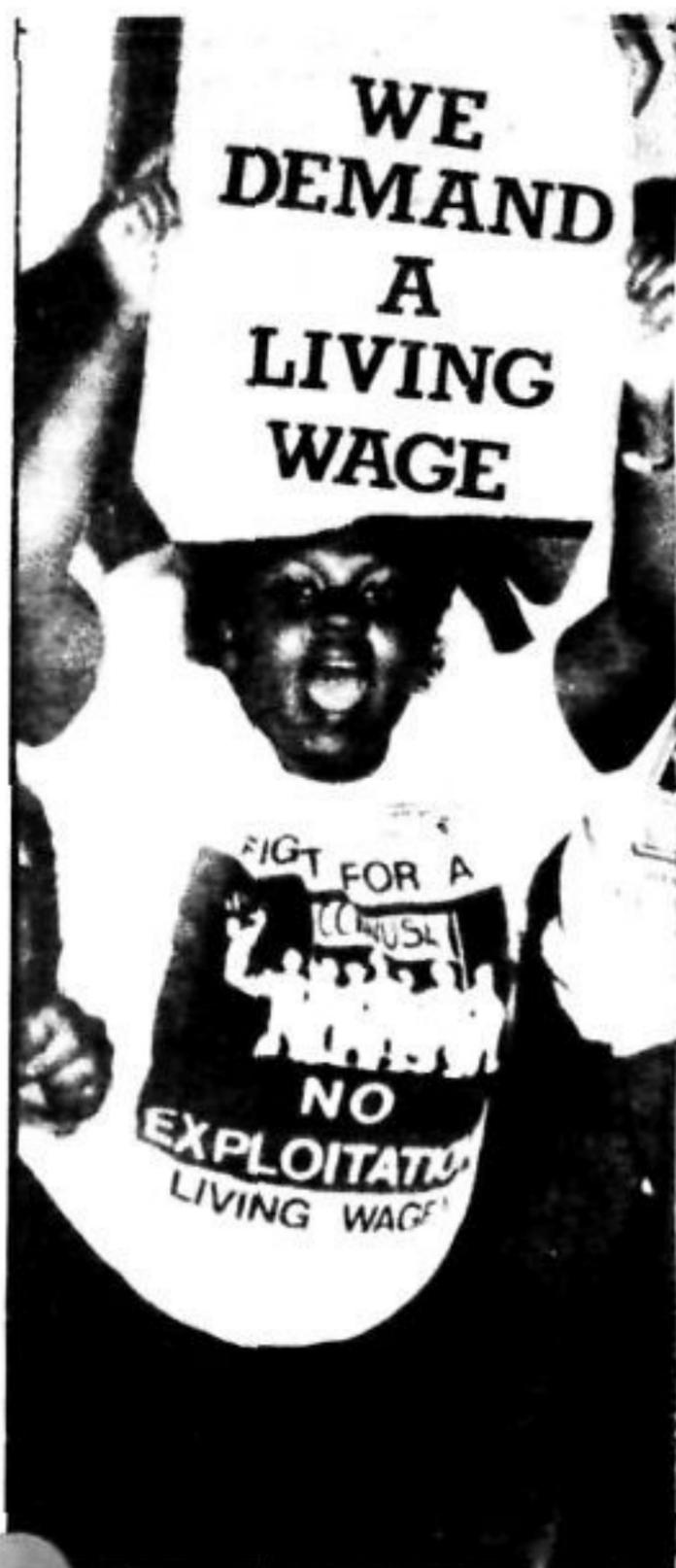


inqaba

YA BASEBENZI

Journal of the Marxist Workers' Tendency
of the African National Congress



S'KHOKHELE COSATU!

CAMPAIGN FOR A *SPECIFIC* NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE

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Editorial Board Statement

Inqaba ya Basebenzi

(Journal of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC)

1 March 1987

COSATU has now launched the *national minimum living wage campaign* agreed at the 1985 founding congress.

This could not be more timely. Wage demands are to the fore in a wave of militant industrial struggles—at Mondi, Clover and Beacon, for example. Annual wage bargaining is coming up in the metal industry, in textiles, and on the mines, in which workers are looking for a way to make big gains.

The long OK Bazaars strike, especially, and the victory achieved, has raised in the minds of many workers and youth the need to join forces nation-wide to strengthen every one of these struggles.

A well-organised national minimum wage campaign is what is needed for this. At the same time it can answer the present *political* needs of the working class.

Not only COSATU, but the UDF and the Youth Congresses, should mobilise all their forces to take this campaign forward—with full political support from the ANC.

The COSATU leadership needs now, as they were mandated by the 1985 Congress, to "*establish as soon as possible what workers regard as a minimum living wage*"—as a national demand around which to unite the campaign.

Millions are looking for a clear lead in action

In the 1984-6 revolutionary upsurge millions showed in action their rejection of the intolerable burdens of *baasskap* and endless poverty. There can be no going back from this.

But, in this huge forward thrust, our movement came up again and again against a formidable obstacle—the state machine defending the bosses, relying on support from four and a half million privileged whites. Confronting this obstacle head-on, not yet able to overcome it, the revolutionary wave receded. On the directly political front of struggle, an ebb has temporarily set in.

Taking advantage of this, the government and its agents in the townships have severely stepped up their attacks, through killings and mass detentions. They are using every opportunity to inch forward, clawing back concessions they had made. They are looking for every sign of weakness to strike blows against us and divide us. Where they fear to take us on directly, they are hiding behind their murderous black stooges—attacking youth, community and now union activists.

In Natal and elsewhere, the strike-breaking UWUSA and Inkatha gangsters are on the offensive—even threatening OK

strikers. On the mines, the bosses are provoking 'faction-fights' in an assault on the power of the NUM. Even in the Eastern Cape, previously the strongest fortress of township organisation, *witdoeke* are running rampage.

But, unlike in the 1960s, the ruling class cannot inflict a crushing defeat on our movement now. On every front, they are in increasing crisis, unsure of which way to turn.

Despite the terrible blows we have suffered, the present wave of industrial militancy shows that our organisations remain strong in the factories, mines and shops. They have not been able to crush COSATU.

For all the *kragdadigheid* of Botha's speeches, he is aware of our movement's huge reserves of strength, accumulated now over more than a decade—and based on the numbers, strength in production, and grass-root organisation of our class, the black working class. He can make middle-class careerists like Hendrickse grovel—but he cannot crush the fighting spirit of the workers and youth. For all the difficulties, the working class is deeply confident that the future lies in its hands.

This is why, in the long struggles at BTR and Transvaal Alloys the workers—though many are starving—talk of winning even if it takes 5 or 10 years. The state's repression serves merely to fuel the class anger of working people, storing it up, until the tension becomes unbearable.

There are millions of working people still to rise in struggle and become organised. Millions more who have fought are ready once again to be led against the enemy. But, to be confident in entering into battle, workers, youth and community organisations alike are looking for a *national lead*—based on a sober estimate of the strengths and weaknesses of the enemy, and what is the best way to regroup, unite, and strengthen our movement, by drawing the greatest numbers into action now.

The responsibility for providing this lead rests firmly on the COSATU leadership.

COSATU's responsibility

Never before has the SA working class created an instrument with such potential for uniting it in struggle. Not only in the workplaces, but everywhere that black people are struggling to lift their oppression, high expectations have been aroused by COSATU since its foundation. Now, in the ebb, COSATU is the strongest fortress of the movement. Many workers are eager to "join COSATU" even before they join its unions in their own industry!

This is the time for COSATU's potential to be fully realised! The national minimum wage campaign is the ideal vehicle for this.

Through it, millions of workers, along with the youth, can be roused to take action together—provided the COSATU leadership puts forward to every worker in SA a *clear and definite plan of action* for taking forward the campaign.

This would not only bring unorganised workers flooding into COSATU. It would have an electrifying effect throughout the country. Through it, our movement could rapidly regain the *political* initiative from the bosses, their state, and their collaborators.

A national minimum wage campaign is a *political* campaign

There are some in the movement, and even in COSATU, who say that to concentrate the energies of the movement around a wage campaign is too "narrow" and "economistic". Has the black working class not passed beyond this point, they say? Is it not already engaged in a revolutionary struggle for state power?

These comrades have not fully thought through what is involved in *preparing* the mass of the working class to conquer state power. They have not yet understood the way in which—even under revolutionary conditions—the struggle around economic demands itself plays an essential role in building the political movement. *They have not thought concretely about the kind of campaign that is needed now to change the political situation in our country.*

Despite the ebb, the working class remains determined to achieve victory. At the same time, through the experience of the 1984-6 upsurge, there is a deeper understanding of what is required to overcome the obstacles that stand in its way. As a Guguletu SRC member put it, "we cannot dispute the fact that the state is still strong and that in order to challenge the government, in order to overthrow it, you need an organised force... the transition of power from the ruling class to the working class... can only happen if the working class is an organised force."

To build this force—the force of the consciously organised working class—is the central task. That is the political purpose of the national minimum wage campaign.

Political and economic struggles link together

Everyone knows that our movement has been built to its present strength around a *combination* of political and economic struggles.

Lenin, leader of the Russian revolution, pointed out that political and economic struggles were woven together in the Russian revolution of 1905—the "dress rehearsal" for the victory of the Russian working class in 1917.

"*There can be no doubt*", he wrote, "*that only this very close link-up of the two forms of strike gave the movement its great power.*"

"*The broad masses of the exploited could not have been drawn into the revolutionary movement had they not been given daily examples of how the wage-workers in the various industries were forcing the capitalists to grant immediate, direct improvements in their conditions.*"

"*This struggle imbued the masses of the Russian people with a new spirit. Only then did the old serf-ridden, sluggish, patriarchal, pious and obedient Russia cast out the old Adam; only then did the Russian people obtain a really democratic and really revolutionary education.*"

Hence, he concluded, "*the economic struggle, the struggle for immediate and direct improvement of conditions, is alone capable of rousing the most backward strata of the exploited masses, gives them a real education and transforms them—during a revolutionary period—into an army of political fighters within the space of a few months.*" (Lessons of the 1905 Revolution)

In the same way in SA, hundreds of thousands of previously passive working people, many in the remotest areas of the country, have been drawn into the political movement initially through struggling for "immediate and direct improvement of conditions"—gaining confidence from the forward movement and advanced slogans of the stronger layers of the class. Even in the Vaal Triangle, *it was the struggle over rents which really launched the revolutionary upsurge in September 1984.*

Now that the revolutionary tide has temporarily been thrown back, the lesson explained by Lenin is even more obviously valid: that through a united struggle of working people everywhere

for "economic" demands the movement can strengthen itself for a new political advance.

This is what makes the national minimum wage campaign so politically vital at this time. Building this campaign will itself also create the opportunities for linking to it concrete campaigns of a directly political nature.

A national wage campaign can reverse the ebb

Activists have been discussing why the national stayways called on July 14 and December 1 received so little support, when compared with the magnificent response of more than two million workers and youth on May Day and June 16.

For this there are many reasons, including the failure of the leaders of some COSATU affiliates to mobilise for the later calls. But there was a deeper cause.

As the masses took stock of the new situation prevailing after the June State of Emergency and the successful June 16 strike, they could see no point in simply repeating again days of action and other forms of struggle which had proved insufficient to shift the state. But this in no way meant that the working class had lost the willingness to fight.

What working people were looking for were serious plans of action around realistic demands with a *national leadership* prepared to spell out clearly what to do, how to do it, and when to do it—combining all their forces country-wide.

Neither the UDF's call for National United Action, nor mere tagging on of COSATU's support for that could answer the needs of the working-class movement. Nowhere did the leadership spell out any real strategy of action which could rouse and unite the majority of workers and youth in struggle against the bosses or the state. What remained was thus a "campaign" of words and not of deeds—which only deepened the doubts among the masses as to whether any real struggle could succeed at this point.

With whole sections of the class unsure of the way forward, finding their forces divided up rather than concentrated in action together on the same issue, Buthelezi's strike-breaking UWUSA, Inkatha and other vigilante groups have found it far easier to make inroads into the movement.

But a clear lead by COSATU could begin to turn this situation around quite rapidly.

With the present stalemate in the townships and in the schools, the struggle is mainly concentrated on the industrial front. Sensing the economic upturn—weak though it is—workers are trying to win back the losses in income inflicted by the bosses during the long recession. But, to do this, workers can see the need for a *national strategy*, which could combine the strength of millions of workers—joining together in the fight for a living wage.

In 1985-6 workers were putting demands through their unions for wages to be doubled. But the conditions in which most workers are struggling for wage rises get harder year by year. In practice, most unions settled for increases less than price increases. A survey by the bosses themselves shows that in 1985-6 there was a 7% decline in real wages.

Clearly workers are experiencing the difficulties of going in to struggle for a living wage industry by industry, company by company. Even strongly organised sections, such as mine and metal workers, need co-ordinated solidarity campaigns and strike action to be sure of increases above inflation.

An effective *national* struggle over wages would boost the morale and strengthen the forces of the whole movement. This is why the national minimum wage campaign is so vital. Now, to show every worker in SA that COSATU really means business—and that fighting in this campaign can really change the condition of their lives—the starting point for the COSATU leadership must be: *to fix a figure for the national minimum wage demand, and put forward a definite plan of action for fighting for it.*

If this is not done, the working class can only conclude that

this campaign too is not intended to be seriously implemented. That would be a tragedy, and could signal to the bosses and the state a vulnerability of the movement to further reactionary attacks. Thus the COSATU leadership now carries a heavy responsibility.

A national wage campaign requires a national wage demand

The living wage campaign will obviously be left limping if each section of workers fights separately for what they regard as a living wage—in the name of a “national” campaign. *A national campaign requires a commonly-agreed national target.*

It is the idea of a *specific* national minimum wage which will enthuse the widest sections of workers, organised and unorganised, with a sense of common purpose and collective power. The strongly organised will fight the harder because they feel they are fighting not just for themselves. The weaker sections will increase their courage and raise their sights because they see the heavy battalions fighting with them. Setting a specific wage demand is the key to breaking down the barriers which isolate workers in different workplaces, industries and regions. Struggling for a common concrete demand is the critical element in raising the confidence of workers in their collective power as a class.

Without a specific wage demand, a national living wage campaign will remain unfocussed, and fall far short of its potential to inspire the *mass* of the working class.

This is why Marx, in 1875, criticised the “indefinite demand” in the draft programme of the German workers’ party for a “normal working day” and pointed out that the workers’ movement in other countries “has always fixed the length of the working day that it considers normal under the given circumstances.” (*Critique of the Gotha Programme*) The same applies to a living wage demand.

It was the *definite* demand for “£1-a-day” which gave the momentum to SACTU’s national minimum wage campaign thirty years ago—achieving gains in wages, organising the unorganised, and uniting workers across racial and tribal barriers. As a result of the campaign, it was reported at SACTU’s 1960 conference, “In some industries, the minimum wage has leapt in the past year from £2 18s 3d per week to £4 per week. Our membership figure (52,583) is the highest it has been in the five years of our existence.”

COSATU’s membership is more than ten times as large as SACTU’s ever was. How much more could be achieved now! For the first time the national, regional, and local mobilising structures of COSATU would be used to their maximum effect—provided that a definite wage demand is set! The possibilities have already been shown—in one industrial sector—by MAWU. The 1985-6 campaign for a R3,50 an hour minimum wage won 19 000 new members in a year.

The COSATU CEC should set the minimum wage demand now

The importance of a specific demand was recognised in the 1985 COSATU Congress resolution, which mandated the Central Executive Committee to “establish as soon as possible what workers regard as a minimum living wage.” At the January CEC, we understand, CCAWUSA and FAWU again called for a specific national minimum wage demand to be fixed immediately. But, regrettably, this was not supported by a majority on the CEC.

CCAWUSA and FAWU said that, unless a specific figure was named, it would be very difficult to mobilise their membership nation-wide for the campaign. These were among the unions which won the highest wage increases for their members last year. CCAWUSA workers at OK have been at the forefront of the struggle for a living wage. Surely the CEC should have heeded this advice?

According to the *Weekly Mail* (6-12/2/87) COSATU leaders are expressing “deep unhappiness” with its affiliates for “the failure to turn a number of its militant founding resolutions into reality.”

“It believes employers and the state have focused on these shortcomings—rather than the federation’s achievements—and interpreted them as signs of weakness.”

Workers themselves are aware of shortcomings within COSATU’s affiliates. *But the first responsibility of the COSATU leadership, to overcome these problems, must be to give a lead to the wage campaign in terms which every worker can take up practically. The CEC must name a definite national wage demand, as the 1985 Congress instructed it to do, and provide a clear plan of action to fight for it.*

The campaign which can then take off will show to the employers and the state, as well as to all the people, the real strength of our trade union movement.

At what level should the national minimum wage demand be set

Possibly there is uncertainty on the COSATU CEC about the level at which the national minimum wage demand should be set—or whether it is possible in our circumstances to fix such a demand at all.

It is true that workers in different sectors and regions, are demanding and achieving different basic wage levels. Whatever figure is set some workers will already have achieved it, or others may see it as beyond their power to win.

This problem is not difficult to resolve provided the central question in the eyes of the mass of workers is kept in mind: *how can we join together to improve our conditions of life using our collective power?*

The demand needs to be set at a level which will inspire the widest possible sections of the class into struggle because it seems a realistic goal to fight for *if everybody fights together*. While high enough to raise the sights of all workers as to the possibilities of changing their lives through struggle, the demand should also be at a level which could realistically be implemented if a workers’ government were in power.

Considering the range of demands that have been put forward in the recent period, *Inqaba* would suggest a figure of *R140 for a forty hour week*. This to be paid in full even if workers are forced to work less hours than this, and any additional hours to be paid as overtime. *We certainly would not quarrel if the COSATU leadership judges a somewhat lower or higher figure to be appropriate. The point is that a figure must be set.*

It can well be argued that even double R140 a week is not an adequate living wage. More strongly-organised sections of workers, such as MAWU, are already in struggle for a higher minimum wage—of R4 an hour, or R160 for a forty-hour week. But MAWU workers can fight to win this demand in their own industry, *and* at the same time support a struggle for a *national minimum wage* of R140 for a forty hour week which would assist them in winning their own higher demand.

The point of a national minimum wage demand is not to set a ceiling on wage levels, but a floor below which no workers’ wage should fall in SA.

The demand of OK workers for R450 a month worked out lower than R140 for a forty hour week. But they have been fighting in isolation. Indeed a CCAWUSA spokesman has said that their members regard R700 a month as a reasonable living wage. Fighting as part of a concerted national campaign, it would be easier for them to approach this figure in future.

For the lowest-paid workers, R140 for a forty hour week may seem a very ambitious demand. But a thoroughly organised and nationally unified campaign, combining the strength of the best-organised sections with the numerical weight of the mass of workers, can vastly raise the sights of such sections of the class as to what could be won.

Until a demand is actually set, there will no doubt be all sorts of disagreements about exactly the best figure. But these

disagreements would vanish overnight once the COSATU leadership sets a more-or-less appropriate figure—thus showing its serious determination to mount a concerted and concrete fight. There would be an immediate readiness for unity of workers against the enemy.

The key mobilising role of the youth

With the clear slogan of a definite wage demand, the national minimum wage campaign would become a powerful vehicle for galvanising the energies of the whole class.

Armed with a specific wage demand, mobilised in a united campaign, every COSATU member can turn outwards and become a COSATU organiser, drawing new layers of workers into fighting unions.

Crucial to the success of the campaign will be the youth—who suffer, along with the whole of their families, the hardships imposed by starvation wages.

In the upsurge of 1984-6 the youth played the key mobilising role—not merely in the schools, but in the townships, imparting a revolutionary spirit to the whole movement, joining in action with the organised workers as on May Day and June 16, and confronting the forces of the state with exemplary courage.

Now, as the tide has receded, the youth have borne the main brunt of the state's repression. Yet, despite detentions and killings, they have lost none of their fighting spirit. Even more than before, they are looking for a way to link up their own struggles with the power of the organised workers. In many areas the youth turned rapidly to assist the OK strikers. They would respond with enthusiasm to a call from the COSATU leadership to take up the national campaign, using it to win hundreds of thousands of new members to COSATU, build COSATU locals, and strengthen the whole movement.

With the full talents and energies of the youth enlisted, it would be possible to win a million more workers to COSATU—and tens of thousands of new members to the youth organisations also.

It would be a challenge for the youth, with their enormous boldness, to assist in building unions in the most difficult areas—adding strength to the recently-launched rail and construction unions, tackling unionisation in small towns, “border areas” and Bantustans, and laying clandestine foundations for a farmworkers' union.

The Youth Congresses should approach COSATU, its unions, the shop-steward organisations, and the factory workers directly. With their experience of house-to-house organising, the youth will also readily appreciate the importance of a definite wage target and should insist that the COSATU leadership name it.

A successful campaign would help to cement the links between the youth and organised workers and lay the basis for further campaigns on unemployment, education, repression, and so on.

The national minimum wage campaign provides the opportunity for developing the COSATU locals as the fundamental organising centres in every industrial area.

The foundation-stone of our movements' strength in the last decade has been in factory-level organisation. Now, where shop-stewards councils have been built successfully, they have raised this strength to a new level. By bringing together representatives from each workplace, they can set in motion the combined force of the workers in each area—using it to organise new layers and link together factory, community, and school struggles.

Now, around the campaign, the COSATU locals can take on flesh in every part of the country.

Using the campaign to strengthen trade union unity

A campaign for a definite national minimum wage would also be a powerful means for taking forward trade union unity by providing a fighting pole of attraction for workers in CUSA-

AZACTU and ex-TUCSA unions.

By refusing to join COSATU, and establishing a rival federation, the CUSA-AZACTU leaders have been holding back class unity. But their members face the same monopoly bosses and endure the same starvation wages as COSATU members. These leaders have a far from healthy record in fighting for higher wages. SACWU members, who have shown their militancy in struggle, were disappointed at the low level of the increase recently negotiated by their leaders with the chemical bosses. Much more could be achieved on the basis of a united national campaign.

According to the *Star*, (12/1/87) the CUSA-AZACTU leadership promised “appropriate solidarity action” to COSATU members on strike at OK. Their real object was to split CCAWUSA from COSATU. Let the COSATU leadership now put such fine promises of solidarity to the test by inviting the CUSA-AZACTU leaders to take *specific* action in a joint campaign for a *specific* national minimum wage. The same approach should be made by COSATU members to the CUSA-AZACTU rank and file in every area, with clear proposals for joint action.

If the CUSA-AZACTU leadership is now prepared to fight, well and good: a successful campaign will only reinforce for their members the need for a trade union movement united in action under one banner. If they refuse, they will expose their unwillingness to engage in struggle in the eyes of their members, who will more readily be encouraged to join COSATU unions.

TUCSA is now dead. But many of the membership of its former unions, particularly in the garment, textile, leather, and furniture industries, are among the lowest-paid of black workers. They can be drawn to COSATU by this campaign.

From the latest agreement negotiated by the Garment Workers' Union leaders with the bosses, Cape machinists receive the shocking basic wage of R56 a week—increasing to a mere R70 a week in July 1988! If COSATU shows the way, thousands of garment workers will be ready to struggle for improvements—and against their class-compromising leaders. In the present moves towards linking all garment and textile workers together, NUTW has an enormous opportunity to draw the other unions into COSATU on the basis of a clear fighting campaign to rally the membership in action with the other COSATU unions. This will also lay the basis for a fight for worker control of union organisation throughout these industries.

Successfully carried out towards ex-TUCSA unions, this would mean huge strides to the goal of “one industry one union”, on a mass basis.

But to win over CUSA-AZACTU workers and ex-TUCSA workers, the power of a fighting COSATU must be demonstrated in action—through a national minimum wage campaign geared to a definite target.

Even highly paid workers can support the campaign

A national minimum wage demand is no threat to even the highest paid workers. On the contrary. It is understood in the labour movement world-wide that cheap labour undermines the wage levels of the whole working class.

Lower paid workers have no objection to the payment of reasonable differentials to other workers on the basis of skill or long service. And higher-paid workers can readily appreciate the need to set a minimum level for wages in order to protect their own living standards.

In last year's metal negotiations the skilled Boilermakers union themselves demanded that minimum wages be increased from a third to one half of skilled wages.

The average real wage for artisans under Wage Board determinations has fallen by 61% since 1976, and 16% since last year; for those covered by Industrial Councils by 12% since 1976. These declines go together with attacks on the living standards of all workers. A national minimum wage campaign can strengthen and thus protect higher-paid workers also.

By approaching the campaign on these lines, COSATU could

readily win support for it among higher-paid sections of workers, including among the privileged whites.

The campaign can build the power of the whole movement

For large numbers of working people in doubt about what can be done at the present time, a concerted national minimum wage campaign, spearheaded by the organised workers and the youth, would be the clearest signal that the bosses can be taken on.

Not just male and female wage-earners, but women at home, children, and the elderly endure the misery and brutality imposed by starvation wages. Food prices are expected to rise by 20% before the middle of this year. Nearly a million people have been receiving emergency famine relief. 300 000 town dwellers are presently being fed by Operation Hunger. In these terrible conditions, the national wage campaign would become the talk of every street corner, every shebeen. In different ways, all sections of working people can be drawn in, to assist in taking it forward.

COSATU should call on the UDF leadership to mobilise its membership to put all their resources into the campaign.

The ANC leadership must give its full support to this campaign, not by guerilla bomb attacks at 'economic targets', but by using its tremendous political authority in the eyes of the masses to encourage the building of the organised power of the working class. CCAWUSA was quite correct to condemn the bombing of an OK Bazaars store during the strike: such acts add nothing to the strength of the workers' movement but on the contrary set back organisation and consciousness.

The national minimum wage campaign is the best way at present for giving new life to, and building, the street-committees which have been such an important conquest of the last period. In every township, linking with the youth organisations and the COSATU locals, these can play the role of *committees of action* for mobilising and sustaining the campaign.

Roused into action around a struggle with definite and immediate targets nation-wide, workers will also become far more confident in organising self-defence against vigilantes. This would lay the basis for drawing unorganised and passive layers away from the sway of Inkatha, and completely undermining any influence of UWUSA in the workplaces.

The campaign can draw in whites

No-one imagines that a wage campaign will be enough to seriously split the privileged white working class from its long-established support for the racist state. That will become possible only when we have built a much more powerful revolutionary movement of the black working class, moving arms in hand towards the actual conquest of state power. But we must use every opportunity now to lever open the class divisions among the whites and win *class allies* for our struggle within their ranks.

A fully mobilised national minimum wage campaign now can have a powerful impact among white workers, and on white middle-class people also—if a conscious effort is made to draw them in.

In the mounting economic crisis of capitalism, great numbers of white workers are seeing their security and privileges gradually undermined. In some extreme cases unemployed white workers have become completely destitute, and are taking jobs for so little money that even black workers have complained that their own low wages are being undercut. 20 000 whites are being fed by Operation Hunger. The plight of this small minority of whites shocks the whole white working class with a fearful vision of their possible future under this capitalist system.

Struggling for a legally enforced national minimum wage for all workers can be widely understood as an effective way of defending the livelihood of every section of the class, black and white.

The fascist AWB, preying on white misery, organises feeding

schemes for the white poor. But the ultra-right demagogues, while denouncing the big bosses, fight to defend the capitalist system itself. None of them can provide a solution for white workers' economic problems.

Taking the wage campaign to white workers is a vital political task, which could begin to undermine the influence of the ultra-right, and to weaken the base of support of the apartheid state. Through this campaign thousands of white workers can be made to see non-racial workers' unity with the blacks as a practical way forward.

All those in the middle class who have no vested interest in capitalist exploitation, and sincerely want an end to poverty, could also be won to support the campaign, and to taking the side of the working class.

Building towards general strike action

The campaign needs to develop around linking together, and giving practical support to, each particular wage struggle and strike that is in progress—building towards renewed general strike action.

A one-day national general strike could, as in the past period, play an important role in mass mobilisation. But it would be an error if the campaign was geared to a simple repetition of *one-day strikes*. The aim must be whenever possible to build on each successful action with further action asserting the power of the working class nation-wide on a still-greater scale.

Provided that it is planned and organised thoroughly, tapping the initiatives of the active and organised workers in every area, drawing on the bold campaigning abilities of the mass of the youth also, a national minimum wage campaign could rapidly transform the mood of the whole class, and place the bosses, the state and reaction on the defensive.

A million new members in COSATU, and mass Youth Congresses in every area, would prepare the way for the rise of a mass ANC, democratically controlled by the working class, organising for workers' rule and socialism.

How to answer the bosses

Against the campaign, the capitalists' main argument will be that our national wage demand is hopelessly unrealistic. If implemented it would, they will say, drive employers out of business and workers out of jobs, and cause massive price increases.

Even the so-called 'liberal' bosses take this approach—because of the crisis of their system. Take Tony Bloom and Zac de Beer, both of whom flew to Lusaka in 1985 to try to convince the ANC leaders of their 'progressive' credentials.

Tony Bloom's Premier Group owns OK Bazaars—and opposes the demands of OK workers for a living wage. Anglo's Zac de Beer has openly declared that he is now opposed to any legally enforced national minimum wage level at all. (*Rand Daily Mail*, 28/2/85) Workers must work, he says, at "any wage, no matter how low, that they are prepared to accept"—in other words, what the bosses are prepared to offer. Meanwhile, they find no difficulty in paying themselves, not a 'living wage'—but gross riches stolen through our exploitation.

These 'liberals' claim to be 'friends of the black people' because they oppose apartheid. But since when did apartheid compel them to pay their workers starvation wages? The fact that the bosses refuse to concede a living wage, and that the apartheid government refuses to legislate it, only confirms that 'big business and the state are two sides of the same bloody coin.'

The arguments that our national minimum wage demand is 'unrealisable' will be echoed by reformists in our movement, who accept capitalism as the only possible economic system. Many ordinary workers can become confused and hesitate to act as a result. It is vital that worker and youth activists tackle these arguments head-on in the course of the campaign, and are well prepared to answer them—by explaining how they con-

firm the necessity for workers' power and socialism.

In doing so, they can massively transform the consciousness of the whole working class and encourage it to struggle with redoubled effort—knowing that there is a way out of the poverty which capitalism imposes.

The lies of the capitalists

The arguments of the capitalists are totally hypocritical. It is not our justifiable demands, but the impasse of their own system—investing in production only to make profits—which is to blame for mass unemployment, chronic price increases, and attacks on our living standards.

The bosses say higher wages mean job losses. But have the starvation wages we are paid allowed them to give a job to every worker? On the contrary, present estimates put unemployment as high as 6 million and still rising.

The bosses say higher wages cause price increases. The chief economist of Old Mutual has recently predicted "runaway inflation" in the near future. Is this because of "runaway" improvements in our living standards? On the contrary, it is a big struggle for workers even to keep wages up with price increases.

Despite the wailing of the capitalists, and despite the crisis of their system, they can be forced into big concessions by our struggle.

"Property owners and their lawyers will prove the 'unrealisability' of these demands", wrote the great Marxist leader Trotsky in the 1930s. (He was explaining why it is vital for the working class to struggle for a national minimum wage linked to rises in prices, and for shorter working hours.) "'Realisability' or 'unrealisability'", he explained, "is in any given instance a question of the relationship of forces, which can be decided only by the struggle".

With a well-organised campaign uniting workers and youth in action nation-wide, many employers could be compelled to pay the full demand. Even the most stubborn employers could be forced to concede big increases. Through resolute struggle, supported in solidarity action and strikes if necessary by other sections of the class, the mineworkers could for the first time make huge strides towards a living wage, reclaiming some of what has been stolen from them by the bosses.

The minimum wage must rise along with price rises

At the same time, what the capitalists are forced to concede with one hand they will try immediately to take back with the other.

The trade unions raised the slogan of a "living wage" in 1980—a wage determined by workers' needs rather than the "poverty datum line" standards of the bosses. But the gains that were won have already been cancelled out by price increases. A basket of household goods that would have cost R100 then now costs R240. By the end of this year the 1980 rand, the economists say, will buy only 35c worth of goods.

The working class cannot afford to draw back before this. For us, securing a living wage is a basic matter of survival. *This is why the 1985 Congress resolution demanded a national minimum living wage "automatically linked to the rate of inflation"* (with every rise in prices the national minimum wage must rise to the same extent).

If the bosses say that to concede this demand is impossible, this is an open confession that their system can offer us nothing but poverty—and that we must make an end to it.

When Zac de Beer and Tony Bloom flew to Lusaka in 1985 it was to try to trap the ANC leadership into compromising our programme. In reply to them, let the ANC leadership declare that an ANC government would immediately introduce a national minimum wage of R140 for a forty hour week, with

automatic further increases in line with prices. The same should be paid to all unable to work or for whom work cannot be provided.

If not this figure, then what figure would the ANC leadership have in mind to fulfil the Freedom Charter's promise of a national minimum wage? Naming a figure would enormously reinforce the popularity of the Charter throughout the working class, and advance the wage campaign.

Where bosses plead that conceding the wage demand will drive them out of business, let us—in the words of the 1985 COSATU Congress resolution—"fight to open the books of every organised company so that workers can see exactly how the wealth they have produced is being wasted and misused by the employers' profit system".

This, as the resolution says, will "strengthen the case for worker control and management of production."

When the bosses say that wage increases will lead to big increases in unemployment, let us reply that this is not for want of resources, or because there is no need for the products of our labour—but because of the laws of their profit system.

While thousands of construction workers are unemployed, and millions of our people are homeless or lacking decent housing, 300 million bricks are today piled up unused in SA. This is because capitalists will not engage in production unless there is profit to be made. Under a planned economy, with the big factories, mines, and farms in state ownership and democratically controlled and managed by the working class, bricks and labour could be brought together immediately to build the needed homes.

The fight for a living wage means a struggle for power

Our demand for a living wage is both reasonable and necessary. But, before conceding it, the bosses would rather fight. Their final resort is to the murderous forces of the state. When the state is used against workers in struggle for a minimum wage, it will only confirm to every worker that there can be no compromises with this state, and no solution to our problems so long as this state remains.

The task for the working class is to build the force capable of gaining improvements in the conditions of everyday life, of defending itself with arms—and ultimately of replacing the present state with workers' democratic rule.

The question of a minimum wage meeting workers' needs, wrote Trotsky in the 1930s, "is not one of a 'normal' collision between opposing material interests. The question is one of guarding the proletariat from decay, demoralisation and ruin. The question is one of life or death of the only progressive class, and by that token of the future of mankind."

"If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish."

Thousands in our movement have, from their own experience of struggle, drawn the same conclusions. As COSATU News says, "So many workers are saying that the only alternative to this system is a socialist system—a society controlled by workers and organised to meet all the needs of workers."

