lomkhandlo wethu ubumbhene futhi uqine impela. Ubambene zandla-zombili.

Ngomhla ka January ngo 1987, kwafika iUWUSA ihlasela ngezikhali kwaze kwasweleka abasebenzi abathathu. Nabo basweleka empakathini.

IUWUSA yathathwa ngamabhunu yayofihla eVlakfontein.

Abasebenzi abangamaZulu bahambisana ne iUWUSA. Ngalelosikathi amalungu eUWUSA ayesafihliwe. Abaphathi balanda abasebenzi abangamashumi amabili e NUM. Azange babakhiphele sonke isifuba sabo bababhalisela ekubeni ngamalungu eNUM.

Namhlanje bangamaqabani athi "iUWUSA ya ba uphu'uphele lapha". (Isisebenzi sasezimayini)

Themba Mazibuko

Comrades,

From the time the fight started we fought face to face with them until there was dust. The fight lasted for an hour. Later we finished Uwusa.

Because it is an organisation of the bosses we put them in their right place. We did not know what they wanted.

Our organisation was found to be strong and united — holding together with both hands.

In January '87 Uwusa attacked with guns at our workplace and three workers died. They also lost people.

The bosses took Uwusa to Vlakfontein to hide them.

Zulu workers supported Uwusa. At that time Uwusa's membership was being kept secret.

Our leaders fetched 20 (Zulu) NUM members. They did not reprimand them, but took their names down for them to join NUM.

Today they are the best militants who demand "Uwusa disappear completely from here".

(By a mineworker)
Themba Mazibuko

The workers introduced themselves, saying where they worked and their role in the union. We said we were from the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC.

We explained our standpoint, that Congress has to be built on the strength of organised workers and youth to seize power. We need a mass workers' ANC, for revolution. There cannot be a negotiated settlement between our movement and the state. This meant the mass movement must be armed.

When the discussion began, the worker comrades were sitting on the backs of their chairs, upright and subdued. By the end, all the chairs had been moved forward, and we were being interrupted constantly with exclamations: "That's right, that's right, OK, OK, yes."

At the end they said simply "You are telling us what we know. We know it is raining but we need raincoats." They meant weapons, as well as political arms: strong organisation and leadership. One added: "You know the workers are going to like this. Every worker must hear this."

Turning to a comrade among us, he said: "You say you are a student, my friend, but you must have been taught by the workers. You speak as though you live in a hostel."

We next discussed the Freedom Charter. All agreed that its demands for democracy and a better life could only be won by working-class power. The right to vote; the return of the land to the people; homes and jobs for all; the sharing of the wealth -- can only be guaranteed by defeating the bosses and the state and building socialism.

At first the workers were not familiar with the terms 'capitalism' and 'socialism'. But at the end they said: "Now we understand it. Capitalism is the bosses, and socialism is the workers taking over from them."

We explained that our ideas did not find support among leaders of the UDF, COSATU and the ANC who argued democracy could be won first, without a workers' revolution, and the struggle against capitalism left till later. Another of the workers answered:

"It is like a tree. Capitalism, the bosses, the army, the police are all branches of the same tree. You can try and cut it down branch by branch, but you would just get confused amongst all the branches. Better to cut the whole thing down from the roots up. Yes, cut the whole thing down, why

"Every worker must hear this..."

-- shop stewards respond to *Inqaba's* ideas

waste time on all the branches?"

He added: "I have waited the best part of my life to hear someone say what you have said tonight."

In the next discussion we went into the question of the armed struggle. One of the workers had said "All this discussion is fine, but when do we get guns?"

Comrades stressed the respect we have for the courage and sacrifice of the youth who join MK. They are determined, as we are, to overthrow the regime. But frankly we have to say the approach of MK to armed struggle is a fantasy. Guerilla methods cannot overthrow this state (and actually strengthen reactionary unity among the whites).

Nor could guerilla attacks on police stations, landmines, bombs in supermarkets, etc, induce the regime to negotiate.

A revolutionary strategy has to be based on arming the organised work-

Supporters in the Transvaal report on discussions with shop-stewards in one of the main industries.

ers and youth, first for self-defence, and from that build towards a mass armed insurrection. Then the enemies' forces could be divided and paralysed.

Arms were useless unless combined with the power of the working class. Only this armed power could defeat the power of the state.

MK had not defended the movement against vigilantes, Inkatha or UWUSA, but youth and workers are now beginning to do that themselves. Why are the needed arms not supplied? If arms had been provided in Crossroads in 1986, and self-defence organised, the witdoeke would have been thrown back. This is what a serious approach to armed struggle will involve.

One worker replied, "I see all this. Everyone has to know what they are doing, that is clear. It is political, I agree, and the guns have to be there as

well." The others agreed.

In a further discussion we described how comrades of our tendency are being attacked for these ideas by Congress leaders who strongly disagree with us. At the same time we've found ready support among rank-and-file workers and youth. A few comrades had been suspended and expelled by the ANC leadership. We had been attacked by UDF and SAYCO leaders at the COSATU Congress. We did not want the workers to be under any illusion that we enjoyed official backing from the leadership, or that the tendency was yet a mass force.

One worker replied: "You have impressed me by your seriousness. The tendency obviously does not flinch from anything. I agree with everything you have said. Count me in."

A second said: "You judge something by its strength and direction. There is no disputing the strength of these ideas and their direction. In time they will be the strength of the movement. It will be like the unions. At the start of each union no-one believed it could achieve anything. Then when it developed strength people could see the power that was in it. The same will happen here."

A third said: "These ideas are the most powerful thing I've heard since I read the Bible for the first time. What you have said makes this a moment of jubilation for me. I am clear on the need to prepare carefully, but I am confident about the future now."

Another said: "We must build support for these ideas first among the workers. We focus on the workers and then when we are powerful we will draw the leaders behind us. They will have no choice."

Another said: "If you are saying that we must begin now to build the workers' army as the foundation of the ANC then I am with you."

We emphasised that we work with workers and youth with the same ideas in many countries around the world. All the workers then raised that they knew others, in their workplace, and in other parts of the country, to whom they wanted to take these ideas.

We are working together now.

THE FREEDOM CHARTER: --- is it a workers' programme?

In the course of 1987 over a million black workers and youth, organised in COSATU and SAYCO, enthusiastically adopted the Freedom Charter.

Around the country millions support it because it stands for the **complete elimination of white domination**. They support it, too, because it has endured for more than 30 years as the programme of the Congress movement, the movement which gives a **sense of unity** to the mass of oppressed people.

The popularity of the Freedom Charter is also built on the fact that it contains demands for **all-round improvements in the conditions of life and work**, which would mean a radical reconstruction of South African society.

The masses see it as an answer to their intolerable enslavement under white rule and capitalism. Awareness of the Freedom Charter has penetrated deeply into the collective consciousness of the working class. Many children of ten can recite it from memory!

Nevertheless, because the Freedom Charter says nothing specifically about the need for **socialism**, many of the most advanced workers in COSATU have felt uneasy about its adoption. Some have argued for a "socialist programme", or "workers' charter", either instead of the Freedom Charter or in addition to it.

Debate

This valuable debate within the workers' movement has been complicated by sectarian and middle-class elements.

On the one hand, sectarian so-called "socialists" have condemned the Freedom Charter root and branch as a programme for compromise with white liberalism. On the other hand, middle-class voices in Congress have themselves insisted that the Charter is a programme of class compromise, and should not be interpreted as belonging to the working class.

By Sean Kelly

How are we to resolve these questions?

It's quite true that the Freedom Charter is not "a socialist programme". Nowhere does it say **explicitly** that the capitalist system must be overthrown, and socialism constructed. But then, neither does it explain how the **democratic** transformation and the far-reaching social reforms which it proclaims, are to be won.

The Freedom Charter is not an explicit programme for **revolution** -- but who would seriously argue today (especially after the crackdown!) that a democratic South Africa can come about without a revolution? If we examine the contents of the Freedom Charter closely, and if we really mean to carry it out, then it will be obvious that nothing less than a **democratic and socialist revolution** is required. That is the plain implication of the Freedom Charter.

Every basic demand which the Freedom Charter raises brings working people into head-on confrontation with white minority rule and the system of capitalism that it defends.

"All apartheid laws and practices shall be set aside...Every man and woman shall have the right to vote for and stand as a candidate for all bodies which make laws...All bodies of minority rule, advisory boards, councils and authorities shall be replaced by democratic organs of self-government."

To this the regime replies with States of Emergency, detentions, banings, police and troops in the townships. What clearer indication could there be that democracy requires the overthrow of the regime and the dismantling of its armed forces?

"There shall be work and security! ... There shall be a 40 hour working week, a national minimum wage, paid annual leave and sick leave for all workers, and maternity leave and full pay for all working mothers."

The struggle for a living wage, shorter hours and decent working conditions is an unceasing battle with the bosses and the state.

The national minimum living wage campaign is a "communist plot" says the government! Where minimum wages do exist they should be scrapped, says Zach De Beer, a director of Anglo-American and one of the so-called "liberal" bosses. This company sacked 50 000 mineworkers rather than concede even a few per cent on the 1987 wage demand.

Where wage rises are forced from the bosses they are eaten away by rising food prices, rising bus fares, and so on.

Women have taken strike action across the country, from OK Bazaars and Spekenham to tea plantations of Natal. Militant struggle has won important concessions on maternity leave. Yet daily hardships worsen constantly. The mass of low-paid women in the factories, and at home, know there is still a world to win.

"Decently housed"

"All shall have the right to live where they choose, to be decently housed, and to bring up their families in security and comfort", says the Freedom Charter.

Migrant workers should not bring their wives or families to the cities, or live in 'white' areas, says the racist government. Miners must not bring their wives to the compounds, says the Chamber of Mines!

There are not enough houses; the houses there are are small and squalid, often without basic facilities such as electricity or a sewerage system. The average urban black lives in a space about the size of a double bed -- to wash, eat, sleep, study and relax.

Even official figures show the gulf between what is, and what is needed. In the PWV area there is an average of more than ten people per house. But this is a relative luxury compared to workers who live in Bekkersdal near Westonaria, where the average is 39 per house.

The rent boycott, which spread like a bush fire to more than 50 townships and has cost the state an estimated R1 billion, has shown the determination of millions to change these conditions. But mass poverty and squalor will not



The Freedom Charter offers an alternative to miserable slum conditions in the townships

end until we overthrow the system which exploits and oppresses.

"The doors of learning and culture shall be opened!"

Youth yearn for an alternative to gutter education for wage slavery. Since 1976 they have organised, marched, and died struggling for a democratic and socialist future. The government's increased spending on black education can't hide from the youth that they are still being schooled as cheap labour for the bosses' profits.

Even the most basic of the Freedom Charter's demands therefore involves a social revolution.

"Liberal" bosses

The language of tear gas, detentions and dismissals, is not that of Botha and Vlok alone. It is the language of even the most "liberal" bosses.

Overwhelmingly, they have supported the State of Emergency. Anglo-American's Gavin Relly said, "though regrettable", it was "necessary to contain the widening cycle of senseless violence". After the recent crackdown, the *Financial Mail* commented:

"Business confidence, that fragile reed, will probably be bolstered by government's latest crackdown on black dissent...it's logical that anything which seems to enhance national stability will be made the most of by those -- and who would exclude himself? -- desperate to turn an honest penny in a climate of relative stability." (4/3/88)

What this bosses' mouthpiece means by an "honest penny" is the wealth they steal from the workers' labour. To maintain this they inevitably turn time and again for help to the SADF, the police and vigilantes in the townships and bantustans. They know workers would use **majority rule** to enforce a living wage and to use the wealth created by labour to build houses, schools, hospitals and everything that people need.

These needs are in irreconcilable conflict with capitalism, which is a diseased system now in SA and internationally. For the working people reality means the problems and needs of everyday life; for the ruling class "reality" means the needs of their profit system. Where two 'rights', two fundamental interests, are in conflict force decides.

To implement the Freedom Charter it will be necessary to break the power of the bosses and end the system of capitalism which white minority rule

defends. To impose the democratic and social demands of the mass of working people it will be necessary to defeat the army and the police. Power will have to be taken into the hands of the working masses -- into the hands of the working class.

Share the wealth

The Freedom Charter states that *"the people shall share in the country's wealth!"*

"The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole."

The foundations of apartheid are in the economic system. Giant monopolies control the lives of millions of workers. Anglo American alone employs over 700 000 workers. The Freedom Charter recognises that, for the democratic and social changes in it to be carried out, these monopolies must be owned by the people together.

That is absolutely unacceptable to the capitalist class.

In their propaganda against the Charter the bosses always single out

the "nationalisation" clause. And they are not placated by all the efforts of some Congress leaders to "reinterpret" the clause to suggest that it doesn't mean taking the wealth away from the capitalists.

David Willers of the SA Foundation expressed the fears of his class: "it is still the view of most businessmen that ANC policies, the Freedom Charter notwithstanding [?], are inimical to business practice and that socialism and nationalization on a large scale will be consequences of its coming to power."

Business has the "feeling that it would be suicide to leave the economic system of a future South Africa to the democratic wishes of the majority to decide on". (Cape Times, 13.6.87)

The *Financial Mail* (6/12/85) put the reality of the matter in brutal terms: "Anything would be preferable to seeing South Africa's economy decimated by such crude attempts at 'wealth redistribution' implicit in the doctrine of the Freedom Charter."

Anything would be preferable! Even a more reactionary and blood thirsty regime! This is no mere threat. Look at the support they give to the rule of terror of vigilante-in-chief Gatsha Buthelezi. When the chips are down "anything" -- so long as it protects their wealth, privilege and power -- is justifiable to the capitalist class. Their liberalism, their claim to being democrats, is but a mask.

Implement by revolution

The Freedom Charter will only be implemented by mobilising our forces for revolution; by defeating and destroying the bosses' state; and by establishing a state of workers' democratic power. Without this no lasting reforms can be won. With working-class power not only will apartheid be destroyed, not only will national liberation and democracy be secured -- but the capitalist system itself will be swept away.

The monopolies and the main productive resources of the country will be taken into state ownership under workers' control and management. This alone can ensure that the people's needs are really met. And it will lay the foundations for socialist construction to begin.

There is no other route to implementing the Freedom Charter except **revolutionary struggle against the**



Reporting on the 1987 Dakar "talks", the *Financial Mail* (14.8.87) said the ANC delegation had "agreed that there was a distinction between ownership of minerals, which belonged to the nation, and the right to extract it which must be purchased. This section might have to be reworded, an ANC representative said."

What does this imply? That the mines, the heart of capitalist exploitation in SA, are to remain in the bosses hands? What a concession to monopoly capitalism,

what an abandonment of the working class's basic needs.

If we reword the Freedom Charter to suit the bosses' demands where will we stop? Concessions will not make them any more prepared to accept an ANC government, but will spread confusion and uncertainty in the movement (which they will ruthlessly exploit).

Congress leadership should declare that an ANC government will immediately nationalise Anglo American and the other monopolies.

bosses and their state. To mobilise and guide this struggle is the responsibility of the Congress leadership.

Unfortunately, not all the ANC, UDF and COSATU leaders are willing to recognise that. This is why so much time and effort is spent insisting that the Freedom Charter is not a socialist programme -- instead of proclaiming boldly that a struggle for workers' power and socialism is the only way to make the Charter a reality.

Those who say that the Freedom Charter is a programme for an "all-class alliance" -- an alliance of the **working class with the bosses!** -- have not stopped to examine what the implementation of even the most basic elements of the Freedom Charter would really entail. The bosses may protest most about the nationalisation clause -- but they can't accept any of the Charter's demands for fundamental change.

Efforts to "guarantee" capitalism could only guarantee that the Charter remains no more than a fine declaration of good intentions to hang on the

wall. By these means the only really powerful force for changing South Africa -- the force of the black working class -- is hamstrung in its revolutionary leading role.

Essence falsified

We acknowledge that the Freedom Charter makes no mention of revolution or socialism. But, to insist that the Charter means **less than revolution and socialism** -- that it could be carried out without this -- is to falsify its essence and frustrate its aims.

The Charter declares that the armed forces of the state shall be "the helpers and protectors of the people". How could this happen unless the SAP, SADF, Koevoet, etc, are defeated, dismantled and replaced by the organised people themselves bearing arms?

If the Freedom Charter does not

specify that armed revolution is necessary, this is plainly something missing from the Charter which needs to be rectified by means of clear explanation of the revolutionary tasks by the ANC leadership.

The same applies to the question of socialism. The socialist implications of the Freedom Charter should be clearly spelled out.

What is the use of sheltering behind the fact that certain things were left out of the Freedom Charter? That will not get us power.

Further explanation

Anyone who thinks that the Freedom Charter could simply stand without further explanation as a complete blueprint for a liberated South Africa needs to study the document again. Nowhere in the Charter does it specify how the state is to be organised or how democratic power is to be exercised by the people. On the structures of government the Charter is silent.

Nowhere does it suggest, for example, that majority rule should be exercised through a bourgeois parliamentary system. But nor does it say anything about street and area committees -- the democratic institutions of people's power which the revolution has so far created.

By whom and how are the decisions about a democratic constitution for South Africa to be made?

It should by now be obvious to everyone that we won't achieve the demands of the Charter by horse trading with the racists and capitalists. Nor will a democratic constitution come from negotiation.

Just as the revolutionary conquest of power is necessary, so a revolutionary-democratic assembly of the people will be needed to decide the structure of future government on the basis of majority rule. Alongside the Freedom Charter, this too needs to be explained.

The 1955 Congress of the People was the most democratic meeting of the oppressed masses to that day -- but it was broken up by the state, and its leaders charged with treason. In the future a Revolutionary Congress of the People, democratically elected with representatives from every township and factory, would enable the majority to decide how society is going to be run in the interests of all.

But for such a Congress of the

What the Freedom Charter means to me

By an unemployed African youth

I think the Freedom Charter is the list of demands of the people of South Africa because it means freedom for us and that this robbing of our people must stop.

There is one clause I like, "The people must share in the country's wealth."

The bosses and the government are not prepared to share with us. If we speak out the prison doors are always open or else you die on the spot.

The Freedom Charter enjoys massive support among the oppressed. Even those who have never seen it or who can't read, accept it.

I think the reason is because it spells out real freedom not like the so-called independent states like Transkei, Ciskei etc.

It was banned but the boere could see it was so popular that the banning order was useless and they unbanned it.

Those demands won't come on a tray. We will have to organise, fight and die for them.

Botha and others are talking about reforms. To them reforms means allowing us to fall in love with whites, granting us permission to enter whites-only restaurants, scrapping restrictions on the buses and trains.

But to us reforms, I mean proper reforms, are the right to vote, have a job, a house. All this is in the Freedom Charter. Therefore proper reforms are to implement the Freedom Charter.

It is only us who can implement it, not the bosses and the regime. It was there since 1955, more than 30 years ago, it is still a document, they did not implement it.

The UDF needs a tactic to implement the Freedom Charter. We first

have to defeat the state. Otherwise it will be the ANC and NP in one parliament. The ANC will say the Freedom Charter and the NP will say apartheid.

Therefore the ANC will have to destroy completely the NP and their supporters the bosses, and then implement the Freedom Charter.

The capitalists won't sleep, they will demand their factory back.

That is why everybody must be a soldier. If the ANC defeats the NP and take over the government we will defend that government, we will ride those Hippos and Casspirs to maintain working class law and order.

But the capitalists are very strong, that is why everybody must be a soldier like during the toi-toi time, when youth, mothers, fathers took part in the fighting.

That is why everybody again must take part in the defence of the Freedom Charter because it says, "the people shall govern". The people shall decide for themselves, I mean Parliament will listen to us not us listening to it.

O.R. said People's war for People's power, People's power for democracy.

This war for the Freedom Charter is going to be fought in the streets but not until we get our bazookas.

That is why I mean to demand capitalist belongings and property is to demand a revolution. I don't know much about revolution. One thing I know, it must involve millions of people.

That is why, there can't be People's war unless 80% or so of the people are armed.

Those bazookas we don't hand them back after we defeated the boere. When we get the Freedom Charter we will defend it.

But it's nice to speak. We must do now, not speak.

People to assemble, and for it to have sovereign power to implement its will, it will be necessary that armed state power is taken firmly into the hands of the majority.

The Congress leadership should boldly take this approach to the Freedom Charter. A clear and uncompromising stand on the Freedom Charter will make it more difficult for the

bosses to divide the movement in the future; it will immediately strengthen those forces fighting for the destruction of capitalism and apartheid under the Congress banner. Whichever clause you turn to, it points to revolution! It will not be won without us destroying the bosses' state.

There must be no retreat from the Freedom Charter. Increased repres-

sion is a sign of the blind alley the state finds itself in. The Freedom Charter is under attack because of its strength and its part in the revolution. To retreat from the Freedom Charter is to strengthen the state.

Attempts to stand half-way between the demands of the masses and the demands of the bosses will lead to chaos and racial civil war.

