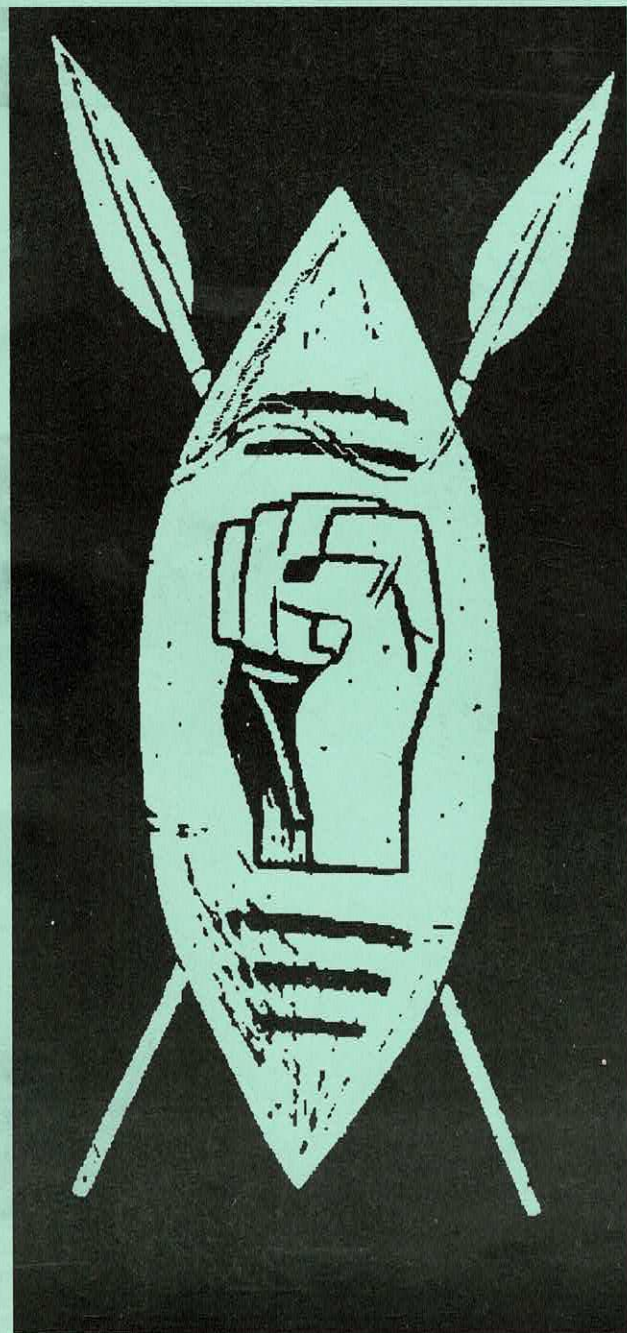


FRONTLINE WORKER

3

Journal for a socialist movement in South Africa



Contents:

- *Debating principles and alliances*
- *Birth of a new socialist organisation*
- *Politics of negotiation*
- *Book reviews*

Price R5/£2

WORKER

3
ing

No 26

No 15

1991

Subscription rates to

FRONTLINE WORKER

Following rates apply to 4 issues:

South Africa	R30.00
Individuals	R70.00
Institutions	
United Kingdom and Eire	
Individuals	£9.00
Institutions	£14.00
Europe	
Individuals	£10.00
Institutions	£15.00

Editorial Notes

Violence in the townships

On 2 February this year, President F W de Klerk proclaimed that the season of violence had come to an end. It was something which belonged to the past. Today there is more violence than ever before. The troops are back in the townships. This issue is dealt with in the statement from the Workers Organisation of South Africa (WOSA) and by the United States based Organisation of South Africans for Liberation Education (OSALE). The most recent meeting between Nelson Mandela and his negotiating team with de Klerk and members of the government does not appear to have done anything to resolve this crisis. The only concession which the ANC was able to wring from de Klerk was the release of some more political prisoners from Robben Island and the promise of an amnesty for returned exiles. On the question of maintenance of law and order (*sic*), which Mandela in a series of statements now believes it is this government's duty to maintain, the regime made no concessions.

There can be no question but that de Klerk has maintained the initiative which he gained when he made his dramatic statement to the white parliament in February. On the world stage South Africa is now well on the road to regaining its diplomatic respectability.

But, perhaps there is another victory to be chalked up by de Klerk? In several statements Mandela has said that it is the government's duty to maintain law and order, and that there is a sense in which it can be said that the ANC and the government are in

which this journal has made a considerable contribution. But above all, perhaps the signing-on by the party of leading trade unionists like Moses Mayekiso who it for long labelled as "workerists" has helped to transform its image. There is a feeling by many erstwhile critics on the left that with the advent of Gorbachev and the demise of the "socialist" states of Eastern Europe, the South African Communist Party is now at last free to develop without its traditional shackles to Moscow. A hope, perhaps a belief, that it can now become an indigent party representing the interests of the working class.

There is, however, a growing criticism of the party, both within the party and outside. This was stimulated by Joe Slovo's *Has Socialism Failed*, which is analysed by Carol Brickley in this issue. A special edition of *South African Labour Bulletin (SALB)* is entirely devoted to a discussion of the SACP.

The discussion is wide-ranging. There is a strong criticism of Joe Slovo's account of the history of the "socialist" countries; others, including a contribution from WOSA, point to the need for a re-examination of the Marxist tradition. There is an attempt to bring Rosa Luxemburg into the debate. Jeremy Cronin, a member of the SACP internal leadership committee, argues for a combination of Lenin's insistence on quality and Luxemburg's emphasis on mass participation (the salience of Luxemburg was of course recognised as long ago as 1981 by Saul and Gelb in their *The Crisis in South Africa*). Cronin writes:

We need to get the balance right between a party of quality and a mass party.

Firstly, there is mass support for socialism in our country. The SACP, from five or six years ago perhaps, underestimated the potential support for socialism, particularly among the

A question that must also be asked: is the violence in Natal and now also in Transvaal townships not a function of the intolerance which leaderships of both Inkatha and ANC display towards dissent?

Launch of SACP

There are some significant indicators of the strength and influence of the various organisations in a public opinion poll conducted by Integrated Marketing Research in August. Views of 2100 economically active black people were canvassed. To the question which organisations exercised a positive influence on the future of South Africa, 66 percent said the ANC, compared to 84 percent who responded to the same question in April. Nearly all political organisations would appear to be enjoying less confidence among the people. The ruling National Party went from 21 percent in April to 12 percent in August; the UDF from 29 percent to 20 percent; COSATU from 25 percent to 13 percent; PAC retained the same 11 percent; Inkatha went from 3 percent to 1 percent. The one exception is the South African Communist Party (SACP) who improved their standing from 1 percent to 5 percent.

(In contrast to the position of the ANC, Nelson Mandela's was strengthened from 13 percent in April to 44 percent in August. President de Klerk also did better than his

FRONTLINE WORKER ALWAYS BRAGING THE GROWTH OF SOCIALIST FORCES OUR STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION SAYS

Vision of new South Africa/ Azania

On the 14 and 15 April a new socialist organisation, the Workers Organisation for Socialist Action (WOSA) was founded in Cape Town. WOSA brings together socialists from the Cape Action League (CAL), Action Youth, Students of Young Azania (SOYA), Mayibuye and many individuals from different parts of the country. We publish below the opening address and founding resolutions of WOSA, which spell out the basic principles of the organisation.

Introduction

Comrade Chair, fellow comrades, I ask your undivided attention.

Throughout history people of all lands throughout the world have been battling to satisfy their needs. Seldom does the contrast between "unlimited" material needs and artificially "limited" means of meeting them emerge so clearly as in a country's cash registers. The historical records and balance sheets of our beloved country are so grossly unbalanced that we have long since taken it upon ourselves to look towards balancing the books. In doing so, we are not merely engaging in an accounting exercise as to how best to improve our way to life but also reveal a scientific approach to the use of our physical resources (however limited), and our values and ideas.

Any society which is based on injustice, exploitation and oppression will soon over-extend itself, thereby exhausting its resources - and is set on a path of impoverishment and wastage. We live in such a society. The demands of insight, responsibility and accountability in the evaluation of *how to change* our society *now* finds expression in the unfavourable conditions within which we are living. It is these conditions which

an agreed programme of action, it becomes necessary to further engage you in the historical background to this meeting.

As to the impact of this initiative in its totality, the need for creating new means to the benefit of the black working class in particular and oppressed and exploited people in general find expression in the goal of building a new political tradition and resistance culture in our country.

The envisaged new socialist orientated organisation not only gives further momentum to certain political adjustments already under way, but combines with them a new approach in a dynamic action aimed at building a South Africa/Azania with a sound and workable democratic base.

But such a socialist organisation also stands squarely within the broad and complex national question of our present political, economic and cultural situation.

One of the most disquieting political events of this present period is the willingness and commitment of leading sectors within the ANC/SACP alliance toward reaching a negotiated settlement with the white minority racist government in South Africa and its

tinued physical existence, accompanied by initial unpopularity and abuse.

There is a clear and immediate need for socialist orientated forces to meet each other on common grounds, putting aside petty political differences in favour of greater domestic priorities.

But, particularly the mid-1980s with the beginnings of reform and repression, political isolation and growing conflict within the national liberation movement became our lot too, and made the implementation of new political programmes inescapable.

Coupled with this was a tightening of international political action within South Africa, involving widespread sanctions now a critical factor in the negotiated process.

Seen against this background, our political programme has not only a broader unifying role but pursues important policy goals. Amongst others, it seeks to make the greatest possible contribution to real and widespread political change, economic prosperity and social equality, with the emphasis on worker control and democratic participation. Moreover, our political programme must seek to contribute to the creation of lasting peace

Founding Resolution of the Workers' Organisation for Socialist Action

* it calls for a membership that is committed to the tactic of building a united front to enable us to act in a manner that places the unity of the working class first on our agenda.

* it calls for an organisation that has a powerful attraction toward rooting itself within a new society and tradition amongst the working class; and

* an organisation which promotes and defends the interests of the working class in all aspects of social life eg. health care, education, and other social services.

But the *means* for the role which such a socialist orientated organisation must play do not simply lie in its good intentions. Quite the opposite: throughout the world experience has shown that actions themselves are more important than mere words. An adequate organisational infrastructure and communication network, using the latest techniques, methods and technology are crucial if we are to be capable of equipping ourselves with the task of building a new nation in South Africa/Azania. What will finally make anything possible, is the practical commitment of every member to work in the interests of the organisation, especially when reinforced by a firm and yet flexible package of working principles.

Taken together, all these goals, aims and objectives constitute nothing less than a new way of life in all aspects of human activity and thinking.

necessary risks and skills and assets liability, economic unavailability.

and property co-ordination by all those decisions within a participative, involving themselves degree of predictability.

these goals clearly order that, by virtue of long-term aims, democratic rights for racial and anti-racist at there are also following necessary political growth of our

phold a clear anti-racism - both in the understanding and is to

an organisation of class and its

based on agreement centralism eg. collective functional democratic de-political understanding discipline and struggle. Further, able of offering rights, duties, privi-

organisation's resources applied ably and

We, at the Founding Conference of the Workers' Organisation for Socialist Action, on this day, 14 April 1990, in Cape Town, South Africa

Noting that:

1. The interests of the working class, and the oppressed and exploited masses in general, can best be advanced and defended in a consistent manner through the creation of an independent political organisation of the working class, and

2. The resurgence of mass struggles, the ever-increasing participation and radicalisation of both rural and urban masses, and the era of reform and negotiation, all create opportunities and dangers. This lends enormous urgency to the task of forming and building a socialist organisation.

Resolve to found and build a national unitary organisation based on the following principles:

1. The organisation shall strive to have a clear socialist perspective, and shall be rooted in the working class and its struggles.

2. Only through its self-organisation and activity can the working class bring about socialist transformation. By implication, we reject all reformist roads to socialism.

3. The organisation shall place working class interests in the forefront of its struggle against all forms of class, racial and sexual

developed through democratic debate.

6. The organisation shall actively build and support all structures and organisations of the working class and the oppressed by striving to give leadership which assists in building the self-confidence, combativity and class consciousness of the working class in its fight against exploitation and oppression.