The full power of our movement has barely yet been tapped. Millions of workers and youth are looking for a lead from COSATU.

Let the COSATU leadership now name a definite wage demand—giving serious consideration to a figure of R140 for a 40 hour week!

Let every active worker and youth, in every area, turn their energies now to mobilising a massive national minimum wage campaign!

FORWARD TO WORKERS' POWER, DEMOCRACY, AND SOCIALISM!

(This statement is also available in Zulu and Setswana).

Working for an "outstanding businessman"

An Inqaba correspondent interviews a worker at Farm Fare, a chicken factory in Cape Town. The factory is a subsidiary of the Premier Group, whose Chairman is Tony Bloom.

Bloom is a so-called "liberal" boss, who took part in the meeting between ANC leaders and big businessmen in Lusaka in 1985—and has been described by comrade Thabo Mbeki as "an outstanding businessman" who "will play a very important role in the future economy."

Workers in Bloom's companies see matters differently. At Farm Fare, they have fought successfully to get rid of the bosses' liason committee and are now organised in FAWU. Recently they took action in support of the OK strike by stopping delivery of chickens.

They have demanded and achieved May Day and June 16 as paid public holidays. However they continue to suffer low wages and bad conditions at Bloom's hands.

In recent negotiations with FAWU, Bloom threatened to turn to UWUSA!

Wat is die grootste probleme van werkers by Farm Fare?

Ons grootste probleme is honger lone en lang ure. Ons werk 46 ure per week. Die minimum wage is R89 en die maximum R104 per week.

Is daar enige beserings?

Byna elke dag is daar 'n besering. Werkers verloor hulle vingers, hande en arms by die masjiene. Die base sien al dié maar doen niks daarvoor nie.

Die ander probleem is dat die supervisors push ons altyd om harder en vinniger te werk om die base te impress en sodat hulle bonuses kry. Dit veroorsaak baie ongelukke.

Ons wou veiligheids shop stewards kies, maar die base het geweier, en gesê Premier het 'n veiligheids komitee. Die werkers het nie verteenwoordigers op die komitee nie. Dinge kan beter word net as ons veiligheids stewards het. Die base het geen belangstelling in ons veiligheid nie.

Is daar enige probleme oor gesondheid?

Die werkers kla baie oor die koue (waar die hoenders gehou word) en dan oor die chemicals en so aan. Hulle sê hulle kan nie elke dag so aangaan want baie van hulle gaan nou vir TB treatment.

Binne drie maande het 12 werkers by die fabriek 'strokes' gekry as gevolg van die koue.

Ons gebruik chemicals om kratte te was en om die bloed van die hoenders op te droog. As daar te veel chemicals in die water is, brand onse hande. Die gloves is van 'n lae gehalte

en hou net vir 'n uur of so, dan is dit klaar. Werkers word siek van die chemikalieë inasem.

Daar is ook die probleem van afstof as die hoenders hulle vlerke klap. Asma en bors infeksie is algemeen. Werkers het ge-demand dat management vir hulle melk moet gee om te drink, maar die base verwag dat werkers moet betaal. Die respirators is van armoedige kwaliteit.

In die seksie waar die hoenders geslag word, is 2 uit 8 werkers gereeld af as gevolg van siekte. Werkers het vir beter toestande gevra maar die base het geweier. Dit is baie vuil werk. Ons hande bloei as die hoenders ons krap en as ons hulle op die transportband aanhak.

Ons moet altyd veg voor ons protective clothing kan kry. Die supervisors word bonuses beloof deur management as hulle baie minder protective clothing uitgee.

Kry werkers sick pay?

Ja, maar nie baie nie. Dit is baie moeilik om siekverlof tyd te kry want ons gaan na die fabriek-dokter. Werkers roep hom Dr Panado want hy skryf altyd dié hoofpynpille voor. As daar 'n paar van ons by sy surgery is, vra die base hom gewoonlik om ons terug werk toe te stuur. Dit maak nie saak hoe ernstig 'n mens siek is nie.

Die base gee nie om vir die gesondheid en veiligheid van werkers nie. Hulle dink net van hulle profits. Hulle sê op die oomblik dat die toestand van die ekonomie nie goed is nie, daarom kan hulle nie die toe-



Tony Bloom: boss of the giant Premier monopoly

stand van werkers verbeter nie. Dis hoe die 'liberal' Bloom sy werkers behandel.

Onlangs was 'n werker opgeskort. Wat het gebeur?

Die toestande by die huis van hierdie werker is baie sleg. Nou en dan is die familie sonder kos. Daardie dag was sy honger. Sy het tot na teetyd gewag toe het sy twee hoenderstukke gekry om te gaan braai. Een van die supervisors het haar gekry en haar na die security toe geneem. Nadat hulle die saak oorgepraat het, was sy gedissmiss.

Die shop-stewards komitee het die saak na die werkers gebring. Die werkers het besluit om te strike. Van 12 uur af het die werkers hulle tools neer gesit en na die cloakroom toe gegaan vir 'n vergadering.

Die base het die werkers gevra om terug werk toe te gaan. Ons het geweier en gesê ons sal terug gaan net as die werker terug geneem word.

En toe, wat was die uitslag?

Sy was terug geneem met volle betaling.

Maar 'n week later, toe die supervisors hulle salarisse kry, was twee ure van hulle geld afgetrek. Die base het gesê die stoppage was onwettig en hulle het geen keuse gehad maar om geld af te trek. Maar hulle was bang om die selfde ding aan ons te doen.

Was daar ander stryde wat die unie opgevat het? Is enige iets gedoen oor wages?

Die unie het die saak van wages opgeneem. Maar ons unie officials het werkers vertel dat hulle die

bedreiging van die base moet glo, dat as die werkers staak vir hoër wages dan sal hulle geen keuse het maar om die fabriek toe te maak nie.

As gevolg daarvan, was daar geen geveg nie en ons het nie ons eis gewen nie.

Werkers was baie teleurgesteld. Hulle was vasberade om te staak. Hulle het aan die komitee gesê: "Julle unie officials, gaan terug na die base en vertel hulle ons is nie tevrede nie. Intussen sal ons die tools neer sit. Ons sal terug gaan net as julle ons 'n antwoord bring."

Die officials het gesê werkers was baie dom want hulle sal die stryd verloor.

Ek het ook gehoor dat toe die werkers in Port Elizabeth wou staak, het onse union officials gesê hulle moet nie, omdat die base gesê het, hulle sal die fabriek toemaak om die werkers in die Kaap te betaal. "Daar is 'n krisis, en werkers moet bereid is vir die konsekwente", het die official gesê. Ons dink die werkers moet baklei.

Ons is baie frustreerd want ons kry geen duidelike politiese aanwysing van die officials nie. Hulle praat van COSATU se resolusies maar hulle gee ons nie 'n indruk dat hulle ernstig is om die resolusies op te neem nie.

Die onderhandelings met die base het die moed van baie werkers gedreig. Werkers is nie so verenigd as tevore nie. Maar daar is nog 'n moontlikheid om hulle weer saam te bring. Dit kan maklik gedoen word.

Dink jy COSATU se national minimum wage campaign kan opgevat word?

Ek stem saam met die resoluë vir 'n national minimum living wage. Al dié jare betaal die base ons nie die bestaanbare wages nie. COSATU moet wyse kry om al die wages struggles by al die fabriek te verenig.

Onlangs het ek my mede-werkers hoor praat van wages. Hulle het van die OK staak gehoor, die oorwinning van werkers by USA Brush en die struggle by Nettex, en gesê: "Ons moet 'n plan maak. Ons kan nie vir dié min geld werk nie." Hulle het van 'n 40% verhoging gepraat.

Ons moet begin met die bouery van COSATU locals in die industriële gebiede. Op dié manier, sal hulle in die hande van die werkers wees and die werkers sal kan skik vir vergaderinge by sonder plekke. By die fabriek het werkers die krag wat hulle nie by die woningsplekke het

nie. By die werk sien hulle mekaar elke dag. Dit is meer moontlik om die locals hier te bou as in die gemeenskap.

As die locals sterk is, dan kan hulle na die gemeenskap gevat word om die organisasies daar in te trek. Mense kan dan saam deelneem, en die stryd van die werkers, studente en die gemeenskap saam opvat.

Hoe voel werkers teenoor COSATU?

Werkers sien COSATU as die organisasie van die werkersklas wat hulle in die stryd kan lei. Toe dit gebou was, het ek gevoel dit sal 'n baie belangrike rol speel in die werkstaking en ander gevegte, en dat die werkers se ondersteuning vir COSATU sal groei.

Nou, 'n jaar na dit gebou was, wat het dit bereik?

COSATU het werkers by verskillende fabriek en industrië verenig. Maar daar is verdelings tussen Staliniste en reformiste officials wat wedywer met mekaar.

Die organisasie is nog op sy vroeë stadium. Dit is belangrik dat al die militant werkers COSATU op 'n socialistiese program moet bou en 'n socialistiese leiding gee. Elke werker moet bereid wees om COSATU te bou. Ons moet die probleme van die maatskapy aan ander werkers te verduidelik en beplan om te organiseer vir die geveg teen die base en Botha.

COSATU moet ook na die jeug organisasies en na die gemeenskap gevat word.

Wat dink werkers van Tony Bloom?

Sommige werkers dink hy is progressief want hy sê apartheid moet afgetakel word en hy het ook die ANC leiers in Lusaka ontmoet. Hulle dink hy is aan onse kant.

Maar ek vertel hulle altyd dat as hy op onse kant was, sou hy ons nie honger lone betaal het nie; ons sou nie lang ure onder verskriklike toestande gewerk het nie.

Wat dink jy laat hom Lusaka toe gaan vir besprekings met die ANC leiers?

Net soos die imperialiste, gaan hy na die ANC want hy soek 'n kalm SA sodat hy verder kan gaan met sy uitbuiting en kapitalisme. Hy is nie aan die kant van werkers nie. Hy soek nie werkers demokrasie nie want ons sal nie honger lone kry en lang ure moet werk nie. Dinge sal vër beter wees onder werkers demokrasie.

Dink jy die ANC se besprekings met mense soos Tony Bloom moet voortgaan?

Ek stem nie saam met daardie nie. Daar is niks soos 'n 'liberal boss' nie. Die toestand van werkers word slegter. P.W.Botha het ons gewys dat dié mense nie aan die slaap is nie. Hulle probeer ons mislei. Dit is onmoontlik dat hulle sal saam stem met demokrasie—d.w.s., die ware mag vir werkers.

Die ANC leiers moet die werkers en die jeug politiseer en hulle mobilise om die socialist revolution te maak. Hulle moet die rol van hierdie kapitaliste aan die kaak stel. Hulle moet COSATU help bou en organiseer met die gemeenskap, die werkers en die jeug.



Some of the thousands of SATS workers now on strike in protest at the dismissal of Andrew Nendzanda (on the right in the picture.)

NUM CONGRESS: MINEWORKERS READY FOR STRUGGLE

Despite the State of Emergency, the fifth NUM Congress held at the start of March revealed the continued militant determination of black mineworkers to struggle for decent wages and conditions, and for the replacement of apartheid and capitalism by a socialist society.

The Congress assembled in the wake of the victory of the OK strike, part of the rising tide of industrial action since the start of the year. It has been followed by the massive SATS strike, now joined by 7 000 postal workers.

The speed of this recovery, despite the harsh blows of the state, shows not only the underlying strength of our movement, but where that strength lies. It shows the regime's inability to inflict a fundamental defeat now.

How to unite this strength in action to take the movement forward now, is the question uppermost in the minds of active workers and youth. In this the mineworkers have a key role to play.

The birth and rapid growth of the NUM since 1982 has been of historic importance. Black mineworkers not only have a vital strategic role in the economy, but form the single most powerful section of the working class. Now, with 360 000 signed-up and 227 000 paid-up members, half the membership of COSATU, the NUM has 'come of age' and reached a crossroads in its development.

The mining bosses are terrified of the growing strength of the NUM. They have taken advantage of the State of Emergency and the ebbing of the movement to foment 'faction-fighting' and vigilante attacks on the mines. A stark reminder of this at the Congress was the absence of a delegation from Natal, because of the severity of UWUSA's offensive.

Despite this, the Congress showed that black mineworkers have sensed their enormous power and are looking for the ways to use it in action.

Under the huge red and yellow banner proclaiming "Socialism

means Freedom", the more than 750 delegates passed resolutions demanding from the Chamber of Mines a 55% increase in wages this year, and calling for the union to fight a range of other grievances. Many of the resolutions called for the mobilisation of national strike action if demands were not met.

Noting that the migrant labour system "breaks down family life and causes prostitution", that "the mine bosses have benefited from this system", and that "the hostel system is the root cause of faction fights", the delegates were determined to impose on the Chamber of Mines a time-limit for providing family accommodation, abolishing the induna system, and destroying the hostels completely.

Direct defiance

The main slogan of the Congress was "1987—the year mineworkers take control". Since the Congress mineworkers have taken this up by direct defiance of the migrant labour system. On a number of mines, they are bringing their wives and families to the hostels, and breaking down tribally-segregated accommodation practices.

The Congress endorsed the Freedom Charter as a guide to political policy, in a resolution declaring that "apartheid and capitalism are inseparable evils that must be smashed" and that "the workers in this country are not only striving for better conditions but for a democratic socialist society controlled by the working class."

For the ranks of the mineworkers, this adoption of the Freedom Charter by the Congress represented a commitment to a program of uncompromising revolutionary struggle for genuine democracy and socialism. Mineworkers in daily conflict with Anglo American and the other mining monopolies know that the bosses are defended not only by private armies and vigilantes, but by the full might of Botha's state. Their mood at the Congress showed that—in common with millions of other

workers and youth—they are prepared for a fight to the finish, however protracted, to overcome and defeat this apartheid state, and to take control of the monopolies and society.

To translate this militant mood into a program of action that can win concrete gains for mineworkers, build the strength of the whole movement, and prepare the way to achieving democracy and socialism, is the huge responsibility now resting on the shoulders of the NUM leadership.

For this, the most important immediate task is to win a big victory on the wages front this year. Against the Chamber of Mines, most powerful employer in the country, this in itself will require determined organisation and struggle. Such a victory would not only be a gain for mineworkers, but a massive boost for COSATU's national minimum wage campaign. Spurring on the organisation of the unorganised, it would raise the political confidence of mineworkers and the whole working class in turning the tide against vigilantes, the bosses, and Botha's state.

This will require preparing and mobilising not merely the full force of the NUM, but also the power of COSATU and the youth movement in active solidarity and support, under the banner of the national minimum wage campaign.

Ideal opportunity

The Congress was the ideal opportunity not merely for fixing the wage demand, but for the leadership to explain clearly how the struggle for it was to be carried forward. Against the divisive manoeuvres of the mine bosses, how are workers on every mine and in every mining company to unite, and remain united, in action? How should the national minimum wage campaign be organised so that mineworkers, metalworkers, transport workers, and other sections can deploy their power to reinforce each other through united struggle?

How can the energies of the youth

be drawn in to strengthen the struggle on the mines, the national minimum wage campaign, and the whole movement? What tasks are posed for the whole membership of the UDF to ensure victories for the mineworkers and for the national minimum wage campaign?

Unfortunately, despite militant speeches by President James Motlatsi and COSATU President Elijah Barayi, the union leaders did not outline a strategy even for the wages campaign. Signs of uncertainty were evident also on how to carry forward the political struggle for liberation under working-class leadership.

The keynote speech to the Congress was delivered by comrade Winnie Mandela. Echoing the Freedom Charter, she said that "The new democratic order has to address itself to the question of the transfer of ownership, control, and direction of the economy as a whole."

But this, she claimed, could be carried forward "**hand in hand with true business patriots of this land** ...it is in this area that the importance of NUM, of COSATU, of all relevant labour movements **in joint consultation with the business sector** cannot be over-emphasised...The government has gone out of its way to discourage business and labour solidarity as seen in its hysterical reaction to big business's attempt to communicate with Lusaka. The government fears the democratisation of capital as this would logically lead to organised labour having a say in decisions which are likely to affect their lives." (*Our emphasis—Editor*)

"We want", she continued, "a peaceful transition of power, we want a peaceful transfer of the means of production to these workers who are sitting here—the mines as they work on them belong to them."

Comrade Winnie's speech undoubtedly surprised and confused the delegates, and was heard by them in a much more subdued atmosphere than any other speech. How could the mining bosses who went to Lusaka assist workers in peacefully achieving control over production and their lives? Workers know true business **exploiters and oppressors**. What on earth are "true business patriots" and what makes them different from **capitalists** who have to be expropriated and overthrown?

To remove this confusion, the NUM leadership should have explained clearly that no solidarity is

The mood at the NUM rally of 15 000 in Jabulani stadium on Sunday March 1 is described by an Inqaba correspondent:

"It is some time since the trade unions had such a show of strength. It is easy to forget what these occasions look like. The sun is scorching hot by 11am, the sky blue and the stadium ablaze with colour. Almost everyone is dressed in T-shirts with the slogans of today, yesterday, and tomorrow, all in the red, yellow, black or white colours of the NUM. Quartered umbrellas in the same colours bearing the NUM logo are all over the place.

"All the trials and tribulations of last year have been forgotten. All the

grief, all the doubts and anxieties, have vanished, like a passing thunderstorm, in this show of strength. This is not a day for looking back, but for looking forward. Heyta, Heyta, Heyta, da, this is it! This year we are going for it—for sure!!

*"The mineworkers leave the stadium at the end like worker-soldiers ready to go and do battle. In December Stimela had a huge hit with **Don't whisper in the Deep**—'don't be afraid, speak out your mind', ran one of the lines. Among the ranks of men and women who make up the NUM no fears are apparent. There is no whispering in the deep here, but an insatiable appetite for struggle."*

possible between the working class and any section of the bosses, and that the most dangerous capitalists are those who try to pose as 'friends of the people'. Because they cannot afford to meet the demands of working people, the whole capitalist class, including the so-called 'progressive' big capitalists are resolutely opposed to democracy in SA.

Mineworkers endorse the Freedom Charter. In reality the liberal big businessmen went to Lusaka to try to persuade the ANC leadership to **retreat** from the Freedom Charter. This ought to have been spelled out.

Shaft-stewards councils

The NUM leadership introduced some of the resolutions to the Congress at the last minute—among them to abolish the shaft-stewards councils and to hold national and regional congresses every two years instead of annually. These were passed, but only by a narrow majority.

Democratic bodies like the shaft stewards councils are one of the major conquests of the trade union movement over the last ten years. Shop steward councils, as COSATU general secretary Naidoo stated at the Congress, "are the pillars on which COSATU stands." Shaft stewards councils should play the same role in the NUM.

These decisions, once implemented, will weaken democracy and workers control within the union. They would tend to reduce accountability of the leadership to the

members.

How can the decision to abolish shaft stewards' councils be reconciled with the Congress's slogan "1987—the year mineworkers take control"?

The Congress recognised the need to organise workers for self-defence against the bosses' vigilantes. Quite correctly—for security reasons—it was decided that the Congress itself was not the forum for discussing the details of such defence bodies. But where are the details to be discussed, and how are these bodies to be organised on a sufficient scale in the mines and hostels where they are needed, and properly directed, if shaft stewards councils are abolished?

To prepare for the battles which are in sight against the bosses and the state, powerful shaft stewards councils are a vital instrument. NUM activists need to conduct a systematic campaign to explain why these councils, and annual union conferences, are important, and ensure that these decisions are formally reconsidered at the earliest opportunity.

1987 is a critical year for mineworkers and the whole working-class movement. The fifth NUM Congress has showed the huge potential power in the hands of the black mineworkers, who are prepared to give their all to achieve victory. It now remains for the NUM leadership to give the clear guidance in action that is needed to turn that potential into practice.

UDF MEETING SAYS: **SOCIALISM IS THE ANSWER!**

By Bernard Fortuin

(Written up from memory)

Despite Botha's announcement of a third set of emergency regulations in December and the detention of almost 30 000 activists since June 1986... lunchtime 4 February 1987 saw the biggest UDF meeting for a long time in the St. Georges Cathedral Hall, Cape Town.

It was the first time the UDF was to discuss socialism publicly.

This meeting of more than 400 people had an electric atmosphere. More than half the audience was white. More than one third were white office workers. A large number of black workers and youth also attended. There were even young black workers from the construction site at Botha's residence and parliament!

For three days before and at least a week afterwards, the simple pale yellow poster announcing the meeting and the topic—'Socialism: The answer?'—penetrated the consciousness of thousands of workers, youth and middle class people of all races. Hanging at bus-stops, in front of police stations, parliament, military barracks, street corners and cafes it brought **the UDF, COSATU and socialism** to everyone's attention.

Opening the meeting, the chairman, comrade Gordon Young of UDF (Gardens) referred to a recent speech in parliament by government minister Myburgh Streicher, who had said *the government could not permit capitalism to be replaced*. Streicher, he said, was "not addressing the parliamentary opposition, but the vast and growing movement of the working class which is beginning to take socialism seriously."

Comrade Young explained the meeting was being held in response to COSATU's call for all working class organisations to discuss the way forward for our movement and the socialist society workers and youth are struggling for.

The first speaker, Comrade Mbotwe from TGWU, said "The

unions have given workers dignity and strength." This was shown by the confidence fellow workers had expressed in him and other workers when they were made organisers even though they had not been educated. "The solidarity that unions have built between workers and the democracy of COSATU shows that a future South Africa belongs to the working class."

A lone heckler shouted: "How can you preach Marxist communism from a church hall?"

To loud applause comrade Mbotwe replied: "I am a Christian and I am also a worker and I think socialism is right. I did not learn this from books. Experience itself talks. Under capitalism workers work hard all day and then go home where they don't even have bathrooms to wash off the sweat, while those who do nothing live in comfort.

"This shows to black workers and youth that they have no future under capitalism and that they have to take control of their lives in a democratic and socialist South Africa."

Comrade Yusuf Gabru, leading UDF member and chairman of the Western Cape Teachers Union (WECTU), was the main speaker and gave an exciting speech.

"Capitalism internationally has failed. In Britain, thousands of old people die of the cold every year—because they cannot afford to heat their homes. Three million people are unemployed and the Tory cuts are smashing the health, education and other social services.

America

"In America, that land of milk and honey, 30% of workers don't even earn the minimum wage. Tens of thousands of youth and workers, particularly black Americans, are without work."

In obvious reference to the Kennedy visit to SA hosted by some UDF leaders and opposed by most of the UDF youth, he added, to loud cheers: "Kennedy won't tell us these

things when he tours South Africa."

"In these advanced capitalist countries, even though workers and youth have the vote, they do not control their lives. The only solution lies in ending the capitalist system internationally."

Comrade Gabru then knocked the SA 'liberal' bosses and their political agents for a six. "The high rates of profit bosses made after the war was due to the way the apartheid state oppressed the black workers", he explained. "Pass laws assisted the bosses to control black labour. The migrant labour system which existed even before the Nats came to power was entrenched. Bad housing, gutter education, racism all assisted the capitalist class to maintain their profits, while they relied on the police and army to defend their property."

Bosses

He said that now the bosses play at being 'against apartheid'. "Why does Tony Bloom speak to the ANC but refuses to pay a living wage to workers on strike at OK Bazaars?"

"All those bosses who speak to the ANC" he continued, "All those bosses who beg Botha to reform... all those bosses who oppose apartheid... what stops them from paying workers a living wage? No apartheid law stops them!"

"The monopoly capitalists care about nothing but their profits. Anglo-American fears our demand in the Freedom Charter for nationalisation of the monopolies. In 1981 AAC controlled 51% of the shares quoted on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange while the second biggest monopoly SANLAM controlled only 9% of the shares."

A white pensioner interjected: "You almost sound sorry for SANLAM." Everyone laughed.

Cde Gabru continued: "The bosses went to Lusaka hoping to secure their profits. They want a black capitalist government because they fear that the working class will take power to end economic exploitation and political oppression.

"Let's take Alex Boraine. In the early seventies he was Personnel Manager at Anglo, when unions for black miners were banned. He was in charge of Personnel when Anglo installed monitoring equipment in the single sex hostels and stockpiled teargas to deal with black workers' grievances. I believe people change but what changed him?"

"It is the movement of the black working class," concluded comrade Gabru, "which has struck fear into the hearts of the bosses and their political agents." To thundering applause, he said: "That is why the bosses ran to Lusaka. They want to trap the ANC leaders to compromise. We believe they will fail. We will see a socialist South Africa with an ANC government."

Following the speech, and unusually for a UDF public meeting, contributions from the floor were taken.

An African youth appealed to the whites in the audience to remember "capitalism is also your enemy, it will also attack your living standards. Remember the 1922 miners' strike when Smuts defended the state and capitalism by bombing white workers. Join us in the fight for socialism", he said.

A white office worker said none of the speakers addressed the question of "ESCOM, ISCOR, SASOL, SATS, etc which were nationalised enterprises but were inefficient, wasted resources and were bureaucratic. What would happen to them in a socialist South Africa when the ANC came to power?"

Democratic socialism

Comrade Young explained that MAWU had passed a resolution calling for democratic socialism where factories, mines, shops and farms were "worker-controlled and -managed for the benefit of all the people." The question showed the need for a policy in COSATU which could expose the mismanagement and bureaucratic bungling in the industries owned by the apartheid state. While opposing privatisation it could explain the need for workers' control and management.

Another questioner asked, "If the UDF comes to power will it slip into communism and dictatorship like elsewhere in the world?"

Comrade Gabru replied: "I cannot

speak for the UDF, but the UDF believes that once a spirit of democracy existed, once all the people were allowed to decide, once a democratic system was established, the majority would decide."

Comrade Gabru put the position of the UDF leadership...but he did not state his own position on the question.

How can a 'spirit of democracy' come to exist while power remains in the hands of the monopolies and their apartheid state? Workers and youth argue: 'Socialism and democracy—YES, we agree. But, how do we defeat the state and the bosses to achieve this?'



In answering the question, Comrade Gabru should have explained the need to overcome the bosses' dictatorship and replace it by workers' rule, in order to ensure real democracy. His failure to do so provoked further questioning along the same lines.

The speakers were taken aback when a white pensioner asked: "When the ANC comes to power, what country will be used as a model to develop socialism in South Africa?"

Comrade Gabru declined to reply to this. Then comrade Mbotwe rose to his feet saying: "Yes, we realise there are some countries who call themselves socialist and that they have problems, people there are not really free. But we in South Africa are not looking to them. We will establish socialism in our own way." Loud applause followed his remarks.

The questions showed the concern which exists that socialism in South Africa might be on the undemocratic

model of the 'socialism' in the Soviet Union and other Stalinist states.

Soviet Union

Comrade Gabru could and should have explained that the Soviet Union is neither democratic nor socialist. Because a nationalised and planned economy was established after 1917, Russia has been transformed from the conditions of India to the second most industrialised and powerful country in the world. This shows the advantages of a planned economy.

But the political gains of the revolution—workers' democracy—were smashed by Stalin and the bureaucracy he headed, who have established a totalitarian dictatorship over the working class in Russia. 'Stalinism' is not a term of abuse, or an 'unscientific label' as some people maintain, but a historically precise and scientific term for the policies of this bureaucracy determined by its interests in maintaining its power and privilege.

The political counter-revolution in Russia took place because the workers' revolution remained isolated in a backward country. The lesson our movement should draw is the need to build the ANC under the control of the working class, on a programme of uncompromising struggle against the bosses and their state, linking with workers in struggle internationally. To take this forward, activists cannot evade the issue of Stalinism, but must be prepared to explain openly the gains and the shortcomings of the Stalinist system.

So came to an end one of the most exciting lunchtimes this year. Outside, a 'Mellow-Yellow' (police armoured vehicle passed) and a security branch cop walked away after the audience rose to sing Nkosi Sikelele Afrika.

The meeting showed that, despite the State of Emergency, the last two years of struggle had washed away any fear among working people to discuss and fight for socialism. It showed, contrary to what many UDF leaders argue, that white workers and the middle class will not be scared of socialist policies, if they are presented in the right way.

On the contrary **only by building a mass ANC on a socialist programme, will we defeat the apartheid state and the bosses it defends.**

WHITE ELECTION: NO WAY OUT OF THE CRISIS

The whites-only election of 6 May is taking place in a period of extreme volatility.

Despite all the so-called "reforms" and vicious repression, despite the temporary ebb in the movement and the seeming upper hand of the forces of reaction, the black working class is still very conscious of its power, able and prepared to struggle.

After three years of struggle the black workers and youth are not defeated. On the contrary, these struggles forced Botha to call the election.

They have forced divisions within white politics, which on the eve of the elections are coming more to the surface. These divisions are caused primarily on how the regime should respond to the crisis—on how to respond to the demands of the blacks while maintaining the support of the whites on which the state rests to ensure the protection of capitalism.

The parties going into this election are faced with the impossible task of offering a programme that will restore the faith of the white electorate—a programme that will at the same time restore confidence in the country as a profitable economic venture for the capitalists without a threat of revolution. A programme that will 'adequately' deal with black 'aspirations' without threatening the standard of living of the whites.

Nationalist Party

Of all the parties the NP are faced with the biggest challenge. It is their policies that are under attack from the liberals and right. Through the election they want to show to both blacks and whites, capitalists and workers, that they are still in control of the situation and capable of carrying out "controlled reform".

They intend demonstrating that they're not prepared to tolerate mass struggle; that they are not prepared to be dictated to by the liberal capitalists or the international community on how to "reform" apartheid; and that they are not going to

By Neville Jacobs

be prevented by the conservatives from attempting further reform.

Over the last ten years the NP under Botha has introduced more reforms than any past government. But instead of co-opting sections of, and dividing the blacks, it has had the opposite effect. The reforms all fell short of any significant changes acceptable to the majority of blacks. **Not even Gatsha could agree to what has been offered.** They were seen as a weakening of the government and contributed to the confidence and preparedness of the black working class to struggle.

Despite their earlier commitment to reform, the government very quickly went to the other extreme of vicious repression, declaring two states of emergency, giving the police and military wide-ranging powers, killing thousands and detaining tens of thousands. Because this did not crush the movement it has forced the underlying divisions within white politics to the surface. The failure of the government to bring back 'stability' to the country after all the attempts to reform and repress has weakened the NP.

Suddenly everything, all those privileges that were taken for granted by the whites seem under threat. This forces them to seriously seek a way out of this crisis. The white workers and middle class feel most vulnerable because they are weakest.

The declining economy can less and less afford privileges for them. Faced with rising black working class demands the capitalists find it more difficult to maintain white working-class privilege intact. Capitalism is forced to begin attacking the jobs and living standards of white workers as well.

The NP which historically protected white privilege now seems, to the white workers, either not prepared or incapable of playing the same role. Right-wingers are able to

say the NP is defending the big capitalists and making concessions to the blacks at the expense of the "volk", and this is winning support among farmers and poorer whites.

To the majority of whites it is not their present situation, but the fear of what the future would be like if the government is not able to defend them in the old way—the fear of joining the 20 000 whites already living in poverty, of being reduced to the "level of the blacks"—that causes them to look for political alternatives on the right.

The right-wing Nationalists who split from the NP and formed the CP in 1982, based themselves on these fears among whites.

However the majority of conservative whites did not break away with Treurnicht and are still in the NP.

Further divisions

White voters remain confronted by these questions and further divisions will take place within the NP. Whatever the result of this election, large sections of whites will be driven towards the right, in particular from farming areas and the poorer whites. These moves must not be interpreted as real confidence in the right-wing parties, but rather be seen as an expression of the loss of confidence in the NP.

If the HNP and CP conclude a unity agreement, they could increase their seats in this election, and possibly even become the official opposition. But the rivalry between them makes unity unlikely now. Whatever the case however the NP majority won't be threatened at this point.

The growth of the right-wing certainly poses an additional threat to the socialist revolution alongside the state. It is a breeding place for reaction and counter-revolution. But it can also be turned into a favourable situation for the revolution. This is because **none** of the white parties can actually provide a way out of the crisis.

As the crisis intensifies what might today seem as solutions to most of the white workers, can in the future be exposed by the black working class as bankrupt manoeuvres in the interest of capitalism which holds no future either for the whole society or for the white population. For this the revolutionary forces must consistently offer a programme that shows a way out of this mad capitalist system.

By building strong mass organisation, by making constant class appeals to the white working class and offering socialism as the solution our movement will be able over time to win sections of the white workers to the revolution.

All bourgeois parties will be exposed for the real class interests they represent.

The move to the right by sections of the NP is not the only shift taking place. The alliance between the PFP and NRP has been a recent manoeuvre of the liberals to project themselves as an alternative to the NP—as the party which “cares about the blacks”, the party committed to carrying through a reform programme.

But they do not talk about a united SA based on one-person-one-vote, or any of the other democratic demands of the blacks. In fact the alliance with the decrepit NRP shows a shift to the right by the PFP. Even then, the PFP leaders admit they cannot come to government unless they can ally also with many ‘left’ splits from the NP itself, to win Afrikaner support.

The recent exodus of some important NP members, ranging from well-known Afrikaner academics to MP’s, and including Worrall (former ambassador to London) represents such a ‘left’. But despite their resignations from the NP they don’t represent anything fundamentally different from the NP, and still see themselves as Nats.

The wide coverage by the liberal press on this dissent is because the group represents the interest of the liberal capitalists. They appear more committed to carrying through a program of “reform”. And they are Nats. They thus provide an illusion of possibilities for change when no real change is occurring in the oppression of the masses.

Some of them are standing as independent candidates in the coming election against the NP, but only to press for the NP itself to pursue faster “reform”. It is Botha’s failures that

have forced them to their present position. They believe the white voter is ripe for change, that the government can introduce more reforms, but that Botha is holding back the carrying through of reforms.

The reality is that even if a majority of members of parliament agreed with them, it would make no fundamental difference. On a capitalist basis, any future government faces the same predicament as Botha has faced over the last ten years—and a worse one. Because of the great strength of the black working class and its struggle for power, the regime has to attempt reform. But it also has to maintain and use the repressive racist state machine.

More and more, the situation becomes one of all or nothing. The only thing that can be done is to sway between even more far-reaching reforms, and then back again to even worse repression, trying to postpone a revolution until it becomes impossible.

These ‘left Nats’, in their election manifesto, themselves accept the necessity for a state of emergency!

Their dissent reflects division in the NP on the best way forward, and will be seen by blacks as a further weakening of the government.

Liberal propaganda

But a danger exists that this division, and the liberal propaganda of the PFP concerning it, might create illusions among some of the black middle class as well as sections of the black working class. It might be thought a so-called “progressive realignment” in white politics can offer a way out of the situation. The UDF and Congress leadership must not foster such illusions—as some recent statements by UDF leaders, Bishop Tutu etc., have done—but must openly explain that no bourgeois force, however “progressive”, can solve the problems of society.

