

# PROGRESS

## A South African communist speaks

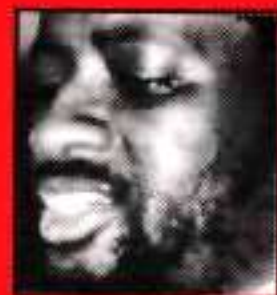


### EXCLUSIVE:

Chris Dlamini discusses his membership of the new SACP Internal Leadership Group



Kasrils on the role of Umkhonto we Sizwe



Jordan on the state of the SACP



PAC: The way of the empty hand



WORK IN PROGRESS  
August 1990 No 68

Published by the  
South African  
Research Service  
PO Box 32716  
Braamfontein  
2017  
South Africa

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Auckland House  
c/o Smit and Biccard  
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Searches on the role of  
Umkhonto we Sizwe



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PRC: The way of  
the empty hand

**A South African communist speaks: As the SACP prepared for its 29 July legal launch, Cosatu vice-president Chris Dlamini formally acknowledged his membership of the party - the first 'local' to do so in 40 years - and discussed the implications of his membership and the SACP's future.**

**Picture: Anna Ziemiński**

## Editorial

**W**ith the next round of talks between the government and the African National Congress just a week away as *WIP* goes on sale, the process towards negotiations has been hit by another bout of hiccups. This time the issue is the arrest of up to 100 ANC members, the cracking by police of what appears to have been a major underground network, and the seizure of a substantial quantity of arms.

The low-key nature of the ANC's responses so far suggest that much of what has been claimed regarding the background to many of the arrests is correct: that they are linked to the existence of underground ANC structures; that they involve elements of Umkhonto we Sizwe; and that, in the case of the weapons at least, many have been brought into the country recently.

The facts have since been used as justification for a barrage against the ANC on the basis that the movement is either not committed to the peace process, or that it is attempting to scuttle it.

Ignoring for the moment the question of just how sensible the ANC's action may have been, several issues of logic arise.

The ANC and Nelson Mandela in particular have stressed repeatedly since the movement's 2 February legalisation that its armed struggle will continue until a formal suspension of hostilities is agreed - very possibly at the next talks, beginning on August 6. It has also said, again almost to the point of boredom, that it is reining in its Umkhonto fighters as a contribution to the creation of a climate for negotiations.

To these positions there have been two responses: government outrage that the ANC should be talking of armed hostilities at all; and, from the media in particular, the apparently-informed assessment that all this was simply rhetoric, a face-saver to allow the ANC to stop fighting without alienating its militant constituency.

The arrests and apparent destruction of the underground network fairly convincingly disprove the latter assessment: it is now clear that the ANC was telling the truth, and that what those arrested were doing was providing themselves with both the infrastructure and means to continue the ANC's armed struggle. But because the movement had ordered an easing-up on attacks, the weapons had not yet been used.

Since the arrests, however, it is precisely those media which knowingly reported that the ANC's statements on armed struggle were no more than rhetoric which are now haranguing the movement for doing exactly what it said it was doing. The fault lies not with the ANC, but with those who didn't believe it.

And there is a second question of logic involved: even if there had been a ceasefire, international law accepts that unless it is specifically written into the agreement, a ceasefire bars neither side in any conflict from replenishing its forces or its weaponry.

Suggestions that the ANC's actions could precipitate a collapse of the negotiation process are little more than ill-informed.

The ANC's statements that it was continuing with its armed struggle have not previously blocked talks. Now that it has been demonstrated not to be lying, there is no reason why that should change.

Anyway, the ANC view is that it has had little choice in the matter.

While substantial progress has clearly been made since the Groote Schuur talks on what it views as obstacles to negotiations - the continued detention of political prisoners, political exiles and security force action - little has actually been delivered in the form of freed prisoners, returning exiles and an end to violent security force repression.

At the same time, international pressure on FW de Klerk's government has eased substantially since February.

Against this background, the ANC believes it has had little choice but to ensure that the only remaining alternative route to democracy remains open, by building its military capacity.

Whether this was the wisest choice, the months ahead will demonstrate.

What it has already demonstrated, however, is that peace might be in sight, but it is not yet achieved. Nor will it be until such time as the negotiation process begins to deliver the goods.\*



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22, 24, 26, 27, 35 & 40

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## Crisis in conscience for the SACP

Pallo Jordan responds to Slovo's *Has socialism failed?*, arguing that the SACP needs to demonstrate that it has shed its Stalinist past. An edited version taken from *Transformation* magazine.

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## Umkhonto: Past, present and future

Former Umkhonto we Sizwe intelligence chief Ronnie Kasrils discusses the force's past and present, as a primarily defensive force, a rural guerrilla army of the bush, and the core of a mainly-urban people's army - and looks to its future as an element of a national army.

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## Unravelling 'Upalma'

After almost three decades, the PAC has moved out of the political twilight. In four reports, *WIP* examines whether it can stay in the limelight, its economic policy, its influence in Nactu and a PAC-ANC peace pact.

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# Mobilising the Right capitalists

RIGHTWINGERS have established a new employer organisation, Federasie van Werkgewersorganisasies en Werkgewers van Suid-Afrika (Federation of Employers' Organisations and Employers of South Africa) whose primary aim is to support employers against 'radical trade unions'.

The organisation recently made representations to the government not to enact the accord on the Labour Relations Act reached by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), the National Council of Trade Unions (Nactu) and the SA Employers' Consultative Committee on Labour Affairs (Saccola).

The formation of the federation is a direct challenge to the Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut (AHI), the Afrikaans business community's equivalent of the SA Chamber of Business, and Sacolla, to which the AHI is affiliated. The federation is the brainchild of the Arbeidstigting (ABS), an organisation said to have been founded some five or six years ago to promote the interests of employers. Its executive chairman is Leon Smith, deputy chairman of the Regional Development Advisory Committee for the PWV. He is a former mayor of Roodepoort and was the Conservative Party (CP) candidate for the town in last September's general election. Its director, Hein van der Walt, is the founder of the Arbeidstigting. He is an advocate and former legal adviser to the AHI. Notice of the federation's

formation was given at an ABS conference at Eskom's Megawatt Park headquarters on 22 June. The conference was closed to the press. Minister for Administration and Privatisation Wim de Villiers was to have delivered the opening address, but was forced to cancel because of the closing of parliament. Van der Walt has claimed that the federation's membership consists of 'some employer organisations and 500 individual employers' with a combined workforce of two million - a figure observers think is a gross over-exaggeration. He has refused to name any of the organisations or individuals who are members of the federation as they may become targets for industrial action by unions. The only affiliate that has been identified is the Witwatersrand Master Builders' Association (MBA) whose director, ZL Pretorius, is a known CP supporter. The MBA is part of the Building Industry Federation of SA (Bifsa) which is also a member of Saccola.

According to an ABS newsletter, the federation has identified several points in the Labour Relations Act that require attention. For one, unions' 'misuse' of strikes had to be stopped; strikes should only be permitted if they involve disputes of a serious nature. Unions should also be more strictly controlled. They should, for example, fall under the discipline of a professional body in the same way as lawyers and estate agents, and should in addition contribute to a trust fund which employers could draw on in the event of illegal union activity. Workers who lose their jobs as a result of unlawful actions by unions should also be able to draw on it.

The federation also intends establishing a databank of 'surrogate workers' - scabs - to assist employers during strikes and a strike fund for any damages incurred in illegal strikes. Membership of the federation also entitles members to make use of the ABS's 24-hour emergency advice hotline, get guidance from a labour consultant at a specially reduced rate, and receive its publications.

Although it is too early to tell what impact the formation of the federation will have on the AHI, the possibility that it could cause divisions cannot be ruled out. According to insiders, there have been tensions between Conservatives and National Party supporters in the AHI ever since the CP was established in 1981. 'If a split develops, it would probably occur between the CP and National Party supporters', an employer source told *WIP*, 'although the organisation has thus far succeeded in maintaining unity by emphasising its members' common interests'. - *Robyn Rafel*

## ANGOLA

# Moving closer to a ceasefire

ANGOLA is expressing official confidence that a ceasefire to end 15 years of civil will be agreed with Unita rebels at forthcoming peace talks in Portugal. But private doubts are being expressed by other Angolan sources.

The two sides are still far apart on several issues, including the time-table for general elections and a shift towards political pluralism, according to the sources. But they did not rule out an

agreement in principle leading to a ceasefire, which could be reached at the next Angola-Unita meeting. 'We don't think the few differences that still exist will prevent the signing of a ceasefire', Foreign Minister Petro de Castro van Dunem said in Harare late last month.

At the same time Unita leader Jonas Savimbi has been visiting long-time ally Morocco for pre-talks discussions. He arrived there in mid-July and is understood to have held talks with Morocco's King Hassan and Portuguese foreign affairs secretary Jose Manuel Durao Barroso. Durao Barroso has hosted two rounds of exploratory contacts between Unita and the Angolan government in Portugal since April. Unita has doubled the size of its delegation to these, and Unita officials say they are prepared to sign a ceasefire at their next meeting.

Van Dunem was equally optimistic, saying that despite heavy fighting in northern Angola 'all indications are that the conditions for a ceasefire are there'.

He said the army had repelled an attack by Unita rebels in the north. 'Unita has transferred most of its troops to the north. The aim was obviously to take Luanda, or at the very least to make life difficult for the people so they would want to rise up against the government', he said. This initiative has the endorsement of US military advisers now operating inside Angola with Unita, Van Dunem added.

Advisors are now based both at Unita headquarters at Jamba in southern Angola and with rebel forces in the north, he said, 'not only to give tactical and operational advice but also to operate sophisticated equipment'.



This equipment includes Stinger and other anti-aircraft missiles - some of them with a range of 10km. This is the first time the Angolan government has accused the US military of taking a direct operational part in the civil war, although there were reports of CIA operatives in Jamba in 1987.

Earlier, Van Dunem had cast doubts on Unita's ability to sabotage electricity and water supplies to Luanda - as it has done repeatedly in recent months - without outside help.

And he dismissed claims that Luanda is surrounded, saying: 'The pressure is off the capital'.

But the Angolan military reports a flare-up in fighting elsewhere in the north.

Against this background, Brazilian officers responsible for verifying the withdrawal of Cuban troops say a total of 35 457 have now left the country.

The next and final phase of the pull-out begins in October and is scheduled to end with the last Cuban troops leaving Angolan soil next June.

At the same time, however, the US Congress' House Intelligence Oversight Committee has endorsed a substantial increase in US funding for Unita - increasing the total annual allocation to the rebels by R70-million, according to some sources.

This will push US aid to Unita to almost R200-million.

The aid forms part of the CIA budget which, once approved by the committee, will be voted on by Congress sight unseen.

The committee was established in 1975 in response to massive covert CIA aid to Unita, but critics claim it no longer serves as a watchdog on covert CIA aid. Instead of functioning as an oversight committee,

they say, it does little more than cheer on CIA activities. This year, while opponents of the Bush administration's policy towards Angola are mounting a sustained challenge to the funding, they say prospects for stopping the aid are slim. Too many Senate and congressional representatives regard it as 'an anti-communist, anti-Cuban issue', they say. - *SouthScan Features*

## MOZAMBIQUE

# Frelimo meets MNR

THE first direct talks between representatives of the Mozambican government and the MNR rebels took place in Rome between 8 to 10 July. The Catholic Church, as in the past, appeared to play a major mediating role, according to Mozambique's *AIM* news agency. A joint communique said that the two delegations 'recognising each other as compatriots and members of the great Mozambican family expressed satisfaction and pleasure at this direct, open and frank meeting, the first between the two sides'.

The meeting surprised many observers in Maputo. Italy, the country's main Western trading partner, had not been named either side as a possible venue.

The Mozambican side to the talks was led by Transport Minister Armando Guebusa, also a member of the 12-man politburo of the Frelimo party. Also on the Mozambican delegation were Information Minister Teodato Hunguana, Labour Minister Agular Mazula and the diplomatic advisor in



President Joachim Chissano's office, Francisco Madeira.

Leading the Renamo delegation was Raul Domingos, head of the rebel's foreign affairs department.

He was accompanied by the head of the Renamo information department Vicente Ululu and by a member of the Renamo presidential office, Joao Almirante.

The meeting took place in the headquarters of the Catholic Church-linked charitable body the Santo Egidio Community with which Frelimo had a long association.

Present as observers at the meeting were two members of the Santo Egidio Community, Andres Ricardo and Matteo Zuppi, as well as the Catholic archbishop of the central Mozambican city of Beira, Jaime Goncalves, and a representative of the Italian government, Mario Raffaelli.

The Church has led moves towards talks with the rebels, meeting them a number of times in Nairobi. Raffaelli, a former secretary of state in the Italian ministry with responsibility for Africa, has been deeply involved in Italian cooperation with Mozambique.

He was last in Maputo in May when he took part in an international conference titled Rethinking strategies for Southern Africa.

The three-day meeting in Rome took place without

any publicity, and the Mozambican side was not accompanied by any journalists.

This contrasts with the abortive talks last month in Malawi that were announced in advance and where a large number of journalists accompanied the Mozambican delegation.

There is now doubt in Maputo as to the accuracy of reports, initially by *AIM*, and stemming from official sources, that rebel leader Alfonso Dhlakama was present at the time and that he was accompanied by a senior Kenyan advisor.

After the talks scheduled for 12 June in Malawi had failed to take place, the Mozambican, Malawian and Zimbabwean delegations present issued a statement which said that efforts were continuing 'to set a new date in the near future for the process to begin in Malawi'. Presidents Daniel arap Moi of Kenya and Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe had been acting as mediators in the conflict, but there are no reports that either sent a delegation to the Rome meeting.

Meanwhile, the emergency situation in Mozambique is worsening, according to *AIM*.

Mozambique's needs are now considerably greater than those estimated in the emergency appeal document placed before a UN sponsored donors' conference in New York in April.

The national director of Mozambique's relief body the Disasters Control Office (DPCCN), Salomao Mambo, says the number of displaced people who could now be reached by relief efforts has increased substantially due to recent Mozambican military successes against the MNR rebels in the centre of the country. - *Southscan Features*



# A South African communist speaks



**A**s a member of the South African Communist Party's internal leadership group (ILG), Chris Dlamini is the first internally-based South African communist in 40 years to have publicly identified himself as such.

Vice-president of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) and president of its Food and Allied Workers' Union (Fawu) affiliate, Dlamini is one of about a dozen 'locals' on the ILG. This group is responsible for the party's day-to-day running in the year between its formal legal launch on 29 July and its next congress, scheduled for July next year.

Dlamini has worked as what was then formally designated a 'store-boy' and in various other jobs since leaving school at 18, after completing Standard Eight in 1962.

Since 1977 he has been employed at Kellogg's Springs plant where, as shop stewards' committee chairman, he was instrumental in winning the first formal recognition agreement in the Transvaal for Fosatu's Sweet, Food and Allied Workers' Union.

President of Fosatu from 1982 until the formation of Cosatu three years later, Dlamini has held the post of first Cosatu vice-president since then. With the merger of Cosatu's food sector affiliates into Fawu in 1986, Dlamini was elected president of the union.

Shortly before the launch of the legal SACP - at which he and other members of the party's internal leadership were publicly identified for the first time - he gave this interview to *WIP*.

**Why and under what circumstances did you join the SACP?**

I have been a worker most of my life. And as a worker, I realised that apartheid is more than racial oppression: it is used as a cover for capitalist exploitation - the majority of

*In this exclusive interview with WIP, Cosatu's Chris Dlamini discusses his membership of the South African Communist Party, the implications of wearing two hats, and the SACP's relationship with Cosatu and the ANC. David Niddrie reports*



South Africans do not enjoy the wealth they themselves have created.

They are economically exploited, socially degraded and politically oppressed.

And in the struggle for equality and justice, the SACP has been one of the leading organisations, and the leading organisation struggling to end exploitation.

That's why I joined. As to how, I joined: I was recruited by members of the party, but I can't give you details yet.

**What are your duties as a member of the ILG?**

We will run the party internally until the party congress in July 1991, when full democratic elections for the national leadership will take place. In the meanwhile, branches and districts will be established with fully democratically elected leaderships, ideally before the congress. That depends on how soon we can develop an efficient administration.

**You are now a senior member of the SACP, vice-president of Cosatu and president of one of its affiliates. Is that not a conflict of interest?**

The issue is not always clear in people's minds: It is not a question of wearing two - or even three - hats, and trying to decide on where my loyalties lie.

Firstly I am not an elected office bearer in the SACP, but in the union and the federation I am. I perform my duties in those organisations as a representative of the organisations, not of the SACP.

Within the unions I am bound by the democracy and processes of the unions.

My party work involves conscientising people, as an advocate of equality - arguing for a humane approach to life, making people realise they do have rights, the right to earn a living, the right to a house, to education, for example.

It is not a conspiratorial thing.

There is a comparison to be found in the civics. Many of our members - Cosatu members - are members of the civic associations in the communities in which they live, discussing issues like rent and electricity. Many hold senior positions and represent their communities in meetings with the authorities.

This doesn't affect the democratic functioning of the civics - it doesn't mean Cosatu controls them. But it usually means they (Cosatu members) advocate perspectives they have found in the trade unions - recognition that people have rights, and that united they can achieve them.

**Cosatu has recently been formally allied to the ANC and SACP in what is being called 'a fighting alliance'. What impact will this have on Cosatu, and more generally, what impact is a legal communist party going to have in South Africa?**

Each of the three formations will retain their independence in the tripartite alliance, that's important. They will also have their own constituencies and be answerable to them.

And at the level of the alliance, we will take decisions by consensus — all decisions will be in the interests of all three.

So we do not foresee domination.

But I do expect that the existence of the alliance will sharpen the political position of Cosatu; it will solidify and clarify Cosatu's objectives.

At a certain level, all three members of the alliance want the same thing. They have the same immediate objective in seeking to end apartheid and replace it with a democratic, non-racial

system and government.

But the party goes further, recognising that under such a system the needs of the working class will not necessarily be fully met.

Politically it has set an agenda intended to meet the needs of the majority who have been economically exploited and politically oppressed for a long time.

We have always said that the immediate task of the party and all democrats is to build the ANC. We still say that. But it does not mean we suspend building the party.

In the immediate future, the party will draw together socialists to enable them to make a combined contribution to debates, to putting up ideas both on what is to be done to achieve our, the alliance's, common objectives and to fully explore the common objectives.

Very specifically we have a contribution to make to debates on how the economy should to be restructured.

In the short term, we are obviously hoping that the powerful anti-communism from the authorities and from other quarters will fade now that the SACP is legal.

The Gorbachev-Bush talks have produced a formal end to the cold war internationally. We believe that should help get communists accepted here by the authorities, and that they will stop regarding communists as animals as they did after the party's banning.

**And the impact of a trade union alliance with political parties? Can you see the unions, for instance, striking against an alliance partner that has become the ruling party?**

We expect to see the right to strike constitutionally enshrined, if not in the constitution itself then in an addendum, a workers' charter binding on the government.

Both the SACP and the ANC are committed to trade union independence and to the unrestrained right of workers to strike. So we could see a situation in which workers in state-controlled industries go on strike after apartheid. But they would not be striking politically against a democratically-elected government. They'd be striking against an employer.

**The SACP sees its immediate task as building the ANC, and shares with the ANC common short-term objectives - ending apartheid and establishing a non-racial, democratic society. What will distinguish SACP members, SACP structures, from their ANC counterparts?**

Firstly, as I've said, to ensure a socialist voice in the alliance. But for the ANC the objective is to end apartheid, to correct the wrongs of apartheid and to destroy apartheid legislation and apparatuses.

In doing so, and as a national movement and government, it will have to accommodate all shades of opinion - even those of big business.

The party will speak purely for the working class.

It will encourage the ANC - as an ally - to take account of the immediate demands and needs of the working class. It will do so now and once the ANC has become the government of the country.

But the alliance may not exist for ever. As a government the ANC will have to accommodate the interests, perspectives and demands of employers.

And these are different from the interests of the workers, whose interests the SACP is committed to defending and promoting.





**What level of support do you see in the unions and elsewhere for the SACP? What do you expect its membership to be?**

The socio-economic order the workers are demanding is socialism, so we can already see high levels of support. This has not come about because of agitation, but because of the conditions under which they live and work - their experiences of apartheid.

We have also seen massive support among the youth for the SACP. This was clear from 1984-85 when, at the funerals of comrades killed by the regime, you saw the party flag raised alongside that of the ANC over the grave. They were prepared to ignore the risks to demonstrate their support for the party.

