

AZANIA

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WORKER

No10



CCAWUSA rally in Johannesburg

TOWARDS
WORKERS' UNITY
 IN
SOUTH AFRICA

THE AIM OF AZANIA WORKER

1. The struggle for national liberation in South Africa is a struggle against white domination and racial oppression of the majority black population. White domination and racism are inextricably woven into the economic development of capitalism in South Africa. The elimination of white domination and racism can only be completed after the disappearance of capitalism. Thus the struggle for national liberation is a combined one with the struggle for socialism.

2. The leading role in the struggle for socialism is played by the working class. In South Africa at the present time, this role belongs to the black working class in industry, mining, agriculture and the domestic service of white households. The black workers and their families constitute not only a majority of the population but are also the most oppressed and most exploited section of the population and working class in South Africa.

3. The working class can only secure its leading role in the combined struggle for national liberation and socialism through its own independent political working class organisation which expresses its specific political, economic and social demands. We thus fully support the project of creating an independent political organisation of the working class in South Africa.

4. An independent political organisation of the working class is necessary because:

(i) without an organisation of their own the workers will never in their own name and interests be able to struggle for, assume

and maintain power; workers' power is a necessary condition for successful and meaningful social change that will bring an end to racism and capitalism and usher in a period of transition to socialism; an independent political working class organisation is the means by which the working class secures its interests and representation in any political conjuncture, now and in the future;

(ii) without an organisation of their own the workers will not be able to press within the popular and national liberation struggle the political, economic and social demands of the working class and other dominated classes: the example of many former colonial countries shows that the popular and national struggles often end by serving the interests of indigenous middle class elites rather than those of workers and other toiling classes.

5. An independent political organisation of the working class can only be created out of the political and trade union organisations and the various socialist currents which exist at the time. For this organisation to have deep roots and a mass base in the working class itself, it cannot be built in isolation from the working class and the organisations in which the workers presently find themselves, nor can it be built by any one socialist current in isolation from all others actively involved in workers' and mass struggles.

There is a need, as a step towards the building of a working class organisation, for all socialists to engage in discussion. Our journal is

offered as an open medium of expression to all socialists actively involved in struggles, and remains non-sectarian in that it will publish contributions which may not agree with our own.

6. Without a relevant theory and practice of social change the working class can have no organisation worthy of its leading role. Our journal is further offered as a forum in which socialists from all political currents within the trade unions, student and national liberation movements can contribute towards the development of a relevant theory and practice of social change, and in which they can exchange experiences and lessons drawn from present and past struggles.

7. In a world dominated by capitalism the struggle against capitalism is an international one. We cannot therefore conceive of a political organisation of the working class in South Africa in isolation from the organisations, experience and history of the working class in other countries of the world. We offer our journal as a link between the struggle in South Africa and the struggles in other countries and, to this end, extend an invitation to socialists in other parts of the world to join us in developing a relevant theory and practice of social change and share with us their experiences of struggles in a manner relevant to the workers' struggle in South Africa. In particular, we seek contributions of articles which will help in the understanding of questions such as race, class, culture, ideology, consciousness and subjectivity.

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EDITORIAL

There is a central theme running through most of the articles which appear in this issue of AZANIA WORKER. That theme can be summed up in the word unite: the struggle to unite, on a principled basis, the forces combating apartheid.

The pattern is set in the address by Mandla Seleokane to the media workers annual congress. He sets out in plain terms the problems facing workers in South Africa - political oppression and economic exploitation - and the equally serious problems which stand in the way of working class unity. The major difficulty in this connection is that there is a strong element in the liberation movement which claims its own programme as sacrosanct and which not only rejects all criticism but condemns all criticism as hostile.

The theme of unity also runs through the article by "Zwakala", a comrade who as well as being a leading COSATU trade unionist is active in an embryonic socialist organisation. He points out that the disunity in the liberation movement has given the Botha regime renewed confidence to impose ever more severe repression. He writes that "the belief nourished in the liberal press that the ANC/UDF/COSATU have established an overwhelming hegemony throughout" and that because "criticism of the ANC/UDF/COSATU is seen as reactionary" are factors which have contributed in no small measure to the "internecine conflict and therefore lack of unity."

The articles on the continuing crisis in the Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union of South Africa (CCAWUSA) - written jointly by some CCAWUSA branch secretaries - underline the dangers which threaten the labour movement from within, resulting, as it does, directly from the attempt to impose from above a unilateral one party political line on the trade unions.

A casualty of the imposition of a single political line in COSATU has been the debate on the post-apartheid economy and the creation of a workers' party. Within many of the affiliates of COSATU there is a virtual banning of any discussion which is critical of the Freedom Charter and the political alliances which built around the Freedom Charter do not give a leading role to proletarian organisation. An attempt to re-open this debate is reflected in the article on a Workers' Charter. The article is a transcript of a discussion led by guest speaker at a meeting organised by the Engineering & Allied Workers Union of South Africa, an affiliate of NACTU.

It is in context to reiterate the simple truth that trade unions differ from a political party precisely because they are politically heterogeneous. They seek to unite workers with a variety of political views, or none, in a common struggle for attainable objectives within the capitalist system. This does not mean, of course, that trade unions are non-political or that political persons have no role to play inside the unions.

Quite the contrary. In the course of the struggle over bread and butter issues, especially in this age of imperialist decline, trade unions find themselves more and more in direct confrontation with the state and the need for political solutions. In the particular conditions of South Africa, bread and butter issues are invariably political. But the battle for the political leadership of the working class cannot be achieved by treating the working class as if it was politically undivided or preventing debate and imposing a line (or, for that matter, by the self-proclamation of a vanguard). The leadership has to be won in active struggles and the free interchange of healthy controversy within the movement for national liberation. To do otherwise would take us right back to Stalinism with all the evil consequences that flowed from it.

The resolutions of the CAPE ACTION LEAGUE, published in this issue, take the quest for solidarity and unity a stage further. CAL openly condemns the use of violence "in the settlement of disputes or differences between organisations in the progressive movement." Violence must be reserved as "a means of self-defence against the ruling class and their state." CAL defends the right of ideological dissent and criticism and self-criticism, and calls for a United Front "as a means of ensuring maximum principled unity."

In its way, the review of the biography of Miriam Makeba also reflects the theme of unity. Makeba is a great artist, not only because of the magnificent qualities of her song but because she has always seen her contribution to her art as part and parcel of her fight against apartheid. Her art and politics are indivisible, her songs ammunition in the battle.

WORKERS UNITY

THE ROAD AHEAD

by Mandla Seleoane

1. Introduction

At face value the subject-matter of our discussion is straight-forward. We all know that unity is strength. Therefore we know that, in order to succeed in their struggles, workers have to be united. The road ahead also seems to be straight-forward. We are all struggling for human liberation. Our goal, therefore, is liberation and in order to reach it workers have to unite.

It is only when we begin to ask "What is liberation?" that the straight-forwardness disappears. It is only when we begin to ask "What are the things for which workers should unite?" that the difficulties of our topic becomes obvious.

The temptation may be very strong to reject these two questions as hair-splitting. It is suggested, however, that these questions must be faced squarely, since everything depends on how we answer them. It is the answers to these questions which will determine whom workers should unite with. If we know what we want, we shall be able to choose the correct actions in order to reach our goals. But if we don't know what we want, we shall choose wrong friends and it is unlikely that our strategies will be correct. Archie Mafeje (exiled Professor of Sociology - *Ed.*) once remarked that a "clear identification of issues is as important as fighting in the streets or in the mountains."

2. The meaning of unity

Unity means oneness. Different people become one as a result of their agreement in respect of certain things. Agreement or commonness of purpose is therefore a precondition for unity. You do not unite with people you disagree with. If the last statement is correct, then we could also say that people's beliefs can be deduced from the kind of company they choose to keep.

In order for workers to unite, therefore, there must be a common understanding of the problems they are up against. There must also be agreement about the alternative society they are striving for, and how they think it will be attained.

3. The problem facing workers in South Africa

In South Africa it is difficult to speak about worker problems without qualification. The difficulty is that workers are not just workers: they are black or they are white workers. To a very large extent the nature and the degree of the problems a worker will face in South Africa is determined by the colour of his/her skin. To the extent that people's responses are moulded by the nature of the problem, and by how they experience that problem, we can accept that the responses of black workers cannot be the same as those of white workers.

Having made that point, we can accept that there are two major problems facing the majority of workers in South Africa. Those problems are economic exploitation and political oppression. It is so obviously true that workers are economically exploited, and that black workers lack political rights, that we do not need lengthy arguments to prove that claim.

4. Unity for what?

It seems to me that we should now begin to draw our boundaries fairly clearly. We shall not concern ourselves with white workers, for they have a political interest in the continuation of the order in which we live. In South Africa capitalism has evolved in a manner which made the dehumanisation of black people necessary. Part of this dehumanisation has manifested itself in the denial of political

rights of all black people. Even as I stand in front of you today, white workers are exercising their political rights (in a whites' only general election - *Ed.*) in order to exclude black people, not only from political power, but from the economic wealth of this country as well. The political oppression of black people in this country could never have gone on for so long without the enthusiastic support of white workers. White workers see black people as a political threat. And because of the peculiar way in which capitalism has developed here, they mistakenly see their black counterparts as their class enemy. In short, therefore, the attitudes held by white workers in South Africa today are necessary for the perpetuation of white domination and of exploitive economic relations. Therefore, we must keep them outside our terms of reference.

For the rest of the paper, therefore, the word workers must be understood to mean black workers. When I want to speak about white workers, I shall state that clearly.

We have said that the problems facing workers in South Africa are political oppression and economic exploitation. The problem of political oppression can be addressed within the framework of the struggle for national self-determination. It is only when everybody has the right to vote and be voted for; when people who are voted for are liable to immediate recall for not fulfilling the wishes of the majority, that political oppression will come to an end.

The problem of economic exploitation can be addressed within the framework of the struggle for socialism. Only when the private ownership of the means of production is abolished will the exploitation of one person by another come to an end. When the needs of people,

rather than the profit motive, take control of productive labour, we shall be able to abolish poverty for all and not just the monied few. The struggle against poverty requires that we should establish a social system that will forbid people from throwing tons of milk and of oranges into the sea when hundreds of thousands of people go to bed with empty stomachs.

This analysis leads us to the conclusion that workers should unite in order to establish a democratic socialist society. It is only in that type of society that the problems we have referred to can be solved.

5. The problems in uniting workers in South Africa

There seems to be three problems standing in the way for worker unity in South Africa. The first and major one is that the issues involved in the struggle are perceived differently. The second is that there is no general agreement about the methods to be used in solving those issues, even if we could reach a common understanding thereof. The third is that the participants in the struggle have a greater commitment to their organisational positions than the solution of the problems facing the workers.

About the different perceptions, there is little one can do except allow free and constructive debate in the hope that there may be some agreement in future. Even if there is no prospect of agreement, free debate must still be allowed. In Mao Tse-tung's words: "There need be no fear that the policy of a Hundred Flowers will yield poisoned fruit. Sometimes it is necessary even to have this poisoned fruit in order to know what it is that we are fighting against... It is not enough to attack reactionaries. We must know exactly what the reactionaries want and what they represent."

You may feel uncomfortable about the demand that even reactionaries must be given the freedom to air their views. Our experiences in 1985/6 show, however, that Mao was correct. If we say reactionaries must not be heard, the question arises: Who defines reactionaries? We have lost several dedicated revolutionaries since 1985 because one section of the liberation movement abrogated to itself the right to define other sections as reactionary. That is the risk we take if we elect to suppress the views of those we consider to be reactionary. Once we have committed ourselves to that position, it will be easy and tempting to

consider all those who do not agree with us to be reactionaries. Let us not forget how easy Stalin found it to kill thousands of committed socialists under the pretext that they were reactionary!

If it is difficult to reach agreement on what the struggle is about, it will be just as difficult to reach agreement on how it should be prosecuted. The reason for this is that it is our understanding of what the issues are which informs us what our response should be, and what form they should take. For as long as our understanding of the issues is different, therefore, we are bound to follow different paths to our objectives. Indeed, even if we could agree on the issues, that would not necessarily lead to agreement on methods.

Our 1985/6 experiences have shown us the dangers involved in one section of the liberation movement deciding that it alone understands the issues correctly. They have shown us further the dangers which exist if one section of the liberation movement comes to the conclusion that only its methods are capable of being correct. Therefore we must resist the tendency of political organisations to think that they have a monopoly on truth. We must resist with everything we have the emerging inclination to think that there is a copyright to the struggle.

This means that while we must do everything to narrow the perceptual gap which exists among our organisations today, we have to display revolutionary tolerance for divergent views and methods. It means that we must agree, while these differences last, to march under different banners, but that we must strike together. But we must never allow ourselves to sink to the low level of thinking that we have a monopoly of truth. We cannot allow the struggle to degenerate into an anti-democratic position where we kill people for holding views which differ from ours. If we cannot be liberated in this way, then maybe it is not worth our while to struggle for liberation.

The tendency of activists to elevate their organisations above the struggle is another serious obstacle to unity. The reason we have a multiplicity of organisations is that, initially, the participants in the struggle saw the issues differently. They also saw the way forward differently. Therefore it was inevitable that we should have different organisations. But once that had happened, the multiplicity of organisations assumed a logic of its own.

Instead of planting the seeds of unity, these organisations fostered disunity. Instead of becoming vehicles for liberation, these organisations became synonymous with liberation. Rather than become the means to the end, these organisations now presented themselves as the end itself.

Under such circumstances it is understandable why young people who must still learn about the nature and the objectives of the struggle so easily come to the conclusion that differing with their organisation is selling out on the struggle. If such lessons were not reckoned in human life, we might say it was worthwhile learning them.