White workers

White workers and lower middle-class people are joining the KP and AWB. Though they cannot see it yet, it is not simply the breakdown of the existing order of white supremacy, but the crisis of capitalism, that underlies this intensified racism. Only the black proletariat has an answer which can reconstruct SA so as to provide a future for all its people. Trying to appease capitalism would make it impossible to win over white working people, and would only bind them to the ultra-right.

In the past these layers have allowed the white state sufficient strength to hold down the black proletariat, allowing the bosses to develop the economy and their riches. Things are different now. The contradictions created by South African capitalism can no longer be suppressed in the old way. White workers are beginning to feel this.

Witness the white railway workers. In a meeting to protest against the wage freeze *Business Day* (19.2.87) reported that: "In an unexpected admission council President Dudley Henn said the SARHWU strike last year had been costly for the workers involved, but they had eventually won their demands". On the one hand they look to the KP, on the other they look for strike action against the bosses!

Ultimately if these workers are not split from the state, and from the crude and reactionary ideas of the KP and AWB, we will have to go through a fearfully bloody and destructive war to achieve our freedom. Assuming we could win, we would then have to rebuild a ruined land. With the class split developing in white society, however, the possibility is beginning to open of winning some white workers and other

less-privileged whites away from the bosses and the state, towards our movement. To convince them they have a future with us, we have to show uncompromising strength -- but also that we have a realistic programme capable of providing for the needs of all South Africans together.

Only if the Freedom Charter is explained in the context of a revolutionary struggle for workers' power, democracy and socialism, can we show a real way forward to black and white alike.

Establishing clearly that socialist tasks flow from the Freedom Charter will not drive away the black middle class, who also suffer from capitalism as well as apartheid. They too have been driven into debt by the monopolies; they too have been stifled by apartheid; have had to endure racism, crime, and insecurity under capitalism. The path we are proposing will be the only guarantee of lasting democracy, security and peace.

To win the support of the black middle class, it is above all necessary that the working class be clear and firm in its aims. It is when clear working-class leadership is lacking that middle-class leadership comes to the fore and tries to 'reconcile' workers with the bosses by holding back the movement.

Stand firmly

We stand firmly for the Freedom Charter, explaining that its inadequacies can and should be overcome by popularising it in the context of an uncompromising strategy for working-class power and socialism.

We do not pretend the Freedom Charter is a tablet of stone. For instance, it omits to mention the right to strike -- but a triumphant revolutionary working-class movement will have no difficulty establishing that as a basic democratic right.

The Charter cannot be divorced from economic and social conditions. The clause that says "*The land shall be shared among those who work it!*" is an example.

"Restriction of land ownership on a racial basis shall be ended, and all the land redivided amongst those who work it, to banish famine and land hunger ...

All shall have the right to occupy land wherever they choose."

The Freedom Charter does not explain how the land is to be redivided. Far more than when the Charter was drawn up the bulk of farm produce comes from big capitalist farms. The cities are fed by large scale agriculture, using modern machinery. To share the land and its fruits in the interests of those who work it and all working people--to end poverty and hunger--it will be necessary to expropriate the land-owning capitalists by nationalising the land.

Together with the present state-owned land, the big farms should be run under workers' control and management. Redistribution of the rest of the land could be carried out by democratic committees of working people in each area, in accordance with local demands.

Clarity

The latest crackdown, the Labour Bill, and the struggle in Natal, all make clarity on these questions ever more urgent. New layers are constantly joining the struggle, immediately meeting with state repression, and drawing revolutionary conclusions.

Workers and youth rallied behind the Freedom Charter in order to struggle for its demands. They want the Freedom Charter as a programme of action to politically prepare and strengthen the movement.

The support it commands is the basis for building the vitally important unity of workers and youth in struggle. In Natal a campaign to explain the Freedom Charter would help eliminate the last traces of rank and file support for Inkatha. Across the country it could be used to raise the awareness of all strugglers of the tasks ahead, and to build the movement on firm foundations in preparation for this.

Saying that the Freedom Charter will only be won after we have won power does not mean that it must be shelved until then. Understood correctly it can make an enormous contribution to the struggle for power, preparing the way for national liberation, democracy and socialism.

BLACK AND WHITE PENSIONERS SUFFER FROM CAPITALISM!

A society can judge its degree of civilisation in the way it treats its aged. Old people -- pensioners -- are the salt of the earth. The masses of wealth in society rests on their blood, sweat and tears.

The sacrifices of the older generation of working class people have built the railways, the roads, Escom, Iscor, Anglo American and all the monopolies. They sacrificed to ensure a better life for future generations.

Business Day is the mouth-piece of the big bosses. It speaks the language of Oppenheimer, Relly, Bloom, Ackerman, Rupert, Rosholt and the like. But on 4 January 1988, it almost sounded like *Inqaba* or *Cosatu News*. It reminded us in what a barbaric society we live. It carried an "expose" of the "insecurity of old age". It showed a glimpse of the misery faced by thousands of white pensioners.

Business Day explains how one pensioner receives R233,00 per month. He is a war veteran. His room costs R81,00 per month. He pays another R10,00 for electricity and is left with R132,00 for food. At this age he is driven to find casual work to live!

Why does *Business Day*, a capitalist newspaper, "worry" about white working class pensioners, many who "can afford only their rent and rely on family and charity for food"?

Sweated

How does that compare with the bosses for whom they sweated their whole lives? Many of them even served in the bosses' army to defend their system. Does Gavin Relly or Mike Rosholt cook their food on a "micro-wave" -- an iron turned upside down, supported by bricks for cooking? Certainly not!

An Anglo American director's "wage" for a week is what a white pensioner receives every two years! We must expose *Business Day's* crocodile tears.



**By Bernard Fortuin,
active in the movement
since 1976**

Business Day, this bosses' rag, does not tell us that in 1986 Anglo American directors' "earned" about R6 410 a week! They don't tell us that is about R330 000 per year! That's just "wages", it has nothing to do with profits.

Nowhere do they mention black pensioners who are grinded down by the racism of the bosses' system and receive about half the pension of whites! They only mention the white pensioners because they fear the political consequences for their system.

The bosses' system is defended by the white working class. *Business Day* fears losing this support. They fear white working class people will see as they get old that they were just used by the bosses against black people. They



fear that more and more younger generations of whites will draw the same conclusions.

And they are right. Many will. Particularly as the bosses play chorus to Botha's attacks on the white working class.

The plight of the white pensioners is the tip of the iceberg. Old people in South Africa are treated like dirt. Capitalism uses us when we're young and discards us when we're old.

The UDF, COSATU and SAYCO must defend the aged. Botha and the bosses are also the enemy of white pensioners. *Business Day* must not be allowed to pull wool over our eyes. The demand for a national pension for every worker no lower than his or her wage, and not below a national minimum, can be linked to the campaign for a national minimum wage.

Nationalise the monopolies under workers' control and management! Confiscate the wealth of the big bosses for the benefit of those who worked for it!

amandla

CAYCO

BELLVILLE
FEB'88

**WORKERS AND YOUTH UNITE FOR POWER,
NATIONAL LIBERATION AND SOCIALISM!**

COSATU and UDF —Defend the school students!

Grievances that brought the youth into head-on confrontation with the state in 1984-86 are still unanswered. Here *Inqaba* reprints an article that recently appeared in the movement press in *Amandla*, the newspaper of the Bellville branch of CAYCO.

For many, many years the Apartheid state tried to keep black workers and youth uneducated. They were happy to educate us to become cheap labour slaves for the bosses. They used illiteracy, ignorance, and poverty to oppress us. Today, 'Doctor' AB Fourie and the Department of 'Education and Training' (DET) try to sing a different tune. But we know it is a false one. The DET hypocrites say:

"We know that every right-minded parent wants his child to be educated. He wants his children to attend a well organised school. He prefers a well disciplined school free of intimidation by the so-called (self-appointed) Joint SRC's and the like." (DET circular).

In Langa, Guguletu, Crossroads, in Mitchell's Plain, everywhere we know this is not true. We ask Fourie: Are classes with more than 50 pupils, with no books or stationery "well organised"? DET can't tell us why so many students have failed, why there is a lack of teachers, why so many teachers are overworked and underpaid. DET won't tell us because they are inefficient and useless, they are wasting the lives of our children.

Our SRC's like COSATU, SAYCO and the UDF defend us against attacks by apartheid and capitalism. They are democratic or-

ganisations. DET is not democratic. It is an instrument of white minority rule. Many, many youths are forced out of schools into the streets, factories, farms, because our parents can no longer afford to educate us. Is this not intimidation?

Dompas conditions

Fourie and the DET are trying to make our schools police stations. They demand that students register with dompas conditions. They demand that we give them the right to use any form of discipline. They demand that our parents also give them this right. Does this mean give them the right to shoot, detain and beat up students? We say no to these conditions.

They demand that our parents pay for all damages done or losses caused to school property by their children. How and who will decide this?

They have closed down schools in Langa, Guguletu, Nyanga and Crossroads until we register under these conditions.

DET has transferred Langa High School principal, Mr Duke Ngcukana. This is victimisation. In

Mitchell's Plain, Glendale high school principal Mr Peter Carelse was transferred as well.

DET and DEC wants to take revenge for the victories at Langa and in Mitchell's Plain last year. They are trying to provoke our students. Students reject these dompas conditions.

DET is trying to use their old trick of divide and rule. They are spreading confusion trying to divide parents and students. DET asks "Are these SRC's not CHILDREN ... Are they now giving orders and prescribing to adult parents?" These hypocrites refuse to recognise our democratic PTSA's. They have never cared what parents or students think. Because of intimidation by the police and the DET confusion exists in our townships. They won't succeed in their mischief. Every parent and student can be convinced through patient explanation of the need to oppose the police conditions of DET.

Best education

Every parent and student wants the best education. Botha and his bosses have always tried to keep us ignorant. We want education. Because when the working class rules South Africa and we implement the Freedom Charter, we will need education.

No matter what DET and all the collaborators do, parents, students and teachers will continue to strugg-

le for a democratic and socialist education.

Every parent and student rejects these conditions of registration. But we are intimidated and forced to register. The DET and the DEC of Hendrickse are cowards. They hide behind the guns of the SAP and SADF. We want to go back to the schools without conditions but DET has surrounded them with the police and army to keep us out.

Banned and dispersed

They have banned and dispersed our meetings but it will not help them. If students register it will not be a victory for DET because they are holding a gun to our heads. We are going to struggle against these conditions. We will not allow any student to be victimised.

Fourie your intimidation will not work. We will fight back!!

COSATU and UDF—Fight back to defend school students!

Most of our parents are workers. Many of them are COSATU members. They are struggling to survive attacks by the bosses. It is the police of Botha and the bosses who are closing our schools.

CAYCO and WESCO members have always supported worker struggles. We will continue to do so. Now the organised workers must lead. They must defend the youth.

The youth must organise. Every factory should be visited. At every COSATU factory a meeting of workers should demand that DET drop these police conditions. They should demand no victimisation of students and teachers and the release of all detained students. Otherwise they will face action by the workers. Does DET, Botha and the bosses want to close all the factories?

The Boers think they are powerful. They can surround every



Youth in Soweto demonstrate after the murder of Sicelo Dhlomo.

school, they can stop our meetings. But they cannot occupy every factory. There the workers have power. They could not stop the magnificent struggle of 5 000 Ellerines workers. Every youth to the factories. Build worker-youth unity! Stop DET! Unite and prepare for the textile workers' strike!

WESCO and CAYCO must organise the support of every coloured school for the African schools and for Mitchell's Plain.

Working class unity

Build working class unity of the Africa and coloureds. An injury to one is an injury to all!

We say full support for the NECC demands:

No police conditions in our schools!

Open the schools unconditionaly!

Remove the police and the army, now!

No victimisation of students and teachers!

The right for democratically elected SRC's!

Reinstate the principals!

The right to attend schools of our choice!

Education for liberation!

We struggle for:

Non racial, democratic and socialist education!

One person one vote in a united South Africa!

The doors of learning and culture shall be opened!

Viva WESCO! Viva COSATU! Viva NECC! Viva UDF! Viva CAYCO!

**ONE PERSON ONE VOTE IN
A UNITED SOUTH AFRICA**

BOTHANOMICS: sign of SA capitalism's

Aiming to cover up the collapse of his *political* "reform" programme, P.W. Botha's speech at the opening of Parliament concentrated on *economic* "reform". It was hailed as a "watershed" in economic policy by the big bosses.

The key measures he announced are a *state sector wage freeze*, (which he urges the private sector to follow) and *privatisation* of ESCOM, SATS, ISCOR and other state-owned industry.

On this basis Botha promises (in a full-page press advertisement): "Improved education. Adequate health services. More jobs. A fairer tax dispensation. And a secure old age."

These measures may temporarily boost the big monopolies' profits. But they will not fulfil Botha's promises. On a capitalist basis, this is impossible.

By Richard Monroe

There is an old saying that "those whom the gods wish to destroy they first drive mad." It applies increasingly to our rulers.

The measures will not only spell increasing devastation for millions of black working people. To carry them through in full would dramatically reverse Nationalist Party policy of 40 years. They will seriously hit white workers and lower middle-class people, the NP's electoral base. The effect will be vastly worsened by the coming recession or slump in capitalist economies throughout the world (see "World economy heads for slump", *Inqaba*, 24/25).

The conditions already facing black working people show the chronic sickness of capitalism. Poverty wages, joblessness, overcrowded homes, homelessness, miserable conditions of mis-education for the youth, are all

that capitalism can offer the masses. Five per cent of South Africans own 88% of the country's personal wealth.

Food today costs 12 times more than it did in 1960, and transport 10 times as much. Since 1980, food prices have trebled. Despite population increase, there has been an actual fall in the volume of food sales since 1984. In some rural areas, 70-80% of people are suffering from malnutrition.

Even the whites are now increasingly affected by the state of the economy. On the margins of white privilege there are soup kitchens, feeding schemes at white schools, whites taking jobs at R5 a day, white housewives selling homemade jam to supplement their income. These signs of destitution bring back echoes of the 1930s.

Among the black majority, the idea is increasingly taking hold that these problems will not be solved without the overthrow of the regime and the bosses. In the words of the NUM slogan, "Socialism means Freedom."

Our rulers are concerned about the state of the economy because it is fueling this revolution. Without a "strong economic base", says Botha, "we don't have the foundation...to go ahead with the social and political reform which we need." "All our [reform] efforts will fail", said the Urban Foundation's Jan Steyn, "unless our economy is able to sustain its thus far rather limited recovery. If we slide back into a further recession soon, unemployment and falling incomes will create a deepening of social problems which are already serious." (*Financial Mail*, 11/3/88)

Limits of the market

At the root of capitalism's crises throughout its history, lie the limits of the market it creates. Nationally and internationally it has run up against these limits again and again, overcome them, only to run up against them again sooner or later.

These exist because capitalism is based on extracting unpaid labour from the working class. The working class is not only the producer but the main consumer of commodities. In the last analysis, the market for capitalism is limited by the buying power of the working class, whose wages are less than the value of what they produce.

As Marx put it, "The ultimate reason for all real crises always remains the poverty and restricted consumption of the masses as opposed to the drive of capitalist production to develop the productive forces as though only the absolute consuming power of society constituted their limit." (*Capital*, III, 484)

Modern capitalism has meant increasingly large-scale production, beating again and again against the limits set on the world market by private ownership and separate na-

tion-states. It has meant domination of the world market by the big monopolies in the imperialist powers, carving and recarving it among themselves through convulsions and through wars.

Between 1950 and 1975 there was a colossal and unprecedented expansion of the world market — because of a combination of particular circumstances which *Inqaba* has previously explained. This allowed a massive expansion in the productive forces in the advanced capitalist countries uninterrupted for a generation. But it could not overcome capitalism's fundamental contradictions, which are more and more reasserting themselves.

Between 1950 and 1975 world trade grew by 12% a year; now annual growth at half that rate is entirely exceptional. In the temporary upturn in the 1980s, industry operates in advanced capitalist countries at only 80% capacity, with big cutbacks in basic industries such as steel, ship-building, etc. 31 million are unemployed in these countries, and in the colonial world millions face starvation.

Height

In the 1960s, at the height of 25 years of massive boom in the advanced capitalist countries, the SA economy grew by an average 6% a year. But what benefit did the mass of black people get from that?

In the 1970s, as the world capitalism entered once again into crisis, SA growth slowed to 3% a year. In the 1980s the advanced capitalist countries have passed through a temporary recovery, although with very low growth rates compared with the past. SA experienced a short-lived gold-based boom in 1980-81. But, between 1982 and 1986, growth in SA has averaged a

bankruptcy

mere 0.5% a year.

"Real income per person" -- a statistic which does not take account of the inequality of income distribution -- nevertheless has fallen every year since 1974, and is back to the level of 1967.

356 000 youth enter the labour market each year. Growth of at least 5% a year would be needed just to provide jobs for them. Instead jobs are being lost: 124 000 since 1981 in the key metal sector, for example -- a

quarter of its jobs. Black unemployment may be as high as 6 million.

Even this year, with the economy in upturn, experts do not anticipate more than 3-4% growth. And how long can the recovery last? Since the stock market crash on Wall Street last October the capitalists are talking about "when" and not "whether" a new world recession will come. And, whatever the state of the world economy, there are now fundamental limits on the growth of SA capitalism.

Capitalism can neither solve the problems of SA's people, nor the crisis

facing our rulers.

Botha and the "experts" are not even consistent. On the one hand they say the barrier to growth is "state control" of large sectors of the economy. Return these to private capitalists, they say! This will open them to the "discipline of the marketplace", as the "most efficient" means for the production of wealth. But what about "the marketplace" when it comes to the struggle of working people for a living wage? Over wages, the regime uses "state control". Working people, says

LIMITS OF THE SA MARKET

SA capitalism, based first on mining, arose with the world market dominated by the monopolies. To compete, it has depended and still depends on cheap black labour. This has become its Achilles heel -- because of the limits which low wages place on the market.

The motor of growth in any modern economy is manufacturing. SA capitalism expanded into manufacturing, particularly during the post-war boom, by substituting local production for goods previously imported. But, since the early 1970s, this has increasingly come up against the limits of the home market. In 1981, for example, 8 million refrigerators were sold in the United States -- but only 150 000 in South Africa. Thus refrigerator production in SA means "small production runs and relatively high unit costs." (*Rand Daily Mail*, 11/5/81)

As the UK capitalists' *Economist Intelligence Unit* put it in a 1982 report on SA: "All of the 'easy' import substitution has been accomplished and most of the manufactured goods which continue to be imported are either very specialised components, or machinery and equipment (for example computers) for which markets in SA are still far too small to warrant local production."

Minimum capacity for a plant producing the rubber compound PBR is 36 000 tons -- but in 1975 SA industry used only 7 300 tons of it (*FM*, 24/2/78). A SA machine tool manufacturer explains "it would not be in [our] interest...to devote scarce and expensive skills to manufacture equipment which can be produced more economically

overseas." (*RDM*, 7/5/81).

Continued growth requires these capital imports. To buy them requires dollars, D marks, yen, etc earned by selling exports. Since the early 1970s the strategy of SA capitalism, to overcome the limits of the home market, and earn foreign exchange, has been to try to expand beyond exporting minerals and agricultural products to exporting manufactured goods also. **But this strategy has failed.**

It has been tried precisely when world trade is increasingly stagnating and subject to fiercer cut-throat competition among the imperialist powers because of capitalist crisis.

Despite the temporary recovery in the world economy in the 1980s, **the volume of total SA exports in 1987 was the same as that in 1980.** Gold accounts still for some 40% of these; only 25% are "manufactured" goods (and these mostly semi-processed).

Labour costs

The capitalists are now trying to claim they are being "priced out of the world market" by "rising labour costs". The National Productivity Institute, for example, is "dismayed to find that while wages in the manufacturing sector rocketed ahead by no less than 352% since 1975, labour productivity had crawled forward by a mere 18.5%. The result has been that unit labour costs have soared by a staggering 282% -- in stark contrast with an actual 3% decline in Japan over the identical time span." (*Star*, 23/2/1988)

This argument is entirely spurious. "Unit labour costs" are mainly determined by the amount of investment in machinery, etc, not by wage levels. Otherwise why is it that "high-wage" economies such as West Germany are among the most competitive on the world market?

In any case, if the poverty wages of black SA workers are really "too high" to allow capitalism to develop -- this is a conclusive argument for ending capitalism.

Nor can the capitalists overcome the limits of the home market by raising wages. Because they are in competition, on the home market and internationally, no capitalist can raise wages unilaterally. They must hold them down.

In reality this stagnation in "labour productivity" is because of a lack of investment by the capitalists -- because they are increasingly unable to find the markets, at home or abroad, for which they can produce and sell goods at a profit.

In the boom of the 1960s gross fixed investment in SA grew by 17, 18, and 20% a year. Now it has fallen every year since 1981. In the first half of last year it was R12,1 billion -- one third lower than in 1981. Only now is it recovering...and will be overtaken again by the recession.

