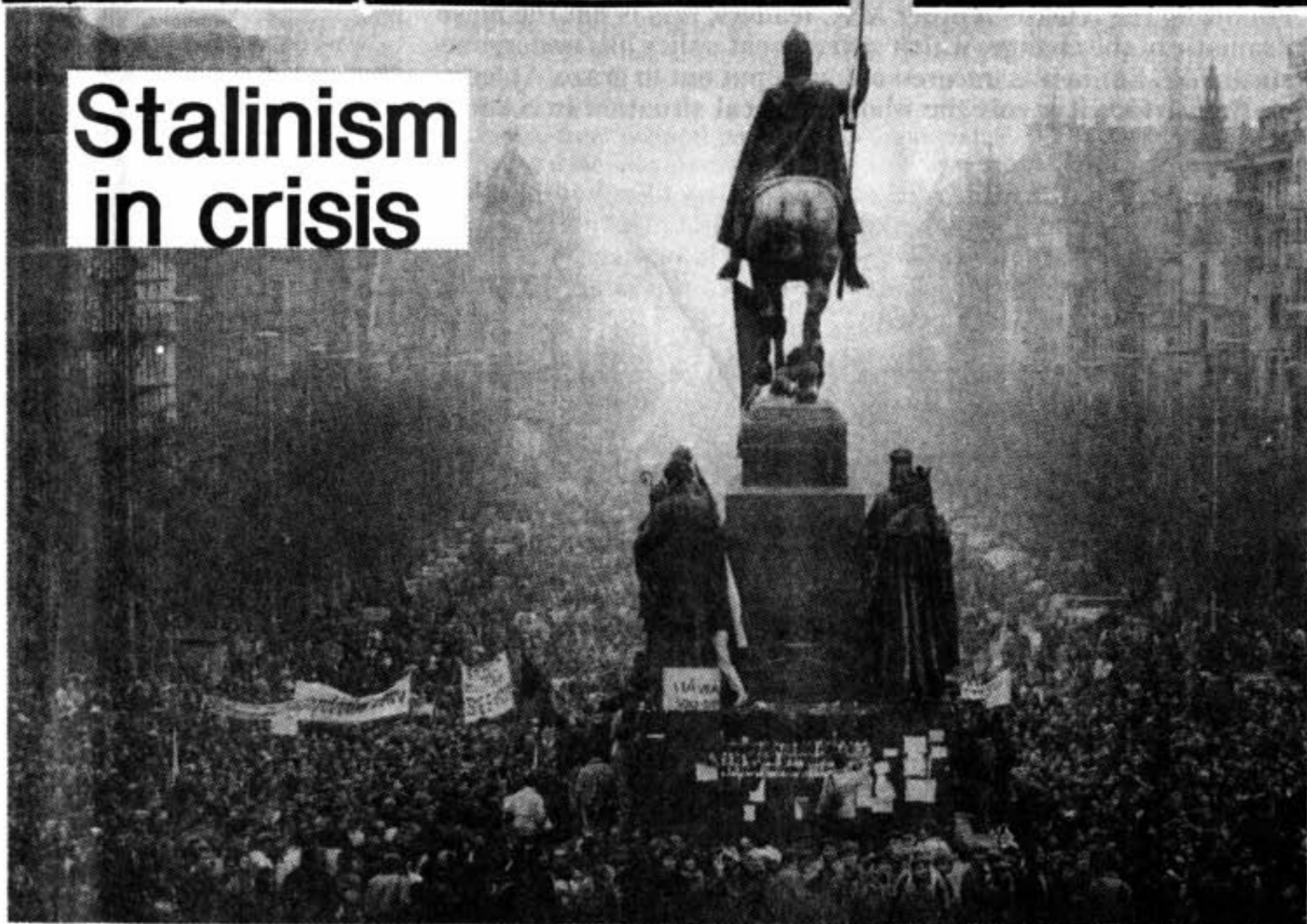


# **inqaba**

## **YA BASEBENZI**

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

**Stalinism  
in crisis**



# ***Mandela* release**

## **The tasks ahead - p.2**

■ Holomisa   ■ Unemployment   ■ Zulu kingdom   ■ Natal



# MOBILISE A MASS ANC TO OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT !

*"The character of the social regime, and consequently the character of every revolution, is determined by the character of the class that holds the power in its hands. The power can pass from the hands of one class into the hands of another only through a revolutionary overthrow and not by any means through an organic 'growing over'."*

*Leon Trotsky on the Spanish Revolution (1931).*

As we go to press, the release of Nelson Mandela is imminent. Following the release of other ANC leaders, this is but the most dramatic of the changes which government policy has undergone since P.W. Botha was unceremoniously put out to graze. At least on the surface it seems the whole political situation in SA has changed.

In contrast to the wild *kragdadigheid* of Groot Krokodil Botha, we now have the calmly calculated and deliberate implementation of government reform policy by de Klerk. In place of Botha's clumsy bullying and finger-waving we have the image of sweet reasonableness of "Mr Nice Guy".

**by Basil Hendrickse**

These developments might have seemed unthinkable 6 months ago. For 3 years, under the State of Emergency, the regime had made the subduing of the black working class the main content of their policy. Now the Emergency has been partially relaxed, and the government is involved in discussions with the ANC -- the same "terrorists" they have blamed for the "unrest" in the townships. Yesterday's heresies are today's truths; yesterday's demons, today's saints.

This change in style, presentation and implementation of government policy is the outward expression of an important shift in ruling class strategy. Under de Klerk the question of negotiations with the ANC now occupies centre stage in politics.

But does this really mean that our movement does not need to overthrow the government after all? In fact it would be quite wrong, however remarkable the events now unfolding, to fall into the delusion that anything fundamental has altered in the under-

lying conflict between the races and classes in South Africa.

## 1984-86

For decades the ruling class has been politically divided over the question of how to deal with the rising strength of the black working class -- between policies of reform and racist repression. In recent years there have been combinations of reform and repression. Neither policy has succeeded in getting the black working class to tamely submit to the system of exploitation, i.e., to defeat them.

The insurrectionary movement of 1984-6, although based mainly on the youth, and eventually contained by the government, had a profound effect on all the classes. It brought the ruling class face to face with the dire threat before their system in the form of a mass revolution by the black working class. It revealed conclusively that the experiment of the "tricameral constitution" had failed, and faced the ruling class with the need to consider much more radical measures to try to contain the black working class and avert revolution.

The ferocity of the state's reaction under the Emergency was an indication of the seriousness with which they regarded the situation. But, as *Inqaba* had predicted, the Emergency itself solved nothing. It clamped the lid down on the boiling revolt, but could not put out the fire of discontent underneath. It could not reverse the objective processes that capitalism and apartheid had set into motion.

1984-6 was the overture to the SA revolution. In that sense it was a decisive watershed in history.

Underneath the lid of the Emergency, a partial recovery of the revolutionary movement took place. As the earthquake in the cities subsided temporarily, the after-shocks of 1984-6 shook the rural areas. Social convulsions in Bophuthatswana, Venda, Ciskei, KwaNdebele, and Botshabelo brought fresh forces into the struggle, loosening one of the most important pillars in the stability of the apartheid order -- the conservatism and submissiveness of the rural masses.

During 1987, only a year after the imposition of the Emergency, SA witnessed the biggest wave of industrial struggles ever, including the single largest industrial strike -- that of the mineworkers.

The miners' strike, the first since 1946, was defeated. But this was not due to any lack of willingness to do battle on the part of the workers. It was the failure of the leadership, who dispersed the strength of the miners by sending them to the homelands, and failed to organise any effective solidarity action through COSATU and SAYCO when the attention of the whole working class, and indeed the whole of society was focussed on this particular battle. In fact more than a million workers in other sectors of industry were coming out on strike at the same time waiting for a call from the leaders to combine their actions -- a call that never came.

Despite this setback, despite the destruction of its headquarters during the 1987 railstrike, COSATU doubled its membership by 1989. The Emer-



gency failed to break the black working class: rather, it emerged stronger than ever. This undefeated strength was shown in the magnificent political general strike of June 6-8, 1988.

In 1989, resistance burst to the surface again in campaigns of mass defiance: against KP councils, against the Labour Act, against segregation in the workplaces and society, against apartheid elections.

No matter how much "democratic" wailing the liberal capitalists did over the curtailment of democratic freedoms, the whole ruling class was unanimous when the Emergency was imposed. They thought it totally necessary to halt what was clearly the gravest threat capitalism had faced -- that of a workers revolution.

But the longer the Emergency remained in force, the more its impotence became apparent. It failed to keep the lid on the black working class. It ensured the thorough discrediting and collapse of Botha's re-

form programme. A sense of paralysis gripped the government, preparing the conditions for Botha's removal from office.

## White domination unsustainable

In the past, it has been possible for capitalism to maintain the blacks in slavery by cementing together the different classes in white society on the one hand and by keeping the blacks divided on the other. Throughout the history of capitalism in SA, the central aim of all government policy has been to maintain this machinery for the exploitation of the black working class. Divide-and-rule is the historical weapon of capitalism in SA.

Since 1948 this has meant the attempt, through the policy of apartheid, to reinforce the exclusion of Africans from political power by restricting their right to residence in the

cities, and developing the reserves into independent "national states" where the Africans were to go and exercise their "democratic" rights.

But the dialectic of history is having a sweet revenge on the ruling class. Initially very successful in maintaining the cheap labour system on which the economy has developed, apartheid, by its very "success" in that respect, has now seriously undermined the basis of capitalist rule.

The homelands, always reservoirs of cheap labour, have failed in their purpose -- the political containment of the African working class. Influx control has had to be abolished as the African majority pour relentlessly into the cities looking for a livelihood.

Together with industrialisation, this has led to the creation of a huge, urbanised black proletariat, uniting across tribal lines -- the very development which the whole structure of South African society was designed to prevent.

An enormous change in the racial



Workers toyi-toyi outside Pretoria's COSATU House



balance of forces has taken place, not only within SA but in the Southern African sub-continent.

It is no more than 15 years ago that the apartheid regime in SA was buttressed by white minority regimes along its borders in Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia), supplemented by SA's own occupation of Namibia. Today SA remains as the only white minority government in a region of 100 million people.

Within SA itself, by the year 2000, the population is expected to reach between 47 and 50 million of which the whites will constitute no more than 5-6 million. Between 1986 and 1989 alone, the urban African population increased by 25%! From a long-term historical point of view, white domination is finished.

The law that consciousness lags behind conditions applies to every class in society. The long-term implications of these objective factors were not a new discovery. But it required the revolutionary action of the working class to hammer these points home before the reformist wing of the ruling class could gain the upper hand to pursue its policies -- at least for the time being.

## De Klerk's strategy

Coming from the **right wing** of the Nationalist Party, de Klerk is now the pace setter for the reformist wing of big capital! The irony of this must leave a bitter taste in Botha's mouth as he wanders about in the Wilderness. De Klerk's strategy is to lay a new basis for the division of the black proletariat, to try to defeat the revolution.

The ruling class recognises that in the long run it would be impossible to maintain the monopoly of government in white hands. Yet there can be no question of them giving the government to the blacks.

Historically, the blacks have been excluded from political power, have been denied the right to vote, because of the risk that this would lead to the overthrow of capitalism itself.

That danger has now been magnified several times over. Whilst the black proletariat created by capitalism is acting as the central force of attraction around which the whole black 'nation' is uniting, the white government and its policies is the source of the divisions splitting white

society apart as never before.

While, more than ever, there can be no question of the ruling class handing the government to the blacks, it has become impossible to maintain their complete exclusion from it.

Thus the strategy of the ruling class depends on keeping state power in capitalist hands as the ultimate weapon against the working class -- while using the form of government in a more flexible way to try to diffuse the previously established unity of the black working class.

To keep one's bearings during rapidly-changing events, it is critical to keep attention on the central question: which class holds state power. **There is no question of the capitalist class giving up the state power. Only their revolutionary overthrow can achieve this.**

The final option available to the ruling class -- an option they are holding in reserve -- is to use military power to the full to try to crush the working class. In SA this would mean unleashing civil war.

Although the bourgeoisie will not shrink from civil war if they considered this necessary to crush the revolution, they will go down that road only if no other alternative exists. A civil war would be an extremely risky business out of which, apart from the long-term domestic and international economic and political repercussions, the ruling class are not confident of emerging as the victors against a black working class that would have no alternative but to arm itself.

Already vigilantism, so brutally in evidence again in the railway workers strike, has forced black workers and youth to begin to arm. It is from this nightmare that the ruling class has recoiled for the time being by pursuing a more radical strategy of reform.

## International factors

In pursuing the path of reform, the ruling class takes comfort from the present international economic and political conjuncture.

The *toenadering* between the Soviet Union and the USA is playing an important role in international political relations. It has had a material effect on policies of political parties and governments the world over.

With mass uprisings throughout Eastern Europe, the revolt of the nationalities in the Soviet Union, and

simmering discontent among the Soviet masses, the Russian bureaucracy under Gorbachev is trying to disengage from potential points of conflict internationally -- to head off revolution at home.

It has moved from its previous policy of peaceful co-existence with imperialism, to virtual capitulation. The Soviet bureaucracy has never supported workers' revolution. Now it has abandoned even a formal adherence to "revolution", in favour of "negotiated settlements" compromising with capitalism.

Gorbachev promotes this policy in the name of "world peace." But it will not lead to peace. In fact it cannot prevent the future of instability, wars, revolution and counter-revolution that both Stalinism and capitalism holds in store for humanity.

The capitalists present the crisis in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union as proof that socialism cannot work. In reality it is a crisis of **Stalinism** -- of bureaucratic rule. But sections of the bureaucracies themselves (including Gorbachev, who sings praises to capitalism) are muddying the waters by preaching the desirability of capitalist measures to solve their crisis -- when the solution lies in the removal of bureaucratic rule by the working class.

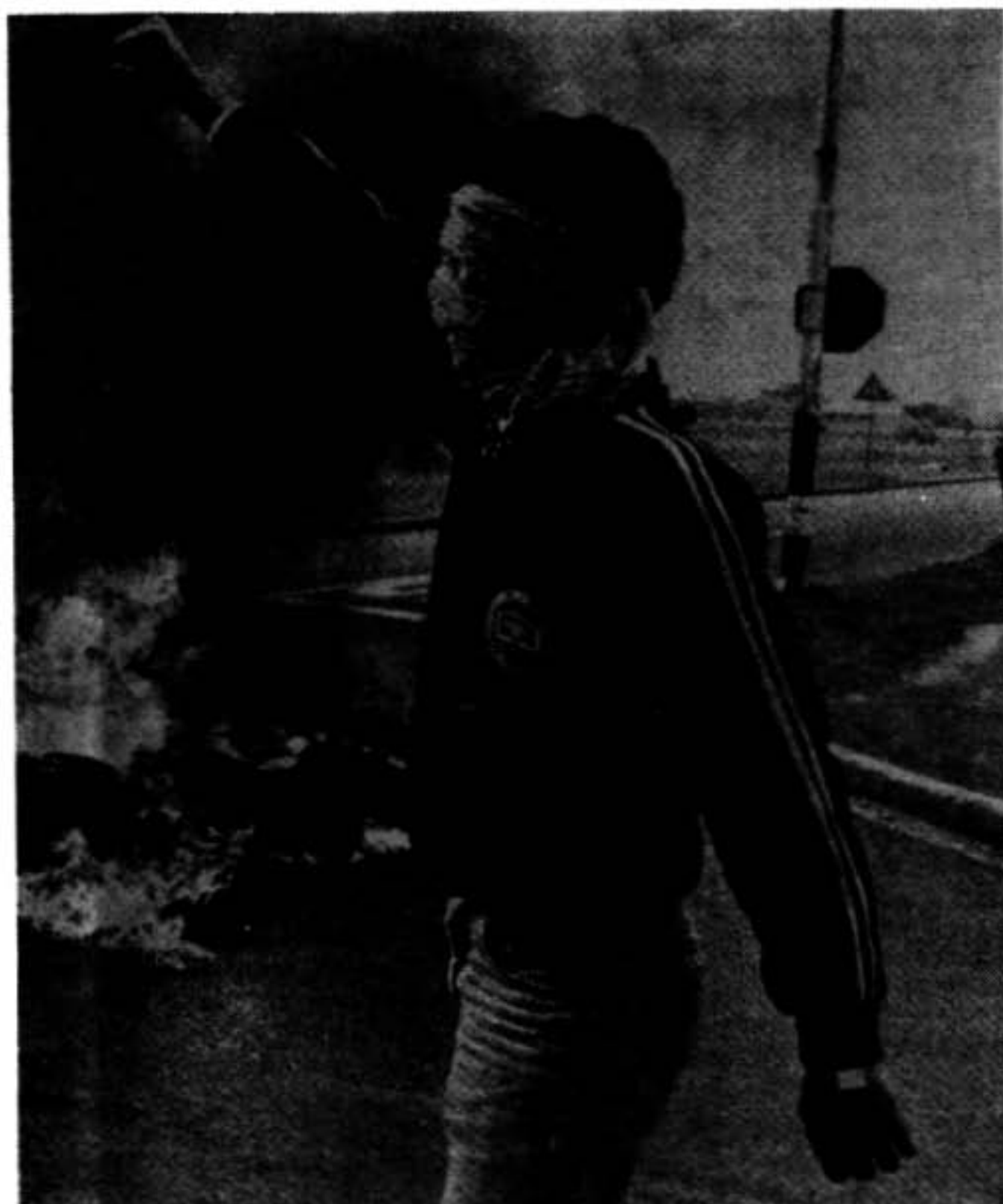
It is true that while Stalinist regimes are subject to social convulsion and political upheaval, capitalism, at least in the advanced capitalist countries, is enjoying a temporary flush of prosperity. The boom in the capitalist economies started in 1982 and is now the longest single cycle of growth in the post war period.

But for the most part this boom has had a very feeble basis, with growth rates bearing no comparison to those of 1950-75. It is hard to predict how much longer this boom will last, but it is inevitable that it will exhaust itself. The wild fluctuations on the world stock exchanges are an indication of the fragility of the system. The excitement about a new golden age for capitalism is misplaced.

This apparent success of capitalism coinciding with the failure of systems based on revolution and so-called "socialism" is the material basis for the confidence of the capitalist class in the future of their system and the nature of relations between the world powers at present.

Both within SA and internationally the leadership of the working





*Burning tyres in Athlone during the September upsurge*

class is failing to explain this, thus adding to the confusion in the minds of workers and youth especially over the events in Eastern Europe. Events there represent the collapse of Stalinism not socialism. Illusions in capitalism among the masses of these countries represent a reactionary outer shell, within which a struggle for democratic control by the working masses against Stalinist bureaucratic rule is taking place.

In the absence of a mass revolutionary party of Marxism at the head of the struggle, consciousness is inevitably confused, and counter-revolutionary dangers may multiply.

The whole problem could be solved by the overthrow of the bureaucracies, and their replacement by workers' democracy, as genuine Marxists have always pointed out. This would lay the basis for the democratic control of the government and the economy by the working class and the proper and harmonious use of resources and the labour power of the

workers within the individual countries and between them. On this basis it would be possible to create a level of prosperity far outstripping capitalism.

But this whole conjuncture, giving an apparent boost to the system of capitalism, combined with Gorbachev's willingness to collaborate with imperialism in seeking "negotiated solutions" of "regional problems", forms an important factor in the calculations of the SA ruling class.

## De Klerk's mission

All this has convinced the strategists of the ruling class in SA to experiment with accommodating at least a layer of the blacks into the system of capitalism. They hope by this means to break up the cohesion and the unity that has developed around the movement of the black working class up to now.

This of course, is nothing new. It

has always been the purpose of reform. The difference this time is that de Klerk aims to draw at least elements of the ANC itself into government. He has to try to reconcile the contradiction between the incessant demands of the blacks for the right to vote for a government of their choice, and the maintenance of capitalism. He recognises this is impossible unless black leaders, in whom the masses have confidence, can persuade their followers to accept something less than majority rule.

The leadership of the ANC, unfortunately, has not understood the significance of de Klerk's policy. They present negotiations with de Klerk as a step towards majority rule when in fact the negotiations are designed to prevent majority rule.

Even well-informed bourgeois commentators are remarking upon this: "Government theoreticians have floated a number of complicated models, but what they all boil down to is that each race group is equally weighted in the legislature, regardless of its size, so that no single group can dominate. In addition, all key decisions have to be reached by consensus between all the groups, which gives the white minority a veto."

"Black nationalists object to this on two grounds. First, it would require continued race classification. Second, the veto power would enable the whites to prevent any radical restructuring of the socio-economic system and so entrench the privilege they have built up..."

"However, Mandela is said to have accepted that the transition will not come in a single step but several. This suggests the ANC/MDM may settle for less than they want as an initial phase, then use the political power gained to campaign for more -- so moving step by step towards the goal of majority rule." (Allister Sparks, *Observer*, London, 14/1/90).

Even if, by giving up one after the other of the black working class's demands, a temporary agreement could be struck, it would lead not to a step-by-step democratic advance, but to further outbreak of bloody conflict.

As soon as the working class recognises that de Klerk's schemes are a scheme to defraud them of their democratic rights, they would return to the path of revolution. The present "negotiations" policy of the ANC leadership will not help the revolution, but place new difficulties and obstacles in its path.



## Letter from a SAYCO member

The bourgeois press writes that de Klerk's promises of reform imply a better life for all in South Africa.

But despite promises, defiance has been met with police action, detentions and killings. Time and again the white state will clamp down on the opposition. But they will keep talking of reform, continue meeting Mandela, creating illusions.

Will they stop inflation? Will they provide a living wage? Will they build enough houses? Will they abolish the LRA? No, they will only make amendments in order to ensure that the state and bosses stay in control!

The leadership of our organisations keep pushing for negotiations. Time and again they talk about peace, a united front and conditions for the handing over of power. But they meet with each other, with the bosses and the state behind closed doors, talking and deciding without the people. We need to follow them behind these closed doors and discuss their political programme.

When the state has no other way they will then draw up some federal constitution which will ensure that the bosses still make enormous profits and their defense remains. But they will not allow majority rule.

"Phambili Nomzabalazo Wabasebenzi" -- Forward with the workers' struggle means one person one vote in an undivided South Africa!

Even if the price the government has to pay for ANC participation is to formally concede 'the vote' to blacks, the constitution would be contrived in such a way as to **exclude** the possibility of **majority rule**. The essential structure of class privilege and, therefore, race privilege also would remain intact.

That, broadly speaking, is de Klerk's strategy. But only a foolish strategist places all his eggs in one basket. In reserve there is the state power to be used mercilessly again when necessary, directly or indirectly, as in the railway workers' strike.

Even in embarking on the strategy of negotiations with the ANC, De Klerk has to move with great caution for fear that a movement of the working class will be encouraged.

This is why the release of ANC leaders has been so carefully staged. De Klerk has wanted to test the response of the people to this, and the response of the leaders to the expectations of the people. The release of Mandela will again provide a critical test for the strategy of the government.

Unfortunately the whole Congress leadership is playing directly into de Klerk's hands by ruling out any mobilisation and mass action, for example doing nothing to support the SATS strike, which could upset the reform plans. But the government, for its part, shows no corresponding

goodwill!

Simultaneously with "negotiations", the regime is stepping up its efforts to divide the working class in order to repress it. The traditional weapon for the division of the blacks has been tribalism.

The rural revolt has exposed the tribal and homeland rulers as agents of the **white** government in the eyes of the rural masses. Nothing the white government does can restore the authority of these rural dictators. This is the significance of the movement of opposition to incorporation into the homelands, and against independence that has swept through these rural areas over the past few years.

Yet the homelands continue to occupy a central place in the strategy of the government to maintain tribal divisions amongst the Africans. This is one question over which every section of the ruling class, from "liberal" to conservative are unanimous. Whatever their faults, the bourgeoisie says, "the homelands are a reality".

For all these reasons the whole strategy of the regime depends crucially on the preparedness of the Congress leadership to co-operate. The regime hopes to restore the authority of the tribal and homeland leaders by leaning on the authority particularly of the leaders of the ANC.

This is why it is such a tragic mistake for the ANC leaders to boost the credibility of Holomisa, Mabuza,

Buthelezi, etc.

## Negotiations

The centrepiece in de Klerk's strategy is negotiations. Using this in the way the Venus Fly Trap flower uses its nectar, he hopes to trap the leaders and destroy our movement. Like nectar, negotiations may have a seductive smell. But our leaders will participate in these negotiations at their peril and that of the movement.

We are not saying negotiations should be rejected in principle. Negotiations are a matter of tactics. The most important consideration in tactics is to avoid deceiving the masses. On the contrary tactics ought to raise the understanding of the masses of the need to take revolutionary action.

By entering into negotiations with de Klerk, the ANC leaders will unavoidably mislead millions into thinking that freedom can come "from above" -- and that there is no need to overthrow the state.

The government has no intention of granting genuine democracy. "Don't expect me", De Klerk told a western diplomat recently "to negotiate myself out of power." (*Observer*, London, 4/6/89). If the regime were prepared to negotiate the practical handover to majority rule (the only genuine democracy), then it would be foolish not to participate. But this is clearly not the case. Therefore these negotiations must be rejected.

## Cuito Canavale

In support of the argument that we should negotiate, some Congress leaders have compared the position with the battle of Cuito Canavale in southern Angola. It is argued that SA was militarily defeated in that battle and consequently was compelled to negotiate withdrawal not only from Angola, but from Namibia.

The comparison is misguided. Firstly, SA was not **defeated** in that battle. They could have continued and possibly won that battle -- but only at the cost of a high number of white casualties and the long-term escalation of the war, a cost they considered too high for the strategic interests of the state.

For this reason they retreated, turning to a modified regional strategy: a negotiated agreement with the Angolan government and the Cubans



"negotiations", and so prepared for setbacks and even bloody defeat.

## The state of the battle

As Trotsky pointed out in discussing the Spanish civil war in the 1930s, "It is a basic rule of tactics: if you want to get stronger, do not begin with an exaggeration of your forces." Just as mistaken, we would add, is to underestimate the strength of the enemy. In other words it is necessary to make as accurate an analysis as possible of the balance of forces, and the state of the battle.

As already explained, the Emergency -- despite 50 000 arrests, the banning of organisations and loss of thousands of lives -- did not inflict a decisive defeat on the working class. So far as the movement of the masses is concerned the revolution which began in 1984-6 is now ready to march forward again.

At the same time, the revolution is still in its early stages. It would be an exaggeration to say the regime is fully in the grip of a revolutionary crisis.

The sure-footed confidence of de Klerk is not without significance. It is based on the fact that even during the SOE the regime did not use more than a fraction of the fire power at its disposal. In the white population this regime still has enormous social reserves.

To give the negotiations strategy credibility, the regime's armed forces have had to stand back from the front line. Its claws have been withdrawn and a smile put on the face of the tiger. The winding up of the Joint Management Committees, the lessening of the military training period and the reduction in the defence budget do not alter the power of the SADF. De Klerk is widening the smile of the tiger ... while it waits.

Yet the Rockman affair shows that the state is vulnerable to disintegration where it relies on black forces. Moreover there are already unprecedented splits opening up within white society. **By mobilising our full strength**, the black working class can develop the power to defeat this state.

However, so long as the leaders hold back and divert the masses from this task, the military-police apparatus, based on the whites, will retain its cohesion as a formidable foundation for bosses' rule.

A new upsurge has already begun. Although not yet as fiery, it is qualita-



*Police block a march by women in Cape Town*

allowing for the withdrawal from Namibia, but **without losing control**. There was no question of giving up any vital interest.

Reality has more than one side. While withdrawing from direct political control in Namibia, SA's long-term domination of Namibia has in effect now been sanctified by international agreements, and its ability to dominate the whole of Southern Africa **extended** by the weakening of SA's international isolation.

If there is an analogy between Cuito Canavale and the internal situation in SA today, it lies in this: the regime has no intention of giving up any vital interest within SA as a result of negotiations.

## Lancaster House

Equally mistaken would be to believe there is any comparison between the Lancaster House negotiations (which led to independence in Zimbabwe) and the present situation within SA.

Smith participated in those negotiations because the white minority government had begun to lose the war. As his intelligence chief, Ken Flower, admitted afterwards, had the war continued to a conclusion the guerrillas would have taken control of the capital. This would have led to the overthrow of capitalism itself.

Had Smith refused to negotiate in time, a SA invasion of Zimbabwe

would have been the only alternative to a military victory for the guerrilla armies. But SA rejected that option because of the enormous risks and costs involved in a military occupation, including the radicalisation of the masses throughout Southern Africa.

On the other hand the power of SA imperialism was a prime factor in persuading Mugabe and the other guerrilla leaders to promise to leave capitalism in Zimbabwe intact. This enabled the whites and the capitalists to salvage on the negotiating table much of what they had begun to lose on the battlefield.

This is manifestly not the position in SA. If the SA state were to be defeated in a revolution, the result would be **winner takes all**.

The "settlement" in Zimbabwe was possible only because the working class remained passive, and allowed the petty-bourgeois nationalists heading ZANU and ZAPU to raise themselves to power by agreement with the capitalists and imperialists. Now the workers are faced with having to wage bitter struggles against an increasingly repressive regime in Zimbabwe, which is clawing back all the reforms and enriching the black elite in co-operation with the white capitalists.

In SA, the **black working class** is making the revolution by its own struggle, and the question is whether this revolution will be led to victory by the ANC, or paralysed by misguided



**Build a**  
  
**to overthrow the government!**

**For workers' power  
 democracy and socialism!**

---

*Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC*

**De Klerk rejects majority rule —  
 no negotiations with De Klerk!**

**No retreat from the  
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tively more advanced than in 1984-6. While that was initiated and sustained almost entirely by the working-class youth, today it is the industrial workers spearheading the movement.

Despite the confidence exhibited by de Klerk, fear of the proletarian revolution lies at the heart of government strategy. De Klerk's actions are more than an episodic tactical manoeuvre. The capitalist class is undertaking a serious defensive readjustment of their system.

But they are not going to risk their fate by resting simply on the support of the Congress leadership. The essential basis of their rule remains the military-police apparatus of the state. Whatever they are prepared to "negotiate", state power is not negotiable.

