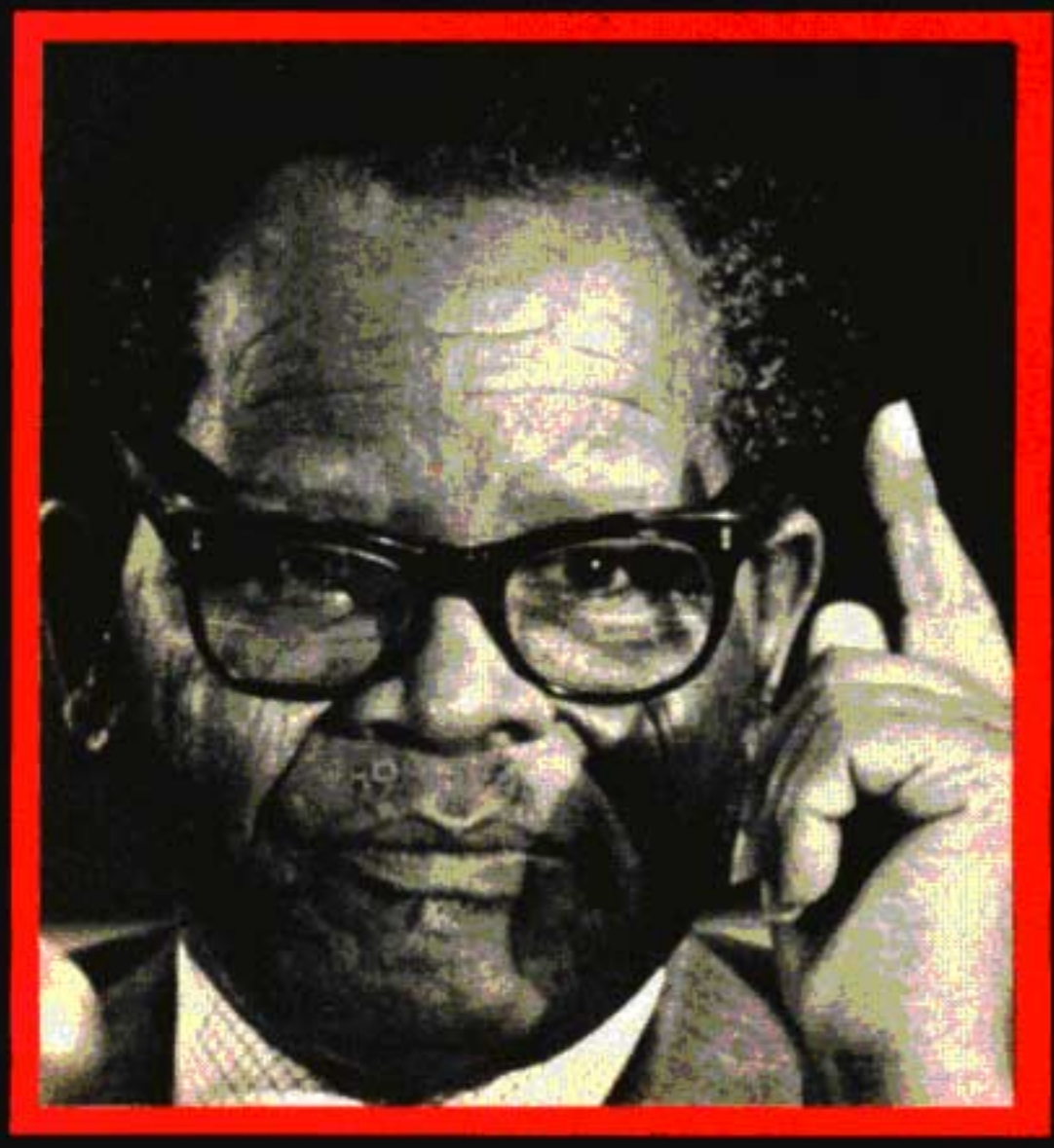
Ten years of

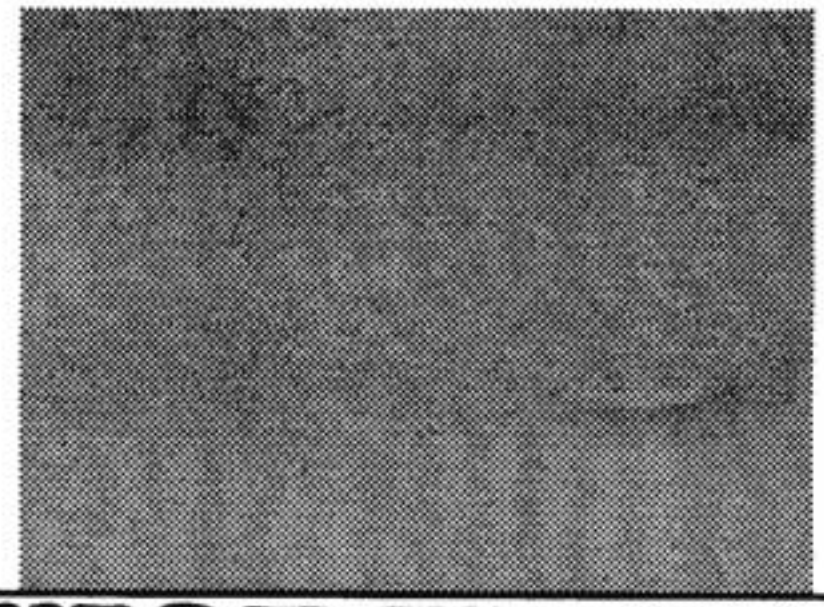
WORK IN PROGRESS

50



TOWARDS NEGOTIATION

DOUBLE EDITION: ISSUES 50 AND 51



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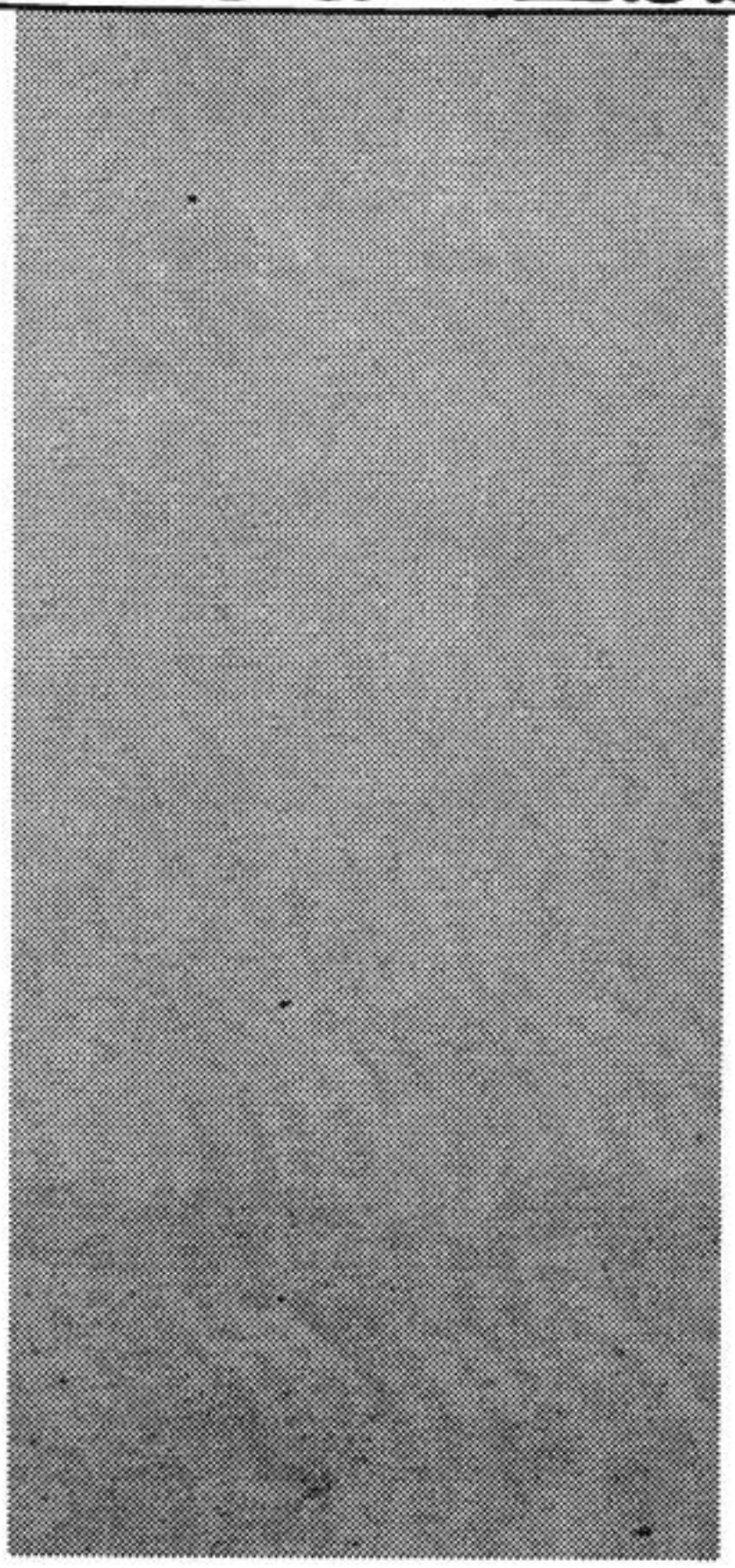


Editorial

Hundreds of committed people have been involved in the ten years and 50 issues of *Work In Progress*. We salute those dedicated distributors who, without reward, have loyally ensured that the publication is read.

Contributors have set the tone of *WIP* through their articles, raised the issues and asked the questions. Without them, the magazine would not have survived.

Readers are the most important group for any publication. They are the people to whom writers and editors are ultimately responsible. Unless they actively engage with and respond to the written word, the publication withers and becomes the toy of the small group producing it. We thank all *WIP* readers for their critical involvement in the project.

The support which so many have given *WIP* over the years is deeply appreciated. Without their advice, ideas, and voluntary assistance during the crises of typing and layout, editing and proof reading, distribution and writing, *WIP* could not have developed in the way it has.

Messages of support from a wide range of organisations appear in this edition. *WIP* thanks them for their greetings, and for subsidising the price of this double issue through their advertisements.

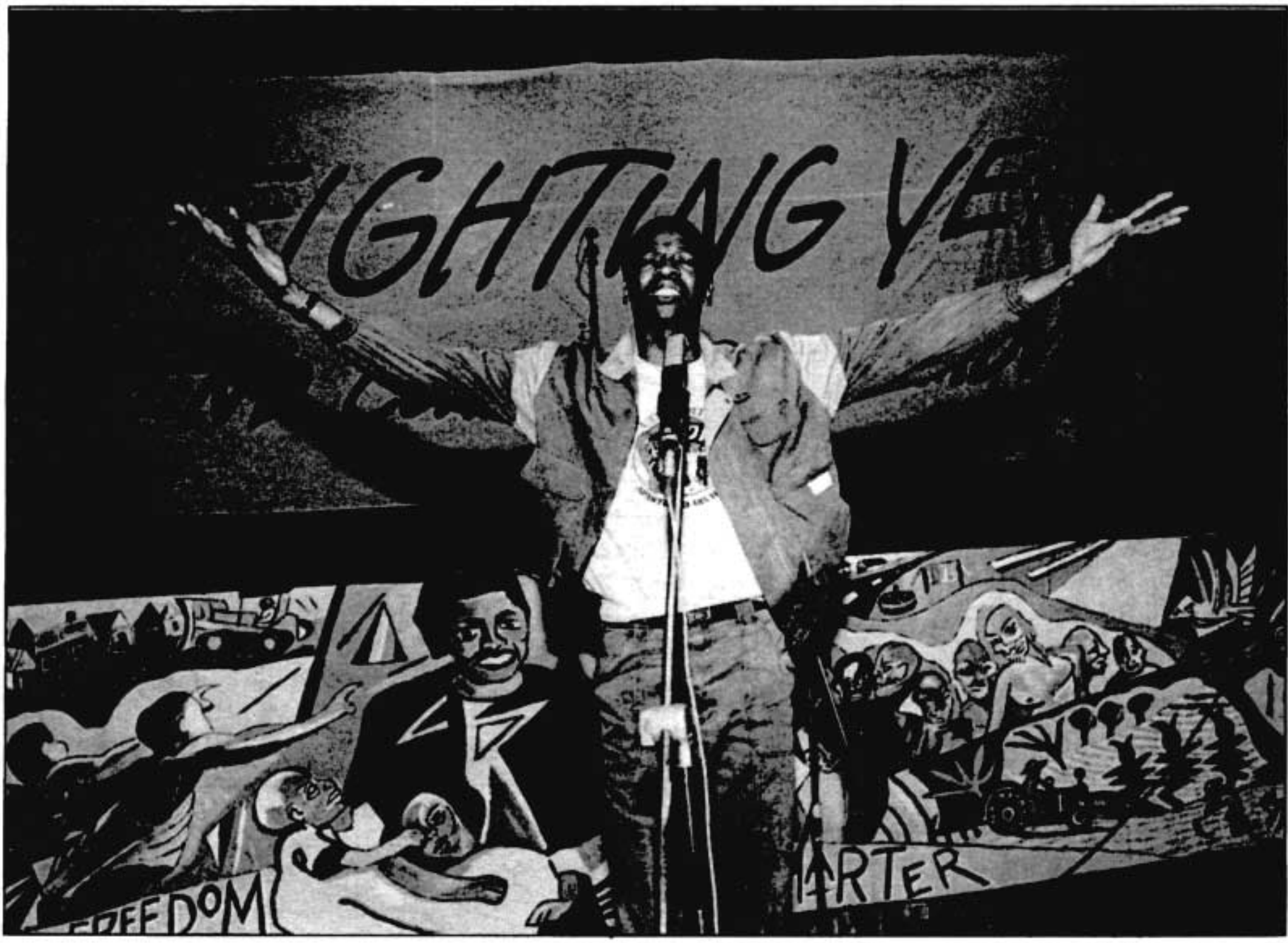
The media as a whole, and the 'alternative press' in particular, currently faces a government intent on further limiting the right to debate and report on contemporary events. *WIP*, like many other publications, has been instructed to submit copies to Stoffel Botha's home affairs department in terms of the emergency regulations. Censorship is tightening, with the possibility of suspension or closure facing sections of the media.

In this context, it may be foolish to predict another 10 years of *Work In Progress*. But the editors look forward to the day when the media can fulfil its basic role of informing readership about the events, dynamics and trends which are shaping their lives.

Thanks to TOPS for assistance in layout and design, and to Afrapix for all photographs used.

Work In Progress 50/51 - October/November 1987

State power and the politics of resistance



As South Africa moves into another year of emergency rule, TOM LODGE examines some of the strategic options available to resistance movements.

The UDF: a significant actor in current opposition politics

Black resistance in the 1980s has involved the politics of a relatively advanced industrial society. Changes in South Africa's economy in the 1960s and 1970s, and in particular the movement of Africans into the most vital sectors of the industrial workforce during those years, form the two most distinctive features of black South African protest: its strength and its radicalism.

Many of the mass movements in the present conflict are socially and intellectually more substantial and sophisticated than in previous generations of protest.

The vanguard role of youth, the clear presence of class analysis in political discourse, the emphasis on democratic participation, the readiness to challenge the state's legitimacy, and the often violent antipathy between rivals: all are features of modern black politics which set it apart from what has been before.

The sense of impending victory and the consciousness of power which, until recently, was implicit and sometimes explicit in the discourse of radical black leadership, was not really justified.

In contrast to the 1950s, popular organisations during 1984-86 presented the authorities with a much more potent challenge to the working of government and the functioning of the economy. But the balance of power did not involve stalemate, as certain radical analyses would have. For conflict in the 1980s has in part been caused by government efforts to alter the terms of domination; trying to shift from an order based largely on coercion, to one where ideology, consensus, and incorporation could play rather larger roles. White South Africa's probable future prosperity - but not its very survival - hinged upon the success of these efforts.

Changes introduced by the government were not all meaningless. In the case of labour, the 1979 legislation institutionalised trade unions, which are now a vital element in resistance and power. But outside the sphere of labour the government's programme held back from any significant concession of political rights, any division of the essentials of political authority, or any meaningful broadening of the system of political participation.

Despite their inadequacy, their tendency to raise expectations rather than fulfil them, the government's reforms had positive implications for the development of popular opposition. For the reforms themselves demanded a lessening of official restrictions and controls, and created a legal space for the open mobilisation of resistance to apartheid.

But it was a brief springtime. And like such springs elsewhere, it was followed not by a blossoming into summer, but a particularly harsh winter. Between 1986 and 1987 there was a shift in state strategy. Government's limited tolerance of radical dissent is over: it is replacing, through repression, the short-lived attempt to rule on the basis of legitimation. And when it comes to coercion, the state's resources are still far greater than those which can be marshalled by the forces of popular resistance. There is no stalemate, and the state can still tear apart the body of organised political activity.

What is questionable, though, is whether the psychological effects of doing so will be as durable as was the case after the state's clampdown at the beginning of the 1960s. The culture of black political radicalism may be much more resilient this time.

The options for resistance politics

The choices which currently face resistance politics are not the same as those faced by the leaders of the 1960s. Their options did not appear to be choices at all: acceptance of the massive force and authority of the state, and 'working within the system'; or clandestine organisation linked to the promotion of guerilla warfare.

These are not the only routes now. Guerilla warfare remains important. But it is not the only option in resistance politics. In the last ten years of guerilla insurgency, its significance has been political rather than military. The ANC itself described the first stage of its campaign as 'armed propaganda'. Though there have been strategic developments since then, the main purpose of guerilla attacks remains symbolic and inspirational, to provide political pointers.

It is unlikely that, in the near future, the military struggle will seriously be able to disrupt or threaten the functioning of the government or the economy. The ANC has been restraining its forces, but that restraint has been qualitative rather than quantitative. The ANC could, if it wished to, more effectively terrorise the cities and the suburbs. It could attack targets so far not chosen: schools, public transport, shopping centres; targets selected so as to maximise white casualties. The ANC is strongly opposed to doing this for moral and strategic reasons, but it probably has the resources to undertake such a campaign.

What the ANC cannot do is mount a major military or sabotage offensive which would tie up large numbers of South African soldiers. This would have the same debilitating effects on the South African economy as the war in Zimbabwe did in its final

stages.

But South African conditions are different from those which existed in Zimbabwe. To field and supply a guerilla army of several thousand inside the country's borders would be well beyond the ANC's logistical resources, and would require a completely different regional political economy.

Guerilla warfare will remain just one theme in the struggle. While it will be a major aspect, its importance will remain chiefly psychological. It will signal the ANC's presence. It will provide a medium through which the ANC can exercise its authority, and can enhance its status internationally. But for a long time it is unlikely to accomplish more than this. And even in the long term, the probabilities are against a militarily-based 'seizure of power'. Like most anti-colonial struggles, this one is almost certain to end through talks.

Another option for resistance politics would be to turn back the clock: to forget that the UDF and the popular political movement it commanded existed; forget that open political mobilisation was beginning to alter the political landscape, and retreat into a kind of defeatist syndicalism.

This syndicalist position would argue that political struggle and opposition should be left to the labour movement: to the extent that black people have power, it is grounded in labour relations and the strategic position black workers hold in the economy. An extension of this argument would suggest that this power should be conserved to protect labour organisation until it can fight the truly decisive battle another day.

This is not a realistic option. Firstly, given the present economic situation and its likely future development, a labour movement left to itself is unlikely to grow much stronger. Secondly, power held in reserve and not actually exercised may not turn out to be as powerful as was thought. Thirdly, the one kind of political challenge the authorities are really well-equipped to deal with is the general strike or general stayaway.

And it is worth remembering that the popular movement which mushroomed so dramatically in the townships in the 1983-86 period actually won victories. It won a succession of local struggles, compelling local representatives of state and capital to recognise black political power and negotiate with it.

The popular movement also won national victories. Analyses of state strategy produced before 1984, contrasted with what appears to be on the agenda today, make this obvious. The UDF was established to oppose, amongst other things, the Orderly Movement and Settlement of Black Persons Bill, which aimed at streamlining and tightening up influx control. Today, government policy in that area is wholly disorganised. And the abolition of influx control, despite the 'ifs and buts', represents a momentus victory, a signal advance.

But more than anything else, what has changed since the early 1980s is the question of whether the government has a strategy. It did then - or appeared to: indeed the left attributed to the state an almost Machiavellian intelligence. Today the state no longer has a coherent strategy. In 1983, the tricameral system was the final blueprint; today it is conceived of by government as merely 'a step in the process'.

Alliance politics and negotiation

It would be a mistake to turn the clock back, and write off the gains achieved by the politics of popular mobilisation. But conditions have changed.

The substructure of local organisation, which provided the UDF with its undertow of such force, is badly fragmented. In certain areas it is considerably demoralised. Where organisation can be repaired it should be. But where the state has concentrated its resources this may not be possible. When the SABC ventures into Alexandra township, then something which existed is now lost.

In place of the open structures constructed in the heyday of people's power, more discreet, clandestine or underground networks may be built. But these are not the only strategic alternatives.

And by its very nature, 'underground' politics is difficult to make democratic. In any case, mobilisation does not depend merely on the presence of committed activists, whether in the open or underground. It requires ideas, causes, issues and victories - both psychological and real.

It may still be possible to reconstruct the resistance movement around bread and

butter preoccupations, the localised subsistence politics so fundamental to the building of 'first level' organisations before the UDF was formed. It is certainly the case that many effective local activists have tended to be absorbed by national structures and have become preoccupied with problems removed from the immediate needs of their constituencies.

But a return to localism would be a retreat. Local issues should not be neglected, for there are many victories to be won. The rent strike still effective in Soweto is a case in point. But local struggles do not effectively challenge the state, and do not rearrange the equation of political power.

Some of these considerations may be influencing the astute move by democratic organisations into alliance politics. The last three years have profoundly shaken up the white community's political culture. Divisions and demoralisations are more evident than they have been for decades.

It may not be possible to persuade more than an active minority of whites to join the camp of liberation politics. But a much larger proportion may have their fears lessened if movements like the UDF actively co-operate with forces and organisations which, in white political culture, have institutional respectability.

A large proportion of whites may be receptive to the leadership of a broad front around the call for negotiation. Events like the launch of the 'Friends of the UDF' in the plush surrounds of the Carlton Hotel, or the UDF's participation, along with IDASA and PFP notables, in the Five Freedoms Forum conference, make excellent sense.

Reassessing strategy

Once predominantly black democratic organisations begin co-operating across the lines which strategically and ideologically divide parliamentary from extra-parliamentary forces, then sooner or later a fundamental question must be asked about the boycottist position. This has been elevated almost to a point of principle in national democratic politics in the last three decades.

UDF co-president Archie Gumede phrased the problem clumsily when he raised it two months ago. But he was justified in asking whether there should not be a fundamental rethink in strategy.

There are historical precedents for political movements committed to fundamental change using, when appropriate, existing political institutions, if only for a platform and a legal shelter. There are some South African examples of this too, although they are not very happy ones. The history of the Labour Party demonstrates this well.

The arguments against such a move are strong. It is difficult to carry along a constituency mobilised in opposition to government-created representative bodies.

Then there is the possibility of elected leaders deserting their constituency, playing the system by its own rules. Any move of this kind would have to be debated, and leaders would have to be people of unswerving commitment.

In the end it may be found that the arguments against such a move are too strong. But the debate should take place, and not be cut off by expressions of moral outrage and accusations of treachery. These are difficult times, and the strategic issues which confront the progress of democratic opposition to apartheid are complex. The categories which are required to discuss them are analytical and dispassionate, not moral and emotive.

The Inkatha approach: Armed Inkatha members stop the funeral of a UDF member in Kwandengezi outside Durban last year

Talking to Inkatha

Over the past few months, Inkatha has made peace overtures to the United Democratic Front, calling for negotiations in an attempt to resolve their lengthy and bloody conflict. This year alone clashes have claimed more than 100 lives and turned scores of people, mostly youths, into virtual refugees.

But recent developments in the region have cast doubt on Inkatha's sincerity to resolve the conflict.

As Inkatha makes these peace overtures, vigilante activity is spreading to remote parts of Natal. And in the past two months, police reported at least 33 deaths in the Pietermaritzburg area. But local UDF activists say many incidents have not been reported and the death toll could be as high as 50. Inkatha vigilantes have suffered severe losses as well.

There have been talks recently about negotiations to resolve the conflict between vigilantes backed by Inkatha and supporters of the United Democratic Front (UDF). Inkatha leader Gatsha Buthelezi has met with UDF leaders in an attempt to resolve the conflict. CONCORD NEWS AGENCY in Durban reports

Reports of activists hounded out of their townships filter through almost daily. And killings, rapes, abductions and acts of arson have become the order of the day in many Natal townships.

In June, Kwazulu police took over police stations in two of Durban's biggest townships — Umlazi and Kwamashu. Within a month of this move, the Zulu 'Popayis' (as they are called in

townships around Durban) allegedly assaulted local activists.

Activists are detained and sjambokked

On 16 June, Kwazulu police picked up more than 20 Umlazi and Kwamashu activists from their homes or off the streets. They were detained for almost two days and allegedly sjambokked.

Some of the victims laid charges, and at present Kwazulu police face claims of over R70 000 as a result of this incident, in which more than 12 activists, mostly from Umlazi, ended up with cuts and sjambok weals.

In the Pietermaritzburg Supreme Court, Kwazulu police and Inkatha face another claim for damages amounting to R154 550 as a result of alleged Inkatha members' attacks on people at Mpophomeni township near Howick.

A Kwazulu policeman, Inkatha's national organiser Joseph Mabaso, and other Inkatha employees and office bearers were present at the meeting where the attack was allegedly planned.

Papers before the court claim that if these people were not party to the agreement or attacks, they negligently failed in their duty to prevent the attack when they could have done so.

UDF's Lechesa Tsenoli noted that after Inkatha made overtures to resolve the conflict, there was violence aimed at so-called UDF people in local communities.

'What is happening in the Pietermaritzburg area is not the question of only the UDF being attacked', said Tsenoli. 'Community life has severely been affected by the violence. Workers, who are on night shift, are in danger. But the liberal press, which is not subtle about its support for Chief Buthelezi, is portraying the conflict to be solely between Inkatha and the UDF supporters.

'People have been terribly affected for refusing to join what seem to be Inkatha campaigns. One thing that is shocking, but not surprising, is the failure of the South African police to use their powers to stop vigilantes'.

Tsenoli claimed the Kwazulu police takeover of police stations in Umlazi and Kwamashu had 'strengthened the ban under which we have been living in Kwazulu'.

Poilce have taken over from vigilantes

'We have lost a number of activists. Vigils and funerals have been disrupted. Families have been evicted and are virtually exiled because of their well-known association with the UDF. That people continue to hold meetings is because of their determination to make known their viewpoints', he said.

'Where you once saw gun-toting vigilantes bashing UDF activists, members of the Kwazulu police, acting with authority, are now doing the same thing and in some cases have proved to be more vicious than vigilantes'.

Tsenoli said the impact of vigilante activity varied from one area to another.

In areas where the community strongly supported youth organisation, 'vigilantes have failed to have any negative impact'.

But Hambanathi is one township where vigilantes are apparently in complete control. Tsenoli claimed leading members of the Hambanathi Residents' Association were forced to flee the township. But there is still strong, though suppressed, community support for the UDF and the residents' association.

'They mistake fear for political support'

According to Tsenoli, the vigilantes 'have instilled fear in the community, which they misinterpret as political support. The only negative impact vigilante activity has had on us is that it has diverted our focus on specific campaigns and has kept us preoccupied with defence. And the vigilantes are not doing anything to solve the problems faced by communities'.

He said collusion between vigilantes and members of the South African police was more frightening.

He told of eye witnesses accounts and photographs of vigilante assaults while SAP members were present. 'It convinces us that the state is involved in this campaign against the UDF'.

The UDF is 'not in principle opposed to talking to Inkatha. Because of the nature of the problem it must be resolved in the community. We are not the only victims of vigilante activity'.

Communities must be able to discuss vigilantes

But, said Tsenoli, the UDF believes the various Natal communities should be allowed to hold meetings to discuss the issues of violence and vigilantes, and such meetings should not be disrupted.

'People who have been forced to leave their townships should be allowed to return so that they can put their viewpoints across. We are saying a general

climate in which people can be free to talk and not feel threatened must be created before we negotiate', explained Tsenoli.

The question of talking to Inkatha has the potential to split the UDF in Natal. A few days after newspapers reported that UDF co-president Archie Gumede had held talks with Inkatha leaders, several young activists apparently confronted Gumede.

There were reports that the Kwamashu Youth League had threatened to disaffiliate from the UDF. And Gumede's most recent agreement with Inkatha is strongly opposed by local youth.

Representatives of local youth congresses who attended the meeting were reprimanded by their fellow members who said they had no mandate to participate in any such agreement.

Youths are doubtful of Inkatha's sincerity

'People feel very strongly about what they see as Inkatha's campaign against the UDF', said Tsenoli.

'A lot of painstaking effort went into the creation of structures that exist within the UDF. That is why we have to go through all channels of communications to guarantee success of talks with anybody'.

Youths interviewed made it quite clear that they doubted Inkatha's sincerity in trying to resolve the conflict.

'We have suffered so long. Why does Inkatha want to talk now after hundreds of people have been killed.

'Did they not realise a long time ago that it was wrong to bash people for their political beliefs. Why now?

'We suspect it is just a face-saving tactic to create a false impression that they are a peace-loving people'.

'In a mass-based movement, there will always be elements who will let the side down'
— Gatsha Buthelezi

'Vigilantes are still out to get us. I last slept at home six months ago', said a 23-year-old youth from Mpumalanga.

'Two of my brothers were brutally murdered by vigilantes in Mpumalanga. Last year I survived a petrol bomb attack at my home. I suffered severe burns in my hands and neck. Since then I have not been living at home. The rest of my family has left Mpumalanga and are living in hiding, and always in fear of their lives, somewhere in Durban. There is no hope of ever returning to Mpumalanga. It simply means death.

'Living away from home and not knowing if other family members are still alive is a terrible experience.

'I do not think talking to Inkatha will resolve anything. The only solution is the elimination of vigilante leaders', he said.

Inkatha's peace overtures must be seen against the background of growing publicity and allegations of involvement by senior and leading Inkatha officials in vigilante activity. Inkatha's image, both locally and internationally, has taken a severe battering as a result.

Vigilantes planned to attack Gumede

Earlier this year, two self-confessed vigilante leaders from the township of Clermont, near Pinetown, made startling revelations about their aborted plans to launch Kwamakhutha-style gun attacks on UDF activists, including UDF co-president Archie Gumede.

Even Inkosi Gatsha Buthelezi has admitted in a letter to a Durban newspaper that 'in a mass-based movement there would always be elements who will let the side down'.

Also of note is the recent court appearance of a vigilante leader, Thomas Mandla Shabalala, on charges of illegal possession of ammunition. Last year Shabalala boasted that he had a private army of more than 200 people who were paid R103 a month. Shabalala is a member of Inkatha's central committee.

