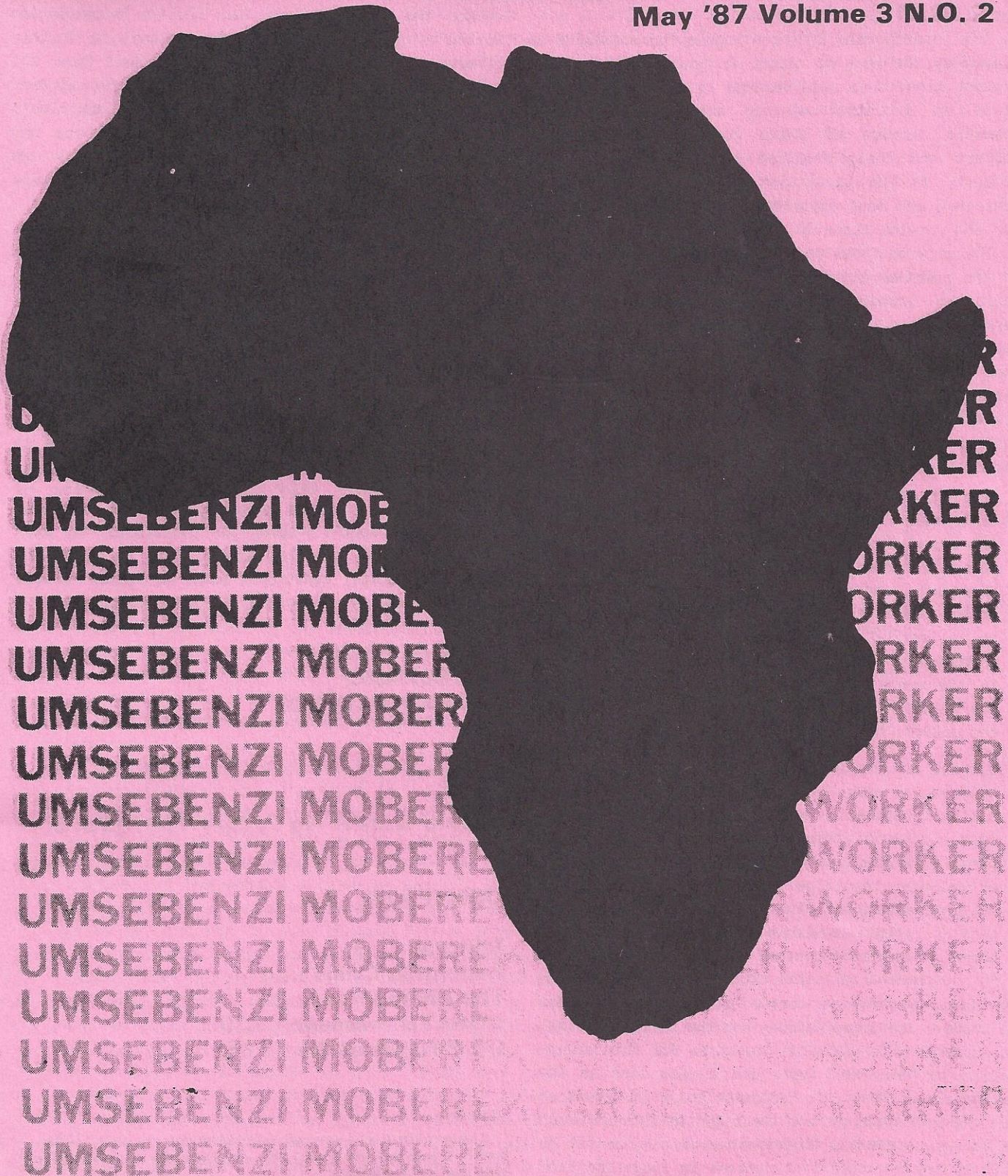

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THE AIM OF AZANIA WORKER

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; worker's 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 and toiling masses 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 contribution of articles which will help in the understanding of questions such as race, class, culture, ideology, consciousness and subjectivity.

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Apology

The last issue was wrongly numbered volume 4 no.1 when infact it was volume 3 no.1. We apologise for any confusion this may have caused.

EDITORIAL

An article on the education crisis in South Africa again takes a central place in our journal. That we should give so much prominence to an analysis of the education crisis is to be expected. After all, the struggles in education have since 1976 been at the forefront of all other struggles whose cumulative effect has been the general crisis of South Africa. In the words of the article, the struggles in education are the "most volatile and radicalised".

The particular crisis in education is considered within the context of the general crisis facing South Africa and against an ongoing debate on the content and direction of the national liberation struggle in South Africa. The question at the heart of the debate is whether there is a single struggle for a non-apartheid society or a combined struggle which simultaneously addresses both apartheid and capitalism. It is a debate on whether the two struggles are separate and whether the struggle for social transformation must be postponed until after apartheid laws have been removed from South Africa's statute books.

Whether it is possible to separate apartheid from capitalism and thus wage a successful struggle against apartheid without waging a struggle against capitalism is a question which all leading left-wing scholars have answered in the negative. Many leading trade unionists and COSATU itself are also advancing the view that the two struggles are inseparable.

Nevertheless, the case for separation of struggles and postponement of the struggle for social transformation is defended most emphatically by the African National Congress, South African Communist Party and United Democratic Front or, at any rate, their leading members. Consequently, these organisations do not address the way in which the post-apartheid economy will be different from the apartheid economy. Dubbing any one who does pose the question of a post-apartheid economy an "ultra-leftist", the three organisations have set themselves the aim of constructing the broadest possible unity on the basis of a minimum consensus against apartheid.

In the recent period of crisis, a logical outcome of the strategy of the widest possible front against apartheid has been the pursuance of tactics which assume an imminent collapse of the apartheid regime. The struggles in education have presented one area where such tactics are all too evident. Thus the slogan Liberation Before Education whose practical effect is an indefinite boycott of schools or a boycott until liberation is won stems from a belief that liberation is nigh. It is precisely at the tactics based on the imminent collapse of the apartheid regime as applied in the struggles in education that the article on education takes a critical look.

The second article is on the current (pre May 12 election) situation in the Philippines. Written by a member of the Institute for Popular Democracy in the Philippines, it demonstrates how the centrists ("widest possible unity against Marcos") led by Cory Aquino, now they are in power after liberation, are achieving an accommodation with the right wing and consolidating "democracy" on a conservative West European model the elitism of which excludes the popular classes from participation and prevents the creation of a people's democracy.

In the final section we publish two documents recently released by the trade union movement in South Africa. The first is a COSATU message addressed to its members - a message in which COSATU tells its members that "if the bosses' capitalist system can't provide us with what we need, then we don't need the bosses' system", and "we must really unite and really lead the mass of our people to a new, transformed society - a society where the needs of the workers will be paramount". It is a message clearly out of tune with those leaders and organisations holding out that the struggle to socially transform South Africa is to be postponed to some distant future long after one person one vote is established.

The second document was issued by the Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union of South Africa during the 11 week strike by 11000 workers it successfully led against the OK Bazaars chain of supermarkets. Calling for the "unqualified support of the international working class and its organisations in this struggle against OK Bazaars", CCAWUSA issued the document to seek international publicity and support for the strike. Also noteworthy at the time of the strike is that CCAWUSA sent union officials to Britain and Europe in a drive to make direct contact with overseas' unions. Supporting the view that the working class must lead the national liberation struggle, CCAWUSA declared: "Victory in this strike is also crucial if the workers are to imprint within the political arena and be respected as leaders of the struggle for liberation in South Africa".



SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE EDUCATION CRISIS

By a group of recent exiles from South Africa

This document is a kind of "internal memorandum" addressed to all political and educational activists in South Africa/Azania regardless of which tendency they belong to. We believe sincerely and profoundly that in spite of different approaches to the struggle for national liberation, there is more than enough common ground on which all of us can stand united. We believe further that only in this way can

we make sure that the enemy does not make a mockery of the heroic sacrifices which our people, young and old, have made during the past thirty months or so. As we shall show in this memo, during this period we have made very important gains even though we have suffered heavy losses.

One such loss has been the deepening of divisions within the liberation movement. That is bad

enough, of course, even though division, when it is essential, is not a bad thing. What is worse, however, is the fact that through these divisions, very often disastrous tactics have been adopted in the day-to-day struggle of our people. Especially in the educational arena. Because of the critical importance of this arena, we have felt that it is necessary to open up a serious and ongoing debate on

this question. Unity is the main weapon of an oppressed and exploited people. This has been said often and all of us repeat it like a prayer. But the past thirty months have shown all too clearly that unless we take this principle seriously, our struggle is going to fall apart. We are going to be reduced to scattered groups of warring factions, shooting and necklacing one another while the ruling class smiles and pretends to "restore the peace" or, as they say, to "maintain law and order". Unless we learn the bitter lessons of unity and disunity, we shall fail our people and this phase of our struggle will be remembered as one of the most disastrous lost opportunities in world history.

Like the Chinese revolutionaries we believe that it is necessary to have many "speak bitterness" meetings in all our local and regional communities so that we can get to the truth and plot a course that will give us strength.

What were the gains of the period September 1984 to the end of 1986?

No one can doubt that the period September 1984 to the end of 1986 has been one of spectacular mass mobilisation. On all fronts and in all arenas of struggle, important advances were made. Indeed, it is not too much to say that the mobilisations of this period have taken us beyond the point of no return. In other words, because of the intensification of the struggle during this period, South Africa has been placed squarely before a single alternative. That alternative is : either decades-long military dictatorship (as in some Latin American countries) or a fundamental anti-capitalist revolution that will place the working masses in power.

The level of political and revolutionary consciousness of all our people has been raised to a height unknown before. Millions of black people in the cities, on the farms and in the "homelands" now know exactly why they are oppressed and exploited. They have begun to understand how they can liberate themselves. As a result, the level of independent organisation of the people has become one of the main

dangers for the rulers. Since 1980 already, but especially since 1984, thousands of independent organisations of the working people have sprung up all over the country. From large trade unions, such as the National Union of Mineworkers, through thousands-strong students' organisations and youth congresses to the smallest action committees in rural or neighbourhood groups in the cities, a solid foundation of people's organisations has been built up in struggle. In this base, a non-racial, democratic and socialist Azania/South Africa will arise. It is an indestructible foundation, one which the enemy can no longer hope to break up. Important new kinds of organisations have been discovered. We refer to street committees, co-operatives, some people's courts and many others. Organisational skills and resources have been built up on an unprecedented scale. In fact, our struggle has been pushed forward into the last quarter of the 20th century out of the 19th century backwardness in which it was caught until 1976. Today, the movement can call, to mention one sphere only, on expert media people, graphic artists, poster makers, banner painters, photographers, video and film makers, and many more. Few movements for national liberation have been so well endowed!

A much better understanding of the nature of our society and of the character of our struggle has been spread especially among the youth. Today, most young activists accept that only a socialist system can solve the problems of this country. Because of the spreading of the scientific analysis of our society, anti-racism, anti-sexism and participatory democracy have become widely understood and are gradually influencing the practices of more and more organisations.

The regional and international context of the South African struggle has begun to be understood more clearly even though there are still serious limitations in the analysis of many groups. These limitations stem from a failure or refusal to consider the hostile class interests that are often defended and promoted by many of the ruling parties in Southern Africa and in the rest of Africa.

What was the central weakness in the recent period of mobilisation?

Despite the heroic militancy of our people despite the spectacular mobilisations, rallies, demonstrations, conferences and confrontations, there is no doubt that we have in important respects suffered a serious reverse. The movement is temporarily on the retreat. How far back it will be pushed by the forces of reaction will depend on whether or not we have understood the mistakes that were made in this period of significant advance.

The central weakness of the recent period of mobilisation was, as in the past, the failure on the part of large sections of the political leadership of the national liberation movement to understand the nature of the regime against which we are fighting. In this regard, a few very hard statements have to be made. These statements will be denied, ridiculed and attacked by those to whom they apply. That is inevitable. People seldom admit in public that they are wrong, partly because they really do not believe that they are wrong. A drunk man or woman often has to be transformed into a cripple or a near corpse before they understand the danger of too much drink. This does and should not stop us from telling them the truth. And this is exactly what we want to try to do here in as simple words as possible. We deliberately do not refer to any particular organisations since we believe that elements of this leadership we are referring to are to be found in all tendencies and in all organisations.