If the liberation movement wishes to move away from the destructive path it now moves on, then correct political education becomes an obvious need. We have to begin to teach our cadres the sort of things which unite, rather than those which divide. We have to develop educational programmes which will narrow the gap between our organisations, rather than ones which will widen it. This will entail open and honest debate on all issues affecting our social life in South Africa. It is only in an atmosphere of open and honest debate that we can see our mistakes about what is involved in the struggle. In the final analysis we have to teach our cadres that the struggle is more important than all our organisations put together. We have to teach our cadres that our organisations exist for the struggle and not the other way round.

The sort of things I'm saying here seem fairly obvious: so obvious, in fact, that we must ask: why have they not been done? In my view the answer is not difficult to fathom. If organisations did give their cadres such education, a critical cadreship would arise. This cadreship would question, not only the things done to us by our oppressors and by our exploiters: it would question a number of things happening in the liberation movement itself. Our organisations are not ready for such a critical or questioning fellowship. But our whole future hinges on that, and an honest approach to the struggle would make it imperative for us to impart that kind of education to our members.

Although I am emphasizing political organisations, the connection with labour organisations is obvious. Nobody will deny that political organisations are responsible for a greater part of the divisions we see in the labour movement today. Whenever unionists contemplate affiliation to a federation, the uppermost

question is: What are the politics of COSATU or of NACTU? Have they adopted any political document?

If we can approach political differences in the liberation movement in a responsible and democratic manner, many of the problems faced by unionists stand a good chance of disappearing.

6. Whom should workers in South Africa unite with?

We have said that the problems facing workers in South Africa are political oppression and economic exploitation. We said also that the solution lies in creating a socialist democracy. It makes sense, therefore, to assert that workers should unite with all those who are committed to working for such a society.

The problem we have is that there are people who are committed to the establishment of a democratic social order, but not socialism. Must workers unite with such people?

Firstly, I would say that workers have to understand that socialism is a social order which makes it possible in a practical manner for democracy to be realised. Outside of socialism, you can have democracy only in the formal sense. That means you will have declarations to the effect that people are free and equal. But if you check whether, in reality, they are free and equal, you will not have difficulty in deciding that they are not.

People cannot be equal where, by virtue of the means of producing wealth being in the hands of a few people, the majority are condemned to poverty. Everybody knows, and you know from your own experiences, how much power those who are rich have over those who are poor. And you know how much freedom you have in comparison with those who employ you. That is the sort of equality and freedom these people have in mind for you when they offer to support your struggle for democracy but not for socialism.

That analysis does not mean workers cannot cooperate with such groupings. In South Africa, where we still have to win even such formal declarations of equality and freedom, even that kind of support is important. But workers must know and understand the limited distance they can travel with such elements. In other words workers must know and understand that long-term alliances are not possible - indeed not even desirable - with such groups.

A situation, therefore, where a labour

organisation seems to prefer links with such elements above co-operation with another labour organisation in the same country, must go down in history as a sad negation of everything worker struggles are about.

The other problem we must resolve is whether, and on what basis, workers can co-operate with people who are not themselves workers, but who are committed to the establishment of a socialist democracy.

If people who belong to other classes are prepared to give up their position in those classes; to give up the interests of the class they wish to move out of; and they embrace the interests of the working class, then nothing stands in the way for the working class to co-operate with them. But if they approach the working class without an interest in changing the socio-economic relations now prevailing for the benefit of the working class; if they are not ready to submit to the revolutionary discipline of the working class, there is no scope for the working class co-operating with such people. Further, these people must approach the working class as individuals. They cannot come as a class to the workers, since a contradiction would then arise. As a class, their interests are not reconcilable with those of the workers. Therefore a multi-class approach would present us with an insoluble contradiction.

7. On the fact that two trade union federations exist today in South Africa

Clearly the fact that two trade union federations exist in South Africa is a sign of how disunited workers are. Lack of unity must be worked through constructively and democratically. If this is to happen, the legitimacy of both federations must be recognized. Therefore all efforts by one federation to undermine the other must be resisted. And they must be exposed for what they are - viz the height of Stalinism, and therefore anti-democratic!

If we face up to the challenges ahead of us, we have to recognize that unity does not fall from heaven. Unity is a process and it is worked at. Unity implies division. We have to divide before we unite. And we have to deliberately set out to divide if we mean to have lasting unity. The forces of oppression must be separated from the forces of liberation. The forces of exploitation must be separated from the forces of socialism. In

the long run the forces of socialism must even be separated from the forces of liberation - if the liberation intended is not aimed at freeing humanity from exploitive social relations.

That is where and how we ought to start our journey to genuine liberation. Once we have effected such divisions, we shall be able to unite those who matter most for our liberatory effort. But for as long as our haste to unite leads us to a situation where we have the wolves and the sheep in one kraal, for so long will true unity evade us. The eventual unity of workers in South Africa, and therefore the possibility to have one union federation, depends on whether our unionists are willing to effect the careful divisions which working class unity all over the world.

8. Trade unions and political organisations

It is well-known by now that trade unions have to co-operate with political organisations if they must make a meaningful contribution to the effort to remove our social problems. There has been a disturbing tendency, however, to confuse co-operation with political organisations with submergence of trade unions in political organisations. The tendency has, in South Africa, even led to a situation where trade unions have refused to embrace socialism. Such a situation is most unfortunate, since we have seen that socialism is the only hope which workers have for moving out of their present misery. In order to make sure, therefore, that trade unions do not surrender the interests of workers, it is necessary that their independence must be guarded jealously.

9. Conclusion

By way of concluding I would like to remind us what we are basically saying in this paper. We are saying that the unity of workers is crucial if our struggles must succeed. But we seek genuine and principled unity, rather than unity for its own sake. In order to have the type of unity required for our arduous journey, we have to discriminate. Our basis for discrimination is whether or not those we seek to unite will have our interests at heart. And we are saying that co-operation with political organisations does not carry with it the inevitable need for trade unions to be swallowed up by political organisations.

There is no doubt that the amendment to the State of Emergency regulations, which effectively bans seventeen organisations and restricts the activities of trade unions, is the most severe blow to legal resistance since the banning of Black Consciousness organisations in October 1977. The severity of these measures, combined with the proposed new Labour Relations Amendment Bill, clearly indicates that the regime is sparing no quarter against resistance. The Labour Bill attempts to emasculate the labour movement by curbing its economic strength and its political boldness. The intention is to roll back the gains made by trade unions over the past decade.

It is important for us in the liberation movement to make sense of these measures, the State's long term strategy and what we need to do. At the same time we need to be critical, take stock of our organisations and understand why a well organised fight back has not materialised - aside from moral dissent by the church and brave but ineffectual attempts by newly formed organisations.

The latest measures against our organisations must be seen in the context of events during the past few years: it will be argued that the seeds for the failure of an effective counter-attack by the liberation movement were sown earlier on.

Following the successful agitation against the Tricameral Parliament, we witnessed heightened resistance in 1984 and 1985. This resistance was uneven geographically and at times filled with contradictions and mistakes. Nevertheless, it was heroic, courageous and enriched by attempts at developing alternative education structures and innovative methods of struggle: factory occupations, alternative education and street/defence committees made their embryonic appearance. The rent and consumer boycott forcefully made their appearance felt in certain areas. The school boycott persisted for over two years in many townships.

The struggle at this time was also wracked with internal contradictions, an absence of long term perspectives and working class leadership, and disappointingly plagued with a sectarianism

that on occasion gave rise to vicious internecine conflict. Many of these factors created an opening for agent provocateurs and the police who channeled the discontent into physical struggles among the oppressed. Under these circumstances the "necklace" and vigilantes came into being.

Street committees, defence committees and alternative education were all gaining ground and their form opened up great

flounder on the rocks of sectarianism and exhaustion, Botha pounced and struck hard.

The first State of Emergency was declared. The regime made the movement pay a heavy price for challenging its rule: 1200 people were murdered, many maimed and nearly 25000 people detained during 1985 alone. The state took the movement head on. Township organisations were effectively crippled or paralysed (but state terror is only part of the explanation for this).

The second State of Emergency in June 1986 saw the trade union movement as one of the targets. The thin divide between political and economic struggle, the nature of racial capitalism and the character of the state, inevitably pushes unions to confront political issues. The fear by the regime of this action against the unions triggering a general uprising or general strike, was not realised. It was largely the Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union of South Africa (CCAWUSA) which came out on strike to protest and demand the release of detainees under the State of Emergency.

What happened in CCAWUSA was a rank and file confidence and organisation which allowed them

STATE REPRESSION AND WHAT THERE IS TO BE DONE

by Zwakala

possibilities. However, the content was in many cases problematic, even counter-revolutionary. Defence or street committees, for example, were sometimes manipulated into attacking ideological opponents in the liberation movement. Alternative education, assisted by some organisations, degenerated into a carte blanche glorification of the Freedom Charter.

The strategy of ungovernability, which preached the imminent collapse of the Botha regime, led many youths and students to behave in an undisciplined and adventurist manner, and finally into a cul de sac. Some advocates of the consumer boycott, for instance, resorted to appeals to the bourgeoisie to talk to the government, while using youths and students to enforce the boycott in a coercive, undemocratic manner against workers. When this strategy began to stagnate and

to build a strike wave almost spontaneously. The union continued to function and fight in spite of many leaders and officials being arrested, or going into hiding. COSATU's reluctance to support CCAWUSA's actions was disappointing, and its failure and indecisiveness in building on this militancy showed its weakness.

The demoralisation in the second half of 1986 was again broken by CCAWUSA. This came in the form of the strike by 11000 OK Bazaars workers over a period of 10 weeks. This strike mobilised thousands of people over and above the actual number of strikers, in various types of support activities. This strike was crucial for two main reasons which require elaboration:

1. It gave the labour movement renewed confidence. After the promulgation of the second State of Emergency, the strike was the first organised and

sustained fight against, albeit indirectly, the biggest capitalist enterprise in South Africa: Anglo-American Corporation. The result was a tangible victory for the OK Bazaars workers. This despite the interest shown by the state and its repressive apparatus. Almost 1000 workers were detained for varying periods during the strike.

2. The strike showed the possibility of successful unity in action, non-sectarianism and a united front strategy. Political groups such as AZAPO, UDF, AZANYU, as well as independent socialists, together with the then CUSA-AZACTU labour federation and some trade unions from COSATU, supported this struggle under the banner and leadership of the striking workers.

The success of a strike should not only be determined by the short-term material victories, but also by the raising of the level of socialist consciousness. Both these criteria were largely met. Both Premier Milling and Anglo-American have a large stake in OK Bazaars. The managing directors of both these companies, Tony Bloom and Gavin Relly, have been known for sometimes vociferous attacks on apartheid. Both these men held talks with the ANC in Lusaka before the strike. During the strike, workers clearly spelt out in placards they carried on picket lines that "Anti-Apartheid bosses are not our friends". As an aside it is not difficult to understand why large numbers of workers and political activists are suspicious of alliances with liberals to create a broad anti-apartheid front. This disagreement with popular front politics is not a theoretical construct but is rather born out of the living experience and daily class struggles of large numbers of workers. The struggles of the CCAWUSA workers against members of NAFKOC (Richard Maponya, Reuel Khoza, and other black businessmen in the retail trade), considered by organisations supporting the popular front to be a component of their broad front against apartheid, are an example of why workers would resist such a front.

On the heels of the OK strike in 1987 came the massive strikes by SATS, postal, municipal, SASOL and mine workers. Not all these strikes were successful, but the point is that it was the OK strike which showed the possibility of strike action under the state of emergency and opened a space for tremendous militancy throughout 1987.

Why the present measures?

The ostensible reason given for the sec-

ond State of Emergency in June 1986 was that a massive and diabolical plot to topple the government was worked out by the SACP and ANC, and that this event would coincide with June 16th commemorations of the Soweto Uprising. This was inconceivable. The regime certainly used June 16th as an excuse for the crackdown it had long wanted. With the new curbs added to the State of Emergency regulations, the regime didn't even bother to offer an excuse.

The real reasons for the the latest measures are the complex interplay between reform and repression: two sides of the same coin.

1. The regime needs to reassert its political initiatives. The general thrust of Botha's reforms (which are to incorporate privileged layers of the Black middle class) must continue. The National Statutory Councils, Regional Services Councils, etc. must not fail. The collaborators in the local councils must (in some cases) literally be given a new lease of life. The October municipal elections must go ahead without serious disruption. The regime needs political room to manoeuvre, to implement its economic programme for the oppressed communities.

2. Despite the crippling of community organisations, certain types of struggle have persisted. For over two years the regime has tried to break the rent boycott in certain townships. They first used brute force resulting in the White City Jabavu massacre and then attempted to force bosses to deduct rent arrears from the wages of workers. They have now resorted to a massive advertising campaign, running into millions of rands, together again with the use of brute force, to break the boycott. In the meantime the flimsy authority of the local councillors continues to be eroded as a result and much revenue from rents (sorely needed for the regime's reform package) is not forthcoming.

3. The Botha regime is faced with a situation where it has to conciliate diverse interests, inside the ruling class and imperialism, as well as take account of pressure from its elected base. The Nationalist Party is losing support of the white working class to the CP/AWB. Botha needs the crucial support and must maintain a strong crucial influence in the police and army. The CP/AWB is waiting in the wings for swelling white popular reaction, to allow them to do to Botha what the Nationalist Party themselves did to General Hertzog. The latest measures then are also an attempt to reassure and

placate the fears of the white population. 4. When the regime accepted Wiehahn's recommendations to legalise Black trade unions, as part of its reform package, the regime thought it could follow the strategy of incorporation it had pursued so well for the white workers in the 1920s and 1940s. Attempts were made to create a labour aristocracy from those workers who were legally allowed to live in urban areas. The aim was to tame workers and make unions accountable for illegal worker action. Ever since the 1970s (the mass strikes in Natal in 1973 and the coming into being of Black Consciousness) black workers have become more assertive. Trade unions, far from blunting the militancy, have provided the space and resources for an increase in worker action. The state and the bosses thus needed to restructure industrial relations. Some farsighted bosses have already introduced the system of worker share-ownership. Unions need to be vigilant of this insidious attempt at buying off workers. More blatantly though, the regime intends to push through the Labour Relations Bill. The gravity of this move is widely acknowledged in the labour movement. While the trade union movement as a whole has not yet properly worked out a cohesive, thorough strategy to fight this move, it does threaten to do so. The regime is not taking any chances and wants the passage of this Bill without without severe social dislocation. The restrictions

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on the trade unions can thus be seen in this light.