As far as actual card-carrying membership goes, if the party simply invited applications for membership, we could expect a really massive party, 20 000-30 000 at least.

But we are talking of a party of activists, what (general secretary Joe) Slovo has called a party of quality and calibre, so we will not necessarily accept just anyone.

In the past we have managed this by recruitment and probation. This is going to change as the party becomes more open. But we will have to watch that it does not become a party of paper membership. We will have to introduce ways of ensuring that members continually prove their eligibility.

I am sure, though, that the party will retain its black majority, its working class majority.

Administratively, though, there may be problems with the rapid growth of the party. I'm not sure we yet have the resources to immediately build a big party, a mass party.

But our ability to do so depends on people actually joining - on our transforming the strong emotional on-the-ground support into organised membership.

And to achieve that it is important not to intimidate people with the idea of 'quality and calibre'. What we mean is a strong, active commitment and participation by members - active participation in party life, in building the ANC, in building Cosatu and in building other democratic formations: in other words active participation in the struggle for democracy.

**What is your attitude to other socialist formations?**

We would obviously like to see all socialists in the party. But we are open for discussions with all groups saying they are socialist.

And it is through these discussions and debates that we believe people will realise which group is advocating - and capable of achieving - the kind of socialism they are looking for. So we will encourage all those who support socialism to debate their positions openly. •



# Kasrils on Umkhonto



*Ronnie Kasrils, former head of military intelligence for the African National Congress, discusses the armed struggle in South Africa - past, present and possible future. A member of Umkhonto we Sizwe since its formation in 1961 - initially deployed with its Natal command - Kasrils served as head of MK military intelligence until his co-option on to the ANC national executive committee in 1987*

**Given the legalisation of the African National Congress, the South African Communist Party and Umkhonto we Sizwe itself on February 2, is there any need for the liberation alliance to retain its military capacity, to keep MK alive?**

Without a doubt. We are hopeful about the possibilities opened up for a peaceful way. We have always been attracted by the peaceful option. It minimises the loss of life, the bloodshed. But we are dealing with reality, with an ongoing struggle. Simply because we are talking of the possibilities of a negotiated path doesn't mean we are going to dissolve Umkhonto.

Even after apartheid, Umkhonto will be necessary - simply from the point of view of establishing a defence force for South Africa if and when a negotiated settlement takes place.

But prior to that we need to keep our options open. There is no guarantee at this stage that negotiations will succeed, that there will not be a retreat to repression. MK is one of our guarantors.

Take, for example, the state's National Coordinating Mechanism (which has replaced the National Security Management System, or NSMS): It's an extremely sinister development. I'm not satisfied with (president FW) De Klerk's explanations that it is a peaceful mechanism to help to solve the people's

problems on the ground. It looks like a disguised form of PW Botha's NSMS. Whatever it is, it shows De Klerk is keeping his options open. So we have both a right and a duty to do the same.

For us, it is one thing to talk of a suspension of armed hostilities - the kind of ceasefire spelt out in the Harare Declaration to facilitate or encourage the negotiation process. But that doesn't mean we give up our arms and disband our army. In international law, a ceasefire does not prevent the belligerents from building their forces, replenishing their arsenals and recruiting and training.

Ending our armed struggle can only happen once a solution is reached, when we have the basis for a democratic, non-racial South Africa.

At that point there will be a termination of hostilities - a permanent thing. That's when we say the chapter of armed struggle for a democratic South Africa is closed.

But even then we don't dissolve Umkhonto, because we then begin looking at the creation of a new defence force.

**At what point does the actual termination of hostilities take place?**

When a state based on racial domination no longer exists. If the process was in a colonial country, it would be when the



## ARMED STRUGGLE

documents of independence are signed. In our case, possibly when an interim government moves in and the old government resigns, when a new force is emerging which can guarantee the sovereignty and a new constitution.

### **The SADF couldn't do that?**

Certainly not. It is a racial force, a creature of race domination. We can't conceive of the SADF becoming an apparently non-political force, just because they are beginning to lecture their officers on the need to be non-political.

### **On MK itself: Many within the ANC characterise the force as an essentially defensive force, established to protect the people against state violence. Is that right?**

Looking at MK historically, its founding manifesto indicates clearly that it was perceived as a defence mechanism - the exact words are: 'There comes a time in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices: submit or fight ... we shall not submit and have no choice but to hit back by all means ... in defence of our people', and later 'Umkhonto will be in the front line of the people's defence'.

There was also a more assertive element: the manifesto refers to the impossibility of attaining 'the well-being of the people ... without the overthrow of the Nationalist government'.

But the decision to launch Umkhonto was taken primarily because the people needed to be defended against increasing violence by the state - the manifesto refers to the choice being forced on the liberation movement by the apartheid regime because it 'answered every peaceable demand with force and yet more force'.

All avenues of peaceful struggle had been blocked, so the history-making decision was taken.

It was a pragmatic one rather than a theoretical one.

There *are* revolutionary movements which, at their foundation, addressed the question of seizing state power. These immediately recognised and analysed the use of state power and the need to develop a force to seize state power. With us that was not the ethos.

So the blows of Umkhonto in the early period were directed at reinforcing mass struggle and securing rights, rather than at seizing state power. Then, in a short time, there was the Rivonia setback and our movement was nearly extinguished inside the country. We had the armed struggle being planned and developed abroad in exile.

In that period we became very taken up with successful models ... Cuba, Algeria, Vietnam, and later Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau. We began to develop the idea of guerrilla war, bush war. At the time it seemed the only possibility, particularly as our political base inside the country had been so weakened. We were looking at a guerrilla army of the bush, such as the one led by Samora Machel in conditions in which, as Samora put it, the political organisation would come out of the bush - the guerrillas would create it.

You see in our documents of the time, at the Morogoro Conference, *Strategy and Tactics*, and our propaganda, our thinking was very much towards a protracted guerrilla war by which the masses would be inspired in struggle, organisations created, and the regime increasingly paralysed, bled white, its resources drained.

### **Has that perspective changed?**

It was really only in the 1983-86 period, the uprisings in the

townships, that we began to see the prospect of a much shorter path to power.

The wave that swept the country in the '80s was recognised as insurrection knocking on the door ... excited debate took place in the ANC, Umkhonto itself and the Party. This was reflected in the ANC and SACP journals and certainly in the SACP programme of 1989, which for the first time elaborated a thesis on insurrection. So by 1969, at the Morogoro conference, we had moved away from the idea of force as a primarily defensive mechanism and had recognised it as a means of overthrowing the ruling power - although still, at the time, with protracted guerrilla war as the method. The '83-'86 period showed us there was an alternative method. The 1976 uprisings could have taught us that, but my personal view is that the tremendous pressure on us during and after 1976 to demonstrate to the people that we could hit back militarily consumed all our energies.

### **You talk about concentrating on bush war but, at least in the 1970s and 1980s, most actions took place in the urban areas.**

Although in our minds we were locked into the idea of rural guerrilla warfare, the situation was one in which we were inevitably drawn into the urban battlegrounds.

We were never exclusive - we never said armed actions should only take place in the countryside. We saw the necessity to come to the defence of our people in the urban theatre of war as well.

And we saw that armed propaganda actions in the urban areas had far greater impact than in the rural areas where many actions did take place, but without the same levels of publicity.

Nevertheless our perspective was that if we could develop bases in the rural areas, our guerrilla forces would be able to grow and become stronger than in the urban areas where there was less chance of survival.

### **So the rural focus was a mistake?**

No, I wouldn't say a mistake under the conditions prevailing at the time.

Firstly because the need to develop in the countryside is vital, even in terms of an insurrectionary scenario in which the urban masses of the working class and the youth are obviously crucial.

But that specific period, following the bannings and Rivonia, was one of political recession ... what one might call a deep political trough.

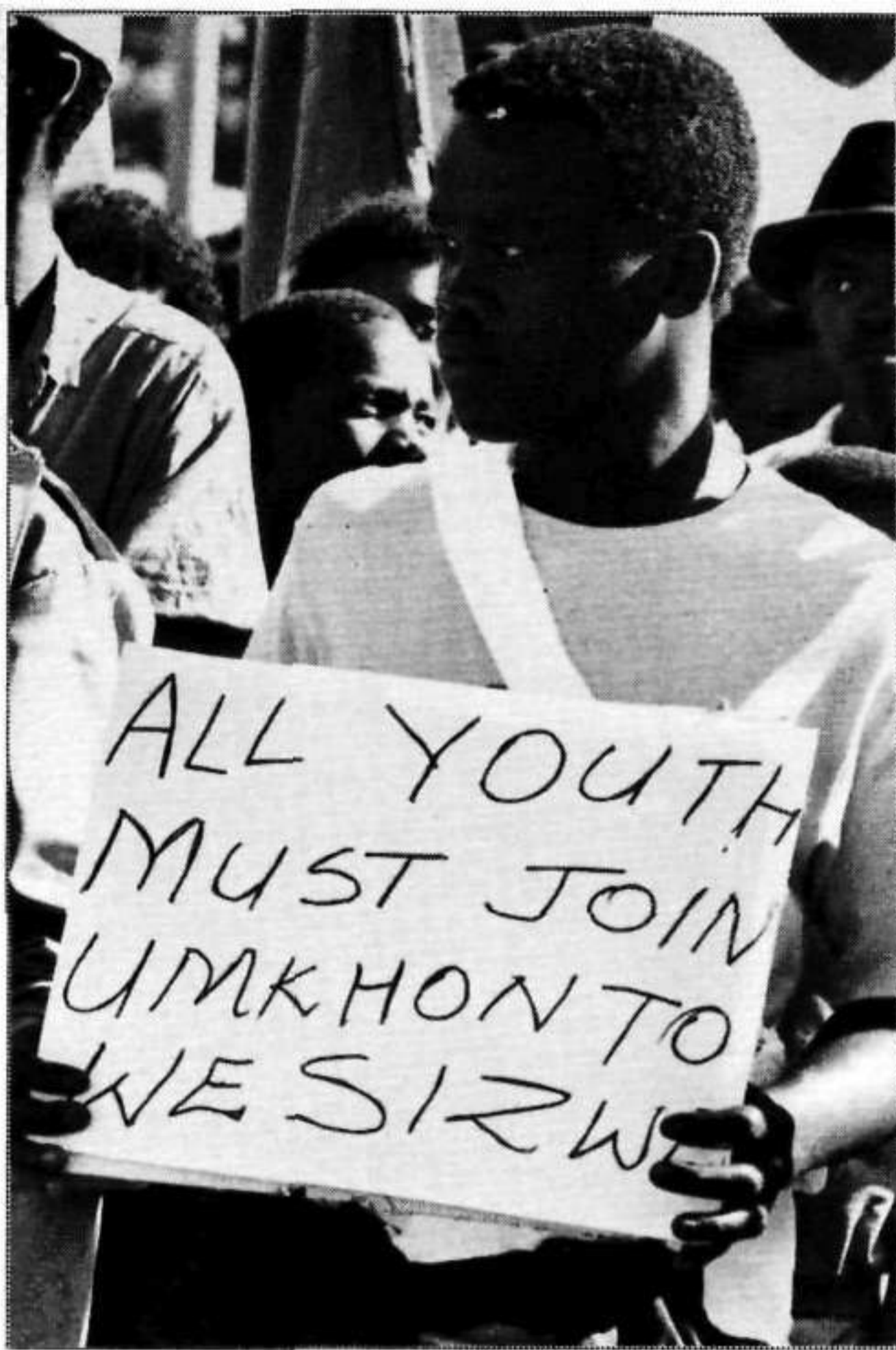
The metaphor of the waves and troughs of struggle is very apposite. Many revolutionary theorists refer to the ebb and flow, the waves and troughs, the currents of political struggle ... it's very close to what actually takes place in mass struggle. One of the key factors is the mood of the masses, affected by socio-economic conditions and so on.

The masses are always struggling, spontaneously or led in protest against their conditions in an exploitative society, whatever the socio-economic formation might be.

Obviously on its own, there will be no culmination, no overthrow. For that you need a vanguard organisation or movement with its programme, strategy and tactics, forces and means of struggle.

Look at South African history from the '40s, when mass struggle really began to increase after a period of comparative civic peace, as momentum began to grow as a result of changed objective conditions ... industrialisation, the war years, eco-





vacuum. And to an extent our thinking reflected that.

**How did MK fit into this shift towards an insurrectionary perspective?**

With the development of popular political organisation in the 1980s, our movement began to perceive the insurrectionary potential.

I'm not saying this has been resolved to date ... my own view is that Umkhonto is a people's army and as such not simply a divorced military entity. We have always thought in terms of a thesis of people's war; that what is primarily needed is the involvement of the masses, the arming of the masses, the development of self-defence units within the masses, underground combat units, guerrilla units, the various formations of a people's army.

In our country, we are looking at a situation in which there is a tradition of popular mass organisation. And although we went through the post-Rivonia period, by the 1980s one of the subjective elements, mass organisation, had really developed.

And in order to develop our armed struggle and concept of the people's army we had to consider how to involve workers, youth, the masses of our people, who had actually demonstrated their propensity to do battle with the security forces in a spontaneous way.

Those detachments, those fighting contingents, were there. It was an exciting development and it posed a challenge to those of us instrumental in developing Umkhonto.

There is a model, known to students of armed struggle, somewhat different to that of the guerrilla in the bush. This takes up the question of the revolutionary army, the people's army. It is based on three key elements.

- The core are the professional trained guerrillas, in our case Umkhonto.
  - Around this is the army of the masses, the most advanced activists who man the barricades, who take on the security forces mainly with homemade weapons and explosives.
- These are the most advanced elements, ready to take up arms and be organised into self-defence units, rural, factory and community-based.
- One has seen the people's militia in El Salvador and Nicaragua. In El Salvador this has been developed to a very high degree. Of course the guerrilla core leads, trains and guides the activities of the people's militia and recruits from its ranks. These are the two key elements on the side of the people.
- The third key element are those elements of the enemy security forces which are won over to the side of the revolution at crucial times, who refuse to carry out the orders of their officers and of the ruling power.

We've seen very interesting developments taking place in the past five years - the mutiny of the troops in Bophuthatswana, the big change in the Transkei, black policemen on the Rand who are refusing to serve, going on strike, the Rockman episode ...

We've also seen many whites neutralised, either because of

economic deprivation, the post-war anti-colonial upsurge.

You'd see a wave of struggle - the 1946 miners' strike, for example - build up and reach a peak, and then recede.

The next peak, in 1953 with the defiance campaign, is even higher and the subsequent trough both shallower and of shorter duration. And so on ... the 1960 resistance culminating in Sharpeville followed by a deep and, comparatively lengthy trough. Then the spontaneous strikes of 1973, followed quickly by 1976, almost a tidal wave by comparison with the past.

By 1983 the troughs were getting shallower and far shorter. The waves, by contrast, dwarfed anything that came before.

Following a similar rhythm - or attempting to do so - is the subjective element, the vanguard movement: where the organisational efforts of activists synchronise with the energy of the masses, the wave becomes much more powerful, as with the '46 miners' strike.

But at times - the defiance campaign, the early period of Umkhonto - you see the vanguard movement's progress ahead of the mass mood.

At others, the early period of the 1983-1986 mass wave for example, you see spontaneous mass action leaping ahead.

But to return to the early MK period, the early to mid-1960s: it was one of the deeper troughs, a period of relative political



## ARMED STRUGGLE

their fear of being killed, or simply because they refused, as was increasingly becoming the case, to defend a rotten system ... a moral revulsion for apartheid, which was affecting large numbers of citizen force personnel, white troopers.

In a situation where the crisis is so great, the political pressures are so great, conscript armies can be neutralised - decomposed from within - that's very much a possibility. The situation would affect very large percentages of conscript troops and, of course, black police and soldiers.

The bottom line is numbers. The Achilles heel of white supremacy is that to maintain white power, they need white unity. And we have seen how white unity has gone through a shredding machine over the past years. So if you do your arithmetic: the ruling power can mobilise 500 000 white soldiers. Of that, 40% - 200 000 - might prove unreliable at a point of crisis. And the black units - in the police they make up half the force - would be affected.

In some countries this element, from within the enemy forces, can become a major factor. It did in the Bolshevik revolution, for instance.

In South Africa, given the social composition of the SADF, this has offered less obvious possibilities. Perhaps, for our part, it was neglected for too long.

But the successes of the End Conscription Campaign, the impact of the civil and political struggle on the consciousness of the conscripted troops showed the tremendous potential to reach their minds and neutralise a high proportion.

This would be the model available to study as an alternative to that of the army of the bush.

It is clearly a model more relevant to an insurrectionary strategy.

### What does all this say about negotiations?

Firstly, we don't have a double agenda; we are genuine in our deep hope that negotiations succeed.

But the responsibility for that success depends on De Klerk. Just as the founding manifesto of Umkhonto says the government was responsible for forcing us to resort to armed struggle, so too now with De Klerk.

He has recognised that his government cannot go on in the old way ... he is far more advanced than his predecessors. And he understands if he is tardy about this process, if he's unreasonable about democratic change, it is he and his government who will create the possibility for renewed revolutionary offensive, because they will have frustrated the aspirations of the masses by their stubbornness and intractability.

So the choice is theirs: We are still to see exactly what their agenda is.

Although I must stress that we do not have a double agenda, it is clear to me as a student of history that the struggle has developed to such a level here that it can't be diverted or distracted. The people will not accept half-measures, half a loaf.

What we demand is simple, basic democratic rights.

If De Klerk seeks to negate that, the tide will rise to sweep him and the obstacles away.

The masses will do that. In terms of the options which we hold - and we have ours, as he has his - our other option is our organised strength and capacity, which we must continue to build and strengthen.

There is no moratorium on this. We would never accept a moratorium on building our strength, organising our people to defend themselves and developing the means to assist in

achieving democratic objectives.

But an actual insurrection, as Joe Slovo has pointed out many times - it appears in the *The path to power*, the party programme - depends on a specific moment in time. And that moment is not simply man-made. It depends on the mood of the masses, and the crises of a particular time, the role of the vanguard movement and, very crucially, on the actions of the ruling power.

We can't foresee when - or even whether - such a moment might occur. But we would reserve our right to take the decision to act if we find that the regime, at such a moment, is blocking the path to democracy, is seeking to turn the clock back and is resorting to repression.

That is what the ruling power attempted in Russia from July to October 1917. Lenin's April Thesis in 1917 actually spelled out that the peaceful way was possible - until the July reaction and terror which drove the Bolsheviks underground. The Bolsheviks then exercised their option in October, seizing the moment and calling for an uprising.

We would prefer the peaceful way because it is the easier, less painful way.

### So the idea of an insurrection is still in the air?

There appears to have been a clear scaling down of Umkhonto operations since 2 February - this is our contribution to creating a climate conducive to negotiations.

But - and here I'm again speaking as an analyst, not an advocate - we should note that insurrections don't usually take place when movements are deeply underground. They usually take place when there is more space, when there are openings created by the enforced retreat of the ruling power.

In these conditions, where the semi-legal and even legal possibilities of developing combat and defence units by the masses have increased substantially, there is tremendous scope.

Consider what happened in February and October 1917 - the scope for insurrection opened up tremendously after February. In that situation, if a ruling power attempts to turn back to repression, an acute crisis can emerge providing the moment for an uprising.

This is why I keep saying the responsibility is on De Klerk: there won't be a need for an uprising - the moment won't arise - if the negotiation process stays on course and he shows he's serious about it. The situation since 2 February has opened up enormous energy and possibilities for the strengthening of the liberation movement. And there is a very volatile situation in this country, it is explosive: the impoverishment of the masses is reaching unbearable levels.

As an exile who has just returned home, I'm absolutely shocked at how material conditions have declined in areas like Alexandra, in Winterveldt, in Inanda and the valleys of Natal. The impoverishment is acute and we see militant local struggles taking place everywhere - and attacks by police on the people.

The combustible elements, the insurrectionary elements ... the mood is there. If the government is incapable of addressing grievances, and this process proves incapable of dealing with the aspirations, then insurrectionary possibilities are on the cards. The wave now rising will be irresistible.