Too many elements of the leadership of our struggle continue to believe that we are fighting against a colonial regime, that South Africa is a colonial country. Even though they often say that, of course, the Whites will stay on in the country after liberation, they also see these Whites as or behave as though the Whites are still "settlers" and "colonists". Now, if this were only a manner of speaking, or if they were merely saying that many features of racial/national oppression are like colonial oppression, there would be no disagreement at all. But there is a great difference between saying that a is like b and saying that

$a = b !$

For, clearly, if we are fighting against a colonial regime, then we can assume that the general features of modern anti-colonial wars will apply to our situation. We can among other things, assume that

- decolonisation is inevitable;
- the colonists will withdraw to their mother country or countries;
- colonial authority will transfer power to the anti-colonial forces through a negotiated settlement;
- a "sole authentic representative" organisation will unite the nation against the colonial forces. This scenario has been enacted in numerous African countries ruled by Britain, France and Belgium before the 1960's. It is now being enacted under extremely unfavourable circumstances for the anti-colonial forces in Namibia, where South Africa is the colonial authority. It is unnecessary, after this brief description of the decolonisation process, to show that the dominant discourse in our movement is identical with that of the anti-colonial struggles after World War II.

But behind language there lurk beliefs and attitudes. Many of the leadership elements we refer to really believe that we are acting in a colonial situation. They expect, consequently, that at some point in the not too distant future "settler colonialists", i.e., the White regime will "lose their nerve or suffer a "failure of will"; then they will - like Britain, France and Belgium in the 'sixties - decide to "cut their losses" and withdraw from the colony. In doing so, they will hand over or "transfer" power to the African middle class or intelligentsia to rule the "independent country"!

Some of the more radical elements in this leadership take the analogy further. They go along with this analysis and support the strategies and tactics that flow from it. Thus, for example, they see the "first stage" of the struggle as being "against apartheid". When "liberation" (independence) has been attained, the masses under the guidance of the radical leadership, will quickly realise that this political "liberation" has not

solved the problem. Just like Kwame Nkrumah and other African leaders of the 'sixties realised that all the post-independence African states were being exploited by a system of neo-colonialism (which Nkrumah called "the last stage of imperialism"), so the radical leadership in South Africa will lead the masses out of the anti-apartheid stage of the struggle into the second, anti-capitalist or socialist stage!

But, for all the superficial plausibility of this argument, it is in fact a completely false picture of the South African reality. What is the reality? That capitalism in South Africa has its origins in the colonial conquest of the indigenous African people and in the brutal and merciless dispossession of the people and the pillage of their goods and chattels needs no explanation. In this,

South Africa is no different from the United States, Canada, Australia and the other White dominions of the former British Empire. Unlike those capitalist countries, however, the indigenous people survived the holocaust of the colonial conquest, remained the vast majority of the population and continued up to this day to struggle for the restoration of land and liberty. For this reason, the quasi colonial aspect of our struggle links up directly with immediate resistance of our forebears to conquest. There is, without any doubt, a certain historical continuity. But it would be simplistic to believe in a formula like "once a colony, always a colony" (until the black people rule)!

The crucial feature of the South African system is the nature of the original settler population. Even though they did not manage to eradicate the indigenous people (as they did to a very large extent in most other dominions and in the USA!), they cut their links with Europe in the sense that they themselves became "Africans" even though they often continued to call themselves "Europeans" until recently. They became in effect, like any other conquering group that imposes itself on and adapts to the foreign environment, a ruling caste. In the South African case, the historical accidents of colour and language

made this process of caste formation (across class differences in the superordinate castes) so much easier and so much more deep-going.

Like the Ndebele in Southern Zimbabwe in the 19th century, like the Arabs in East Africa in an earlier period, the merchant - capitalist (mainly Afrikaans-speaking) Whites who conquered the indigenous people became an integral, albeit exploitative and dominant part of a new socio-economic and socio-political totality within a relatively short period of time. This is a vast subject which can only be referred to here. Suffice it to say that we are here dealing with a native ruling class (of European origin), not with a foreign ruling group. We are not, in short, dealing with a colonial situation anymore. South Africa was the first African colony of Europe to be decolonised. This took place as long ago as 1910 when the Union of South Africa was formed. It is, we think, unnecessary to repeat

here the well known history of the economic, political and cultural forces and events that persuaded or forced Britain to "cut its losses" and to "transfer power" to the Afrikaner middle class and the Afrikaans and English speaking bourgeoisie of the time. This was the first "negotiated settlement" between an African middle class and an imperial power. Since then, South African capitalism has developed along its own peculiar path as a secondary imperialism in league with Anglo-American and more recently with other European, especially German, and Japanese imperialisms. To continue to view this situation as a colonial one is particularly perverse in view of the fundamental changes that have taken place in the class structure of the country and generally in the political economy since 1945. Today, the overwhelming majority of the people are proletarians, permanently so. While the land question continues to be a central concern of many of the people and the liberation movement, the question of wage exploitation has become the main social question in South Africa. The primary contradiction (not only objectively but in the subjective consciousness

of the masses) is that between capital and labour and not that between an oppressing White colonial-settler class and an oppressed class of black helots. This latter is certainly one of the pertinent contradictions of our situation but it is a secondary one none the less. Of course, the fact that this exploitative relationship is experienced in the form of racial discrimination and racial oppression means that a nationalist response remains the dominant consciousness among black people. This is one of the contradictory and peculiar features of the system of racial capitalism that render our struggle unique and preclude any stereotyped Eurocentric "workerist" or "populist" solutions to our problems.

What are the strategic and tactical consequences of this analysis?

It follows from the above analysis that the native White ruling class will not transfer power. They are not foreigners even though they are racists. Their remoteness from the proletarianised black masses can be compared with the remoteness of the French or Russian aristocracy from "the common people" in a different epoch. Even though they appear and often act as foreigners, they are none the less native South Africans! Whether we like it or not!

They have made it clear, very crudely through Botha, Heunis and Co., more subtly and less offensively through numerous spokes-persons of the PFP and other parties, that they are prepared to "share power" with the up-and-coming black middle class (as representatives of the "black people") in some federal or confederal or "consociational" constitution. In other words, they are prepared to co-opt those middle class elements among the blacks who are prepared to accept their ethnic point of departure (e.g., homelands leaders, tricameral parties, community councillors, management committee members, and so forth). Co-option, not negotiation is the name of the game, and therefore sharing, not transfer, of power.

We want to stress that this flows from the nature of the regime and the character of our struggle. We are involved (as in France in

1789 and Russia in 1917) in a civil war between indigenous classes, not in an anti-colonial war between patriots on the one side and foreigners on the other. Once this is understood, it becomes crystal clear what our tactics should be both in the short and in the long term.

It is a pipe dream to think that it is possible to pressurise Botha and Co. into a situation where they will transfer power to a black middle class, not to mention a black working class! A strategy based on the assumption that this is possible flows from a profound misunderstanding of South African history. As in any other modern capitalist country, the ruling class will manage to cling to power as long as the army supports it. Unlike the army of almost any other capitalist country in the modern world, the South African army will not easily switch allegiances from the existing (White) capitalist class to contending (black or white) strata of the capitalist class or the middle class. This, indeed, is possibly the most important legacy of the racist character of colonial conquest and colonial capitalism i.e., the fact that the South African army is not an army drawn from "the people" but an army made up even today largely of the sons and daughters of the ruling caste. Again, we are dealing with a changing reality even in this area, but it would take us too far off course to trace these changes and their implications in this memorandum. The long and the short of what we are saying is that even if a strategy of pressurising "South Africa" into a negotiated settlement had any chance of success from an international vantage point, it would fail because the government can depend on the standing army and because it will be enabled to continue to do so as long as South Africa's trading partners are unable to suffocate the economy by means of a total blockade of the sea, land and air lanes to and from the country. This latter tactic has never succeeded even in the midst of a world war and it is almost inconceivable that Europe, South Africa's Asian collaborators and North America could reach consensus on such a complex (and astronomic-

ally expensive) tactic.

Why disinvestment? Why sanctions?

Be that as it may, the question poses itself: Why are the liberals and the social democrats of the "Western World" promoting and reinforcing the policy of pressure in the form of half-hearted sanctions, disinvestment, divestment, etc? Do they believe that this can "bring the South African government to the negotiating table"?

Some of them certainly believe in this, simply because of political naivety and a lack of historical penetration. These, we need not consider. Others, however, are much more subtle. They had hoped in the first place that Botha and Co would more or less rapidly get rid of the gross forms of racial discrimination when it became clear that apartheid was no longer economically profitable or socially acceptable. When Botha in his Rubicon speeches finally dispelled these cobwebs, these ladies and gentlemen began to look around for an alternative capitalist government. They were willing to put together any ensemble of anti-apartheid forces that had any hope of cohering in a stable manner. The centre piece of such an ensemble was to be the UDF, the so-called nationalists in the ANC, the PFP, some "verligte" Nats, some of the homelands and tricameral elements and perhaps some of the PAC and National Forum groupings.

This is the main reason why the liberal press and other media gave such prominence to these forces in the past thirty months or so. We have no means of knowing whether and to what extent pressure was brought to bear on the South African army to consider switching allegiances (as happened recently in the Philippines, for example). That such attempts would have been made is very likely. In this regard, we assume, the international liberal lobby failed miserably. The recent behaviour of the South African Defence Force inside and outside the country speaks louder than words.

What does this mean, however? It means quite simply that international (and local) liberalism realises that there is no possibility at present of installing an alter-

native capitalist government in South Africa. They know that as long as they do not get SADF backing for such a strategy, it can only lead to bloody civil war and perhaps even large-scale international war in the Southern African region. Since they are implacably opposed to any socialist alternative, it means that they promote, support and misadvise the popular anti-apartheid resistance movement as a battering ram against the Botha regime. They see it as no more than a means of forcing Botha (or his successor) and his army to reform the South African economy and society along the lines they desire, i.e., to deracialise capitalism without altering in any fundamental manner the relations of production and therefore of exploitation and oppression. In their scheme of things, a few tens of thousands of black middle class people will enter into the South African paradise now reserved for Whites only, while the vast majority of the black workers will remain at the bottom of the capitalist pile in their ghettos, locations, compounds, and "homelands". In other words, a cynical game is being played in which well-meaning, sincere and courageous activists are being made to believe that they are mobilising the masses for "liberation". In fact, the liberals of the world and of South Africa are playing this dastardly game only because they have no alternative, only because the unpredictable intensity of the mass resistance on the one hand has caught them unawares and they stand confounded before the "intransigence" of the "racist Pretoria regime" on the other hand. In fact, they know very well that there is no "liberation" at the end of that particular road, only further exploitation and racial inequality even though under a so-called non-racial capitalism!

Those "leaders" who have strutted about the country predicting the imminent collapse of the South African regime, whether they knew it or not, were doing the work of the liberal imperialists. The masses of the working people, so history teaches us, will always follow those forces which promise them some relief from the burdens they are forced to bear unless

these promises are clearly unrealistic and romantic. The attempt to "talk down" and thus to soften up the South African government by local and overseas elements has now reached its dead end. To understand why the National Party government has hardly been shaken by these tactics would require a detailed analysis of the political economy of South Africa today. What is very clear, however, is that the South African government is willing, and within certain limits able, to allow the economy to shrink back to the point where a majority of Whites and some blacks are relatively comfortable and even prosperous while the majority of black people starve and kill one another in vicious and divisive faction fights and sectarian vendettas. Or, to put it another way, the Masada complex or the laager mentality is more likely to be decisive than the "failure of will" on which so many liberal strategies are based at present.

On the side of the liberation movement, this means simply that we have to proceed on the calculation that the end game is not one involving a negotiated settlement and a transfer of power. On the contrary, we have to assume that in the end, this regime is going to have to be overthrown by a revolutionary uprising of the working masses who will seize or conquer power. In other words, we should not try to walk on the futile road of reformist politics. History in Southern Africa is in process of forcing us, however reluctant we may be, to adopt a revolutionary strategy with appropriate revolutionary tactics.