5. The regime has confidently and unhesitatingly taken these severe measures because it knows an effective fightback will not be forthcoming. Partly to be blamed for this state of affairs is the mistakes made in the liberation movement, the lack of clear working class leadership, disunity and sectarianism. These factors together with excesses committed by undisciplined youth have given rise to the vigilante phenomenon. We can not only blame agent provocateurs for the physical conflict between oppressed people. Two cases, Pietermaritzburg and Crossroads, will suffice. According to the 1985 Consultative Conference Documents of the ANC, we read on pages 20-21 how the ANC confesses to regularly keeping in touch with Buthelezi in the 1970s. In fact, according to the House of Commons evidence, Tambo admitted that the ANC was instrumental in forming Buthelezi's Inkatha (page 2 Foreign Affairs Committee, 29 October 1985). This at a time when the Black Consciousness movement was locked in battle with all collaborators, including Buthelezi.

Similarly, the UDF worked closely with the Chairman of the Western Cape Civic Association - a founder member of UDF. The UDF was warned to be careful of Mr N Ngxobongwana who became famous in Crossroads because of gangster-like operations. The UDF did not heed this warning.

These blunders have cost many lives and much suffering. The flag of Inkatha is smeared with the blood of unionists, students and political activists. The "witdoeke" at the beck and call of Mr Ngxobongwana have carried out many atrocities. The blunders will continue because the ANC/UDF leadership fails to approach questions a proper class analysis.

There is also a readily discernible ideological intolerance in certain resistance organisations and the labour movement. This partly springs from the belief nourished in the liberal press that the ANC/UDF/COSATU have established an overwhelming hegemony throughout South Africa. Criticism of the ANC/UDF/COSATU is seen as reactionary. These attitudes have in no small part contributed to the internecine conflict and, therefore, lack of unity. The attempt made by the COSATU leadership to smash CCAWUSA because of its resistance toward the imposition of the Freedom Charter is a case in point.

The regime has therefore had an easy time to dictate the pace of the struggle and to call the tune. It would be amusing if it was not so tragic to observe that a few months ago organisations were calling for the unbanning of the ANC. Today they are calling for the unbanning of UDF.

6. It should be abundantly clear to us by now that the regime is not willing to negotiate in the short to medium term. Their aim is clear: to weaken the Resistance as much as possible. Repression will increase. Death squads have clearly taken root and their activities will expand.

We should not, though, rule out the possibility of the regime offering a negotiated settlement if it knows full well that the liberation movement is so weakened that it has very little to bargain with. Western imperialism, the Soviet Union as well as the war-weary Frontline States and sections of the liberation movement will be tempted to acquiesce. We must continue to be alert to this possibility.

If the regime perceives that it can not, despite its measures, contain resistance as well as the extreme right wing threat, it could yet unambiguously bring out the military and settle for an out and out fascist solution which will include the banning of trade unions.

Whatever the scenario, our task is clear: **BUILD A GENUINE UNITED FRONT!**

This slogan, put forward many years ago by certain sections of the liberation movement, takes on a greater urgency. The increasing talk of a United Front in many quarters is positive but brings in its wake dangers as well as a repetition of mistakes. Generally there is a confusion between a united front and a popular front.

The strategy of a popular front arose in 1935. This was a result of the ascendancy of Nazism in Germany. This strategy was largely chosen for reasons of Russian foreign policy. Stalin hoped to prevent a German Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union through an alliance with the "democratic" capitalist powers Britain, France and America. The Popular Front was designed to achieve this end. The Communist Parties should unite against fascism not just with the Social Democrats and Labour Parties but also with "democratic" capitalists opposed to fascism. This strategy amounted to an abandonment of the goal of socialist revolution. In practice it meant the Communist Parties had to hold back workers' struggles in order not to antagonise the capitalist parties they sought to involve in the Popular Front.

In South Africa there is a danger of a

similar trend. To quote a UDF discussion paper:

"Anti-apartheid forces include the PFP, NDM, IDASA and various other groupings and individuals. They are an increasingly important force for change even if they never join the democratic movement. For this reason we need to work in alliance with them against our common enemy - apartheid."

The overwhelmingly bourgeois/petty-bourgeois Five Freedoms is already seen to be a part of the "democratic movement".

The bringing into the UDF of the Inyandza Movement of Mabuse, the leader of the Kangwane homeland bantustan, NAFCOG and other liberal bourgeois forces mentioned above is the ideal recipe for a Popular Front in South Africa.

While the strategy of the Popular Front entertains the forging of an alliance between the ANC/UDF, bosses, collaborators in the bantustans, and white parliamentary parties, it excludes many progressive and left-wing organisations representative of workers and the oppressed. Alliances with organisations such as the National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU), AZAPO and other forces in the Azanian Tendency. Quite simply, organisations in the liberation movement which do not subscribe to the Freedom Charter are dismissed.

We need to stress that a United Front today is imperative. A United Front has a clear set of principles and objectives. These are in the interests of the working class. A United Front excludes forces whose intention is to maintain capitalism but fight apartheid only. The United Front is not an abstract theoretical construct: it must be tempered in the heat of battle. There are, and will continue to be, numerous practical issues around which a United Front strategy can be built. The Labour Relations Amendment Bill is an ideal case in point. In future there will be others.

Finally, it would be wishful to think that in the long term, a spontaneous, automatic, socialist revolution will occur with working class hegemony, without a leadership intervening with its programme of action to organise and lead it. A discussion around this conscious political organisation of the working class is beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say that this organisation is necessary if we believe that the choice is between Socialism and Barbarism. 9 April 1988

THE WORKERS' CHARTER

An address* presented to a seminar organised by the Western Cape region of the Engineering and Allied Workers Union of South Africa, an affiliate of the National Council of Trade Unions.

It is important that we try to make a serious contribution to this very important discussion. Every worker has the right and duty to do so. The Workers' Charter (WC) must embody the real interests and ideas of the working class.

I am starting off by looking at the history of the word *charter*. The discussion going on in this country about the WC is also a discussion about the word *charter* and the word *manifesto*. Many people in Nactu use the term *manifesto*.

Charter and manifesto

The word charter was first used in England more than 700 years ago in 1216 when the Magna Carta was proclaimed to limit the powers of the king. It represented the beginnings of the constitutional entrenchment of the rights of the individual. The word charter was linked up with the concepts of freedom and liberty. It was next used in the 19th century when workers in England were struggling for the franchise. This movement, called the Chartist movement, drew up a people's charter demanding the vote for all men. The history of the 19th century in England is the history of the gradual broadening of democracy. (This raises a strange comparison between P.W. Botha, who believes he is giving black people of SA such a right through a process of broadening democracy). The people's charter of the Chartists was the most immediate beginning of all ideas of freedom charters in the modern world. There are many examples around the world where the word charter was used as part of the struggle for freedom.

The word was used by Roosevelt during World War II at a time when the allied powers needed the support of the colonies for their struggle. They felt that they needed to grant the colonised people freedom in exchange for their participation in the war. There was a terrible contradiction in the fight of colonised peoples for freedom against oppression and Nazism in Europe. This contradiction became very obvious to those people in the colonies. The Atlantic Charter signed by Roosevelt and Churchill promised freedom to the colonies after the war. This was the beginning of the de-

colonisation process. Thus, historically, the ideas of a charter and freedom belong together.

In our own history the expression *Charter of Liberty* was used by the Unity Movement in 1943 a year after the Atlantic Charter was proclaimed. In the preamble to the Ten Point Programme they referred to a Charter of Liberty. This was the first South African referral to the term charter. Subsequently, in 1955, the Freedom Charter was drawn up in Kliptown by the Congress Alliance. Today, we are now speaking of a Workers Charter.

The word manifesto is equally important in the history of the world and of the working class. The first time this word gained prominence in the history of the world was with the Communist Manifesto drawn up by Marx and Engels. In our own country there have been many manifestos, the best known being the Azanian Manifesto adopted in June 1983.

The need for a workers' charter

My purpose in going into this history is to show that the struggle is not merely about words on paper but that it is a struggle for freedom. Any programme of demands or principles of action is as important as a plan is to a builder. Any organisation or movement needs a programme as much as a builder needs a plan. Without a programme our actions can be changed from day to day. Self-appointed leaders can run away with the organisation because there would be no way to hold them accountable. A programme is one of the most significant achievements in a people's struggle for liberty. Without such a programme a people is subject to leaders. I have nothing against leaders but I am against leaders who are not accountable to people.

This leads us to the question of why we need a WC or programme. Why do we need another charter, a WC, if we have all these other charters? In order to answer this question it is necessary to understand our society, where most people are forced to sell their labour in the market. Individuals are forced to bargain over the price of their labour-power by virtue of the fact that they are

forced to sell their labour-power. This labour-power is what you sell to the boss. For 8 hours or more a day the boss has control over your ability to work. It is because you are forced to sell your labour-power that you are a worker. People situated in our society as workers have different interests from other people in our society who are not forced to sell their labour-power. If all people in South Africa had the same interests there would be no need for another charter.

In South Africa today all black people have common interests such as obtaining the right to vote, to move freely and to own houses. Then why should it be that a shopkeeper and a worker would have different interests when as blacks they would have common interests? Why should we make this distinction? Unless this is understood we won't understand why we need a workers' charter. While all blacks, all the oppressed of South Africa, do have common interests, it is not true to say that all *our* interests are the same. All black people have common interests but not all our interests are the same. Most people who own shops and factories want to own larger factories, larger shops, etc. This is the natural law of capitalist development. One wants to be richer and stronger. When these people have got the rights in the Freedom Charter or the Ten Point Programme, why should they want to struggle further? After all, most people don't want to struggle.

Capitalism without racism?

Let's say we reach a point in our history where there is no more racism but the capitalist system has not changed. There would be blacks who are bosses. The workers, though, are still forced to sell their labour-power. The workers are still as unfree as before even though they can go and vote every 5 years. Let's take the example of Zambia, where there are many more black bosses and the whites to a large extent have left, although there are still many multinational corporations. What is the position of the black workers in the copper mines? Not better, and for many it is worse. In Zambia and Lesotho, where people are free in the sense they can vote and live where they want to, the workers are still not free.

*The transcript of the address as published by us has not been ratified by the comrade who made the address.

Many of the points we are saying should be in a WC are already in the existing documents. But with the possible exception of the Azanian Manifesto, there is no provision for the leadership of the working class. If we want to reach a point where everyone can develop fully then the workers, the working people, who, as Marx said have nothing to lose but their chains, must lead the struggle. Others will want to stop the struggle after some rights have been obtained.

We must not see the struggle as only black versus white although to an extent that is what it is and what it looks like. We must see how colour and class work together. A WC is necessary in order to ensure that the struggle is led by the working class, especially the black working class. While there are many white workers we cannot at this moment depend on them. Thus the black workers must be the ones who will lead the struggle.

What kind of reforms?

Another reason why the workers' charter is important is that we need a programme of demands that will state clearly what kinds of reforms we need now in order to strengthen our position as workers. We must look at the situation as a battle. Two generals on opposing sides will always find ways to strengthen their sides. They will send people before the battle to capture some of the enemy to strengthen their position before the final battle.

We, too, must make sure that our position as working class is strengthened to make sure that when the final battle is fought we are assured of victory. Victory does not fall from heaven; it must be fought for and it takes time. In the WC working class interests must be embodied and the reforms that we want the enemy to make now must be listed. I deliberately use the word reforms but I want to stress that there is a big difference between fighting for reforms and reformist struggle. For example, the fight for trade unions has been a major reform won by the working class. Once workers have that right they have been able to strengthen their own position. In the past, and in many countries, people had to fight and were imprisoned in the fight for this right. To fight for reforms like that and to force the enemy to make them is not a reformist struggle. A reformist struggle means going to the government, going into the government and pleading with the government. People who do that



have accepted that they are slaves. But what we have done is to go into the factories on strikes and into the streets, forcing the government to make reforms. We have won many reforms since 1976. There is a difference between fighting for specific reforms to strengthen our position for a long-term struggle and fighting for reformist goals.

Your demands in the workplace

I have seen from the lists of demands from you in the workplaces that many of the demands you are raising are similar to those I am suggesting. I am starting with political demands. First, there is no doubt that our first demand is universal suffrage. Without this almost anything else will not work. It is a question of workers' control of political power. It is not that workers will sit in the present Parliament, but that they have the right to determine their leaders and representatives. The second demand is equal rights for people in all respects. The third demand is for the right of immediate recall of all delegates to representative bodies. This is what you are already doing in your union, where any person who is not carrying out the mandate of the workers can be recalled. This right is not part of any of our existing documents. In a WC the right of immediate recall of all delegates to representative bodies must be underlined. (Another right is the right to bear arms. In any democratic country the workers have the right to bear arms and to form workers' militias. Otherwise you are at the mercy of the state or the enemy army. This also, probably for legal reasons, is not in any of the documents.)

On the economic front the right to work is one of the most important demands. The 35 hour week has become possible in SA. Today it is quite possible to produce what we need in a 35 hour week so that we have more leisure time. We also need a minimum wage which is a living wage. The right to form trade unions is very important today as the government is trying to push back the rights we have already one.

