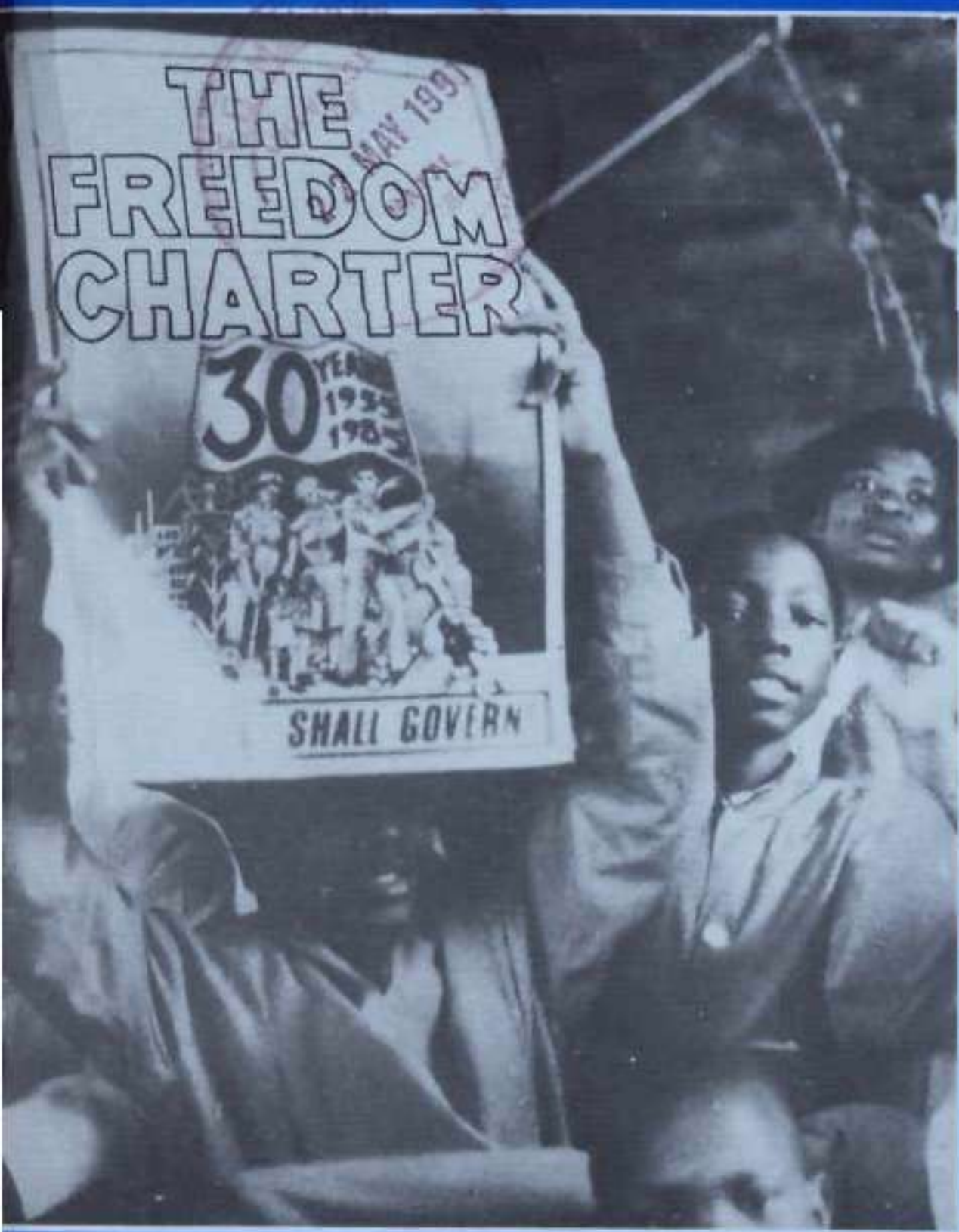


WORK

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IN

PROGRESS



BUILDING ON THE FREEDOM CHARTER

Towards a
post-apartheid
constitution

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Editorial

There is a sense in which government's closure of one newspaper, and threatened banning of a number of other publications, is justified.

This is not because those publications are necessarily guilty of biased or inaccurate journalism, or even because they are in contravention of the over 100 statutes which limit what may be published.

Rather, it is because any government which has as much to hide as South Africa's rulers must fear all but the most tame sections of the media.

Nearly half of all the editions of *Work In Progress* produced over ten years were banned under the Publications Act. Yet not once was it suggested that inaccuracy or false information was the reason for banning.

In warning *Work In Progress* that action against the magazine was being contemplated, Stoffel Botha claims to have looked at 24 articles contained in two editions of the magazine. Yet in not one case does he claim that information in an article was false.

The conclusion is clear: publications like *Work In Progress* face closure or pre-publication censorship because of the accuracy of their reporting and analysis.

- When an attorney-general declines to prosecute soldiers who kidnap, assault and threaten with death a political activist because the soldiers were acting in terms of emergency regulations;
- when a head of state stops the trial of soldiers accused of murdering a Swapo member at a political meeting because they were 'suppressing terrorism';
- when the ministers of defence and law and order issue special instructions not to allow lawyers access to records necessary for legal action against members of the 'security forces';
- when policemen accept that it is legitimate to commit murder because they believe their victims are associated with the ANC;
- when there are ongoing and well-substantiated allegations that police and army personnel are involved in supporting vigilante violence against anti-apartheid activists;
- when a policeman on trial for his life refers to security police assassination of ANC activists in a foreign country and SADF support for destabilisation, as if they are common practices;
- and when soldiers invade a foreign territory, attack civilian houses in the middle of the night, and burn the bodies of their victims;

When these things occur, then the government of Botha, Malan and Vlok is justified in fearing what a competent media might publish.

In the next few weeks the African National Congress will unveil the most comprehensive and detailed picture ever of its vision for post-apartheid South Africa.

After two years of extensive discussion within the banned organisation, officials in the ANC's legal affairs department last month put the finishing touches to this picture - draft guidelines for a post-apartheid South African constitution. These draw on the experiences of more than a dozen African countries and at least a dozen others as disparate as Nicaragua and Sweden, Cuba and Britain.

By mid-year, says legal affairs department head Zola Skweyiya, the document will be sent for consideration to anti-apartheid organisations inside the country. This, Skweyiya believes, could set in motion a

process of debate not dissimilar to that which led to the drafting of the Freedom Charter in 1955.

The guidelines, the ANC hopes, will then be discussed at a seminar of anti-apartheid organisations towards the end of the year 'somewhere in the frontline states'.

From slogans to realisation

The ANC's draft document is unlikely to be published before the major components of the internal opposition have seen and commented on it.

But key elements of the ANC's draft constitutional guidelines have already been

pre-figured in ANC statements of the past two years - notably that the ANC favours a unitary, non-federal, multi-party democracy with a mixed economy.

Other elements in the guidelines, say ANC officials in Lusaka, are intended to create a

in the organisation itself and within the broad democratic movement as a whole, Skweyiya and others emphasise that the resultant document will be no more than a guideline: 'There were initial suggestions that we should produce a complete

constitution, but we argued that the drafting of such a document could only correctly be drawn up by elected representatives of all the people of our country - ideally sitting as a constituent assembly'.

The struggle against apartheid will also affect conditions under which a constitution is finally drafted and implemented, he adds. 'And the nature of the transfer of power from the apartheid regime to the majority will obviously play a major part in defining the terms. An armed seizure of power will bring with it different demands

and requirements from those of a negotiated hand-over, assuming that is possible. From all these perspectives, compiling a final constitution would be inappropriate'.

Although the document contains constitutional guidelines rather than a comprehensive picture of post-apartheid South Africa, the several dozen papers delivered to an ANC internal seminar on the subject in the first week of March reportedly filled in many of the gaps.

No breaks with the Charter

The guidelines involve no major breaks with the Freedom

BUILDING ON THE FREEDOM CHARTER

The African National Congress is about to release proposed guidelines for a post-apartheid constitution. DAVID NIDDRIE reports.

legal and constitutional framework through which the aims and concepts contained in the Freedom Charter can be realised.

'An obvious example is the Freedom Charter's third clause: that the people shall share in the country's wealth', adds a senior official. 'The charter itself does not say how that will happen. Part of the reason for examining future constitutional options is to make it possible - to take the idea past the slogans and towards realisation'.

Despite the priority ANC leadership has given to the process of gaining consensus both



Charter, although they incorporate some elements not included in 1955 (among them the right to strike, the exclusion of which has long been a source of criticism).

Not surprisingly, the guidelines envisage a non-racial, democratic and unitary post-apartheid South Africa.

Reflecting the ANC's overriding commitment to rid South Africa of its racist heritage, the guidelines envisage a complete ban on all institutions organising or structured on racial lines. 'Obviously the National Party would have no place in that society', says Skweyiya.

It is not yet clear where this leaves organisations such as Inkatha. Officials in Lusaka did not comment specifically on Chief Gatsha Buthelezi's Zulu-based organisation, although constitutional committee secretary ZN 'Job' Jobodwana said: 'We see parties like Inkatha and the bantustan parties as contributing nothing. Their tribal, ethnic base will act against the whole concept of a united, democratic South Africa'.

It would require far greater naivety than the ANC has demonstrated over the past decades to believe that closing down Inkatha would destroy the tribal chauvinism that the organisation has succeeded in constructing around itself. That, however, is a matter of practical legal implementation rather than for constitutional guidelines - the flesh of post-apartheid society, rather than its constitutional bones.

Although the ANC had already committed itself to a unitary post-apartheid state, the eight-person constitution committee, headed by Congress veteran Jack Simons, included in its search for an appropriate constitutional model several

countries governed federally - among them the US, Nigeria and Czechoslovakia (where they spent a week last year). They came away convinced of the necessity to retain unitary government. The ANC sees federalism as a possible way of weakening the ability of a democratically-elected government to control the pace and direction of change.

It is not yet clear whether the guidelines will be sufficiently detailed to give preference to an executive presidency over a prime ministerial system, but there appears to be consensus within the ANC in favour of the former. 'We must remember that almost the whole of Africa has opted for that system: In (immediate post-colonial) countries in need of visible and real symbols of national unity, an executive president can play a powerful role', says Skweyiya.

If this is the path chosen, the presidency of post-apartheid South Africa is likely to be a directly-elected post - closer to that of the US and France than South Africa's current system.

But a number of factors favour a more collective leadership structure. There is, firstly, the tradition within the ANC itself over its 23 years of illegality. While Tambo has, particularly in the last few years, increasingly acquired a more clearly-perceived presidential stature, the leadership remains strongly collective.

A second point is that, while the ANC baulks at any public debate on succession to the presidency, Tambo and the other obvious presidential candidate, Nelson Mandela, are both in their 70s. Ronald Reagan notwithstanding, the energy and physical resources required of the first post-apartheid president of South Africa may

demand a younger man. And so far, at least publicly, no single, unchallenged candidate has emerged - partially because of the organisation's emphasis on collective leadership.

The next stratum of democratically elected representation will, logically, be in a national parliament. A single, non-racial national parliament lies at the heart of the political demands of the ANC and its allies.

But there is within the ANC a strong dislike for the exercise of popular political participation only through voting in infrequent elections for a candidate who then departs for a distant national parliament.

So the guidelines lay much emphasis on third-tier representation in powerful, although not fully-autonomous, local government structures. 'In the GDR (East Germany) local authorities have substantial control over many areas of industry and exercise a large amount of autonomy. Local authorities therefore impact directly on people's everyday lives', adds Skweyiya.

What he envisages is a form of devolution which will incorporate the advantages of federal rule (with easier and more direct access to the corridors of power) while avoiding the regionalism which often develops as a result.

Education and the economy

Not surprisingly, in a country in which unequal education has provided the spark for some of the most bitter and sustained resistance to apartheid, the guidelines are emphatic on the need for free, equal and compulsory education in post-apartheid South Africa.

In addition, says Jobodwana, the post-apartheid state will provide 'financial assistance to the

children of the working class to enable them to attend university'.

And in line with its emphasis that the guidelines themselves must be rooted in present realities, the ANC emphasises that the nature of post-apartheid education is, to a degree, being decided now. Its endorsement of the 'people's education' initiatives of the last three years has been not so much a matter of winning tactical advantage as supporting the construction of an education system capable of feeding into a future South Africa.

While the constitutional guidelines themselves give only an indirect image of the future economy envisaged by the ANC, the organisation has been engaged in extensive economic research for some time. And here, more than anywhere else, ANC officials emphasise that the manner in which apartheid ends will drastically affect the number and nature of options available to the first post-apartheid government.

It thus approaches the question of knee-jerk nationalisation with extreme caution. 'When the Zambians nationalised their mines, they took 51% of the mines' interests, leaving the remaining 49% with Anglo-American', says one senior ANC source. 'But there were no Zambians to run the mines - they had to rehire Anglo to do it for them. Anglo did it, through their hastily-formed, Bermuda-based Zamanglo.

'Zamanglo is still running Zambia's mines, and Zambia has to rely entirely on their goodwill - they can't check the books, can't verify the profits, the turnover, anything, because Zamanglo is off-shore.

'We must be careful to avoid that'.

Adds Skweyiya: 'Can we honestly say that on day one we will be able to replace all the skills, the entire skilled strata, with skilled managers, planners and workers of our own? Look what happened in so many African countries - the white settlers, the colonialists ran away - leaving the economies to crumble.

'Any policies we pursue must be developed with that permanently in our minds'.

Present strategies create future options, and the ANC's constitutional seminar reportedly heard strong arguments in favour of 'winning the professionals, the management-types away from apartheid to a less hostile perspective'.

Despite a recognition that clumsily-implemented nationalisation or transfer to worker control could be disastrous for a highly-vulnerable, immediate post-apartheid economy, the ANC is unlikely to back away from its 33-year-old Freedom Charter pledge that 'the mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and the monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole'.

But current thinking within the organisation also appears to hold that acrimonious public debates on the precise details of the theoretical formulations of that process are, at this stage, a waste of time. The guidelines are, therefore, likely to be fairly broad on this aspect - firmly committed to a mixed economy without, for the present, defining the precise breakdown of that mix.

But if ANC economic forecasts contain a strong dose of pragmatism, they also contain a clear recognition of the centrality of organised workers both now and in the future. In addition to introducing the right

to strike, the guidelines foresee the constitutional entrenchment of the independence of the trade union movement. 'The (March) seminar was very clear that it did not want to see the trade unions tied in to the ruling party', Skweyiya said.

'We have also provided for the incorporation into either the guidelines or a future constitution of a workers charter - a charter of worker interests compiled by the workers themselves, through the trade union movement'.

Within the ANC there is also a powerful lobby, led by officials of the South African Congress of Trade Unions, on the right of all South Africans to work. While the immediate creation of a national social security system will not be easy in an economy weakened by the transition from apartheid, there is strong support for the Freedom Charter's guarantee that 'the state shall recognise the right and duty of all to work and to draw full unemployment benefits'. The draft guidelines are likely to reflect this.

Making formal rights real

A further major element of a post-apartheid constitution should, the ANC believes, be a bill of rights incorporating many of the ideals of the Freedom Charter - specifically those covered in the charter's sixth clause, 'All shall enjoy human rights'. But here too the draft guidelines will, say ANC officials, attempt to take the ideals 'past the slogans and towards realisation'. For example the guaranteed right to publish has been seen by a number of officials as being an insufficient guarantee on the issue of press freedom. 'Unless you guarantee the right to access to information by all South Africans -

something like the US Freedom of Information Act - the right to publish could be a very limited one', says an ANC official.

The second leg to this argument is a recognition of the necessity of creating the distributive infrastructure, and of access to the means to publish, to ensure that all South Africans are able to exercise their right to information.

While the guidelines themselves reportedly do not go into detail on the issue, ANC department of information and publicity official Victor Moche recently argued on behalf of the ANC for post-apartheid legislation prohibiting centralisation and monopolisation of the mass media.