Meanwhile, Zakhele Nkehli, a

vigilante leader from strife-torn Mpumalanga, has strongly denied that vigilantes were responsible for the spate of murders, rapes and abductions in the township. Nkehli is also a Inkatha central committee member, and chairman of Inkatha in the Hammarsdale area.

Scores of young people have fled

Mpumalanga, a once quite and peaceful community, has turned into a battlefield for political supremacy as vigilantes have gone on the rampage against supporters and members of the UDF-affiliated Hammarsdale Youth Congress.

More than 20 people are reported to have been killed since February and scores of young people have left Mpumalanga to seek refuge in neighbouring townships.

There have been reports that during the last three months more than 30 families left Mpumalanga.

Women have been raped and robbed of their possessions. Young people have been abducted from their homes and later found either shot or hacked to death.

Residents blame all these actions on vigilantes.

There were rumours that a man well-known in the Umbumbulu area for his marksmanship in faction fights had been hired by the vigilantes and was operating in Mpumalanga.

Inkatha leader Nkehli has a very different view of the vigilantes.

'Inkatha took the initiative in forming vigilante groups to fight crime in Mpumalanga. Like vigilantes in other areas, they have been very responsible people.

'Mandla Shabalala of Lindelani and Winnington Sabelo of Umlazi are both well-known and very responsible vigilantes', said Nkehli.

'Vigilantes will always fight things that are against the law. But a person who is against the South African government's laws is not a criminal and would not be attacked by vigilantes.

'It is rogues and vagabonds who are to be blamed for the spate of killings in Mpumalanga', he said.

The Inkatha leader boasted that Mpumalanga was a 'semi-liberated zone and no policeman can come in here and arrest my (Inkatha) people without my consent'.

He said the vigilantes did not need to hire mercenaries 'as has been alleged by some newspapers'.

'We are self-sufficient. We have men who can come out now and arm themselves with sticks and knobkerries and fight'.

'Where UDF rules, Inkatha will not live'

Nkehli said the 'UDF has a very unique opportunity here in Mpumalanga and this is to live where Inkatha rules. In places where the UDF rules, Inkatha will not live'.

Nkehli said he was like an Inkatha flag, and felt 'very noble for the allegations against me'.

'If I die because of all these allegations I will die a very happy man. I am a well-known public figure, even in UDF circles'.

Nkehli could not deny that Inkatha Youth Brigade members were involved in acts of violence against members and supporters of the Hammarsdale Youth Congress.

'I must admit that as an effective youth leader, Inkatha youth brigade members would be very reluctant to tell me of all the shameful things that they do.

'With all honesty I would not like to see any person being attacked.

'It is pointless for the leaders of both UDF and Inkatha to expect us down here to meet and resolve the conflict when they have not met. They, the leaders, must show the way', said Nkehli.

Taking a close look at faction fighting

Nkehli denied that Inkatha Youth members were receiving military training at the Emandleni/Matleng camp or any other Inkatha youth camp.

'At Emandleni the youth get training in cultural activities and agriculture. Most of them are now working as field workers for various Inkatha branches'.

The Inkatha leader said his organisation looked at faction fighting quite closely.

'We take people involved in faction fighting and teach them to use their anger against their arch enemy.

'We have moved into areas like Mophela (one of the shack settlements near Mpumalanga adversely affected by faction fighting).

'We study their home-made weapons. The way they manufacture their weapons is totally different from the conventional Western methods'.

But Nkehli declined to say what happened after the weapons had been studied.He just boasted that he did not need burglar guards in his office or a fence around his house.

Nkehli, a stocky man in his early 30s wagged his finger and said: 'We use muti. We have something very powerful. He who hates me hates himself'.

National liberation and socialism

In its alliance with the African National Congress, and as an independent organisation, the South African Communist Party has influence in the struggle over South Africa's future. The role and policy of the SACP will inevitably have a bearing on future political developments. In the interests of understanding the SACP's policy and position on a number of important issues, GLENN MOSS submitted questions to senior members of the party. The responses are those of a senior SACP official whose identity was not revealed to WIP.

How does the SACP characterise the relationship between classes in the current phase of struggle in South Africa, particularly those classes which are nationally oppressed?

The present phase of the revolution in our country is one of the whole oppressed people. This does not mean the oppressed 'people' can be regarded as a homogeneous entity. They are made up of diverse classes and strata whose long-term interests do not necessarily coincide, and whose consistency and commitment even to the immediate objectives of the democratic revolution cannot be equated.

But it remains true that the democratic revolution expresses the broad objective interests, not only of the working class, but of every class and strata within the nationally-dominated majority. This includes the black bourgeoisie. This reality provides the foundation for a struggle which attempts to mobilise all oppressed classes and strata as part of a national liberation alliance.

But what about the special role of the working class in this alliance?

The working class is an indispensible part of the liberation alliance. Its relations with other classes and strata in the alliance cannot, however, be on the condition that these other classes and strata accept socialist aims.

The historic programme which has evolved to express the common aspirations of all the classes which make up the dominated people is the Freedom Charter. But this document is not, in itself, a programme for socialism.

Does the immediate emphasis on the 'democratic revolution' (involving class alliances) imply that the working-class should abandon class struggle in favour of national struggle? And does it involve shelving socialist objectives in a struggle for bourgeois democracy?

The answer to these questions requires a correct grasp of the relationship between class and national struggle. Mechanical tendencies set out these categories as if they were almost mutually exclusive. This leads to inevitable confusion on the role of the working class and its mass and vanguard organisations. Failure to understand the class content of the national struggle and the national content of the class struggle in existing conditions retards both the democratic and socialist transformations which we seek.

The immediate primacy of the struggle against race tyranny flows from the concrete realities of our existing situation. The concept of national domination is not an ideological mystification to divert us from a class approach. It infects every level of class exploitation, and divides the working class into colour compartments.

National domination is underwritten by a state apparatus which in varying degrees protects the economic interests and social privileges of all classes among the white minority. It denies the nationhood of the African people and, in its place, imposes tribalism and ethnicity. These, and a host of related race practices, are the visible daily manifestations of national domination.

The chief victim of national domination is the black working class. Those who dismiss the fight against national domination as the key mobilising factor are living in an unreal world of their own.

The link between national domination and class exploitation undoubtedly needs unending stress. It is encouraging to observe the recent spread of an understanding of this link

among organised sectors of the working class. But we must not exaggerate the extent and depth of this spread. Nor must we forget that insofar as it has spread, it is due primarily to the heightened experiences of struggle against race domination in the recent period.

What is meant by 'class struggle' in a period in which national liberation is the primary objective?

Class struggle in a period of capitalist hegemony is above all a political struggle aimed against the political dominance of the ruling class and at the ultimate winning of power by the working people.

But the shape of this class struggle does not remain fixed for all time. Its main emphasis and content at every given historical moment is dictated by the concrete situation. We cannot confine the meaning of working-class struggle to the immediate struggle for socialism. Nor can we conclude that participation by workers in inter-class alliances implies a postponement or compromise of their own class struggle.

The concept of 'class struggle' cannot be restricted to those rare moments when the immediate winning of socialist power is on the agenda.

Nor does it fade into the background when workers forge alliances with other class forces on commonly agreed minimum programmes. The history of all struggles is in fact overwhelmingly dominated by such interim phases. There is no such thing as 'pure' class struggle, and those who seek it can only do so from the isolated comfort of a library arm chair.

Workers in pre-1948 India were not abandoning the class struggle when they concentrated their main energies, in alliance with other class forces, to get Britain out of India. When Hitler unleashed world war, the main content of workers' class struggle correctly became the defeat of fascism. This task necessitated the most 'popular' of fronts, which brought together both pro- and anti-socialist forces.

'The concept of class struggle cannot be restricted to those moments when the immediate winning of socialist power is on the agenda'

It is a matter of historical record that the anti-fascist victory made possible the most significant spread of socialist power since the October revolution.

How does the SACP understand the relationship between national and class struggle, and between national liberation and socialism?

When we exhort the working class to devote its main energies, in alliance with other nationally-oppressed classes, to the immediate task of winning national liberation, we are certainly not diluting the class struggle or retreating from it. On the contrary, we are advancing and reinforcing it in the only manner which is consistent with the historic aspirations of the working class.

Nor are we putting off the socialist revolution by an emphasis on the national-democratic tasks of the immediate phase. In the words of Lenin, answering critics of Bolshevik policy on the earlier primacy of the democratic revolution, 'we are not putting (the socialist revolution) off but we are taking the first steps towards it in the only possible way, along the only correct path, namely the path of a democratic republic'.

The immediate emphasis on the struggle for democracy and 'people's power' is, in our present situation, an essential prerequisite for the longer-term advance towards a socialist transformation. But it is also a short-term class imperative. Race tyranny weighs more heavily on South Africa's doubly-exploited working class than on any other class. Its destruction by the shortest route possible is, in itself, in the deepest class interests of our proletariat, who stand to gain more from the ending of national domination than any other class or strata among the oppressed.

This reality helps define the main form and content of the workers' class struggle at the present historical conjuncture, and the kind of alliances necessary to advance working-class struggle.

It is sometimes argued that the current emphasis on national liberation and struggle precludes the possibility of building socialism in a subsequent phase of struggle. It has also been suggested that one way of establishing the primacy of working-class interests in the future is to build and strengthen independent working-class structures in the current period. How does the SACP view these issues?

The need to concentrate on the present does not imply an abandonment or disregard of the future. Participation by the working class in the democratic revolution, involving alliances, minimum programmes, etc, does not imply a dilution of its independent class positions. On the contrary, the strengthening of workers' independent mass and vanguard structures is even more imperative in periods demanding organised relations with other class forces.

Nor does it follow that the spread of socialist awareness among the working people should be less during the phase emphasising democratic transformation. During this period it is even more vital to maintain and deepen working-class understanding of the interdependence between national liberation and social emancipation. This task cannot be postponed until after the ANC flag flies over Pretoria.

The participation of the working class and its political vanguard in the liberation alliance is, therefore, both a long-term and a short-term class necessity. The SACP's participation in this alliance is not, as our right-wing detractors would have it, an opportunistic ploy to camouflage our so-called 'hidden agenda', and to use the ANC as a stepping stone to socialism. We have never made a secret of our belief that the shortest route to socialism is via a democratic republic.

The SACP takes part in the liberation alliance, as one of its fundamental pillars, because we believe the elimination of national domination, which is the prime objective of the alliance, is the most immediate and vital concern of South Africa's proletariat.

The SACP has often been accused of creating a rigid distinction between national-democratic and socialist transformation. This 'two-stage' theory has sometimes been used to justify the suppression of socialist ideas and practices within organisations struggling for national liberation. What is the SACP's formulation of the 'two-stage' question?

'There is both a distinction and a continuity between the national democratic and socialist revolutions'

What vulgar marxists do not understand is that there is both a distinction and a continuity between the national-democratic and socialist revolutions. Although the SACP correctly talks of 'stages', we do not believe there is a Chinese wall between such stages. But we can concede that our own formulations have sometimes been too imprecise, laying ourselves open to charges of treating stages as compartments, as 'things in themselves'.

The concept 'stage' implies a destination. Hence it is part of a whole. The question is how to reach a 'stage' without blocking the route towards the destination of which the 'stage' constitutes a dialectical and chronological segment. This depends, perhaps mainly, on revolutionary practice. On balance, the SACP's practice has not departed from the 'continuity' concept of stages.

The dominant ingredients of the later stage must already have begun to mature in the earlier stage. Discussing an analogous question which faced the Bolsheviks, Lenin wrote: 'We all categorise bourgeois revolution and socialist revolution, we all insist on the absolute necessity of strictly distinguishing between the two; however, can it be denied that, in the course of history, individual particular elements of the two revolutions become interwoven?'

Lenin's formulations have even greater relevance to our situation, in which, despite a few areas of similarity, we cannot really equate the national-democratic revolution to the classical bourgeois-democratic revolution. In contrast to 1905 and February 1917 in Russia, it is South Africa's bourgeoisie, and not a feudally-based autocracy, which wields power as the ruling class. Its accumulated economic riches have been built precisely by means of the very denial of bourgeois-democratic rights to the overwhelming majority. And, with the exception of the tiny and weak black bourgeoisie, our capitalist ruling class remains opposed to the universal extension of bourgeois democracy to the majority.

This reality is not negated by the radical-sounding rhetoric of some tycoons who are stimulated by a liberal conscience and, more importantly, by an understanding that certain aspects of race domination no longer suit their pockets.

In stressing the limitations of this group, we do not intend to belittle the very important task of helping by all means, including dialogue, to weaken cohesion and unity of the ruling

class, and to isolate and weaken its most racist and politically reactionary sector. But the very fact that South Africa's ruling capitalist class is, and can be expected to remain, in the opposing camp, provides a special proletarian stamp to our national-democratic revolution.

It cannot be said of South Africa's immediate situation, as Lenin was able to say of pre-October Russia, that the 'revolution expresses the interests of the entire bourgeoisie as well'. This difference gives a special social content to the stage of our national democratic revolution.

When compared to analogous historical phases, certain of the key elements of our democratic revolution are, therefore, even more closely interwoven with the longer-term socialist transformation. Among the most important of these elements is the preponderant role of the working class in all phases of the revolutionary process and, more immediately, in the democratic alliance which makes up the liberation front.

What does it mean to talk of the 'dominant' or 'leadership' role of the working class in a phase in which the primary struggle is for national-democratic transformation?

The working class is everywhere the most consistent and unconditional fighter for democracy. But there are also special features of the South African situation which objectively reinforce its dominant role and enable the working class to put its imprint on all phases of the revolutionary process.

As already noted, the main constituent of the bourgeoisie by its very nature distances itself from the democratic revolution and has less prospect of influencing its course than in analogous situations. The black bourgeoisie is abysmally small and weak. The small peasantry which traditionally provides the main impetus for the petty bourgeoisie has been virtually decimated as a class. The black middle strata can find few, if any, alliances with its privileged counterparts across the colour line.

In general, the immediate aspirations of all classes and strata among the oppressed people can only be effectively advanced through the organised strength and leadership of the working class. But this leadership, which has an objective basis in the actual correlation of class forces in the present situation, has to be worked for on the ground. It will not come as a gift from heaven. And the working class cannot carry out its historic role merely by leading itself.

Our youth, women, intellectuals, small traders, peasants, the rural poor and even the racially-dominated black bourgeoisie are a necessary part of a broad front of struggle which must also seek to win over those whites who are prepared to shed racism. The working class must not only act independently to advance its interests as a class, but must also play a key role in this front as a champion of the democratic aspirations of all racially-oppressed groups.

The philosophy and practice of PAC's armed wing Poqo — 'we alone' — means working-class surrender of its leading role in the democratic revolution. The result of such isolation would be to dilute the content of this revolution, to hand over its direction to other class forces and to endanger future socialist advance.

Organisationally, how can the working class both advance its own interests, and play a leading role in alliance with other classes?

In general, workers must be active wherever people come together in struggle, whether at national, regional or local levels. The UDF, youth organisations, women's organisations, civics, street committees, students, church-goers, etc, must all feel the influence of workers' militancy and dedication.

But the role of workers as a class and the way this class relates to other classes rests on three main organised sectors of our struggle: the national movement, the trade union movement and, not least, the political party of the working class.

The national movement and the working class: As head of the liberation alliance and prime representative of all the oppressed, the ANC welcomes within its ranks all, from whatever class they come, who support and are ready to fight for the aims of the Freedom Charter.

The ANC is a revolutionary nationalist organisation whose popular roots, however, must not be confused with 'populism'. The ANC's strategy and tactics bear witness to an approach which recognises the significance of the different class formations which make up 'the people'.

To be truly representative of a people whose overwhelming majority are workers, the ANC recognises the need to show a strong bias towards the working class both in its composition and policies. It does not apologise for the fact that it considers it both proper and necessary for socialist ideology to be discussed and understood in its ranks.

But it would clearly weaken

the necessary multi-class character of the ANC if it adopted socialist objectives as part of its programme. Although the ANC is not, and should not become, a workers' political vanguard, worker participation in its ranks is one of the most important ways in which the working class can assert its role in relation to other classes in the democratic revolution.

Trade unions and the working class: Trade unions are the prime mass legal organisations of the working class. To fulfil their purpose, they must be as broad as possible and must fight to maintain their legal public status. Unions must unite, on an industrial basis, all workers — at whatever level of political consciousness, the most backward and the most advanced — who understand the elementary need to come together to defend and advance their economic interests.

But a trade union cannot live without politics. The capitalist state everywhere acts in defence of the bosses. It uses all its instruments of power — the police, army, courts, etc — against workers and their trade unions. It does everything to defend the capitalist system. It makes and enforces laws to help increase workers' exploitation.

This reality has taught workers in every part of the world that it is impossible for their trade unions to ignore broader political conflict.

In South Africa, where racism and capitalism are two sides of the same coin, it is even clearer that a trade union cannot stand aside from the liberation struggle.

But the very fact that conditions demand that workers engaged in economic struggle must also involve themselves with broader political questions has helped to blur the line between trade unionism and political leadership of the working class as a whole.

The trade union movement is the most important mass contingent of the working class. Its organised involvement in struggle will help reinforce the dominant role of workers as a class.

'The basic character of a trade union means that it cannot act as a working-class political vanguard'

But the basic character of a trade union means it cannot act as a working-class political vanguard. If it attempted to do so, it would risk committing organisational suicide as a mass force.

What about the debate on whether to incorporate socialist objectives into the trade union movement, and the related question of union adoption of the Freedom Charter and/or a workers' charter?

We must guard against premature attempts to formally incorporate socialist objectives into programmes of trade unions and the federations to which they belong. Individual membership, or the affiliation of unions to a federation, cannot be made conditional on the acceptance of such a high level of political consciousness. To attempt to do so is to confuse a trade union with a political vanguard.

It is true that trade unions and workers' experience of struggle in unions provide the most fertile field in which to school masses of workers in socialist understanding and political consciousness. But this is not achieved by proclaiming 'aims' which are not yet understood by the mass of membership. Such an approach would narrow the mass character of the trade union movement and, in addition, give the enemy the very excuse it needs to deal with one of its most formidable foes.

The possibilities of spreading socialist consciousness within trade unions should not be sacrificed through short cuts which will, in fact, slow down its advances. The adoption by some unions of the Freedom Charter correctly reflects the mass popular mood. It is a pointer to a more realistic linkage between the economic and political struggle in the present phase.

The debate around the Freedom Charter versus a workers' charter is posed in an exclusivist way, and this leads to confusion. There is no reason why both the Freedom Charter and a workers' charter cannot stand side by side. In practice the debate, as posed by the 'workerist' tendency, has emphasised an incorrect 'either-or' approach.

What about the independent political organisation of the working class?

Victory in the democratic revolution must find a working class already equipped organisationally and ideologically to assert its role. A strong trade union movement and a workers' political vanguard are, we

believe, essential preconditions for such an outcome. There is both a harmony and a distinction in the character and roles of these two vital sectors, and the failure to understand this distinction will inevitably weaken the cause of working-class leadership.

Workers' political leadership must represent the workers not just in economic struggle against the bosses, but in relation to all classes of society, and to the state as an organised force.

A trade union cannot carry out this role. Only a political vanguard of the working class, made up of professional revolutionaries coming mainly from the ranks of advanced working-class cadres with a capacity to combine both legal and illegal activity, can do so.

We believe the SACP is such a party, and that its history, with all its ups and downs, has equipped it to play such a role.

The SACP's characterisation of South Africa as a colonial situation of a special type is very controversial. Some have argued that the thesis of internal colonialism is only a descriptive metaphor, with no theoretical or explanatory status. Can internal colonialism as a concept really adequately interpret South African reality, with its developed class structures and cleavages based on a mode of production, distribution and circulation which is dominantly capitalist?

The term 'internal colonialism', or 'colonialism of a special type', is both analytically correct and politically useful in describing South African reality.

The reality it describes is that the colonial condition and status of the black majority has persisted despite the juridical, constitutional and economic changes which followed the Act of Union in 1910.

From the point of view of the dominated majority the form has changed, but the substance of their colonial status has not altered.

The onus is on those who contest this proposition to describe the point or the stage in the post-1910 period when blacks were freed from their special colonial constraints, which continued to apply to all of them whatever class they belonged to.

'Victory in the democratic revolution must find a working class already equipped ideologically to assert its role'

For example, can the proposition be disputed that the black worker is exploited both as a worker and as a black worker?

We deliberately do not equate internal colonialism with the classic colonialism which describes geographical separation between the colonial power and the colonised people.

That is why we call it colonialism of a special type. It is an innovative concept which should be judged in its unique context.

It is a concept which was not there in previous marxist learning, and we have entered it into the communist book in our elaboration of the indigenous theory of the South African revolution.

We believe the concept of internal colonialism provides a valid and rigorous theoretical foundation for the emphasis we give to the present phase of the national liberation struggle, particularly its main content in the period of the national-democratic revolution.

It provides a starting point for grappling with the complex question of the relationship between national and class struggle. It helps us to understand the specific character of South Africa's dominant capitalist mode of production and the way in which this specificity mediates and influences virtually every level of conflict within it.

The most persistent critique of our thesis relates to a charge that it nurtures a form of populism, allegedly conjuring up a struggle between 'peoples' rather than 'classes'. Of relevance here is what has already been said about the way we understand the relationship between class and national struggle and how we apply our understanding in revolutionary practice.

If there have been departures on this score, then they must be specifically assessed and debated, and not mechanically attributed to the basic internal colonialist thesis.

It is in any case difficult to understand why our detractors should conclude that the thesis leads to a dilution of our understanding of class divisions both within the dominant and subject peoples, and why it should divert us from the correct application of class criteria in the social conflicts.

This does not follow, even in the case of colonialism of the more classical variety such as Britain and pre-1948 India.

Left: ANC president Oliver Tambo. Right: South African State President PW Botha. Will they meet across a negotiating table in the future?

The politics of negotiation

'Have hope brother, despair is for the defeated' - Oswald Mtshali

Negotiations over South Africa's political future are not currently on the cards. But, according to MARK SWILLING, ways of creating a 'climate of negotiation' are being discussed in influential circles.

Dramatic new departures in white politics, pioneered by the Five Freedoms Forum and the newly-formed National Democratic Movement, point to political realignments concerned with negotiations over South Africa's future.

Recent statements by government and black political leaders have renewed the debate over negotiations. Cynics argue this is all for the sake of an international audience. They depict South Africa as spiralling into a black hole of aimless violence, where the militarised state can only save itself by smashing black opposition movements. These are presented as weak, unrealistic, increasingly radical organisations led by utopian leaders deluded by visions of armed seizure of power.

This view ignores the complexities of changing power relations within the state, capital and liberation movements. The central focus of these conflicts is how 'a climate of negotiation' can be created.

Recently the deputy minister of constitutional development and planning, Stoffel van der Merwe, suggested there was a need for talks between the United Democratic Front and government

representatives. Others in the state have put out feelers to the banned African National Congress. These developments confirm what senior officials in reformist circles have said off the record since the all-white May election.

These officials believe the state has painted itself into a corner. On the one hand government realises the severity of its crisis of legitimacy. The only solution to this involves a new constitutional dispensation, paving the way for full parliamentary representation in a 'united South Africa'. This was the central reformist idea in the National Party's election manifesto.

On the other hand, military strategists around PW Botha have taken a hard line on the extra-parliamentary opposition. They activated the national security management system (NSMS) with its 11 regional joint management centres (JMCs). This security apparatus also includes 60 sub-JMCs at sub-regional level and 350 mini-JMCs at local level.

This complex system of militarised rule effectively eliminates all channels for negotiation with opposition leaders and organisations enjoying popular legitimacy. A JMC strategy report leaked to the press in 1986 instructed local officials not to 'negotiate with revolutionary organisations'.

The national council has failed to attract even moderate support. The special cabinet committee on black affairs (appointed around January 1984) has been unable to produce workable solutions. Both these failures underline the dilemma which faces the state.

State reformers resurface

Recent government attempts to talk to the UDF, ANC, National Education Crisis Committee and several local civics, are the result of the re-emergence of a reformist position within the state which was effectively marginalised in April-May 1986. Until then, political initiative within the state was in the hands of an influential group of advanced reformers. They were found mainly in Heunis' department of constitutional development and planning, but also in manpower, finance, foreign affairs and the National Party itself.

This group pioneered key policy shifts: the inclusion of Africans in the regional services councils (RSCs); scrapping of pass laws; dropping of mixed marriages and political interference laws; and discussion of 'regional-federal' options, which are clearly present in proposals that the national council should be elected by constituencies defined in terms of the nine regional development boundries.

The Heunis empire emerged after the 1985 cabinet reshuffle that destroyed Piet Koornhof's department of co-operation and development. The department of constitutional development gained control of almost every aspect of black life. While constitutional planners pioneered domestic reforms, foreign affairs was exploring the possibility of national negotiations during the Commonwealth's Eminent Persons Group (EPG) mission.

But the reformists lost the initiative to the militarists in early 1986. In April a rift appeared between the statements of PW Botha and Magnus Malan, and the calls of Heunis and his group. Botha and Malan spoke about 'city-states' and 'independence' for bantustans, and defended the detention/imprisonment of political leaders. The reformists were proceeding with the inclusion of black local authorities into RSCs, backpeddling on independence and undoing influx control. They supported negotiations between senior government officials and UDF leaders in places like Port Elizabeth, Oudtshoorn, Worcester, Cradock, Uitenhage, Port Alfred and St Wendolins (Pinetown).

Some sources say this rift was the result of a clash in the cabinet after PW Botha refused to accept criticisms from officials in Heunis' department.

The final break between reformers and militarists came after the state security council decided to bomb frontline state capitals to destroy the EPG initiative.

It is significant that PW Botha currently says the ANC's 'renunciation' of violence is a pre-condition for talks. Before the EPG mission collapsed government conceded that 'suspension' of violence would be sufficient. The EPG indicated the ANC would accept this. PW Botha and the generals suddenly realised the chips were down - they had to make a choice about negotiations.

The choice they made activated a sophisticated counter-revolutionary strategy. Its objectives were clearly expressed in a May 1986 speech by current law and order min-

ister, Adriaan Vlok: 'bomb the enemy in its bases'; 're-establish law and order', ie mass detentions; 'bring government down to the people', ie RSCs; 're-distribute resources from white areas to upgrade black areas'.

A national state of emergency followed, and the national security management system was activated at local and regional level. The security police, and sections of the military, promised the state security council that township protest, 'alternative structures' and ANC support could be eliminated by applying enough force in a relatively short space of time. This was the basis for sometime security policeman Craig Williamson's remark in a June 1986 BBC interview that the South American 'rugby stadium' option could work in South Africa.

This strategy aimed to restore the state's 'position of strength' and refute Zwelakhe Sisulu's March 1986 claim at an NECC conference that 'the state had lost the initiative to the people'.

The militarists in the NSMS argued that negotiations could only be considered if the state regained this 'position of strength'. Still reeling from the international and domestic consequences of the Rubicon I and Rubicon II fiascos, it was not surprising that Botha found the alternative of armed procrastination attractive.

The rise of the 'securocrats'

The decision to abort the EPG mission and regain the initiative was taken largely by an inner power elite dominated by what Professor Willie Breytenbach calls the 'securocrats' - powerful security personnel who co-ordinate key state apparatuses. As Frederick van Zyl Slabbert said, they govern in an 'extra-parliamentary' manner and use parliament to both legalise and legitimise their actions.

The rise of the securocrats has led some observers to refer to current state strategy as the 'Brazilian Option'. Some key securocrats believe Brazil's militarily-managed 20-year reform programme (1964-1986) is a model of how to restructure political institutions without capitulating or losing power.

This 'option' is not purely coercive. In March 1986, Mike Hough of Pretoria University's Strategic Studies Institute, described state strategy far more clearly than his fellow political scientist, Stoffel van der Merwe, has been able to do. 'Reform and unrest are not totally contradictory situations', said Hough. 'Reform creates rising expectations and counteraction by those who do not want reform, but revolution. Hopefully the longer-term effects of credible and meaningful reform will lessen revolutionary and unrest potential, as will economic recovery. In the interim, the maintenance of law and order, within limits, is crucial. Reform alone will not cause the ANC to disappear'.

Law and Order Minister Adriaan Vlok:'Bomb the enemy in its bases... Re-establish law and order...'

This was the logic Willie Breytenbach referred to when, with deep scepticism, he said that 'where once there could be no security without reform, now there can be no reform without security'.

Militarist strength, and marginalisation of the reformers depended on the success of the repressive component of the strategy.

But legal non-violent extra-parliamentary opposition survived and the state of emergency was re-declared. This indicated that repression had not been as effective and decisive as the securocrats had hoped. It critically weakened their overall strategic objective and opened the way for disagreements, divisions and even contradictions within the state and between state and capital.

Informed sources in both the private and public sectors claim that General Johan Coetzee was ousted as commissioner of police precisely because he pointed out the limitations of emergency rule. Coetzee, also a political scientist with a post-graduate degree on South African Trotskyism, is a more sophisticated political theorist than younger idealists like van der Merwe, Hough and the eager securocrats in the secretariat of the state security council. There is evidence to suggest Coetzee argued that the mounting costs of repression were unjustified given the low-level returns.

A key reason limiting the Brazilian option in South Africa is its failure to attract the support of monopoly capital. In Brazil the ideology of militarised reform was accepted by the national bourgeoisie, international capital and some co-opted elites in the non-capitalist classes.

In South Africa, coercive co-option has produced some black petty-bourgeois elites who believe it is in their interest to 'participate' in parliament and local authorities. But monopoly and international capital remain deeply sceptical over whether reform from above will succeed.

This is why business has generally not supported the 1986-87 state of emergency after its previous support for the 1985-86 emergency. But this could change. Capital's involvement in RSCs, housing construction and economic recovery could mean it adopts a 'supportive ideology' by default.

The private sector has shown support for the 'positive development work' of JMCs in places like Alexandra and Mamelodi, and support for the state's 'success' in bringing an end to 'township violence'. These attitudes may point to the militarisation of capitalist ideology. This is the context in which NSMS officials are holding country-wide seminars with senior management personnel at present.

Models or open-ended negotiation?

It is too early to predict the 'failure' of the Brazilian option. But given the limited success of repression, it appears reformers in the state have begun to re-assert their position.

In the pre-EPG period the debate amongst reformers was over different constitutional 'models' (federalism versus confederalism versus federal/confederalism versus co-federalism). The debate is now between 'models' and negotiation 'processes' which would be more open-ended. Three examples of this tendency can be mentioned.

Firstly, the need for negotiation processes is a key concern in the newly formed special committee of the council for the co-ordination of local government affairs. This committee's brief was shaped by Heunis' recent speech to the Urban Councils Association of South Africa (UCASA) conference where he called for the formulation of a 'uniform local government law'. He probably meant a single law implemented through different locally-determined systems, rather than a uniform system imposed on all areas irrespective of local power relations. This committee met for the first time in August.

Secondly, the press failed to note the significance of Heunis' skilful stalling tactics which placed the National Council Bill in a select committee until next year, despite PW Botha's insistence that the bill should go through parliament this session.

Heunis's scheme was an attempt to head-off the disastrous political consequences of major extra-parliamentary protests against the national council, and prepare the way for more open-ended negotiation processes.