On the social and cultural front we should, in my view, have a statement that no one should receive wages without giving labour. Maternity and paternity benefits and all aspects of social security must be spelled out. Other demands include the right to learn and free education for all up to Standard 10 and the prohibition of child labour under the age of 16. Education should be linked up with production for social needs where labour is something for which you are educated. Productive work must become a pleasure not a burden. There should be state provision of free legal representation for all workers, as well as health care and housing and recreation for all. These must be free; no one should have to pay for these things. They must be at the centre of a workers' charter.

I want to conclude by mentioning how a workers' charter can be formed. The EAWU can't draw up such a charter on its own but they can contribute to this process. All trade unions and the working class as a whole must be involved. A WC must be drawn up in a democratic, participatory manner. It must be worked out from below rather than drawn up by union officials. It must be discussed at all union conferences. The EAWU has an important role to play in raising the issue at the workplace and getting workers to

discuss the issue. The next step for the EAWU is to contact other unions and start discussing the issue with them. Finally, in the long-term the process we are starting here of drawing up a WC can only lead to the formation of a party of the workers. How this will come about and be shaped is not for me to say at the moment. There are many people's organisations. Either they take up the struggle for working class leadership or the workers will have to form such a party themselves. There must be a party that can fight for workers rights not only at the workplace, but in the communities and all other places. Let us go from here today with the knowledge and power by asking questions and discussing this issue.

Summary of Questions and Discussion

The following is a summary of the points raised by the audience.

1. The right to arms: The way this will be formulated is extremely important, otherwise it would possibly make such a document illegal. I raise the issue because it is a vital part of a workers' charter. This is because in any state power is determined in the final analysis by those who have armed power. No matter how great a document we draw up, without the power to defend it, it is meaningless. Although the government will not give us this demand we must nevertheless make it in order to accustom our people to the fact that they must have this right. Even if individuals don't want to bear arms everyone must have the right to bear arms. How are the whites able to withstand all attempts to curtail their power? They have the right to bear arms, and most white families possess arms. This is the difference between us and them.

2. Why the black working class rather than working class? SA is a peculiar country because of the way racial discrimination is not just enshrined in the constitution but because it is part and parcel of the profit system. Until recently profit really depended on racial discrimination to a large extent. The best example are mines and agriculture. Without cheap black labour, especially migrant labour, the mines and farms would not have been able to accumulate the profit and capital with which they later established factories. While things have changed and are moving away from a system of cheap black labour, history cannot be changed. The white workers

have been coopted by and are junior partners to the ruling class. This is still the case today. The vast majority of whites and white workers are not willing to throw in their lot with the black people and black workers. For the foreseeable future most whites will support the system. They will defend it against the oppressed. Those who have nothing to lose are the black workers. White workers still have much to lose. It is the duty of the BWC to create the conditions whereby the white workers could join the BWC. This is why the movement must not push anti-whiteism. The BWC must create the conditions where white workers are forced to throw in their lot with blacks. It may well be the case that the whites will not come over until after the revolution, but the conditions must still be created.

While there is not such a great gap between the black and white middle class, there is still a very great gap between black and white workers.

3. Right to bear arms: This clause might make the WC unconstitutional; compares with US where individuals have the right to bear arms; argues for working class militias.

4. If EAWU tries to discuss this issue of a WC with other unions won't this lead to conflict with those who have adopted the FC because they feel it contains some working class rights? Won't a WC be in conflict with the other existing documents?

This raises the issue of the political tactics of and the contradictions within the liberation movement. Our first task is to bring about unity. We must bridge the gaps between Congress, BC and the UM. No revolutionary movement will succeed unless the oppressed and exploited are united. We need leaders who are able to bring about this unity. We have to initiate this discussion to bring these groups together. It is through a discussion on the WC or manifesto that other organisations will have to review their programmes. The ANC is now busy reviewing the FC and developing a new constitutional approach. It took the UM many years before they admitted the need to review the 10 Point Programme. At all the National Forum people have agreed that the Azanian Manifesto will have to be reviewed. We have to be very careful about how we insert this discussion into the liberation movement.

5. It would be arrogant of the EAWU to formulate a WC and then

go to other organisations with the pre-formulated charter. They point must be to stimulate and direct discussions about what workers want.

6. Need to mention unemployed workers in the WC and to ensure against possibility of scabbing. This could come under the clause on the right to work. Unions must take the lead in creating conditions where scabbing becomes impossible.

7. Should there be a students' charter? Students are the workers of the future, but they have no experience of work. They are a temporary population. They are not so located in our society that they call the shots. It is the workers who have the power to do so. In no cases have students been able to sustain a challenge to state power, although they can initiate and heat things up. Workers must take the lead in developing a programme of working class rights.

8. Public workers and the right to strike.

9. Experience of Ccawusa, Numsa, Num being pressured to adopt FC. Will Stalinist forces allow us even to discuss a Workers' charter?

10. Why should black workers make conditions conducive to white workers joining the struggle, especially given that white workers have themselves widened the gap in the working class?

Generally, at the current moment only a few white intellectuals of the middle class will support the liberation movement. When I speak of making conditions conducive to white workers joining the struggle I mean that even when and if there is a revolution the country will still be dependent on white workers because they have monopolised skills. To prevent things like large-scale sabotage in the future we must make it possible for whites to join us. But in the immediate future I don't see whites joining the struggle. White workers are enemies because they are racist, not because they are workers.

11. Conclusion: The significance of a workers' charter as a possible instrument of unity and to ensure the real leadership of the working class in the struggle. Need to workshop these ideas and to give drafts to other unions. We need to open communications with other unions. This process will help ensure a democratic workers' movement. Hope that the processes started by the Electrical and Allied Workers Trade Union will not be smothered.

Resolutions of the Annual General Meeting of the Cape Action League held on 30 & 31 January 1988

SOLIDARITY FOR SOCIALISM

“CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS”

The CAPE ACTION LEAGUE rejects without reservation the proposed National Statutory Council as just another threadbare manoeuvre on the part of the apartheid regime to disguise its racist policies and to deny to the majority of South Africa their inalienable right to the franchise which alone will enable them to determine their own destiny. The so-called NSC is just another name for the old Native Representative Council which was finally buried in 1946 more than 40 years ago. It is no more than a powerless fourth chamber that is supposed to stabilise the three-legged monster of the Tricameral Parliament.

We call on the oppressed and exploited people of our country to make sure that this insulting institution does not obtain any credibility whatsoever. We call on those in the camp of liberation who are toying with the idea of making this new toy telephone of the rulers look like the real thing to give up all such ideas immediately. Instead, they should conduct our struggle for liberation on the principled basis of mass extra-parliamentary action against all oppressive measures and constructive organisational advances that strengthen the position of the black working class. In the dark days ahead, this is the only path that will lead us through the tunnel and into the light of democratic socialist Azania.

For the same reasons, the CAPE ACTION LEAGUE rejects the new system of Local Government in the guise of Regional Services Councils (RSCs) and Primary Local Authorities (PLAs). The only purpose of this system is to realise the racist vision of “own affairs” politics, economics and culture at the grass roots level. As such, this policy is the most dangerous instrument of the rulers, one which is calculated to create and entrench maximum divisions among oppressed and exploited people. It is in no sense anything like the non-racial municipal franchise for all residents which we demand.

We call on all the oppressed people to

make sure that none of the collaborators who will work or are already working the system of town councils and management committees represent anyone among our people.

Botha's Latest Economic Reform

Having noticed P.W. Botha's proposed privatisation of state and parastatal enterprises on the model of Thatcher's Britain as well as the introduction of Value Added Tax (VAT); and being aware of the disastrous consequences of these policies for the working class; and noting the hand-rubbing glee with which all the major capitalist firms have greeted this announcement:

The CAPE ACTION LEAGUE calls on all workers to stand together and to fight this total onslaught on the pitiable living standards of the black workers and the unemployed in particular. It is necessary to prepare for a hard and tough struggle and therefore we need to consolidate and mobilise our working class organisations into a united force to resist these and other attacks on the black working class. We call on democratic trade unions together with all progressive organisations and the unemployed to jointly campaign against the attack on the living standards of the working class and to defend the gains that have been won in the past period.

NON-SECTARIANISM AND VIOLENCE

Our society, characterised by the system of apartheid-capitalism, is a very complex one. The ruling class has deliberately set about dividing the oppressed masses along the lines of class, colour, sex, religion and language. Hence different organisations basing themselves on different class forces and putting forward different ideas, strategies and tactics for solving the difficult problems of uniting our people, directing and organising the

struggle, etc. have emerged to constitute our broad liberation movement. Over these decades that our struggle has been waged, all these organisations have made their contribution in different ways and in varying importance. It is a simple fact that no organisation has been formed that can claim to represent all the oppressed people. And although unity is an essential prerequisite for victory, one single organisation that wishes to put itself forward as the sole authentic representative of our struggle, is creating the conditions for disunity, and sectarian violence between different organisations of the liberation movement and is sacrificing the democratic ideals, norms and procedures of our struggle. Therefore, we in the CAPE ACTION LEAGUE are committed to a policy of NON-SECTARIANISM by which we mean the following: •

1. The right of different organisations of the liberation movement, no matter how small, to exist and to freely propagate their views.
 2. The defense of the freedoms of thought, speech, association, assembly and the press.
 3. That it is our duty to defend any action of the liberation movement when attacked by the state and when attacked in pursuing these freedoms.
 4. The differences between organisations of the liberation movement that have occurred and will occur in the future are non-antagonistic and hence must be solved through the democratic method of discussion and debate.
 5. Violence is a means of self-defence against the ruling class and their state. Therefore, violence in the settlement of disputes or differences between progressive organisations must be outlawed and those undisciplined elements should be dealt with accordingly.
 6. The right of self-defence when attacked by the state and its agents.
- We therefore resolve to :

1. Propagate NON-SECTARIANISM as an aim and method of struggle;

2. Condemn all sectarian practices which seek to prevent one section of the liberation movement from organising and propagating its beliefs;

3. Condemn all violent methods of settling disputes within the liberation movement;

4. Defend the right of ideological debate and to make constructive criticism and self-criticism;

5. Propagate the United Front as a means of ensuring maximum principled unity, under the present conditions and in the present circumstances.

SANCTIONS

1. Economic sanctions are part of an international campaign to isolate the South African—egime.

2. As such, this issue and related questions such as divestment and disinvestment are clearly moral political issues for people outside of South Africa who are compelled in one way or another to address the situation inside South Africa.

3. Because of the anti-apartheid thrust of this campaign, we support the principles that inform it and its derivative campaigns such as disinvestment, divestment, etc.

4. However, in order to support any campaign or any action of a political kind, that is alleged to be geared towards the liberation of black people and especially of the black poor, we have to have specific criteria. For us the main such criterion must be whether or not such action increases the bargaining power and the strategic leverage of the black people, the oppressed people, and in particular of the poor, the workers, the landless peasants and the unemployed. It is not enough simply to claim that a particular action will weaken the South African government. It is not our intention to weaken the South African government but to get rid of it.

Only action that strengthens the position of the black working class and of other oppressed sections of our people can get our unqualified support. In the struggle that lies ahead, it is essential that the black workers should be enabled to gain maximum strength in the balance of forces.

5. In line with this reasoning, it is our belief that a policy of total sanctions, total disinvestment, can only be [.....?] leadership of the oppressed people if that leadership has some certainty that by supporting such a policy it will hasten the almost immediate disappearance of the South African government, ie, that the present South African rulers will disappear from

the stage of history within a very short space of time of say one or two years. The reason for this is that any long-term commitment to total sanctions necessarily involves the acceptance of large-scale stagnation of the South African economy and therefore increasing pressure of an economic and physical kind on the workers and the other disadvantaged groups in our society. For this reason, a policy of total sanctions and blockades on the eve of victory is fully acceptable and even mandatory.

Recent polls - for whatever they are worth - indicate that up to 60% and more of black people will oppose sanctions/disinvestment if the strategy were to lead to a long-term increase in unemployment. The situation can be compared with that which existed in the educational sphere during the period 1985-86 when many students (and others) in South Africa believed that the strategy of indefinite school boycotts would somehow bring about the fall of the South African government. This naive euphoria gave rise to the suicidal slogan Liberation Before Education! It took months of very hard work on the part of hundreds of people's organisations to persuade students that this was indeed a counsel of despair. While the analogy with economic strategy must not be made in a simplistic and mechanical way, there is no doubt that an unproblematic strategy of total sanctions is tantamount to promoting a slogan such as "Liberation Before Employment!" Such a policy were it at all possible, would amount to a policy of national suicide on the part of the oppressed and the exploited workers of South Africa.

6. It is our belief that a policy of selective targeted sanctions is the only acceptable policy for a movement that is genuinely committed to liberation in South Africa. There are certain types of sanctions that are politically and symbolically extremely important, even if they are ineffective, such as arms embargo, for example, or the embargo on computers being sold to the Defence Force and similar repressive organisations. It is not that these things can be prevented altogether, it is rather the fact that the attempt to prevent them is politically important to the people of South Africa, in particular to the oppressed people of South Africa. We believe that a policy of selective, targeted sanctions that aim to influence a situation in the short term in South Africa, or particularly that aims to strengthen the position of the oppressed people in a specific situation can be and will be accepted by

the masses. For example - action during a period such as the recent mine worker's strike, with a view to bringing about a favourable solution of the dispute from the view of black workers would find ready acceptance. An excellent example of the kind of sanctions we are thinking of relates to the question of landing rights. Certain groups in Europe have suggested that all direct international air contact with South Africa should be prohibited. This would mean, inter alia, that all goods and passengers bound for South Africa will be carried as far as one or other international airport located in one of the Frontline States. South African Airways and the airlines of the neighbouring states would have the rights to carry these goods and passengers to South Africa or to the Frontline States, as the case may be. Visa applications and other relevant matters would also be handled by the relevant embassies in the Frontline States. Such a strategy will have a dual effect. It would, firstly, have immediate economic benefits for the Frontline States and, secondly, it would increase their strategic importance vis-a-vis South Africa in economic, political and military terms. The South African Defence Force would be much more careful about destabilising South Africa's only access to the world outside. Of course, such a strategy would face many problems but it is certainly this kind of strategic thinking that will further the cause of the oppressed and exploited people inside South Africa.