Not a government-in-exile

The public appearance of the ANC draft constitutional guidelines, and the process of consultation which the organisation hopes will result in a wide-ranging consensus on a constitutional framework, do not mark an abrupt shift in ANC policy.

The process of formulating a collective ANC position on a constitutional framework for a post-apartheid society has been in motion for some time. But one of the reasons for the ANC's reluctance to pursue the drafting of a finished constitution - awaiting only liberation for its imposition on the country - has been its logical consequence: the declaration of an ANC government-in-exile. In the face of repeated suggestions from well-meaning friends, the ANC has held to the position (enshrined in the Freedom Charter) that only the people of South Africa, through a formal democratic process, can determine the legitimate government of the country. This has led, in

the past, to a hesitancy to build what one official called 'practicalities on the foundations of the charter'.

The strands only began to come together just over two years ago, when the political convulsions of 1983-84 combined with years of quiet ANC diplomacy to give it, in the eyes of even the most conservative Western administrations, unquestionable stature as a major player in the South African game.

This Western recognition brought with it intense scrutiny not only of the organisation itself, but of its strategies and - most importantly - its perspectives of the future.

Building on this, ANC President Oliver Tambo embarked on an extensive 'world tour' in 1986. 'We managed to use the Freedom Charter and more recent policy documents to end the often repeated challenge that we were trying to force socialism on an unwilling majority', says Skweyiya. 'Western leaders found that the charter contained nothing they themselves - whatever their political perspectives - would be unhappy with in any constitution'.

But if this greater awareness of the ANC's national-democratic objectives muted past accusations, it also brought - most recently and powerfully during Tambo's meeting with US Secretary of State George Schultz - a follow-on question: 'That's fine, but how do you plan to implement it?'

The need for a clearer answer than the ideals of the Freedom Charter added impetus to the process.

Similarly, says Skweyiya, the flood of interest in South Africa added further urgency. 'Post-apartheid research has become an international industry.

Pretoria itself is examining alternative constitutional models, and there is extensive research going on at Columbia University and elsewhere in the US, in Britain (where researchers have reportedly adapted the federalism of South African free marketer Leon Louw for their model), in West Germany and in Geneva.

'As a serious movement we cannot allow ourselves to be dictated to by outsiders on this issue - we have the experience of Zimbabwe and the Lancaster House constitution, and of Zambia which was handed a constitution by Britain.

'We will not get our freedom tomorrow, but our people need to start knowing what is involved. These are political issues, and should not be allowed to be the exclusive preserve of the intellectuals, of governments and of party politicians. This is something which should involve every member of the mass democratic movement, of the ANC and of Umkhonto we Sizwe', says Skweyiya.

Representation at the constitutional seminar was substantial, drawing delegates from virtually all sectors of the ANC and MK, and followed extensive debate within the organisations' structures.

The next stage, the ANC believes, is to draw other elements of the country's 'democratic opposition' into debate.

Whether by coincidence or design, this stage will peak towards the end of the year - as South Africans are going to the polls in countrywide local authority elections on 26 October. Because they are divided on rigidly racial lines, these elections will contrast sharply with the ANC guidelines.



More than wages at stake

As the South African government moves to manacle organised worker activity to industrial council-linked trade unionism, metal industry employers are manoeuvring to shut off even that limited channel for worker demands. GREG RUITERS, INGRID OBERY and DAVID NIDDRIE report.

Metal union negotiators entered national wage talks far stronger this year than ever before - and walked into a solid wall of employer hostility which makes the chances of a negotiated settlement less than ever before.

The talks began amid an increasingly-aggressive government campaign to crush all visible signs of opposition: three weeks before they started, Law and Order Minister Adriaan Vlok effectively banned 17 extra-parliamentary political organisations, and severely restricted the activities of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) to an extremely narrow range of shop-floor activities.

This shop-floor activity had also been targeted by the government: in January, Manpower

Minister Pietie du Plessis tabled the Labour Relations Amendment Bill, aimed at closing the gaps workers have won for themselves in the past decade.

Against this background, the national metal industry negotiations began on 15 March.

This year, for the first time since the Metal and Allied Workers Union (Mawu) entered the National Industrial Council for the Iron and Steel Industry in 1983, the majority of the industry's workers - black and unskilled - appeared to have a chance of forcing the industrial council to seriously examine their demands.

In the past the metal industries industrial council, which includes 14 unions, has managed to isolate Mawu - and its successor, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) - and sign an agreement with the remaining unions, most of them representing white and skilled workers and linked to the conservative Confederation for Metal and Building Unions (CMBU).

The council argued that, despite its numerical dominance, Mawu (and last year Numsa) was one union among 14 and its failure to settle on terms agreed by the 'majority' should not delay settlement. Every year, the manpower minister has agreed - and signed the agreement into law.

'There have never really been negotiations', says Numsa national organiser Jeff Schreiner. 'We tabled our demands, the bosses agreed on a settlement with the CMBU unions, it was signed, endorsed by the minister, and that was that'. The result, he says, has been a growing gap between unskilled and skilled workers' pay - increasing racial discrimination instead of decreasing it, or

sharpening the 'wage curve' instead of flattening it.

A negotiating alliance

But this year, four unions belonging to the South African co-ordinating council of the International Metalworkers Federation (IMF) entered the talks as a single bloc of 120 000 workers, half those represented at the talks. Numsa, the largest union in the alliance, represents 90 000 workers in the metal and engineering industries. The other three are: the Steel, Engineering and Allied Workers Union of SA (Seawusa), the Engineering and Allied Workers Union (Eawu), and the Electrical and Allied Workers Trade Union of SA (EAWTUSA). In the past, all three have opposed the council agreement, but have signed it under pressure.

The IMF alliance is an attempt to present a larger block of opinion in the council, and unites the Cosatu-affiliated Numsa with two affiliates of the National Confederation of Trade Unions (Nactu).

IMF South African co-ordinating committee secretary Brian Fredericks says there may be political and ideological differences between the unions' leaderships but 'the united feeling among union leaders means they can present a united front to the council'. 'Whatever the IMF unions do in the industrial council will determine the future of that council', he said. The alliance could be a crucial lesson of how workers can 'march separately and strike together'.

An important feature of the alliance is that demands were formulated at IMF-hosted joint meetings of members of all four unions. These have been followed by joint report-back meetings. Any decisions on set-

tlement or action will be taken at similar mass general meetings. The IMF negotiating committee is made up of two representatives elected at each regional mass meeting and the national executives of each union. Numsa, however, enjoys additional representation. The team will make recommendations for discussion by members after each stage of the negotiations.

Because of this process, it is less likely that there will be a repetition of the splits in IMF ranks, when Mawu (and Numsa) have held out while other unions have backed down and signed. The alliance is not unbreakable, however, given the strength of member loyalty to their own unions and leadership.

Two other IMF-affiliated unions - SA Boilermakers and the small Radio and Television Workers - decided not to join the alliance. The boilermakers' union, with 27 000 members, has in the past been among the strongest proponents of IMF unity, but significant changes in the leadership appear to be nudging the union steadily to the right.

Speaking for the majority

IMF negotiators have already pointed out that they speak for the vast majority of black, unskilled workers, and have argued that employers must include them in any settlement. Any agreement reached with half the negotiators (a conservative, predominantly white, skilled half at that) could not then be forced on the other half (militant, mainly black and unskilled).

The IMF alliance took into the talks more than a dozen interlocking demands aimed at winning for their members a

living wage - R5 an hour, or R225 a week. To achieve this, they demanded a minimum-wage increase of just over 90% - R2,40-an-hour up on the existing R2,60-an-hour minimum.

Their strategy was to focus on the vast inequalities between skilled and unskilled wages in the industry - put on a graph, these differences form a curve running from the R2,60 minimum for unskilled workers to R10 for skilled workers.

Although few skilled workers earn the minimum (most earn far more than R10 an hour), in terms of the agreed minimum they take home four times the wages of unskilled workers. The alliance demanded that this difference in the 'wage curve' be cut to 45%. In doing so, the IMF negotiators were both attempting to win a living wage, and challenging racial discrimination in the industry.

The alliance also demanded discussions on employer action against the Labour Relations Amendment Bill.

Employers, negotiating through the Steel and Engineering Industries' Federation of South Africa (Seifsa), responded with a minimum-wage increase offer of just 8% - an increase of 21 cents an hour.

The first round of talks rarely sees either side presenting an offer which the other considers fit for negotiation. But the 15 March Seifsa offer was startlingly small. It represents less than half official estimates of inflation. Seifsa argued that wage increases cause inflation - but *wage increases in the metal industry have not exceeded price increases for the past five years. Real wages have decreased steadily in that time. And, in the past three years, employers' wage bills have shrunk with the loss of more than 110 000 jobs*

in the industry.

Beyond the wage offer, Seifsa did not respond to union demands.

'They treated us with contempt; there are no bona-fide negotiations with us', said Bernie Fanaroff, Numsa's representative on the IMF team.

Seifsa negotiators also failed to make any real comment on opposition to the harsh provisions of the Labour Relations Bill.

Questions about industrial councils

The IMF alliance distinguishes between principled and tactical demands. Tactical demands include sick pay, housing allowances, leave pay, and overtime. Principled demands are non-negotiable and include Sharpeville Day and 16 June as paid holidays, and living wages.

The vast difference between what the IMF unions have demanded and what Seifsa has offered represents more than a tough negotiating tactic by employers.

There is a strongly-held belief within the four IMF unions that Seifsa's hard line is part of a strategy designed to provoke workers into premature action in much the same way that the Chamber of Mines did with the miners last year. Certainly elements within the employer group hold that the Labour Bill does not go far enough in curbing union militancy. They also see last year's Numsa action - protesting a settlement which acknowledged none of their demands - as 'a dress rehearsal for 1988'. This view would support suggestions that Seifsa is attempting to draw workers into un-coordinated, wildcat strikes and to ambush them with the sort of mass dismissals which damaged the National Union of Mineworkers last year.

For the unions it could, literally, be a do-or-die year.

In response, says Fredericks, the unions have been evaluating their strength and reviewing possible strategies. He believes Seifsa has noted the IMF alliance, and has decided to back white union demands to diminish the IMF threat. He said IMF strategy has been fairly reactive until now, as there had not been time to develop a coherent positive strategy.

National shopsteward workshops are taking place to discuss strategic options.

The 24 February restrictions, the 15 March offer and the Labour Bill suggest that employers and the government are trying to lock the door they opened in 1979 - to attempt to control organised workers by co-opting the unions 'into the system'.

That door was opened by the Wiehahn Commission whose labour reform recommendations became law with the 1979 Labour Relations Act.

A year later, 14 unions belonging to the Federation of South African Trade Unions (later to merge into Cosatu) took the controversial step of registering in terms of this law. By doing so, they gained state recognition - and used that space to massively build their shop-floor strength.

At the time it was emphasised that registration was a tactical move, and in no way a sell-out.

In 1983, Mawu went further - joining the industrial council.

At the time the issues of registration and participation in the industrial councils were fiercely debated. Unions opposed to entering the state structures argued this would lead to 'legalism', accepting the law as setting the limits of workers' rights.

Legalism would trap the unions in state mechanisms and

move the focus away from the shop floor, they argued. It would also encourage a unionism concentrating on narrow economic issues, ignoring key political and community struggles.

In response, the 14 unions argued that the state was bending in the face of strong worker organisation and that it was forced to give legal statutory recognition to black unions - a right denied for 60 years.

They later pointed to the massive increase in membership following registration - Fosatu membership leapt from 30 000 in 1979 to 95 000 in 1981.

In the next seven years, as union membership rocketed, the debate faded into the background.

But today the union movement finds itself fighting on new terrain. Both the state and capital have as their declared intention a policy which can only lead to the weakening of the militant mass base of the unions.

Legal avenues such as the definition of unfair labour practices are being redefined in favour of capital: deregulation, privatisation and the new Labour Bill mean that serious resistance and advance is impossible for workers if they stick to the industrial laws. Even under the 1979 law, workers do not have an unqualified right to strike. The Labour Bill aims to strip them of the limited rights they do have.

The debates of the early 1980s have been catapulted back into the arena, with the gains of the last nine years seriously under threat. If, in 1980 registration and participation in the industrial councils was a tactic, it is a tactic which requires examin-

ation under rapidly changing conditions.

Pros and cons

The outcome of this year's metal industry negotiations may raise the question of the usefulness of staying in the council. There are pros and cons for both strategies. Numsa insists 'the only thing to rely on the council for is as a focus for mobilisation'.

Immediate sources of dissatisfaction over the council include:

- * Representivity: each union, irrespective of membership, has one vote. Although the IMF alliance represents half the workers covered by council agreements, it has four votes. The two other IMF affiliates account for two more, while the CMBU unions have a combined voting strength of nine. Management has 15 votes.

- * The discretion of the minister to accept or reject all or part of the council's decisions. Last year Manpower Minister Pietie du Plessis re-promulgated the 1986 agreement on the eve of Numsa's planned strike - thus outlawing the action.

The negotiations - combined with the state of emergency restrictions and the Labour Bill - may leave metalworkers with little reason for participation in the industrial council system.

The minister of manpower has indicated he would like to see more than 50% of all metal employers sitting on the council to make it more 'representative'. This trend was evident already in 1985, when the minister said he was 'tired of paying the political bill for inflexible and unrepresentative industrial councils', and was reviewing his policy of customary exten-

sion of industrial council agreements to non-parties.

The big companies are all represented, so this extension of council membership would involve all the small employers. This is the sector of the economy the government wants to boost. But these employers are also those most opposed to unions and minimum wages, as they are heaviest hit by the recession.

If, as he has threatened, the minister refuses to extend the agreement to the whole industry, many employers could leave the council as they would be exempt from implementing minimum wages; this could mean the end of the industrial council system as councils would become too unrepresentative.

There would then be one less vehicle unions could use to defend the principle of enforceable protection of wage standards and working conditions.

And if the IMF alliance unions refuse to sign the council agreement, and the CMBU unions - which represent only more skilled grades - sign, the terms of the agreement for all workers will be made at the discretion of the council. If the council decides to leave wages for unskilled categories at the same rate as last year, these workers will get no increase at all. This would suit the minister's wage freeze strategy.

In addition, the IMF unions would come away from negotiations with no gains at all for their members - and this in a context where workers have taken many actions, with few victories.



Learning to live in the shadows



Just a month and four days before the South African Youth Congress celebrated its first birthday on 28 March, Pretoria finally acknowledged the reality under which the organisation had operated from birth - by banning it. *WIP* interviewed Sayco leaders before the banning, and looked at the organisation's first year. Sayco's comments on its future plans were made before restrictions rendered the organisation legally unable to act.

Since its launch last year the South African Youth Congress (Sayco) has inhabited a semi-clandestine world, its members, its leaders and its actions visible only briefly as they emerged into open activity.

'From our formation we were forced to adapt to the hostile environment of a state of emergency, to develop methods of operation which enabled us to survive', recalls publicity secretary Simon Ntombela. And it had to do so despite its leaders' oft-repeated declaration: 'We are a

legal organisation operating legally'.

The organisation's launch itself - in Cape Town on 28 March 1987 - was, Ntombela says, a victory for the process of learning to merge into the shadows. It took place in near-total secrecy, carefully shielded from public knowledge by a highly-efficient barrier of disinformation.

That process, Ntombela and other members of Sayco's 'head office' believe, heightened state hostility to the organisation. 'From the beginning the police were after us,

they specifically targetted Sayco...and when they came for Sayco they came armed, as if they were hunting guerillas'.

From the outset, however, Sayco had done little to avoid incurring the state's wrath. It adopted a slogan - 'freedom or death, victory is certain!' - traditionally linked to the outlawed African National Congress and chose colours (black, green and gold against a red backdrop) most likely to outrage Pretoria. And delegates to the inaugural congress chose as their president Peter Mokaba, not long off Robben Island after conviction as an ANC guerilla.