Inherent in the logic of his choice, De Klerk has to move fast to stay ahead of what the ruling power fears most, the masses. The ruling power is haunted by the '83-'86 uprisings. If De Klerk fails to allow for a negotiated solution then, and speaking strictly as a student of history, one foresees the whole issue being settled in the streets. •



# Jordan on the Party



*Pallo Jordan responds to SACP general-secretary Joe Slovo's discussion paper 'Has Socialism Failed?' This is an edited version of Jordan's response; his paper, 'The Crisis of Conscience in the SACP', is published in full in the latest edition of Transformation magazine.*

*Jordan is a member of the ANC national executive committee*

**T**he most refreshing aspect of Joe Slovo's discussion paper is the candour and honesty with which many of the problems of 'existing socialism' are examined. A few years ago, no-one in the South African Communist Party (SACP) would have dared to cast such a critical light on the socialist countries. 'Anti-Soviet', 'anti-communist', or 'anti-Party' were the dismissive epithets reserved for those who did. We can but hope the publication of the discussion paper spells the end of such practices.

It is clear too that much of the heart-searching that required Slovo to put pen to paper was prompted by the harrowing events of the past 12 months, which culminated in the Romanian masses — in scenes reminiscent of the storming of the Winter Palace — storming the headquarters of the Communist Party of Romania.

We may expect that, just as in 1956 and 1968, there will flow from many pens essays of disillusionment and despair written by ex-communists who have recently discovered the sterling qualities of late capitalism.

Slovo remains a communist, convinced that the future of humankind lies in the socialist development of society and the social ownership of property. This is a creed he has lived by all his adult life, and he therefore feels compelled to explain what could have gone so terribly wrong as to bring about the events we witnessed in Romania.

I read and re-read Slovo's paper in the hope of finding such an explanation, but it proved well-nigh impossible to discover a coherent account of what had gone wrong. Reducing the arguments advanced in his discussion paper to their barest minimum we are left with a handful of causes which beg a

number of questions rather than answer them.

Slovo points to the backwardness of a war-weary Russia, forced to build socialism in one country because the European revolutions it had hoped for failed to materialise. He also attributes a degree of blame to the necessities imposed upon the Bolsheviks by the intervention of capitalist powers in 1918. He discerns, too, a rather mechanical dismissal of the virtues of bourgeois democracy by Lenin in *The State and Revolution*, and detects some responsibility attaching to the non-existence of 'democratic traditions' in Tsarist Russia.

Lastly, he faults all the ruling communist Parties for institutionalising their role as 'vanguard' through law rather than on the basis of popular endorsement by the working class and the majority of society.

The combination of these factors acting on each other, by Slovo's account, led to the one-party dictatorship over the proletariat and society. To sum up, he offers one major objective factor (economic backwardness in the context of war-weariness coupled with political isolation) plus four subjective factors.

**S**lovo acknowledges that there were terrible abuses of political, civil and human rights in all countries in the socialist bloc. He admits also that during the days of the Comintern (and perhaps even after) the interests of other parties and peoples were often subordinated to the perceived interests of the Soviet Union. He does not dispute the mounting evidence of corruption and moral degeneration among the CP leaders in many of these countries - leading to the scandalous charges of graft, money-laundering and skimming off the top!



He has identified the symptoms of the illness but not its basic causes. He has, perhaps, also provided us with evidence that in a particular economic and social climate the viruses that give rise to the illness may thrive and prove more lethal, but we remain with the illness itself undiagnosed.

Marxism prides itself in its ability to uncover the reality that lies hidden behind appearances. Marxists therefore cannot be content with expressions of shock, horror and condemnation. It is our task to explain what has led to the atrocities we condemn! This is the missing element in Slovo's otherwise useful discussion paper.

Among the Marxist-Leninist parties that once constituted the world communist movement, attempts to come to grips with the problems of socialist construction are extremely rare and have for decades been muted if not actively suppressed. This is as true of the South African Communist Party (perhaps more so) as it is of the communist parties that have achieved power and of the others. The exceptions to this pattern were the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the immediate aftermath of the uprising in Poland and Hungary during 1966; and the Italian Communist Party, after the death of Togliatti, when it began to define a new identity for itself.

Previous to this, the only other attempts were undertaken in the ranks of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union itself, by the two oppositions associated with Trotsky-Zinoviev and Bukharin. This tradition has been almost totally suppressed in the communist movement and despite the political rehabilitation of Bukharin and the judicial rehabilitation of Trotsky, Zinoviev and the other left oppositionists, is still largely forgotten.

Latter-day Marxist oppositionists have been branded as 'counter-revolutionaries', 'spies' and 'provocateurs' by the Communist Party in much the same way as their predecessors (Trotsky, Zinoviev, Bukharin, etc) were so labelled in their frame-up trials of the 1930s. Their works have consequently been ignored, only to be taken up by the real counter-revolutionaries, spies and provocateurs, as sticks to beat the left in general.

**T**he concept, 'the dictatorship of the proletariat', which owes more to French revolutionary practice than to Marx and Engels, may have to bear some blame for the horrors perpetrated in its name. It was precisely this that the CCP attempted to examine in 1957 in a short pamphlet titled *On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*.

In analyzing the previous 40 years (1917-1957) the Chinese communists drew analogies between the socialist revolution and the bourgeois democratic revolution. They correctly assert that for the first 100 years of its existence bourgeois democracy was in fact precisely that - democracy for the bourgeoisie - as only the property owners had the vote.

The pamphlet went on to argue that while the proletarian dictatorship was imperfect and deformed in many ways, most of these distortions were attributable to the security considerations imposed by capitalist encirclement and active hostility. Its basic character, however, was sound because of its commitment to the creation of a classless society.

In what was then an amazing departure from conventional orthodoxies, the CCP argued that the dictatorship of the proletariat had already given rise to a variety of institutional forms. Among those it enumerated the Yugoslav system of worker's councils, the Chinese 'People's Democratic Dictatorship', etc.

This was among the first official CP documents to suggest the Soviet model was not universally applicable.

The Italian communists in many respects followed a line similar to the Chinese until the mid-1980s, when Enrico Berlinguer castigated the Soviet model as a failure which should be abandoned. During the 1970s, a whole range of other parties also took the plunge but most of their writing was unoriginal, repeating the formulation of others.

The class character of the Soviet model (which was applied in most socialist countries) has been precisely the central focus among Marxists who take their inspiration from the Bolshevik oppositionists and other East European critics of Stalinism. In their polemics against Stalin and Stalinism, both Trotsky and Bukharin make reference to the class character of Soviet society at the time. The same is true of the Yugoslav oppositionist, Milovan Djilas, in his *The New Class*; Modzelewski and Kuron, two Polish oppositionists from the 1960s, also point to the class roots of the degeneration of the socialist countries, as does Bahro, the most recent left critic of Stalinism from inside a ruling Communist Party in his *The Alternative in Eastern Europe*.

While Slovo recognises that the socialist countries degenerated into police states, with their administrative and repressive organs possessed of inordinate powers, he never seems to broach the rather obvious questions: what gave rise to the need for such practices? Was it not to contain and suppress a fundamentally explosive contradiction in these societies that the ruling parties constructed such formidable armouries of police powers?

**T**he most famous critic of Stalinism was doubtlessly Leon Trotsky. Setting aside our opinion of him and his political career, we can nonetheless agree that, employing the method of historical materialism, he provided one of the most original critiques of the Soviet system. It was Trotsky's contention that the backwardness of Russia, the depredations of the War of Intervention followed by the famine, and the failure of the European revolution, conspired to so isolate the young Soviet republic that it was compelled to fall back on its own meagre resources in order to survive.

The price exacted was that a bureaucratic caste, drawn from the working class leadership itself, was able to usurp power from the proletariat, which required their expertise and skill to maintain the state. This caste, having developed from within the working class and ensconced in its party, employing the language of socialism and forced to defend the gains of October (on which its very existence depended) was nonetheless a parasitic layer battenning onto the surplus produced by the working class.

According to this account, a unique relationship developed - it was not exploitative in the true sense, since the bureaucracy did not own the means of production; yet it was exploitative in the sense that the bureaucracy was above the class of direct producers and consumed the surplus. According to Trotsky, *the dictatorship of Stalin was the political expression of this fraught internal contradiction*.

While Bukharin would have parted company with Trotsky as regards his conclusions, he nonetheless sought to employ the same method, historical materialism, to explain the problems of Soviet society. Bukharin stressed the social character of the alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry, which underlay Soviet power. According to him, the problems arose as a result of the abandonment of the New Economic Pro-





**The SACP: Members should re-examine the meaning of socialism**

gramme (NEP) in favour of the five year plans. All these, Bukharin charged, were premised on the accumulation of capital at the expense of the peasantry and were bound to rupture the alliance. Having ruptured the peasant-worker alliance, the Soviet state lost the support of the vast majority of the population and was consequently tempted to act no differently than the Tsarist state before it - in a dictatorial manner. Bukharin and Trotsky concurred that Stalin had become the leader of this omnipotent state and epitomised its cruelty and callousness.

Most subsequent oppositional writings, with the exception of the Chinese and the Italians, derive from these two main sources or at any rate regard them as their baseline. Milovan Djilas, for example, contended the process of socialist construction had brought into being a 'new class', unknown to the Marxist classics and to the experience of bourgeois sociology. Its power derived from its control over the means of production (rather than ownership) and its capacity to command the labour-power of others.

The locus of this 'new class', Djilas argued, was the leadership of the Communist Party.

Rudolph Bahro, an erstwhile member of the Socialist Unity Party of the GDR, holds that Stalinism was inevitable in the context of a backward Russia that still awaited the capitalist development of the productive forces. 'Despotic industrialisation' was the necessary outcome of the drive to transform an agrarian into an urban industrial society. Stalinism, by his account, had outlived its historically necessary role once an industrial base had been established. However, because the bureaucracy created to manage this earlier phase had acquired a vested interest in the prerequisites of power, it resisted change to the point of violence, as in Czechoslovakia in 1968.

This bureaucracy, he argued, behaved like a class in that it is able to reproduce itself, through easier access to better education; favoured treatment for its members and their families; special status in all spheres of public life.

These explanations apart, it is true that Stalin's approach was actually supported by the overwhelming majority of Soviet communists in the 1920s and 1930s. Both the Trotskyists and the Bukharinists were outvoted in the Party congresses. It was precisely because he had such support that Stalin found it

possible to perpetrate the abuses of the the late 1930s and 1940s.

The only anti-Stalinist who accepts and has sought to explain the pro-Stalin consensus in the CPSU is Isaac Deutscher, who asserts that by a skillful combination of Marxist rhetoric and appeal to Russian nationalism Stalin was able to weld together an alliance among the party apparatus and the basically conservative bureaucracy — at the expense of the CPSU's revolutionary traditions.

Whether one accepts it or not, this oppositional intellectual tradition must be taken into account by a Marxist who wishes to understand the 'socialist countries'.

**O**ne question we have to ask is: could a new class of bureaucrats, who have acquired an identity and interests apart from the rest of society, possibly have come into existence?

Historical materialism teaches that the basis of class lies in social productive relations, and not in the real or apparent relative influence of individuals. To answer this question leads us straight back to the classic Marxian definition of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which Friedrich Engels discerned in the institutions of the Paris Commune of 1871.

Apart from democratising the state, the Paris Commune attempted to create a legislature and administration that would remain close to the working people. This was institutionalised in the law that no law-maker or civil servant should earn a salary higher than that of a skilled workman: intended in the first instance, to discourage those who saw government service as a means of self-enrichment; and to contain the tendency for the legislators to become alienated from their constituencies. A second provision, linked to the first, subjected all legislators to immediate recall by the electors, imposing on them greater accountability to the voters.

One would be very hard put to find a single socialist country that has adopted these sound principles as the basis for government. If the evidence of recent events is to be believed, it seems clear that they were honoured in blatant breach. The hunting lodges, the exclusive suburbs and ornate palaces of the 'proletarian dictators', indicate gross violation of the intent of the model handed down by the Paris Commune. If one were to





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**Everyone must  
enjoy  
human rights**

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judge by the evidence of this alone one could indeed be persuaded that we had witnessed the emergence of a new class.

What, then, were the social productive relations in the existing socialisms?

It is clear that a number of modes of production existed side by side in the socialist countries and that among them one could point to a variety of social productive relations. While this is true, we can also refer to a dominant mode, based on state-owned property. The Stalin model, whose roots lie in the specifics of Soviet history, shall for purposes of this paper serve as the universal model.

The Stalin model had its origins in the defeat of the left and right oppositionists to Stalin during the 1920s and the 1930s. It involved a dramatic reversal of all the policies pursued during the NEP and the near total 'statisation' of the economy. The task of the state as understood by the pro-Stalin majority in the CPSU was to set in motion the processes of primitive socialist accumulation. The techniques employed to achieve this were not altogether different from those related to the early phases of capitalism. Coercion and extra-legal methods became the order of the day. These in turn created their own dynamic. The egalitarian ethos, which had been the hallmark of the communists during the period of War Communism, was replaced by a strongly anti-egalitarian ethic, decreed from the topmost leadership of the CPSU. The rationale for these steps was elementary - there was no way of enforcing work discipline other than the methods which served capitalism so well.

The impact of the war and the famine had drastically transformed the Bolshevik Party since 1917. At the end of the Civil War, it had become a party of committeemen, professional revolutionaries, administrators and state functionaries rather than a party of working class militants rooted in their factories and their neighbourhoods. It was less and less the working class, but the committeemen, the cadres and functionaries who served in these capacities, who framed policy.

The extent to which this was true is evident from the census of party membership published by the central control commission of the CPSU in 1927:

Workers engaged in industry and transport: 430 000  
 Agricultural workers: 15 700  
 Peasants: 151 500  
 Government officials of peasant origins: 151 500  
 Other government officials: 462 000

The disproportionate representation of state officials was perhaps unavoidable in the light of the demands of the moment, but it has to be admitted that it changed very fundamentally the character of the CPSU.

**A**s early as 1921, the 'Workers Opposition' grouping complained bitterly about the introduction of one person management in all the factories. The relegation of the Committees for Workers' Control at factory and plant level, though important for efficiency, stripped the working class of a most fundamental conquest of the October revolution - the power to determine the character and the rhythm of the labour process. The soviets too saw their power diminished by appointments made by the apparatus. The Bolsheviks harvested the bitter fruits of these developments when the sailors of the Kronstadt garrison, known from the days of October and through the War of Intervention for their heroism and revolutionary zeal, mutinied in March 1921, denouncing the Soviet government as a new tyranny. The Temporary Revolutionary Committee of Kronstadt declared: 'The most hateful and

criminal thing the communists have created is moral servitude: they laid their hands even on the inner life of the toilers and compelled them to think only in the communist way...With the aid of militarized trade unions they have bound the workers to their benches and have made labour not into a joy but into a new slavery.'

In both his works, *From NEP to Socialism* and *The New Economics* written during the 1920s, the left oppositionist Eugene Preobrazhensky makes clear that in the absence of massive capital inflows from advanced countries, the Soviet Union would have no option but to construct its industrial base at the expense of the peasantry. It was his contention also that the proletariat would have to submit itself to the most rigorous work discipline in order to build at breakneck speed.

By 1934, Lazar Kaganovich, one of Stalin's leading henchmen, could remark that 'the earth should tremble when the director is entering the factory'. This new style 'socialist' director was conceived of as a petty tyrant on his own patch and all other structures in the factory - such as the trade union - existed not to obstruct or contain his power but rather to assist it in realising its objectives.

The demands of constructing an industrial society in conditions of economic backwardness in a huge territory surrounded by extremely hostile enemies, placed enormous strains on the political institutions of the young Soviet republic. The Bolsheviks had never been a mass party, even of the working class, before or after the October revolution. The party had won the confidence and support of millions of workers and soldiers. Land reforms also earned them support among the peasants, and the nationalities programme gained them the confidence of the Asiatic peoples formerly oppressed by Tsarism.

It was only at the end of that war that one can properly say the Bolsheviks began to rule. Though they had fought to defend the conquests of the revolution - especially land - the peasants in fact had not become solid supporters of the Bolshevik party.

The dispersal of the urban proletariat, as the factories ground to a halt and mass starvation threatened the cities, meant that the Bolsheviks also lost their anchor in the working class. Taking fright at these developments, the Tenth Party Congress, in March 1921, instituted the most fateful reforms of the party statutes, outlawing factions. The sixth thesis of the resolution on party unity explicitly prescribed expulsion for anyone who did not observe this new rule. More fateful were the *Resolutions on the Syndicalist and Anarchist Deviation in our Party* adopted at the same congress. For the first time in the history of the communist movement, a 'deviation' was declared as treason to the working class. The relevant section states: 'Hence, the views of the "workers opposition" and of like-minded elements are not only wrong in theory, but in practice, and an expression of petty bourgeois anarchist wavering, in practice weaken the consistency of the leading line of the Communist Party, and help the class enemies of the proletarian revolution'.

The result of these reforms was the reversal of long-standing Bolshevik practice, which had permitted like-minded members of the party to combine and present a common platform to the party for debate and resolution. A few weeks before the Tenth Party Congress such a debate, on the 'Trade Union Question', had just been concluded. During the course of the debate, *Pravda* had published a series of articles representing different viewpoints among the CPSU leadership, and at least three public debates had been held in Moscow and Leningrad, at which the various viewpoints were aired before an audience



of party militants and the public.

Many who voted for the resolutions of the Tenth Party Congress and subsequently became oppositionists had these fateful words flung back at them in later years. But while wiser counsels prevailed in the Politburo of the CPSU no party member needed to fear his/her safety. The congress resolved '...to wage an unswerving and systematic ideological struggle against these ideas'.

As yet struggle was aimed at the incorrect ideas - the sin, so to speak, but not the sinner. However, the malignancy had been planted in the body of the party and all it required was a new environment, provided by the death of Lenin, for it to become dangerous. Just as Zinoviev and Trotsky supported the outlawing of ideas of the 'Workers Opposition' in 1921, so too did Bukharin, in 1927, support the outlawing of those of the Right Opposition. Each of these successive layers prepared the ground for their own demise by compromising the intellectual climate in the party and its traditions of debate and ideological contestation. Thus once the CPSU succumbed to the imperatives of primitive socialist accumulation, there was no mechanism to break out of the logic of this grim cycle. Once caught on this treadmill, the party leadership either kept going or went under.

The regime this system imposed in the factories, plants and fields was as authoritarian as it was rigid. The concept 'alienation' employed by the young Marx to describe the plight of the worker in capitalist industry has been borrowed in this instance by Slovo to explain the profound scepticism (if not cynicism) of the Soviet workers about their employers - the 'socialist' state. In the capitalist countries, the attitude of workers is determined by their age-old recognition that no matter how much their immediate conditions might improve, the relationship with their employers remains exploitative.

There appears to be a similar feeling in the Soviet Union, fuelled no doubt also by the regime of lies and falsehood that the logic of monolithism compelled the CPSU to embrace. If ideological deviation equals class enemy ideology, was it not logical that the bearer of that ideology was also a class enemy?

Thus did the wheel come full circle - since the Party felt it could no longer rely on the working class, it fell back on its own resources and instituted a system of control essentially no different from that of the capitalists; but having chosen that option it left itself no means to reconquer working class confidence and, though ruling in that class's name, both it and the working class knew that this was a lie, eroding further the working class's confidence in the party.

**B**ut was it inevitable, given the complex of circumstances and the historical legacy of Tsarist Russia, that the first socialist state should evolve in this direction? Related to this question is a second: did Stalinism and its horrors flow logically from Leninism and Marxist theory? Throughout this paper I have sought to show that the Soviet leadership faced a range of alternatives at all the crucial turning points in its history. Inevitability is therefore not part of the question. I am persuaded that a number of circumstances - among which we cannot exclude personality - conspired to bias their choices in particular directions.

Having chosen those specific options, the Soviet leadership, by that action, foreclosed others. Rather than inevitability, what we are dealing with is necessity. This implies an element of choice, but not an unlimited choice, for the alternatives themselves are structured by previous choices and inherited

circumstances. To speak with the Karl Marx of *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*: 'Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past'.

Necessity, Marx tells us, plays itself out in the shape of accidents. In this regard one may say that it was an accident that Lenin died at a time when his leadership qualities might have prevented the tensions he detected within the CPSU from spilling over into splits. Equally, it may be counted as an accident that the man who became general secretary of the CPSU was a ruthless Georgian defrocked priest. Yet another accident was the murder of Kirov immediately after the 1935 'Congress of the Victors'. But it was all these accidents that conspired with given circumstances and those created by the CPSU's own choices, to place inordinate power in the hands of Stalin and his henchmen. It is this uncanny synchronisation of chance and causality that constitutes necessity.