7. We believe that is necessary for the whole liberation movement to consider carefully the strategy and tactics of sanctions. In particular, we have to consider the wisdom of making a major aspect of the liberation of the black working people of Azania dependent on the co-operation of important sections of the international capitalist class. In other words, even the kind of sanctions we do propagate has to be weighed carefully in order to see whether it promotes our unity with the rest of the exploited workers and oppressed peoples of the world.

TRADE UNIONS

The CAPE ACTION LEAGUE believes that: the trade union movement in South Africa today plays a major role in working class struggle; and that in the last three years the union movement has made tremendous strides, progressing from being merely an interest group to constituting itself as a major force in the struggle for political power; and that, furthermore, the trade union movement has played an important role in raising an awareness of the

triple oppression suffered by black women in South Africa.

The CAPE ACTION LEAGUE rejects and condemns the attempts being made by the State through the Labour Relations Bill which seeks to further erode the rights of trade unions to organise and of workers to strike. It is in this light that we believe that unity within the trade union movement is essential in order to advance the interests of workers at the level of the shopfloor, but more vitally to forge the broader unity of the whole working class. It is only on this basis that the black working class can advance and defend its own interests.

It is in this context that we in the CAPE ACTION LEAGUE recognise the need to become involved in the struggle for building the democratic trade union movement.

We recognise the importance of the trade union movement in two critical senses:

(a) It provides the working class with the opportunity of beginning to take control over its own destiny through the practice of democratic decision-making;

(b) and, secondly, it is one of the embryos in which a socialist culture and ideology in our country will be developed. The trade union movement is thus a vital force in preparing workers for the responsibilities of building a new socialist society.

We, therefore, pledge to fight for the independence of the trade union movement. While we support the building of alliances with the working class, we reject multi-class alliances which subordinate working class demands for broader bourgeois democratic purposes. Specifically, this means that we have to fight to prevent the leadership of the trade union movement taking workers into alliances with elements of the bourgeoisie.

We hold, furthermore, that workers of different political tendencies have the right to work inside the trade union movement.

The CAPE ACTION LEAGUE therefore resolves to:

1. Assist in building the unity of the trade union movement;
2. Support trade unions in defending their right to organise and defend themselves;
3. Support the right of workers to work;
4. Support the right of workers to strike;
5. Assist unions in organising workers in factories in rural areas where assistance is required;
6. To support any campaign which seeks to improve legislation which governs the conditions of employment of all workers, particularly farm workers and domestic workers;

7. To put its full weight behind the Living Wage Campaign; and, finally,

8. To campaign actively for the drawing up of a workers' manifesto or charter.

EDUCATION

The CAPE ACTION LEAGUE demands the implementation of a free, compulsory and democratic system of education for all the people of South Africa/Azania. This means that we demand an education for all our people that should:

1. Enable the people to understand the racial capitalist system and should prepare them for participation in a non-racial, democratic, socialist system;
2. Eliminate values of competition, individualism, elitism and stunted intellectual development, encourage collective input and active participation by all, stimulate critical thinking and analysis, and address the division between mental and manual labour;
3. Help to eliminate illiteracy, ignorance and exploitation of one person by another;
4. Equip and train all sectors of our people to participate actively and creatively in the struggle for a non-racial, democratic, socialist Azania/South Africa;
5. Allow students, parents, teachers and workers to be mobilised into appropriate organisational structures which enable them to promote the struggle for workers' power and to participate actively in the initiation and management of people's education in all its forms;
6. Enable workers to resist exploitation and oppression at the workplace;
7. Lay the foundations for a modern scientific education in a progressive system of pre-school education that will enable us to realise all the above.

The Annual General Meeting of the CAPE ACTION LEAGUE notes that the implementation of people's education is an urgent matter. Believing that:

1. All student-teacher-parent and community-based organisations must work vigorously and energetically to promote a socialist people's education;
2. All programmes must promote the democratic organisation of all sections of our people, wherever they may be;
3. The programmes must encourage critical and creative thinking and working methods;
4. The programmes must promote the values of democracy, non-racialism, anti-racism, anti-sexism, collective work and active participation;

The CAPE ACTION LEAGUE hereby resolves to do everything in its power to

initiate and sustain all programmes that promote people's education.

We demand:

The Right to Learn;
Education for Liberation;
Education for Socialism.

THE TROUBLES IN KTC SQUATTER CAMP

The CAPE ACTION LEAGUE warns the people of Cape Town and South Africa against believing the newspaper "explanations" of what is going on in KTC. Most of these come from ruling class sources, in particular from the police and the press. According to this view, the troubles in KTC are a result of a conflict between "unsophisticated" older people who have recently come from the rural areas on the one hand, and younger progressive people who have lived in the city for many years, on the other hand. Often, this is said to be a conflict between "vigilantes" or "witdoeke" and "comrades". Sometimes it is simply described as "black-on-black" violence.

But the real situation is entirely different. These simplistic explanations merely play into the hands of the enemy. The Liberal press, especially, has to be condemned since it has eagerly tried to deepen existing divisions and conflicts through biased and sensationalist journalism.

The fundamental cause of all social conflicts and power struggles in KTC and in other communities is the artificial pressure on land and resources brought to bear by influx control and group areas laws. Under such circumstances, it is essential that the political leadership assures that the workers are not exploited and divided by the State, police collaborators or anti-social thugs. Unity is one of the supreme instruments of the oppressed people in these and in all other circumstances.

Our people have the inalienable right to work, the right to decent homes and the right to learn, among others. In KTC, the community, through its democratically elected organs and structures have gone a long way towards ensuring that these and other basic rights are fought for by all the people on a principled basis. Whatever the problems, there is certainly no need to settle them by recourse to violent intimidation and murder. Such action can only play into the hands of the enemies of our struggle for national liberation and for a society in which the workers will rule.

The CAPE ACTION LEAGUE calls on the people of KTC to find a peaceful way of resolving the conflict among the people

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CCAWUSA'S GENERAL SECRETARY REPORTS CRISIS TO INTERNATIONAL FRATERNAL ORGANISATIONS

Under normal circumstances we would not issue reports on our internal problems to International Fraternal Organisations, but the situation in CCAWUSA has now deteriorated to such an extent that we believe it will impact on our relationships with organisations internationally. It has thus become imperative to clarify the dispute that has been raging within the Commercial and Catering Sector for the past five months.

In accordance with the COSATU resolution at its launching congress, to establish one Union per Industrial Sector, a merger was planned between CCAWUSA (membership - 70,000) and two other unions HARWU (Hotel and Restaurant Workers' Union, membership - 9000) and RAWU (Retail and Allied Workers' Union, membership - 3000) for June 27-28, 1987. Unfortunately, a disgruntled faction within CCAWUSA, who disagreed with the policy resolutions adopted at our National Congress of 12-14 June 1987, took advantage of the planned merger to break away from CCAWUSA and form an alliance with the other two unions. This was carried out at an unconstitutional meeting on the 28 June 1987, after attempts by the three unions to merge failed. This alliance was then announced as the new "merged" CCAWUSA. The breakaway faction from CCAWUSA succeeded in getting the support of four branches of the union. These branches constitute about a third of the total membership of CCAWUSA. The majority of our membership, including the Johannesburg branch - the biggest branch in CCAWUSA - stands firmly by the CCAWUSA National Congress resolution and rejects this unconstitutional undemocratic "merger".

In an attempt to resolve the dispute, COSATU established a commission to mediate between the two groups.

After three meetings between the commission and the two parties in dispute, certain recommendations were formulated by the commission as a possible solution to the problem. These recommendations were endorsed by the COSATU Executive Committee at a meeting on the 10th October 1987. Both groups undertook to go along with the Executive Committee's decision, which is as follows:

(a) A National Congress to be convened with delegates representing those workers who were members of CCAWUSA, RAWU (Pretoria) and HARWU prior to the meeting of 27-28 June 1987. This Congress would have maximum limit on the size of delegations and an agenda agreeable to both "wings".

(b) The credentials for this National Congress would have to be based on paid up membership determined by the application of uniform standards.

(c) Only those workers referred to in paragraph (a) above would be entitled to send delegates to the Congress. The Natal and Cape Liqor Unions would not be entitled to attend.

At the most recent meeting of the commission on Thursday 12th November 1987, we discovered that the break-away faction had gone against this decision of the COSATU EXCO by going ahead with a merger with the Cape based Liqor and Catering Trade Employees Union, a non-COSATU Union.

Prior to this meeting, tension between us and the break-away faction increased dramatically when they forcefully took over control of our Cape Town office on the 2nd November 1987. Our members and officials present were threatened with violence. Financial records and cash were stolen. Two days later, however, hundreds of our members enraged by this act of thuggery, re-took our office from the break-away faction. This act of violence was a serious threat to the chances of unity and heightened tensions considerably.

When this unauthorised merger was discovered, the commission ended abruptly with the commissionaires stating that this is a new development and that a report would be made to the COSATU Central Executive Committee of the 13-15 November 1987. The COSATU CEC was told that the mediation attempts by the commission had failed.

After the commission's report was tabled, we urged the CEC to continue with attempts to mediate despite what had happened.

Unfortunately the break-away faction

started levelling all kinds of allegations against us, viz that we are anti-COSATU, critical of COSATU policies, and planning to affiliate to NACTU, a rival federation of Trade Unions. These allegations which we rejected were supported by a few CEC delegates. As a result the CEC made a decision to recognise the "CCAWUSA that merged on 27-28 June" i.e. the break-away faction.

We find the CEC decision to side with the very group that went against the EXCO decision and caused the commission to break down, as surprising and unfortunate.

We also view the break-away faction's behaviour, apart from being a serious threat to worker unity, as a serious contravention of COSATU policy.

The following is an extract of our communication to COSATU Affiliates:

"Some CEC delegates have mentioned that we are anti-COSATU and critical of COSATU policies.

"From time to time we have levelled criticism against certain undemocratic activities carried out by certain COSATU structures or individuals. We see this as our democratic right and it does not mean we are criticising COSATU as a whole. Part of being a democratic organisation is to critically evaluate and this in no way means being against the whole organisation.

"Accusations by some CEC delegates that we are contravening COSATU policy due to our attitude towards NACTU are surprising. Any relations or contact between us and NACTU do not constitute by any stretch of the imagination, contravention of COSATU policy. We believe it is the overall policy of COSATU to unite workers. Any interaction with NACTU has been for this purpose.

"We firmly believe that our workers must be involved in developing the political position of CCAWUSA. The fact that our members have not adopted the Freedom Charter does not mean we are anti-COSATU.

"We are deeply concerned about the the CEC's motives in attempting to build a case against us regarding contravention of COSATU policy in order to justify support for the breakaway faction. We be-

An Open Statement on Issues Hindering Worker Unity

This statement is being written at a time when the state is mobilising another offensive to smash the struggle against oppression and exploitation led by the South African working class. The proposed amendments to the Labour Relations Act is the state's attempt to break the militancy of workers in the independent trade union movement. We need to prepare ourselves for this offensive.

It is our urgent task, therefore, to assess our organisations, ensure maximum unity in the labour movement and sharpen our offensiveness in the battles that are before us. Let us not fool ourselves that the battle is going to be easy. Our ability to defend the gains we have made and to further advance our struggle, depends upon our militancy and fighting spirit, the correctness of our strategies and tactics and the quality of our leadership on the shop-floor and within the ranks of our organisations. It remains our revolutionary task to ensure that COSATU makes a leap forward in the struggle of the working class for a socialist future and the elimination of all forms of oppression and exploitation.

It would be a step backwards if the COSATU Special Congress makes any decisions that would further divide the workers' movement in South Africa and divert our struggle away from the socialist aims and objectives that we have committed ourselves to. It would be a setback to the workers' movement in South Africa and the struggles of the working class internationally, if the COSATU leadership makes any decisions or continues with the policy of encouraging a split in CCAWUSA, the third largest union in COSATU, a union that has consistently been in the forefront of the living wage campaign and the struggle for the rights of working women in South Africa. CCAWUSA was also the union which stood up to the state of emergency where thousands of members went out on strike, in protest. It would be a further blow, if in the campaign against the amendments to the Labour Relations Act, COSATU makes any decisions that further discourage united actions within the federation and the unions outside of COSATU, including NACTU.

We have a big responsibility to ensure that democracy and workers' control prevail. We have to be vigilant at all times of attempts to divert our struggle away from socialism, for this can only mean a betrayal

*Issued by the Branch Secretaries of the Johannesburg, Pietersburg, Western Cape and Klerksdorp branches of CCAWUSA members.

of the workers' struggle. For example, a significant lobby existed at the July '87 Congress of COSATU putting across the view that socialism must not be "elevated" into policy.

With this statement we wish to encourage worker militants to consider some of the issues which, in our view, need to be addressed urgently. We are particularly concerned about the COSATU LEADERSHIP'S CURRENT POSITION ON CCAWUSA. This position, we believe, is directly threatening worker unity in the Commercial and Catering Sector, and openly encouraging a split in CCAWUSA.

We believe that the COSATU leadership's handling of the CCAWUSA dispute has been incorrect in many respects. This will show more fully below, but what is clear is that it has set a very bad precedent in the history of the labour movement in South Africa. "Resolving" an internal dispute in an affiliate by recognising a minority group and attempting to crush the rest on the basis of unfounded smears, is not only bad trade-unionism but also bad politics. If and when an internal dispute surfaces in another union affiliated to COSATU, members are bound to ask: "After CCAWUSA, who will be next in line to be "crushed" by the COSATU leadership?" This short-sightedness bodes ill for worker unity, democracy and workers' control.