Irrespective of which party whites may vote for in this election, there will be no fundamental change in the situation facing our movement.

If the Congress movement was clearly putting forward a socialist program, this election would provide an opportunity for black workers and youth to campaign for our democratic socialist alternative among the ranks of white workers,

and the lower middle class.

The majority of NP support will remain intact in the May election. This support will remain for various reasons, least of all faith in the present NP policies. Despite all the signs of failure of the NP to get the country out of this mess, none of the other parties can put forward a real alternative to win over the majority of NP support.

Weakening

To the majority of whites, even as they lose faith in the NP—the strength of the NP government is still very important. A weakening of the party and government would suggest a weakening of the state, which none of the forces opposing revolution can afford. The strength of the black working class and the threat it poses is the main factor that will **for the time being** keep the majority of NP supporters with the NP. At the same time it will bring ever more sharply to the surface the divisions in the NP, and in white politics as a whole.

Whilst the government after the election will again try to carry through some reforms, mostly of an insignificant nature (though some might even appear significant) it will always have to have its repressive apparatus at hand to use against the revolutionary movement whenever necessary. They are dealing with a developing revolutionary crisis in the country, a constant deepening of the ferment in society and a further polarisation of classes.

What we have seen so far is only the beginnings of the splits and turmoil that will open up in white politics because of the political, economic, and social impasse of capitalism. The important aspect for the movement is to understand that none of the bourgeois political parties can solve the crisis. The white political parties will be thrown into continuous crisis.

Only if our movement, led by the organised black working class, rises to its full height, and only if the white workers are won over to the side of revolution, will we be able to solve the problems of society once and for all.

Only a socialist revolution and the establishment of workers’ democracy can lead us out of this chaos.

"Every young worker a SAYCO and COSATU member"

An Inqaba correspondent talks to THEMBA TANSI, a Standard 8 school youth, active in the boycott movement and the youth organisations, and injured by police bullets in the struggles of 1986.

On May Day and June 16 last year we had a national demonstration of workers and youth, probably one of the greatest general strikes in our history. What do you think should be the relationship of youth and workers?

I think worker-youth unity is important because it is going to organise young workers to be members of the community organisations and to be members of the unions so that the working class can become strong with a good idea of socialism.

How can we achieve worker-youth unity?

I think we have to give ourselves the task to organise all people—students, unemployed workers, all of the people—and educate them about worker-youth unity: that if they support worker-youth unity they can get the ideas of what the people want.

The slogan has been put forward 'Every young worker a SAYCO and COSATU member'. What do you think of it?

I support it because if a young worker is a member of COSATU or a COSATU member is a member of a Youth Congress that will bring us a communication or contact between the workers and the youth and that will work when there is no-one who sees the way forward. If the workers don't see the way forward then maybe the youth can see the way forward. Then they are going to say this is the way to socialism.

You have said that youth and workers must work together. There was the call at the end of last year for a 'Christmas of Concern campaign'. Did that campaign take forward worker-youth unity?

The 'Christmas of Concern' was not a good strategy to win peoples' liberation or socialism because it could not do anything to our enemy.

It was going to create problems in our communities. It was going to make us to be divided because if I get in your house and say 'why don't you light a candle, why do you light the lamp?' you are going to be angry at that and you are not going to support us in our work. It is not a way forward.

COSATU has announced a campaign for a living wage. What do you think of the idea of a national minimum wage campaign?

It is important to campaign for it because it is going to make our movement and our working class to be a strong force against the government and its capitalists and it is going to make our organisations to be mass organisations. It is going to leave Botha's regime with less supporters so it will be easier in our revolution to crush the government and put the peoples' government in.

How should the campaign be taken up? Should we just call on COSATU, because it affects workers? Or should the UDF, and SAYCO, work with COSATU too?

I think all organisations that are fighting for peoples' liberation can work hand in hand with COSATU to make this national minimum wage campaign to be a successful campaign. All the organisations who are fighting for socialism and liberation in our country can work hand in hand so that this campaign can be successful and the working class can be a strong working class.

How do you think the white workers will respond to this campaign?

I think some of the white workers will agree, because they do not have what they want from the capitalists or the regime. They are going to support the campaign because they see that capitalism is not bringing anything to them. So they are not going to support the bosses here.

We are going to get and include them in the peoples' movement because they want all things that have been wanted by the people. They see that the working class is going to overcome the regime, so the working

class needs to go to the white workers and organise them into our movement so the regime can have no support and we can win our liberation and we can get our socialism which is on our lips today.

There is also the problem of Inkatha, of vigilantes, of the witdoeke. How do you think the vigilantes would respond to the national minimum wage campaign?

If they know about the campaign they can support us but if they didn't have the clarity of that they can try to stop and crush the campaign and crush the people.

Don't you think we can demonstrate to them the enormous power of the working class through the campaign?

If they know what is meant by that national minimum wage campaign they can come to the people because I believe that they are not given what they want by the capitalists. If the people can make sure that all of the people here in SA know what is the national minimum wage, I promise that Inkatha and the witdoeke... and the 'gluk-glukdoeke'!... can come and help and become included in the working class and push the national minimum wage because then they can get what they want.

When this idea of the campaign has been raised in discussion forums some people have argued that the movement wasn't ready, that COSATU, the UDF and SAYCO for that matter aren't strong enough. What do you think?

I don't agree. We can take the campaign because the people are oppressed and exploited now. If the people support the national minimum wage campaign it can be successful.

If the people of the movement clearly know what is going to bring for us a national minimum wage they can take it, support it and push it forward because I believe no matter that we are weak now the national minimum wage campaign is going to make our Youth Congresses strong, mass organisations in all areas.



STRUGGLE IN THE SCHOOLS

An *Inqaba* correspondent talks to black school youth about the problems that face them, and the way forward for the struggle of the youth.

What do you think has been gained by the school boycotts of 1985-6?

A: (Std 8; age 22) The advantage of boycott was that students saw that it is only through struggle that they can win their demands and also that participation of their parents in school affairs is essential.

Our SRC failed to use boycott to educate us more about national struggle. As a result some students broke the boycott.

Will there be boycotts in 1987?

B: (Std 10; age 21) I can't say, but the struggle is continuing. Botha and Malan together with their supporters are unable to stop the mass movement. Anything can crop out anytime because workers are still struggling in other regions and some schools are closed.

How were conditions in the schools before and after the boycotts and the uprising?

B: Schools were bad. Everything from premises to teachers. But now as part of 'reforms' some schools have been renovated. There are even caretakers' houses built, and a small laboratory with few equipment.

The government knows that boycott reflects the crisis situation of the country. So in order to hide that they do all these things. We know that they can't meet all our demands but we will fight for them.

A: The schools were in bad condition. There was no supply of books. Teachers were unaware of the struggle. There were no lab facilities. Now schools are renovated. There is a supply of stationery, and a few lab facilities. SRC's in some schools are permitted.

Government does this because of the pressure from students nationally. It is not enough because not all students demands are met. Students still want more of their demands: free education; non-racial education;

troops out; lower rents; more houses, etc.

C: (Std 7; age 17) Izikolo zethu zazimdaka zophuke ifestile, amacango, ideska netwayilethi. Kodwa ngoku zintle zipeyintiwe, iclasi zongeziwe ideska ezintsha. (Our schools were dirty with broken windows, doors and desks, but now they are renovated. There are new desks in the classrooms.)

Urulumente uyasiqhatha ufuna sithule singazabalazi. Hayi ayonelanga lento ayenzileyo sifuna imfundo yonke ibentsha. (The government is cheating us. They want us to keep quiet. But it is not enough. We want a new and healthy education.)

What do you think about the new government regulations for schools?

B: We reject all kinds of government regulations. We stated it clearly that we will resist carrying new ID's, and we burnt all those application forms.

A: New regulations are provocative. Government say no-one is allowed in school premises after

school hours. Soldiers should maintain order inside the schools. How can we study, because we stay in 2 or 3-roomed houses? There is lack of a library. We defy all the laws, we occupied the schools.

C: Urulumente usibonile ukuba sikhaliqhile ngoku ufuna ukusenza amabanjwa ezikolweni. Ufuna sigadwe ngamajoni siphathe amapasi. Abafundi bacaphuka esikolweni babiza inwlanganiso bawatshisa amaphepha eID. (The government had realised that students are militant. They want to make us prisoners inside the schools. They say we must be guarded by soldiers and we must carry new passes (ID). The students were very angry. We called a meeting and burnt ID application forms.)

D (a coloured matric student): We don't know much about the new government regulations for schools. Maybe it has to do with us setting security boxes on fire last year. Security is stricter at schools now. It's not permitted to have meetings on premises, invite outside speakers, or take action in support of workers on

strike. Students will face suspension. Athletics meetings have been brought in by the school to occupy us!

What problems face the students now?

A: Problems at our school are still the same—lack of textbooks, stationery, etc.

C: Ingxaki yethu ngoku zingewadi urulumente wasinika amaphephece encwadi. Kwazo itextbooks zisashota. (Our problem is stationery. Government gave us thin exercise books. There are still not enough textbooks.)

What is your attitude towards teachers and theirs towards you?

B: We have unqualified teachers who should be teaching Std 7 but they are teaching Std 10. We don't know how this does happen.

A: Teachers are liberal towards our struggle. They don't want to join progressive DETU organisations.

C: Otitshala bethu uninzi lwabo luye ngemali kwa teaching. Xa sisilwa abasancedisi kodwa silwela nabo. Sithi imfundo mayiphucuke nabo

bafumane imivuzo ebhadlileyo. Bayayoyika iboycott ukuba ibophulela imisebenzi yabo. (Most of the teachers take teaching us as a job. They are there only for money and do not assist us in our struggle. Yet we also fight for them. We want better education and even that they should get better pay.)

D: Only a minority of teachers at my school are on the students' side. Some give assistance with alternative programmes. But what about the other teachers? Don't they have children? Do they want them to suffer? The teachers must support the students.

Teachers meetings should be open to student representation, and vice versa (ie. student meetings)—so we can find a more effective way to cope with the crisis. We need to exchange ideas.

Is there an SRC at your school? What has it done?

B: Our SRC played a major role in educating students but the gains that we have now came not only because of our SRC but because of the strug-

Conversation with a white youth

A black Inqaba correspondent spoke to an 18 year old white failed matriculant, who in his words "unfortunately has to go to the army".

Do you support the government?

Me? (he laughs). The other day a friend of mine said: "The government is getting a tough time" and I said to him—good. This government has had it too easy for too long. Now it is getting what it deserves.

Are you going to vote in the elections?

No, never. I don't see any reason to. There isn't an honest political party to vote for. They all lie, these politicians. I don't even think about the PFP. What can they do? They can't do a thing, the fight is really between Botha and the black people.

I support the ANC. I think the ANC is the only organisation which will be able to solve the problems of the black working people and to offer youth who cannot find a job a future—on the basis of socialism.

What do you think?

I scheme you right. As long as I can live in peace, with work and food, I don't mind the ANC or any black government. But the bombs worry me.

I agree the bombs are not the right way, but what do you think about them?

I think it just stirs up people's emotions. They (white people) forget about the government and its mistakes when a bomb attacks people. They don't think when a bomb goes off—it just scares them.

You said you were going to the army. Don't you think that shooting youth protesting about bad education or workers striking for higher wages is terrorism?

I don't want to go to the Army, but I failed matric so I can't go to university and I don't have any money to leave South Africa. Besides I don't want to leave so long as I can live in peace. When I have to shoot

black people, I'll do what my brother did when he was on "border duty". He saw a terrorist and a terrorist saw him, and they both ran away.

What do your parents think of you going into the army?

My father and mother are divorced. My mother works as a saleslady. She sells jewellery. She will worry. She worried when my brother went to the army. I really don't want to go to the army, but what can I do?

Editor's comment: this is typical of the predicament today facing many white high-school youth.

It is therefore vital for black youth organised in the Youth Congresses to approach white youth in their schools. We must win white working class youth to our organisations, so that they too have a means to fight back against the bosses and the Apartheid state.

Only when organised together with us will white youth be in a position to mobilise effective resistance against conscription to the SADF.



Students from Ebenezer Majombozi protest against the transfer of teachers.

gle generally.

A: Yes, there is an SRC. They have tried, but they worked under the repression of the state of emergency.

C: Ewe ikhona kodwa iyasokola ukuba yikabi nalo ulwazi. Ix-homekele kwi SRC yase high school. (Yes we have SRCs but they are struggling because of inexperience. It works together with the High School SRC.)

How much are your school fees? How do you get your school fees?

B: I can't remember the fees because I don't pay fees any more now. I only pay examination fee. There are lots of unemployed youth who left schools because of financial problems.

A: School fees R25. There are a lot who can't pay it. I get money from my working parents. Some parents can't afford it. They are unemployed.

C: Ischoolfees yi R15 ngonyaka. Baninzi abantwana abagxothwayo ngenxa yefees. Kodwa ngoku asisagxothwa. (We pay R15 school fee a year. Most of the students were turned away because they could not afford it. Before boycotts students were turned away but now teachers are afraid of doing that.)

Do you receive religious education? Should you continue to do so?

B: Religious education is meant to confuse the students. I think we should fight to substitute it with political education.

A: I don't like it. Religious education furthers the aims of capitalists.

What are our churches doing under this rotten system? Nothing.

C: Ndiya yithanda ireligious education kodwa ngamanye amaxesha iyasibhida kuba kuthiwa ze ungabulali kodwa amabhunu wona ayasibulala. (I like religious education but sometimes it confuses us because it says 'don't kill' but government is killing thousands of us and nothing has been said about that.)

What are the facilities you have to study at home?

B: I come from a family of five: three brothers and two sisters. We live in a three-room house. Unfortunately the house is too small. I have no reading room. I have to use a school at night. The library closes very early and it is too small.

A: I stay in two rooms. No study room. Two brothers. One sister. No library. Both parents are working. My mother leaves home early and comes home late. She is a domestic worker. My father is a watchman.

C: Ekhaya umama uyaphangela ubuya ngecawa. Utata akaphangeli, wenza ijob ze' plumbing. Andina ndawo yokufundela kuba ndihlala kwi two rooms, kwaye sibathathu endlini, ndim notata nosisiwe. Ndifundela esikolweni ebusuku. (My mother is a domestic worker. She works sleep-in. She gets back on Sundays. My father is doing local plumbing jobs because he is unemployed. I don't have a reading room. I stay in a two-roomed house. We are a family of three. I do my studies at

night on school premises.)

Do you know how many of the people you started with have dropped out?

B: There are lots of people who dropped out of school.

A: From Sub A up to Std 8 there are hundreds.

C: Baninzi kakhulu abayekayo, andina kuba khumbula bonke. (There are many students who left school. I can't count them.)

Do you think students should support community struggles?

A: Yes, we do, because we are part and parcel of the community. We cannot stand aside in the SA struggle.

C: Ewe kakhulu. Abafundi ngabo abaqala bayinyova ngo '84. Abafundi bayazibona ezizinto zenziwa ngoBhota futhi imfudo yabo iphantsi kakhulu. (Yes, students were the first people to come out in 1984 to resist Botha's laws and also students can see the problems of our society but they are undermined by inferior education.)

What do you think about worker-youth unity?

B: I support the idea of worker-youth unity but also students should not just invade trade unions and community organisations. Workers should be trained to lead themselves.

A: Because students have no power workers power is vital. Worker-youth unity is the answer. We should work with workers. Students should use

their education to advance working-class struggle.

C: Abasebenzi ngabo abenze ukuba sifunde kwaye ngabazali bethu. Ngoko kufuneka silwe kunye kuba xa siboycotta siye sicele ingxaso yabo. (We are educated by our parents, workers, therefore we must fight together with workers and also when we boycott we usually need our parents' support.)

D: Workers and youth should be closer to each other. If separated, we won't find each other in the struggle. It would be like holding out a hand—but not reaching one another. When we grow up we too become workers, so why not connect the two from an early stage?

What do you think about COSATU? How can the worker and youth wings of the movement work together?

A: Students should run workshops with workers.

C: Abafundi abaninzi ngoku ngabasebenzi. Ndinga ukuba kufuneka imibutho yethu isifundise ipolitiki sikwazi ukuncedisana ne unions naxa kukho istrike sencedise ngokolwazi lethu. (Most students left school for work. I think our organisation must educate us politically in order to be able to work

in unions and when there are strikes we must use our political understanding to assist the workers.)

D: COSATU is fulfilling a very good role for youth and workers in the organisation of workers into industrial unions. When organised and mobilised, workers can take solidarity action, and overcome racial barriers between coloured, African, Indian and eventually white workers.

We have also seen a negative side to COSATU. Such was their decision to reduce to one day the June 16 stay-away of last year. The government saw the split. It saw no unity between workers and youth, and it used it to their advantage. The police and army have been outsmarting our movement due to those faults.

If we had stayed within the original three day stay-away plan, then we could better have assessed what the movement needed next, and showed Botha a very big force exists in the workers and youth.

How do you think our problems can be overcome?

B: Our problems can only be solved through organising the mass of people, educate them and prepare them for revolution.

A: If students can be united with parents and teachers and the govern-

ment can be overthrown and replaced by a people's government using arms.

C: Ukuba singamanyana sonke, sifumane izixhobo, singawabulala lamabhunu. (We can only win our liberation if we can be united and have arms.)

What do you think about the ANC?

B: ANC is a mass organisation. Everybody supports it. I think it should make its voice be heard by the people because there are people who still believe that it is a terrorist organisation.

A: It is the only movement to bring freedom because it is stated in the Freedom Charter that the doors of learning and culture will be opened. They are not forgetting us.

C: Ndiyayithanda. Ngumbutho wethu. Kufuneka iUDF ilwele ukuba ivulwe umlomo. (I like ANC, it is our organisation. UDF must campaign for its unbanning.)

D: The ANC is the movement of the masses. We are the ones who will bring national liberation and socialism to SA.

We need to focus on the national minimum wage campaign in the schools. We should get speakers.

HAMBA KAHLE COMRADE

With great sorrow the comrades of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the African National Congress announce the death of worker-leader and militant, known to us as Ivin Malaza. He was shot in the back by an assassin, hired by the murderous Inkatha-

based scab "union"—UWUSA. Ivin was a wonderful man; his life was an unyielding commitment to the struggle for a socialist South Africa. The work he began will be continued by the comrades he has left.

**ASISOZE SIKULIBALE FUTHI SIYOQHUBEKA NJALO
NOMNABALAZO OWAWUFELA**

We will never forget you, we will never give up the cause you died for.

A Memorial Fund has been launched in tribute to the murdered comrade. It will be used to carry on the work in which he was engaged, and to give assistance to his widow and children.

Donations internationally should be sent to:
The Ivin Malaza Memorial Fund,
c/o Councillor L. Faulkes,
143B Amhurst Road,
London E8 2AW, United Kingdom.

WITH MARXIST LEADERSHIP

SPANISH YOUTH FIGHT AND WIN



A magnificent school students movement erupted in Spain in December, and—after 71 days of struggle, including 12 days of national student strikes—extracted big concessions from the PSOE (Socialist Party) government.

This is part of a wave of student struggles which have swept across Europe in the last two years—in France, Belgium, Italy, Greece, Holland, Britain and elsewhere. This unprecedented movement is a symptom of the organic crisis of capitalism. With more than 30 million unemployed in the advanced capitalist countries, working-class youth are moving instinctively into rebellion against a system which offers them no hope for the future.

The movement in Spain, involving three million youth, has a particular significance. It was, from the start, under the Marxist leadership of the Sindicato de Estudiantes (SE) (School Students Union). It was the superiority of Marxist methods, strategy, and tactics, which secured the magnificent victory.

We are proud to publish here first-hand reports of the struggle by our fellow-Marxists in Spain who led it.

The movement of youth, and the victory achieved, has transformed the psychology of the whole Spanish working class, and led to an eruption of militant strike action nation-wide.

For the past ten years, the working class in Spain has suffered unremitting blows from the capitalists: waves of factory closures and redundancies, savage attacks on wages and living conditions, brutal police repression. These attacks have intensified under the 'socialist' PSOE government of Felipe Gonzales, elected overwhelmingly in 1982 and re-

ected in 1985.

The Spanish working class has a magnificent revolutionary tradition. Between 1931 and 1937, it could have taken power and ended capitalism ten times. But, time and again, it was held back by the class-compromising policies of Socialist Party and Communist Party leaders.

The consequence in the 1930s was the triumph of the counter-revolution: the coming to power of the fascist Franco government, which lasted for forty years. Following the death of Franco, in 1975-77 Spain again lived through a stormy period, with general strike after general strike. But for the policies of the workers' leaders, the working class could have taken power. Instead, the Spanish Communist Party, which then had majority support in the working class, derailed the movement and deliberately left power in the hands of the capitalist class.

Betrayal

This betrayal led to a long period of profound disillusionment, despair, and apathy. The youth organisations of PSOE and the CP, and the adult parties themselves, were reduced to shells. The CP split, and split again. Rising unemployment, and the class collaborationist policies of the trade union leaders—both the pro-socialist UGT and pro-CP Workers' Commissions (CCOO)—led to a drastic fall in trade union membership, now only 10% of the workforce.

During this dark decade the small forces of Marxism, grouped around the newspaper *Nuevo Claridad*, were driven

by the right-wing workers' leaders out of PSOE and its youth organisation, and even out of the UGT. But, armed with the perspectives of Marxism, they never lost their confidence in the working class. Worsening conditions would inevitably drive the working class again onto the road of struggle, flooding into its trade unions and traditional political organisations, recovering the revolutionary traditions of the 1930s.

The new eruption of working-class struggle is a brilliant first confirmation of this perspective. In a real sense, it marks the reopening of the Spanish revolution. For this, the school students' movement has been the catalyst.

In January, strikes increased by 30% over the previous January; the number of workers on strike increased by 118%, and the number of hours lost by 152%. This was only the beginning. A rash of strikes has been taking place—a three-day general strike of metal workers, a strike of building workers in half the country's provinces, strikes in the carplants and arms factories, strikes by teachers, militant demonstrations by small farmers, and even a strike of small shopkeepers in the capital, Madrid.

Major strikes against redundancies are in progress by coal, steel, and shipyard workers. Asturian miners, out for over a month, have—together with their wives and other members of the community—set up barricades, fought pitched battles with police, including driving police out of two mines which they had occupied.

Another sign of the volatility and class polarisation is what took place in the steel town of Reinosa, situated in the most politically backward area in Spain. Striking workers 'kidnapped' the manager of

their factory—and then, when the paramilitary and fascist-leaning Civil Guard were sent to free him, forced them to surrender and disarmed them!

Now even the reformist leadership of the UGT and the Workers' Commissions are being driven into sharp opposition to the government, and are under pressure to call national general strike action.

All this has been sparked off by the school students movement, for which the Marxists had prepared by months of patient organisation in the schools, and which they led to victory against opposition, and attempts at disruption, by every other tendency in the workers' movement.

Throughout the students' struggle, fringe sectarian groupings—supported initially by the CP and official PSOE youth leaders—tried to exploit the spontaneous mood of the youth by calling for uncoordinated localised strikes of an adventurist and disorganised kind. This would have exhausted the energies of the youth, to no effect.

The ES, in contrast, advocated national general student strikes organised and limited in time, combined with mass demonstrations. This enabled the school students throughout Spain to exert maximum force by striking together on the same day, at the same hour, for the same demands.

The ES skilfully combined tactics of pressure on the government for negotiations with a step-by-step increase in the scale of each strike action, carefully monitoring the mood of the youth to guard against either falling behind it or driving it into the ground in exhaustion.

The central message of the ES to the youth in struggle—as these reports reveal—was the need to link up with the power of the organised workers, winning their support and drawing them into struggle around their own demands.

The ES understood that it could not, on its own account, issue a call for strike action by the organised workers. Rather, it campaigned for the school youth to approach the trade unions at all levels with the demand that the UGT and CCOO leaders call a 24-hour national general strike. Initially the trade union leaders dismissed this out of hand. But consistent pressure from below had its effect, and pushed them towards this position.

As outlined in these reports, a big conquest of the movement, initiated by the Marxists, was the organisation of disciplined self-defence of mass demonstrations against attacks and provocations by fascists. This has established a new tradition in the working-class movement.

This was linked to a conscious political strategy. Clearly the same preparations would serve to defend the movement against the police. However, it was part of the Marxists' strategy to avoid violent confronta-

Message of solidarity to South African youth from Juan Ignacio Ramos, leader of the Spanish School Student's Union



Comrades! The struggle waged by South African youth over the last two years has been an inspiration to youth fighting for socialism the world over.

In *Inqaba* you have stressed the importance of linking the struggle of the youth to that of the mighty industrial working class in South Africa. We have heard of the role played by the Youth Congresses in building the massive general strikes of May 1 and June 16 last year, and how this has given new confidence to older workers.

Spanish youth too are beginning to understand that in Spain as well, the struggle for a better education, jobs and a future can only be won on a lasting basis with the victory of the working class and the socialist transformation of society.

The first victory of the *Sindicato des Estudiantes* has changed the outlook of the working class in

Spain. The movement of three million students which we led showed at every stage the effectiveness of the ideas, methods, and tactics of Marxism, as a weapon in the hands of the working class.

The determination of the youth in the struggle pointed the way forward and raised the spirits of the whole working class.

At the same time what ensured our victory was the growing support from workers organised in trade unions. Now, workers are again confronting the bosses in many parts of Spain—and the youth are well prepared to support this struggle.

Internationally the working class youth must place themselves in the forefront of the struggle for socialism. Increasingly the ideas of the Marxists, as carried in the paper *Nuevo Claridad* in Spain and *Inqaba Ya Basebenzi* in South Africa, are being seen as those best able to arm us for the struggles ahead.

The *Sindicato des Estudiantes* salutes the fighting youth of South Africa!

I salute *Inqaba Ya Basebenzi* and the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC!

Forward to the socialist transformation of society!

tions between demonstrators and police as long as possible, using to the full the scope provided by bourgeois 'democracy' in Spain.

This disciplined approach not only largely prevented bloody repression of demonstrations by the police, but was an element in winning overwhelming support for the students' demands among the mass of working people.

After a decade of calm, the youth, with Marxist leadership, have begun a process that has transformed the political landscape and struck fear into the heart of the

bosses. The working class in Spain today, now reawakening in struggle, is immeasurably stronger than in the 1930s. Today, unlike the 1930s, Marxism—though still a small force—is a presence in Spain, and internationally, offering a way forward.

Entering into battle, gravitating to these ideas, the Spanish working class can prepare itself for power—and open up workers' revolution throughout Europe. The events of the last months begin to show that this is no dream, but a realistic possibility.

Eyewitness reports: diary of the struggle

Madrid, 5 December, 1986

The school strike on 4 December was an earthquake for the whole of Spanish society. It was the product of three months patient organisation and propaganda by the School Student's Union among the 14-18 year old high school students. The union, which was involved in school strikes twelve months ago, was set up by supporters of the Marxist newspaper *Nuevo Claridad*.

The strike proved a colossal success, far surpassing anything that the organisers hoped for.

Every labour movement grouping and party had opposed the strike call, except the organisers around *Nuevo Claridad*. Yet according to the most conservative estimates, at least 400 000 school students came out, and hundreds of thousands were involved in demonstrations.

There were probably many more small towns and villages that came out, unknown to the organisers, because in the majority of cases the strikes took place on the basis of no more than a letter or a phone-call to the school from the students union.

In the biggest demonstration of the day, in Madrid, there were 150 000 students as 80 per cent of schools closed. The organisers of the march were originally denied permission to march to the Ministry of Education and were limited to going to the Plaza de Espana, but such was the militancy and so huge the numbers that the police could only stand by and watch as the demonstration swept towards the ministry.

Not only did the students reach their goal, but the ministry was forced to meet a delegation of the students, all supporters of *Nuevo Claridad*, led by Juan Ignacio Ramos. The minister was pushed into making quick concessions—but not on the main demands.

The demonstration was attacked by groups of fascists, as the police stood by and watched. Incensed by the attacks, the students fought back. When they began to get the upper hand, the police waded in to attack the students. The slogan of "self-defence" has now become a main issue in the student meetings and they will not be prepared to go on demonstrations in future without having organised their own protection against both the fascists and the police.

Madrid, 16 December, 1986

The explosive movement of school students is continuing. Since 4 December, students have been coming out spon-



taneously all over Spain. The policy of the Student's Union now is for mass meetings to continue to take place in the schools and for the campaign to be kept up until the main demands are met. The atmosphere in the schools is electric.

Even in formerly backward areas like Soria, Cuenca, Murcia and Valladolid and Burgos there have been strikes, demonstrations and even occupations of schools.

Now the call for a still bigger national strike on 17 December is getting wide acceptance. And, with the example of the victory by students and workers combining in France, the School Students' Union has produced a leaflet calling for labour movement support for the strike on the 17th. It has been distributed massively by youth throughout the country.

For the first time students in the mining area of Asturias have come out. The spreading of the struggle into this area, with revolutionary traditions in the 1930's, is a very significant development. Representatives of the School Student's Union were invited to the area to set up a union there, which has now got off to a good start.

The leadership of the Socialist Party and the official Young Socialists have been completely caught off guard by this mass mobilisation of Spanish youth. An internal circular was issued by the right wing leaders of the tamed Young Socialists prior to the 4th, ordering them not to support the strike or the Union. This has led to serious internal upheavals and splits in the areas where the Young Socialists still exist.

But after the first week of the move-

ment the tactics of the ruling class and the government have changed. From initially trying to maintain silence about it, they have now decided to pass over on to the offensive. A key role in this has been played by the supposedly liberal paper *El Pais*, which has launched a vicious campaign of disinformation in relation to the strike in general, and the students' union in particular.

They have been helped by an unholy alliance of so-called left wing groups, from the Communist Party, both Eurocommunist and pro-Soviet wings, down to the smallest sects. These have played a completely counter-revolutionary role, attempting to oppose the creation of the union in favour of a "co-ordinating committee" of completely unrepresentative elements who have not been elected, who are not from the schools and who represent nobody but themselves.

In Madrid last Saturday an assembly of upwards of 800 youth representing over 70 schools in the city, was convened. It was an enormous success and elected a special strike committee of 50 to organise for the 17th. The strike organisers were confident of a massive turnout—a general strike with the involvement of more than a million students and an even greater attendance in the demonstrations which have been called for all over Spain.

Madrid, 5 January, 1987

The general strike in the schools which took place in Spain on 17 December was an historic success.

More than two million students, mainly in the secondary schools and technical colleges, responded to the call of the School Student's Union, led by the Marxist tendency around *Nuevo Claridad*. Mass demonstrations took place all over Spain. The general response was a hundred per cent, not just in big cities, but even in the smallest villages with no history of struggle.

In Barcelona there was a hundred per cent support for the stoppage, involving 260 000 students. Also part of the university came out. More important still there were big movements in the surrounding industrial towns known as the Red Belt. Elsewhere in Catalonia the response was also total.

In Andulucia, Alicante, Murcia and Galicia provinces, there was virtually 100% support in most parts.

Even in backward areas there were strikes. Strikes also took place in formerly reactionary places such as Toledo, Cuenca, and Soria.

In the final negotiations the PSOE government conceded:

★ For the first time in history, free education in state schools for anyone up to 16 years old. This includes students in technical schools.

★ Abolition of university entrance fees for youth from families earning less than 1 700 000 pesetas (R26 000) a year. This includes all children from working-class families.

★ For all others, the increase in university fees will be limited to 5% in 1987, in line with the official rate of inflation, but in practice well below it.

★ 25% increase in grants in

1987, and 40% in 1988.

★ Modification in selection procedures to make it easier for students to go to university.

★ A far-reaching plan to improve apprenticeship schemes and technical education.

★ 30% increase in the budget for running costs of state schools.

★ Improved democracy in the schools; increased participation of school students in the governing bodies.

★ Elaboration of a Charter of Rights for students, to include the right to organise, strike, assemble, etc.

Many areas, such as the Basque country and Asturias, which didn't come out in the previous strike on 4 December, did so this time.

In Madrid, an estimated 200 000 students marched on the streets.

This time the Students' Union took the necessary steps to organise the defence of the demonstration against fascists. The previous night a meeting of 200 delegates from the schools was held to organise defence pickets. Up to 1 000 students were organised as pickets, armed initially with wooden staves, with a banner on the top to make it look legal. They formed a human chain around the demonstration which nobody was allowed to enter or leave. The outskirts of the demonstration were patrolled by stewards of the union with arm bands and walkie-talkies, to draw attention to any danger of attack at the front or the rear.

It was an impressive sight to see these young students, from anything between 14 and 18 years old, organised in an extremely disciplined fashion. **Veteran workers of the underground period commented that it was probably the best organised demonstration they had seen.**

This time not a single member of the union fell victim to fascist gangs. These gangs were present on the outskirts of the demonstration, but wherever they reared their heads they were attacked by groups of anything up to two hundred youths who dashed at them with staves uplifted and all sorts of other weapons. The fascists, therefore, decided that discretion was the better part of valour.

There were incidents, but in all of them the fascists came off the worst. In one incident a fascist was found with a home-made nail bomb, which he intended to throw at the demonstrators. He was detected in time and attacked by the stewards who gave him such a beating

that he ended the day in hospital.

The demonstration was only marred by one incident caused by the provocative behaviour of different sectarian groups and the so-called Spanish Communist Party. The night before the demonstration they attempted to organise in the universities—for they have no base in the schools—a meeting of the so-called "Co-ordinating Committee" for the students of Madrid. It is a body which represents nobody and nothing. Nevertheless these groups imposed themselves, five minutes before the start, at the head of the demonstration. They turned up with lumpen youth recruited off the streets armed with iron bars in order to provoke a bloody incident at the outset of the demonstration.

This caused severe problems for the organisers. If this provocation had led to blows it would have encouraged the police to wade in and cause a bloody encounter smashing the demonstration at its inception. These hooligans and provocateurs have been roundly condemned by the mass of students and representatives of the labour movement.

Provocative intentions

Their provocative intentions were further demonstrated at the end of the march when, against the instructions of the organisers, they stayed on in front of the Ministry of Education throwing bricks and bottles at the police. Had it been supported by the students, it would have led to bloody retaliation and casualties. Fortunately the mass of students followed the instruction of the union and dispersed. However the capitalist press featured prominently the behaviour of these hooligans, to the detriment of the

disciplined mass of students.

But the enemies of the movement are under no illusions of the enormous significance of the events. The Minister of Education appeared on television the next day and, among other concessions, declared that as from 1 January 1987 all student grants would be increased by 25 per cent. This indicates the enormous success of the movement, and has once again demonstrated the power and strength of the students, if they are organised in a disciplined and conscious movement, with a Marxist leadership and orientated towards the labour movement.