How is the education crisis related to the general crisis in S.A?

This question has been analysed in great depth on many public occasions. There is, therefore, no need to go into detail here. The general political, economic and social crisis of the ruling class in South Africa is both the effect and the cause of the intensification of numerous contradictions that have developed in diverse sites of struggle. Among the main sites of struggle referred to here are the production of goods and services in

factories, mines, farms and offices, the schools, technicons, colleges and universities, the townships as places of residence, the rural "homelands" and resettlement camps, and the churches. In all these spheres, the contradictions of the apartheid system have for years been on the point of bursting out into open rebellion.

The educational arena, for reasons that have been analysed often before, is the most volatile and radicalised of all these spheres at present. The education crisis has, since 1976, been one of the main catchment areas in which the great river of our struggle for national liberation has its source. The youth, especially the student youth, much more than their parents, have broken with the missionary tradition of subservience and "turning the other cheek." In this, they are like youth all over the world. But in the process, they have destroyed any hope of legitimacy that any white minority South African government can have now or in the future. This fact alone is enough to guarantee that in South Africa one of the greatest revolutions of the 20th century is going to be consummated.

The crucial point that has to be made here is that our tactics in any of the relevant sites of struggle are a necessary outflow of our strategic perspectives. That is to say, if we have reformist illusions such as those outlined above, we will adopt one set of tactics. If, on the other hand, we are clear about the revolutionary path we have to follow, we will adopt another set of tactics. This relationship between theory (analysis), strategy and tactics is one of the most profound lessons of revolutionary practice that every single activist in this country has to learn as quickly as possible. It is the key to democracy. Because the understanding of the interconnection between these three facets of political action makes it impossible for any leaders or leadership to hoodwink the people who have to implement the policies captured in the slogans of our struggle.

To focus on the education crisis: it has been said repeatedly but it bears repetition: a slogan

such as liberation before education can be traced back to a false assessment of the nature of the South African regime. In particular, it assumes that the South African government is on the verge of collapse. The policy which is captured in this slogan is, to put it very simply, indefinite boycott of schools, intensified political mobilisation outside the schools in the communities and with the trade unions, etc., etc. We all know where this leads. And, let us be clear, it is a glorious and spectacular road, full of illuminating visions of a bright future. It is our right to have these visions. We must have them if our struggle is to succeed. And even those of us who were (and are) critical of this slogan and these policies supported our students' right to their visions and to their actions.

The problem arises, however, when the mass of students, who do not have the same quality of political consciousness as the student vanguard, reach the dead end which in terms of our analysis in this memorandum - is inevitable in the short to medium term. Then the euphoric exponents of triumphalist slogans such as these have no option but to turn to tactics of intimidation and blackmail. All too often we have seen this happen in the recent past. Sincere, dedicated young students who have just begun to understand the realities of power and who are honestly probing the possibilities of democratic mass action, because of a wrong strategy adopt tactics that negate their noble intentions. They become manipulative and opportunistic and, sometimes, no more than politicised thugs! Such is the iron logic of revolutionary politics.

On the other hand, a slogan such as Let us turn the schools into zones of liberation stems from a totally different conception of our struggle. It sees the schools as one of many sites of struggle where tactics are orchestrated in accordance with a general strategy of revolutionary class warfare. It assumes that the struggle has to be fought on all fronts, that no site of struggle can or should be abandoned and left to the enemy to occupy. We shall return to the

origins and the logic of this approach below. For the moment, the point that needs to be stressed is that there is a clear and unavoidable connection between theory, strategy, policy, tactics, slogans and organisational practice. At no stage should any of these dimensions of political action be viewed in isolation. We should always ask: What does this slogan imply theoretically? What goals are promoted by this action? In what kind of theoretical framework does such and such a practice fit? What are the practical consequences of this principle or that theoretical position? When we start thinking like this as a matter of course, there is no way that we can be misled into actions that negate the principles for which we stand or that undermine the goals for which we are fighting.

What about the people's attempts to deal with the education crisis?

It became clear towards the middle of 1985 that a large proportion of our student youth had fallen victim to the tactics of liberation before education and that schooling would be disrupted for a long time.

Many young and older persons in the leadership of the different organisations of the people began to consider seriously in which direction things were going. There were subsequently attempts in all parts of the country to redirect the course of events in the educational arena. Let it be said immediately that these attempts were variously motivated. Not all of them had their source in a revolutionary perspective. Indeed, some of them (such as calls by Inkatha and other collaborationist bodies) had clear counter-revolutionary aims!

Within the broad social movement of the oppressed and exploited people, there were essentially three positions. There was, firstly, the position of moderate parents and teachers (in organisations such as African Teachers Association of South Africa, Cape Teachers Professional Association and others) that "the children have made their point" and should, therefore, return to school. These people argued that we need skills and knowledge today and tomorrow. They said that

even if we got to power eventually, we would continue to be dependent on "the Whites" to run the country and especially the economic machinery unless our children were learning their lessons at school. They were, like everybody else, horrified at the brutalities of the SADF and SAP in the townships and in the schools themselves and, like everybody else, they wanted the troops out of the townships as soon as possible. One way of achieving this end, as they saw it, was for the children to return to school and to "normality". They were sick with worry because of the way their lives - impoverished as they are in the dreary normality of apartheid - were dislocated by the revolutionary whirlwind which the education campaign had blown up since 1984. They were (and are) conservative people who cannot see beyond the politics of protest. If things were left to them, the oppressed people of South Africa would continue in their semi-slavery for centuries, only voicing their dissatisfaction once or twice in every generation.

Then there was the position to which we hold. This stated simply that the boycott is not the only weapon of struggle in the arsenal of the oppressed; that it should not be blunted through wrong usage; that the student mass would soon become demoralised when the inevitable dead-end of the tactics of liberation before education was reached; that students should return to formal classes in order to carry on the struggle inside and outside the schools; that the schools should be turned into zones of liberation by progressive teachers, students and parents; that the boycott should be used as a tactical and not a strategic weapon, i.e., that it should only be deployed for carefully defined targets and periods of time under specific circumstances. The whole position was premised on the consideration that the South African government, although they are vulnerable (to pressure) are not weak (militarily) and even if sanctions began to put their backs against the economic wall, they could last for many years. Hence, even in the most favourable circumstances, we would have to wait a long time be-

fore the strategy of negotiated settlement could reach a successful conclusion. In these circumstances, the tactics of liberation before education were suicidal and those who were promoting these tactics were re-enacting a modern version of Nongqause's "national suicide of the amaXhosa"!

A third position has emerged out of the turmoil of the past 12 - 15 months or so. It is a position put forward very tentatively by people who in the past at the very least condoned, if they did not actually initiate, the tactics of liberation before education. We refer to those people who, because of their reformist illusions, have been rudely shocked by the brutal manner in which the South African state has reacted to the waves of mobilisation. These people find themselves in an invidious position. On the one hand, they refuse to accept that the premises on which they based their previous tactics had been grievously wrong. On the other hand, the harsh realities of quasi-military rule during the past two years have forced them to change tactics. Hence, they now call for a return to school (even without the preconditions on which they insisted in the previous period). But they warn that government action could once again "empty the schools". That is, they once again put the reins in the hands of government by telling them in advance that if it suits them to promote and perpetuate the dislocation of schooling, they may go ahead and do so. This is a counsel of despair, an empty bravado that substitutes political posturing for social analysis and planning.

What of the NECC?

Unfortunately, this past attitude is to be found in certain National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) circles. Indeed, the NECC gave up a glorious opportunity - opened up by others - of uniting the entire opposition to gutter education and to all oppression and repression in the educational sphere. It is well known that many people and organisations mainly associated with the National Forum were dissatisfied because of the sectarian manipulation that surrounded the con-

stituting of the NECC, especially at its second national meeting in Durban in March 1986. This is not the place to recount the history of the first few months of the NECC even though such an account will be extremely enlightening and will help to show how sectarianism and opportunist tactics can bedevil a liberation struggle. In this regard, the role of the liberal press in particular will have to be placed under the microscope!

Both the NECC and its affiliates and the Third National Forum passed resolutions at their Durban conferences in March 1986 which continue to determine the tactics of students, teachers and parents in the educational arena. We do not have inside information on the NECC and can only infer from public words and actions what their broad strategy either is or is tending towards.

On certain questions, there is very little difference between what the NECC and the National Education Action Committee (NEAC) of the National Forum are saying and doing. Both, for example, stand for the building of solid democratic structures in which students, parents and teachers are organised such as Student Representative Councils, Parent-Teacher-Student Associations, teachers' unions and students' unions. Both are also advocating the production of alternative texts and other materials for use inside and outside the schools and both, quite logically, advocate some kind of retraining of teachers for purposes of implementing an alternative education programme in the schools. Presumably, both groupings are now involved in implementing these policies.

Although neither of these groupings is monolithic or homogeneous and there are probably even quite wide differences between tendencies that constitute them, it is clear that there are certain important differences in their general approach to the struggle in the educational arena. Besides the high public profile of the NECC campaign - which, in a sense, is now beyond its control! - as opposed to the deliberately low-profile campaign of the National Forum, the most important difference seems to be in

their expectations of what is possible in the short term.

The NECC, generally speaking, has probably now abandoned the idea which was prevalent in its circles in the early part of 1986, that it was possible to "take over" and to control the physical school buildings in order to conduct people's education in them for any length of time. On various occasions, its spokespersons sowed this illusion among the people. Instead, the dominant strategy towards the end of 1986 appeared to be one of negotiation between the NECC and the government's Department of Education and Training (DET). Although we have no access to specific confidential material, there is absolutely no doubt that the idea was (and for some persons in NECC circles still is) to bargain with DET for the acceptance of as much of "people's education" as is attainable in the immediate term. Conversely, as much as is possible of Bantu Education should be scrapped immediately. DET, in the person of the apparently conciliatory Sam De Beer, was expected to be willing and able to make major concessions since the government presumably was unwilling to tolerate semi-permanent dislocation of the education process.

There is a breathtaking naivety in this perspective. To think that any modern dictatorship is going to be willing to hand over the education institutions ("people's universities"!!) to groups whom it sees as "revolutionaries" defies all logic. To imagine further that once this has happened (within the space of a few weeks or months, as it were) there would be a sufficient number of trained teachers or even volunteers who could run the alternative system, speaks of an ignorance of even the elementary logistics of the machinery of a modern society. It is, in the kindest possible formulation, a pipe dream! All one can say in mitigation is that the NECC leadership was (and still is) under extreme pressure from thousands and even hundreds of thousands of students to produce and implement People's Education Now! This is the direct result of a policy which did not warn students from the beginning that this slogan was idealistic at

present and that the view that the National Party government was about to be toppled was so much nonsense. On the other hand, the NECC is very much under pressure from parents in the township to get the situation "back to normal". Between these two apparently opposite forces, the NECC is, to put it mildly, floundering and vacillating in search of a credible policy.

But it is easy to criticise from outside. For all we know, the NECC is in fact not acting on the basis of these naive assumptions even though everything points in that direction. There, is of course, no doubt at all that the NECC was a response to revolutionary currents which are flowing especially among the student youth. For this very reason, the Third National Forum, even though it refused to attend the NECC meeting in Durban in March 1986, resolved to support all those NECC initiatives with which it is in agreement and to strive for joint action in the educational arena whenever possible.

What is the National Forum position on education?

The National Forum's National Education Action Committee (NEAC), in terms of the resolutions of the Third National Forum held in March 1986, accepts that education, for the ruling class, is a conservative process. For the contending exploited and oppressed classes it is essentially a subversive process. The class struggle is, therefore, fought out in the educational arena as much as in the factories, churches, newspapers and other arenas of struggle on a daily basis. The schools, colleges and universities are, in this sense, sites of struggle which can in many respects (and, for short periods of time in the pre-revolutionary phase even in all respects) be transformed into zones of liberation. In line with its general perspective of the South African struggle, the NEAC does not expect the South African regime to vanish from the stage of history for a number of years yet. Consequently, it takes a medium to long term view of strategy and tactics in the educational arena, as it does in other arenas of struggle. This, incidentally, does not preclude it

from undertaking ad hoc or short term programmes in order to deal with immediate catastrophes and needs!

What is the road forward?