In an attempt to further clarify our position and motivate for an objective re-assessment by COSATU and its affiliates of the CCAWUSA dispute, we wish to look at the following questions:

1. What is the CCAWUSA dispute essentially about?
2. What is COSATU's present position on CCAWUSA?
3. What has been the consequence of this position in COSATU?
4. What has been the consequence of this position in CCAWUSA?
5. What are the implications of this for the workers' struggle in South Africa?

1. What is the CCAWUSA dispute essentially about?

Essentially, the CCAWUSA dispute started when a minority group broke our National Congress mandate concerning political policy and merger with HARWU and RAWU, two other COSATU affilia-

ates operating in the catering and commercial sector respectfully. Our National Congress did not adopt the Azanian Manifesto nor the Freedom Charter as this would create unnecessary division within the Union. Rather, the National Congress decided that CCAWUSA should work towards a socialist programme of action. The minority group did not respect the decisions of the National Congress. Instead, they used the failed merger attempt to break away from the National Congress mandate and aligned themselves with HARWU and RAWU to bureaucratically impose their political line on CCAWUSA.

After months of conflict with the minority group claiming that "CCAWUSA" has merged with HARWU and RAWU, and elected new national office-bearers, a settlement was eventually reached. The two parties agreed that a merger did not take place. It was agreed that the AGM's should be held in all the regions after which a National Congress would be called. Despite this agreement, attempts to work towards re-unifying the union have been very difficult. The attempt to call an AGM in the Western Cape, for example, had to be abandoned after the minority group was caught preparing fraudulent ballot papers and distributing membership cards to non-members in order to boost their numbers. The widespread fraud and corruption at the Pretoria AGM is another example.

The actions of the minority group have gone against all basic principles of trade-union democracy and worker control. Our attempts to explain exactly what has happened, have been greeted by a barrage of false allegations and slanderous attacks. For example, a resolution which later was changed to a pamphlet, circulated by the minority group, listed the names of prominent CCAWUSA officials including the General Secretary, with alleged "crimes" and described these officials as "criminals", "thugs" and "bully-boys".

It became very difficult for anyone not directly involved to separate fact from fiction. Manipulative reporting in the press also clouded the issue. Indeed we don't know of any other internal union dispute in SA that has denigrated into such acrimony and slander.

Despite severe provocation including the use of violence, we have avoided dealing with the dispute on anything but a principled basis. We remain mindful of the fact that the CCAWUSA dispute has important implications for all workers committed to

democratic trade-unionism. To give up the struggle to inform the workers' movement in SA and internationally of the crimes that were committed in its name, would mean simply giving in to falsification. No amount of violent threats, intimidation of both our members and worker-support agencies, nor attempts to stop us receiving support from the international trade union movement, will prevent us from telling the truth.

2. What is COSATU's present position on CCAWUSA?

In the beginning, despite our objections, the COSATU leadership recognized the "merger". However, at the July National Congress, it was noted that a dispute did indeed exist and while attempts were being made to resolve it, COSATU officials should not take sides on the matter. A subsequent CEC decision allowed for a commission to be formed to resolve the dispute. The commission was able to formulate a set of proposals which were endorsed by the COSATU Executive Committee. The last meeting of the commission ended abruptly when it was learnt that the minority group had apparently merged with the Cape Liquor and Catering Union, (not a COSATU affiliate and not involved in prior merger discussions) contrary to the COSATU Exco decision. However at the November meeting of the COSATU CEC the Commissions work was simply abandoned in favour of direct intervention in the dispute. The CEC delegates, on the basis of unfounded allegations and smears, decided that we were anti-COSATU and resolved to recognize only the minority group. Since then our delegates have not been welcomed in COSATU structures nor are we informed of any meetings taking place. Despite the Agreement of Settlement between the two groups, which nullified the merger and recognizes Vivian Mtwana as General Secretary of CCAWUSA, COSATU's position remains unchanged. Unwillingness to revise the November CEC decision (despite calls by us and thousands of workers in NUMSA, CWIU and ACTWUSA unions which represent the metal, chemical and textile workers in COSATU) amounts to a rejection of the Agreement between the two groups and an encouragement of a split in order to keep us out of COSATU.

3. What is the consequence of this position in COSATU?

COSATU's current position demonstrates a lack of concern for the consequences of worker disunity in the Commercial and Catering Sector. Political consideration

are at the root of this. Free and open discussion is suppressed in order for one political tendency in COSATU to entrench itself unchallenged, whatever consequences this may have for worker unity. We believe this is a very dangerous policy that is weakening the federation and taking the political struggle backwards. The CCAWUSA dispute has unnecessarily heightened tensions between affiliates, inhibited democratic participation in the federation and caused great confusion and disappointment among workers who are now questioning their commitment to the present COSATU leadership at a time when the state is mounting a massive attack on the working class.

4. What is the consequence of this position in CCAWUSA?

The dispute, if it had been handled correctly by the COSATU leadership, may have been resolved by now. The federation lost an important opportunity to perform one of its main tasks, viz to build worker unity. Today CCAWUSA still remains divided, with the large majority of members finding themselves not recognised by the COSATU leadership. Recently CCAWUSA has been evicted like common criminals from numerous COSATU meetings. CCAWUSA, as an organisation, was prevented from attending the COSATU Women's Congress although it has made many advances in fighting for women's rights and establishing women's committees.

So long as this state of affairs continues, the more there is likelihood of a split in CCAWUSA. With an urgent re-assessment by COSATU of its position such a consequence may just be averted.

5. What are the implications of this position for the workers' struggle in South Africa?

The situation in CCAWUSA and how COSATU has related to it must not be seen in isolation. Similar tensions are simmering in other COSATU affiliates and as workers begin to realise what COSATU's political policy means in practice more divisions are likely to surface inside COSATU.

COSATU's political policy also means that unity with unions outside of COSATU holding different political positions is ruled out. The political policy resolution makes it clear that a confrontational approach must be adopted towards all organisations who have not aligned themselves with one political tendency. This, in practice, means that unity with the thousands of workers in NACTU and

some independent unions is not possible. This all means that COSATU's present political policy is the basis for entrenching division in the trade union movement and by implication places more obstacles in the way of forging political unity in the mass movement. Given the relative weakness of working class political organisations in SA, a divided trade union movement will only weaken the possibility of working class leadership in our struggle, making the struggle for socialism that much more difficult and the possibility of the betrayal of our struggle that much easier.

The South African working class is now facing massive state repression, regardless of which organisation they belong to. Recent state legislation will harm all organisations of the left irrespective of political preference, whether workers find themselves in AZAPO, UDF, COSATU or NACTU.

Those supporting the present political policy of the COSATU leadership claim that there is only one political tendency worth speaking about. They have actively campaigned nationally and internationally to try and get this message across. This of course is not correct and will only further divide and weaken the working class. Such a strategy, and the sectarian politics involved, has not worked in other liberation struggles and will not work in SA. Recently, at a meeting in Zimbabwe attended by delegates from NACTU, Azanian Trade Union Co-ordinating Committee, COSATU and SACTU, issues that divide the labour movement in SA were discussed. It was acknowledged by all parties that there are more issues that unite than divide the different organisations in SA. A meeting between the ANC and NACTU recently came to similar conclusions. It was agreed that the adoption or the non-adoption of the Freedom Charter should not be a pre-requisite for unity or a stumbling block towards unity. We in CCAWUSA have consistently argued for the same position, but unfortunately, have been the victim of many smears that are anti-COSATU and pro-NACTU. It is our sincere hope that the COSATU leadership would heed these calls coming from Zimbabwe.

Without a clear strategy for political unity the state and the bosses will continue the offensive. A united front of all fighting forces, under a working class leadership and committed to socialist politics will go a long way towards defeating that offensive and opening the path towards a socialist future.

7th May 1988

Without a clear strategy for political unity the state and the bosses will continue the offensive. A united front of all fighting forces, under a working class leadership and committed to socialist politics will go a long way towards defeating that offensive and opening the path towards a socialist future.

CCAWUSA BRANCHES REPLY TO SLANDERS

"COSATU has endorsed the idea of a CCAWUSA Conference which includes the disaffected group so that workers in that sector may come together to forge the unity that is so badly needed."

Telex from COSATU National Office-bearers, 13 May 1988

It is no good endorsing the idea of a CCAWUSA Conference while still dividing CCAWUSA into a "recognised group" and a "disaffected group". Such labels question the seriousness of COSATU's endorsement of a CCAWUSA Conference. This is blatant interference in the dispute before workers are given an opportunity to make their own decisions at a representative and democratic forum.

There is a big difference between a CCAWUSA National Congress (as in the new constitution) where one delegate is chosen out of every 250 members in a local, and a CCAWUSA National Conference (as in the old, but at present legal constitution) where each branch, irrespective of size, can only elect up to eight delegates to the conference¹.

From the beginning of the dispute, we have always argued for the calling of a National Congress of CCAWUSA. Despite their claims of majority support, the minority never wanted to commit themselves to the calling of such a democratic and representative forum. They knew we would be in a clear majority.

In a recent South African Labour Bulletin article² on the CCAWUSA dispute, the COSATU Information Officer stated "that the feeling of the COSATU Executive throughout was that the dispute could be resolved through calling for a workers' congress in CCAWUSA." We support this fully if it is based on one delegate for every 250 members. Such a congress would clearly be a more democratic forum to

*Statement titled "Replies To Our Critics" jointly issued by Johannesburg, Western Cape, Pietersburg and Klerksdorp branches in a Special Bulletin dated May 1988. All footnotes, however, are by the Editor. ¹Although adopted by National Conference in 1986, CCAWUSA's new constitution remains unregistered in terms of the law and, thus, legally unenforceable. For the differences between the old and new constitutions, and the advantages the former confers on the minority, see Sanza Chocho, "Constitution gives unfair advantage to minority" in *Azania Frontline* No 22, April/May 1988.

²See Coletane Markham, *SALB* Vol 13 No 2, February 1988.

resolve the differences than the old constitution which has suddenly been given respectability by the minority group.

With the settlement made with the minority group on 19 January 1988, we agreed to the convening of a National Conference. The understanding at the time was that this conference, although it is clearly an undemocratic and unrepresentative forum, should be used to lay the basis for re-uniting the two groups in CCAWUSA. It appears now that the minority group is wanting to use such a conference for purposes other than what it was intended for, for example, they have circulated a hit-list of key CCAWUSA officials whose names they have smeared in public and who they want to dismiss at such a conference.

Through the outmoded constitution, rejected as undemocratic and against the basic principles of COSATU by our National Conference in November 1986, the minority group hopes to bureaucratically take control of CCAWUSA against the wishes of the majority of its members. **"The disaffected minority group are widely regarded as being anti-COSATU."**

Telex from COSATU National Office-Bearers

Those who level this charge at us know full well that we are not anti-COSATU. It is simply a smear to confuse workers and to discredit us among COSATU affiliates.

Since the beginning of the unity talks in 1981, CCAWUSA has been active along with other unions in establishing one united trade union federation in South Africa. While these efforts were being made, we enjoyed close fraternal relations with both FOSATU and CUSA. When COSATU was eventually launched in 1985, we chose to affiliate to it despite the absence of unions affiliated to CUSA and AZACTU³. Our view was that further

³Apart from very few exceptions (CCAWUSA being one), the major industrial unions were formed by FOSATU (Federation of South African Trade Unions) and CUSA (Council of South African Unions). The FOSATU unions became the industrial backbone of COSATU; CUSA unions (except the National Union of Mineworkers) withdrew from the unity talks which finally resulted in the formation of

efforts must be made to unite all the progressive unions into one federation. To this day we remain committed to COSATU, the organisation that we helped to build. Whatever relationship we have with NACTU and its affiliates is for the purpose of building worker unity, an aim not inconsistent with with COSATU's principles.

"For COSATU a commitment to democracy is more fundamental than the abstract notion of non-sectarianism".

Telex from COSATU National Office-Bearers

"...in our view, and in terms of our understanding of this whole non-sectarian approach, this is merely a front slogan behind which lies a strategy to undermine unity in the mass-democratic movement."

From SALB February 1988

A clearly worked out political position is necessary to show the bosses and the state that our politics is different from their politics. But different political positions within the mass movement will be a major obstacle in our struggle if such positions are not respected, treated correctly and worked through in such a manner that it builds organisation and contributes towards unity. This is what we believe to be a non-sectarian approach to political divisions within the mass movement.

In this regard trade unions can make a very important contribution. Non-sectarianism, like the policy of non-racialism, is an important principle in the trade union movement. Both can be applied "abstractly" in theory and in practice. The same can be said about "democracy" or "workers' control". It is not because an idea is abstract that we reject it. We reject ideas when through practice in struggle we can see that the idea is false or bad and does not contribute to the struggle we are engaged in. Non-sectarianism is a good idea. It is a guide to forging unity in our struggle. It is the basis for unity in the trade union movement and "unity in action" in our struggle against oppression and exploitation. How can we build the "united

COSATU; and AZACTU (Azanian Confederation of Trade Unions) was not invited to form COSATU. Later, CUSA and AZACTU came together to form NACTU (National Council of Trade Unions).

front" when we reject the policy of "non-sectarianism"?"

Given all the divisions that plague our struggle and our common commitment to socialism we believe that we can help build unity by respecting the contributions that every political tendency has made towards our struggle for socialism.

The term "mass-democratic movement" is being used by the minority group to mean that section of the mass democratic that supports one particular brand of politics in South Africa⁴. The mass-democratic movement encompasses a variety of progressive political tendencies. It is wrong and divisive to claim that there is only one political tendency in the mass-democratic movement.