Negotiations

It is clear that secret negotiations between the government and the ANC have already begun. The various meetings between Mandela and senior ministers of the government, the meetings with government officials and members of the ANC abroad and the forthcoming three day meeting between a government delegation and a senior delegation of the ANC point to this.

For the government the strategy of negotiations represents a decisive initiative to win the time and space to extract itself from the economic, social and political crisis that the system of apartheid is in.

It is unclear what the ANC and the SACP, who support a negotiated settlement, expect to gain from negotiations. It is obvious that negotiations cannot deliver the transfer of power from the minority to the oppressed masses.

7. Internationalism is a fundamental principle of socialism since capitalism is an international system. Consequently, socialism cannot be built in one country. The struggle for socialism is therefore a worldwide struggle in which the organisation recognises that its struggle is linked to the struggles of oppressed and exploited people throughout the world and commits itself to support and defend working class organisations in all countries.

While the government is prepared to get rid of most of the racial laws on the statute books, such as the Group Areas Act and even the Populations Registration Act, they are not ready to hand over power to the majority. The government could reintegrate the ban-tustians into South Africa and may even formally introduce some form of universal franchise. However the government will not grant majority rule. They will insist on some form of minority rights or veto for the whites. This is necessary to ensure economic wealth and privilege remains in the hands of the white capitalist class and their class allies.

Negotiations with the government cannot deliver the national democratic demands never mind the social or proletarian demands, that have come to occupy a central place in the liberation struggle. If a negotiated settlement were to occur this would mean that the representatives of the liberation movement beset to compromise at

e between the masses and the on.

- * Immediate abolition of all racial legislation eg. the Group Areas Act, the Population Registrations Act etc.
 - * Dismantling of the repressive forces and fascist groups.
 - * Dismantling of the bantustans.
 - * Agrarian reform that allows distribution and the nationalisation of the big landholdings.
 - * The nationalisation of the banks and mines.
 - * The right of veto for the unions, over hiring, redundancies, working conditions and industrial restructuring.
- To strengthen the position of the working class we must pursue:

- * The building of NACTU and COSATU, towards unification in a single confederation;
- * Democracy and plurality of viewpoints in the trade-union movement;
- * Rebuilding the civic associations on a unitary democratic basis, federated nationally on the basis of rank-and-file representation;
- * The independence of the trade union movement in relation to all political forces.

the traders) in its alliance with big capital.

2. This petty bourgeoisie layer is dependent on the current South African State (for its power over the land) on South African capital (for the funds for its trading interests), and on South African armed forces (SAP, SADF etc.) for its armed defence.
3. It uses its control over land allocation as a weapon to extract support from the rural poor.
4. It uses a falsely re-incarnated mockery of 'Zulu tradition' in its attempt to establish ideological hegemony over that layer.
5. This resting on capital and the State stands in direct contradiction to the material interests of the urbanised working class of Natal.
6. Despite the trade unions' attempts to hold back the expression of this contradiction, it finally burst forth in the mid 1980s.

7. The social forces represented by Inkatha cannot survive on the support of the rural 'support' from the urbanised working class that is the fundamental cause of the 'Natal violence'.
8. The leadership of the majority political forces in Natal (UDF and COSATU) have attempted to pursue a conciliatory strategy towards Inkatha. This has ranged from attempts to 'win space' through agreements to outright peace talks. This strategy has manifestly failed.

9. The logic of this 'strategy' (already prefigured by Nelson Mandela's proposal to stand on the same platform as Buthelezi in a joint call for peace) is to woo Inkatha into

that they too could be part of the peace movement), an agreement which was never forthcoming.

We therefore resolve that:

1. The violence between Inkatha and the State on the one side and the mass of the working class on the other cannot be resolved through any form of negotiated settlement. This violence is not in the interests of the mass of Inkatha membership any more than it is in the interests of the working class.
2. We reject completely the approach of COSATU, UDF and ANC leadership which tries to tell us that the war against Inkatha is a distraction from the 'real' war against apartheid. Insofar as Inkatha acts as an agent of the South African State we see the battle against Inkatha as an integral part of the struggle against racial capitalism.

3. The only direction that can bring an end to the killings is the defeat of Inkatha through a programme of mass action led by the working class.

4. This programme of action must be aimed immediately at the scrapping of the KwaZulu bantustan and the removal of all State security forces from the townships. This call has come from the Natal Region of COSATU and we fully support it, as we support the stayaway and boycott action proposed by the worker leaders.

5. However, the call for removal of all State security forces only makes sense if it goes alongside the building of effective self-defence organisation in all townships. Such a call will not win the support of all communities if residents are not convinced

And in order to be able to defend itself it must be organised. We therefore stand for democratically elected self-defence committees drawn from the communities and accountable to them. We stand for this not because of some abstract principle, but because it is the only way that communities will in practice be able to defend themselves.

7. We therefore also call for the formation of elected street and area committees, taking up concrete programmes of action. These programmes must campaign around all of the issues (lack of housing, high rents, unemployment etc.) which are an underlying cause of such social unrest. We must therefore be the strongest fighters for the COSATU resolution on building mass community organisations, but we must add that mass organisations can only be built around concrete programmes of action.

8. We also call for an orientation towards winning over the base of Inkatha away from its reactionary leadership. However, unlike COSATU, UDF and ANC we do not believe that this can be done by negotiating with the Inkatha leadership. The only method of winning this base is by organising them as workers on the farms and as the landless poor in the rural areas. We must therefore struggle to build democratically elected village committees to challenge the right of the chiefs to control the distribution of land. We cannot do this by building alternative organisations of chiefs such as CONTRALESA.

9. We reject completely the approach of COSATU, UDF and ANC leadership which tries to tell us that the war against Inkatha is a distraction from the 'real' war against apartheid. Insofar as Inkatha acts

on Movement and rianism

against the ruling organisations of that exist and will be re- cratic method of

egestion for a pa- come. We under- mean a united ss organisations. alone resolve the between organisa- vement;

essential pr-requi- s of the working e empowered to lives.

sical fighting be- ces of the libera-

mrade Mandela's o incorporate the

passed defence or- g class;

(ii) the defence of the freedoms of thought, speech, association, assembly, and press in these structures;

(iii) the defence of these structures when under attack by the state, by all organisations of the liberation movement;

(iv) to allow these structures to, after listening to a plurality of views, arrive at their own decisions through the process of democracy, and without fear of intimidation and victimisation.

3. To propagate the tactic of the United Front as a means of ensuring maximum principled unity, whilst maintaining the organisational and political independence of the constituent forces of the liberation movement.

Negotiations in South Africa/Azania

The positions of the major tendencies in the liberation movement

Neville Alexander

F W de Klerk's speech of Friday 2 February, in which he announced the legalisation of the ANC, PAC, and other banned/restricted organisations, among other things, marked the beginning of a new phase in the struggle for freedom in South Africa. In 1960, the volleys of Sharpeville sounded the end of collaboratorist, petitionist and pacifist forms of struggle and catapulted the entire liberation movement into three decades of armed struggle to one degree or another. De Klerk's speech is an important part of an orchestrated attempt to draw a line under that period. It signals an invitation to the liberation movement to probe a different trajectory of struggle, one which involves centrally a negotiation process between representatives of the rulers on the one side, and of the ruled on the other side.

Various developments have given rise to the new situation. Here, it is necessary to mention only the three most important ones. Fundamental to the evolving situation is the change in the geostrategy of the Soviet Un-

quite openly that the notion of a socialist revolution in Southern Africa even within the next century is mere pie in the sky. The revolutions in Eastern Europe have reinforced the Soviet tendency to retreat from Southern Africa by diverting the attention of the West to Eastern Europe. Although it is not always admitted in public, there is no doubt that for both economic and political reasons, investment capital will tend to flow to Eastern Europe in the next decade or so, thus reducing the flow to Africa, Asia and Latin America. This will strengthen the relative strategic position of the South African regime as the "regional superpower" in Southern Africa.

The Soviet decision to scale down its commitments in Southern Africa has much to do with Angola's willingness to settle the Anglo-Namibian issue. Cuito Cuanavale made possible a South African *quid pro quo*. Since South Africa had, at least since 1978, conceded the principle of Namibian independence, this was an opportune tactical moment

counts, the social fabric has disintegrated, and Zambia is going the same way, even though military destabilisation has been of less importance in its case. Consequently, the pressure from these quarters on the liberation movement to adopt different, i.e., non-military, tactics is overwhelming. While the ritual forms of "immovable support" continue to be upheld in public, the brutal reality of the situation is clearly articulated privately and sometimes not so privately. The fact of the matter is that the continuity and security of some of the regimes have become doubtful because of the intensification of the struggle in Southern Africa. Unlike the major Arab states in the Arab-Israeli conflict, by way of analogy, the Frontline States are simply not in a position to keep up even a pose of belligerency for much longer.

The second major development is the changing dynamics of the political-economic situation inside South Africa which, during the past fifteen years, has become one of en-

Negotiations

political organisations in South Africa, is supplied by the black working class. The real struggle in the Charterist camp is between those who, objectively, promote middle-class leadership of the movement and those who promote working-class leadership. Although this is potentially a serious *casus belli* within the structures of the Charterist camp, it has been bracketed out for most times through the formal adherence by all members of the Charterist structures to the Freedom Charter and the acceptance by them of the notion of a two-stage struggle, i.e., a first struggle, led by the ANC, against apartheid and a second struggle, led by the SACP, against capitalism. Even if we elide any consideration of how events in Eastern Europe may have impacted on this schema, it is clear that the schema does permit a very large-scale anti-apartheid consensus and thus a large measure of political cohesion. Since this cohesion is built around an anti-apartheid programme, it is clear that the more vocal, more "educated" middle-class elements are effectively in the leadership of the Charterist project today.

Besides a few left-wing groups that operate semi-clandestinely inside Charterist structures, the main threat to this cohesion comes from the organised workers in the trade unions, where socialist rhetoric continues to be popular in spite of attempts by the leadership to discourage such rhetoric. It is probable that because of the logic of guerrilla warfare, some of "the young lions" in the camps and in the townships are at least sceptical of the anti-apartheid tactics of the leadership. None of these groups is at present in a position to challenge the middle-class orientation of the leadership, however. Such a challenge would have to emerge out of the ups and downs of the negotiation process itself and would be decisively influenced by the tactics of other currents in the broad liberation movement. For the foreseeable future, there-

test action had been made impossible. Publicly, MK was never justified in terms of the logic of class struggle, i.e., in terms of the fact that no ruling class surrenders state power without a bitter struggle. On many occasions since then, leaders of the Congress current have indicated clearly that as soon as conditions permitted, they would be prepared to commit themselves to peaceful forms of struggle. According to the South African government, this is what Nelson Mandela is alleged to have done in the course of various discussions with cabinet ministers and others. It is a known fact that MK's overall strategic goal was (and has remained) "to bring the South African government to the negotiating table". De Klerk, it is obvious, is addressing himself in the first instance to the leadership and the activists in the Charterist organisations. By appearing to create the necessary conditions for a negotiations process, de Klerk has in fact thrown the ANC and related organisations into an existentialist dilemma.

It is clear that for the Charterists, the politics of negotiation represents a historic opportunity. In order to make sure that a negotiation process leads to their goal of a "national democratic state", they have insisted on the creation of a "climate for negotiations", i.e., freedom of association, speech, assembly, release of all political prisoners, return of all exiles, and withdrawal of South African security forces from the townships. Clearly, if this phase is not to be wasted, the Charterists have to use it to build or to rebuild popular structures and to engage the urban and the rural workers in mass campaigns behind a programme of action designed to strengthen their negotiating position. However long the negotiation process lasts, it is clear that the ANC leadership will want it in order to establish its centrality and its dominance within the liberation movement. Because of the insurrectionist and adventurist

- 1940s and 1950s ANC and Non-European Unity Movement;
- 1960s ANC and Pan-Africanist Congress;
- 1970s Black Consciousness Movement of South Africa;
- 1980s BCM and ANC.

For reasons of historical tradition, the ANC has been the one organisation that has existed throughout this century and that has been able to resurrect itself after long periods of dormancy or even death-like inactivity. As we enter the 'nineties, it would be correct to say that in the liberation movement, the following major currents are discernible: Charterism, the Azanian tendency, and Socialism/Workerism. How do these tendencies respond to the proposed politics of negotiation?