When profitable investment opportunities existed, foreign capital flowed into SA, attracted by high rates of return. Now the trend is reversed. Since the middle of 1985, for example, there has been a net outflow of capital of at least R11,5 million -- representing a withdrawal of foreign capital and an outflow of SA capital. In this the lack of profitable investment opportunities is a factor as decisive as "political risk" or pressures of the sanctions lobby.

Botha (with his salary of R151 000 a year), must "tighten their belts."

The freeze on wages is, they say, to combat inflation. But every worker experiences that inflation -- rising prices -- is not caused by rising wages. It is a constant struggle to try to keep wages up with rising prices. When we win wage increases, the bosses put prices up again.

SA's chronic inflation -- 10-20% since the early 1970s -- is a consequence (on the one hand) of the low investment, stagnant productivity, and declining competitiveness of SA capitalism (see box), and (on the other) of the inflationary pressures in the world capitalist economy itself.

The post-war boom in the advanced capitalist countries went along with the massive expansion of credit, (bank lending, hire purchase, mortgages, etc) -- as a means for trying to overcome the limits of the market. For the same purpose, governments practiced "deficit financing", i.e. spending beyond their means on infrastructure, social welfare measures, etc by borrowing and printing money. For a whole period this was a factor in expanding the economy but, increasingly, it reached its limits.

"Creating" money artificially has the tendency to devalue it -- it builds in, inherent tendencies to inflation which began to grow out of control in many advanced capitalist countries.

By the 1970s these "Keynesian" policies (after the economist Keynes who first advocated them) gave way to doctrines of "monetarism". The "monetarists" argued that by cutting back on government spending, credit etc, to what "the economy could afford", inflation could be squeezed out and growth resumed.

Where these doctrines were fully implemented, it has been with disastrous results. The reactionary dictator Pinochet imposed them on the back of a defeated working class in Chile in the early 1980s. Production collapsed by a staggering 14% in 1982. In the first three months of 1983 unemployment increased by 300%, with 80% out of work in some Santiago shanty-towns. While this at first brought down inflation sharply, it soon rose again.

This struck the Chilean economy a blow from which it has not recovered. In 1983, production fell back to the level of 1965, and the size of the workforce to that of 1900! Unemployment remains at levels of 40%. And such has been the level of bankruptcies that the dictatorship -- despite its

"commitment to the free market" -- has been compelled to take over 60% of industry for it to survive at all.

Implemented for a time by Thatcher in Britain, monetarist policies also led to massive unemployment and hardship. Thatcher's "privatisation" -- which the SA ruling class holds up as a model -- has not stimulated a resurgence of manufacturing industry. Once third among the advanced capitalist countries in production of goods per head of population, Britain has dropped to 19th; she is now outstripped in industry by formerly backward Italy and even India. Despite the upturn in the world economy, manufacturing output in Britain in 1985 was still 5% lower than when Thatcher came to office.

If the situation is not worse, it is because of the temporary benefits of North Sea oil, and because Thatcher has not carried through "monetarism" consistently. Despite the slashing of social programmes, **government spending has continually risen.**

Abandoning

In fact the whole recovery of the world economy in the 1980s, spearheaded by the US, has been based on **abandoning** monetarism. While proclaiming "monetarism" and attacking the living standards of the working class, the Reagan administration has engaged in massive deficit spending on arms -- "negative Keynesianism", spending on "guns instead of butter". **US government debt has doubled in the last eight years.**

Inflation has been temporarily dampened in the advanced capitalist countries. But this is largely because of a massive drop in agricultural and mineral commodity prices -- the main exports of "Third World" countries. This has meant a massive drain of resources from the "Third World" of \$1000 billion in the last period, at huge cost to the masses in these countries. Prices of their imports rise correspondingly, devastating their currencies, and fuelling inflation for them. The monetarist medicine of the IMF worsens the problems.

The upturn of the 1980s, though temporarily benefitting some layers of workers, has been fragile, accompanied by unprecedented mass misery. It has been based on the plunder of the poor countries by the rich, and on

Reagan's massive deficits in the US. It cannot last.

A suppressed UK report commented that "manufacturing industry has failed to invest in new capital equipment, despite a strong rise in profitability. Instead funds have been channelled into mergers and acquisitions." (*Independent*, 22/11/86) This reflects the general situation. There has been a huge expansion of bank credit, etc -- including "Third World" debt of \$1 trillion -- and a massive bubble of speculation, which the October 1987 stock market crash began to prick. All this is the harbinger of renewed recession or slump.

SA spending

In SA since World War II, government spending has risen constantly. Mostly it has gone to finance a bloated state bureaucracy, to sustain white privilege as a bulwark against the black working class, and to pay for the military-police repression of the South and Southern African revolution.

With the economy tending to stagnate, and massively increased pressures from the masses, government spending not only grows, but is increasingly based on deficit financing -- "negative Keynesianism" also.

From 1973 to 1980, government spending was 25-30% of total production. By 1986 it had risen to 38%. Increasingly this is current rather than capital spending, a third of it on public sector wages and salaries.

In 1981 the budget deficit was 2,6% of GDP; in 1987-8 this had risen to 5,8%. Along with this goes accumulating total government debt, potential inflationary dynamite. In 1960 it was R2,4 billion; now it is R54 billion.

The amount allocated in the recent budget for paying interest to the big banks on this debt is one of the largest single items: R7,6 billion, an increase of 19,5% over last year.

The present economic upturn, as the capitalist "experts" admit, is wholly based on deficit spending by government, and on consumer borrowing.

The regime is locked into increasing spending, for both political and economic reasons. The monetarist *Financial Mail* wails: "We are witnessing Keynes run amok; Pretoria spends when the economy is growing slowly on the unconvincing grounds that this promotes growth. Then, each time the

economy picks up, it continues to spend, saying the country can now afford government projects." (5/2/88)

Nor is it government spending alone that fuels inflation. The failure of capitalists to invest means their profits pile up without finding a productive outlet. This money becomes devalued. The weakness of the economy reflects itself in a weakening of the rand against other currencies -- driving up the price of imports. This also fuels inflation.

Now the government promises to reduce government spending and inflation by a wage freeze. But this will not solve the problems. "Future growth", said the *Standard Bank Review* only last October "will continue to depend on increased consumption spending which, in turn, can only come about if net personal income increases at a higher rate than inflation." But this is what the wage freeze is intended to prevent! The capitalists have to try to cut wages to ensure profits and try to control inflation. But this also cuts their market.

It is, at any rate, more and not less state spending which is needed by the majority -- not on military, police, and apartheid bureaucracy -- but education, homes, health, pensions, etc.

Just to satisfy new demand for homes of 300 000 units a year would require R8 billion a year. (*FM*, 2/10/1987) To cover even the official waiting lists, more homes are needed than have been built since World War II! Yet in 1986 only 19 000 homes were built. The government has no serious housing programme.

Neither the government nor the big bosses are prepared to cut spending on the military and police. This they depend on to defend themselves against the revolution. In 1977-78 military spending was R1,7 billion: in this year's budget it is R8,2 billion. This is 22,6% more than in 1987-8; while police spending increases by 17,3% and spending on prisons by 28,8%.

At the same time, in their futile attempts to dampen mass anger, they are forced to increase social spending -- but, in the recent budget by only 12%, disproportionately for whites.

For the black majority this amounts to nothing more than pouring spoons of water onto a desert of misery. Even where they have increased spending, as in education (3500% up in 15 years), what effects are felt from this in the township schools?

To try to finance all this without running up debt, the government expands taxation to its limits.

There has been a huge rise in the tax burden on black working people, as a result of GST. Since introduced in 1978, GST revenue has soared 1000% to R10-11 billion, 30% of tax revenue in this budget. Now, with the proposed change to VAT, they may even end exemptions on basic foodstuffs.

Along with this has gone a big rise in personal income tax -- and a reduction in the relative contribution of big business to tax revenues, partly through tax evasion. (As a merchant banker put it recently, "If a company...says it's paying 42% tax, we assume it's a badly managed company." *Weekly Mail*, 11/3/88).

Barend du Plessis pretended that his recent budget contained "tax cuts" for individuals. Yet, through indirect and direct taxes, individuals will provide 68% of revenue in this budget (more than last year) compared with 31% in 1980.

Du Plessis now claims he will reduce government spending, and the budget deficit, for the first time since the Second World War. This will prove to be impossible. The pressures for raising spending will mount from every direction. Equally, government debt and the inflation it produces, is insoluble short of ending capitalism.

Stimulate?

Hailing "privatisation", Botha and the capitalists claim that the "discipline of the marketplace" will stimulate production and revive the economy. This will not be the case.

Both have short-term reasons for privatisation and a wage freeze.

From the point of view of the government, these are also means to try to balance the budget. The *Standard Bank Review* (December 1987) estimates that R80 billion of state assets could be privatised. But selling these off would only realise twice last year's government spending. And, once sold, they can't be sold again! Only temporarily alleviating the problem of deficits, implementing these measures will also slash the market.

The big monopolies, for their part, into whose hands these assets will fall, are licking their lips not at the prospect of long-term investment possibilities, but of making a quick buck.

Last year SA Reserve Bank Governor de Kock lamented in his annual report that "Money is chasing paper in

the financial markets instead of bricks, mortar and steel. The financial sector is experiencing high blood pressure while the real economy suffers from low blood pressure."

Lack of a market for bricks, mortar, and steel is why the capitalists do not invest to produce more of them (despite the masses' want of housing, cars, etc.). The rich will not cease "chasing paper" on the stock exchange, grabbing companies from each other in "mergers", looking for outlets of investment abroad, merely because they can buy a stake in ESCOM, FOSKOR, ISCOR, or SATS.

Their profits have been rising; their contribution to government revenue has been falling...but this has not induced them to invest productively. Privatisation will go along with cutting back and "rationalisation" of these sectors, with severe consequences for working people.

Pay more

As even the capitalist press points out, privatisation means that "the ordinary citizen" may have to "pay more for services which may be a lower standard than before. And some services which he has taken for granted might simply be discontinued.... Barend du Plessis said South Africans would have to accept that many of their needs were much greater than was really necessary[!]. He did not want to elaborate on which services would be curtailed or cut as this could lead to controversy [!!] at this stage". (*Star*, 7/2/88)

Even to ensure that the capitalists are willing to grab a stake, the government must make the state industries and services it is selling "profitable." This means raising the prices of what they sell to "market levels." At present, for example, rail commuters are subsidised to the extent of two-thirds of their fares. If commuter fares are tripled -- the reverse of "curing inflation" -- it will be a huge new burden for working people. Fewer people would travel by train -- and rail services, far from being profitable, would be cut back.

For the capitalists, making these industries profitable will also mean weeding out "overstaffing" and firing "redundant" workers. This will affect not only black but also white workers -- who for decades have been used to

job protection, special benefits, and reliable pensions in the state sector.

Finding no alternative now but to attack the conditions of white workers, Botha is handing over as much as possible of the dirty work to the big monopolies to carry out.

If privatisation is carried into education or the health services -- as is now threatened with Baragwanath and other hospitals -- the effects will be even more disastrous. Already the costs of state health care itself have been increased savagely in SA. In Britain creeping privatisation has meant worse health facilities for most people, and five-star treatment for the rich.

No escape

Privatisation is no escape from capitalist crisis. The state sector forms a big part of the market; cutting it back will further restrict the possibilities for growth. Sooner or later they will be compelled to renationalise or make new nationalisations anyway.

Privatisation is a reactionary measure. The growth of a state-owned sector in capitalist countries, as Marx's co-worker Engels long ago explained (see box opposite), is a distorted symptom of the decay of capitalism, and of its ripeness for replacement by socialism.

First written a hundred years ago, what Engels says remains -- for all that has intervened -- essentially true today.

The boom of 1950-1975 itself went along, in almost every capitalist country, not only with government "deficit financing", but with the growth of state ownership of the means of production.

Reformist leaders of the workers' movement argued that this showed the possibilities for a gradual evolution to socialism on the basis of a "mixed economy" in which the state would play an ever-greater role.

In reality, in these "mixed economies", state ownership has generally been restricted to needed but unprofitable sectors, serving the interests of the capitalist class. Now, with the crisis, capitalists in many countries are engaged in a counter-revolutionary attack on state ownership -- to cut the unprofitable parts, and hand over the profitable parts to the rich. Against this we argue as Engels argued: To solve the crisis, it is the task of the working class to carry through a revolution to

place the monopolies in state ownership under its own democratic control and management.

If monopolies dominate the SA economy, if the SA state today owns 57% of the economy, this is because SA capitalism could not have developed otherwise. For the rise of capitalist agriculture and manufacturing the role of the state has been crucial, intervening to protect and subsidise uncompetitive sectors, and establishing and maintaining key sectors of infrastructure and heavy industry. Over the past five years, ESCOM, SATS, and Posts and Telecommunications have accounted for 30% of net fixed investment.

These, and ISCOR, FOSKOR, etc would not exist were it not for the state. In 1927-8, when ISCOR was founded, shares were offered to private capitalists -- who refused to take them up because there was no profit to be made! Some even opposed the creation of ISCOR at all. Now, in the epoch of capitalism's decay, they want to scavenge some last pickings.

Capitalism is bankrupt. It is rotten-ripe for overthrow. This is the task placed on the working class in every capitalist country.

COSATU pamphlet

COSATU's recent pamphlet, *Political Economy: South Africa in crisis* identifies many of the insoluble problems facing SA capitalism. It correctly argues that "Privatisation and deregulation...will improve the profits of the monopolies while at the same time reducing the income and employment levels of the vast majority of the people of South Africa...[and] would only...further strengthen the power and grip which the monopolies have over the capitalist economy." (p.72)

But the pamphlet is less clear on what our movement should pose as an alternative. Citing COSATU's support for the Freedom Charter, it adds: "The nationalisation of the productive assets of a country can take many forms. In fact nationalisation does not immediately eliminate the problems caused by production for profit."

Undoubtedly, nationalisation of the monopolies does not bring socialism, or solve all the problems of the working class, overnight. But COSATU needs to make it clear

throughout the movement that there is only one "form" of nationalisation which can truly serve the interests of the working class and all the oppressed.

Nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy under democratic workers' control and management, and on the basis of a comprehensive and democratic economic plan is the absolute precondition for freeing the productive forces from the fetters of capitalism, satisfying the fundamental needs of working people, liberating all the oppressed from enslavement, and opening the way towards classless socialist society.

Organised force

The key towards this is strengthening the organised force of the working class. In the present upturn, the black working class will use every opportunity to recover what has been taken from it in the 1982-6 recession.

Now also there is an urgent need to mobilise a fightback to defeat the wage freeze. This can not only strengthen the forces of the black working class, but provides opportunities for drawing white workers into the struggle.

It is necessary also to prepare for the coming downturn of the SA economy in SA. The capitalist class internationally knows the severe revolutionary consequences of a new recession, and are seeking to hold it off by the means at their disposal. But they cannot do so indefinitely.

The coming downturn, if not a depression to match the 1930s, is likely to be the most severe since that time. The 1930s depression had devastating effects on black and white working people in SA. There will be new attacks on jobs and living standards, and attempts to close down whole factories.

Because, in times of crisis, capitalists buy gold to try to preserve and hoard their wealth, the downturn may go along with big increases in the gold price. This happened in the 1930s, and in the 1979-81 world recession.

This could temporarily offset the downturn in SA, particularly if the government tries to pump increased tax revenue from the gold mines into spending on infrastructure or social services in futile attempts to hold off the revolution. But, as *Inqaba* has previously explained (supplement to No.

20/21, November 1986), these effects cannot be more than temporary. They would ultimately lead to increased inflationary pressures -- if unchecked, to inflation rates of 100% or more, as Latin American countries and Israel have recently experienced.

As the great Marxist teachers al-

ways explained, capitalism, however deep its crisis, will not disappear automatically: it must be overthrown. On a capitalist basis, the perspectives ahead for working people in South Africa and throughout the world are of increasing nightmare.

Our task in South Africa is to build

a mass ANC on a socialist programme, to end the rule of Botha's regime and the bosses -- and establish the conditions, along with working people world-wide, in which poverty, insecurity and privilege will be ended for ever.

What Engels said about monopolies and nationalisation ...under capitalism and in the socialist transformation of society

"This rebellion of the productive forces, as they grow more and more powerful against their quality as capital, this stronger and stronger command that their social character shall be recognised, forces the capitalist class itself to treat them more and more as social productive forces, so far as this is possible under capitalist conditions...

"In the trusts, freedom of competition changes into its very opposite -- into monopoly; and the production without any definite plan of capitalistic society capitulates to the production upon a definite plan of the invading socialistic society. Certainly this is so far still to the benefit and advantage of the capitalists. But in this case the exploitation is so palpable that it must break down. No nation will put up with production conducted by trusts, with so bare-faced an exploitation of the community by a small band of dividend-mongers...

"In any case, with trusts or without, the official representative of capitalist society -- the state -- will ultimately have to undertake the direction of production. This necessity for conversion of state property is felt first in the great institutions for intercourse and communication -- the post office, the telegraphs, the railways.

"If the crises demonstrate the incapacity of the bourgeoisie for managing any longer modern productive forces, the transformation of the great establishments for production and distribution into joint-stock companies, trusts and state property shows how unnecessary the bourgeoisie are for that purpose. All the social functions of the capitalist are now performed by salaried employees. The capitalist has no further social function than that of pocketing dividends, tearing off coupons, and gambling on the

Stock Exchange, where the different capitalists despoil one another of their capital...

"The modern state, no matter what its form, is essentially a capitalist machine, the state of the capitalists, the ideal personification of the total national capital. The more it proceeds to taking over the productive forces, the more does it actually become the national capitalist, the more citizens does it exploit. The workers remain wage-workers -- proletarians. The capitalist relation is not done away with. It is rather brought to a head. But, brought to a head, it topples over. State ownership of the productive forces is not the solution of the conflict, but concealed within it are the technical conditions that form the elements of that solution....

This solution can only consist in the practical recognition of the social nature of the modern forces of production, and therefore in the harmonising of the modes of production, appropriation, and exchange with the socialised character of the means of production. And this can only come about by society openly and directly taking possession of the productive forces which have outgrown all control except that of society as a whole. The social character of the means of production and of the products today reacts against the producers, periodically disrupts all production and exchange, acts only like a law of Nature working blindly, forcibly, destructively. But with the taking over by society of the productive forces, the social character of the means of production and of the products will be utilised by the producers with a perfect understanding of its nature, and instead of being a source of disturbance and periodical collapse, will become the most powerful lever of production itself...

"The difference is as that between

the destructive force of electricity in the lightning of the storm, and electricity under command in the telegraph and the voltaic arc; the difference between a conflagration, and fire working in the service of man. With this recognition, at last, of the real nature of the productive forces of today, the social anarchy of production gives place to a social regulation of production upon a definite plan, according to the needs of the community and of each individual...

"Whilst the capitalist mode of production more and more completely transforms the great majority of the population into proletarians, it creates the power which, under penalty of its own destruction, is forced to accomplish this revolution. Whilst it forces on more and more the transformation of the vast means of production, already socialised, into state property, it shows itself the way to accomplishing this revolution. The proletariat seizes political power and turns the means of production into state property...

"By this act, the proletariat frees the means of production from the character of capital they have thus far borne, and gives their socialised character complete freedom to work itself out. Socialised production upon a predetermined plan becomes henceforth possible. The development of production makes the existence of different classes of society thenceforth an anachronism. In proportion as anarchy in social production vanishes, the political authority of the state dies out. Man, at last the master of his own form of social organisation, becomes at the same time the lord over Nature, his own master -- free."

-- from **Socialism: Utopian and Scientific** (1877)

HOW CAN SA IMPERIALISM BE

Throughout Southern Africa youth and workers are looking for the way to break the power of racist and capitalist domination over the region.

The mood for resistance which burst out after the death of President Samora Machel still smoulders as fresh atrocities are added to the crimes of SA.

The 70 million Africans of the SADCC region are coming to feel the same hatred for SA oppression as the 28 million blacks of South Africa. SA's policies in the region are the same as at home: economic exploitation and white domination enforced by the gun.

Genocidal policies

Millions face starvation in Southern Africa -- six million in Mozambique alone as a result of the policies of South African imperialism which amount to genocide. The responsibility for every Mozambican death rests squarely on Botha and Malan.

Since 1980 it is estimated that the region has suffered \$10 000 million damage from SA aggression. SA-supported sabotage has been unleashed against every transport route out of

By Jake Wilson

Southern Africa which does not pass through SA.

Despite all the promises made at Nkomati, and repeated time after time, Mozambique continues to be squeezed dry by SA. Mozambican workers have been deported from SA.

Through Maputo, the largest port in Southern Africa in 1973, there is now only a trickle of cargo. Tonnage has been reduced by SA from 14,2 to 2,2 million tons between 1973-87.

The barbaric MNR headed by reactionary scum of the earth, is organised and used by SA to destroy farms, clinics, shops, schools, transport facilities; everything associated with social advance and development. It is estimated that SA support has equipped over 20 000 bandits -- even larger than FRELIMO itself.