Thirdly, in a number of areas in Natal, Eastern Cape and Transvaal, government officials have again initiated talks with local civics around urban upgrading programmes.

The reformers will not necessarily regain the initiative within the state. Conflict between them and the securocrats remains intense with each pushing for different 'solutions' to the crisis. This was most evident in different campaign speeches during the white election.

For the militarist camp (Botha, Malan, Vlok), the priorities of reform were: first to re-establish law and order; second, economic recovery; third, socio-economic upgrading of black townships

('Operation Oilspot'); and fourth, constitutional solutions to the problem of political rights.

For the reformers (especially Viljoen, de Beer and Heunis), law and order can only be re-established if the problem of political rights is resolved first.

These different solutions depend on different diagnoses of the problem. The militarists assume 'communist agitators' and 'socio-economic' grievances underlie black unrest, while the reformers accept that lack of political rights is an important cause of black resistance.

The survival of internal opposition

The liberation movement's capacity to strike direct blows against the state has been severely weakened since the national state of emergency. But it has nevertheless strengthened and consolidated its political and organisational structures. Internally this was reflected in:

* the formation of the South African Youth Congress despite the difficulties of underground organisation;
* the defence of COSATU despite security force attempts to provoke it into premature counter-reaction after the COSATU House bombing;
* the holding of several key trade union congresses that consolidated industrial union power and committed the unions to a strong political stand;
* the UDF's ability to hold a secret national conference to review and consolidate its position;
* the 5 and 6 May national stayaway protest against the white elections. This was arguably the largest and most successful two-day stayaway in South Africa's history, where the Rand and some Natal townships equalled the Eastern Cape's full-scale support;
* the persistence, spread and organisational consolidation of rent boycotts in all the key Transvaal and Eastern Cape centres;
* massive escalation in strike levels throughout 1986 and into 1987. The SATS strike was a clear example of how industrial conflict has been irreversably politicised;
* the reigning-in of militant youth squads, which were becoming increasingly uncontrollable during the first months of 1986;
* the ending of the three-year schools boycott as a result of NECC initiatives.

Local-level grassroots organisations were badly hit by repression. In many small Eastern Cape and Transvaal townships, 'alternative structures' have been smashed. Places once renowned for their street committees and people's courts - like Port Alfred, Alexandra and Mamelodi - suffered waves of detentions, vigilante action and, more recently, treason and sedition trials.

Leader of the reformist lobby Chris Heunis

From the seizure of power to a negotiated settlement

International rejection of the South African state's internal policies greatly strengthened the ANC's position with Western governments. The ANC is more than ever before entrenched as 'the factor' in the various international foreign policy formulae. This has led the ANC to clarify and refine its commitment to a negotiated settlement rather than an 'armed seizure of power'.

Although the ANC's position in the West is not as solid as it would like, there are indications that the Soviet

Union's new foreign policy will strengthen this.

In line with the 27th Party Congress resolution to stabilise world security by 'defusing conflict situations', the Soviets are keen to demilitarise Southern Africa, pressurise the West into more comprehensive sanctions coupled to firmer recognition of the ANC, and find a negotiated settlement to the 'national liberation' (as opposed to the socialist) struggle. The Soviets see defusing conflict with the West as the only way they can re-direct scarce resources into much-needed economic development programmes and gain access to Western technology.

There is a debate within the USSR Academy of Sciences - a key foreign policy think-tank - over Gleb Starushenko's proposal that whites should be offered 'group rights' guarantees to hasten the negotiation process. But all agree that military escalation is not the solution. International diplomatic alliances, therefore, become crucial.

A more important reason for the ANC shift in emphasis from 'armed seizure of power' to 'negotiated settlement' is the fragile economic and military position of the frontline states.

There is evidence that these states are not prepared to host an ANC movement engaged in a full-scale battle with the economic and military might of the South African state. South African destabilisation strategies have already reduced most of Mozambique and Angola to socio-political wastelands, Zambia has economic problems with parts of the countryside not much better than Mozambique, and Zimbabwe is very reluctant to sacrifice its economic surplus for the sake of the South African struggle.

The internal stability and survival of present frontline governments may depend on a speedy negotiated settlement of the South African problem. This is something the ANC cannot ignore.

Towards a climate of negotiation

South African trade union and political organisations have not only survived one of the most brutal periods of repression in recent times, but have been able to strengthen political and organisational structures. Externally, the ANC has consolidated and clarified its position on a negotiated settlement. The strength of the internal movements will greatly assist the ANC's negotiating hand.

But both the internal organisations and the ANC still maintain that a 'climate for negotiation' can only be created if all political prisoners and detainees are released, exiles allowed to return to South Africa unconditionally, repressive laws dismantled, organisations unbanned and the right to free association guaranteed.

It remains to be seen how internal and external opposition movement positions will respond to changes in state strategy if reformers regain the initiative. Equally important will be the political strategy and ideological direction of monopoly capital.

The worst scenario involves the continued dominance of securocrats backed by an increasingly submissive and politically impotent capitalist class. The most hopeful includes the demise of the securocrats and the consolidation of the reformers backed by big capital. But there is no chance of this happening before PW Botha's retirement.

The most likely future involves the state lurching from one badly conceived 'option' to another, failing to break the stalemate or unify the capitalist class around a purposive political programme. In the meantime, the repressive screws on black opposition will remain, if not tighten.

The politics of negotiation will become the focus of political conflict. Whether this will involve an attempt at top-down co-option via the national council, or the beginnings of a properly negotiated settlement with popularly recognised opposition leaders, remains to be seen.

How this 'climate of negotiation' is created will affect the way the current stalemate is resolved. The government is unlikely to make any momentous decisions in this regard. But there may be hope in the recent Five Freedoms Forum proposal for the launch of a grassroots movement of white democrats united around the concern for national survival and the demand for a negotiated settlement. This initiative, coupled with the impact the National Democratic Movement is bound to have on Afrikanerdom, might well force white politics across its Rubicon. The pressure of black resistance together with debilitating divisions in the white power bloc may steadily isolate the securocrats.

The case for a workers' programme

DUNCAN INNES continues the debate on the importance of a workers' programme, and its relationship to the Freedom Charter.

In their contribution to the debate over working-class and popular politics, and the relationship between the Freedom Charter and a workers' programme, Tony Karon and Max Ozinsky are guilty of grossly distorting the position argued in my *WIP 41* article. While they accuse me of being a 'university-based intellectual', they themselves have employed the oldest academic trick in the book: namely, setting up a straw man which they can then easily knock down.

Karon and Ozinsky argue that I claim 'The Freedom Charter as the basis for popular unity in South Africa...does not guarantee the interests of the working class, and will *inevitably* (my emphasis) block its ability to assert those interests'.

What I in fact say is the following: 'If...the imperative of unity may deny us the right to criticise - and even move beyond - the Charter, then it becomes an obstacle to transformation'. The Freedom Charter only becomes an obstacle to the working-class movement if the working class is denied the right to subject it to critical scrutiny. Elsewhere in the *WIP 41* article I say that: 'The Freedom Charter was - and still is - a progressive document', but go on to add that 'its many omissions and vague notions impose serious limitations on the development of the South African working-class movement'. And I also suggest that the Freedom Charter makes a 'limited contribution to transformation politics'. It is therefore a gross misrepresentation to say that I argue the Freedom Charter will 'inevitably' block the working class from asserting its interests.

In an obvious reference to me, Karon and Ozinsky claim that 'it is intellectuals who ponder *whether* the working class should be involved in the national democratic struggle'. At no stage do I ever 'ponder' this question. In fact I specifically argue that: 'For the liberation struggle to advance, popular and workers' movements must work more closely together'. What I do question is the basis on which this alliance should take place.

Defining the working class

Both Karon and Ozinsky, and more recently, Karl von Holdt, accuse me of employing an erroneous definition of the working class. According to Karon and Ozinsky, I use a definition in which 'workers appear to have a cosmopolitan consciousness, with very little that is nationally specific about it'. According to von Holdt, my 'fundamental mistake' lies in my 'class reductionism and essentialism'. Von Holdt claims I argue that 'workers are *instinctively socialist* because of their place in the relations of production'. This argument is particularly weak since I argued specifically that 'workers...have no natural immunity to populism' and, again, that workers may 'succumb to the lure of populism'.

The definition of the working class that I use is taken from Jochelson, Moss and Obery and runs as follows: 'Most socialists argue that the working class is defined primarily by its members' relation to, and dependence on, wage labour. This involves the production, distribution and circulation of capitalist commodities, where the exploitation of wage labour enables capitalists to make a profit. This definition includes unemployed workers who have been forced out of capitalist employment, but whose interests are still defined by their relation to wage labour. It also includes those involved in the domestic support of workers, who have the same primary interests. But the most important group in the working class is seen as that section which is employed in wage labour...(and which) has a primary interest in the abolition of capitalism'.

This definition does not, as von Holdt argues, 'conflate the trade union movement

and the working class movement'. What it does do, though, is argue that 'that section of the working class which is employed in wage labour' is 'the most important group'. Consequently the organisation of this section of the working class, not only in trade unions but also politically, is of crucial significance.

Flowing out of this definition of the working class is the difficult issue of defining working-class interests and working-class politics in South Africa. Again, Jochelson, Moss and Obery, although not answering the question completely, have made a useful contribution to this debate: 'There is no "ideal" model of working-class politics against which existing structures and programmes can be compared and assessed. The idea of "working-class politics" suggests a class with its own instinctive political practices and interests. But the working class does not exist only on the factory or shop floor. Nor does it exist in any "pure" form unaffected by issues of race, ethnicity, and national oppression.

'This suggests that, apart from the very general interest in the overthrow of capitalist relations, working-class interests are defined by specific historical situations. What might, in one time and place, be in the interests of the working class, could in another context support petty-bourgeois interests against workers'.

In my article, I specifically raised the above points when criticising both economism and syndicalism. The definition of the working class I use does not, as von Holdt claims, conflate trade unions with the working class; and it does not, as Karon and Ozinsky claim, have 'very little that is nationally specific about it'. The interests of the South African working class cannot be defined outside of the specific issues of race, ethnicity and national oppression.

Class alliances and the leading role of the working class

The main differences between the Karon-Ozinsky position and mine revolve around two key issues: the role of the working class in alliances with other social classes, and the correctness of the two-stage theory.

Both Karon and Ozinsky and von Holdt attack me because I draw a conceptual distinction between the 'working-class movement' on the one hand and the 'popular movement' on the other. According to von Holdt, I 'use a mechanical and fetishised notion of working-class "independence"'. He then goes on to criticise me for asking the 'wrong' questions before posing the 'correct political question', namely 'how should the working class participate in and *strengthen* the broad popular struggle against apartheid, in such a way as to build working-class hegemony within the struggle?'.

In my original *WIP* article, which von Holdt says is so 'wrong', I asked the following question: 'Why has the working-class movement not taken a leadership role in the liberation struggle?', before going on to conclude that: 'For the liberation struggle to advance, popular and workers' movements must work more closely together on terms satisfactory to each'. The closeness of von Holdt's question to my own comments leads me to conclude that if I am guilty of 'a mechanical and fetishised notion' of working-class independence, then so is von Holdt.

Karon and Ozinsky also take me up on this point: 'Advanced and organised workers are not distinguishing themselves as a separate group outside of the popular movement in the way that Innes is'. This contradicts a decade of trade union history in South Africa. A very important section of the black trade union movement, represented most clearly but not exclusively by the Federation of South African Trade Unions, sought to organise precisely by 'distinguishing themselves as a separate group outside of the popular movement'. To pretend, as Karon and Ozinsky do, that this did not happen is to rewrite history in flagrant violation of its essential processes and facts.

But to argue that sections of the black working class did - and still do - see themselves as standing outside the popular movement does not mean this is the correct political position for the workers' movement to adopt. In my *WIP 41* article I pointed out a number of the political problems this caused for the workers' movement. But, equally, to pretend as Karon and Ozinsky, and von Holdt do, that there are not immensely complex political issues involved in integrating the workers' and popular movements is to do a grave disservice to both.

According to Karon and Ozinsky, 'The key question which Innes has failed to pose, is that of building working class leadership *within* the

popular movement'. Yet my whole argument was that one of the ways for the working class to achieve such a leadership role is by devising 'a clear programme which the workers' movement can use as a basis for mobilising and linking-up with others'.

This is the nub of the difference between von Holdt, Karon and Ozinsky, and my position. It involves a different political strategy for securing the alliance between the working class and other social classes.

Establishing working-class leadership

For von Holdt, Karon and Ozinsky, the alliance must be based exclusively on the Freedom Charter with the working class taking a leading role. However, one reads their respective works in vain for any clear and concrete indication of how this leadership role is to be forged.

For von Holdt 'the predominance of Charterism is precisely a sign of how advanced the working class is, since it signifies the engagement of the working class in national democratic struggles'. It is worth noting that when the Freedom Charter was adopted by the South African Congress of Trade Unions in 1956 it was hailed as a sign of how advanced the working class was. According to this argument, the working class is no further advanced in 1987 than it was in 1956. However, von Holdt does refer to 'practical evidence of an increasing (working-class) leadership within the mass struggles of the last three years', but unfortunately provides no concrete evidence to substantiate this polemical assertion. He does subsequently make vague references to 'trade unions, civics, action committees, youth congresses, student organisation, street committees, UDF and much more, all engaged in a rich variety of struggles', but the crucial question he fails to address is why these various forms of struggle are necessarily evidence of working-class leadership in the struggle?

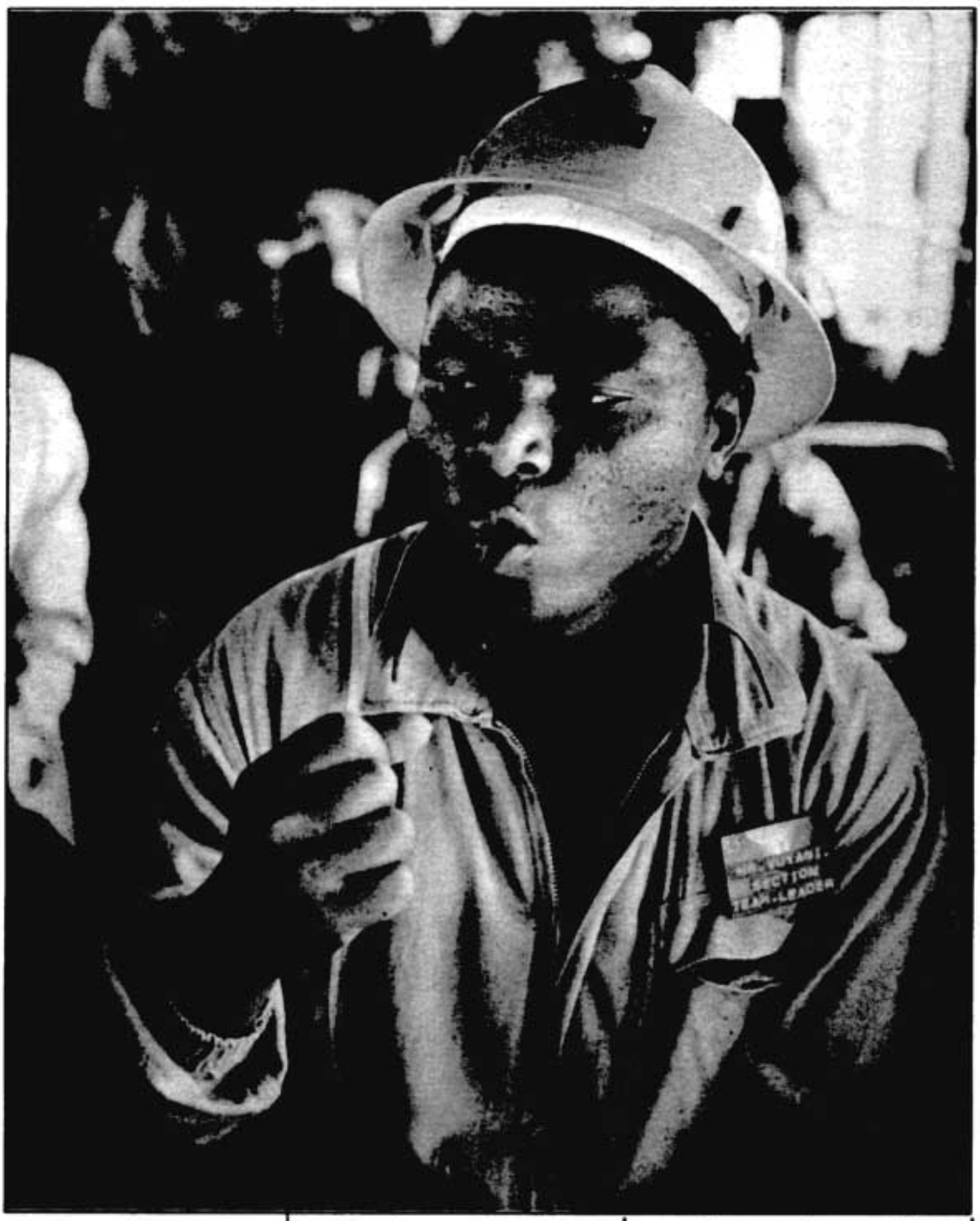
Karon and Ozinsky go a bit further than von Holdt. But although they have a whole section in their article entitled 'Working-class leadership' they fail to address the question of precisely how the working class is to secure leadership of the struggle? And the few comments they do make leads one to question whether they are serious in their assertion that the working class should lead the struggle.

For instance, they argue that the key to working-class leadership lies in building the structures of peoples' power within the national democratic movement: it is 'the extension and deepening of these structures (which) creates the most favourable situation for the working class relative to other classes in the national democratic struggle'. While this certainly sounds impressive it does not take us very far, since Karon and Ozinsky do not explain how deepening the structures of people's power will necessarily be more favourable to the working class than to other classes. Unless one falls back on the notion of which von Holdt is so critical - that the working-class has a spontaneous instinct for socialism - there is no reason why the working class should necessarily benefit from a deepening of democracy more than other classes. Democracy is not the exclusive preserve of the working class.

This problem is further compounded by the way in which Karon and Ozinsky conceive of working class involvement in these structures: 'The basic units of these structures are street and area committees, and they therefore depend on the involvement of all sectors of the community, including the working class, in the liberation struggle'. Here the working class is simply 'involved' in the relevant committees on the same basis as all other sectors of the community. So how then is working-class leadership secured? Karon and Ozinsky are silent on this key question.

Underlying the Karon-Ozinsky position, and explicit in von Holdt's case, is the assumption that because COSATU has taken up community and general political issues in a more forthright way than FOSATU did, this means that the working class is now leading the liberation struggle. This argument confuses the mere fact of workers' presence in political struggles with the issue of working-class political leadership of those struggles. As I argued in my original article, workers may also 'succumb to the lure of populism'.

This point has been persuasively argued by Jochelson, Moss and Obery: '...the fact of COSATU's presence does not automatically advance working-class political interests. This problem has been the subject of a century of socialist debate and is as yet unsolved. Trade unions have



A workers' programme can provide no guarantees. But without a clear programme, it is guaranteed that the working class will never exercise leadership of the national liberation struggle.

sometimes been labelled inherently reformist and economistic. While expressing the capital-labour conflict on the factory floor, they can never overcome this conflict. Socialists at the turn of the century argued that trade unions could at most express and develop an economistic and reformist consciousness amongst the working class. A revolutionary consciousness, aimed at the total transformation of capitalist society, could only be developed by a political party (mass-based or vanguard)'.

Thus, according to classical socialist theory, the absence of such a party must seriously inhibit the working class in its struggle for socialism. Consequently, if in the absence of such a party the working class is itself incapable of developing a revolutionary consciousness, how can it possibly hope to exert a revolutionary leadership over other classes? On the contrary, the tendency is likely to be in the other direction: that the working class will fall under the sway of petty-bourgeois ideologies.

If a working-class political party does exist, a different terrain of debate is opened up. But in South Africa today there is no mass-based working-class political party. However, there are a variety of organisations which would like to lay claim to being a vanguard party. But a party does not become the vanguard party of the working class simply by claiming this as a right. It must win this right by winning the confidence of the leading sections of the working class.

Since no single organisation can so far claim to have succeeded in this, the question remains how working-class political interests are to be advanced at the moment. One of the factors that needs to be considered here is the Freedom Charter and its relationship to the working-class movement.

Interpreting the Freedom Charter

In the *WIP 41* article I pointed out certain

'inadequacies' in the Freedom Charter from the point of view of developing a working-class movement in South Africa.

Although they do not respond to any of the specific criticisms I raise bar one, Karon and Ozinsky nonetheless reject my critique on grounds of 'facile constitutionalism' - a cry which is echoed by von Holdt, who also fails to respond to any of my specific arguments. The one issue that Karon and Ozinsky do respond to is my argument that the Freedom Charter does not demand that workers should have the right to strike. To this they reply that 'to debate it (the Charter) as such is to miss the living reality of the Charter' which, they say, 'is a document which outlines the *objectives* of the national democratic struggle'.

But then surely my question becomes even more pertinent: for is not the winning of the unimpeded right to strike one of the objectives of the working class within 'the national democratic struggle?' If rent and price controls, decent housing and a preventive health care among others should be - and are - clearly spelt out in the Freedom Charter as objectives of the national democratic struggle, why has the right to strike been omitted?

Even more worrying on this score is that certain members of the exile movement who are committed to the Charter have argued that after minority rule has been abolished workers in South Africa should not have the right to strike against the government of the people or against companies in a 'liberated' South Africa. To some, the exclusion of this right from the Charter is more than just an issue of 'facile constitutionalism'.

Despite their criticisms, Karon and Ozinsky do concede my basic argument which, in their words, is that 'the Charter does not represent the final word on questions of liberation and transformation'. Why then are they so vociferous in their attack on me? The answer, it seems, is not because I have argued that the working class should 'devise a clear programme, possibly a workers' charter' as one of the steps in the process of developing its leadership in the popular movement, since as they themselves put it: 'Innes' proposal for the drafting of a workers' charter is not inconsistent with the character of the Freedom Charter'.

Von Holdt, too, does not seem to be too concerned about this point since he states that 'it is in no way strategically unsound to speak of a working-class programme of action, or an organisational (eg trade union) programme of action; nor is it unsound to speak of developing a working-class interpretation of the Charter. On the contrary, these are vitally important tasks confronting all working class organisations and their allies'.

So what is it that these authors find so offensive in my argument? Apparently it is, according to Karon and Ozinsky, that 'he (Innes) insists on a workers' charter as the basis of unity between the working class and other classes in the popular movement'. In other words, Karon and Ozinsky claim that I believe a workers' charter should be a substitute for the Freedom Charter. This interpretation is not consistent with the arguments put forward in my *WIP* article, where I say that 'A working-class vision of the future demands more than the Charter offers' and that on its own the Freedom Charter is 'an inadequate basis for such unity, since it falls short of goals which are fundamental to the workers' movement'.

Consequently, I argue that the Charter which 'was - and still is - a progressive document' should be supplemented by 'a clear programme, possibly a workers' charter' which would enable workers to develop their own interpretation of the Freedom Charter. In another article, Gelb and I have sought to sketch out a broad scenario for a democratic economy in which there will be a relatively high degree of worker participation and which does not contradict any of the democratic demands spelt out in the Freedom Charter. There are, of course, other interpretations of the demands suggesting structures different from these. But it is certainly not inconsistent with the spirit of the Freedom Charter that different classes and groups should place different interpretations on its many clauses. I am consequently at a loss to understand why Karon-Ozinsky and von Holdt should react so vehemently to my attempts to develop a working-class interpretation of the Freedom Charter.

Debate and freedom of speech

Perhaps one possible answer to that question lies in the Karon-Ozinsky attack on me

for being a 'university-based intellectual' who is removed from 'real political struggle'. The implication is that because one is university-based one has no right to participate in important political debates. One response is to point out that I have had a working relationship with the trade union movement since 1977.

But more importantly, even if I had no contact with any of the participants in the struggle, would this prohibit me from being allowed to comment on that struggle? Surely in a situation of intense conflict and debate the views of people not directly engaged at an organisational level may also be relevant and useful? While one might wish to dismiss Karon and Ozinsky's argument as simply an example of narrow-mindedness or possibly naivety, it carries with it a serious political danger: namely, that unless one participates in certain organisations of which they approve, one's views are dismissed as useless and therefore unwanted. Such a position, which accords some people's views a greater respectability than others because of their organisational affiliations, does little to promote the Freedom Charter's objective that there shall be freedom of speech in South Africa.

Allies and anti-social elements

Another possible reason why they object to my approach to the Charter lies in a further misinterpretation of my position. According to Karon and Ozinsky, the workers' programme or charter which I advocate would be 'the complete programme of the working class' and this in turn would be 'a socialist programme'. Yet all I say on the subject is that it should be 'a clear programme'. That is, it should clarify and expand upon the demands raised in the Freedom Charter interpreting those demands along lines which would be favourable to the working class. This does not mean that it should be 'a complete programme of the working class' - whatever that may mean - but would be a step in the process of developing a working-class perspective on the vital issues outlined in the Freedom Charter. The alliance between the working class and other classes can still be built around the Freedom Charter, but now the workers will have a clearer conception - as will their allies - of how workers are interpreting it.

This may have implications for the alliance. Certain middle-class elements or opportunists may be frightened off by such a development, but the advantage to the working class, and to those who support it, outweigh this factor. What the working class and its supporters will gain is a clearer perception of its short to medium-term goals and, consequently, the potential to offer real political leadership to its allies in the popular movement. What it will lose will be the support of so-called allies whose allegiance is of the most temporary, vacillating or conditional kind.

Karon and Ozinsky will undoubtedly take issue on this point since, as far as they are concerned: 'Failure, to win *every* potential ally at every point, no matter how temporary, vacillating or conditional those allies may be, betrays the interests of the working class'. While the working class should actively seek to win over all progressive elements among other classes to its side, Karon and Ozinsky's indiscrimate approach to this question poses a real threat to the development of the popular movement as well as to working-class interests within it. One thinks of the set-back suffered by the people of Crossroads after progressive groupings sought to work in alliance with the opportunist Ngxobongwana.

Workers will seriously question the wisdom of entering into alliances with employers, including those who are black, who consistently victimise union menbers in their employ. The disputes between CCAWUSA and Richard Maponya, owner of Maponya's Discount Supermarket come to mind here. There is an important political difference in arguing that the working class should seek allies among progressive sections of the population and arguing that they should indiscriminately allow anybody to jump onto the bandwagon.

But there is an even more disturbing aspect to Karon and Ozinsky's argument. Although on the one hand they claim that 'every potential ally...no matter how temporary, vacillating or conditional' must be won over, subsequently we are told that 'the importance of structures of people's power' is that, among other things, 'they...ensure that the struggle remains under a firm political leadership and is not hijacked by anti-social elements'. And, shortly afterwards, we are warned that 'these struc-

tures...are continually open to attack from both the state and divisive elements in the community'.

Of concern here is the reference to 'anti-social elements' and 'divisive elements in the community', both of which apparently seek to 'hi-jack' the struggle. The structures of people's power, we are told, have to guard against such 'elements', though Karon and Ozinsky do not tell us who they are. Nor do they tell us by what criteria some people are judged to be 'anti-social' and 'divisive'. And they do not tell us who will do the judging. Are Inkatha and Labour Party members 'divisive' and, if so, what does this mean for the claim that 'every potential ally' must be won over? Are the 'Witdoeke' potential allies or are they 'anti-social elements'? And where does the Black Consciousness movement fit into all of this?

Last year Murphy Morobe of the UDF was reported as saying that the UDF 'has come to the realisation that quiet diplomacy has now failed in dealing with these (black consciousness) organisations, especially AZASM', and went on to say that the UDF and its affiliates had decided 'that no progressive organisation is now going to have any working relationship with them'. Does this mean that the Black Consciousness Movement and its affilates are 'anti-social' and 'divisive'?

These questions are raised not to point a finger at one organisation or group nor to belittle the attempts by popular organisations to overcome the serious political problem which arises as a result of legitimate ideological differences and confusions among the South African community. They are raised to point out that Karon and Ozinsky's attempts to deal with this issue amounts to little more than sloganeering and empty rhetoric. One cannot talk about winning allies in the one breath and warn against anti-social elements who seek to hi-jack the struggle in the next without at least explaining the criteria by which the two are to be distinguished.

Further confusion arises when Karon and Ozinsky attempt to define the basis on which unity should occur: 'Unity in the struggle...is dependent on a willingness in different organisations to *struggle* together in the field for the achievement of mutual objectives *despite* programmatic and conceptual differences'. By 'mutual objectives' I presume Karon and Ozinsky mean the struggle to bring about an end to apartheid. Presumably, then, this excludes those who serve the apartheid regime, such as black township police and members of the SADF who have become the storm troopers of apartheid, bolstering it militarily - even though many of them might be workers who have joined up to escape extreme poverty and unemployment. According to Karon and Ozinsky, no attempts should be made to win over these people.

But what about those who support the objective of an end to apartheid but seek to do so through parliamentary means? Are the leaders of the Labour Party and the National People's Party also part of the struggle for liberation? Are they among the 'temporary, vacillating and conditional' allies of the working class or are they 'divisive' elements? And who is to decide? The people? But who among the people? And how will such a decision be democratically taken? Will we say that only those who support the Freedom Charter are part of the liberation movement? In that case, the whole of the Black Consciousness Movement, Inkatha and members of the Labour Party and NPP are excluded - even though the aim is to win 'every potential ally'.

The issue of alliances is complex, and demands more than empty slogans to resolve.

'The usual two-stage argument'

In the *WIP 41* article I noted that both Erwin and Cronin had rejected what Cronin called 'the usual two-stage argument'. I took this as a positive development, seeing it as an opportunity to 'broach the important issue of how to develop transformation politics within the current liberation struggle'. Karon and Ozinsky have, however, taken exception to this position, arguing that: 'We need to be more careful about what jettisoning of the "usual two-stage argument" entails'. As it transpires, their qualification turns out to be no more than an attempt to once again resurrect the 'usual two-stage argument'.

Karon and Ozinsky claim to reject the notion of 'a mechanical separation between the tasks of establishing democracy and of social emancipation (since) the implication is that the second set of tasks is only placed on history's agenda when the first set is complete'. However, having said

this they then argue that 'this does not deny the existence of historically-distinct stages, phases or moments through which our struggle must pass. These are not determined by the programme or outlook of particular organisations, but mark an objective and historically-determined route along which we pass'. Then they add that: 'Only when that system (of minority rule) has been abolished does the possibility of social emancipation arise'. Thus not only do they resurrect the notion of historically-determined stages, but they resurrect the 'mechanical separation between the tasks of establishing democracy and of social emancipation', which they claim to reject.

In order to try and rescue themselves from their own contradiction, they introduce the notion of an 'uninterrupted' transition from the first national democratic stage to the second socialist stage: 'The question of building the path to full social emancipation cannot wait until the achievement of formal democracy in South Africa. It is the *process* by which the national democratic tasks are completed that will determine...the extent to which progress towards complete emancipation from exploitation will be *uninterrupted*'. The notion of historically-determined stages is upheld; but if the working class plays a leading role in the first stage of the struggle, then there can be an 'uninterrupted' movement towards the second stage.