Besides local, regional and national ad hoc action, the NEAC proposes essentially the following action within the educational arena.

1. The building of democratic education-related structures (SRCs PTsAs, teachers' and students' unions) which are closely linked to the relevant organisations in the liberation movement. These structures are the instruments through which the reactionary intentions and racist practices of the rulers can be negated or minimised.
2. The expansion of cultural political activity on as broad a scale as possible. This point refers to a large number of programmes involving literature drama, media, language programmes, co-operation with people's organisations, writing of pamphlets on important subjects, etc.
3. Promoting and experimenting carefully with various forms of liberatory or people's education both inside and outside the state institutions. This involves, among many different things, the training and re-training of teachers, initiation of smaller and larger alternative education programmes linked to progressive people's organisations such as co-operatives, trade unions, creches, etc., publication of texts, and so forth.
4. Whenever possible, all these initiatives should be approached in a non-sectarian, popular way. Programmes should never be designed to exclude the adherents of any tendency that is genuinely committed to the liberation of the oppressed and exploited people of South Africa/Azania.
5. In line with its socialist commitment, the NEAC's education programme is geared to enhancing the spread of the consciousness of a socialist alternative to the present set-up. Consequently, one of its main goals is to attempt, as practically

as possible, to build the worker--student alliance on which, among other things, the attainment of socialism in Azania will depend.

As we see it, the position of the NEAC amounts to a proper understanding and implementation in the South African context of Gramsci's notion of a war of position. It is of the utmost importance that education activists understand this concept as applied in our situation.

According to Roger Simon's interpretation of Gramsci, the war of position between the ruling class and the exploited classes implies that "the change from capitalism to socialism consists in the transformation of the social relations of civil society as the basis for the transformation of the state apparatuses and of the organisations of civil society, viz., the churches, the schools, political parties, trade unions, etc., as well as the family. The war of position does not exclude the possibility of very sharp struggles, even violent ones against the coercive organs of the state. It means that the decisive struggle for state power can only be won on the basis of a decisive shift in the balance of forces in civil society. Once such a shift has taken place, the opportunities for counter revolutionary attacks from the right will be greatly restricted and will ultimately fail even if they do take place."

It is our belief that - with certain amendments necessitated by the different historical context - this kind of perspective should inform our approach to the present stage of our struggle in South Africa. Such a view of where we are and how we are going to get to where we want to be will certainly make it much more difficult to make the disastrous tactical errors that can throw our struggle back for many years. In view of the increasing complexity and internationalisation of the South African revolution, it is urgently necessary that a deep-going reassessment of strategy and tactics be undertaken on all fronts. This memorandum should be seen as a programmatic statement which is calculated to assist in that process.

THE PHILIPPINES

NOTES

ON THE CURRENT SITUATION
in the key of C major

Cory, Cabinet, Constitution, Congress

Coup, Counterinsurgency, Ceasefire, Coalition

Church, Communism, Corruption, Censorship

By the Institute for Popular Democracy in the Philippines

January 1987

These notes should be read against the background of the three main political trends since February 1986:

First trend - the restoration of repressive rule;

Second trend - the consolidation of conservative democracy; and

Third trend - the promotion of popular democracy.

The first trend refers to efforts by political forces outside and inside government to promote a hardline policy, not just against the armed insurgencies, but even against legal left and progressive forces. It also wants the military to retain its influence and power vis-a-vis the civilian authorities. The trend includes the "loyalists" who want the return of Marcos rule,

those who look to Enrile for leadership, and some within the Aquino government.

The second trend seeks to restore "constitutional democracy" but in its narrow, elite version. However, instead of the pre-martial law two-party system, it has adopted a multiparty form. While it fends off a direct power challenge to it from the first trend, it tends to yield to the policy preferences of the first trend. It also seeks to accommodate forces from the first trend, while simultaneously retaining a secondary place for liberal elements. It is also characterised by a steady downplaying of "people's power" as the political base of the government, in favour of traditional parties.

The third trend refers to the building of a broader democracy,

with the following features: a central place for "people's power" or non-party people's organisations and alliances, a multiparty system that is also pluralist i.e. including left and progressive parties in the spectrum of legal parties, and a government that incorporates people's participation in its operations and structures. This implies a coalition government that is at least genuinely liberal democratic, or even open to direct left participation.

As we move towards February 19-87, these three trends continue to define political developments, with the second trend continuing to be dominant. Coincidentally, key events and issues related to all three trends begin with the letter C; hence the subtitle.

COUP and COUNTERINSURGENCY for

the first trend; CONSTITUTION, CABINET and CONGRESS for the second trend; and CEASEFIRE and COALITION for the third trend.

And in the middle of all these, or on top, is CORY.

COUP and COUNTERINSURGENCY

Another rumour of a coup. Is it for real? The AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) goes on red alert, but Chief of Staff Ramos denies there is a coup threat. There is supposed to be a project codenamed "ACCESS" but the PnB (Partido ng Bayan, People's Party) sources claim that it is only a cover for the real project, codenamed NOEL (for NO Elections).

The power agenda of a coup concerns us, of course, especially since it includes the elimination of progressive and left forces inside and outside government. But we should look at its policy agenda to fully appreciate its continuing threat. The thread that links all reported coup efforts is counterinsurgency.

Even the aborted coup by the RAM and Enrile against Marcos was based on two agenda. The power agenda was a reaction to being left out in favour of Ver and his people. The policy agenda was to remove Marcos whom they saw as an obstacle to effective counterinsurgency because he was corrupt and a political liability. They did not have a quarrel with his "hard-line" approach. Against Cory, the same combined agenda remains. Both loyalists and RAM see themselves left out; they also see Cory's government as corrupt and inept. Worse, it is "soft" in its approach, and includes "left-leaning" members.

Both Enrile-RAM and Ramos agree on counterinsurgency. They differ in their assessment of the value of keeping a credible civilian government. So long as they perceive the insurgency as growing, and Cory as too soft or coddling liberals in government and outside government, coup efforts will continue, from within and without.

Presuming that the United States is actively pursuing its power and policy agenda in the Philippines, what line of action and what forces would it likely support? Taking into account the policy debates among the State Department, Pentagon and

CIA, there is great likelihood of supporting the establishment of the National Security Council (NSC) as the dominant government body in charge of counterinsurgency. This is along the lines of the supposedly new strategy called LIC or Low Intensity Conflict.

In the LIC strategy of counterinsurgency, the NSC is to be the main government body in charge of policy. This is to avoid, on the one hand, the lack of coordination between military and civilian authorities. On the other hand, it also avoids undue interference of various political forces in the larger Cabinet or Congress, especially if these include liberals and progressives. Unlike these other bodies, the NSC includes not just the civilian Minister of Defence, but the military officials themselves.

Based on this scheme of things, Chief of Staff Ramos and Minister of Defence Ileta are not expected to conspire with the loyalists or Enrile-RAM for an outright assault on Cory. However, they can very well let these forces strike at liberals and progressives in government and also at the legal left. In return for fending off any coup attempt, the two can achieve what is in effect a "creeping coup" - steadily taking greater power and having greater say over policy. For example, their opposition to any extension of the ceasefire, the registration of the electorate, left, and even the so-called leftists in the cabinet.

CONSTITUTION, CABINET and CONGRESS

Any new government needs to consolidate its hold on power. The Aquino government especially so, because it came to power in a sudden, untraditional manner, and because it is a coalition of diverse political forces.

The ratification of a new constitution is a step towards consolidation. We should see it not only as establishing the relationship between government and people, but, more important, as defining the relationship among the different factions of the elite - their respective share in power and the framework for resolving their conflicts.

It is not the constitution as such that consolidates the government. The reorganisation of the various elite forces, usually in political parties, and the emergence of a dominant bloc that gets the lion's share of appointive and elective posts is more important. Of course, this dominant bloc must skillfully accommodate the other factions by giving them their share and offering them a reasonable chance of increasing their share.

The three items related to the consolidation of conservative democracy - the Constitution, the Cabinet and the future Congress have a markedly conservative bias, but they do retain liberal elements and possibilities, in the same way that the present ruling coalition of forces include liberals.

Since only the Cabinet, as of now, is actually operating, the recent trends within it are the most reliable indicators of the precise character of the government's consolidation. There is a broad consensus among political analysts that while the removal of Enrile undercut the extreme rightist forces within the government, the removal and demotion of liberal elements plus the ascendancy of Ramos and Ileta make for a basically centre-right coalition, rather than a strictly centrist government. Of course this makes the prospects of a genuinely liberal democratic government dimmer.

CEASEFIRE and COALITION

The various ceasefire agreements with armed revolutionary opposition forces, particularly the NDF, are not by themselves issues of popular democracy, since the latter is basically a legal political project. However, ceasefire clearly favours popular democracy, at least as a project of centre-left legal forces who relate to the government in "critical support". The relationship of critical support by liberal, progressive and left forces is what we refer to as "coalition". Of course, coalition can go further to actual entry of these forces in government, including the formation of a new coalition government that would include the illegalised left should a political settlement be reached.

Such a settlement appears unlikely, as even the ceasefire will probably not be renewed. When armed hostilities resume between the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) and the different armed insurgencies, the space for open progressive and left politics can't help but be affected.

In fact, the potential popular democratic forces outside government have experienced two significant developments within their ranks. On the one hand, a section has declared itself basically centrist, neither left nor right. In effect, it would identify with the second trend of conservative consolidation. On the other hand, another section has shifted from principled support to principled opposition in relating to the government. While an oppositionist stance is not at all incompatible with popular democracy, it raises questions about the specific shape of the popular democratic project i.e. what role does government, at least the liberal elements in it, play?

Recent developments, including the killing of unarmed peasant protestors at Mendiola tend to make popular democracy an oppositionist project rather than its earlier prospect of being a coalition project between a government that would be genuinely liberal democratic, and progressive and left forces outside government who would relate to it in critical support. The accusations of Ramos that the popular democratic movement is a Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) project, with the PnB at its head, adds to this tendency.

There are other notes also in the key of C, possibly minor or major, depending on how things develop: Cardinal Sin and the Church, Corruption (as in graft and ...), Communism (as in anti-), Censorship etc. In relation to Cory, questions about Competence and Cautiousness (as in yellow traffic lights).

CONFUSED? Don't worry. You're normal. "In a complex and fluid situation, if you're not slightly confused, you are not thinking clearly".

NOTES ON THE CURRENT SITUATION still in the key of C major

February 10, 1987

A COUP is foiled
A CONSTITUTION is ratified
A CEASEFIRE expires

As the country moves toward the first anniversary of the February revolution, the second political trend continues to dominate - the consolidation of a conservative democracy.

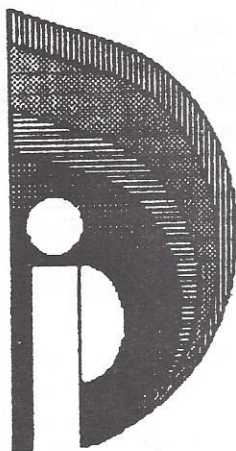
On the one hand, this trend has fended off another challenge from the first trend (the restoration of a repressive regime) by foiling the attempted coup of January 27. The vote NO campaign of the right opposition parties KBL and NP, the leading forces of the CODA (an alliance of forces within the first trend), received a drubbing at the polls, thus undercutting their intended legal and constitutional attack on President Aquino's leadership and legitimacy.

On the other hand, there are efforts by members of the ruling coalition to claim not just an overwhelming YES vote against the NO vote of the right and the left but also to dismiss the "critical YES" position (of a section of the left) as essentially a NO vote. By restricting the interpretation of the YES vote, they hope to monopolise the mandate of the plebiscite for the second trend.

There is no doubt that the coup attempt and the dramatic challenge from the first trend is responsible in no small measure for the unexpectedly overwhelming YES vote. Almost all surveys had only about 50% firm YES votes going into the final week of the plebiscite campaign, with a large number UNDECIDED. The coup pushed them into deciding for Cory and for "stability".

According to a PEOPLE'S PULSE survey taken just before the coup a majority of those who intended to vote YES based their vote not on the content of the constitution but on the political context i.e. for Cory and for

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stability. In fact, they cited instability as the second most worrisome national problem, after poverty.