SA military forces are in almost continuous occupation of parts of Angola in support of the counter-revolutionary UNITA. SA forces and agents launch raid after raid into Botswana, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, and Zambia.

By pushing its fist against the face of the leaders of Southern African states the Botha regime has succeeded in driving out any substantial presence of the ANC in country after country.

And still the SA racists are not satisfied. Every week there is a new outburst of rampant aggression. Recently General Magnus Malan announced to Zambia, Mozambique and Zimbabwe that "the tone and content of their propaganda is totally unacceptable to us".

All the countries in the region should accept, he argued, that "as the regional power we have the right to help formulate the ground rules for interaction in the region". (*Financial Times*, 12/11/87)

A basic reason for the huge expansion of military attacks against Southern African countries has been the attempt to prove "blacks can't govern themselves". It is a desperate attempt to roll back the African revolution.

The revolutions in Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe wrecked the hopes of South African imperialism to dominate Southern Africa through a "constellation" of compliant Bantustan-type regimes. Equally, the SA ruling class is threatened by the toppling of capitalism which has taken place in Angola and Mozambique. It is determined to prove that "socialism" leads to economic disaster.

One economic unit

In Southern Africa, SA is an economic giant. In 1985 80% of the region's GDP was generated in SA. There are one million Southern African migrant workers in SA. Most rail and roads run to and from the South.

Virtually all key economic resources of the region are controlled by multi-nationals, with the SA monopolies such as Anglo-American Corporation having their grip on the richest.

Diamond mines in Botswana and Angola; a nickel refinery, bank, and citrus farms in Zimbabwe; a freight company directing much of Southern Africa's trade -- are just a few of its operations which are closely controlled from Johannesburg.

Southern Africa is one economic unit formed around the colossus in the south.

The power of SA industry de-

termines the basic trading relations. **There is more trade between SADCC countries and SA than the total amount of trade between all SADCC countries and the whole 13 nation preferential free trade area (PTA) together.**

Every year there is a surplus in the balance of trade between SA and SADCC to the advantage of SA of about US\$1,5 billion a year -- the same basic relationship which exists between the imperialist countries and the former colonial world.

SA's exports are made up largely of manufactures -- mining equipment, machinery, plastics, chemicals. These are a vital component of its total manufactured exports and SADCC countries are, in this sense, a crucial market which SA cannot afford to lose.

There is no escaping these economic realities in dreams of national self-sufficiency.

Heritage

In both Mozambique and Angola the benefits of a planned economy are yet to be felt. With the heritage of colonial backwardness together with SA's attacks and strangulation, the peasants and workers are daily struggling for survival. Every major attack on an economic installation sets back the 5-year plan by months or even years.

The SA bourgeoisie cannot allow the economic and social development of the region. The only way in which it

DEFEATED?

can maintain its domination is if Southern Africa -- already impoverished by Western imperialism -- is kept poor and backward.

All this shows that SA military aggression against Southern African states has to continue.

Malan's militarist declarations, the new raid on Botswana on 27 March, and the killing of the ANC representative in France shows SA's increasing desperation. It faces revolution at home; abroad its diplomacy is in ruins. Military measures are its first and last resort. The Botha regime is completely incapable of living in peace with the region.

SA's vulnerability

But while Botha boasts of being able to mobilise an army of 250 000 or more against Southern Africa, he has to consider that the battles are increasingly being fought in the rear -- in the townships and factories against a revolutionary movement of black youth and workers.

This makes SA potentially one of

the most vulnerable imperialist states in history!

What an opportunity for the working class in SA and throughout the region to unite in a strategy to defeat SA imperialism.

SA has an enormous capacity for destruction. It has the potential military power to overthrow any other government in Southern Africa. But to maintain its own puppet governments in these countries would be an entirely different matter. Despite its industrial strength, to attempt that would be to over-reach itself disastrously.

As Pik Botha admitted in discussions with RENAMO (MNR) after

the Nkomati agreement, "the RSA does not have money to help RENAMO recuperate the economy if it wins the war". A SA military officer has admitted that Pretoria's goal was "not to put the MNR into government, but to create massive confusion and difficulty for the Mozambique government". (*Independent*, 24/3/88)

Such frank admissions that the MNR's sole task is to massacre people and smash the infrastructure of Mozambique -- but not come to power -- inevitably undermines the morale of the organisation. There are already reports of splits and divisions in RENAMO. The same would eventu-

Strangled by world crisis of capitalism

Southern Africa is being strangled as much by the past ravages of imperialism and the present crisis of capitalism as the direct operation of SA imperialism.

According to the 1987 SADCC Annual Report member countries are now struggling with a foreign debt of US\$13 200 million, which is roughly 50% of the region's gross domestic product.

Fallen prices of exports has caused shortages of foreign exchange. This has led to cuts in imports of essential industrial and

agricultural inputs, causing a decline in output, and further reducing export earnings. "And so the downward spiral continues."

There are no prospects whatsoever of Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia meeting debt-service obligations.

A 1986 SADCC report concluded, the "very high level" of debt and SA destabilisation opens member states to SA's "political blackmail". There is no escape from this short of overthrowing apartheid and capitalism.



Starvation in Mozambique. Responsibility rests on Botha and Malan, among the worst mass murderers in Africa's history.

Angola -- South Africa's Vietnam?

After a long period of deadlock, there is renewed diplomatic flurry on the question of Angola and Namibia. Despite claims in the press that this follows from the Pretoria regime's "strengthened" military position in southern Angola, the truth is that SA imperialism finds itself in a severe predicament there. SA has begun to over-reach itself in sustaining UNITA as its tool of counter-revolution.

For years, SA, with the support of the West, has blocked independence for Namibia "unless Cuban troops are withdrawn from Angola." This was unacceptable to Moscow not because the Kremlin bureaucracy is committed to world revolution -- far from it -- but because it would have been a drastic blow to their prestige in the "Third World."

It could have opened the door to an SA attempt to install a counter-revolutionary government in Luanda, as they tried in 1975. Instead Gorbachev poured in a billion rubles of military hardware, as UNITA stepped up its wrecking activities.

Now the tables are turned. It is SA which is trying to do a deal over Angola without reference to the question of Namibia. But it is complete wishful thinking by the SA re-

gime to imagine that a deal can be made to bring the UNITA Trojan horse into the Angolan government (with or without Savimbi) and remove Cuban troops -- while SA troops remain in Namibia, in a position at any time to reinvade Angola.

The battle taking place over Cuito Cuanavale reflects not merely the new military, but the new political, balance of forces. From this town, the MPLA forces would be well placed to attack Savimbi's headquarters at Jamba, and drive his forces back into the bush. To defend him, the apartheid regime is compelled to pour in more and more troops -- thereby stretching its reserves for use in the SA townships.

This is involving a sharp increase in SA casualties -- a fact which is gradually forcing its way into the minds of ordinary troops. Hence the SWATF mutinies and the lowered morale of white troops. 400 SADF conscripts attempted suicide last year.

The Botha-Malan regime knows that open retreat would be a humiliation which would spur the confidence of the SA masses in struggle, and at the same time inflame the white ultra-right. Their forced retreat from Angola in 1975, was a major factor in stimulating the uprising of the black youth in 1976, as well as in

the downfall of Prime Minister Vorster. This is why they now search for a settlement.

Malan's speech in March, offering to deal directly with the Soviet Union on Angola, was not a reflection of SA's strength, but of its weakness.

The MPLA government and the Soviet bureaucracy would also like to settle, were it possible. To improve its relations with US imperialism, Moscow is cutting back on its commitments abroad and would like to see the Cuban troops withdrawn. To settle, the MPLA government, according to the London *Independent*, (1/4/88) would even be prepared to "cease all military assistance to anti-apartheid rebels."

But the fact remains that each side can accept a "settlement" only on terms unacceptable to the other. Thus attempts at agreement will break down.

SA has been sucked into an unwinnable war like the US in Vietnam -- this will pose an increasing drain on its resources. Peace will come in the region only if it is **driven out** of Angola and of Namibia.

For this, the surest way is the mobilisation of the working masses throughout the region in support of the SA revolution.

ally become the case with UNITA if it cannot get into power.

SA's strength is its destructive power. Its great weakness is its complete inability to develop the region. This weakness means it cannot successfully control the region and this is now causing it to lash out in all directions.

This is now bringing it up against the interests of the big imperialist powers, who, because they want markets in Southern Africa, have an interest in regional stability. Only these narrow interests, and not any concern for the welfare of Southern African people, induces British imperialism to provide military aid for protecting the Beira line.

The big powers are at one with Pretoria on the need to suppress revolution in SA and throughout the region. Their differences are over how to do that.

Strategy of leadership

Revolutionaries in Southern Africa have to build a strategy on these political and economic realities. It is necessary to combine defensive measures based on arming the workers and peasants against SA aggression with full support to the revolutionary movement inside SA.

The strategy of the leadership of the "front line" states is one of appeasement. By confronting SA at its strong points and then retreating -- and failing to mobilise against the apartheid regime where it is weakest, they give the impression that the power at their disposal is even less than it really is.

The leaders say their policy is based on "realism". But where is the realism in the strategy of SADCC based on trying to break economic ties with SA?

Where is the realism in depending

(on the one hand) on sanctions which they know they can't implement and (on the other hand) on "peace" agreements like Nkomati which SA simply disregards?

These utopian policies are put forward as an alternative to revolution in SA, which these leaders all dread because it would embroil the whole region.

Mugabe recently summed up their entire strategy when he appealed to the capitalists to "put pressure on the SA regime in whatever ways you can...so that the apartheid system is peacefully forced to crumble". He pleaded they should disinvest from SA and invest in Zimbabwe instead! (*Chronicle*, Bulawayo, 10/2/88)

The big capitalists go where they can make the most profits at the expense of the working class. They are not swayed by moral appeals, and cooperate comfortably with dictatorships wherever it suits them.

By making such appeals to the capitalists, the leadership in Southern Africa have hoped they could have peaceful relations with SA -- but in vain.

The Nkomati Accord in March 1984 between SA and Mozambique which gave vital international recognition to SA was hailed by all these leaders as a enormous breakthrough which would lead to peace and harmony throughout the region.

Even now they are reluctant to admit that they were cynically used by SA which has never given up its support for the MNR.

Only *Inqaba* pointed out that SA could not stick to the peace terms and also had no intention of rebuilding the Mozambican economy. Far from bringing a period of 'peace and stability', we wrote in September 1984, Nkomati signalled "the beginning of a new phase of enormous instability and upheaval in which the struggles of the working people throughout the region will be more consciously linked together."

Surely the catastrophe which has followed in Mozambique shows all the hopes in SA's promises are a complete illusion!

Hoping

The leaders of Southern Africa are hoping that reopening alternative transport routes for exports, combined with some defensive measures, will enable the region to wriggle out of the grip of SA. There has been some success in rehabilitating the Beira corridor which presently carries 30% and could eventually carry up to 50% of SADCC's exports. But it remains vulnerable to sabotage at any time.

Every advance which lessens SA domination over the region must be welcomed. But there is no guarantee that even these small steps to lessen SA's grip will be tolerated by Pretoria. Quite the opposite: any success for SADCC will most likely lead to escalated SA aggression.

Eddie Cross, chief executive of the Beira Corridor Group, recently expressed the policy of SADCC: "What we're trying to do is to persuade South Africa that it is not in their strategic interests to cripple the Frontline states". (Interview in *Die Suid Afrikaan*, December 1987)

These Zimbabwean capitalists,

who are the main backers of SADCC because it is they who will gain most, are trying to be better strategists for SA imperialism than Botha and Malan! Revolutionaries do not expect capitalists to support the SA workers' struggle.

SA imperialism cannot offer peace to Southern Africa. **The only alternative is to combine with the SA working class in a revolutionary strategy to overthrow apartheid and capitalism.**

All Southern Africa longs for peace and development. But this will only come by making an end to SA imperialism.

A strategy to defeat SA imperialism

Up to October 1984 the SA military was almost wholly available for operations outside SA borders. Now the

Namibia: workers lead struggle for freedom

The celebration of May Day last year marked an unprecedented upsurge in workers' struggle in Namibia.

Namibian workers, oppressed by the same regime and often exploited by the same employers as in SA, have a militant history. The 1972 strike wave there was a forerunner of the 1973-4 strike wave in SA. Now Namibian workers feel the advances made by workers in SA. They have been directly influenced by the fighting example of the SA industrial and political strike movement and the launch of COSATU.

In Namibia capitalism has employed most brutal methods of exploitation, even worse than in SA. The concessions won by black workers in SA are having to be won again in Namibia through struggle.

The country is occupied by the SA military, and administered as a colony. In the North, murder and rape by Koevoet is routine. Even the puppet leaders of Owambo complain against the brutal occupation.

Many Namibian youth have joined the guerilla struggle led by SWAPO and courageously sacrificed their lives. But the guerilla war has proved unable to free Namibia or drive SA troops out of the country.

Instead SA has enlarged its forces, set up the SWA Territorial Force of black troops, and is using Namibia as a base from which to fight counter-revolutionary war in Angola.

With stalemate on the guerilla front the SWAPO leaders have hoped that the capitalist powers (the 'Western initiative') would bring SA to reconsider its occupation and seek a negotiated way out.

But negotiations have flowed like

water sinking into sand. Every hope raised by UN Resolution 435 has been dashed by SA refusing to make any concessions. Instead the Botha regime has concentrated on making an 'internal settlement' to keep control.

Now there is a marvellous movement of workers, shown in the growth of the unions (in mining, transport, metal and food industries, etc). There is the growth of a fighting youth movement in the schools. This could become a key element in breaking the deadlock.

The strength of the workers and youth has yet to be mobilised in co-ordinated industrial and political struggle throughout Namibia. The time is obviously ripe for this. Namibian workers need to link closely with the power of the SA movement and add their demands for a united movement to take up.

Namibian workers and youth are struggling to build SWAPO inside the country to lead the struggle for freedom and against capitalist exploitation. The vigorous growth of unions and youth organisations is part of this.

If the workers and youth were now mobilised by the SWAPO leadership in the country in mass resistance -- general strikes, mass demonstrations, boycotts, rent strikes, etc -- the SA occupying forces would find they had no secure rear base for their pillage of Angola.

Mass resistance on this scale would throw a spanner in the works of the SA military machine. And the surest way to drive the SA troops out and secure independence for Namibia is if the workers of SA and Namibia unite in a common struggle for workers' power and democracy.

army has to be widely deployed in SA townships because the police are no longer able to suppress the resistance.

The vulnerability of SA as an imperialist state is clear. If the regime had to face co-ordinated resistance in Southern Africa and an uprising at home, it would find it hard to maintain power.

Workers and youth should be making direct links across the borders which separate SA and Namibia to support each other in common struggle. Workers in the same companies and industries should be meeting together to present a united front in their struggles and negotiations with the capitalists.

Mineworkers should be mobilised to come out in support of the SA miners' heroic struggles against the Chamber of Mines and the apartheid state.

The workers should demand that legislation which defends Anglo American and other capitalists by banning strikes and suppressing workers' rights in the Southern African states be removed.

Every effort should be made to support the struggles of black SA railwayworkers who are handling much of the cargo passing along SA transport routes. Here is a force to counteract the control of transport services by SA to destabilise the region!

There is virtually no communication at all between the fighting youth of SA and the Southern African youth -- links have to be made at this level as well. The youth of Pietermaritzburg fighting against Inkatha name the townships they are winning after the regional enemies of Pretoria: Angola, Lusaka, etc. Let this solidarity be reciprocated and strengthened!

Equally the SA working class, the only power able to finally demolish apartheid and capitalism in the region, has the responsibility of supporting workers' struggles in Southern Africa.

The workers of Southern Africa say to the leaders of SA trade unions, "Comrades, please get out of the hotels, meet the workers, and support the struggle in our countries for democratic unions free of state control and the right to strike!"

The struggle of the Namibian masses for freedom and an end to exploitation has to be supported.

The workers and peasants throughout the region, as in SA, have to be armed to defend themselves against SA attack.

SA faces resistance internally and in the region. Let us combine our forces to destroy the enemy!

RELIGION AND

Geagte kameraad,

Eerstens wil ek dit baie duidelik aan u stel dat ek nie 'n gelowige persoon is nie. Ek is 'n Christen wat eerste baie gedink het van die Christelike geloof. Maar nou dat ek aangegluit het by die stryd voel ek nie meer dieselfde nie. My lewe het so verander dat dit nie eers saak maak vir my nie. Maar daar is tye wanneer ek weer oor die saak dink dan pla dit my weer. Selfs op die treine waar die mense baie lief is om te preek en te sing.

Maar aan die ander kant dink ek dit is die boere wat agter die hele ding staan. Dan vra ek myself maar hoe het die mens dan ontstaan? En wie het dan die bybel geskryf? En daar word gesê dat die Here n Jood was. Waarom is ons almal dan nie Jode nie?

Om net weer by die punt van die

boere te kom, wil ek maar net sê dat ek nogal 'n bietjie saamstem dat die boere agter die ding staan. Want ek voel dat dit nogal ons eenheid breek. Selfs in 'n vergadering wat ek bygewoon het, het 'n kameraad dieselfde ding gesê en het ook bygevoeg dat ons nie die mense somerso moet agterlos nie. En dat ons moet probeer om hulle in die stryd te kry. Omdat daar baie van hulle is hou hulle die stryd agter.

Nou wil ek net graag weet hoe u oor die saak voel? En as u dieselfde voel, hoe dink u kan ons te werk gaan met sulke soort mense? Ek wonder maar net of dit ook die geval is met die Muslems? En as dit dalk die geval is, dan wonder ek maar weer hoe hulle oor die saak voel? Veral hulle wat almal in die stryd is. Ek dink dit sal al wees vir nou.

Van u verlangende kameraad.

Bernard Fortuin replies:

In the letter, the comrade makes many important points on religion and how it affects our struggle.

Religion has a hold over the lives of hundreds of millions of workers, youth and rural poor throughout the world. Everywhere the suffering and misery of millions of working people is based on exploitation which benefits a minority. In Africa, Asia, Latin America hunger, low wages, homelessness, landlessness goes hand in hand with illiteracy, ignorance and superstition. In developed capitalist countries, workers are embattled without decisive leadership in their mass organisations. In the Stalinist states, oppression and hardship persist under the rule of bureaucracies, despite the ending of capitalism.

Millions turn to religion to provide comfort and answers to the problems of daily life. Religion is thus a material force.

Did God create man, or man create God?

Where does religion come from? Human beings have battled over millions of years to establish control over nature. Primitive man was vulnerable

and led a very precarious existence. Life was simple. Existence was threatened from many sides; many were killed and maimed by wild animals; natural elements also took their toll -- winds, floods, fires and disease easily destroyed society's fabric.

Unable to explain society and nature, people took refuge in the idea of supernatural phenomena. In Africa, the ancestors were used to explain the forces which guided the destiny of man. They were seen to have magical powers which influenced everyday life. Gods and ancestors became constant companions. Humans made gods to whom they gave powers to change, create and explain nature.

The vulnerability of early man was caused by the low level of the productive forces. With the development of the productive forces, there has been the development of science. Within the last three hundred years, science has discovered and explained more about life than religion achieved in all the time before. With knowledge comes a greater ability to deal with the problems of nature. As Trotsky put it, "science is the knowledge that endows us with power".

Throughout history, religious medicine men, witch-doctors, prayers, sacrifices, have been turned to to cure disease. But they could not stop the plagues and epidemics which have decimated peoples in the past. Natural

MARXISM



Religious protest in Durban against the crackdown.

disasters and plagues were presented by priests as God's will or punishment. Today, because of science, polio, measles, small pox, etc can be prevented; and many natural disasters predicted by scientific means. Real wonders and "miracles" have been worked by science and technology.

Science has driven back the boundaries of religious belief. God is obliged to inhabit the shrinking realm of the unknown.

All religions claim that God created man. They point to the wonders of the world saying "somebody must have created all this." But if existence requires a creator....then who created the creator? There is no logical argument proving the existence of "God".

Science has proven beyond doubt that man was created from changing species over millions of years. Just in the same way as society has grown and developed, all living beings have developed and changed.

Why the variety of different religions? Each has risen under different circumstances in different parts of the world. But virtually every religion believes itself to have been created by God, while holding that other religions are "false religions", the products of human imagination.

Marxists are atheists. We say all religions, all "gods", are created by man -- and not vice versa. But this doesn't make it any less important to

understand why religion has such a hold, or alter the need for a patient and sympathetic approach to overcoming the powerful influence of religion on the minds of ordinary working people.

Religion and class society

With the development of the productive forces, there developed various forms of class society. With the growth of science (at first in rudimentary forms), religion did not lose its hold. In fact it intensified it -- because of the existence of class society.

In early class societies, such as those in Egypt and the Middle East, it was priests who were the ruling class and the "custodians of knowledge". Religion reinforced their power. But the oppressed and exploited also reinterpreted religion in their own ways. For the Jews, Moses was an instrument of God in delivering them from their oppression by the Pharaohs of Egypt.

Every religion has its own history. We can take Christianity as an example to illustrate the developments.