The links with the working class were shown by the presence on the demonstration of the leader of the Workers' Commission, Marcelino Camacho, and two members of the national committee of the socialist-led UGT union federation.

The demonstrators appealed for support from these organisations and the working class in general and received messages of support, not just from the Workers' Commissions but also, in an unparalleled gesture of opposition to the socialist government, a telegram of support from the National Committee of the socialist UGT.

Madrid, 20 January, 1987

The movement of Spanish school students which began in December of last year has now reached a new and dramatically higher stage.

Two million school students are on strike until Friday 23 when mass demonstrations of students and workers are planned. Today Spanish television announced that the strike called by the Spanish School Students Union reached 100% support on its first day.

The Spanish ruling class and the government had hoped that the Christmas holidays would paralyse the movement—but their hopes have been dashed by this week's events.

From the very beginning of term there has been an enormous explosion of activity in the schools up and down the country. Unfortunately this has been partly due to the intervention of ultra-left sects, who played no role in the initial mobilisation. They have attempted to climb on the bandwagon, calling for all kinds of adventurist actions in the name of alleged 'co-ordinating committees' of school students, which represent nobody but themselves.

The reaction of the School Students' Union was firstly to continue the negotiations with the ministers—which have already gained unprecedented concessions. But because the ministry has not conceded the fundamental demands of free entrance of students into the Spanish universities, the School Students Union decided on further action—a four-day general strike of the whole education sector.

The strike was preceded by a day of assemblies or mass meetings called in the schools to discuss the strike call and vote democratically on the line to be pursued. This tactic, despite the efforts of the different ultra-left sects has now had a resounding success—with 100% response to the strike call from the smallest villages to the big cities all over Spain.

The response in the state schools has been matched in the private schools, mostly owned by the church, which did not participate in the previous struggle, and also in the apprentice schools and night schools.

The union has explained that the only way the school students can win all their demands, as was the case with the French students, is by getting the active support of the labour movement.

Labour movement

The union instructed all its members not to passively stay at home, but to approach factories and mines in Spain during the strike to explain their case to the workers directly and to call for sympathetic action.

The Marxist leadership have used the occasion to hammer home to the union leaders the need to call a 24-hour general strike.

The reason for this has become all the more clear when, just before the strike, a minister of the socialist government incredibly announced a new round of industrial 'reconversion' involving the sacking of 30 000 workers, mainly centred in the steel and coal industries.

Dock workers in Cadiz immediately responded with a strike and mass demonstrations, which forced even the leaders of the socialist UGT to sharply criticise the government. Then leaders of the PSOE appeared on television disclaiming all responsibility for these statements. The main dockers' union, the OPP, is linking its own one-hour strike on Friday 23 with the school students and has instructed its officials to call mass meetings and collect money.

Even prior to this there have been mass demonstrations of workers in Seat, the giant car factory in Barcelona and a general strike of agricultural labourers in the south and west of the country (Andalucia and Extremadura). Road blocks have been set up in Extremadura, in another protest at attacks on benefits for unemployed labourers. A struggle of port workers is also entering into a new phase.

The call of the students' union to turn out to the factories has already had some very significant results.

In Zaragoza, the workers' commissions have already provided the union with a headquarters and a telephone for the strike committee. It has also published, at its own expense, 2 500 leaflets which have been used to involve the universities

in the strike action; and has promised to produce a large number of stickers and 20 000 posters which will be used to cover the whole city with a call for strike action.

Most important of all, the municipal transport workers' commission, Tuzsa have asked all their members to turn out to Friday's demonstration—equivalent to calling strike action in solidarity with the students. They have also agreed to provide free bus transport for any Students' Union representative to travel throughout Zaragoza on union business.

In many other areas the unions have provided money, headquarters and general support for strike action; and workers have invited the students to put their case at factory assemblies.



The ES actively sought the support of the labour movement.

The success of the School Students Union was gauged in the first national meeting on Sunday 18 January in Madrid. 100 comrades attended from 30 provinces of Spain and with the numerous apologies the union must have support in about 40 provinces. The mood of this meeting was euphoric. As a result of the strike, this union will be well-established as a mass-based youth organisation.

Madrid, 27 January, 1987

The inspiring struggle of the Spanish school students has again brought secondary education to a close, this time for four days, 20-23 January. According to the School Student's union, no fewer than two and a half million students were involved.

Under the leadership of the Union, this was the third mass mobilisation in six weeks. But the shooting by the police of a young female student has brought the

movement to a turning point.

The impressive organisation of the Madrid demonstration—in which 200 000 students took part—was thanks exclusively to the activities of the school students' union under the leadership of the Marxist tendency organised around the paper *Nuevo Claridad*. They organised a defence force of 2 000 youth in order to ward off any possible fascist attacks.

The main bulk of the demonstration was preceded by no fewer than five lines of defence, all armed with cudgels to defend the union and the demonstration.

As the demonstration approached the Ministry of Education, it was forewarned by its information service of fascist provocateurs around the ministry. These were attacking the riot police with stones, iron bars, and molotov cocktails. The demonstration was therefore ordered to halt. A group of approximately 100 stewards, armed with staves, were sent ahead with orders to clear the fascists out of the way.

The police were more than sufficiently equipped to repel these fascist provocateurs. They were not only armed but had mounted police, water cannon and armoured buses.

But they made no serious effort to attack the fascists, but waited until the advance guard of the demonstration arrived before wading in. Their indiscriminate attack did not affect the fascists, who immediately fled, but was directed in the main against the demonstrators themselves. This was the moment of truth. Had the demonstration broken up at this point, a bloody massacre could have ensued with many people injured or even killed.

The demonstration held firm. The iron ring stood its ground. Representatives were sent to discuss with the police who eventually permitted the main bulk of the demonstration to advance. Nevertheless the situation remained tense to the point that the police at a certain moment began to attack once again the main demonstrators, leading to bloody clashes. As a result of this, some 17 demonstrators were injured and 14 policemen.

Most serious of all a young girl of 14 years of age received serious bullet wounds, as a result of the police actually opening fire against the unarmed demonstrators.

The girl was from a working class family. Her father and sister had suffered from the cooking-oil poisoning a few years ago, in which thousands died or were injured. Her father remarked bitterly that he supported his daughter, he supported the right to demonstrate and the strike. "They have poisoned one of my daughters, and now they have nearly killed the other one" he said.

Immediately the school students' union discovered what had happened, they called a further one day strike for Monday 26, which again received massive support throughout Spain.



Well organised defence pickets became a part of every major demonstration.

The general secretary of the largest union organisation, the Workers' Commissions, Marcelino Camacho, phoned the school students' union and said that if this student had been killed, they would have called a 24 hour general strike.

The possibility of a growing together of the school students' strike and the workers' movement is undoubtedly implicit in the situation.

The police atrocity caused a wave of revulsion throughout the whole of Spanish society. But the school students' strike itself has had a big effect on the consciousness of the masses.

On Thursday night, (22 January) school students' union president, Juan Ignacio Ramos, participated in a TV programme lasting one and a half hours and put the union's case, together with a member of the ministry. The sight of an ordinary working class youth clearly putting forward a basic class position had an enormous impact. Workers and students have been stopping him in the streets to shake his hands.

This shows that the movement of the students and the youth has struck a responsive chord, in a society that is now sick and tired of the behaviour of this right wing socialist government. The capitalist press have understood that this movement is acting as a catalyst for the general discontent within society.

The Sunday edition of *El Pais*, the main bourgeois liberal paper, on its front page carried an article clearly designed to warn the government not to go too far on the question of the students. It was sign-

ed by the editor, Cebrian, one of the main strategists of Spanish capital.

After ignoring and distorting the facts since the start of the movement, *El Pais* was also forced to recognise the union's strength by publishing an article from Juan Ignacio Ramos, in the form of an open letter to the education minister. Written in very harsh terms, it explained the link between the dispute and the struggle of the workers' movement.

Opinion poll

The same issue carried an opinion poll with incredible figures indicating that after six weeks of struggle 67% of Spanish people were in favour of the students, 20% 'don't know' and only 13% in favour of the education ministry.

This movement has shaken the government. The ministry has been compelled for the first time to seriously negotiate.

The government is in a state of panic about the potential behind this mobilisation, particularly as it is aware that behind the students is a conscious, Marxist tendency.

The policy of the union will be to enter seriously into negotiations, with the aim of seeking an agreement which will meet the main demands of the students. However, it is not excluded, given the blindness of this government and its past record, that it will show intransigence, and the negotiations break down. Though some layers of the youth show signs of tiredness, the movement then will enter new and uncharted waters.

Madrid, 10 February, 1987

The deadlock of negotiations last week between the Student's Union, ES, and the Ministry of Education has led to a renewed action campaign this week: a four-day strike call for February 9-13.

The union rejected the Ministry's offer. The Ministry has asked for fresh negotiations on Wednesday. But even if a settlement is reached, the mobilisation will go ahead.

On Monday, up to 95 per cent of students supported the strike in Madrid, Andalucia and certain other regions.

Concrete agreement has been reached with the CCOO (unions led by the Communist Party) for joint demonstrations with the ES on Wednesday. In Madrid, the CCOO have put out 10 000 posters.

A mass march on Madrid has been called for Friday. Coaches and trains have been organised from all over Spain. Factories have been approached, and many have agreed to hold meetings during breaks with representatives of the students.

The ultra-left, etc., organised in so-called "Coordinating Committees", have tried to upstage the union by provoking violent clashes with the police. Naturally the media have played this up. In fact their support has been minimal: 400 outside Parliament, 1 000 on their march to the Moncloa Palace (Prime Minister's residence), 50 out of 1 500 demonstrators in San Sebastian last week.

Spain is in an explosive mood. The

week of action was planned by the Union to coincide with important struggles by teachers and other sectors.

Forty-eight hours before the start, a bad deal was signed on behalf of the teachers; but agricultural workers are still coming out, coal miners in Asturias (two days), copper miners in Rio Tinto (four days), teachers in the private sector, and others.

On Friday the dockers will be out, and the Seat and Renault car workers in Barcelona. Even the small shopkeepers in Madrid are taking action.

Workers' leaders

One word from the workers' union leadership and there could be a general strike. The ES have urged this. But the workers' leaders have held back.

Significantly, however, Marcelino Camacho, leader of the CCOO, raises the possibility of a general strike in March or April, when wage bargaining comes to a head.

The students' movement has transformed the psychology of all the classes in Spain. It has galvanised into organised struggle the bitterness and frustration that was already present among the youth and workers. But the struggle will not end here. The turbulent events of this week are indicative of what lies ahead if the right-wing socialist government continues on its collision course with the industrial workers and working-class youth.

Madrid, 17 February, 1987

The Spanish government has climbed down completely in the face of the school student's movement. Free school education, and also at university for students from working class homes, has been conceded for the first time in Spain's history.

This victory is due exclusively to the mass campaign led by the school students' union (ES) since last December, reaching a climax in the week of action from 9 to 13 February. At its height almost three million students were involved.

The students' union has called for an orderly return to classes and for the convening of assemblies to discuss and vote upon the ministry's offer, before deciding on future action.

The main aim of the union was to achieve unity in action between the students and workers around the slogan of a 24-hour general strike.

The response of the workers' leaders to the repeated approaches of the union was at first luke-warm. However, as the movement continued, pressure began building up among the workers themselves for the calling of a general strike.

The leaders of the CCOO (Workers' Commissions: unions under Communist party influence) agreed, for the first time,

to call joint demonstrations with the students' union all over Spain on 11 February. The biggest demonstration was in Madrid, where 150 000 workers and students marched behind the banners of the ES.

At the head marched the leaders of the students together with the leader of the CCOO, Marcelino Camacho. The press, however, played up the violent incidents organised by a handful of provocateurs—undoubtedly infiltrated by fascist elements—at the end of the demonstration.

The climax of the students' movement was the march on Madrid organised by the students' union on Friday, 13 February. Organised in a very short space of time, with very small resources, it succeeded in mobilising 200 000 young people on the streets of Madrid.

The demonstration was an impressive spectacle—a sea of colour, with the flags of different nationalities interspersed with the red banners of the unions from Seville and other areas.

There was no doubt whatsoever of who was behind all this. The main banners were those of the students' union but also, interspersed with these, were the banners of Youth for Socialism and *Nuevo Claridad*, Marxist tendency in the Spanish labour movement.

The radio gave a blow by blow account of this demonstration as if it was a football match. Indeed, the atmosphere was extremely similar to that of a football match.

The idea of this march undoubtedly caught the imagination of youth all over Spain. The demonstration was preceded, unexpectedly, by the arrival of 300 youths on motor bikes. These were the "messenger boys", one of the most exploited layers of the youth, who turned up in a spontaneous gesture of solidarity, chanting: "The messenger boys are also workers".

Once again, the defence pickets organised by the ES behaved in an exemplary fashion. There was a record number of 3 000 youths armed with staves, arm in arm, tightly controlled by a specialised group organised by the Marxists around *Nuevo Claridad*.

Delegate conference

While the demonstration marched through the streets, a special delegate conference of the CCOO was taking place. Juan Ignacio Ramos, leader of the ES and a supporter of the Marxist tendency, was specifically invited to speak.

Alarmed at the impact of the Marxists among the CCOO, certain pro-Moscow elements demanded that a representative of the so-called Coordinating Committees should also be allowed to speak. This was agreed.

This individual succeeded in boring the

pants off everybody and received merely token applause. However, no sooner had the chairman announced the presence of Juan Ignacio Ramos than all 3 000 delegates stood up and gave a standing ovation to the representative of the ES.

Ramos's speech was interrupted no fewer than four times by enthusiastic applause by the delegates who, at the end, voted unanimously to leave the hall and go to participate in the demonstration.

The demonstration halted outside the building of the CCOO, chanting "Workers and students, unite and go forward", and "Not one step back! Against the cuts! General strike!"

After a few minutes all 3 000 delegates joined the march to enthusiastic applause from the students.

Once again, the demonstration was saved from disorganisation by fascist provocateurs by the exemplary discipline and courage of the defence pickets.

Madrid, 24 February, 1987

"We have won the first battle against the Ministry of Education by a knockout".

With these words Juan Ignacio Ramos, leader of the Spanish School Students' Union (ES), announced to the press and TV the historic victory won by the youth of Spain after two and a half months of bitter struggles.

The first two offers made by the Ministry were rejected by the union as insufficient to meet the students' demands, summed up in the celebrated phrase chanted on all the recent demonstrations: "*El hijo del obrero a la Universidad*" ("The workers' children to the University").

Now, after two one-day general strikes and two week-long general strikes, with hundreds of demonstrations, the government has signed an unconditional surrender.

In the last week assemblies have been held in schools all over Spain, with the overwhelming majority voting in favour of the deal.

The terms of the agreement have caused great surprise in working-class circles, used to seeing union leaders sign wage agreements for piddling amounts.

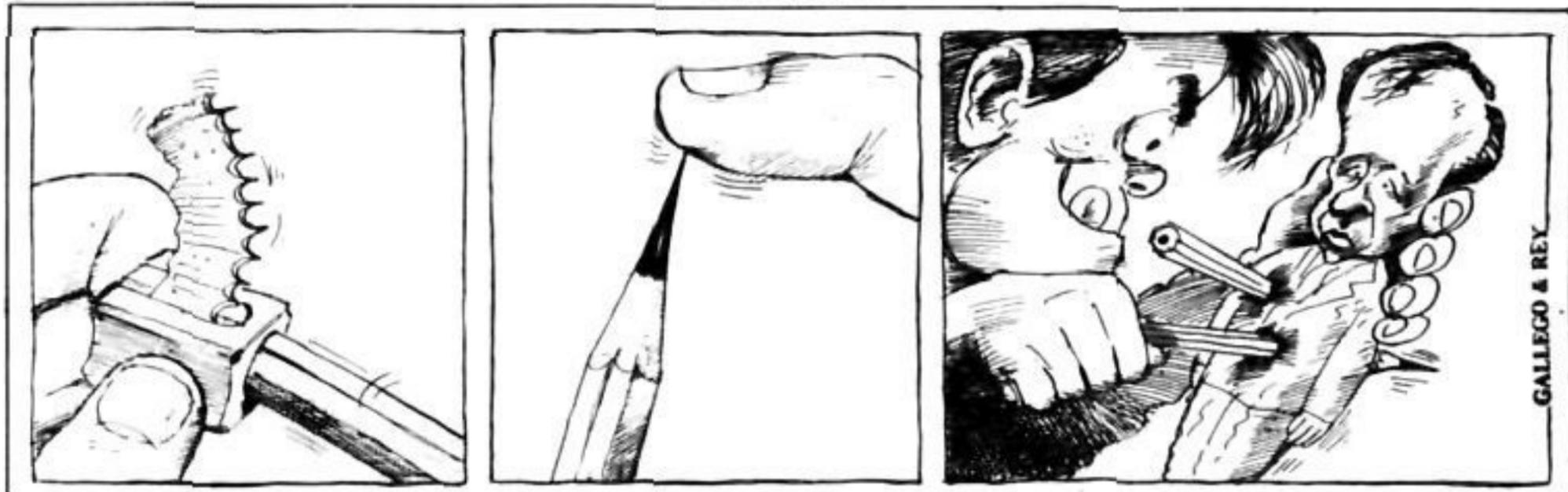
Emerging from the negotiations, Education minister Jose Maria Maravall claimed unconvincingly that "there are neither victors nor vanquished".

To no avail! Everyone is well aware that these "concessions" have been torn from a reluctant right-wing Socialist government by the movement of three million, mainly working-class, youth headed by the ES under a Marxist leadership, with the backing of the workers and their organisations.

Juan Ignacio Ramos warned the government that they had better deliver their promises, and was careful to point out that this was "only the first round in

Díario 16/2 de febrero. 87

OPINION



This cartoon, from one of the Spanish national daily newspapers (*Díario 16*, 2.2.1987), shows the students' campaign for free education and better opportunities in a new light! Maravall, the PSOE Minister for Education, is drawn in the right hand box.

a long battle to change the educational system".

"After this, nothing will ever be the same again", he said, "because after the struggle of the last two and a half months, we have proved that through struggle you get things done".

The school students' struggle has been a watershed in modern Spanish history. For the first time in any country for many decades, a genuine Marxist leadership has led a movement which, at its high point, encompassed three million young people.

This movement, now crowned with success, has been an inspiration to millions of workers, who in recent years have grown all too accustomed to defeated strikes.

Spanish society is becoming polarised. The mood of the working class is increasingly radicalised. The students' movement has acted as a catalyst.

The movement to the left of the workers is accompanied by the movement to the right of the leaders of the PSOE. For weeks Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez has disappeared from the face of the earth. The main spokesman for the government is Carlos Solchaga, the Industry minister, who directly represents the interests of the banks in the government.

It is no accident that the leaders of the Workers' Commissions (CCOO) are talking about organising an all-Spain general strike next month, and have asked for the support of the School Students' union.

Nicolas Redondo, leader of the Socialist UGT (trade union federation), has broken off relations with the employers and publicly attacked the economic policies of the Socialist government.

As always, the youth have shown the way. By their courage, elan and militancy they have breached the dam. The rising workers' movement will now force its way through, opening a new and stormy chapter in Spanish history.



The massive demonstration in Madrid on 4 December 1986.

RUSSIA: reform or political revolution?

Gorbachev's speech last year at the 27th Congress of the Communist Party and now his speech to the January 1987 plenum of the Party Central Committee, mark a new stage in the development of 'soviet' Russia. It requires attentive analysis by Marxists in order to understand the processes taking place in Soviet society.

While speeches attacking corruption, waste, inefficiency etc are nothing new in Russia, Gorbachev's 'reforms' go beyond anything in the last 30 years, calling for more democracy, election under certain conditions of factory managers, elections within the 'Communist' Party etc.

These proposals are an attempt to remove the worst logjams in the economy which is nearly stagnant. However, precisely because of this stagnation, Gorbachev faces the risk of even the talk of reforms encouraging a movement developing among the discontented workers and youth.

The crisis in the Soviet economy, Gorbachev's 'reforms', and the split in the bureaucracy that they represent are an indication that the era of the political revolution is beginning to unfold in Russia.

Seventy years

It is now seventy years since the overthrow of capitalism and landlordism in Russia in October 1917. The Russian revolution changed the history of the world, and marked an entire new stage in the development of mankind. Russia has moved from a position where industry and society were at a lower level than India today, to the position of the second industrial and world power. In 1985 Russia was the world's leading producer of oil (25 per cent of world production), gas (35 per cent), and steel (24 per cent, almost double the USA). Its electricity output is equivalent to that of the whole EEC, and accounts for 17 per cent of world production. Its achievements with the nationalised means of production, distribution and exchange are gigantic and imperishable. State ownership has demonstrated its right to superiority over capitalism, as Trotsky once said, not in the language of Marx's *Capital*, but in the language of steel, cement and production.

But the isolation of the revolution and the backwardness of Russia, led to the victory of the bureaucracy over the democracy of the revolution. Stalin was able to seize control in the interests and to serve the needs of the bureaucratic elite.

**By
Ted Grant**
**Political Editor, Militant,
Marxist newspaper for
labour and youth in Britain**

However, history always proceeds in a dialectical way, in contradictions, never in a smooth and straight path of development. Seventy years after the revolution there is **more** inequality, and no genuine democracy as there was in the years 1917-23.

Now not only in social relations but in the development of industry too, the contradictions between the economic basis of the Soviet Union and the role of its bureaucratic leadership have become extreme. From being a relative means of developing the Soviet Union the bureaucracy has now become a reactionary brake on development.

During the last twenty years, Russia has developed only at a tortoise pace, no longer hurtling forward as in the years before the war, and the first decade or two after the war. Thus, from 1913 (the highest pre-revolution figures) to 1963, industrial output rocketed by 52 times in Russia, while in the USA it increased six times and in Britain, doubled. In the 1950s the economy in Russia grew by an average of 12 per cent a year, a rate easily outstripping almost every capitalist power even at the peak of the boom.

In the last period, however, the rate of development of the economy has been lower than that of capitalism in the period of the economic upswing or even in some years of economic decline. In 1979 the Gross National Product grew by 0.9 per cent, in 1980 1.5 per cent, and about 2.5 per cent in 1981 and 1982.

In the sixties Khrushchev had predicted that by 1980, the Soviet Union would succeed in overtaking the United States in productivity of labour, in output and in standards of living.

This would have been entirely possible if the bureaucracy had not become an enormous fetter on the further development of the Russian economy. It was no

idle boast by Khrushchev. The level of culture; the level of education and the numbers of the working class; the resources of Russia; had they all been used in a scientific and planned way with control over society by the mass of the population, this aim could have been realised. Under the conditions of totalitarian Stalinism it was an impossible dream.

Marx explained that the transition of one society to another is determined by the development of the productive forces. So why, despite the colossal advantages of the elimination of private ownership of the means of production, has there been this very slow development in the last few decades in Russia? A workers' state moving towards socialism requires democracy and control by the workers, of industry, the state and of the economic plan. It is impossible to run a hundred thousand industrial enterprises, many employing more than 100,000 people, a hundred thousand construction works, in turn employing up to 300,000 people, by command of bureaucrats at the top.

When it was a question in the pre-war and the first decade or two of the post-war period of translating the achievements of science and technique of the West to a relatively primitive economy, the bureaucracy could be relatively successful, although Trotsky pointed out that this was at three times the cost of the development of industry in capitalist society. Now the role of the bureaucracy in Russian society has become completely reactionary. The bureaucrats had dreams of ruling for a thousand years. Now after mere decades the regime of political counter revolution on the basis of a planned economy, has reached its limits. It can no longer rule in the old way.

State machine

According to the arguments of Marxism, the state is a machine for the oppression of one class by another class. It is the guardian of inequality and privilege. The Soviet Union was not and still is not an harmonious society, although it is more harmonious than capitalist society.

The bureaucratic caste of millions is clogging the state machinery and the economy. Every section of the state machine—the army, the police—and the 'Communist' Party is moulded for the purpose of defending the interests of the ruling elite. It is true the bureaucracy defends state ownership and the plan, but it does so not in the interests of society

as a whole but because this is the source of privilege for itself. Under a system of totalitarian rule, as the whole of history has demonstrated, corruption, theft, swindling, embezzling, speculation, nepotism and all the other phenomena of bureaucratic command and control are inevitable.

Now Gorbachev has given a glimpse of what is really going on within Soviet society. He has lifted the lid off a seething cauldron of corruption and crime in all the Republics and throughout the Soviet Union.

As an intelligent representative of the bureaucratic caste, he realises that the present situation cannot be continued without the danger of explosions within the masses. Enormous discontent has been accumulating within Soviet society. Telling examples of corruption have been given in the Soviet press in the course of the last year. Some bureaucrats actually looted millions of roubles, which is the equivalent of millions of pounds. Their greed and corruption threaten to devour all the fruits of the revolution.

In his report to the 27th Congress, Gorbachev justifiably boasted that in the last 25 years: "The fixed production assets of our economy have increased seven times over. Thousands of enterprises have been built and new industries created. The national income has gone up nearly 300 per cent, industrial production 400 per cent

and agriculture 70 per cent."

"Before the war, and in early post-war years, the level of the US economy appeared to us hard to attain, but it was really in the '70s that we have come substantially close to it in terms of our scientific, technical and economic potential and had even surpassed it in the output of certain key items."

"These achievements are the result of tremendous effort by the people. They enabled us to enhance considerably the well-being of Soviet citizens. In a quarter of a century real per capita incomes have gone up by 160 per cent and the social consumption funds more than 400 per cent. Fifty-four million flats have been built which enabled us to improve the living conditions of the majority of families. The transition has been completed to universal secondary education. The number of people who have finished higher educational establishments has increased four-fold. The successes of science, medicine and culture are universally recognised."

However, Gorbachev is compelled to admit: "at the same time difficulties began to build up in the economy in the 70s, with the rates of economic growth declining visibly. As a result the targets for economic development set in the CPSU programme and even the lower targets of the 9th and 10th five year plans were not attained. Neither did we manage

to carry out fully the social programme charted for this period. A lag ensued in the material basis of science, education, health protection, culture and every day services....the economy, which has enormous resources at its disposal, ran into shortages. A gap appeared between the needs of society and the attained level of production, between the effective demand and supply of goods."

Success?

"The success of any undertaking depends to a decisive degree on how actively and consciously the masses take part in it. To convince broad sections of the working people that the chosen path is correct, to win their interest morally and materially, and restructure the psychology of the cadre—those are crucial conditions for the acceleration of our growth. The advance will be all the more rapid, the tighter our discipline and organisation will be, and the higher the responsibility of each for his job and its results."

"Today the prime task of the party and the entire people is to resolutely reverse the unfavourable tendencies in the developing of the economy, to impart to it the due dynamism and to give scope to the initiative and creativity of the masses, to truly revolutionary change."

Gorbachev is a consummate representative of the ruling caste, and has all the limitations of bureaucrat. He wants to transform Russian society without altering the basic structure of bureaucratic control. Like the top layers of the bureaucracy, his conditions of living are vastly different to those of the working class in the Soviet Union. His wife wears clothes from the expensive fashion houses in France like Cardin. She buys the most expensive perfumes.

Gorbachev lives like a millionaire or an American ruling politician. But alarmed by the economic stagnation and its threat to Russian society, fearful of the workers' inevitable reaction, he is trying, on the basis of bureaucratic rule, to change the situation. The mass movement of the Polish workers around Solidarity and its revolutionary potential, was an ominous warning of the processes that would inevitably take place in Russia. Even Brezhnev was stirred into panic and berated the so-called 'trade union leaders' for not representing the interests of the Russian workers, exposing the lie that the trade unions in the Stalinist states have any independence.

Gorbachev is trying to introduce reform from the top to prevent political revolution from the bottom, and also in an endeavour to find a way out of the bureaucratic straitjacket imposed on the progress of the Russian economy.

Real Marxist-Leninists could explain



Soviet leader Gorbachev: claiming the authority of Lenin, but has nothing in common with Lenin's policies.

all this in advance. Trotsky's book *The Revolution Betrayed*, 50 years after it was written, is still the most fresh document explaining the processes taking place in the Soviet Union.

Stalin, in the past, as a bonapartist military-police dictator on occasions leaned on the working class to strike blows at the most corrupt section of the bureaucracy. Bonapartism is a system of balancing between different groups and classes—between the workers, the peasants, and the bureaucrats themselves. So in the same way, Gorbachev is compelled to lean on the working class, to strike blows at a section of the bureaucratic caste which has gained enormously in influence and in its standard of living and its parasitism on the economy. Gorbachev wants 'controlled reforms' but it will not be possible to continue on this road.

Stalin specifically abandoned reforms and was compelled to launch a one-sided civil war in the purge of the Old Bolsheviks. He completely abandoned reforms for fear of overthrow of the bureaucratic elite. However, Gorbachev, once embarked on the road of 'reforms', will not find it so easy to reverse and to clamp down once more. Whereas in the 1930s the working class was about 20 per cent of Russian society, the figure today is nearer to 70 per cent. Though a reaction as in China today is inevitable, Russia is no longer a backward country but a sophisticated economy with the largest working class in the world, and a highly cultured working class. These 'reforms' will still enormously encourage the workers. They could set the masses in motion, despite Gorbachev's limited aims.

Questions

Inevitably, once the workers get a certain measure of control they will begin to ask questions and demand why the bureaucracy gets more than the wages of superintendence. Why they maintain their perks of country houses, cars of special food shops which can only be used by officials?

Like Stalin, Gorbachev can take measures against the lower and middle bureaucrats, even some of the higher bureaucrats as scapegoats for the sins of the entire system. Thus in his first 11 months he has removed 46 out of 156 regional party bosses. But in his endeavour to improve things, Gorbachev has given some glaring examples of the role of the bureaucracy in impeding the development of soviet society:

"The non-wear and tear effect which soviet scientists discovered three decades ago, led to the development of fundamentally new lubricants that greatly increase the service life of the machine parts subjected to friction and sharply reduce



The Central Committee of the CPSU under Chernenko's rule (Gorbachev second from right): an entrenched and privileged bureaucracy.

labour outlays. This discovery, which yields savings of many millions of roubles, has to this day not yet been applied on a broad scale, because of the blinkers worn by some of the high ranking executives of the USSR Ministry of Petrochemical Industry and also of a number of other ministries and departments."

"The Ministry of the Motor Vehicle Industry and planning bodies are to blame for the fact that for about ten years now a newly invented anti-friction bearing, which makes machines more reliable and failure-safe under the most rigorous operational conditions has not been applied on a large scale."

"We cannot reach our targets in accelerating scientific and technological progress unless we find levers that will guarantee priority only to those research establishments and industrial enterprises whose work collectives actually introduce whatever is new and progressive and seek ways and means of manufacturing articles of high quality and efficiency."

Gorbachev also exposes some of the bureaucratic waste in the agricultural sector:

"Reducing crop and livestock produce losses during harvesting, transportation, storage and processing is the most immediate source of augmenting food stocks. We have no small potentialities in this respect; the addition to consumption resources could amount to as much as 20 per cent, and in the case of some products, to as much as 30 per cent. Besides, eliminating the losses would cost only between a third and one half as much as raising the same amount of produce."

Gorbachev's solution is "carrying out all-round democratisation of management, heightening the part played in it by work collectives, strengthening control from below, and ensuring accountancy and publicity in the work of economic bodies."

In reality, this could only be ac-

complished by a genuine control by the mass of the working class. This Gorbachev and the bureaucracy have no intention of introducing. Their democratic changes are cosmetic although a certain 'consultation' will be allowed with the workers in an endeavour to involve them in the decisions, without introducing workers' control and management as existed in the days of Lenin and Trotsky. Gorbachev then goes on:

"The elective bodies should be more exacting and strict towards their own apparatus. One cannot overlook the fact that executives who remain in offices for long periods tend to lose their feel for the new, to shut themselves off from the people by institutions they have concocted themselves, and sometimes even hold back the work of elective bodies. It is obviously time to work out a procedure which enables soviets, and all social bodies in general, to evaluate and certify the work of responsible executives of their apparatus after each election making desirable personnel changes."

"Ever more active involvement of social organisations in governing the country is needed in our time. When the work of our social organisations is considered from this angle, however, it becomes obvious that many of them are lacking in sufficient initiative. Some of them try to operate above all through their regular staff, in a bureaucratic way, and lean only a little on the masses. In other words, the popular collective, independent nature of social organisations is not being fully realised by far."

Gorbachev even came out in his speech to the 27 Congress for the "electivity principle for all team leaders and then gradually to some other categories of managerial personnel—foremen, shift, sector or shop superintendents, and state-farm department managers."

The fact that he was compelled to raise the question in his January 1987 speech of the election of all the posts in the Com-

unist Party is an indication that not much success was achieved for this idea of electing foremen etc. The bureaucracy has suppressed and prevented the development of this so-called principle. Delegations of Russian politicians and scientists to Britain and America in the last few weeks have revealed that there is enormous resistance to Gorbachev's programme of 'democracy'.

The so-called Soviet Communist Party, 19 million strong, is part of a totalitarian one party machine and is a tool of the bureaucracy. It is not even a 'party' in the sense of the European 'Communist' parties. So now he has advocated secret elections of party officials as a whip against the bureaucracy within the party itself. This is a desperate measure to try and break their resistance to change.

Of course his proposals have nothing in common with the democracy of Lenin and the four conditions laid down for the **beginning** of workers' rule, not for socialism. Seventy years later none of them are in existence. The election of officials by genuine soviets of workers with the right of recall was the first condition for workers' democracy. The second was that no official was to receive a higher wage than a skilled worker. Lenin limited the differential he was forced to introduce between workers and specialists to four to one—and this to him was a "capitalist differential". Now the differences in standards of living between the bureaucrats, managers, technicians, army generals and the ordinary workers is possibly as great or nearly as great as in capitalist coun-

tries, even the USA.

The third condition was no special standing army but an armed people. The fourth was that in order to prevent a bureaucracy from developing, all the official tasks should be done gradually in turn. When everyone is a bureaucrat, then no-one could be a bureaucrat, or in Lenin's aphorism: "Every cook should be able to be Prime Minister." Now under the conditions of enormous economic development and where the working class is now the majority of the population of the Soviet Union, Marxists would add a fifth condition—the right of all parties to put forward their point of view. It would be possible to allow even pro-capitalist parties to develop. They would have so little support as it would be entirely ludicrous to consider the idea of going back to capitalism or the conditions that existed under Tsarism.

Bureaucratic caste

The bureaucracy through Gorbachev reveals its fear of all classes—workers, peasants. The bureaucratic caste itself, feels things cannot continue as they were under Brezhnev. Consequently Gorbachev wants to eliminate many of the worst abuses of the bureaucracy. The illegal and nominally illegal bribery, theft and other bureaucratic perks.