Born as the national voice of the 'young lions', the 'comrades' who had spearheaded the semi-insurrectionary wave of the previous two years, Sayco had little option but to operate underground - whatever the validity of its claims to legality.

Its leaders were able to speak more freely from the semi-clandestine shadows than many of those permanently stationed in more visible and vulnerable structures. And speak they did: of the desirability of socialism, of the inevitability (although not the justification) of the 'necklace', and of the South African Communist Party as the only political vanguard of the working class.

But if the successful underground launching and developing of possibly the biggest political formation in South Africa brought an exuberance, a defiance and a burst of energy to Sayco's first days, its leadership did not have much time to relish the excitement.

Formed nine months into the

1986 national state of emergency, Sayco emerged in the ebb of the tide of resistance which exploded across the country two years earlier. Its leaders oversaw a steady transfer of initiative from the opposition into the hands of the state; an easing of the semi-insurrectionary challenge to apartheid - a challenge in which those who became its members had served as the cutting edge.

One foot in the shadows

Many of the activities outlined in its original programme of action were based on the assumption that Sayco could extend the political duality at which organisations in and around the United Democratic Front (UDF) had become so adept. Standing with one foot in the light and one in the shadows, the organisations enjoyed the benefit of both public campaigns and semi-clandestine structures.

For Sayco, this proved impossible.

Reviewing the first year shortly before the 24 February restrictions, Sayco officials acknowledged the damaging effect of the permanent state of seige under which they had existed.

High-profile public campaigns such as the 'Police Isolation Campaign' and the 'Save the Patriots Campaign' had been drastically hobbled, they said, as the state repeatedly moved to head off public rallies, press conferences and Sayco propaganda.

'These restrictions certainly weakened us', Ntombela said. 'Because of the state of emergency we were not able to undertake rallies, put out publications and generate support for our campaigns.

'But it is one battle lost - not the war. We'll win the war'.

Nevertheless, the Police Isolation Campaign, designed to freeze out police socially - particularly kitskonstabels - achieved a limited degree of success in many areas. In New Brighton and in Bongulethu in the southern Cape, the campaign went ahead as planned: in New Brighton the bulk of kitskonstabels are imports, many of them from rural Kwa-zulu. 'The women particularly pressured their husbands and sons not to join the kitskonstabels', said Sayco secretary general Rapu Molekane. 'In Bongolethu, when the kitskonstabels returned from their training, their families pressured them and many resigned - Bongolethu rejected the vigilantes in uniform'.

The Save the Patriots Campaign suffered similarly from the hostility of the environment in which it was launched. Originally called the Save the 32 Campaign - but renamed as the numbers on death row increased - it had several aims:

- * to win reprieves for politically-linked prisoners on death row;

- * to question the passing of death sentences for politically-linked or politically-inspired killings;

- * to generate pressure on the South African government to sign the Geneva Convention protocol on guerillas engaged in a civil war - and thus win them prisoner-of-war status rather than the death sentences they currently face.

'We originally planned a mass signature campaign. Collection of signatures went on, but not as we originally intended - most of our activists are underground and had to

emerge to collect signatures. This was very dangerous', Molekane explained.

'But despite our failure to achieve our objectives so far, we managed to keep the issue in the minds of millions of South Africans'.

Recently a Southern Transvaal Save the Patriots committee has been launched, expanding membership beyond Sayco's Southern Transvaal affiliate (Styco) to include, among others, the National Union of Mineworkers, which has members of its own on death row.

'Our aim was specifically to save the political patriots on death row, but the campaign includes people who oppose all capital punishment', said Molekane.

Streamlining activities

Even before the restrictions, Sayco had streamlined its operations to adapt to life in the shadows. While its basic decision-making and executive structures remained unchanged - 'born into the underground and well-adapted to that world', as Ntombela put it - increasing pressure from the state and the possibility of the detention of the national leadership led to major revisions.

Functions once shared among the 'head office' - the officials running Sayco's day-to-day activity - were divided into eight departments. 'From these collectives, these expanded decision-making structures, we can replenish the leadership lost through detention or death', said Ntombela.

Sayco's national executive had, at the time of its restriction, lost none of its members - although Mokaba was

detained less than a month after the banning, as were several senior members of the Southern Transvaal structure.



Rapu Molekane: Focusing attention on capital punishment

Throughout its first year, Sayco's 'head office' continued to meet daily and the national and central executive committees met regularly, although not quite as often as directed by the constitution - every fortnight for the NEC and every two months for the CEC.

In this way, said Ntombela, they managed 'not just to survive, but to grow'. At its launch Sayco claimed just over half-a-million members - rather than the 800 000-going-on-a-million figure claimed on its behalf - in 800 local youth groupings. Individual membership has increased slightly since then.

These figures are, by the nature of the organisation, virtually impossible to verify. The more efficient an organisation's adaptation to clandestinity, the more diffi-

cult it is to verify its claims - making exaggeration virtually compulsory for the few representatives out in the open. The possibilities are endless.

Last May, in clear imitation of the carefully-orchestrated announcement of Sayco's formation, a youth popped into view to announce the recent formation of a rival youth body, the Azanian Youth Organisation. It had been launched, he said, at a secret gathering of 1 000 delegates in Durban.

The 1 000 had, apparently, passed among a community, tense and on the lookout for strangers, without stirring a ripple or leaving a footprint. Similarly, they managed to avoid using all known Durban venues big enough to house 1 000 delegates.

By contrast, if Sayco's membership is untestable, its footprints at least are visible - most recently in this year's 21 March stayaway. With Sayco itself formally restricted, the task of spreading the word of the stayaway fell to its regional affiliates. And, with extremely limited pre-publicity, without formal organisational backing from Cosatu, and with even police withholding their normally-routine charge of 'intimidation', the stayaway won the support of more than a million people.

Sayco's footprints could, similarly, be tracked through last year's railway strike. With 16 000 workers dismissed and little prospect of a settlement in sight, young 'comrades' on the Reef gave form to their leaders' calls for an alliance in action of workers and youth, torching R100-million worth of SA Transport Services rolling stock in two dozen separate attacks.

Towards the end of last year the organisation attempted to step up its support for organised worker action, although in less dramatic fashion. But if its programmes became more modest, Sayco remained relatively unscathed - particularly when compared to the organisational decimation wreaked on its allies in the UDF and on the UDF itself.

'The regime peeled off four layers of leadership from the UDF', Molekane said.

'The organisation has been under sustained attack since before the first emergency. Its leaders have been detained, put on trial like Terror (Lekota, publicity secretary) and Popo (Molefe, general secretary), forced deep underground or out of the country'.

Last year the UDF initiated a decentralisation process, putting its energy into the formation of national, sectoral affiliates to avoid over-concentration on a single, national leadership structure.

'The detention of Murphy (Morobe, acting publicity secretary) and (acting general secretary Mohamed) Valli seriously interrupted that process. It is still trying to adapt and assert itself', Molekane added. 'But it has been severely under attack. As a result it does not appear to be giving political direction and leadership, but it is still making itself felt'.

The process of strengthening

the UDF, and the 'national-democratic struggle' of which it is a part, has - at least legally - been interrupted by the 24 February restrictions, which according to Information Minister Stoffel van der Merwe 'put these organisations in the deep freeze for a while'.

Prior to the crackdown, however, Sayco was looking to re-invigorate its relationship

beyond capitalism, socialism. But the way to reach that stage is through national-democratic revolution'.

This perception pushed the need for an active alliance with Cosatu high on Sayco's agenda. It also meant an unusually explicit acknowledgment of the role of the South African Communist Party.

'Only a political vanguard of the most advanced elements of the most advanced class can lead that class beyond capitalism. And in South Africa, the only political formation capable of undertaking that vanguard role is the SACP'.

Ephraim Nkwe, Sayco's education officer, said the organisation looked to Cosatu to contribute more

immediately in working-class struggle.

'The working class is realising, in struggle, that it is faced with the primary national question - of overcoming apartheid colonialism. This is demonstrated to workers clearly by the way the state reacts to their actions, particularly in the massive public sector actions by rail and postal workers', he said.

Even before its 24 February restriction, Sayco felt it could not function openly, and no longer conduct its own mass propaganda. So, said Nkwe, 'we are looking at new tactics and styles of work to deepen the process by which the working class becomes a vital component in the mass democratic movement'.



'It is one battle lost - but we'll win the war'

with Cosatu, also hampered by state activity.

The relationship with Cosatu is one of the pillars of Sayco policy - a policy more explicitly class-determined than most of its allies within the UDF. This is understandable for an organisation which drew much of its strength from a generation whose world view has been shaped by a combination of racial oppression and mass unemployment.

'Our constitution's preamble depicts the current era as capitalist, in which the means of production are owned by a white minority and by foreign capitalists, with our people selling their only asset, their labour, for next to nothing', says Ntombela.

'And it depicts a stage



Fencing off the conflict

It sounds like Crossroads revisited: older residents of a squatter camp turn against younger residents in a series of violent attacks, while the security forces keep their distance. But this time it is KTC that is at war. MOIRA LEVY reports on the battles in this Cape Town squatter camp, and explains what the state hopes to achieve there.

The 800-metre long blade-wire barricade that cuts through Cape Town's KTC squatter camp has left residents and commentators bemused.

When it was erected by more than 100 armed police, SADF members and kitskonstabels on 27 February, residents gathered to watch. They stood around silent, angry and puzzled.

They had good reason to be. For both the warring groups in the township had stated that they rejected the fence. Privately they may also have been asking why it was not installed earlier, when fighting was at a peak, and before the violence claimed six lives and left an estimated 3 000 people homeless.

Also watching the erection of the fence was the Western Cape divisional police commissioner, Brigadier Roy During, who took the opportunity to announce that floodlights would be set up and the area would be patrolled by police until 'peace and stability returned to KTC'.

Police maintained their action was to keep apart the warring factions - the Masincedane group, based in 'new KTC', and residents of 'old KTC' - and 'prevent senseless killing and violence'.

But by then the fighting was just about over and peace - albeit shaky - had already been restored to the area.

Although the joint police-SADF operation was publicly directed at KTC's 'warring factions', there can be no doubt that a mediating committee set up by the United Democratic Front, Cosatu and the Western Province Council of Churches was also a target.

An order issued just a few days later under the emergency regulations declaring KTC a restricted area, open to residents only, can be regarded as a further attack on the mediating committee.

During's statement at the time

referred to people from outside KTC, 'among them whites and coloured people who were trying their utmost to ensure an atmosphere in which violence could take its toll'.

Keeping the peace

The mediating committee set up at the height of the conflict and headed by Dr Alan Boesak and Archbishop Desmond Tutu was established to keep the peace. Its aim was to intervene where necessary to prevent further violence and to mediate between the two groups through negotiations and meetings.

For almost 24 hours each day, the team monitored the conflict from a combi strategically parked in a street between the two camps. At the committee's core were Patrick Matanjana and Lumko Huna, two Robben Island veterans highly regarded by both sides and accorded the respect needed to enable them to intervene when necessary.

'Members of the mediating committee have played a central role in reducing the level of conflict over the last few weeks, often at great personal risk to themselves', a statement from the committee declared.

'If During had bothered to ask the elected committees on either side for their opinions, this is exactly what they would have told him. In fact both sides have pleaded with the mediating committee to remain in KTC'.

The mediators believe police have made 'continual attempts' to undermine their efforts to 'create peace in KTC' - four committee members were arrested 'on ridiculous charges of

attempted arson' and released hours later; and the UDF's representative on the committee, Willie Hofmeyr, was served with a restriction order while in KTC, which made it illegal for him to continue his work.

The aim of the state intervention is to remove the mediating committee from the area; this can be understood as part of an overall strategy that involves presenting the police and SADF troops as peacemakers and winning the support of a section of the squatter population.

It was done before, with devastating effect, in the 1986 'witdoek-comrade' clashes in Cape Town's squatter camps. The government learned then that the security forces need conflict in which they can be seen to be fighting side by side with a part of the community against the 'comrades', who they can present as the enemy.

This, the state found, has proved more successful than attempts to install puppet leaders; it has learned that support can be won through in-fighting and clashes.

And with municipal elections in October, the need to install a leader the state can rely on, but who has sufficient support in his own constituency, has become all the more urgent.

It is in this context that the SADF and police overtures to the Masincedane Committee can be understood.

Police appear to be attempting to portray themselves as sympathetic to the Masincedane. Kitskonstabels have been seen chatting to them and offering protection from the other side.

There have been offers of help to Masincedane, in the form of clinics, toilets,

schools and so on. So far these have been rejected, but it seems clear that the state aims to win over this group.

Capitalising on conflict

Not even the most cynical would suggest that the state directly caused the internecine clashes. However, large-scale violence plays into state hands; the authorities do not have to start the violence, but the absence of security forces when it flares suggests they may want it to develop.

Divisions within the KTC squatter camp have a long history; objective factors have forced a wedge between the factions for years and it is this that the state is fostering.

The original squatter camp, known as old KTC, was settled in 1983 by 'legal' residents forced out of the Western Cape township of Guguletu by overcrowding and severe housing shortages. For years they lived in backyard shanties and as tenants in already-overcrowded township shacks, until the decision was made to settle on the stretch of open land, beside the Kekaza Trading Centre which gave KTC its name.

Some years later, in-fighting among a section of the Crossroads squatters resulted in a breakaway group settling in an area adjacent to KTC - dubbed new KTC. It became known as the Masincedane group - 'let us help each other', a name that originated in a burial society.

The two communities lived peacefully side by side. It was a time of intense grassroots activity in the Western Cape, and organisations like the United Womens Organisation (UWO) and the Western Cape Civic Association (WCCA)



The KTC fence: Dividing a defiant community

had strong support in both old and new KTC. In fact, the Masincedane group was affiliated to the WCCA at that stage.

For years there was no conflict - during 1986 both groups

rallied together against the witdoek attacks - but objective differences existed, and in time these were to come to the fore.

Essentially the groups differed over their housing

demands. In old KTC single women and youth pre-dominated; although mostly born in Cape Town, they were not entitled to township houses. All along their demand had been for housing and in negotiations

with government officials they consistently rejected upgrading schemes or other compromise solutions. Their objective was houses, security and comfort - and nothing short of that would suffice.

It was in this community that the UWO and the Cape Youth Congress were able to take root.

The Masincedane group wanted only to be left in peace to live in the squatter camp. They were more interested in upgrading schemes; few could afford to buy houses.

If housing was the foremost point of conflict, however, it was not the only one. Differences ran deep. Members of the Masincedane group were newly urbanised; some were still migrants who commuted regularly between Cape Town and the Transkei. The group consisted primarily of older men who clung to traditional values, particularly concerning the role of women and youth.

Hostilities erupt

Relations between the two became increasingly strained, particularly from the beginning of last year, when the WCCA relaunched an interim committee which organised branches in old KTC that were seen to be in opposition to the Masincedane group.

In November last year the growing hostilities erupted, and seven people were killed in a series of revenge attacks.

Joint forums started by the UDF, Cosatu and the churches, predecessors to the official mediating committee, succeeded in preventing the conflict from escalating into full-blown attacks - but only

for a few weeks. Violence broke out again after the murder in January of Storeman Madubela, a senior member of the Masincedane Committee and a crucial figure in the peace talks.

That day the Masincedane group, bent on revenge, began burning down old KTC shacks. In days almost 400 shacks were destroyed, and the cycle of violence was well in motion. Emergency meetings and negotiation attempts by Boesak and Tutu could not restore the peace.

Within days those shacks still standing in old KTC had been dismantled by residents who feared for their safety, and the entire area was cleared of squatters.

Some, estimated at less than a quarter of the original old KTC community, set up camp again across the road in a vacant lot that had been named Tambo Square. Many were reported as saying development board officials told them to move there and that, although they feared more violence, they were reluctant to move back to the township backyards or to Khayalitsha in case they lost their places on the waiting list for houses in KTC.