Karon and Ozinsky then turn once again to attack me: 'The manner in which Innes rejects the "usual two-stage theory" is such that he rejects, in practice, all phases, stages and moments in the struggle'. This is not a correct interpretation. What I do reject are all attempts to impose arbitrary limitations on the potential of the working masses to further their own struggle. This is why I reject Karon and Ozinsky's formulation of the two-stage theory.

I emphatically reject the Karon-Ozinsky claim that the 'historically-distinct stages, phases or moments through which our struggle must pass...are not determined by the programme or outlook of particular organisations, but mark an objective and historically-determined route along which we pass'.

The argument about stages derives from the programme and outlook of particular organisations. The initial theory was developed by the SACP as *their* subjective attempt to mobilise the masses in a social revolution. History is not 'objectively' divided into neat stages; organisations and people divide history up in different ways in order to try and make sense of it.

The Karon-Ozinsky position on this issue is not only wrong, but could have unfortunate implications. By seeking to locate the two-stage theory objectively in history rather than subjectively in the programmes of specific organisations they give it the status of eternal truth. Consequently, all other competing theories must by definition be wrong.

This point is rammed home in the crudest fashion by Karon and Ozinsky when they say: 'The national democratic struggle is the path necessarily followed by the struggle for socialism in South Africa'. This statement represents a complete denial of the democratic process. By asserting that the struggle for socialism must '*necessarily*' follow the national democratic route, Karon and Ozinsky are also saying that anybody who argues for an alternative route must necessarily be wrong. It is a small step from there to assert that those who argue for alternative routes should be silenced, since they are misleading or betraying the working class. Interestingly enough, Karon and Ozinsky have already made use of this blatantly reactionary argument in claiming that 'failure to win every potential ally...betrays the interests of the working class'. Once the distinction between subjective theories and objective history becomes blurred, democracy immediately comes under threat, along with individual freedom, freedom of speech, association and the press.

A workers' programme

Having earlier dismissed my argument for a workers' programme on the grounds that I reject, 'in practice, all phases, stages and moments in the struggle', Karon and Ozinsky then introduce a new twist into the debate by arguing that: 'Innes examines the question of programmes only at the level of programmes for reconstruction *after* minority rule'.

Thus after first accusing me of rejecting a stages theory, I am now accused of sticking to it too rigorously.

The workers' programme should be grounded not in abstract theoretical propositions, but in the concrete conditions in which workers find themselves. The pro-

gramme should be formulated around issues like political and economic rights, housing and educational needs - that is, the issues which are raised in the Freedom Charter - so as to help arm workers in their present struggles.

Nor does this mean that the workers' programme should be a socialist programme or the complete programme of the working class. Rather, it should be a democratic programme which develops and extends the demands raised in the Freedom Charter in a manner which workers feel furthers their interests at the moment. How workers should go about this process is something which only they can decide. But a start has already been made in debating the issue of a workers' programme within various trade unions. This process should be continued within the unions and widened to include other organisations in which workers participate or organisations which seek to promote worker interests.

How will a workers' programme relate to the Freedom Charter? This can only be fully answered in the process of formulating such a programme. Workers could begin by studying the Freedom Charter closely, going through its clauses and demands, and debating the best way these should be interpreted and expanded upon in order to make these demands more concrete.

Where the Freedom Charter demands that 'every man and woman shall have the right to vote for and to stand as a candidate for all bodies which make laws' workers could begin discussing what form of law-making bodies would be most appropriate in a liberated South Africa. Is parliament the best form? Is democracy best protected through a one-party or multi-party political system? How can workers and the population in general ensure that their elected representatives remain accountable to them in a meaningful way? Should such representatives be subject to recall by their electorate?

Where the Freedom Charter demands that 'all people shall be entitled to take part in the administration of the country', workers could debate how best to make such civil servants accountable not only to their superiors but also to the population as a whole.

Where the Freedom Charter demands that 'All people shall have equal right to use their own languages' workers could discuss how many official languages would best suit South Africa's needs and which languages might be appropriate in this regard.

Where the Freedom Charter demands nationalisation of the mines, banks and monopoly industry, workers could discuss this issue in the light of current demands from employers' organisations for privatisation of the country's resources. If workers stand by the demand for nationalisation they could discuss what form it should take given the changes that have occurred in South Africa's economy since the 1950s, and what role existing workers' organisations might play in the process. They could also discuss this issue in the light of current employer proposals for share ownership to be extended to employees.

Where the Freedom Charter demands that 'all other industry and trade shall be controlled to assist the well-being of the people', workers could begin to specify precisely which controls they feel would serve this end, and could also look at how this demand relates to the issue of deregulation.

Where the Freedom Charter demands the redivision of the land, workers could discuss how that redivision might occur. What policy do they feel a post-apartheid government should adopt towards land which is currently owned by individual white farmers, companies and black peasant farmers? And what policy should be adopted towards the landless?

Workers could compare the Freedom Charters' demand that 'the courts shall be representative of all the people' with their recent experiences of people's courts, as well as assessing the Charters' demand that 'imprisonment... shall aim at re-education, not vengeance' against the use of 'necklaces' and other methods of popular violence.

The Freedom Charter demands that 'the police force and army shall be open to all on an equal basis and shall be the helpers and protectors of the people'. This raises the issue of how best the popular movement can respond to ever-increasing numbers of the black unemployed being drawn into the ranks of the armed forces. Should attempts be made to help organise these people into unions or should they be discarded? And what form could a people's army take in a post-apartheid South Africa?

Are the demands raised by the Freedom Charter in the

clause, 'There shall be work and security', sufficient to meet the needs of an increasingly powerful and well organised trade union movement or should they be expanded? Should the right to strike be included or is it unnecessary? What other demands could be raised to meet the challenges of a modern industrial sector which has grown significantly since 1955?

The Freedom Charter demands that 'education shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children', but workers could discuss whether education should be state-controlled or privatised; who should draw up curricula; and how schools could best be administered to give workers some influence over the education of their children.

The Freedom Charter does not itself provide answers to any of the issues raised above. But these questions are vital to a workers' vision of the future as well as to workers' current campaigns.

Some of these issues are already being taken up in discussions within a wide array of organisations active in the field, but it is important to refine them and organise them in a systematic way. In this way workers can both clarify their ideas of the future and give their existing campaigns a greater coherence and clarity. Workers' struggles against management authoritarianism in the factory is strengthened when they have a clearer idea of how they would like their factories to be run instead - even in the short to medium term. Community struggles against the government's housing policy are strengthened if community organisations know what kind of housing policy they want, and how housing should be administered and paid for.

If the working class, through a wide range of organisations, does not achieve clarity on these issues for itself, then when minority rule does finally give way to a democratic government it will not be in a position to press forward its demands. Instead, it will have to turn to the petty-bourgeoisie - to intellectuals - to formulate policy for it. And that could put the working class on a slippery slope to subordination.

No guarantees, no sacred texts

In their book on the Freedom Charter, Suttner and Cronin have warned against regarding the Freedom Charter as a 'sacred text', arguing instead that 'we must take criticisms of the Freedom Charter seriously' in order that the Charter may be 'built into our mass campaigns'. That is the only way the Charter can continue to be the 'living reality' Karon and Ozinsky say they want it to be. Once you deny people the opportunity to debate and discuss the Charter, to interpret and extend it, you turn it from a progressive living reality into an obstacle to progress.

The argument for a workers' programme is that, by clarifying workers' ideas of the way in which the Freedom Charters' demands could be interpreted, it will assist them to shift power relations in their favour. How can the working class possibly play a leading role in the liberation struggle if its members are forbidden, for whatever reason, to state their demands clearly?

'It is the task of the working class', write Karon and Ozinsky, 'to weld together the broadest force...to most rapidly and effectively remove each obstacle in the path of progress'. The basis of this welding can still be the Freedom Charter, but as Karon and Ozinsky correctly argue 'working-class leadership in the national liberation struggle ...has to be built; it cannot be guaranteed by any charter'. The problem with the Karon-Ozinsky analysis is that it offers no suggestions of how working-class leadership can be built. A workers' programme is one step along that road. Certainly it can provide no guarantees, but without it - without a clear programme - it is guaranteed that the working class will never exercise that leadership.

Articles referred to are: Duncan Innes, 'Worker politics and the popular movement', *WIP 41*, April 1986; Karen Jochelson, Glenn Moss and Ingrid Obery, 'Defining working-class politics', also in *WIP 41*. Tony Karon and Max Ozinsky's reply to the Innes article, 'The working class in national democratic struggle', was published in *WIP 42*, May 1986. Karl von Holdt's article, which has not been published, was given as a paper to the 18th annual congress of the Association for Sociology in Southern Africa, held at the University of the Western Cape in June and July 1987. It is titled 'National liberation and the trade union movement'. Steven Gelb and Duncan Innes's joint contribution, 'Towards a democratic economy in South Africa' appeared in *Third World Quarterly*, 9(2), April 1987. Raymond Suttner and Jeremy Cronin's book, *30 Years of the Freedom Charter*, was first published by Ravan Press in 1986.

Student and youth politics in the Western Cape

Student and youth organisation in the Western Cape remains weak, but has developed greatly in the last three years.
A Cape Youth Congress activist reviews student and youth activity.

By the beginning of 1985 civic, youth and student activity in the Western Cape had declined. Organisations that had emerged during opposition to the 1984 tricameral elections were depleted. Some had collapsed, while others involved only a small number of activists.

Politics was reactive, responding to issues mainly through newspapers, pamphlets and mass meetings. No grassroots organisation had taken place, and mobilisation remained the dominant form of organising.

Students take the lead

The concern of ordinary students over the events in the rest of the country in early 1985, and their knowledge of the Transvaal and Eastern Cape schools boycott, sparked off the Western Cape schools boycott in July 1985. A slogan of the period, 'Eastern Cape today, Western Cape tomorrow' became a reality within months of it being painted on Cape Town walls.

These school boycotts played a major role in reviving and transforming organisation and politics in the Western Cape. During and after the boycotts student organisation grew rapidly, making gains in this area of struggle.

As a result of student struggles and organisation, youth organisations, especially the UDF-affiliated Cape Youth Congress, mushroomed and grew once more. Developing student struggles also gave rise to the 1985 consumer boycott, the rents boycott in Guguletu, Nyanga, Langa and KTC, and the formation of parent-teacher-student associations, education crisis committees, the Western Cape Teachers Union and the Democratic Teachers Union.

WECSCO

The greatest achievement of students struggles during and after the school boycotts of 1985-86 involved the formation of WECSCO — the Western Cape Students Congress. It is presently the only affiliate of the National Students Co-ordinating Committee able to function, and is strong and flourishing.

WECSCO represents nearly 100 000 students, with ten area structures and about 80 students representative councils (SRCs). All schools from a particular area form an area committee. WECSCO is currently consolidating links with the West Coast Students Congress (Atlantis, Saldanha and Vredenberg) and the Boland Students Congress.

Formed towards the end of 1985, WECSCO initially experienced many problems and had to be relaunched towards the end of 1986. By this time most SRCs in the region belonged to it.

Although weak at the time, WECSCO successfully organised a boycott of the 1985 examinations. It effectively halted new departmental regulations introduced into African and coloured schools at the begining of 1987: very few students re-registered, ID cards were burnt, and SRCs banned by the educational authorities were almost immediately 'unbanned' by students.

At present WECSCO-organised schools are involved in support work for striking Spekenham workers, collecting food and money at school during people's education periods, and going door-to-door in the community.

WECSCO emphasises four principles in its functioning: democracy, accountability, representation and non-racialism. This accounts for its significance compared to previous student organisation.

Over the past three years, WECSCO has had to fight for the right of SRCs to take decisions independently from teacher, parent and other organisations. Before SRCs take decisions, other organisations are consulted and areas of conflict discussed. But at the end of this process WECSCO maintains that students have the right to decide democratically on their chosen course of action. The New Unity Movement, SOYA, Cape Action League and others, have argued that SRCs should

not have independence in decision-making. This, they suggest, is the function of the PTSAs.

WECSCO has stuck firmly to its position, comparing its structures to those of the trade unions and their method of operating. When workers decide to strike over a factory-floor issue, neither the family nor community organisations have the right to vote on this. While others can be consulted, only workers involved in the dispute can finally decide on strike action.

For WECSCO non-racialism is not a far-off dream but a reality that has to be worked for. Practical activity and campaigns are conducted so as to break down racial barriers. An example was WECSCO's successful campaign to persuade the Western Province Senior Schools Sports Union to draw in African schools at all levels of sport.

Other organisations have started transforming methods of organisation and politics in response to student and other influences, such as street committees. The Cape Youth Congress (CAYCO) has been in the forefront of this process.

'Every student a youth member'

During the student struggles of 1985 and 1986 youth branches of CAYCO were not all active. Many did not take advantage of the militancy of students by attempting to draw them into youth organisation. Nor did CAYCO as a whole have a good working relationship with student structures. No joint campaigns or issues were taken up together.

The struggles of 1985 and 1986 produced a highly militant and politicised youth, many of whom began looking for an organisation to take forward their militancy. These young militants turned towards CAYCO.

Launched in 1983, CAYCO is one of the South African Youth Congress's oldest affiliates. It is a unitary structure consisting of about 38 youth branches in Cape Town, and has a working relationship with the Paarl Youth Congress, Youths of Worcester, and West Coast Youth Congress. It is one of the strongest Western Cape affiliates of the UDF.

Unlike many of the other youth organisations in the Cape, CAYCO has been able to sustain itself under the severe conditions of the state of emergency. Its president, Roseberry Sonto, has been in detention for nearly two years, and many other executive and active members have been jailed. Youth branches in KTC, Nyanga, New Crossroads and Bonteheuwel have come under attack from police, the SADF, kitskonstabels and vigilantes.

The major tasks that face all organisations in the democratic movement at present are:

- how to build or rebuild street, yard, village and area committees;
- where these structures do exist, how to advance and strengthen them;
- how to build and strengthen defence committees to stave-off attacks from the state and vigilantes;
- how to build and strengthen unity on national and local grassroots level;
- how to begin seriously advancing working-class interests as the leading force in the democratic movement.

Through its campaigns on unemployment, a living wage, unban the ANC, and save the compatriots on death row, CAYCO is attempting to build strong grassroots youth structures, and assist in the building of UDF area committees, civics and COSATU locals.

Some CAYCO branches and regions have formally met student area committees and SRCs, and are embarking on joint campaigns. One such attempt to work together has been on the 'save the compatriots campaign', which concerns activists sentenced to death and currently awaiting execution.

Joint action between youth and student structures has seen a growth in CAYCO's membership, and also strengthened student structures. Youth work in helping to build SRCs, and assistance with awareness programmes and people's education continues, although unevenly.

CAYCO also works closely with SRCs from tertiary institutions like the Universities of the Western Cape and Cape Town, and with the South African National Students Congress. A CAYCO slogan spells out the aim: 'every student a youth member'.

Relations with COSATU

CAYCO's relationship with COSATU in the Western Cape is a new and shaky one. CAYCO accepts working-class leadership of the democratic struggle, and sees COSATU as the most strongly organised expression of the working class at present.

A close working relationship with COSATU is therefore an immediate priority for CAYCO. No formal relationship has been worked out as yet. But like the other organisations, CAYCO has been involved in joint activities with COSATU over the May Day stayaway, the two-day national action around the white elec-

tion, the 16 June stayaway and similar events.

Through these activities, attempts have been made not only to meet executives of COSATU and other organisations, but also to work with the affiliates and grassroot organisations on a regional level.

Locally, CAYCO has been involved with COSATU affiliates and locals in the bus action committee fighting high fares introduced between Cape Town and the bantustans.

CAYCO has also assisted some of the COSATU locals, and has representation on these. This is a sensitive area for COSATU and exactly how CAYCO should relate to locals is presently under discussion.

Workers at the Spekenham factory in Bellville have been on strike for nearly two months. The Food and Allied Workers Union organised a support committee, consisting of community organisations and COSATU affiliates.

CAYCO's involvement in the Spekenham dispute is mainly concentrated on collection of food and money. Door-to-door collections of food and money has been undertaken across the peninsula. Youth branches are daily involved in presenting programmes for striking workers. And youth branches where striking workers live have adopted workers, feeding and looking after them during the strike. Some of the striking workers have joined CAYCO while others have formed CAYCO branches.

Support for striking workers has not been taken up separately from other CAYCO campaigns.

It has been integrated into the living wage campaigns, just as rents and unemployment are seen as part of the fight for a living wage.

In CAYCO's view, attempts to not only mobilise but organise on grassroots level, building street and area committees, and locals, are the only way in which democracy and accountability can be practised. These structures and practices should be built and started now to ensure a future free of oppression and class exploitation.

CAYCO is presently looking at how youth in white areas can become affiliated to the organisation.

In line with CAYCO's non-racial policy it has been accepted that these youths should affiliate rather than form separate youth organisations.

Compared to three years ago, student and youth organisation in the Western Cape has developed greatly. But it remains weak: gains have to be consolidated, organisation strengthened and many more youths and students incorporated.

TEN YEARS OF WORK IN PROGRESS

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Work In Progress is ten years old. GLENN MOSS, the only founding editor still employed on the magazine, surveys WIP's first decade

The urban rebellion associated with 16 June 1976 was winding down. In its wake, business had formed the Urban Foundation, while competing interests struggled for control of the ruling National Party. Within months Steve Biko and Ric Turner — in their different ways leading intellectual figures of the 1970s — would be dead. And Justice and Police Minister Jimmy Kruger was about to ban more than 20 opposition organisations and publications, mainly supportive of black consciousness. It was September 1977.

There was talk of 'change' in South Africa's political dispensation. Newspapers regularly referred to 'verligtes' and 'verkramptes' struggling within the National Party over the nature and implementation of 'grand' and 'petty' apartheid. Opposition groups argued that those few changes proposed by the 'verligtes' were cosmetic, aimed at deceiving world opinion and South Africa's black majority. And just off centre stage, Defence Minister PW Botha and SADF chief Magnus Malan were beginning to talk the language of total war, total strategy and free enterprise.

Afrikaans-language newspapers regularly speculated over the possibility of a military coup or a one-party state, sometimes suggesting that 'reform from above' could only be achieved in this way.

The embryonic trade union movement had not yet emerged as a major actor on the scene. Popular political resistance to apartheid seemed to be waning, although the impetus that 16 June 1976 had given to the African National Congress was soon to manifest itself in the 'armed propaganda' associated with guerilla and sabotage activities of the late 1970s and early 1980s.

A cabinet committee had drafted a new constitutional plan which proposed a tricameral parliamentary system based on separate chambers for whites, coloureds and Indians, and an executive state president holding ultimate power. And the Soweto 'Committee of Ten's' call for municipal autonomy for the township had been met with cautious approval by some government and business sources.

Most of the organisations, service groups and publications which today dominate progressive activity had not yet been launched and the positions associated with black consciousness dominated public political resistance to apartheid.

This was the context in which the first issue of Work In Progress appeared. The impetus for the publication came from a group of University of

Neither this survey, nor indeed the first six years of the WIP project, would have occurred without the active involvement and dedication of Gerry Maré, one of the magazine's three founding editors. His contribution is deeply appreciated.

Witwatersrand post-graduate students who believed that modes of analysis and information contained within the university community had to be shared with a wider audience. South Africa was an increasingly complex society, and new developments and dynamics demanded informed debate, analysis and response.

While explicitly intellectual in approach, WIP did not set out to be academic, or university-based.

It aimed at 'stimulating and provoking responses (in a) national debate on contemporary South Africa'. As editors, we hoped to create a forum in which debate, rather than already-established positions, could be aired. According to the first editorial, WIP 'is a journal for ideas and perspectives which are only half-formed, and which need to be submitted to a critical readership so as to develop fully. None of the work presented is definitive, and it is put forward to stimulate a critical appraisal of the dynamics of South African society, rather than for "judgement" or "assessment" in any competitive academic sense'.

Over ten years and 50 issues, Work In Progress has changed and developed, often in response to the processes at work in society. Yet the magazine shows a degree of consistency and coherence in themes covered, questions raised, material presented, and positions adopted.

Working-class organisation and issues

This survey of WIP's first ten years is as much about the developments, changes and conflicts which make up the past decade as it is about one magazine.

When WIP first appeared, the labour movement was splintered, small and struggling to establish itself. The working class as an organised force was exceptionally weak, and the question of alliances between it and other class forces was not on the political agenda. The issue of working-class leadership in struggle was not part of general political debate, largely because the development of organisational forces had not matured sufficiently to raise it.

Yet from an early stage, WIP raised the questions of class leadership, reflecting its consistent and coherent concern with the class nature of organisations and issues. Initially, this reflected itself in questions about the role of the petty-bourgeoisie.

The editorial in issue 5 (June 1978) refers to 'the dangers of petty- bourgeois politics masquerading as being in the interests of the exploited masses', and warns about 'the processes of political and personal degeneration which follow the attempt to remake a society without the active involvement and participation of the popular classes'.

The politics and organisations of black consciousness at the time displayed a worrying tendency to ignore class divisions within black communities. In the absence of established working-class organs, this allowed for the dominance of elite and petty-bourgeois politics in the struggle against apartheid.

In August 1979, WIP referred to the petty-bourgeoisie's tendency to 'form alliances with either large-scale capitalists or the working class, although it often attempts to use an alliance with the working class to further its own basically bourgeois interests at the expense of worker interests'. In an argument which foreshadowed many of the current debates over class alliances, WIP suggested that in any progressive alliance between the working class and other forces, 'it is essential that working-class interests have primacy over petty-bourgeois interests'.

These concerns were again raised in the last issue for 1979, when an anonymous contributor referred to the strong middle-class content of 'exclusivist nationalism', and noted that this would 'prove problematic for the forging of alliances with the masses'.

At the beginning of 1980, concerns over petty-bourgeois leadership were raised in a more assertive manner. No longer was this just a question about the objective interests and tendencies within the petty-bourgeoisie.

The organisation of workers into trade unions was developing rapidly: in April 1979 the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) had been formed by 12 unions representing 45 000 workers; eight unions were grouped together under the Consultative Committee, which subsequently gave rise to the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA); and the Western Cape General Workers Union and Food and Canning Workers Union had entered into alliances with community groups to organise consumer boycotts of red meat and Fattis and Monis products.

Rather than just focusing on questions of petty-bourgeois interests and leadership, circumstances allowed for the raising of questions about working-class interests and leadership, especially in alliance with other groups.

The consumer boycotts of the

period involved alliances between trade unions and the community. Eventually this tactic led to tensions over which interests led the alliance: workers in the trade unions or the multi-class community groups. At one stage of the red meat boycott, for example, community groups called off the boycott without consulting the trade union or striking workers involved.

Debate on these issues initially revolved around the relationship between 'the point of production' and 'the community' or 'point of reproduction'. The editorial in WIP 12 (April 1980) inaugurated a debate in the magazine which raged over the next few years: 'What sorts of issues', asked the editors, 'are of direct concern to the working class in South Africa?... One approach argues that any issue which is not related to the "point of production" is "political", and therefore is of no concern to workers' organisations (trade unions)'.

One effect of this separation between work-place and community, argued the editors, 'is that many issues are handed over to non-working class interests, which tend to mobilise the working class for ends that have precious little to do with workers. If this takes place, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy as far as the "point-of-productionists" are concerned: they decline involvement in non-factory floor issues, and then claim that such issues are led by the petty bourgeoisie for their own ends'.

The next few issues consistently raised these questions in relation to rent, transport and educational struggles. 'While none of these are "point of production" issues', the editors argued, 'they are of direct concern to the working class. The class basis of leadership and activity in these areas is of great importance: whether the demands made contain a working-class or petty-bourgeois content will crucially effect the outcome of struggle around these issues'.

By its third year of existence, then, WIP was criticising those

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By its third year of existence, WIP was criticising tendencies described as 'workerist' or 'economistic'

tendencies which could objectively be described as 'workerist' or 'economistic', raising questions about the relationship between factory-floor and other struggles, and asserting the importance of working-class leadership and dominance in organisation and struggle.

The exploration of these issues continued: according to a mid-1980 editorial, 'there are those who have argued that working-class organisation should be confined to factory-floor issues: this position has reflected legitimate concern that wider issues have often seen the subordination of worker interests to those of the petty bourgeoisie or other classes. A number of "political" and "community" issues have seen the de-emphasising of worker interests within broad alliances organised around notions like "the community", "blacks", "the people", etc. However, recent developments have suggested that alliances led by working-class interests can take up "community" issues such as rents and transport without any necessary loss of working-class content'.

Concerns about the nature and content of working-class issues and organisation, and their relationship to other organisations and issues, led naturally to the question of alliances. Long before the organisational structures necessary for disciplined alliances between different classes, interests and sectors had developed, WIP was raising issues about alliance politics.

Exploration of the union tendencies led by the South African Allied Workers Union in the Eastern Cape, which emphasised close co-operation between union and community, factory and township struggle, were frequent in WIP throughout 1981, 1982 and 1983. Progressive organisation in the community and the nature of support alliances between community groups and trade union struggle were explored, debated and described in the pages of Work In Progress during the early 1980s.

Struggles often found expression in legal proceedings, with court applications to set aside rent increases and bus fare hikes. During 1981, WIP raised the question of 'legalism', arguing that while court-related strategies could win gains, organisations needed to guard against handing the outcome of struggles over to lawyers and the courts. Concern was also expressed over the anti-democratic nature of legal proceedings: rank-and-file could easily be excluded from decision-

making and control once issues were in the specialist realm of the legal process.

Few, if any contributors, argued that the working class should 'go it alone', totally independent from other potentially progressive forces. The issues of working-class leadership and interests, in relation to alliances with other classes, remained an ongoing concern and debate.

But many of these concerns were raised in a relatively abstract manner, as issues in themselves. Only trade union organisation had developed sufficiently for the questions of alliances to be raised in concrete organisational form. Both at national and local level, political structures were weak, unformed or not yet constituted. During 1983, in the lead-up to the formation of the United Democratic Front and National Forum, the question of alliances became more concrete. Trade unions, especially, were forced to define more carefully their relationship to the multi-class organisations developing nationally and within local communities.

The character and form of the developing multi-class or popular organisations became an issue of debate. Trade unions had a definable constituency and membership, structures through which to organise and take decisions, and the possibility of tight internal democracy based on accountability of leadership to membership through a structured relationship of mandate. The question of whether this form of organisation could be compatible with the loosely-structured community and political organisations, often based on groups of activists rather than a defined constituency, and engaging with multi-class rather than class-specific issues, became a key question.

An early indication of this concern was displayed in the editorial of WIP 25, February 1983. The Transvaal Indian Congress had been revived in the wake of the successful anti-South African Indian Council (anti-SAIC) campaign. Its reconstitution was viciously

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At the end of 1986, WIP broke new ground by interviewing a member of the ANC women's section

attacked by the Azanian Peoples Organisation (AZAPO): 'Any ethnically-based organisation by Indians, coloureds or Zulus is directly in line with Pretoria's policy of apartheid', said AZAPO's publicity secretary. WIP suggested that AZAPO's attack on the TIC needed to be assessed 'in the light of three factors:

- The TIC's adherence to non-racialism.
- Whether it manipulates ethnicity and racial symbols in its activities.
- The interests which it represents'.

In this editorial it was argued that non-racialism did not necessarily demand multi-racial forms of organisation. But the 'relative weight that working-class, petty-bourgeois, peasant or other interests enjoy within an organisation or alliance' was important in establishing its nature. 'An attempt to establish the primacy of working-class or popular interests is unlikely to merit the ethnic tag', the editors concluded.

These issues of organisational form and content were debated strongly in WIP for the remainder of 1983. Shortly after the UDF had been launched nationally, WIP interviewed David Lewis, general secretary of one of the many trade unions which resolved not to affiliate to the front. Asked why the General Workers Union had stayed out of the UDF, Lewis isolated two broad issues of concern: 'the structure of many of the organisations that are affiliated to the UDF, relative to the structure of a trade union'; and the 'essentially single-class nature, the working-class nature, of trade unions, relative to the multi-class nature of the UDF and many of the organisations affiliated to it'. The union's general secretary went on to spell out the difference between organisations of activists committed to a specific goal, and trade unions with factory, branch and national structures, where worker representatives are controlled, directed by and accountable to membership.

On the question of working-class leadership, Lewis argued that 'it is essential that working-class individuals occupy leading positions in national political organisations inside the country... Workers must have the opportunity to lead the pace and style and tone and language of the organisation'.

Turning to future developments, the union official stated that he could 'not see his union affiliating to the UDF in the future... But I can envisage a situation where a formal relationship develops between a

national/political/community centre and a national trade union centre... As part of a national trade union centre, workers would have the necessary support, the necessary base, from which to participate in a multi-class organisation'.

In its next issue, WIP interviewed the UDF's publicity secretary, 'Terror' Lekota, to establish the front's position on the issues raised by the General Workers Union. In a detailed and frank interview, Lekota acknowledged that some criticisms levelled by the unions were well-founded. But he urged unions to affiliate, saying that the larger independent unions could shape both the form and content of UDF politics in a meaningful way.

The contemporary importance of this 1983 debate was demonstrated at the July 1987 COSATU conference, which resolved not to affiliate to any political organisation at this stage, but to establish 'disciplined alliances' with community organisations which are mass-based, democratic and non-racial, have a proven record of struggle, and principles and policies compatible with COSATU. The last issue of WIP quotes COSATU general secretary Jay Naidoo saying that such alliances should be based on structures of 'mandated representatives of organisations accountable to their constituencies through regular report-back meetings', rather than groups of 'free-floating individuals'. Although COSATU expressed understanding for the difficulties of community organisations in the state of emergency, Naidoo suggested that 'an urgent responsibility lies with our allies in the community to build sound organisation in the different sectors' (youth, students, women and civics).

In similar vein, a recent WIP editorial suggested that 'structures and forms of organisation which promote working-class leadership; organisational accountability to working-class and progressive constituencies; and the struggle to win support for working-class interests within multi-class alliances all strengthen the possibility of building a democratic and socialist society in the future'.

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'Workers must have the opportunity to lead the pace, style and tone of their organisations'

The organisational focus

The earlier issues of WIP tended to raise organisational questions as issues in themselves. This reflected the low level of organisational development of the time. But from the beginning of 1983, as political and community organisations began developing, the issues became more focused and grounded in practical politics.

From the early discussions on the Transvaal Indian Congress, and the relationship between the UDF and trade unions, a more specific organisational focus developed. Beginning in 1984, WIP published detailed material on a wide range of organisations, often based on interviews with leadership. Policies and structures of the UDF, AZAPO, the African People's Democratic Union of Southern Africa, the Cape Action League, the National Forum and others were discussed in the pages of the magazine.

At the beginning of 1985, WIP became one of the first South African-based publications to present current ANC views and developments. In a series of articles, the build-up to the ANC's consultative conference at Kabwe was discussed, the conference itself was reported on, and the ANC's position on talks with representatives of business was discussed. At the end of 1986, WIP again broke new ground by interviewing a senior member of the ANC women's section. These articles were explicitly not propaganda pieces, but represented our attempt to provide information and perspective on an important organisational influence in South African politics of which South Africans are kept ignorant because of censorship, security legislations, curbs on the media and the like.