However he does not want to fundamentally interfere with the privileges of the bureaucracy. The 'legitimate' privileges must be maintained.

Marx characterised communism as "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs." Socialism is a society in transition to fully-developed communism in which all inequalities will have withered away.

Gorbachev, to justify bureaucratic privilege, is very careful to put forward the idea of Stalin that socialism means "from each according to his ability, to each according to his work." As explained by Trotsky in *The Revolution Betrayed* this concept is false from beginning to end.

It is precisely because they get more than they are entitled to—which should only be wages of superintendence as Marx explained—that the bureaucracy maintains its rule, because they are interested in the defence and extension of their income, power and privileges.

As Trotsky explained: "Wage labour does not cease, even under the Soviet regime, to wear the humiliating label of slavery. Payment 'according to work'—in reality payment to the advantage of 'intellectual' at the expense of the physical, and especially unskilled, work—is a source of injustice, oppression and compulsions for the majority, privileges and a 'happy life' for the few."

Trotsky continues: "Instead of frankly acknowledging that bourgeois norms of labour and distribution still prevail in the Soviet Union, the authors of the constitution (the new constitution introduced by Stalin in 1936—EG) have cut this (Marx's) integral Communist principle in two halves, postponed the second half to an indefinite future, declared the first half

After 70 years of "building socialism" in the Soviet Union, during which time both the bureaucracy and international Communist Parties have claimed that privilege and corruption have been eliminated, the General Secretary of the CPSU has at last lifted the lid on reality. In his report to the Central Committee of the CPSU in January he conceded:

"Disregard for laws, report-padding, bribe-taking and encouragement of toadyism and adulation had a deleterious influence on the moral atmosphere in society.

"The principle of equality between Communists was often violated. Many party members in senior executive positions were outside control or criticism, which resulted in failures of work and serious breaches of party ethics.

"Naturally, party organisations

and the party as a whole were fighting these phenomena and expelled from the CPSU a considerable number of renegades. Among them were people guilty of embezzlement, bribe-taking and report-padding, people who violated state and party discipline and indulged in heavy drinking."

Gorbachev's speech was carried in the British Communist Party paper, the *Morning Star* (29/1/87)—without comment—despite the fact that their uncritical adulation of the bureaucracy is as as old as the bureaucracy itself, and despite the fact that the speech completely exposes the lies with which they have defended its rule in the past.

When Stalin sought to consolidate the bureaucracy through purging all the genuine Bolsheviks in the 1930's the British CP gave uncritical support. Their headline in

their paper, the *Daily Worker* at the time of the Moscow trials, which condemned amongst other the former Bolsheviks Zinoviev and Kamenev to death, was "Shoot the Reptiles."

Gorbachev's revelations confirm the analysis made by Trotsky in the 1930's when he warned of the consequences of a bureaucracy usurping power in the Soviet workers' state. For this he was expelled from the Soviet Union, branded an agent of the Nazis, and assassinated on the instruction of Stalin in 1940.

Gorbachev has been forced into these exposures and "reform" because of the crisis bureaucratic misrule has created in the Soviet economy. But it will not be Gorbachev, but the Soviet working class, that will return the Soviet Union to the task of building socialism, carrying out a political revolution to rid itself of the bureaucracy.

already realised, mechanically hitched on to it the capitalist norm of piecework payment, named the whole thing 'principle of socialism' and upon this falsification erected the structure of their constitution.

Trotsky went on to comment: "At the same time—and this is of no small importance—a protection by law of the hut, cow and home furnishings of the peasant, worker or clerical worker, also legalises the town house of the bureaucrat, his summer home, his automobile and all the other 'objects of personal consumption and comfort', appropriated by him on the basis of the 'socialist' principle: 'From each according to his abilities, to each according to his work.' The bureaucrat's automobile will certainly be protected by the new fundamental law more effectively than the peasant's wagon."

The real situation in Soviet society is indicated by the desperate attempt of Gorbachev to use the secret ballot in elections from lower to higher levels of the Communist Party, as a means to break the will of the more degenerate and reactionary sections of the bureaucracy, who want to continue untrammelled in their looting of the Soviet state.

Trotsky explained: "In a capitalist society, the secret ballot is meant to defend the exploited from the terror of the exploiters. If the bourgeoisie finally adopted such a reform, obviously under pressure from the masses, it was only because it became interested in protecting its state at least partially from the demoralisation introduced by itself. But in a socialist society there can be, it would seem, no terror of the exploiters.

"From whom is it necessary to defend the Soviet citizens? The answer is clear: from the bureaucracy. Stalin is frank enough to recognise this. To the question: Why are secret elections necessary? He answered verbatim: 'Because we intend to give the Soviet people full freedom to vote for those they want to elect'. Thus humanity learns from an authoritative source that today the 'Soviet people' cannot yet vote for those whom they want to elect. It would be hasty to conclude from this that the new constitution will really tender them this opportunity in the future."

In the early days when there were economic successes during the course of the first two five year plans Stalin was compelled to try and curb the rapacity and greed of the bureaucrats. Now the same process is taking place. However Stalin did not dare to introduce these reforms in reality. Elections remained with only one candidate. Although even if there had been more than one candidate, it would have been only the candidates vetted and agreed by the party which is representative of the bureaucracy, and of course with the KGB in the background. Stalin intended this as a 'whip' against the officialdom he represented.

The system in the Soviet Union under

Gorbachev remains fundamentally what it has been during the course of the rule of the bureaucracy since 1927. Trotsky goes on to say:

"The promise to give the Soviet people freedom to vote 'for those whom they want to elect' is rather a poetic figure than a political formula. The Soviet people will have the right to choose their 'representatives' only from among candidates whom the central and local leaders present to them under the flag of the party."

That will be exactly the same now in the elections for the party from the bottom to the top. Thus this attempt at a whip over the bureaucracy in the long term will fail. As Trotsky went on further to explain: "It is not a question of sociology, but a material interest."

The economy cannot develop without the participation and control of the working class, so Gorbachev is gambling on maintaining control with some elements of participation and control by the workers. However, there is no such thing as a partial control by the mass of the population, all history demonstrates that either the workers get control or control is taken back from them.

After lying for decades about the situation in "idyllic socialism" in the Soviet Union, the *Morning Star* and other papers of the so-called Communist Party in Britain are compelled to quote from the Soviet media itself instances of bureaucratic control, of arbitrariness, of corruption and of speculation: stones upturned, showing the horrible slime of bureaucracy lying underneath.

Endorsed

The 'Communist' parties of the world justified, endorsed, lied about Stalin's claims, then endorsed without blinking Khrushchev's denunciations of Stalin. They accepted the ousting of Khrushchev and fawned on Brezhnev. Now, without batting an eyelid, they accept Gorbachev's strictures on the last two decades of Brezhnev's rule.

Partial control will not work. It cannot work without the control from top to bottom of society by the working class and the peasants. Fine art and technique can only blossom with full freedom of discussion and debate. But that cannot be maintained in a bureaucratic structure like that of the Soviet Union.

Gorbachev wants to introduce a new aristocracy of labour on whom the bureaucracy can lean. A return, on entirely different conditions, to the Stakhanovite principle of separating out a layer of workers from the rest of the working class, who would be showered with privileges in order to have a basis within the working class. By creating a new privileged layer of labour aristocrats, the bureaucrats hope to have a basis in Soviet society which would frustrate any endeavour of the workers to really take

control into their hands.

Marx and Lenin believed that the state would begin to wither away almost immediately once the working class came to power. This, from the very first day, of workers' power. This was impossible in a backward country like Russia of 1917-23. Now there are no economic reasons why this does not begin except the vested interests of the almighty bureaucracy itself.

Russia has the productive forces now to begin the movement towards real socialism. Well within ten years Russia could surpass American capitalism if it were not for the impediment of the bureaucracy. Under conditions of developing super-abundance of the necessities of life, the state, divisions in society, money etc would all begin to wither away. But the bureaucracy would not be prepared to give up power, any more than the capitalists in the West, without a struggle. The bureaucracy will do anything for the working class except get off their backs.

In the speech at the 27th congress Gorbachev referred to subversion by imperialist agents. As if in a really democratic workers' state going forward in the direction of socialism, subversion by imperialist agents would have any effect! These words are a reassurance to the bureaucratic caste that their privileged position is secure, there will be no withering away of the state—if workers challenged the fundamental basis of the bureaucracy in inequality, they would soon receive short shrift, and be accused of acting as subversive agents of imperialism.

This was the formula with which Stalin started to carry out the purge against the Old Bolsheviks, against hundreds of thousands of the best layers of Soviet society who had threatened the privileges of the bureaucracy. They were accused of being the agents of whatever power Stalin was in conflict with at that particular moment: British, French, German, Italian, Spanish, and of course American imperialism.

Moving towards socialism would mean a lessening of inequality, not a reinforcement of inequality as Gorbachev is trying to carry out. Thus the argument that socialism has been achieved at a time when the state has reached monstrous proportions in the Soviet Union, probably greater than any other country in the world, is a mockery.

In addition to this, not by accident he made a reference in his speech to the views of the "Left Communists" and the Trotskyites, "who championed the theory of 'revolutionary war' which, they claimed, would carry socialism to other countries... Today, too, we are firmly convinced that pushing revolutions from outside, and doubly so by military means, is futile and inadmissible." It is not the intention here to go into these questions. Suffice to say that Trotsky and Lenin in 1918 were opposed to the idea of

Bukharin of revolutionary war at that particular time. This ritual denunciation of Trotskyists is an additional reassurance to the bureaucracy that Gorbachev in no way intends to undermine the position of the privileged elite.

At the same time it is reassurance to the capitalist powers, in particular the imperialists of the United States that the bureaucracy has no intention of supporting revolutionary developments in other countries. Like his predecessors Gorbachev is firmly against the development of revolution in the West, because that would result in a genuine workers' democracy which in turn would have an enormous effect on the masses internationally, and especially the masses in Russia, Eastern Europe and China. Gorbachev is endeavouring to come to some

agreement with the imperialists. Even though temporary agreements are possible, the fundamental basis of the Russian state is incompatible with the development of capitalism on a world scale.

The real meaning of the reforms is shown by the fact that far from assuring the national minorities of untrammelled development, in all the republics Gorbachev is pushing in Russians to guarantee the positions of the Great Russian bureaucracy. The dangers of this were shown in December 1986, when riots followed the removal of the top Communist Party bureaucrat (a Kazakh) in Kazakhstan and his replacement by a Great Russian.

Despite this unrest, or because of it, the bureaucracy, including Gorbachev, is determined to make sure that in all the

republics of the national minorities Russians still have key positions.

However in a sense political revolution has begun. It will be a protracted process with many sharp turns and sudden changes. Gorbachev wanted to eliminate the worst excesses of the bureaucracy. For a temporary period he may succeed in doing this. The lifting of the long suppressed lid of criticism will have an effect in all areas of Soviet society. Half a reform will get results economically, as it already appears to have done, for one or two years perhaps more or less as the case might be.

Science, art, philosophy will receive a spurt for a temporary period of time. But the fundamental privileged role of the bureaucracy is the main fetter on the development of Soviet society and this remains intact. Not evolution but political revolution, preparing the way for the rule of the working class, is inevitable.

Gorbachev's reforms far from solving the problems of the bureaucracy will exacerbate and intensify them. Movements from the top will inevitably provoke an enormous movement from the bottom which will end in political revolution. He gave unprecedented warnings at a Soviet press conference on 13 February 1987 that he would step down if his reforms were blocked. At present this is intended as a warning to the more conservative layers of the bureaucracy. But at a certain stage he will be forced to return to traditional Stalinist methods of repression, or face being removed from within the bureaucracy.

Only by abolishing the privileges of the bureaucracy and restoring control into the hands of the workers and peasants can all the contradictions in Russian society be overcome. Only a Marxist tendency standing on the programme of Lenin and Trotsky can solve this problem of the revolution. There is no way forward for any length of time in Soviet society except through political revolution. The bureaucracy will never de-bureaucratise itself. On the contrary even in the course of the reforms they are trying to reinforce their position of privilege. Now with a modern Soviet society they are becoming more and more in conflict with the development of society and the development of production. That is the reason that they are doomed. But over the next five to ten years the way will be cleared for the beginning of the movement in the direction of socialism.

Victory for the Soviet workers under modern conditions would have a far greater effect than even the Russian revolution of 1917. The advantages of state ownership and of a plan will become so overwhelming that it will have an effect not only on the working class but on the intellectuals, the middle class, and other layers in society, leading to a complete overthrow of capitalism on a world scale.

The Bolsheviks uncompromisingly supported international workers' revolution. The 1919 "Manifesto of the Communist International to the Workers of the World" declared:

"...Our task is to generalise the revolutionary experience of the working class, to purge the movement of the corrupting admixture of opportunism and social-patriotism, to unify the efforts of all genuinely revolutionary parties of the world proletariat and thereby facilitate and hasten the victory of the Communist revolution throughout the world.

"Bourgeois world order has been sufficiently lashed by socialist criticism. The task of the International Communist Party consists in overthrowing this order and erecting in its place the edifice of the socialist order. We summon the

In contrast Gorbachev's recommendation to the Supreme Soviet (27.11.85) shows how far the bureaucracy has degenerated from the Bolshevik program—to a position which calls for "peaceful co-existence of different social systems", in other words which supports the maintenance of capitalist rule everywhere it still exists.

"The only sensible and acceptable way out in the present-day world, which is riddled with acute contradictions and which faces impending catastrophe, is peaceful co-existence of states with different social systems.

"This means not merely the absence of wars. It is an international set-up under which good neighbourliness and co-operation rather than armed force dominate, and under which broad exchanges of achievements of science and technology and cultural values are practiced for the good of all peoples.

working men and women of all countries to unite under the Communist banner which is already the banner of the first great victories.

"Workers of the world—in the struggle against imperialist barbarism, against monarchy, against the privileged estates, against the bourgeois state and bourgeois property, against all kinds and forms of class or national oppression—unite!

"Under the banner of workers' Soviets, under the banner of revolutionary struggle for power and the dictatorship of the proletariat, under the banner of the Third International—Workers of the world unite!"

"Delivery from the expenditure of huge resources for military purposes would make it possible to use the fruit of labour exclusively for the purposes of construction.

"States which have embarked on roads of independent development would be shielded from external encroachments, which would facilitate their advance towards national progress. Auspicious opportunities would be provided also for the solution of the global problems of mankind by the collective efforts of all the states. Peaceful co-existence meets the interests of all lands and all peoples."

Does the Soviet leadership support our socialist revolution?

By Richard Monroe

Many youth and workers look to the SACP to put forward in the ANC the standpoint of the working class for workers' power and socialism. In our struggle to overthrow the SA apartheid state and end capitalism, many also count on full support from the ruling Communist Party in the Soviet Union, the 'biggest socialist country'.

The capture of power by the working class in Russia in 1917 was the greatest event in human history and remains an inspiration for workers in struggle everywhere. The Soviet Union was the first workers' state.

The Bolshevik Party which led the Russian working class to power always based itself on the **internationalist** perspective, method and programme of Marxism—of the common struggle of workers around the world against capitalism. After the 1917 revolution, it encouraged the formation of the Third (Communist) International, linking together mass workers' parties in different countries, to take forward workers' revolution everywhere.

Capitalism, they understood, is a system connected together worldwide. To achieve socialism and pave the way to communism—a classless society—the working class in each country needs to establish its own democratic rule and take control of the monopolies which rule the world economy.

The 1921 programme of the Young Communist League in the Soviet Union declared: "In the USSR state power is already in the hands of the working class. In the course of three years of heroic struggle against world capitalism, the proletariat has maintained and strengthened its Soviet government. Russia, though it possesses enormous natural resources, is, nevertheless, from an industrial point of view, a backward country, in which a petty bourgeois population predominates. **It can arrive at socialism only through the world proletarian revolution, which epoch of development we have now entered.**"

Hundreds of thousands of youth and workers in our country are striving to build a mass ANC on a socialist programme—to carry through a workers' revolution opening the way to socialism. But what policies does Gorbachev's Russian Communist Party propose today for taking our movement forward?

Last year—as reported in the *Weekly Mail* (9-15.1.87)—Gleb Starushenko, of the USSR Academy of Sciences, made some suggestions for the ANC's programme in a paper to a Soviet-Africa conference.

Those workers and youth who read the *Weekly Mail* will have been surprised that Starushenko argues **that the ANC should "not advance plans for a broad nationalisation of capitalist property" and should be "willing to give the bourgeoisie the corresponding guarantee."**

It is because capitalism was replaced after 1917 in Russia by a nationalised and planned economy, that the masses in the Soviet Union have made huge advances in 70 years from conditions of poverty and backwardness comparable with India. On this basis, Russia has become an industrial power second only to the United States.

Nationalisation

Yet Starushenko proposes that the ANC should abandon the demand of the Freedom Charter for nationalisation of the big mines, factories, and farms! In place of the Bolshevik programme for workers' revolution, he puts forward: **that the ANC leadership should guarantee to the capitalist enemy that their property will not be nationalised!**

How does Starushenko justify this compromise with the capitalists? It is, he says, because the "white bourgeoisie are not tied to the 'chariot of apartheid' and appears to be inclined to enter into negotiations with the ANC".

Does Starushenko then believe that, by offering these 'guarantees' to the bosses against nationalisation, they will in turn concede our demands for democratic rule in SA?

If the bosses are today 'inclined' to recognise the ANC and hold talks with our leadership, it is not because they have been converted to accept our demands for majority rule and a decent life. It is because they have seen, in the upsurge of 1984-6, the spectre of the revolution that is coming—of an unstoppable movement of the working class determined to achieve workers' power, democracy and socialism.

Their system of capitalism is in crisis. It cannot afford to end poverty wages, or to provide jobs, homes and decent education for all. Because of this, every one of the bosses is terrified of the prospect of a democratic government committed to fulfilling the needs of the majority. They want to try to trap the ANC leaders into futile plans for compromising our programme.

Bosses' hostility

What then, is the point of offering them paper 'guarantees'? Even were the ANC leadership to do so, how could this tame the bosses' hostility to our demands? How could it make them better able to concede higher wages, provide jobs, or live with majority rule?

Against our struggle for democracy and a decent life, the bosses depend utterly on the apartheid state machine. This is the only real **guarantee** for their property—and they know this full well. The 'guarantee' they want from the ANC leadership is to hold back workers and youth from seeing the need to overthrow by revolution this state, and capitalism with it.

The apartheid state depends on the political privilege of the white minority. All the schemes for political 'reform' and 'negotiated solutions' put forward by Botha's government or the 'liberal' bosses, seek to preserve capitalist power by preserving its basis in white privilege.

To achieve democracy, and open the way to socialism, what is required is policies which will split the whites on class lines, and undermine the state.

But what does Starushenko propose instead? The ANC "might work out comprehensive guarantees for the white population which could be implemented after the elimination of the regime of apartheid." This is necessary, he says, because "the



Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and comrade Oliver Tambo.

white middle and lower strata of the white community facing the possibility of losing their privileges tend to support the more reactionary parties, more rightist than even the ruling National Party."

To reassure such whites, the guarantees that Starushenko proposes are for a two-chamber parliament—in which the second chamber operates on the basis of "equal representation of the four communities" and has "the right of minority veto". 'Equal representation' of the African majority and the white minority, in other words—with a veto for the white minority.

For the black majority in SA liberation from national oppression means not constitutional tinkering, not 'power-sharing', not fancy federal schemes, but **majority rule—one person-one-vote in an undivided South Africa.**

Yet—in the name of reassuring the white minority—Starushenko suggests that our movement accept a constitution barely distinguishable from the Natal Indaba plans cobbled together by the NRP, PFP, Buthelezi and their cronies to try to entrench capitalist power!

Nor would such guarantees reassure whites turning towards reaction. Already, in the constitutional tinkering that is taking place, whites sense that parliament is becoming more and more a rubber-stamp for executive dictatorship. If insecure and anxious white workers were led to believe that the ANC and the big capitalists were conspiring together in this, it would only drive them further

under the influence of reactionary ultra-right demagogues. Our movement should make not the slightest concession to white privilege. But, to the white workers and middle class, we **can** guarantee a future secure from the ravages of capitalism and racial division—if they join with us in struggle for workers' democracy and socialism. Nothing short of this will ever win whites in significant numbers away from reaction, and serve to undermine the state.

Chasm

Starushenko's proposals compromise **not merely the socialist, but the democratic, aims of our revolution.** But they are, unfortunately, not those of an eccentric Soviet academic. **They are consistent with the whole foreign policy of the Soviet leadership.** They are a small reflection of the chasm that separates the internationalist programme of Bolshevism from the policy of the Stalinist bureaucracy that now rules in Russia.

Internationalism is inseparable from socialism. But the Soviet Union is not a 'socialist country'. Genuine socialism cannot be built unless the working people themselves directly and democratically run and control the state and the economy.

In the Soviet Union in the 1920s this power was stolen from the working class by a bureaucratic elite headed by Stalin. Over time this bureaucracy has consciously aban-

doned and turned its back on the programme of Bolshevism—to protect its own power and privilege.

The basis of the Soviet economy has continued to be state ownership and planning. But all elements of workers' democracy have been ruthlessly destroyed. Gorbachev and the 'tops' of the bureaucracy live off the labour of the workers at the standards of capitalists in the West—in a different world from workers in Russia or anywhere else.

More and more, bureaucratic rule has put a brake on growth. Without democratic checks and controls, waste and corruption multiply like huge cancers, devouring what should be reinvested or consumed by the masses.

The Soviet working class, now the strongest and most cultured in the world, is increasingly discontented. What the parasitic Russian bureaucracy fears above all else is that this working class will rise up, overthrow it and re-establish workers' democratic rule. This is what the working class was trying to do in Poland in 1980-81.

Gorbachev and his supporters in the bureaucracy are far-sighted enough to see the need to do something. But his reforms can only temporarily alleviate the situation. The one solution is the only thing the bureaucracy cannot do—give up its privilege and get off the backs of the workers.

Because of the example that it would provide at home, the bureaucracy is terrified of workers' revolution anywhere in the world. This is what underlies the foreign policy of the Russian bureaucracy everywhere.

In this they have a common interest with the capitalists in the West. This is what explains Starushenko's incredible proposals.

Planned economy

Russia's state-owned and planned economy remains in fundamental conflict with Western capitalism. Thus the imperialist powers hate and denounce Russia—and Botha tries to prove to them that the SACP is a 'tool of the Kremlin' trying to destroy 'free enterprise' in SA.

But the Russian bureaucracy has no such intention. More and more, as growth slows down, their interest lies in achieving 'peaceful coex-

istence', 'detente' and so on, with the big imperialist powers. They hope through such agreements to be able to import technology, cut arms spending, etc.—and thus quicken economic growth, trying to delay their overthrow by the Russian working class.

This is why they encourage our movement to compromise with the capitalist enemy. They make this clear to representatives of imperialism themselves.

Thus—as reported in *The Guardian*, Botswana, (19.12.86)—Dr Winrich Kuhne, a West German 'expert' on Soviet Africa policy, recently visited Russia. Before his visit, he "shared a Western belief that SA must be the greatest Soviet hope for socialism in Africa because of its degree of industrialisation." He returned reassured.

"What they are hoping for" in SA, he said, "is some sort of socialist orientation with a mixed economy".

A 'mixed economy' is the term that reformist 'socialists' in the West use to describe an economy with some state participation, but which remains dominated by capitalism—an economy, as Starushenko puts it, where the capitalists are 'guaranteed' their property. With such an economy 'socialist orientation' of the government amounts to nothing more than words to try to lull the masses.

"I was surprised", continues

Kuhne, "to find out how much understanding they had for white minority rights...If the West starts an initiative to bring black and white to the negotiating table the Soviets will insist that the ANC is given an important role. But the people I spoke to concede that Inkatha should be included too."

These views Kuhne found to be held, "not just among academics" (like Starushenko) "but in the international department of the central committee and other decision-making bodies."

"Apart from economic factors, the Soviets are wary of pinning hope on South African socialism because they feel the black opposition is too spontaneous and unorganised... They are suspicious of the young comrades in the townships" says Kuhne. "They do not want the situation to get too much out of control. This is because it would make it more difficult to talk to the US on global relations."

Wanting deals with imperialism, and with SA capitalists—while suspicious of the heroic township youth! The counter-revolutionary murderer Buthelezi welcomed to negotiate on SA's future—together with fears that the struggles of the masses might get 'out of control'!

The Soviet bureaucracy follows these reactionary policies because they base themselves, not on workers' revolution internationally, but on the protection of their own narrow na-

tional interests and privileges.

Kuhne's article, reprinted in the Botswana *Guardian*, was widely distributed by a British news agency. His interpretations and conclusions are very damaging to the reputation of the Soviet leadership. But has the Soviet Embassy in Botswana or anywhere else denounced them as false? Have they anywhere repudiated the proposals put forward by Starushenko?

Anti-revolutionary

Capitalists like Kuhne feel reassured by the anti-revolutionary attitudes of the Soviet bureaucracy. But they will not be able to save capitalism in South Africa. In reality, it is completely utopian for imperialism, or for the Soviet bureaucracy, to believe that the mighty clash of classes in SA can be solved by deals at a negotiating table.

It is impossible for the mass of workers and youth in struggle to 'guarantee' capitalist property—because crisis-ridden capitalism cannot guarantee to provide our needs. Yet, unless the ranks of the whites are offered by our movement the alternative of a socialist future, they will inevitably become the tools of the most vicious racist reaction.

The real choices before SA are—the nightmare of a racial civil war, or a workers' revolution.

If the Soviet bureaucracy, rather than supporting our workers' revolution, stands for futile deals with the capitalist class, this will only strengthen our determination to build the ANC as a mass organisation, controlled by the working class, with a programme for ending capitalism and achieving workers' rule.

We must demand that the leadership of the SACP sever completely their ties to the Soviet bureaucracy, and join this struggle for the transformation of the ANC, if they are to serve the interests of the working class.

Our movement's only reliable allies are the working class and rural poor in the Third World; the working class in the advanced capitalist countries struggling against capitalism; and the working class in the Stalinist states struggling against bureaucratic rule.

Together with them we will resurrect the programme of Bolshevism and achieve the international socialist revolution. ■



The fighting youth want a working-class revolution.

SACP'S 'LEFT TURN' TO THE RIGHT

Haven't we all been behind a motorist who indicates a turn in one direction... and then promptly turns in the other? When that happens in the political steering of our movement it is all the more dangerous. Best roll down the window and have a few hard words with the driver concerned.

Comrade Joe Slovo, leader of the SA Communist Party, ANC Executive member, and strategist of MK, has gained a big reputation, especially among the working-class youth. Many 'Vivas!' go together with his name. It is painted on township street corners and school walls. To most people it means: **revolution without compromise until the working class wins power, capitalism is ended and socialism is achieved.**

Comrade Slovo's rise in the SACP leadership is believed to have marked a leftward shift away from the old, crude two stages theory (struggle for democracy first; struggle for socialism later) to a new theory of **uninterrupted revolution.** Ac-

By Paul Storey

ording to this a revolutionary government of 'people's power' is to be established under working-class leadership, which will eliminate apartheid and then carry through the transition to socialism as a continuous process.

But, in an interview with Allister Sparks in the *London Observer* (1.3.87), comrade Slovo has suddenly executed the sharpest of sharp right turns (see reprint below). Apparently it will be possible now to get to a non-racial democracy and then to socialism without ever seizing power, but through negotiation and debate!

The bitter problem faced by our movement every day on the streets, the problem of disarming and defeating the murderous army and police forces; the problem of the centuries-old power structure of vested racial and class interests, of today's monopoly-capitalist ownership

and control of land, mines, factories, banks; the problem of taking state power into the hands of the enslaved majority and the elimination thereafter of all oppression and exploitation—all this is to be solved, apparently, **without** the necessity of revolution, but through the peaceful settlement of differences, through uninterrupted... **reform!**

From "uninterrupted revolution" to renouncing revolution itself! What is the meaning of this amazing turnabout? How can it be explained?

'Tactics! It's just a manoeuvre to fool the capitalists!' This is the story put about by the complacent among us; those who prefer not to trouble their brains with thinking for themselves; those who feel safer covering their heads with a blanket in the back of the car instead of questioning the conduct of the driver. They are wrong.

In what way can **renouncing the need for revolution** aid our struggle?

The state is armed to the teeth against

Bogymán shifts on the

OBSERVER (LONDON) 1.3.87

ALLISTER SPARKS, in Lusaka, meets the white Communist mastermind of terrorism who advocates a negotiated settlement in South Africa.

THE stocky man with greying hair and mild eyes sounded almost plaintive. 'I believe that transition in South Africa is going to come through negotiation,' he said. 'If there was any prospect of settling it peacefully tomorrow, we would be the first to say let's do it.'

Coming from someone who has been portrayed in South Africa and parts of the West as an ogre, a white Communist who has become the mastermind of the black underground and chief strategist of its terrorist operations, the words sounded surprisingly conciliatory.

Even heretical, for it has become part of the credo of the tough young 'comrades' in South Africa's black townships to argue against the idea of a negotiated settlement, on the grounds that it would mean compromising with the ruling white oligarchy.

Twelve years ago, Joe Slovo, leader of the South African Communist Party, warned in a book called 'No Middle Road' against the 'illusion' that there might be a route to democracy in South Africa short of 'the seizure of power' by the military arm of the African National Congress.

But in a rare series of interviews and conversations in this Zambian capital last week, Slovo sounded a different line. Both as a man and a politician, he did not fit his stereotype. The ogre turned out to be witty and charming, the hardline ideologue pragmatic.

Perhaps time has mellowed him. He is now 60 and has been in exile for 23 years.

Perhaps it is the weight of increased responsibility as the ANC, on whose national executive he serves, has gained in international recognition over the past two years as the main alternative to white minority rule in South Africa.

Slovo's own explanation is that circumstances have changed. 'When I wrote "No Middle Road" there was not even a peripheral chance of negotiation,' he said. 'The other side was completely intransigent, and for us there was only one answer to this.'

'Now the other side is in such trouble that with meaningful international intervention they might come forward. In fact I venture to guess that within six months of mandatory international sanctions being introduced Botha or his successor will be sitting round the table — and we would welcome that.'

For more than eight hours he spoke frankly about his life and beliefs and the controversial alliance between his Communist Party and the ANC which has caused Pretoria to label the black nationalists movement a puppet of Moscow and has also caused Washington to have doubts about it.

He spoke of Communism's many failures, of his 'anger and disgust' at having once been a defender of Stalin and of his

enthusiasm for the Gorbachov reforms which he believes will at last release the true creative energy that he feels is inherent in the Communist system.

It was difficult to picture this amiable and amusing companion as the chief of staff of the ANC's guerrilla army, *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (Spear of the Nation), and the planner of many of its guerrilla attacks inside South Africa.

He lives a furtive life. His wife, Ruth First, also a leading South African Communist, was killed by a letter-bomb in Maputo in 1982 and Slovo is undoubtedly at the top of Pretoria's hit-squad list.

He keeps on the move, from city to city across several continents, always incognito, varying his daily routine and never sleeping in the same place for more than a night or two.

Only once during our conversations was there a glimpse of this side of his life. Stepping on to a balcony to view the sunset, Slovo tripped on a step and a pistol fell with a clatter on the floor. 'Oops, I didn't mean to show you that,' he said, slightly embarrassed, as he replaced it in an ankle holster.

Slovo emphatically denied Pretoria's allegations that the Communist Party's alliance with the ANC means the black

us. The capitalists depend on this state. The government wields this state power in daily blows. Any capitalist government would have to do essentially the same. Do our class enemies not realise that, perhaps?

Do they not know the revolutionary threat rising against them in the form of the multi-million strong black working class? Do they not have informers? Do they not encounter strikes? Have they not found the schools uncontrollable? Have their collaborators not been driven bodily out of townships? Have they not seen us at the barricades? Have they not felt and smelt the flames of revolution all round them? Who can seriously believe it is possible to deceive them about what is really at stake in the South African struggle?

Between them and us lies a fundamental gulf. It is a class gulf—of those with property against those dispossessed; of the idle, grasping rich against the working poor; of exploiters against their slaves. It is the gulf between those who have the armed power against those who must break that power and establish our own armed power in order to suppress white *baasskap* and exploitation.

No privileged, exploiting, ruling class in history has ever given up its power without a fight. To dislodge them from power, we have to overthrow them by revolution. We know it, **and they know it.**

Trotsky, who with Lenin led the Russian Revolution to victory, was a man well experienced in the tactics and manoeuvres necessary in the conduct of the struggle. He wrote: "It is impossible to escape from fundamental difficulties by means of a manoeuvre."

"The contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is a fundamental one.... Classes cannot be tricked. This applies, considered historically, to all the classes and it is particularly and immediately true of the ruling, possessing, exploiting and educated classes. The world experience of the latter is so great, their class instinct so refined, and their organs of espionage so varied that an attempt to deceive them by posing as somebody else must lead in reality to trapping, not the enemy, but one's own friends." (*The Draft Program of the Communist International—A Criticism of Fundamentals*, 1928.)

If the statement by comrade Slovo, renouncing revolution, is intended as a

manoeuvre, then it is necessary to ask a question. Should the revolutionary black proletariat, striving for power and socialism, also renounce the need for revolution (for purposes of deceiving the bourgeoisie), or should this renunciation be done only by the **leadership**? To pose the question is enough to expose the absurdity of the 'manoeuvre' idea.

Revolution is made not by stealth but by main force. It is obviously not made by masses sneaking about like pickpockets hoping to gain their object on the sly, but by masses openly and defiantly mobilising their full strength in action, drawing all the wavering sections of the oppressed, all the middle layers, behind the boldness, determination and drive-to-power of the revolutionary force. **Our revolution can be made only by the conscious movement of the working class to take power and change society.** Deception of the bourgeoisie as to this aim is absolutely out of the question, absolutely in contradiction with success.

And if the **leaders** renounce revolution—will this help? The task of the leaders is to rouse, educate and lead their followers, first and foremost the working class, towards the goal. If the leaders carry out this task, they will have to **shout our revolutionary and socialist objectives from the rooftops in the clearest terms.** There will be no room for ambiguity, no room for deception of the enemy as to our real aims.

If the leaders fail to carry out this task, if they succeed instead in convincing the bourgeoisie that they **seriously** intend to divert their followers from revolutionary goals, then they would unwittingly but inevitably end up as tools in the hands of the enemy to use in confusing, dividing and weakening our movement in preparation for a crushing defeat.

Surely we have only spelled out the obvious here? Reasoning it through, surely only a fool could suppose the leadership of our movement ought to renounce revolution as a **manoeuvre**? Comrade Slovo is no fool. His statement to Allister Sparks is **seriously intended.** It marks a turn in the deliberate policy of the SACP and ANC leadership. We have to take it seriously, analyse its errors, and combat it systematically—or we shall be worse than fools.