Intermittent violence continued, and after another six deaths the mediating committee was established. Pamphlets were circulated throughout the area quoting an ANC press statement calling on the youth to take the lead in ending hostilities between conservatives and radicals. Cosatu officials Jay Naidoo, Chris Dlamini and Elijah Barayi, members of the South African Youth Congress national executive

committee and UDF co-president Albertina Sisulu travelled from Johannesburg in various attempts to set up peace talks.

The mediating committee managed, to a large extent, to defuse the situation and control the violence, effectively preventing it from escalating into the full-blown pitched battles that shook the squatter camps in 1986.

However, reluctance by ultra-militant youths or ntsaras (criminals) in the Tambo Square community to participate in negotiations remains a major concern to the mediators.

And of even greater concern is their fear that the failure to get the two sides talking is working in the interests of the state.

Smear campaigns

Numerous anonymous pamphlets have been distributed blaming individuals for violent incidents; smear campaigns have been launched against organisations; police have been accused of provoking residents in several ways, such as transporting people in Casspirs against their will to create the impression that they are informers. All of this has helped stoke the anger on both sides.

Observers see the barbed-wire fence as another attempt - albeit less subtle - to divide a community that has long stood as a symbol of squatter defiance against government raids.

And they fear this will be followed by further overtures to the Masincedane group to force the new KTC committee to ally itself with the state - in much the same way that the Crossroads squatter leadership has done.

A high price for freedom

Militarisation and white South Africa

Defence Minister Magnus Malan says South Africa is prepared to pay a high price for 'freedom'. But, argues JACKLYN COCK, no society can afford the costs which militarisation imposes.



'A small Transvaal toy manufacturer will soon add another product to its already burgeoning armoury - a miniature version of a new police anti-riot vehicle unveiled this week... In the meantime the Ventersdorp toy company will expand its existing police fleet of toy Buffels, Ratels and Casspirs at the end of the month when it begins production of a gleaming replica of the new police helicopter. The toy Casspir sold more than 25 000 models' (*Sunday Times*, 06.09.87).

'Minister Vlok admitted in Parliament that six members of the SADF had interrogated Father Smangaliso Mkhathshwa, the secretary-general of the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference, while he was detained under the Emergency regulations. Earlier Peter Soal, the PFP MP for Johannesburg North, read out in Parliament an affidavit by Father Mkhathshwa in which he said that during his detention he was left standing on the same spot for 30 hours, blindfolded and handcuffed. Father Mkhathshwa also said his genitals and buttocks were exposed for 29 hours, a watery substance was smeared on his legs and thighs, two shots were fired behind him and a creepy substance or instrument fed into his backside' (*Weekly Mail*, 09.10.87).

'If we saw a well-built kaffir we'd know he was a terr. If he had soft feet that would prove it beyond doubt, at least if we were out in the bush, because who else wears shoes? Sometimes you could also see marks on his shoulders or his waist from the webbing. We'd interrogate him, and if he was stubborn he could have trouble. Maybe we tie him to the front of the Buffel and do a little bundu-bashing. Feel it? Why should I feel it? I wasn't on the front of the Buffel. If he's still okay when we get tired of driving around maybe we give him a ratpack (a seven-day food supply) and tell him to shut up. Sometimes they shout and complain and then we have no choice, we have to finish him off. Sometimes he's finished off before we stop driving. Then we just untie him and say farewell' (SADF soldier, *Frontline*, August 1985).

It would be comforting to think that people who commit acts of violence and cruelty are 'different'; that they are vicious, sick, mentally ill, psychopaths - pathological in some way. But there is powerful evidence to the contrary - evidence that acts of group killing, torture and cruelty may be performed by normal people.

Hannah Arendt wrote of this 'banality of evil' in her coverage of the trial of Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann: 'The trouble with Eichmann was precisely that so many were like him,

and that the man was neither perverted nor sadistic...(but) terribly and terrifyingly normal'.

Many South Africans who engage in acts of cruelty are terrifyingly normal. They are people who have been socialised into conformity; into an unthinking obedience to authority, or into the belief that some human beings (jews, moffies, kaffirs, communists or whatever) are non-human and outside the boundaries which define human/humane treatment.

War toys are part of

this process of socialisation. There is a connection between toys and torture - both are symptoms of a highly militarised society.

Mobilising for war

Militarisation involves the mobilisation of resources for war. It is closely related to militarism which Michael Mann says involves 'a set of attitudes and social practices which regard war and the preparation for war as a normal and desirable social activity'.

Both militarism and militarisation are centered on the military as a social institution, a set of social relations organised around war.

Whether the level of militarisation is measured through military expenditure, the size and sophistication of the weapons systems, the scale of repression, or the political influence of the military, South Africa is a highly militarised society. Indicators of this are:

- * defence expenditure. In June 1987 the defence budget was increased by 30% over that of 1986 to R6 686-million. And there are hidden items which make it far larger than that - almost R11-million, according to one commentator;

- * the sophistication of its weapons system. Next year the state will have air-to-air missiles and a remote-controlled reconnaissance aircraft. The state may even have nuclear weapons. Many people find it strange that South Africa is so committed to developing nuclear energy, given the expense and dangers involved. The Koeberg Alert Group has pointed to the apparent irrationality of further nuclear development on the one hand (because of the ex-

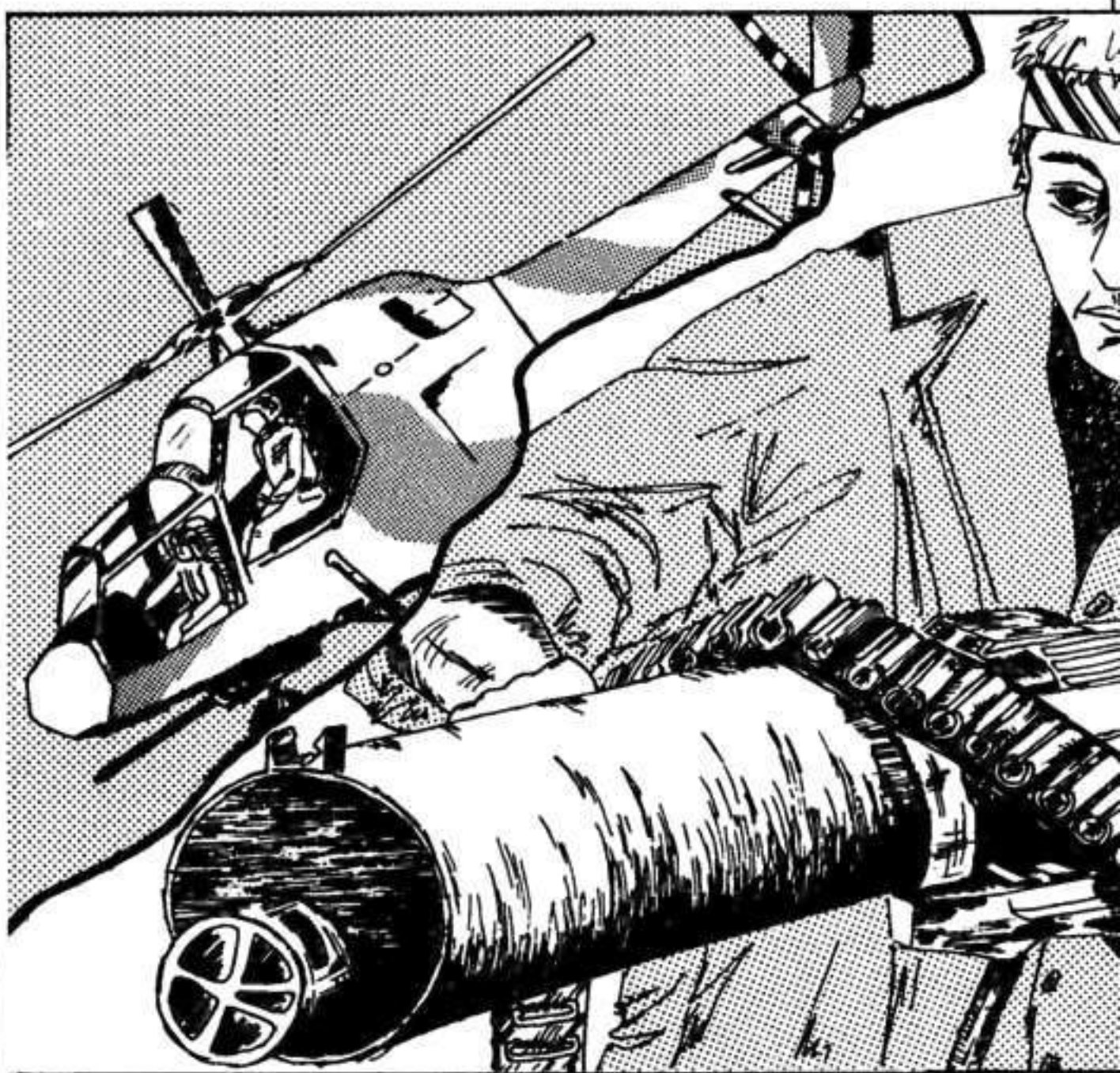
pense and risks involved) and the state's determination to proceed with its nuclear programme. The military applications of nuclear power may provide a possible motive for state interest in the further expansion of its nuclear programme;

- * the progressive extension of compulsory military service

schools in the Transvaal - where selected Transvaal Education Department teachers now carry guns.

- * the rapid increase in gun sales, with one in four white South Africans now owning a gun;

- * reliance on the SADF to suppress resistance in arenas as diverse as education, health



for white male youths - now two years plus annual camps;

- * the domination of the political system by a National Security Management System controlled by the SADF and the SAP;

- * the local armaments industry (Armcor) is the third largest corporation in South Africa. It is the largest arms manufacturer in the southern hemisphere and the tenth largest in the world;

- * increasing militarisation of white schools through cadets, youth preparedness, and veld

and labour. The SADF has been used to break the schools boycott in Soweto; for strike breaking at Baragwanath Hospital; in evicting squatters and rent boycotters; and in the registration and screening of students at the University of the North (Turfloop);

- * a vigorous and spectacular consumerist militarism evident in war toys, games and films which glorify military encounters.

Consumerist militarism involves increasingly popular war games. 'Lifestyle', the

Sunday Times magazine of 13 September 1987, described how 'George Raubenheimer, 64 year old former SAAF fighter pilot, author and businessman, and a growing band of friends spend their Sundays crawling through the bush, armed to the teeth, firing marbles at each other with deadly accuracy and painful



results'. Dressed in camouflage they roam the bush near Hartebeespoort dam stalking each other and are part of a growing number of people in South Africa who engage in such sports.

Civilians and the SADF

This consumerist or 'spectator sport' militarism is part of a pervasive ideology which accepts violence as the solution to conflict and problems. It involves deep acceptance of organised state violence as a legitimate response, with a

glorification of war in terms of which both actors and encounters are portrayed in heroic terms. There is an acceptance - among the white community - of the power of the military and its encroachment into civilian areas. Above all, war is viewed as 'normal'.

There are four direct and obvious points at which citizens connect to the SADF and the militarisation of society:

as conscripts with increasing length of service and all the disruption of work, education and family relationships that prolonged separation involves. Growing periods of compulsory military service reflect increased black resistance. And the SADF relies heavily on coercion to obtain its manpower: eight out of every nine members of the SADF are Citizen Force or National Service conscripts;

as taxpayers who are footing an enormous bill for the war in Angola. The Namibian war costs South Africa more than R2-million every day;

as citizens increasingly ruled by an elaborate national security system and other extra-parliamentary structures shrouded in secrecy;

as eager and active consumers of a war culture.

The high costs of militarisation

The cost of militarisation is high, both in physical and psychological terms.

There is the 'final sacrifice' paid by young South African men killed in action far from home. It is extremely difficult to speak with confidence about the scale on which this is occurring. In Angola (which South African troops first invaded in 1975) the SADF

acknowledged that 28 of its troops died there in the last three months of 1987. But the Angolan government claimed that during the same period 230 South African soldiers had died there. Whichever version one accepts, it is clear that South Africans, and no doubt many Angolans, are dying because of the SADF's involvement in the Angolan war.

Increasing numbers of white South Africans are critical of the physical cost involved. For example the father of a 20-year old conscript killed in November 1987 when the armoured car he was driving was attacked by a Russian T55 rocket, criticised the SADF for 'putting young boys who didn't have a choice in the front line. Our young boys leave school, get called up for service, train for three months and then face rocket fire while the Permanent Force are sitting behind desks controlling them from a distance'.

A number of letters in the local press at the time made the same point. One quoted the historian Haylett who said: 'Beware of the generals - their job and function is to wage war'.

Professor Green of the Institute for Development Studies in Sussex has estimated that as a proportion of the white population, the number of white South Africans who lost their lives fighting Swapo is more than three times the number of American lives lost in Vietnam.

Increasing numbers of white South Africans are resisting military service: the numbers failing to report for duty at each call up is now secret, but by all accounts it rose very dramatically since the use of

the SADF in the townships after October 1984. Growing numbers of conscripts have applied to the Board for Religious Objection. And many of South Africa's most competent and talented young men emigrate each year.

According to parliamentary statistics released in February 1987, a total of 2 164 professional people emigrated in 1986. While 1 026 immigrated, the nett loss for the country was 1 138 or, on average, just more than three per day. Over 47% more professional and technical people left the country than during 1985.

The costs of war go further than this. Estimates in a new book on the Second World War suggest that 80-million people were killed if one includes those who died of starvation and illness as a direct result of the war. Casualties in the Vietnam war were horrific. Fifty-four thousand Americans died in Vietnam, 153 000 were wounded and an undisclosed number crippled for life. Something like three-million Vietnamese died - mainly civilians.

But the human cost of the Vietnam war goes deeper than casualty figures. By 1971 almost 50 000 Vietnam veterans in the US had died since discharge and return to civilian life. There were three main causes: suicide, drug overdose and vehicle accidents. Levels of all three of these social indicators are also high in white South African society.

For many young men, their two years of military service are a psychologically disturbing experience. Research by Diane Sandler involving case studies of soldiers who have done township duty reveals

aggressive tendencies, and a deep sense of alienation and meaninglessness among these soldiers.

Military training involves a kind of social programming that teaches unquestioning obedience. As one writer has put it, 'In war, man is much more a sheep than a wolf. He follows, he obeys. War is servility, not aggressiveness'.

Military training also involves a process of dehumanisation. The process is best illustrated by an American sociologist who described an incident from his training in the Marines: 'On the last day of training before leaving for Vietnam we were ushered into a clearing where a staff sergeant stood holding a rabbit. He stroked and petted it. As soon as we were all seated and with no word of explanation, he crushed its head with a rock and proceeded to actually skin and disembowel the animal with his bare hands and teeth while showering the entrails on us. As we left the clearing he stood there with fur all around his mouth and blood running down his throat'.

A psychologically damaged society

It is not difficult to understand how military trainees became psychologically damaged by their experiences. And it is not difficult to understand how such damage could spread out and stain an entire society.

There are many indicators that South Africa is a psychologically damaged society:

- * as many as 25% of South Africans between 12 and 25 are actively engaged in some form of drug abuse;

- * South Africa's divorce rate is among the three highest in the world;

- * the incidence of coronary disease is among the five highest in the world;

- * the number of vehicle accidents is among the highest in the world;

- * rape is increasing to an average of one every two minutes;

- * suicides in the white community are dramatically increasing.

Such indicators have led the director of the Unit for Clinical Psychology at the University of Stellenbosch, Hendrik Kotze, to describe South Africa as 'one of the most psychologically ill societies in the world'.

Perhaps the most horrifying indicator of the extent of this breakage is the escalation of domestic violence in the white community. Forty people were killed in family murders during 1987; family murders seem to be almost exclusively a white phenomenon. According to Rev van Arkel, 'South African men - particularly Afrikaans men - have the dubious distinction of committing more family murders than men in any other society in the world'. He relates this phenomenon to 'escalation of violence at all levels of our society'.