The political development of the mass-democratic movement will be a long and difficult process. For it to develop it requires open debate and discussion in an environment where all progressive political tendencies are respected. The approach of the minority group clearly undermines this process by supporting one tendency within the mass-democratic movement.

"In Pietersburg, Mtwa's supporters only won by a very narrow margin and in Johannesburg there was a lot of cheating and many workers who attended were not given ballot papers to vote."

From the newsletter of the minority group, May 1988.

The report from IMSSA (Independent Media Services of South Africa) is clear: in Pietersburg we won all the elections for the Branch Executive Committee, Branch Secretary, National Executive Committee and National Conference delegates by an overwhelming majority. At least 90% of members present at the AGM in Pietersburg supported our position⁵.

At the Johannesburg AGM the minority group's support was negligible. Out of an estimated 7000 workers present, about 100 could be said to be supporters of the minority group. Many forced their way in without going through the accreditation procedure in order to get ballot papers. Even if all their supporters were given ten sets of ballot papers, their vote would still have been a minority vote. Their allega-

⁴Not only by the minority group in CCAWUSA. The COSATU leadership itself uses the term to mean only one section of the national liberation movement. They all use the term to mean UDF and ANC. Thus they exclude mass organisations like the National Forum, National Council of Trade Unions, Azanian Peoples Organisation or any liberation organisation or progressive trade union that has not adopted the Freedom Charter.

⁵Misleadingly, the *Weekly Mail* reported that the minority group had won in Pietersburg.

tions of cheating are mere sour grapes to hide their embarrassment.

"Although he was a party to the agreement on 19 January⁶, Mtwa has refused to cooperate with the other office-bearers."

Minority group's newsletter, May 1988

There is no truth in this allegation. Vivian Mtwa, our General Secretary, has conducted himself in an exemplary and disciplined way in the interest of all the members of CCAWUSA and has fully complied with the agreement of settlement despite all the difficulties in his way.

"... it is clear that Mtwa and his supporters will delay a conference for as long as possible. This is because they know they are minority and they are afraid they may be dismissed by the Conference."

Minority group's newsletter, May 1988

The delay in calling the conference is solely due to the attempts by the minority group to sabotage the AGMs in Klerksdorp and Western Cape where they are desperately trying to take control. Their lack of worker support in these areas has led them rather to disrupt efforts to convene AGMs in these areas.

In Klerksdorp the AGM went ahead without IMSSA because the minority group threatened to sabotage the meeting. Workers expressed overwhelming support for our position and we won all the branch elections.

In the Western Cape the minority group, despite an agreement that we made with them, came with fraudulent ballot papers to the meeting. They also brought non-CCAWUSA members to the meeting. Members of the Cape Liquor and Catering Union and students from the University of the Western Cape were posing as CCAWUSA members⁷. As a result IMSSA withdrew and the AGM was canceled.

"Of the six AGMs held so far, the Mtwa's group only managed to have its supporters elected in two - Johannesburg and Pietersburg - while he has no supporters in the other four branches."

Minority group's newsletter, May 1988

The allegation that we have no support in Pretoria, Natal, Eastern Cape and Orange Vaal is completely false. Out of a commitment to the agreement of settlement and the desire to resolve the dispute we chose not to set up alternative struc-

⁶That is the out of court settlement between the majority and minority groups.

⁷For a full report of the Western Cape AGM, see *Azania Frontline* No 22, May/June 1988, p3.

tures in the branches that support the minority group⁸. We continue to enjoy significant support in the areas where the minority group operates without having to resort to manipulation and intimidation of workers.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE

We hope that this statement has been sufficiently informative and stimulating to encourage you to commit yourself to making a positive contribution towards reducing the problems that we have described above. Above all, we wish to see all comrades committed to a socialist future commit themselves to make a contribution towards this both individually and collectively in the organisations to which they belong.

This statement has focused mainly on the CCAWUSA dispute and the problems confronting us in finding a solution to this dispute. We have tried to show that the problem and the solution to the problem are wider than CCAWUSA itself. We have also tried to convince workers in COSATU and NACTU affiliates, and other independent trade unions - in particular NUDAW, FEDCRAW, Natal Liquor and Catering, HARWU and the Cape Liquor and Catering Union - and militants in UDF, AZAPO, AZANYU and NUM, that the problem in CCAWUSA is also their problem as activists in the mass-democratic movement. We need to continue efforts on all fronts. Ultimately the workers in CCAWUSA have the historic responsibility to ensure a resolution to the dispute. But every militant committed to the principles we have outlined can make a contribution by informing themselves of all the issues we have addressed and raising them within their own organisations.

1. To workers in CCAWUSA: Many of you are by now fully aware of the issues facing CCAWUSA and have taken sides based on political preferences or slander. If this is the only reason that you have taken sides, please think again. Acquaint yourself with all the facts and make your own independent decision. If you are a shop steward ensure that the matter is fully discussed at your workplace. Workers who support the minority faction - you have been bombarded with a lot of false information and smears about certain officials in CCAWUSA. For the sake of your union, CCAWUSA, support the voice of the

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⁸The minority group has set up offices in areas whose branches they do not control and publish a newsletter bearing the name *CCAWUSA NEWSLETTER* which is the name of the official newsletter published by the majority group.

IN DEFENCE OF SOCIALISM

The ANC's Right Turn

The 2nd COSATU Congress in July was notable for two things: on the one hand workers raised high the banner proclaiming "Socialism is Freedom", and on the other the Stalinists, through a carefully orchestrated manoeuvre, attempted to exorcise socialism as an objective from Cosatu's policies.

Workers were scolded by the President of South African Youth Congress (SAYCO) and by the UDF, backed up of course like a well planned intervention, by a statement from SACTU, for having the temerity to raise socialist revolution as an immediate objective. Going hand in glove with the attempt to smash socialism went a very specific attack, in the most unprincipled manner on certain socialists.

The Cosatu Congress manoeuvre was not an isolated act. It comes in the wake of a sharp right wing turn on the part of the ANC and the SACP - a turn necessitated by the very nature of ANC/SACP politics. With their self-confessed four pillars conception of the struggle, the ANC explicitly assigns equal importance to, what they call the military, mass, underground and diplomatic struggle. What this means is that the ANC is committed to combining mass action with appeals to bourgeois imperialist governments to force Botha to the negotiating table. Not having a clear class strategy the ANC therefore oscillates between radicalism and reform depending on the state of open mass struggle in South Africa.

In 1985, the rise of militant youth and workers raised decisively the need for socialism as their only alternative to apartheid capitalism. With the decline in mass activity in 1986 and 1987, as the state succeeded in temporarily smashing resistance in the townships the radical rhetoric of the ANC has changed. Now it is the diplomatic struggle which assumes most prominence (from Schultz to Dakar) and the strategy of isolating Botha by building a "broad front of all democrats" is the order of the day. The problem with some of these "democrats" (from Worrall to Franklin Sonn to Van Zyl Slabbert) is that there is one thing they fear most - socialism. And so the talk about socialism among youth and workers must be stopped.

Together with the attack on socialism as an immediate objective of the SA revolu-

tion must go a direct ATTACK ON THE SOCIALISTS. This is what lies behind the attack at the Cosatu July Congress. This is what lies behind the re-emergence in the SACP of the 2 stage theory and of Internal Colonialism. And this is what lies behind the adoption by Cosatu of the Freedom Charter - not as an attempt to politicise the workers, but as a bureaucratic manoeuvre to drive out the socialists.

The CCAWUSA Case - The Method of Stalinism

Just before the July Congress, a split in CCAWUSA occurred after merger talks had been held with HARWU and RAWU. While the Natal, East Cape and Pretoria branches of CCAWUSA carried through the merger with HARWU and RAWU, the majority section of CCAWUSA (including Johannesburg and W. Cape) charged the minority with conducting the merger in an unprincipled, unconstitutional way. The majority section cited as examples unsubstantiated membership figures given by HARWU and RAWU, that CCAWUSA, as by far the largest of the three unions, should retain its name and orientation (which had been decided at a previous CCAWUSA congress) and that they could not accept the Freedom Charter as their programme given the range of political affiliations of CCAWUSA membership.

Underlying these issues was the simple fact that the reasons for the split were not constitutional or moral, but political. The old CCAWUSA was labelled "workerist" and part of the camp of those who opposed the pro-UDF drift in COSATU. On the other hand both HARWU and RAWU were known as "populist" unions with a leadership being Charterist. The split in CCAWUSA has taken place because what was necessary from the ANC/SACP viewpoint was a takeover of CCAWUSA, a manoeuvre to trap the organised workers under the banner of the ANC. And because of Stalinism's success at the second COSATU congress what is clearly on the cards, is that COSATU will officially recognise the new merger - no matter how unprincipled. COSATU's acceptance of the FREEDOM charter will be used as formal justification for this recognition.

And so the ANC/SACP take over of COSATU is being carried through remorselessly.

After the revival of trade unions in South Africa was initiated by FOSATU its antecedents, after it took four years to drag the populist unions into the federation, the ANC/SACP elements are now the leading union bureaucrats who are fully prepared to sacrifice the South African working class at the altar of populism. The victory against CCAWUSA is a must for these Stalinists. Let us say here quite categorically, that syndicalist narrowness in matters political has only strengthened the hand of the populists. With the terrain of mass political action left open to the workers, the workers were allowed to continue under the illusion that the ANC is the only political organisation capable of harnessing the political anger of the masses, and it is the only organisation capable of taking state power. We can only here, once again, assert our belief that only the direct politicisation of the unions in mass action can counteract the lure of the populist demagogues. But be that as it may, what is at stake here is for all socialists, whether in COSATU or not, to rally behind the legitimate majority section of CCAWUSA as a crucial test-case wherein the socialists can begin to fight back.

To the syndicalists: For years you have built progressive unions from the '73 Durban strikes to FOSATU and then COSATU. And this while SACTU slandered you as imperialist CIA agents. Now that the Freedom Charter has been endorsed as a guide, now that the populists have shown their preparedness to use any dirty tactic (even splitting unions), now that socialism is being removed from COSATU, you face the very real threat of having your final trump card (the unions) removed from your grasp. While we reserve the right to fight you when you want to keep the workers out of mass politics, yet we recognise that the building of proper democratic organs of workers is vital. Unity of socialists is required because the very rationale of your existence requires that socialism be an immediate objective. Without access to COSATU and its member unions you face a future of political extinction. You may feel this prediction is far too gloomy, and we agree

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EMISSARY OF AFRICAN SONG

Review by Livingstone Mqotsi
Makeba: My Story

Miriam Makeba/James Hall Bloomsbury £13.95

This is the story of an African patriot now living in exile. Her passionate love for her country and her people has deepened and matured with the effluxion of time. She takes us on a tour of the world which has transformed for us into a concert stage where she performs in a manner familiar to us who know her and love her music and the message. With her we

feel the warmth of the studio lights, so bright, and the warmth of my African sun, so much brighter.

As her audience on this global forum we listen to her affirmation and her testimony:

My life, my career, every song I sing and every appearance, are bound up with the plight of my people.

This is a recurring theme throughout the 249 pages of this remarkable story of her courage, grandeur, wisdom, vivaciousness, love, magnanimity and broad humanity. It is inextricably bound up with the condition of her people, not only in terms of recording their tribulations but also their memorable valiant struggles to throw off the chains of oppression, their rejection of "that hateful system" of apartheid in South Africa: a system that puts blacks outside the pail of human society, sends them into a kind of internal exile:

I am in exile on the outside. We are in exile on the inside.

But she will have "hope, determination and song" until the day she dies. No power on earth can take that away from her. These have been given to her by the Superior Being. And she is sustained by the conviction that

some day all wrongs will be righted, and justice will prevail. Then all human beings will have a "decent life, peace, love."

Written in an intimate, conversational style, this book has nonetheless moments of serious reflection, which further illustrates to us how deeply Miriam feels about the lot of her people back home:

There are times when each African wonders how much longer we can stand living the way we do, as subhumans. The whites do not want to treat us like human beings because it is easier to keep us down if they think we are animals. But we know we are human beings. We know we are as good as anybody. We also know that something has got to happen. There is only so much anger, resentment, pain, and fear in a person before there is eruption.

Poignant words.

Although she asserts that "when I am angry, I come alive!" and although there are moments when she does sound as if she

is angry, yet the reader looks in vain for any bitterness in her. Her own humanity is so sublime that she sees racism as an aberration and views those who suffer from this disease with a kind of majestic disdain which reduces them to the level of "pimple-heads in uniform" who are living on borrowed time.

But she is keenly aware of the machinations of those who cruelly robbed her people of their land and their human rights, "the powerful and greedy invaders" who "with their boots.....pressed the faces of an entire people to the dirt", reduced them to a state of poverty, rightlessness and a source of cheap labour, and slavery consigned to the ghettos, where they are brutalised everyday of their lives.

When she appears before the United Nations Special Committee on Apartheid (1963) she is full of humility and is conscious of the heavy responsibility that falls on her:

The person Miriam Makeba is no longer just an African singer....I am a symbol of my repressed people.

Although she is nervous, she is, nevertheless, strengthened by the belief in the justness of her cause and by the faith she has in her people and their ultimate victory.

Whatever honours the world confers on her, she receives these in the name of her people. They are symbolic; they are expressions of solidarity:

I made the decision to always talk about the problems of my homeland, so those governments that feel compassion towards my people and want freedom for my people take me as a representative of my brothers and sisters. Everytime I receive an honorary passport from a country, I accept it in the name of my people.

Miriam is intensely fond of her country, that is, South Africa. It is the only country that is in harmony with her make-up. She loves other people and other lands, but she has to say:

My home is South Africa. And so I have to ask myself a terrible question: Will I ever find peace in my lifetime? Will I ever go home?