Charterism

Under this heading are included all those organisations which have adopted or pay allegiance to the Freedom Charter. These are in particular the ANC, the SACP, UDF, COSATU, and many others. On negotiations, their position is defined succinctly in the statement of the National Executive Committee of the ANC issued on 9 October 1987:

The ANC has never been opposed to a negotiated settlement of the South African question. The ANC and the masses as a whole are ready and willing to enter genuine negotiations provided they are aimed at the transformation of our country into a united and non-racial democracy.

The ANC, which represents without any doubt the majority current in the national liberation movement today, went under-

to the fracturing of the organisations into antagonistic and different strategic

generation

tionally complex people, originating in the world, speaking having different grounds with diffeical development, with African economies for different purities were experienced of categories of white-m/Hindu/Unbe-ment, all these own together by

m in South Africa generally known. nences of this fact people responded ply in class terms are consciously in "Whites" were "blacks" (subdi-ur and language) t classes" as ex-lass". The latter al abstraction (a that seldom penetr the mass of work- the main indices to y or social move- e way in which it onship between is true at particular twentieth century

the de Klerk regime forces the pace because of its realisation that the ANC is "unprepared". However, with leaders like Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and others to reinforce their lead, this adjustment phase, during which many contradictory and evasive positions will be evident, ought to be overcome rapidly.

Once a negotiation position has been established, however, the real struggle will move beyond the confines of the Charterist camp. They will be faced with reactionary alternatives to their right (Inkatha, Labour Party, etc.) which will want to accommodate the ethnically defined proposals of the National Party government, and rejectionist alternatives to their left (PAC, socialist groups) that will guard against any sell out or any watering down of the cherished principles of non-racialism, democracy, one person, one vote, and equitable distribution of resources among all the people of South Africa. During the next few years, these battles will be fought out in the liberation movement even as the National Party and the Conservative Party battle for the soul of the Afrikaners and the white workers.

The Azanian Tendency

For the purposes of this paper, I shall not discuss the historical and theoretical differences between the PAC and the BCM, as important as these are. In practice, the

differences tend to reduce to power-political tactical disagreements and often even to personalities. The decisive issue is that the BCM tends to be genuinely concerned about United Fronts of all the oppressed, whereas the PAC considers itself as a rival to the ANC in terms of mobilising the oppressed and is, thus, more wary of, even if it is not opposed to, working with the Charterists.

at in discussions
: government we
on (Argus 15 Feb.

The Socialist Tendency

Under this rubric, I do not include members of the SACP who continue to accept the basic two-stage paradigm of the Charterists. Also, I only consider those "workerists" as falling under this umbrella who, while insisting that trade-union struggle is the alpha and omega of the struggle in South Africa, are not indifferent to the hegemonic aspirations and manoeuvrings of populist or nationalist - especially Charterist and narrow Africanist - currents within the trade-union movement.

In spite of developments in Eastern Europe, the experience of the majority of black people of actually existing capitalism in South Africa as a system of brutal racist inequality continues to provide an objective base for the flourishing of anti-capitalist and pro-socialist ideas and movements. While it is obvious that the ignominious collapse of the bureaucratic centralist, so-called socialist systems of Eastern Europe cannot go unnoticed even in a peripheral country such as South Africa, it would be a mistake to conclude that the socialist current will rapidly and inevitably cease to flow. Indeed, it is to be expected that the various small groups of socialist orientation will be compelled to come together in order to strengthen themselves organisationally, bury the ideological and theoretical hatchets and formulate a common left-wing strategy for the years of "negotiation politics" ahead. The most likely strategy to be followed will be one of supporting the negotiation process in so far as it opens up more space for the mobilisation and political education of the mass of black workers around socio-economic issues such as wages, housing, health, education, social welfare, etc., and in so far as it does not in any way compromise the fundamental principles of anti-racism and non-racial democracy, which are the bed-rock of the anti-apartheid liberation movement in

trench the hold of populism on the leadership and direction of the struggle.

Conclusion

The contradictions and competition for hegemony between the three major tendencies in the South African movement will not be allowed to play themselves out in a peaceful atmosphere. Quite apart from the right-wing inspired counter-revolutionary turmoil, it is to be expected that the South African government and black organisa-

tempt the Charterists to go it alone and to marginalise other tendencies. This is the greatest danger in South Africa. Only a real United Front of all the genuinely anti-apartheid forces will prevent the situation from degenerating into the kind of shambles we have had the historical misfortune of witnessing in a territory such as Lebanon. The real test of the mettle of the leadership of the liberation struggle in South Africa depends on how it resolves this question.

tions located within the apartheid political system will do their best to widen the gaps between these tendencies so as to increase their leverage within the negotiation process in the hope of coming out of it with the best possible deal. Moreover, the lopsidedness of real organisational strength and the access to resources which characterises the broad liberation movement as well as a real desire on the part of many leaders in the movement to probe a different trajectory of struggle should the de Klerk-Vijjoen team turn out to be people of "integrity", will constantly

Negotiations

The New Politics of Negotiations

Thomas K. Ranuga

Black workers, squeezed between the vice of economic exploitation and white working class racism, began to wield the strike weapon in 1973, and the young people of South Africa exploded in anger and defiance in the Soweto uprising of June 1976. It was as a result of that unprecedented national explosion of young people that the ANC, which was firmly established in neighbouring African states, received a new lease of life in the form of young Black militants who enlisted as freedom fighters.

The struggle for the liberation of South Africa/Azania has now entered its most critical and decisive phase. The African National Congress was founded in 1912 to agitate for the interests of Black people in a white-dominated power structure. The second liberation movement, the Pan Africanist Congress, came into being in 1958 to fight for the right of the African people to regain and rule their motherland on the basis of majority rule. The Black Consciousness Movement emerged in 1968 to fill up the vacuum left after the banning of the ANC and PAC in 1960 and to undertake the task of raising the political consciousness of the demoralised Black masses. And now, after the political vicissitudes that are part and parcel of na-

nies of Guinea Bissau, Angola and Mozambique and the grand finale to the liberation war in Zimbabwe which involved the loss of life of literally tens of thousands of freedom fighters. But in South Africa, why was there no effective fighting, apart from sporadic bomb explosions that have periodically racked empty government buildings and installations? In short, why was the level of national liberation efforts in South Africa not even anywhere near the initial stages of the wars of liberation that ushered in such radical transformations in all these countries? In other words, could it be the case that the liberation struggle in South Africa was destined for the reformist path instead of the much vaunted revolutionary path? Can post-

Critical Questions

The question often raised by concerned sympathisers and critical observers of the

ments have been no following the Pre- that killed nineteen n two hundred in- y. The Economist, stic terms that the joke-figure of ments, if only be- mment to nonvi- e observers have ut no less negative y effectiveness of their overall views of the ANC, two as and Davis, who uerrilla leaders in tion that "the ANC n the battle field".³

was officially sus- onse of the ANC to ments was to point dget of the regime e guerrilla "war" es of the system to the validity of that s of the South Afri- at that, on the con- budget was more a strategy" of the re- maintaining white l less a reflection of errilla movements, ultimately damag- aditions within the

dations and jectives

of its emergence in n it was declared he Pan Africanist y African govern- y committed to a

taking my Christianity with me and pray- ing that it may be used to influence for good the character of the resistance.⁴

Luthuli had accurately projected the domi- nant ideological current within the ANC which made reformism the logical path to follow.

From its inception the declared aims of the ANC were along the lines of gradual reforms and not the eradication of the system through unconstitutional means. This was the case even after World War II when oppressed colonial people were talking of total inde- pendence from foreign domination. At the time, the ANC took the exceptional re- formist position that the principle of self- determination, as enshrined in the third ar- ticle of the Atlantic Charter, must be given a special meaning when applied to South Africa. Accordingly, the principle was inter- preted by the organisation to be perfectly ac- ceptable in relation to "small nations" and in "certain parts of Africa", but:

...in other parts of Africa where there are the peculiar circumstances of a politically entrenched European minority ruling a majority non-European population the demands of the African for full citizenship rights and direct participation in all the councils of the state should be recognised. This is most urgent in the Union of South Africa.⁵

This was the declared position of the ANC in 1943 when it adopted a statement of African aims under the title "Africans' Aims in South Africa" which also included a section on "The Atlantic Charter from the stand- point of Africans within the Union of South Africa" and another on a "Bill of Rights". The emphasis at the time was undoubtedly on peaceful petitions for the recognition of

Negotiations

leader, Z K Mathews. The aim of this con- gress was to consider, frame and adopt a set of political ideas and guidelines that came to be known as the "Freedom Charter." This document, which was approved by acclama- tion by the "Congress of the people," marked a major turning point in the history of the ANC. The adoption of the Charter signalled the premature demise of the radical politics of the CYL. The seeds of radical politics which could have flowered into a genuine revolution were swept away by the reformist tide.

The preamble to the Freedom Charter, which became the immediate target of denuncia- tions by militant African nationalists, pro- claimed:

We, the people of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know: *That South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of the people. And therefore, we, the people of South Africa, black and white together - equals, countrymen, and brothers - adopted this Freedom Charter. And we pledge ourselves to strive to- gether, sparing nothing of our strength and courage, until the democratic changes here set out have been won.*⁷ (emphasis mine)

ANC leaders have not budged an inch from their declared attachment to the basic provi- sions of the Freedom Charter. Year after year, since the adoption of the document in 1955, they have repeatedly taken the posi- tion that this document projects the basic ideology of the organisation. But by the time of the Soweto student explosion in 1976, the ANC as a liberation movement was not doing much on the military front. The liberal ideology of the Freedom Charter had abso- lutely failed to incite a national revolution.

majority. The emphasis of this philosophy was on the elevation of the level of political consciousness, solidarity and cohesion of the oppressed Black masses (Africans, Col- oreds and Indians) as an essential founda- tion for the prosecution of the national lib- eration struggle. The inspirational slogan of the Black Consciousness Movement was: "Black man you are on your own!" In other words, it was the primary duty of the op- pressed Black people to liberate themselves.

It is important to realise that the founder of the Black Consciousness Movement, Steve Biko, was from the outset very critical of any ideological perspective that de-emphasised the unique historical position of the op- pressed Black masses. In a clear reference to the Freedom Charter, Biko had this to say about those former ANC militants who were known to be dissatisfied with their reformist leaders and the accommodationist ideologi- cal direction of the organisation:

*These young men were questioning a number of things among which was the "go slow" attitude adopted by the lead- ership, and the ease with which the lead- ership accepted coalitions with organisa- tions other than those run by Blacks. The "Peoples' Charter adopted in Kliptown in 1955, was evidence of this."*⁸

The disgruntled members of the ANC were actually the Africanists who stressed the paramount importance of African national- ism as a powerful and effective ideological instrument for motivating and mobilising the oppressed African masses. These ortho- dox nationalists later broke away from the ANC to form the Pan Africanist Congress whose militant nationalist ideology played a very significant role in the evolution of Afri- ca political thought in South Africa. The PAC never had enough time, during its short legal existence from 1950 to 1960, to estab-

an history and the
the white power
a tough stand?

il scene has never
South African
towards the end
ferendum. When
lly implemented
racially separate
Whites, Coloureds
xploded through-
to the streets to
opposition to the
It is instructive to

1976-77 student
loss of hundreds
to-political unrest
ates back to Sep-
s constitutional
emented. Those
y triggered off a
against the white
t was ultimately
ate of emergency
er military occu-
k a semblance of
ds of repression
asic human rights
from the West
ited States voted
mic sanctions on
ate of emergency,
ighbouring Afri-
sanctions took a
y's economy. It
to the country's
tic initiatives had
p of the United
the new foreign
the 1988 Angla-
ed. The Cubans
Angola, the South

tary cadres from Angolan territory and South Africa in turn was required to stop its military support for UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola).

As a result of the Angola-Namibia settle- ment the ANC was denied military bases not only in Angola but also in other neighbour- ing frontline states which would not allow the launching of guerrilla attacks from their territories. To complicate matters, the main military supplier of the ANC, the Soviet Union, made it abundantly clear that it sup- ported a negotiated and not a military solu- tion in South Africa.