Public and private violence

The core component of militarism is a reliance on violence as a solution to problems and conflict. The public and private spheres are connected by a war culture, which includes a central notion of security. The state claims that violence (or force) is necessary to protect state security - but this violence spirals and spreads so that many are fearful and anxious about personal security.

The level of fear for personal security has led one journalist to describe South Africa as 'the frightened society'. Writing in the October 1987 issue of *Living*, Chloe Rolfes describes security as the biggest boom business of the 1980s. According to her, some 20 armed response security firms operate in the Johannesburg area alone.

Some of these security firms are explicitly militarist. For example a local newspaper described a new firm as follows: 'Fire Force Security is the name of an impressive new security company which is run on professional, military lines'.

Some security firms market themselves in a blatantly racist manner. A pamphlet to residents of Johannesburg headed 'Time is Running Out' issued by Linden Sentinel poses the question, 'What is happening to our suburbs?' The answer: 'They are systematically being inhabited by Blacks'.

This fear is also evident in the dramatic increase in arms sales which makes white South Africa one of the most heavily-armed communities in the world.

A war psychosis or siege mentality creates the demand for these security firms and firearms. Violence is the central organising principle in our society: the official or repressive violence of the state and the reactive violence of the oppressed people. But this spiral of violence is not unique to South Africa. It has been described by Dom Helder Camara, Archbishop of Recife, Brazil as follows:

Violence 1: The injustice of oppressive laws and exploitation;

Violence 2: The counter-violence of revolt in riots, bomb attacks, and eventually guerilla warfare;

Violence 3: The action by the authorities to re-establish their control when they resort to imprisonment without trial, torture and the taking of life.

Some kinds of violence are particularly upsetting, such as the 'necklacing' of a suspected police informer. But are we ever shown television pictures of the official killing which takes place in Pretoria? This is not called 'killing' - it is called 'capital punishment' or execution. The late president of the Bar Council, Advocate Ernie Wentzel, noted that the state has the technology in Pretoria Central Prison to hang several people simultaneously. No doubt this too would be upsetting to watch - yet violence by the state is strangely absent from most discussions of the problem of violence.

Secrecy and security

There is some evidence that elements in the white community are becoming intolerant of the suppression of information in the name of 'national security'. For example, in January, the *Sunday Times* reported that six soldiers had died of a virulent strain of malaria caught while in Angola and that scores of others had been admitted to hospital. According to its editorial of 10 January 1988, 'The initial response of the military authorities was to minimise the scale of the epidemic and then to refuse to release the names of the fatalities for "security reasons"... The SADF's reticence to provide information in this case was both inexplicable and

inexcusable. National security was not endangered but the right of families to know elementary details about the health of their servicemen sons and husbands most certainly was'.

The editorial concluded that the SADF was 'indescribably arrogant in its approach to information that should, by any criteria, be in the public domain'.

This points to one of the most alarming aspects of militarism - both here in South Africa and as a global phenomenon: its secrecy. It is through secrecy, through silence - a silence which distorts and damages any attempt to gain understanding - that consent to militarism is secured.

After the October 1987 strike into Angola the minister of defence said: 'South Africa is prepared to pay the price (for freedom), and it knows the price is high'.

High levels of military spending drain resources away from urgent needs in the areas of housing, education and health. There is a clear link between this level of military spending and poverty and deprivation in the rest of the social order. Emigration is a further drain on the skilled personpower needed to tackle these social problems.

In social terms, a society has developed in which personal relationships are fragile and family units fractured as increasing numbers of young people leave the country.

In psychological terms, South African society has become a battlefield littered with the bodies of damaged people.

No society can afford a price so high.

Politics with a price on its head

Defence Minister Magnus Malan set out the policy on 19 February: 'Wherever the ANC is, we will eliminate it', he said.

Nor, he said, would it be only the formally acknowledged South African security forces doing the eliminating. Malan also spoke of a bounty system, where rewards could be paid for information leading to the capture of 'terrorists'.

In the weeks following this statement:

- * The ANC's chief representative in France, Dulcie September, was assassinated in Paris.

- * A 17 kilogram bomb was found outside the ANC's Brussels office - after burst of gunfire had failed to 'eliminate' ANC representative Godfrey Motsepe.

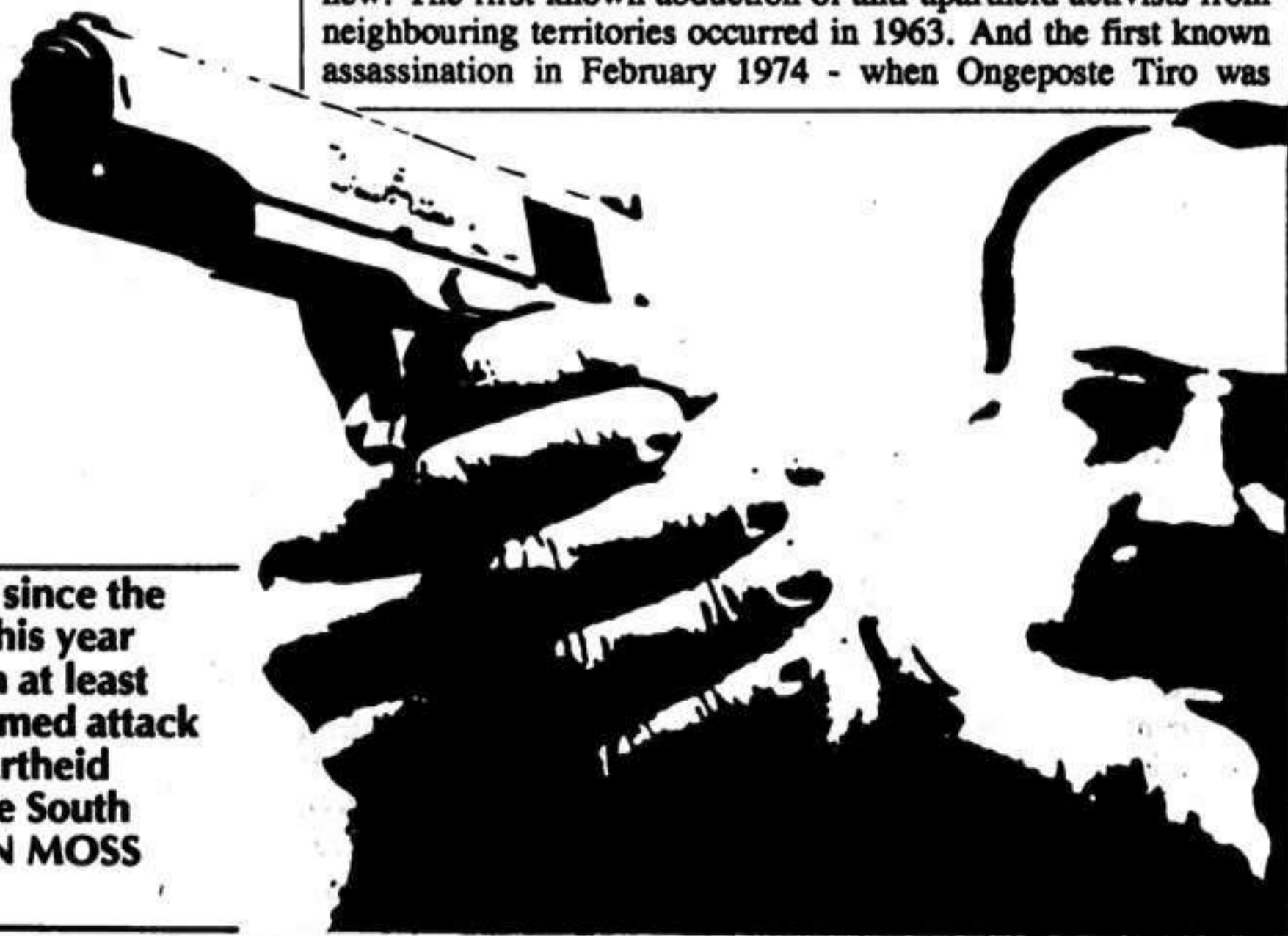
- * An alleged ANC official was shot in Lesotho and, when his would-be assassins failed to kill him, they entered the hospital room in which he was recovering from his wounds and finished the job.

- * And a prominent ANC member and university law professor, Albie Sachs, lost an arm in a car bomb explosion outside his Maputo apartment.

South African government sources have denied involvement in these acts of terror.

They were less coy about a cross-border raid into Botswana, in which three Botswana nationals and a South African exile were savagely murdered and their bodies incinerated. After furious Botswanan accusations of 'murdering innocent civilians in their sleep', South African security sources claimed that one of the four murdered was a senior Umkhonto we Sizwe commander. They did not explain why their representatives poured petrol on the bodies, and set fire to them.

Assassination and abduction of apartheid's opponents is not new. The first known abduction of anti-apartheid activists from neighbouring territories occurred in 1963. And the first known assassination in February 1974 - when Ongeposte Tiro was



Every 12 days since the beginning of this year there has been at least one serious armed attack on an anti-apartheid activist outside South Africa. GLENN MOSS reports.

killed by a letter bomb in Botswana.

The list of victims has mounted steadily since then: Senior ANC representative Joe Gqabi - gunned down in his Harare home in 1980; prominent ANC members Ruth First and Jeanette Curtis (Schoon) - killed in parcel-bomb explosions; the ANC's Ablom Duma and Phyllis Naidoo - badly injured in parcel-bomb blasts; the Nzima couple - killed in Swaziland when a powerful bomb destroyed their car; and Ismail Ebrahim, currently on trial for treason was kidnapped from his Swaziland home and taken directly to security police headquarters in Pretoria.

But in the last few months action against opponents of apartheid - in particular ANC members - appears to have changed from random slaughter to a sustained campaign; from individual covert hits to generalised policy - a policy that would dovetail almost exactly with the statement: 'Wherever the ANC is, we will eliminate it'. Every 12 days since the beginning of the year there has been at least one armed attack on an ANC member living outside South Africa.

Security police assassins?

Evidence in a recently-concluded murder trial of two policemen gives the lie to South Africa's repeated denials of involvement in acts of terror.

Detective Sergeant Robert van der Merwe, recently sentenced to death for his involvement in the killing of two underworld characters because he believed they had ANC links, has testified that 'I did not hesitate to assassinate

the ANC men because I knew it happened before'. Referring to his pocket diary, Van der Merwe told the court that he had been on the South African-Swaziland border on the night of 8 July 1987. There he had talked to four security police members from Pretoria who said that they were on a clandestine mission. Later he overheard them talking about 'the BMW and the weapons' already being over the border.

Sometime late on the night of 8 July 1987, or early the following morning, two senior ANC officials were murdered in Swaziland. They were chased by three white occupants in a BMW motor car, forced off the road, and gunned down.

One of those killed, Cassius Make, was a member of the ANC's national executive committee; the other, Paul Dikeledi, was named by an ANC defector as an active member of Umkhonto we Sizwe.

When Van der Merwe read about the assassination of ANC members, he told the court later, he 'definitely connected the incident with the conversation'.

Police denied responsibility for the murder of Make and Dikeledi.

War and morality

These and other incidents flow from South Africa's low intensity civil war, in which the major armed actors are represented by the South African police and defence force, and the ANC's Umkhonto we Sizwe.

Wars involve many casualties, of which truth and morality are only two. This is probably more true for civil than conventional warfare, with its emphasis on guerilla

and counter-insurgency tactics, and its involvement of civilians.

Yet South African agents have distinguished themselves by conducting a particularly dirty and deceitful war. Support for rebel and terrorist organisations in neighbouring states; military and other attacks on 'soft' and civilian targets; car and parcel bombs aimed at civilians. These have been some of South Africa's tactics of war.

And they have not been confined to destabilisation and bullying of neighbouring countries. Within the country, powerful evidence is mounting that agents of the state are involved in vigilante violence against apartheid's opponents; that rampaging soldiers have been involved in late-night abductions, assaults, interrogations and murders.

Transvaal attorney-general Donald Brunette has recently declined to prosecute eight soldiers accused of abducting a Duduza anti-apartheid activist from his home, taking him into the open veld, and interrogating him at gunpoint while being forced to lie face-down on a grave. According to the victim of this attack, Vusi Mashabane, he only escaped death because the soldiers were initially unsure of his identity. Police investigating the case indicated that these facts were not in dispute, but that the soldiers claimed they were acting in accordance with emergency regulations.

In the ongoing civil case in which 21 families are suing Minister of Law and Order Adriaan Vlok for damages arising out of police action and inaction in vigilante violence at the KTC squatter camp, government has four times

refused lawyers acting for the families access to documentation concerning police and defence force actions during the KTC conflict. The authorities clearly have much to hide concerning the conduct of their 'security forces'.

The South African state believes it has the legal and moral right to attack ANC military targets (including personnel), while the ANC asserts that it conducts its military struggle in accordance with a Geneva Convention protocol covering wars of national liberation.

The ANC could point to South African attacks on civilians in neighbouring states, assassination squads stalking ANC members in Southern Africa and, increasingly, Europe, in its assessment of South African conduct in the war. Pro-government adherents will point to Umkhonto we Sizwe car bombs in civilian urban areas and land mines on farm roads used by farmers, farm workers and their families.

But there is no doubt that thusfar the ANC's war conduct has been substantially more restrained than the South African state's. Of the over 250 ANC guerilla attacks recorded in South Africa last year, only a handful involved civilian casualties. A programme of assassination of political and military leaders has not thusfar featured on Umkhonto we Sizwe's list of actions, neither has the use of parcel bombs sent to civilians been recorded.

Assassination attempts on non-military ANC personnel such as chief representatives in Paris and Brussels, or political intellectuals like Albie Sachs in Maputo, are the equivalent of plans to assassinate South

African diplomats in foreign countries, or apartheid supporting intellectuals in South African universities. Again, there is no indication that Umkhonto we Sizwe has followed this course of action.

In the courts

Disinformation, deception and secrecy are the hallmark of counter-insurgency, destabilisation and covert operations. Yet sometimes the veil lifts sufficiently for those on the outside to catch a glimpse of a world they sometimes did not even know existed.

South Africa's ongoing support for Renamo (MNR) as a means of destabilising and controlling Mozambique is well-documented. But Sergeant Van der Merwe added another piece to the jigsaw puzzle when he explained his belief that illegal covert operations were common in South Africa.

While in Nelspruit, testified van der Merwe, he met a Commandant John Vorster who said he was responsible for liaison between the South African government and an organisation which van der Merwe understood to be Renamo. 'I saw various weapons of communist origin in his garage and I made the inference that they were destined for this organisation', explained Van der Merwe.

In a Zimbabwe court, the South African state stands accused with three Zimbabweans and a Botswanan national who are charged with acts of terrorism aimed at overthrowing Robert Mugabe's government. According to the prosecution, Zimbabwean dissidents often responsible for civilian attacks in Matabeleland have been supported financially and mili-

tarily by agents of the South African state for at least five years.

As far back as February 1983, dissidents met South African agents in Botswana, who allegedly provided the dissidents with weapons, money and medical supplies.

In another Harare court case, six men face charges of murder arising from a January 1988 bomb blast outside an ANC house in Bulawayo. Subsequent to this blast, about 17 people were detained by Zimbabwean police, and Foreign Minister Nathan Shamuyarira claimed that a South African-run sabotage network responsible for a seven-year campaign of bombings and assassinations had been smashed.

According to Shamuyarira, 'The network was based on farmers and other pro-Rhodesian elements in the Bulawayo and Fort Rixon area'. Statements made by its members in detention 'exposed the extensive nature of South African destabilisation from 1981 to 1986, such as the attack on Inkomo Arms dump in 1981 up to the recent car-bomb attack in Bulawayo'. The arrested agents also allegedly revealed how they obtained arms from South African agents, and were paid through South African banks.

Defence lawyers for the six accused have said that, for the moment at least, their clients are cooperating with the investigation. And a Zimbabwean official said the six had supplied 'an amazing amount of information' in an investigation which is expected to be highly embarrassing for the South African government.