Christianity arose in conditions of revolt against Roman colonisation and oppression of the people of Judea (Palestine). The power of Rome was based on slavery. On the basis of conquest and slavery the productive forces

were developed. Vast riches coexisted with extreme poverty.

The powerlessness of the Jews gave rise to the need for salvation. They needed a Saviour against the Romans and the rich. The teachings of the early Christians bear testimony to this: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." In the Sermon on the Mount it is said: "Blessed are the poor, for yours is the kingdom of God...but woe unto you that are rich."

Buddhism, Islam, and other religions have arisen on the basis of similar ideals of "universal brotherhood."

Lenin explained that: "Impotence of the exploited classes in their struggle against the exploiters just as inevitably gives rise to the belief in a better life after death, as impotence of the savage in his battle with nature give rise to belief in gods, devils, miracles and the like." (*Socialism and Religion*, p. 5)

The Roman State persecuted, jailed, murdered and crucified the early Christians for their teachings. Over the period of three hundred years after the death of Christ the Roman Empire disintegrated through economic stagnation, social and moral decay, and barbarian invasions.

The Roman emperors turned to Christianity in the hope of regenerating their decaying state. Christianity, having arisen among slaves, became the state religion of the Roman Empire, based on slavery.

The organised Christian church in history has adapted itself to the ruling class in slave society, then in feudal society, then in capitalist society, and now also to the ruling bureaucratic caste in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

In Europe slave society gave way to feudalism, where the mass of producers (peasant-serfs) were exploited by the ruling feudal landowners, compelled to hand over to them a part of what they produced. The Church became the largest landowner, and initially played a role in the preservation and development of scientific knowledge. All the feudal rulers paid homage to the great Roman Catholic Church. The Church was one of the main institutions of feudal oppression.

The developing forces of production eventually came up against their feudal limits. Capitalism grew in feu-

dalism. The Church as part of the feudal ruling class opposed the development of capitalism, and with it came into opposition to the growth of scientific knowledge which tended to undermine its authority.

The church showed itself as a bulwark of reaction as it has done again and again in history. Religion claimed only God knew the mysteries of the universe. Everything was explained as God's will or the work of the Devil and evil spirits. The Church claimed the earth was flat.

The Church used the Inquisition to witch-hunt scientific ideas. Galileo Galilei, an Italian astronomer, who developed the scientific discoveries of Copernicus, discovered that the moon moved around the earth. For the Church, God created the Earth which is the centre of the universe. Science proved it wrong. They declared Galileo a heretic. On the pain of death they forced him to renounce his theory.

The Protestant churches grew out of the emerging conflict between capitalism and feudalism. The Reformation and the Counter-Reformation were phases in the developing bourgeois revolution and the reaction against it. "Heretics" were tortured and burnt at the stake by the Inquisition and the Counter-Reformation. No-one, before or since, has succeeded in inventing worse cruelties than the Christian Church.

Development of knowledge, science, and the productive forces required that State and Church be separated. The capitalist ruling class wanted to use the state to develop capitalism. The Great French Revolution of 1789 separated Church and State.

But capitalism could not sustain a separation of Church and state. Like previous class societies, capitalism uses religion to sustain its rule by preying on feelings of powerlessness among the masses. Among working people illiteracy, superstition and ignorance are powerful factors on which religion rests. There is a song that says: "Magic loves the hungry."

Religion under capitalism

Lenin wrote in his pamphlet *Socialism and Religion* that the economic oppression of working people also leads to political oppression and social

humiliation. The power of capital darkens the spiritual and moral values of millions of proletarians and rural poor. They turn to religion to escape this morass.

The life we face under capitalism is dark, dull and dreary. Every day is the same -- where will the next piece of bread come from, how will the rent be paid, the children's shoes are broken? Every day the same fights with the racist boss and supervisor, the debt collectors, fights over low pay.

It drives many to crime, even more to drink. It causes wife and child battering. It forces us to take our children out of school. Yearly over 300 000 youth in SA leave school before they reach Standard Two!

Millions of workers get up at five in the morning, return home at seven in the evening. Scarcely time to say goodbye to the children, almost too tired to say goodnight. Five or six days a week. Sundays is different, it can be peaceful. It is Church.

Millions of working class women look to God and religion for comfort from the ravages of life -- from poverty and wife-beating. They pray and hope God will make life better for their children.

Sense of community

* Where working class organisation like trade unions, youth, sport, choirs, cultural clubs, etc. are weak or non-existent, religion also provides a sense of community and a break in the monotony of everyday life.

Trotsky wrote: "The longing for amusement, distraction, sightseeing, and laughter is the most legitimate desire of human nature." Religion provides this to many people. "As for Church-going", he continues, "the people do not go because they are religious; the church is brilliantly lighted, crowded with men and women in their best clothes, the singing is good -- a range of social-aesthetic attractions not provided by the factory, the family, or the workaday street."

Church weddings, baptism, initiation ceremonies, pilgrimages to Mecca are all ways in which working people try to resist the degradations which capitalism imposes on life.

Religion remains a powerful force in society for many reasons; ignorance, tradition, fear of destitution, escape

from breakdowns of everyday life and boredom with it. Religion appears as salvation to those who feel powerless against their exploiters.

Religion cannot be wished away. Mere propaganda against it will only convince a small minority. The very conditions of life need to be changed. Only a revolution to end exploitation for ever, release the forces of production from the fetters of capitalism, and build a classless society, a society of abundance, can remove the soil in which religion and other forms of superstition grow.

Religion, apartheid and capitalism.

In South Africa religion is closely tied to the state. The comrade says "dit is die boere wat agter die hele ding staan." It is true that the Nationalists have seen it as their god-given right to oppress and exploit blacks, and have constantly used religion as an instrument of control.

In the 1950's a Commission of the NGK, justifying the oppression of the black majority wrote: "God divided humanity into races, languages and nations. Differences [blacks and whites, bosses and workers] are not only willed by God but are perpetuated by Him. Far from God encouraging equality, it is an established scriptural [from the bible] principle that in every community ordination, there is a fixed relationship between authorities [and those they rule]."

Religion affects every aspect of life in SA. Every township has a Church, a beerhall and police station, with the house of the priest always being the biggest. In the schools, particularly white schools, pupils are drilled in Christlike Nasionale Onderwys. You can't even go to movies or play organised sport on Sundays because it is illegal.

Injustices

In the name of religion many, many injustices and untold misery have been caused to black people in South Africa. But to break the hold of religion on the working class is a daunting task. We have hundreds of different Christian



religious bigotry, fights to end the conditions in which religion exists, but defends every person's right to any religious belief, and to private religious association.

Tasks

The comrade writes: "nou dat ek by die stryd aangesluit het maak dit [religion] nie meer saak nie". It's the experience of many people who join the movement that it increasingly takes the place of religion, because it gives a new meaning to their life, and shows a way forward. The more involved in struggle such people become, the more they become aware of the mystifying influence of religion, and the way it holds people back. They can even become impatient with religious people.

The comrade writes, regarding religious people, "ons kan hulle nie somerso agterlos nie." Dit is heeltemaal waar!

We cannot leave behind any sections of the working class and the rural poor who have illusions in the Church and who have religious prejudices. If we do so, or fail to take into account and combat religious or other prejudices, the bosses will use religion, racism, sexism, etc. to divide us.

Lenin's approach

Lenin's approach to this question rejected out of hand a sectarian, childish and ultra-left approach. He saw it necessary to combat "religious fog". But he saw also that only through entering into struggle could religious workers become freed from the "fog" of superstition. His words are as relevant today as when they were first written.

"Why do we not declare in our Programme that we are atheists? Why do we not forbid Christians and other believers to join our Party?..." he wrote.

"No number of pamphlets and no amount of preaching can enlighten the proletariat, if it is not enlightened by its own struggle against the dark forces of capitalism. Unity in this really revolutionary struggle of the oppressed class for the creation of a

sects. The ZCC has over 3 million members. We have the collaborating leadership of the Muslim Judicial Council and the fundamentalists in Qibla.

Marxists have always been accused of wanting to outlaw religion. Nothing can be further from the truth! Supporters of *Inqaba* see in the programme Lenin outlined for the Russian working class a clear approach on the question of religion and a clear vision of the role of religion in a free South Africa. Lenin wrote in a country where backwardness, religion and ignorance were far more powerful factors than in SA. He said:

"The proletariat of today takes the side of socialism, which enlists science in the battle against the fog of religion, and frees the workers from their belief in life after death by welding them together to fight in the present for a better life on earth.

"Religion must be declared a private affair. In these words socialists usually express their attitude towards religion. But the meaning of these words should be accurately defined to prevent any misunderstanding.

"We demand that religion be held a private affair so far as the state is

concerned. But by no means can we consider religion a private affair so far as our Party is concerned.

"Religion must be of no concern to the state, and religious societies must have no connection with governmental authority. Everyone must be absolutely free to profess any religion he pleases, or no religion whatever, i.e., to be an atheist, which every socialist is as a rule.

"Discrimination among citizens on account of their religious convictions is wholly intolerable. Even the bare mention of a citizen's religion in official documents should unquestionably be eliminated. No subsidies should be granted to the established church nor state allowances made to ecclesiastical religious societies. These should become absolutely free associations of like-minded citizens, associations independent of the state....

"Complete separation of Church and State is what the socialist proletariat demands of the modern state and modern church". (*Socialism and Religion*, p. 6-7).

In its struggle, in other words, the working class opposes state support for religion, and opposes equally any religious discrimination. It combats all

paradise on earth, is more important to us than unity of proletarian opinion on paradise in heaven.

"That is the reason why we do not and should not set forth atheism in our Programme; that is why we do not and should not prohibit proletarians who still retain vestiges of their old prejudices from associating themselves with our Party." (*Socialism and Religion*, p8-9)

How do we draw religious layers into struggle? Workers and youth are united by the need to end apartheid and capitalism. The struggle for a living wage, decent education, housing, full democratic rights and the struggle for socialism is the struggle of all workers. On the basis of these demands the most religious workers can be won to the Congress movement.

Many people in the UDF, SAYCO and COSATU argue that we need religious organisations to "awaken" religious people to struggle. This is not the case. Using the full mobilising power of the Congress organisations it is possible to draw religious and other inactive layers into struggle directly, and without the intervention of the Church. We reject the idea that "the Church" -- i.e. the organised religious hierarchy -- has to be won over in order to draw religious people into the movement. In fact we draw such people into the movement partly with the aim of winning them away from the influence of the church.

The late Comrade Rev Howard Marawu of the Transport and General Workers' Union never believed that to fight for a living wage or to fight Botha and the bosses, workers and youth had to join the Church. He saw unions, the UDF, the ANC as the vehicles to unite workers and youth in struggle.

The church and liberation

The rising of the masses in struggle creates splits in the organised church.

Most of the church hierarchy forms a part of the state and the ruling-class establishment. At the same time there are priests who live with, and live like, the majority of working-class people. Who suffer the same indignities and witness the havoc wreaked by capitalist exploitation.

Dr Beyers Naude has even declared that capitalism is the problem and the Church has to be prepared to consider Marxism as the alternative.

Marxists should encourage all religious people including priests who are genuinely prepared to fight against oppression.

In Latin America some Catholic priests have taken the road of revolution against the wishes of the Church hierarchy. Some have been warned by the Pope and defrocked as a result.

Father Camillo Torres, a Colombian priest killed in guerilla war, declared: "I took off my cassock to be more truly a priest. The duty of every Catholic is to be a revolutionary. The duty of every revolutionary is to make revolution. The Catholic who is not a revolutionary is living in mortal sin."

In many countries the church is often the only vehicle for expressing opposition to dictatorships. This is more so when the leaders of mass organisations do not have a policy to conduct struggle. Liberation theology grew from this reality. However although it cannot liberate the working class it has nothing in common with the Church of the rich.

Today in South Africa most Churches oppose apartheid. The names of Tutu, Boesak and other priests are famous the world over for opposing the government. But Tutu is just as capable of going into Alexandria and telling people in struggle to "go home": that "God will bring liberation."

We must not pander to the religious leaders, but show to ordinary religious people the power of our movement and that only the working class will liberate the whole of humanity. The working class cannot rely either on the church or on help from heaven in its battle on earth.

Most Churches and mosques still close their doors to the winds of the revolution. These will be opened by struggle. Many of those who sing and preach on the trains are police agents. It is not uncommon to find a Youth Congress or union holding a house meeting and the street churches then deliberately organising "house meetings" where they attack "Marx en sy Engelse vriend Lenin"!

In the working class movement, in SAYCO, COSATU, UDF and the ANC, we ought to have no illusions about religion and its role. In our battle against the apartheid state and the capitalist class, we need to build a force powerful to smash their resistance. We have to show that only the working class leading all the oppressed, united in a mass ANC on a socialist programme is capable of accomplishing

this. The divisive role that religion plays must be exposed.

The reactionary role of religion.

In the Iran-Iraq war two reactionary cliques are at war, each using religion to whip up popular frenzy against the enemy. In this sense sectarian religious violence has already claimed over a million lives. And that is only between two sects of the same religion -- Islam! The Mullah's rule in Iran shows that even where religion plays a role in the overthrow of a vicious dictatorship, it cannot take society forward.

In Northern Ireland sectarian violence between Catholic and Protestant has reinforced divisions and claimed hundreds of lives. Ordinary Catholic and Protestant workers and youth have nothing to gain from such violence.

Everywhere religion has played a divisive role. Where the working class is downtrodden; remains in darkness and ignorance religions strives to maintain it. Religion is used as a brake on the struggles of the workers.

Compared to all the religious and nationalist claptrap Marxism is a breath of fresh air. Everywhere Marxism fights for the unity of the working class of every religion, race and nationality. Marxism opposes the division of the workers' movement on these lines, and combats any vestige of chauvinism or prejudice. Unity of the working class with the peasantry and the rural poor, against the bosses, the landowners, reactionaries and bigots, everywhere.

Religious sectarianism has different roots in each situation, and expresses different class, national, social and economic contradictions. In essence it shows that there is no way out for the mass of people under capitalism. In turn it shows the bankruptcy of religion once it takes hold of a society. Besides the horror and brutality it unleashes, it represents a setback in consciousness of the working class and the rural poor.

Only the struggle of the working class, the educational and organising power of the revolution -- "when mighty events force the man in the street out of his remote corner, garret or basement and make a citizen out of him" -- can bring progress, science and culture to the majority of people. In that struggle Marxism proudly takes its place at its head, as the science of the proletariat fighting every prejudice.

LETTERS

To the Editors:

Inqaba ya Basebenzi,
BM Box 1719,
London WC1N 3XX,
Britain.

Conversation with a shopworker

Dear comrades,

This is a discussion I had with a middle-aged woman shopworker last November.

Worker: Hello, I see you have COSATU on your file. Do they belong to a union or are they connected to unions?

Cde: Yes, COSATU is a federation of trade unions in almost all industries including mining, metal, as well as the commercial area like this one. They have a union which organises all shop workers--called CCAWUSA.

W: I've heard about CCAWUSA and I'm very interested in joining it. But they say that CCAWUSA just wants to strike and be political?

C: I think it is a good idea to join. If you can persuade workers in this shop to join, then you can form a CCAWUSA branch. It is true CCAWUSA has led strikes, of the OK workers this year, and CNA workers in 1986 -- which won workers their wage increases.

W: I've worked in shops for so long. I joined another union, NUDAW. But every time you go to them with complaints, they don't do anything.

C: NUDAW works closely with the bosses. They tried to break the OK strike by causing disunity amongst the workers.

W: I've been at CCAWUSA meetings, and I enjoyed the singing and clapping. It is important for us to belong to this union because the boss can sack you tomorrow if there is no union to fight for you.

C: I agree, I think you should form a CCAWUSA branch here. Speak to the workers about the importance of a union.

W: I'll try but die werkers is so skuit bang vir die base dat 'n mens nooit weet waar jy met hulle staan nie.

Comradely,

[Name withheld].

ZANU-ZAPU unity rally

Dear comrades,

I went to the unity rally of ZANU/ZAPU. People are happy at this marriage, but the enthusiasm is not great. There were mostly women present. Even some of the Youth Brigade did not bother to attend.

When Nkomo spoke, he said: "Economically Zimbabwe belongs to the rich but in every other way it belongs to the poor, so the whites must listen to the poor Zimbabwean blacks." Almost all the people were confused by this. Some said Nkomo was admitting nothing had changed since independence.

Nkomo pointed with his finger at the crowd: "You don't know what capitalism and socialism is. Capitalism says when you are poor it's your fault. Socialism says when you are poor it's our fault together."

Because of this confused and incor-

rect explanation, most people cheered capitalism!

He warned "Jobs don't drop from the sky; to get a job you must work for it. Being thick minded does not provide any way forward." And so on, for an hour. His speech never got enthusiasm; the youth were disillusioned.

Simon Muzenda, Vice President of ZANU, was cheered. He confirmed the unity of the party leaders.

The one-party state was coming before 1990. He said the new party would be a revolutionary party which would wipe out capitalism which was strangling the economy.

We have heard promises like this before. But where is the action against corruption in the party leadership? Where is the action against capitalism? We want unity against repression, poverty and suffering.

From a Zimbabwean comrade.

Support for BTR strike

Dear comrades,

The three year long struggle of the BTR workers has become a symbol for British workers and youth of the unbreakable will of the South African workers in their struggle against international big business and apartheid.

In 1986 Moses Mayekiso, general secretary of NUMSA, addressed the LPYS national conference and called for support for the BTR strikers. Our LPYS took the campaign to local workers. In an office of 1 000 workers, regular monthly collections raised an average of £80 in 3-4 hours. The collection was supported by the office union (Inland Revenue Staff Federation) with a membership of 8-900.

With over £400 collected, and a letter of thanks received from the strikers, the campaign was extended by setting up a local "BTR strikers support group" which took the message to the local labour movement. Already the group enjoys the support of the local Anti-Apartheid Group and Trades Council as well as the ISRF.

The highlight of the campaign came with the visit of the play, "The Long March". Performed by the strikers themselves, it tells the story of their struggle in words and music. 70-100 workers gave up their lunchtime to watch the strikers' enjoyable performance, which we had arranged, and £140 was handed over to the strike fund.

This does not mark the end. We hope to produce a pamphlet on the strike, and look at other ways of developing our campaign.

This is one example of how the LPYS is building direct links with the struggle in SA, and we will not rest until our common exploiters are overthrown and socialism achieved in Britain, South Africa and internationally.

Yours fraternally,

Kevin McVey, (Cumbernauld & Kilsyth LPYS; BTR strike support group)

Dear comrades,

A third successful disco was held in the Omagh Town Football Club on 11th February, on behalf of BTR strikers and their families, by *Militant* supporters. Interest was shown in T-shirts printed in one of the workshops set up by the BTR strikers. These have been selling well in Omagh.

The atmosphere of the disco was excellent, benefiting greatly, other comrades should note, from being advertised on Ulster TV's 'Preview' Programme, which is free. In fact with the help of Omagh District Council, FC and Strathrey Youth Club, we had no outlay whatsoever.

Our group, which ran the discos under the slogan 'Direct Links', benefited greatly by sending the money raised directly to the strikers, thereby receiving a reply and a receipt.

Yours fraternally,

Viv Brady

Marxists imprisoned by Nigerian junta

Femi Aborisade, editor of *Labour Militant* and former Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) Education Officer, and Kunle Bakare, a local leader of civil service technical workers in Lagos, were imprisoned last month by the military regime. Less than a week after being released, on condition they report to the police every two days, Femi Aborisade has been re-arrested. At the time of writing (April) he is being held without charge.

The reason for their arrest was apparently a *Labour Militant* leaflet calling for industrial action in defence of the NLC.

On 1 March the regime, supported by the rightwing faction in the NLC, suspended NLC leading bodies at state and national level, occupied the national headquarters, and appointed a director of a multinational company as sole administrator of the unions.

The dictatorship fears the growing radicalism of Nigerian workers, and the threat of protests against the plan to remove the 'petroleum subsidy' -- adding another hardship to workers. Under pressure from the masses the NLC leadership, which had previously supported the military regime, has moved left. In 1986 they declared that the NLC was "for

socialism", and have also talked of the need for a 'workers' party'.

Unfortunately, after the attack these leaders were unwilling to mobilise the anger of workers to fight back -- and force the regime to retreat. The President of the NLC, Ali Chiroma, personally handed over the keys to NLC offices to the government administrator, and chose to fight the restrictions in court -- where the NLC was defeated.

It was left to the Marxists to take the lead in calling for a campaign of action. The Marxist President of the Footwear, Leather and Rubber Products Workers' Union called for industrial action for the restoration of trade union rights. *Labour Militant* produced leaflets calling on workers to fight back.

The arrests confirm the need for Marxist policies to lead the fightback and to unite Nigerian workers, youth and poor peasants against the military regime, and for socialism.

An important step was taken in November 1987 when *Labour Militant*, Marxist newspaper for Nigerian workers and youth, was launched. We reprint an article from the first issue which explains the paper's programme.