Not all limitations on the media were state-imposed. The mainstream commercial media of the time displayed a worrying bias against important actors and forces in the unfolding conflict. The ANC, for example, was rarely mentioned, and some editors argued that it was illegal to report on ANC activities and statements. When Ric Turner was assassinated, the Rand Daily Mail quoted a security police source saying that an anonymous caller had accepted responsibility for the assassination on behalf of 'the ANC and the black consciousness movement'. But the newspaper refused to run the ANC's denial of this. Nor would it print an ANC statement expressing appreciation of

Turner's political initiatives over the years. Too often the mainstream media left it to the black and alternative press to report on the events and organisational initiatives associated with resistance politics.

WIP under pressure

Not everyone viewed the WIP debates as constructive. In its February 1984 editorial, WIP suggested that political resistance was 'not only about power: it also involves conflict between different interests both in the ruling group and the popular classes... These debates and conflicts are the daily reality of resistance politics, and cannot be ignored. But some have found this difficult to accept... But in this formative stage of resistance politics, many issues are far from resolved. The re-establishment and consolidation of mass politics in a context where the organised working class is stronger than before has created dynamics beyond the experience of some of South Africa's newer political forces. This is the context in which WIP will continue raising some of the issues that have always been discussed as part of progressive politics'.

As organisations developed and grew in stature, there were sometimes attempts to force WIP into one contending camp or another, or to stifle debate. In August 1983, WIP set out its editorial position on these questions: 'New organisations are competing for members, prominence and resources. They feel weak and vulnerable, especially to possible state action against them. It is thus understandable that they are not all equally open to scrutiny, debate and criticism. Yet if the opening up of a new democratic political era is to be real — if political democracy on the left is to have substance — then debate and assessment of what is occurring is necessary.

'South Africa lacks a strong or developed democratic tradition. This has sometimes allowed leaders to act without mandate or constituency, accountability or responsibility... Too often the absence of

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While court-related strategies could win gains, organisations needed to guard against handing the outcome of struggles to lawyers

debate and criticism...has been justified on the grounds that its presence is too dangerous in a repressive society... The right of debate and criticism both from within and without political organisation needs to be retained if democracy is to be more than a slogan for manipulation'.

WIP has refused to ignore political tendencies and organisations which are weaker or have less support than organisations which occupy centre stage. This reflects a commitment to democracy, open debate and freedom of speech as important cornerstones of progressive politics. Nor have the personal political affiliations of members of the editorial collective been permitted to determine the selection of articles. This means that the political positions of AZAPO and Inkatha; the UDF, Cape Action League and National Forum; and ANC and PAC have all been discussed and debated in magazine.

Political trials and resistance

One of WIP's most innovative features involved the use of legal proceedings as a contemporary source of information. For ten years, WIP has told one part of the story of political resistance through its coverage and analysis of political trials.

The development of the armed struggle, from 'armed propaganda' through to attacks on economic institutions; sabotage and guerilla incidents involving ANC cadres; resistance in the townships; right-wing vigilante activity in rural areas and small towns. All have been described and analysed, often through the use of court proceedings.

In the first few years of WIP, a detailed monitor of political trials was maintained. Later, we focused more on specific cases and incidents, especially trials involving military activity. From this material, WIP was able to provide detailed chronologies of sabotage and guerilla attacks over the years; analyse the nature of political trials and the legal process; and assess trends in some aspects of resistance activity.

For example, in June 1985 WIP was able to point out that there were more treason trials then underway in South Africa than at any previous time in history, enabling WIP to detail the growing and changing nature of the ANC's armed struggle. On the basis of a study of these trials, it was noted that 'the ANC's armed struggle continues despite the Nkomati Accord and other similar agreements with

Southern African governments. Of particular interest are state allegations that the ANC is training cadres inside South Africa, and that its military campaign includes township supporters who have not undergone specialised training outside South Africa'.

At a time when the mainstream commercial media was increasingly failing in its duty to report on resistance politics, WIP's use of court proceedings to produce a fuller picture of the South African reality has been an important feature.

'Cosmetic' and 'real' change

During the first years of WIP's existence, a fierce debate raged over the nature of change in South Africa. Many liberals, 'verligtes' in the National Party, business interests and others argued that a process of genuine reform was underway in South Africa. All that was holding it back was the right wing of the National Party that was preventing reformers from first undermining, and finally dismantling apartheid. 'Real' change was in the air.

Those of a more radical cast of mind rejected this. The fundamentals of the society were not changing, although some non-essentials of 'petty apartheid' had been modified. Change was not real, it was 'cosmetic', and aimed at fooling the international community and 'the people'.

WIP displayed an abiding concern with this debate. What concerned the editors was that the changes taking place in South African society were deep, but did not involve progress in ending apartheid. Over its first five years of existence, WIP probed this question from a number of angles: the changing class composition of the National Party, where an ascendant Afrikaner capitalist class was attempting to break the party's traditional populist alliance between small farmers, white workers and the petty bourgeoisie; changing relations within the state between the military and other interests; the changing relationship between monopoly capital and the state,

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WIP has focused on areas which fall outside the mainstream of national urban politics

as the demands of monopoly dominance increasingly dictated new labour policies on migrancy, urbanisation, skills and industrial relations.

It was these processes of 'change' which WIP began describing as 'restructuring' in an attempt to get away from the stagnant 'real vs cosmetic change' debate. Early issues focused on a 'reforming' clique within the state who argued that only a military dictatorship could deal with the pressing need to restructure aspects of apartheid. And while this did not occur, centralisation of power around this clique effectively involved a silent coup.

WIP's most definitive statement on the question involved an article on 'total strategy', which appeared in early 1980: 'At the level of description, rather than of explanation and analysis, "total strategy" refers to the manner in which the contemporary South African state "functions". It indicates the way in which certain aspects of state activity are changing in the current period. These "changes" within the state include a number of areas: policies and programmes; the relationship between the various state organs and apparatuses, including the relationship between "ideological", "repressive" and "economic" state organs which reproduce and maintain society; the relationships between and within classes; and the relationships between classes, class fractions and the state'.

This analysis established that there was change in South Africa, involving new state responses to the economic dominance of monopoly capital, allied to a restructuring and centralisation of power within the military. The content of this 'change' was highly authoritarian and anti-democratic, in the interests of limited sectional interests only, and had the potential to create conditions of conflict and misery in South Africa which had thusfar only been guessed at.

By the mid-1980s the restructuring associated with 'total strategy' lay in tatters, largely as a result of massive resistance and opposition combined with an ever-declining economy. The questions which had preoccupied WIP in the late 1970s, when so many were concerned about the nature and content of 'change' initiated from within the apartheid state, had themselves evolved. But WIP's consistency in raising questions about the centralisation and changing nature of state power, changing relationships between and within classes, the impact of monopoly economic dominance on the state, the changing role of the military in the 1970s, etc, was

a major contribution in establishing whose interests 'restructuring' served, what was happening in the changing relations between capital and the state, and how to understand a period of 'change' after years of apparent immobility by the state and ruling National Party.

Background to the news

By 1985, the intensity of political resistance had increased substantially. Consumer and rent boycotts, stay-aways, school boycotts, and attacks on local authority structures and personnel in the township were common forms of struggle. Yet much of this South African reality was hidden, not only because of legal restraints on the media, but because the mainstream commercial media was increasingly incapable of reporting on, and analysing these events.

WIP began publishing detailed feature articles which both described township struggles, and provided background information and analysis necessary to understand daily news.

A notable contribution covered stay-aways in the Eastern Cape, where early differences between some trade unions and community organisations grew into open conflict during the March 1985 stay-away. WIP was able to offer a comprehensive description and analysis of these events, the early origins of which were dealt with in a WIP focus on Eastern Cape developments during 1980.

Other important features which combined news presentation, detailed information and analysis included a detailed national investigation of the consumer boycott movement (WIP 39), a similar project on rent boycotts (WIP 44), features on the launch of COSATU and its second congress (WIP 40 and 49), street committees and people's courts in Mamelodi township (WIP 41), and the launch of the South African Youth Congress (WIP 47).

WIP has also focused on areas which fall outside of the mainstream of national urban politics. Early editions consistently covered rural and bantustan

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WIP has had an ongoing focus on forced population removals and resettlement

dynamics and developments, while more recent issues have focused on those small semi-urban towns where the current phase of conflict between popular forces and the state have been so intense. Notable examples include background details and information on Kimberley, Cradock, Colesberg, Duduza and Fort Beaufort.

In much the same way, WIP has had an ongoing focus on forced population removals and resettlement. From the contemporary issues of the Brits Oukasie and the Mogopa removals, back to Driefontein, Onverwacht, Thornhill, Glenmore, Winterveld, the Batlokwa and Matlala, the massive social engineering associated with 'grand apartheid' has been one of the issues investigated in the magazine.

The specifics of bantustan and rural dynamics, so often ignored in the centrality of urban struggle and organisation, have also featured prominently. From a recent study of youth politics and witch burnings in Lebowa, back to early 1980s features on pensions and unemployment in the bantustans, strategies for survival by the rural unemployed, and features on political developments and corruption in the bantustans, have all reflected our desire to reflect accurately the complex and changing dynamics which directly affect more than half of South Africa's population.

A forum for debate

A 1986 assessment of Work In Progress, undertaken by an independent evaluator, revealed a high level of readership appreciation of the debates which occur in the magazine (see WIP 44 for a summary of the findings).

The columns of WIP have always been open for serious and informed debate on the burning issues of strategies and policies, organisational directions and structures, and ways of viewing the struggles to transform South Africa. There is a disclaimer which appears in every edition: 'The nature of Work In Progress, which is to stimulate views on a wide range of issues, ensures that the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editorial collective'. This is not a legal nicety, nor an attempt to avoid responsibility for what is published. Rather, it reflects the editorial collective's refusal to assess articles on a basis of individual agreement or disagreement. From WIP's very first issue onwards, the editors have published articles which they have personally disagreed with. Often there have been differences within the editorial group on positions adopted within articles. But a steadfast belief that the publi-

cation is a forum for debate, and that open discussion and assessment strengthens progressive organisation, guides WIP policy.

Debate necessarily involves attempts at realistic assessments of strengths and weaknesses. WIP has consistently warned against both triumphalism and a tendency to exaggerate strengths and underplay weaknesses. As a May 1986 editorial put it, 'Political organisations competing for support, constituencies and power are not always realistic in their assessments... Sometimes, exaggerated claims are made so often that they become self-evident truths... Political power can never be built on a false underestimation of the opposition's strength. A realistic understanding of strength and weakness can ultimately only benefit progressive and democratic organisation'.

Earlier debates often involved ways of seeing society: the relationships between class and race; the effects of monopoly capitalist dominance on a society; how to understand unemployment, the state, exploitation and the women's question. By the early 1980s, the focus had shifted to questions of organisational form, and the issues concerning working-class interests and organisation discussed above.

More recently, WIP's columns have been used to debate questions about the academic boycott; sanctions; the relationship between the working-class and national-democratic struggle; and working-class interests and the Freedom Charter. While WIP is by no means the only publication to encourage these debates, its openness to the elaboration of positions which members of the editorial collective may not agree with is one hall-mark of the publication.

The great censorship battles

It did not take WIP long to come to the attention of the state's censorship machinery. When issue number 5 was banned under the Publications Act, this began a series of bannings that continued almost unabated for the next 20 editions and four years. This culminated in 1982, when a censorship committee prohibited all future editions of Work In Progress.

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WIP — like all South African publications — has always been severely restricted in what it can publish

For the first years of this onslaught against WIP, the editors took no action. The legal space to contest bannings was almost non-existent, with the discredited publications appeal machinery operating arbitrarily and with little intellectual or juridical content under a retired judge of extremist views.

But by 1980, there was concern that WIP would be closed down under the Publications Act unless some action was taken. The Publications Appeal Board was now chaired by a legal academic, who at least appeared willing to establish technical guidelines and precedents for the arguing of appeals.

A set of appeals against banning were set in motion, as WIP became one of the first political publications to challenge censorship through appeal proceedings. At the time, many publications and authors, especially those involved in the world of literature and poetry, argued that to engage in these proceedings was to compromise, to grant credibility to discredited state institutions.

Initial appeals were argued by the editors themselves, without the assistance of legal representatives. During the first WIP appeal, the chairman of the board warned a leather jacket-clad editor with crash helmet in tow that his arguments defamed the publications directorate! But the appeal succeeded, and two issues were unbanned.

Within a year of the first WIP appeal, more and more publications were following the same route in an attempt both to survive, and contest and broaden the space for legal publishing.

WIP scored some notable successes in these proceedings. Apart from successfully challenging a number of bannings, it was able to make limited inroads into Publications Act committees declaring material undesirable for obviously trivial or untenable reasons. For example, in the case of Work In Progress 7, a closely-typed publication of 92 pages, the committee's full argument for declaring the publication undesirable read as follows: 'The publication as a whole creates the impression of being an attempt to sow doubts in the minds of blacks regarding their relationship with the mainly white authorities. The illustrations support this views (sic)'.

Following a series of successful appeals, including the overturning of a committee's deci-

sion that WIP could no longer be published because all future issues were undesirable, the magazine was not subject to banning for a number of years. However, a 1986 edition has recently been declared 'undesirable', and the publishers have lodged an appeal.

Despite the limited victories won in battle against censorship, WIP, like all South African publications, has always been severely restricted in what it can publish. Apart from the current media regulations promulgated under state of emergency provisions, a myriad of more-obviously permanent legislation has precluded publication of material in a wide range of important fields, including resistance to apartheid, police and army actions, allegations of ongoing torture of detainees, armaments, prisons, nuclear developments, destabilisation of neighbouring countries, and the like.

The first ten years

The first decade of Work In Progress covers a rich, complex and dynamic period in the struggle to transform South Africa. Organised resistance and opposition both to apartheid and to exploitative and oppressive capitalist structures are considerably more developed than before, although a change in state power is not on the agenda at present.

WIP has never aimed to be comprehensive in its treatment of the unfolding dynamics, actors and institutions which are central to South African society. As a magazine coming out five times a year on average over its ten years of existence, this would have been impossible.

But in a number of important areas, WIP has shown, and continues to show, significant weakness. In the area of women and the women's question, we have published some articles. But a systematic approach and sensitivity to gender issues has been lacking. In much the same way, material has appeared on the economy and Southern Africa. But again, a coherent and thorough approach to dynamics, events and debates in these areas has been absent.

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We hope to see a post-apartheid society, and to play as progressive and constructive a role then as we believe we do now

We have sometimes been weak on important areas of debate and discussion. In particular, the trade union debates of the late 1970s and early 1980s over registration, participation in industrial courts, use of legal processes to win victories and the like were inadequately discussed and formulated in the publication. In-depth analysis of the Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions were also missing from WIP pages. The older South African Labour Bulletin was the vehicle for the most comprehensive and useful material on these issues.

Some of the concerns of the earlier issues of WIP were shifted to another SARS publication, the South African Review, in the early 1980s, in a move to cater more adequately for a readership wanting more detailed information and analysis than a magazine can provide. And the welcome growth of specialist progressive publications in fields like health, law, detention and forced removals has changed the focus and nature of WIP's coverage.

The magazine and its staff have changed over the years. The first editions were produced on a portable manual typewriter in Yeoville flats and Sunnyside semis. They were typed, paid for and distributed largely by two editors with almost no experience in publishing.

But the acquisition of permanent offices, better equipment and new skills have changed WIP only in form and degree. The concern with progressive politics and trade unionism, strategies for change, and the organisational and class actors who promote or impede the transformation of apartheid society remain.

The future shape of South Africa remains the subject of an intense battle between competing classes, interests and powers, and its outcome is far from clear. But whatever the shape of post-apartheid South Africa, an independent and vibrant press free of the constraints imposed in contemporary South Africa will be as vital then as it is now.

WIP hopes to see a post-apartheid society, and to play as progressive and constructive role then as we believe it does now.

Message from the National Education Crisis Committee

Happy birthday to Work In Progress!

WIP's 10th anniversay comes at a time when the crisis in education has not abated. Many of the educational demands of our people are still not met. People's education is under harsh attack. NECC leadership, students and members of parent-teacher-student associations are still in detention. Teachers are still being harassed.

The NECC extends fraternal greetings to WIP. The challenges of present South Africa demand that all progressives must stand together against racism. We have to organise constantly, and build up our democratic structures.

Through analysis, discussion and exchange of views, WIP has a role in piercing the smokescreen of false reform being offered in South Africa today.

Forward to people's education.

To
Work In Progress

The
SOUTH AFRICAN
COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

wishes you many blessings on your 10th anniversary. May the Lord give you strength and courage to carry on your good work in the cause for the struggle for liberation of the oppressed masses of this country.

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR
50TH ISSUE

Issued by: SACC, Khotso House, De Villiers Street, Johannesburg 2001

COSATU message of support to Work In Progress

INTELLECTUALS HAVE A VITAL ROLE TO PLAY

The mass struggles of the working class and the people have reached new heights. The organised labour movement under COSATU has come of age and today stands as one of the important pillars of the democratic movement.

Many progressive intellectuals have played their part in building this movement. They have helped in shaping a coherent understanding of South Africa's crisis and in developing a progressive interpretation of our history. They have encouraged critical debate on the goals and strategies of the democratic struggle.

In recent months there has been growing debate on the role of intellectuals and theoretical journals. Our statements have been interpreted as being critical of them. Our views must, however, be seen in the context of sharpening mass democratic struggle in our country. We believe there is an urgent need for intellectuals to locate themselves more centrally in the mass democratic movement. This has become more urgent today, when the forces of imperialism and the apartheid state are launching a determined attack on those fighting for the fundamental restructuring of our society.

This year, the working class has experienced some of the most brutal attacks ever. Our buildings have been bombed. Thousands have been detained or arrested. Hundreds have been injured and many killed through security force and vigilante action. Tens of thousands of workers have been dismissed following capital's iron-fist response to legitimate worker demands. Campaigns like our Living Wage campaign have been branded a 'communist plot', our rallies have been banned and our publications banned and seized.

Our response should be to consolidate working-class politics and defend ourselves as a democratic movement. The left intelligentsia therefore has an urgent responsibility to critically evaluate its role in building and defending working-class positions.

We believe the clampdown on the progressive media and the campaign to discredit progressive academics is directly linked to the brutal attacks against COSATU and the mass democratic movement. To effectively resist these attacks, we need a united response that can only be achieved by a fusion of theory and the militant struggles on the ground.

Intellectuals have a vital role to play in sharing theoretical skills; in providing useful and scientific research; in academic work for a future South Africa; and in contributing to debates on labour and within the broader democratic movement.

In achieving this, one must build democratic practice and broad accountability. The cult of individualism must be fought in the ranks of all democrats. Our greatest contribution to working-class politics is to build democratic practices. Only by contributing in this way will we ensure a truly democratic society, free from the chains of poverty, racism and exploitation.

We salute the contribution that WIP has made in this respect, and call on all democratic intellectuals to seriously address the issues we have raised.

Message from the United Democratic Front

In the last decade a rich history of struggle has unfolded in our country. WIP has been part of that history, part of the ups and downs of our struggle, by promoting debate and discussion around many issues.

Today, WIP and many other anti-apartheid publications are under threat. We in the UDF regard this attack on the press as an attack on the democratic movement as a whole. We call on all progressive publications, together with our mass-based organisations, to unite and resist state attacks, censorship and propaganda. Our trade unions, civics, youth, student and women's organisations must see the attacks on the press as attacks on the entire democratic movement.

Journals like WIP must increasingly reflect the fact that they are part of the movement for democracy. We hope that WIP will increasingly provide a forum to give dynamic expression to the struggles, direction and perspectives of the masses of ordinary people in our country, as represented in their democratic organisations.

Happy Fighters

We have the flair, but you have the stamina.
Hope you're around for extra time...

PLANACT

thanks WIP for keeping us well informed and abrest of critical debate, and wishes WIP strength for the future.

PLANACT is concerned with housing and development and works with progressive organisations

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The Foundation for Peace and Justice

congratulates

WORK IN PROGRESS

on its 10th anniversary and wishes it many years of service to our people.

In a repressive society the struggle for a free press is part of the overall struggle for a free, democratic and just South Africa.
Congratulations to WIP for 10 years of committment to a free press.

SA's new music paper

Bits

Published by The Graphic Equaliser

The Transvaal Rural Action Committee (TRAC) congratulates WIP on its 10th anniversary and 50th issue, and salutes its commitment to regular publication and debate in the face of the current onslaught on the alternative media.

Congratulations to Work In Progress on 10 years and 50 editions.

From the staff of the Labour Research Service
Cape Town

NAMDA

National Medical and Dental Association

In a repressive society, the struggle for a free press is part of the overall struggle for a free, democratic and just South Africa. Congratulations to WIP for 10 years of commitment to a free press.

For 10 years WIP has provided a forum to stimulate debate on the crucial issues facing the progressive movement.

OASSA

An organisation of progressive mental health practitioners.

The Five Freedoms Forum

congratulates Work In Progress for 10 years of in-depth and critical thought and courageous editorial policy.

The BLACK SASH upholds the principle of press freedom. We congratulate WIP on its 10th birthday. We believe WIP has made an invaluable contribution to political debate in South Africa

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Human Awareness Programme

We congratulate WIP on 10 years of political debate reflection and analysis.

EDA

(Environmental and Development Agency)

For 10 years WIP has provided a forum to stimulate debate on the crucial issues facing the progressive movement.

Re-examining the middle ground

In the backwash from the massive wave of semi-insurrectionary resistance to apartheid, a number of ripples are discernible. They converge in recognising the short-term failure to weaken apartheid rule seriously. DAVID NIDDRIE looks at some important international tendencies, and GEORGINA JAFFEE examines recent developments in internal white opposition.

For more than a year, both the Soviet Union and the United States have been signalling their mounting impatience with the failure of local and international initiatives to end apartheid's destabilising effects on Southern Africa.

That impatience, whatever its differences in motivation, has lead to a steady convergence of superpower foreign policy on the region.

An adequate appreciation of what this means for South Africa, and why it has come about, requires recognition of South Africa's modest position on the totem pole of international priorities.

For the Soviet Union, says Victor Goncharov, deputy director of the USSR's Institute for African Studies, 'the most immediate foreign policy priority (is) the prevention of nuclear war'. Put another way, the USSR's relationship with the United States is its top priority.

Washington concurs - although Ronald Reagan's enthusiasm for lurid public posturing on the Soviet 'evil empire' puts that relationship in a somewhat different perspective.

For both, the importance accorded other foreign policy issues is determined by the priority given to their relationship.

And although post-1976 developments in South Africa have nudged the country into the international spotlight, it remains at the edge of that spotlight and, for both superpowers, more of a potential than a real problem.

Apartheid and regional instability

Nor is it apartheid itself that primarily concerns the world powers, however morally repugnant the policy may be. It is the destabilising impact of apartheid on the region, and the instabilities as a potential stumbling block in the way of their foreign policy priorities.

In a 29 September speech to the Business Council for International Understanding, US secretary of state George Schultz singled out 'instability throughout Southern Africa' as the major material impact of apartheid.

'While apartheid exists, cross-border violence will continue, economies will be dislocated and outside intervention encouraged', he argued.

Likewise his deputy on African affairs, Chester Crocker, said two days later that 'the sad price for individual blows against the symbols of apartheid is likely to be long-term instability in the region'.

For Washington, the need to end apartheid is determined by the regional instability it causes and the 'outside (read Soviet) intervention' it brings with it, although for Shultz there is a bonus: 'In opposing apartheid there is no conflict between our ideals and our interests'.

The Soviets are similarly motivated. Ongoing regional instability inevitably gains 'an east-west character', largely through a US attempt to challenge Soviet 'influence' with Stinger missiles to UNITA's Savimbi, and the like.

With a greater emphasis on the need to ease its relationship with the US, the Soviets place greater importance in keeping Southern Africa out of the superpower stakes. Says Goncharov's fellow Soviet Institute for African Studies deputy director Gleb Starushenko: 'The USSR

does not participate in exploitation of natural or manpower resources in the countries of the region, has no mines nor factories on their territory...(and is) not affected by any changes in political or economic life in the region'.

And Goncharov: 'The Soviet Union has no vital interests in the region...and no desire to...interrupt those traditional ties between some countries of Southern Africa and some western powers'.

Militarily too, the Soviet academics are keen to avoid seeing Southern Africa as a site of possible superpower rivalry. They reject the much-vaunted Cape sea route as a quaint throw-back to World War Two, rather than a potential area of conflict in the missile-launched destruction a third world war would bring with it.

Strategically, neither side wishes to see further escalation of conflict in the region. From widely differing perspectives, both want to see it cool down.

Broadening the anti-apartheid alliance

Goncharov and Starushenko, in fact, see the area as a possible site of co-operation, although they do not think this could be seriously addressed until after Reagan's term ends, and with it, hopefully, Washington's current anti-Soviet xenophobia.

But the destabilisation, both sides realise, will not end until Pretoria no longer feels forced to deny the African National Congress safe bases in the countries along South Africa's borders. And that will not cease until apartheid is ended - or at least trimmed down to acceptable limits.

Here too superpower policies converge, with both arguing strongly, although again from differing positions, on the need for substantial broadening of the opposition forces ranged against Pretoria and, eventually, a negotiated end to apartheid.

For the two Soviet academics, the need to broaden the anti-apartheid alliance is based on an assessment that, without it, 'the struggle against apartheid may lose momentum and even bog down at the present pre-revolutionary stage'.

Starushenko observed, more than a year ago, that 'the main participants in anti-racist action are students and the unemployed... The broad masses of the black population... stay aloof'.

To encourage more general support for the ANC-led struggle, he argued then for the creation of a two-chamber post-apartheid parliament, the upper chamber elected on a racial basis, with each 'group' exercising the right of veto.

More recently, apparently in the belief that the struggle has, for the time being at least, 'bogged down' in a pre-revolutionary stage, Starushenko argued that Chief Gatsha Buthelezi's Inkatha should be part of future negotiations: in effect that it should be encouraged to sit on the ANC's side of the table and, before it gets there, take a less ambiguous position towards 'the forces of national liberation'.

Both academics believe that 'the real compromise' would have to be achieved by the South African government and the 'forces of national liberation', and are consistent in their endorsement of the ANC's right to engage in armed struggle. They also emphasise that the USSR will continue to back the ANC's military challenge to apartheid: 'if we think it (armed struggle) is useless, then we won't give anything', Goncharov said, adding that the Soviet Union was not about to withdraw such support.

But at the same time, Goncharov spoke of the need for greater 'flexibility, objectivity' and less use of 'dogmatic formulations'.

In summary, the Soviet position is thus: It does not matter how *right* you are, results are what count. So take a long hard look at your chances, and adjust your tactics accordingly.

And while the Soviets may have no objection to a successful ANC-led insurrection - although this might encourage a more direct US involvement - they cannot see it happening, particularly not within a time-scale that would suit Moscow's current strategic need to end or limit the arms race.

Goncharov and Starushenko, with different emphases, see a need to both strengthen the ANC's 'stable political organisation' internally, and for greater imagination in 'widening the cleavage...in the privileged groups' and in drawing off 'the white bourgeoisie' and the 'white middle and lower strata' from the ruling bloc.

This remains, both academics emphasise, at the level of 'advice'.

The US, according to Goncharov, is, by contrast, prepared to go a lot further even

under Reagan, and is willing to 'deliver' Pretoria to the negotiating table in exchange for a similar delivery by the Soviets of the ANC - with a Soviet-enforced compromise on group rights.

The US assessment of the possibilities of change is also based on the belief that an end to apartheid, and thus the irritant factor of Southern Africa, requires a substantial strengthening of anti-apartheid forces and winning more whites to an 'acceptable' anti-apartheid position. But for the US, this should not necessarily be under the leadership of the ANC.

Crocker's 1 October speech was emphatic on armed struggle: 'The great future we envisage (for South Africa)...cannot be realised by revolutionary upheaval nor by cross-border forays. These aspirations can only be achieved by breaking down...profound distrust that divides South Africans, black and white'.

Practical steps suggested by both Schultz and Crocker remain very much within the context of US and Soviet 'delivery' of 'their' people to the negotiating table. And the Schultz vision of the future is - despite his disclaimer that 'it is not up to us to prescribe' - absolutely prescriptive. But there is a marked change in the US view of the forces which will be responsible for change.

Schultz referred with some warmth to the development of 'black leadership, black economic strength and black organisational skill... Movements such as the United Democratic Front, Inkatha and AZAPO are evidence of these changes'.

He referred to 'black education, community mobilisation, labour organisation and human rights advocacy' as 'essential building blocks in the foundation of a non-racial democratic South Africa'.

By contrast, and in marked contradiction to the constructive engagement terminology of the past, he was markedly cool about Pretoria's willingness to engineer reforms. The explicit laying out of a unmistakably democratic blueprint for an acceptable post-apartheid constitution also indicates a marked change from past cautious approval of each 'reform' Pretoria produced.

But, said Crocker two days later, 'if South Africans are to move beyond this critical first step (of Dakar-type talks), dialogue must be deepened and broadened beyond the vanguards of rapprochement to encompass those who wield the power to move from talk'.

Washington's assessment - arrived at from a point directly opposite from the Soviet starting point - can by summarised thus: Pretoria will not end apartheid and its regional consequences, so we must identify someone who can. That 'someone' involves a range of political and economic interests which suffer, to varying degrees, from apartheid or the varying international reactions to it.

Post-constructive engagement policy appears to consist of encouraging those groups to get moving and produce some results. When they have gone as far as they can, Washington will step in with a multi-sided negotiating table and 'deliver' Pretoria.

These somewhat wordy superpower analyses converge and link up with the current turbulence in the South African political middle-ground (or on the left of white South African politics). This is in the recognition that to weaken the position of the country's rulers sufficiently to force them to negotiate will require a substantial realignment of white politics.

Realignments in internal opposition

From elsewhere too are coming powerful arguments for a major realignment of the internal opposition to Botha's government. New organisational initiatives and political trends are emerging within white politics and in parts of the white community. They are apparent on two levels. The first is indicated by changes within parliamentary politics. These began in the turmoil of the election with the development of 'independent' candidates who had left the Nationalist Party and formed the Independent Movement.

Only months earlier, Frederick van Zyl Slabbert, leader of the white opposition Progressive Federal Party, and Alex Borraine, a senior PFP member of parliament, had shocked parliament with their resignations and effective dismissal of white parliamentary politics. After the white elections showing a swing to the right, with the PFP faring poorly, the party suffered another blow when MP Jan van Eck left the PFP to sit as an independent.

Then came the recent breakaway of other PFP members, when Peter Gastrow, Pierre Cronje and Pieter

Schoeman joined up with Wynand Malan's independents to form the National Democratic Movement (NDM). While the NDM is to the right of the PFP on a number of issues, notably detention without trial, it places far greater emphasis on the need to combine parliamentary and extra-parliamentary activities in opposing apartheid.