**On this fact the attempt to reconcile the races and the classes in SA will founder.**

There may be many attempts at negotiations, collapse of negotiations, re-establishment of negotiations, collapse again. There may be "agreement" partly reached, or reached and then broken. Ultimately this cannot prevent the polarisation in society continuing.

The Conservatives have been set back. But they are by no means a spent force. No serious analysis of political developments can exclude ferocious right-wing reaction in the future. As the political and economic crisis deepens, the whites too will seek desperately for a way out of the impasse. Unless a decisive democratic socialist alternative, in place of the dog-eat-dog competition of capitalism, is offered to them by the black working class, they will continue to

provide a reliable social basis for racist reaction in the hope of securing their future.

There is the future possibility of more reactionary governments, and even military government.

The black proletariat will not submit patiently to unrelieved suffering. It has rallied behind the ANC banner for the purpose of liberating itself. It will have to find or create in the ANC a revolutionary leadership to carry through this task. Otherwise the danger will be created of the political break-up of the proletariat, leading to chaos, bloody infighting and the collapse of the country into racial civil war.

All the factors which sparked off the revolution, far from receding, continue to accumulate. The misery and deprivation which capitalism imposes on the working class continues unrelieved. New explosions are absolutely inevitable.

## **The tasks of the leadership**

Therefore enormous responsibilities rest on the shoulders of the leadership of the ANC. SA has the possibility of one of the greatest revolutionary advances in human history.

Unfortunately the actions of the leadership thus far should fill the working class with alarm. There is not one instance of an all-out nation-wide struggle against the regime or the bosses in which the Congress leaders have even tried to mobilise the full forces at their disposal.

Instead of an uncompromising struggle against Buthelezi involving mobilising the workers and youth around a social programme for housing, jobs, etc., the leaders have attempted to secure peace in Natal through negotiations with Buthelezi. This policy of "peace" has brought nothing but war. Thousands have died unnecessarily.

There can be no greater danger for the movement than to fail to combat tribalism. Tribalism is the historical weapon of apartheid and capitalism for the division of the blacks. The civil war in Natal is a grim warning of the price our movement will pay for incorrect policies. Unfortunately the leadership does not appear to understand this.

By embracing Holomisa, the leadership is anointing tribalism. Over 17 painful years, beginning in the trade unions, the black working class has united itself and the majority of blacks under one banner -- thereby breaking down the tribal and racial barriers which were the basis of our weakness and the source of the regime's strength. This advance must never be allowed to be thrown back.

## **COSATU**

Tribalism will by no means be the only consequence of the adoption of "negotiations" as the strategy of the Congress leadership. The endorsement by COSATU of "negotiations" with de Klerk has produced paralysis in an organisation built by the workers for struggle.

Afraid that the government would be discouraged from participation in negotiations if the movement was mobilised in support of the railway workers, the COSATU leaders have not lifted a finger in real solidarity with the SARHWU workers. This is the price our movement is paying in order not to disturb the "negotiations process".

It is left to a bourgeois journalist to comment on the irony of a government that claims to be committed to negotiations with the ANC but will not negotiate with its own employees.

The continuation of this policy which converts negotiations into handcuffs on the wrists of our organisations, will encourage even more savage aggression from the bosses and the state than has been shown against the railway workers so far.



COSATU, like the ANC, has a tremendous potential to unify the whole working class -- if a serious programme of action was put forward. However if militant phrases are endlessly substituted for action -- if the real policy remains one of inaction -- then what presently is a symbol of unity can be turned into disappointment, cynicism and division on the part of the working class.

The black working class has a powerful progressive instinct of non-racialism -- for unity of working class people against the system of exploitation. This is a colossal conquest of consciousness. But if in practice, non-racialism is turned by the leadership into an excuse for **class-compromise** -- if it is turned against the interest of the working class as is the case now -- then the ground may be prepared for new splits in the direction of black nationalism as an apparently more "revolutionary" alternative.

## PAC

The reemergence of the PAC (PAM) would be insignificant were it not for the dangers created by the "negotiations" policy of the Congress leadership and their consequent unwillingness to mobilise mass action.

Shrewdly, the PAC leaders make opposition to these negotiations their main point of propaganda. It is not accidental that they use left-wing and "socialist" demagoguery to reach the ear of the black working class. They are black nationalist petty-bourgeois trying to make their way in politics by manipulating the working class.

If they achieve a large following, they would play an absolutely treacherous role, contributing as in 1950s and early 1960s, to the break-up of the movement. The way to avoid the PAC danger is to **unify the black working in Congress by means of a serious programme of action.**

But that means breaking with the present policy of negotiations with de Klerk and adopting instead the revolutionary policy of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC.

## The period ahead

The heroic insurrection in Romania shows that once the working class moves as a whole, no state power, however mighty, can stop them.

The Congress leaders have an opportunity now to mobilise an unstoppable movement against the regime. But this requires clarity of policy, programme and perspectives.

Power can be conquered only by

the working class struggling to defeat and overthrow the state. This requires the mobilisation of the whole working class around a programme for housing, jobs, a decent health and education system, none of which are possible under capitalism. Together with this mobilisation we must arm the movement and make an appeal to the white workers to come over to the side of the revolution.

## We say:

- \* De Klerk rejects majority rule -- no negotiations with De Klerk!
- \* For one-person-one-vote in an undivided South Africa!
- \* No retreat from the Freedom Charter!
- \* Build a mass ANC to overthrow the government!
- \* Forward to workers' power, democracy and socialism!





# NEGOTIATIONS?

F.W. de Klerk presents himself to the voters as a man of "negotiation" and "peaceful settlement" with the black people. But his manifesto shows he is only trying to entice black leaders into *collaboration* with the present system.

How should our movement respond to the government's "negotiations" policy?

It is necessary for the ANC to show willingness to negotiate a peaceful end to white rule and a handover of power to the majority of the people. We have to convince millions of people, white as well as black, over and over again, that the responsibility for the suffering and violence in the country lies fully with the government, the racists and the ruling class.

But to show willingness to negotiate does not mean dropping the program of the movement or giving up the struggle for power. A handover of power is not offered by this government. Nor will it be offered in future. That is the explanation which Congress activists should carry to every industrial area, every township, every school, every dorp, every farm -- to organise and mobilise action.

## Not acceptable

There is not one bit of the Freedom Charter which is acceptable to the government, or which it is prepared even to negotiate!

While we demand **One Person One Vote in a unitary South Africa**, the government totally rejects majority rule. It plans to continue the system of divide-and-rule, with "own affairs" and separate political institutions, as a screen for white domination.

While we demand an end to apartheid laws and practices, the government plans to maintain the basic structure of segregated residential areas, schools and facilities.

While we demand an end to injustice and discrimination, the government says that the different races have different needs, and that social welfare, education, health and housing cannot be equal! That is a program for continued mass misery.

De Klerk is not offering any step-by-step progress towards genuine democracy. He is setting a trap, in which

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### Editorial Statement Reprinted from *Congress Militant* (August 1989) Paper of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC

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he hopes to catch our movement, draw the leadership into co-operation with the state, divide us, and then cripple us.

This is the aim of the government and the bosses behind all the talk about "negotiations".

In de Klerk's very same "Five Year Plan" for negotiations, he states the government's intention to strengthen the SADF, police and prison service -- the main defence of white domination and the bosses' power.

**We demand the immediate and unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners!**

The signs are that the government is preparing to release comrade Mandela after the elections -- although it could again be delayed if the government feels insecure.

We should have no illusions however that the release of Mandela would mean the government is getting ready to seriously negotiate democratic change. It will not do so. Its immediate objective will be to draw in Buthelezi and other collaborators, to divide the masses and strengthen its power against our demands.

It would be a mistake to wait in hope for the prospect of a negotiated settlement. That would mean falling for the government's tricks and playing into its hands. The task of Congress is to fully expose the government's lies and build the mass movement to overthrow it.

It is not necessary -- in fact it would be disastrous -- to water down the ANC program for the sake of showing ourselves more willing to negotiate a

peaceful solution.

The ANC's program is already reasonable. COSATU general secretary Jay Naidoo describes the Freedom Charter as the **minimum demands** as far as the working class is concerned. **No retreat from the Freedom Charter!**

We should emphasise just how reasonable the Freedom Charter is.

We should stress our determination to uphold individual human rights irrespective of race, sex or religion. We should stress the equal rights of all groups to their language and culture.

Majority rule will not (as de Klerk falsely claims) mean "domination" of minorities. It will mean full equality and freedom. The black working-class masses have no reason to exploit or discriminate against others. The surest guarantee of genuine equality will be the power of the organised working class and its democratic organisations.

We stand for freedom of political parties in a new South Africa, so long as they do not organise armed counter-revolution against democracy. Racism, of course, must be outlawed.

## Fears

To ease the fears of the black middle class, and the ordinary whites, let us by all means offer security for the modest assets of small savers and pensioners. Let there be reasonable guarantees against the expropriation of private homes, cars and other property which is genuinely for individual or family use. The same applies to small business property. The Freedom Charter threatens none of this.

**But it is a different matter when it comes to the monopolies which own the means of production by which the nation lives.** How could there be national liberation unless the productive wealth of our country, robbed by conquest and exploitation over three hundred years, is taken back from the rich few and restored to the people? **Mayibuy' iAfrika!**

To end low wages, unemployment, high prices, homelessness and hunger, the nationalisation clause of the Freedom Charter must be carried out. The land must be restored to the working people. The mines, banks and monopoly industries must be made the common property of the people as a whole.

In exposing the government's false





propaganda about its intention to "negotiate", it is right for the ANC to say what **minimum conditions** would have to be met.

The release of all political prisoners; lifting of the State of Emergency and other restrictions on political activity; unbanning of the ANC and other organisations; the safe return of exiles; ending of political trials and executions; SADF and other paramilitary forces out of the townships -- all these have been listed by Congress leaders, and we agree with them. But do they go far enough?

Surely the key condition has been left out: namely that the **transfer of real power to the majority must be attainable through the negotiations.**

Congress should state clearly that at least the following must be on the agenda:

- \* A Constitutional Assembly, with delegates all freely elected on the basis of One Person One Vote from every part of South Africa (including the so-called "independent states"), to draw up a new constitution.

Meanwhile:

- \* Immediate suspension of all segregation laws. Immediate suspension of the Labour Act.

- \* The equal right of all the people irrespective of race to bear arms for their own defence. The right of local people to form militias for defence purposes in all residential areas, and of the trade unions to form workers' defence guards in all industrial areas

and on buses and trains.

The removal of the SADF and paramilitary forces from the townships or their confinement to barracks would, on its own, provide no guarantee that the army couldn't come back and crush us at any time. Organised and armed self-defence by virtually the whole of the oppressed people would be absolutely necessary if there is to be any possibility of a peaceful transfer of power.

The Marxist tendency has always explained that the bosses, the government, the military and police commanders will not give up their armed power. It will have to be broken by mass revolutionary struggle, and its ranks won over to the side of the people. Otherwise, the enemy will merely bide its time, and turn again to vicious counter-revolution at the first opportunity.

The main task of the ANC now is to overcome any illusions which are spreading among the people in de Klerk and his "negotiations" trickery.

In October 1987, the ANC National Executive Committee issued a statement "once more reaffirming its opposition to any secret negotiations".

It is absolutely essential that there should never be any private or secret meetings between Congress leaders and the government. Otherwise the false impression is created that the government may be preparing to offer something worthwhile. That is precisely the aim of de Klerk's and the bosses' propaganda.

If any meetings or talks are proposed, the question must be: What offers and counter-offers are on the

table for discussion? This must be openly revealed and publicised at every step!

After all, that's what organised workers insist on when negotiations are carried out by their union representatives. How can the vital matter of the future government of South Africa be negotiated in any other way?

The ranks of Congress must have the opportunity to follow closely the progress of any talks and control their leadership during the conduct of any negotiations.

**No negotiations behind closed doors! Nothing in secret! Everything in the open and in the full glare of public scrutiny! That is the only democratic way.**

If a real transfer of power to the majority can be negotiated peacefully -- then by all means negotiate it! But if the enemy is to keep the state power, if majority rule is denied, if nothing but sham "democracy" is on the table -- reject it, and carry the explanation to the people.

In that way we can frustrate the tricks of de Klerk, harden the revolutionary determination of the black majority, and show to the ordinary whites that the government and the ruling class allows us **no alternative** but the revolutionary road.

**Forward to the overthrow of the racist regime!**

**Forward to an ANC government with power to implement the Freedom Charter!**

**Forward to workers' power, democracy and socialism!**



## Demonstrators taunt De Klerk:

# "Come out! See who is the power in this country"

**Cape Town  
13 September**

"Moet nie daar op die sidelines staan nie, kom join die struggle", shouted the youth to the thousands lining Cape Town streets. Many garment workers from Woodstock and Salt River left work and walked from their factories to be on the march. As we turned into Adderley Street one saw a sight not seen in this city since 30 000 people marched from the townships to Caledon Square in 1960. The whole of Cape Town was brought to a standstill. The idea that the impossible seemed to have happened made many people very happy. There was a sense that history was being made here today. De Klerk was forced to give in to our march. How could they think of confronting us when we are so big and powerful?

**Durban  
23 September**

The march was close to 30 000 strong. Commercial Road was lined with office workers, half of them white. Construction workers, working on a shop front, were hanging from the scaffolding and joined the singing, waving their hammers. As the mass toyi-toyed it was as if everything moved -- only the buildings stood.

**KwaThema  
25 September**

Monday morning was cloudy and bitterly cold. This didn't deter 600 people from gathering at the Civic Hall at 8 am. Buses and taxis to take people to town did not come. People decided to foot it instead. Into town



*Cape Town, 14 October 1989*

and back was 10km, but distance was of no consequence.

There were no less than 6 000 people when the march beat Thema Road. People sang and toyi-toyed jubilantly. A middle-aged man said: "Let us give our children all the support we can -- tomorrow we're heading for the grave." One of the youth shouted: "Today we demonstrate against DET -- next time we say 'Phantsi with community councils!' "

Students, workers, unemployed, lumpens, housewives, teachers and hawkers -- all marched together as one united mass. There were even primary schools -- six to ten year olds -- bubbling and singing along.

Placards and posters conveyed various messages: "Mass Democratic Movement is freedom"; "We want bread not bullets"; "Viva Rockman". *Congress Militant* posters calling for defiance of apartheid and one-person-one-vote in a unitary SA daubed the march as well. Some of the students had them pasted on their backs with sellotape.

*Photo: Congress Militant*

The march was blocked by a heavy contingent of the army and police. Some shouted that we should break through the wall of helmeted and armed police with placards and bare knuckles. However, the majority were not in the mood for confrontation. This had to be a peaceful march demonstrating our strength. Marshalls with red-white headbands (one woman in a union T-shirt among them) maintained discipline.

Some security police on a nearby building with videos and cameras had a field day taking pictures of the crowd. Hundreds more arrived. Another big colourful wave of dancing and chanting students could be seen far-off down the road still coming.

People went back towards the Civic Hall. Security police Sierras went ahead of the march. Another yellow police car with two black policemen inside slowly cut through the march with hardly anyone of the chanting mass touching it.

People sang: "Socialism ke thebe (Socialism is a shield)"; "Tambo

**Comrades report from the areas**



sithwele kanzima kulomhlaba" (Tambo we live in hardship in this land). Every time people came across police they would always sing the same song: "Noma siyafa sitsho sithi halukho uvalo" (Even if we have to die we say we have no fear).

At the Civic Hall hawkers who usually grace the piazza with fruits and vegs were nowhere to be seen. Wave after wave arrived dancing and singing. Police blocked off Nkosi Road and told people to disperse in ten minutes. This drew an angry response from the crowd: "Ten minutes is too little -- they are mad. Where should we disperse to -- town? This is our township: we're going nowhere." For a moment I thought confrontation was imminent. Long after ten minutes, people started trickling away slowly.

One school student said: "We didn't reach town, the march was a failure." But this is not true.

A student movement culminated in a mass demonstration of no less than 15 000 people, many of them workers. Housewives were there. Scores of households lining Thema road cheered the march on. This movement together with the defiance of segregation by workers at Ergo and Impala Platinum confirms that the East Rand has also entered the political upsurge developing nationally.

## Cape Town 14 October

Striking SAB workers toyi-toyed from the station to the meeting place in their work overalls. They sang two songs all the time. The first compared Gatsha Buthelezi to Hoza, the gangster puppet mayor of Khayelitsha. The second was "Ilizwe ngelethu basebenzi". An SAB worker said: "This is a victory. De Klerk was must not be fooled, he also wants to put a mask in front of our face so that we must think that everything is OK. Did you see the papers this morning, there is already a beer shortage. Last year SAB made a big profit and now we want to get an increase. All our workers are on strike and that is our power!"

"Waar is De Klerk? Laat hy uit kom om te sien wie is die power in die land" (Where is de Klerk? Let him come out to see who is the power in the country) shouted a young worker as we marched past parliament. A worker speaker said: "We make cars but we don't have any cars, we make clothes but we don't have clothes, we make houses but we don't have any houses. The Freedom Charter says: *The wealth of the country shall be shared equally amongst all the people*, we are fighting for that and nothing less."

A UDF leader, Dullah Omar, said: "We must be careful about what De Klerk is doing. He wants to trap the leadership with all the talk of reform. We must be clear that the monopolies in the country support his system and we will never be free as long as these monopolies still control the economy. Negotiations will not win us total freedom."

Then he said: "There are some people who disagree with the presence of red flags on the march. Some people have asked me why there are red flags on the march. There are red flags because they are the flags of the working class, red represents the blood of the working class and the goal of our struggle. Are there any people here who disagree with the red flag? They must say so now!" There was a massive response from the crowd who all shouted "NO!"

Supporters of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC were the only people on the demonstration carrying a big red flag, together with ANC flags. They also distributed small red flags which workers took and were waving all the time. Supporters of the SA Communist Party were extremely angered by this. Only one of them had the courage to ask: "Where is the hammer and the sickle?" A young comrade replied: "This red flag is the genuine flag of the working class and Marxism."





## Jo'burg 14 October

The Anti-LRA march was around 15 000 strong, 90% workers. Placards were carried: "Don't trust De Klerk!", "One-person-one vote in a united South Africa".

The original route was to SATS, the Dept of Manpower and Anglo American -- but was changed to skirt Braamfontein and rally at the University of the Witwatersrand. "Why are we going to Wits? What can we challenge there? We want to march to Anglo," said a PPWAWU member.

## Natal 14 October

In Durban this march was smaller, but 70% were workers. It didn't lay siege to the heart of the city, but down Grey and Broad street to the Manpower office. In Pietermaritzburg supporters of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC had the biggest homemade banner, placards and *Congress Militant* stickers, "Don't trust De Klerk", "Step up defiance!", which everyone wore.

## Soweto 29 October

Buses and combis were arriving from all over SA to the 'Soccer City' rally. Youth hanging out of windows and banging on roof tops, slogans and "vivas" shouted from bus windows, and a thick river on foot walking and toyi-toying up to the stadium.

The stadium filled up. The atmosphere was not subdued, nor was it euphoric. From the stands of the stadium you looked out over Jo'burg, and the mine dumps. Who controls all that and in whose interests, is what the struggle is ultimately about.

The crowd was very mixed. African women of about 60 years of age, had travelled from Natal with the youth. There were organised workers in the thousands, though they were absorbed into the mass. But you didn't feel the power of the workers at the rally in the same way you could sense it in the recent LRA demos. At 12.30pm the leaders were brought in like heads of state -- led by a group of goose-stepping "young lions". 80 000



Jo'burg, 14 October 1989

people joined in a rapturous toyi-toyi and applause.

Mhlaba stressed moderation in the face of government and state intransigence. He said the chiefs still have an important role to play and stressed the traditional ANC, the ANC of Luthuli and Seme.

When reference was made to Natal I interjected and shouted "Phantsi Gatsha Buthelezi!" and all the workers around me raised their fists and shouted "Phantsi!"

Sisulu said the defiance campaign must continue and spoke against the "fratricide in Natal". "We call on COSATU, the UDF and Inkatha to continue their search for peace."

In our bus a white collar Afrikaans-speaking man who works for an insurance company had come from Pretoria. "I wouldn't have missed this event for the world. I've never felt so optimistic than over the last three weeks." At the rally he responded with clenched fist to Amandla! Later he said how much he agreed with all, but more importantly there had been no antagonism to him as a white.

Mzwakhe is doing his act down on stage. He recites one of his popular poems: *Triple M, Matanzima, Mphephu, Mangope ... Meeesssss*. The Tembisa youth sitting next to me is willing him to add Holomisa and finally he gets his wish as Holomisa is included in the rogue's gallery.

The leadership comes on the field, shielded from the sun each by a large COSATU umbrella. It is because of

COSATU -- and the struggles of the youth -- that we are here today. There is a "COSATU praise poet" dressed in tribal leopard skins who leads a praise of Sisulu.

There are two watchwords to the day: discipline and appeals to chiefs.

Cyril Ramaphosa, Murphy Morobe and Sydney Mafumadi are the MCs with dark black suits and ties. Cyril appeals to all chiefs to join Contralesa. Sisulu demands a constituent assembly elected by universal suffrage and negotiations.

Mbeki speaks through Mafumadi. He didn't attend because of the restriction orders. The youth all shout: "Defy them! Defy them!"

At times the crowd does cheer. Today is a holiday, a festive occasion. There is not the euphoria of the UDF launch. The sun is hot, there is coke and hot dogs, and the small traders are selling us choc ices at R1.50 each!

When there are appeals to tribal leaders, the crowd is quiet. But it's not knocked out by the sun. Half a minute later the Tembisa youth is on his feet cheering the call for the intensification of sanctions or the refusal of the speakers to call off the armed struggle until the pre-conditions for negotiation are met. The youth calls on the leaders to provide arms. A worker says: "My grandfather, my father and now me -- we've gone through this. It will take 100 years not five years if we accept De Klerk."

There are banners from Natal, East London and the Winterveld. The all-in unity of the black working class is strong and growing.



# **ORGANISE to defeat Inkatha !**



*Mpophomeni youths bury two of their comrades*

1990 has begun. But Inkatha's bloody war, backed by the police and the state, continues more ferociously than ever.

More than 150 died in Durban in December alone. In Ntuzuma, Inanda, KwaMashu, KwaMakhuta, Richmond Farm, Inchanga, Shongweni, Umlazi... Inkatha mobs pillage, rape, loot, and kill. Houses are burnt out. Uncounted hundreds are refugees.

This follows the atrocities in Mpumalanga and Cato Ridge in late November. In four years, 4000 have died, 2500 in Greater Maritzburg. This is war on the scale of Lebanon and Northern Ireland.

Zulu people face the same heavy burdens -- poverty wages, lack of jobs, homelessness, gutter education, malnutrition -- as black people throughout SA. They yearn to unite in nationwide struggle to end white domination and exploitation.

As the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC has again and again explained, it is Buthelezi's reign of terror in Natal which is the

real obstacle to this. To take forward our struggle for freedom, the Inkatha leaders must be defeated and its rank-and-file won over to Congress.

Workers' revulsion against Inkatha violence was shown again in the stayaway in Hammarsdale, Pinetown and New Germany in protest at the Mpumalanga killings.

But, for more than two years, Congress leaders have tried to make peace with Inkatha. Every attempt has failed. Conditions of life have worsened. The violence has grown.

In Durban in 1987, 100 were killed; in 1988 230; in 1989, up to December 20th, 560. That is the rec-

ord of the "peace process".

The snake Buthelezi has never been serious when he talks sweetly of "peace".

As the *SA Labour Bulletin* (November 1989) puts it: "There has been a consistent pattern on the part of Inkatha in the peace process.... agreements were reached on important aspects that would have meant peace. However when it came to either further meetings or the practical implementation of what had already been agreed upon, the process would inevitably break down and violence would escalate."

"Whenever there is a need for a decision, or when it appears an agreed solution is close, Inkatha moves the goalposts", concludes the *Weekly Mail*, (21/12/89-18/1/90)

The Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC warned in advance against the dangers of the so-called "peace policy": that it would only



lengthen and worsen the war (see, e.g. reprint on pages 17-20).

**Buthelezi wages war because it is the only way of propping up his waning authority. The state and the bosses back him because they need this promoter of capitalism, dictatorship, and tribal division in their struggle against the working class.**

In Isithebe, a KwaZulu "industrial development point", workers' wages range from R25 to R90 a week, while the bosses use the strike-breaking UWUSA to try to drive out COSATU. This is what Buthelezi and his friends would enforce throughout Natal, if they could get away with it.

Disastrously, the "peace" policies of the Congress leadership have served to dignify this enemy of the working class. They cannot escape responsibility for the continuing bloodshed. The COSATU leaders, representing the organised workers, strongest force of our movement, are especially to blame. Congress must urgently change course.

As Maritzburg youth Selby Ngidi writes to *Inqaba*, "No-one can change Inkatha to a progressive organisation. It is true that people want peace. But everyone hates a peace that will oppress him from demanding his life's necessities."

"Foolish songs like 'sizomshintsha uGatsha simenze ikomanisi' ('we will change Gatsha to a communist') are totally wrong. Instead we can sing 'Gatsha will change us to be sell-outs.' He is like engine pistons -- they

are moving because the crank shaft is working underneath. Inkatha is existing because racism and capitalism exist behind it."

**The need is clear: mobilising campaigns of action by Congress around our social and democratic demands to strip away what remains of Inkatha's support, combined with mass armed self-defence against Inkatha and state terror.**

The youth have fought heroically against Inkatha, at great cost. But they have been disarmed by the Congress leadership.

"The youth received a very hard blow from their leaders", writes K. Majosi in Maritzburg. "The call for peace talks confused and brought doubt to them, but they continued to defend themselves."

"The second call for peace brought them to the dust. They lost all the gains they had achieved."

"The third call for peace enabled Inkatha to operate freely while forcing people to join it. This also caused division within the ranks of the fighting masses. Thus Inkatha continued to kill, leaving people homeless, others injured. The fighting masses were not convinced that Inkatha warlords would become their allies. They continued to defend themselves."

The youth must take the initiative in setting Congress policy on the right track.

D. Makhaye, a refugee and victim of detention, explains: "We must build street committees, defence

committees, civics, and also rebuild our organisations."

"At the beginning we made a fundamental mistake that we didn't realise it is very important to bring together our parents and teachers with us, so that by mistake our parents decided to kill their children."

**The key to the struggle is mobilising the organised working class, together with the youth, especially in the stronghold of Durban. This is the job, above all, of the COSATU leadership.**

Because our movement has not been mobilised in full strength, the Inkatha gangsters can prey on the most oppressed.

"The raiding parties", writes Carmel Rickard in the *Weekly Mail* (15-20/12/89), "include many newcomers...who arrive on the fringes of the cities to look for work, without money, or security, or even a piece of cardboard over their heads."

"They are offered a place to stay on condition they join the raids, and as an incentive, are promised the goods they loot."

**It is intolerable that Inkatha and the state should be able to exploit this situation.**

By standing up together, in campaigns which show the power of the working class to control the future of South Africa, our movement can win the confidence of the powerless and smash Inkatha's hold over them.

**We have that power at our disposal! Let us show it in action!**

## Workers discuss how to defeat Inkatha

Recently a comrade from Natal visited Jo'burg to speak to workers. He came from one of the trouble-torn townships where many are caught in battle against Inkatha.

The comrade visited factories where the response of the workers was outstanding. They were all eager to hear the truth about the troubles. As they said: "This was from the horse's mouth."

At one factory, workers felt that Inkatha was not serious about peace. Workers were concerned about those

in their factory who were members of the union, as well as Inkatha: "We must win these workers by showing them what Gatsha is about." Many people are forced to become members of Inkatha. If they refuse they become victims of Inkatha's violence.

At another factory, the workers said that they should all go to Natal to help in the fightback. One worker said he was a member of Inkatha in the past, but saw that Inkatha could do nothing for workers and joined COSATU. An older worker, in tears, said he felt

ashamed that a youngster has to tell him about the reality of the violence in Natal.

Workers said that despite peace talks between the leadership of COSATU, UDF and Inkatha violence was continuing. They offered support, clothing, food, money. At one factory, workers said it is useless to fight Inkatha with sticks and stones when they are armed by the state: "We must help our comrades in Natal by arranging for them to be armed as well."



# Revolutionary appeal to the youth of Natal

from the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the African National Congress

FEBRUARY 1989

## HOW TO DEFEAT INKATHA

### and unite the struggle against the apartheid regime

It is well over a year since UDF leaders entered peace talks with Inkatha. It is five months since COSATU signed an agreement with Inkatha. But has this helped the Congress movement or protected the masses of KwaZulu/Natal? It has not.

In 1988 the death toll was 655 -- even higher than 1987. Inkatha's terror attacks continue unchecked, extending to more areas, like Trust Feed and Inanda.

Inkatha warlords go on butchering and burning, backed up by the army and police. Tens of thousands have fled their homes to escape attack.

Heroic Congress youth have had no choice except to defend their communities and take reprisals against the Inkatha killers.

The Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC has always stood for a policy of fighting back against Inkatha. We warned that Congress leaders' hopes of making peace with Inkatha would not work.

The 'agreement' with Inkatha is hampering Congress in the struggle against the apartheid regime and the bosses. No clear strategy of mass action has been advanced by the Congress leadership, either in Natal or nationally.

Yet that is the key to defeating Inkatha and uniting our oppressed communities in the struggle for liberation.

We therefore appeal directly to the militant youth in Natal and KwaZulu to take the initiative in setting the policy of Congress on the right track.

### Mass revolt stirring

The people are looking to Congress to lead a revolution to overthrow white domination and capitalism. Life is intolerable under this system.

Unemployment means that wage-earners have to support up to 12 people. Round Pietermaritzburg, people are crowded 16 to a two-roomed house. Round Durban, a million and a half live in shacks.

Ten years after the government promised "reform", we have no democratic rights. We face worse misery, worse slavery.

Mass revolt against poverty, exploitation and oppression is stirring in the towns and countryside throughout Natal/KwaZulu.

If this revolt is mobilised and drawn together under the Congress banner, it will bring a mighty power to bear against the bosses and the apartheid state.

Youth are in the forefront today, as so often before in our struggle. But the main power to take the movement forward lies with the workers.

In 1973 the workers of Natal shook the whole country. Again today workers are ready to take action -- if leadership is given.