International support is needed to defend the NLC and to demand the release of comrade Femi Aborisade. Messages and donations c/o Falouki Akinlose, 45A Charleston St, London, SE19, will be forwarded safely.

What *Labour Militant* stands for

Labour Militant is published by workers and youth active in the labour movement. We are not just commentators on events in the labour movement but active participants in the struggles of the working class and youth. Our task is to fight alongside the working masses wherever and whenever struggles for emancipation take place.

Reprinted from
Nigerian Labour Militant,
No.1, November 1987

We see the problems confronting the working people in Nigeria and internationally as being caused by the capitalist system. Mass unemployment is officially reckoned at three million, which itself is a gross underestimation. In addition, an estimated 1.2 million persons join the labour market every year.

About 70 per cent of the population are illiterate; 77.3 per cent of those living in rented houses live in congested, slum conditions. Lagos state alone needs to build 500 000 housing units annually to house the citizens. Yet the nation's Fourth Development Plan (1981-1985) planned to build only 400 000 units of which less than 20% was achieved at the end of the plan period! It has been said recently that Government will now build houses only for those who can pay -- the rich. A picture of the health care situation can be seen from the fact that in Borno State for example, there is just one doctor to 60 000 persons instead of one to 10 000 which is the minimum recommended by the W.H.O. Also, it is estimated that 700 000 children die yearly in Nigeria due to diarrhoea and dehydration. Officially, 73.9 per cent of Nigerians belong to the low-income bracket while low-income bracket is defined as those earning not more than naira 4 000 (R2 300) per annum.

Inqaba welcomes *Labour Militant*!

Dear comrades,

It was a moment of great joy to receive the first issue of *Labour Militant*. The mighty Nigerian working class now has a paper which, from the first page to the last clearly voices the revolutionary class standpoint in the struggle for democracy and socialism. This marks a step of the utmost importance for all of Africa.

Congratulations on your achievement! May you grow from

strength to strength.

South African Marxists -- workers and youth fighting to overthrow apartheid and capitalism -- join with you in striving for a socialist federation of Africa, and a socialist world.

With comradely best wishes,

Editorial Board of *Inqaba Ya Basebenzi*, Journal of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the African National Congress.

The capitalist system is based on exploitation of the mass of the working people for the profit motives of the few capitalists. Providing for the needs of the people is not the concern of a society based on private ownership of the means of production.

Needs and interests

For the needs and interests of the working masses to be satisfied, the labour movement has to organise for the overthrow of capitalism and its replacement by a socialist society based on nationalisation of the major means of production under democratic management and control of the working people. Without the overthrow of capitalism it is difficult to imagine the nightmarish experience that lies ahead for the mass of the people.

We take the standpoint that the task of socialist transformation of society is the responsibility of the working-class which will lead the other oppressed strata (poor peasants, petty traders, artisans, students, etc.) in the struggle to change society.

From the foregoing, there arises the urgent need for an independent workers' party based on socialist policies to be established at the initiative of the unions under the umbrella of the NLC as a weapon to support the industrial struggles of the working class and its goal of capturing political power. This does not mean that the NLC or the unions will cease to exist as trade unions. In addition to the above, we advocate the following:

- For Labour to fight for a democratically elected Constituent Assembly to handle the transition to civil rule.
- A national minimum wage of N500 (R285) per month plus increases to match the rate of inflation.
- Opposition to all forms of wage controls, e.g. suspension of increment, limits to bonuses, wage freeze, etc.
- Provision of social security payments, including sick-pay, unemployment benefit, and a pension not less than the minimum wage.
- Control of prices and distribution



Since independence the corrupt ruling class have enriched themselves in collusion with the multinationals. For the mass of workers and peasants life has got harder and harder.

by democratic committees, farmers and consumers.

- Maximum working week of 35 hours to absorb the unemployed and afford workers greater leisure time for politics and recreation.

- No retrenchment! Share available jobs without loss of pay.

- Nationalisation (under workers' control and management with minimum compensation determined solely according to need) of any company threatening retrenchment.

- Provision of agricultural inputs and cheap loans for small farmers.

- Confiscation of the landed estates of the agricultural bourgeoisie and the administration of land to be handled by poor farmers' committees.

- Abolition of all taxes on poor farmers.

- Equal political, civil, property and social rights for women. Provision of properly laid-out stalls for market-women.

- Cost-free health service for

all.

- Crash public housing and transportation programme. Democratic committees of workers and the poor to enforce rent control and take over houses which are deliberately left unoccupied or abandoned.

- Opposition to all forms of privatisation.

Nationalisation (under workers' democratic control and management with minimal compensation determined solely according to needs) of foreign trade and of banks and all big companies. On this basis, an economic plan should be democratically drawn up by trade unions, traders' associations, farmers' organisations, etc.

- Public ownership of the media under democratic control of the media workers' union and other mass organisations and political groups on the basis of their support within society.
- Freedom of speech, assembly and organisation. The right to strike, no state interference in trade union or political organisation. Full freedom for trade unions, student bodies etc, to participate in political

activities, including the formation of their own parties and standing for elections.

● Lift the ban on National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) and other local student bodies.

● Freedom for military personnel and police to join trade unions, political parties to elect their officers and to take all forms of industrial action.

● Abolition of the standing army and the formation of a popular militia under democratic control of mass organisations of the working people.

● While striving against tribalist, regionalist forces and for the unity of Nigeria, we recognise the right to self-determination within Nigeria. For the real unification of Africa through the establishment of a voluntary, socialist federation of Africa.

Compromising

Unfortunately, however, the majority of the leaders of the trade unions are not up to the challenges which the tasks require. Their perspectives, policy and programme are geared towards collaborating with the capitalist class and compromising the interests of the workers. Instead of leading struggles for the protection of workers' interests, they betray the workers at the hour of need; preferring instead a quiet, undisturbed life-style. Earning incomes far removed from the level of the rank and file workers, they have no confidence in the ability of the workers to fight and win improvement in their daily living conditions and ultimately change society.

Although growing pressure from below is forcing the NLC leadership to make socialist declarations, very little is being done to concretely translate this commitment into action.

For instance, while the NLC gives the impression in public of demanding the right to form an independent workers' party, it has at the same time secretly compiled a list of trade union leaders to be "considered by government to serve on any national assignment". This is a continuation of their policy of class collaboration. As Lenin put it, "The victory of the proletariat is impossible unless this evil is com-

bated, unless the opportunist, social-traitor leaders are exposed, discredited and expelled ..."

Transform

From their own experience, the workers will draw the conclusion that they have to fight to transform their unions into organs of militant struggle and establish workers' democracy in these organisations. The workers will have to fight for regular election, subject to immediate recall, of all committees and officers; all officials to be paid no more than the average salary of those they represent, plus genuine incidental expenses; all expenditures subject to scrutiny by rank and file members.

The deepening economic crisis will force workers into struggle to defend their past gains. No obstacle, not even the reformist leadership, will be able to stop the movement of the masses. Capitalism is doomed, and so the reformist leaders who collaborate with the capitalists are equally doomed.

We see the picture of the future movement in the invincible fighting spirit of the students, as demonstrated in the May/June nation-wide crisis last year; in the recent clashes with the police of youth under the age of 20 in Minna this year, who took solidarity action in support of a butcher killed by the police; and in the series of strikes and demonstrations among workers in virtually every sector of the economy, including the occupation of their factory by the BEREC (a large multinational producing batteries) workers for a whole period.

With a Marxist leadership, these struggles carry in them the possibility of a socialist transformation of society. The road will not be easy. There will be victories and defeats. But in spite of any set-backs and defeats, the movement will recover. No force on earth can stop the progressive march of humanity or halt the determination of the working class to change society.

The task of *Labour Militant* in this situation is to put forward socialist ideas to guide the struggles of the masses. By explaining what has to be done at every stage from the Marxist standpoint, we would win the most active layers of

workers and youth to the cause of socialism.

At the same time, supporters of *Labour Militant* will unite with other forces (nationally and internationally) who share the same ideas, programme and method of work for the overthrow of capitalism and imperialism. We will also be prepared for united action with other forces (who may not totally share our ideas) on particular issues to promote the interests of the working class. We stand for principled unity of the working-class movement.

We want to abolish exploitation of man by man, eliminate poverty, disease, ignorance and insecurity. We want to build a new world, one based on the ideals of socialism. This world could be a beautiful place to live in. All that is required is for the oppressed to unite and end the ugly nightmares of capitalism.

'The harvest is plenty but the labourers are few'. If you support our ideas and programme, then write to us immediately. Become an active supporter of *Labour Militant*. Send us news, articles, data, etc. about working and living conditions as well as jokes etc. among workers.

Every supporter is our journalist. Form Readers' Clubs or study groups to discuss the ideas of *Labour Militant*.

Order copies of *Labour Militant* for sale to workers and youth in schools, work-places, the docks, recreation-centres, etc.

Most importantly, send us regular donations in cash and campaign for donations from others as well. There is an indispensable need for an independent paper that projects the struggles and aspirations of the working class in a way that no capitalist paper can do.

Support us!

This paper can survive only if every worker and youth support us with cash and other forms of assistance. No rich will support a paper of this nature. We therefore look forward to support only from the working masses.

Rally to the banner of *Labour Militant*! Together let us work for the cause of socialism in Nigeria and internationally.

US: the Jesse Jackson campaign

By Sean Herron
Reprinted from
US Labor Militant
April-June 1988

There is conflicting evidence concerning racial antagonism in the United States. There are the increasing reports of racist attacks against blacks. On the other hand there was the recent court case in Alabama where an all white jury awarded a black woman \$7 million compensation against the Ku Klux Klan who had murdered her son. Simultaneously there is the powerful support Jesse Jackson is winning from white and black workers in his campaign for the Democratic nomination.

The rising poverty and insecurity of the capitalist economic system in decline gives rise to increased tensions in society. The labor leaders are not mobilizing the working class youth in a struggle for decent jobs and wages. The working class has not yet taken action from below sufficient to overcome obstacles in its own leadership. With no mass movement of struggle in evidence, rising tension does on occasion lead to some of the more brutalized and despairing elements in society striking out in a racist fashion. This explains the rise in racist attacks. When the labor movement takes action in the future, or when a mass movement takes place such as in the 1950's and 1960's, this will be cut across.

The response to Jesse Jackson's campaign indicates such movements lie ahead. It shows the rising mood to struggle of black Americans, the weakening of racism among the (white) working class and the strengthening of the tendency towards workers' unity that has developed.

Against all predictions of the big business dominated media, and with a fraction of the campaign funds of his rivals, Jackson has been piling up support in the South, in the mid West and in the Northeast. This has been based on his demands for government investment to provide jobs, raising the minimum wage, saving family farms, the repeal of anti-labor laws, a house building programme, a national health care system, a doubling in education spending and the "safeguarding of the rights of all Ameri-

cans regardless of race, creed, sex or national origin."

He proposes paying for his programs by taking \$20bn in extra taxes from the rich and cutting defence spending. He lashes Reaganomics as an economic policy based on the belief that the poor have too much money and the rich have too little.

Not only does he debate with his democratic rivals on TV or appear at press conferences, he also goes on the picket line with striking workers and farmers who are protesting evictions. He marches in demonstrations against union busting, against racism and for increases in wages and benefits. He is the only nationally known Democrat who participates in mobilizations of workers and youth.

This campaign and the support it has won must be understood by all workers and youth. It shows the potential that exists for building a mass based Labor Party and uniting the workers, farmers, youth and small business people across racial and religious lines. If Jackson can achieve what he has with his resources, consider what would be possible if the AFL-CIO used its resources to build a Labor Party and campaign against corporations and their government and political parties, against racism and for a decent living standard for all.

However, the Jackson campaign's negative features must also be understood. Jackson at no time calls for an end to capitalism. He has stated, "the long term interest of American business and the American people are mutual and inseparable." (*Business*

Week, 6/1/87). Contrast this to Martin Luther King's conclusions in the last years of his life when he stated "something is wrong with capitalism" and called for a "move towards socialism." Jackson's program can be described as a social democratic program which believes with sufficient pressure from below capitalism can be made to deliver the goods.

The other aspect is that he is fighting for the nomination for President of the big business party, the Democrats. There is no way Jackson or any other politician can make this party carry out policies in the interests of blacks or workers. It is a party bought, paid for and controlled by big business.

Jesse Jackson has taken the side of workers in many fights, has marched and fought against racism. If there was a mass Labor Party in the US it is virtually certain he would be part of it. The reason there is no Labor Party is because of the refusal of the labor leaders to break from the Democrats and take independent action.

A mass trade union based Labor Party fighting on socialist policies is the only way to end racism, and the problems of workers and youth of all races be resolved. The effective way Jackson and the forces he has inspired around him can work is by coming out clearly against capitalism and for a democratic socialist society. At the same time breaking from the Democratic Party and directing their resources towards the labor movement and taking independent political action by building a Labor Party.



Part of a 200 000-strong demonstration occupying a bridge in Duisburg, West Germany last December in protest at the Krupp firm's plans to close a steelplant.

Palestinian youth revolt

By Peter Hadden
 Reprinted from *Militant Irish Monthly* (February 1988), Marxist paper for workers' unity and socialism

The occupied territories of Gaza and the West Bank are in open revolt against Israeli rule.

Starting with one incident—the running down of four Palestinians by an Israeli army vehicle—the fighting has spread from Gaza to the West Bank to Jerusalem.

Apart from the rioting, several general strikes have been called. Solidarity strike action has been taken by the 750 000 Arabs living within Israel's pre-1967 boundaries and support has been echoed by demonstrators in Egypt and other Arab states.

This is the most extensive movement of the Palestinians of Gaza and the West Bank since these areas were annexed by Israel in 1967 and the biggest movement of the Palestinian people as a whole since the six-month general strike and the three year uprising against British rule between 1936-1939.

Brute repression

While the youth of the occupied territories have resisted with barricades and stones, the right-wing led coalition government in Israel has replied with brute repression—arrests, deportations, tear gas rolled in canisters from army vehicles, rubber bullets and lead bullets. There have been reports of Israeli army snipers positioned to pick out and murder identified targets during rioting. And still, despite these methods, and despite to date over 100 deaths, the revolt has not been contained. Israel has been forced to commit three times as many troops to the task of holding down the



people of Gaza as were involved in capturing this area in 1967.

The upheaval may have been triggered by one incident but it is the underlying problems of poverty and repression which are the real cause.

Repression is no new phenomenon. An estimated 200 000 Palestinians have passed through Israeli jails since 1967. Half of the students of the West Bank's leading university, Bir Zeit, are already graduates of prison.

These territories, particularly Gaza, are the Israeli equivalent of South Africa's bantustans. Of Gaza's half million population over 400 000 are refugees, many living in camps which lack proper housing or amenities.

Every day 100 000 Palestinians cross into Israel to provide cheap labour. They receive no social security benefits and the only return these areas see from their taxes is in the form of Israeli soldiers.

When the right-wing Likud came to power in 1977 it stepped up its policy of settlement of Gaza and the West Bank by Jews, switching resources from the development of the Negev region to the detriment of those Jews who had been encouraged to settle there. So extensive has been this policy of annexation by settlement that 36% of the available land in Gaza has been given to 2 500 settlers, while 50% of the West Bank is either for military use or in the hands of 65 000 settlers.

Add to all this the extreme youthfulness of the Palestinian popula-

tion (60% of Gazans are under 20 years of age) and the real causes of discontent and the revolt are established.

The historical roots of this conflict lie first in the divide and rule policies by which British imperialism maintained their grip on Palestine and second in the creation of the Israeli state in 1948.

Expulsion

Israel's foundation led to the expulsion of some 900 000 Palestinians to the West Bank, Gaza and surrounding Arab states. In the main these people and their descendants remain today as refugees.

On the other side the Israeli state has been consolidated. Its population was quickly swollen by Jews fleeing persecution in Europe and by Jews driven out in reprisals from Arab states. Iraq for example expelled the greater part of its Jewish population. Within three years of its birth the population of Israel had doubled. After almost 40 years these people, their descendants and the immigrants who came after, see Israel as their home and have nowhere else to go.

Today, the destruction of Israel and the creation of an even bigger Jewish refugee problem is no answer to give to the problems of homeless and stateless Palestinians. **So there is no capitalist answer**, only more instability and worsening conflict.

The present situation is intolerable for the Arabs and untenable in the long term for the Jews. The promised land of milk and honey has not materialised. Instead the Israeli state is a state under permanent siege, the youth are forced to take to arms, military expenditure eats up 20% of GNP, and its survival depends on hand-outs from US imperialism.

Israel is surrounded by 100 million Arabs. Its 3.5 million Jews co-exist within Israel with 750 000 Arabs and directly rule a further 1.5 million in the occupied territories. By the end of the century the Jews will be in a minority within the post-1967 state.

To contain the situation the regime has to choose from the cleft stick of concession or repression. Rule by repression points towards a South African scenario of virtual apartheid and with all the explosive consequences. But there is a limit to the concessions they can grant. They cannot withdraw from the occupied areas and allow the establishment of a genuinely independent Palestinian state. They fear this would be a radical state, that it would radicalise the Arab population within Israel and be used as a base for PLO attacks.

They might be prepared to cede these areas to Egypt or Jordan (except these states do not want them) or grant some kind of joint authority but inevitably such an arrangement would not satisfy the Palestinians and would break down.

Military methods

Ultimately they will be driven more and more to military methods, continuing the pattern of the last 40 years and of the current disorder.

Nor is there a capitalist way out for the Palestinians. The policy of the PLO majority, particularly of Arafat, of wheeling and dealing with reactionary Arab regimes and attempting to court the major imperialist powers has been and will be a recipe for disorder.

Arafat's proposals to resolve the present crisis show how out of touch



PLO leader Yasser Arafat

he is from the real demands and aspirations of the Palestinian youth. In an interview with *Newsweek* (January 14, 1988) he states, "In my opinion the only way, if our friends (*sic*) will help us, is for the occupied territories to be under UN control for a certain period of time, until we arrive at a final comprehensive solution by the international conference or by any means". Arafat's recent statements also represents a turn about on the part of the PLO majority in that they now explicitly recognise the existence of Israel.

His proposals are a thousand light years from reality. **The dis-united Nations will no more solve the problem of Gaza or the West Bank than they have achieved peace in Lebanon.** The conference he proposes is between the Israelis, the leaders of the Arab states, such as Jordan, and the PLO, with imperialism breathing down the necks of all the participants of course.

This could not bring about a solution. As already stated the Israelis would not tolerate a genuinely independent Palestinian state in the occupied areas. Nor would Jordan or Egypt, both of whom fear the development of proletarian bonapartism, i.e. wholesale nationalisation of the economy, as in Syria. Neither Egypt, nor Jordan wishes to have direct control over the areas. In the case of Jordan it would mean the Palestinians would become the majority of the population and would threaten the regime. Joint control would be unworkable in the long run. It would be the problems of the Anglo-Irish agreement magnified one hundred fold.

In any case none of these options would satisfy the aspirations of the Palestinian youth. A survey carried out in the occupied territories and published last year in the Arab magazine *Al Fajr* gave the following responses. Less than 40% favoured Jordanian or Egyptian rule. Only 17% favoured a state based solely in Gaza and the West Bank while 78% were for a state comprising the whole of what is now Israel.

Rule by Jordan or Egypt would mean swapping one oppressor for another. Arafat's 'friend' Hussein in Jordan was responsible for butchering 10-17 000 Palestinians between 1970-71. Egypt formerly ruled the Gaza strip and did nothing to improve the conditions in the camps. Significantly the Egyptian government has recently banned demonstrations of solidarity with Gazans and West Bankers among its Palestinian refugee population in camps in Sinai.

Occupied territories

A state comprised of the existing occupied territories is seen as unviable. So long as poverty and oppression remain the lot of the Palestinians, so long will they retain the aspiration for their own homeland.

Only on a socialist basis can the conflicting aspirations of Arab and Jew be solved and a democratic settlement be reached. The only answer is the setting up of a socialist federation of the Middle East. This would allow the development of the economy of the region and lead to the ending of poverty which is endemic under this system. A socialist federation would recognise the right of the Jews to retain their own state but cater also for the right of any minority within it. It would also recognise the historic right of Palestinians to a homeland. A certain redrawing of boundaries to allow this could be achieved. It may be that many Palestinians, with their lot improved in the areas where they now live and, in most cases, always have lived, would prefer to remain where they are.

On a capitalist basis such a settlement is impossible, but because socialism offers the development of production and of rising living standards, and involves no coercion, the problem could be democratically resolved.

Capitalist diplomacy by the PLO has led the Palestinians into a blind alley. Despite the heroism of their fighters they have suffered persecution and defeat. Likewise the methods of individual terrorism practiced at various times by all the main groups within the PLO, has proved disastrous.

Siege mentality

It has reinforced the siege mentality within Israel, driving Jews behind the Likud and provoking retaliation. Similarly with the Arab states, it was the hijacking of three planes in 1970 which provided Hussein with the justification to launch his military offensive against the Palestinian camps.