After the release of Nelson Mandela, South Africa witnessed a flurry of activities relat- ing not to negotiations per se, but the crea- tion of the so called suitable climate relating to preconditions for negotiations. These pre- conditions included the end of the state of emergency, release of all political prisoners, lifting the ban on all political organisations, and the removal of troops from the town- ships. The partial fulfilment of these precon- ditions has been such a deliberately slow process that it left absolutely no doubt that the white state was very much in control of the pace of events. And the de Klerk admin- istration has made it abundantly clear that, whatever the intentions of those who want to participate in negotiations, the outcome cannot be ruled by majority.

On the diplomatic front, the white minority government is doing all it can to impress its allies abroad that it is taking preliminary steps towards a negotiated settlement.

What is clear at this stage is that de Klerk is making all the necessary tactical moves to gain more time for the white power structure. At any rate, whatever he means by reforms has nothing to do with the establishment of a

Negotiations

of political power, what will be the bargain- ing position of the organisation, assuming that all preconditions will have been met. Is the framework of the Charterists going to be one person, one vote in a unitary state as every Black person would expect them to do? If everything is apparently negotiable, what possible compromise can the ANC make on that fundamental principle that would not precipitate a groundswell of Black opposition throughout the country that may culminate in a bloody conflict? Since the military option is now past history after the suspension of the armed struggle, what is their leverage going to be if de Klerk insists he can only address the concept of one person one vote solely within the context of power-sharing and not majority rule? The ANC can of course appeal to the interna- tional community for help but what if they are told in no uncertain terms that negotia- tions within the framework of power-shar- ing must be accepted in the South African situation? Would the stage not be set for a face-saving compromise deal that the ANC would be compelled to sell to the people to prove that it can deliver?

The second major problem relates to timing. Since the white minority government is in serious crisis with respect to a troubled econ- omy and ongoing Black unrest, the question arises as to why even show any interest in ne- gotiations at this juncture before the eco- nomic pain has completely registered. There is no question about it that it was becoming increasingly clear to the white supremacists that the days of the apartheid system were numbered and, in order to cut their losses and avoid negotiating from a position of weak- ness, they had to declare a truce and call for a negotiated settlement. But in the final analysis the people who stand to gain a great deal if substantive talks begin now are the South African rulers who will do everything possible to convince the international com-

stand to lose the most especially if the con- cept of majority rule is somehow diluted or obfuscated in the settlement. Blacks have suffered so much and for such a long time in apartheid South Africa that they will accept nothing that is perceived as a betrayal of their birthright for majority rule. To avoid the likelihood of a colossal fiasco on the negoti- ated front, the ANC must consult with other liberation movements such as the Pan Afri- canist Congress and the Black Conscious- ness Movement for the purpose of establish- ing a united front. These are the groups after all that are most likely to cry out Revolution! when deliberations in which they were not involved prove to be a failure. And if that happens the oppressed majority as a whole will suffer a major setback because divisions of that nature at such a critical juncture can only play into the hands of the powers that be. But that is exactly the kind of crisis the white supremacists would like to create in order to justify the perpetuation of white control in one form or another. The argu- ment will be heard all over again that to stop the chaos resulting from so called Black-on- Black violence the whites must be in control.

Given the fact that the ANC has always been associated with the liberal reformist tradi- tion, it is important that all liberation groups be involved in a united front so that they can all talk from a position of strength. Because of its popularity both inside and outside the country the ANC may be strongly tempted to "go it alone" but in the end such a short- sighted approach is bound to derail the ob- jectives of the national liberation struggle. Organisations to the left of the ANC can be shunned and ignored by leading countries in the West for their own reasons but the ANC must avoid that temptation because it can spell disaster in the end. Concern about the reaction of the left was expressed by Freder- ick Van Zyl Slabbert who resigned as MP and leader of the official opposition in 1982.

ration movement blishing a united d principled lines creation of a con- asis of a universal a unitary, nonra- Africa/Azania are tituent Assembly for debating and ion.

one popular um- tion entities that logical positions hope to establish a hope dream and an isation worth its dilute its political its independence emony of a popu- the minimal objec- apartheid. There- ft that are striving , democratic and ical/Azania must oncept of a united es for full partici- emly where they cling of the apart- manent impact on ay that can bring disenfranchised,

the dispossessed and the disadvantaged, the left must stick to its principles and maintain its independence and integrity. To do otherwise is to flagrantly disregard the lessons of history and to abandon the unique role of the left in the struggle for genuine liberation.

Notes

- 1 *The New York Times*, June 10, 1980.
- 2 *The Economist*, article was reprinted in *The Boston Globe*, June 3, 1983.
- 3 *Harper's*, December, 1983.
- 4 Luthuli, Albert. *Let My People Go: An Autobiography*. London, Collins, 1962.
- 5 *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa 1982-1964* (Carter & Kasis) Vol.2, p214.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p337.
- 7 'Freedom Charter', adopted by the Congress of the People, June 26, 1955.
- 8 Biko, Steve. *I Write What I Like: a selection of his writings* edited with a personal memoir by Aelred Stubbs. London, Harper & Row, 1978.
- 9 *Harper's*, December, 1983.
- 10 *Africa Report*, July - August 1989.
- 11 *Africa Report*, Jan. - Feb. 1989.

Responses to "Stopping further tactical errors"

Standing on principles against negotiations

Andrew Lukele

good job setting forth factors that have impelled the Apartheid regime to seek a settlement of the situation in South Africa through negotiations. Then, without much else, he proceeds to endorse the negotiations and the ANC's role with respect to the negotiations so far. The justification for this endorsement does not amount to anything beyond the fact that indeed, negotiations are already underway. They have been for the last three years! In other words, the government and the ANC have presented the people of South Africa with negotiations as a fait accompli, and, all there is to do now is to take those negotiations forward.

Phahle takes a position on the negotiations which is entirely untenable. The most salient fact about the so called negotiations in South Africa is that they have been, and they continue to be wholly the initiative of the Apartheid government. It is the government that created the idea of negotiations, it set the terms of the negotiations, and it even determined who and which party would represent the disenfranchised black population.

Even in the very act of creating the institutional instrument for its intended reform programme the government is acting in a despotic manner. That is the only way that the apartheid government knows and uses in dealing with black people.

ately and primarily to entrench itself and consolidate its advantage of position in relation to all the other organisations which it did not control. A long history and practice of thorough-going sectarianism predetermined that organisational self-aggrandisement would be the cardinal principle which guides this premier and select organisation. And the result? One must be really blind not to see how close we are to civil war.

Phahle uses the phrase 'negotiations as another site of struggle', an expression which he ascribes to 'the most astute supporters of negotiation'. Whatever meaning was given to this expression by these 'astute supporters of negotiations', it should be clear from the foregoing remarks that negotiations are themselves an arena of gigantic struggle.

A huge hue-and-cry must be raised against the despotic hand of the apartheid state in the negotiations as presently set up. A multitude of voices must cry out, demanding the launching of a proper democratic instrument for the inauguration of a truly democratic society. The clear demand must be for a Constituent Assembly.

The ANC has no great dissatisfaction with the present arrangements, which accord to it the monopoly of 'representing' us all. Therefore it is not likely that the ANC would take any lead in the call for a Constituent Assem-

An especially obnoxious aspect of the gov-

Further tactical errors''

hip of the ANC
1983 distressful
through of large
were being as-
charterists. The
sident organisa-
ese massacres did
of the hostilities
ankatha Ya kwaZ-
e papers reported
ho were killed in
rists. As the rela-
ists approach rap-
ulation is that the
I again be free to
of hostilities to-

and purposes, abandoned the will to seek liberation through struggle. It is actually at this very moment engaged in dismantling even the bare emblems of struggle. It is holding the olive branch; and it does not want this fact to be missed by the state which is still holding power. Rapidly the sights of this petty bourgeois sector have become fixed on incorporation into the apparatus of the existing state. It has begun to use the authority and prestige that tradition has bestowed on it in an attempt to impose that fixation on the general masses of our population.

It will not be long before the organisational structures which give the appearance of a liberation movement are shed and from these will emerge, into full view, a granite monolith, towering above and standing between us and our future in a truly free and socialist Azania.

I do not find it possible to agree with Phahle on either of the two main issues that he discusses in his article. On negotiations it is clearly wrong to follow passively behind the initiative of the apartheid government. The task of progressives on this issue should be to uncover in these negotiations the continuum of the contest for power. They should expose the despotic hand that the apartheid government continues to play in the very act of inaugurating its reform programme.

Proper slogans must be raised proclaiming that we demand democracy to be launched through democratic instruments. Nothing will do, short of a Constituent Assembly, as a prelude to the inauguration of a new order.

On organisations and alliances, the position should be clear. There should be no mandamus on any person to join any organisation or collection of organisations. Everyone should have the right to join an organisation of their choice, and all organisations that

Responses to "Stopping further tactical errors''

principal actors at this stage show a disregard for fair and democratic practice which is truly alarming. Nothing can be gained by glossing over that enormous fact.

The grim reality is that a very large section of the black petty bourgeoisie of our country has seized control of a host of organisations that were organs of the resistance or had the

potential of being such. Pursuing a severely sectarian course, this petty bourgeois leadership is deflecting the struggle from its course, and, in doing so, it is pressing the country to the verge of a civil war.

It is very clear that in the impending civil strife the Left will undoubtedly be first in the line of attack. It would be a cruel irony if,

Negotiations: a brake on socialist struggle

Shaun Whittaker

Member of the Committee for a Socialist Future in South Africa/Azania

amongst other things. The misgivings of the Left are not sufficient ground to oppose negotiations, according to the author.

Recent political developments in South Africa have already shown this argument to be incorrect. The major concessions made by the ANC's leadership already at this early stage of negotiations about negotiations, make it clear that they will be satisfied with the crumbs from Pretoria's table. This leadership has suspended the armed struggle and is making noises about the relaxation of economic sanctions, despite the fact that our people continue to be detained, teargassed and killed. We do agree with Phahle that the masses will vote with their feet when they see a sell-out. Indeed, membership of the PAC has increased dramatically and WOSA was launched. Increasingly the divisions within the Charterist tendency are coming to

were members of the NF. The author seems to have conveniently forgotten some of these historical facts.

The simple truth is also that the ANC LEADERSHIP does not have a mandate from their own membership, let alone the black people of the country, to negotiate with the Pretoria regime. As far as we know, the ANC leadership has never asked their own members in a democratic way about their opinion on negotiations. The young lions do not seem to be in the mood for negotiations now. The Conference for a Democratic Future opposed negotiations and called for a non-racial Constituent Assembly to write the constitution. The Charterist tendency was an important component of this conference. Given the election results in Namibia, the SWAPO claim to be the sole and authentic voice of the Namibian people sounds extremely hollow

(socialist) Unidad Popular government to function within the legal framework was in fact their main weakness. The bloodbath that followed in Chile remains proof of the importance of correct political analysis.

The recent exposure in Africa Confidential (12 January 1990, Vol. 31, No. 1) of ANC atrocities against its own membership in the military camps are of grave concern. The Stalinist SACP leadership that has never been part of the daily struggles of the working class also continues to force its undemocratic will on this class.

We call on the socialists in the Charterist tendency to join hands with socialists in the other political organisations through a non-sectarian united front or a socialist party. Socialists in South Africa/Azania simply do not currently have enough organised strength on a national scale. This should be our priority. The national hegemony of the working class before the insurrection is a vital condition for the successful building of scientific socialism. Forward to the socialist revolution.

at tendency who constitutional or alism might also attempt by the

What did Mandela achieve in America?

Alexander Gomaz

Nelson Mandela's triumphant twelve-day tour of America has been compared to a "victory lap, after twenty seven years". He emerges as a tough-minded and able representative of the Black South African people, as well as a disciplined spokesperson for the African National Congress (ANC) leadership. It is perhaps through his recent public speeches and official statements that we might learn what future ANC policy might be on a range of issues, both on the domestic and foreign policy fronts.