Last year, hundreds of thousands took part in the June 6-8 general strike. In Durban 95 per cent stayed away. Dock and rail workers, garment work-

## An action program for Congress

### Congress leaders!

**Mobilise the mighty working class of Natal together with the youth and workers of the whole of South Africa!**

\* Organise to spread the Transvaal rent strike to all parts of the country.

\* Call united worker action, in all industries together, for a national minimum wage. Demand a specific figure, such as R160 rand for a 40-hour week!

*These actions will help unite the youth and the workers. They will rouse unorganised workers and draw them into the unions.*

The Congress leadership must not condemn armed self-defence actions by Congress youth and workers.

The leadership should promote and organise self-defence on a mass scale against Inkatha and all vigilante and state attacks.

*The ANC must urgently supply arms for this purpose.*

\* Prepare for a one-day protest strike of all workers and youth against the next major atrocity committed by Inkatha.

*Build a mass ANC to unite all oppressed people in the struggle for workers' power, democracy and socialism!*



ers, paper workers -- have shown their eagerness to use organised power in the fight for a better life.

**The power of the workers must be united with the youth. We must be mobilised all together on a clear programme of demands.**

Yet instead of uniting the working class in action behind Congress, Congress leaders have sought peace with Inkatha. Some go so far as to preach the goal of "unity" with Buthelezi and his gang of middle-class collaborators with the system.

**That is a road to disaster for the revolution. It is time to change course.**

## 'Agreement' has failed

**\* The agreement with Inkatha claimed to end forced recruitment and to establish the right of people to join the political organisation of their choice.**

If the agreement was real, then Congress organisations would be able to hold meetings throughout Kwa-Zulu/Natal, and win over Inkatha "supporters".

But everybody knows there is no freedom to join Congress in areas which Inkatha controls.

Even Catholics and Jehovah's Witnesses have been driven from their homes -- simply because they refuse to join Inkatha.

While Inkatha is aided by the police, the state has banned the UDF and SAYCO as it previously banned the ANC.

The reason Congress militants drive Inkatha agents from their areas is because there is no other way of defending themselves. In the same way you drive a snake from your house, lest it bite you.

**\* COSATU's leaders hoped that agreement with Inkatha would "create the space for our organisation to operate" (Head Office circular, 16/8/1988).**

Already at that time, however, the Executive of PWWU -- a union which has faced Inkatha's attacks in Natal -- warned COSATU against meeting with Inkatha.

They saw that Inkatha would gain a propaganda advantage, while bringing "no reduction in the violence from their side". (General Secretary's letter, 15/8/88)

The whole history of the workers'

movement shows that *space to operate* must be won by organisation and militancy of the workers -- not by relying on agreement with a treacherous enemy of the working class.

**\* COSATU CEC documents (October 1988) say the aim of the agreement was to "compel Inkatha to remove its organisational and financial support from members who were held responsible for acts of violence."**

But all the agreement has done is allow the Inkatha leadership to pretend they have nothing to do with the violence -- while they organise violence secretly none the less.

The agreement therefore *strengthens* Inkatha politically, while leaving the Congress ranks no less vulnerable to attack.

It holds our side back from defending itself. It does nothing to hamper Inkatha. Isn't this obvious by now?

**\* The Complaints Adjudication Board, set up jointly by COSATU and Inkatha, was claimed to provide the main benefit of the agreement.**

**This Board would hear allegations of violence by members of Inkatha and**

**COSATU against each other and recommend disciplinary actions by the organisations where necessary.**

Its purpose, say COSATU's lawyers, was "to be more just and certainly far more prompt and cost effective" (cheaper) than the courts. (Report dated 11/10/88)

Nowadays even lawyers admit that the courts give no protection against Inkatha. But the 'Complaints Adjudication Board' has proved equally ineffective.

Victims of Inkatha and their witnesses fear to testify, even in secret, because of the danger of reprisals. Inkatha thugs will not appear before the Board because they don't want to incriminate themselves in case they face criminal charges.

Much of the violence against COSATU members is carried out by UWUSA. But Inkatha, lying as always, claims UWUSA is not its responsibility.

Even if the Board recommended disciplinary action by Inkatha against its members, who imagines that would seriously be carried out? *The chief killers are the Inkatha leaders who send their members to carry out murder*

## We can be proud of our record

Since Congress leaders began talks with Inkatha, supporters of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC have warned that this policy would fail. An Editorial Board Statement of 16/12/87, published in our journal *Inqaba ya Basebenzi*, explained:

"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. Gatscha is destined to be reduced to a pathetic puppet."

We called on the Congress leadership to organise a mass campaign of action on social demands, combined with armed self-defence, as the way to defeat Inkatha.

**We have not been commentators from the sidelines.**

**Side-by-side with all fighting**

**Congress youth and workers, and to the extent of our forces, we have striven to implement these policies in practice.**

In 1987, in the Transvaal, our comrade Ivin Malaza led the defence of his workplace against an UWUSA attack. He was shot dead by UWUSA thugs, but the workplace remains today a stronghold of COSATU.

Last year near Pietermaritzburg our comrade Sipho Dladla, a leader in the fightback against Inkatha, was struck down by assassins.

In the past few weeks another comrade in Natal, only 16 years old, has been murdered by Inkatha.

In December 1987 Buthelezi threatened to break off talks with UDF and COSATU leaders unless they publicly repudiated the policies of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC.

In a full-page advertisement in the press, they repudiated our tendency and declared their commitment to peace with Buthelezi.

**Today our policy is shown to be fully justified. Theirs has failed. It must be radically changed.**



against Congress ranks.

They are merely using the Complaints Adjudication Board to help them pretend innocence of these atrocities. The "agreement" aids them in this dirty game.

\* Some say the agreement is weak because it doesn't include the banned UDF or extend beyond the Maritzburg area.

This is false. The agreement is harmful to Congress where it is supposed to operate. Extending it will only extend the harm.

Inkatha leaders want the UDF formally included in the agreement, because they want UDF leaders to tie the hands of the youth while Inkatha stabs them.

It is time that the COSATU, UDF and ANC leaderships declared that Inkatha's violations have made the "agreement" null and void.

It is time the Congress leadership advanced a clear strategy of mass action to smash Inkatha and build the movement to overthrow the apartheid regime.

## An arm of the enemy

The apartheid state and the bosses are the enemy. But Inkatha has made itself an arm of the enemy.

Why is Inkatha supported and financed by the big companies? Why do capitalist governments overseas welcome Buthelezi? Why does the SA government favour Inkatha while banning Congress organisations? Why do the police and army back it up?

Because, whatever Inkatha may say about being a "liberation" movement, its real function is to divide the black people of SA, using Zulu tribalism as its means.

Its purpose is to attack Congress and hold back the revolution. Its leaders promote themselves in business by collaborating with the white bosses and the white racist state.

Inkatha could never succeed in dividing the people if fully exposed as the puppet it is. That is why its leaders have to claim to be fighting the Pretoria regime.

*But how do they "fight"?*

They oppose any armed struggle against the regime as 'unrealistic' -- but conduct a ferocious armed struggle against every stirring of opposition

## Hamba kahle Qhawe lamaQhawe

The Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC mourns Comrade Siphos Dladla, brutally murdered by assassins in Natal. His death is a tragic loss to revolutionary youth in South Africa and throughout the world.

Comrade Siphos, aged 19, was one of the first Congress youth to enter battle against Inkatha, whose hands drip with the blood of hundreds of workers and youth. Siphos was an ANC soldier and Marxist.

Along with other heroic youth, he established a reputation throughout Natal for tenacity, hardness and determination in the struggle to drive Inkatha out of his township. He played an indispensable role in the creation of armed self-defence organisations.

As a builder of the ANC on the ideas of Marxism, Siphos shared with us the understanding and confidence that the state, the

bosses and Inkatha will be smashed. This they could not take from him. He fought and died for non-racialism, democracy and socialism.

To all who knew him, Siphos was a leader and a friend who shared with the comrades in joy and in sorrow. His bold example inspired hundreds. His courage and military prowess disguised his youth. He will be greatly missed by his family, his young child and all who fought at his side.

Supporters of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC will avenge Siphos, Ivin Malaza and all the martyrs in the struggle to smash Inkatha, apartheid and capitalism. We will build a monument to Comrade Siphos Dladla by redoubling our efforts to build the forces of Marxism in South Africa to overthrow apartheid and capitalism.

**ASISOZE SIKULIBALE FUTHI SIYOQHUBEKA NJALO  
NOMZABALAZO OWAWUFELA**

*We will never forget you, we will never give up the cause you died for.*

amongst the oppressed people.

Buthelezi proclaims that black "worker power" and "consumer power" is the weapon to use against apartheid -- but he uses intimidation and violence to try to break every actual strike, general strike and consumer boycott that takes place.

The coal miners at Hlobane, the bus drivers of Pietermaritzburg, the BTR strikers, the paper workers -- these and many other victims of Inkatha and UWUSA violence have tasted what Buthelezi's attitude to worker and union power really is.

## Inkatha dignified

If the COSATU, UDF and ANC leadership had only conducted a sustained campaign of mass action on wages, rents, fares, jobs, education and political rights, to mobilise the full strength of the Zulu working class together with their brothers and sisters nationwide -- then Inkatha would long

ago have been shattered as a political force and stripped of any claim to a popular following.

Instead, by seeking "peace" with Inkatha, they have dignified it. They have unwittingly helped Inkatha sustain its fraudulent claim to being a 'rival political organisation' of the black people -- rather than the agent of counter-revolution which it is.

Far from helping to "unite" black people against the government, the policy of "peace" with Inkatha has merely helped Inkatha in its hidden purpose of dividing the people for the benefit of the oppressor.

Some in Congress may argue that the policy of the leadership was not to dignify Inkatha as a potential ally, but to place clearly on its shoulders the full responsibility for the killing in Natal/KwaZulu -- and show Congress to be the only genuine mass movement of liberation.

If that was the aim, then surely the leadership should long ago have launched the very programme of mass action on the social and democratic



issues -- throughout Natal and Kwa-Zulu -- which we have called for.

But let us look to the future. No honest person can doubt now that Inkatha has systematically violated the "peace".

**A turn to a policy of action by the whole Congress movement is long overdue. That is the reason for our urgent appeal to the youth.**

## The way forward

The townships and settlements around Pietermaritzburg have suffered most from Inkatha terror. And it is here that Congress youth have organised the strongest defence. As a result of these comrades' heroism, Inkatha has generally failed to reimpose its grip on this area.

**But it is difficult to defeat Inkatha decisively by this defence alone.**

Scattered settlements on the hillsides are hard to protect against night attacks. Defence often has to take the form of reprisal attacks. The cycle of violence and counter-violence, of insecurity and fear seems endless.

Many, particularly older people, remain passive. They must be given confidence to struggle. If no way forward is shown, some can begin to feel they would be safer submitting again to the authority of Inkatha and the state.

In this way, the danger of reaction and of further divisions among the people could arise.

**But there is a way forward out of this situation.**

The armed self-defence by Congress militants must be linked to a full-scale social movement of the people, struggling to change the conditions of poverty and oppression.

**The social power of the workers is the main force for change. The main force of the Natal workers is concentrated in and around Durban.**

The militant youth must find the way to mobilise this power, and link their own forces with it.

**We say: Youth go to the workers! And, comrades of Pietermaritzburg, go to your comrades in Durban for help!**

A major problem is created by the COSATU leaders' policy of "peace" with Inkatha. This holds many workers back. The biggest danger is if Congress youth, feeling let down, allow a division to be opened between themselves and

the workers.

That is why we must be clear: the problem lies not with the workers but with the leadership. The workers are ready to struggle if leadership is given.

Youth need to organise themselves with a plan to overcome this problem.

Go to all the workplaces to discuss the issues with the shop stewards and with all workers.

Discuss with the workers on the buses and trains and in the streets.

Bring the problem of the leadership and its policy clearly into the forefront.

Adopt the program of action which we have suggested -- or reach agreement on your own proposals.

**Organise joint delegations of workers and youth to union and COSATU meetings, to argue the case for a change of policy by the leadership.**

Comrades such as Harry Gwala, recently released from Robben Island -- a long-time fighter against oppression who is an inspiration to the youth in Natal -- should also put their weight behind these calls.

**In this way, together, we can break the deadlock in Natal/KwaZulu, defeat Inkatha, and unite all revolutionary forces against white rule and capitalism in South Africa.**

## INTO ESIYILWELAYO

**IThendensi yeSoshalizimu yaBasebenzi beAfrican National Congress imele ukuketulwa kombuso obandlulula ngebala waseNingizimu Afrika.**

**Simele nokuketulwa kombuso wabaqashi futhi, nokuthi umnotho wabo uphathwe ngabantu bonke.**

**Simele inkululeko yesizwe, umbuso ophethe ngentando yabantu kanye nesoshalizimu.**

Siyinxenye yeANC kanye nomzabalazo weNkongolo -- ye-COSATU, yeSAYCO kanye neUDF.

"IThendensi" kwezepolitiki kusho ukuthi imicabango ethize eqinisekile. IThendensi yeSoshalizimu yaBasebenzi yigama lama-comrade akwiNkongolo abezwana ngalemicabango elandelayo, futhi basebenzisana ekuyiqhubekiseni.

Thina sithi:

\* Inkululeko yabantu abamnyama ingeza kuphela ngombuso obusa ngabantu abaningi.

\* Umbuso ophethe ngabantu abaningi angeke unikezwe nje ngabacindezeli bobandlululo nanoma ngamakhosi esiwasenzelayo; ungathathwa nje ngousebenzisa amandla.

\* Lokhu kusho ukuthi kuzodingeka impi yezingukuko ehlome ngezikhali, futhi angeke ibalekelwe ngezinkulumisano.

\* Ukunqoba kulele emandleni endima yabasebenzi abamnyama (abasebenzi bebumbene, behlangene kunye nabasha) ekunqobeni umbuso kanye nabaqashi.

\* Kufanele sizimisele ukuhlukanisa amasotsha abamhlophe, ukushiya abaqashi bebodwa,

ngokudonsela abasebenzi abamhlophe kanye nalabo abanamalungelo angasho lutho emzabalazweni wethu.

\* Sizodinga uhulumende we-ANC ozisekele ngamandla abasebenzi, ome ngombutho wabantu abahlomile.

\* Lokhu kuzodingeka ukuze sikwazi ukudlovoza inkani yalabo ababandlulula ngebala kanye nabaqashi, ukuze futhi iFreedom Charter ikwazi ukwenzakaliswa.

\* Nguhulumende ofana nalona kuphela ongakwazi ukuqinisekisa umbuso ophethe ngentando yabantu, kanti futhi ngohulumende ofana nalona kungaqaliswa ukwakhiwa futhi kweNingizimu Afrika ngendlela yesoshalizimu.

Ngalendlela, nangokuhlangana nabasebenzi enhlabeni wonke ukuletha izingukuko ezweni, singakha ikusasa lenkululeko, lengqubekela phambili, lehlonipheko kanye nonkulingana kwabantu bonke.

**Uyavuma na? Uma kunjalo sikukhuthaza ukuthi uzixhume nathi ekwakheni iANC kanye nomzabalazo weNkongolo ukuze sifinyelele kulenhloso.**



# The rise and fall of the ZULU KINGDOM

By Richard Monroe

Inkatha claims to be a national liberation movement of the Zulu people -- following in the traditions of resistance established under the leadership of the Zulu royal house in the nineteenth century.

This article re-examines this claim. It explains how the Zulu kingdom arose, and how it was able to combat white settlers and British imperialism, establishing the tradition of resistance.

It explains how this tradition of resistance later passed to the Zulu working class, while the Zulu royal house and chiefs were transformed into agents of collaboration with white minority rule.

It took 250 years after 1652 for the indigenous African tribespeople of SA to be conquered by the forces of colonialism and imperialism: first Dutch and then British.

White settler regimes grew up, expropriating the bulk of the land, and subjugating the black majority.

Through conquest, a capitalist economy arose, born in blood and exploitation -- particularly from the last quarter of the 19th century.

The rise of capitalism has transformed the conquered



tribes into a working-class that forms the overwhelming majority of our population.

But, within these broad processes of conquest and of the rise of the working class, there are important regional variations and histories which affect the relationships between the

races and classes in different areas.

In the Eastern Cape the militant traditions of the proletariat are almost a direct continuation of 100 years of struggle by the Xhosa people against land-grabbing and enforced labour.

On the other hand, on the Witwatersrand the working class has come



## Engels on the origins of the state

"As men originally made their exit from the animal world — in the narrower sense — so they made their entry into history: still half animal, brutish, still impotent in face of the forces of nature, still ignorant of their own; and consequently as poor as the animals and hardly more productive than they. There prevailed a certain equality in the conditions of existence, and also a kind of equality of social position for the heads of the families — at least an absence of social classes — which continued among the primitive agricultural communities of the civilized peoples of a later period.

In each such community there were from the beginning certain common interests the safeguarding of which had to be handed over to individuals, true, under the control of the community as whole: adjudication of disputes; repression of encroachments by individuals beyond their rights; control of water supplies, especially in hot countries; and finally, when conditions were still very primitive, religious functions.

Such offices are found in native communities in every period — thus in the oldest German Marks and even today in India. It goes without saying that they are endowed with a certain measure of authority and constitute the beginnings of state power. The productive forces gradually increase; the greater density of the population creates common interests at one point and conflicting interests at another between the separate communities, whose grouping into larger units again brings about a new division of labour, the

setting up of organs to defend common interests and guard against conflicting interests.

These organs, which as representatives of the common interests of the whole group, already occupy a special position in relation to each individual community —

in certain circumstances even one of opposition — soon make themselves still more independent, partly through heredity of functions, which comes about almost as a matter of course in a world where everything occurs spontaneously, and partly through their growing indispensability with the increase in conflicts with other groups.

It is not necessary for us to examine here how this independence of social functions as against society increased with time until it developed into domination over society; how, where conditions were favourable, the original servant gradually changed into the master; how this master emerged as an Oriental despot or satrap, the dynast of a Greek tribe, the chieftain of a Celtic clan, and so on, according to the conditions; how far he finally made use of force in the course of this transformation; and how the individual rulers ultimately united into a ruling class.

Here we are only concerned with establishing the fact that the exercise of a social function was everywhere the basis of political domination; and further that political domination has existed for any length of time only when it discharged this, its social, function?"

*F. Engels, Anti-Duhring*

together from all over Southern Africa, from many different tribes. It has had to create a new tradition for itself as a working class — which owes very little to the tradition of those who happened to live in the area of Johannesburg before the late 19th century.

What we deal with here is the history and traditions of Natal — which means at root the traditions of the Zulu people, who form the overwhelming majority of the population of Natal (70 per cent), together with 10 per cent whites, 11 per cent Indian and some 7 per cent Mpondo. Throughout SA the Zulu number today six million, three-quarters of them in Natal/Kwazulu.

### The Zulu state

The history of what is now Natal is very rich. This account sketches only the main processes, beginning with the rise of the Zulu state under Shaka, at the start of the 19th century — to become the most formidable military power in south east Africa. It remained such until the 1880s. This has had immense importance in the history of Natal up to the present.

In the Eastern Cape, white settlers and the British army waged against the Xhosa tribes for 100 years an almost continuous war of attrition. Because there was no centralised military power, the colonisers could play off tribes and sections of tribes against each other — grabbing this bit, then that bit of land; turning some groups into collaborators, dividing to subjugate and rule.

But the Zulu state through most of the 19th century was too powerful for this.

Before the Zulu state arose, production in this area was based on homesteads (kraals). Each extended family lived from the crops it produced and the livestock it reared. New generations established new kraals.

Women were subordinate to men, who controlled what their wives produced (including children). Marriage involved the transfer of *lobola* (payment in cattle) from the man's family to his wife's family.

Kraals were grouped in chiefdoms, on a kinship basis at their core. For several centuries there had been, also, the germs of wider forms of political authority based around paramount chiefs. These were unstable, constantly shifting, tiered groupings



of chiefdoms.

But this form of social organisation began to come up against its limits. This was partly because of rising population on the land beneath the Drakensberg escarpment (partly due to the introduction of maize, and more widespread use of iron hoes). Linked to this was the increase in herds of cattle, pressing on the available pasturage.

There was also a widening network of trade, among the peoples of the region, and to Europe and the East via the outlet of Delagoa Bay.

All these factors encouraged heightened conflict between groups, over the use of land, and over maximising benefits from trading.

It was in these conditions that the Zulu state arose -- a classic example of the emergence of the state in the way explained by Marx and Engels (see box, p. 22). The crisis in the region was resolved in the revolution brought about by Shaka.

At the core of this revolution was the creation of a standing army which, at the height of Shaka's rule, may have numbered 100 000 fighting men. Built up through repeated con-

the homestead heads control of marriage and hence of the creation of new homesteads. Only with the king's permission could men and women leave their age-regiments, marry, and settle on a homestead of their own.

By thus controlling the extent to which kin groups could expand and build up their numbers of young men, women and cattle, the Zulu state was able to suppress internal conflicts between generations which so often tore other chiefdoms apart. This also provided a means of regulating the distribution of surplus between the homesteads and the royal estates.

Together with methods of birth-control, it also controlled, not sexual activity as such, but birth of children, hence increase in population.

By all these means, much of the surplus was directly or indirectly controlled by Shaka and his successors. Together with this, numbers of cattle, numbers of wives, production of crops, were increasingly unequal from top to bottom of society.

A powerful military machine was created which, at its height, held sway from Delagoa Bay in the north to the country of the Mpondo in the south.

## **The Zulu state was despotic, but it had a resilience with which to confront the encroaching forces of colonialism and imperialism.**

quests of weaker clans, this army replaced the fluctuating "retinues" of dozens or a few hundreds of warriors which was the main force that earlier chiefs and paramounts had at their disposal. It fought, not with the earlier throwing spear, but with a far more effective stabbing spear.

The standing army was not merely a military but a social innovation. Previous retinues subsisted on what surplus in tribute the chiefly layers could squeeze from the homesteads under their authority. In the Zulu state all males and most females between about 18 and 30 were conscripted into age-regiments, not only for war, but to labour on the royal homesteads. The produce of this labour supported a permanent staff of state officials, and could be dispensed by the Zulu ruler in conducting "affairs of state".

Homestead production continued, as the predominant form of production. But, in another important innovation, the Zulu rulers took over from

Centralised authority throughout this area brought greater stability -- by ruthless means.

Prior to Shaka, the Zulu were a tiny clan. Under Shaka, all the peoples between the Pongola and Tugela rivers came to regard themselves as Zulu. This was achieved by despotism. The rule of the Zulu state was a rule of terror. For example, a soldier returning from battle without his stabbing spear, or with a wound in his back, was put to death.

Beyond the Zulu heartland, impis exacted tribute from vassal peoples by force, and raided for labour put forcibly to work on the royal homesteads. Military offshoots from the Zulu state -- such as that led by Mzilikazi -- spread havoc across the Highveld and northwards in Africa in the course of establishing similar states. Hundreds of thousands, at the least, lost their lives.

At the same time, the Zulu state under Shaka, and under Dingane from 1828, had a resilience with which

to confront the encroaching forces of colonialism and imperialism.

## **British occupation: Zulu kingdom cut back**

In the 1830s what was to become Natal was entered by the Voortrekkers. In 1843 it was annexed by Britain. The main concern of British imperialism was to control the SA coastline against any independent power -- because of their interest in controlling the sea-route from Europe to India. They were not willing to allow the Trekkers an independent republic with a port at Port Natal (later Durban).

At the same time the British put the weight of imperial power behind the white land-grabbing, trading, etc interests which had established themselves in Natal. The British thereby deprived the Zulu state of a large area it had dominated to the south of its heartland. The sway of the Zulu kingdom was forced back to the north of the Tugela river.

In addition, the emergence of a rival power in Natal allowed many of those Africans forcibly incorporated into the Zulu heartland to return to their original homes.

But, reduced in territory and in subjects, the Zulu kingdom continued to exist, economically self-sufficient, politically independent, and militarily strong under the rule of Mpande (from about 1837) and then under Cetshwayo (from 1872). In the late 1870's its population may have been about 300 000.

And in 1879, for example, Cetshwayo could muster 30 000 fighting men in an army of age-regiments. This was a formidable force -- given that the total white population of Natal, even by 1891, was only 46 000.

## **Day of the Covenant**

The decisive confrontation between white settlers and the Zulu in the 1830s took place at the battle of Blood River on 16 December 1838. The Day of the Covenant is still celebrated by whites as the commemoration of that victory. White racists claim it as the day of the 'triumph of white civilisation over black barbarism'.

But, at the time, the Trekkers



prayed to God and 'made a covenant' before the battle because they were terrified of being wiped out altogether. So in reality the Day commemorates merely the sigh of relief that they survived at all against Zulu power!

Dingane was suspicious of the motives of the Voortrekkers in Natal. He understood they were after the land. He is reported to have said "this is a fighting force." He was also no doubt angered by the arrogant letter written to him by the Trekker leader Retief: "The great Book of God teaches us that kings who conduct themselves as Umsilikazi [Mzilikazi] does are severely punished, and it is not granted to them to live or reign long."

Dingane invited Retief and his party to his capital, signed a piece of paper conceding some land -- and then killed the party and went onto the offensive against the Trekkers. His impis killed or drove out about nine-tenths of them in 1837 and early 1838.

The Trekkers achieved their victory at Blood River only by bringing in a new commander, Potgieter, who had experience in the Eastern Cape, and by using to maximum effect the laager of ox-wagons to fight off the impis from a defensive position with controlled firepower.

Some 4 000 Zulu were killed at Blood River and a subsequent battle. These were severe defeats. They resulted in splits at the top of the Zulu state. Mpande, Dingane's brother,

means in Zulu "those we spit out".

The survival of the state, and the relative self-sufficiency of the economy, gave the Zulu a certain sense of superiority to other tribes.

## The Colony of Natal

Natal developed, as a colony with limited self-government for whites only, under the shadow of Zulu power. The white settlers were weak, and fearful of this power. They were also frustrated, because their ability to grab land and labour in Zululand was limited. Zulu power also affected their ability to exploit the African people even within Natal.

By the early 1850s the colonial government had given five-sixths of the land of Natal to whites, leaving only the remaining one-sixth as "reserves" -- for an African population numbering 100 000 (increasing to 300 000 by the 1870s).

This was a policy of racial segregation on the land. In later times, in Natal, and throughout SA, the "reserves" would become transformed into cheap labour-reservoirs for the developing mining and manufacturing industries. But, at the start, these "reserves" were established rather to contain the potential military threat that the Africans represented.

The settlers complained that the Africans were "allowed" land at all. They wanted them distributed among their own farms, to use as labour. But

develop under white ownership, producing sugar for export. Unable to secure local labour, the sugar planters were supplied by the British government with indentured (forced) labour from India (resulting in a population of 100 000 Indians in Natal by 1904).

Most of the rest of white-owned land fell into the hands of absentee owners and land speculators -- grabbing land in the hope of future profit. The largest was the British-based Natal Land and Colonisation Company, with 675 000 acres in 1871. Backed by government power, these speculators exacted rent-tribute from the African producers.

## Imperialism and the rise of the mining economy

In the 1870's large-scale diamond production started in Kimberley. From 1886, large-scale goldmining began on the Witwatersrand.

These economic developments produced big pressures towards political unification of SA -- because of the stimulus given to production, to the development of railways and trade, and to the creation of a black working class throughout the region.

The colonies, Trekker republics, and still-independent African societies into which SA was divided stood in the way of economic integration, and the development of the forces of production to create profit for British imperialism and SA capitalists. This divided system of states was not adequate for forcibly creating, and controlling the black working class.

The capitalist class within SA was too weak, economically and politically, to unify the country. This task fell on the shoulders of British imperialism.

Britain's predominant role in SA derived from its predominant role in the world through most of the nineteenth century as the strongest capitalist economy: "the workshop of the world." But by the last quarter this position was being challenged by other capitalist powers, in particular Germany and the United States.

By the late nineteenth century no capitalist power could any longer develop on the basis of restricted home markets. The old small-scale competitive capitalism had given way to monopoly capitalism, engaging in large-scale production of commodi-

## The Natal settlers were weak, and fearful of Zulu power. They were also frustrated, because this limited their ability to exploit land and labour.

turned against him and sued for peace with the Trekkers. Dingane was driven out of the kingdom.

Zulu power was temporarily weakened. But it was not finally crushed. Mpande made an accommodation with the power of the Trekkers. By these means he secured the survival of the Zulu state for more than 40 years.

This affected Zulu consciousness. By the 1870's they had a word, *amakafula*, for those Africans who, in contrast with themselves, went out to work for the whites. *Amakafula* is derived from 'kaffir' -- "they're the kaffirs, we're the Zulus". It also

the government could see that pushing too hard against the African people would most likely provoke an uprising -- and could even bring Zulu military power into play.

Even this degree of "segregation" could not realistically be enforced. Probably less than half the African population lived on the "reserves". And, even on white-owned land, they were economically and politically strong enough to resist pressures to labour for white owners.

The result was that agricultural production in Natal remained largely based on African homesteads. Only on the coast did a plantation economy



ties, competing on a world scale for sources of raw material, spheres of investment, and market.

Capitalism had entered the phase of imperialism -- with the major powers carving and recarving the world among themselves in hectic competition which culminated in the First World War (1914-1918).

Between the 1870s and the turn of the century the whole of Africa (save Ethiopia and Liberia) was brought under British, French, German and Portuguese colonial rule.

In Southern Africa British imperialists had been divided between those favouring annexation of territory, and those who thought colonies an unnecessary expense so long as Britain was economically dominant. They had pursued a zigzag policy. In 1848, for example, inland Trekker territory was annexed as the Orange River Colony, but then granted independence as the Orange Free State in 1854.

With the rising challenge of rival powers, however, combined with the expansion of production in SA, British imperialism was impelled in a more interventionist direction to protect its interests. In the 1870s it moved again to conquer the Trekker republics and the remaining tribal societies, aiming to create a white-ruled confederation of states. The Transvaal Republic was annexed in 1877. Direct British rule of Natal was re-established in 1873.

Together with this, spurred on by settler interests, British imperialism

directed itself towards the subjugation of the Zulu state. Thus Theophilus Shepstone, architect of "native policy" in Natal, and a spokesman of expansionism, wrote in 1878 to the British Colonial Secretary: "Had Cetshwayo's 30 000 warriors been in time changed to labourers working for wages, Zululand would have been a prosperous peaceful country instead of what it now is, a source of perpetual danger to itself and its neighbours." (1, p. 47) In the interests of land- and labour-grabbing, Shepstone falsely presented the Zulu power as an aggressive and threatening one.