**I**f Slovo's discussion paper is to serve any useful purpose, it must at the very least assist communists in coming to terms with the history of their movement. This requires that they begin to settle accounts with the oppositionists, left and right, who have stood up courageously against the degradation of the ideals of communism. South African communists would do well to turn to the works of anti-Stalinist Marxists and communists to rediscover the true meaning of this vision which has persuaded thousands of militants to lay down their lives; which has inspired thousands with courage to storm the citadels of power even when the odds appeared insuperable; which moved great artists to create magnificent works. The SACP owes it to itself and to the cause it espouses that it boldly grasp this nettle.

One cannot accept at face value Slovo's protestations about the SACP's non-Stalinist credentials. Firstly, there is too much evidence to the contrary. Any regular reader of SACP publications can point to a persistent pattern of praise and support for every violation of freedom perpetrated by the Soviet leadership, both before and after the death of Stalin. It is all too easy in the context of Soviet criticisms of this past for Slovo to boldly come forward. Secondly, the political culture nurtured by the SACP's leadership over the years has produced a spirit of intolerance, petty intellectual thuggery and political dissembling among its membership which regularly emerges in the pages of both the *African Communist* and *Umsebenzi*. If we are to be persuaded that the party had indeed embraced the spirit of honesty and openness expected of Marxists, it has an obligation to demonstrate this by a number of visible measures.

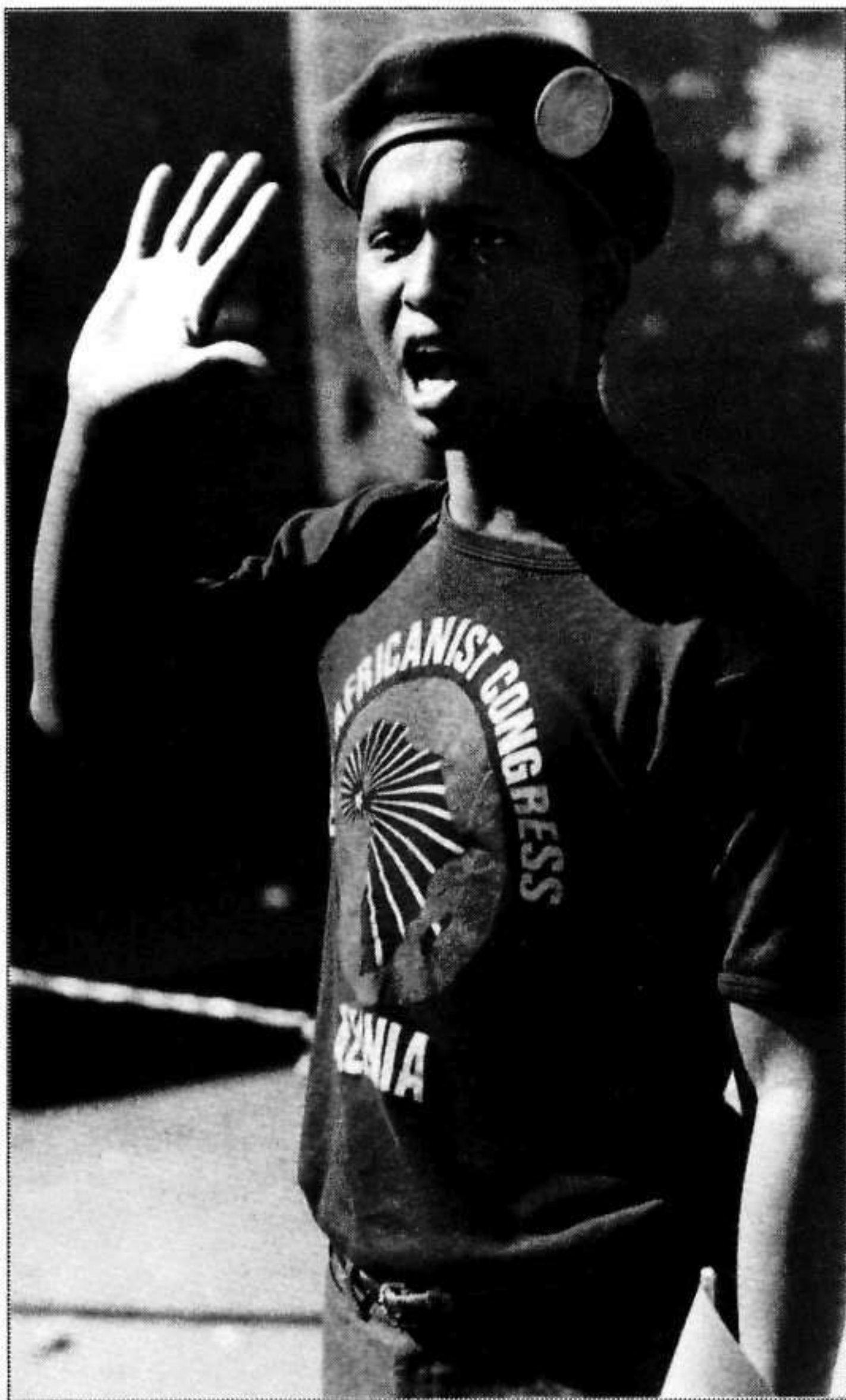
As a token of the SACP's commitment to a new path and political practice, Slovo's discussion paper could serve as the opening sally in a dialogue among South African socialists, including every persuasion, to re-examine the meaning of socialism and the implications of its distortions in the socialist countries. An unsparing interrogation of this past can help to salvage something from the tragedy of existing socialism.

To draw an analogy with the bourgeois revolution, it required the imperial tyranny of Napoleon, the restoration of the Bourbons, the farcical empire of the younger Napoleon and defeat at the hands of Prussia for the French bourgeoisie to fully appreciate the greatness of the men of 1789-95. Perhaps socialism has had to pass through a similar painful infancy and adolescence for communists to recognise the true stature of those who opposed Stalin, his henchmen and their successors in Eastern Europe. •



*After almost 30 years in the political twilight zone, the PAC has undergone a significant revival.*

- *Gary van Staden examines the movement's options on negotiations*
- *Allan Hirsch looks at the PAC's economic document*
- *Robyn Rafel reports on the tensions between Nactu's Africanist and BC adherents*
- *A WIP correspondent focuses on the joint ANC-PAC peace initiative in the Eastern Cape*



# The way of the empty hand



**W**ith South Africa's political temperature high and rising, for pure heating power few questions can match that which asks: What about the Pan-Africanist Congress?

Five years ago few would have bothered. That alone says much about the revival of Africanism in the late 1980s.

The issue is no longer whether the PAC has emerged from the political twilight it occupied for nearly three decades. That is established fact.

The questions which now arise are:

- What is the extent of the revival - both organisationally and in terms of popular support?

- Can the organisation escape its unhappy past?

- And does it represent a threat to the near-hegemonic position of the African National Congress?

Before addressing these questions, several points should be noted.

The first is that despite some of the rhetoric currently emanating from its supporters - 'one settler, one bullet' being the most contentious - despite its black exclusivist history, and despite its ambiguity towards 'white liberals', the PAC is no longer a racist or exclusivist organisation.

Secondly, any attempt to accurately measure levels of PAC support against those of the ANC or any other competitors can achieve little conclusive.

It clearly does not draw as many supporters to its public gatherings - witness this year's June 16 meetings. And its opposition to the joint ANC-Congress of South African Trade Unions-United Democratic Front stayaway on 2 July met with limited success.

But the only true test of popular support is at the polls, when all adult South Africans are given the chance to democratically elect their representatives.

That said, three points can be made with safety:

- The PAC is not the largest political organisation in South Africa;
- The ANC currently appears to enjoy majority support;
- The PAC, however, is a significant component of the South African body politic.

In attempting to answer the specific questions outlined earlier, it is necessary to examine some of the factors contributing to the revival of Africanism.

These include an improvement in the quality of the organisation's leadership; the resumption of PAC-inspired insurgency; a substantial increase in external



## PAC: Walking on its own tightrope

*The PAC's revival is now established. But it is not yet clear that the organisation can retain or build on its new-found influence. Gary van Staden reports*

support and its international representation (the number of missions abroad has tripled in the past five years, and now exceeds that of the South African government); and a perception that the ANC failed to take full advantage of favourable conditions existing from late-1984 to mid-1986.

**A**n additional factor has since been added: the ANC's readiness to seek a negotiated end to apartheid.

For the PAC itself, the issue of negotiations is not without risk, and the movement's response will provide a crucial test of its leadership.

While the PAC may gain in the short-term from dissatisfaction over the ANC's willingness to sit down with President FW de Klerk, its current stance could put it in danger of being ruled out of the game entirely.

The attitude the PAC currently adopts is that it will have nothing to do with negotiations while they remain in the preliminary or pre-bargaining stage.

This enables it to politically 'outbid' the ANC - retaining a political purity which allows it to give its constituents a message it believes they want to hear.

Once negotiations begin addressing substantive issues - once they begin to address the issue and distribution of state



power - the PAC has two options:

- It can stay out and hope to prevent implementation of any agreement which may emerge - much as the Patriotic Front did in Zimbabwe over the Ian Smith-Abel Muzorewa accord; or
- it can join the process in the hope of negotiating a slice of the political power cake.

But the first option requires of the PAC sufficient political strength on the ground to block implementation of whatever is agreed. And while no conclusive data may yet be available on the movement's strength, it can safely be assumed that it does not command majority support.

It must therefore fall back on the second option: joining the process. But this would mean losing whatever advantage its current 'outbidding' position has gained it.

An additional complicating factor is that the PAC seems to have been unable to reap the potential profits of its 'outbidding' position.

At least part of the reason for this is the continued absence of its exiled leadership. Because of its current stance on negotiations, and its public position that 'what has not been won on the battlefield cannot be won at the negotiating table', the movement's exiled leaders cannot return without losing face.

An additional concern for the organisation is the potentially damaging possibility that a return of the PAC's exiled leadership would not generate the same level of public response as that of returning ANC leaders.

There may, however, be advantages to an early return. The presence inside the country of the major figures of its exiled leadership - Johnson Mlambo, Gora Ebrahim, Joe Mkwana and Lesaoana Makhanda - would substantially boost its media and political profile and add to its local leadership corps.

The PAC is thus at a crossroads. And there is not a great deal of time to choose which path to take - its 'outbidding' option is unlikely to last beyond the first quarter of next year, when substantive negotiations are likely to start.

*And it may be a case of now or never.*

Two of the answers to the specific questions posed above may well depend on the PAC's decision.

The PAC's revival, whatever its extent to date, has already begun to run out of steam and needs a decisive injection to keep it going.

As regards the threat it could pose to



**PAC's Barney Desai addressing a rally. At his feet is the contentious slogan, One settler, one bullet**

the ANC's dominant position, this depends largely on how the PAC uses its various advantages. But even if it uses them all to maximum effect it is unlikely that it could emerge as a real threat, although it bears repeating that this will only be demonstrated on election day.

**I**n the interim there are signs that the PAC is shifting position slightly on negotiations.

While it remains adamant that the time is not yet ripe to enter the negotiation process, it has not ruled out the possibility in the future.

Current PAC thinking holds that De Klerk's government is trying to buy itself time rather than seriously contemplating handing over power.

Under these circumstances, the PAC is demanding, before it will contemplate participation, the removal of the Population Registration Act, the Land Act, the Constitution Act (establishing the tricameral parliament), the Bantu Education Act and the acts establishing the bantustans.

The route to possible future participation is thus open. And there are several factors nudging the movement down it - primarily the inviability of its posited alternatives: armed struggle and international pressure on De Klerk.

The PAC clearly commands greater influence today than at any time since the Sharpeville uprising. The organisation's own actions will demonstrate whether it can maintain or improve that influence. •



*Forced to come to terms with its shrinking membership, Nactu now also faces tensions between its Africanist and BC adherents. Robyn Rafel reports*

# NACTU: A little bit of this and a little bit of that

**U**nlike its larger counterpart, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) — which has pinned its flag to the Charterist banner — the National Council of Trade Unions (Nactu) has never adopted a party-political position.

Yet it is common cause that just as Cosatu has its workerists and populists, so Nactu has its Africanists and black consciousness adherents. And, as former general secretary Phiroshaw Camay was often quick to point out, there are some Charterists and Trotskyists in the mix as well.

It is difficult to quantify the precise effect that the unbanning of the PAC, and the mobilisation that has taken place in Africanist ranks since then, has had on Nactu. But at least two observations can be made:

- despite denials by Nactu officials, the ideological war between Africanists and BC supporters continues;
- there is a big question mark over the likelihood of further co-operation between Nactu and Cosatu on anything other than the campaign against the Labour Relations Act. And now that the government is getting in on the act — through a working group established after the two federations and the SA Co-ordinating Committee on Labour (Saccola) met president FW de Klerk — even that is no longer certain, given Nactu's anti-collaborationist position.

With the benefit of hindsight it seems

clear that Nactu's problems must have begun at the federation's birth in October 1986, when the Council of Unions of South Africa (Cusa) merged with the Azanian Confederation of Trade Unions (Azactu). Both had pulled out of the talks that led to the formation of Cosatu in December 1985, the issue being their insistence that only blacks should hold leadership positions in unions. Cusa had participated in those talks from the start — indeed Camay always maintained that the unity talks began at its initiative. Azactu's involvement came at a late stage and, given its BC bent, was never something to be taken seriously.

Cusa organised along industrial lines and, unlike the so-called 'community unions' which adopted a Charterist position and became affiliates of the UDF, elected not to become affiliated to any political grouping. And it was common cause that the dominant strains within Cusa were those of BC and Africanism, and that the Federation of South African Trade Unions (Fosatu) had workerist and populist/Charterist elements.

The federation was initially known as Cusa-Azactu and said it had 420 000 signed-up members in 23 affiliated unions, of whom 284 000 were paid-up. Cusa was by far the larger partner; the only sizeable Azactu affiliate was the Black Allied Mining & Construction Workers' Union (Bamcwu), which waged a highly successful anti-asbestos campaign in the mid-1980s.

At Nactu's August 1988 congress, in a development that was symptomatic of the changes that had occurred in the federation since its formation, BC-hardliner Pandelani Nefolovhodwe was ousted as first assistant general secretary and replaced by Cunningham Ngcukana, an Africanist.

Africanists also captured other key positions: James Mndaweni, who had also been president of Cusa, was re-elected president. He is an Africanist. So is Patricia de Lille, who was elected vice-president — the first woman to serve on Nactu's NEC. De Lille was assigned the foreign affairs portfolio of the Pan-Africanist Movement (PAM) when that organisation, now the internal Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), was formed on 2 December last year. Africanists also occupy pivotal positions in many affiliates.

The congress also revealed that Nactu's fortunes had undergone a drastic decline — membership had plummeted to 150 000. Three unions accounted for the majority of these members: the SA Chemical Workers Union (Sacwu) with 32 000 members; the 22 000-strong Building, Construction & Allied Workers' Union (BCAWU); and the Food, Beverage Workers' Union (FBWU) with 17 000 members.

Bamcwu's membership had plunged to 3 100; the Transport & Allied Workers' Union (Tawu) membership had halved, from 10 000 members to 5 000;





*The shaky alliance: joint Cosatu/Nactu protests against the LRA last year*

the Steel, Engineering & Allied Workers' Union (Seawusa), which had 27 000 members in October 1986, had only 5 500 members by 1988. Membership of the Vukani Black Guards' and Allied Workers' Union had fallen from 8 900 to 2 000. The Black Domestic Workers' Union and the Textile Workers' Union each had less than 400 members.

**A**t first the rise of the Africanists was seen as a sign that greater cooperation between Nactu and Cosatu might be possible. This was based on the perception that Africanists would be more prepared to engage in joint action on matters of common concern to the working class than the black consciousness elements in Nactu. This was primarily because of the Africanist group's formal acceptance that whites who identify with Africa have a legitimate place in South Africa.

A congress resolution that Nactu should establish a working relationship with Cosatu - even though it would continue its policy of non-affiliation to political parties to avoid ideological divisions among workers - lent weight to this interpretation.

Developments in the months preceding the congress had also pointed to this. In line with a resolution adopted at its founding congress to 'strive to unite all groups that have a contradiction with the white minority regime', a Nactu delegation held meetings outside the country

with the PAC, the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania (BCMA) and the African National Congress (ANC).

It is not clear what happened at the discussions with the PAC and the BCM. But after meeting the ANC in May, the two organisations surprised everyone when they announced they were in agreement that 'it was imperative for the labour movement inside the country to strive towards unity with the eventual objective of a single labour federation'. The fact that Nactu did not subscribe to the Freedom Charter was not seen as an obstacle.

Confirming this, South African Congress of Trade Unions (Sactu) general secretary John Nkadimeng said at the time: 'Certain people think it is a prerequisite that anyone who wants to join a new united front must support the Freedom Charter. We say that is incorrect ... (A united front) is something that brings people together to face a common enemy. They do not have to agree 100% with each other'.

The meeting with the ANC took place while delegations from both Cosatu and Nactu were in Harare for a seminar arranged by the International Labour Organisation and followed an offer by the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity, to which both federations are affiliated, to host unity talks between them.

Later that month, at a special congress, Cosatu resolved to appoint a committee to investigate the establish-

ment of a broad front that would include bodies like Nactu and the Azanian Peoples' Organisation (Azapo). Cosatu also wrote to Nactu calling for a merger. Although there was no real prospect of that happening in the short term, there was still hope that the federations could act together on issues affecting them both.

Nactu's decision to join forces with Cosatu in the highly-successful three-day stayaway in 1988 against proposed amendments to the Labour Relations Act was one of the fruits of these developments. The campaign against the Act, as is well known, was a project into which both federations continued to pour great effort.

Despite this, it was when Nactu pulled out of the first Workers' Summit in March last year that it became clear that the initial conceptions about the direction in which the new Africanist leadership would steer the federation were totally off the mark. With a few bumps here and there it is Nactu's BC adherents - and not the Africanists - who have demonstrated they are more amenable to inter-union cooperation.

The summit was Nactu's idea. Yet, in the days leading up to it, the federation contacted Cosatu and asked for an indefinite postponement to give its members more time to discuss unity. The request was totally unexpected and Cosatu insisted that arrangements were too far advanced to stop. Nactu then



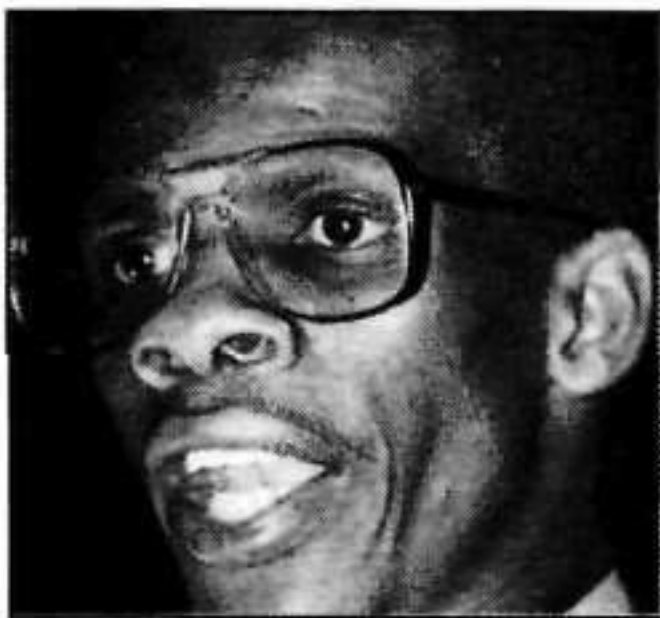
announced it would not attend. Something was obviously amiss.

Just how much dissent this issue created was made clear when 11 Nactu unions - mainly those with BC sympathies - defied the federation's ruling and participated in the summit.

Afterwards they explained they had done so because the 'growing repressiveness of the state and the arrogant attitude of capital can be effectively challenged by the black working class only if it is united'. However, even though they felt the federation's decision had not been in the interests of the working class, there was no question about their commitment to Nactu. Despite these attempts to placate, it is known that Mndaweni's branch of FBWU tried to expel an organiser who went to the summit.