Stung by the ghastly transformation she observes in her "confused and dissatisfied" beloved daughter, Bongis, who will not even tell her mother of her decision to get married until after the event, she comes face to face with the truth that must confront those "on the outside":

Our people and our ways cannot be found in America. The loss is terrible for me, and I know it must be terrible for her.

It is therefore an eloquent testimony to her principles and her love of freedom, that she is resolved never to go back to an apartheid South Africa, in spite of her strong nostalgia for her motherland, its people and its traditions:

Our ancient laws and traditions, like our art and architecture, grew from our profound closeness to our land.

Meeting her brother, Joseph, in Mozambique was "like something from a dream or a moment of warmth in the chill of an exile life."

She loves Africa and her peoples who in turn love her, but this does not blind her to its imperfections. She has always been an African, for better or worse. Yet she confesses in all honesty:

It is never easy living in Africa. The politics, the poverty, the terrible diseases, are all hard on the soul. It takes courage, hope, and real love for the land and the people to live here. But since I have these things, I continue to make this my home.

And yet she knows that all Africa is not really her home. That is South Africa. And unlike a lot of people she knows for certain where her home is:

Yes I know. But the hurt won't go away, because knowing is not the same as being there.

She has seen and befriended a lot of Africans of all stations and is profoundly grateful to the late President Sekou Toure of Guinea, her sponsor who sent her on a delegation to the United Nations and twice asked her to address the General Assembly on behalf of his country:

great moments for myself and wonderful platforms from which I could speak about the plight of my people.

She pours scorn on Reagan's idea of "constructive engagement" with South Africa. It hurts her ear "like a sour note". She says that's Reagan's way of saying, "Speak softly and do not carry even a stick, and maybe everything will get better."

There is a cynicism too in all this. For in the view of the American establishment "there is no suffering that is as important as American interests." Thus while Lybia is bombed as a terrorist state by America in collusion with her satellites, South Africa's genocide is stroked with the gentle hand of "constructive engagement" and dialogue. For Washington and London value South African uranium for their warplanes more than mere black lives. But the warning is:

Hey, we understand what "constructive engagement" means. We are slaves, but we are not stupid.

Botha's "reforms" and "accords" are

dismissed as "phony attempts to fool world opinion." She is equally critical of those opportunists inside South Africa who are prepared to participate in second class "parliaments" believing that, indeed, "they are part of things." These she dubs traitors.

But her political maturity does not permit her to lump all the Coloureds and all the Indians together in the same category simply because of the roll played by a few collaborators. For

a great majority of Indians and Coloureds show that they want real reform.

They will not be divided from the black majority, like the government is trying to do.

It is all the more surprising, therefore, that a person with such breadth of vision and political sensitivity should have omitted to make any reference at all to other people and organisations involved in the South African liberation struggles except those falling within the ambit of the congress movement.

Miriam is down to earth. She does not speak from the vaults of erudition, but from a disarming and intuitive common sense that she claims to have got from her mother's breast. With that native equipment at her command she sometimes makes some of the most profound philosophical statements. One example is her almost motherly rebuke of Stokely Carmichael on account of his appearance. She tells him that it is superficial understanding of the nature of revolution to believe that the more ragged and scruffy you are the more genuinely revolutionary you must be. This is an illusion:

What you are doing is not revolutionary. You don't fight a revolution to stay in the mud. If you want to stay in the mud like a pig, then you don't have to do nothing.

Indeed, her own commitment to South African revolution is beyond question. Her single overriding preoccupation is the destruction of apartheid and oppression. Although her life in exile has conspired to keep her on the move, this does not make her forget and does not erode the hurt and the pain:

.....instead of making me tired, all the motion makes me realize that I have a job to do, a purpose. I am not running away from anything, but toward some-

thing: toward a day when the world realizes, through voices like mine, that there is a terrible evil among all people that is dragging us down and must be stopped. I am not a vengeful person, but I know that there is a political system that must answer for the murders of my relatives and ancestors. This is how, days after the death of my grandson or hours after a divorce has gone through, I am on stage, and all that people see is the good feeling I have being there to sing to them.

Her misfortunes and the tragedies of her family are the lot of her people. She accepts them with dignity. Although they hurt, they leave no visible scars; her indomitable courage remains intact and her generosity unflinching. Hers is a character whose spiritual sublimity transcends the ordinary follies and foibles of human nature. At times she takes us backstage and allows us to look deeper into her inner soul and makes us understand what it is that makes Miriam Makeba tick. She proclaims:

Going on stage to sing is like stepping into a perfect world. The past means nothing. Worries about the future do not exist. All that matters is the music. I live for this. The love I have for my music, and my audience, is what makes this a perfect world: under the lights, with my pretty singers and good-looking musicians! And the message, the few heartfelt words that I say to plead for my people, this makes it even more perfect. My voice is heard by the people when I speak about the evils that are strangling South Africa. Every day there is more and more to say - there is more urgency and more tragedy.

The concert stage: This is one place where I am most at home, where there is no exile.

It is here that she unveils for all to see the fatal pestilence that haunts "the iron cage of apartheid."

But in the life of an individual there are levels of tragic circumstances. Here we have life that's full of resilience, courage and determination in a hostile world, a drama that has been, as she calls it cryptically, of "an exercise in African magic." She can weather the storm of a very heart-rending "divorce" with her Big Brother, Harry Belafonte, for whom she has the highest regard and admiration and to whom she is immensely thankful. For it was he who launched on to the American

stage and tutored her in the discipline of her profession. She is prepared to defy the American establishment and its satellites and sacrifice personal comfort to marry the man she loves. She does all this because she feels that in these situations her personal integrity and her freedom of choice are being challenged and violated. And that she will not allow.

But when her Bongi dies, we feel, for the first time, that she is beginning to sound despondent. Apartheid, the evil that has done so much harm to her people "is destroying me too. Don't you see, it is beating me?"

Her next concert was performed in a trance like condition, and yet it was a miraculous success, as though the spirits (amadlozi) had taken over. Yet again the stage concert had done its magic.

This wound seems to heal in a typically magical way. But this magic is of a different kind. When a baby girl is born to her late daughter's husband's sister, she is given the name of Bongi at the request of Bongi's mother-in-law. This seems to constitute a rebirth of Miriam's dear departed daughter and revered as is the custom of her host, the people of Guinea, she goes to the Source, a holy spring, to leave her baptismal sacrifice; to pray and offer thanksgiving; to remember those who have been kind to her, and to remember in particular her daughter, Bongi. The sacrifice is a gift to the past and to the future. For those two "are always knocking at your door." Like the concert stage itself, this belief in the power of the ancestral spirits and intervention of the Superior Being in the affairs of the living, as well as reliving the past, and in the process breaking the resistance that leave unwanted stuff buried in the deep levels of consciousness thus interfering with our adjustment to reality, must have a cathartic effect on the isangoma personality, whose ukuthwasa syndrome, with all its complexities, can only be understood against the background of a particular culture. But the ritual should be familiar to all. It is variation on a theme orchestrated elsewhere by the fortune-teller, the priest, the family doctor, the consultant psychologist and the psychiatrist.

For anyone wishing to gain a fresh, deep and delicately human insight into the South African tragedy, Miriam Makeba's autobiography must be required reading. It will also occupy pride of place in the annals of the struggles of African women.

masses of supporters. Instead of being scared of "prematurely exposing yourself" your silence in defence of socialism only strengthens the hands of the hard core nationalists and Stalinists - which will make your own work impossible when they deliberately isolate you. Instead of being apole within the ANC you face the danger of being indistinguishable from the nationalists and Stalinists.

DEFEND CCAWUSA. DEFEND DEMOCRACY. BUILD SOCIALISM NOW. FORWARD WITH A SOCIALIST PROGRAMME OF ACTION. SOCIALISTS UNITE!

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with you - BUT ONLY IF YOU ARE PREPARED TO FIGHT THE POPULISTS ON POLITICAL GROUND, OTHERWISE YOU WILL SUCCEED TO THE LURE AND YOU WILL CAPITULATE.

To all entryists: For years the logic of your argument of transforming the ANC from within committed you to every twist and turn of the ANC. You proclaim yourselves to be socialists and anti-petite bourgeois nationalists. You believe in the need for a Worker's Party but only via transforming the ANC. Yet you are in danger of becoming the finger-men of the Stalinists. Because you have a secret

hidden agenda, which includes sympathies for Trotsky, you are often best able to expose and identify anti ANC/UDF elements. And that makes you potential star-performers doing the dirty work of the SACP and ANC. This is certainly not going to win you any favours from the ANC/CP who will more likely reward your endeavors with death eventually.

The very logic of your commitment to transforming the ANC, requires that you set yourselves up as a pole within the ANC. A pole around the need for socialist revolution is the only way of driving a wedge between the reformist leadership of the ANC and its

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and not to give the enemy a chance to divide us further. Unity based on democratic structures that have grown up in the community and with the support of the community is the only means by which a satisfactory solution will be arrived at.

The CAPE ACTION LEAGUE pledges its support for the entire community of KTC and will do everything in its power to help find a solution that strengthens us rather than a "solution" that makes brother fight brother and sister fight sister.

SITUATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

The CAPE ACTION LEAGUE holds the government of South Africa responsible for the devastating wars now reigning in all the neighbouring States, more especially in Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

These wars are part and parcel of the regime's total strategy for the maintenance of white supremacy and regional imperialist domination. They are the foreign political outflow of the same policies that are being implemented to crush the resistance of the oppressed peoples of Namibia and Azania. In all these murderous activities, the South African regime has the open or covert support of various imperialist governments and cliques as became obvious again just recently when the fascist-minded Franz-Joseph Strauss made it abundantly clear that he and his backers support the regime almost without reservation.

We pledge our immovable support for all the peoples of Southern Africa who are unified in their resistance to this racist-imperialist monster that is devouring thousands and even hundreds of thousands of our people. We condemn all puppets, collaborators and traitors who are working with the regime, in particular the bandit leaders of Unita and Renamo and the venal and corrupt elements who are administering the Bantustans and the tricameral system on behalf of the regime.

Let the rulers and the world take note that sooner or later the entire region will be engulfed in a war of survival that will turn the subcontinent into a killing field such as humanity has seen only too often in this century as a result of imperialist wars.

We call on all the peoples of Southern Africa to stand together and to forge unbreakable bonds that will help us to eradicate racism and imperialism and to render the subcontinent safe for all our children and future generations.

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lieve this decision has not been made in the interests of worker unity.

"We re-iterate that: It is our democratic right to question the CEC decision, and we will now be taking it to our members. A decision on what our position is will be made by our members through our structure.

"We are calling on democratic and decent behaviour to prevail and that workers must be allowed to make a decision in a constitutionally correct manner.

"We believe that this decision was arrived at by CEC delegates under the mistaken belief that the allegations are correct. We were not shown any real evidence to substantiate the charges nor were we given a fair opportunity to reply to them.

"We believe that this decision seriously undermines COSATU policy and is clearly not in the interests of building a National Industrial Trade Union in the Commercial and Catering Sector."

An urgent request has been made to all COSATU Affiliates to seriously examine the CEC decision. In the meantime the latest developments in the dispute as well as the implications of the COSATU decision are being discussed at all levels in our Union. In whatever way the dispute is resolved in the future, we remain committed to a solution that has the support of the rank and file members in our Union and that furthers the unity of workers in the Commercial and Catering Sector.

We sincerely hope that this report has contributed towards a greater understanding of the dispute. Despite this serious set-back in our Union's history, we firmly believe that the majority of organised workers are fully in support of our position. The tradition of 12 years of militant worker struggle that CCAWUSA is known for will certainly continue.

We are an affiliate of FIET and look forward to continuing fraternal relations with the International Trade Union Movement. We call upon you to extend a hand of solidarity to CCAWUSA at this difficult moment in its history.

FORWARD WITH INTERNATIONAL WORKER SOLIDARITY
Yours fraternally,
Vivian Mtwana

General Secretary CCAWUSA

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majority of the members.

2. To workers in COSATU: The position that COSATU has taken is unfortunately a position that has encouraged division in CCAWUSA. As we have said above, we believe that this position has been taken simply because the minority group in CCAWUSA has a political stance similar to the dominant political view inside COSATU. As a result, the violent and undemocratic activities of this group are ignored and the majority of CCAWUSA members denied the right to participate in COSATU structures. For the sake of COSATU and unity in the workers' struggle we call on you to support our struggle.

3. To workers in the commercial and catering sector: CCAWUSA is by far the biggest union organising commercial and catering workers in South Africa. The victories of CCAWUSA workers against the retail and catering bosses are your victories as well. CCAWUSA workers are divided at a time when the bosses are now organising themselves against the workers and when the state is preparing new laws to crush the gains that the trade unions have made over the last decade. A divided CCAWUSA will mean a setback for all commercial and catering workers. The struggle for unity in our sector has been faced with many difficulties in the past. We need to redouble our efforts to build one big trade union for workers in the com-

mercial and catering sector.

Conclusion

Without a clear strategy for building political unity in the labour movement and in the mass movement in general, the state and the bosses will continue their onslaught against the gains that we have struggled so hard to achieve.

We need to develop a correct approach to the different political tendencies in the mass movement. Clearly, a sincere commitment to a particular progressive political position must be acknowledged and respected no matter how unpopular it may be. If it is sincerely expressed, it must be honestly and openly debated and given an opportunity to be tested in practice. It is within a climate of open and democratic debate that the mass movement heightens the quality of its political actions. Wider dissemination of information and a climate of open debate among political activists will promote unity and understanding. With unity and understanding it will be easier to build organisational unity. An arrogant and sectarian approach to political positions can only promote ignorance, closed minds, fear and division in the mass movement.

Let the CCAWUSA dispute be a lesson to all!
Forward with the unity between COSATU and NACTU!
Forward with united action against the Labour Bill!