Does this mean that the first trend is down and out? Not quite. The majority NO votes in regions 1 and 2, and the substantial NO votes in military camps show a significant social base for future challenges, both electoral and extra-electoral. Enrile has given broad hints of these, when he warns about policies on counter-insurgency. The coup leaders' attempt to justify their acts in the name of anti-communism and the Enrile-RAM's intervention against penalising the coup participants received sympathetic hearing among the officers and troops under the command of Ramos and Iletto. It is this coupling of COUP and COUNTERINSURGENCY that makes the first trend a continuing danger; it cannot be limited to forces outside government. The first trend is represented by rightist elements outside government and INSIDE government.

What about the third trend - the promotion of popular democracy? Despite efforts by the second trend to interpret the YES vote in narrow terms, the third trend cannot be restricted to a left opposition project i.e. the "principled NO" position. The "critical YES" vote reflected a section of the third trend - those who voted partly because of the constitution's contents and partly because of the political context. They voted against the first trend's "shameless NO" position, and for the portions of the constitution that give legal grounds for the promotion of popular democracy. Their critical judgment was directed against the simplistic and traditionalist campaign of the second trend. The third trend includes both those who adopted a "principled NO" and a "critical YES" position.

The expiration of the ceasefire did not create a dramatic stir, partly because the government talks of possible regional or provincial negotiations, partly because even the NDF - National Democratic Front which is a third trend coalition supporting the guerilla fighters of the New People's Army - does not rule out talks even while there is no ceasefire. What bears watching,

however, is another C - the so-called CRISIS COMMITTEE which might take charge of the counterinsurgency. As reported, it has a military component that is even greater than that of the National Security Council.

In the meantime, there is another ceasefire holding - with the MNLF, MILF and the Reformists. Negotiations have started, with a 90-day deadline. Some observers note coincidence: the negotiations with the NDF appeared to have been tied to a timetable - 60 days, or just long enough to have the constitution ratified. Are negotiations with the Muslims also tied to a timetable - just long enough to have Congress elected? Will the negotiations also get stuck on the issue of framework (as did the GRP-NDF talks) - the constitutional provision on autonomy?

**The campaign for CONGRESS
CONFLICTS within the coalition
CHANCES for the first and third
trends**

With the ratification of the constitution, the next key political event is the elections for Congress. Congress will, of course, take care of translating the constitution into laws, and most expectations are that the laws will further reflect the second trend of conservative consolidation. Even supporters of the President recognise this; they urge her to exercise her powers to issue basic laws, e.g. land reform, before Congress convenes to assume legislative powers.

But Congress (both Senate and Lower House) has a more immediate political function - to settle the share in government positions of the different fractions and factions of the ruling coalition. Despite the big number of slots to be filled (24 for Senate, 250 for the Lower House), not all aspirants can be accommodated. Conflicts are bound to erupt, both among individual interests and party interests. Some Cabinet positions will of course also be available, as ministers resign to run in the elections.

Whom will Cory bless as her personal choices? How many from her campaign coalition - UNIDO, PDP-

Laban, LP? From the emerging conservative party - Lakas ng Bansa? From the aspirants to the ruling coalition - NUCD, PDSP, Bandila?

Like the Constitution, the Cabinet, and Cory herself, the final compromise slate is bound to be dominated by conservative elements, but there will be enough liberal and progressive elements to broaden its appeal. It's still another question if the whole slate will win, or if the elections will stabilise the second trend.

Most probably not.

Why? First, there is the challenge from the rightist opposition. There are enough candidates among them who can give the ruling coalition's bets a run for their money. Some of them might belong to the second trend, but the majority would identify with the first trend. Not all KBL need to be laundered into Lakas ng Bansa to win. The same is true of their younger clones in the NP.

The coming elections will be dominated by traditional electoral politics of personalities and patronage. The three Gs (gold, guns and goons) are available to all the ruling clans and classes.

A fearless forecast: The conflicts within the ruling coalition and between the ruling coalition and the rightist opposition are beyond Cory's capacity to manage. In fact, it just might be beyond anybody's capacity to manage! Not that no one is giving it a good try The United States, for sure.

What the second trend (and presumably the US) would want is for the various contenders for power to be happy with the election results (and their respective share of power), or to keep their conflicts within electoral "peaceful" bounds of elite democracy. But given the tradition of inter-clan and intra-class fighting among the Philippine elite, these electoral contests could just exacerbate their contradictions. Elections might be ritual exercises for the ordinary Filipino, but they can be very real, even deadly, clashes among the candidates.

Besides, there is another element of horror or hope (depending on one's point of view). The elections could also mark the formal entry of the legal left into gov-

ernment, not just through individual personalities, but as an organized party. Of course, the Comelec is trying its best to prevent PnB (the People's or National Party) from being registered for the campaign. The irony has not been lost to political observers: the left is blamed for not taking democracy (= elections) seriously, but when it does, all efforts are exerted to prevent it from participating effectively.

There is a logic, however, to such excommunication. According to the Low Intensity Conflict strategy, the legal left must be expunged by a combination of legal and extra-legal means. At the same time, an accommodation must be reached by the first and second trends, so they can unite in pursuit of counterinsurgency.

But the best laid plans of mice and men....Or is the third trend whistling in the dark?

Anyway, for what it's worth, the elections offer some promise for the third trend, despite the fact that they are designed to strengthen the second trend and accommodate the first trend. In addition to a multiparty system, we just might get the beginnings of a truly pluralist political order.

Not without a lot of hardwork, and a little bit of luck. The popular movement must learn to handle both traditional and new methods of electoral struggle, to elect liberal and progressive candidates and also to strengthen the popular movement itself. The candidates have to do the same, in addition to dodging bullets and death squads, and avoiding being unseated on charges of "fraud and terrorism", as in the late 40s. If cold warriors like the new Local Government Minister can have his way, there will be no need for such legal excuses. Being called "left-leaning" is enough.

Beyond February

The social CONTENT and the Nationalist CONTEXT of Democracy

Although these notes concentrate on the political trends, social issues and nationalist issues will become more prominent as the nation commemorates the February revolution and as elections settle the

allocation of positions among the aspirants.

Democracy, especially popular democracy, has its own distinct importance for people. But it ultimately rests on a fundamental need and expectation - the improvement of the social condition, especially for the majority who are poor.

The same PEOPLE'S PULSE survey respondents cited poverty as the most important issue, more important than constitution and ceasefire. Once the government gets its formal mechanisms of stability (constitution, elections), the people will look for performance, particularly in social services, social reform and social development.

Two items in the 1986 Social Weather survey are instructive. Majority of respondents said that since February 1986, their social situation has either only remained the same or has even worsened. And yet, majority also said that they hoped for an improvement of the situation.

This hope is the political capital that the Aquino government has. But it is a short-term investment, and the people expect high returns soon. If previous political behaviour is a gauge, the electorate tend to lose patience by mid-term of presidencies, and they express this by voting for opposition senatorial and congressional candidates. Will the pattern repeat itself?

Most probably not in precisely the same form. There are no elections scheduled for the mid-term of Cory's presidency. And there are other outlets of oppositionist sentiments available, both legal and illegal.

The fact that the "principled NO" and "critical YES" positions both cited constitutional provisions on social and nationalist issues should warn the government against interpreting its mandate too narrowly. The people's agenda is broader than the constitution, because it is not fixed in written documents; it grows together with people's consciousness and hopes.

It is for this reason that already now, the popular democratic forces have gravitated towards two poles- "principled support" and "principled opposition". They base

themselves on the same fundamental social and nationalist agenda. They differ in their judgment of how far the government can help advance these. There is no precise measurement available, and the popular democratic forces must live with the challenging task of handling these two poles in their unity and struggle. At the same time, they try to win back the "centrists" to the popular democratic project.

Some more Cs to watch minor or major

Cardinal Sin, CBCP (Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines), Conservative Church. The trend of open pronouncements by the conservative church leadership is to support the government's counterinsurgency drive and to denounce the involvement of the rank and file church people and lay people in radical issues. This will become increasingly important as an ideological defense against the people's dissatisfaction over the failure of government to meet the people's expectations.

Censorship. The launching of a more sophisticated counterinsurgency programme along the lines of Low Intensity Conflict calls for greater use of media for government partisan purposes. Expect increasing censorship in different forms. The reaction of the media practitioners will put the government's avowed commitment to liberal democracy to test.

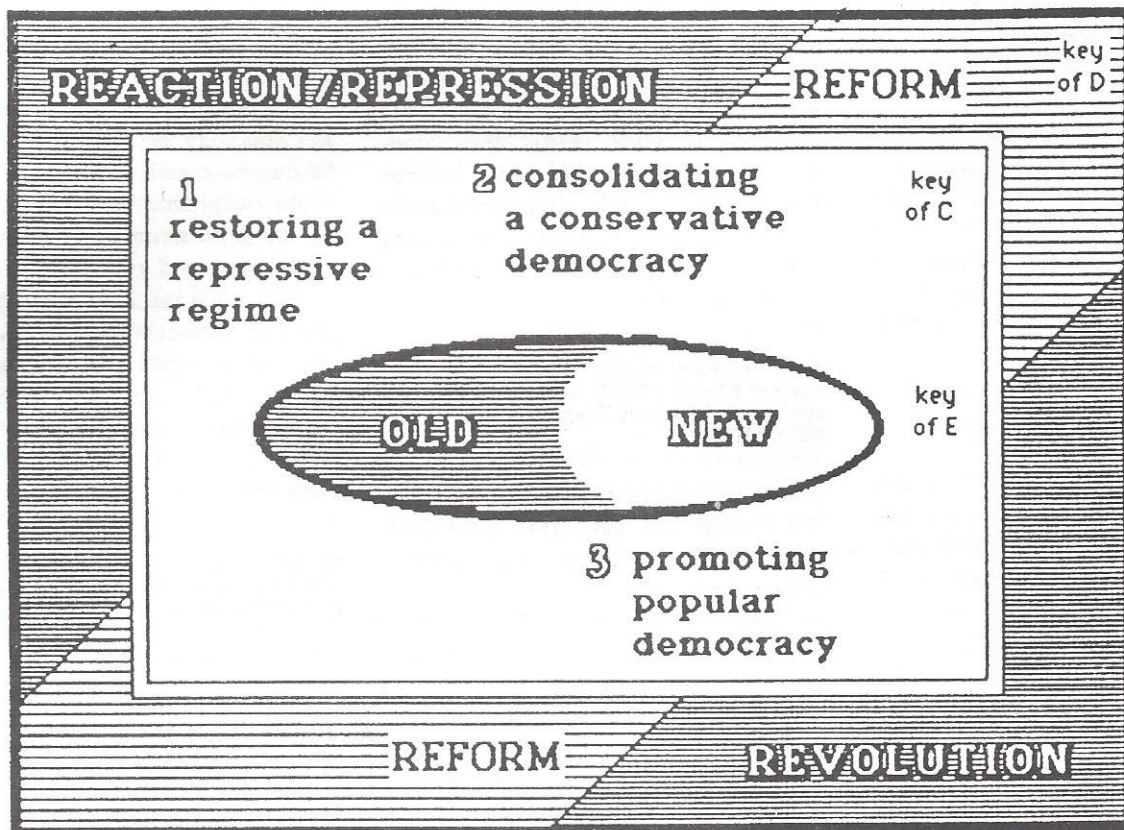
Corruption. As the various factions and factions settle down to their respective seats of power, the standard issue of graft and corruption will have greater prominence. This will surely be one convenient issue during the electoral campaigns, at least among the traditional political candidates. All eyes on the ruling clan and its coalition partners.

Anti-Communism. The counterinsurgency drive, the failure of government "crash programmes", and the advance of the popular democratic movement will provoke greater flurries of anti-communist propaganda. Expect an assortment of professional anti-communist types, including Moonies, to swoop into the country to boost their local counterparts.

Notes

on the current situation

in the key of D sharp
C major
and E minor



To read the current political situation (March 1987), we need to consider at least three levels of contradictions, designated as D sharp, C major and E minor.