In the months that followed further evidence of strains between the BC and Africanist elements came to light. Nactu has a programme to merge all unions operating in the same sector. Yet Seawusa, for example, refused to act in concert with four other unions operating in the metal sector in May 1989 when they merged to form the 69 000-strong Metal & Engineering Workers' Union (Mewusa). Mewusa is regarded as a middle-of-the-road union politically. General secretary Tommy Oliphant was general secretary of the biggest union in the merger, the Electrical & Allied Workers' Union, a former Trade Union Council of South Africa (Tucsa) parallel union. Its assistant general secretary, G S Zithulele, is a BC supporter. Seawusa's leadership, on the other hand, has been predominantly Africanist since September 1988 when Khotso Kodisang replaced Jane Hlongwane as general secretary. Insiders say Seawusa's decision was prompted by leaders' fears that they would not be able to retain their power in the new union. The two unions are now said to be rivals.

After this bad start, the second Workers' Summit, which was called to formulate responses to the 1989 election and the campaign against the LRA, was ostensibly a completely different affair. Differences were seemingly buried. Nactu not only attended but also committed itself to building working class unity. It agreed that unions organising the same sectors should meet at local and regional level to discuss unity and that a national coordinating committee be established to set objectives and deadlines and to collate the responses in prepara-



**Nactu's Ngcukana:  
Replaced Camay**



**Nactu's Mndaweni:  
Re-elected president**

tion for a further summit.

After the summit there was some conflict between BC elements and Cosatu over precisely which days had been earmarked for stayaways. The former wanted stayaways on 6 September (election day) and 12 September (the anniversary of Steve Biko's death). The latter opted for stayaways on 5 and 6 September. Nevertheless, when the MDM began to stage peace marches after the election, they were supported by the BCM and the Cape Action League.

On 2 December the PAM/internal PAC was formed. Counting in De Lille, almost half the positions on its executive committee are filled by Nactu people. PAC general secretary Benny Alexander is a former organiser with Food Beverage. Nactu second assistant general secretary Mike Matsobane is the PAC's treasurer. Sacwu national organiser Manene Samela - one of the kingpins in the federation - is its labour secretary. PAC health secretary Nana Moabi is a Nactu staff member, as is Joyce Sedibi who is in charge of the PAC's projects and development portfolio. And SA Black Municipality & Allied Workers' Union general secretary Philip Dlamini is the

executive member for legal affairs.

Later in December, Nactu announced it would not be participating in the Conference for a Democratic Future (CDF), citing as its reasons the inclusion of bantustan leaders - 'collaborators' - and the way the CDF organising committee had handled itself, charging that it had a pre-set agenda regarding the Harare Declaration.

The excuse didn't quite ring true. Nactu had decided to attend the CDF at a national council meeting in November and was represented on the organising committee. As such it must have been aware of all decisions made.

And proof that not all in Nactu agreed with the federation's decision was provided when eight unions - again mostly with BC leanings - showed up on the day of the conference. Camay also attended, although he was careful to tell reporters he was not there as a union representative but to represent an educational organisation.

Newspapers reported that week that representatives of six unions met with Ngcukana the night before the Nactu announcement was made. Ngcukana apparently refused to entertain any discussion - even when they pointed out that officials had no right to take decisions on matters which require consultation with workers. BC delegates told newspapers they did not agree that Nactu's principle of non-collaboration had been compromised. Bantustan leaders were not prescribing to the liberation forces but aligning themselves with them, they argued.

Ngcukana's response to all of this was that BC unions represented no more than 25% of Nactu's membership, and those that had attended were guilty of 'blatant opportunism'.

Camay quit Nactu on 31 December, having handed in his resignation at a special central committee meeting beforehand where Ngcukana was elected to succeed him. Nactu accountant Florence Thinane also walked out.

Camay later disclosed that it was the fiasco around the first Workers' Summit and the CDF which finally forced him act as he did: 'I realised I had very little impact on decisions regarding worker unity. Primarily, decisions were not being made within Nactu forums - they were being made in political caucuses. And the will and decisions of these caucuses were being imposed on the Nactu structures.'

When he was asked if he could have ensured greater worker unity if he had



remained in Nactu, he said on the contrary he felt that 'this fundamental principle was being eroded'. Camay refused to identify the 'political caucuses' he was talking about; but the inference was obvious.

Whatever his failings, one thing Camay cannot be accused of is of using his position to impose his own political beliefs. It is acknowledged that he always strictly adhered to worker mandates.

**W**hen the news of Camay's resignation broke, Ngcukana was quick to deny that a split in Nactu was imminent. He now claims there is greater unity in the federation, and that it is going from strength to strength.

But there are a number of pointers which suggest this is not the case. Several key people have left Nactu since the beginning of the year. Dale Tiffin, Nactu's information officer, has left and joined Camay and Thinane at an educational co-op. So has Kessie Moodley, Nactu's legal coordinator in Natal. Brushes & Cleaners Workers' Union general secretary Mary Ntseke, an old-style unionist, is reportedly being squeezed out of her union by Africanists. Fay Mandy, general secretary of the National Union of Wine & Spirit Workers, faces similar pressures.

Poaching is also said to be occurring - both within the federation and across sectors. In April Cosatu's Chemical Workers' Industrial Union (CWIU) obtained an urgent Supreme Court order against Sacwu president Wilson Thulane and two shop stewards interdicting them from assaulting or threatening to assault CWIU members at AECI's Modderfontein plant. According to CWIU, there have been several incidents of violence between members of the two unions in the past two years.

Well-placed sources say Sacwu still retains its long-standing majority at Modderfontein, but that CWIU is making inroads because of thuggery and intimidation by members of the Nactu affiliate.

Workers at an SAB plant in Witbank recently defected wholesale from Food Beverage to Cosatu's Food & Allied Workers' Union (Fawu) - apparently because the town is now regarded as ANC territory. On the other hand, SAB's Chamdor brewery, where the Nactu union's long-standing majority dropped to below 50% during last year's strike by

Fawu members, is once again a Food Beverage plant.

The PAC, Nactu and Azapo did not support the 2 July stayaway called by the Cosatu-UDF-ANC alliance in an effort to get the state to take decisive action to end the Natal violence. Ngcukana told *WIP* Nactu has no doubt that these organisations are genuinely trying to find a solution to the problems there, but it was not consulted about the stayaway. A more important consideration, he says, was the welfare of the ordinary people in Natal: 'We felt a stayaway would make Inkatha more intransigent.'

Azapo publicity secretary Strini Moodley says Azapo condemned the stayaway because it thought the alliance was intent on a display of political one-upmanship. 'But we do not actively go and encourage conflict by mobilising against it. We simply stated a position that we believe is a reflection of feelings in the black community as a whole. Black people are tired of being manipulated, they are tired of violence and meaningless boycotts and stayaways. They want to see something new.'

Asked for comment on the 'ideological war' in Nactu, Moodley told *WIP*: 'On the little information I have I cannot deny that this conflict is continuing. There is deep concern about indications of a campaign to try to wish away the BC grouping, to try to deny that our movement has played a crucial role in developing the kind of political consciousness that exists in our country today.'

'We believe the union movement must be independent and that workers must be given the opportunity to recognise that they all have a democratic right to support the political organisation of their choice. And we will continue to try to correct the imbalances, first of all, and to re-educate the misdirected. We are confident that there are sufficient people within Nactu who do not want to see it destroyed'.

But the one thing that mitigates against this is the fact that without Nactu neither the PAC nor Azapo will have a union base. Bamcwu general secretary Motsumi Mokhine articulated this concern soon after the CDF and Camay's resignation when he told a reporter that the BC unions would not be able to find a home in Cosatu.

Mokhine added that he was sure the differences between the two groups would be accommodated. Nactu's congress in September will demonstrate whether he is right. •

## A peace pact - but for how long?

*Although it has been unable to compete with the ANC's ability to draw large numbers to rallies, the PAC still has a political presence in the Eastern Cape. A WIP Correspondent reports*

**U**itenhage's KwaNobuhle township lies at the centre of the Pan-Africanist Congress' presence in the Eastern Cape — in particular, the home of former Robben Islander Timothy Jantjie, regional PAC organiser and the man who heads a group called 'AmaAfrika'.

Dubbed 'vigilantes' by some, AmaAfrika members had been at war with United Democratic Front supporters in the region for over two years, until a peace pact was signed in February.

The joint ANC-PAC initiative, monitored by peace committees, appears to have kept things calm; peace committees meet frequently to discuss how the accord is holding, and to investigate alleged violations.

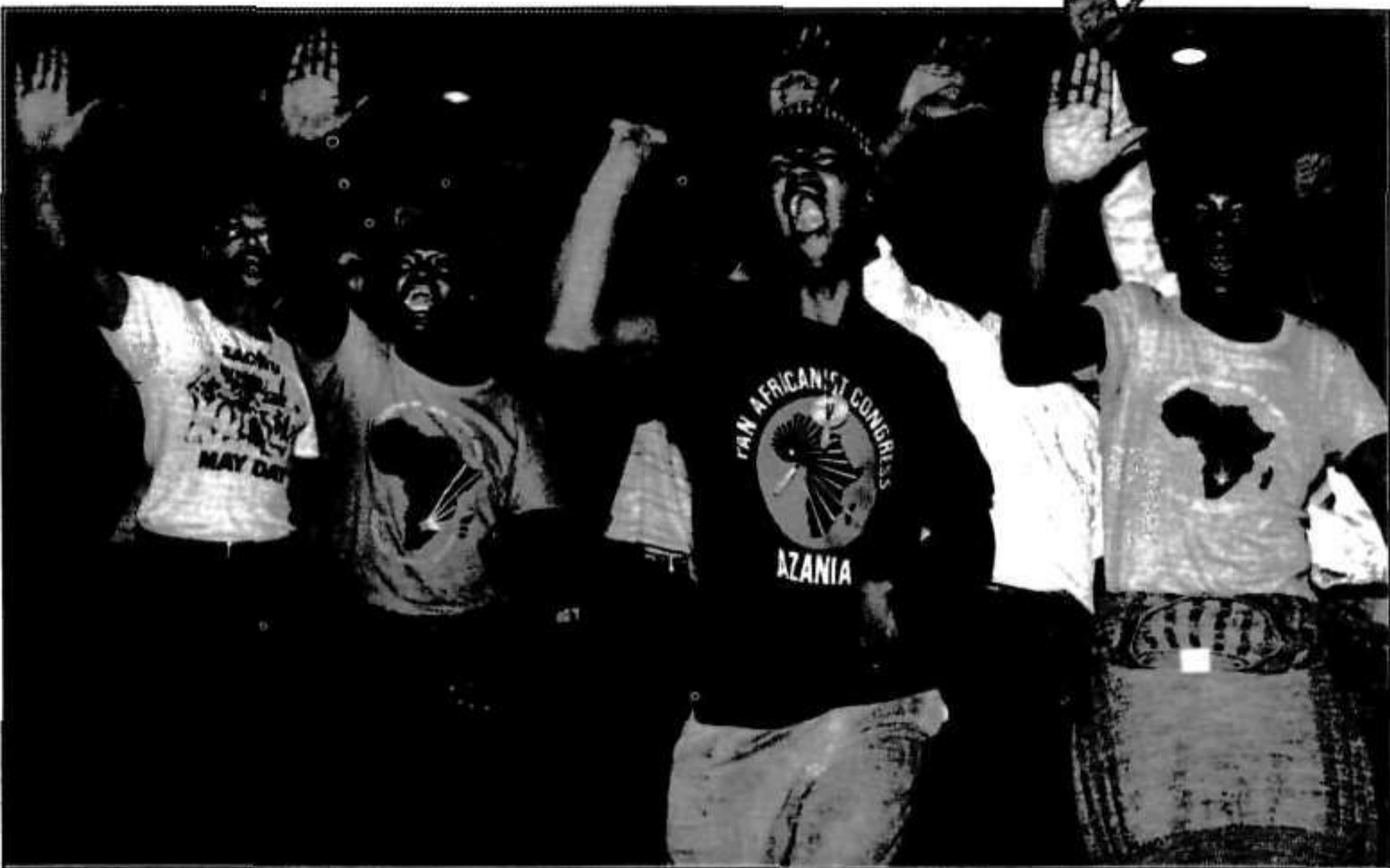
Peace was preached in shebeens, at rallies and at sports fixtures, and copies of the accord were printed and distributed throughout the area. Committee members and clergy visited every school in the area, explaining the document and its implications.

The PAC seemed to be going out of its way to keep the peace on course. At least one high school, reportedly peaceful and democratic student representative council elections saw representatives of both ideological leanings elected onto the SRC.

People who had fled to an Africanist stronghold at the height of the conflict have been able to return - without harassment - to their homes, after consultation with the relevant street and area committees.

Jantjie, who signed the accord on behalf of the Africanists, expressed his





**PAC supporters: According to the UDF, they've started protecting Eastern Cape councillors**

delight about both groups' adherence to the treaty. He emerged from the peace talks looking far more compromising and conciliatory than UDF activists expected, saying he believe cooperation at a leadership level served as an example to the community.

How much the feuding was the result of intense ideological differences, and how much the work of police 'agents provocateur', is impossible to establish. The police had allegedly taken sides in the feuding, and stirred up suspicions when the peace initiative started gaining momentum.

'From the start, before the pact was signed, (the police) were against peace,' says a UDF activist. 'We would take them injured people and they'd say they would investigate, but no arrests were made'.

PAC members add that the security police warned them that attempts to forge peace were tricks by the UDF to lure them into lowering their guard.

Local police had allegedly said that if PAC signed an accord, known Africanist culprits of a 1987 attack on UDF property would be arrested and thrown into jail. There they would suffer, 'because there are many UDF people (in prison)'.

Jantjie, too, questions the role of the police: 'Although the people of Uitenhage wanted peace long ago, the police enjoy the fighting', he said.

A number of claims and affidavits on

alleged partisan behaviour by police were submitted to Law and Order Minister Adriaan Vlok when he visited Uitenhage recently.

After the signing of the peace pact, the AmaAfrika kept a low profile for several months.

Then, in June, in the small Karoo town of Graaff-Reinet (birthplace of PAC founder Robert Sobukwe), PAC-inclined mayor Roko Pase — faced with mounting community pressure to resign — called in the Africanist faction.

Residents of Masizakhe township say two minibuses off-loaded a group of AmaAfrika men, led by Jantjie, at councillors' houses, and that they were seen patrolling the township in pairs. Several residents said one of the minibuses had been a police vehicle - a claim dismissed by Eastern Cape police spokesperson Major Bill Dennis as 'absolutely ridiculous'.

The arrival of AmaAfrika followed increasing violence in the township, culminating in the burning of five councillors' houses. Outlining the background to his invitation to the Africanists, Pase said that after a mass rally on Republic Day, there had been stone-throwing in the township, followed the next day by the petrol-bombing of his and four other councillors' homes. One resident was reportedly shot dead and another wounded.

Pase said residents had been calling

on the council to resign, and had sent them a letter to that effect. 'We said we will never resign until there is one municipality', he said.

Asked about the relationship between the PAC and the town councillors, Jantjie said his organisation merely sympathised with them 'as African people'.

He reiterated that the PAC was firmly against the government, claiming that in six months it would have as members the majority of South Africans. The energy of township youth was being misspent, he said. Rather than burn down the houses of councillors, they should 'kill the boers' who installed the councillors, and burn down the offices of the regional services councils.

In another small Eastern Cape town, Cathcart, embattled mayor Mxolisi Sili has also reached out to the PAC. Amid calls for his resignation, the unpopular Katikati township mayor claimed membership of the organisation. The PAC, however, has denied knowledge of this.

A recent violent incident in Kirkwood raised fears of a new outbreak of conflict along ideological lines. The house of PAC area organiser Kolla Bake was stoned and petrol-bombed, allegedly by UDF supporters. Jantjie suggests that the youth, tired of 'hunting' policemen and councillors, turned their attentions toward the PAC. His gloomy predictions of fresh violence have not yet been realised, however. — *PE News* •



# PAC economic policy: Socialism of a special type?

*Alan Hirsch analyses the PAC's recently-released working paper on economic policy*

**A**t present the Pan-Africanist Congress does not have a fully formulated economic policy. This in itself is not remarkable; the African National Congress and Cosatu are still in the process of formulating theirs - the document which came out of an ANC-Cosatu meeting in Harare in April was very much a preliminary working paper.

The PAC also has a working paper, although it is called 'An Exploratory, Diagnostic, and Contingency Exposition'.

This document has been discussed in some PAC forums, such as the recent 'Conference of the Oppressed' convened by the PAC in Johannesburg.

PAC leaders insist that the document remains no more than a position paper which will be debated in the organisation's branches around the country before economic policy is finalised at a congress in October.

Its significance lies in the fact that, as far as can be ascertained, it remains the only paper on economic policy currently under discussion by the PAC.

It covers much more than economic policy in its thirteen-and-a-quarter pages, so it does not cover any aspect of economic policy in great detail, but a clear and reasonably consistent position does emerge.

In short, it proposes a mixed economy (for the foreseeable future) in which the state would intervene in various ways to ensure the redistribution of economic power away from the 'European settlers', towards 'Africans in Azania', while noting that Africans are defined in subjective terms, not simply by colour, ethnicity, or place of birth.

Curiously, the structure, if not the content, of the early part of the paper resembles nothing so much as a business school strategy plan, with a 'mission position', an 'environmental analysis' and so on. The only thing missing is the 'critical path'.

The PAC mission position outlined in the economic document is very broad: the economy in a PAC society will represent the economic and political interests of all Africans in Azania; and 'the production and distribution relations within this political economy must be non-exploitative', although the document never spells out what exploitation means.

The South African capitalist economy is not only exploitative in some general sense, argues the document, but it is destroying itself. The economy's two central features are that it is domi-

nated by 'oligopolism and generally monopoly capitalist structures', and that it has 'developed without and in spite of the majority of the African people'.

The oligopolies - the small number of firms that dominate sectors of the economy - have responded to the economic crisis since 1984 by restricting output, investment, and job creation. An economy dominated by oligopolistic structures, the paper argues, lacks the built-in mechanisms 'to put the economy on a better track again'. The discrimination against Africans has led to the absence of essential skills, and of growing markets.

The document then points, quite concisely and accurately, to a series of 'structural and process weaknesses' in the South African economy. Much of the data in this section is meticulously attributed to the *Financial Mail*, and includes:

- dependence on the export of gold and other metals and minerals;
- the growing weakness of the import-substitution policy;
- dependence on foreign investment and loans; and
- the slow growth of the economy in recent years relative to the high rate of black population growth and the very rapid rate of urbanisation.

**T**wo major themes run through the policy itself: a high degree of state intervention in the economy to promote growth; and the redistribution of wealth and income towards 'the African people'.

Overall a mixed economy is called for because 'market forces are incapable on their own of bringing out the economic conditions spelt out by the PAC's political and economic mission'. But conversely, 'the PAC does not want to promote an illusion that the state can alone develop the economy or start new economic organisations'.

Redistribution is planned not only from 'settlers to Africans', but also from foreigners to locals. As many of the economic resources of the country as possible are to be 'localised' under the PAC proposed policy, in other words transferred from foreign hands to local ownership, in order 'to minimise the role of international financial capital'.

This position echoes the economic posture adopted by several African governments under the banner of 'African socialism' in the late 1960s, but long since abandoned.

In a similar vein, the state would promote the economic position of Africans





through a range of mechanisms including boosting training and education for management, and 'ensuring the promotion of Africans to managerial positions in all sectors of the economy'.

This was called Africanisation north of the Zambezi in the 1960s.

The state would also be responsible for 'the massive promotion of business firms that will be owned individually and as cooperatives by the indigenous African people'.

The PAC has always claimed to have a distinctive land policy. The document indicates that the PAC would redistribute the land 'for use by all Azanians', after having 'decommoditised' the land, which presumably means that land would not longer be bought or sold on private markets.

The alienation of land would be compensated through payments in the form of interest-bearing government bonds. Beyond this, the land policy is very vague, and the document does not enter into a discussion of the forms of ownership that would be promoted in the countryside.

In another part of the document, 'self-sufficiency in food production' is cited as an important goal, but the possible contradiction between this goal and the radical redistribution of land is not discussed. Incidentally, this possible contradiction was a point of contention at the ANC-Cosatu economic deliberations in Harare.

The position of the PAC on the role of worker organisation as represented in the document is potentially highly controversial. The paper refers to the promotion of a strong politically autonomous workers movement, and that a PAC government would assist workers in obtaining shares in the companies in which they worked.