Publicly, trying to whip up pro-imperialist popular sentiment in Britain, Shepstone also promoted the idea that the Zulu kingship was an "unpopular tyranny", imposed by Shaka over the "natural tribes" of the region -- and that Britain had the task of "liberating" and "civilising" these tribes.

Indeed the rule of the Zulu state was despotic. But the aim of Shepstone and of British imperialism was to replace this despotism by the **global despotism** of imperialism and capitalism. For the masses of Zululand, the rule of the Zulu state at least served to ensure the independence and relative prosperity they had enjoyed since the 1830s.

Cetshwayo bent diplomatically backwards to try to avoid a war, but to no avail. On 11 November 1879 the British army invaded Zululand. But their leaders were over-confident: they under-estimated Zulu military

power.

## Isandhlwana and Ulundi

Eleven days later, the British army suffered one of its biggest defeats of the century at the battle of Isandhlwana. One of its three invading columns was caught unawares by the main body of the Zulu army, and decimated: 1 600 men were killed.

As Marx's close collaborator, Engels wrote in 1884: "The Zulus a few years ago...did what no European army can do. Armed only with lances and spears, without firearms, under a hail of bullets from the breech-loaders of the English infantry -- acknowledged the best in the world at fighting in close order -- they advanced right up to the bayonets and more than once threw the English into disorder and even put them to flight, in spite of the enormous inequality of weapons and in spite of the fact that they had no military service and knew nothing of drill." (*Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State*)

Engels was not aware that the Zulu did have a form of "military service", and a centralised state machine. But he correctly estimated the significance of the Zulu victory, and its blow to British imperial pride.

To save face, the British continued fighting until, a few months later, they occupied the capital Ulundi. Behind them, of course, was the whole social



Battle of  
Isandhlwana,  
1879





*Cetshwayo boards a surf-boat for transfer to Natal and imprisonment in Cape Town*

and economic power of British imperialism. In contrast the Zulu army, efficient and skilful fighting force as it was, was a "part-time" army, which also had responsibilities for maintaining production.

In public, British imperialism claimed a big military victory in occupying Ulundi. But its shrewder representatives -- such as the new army commander Wolseley -- recognised that they would be over-reaching themselves to try to smash the Zulu completely. They offered peace provided that the military age-regiment system was disbanded, but on the basis that the Zulu would not be deprived of any land.

Thus the victory of Isandhlwana further delayed expropriation of Zulu land. It also had a wider impact in SA history. Together with the 1881 uprising by the Transvaal Boers, it persuaded British imperialism to retreat temporarily from its plans for annexation and confederation.

The drive to bring all SA under the imperial flag was resumed again only in the 1890s. The gold wealth of the Transvaal was a rich prize for British imperialism. It did not want a Transvaal with the independence to manoeuvre with rival powers. Moreover, Kruger's Transvaal Republic was an inadequate state for protecting the interests of the gold-mining capitalists and controlling the black working class drawn from the whole sub-continent.

Thus the Orange Free State and Transvaal were brought under British rule through the 1899-1902 Anglo-Boer war, laying the basis for the formation, under British supervision, of the Union of South Africa in 1910.

## Divide and rule

Over Zululand itself Shepstone and the Natal whites had wanted to establish a military dictatorship. Wolseley saw this was unrealistic. Zululand remained formally independent. But Cetshwayo was banished: at first, imprisoned in Cape Town Castle. Zululand was divided into 13 areas to be ruled by 13 British-appointed chiefs. This was a half-way concession to Shepstone's idea that the Zulu state was an "artificial" creation.

Shepstone claimed these chiefs were the heirs to the pre-Shakan rulers. This was only partly the case. Most were chosen purely on the basis that they had some sort of grudge against the Zulu royal family. It was "divide and rule" of a very crude kind.

These "chiefs" were the most greedy, ambitious and parasitic figures in Zululand, already involved on the fringes of the kingdom in accumulating personal wealth through trading, labour recruitment, etc. Under British sanction, they now set out to

grab more wealth, cattle, and fees as labour recruiters, and to impose more severe taxes on the Zulu people than ever before.

Foremost among them were Hamu, who had deserted to the British before Isandhlwana, and Zibhebhu, from the Zulu clan. Immediately after the battle of Ulundi Zibhebhu turned against Cetshwayo to collaborate with the British. A third was a white, John Dunn, who had "gone native", and become a chief with many wives.

These, collaborators with imperialism and parasitic plunderers of the Zulu people over the next years, were precursors of the Inkatha warlords of today.

## Cetshwayo returned

The parasitic and destructive rule of the 13 chiefs aroused the hatred of the mass of Zulu people. It threatened to become counter-productive for imperialism. Moreover, by exiling Cetshwayo, the British unwittingly strengthened his position as a rallying point for Zulu opposition to the new order.

To redeem the situation, the British brought Cetshwayo back in 1883. But they gave him only limited authority as "one chief among many" in a restricted area. Of course, that was not how he was seen by the Zulu



people.

During his exile, Cetshwayo had been allowed to visit Britain. Here he had seen the might of imperialism: the power of British industry, and its military power. He believed that the only chance for the survival of his dynasty was to come to terms with British imperialism. He accepted this compromise, hoping it would lead to his full restoration.

But British imperialism could not abandon the collaborating allies they had created.

## The Usuthu against Zibhebhu

The return of Cetshwayo led to civil war. He became the pole around which the mass of Zulu rallied against the collaborators and their followers. His supporters, known as the Usuthu, the praise name of his age-regiment, launched a struggle to overturn the rule of the forces of Zibhebhu.

This war was what finally undermined Zulu military and economic power. Just as British imperialism could not conquer and hold India except by "divide-and-rule" and the use of Indian troops against other Indians, so they could not subjugate the Zulu except by turning Zulu against Zulu.

Two battles in 1883 were decisive. One was fought at Msebe in March, where Zibhebhu inflicted a severe defeat on Cetshwayo's forces -- partly through an ambush and partly because he had better mounted troops and better rifles. There were thousands of Usuthu casualties. Zibhebhu's forces followed up by destroying Usuthu homes, crops, food stores and so on. The Usuthu were forced to retreat into caves in the mountains which had previously been used as defensive retreats in Shaka's times -- caves known as 'inqaba' (fortresses, strongholds).

At the battle of Ulundi in July there was again huge slaughter. A whole generation of Zulu leaders were wiped out, and Cetshwayo had to flee for his life.

The historian Jeff Guy explains the difference between 1879 and 1883: "In 1879 the Zulu turned from war to seek out their cattle and prepare their lands for the spring rains. In 1883 the upholders of the Zulu royal house had lost their cattle and

were unable to turn to the urgent tasks required by the agricultural cycle. They were forced to seek refuge beyond their borders or were driven further into the forest cave and mountain strongholds." (1, p.204)

In other words the civil war in the 1880's led not merely to defeat for the Usuthu resistance, but to economic breakdown. It prepared the conditions for the enslavement of the Zulu masses to rising capitalism -- as Shepstone and his party desired.

After the battle of Msebe one Herbert Nunn, a white "advisor" to Hamu, crowed cynically: "Numbers of old men, women and children are coming in. What will thousands eat this year? No cattle to purchase! A fine time to gather these refugees to-

around Cetshwayo's 15-year-old eldest son, Dinizulu, to continue guerrilla resistance against Zibhebhu, etc. They also made a temporary tactical alliance with Transvaal Boers, and defeated Zibhebhu in battle in 1884.

The result was that the Boers laid claim to north-west Zululand. They were held off from further land-grabbing only because the British wanted to prevent their access to the sea. Then, over the head of the royal house, British imperialism and the Transvaal agreed to partition Zululand.

The British Resident Commissioner declared: "Dinizulu must know, and all the Zulus must know, that the rule of the House of Shaka is a thing of the past. It is dead. It is like



*The thirteen chiefdoms: Wolseley's 'settlement' 1879*

gether here, and send them out to work on the Natal government railways or sugar estates! Wages ought to come down 100%." (1, p.193)

Cetshwayo died the following year at Eshowe, where the British Resident had installed himself. The Zulu still believe he was poisoned there. And they date the demise of the kingdom to this time. "When the great bird died, the eggs became rotten", it is said. (1, p.215)

The Usuthu leaders tried to unite

water spilt on the ground. The Queen rules now in Zululand and no one else." (1, p.237)

In a last despairing attempt, Dinizulu again went to war against Zibhebhu in 1888, and defeated him. As a result, the British put Dinizulu on trial for high treason and exiled him to St. Helena.

Because of their numbers, organised by the powerful and despotic centralised state, the Zulu had held off the pressures of land alienation and



proletarianisation for nearly fifty years. Now, they were to be rapidly subjected to the brutality of capitalist exploitation -- an experience which produced huge psychological shock.

## Proletarianisation and resistance

In 1893 the Natal whites were conceded self-government. But despite vehement opposition from the Natal settlers, the British government felt obliged in 1898 to allow Dinizulu to return from exile, again as "one chief amongst many" rather than as paramount. To sweeten the whites, British Zululand was handed over to the rule of Natal, with certain areas of it opened up to settlement.

"The history of Zululand in the 1880s and the 1890s", writes Jeff Guy, "can be seen as the history of the diversion of surplus labour from the service of the Zulu state to the service of developing capitalist production in southern Africa." (3, p.166)

From 1883, the British had begun to enforce a hut tax -- a tax on every wife of every homestead, to be paid in money. This created an inexorable pressure on those who had previously produced for themselves to take jobs at low wages.

The British also enforced an increase in the amount of *lobola*. This created further pressure on young men wishing to marry to earn money -- with which to buy the cattle.

"In the 1890s", writes Guy, "Zulu society had changed fundamentally, from a society in which man was the aim of production to one in which production was the aim of man." (3, p.190)

By that time 10-20,000 Zulu, erstwhile warriors, were living in compounds and working in the degrading and atrocious conditions of the Transvaal gold mines. Many more

were wage-labourers in Natal. By the turn of the century the pressures of capitalism were weighing even more intensely. The rise of the mining economy created new urban markets for foodstuffs and products such as wattle. Natal landowners turned from speculation and rent-exaction to demand labour from their black tenants. They squeezed them by raising rents and by evictions.

Together with this, the homestead economy was ravaged by the effects of new diseases. In 1897-8 six-sevenths of African-owned cattle -- the lynchpin of the tribal economy -- were wiped out by rinderpest. It represented, as Shula Marks writes, a loss for the Zulu people equivalent to the losses suffered by shareholders in the 1929 Wall Street stock-exchange crash. (2, p.129-130)

The final straw was the decision of the Natal government in 1905 to impose a poll tax -- a tax aimed at all those men who did not pay hut tax, i.e. specifically young unmarried men. It was aimed to strengthen the compulsion on all young men to wage-labour.

Within a generation, the masses in Zululand were rapidly transformed from independent tribespeople to a subjugated peasantry and working-class, heaped with intolerable burdens. Among this defeated and enslaved people, mass anger and frustration boiled up, looking for an outlet through which to break into the open.

In the absence of an alternative, it was once again to the resistance tradition of the royal house that oppressed

Zulu rallied. Removed from power, the Zulu royal house was not so easily removed of its authority. As the liberal Harriet Colenso warned in 1897, the government did not have the choice of "giving or withholding power from him [Dinizulu], but of controlling the power he has without us. If it is not recognised, it is not controlled and if he died tomorrow another of Cetshwayo's descendants would have it". (2, p.112)

What was expected of the royal house was revealed in the 1906-7 Bambatha revolt.

## The Bambatha rebellion

Electric currents began to flow, in all kinds of forms, but linking in one way or another to the question of Dinizulu. Even descendants of those who had fled from the Zulu state in opposition to Zulu tyranny were now looking towards him as a pole of attraction. Mission-educated Africans, the elite, were also supporters of the Zulu royal house.

This mood of resistance came out in desperate ways. In 1905, with the promulgation of the poll tax, sudden rumours spread that Dinizulu had ordered all white goats, pigs and fowl to be killed, and all tools of European manufacture to be destroyed. It was supposed he was then going to call on the gods to kill all whites on a certain day.

There had been similar developments among the Xhosa when tradi-

**By the 1890's 10-20,000 Zulu, erstwhile warriors, were living in compounds working underground in the Transvaal gold mines. Many worked as wage-labourers in Natal, where the landowners squeezed them by rents and evictions.**





tional modes of military resistance seemed to have failed, when people felt powerless and looked for some supernatural way out.

Out of this, revolt flared. In scattered areas up and down Natal, chiefs and people resisted payment of the poll tax.

The main effort to unify this resistance was by Bambatha, whose chieftom was in Natal though part of old Zululand. His people were rent-payers on white-owned land -- in an area becoming a crucible for capitalist agriculture.

Bambatha claimed that resisting the tax was an instruction from Dinizulu. He told his troops that Dinizulu had given him a charm to turn white man's bullets into water. His followers used the Usuthu war-cry.

Bambatha came to his uncle,

ing people. 3-4,000 Africans were killed, mown down by Gatling guns. There were numerous floggings and atrocities.

But the revolt stretched the whites in Natal. They had to call up volunteers from other provinces. In the Transvaal, mining magnates like Percy Fitzpatrick and Abe Bailey were quick to oblige, speaking at public meetings to encourage enlistment in the name of "the unity of the white races." (2, p.214)

The collaborationist traditions of Zibhebhu continued. Just as Bambatha's followers used the Usuthu war-cry, so the black troops that fought on the side of the Natal government used the war-cry of Zibhebhu.

The Bambatha revolt marks the end of tribally-based military resistance to white conquest, not only in

unify the country, and to hand over government to a white minority regime in 1910.

Together with other conquered African peoples, the Zulu were absorbed into the SA state as rightless subjects, foreigners in the land of their birth. At the same time, they were becoming formed as part of the black proletariat creating the country's wealth.

Objectively, for the Zulu people the question was how to unite with the other African peoples of SA in a struggle for national liberation and democracy -- to bring state power into the hands of the majority.

Capitalism in SA was -- and is -- implacably hostile to majority rule. The task of achieving democracy has fallen on the shoulders of the working class, the only force with the potential power and interest to carry through the struggle against the regime and the capitalists it defends to a revolutionary conclusion. For this, it must unite and lead in a struggle to overturn the SA state by splitting the whites along class lines.

Since the demise of the Zulu state, the task for the working class in Natal and Zululand has been to play its part in building the instruments of struggle -- trade unions, and political organisation -- which could achieve these goals.

## Legacy

In the struggle of the Zulu working class to rise to this task, the Zulu state left an ambiguous legacy.

"Without our king the Zulu people would be like coolies", it was said after the Bambatha revolt. (4, p. 28) The ability of traditional Zulu institutions to hold out against colonialism and imperialism for so long, and to inspire tribal resistance, reinforced the idea that they were a necessary instrument in the fight against worse servitude. The traditions of Zulu resistance continued to resound as a source of militant inspiration and confidence for the rising working class in Natal/Zululand.

Already, in the Bambatha revolt, new forms of struggle blended with the old. Thousands of Zulu workers in Durban, including dockworkers, were summoned back to their age-regiments to join the poll-tax revolt.

The Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union, exploding in Natal in the late 1920s as a mass organisation of working people -- as an instru-

## The Bambatha rebellion linked more closely the Usuthu tradition with resistance to imperialism and capitalist exploitation.

whom the British installed as chief in his place, and taunted him: "Where are your white friends now? We do not acknowledge a Natal king but a black one" (in other words Dinizulu). (2, p. 206) When forced to retreat from the colonial troops, he took as his base the Inkandla forest, the same area of the "inqaba" to which the Usuthu and Cetshwayo retreated in the 1880s.

But Dinizulu did not support the revolt. Instead, he sent a message of loyalty to the government and even offered to raise levies. Bambatha's appeal in Dinizulu's name to all the chiefs of Natal and Zululand mobilised only a few. There was a sense among the chiefs that this was a desperate revolt against a force that was too powerful. The historian Shula Marks believes that Bambatha himself "was prepared to die fighting probably knowing that his chance of success was slender in the extreme". (2, p. 208)

Disunited, trying to organise around outmoded institutions, the revolt was crushed rapidly and brutally by white settler forces. Chiefs refusing to encourage payment of poll tax were deposed, and in some cases court-martialled on the spot and shot. Troops rampaged through African communities, burning crops and kraals, confiscating cattle, imprison-

Natal, but throughout South Africa. But even in failure, and despite Dinizulu's actual role, it linked even more closely the Usuthu tradition with resistance to imperialism and capitalist exploitation.

During the rebellion, the military were very careful not to provoke Dinizulu, for fear of worsening matters. But a year after the revolt was crushed, Dinizulu was again arrested and tried for treason -- though the court could find him guilty only on three counts out of 23. This persecution strengthened the popular identification of the royal house with resistance.

## Aftermath

The conquest of the Zulu kingdom was a late episode in entrenching imperialist tyranny in SA. It was part of the forcible unification of SA by British imperial power, breaking down barriers to capitalist production.

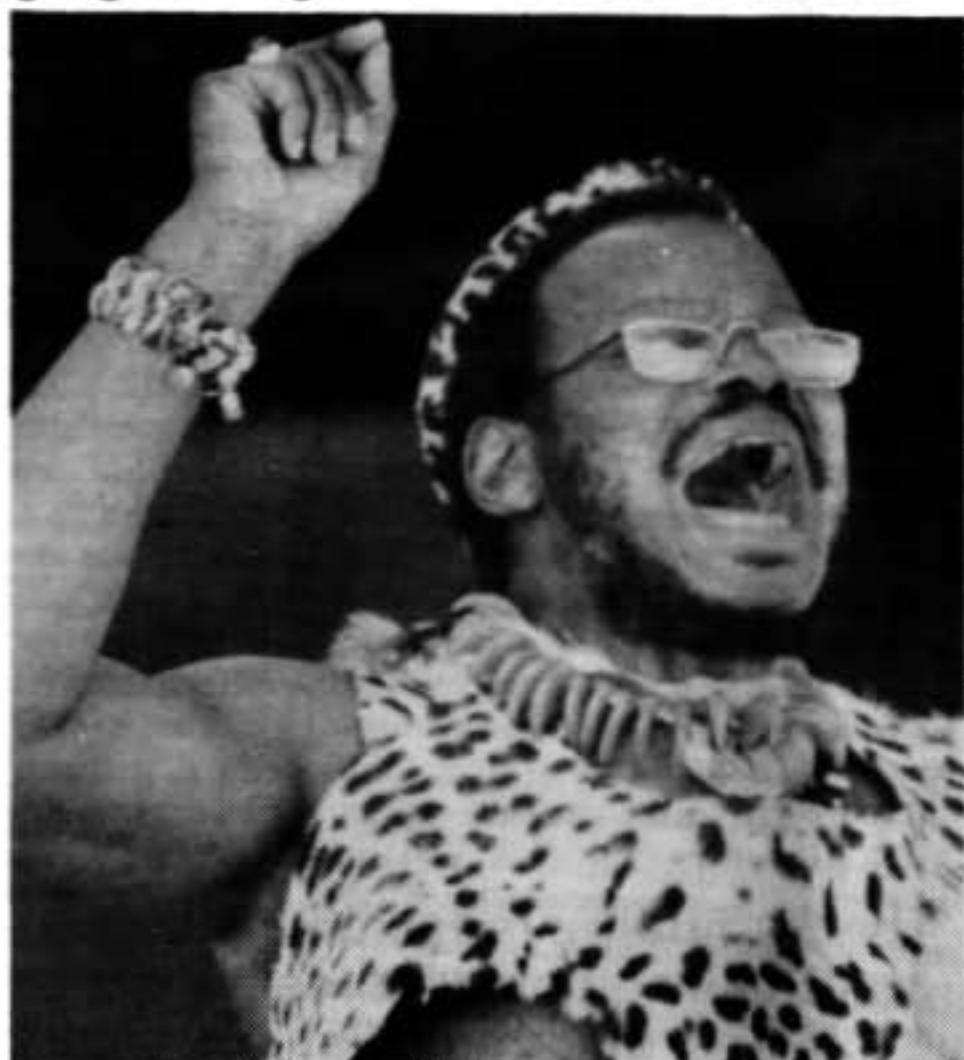
The course of world history made the destruction of the Zulu state inevitable. Imperialism, rooted in monopoly capitalism, dominated the globe, and shaped all societies to serve its interests. British imperialism deployed its power in SA to create and subjugate the black proletariat, to



## Gatsha Buthelezi heads a vigilante mafia perpetuating the collaborating traditions of Zibhebhu and Hamu, waging war against the Zulu masses.



*Zibhebhu in the 1880s.*



*Chief 'Shenge' Buthelezi today.*

ment for national and social liberation rather than as a mere trade union -- absorbed Zulu traditions of resistance. Many of those who fought in the Bambatha revolt joined the ICU.

Durban dockworkers in the 1940s led by Zulu Phungula, workers in the 1973 Durban strike-wave -- the first herald of the revolution which has now opened -- and many other strugglers in Natal have chanted the slogans of Zulu resistance and of the royal house: 'Usuthu', 'Bayete Zulu', etc.

But the failure of the Bambatha revolt itself was a symptom of the inability of traditional Zulu institutions to organise a united struggle to combat oppression and exploitation. In reality, tribal institutions served increasingly as a block to the development of the organisation and consciousness of the Zulu masses.

As elsewhere in SA, the white minority regime has rested in Zululand and Natal on the instruments of tribal society in trying to perpetuate divisions among the African people. On the "native reserves" and the Bantustans, the emerging working class has been ruled by autocratic and usually corrupt chiefs propped up as government appointees.

At first, because of its tradition of

resistance the Zulu Paramountcy had no place in this scheme. But, the more the masses of Zululand and Natal began to seek expression through working-class organisation, the more the SA state turned to support the authority of the Zulu royal house as a weapon against the working class.

From the 1930s until the present, the SA regime has used the Zulu Paramountcy to denounce every independent working-class action, every strike, every manifestation of mass resistance. It has used the hierarchy of chieftainship to reinforce all the conservative and reactionary features of the Zulu state: inequality, deference to dictatorial authority, subordination of women to men, and the young to the old.

### Inkatha vs Congress

The best of tradition can be an inspiration to succeeding generations. But, as Marx long ago explained, "The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionising themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such periods of revolu-

tionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle cries and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language." (*Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*)

In 1975 Chief Gatsha Buthelezi created Inkatha, as a "mass anti-apartheid movement", appealing to the tradition of Zulu resistance. He has made much of the closeness of his clan to the Zulu royal family: that his great-grandfather was Cetshwayo's prime minister. But Buthelezi and Inkatha did not, and could not, follow the tradition of the Usuthu.

Inkatha, based on the apartheid-created KwaZulu Bantustan and its chiefly apparatuses, inevitably became an anti-popular force, serving the interests of capitalism and the regime. Gatsha 'Shenge' Buthelezi heads a vigilante mafia perpetuating the collaborationist traditions of Zibhebhu and Hamu in waging war against the Zulu masses.

To cloud his purposes, Buthelezi clothed Inkatha in the colours of the ANC, to which the masses in Zululand and Natal have looked since the 1950s as an instrument of unity in the struggle to end oppression and exploi-



tation. Indeed, at the founding conference of the ANC in 1912 itself, Natal Africans -- John Dube and Pixley Seme -- were elected as President and Treasurer, in tribute to the Bambatha revolt.

Buthelezi claims to continue the traditions of the ANC in Natal. But in fact, within the ANC, there have been -- and still are -- two different traditions in relation to the state, the bosses, and the institutions of tribal society: a tradition of struggle, and a tradition of compromise.

Thus John Dube -- who continued as President of the ANC in Natal until 1945 -- was dismissed from his post as national ANC President in 1917 for compromising with the segregationist policies of the Louis Botha government. Dube, as a later article in this series will explain, was a collaborator with big business and the government, an ardent supporter of chieftainship and the Zulu Paramountcy, and bitterly hostile to the working class.

Today, Zulu working people, particularly the youth, have risen in revolt against their intolerable conditions of life. They are being drawn *en masse* into the revolutionary struggle. All the institutions of the old society, from the royal house to the Inkatha mafia and the collaborating chiefs, are trying to crush them.

**For the liberation of the Zulu people, and African people nation-wide, Congress needs to be built as the revolutionary instrument of the working class, uncompromising in struggle against the state, the bosses, Inkatha, and chieftainship.**

**Congress needs to incorporate all that is best in the militant and military traditions of the Zulu masses -- and at the same time wage implacable struggle against all those traditions that "weigh like a nightmare on the brain of the living."**

References in the text are to:

1. Jeff Guy, *The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom*.
2. Shula Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion*.
3. *Industrialisation and Social Change in South Africa*, edited by S. Marks and R. Rathbone.
4. Shula Marks, *The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa*.

# No to collaboration!

**Dear Comrades,**

There has been a long tradition in our movement of drawing a clear dividing line between agents of the state, and those they help to oppress. In this way we have shielded ourselves from the state's attempts to divide and crush us.

However, elements now wish to reverse this policy. Mrs Fatima Meer is a university academic in Durban who has never been an activist in the movement. She has however recently completed a biography of Comrade Nelson Mandela, with his agreement. So she will be seen by many as a spokeswoman for the ANC.

In a recent speech, she criticised what she calls a "divisive tendency in our movement", which has a "vulgar doctrine of irreconcilable conflict" and which classifies people into "collaborators" and "liberators". "For us to be truly strong today against the wavering Nats, if we are going to succeed in forcing them on the negotiating table, then it is imperative that we must rethink our policies of irreconcilable conflict and seriously consider the alternative of co-operation. We must try and gather our forces, be they homeland governments or community councils. Our reasoning ought to be that we need the widest and strongest black resistance against the Nationalist government. And in order to gain this it would be suicidal if we now continued to maintain and nurture internal conflicts." (*Weekly Mail* 13-19/10/89).

What is the purpose in saying this?

Bantustan leaders and community councillors are part and parcel of the apartheid state machine. Precisely because of this they have very early on felt the fiery breath of the workers and youth when they have risen up in anger in the townships and villages.

By calling for unity with the puppets, Meer is arguing for capitulation of the movement to de Klerk's government, for its division and defeat.

Today, Buthelezi and Inkatha are waging war against workers and youth in Natal. And Meer wants unity with him while sneering at the youth who have fought so courageously against the forces of the state. She said: "Our youth have on the one hand been dis-

tanced from the democratic tradition of their forebears and on the other hand so brutalised by the state that the state appears to be reflected in them rather than in the traditional values of the ANC."

If today the government is appearing 'reasonable', and is releasing our leaders and talking of reform, this is because of the heroism and the sacrifice of the working-class youth. But Fatima Meer shows no interest in this. Her interest is in taking advantage of this and crossing over to collaboration with the state.

Already she has given comfort to the Bantustan oppressors in Natal. Recently King Goodwill Zwelithini Zulu referred to her: "There is more hope for reconciliation across race groups when leading Indians call for reconciliation instead of fanning the flames of black on black violence" (*New African* 25/11/89).

The King uttered these words just as the Inkatha impis were intensifying their war in Natal. Mrs Meer would do well to remember too that Inkatha has not hesitated to stoke racial attacks on Indians in Natal.

By talking of unity, Meer touched a nerve in the movement of the workers and youth. They feel a great chasm developing in society between those who cling to the state of racism and privilege, and those whose survival depends on fighting to smash it.

While the air is now filled with talk of 'reform' and 'negotiation', the 'toenadering' masks a deepening of the divisions in our society.

The workers and youth can sense this, and yearn for the strength that comes through unity of their ranks. Unity will not come by linking hands with state collaborators. That is the road to division and defeat.

But unity can only be built around a fighting programme which puts forward the needs and aspirations of the workers and youth. With such a programme for cleansing society of apartheid and exploitation, and with their ranks organised to fight for it, the workers can act as a mighty magnet, pulling towards themselves all other classes whose future lies in the death of capitalism.

**Florence Bosch**



# Is Holomisa a "comrade"?

by D. Sikhakhane

The reburial of King Sabata Dalindyebo in the Transkei in October 1989 was organised by the ANC. "The funeral itself was a magnificent showpiece and triumph for the ANC", reported *South* (5/10/89).

One of the main speakers was Major General Bantu Holomisa, ruler of this bantustan. He was invited to share the platform with Winnie Mandela, UDF's Murphy Morobe, COSATU's Elijah Barayi, and Sayco's Peter Mokaba.

Since Dalindyebo's reburial, the ANC leaders have organised a welcome rally attended by 50 000 people in Umtata at which Holomisa was hailed as a "friend" of the ANC and a "spiritual" member of Umkhonto we Sizwe. Now, he is widely referred to as "comrade" Holomisa. We regard this as a serious mistake by the ANC leadership.

In the eyes of ANC workers and youth the bantustans -- Transkei in particular -- have always represented a symbol of the racist system they are fighting to destroy.

Indeed, in 1977 the ANC called for "opposition to the so-called independent Transkei" and pledged to organise a "worldwide campaign against any tacit recognition of this puppet creation" (*Sechaba*, 4th Quarter, 1977).

Has this position changed? Do our leaders now accept the Transkei and bantustans?

The history of present SA began with the conquering of the African tribes by colonial forces. The tribes were dispossessed of their agricultural and grazing land. Since then millions have been forcibly removed from the land, and the process of dispossession carried through to completion. The tribal economy has been completely shattered, and conse-

quently, the material foundation of tribal society itself.

Instead, the African population on the land has been turned into a proletariat. Capitalism in agriculture has concentrated land in fewer and fewer hands and mechanised production. Having separated Africans from the land, the ruling class did not want large scale immigration of the working class to the towns.

They created the reserves, governed under 'tribal' structures dictated and financed by the racist government, to control the movement of African workers and to divide them along tribal lines. This was enforced through pass and influx control laws, forced removals, etc.

Verwoerd's policy of creating 'self-governing' bantustans was based on these reserves. Verwoerd was responding to the rising movement of the African proletariat which in the 1950's really began to reveal itself through action as the leading revolutionary force in the struggle for national liberation.

The imposition of bantustans was an attempt at breaking African working class unity. At the same time, in the calculations of the ruling class, these structures were to be an 'outlet' for African political aspirations. The bantustans have always been an instrument for division directed against the democratic struggle for

majority rule.