- D sharp** defines the broadest and sharpest contradictions: REACTION/REPRESSION, REFORM and REVOLUTION (D-Re)
- C major** defines the major contradictions in open legal politics, with 3 main trends: 1) restoring a repressive regime 2) consolidating a conservative democracy 3) promoting popular democracy. (refer to Jan. and Feb. Notes)
- E minor** defines the contradictions in electoral politics, between OLD and NEW politics.

March 1987

March plunged the Philippines into the first elections since the EDSA revolution. At stake are 24 seats for the Senate and 200 seats for the Congress. There are a few more

things at stake, as we shall see later, under the key of E. Compared to the developments in the key of D and C, the elections, no matter how exciting, seem to be secondary. Hence, the key of E minor.

The expiration of the ceasefire

was followed by an escalation of tactical offensives by the NPA, and a massive counterinsurgency drive by the AFP (which dropped the "New" from its name). The scale of fighting and the employment of psy-war, including the open use of paramili-

tary and civilian anti-insurgency organisations threaten to bring violence to a level much higher than ever happened under the Marcos regime.

For this reason, the NOTES include the broader background of reaction/repression vs. revolution, and the ambivalent role of reform. These have been present all the time, but the recent developments make them more obvious and crucial as a new political polarisation starts to take shape. Hence, the key of D sharp.

The NOTES for January and February focused on the trends and factors in open legal politics, in the key of C major. They remain major, and correlating them to the other two keys allows us to deepen our understanding of the prospects of popular democracy in the current situation.

VARIATIONS IN Re (Key of D sharp)

The strategic political positions of forces in Philippine politics can be classified through different combinations of three elements: 1) REACTION, particularly in its sharpest form of REPRESSION, 2) REFORM, and 3) REVOLUTION. Without exhausting all possible combinations, we can identify the following main variations:

REPRESSION with REFORM against REVOLUTION; and REFORM with REPRESSION against REVOLUTION.

The phrase "repression with reform" was first used in El Salvador. Despite its stress on repression, it seeks to distinguish itself from an even more ultra-rightist stand i.e. repression without or even against reform. This latter position does not even pretend to bring about changes. It just wants to "neutralise" those who seek change, branding them all as communists.

The Low Intensity Conflict doctrine that is supposed to be more dominant in US policy can be classified as repression with reform. Although it gives more stress to non-military forms of struggle and even engages in "nation-building" measures, its primary stress is still on repression, including the "privatisation of terror" through

the use of foreign and local paramilitary groups. It has been well described as "counter-revolution trying to use revolutionary methods".

Reform with repression is somewhat different in stress, although the net effect is the same. Instead of repression using reform, it is reform using repression but still against revolution. In its intentions, at least, it wants to engage first in reform as a response to popular opposition and insurgency, but it also uses repression, either reluctantly or pragmatically. This position projects itself as a "centrist" position, but it is not really so. It is more accurately called a centre-right position, with changing stresses between right and centre.

REFORM without REPRESSION against REVOLUTION; and REFORM against REPRESSION against REVOLUTION

These two variations are closer to the so-called "centrist" position. Their starting stress is on reform, referring to the extent of changes and methods of changes. The changes they seek are not fundamental enough to be called radical, and the methods they want (from top, with no militancy from below) make them basically against revolution. On this point they agree with the first two variations.

However, they prefer not to use repression, if at all possible. In fact, the second variation is consciously against repression and would move to reform, or at least curb the military.

But because they are also quite opposed to revolutionary goals and methods, both variations tend to react against any perceived advances of the revolution and wind up with a stand closer to the first two variations. Ironically, both right and left thinkers agree that this position is not tenable in a situation moving towards sharper polarisation.

REFORM against REPRESSION without REVOLUTION; and REFORM against REPRESSION within REVOLUTION

The primary stress of these next two variations is opposition to repression. Hence, they are not

"centrist" or middle-of-the-road in their political position, unlike the previous variations.

The first variation, although not explicitly against revolution, still prefers not to have a revolution. At least, it does not want to consider itself consciously as part of any revolutionary process. It can be outrightly reformist or can be simply seeking genuine reforms while preserving its "political innocence".

The second variation goes beyond the first, because it accepts the objective possibility that while its focus is exclusively on reforms it can be considered part of a revolutionary process. This is because it is uncompromisingly opposed to repression and reaction.

Both variations operate among popular democratic forces. In the eyes of the military, however, both are already classified as consciously revolutionary forces and therefore fair targets for counter-insurgency.

REVOLUTION with REFORM against REPRESSION; REVOLUTION without REFORM against REPRESSION

Revolution is distinguished from the previous variations in that it has arrived at a definite conclusion about the impossibility of fundamental changes in the present society and under the present government. The starting point, therefore for revolution, is a commitment to revolutionary goals and methods, not reform. However, it sees reforms as helping advance the revolutionary process, either directly or indirectly.

In reaction, however, to the first four variations, some would-be revolutionaries look at all reforms with basic suspicion, considering them part of counter-revolution unless they are explicitly part of revolution ("who is not with me, is against me"). They doubt the other variation of this biblical quotation ("who is not against me is with me"). This position, ironically, becomes an ultra-left mirror image of the ultra-right variation.

ELECTIONS (in the key of E minor)

Excitement, or lack of it. If the

crowds are any indicator, the current election campaign has not provoked intense passions beyond the campaign machineries of the candidates. The fever might rise as election day draws near. Part of the reason may be that it is not the presidency at stake. Senate and Congress are dim memories for most voters (over 90% are voting for the first time in a senatorial election) and the previous Batasang Pambansa was not a meaningful seat of power. The other reason, however could be the more worrisome developments in counter-insurgency and insurgency. Instead of the key of D sharp providing the background for elections as the major battle, the key of E might be limited to minor variations.

Expectations - Candidates, particularly traditional politicians understandably have major expectations from these elections. But even players in the key of D have major hopes and purposes, at least two:

1) To establish relatively peaceful and stable rules for settling power conflicts among the factions of our ruling elite, and 2) To isolate the revolutionary forces by restoring credibility to elections and containing the political energies of the middle and lower classes within electoral processes. Some US counter-insurgency planners (and their Filipino counterparts) even dream of doing a repeat of the 1950s. Aging cold warriors may be allowed their nostalgia, except they tend to kill people.

Most probably neither of the two grand expectations will be met. The factional conflicts among our ruling clans are not about to be settled through the coming elections. Also, the left, contrary to its previous policy is participating in the elections. Besides, the politically active middle and lower classes continue to pursue "new politics" which goes beyond elections.

Still, there are a few questions the elections will help answer, and they are interesting enough:

1. What will the balance of forces be between the "administration" the "opposition"? This is the narrow framework within which our traditional politicians think: the "two-party system" with one party in and the other

- party out of power. The elections, however, will not settle all this; there will be horse-trading and realignments once the legislature starts operating
2. What party and which personalities will be the top dog, both within the ruling coalition and the traditional opposition coalition? Elections, again, will not settle this decisively, but presidential ambitions within the administration or in the traditional opposition will rise and fall depending on the election results.
3. To what extent will "new politics" make its presence felt, not only during the campaign, but in the election results? Will there be enough progressive winners to give genuinely pluralist content to the multiparty form of current politics?

Experiment - In addition to these questions, the current elections may be considered as an experiment. For the traditional conservative elite, it is a way of finding out how much the electorate has changed. Will the ways and framework of old politics suffice? How much of "new politics" do they need to adopt? How much can they adopt?

For advocates of "new politics", the same questions may be asked. How much of traditional political methods do they need to combine with the new in order to win? Can the cause-oriented organisations translate their skills in the parliament of the streets into votes for getting into parliament?

For certain candidates and for the left as a whole the elections mark the first time since the mid-1940s when the electoral strength of the organised left will be tested. While electoral strength is not the only gauge of the left's strength (left thinkers even argue that it is not a realistic gauge of left strength), it could be a crucial indicator of how many Filipinos have been influenced not only by new politics but even by revolutionary politics.

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A MESSAGE TO ALL MEMBERS OF COSATU

**FROM THE
EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**



**1987 — the year of consolidation
and decisive action**

DOCUMENT

COSATU MESSAGE

We greet you in the name of the Congress of South African Trade Unions.

We greet you in 1987 - the year for the consolidation and decisive action of our movement.

COSATU is just over a year old. Today we are closer to the day when we - the workers and youth of our land - free ourselves from poverty, hunger, exploitation and racism. But a long and bitter struggle awaits us.

Our struggle has come so far because of the struggle and unity of millions of people, led by the workers and the youth. The path we have travelled has not been easy, and although we have built COSATU into a mass workers' organisation, we can see that the path ahead is even more difficult.

The possibilities before us are greater than ever before - but so are the dangers.

We are being attacked on all sides - the bosses, their government and their allies are panicking. They are confused - and in their crisis they can see we are getting stronger.

They want to stop us from advancing. That's why they have imposed a State of Emergency.

They have detained thousands of our comrades - among them Moses Mayekiso, Lizzie Phike, Enoch Godongwana, Noel Williams, Matthews Olifant and Amos Masondo.

They have sent their army and police into our townships and into our children's schools and in to our worker meetings.

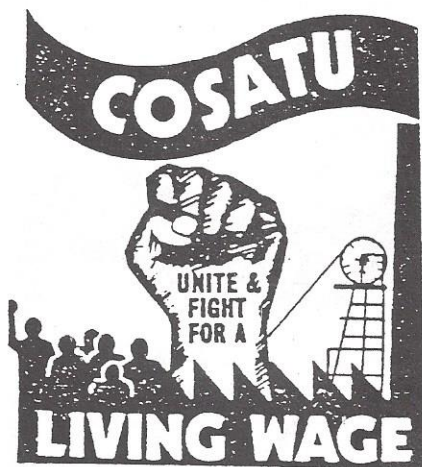
Their allies have sent vigilante death squads to attack and kill workers all over the country - like our MAWU comrades who were murdered at Mphopomemi.

They have tried to crush workers who dare to struggle for what they deserve - at GM and OK Bazaars and BTR and Goldfields and Impala.

We all know the situation is serious. We all know we need the maximum unity if we are to defend ourselves and move forward in our struggle. We all know we need to learn from our mistakes and setbacks if we are to consolidate our gains, strengthen our organisation and move forward in 1987.

Comrades: this year we have to overcome our problems. This year we have to overcome our divisions. This year we have to build the greatest possible mass united action under the leadership of the working class.

How can we do this?



One Industry, One Union - Now

We have to make sure all our structures - at the local, regional and national level - are consolidated and working properly. To do this effectively we need one union, one industry.

We promised at our launch that we would merge and form big industrial unions within 6 months. It is now 14 months and still we do not have one union in each industry. This cannot be allowed to continue.

We have a big job to do, comrades. We have to organise millions and millions of unorganised workers into our ranks. We have to bring the millions of unemployed, farm, railway, construction and public sector workers into our ranks. We can only do this by building strong and powerful industrial unions. Nothing must stand in our way.

Workers - make sure your union is coming together to form one big union in your industry!

Build and strengthen shop stewards councils

All our structures must be strengthened, especially our local shop steward councils. They are one of the pillars on which COSATU stands. Make sure your views are represented by your shop stewards on the local COSATU shop steward council in your area. If there is no shop stewards' council in your area then you must make sure one is formed.

Build COSATU shop stewards' council as the organised voice of worker unity in every area.

Build worker solidarity action

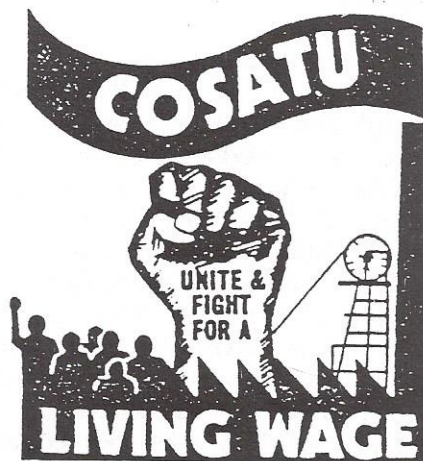
At our launching congress we said "AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL" will be our guiding light, and we adopted powerful resolutions to guide us in the struggle ahead. We have made some progress - but not nearly enough.

Too often we have stood back and watched while our comrades struggled alone against the bosses or the government - like at GM, Crossroads Impala, BTR or OK Bazaars.