But it also says that 'efficiency will be highly enforced' and that the nation must be 'highly disciplined' economically. Moreover, apparently contradicting its position on the autonomy of workers organisations, the document indicates that 'for the next five to ten years an African and nationalist movement is considered the best vehicle in the implementation of the economic policy of the PAC', and this entails the 'affiliation' of 'sub-movements' like the workers' movement, to the PAC.

Again, this is reminiscent of 'African socialism'. At least one African socialist



**PAC economic policy: Now there's debate within the organisation on whether it follows 'African socialism' or 'scientific socialism' — with some saying it is too moderate in many respects**

government in the late 1960s argued that strikes could be made illegal because African workers had gained political control over the economy.

If the document must be pigeon-holed, it is undoubtedly strongly influenced by the kind of African socialism that had currency in countries like Tanzania and Uganda in the late 1960s and early 1970s, though somewhat adapted for a more industrialised economy, and containing a few modern touches like employee share ownership. It is not dogmatic on the question of public ownership, but it verges on dogmatism on the issue of

indigenisation.

The document's stance has provoked a debate within the PAC on whether the organisation follows 'African socialism' or 'scientific socialism', and it appears that significant sections within the PAC regard it as too moderate in many respects. One PAC official, who is also a trade unionist, was adamant that the organisation had not abandoned 'scientific socialism', and that the process of formulating an economic policy for the PAC would extend well beyond the present 'Exploratory, Diagnostic and Contingency Exposition'. •



# Small town rebellion

*Talk of reform means little to embattled residents of the rural areas in the Eastern Cape, where rising political expectations have met with increased repression. Mike Kenyon, fieldworker with the Grahamstown Rural Committee, and Franz Krüger, editor of the Eastern Cape News Agency, look at the situation in the region*



**Small town, giant step: A protest march in the Border town of Queenstown last year, at the height of the nationwide defiance campaign**

**A**lmost unnoticed amid the political attention focused on South Africa's cities, rising expectations are fuelling a wave of revolt in small towns and rural areas of the Eastern Cape.

It is essentially the same revolt as that which toppled Ciskei president Lennox Sebe in February. But while the military coup in the homeland has largely defused the rebellion there, the rest of the Eastern Cape has seen no such break. On the contrary, hard-line responses by local white authorities have helped escalate protest into confrontation, and often violence.

A key demand in almost all communities has been for a radical change to the system of local government, with discredited community councillors coming under increasing pressure to resign. By May this year, provincial officials acknowledged that half of all positions on councils in the Eastern Cape were empty.

The impact of the protests - in particular, objections to the system of local government - has already been felt far beyond the region. It is partly as a result of the collapse of black local authorities in the Eastern Cape that the government has begun looking at alternative models. The government has also quietly dropped the Tribal and Community Authorities Bill after opposition from affected communities.

The revolt started with the easing of political repression last year, which saw

a resurgence of political activity in the region.

Several communities in the Ciskei led the way, demonstrating that it was possible to stand up to Sebe. East Peulton, which had been resisting Ciskei rule since the village was forcibly incorporated into the bantustan in August 1988, erupted in October last year. It was soon joined by at least three other Ciskei communities in a growing national campaign against forced incorporation.

Residents of the Border and Ciskei responded to September's white parliamentary election with a successful stay-away. A week later residents of Stutterheim began a consumer boycott. And as a nationwide defiance campaign got underway, residents throughout the region threw their weight behind it, marching in most of the small towns dotting the region.

The small towns have seen an extremely harsh white reaction to what is correctly perceived as a mass revolt against white rule. White businessmen, local authorities and the security establishment are responding to community demands with repression.

In these small towns, talk of reform seems a long way off. Nelson Mandela's release and the first contacts between the

government and the African National Congress (ANC) quickly heightened the expectations of black communities; but local whites saw little reason to change past habits, or even acknowledge the passing of the state of emergency.

Police, business and white civic leadership structures remain inextricably intertwined, and the same individuals regularly feature in each.

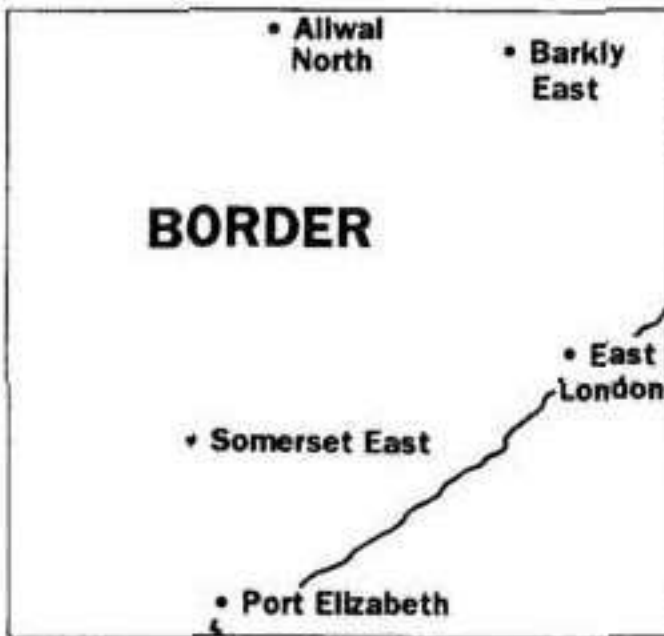
**R**eports abound of communities embarking on consumer boycotts, only to find local shopkeepers staffing roadblocks in their capacity as police reservists.

Similarly, when residents of Stutterheim applied for permission for a protest march, they had to do so to a magistrate who, two months earlier, had appeared on a National Party political platform. Not surprisingly, he referred the decision to the police and Afrikaanse Sakekamer who, equally unsurprisingly, turned it down.

In Barkly East magistrate's court, policemen double as prosecutor and interpreter. Until June, there was no magistrate at all, and police frequently asked the clerk of the court to stand in.

Residents of the town say ANC supporters are threatened with arrest on





charges of treason amid a series of clashes in the town since the legalisation of the ANC.

The months since then have seen a youth shot dead by police in Elliot; a baby dying after being teargassed in Jamestown; and a kitskonstabel killed by youths in Indwe after he pointed his gun at them.

By contrast, the region's larger towns and cities have not seen nearly as much turmoil. Among the explanations for this are a combination of unchanged and desperately poor conditions in the rural

areas with little change in the level of political repression, as well as massively raised expectations linked to political reforms.

In the small towns and farming areas there are almost no jobs; the few there are pay appalling wages. Social services, such as housing and education, are in a state of extreme neglect.

In addition, many communities have had to live under permanent insecurity over their homes and land. The 20 000 black inhabitants of Stutterheim have been living with hardly any services and under threat of forced removal for the past four decades.

Education is almost at a standstill, with a dire shortage of furniture, books and facilities. Some classes of 80 pupils have to share a single textbook, others have none at all. In Lesseyton, near Queenstown, classes are held under a tree because the school building is in such poor condition.

In some communities, tentative steps towards local negotiations have been taken. In Cathcart and Stutterheim, the white establishment and community groups have begun talks based on an acknowledgement that upgrading of the township is a priority.

But if progress has been made in Cathcart and Stutterheim, the north eastern Cape is still living in dark and repressive times.

The challenge to all, from the ANC to FW de Klerk, is to ensure that the authorities in these places are brought to their senses or thrown out.

The long-term challenges posed by these rural communities are substantial. These small towns have, at best, a very small and fragile economic base, and this is unlikely to change quickly under a new and democratic government.

They are likely to remain dependent on the central government for finances for infrastructural development. The cost of financing the backlog in development across the country is enormous and unlikely to be met to the satisfaction of all.

The inequalities of wealth are particularly severe, and it will be no small task to address the demands and expectations of small town communities.

This is a problem which is more real for the ANC than it is for the De Klerk government. Nobody seriously expects the Nationalist government to address rural poverty. But there are very real expectations on the ANC to deliver a new and better South Africa. •

## Living on the edge of the sword

The temperatures outside - and inside - the rusty corrugated iron shacks that make up half the homes in Nkululeko, Barkly East's black township, drop below freezing most winter nights.

No new homes have been built in Nkululeko for four years, and even those lucky enough to have houses are not sure whether they have bought them or are renting them. They have no papers and get no receipts for the R25 a month each household must pay - even those living in shacks.

The township has one or two taps in each street and the bucket system is still in general use. Nkululeko has just one school, which only went up to Standard 7 until residents recently won permission to introduce a Standard 8 class - on condition they provided the funds for teachers and books.

With few jobs outside of domestic and farm labour, the average wage of an Nkululeko resident is below R100 a month.

And when residents took to the streets on February 2 to celebrate the legalisation of the ANC, police teargassed them without warning.

Three days later residents launched a selective consumer boycott - with the mayor's shop one of those targeted. Two days into the boycott, community councillor William Thethelwa forced several youths at gunpoint into one of the boycotted shops. When crowds gathered outside his home to protest, he opened fire, wounding a protestor. The crowd responded by torching his house.

Soon afterwards, as the toyi-toying crowd made its way through the township, a policeman opened fire, killing two youths.

Since then the political temperature has continued to rise. At least 60 people have been arrested, held for 48 hours and charged, generally either with public violence or participating in an illegal gathering. Their cases have been repeatedly postponed and although many have been granted bail, this has usually been set at between R150 and R300 - beyond the reach of most.

No local lawyer has yet agreed to defend 'unrest' cases, and white Barkly East is almost universally behind the police - black residents tell of white civilians sitting in police vans during action in the township. And when members of one white family wrote to Law and Order Minister Adriaan Vlok to complain about the harshness of police action, the response of the local security police was to subpoena them to reveal the names of their sources, and investigate charges of defeating the ends of justice and publishing untrue statements about the police.

Even medically, the gulf between white and black Barkly East is huge and growing: A local doctor has refused to treat black people hurt in 'unrest' or political activities - arguing that they cannot pay him.



# Pulling the plug on township councils



*The rent boycott campaign has taken a new turn with the Transvaal Provincial Administration's decision to cut off subsidies to bankrupt township councils. Inga Molzen and Alan Mabin look at the implications for rent boycotters — and for the township councils*

**A**t first glance, the Transvaal Provincial Administration decision to stop subsidising bankrupt black local authorities (BLAs) looks like a major victory for rent boycott campaigners.

But the TPA decision - which ends years of subsidies to local authorities hardest-hit by rent and service charge boycotts - raises several challenges for the civics which have spearheaded those campaigns.

Not least of these is the need for an urban development programme which can overcome the decay caused by the local authorities' lack of funds: Because of the duration of the boycott campaigns, development in many townships has come to a standstill. Even with enormous subsidies, bankrupt BLAs have barely been able to meet their debts, never mind raise additional funds for new services, maintenance and infrastructural development.

The extent of the debt is awesome: According to official figures, 47 black town councils in the Transvaal owe about R787-million in rent and service payments accumulated since 1986, and about R380-m in loans provided by the prov-

ince during 1989 and 1990.

In June, they were told by the TPA that these bridging funds would be cut, with effect from July 1.

'We simply cannot supply the demand', explained TPA spokesman Jan van der Walt. 'And there are indications that further funds from central government will not be forthcoming'.

At present rates, he explained, the TPA's funds for the entire financial year would be exhausted within three to four months, with the result that bulk supplies of services such as electricity would not be paid for. Financial assistance had increased to R35,5-m in April, R60,5-m in May and even more in June, he said — and there was only R26-m available as bridging finance each month.

Planning and Provincial Affairs Minister Hemus Kriel gave the line from central government: 'No government can subsidise millions of people with rent, electricity, water, refuse removal and other municipal services. We have to take steps to balance the books. Citizens have to play their part, we cannot continue pumping in money ad infinitum'.

Kriel warned of tough action against residents, with services being stopped

for those who 'allow themselves to be used for political ends' or who participate in the 'political boycott'. This is despite warnings by community leaders, such as Soweto Civic Association (SCA) publicity secretary Pat Lephunya, who warned that power cuts 'could lead to violence ... which may plunge the country into the dark days of '86 and '87'.

**A**lso at issue is the future of the BLAs. Introduced at the height of the community rebellions in the mid-80s, they have gained even less support than their predecessors, such as the Urban Bantu Councils.

BLAs have been characterised by low polls and high expense accounts, and have become synonymous with high rentals, corruption, poor living conditions and serious housing shortages.

The rent boycotters are demanding improved facilities, the transfer of ownership to those who have paid rent for a generation, and the abolition of separate black local authorities.

The boycott has tended to cripple the already inefficient administration of the townships, especially in the Transvaal and the eastern Cape. The result has been



to place civic associations in a strong position in relation to those who have participated in the black local authority structures.

The black local authorities have, of course, tried to respond, employing various strategies ranging from appeals to outright threats of eviction:

Their tactics include:

- Attempts to break the boycott by lowering municipal service charges, such as in Tsakane on the East Rand.
- Attempts to increase income by other councils, which called on those residents who were paying municipal levies to pay even more. In Duduza, the council threatened to discontinue services such as electricity and water, the provision of graves and health services, and the maintenance of sewerage and roads if residents did not pay the increased levies.
- Offering residents the option of paying their rental outside the township. Diepmeadow council, for example, hired attorneys in an attempt to recover more than R37-m owed by residents. Residents received notices in June to pay their arrears and R12,50 legal recovery fees within 14 days to avoid being summonsed. The letters stated that debts could be paid directly to the Florida-based law firm.

Atteridgeville residents were given the option of paying their arrears at a Pretoria branch of Standard Bank after a rent boycott caused lost the council R3-m between April and June. The Atteridgeville/Saulsville Residents' Organisation urged the bank to close the account because the boycott was in protest against corruption and mismanagement of funds.

- Trying public relations exercises: water and electricity tariff increases were deferred in Tembisa from March until July to enable the council to inform residents about the increases.
- Threatening to evict residents of the Vaal townships of Sharpeville, Sebokeng, Bophelong, Boipatong and Zamdela when tariff increases of about R40 were introduced in January — even though most residents had been boycotting rent for more than three years.

SCA deputy-president Sam Pholotho believes the provincial authority is passing the buck to councillors, 'getting them to pressurise residents. But it won't work because we won't pay'.

The civic says the arrears should be written off altogether — a point on which the Soweto Council and the Democratic



**'Strong civics may be able to make enormous gains in deciding the future of their cities'**

Party caucus in the Johannesburg city council agree.

But the TPA stance towards the BLAs is unconciliatory: Get your houses in order or face the consequences.

Events in Mamelodi recently show the stark contrast between the possibilities if debts can be disposed of, and the probabilities which will follow a hard-line approach.

On June 20, agreement was reached between the Mamelodi People's Delegation and TPA officials that residents would not have to pay rent arrears, in return for which the civic would recommend an end to the rent boycott. But the mass meeting called to discuss this recommendation was broken up by police on July 9, resulting in hundreds of injuries. In the anger which followed, residents agreed not only to continue their rent boycott, but to extend it to include a consumer boycott of Pretoria businesses.

Failure to resolve the crisis of the BLAs will undoubtedly lead to renewed political activity, which will again tend to paralyse development in the townships.

As a result, negotiations to resolve the rent and service charge boycott may have to be tackled at a national rather than local level. If the TPA (and other provincial administrations) were, for example, to write off debts or make bridging finance available to new joint (and perhaps even non-racial) local authorities, this could increase the possibility of community acceptance of the government's reform intentions.

**A**lready, various local negotiating initiatives which affect the future of local government structure and finance are under way:

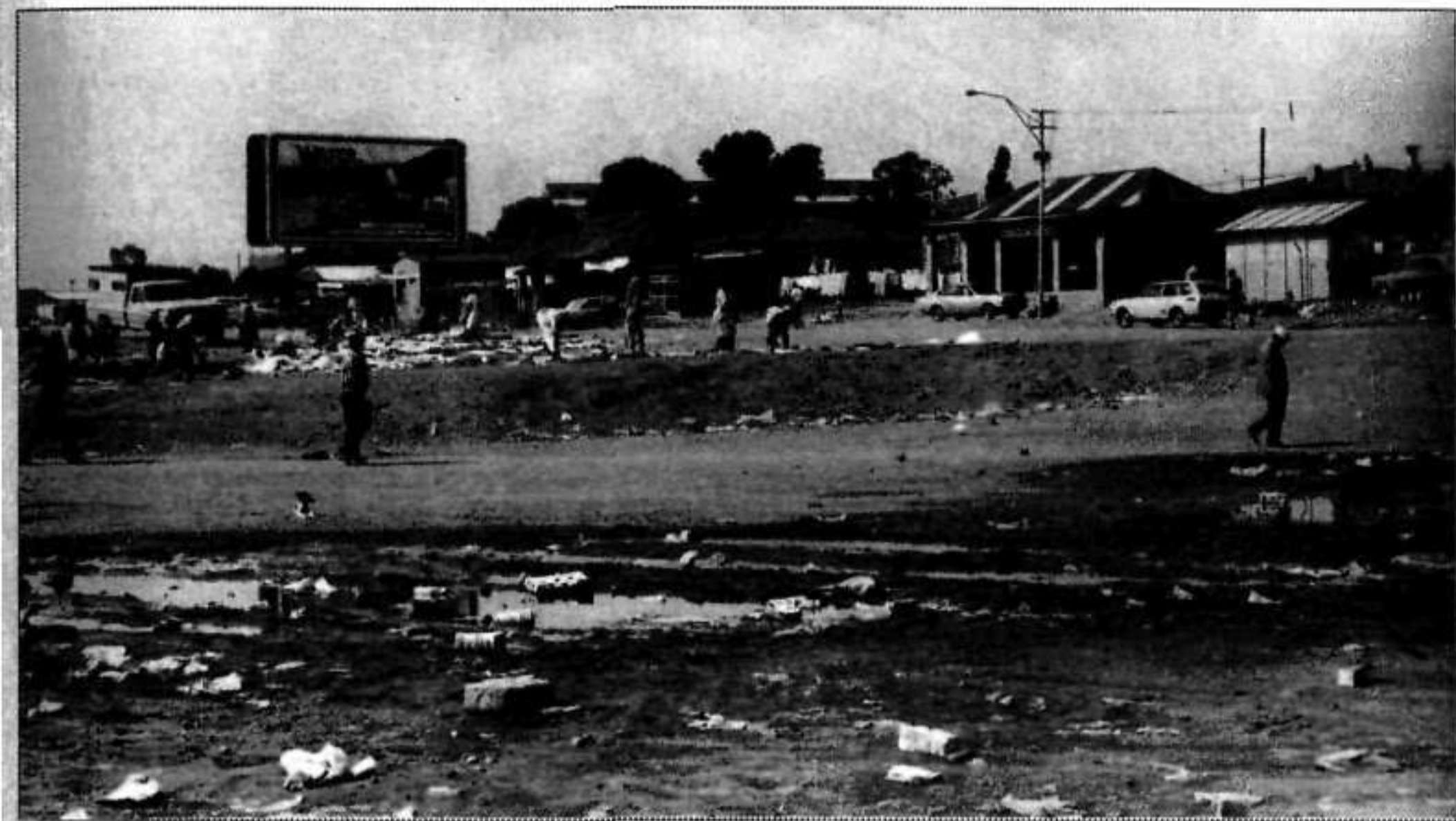
- Residents of the East Rand township of Daveyton resolved in March to temporarily suspend their rent boycott pending a meeting scheduled between the Daveyton People's Delegation and TPA officials. The residents are demanding the resignation of all councillors; the setting up of a commission of inquiry to look into the administration, management and financial matters of the council; and the reduction of tariffs.
- In June, a watershed agreement between the civic association of Brakpan's Tsakane township and administrator Jim Vinning proposed an end to the five-month-long rent boycott by reducing rentals, establishing standard rates and setting up joint committees comprising community representatives and administration officials to address residents' grievances. Provision to make land available to squatters, to electrify more houses in the township and to investigate allegations of corruption were included in the pact.

A vital question concerns the impact of the TPA's decision to cut bridging finance on these local negotiations. It may prove to be a clumsily-wielded stick with tragic consequences; it may turn out to be a noisy diversion; or it may be part of a complex stick-and-carrot game which may draw increasing numbers of civics into participation in deciding the future of local government.

If it does turn out to do so, strong civics may be able to make enormous gains for participation by residents in deciding the future of their cities. But the danger exists that weaker civics may lose their autonomy in return for empty gains.\*



# Planning an urban policy



*Dan Smit and Jeff McCarthy of the Urban Foundation look at future urban policy. The article is a response to Mark Swilling's contributions in WIP 66 and 67*

**T**he articles on urban policy raise some important issues for those committed to the realisation of post-apartheid urban futures.