The second manifestation of changing trends in white politics was revealed in the spirit and themes which emerged at the conference of the Five Freedoms Forum, held from 25 to 27 September in Johannesburg. This conference, which addressed itself to the role of whites in South Africa, was attended by over a thousand people, more than 600 of them white, ready to think about and act on new ways to overcome the crisis facing apartheid South Africa. The gathering attracted speakers from a large number of different constituencies representing white, black and non-racial organisations.

At the end of the conference, a unanimous resolution suggested that the time was right for a broad-based initiative to mobilise whites with the goal of ending apartheid and establishing a non-racial democracy.

The meeting brought together a wide range of people from different political and social contexts. Participants included members of the Progressive Federal Party, the Independent Movement, business interests, industrial relations consultants, human rights groups, church organisations and white activists. Proceedings were also addressed by trade unionists and representatives from the United Democratic Front.

The conference was organised by a number of key human rights, professional and white political organisations which have co-ordinated their efforts to reach out towards the white community over the last two years. The willingness of large numbers of whites to participate in such a forum has its origins in the changing political climate. The state of emergency first declared in 1985, the result of the white elections, the government's stalling of reform and the increased influence of black opposition in creating new scenarios for change, has left many white South African wanting change but confused and uncertain of their role, if any, in that change.

Frederick van Zyl Slabbert, ex-PFP, and active campaigner for dialogue between white and black anti-apartheid activists.

Many have left the country, deciding they have none. Others have become disillusioned with formal party politics.

From 'concerned citizens' to 'five freedoms'

These sentiments were recognised and acted on by a coalition of white activist and human rights groups who joined forces to fight the state of emergency in 1985. The Concerned Citizens group combined resources and organised a number of public meetings. A sense of confusion and concern was noticed at these meetings. The coalition's activities widened during the second state of emergency where it decided to focus on providing information about the white general election.

In March 1986, Concerned Citizens launched itself as the Five Freedoms Forum. Founding alliance members were the Anglican Board of Social Responsibility, the Anti-Censorship Action Group, Black Sash, the Catholic Church's Commission for Justice and Peace, Concerned Social Workers, Democratic Lawyers Association, Detainees Parents Support Committee, End Conscription Campaign, Jews for Social Justice, Johannesburg Democratic Action Committee, Lawyers for Human Rights, National Medical and Dental Association, National Union of South African Students, National Education Union of SA, Women for Peace, and the Young Christian Students.

The five freedoms - freedom from want, from fear, from discrimination, and freedom of speech, of association and of conscience, represent freedoms basic to any democratic society. They were adopted as part of the manifesto of the forum, which aimed to draw together a broad coalition of opposition groups. The forum began by using public meetings to raise questions and concerns about the election. It did not call people out to vote for any particular party, or at all, being more concerned to educate voters about issues in the election and national politics.

The work of the forum increased after the elections when it began exploring aspects of the manifesto which not only set out the five freedoms, but encouraged whites to stay in South Africa, and contribute to building a undivided democratic nation.

According to the Detainees Parents Support Committee's David Webster, one of the organisations affiliated to the Five Freedoms Forum, meetings of this sort were 'a watershed - a lot of new people attended, showing that there was a community which could be mobilised. People showed a real need to participate and become involved'.

Within this context the Five Freedoms Forum decided to organise a conference so as to understand the sentiments of other white communities in the country. It was seen as primarily consultative, to decide where to move next. However, the meeting went far beyond this.

Themes emerged and developed which provided pointers and indications of the mood prevalent amongst some whites and demonstrating that a new alliance may be possible.

Recognition that as broad an alliance as possible should be formed to fight apartheid was the most important of these to emerge. There was broad consensus that this was more important than any of the differences which may exist within the white community. This unity aims not only to strive to fight for the end of apartheid and the establishment of a non-racial democracy, but in this process to unite people from different communities, delegates argued. This will begin bridging the divisions created by apartheid.

It was recognised that apartheid had created real prejudices and fears amongst whites and that these have to be consciously broken down.

While the ability to unite large numbers of whites in the struggle against apartheid is one step in isolating the government further, several speakers at the conference noted that the government is still in an extremely powerful position. Slabbert made the point that one 'should not confuse loss of legitimacy with lack of control - the opposite is often the case'. Jan van Eck spoke of the power of government to co-opt, enabling it to convince the white electorate that change is in process.

These points have frequently been underestimated by white and black opposition groups whose politics have often reflected premature optimism over the potential for the opposition forces to take over the state through insurrectionary policies.

Hastening the negotiation process

This attitude seems to be

shifting. The state of emergency has resulted in the severe weakening of all opposition organisations. This has forced radical groupings to more seriously examine mobilisation of the white community as an important component in the process of weakening the government. One way of doing this is to be politically attractive to the constituency to be mobilised.

Another theme to emerge in conference debates was the necessity to break down apartheid in order to begin negotiations.

This was brought up by a number of speakers, echoing the call that has been made for many years by black opposition movements. Eric Molobi of the National Education Crisis Committee noted that black political groupings 'have no desire to perpetuate the injustices which we have suffered through apartheid...but that whites must play a part in making sure that this future comes about'. An End Conscription Campaign member Mike Evans argued the task of the white initiative is to hasten the process of negotiation.

In between the varied speeches which echoed these sentiments, participants at workshops discussed concrete activities in which they could involve themselves. The ability to introduce people to organisations focusing on apartheid society in an attempt to promote change was made easier by the existence of progressive organisations which are becoming more established in the areas of health, education, conscription resistance and detention monitoring. These have developed greatly over the last few years and are now in a position to absorb new members. The conference provided a way of extending their networks so as to incorporate a broader group of people.

Wynand Malan: leader of the New Democratic Movement

The participation in and endorsement by mainstream resistance organisations at the conference indicated support for an active white role in the struggle for a democratic non-racial South Africa.

Azhar Cachalia of the United Democratic Front called on all whites to break with apartheid and stand by democratic movement. Opposition organisations are, according to Cachalia, anxious to 'address those fears' which whites hold about the future, but will only be able to do so if whites 'are prepared to stand with us and share our suffering'.

Combining forces in a broad commitment to break with apartheid could become strained if more radical components begin making demands on the more moderate elements of the alliance.

Keeping the alliance together, and the building of links with moderate forces with their own agenda, may conflict with other political forces.

In the course of the Five Freedoms weekend there was little discussion on the type of future society envisaged. An oft-expressed view was that getting rid of racial discrimination and deregulating the economy will suffice. This position is likely to conflict in the future with other forces in the society, particularly with some sectors of organised labour which have long questioned the free enterprise system.

As the ECC's Mike Evans pointed out, other issues will eventually have to be debated such as 'the question of post-apartheid economic structure, and the precise shape of democratic institutions'.

Once these debates emerge, it will require both imaginative and confident leadership by the national democratic movement to retain the loyalty of more moderate and hesitant elements within the alliance.

But in the meantime, both the National Democratic Movement and the constituency attracted by the Five Freedoms indicate that white initiatives to further isolate the government and deliver it to the negotiating table are being more seriously addressed as one component of a broader attempt to resolve the crisis of apartheid society.

Organising public sector transport workers

The South African Railways and Harbours Workers Union gained thousands of members after the three-month SATS strike earlier this year. GREG RUITERS interviewed Sello Ntai, SARHWU's general secretary, about the union's development since the strike

How did you get involved in SARHWU?

I was born in 1955, in the Transkei. My father was a migrant worker employed by the railways in Durban.

While at school I began to question the role of the prefect system, comparing it with the induna system and conditions of employment on the railways. Although my father desired that I should go to university, I realised that a role had to be played by someone with education in trying to change conditions on the railways.

I joined my father in 1980 as a labourer and found myself labelled as a 'kaffir' and a 'terrorist'. I was transferred to a remote place but at that point I left the railways and became active in the union movement and in organising railway workers.

Could you give us an insight into conditions of work in the South African Transport Services (SATS)?

Conditions are very bad. After five years' service a worker can apply for permanency. But most workers do not know this because they cannot read, and the information is provided in English or Afrikaans. So you find a worker with 30 years service who is still temporarily employed.

Racism is rife, with the foreman or supervisor being a 'baas' who has the power to fire workers. There is only a disciplinary procedure for workers to be punished but no grievance procedure. This breeds hatred.

And SATS employees are not covered by the Labour Relations Act and do not have access to the industrial court. There is no fairness in the procedures.

There are as many blacks as whites employed but in 1984, for example, only four blacks were apprenticed as opposed to 1 904 whites.

Parity moves by SATS do not address these problems.

The workplace environment is characterised by hatred between the white supervisors and the workers and this has turned the workplace into a political sphere.

The hatred leads to many unnecessary deaths. But even though conditions are so harsh there are many examples of black workers saving the lives of whites on the job.

The medical scheme is very poor. SATS doctors compel ill workers to return to work or lose their jobs. Only two weeks' paid sick leave a year are allowed.

Many workers do skilled work but are not paid for it. The rewards go to the supervisors. No white worker is supervised by a black person.

What about the situation in the hostels?

Conditions are inhuman. A percentage of earnings is deducted for food, although all workers get the same bad food. When a worker works overtime he finds that more money is deducted because of the percentage system, but the quality and quantity of the food remains the same. As a result of the poor food provided, workers are forced to buy food at shops owned by SATS in the compound.

No females are allowed in the hostels, so the men drink liquor a lot because of frustrations. And only meetings of management's chosen union, BLATU (Black Trade Union), are allowed on hostel premises.

Has SATS adhered to the agreement made between it and legal representatives of the union after the strike?

It may be that the top management was serious about the agreement. But the message from above is not automatically implemented by lower-level supervisors and foremen who are hardened racists. The foremen simply disregard the disciplinary procedures which SATS itself designed. There is no effective communication between top and lower level management.

In areas where the union is strong enough, workers can force local management to stick to agreements. And work-

ers who went on strike have not lost pension, travel and medical benefits as a result of the strike. However, we believe that these benefits are not privileges but normal rights and should not be used by management.

How does SARHWU evaluate the three-months strike and SATS' eventual reinstatement of striking workers?

The strike was bad for both parties, and could have been avoided if SATS was prepared to be fair. It was not the union but years of pain and suffering which led to the strike.

Union membership grew rapidly after the strike — from 9 000 to 40 000 — because of the desire of rail workers for an organisation which could properly represent them.

Whereas in 1982 SATS was able to simply fire 600 striking General Workers Union members in Port Elizabeth, this time conditions were very different.

SATS was being advised by the state's national security management system (NSMS), and was aware of the serious political consequences of its action. And SARHWU is a national union, with workers in centres like Pretoria and Cape Town prepared to take action in support of striking colleagues.

As a result of community anger about the way management handled the strike, SATS lost millions in damages to coaches. The union is strongly community-based and is affiliated to the UDF.

Most SATS workers come from the rural areas as migrants, and their wives and children were also organised by the strike. To sack 18 000 militant workers would have created severe political problems for the state in a number of areas. COSATU's Unemployed Workers Co-ordinating Committee played a vital role in reducing scabbing so that white schoolkids had to be employed by management as a last resort.

These jobs which they did are in many cases 'dirty' and very strenuous, but without them SATS cannot function. Skilled workers like the train drivers take six months to train. At what expense could they be fired?

In taking back the skilled workers SATS had to take everyone because of our unity.

SATS is aware that its labour practices are out of step with the rest of the country and its experts were advising changes to prevent strikes like ours. Other parastatals like SASOL and ISCOR negotiate with unions like SARHWU, so why not SATS?

'Sats is aware that its labour practices are out of step with the rest of the country, and its experts were advising changes to prevent strikes like ours'

But even if SATS had not faced reality and refused reinstatement, SARHWU would not have disappeared. We are here to stay.

SARHWU is affiliated to the UDF and some see this as an added barrier to the union being recognised by SATS.

What is the union's view?

Workers are employees and also living in oppressed communities. Especially in SATS, on the mines and in agriculture, workers are exposed to terrible racism.

The UDF was not formed as a political organisation but as an anti-apartheid front. As a union organising in SATS we have a direct interest in opposing apartheid.

The most oppressed workers have an interest in full and direct leadership of the anti-apartheid front. Which other class can solve these problems?

If we are not in the UDF other classes with different interest will lead it. If we are fighting for a classless society, then the very people exploited must lead.

And finally, membership of the UDF does not mean that normal trade unionism cannot take place to the fullest.

How has the union coped with the recent flood of membership?

New structures and new sections such as the legal department have to be fully staffed. Hundreds of workers join every day and the membership is being computerised. We have branch offices in Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town, Germiston, Springs, Kroonstad, East London, Bloemfontein, Kimberley, Pretoria and the Vaal.

New technology and its effects on workers is being researched.

In Natal, Inkatha members have joined the union. We do not criticise Inkatha members, but we criticise Inkatha for misleading the workers.

Many people forget that if you want to have a field or a house in Natal, you must have an Inkatha card. You are forced to be a member.

What about the proposed merger with the Transport and General Workers Union?

The policy of one union, one industry is SARHWU policy. SARHWU is a pure industrial union whereas TGWU organises in private transport as well as cleaning and security workers.

We are looking forward to one national transport union. The alliance of bosses across the private and state transport requires a strong transport union.

There will have to be specialised departments to deal with the specific problems of state-sector transport. The militancy of the SATS workers is an inspiration to all, but we have very special problems as we are employed by the state. A federal structure of all state sector workers or a strong alliance between posts and telecommunications, local municipalities, railways, hospitals and education workers is required in order to win full trade union rights in the public sector.

The union recently warned the minister of transport that to continue ignoring SARHWU could provoke a dangerous situation. What has the response from SATS been?

We want to avoid a major confrontation and we really want to talk to management. We sent a memo to SATS outlining our position. All we got in reply was a letter acknowledging receipt of our memo and no commitment to speak to us.

We want the world to know that we are doing everything to avoid a confrontation. We will not allow ourselves to be provoked into strikes which could lead to the union being crushed. We are not threatening SATS with a strike.

Almost everyday we send out telexes to SATS and the police urging the release of our members. Some have been released but 40 are still being detained under section 29 of the Internal Security Act.

But SATS does not want to face the fact that the sweetheart BLATU is not accepted and is incapable of representing workers.

What about trying to change BLATU from within?

BLATU was started by management after the 1982 strike by 600 General Workers Union members in Port Elizabeth. Its constitution was not drawn up by the workers but by SATS. BLATU is no different from liaison committees chosen by management. And it is very difficult to change something formed by the system.

BLATU was formed through the induna system which is management's creation.

We are looking forward to one national transport union. The alliance of bosses across the private sector and state transport requires a strong transport union

It is mainly Natal-based, and acts as a policing and disciplining agent for SATS. A BLATU official at Durban station who was being questioned by angry workers took out a gun, fired into the air and ran away.

How can an official in a meeting carry a gun?

BLATU is management in disguise. The whole point of BLATU is to divert workers from genuine unionism.

Most of our members are also BLATU members, I will not deny that. But it would not be easy for BLATU to organise SARHWU members.

When you join the railways you automatically become a member of BLATU. This is now being challenged as workers resign from BLATU.

What is the union doing to try to gain recognition from SATS?

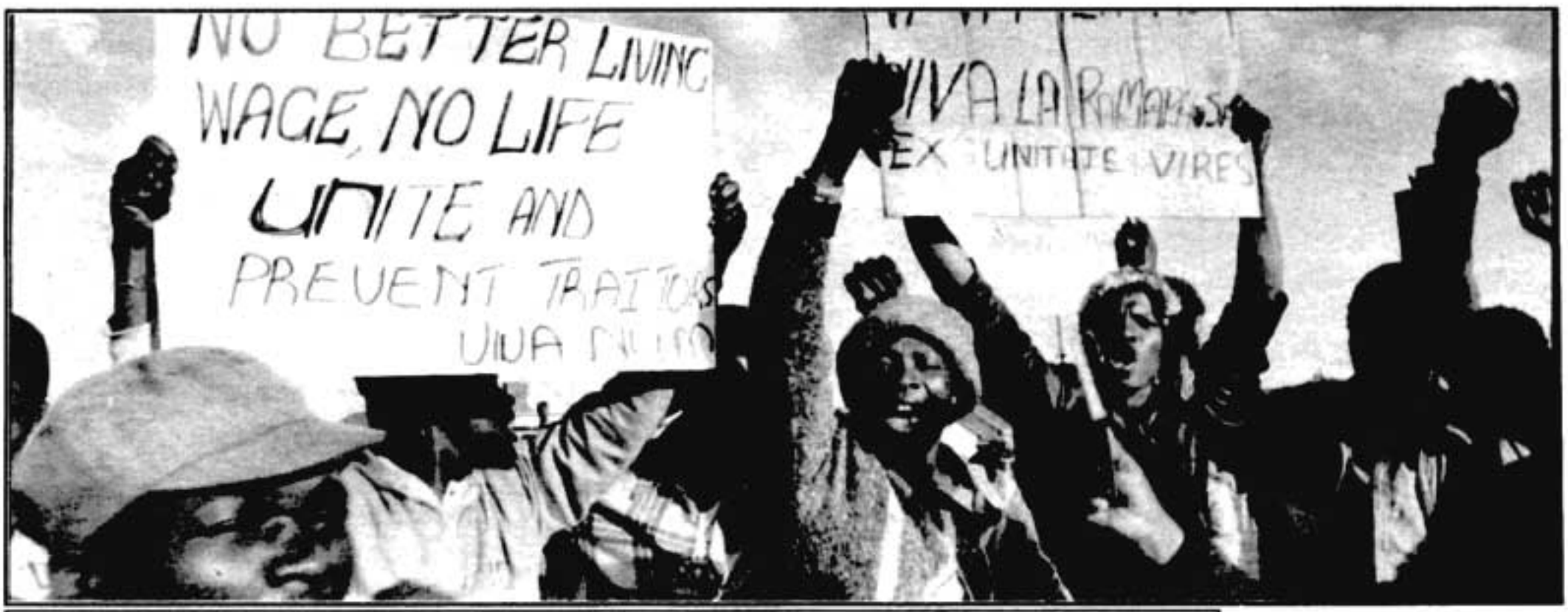
We have organised almost all the workers in the Southern Transvaal and in other areas we are strong, although not in every department. We keep on informing management of day-to-day problems of the workers.

But the main thing we are pushing for now is a national ballot. We are also demanding all the rights offered by management to the staff associations like BLATU.

Workers are insisting that deductions from wages for union membership are now sent to SARHWU, not BLATU. If management agrees to this, it cannot refuse to recognise the union.

SATS is currently just treading water, while organisationally we have progressed beyond our expectations. Even some sympathetic white workers want to join the union. We are optimistic.

After the strike



In the struggle for elementary rights in the workplace and broader society, workers pay a high price. Both capital and the state equally inflict their blows on the working class.

The miners' strike involved a titanic battle between the Chamber of Mines and the National Union of Mineworkers. GREG RUITERS looks at the implications of the strike.

The National Union of Mineworkers is five years old, and said to be the fastest growing union in the world: in June 1987 it had a paid up membership of 262 000. NUM's coordination of over a quarter of a million mineworkers in recent disciplined strike action shows a significant depth of organisation, especially in the light of the union's rapid growth and the hostile environment in which it functions.

In allowing the dispute to end in strike action, the Chamber of Mines underestimated NUM's fighting capacity. Instead of a few days, the strike lasted three weeks - from 9 to 30 August. By the second week, both management and the union probably wanted an end to the action. But the chamber consistently refused to raise its wage offer, opting for mass dismissals rather than move closer to union demands for a 27% increase.

NUM officials believe that because the union showed its strength, management decided to test the extent and depth of worker support. In so doing, management 'painted itself into a corner'. To save face it was forced to stick to a strategy more suited to a 48-hour strike.

But the strike also had costs for the union. Weeks afterwards, NUM is battling to secure jobs for some 50 000 members fired during the strike. And union recognition has been withdrawn at Anglo's President Brand gold mine in what appears to be a hardening of management attitudes.

Mining and the economy

South Africa's economy is in a serious crisis period.

The manufacturing sector is declining, and the country is being downgraded to a lower-ranking third world economy depending largely on mineral exports.

South Africa's gross domestic product grew by only by 0,5% in 1986, after declining 1,1% in 1985.

According to government statistics, population growth is 3% annually: this

means the economy is not expanding to keep pace with growing population. And the average amount people earn (per capita income) is declining.

South Africa's foreign debt is R43-billion. Gold and coal, the chief earners of foreign exchange, now represent the battered economy's lifeline. A high rate of profit on the mines is crucial for the state: 40% of its earnings come from mine profits. The state's ability to pay its loans depends to a large extent on mining profitability and peaceful labour relations.

The recent strike cost mine owners R250-million and uncounted losses due to deterioration at unserviced mines. The huge strike further entrenched the image of South Africa as inherently unstable, a factor which discourages investment.

During the strike, the chamber stood firm on its final offer. Previously, NUM had dropped its wage demand from 55% to 30% and then to 27%, but management refused to move. After two conciliation board meetings the union suggested mediation or arbitration. Again the bosses refused.

At the same time, mines were making huge profits: record gold profits of R8 420-million in 1986 and coal profits of R989-million. The union repeatedly emphasised that its demands were reasonable. At the time of striking, management's offer was 23%, only 4% lower than NUM's demand. A 27% increase would not have hurt the mines financially. In fact the mines would have lost considerably less than what the strike eventually cost.

The chamber probably hoped to teach the miners a lesson, to demoralise and disorganise them, and so weaken the union. By attempting to inflict a defeat on the miners, capital as a whole was giving organised workers a message: concessions would only be made when it suited management, not won by worker militancy. And employers were signalling that they would even be prepared to take short-term losses in resisting union demands. Defeat of the mineworkers would, for capital, be a symbolic attack on the working class as a whole.

Anglo and the other mining houses own a large chunk of the economy. In sectors hard hit by recession, more strikes were undesirable. More importantly, mining profits balanced out losses elsewhere. So monopoly capital's response to NUM was not irrational, nor can it be explained in terms of conditions in the mining industry alone.

Recent studies suggest a shift away from migrant labour towards stabilisation of the workforce. Anglo has stated its opposition to the migrant system. To achieve a stable, localised workforce, mines have begun to provide limited family housing, and programmes aimed at improving productivity. But with wage increases for miners below inflation, and mine wages below wages in manufacturing, Anglo's commitment to ending migrant labour is questionable.

Declining real wages on the mines

In the early 1970s black miners' wages trebled in real terms, largely as a result of the soaring gold price which reached $700 an ounce in 1980. The ratio of white to black wages changed from 21:1 to 5:1. Despite this increase, mine wages were still below those in the manufacturing sector. Since 1975 no significant real wage increases were granted and by 1983 real wages were declining.

Anglo's 1982 decision to allow unions to recruit on its mines did not reflect a change of heart. With the rebirth of independent unions in 1973 and their rapid growth in 1981 especially, it became increasingly untenable for black miners to be left out while their fellow workers enjoyed considerable trade union rights. There were numerous wildcat strikes and no representative forum between management and the huge workforce, so Anglo took the unavoidable step.

Today, unlike most other countries except India, South African mines pay wages far below those in manufacturing. In urban areas, even the unemployed are reluctant to do mine work - only 100 people applied to a recruiting office in Soweto and it was soon closed. In Poland mine wages are 203% higher than in manufacturing; in Britain 121% higher. South African mines are the deepest, and the most dangerous (800 workers died in mine accidents in 1986 alone). By any standards, South African mines perpetuate conditions which are among the worst in the world today.

After the strike, NUM Assistant General Secretary Marcel Golding said the strike revealed the farce of industrial relations: the union found itself face to face with a

triple alliance of the SABC, financial institutions (the reserve bank froze overseas donations to the union, and banks which froze individual workers' bank accounts), and the police.

Proposed new labour legislation means unions will face even more severe legal constraints on their ability to pressurise management in disputes. These legal trappings threaten to bind unions hand and foot at a time when living standards are fast eroding and worker expectations and confidence are high.

Narrowly-defined union strategy, within the confines of an increasingly limited legality, and confined to single-industry bargaining, is unlikely to achieve even very modest goals in the future.

Workers pay a high price

The responses of mining capital to the strike reveal much about its political position. Mining interests were well-represented during liberal capital's flirtation with the liberation movement. COSATU Assistant General Secretary Sidney Mafumadi said of these self-proclaimed opponents of racism: 'Liberal businessmen have been unmasked. They too use repressive methods'.

The NUM strike goes some way to destroying the myth of a liberal anti-apartheid bourgeoisie which is likely to stand on the side of the oppressed. This does not mean efforts to reform apartheid on the part of certain sectors of capital are not real. But the strike gave an indication of how far they will go in their dealings with the working class.

In the struggle for elementary rights in the workplace and broader society, workers pay a high price. Under these conditions it becomes increasingly difficult to separate capital and the state, both of which equally inflict their blows against the working class.

Political movements leading the oppressed, of whom workers are the majority, will inevitably have to address a capitalism which seems incapable of offering even the most meagre economic reforms.

A failure in solidarity action

The NUM strike was the climax of COSATU's living wage campaign for 1987. The idea of a living wage was already current among labour organisation in 1973. But in 1987, thousands of workers supported COSATU's campaign and came out in support of the demand.

Examples include strikes at Pick 'n Pay, SATS, OK Bazaars, the national wage strike in the metal industry, the miners strike, as well as other action by thousands of organised and unorganised workers, especially in the public sector. Statistics show that strikes in the first half of 1987 alone exceeded the total for 1986.

The NUM strike on its own could not rock capital at its roots. But the same monopolies own both the big metal factories and the mines, and a combined strike may have put greater pressure on monopoly capital to give meaningful concessions. Instead, each union faced capital alone. And metal workers, having abandoned their wage strike when government intervention made it illegal, were unlikely to go on an illegal strike in solidarity with the mine workers.

COSATU General Secretary Jay Naidoo spoke of the lessons learned from the NUM strike: 'The breakdown in co-ordination of the campaign in all sectors allowed employers and the state to exploit weaknesses'. One of the most potent sources of strength of the union movement is the unity of organised labour across industries. This strength was not tapped and specific forms of action such as blacking, sympathy strikes and international support action were not prepared for.

COSATU only met two weeks into the mine strike to consider appropriate forms of support. According to Naidoo, 'There was a real weakness on our side in mobilising support for the miners'. Indeed, there was little evidence of significant support action.

High unemployment in the rural areas, and the availability of labour in neighbouring states made it easier for bosses to go ahead with mass dismissals. Naidoo suggests these problems must be addressed through the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity and the Southern African Development Co-ordinating Conference.

Individual unions which test their strength against the giants of monopoly capital face a formidable opponent. Without well co-ordinated and prepared support actions, unions can be forced into a situation where a continued strike could cripple the union.

With 500 arrested, hundreds injured, ten dead and numerous lockouts, NUM called off

the strike. The absence of significant solidarity and support must be added to the reasons for ending the action.

Internationalism is a vital component of workers struggle. Capital is an international force and can play workers of different countries off against each other. And international worker solidarity is often neglected as a crucial source of strength for workers.

The South African struggle has captured the interest of workers and anti-apartheid groups world-wide. The September issue of *NUM News* boldly asserts the slogan 'Workers of the world unite against the chamber'. But waging this kind of lengthy battle demands that principled international solidarity be harnessed to the maximum. Some five million members of the International Miners Organisation, through their national centres, expressed support in the form of donations and solidarity messages.

Setting the stage for the future

NUM has warned that miners will re-open the fight. Having flexed their muscles and seen their weak points, the union claims workers will come back stronger on the basis of evaluated strategies.

The strike was called off without management improving its original wage offer - 17% minimum increases and 23% maximum for different categories. Bosses have tried to use this to show workers that strikes do not succeed, and that even the biggest union had to back down.

The state saw the strike as a victory for its labour relations strategies: 'The labour legislation reforms have proved their worth', said the minister of manpower. And the state has signalled a retreat from more progressive labour relations with a new bill which drastically curtails labour action.

Management has seen NUM's potential and will no doubt be considerably better prepared for the next round. It remains to be seen whether the union will be able to take up this challenge. NUM believes that it is able to recover from losses quickly and address weak spots where strike action failed to occur. The union is now numerically weaker, and still has to ensure that 50 000 workers dismissed during the strike are reinstated. And platinum mines as well as Goldfields and Rand Mines are still to be organised.

Management will attempt to chip away at NUM's strength and frustrate the union's efforts to consolidate its membership. At President Brand gold mine, management charged that union shaftstewards were directly involved in the killing of team-leaders who did not take part in the strike. As a result, management withdrew all facilities and recognition of the union. NUM has vowed to contest the allegations. NUM repeated its denunciation of violence, and stressed its 'exemplary code of conduct during the 21-day strike'. The President Brand episode may be a signal of Anglo's intention to entangle NUM's resources and energy in disputes around issues like recognition and shaftstewards' rights.

Further counter-attacks by management have included closing of offices at Buffelsfontein, denying shaftstewards time off for meetings, and stringent control over the labour force. In the longer term mine owners are looking at rationalisation, closing unprofitable mines and greater mechanisation. With massive rural poverty, unemployment, and longer queues at TEBA offices, there is no shortage of unskilled labour to draw on.

The chamber's largest opponent has come of age, and the pressures are mounting. Employers' new 'get tough' policy is likely to be combined with selective offers of sops to sections of miners, especially those in skilled categories. These are the only workers who could take advantage of, for example, the chamber's housing offer.

The miners strike represents a turning point in South African labour relations. Harsh new labour legislation, a hardening of management attitudes, and greater labour militancy around COSATU, point to future battles.

In the past two years progressive unionism has come under severe attack. Union infrastructure has been weakened as offices have been bombed, officials and worker leadership detained or forced to live in hiding. *COSATU News*, the federation's mouthpiece has often been seized before it leaves the printers.

As the co-ordinating superstructure, COSATU has helped to generalise individual union struggles through actions like the living wage campaign. But strengthening both political and trade union organisation of workers is likely to be high on the federation's agenda next year.

Sarmcol forces rethink on industrial court

Striking BTR Sarmcol workers.

After a ten-month court case, 975 BTR Sarmcol workers have been told that their dismissal after a strike over union recognition was 'fair'. They will not be reinstated nor receive pay for the more than two years on strike. SHAREEN SINGH discusses the implications of this industrial court judgement.

For most workers in Mpophomeni township, the industrial court judgement in the BTR versus Metal and Allied Workers Union case represented the end of any hopes for future employment. Unemployment in Mpophomeni, where most of the ex-Sarmcol workers live, is 81,6%.

Important disclosures emerged during the ten-month hearing which ended on 10 September when judgement was given. Police intervention in the strike, and the court's bias against the union, showed that capital and the state were close allies when it came to crushing union organisation. And anti-democratic forces, in the form of the Inkatha-backed United Workers Union of South Africa (UWUSA), took advantage of this situation to gain members from among the scabs at BTR.

The court was evidently biased against the union from the start of the case. The way it interpreted and ignored evidence suggested a partial attitude to the company, BTR Sarmcol. And throughout, the court displayed a negative attitude to union witnesses. The Sarmcol judgement was received with shock by unionists, not only because of the negative outcome of the case they had thought they would win, but because of the court's harsh criticism of MAWU, its officials,

Much of the information in this article is based on a critique of the Sarmcol judgement prepared by the union and its legal advisers.

and trade union democracy.