Mandela's international stature has been enhanced by this last tour. Coming from a continent where there is a growing vacuum of authority and credibility for African leaders, he has become a cult-figure of (inter) continental proportions (like Simon Bolivar was for Latin Americans). He transcends national boundaries and has the aura and presence of a forceful and articulate elderly statesman. His message to the American public, especially the business community, was simple:

1. Apartheid structures are still in place;
2. Sanctions are needed, now more than ever before (hence no let-up on the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986);
3. Financial support for the ANC;

Bush parried by making no concessions, making clear that he would continue to press the ANC to renounce violence, and also rejected Mandela's appeal to be consulted on when to remove sanctions against South Africa. His only promise was to consult Congress, in line with the 1986 Anti-Apartheid Act.

However, Herman Cohen, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, conceded that a deal on political prisoners, coupled with the lifting of the state of emergency in the province of Natal, would be enough to allow President Bush to recommend suspending or modifying sanctions. Under the Anti-Apartheid Act, the US Congress has thirty days to consider such a recommendation.

Unless, within that period, the House and Senate were to pass a joint resolution against the President's recommendation, he would have the authority to modify or suspend the sanctions (which include a ban on new US investment, a ban on imports of certain commodities and on air links between the US and South Africa).

The question causing concern for the State Department is: What happens if reform in South Africa moves more rapidly than expected? Also, what happens to the bipartisan policy with Congress on South Africa once

from the above. explain to the US the ANC was not US conservative He said that the private sector "an declared that the gical predisposition.

sation follows on Africa, in which t, where on May red businessmen, "nationalisation ot the only eco-

s vocabulary. to the main ANC om Charter, con- napping nationalisa- ple shall share in his pronounc- e from prison in

was accepted that ions are not the onation with the et about trying to backers of the seems to imply a bility on the part

r the continuation ainst the regime, ealing for invest- evelopment of a finds himself in eign investment at brings democ- s of capital have y in the so-called ts of foreign in- eans are which

Given other structural hindrances to the expanded reproduction of capital (limited internal market; lack of a skilled black workforce and incentives; financial strangulation of capital markets due to sanctions; low productivity of existing plants etc), coupled with the collapse of the international gold market, South Africa has not been seen as an area of stability, and hence profitability, by investors (even local capital is making plans to leave). It is therefore rather naive to believe that one can attract foreign investments to the region without the social and political guarantees of profit-making. Maybe this is what the ANC is in fact giving.

What we are witnessing, in fact, is a strategic shift in the internal and foreign policy positions of Mandela, and hence of the leadership of the ANC, on such issues as nationalisation, foreign investments and the socialist project. Instead, it has chosen the route of achieving political rights within existing institutions rather than socio-economic transformation.

Whether this "new course" will be acceptable to the ANC's mass base is another question. With the closing of schools (again) and black unemployment at a staggering 50% in some districts, the pressure for fundamental changes (not just the cosmetic exercises of the de Klerk regime) is growing stronger. Apartheid may disappear, but the bases of "racial capitalism" will remain: guarantees to the white community for its control over the means of production and the maintenance of social divisions through inequalities of income and access to social resources such as schooling, skill training and housing.

It is possible that the proposed negotiations between the apartheid regime and the ANC will be over the electoral system and its

The violence in Reef townships

Statement issued by Workers Organisation for Socialist Action

The brutal violence sweeping the Reef townships has shattered the myth that a new era of peace is dawning for South Africa. No political organisation of the oppressed can avoid giving an answer to "What is the way forward?".

1. In the nine days following the Pretoria talks, over 500 people have died horrible deaths, thousands more have been injured, and thousands have been left homeless and lost all or part of their belongings. The communities around Sebokeng, Thokoza, KwaThema, Tembisa, Katlehong, Vosloorus, parts of Soweto, Kagiso and Springs and elsewhere resemble warzones and despite the freezing nights, many people are sleeping outside in the open. An excruciating climate of tension and terror has descended on the townships and shows signs of spreading.

2. Whoever is responsible, the scale and type of terror and violence is an assault on all forces committed to democracy, working class unity and socialism. The bitterness generated by the senseless slaying, maiming and shattering of lives will take many years to overcome. We all know that our townships are like tinder boxes at present which can be blown apart by any number of provocations. It is therefore vital that the working class stands united and shows courage and leadership in order to defend our communities. It is also vital that we identify both the weaknesses and streng-

nage suggests that it derives from a deeper and more complex source, namely years of brutalization, of appalling living conditions, and of divisions between people dictated by the needs of apartheid-capitalism.

4. At the heart of brutality is the hostel/migrant labour system which is the result of the homelands policy, influx control, jobs and accommodation divided along racial, ethnic, social and economic lines, low wages, unemployment, and lack of control over even the basic means of existence. Squatting, overcrowded houses, lack of privacy, separated families, insupportable conditions all exacerbate the problem.

5. If the state and the "white" population is "horrified" by the violence we say categorically that *this is the bitter harvest of the system of apartheid-capitalism that you have implanted and nurtured for all these years in our country.* It is apartheid-capitalism which has brutalised and dehumanised our people as it exploits and oppresses them. It is no wonder that the anger, frustration, alienation and cynicism this generates explodes in further anti-social and brutal violence.

6. We therefore pin the blame firmly on state policies and the operation of capitalism in our society. For the same reason, WOSA condemns the acts of personalised intimi-

complaints from hostel, squatter camp and township residents of acts of intimidation by *undisciplined youth* in the name of liberation organisations. We will deal with each of the elements in turn.

The role of Inkatha

8. Since July, many people have warned that Inkatha has been planning to spread the Natal violence to the Reef, and the state authorities were warned that attacks were being planned. Yet de Klerk made no attempt to instruct the police to disarm Inkatha nor organise adequate defence for communities. For example, it is alleged that Inkatha bussed in armed vigilantes to attack Sebokeng on July 22nd. It is further alleged that the police refused to disarm them and intervened on the side of Inkatha.

29 people were killed. After hostel dwellers evicted vigilante Inkatha members they were subjected to a reign of terror by Inkatha and allegedly the police which left 13 more dead. White vigilantes are suspected of being involved in several raids at Sebokeng.

9. Hostel residents allege that Inkatha has consistently been using violent coercion to force hostel dwellers to join Inkatha and resign from other organisations and to participate in Inkatha attacks. This is aimed at both Zulu and non-Zulu dwellers. Inkatha warlords have spread the idea that

This has often resulted in the formation of street committees and defence committees. These committees are made up of one liberationist and one non-liberationist. The degree of involvement in the struggle has often had the effect of bringing class people together around housing, education, health, and other issues. This degree of involvement has often had the effect of bringing class people together around housing, education, health, and other issues.

(ie ANC, AZAPO, PAC, WOSA, COSATU, NACTU, SACP) to come together to discuss ways and means of defending the communities and resisting all provocations from whatever source.

WOSA members and supporters will join all Defence Committees genuinely committed to defend the community.

17. WOSA supports all progress towards the abolition and dismantling of the *hostel/migrant labour system* with all that this implies ie a policy of decent housing for all, no forced separation of families, an end to the ban tustan system, job opportunities for all, no more ethnically based jobs, accommodation or wages.

18. Many people are calling for Mandela to meet Buthelezi to solve the crisis. Given the role of Inkatha in the violence this will be difficult, but in any case, this alone will not stop the possibility of future violence. The ANC itself is caught in its own policy knot since it has given certain credence to other homeland leaders by talking to most of them already. Again, WOSA feels that *Unity in Action* is called for. Let all of us committed to change formulate a strategy for doing away with the "homelands" altogether.

19. Finally, WOSA reiterates that the *strongest form of resistance is mass-based and independent working class organisations* especially democratic, unified and worker/member controlled trade unions, civics, defence committees and other representative organisations rooted in the working class. The democratic trade unions have a particular role to play here since many people, on both sides of the fighting, are trade union members. Despite the difficulties involved, all progressive trade unionists must take a firm stand for worker unity

Statement on the Natal violence

Issued by Organization of South Africans for Liberation Education

The Organization of South Africans for Liberation Education (OSALE) is a group of exiled South Africans living and working in the USA. After a special meeting held recently to discuss aspects of the current situation in South Africa, they issued the following statement on the violence in Natal.

OSALE is gravely concerned about the escalating internecine violence amongst Black people in the province of Natal. Guided by the tenets of non-sectarianism, principled unity and the primacy of the popular will, we are impelled to make our collective position known regarding the current crisis of violence in the country.

On March 31, at a New York city meeting of South Africans invited by OSALE to consider and evaluate recent developments in South Africa, the participants were given the opportunity to express their feelings regarding the rising level of violence in their home country, particularly in Natal. In the course of the deliberations a number of resolutions were adopted on the basis of which the Executive of OSALE was mandated to issue a public statement which would accordingly be submitted to all entities of the Liberation Movement in South Africa.

The oppressed people of South Africa, who have suffered for such a long time under the repressive apartheid regime, are now facing a colossal crisis which cannot be resolved by resorting to pious appeals and political compromises. Innocent and ordinary people who know nothing or care less about ideological niceties and distinctions are help-

assume an innocent posture and blame the victims for the so called Black-on-Black violence. But it must be emphatically stated that not only is the on-going violence orchestrated by Pretoria agents, but that ultimately the main source of that violence is the apartheid system itself that has created repressive and intolerable conditions for Black people in South Africa. And now that it has made enough political mileage out of a tragic conflict that its agents have fuelled for several years, the government is belatedly intervening with its armed forces and expects its grateful subjects to dance for joy. Why would any responsible government wait for three years and after thousands of lives are lost to order a military intervention, unless it is playing a ruthless political game?

The so called Homeland or Bantustan leaders, who have accepted to operate within government created dummy institutions, have always been denounced and rejected by the majority of Blacks as quislings and puppets of the Pretoria regime. Gatscha Buthelezi is no exception. As a traditional chief of a segment of the Zulu people he was elevated and imposed by the Pretoria regime on all the Zulus within the jurisdiction of the so called KwaZulu Homeland. He is not a democratically elected leader of the Zulus.

And he knows perfectly well that the violence could stop overnight if only he could abdicate his Pretoria-created Bantustan leadership and throw in his lot with the national forces that are fighting for a non-ethnic, non-racial and unitary state under majority rule. But that of course would be political suicide and the end of his ethnic dreams.

The continuing violence in Natal therefore serves to reinforce the image that Chief Buthelezi is a force to be reckoned with and that there will be no political settlement without his involvement. He is in effect using the violence to shore up his dwindling political base and thus compel the National Liberation Movement to give him a highly visible place on the national political platform. Unlike Chief Albert Luthuli, who categorically refused to operate within government-created structures, Gatscha Buthelezi has allowed his Inkatha impis to be used by the Pretoria regime to terrorise his people just like Renamo in Mozambique and Jonas Savimbi's UNITA in Angola which are also deadly instruments of the South African government. The loyal Inkatha impis will listen to no leader but their chief and the rest of the Zulu people will continue to resist a leader who is in fact the Chief ally of Preto-

A press statement from the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania

Racist hit squads active against PAC

In recent weeks several prominent and key members of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania have either been murdered or attacked. The spate and nature of these co-ordinated attacks confirm that the hit squads of the racist regime are bent on liquidating PAC opponents of the racist regime.

Comrade Sam Chand, his wife Hajira and three sons and the night-watchman were all murdered in Sikwane, Botswana, a few kilometres from the border with apartheid South Africa. According to eyewitness reports attackers came from across the border and carried out a vicious and co-ordinated operation killing the entire family and reducing the family home and shop to a rubble.

The internal treasurer of PAC, Comrade Mike Matsobane had two bullets fired and a hand-grenade hurled at his Kagiso home in the West Rand. Earlier in January stones were thrown, breaking window panes.

It is interesting to note that these planned attacks were carried out in the early hours of the morning, and, therefore, not spontaneously.

The greatest loss suffered by the PAC was the killing of the veteran PAC leader Comrade Jafta Masemola. The car accident in which he died has now suspicious circumstances surrounding it because the driver of

ment such as labour strikes, divestment, economic sanctions, and armed struggle, has proven beyond any shadow of doubt that principled unity in the struggle cannot be forged with allies of apartheid but only with those who operate outside the framework of the system. The greatest threat to the national liberation effort is not the repressive state, Gatscha Buthelezi or any Homeland leader but sectarianism and lack of unity within all those forces staunchly opposed to the white power structure. And that is the message of one of the resolutions endorsed at the New York OSALE meeting:

Because sectarianism has been so destructive, resulting in violence amongst our own people, we urge the National Liberation Movement to work effectively towards the creation of a nonsectarian approach to the struggle, leading towards the formation of a broad united front of all progressive forces.