Too often we stood back and watched while our comrades were detained - even though we have resolved to fight every attack on our organisation with united action.

And when we did take decisions for strong action - like the July 14 action against the Emergency or the December 1 action against the killings of our MAWU comrades, some problems and divisions in our movement weakened our protest.

This is bad, comrades. We must build our structures, our unity and



our ability to mobilise more strongly and seriously - so that we can take action on what we decide, instead of just having resolutions on paper.

The bosses and the government have seen this weakness too. They saw how we built June 16 and Ma Day into the biggest national general strikes ever, with millions of people taking action. They were scared. They saw how NUM and some affiliates mobilised the biggest ever national industrial action, against the death of our comrades at Kinross. They were alarmed. But they also saw how we failed to build July 14 and December 1 - and they grew more confident.

We must not forget that the base of our power is in the workplaces. We must ensure that every workplace has strong, democratic structures and active members. And we must not allow our differences to undermine our unity in action. Differences we will always have. They are necessary in every democratic organisation, to find the best ideas for the strongest way forward. That is what worker democracy means. But it also means that once we have made a decision, we are all loyal to that decision - and we do our very best to carry it out in a disciplined and comradely way.

To let differences lead to a split in a union, as happened in NUTW; or hold up the organisation of a region, as happened in the Eastern Cape and Witwatersrand regions; or weaken a local, as happened in the Johannesburg local, is terrible comrades. Please, let's make sure these things do not happen and that we discipline people who try to divide us.

Campaigns

This year we will be working to turn our powerful resolutions into action. The campaigns for a living wage for all workers, for the organisation of the unemployed under the banner of COSATU and for national united action under the leadership of the working class are crucial.

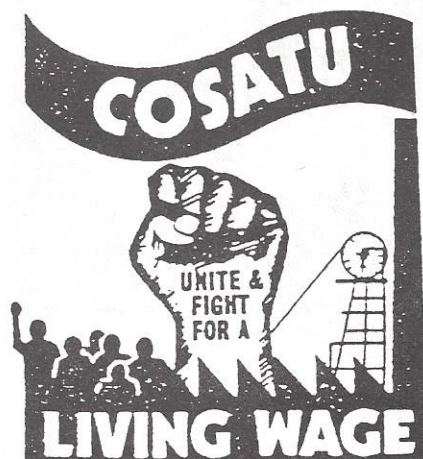
Already, all over the country, workers are building these campaigns in action. The heroic OK workers have been on strike for a living wage for weeks now. COSATU

workers have blacked supplies to OK in solidarity with the workers. The youth and all progressive organisations have increasingly been drawn into solidarity action with the workers.

Build the living wage campaign

Together, we in COSATU must take these campaigns forward. The struggle for a living wage will be COSATU's main campaign this year. We must especially organise and unite our mass strength behind a clear, co-ordinated, united, national living wage campaign, and for the organisation of the unemployed.

Our campaign will strike at the heart of the profit system. What we want is what we need to live decently. If the bosses' capitalist system can't provide us with what



we need, then we don't need the bosses' system. We want the wealth we created to come back to us, so we can all have decent lives.

Build mass united action

Mass united action is our strongest weapon. As we move forward we must draw behind us support and solidarity from the millions of workers, youth and progressive democratic organisations outside our ranks.

In this way we will build a campaign of united action under the leadership of workers, and around our demands.

In all our campaigns, we will get the best results and strengthen our leadership of the struggle if we take the initiative and build

the widest possible unity in action behind our demands.

This year we must make sure that our May Day and June 16 campaigns are much bigger than last year so that they truly are OUR national holidays.

We can expect the strongest resistance to our struggle for national united action from the bosses and the government. In their desperation they will try even harder than before to attack our movement.

They will try to create vigilante gangs, especially from the unemployed, to divide and intimidate us.

They will try to encourage tribalism, racism, factions and division wherever they can to undermine our unity.

We must not let them.

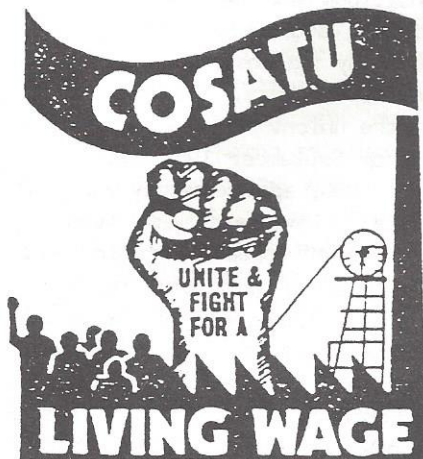
Organise the unemployed

We have to organise millions of unemployed under our federation to strengthen our common struggle for jobs for all at a living wage. We, the organised employed workers, can help the struggle of our unemployed comrades by implementing our resolution for a ban on overtime and a 40 hour week. Let us mobilise support for this campaign and join unemployed workers in fighting for the sharing of all work on full pay and a massive public works programme, paid for by the bosses to create jobs and provide us with things that we need.

Build workers' self-defence

We have to organise our own defence to protect ourselves and our struggle against attack. Already, in many areas, COSATU workers are starting to defend themselves. We have to strengthen this a hundred times over, in every workplace and every township. The attacks are getting so serious, so many people have died, that we must organise self defence in every workplace and every township to consolidate and protect the gains we have made.

No one else will defend us or our struggle. We must do it.



Build democratic community and youth organisations

The problems facing us at work and in our communities are the same. Nowhere do we have control over the decisions that affect our lives. the rent we are forced to pay; high transport costs; terrible conditions in the townships.

These issues are directly related to the starvation wages workers are paid.

That is why COSATU workers are leading the struggle to build street committees in the townships. Like our unions in the workplaces, street committees will give us the democratic organisation and unity and strength to fight for all the things we need - including control over every aspect of our lives through our own democratic organisation under the leadership of organised workers.

There is a lot of discussion about alliances and allies in our struggle. The strongest, best and most reliable allies of the working class are the youth. Like us, the youth exploit no-one. They have nothing to lose and everything to gain by marching together with us to a workers' future.

We must do everything we can to build close links with the students and youth and their organisations; to share our experiences with them of building democratic organisation and to share our vision of our struggle and the future. At the same time we must give maximum support to the struggle for Peoples Education and the building of democratic SRC's and control over the schools.

Organise farm workers

Farmworkers are starting to get organised under FAWU. As farmworker organisation develops, a solid bridge will be built between workers in the cities and workers in the country-side. Millions of rural workers - together with the rural poor - will join hands with organised workers in the cities to struggle, like in the factories, mines and shops, for control over the land where they live and work. We must do all in our power to build this bridge as soon as possible - and to make it as strong as possible.

Women workers come first

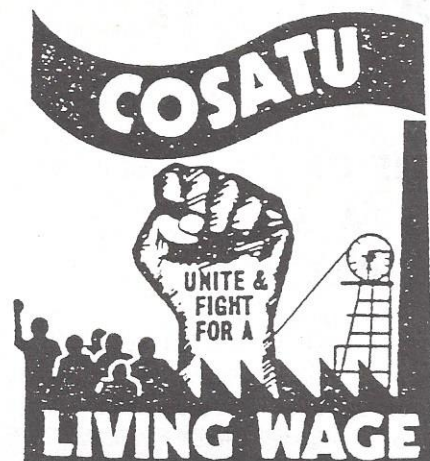
IN our movement women workers have a special place because they carry the heaviest load of all it is the duty of every COSATU worker to make sure that the demands, participation and struggle of women workers are strengthened a thousand times over. If our liberation does not succeed in creating free people equal to each other in every way, then we would not be liberated.

Our struggles for maternity rights; equal pay for work of equal value; childcare facilities that meet workers needs; against sexual harassment and harmful work must have the highest priority in all our struggles today.

Our leading role in the struggle depends on the courage, determination and leadership of women workers.

One federation, One Country - Now!

Comrades - we are at a crossroads. We see a year of more struggle, more hardship and more suffering - and more hope. Now is the time. If we are to live, then we must go forward together against the bosses system of profit and greed. We can see how far we have come. COSATU is the home for every worker in South Africa - employed and unemployed. That is why the old bosses federation TUCSA has broken up. That is why the bosses are desperately trying to promote UWUSA against COSATU. All their divisive



efforts are doomed to failure if we are united. There should now be no obstacle for all democratic unions to come together with us and form one federation in one country.

Our tasks

We are committed to the leadership of the working class in the struggle. This year we must show what this means by consolidating and uniting our organisation COSATU in decisive united action with other progressive organisations under the leadership of organised workers.

To do this we will need the widest possible democratic debate, through all our structures, on our weaknesses and our strengths, so that we can come to our National Congress in July with the program for the workers' way forward.

We must, through our organised strength and unity and clarity of purpose, really unite and really lead the mass of our people to a new, transformed society - a society where the needs of workers will be paramount.

How we build this society and what it will be like must be deeply discussed in our affiliates and in COSATU structures before the Congress and after it.

Comrade workers - the future is in your hands. The struggle depends on you and you alone. Make sure your organisation COSATU is united. Make sure your union is participating fully and actively in all the structures of COSATU. Make sure COSATU is democratic. Make sure COSATU is doing what you want under your control. The workers united can never be defeated.

DOCUMENT

THE OK BAZAARS STRIKE

The largest strike in retail history in South Africa is presently underway and unprecedented levels of organisation and resistance are being shown by workers as well as unprecedented repression and opposition by management and police.

Over 10,000 CCAWUSA members have engaged in strike action over demands for wage increases at OK Bazaars since 18 December 1986 and the strike has spread to 137 stores throughout South Africa.

However, the company has so far remained intransigent in its approach to the union. No negotiations have been taking place so far despite CCAWUSA's open approach to negotiation. It appears that the company, which is an indirect subsidiary of Anglo American (which owns more than half of the shares in the South African Stock Exchange) is trying to break the union in collaboration with other capitalists. However workers are determined and resolute in their struggle, we have the support of workers in other COSATU unions and even those not affiliated to COSATU, as well as the community are behind us.

This struggle is developing into one of the most crucial battles ever between labour and capital in South Africa. Workers in particular have made great progress towards obtaining a living wage. Wages have generally increased ahead of the inflation during 1986.

CCAUSA calls for the unqualified support of the international working class and its organisations in this struggle against OK Bazaars

Background on OK Bazaars

OK Bazaars (1929) Limited, is the largest retail company in South Africa. Employing a total of approximately 23,000 employees, it has 202 stores throughout South Africa. It was formed in 1929 and, through

the years, has expanded throughout Southern Africa. Besides South Africa, it also has outlets in Lesotho and Zimbabwe.

Relationship between CCAWUSA and OK

Through the friendly relationship that CCAWUSA enjoyed with NUDAW at the time of its formation, access facilities were obtained from OK Bazaars. However, OK had always conducted its relationship with the union on a paternalistic basis and no recognition rights were granted to the union. OK also refused to grant stop order facilities until CCAWUSA applied for registration which occurred in 1981.

In October 1982, workers at a warehouse in Johannesburg and then in a number of stores went on strike demanding an increase of R80 per month. OK responded by dismissing all the workers after they first demanded that workers return to work before any negotiation took place.

The threat of strikes occurring in other branches together with a consumer boycott quickly forced them to reinstate the workers and negotiate over wages.

Subsequently, a recognition agreement was negotiated with the company.

Wage negotiations have always been a difficult project with OK Bazaars. In 1983, a dispute was declared by CCAWUSA during the wage negotiations and it was only at the conciliation board that a last minute settlement was arrived at.

In 1984 another wage dispute was only resolved by mediation. However faced by a picture of OK's falling profits, CCAWUSA agreed to an increase paid on an 'anniversary date' system as opposed to the across the board system. The 'anniversary date' system is explained in detail below.

In 1985, as a result of lack of coordination within the union and a picture of dramatically falling profits of the company, a most pathetic wage agreement was reached between CCAWUSA and OK. This agreement is explained in detail below.

During 1986, the relationship between CCAWUSA and OK Bazaars has been rapidly deteriorating as a result of workers' frustration at their low wages and poor working

conditions and because of the unbridled aggression and contempt shown by managers at all levels towards workers, workers' rights and the union.