Instinctively the youth of Gaza and the West Bank have now turn-

ed to other and better methods. The mass protests and strikes have shaken the Israeli state to a degree which 25 years of PLO terrorism has failed to do.

The way forward for the Palestinians is to work out a socialist programme and socialist perspective. Such a programme could be the basis of an appeal to the Jewish working class in Israel, attempting to convince them that their future lies in a joint struggle with Arab workers, not in supporting their own exploiters.

It would also allow the Palestinians to appeal directly to the discontented masses in Egypt, Jordan and other Arab states, thereby accelerating the process of revolution in these countries.

What is necessary is the building of a Marxist leadership among the Palestinians so that a programme and strategy can be put forward. In this way the Palestinians could act as the vanguard of the socialist revolution in the entire region.

But there are dangers if such a leadership is not built. There are similarities between what is taking place in this area now and events in Northern Ireland in 1968-69.

Then a tremendous opportunity existed to develop as a mass united socialist movement. However, because no leadership existed capable of directing events in such a direction, the anger of the Catholic youth instead turned into blind alleys of individual terrorism and nationalism. It is possible, in the absence of a class leadership, that the ideas of Islamic fundamentalism and support for new terror campaigns against Israel could gain an echo in the Palestinian camps.

Already there are signs that discontent with the moderate PLO leadership is turning a section of the youth to such ideas. Should organisations like the Islamic Jihad gain a firm base it would represent a setback for the socialist movement and would be a hugely complicating factor in the situation.

The choice is stark. Either the Palestinian masses will carry forward the struggle they have started by developing a socialist leadership or else events will ultimately take a turn towards a worsening Arab-Jewish conflict from which both the Arab and Jewish working classes will be losers.

What way forward?

The mass movement now needs organisation, discipline, and above all a sense of direction, if it is not to be dissipated in confusion, disagreement and unnecessary deaths. It needs a strategy to build on the tremendous gains already made, on the solidarity and the willingness to struggle that have been amply demonstrated, and especially on the need to further sharpen the splits and opposition that have developed in Israel.

If the strike of Palestinian workers is effectively winding down, the task must now be to build solidarity in the workplaces with Israeli Arabs, and make attempts to build links with Jewish workers.

Preparations could be made, for example, for a series of one-day general strikes, to involve Arabs from the occupied areas and appealing in the first instance for support from Israeli Arab members of the trade union federation, the Histadruth.

Clear and definite demands should be put forward, including full trade

union rights and equal conditions and pay for all workers, including Palestinians, irrespective of whether they live in Israel or the territories. On this basis, a class call should be made also to Jewish Histadruth members.

A series of one-day strikes would not be an end in itself, but a means of mobilising and organising mass support for an all-out indefinite strike to demand national rights for the Palestinians masses. Once again, class appeals should be directed towards Israeli soldiers, who are mostly young workers in uniform, by means of a specific campaign of posters and leaflets printed in Hebrew.

Workers' defence

At the same time, a workers' defence guard could be organised, to defend demonstrations and protest marches from attacks. It would be a disciplined force, democratically run by workers including the West Bank and Gaza trade unions.

It would include workers and youth from Israel, prepared to support Palestinian rights. Such a defence force would make it clear once again to Israel and the world that Palestinian workers are not prepared to be brutalised in the fight for democratic and national rights.

But the key element in winning support among Jewish workers, is a clear and unambiguous indication that the achievement of a national homeland for the Palestinian people would not be a threat to Jews or to the existence of an Israeli state.

That would mean a Socialist Federation of states including a Palestinian and an Israeli state, with agreed borders, guaranteed rights for refugees and exiles to return and with guarantees for minority rights.

In the final analysis, there can be no solution to the Israel-Palestine national conflict, except by the common struggle of Jewish and Arab workers for the overthrow of capitalism in Israel and the Arab states.

It is the history and tradition of imperialism which is responsible for the bloody national conflicts in the Middle East, and it is only by an unrelenting struggle against capitalism and imperialism that they can be overcome and national aspirations fulfilled.

Slaughter in Brazil

On 29 December 1987 Brazilian police opened fire on unarmed men, women and children and slaughtered over 130 in cold-blood.

For two days over 3 000 poverty-stricken workers, forced to try and make a dangerous living by searching for gold, occupied a bridge near Serra Pelada, the biggest open cast mine in the world. They were demanding "government funds to make the mine safer and able to yield more gold".

This is part of an ongoing battle between the over 500 000 *garimpeiros* (prospectors) trying to make ends meet and the Sarney dictatorship in Brazil.

To Serra Pelada, 60 000 unemployed, unskilled workers and their families, condemned to starvation by the system of capitalism, have flocked to dig for gold. The multinationals, including Anglo American, want to move into mines like this and clear out the independent prospectors.

The *garimpeiros* at Serra Pelada were well organised; negotiations were taking place while they occupied the bridge, and they even had a special committee preparing meals. With them in solidarity were other workers from a nearby shanty town.

As the workers were queuing up for their meals, police took positions on both sides of the bridge. At

one end of the bridge, without warning, police fired teargas and blank shots. As panic-stricken demonstrators fled, police at the other end opened fire with live ammunition.

Many died from bullet wounds, others leapt in terror off the bridge, falling to their deaths 250 feet below, or drowning in the river. Police were seen hurling the body of an executed woman and a small child over the bridge. In all 133 people were missing—presumed killed.

Cover up

In a desperate attempt to cover up the massacre, the dead bodies and the injured were hurriedly removed in twenty buses. The Minister of Justice, like the police, believed that if there were no corpses there could not be said to have been a massacre.

A worker who dared to report on television that he had seen corpses floating on the river was mysteriously beaten to death.

This is what capitalism means. No work and no support from the government. Instead merciless suppression. For this reason the *garimpeiros* are determined to fight and change society, along with the rest of the working-class.



Garimpeiros slave in dreadful conditions to earn a pittance.

Free Moses Mayekiso!

Resolution from comrades of the Brazilian Workers' Party:

Nos trabalhadores e moradores organizados No.1 Encontro Da Comissão De Nucleação Do P.T. Abaixo assinados bilgijos a imediata libertação do companheiro Moses Mayekiso e de todos os companheiros que se acham confinados por lutarem contra o regime de segregação economico-racial-byaguessa da qual P.W. Botha é representante.

Entendemos que para substituir a breneridade deste abaixo assinado, todos os trabalhadores do Brasil e do mundo deveriam exigir, de seus governantes o imediato rompimento de quaisquer tipos de relações com a África do Sul através de greves, passeatas e discussões/políticas sobre a questão do apartheid e de todo o continente África no.

Tudo o poder aos Trabalhadores!!!

Pela revolução socialista na África do Sul e no mundo!!!

Pela destruição do capitalismo!!!

Translation:

The following workers and other organised sectors in the First Branch Construction Commission of Sao Paulo state Partido dos Trabalhadores (Workers' Party), demand the immediate liberation of Moses Mayekiso and of all comrades imprisoned for struggling against the regime of economic and racial segregation of the bourgeoisie of which Botha is the head:

We propose that the Brazilian and world working-class demands that the governments immediately break off relations with South Africa through strikes, demonstrations, political debates and meetings on the question of Apartheid and of the African continent.

Power to the workers!

For the socialist revolution in South Africa and the world!

For the destruction of capitalism!
Copy to the International Secretary of the PT.

The meaning of Gorbachev's reforms



The bureaucracy united to applaud Gorbachev's speech: but the reality is of bitter divisions.

1987 was the seventieth anniversary of the 1917 Russian revolution. In this article ALAN WOODS, editor of *Militant International Review*, analyses Gorbachev's Russian Revolution anniversary speech. He examines the meaning of the perestroika reforms, and the growing crisis for Stalinism.

Faced with the organic crisis of world capitalism, the apologists of the decaying system of 'private enterprise' hypocritically try to discredit the idea of socialist nationalisation by pointing to the impasse of bureaucratic planning in the East.

They inevitably forget that the initiation of the five-year plans in the 1930s gave the USSR the fastest sustained rate of growth known to history: an average of 20 per cent every year before the war.

Despite the horrific destruction of the war, the Soviet economy was rapidly reconstructed, to the point where today it is the second industrial power—and the first in military might. In comparison to this the Japanese and German 'miracles' seem almost insignificant.

To Marxism, the development of industry, science and technology constitute the key to the development of human society. Marx explained no social system ever leaves the stage of history until it has exhausted all the potential for the development of the productive forces inherent within itself.

Reprinted from *Militant* (27/11/87), the Marxist paper for labour and youth in Britain

That was the secret of the relative stability of world capitalism in the period 1950-75, when it revealed, for the last time, the potential which lay within it. Likewise, despite all the horrors and crimes, Stalinism in Russia played a relatively progressive role in developing the productive forces in the past, albeit at a fearful cost.

The Soviet economy increased nine times in 50 years and five times since 1945. This formerly backward economy is now the world's foremost producer of oil, steel, asbestos, cement, tractors, cotton, coal, iron ore and many machine tools.

It is fashionable in the West to denigrate Soviet technology. Yet in the field of computers, where in the 1970s, the USSR was supposedly 10 years behind the West, the CIA's latest calculations place the gap at no more than two to three years.

The latest five year plan envisages a

staggering increase in the production, not only of computers, but also industrial robots, micro-processors and other essential components of the technology. The Soviet Union has more scientists and technicians than the rest of the world put together, and the number of scientists doubles every seven years.

The enormous potential of the nationalised planned economy is seen in the Soviet space programme, which is 10 years ahead of the USA. The USSR is now selling a cheap and reliable rocket (the 'Proton') at £10 million less than the EEC's 'Arianne'.

In 1940, two-thirds of the population still lived in rural backwardness. Now the proportion has been inverted—only one-third live on the land. Almost one worker in three has a university degree or special skill of some sort. The new five year plan envisages the retraining of 2.1 million workers in vocational schools and 3.9 million in workplaces. Compare these grandiose achievements with the pettifogging schemes of the Labour leaders in the West.

In the 1950s and early 1960s, the Soviet economy continued to advance at quite a rapid speed—about 10-11 per cent a year, still two to three times faster than most capitalist countries. This permitted a steady increase in living standards, particularly given the absence of unemployment and inflation.

The average industrial wage is about 200 roubles a month (1 rouble = R3). But a flat in Moscow with central

Does glasnost mean power for the workers?

Comrades, there is some problems in Russia. That's why Gorbachev is calling for more openness and criticism because he wants to give all power back to the workers. And get rid of the bureaucracy in Russia. That is what cde Jay Naidoo said at a COSATU seminar.

As a worker I got certain problems with glasnost. Before, a worker could criticise a director of a factory, now he can criticise a minister, but he still needs a permission to do so. Even if he wants to criticise a secretary of the Central Executive Committee.

Gorbachev could not afford to lose support of top bureaucrats. There's already attacks been launched by the upper levels of Gorbachev's party against his so-called reform program.

The bureaucracy is responsible for the downturn of the Soviet economy. They did even slow down the campaigns for more openness. And ban genuine workers' democracy which Lenin and Trotsky fought for.

Comrades, my view is these people undermine the working class.

By a COSATU activist

They say that workers are not educated to run the means of production, whilst they themselves could not manage control of the economy. Gorbachev fears for the explosive movements of the working class. He knows that anything wrong the bureaucracy is doing could mean the end of it.

As a worker I couldn't say Gorbachev is serious because what he gives he could also take back. And he would make no difference in Russia. Also reforms would make no difference. The workers in Russia are fighting a political revolution for democracy; they already got rid of capitalism and have a planned economy.

One of these days these regimes will be defeated. Signs of that has already shown its head. In 1987 in the republic of Khazakstan where the local CP leader was sacked and been

replaced by a Russian, sparked off demonstrations. In the Southern republic of Armenia hundreds of thousands of Armenians have demonstrated for nationality rights. Top officials was sent to that area to call for calm, but the people shouted them down and said 'we demand'. There was even talk about some troops joining the demonstrations.

Because the bureaucracy is a dictatorship, the nationalities cannot be free. It is not only the nationalities, but the people throughout the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe that want workers' democracy.

These are the beginnings of the political revolution, which Marxist has fight and write for ages. Comrades, the political revolution must go together with the socialist revolution in the Western countries. Workers and youth must defeat the capitalists and build workers' power for democracy and socialism.

In last glasnost cannot change the course of the political revolution in the East.

heating, unlimited hot water, electricity and gas costs only just over 11 roubles a month, compared to the inflated rents which eat into the workers' wage in the West. Rents in the Soviet Union last increased in 1928!

Privileged caste

Western observers hypocritically point to the recent (small) increases in food prices in Russia. Yet the last time meat and dairy produce rose was in 1962. Bread costs only 16 kopeks (48 cents) a kilo and, like most basic foodstuffs, last went up in 1955!

These facts go a long way to explain how the bureaucracy was able to maintain itself in power for so long. The Soviet workers hate the bloated caste of powerful and privileged officials which rule in their name, but while the economy was making progress and life was becoming easier, they swallowed their anger and continued to work, hoping for an improvement in the future.

But now time is running out for the bureaucracy. The growth rate fell to a mere 3 per cent in the 1970s. Khrushchev boasted in 1960 that in 20 years the USSR would overtake the most powerful capitalist nation, the USA. And that

would have been entirely possible if the then rate of growth had been maintained.

Instead the economy under Brezhnev was grinding almost to a standstill for a decade. Industrial productivity is still only about 55 per cent of the USA. The situation in agriculture is still worse. It takes four Soviet farmers to produce the same as one American farmer.

A growth rate of only 3 per cent meant that the USSR was no longer capable of producing better results than the terminally sick capitalist economies. The historical justification for such a system therefore ceased to exist. From being a relative brake on the development of the productive forces, the bureaucracy has become an absolute fetter.

It is no longer a problem of backwardness. The Soviet Union is now an advanced, modern economy. No fewer than 80 000 new inventions are patented each year in Russia, the same number as the USA and way ahead of Japan's 50 000 and the meagre 10 000 of Britain and France.

Yet the tremendous advantage of a planned economy, in drawing on the resources of a sub-continent and a highly-developed scientific infrastructure, are being cancelled out by a suffocating regime of bureaucratic control which clogs up every pore of society.

When it was a primitive economy in the 1930s, confronted with the relatively simple task of building heavy industry, the method of 'command from above' could get results. Today, in a sophisticated modern economy, the same bureaucratic methods have a disastrous effect.

Planned economy

Unlike capitalism, where in the past the market mechanism 'regulated' the economy in an automatic fashion, a nationalised planned economy requires the conscious control of the working class. As Trotsky put it: "A nationalised planned economy needs democracy, as the human body needs oxygen."

The contradiction between the almost unlimited potential of the planned economy and the dead hand of bureaucratic administration is graphically expressed by Gorbachev himself:

"An absurd situation was developing (in the late 1970s—AW). The Soviet Union, the world's biggest producer of steel, raw materials, fuel and energy, has shortfalls in these due to wasteful and inefficient use. One of the biggest producers of grain for food, it nevertheless has to buy millions of tons of

grain a year for fodder."

Examples of bureaucratic bungling now appear every day in the official press. Soviet premier Ryzhkov told the Party congress that some ministries were only starting construction work on projects originally designed 20 years ago!

To their inflated salaries and unchecked expense accounts, the bureaucrats have added millions of roubles' worth of illegal perks and outright theft. It is this aspect which Gorbachev seeks to clamp down on by administrative means, sacking, arresting or even shooting some of the worst offenders.

A year ago, the police arrested one official and found his property included 12 cars, 47 tape recorders and colour TVs and 3 000 bottles of wine and cognac. But this is small fry compared to another official who had three Volga cars, 23 dinner services with 380 settings, 74 suits and 149 pairs of shoes.

"He had hidden some things away for emergencies," reported Radio Moscow, "including 735 000 roubles (nearly 3/4 million pounds) in cash, 18 300 roubles' worth of three per cent loan bonds, 450 gold coins and 39 gold wrist watches."

In his classic work *State and Revolution*, Lenin explains the four conditions not for socialism or 'communism' but for the immediate inception of workers' rule: 1) free and democratic election of all officials with right of recall 2) no official to receive a higher wage than a skilled worker 3) no standing army but the armed people 4) gradually, all the tasks of running industry, society and the state to be performed by the working class on a rota basis ("when everyone is a bureaucrat in turn, no-one is a bureaucrat").

Today not one of these principles of Lenin remains in force in the Soviet Union.

What existed in Russia in 1917-24 was not 'socialism' but a workers' state ("with bureaucratic deformations" as Lenin honestly added)—a transitional state between capitalism and socialism with the inevitable contradictions and inequalities inherited from the past.

But these inequalities were kept to a strict minimum. And to the degree that the material and cultural level of society increased and Russia moved in the direction of socialism, such inequalities would steadily diminish.

70 years later, despite the enormous development of industry and technique, Soviet society is further away from socialism than in the days of Lenin and Trotsky. **The differentials between the working class and the bureaucracy are huge and increasing.**

The parasitic caste of officials, their wives and offspring live like millionaires, while millions of Soviet

Endorsing capitalism

After the death of Lenin the methods of the emerging Soviet bureaucracy became completely alien to the genuine ideas, methods and aims of Marxism. Now, at the beginning of a new worldwide capitalist crisis, they reveal starkly the extent to which they have turned their backs on the working class and on socialist revolution internationally.

In a speech at the Kremlin on November 4 1987, as part of the 70th anniversary celebrations of the Bolshevik revolution, General Secretary Gorbachev attacked "obsolete propositions from Marx and Engels" saying "the postulates of the fifties and sixties, let alone the thirties, are of no use in addressing the world today".

He argued that "the habitual formula about the continuous aggravation of capitalism's general crisis" had hidden the real impact of the technological revolution in the West.

Endorsement of capitalism in the West just as the system moves towards slump!

In reality the technological revolution has been stifled by capitalism. In a new slump this will become even more obvious.

Under the cloak of 'glasnost' and 'perestroika', even the phraseology of Marxism is being abandoned now. What they cannot abandon is bureaucratic rule and privilege.

Behind their arguments is a mortal fear of the class struggles that will develop in the West as a consequence of capitalist crisis. They fear that combined with economic stagnation in the Stalinist states these new battles could provide the spark that will set the Soviet working class into action against the bureaucratic caste.

For decades the bureaucracy have distorted the ideas of Marxism to serve their material self-interests. Their 'Marxism' is divided by an unbridgable chasm from the Marxism of Lenin and Trotsky. However, with deeper crises looming in the Stalinist and capitalist countries, the analysis made by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky remains as relevant as ever.

workers and pensioners eke out a living on 100 rubles a month.

Under capitalism the profit motive plays a necessary part in the productive process. An advanced worker might demand that the bosses' profits be cut so the workers' share can be increased. But nobody would demand the abolition of profit within the limits of capitalism.

But what possible justification is there for the bloated salaries, privileges and perks of the bureaucracy under a nationalised planned economy?

Gorbachev, like Stalin before him, cracks the whip on that section of the bureaucracy which has 'gone a bit too far' in devouring the wealth created by the workers. But he cannot attack the roots of the problem, because he himself is the most consummate representative of the privileged ruling elite.

His wife dresses in the latest Pierre Cardin creations, specially imported from Paris. Meanwhile, ordinary Russian women stand hours in the cold to obtain the necessities of life. *Literaturnaya Gazeta* reported that 8 billion working days a year were lost by people hunting for essentials in short supply.

The slowing-down of the Soviet economy threatens the bureaucracy with a catastrophe. As living standards are affected, the discontent of the

workers will reach boiling point. The memory of what happened in Poland must haunt the men in the Kremlin. And here there is no Roman Catholic Church to mislead and divert the masses.

The only tradition of the Soviet workers is the tradition of October, of Lenin and Trotsky. That is why Gorbachev, despite all the weasel words about "openness" and "historical objectivity" is compelled to lie about Trotsky's role.

There can be no question of Gorbachev instituting real workers' democracy in Russia. The first question the Soviet workers would ask would be:

"Marx said that in a workers' state, all you, the officials, would be entitled to would be the wages of superintendence. How do you explain these enormous salaries? These chauffeur-driven limousines? The luxury apartments and 'dachas'? The private restaurants, shops and clinics? We believe, like Lenin, that such things are incompatible with a society that is moving towards socialism".

The very language used by Gorbachev exposes him as a haughty bureaucrat who graciously offers to 'do good' to the benighted masses from above, on condition they do not question the 'divine right to rule' of the bureaucracy.

"People", he explains "must be

taught in practice (!) how to live in the conditions of deepening democracy (?), to extend and consolidate (?) human rights, to nurture a contemporary political culture of the masses."

Contrast

What a contrast to the attitude of Lenin, with his boundless faith in the initiative and creativity of ordinary working people! Lenin's programme for workers' democracy could not be maintained because of the extremely low material and cultural basis of Russia at that time. But now, with a developed economy, and the most educated working class in the world, Gorbachev thinks the workers must be 'taught' democracy!

He wants to carry out reforms from the top to prevent a political revolution from below. He plans to defend the power and privileges of the bureaucracy as a whole by striking blows at the more corrupt elements, attempting to lean on the workers in order to do so, but without giving them real power.