Comrade Nelson Mandela had previously been offered release from jail if he went to live in the Transkei. He always refused on the grounds that he did not recognise the bantustan system and the "independence" of Transkei.

Comrade Govan Mbeki in his famous 1964 book, *South Africa: The Peasants' Revolt*, wrote: "The basic purpose of the bantustan policy was not to create an African nation-state, but to carry the apartheid programme even further" (p.44).

But today comrade Mbeki appears to hold a different view. At the Umtata welcome rally he said "the government of Transkei has begun to get the people free".

How can one recognise the 'governments' in the bantustans when they are not African nation-states but cynical, artificial creations of the white oppressor? Who elected these 'governments'?

'Self-government' and 'independence' in the Transkei were forced through by suppressing any opposition through the State of Emergency imposed under Proclamation 400 of 1960, which was used to crackdown on the Pondoland uprising in the course of that year. Political organisations and meetings were banned. Unlimited power was given to the police and



Celebrations for the promise of Transkei's Holomisa to unban the ANC



army to crush any opposition. Like in Bophuthatswana where only 6% voted in the last 'elections', all bantustan 'governments' enjoy no allegiance among the people.

At the same rally this year comrade Walter Sisulu praised Holomisa "for carrying forward the struggle against tribalism" and seeking "reunification" of SA.

It makes no difference whether the rulers in these bantustans express opposition to 'independence' or not. Gatsha Buthelezi has refused to accept independence for KwaZulu. But he whips up tribal sentiment to establish a base for himself among the Zulu people.

Whether 'independent' or not, the bantustans remain extensions of the SA state, hated by the masses.

The power of Holomisa and Buthelezi rests on structures devised by Pretoria. They rely on a police force and army provided and financed by the SA ruling class. Their forces work hand in hand with the SAP and SADF.

1987 saw bitter struggles and revolts in every bantustan -- against corruption in the Transkei, against the imposition of 'independence' in KwaNdebele, against Mangope in Bophuthatswana, against ritual killings in Venda, against incorporation into Qwa-Qwa, and so on.

The gangster puppets ruling these areas are paid servants of Pretoria. They have been delegated functions of tyranny and repression by their master. They are enemies of the struggle for freedom and democracy.

Whoever calls Holomisa a "comrade" and "spiritual member" of MK is casting aside the facts of history. This man, who matriculated at the school for sons of chiefs and headmen, underwent his military training in the SADF. He was the first black graduate of the SA Staff and Management course at P.W. Botha's army college in Pretoria. He became chief-of-staff of the Transkeian Defence Force in 1985 under Matanzima's government.

He is not a ruler elected by the people of the Transkei. He took over in a coup in 1987. In November 1989 he was still saying the time is not yet ripe for elections.

He staged the coup collaborating with the SA military intelligence. It is for that reason that the SADF did not intervene as in Bophuthatswana when a section of the army tried to remove



**Members of Contralesa meet the NEC of the ANC in Zambia**

Mangope. At the time of Holomisa's coup Pik Botha said "as far as the SA government is concerned, nothing has happened to affect our bilateral relationships".

Like all heads of bantustans, he is a puppet of the SA ruling class. Through the coup he saved the Transkei -- indeed the whole bantustan system -- from crumbling to pieces. Holomisa was conscious of this fact.

When asked about the coup he replied that the people had "become very unhappy" and "at the end of the day it would be the army who would have to shoulder the problem and quell the situation" (*Weekly Mail*, 15-21 Jan. 1988). He took power not to liberate the people, but to prop up the stability of the state.

To stay in power he relies on funds from the SA government, which he has not rejected. The Transkei government is financed from Pretoria -- for example it received R505,5-million in 1987/88.

As long as he is head of a bantustan, Holomisa cannot be interested in joining with the SA black workers and youth in the struggle to overthrow the government.

If he is serious about overthrowing the government then he would resign his position in the Transkei and help bring about the overthrow of the SA state. The same applies to other rulers like Enos Mabuza of KwaNgwane. But Holomisa is not prepared to do that.

He promised a referendum to get the people's views on the independent status of the Transkei. But in an interview with the *Financial Mail* (17/11/89) he said "the question is where are

we going to fit the homelands in -- and how. There is not an outright answer to that question because the homelands comprise structures which cannot be wished away overnight. They need to be accommodated in a future SA". Is this the position of our movement?

Even if the Transkei returns into SA, we should not weaken our struggle to overthrow the state apparatus in the bantustans and throughout SA.

There can be no place for the state machine and the accommodation of bantustan structures in a liberated SA. Our struggle is for one-person-one-vote in a united SA.

It is false to create the impression that Holomisa is a friend of Congress workers and youth.

He promised to unban the ANC and PAC. Since then, fifteen political organisations have been unbanned, but not the ANC. Holomisa now says he cannot unban the ANC yet because "irresponsible elements" would take advantage!

On the 25th of November an ANC rally in the Transkei was attacked. Two people were shot dead. At a meeting with comrade Sisulu, Holomisa distanced himself from the attack and promised an inquiry. The two shook hands, the dead were forgotten.

But it is his own police force. Should we shake hands with de Klerk when he distances himself from the actions of the SAP and their death squads? No!

The point is that we will never be free until the present state is over-



thrown -- and power organised in the hands of the people. This struggle depends above all on the strength and conscious leading role of the working class.

Holomisa is no friend of the working class. In 1988 he cracked down on strikes after workers had taken action hoping to receive a sympathetic ear from him. "The grievances are genuine", he said, "but the action of striking will be condemned".

A wave of strikes surged through Transkei in October 1989 over the question of wages. Despite Holomisa's promise to legalise unions, strikers were attacked and beaten by police. Holomisa has since warned he is against those who use the cover of unions to organise bus boycotts, strikes, etc.

If he has to accept unions, he wants unions he can control. This is the standpoint of the big capitalists, whose interests Holomisa -- like the SA government -- ultimately represents.

It is no accident that he has appointed Wiehahn to head the commission drafting the trade union legislation. Wiehahn is the man who, together with the bosses in SA, devised schemes to try to undermine the independence of black trade unions by squeezing them into the straitjacket of state regulation and control.

At COSATU's founding conference it was resolved that "the bantustan system be totally rejected". This remains the standpoint of the black working class as a whole. But now comrades Barayi and Ramaphosa are platforms with a bantustan leader. What is the use of good and solemn words in fine resolutions if leaders can abandon them in practice? When did workers in COSATU give them the mandate to do this?

Workers in COSATU expect the leaders to condemn Holomisa's brutality against fellow workers. Workers in Transkei expect COSATU to assist them in their struggles for trade union rights and better conditions.

**The black proletariat of SA expect COSATU to maintain independence from all capitalist governments.**

The dangers in the policies of the leadership lie in that they will split and weaken the black working class, and open the possibility for a serious defeat of the movement.

The ANC leaders repeat the same mistakes they made in relation to Gatsha. They advised him to take up

the position of Chief Minister of KwaZulu bantustan in 1970. They helped him form Inkatha in 1975. This dignified him in the eyes of the masses.

His success in Natal was a result, in large measure, of the support he received from the ANC. Comrade Oliver Tambo admitted this at the 1985 Consultative Conference of the ANC in Zambia. Now Gatsha is slaughtering hundreds of Congress workers and youth. As a result, today in Natal, the movement is confused, split and divided. Still, the leaders refuse to correct their errors.

Instead, they continue to give courage to Gatsha today by holding "peace" talks with him. This Gatsha always uses to try and recapture lost ground.

From his prison cell, comrade Mandela has also, unfortunately, played an important part in assisting Gatsha. In 1986 he wrote a letter to Gatsha which was described in the press as "warm". This was during the

time of fierce fighting in Natal.

Then again in 1989, at the time when hundreds of Congress youth were being massacred by Gatsha and Inkatha, he wrote him another warm letter. He called Gatsha by his clan name, "Shenge", and signed the letter with his, "Madiba". He said in the letter "far more information than I possess at the moment is required before I can blame any of the parties involved in the deplorable conflicts ... in Natal".

But was it a lack of information that led him to this blunder? Comrade Sisulu is now out of prison and has all the necessary information. But still nothing is being said against Gatsha. Meanwhile Gatsha takes advantage to continue to slaughter Congress youth and workers.

In the same way, the only people to gain from the ANC's recognition of the Transkei have been the Pretoria regime and Holomisa himself. In effect, the ANC now recognises bantustans. The great danger is that this will

## Mandela writes to Buthelezi:

"Dear Shenge"

I thank you for the warm and well considered telex message you sent me on behalf of King Zwelithini and Inkatha on the occasion of my seventieth birthday. I also received your letter of 26 August 1988 in which you wished me a speedy recovery from illness, and in which you outlined your efforts both locally and abroad to secure the release of prisoners in South Africa.

"Apart from your telex and a telegram from Mrs Helen Suzman, hundreds of similar messages came from well-wishers in the country and in different parts of the world. It is partly the unswerving support of such men and women, and partly the achievements made by our organisation within and outside the country which have given prisoners so much strength and hope.

"You will readily accept that it is not at all easy from my present quarters to comment fully and freely on the sentiments you so eloquently expressed in the above correspondence.

"It is sufficient to state that your persistent demand for the unconditional release of prisoners before negotiations can start, is a stand which I have always welcomed as a positive contribution to the search for lasting peace in this country.

"Obviously, my fervent hope is to see, in due course, the restoration of the cordial relations which existed between you and OR (Oliver Tambo), and between the two organisations in the seventies. The most challenging task facing the leadership today is that of national unity. At no other

time in our history has it become so crucial for our people to speak with one voice, and to pool their efforts. Any act or statement, from whatever source, which tends to create or worsen division is, in the existing political situation, a fatal error which ought to be avoided at all costs.

"Far more information than I possess at the moment is required before I can blame any of the parties involved in the deplorable conflicts now taking place in Natal. All the same, I consider it a serious indictment against all of us that we are still unable to combine forces to stop the slaughter of so many innocent lives. The struggle is our life and, even though the realisation of our fondest dreams may not be at hand, we can nevertheless make that struggle immensely enriching or absolutely disastrous.

"In my entire political career few things have distressed me (so much) as to see our people killing one another as is now happening. As you know, the entire fabric of community life in some of the affected areas has been seriously disrupted, leaving behind a legacy of hatred and bitterness which may haunt us for years to come. It is a matter which requires the urgent attention of all people in this country. Nothing will please me more than to know that my concern and appeal have not fallen on deaf ears.

"Once again, I thank you, the King and Inkatha for your inspiring message. My best wishes to you and Mndlunkulu. -- Yours sincerely, Madiba"



foster tribal divisions among the black masses. This is exactly what the SA ruling class wants. **It is vital for the ANC to reverse this mistake immediately.**

The task is to build the unity of the black proletariat, in the towns and rural areas, on the basis of the Freedom Charter: **"All bodies of minority rule, advisory boards, councils and authorities shall be replaced by democratic organs of self-government."**

Related to the question of bantustans is the role of chiefs. At the ANC welcome rally held at Soccer City, comrade Raymond Mhlaba said that chiefs have an important role to play inside the ANC. At the same time, ANC leaders have had talks and photos taken with chiefs in Lusaka. There have been reports of comrade Nelson Mandela meeting with Tembu chiefs in Victor Verster prison.

Yet all democratic revolutions in history have been against monarchs, aristocrats, kings, the royal families and all institutions based on privilege by birth. 1989 was the 200th anniversary of the great French Revolution that overthrew the monarchy.

Now ANC leaders want to maintain chieftainship.

In the "constitutional guidelines" they have issued to the movement they say: "The institution of hereditary rulers and chiefs shall be transformed to serve the interests of the people..." What exactly does this mean? How can any hereditary institution be "transformed"...except by abolishing it? What foundation can there be for this institution of the past?

The old more or less equal basis of tribal life is finished. Today we all live under the capitalist system -- of class division and class rule.

The ruling class has always relied on chiefs to oppress the masses in the reserves. On behalf of the SA government they have suppressed protests, enforced influx control, collected taxes, conducted trials and imposed heavy sentences, etc.

At the base of the bantustan system lies the Tribal Authorities, composed of chiefs and headmen. What are called 'chiefs' today are simply paid servants of the SA government. Over the years they have been exposed as such. As a result people have turned massively against them.

From the 1940s there have been

general struggles throughout SA against the chiefs and the institutions they represent. These reached a climax with the Pondoland uprising in 1960. People stopped paying taxes. There was non-compliance with the law. Traders were boycotted under the slogan "When we boycott them we are boycotting the government". People's courts took the place of those controlled by chiefs. Members of school boards or committees were ordered to resign in conformity with the boycott of Bantu Education before they could be members of people's courts.

This signalled the historic change which had come about in the consciousness of the masses. The tribal shell could no longer be filled with a living content.

The tradition of these struggles -- in Pondoland, Marico, Sekhukhune-land, Witzieshoek -- are today being carried forward by the urban proletariat against the puppet councillors, who, unlike chiefs, are at least 'elected'.

**The recognition of chiefs is a stepping stone towards the recognition of the township structures of collaboration as well.**

Any recognition of chieftainship means an attack on the rural poor. This is because in the rural areas of SA today, families have to pay chiefs for permission to hold wedding parties, or to have a baptism certificate signed. Where complainants are awarded damages in a civil case presided by the chief, the chief must get a share of the award.

The overwhelming majority of the population suffers in poverty. They have no land to till. To obtain land, people are not just forced to pay allegiance to the chief, but often have to pay bribes as well. They are without water or ploughing implements. Worst of all, there is no hope of a job. The bantustans remain just pools of labour.

The ones who benefit are the tiny minority of land-grabbing chiefs who are the new bantustan elite -- parasites willing and able to enrich themselves while serving as eager lackeys of the SA ruling class.

This is what the institution of chieftainship represents -- the oppression of the rural poor who are denied the right of free access to land.

The working class in the towns and rural areas is one and fighting to overthrow capitalism. Only then can

the land be allocated democratically by the toilers themselves so that there shall be land available to all poor people who need it -- together with jobs and a living wage for all.

**African working class women suffer triple oppression. They suffer class oppression, national oppression and oppression as women.**

This is particularly the case in the rural areas where tribal customs are still being practised, where women are treated as naturally inferior to men. Women have no right to ownership of the land and cattle. They are seen to have no other responsibility than to bear and look after children, with men playing no role in this.

The institution of chieftainship only perpetuates this inequality. Women in the bantustan of KwaNdebele were denied the right to vote simply on account of being women. They had to go to court for this situation to be overturned.

**Our movement struggles for equality between women and men -- at work, in taking responsibility for the family at home, and in society as a whole. The Freedom Charter states "the rights of the people shall be the same, regardless of race, colour or sex".**

The working class movement in SA has taken conscious steps in correcting this situation. Some advances have been made although there is still a long way to go.

CCAWUSA, for example, has fought for an agreement with Pick 'n Pay which undertakes to ensure that women are not unfairly discriminated against because of pregnancy, and that both men and women workers are able to exercise parental responsibilities.

How can the tribal tradition of chieftainship be reconciled with these advances? Working class women are not prepared to go back to the past.

**Above all, this ancient system of hereditary chiefs and tribal laws comes into conflict with the demands and aspirations of youth living in modern society.**

Youth want freedom and democracy. Like their working class parents, they want to elect people. But the position of chief is hereditary. They want to cut themselves free from conservative forms of life. They do not want to be told what to do, and how to do it. Youth want to exchange thoughts, make mistakes and correct



them.

The most conscious militant youth want a discipline based on own understanding and own respect, not on the basis of tyrannical orders by 'elders'.

Chieftainship collides with them. It requires them to carry out the decisions and sing the glory of those who made them. Naturally chiefs erect obstacles in advance to consolidate their position against the younger generation. This explains the youths' resentment towards chiefs and their indunas, who are referred as "warlords" by the youth in Natal.

Every political organisation that represents the future finds its chief support from the younger generation. It is because the ANC is seen as the organisation of the future that it has attracted enormous support from youth.

Comrade Mbeki correctly pointed out in 1964 that "if Africans have had chiefs, it was because all human societies have had them at one stage or another. But when a people have developed to a stage which discards chieftainship, when their social development contradicts the need for such an institution, then to force it on them is not liberation but enslavement" (*SA: The Peasants' Revolt*).

If the "social development" of the people contradicts the need for chiefs -- and it does -- then why the Congress of Traditional Leaders of SA (Contralesa)?

At their meeting with the ANC in Lusaka, the vice-president of Contralesa, chief Phathekile Holomisa said: "We have been used to work

against the interests of our people and collaborate with their enemies. Chiefs have been a force wreaking havoc on the rights of their people. It is time they started working for change". (*New African*, 28/8/89)

It is just as well if a chief recognises this. But what does he mean by chiefs working for change?

Holomisa and others in Contralesa want to retain the privileges of chieftainship by claiming to be working for the people. They want to divert the necessary struggle against this institution by claiming for themselves a "progressive" role.

It would be wrong to try and draw chiefs into our organisation **on the basis of promising them that their institution will be protected.**

Chiefs should resign their present paid positions to show commitment to the struggle. Then we can welcome them as equal comrades in a democratic movement.

Chief Luthuli, at least, gave up his position as chief and chose to openly stand with the people under the banner of the ANC in the struggle against apartheid.

It is incorrect to accord chiefs a special place in the ANC. In Lusaka the ANC told chiefs that "there has always been a role for progressive chiefs in the struggle and that their role was no different from that of any other leader in the liberation organisation". How come they are treated as leaders already?

In our organisation people should have equal rights. Our struggle is for equality. Leaders should be leaders not because of their position in soci-

ety, or being chiefs for that matter. People should gain the position of leadership on the basis of being tried and tested in the course of struggle, of having shown undivided commitment to our goal, and of having proved qualities of leadership.

Some speak of chiefs by merit. In the ANC -- as in society as a whole -- people of merit can stand for election. That is the real test of merit and there should be no privileged social status attaching to it.

The ANC's 1919 Constitution assigned chiefs a special place in the organisation. "All chiefs within the provinces shall be Honorary vice-chairmen in all districts and branches, and be delegates for their districts in the meetings of the Provincial Congress, with a separate place of honour and a right of preference to audience". (Clause 41)

In addition, "no motion, resolution or decision of any of the branches of the association, either in the provinces or territories, which in the opinion of the president for the time being is hostile to the interests of the chiefs and people or in direct conflict with the express desire of the majority of the chiefs, shall be considered valid or operative". (Clause 31)

Today there are those in the ANC who still want a House of Chiefs. This goes against the democratic aspirations of the mass of the working class for a revolutionary change. It will be found to be incompatible with a society based on individual freedom and social equality. We must fight for nothing less.



People welcome Walter and Albertina Sisulu at the ANC rally in Umtata



# Fight unemployment !

## JOBS FOR ALL !

by John Fredericks and  
Jake Wilson

There are at least 5,5 million unemployed in SA. No less than 1 000 people enter the labour market every day in search of jobs. But most will never find work. Close to ten million will be unemployed at the turn of the century -- more than half of the total workforce.

The SA economy needs to grow by at least 5% a year for the next 10 years to be able to create jobs for the 350 000 workseekers each year. In the last ten years the economy has barely grown at 2% a year.

If unemployment is to be overcome, between 2 500-3 000 jobs need to be created every day for the next 10 to 15 years! But capitalism cannot create enough jobs. Only 470 jobs were created a day during 1970-80, which was a period of growth faster than the 1980s. This is less than 20% of the number required.

Under the present system of apartheid and capitalism the majority of young South Africans will never know what it is to have a stable job.

These are not the problems of SA and apartheid alone. Millions of people face starvation because of the chronic shortage of work.

Mass unemployment persists even in the advanced capitalist countries which have been going through an unusually long boom. The number of unemployed in these (OECD countries) is well over 20 million!

In the Third World the problem is a hundred times worse. The domination of their economies by imperialism has resulted in hundreds of millions of unemployed adding to the high numbers of desperately poor.

Why are there so many unemployed when all over the world there is such a tremendous shortage of housing, food, clothing, health, education, etc? Everyone can see that millions of jobs would be created if social programs were implemented to provide the most basic necessities of the poverty stricken masses of the world.

The answer lies in the fact that the capitalist system only works in the interest of the rich minority.

### The bosses are only interested in profits

Profit-making is the motive force of the capitalist system. Everything is turned to serving and securing the profits of the bosses. The actions of the capitalist class and the states which serve them are determined by their incessant greed for greater profits. The capitalists line their pockets

and live in glorious luxury while millions starve.

The basic needs of the people for jobs, housing and education, etc. only enter the calculations of the bosses insofar as they serve the profit system.

The working class produces the wealth of society. But workers find they cannot buy the products of their labour which they need. This is because the capitalists' profits come from the unpaid labour of the working class. Capitalists are in constant competition with each other, and to survive they fight to keep wages low. But this means the capitalist class cuts the market for the goods and services it controls.

This intensifies the ruthless competition between companies to hold on to their share of the market. Competition constantly threatens profits and drives the capitalists to further lower costs and cheapen production.

They squeeze the workers to work harder for longer hours, cut the number of workers and invest in machinery. The capitalist who invests in the most modern machinery gets faster and greater production and bigger profits.

In a planned economy, new machinery would liberate the worker from the drudgery of exhausting work and benefit millions. But under capitalism, inventions and new machinery become an extra burden. More ma-







*Unemployed workers seeking work in the streets*

chinery means the bosses are less dependent on workers. Workers are retrenched with no guarantee of finding new work.

It is no solution to the problem of unemployment to argue that more workers should be employed instead of new machinery. On this basis SA industry could not compete with mechanised industry internationally and would fall further behind other capitalist countries.

But capitalists will not invest in new machinery unless they are confident of being able to produce and sell their goods at a profit. Mass unemployment in SA has resulted mainly from the failure of capitalists to invest in modern industry.

## Manufacturing recession begins

The SA economy has benefitted from the expansion of the world market, but now has been slowing while

the more advanced capitalist countries have continued to grow. SA exports are facing fierce competition.

The SA economic upturn since 1986 has been weakened by the political crisis of the system, limits on the ability to import machinery needed to expand production, and rising inflation. The boom has largely been based on credit which has temporarily expanded the market, but pushed inflation upwards. Because manufacturing is not advancing, investment is limited to the replacement of obsolete machinery.

The government's attempts to bring inflation of more than 15% under control has increased interest rates to 20%. Now that the government has been forced to put the brakes on, the market is being squeezed and recession has begun to loom.

Although the bosses are hoping for the best, their real fears were recently spelt out by the FCI President, Leslie Boyd: "The SA economy is in

for a hard landing, and a serious fight against inflation will mean higher unemployment." (*Cape Times*, 20/10/89)

Now the gold price has risen and there has been a trickle of investment. This has given the capitalists greater confidence, they think there could be growth of 1% or more in 1990!

That does not alter the fact that manufacturing has already been in decline of 1989 and sectors like the metal industry are increasingly throwing workers out of jobs.

## Recession leads to job losses

During a recession more factories are closed and there is less work available. More workers are laid off, and remaining workers have to work harder and for longer hours.

This is what workers are now facing.

Even during times of rapid economic growth, unemployment in SA has been increasing. During recessions this has grown much faster. In the last recession of 1984-86 thousands of jobs were lost in all the key sectors of the economy. Manufacturing was hard hit.

In the Eastern Cape unemployment rocketed to well over 60%, reaching 80% among the township youth.

Now it is predicted that the coming recession will see widespread layoffs in textiles, clothing, footwear, plastics, and machinery.

Labour intensive industries will be hardest hit.

In the clothing industry there are mainly small factories employing 10-100 workers. These small bosses are at the mercy of the big retail companies like Edgars, Foschini, Truworths, etc. When demand slows they simply cut orders and the small factories are forced into bankruptcies and closures.

In the metal industry the bosses have already made many layoffs in 1984-86 and brought in mechanisation. Workers are already being hard hit despite employment already being cut to the bone. At COSATU locals workers are reporting on retrenchments in the industry.

Building will be seriously affected. Already in 1989 there were retrenchments. At Corobrick in Stellenbosch more than 300 workers lost their jobs. This pressure will continue.

In the mining industry the bosses



# "Unemployment eats us like disease"

by Andrew Jamela

We are a group of unemployed youth from Khayelitsha. Life is hard without a job. Most of us have no hope of getting jobs again. It needs money to look for jobs and you just get, "sorry no jobs, try next week".

We attend these unemployment schemes at the moment. They are just a waste of time. The government promised to train you to be anything from a bricklayer to a mechanic. But tell me where you can get a motor mechanic or bricklayer trained for only three months? They just want to keep us off the streets. They know if you have a mass of unemployed youth then they start throwing stones. Most of us go there because we get money at least for cigarettes.

In Khayelitsha alone unemployment is the order of the day. People wake up to go to the *ibokwe* where they stand, sit for hours along the main road waiting for anyone to offer cheap labour for them. Whites, sometimes coloureds, come to pick up tough guys for work. You should see how people run for these cars. Cruel whites take advantage of this and not pay our people.

Lot of youth resort to crime now. They go to shop-

lift, break into white peoples' houses and even rob the community. Unemployment eats us like a disease will eat your body. If you can not give your child 5 cents then what kind of pappa are you? In your family you are seen as a loafer. This thing is destroying our dignity.

Do not talk about Unemployment Benefit Fund. Most of us never get that money. If you fail to hand it in within three weeks after you are fired, you will never be able to draw your money. They just tell you straight, "go look for a job, work and come back when you are fired there!"

Tell me where are we going to get jobs? We should unite against this. This unemployment is growing by days. Students drop out and join us, people from rural areas and retrenched workers. We must organise.

I have heard people talk about a "post-apartheid system", a negotiated settlement. Freedom for us will mean that we should be able to go to the factories, get jobs and the wages we claim according to our responsibilities. How can we be free if we do not have jobs and a living wage?

I can't remember when I had proper food. I eat bread and coffee, sometimes with water. This must come to an end.

have a clear strategy to cut jobs -- no less than 60 000 miners have lost their jobs since 1986.

Now that the NUM challenged the cheap migrant labour system, the mining bosses have responded by mechanising underground production. All this means massive retrenchments. In April 1989 Gencor retrenched 7 000 workers. Now Rand Mines has announced it wants to retrench at least 8 000 workers.

Cyril Ramaphosa has said: "50 000 workers have either lost their jobs or are in immediate danger of doing so" (*Sunday Times*, 9/7/89).

All this despite the fact that in 1987 the profits on the gold mines was three times the total wages paid to black workers. Mechanisation and cost-cutting programs are merely introduced to secure super-profits for the gold magnates.

These pressures for jobs cuts and harder work are seen in the state sector. Between 1984-89 61 400 job were lost at SATS. At Iscor 23 000 black and white workers lost their jobs. Escom has thrown 10 000 out of work since announcing its 'restructuring'.

Many state sectors are being prepared in this way for the vulture of

privatisation.

## Sanctions not the cause of high unemployment!

All these developments are part of world trends in capitalism. Internationally there have been lay-offs in manufacturing and intensification of labour even during the upturn which is now showing signs of ending.

Internationally profitable sections of the state sector have suffered cuts, jobs losses, and reorganisation, to prepare them to be handed over to the monopolies. In Britain privatisation has resulted in the loss of 400 000 jobs.

In the US the giant multinational IBM which promises its workers a job for life has given workers a strange Christmas present by declaring 10 000 jobs must go!

The same processes are at work in SA. It is nonsense for Buthelezi and his masters to say that sanctions are the cause of unemployment.

It is true that scores of companies have disinvested since 1984. But the main reason for them withdrawing was the difficulty in making profits

and the political crisis of the ruling class caused by the rising revolution. P.W. Botha's Rubicon 2 speech in August 1985 triggered an outflow of more than R10bn capital -- as the capitalists internationally lost confidence in the future of the profit-system in SA.

Few companies closed down production. They sold formal ownership to SA bosses and signed agreements giving them licence to take a share of the profits, and sometimes permitting them to come back if conditions change!

It is true that anti-apartheid campaigns have brought some European countries to cancel contracts for SA coal and this has put some pressure on the jobs of coal workers. But the main reason is the struggle between coal producers internationally to sell their own coal on a declining market.

How do the bosses explain jobs losses in gold mining when the price is rising? This has clearly nothing to do with sanctions.

The bosses blame sanctions for unemployment to hide the truth from the working class -- it is a disease of the whole capitalist system which has resulted in the astronomical rise in





*SAB workers and youth march to the Manpower offices in Cape Town*

unemployment.

## **Fight as one united force!**

Hundreds of thousands of jobs are under threat now that recession is coming. Workers have to defend what little they have got, and to argue against the bosses that job losses could be avoided if the economy was geared to the needs of the people and not to profit.

Every job loss is a loss for the whole working class, especially the youth. The growing strength of the trade union movement must be mobilised now to confront the bosses.

Only the power of the organised workers united with the youth can force the bosses and the state to give in to our demands. To give in to the bosses without a fight weakens the movement and strengthens the resolve of the bosses to launch further attacks against the workers.

COSATU needs to prepare all workers for the battle to save every job under threat. We need a plan of action on how to defend jobs and mobilise the enormous existing strength of COSATU in defence of workers under threat.

On paper COSATU has a bold program to fight retrenchments. At COSATU's first Congress it was resolved to "fight as one united force" to defend all jobs threatened by retrenchment, closing of factories, for

control over mechanisation, to "fight for work-sharing on full pay whenever workers face retrenchments."

Other resolutions called for the bosses' books to be opened, "so that workers can see exactly how the wealth they have produced is being wasted and misused by the employers' profit system".

But little has been done by the union leadership to carry out these decisions.

Recent developments show how workers are prepared to take action on their own. Commercial workers have succeeded in forcing the bosses of Joshua Doore to reinstate 500 retrenched. The company found that workers' unity was difficult to break. The community donated money and most customers who had debts with the furniture shop refused to cross the picket line to pay accounts.

This example shows an organised fightback can stop retrenchments. But it also shows what is involved -- the trade union leaders have to link up with other unions and the workers in the townships to win.

Other examples show the difficulties. Early in 1989 the Premier bosses managed to retrench about 1 000 workers at Farm Fare (now Bonny Bird). This happened despite workers from plants all around the country being prepared to fight.