Revolution begun

South Africa's revolution has, in fact, begun. The enormous movement of 1984-86 has shown this conclusively. For some months now, despite strikes and other upheavals, it has been passing through a relative lull, and a phase during which the forces of reaction have moved onto the offensive. But the revolution is there nonetheless. It will return to the advance again and again, passing

sands of time

nationalist organisation is a puppet controlled from Moscow. He described the alliance as a 'special relationship' in which the Communist members accepted unconditionally the leadership of the ANC and were bound by its policy decisions even if they conflicted with their own party line.

The alliance, as Slovo described it, is part of an emerging coalition of forces which have different objectives but are agreed on the immediate one of overthrowing apartheid and replacing it with a non-racial democracy based on black majority rule.

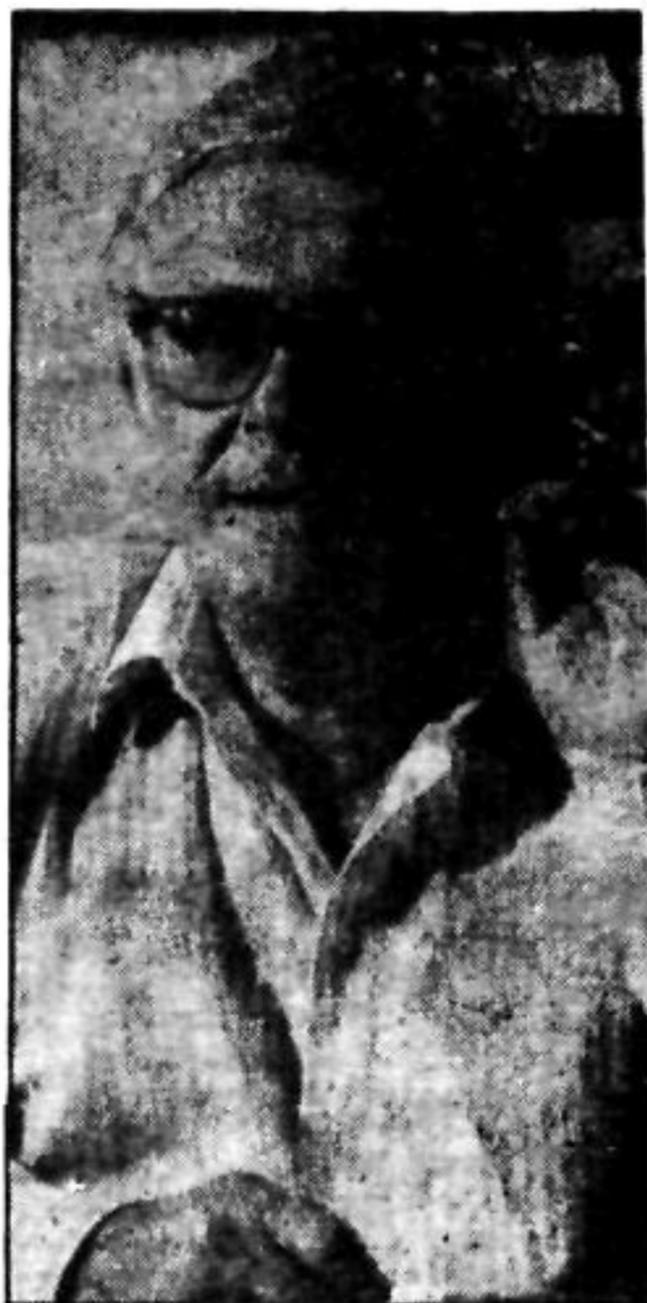
Slovo said he would like to see this alliance broaden, even to include forces he did not regard as revolutionary but who nevertheless shared the goal of ending apartheid.

Once a non-racial democracy was established, ideological difference between the various elements of the alliance could be resolved in a democratic way, he said.

He hoped and believed that if a non-racial democracy were established, true socialism would 'flow from it' naturally in time.

The party also accepted that there was no inevitability about a move from non-racial democracy to Communism. The process had stopped short of that in many parts of Africa and the Third World. Communists would try to bring this about, but they would do so democratically.

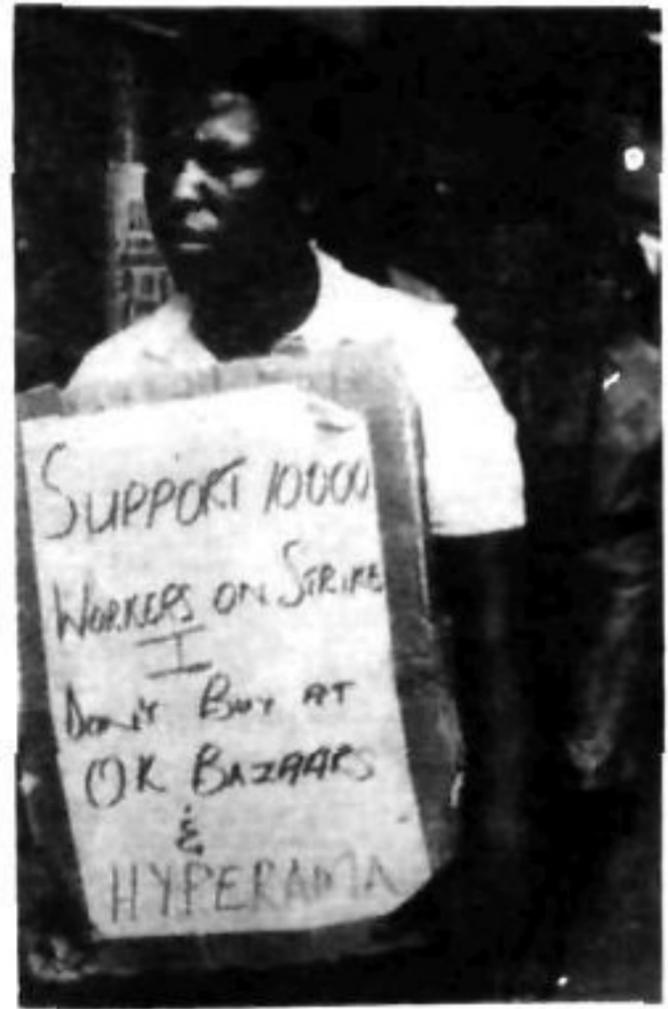
'I am absolutely convinced that if we achieve a real democratic society in South Africa, the question of an advance to socialism will be settled in debate rather than in the streets,' Slovo said.



Moving target: The elusive Joe Slovo



Striking OK Bazaars workers, December 1986.



through many convulsive phases, through sharp turns and changes, over a number of years. It cannot be short precisely because of the immense, unsolved difficulty of defeating the state.

Successful conclusion

Either the revolution will be brought to a successful conclusion (in the next five, ten, or perhaps more years) through the **armed seizure of state power by the black working class**—establishing thus a genuine democracy and opening at once the transition to socialism—or else it will ultimately shipwreck and break up in confusion, degenerating into a nightmare of racial bloodletting and the "mutual ruin of the contending classes" (to use the expression of Marx). Only a proletarian revolution is possible in South Africa now; there cannot be any other kind.

This has been thoroughly explained in our perspectives; the processes outlined are being borne out by the development of events. But even the most powerful of arguments, even the most obvious facts, cannot convince those who represent and defend interests mortally hostile to the victory of the working class.

Plainly, we cannot expect capitalists to support our revolution, even though this revolution is the **only** means to the salvation of society. As far as the **middle classes** and layers of the population are concerned, however, the position is different. They have no fixed material base in capitalist society **independent** of the main classes—the bourgeoisie and the working class. Their property, their privileges, are fragile. **They cannot create a state or social system of their own.** They have to reconcile themselves to the state

power and social system determined by the rule of one or the other of these two classes.

Different parts and even individuals of the middle classes are pulled in different directions, depending on their relationship with the existing state and ruling class on the one hand, and with the mass of the proletariat on the other. **Only the magnetic attraction of a powerful working-class movement driving towards the seizure of power, with clear aims and leadership, and with strategy and tactics to match, can firmly draw the bulk of the middle classes to the side of a fundamental change of society—a change by means of revolution, the only possible real change.**

The middle classes also suffer to varying degrees under the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. It is not the middle classes themselves which are intrinsically hostile to revolution and to workers' power, **but the intellectual and political leaders of the middle classes, who want to make their own way forward on the backs of the working class, in co-operation with the capitalist powers-that-be, and who fear the challenge of the proletariat for leadership of society.** Success of the revolution is possible only on condition that the hold of such leaders—over the middle classes and over the masses as a whole—is decisively broken.

Stalinism

In the present leadership of our movement, we have the complicating factor of **Stalinism.** This term describes the politics of a largely middle-class grouping which is linked organisationally, by material dependence, and by long-formed tradi-

tion and outlook, to the ruling, privileged, bureaucratic caste in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and other deformed workers' states.

The nature of Stalinism, the regimes in these states, and the working-class struggle against them for workers' democracy and genuine socialism, is described in other articles in this issue. Enough to emphasise here that **the Stalinist bureaucracy, while in conflict with the capitalist class and state internationally, is simultaneously compelled in defence of its own interests to oppose, obstruct and fight against any threat of the working class itself leading a revolution and coming to power.**

Workers' democracy

This is because workers' democracy—especially in an important, relatively industrialised country like South Africa—would lead to the spread of working-class revolution against capitalism internationally. That would shatter the efforts of the bureaucracy (now headed by Gorbachev in the Soviet Union) to foster a 'peaceful co-existence' of itself and its system with Western imperialism. The spread of revolution in the West would, at the same time, hasten the overthrow by workers of the bureaucratic dictatorships in the East and their replacement by a genuine socialist democracy. Thus the bureaucracy and its conscious supporters **have to oppose workers' revolution—not always in words, but always when it comes to deed.**

Without understanding this, it is impossible to make sense of the twists and turns in policy pursued by the leaders of the SACP, which has the decisive influence also upon the policy of the ANC.



1962 Program

Let's remind ourselves what the Communist Party **used to say**.

Its 1962 Program (still not formally replaced) stresses that the immediate proposals which the Communist Party advances "before the workers and democratic people" of South Africa "are not proposals for a socialist state. They are proposals for the building of a national democratic state." Not by a long chalk the revolutionary working-class answer to poverty, exploitation and oppression.

Even in the late 1970s, **after** the volcano had erupted in Soweto; **after** the militant youth had turned towards their worker-parents in search of **working-class** power against the racist state; **after** the black workers had begun to flex their political **class** muscles through general strike action; **after** the realisation had dawned quite widely among the active layer that apartheid and capitalism are bound together and must be overthrown together — **after all this** SACP leaders were **still** denying that the proletariat could or should assert its own class aims in the struggle.

"Can the black workers realise their **class** aims, when the society rubs their faces so deeply in their national oppression that their eyes are blinded?" With these contemptuous words the well-known CP theoretician 'Toussaint' (writing in the *African Communist*, No. 72, 1978) brushed aside the socialist aspirations of the South African working class!

As late as the 4th quarter of 1985, the *African Communist* was still giving voice to the view:

"The problem with people advocating 'socialism now' is that they expect those



NUM Congress, 1987: black mineworkers want socialism.

blacks who cannot read or write to run socialist industries and mines.... The result would be an economic crisis." (Nyawuza, p58.) Logically, this would mean the SACP openly undertaking to **defend** capitalism against the striving of the black working class to overthrow capitalism at the first opportunity.

But under the conditions of revolutionary upsurge within South Africa, such a position could not be publicly maintained by the Party leadership, in that crude form. They claim to be the 'vanguard' of the proletariat, not a conservative tail!

Out of the experience of struggle the slogans of socialism were appearing everywhere, spreading with spontaneous enthusiasm among the masses. The political development of the working-class movement itself, spearheaded by the most determined youth, was moving along a curve diametrically opposite to the one which had been graphed out in theory by the Party leadership. In short, this leadership, fearing to lose its base, faced its own choice to 'adapt or die'.

From this necessity came the 'left' indications of a change in policy linked with the promotion of comrade Slovo to the head of the Party.

Popularity

It would be wrong, however, to think that popular support for the SACP only developed **after** the signalling of a left turn. Well before that, there was a very considerable underlying growth in its popularity among the most militant layer of the black working class. Why?

Youth and workers, feeling their way without a compass towards Marxist conclusions, did not of course set out with

an analysis of the false theories of the SACP. Of these matters almost all at first lacked even basic information, as very many still do. It is essentially through experience—through events, events and once again events—that the mass of the working class, as well as its more advanced and active contingent, weighs and tests and learns.

What the leading layer of the class sought in living struggle (and now seeks more determinedly than ever) is a thread of organisation and leadership linking them to Lenin and to Red October—to the indelible traditions of the Russian proletarian revolution of 1917, the greatest conquest in the history of the world working class.

From what reliable sources could they possibly learn at the outset of the degeneration of the Russian Revolution that had taken place; of the rise of a bureaucratic dictatorship in the Soviet Union, a new privileged elite, which, under Stalin, crushed underfoot the exhausted working class and destroyed all vestiges of workers' democratic control of society, production and the state?

With our own tendency still far too weak in numbers and influence, from what source could they learn of the gulf that separates genuine Marxism, the method of Lenin and Trotsky, from **Stalinism**?—that is to say, from the politics of the bureaucratic caste and its supporters, who continue to rule and act "in Lenin's name" while muddying and falsifying all the essential teachings of that great leader.

From what source could the rising revolutionary generation in South Africa know the actual role played by the corrupted Stalinist ('Communist') Parties internationally over more than half a century—in holding back, diverting and

thus ensuring the defeat of **working-class revolutions** again and again, because of their leaders' fear of the triumph of **workers' democracy** anywhere and their *pursuit instead of class-compromise with the liberal bosses?* (Spain, Italy, France, Greece, Chile, Iraq, Sudan—are only some of the examples).

'All is not right'

Even so, in a certain sense, there was all along unease among the SA workers and youth: a feeling that 'all is not right in the Soviet Union'; that there is some kind of dictatorship of privilege there and not the workers' democracy and fundamental equality which would be the essence of working-class rule and the necessary basis for a truly socialist society to be built.

But, without a powerful force of Marxism to offer a clear explanation and a practical alternative, initially it could only be to the banner of the Stalinists that socialist youth and workers of the Congress movement turned.

Because of the 'Communist' Party name, because of its prominence in the history of the black working-class movement, because of its organic link with so-called 'socialist' Moscow, because of its alliance with the ANC and its part in 'armed struggle'—youth and workers have thought to find the red thread of proletarian revolution there. Thus they raise the banner of the SACP alongside that of the ANC—**not as a conscious endorsement of Stalinism, but as a symbol to them of the unbreakable socialist determination of their own class.**

This was why working-class youth who built COSAS looked from the start towards the SACP for leadership; why the SACP flag has been raised again and again at funerals; why the finest of the black youth today actively seek out communists for guidance in the movement—and when they encounter the supporters of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC, and eagerly grasp our basic ideas, they are inclined at first to assume they must have come in contact with the Communist Party.

Filled with alarm

The eagerness of the advanced youth and workers to build the Congress organisations as conscious instruments for a **working-class revolution**, for democracy and socialism combined—their gravitation towards the SACP banner **for this purpose**—could only fill the Stalinist leadership with alarm.

How could they hold onto this growing popular support, yet blunt its thrust? How could they appease it, yet prevent



upsetting the long-established policy of a so-called "democratic alliance of all classes" (working-class and big bourgeois!) on which the ANC leadership and the SACP leadership together rest, and which the Soviet bureaucracy itself is intent on preserving?

How, in particular, could they defend themselves against the criticism (including our criticism) mounting against their untenable 'two stages' theory?

This is the context in which to examine the 'left turn' which was apparently made by the SACP leadership, and the adoption of the ideas of so-called 'uninterrupted revolution' advanced by comrade Slovo.

'No Middle Road'

It was back in 1976 that Joe Slovo wrote *South Africa—No Middle Road*. This marked a significant departure from the old theoretical formulas advanced by the Party leadership. He took up the link between apartheid and capitalist exploitation in these words:

"Since race discrimination is the mechanism of this exploitation and functional to it, since it is the *modus operandi* of South African capitalism, the struggle to destroy 'white supremacy' is ultimately bound up with the very destruction of capitalism itself. It is this interdependence of national and social liberation which gives the South African

revolutionary struggle a distinctive form and shapes the role of the various classes within the dominant (minority) and subordinated majority." (p118-9)

"National liberation in its true sense must therefore imply the expropriation of the owners of the means of production (monopolized by a bourgeoisie drawn from the white group) and the complete destruction of the state which serves them. There can be no halfway house..." (p141)

How, then, could one conceive of a 'stage' (and 'state'!) of 'national democracy' in which white supremacy is destroyed, but capitalism not destroyed—in other words, the old official line of the SACP? It was to overcome exactly this difficulty that comrade Slovo wrote this book. While avoiding head-on criticism of the 'stages' formula, he in effect slid round it with a cautiously-phrased sentence beginning with 'if'.

"If ... the liberation struggle should bring to power a revolutionary democratic alliance dominated by the proletariat and peasantry (*which is on the agenda in South Africa*), the post-revolutionary phase can surely become the first stage *in a continuous process* along the road to socialism: a road which ultimately can only be charted by the proletariat and its natural allies." (p148)

Leave aside the question of the class character of the rural masses. Ignore for the present all the curious qualifications and let-out-words. The point is: the idea

of an **uninterrupted revolution** led by the working class stood out for all to see in comrade Slovo's own italics. Can there be any doubt that this is the reason the book was not published by the Communist Party itself, but had to be privately published in Penguin?

Yet, it was this and **not** the official 'stages' position which SACP supporters in SA have found necessary to put forward when revolutionary workers and youth turned to them, demanding an explanation of the Party's position.

After a delay of some years, no doubt reluctantly, but without a split, the Party leadership adapted to the situation. Comrade Slovo was elevated to its head, and the Party began issuing his ideas, now even more boldly stated, **as official policy**. To the communist rank-and-file everything now seemed on course for victory.

Unfortunately, in politics, things are seldom what they first seem.

The state

Marxism is distinguished from reformism above all by its approach to the problem of the state. The **essence** of the state is "armed bodies of men"—military and police forces devoted to the defence of the ruling class against challenges to its 'law and order'. Revolution becomes necessary precisely because ruling classes which have outlived themselves, whose system has proved itself reactionary and diseased, refuse to make way for the necessary changes in the interests of the mass of the people **but fight to retain power by every means at their disposal**. They may use so-called 'reforms'; they may use tricks; but in the final analysis they use force. **They use the state**.

The conquest and **destruction** of the old state machine, first and foremost its army and police forces, and its replacement by a new state, created by and wielding the power of the new ruling class against the old, forms the basic element in a scientific theory of revolution. It is not accidental that **all** who shrink from this necessity, for whatever reason, always end up in the course of a revolution compromising themselves with the established ruling class and, however reluctantly, making or offering concessions to its state.

We say they 'end up' so. But what of now? Between a clear and resolute Marxist policy, on the one hand, and abject capitulation on the other, lies the swamp of confused ideas, of individuals, groupings, tendencies and even whole parties seeking hopelessly to find a 'middle way' between the proletariat (the rising ruling class) and its enemy the bourgeoisie (the ruling class still to be overthrown).

Characteristic of this swamp is that its

various inhabitants all refuse to accept the necessity of **a workers' state** (or, in other words, the **dictatorship of the proletariat**) to suppress the class enemy and carry through the needed change of society. They may be terribly 'revolutionary' in words—they may even propose that 'revolution' should be 'uninterrupted'—but in practice they shrink from the measures and methods which alone can bring the revolution to success.

Middle road

Comrade Slovo called his book *No Middle Road*, but it is precisely a middle road he sought when he refused to specify **a workers' state** as the revolutionary alternative which alone can take the place of the white capitalist dictatorship and organise the transition to socialism. Instead we are offered an "alliance" (of whom exactly?) "dominated" (precisely how?) by the proletariat along with the so-called "peasantry" (in what relationship to each other and to capitalism, one might ask?).

Having dissolved the question of the class character of the revolutionary state into a vague formula, open to various interpretations, comrade Slovo has found it a relatively simple matter now to go on to dissolve the question of the state itself—**of the need for a revolutionary seizure of power in order to smash the existing state**—into a milk-and-water solution of 'uninterrupted' debate and reform.

Nor does the continuation of 'armed struggle' in the manner organised by comrade Slovo and the leaders of MK contradict this in any fundamental way. As Sparks recorded in the *Cape Times* (26.2.87), following extensive interviews with comrade Slovo and other leaders of our movement, the armed struggle is being approached "more as a means of increasing the pressures for negotiation than with any realistic hope of being able to win a military victory." As we have always pointed out, it is not guerilla actions but the systematic preparation from now of an armed insurrection of the working class when all the political conditions for success have been adequately developed, which will lead to victory. The leadership not only refuses to base itself on such a strategy, but now turns openly in the **opposite** direction.

Pressures mounting

Comrade Slovo told Allister Sparks of the pressures now mounting which he believed could drive Botha to negotiate a settlement—something which was "not even a peripheral chance" in 1976 when

he wrote *No Middle Road*.

But in that very book, as though criticising himself in advance, comrade Slovo warned against maintaining "that enlightened pressures from within the white group ... will escalate, and in the foreseeable future create conditions for a less painful road to democratic advance" than the forcible seizure of power. (p114) Explaining this, he wrote:

"What separates a Strijdom and a Botha is not a retreat from white supremacy but rather a differing approach to securing that supremacy in two distinct periods: a period when the risk of internal upheaval and external pressures were not yet immediately menacing; and the present period, when the prospect of a black revolutionary breakthrough is no longer a distant nightmare but (in 1976) a discernable cloud on the horizon..." (p.109)

"There are, of course, moments when, feeling itself vulnerable, the ruling class is compelled to venture into new territory, and so unintentionally triggers off fresh energies in its antagonists. But at the end of the day it will muster all its instruments of force to destroy these energies or divert them into non-vital areas." (p112)

"Even some good friends of the black liberation movements are sometimes tempted to ... foster the illusion that there may be a route to true democracy in South Africa short of the complete destruction of the white state and the economic base on which it rests. But the new society in South Africa will only come through a successful revolutionary assault by the deprived, in which increasing armed confrontation is unavoidable. To counsel otherwise is in fact to counsel submission." (p113)

Today

Today comrade Slovo "counsels otherwise". Today when the prospect of a "black revolutionary breakthrough" at last really grips the ruling class by the throat; when they are "compelled to venture" desperately into the new territory of trying to use the leadership of our movement to foster illusions in reform so as to avert revolution—comrade Slovo chooses this moment to counsel otherwise than the complete destruction of the white state and its economic base, capitalism!

What can this mean but to leave open to the ruling class to "muster" at its convenience those "instruments of force" with which "to destroy" us?

Precisely when the **impossibility** of achieving the national-democratic aims of our struggle through negotiated settlement is becoming obvious to hundreds of thousands and even millions of black working-class people—precisely when it is becoming clear **through practical experience** that a fight to the finish will be needed for the majority to put itself in

power—precisely now when this conclusion needs to be generalised and welded into a unified strategy and national plan of **mass struggle** building towards an armed victory, the leadership of our movement declares its faith in negotiated settlement and in socialism itself coming through debate!

Setting out from the interests of Stalinist bureaucracy and not from the class standpoint of the black proletariat; using the false theoretical methods elaborated by Stalinism; recoiling in practice from the reality of the proletarian revolution which has begun—even the most far-sighted leader of the SACP finds himself bound to propagate the most ridiculous utopian ideas. These ideas, if followed by the activists looking towards the SACP, will seriously disorient our movement at a critical time.

Even now, SACP supporters inside South Africa, taking their cue from the Party leadership, are conducting nothing short of **an offensive against socialism** among the activists. Completely against the wishes of the rank-and-file of the youth movement, they have secured the elimination of 'socialism' from the program of the newly-launched SAYCO. This will require a sustained political

struggle within the youth movement to reverse.

Armed with ideas

To succeed in this struggle, comrades need to be armed with an understanding of the basic ideas of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, particularly their writings against the various forms of reformism, and particularly on the question of the state. This will be necessary to answer the honest questions of the Communist Party **rank-and-file supporters**, who take the revolutionary phrases of the Party documents and leaders at their face value.

In its new 1984 Constitution, for instance, the SACP puts forward "the establishment of one united state of People's Power in which the working class will be the dominant force and which will move uninterruptedly towards social emancipation and the total abolition of exploitation of man by man." Why should we quibble at this? Doesn't it mean a workers' state in fact?

In that case why do the SACP leaders not say so? Why don't they use that plain and unambiguous concept used by Marx and Lenin themselves? Why do they find

it necessary to rub verbal vaseline all over the thing if not to make the formula deliberately slippery, difficult to grasp in practice, and easy to evade?

These people have all read Lenin—yet what would he say of their ideas?

Lenin at one time advanced, in regard to Russia (then a backward country where the poor peasants were the great majority of the people), the imprecise formula of a "democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants", which the workers would strive to lead, and which would carry out the bourgeois-democratic tasks of that revolution. But he repudiated this formula and criticised those who stuck to it in the course of the Russian Revolution, because opportunists and reformists **used it as a cover** to defend the continued class rule of the bourgeoisie and deny the necessity of the working class taking power and decisively smashing the old state.

In fact (as Lenin clearly saw and as Trotsky had earlier foreseen) it was the **dictatorship of the proletariat or workers' state** established in the October Revolution with the support of the poor peasants, which was necessary even to carry out the essential **democratic tasks** in Russia. On the basis of such a state and



only on that basis could the revolution proceed **uninterruptedly** to tackle socialist tasks.

Lenin's position

Lenin defended the Russian workers' state against **reformist** socialists in the European labour movement with these words:

"The main thing that socialists fail to understand and that constitutes their short-sightedness in matters of theory, their subservience to bourgeois prejudices and their political betrayal of the proletariat is that in capitalist society, whenever there is any serious aggravation of the class struggle intrinsic to that society, there can be no alternative but the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie or the dictatorship of the proletariat. Dreams of some third way are reactionary, petty-bourgeois lamentations.

"That is borne out by more than a century of development of bourgeois democracy and the working-class movement in all the advanced countries, and notably by the experience of the past five years. This is also borne out by the whole science of political economy, by the entire content of Marxism, which reveals the economic inevitability, wherever commodity economy prevails, of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie that can only be replaced by the class which the very growth of capitalism develops, multiplies, welds together and strengthens, that is, the proletarian class." (In Lenin's address to the Communist International, 1919)

Whereas the SACP 'Slovo' argument has envisaged an 'uninterrupted' process of change to socialism **without a workers' state presiding over this**—such a state (called a "socialist republic" in the Party constitution) coming into existence somehow, at some point, out of this 'uninterrupted' process itself—Karl Marx said precisely the opposite more than a hundred years ago:

"Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat."

The SACP leaders never tire of proclaiming themselves Marxists and Leninists. Yet they systematically revise and reject the basic teachings of both.

It was not only the 'two stages' ideas of the Stalinists which masked their real evasion of the proletarian revolution and its necessary tasks. The ideas of comrade Slovo, seemingly so 'left' in comparison with stages, have just as deliberately and systematically **evaded the necessity of a workers' state** to carry through the so-called 'continuous' or 'uninterrupted' process of change.

There is only one **uninterrupted revolu-**

tion possible, and that is one carried out under a workers' state, under the dictatorship of the proletariat. All else is uninterrupted garbage—a cover for duplicity and the drawing back from real tasks.

At least the crude 'two stages' theory—bankrupt through and through—had the merit of exposing itself before the socialist rank-and-file. They simply rejected it. The formulations *a la* Slovo are **worse** because they are more slippery; because they have succeeded (at least for a time) in lulling the activists into a false sense of confidence in the SACP policy and have **diverted attention from the critical question of the revolution, namely the class character of the state**. In so doing, they prepared the way for the shift to the right revealed so starkly in the *Observer* interview.

The issues of *Umsebenzi*, distributed in South Africa, stress for the benefit of their working-class readers the SACP's 'socialist' and 'communist' goals. They, too, emphasise the idea of 'uninterrupted' revolution from the overthrow of apartheid to the complete elimination of exploitation. They hark back continually to the Russian Revolution and to Lenin. But they steadfastly refuse to adopt Lenin's position on the question of the state.

Socialist revolution

At a time when the pressures towards socialist revolution are sharpening all over the capitalist world, we have the remarkable fact that all the 'Communist' Parties linked to Moscow are sprinting as fast as they can away from socialist revolution. In place of simple old 'two stages', all kinds of 'intermediate' stages and 'uninterrupted' processes of stages are invented and added.

In Chile, the CP has offered to accept a "military government without Pinochet". In Haiti, the CP opposed the general strike against the "provisional" dictatorship of General Namphy on the incredible pretext that it was necessary first to develop the capitalist economy in this pauperised client-state of US imperialism! The conservative hand of the Soviet bureaucracy—their search for accommodation with the imperialist bourgeoisie, now vigorously promoted by Gorbachev—is clear in all this.

In South Africa, the Communist Party leadership has found it necessary to respond and adapt to the huge pressures from below of a **working-class revolution** in the making. But it has remained tied by an umbilical cord to the Soviet bureaucracy, and remains faithful to the global policy of the bureaucracy which pushes it further and further into the hopeless pursuit of a 'peaceful settlement' with capitalism.

The art of comrade Slovo's formulations—their essential usefulness to the Stalinist CP leadership—has lain

in **presenting** as a left turn, in **dressing up** as 'uninterrupted revolution', for the workers and youth, what is in reality a theory of **uninterrupted reform**.

All that the Allister Sparks interview has done is draw this reality nakedly to the surface for all to see. The right turn demonstrated in this interview was already present in embryo, from the first formulation of comrade's Slovo's position, requiring only a proper dissection by Marxist theory to bring it to light. Now events themselves have done that.

Comrade Slovo now expresses "anger and disgust" at having once been a defender of Stalin—defender, that is, of a tyrant on Hitler's scale, who slaughtered the flower of Bolshevism, destroyed the whole revolutionary vanguard of the Soviet working class, and deliberately sabotaged the world revolution. What value is there really in this belated repentance?

The bureaucracy which Stalin led lives on, now seeking to adapt itself, under the reformer Gorbachev, to resist rising pressures towards its overthrow. Over the decades the SACP leadership have uncritically followed each twist and turn of the Kremlin. Only recently adulation of "Comrade Brezhnev" filled pages in the *African Communist*. Now Brezhnev is disgraced as the mainstay of gigantic corruption and mismanagement, and Gorbachev can do no wrong.

Yet the Gorbachev regime stands just as plainly opposed to proletarian socialist revolution—just as hostile to workers' power and international socialism—as Stalin, Brezhnev etc ever were. All this elicits not one word of criticism from comrade Slovo!

Collision being prepared

The reality is that an SACP Stalinist bureaucracy **unalterably opposed to workers' revolution** has found itself, in the course of a social earthquake, lifted from below by a torrent of working-class energy, seeking an outlet in socialist revolution to the end. The inherent motion of this historical force is, in fact, absolutely contrary to the real interests and positions defended by the Stalinist apparatus of the Party. Thus a political collision of tremendous proportions is being prepared.

Doubtless there will be new "left" turns by the SACP leaders, under pressure—but never to the position of proletarian revolution in fact. Each time they will recoil and again turn right—in *search of compromise with capitalism*.

The greater the working-class forces which now gravitate to the SACP banner, the greater the future collision with the leadership will be. There are in truth two 'Communist Parties' now inhabiting the same skin.

One is beginning to be fleshed out from

below by the active, genuinely communist proletariat, spontaneously organising itself into 'party' groupings, i.e. with a 'party' conception of themselves, and a determination to build and transform the ANC on socialist lines. The other is the old, hardened and actually **anti-proletarian** apparatus of the Stalinist bureaucracy determined to preserve all possible ambiguities in ANC policy against socialist change. These two essentially different 'parties' within one skin will prove irreconcilable as the process of class polarisation develops in SA.

Youth

The youth who raise the red flag want a communist ANC. *Umsebenzi* (Fourth quarter 1986) answers them thus: "any attempt to 'capture' the ANC and transform it into a 'communist' front would serve only the racists and not the working class"(!)

Out of the inevitable conflict of the genuinely communist workers and youth with the Stalinist apparatus will come decisive forces for the Marxist tendency itself—for the socialist transformation of the ANC and the victory of the South African revolution.

Every comrade of our tendency must orient actively towards the pro-communist rank-and-file—not towards hacks or bureaucrats even of the lowest rank, but towards those thousands of genuine strugglers seeking a way to a revolutionary working-class victory under the red flag.

Always in a comradely spirit of fighting for the same aims together, we must at the same time fearlessly and sharply delineate our ideas from even the most 'left'-sounding Stalinism. On the whole, in the minds of the youth and worker activists, Stalinist ideas form no more than a thin crust of confusion which, in the course of further experience of events, combined with proper explanation and tactical skill, it will not be difficult to prise loose. That is the task of the Marxists.

Editor's note: Material dealing with the ideas of comrade Slovo and the SACP on the question of so-called "democracy" and "socialism" in Africa and the Third World will appear in other issues.

Comrades are urged to re-read, with this article, past material produced by *Inqaba* dealing with Stalinism and the SACP, particularly the article "How 'democratic' are the big bosses?" (*Inqaba* No. 20/21), and the perspectives documents *South Africa's impending socialist revolution and Workers' revolution or racial civil war* (supplement to *Inqaba* No. 16/17).

ANC leaders must concentrate

**By Nkululeko Nomji
A local leader of SAYCO**

I write this during the time when the masses of South Africa, as never before, are conscious of transforming the society into a healthy socialist society. This is a big task because it is diluted with confusion, therefore a clear programme is needed. The masses are looking to our mass movement for leadership.

The past upsurge was alone enough to expose the nature of our struggle. The youth came out in the streets to demonstrate their willingness to struggle for something more progressive than capitalism. After the launch of COSATU the working masses also demonstrated their power during June 16 and May Day.

Our struggle has entered a phase where everything should be in front of the oppressed and exploited masses. We saw how the state failed to rest only on repression to curb the upsurge. They resorted to manoeuvres in order to divide the working class.

The upsurge occurred during a time when capitalism is in crisis worldwide, which made the bosses panic. We saw them pushing Botha to reform, but also to apply strong pressure on the working class—by endorsing the emergency. Capitalists came out to criticise the state, and called for the abolition of apartheid.

Clear programme

These manoeuvres can only be overcome by a clear programme and leadership. Every method had been tried by the ruling class; but empty reforms and harsh repression can't dismantle apartheid.

