

Forty years of the Nats? Thats no cause to celebrate.

THE Nationalist celebrations for ruling our country for 40 years reach a high point on December 16.

For the Nationalists together with their financial backers - monopoly capitalists - the celebrations mean "success" in politics and economy.

But in the words of COSATU president, Elijah Barayi: "Workers have gained absolutely nothing since the Nats came to power in 1948."

"To start with we were never consulted when the government was formed, they declared a white Republic in 1961, again without our consent. All the laws made by the white Parliament are thus imposed on us".

"With the new Labour Relations Act, all our past gains achieved in the post Wiehahn era have been eroded. Therefore workers have nothing to celebrate on this 40th anniversary of Nationalist Party misrule."

"No celebrations for the exploited masses of this country", he said.

The success story of Afrikaner and Nationalist capital is at the core of the apartheid system - the control of the majority to enrich the few who constitute the ruling class. White workers support this system as they get fat pay packets at the expense of black workers.

The winning of elections by the Nationalist Party in 1948 began a new period of intensified misery for black people.

Repressive laws

A vicious network of repressive legislation was thrown over the already oppressed people. Homelands, group areas, forced removals, and pass laws became tools to control the people. The people were opposed to passes - particularly when the pass laws were extended to women.

Sharpeville massacre

In 1960 the level of anti-pass

campaigning reached its highest when demonstrators marched to various police stations without carrying passbooks while others burned theirs. On the 21st March, the police killed 69 African anti-pass demonstrators at Sharpeville.

The Sharpeville killings marked a turning-point in the politics of mass action.

First emergency

To suppress the peoples' revolt the first state of emergency was declared and the ANC was banned. Thousands of people were detained.

Workers' organisations were crushed by the heavy blows of the Nationalist government. The militant SACTU was stripped of its leadership through detentions, bannings and imprisonment while others were forced to go abroad.

Huge profits were made by the apartheid financiers after the repression in the sixties. With the



BARAYI: Workers have gained nothing since the Nats came to power

The 1976 revolt marked another turning point in the struggle.

The determination to oppose apartheid by the youth re-kindled the spirit of opposition throughout the whole country.

June 1976 uprising

In the meantime other Africans in the neighbouring countries won independence.

These historic events further stirred the feelings of resistance against apartheid among the oppressed and exploited of our country.

The 1980s saw the resurgence of the mass democratic movement. People formed their own organisations to control their own lives.

Civic organisations, youth congresses, student, women, village and chiefs' organisations were established throughout the whole country.

Workers as a social group formed their unions outside the legal restrictions put by the government.

The workers on the factory floor came to realise the link between their living conditions in the townships and compounds to their conditions of work and low wages.

As mass action increased against apartheid, an umbrella body for co-ordination of individual organisations and groups was needed - and so organisations like the UDF was formed.

Workers move to lead

The militancy of the democratic workers movement was made a reality by the formation of COSATU and other organisations.

COSATU later adopted the Freedom Charter. Mass action reached its peak in the period between 1984 - 1986 when people started controlling their lives through democratic structures.

The government felt it was losing control and set the state machinery in motion to defeat opposition. Townships and villages were occupied by soldiers with armoured vehicles.

Shootings and detentions became the order of the day. The detentions carried on for almost two years without decline.

While the Nationalist government and its supporters prepared for the highest moment of the 40th anniversary for their misrule and economic mismanagement on December 16, for the black working class and the oppressed masses the struggle continues.

December 16 also marks another turning - point. For it was on this day 27 years ago that Umkhonto we Sizwe conducted a wave of sabotage acts to mark the beginning of the organisation's armed struggle.

Nothing to celebrate

With hundreds of people still in detention and scores on death row waiting for the hangman, millions being subjected to forced removals, young lives lost due to malnutrition and other hunger related diseases and the anonymous killing squads assassinating anti-apartheid activists and trade unionists, there is nothing to celebrate.

The Nationalist policies have divided our country into two hostile camps.

For the black working class the path is clear - an end to apartheid. It is only under a democratic government that the working class will be able to rid itself of oppression and exploitation.



The Great Trek rolls again: but isn't it time the Nats moved on

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The Sarmcol Workers Co-operative, SAWCO, a project of Numsa requires a co-ordinator for its two service projects (bulk buying and primary health). The new staff person will work with the current staff team of two who are working on SAWCO's production and cultural projects.

Candidates will need to have a proven track record in community/trade union organisation. Additional advantages will be fluency in Zulu and English, experience of consumer/primary health projects and a drivers license. A commitment to the building of democratic structures is essential.

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apartheid industries growing fast, the number of African workers increased and they started taking jobs in commerce.

The militancy of this section of the working class became evident in 1973 when a wave of strikes swept the country. In an attempt to curb this militancy the Nationalist government allowed Africans to have their own trade unions subject to registration.

Three years after the workers strikes, their sons and daughters rebelled against the system of Bantu Education introduced by the Nationalist government in 1954.