The bosses said that the company was not making profits and had to retrench workers to survive. The union leadership accepted this argument

and concentrated its efforts on securing good retrenchment 'packages' for the workers. This demoralised many workers who staged demonstrations nationally against job losses but eventually because of a lack of leadership had to accept defeat.

Once the bosses had succeeded they wanted to go further. Now they are proposing to retrench more Bonny Bird workers!

When redundancies are threatened we should demand instead that the work be shared with shorter working week and no loss of pay.

These examples show that more is needed that the spontaneous struggle of individual factories and unions -- the COSATU leadership must carry out the resolutions of the Congresses.

## **LIFO and retrenchment packages**

The Bonny Bird example is a

# **KwaZulu**

All workers have the right to form and to join trade unions.

Where have you ever seen the government forming the union for its workers? The KwaZulu government formed NATU (Natal African Teachers Union). We all know the KwaZulu government is Inkatha, and what this "union" is!

Comrades teachers, this is the time we must join and build the union which is of our own needs and interests. We must not be threatened by NATU the toothless-bulldog union. What has NATU done for its teachers? The only thing it does is take donations from the starving teachers. It does not represent our demands. It is not democratic but always dictates to its affiliates. Away with it!

Many teachers of ZG Department of Education and Culture are joining NEHAWU. They see it is a living body organising against starvation.

All teachers, especially blacks who are under DET or DEC, demand a living wage. Teachers, we are part of our communities, why don't we serve our struggle? There is no-one who can be neutral. You are either on the side of the struggle or on the other side.

**by Thami Dlamini**



warning to workers of how the bosses will act in the coming recession. They will argue they are not making profits, they will threaten closures, and demand sacrifices from the workers.

We have to resist these attacks. It is not enough just to argue for last in first out (LIFO) and a retrenchment package. LIFO helps to protect the active trade union member from victimisation. But the threat of retrenchment still faces workers as a whole.

Some older workers might be attracted by a retrenchment package -- but these will never compensate for the loss of a job. Mostly they just add up to a few months wages, it looks a good lump sum but doesn't go very far. Within weeks the money is gone.

Worse still the job for another workers' child is gone forever!

## **COSATU must implement its program: Open the books!**

Instead we have to confront the bosses' arguments. How do we know they are not making profits? We have to demand they should open the company books so we can find the facts. If they are making profits they have no reason to dismiss workers.

If they are not making profits are they wasting resources and mismanaging the company? How much money is given to company directors who just attend a few meetings? How much is spent on company cars and aircraft? How much money are they secretly taking out of the country?

The bosses will fight hard against disclosing their 'business secrets', but we have to fight harder to survive.

## **No redundancies: ban overtime!**

The bosses keep wages low to force workers to work overtime to make ends meet. Overtime means the bosses do not have to employ more workers -- they save a lot of money while increasing exploitation.

In SA many workers labour for 46 hours before overtime is paid, and then on average they work an additional 4 hours overtime! This is higher than most countries in the world.

In SA it is legal for workers to work up to 500 hours overtime a year. Many workers complain of compulsory overtime and exhaustion.

If overtime was reduced to 2 hours

# **COSATU CONGRESS, 1985**

## **Resolution on unemployment**

### **Noting:**

1. That under capitalist conditions of exploitation, unemployment is a reality facing every worker at all times.
2. That these unemployed workers are used as a reserve pool of labour by the bosses to keep wages low and to provide a source of scab labour in the event of strikes.
3. That the interest of all workers, whether employed or unemployed, are the same -- the right to a job at a decent living wage.
4. That the unity of employed and unemployed workers is essential in the struggle against scabbing and to advance the struggle for the right to work at a living wage.

### **And further noting:**

1. That in SA there are millions of unemployed -- a number that is increasing daily through retrenchments.
2. That the introduction of the new technology for profiteering purposes is making the whole unemployment situation even worse. This is further aggravated by pressure from employers for higher productivity.
3. That many are abandoning all hope of finding suitable employment in the immediate future.
4. That for thousands of school leavers there is virtually no prospect of getting employment and therefore no possibility of drawing UIF benefits.
5. That unemployed workers are not organised in SA.

### **Congress therefore resolves to:**

1. Fight as one united force to defend all jobs threatened by retrenchments; fight the closing of the factories; and fight for participation in and control over -- right from the planning stage -- the implementation of any new technology. And fight all attempts by employers to make workers work harder and attempts to rationalise production, because in the present system this always leads to unemployment.
2. Campaign for a 40 hour week at full pay and a ban on overtime.
3. Fight for free and increased unemployment benefits, supplemented by rent, transport and medical concessions for all unemployed workers.
5. Demand that the state initiate a national programme of public works to provide jobs for the unemployed and to improve services and facilities in working class communities.
6. Fight for work sharing on full pay whenever workers face retrenchments.
7. Establish a national unemployed workers' union as a full affiliate of the new federation to struggle for the realisation of the right of all to work and security.
8. Struggle for a fair, democratic and rational political system and economic system which can guarantee full employment for all people in Southern Africa at a living wage.
9. To give full support to efforts by retrenched and dismissed workers to establish co-operatives based on the principles of COSATU.

a week in manufacturing then about 100 000 new jobs would be created! In construction more than 20 000 jobs would be created in the same way. (See the *LRS Overtime report*, 1988)

Clearly if there was a complete ban on overtime and all workers worked only 40 hours, then 100 000s of jobs would be created immediately.

COSATU's campaign for a ban on overtime should be taken up by all workers. However, this ban also means that workers don't earn a living wage and need overtime to survive.

## **Factory occupations**

In the coming wage negotiations COSATU leaders have to prepare national action to link the overtime ban to the demand for a national minimum wage of R180 for a 40 hour week as prices rise.

In many cases the bosses refuse to

listen to the workers' arguments. Sometimes in such cases workers occupy the factories to prevent the bosses from firing workers, removing the machines, or their expensive directors cars. Workers at Haggie Rand have fought in this way.

*Siyalala* have become important weapons of the working class in SA and internationally. A factory occupation for a time takes away from the bosses the weapon of employing scabs to continue production on another basis.

In Britain 1 200 workers at the Caterpillar factory in Scotland occupied the factory in 1987 to protest against its threatened closure. For 12 weeks the workers controlled the factory and stopped the bosses removing the machines.

Some production continued to prove the bosses were not needed to make Caterpillar tractors! There was enormous support throughout the



country for the occupation. But the struggle was defeated when the trade union leaders searched for other capitalists to buy the plant rather than campaign for its nationalisation.

We can draw lessons from *siyalala*:

\* We have to mobilise support from workers outside the factory as the Haggie Rand workers did in 1986 -- from other factories, youth and communities.

\* The workers and youth must form self-defence groups in the factory and outside on the picketline to protect the workers from attack. We must be prepared.

Such temporary occupations may force the bosses to make concessions. But success is never guaranteed and

occupations can become isolated. The bosses will want to protect their machines, but in the end they will support armed action by the security forces to seize the factory back from the workers. Even well supported occupations can be defeated.

Such struggles can confirm in workers minds the need to take control of production and society in order to solve our problems. But no single tactic will save jobs: we must use all tactics together to change the system.

Through struggle whether we succeed or not, workers will come to understand that there are no solutions to jobs, wages, housing, etc under capitalism. Through struggle workers can build the forces to overthrow the system.

## Government workers fight back!

In SA the government has ruled by brutal and open oppression. Workers were not allowed to organise unions. The state sector workers were suffering bad conditions of work and low wages.

But the black working class organised itself, until the government was forced to allow unions.

But government workers were excluded with no law to protect them. The choice given to these workers was to listen to their bosses or leave their jobs quietly. Besides, the workers were not even allowed contact with their employer, the government. The racist white officials in the workplace had control over the black workers, to decide who is to be dismissed, who is to be promoted, etc. The workers were not allowed to raise their grievances. Now the government is talking about reform and pretending that they do not hate blacks like Verwoerd and Vorster. It is talking about blacks and whites living peacefully together in SA.

But the government workers have no taste of this 'future'. They still face low wages and exploitation, high prices of food, transport and the suffering imposed by capitalism and the government. The government sector workers saw the need for unions and through intense battles they built SARHWU, POTWA and NEHAWU.

The government still tries to break the workers' organisations. On the one hand they talk about negotiating with political organisations, but on the other they refuse to negotiate with the unions, to pay us a living wage and improve our working conditions.

Manpower Minister Eli Louw says his "door is open". But it is not open for those working for him. They refuse 90% of their workers the right to build unions, to medical aid, to staff status.

We as workers must unite and fight for these demands. The unions in the government sector must campaign for a national minimum wage and for recognition. SARHWU, POTWA and NEHAWU, together with COSATU, must seriously take up the campaigns and unite in action.

The isolated strikes showed they are like hand grenade explosions in the ocean -- they do not strike a united blow against the government. We need the whole workers' movement united with a clear strategy and plan for all the workers in the government sector.

The SATS workers are on strike now, so we must discuss it in our unions and locals, to carry out a unified battle for a national minimum wage and for recognition of our unions.

**by a state sector worker**

When the majority of workers are organised with a revolutionary understanding it will become possible to mobilise general strikes, with mass factory occupations, as part of the fight to seize power. By defeating the state and taking the factories from the capitalists it will be possible to reorganise production on the basis of a workers' state and a democratic plan.

This is what we must aim to build the forces to achieve.

## COSATU must fight together with unemployed youth and women

As in the rest of the world, South African youth and women are the worst affected by unemployment. There are at least 3m unemployed youth and women.

Every year at least 350 000 black youth leave school in search of jobs. But for the majority job hunting leads nowhere. The future of school leaving youth looks very grim and the sacrifice of their parents laid to waste.

Women also suffer an unemployment rate twice as high as male workers. Only a small proportion of jobs in industry are open to women. Bosses are prejudiced against women who may need maternity leave and attend to their families. The high unemployment among women means that it is more difficult for their enormous potential strength for the revolution to be mobilised.

COSATU needs to fight for the interests of working class youth and women. Workers, women and youth should link up in the townships and industrial areas to take up the fight for jobs for all.

## The unemployed want to fight

At COSATU Congresses workers have proposed campaigns against unemployment and a National Union of the unemployed. Now that recession looms this has become an urgent task. If the 5.5 million unemployed are not organised they will inevitably be used to scab against unionised workers.

With a clear program COSATU could help in the organisation of the unemployed and turn the 5.5m jobless



into a revolutionary force, not an unorganised mass of those "who have abandoned all hope".

But an unemployed union will not be like other factory-based unions -- it will have to be built almost entirely on mobilisation around a clear program and plan of action.

The overwhelming majority of unemployed do not get any benefits from the state. Every week workers contribute a part of their wages to the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF). But even the worker who has contributed for years will not get enough benefits to survive for more than a few months.

The unemployed need to be organised around a clear demand for an unemployed benefit equal to a national minimum living wage of R180 for a 40 hour week.

COSATU's campaign against unemployment must be used to mobilise the unemployed around the demand for benefits not less than the national minimum wage for all unemployed. This should be the basis on which to launch the union of the unemployed nationally.

Through actions to defend workers struggling against redundancies, through marches through the industrial areas, demonstrations and meetings in townships and city centres, and

in joint rallies with unionised workers, the unemployed would become a powerful organised force. All youth in SAYCO have a role to mobilise for this struggle.

In Cape Town unemployed youth have already marched through the city centre. In Durban there has been a demonstration which rapidly grew into a mass meeting. "If the Government cannot solve unemployment of 6m of the population then it must provide for those who don't have work", said a speaker there. This sums up the growing mood for organisation and struggle among unemployed.

National marches of the unemployed to Pretoria from Natal, OFS, Cape, East Rand and Soweto, supported by COSATU and SAYCO would have an electrifying effect on the whole movement.

On a clear program of fighting for jobs for all, massive public spending on housing, roads, education, etc; a living benefit for the unemployed, and the overthrow of capitalism, we can build a mass fighting organisation in every township.

A national union of the unemployed would be able to mobilise and to give a massive blow against the growth of gangsterism in our townships.

## Capitalism must be overthrown

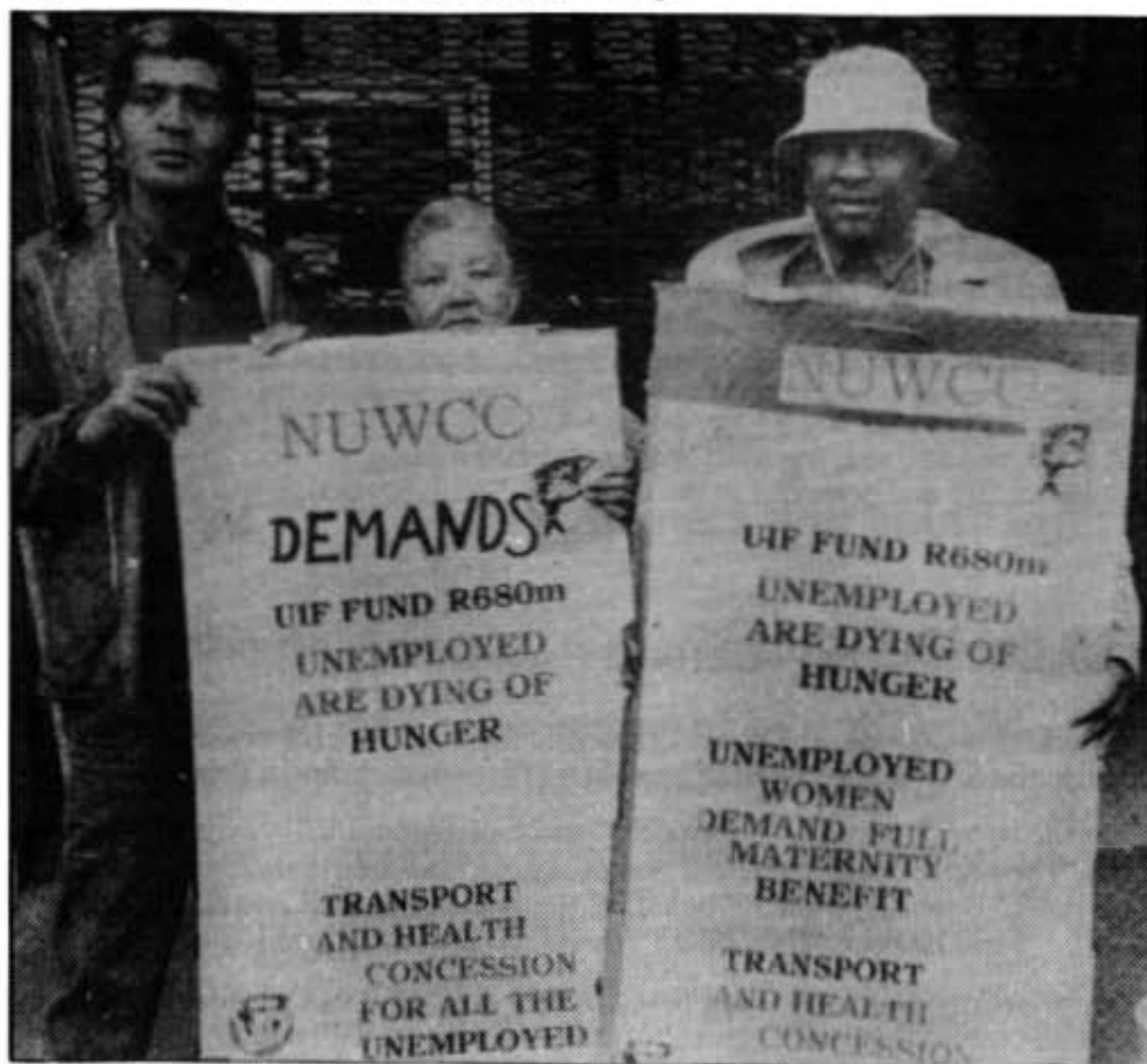
Unemployment is a sickness of the capitalist system. Capitalists force wages down to cut costs, but find that the products they want to sell cannot be bought by the mass of poorly paid workers. The capitalist economy can never expand to provide all workers with jobs with decent wages.

Capitalism produces mass misery. It must be overthrown and replaced by a planned economy under democratic workers control and management. A massive public works program could then be undertaken to provide for the needs of the masses: decent houses, education, health, food, and clothing.

The introduction of new machinery would not cause retrenchments, but be used to further reduce the working week. On this basis unemployment would be wiped out.

One of the first steps of a workers' government could be to cut the working week to 35 hours without loss of pay and create 100 000s of jobs.

This is what we are struggling for. This is why workers and youth have to unite to build a mass ANC to overthrow the government which is defending capitalism.



Members of the National Unemployed Co-ordinating Committee (Nuwcc) hold a placard demonstration

- \* For a fighting national union of unemployed!
- \* No redundancies, ban overtime!
- \* Share the work -- for shorter hours with no loss of pay!
- \* A job for every school leaver.
- \* A national minimum wage of R180 for a 40 hour week, rising with price increases.
- \* Unemployment benefit equal to the minimum wage!
- \* For an ANC government to nationalise the main means of production under democratic workers' control and management!
- \* Forward to workers' power, democracy, and socialism!



# WORKERS CHALLENGE BOSSES RULE! SUPPORT RAILWAY AND SAB STRIKERS!

More than 50 000 workers are on strike throughout the country. Workers are challenging the bosses demanding a living wage, union recognition, an end to retrenchments and victimisation. Prices are soaring. Bread is now more expensive than many families can afford. Train and taxi fares are up, and soon electricity prices will increase. Living standards are being attacked from every direction. The black working class is fighting back.

At the forefront of these battles are the railway workers. Daily police and strikers have bloody clashes. Many strikers have been shot and injured. SATS is dismissing thousands. **COSATU leadership must not delay one more minute in organising mass solidarity action nationwide.** This is the only way to win.

These battles prove that De Klerk's "negotiations" and "reforms" have nothing to do with freedom. It is a trick to stop our revolution and trap the ANC leadership. The message of the SATS and SAB workers' struggle is: "Don't trust De Klerk! Fight for majority rule!" De Klerk and the bosses still use the SAP and SADF against workers fighting for a living wage.

## Support SATS workers -- Defend SARHWU!

About 40 000 SATS workers from Germiston to Cape Town and Durban are on strike. They demand a R1500 minimum wage, union recognition and reinstatement of dismissed comrades. But SATS refuses to negotiate. Once again they are talking through the barrel of the SAP's guns, and carrying out mass dismissals.

In the 1987 railway strike, six workers were murdered by the SAP and 17 000 sacked. But the workers' determination combined with a massive general strike on 5 and 6 May led by COSATU won a victory. Sacked workers were reinstated, but SATS' promises of reform in conditions were empty.

Black railway workers are still treated like slaves and paid starvation wages. SATS hostels are not fit for dogs. More than 100 000 jobs were lost in ten years, now SATS privatisation means that 10 000 jobs will go.

SATS management is racist and have armed their white workers against blacks. After the 1976 uprising SATS openly sold .303 rifles to white workers at R7.00 each. They are responsible for racist attacks. Already there has been a shooting involving white workers. COSATU and SARHWU must warn SATS that black workers will not tolerate this. **Workers will arm in self-defence against racist and police attacks.**

**Every worker and youth must mobilise support for the SATS strike.** COSATU must organise a 24-hour general strike of all transport workers, road, rail and sea, together with metal and mining workers to support SARHWU. These sectors are the most important and powerful in the economy. Solidarity action will defy and smash the LRA.

## Support SAB workers -- defend FAWU!

6 000 SAB workers have been on strike for two months. SAB brags it is the most liberal bosses in the country, but like the racist SATS they use the SAP and the SADF against workers demanding a living wage.

These "liberal" bosses complain that the wage demand is "impossible" and "unreasonable" -- even though it would only cost 5% of SAB's profits. They have locked strikers out using the SAP and employed scabs. Private security guards ride shotgun on the SAB trucks, while on behalf of the bosses the SAP and the SADF raided strikers' houses in Tembisa.

The strike can be won with solidarity action. COSATU and SACCAWU (CCAWUSA) leaders must organise members in hotels, bars, shops and all SAB subsidiaries to refuse to handle their products.



## **Organise for victory!**

These strikes are the most important struggles of 1989. The bosses and their state want to defeat SATS and SAB workers to intimidate all workers. They plan further attacks. The economy is in crisis. Prices rise, sales and orders are down, interest rates go up, and mass retrenchments loom large. These will affect the bosses' profits. They don't want to pay so they attack workers and their families by cutting jobs and lowering wages. COSATU must resist these attacks. A campaign for a national minimum wage, a 40-hour week and a ban on overtime is vital.

## **Solidarity Action!**

Only united working class action will defeat SATS and SAB bosses.

- \* SAYCO must mobilise youth to support the strike -- Build worker-youth unity!
- \* COSATU leadership together with NUM, NUMSA and TGWU should call and mobilise for a 24-hour general strike of mining, metal and transport workers to support SARHWU and the railway workers.
- \* COSATU must organise armed self-defence of strikers, union offices and worker leaders against armed racist and police attacks.
- \* COSATU must campaign and set a figure for a national minimum wage. We should suggest R200 per week for a 40-hour week. This will unite millions in struggle and allow COSATU to organise another million workers.

COSATU was built on the sweat and blood of generations of fighters to unite, defend and lead workers in struggle. Now once again let COSATU lead.

**An injury to one is an injury to all !**

**Build worker-youth unity!**

**Victory to SATS and SAB workers!**

## **Build a mass ANC on a socialist programme!**

These struggles show that our poverty and oppression will only be ended when we overthrow the apartheid state and capitalism. Against us the bosses have their press, SAP, SADF, NP, DP, CP and AWB, Gatsha, Holomisa and all puppets. We need the ANC as a workers' army.

The working class has unity, power and organisation. Youth and workers must build a mass workers' ANC as a powerful force in every factory, mine, street and school. This alone can unite the oppressed to win majority rule to implement the Freedom Charter.

## **Workers and youth fight for:**

- \* one person one vote in a united South Africa!
- \* For an ANC government to nationalise the monopolies under workers' control and management!
- \* For workers' power, democracy and socialism!
- \* No retreat from the Freedom Charter!

*Issued by supporters of Congress Militant -- Paper of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC, in the Transvaal.*



# Visit to Soweto

## A Zimbabwean comrade reports:

*"Walking the streets of Johannesburg, I felt it is not going to be long before the white minority government is overthrown, just by comparing the way whites were outnumbered to nothing by the black population."*

The very day I arrived I went to a party in Soweto. When the people were drunk they were shouting from the top floor "Amandla!" and the people on the ground were responding. There wasn't any fear of the state.

That night my uncle introduced me to young comrades of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC. They are working like bees to build the ANC on a socialist program. I really enjoyed these comrades and was inspired by the hard work they are doing.

I spoke to several ANC branches built by these comrades, and had many informal meetings with them.

These comrades are not waiting for the De Klerk regime to legalise the ANC. They are setting about the job right now. They say it is not good enough to support the ANC and welcome home the leaders, you have to build the ANC underground for democracy and socialist revolution.

### Serious work

It was a good experience for me to see the way the branch meetings were conducted. The first thing one notices is seriousness in the work. One comrade said to me "In SA there is no time to waste, because the revolution will overtake us."

The comrades say the mass support for the ANC has to be properly organised on a clear socialist basis. All the time we walked to the shops or somewhere you will find that the comrades go along with those they are recruiting. They discuss on the way and the comrade tries to make sure that by the time we reach the shops that person must have been convinced to join. The comrades explain fully who they are and what they stand for.

Then again, the comrades make appointments to discuss fully with two or three possible recruits at a time. They will never let these people off the

hook. Every time they meet them they make sure it is a clear and thorough discussion until that person is won over.

There is now a comrade who has been named "Subs" because whenever discussing with those he is recruiting, he stresses the need for paying regular subscriptions to finance the building of the underground foundations of the ANC, however little people can afford.

This approach towards recruiting new people left me with no doubt that the ANC can be built rapidly along these lines.

At every branch meeting there is a check of those who have brought in new comrades. Nearly every week there is a growth of two or three comrades in every branch. From each of these new comrades you will hear them saying that they can bring in more, three or four comrades, which is so encouraging.

*"In SA there is no time to waste, the revolution will overtake us."*

In the branch meetings a political lead-off is given, followed by a business agenda, which includes organising the work for the week ahead. Reading groups are organised to raise the political level of the comrades. It is easier to read the material and understand it if you read it in a group. These discussions have been very useful in developing newer comrades to be able to take over the leadership of branches.

In the meetings where I spoke the comrades wanted to know what lessons should be drawn by Congress youth and workers from the experience of Zimbabwe. They asked what made the guerrilla war successful and also why the negotiations brought

majority rule.

I explained that what was possible in Zimbabwe was not possible in SA because of the different conditions in these two countries. It was possible in Zimbabwe because most of the population were peasants. They provided the social base for a successful guerrilla war.

### The whites

I explained that the whites were eventually forced to sit down and negotiate, because they were so few in numbers and because the capitalist grip on the economy could be assured by the leaders of the blacks. But in SA it is entirely different because it is a working-class struggle. The whites and capitalists are afraid of losing their power and control of the economy to the blacks.

The comrades oppose the 'two-stage theory' of the SA Communist Party. They wanted to know how this 'two-stage' theory has been used by the ZANU(PF) leadership in Zimbabwe. I told them that the 'two-stage' theory in Zimbabwe has been no real democracy, no right to strike, and corruption among the leaders. This is not the way to socialism.

I explained the masses still face the old capitalist state and its laws. I explained how the workers are repressed by the Labour Relations Act, how workers campaigning for a democratic trade union were detained and tortured in 1985 -- how people are crying for land, how the youth are crying for jobs. I explained how Mugabe ordered the killing of up to 3 000 Ndebele people during the war against the dissidents etc.

The comrades were taken up by this. They said: "Now we know what the Zimbabwean government is made of. If this is what our leaders want SA



to be they are going to be in conflict with the youth and the workers".

They pointed to the need of recruiting as many workers into the ranks of the underground foundations of the ANC as we can. Only the power of the organised workers, together with the youth, can bring change.

The comrades are so pleased and proud to be supporters of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC because they say now we have found the right ideas for building the ANC. Comrades said to me with confidence that this tendency will grow fast in numbers.

"In the 1976 uprising we did not have politics of knowing how we were going to overthrow the state. In 1984-1986 we were united in our struggle. We took over control of our townships and there was some happiness that we had defeated the state.

"We were not aware that freedom of our townships doesn't mean anything if the state is not overthrown and if the ownership of production still remains in the hands of the minority white ruling class. Now we found the politics which explains how to overthrow the state; we now know that it is only the working class revolution which will overthrow capitalism and build socialism."

There is much talk in the townships about the desire of the ANC leaders to negotiate with De Klerk. The leaders are leaving the people behind. They are trying to negotiate at the expense of changing the Freedom Charter. This is going to be difficult for them to do because the workers and the youth want the Freedom Charter to be implemented as it is.

The comrades are saying there will be a revolt against the ANC leaders by the masses if they change the Freedom Charter. One said: "If the ANC leaders compromise for less than majority rule, they will sink in the mud which has been set for them by P.W. Botha and F.W. de Klerk. The masses are going to resist."

## Soweto gangsters

Even though the comrades have been having gains in their work they have been also facing difficulties. They are facing fights not only against the state, but also against local gangsters. Sometimes it is very difficult for them to move around in their own local area.

I witnessed an attack on some of these comrades by a group of gangsters

during the election stayaway. The comrades were made to run away for their lives just because this gang was armed with pistols. There was shooting during daylight. The comrades' plan that day was to go into schools and explain to the students about the stay-away but all this was countered by this gang of lumpen youth.

In that situation, which I have never been in before, I panicked and was shocked. During the shooting I just ran into someone's bedroom for hiding.

After that, the next problem I faced was that we were surrounded in a taxi to town by the greenflies (the municipal police). They were armed with whips, guns and teargas. All this just happened soon after my arrival. The comrades just said to me: "Welcome to Soweto"!

These are some of the conditions which comrades work in. There is a clear need for mass armed self-defence against gangsters, Inkatha, the SAP, and SADF.

## Female comrades

In the branch meetings I was pleased to see female comrades playing leading roles. But I was told of some of the difficulties in recruiting female comrades. A female comrade told me this is because of the danger of being raped by gangsters. Due to this, parents have been refusing to allow their daughters out to meetings or activities.

This comrade pointed out that many girls were active in 1985 and in 1986 but during this time they found themselves pregnant, which affected their activeness in Congress. She said we need to go and convince the parents with our ideas and to explain them that if their daughters join us as active builders of the ANC it won't mean getting pregnant, but fighting for a socialist revolution.

There are at the moment some disagreements between youth and parents. The comrades say that the parents at the moment are 'weak' because they tell the youth they are wasting their energies. Because of the new upsurge of struggle the youth are going to their parents to try to organise them.

But the parents are saying "You fought in 1985 but you did not get anything." This is a thing which needs to be clearly explained to them: that even if we did not get anything from the government, we gained in confidence and organisation, and that if we learn the

lessons of the past, we can go forward with greater strength.

Street committees can become strong again only if the parents are organised and this will mean getting rid of these gangsters who are stealing, killing and raping. But the comrades were quite confident they can do this by organising the community who will deal with them once and for all.

I was taken for a tour around the township which is so rich in the history of struggles against the apartheid government.

I was shown how the township was built surrounded by many police stations. I was shown the remains of the 1984-1986 upsurge: the burnt houses of councillors who co-operated with the state, and schools which were burnt during the school boycotts. I also went to the palace of Winnie Mandela which is on a small hill with a bird's view.

## Rent boycott

The rent boycott is still on. One morning I had to laugh at myself. A woman opened a water tap to fill a bucket with clothes she wanted to rinse. The bucket went full. But she did not switch the tap off because she was busy cleaning in the house. It was on for about 15 minutes.

So I went to switch it off. Then came another woman and did the same. I started to wonder why. This time I did not switch it off. It went for about 25 minutes. I asked her: "Do you pay for water?" She said "We will only start paying when our husbands are paid decent wages." So rent, water and electricity is still being boycotted.

I was taken into houses where you find four to six people sleeping in one small room. Some families go for days without proper meals. The streets and roads are full of sewage from pipe breakages which take ages to be repaired. I saw that nothing short of a revolution is needed to change these bad conditions.