The industrial court was established on the bases of recommendations from the Wiehahn Commission.

Unions believed it was a positive step in industrial relations. But the anti-union stance the court revealed in the Sarmcol hearing may lead unions to seek other avenues to settle disputes.

A management bias

The composition of the court, and the way it either glossed over or dismissed vital evidence submitted by the union, indicated a commitment to the protection of capitalist interests.

After the court's presiding officials were announced, MAWU's legal representatives were sceptical of the union's chances of an unbiased hearing. MAWU raised objection to the composition of the bench: the officers were all whites of Afrikaans extraction and were all associated with management at various levels. For example, CC de Witt is a 'part-time fee-earning management consultant'. In mid-trial, the court's presiding officer, advocate PE Roux, participated in a management seminar arranged by Andrew Levy and Associates. Levy is BTR's industrial relations consultant.

Evidence showed that BTR had acted on Andrew Levy's advice in dismissing its entire workforce. It appeared that Levy might be called as a witness. But in the end all MAWU's objections about the composition of the court and Roux's participation in the seminar were dismissed.

The final judgement appears to have ignored or glossed over vital evidence in support of the union. When advocate Martin Brassey cross-examined BTR administrative officer RJ Sampson, he asked whether it was the purpose of the company to 'smash' the union. Sampson replied: 'Sir, to some extent this is true...' This admission was not enough to prove to the court the company's intentions. The judgement instead stated that: 'BTR's attitude towards the union immediately after the dismissal and the company's willingness to re-employ all the dismissed workers belies such (union-smashing) intention'.

Throughout their struggle for recognition at BTR, workers were subject to police harassment and intimidation. Evidence before the court disclosed close co-operation between management and police in a 'union-busting' exercise. BTR admitted that company security personnel might have summoned the police on occasion, and that security may have allowed police to use company premises to interrogate union members. Company officials said they had met with local Howick police who assured them police were keeping a watch on the union's activities and sending 'representatives' to union meetings. None of these important facts were mentioned in the judgement.

UWUSA's recruitment of scab labour which had replaced the MAWU strikers added to the controversy around the Sarmcol case. BTR signed a recognition agreement with UWUSA five months into the court case, even though, being unregistered and racially exclusive, it did not satisfy the company's original requirement for the recognition of trade unions.

Confrontations between the Inkatha-backed union and the strikers culminated in the cold-blooded murder of key MAWU activists. MAWU reported that shortly after BTR fired striking workers, Inkatha supporters marched through Mpophomeni chanting 'Down with the strikers', 'Get out of Mpophomeni if you don't obey the Kwazulu government', and 'Join Inkatha or go and live elsewhere'.

A history of union bashing

BTR is well-known for union bashing, both locally and internationally. Workers at the Caribbean Tyre Company (a subsidiary of BTR in Trinidad) said: 'When we found out what BTR was doing in South Africa, we realised that it is the same as it is doing in Trinidad. It is anti-union and anti-worker, and the company definitely has an international labour strategy'. They told of their dispute in 1985 with BTR over retrenchment and shift systems. As a result, 143 workers were locked out and by April this year the dispute was still not resolved.

In England, at the BTR subsidiary JE Hanger, almost the entire workforce of 300 was dismissed in September 1986. Workers had walked out in protest against the dismissal of four shop stewards. This dispute has also not been resolved.

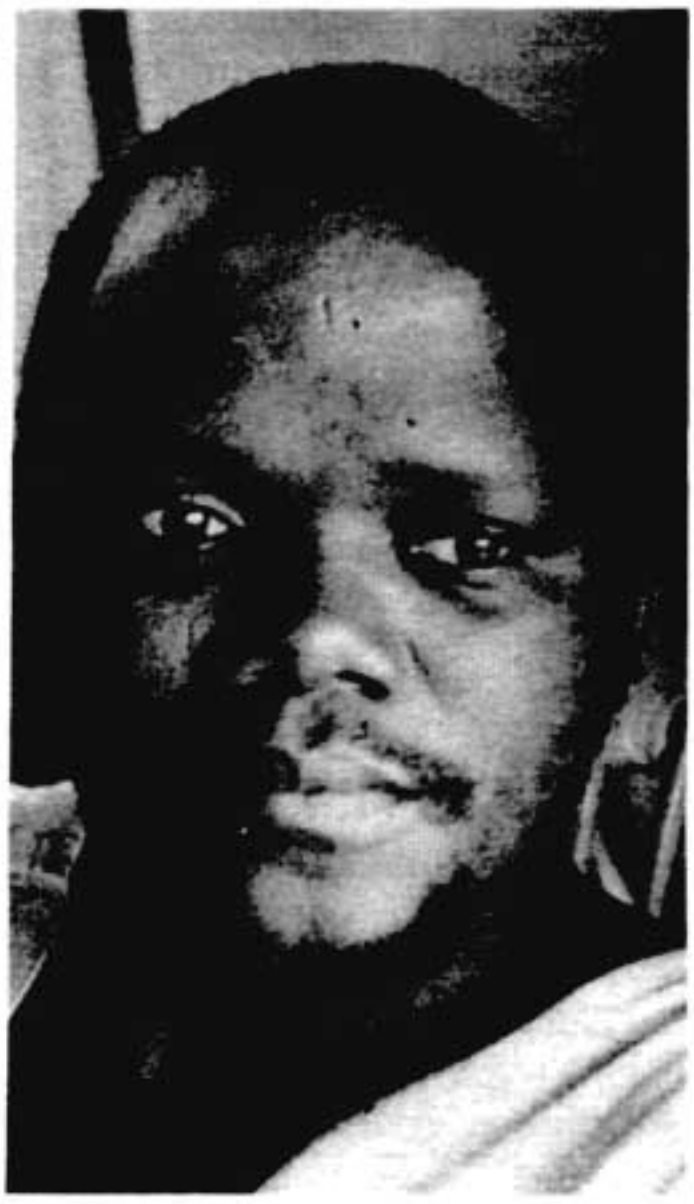
The Sarmcol judgement makes no reference to the union's testimony about poor wages and BTR's practice of downgrading employees and cutting their wages when they become less efficient and productive, because of age or

sickness. The company justified these methods on the grounds of economic rationality. Ironically, Sarmcol wanted a clause in its recognition agreement with MAWU to state that the interests of the company and its employees were not divergent but identical.

Although it is a multinational company, BTR does not adhere to the provisions of the EEC Code of Conduct for companies with interests in South Africa. The code requires that companies allow employees, irrespective of racial or other distinction, to choose, without any hindrance, the type of organisation they wish to have to represent them.

When challenged on this point BTR's response was that the code comprised more a set of goals to be aimed at than standards to be adhered to. The judgement stated that from a practical point of view the EEC code would have 'to be phased in and cannot be implemented overnight'. But the union could see no practical reason why the code could not be implemented immediately.

The Sarmcol workers and the union do not believe the struggle is over. The Sarmcol workers co-operative project, set up to provide employment for the strikers, has become a permanent concern. A play written by Sarmcol workers to explain the strike is presently on tour in Britain as part of an international campaign against BTR. The campaign is aptly called 'Blood, Tears and Repression', and aims to expose BTR as a company which profits from apartheid, and ruthlessly exploits workers the world over. A book of the same title, which describes the Sarmcol struggle, is being written and will be sold internationally.



Simon Ngubane, a Sarmcol striker killed by vigilantes early this year.

A 'clean surgical' dismissal?

Advice given to BTR by Andrew Levy and Associates included: '3. Fire Monday. 4. Start re-hiring (X old faces - Y new faces) each. Union lads will be the last back = no jobs'. Clearly, the dismissals were not only intended to break the strike, but to remove all traces of union support. A note in Sampson's handwriting was handed to the court. It read: 'Strike two weeks. Would not fire or rehire for two weeks... more acceptable to UK... clean surgical issue... then perhaps fire after due warning, and obtain a new workforce'. These crucial facts were not mentioned in the judgement.

It appears the court did not regard evidence from union officials in the same light as most evidence from management. Without any substantial evidence the court concluded that MAWU official Geoff Schreiner was 'influenced to a certain extent by his youthful idealism', and that he may have mislead workers into believing that the strike was legal. Schreiner had been with the union for six years at the time of the dispute, and had negotiated over 50 recognition agreements.

The court was also harsh in its criticism of the democratic practice of trade unionism: 'A disturbing feature which was disclosed by the evidence in this case was the form of collective democracy practised by this union. If properly understood, union activity depends solely on the collective will of the members. This has the convenient effect that no individual member can be held responsible or be called to account for his actions or inactions... The members of this court... have some reservations whether this philosophy, if correctly understood, can properly be entertained or even tolerated by present-day society in this country'.

It is alleged that one of the appointees to the court, de Witt, is a strong supporter of common law, which is intolerant of collective action, and views strike action as a wilful refusal to work.

Union efforts ignored

During the hearing, BTR argued that reinstating the strikers would deprive the strike-breakers of their jobs. The court supported this view saying: 'this court is not only concerned with the relation-

ship between the employer and dismissed employees seeking reinstatement, it is also required...to have regard to the present work force who stepped into the breach to save the company from bankruptcy...'

In effect this means the court will not reinstate a dismissed employee if he\she has been replaced by a new worker. This remarkable stance is not usual industrial court practice, for it means employers can easily escape a judgement of unfair dismissal.

The court appeared to ignore the fact that the union made a great effort to resolve the dispute. In December 1984 MAWU applied for the establishment of two conciliation boards, one over severance pay, the other to try and resolve the dispute which prevented the conclusion of a written procedural agreement.

Thirty days after this application, workers held a strike ballot. An overwhelming majority voted in favour of strike action. Despite workers' determination to go on strike, the union went back to the negotiating table. Only three months later did the workers actually go out on strike. The judgement does not mention these efforts.

After the conciliation board deadlocked, MAWU suggested the dispute be referred to arbitration. Without giving reasons, BTR rejected this option. A week later BTR's Sampson invited MAWU organiser Geoff Schreiner to a private meeting. Schreiner refused, on the grounds that negotiations should take place between the union and the company and not just between the two of them.

Ignoring the fact that BTR refused to go to arbitration, the court's view of Sampson's request to meet Schreiner was that Sampson 'was prepared even at the eleventh hour to endeavour to resolve the deadlock'.

A discredited industrial court

Collusion between capital, the state and anti-democratic forces has been highlighted in the Sarmcol workers' struggle.

UWUSA's strategy to try to eliminate democratic working-class organisation, particularly in Natal, may find favour with some managements. So UWUSA may become a greater threat to trade union organisation, despite its poor organisational record.

The court's partial attitude towards BTR, and bias against the union, raises questions about use of the industrial court. The evidence presented to the court by management and the union does not logically suggest a ruling that the dismissal of 975 workers was fair, especially given that the workers' average length of service was 25 years.

In a similar case at Natal Die Castings, the court ordered the reinstatement of dismissed workers. Because of the many similarities between the two cases, unionists at the time were optimistic of a favourable judgement in the Sarmcol case.

In its critique of the judgement, MAWU charted presiding official Roux's attitude. Instead of remaining impartial, he actively participated in the proceedings. He asked the union's main witness questions in a hostile manner, and interjected during cross-examination of BTR's primary witness. He seemed to absorb the testimony in a selective and partial way, giving the impression that he had preconceived notions about the case.

The composition of the bench to a large extent determines whether a hearing will be biased or not. Presently, trade unions cannot influence the composition of the industrial court. But in some cases unions have been fortunate in facing a relatively fair bench.

But some legal experts believe the Sarmcol judgement will destroy unions' faith in the industrial court's ability to redress collective disputes. They believe this would relegate the court to a position as arbiter of individual dismissals. If this is the case, unions may be forced to seek other less procedural avenues of resolving collective matters.

Two kids examine an anti-boycott pamphlet in Port Elizabeth

Uniting a community

In the first half of 1986, UDF-linked community organisations and COSATU unions in Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage organised three major work stayaways. GLENN ADLER compares the 1985 and 1986 stayaways and discusses the implications of both state and popular strategies for future working-class organisation. He argues that stayaways reflect contests for leadership both between different classes and within the working class itself.

The 1986 stayaways in Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage were marked by co-operation as unions explicitly aligned themselves with popular organisations linked to the UDF.

Unions did not play a leading role, even though the stayaways directly affected the shop floor. Rather, township-based community organisations were able to channel worker protests into their general political project. The level of consultation and co-operation was in great contrast to the conflict evident before and after the UDF-sponsored Black Weekend of March 1985.

But popular mobilisations depended as much on state responses as any other factor. The second state of emergency quickly cut the ground from under the protests. Detentions of many community activists did not end mobilisation, but made control and direction virtually impossible. Consultation between organisations broke down, as undisciplined township forces emerged to lead protests. Stayaways organised before June 1986 were the best-supported actions in the country, with near total African participation and strong support amongst coloured workers. Actions after the emergency, especially the 14 July national call by COSATU, led to considerable confusion if not outright disarray.

It is not clear what possibilities for political protest remain under the emergency, or what new strategies will emerge. But events around the stayaways in Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage shed light on the state's effect on popular protest and on the changing character of co-operation between community groups and trade unions.

Few studies examine the organisational complexities of stayaways, narrowly defining the tactic as workers withdrawing their labour from production. And events are usually viewed through the lens of class competition for leadership of movements opposing apartheid.

Stressing the withdrawal of labour emphasises the workplace, and disregards the complicated unity of classes and class fractions which contribute to success. Stayaways are not simply strikes or work stoppages, but are broad-based protests which unite many social groups. Great political skill is needed to co-ordinate these many elements from different spheres into a political movement. Debates about whether unions or community organisations ought to lead such actions

ignore what each can contribute to the struggle and the difficulties either would have organising mass protests alone.

Independent trade unionists have criticised community organisations' practice, their lack of accountability and the absence of internal democracy, not simply their class basis. And the independent unions are not powerful simply because they represent the interests of a single class. There are many examples of undemocratic, unreliable and ultimately weak worker organisations in South African labour history. What distinguishes independent trade unions is not only their class basis, but the strategy and tactics they employ to organise workers.

Earlier accounts of stayaways do not deeply consider the organisational and structural differences which make relations between such groups difficult. Slogans like 'the leading role of the working class' or the idea that politics cannot be separated from work or unions from community organisations, do not indicate how the working class can accomplish such tasks organisationally.

Stayaways do not only involve contests for class leadership of the popular movement. They are also the context for leadership struggles within the working class itself.

In all industrial, and especially capitalist societies, divisions between the workplace and place of residence tend to separate point-of-production conflicts from political conflicts. As a result conflicts usually take place between capital and labour at work, and between the state and workers in communities. But this does not mean the state is absent from production, or that capital does not influence the political sphere.

In South Africa divisions within the working class are even more complicated. Both 'at work' and 'at home', state-imposed racial divisions can aggravate these struggles. Unions and community groups represent constituencies with varying legal status. They have different internal structures, and face different kinds of opponents. Their varying strategies and tactics arise in part from dissimilar visions of what is possible given their different situations. This makes it difficult to unify protest.

A declining region

During 1985 and 1986 the Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage townships, like those in many parts of South Africa, were buffeted by economic depression and political repression. The cost of living rose, while living conditions declined dramatically.

The state's failure to provide adequate housing, and the influx of large numbers of migrants from Cape country districts, caused extreme overcrowding in townships, and massive squatter settlements were set up. One survey said shacks made up 40% of all dwellings in the Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage townships, and projected a housing shortage of about 20 000 units by 1987.

About 70% of families in the two towns lived on less than R150 per month while 21% of the households in Langa, Uitenhage, received no regular income at all. For these people, government efforts to raise rents, service charges or transport prices were insulting. They could not afford to pay more, and indeed, the existing services were crude.

It is not surprising then that the first discussions of stayaways took place after the community council announced a rent increase in December 1984. At the same time the petrol price rose, which meant bus fares increased, sparking a later stayaway.

And while formal influx control was scrapped, urban tenure remained insecure. Under the government's 'orderly urbanisation' policy, local authorities forcibly removed Langa township in Uitenhage and repeatedly threatened to do the same in Red Location, Walmer, and Soweto-by-the-Sea in Port Elizabeth.

Such conditions were common throughout South Africa, but they were more intense in the Eastern Cape which was also experiencing a depression in the motor industry. The region's fortunes rise and fall with those of the industry, which has seen huge changes lately: its production centre has shifted to the Transvaal, many firms have gone out of business or merged. The remaining firms are introducing new labour-saving technologies on the shop floor to keep pace with international design standards. All these developments threaten employment, and signal the decline of the region as the 'Detroit of South Africa'.

In 1985 and 1986 local employment declined by half. Workers who kept their jobs lived under the threat of short-time, limited wage increases, and the ultimate danger of plant closure and relocation.

The distress went well beyond the motor industry. Total African unemployment in Port Elizabeth reached over 50%, and according to a 1985 survey, 43% of black workers in Port Elizabeth and 62% in Uitenhage were on short time.

Popular community organisations and trade unions had different organisational means and strategic visions for countering these problems. These differences came to a head in the run-up to the Port Elizabeth Black Weekend of March 1985.

Division in the ranks

The Black Weekend was called by the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organisation (PEBCO) and allied groups, to protest retrenchments of workers, the Ford-Amcar merger and the petrol price increase. PEBCO called on township residents to boycott white shops, and workers to stay at home on the weekend of 16-17 March, and stay away from work on Monday 18 March.

PEBCO, formed in 1979, lost popularity in 1980. But by early 1984, especially after the release of long-term Robben Island prisoners Henry Fazzie and Edgar Ngoyi, the organisation had reclaimed its lost prestige and strength.

PEBCO's largest constituent was

the Port Elizabeth Youth Congress (PEYCO). Founded in 1983, it became the political home for many politically-experienced young men and women with some education, little hope of employment, and clear memories of the 1976 and 1980 school boycotts. PEYCO's young, militant activists gave PEBCO the means to mobilise supporters in response to its calls. And the UDF's formation in 1983 meant PEBCO and PEYCO, as local front representatives, could draw on the prestige and resources of the resurgent national democratic movement.

PEBCO had reason to be optimistic. The 1984 campaign against the tricameral elections dealt a blow to the government's new constitutional dispensation. In December 1984, after the community council threat to raise rents, PEBCO planned a protest stayaway and the increase was shelved. School boycotts further demonstrated the potential benefits of protest politics.

Still, no group had yet organised a township-wide protest drawing in all sections of the community: it was uncertain how residents would respond and, as important, how the state would retaliate.

FOSATU, CUSA, the Food and Canning Workers Union and the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union of SA all rejected the idea of a stayaway. Their reasons were that the demands were national in character and required a national, not a local challenge; the call was not made in coloured areas and would reinforce racial divisions; and no provision was made for workers who would lose their jobs. Over the next month, attempts to reach a compromise failed. The stayaway went ahead with the only unions participating being UDF-affiliated.

Those unions which did not participate questioned whether mass mobilisation was a wise way to confront the state before deep and stable organisation had been established. Many unionists had seen PEBCO's previous unsuccessful calls for action, which brought strong state reprisals: leaders were banned, offices raided, members intimidated. They believed the Black Weekend would be the same.

The unions were dealing with the problems of the economic crisis in their own way. For the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union (NAAWU), a major concern was the Ford-Amcar merger and the closure of Ford operations in Port Elizabeth. It was impossible to keep Ford in Port Elizabeth. So NAAWU, using well-tested trade union tactics, organised shop-floor pressure and higher-level negotiations to push Ford into a big improvement in the retrenchment package.

Meanwhile, UDF-affiliated organisations mounted a pamphleteering and door-to-door organising campaign in support of the stayaway call. In the weeks before the stayaway, conditions worsened. Clashes between township residents and security forces resulted in a number of deaths and political funerals. The bus service was withdrawn after stone-throwing incidents, and conflicts intensified between comrades and vigilantes hired by community councillors. Enormous support was building for some type of protest.

Community organisations show their strength

On Saturday 16 March 1985 virtually all African workers and consumers stayed away from work and boycotted shops. The North End shopping area in Port Elizabeth was empty. Action continued on Monday as 90% of African workers stayed at home.

For the first time community organisations demonstrated the power to lead a disciplined mass protest. Unions which rejected the call had failed to see the build-up of discontent in the townships, and the fact that residents desperately wanted to respond to the economic and physical assaults. Unions were absent at this important time, and the way was left open for township political organisations to take sole leadership of mobilisation.

The unions had misjudged the temper of people's discontent, but their other criticisms of the action were accurate. The stayaways, including the two-day one in Uitenhage after the Langa Massacre of 21 March, had little support in coloured communities. And the township organisations were not co-ordinated: there was little response in Uitenhage for the Black Weekend, and there was no stayaway in Port Elizabeth after the massacre. Township politics was bottled up inside the state-imposed borders of racial group areas.

Neither PEBCO nor PEYCO could show how local mass mobilisation could win national demands like reducing the petrol price or ending mass retrenchments. In the end the stayaway was more a potent, localised demonstration of discontent than a challenge to state power.

PEBCO's behaviour in the weeks before the stayaway did not dispel unionists' fears about township organisations' political practice. It did not modify the Black Weekend demands in the face of widespread criticism. Instead, key community activists used the debate to present themselves as the true worker representatives, directly challenging the unions' standing among their members.

After the stayaways, township organisations turned the policy dispute about appropriate political tactics into a competition for power with trade unions. The UDF-affiliated Motor Assemblers and Components Workers Union of South Africa (MACWUSA), for example, stepped up efforts to woo workers at key NAAWU factories.

While most people took part in the stayaway, support for a particular action does not mean support for the organisations calling the action, or agreement with their general policies and practices. Unions had misread a community issue, but they were still important in production. For example, MACWUSA made very little headway on the factory floor, while NAAWU members remained committed to the union during the rolling wage strikes

which began after the stayaway.

In a freer environment where relatively open debates could occur, it might have been possible to resolve these differences constructively. But the political climate in Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage worsened after the Black Weekend, making it more difficult to reconcile unions and community organisations.

Reaction to the stayaway was swift and brutal. Immediately after the Black Weekend the homes of leading UDF and PEBCO activists in Port Elizabeth were firebombed. The bloody conflicts between AZAPO and UDF began soon after. In May, three PEBCO executive members disappeared, and at the end of June the four Cradock UDF leaders were murdered on the outskirts of Port Elizabeth. The first emergency followed in July.

As the middle ground between UDF and AZAPO disappeared, people were asked to choose sides. But unions, especially those in FOSATU, refused to identify formally with either the UDF or AZAPO. In the face of armed assaults on the community the unions were portrayed as passive - or more extremely, active - supporters of the system.

In the highly-charged days after the Uitenhage massacre, especially after the murders of the last remaining town councillor and his relatives, such criticisms often resulted in action against union members. One attack occurred at the Uitenhage funeral of a union member who died of natural causes. In the fighting, a union member was killed, the homes of three burned, and another had his car destroyed.

In both towns, working-class responses to worsening social and economic conditions were at best completely uncoordinated during 1985, or at worst in direct conflict. Even a threat like the Ford closures did not result in action based on the strengths of both community and union forms of protest. Instead, there was as much conflict between popular organisations as between the workers and Ford.

Mass action to challenge the state

There were no more stayaways in 1985. Township organisations continued protest under the emergency. The Black Weekend showed they were powerful enough to organise 100% effective consumer boycotts. The Port Elizabeth consumer boycott, launched on the eve of the crackdown, resulted in a massive rejection of white-owned shops and caused great damage to local commerce.

For the first time, community organisations linked mass tactics with a strategy to take on the state: the consumer boycotts included calls to local business and the state to negotiate with popular leaders. Protests, including the schools boycott, continued despite detentions, and township militants engaged in frequent confrontations with the security forces. The first emergency was simply not having its intended effect of quelling opposition in the townships.

After their release from detention late in 1985, members of the consumer boycott committee entered into negotiations with the Port Elizabeth Chamber of Commerce to discuss boycott demands. The boycott was called off when local businessmen agreed to raise the demands with the authorities. These negotiations brought some state response and security forces withdrew from the townships.

Before and after the release of township leaders, community organisations in both towns began to reorganise. The door-to-door campaigns used in the anti-tricameral elections and then in the Black Weekend and consumer boycott showed the strengths to be gained by giving normally top-heavy organisations strong neighbourhood structures.

The development of street and area committees gave civic organisations much more power in their campaigns. Leaders no longer relied solely on mass meetings to communicate with and direct their followers. These structures did not only work from the top down. Township consituencies now had - at least on paper - formal channels through which to inform leaders of their grievances and demands.

Procedures for election and standards of representation were extremely uneven and seldom spelled out. But if not entirely democratic, these structures were highly participatory, drawing in activists at all levels of township life. The civic organisations, especially PEYCO, now had both a militant and supportive base and the means for communicating with it on almost a person-to-person basis. This new and important development in township politics showed its value during the successful mobilisations of the first half of 1986.

The season of stayaways

To commemorate the March 1985 massacre, Uitenhage residents took up a collection for a stone memorial to be unveiled at a mass service on 21 March. The day would also be marked by a work stayaway.

Shortly before it took place, the Uitenhage and Port Elizabeth COSATU locals decided to support the stayaway. The unions wanted to show solidarity with the community in a time of mourning, and demonstrate to the state and capital their rejection of repression. In contrast to 1985, the major trade unions and civic organisations in both cities jointly decided on a full stayaway.

In both Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage, virtually all African workers stayed at home. The results were more pronounced than in the Black Weekend, both in the size of the response and because the stayaway was supported in both towns.

Unlike the 1985 stayaway, large numbers of coloured workers participated: 25% of all coloureds in Port Elizabeth and 79% in Uitenhage stayed away. Coloured support was concentrated in manufacturing firms organised by COSATU affiliates.

Most employers felt workers stayed away due to intimidation. Management did not victimise workers who participated, but any leniency was not because they

accepted the action was legitimate. In fact, few of the employers surveyed could identify the Langa anniversary as the reason for the stayaway.

The hope of popular organisations that management would communicate their demands to state authorities foundered: managers did not understand the demands. Indeed, if they were to communicate any message at all it might be that government ought to deal with the 'intimidators' whom managers believed caused the stayaway in the first place.

This massive popular response was repeated in the May Day and 16 June stayaways. These actions formed part of COSATU's efforts to have the dates recognised as holidays for South African workers. These stayaways were endorsed by civics and trade unions in both cities.

The May Day response by African workers equalled that of the Langa anniversary stayaway: a near-total response from all sectors. Out of a sample of 21 000 workers in Uitenhage and Port Elizabeth, the Labour Monitoring Group found 14 Africans reporting for work. More coloured workers took part this time: 45% in Port Elizabeth, and 79% in Uitenhage.

On 16 June, despite the second state of emergency declared four days earlier, African participation was virtually total in both cities, across all sectors. Coloured participation in Uitenhage remained high at 75% while in Port Elizabeth it declined to 33%. Coloured participation was again strongest in manufacturing at COSATU-organised plants.

A small, but growing, number of managers began to accept the legitimacy of popular demands. Some were willing to swop May Day for another public holiday, while others believed it should be a paid holiday. And 29% of all employers stated they could accept 16 June as a paid holiday. This time there were no reported dismissals, and a growing number of employers believed workers stayed away out of sympathy for the COSATU and UDF calls.

The most impressive feature of the stayaways was the overwhelming and consistent participation by Africans. No other part of the country responded as forcefully or as often to popular calls for action. Fewer press reports of intimidation, and employers' decreasing perception of the importance of intimidation, indicate that workers willingly joined in the protests. The numbers testify to the effectiveness, extent, and durability of the mobilisation.

Events were also marked by cooperation between COSATU unions and UDF-linked community organisations. Unions brought coloured workers into the actions, enabling township-generated protests to extend, for once, beyond state-imposed group area borders.

Union participation also allowed closer negotiation with managements. In many cases this meant winning paid holidays for workers, as well as assurances of non-victimisation.

Gains, shortcomings and mutual respect

Unions and community organisations showed a new respect for each other's sphere of influence. Unionists might question whether community organisations represented their rank-and-file democratically, or criticise policy decisions. But UDF groups had demonstrated their power to mobilise diverse township constituencies, including union members.

Civic bodies appeared eager to gain more influence in local COSATU structures rather than challenge COSATU affiliates in their own industries. The competition between groups representing production and reproduction-based strategies was displaced to this new level. As a result, efforts to launch regional and local branches of COSATU in the Eastern Cape were repeatedly stalemated throughout 1986.

The stayaway alliance brought gains and revealed shortcomings. While organisations met to discuss strategy before the stayaways, no formal stayaway committee, like the one which directed the 1984 Transvaal stayaway, was established as a regular forum for representatives. No trade union officials or senior shop stewards sat on the executives of the civic organisations - apart from the UDF-affiliated MACWUSA and GWUSA.

Contact between organisations remained ad hoc and confined to leadership. The contact was also event-specific, and focused on logistical issues rather than broader strategy and tactics. At best it served as a starting point for overcoming organisational antagonisms.

The power behind the successful stayaways came from community organisations. Their membership was based on unemployed youth and students, and organised in a decentralised system of street and area committees. This same power directed the extended consumer and school boycotts.

After the Black Weekend, civic organisations developed a powerful political strategy. Their broad programme included stayaways, consumer, rent and school boycotts. Anti-removal campaigns mobilised distinct township constituencies around a host of immediate grievances.

It had become clear to township residents that withdrawal of their buying power or refusal to pay rents could hit capital and the state hard. The boycotts expressed real discontent, but were also a way to directly or indirectly pressurise authorities for concessions on specific issues. In 1980 PEBCO rejected negotiations with white organisations and state bodies. In 1985 and 1986 it tried to engage those in power, and win over whites to support the process of negotiation, if not the movement itself.

One result of popular pressure was that civic organisations entered complicated negotiations over a wide range of issues with the Chambers of Commerce and Industry, individual capitals, and even the state, including the SAP.

There were sometimes results:

the bus service was restructured in exchange for guaranteed safe passage through townships; security forces temporarily withdrew from townships; restraints on political meetings were relaxed.

Township leaders and civic organisations gained leverage in power circles beyond their communities. They could 'deliver the goods', both leading and successfully calling off boycotts. Their status undercut town councillors and other state-appointed black leaders. Businessmen and even some state authorities saw that councillors wielded no popular power.

By mid-1986 one businessman was negotiating plans for a non-racial municipality with activists he had dismissed ten months before. And on the eve of the second state of emergency the city council itself was poised to create a special committee, which included the mayor - a staunch National Party supporter - to engage UDF-affiliated township leaders in similar discussions.

Union absence from negotiations

Unions could not easily be drawn into these developments. They do not usually gain membership through popular mobilisations, preferring the slower process of building shop-floor support. Based in factories, they lack the organisational structures to reach into the townships to mobilise other constituencies. And unions do not generally use boycotts or other community-based strategies to achieve their goals, but rely on factory-specific weapons like strikes or go-slows.

While unions and community groups had great differences in organisation and constituencies, they were both addressing problems of working-class life. But the connections created between them were not deep enough to last. They could achieve huge responses on stayaway days, but the structures did not lead to a deepening of class conscious activity either on the factory floor or in the townships.