The first article offers an analysis of what Swilling sees as 'the state and capital's' new urban policy framework.

The second provides his view of the strategic approach that should be adopted by the MDM in response to that framework. Both articles are provocative and have stimulated us to further develop our thoughts about the nature of post-apartheid urban development policy.

We share Swilling's dedication to realising a democratic, post-apartheid urban order. However, we differ with him when it comes to analysis of contemporary urban policy issues, and certain aspects of his strategic proposals. We have no difficulty with his proposal in the second of the two articles, that new, critical insights need to be developed by the MDM in its engagement with urban policy frameworks being developed elsewhere. However, if those insights are to

be developed on the basis of his particular analysis of contemporary urban policy debates, (the first article), we believe some important errors of judgement will result.

The basic methodological problem in Swilling's analysis is that he takes a small clutch of articles or documents published by disparate individuals or organisations, and then shoehorns the aspects of these that appear to be relevant to him into an undifferentiated conception of a state/capital versus popular classes contradiction.

We would have thought that, quite apart from the social scientific reservations this might give rise to, the current political climate hardly corresponds. Against the background of rapidly shifting political re-alignments, it can serve little purpose to reproduce outdated concepts and frameworks inherited from the mid-1980s.

Swilling mixes apples and oranges in his analysis of the allegedly coherent strategies of 'the state and capital'. If, as

is commonly the case in popular opposition circles, the notion of a mixed economy is held up as the broad objective for a post-apartheid political economy, surely it is necessary to move away from simplistic, homogeneous state-capital alliance theories?

Is it not realistic, under such circumstances, to distinguish between tendencies or fractions within both the state and capital with whom common post-apartheid alliance strategies either can or cannot be forged?

The assumption, for example, that there is a commonality of purpose between FW de Klerk's government, the Urban Foundation and the Development Bank of Southern Africa in matters of urban policy, is one that - in our view - would probably come as a surprise to those in these institutions.

This is not to say that there is no convergence of thinking on certain aspects of urban policy. But to elevate some intersecting ideas to the status of a full-blown plot, and to ignore substantial





**Informal housing: Urban policies need to deal with this issue**

tensions and differences, is not only bad social science but is strategically foolhardy.

Moreover, the notion that market-oriented solutions to the housing challenge 'will result in an urban restructuring process that could displace people on a scale similar to the forced removals of the 1950s and 1960s', strikes us as both a grotesque exaggeration and scientifically absurd proposition.

Some of Swilling's practical suggestions in the second article are not without merit, but we can see little potential for them if they are to be situated within the analysis of society offered in the first article. The concept of Community Development Corporations (CDCs) for example, may well be a viable one in the South African context, but to counterpose these against the allegedly machiavellian intent of all of 'financial capital', would seem to be rather crude and lacking in an appropriate sense of scale.

In a recent paper, respected trade unionist Alec Erwin noted that developments both in South Africa and Europe demand a new approach to analysis and politics. More specifically he argues as follows: '...we will have to learn to confront the issues and not the ideological paradigms. This is not to abandon analysis or to deny very real differences. However, we have to be quite clear what those differences are, and to what extent negotiation will narrow them. Our future is far too important to everyone to allow

it to be left in the realm of a war of slogans...'

We could not agree more. Moreover we believe that in his recent articles Swilling is guilty, at least in part, of the kind of sloganeering that Erwin suggests we should be avoiding. Consider, for example, Swilling's rejection of supply-side subsidies. He rejects this form of subsidy on the grounds that it involves the use of taxpayer's money to promote the profit-making capacities of private capital. Since Swilling provides no further justification for his position on subsidies, we must presume he believes the rationale of his argument is self-evident. But is it? The notion of a mixed economy, for example, concedes to capitalism the notion that there are efficiency gains in organising production and consumption through markets. Likewise it concedes to socialism that the unfettered operation of the market will not result in an equitable distribution of the goods and services produced. Nor will it necessarily ensure that certain goods required by low-income people will in fact be delivered.

Thus, while there are many conceptions of the nature of a mixed economy, many support a version of it in which the market is subordinated to parameters set through democratic processes (this is certainly the version we support). Now it is quite common in such mixed economies for the state to provide incentives to private producers to ensure the produc-

tion of desired goods or to ensure greater equity. Examples include the use of 'prescribed assets' to encourage certain investment patterns and incentive packages targeted at industrial-location-decisions. Particularly effective forms of supply-side subsidies are those which are paid only after the delivery of targeted goods.

The use of one-time capital subsidies to encourage private sector production of low-income site-and-service schemes is simply another example of the use of 'after-delivery' incentives to direct private investments and production activity.

In fact it is possible that the mechanism may offer major societal advantages by, for example, targeting the very poor; boosting the rate and scale of production; ensuring efficient production by promoting competition; and reducing the administrative machinery needed to administer subsidy schemes.

We are not, however, starry-eyed about supply-side subsidies or market-oriented approaches to housing supply. Nor is our support of the different kinds of cooperative or collective housing delivery systems unqualified. Housing co-operatives, like markets, only work if certain preconditions are met (for example, housing co-operatives have a far better chance of working if the members are literate and have developed management and budgeting skills).

It seems obvious to us that in structuring a post-apartheid South Africa, the relative merits and problems of different approaches to development issues (e.g. housing delivery systems) must be subjected to debate and negotiation — both between different social constituencies and within them. Democracy can accept nothing less. Certain approaches, such as supply side-subsidies, should not be dismissed out of hand. The issues are complex and require serious rather than fleeting engagement.

Swilling's proposals for a democratic urban policy do not reflect sufficiently serious engagement with the frameworks and ideas proposed by others. Instead they appear to be based almost entirely on ideological predisposition.

While such predisposition is important, since it may reflect real material interests, it can never be the sole basis on which urban policy should be made. What is needed are policy proposals which are thought through in detail — and which can actually work. In short, a new pragmatism is required. •



# PROGRESS

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# Capitalising on a new constitution

In 1988, Albie Sachs argued in a draft discussion paper, *Towards a bill of rights in a democratic South Africa*, that a bill of rights should not be regarded as a means of protecting group rights, but rather 'as an instrument for enlarging the freedom of the oppressed majority, thereby creating a South Africa in which equal rights becomes the reality and in which the whole population, irrespective of colour or origin, can live in peace and with dignity'.

Since then the political landscape has been transformed.

Apartheid has failed, due to a combination of internal resistance and international sanctions. The economy is beset by deep structural contradictions which mitigate against successful short-term solutions. And the government has been forced to unban the African National Congress, the South African Communist Party, the Pan-Africanist Congress, and many other organisations, and to release ANC leader Nelson Mandela.

The end of apartheid is nigh. But is liberation as close as many would like to believe?

The removal of the formal legal structures of apartheid alone will not guarantee the full political, economic and social emancipation of the oppressed majority. White power is so deeply entrenched that South Africa needs far more than the cosmetic repeal of apartheid legislation.

Constitutional negotiations are imminent because the government has come to accept what big business has so long been arguing: that any semblance of white wealth and privilege can be salvaged only in a democratic political system.

But no ruling class in history has voluntarily abdicated. And white South Africa is no exception.

The central question which confronts progressive forces is whether a new constitution will mark true liberation, or the emergence of a system of neo-apartheid in which there is black majority rule but continued white economic hegemony.

As constitutional proposals emerge from all points of the political spectrum it is clear that neo-apartheid is the goal of both the government and big business, and that a bill of rights is regarded as a way of protecting the minority's privileges rather than enlarging the freedoms of the majority.

'Reform' has so far been all about trying to foster neo-apartheid without conceding political power.

If the trick is to be pulled off, the sleight of hand will take the form of a liberal majority-rule constitution.

Liberal constitutional models are characterised by their emphasis on limited and ostensibly accountable government and individuals rights.

On these two pillars, other structures are erected, such as:

- periodic elections
- a separation of powers
- the rule of law
- an impartial and independent judiciary
- procedural rights commonly enunciated in a bill of rights.

At face value such a conception is desirable, embodying as it does many of the freedoms underpinning the recent revolutions in Eastern Europe.

But, as Engels noted and history has proved, it is the bourgeois democratic form of state which is most likely to throttle progressive aspirations, for 'it is precisely the democratic republic which is the logical form of bourgeois rule'.

The rule of law, for example, is predicated on the ostensible neutrality of the state in conflicts between classes, interest groups and individuals. Power must be achieved in a constitutional manner and must be employed neutrally; economic might or claims of privilege must be ignored.

The laws, among which the constitution is pre-eminent, thus determine who should hold political power and how it can be exercised.

A constitution will specify procedures for the creation of all other laws, which

*The South African Chamber of Commerce recently published its contribution to the debate on a post-apartheid constitution. Sammy Adelman argues that big business' objective is to maintain 'neo-apartheid', rather than to bring about true economic liberation. A former Wits University SRC president, Adelman was banned in 1981 and went into exile in 1982. He is currently lecturing in law at Warwick University, England*





of law, a separation of powers and a bill of rights - primary among those rights being that to private property.

The charter is one of the first major assaults in the ideological battle now joined over its form and content.

In a statement accompanying the publication of its charter, Sacob asserts that it 'is in business to create a climate of opinion in this country in which companies can operate efficiently and profitably for the benefit of all' - apparently forgetting capital's historic failure to mitigate the grossest inequalities of apartheid.

Obviously a response to the influence of the Freedom Charter, Sacob's document signals monopoly capital's intention of influencing constitutional negotiations through the formulation of what is essentially a bill of rights.

Essentially bourgeois in form, it is designed to perpetuate minority powers by de-emphasising race — while intensifying existing class distinctions arising from apartheid.

The Sacob charter reflects the standpoints of the Associated Chamber of Commerce (Assocom) and the Federated Chamber of Industry (FCI), chambers of commerce and individual businessmen. But above all it reflects the corporate views of Anglo American, the main exploiter of black labour power and the most significant progenitor of constitutional proposals in the business community.

In the recently published Anglo America, its associates and South Africa, the corporation argues that South Africa 'must move towards being a prosperous, non-racial, multi-party democracy' and that 'a high degree of individual economic freedom is characteristic of prosperous societies. This is most clearly expressed in the freedom to acquire private property. Other features include a broadly-based and non-punitive tax system, sound fiscal policy, prudent management of the money supply and proper recognition of the power and place of the market in allocating economic resources'.

This is not so much a call for the retention of the status quo, which has become increasingly contradictory for capital, but rather for a market system which reduces interventions of the state to an absolute minimum.

The major conflict which will dominate negotiations over a post-apartheid

**Anglo's Bobby Godsell: 'Group rights provide an adequate solution'**

must be public, capable of being readily understood, and enforced according to their obvious meaning.

No person may arrogate to her/himself the power to ignore them or to dispense with due process. Indeed, the rule of law insists that the legal procedures be followed even when this inconveniences the dominant class. Citizens must be able to exercise their rights with the confidence that the courts will uphold them.

At face value this is unexceptional, and the commitment of big business to bourgeois legality is reflected by the newly formed South African Chamber of Business (Sacob) in its recently-published Charter for economic, social and political rights.

In section 22 of this charter, Sacob demands that 'the institutions of democratic government and in particular the separation of state powers, the independence of the judiciary and the supremacy of the law, the freedom of the press and the free formation of political parties shall be the foundation of South African statehood'.

But the problem with bourgeois law, and the rule of law in particular, is that it is more concerned with form than with

substance. It privileges individualism at the expense of the collective, and it fetishes law. While the formal equality of bourgeois law would certainly be an improvement on the apartheid legal system, a deracialised post-apartheid constitution could ultimately form the basis for a more subtle form of class domination.

By refusing to take substantive issues into consideration, bourgeois legal systems are able to pull the vital trick of granting protection to private property, and therefore to capitalist social relations as a whole.

And it is the bourgeois legal form upon which capital's constitutional proposals are based.

**D**rawing on the lessons of Zimbabwe, capital's strategy appears to involve accepting the inevitability of having to cede political power to the black majority in the knowledge that white skills, capital and confidence will be essential to future economic development.

The key is thus a constitution which entrenches the free enterprise system, capitalist relations of production, the rule



constitution is the demand of the majority contained in the Freedom Charter that 'the people shall govern' (meaning one-person, one-vote in a unitary state) on the one hand; and, on the other, attempts by the state and capital to develop neo-apartheid through federalism, confederalism, 'group rights' or some constitutional mechanisms which effectively give whites a veto.

There has long been a contradiction in state policy on decentralisation. Separate development was premised on the 'decentralisation' of political power to the bantustans, and attempts to promote economic activity in the 'border areas'.

The former failed because it was both illogical and genocidal; the latter because it confounded the logic of the market.

'Total strategy', PW Botha's version of 'reform', also had dual and contradictory goals. On the one hand it aimed to incorporate black people into more effective local government organs, in an attempt to foster the development of a black buffer middle class, thereby deflecting political demands away from the centre. On the other hand it involved massive centralisation of power in the hands of the central state through the State Security Council system and state of emergency powers.

While Sacob and the government may not agree completely on these issues, there are numerous points common to their positions. Government thinking on a new constitution has so far stipulated the need for regular elections, a ban on one-party rule imposed by 'unsophisticated majority vote', a free market economy, jobs in government for minority leaders, and guarantees that people will be able to live in their own communities.

There should be state funding for racially-exclusive schools and no expropriation of property without compensation.

The government wants to promote strong, relatively small, local government units, controlling their own schools, police and other municipal services.

Whites would not only run their own local affairs on the basis of 'group rights', but would command resources, from an infinitely wealthier tax base, that would enable them to maintain their separate and privileged way of life.

In this way the Group Areas Act and Bantu education would be perpetuated in other forms.

The dangers of neo-apartheid are reflected in Sections 19 and 20 of Sacob's charter, which fleshes out its call for minority and cultural rights to be protected:

*19. The form of any new constitution shall be the subject of negotiation between interested parties, and it is essential that any future political system in South Africa provides:*

*19.1 the necessary checks and balances;*  
*19.2 the safeguard of basic human rights;*  
*19.3 protection for minorities against domination.*

*20. The state shall not be above the law but shall, through decentralisation and devolution of state powers, (author's emphasis) be close to the people and responsive to their needs.*

**T**he Sacob charter is silent as to what form the protections provided for minorities should take. But given the historic relationship between Anglo and the Democratic Party and its predecessors, we may assume that some form of federalism or confederalism is envisaged in contrast to the government's 'canton-like' structures.

In the Anglo American document referred to above, the corporation claims that 'it is not the role of business in general, or Anglo in particular, to write constitutions or to create political processes'. It then proceeds to celebrate the role of Anglo director Bobby Godsell in producing a booklet published by Anglo and titled *Shaping the future: a citizen's guide to constitution making* in which the corporation's response to the issue of 'group rights' takes the form of a discussion of decentralised political power.

Godsell argues that in a centralised system of government, power is concentrated in a few institutions and although some functions of government may be delegated, 'the authority of the central institutions remains supreme and subject to very few restraints. In a decentralised system ... power is divided and devolved to a range of local or regional institutions which exercise full or partial authority over their respective areas. In this way, they act as a check on one another.'

Godsell implicitly argues that 'group rights' can provide an adequate basis for a solution because although 'group rights' have been used (as in South Africa) to secure and maintain minority domination, more commonly their purpose is quite the reverse. Other societies have

used the concept either to protect minority rights or to prevent discrimination; or to accommodate or ameliorate inter-group conflict'. To argue, in South Africa, that the concept of 'group rights' is consistent with democratic politics, that it enhances citizen's rights and is designed to be inclusive rather than exclusive is at best disingenuous — and, at worst, dangerous.

Logically there can be no possibility of apartheid disappearing under any constitution which seeks to incorporate such inherently undemocratic mechanisms.

The rest of Sacob's charter is unexceptional but limited. The preamble states the organisation's belief that 'the optimal wealth creation for the benefit of all is best achieved through a market economy', while elsewhere it call for entrenchment of 'economic freedom and the private enterprise ethic' in any new constitution.

Despite its preoccupation with the free market, individual rights and private property ('everyone has the right to own property' and cannot be deprived of it 'without due process of law and compensation'), the charter does not confine itself to representing the essentially bourgeois rights derived from the French and American revolutions and contained in the 1966 UN covenant on civil and political rights.

Acknowledging some of the realities of apartheid and belatedly reflecting a willingness to drag South Africa into the 20th century as the rest of the world prepares for the 21st, the charter also draws upon the UN covenant on economic, social and cultural rights, largely inspired by the Russian revolution.

Part I consists of a statement of economic rights and principles and provides that there shall be equal work opportunities, free choice of employment and fair remuneration, freedom of contract and equal pay for equal work, as well as the right to form and join trade unions.

But the charter omits the right to strike provided in the UN covenant, and does not contemplate a right to work.

The social and cultural rights envisaged in the charter are respect for private and family life, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and rights to equal education, freedom of language and to participate in the cultural life of the nation.

Another right accepted by the charter, that of 'a person belonging to an ethnic,





**One person one vote: Not quite the bottom line for big business**

religious or cultural grouping' to 'use his own language' would, on face value, appear to be unexceptionable; indeed the ANC has indicated its agreement with such a position.

This provision can be interpreted either altruistically, as a genuine attempt at promoting a multi-ethnic non-racial society, or more cynically, as an attempt to curry favour with the present regime.

While there can be no disagreement in principle in protecting the right of people to use their own language, it is precisely such a clause which might potentially provide the basis for neo-apartheid in the form of exclusively white schools with Afrikaans as a medium of instruction.

The Sacob charter also lays down the organisation's desired civil and political rights, which provide that all shall be equal before the law and prohibits arbitrary arrest, detention without trial, torture, slavery and servitude. It calls for freedom of movement, opinion and expression, freedom of association and peaceful assembly. Incitement of racial, national and religious hatred shall be prohibited by law.

The final and briefest part of the charter covers personal and public responsibilities.

It includes the right of the state to take action in accordance with the law to defend itself during times of public emergency. This ominous-sounding provision is a common constitutional mechanism — appearing, for example, in Namibia's constitution.

At face value, then, much of the charter is unexceptionable. Indeed it is consistent with many of the demands of the ANC and the mass democratic movement.

But it is important to emphasise that the predominant thrust of the Sacob charter is in favour of individual rather than collective rights.

In other words the aim of monopoly capital is primarily to entrench existing disparities in economic power and to reduce to an absolute minimum the amount of state-directed restructuring.

The realities of South Africa's political economy and the balance of class forces indicate that the first post-apartheid constitution may be as liberal as

Namibia's.

Like so much else in the struggle against apartheid, the making of a new constitution is likely to be a contradictory process.

After the ravages of apartheid and the lessons of eastern Europe, we must be prepared to acknowledge that many of the slogans of the struggle can be distilled into the demand for the rule of law.

While much of what is contained in Sacob's charter constitutes an acknowledgement by business of the majority's demand for basic human rights, the rhetoric of liberalism and free enterprise has too often masked the realities of exploitation and oppression.

Similarly, the rhetoric of liberal constitutionalism may disguise an attempt to perpetuate apartheid in another form.

As the ANC states in its 1988 constitutional guidelines, 'steps must be taken to ensure that apartheid ideas and practices are not permitted to appear in old forms or new' and the concept of 'group rights' must be rejected because it means the majority would continue to be constitutionally underprivileged. •



**M**id-year is normally a time of tension in the labour arena. This is partly as a result of the many wage negotiations which take place during this period — the most important of which are the mine and metal talks.

But it is also a time of protest. There is always a stayaway on 16 June - whether or not companies agree to grant the day as a paid holiday.

Last year Cosatu and Nactu called the highly successful three-day stayaway from 4-6 June in protest against the Labour Relations Act (LRA). This year, the LRA is still an issue — but it is only one of scores that workers have raised in the surge of militancy that has accompanied the unbanning of the ANC, SACP and the PAC. The Natal violence is also now on the national agenda after 3-million people heeded the stayaway called on 2 July by Cosatu, the UDF and the ANC.

Double-figure inflation is continually eroding any pay gains the unions make. As a result wage bargaining has increasingly come to assume life-and-death proportions.

Saccawu members have taken on large sectors of the retail and hotel trades. And workers in the public sector and municipalities are finally achieving some of their aims as the authorities slowly come to terms with dealing with militant trade unions — in much the same way as their private sector counterparts started doing from the early 1980s.