During our tour I noticed the respect given to our comrades in Soweto by local workers and youth, because of the ideas they have. After discussing with them I felt proud of the Marxist ideas I shared with these comrades and other comrades around the world.

by Tokozani

reprinted from *IZWI/ILIZWI*,  
Zimbabwean Marxist paper  
November 1989



# Workers, women and youth join the

## Anti crime Campaign

Our struggle has been long and there still is a long way to go before we reach our freedom, which is socialism. On the way to taking power we experience many difficulties. The main obstacle between us and freedom is the state. The capitalist class uses the state and laws like the LRA, the State of Emergency, to control the working class. But they also have indirect methods against the struggle, like crime. Andrew Makhatini, Pietermaritzburg writes:

Capitalism is not giving jobs to all. When young people have no jobs and no future they easily get involved in crime. Once they become gangsters they have to turn against all those people who want a better life in the community.

Who suffers under crime?

It is the working class that suffers under the gangsters because they attack the poor people. They are not fighting against the enemy which causes bad conditions. The capitalists and the government cause the bitter suffering of the people -- then the criminals attack them too. The government doesn't bother to do anything because they can use it to get rid of our comrades who fight against them.

It is especially women who suffer from the criminals. They rob people from their wages and they steal the little property of the working class. They do not stop there, but they go on and continue killing our active comrades.

We have heard of the AmaSinyora in Durban and other gangs in townships like Soweto giving people rotten ill-treatment. In Pietermaritzburg there is the Amaqola and another group that calls itself Kabasa. Amaqola is based at KwaPata and iKabasa comes from an area called KwaMnyandu, near Pietermaritzburg. They are making life in the communities extremely dangerous and the situation more bitter for the struggle.

We are sick and tired of the gangsters. We must organise to defend our communities and comrades. We must strengthen our organisations because if the working class is organised and armed, then it can stop all the activities of the gangsters.

But it does not end there. It is the

overthrow of capitalism that will end the poor conditions we live in and crime. We must build solidarity between workers and youth and take practical steps to solve the problem.

Zakes Molamo reports:

In Soweto the rate of crime is so high. Gangsters are caused by capitalism, bad schooling, unemployment.

They tell themselves they are making a living if they terrorise the community. If capitalism ends, the unemployed youth can get jobs, the rate of crime and the launching of gangsters will end.

These gangsters disturb the people from enjoying their money. If you haven't got money they stab you and rape you, and before they do this they use drugs, alcoholism and daggas to get the pluk.

Even if you go and report to the police station, they don't care, they take it for granted. Because they also use the drugs. After using it they started to harass the innocent people. If the comrades try to stop this crime, the police interfere in this conflict, they support the gangsters in the fight against us.

We want our own state not the capitalist state. Phantsi ngama gangsters phantsi!

### OBITUARY

Boris was 24 jaar oud. Op die aand van 18 Augustus was hy wreed vermoor deur 'n bende in Bellville Suid. Boris was altyd 'n ondersteuner van die ANC. Hy het geglo dat die probleme van werkers en jeug net opgelos kan word as ons die base en hul apartheid stelsel omverwerp. Hy het ook geglo dat Gatsha verslaan moet word.

In sy laaste paar maande het Boris hom aangesluit by die ondersteuners van Marxisme in die Konress beweging en het sedertdien sy lewe toegewy tot die bou van 'n massa ANC op 'n sosialistiese program om die probleme van sy mense op te los.

Op die dood van ons kameraad sal ons 'n masse ANC bou op 'n sosialistiese program.

Van Marxiste in  
Bellville

## Phantsi 'maJack-roll!

End abuse of women at home!

End sexual harassment at work and school!



We the youth in Bellville witnessed in the past few months the death of a fellow comrade, the rape of a young girl, the hospitalisation of another youth.

## by Sonn, Nettex worker, Bellville

Gangsterism does not stand alone, but can be linked to many factors. For example, the government and puppets said that if we vote for them then they will give us houses. They were lying. Most people are still without houses. The material used for building is very bad, the ground that they are built on is also poor. In many of these houses you can see the roots of trees growing through the foundation. The rent is continuing to rise. No white man would like to raise his family in such a house, so why must we be satisfied with it?

The streets are in bad condition, almost every house in certain areas has no electricity. In 1984 Hendrickse said that we must give him five years and he would improve conditions in

our areas. But he had his five years and did nothing at all.

What is the way forward? We, the community, should unite so that our battles can be successful. With the death of Patrick Muller at the hands of the police we proved that we could stand together. We feel there should be one united, undivided Bellville where young and old in our community can live in peace for years to come. We must do away with apartheid and the capitalist government and establish a society where everyone will be equal.

We appeal to all gangsters to come forward and help us in our struggle for peace and justice for all. We call on you because we feel you are part of us also seeking a way out of this misery, because you are the result not of your own doing but that of the government and the bosses of this country.

So comrades, friends, workers help us to do away with this evil which is threatening our community. The government laughs when they see us fighting against each other.

- ★ Free, equal and non-racial education for all
- ★ A job for every school leaver. Jobs not jail
- ★ A national minimum wage of R180 for a 40 hour week
- ★ Unemployment benefit equal to the minimum wage
- ★ Recreational facilities for all
- ★ Lighting in every street
- ★ Armed self-defence by communities
- ★ Workers' defence teams on public transport
- ★ Away with SAP and SADF
- ★ No kitskops, greenflies or vigilantes
- ★ Local policing under democratic community control

# Spanish youth fight drugs

More than 15 000 demonstrated on 28 September in the workers' district of San Blas in Madrid. "No to drugs -- Yes to work", "Drugs, police the same rubbish", were some of their slogans.

The death of a 15-year old student at the hands of a madman sparked off the movement. Events like this happen every day in the workers' districts, where drugs, alcoholism, unemployment and the lack of a future for the youth is expressed in delinquency, murder, suicides, crime.

Drug trafficking is one of the greatest business concerns of the bourgeoisie. According to Interpol drug traffic moves \$500 000 million a year -- the equivalent of 9 per cent of oil's share of the world economy.

There has been a number of days of action organised by the San Blas Committee against Drugs. In a meeting of more than 500 they drew up a plan of action and a series of demands including creation of free rehabilitation centers for drug addicts in all districts; decent homes for all; parks and cultural centres with training for all unemployed youth; more sport and

cultural facilities to be built in the areas and to be free of charge.

In San Blas in particular, but also in many workers' districts in Madrid, living conditions push young people into the bottomless pit of drugs -- addiction to heroine etc. 80 per cent of the drugs consumed in Madrid are distributed in this district.

On the day of the demonstration we marched through the district shouting to point out those streets and corners where the drug trafficking takes place.

The School Students' Union took the lead with leaflets. We proposed a meeting of the neighbourhood for the 29th September to discuss the future of our struggle and how to extend it. We wanted to link it with activities in other workers' areas which have the same problems. We organised another demonstration and made contact with the trade unions, the UGT, the Workers' Commissions (CCOO). Also we approached other organisations like Mothers against Drugs and all others who would support our mobilisation.

The death of the young student

made the anger and the indignation of thousands of workers' families to boil over.

Housewives, students, workers, parents, all participated. All think that organisation is vital. "As the law doesn't provide any solution, we have to provide it ourselves", said Olga, a worker.

"Without organising nothing can be done", said Conchi, another female factory worker. Many felt it was necessary to link up throughout the whole Madrid by building local committees of action.

What is happening in San Blas is a real explosion. Problems that have accumulated for years, dragging on, have now come to the fore.

Many lessons can be drawn from what happened throughout the autumn -- for what is going to happen next. One thing is certain: the workers of San Blas are preparing to fight for their future and that of their families.

translated from  
*El Militante*,  
Spanish Marxist paper



by Neville Jacobs

On 6th September, election day, workers and youth of Reiger Park took to the streets. While nothing in comparison to Manenburg or Mitchells Plain, for this township it was baptism in revolutionary politics.

There were clashes with the police and SADF deployed in groups in most streets; and barricades burning until the early hours of the morning.

One voter came back wanting to withdraw his vote for the puppets: "Ek het gedink hulle is daar vir ons, maar nou sien ek hulle is saam met die boere. Ek sal nooit meer vote nie." Weeks after, people were still talking with anger about the elections.

This mood had begun to build up since the victory of the Konservatiewe Party in nearby Boksburg in the 1987 municipal elections. It has developed from anger against the reintroduction of petty apartheid by the KP town council -- to demands for one town, one council, one-person-one-vote in a unitary SA; for the release of political leaders; and support for local strikes and calling on workers not to scab.

Reiger Park had never previously managed to mobilise effective political campaigns, or to build Youth Congresses, civics or the UDF. The political arena had been dominated by collaboratory politics. This was one of the few townships where collaborators could still drive around in cars with mobile public address systems calling on residents to vote for them.

In the 1984 tricameral elections the percentage poll in the constituency was fifty-six per cent, one of the highest in the country. Reiger Park itself contributed eighty-one per cent of that. In the shebeens the debate was which puppet party or candidates should be supported.

This has all changed.

In 1989 Reiger Park contributed only seventeen per cent of the thirty-six per cent poll in the constituency. Of this only three per cent of the votes were cast on election day. Reiger Park will never be the same again.

In 1988, within days of the KP town council announcing reintroduction of petty apartheid, the township was buzzing with talk about action, in particular a consumer boycott. By the time the Save Boksburg Committee was elected and called a boycott, it was merely endorsing the actions and

# Battle for Boksburg

feelings of most people. Three thousand people attended this meeting.

At first, the SBC underestimated the extent of support for the boycott, and decided to keep its campaign as "non-political" as possible. It was to be about "personal pride" and "human dignity". However, mass anger and determination to teach the KP a lesson and defeat them was so great that this did not weaken the campaign. Effective organisation by the SBC, which raised more than R150 000 and provided subsidised transport for shoppers to neighbouring towns, helped sustain it.

Regular mass meetings, called at least once a month to discuss problems and reaffirm the mandate to continue, also helped the campaign. However political debates were not tolerated at these meetings, and when such situations arose the meetings were closed from the platform.

From the beginning of the campaign, the white politicians of all shades -- the NP and DP as well as the KP -- and Boksburg business reacted with concern that equalled fear. The NP and DP said they opposed the KP, but appealed to Reiger Park not to boycott the town, basically saying: "Yes, these 'whites only' signs are bad, but please don't fight against them". It was greed for profit and fear of a docile township turning militant that drove the capitalist politicians. What they did not understand was that, while the campaign was sparked off by the racist trimmings, the issues which it brought to the surface were much more fundamental.

People were saying: "Our campaign is not just about a lake. We built this town. We will not allow other people to decide for us how it's going to be run." The attempts by the NP and DP to halt the campaign made them targets. People were saying:

"We want to run our own lives."

The white bourgeois politicians were terrified by the closing of shops in the town. Many "To Let" and "Closing down sale" signs appeared. In one shopping complex, seven shops closed down. A multi-million rand shopping complex was shelved.

The KP did not expect this response from Reiger Park. Its leaders tried to play down the effects of the boycott while at the same time trying to make behind the back deals with the Management Committee. But the collaborators' credibility was hanging by such a thin thread that even they were forced to pose as champions of this struggle against apartheid.

The Boksburg boycott had important national implications both in white politics and for the liberation movement.

The massive gains that the KP made during the 1988 municipal elections gave it the confidence to try to implement its policy of 'turning the clock back'. But the mass resistance in Boksburg showed to whites around the country that KP policy was not as safe a way to rule as in the 1950s and 1960s. In the racially-mixed Hillbrow one of the KP big guns, T.J. Ferreira, campaigning on the ticket of: "Let's make Hillbrow like Boksburg", lost against the NP and DP.

The successful campaign in Boksburg forced the KP, despite all the councils it controls, to retreat. Even A. P. Treurnicht, after the Boksburg experience, said they would have to consider how they will implement their policies!

Equally, blacks around the country gained courage from the success of the mass defiance of the Boksburg council. Together with the spontaneous resistance by organised workers to the Labour Bill, it was one of the factors of the outbreak of mass defiance in 1989. The whip of counter-revolution spurred on the revolution.

Recently, the coloured community of Alra Park outside Nigel, another KP-controlled town, had a meeting where they set out to fight evictions and high water and electricity rates. The SBC was invited to the meeting, and two buses full of people went to Alra Park to show the people: "We've got something in Reiger Park, this is what you need to fight them."

Now, since the September 1989 elections, the campaign has taken a more active form -- with a march of 3 000 people through town on a Satur-



day morning waving banners calling for a single non-racial town council; with a protest picnic of 500 people at the whites-only lake on a weekday; with a picket at the local "white" library; and with four full buses organised for the ANC "Welcome Home" rally with banners extending the freedom of Boksburg to Nelson Mandela.

Greater political expectations have been raised and demanded from the campaign. However, the day to day planning of the campaign with no long term strategy has not met these expectations. There even appeared to be an intention by the SBC to call off the boycott after December.

What the SBC should be seriously considering, instead of downgrading the campaign, is broadening the strategy beyond just the consumer boycott. Also generalising the political gains and experiences beyond the demands that have been put forward thus far.

We've had a consumer boycott for one year, the second longest in the country only after Port Elizabeth in '85-'86. But, left on its own, the consumer boycott is likely to fizzle out.

The national political mood and the retreats by the de Klerk government on peaceful protest (not that we must stick to his rules; after all the whole campaign was despite and against government rules) makes it easier to engage in more mass activity. Greater acts of defiance like the picket, or even occupation of the Boksburg library could be organised.

Far more serious attempts than up

to now are needed to broaden the campaign beyond Reiger Park itself.

The SBC needs to approach the people of Vosloorus for organised involvement in the campaign. This would give it an enormous boost, and lay the basis for unity between the African and coloured youth and the building of strong Youth Congresses.

The involvement of COSATU and the industrial workers can make the biggest difference now. Organised industrial action from overtime bans to go-slows; lunch-time demonstrations; occupations and even one day general strikes would strengthen the campaign enormously and inflict serious setbacks on KP plans.

The involvement of the municipal workers in a "defiance" strike, while they refuse to work where only whites are allowed, would make an enormous impact and again show the role of the workers as the leading organised force in our struggles.

Such industrial actions linked with mass demonstrations and marches, have the potential of smashing the KP council or radically reversing their policies, instead of us depending on the courts to do it for us.

The boycott campaign exposed the powerlessness and fraud of the tricameral parliament -- where "our" MP in the House of Representatives could not do a thing about the grievances of his "constituency". The Management Committee was shown up for what it is -- a bunch of puppets

whose "advice" can just be disregarded by their white masters.

But marvellous opportunities were missed many times over the last year to demolish all support for these collaborators, by showing up their opportunism and that they are after only financial gains. Had the SBC led an effective anti-election campaign, it could have reduced the poll in the constituency well below ten per cent.

But now, by campaigning on the social issues of housing, unemployment, etc., by support for strikes, school boycotts, etc., in the coming period we can forever expose these collaborators for what they are.

The SBC needs to link such campaigns to more general political demands and particularly the demand for majority rule in a united South Africa. Gains we make at local level in smashing apartheid can be taken forward and sustained only by the defeat of the apartheid regime itself.

It is necessary to show in the most direct and concrete way what organisation and strength we have to build up to end the cause of our oppression and exploitation. This campaign has never given us a better opportunity to draw the overwhelming mass of people into the struggle for national liberation, democracy and socialism.

This is the only way all this madness of racist and minority rule can be ended and all our social, economic and political problems solved. Only then can we live as a free and happy people in a united South Africa.





# Namibia : What SWAPO needs to do

SWAPO convincingly won the November elections with 57% of the vote. This year it will come to government in an independent Namibia. The end of SA military occupation and direct colonial rule are big steps forward for the Namibian people.

But SWAPO's leadership have wholly abandoned the policies of social transformation contained in SWAPO's past constitution.

Interviewed by the *Weekly Mail* this month, Sam Nujoma reaffirmed that "There will be no wholesale nationalisation of business, nor will there be wholesale distribution of land in an independent Namibia...

"Our economic development will be based on existing conditions in the country." (19/1-25/1/1990)

Together with this, the SWAPO leadership in the Constituent Assembly has put forward a draft constitution which entrenches capitalist ownership of production.

SWAPO leaders say they have "no alternative": because of the international agreements which paved the way to independence, and the "realities" of South African power.

But there has always been an alternative -- and that alternative remains.

It lies in mobilising and linking together the working class throughout the region, to overthrow the SA state, SA imperialism, and capitalism, leading to real self-determination for all the peoples of the region.

Without this, the huge sacrifices of the Namibian people in the long struggle to end SA occupation will be wasted.

## Two-thirds

It is true that -- in terms of the international agreements -- SWAPO failed to win the necessary two-thirds majority in the elections to write the independence constitution unilaterally.

But is that an adequate reason for compromising with capitalism, and accepting the continuation of the pre-independence state?

In a genuine democracy, a party with an electoral majority of 57% would be entitled to carry into law the

reforms demanded by its supporters. The requirement of a two-thirds majority was imposed by the big powers in the Geneva "agreement." It is not a democratic safeguard, but a device to frustrate majority rule.

Which of the governments represented at Geneva -- the United States, South Africa, Cuba, Angola -- accepts such a limitation on its own power? Which of them can claim even 50% backing of their own population in free elections?

SWAPO was not even a party to the Geneva agreement, but had it thrust upon it.

## Protection of rich

Calling themselves "democrats" the capitalists claim that ownership of private property is a "fundamental human right." This is entirely hypocritical. The ruling class has never been genuinely interested in human rights as its record in Namibia shows. Why suddenly now? They want a bill of rights only as a cover under which to smuggle in clauses for maintaining private ownership of Namibian wealth by a few rich farmers and foreign multinational companies.

SWAPO should certainly promote constitutional proposals which guarantee individual human rights, freedom of political parties that accept democracy, and protection of ethnic or tribal minorities against discrimination.

At the same time, while openly championing these human rights, and offering to protect small-scale property -- small landholdings, small herds and small businesses -- SWAPO should flatly refuse to guarantee protection of the big landowners, cattle barons, banks and mines.

We don't for a moment dispute the right to private property for personal use.

The right to privately own the means of production on the other hand is not a "fundamental democratic right." This "right" of the rich excludes the right of the poor to the land, the minerals and the factories of Namibia. The poor can own these only through common ownership, i.e. nationalisation -- provided the poor

also own and control the state.

It is the fundamental national-democratic right of the Namibian people to own the wealth of their own country, and not to have it plundered by foreigners. The big farms ought to be expropriated along with the big herds, and redistributed. The mineral wealth, banks and bigger factories should be taken into state ownership.

It is not surprising that the trade unions, even some SWAPO delegates to the Constitutional Assembly, are unhappy about the draft proposals.

The NUNW and the ranks of SWAPO should demand that the SWAPO leadership repudiate its endorsement of capitalist ownership in the draft constitution.

## Minority tribes

Many expected SWAPO to secure over two-thirds of the vote last November. Its failure to do so reflected, in the main, its inability to win the full confidence of the minority tribes.

During the campaign, revelations of SWAPO's tortures and barbarity towards its own supporters and fighters in the guerrilla camps lost it votes, particularly among minority tribes.

Now, the debate over the constitution reveals that these minorities remain uneasy about measures -- delay in local elections, preservation of provisions for detention without trial -- which might be used to enforce SWAPO domination in Namibia.

The DTA preys on these fears to sustain support for its capitalist policies.

The main factor which allows this situation is the repeated assertions by the SWAPO leadership that they will not expropriate and distribute the property of the big landowners and cattle barons, nor nationalise the country's wealth.

An Ovahimba tribesman who voted for the DTA in November explained to a British journalist: "I hope if SWAPO wins they will allow us to stay here and do not take my land. This land belongs to Ovahimba people, not to the Ovambo." (*Independent*, 8/11/89)

What else can such people think? The problem is not so much that





*SWAPO supporters celebrate the election results in Katutura*

SWAPO, for historical reasons, is seen as a predominantly Ovambo organisation. The problem arises because this tribal identity combines with the leaderships' willingness to enter into compromise with the ruling class and the state.

If SWAPO had fought the election on the basis that, when in power, it would take the land from the rich and redistribute it among the rural population, with something for everybody, then this fear and suspicion of losing their land could have been overcome among minorities as the Ovahimba. In fact they could have become enthusiastic supporters of SWAPO.

The same could have been done with a promise to redistribute the cattle from the big owners' herds to the poor people of the rural areas, along with the land.

But if SWAPO promises instead to touch nothing of the property of the rich, what do those such as the Ovahimba tribesman and woman think? It is not hard to imagine.

Fuelled by the enemy's propaganda, all the historical memories of conflict and distrust come flooding back.

Many think: "SWAPO are making a deal to benefit themselves. Since they are not taking the land from the whites, they are sure to take it from us, the weak people."

"Therefore let's rather support the DTA, the present government which we know. It is clear they are strong, for even SWAPO fears them and has come to an agreement."

"The DTA hate SWAPO, and want our support, so perhaps they will protect us. We do not like them, but we know them. They are not likely to take the little land we have."

This is the psychology which often causes minorities to remain tied to their oppressors when a revolutionary policy could have won them over.

## Class-based campaign

**All this can still be cut across -- if the SWAPO leadership launches a class-based campaign for restoring the wealth of the country to the people.**

With its strong base in the working class, such a campaign by SWAPO could cut across the ethnic and tribal divisions, and unify the urban and rural poor.

There must be mass mobilisation behind SWAPO demanding that the land and the cattle be taken from the big owners, and redistributed among all the rural poor! To nationalise the handful of monopolies which dominate the economy, and place them under democratic workers' control and management!

Such a campaign could electrify the Namibian masses, and give encouragement to strugglers throughout the region.

Together with this, SWAPO should promote a fully democratic constitution. If this is blocked by the DTA, etc., then its hypocrisy would be exposed. It would be left simply de-

manding capitalist property in opposition to SWAPO. Its proletarian and peasant supporters could easily be won to SWAPO.

But SWAPO would still lack a two-thirds majority in the Constituent Assembly, which could become deadlocked. In that case SWAPO could demand a referendum on its own constitutional proposals, sure of more than a two-thirds landslide in its favour. If the DTA and their allies stood in the way of this, they would bear the full responsibility for thwarting the will of the overwhelming majority.

Of course, such a strategy by SWAPO would encounter the risk of a new invasion by SA. But there is no road to the genuine freedom of Namibia which avoids the problem of SA power. The SA government would face a huge dilemma. Reinvansion of Namibia would be a disaster for de Klerk's whole strategy of negotiations and reform. Its repercussions would rebound around Southern Africa and the world.

Workers and youth in SWAPO should urge this strategy on the SWAPO leadership.

At the same time, the guarantee of genuine democracy and independence for the Namibian people depends on linking their struggle with that of the black majority in South Africa, under working-class leadership, for a combined revolution to liberate all Southern Africa.

For this, in SA, Namibia, and throughout the region, the program of Marxism will prove indispensable.



# Crisis of Stalinism



*Hundreds of thousands demonstrating in Prague*

The overthrow of the brutal regime in Romania in December, and the execution of Ceausescu, culminated a tidal wave of unprecedented upheavals washing through Eastern Europe in 1989.

In East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and then Romania millions have demonstrated, struck, and fought in the streets in a revolt against bureaucratic mismanagement, corruption, privilege, and dictatorship. As well as Ceausescu, the old-style Stalinist rulers Honecker, Zhivkov, and Husak have been swept away.

This follows the continued revolt of national minorities in the Soviet Union against bureaucratic rule from Moscow -- and the first stirrings of the mighty Russian working class.

100 000 miners struck in July in Siberia and the Ukraine in the biggest movement since 1917. Seven million working days were lost in strikes in the Soviet Union between January and September.

Throughout Eastern Europe, Communist Party regimes are crumbling.

In August, after the first semi-free elections for 40 years, the non-Communist Solidarity government took office in Poland. In the Soviet Union itself last March, many leading Communists were rejected in elections to the Congress of People's Deputies.

In 1990 governments without Communist majorities are likely to win election in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Bulgaria and Romania.

The Communist Parties of Eastern Europe have been forced to abandon their so-called "leading role" in government. Far from representing political leadership of a revolutionary struggle, this constitutional device has been used by them to entrench one-party totalitarian control of government under all circumstances. In the Soviet Union itself the "leading role" of the Communist Party is also being challenged.

The reports published in the following pages reflect some of these momentous history-making developments. But what lies behind them?

The capitalist media are hailing all



## CRISIS OF STALINISM

this as proof that "socialism does not work", and that capitalism is the only alternative.

These countries, it is true, are not capitalist: their economies are based on nationalisation of production and on planning, not on the drive for profit. But none of them are "socialist".

Socialism is inconceivable without workers' democracy. But these countries are all ruled by a dictatorial bureaucratic caste, which stands in the way of socialist development.

**The crisis in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union is not a crisis of planned economy. It is a crisis of bureaucratic rule by so-called "Communist" Parties. It can be overcome only through political revolution -- workers' revolutions overthrowing the bureaucracy and establishing workers' control and management of production and society.**

The movement that is sweeping through these regimes varies in character from country to country. It contains within it dangerous elements of pro-capitalist counter-revolution. But fundamentally it represents the opening of this political revolution.

"Theoretically everything is the people's property", a Siberian metalworker told a British capitalist journalist in November. "In fact, an uncontrolled apparatus decides everything. The only answer is to make us real

masters of the factories and the land." (*Independent*, 17/11/89). That is the authentic voice of the workers' revolution which is beginning throughout the Stalinist world.

In 1917, the Russian revolution established the first workers' state. But in the 1920s power was seized from the working class in Russia by a privileged bureaucracy headed by Stalin, which ruthlessly suppressed all opposition to its rule.

After the Second World War, under the guns of the Red Army, similar bureaucratic regimes were established in Eastern Europe, overthrowing capitalism and modelling themselves on the regime in Russia.

For a whole period in all these countries, because of nationalisation and planning, the bureaucracies were able to develop the economy and take society forward. The Soviet Union leapt from greater backwardness than India today to become a super-power.

But, more and more, the development of production has run up against the obstacles of bureaucratic rule and national boundaries.

The depth of the economic crisis varies from country to country, reaching extreme proportions in both Poland and Romania. But, everywhere, bureaucratic rule means wastage, corruption, and massive inequality.

In the Soviet Union itself, after 70 years of "socialist development", after four years of Gorbachev's "renewal of socialism", the economy is virtually paralysed. A Soviet government report has stated there was zero growth in the first nine months of 1989. Even food output grew by only 3%, instead of the 11% planned. The economy is increasingly beset by the capitalist diseases of budget deficits (120 million rubles, 14% of the national product), inflation, and unemployment. 40 million people live below the poverty line.

In September, the Party control commission admitted that, of 276 basic consumer items, 243 were mostly or entirely absent from the shops -- including soap, toothpaste, and washing powder. As a result, unspendable personal savings have risen to the record level of 319 million rubles.

### Modern planned economy

Underlying this crisis is the reality that a modern planned economy, requiring the inter-connected production and distribution of millions of different products, cannot be efficiently organised by bureaucratic *diktat* from the top. It requires the full participation and control of the working class, using its own best knowledge to check and regulate production to serve the needs of all.

The use of modern productive forces cannot be achieved to the fullest extent in any single country, no matter how large its resources or its population, but only on an international scale.

But this is the one solution which the bureaucracies cannot accept, because it would mean an end to their nationally-based parasitic rule.

Instead, as the crisis has mounted, the bureaucracies have turned this way and that, in a futile search for other solutions. The fall of Honecker in East Germany, Zhivkov in Bulgaria, and Husak in Czechoslovakia represents an attempt by the bureaucracy to preempt revolution from below by "reform" from above -- as Gorbachev is attempting in the Soviet Union. In Hungary and Poland the bureaucracy has taken the same path, in advance of a mass uprising.

Attempting to hold onto power by bloody force, Ceausescu only catalysed a more profound revolutionary upsurge.

Sensing the growing hatred of the

### SA Communist Party lies

In 1981, SA Communist Party delegates attending Congresses of the East German, Bulgarian, and Czech parties reported: "At all three Congresses we felt the great liberating force of socialism. The reports of the respective Central Committees delivered by comrades Zhivkov, Husack and Honecker were models of Marxist-Leninist thinking on the most pressing issues facing humanity today..."

"In all these three countries the ruling parties reported with pride that over the past 5 years their people have experienced a consistent and steady improvement of their living, working and spiritual conditions. Moreover they could map out with confidence the new 5-year plan and future tasks." (*African Communist*, Third Quarter, 1981)

Today it is evident for all to see that this was nothing but lies.

Zhivkov, Husack, and Honecker are stripped of power and in disgrace, revealed as gangsters presiding over regimes rotten with corruption, and with the repression, torture and murder of political opposition.

Honecker praised the Chinese bureaucracy for massacring students struggling for democracy in Tiananmen Square, and threatened demonstrators in his own country with the same treatment.

Zhivkov has been revealed as the owner of at least thirty palatial residences, well-stocked with mistresses and liquor.

"Models of Marxist-Leninist thinking", wrote the *African Communist*! How is it possible ever again to believe anything that the SA Communist Party says?



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masses, the bureaucracies are increasingly demoralised and divided. Some wish to cling onto, or return to, old-style Stalinist methods. Some want to combine planning with elements of capitalism in a so-called "social-market economy." But also, in a number of countries including the Soviet Union, there are sections of the bureaucracy who even advocate a return to capitalism as a way out of their crisis. They are joined by many of the intellectuals who have come to the head of the movements of workers' opposition.

Combined with a movement towards political revolution, is a movement of creeping counter-revolution -- not merely pro-capitalist, but wishing to revive other reactionary legacies of the past. This is most advanced in Poland and Hungary.

The Polish bureaucracy, allied in control of the state with Solidarity in order to hold down the working class, openly advocates a return to capitalism. Lech Waleca, Solidarity leader, tours the United States, cap in hand, to plead for the monopolies to invest in Poland, and to buy up 80% of Polish industry!

The responsibility for this reactionary movement lies fully on the shoulders of Stalinism, whose corrupt and repressive rule in the name of "socialism" alienated the Polish people, and discredited the idea of socialism itself.

Now we have in Hungary a "reformist" Stalinist bureaucracy that does not hesitate to enter into open collusion with the South African apartheid regime.

### Capitalism no way out

All this is a response not merely to the crisis of Stalinism, but to the fact that, in the advanced countries, capitalism has been enjoying an unrelieved upturn for more than eight years.

But, despite the upturn, capitalism would offer no way out for the regimes of Eastern Europe.