It is the consensus of OSALE that this is the path to follow if we are to avoid the pitfalls of debilitating internecine conflicts and thus play into the hands of the white power structure which will miss no opportunity of perpetuating its domination of the Black majority through divide and rule. In non-sectarianism, principled unity and solidarity lies our strength and ultimate victory. **Power to the People!**

is also utilizing major propaganda fully orchestrated of the last bastion of what has been road as wanton we witness once the age-old stereoman's burden to it therefore to re the affairs of national political genius to be taken by the expected negotia-

province of Natal country is a clear oppressed people of to accept any political freedom. to all entities of the the face of formed by the system expedite the process nonsectarian and unity encompassed by the liberation Movement is created stans and urban record of Buthelezi recently opposed to Liberation Move-

Unfortunately the brother of Comrade Sam Chand, Ismail Chand, died in a car "accident" whilst on his way to attend the funeral in Botswana.

The South African hit squads followed up these terrorist acts with a deliberate misinformation campaign through the racist government sponsored newspaper, The Citizen. The Citizen in an article on May 2, 1990, attempted to blame the murder of the Chand family on supposed rivalry between the PAC and ANC and claimed the PAC reacted by "sending a parcel bomb to Anglican priest Father Michael Lapsley, in Harare, Zimbabwe".

In the past the brutal murders of Griffith Mxenge and his wife, Dr Rebeiro and his wife and Professor Webster were cunningly attributed by the regime to rivalry among liberation movements but evidence before the Harms Commission and confessions by former hit squad members clearly and unambiguously point to organised state approved and sponsored terrorism in the above murders.

The de Klerk administration is attempting to portray itself as reformist and opposed to violence. However, state violence is continuing unabated as evidenced in the Sebokeng killings and spate of co-ordinated

The state terrorism of de Klerk will in no way succeed in either intimidating PAC and the Azanian People or in liquidating the PAC. What will certainly be liquidated is apartheid and the perpetrators of this crime against humanity.

The noble ideals for which the PAC and other martyrs have made the supreme sacrifice will definitely triumph in a free, non-racial, united and democratic Azania.

Ahmed Gora Ebrahim

Secretary for Foreign Affairs
Pan Africanist Congress of Azania
Dar-Es-Salaam
Tanzania.

Diplomacy begins

Donald

oper Gorbachevism

is successful. On engaged in an or Gorbachev and that rhetoric as a ling and preserv- continued blockade against the USSR.

so much unchal- the way in which been politically ax Americana. No ant been achieved ol: the old system a legal right to s of territory. In- is been to exercise omic processes , international in- , largely auto- ny any individual ke the IMF, the OECD, etc. instruments like h a low profile, -technical mask is -of a highly politi- c warfare.

combination of a the Cold War has -tration does eve- orbachev and at the preservation of et involvement in the trade pact signed there is of little or

We should point out that the word "assistance" should not be understood to mean aid: it simply means treating the USSR as if it were a normal state doing business in normal conditions on normal terms within the world economy. This is what is not on.

Thus the Cocom lists is to be stringently maintained against exports to the USSR. The G24 package of measures for Eastern Europe specifically excludes the USSR until it adopts, in the words of the EC Commissioner in charge of the programme, the "economic preconditions of democracy". The EC has also made a point of ruling out the possibility that the USSR may be offered an Association Agreement. The agreement establishing the EBRD specifically bans the USSR from borrowing significant amounts of money from the new bank for the next three years. And so on.

The one area where it seemed the US administration might be flexible was in the field of US-Soviet trade: the administration has been under a great deal of pressure from those sections of US capital strongly interested in the Soviet market and it has genuine fears about losing the battle for this prize to West German business. Therefore, at the Malta summit in December 1989, Bush indicated that the USSR would probably be granted Most Favoured Nation status (MFN) at the June summit and would also be allowed to gain observer status at GATT. In fact in June the US rejected the granting of MFN status

Eastern Europe

for the USA the region is of little importance in itself. American post-war operations in Eastern Europe have always been premised on the idea that the area is a pawn and to some extent a stake in the fundamental concerns of US policy, namely American relations with the USSR on the one hand and with Western Europe on the other.

And so it is today: Eastern Europe's destiny is to be a lever for opening up the USSR. The overriding priority therefore in Western policy towards the region is to achieve the swiftest and most thorough transition to capitalism possible and to destroy the political influence of all forces which seem inclined to drag their feet on capitalist restoration.

Despite the fact that the Cold War has been fought under the banner of the struggle for 'democracy' against 'totalitarianism', scant regard is being paid at present towards the sensitivities of and political problems facing the new, non-communist political formations now ascendant in the region.

The West is operating in Eastern Europe with two kinds of strategic instrument: first those which control the scope of choice for East European governments, pushing them towards the objectives and methods favoured by the West; secondly, instruments for positively restructuring these states in a capitalist direction. We will briefly summarise each in turn.

A. The control instruments

The new governments of Eastern Europe depend for their future on their capacity to offer their voters a credible prospect of higher living standards in the medium term future. Such a prospect requires investment resources and the West's instruments of

like in the empty room or to pass, of their own free will, through the door.

The walls we are talking about are first of all the old Cold War controls on Comecon states. These have not been dismantled by the West and indeed new barriers are being erected between the Comecon countries and access to the resources of the multilateral institutions of the Western economic system. To gain the easing of these controls and the lifting of the barriers, governments in Eastern Europe must embark on a *domestic social transformation* of a scope not seen since the Sovietisation of the region in the late 1940s.

To briefly summarise the system of controls we should stress the following:

1. Cocom is still very much in place and a substantial list of items remains barred from export to Eastern Europe.
2. Barriers against imports from Eastern Europe into Western Europe remain high, especially in those sectors most important for East European economies, such as agriculture, textiles, coal and steel. These barriers are enshrined in the trade agreements already signed or currently being negotiated. At the start of the year the EC did introduce its Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) for Poland and Hungary but GSP's make a marginal difference for most sectors and in any case the granting of them is only for one year.

3. Debt and Debt Relief: Western public policy on the debt issue has been geared to both avoiding a crippling breakdown of the Polish and Hungarian economies in the short term, and maintaining the full weight of the long term debt burden. This ensures maximum political control by making East

We can run quickly through the range of agencies involved:

1. The World Bank: In February 1990, the World Bank announced it would lend \$5Bn to Eastern Europe (excluding Czechoslovakia, which is too advanced to qualify) over the next three years. Its President, Mr Barber Conable made clear that this money "will focus on restructuring all facets of the economy and market-oriented change" and he underlined that the World Bank was working for a new system in Eastern Europe "vesting economic decision-making in the individual and in private enterprise" (*Financial Times*, 23 February). East European governments need not apply unless they accept these terms.

2. The EC: The same bottom line for new agreements of all sorts with Eastern Europe has been adopted by the EC. We should note that the EC plays three distinct but overlapping roles in current economic diplomacy towards the East. On the one hand, its institutions speak for the 12 member states in the traditional fields of EC competence, above all trade and economic co-operation agreements with non-members. But on the other hand, since the summer of 1989, the EC Commission has been made into an executive agency acting on behalf of the Group of 24, the OECD countries. (This role of executive agency was placed on the Commission because the OECD itself is purely a research and policy and co-ordination discussion forum and not an agency of collective action capable of binding its members.) The third dimension of EC involvement will be through the preponderant stake held by the 12 members in the new EBRD.

In its purely EC role, the Commission is offering credits only to back "market ori-

other direct EC operation is Economic Co-operation Agreements with individual East European states, usually as part of general trade agreements discussed above. These are aimed at structural reform (privatisation) and at opening up the Eastern economies to full penetration by Western business: no discrimination against EC companies in the granting of import licences, no discrimination against EC companies over the giving out of hard currency to pay for imports. Help must be provided for EC firms wishing to establish themselves and international invitations to tender for contracts must be offered to EC firms; Western firms must be helped with "investment promotion and protection, including the transfer of profits and repatriation of capital" (as Article 18 of the Polish agreement puts it). To round off its effort the EC will be offering "vocational training", which turns out to be training for "executives, instructors, managers and students" linked to the vital need for "economic reform", which is "especially urgent" in the fields of banking and finance.

3. The Group of 24 'Aid': these resources are drawn from the 24 member states of the OECD and administered through the EC Commission. But all this money is only for projects which "must benefit the private sector in particular", and is only available for states committed to "economic liberalisation with a view to introducing market economies". And the money largely takes the form of counter-part funds: in other words, to get the aid, governments must switch parts of their own budgetary resources towards projects backing the private sector of their economies. The choice of projects is in the hands of the Group of 24: "The Commission will take steps to identify areas where such aid can be most useful". The Commission decided on 3

approval by its 41 member states (including such paragons of liberal democratic virtue as King Hassan of Morocco) in June of this year, has been a source of bitter disputes, especially between the US and West European states. It is the first major multilateral institution within the international financial system in which the US does not exercise a controlling vote: insofar as the 12 EC members act together the can dictate the bank's policy. But the fundamentals of that policy are not in dispute. The original document laid before the EC's December summit spells out that one of its central objectives is to "assist moves to market-oriented economies and structural adjustments" in Eastern Europe. This privatising mission has now been set in concrete in the EBRD's legal constitution: at least 60% of the funds disbursed under the bank's aegis must be directly devoted to private sector development while the remaining funds, devoted to public sector infrastructure projects, must be geared towards indirect assistance for the private sector.

The entire framework of Western policies and institutions for the privatisation drive in Eastern Europe is designed to result in the shortest possible transition to capitalism in these states. When that transition has taken place and is judged secure in political as well as social and economic terms, these states will certainly be fully integrated into the institutions of the world economy. But two additional points about this process are worth stressing.

First, the planning of how each of these states will be integrated into the global and regional division of labour will largely be determined outside the borders of the states concerned. To take a simple example, one of the most vital sectors for most of these states is agriculture. The results of this decision

The West's economic diplomacy in Eastern Europe this year has already produced enormous strains in the region's internal politics. Leaving aside Yugoslavia, where the IMF drive is literally fragmenting the state, the Polish case is a sombre warning of what may be in store in the rest of the region.

The Balcerowicz Plan, named after the deputy Prime Minister in the Mazowiecki government, but fathered by the IMF, has cut living standards by some 40% so far this year - an austerity drive of unparalleled scope in post-war international history. The government's increasingly desperate pleas for the removal of Western financial pressure have been ignored. Its political authority is being undermined by the week since its policy strikes at the heart of its legitimacy, which lies in its claim to embody the tradition of the Polish working class movement, Solidarity. Tensions within the political elite have now burst forth in a bitter struggle between Walesa and the Government and Parliamentary leaderships of Mazowiecki, Geremek and Michnik. The real content of this open war within Solidarity is revealed by the strikes that erupted on the railways and in the Gdansk Shipyard in May: the workers feel utterly betrayed by the policy of what they took to be their own government and Walesa is giving voice to this despair. There is a very real prospect of the breakdown of the new liberal democratic order itself in Poland, if the one political movement with popular roots is torn apart.

In Hungary, the newly victorious Democratic Forum has been plunged into a crisis deriving from the West's backing of the Free Democrats, the one political group in Hungary unequivocally in favour of a wrenching Thatcherite turn towards capital-

to is a very different set of policies than the dominant theme in Western Europe and the Community are the second strongest warning not to Poland's helter-

Civic Forum over the West's pressure for a transformation are and are likely to the months go by. powerful President we the West's Ministry of Finance, by winning the national to resist.

ion

coercive, diplomatic tting social transforming the current leaders it of whom support expected or wished genuine puzzle as to adopted.

is that unlike anti-Western policy of the real attractions al groups in Eastern re-established by the in the post-war era, simply an external standing above so-groups with total-regimes were genu-interests of important

social processes means that backbone must be supplied from external diplomatic sources.