The South African Defence Force has recently acknow-

ledged that it runs agents in Zimbabwe. Reacting to a report that Pretoria had paid Richard Woodcroft R40 000 in an out-of-court settlement after Woodcroft claimed he had been duped into assisting a South African raid in Zimbabwe, a defence force spokesman said: 'The SADF confirms an amount was offered to Woodcroft which he accepted. The amount was offered to him because the SADF regarded him as its agent and consequently wished to compensate him'.

Woodcroft spent 18 months in detention in Zimbabwe for alleged complicity in the May 1986 South African raid on ANC buildings in Harare.

And a Zambian court recently sentenced an alleged SADF member, Isaiah Moyo (32), to 50 years imprisonment. A Lusaka high court judge found that the prosecution had proved that between October 1982 and March 1986 Moyo collected information about Zambian strategic installations and ANC and Swapo installations. This information was passed onto a Peter Koeke-moer, identified as an SADF officer.

International terrorism

The South African civil war has serious effects on Southern Africa. And frontline state leaders have long viewed the South African government as an exporter of terrorism.

But the effects of this conflict have now moved further afield, with allegations that South African-backed and organised death squads are hunting ANC leaders in Europe, the United Kingdom and the USA.

Fench newspapers have named an alleged agent of

South Africa's National Intelligence Service (NIS) as being responsible for the assassination of Dulcie September. Many believe that the attempted murder of the ANC's Brussels chief, Godfrey Motsepe, and the subsequent discovery of a bomb outside the ANC's Belgium office, can be traced back to similar initiatives.

British police have long been aware of a 'hit-list' of ANC leaders, and Scotland Yard is providing extra protection for ANC officials living in London.

A former US mercenary, Jack Terrell, has claimed that South African intelligence agents asked him to form an eight-man 'hit team' to assassinate ANC sympathisers and members in the US. He ultimately decided not to take part in the scheme, and disclosed the offer to FBI agents in July 1986.

Subsequently, FBI agents warned ANC representatives in the US to be alert to the possibility of right-wing hit squads.

Assassination and deception, destabilisation and disinformation: these are the weapons of war which have replaced John Vorster and Jimmy Kruger's era of legally-sanctioned repression. They reflect the dominance of Magnus Malan's military structures within the state, and raise dilemmas of universal significance for all touched by South Africa's expanding civil war.

What, for example, does the ordinary citizen do when the ruling government places itself outside the law? When police squads enter foreign countries to assassinate political opponents? When soldiers murder and politicians support them?

And when senior cabinet minister's boast of 'bounty systems' and 'elimination' as a response to political opposition?

Linking the South African state to each and every assassination or bomb blast aimed at ANC members may not be possible. But evidence is mounting that South Africa is ruled by a rogue government which will not baulk at international terrorism as a means of controlling opposition to its apartheid-ruled society.

During the trial of Sergeant Van der Merwe, his defence council argued that his client had believed he was acting in the national interest when he shot people he thought were ANC members.

Referring to Magnus Malan's promise to 'eliminate the ANC', Advocate Bill Maritz argued that 'The government has presented us with a dangerous double standard in declaring that if it is in the national interest, we will act against the ANC wherever they are.

'Members of the defence force who took part in the Botswana raid...will probably be given medals - yet my client...who believed he was doing exactly the same, stands in the shadow of the gallows'.

Whether the actions of agents operating in apartheid's interests are formally approved at cabinet level, or national security council level or not at all, is immaterial. On 19 February Defence Minister Magnus Malan announced a policy. Ultimately, the government must take responsibility for the creation of a climate in which members of its 'security forces' can act without regard to normal national or international law.

Winning white support for democracy

It is often said that liberation will only be won in South Africa through the strength of the mass movement. This is true. But by itself it is not enough.

The struggle for liberation is against an opposing force of immense power and resource. If both the mass movement and the forces of apartheid are strong, stalemate rather than liberation may result.

Only when the democratic movement is very powerful and when apartheid forces become too weak to continue ruling will the day of liberation be in sight. It is therefore necessary to consider strengths and weaknesses dialectically - in relation to the strengths and weaknesses of the enemy.

A strong and well-organised ruling class alliance with a clear political programme, a powerful state and a broad support base among the population makes for an enemy which is virtually unbeatable.

This was the situation until recently in South Africa. Not only was the apartheid state strong and relatively unified, but the majority of whites had

Working to win support from the white bloc for democratic positions involves tactics and alliances very different from those formed amongst the oppressed. But, argues the UDF-affiliated Johannesburg Democratic Action Committee (Jodac), compromises necessary to achieve this are an integral part of the liberation struggle, which can be won only by strengthening the democratic movement at the same time as weakening the ruling bloc.

confidence in National Party rule, and most important forces within the white ruling bloc had faith in the political and ideological programme of apartheid.

However, the sustained and far-reaching mass resistance in the period 1984-7, coupled with the deep political and economic crisis of apartheid, has altered this. Despite the efforts of the apartheid state to contain the crisis with repression, news blackouts and a steady barrage of propaganda, deep divisions have appeared

in the ruling bloc. The demise and paralysis of the Progressive Federal Party; the fracturing of Afrikaner unity; the moral and political bankruptcy of the Nationalist government; the rise of new groupings such as Idasa, the NDM and the independents; the increase of dissidence amongst churches, business, intellectuals and youth; and the success of the Five Freedoms Forum conference: all are signs of greater fluidity and division in white politics.

This opens up the possibility of the ruling bloc being weakened to a point where there is little unity of purpose and no clear ideological cohesion on the major political and economic issues. Divisions between different factions in the National Party, government and the state could deepen, paralysing state action.

There is a potential for important ruling bloc forces to oppose the state, and its strategies. Some could lose faith in minority rule, lose their will to defend it and even look to the democratic move-

ment for guidance. This situation does not yet exist, although conditions are ripening for its emergence.

These new conditions have arisen as a result of the mass resistance launched over the 1980s. But mass resistance on its own may not weaken and divide the ruling bloc. White democrats need to campaign and organise actively in the white bloc so as to win broad support for the democratic movement, and to weaken and isolate the apartheid regime.

It is not necessary for the broad anti-apartheid alliance to adopt the full political programme of the democratic movement, which is made up of a wide grouping of organisations with a shared commitment to a non-racial, united and democratic future. The democratic movement often refers specifically to organisations which subscribe to the Freedom Charter, and are affiliated to the UDF or Cosatu. The broadness of the anti-apartheid alliance will enable it to reach whites that the democratic movement as such could never reach, and mobilise them against apartheid.

Shaken - but not defeated

Many have misconceptions about this approach to working in white areas. Some liberals (including a few of a 'workerist' bent) have suggested that transformation in South Africa is impossible. The state of emergency, they argue, has proved the limitations of taking on the state directly. The way forward is through 'incremental' change by working with (and within) the state for reform - in the same way that the trade unions have won reforms and wage increases through collective bargaining.

But it is not possible for the complete elimination of apartheid (ie a transition to majority rule) to come about through the government's reform programme.

All the current evidence suggests that the state is moving in the direction of a military-dominated autocracy rather than a non-racial democracy. Until there is some form of transfer of power the post-apartheid era cannot begin.

And it is not illuminating to compare gains at the workplace and reforms in labour legislation won through 'constructive engagement' with the bosses and the state, with winning state power through comparable methods. The factory floor is a unique arena of conflict with dynamics very different to those of the broader political arena.

This view of 'incremental change' usually assumes that the mass movement is very weakened or about to be defeated, demonstrating lack of faith in the potential of mass struggle. This pessimism fails to acknowledge that mass struggles of the last period have registered significant successes. These include the weakening of the tri-cameral parliament, and discrediting of the black local authorities to an extent which has robbed the apartheid state of any viable political strategy in the oppressed communities.

These successes have created confusion and division within the ruling bloc, opening up potential for broad alliances. The strength and resilience of mass resistance has forced a range of groupings in the middle ground to see the writing on the wall, to recognise the importance of the democratic movement, and to seek

alliances with it. And a strategy of broad alliances continues to depend on the strength and success of the mass movement.

Over the last 18 months, sectors of the democratic movement have suffered severe setbacks as a result of state repression. In some areas this has forced it into temporary retreat, and more generally has necessitated a re-assessment of strategies.

However, even in this period, important successes have been noted: the growth of Cosatu, the success of the railway, post office and other major strikes, the formation of national youth, student, women's and cultural bodies, the growing national and international recognition of the ANC as a key to resolving the crisis and the gains made in terms of isolating white South Africa internationally. The setbacks of the 1980s are not reminiscent of those of the 1960s. The democratic movement has been shaken, but not defeated.

Questioning broad alliances

For some observers, the democratic movement is being forced into alliances by these recent setbacks. This analysis of politics and assessment of the current balance of forces is faulty. However, many committed activists are asking important and critical questions regarding the strategy of broad alliances. Among these questions are the following:

Does engaging in broad alliances not show a lack of faith in the masses, leading to compromises and a weakening of the mass struggle?

Building broad alliances in the ruling bloc, and streng-

thening mass organisation and action, are not mutually exclusive. They are complementary parts of an overall strategy to achieve liberation in South Africa - to strengthen the democratic movement on the one hand, and weaken the apartheid regime on the other.

The success of any strategy in gaining ground in the ruling bloc, far from weakening or compromising the mass movement, actually depends on the strength of the mass movement.

White democrats gain their credibility in white politics precisely because of their relation to the organisations of the mass movement. They command respect through affiliation to the United Democratic Front.

Progress in the white arena can help to protect and advance the mass movement. White democrats contribute to this partly by taking the message of the democratic movement into the white arena, and thus into the ruling bloc, and partly by exposing and campaigning against the brutalities of state repression. In this way it is possible to block some of the state's blows. One example of this is the success of the 'Free the Children' campaign.

A more complex example is provided by the Pietermaritzburg 'peace process'. The UDF and Cosatu have shown, by their preparedness to negotiate through the Chamber of Commerce, and by their just and principled approach to the problem of violence, that Inkatha is the aggressor and a close ally of the state. The result is that important sectors of white opinion are being alienated from Inkatha; this is forcing Inkatha onto the de-

fensive at an ideological level. The UDF and Cosatu have, in the process won the moral highground in Pietermaritzburg politics.

By developing relations with groups like Idasa, the NDM and the PFP, are you not giving them the opportunity and credibility to hijack the democratic struggle?

Caution about many of the groups in the middle ground is correct. But it is wrong to see all those groups and individuals as agents of capitalism or imperialism. This would be a one-dimensional view of politics. Between the apartheid state and the democratic movement there is a political middle ground, made up of a range of organisations and individuals. Many of these share some of the democratic movement's concerns without accepting its whole programme.

They have their own history, their own reasons for coming into existence, their own agendas. They cannot simply be assumed to represent the direct interests of capital or imperialism or to have a crude interest in co-opting democratic politics. This middle ground constitutes a site of struggle and the risks involved have to be concretely weighed in terms of the political gains or losses that can be made in working in this way. This is more complex than the simple notion of 'hijacking' allows and depends on an assessment of the balance of forces within the middle ground and the concrete implications of tangling with the PFP or the NDM.

What about imperialism itself? By working in this way are you not allowing imper-

ialist forces a bridgehead into the democratic movement, from which they can undermine and dilute the struggle?

Imperialism is not a monolithic force that simply 'possesses' all that it touches. It operates directly through the actions of American and British governments and companies, as well as through a variety of informal attempts to gain influence and control, eg funding, education programmes, media, establishing links with various organisations and individuals and so on.

Imperialism engages in a struggle to gain influence and control, and one of the critical arenas for this struggle is precisely the middle ground. It seldom has ready-made agents, but rather tries to recruit them.

The reformist forces and groups that exist in the middle ground of white politics can fit easily into an imperialist agenda for South Africa. But they can also be incorporated into a democratic agenda. By entering into alliances on the middle ground, white democrats are not only weakening apartheid. They are also limiting the options open to imperialism. They are shifting the moral, ideological and organisational framework within which middle ground politics operates. One consequence of this is the pre-emption of destructive imperialist intervention.

An example of this is provided by the issue of negotiations. Currently the major imperialist forces portray the South African crisis as a war between two intractable and unreasonable parties - the South African government and

the ANC. At the same time, they suggest that the ANC is simply one amongst a number of anti-apartheid organisations, and that it should not be given a dominant position in negotiations. Thatcher and Reagan are pressurising both parties to be 'reasonable' and come to the negotiating table, while aiming to dilute the power and weight of the ANC as much as possible. Many of the groups on the middle ground probably agree with this approach.

The view of the democratic movement is that the ANC has always been ready to negotiate, but that the government is the violent party which refuses to negotiate seriously. The source of the civil war is apartheid, and it is the Nationalists who have refused to abandon this policy and who have insisted on fighting rather than talking. Therefore pressure needs to be brought to bear on the government to come to the table and seriously negotiate the end of apartheid. It is also important that negotiations take place between the main forces as far as possible.

The task in the middle ground is to put forward this view and persuade other groups to support it, thus isolating and pressurising the government and *at the same time* discrediting the position of imperialism and reducing its influence.

But what about big business? How can you be trying to develop closer relations with the same capitalists whom workers are fighting every day of their lives? Are you not ignoring the fact that the multi-nationals are as much the enemy as PW Botha?

The working class and the

oppressed have fundamentally different interests to those of the capitalist class. It is essential that everything possible is done to support the struggle of the working class, and also that nothing we do provides an obstacle to the achievement to both the short- and the long-term goals of the workers.

But the interests of big business and the apartheid state do not always coincide. In certain respects the gulf between the two has widened. For example, most elements of big business would like to see the repeal of the Group Areas Act. The government has made it clear that this is not on the cards for the moment.

Likewise, some important businessmen have called for the release of Mandela, and a few for an end to the emergency.

The fact that these same businessmen may be tempted to call in the police when their workers go on strike should not be a surprise. This is an area where their interests tend to be with the apartheid state rather than the democratic movement.

White democrats working in the middle ground need to exacerbate the divisions between capital and the state. They must ensure that on as many issues as possible capital supports at least the democratic movement's short-term demands, is susceptible to mass pressure and open to influence.

Over the last year government attacks on Chris Ball, the Dakar safari and the talks between business and the ANC have contributed to business shying away from politics in general and the democratic movement in particular. Far from trying to use its influence

to 'buy out the democratic movement', business is instead looking in the opposite direction, having been silenced by prosperity and threats.

In the short term it is important to do everything possible to re-open the cracks between capital and the state, win business support even on limited issues and thereby undermine the unity of the ruling bloc. In the longer term a working relationship and co-operation between business and the democratic movement needs to be cemented.

There ought to be no illusions about the extent to which a post-apartheid society will rely on capital's knowledge and resources. The necessary alliance needs to be built now, without any delusions about the fundamental differences dividing business and the democratic movement.

The experience of other struggles

The arguments for participating in broad alliances are partly based on the historical experience of other struggles. Activists in the Philippines, for instance, blame themselves for not working effectively in the middle ground. This left the middle classes to provide a firm foundation for Cory Aquino's government, which is precisely the solution which most favours American imperialism. In Chile too, Popular Unity failed to win over the middle classes, which proceeded to undermine and sabotage the Allende government and open the way for American intervention and the military coup.

In Nicaragua, on the other hand, the Sandinista's managed an astute and mature handling of contradictions be-

tween the middle classes and Somoza, between local capitalists and Somoza and American capital, and between the American government and the social-democratic parties in Europe. This allowed them to win hegemony both within Nicaragua and internationally, and effectively tie America's hands and prevent intervention by the Carter government. Even today, the Contras have no social base inside the country and are kept going solely by the financial injections of the rabidly interventionist Reagan administration.

Work in the middle ground is strategically critical if the politics of the democratic movement is to win hegemony and undermine the social base of the present order.

It is also critical for the future to ensure the broadest possible social base for a people's government after liberation, and the narrowest possible base for counter-revolution, both in the form of an armed right wing, and economic sabotage. The acceptance and respect, if not the active support, of powerful sectors of white society for the democratic movement has to be won to limit the potential for post-liberation reaction.