From September 1985 until September 1986, approximately 2000 individual dismissals were recorded. Hundreds of appeals were lodged by CCAWUSA after examining the dismissal, we believe many of the dismissals were unfair. As a rule appeals lodged were rejected by management. In February 1986, a call for a national strike in protest against the dismissals was averted by a court interdict lodged by OK Bazaars and an undertaking made by the company to review the dismissals.

Despite this clear sign of potential industrial unrest, only a handful were reinstated after this review and management refused to alter their decisions regarding the dismissals. A proposal that arbitration should be agreed upon to resolve the dispute was rejected by OK Bazaars.

Workers have come to see that OK Bazaars regards its workers in the same manner as it regards its equipment and machinery, as things requiring minimum service and attention, to give maximum productivity and to be cast aside without a second thought whenever one's usefulness has decreased or whenever it satisfied the whims of one of the managers.

The wage agreement and the 'Anniversary date' system

Increases were due in October 1985. However, the agreement of 12 September 1985 provided that:

(A) No increase would be granted until April 1986 i.e. a six month deferment of the increase. Instead workers received a one-off bonus of R16.

(B) From April 1986, an anniversary increase of R40 to be paid. The "Anniversary Date" system entails that the workers receive the increase on different months depending on the month of their commencement of employment with the company. For example, those who started in March of a particular year, would only receive the increase in March.

(C) The anniversary increase was

paid as follows:

Those whose anniversary months were April to September received the R40 increase in those months;

Others whose anniversary months were October to March received R20 earlier in accordance with a certain plan set out in the agreement, and the second instalment of R20 on their anniversary months.

(D) This means that instead of receiving the increase in October 1985, some workers have to wait until March 1987 to get their full increase.

(E) The agreement also provided that a review of wages could be held if OK Bazaars made more profit than the previous financial year.

Negotiations

After a record of falling profits since 1982, OK Bazaars finally halted this and showed an improvement in their profits at the financial year-end of March 1986.

However, they have consistently refused a wage review.

In August 1986, when threatened with a dispute, they agreed to meet. Eventually, on 7 October, a meeting was held between the two parties. We presented our demands and motivated why we felt there should be a review. The company responded asking for another meeting since they did not have a mandate.

On 15 October, we met again. However, here again OK asked for our viewpoint concerning a review. This was re-explained. OK then said they needed a mandate to consider our demands which we had presented in the previous meeting. They did not agree to a review, stating that they still needed a mandate from their directors. This tone sounded very much like the one we had heard in the earlier meeting and we told them we were not satisfied. It was clear they were delaying. We then

declared a dispute and applied for a conciliation board to be established.

The conciliation board met on 3 December, and OK agreed to review wages, provided we also negotiated, at the same time the new agreement covering April 1987 onwards. This was agreed to.

On 10, 11, 12 and 15 December the conciliation board met. However after making their proposals, OK

refused to make any further adjustments to their proposals saying we had to provide a 'reasonable proposal' first. Despite proposals from us which we believed could bridge the gap, OK remained adamant.

On 15 December, when a deadlock was completely unbreakable, we proposed arbitration, but only covering the period of review, to finally resolve the dispute. OK Bazaars refused saying they would only

Worker power



- ◆ FORWARD WITH THE STRUGGLE OF CCAWUSA
OK WORKERS
- ◆ FORWARD WITH THE STRUGGLE FOR A LIVING
WAGE FOR ALL WORKERS
- ◆ BUILD MAXIMUM SOLIDARITY ACTION WITH
THE OK WORKERS
- ◆ FORWARD EVER - BACKWARD NEVER
- ◆ NO RETREAT - NO SURRENDER

FIGHT FOR A LIVING WAGE!



agree to arbitration if the arbitrator's right to make awards was limited to the sum of R237000 (which is the sum of their excess profits.) This amounts to R1 per month per worker and was clearly not a serious proposal.

Demands

Our demands are:

- (A) R160 per month across the board increase, covering the period April 1986-March 1988.
- (B) R450 per month minimum wage.
- (C) Staff discount 20 percent (instead of the present 10 percent; senior management get 25 percent yet they need least).

Management's offer is:

* R85 per month on anniversary date commencing April 1987.

The strike, which is legal began on 18 December and presently, at the time of writing this report involves 137 stores throughout South Africa. Over 10000 workers are presently on strike. Although management remains intransigent, workers remain very militant and morale is still very high.

From the beginning of the strike workers have faced the most blatant and brutal collusion between police and management that the retail trade has ever seen.

Dozens of workers have been badly assaulted by police, hundreds have been arrested and management has isolated several stores and dismissed the workers there.

To date:

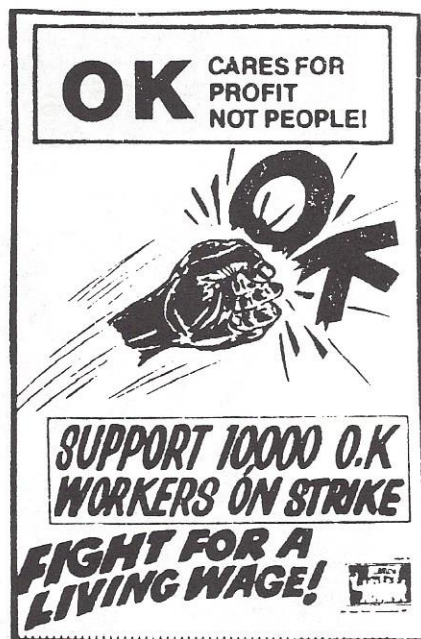
- Approximately 700 strikers have been dismissed for allegedly breaching the 'rules of conduct during a strike' that management had unilaterally issued.
- Over 600 workers have been arrested.
- * 87 workers are in detention under the State of Emergency Regulations.
- CCAWUSA has been forced to pay R90000 in bail so far.

Despite this, workers have continued picketing 'South African style' being either one person outside the entrances of the store or alternatively 'surrounding' the store with pickets 25 metres apart from each

other. Arrests are continuing under various stupid municipal by-laws and, in fact, under any possible charge that can be dragged up.

Support

Support has been received from various community and political organisations, COSATU and its affiliates and CUSA/AZACTU. We are investing large amounts of money



on printing stickers, pamphlets and posters to further mobilise public support for the strike. So far, OK Bazaars has suffered considerable losses and its stores are definitely much quieter than its competitors.

OK Bazaars being supported by other companies

This strike is proving to be battle ground on which the might of the retail trade is thrown against CCAWUSA. Since June 1986, when CCAWUSA members spontaneously went on strike against the detention of union officials and shop stewards, retail employers have been holding meetings and collaborating with each other.

There are incidents of other stores assisting OK in beating the unofficial consumer boycott (it is illegal to call for a boycott) by providing their packets for OK to pack customer's goods.

OK is also a subsidiary of SA Breweries which is in turn control-

led by Anglo American via other subsidiaries which Anglo owns viz. Southern Life and Premier Milling.

Strategic importance of strike

This strike has a strategic importance that will guide the behaviour of companies of all industries towards union this year, especially of retail employers to CCAWUSA. The success of the strike will show employers clearly that the organised workers of South Africa are truly a force to be reckoned with. Since COSATU's launch, employers have been retreating and recently they have been hoping and prepared for a confrontation that will discipline (and control) the unions and restore "normality and stability" to the industrial relations arena. It is vitally important that we win decisively to prevent employers using the opportunity to resist the living wage campaign that we have been conducting.

Politically, the workers on strike have received an education second to none and their determination and discipline has won the respect of South Africa's exploited and oppressed working class and youth. The support being received from all sectors proves that.

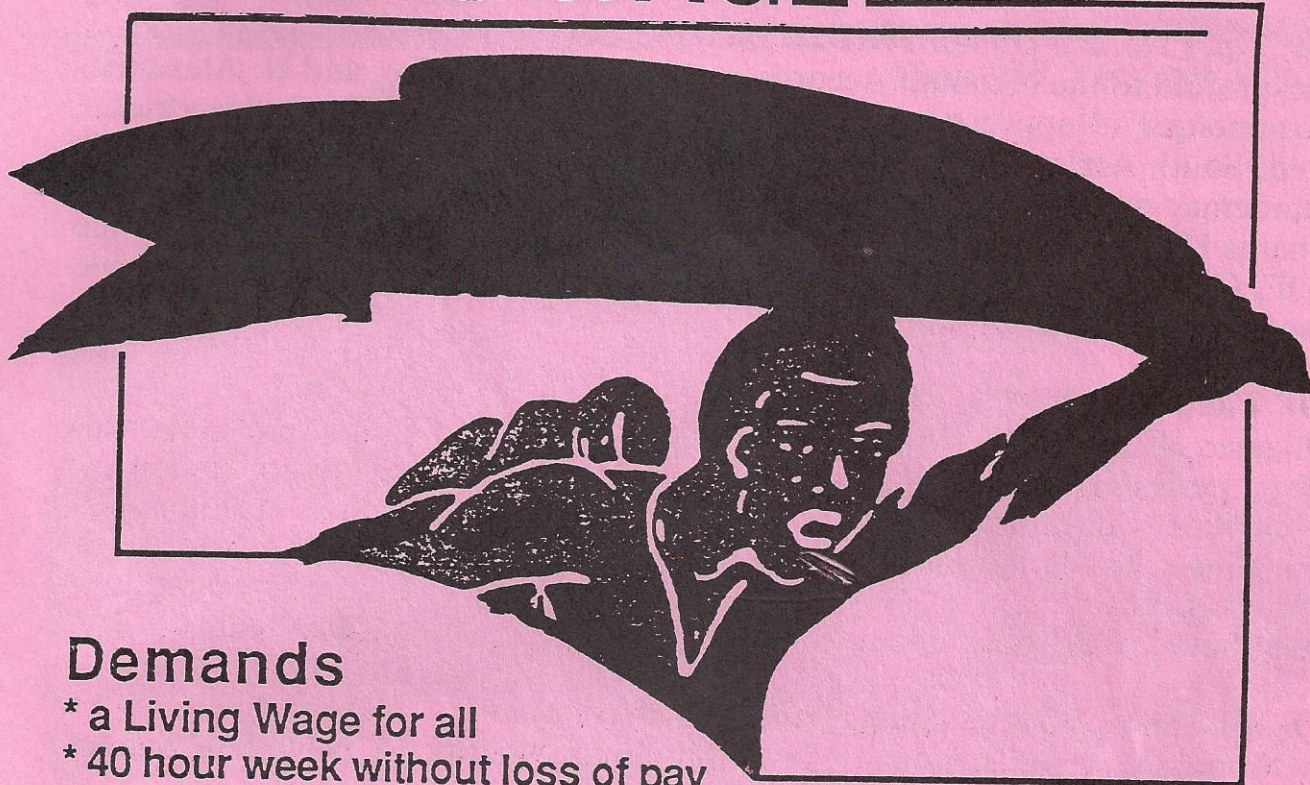
Victory in this strike is also crucial if workers are to imprint within the political arena and be respected as leaders of the struggle for liberation in South Africa.

Victory allows for massive advances for the working class. Defeat would be a crippling blow. The struggle is still evenly balanced and we need the full and active support of all.

Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union of South Africa (CCAUSA)

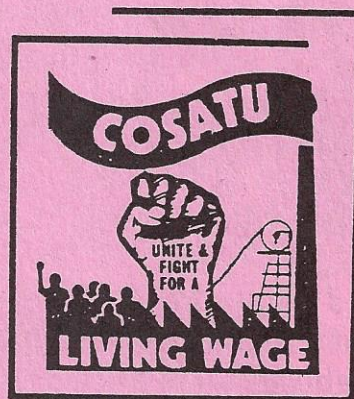
15 January 1987

WOMEN WORKERS JOIN THE FIGHT FOR A LIVING WAGE



Demands

- * a Living Wage for all
- * 40 hour week without loss of pay
- * May Day June 16 and Sharpeville Day as public holidays
- * Job security
- * No tax deductions
- * 6 months paid maternity leave
- * An end to the hostel system and decent housing near places of work.
- * The right to a decent education and training



Women workers, just like men workers, need a Living Wage to provide decent housing, education, food, clothing, transport and leisure for themselves and their families.

Women workers have special reasons to join the fight to win these demands.

AZANIA WORKER
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