Another motivation for Western policy is the threat that some variant of the Third Way. There are powerful and entrenched domestic social pressure to adopt just such a strategy, though these pressures are not politically articulated at present. There is no technical obstacle to a successful pursuit of market socialism, provided that they are able to operate as normal states integrated into the institutions and division of labour of world capitalist economy. The failure of attempts at market socialism in Kadar's Hungary and Jaruzelski's Poland were failures of weak regimes without political authority, regimes incapable of implementing a thorough-going market socialism. But what if this course was adopted by a strong authoritative government in, say Czechoslovakia today?

This would pose a genuine threat to the future stability of the social systems of the West, a threat far more dangerous than any Swedish model; a coupling of pluralist democracy, public ownership and social citizenship in the post-Communist states of Eastern Europe is not an acceptable option very well that the current support for capitalism in Eastern Europe is superficial in the basic sense that it is no more than a policy idea, backed by a professional middle class very hard done by in the world of Brezhnevism: it is not the support of actually existing capitalists, of people with a real stake in the circuits of capital. There is thus the risk that if the edifice of controls and exclusions from the world economy is dismantled today and the drive for capitalism in these states fails tomorrow, market socialism of some sort will be the end result of the process while Western economic diplomacy will have been disarmed.

Eastern Europe

a European Community in which the Left controls a majority within the European Parliament and in whose Commission the presiding genius is a leader of the French Socialist Party. The consequences of this social democratic abasement are visible in the derisory showing of the new social democratic parties of Eastern Europe in the round of spring elections. In countries like Czechoslovakia and Hungary these parties were indistinguishable from the Right programmatically while lacking all the virtues of the parties of the Right for implementing such programmes, above all the trust of Western capital. If the West's current diplomatic effort succeeds in Eastern Europe there will be little chance of a string social democratic movement in that part of the continent: the political cleavage will far more likely pit parties of liberal capitalism against authoritarian populist and nationalist movements. But divisions have nevertheless surfaced on the West in recent months, differences of expediency and of state interest. The former acquired near panic proportions in May when strikes burst out in Poland: the IMF made a tasteless attempt to disclaim responsibility for the entire package of Polish government measures, and voices were raised criticising the folly of driving for capitalism at the price of sacrificing democracy and political stability in the region.

Equally significant have been the division of state interests over the current Western strategy. The Italian and French governments, reeling from the historical consequences of German unification have been unhappy with the continued pursuit of economic warfare against the USSR, wishing to maintain the integrity of the Soviet state and to ensure that it remains a strong player to counter balance Germany in the new politics of Europe. The French government has also been far more ready to accept the existing nationalist leader-

lifted and the instruments of economic blockade will be put to one side, though not abolished, just as immediate debt repayment problems may be eased but overall debt obligations maintained.

On a more general level, this survey has implied a fundamental problem already familiar to those concerned with North-South relations: by what right do a handful of powerful capitalist states assert their political power over the world economy? It is in this field of what conventional liberal thought presents as a depoliticised world market, that the West's decisive political power lies, largely hidden, today. Military strength is, if understood politically, merely an ancillary buttress to this power over world economies: it merely steps in to preserve this system of domination, it has a defensive quality.

Only a new cosmopolitanism, globalising categories like self-determination, and popular sovereignty and reconstructing our ways of thinking about the relationships between economic and political institutions will enable us to grasp the practical meaning for people of what is happening in Eastern Europe today. It will bring into focus these seemingly peripheral and technical multilateral organisations which work in the shadows between the borders of national political systems so brilliantly lit up by the media.

Notes

1. We will examine only the policy towards Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Bulgaria, excluding Yugoslavia, Albania, the USSR and the GDR. Although in some respects the case of the GDR is a paradigm of major themes in this article, we exclude it because of the obviously special features of its situation and the resulting radical difference of dynamics.

2. What is new about the present package is the institutional framework for carrying it through: the role of the EC and the potential future role of the EIB. It is also true that the quantitative scale of funds available may be larger than that on offer to most third world countries. As to whether this new focus on Eastern Europe is at the same time draining funds commensurately away from use in the Third World is a topic of debate. In any case, we should bear in mind the fact that Eastern Europe is by far the biggest bonanza on

South African Class

by H. H. H. H.

London: The Union

Price: £9.59 PB.

... of the liberation today. Without an...
... and organisation...
... graphically, it is...
... the present day...
... black trade unions.

... book - 1930-47, ...
... Africa's rapid...
... huge increase in...
... controlled urbanisa-...
... tiny towns around...
... s. Parallel with the...
... the sub-continent, ...
... toric grave-digger...
... i, industrial prote-

... sub-Saharan Af-...
... guese colony of...
... countries which...
... uthern Rhodesia;...
... aland, Swaziland...
... as from the over-...
... s in the Union of...
... this kaleidoscope...
... s, capitalism cre-...
... ed working class...
... erience many hard-

If Hiron concentrates his study on the Transvaal and particularly the Witwatersrand, this is not because the struggles were confined to this area but out of recognition of the continued domination of the country's economy by the gold mines.

While white trade unions flourished and enjoyed legal protection, black workers who wanted to organise were faced with immense difficulties. Although not illegal they had no legal status. After 1937, they were permitted to give evidence for minimum wages before the newly established Wage Boards, but strike action was forbidden.

The most elementary matters presented new problems: Africans had no right to occupy premises in the towns and subterfuge was needed to rent without which it could not survive. Financing the unions was even more daunting. Wages were so low that subscriptions were not always forthcoming and the unions were starved of funds... (175)

Black miners, domestic and rural workers - two-thirds of the work force faced even greater difficulties. They were excluded from the provisions of the wage legislation

Book Review

called a wage) paid to the unskilled, the Native and the tremendous profits and super profits derived from the enormous explanation, made it possible for Capitalism here to bribe the skilled worker, the white worker, with a higher wage, a much higher standard of living, than in the countries of Europe. The white worker has as a general rule become an aristocrat of Labour, and by ceaseless capitalist propaganda carried on by the Church, the Press, the Schools, and 'public opinion' has been kept separate, economically, culturally, and socially, from his black fellow-workers. Indirectly he has become a supporter of capitalism, the supporter of segregation, the supporter of the Colour Bar...

Even the Trotskyists, who at least tried to grapple with the theoretical problems presented by the situation in South Africa, applied a mechanical interpretation of Marxism according to which the task of overthrowing capitalism and leading the fight for socialism fell to the industrial workers - and, first of all, the skilled industrial worker. As, at that time, Africans did not fit into this category but were:

usually (workers) only of the first generation, coming from the Reserve or the Kraal, backward, downtrodden, uneducated, could not at once shake off his tribal way of life, his barbaric naivety, and his suspicion of the white man, who he could not imagine in any other role than that of the oppressor. Marxism was too much for him as a start. (ibid)

The Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), at that time seeking an alliance with the whites only Labour Party in pursuit of the Stalinist turn to the 'popular front', took an even more reactionary position.

terent. The individual worker may object to the native's colour or his smell (sic) and may start by shuddering at the thought of being his 'comrade', but the Communist Party knows that economic struggle is not a parlour game. It is a grim battle to be fought only by the working class as a whole - a battle for survival... The Native does not want to oust the white man in industry... He wants the European to help him and to lead him.

Hiron is doing a real service to the socialist movement by this reminder that not all the errors of the South African communists can be blamed on Stalin, as Joe Slovo seems to imply these days.

Hiron deals very exhaustively with the mass of laws and regulations passed by successive South African governments to inhibit the growth of 'Native' trade unions. In this they were ably assisted by white liberals, like W.G. Ballinger who was seconded by the British TUC to act as adviser to the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) in the 1920s, who while claiming to encourage trade union activity in South Africa, sought to 'direct the activity into the legitimate channels of agitation'. In 1942, at the height of a strike wave, Ballinger wrote:

There is a rapid awakening of the African's consciousness of his desires, and what he regards as his rights, which is likely to make him, and is in fact making him impatient of the pace of evolutionary change in a democratic society (sic)...

In such circumstances, it is of vital importance that there should be available at this time experienced, sane and balanced advice and assistance which will both encourage him to hope for and to work for improvement in his conditions, but will also

passed because the classes of having

successes steered inefield of industry was brought to an end by the Smuts of war. Hirson is ted for reminding ed part of South

to the early at- tic servants. De- it that it had little overment he con- clude this story as the one source as: permission to ed on their secur- rvants; and also s was the largest en at that time.

ology of the rise ns in the 1930s, eptions of the e locations by a rable conditions. derlines the unity munity, in mines

es of War and the of particular inter- 'brought confu- ft, who had cam- or some time but otskysts (Eg. the e triumph of fas- t opposed or thers opposed the flict but declared as a 'degenerate

democratic countries in which the people can hope for progress only if they resist aggression and fascism, both inside their countries and outside them.

Hirson then goes on to describe the twists and turns by the CPSA, ever faithful to the dictates of the Kremlin. They even went further than their fraternal parties in Europe. Thus, in October it hailed the Hitler-Stalin Pact as 'a symbol of Hitler's abandonment of the drive to the East' and that Hitler was no longer a menace to the USSR. The CP shamelessly appealed to the pro-Nazi elements among the Afrikaners. Thus Sam Kahn, a Communist MP could say:

Those Afrikaners whose sympathies seemed to be with Nazi Germany, must view more sympathetically the communists; if it is possible for Hitler to co-operate with Russia, so it must affect the people here whose sympathies were with Hitler. We will be able to get more readily the ear of the Afrikaners to the line of the CP.

He must have reflected bitterly on these words when the pro-Nazi National Party government came into power in 1948 and drove him and fellow communists in to jail or exile.

The war did not put a stop to trade union organisation. In the 1940s it began to revive. One of the most effective organisers was Daniel Koza, a close associate of Max Gordon. Under his leadership, the African Commercial and Distributive Workers Union (ACDWU) was acknowledged to be the best organised African trade union. He believed trade unions should have a political role and in February 1943 he proposed that the ANC should become the political wing of the trade union movement. He became disillusioned with the ANC during the bus boycott in Alexandria. In opposition to the

against lodger permits, against pick-up patrols and beer raids depended on the resolution of women in the face of police harassment and imprisonment. They were also in the front rank of trade union protests. They marched at the head of the workers when Koza and one of his organisers were arrested, and they were prominent at strikes in the commercial trade.

Despite the set-backs and defeats, Hirson points out that ...tens of thousands of workers had been organised, and even more had taken part in rallies, demonstrations and strikes. Some unions won notable victories and a tradi-

by the as yet weak trade union movement largely ended in defeat but he does not draw a pessimistic conclusion from this. He asks: What then was the legacy of the struggles of the 1930s and 1940s can be learned from the political agitation over impending war, the demonstrations against the pass laws, the trade union struggles, and the boycotts and shanty town movements? Clearly this is no passive working class but a fighting body of people prepared to struggle for better conditions. Nor was this only a man's struggle. Without women there could have been no success in the bus boycotts and the shanty-town movement would have collapsed. Other campaigns

tion of struggle was established. Across the country, workers set out to establish unions, and some of their stories are in this book - Lawrence Mlambo, the domestic worker who organised a union in Parktown (Johannesburg); Willie Bosiambe of the irrigation supply store in Oliphantshoek who enrolled thirty one workers in their own union; Jacks Ngwenya, a teacher of Oranjeville, who was asked by labourers at a nearby airfield to help them form a union...

This paragraph alone illustrates the scope of this book. It is truly an introduction to the making of the South African working class.

The Proletarian Revolution and

Joe Slovo

Carol Brickley

Has Socialism Failed?

Joe Slovo

Inkululeko Publications

out its role in determining the nature of a future democratic South Africa. *Has Socialism Failed?* purports to be the SACP's response to the collapse of socialism in Eastern Europe.

It is worth emphasising that the pamphlet is a discussion paper intended to be 'debated' for years to come both inside and outside the

of his party by the events in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe:

We cannot disclaim our share of the responsibility for the spread of the personality cult and a mechanical embrace of Soviet domestic and foreign policies, some of which discredited the cause of socialism (p24).

l democratic culture; a culture which rather needs to be socialised. (p11)

Well, straight to an and the very essence of the dictatorship of the proletariat bit of Marxist theory wants to ditch.

proletariat, says rather thinly' by only in relation to exceptional expertise the dictatorship of the proletariat in the very transformation'

, the choice of the to describe the type of way to ambiguity of the abandonment of the parties, including imply a rejection of is essential content.

musical accompaniment at this point. Is the concept of the dictatorship because it sounds essential content? res at this point that the history of it with a purpose - for a particular African liberation time that the content the proletariat has worth looking at assessor.