We found a situation where capitalists were visiting our leaders in exile to find out whether their interests would be entertained after the revolution. This was part of the policy of manoeuvring the socialist

programme.

The same leadership which the masses of South Africa expect to lead, sat on a round table with our enemies. If the bosses were prepared to talk to the masses they should have come to us. We are convinced that this is an act to confuse the masses because these people are the very same people who constructed the SADF and Koevoet which is used against us.

The lifting of the ANC and SACP banners during the past mass funerals and meetings was an indication that the masses are ripe for crushing the state under the Congress leadership. Therefore the leadership must concentrate on the masses, not the racist bosses.

I won't call them 'progressive' capitalists because there is nothing progressive about them. Their state machine has taught the youth and workers that arming of people is essential.

Outcry for arms

They exposed themselves when Tony Bloom asked Thabo Mbeki whether they (the ANC) will be able to stop the steely-eyed kids in the townships, in favour of negotiations. The outcry for arms is a clear indication that the oppressed masses don't expect any form of negotiation with the state.

The bosses also indicated their unwillingness to negotiate in many ways. The turning down of the EPG delegation, unbanning of the ANC, and releasing our leaders is enough to say that they can't negotiate with us. I can't say why the bosses visited the ANC leaders, except to say they are confusing us because they know that negotiated settlement is impossible in South Africa.

It was rather foolish to allow the leadership a meeting with the capitalists. The working class is the only force capable of crushing the system. It is only by focussing on us that freedom will come through.

on the masses not on the bosses



The 'liberal' big businessmen meeting with ANC leaders in Lusaka in 1985.

The masses had made a huge step forward but the leadership did not play its role; the youth were dissatisfied because they cried out to be armed but there was no-one to arm them. I think that it is high time that our leadership must take their responsibilities.

We say stop speaking to our enemies, speak to us. We say to the UDF and COSATU leaders, stop looking for unity with the bosses but unite the oppressed and exploited class. It is only the power of the working class with clear leadership that can divide the state on class lines—therefore build working class unity.

Congress

We have turned to the Congress for leadership, and we won't turn back because it is the only movement with working class tradition. We are prepared to tell them when they try to compromise the demands of the Freedom Charter. It is only us who can say 'Forward with the socialist struggle of no compromise'. We know very well that the bosses can't meet our demand of one-person-one-vote in South Africa because

they fear working-class majority rule.

It is only working class democracy that is going to free us and free our brothers and sisters in the front line states of Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Angola etc.

Our struggle is a struggle against capitalism internationally, therefore we advise our exiled leaders not to speak to the Tory government in Britain, or American representatives like Shultz, but to speak to the working class and tell them that they should apply strong workers' sanctions against SA capitalism.

It was wrong for Mac Maharaj to say that Tony Bloom, Neil Chapman, and Chris Ball should come over to our side during negotiations. We don't know now whom we are fighting. The youth and the workers had been in the battles with SADF in the street and bosses who exploit us on factory floors, for what good reason must they come over to our side? They have never shown any signs of agreeing with us. They only fear the clauses of the Freedom Charter.

We say away with apartheid, away with free enterprise. We want socialism—nothing else—and we will never be fooled.

If our leadership is tired of living in exile and want to return home they

must do so not by looking for unity with the bosses.

We say give us arms and we will unban the ANC!

Same coin

We will put the bosses and their state in their places because they are two sides of the same bloody coin. The meeting with the bosses was a betrayal of the working class—we say it loud and clear that the working class is going to rule in South Africa; whilst those who are saying we are too ignorant for this are looking for a way of dictating over us.

We have been dying in the streets, brutalised in factory yards, tortured in South African prisons by the state supported by the capitalists. They did so to protect the bankrupt capitalism, and also they are calling meetings with the ANC to protect this system.

We say—as workers and youth—away with capitalism! Ours is an exciting struggle. We know where we are going to, and we won't be fooled.

We say: **Workers and youth prepare yourselves to take power!**

Workers of the world unite and isolate the bosses!

Don't retreat from the Freedom Charter!

Expelled Marxists welcome readmission to ANC

Four Marxists suspended from the African National Congress in 1979 and expelled in 1985 have welcomed an announcement by ANC President Oliver Tambo as signifying their readmission.

At the ceremony in Lusaka on 8 January marking its 75th anniversary, the ANC publicly invited back into membership those it had previously expelled, provided they "recanted" errors.

Paula Ensor, David Hemson, Martin Legassick and Robert Petersen were suspended and expelled after expressing differences with policies of the ANC leadership.

They argued for a clear strategy of mass working-class action to defeat the apartheid regime and the capitalists together. Neither alliances with capitalists nor guerilla methods of fighting the state would win freedom in SA. The ANC should be built as a force of millions capable of eventually carrying out an armed insurrection, with a program for socialist democracy based on the Freedom Charter and its nationalisation clause.

These Marxists also spoke out against the ANC leaders' dealings with Gatsha Buthelezi at the time of their suspensions.

The suspensions and later expulsions were carried out without the hearing laid down in the ANC constitution. The comrades maintained throughout that they were victims of SACP Stalinists and right-wingers, influential in the ANC in exile, who were opposed to any genuine voice of Marxism in the ANC.

Accepted

Interviewed by *Inqaba*, banned Natal trade unionist David Hemson said he spoke for the others also in "accepting the ANC President's recent statement as readmitting us to the organisation."

He continued: "The movement needs to stand united against the enemy—the murderous apartheid state and the bosses it defends.

"However, unity cannot be sustained

by suppressing political debate. Today, when reaction is trying to regain the initiative after two years of unprecedented revolutionary upheaval by the workers and youth, full and open discussion on how the movement is to go forward to victory is more important than ever.

Ideas

Comrade Hemson noted that the ANC leadership had invited those who are reinstated to recant their errors. However, it had not been said which ideas of the Marxists were now considered by the leadership to be wrong.

"Events since 1979—and particularly in the last two years—have only confirmed the policies we have consistently stood for. The necessity for socialist revolution, led by the working class, is increasingly widely recognised among strugglers.

"In fact the spreading support for Marxist ideas among Congress activists is probably one of the factors which induced the NEC to withdraw our expulsions at this point.

"Let me be clear, when I make mistakes I am prepared to correct them," comrade Hemson said.

"But the policies we stood for have been completely vindicated. There is nothing to recant. The allegations of 'misconduct' made against us to justify our suspension and expulsion were always untrue. We welcome the recent statement by the leadership as in effect a correction of its mistake in suspending and expelling us.

"We would like to believe that our reinstatement marks an acceptance by the ANC leadership of the need for Marxist policies. Possibly its effect has been to reassure the socialist rank-and-file of the movement in this regard.

"Unfortunately, however, we have to express concern at the signs which are evident at this very time of a turn towards the right on the part of the leadership.

"Not only are talks being held with SA and overseas capitalists with the apparent aim of reconciling our liberation struggle with their vested interests. The quite mistaken policy is also being pursued of apparently discussing compromises of majority rule and socialism with the leaders of imperialism, such as George Schultz, in Washington.

"That cannot strengthen, but only weaken, the working class struggle.

"Unfortunately, there are no short cuts to achieve democracy and liberation. The imperialist powers and 'liberal' bosses who now claim to 'oppose apartheid' remain our class enemies. They continue to implacably oppose majority rule, and they show friendliness to the ANC only

in the hope of derailing the revolution. Look at Tony Bloom, for example, chairman of the Premier Group monopoly.

"As the CCAWUSA workers who struck at OK Bazaars—which he owns—have said, he 'is prepared to hold discussions with the ANC in Lusaka on SA's future, yet his own company has no qualms about using the police against workers on strike.'

"Within the discipline of the movement, which we have always observed, we will continue to struggle for socialist policies.

"Despite our victimisation, we have continued in unflinching loyalty to the ANC. Who, after the banners hoisted at the mass funerals of the last years, after the huge sacrifices of the youth, after the foundation of COSATU, can doubt that the workers and youth want to build a mass ANC to carry through the democratic and socialist transformation of South Africa?

Socialism

The *Inqaba* Editorial Board adds:

We welcome the decision of the ANC to readmit the expelled Marxists, and endorse the standpoint taken by these comrades.

The many workers and youth in South Africa who hold the same ideas as these comrades have never been expelled. "Socialism" is today on the lips of the countless activists of the Youth Congresses, COSATU and the UDF. No expulsions could ever change the reality that socialism is what the mass of black working people in South Africa are fighting for.

Along with all socialists in the movement, we welcome again to the ranks of the ANC the four expelled comrades who in reality never left those ranks. Through this the whole movement can go forward stronger in the struggle for democracy, workers' power, and socialism.

At the same time *Inqaba* views as gravely mistaken the decision of the ANC leadership, also announced on 8 January, to offer "amnesty for all state security agents it had captured infiltrating into its membership." (*Weekly Mail*, 9-15/1/87)

Collaborators and informers have inflicted horrible damage on our movement and communities. The fierce struggle to root them out has been a feature of the rising mass movement of the past years. Today it is more than ever necessary to exercise vigilance against the infiltration of our movement by agents either of the state or the capitalist class. The ANC's "amnesty" policy towards them gives quite the wrong signal to the people and should be reversed.

Discussion on the armed struggle



—A report from *Inqaba* supporters—

The armed struggle and the question of armed revolution is central in the minds of the oppressed and exploited youth in South Africa. The revolutionary youth who are involved in the daily battle with the state realise more and more the formidable nature of the South African state, and the need to overthrow it through an armed revolution.

This has been reflected in the discussions we've had with staunch supporters of Umkhonto we Sizwe.

The discussion with Comrade A. was initially introduced when he raised the possibility of being asked to store arms. He explained that he does not find himself in this situation at present, but due to the growing support and the increasing MK activity in the townships, he felt that he would soon be approached to carry out duties for the guerilla army.

Our comrades pointed out that the question of armed revolution goes much deeper than just storing arms for MK cadres. We asked the comrade what he would do if requested to plant a bomb at his workplace.

"Of course, I'll do it," was his reply, "In this way the bosses will really feel the pinch." We continued by asking him what would happen if his comrades in his union were injured in the bomb blast.

He replied that he would not plant the bomb or allow it to explode while workers are working, but that he would do so after working hours when the shop is empty.

He agreed that the workers could lose their jobs as a result of the bomb blast. Unless it was clear that this would definitely lead towards victory in the struggle, it would cause disillusionment and despondency among

the workers.

So the question is: do bomb blasts like this really lead towards liberation?

We asked the comrade what it is that he is fighting for. With intense facial expression, the comrade replied that he is fighting for control of the workplace—for a society run by the workers. "That simply means that I am fighting for a socialist society," he said.

We pointed out that we can therefore not base our struggle on destroying the productive forces which the workers have created and which we want to take over and control. Rather, we should organise ourselves and prepare for the taking of control of the factories, mines, and farms etc.

He responded by asking what would happen if we blow up state institutions like parliament, the courts and prisons, etc. Firstly, we asked the comrade whether that would forward the socialist revolution. He replied that it would not necessarily advance

the revolution because the workers have not gained the consciousness of taking over and controlling society.

Would such actions destroy, or even weaken, the state? Clearly not.

We asked him how he thinks the state would respond should this take place. He answered by saying that the state will undoubtedly brutally repress workers, surround the townships with SADF troops, search houses, etc.

We asked him whether our movement is yet prepared to defend itself with arms against that. We agreed that we are not, and that this is the first issue the movement should address.

In that case, how will the state be defeated?

Here our comrades explained that the SA state rests on the support of the white working class by advocating *white racism*, and that it has a very strong military machine. In fact the strongest in Africa.

Splitting the state

We should thus look at ways of overriding that white racism by splitting the state on class lines and winning over sections of the white working class.

"But the white workers have so many privileges at work," was his response. We agreed with the comrade, but we pointed out that as capitalism develops, and as it goes deeper and deeper into crisis, it will be less able to guarantee the security of white workers.

Already the whites are becoming seriously divided over how to protect their future in SA. Here we also referred to the fact that today you can find queues of unemployed white workers outside the municipal offices in Johannesburg who are prepared to work for R5 per day in the desperate need for money and a job.

The comrade pointed out that is going to be a difficult task to win over the white workers. Again, we agreed and stated that white workers are the most racist section of our society but that it is still our revolutionary task to build our unions and community organisations and show to these workers where their future lies. We used the example of white workers approaching non-racial unions and asking to join.

However, we emphasised a bomb

blast in a shop or anywhere else would bind the white workers more to the state and would not win them over to the side of the movement. Instead of weakening the state, the state can use the bomb blasts to tell the white workers of the "terrorism in the ANC".

Another of our comrades asked him what he thinks will be more of a threat to the state and capital: blowing up Checkers stores or a week long strike by Checkers' workers, bearing in mind that the bourgeoisie have insurance policies, etc, to compensate for their losses.

The comrade replied that the strike will obviously affect the capitalist to a greater extent, and it will reveal to the workers their industrial power.

He continued by asking about the possibility of a general strike for a week or ten days as was the case in Langa at the time of the Sharpeville massacre.

Our comrades pointed out that the general strike is a powerful weapon in the hands of the working class. But the movement would have to be much better prepared than it is now to sustain a successful national general strike of more than 2-3 days. This is because the SA workforce is more than 8 million strong but only 10% are organised into COSATU. This makes it difficult for a long general strike to be successful.

We further explained that a general strike (particularly an unlimited general strike) poses the question of power—of who is in control of society. Such a general strike should be very thoroughly prepared and led by a clear and determined leadership.

General strike

We pointed to the general strike in Langa in 1960. The workers were unorganised and the state was in a stronger position.

We asked him whether he knew what the consequences of that strike were. We explained that the townships were surrounded by the army and that the workers were beaten to work.

The movement was thus severely crushed. However, we stressed that this did not mean we should not call for general strikes.

Here we referred to the success of the May Day and 16 June stayaways in that they demonstrated the enormous power of the black working

class. It is in this context that we raised the question of our tasks as conscious revolutionaries.

We emphasised the crying need to build the Congress organisations—to build COSATU, the UDF and Youth Congresses, and the need to hammer home into the consciousness of the masses, the need to take up arms for the self-defence of the movement.

We continued by addressing the question of arming the masses. We asked the comrade whether MK is able to arm the mass of workers and youth.

Political approach

His response was that MK is much too small to be able to arm the masses. We replied that it is not fundamentally a question of size, but of political approach. We pointed to the lessons of the Crossroads massacre. If the revolutionary youth had been well organised for armed self-defence against the 'witdoeke' and the state, even with a few dozen guns, the people of Crossroads could have protected themselves against the vigilantes. But MK has not taken this approach.

He responded by asking how the masses can be armed. We asked him who produces the arms.

"The workers," he replied. We also pointed out that the mineworkers work with explosives, that chemical workers work with the ingredients needed to make bombs, and with workers building direct links and international solidarity, we can ensure that workers of other countries help to arm the workers and youth in South Africa.

Here we referred to the resolution moved by Marxists at the British Labour Party conference in 1986. The resolution called for the arming of the South African youth and workers by the next Labour government, but the Conference did not pass the resolution.

The trade union and LP leaders intervened to defeat the resolution, saying *the ANC was not asking for this.* Nevertheless over 1 million constituency and trade union votes were cast in favour of it.

The comrade responded enthusiastically to the idea of workers internationally helping to arm our movement.

He agreed that our policy indeed shows the way forward to the socialist revolution, but then he questioned the role and purpose of MK.

He pointed out that it is going to be (and already is) problematic if MK continues to operate separately from the mass organisations. We asked the comrade what he thinks should be done to solve this problem. His response was that we should ask MK to work with the workers.

We pointed out that MK has been built as a guerilla army, with tactics which substitute individual armed action for the necessary armed self-defence of the mass organisations themselves.

To defend our day-to-day struggles (industrial strikes, schools boycotts, community struggles, factory occupations, barricades)—and to defend our organisations against vigilante and state attacks, the need is for the unions and youth organisations to build self-defence bodies, under their political direction and control. *These bodies should conduct training, gather and stockpile arms in safe places—in order to carry out these tasks.*

Inkatha

Many MK supporters argue that MK is already doing these things. Have not MK units hit back against Inkatha leaders, for example?

In reality this shows the problems we face. When MK units kill Inkatha gangsters, it results in vicious retaliation against our activists, **who have not been organised to defend themselves.** If instead we place emphasis on building self-defence bodies, Inkatha could be driven out of the townships, and at the same time we would be defended against retaliation by either them or the state.

The urgent task is to build these self-defence bodies, and not to "build MK" as a separate guerilla organisation substituting itself for the mass movement.

The building of self-defence bodies will enable MK fighters to be drawn in, putting to constructive use the training and skills which they have acquired. We pointed out that this would involve turning their back decisively on the old guerilla conceptions which presently stand in the way of the serious organisation of mass



A witdoek amid the ruins of Crossroads: our movement needs to organise armed self-defence.

armed self-defence.

One of our comrades pointed out how the youth in the Eastern Cape are calling on MK to come out of the 'bushes' and become integrated into the mass movement. The approach we have been suggesting would be the best way of bringing this about, enabling MK to become transformed from a guerilla army into an armed people—so preparing the way for mass armed insurrection.

The comrade then asked how MK fighters could be brought under the discipline of the mass organisations. We pointed out how this could only be done if the leaders of the UDF, ANC, SAYCO, etc., approached the tasks of armed struggle in the right way, beginning with organised armed self-defence of the mass organisations. Only on this basis can comrades of MK realise the incorrectness and the futility of a guerilla strategy in a highly industrialised country.

Way forward

If the industrial working class is organised and armed to its full power this will reduce guerilla forces to an insignificant factor and show the way forward to the socialist revolution.

Again we stressed the fact that we still need to build the movement to greater strength and it is for this reason that we cannot afford to go onto the offensive by planting bombs and attacking the state head on.

We then referred to Comrade

Tambo's statement when he said that "sabotage attacks alone would not bring SA to its knees. We are moving from sabotage acts to attack the enemy face to face." (The comrades were reading through one of the early articles in *Inqaba* on armed struggle)

Revolutionary defence

In complete and utter disbelief the comrade asked us to repeat the statement. He responded by saying he disagrees with Comrade Tambo and that he cannot understand why the comrade could make such an absurd statement. Our comrades pointed out that we disagree with Comrade Tambo's statement—which implies that the movement should go onto the offensive now.

We believe in organised revolutionary defence of our organisations against state attacks and attacks by vigilantes. Again we pointed to the lessons of the Crossroads massacre where only a few youth were armed and vigilantes could easily defeat our comrades.

We also pointed to the burning down of Atlantic House (where the UDF offices were situated), Freeway House, Sached in East London, etc.

Our task is to guard these buildings, defend our mass meetings, defend ourselves against the state and vigilantes,—ie, revolutionary defence of our organisations and the working class. That will create the necessary conditions for moving onto the offensive.

THE DEATH OF BROTHER K

The death at the beginning of this year of brother K was a loss to all workers at the X municipality struggling against apartheid and capitalism.

At the end of 1986 the white supervisors organised the traditional 'breaking up' party. It was characterised by the usual drinking competition. Two workers are given a bottle of 'plaas wyn' (cheap and highly alcoholic farm wine). They then see who can 'drink the bottle out' the quickest. The prize: another litre of wine. After the second such competition K had a heart attack and died.

Workers felt outraged at his death. They remembered the important role K had played as a rank and file militant in bringing the union to their municipality. K worked as a leading hand. He often did the supervisor's work for him. Everyone knew K as a reliable worker. He suffered with his fellow workers from the bosses' accusations of alcohol abuse to deny workers wage increases. Yet these same bosses encourage drinking competitions amongst the workers.

Most workers in the area where K lived worked for the municipality. They live on a miserable income of between R200 and R300 per month. The houses are terribly overcrowded with two or three families, up to 17 people, living in a two bedroomed flat. Most, like K, cannot afford electricity.

Conditions

In these conditions sickness, alcoholism, and defeatism were rife. There was no tradition of unionisation. K played an active part in building community organisations. From this he realised the need for workers to organise to fight for higher wages.

K played a leading role in unionising workers at his municipality. He was steadfast in attending union meetings in the struggle for union recognition. He always explained to those who could not read the contents of the union leaflets. His keenness in

attending meetings was matched only by his willingness to contribute to the discussion.

K had a consistent message at these meetings; the need for the working class to be united. He continually explained that only through united action could the workers change their situation. If the workers united they could be much stronger than the management.

Disciplined

K is remembered for his disciplined approach in union meetings. Once, a reluctant worker worried that joining the union meant that they would have to join the youth throwing stones at the police and army in the streets. The workers attacked and wanted to discipline this worker. K strongly maintained that this was the wrong approach. He patiently explained that the union was not going to lead in the street fighting, but that the workers could not isolate themselves from the youth because they must work with the youth to change society.

K was particularly concerned with conditions of health and safety at work. He continually reminded comrades of the danger of the work they were forced to do. Long hours in the rain, lack of protective clothing, working with dangerous tools without training. He was insistent that through the union workers should be organised to fight for safe and healthy working conditions.

After the death of comrade K the municipality took no steps against the organisers of the drinking competition. It is regarded by the management as a normal part of the workers' lives. In their arrogance they see alcohol abuse as part of the way of life of the workers.

The workers do not share this view. A worker at Cd. K's funeral said "the management encouraged drinking competitions. In this way they can have greater control over the lives of workers. Workers should not allow the bosses to do what they like with them."

Letters

Study the enemy!

Dear Comrades,

Yesterday I was walking through town and it was absolutely crawling with police.

Usually I would just have ignored the goings-on and just walked ahead but I have come to realise that it is important to take note of such things—especially if they concern our enemy.

For example, if I was watching TV and Botha suddenly appeared on the screen I would immediately switch it off. Or, if I was reading the newspaper and an article about Botha appeared, I would just quickly turn the page.

I used to react like this for quite some time before I eventually realised that the socialist revolution would never succeed if we did not study and know our enemy before we strike. (It's like a cat which jumps over a wall. It never jumps without knowing what's on the other side.)

I therefore urge all comrades to read the newspapers regularly, and to take note of other such things. Because this is the one way whereby we will know how to strike at our enemies, the state and the capitalists, and how to defeat them.

Forward to socialism!

Long live the working class!

Yours fraternally,

A Comrade

International solidarity

Dear comrades,

Glasgow Young Socialists salute the heroic struggles of the revolutionary youth in South Africa, who have shown us that they are prepared to die in order to smash the murderous apartheid regime.

In solidarity with the South African youth and workers struggle Glasgow LPYS decided to take direct action and occupy the Benetton clothes store which has business interests in South Africa.

30 Young Socialists occupied the

city centre shop in September last year. When we explained our reasons to the shops' young staff we won their sympathy. We chanted songs and slogans inside the shop, while some comrades who had stayed outside attracted a crowd who were signing petitions in support of sanctions against South Africa.

We were ejected after two hours, but planned another occupation for a month later. This time it involved 45 Young Socialists, 25 of whom were arrested when police smashed the shop's plate glass door in order to forcibly remove us. We were charged with committing a 'breach of the peace'.

We then launched a national campaign to get the charges dropped against the 25, and called a national LPYS day of action in December to picket as many Benetton shops as possible throughout Britain. In Glasgow we sang in the streets, displaying our new weapon...the Moses Mayekiso choir! "S'Khokele COSATU", "No Woman, No Cry" and "Ya basebenzi" filled the streets of Glasgow.

By January the charges were dropped against all 25, and we had secured a victory, and recruited over 200 Young Socialists throughout Britain with this campaign!

We are proud to involve ourselves in the struggle of South African youth, for workers' democracy and socialism. Your struggle is our struggle: together we shall overthrow apartheid, and capitalism in South Africa and in Britain!

Yours fraternally,
Tommy Sheridan,
Pollock LPYS (Scotland)

Ghanaian support!

Dear comrades in the struggle against Apartheid,

With reference to the advertisement in *Militant*, Marxist paper for Labour and youth, I wish to have some old and new copies of *Inqaba*, Journal of the Marxist workers' tendency of the ANC.

Please kindly advise me on how I can remit some money through the bank to help in the struggle.

Please I would like to know more about the struggle against Apartheid in South Africa. So kindly send me some more issues of *Inqaba*.

Thank you. A Lutta Continua,
Yours in the struggle against
Apartheid,
A Ghanaian comrade.

How to build?

Dear Comrades,

It's really nerve racking to hear the reformists in the mass organisations intoning how we should concentrate primarily on the activists and how they should be preserved.

At some stage I was attending a CAYCO workshop to discuss the way forward. We then divided ourselves into four different groups to discuss the issue and in each group comrades arguing for the building of a mass CAYCO were opposed by by reformists and Stalinists.

We were on the point of how we would go about transforming CAYCO into a mass based organisation when these reformists felt the time wasn't right because of the state of emergency we are organising under. Instead we should concentrate on how to preserve our activists. CAYCO, they said, should be limited to an activist core.

We then questioned them on whether activists alone comprise an organisation?

Eventually they were forced to accept our position on the issue or else they couldn't be classified as 'left' because this is how they refer to themselves!

Is this then how they work towards maintaining that bureaucracy in democratic organisations? Mass organisation is the asset of the masses.

Build a mass ANC on a socialist programme!

No retreat from the Freedom Charter!

Yours fraternally,
CAYCO activist.

Editor's comment: The comrade is quite correct in questioning the motives of those who argued that the state of emergency prevents taking up the task of building a mass CAYCO.

At the same time, in order to take up this task, the preservation of the activists is a vital question.

Unless the activists take themselves and their security seriously, they will not be around to enthuse others, and

to transmit their own experience.

But "preserving the activists" does not mean preserving themselves like prunes.

Serious attention to "underground" methods of work is vital. But the basis of effective underground work is in maintaining the closest links between the activists and the mass of the working class.

What is required at the present time is a carefully worked-out program of action, based on a sober assessment of the issues which can rouse the widest layers of youth and workers into the struggle.

Inqaba believes that a national minimum wage campaign, mobilised around a specific national minimum wage demand, is the most effective political vehicle for this now.

Through such a campaign, the CAYCO branches in every area can recruit and build among the youth, raising the confidence of the whole movement by bringing together the energy and courage of the youth with the power of the industrial workers.

Through this, not only can the activists be "preserved", but they can multiply vastly in their numbers.

Anniversary

Dear *Inqaba*,

It'll soon be the anniversary of the killing of the Cradock Four.

I went to the funeral. That day in Cradock it felt like another world. People were so disciplined and so comradely to one another.

I saw only one drunk the whole day. He had to rinse his mouth out with soapy water.

Every house's door was open. Anyone could just go in and ask for water, to make a phone call or ask for help if you had lost the people you had come with. It was just: "Comrade, can I use your toilet, please," and "Of course, comrade, come in in," would be the reply. Everywhere it was "comrade, this" and "comrade, that".

Even the gangsters were shouting: "Viva UDF!" and "Viva Tambo!"

Matthew Goniwe was one of the honest middle class. He gave his life for socialism. We must not give our lives for less.

Hambani Kahle ma-Comrades.
From a UDF member.

Botswana—

The BNF Youth League: which way forward?

The plans to launch the Botswana National Front Youth League in April could not have been more timely. The suffering and misery facing the working people of Botswana is forever increasing. Workers and youth have lost all hope for a better future under the present conditions. However, up to now there have not been any huge and concerted struggles by the working class.

Many have showed signs of being prepared and willing to fight. What has stopped them from moving forward is that they feel too weak, politically and organisationally, to be able to score a victory against the enemy.

The formation of the YL can help transform the situation. The decisive question will be for the YL to develop a program of action. The program will have to correspond to the real demands, needs and aspirations of the workers and youth, and at the same time, guide and direct the political activities of the YL towards the factories and industries.

If the YL is able to show, through organised worker and youth actions, its determination to realise the program, this will help build the confidence and strength of the class as a whole.

Youth for Socialism

For many years now the working-class youth in Botswana have been enduring all the worst miseries brought about by capitalism. They suffer the worst unemployment. Of the 20 000 who enter the labour market for the first time every year, only 10 000 get jobs. Only 20% of young people between 15 and 18 years are employed. Some 14 year-olds work from 7a.m. to 6p.m. for only P30.00 a month. The future is bleak under capitalism.

The prospects for good education are no better. The shortage of classrooms stands at 33,5% at the present time. Only 39% of primary school leavers enter secondary school. Over 2 000 students applied

By a BNF youth member

for places at the university in 1985 and only 400 were successful.

Many, in frustration, have turned to crime. The biggest growth in the prison population is among females 16-25 and males between 16-36.

It is for this reason that during the independence anniversary celebrations the students used the slogan "20 years of problems" as against the government's slogan of "20 years of progress".

Among many youth there is great bitterness and anger with the present system. They realise they have no stake in capitalist society. As a result there is widespread opposition to capitalism and a general instinctive gravitation towards socialist ideas. Their hopes and aspirations are placed on a new socialist order.

Many will greet the formation of the Youth League with enormous enthusiasm. Expectations will be placed on the YL to show a way forward. It is the duty of the organisation to provide the ideas and to show and educate the youth on how to apply these ideas in action.

The young generation wants to struggle for a better future. If they are provided with clear ideas, nothing will stop them from moving forward. Both male and female, in the schools, factories and everywhere else, they are the most revolutionary section of the working class. They have greater energy, are less worn down by previous struggles, are less bound by family pressures and are quicker to absorb revolutionary ideas.

The work of the YL should be focussed to building their strength and unity, whether in the schools or in the factories. They are the force which by its determination can rekindle the class struggle and revitalise the older workers. This will be a step forward in preparing the forces for the socialist revolution.

Preparing for the socialist revolution in Botswana means being part of the preparations for the socialist revolution in SA. No viable revolutionary organisation can be built in Botswana without linking up with the revolutionary movement of the working class in SA itself.

It is the SA capitalist class that owns and controls virtually the whole economy in Botswana. The mines, which contribute over 50% of the GDP are owned by SA multinationals, De Beers and Anglo American. The factories and the big farms are in the hands of South Africans. Capitalism in Botswana is in reality SA capitalism. And therefore, the struggle for socialism is the struggle against SA bosses and their state.

SA capitalism

The BDP government is an agent of SA capitalism. When it shoots and arrests workers for going on strike over wages, as was the case in Selibe Phikwe; when it passes legislation to make it difficult for workers to organise their unions, it does so to protect the SA bosses who are the owners of industries in Botswana.

But still SA has not hesitated to invade. It will be much worse in the event of there existing a threat to capitalism itself. A revolutionary movement in Botswana will be a threat to capitalism even in SA itself. The SA ruling class will move against it and crush it if it can. The examples of Mozambique and Angola should be well understood.

Botswana is an oppressed nation—oppressed by SA. It cannot be truly independent alongside a capitalist SA. Nor can it be socialist while capitalism exists in SA. Real national self-determination, socialism and control of working people over their lives will only come about with the overthrow of capitalism and the creation of a workers' state in SA, as well as in Botswana and other Southern African countries.

The success of the working class in

Botswana over capitalism will depend on the aid, support and victory of the working class in SA. There is no way Batswana workers by themselves can survive the wrath of the SA ruling class.

However, this does not mean nothing can be done in Botswana until the socialist revolution in SA. On the contrary, this raises the absolute need to build the movement, as part of building the movement in SA, so that the Batswana youth and workers can begin to play their part in the struggles for the creation of socialist Southern Africa.

The YL has to be built into a strong organisation. The workers and the trade unions also have to be built. While building, at each and every time, it will be necessary to imbue the workers and youth with the need for unity with the SA working class. Always it must be stressed that the interests of the working class are the same in the two countries and that the common enemy can only be defeated on the basis of unity.

Workers in SA confront the same bosses as Batswana workers—on the same questions of wages, health and safety, retrenchments and victimisation, etc. These common struggles can serve to bring workers, through their trade unions, together. And contact should not only be confined to the leaders, but must extend to shop steward, branch committee and rank and file level.

At the same time, the YL can link up with the SA youth through its

Youth Congresses in different areas. Communications and visits can be exchanged and strong bonds established.

The BNF and trade union leadership have failed to provide answers and to prepare workers in this regard. Instead, they have created the illusion in workers that somehow the problems of society can be solved within the confines of Botswana. The BNF has not explained how it hopes to implement its demand for nationalisation of essential industries. How will it expropriate the SA capitalists in Botswana? How will it deal with the SA capitalist state itself?

No doubt, the determination and heroism of the working class in SA is admired by the overwhelming majority of workers and youth in Botswana. They have an instinctive desire to be part of these struggles. The trade union and BNF leaders have failed to make this a reality.

Are the BNF leaders serious about socialism?

One of the reasons why the BNF enjoys support among workers is because of the clause in its manifesto calling for the nationalisation of essential industries. Many see the answers to their problems lying in the expropriation of these 'foreign' bosses. But is the BNF leadership serious about implementing this demand?

It is becoming more and more dif-

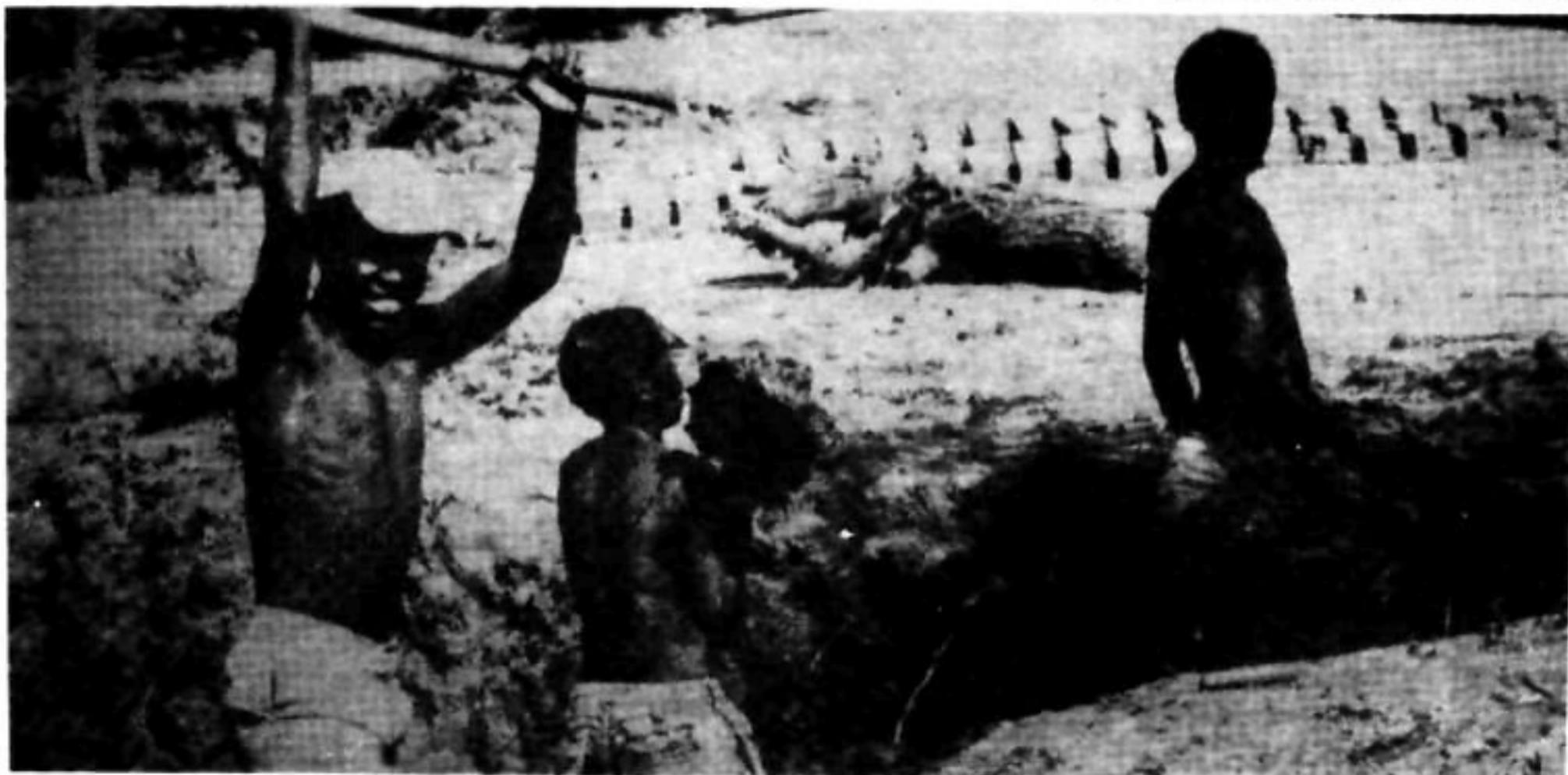
ficult to see how the BNF, in the event of it getting elected into power, would implement this clause.