'In the July 14-15 stayaway, individual workers had to choose between possible victimisation from employers or unpredictable consequences in the townships'

If unions had taken part in negotiations between community groups and business, they could have provided a keen awareness of working-class production issues, especially exploitation at work. The consumer boycott committee consistently failed to raise key working-class demands: full employment, a living wage and trade union recognition. In fact, employers in the largely non-unionised and low-wage commercial establishments in the two cities had more power to meet these demands than demands for the release of political prisoners or unbanning of organisations.

Community efforts to win political demands could have been made easier if they had merged mass mobilisation with proven trade union workplace tactics. This potential was hinted at in the VW kombi strike of 1985, when workers protested company plans to provide vehicles for the South Africa-New Zealand rebel cricket tour; and in the 1983 efforts of FOSATU-affiliated workers to cancel rent stop-order payments to protest township rent increases in Uitenhage.

Unionists did not necessarily see the issues under negotiation as ones in which they could or should participate. But this meant that the issues were discussed and negotiated without them, and decisions taken which were potentially damaging to their interests.

Protest strategy after the second emergency

The conditions which made the 1986 stayaways a success and boosted the civic organisations' political project changed drastically with the 12 June state of emergency.

Within a few weeks security forces detained hundreds of activists, civic and youth congress leaders, and trade union members, especially those connected to township political organisations. In contrast to the first emergency, state strategy in the second clampdown included removing leadership, and destruction of grassroots and middle levels of township groups. It also tried to destroy the structures of participation which had relayed leadership decisions and proved so effective in the successful actions of those organisations.

According to one early estimate, as many as 200 Port Elizabeth area and street committee members were detained in the first two weeks of the emergency alone. The results of the crackdown were most vividly displayed in the chaotic 14 July stayaway called by COSATU.

This stayaway was part of a national attempt by COSATU to contest the state of emergency. In the Eastern Cape no decision was taken to support the action, as police disrupted the regional committee meeting to discuss it. COSATU unions and the UDF did not endorse the stayaway and, with one exception, there were no negotiations with Port Elizabeth or Uitenhage companies.

But the stayaway went ahead on Monday 14 July. In Port Elizabeth only 39% of African workers stayed at home. Many more left work during the day and by afternoon only 9% of the African workforce remained. About 1% of coloured workers stayed away. In Uitenhage only a small number of Africans who work in Uitenhage but live in Port Elizabeth stayed away.

There were no clear motivations for the stayaway. Some managers were told workers were protesting harsh regulations announced on the weekend by the department of education and training. Others were told the action was called in support of COSATU demands. Almost all felt workers stayed away because of intimidation.

Managers said there was complete confusion. African workers began leaving after receiving phone calls or visits from relatives informing them that a stayaway was in progress. Activists told some workers about the stayaway the night before. Others learned about it from activists travelling through industrial areas in bakkies, still others heard at bus ranks on their way to work. Communication was very uneven, and many workers had to make a difficult decision based on little information.

In Port Elizabeth, unlike the rest of the country, the stayaway continued for a second day. Once again, 39% of African workers stayed at home, but far fewer returned home during the day. By afternoon, 47% of the African workforce remained at work, and 6% of coloureds stayed away as one whole factory joined the action. Again, Uitenhage did not follow the call.

The stayaway was not directed by COSATU officials, shop stewards or the formal community organisations. The fact that some were told of the proposed action on Sunday night suggests that remnants of area or street committees remained in place, but had no co-ordination with other areas. With most township leaders and activists detained, other township elements went unchecked and tried to direct the stayaway.

After 14-15 July, many businessmen who were beginning to accept the legitimacy of popular protests again believed workers were intimidated into staying away. The action failed to convince capital and the state that workers were expressing legitimate grievances. It reinforced the attitude that a small group of radicals were manipulating workers into protests they did not support. Many managers reported that they were considering harsher measures in future against workers who stayed away.

The 14-15 July stayaway reversed a major achievement of earlier protests, where workers learned they could act as a mass political movement, win limited gains, and protect themselves from victimisation. Instead, individual workers were left to choose between possible victimisation from employers should they leave, or unpredictable consequences in the townships should they stay at work.

The delicate fabric of participatory decision-making in the neighbourhood and at the workplace was torn apart. Instead of welding individual workers together into a unified movement, the action exposed them as individuals to great danger.

The working class and unions in the liberation struggle

The political mobilisation of 1986 demonstrates problems and possibilities of union-community co-operation, which have important implications for the role of the working class, and especially trade unions, in the liberation struggle.

In the first half of 1986, COSATU unions used their muscle to boost stayaway turnouts. But they had little say in deciding the issues behind the action. Their participation was not through formal ties to political organisations or as integral parts of a class or multi-class alliance. Ironically, this was almost exactly what FOSATU had warned against: unions being called to participate in actions which they could neither control nor avoid, and which could have unpleasant consequences.

- Community organisations, with a mass base in the working class - employed and unemployed - failed to advance workers interests. Their political demands included lower rents and transport prices, police repression, political rights: but these interests are shared by many groups in society. Issues of interest primarily to workers, who formed the core of people participating in the mass campaigns, received less attention: recognition of trade unions, full employment, a living wage, retrenchments and plant closings. In many cases these demands could have been won locally.

For a while, community organisations could use their mass power to win limited but significant victories, and take advantage of cracks in ruling class unity. But they were unable to advance a coherent class agenda.

By the second emergency many employers had adjusted to the loss of production due to stayaways: those on a four-day week scheduled their off day to coincide with stayaways. Consumer boycotts did bankrupt some firms, but most commercial establishments, who depend on white and coloured trade, were relatively unaffected.

Capital did not have the sort of leverage with the state that organisations believed existed. And traders could not be relied upon to communicate popular demands faithfully. They as easily believed 'intimidators' were the source of their troubles as central or local state policies.

Despite local gains, the protest strategy could not link success on

The Eastern Cape spirit: A hearty welcome for whites who participated in this year's June 16 service in the townships

minimum demands to broader national efforts contesting the state at the highest level. Although boycotts pushed local authorities to negotiate, these people were relatively powerless, if not unwilling, to affect national policy. The state itself dealt the death blow to organisations through intense repression and detentions in the second emergency.

It remains to be seen whether unions and community organisations can develop workable relationships without undermining each other. Unions lack the structure, capacity, and in some cases temperament to organise township constituencies, while township organisations do not have the capacity to mobilise on the shop floor.

Unions have much work to do: many industrial sectors remain largely unorganised. They are only beginning to extend organisation to rural, domestic and public employees. In the Eastern Cape, textile, commercial and transport workers are weakly organised, if at all.

Managements in the core unionised industries have redefined the terrain of conflict in production, creating new and difficult questions for unions: retrenchment which eats up union membership; more sophisticated use of work study; corporate reorganisation as local capital replaces departing foreign investors.

While workers face an offensive from employers, in townships the state of emergency clears the way for a far-reaching restructuring of township administration and control.

Regional services councils and other co-optive state strategies seek to capitalise on and reinforce existing divisions in townships, while recruiting some local elites into more formidable state-funded patronage networks.

These 'reform' efforts directly concern workers. The counter-insurgency against political opposition in the townships could be directed against the unions as well. In Natal, for instance, unions learned that trade union activity becomes very difficult when confronted by hostile black local authorities.

Popular organisations face a crisis of strategy. The emergency reduces the legal space available for community organisations to operate while 'reform' poses new issues for the movement to consider. It is unlikely that mass-mobilising tactics will repulse these attacks, even if tactics could be developed to cope with the highly repressive township conditions.

While unions have their industrial concerns, they need to address the crisis in both production and reproduction.

In 1985, unions allowed civics to take control of township politics. If the unions continue this strategy in the future, control may be lost indefinitely to the state.

Strike trends: mid-August to mid-October 1987

Over 400 000 workers were involved in industrial action during the period mid-August to 10 October 1987. Many companies took a hard line in disputes, resulting in mass dismissals. The mineworkers' strike left over 50 000 workers unemployed, and during the period under review SARS recorded a total of over 63 000 dismissals as a result of industrial action.

Police intervention in disputes left some workers dead and many others injured, as in the case of the mineworkers' strike and at Saldanha Sea Harvest.

The Barlow Rand group dismissed over 2 500 workers who were striking for a living wage, while Imperial Cold Storage fired 1 500 workers. Barlow Rand has also been promoting multi-unionism in what appears to be an attempt to divide workers and weaken the stronger unions.

Unions claim to have had difficulty in securing recognition agreements and stop-order facilities at Gencor, while Iscor, Spekenham and Sasol have been involved in union-bashing activities.

Trade unions organising in multinational companies have mobilised international pressure to help in resolving disputes, as in the case of Mercedes and Karl Schmidt. Striking postal and mineworkers also gained international support in an effort to resolve their disputes with employers.

Workers in several companies, for example SA Breweries, Epic Oil and Girlock, embarked on overtime bans. The refusal to work overtime is likely to become more common, as workers and unions view such a ban as a means of creating more jobs.

Most industrial actions recorded took the form of work stoppages, but in a few factories workers embarked on sit-ins and go-slows. Almost 90% of strikes monitored during this period were over wages and working conditions, with a small percentage involving dismissals and solidarity actions.

Examples of some of the strikes, disputes and agreements recorded by SARS are summarised below.

Strikes and Disputes: Transvaal

Afcol	PWAWU, NUMSA & NUFAWU		September	NUMSA and PWAWU have made great strides in ending the closed-shop system in the furniture industry and have concluded a national recognition agreement with Afcol, the biggest furniture company in the country. Both PWAWU and NUMSA signed the agreement which provides for recognition at any of the company's plants where the unions have a majority. PWAWU already has a majority at six factories, and recognition at another six factories is pending. NUFAWU's membership is decreasing as workers join the COSATU unions. For PWAWU the agreement is a consolidation of its campaign to drive NUFAWU out of the industry. The agreement allows for recognition in bantustan-based factories as well.
Atomic Demolishers	CAWU	50	October	Over 50 workers downed tools for two days after the company's manager threatened to replace the entire workforce with prisoners. The workers, who earned R50 a week, demanded an across-the-board increase of R50. The manager told workers that if they did not drop their demands he would replace them with prisoners, whom he would pay only R25 a week. Other worker grievances included the lack of safety equipment, no tea break, no overtime pay, and workers being asked to pay for traffic tickets as a result of company vehicles not being roadworthy. The workers returned to work after the manager promised to discuss their grievances with CAWU.
Beacon Sweets and Chocolates Edenvale	FBWU	150	27.08.87 -	About 150 workers at the Beacon Sweets and Chocolates plant in Edenvale staged a sit-in strike in protest against the dismissal of a worker who had arrived at work 15 minutes late. A spokesperson for FBWU said Daniel Matsoameri was dismissed while other workers who arrived late were not penalised. Management sought an urgent court interdict to have the workers ejected from the factory.
Bekkersdal Town Council	AMAWU	350	30.08.87 -	At least 350 council employees went on strike because the council refused to agree to their demands for an 80% salary increase, improved working conditions and recognition of their union. The town council agreed to hold talks with worker representatives.
BSB Printers Pietersburg	MWASA	2	24.08.- 09.09.87	Two workers dismissed for belonging to the union were reinstated following the union's intervention. Before joining MWASA, the two workers were members of SATU, which has a closed-shop agreement with management. The company refused to speak to MWASA about the dismissals. MWASA then contacted the industrial council for the printing and newspaper industry and declared a dispute, after which management agreed to reinstate the two workers. MWASA indicated it was pushing ahead for recognition despite the closed-shop agreement between management and SATU.

Cadac Limited Industria	NUMSA/-SABS	400	06.10.87 -	About 400 workers at Cadac belonging to rival unions NUMSA and SABS went on a legal strike over wages. The company and the unions began negotiations.
Consol Glass Germiston and Alrode	SAAWU/-CWIU		01.09.87-	Hundreds of workers at three Consol Glass plants downed tools over wage demands. Workers demanded an 80 cents across-the-board hourly increase on their present average wage of R3,21/hour. The workers decided to strike after wage negotiations reached a stalemate.
Department of Posts and Telecommunications	POTWA	16 000	July-September	The month-long strike by POTWA members ended with a favourable agreement for the 16 000 strikers. The strike for higher wages and improved working conditions was sparked off by post office workers in the Eastern Cape and spread to other areas in the country. Although POTWA's demand for a R600 a month minimum wage was not met, the post office improved the lowest wage structure from R310 per month to R375 and the highest from R375 to R450 per month for general assistants. The agreement also states that those workers in detention will be entitled to resume work upon their release, and dismissed workers will be entitled to apply for re-employment.The Postal, Telegraph and Telephone International (PTTI) played an important role in resolving the dispute. The PTTI threatened international disruption of South Africa's communication links if a settlement was not reached. Despite the agreement, POTWA claims the post office openly violated the terms agreed on. In Bryanston, gates were locked when workers reported for duty; at Crown Mines workers were harassed by police; and at several other depots workers who had not been formally dismissed were forced to complete re-employment applications. According to the union, almost every region and depot was affected. POTWA expressed extreme dissatisfaction at this breach of agreement and drew up a dossier listing a range of examples to support its dissatisfaction.
Epic Oil Selby and Isando	FAWU		18.08.87	The Epic Oils division of Premier Food Industries was granted an interim interdict against FAWU and 14 shop stewards preventing them from instigating an illegal strike or organising a ban on overtime at the company's Selby and Isando branches. Workers at these branches staged a go-slow and refused to work overtime in breach of their contracts.
Firestone Rosslyn	NUMSA	500	18.09-06.10.87	About 500 Firestone workers went on strike demanding the dismissal of a supervisor whom they claimed insulted workers. The workers returned to work while negotiations between the union and management progressed. Two days later, the workers were out on strike again because the company violated its promise to keep the supervisor away from work while the dispute was being resolved. Settlement was reached when the company agreed to transfer the supervisor to another department permanently.
Highveld Steel Witbank	NUMSA	2 700	21.09.87	More than 2 000 NUMSA members were dismissed at four Highveld Steel plants in Witbank. Management said workers had until 24 September to apply for re-employment and that they would only be re-employed if they accepted management's pay offer and withdrew. The dispute began when workers rejected the company's pay offer and accused management of refusing to take the issue to mediation. NUMSA demanded a 75c across-the-board increase. Management refused to budge from its offer of 41c-76c/hour. Workers ignored the return-to-work deadline.
Hillbrow Hospital	NEHAWU	600	01.10.87	NEHAWU members at Hillbrow hospital were dismissed after going on strike in demand for higher wages and better working conditions. Police patrolled the hospital and dispersed strikers singing and chanting outside the hospital gates. The union said hospital authorities had fired the strikers without investigating their grievances.
Imperial Cold Storage	FAWU	1 500	September-October	Close to 1 500 workers were dismissed at ICS factories including Sea Harvest, Festive Farms and Renown after strike action. About 4 000 workers from 17 ICS factories in the Transvaal resolved to strike action unless the dismissed strikers were reinstated. Workers from other regions were expected to meet to decide on what action to take. The dismissed workers started an anti-scab campaign aimed mainly at Bophuthatswana, where companies have been recruiting scabs in recent months. According to FAWU, ICS is determined to smash the union at all its factories by dividing workers and promoting multi-unionism.
ISCOR	NUMSA	1 300		ISCOR intends retrenching up to 1 300 workers under its rationalisation programme, with posts being gradually phased out as the production process is modernised. Talks between NUMSA and ISCOR's management in Pretoria failed to alter the retrenchment plans, and NUMSA will take the matter to the industrial court.
Karl Schmidt Alrode	NUMSA	276	22.07.87-	Karl Schmidt, a German multinational piston manufacturing company, dismissed 276 workers and replaced them with coloured scabs. The workers were fired for staying away from work in protest against the 6 May white elections. The union plans to approach the parent company in Germany to obtain reinstatement.

Kyalami Ranch Hotel Kyalami	HARWU	135	29.05.-26.08.87	In June this year Kyalami Ranch Hotel management dismissed 135 workers for striking in protest against a R135 a month deduction for board and lodging. This deduction was R55 more than the R80 limit set by the industrial council. When the industrial council ruled that the dismissals were unfair and the deductions illegal, the company ended up owing the workers a total of R250 000 from deductions over a period of 20 years. Kyalami escaped from paying this sum by selling the hotel and obtaining a court interdict ordering workers to vacate the premises.
Plascon Lighting Industries Johannesburg	NUMSA and RTEAWU	650	28.08.87-	The company obtained an urgent interim interdict to remove NUMSA and the Radio, Television, Electronics and Allied Workers Union (RTEAWU) from company property and ordering their members to refrain from any act of violence, threat or intimidation against co-employees. The workers had been on a go-slow strike since 28 August because management refused to bargain at plant level.
Malbak	NUMSA	2 000	October	NUMSA has declared a dispute with Malbak group companies where it is recognised, claiming they have refused stop-order facilities for union subscriptions. The union claims this represents an unfair labour practice. Malbak claims the various companies involved are independently managed and that it is inappropriate to launch a single dispute. However, NUMSA believes the similarity of the respective managements' approaches indicates collusion.
Matthey Rustenburg Refiners Germiston	CWIU	200	17.08.87-	Platinum refinery workers went on a legal strike in protest against the planned relocation of the plant to Bophuthatswana next year. The union demanded that plans to move to the new R250-m refinery be dropped because of the possibility of some members losing their jobs. The union also feared that workers would face deteriorating conditions of employment as Bophuthatswanan labour legislation forbids 'foreign' unions in the territory. According to the union, the strike was also held in solidarity with mineworkers then on strike.
Metal Box	NUMSA		September	NUMSA members have won their demand for a uniform minimum wage at all Metal Box plants, enabling negotiations to be conducted at a national group level. At some plants, workers won increases of up to 100% more than the increments granted by the industrial council. Metal Box tried to block the move towards national bargaining but the demand for a uniform minimum wage was referred to arbitration, which resolved the dispute in favour of the workers. The increases narrowed the gap between minimum wages in the various divisions and plants of the Metal Box group.
Natalspruit Hospital	NEHAWU	600	18.08.87-	About 600 hospital workers were dismissed after a work stoppage sparked off by the alleged unfair dismissal of a worker. NEHAWU filed an application in the Rand Supreme Court to secure the reinstatement of 195 workers. Management submitted that the other 400 workers had not been fired, but when they returned to work after the strike, they were told they had been dismissed a day before. The Rand Supreme Court ruled that the 195 workers were unfairly dismissed and ordered their reinstatement. NEHAWU intends filing another urgent application to secure the reinstatement of the remaining 400 workers.
Premier and Sasco	FAWU	5 000	September	More than 5 000 FAWU members went on a wage strike at Premier and Sasco mills in the Transvaal, Cape and Natal over their demand for an R80 increase, raising the minimum wage to R200 a week. Workers dropped their demand by R18, but management offered only R4 more. Talks deadlocked when workers refused to make further concessions and management withdrew its additional R4 offer, bringing the minimum down to R138. According to FAWU, workers downed tools at about 20 Premier and Sasco plants, and go-slows and other forms of industrial action were in progress at other plants.
SA Breweries Isando and Denver	FAWU	800	02.10.87	The full production workforce of 800 downed tools at SAB in Isando in sympathy with 12 co-workers who had been dismissed for taking part in a work-to-rule and an overtime ban, sparked by a deadlock in national wage talks between the union and SAB. The strikers returned to work after management reinstated the dismissed workers.
SA Breweries	FAWU	1 594	October	Nearly 1 600 FAWU members refused to work overtime unless their wage demands were met. The overtime ban was costing SAB R150 000 a day and it asked the supreme court to declare the action unlawful. However, Justice Goldstone ruled that to deprive workers of the right to refuse overtime would amount to a serious inroad into individual rights. The application was dismissed.
SABC	MWASA	36	21.08.87	The SABC had been ordered by the industrial court to reinstate 36 MWASA members retrenched in December and January. The workers lost their jobs when the Commissioner Street departments of the SABC moved to Auckland Park.
Sasol Secunda	CWIU	12 000	17.08.87	At least 12 000 CWIU members at Sasol plants in Secunda were scheduled to go on strike over a dispute over the granting of paid holidays on May Day and 16 June. The proposed strike was aborted when CWIU members were attacked

				by vigilantes and two workers were killed. According to the union, the attackers were brought in by bus and were accompanied by mine security. CWIU alleges that members of lower management were involved in organising and/or condoning the attacks. It has proposed that an independent commission of enquiry, headed by a senior member of the Johannesburg Bar, be set up to investigate the attacks.
Sasol Sasolburg	SACWU	2 500	30.09.87	According to SACWU, 2 500 workers went on strike at Sasol 1 after a deadlock in wage talks. The union reported that its members voted in favour of a strike and went out despite management 'using police to pressurise workers' to return to work. Management dismissed an unspecified number of workers who ignored a deadline to return to work, and said it would consider individual applications for re-appointment.
Soweto City Council		5 000	17.08-24.08.87	About 5 000 Soweto City Council employees went on strike demanding wage increases and improved working conditions. The strike involved council workers in all categories of work except for policemen. Workers returned to work after their representatives met with the council's executive and management committees. Some of the demands tabled by workers were resolved and both parties agreed to look further into other grievances, including wages.
Twins-Propan	CWIU	320	August	CWIU members at two Twins-Propan plants downed tools in demand of a R151/month increase. The union said 250 workers at Wadeville and 70 in Durban were demanding 'a living wage' of about R750 a month.
Vaal Transport Corporation	TAWU	1 500	20.08-20.09.87	About 800 workers downed tools in protest against management's decision to retrench 297 employees in Vaal, Virginia and OFS. About 500 other workers employed by Western Bus Lines, which belongs to the same multinational group as VTC, also stopped work in protest against the retrenchments. VTC management dismissed 78 striking workers and called in the police to protect workers not involved in the strike. According to NACTU, police searched its premises in Vereeniging looking for pamphlets, allegedly distributed in Vaal townships, urging residents to support the strike. The strike which affected thousands of commuters in the Vaal and Free State ended after about three weeks.
Vanderbijlpark Town Council	SABMA-WU	600	25.08.87	About 600 council employees were dismissed following a work stoppage. They went on strike demanding the reinstatement of three workers who were discharged because management said their contracts had expired, and that they were not performing well. According to SABMAWU, the workers were locked out when they reported for duty after the strike.
Strikes and Disputes: Cape				
Boland Hout	PWAWU	300	September	Boland Hout management dismissed 300 workers who went on strike over a demand for a living wage. The strikers, mainly migrant workers, earned only R78/fortnight. The company increased the wage by R3/fortnight about a year ago and had refused to negotiate any further increases since then.
Epping market	FAWU	400	12.08.87-	About 400 employees of the ten market agents at Epping market went on strike demanding a minimum wage of R90/week. Management offered an increase of R10 on the present minimum of R60/week. Negotiations between FAWU and management deadlocked and management's negotiators did not seem to favour mediation.
Inmont Epping	SACWU	40	10.09.87	Forty workers were locked out after a three-day sit-in. The dispute arose after a worker was dismissed for absence from work after he had asked for leave and had apparently been refused it.
Mercedes Benz East London	NUMSA	2 800	03.08-02.09.87	The nine-week strike at Mercedes Benz which cost the company an estimated R350-million, ended with the reinstatement of 2 800 workers. The agreement reached provided for a minimum wage of R4,50/hour and the unconditional reinstatement of all strikers. Workers went on strike in support of their demand for a minimum hourly rate of R5. Management's final offer at the time was R4/hour minimum and the reduction in weekly working hours from 44 to 43. NUMSA criticised the company for making a final offer so early in the negotiations and demanded that negotiations continue. The strike brought production to a standstill and the company had to close for several days. Shop stewards from Mercedes Benz, BMW and Volkswagen met regularly to discuss the strike and solidarity action with Mercedes workers. The settlement came shortly after the union sent representatives to Germany to negotiate with the parent company, Daimler Benz, and to seek solidarity for the dismissed strikers. When workers returned to work Mercedes issued them with 'service contracts' which contained several violations of the agreement. The workers held a meeting and refused to sign the contracts. After negotiations with NUMSA the company backed down.

Nampak Corrugated East London	SAAWU		18-20.08.87	Nampak Corrugated obtained an urgent supreme court interdict against SAAWU and all SAAWU members employed at the plant, ordering them to terminate their illegal strike and refrain from intimidating employees wishing to return to work. Workers went on strike after management appointed an outside person without advertising the post internally. According to SAAWU's wage agreement with Nampak, vacancies should be advertised internally before external appointments are made. Strikers returned to work and a committee representing both parties was formed to discuss the matter.
PE Tramways	GWUSA	80	11.08.87	Seventy PE Tramways bus drivers and 10 workshop employees who had been on strike for a week were dismissed after failing to return to their work posts after an ultimatum. They went on strike after the company refused to dismiss a senior chief inspector with whom they had problems.
Saayman's Security Epping	Security Workers Ind. Union	40	07.08.87	About 40 workers went on strike when they did not receive two months wages. Workers claimed their employer Solomon Saayman, owed them about R400 each in arrear wages. They said Saayman had told them he did not have money to pay them.
Saldanha Sea Harvest	FAWU	600	August	The dismissal of 600 workers by Saldanha Sea Harvest led to chaos in Diazville, the township where most of the workers live. The tense situation began when Sea Harvest dismissed 300 workers for failing to meet a 15-minute management deadline to return to work. The workers, who were later joined by the 300 night-shift staff, demanded to meet management to settle the wage dispute. Police began arresting people at the civic hall, where workers met daily to collect food parcels. The tense situation erupted into violence when police shot dead a 14-year old school boy and injured several others. Students at Diazville's high school refused to write exams until the workers were reinstated.
SBH Cotton Mills Epping	NUTW		18.08.87	Workers at the cotton mills went on strike over warnings given to employees who went to the toilet without asking the supervisor's permission. Two workers said there had been no supervisor around at the time. The workers demanded that the warnings be dropped and that the rule of asking permission to go to the toilet be abolished. NUTW and management agreed to discuss the issue.
Spekenham Cape Town	FAWU	600	05.08.87-	FAWU views the dismissal of 600 workers at Spekenham as the beginning of a campaign to smash the union at all Vleissentraal subsidiaries. Workers went on strike over wages and management's refusal to negotiate with union officials. Police used teargas and batons to disperse workers from company premises. The dismissed workers claimed they were often required to work until 1 am and sometimes up to 4 am. The strikers, most of whom are mothers, said the long working hours coupled with low wages made it impossible for them to care for their children. The company paid full-time workers R70 a week. White casuals were paid R100 a week as against R46 for black casuals. The workers are convinced that the company can afford their demand of R120/week but believe that racism, rather than the ability to pay, determine wage rates. The dismissed strikers are determined to win their struggle for higher wages and have mobilised support from CCAWUSA and NUWCC, as well as organisations in the communities where they live.

Strikes and Disputes: Natal/OFS

BTR Dunlop Durban	NUMSA		10.08.87-	BTR Dunlop tyre company declared a dispute with NUMSA when the union refused to respond to the company's latest wage proposal. NUMSA said the company was trying to cut back workers' basic rights and force them to accept a wage increase over an 18-month period. This effectively meant there would be no further negotiations until 1989.
Clover	FAWU		September -	Hundreds of workers at three Clover plants in Natal went on strike for a living wage. The workers, all members of FAWU, downed tools when the company refused to meet their demand for a R650/month minimum wage. The strike comes more than a year after the mass dismissal of striking FAWU members at the dairy's Pietermaritzburg plant.
Hlobane Colliery - Vryheid	NUMSA	1 000		According to ISCOR, about 1 000 workers are to be made redundant as a result of rationalisation. This involves reducing costs to the lowest possible level to remain competitive in the steel industry. The majority of the affected workers are black. ISCOR claims it is trying to find alternative jobs for the affected workers.
Indian Ocean Fertilisers Richards Bay	CWIU	300	08.09.87-	About 300 workers went on strike demanding that the company move away from racist employment practices, as a company director promised in March. The company opened the white canteen to black workers, but simultaneously increased the price of an identical meal in the white canteen to keep black workers out. Toilets were still segregated.

Pelonomi Hospital - Bloemfontein		100	01.09.87	More than 100 workers at Pelonomi Hospital were each fined R30 for trespassing on hospital property. The incident follows the dismissal of striking workers. The workers said they had gone to the hospital to enquire about leave pay and the reason for their dismissal which was not specified. Workers alleged they were told they could remain provided they did not cause a disturbance. But the police arrived shortly afterwards. The workers were put into police vans, taken to a police station, and summonsed for trespassing.
Putco	TGWU	220	25.08.87	Two hundred and twenty Putco bus drivers are to receive more than R500 000 in unpaid wages after an application in the Durban Supreme Court. The workers were dismissed in November last year but were reinstated on 12 May after an application to the industrial court. The industrial court ordered Putco to pay the dismissed workers their usual wages for the period 12 April to 3 July but this was not done, in breach of the order.

Strikes and Disputes: Mines

Ammosal Maganese Kuruman	NUM		Septem-ber	Hundreds of workers at Ammosal mine went on strike after management refused to reinstate a worker dismissed for allegedly refusing to accept racial abuse from mine management. Miners agreed to return to work after management undertook to allow the dismissed worker a hearing. But as workers began returning to work, they were allegedly attacked by mine security and dogs.
Chamber of Mines	NUM	945	25.09.87	Over 900 jobs are threatened by the government's decision to repatriate AIDS-infected workers. NUM warned it would take legal or disciplinary action against any chamber medical staff members who revealed to government the names of AIDS-infected workers. The union said it was opposed to plans to repatriate those miners already found to have the disease through last year's testing, without further testing being done. A NUM spokesperson said government had not declared AIDS to be a notifiable disease and thus nobody had the right to identify those carrying it.
De Beers Consolidated Mines	NUM	9 000	22.09.87	NUM and De Beers Consolidated Mines reached agreement on wages on De Beers Mines for 1987-88. Workers will receive wage increases of between 16% and 18%, improvements in service increments, shift allowances and sick leave benefits. The agreement came into effect on 1 October.
Kinross Gold Mine Evander	NUM	16	28.08.87	Two strikers were shot dead and 16 people - 12 strikers and four mine staff - were injured in a clash between strikers and mine security at the Kinross gold mine hostel.
President Brand Welkom	NUM		01.10.87	Anglo American's President Brand gold mine cancelled all agreement with NUM and withdrew recognition of shaft-stewards. Anglo said it had taken the decision after the reported killing of a team leader at the mine's No 4 hostel. Management claimed regional NUM leaders were implicated. NUM stated it was clearly opposed to violence and that Anglo would have to prove their claim.
St Helena Welkom	NUM	62	31.08.87	At least 62 miners at St Helena gold mine died when their lift cage plunged to the bottom of the shaft, 1 300 metres from the surface. NUM reacted strongly to the accident, the third major disaster on Gencor's mines this year. The St Helena disaster could bring to 273 the number of workers killed on Gencor mines alone in the past 12 months.
Winterveld Chrome Mine	NUM	1 200	07.09.87	About 800 out of 1 200 workers who staged a sit-in left Winterveld mine. NUM accused management of closing the mine canteen in an attempt to 'starve the workers into submission'. Both NUM and Rand Mines indicated their willingness to re-start negotiations to end the strike as it entered its tenth day.

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