Kautsky

The Dictatorship of the Proletariat, German Social Democracy had sided with its own bourgeoisie in the First World War. Lenin responded to Kautsky with his won pamphlet, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*.

Just at the moment when socialism was becoming a practical possibility, one of its most able theoreticians, versed in the language of Marxism, turned Judas and took the side of the bourgeoisie. Precisely because Kautsky had been a giant in the movement, close to Marx and Engels, he was a most dangerous ally of the bourgeoisie. Lenin deals with his arguments with the vitriol reserved for traitors.

The first point which Lenin deals with is Kautsky's attack on the *dictatorship of the proletariat*: 'the very essence of the revolution'. Kautsky tried to identify two methods in the revolutionary movement: 'the dictatorship' (Bolshevik) and 'the democratic' (non-Bolshevik). Kautsky paves the way for his attack much the same way as Slovo: 'This view rests upon a single word of Karl Marx's'. (SW p46) and 'Marx, unfortunately, neglected to show us in greater detail how he conceived this dictatorship'. (SW p47)

Slovo's version is a little different: 'The concept of the *dictatorship of the proletariat* was dealt with rather thinly by Marx as a "transition to classless society" without much further definition. (Slovo p13) and

And there was not enough in classical Marxist theory about the nature of the transition period to provide a detailed guide to the future. (Slovo p12)

This, for Slovo, represents the 'under-developed state of proletarian Marxism theory'. (Slovo

profound consequences after all.

Whose democracy?

Slovo's apparent aside on the progressive nature of bourgeois democracy (quoted above) turns out to have more significance. This point was also central to Kautsky's argument. Listen to Lenin:

When Kautsky devotes dozens of pages to "proving" the truth that bourgeois democracy is progressive compared with medievalism, and that the proletariat must utilise it in its struggle against the bourgeoisie, that in fact is just liberal twaddle intended to fool the workers...

Bourgeois democracy, although a great historical advance in comparison with medievalism, always remains, and under capitalism is bound to remain, restricted, truncated, false and hypocritical, a paradise for the rich and a snare and deception for the exploited, for the poor. It is this truth, which forms a most essential part of Marx's teaching, that Kautsky the "Marxist" has failed to understand. On this - the fundamental issue - Kautsky offers "delights" for the bourgeoisie instead of a scientific criticism of those conditions which make every bourgeois democracy a democracy for the rich (SW p54-55).

Is it this description of democracy that Slovo lightly casts aside as an 'oversimplification'? Is this bourgeois democracy the 'democratic culture' which should be 'expanded under socialism'? (Slovo p11). No Marxist talks of democracy without first asking the question 'democracy for whom?'. No Marxist would doubt that bourgeois democracy will be an improvement for the black working class in South Africa. But we cannot doubt either that it would leave the present and the wealth in the hands of the

Book Review

revolution which justify a postponement of full democratic processes. And we do not address the question of whether the Bolsheviks were justified in taking a monopoly of state power during the extraordinary period of both internal and external assault on the gains of the revolution. (Slovo p17, author's emphasis)

Lenin is not nearly so mealy-mouthed. He makes it clear that throughout the epoch of transition to socialism, the bourgeoisie will continue to attempt to regain its wealth and privilege:

the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat is violence against the bourgeoisie; and the necessity of such violence is particularly called for...

Violent Revolution

How then does Slovo see the transfer of power necessary to achieve socialism in South Africa?

We also believe that if there is real democracy in the post-apartheid state, the way will be open for a peaceful progression towards our party's ultimate objective - a socialist South Africa. This approach is consistent with the Marxist view - not always achieved in practice - that the working class must win the majority to its side: as long as no violence is used against the people there is no other road to power. (Slovo p27)

What is 'real democracy' in a post-apartheid society which is not socialist? Isn't this Kautsky's 'pure democracy'. Isn't it bourgeois democracy? What can Slovo possibly mean by 'winning the majority' to the side of the working class, in the South African context? The majority is black and already has proved it is on the side of the working class. Does Slovo mean that 'the majority' in South Africa is not a majority in its own right?

them a well-established historical truth. This historical truth is that in every profound revolution, the prolonged, stubborn and desperate resistance of the exploiters, who for a number of years retain important political advantages over the exploited, is the rule. Never - except in the sentimental fantasies of the sentimental fool Kautsky - will the exploiters submit to the decision of the exploited majority without trying to make use of their advantages in a last desperate battle, or series of battles. (SW p64)

Isn't it a sentimental fantasy to argue that the South African capitalist class will relinquish its power and wealth without a fight? Haven't they been protecting their interests with the maximum brutality and violence for long enough to convince Slovo? Isn't it a sentimental fantasy to argue that imperialism can suddenly divest itself of its predatory and warmongering nature in favour of an era of 'peace and civilised international relations'?

Isn't it the worst deception of the working class to argue that western pluralist democracy can defend the interests of the working class?

Slovo has missed a great opportunity in this pamphlet to re-examine the central tenets of classical Marxism which are by no means 'under-developed'. He has also avoided the opportunity to give a real accounting for the history of the SACP. The rhetoric proclaims that 'if we are looking for culprits, we must look at ourselves and not the founders of Marxism'. The pamphlet not only gives the SACP a clean bill of health, in every detail Slovo's position is a profound attack on the central tenets of Marxism he pretends to hold dear. We will end with Lenin:

In defending dictatorship, Kautsky tried his utmost to conceal from the reader the fundamental features of this

to centre

James as Revolutionary
 by Buhle
 1988. 197pp.

If the pan-African religious and eclectic movements by leftists into print, there is and, his stature will World Africans, is comparable to h of accomplish-

imaginable of a loyal disciple, Paul *Radical America* figure in the US ok that carries out of reconstructing fying any conven-

orm.
 e's portrait, James with painful lyricism of the black slave rebellions, and publicist on behalf of Trotskyism (1932-38).
 Among the many fresh and still striking achievements of these years are *The Life of*

pation of people of colour as the work of the emancipators themselves; yet he also regarded the nationalist stage as one transitional to a truly human internationalist culture.

Finally, James was a prophet of post-Leninist revolutionary movements of non-party workers' councils and a brand of spontaneity that will be central to the coming transformations of capitalist as well as bureaucratized post-capitalist (in Jamesian terminology, "state capitalist") societies.

Buhle's book is replete with examples of the "renaissance" nature of the Jamesian oeuvre. In a sometimes awkward sequence of chapters that creatively attempts to combine chronology with a particular theme, Buhle traces James' peregrination from a Trinidadian birth, college education, and early career as a school teacher and fiction writer (1901-31), to his sojourn in London as a cricket columnist, Marxist historian of slave rebellions, and publicist on behalf of Trotskyism (1932-38).

Book Review

Trinidad, he spent the last eight years of his life in London where he witnessed the republication of three volumes of his *Selected Writings* (1977-84) and a valuable *Festschrift* edited by Buhle, *C.L.R. James: His Life and Work* (1986).

While I am persuaded for the most part by Buhle's points of emphasis, and much admire his commentary on James's extraordinarily diverse cultural criticism, I draw back from parts of his method. In my view, Buhle mistakenly assesses and valorises James in opposition to much of the broader left movement from which he emerged and of which he remained a part, even if in an adversarial stance on many issues. In contrast, I find that the contribution and legacy of James is only really fertile in the context of an integrated view of a left movement comprised of many countervailing tendencies and perspectives - each in possession of an element of truth, none the sole bearer of any overall "key" to the strategy of social emancipation.

As a theorist James produced many provocative but mostly partial insights. His numerous essays and lectures on world politics, sports, philosophy, literature, and socialist historiography are markedly uneven. His historical schemas and correlations seem in some places mechanical and thin; his philosophical disquisitions are (to me at least) often tedious and incomprehensible; and his literary judgements can be off-the-cuff and superficial.

Then there are bizarre elements in James's outlook that appear, for example, in what might be regarded as the "suppressed" chapter of James's book on Melville, *Marians, Renegades and Castaways* (1953). When this work was reprinted in 1978, the original plates were used or copied, but the highly personal last chapter, "A Natural But

his campaign to view its ethnic and popular cultural aspects, turns out to be a superficial commentator on political organisations with which James came to disagree. In a familiar pattern, those closest to James come in for the hardest knocks.

The Trotskyists are described as "united only in their hatred of Stalinism and in their utter faith in the concept of the vanguard" (p68). Buhle claims that, compared to the Dunayevskaya-James's "state capitalist" analysis, "all other Trotskyist critiques amounted to a waiting game, waiting for Stalin and his bureaucracy to fall out or be thrust out by some loyal descendant of the old Bolshevik Party" (p74). The Black Panther Party is reduced to a "lumpen" organisation with "pick up the gun" politics, while the League of Revolutionary Black Workers is praised mainly because of some Jamesian influence (p155).

Also, some of the insights that Buhle attributes to James are hardly unique. For example, Buhle cites the following statement made by James for a 1980 symposium as a fresh contribution: "[The] workers and peasants must realise that their emancipation lies in their own hands and in the hands of nobody else" (p170). This is not only the foundation of Trotsky's "permanent revolution" - that the workers and peasants must never subordinate their interests to the national bourgeoisie - but also the battle cry of Sandino ("Only the workers and peasants can go all the way") and appears in Marx as well.

Buhle also says of James that "amid the Hungarian revolution [of 1956], he would find his vindication in the substitution of the mass for the party of any kind" (p96). However, the revolt of the Hungarian workers and students might well have gone fur-

Along the Sea less ape Town

's conflicting and
en Press's three
part prose - is as
iful as they come.

n, from weary res-
i, is reflected here
e of standpoints.
s of young black
ged white police-
r political prison-
thers.

happens to be in,
g is one of tired
essage of hope, but
not, there is little
e pages. Unless of
from the author's

ontinual cause for
, as in 'Peoples
'magicians of the
e one body after
of a hat/you can't

oems in the first
heavy with pessi-
ces to winter. Most
be building a co-
s from the reality
ess advises in one
it is born, mother/
/bury it in a corner

tlers by her chief, there is just disbelief. She is forced to live away from her people with strangers whose skin turns red and falls off in the sun. "They could not live the seasons of this country/but they stayed/in spite of everything, our weather and our gods/had no effect on them".

Krotoa's life is a metaphor for the lives of millions of Black Africans, dominated by a white tribe to the point where she becomes Eva, not Krotoa. "Eva is the Dutch for Krotoa" she is told helpfully.

Eventually, married to a Dutchman and now a Christian, she becomes a shadow of her former self, lamenting: "the beginning was an exploding of sun/I ran dancing into the fire/the end unravelled like an old root/dry with sorrow, lasting forever". Only death returns her to her true identity.

The final part of the trilogy, 'Lines of Force', is no more comforting. A short murder mystery etched out vividly on just eighteen pages, it too is a tale of despair, of people angry at their situation but powerless to do anything about it

A young Black girl is found dead in a seaside town, yet the police take no notice, make no inquiries. For a brief spell the local black people make a protest, some are locked up for their pains, and eventually their squatter shacks are bulldozed.

Noncxeba, the mother of the murdered girl, who lived as a squatter, has no option but to go to work and live with the white woman on the seafloor - who some suspect killed her child. Strange bedfellows, but the woman seems to be as ill-at-ease with her existence as Noncxeba.

In fact everyone is ill-at-ease in this book, including the reader. There's a time and place

FRONTLINE WORKER

.....needs money
to carry on publishing the left-wing
views on South Africa which you
will not hear from other
newspapers and journals

We are independent publishers -

our commitment is to
socialist organisation in South Africa

Please send your donations to

ALSC

BM BOX 4863

LONDON WC1N 3XX

Advertisement

RedType

Discounts Available
to Workers and Anti-
Imperialist Organisations

A Service to the
International Labour &
Trade Union Movement

Journals - Leaflets - Posters - Banners - Badges - Stickers - T-Shirts - Printing - Typesetting - Design

Frontline Worker - Printed by RedType (TU), London 071-703 4229