There does not seem to be a fundamental difference of policy between the BNF leadership and the openly capitalist BDP. In his latest major speeches, the leader of the BNF, Kenneth Koma, has minimised differences between his party and the ruling party. He even envisages a coalition of the two.

The BNF Central Committee is today filled and dominated by successful small businessmen who were previously members of the BDP. These people have assumed total control of the party. They appeal to the Americans for financial assistance. These people have no interest in the overthrow of capitalism. On the contrary, they will want to protect it in the vain hope that they will be the big bourgeois tomorrow. Under this leadership, the BNF cannot seriously be for socialism, despite the socialist promises on which it arose.

This is made more clear by the way it neglects the working class. It has failed to hold in the party those many workers who have moved closer to its ranks. Nor has it been able to actively organise support and solidarity for workers who have taken strike action.

Despite popular support among workers, the BNF has not organised any strong and conscious presence among the the workers in the factories and industries. The party has few organised and class conscious



Child labourers in Botswana: these 14 year-olds are paid 30 thebe an hour—for a 60 hour week.

workers in its ranks. Without the conscious participation and leadership of the proletariat, both before and after the revolution, there can be no socialism.

Many of the BNF youth comrades are critical of the party leadership. But it is not enough to "fight for socialism" in little discussion circles where the argument is confined mainly to intellectuals and abstract ideas.

The biggest test of the youth and the Youth League will be whether they are able to organise and build the strength, politically and organisationally, of the working class. Without the backing of the organised power of factory and industrial workers, the youth and the YL will be powerless against either the powerful conservative BNF leadership or against the government and the capitalists.

Tasks

The SA youth, who played a key role in the revolutionary struggles of 1984-86 and have created far stronger youth organisations, have come to understand this fundamental question. In the words of one student leader, "...the youth alone are not the vanguard of the struggle. The industrial working class is and must be the vanguard.

"So the youth must strengthen the leadership of the working class, forge relationships with trade unions, and add their muscle and ideas".

It is this task that faces the youth and the YL in Botswana.

The will of the workers to struggle is there. This has been demonstrated in the few strikes that have taken place over the past few months. What has stopped a big forward movement is a feeling of weakness among workers. They realise that they face an enemy openly committed to a full scale and determined offensive on their living standards and conditions. They have become aware that nothing less than equal determination by the leadership is needed if their fightback is to be successful.

At present the leaders are showing *no such determination*. The trade unions are weak. Added to all this is the workers' numerical weakness and the fact that all the time their struggles have remained isolated with no support from other sections of the class.

The YL can play a very important

role in changing this situation and rebuilding the trade unions into real working class organizations.

Young workers

Opportunities will arise where it will be necessary and possible for the YL to intervene on the side of the workers. It is inevitable that workers in different areas and at different times will take some action against the bosses. In these struggles, as was the case before, it is the young workers who will be militant and in the forefront.

It will be the duty of the YL to immediately participate and help in all these struggles. As could have been done at Bolux, the YL can organise pickets and demonstrations in support of strikers; organise funds for strikers through collections in other workplaces; print and distribute leaflets explaining the case of the strikers and to organise solidarity action, etc.

In the process, it will be possible to raise and to discuss ideas with young workers on carrying forward the struggle and even on how victory could be scored. Many workers will respond with enthusiasm and it will be possible for the YL to draw and to win young workers into the organisation.

It is the industrial working class youth who must form the backbone of the organisation. Every effort must be made to find ways to these militant layers. Visits to shop stewards committees and to speak at trade union meetings should be organised always. The winning of these young workers will open the doors towards the older workers. This will lay the foundation for building and preparing the whole class for carrying through the socialist revolution.

At the same time, outside the factories and industries, initiatives should be taken to organise protests against unemployment, the shortage of houses and the problems of education. Demonstrations around these questions will attract many young people who can later be drawn much closer to the YL.

Boldness and audacity are the key. Guided by correct ideas and correct methods, such activities will fire the imagination of the youth and attract support from wider sections of the working people of Botswana. And

most importantly, it will become clear to many workers and youth as to the kind of struggle that the BNF leaders should be leading if they are serious about solving any of the problems.

In 1984 the BNF won a majority in a number of councils. This was as a result of the promises they had made to people. But up to now none have come. Instead, in Gaborone, some workers have had their property confiscated by a BNF council for being unable to pay the rates and levy. The BNF gives the excuse that the BDP government is refusing to allocate enough funds for the council. But how can the BDP be expected to give enough funds when its job is to defend the capitalists and their profits? In any case isn't it obvious that the BDP is concerned with ensuring that every BNF council is unable to carry through its promises so as to discredit them in the eyes of the masses?

The only way in which the BNF can get enough funds is by mobilising the power of the workers and youth to force the government to concede. It is this struggle that Paul Rantao and his council should be organising instead of attacking the poor masses.

Jwaneng demonstration

The demonstration organised by the youth in Jwaneng against the imposition by government of unelected councillors in the town, is an example that should be extended to the rest of the country. This demonstration was widely supported by workers in the town.

This clearly indicates the potential for struggle if a lead is given. The masses would give much bigger support if action was to be organised against BDP's refusal to allocate enough funds to the councils. If the BNF leaders were to organise and lead any action around this matter, they will enjoy overwhelming support nationally, not only from workers but from the lower middle-classes as well.

The Youth League should call upon the leaders of the BNF to organise and lead such action. Also, in all activities that the youth will organise—in trade unions, during strikes, at schools, on the councils—they should demand the complete

and unconditional support of the BNF leaders. It will be necessary for the BNF to clarify where it stands in relation to the problems and the struggle of the masses against these.

The BNF was not born out of struggle. The masses have not had an opportunity of testing it and its leadership. The youth must make sure it goes through the test. It must be forced to mobilise and lead the masses in everyday struggle against

the immediate issues, and on that basis, that it shows and pledges its commitment to the socialist revolution.

The masses learn through experience. They must go through experience again and again before they are convinced. Only by participating and leading in actual day to day struggles will it be possible to educate the class, and in that way lay the foundation upon which a revolu-

tionary alternative will be constructed.

No mass workers' organisation or workers' leadership is ever born easily. All are born in battle. It will be the convulsive struggles, now and in the future, which will shape, test and develop a real workers' leadership and organisation, and build it into the political arm of the mass of the working people in Botswana and the whole of Southern Africa.

Batswana workers exploited by Bolux

The Bolux Flour Milling Company began operating in Ramotswa in July 1985. Since then it has made huge profits, and plans to expand.

After its establishment as the only flour milling company in the country, the government made the importation of cheaper flour from SA almost impossible. Since then prices have risen by about 20 per cent.

But higher costs are not due to better pay for workers. Workers are treated in a very ruthless manner. They get only half an hour lunch break in a working day of nine hours. No transport is provided, and many workers begin their day with a 12km walk. At work, sacks of flour weighing up to 65kg must be loaded onto trucks. All this for only 70 thebe per hour.

It is not surprising that Bolux workers have already gone on strike twice.

The first time was in December 1985 over the question of a bonus. At that time wages were a pitiful 56 thebe per hour. Seeing the profits being made by the company, workers went on strike without really preparing.

There was no union. Many workers naively believed the labour department and the government would support them.

But the Labour officials stood by the bosses, and accused the workers of being unreasonable! They then threatened them with arrest for taking industrial action without following the procedures laid down by the law.

Conflict with the workers did not deter the Bolux bosses. In 1986 they raised wages to 70 thebe per hour, but this 'generosity' was to be paid for—lunch was not to be paid time

anymore!

On top of that the break was to be taken in turns. When one worker leaves work, another takes over his job. In response workers correctly argued that production does not stop over lunch. Now one worker does the jobs of two; therefore the company must pay.

This time the workers approached the National Union of Government, Parastatal and Statutory Bodies Manual Workers to apply for membership. They selected this union because at the time its members were also preparing for strike action. Because of this the Bolux workers believed the union must have a militant leadership.

However, the union leadership's first response was to ask for a joining fee and subscription from the workers—before they would even visit the factory. This was resisted. In fact union officials only visited the factory once.

The second strike took place on October 24 1986, because workers had been cheated by the bosses over holiday pay during the independence celebrations.

Because of the disgraceful attitude of the leaders of the Manual workers union, workers were again unprepared. Divisions occurred which gave the bosses confidence to call the police, who came dressed in riot gear to intimidate the workers. But the workers were still divided, and their committee failed to call a mass meeting in which differences, tactics, and a clear strategy against the bosses could be debated. Thus, unfortunately, the battle was lost. Workers were prepared to struggle, but confused as to how to go forward in this.

Under the disguise of 'conces-

sions', agreed by the Labour Department, workers were called to see the management one by one. Each received a similar warning: "The owners of this factory are rich and are not starving. They opened this factory in order to help Botswana develop, for her to be independent from South Africa, and to give Botswana jobs. If workers continue to do this the factory will close."

The Labour Department sided with the bosses, and with no agreement on the question of overtime, and threats of dismissal, workers were forced to return to work.

After the Bolux workers' struggles workers can no longer have any doubts as to the role of the Labour Department, and the government—who stand side by side with the bosses. But what was even more shocking to workers was the treacherous role of the union leadership.

Inqaba adds: These bosses came to Botswana not to 'develop the country' but to make profits with the assistance of the government. The masses in Botswana cannot achieve control over their lives while the economy is dominated by Western and South African capitalists.

To assist the struggle of workers in Botswana is an important responsibility of COSATU. In this case FAWU should protest to the leadership of the Botswana Federation of Trade Unions at their failure to assist these foodworkers in struggle, and should also make direct contact with the Bolux workers to give them the benefit of the fighting strength and experience of South African workers.

ZAMBIAN WORKERS AND YOUTH CONFRONT KAUNDA

In December 1986 the growing anger and frustration of **Zambian workers burst forth in riots**, the tremors of which were felt by workers in South Africa. Though the government controlled press tried at first, it was impossible for them to hide such a bitterly significant movement.

There is growing discontent amongst **Zambian workers at the escalation in attacks from the bosses, and the sharp drop in their living standards. Many workers are beginning to see Kenneth Kaunda as an accomplice in these attacks.**

In this article **PETER CHIRIMUTA** examines the problems facing the **Zambian working class, and asks what position the ANC leadership, with its headquarters in Lusaka, should take towards their struggles. Kaunda has been described by them as "our friend and ally", but should not the loyalty of our movement be to our class brothers and sisters in Zambia?**

Riots

The extent of the riots, which spread from the Copperbelt to as far as Lusaka and Livingstone, made the government realise that unless this movement was stopped the future of the UNIP government would be seriously endangered. Using methods characteristic of the SA state, it deployed the army to crush the movement.

The cause of the riots was the ending of the subsidy on maize, and a price rise of 120 per cent for higher grade breakfast meal. This meant a doubling in the price of a 50kg bag to 82 Kwacha—whilst even the more highly paid workers, such as civil servants only have an average wage of K200 per month.

At least fifteen people were killed in the government's brutal response. Thousands were arrested, and a dawn to dusk curfew imposed. But, despite this, the government's fear of the

possible consequences of the workers' wrath forced it to back down, and reverse its measures.

It was no surprise that the centre of the disturbances should be on the Copperbelt. In December alone over 3 000 miners were made redundant, and even since the riots the Ndola copper refinery, one of the three major copper refineries in the country, has been closed. The workers sense that under capitalism they have no future.

The riots were a spontaneous expression of the anger of workers and youth, finding no other outlet because of the lack of a clear lead from trade union leaders. At a time when miners face severe attacks Timothy Walamba, Chairman of the Mineworkers Union of Zambia (MUZ), warned workers that strikes "undermine the strength and independence of trade unions"!

Many workers would willingly engage in strike action to defend themselves against redundancies and wage cuts, and yet at the four yearly(!) conference of the ZCTU the leaders stated that there is "no basis for confrontation between the workers and the bosses."

The existence of COSATU in South Africa is a mine rich with lessons for Zambian workers. By drawing on these lessons they too can seek to build a union federation whose leadership can be made democratically accountable to the rank and file, independent of the state, and which can unite and lead the fighting ranks of the working class

The economic crisis that confronts Zambia today is a direct consequence of the Kaunda and UNIP government trying to reform capitalism rather than overthrowing it decisively. A zig-zag course has been followed between the unworkable alternatives of partial (although extensive) nationalisation, and appeals to the bosses for economic assistance.

From the first days of independence, the under-development



of Zambia (like most of Africa) placed the government in a hard position. *The masses were prepared to struggle to end capitalism, but the economy was dependent on the world market and dominated by the monopolies of the industrialised powers.*

At the same time Zambia faced the problem of South African economic and political power in the region. Zimbabwe and Mozambique were still governed by white minority colonial regimes. A revolutionary break with capitalism—the only possible way of freeing a country from the imperialist grip—would have meant confronting all of those problems head-on.

The predicament facing Zambia could not show more clearly the international nature of the working-class struggle. If a revolutionary government had existed in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe during the advances to independence in Africa—if, instead of a conservative Stalinist bureaucracy in the East encouraging compromise with imperialism, there had been a power encouraging working-class leadership and the international spread of socialist revolution throughout Africa—then Zambia could have broken out of the capitalist encirclement without facing crippling difficulties.

Without such support, only a far-sighted Marxist leadership of the mass struggle in Zambia and elsewhere could have linked the African independence movement as a whole to the overthrow of capitalism, and created a continent-wide basis for resistance to im-

perialism. But that was lacking too.

Rather than confronting the hard facts, and basing himself on a revolutionary strategy despite all the difficulties, Kaunda and UNIP leaders proposed compromise and presented this as the only "realistic" solution. Partial nationalisation was carried out with the deliberate intention of **stopping short** of a break with capitalism.

"Humanism"

Kaunda's "humanism" was extended to the bosses, who through their control of the economy—their right to dictate prices, lower wages, and close factories—were able to counter his "humanism" to the workers. Zambia remained bound to capitalist market relations and trade on the bosses' terms—meaning even during the world boom, and preparing a catastrophe with the onset of the world crisis of capitalism.

In the decade following independence in 1964 the government took into partial public ownership large sections of the economy—including a 51 per cent controlling share in copper mining. But even after this the capitalist bosses of

Anglo American retained management control of the copper mines—with the government as majority shareholder being advised on its interests by the capitalists themselves!

Because of the upswing in world capitalism after the second world war, lasting until the early 1970's, Zambia initially experienced rapid growth on the basis of its copper exports. Between 1964-1969 the Zambian economy expanded at a rate of 13 per cent per annum.

This permitted some concessions by the capitalists to Zambian workers, seen in periods of improvements in wages, as well as better education, health care etc.

However, the economy fell further and further under the domination of the world monopolies. The mass of the people derived no lasting benefit from the boom. Peasants were impoverished: 16 years after independence, a poor peasant farmer had to grow three times as much maize to buy the same shirt.

Independence had been won in the last years of world capitalist upswing. By the early 70's the storm clouds of crisis over the advanced capitalist countries were already rocking the whole of the Zambian economy. Copper prices fell sharply, and with the increase in competition the world market contracted. Because of its

reliance on copper as its single export this spelt disaster for Zambia.

With a low copper price, terms of trade plummeted by 52 per cent between 1972-1978. Gross Domestic Product (the total value of goods produced by a country) fell by 46 per cent between 1974-1979, and by 1980 the value of Zambian copper production was 23 per cent below 1973 levels.

Since then the crisis has deepened. In the nine months to December 1986 ZCCM made a net loss of K718. (*Mining Mirror*, ZCCM press statement).

What had been given to the workers in the first decade of independence was snatched back by the bosses, who now used Kaunda to demand intolerable sacrifices of the workers. The real income of the working class dropped by 15 per cent between 1970-1975, and a further 25 per cent between 1975-1980.

IMF "medicine"

The government reacted to the slump by seeking assistance from the 'protector' of international finance capital, the IMF. But the "medicine" proposed by the IMF involves the closure of factories, cutting wages, abolishing services, and an end to nationalisation.

Borrowing from the IMF has deepened the crisis, and increased the burden on the workers and peasants. In spite of the reaction of workers to the IMF's demands that Kaunda end subsidies on maize, and on a number of other services, Kaunda has not dropped his plans to meet their "requirements".

Kaunda has always ruled as a bonapartist, standing on the fence between the workers and the bosses, in order to defend capitalism. But more and more this demands attacks on workers through the methods of a police state.

Meanwhile, the economic crisis deepens by the day. Inflation currently stands at 65 per cent and the Kwacha has "gone wild" (Kaunda's own words)—rapidly losing its value as a currency both at home and abroad. The budget deficit (ie. the shortfall between necessary government expenditure and the amount of money the government is able to collect through taxes etc.) stands at over KW 3bn. To reduce this figure the government attacks the jobs and con-



Zambian copper miners: many now face redundancy.

ditions of workers.

In December the government announced a 40% cut in its daily paid labour force, and the "retirement" of 11 000 civil servants—in addition to the 5 000 who were sacked in May. Redundancies and factory closures are announced almost every week.

All sectors of industry are convulsed. A recent report in the *Zambian Times* suggested that INDECO, one of the major state holding corporations, will be "reviewing the operations of all the group's companies to determine those profitable or capable of profit. The rest will be closed or sold to the private sector". (25.12.86)

The consequences for Zambian workers are terrible. Per capita income has dropped by 45 per cent in the last ten years, and now Finance Minister Basil Kabwe says openly that "the days of free education, health services and subsidised food disappeared when high copper prices disappeared." (*Zambian Times* 13.2.87)

Whilst still paying lip service to "humanism", the policies now being proposed by Kaunda and the UNIP functionaries show how grossly out of touch they are with the realities of capitalist society for the mass of workers and peasants.

Kaunda naively proposes that "the situation will improve if Zambians work harder". In a measure that stinks badly of South Africa the Government controlled *Zambian Times* has urged the government to "take a fresh look at the constitution which prevents people from being forcibly sent back to the rural areas." (14.11.87)

No escape

For the mass of the youth there is now no possible escape. Last year 176 906 children sat Grade VII exams, but only 42 537 were able to go on to Grade VIII. Then of the 53 000 who sat Grade IX—only 13 000 entered Grade X. And with the deepening crisis the number of school places available can only deteriorate.

Neither is there hope for youth after education—in 1980 73 per cent of the unemployed were between 15 and 24, and youth unemployment now stands at more than 2 million—double the number of employed workers.

Kaunda hopes to avoid a backlash by appealing to workers to "understand" the need for austerity,

appearing to take their side by calling on the bosses to "halt indiscriminate redundancies." But a recent report in *Africa South* (February 1987) stated that "there is evidence that the speed and extent of December cuts in maize meal subsidies were dictated by the President and surprised even the IMF."

Under capitalism, proposals to solve these problems by turning back from reliance on the mining industry to agriculture run in the face of reality. None of the state farms established since 1980 have been a success; recently the National Commission for Development Planning reported that "there has been virtually no progress in the creation of a strong rural economy."

Maize production is dependent on unpredictable rains, and a weak communications network that makes distribution difficult. Hundreds of thousands of Zambians face starvation. And the laws of capitalism mean that even when there is a surplus it cannot be distributed on the basis of need.

The necessity for socialist planning could not be clearer.

In reality it is the crisis of the capitalist system on a world and local scale that is at the root of Zambia's problems.

In the coming period it is inevitable that new struggles will open up. This year there have already been widespread strikes amongst teachers, and medical staff, and in a serious development strikers have been attacked by UNIP youth members and "vigilantes under its control."

The solidarity felt by Zambian workers with their comrades in South Africa, was evident in the demonstrations of youth after the death of Samora Machel. In the past Kaunda has been able to use his 'militant' stand on South Africa and sanctions to deflect the anger felt by workers at their own conditions.

But workers will not tolerate Kaunda forever. The riots, the marked decline in support for UNIP, and the increasing anger of the workers show that this story is beginning to wear thin.

Workers demand support for their comrades in South Africa, but they also demand decent living standards at home. UNIP is failing in both.

Faced with increasing attacks from the bosses it is now vital that the ZCTU is transformed into a federation able to lead the workers. There

must be a struggle for a programme of demands to be drawn up that will unite the maximum number of workers and youth in this struggle. To do this the workers must fight for the democratic accountability of the ZCTU leadership to its members, and for its independence from the state.

In the eyes of the workers UNIP has been discredited. It is therefore necessary that serious attention is given to building a working-class party, based on the workers organised at the point of production, that will lead the fight for socialism.

Assisting

It is in assisting Zambian workers and youth that the ANC leadership should be involved. It cannot be "neutral" towards the polarisation of classes in Zambia. It was wrong to have Kaunda as the guest of honour at the ANC's 75th anniversary celebrations. His hands were dripping with the blood of Zambian workers and youth. The South African revolution cannot be separated from the struggle to end capitalism throughout the region.

Instead of such a stance we have read reports that even on a farm run by the ANC up to 80 workers live in "unserviced hovels" and are paid the Zambian minimum daily wage of 84 cents, or less than, R24 per month (*Sunday Times*, 8/1/87).

The capitalist press have used this to attack the ANC—to try and discredit and confuse our movement. Workers would like to believe that this is mere anti-ANC propaganda by the bosses—but if that is so then these allegations should be vigorously repudiated.

Unless the ANC leadership shows solidarity with Zambian workers they could become alienated from the ANC. Our movement in South Africa should not be associated with a bankrupt regime and system that attacks workers. This will become a much greater problem as the crisis intensifies in Zambia—far outweighing any advantage that can be derived from the facilities presently offered us by the Zambian government.

The only future for the Zambian masses lies in the socialist transformation of Zambia and the whole of Southern Africa, and in the decisive victory of the South African working class.

LEBANON

Workers must unite against chaos!

By Sean Kelly

The capitalist press gives front-page treatment to the plight of foreign hostages in Lebanon. But they have almost completely suppressed news of two general strikes in 1986, uniting Muslim and Christian workers in struggle for the first time in over a decade.

The bosses select only that 'news' that suits their own views on the tragic chaos to which Lebanon has been reduced.

The plight of the Lebanese masses is highlighted in the appalling conditions suffered by the 40 000 Palestinian refugees in the refugee camps of Bourj el Berajneh and Chatilla. Since September 1986 these camps have been besieged by Amal and Shi-ite militias, leaving over 2 000 camp residents dead, 5 000 wounded and up to 80 000 homeless by February this year.

The refugees have been starving, many reduced to eating cats and dogs, their babies eaten by rats.

If the Lebanon is a nightmare, the Palestinians endure a nightmare within a nightmare. Their suffering is part of the price being paid by the workers and peasants throughout the Middle East for the divisions created by imperialism over decades and the failure of capitalism to begin to solve the national, communal and religious conflicts which it has created.

Imperialism

Like Africa, the Middle East was carved up by imperialism. Up to 1918 most of the area had formed part of the Turkish empire, which sided with Germany in the First World War and was defeated by British and Arab armies. In a secret agreement in 1916, the region was divided between France, Britain, and the Russian Tsar.

To make it easier to exploit Arab workers, religious and national differences were fanned by the capitalists, and Arab leaders were

carefully cultivated, brutal to their own population, but friendly to the interests of imperialism.

French imperialism created Lebanon as an artificial state, kept separate from Syria with which it is naturally linked. The aim was to create a state dominated by a Christian bourgeoisie to divide and weaken the emerging national struggle of the mainly Muslim Arabs.

The creation of the Israeli state on the soil of Palestine in 1948 enormously exacerbated the conflict. In the 1920s a small Jewish minority lived peacefully side by side with the Arab majority in Palestine. Fueled by anti-Semitic persecution in Europe, however, the Zionist movement developed, led by the Jewish bourgeoisie, calling for an independent homeland for the Jews—in Palestine.

To serve its own interests of dividing and weakening the Arabs, the British encouraged Jewish immigration to Palestine, and in 1948 connived in the creation of the Israeli state.

The brief and bloody Israeli-Arab war of 1948 left hundreds of thousands of Palestinians dispossessed, and forced into 'temporary' camps in the Arab countries, where the regimes have confined them ever since.

Since then Israel has been a bastion of capitalist reaction in the region, receiving enormous financial support from the USA. But, to ensure its supplies of oil, imperialism has also propped up the rule of repressive Arab capitalist dictators.

They in turn have used the conflict with Israel to divert the attention of the Arab masses from the poverty they are struggling against in their own countries.

Foreign aid and immigrant skills allowed Israel for a whole period to develop as an island of prosperity in the Middle Eastern sea of mass poverty. But the whole region has been wracked by chronic conflict, of the oppressed Palestinians and Arabs against Israel, and of the Arab masses against their rulers.

Today, as the result of world capitalist crisis, the Israeli working class itself is faced with soaring price

increases and mounting unemployment, and is entering into struggle against this.

In Syria in the 1960s, a revolution led by army officers ended capitalism and has brought some improvements for the masses. But, not based on a conscious movement of the working class, this revolution consolidated a bureaucracy in power over the state-owned economy, which pursues its own narrow national interests.

Common enemy

Throughout the region (apart from Syria) the workers and peasants face the common enemy of capitalism. But the cancer of religious and communal conflict, within and between different artificially-created states, and the burden of poverty, cannot be ended within each state on its own.

To end the national oppression of the Palestinians, to end communal conflict, to provide security for Israeli working people also, the aim must be to overthrow capitalism throughout the region and create a federation of democratic socialist states of the Middle East.

To provide a way to end their oppression, the displaced Palestinians have looked to the Palestine Liberation Organisation, formed in 1964. **But the PLO leadership has pursued policies which have only served to deepen the crisis in the region.**

Instead of taking a class approach, based on the common interests of workers and peasants in ending capitalism, they have relied on a futile combination of diplomatic appeals to imperialism and a guerilla strategy against the Israeli state.

Imperialism is incapable of compelling Israel to recognise the national rights of the Palestinians. And the formidable Israeli military machine is impervious to the pinpricks of guerillaism.

Instead, these guerilla methods have given excuses to the Israeli ruling class for massive retaliation around its borders, and expansion of the territory of Israel. These methods also cause revulsion in the Jewish working class and cement them to the

Israeli state.

Disastrously, the PLO leaders have also tied themselves to the apron-strings of reactionary Arab capitalist regimes.

They were compelled, after 1970, to find a base in Lebanon because they were forcibly driven from Jordan by their former ally King Hussein—who feared the increasingly revolutionary situation that was developing under the influence of the Palestinian masses.

'Arab unity'

More than 10 000 Palestinians died in battle under the guns of the Jordanian army. An Israeli officer at the time summed up the hollow pretence of 'Arab unity' on a capitalist basis when he commented that Hussein had "killed more guerillas in one year than we did in ten."

In the Lebanon even more catastrophic defeats have been inflicted on the PLO, and on the Palestinians whose cause it claims to advance.

Despite all this the Palestinians remain a force with tremendous revolutionary potential in the Middle East, who if equipped with the ideas and methods of Marxism, could unite and inspire the working class and peasantry in the whole region.

What is required of their leadership is a serious re-evaluation of the tasks, aims, and methods of struggle for the Palestinian movement.

Increasingly, Lebanon has become the melting pot of all the bitter divisions and sectarian hatred stoked up among the peoples of the region, dominated by capitalism and imperialism, and given no lead forward.

In the 1960s, Beirut was the banking centre of the Middle East and a playground of the wealthy bosses. Today it is in ruins, abandoned to endless war between different militias, whose methods have widened the rifts between workers and peasants of each community, and accelerated a slide into anarchy. Today the Lebanese "government" of the Christian Phalangist Gemayel has no authority beyond the President's palace.

Simmering class tensions burst into the open in Lebanon in 1975. With revolutionary leadership, the working class could have overthrown capitalism. Instead the energy of the masses was diverted into civil war



Beirut in the early 1970's: banking centre of the Middle East, and playground of wealthy bosses.

between the militias of the predominantly Christian right and the predominantly Moslem left, joined by PLO guerillas.

In the period since then the militias have multiplied—fighting, allying, splitting, and fighting again in a bewildering dance of death—with Israel, Iran, Syria and other foreign powers supporting and manipulating one faction or another in their own interests.

In Beirut alone there are today over 44 different armed factions. But though their working-class supporters murder and maim each other in ceaseless street battles they have in reality more in common with each other than any do with their own 'leaders'.

Walid Jumblatt, self-styled 'socialist' leader of the Progressive Socialist party and Druze militias is, for example, a millionaire who has grown fat on the collapse of central government in the Lebanon, and continues to wheel and deal with the imperialists—while his followers suffer ever-greater hardships. Despite this he has been "awarded" the 'Order of Lenin' by the Soviet bureaucracy!

The so-called 'radical' militias, such as the Hizbollah and the Islamic Jihad, have nothing to contribute to Palestinian or Arab liberation, but represent only sectarian religious or nationalist fanaticism. The Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran, mentor of Hiz-

bollah groups, has sent more than one million Iranians to their death in the pointless war against Iraq. Kidnapping and individual acts of terrorism are not methods of working class struggle.

The ideas of these groups are symptoms of social decay, relics of the past. They dominate the scene in the Middle East, because of the absence of a Marxist working-class organisation and leadership.

Militias

The support among youth for these militia groups comes from the desperation of their situation, and the lack of an alternative. The absence of Marxism is not merely a subjective weakness, but has become an objective obstacle to the development of a revolutionary struggle in the Middle East.

Over a whole period, the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union and the 'Communist' Parties which support it, have not put forward in the Middle East a programme for workers' revolution, but have endorsed every twist and turn in the policies of the PLO, and propped up capitalist Arab regimes.

However the support commanded by the militias, and the damage done by their communal clashes, is not irreversible. The working class can endure only so much. In the Lebanon,



Beirut in 1986: a nightmare of endless sectarian warfare, from which only workers and peasants united throughout the region can provide a way out.

there is a latent mood of revulsion against the militias, and for working class unity, which cannot be suppressed completely.

Price rises

The working class have suffered most from the crisis. Between January and June 1986 prices of foodstuffs doubled. The price of bread increased by 150%. Many families are now unable to afford milk for their children, and whilst the average wage of a Lebanese family is £L3 225 (R61,70) a month, costs for food and transport alone amount to over £L8 400 (R160,80) over the same period.

Together with the destruction of housing, jobs and vital services such as hospitals and schools, this has left the workers and peasants, and particularly the youth, in a more precarious position than ever before.

This raises again the question of building working-class organisation capable of winning support from workers of different religious and national backgrounds in Lebanon and throughout the Middle East. Nationalism and religious fanaticism offer no way out. Only the ideas and methods of genuine Marxism will suffice. The immensity of the challenge should not daunt undertaking of the task.

The two general strikes which took

place in Lebanon during 1986 demonstrate that the climate exists for a response to Marxist ideas. Both strikes were an expression of anger by workers at the massive escalation in poverty, homelessness, and hunger in Beirut, caused by the endless spiral of murder and mayhem.

The General Confederation of Lebanese trade Unions was forced to call a 24-hour general strike on July 4 last year, which was 100% solid across East (Christian) and West (Muslim) Beirut—uniting warring factions.

A Lebanese worker described the movement as "the first positive thing that has happened to us since 1975. For once we are all together in this..."

General strike

Shops were closed, all TV programmes except the news were cancelled, and Christian and Muslim radio stations simultaneously delivered a statement denouncing: "famine, war, high prices, and exceptional economic deterioration..."

The general strike showed in practice the need for unity, not only against the bosses, but also against the sectarian groups. Its success resulted in calls to extend and continue the protests later in the month.

Although this strike was soon eclipsed by a new round of car bom-

bing and communal clashes, the murder of a Muslim religious scholar in September sparked off a protest strike in West Beirut, which developed into a general strike of workers throughout the city. For a second time the strike won sympathy and active support from Christian sectors, where many factories and shops closed.

Important beginnings

Though both strikes were short-lived, their importance has not been lost on Lebanese workers, or on the workers of the Middle East. However the unity that was achieved in struggle will not now fall from the skies. It must be fought for, consolidated and developed.

Though important beginnings can be made in Lebanon, ultimately only a mass organisation, that unites workers throughout the whole of the Middle East, and that sets as its task the elimination of capitalism both in Israel and the Arab states, and able to appeal to Islamic, Christian and Jewish workers alike will be able to secure peace and prosperity in the Lebanon. The workers have never surrendered their willingness to continue this struggle.

The strikes in Lebanon showed the possibility of overcoming the religious and national divisions that have for so long hindered the development of a healthy workers movement in Lebanon and throughout the Middle East.

Only a Democratic Socialist Federation of the Middle East can permanently end the nightmare that has relentlessly pursued Lebanese workers and the poverty and insecurity that exists throughout the region.

The development of Marxist organisation, with a clear perspective on the tasks of the revolution in the Middle East could begin to put an end to the spiral of killing and violence.

An understanding of the power of Marxist ideas when they are taken up by the masses must be patiently built amongst the working class—to explain and undermine the support of the militias, and replace the counter-productive methods of individual terrorism, with the methods of struggle developed over many years by the working class internationally.

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