Tactics and goals in alliance politics

Alliance politics distinguishes between overall goals, and strategy and tactics. We need to be firm and uncompromising in our goals, while striving for strategic and tactical flexibility.

The democratic movement's goals are well-known: establishment of a non-racial democratic society based on the Freedom Charter, which envisages a considerable

degree of redistribution of wealth.

The overall strategy for achieving this is to build and strengthen the democratic movement, based primarily on mass organisation, and to weaken and isolate the forces of apartheid by winning hegemony within the broad ranks of opposition forces. This will ensure the deepest possible political and social transformation in a new South Africa.

These goals and overall strategy necessarily entail alliances. This has always been a component of national democratic struggle, and requires entry into any alliance that will strengthen opposition to apartheid and weaken apartheid itself.

But this does not involve entry into any and every available alliance. Alliances which force compromise in the development of mass organisation can never be made. If, for instance, an alliance with business on a specific issue required the curbing and weakening of trade unions and the demands of workers, it would be unacceptable.

Nor is a relationship which strengthens apartheid acceptable. The democratic movement could not enter into an alliance with the Labour Party and other tricameral groupings in 1984 because this would have served apartheid's interests.

These principles provide a clear political perspective from which to assess entry into a specific alliance: will the alliance advance overall goals and strategy, or subvert them by compromising goals and weakening mass struggle? These are concrete strategic and tactical questions requiring conjunctural analysis: they

cannot be decided through abstract categories.

The politics of alliances

Any alliance requires compromise and flexibility. The type of compromise and flexibility demanded will depend on the conjuncture, the specific terrain of struggle, overall balance of forces, etc. Again, this is a concrete tactical question.

White politics, ie politics in the ruling bloc, differs immensely from politics amongst the oppressed. The kinds of compromises and flexibility required for building alliances here will be decided by the political, cultural and ideological terrain of white politics. Features of the white political terrain include the following:

- * while a broad layer of whites oppose apartheid, they do not support one-person-one-vote in a non-racial democracy. They are attracted by the idea of 'group rights' (and privileges);

- * whites are extremely insecure about the future;

- * whites are generally committed to parliamentary, reformist politics;

- * whites generally hold a fundamental belief in 'free-enterprise' capitalism;

- * they have a benign attitude to the western imperialist countries, and support the Thatcher-Reagan approach to South Africa;

- * they hold to a very firm anti-sanctions position.

Building broad alliances with white opposition groupings will have to accommodate these core-beliefs. Democrats cannot demand that the Freedom Charter be the guiding document for all alliances, or that all alliances should pass resolutions condemning imperialism, capitalism and

calling for sanctions.

Examples of valuable compromises made in the past include the case of the End Conscription Campaign, which has several UDF affiliates and many UDF supporting activists. But the ECC decided not to affiliate to the UDF, since that would narrow its base, cutting off many young whites opposed to conscription, but not necessarily seeing themselves as UDF supporters. This has not weakened the democratic movement, it has broadened opposition to apartheid war, and awakened a critical attitude among young whites.

Similarly, given the belief in parliament held by most whites, it would be unwise for white democrats working in broad alliances to adopt a hands-off approach to white parliamentary groupings. There is no reason why this should necessarily compromise the opposition of the democratic movement to the coloured and Indian parliaments. If white democrats were to refuse to work with parliamentary groupings in the white community, they would isolate themselves from the broad grouping in their community who oppose apartheid, and thus weaken opposition to apartheid.

Democrats working in broad white politics may have to march to a different drum from those working in the oppressed communities or in UDF affiliates. That does not make them unprincipled sell-outs or collaborators. Their actions are necessary for the advancement of overall goals and strategy. The nature of the alliance demands this.

Within such a broad anti-apartheid alliance in the white

community, there will be ideological competition and arguments between different groups. This is fruitful and important. Some will try to persuade supporters of the democratic movement by the force of their arguments; and democrats will try to persuade them likewise. In this way we hope to increase white understanding of and respect for the UDF, and win their support for some democratic positions.

But this should not be pushed to the point where it jeopardises the alliance itself. Thus when the Five Freedoms Forum decided that Bob Tucker should speak in support of capitalism at the FFF conference, it would have been wrong for white democrats to withdraw, even though many of them reject capitalism. Just as a committed capitalist can put forward his or her position, so the UDF can claim the right to put forward its views.

Establishing the hegemony of the democratic movement

Working within a broad alliance will do more than simply build opposition to apartheid. It can win the respect of allies by the strength of organisation, political maturity, clarity of vision, and ability to unify the forces on the middle ground. If this is achieved, broad support for a democratic position can be won even if our allies never join us or subscribe to the democratic movement's full programme.

The struggle for political power is not simply a question of building organisations, recruiting new members, or engaging in mass action. A critical dimension of the overall struggle is the moral and ideological struggle to estab-

lish the national hegemony of the democratic movement.

Ultimately, this means demonstrating - even to those who disagree with us - that it is the only force capable of resolving the political and economic crisis facing the nation. We must show that the broad democratic movement is the only political force that can lead the nation to peace, justice and democracy, and heal the ravages of civil war, racial hatred and fear.

Entering broad alliances and winning the confidence and respect of our allies, without trying to impose our view on them, is a vital dimension of establishing the democratic movement's hegemony. Building this involves at the same time demoralising, undermining and isolating the forces of apartheid.

Participation in a broad anti-apartheid alliance will allow democrats to deepen and extend their hegemony into the white ruling bloc; expose the political and moral bankruptcy and paralysis of the apartheid state; show that the state is responsible for crisis, violence and civil war; and demonstrate that only the democratic movement has a clear programme for resolving the crisis through its programme for non-racial democracy.

There can be no principled or theoretical objection to building broad alliances in white politics. The utmost strategic and tactical flexibility is necessary, as long as it advances the overall struggle for the end of apartheid, and does not compromise the goals or overall strategy of the democratic movement: strengthening the mass movement and weakening the forces of apartheid.

LABOUR TRENDS:

20 February - 30 March 1988

The labour movement survived 1987 despite ongoing setbacks: intensified repression, including the detention of unionists; severe losses during the mine strike; the defeat of the metal strike initiative; mass dismissals; the bombing of union offices; and police and vigilante harassment.

The state's attempts to curtail union power are taking place on a wider scale than in the past, and on different levels. It is stepping up its attempts to suppress the liberation movement by increasing the number of laws which restrict or re-direct possible oppositional activities: the proposed Labour Relations Amendment Bill; deregulation and privatisation plans; threatened restrictions on funding; increasing restrictions on the media; and the restrictions imposed on organisations, in particular Cosatu.

These attempts will not necessarily contain general militancy and anger - but they will put heavy demands on the union movement's organisational strength.

According to SARS monitoring, 23 095 workers were involved in strikes and disputes in the period 20 February to 30 March 1988. Unions in the metal, commercial catering and chemical sectors were involved in annual wage negotiations during this period.

Most affected by strike action was the metal, motor and engineering sector, reflecting a constant high level of activity by Numsa in particular since January this year.

In general, strikes were short - averaging between two days and a week. Most were over wages and working conditions, while a few involved the dismissal of fellow employees. At least seven disputes were referred to the Industrial court and another 12 are awaiting conciliation board applications.

Police involvement in union matters was reported in at least three companies: Renown Pork Packers - 120

workers; Transparent Packaging - 55 workers; and Intercity - 50 workers. Police action at Renown and Intercity resulted in several workers being injured.

Cases of management physically assaulting employees were reported at Sasco's Bloemfontein Bakery, where Fawu organises, and at Mainline Carriers in Wadeville, where TGWU organises. At Terreblanche, a Vereeniging transport company, TGWU members have demanded that assaults on workers be stopped.

Management continues to use lockouts and dismissals in dealing with disputes: lockouts at Royal Beechnut - 500 workers, and Transparent Packaging - 55 workers; dismissals at Renown Pork Packers - 120 workers, Intercity - 70 workers, and Protea - 65 workers.

Wage negotiations

Twenty companies were reported to be involved in wage negotiations and five of these were completed in the period 20 February to 30 March.

If initial management responses to union demands are anything to go by, it is possible that some of the major wage negotiations will end in deadlock: the alliance of four IMF unions versus metal employers' organisation Seifsa (see p 7), and the Cawusa-OK Bazaars negotiations being obvious examples. But there are indications that some unions are questioning the wisdom of large-scale strike action in the present context. The metal wage talks will give an indication of the value of continued union participation in industrial councils.

The present repressive climate has not affected the content of union demands. The living wage demand is still very visible, although it is not being fought for by quite as many unions as last year. This year, most unions have dropped the demand that PAYE deductions be scrapped. Demands which have been carried through

are those for a 40-hour week, worker holidays on May Day and 16 June, and a more recent demand for a holiday on 21 March (Sharpeville Day). The CWU has declared disputes with the major oil companies - involving more than 1 500 workers. Shop stewards in this industry are meeting to discuss further action, and there is a possibility of oil company workers considering a joint strike if demands are not met.

Cawusa was in dispute with Pick 'n Pay and Triangle Furnishers, bringing the number of retail industry workers engaged in dispute to over 14 000.

In the OK strike of 1986-87 about 10 000 Cawusa workers held out for ten weeks, costing the union well over R100 000 in strike pay. At present, in the wake of intense internal disputes which resulted in substantial legal costs, Cawusa seems to be in a weaker financial position.

Despite this, the union has made substantial wage and related demands of the OK: an across-the-board increase of R300-a-month; R700-a-month minimum wage; a 40-hour week; no PAYE; holidays on May Day, 16 June and 21 March; a 13th cheque; full disclosure of financial statements; 25% staff discounts; 10% commission and a basic salary of R650 for commissioned staff. OK management has thus far offered a R56 across-the-board monthly increase or a R80 monthly increase in two stages over the next seven months.

Workers in the transport sector have focused on bread-and-butter issues, largely leaving out overtly political demands. The major issues identified were wages, job security and hours of work. Transport workers are paid relatively low wages compared to other sectors and the hours of work range from 14 to 17 hours a day, in some cases seven days a week. TGWU is attempting to consolidate workers nationally around

these basic issues.

The food, clothing and paper/wood unions conduct most of their major wage negotiations from mid-year to year end. However wage negotiations are taking place on a smaller scale at plant level, and examples include: Maister Outdoor Marketing and Ppwawu; Transparent Packaging and Ppwawu; Actwusa and Berg River Textiles; Actwusa and Mooi River Textiles; Royal Beechnut and Fawu; UTC and Fawu.

Parental rights

Unions are beginning to make strides in negotiating maternity and paternity agreements, an issue first initiated by Cawusa in 1983. Cawusa recently researched the issue and is currently negotiating parental rights agreements at Pick 'n Pay, Checkers and EMI.

The main demands include: elimination of discrimination based on sex and gender; that working parents must be able to exercise their parental responsibilities; that both men and women have the right to hold a job, lead a normal family life, work under healthy and safe conditions and give their children the necessary care and attention; that since the company profits from workers' labour it should contribute directly towards the next generation of workers.

At present Numsa is looking at Cawusa's research, and other unions are likely to take up the issue.

Provident funds

The demand for adequate housing has gained momentum this year. Unions in almost every sector are involved in research into adequate housing schemes for their members. In most cases, the finance required for housing is being sought from company provident funds.

Numsa and Metal Box have, through their provident fund, employed a researcher to work on a fea-

ible housing scheme for Metal Box workers. The scheme will probably be financed by the provident fund.

Numsa has commissioned researchers to examine housing possibilities at Iscor and Escom. The union has also proposed to Selfsa that the industry's pension fund be converted to a provident fund.

Num is also researching a provident fund scheme, and is examining the feasibility of housing schemes for workers and their families. The union is expected to draw up a comprehensive housing policy soon. Last year, migrant workers at seven Anglo mines in the Eastern Transvaal brought their families to live with them in the hostels, forcing management to address the issue of migrant labour.

Ccawusa members have also begun to pressure their union to negotiate alternative pension and housing schemes.

In a precedent-setting agreement with Robertsons, Cosatu's Fawu negotiated the first non-contributory provident fund in which the employer is the sole contributor. Management and workers will control and administer the fund jointly and management's contributions to the fund will be back-dated to 1952. Fawu is also negotiating provident fund agreements at ICS and Coca-Cola.

Thus unions in many sectors are addressing issues of housing, provident funds or alternative pension funds. Unions see as a most important factor that workers and management are equally represented on the boards and in the administration of these funds.

Mine safety agreement

The department of mineral and energy affairs annual report for 1986 revealed that 706 miners died on South African mines in 1985, and the number of accidents for that year totalled 14 820. There were 800 deaths in 1986 and 12 709 accidents.

Against this background, Num recently made a major breakthrough in signing a health and safety agreement with Phalaborwa Mining

Company. This agreement is the first between a South African mine and a union and provides for the recognition of 100 safety stewards elected by miners. The safety stewards will inspect the mines at least once a month and will participate in accident enquiries.

Num hopes to sign similar agreements at other mines soon. The Chamber of Mines' position is that it will not negotiate the issue of health and safety, and that the issue should be taken up with individual mines.

The public sector

The public sector could be hit by another massive strike this year. Potwa fears the post and telecommunications department will not meet the agreement drawn up after last year's strike, where it was agreed that post and telecommunication workers would get equal pay for equal work by 1 April. Potwa feels the wage freeze declared for all civil service workers will make it impossible for the department to fulfil its promise.

Potwa says it will review the position at the end of April - and if the agreement is not met, there may be a strike. But strike action will depend largely upon whether the state succeeds in silencing workers through the Post Office Service Bill. This bill contains clauses which restrict public sector workers' ability to take industrial action. Potwa believes this bill is being rushed through parliament in an attempt to prevent a strike.

Workers in SA Transport Services apparently face similar legislation in the SATS Labour Bill. Sarhwu and Potwa are discussing the issue and looking at the possibilities of joint action.

All unions in the public and municipal sectors have openly rejected the public sector wage freeze. Currently Sarhwu, Nehawu, Samwu and Namda are meeting to discuss a joint strategy. The NUPSW, a Nactu affiliate, also believes unity is crucial in fighting the wage freeze, and is waiting for a response on the wage freeze from its members.

In the courts

The industrial court ruling in the BTR-Sarmcol case last year raised the issue of the validity of using the court to resolve disputes. The court's recent ruling in favour of the union in the dispute between Sentrachem and Sacwu therefore came as something of a surprise.

The court ordered Sentrachem to re-employ all dismissed workers who participated in a strike which the court found to be 'legitimate'.

Sentrachem management was also instructed to abolish wage discrimination on the grounds of race by August 1988. This was the first time wage discrimination has been addressed in court so clearly.

In two other cases, Natal Die Casting and Marievale, the industrial court also gave protection to dismissed legal strikers. In the Marievale case in 1985, the court ordered the reinstatement of 413 workers, and in the Natal Die Castings case in 1986 it ordered the reinstatement of 110 workers - an issue which was confirmed by the supreme court in March 1987.

Referring to the above cases, Advocate Edwin Cameron states in the publication *Employment Law*: 'They have not changed the general pattern, which is that strikers, on the whole, are given scant sympathy by the industrial court'. He views all three cases as exceptional. John Brand, the attorney for Mawu in the Sarmcol case, is also not very optimistic. He said the Sentrachem case was 'the last ray of hope before the dark ages'.

Two major out-of-court settlements took place during the period reviewed. The first settlement - between Numsa and Iscor arising out of a wage strike last year - does not fundamentally change the situation of the workers involved. Iscor's wage offer remains the same as it offered at the time of the strike - 34 cents-an-hour - but includes improvements in fringe benefits.

The second out-of-court settlement was between Num and Anglo American.

This, the country's largest ever dismissal settlement, includes the reinstatement and compensation of 9 500 workers, and at least 18 weeks pay for 6 000 who will not be rehired. But differences between the two parties over the meaning of the word 'pay', and what benefits this term includes, could lead to a new round of arbitration.