Globally, capitalism is a nightmare for the masses. The capitalist World Bank admitted in 1988 that 950 million people were living in "a condition of life so degraded by disease, illiteracy, malnutrition and squalor as to deny its victims basic human necessities. 'The majority of humankind is worse off now than about 10 years ago', it confessed.

This is the result of the domination of the world economy by the multi-

national monopolies, squeezing super-profits from the masses of the Third World, with the collaboration of its parasitic dictatorial rulers.

The masses of the Third World yearn to be free of the intolerable burdens of capitalism, landlordism, dictatorship, internecine strife, and all the barbaric legacies of the past -- and struggle again and again to end them.

Were capitalism to be restored in Eastern Europe, it would not provide prosperity as in West Germany or France, but be a recipe for ongoing crisis, with mass unemployment, inflation, etc. -- with the weakest placed in the position of Third World countries. It would be a recipe for poverty, not plenty; for dictatorship, not democracy.

Imperialism offers "aid" to Eastern European countries as a bridge-head for capitalist restoration. But what they are offering is nowhere near what would be required to secure the all-round development of capitalism in these countries. After the Second World War, the United States poured some \$83 billion of aid (at today's values) to rebuild the war-torn economies of Western Europe on a capitalist basis. The "aid" now on offer to Eastern Europe is paltry by comparison.

Even in the advanced capitalist countries the upswing rests on fragile foundations: unsustainable levels of trade and budget deficits in the United States. While the upswing may continue for a further period, the anarchy inherent in capitalism means that it will give way inevitably at some point to a renewed downturn and recession.

The upswing has been marked by increased polarisation of the classes: on the one hand a plutocratic minority, enriching themselves by swindles on the stock and currency markets, and on the other hand, increasing sections of working people suffering attacks on social services, and stressful overtime and speed-ups at work.

Even after eight years of boom, there are millions of unemployed, mainly youth, in the most advanced industrial countries.

At the same time, the upswing has given a fresh boost to the productive forces in the advanced capitalist countries, and improvements in living standards for large sections of organised workers. But, with downturn and recession, the capitalists will attempt to claw back these gains, and sooner or

later provoke massive movements of working-class resistance.

Thus, despite continued upswing, the way is being prepared for enormous revolutionary upheavals in these countries also in the 1990s, which will transform the image of capitalism presented to the Stalinist world.

### Tasks of the working class

In the Stalinist countries, as in the advanced capitalist countries and the Third World, the future of humanity lies in the hands of the working class.

But, to fulfil this mission, it must have a clear understanding of its tasks.

The upheavals throughout Eastern Europe have shown how, with a movement of the masses, power passes onto the streets. They have shown that, if the mass of the people move with determination, there is no power on earth that can stand in their way.

But the task for the working class is not merely to bring down the old order, but to **organise its own democratic state power** to replace the old regime. For this it needs a mass revolutionary party based on the genuine ideas of Marxism and workers' democracy. Without this **subjective factor**, the biggest revolutionary movements can be set back and reversed again.

The upheavals of the last months have led, in several countries, to the establishment of independent workers' organisations -- workers' councils, non-official trade unions, etc. These are the embryonic organs of workers' power. The task is to link these together, around a clear programme for political revolution.

But the consciousness of the masses in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union is uneven. A burning hatred of privilege and a revolutionary desire for equality mingles with confusion, despair, and even counter-revolutionary ideas.

Consciousness has been thrown back by the travesty of "Marxism-Leninism" which the bureaucracy has used to try to maintain its authority. In some cases the noble revolutionary ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin have become hated swear-words for the masses.

The intellectuals who have come to the leadership of the opposition movements offer no clear road forward to socialism, and instead reinforce confused ideas of the "social market econ-



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omy" or a return to capitalism.

Particularly in Poland, where the attempt of the working class to carry through a political revolution under the banner of Solidarity in 1980-81 was defeated because the leadership sought compromise with the bureaucracy -- there is now even an echo among the masses for a return to capitalism.

But moves in this direction by the bureaucracy will impose increasing hardships. On January 1 the Polish bureaucracy imposed price rises of 600% for coal, 400% for electricity, and 400% for petrol, intended to ready them for the capitalist profit system. This is anticipated to produce a 20% fall in living standards, massive unemployment, and factory closures.

Similar consequences will follow from attempts in others of these regimes to remove food subsidies, privatise, or introduce "market measures".

Inevitably, even if it can be delayed, there will be a huge upsurge of working class opposition to such measures.

But, having lifted its repression in the name of "democratic reform", the bureaucracy will find it hard to crack down again through the use of force. The heroic resistance of the Romanian masses to Ceausescu's blood-stained Securitate is a lesson of what would be in store for them should they do so.

Economic crisis and mass upheavals are bringing the Stalinist regimes of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union staggering towards stagnation and collapse. A genuine Marxist program of workers' democracy is the only way to avert chaos and finish off the job:

- \* Free elections;
- \* A free press, no censorship;
- \* The right to form political parties and trade unions;
- \* Elected committees in every workplace, linked up on a city-wide and national basis, drawing up a democratic plan of production;
- \* Committees of soldiers, sailors and airforce personnel with the election of all officers and genuine workers' militias;
- \* All officials to be elected subject to recall;
- \* No official to receive more than a skilled workers' wage;
- \* Rotation of administrative duties;
- \* Committees of workers to investigate and bring to trial those responsible for corruption, mismanagement

and repression;

\* An appeal to workers of Europe and the world for support, and for the establishment of a socialist federation of European states on the basis of workers' democracy.

### Stalinist dictatorships

In the wake of the 1917 Russian Revolution, the Third (Communist) International was founded as an instrument for the victory of the working class internationally against oppression and exploitation. But it was taken over by the Stalinist bureaucracy, transformed into an instrument of its foreign policy, and finally dissolved by Stalin in 1943.

## ROMANIA

**Editorial reprinted from  
Militant, British Marxist  
paper for Labour and  
Youth, 5/1/1990**

First Honecker of East Germany, then Zhivkov of Bulgaria and Husak of Czechoslovakia, now Romania's Ceausescu -- each one of that "gang of four" hardline Stalinist leaders has finally been ousted in 1989, by the tidal wave of revolution washing through Eastern Europe.

Six months ago they were the only Eastern bloc leaders to congratulate the Chinese Stalinist butchers of Tiananmen Square. Now they have all fallen.

And Ceausescu, the most ruthless, bloodthirsty and arrogant of them all, has been executed.

Like the Russian Tsar in 1917, there was the danger Ceausescu and his wife would have been rallying figures for counter-revolution. Outside in the streets of Bucharest the hated Securitate thugs were sniping from rooftops at demonstrators celebrating the fall of the Ceausescu dynasty.

As the masses threw off their fear, the security police, which had harassed, intimidated and spied on them for 40 years, clearly felt they had nothing left to lose.

Ceausescu's death at the hands of a firing squad was even videoed, to reassure the long-suffering Romanian people that he really was dead. It was continually replayed in shop windows

The leadership of every "Communist" party in the capitalist world has degenerated from advancing proletarian internationalism into instruments of nationalist reformism and apologists for the Stalinist dictatorships.

In many countries, including South Africa, workers and youth have in the past looked to these Communist Parties as instruments of Bolshevism and revolution.

Now, to further the struggle of their fellow-workers in the Stalinist regimes, and to further the struggle against capitalism, all genuine socialists should break with these Stalinist parties and join the forces of genuine Marxism to carry forward democratic and socialist revolution world-wide.

to the applause of passers-by.

Of all the dramas in Eastern Europe over the last 12 months, the revolution in Romania has been the most exhilarating and inspiring.

It started from a small demonstration of a few hundred against the deportation of a Hungarian pastor who protested at discrimination against the Hungarian minority. Romanians joined in the protest, cutting across the national divisions in action.

Within two weeks Ceausescu had gone, the Communist Party collapsed and the potential for a successful political revolution and the establishment of workers' democracy existed.

But it was at a heavy cost. At least 7,000 perished as the Romanian people, spearheaded by students and young people, braved the tanks and bullets of the state forces.

First in Timisoara, then in the capital Bucharest, the army was used in an attempt to crush the movement of the masses, as it had the upsurge by workers in the city of Brasov in 1987.

But the wind of change gusting through Eastern Europe had bolstered the youth of Romania. They felt confident. Even as friends felt they felt they could win. The conscript army began to waver and then it cracked.

Some soldiers were gunned down by their officers for disobeying orders to shoot demonstrators. Then soldiers began to arrest some of the officers. Young people climbed on tanks whose gun barrels had been trained on them.

The revolution had begun. The soldiers, the workers and the youth



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combined to break into the Central Committee building and Ceausescu's obscenely lavish People's Palace. They took the TV station and a call was put out for the people to come to defend it against attack from the Securitate.

New committees sprang up across the country and became the real authority in the towns. Armed people's detachments set up road blocks to apprehend fleeing security police or members of the Ceausescu retinue -- then the Ceausescus themselves.

Here was the basis for a new democratic state apparatus. The election of workers' committees in every workplace, of committees of students and soldiers could lay the foundation for workers' democracy, electing every national and local government official and factory manager and making them accountable to the masses.

The soldiers, fighting shoulder to shoulder with the people, would readily respond to the call for the election of officers.

This is the programme of the political revolution. It would mean the complete overthrow of the bureaucratic elite and, with the state in the hands of the working people, a guarantee of all the democratic ideals that fired the Romanian people.

Maintaining the nationalised economy, but placing it under the control and management of the workers and peasants, production could be geared to the real needs of the people, not the ruling elite.

Romania is a poor country, with half the population still living in the countryside. But it seems obligatory under Stalinism that the economic plan should be strictly kept within national boundaries. So Romania built up hugely inefficient heavy industries.

An international appeal from a workers' democracy in Romania to the workers on the march throughout Eastern Europe could open the way to a democratic socialist federation of all these countries.

Then their economies could be harmoniously integrated with production of different commodities allocated to the country where it would be most appropriate. In this way economic progress and the living standards of the people could be lifted way above that on offer under capitalism.

Already the Romanian revolution has brought a welcome reduction in the working week from six to five days. Food earmarked for export has been made available. The inhuman policy of

bulldozing villages and relocating their inhabitants in jerry-built blocks on the outskirts of larger towns has been abandoned. And the humiliating monthly gynaecological checks for all women of child-bearing age.

The National Salvation Front has correctly allowed the formation of new political parties, except fascists. There has been the suggestion that the Communist Party's press monopoly be shared out between the new parties. Elections have been set for April.

But who are the leaders of the Front and its government, where did they come from, who are they answerable to?

They include university lecturers, poets and other intellectuals, who had some record of opposition to Ceausescu. But also a significant number, including the National Salvation Front chair Ion Iliescu, are former "Communist" ministers under Ceausescu.

Romania under him was not merely run by a Stalinist bureaucracy, it was a Ceausescu family fiefdom. He

was even grooming his playboy son Nicu Ceausescu as an heir apparent.

There were three million CP members, but a "family mafia" of about 40 took the important decisions, protected by the praetorian guard of the most hardened of the Securitate, picked out from the country's orphanages and taught to look on the Ceausescus as their parents.

Some of those in the National Salvation Front are members of the bureaucracy squeezed out by the family. Do they see the revolution as the first step on the road to workers' democracy or a way to regain what they feel is their rightful position?

There are reports that, far from the Front spontaneously arising in the course of the revolutionary struggle, it was established six months ago.

The Committee for Socialist Democracy, a representative body that took control of Timisoara and was led by a young worker in his 20s, refused to recognise the Front at first. The Front was forced to make a virtue of necessity



*Civilians and soldiers fight against the security police*



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and name the committee as its representative in the area.

The pastor whose plight ignited the movement complained: "In many local committees of the National Salvation Front there are no real representatives of the revolution. All the previous party members are still present."

He warns of "a real danger that everything would now be lost if the old faces and prejudices simply reappeared with a new name."

The new government relies heavily on the armed forces, which despite the euphoria and fraternisation of the revolution remained intact. General Militaru is the new defence minister.

With the mood of the troops the generals had no alternative but to side with the people. But by so doing they stepped in before an armed workers' militia was really able to take-off. And one of the new government's first edicts was for the handing in of all weapons, except the army's.

The other tottering regimes of Eastern Europe considered using the state forces against the masses but drew back. After all, in 1956 it was a bloody attack on the students that pushed the Hungarian revolution well beyond the stage reached yet in East Germany or Czechoslovakia. Workers' councils were established nationwide, power was in the workers' hands. It was only plucked from their grasp by the Russian tanks.

Ceausescu did try to use military firepower. However, the very speed of events up to now has not allowed the workers the chance to establish properly their own workers' committees.

But in addition the behaviour of his "family mafia" made the revolution a personal battle against the Ceausescus for many workers, rather than being clearly against the bureaucratic regime as a whole. What was lacking was a Marxist tendency that could have made clear the character of the bureaucratic system and the tasks necessary to overthrow it.

The ousting of the old dictator and his relations should not be the end but just the beginning of the revolution, which no force within Romania would be able to defeat.

34 years ago in Hungary the workers were striding towards the idea of socialist democracy, today in Romania it is by no means so clear.

Across Eastern Europe Stalinism and its Communist parties are so discredited, so much have they be-

smirched the name of socialism, so tightly have they choked the economies (while capitalism enjoyed a temporary lease of life in the 80s), that all sorts of illusions and confusions have arisen. Capitalist democracy even seems an alternative.

The National Salvation Front talks ambiguously of a "mixed economy." But Romania's economy is in worse shape even than the Polish. Yet the Polish Solidarity government is prepared for a 20 per cent cut in real wages this year as its price for the restoration of capitalism. At some stage the Polish workers will resist. The attacks on Romanian workers' living standards if a return to capitalism is attempted, will

be even more severe.

What room would there be for democracy to survive with the onslaught on workers' conditions necessary for capitalism to be restored? Romania would return to its pre-war status -- a capitalist dictatorship at the mercy of the big western powers.

The people of Romania have fought valiantly to throw off the yoke of hardline Stalinism. They would not willingly exchange it for a new subjugation either capitalist or Stalinist.

They need to find their way to the programme of political revolution. Then they could set a socialist example to the working class, East and West, who are already so inspired by their fighting spirit.

## CZECHOSLOVAKIA

**An attempt at police repression in Prague on the 17th November 1989, swelled a movement of protest which included mass demonstrations and general strikes. This movement brought down Husak's seemingly all-powerful regime in the space of 10 days.**

**An *Inqaba* correspondent sent the following report from Prague in December. Since then the non-Communist Vaclav Havel, in prison in early 1989, has been elected President, and free elections are promised in 1990. But the aspirations of the Czech people for democracy and a decent life will require the completion of this revolution by the working class on a program for workers' democracy and socialism.**

"Free elections is the main demand of the movement. Workers want to end the obscene privileges of the bureaucrats. In Wenceslas Square workers told us the new government should be 'controlled by the workers. It's supposed to be a workers' government."

Hospital workers at Prague's Sanyas special clinic, especially for the party elite, demand that it be thrown open to the public. Health spending accounts for 4.5 per cent of gross domestic product but one-third of that is spent just on the bureaucrats!

Thomas, a rail worker, calls them an "aristocracy". "For them it really has been a paradise these 40 years."

On 4th November Wenceslas Square is packed. Youth stand on the rooftops. A speaker from the high school students' strike committee protests against the new government.

The chants roll in waves from one end of the square to the other: "We are here, we have the power! Resign, resign!" A list is read of the most hated leaders. There is boos and whistling. "Send him to work in a factory!" the crowd thunders. "Give him a shovel!"

In the space of a week the mood has changed. The revolution is maturing --

less good-natured than a week ago.

A speaker from the recently-formed Central Strike Committee, grouping together the strike committees of Prague factories, speaks:

"The strike committees are the way forward. We have no confidence in the central trade union leaders. The strike committees are demanding new elections for the unions in every factory and workplace, and a new national congress in January. The unions should be controlled by the workers."

The new general strike is set for Monday 11 December. As the rally ends there is silence on the platform.

"What about tomorrow?" the chanting begins.

There is silence on the platform.

"Do we come back tomorrow?" they chant again.

Still no answer.

"We'll be back!" chant the crowd.

As we leave we meet two girls carrying huge posters which read: "No confidence in the provisional government! -- V.I. Lenin".

The same poster appears at metro stations along with another new poster calling for the building of the independent strike committees. ,,



# EAST GERMANY

Demonstrations by one million in East Berlin on the 4th November, and similar demonstrations in other major cities, forced Honecker, leader of the Stalinist regime, out of the government. In a desperate attempt to keep the Communist Party in power, his successor, Krenz, opened the Berlin Wall. Three weeks later he too was swept aside. Popular power has brought the apparently most stable regime in Eastern Europe into crisis. But what can replace it?

In November 1918 the German working class surged to the forefront of the European revolution. Workers' councils, together with soldiers' and sailors' councils, took power in every major city.

This points in the direction of workers' democracy. An *Inqaba* correspondent interviews a 19-year old service sector worker who built a workers' council at his workplace:

On the demonstration you carried a banner with the slogan "Form workers' councils", and you formed one in your workplace. How did you do this?

The most advanced workmates sat down together and we agreed that every department would elect a representative, and these delegates would form a workers' council. Every department would draw up a list of problems

in the department itself and also in the whole workplace. All this would be put together, then the workers' council would set about solving the problems. The management would also elect a delegate to the council.

## Why the management?

Because there are people among them who have scientific education

which can be used. What can't be allowed is that some theoretician decides from behind his green desk, over the heads of 500 workers, what happens in the workplace. Those who work with their hands must of course have the majority on the workers' council.

And the management just accepted this?

Well, of course, only under pressure. They first called a meeting of the whole workforce to let off steam. Nearly everybody came. Our proposal for the formation of a workers' council was accepted and delegates were elected from the departments.

In the beginning the management still had illusions and said: "Well all right, then we'll work together with this council." They hadn't got it into their heads that the council would manage the workplace. In the end they bowed to the pressure and elected a delegate to the council. They had no choice!

So we put into practice the 'council' idea of Lenin in 1917. I've also made leaflets for other workplaces, sort of



Hundreds of thousands demonstrate in East Berlin on the 4th of November



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do-it-yourself guidelines on how to form workers' councils.

The anarchists reject this idea because they reject the state as such. But Lenin makes it clear that the working class also needs a state apparatus when it comes to power. Only it will start dying away from day one because class antagonisms will begin to disappear, and then you don't need a state as the instrument of power of a ruling class any more.

It is necessary to have accountable leaders, and also accountable managers, otherwise the whole thing will end in chaos. These leaders must be subject to election, to recall, they have to give reports of what they do and they must not get any privileges.

**How did you personally come across the ideas of Lenin?**

Well, to begin with it was rammed down my throat at school in such a way that you wouldn't want to hear his name afterwards. But I was in sympathy with these ideas. Then I thought: if so many people have gone to their death for Marxism, then maybe there's something to it after all. I started to read the classics of Marxism for myself, especially *State and Revolution* by Lenin. A Marxist from West Germany had recommended this to me. After the first few pages I realised that what the classics of Marxism write about is completely different from what we have in East Germany.

**How do you see the situation at the moment and what do you think of the demands for reform?**

Many people now believe in Modrow and others like him, and think the reforms are coming bit by bit from the top. But if they'd been consistent Marxists they would reform themselves away!

Then there are other groupings who are in favour of a 'social market economy'. But they avoid words like 'capitalism' and 'exploitation' to describe it. For example, the (East German) Social-Democratic Party (SDP) demands "a social market economy which is oriented towards ecological problems, where monopolies are strictly forbidden".

By saying this they are going against all the fundamental laws of market economies. First of all, being "oriented towards ecological problems" isn't possible in a system based on profit and competition. For ex-



**Demonstrators want the secret police abolished Photo: Congress Militant**

ample, West Germany can see no other possibility except to transport their nuclear waste to East Germany.

Secondly, a "social market economy" doesn't exist. Either an economy is social or the market dominates it -- and that means hard competition. Thirdly, monopolies will always be formed at a certain stage in the development of capitalism.

I'm in favour of soviet power -- that is, in all the workplaces as well as in the communities councils are elected, on a local level but also extending upwards. The demands come from the masses and are taken up by the workers' councils, put together and implemented.

So the highest workers' council is actually no government, it is a representative body of the working people which co-ordinates.

Lenin in *State and Revolution* speaks clearly against any form of parliamentarism. At the moment the bureaucracy are trying to make our so-called 'parliament' (Volkskammer) look like the Bundestag (the parliament of West Germany). I'm strongly against this because a parliament like this is only a talking shop and not a real representative body of the people.

**How do you see the reform wing of the SED and the question of new elections?**

The reformers want to form a new workers' aristocracy, following Gorbachev's example. Certainly a lot has been set in motion through Gorbachev's reforms. But we have to distinguish between *glasnost* and *per-*

*estroika*. *Glasnost* is OK but *perestroika* is a betrayal of Marxist ideas. It is an attempt to rescue the privileges of the bureaucracy and to bring more consumer goods into the shops.

But it hasn't worked and therefore we are also seeing signs of opposition from the workers against Gorbachev.

In Hungary and Poland it also didn't function, and the worst situation is in Yugoslavia.

Elections will probably come next year because the pressure is so great. New Forum probably won't stand. They're very popular at the moment but they have no programme at all and they don't regard themselves as a party. The SDP wants a 'social market economy'. And the SED -- all right, you can't say that all its 2.3 million members are Stalinists. Some of them are really in favour of the communist ideals. We have to wait and see how the faction fighting is decided at its congress in December.

But one thing is clear -- if (genuine) communist ideas come to the fore, it would be end of the reform bureaucrats.

Communists in East Germany have two great tasks before them -- first of all, to make clear the real ideas of Marxism. The whole vocabulary of Marxism has been dragged through the mud by the Stalinists. But you can't invent the wheel twice -- why should I invent new words if everything has already been written correctly by Lenin, Marx and Engels?

The second big task is to develop the workers' councils.



# USSR miners demand: End all privileges!

"We were in the square from 19-24 July, night and day. The miners had decided enough was enough. They weren't going to stay quiet any longer. We went to the square to put forward our demands and waited for a reply."

This is how Victor, a miner in the Ukrainian city of Donetsk, sums up their momentous strike this summer. The Ukraine is the most important industrial republic in the USSR, with 50 million people. This area had bitter experiences of Stalinism. 30,000 were shot here in 1937. Donetsk was called Stalino. There are 28 mines with 120,000 employees.

## Exclusive interviews from the Ukraine and Siberia reprinted from *Militant*, 1/12/1989

"Each town has a committee," Sasha told us. "Each pit sends delegates to the town committee. The pit committee discussions are brought to regional level. The strike committee meets once every ten days or when the need arises."

"For a long time the official union has been under the influence of the management. We need an independent union that represents the workers."

"Now things are different. We want to change the union from top to bottom, get our own leaders at every level."

"We will keep our own committees functioning until this is achieved. The same thing applies across the union -- the Kuzbass have their workers strike

committees."

Alexei, who showed us round his pit -- the Zashyadko -- explained that the old union would be very difficult to reform: "It's an organisation that's been in charge for 70 years. The miners are sick of hearing that the trade unions are a 'school of communism'."

In his pit there were 5,400 miners, 10,000 workers altogether. Along with the pit itself goes a state farm, a 'Palace of Culture', house-building, the hostels etc. But they had their own representatives on the STK (official works council) -- in fact he himself was on the STK and on the strike committee.

In March they held an official conference of the miners' union at which demands for new elections to the STKs and the union committees were put.

Ludmilla (herself a Communist Party member): "In the past every candidate had to be a party member! We want to choose someone because they do a good job."

"Other workers agree to cover our jobs while we do the Stachkom (strike committee) work. We don't collect dues for our organisation. We still have to pay the official union! But we collect voluntary donations for special things."

The strike committee has the use of rooms, telephone, canteen, typing equipment, in the Coal Board head office, and the use of the conference hall as well! They had got these facilities because of the power they demonstrated during the strike.

Ludmilla: "In every area commissions are preparing for the local elec-

tions as part of a campaign to get what they want at every level. In Donetsk the Union of Electors involves workers and professionals like teachers, informal organisations and illegal ones also, to fight the party apparatus and anyone who hinders what we are doing."

Sasha: "We're not simply and solely anti-Party. But in the past we were just told: 'Here's your candidate'. People just voted and didn't say anything."

"The government wants to operate *perestroika* from above; we're doing it from below! *Perestroika* is going too slowly and things are getting worse."

He spoke about people's fear of repression dissolving: "Not so much being afraid but taught for so long to wait and be patient. They could see we were patient. We believed in the 'brighter future' under Stalin, Krushchev, Brezhnev. That's what we were looking forward to."

"Now people's psychology is that they are going to create soviet power themselves. What we have seen with the people's soviet (Congress of People's Deputies and Supreme Soviet) is new."

"Before, it would be: 'We need a woman/ a worker/such and such an age'. Now we can decide and discuss with the candidate what we want."

"You know one of our workers' MPs, Terry Fields, sent a message of support to the strike in the summer?"

Lidia: "Yes, it was read out in the square to thousands of miners there."

I said: "The programme in that message means if everyone is involved in government, as Sasha described, there would be no place for 'specialists' to dominate the state machine."

Lidia: "It's a very important thing that workers have control themselves. In the past there was no accountability. People want to be able to check on their representatives after a day or a year. The people at the top get big privileges but don't work! We want an end to all privileges."

Lidia: "At first there were economic demands. Miners were not involved in politics. They would work, get paid, buy their food. Then they





## CRISIS OF STALINISM

started to think. They began to realise they had heard promises and promises but no money came. Now they're standing up for themselves. Miners want sausages, soap, good pay."

After Victor went out, Lidia and Ludmilla told us that he was a very popular man: "He is a miner but he's taking on 'the mafia' (corrupt bureaucracy) as a member of the workers' control body."

"The domination of everything, including all enterprises, leads to corruption. The workers' control commission exposes things. Like people making false claims as invalids for money not due to them."

Crime did fall sharply during the strike. It had been increasing rapidly before that. The police noted that too! Our control took on the functions of the police. The strike committee sent a letter to the authorities saying we are responsible for all policing -- we'll be in full control of the town. Alcohol was banned and so on."

"We made a big mistake when other workers came during the strike. We said we had our own demands. Everyone's affected by the mafia."

Lidia, who was the only woman on the square during the strike, said there was no problem with the police. "They were very worried and concerned, so they helped to get food and drink for the miners in the square."

Later Kolya told us: "During the strike, when everyone was in the square, we had a cordon around the demo as a form of protection. When we

have a meeting in normal circumstances anyone can speak but when the strike was on we said that no-one from outside can be allowed to come in."

This was the first time people have stood up in 70 years. The authorities didn't dare let the police loose because there would have been civil war!

"The government sent its commission to ask what we wanted," said Lidia. "They were terrified that we'd put political demands."

The former secretary of the party in Kolya's mine was pushed out after the strike. "He says he was tired! He went to the pit and said that he was against strikes and that miners are the enemy of the people. His audience shouted out: 'Are you going to refuse the new level of pension that we won through our strike?'"

In Yuri's pit the director, deposed at the time of the strike, has now been reappointed. Yuri explained:

"78 per cent of the miners voted for him in the election, which shows a different balance of forces -- during the strike 70 per cent had been against this man. But he pays high salaries. He also supported the 1 November strike -- clever tactics!"

"The voting was practically open, the curtains of the booths were hardly shut, and there was only one name on the ballot form. This is a victory for the system, not for him. After the election he went into hospital for a month and an engineer acted as director."

"I personally asked the first deputy

minister for coal for a candidate to take his place," said Yuri. "And this deputy minister let me know that he would never do this because it violates the rules of the game."

"In my pit there is a hard core of about 1,000 miners who can act bravely. We managed to insist that the four most radical strikers could go to the university in Moscow on a course. But the management sent a fifth man to spy on them while they were there."

"Management tried to sabotage our strike. They wanted to switch off the electricity and allow the pits to fill in and be closed. We were concerned to prevent explosions and any kind of damage. At first the management didn't help us, but then they closed ranks with the miners."

"At the Red Star pit, where the miners weren't happy with the management, a completely new management was elected after the strike."

Towards the end of 12 hours of discussion these valiant strike leaders presented us with a calender -- "*In memory of our meeting 4/11/89. Greetings of the Donetsk City Miners' Strike Committee.*"

As we watched the TV news together, anger at the distorted coverage of the Vorkuta and Donbass miners' case gave way to delight at scenes of hundreds of thousands of defiant demonstrators in East Germany.

The political revolution was gathering pace! You could feel them thinking: "Not long now!"

# Vorkuta miners fight Stalinism

"The spirit of the fight against Stalin lives on in the miners," declared Sasha as he pinned a Vorkuta miners' badge to my coat.

It was the Vorkuta miners in March 1989 who paved the way for the momentous strike wave of the summer. There the last remnants of the Left Opposition were physically eliminated in 1938.

"That's the reason they are so militant!" Sasha is a leading member of Donetsk's strike committee.

In Moscow we met a woman whose father had disappeared in 1937 after joking on a bus that he would vote for "Comrade Trotsky". How things changed

from the 1960s and 1970s when miners were shot for striking!

Today the miners are forming alternative organisations to the "kept" unions of the bureaucracy. In Novokuznetsk a founding conference took place of an organisation that involves not only miners but all workers looking for a fighting independent organisation.

As the government wavers the workers' confidence increases. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* commented that Vorkuta went on strike "because an already intolerable level of life got worse."

"Even in the autumn a man's hands and feet underground could

freeze after 20 minutes. For months during the Arctic winter a miner might live without seeing the sun. His standard ration for a six-hour shift consisted of a piece of bread, a piece of cheese, and a piece of sausage -- the men call it a dog's dinner."

The extra food promised by the government at the end of the strike has not been forthcoming.

In the Supreme Soviet a proposal to discuss the abolition of Article Six of the constitution -- guaranteeing the leading role of the Communist Party -- was defeated by four votes! This has been one of the miners' key demands.



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For security reasons, fictitious names have been used by writers of articles in this issue of *Inqaba ya Basebenzi*. In every case, however, care has been taken not to give a misleading impression of the background and experience of the comrade concerned. Details about writers are provided only when security considerations make this possible.

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## **Read and Sell**

# **Congress Militant**

**paper of the Marxist Workers'**  
**Tendency of the ANC**

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