The introduction of more than one candidate in elections is an attempt to camouflage the existence of a totalitarian one-party system. But as all candidates will either belong to the ruling 'Communist' Party (in reality not a party at all, but a bureaucratic club), or else will have to argue the programme of that Party, it amounts to a minor variation on the same theme. All the other 'reforms' have a similarly hollow nature.

Yet despite their cosmetic character, they have come up against fierce resistance from a section of the bureaucracy.

Behind the confident new image, the bureaucracy is profoundly split, demoralised and pessimistic about the future. The section around Gorbachev realises that, unless something drastic is done to get the economy moving, an explosion is inevitable. But the 'conservatives' have realised that even Gorbachev's half-hearted reforms will take the lid off a seething pressure cooker, jeopardising the bureaucracy's rule. The problem is that both are right.

Perestroika (restructuring) initially acted as a stimulus for the economy. The campaign against alcoholism (itself a damning comment on Soviet society), the crack down on corruption, and appeals to the masses, led to an increase of growth. But this seems to be already running out of steam. In the first nine months of this year, *Pravda* reported an increase of industrial production of 3,6 per cent, as against 5,5 per cent in the same period last year.

Foreign trade showed a decrease of 3,6 per cent as against the same period in 1986. Exports were down 0,5 per cent

and imports up 4,2 per cent.

Significantly, in his speech Gorbachev complained that "resistance can be felt not only at management level but also in work collectives".

Like the western bosses, his idea of solving economic difficulties is at the expense of the workers' sweat, by squeezing extra productivity through speed-ups, bonus schemes and greater differentials. His policy is not aimed, as was Lenin's, at greater equality, but greater inequality. Not towards socialism, but away from it.

This explains the resistance of the workers, which has already led to a spate of strikes, like in the Likino bus manufacturing plant in the Urals, where perestroika has meant a wage cut of 60-70 roubles a month in lost bonuses.

Bureaucratic bungling has given rise to all kinds of distortions in the Soviet economy. While some sections are very modern, others have suffered lack of investment. The Likino plant is producing the same model as in 1970, and the workers have to use machine tools built 40 years ago. Small wonder that over the last year \$67 million worth of goods were rejected as defective or of too low quality.

Price increases

The application of Gorbachev's reforms would spell wholesale price increases through the removal of subsidies, an enormous increase in wage differentials, and possibly even sackings. One of Gorbachev's pet economists, Abel Aganbegyan, has argued in favour of closing thousands of uneconomical factories.

It is ironic that just when in the West the system of 'private enterprise' is in an absolute dead-end, the 'Communist' economists of the USSR should be trying to ape the 'market mechanism', arguing against central planning and in favour of the profit motive!

Such methods have been tried and failed in Hungary, and especially in Yugoslavia. Hungary's growth rate has fallen to zero in recent years. Yugoslavia has soaring unemployment and an annual inflation rate of 135 per cent—the highest in Europe—which has led to an unparalleled strike wave.

If Gorbachev was serious about solving the crisis in Russia, he would not need a four hour speech. All he would have to do is to go on television and appeal direct to the Soviet workers, basing himself on Lenin's four conditions.

Once the Soviet workers really felt that the factories were theirs, they would easily solve the problem of bureaucratic red tape, corruption and swindling. They would kick out the

parasites and institute genuine workers' control and management, as envisaged by Lenin.

The use of such simple devices as computers would make a reality of checking and accountability by the workers themselves, who now possess a cultural level more than sufficient to run industry and society. Freed from the palsied grip of bureaucracy, productivity would quickly soar to levels far in excess of the USA and Japan.

Lenin

Lenin said:

"Electrification plus soviets equals communism". Under modern conditions, industrial robots plus workers' democracy equals the material basis for a giant step towards a classless society, with an enormous leap in living standards, a six, four or two hour working day. A big increase in labour productivity would permit a reduction in prices, even from their present low level, and a big increase in wages.

The combination of a planned economy, with full employment, falling prices and rising living standards and a genuine workers' democracy would be an irresistible attraction for the workers of the West, particularly at a time of slump and mass unemployment. The reestablishment of workers' democracy in Russia would immediately sound the death knell of the bureaucratic totalitarian regimes of Eastern Europe and China too.

But such a movement in the direction of socialism is **impossible** without a head-on clash between the workers and the bureaucracy, as in Hungary in 1956 and more recently in Poland. The bureaucrats—whether 'reformist' or 'conservative'—will never give up their power and privileges without a ferocious struggle.

Gorbachev and his cronies will do anything for the workers—except get off their backs!

Gorbachev's speech, with its crude lies about Trotsky, its warnings against the 'overly zealous' advocates of reform, and its clear attempts at a compromise with the 'conservative' bureaucrats is proof that the Gorbachev road leads to a dead end. The rumblings of discontent in the factories indicate that the workers are beginning to understand this. The slowing down of the economy and the dismissal of Yeltsin, one of the most outspoken of the 'reformers', indicates that the 'reform' programme is already in deep trouble.

Nevertheless, in so openly stating the problem, Gorbachev has opened a new chapter in Soviet history. **The final one will be written by the workers of the USSR, who are still to have their word.**

Gorbachev's national dilemma



In February more than a million people demonstrated in the streets of Yerevan, the capital of Soviet Armenia.

Without Lenin's policy on the national question the Russian revolution would have been impossible. It won the confidence of the oppressed peoples of Tsarist Russia. But a gulf separates Lenin's approach to the question from that of Gorbachev and the Stalinist bureaucracy today.

The mighty events in Armenia have shaken the Stalinist regime represented by Gorbachev to its foundations. Never before, at least in its own backyard, has the bureaucratic elite which dominates Russian society faced a challenge on such a scale.

A mounting wave of mass protests demanding the return of Nagorno-Karabakh, a predominantly Armenian enclave in neighbouring Azerbaijan, has engulfed Armenia. Five days of demonstrations, occupations, and mass meetings in factories culminated in one million people gathering in the centre of Yerevan. The city's population is 1.2 million and the Republic of Armenia has only 3.5 million inhabitants.

At this first whiff of mass demonstra-

By Peter Taaffe
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(25/3/88), Marxist paper
for labour and youth in
Britain

tions, the 'liberal' Gorbachev immediately put *Glasnost* (openness) into cold storage. Foreign correspondents

were prevented from visiting the area, in a desperate attempt to suppress all reports. But reports have leaked out which give a graphic picture of these convulsive events.

Just as *Militant* had predicted, Gorbachev's attempt to carry through reforms from above in order to prevent revolution, political revolution, from below, has conjured up forces which represent a mortal threat to the rule of the bureaucracy.

The concept of *Glasnost* has been seized on to air those grievances which have been festering just below the surface. One of the most explosive grievances is undoubtedly the unresolved national problem. Only six months ago, in his book *Perestroika*, Gorbachev boldly claimed: "The revolution and socialism have done away with national oppression and inequality and ensured economic, intellectual and cultural progress for all nations and nationalities."

The events in Armenia and the bloody repercussions in battles between

Armenians and Azerbaijanis within Azerbaijan itself have resulted in more than 30 people being killed according to official sources. This gives the lie to Gorbachev's claims that socialism exists in Russia and that the national question has been resolved.

On the contrary, the bureaucratic elite have not only failed to solve the national question, but through their totalitarian grip on society have guaranteed that it has re-emerged in an aggravated form.

Lenin's policy

And yet Lenin's policy on the national question, which Gorbachev claims to follow, is one of the eternal treasures of mankind. Without it, neither the Russian revolution, nor the creation of a federation of 'United Soviet Socialist Republics' would have been possible.

Tsarist Russia was a prison of nations. The Bolsheviks defended the right of self-determination for the oppressed nationalities of Russia, enshrined in the famous paragraph 9 of their constitution.

Lenin fought an implacable struggle against all shades of Great Russian chauvinism. He pointed out that it was impossible to win the confidence of the oppressed nationalities without proclaiming the right of self-determination.

The Bolsheviks' defence of self-determination did not mean they became advocates of separation. At the same time as proclaiming the right, not the duty, of an oppressed nationality to separate from the oppressing nation, they also conducted a struggle for the union of nations, or states, in a socialist federation.

The Bolsheviks' opponents accused Lenin of wishing the dismemberment of Russia. But as Trotsky pointed out: "This bold revolutionary formulation of the national problem won for the Bolshevik party the indestructible confidence of the small and oppressed peoples of Tsarist Russia."

At the same time Lenin fought an implacable struggle against any taint of nationalism within the workers' movement: "In contrast to the bickering among the different national bourgeois parties over questions of language etc., workers' democracy puts forward the demand for absolute unity, complete amalgamation in all workers' organisations...to counter bourgeois nationalism of every kind."

What a contrast to those little sects who claim to support Lenin's ideas but advocate black sections and other schismatic ideas which divide and separate

workers instead of uniting them!

A gulf separates Lenin's approach to the national problem from that of his alleged heir, Gorbachev. Lenin pointed out that above all the workers of Great Russia in taking power must scrupulously recognise the right of self-determination, up to and including secession, of the former oppressed nationalities in the former Tsarist empire. Thus the separation of Finland from Russia was accepted by the Bolsheviks.

However such sensitivity on the national question was foreign to the bureaucracy which gradually usurped power, personified in the rise of Stalin. This in turn resulted from the isolation of the Russian revolution, its cultural backwardness and the lag of the world revolution.

Russia's bureaucratic rulers have deployed hooligan and brutal repression against different nationalities with the consolidation of their totalitarian regime.

Notwithstanding this, the Russian bureaucracy to some extent carried out certain progressive work in the sphere of national policy. But "with immoderate overhead expenses", as Trotsky pointed out.

New nations were created where none existed before. The bureaucracy's "progressive mission" consisted in carrying out those tasks which the effete Russian capitalists had been incapable of accomplishing.

But in the process they never hesitated to trample on the democratic rights of the nationalities of the USSR.

Trotsky's approach

Trotsky's approach in opposing the Stalinists' national policy provides a key to solving the national question in Russia today. He pointed out that the very development of Russian society would inevitably bring the national question back onto the agenda, given the domination of the totalitarian bureaucratic elite: "The more considerable the development of a given national group, or the higher the sphere of its cultural creation, or again the more closely it grapples with the problems of society and personality, the more heavy and intolerable becomes the pressure of the bureaucracy." Today living standards in Armenia are higher than in Moscow and Leningrad.

In Russia the national question is not properly speaking a question of the oppression of one nationality by another, but the oppression by a centralised police apparatus over the cultural development of all nations, star-

ting with the Great Russians themselves.

It is not just Armenia that has recently witnessed nationalist demonstrations and disturbances. So have the Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia and the Asian republics of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

The events in Armenia show that national protests will fuse with and be fuelled by the resistance to the bureaucracy's rule. In Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968 and recently in Poland, the elements of resistance to national oppression and threats from the Russian bureaucracy fused with a movement to overthrow the bureaucratic elite and establish workers' democracy.

Outer shell

Moreover, as Trotsky pointed out, the nationalism of workers and peasants is often merely the "outer shell of an immature Bolshevism".

The demand for the return of Nagorno-Karabakh is long-standing. But recently two factors have brought the issue to a head. On the one side, by lifting the lid on the pressure cooker of Russian society, Gorbachev has aroused the expectations of the oppressed nationalities.

At the same time, the Armenian elite have leaned on their own population in their conflict with the Russian bureaucracy, which has stimulated this national revolt but gone far beyond the limits that they had prescribed.

The present upheavals were prepared by demonstrations and meetings in October. Initially the issue was not Nagorno-Karabakh but mass protests and demonstrations demanding the shutting down of dangerous chemical plants and a nuclear power station. The example of Chernobyl was fresh in the minds of the population. Their fear of another nuclear catastrophe and the bureaucratic hooliganism of the elite on these issues prompted the demonstrations.

At the same time *Pravda*, as the organ of the central bureaucracy, carried articles denouncing the "Party elite" in Armenia. It particularly concentrated its fire on top bureaucrat Dermichyan, who was blamed for huge scandals in health care and pollution.

Gorbachev's creatures attacked the Armenian bosses but were shouted down in a party meeting in October. *Pravda's* riposte was "they (the party elite) could not believe that a normal, sober-minded person would dare challenge the consolidated ranks of nomenclatura". The Armenian bureaucracy demanded in turn the punishment of "those journalists" of

Pravda.

Typifying the Russian economy as a whole, Armenia has suffered economic stagnation in the recent period.

The noisy agitation for the return of the Karabakh found enormous echoes both within the enclave and throughout Armenia. Demonstrations began in Karabakh with mass meetings in workplaces. This fused with a mass demonstration from Abovyan, a town near Yerevan, in protest at the opening of a synthetic rubber factory.

When the demonstrators reached Yerevan with petitions demanding that the plant should not be opened, they secured a temporary victory. The marchers were then joined by nationalist demonstrators seeking the immediate return of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Thus the movement began as a combination of nationalist protest and demonstrations against the arbitrary rule of the bureaucracy. This in turn led to the sacking of the Communist Party chief in Karabakh for "shortcomings in his work".

On 11 February, the local 'soviet', a 'parliament' of hand-picked representatives of the elite, voted by 110 out of 140 for union with Armenia! This triggered work stoppages, strikes, occupations and demonstrations throughout Armenia and particularly in Yerevan itself.

Gorbachev in his attempt to cut down the 'illegal' privileges of the bureaucratic elite, as opposed to the legal lavish lifestyle of the bureaucracy, has tried to base himself on such local 'soviets' as a whip against the middle layers of the bureaucracy. Yet the decision of the Karabakh 'soviet', obviously supported by 95 per cent of the area's population, is denounced by Gorbachev.

Self determination

Demonstrations which swept Yerevan were under the slogan of "One people, one republic" and "Self-determination is not treason". Such was the scale of the protests that one resident commented: "The whole city centre is completely packed, I have never seen anything like it."

Initially the demonstrators were carrying pictures of Gorbachev. But after his appearance on TV, they threw them to the ground. Gorbachev's radio and TV appearance calling for calm was the first time that he had made such an appeal.

Moreover, the local bureaucracy led by Demirchyan, having first of all leant on the masses, now desperately appealed for calm also. Demirchyan appeared before a mass meeting declaring: "You're not working, so who will pay your wages? What will your families



Bureaucrats and workers: an unbridgeable gulf separates them.

eat?", only to be whistled off the podium.

The scale of the movement was reflected in the comments of a British visitor to the *Times*: "It was one of the most amazing sights I have ever seen. On virtually every road into the city, groups marching under banners have been walking towards the centre of the demonstration, which is outside the Opera.

"At night, the protestors are being put up in a vast network of private apartments, ready to resume their demonstrations. We know for certain that many have walked for 20 miles or more to get here. And even this morning we could see more groups heading past our hotel, which is about half a kilometre from the site."

After seeing the film of the demonstration in Yerevan, a US correspondent commented: "It is clear that this is not a problem that is going to go away. Those people looked as though they had sensed their own power."

But the most illuminating comments were made by a Russian dissident who was in Yerevan at the time. "With little self organisation," he pointed out, "a million people kept order perfectly. It was an unprecedented week of freedom and democracy for the whole people."

He likened the demonstrations and mood of the working class in Yerevan to that during the sit-in at the Gdansk shipyards in 1980.

An organising committee had been improvised in the course of the movement. As with the Petofi Circle of writers and artists in the Hungarian revolution, this was composed in the

main of "respected cultural and scientific figures".

The demonstration was exemplary in its discipline and order. The police had disappeared from the streets and yet there was no outbreak of crime and violence. The police in fact commented that not one single crime had been perpetrated in Yerevan in the course of the week long protest.

Social explosion

It is easy to imagine the terror which must have gripped the Kremlin lords in the face of such a movement. One false move and a social explosion would have ignited in Armenia which could have triggered similar movements throughout the whole of the region and spread into Great Russia itself.

It is clear that the 'liberal' Gorbachev had contingency plans for the use of troops. Airport workers witnessed paratroopers and other troops being rushed into the region. However the use of force in such a situation would have triggered off an uprising.

But Gorbachev found support from an unexpected quarter. The leaders of the movement, such as Sylva Kaputikyan, a poetess, and Zori Babayan, a literary critic, flew to Moscow to meet Gorbachev. They are of a similar social type to the leaders of KOR, who played such a baleful role in derailing the Polish revolution.

They assured the vast crowds in Yerevan after their meeting that Gorbachev had promised that the

Armenian claim to Karabakh would be justly solved. The demonstrations were called off with Gorbachev given a month to settle the issue.

Here had been an opportunity, at the height of the struggle, to generalise, broaden and deepen the movement of the masses in Armenia. All that was required was for the movement of the working class and the peasants to be given an organised form.

Real Soviets

Committees had sprung up in the workplaces. The outline of real soviets, workers' and peasants' councils, had been created. If this had been linked to the idea of the election of all officials and the right of recall, the elimination of bureaucratic privileges, with the average official receiving no more than the wage of a skilled worker—in other words the four conditions that Lenin laid down for a healthy workers' state in 1917—this would have marked the beginnings of the political revolution.

This would have meant the beginning of the end of the rule of the bureaucracy not just in Armenia but throughout the

whole of Russia. As it is Gorbachev is on the horns of a very uncomfortable dilemma. To grant the claims of the Armenian people for the return of Karabakh would inflame Azerbaijan and lead to a growth of national conflict in the region.

It would be vigorously opposed by the Azerbaijani wing of the bureaucracy, whose main concern is to defend 'their territory'.

Failure to satisfy the Armenians however, will result in further upheavals in the area. On a bureaucratic basis it is completely impossible to solve the national problem, either in Armenia or throughout the USSR.

It is the feelings of the population of Karabakh which should first and foremost determine whether it should link up with Armenia or not.

How to ascertain the will of the population? There is no way except through a democratically conducted referendum or elections to a representative 'constituent assembly' which could reflect the will of the masses.

Fifty years ago, Trotsky pointed out: "Cultural demands aroused by the revolution require the widest possible autonomy. At the same time industry can only develop by subjecting all parts of the union to a general centralised plan. There can be no once-and-for-all

formula to resolve and reconcile these two tendencies. Nevertheless it can be done particularly through the will of the interested masses."

He went on: "Only their actual participation in the administration of their own destinies can at each stage draw the necessary lines between the legitimate demands of economic centralisation and the living gravitations of national culture."

National question

Trotsky's profound comments retain their full force for Russia today. Not just in Russia but throughout Eastern Europe the national question has re-emerged.

In Russia itself, the national question is emerging not just in the east, but also in those states with a higher living standard than Russia itself, such as in the Baltic states.

The Armenian revolt shows that the incapacity of the bureaucracy to solve the national question in Russia and Eastern Europe will be one of the factors which will serve to undermine its rule.

In Eastern Europe they have even been incapable of carrying through a degree of unification which has been attained by the capitalist Common Market. Each national bureaucracy has to develop its own industrial base, upon which its power and prestige rests.

A socialist federation, in which the mutual confidence and trust of the working class would be pre-eminent, would immediately eliminate the harmful replication which takes place under the rule of the autocratic bureaucracy.

Without any danger of the domination of one nationality by another, in a society of human solidarity, collaboration for the benefit of all the peoples of Eastern Europe and Russia would unfold.

On the basis of their experience, this perspective will be more and more understood by the mass of the populations of Russia and Eastern Europe.

Actual or threatened military intervention from Russia could put a stop to the movements of the Hungarian and Polish workers in 1956 and 1981. But it will be impossible to use the troops of Eastern Europe and Russia against a movement of the working class, particularly one that will unfold in the major working-class centres of Leningrad and Moscow.

The dramatic events in Armenia in the past month signify that the era of the political revolution has opened up in Russia itself.

Armenia's bloody history

The bitter and bloody history of the Armenian people means that they are extremely sensitive to the violation of their national feelings. Between one and a half and two million Armenians were massacred in 1915 under the Turkish Ottoman empire, in the first case of genocide this century.

In 1922 there were bloody clashes between Armenians, who are of Christian origin, and the Azerbaijanis, who are Shiite Muslims of Turkish origin. They resulted in 30 000 Armenians and half as many Azerbaijanis being slaughtered. By 1923 70 000 remained in Armenia while others were forced to flee to Europe and America. The 3.5 million who now live in Armenia only account for half the world's Armenian population.

Somewhat perversely Nagorno-Karabakh was incorporated into Azerbaijan in 1923, even though 80 per cent of its 160 000 population are Armen-

ians. Given the region's history, this was bound to be a running sore.

On the basis of workers' democracy in Russia the population of this area would in all probability have been satisfied with autonomy within Azerbaijan. The democratic discussion and debate of a healthy workers' state would serve to allay the fears and suspicions of both the Armenian and Azerbaijani peoples and break down remaining prejudices.

A democratic workers' state in Azerbaijan and Armenia and throughout the USSR would allow the population themselves to decide their own state forms.

But, for the central bureaucracy and the bureaucracy of Azerbaijan and Armenia, defence of their privileged position takes precedence over any of the national aspirations of the Armenian people.

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