'It feels like 1987', was one strike-watcher's comment. The analogy is not inappropriate. After two relatively quiet years, strike levels are now comparable with those of 1987. There have also been major strikes against some of the same employers who experienced bitter strikes two years ago — of which the bruising strikes at Transnet (formerly SA Transport Services) and OK Bazaars are the most graphic examples.

There is also a very real prospect of a strike in the engineering sector by Numsa members. The 1987 Numsa strike was admittedly a rather tame affair after the publication of the metal industrial council main agreement made the legality of the whole thing questionable, taking the initiative away from the union.

This year, however, the situation is quite different. Numsa is now the majority union on the council and there can be



*The Johannesburg Sun dispute: 'It's like 1987 all over again'*

# Mid-year militance on the factory floor





**The winter of discontent: Police photograph a protestor detained during a demonstration outside the Edgars head office in June**

no agreement without its approval. The union announced on 18 July that a strike ballot will be held in the first ten days of August after the metal council failed to resolve the dispute it declared on 26 June. Numsa had earlier indicated to employers that it was in a position to settle provided adequate progress was made on wages, hours of work, maternity and child-care leave, and 21 March as a paid holiday. There is also a fairly strong possibility of Numsa members in the auto assembly and tyre and rubber sectors downing tools.

The final wage offer advanced by the Steel & Engineering Industries Federation of SA (Seifsa) at the metal council was an extra 67c an hour for labourers (a 19% increase which would bring the minimum hour wage up to R4,18 an hour) and R1,29 for artisans (15,5% up, to give a minimum of R8,50 an hour). Numsa is demanding an across-the-board increase of R2,00 an hour. Seifsa also offered to specify in the agreement that severance pay must be paid in the event of retrenchment — and that 21 days' notice of such action must be given, and to improve provisions for maternity leave and institute free pap smears. Seifsa did not offer to reduce the present 45-hour week. Numsa had said it would consider a phased reduction after initially demand-

ing a 40-hour week initially.

Seifsa had earlier agreed to:

- negotiate a job creation programme for the industry;
- include some categories of workers previously excluded from the industrial council agreement;
- withdraw its demand for small businesses to be excluded from the agreement;
- withdraw support for training institutions which practice discrimination and negotiate guidelines for the industry to end discrimination in the selection of employees for training;
- restructure the council to provide for proportional representation;
- an improved leave bonus;
- enter into talks to merge the two major provident/pension funds in the industry;
- extend the agreement to the homelands when this becomes possible.

**I**n 1987 Num and Anglo American had their showdown on the gold mines. This year the union settled for a 14,5% to 17% wage increase for the gold mines on 5 July. But it continues to be in dispute with the Chamber of Mines over wages at collieries. At the time of going to press, GfSA, Lonhro, JCI and Rand Mines had balked at going any higher than the gold offer. Amcoal was offering increases of

between 16,4% and 18% and Trans-Natal (Gencor) increases of between 14,5% and 28%. A strike cannot be ruled out.

The OK Bazaars and Southern Sun/Holiday Inn strikes were characterised by a great deal of police intervention and high levels of violence. The OK strike showed that the company and Saccawu had unfinished business from the 1987 strike. This was confirmed at the settlement talks when the company admitted that 'management attitudinal problems do exist, are severe and must be addressed'. Both parties have now committed themselves to a process of negotiation to identify and provide solutions to difficulties. Saccawu is planning a 'National Hour of Action' on July 27 to focus on alleged rightwing harrasment and the arrest of picketers during the strike.

According to the SA Chamber of Business, the 2 July stayaway cost the economy an estimated R750-million in lost production. The action stemmed from the Cosatu-UDF-ANC alliance's conviction that only the state can bring an end to the Natal violence. The alliance has demanded the arrest of Inkatha 'warlords', that the KwaZulu police force be disbanded and that Gatsha Buthelezi be stripped of his position as KwaZulu law and order minister. It also called for





**Marching miners: Unlike in previous years, Num and the Chamber of Mines have already settled on wage increases for members working on gold mines**

the establishment of a judicial inquiry into the role of the police and for the state of emergency in the province to be lifted as it provides a cover for the activities of the 'warlords' and the security forces. A national peace conference is to be convened on 4 and 5 August to evaluate the government's response to the demands.

The campaign against the LRA has entered a new phase since the meeting between Cosatu, Saccola and president FW de Klerk on 26 June. A joint working party has been established to examine ways of resolving the crisis engendered by government's refusal to enact the Cosatu-Nactu-Saccola accord during the parliamentary session that ended on 22 June. The group's first meeting on 11 July was attended by representatives from

the Manpower Department, Cosatu and Saccola. Nactu did not attend. The federation's general secretary, Cunningham Ngcukana, told *WIP* Nactu has not decided whether it will participate.

Cosatu has used the establishment of the working group as an opportunity to introduce some new demands. These include: extending basic worker rights to cover all public sector workers; that no future legislation be promulgated without support from itself, Nactu and Saccola; and the drafting of a second interim bill to extend the LRA to all workers and for the creation of a 'proper' labour appeal court system. In the interim it wants Saccola to agree to measures which would give effect to the accord. Cosatu has also indicated that its continued participation

in the working group is dependent on three factors: that the group should complete its work within 30 days, that the discussions are not secret in any way, and that any settlement should be considered by all labour constituencies. It has warned that major industrial conflict will follow if its demands are not met.

Says Cosatu's Geoff Schreiner: 'The manpower department interpreted the group's brief as a means to facilitate further consultation on the bill. We say all the consultation that was necessary has already taken place.'

The working group's second meeting was scheduled for 26 July. It was agreed that the National Manpower Commission and the Commission for Administration would be invited to attend. •



# STRIKES AND DISPUTES 1 June to 20 July 1990

## Transvaal

Company	Union	No.	Date	Event
ABI Benrose	Fawu	800	10 July	Coca Cola workers at Amalgamated Beverage Industries in Benrose went on strike after three workers were disciplined for refusing to make deliveries at OK Bazaars and Checkers in solidarity with strikers there and at Southern Sun/Holiday Inn. All three companies are SAB subsidiaries.
Amdo Dek Johannesburg	Numsa	140	21 June 22 June	Workers at Amdo Dek went on strike demanding recognition of Numsa. They returned to work after management agreed to negotiate with the union.
Arta Fina Ltd Springs	Cawu	53	9 July 10 July	Ten Cawu members were hospitalised after a police baton charge at the start of this strike. The workers downed tools because management reneged on signing a recognition agreement it had negotiated with the union. The parties met next morning and the agreement was signed.
Bosal Afrika Pretoria	Numsa	450	14 June 18 June	Workers went on strike in protest against the presence of a labour consultant at wage negotiations. Management acceded to the demand.
Cobra Watertech Krugersdorp	Numsa	4 000	4 July 9 July	Workers at Cobra Watertech went on strike demanding a wage increase of R2 an hour across the board after rejecting a management offer of 64c an hour. They returned to work after the resumption of talks between the company and Numsa.
G & W Base Madedville Brakpan	CWIU	250	8 June	Workers at the company's Brakpan and Madedville plants went on a legal strike after rejecting a management offer of a 70c an hour across-the-board increase in response to their demand for 81c. The company instituted a lock out on 13 June.
J G Strydom Hospital Johannesburg	Nehawu	300	19 July 20 July	General workers went on strike protesting against various alleged racist practices at the hospital. They returned to work after talks between Nehawu and the TPA.
John Moffat & Trollock Robertsham	CWIU	50	4 June 4 June	Workers staged a work stoppage demanding a wage increase and recognition of CWIU. They returned to work after the company agreed in principle to the demands.
Kwikot Benoni	Numsa	300	5 July 11 July	Workers struck when management retrenched some of their workmates without consulting Numsa. They resumed work after management agreed to union proposals for job alternation.
Lascon Lighting Langelaagte	Numsa	43	26 June 27 June	Workers staged a work stoppage in support of Numsa's demand for an across-the-board increase of R2 an hour at the metal industrial council wage negotiations.
Putco Boksburg Roodepoort Pretoria Mamelodi KwaMdebele	TGMU	750	13 June 16 June	This dispute arose during wage negotiations for the Transvaal between Putco, Cosatu's TGMU and Nactu's Tawu when management and Tawu objected to the presence of TGMU shop stewards from the Homelands depot outside Pretoria because the Cosatu union was not the majority union at the depot. The Zakheni Transport & Allied Workers' Union, a Tawu breakaway which merged with TGMU in December last year, was the majority union at the depot between 1986 and 1989. According to TGMU, the only reason why it lost its majority was because management deliberately transferred Tawu members to the depot to break its hold. In a series of protest actions, TGMU members from Boksburg drove their buses to the wrong depot and workers at the Lea Glenn (Roodepoort), Dennilton (KwaMdebele), Mamelodi and Homelands depots downed tools. The dispute was settled when management agreed to transfer all Tawu members at Homelands to Shoshanguve which meant that TGMU was once again the majority union at the depot.



Reckitt & Coleman Elandsfontein	CWIU	400	28 May	Workers at the Elandsfontein plant of this British multinational went on a legal strike in an effort to force the company to participate in the Chemical Industries National Provident Fund. During the strike CWIU accused the company of fanning racial conflict by hiring white, coloured and Indian scabs. In mid-June over 160 strikers were arrested and later dismissed after ignoring a court order to leave the premises. The company threatened the others with dismissal if they did not call off the strike by 29 June.
S A Casters Johannesburg	Numsa	140	20 June 21 June	Workers struck for one day demanding recognition of Numsa. Work resumed after management agreed to negotiate.
SA Phillips Martindale	Numsa	150	11 June 21 June	Management locked workers out because they worked a shortened week of 40 hours in support of Numsa's demand for a 40 hour week without loss of pay in the metal industrial council negotiations.
Short-Lifts Johannesburg	Numsa	34	18 June 20 June	Workers worked short hours for two days in a demonstration in support of Numsa's demand for a 40-hour working week in the metal industrial council negotiations.
Steiner Services Alrode Pretoria	TGMU	360	18 June 19 June	Workers at Steiner plants in Alrode and Pretoria went on strike demanding that management recognise TGMU and arrange stop order facilities. The company indicated it would accede to the demands provided the union proves it has majority representation.
Trident Steel Transvaal	Numsa	700	28 June 4 July	Workers struck after management issued a warning to a worker. They returned to work on 4 July after arrangements were made for talks between the company and Numsa.
Valco Latex Industria	CWIU	230	13 June 13 June	Workers staged a work stoppage when a shop steward was suspended. Management agreed to a reinstatement.
Verwoedburg municipality Verwoedburg	Samwu	840	20 June 20 July	Some 750 Samwu and 90 Numsa members were dismissed after staging a sit in when the council rejected their demand for a R30 attendance allowance in wage negotiations. After talks with Samwu, the council announced that 500 of its members would be re-employed.
W J M Construction West rand	Numsa	400	14 June	Workers downed tools in protest against company plans to retrench and segregated facilities. They were all dismissed.

### Cape

Bellville municipality Bellville	Samwu	1 200	5 July 8 July	Workers went on a two-day strike when the council responded to their demand for a monthly minimum wage of R800 by offering a minimum of R455. In talks after the strikers resumed work the council raised its offer by R10.
Cape Town City Council Cape Town	Samwu	5 000	13 June 26 June	Workers downed tools after they rejected the City Council's offer of a minimum monthly wage of R813 and a 13,5% increase for higher paid, unskilled workers and semi-skilled workers earning up to R23 000 a year. Workers also demanded a 40-hour week with no loss of pay, a housing allowance, 16 June as a paid holiday and an end to casual employment. The dispute was settled when Samwu accepted an offer for a monthly minimum of R845 and a 14% increase for higher paid unskilled workers and semi-skilled employees. The council also made an undertaking to negotiate a reduction in working hours and to start a process of employing temporary workers on a full-time basis. Regarding 16 June, the Council agreed to grant an extra day's leave.



Coin Security Cape Town	TGMU	40	1 June	Security guards at Coin Security were dismissed after they joined a march organised by the Transport & General Workers Union to demand higher wages and improved working conditions. The demands included a reduction in working hours from 60 hours a week to 40, a minimum monthly wage of R1 000, an end to part-time work and the repeal of the Security Officers' Act.
Delta Port Elizabeth	Numsa	3 000	4 July 9 July	Workers at Delta went on strike demanding that the company participate in the national bargaining forum in the Auto Assembly Industry. However, workers returned to work after four days in anticipation of negotiations with management. Numsa insists Delta must conduct negotiations at national level.
Grapnel Silencers Atlantis	Numsa	400	20 June 6 July	Workers went on strike after management offered a 14% pay increase in response to their demand for R2 an hour across the board, the equivalent of increases between 22% and 48% for various categories. Strikers returned to work after they won a 16.5% for those earning more than R1 000 a month and 14.5% for those earning less with more than one year's experience. At least 21 strikers were injured in clashes with police on the weekend of 7 and 8 July, after failing to heed a court interdict ordering them to vacate the premises.
Kohler Xactics Cape Town	CWIU	180	22 June	Workers went on strike after management retrenched 35 of their workmates without consulting CWIU. All the strikers were dismissed on 25 June.
Livingstone Hospital Dora Nginza Hospital P E Provincial Hospital Kwazakhele Hospital	Nehawu		2 July 10 July	General workers and nurses at Livingstone Hospital went on strike when 39 nurses who had been hired on a temporary basis in 1988 were told their contracts would not be renewed. The strikers demanded action to deal with critical staff shortages at black hospitals. Another demand was for black patients to be admitted to empty beds at white hospitals. Workers at the Dora Nginza Hospital, the PE Provincial Hospital and Kwazakhele Hospital downed tools in solidarity. The Livingstone strikers returned to work after management reinstated 16 of the 39 nurses and promised the rest would be accommodated in the same way in a phased operation.
P E Municipality Port Elizabeth	Samwu	3 000	3 July 18 July	Municipal workers went on strike after rejecting the council's offer of a 12% wage increase. Workers had demanded a R300 across-the-board and a minimum monthly wage of R750. The dispute developed into a stalemate with strikers refusing to give in until the municipality made an offer on the minimum wage and the council insisting on a return to work before that could happen. On 18 July the parties announced that they had broken the impasse. Workers would resume their duties and negotiations on the wage dispute would begin as soon as possible.
Peninsula Beverage Cape Town	Fawu	80	29 May 5 June	Workers at Peninsula Beverage staged a week-long strike demanding a wage increase of 9% . The workers had received a 19,2% increase in January and the company said it would only negotiate a further increase in January next year. Negotiations on the wage dispute resumed after a return to work. The two parties agreed that workers would be paid for the public holiday on 31 May.
SKF Uitenhage	Numsa	300	5 June 8 June	Workers at SKF's Uitenhage plant downed tools after management dismissed a black worker who became involved in a fight with an alleged AHB member. The rightwinger was only given a verbal warning. The strikers staged a sit-in demanding that the man also be dismissed. Management responded with a lock-out. An arbitrator subsequently ruled that the dismissed worker be reinstated.
United SA Brush Bellville	CWIU	500	10	Workers at SA Brush Manufacturing went on strike demanding to be backdated from 1 July and one day additional bonus.



## OFS

Harmony Gold mine Virginia	Num	3 000	6 July 20 July	Num was not recognised at Rand Mines' Harmony Gold mine when wages negotiations between Num and the Chamber of Mines began some months ago. Early this month, however, it signed up the majority of the labourforce. On 6 July the workers downed tools demanding recognition of Num, a demand to which management acceded. The parties due to meet on 27 July to negotiate on an offer of a 13% wage increase. On 18 July, after the 14,5% to 17% settlement for gold mines at the chamber, Num members struck again, demanding the immediate implementation of the same wage rates. The strike ended after management agreed to start negotiations on 23 July.
QwaQwa government Mitsieshoek	Nehawu	15 000	10 May 11 June	Virtually all public sector workers in QwaQwa downed tools demanding trade union and collective bargaining rights, a minimum monthly wage of R600, and an end to segregated jobs. They resumed work after homeland authorities and a Cosatu representative agreed to the formation of a joint working committee 'to settle all grievances'. QwaQwa authorities also conceded that the workers had the right to join unions and undertook to make representations to central government to make extra funds available for wages.

## Transkei

Magwa Tea Corporation Port St Johns	Fawu	1 000	26 April	Workers went on strike demanding a wage of R2.70 a day. A Fawu spokesman said some earn as little as R200 a month.
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## National

Checkers South Africa	Saccawu	9 000	6 July 19 July	More than 9 500 Saccawu members at 170 Checkers' stores nationally embarked on a legal strike after rejecting the company's offer of a R135 across-the-board increase from 1 July with another R5 in January next year and a monthly minimum wage of R800. The strikers demanded an across-the-board increase of R165, a minimum monthly wage of R830, staff discounts, March 21 as a paid holiday and a 13th cheque. After mediation the strikers accepted a R140 across-the-board wage hike and a monthly minimum of R770 and a 12% discount on purchases to a value of R375. Pay for one week during the strike was, however, still a matter of dispute.
Consolidated Cotton Corp Durban, Ladysmith, East London	Sactwu	10 000	11 June	Workers went on strike after management rejected their demand for a R40 a week increase from 1 July and a further R40 in January 1991. The management rejected their demand, offering R13 for the entire 12 months. On 13 July 63 Sactwu members were arrested outside the company's Pinetown complex. They were charged with attending an illegal gathering and released on bail.
OK National	Saccawu	7 000	4 June 25 July	Saccawu members embarked on a legal strike demanding a R160 a month across-the-board increase, a minimum monthly wage of R800 and other service improvements after OK, citing poor performance, offered a minimum of R710 a month after one year's service. Both management and the strikers had prepared for a long and bitter struggle. At its peak, the strike, which received strong community support, involved 7 000 workers at 131 stores. The strike was characterised by high levels of violence. At least 213 strikers were arrested for picketing, infringing municipal by-laws, trespassing, attending illegal gatherings, assault and intimidation. Management on three occasions tried to get court interdicts against picketers. All three matters were settled out of court. Saccawu also went to court; it made an unsuccessful application to the industrial court for a ruling declaring that OK's decision not to allow strikers access to canteens or communication with union officials constituted an ULP. During the strike management also threatened to close down stores. Settlement was reached in mediation when Saccawu accepted OK's offer of across-the-board increases of between R125 and R145, with a further R10 from 1991. OK also withdrew its threat to retrench 587 workers, although it reserved the right to raise the matter again in the future.



Southern Sun/Holiday Inn South Africa	Saccawu	6 000	3 July	Southern Sun and Holiday Inn workers around the country went on strike after negotiations on wages and working conditions deadlocked with management offering an across-the-board increase of R100 or 15% monthly and Saccawu demanding R160 across the board and a monthly minimum R800. Other demands include allowing casual workers to belong to the union, reinstatement of dismissed workers and that management should not use sub-contractors. Following disputes over picketing, management obtained Supreme Court orders restricting workers from entering the premises at all of the 41 strike-hit hotels. Workers at Durban's Malibu Motel joined the strike despite the fact that their union, the Natal Liquor and Catering Trade Employees' Union, had earlier struck a wage deal. Malibu's management obtained a Supreme Court order obliging the workers to resume work. Cosatu threatened a consumer boycott against Southern Sun and Holiday Inns and three other SAB subsidiaries - OK Bazaar, Afcol and Edgars.
Trador Cash 'n Carry South Africa	Saccawu	2 400	10 July 12 July	Workers in 30 Trador stores struck after the company offered an across-the-board increase of R160 in response to their demand for a pay hike of R200. The strike ended two days later with workers agreeing to accept R160 across the board and management undertaking not to retrench or close any stores for 18 months - a settlement Saccawu said was a significant step forward in its job security campaign. MD Albert Koopman, proponent of 'participative management', earned the union's praise for the company's 'non-hostile' handling of the strike. Trador closed all 30 stores to prevent violence. Strikers were allowed to sleep in the canteens and were catered for. They were also allowed to picket and move freely.
Wine & Spirit Employers South Africa	Nuwsaw	5 000	2 July	Wine and spirit workers at 83 plants nationally embarked on a legal go slow after the industry's employer association rejected their demand for a R40 across-the-board increase, offering R33 instead. Another demand was for workers with more than 10 year's service to receive 20 days leave annually. Four days later the employer imposed a lock out. Police arrested workers in Port Elizabeth and Stellenbosch for picketing. On 16 July the employers announced that 1 400 workers had accepted the R33 offer. On 18 July Nuwsaw and the employers agreed on a code of conduct for the strike in which they denounced intimidation, violence and harrassment. Nuwsaw has threatened to call a consumer boycott.



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