The parties also differed widely on the estimates of the value of the settlement. Anglo put the figure at R35-million while Num estimated R60-million. The Num estimate was based on workers' cash earnings plus non-monetary benefits: board, lodging and other fringe benefits. Anglo calculated on the basis of cash earnings.

Labour Relations Bill

The implications of the Labour Relations Amendment Bill created the possibility of large-scale demonstrations. But so far, reaction has taken the form of propaganda, pamphlets, posters, union discussions, and demonstrations at individual factories - particularly those organised by CWIU and Numsa. Taking it a step further, workers belonging to Ppwawu, Numsa and Fawu organised mass placard demonstrations on two occasions involving close to 2 000 workers in the Industria area. Nactu is apparently concentrating on discussing the bill at shop-floor level.

Union attempts to get employer assistance in countering the bill met with little success. According to Cosatu, employers refused to reject the legislation outright since they had problems with only certain clauses. But Fawu did manage to get one employer, Anchor Yeast in Industria, to reject the bill outright. The company has written to the government to explain its position.

Cosatu's national congress to discuss its response to the bill has been postponed to 6 May. Any national or local Cosatu action will be decided by delegates to this congress.

COMPANY	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS
Strikes and Disputes: TRANSVAAL				
Alberton Old Age Home Alberton	NUPSW	55	16.03.88	Workers went on strike over union recognition and management's refusal to talk to them as a group. Management was only prepared to talk to individuals who were not allowed to raise issues affecting other workers. The workers were dismissed on 28 March. NUPSW instructed its lawyers to handle the matter.
Argus Printing and Publishing and Times Media Ltd	Mwasa	2 000	January 88-22.02.88	Mwasa and the two major English language newspaper groups settled their dispute over wages and working conditions. The union demanded a 20% increase. Settlement was reached on a 17% increase for weekly paid workers and 12% across-the-board increase for monthly paid workers.
Coca-Cola	Fawu	2 300	March 88	Fawu was negotiating a provident fund agreement with Coca-Cola to replace the existing pension fund. Fawu says the problem with the existing pension fund is the lack of consultation with workers over the fund's management and investment of their contributions in state securities. The provident fund, if agreed upon, will restrict investment in government securities. Fawu also demanded equal representation on the board of trustees and direct worker participation in the management of the fund; that workers be allowed to borrow money from the scheme for housing purposes; that workers be entitled to a cash refund made up of the member's full contribution and interest plus a portion of the company's contribution also with full interest; if a worker is dismissed after ten years service, he or she should be paid back all contributions made by both the employer and employee, together with the full interest earned by the investment and in the event of a permanent disablement the worker should be paid five years of earnings. The fund will benefit over 2 300 Fawu members at Coca-Cola.
ICS	Fawu	5 150	March 88	Fawu was negotiating a provident fund agreement similar to the one being negotiated at Coca-Cola.
Intercity Wadeville	TGWU	70	23.03.88	Management dismissed 70 workers whom they claimed forged their clock cards. The union said workers were told they could come to work late on 21 March and their cards would be clocked normally, which the supervisor did when workers arrived late. Management instituted a disciplinary hearing, sparking off a strike. Police were called in and workers were beaten up. Workers were asked to return to work the next day or face dismissal. TGWU and management were discussing the issue.
Iscor Vanderbijlpark	Numsa	7 000	10.03.88	Iscor and Numsa reached an out-of-court settlement arising from a wage strike in July last year. Numsa launched an industrial court application after mediation failed to settle the dispute. The agreement did not change Iscor's wage offer of 34c an hour, but it incorporates improvements in fringe benefits. Iscor is to introduce a R13,50 housing allowance for each employee and deductions for board and lodging will be reduced from R48,50 a month to R14,50 a month, excluding food.
Maganese Metal Company Nelspruit	Numsa	113	07-08.03.88	About 113 workers from one department at Maganese Metal embarked on a go-slow over wage increases. The workers demanded an increase because they felt the work in their department was heavier than that in other departments. After negotiations with the union, management agreed to a 7c-an-hour wage increase for workers in that department.
Mainline Carriers Wadeville	TGWU	100	22-23.03.88	Workers went on strike after management issued them with a final warning for supporting the 21 March stayaway. TGWU said management assaulted two shop stewards whom they called in to discuss the issue. The shop stewards laid charges of assault against management. Workers returned to work while TGWU negotiated withdrawal of the final warning.
Maister Outdoor Marketing Industria	Ppwawu	300	24.02-09.03.88	Workers went on strike after a deadlock in wage negotiations. Ppwawu demanded an across-the-board wage increase of R31 a week, paid holidays on 16 June, May Day and 21 March, and eight days paternity and compassionate leave combined. Management offered R24,50 a week and would not consider the other demands. Workers returned to work after two weeks when management obtained a court interdict ruling the strike illegal. Ppwawu claimed management was clearly anti-union and was acting in bad faith. The matter was referred to the National Industrial Council for the Printing and Packaging Industry.
Mobil Oil South Africa	CWIU	319	18.03.88	CWIU declared a dispute following a deadlock in negotiations over wages and working conditions. The dispute involved workers at 24 depots in the Transvaal and OFS. Workers demanded an across-the-board increase of R180 a month and a service allowance of R3 a month per year of service. Management offered a monthly increase of R155 across the board and was prepared to give in to some of the union's other demands on condition that the R155 increase was accepted. The union applied for a conciliation board.
OK Bazaars	Ccawusa	8 000	09.03.88-	Ccawusa started annual wage negotiations with OK by demanding an across-the-board increase of R300 a month, to raise the minimum wage from R400 to R700. Other demands included: increased commissions from 3% to 10%, a basic salary of R650 a month for commissioned staff, staff discounts to be doubled from 12% to 25%, a 13th cheque, a 40-hour week, no PAYE deductions, May Day, 16 June and 21 March to be paid commemoration days, and full disclosure of financial statements. The company agreed to negotiate the following after the wage agreement has been reached: housing scheme, parental rights agreement, education bursaries, alternative pension scheme, amendments to recognition agreement, service benefits and conversion of monthly pay to weekly pay.
Pick 'n Pay	Ccawusa	13 400	01.03.88	Ccawusa declared a dispute following a deadlock in wage negotiations. The union demand at deadlock was an across-the-board wage increase of R165 a month against management's offer of R124 a month. Last year the company gave a R100 across-the-board increase. The union's revised demands included: four weeks annual leave, a staff discount of 12%, stop order facilities for staff accounts and a R1 stop order deduction from member's wages to be forwarded to the treasurer of the national shop stewards' council. Dispute meetings between management and the union were in progress.

COMPANY	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS
Robertsons Prospecton	Fawu	300		Robertsons spice company and Fawu have negotiated a non-contributory provident fund which is made up entirely of the employer contributions. Although workers will not contribute they will nevertheless have some control of the fund. Robertsons has also agreed to backdate its contributions to 1952. The fund also entitles workers to compensation for injuries received during political unrest.
Renown Pork Packers Clayville	Fawu	120	10.02.88-	On 15 March management dismissed workers for participating in what it believed was a go-slow. The incident was sparked off on 10 February when workers protested that a manager was carrying a firearm on the production line. When management refused to do anything about the situation, workers forcibly removed the firearm. Police were called in and workers were sjambokked and tear-gassed. Nine workers were arrested and others sustained injuries. Fawu said the detention of the nine workers (later charged with theft) who held key positions on production line led to a slower output. Management blamed the slow output on workers and obtained a court interdict ordering workers to stop the go-slow in two hours or face dismissal. The matter was referred to mediation.
Sentrachem	Sacwu	3 000	24.02.88	The industrial court has ruled that wage discrimination is an unfair labour practice and ordered the offending company, Sentrachem, to eliminate pay disparities between workers of different races by August this year. The case arose out of the dismissal of 500 workers who were among 3 000 on strike in May 1986. These workers demanded a R250-a-month across-the-board wage increase as well as the bridging of a wage gap between black and white workers. Management dismissed the 3 000 on 7 July and offered re-employment to those who returned by 15 July. Of the 3 000, management refused to take back 500, on the grounds that they were redundant because of restructuring of operations in the company. In its evidence the company claimed it would cost R4-million to fully eliminate wage discrimination. The court gave the company six months to eliminate wage discrimination and also ordered the re-instatement of the dismissed workers and that they be paid eight weeks backpay. The union saw the case as a major victory in the struggle for racial pay equality and believed it would 'create a precedent in labour matters'.
Sidley Manufacturing Germiston	Numsa	200	22.02.88	Workers went on strike demanding an increase of 50c an hour. Management offered 10c an hour. Workers returned to work after a management ultimatum to either return to work or be dismissed. The union was in the process of declaring a dispute with the company.
Transparent Packaging Industria	Ppwawu	55	09.03.88-	Workers went on strike over wages and working conditions. They demanded an across-the-board increase of R38 a week but were prepared to accept management's offer of R27 a week if the following demands were met: paid holidays on 16 June, May Day and 21 March, five days paid paternity leave, four months maternity leave at 50% pay, and a bonus of R4,50 a week across the board. Management refused to consider these demands. On 14 March management called in police to remove striking workers from the premises. Union officials managed to dissuade the police. Subsequently, management hired white scabs and locked workers out of certain sections of the factory. Ppwawu suggested arbitration and was awaiting a response from management.
Triangle Furnishers	Czawusa	450	08.03.88-	Workers at 12 stores went on strike after a deadlock in wage negotiations. Management rejected the union's revised demands and objected to the union's suggestion of mediation. The union's revised demands included: a R90 across-the-board monthly increase from January 1987 to June 1987, with a further R80 increase from July 1987 to December 1987; a minimum wage of R600 a month; a 13th cheque and 12,5% commission for sales staff. Management offered a R50 across-the-board monthly increase from January 1987 to June 1987 followed by another R50 from July 1987 to June 1988 and a 10% bonus for each year of service to a maximum of 50%.
VFP Engineering Germiston	Numsa	24	03.03.88	About 24 workers at VFP Engineering went on strike after management changed the conditions of work of a shop steward. Management put the worker on short time to work four hours a day. The shop steward ignored the short time and continued working, but management asked him to stop work and go home. The workers stopped work and demanded to know why the shop steward was given short time. Management dismissed the workers when they returned to work the next day. The union declared a dispute with the company and a meeting was arranged in the industrial council.
Volkswagen Germiston	Numsa	120	11.03.88	Workers at Volkswagen staged a two-hour stoppage in protest against the dismissal of a white Numsa member. According to the union, the worker was dismissed because he took some bricks that were lying on the pavement outside the factory thinking they were discarded. The company said the worker, being a security guard, could not be trusted. The union and the company were discussing the issue.

Strikes and disputes: NATAL

Mobil Refining Company	CWU	450	24.02.88-	CWU declared two disputes with Mobil Refining Company, the first over the company's refusal to provide information necessary to the union in wage negotiations and the second following a deadlock in national wage negotiations. The union demanded a monthly increase of R200 across the board and a minimum of R910 a month for its members at 24 depots. The company offered a R155 increase which the workers rejected, saying they could not accept the same increase they won last year. According to the union, Mobil was not making any serious attempts to reduce the salary-gap that exists between itself, Shell and Caltex. The minimum monthly wage at Shell is R780 and R735 at Mobil. CWU made two conciliation board applications in respect of the two disputes.
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COMPANY	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS
Mool River Textiles Mool River	Actwusa	1 200		The two parties concluded a wage agreement providing for a 19% basic wage increase, bringing the minimum wage up to R3,02 an hour. The package also included a funeral and death cover scheme financed entirely by the employer.
Romayam Reunion	Actwusa	300	23.03.88	Workers at this subsidiary of the Romatex group downed tools following the demotion of a colleague. According to Actwusa, the worker was promoted to chargehand after a resignation in December last year, but was instructed by his supervisor to return to his old job. Management threatened to dismiss striking workers. The union said if negotiations with management failed, workers in other Romatex factories would be approached for solidarity action.
Shell Chemicals	CWIU	80		CWIU declared a dispute following the company's refusal to negotiate wages and working conditions on the grounds that a full agreement with the union has not yet been signed. The union applied for a conciliation board and was considering legal strike action if the board did not meet within 30 days.
Umbrella Industries Congella	Actwusa	141	16.03.88	Actwusa and Umbrella Industries reached agreement on wages and working conditions. In terms of the agreement workers were to receive an across-the-board weekly increase of R12, bringing the minimum wage at the lowest grades to R82,50. The agreement also included five days paid leave for shop stewards to attend seminars and six months maternity leave of which eight weeks will be at 32% pay. The company also undertook to apply for membership to the provident fund of the national industrial council for the textile manufacturing industry.
Veetech Oil	CWIU	30	17.03.88	CWIU declared a dispute on 1 March 1988 with Veetech oil, a Shell subsidiary, following the company's refusal to increase wages to match those paid in other Shell subsidiaries. The minimum wage at Veetech is R558 a month and the company offered to raise the minimum to R680-a month. Other Shell subsidiaries pay a minimum of R680 and this is expected to increase to more than R800 after this year's wage negotiations. The workers went on strike following the failure of a conciliation board to resolve the dispute. The union was arranging a meeting with management.

Strikes and disputes: CAPE/OFS

Berg River Textiles Paarl	Actwusa	1 400	15-21.02.88	About 1 400 Berg River workers went on strike over wages and working conditions. Actwusa said employers in the industrial council for the cotton and textile industry split over wages, leaving workers to negotiate at factory level. Workers demanded a R25 across-the-board weekly increase. They returned to work after management agreed to the R25 increase as well as May Day and 16 June as paid commemoration days. Negotiations for maternity, recognition agreement, grievance procedure and disciplinary agreement will take place separately.
Mercedes Benz East London	Numsa	3 000	15-21.03.88	Workers at Mercedes Benz in East London downed tools following a dispute with management. The strike was triggered off when management refused to pay paintshop employees because they failed to complete the last hour of their shift on the 10 March. Workers said they saw no reason to continue working because they believed they had reached their production target for the day. After negotiations it was agreed the dispute should be investigated through internal grievance procedures. In the interim, the workers will be paid the one hour's salary, but if the investigation proves that workers acted wrongly, management will reclaim this money.
Normans Transport Cape Town	TGWU	115	21-22.03.88	Workers went on strike over working conditions. Their main grievance was that management insured their trucks and goods while the drivers were not insured. They returned to work when management agreed to discuss the issue with the union.
Protea Chemical Manufacturers Bethlehem	Sacwu	65	15.02.88	Sacwu members were dismissed after a strike where they demanded a wage increase of R80 a week, a 40-hour week, 20 days annual leave and a 13th cheque. Management offered a R5 a week increase from February to August, and a further increase of R10 a week from August.

Strikes and disputes: MINES

Anglo American	Num	15 500	17.03.88	Anglo American and Num reached agreement on the re-instatement and compensation of 9 500 dismissed workers, and at least 18 weeks pay for 6 000 who will not be rehired. The workers were dismissed during the miners strike last year. Shortly after the settlement differences arose between the two parties over the interpretation of the settlement. Anglo estimated the deal to cost R35-m, while Num estimated R60-m. The union believed that financial settlements should be based on workers cash earnings plus non-monetary benefits. Anglo said the word 'pay' referred only to cash earnings. The differences could lead to a new round of arbitration.
Phalaborwa Mining Company	Num	3 000	18.02.88	Num and PMC signed the country's first ever health and safety agreement between a mine and a union. The agreement provided for the recognition of about 100 safety stewards who were to receive time off for training by management and the union. The democratically elected safety stewards would represent worker interests in the field of health and safety. The agreement makes it possible for safety stewards to inspect the working conditions at least once a month and participate fully in any accident enquiries. Num hailed the agreement as a breakthrough and criticised the mines belonging to the Chamber of Mines for not concluding similar agreements. PMC is not a member of the Chamber of Mines.

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The nature of Work In Progress, which is to stimulate debate and present views on a wide range of issues, ensures that the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editorial collective.

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