

# **inqaba YA BASEBENZI**

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***For a mass ANC  
with a socialist programme!***

# **inqaba YA BASEBENZI**

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## **SUPPLEMENT NO. I**

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**inqaba  
YA BASEBENZI**

# FORWARD UNITED UNDER

A storm of struggles has engulfed South Africa, much bigger and more widespread than anything yet seen. The workers' head-on collision with the bosses of industry had already sent 50 000 workers on strike in the first three months of 1980. In the months that followed new struggles have erupted. In Durban, Port Elizabeth, Uitenhage, Cape Town, Secunda, Johannesburg, and elsewhere, the townships have been drawn into a whirlwind of battles against increased bus fares, rents, passes, etc.

The black youth who had joined the fighting ranks of their worker parents already during the epic struggles of 1976 have deepened their involvement in the present period. The 1980 youth movement, like the 1976 movement, fuels up the workers' movement with selfless leadership. The road upon which the youth have entered is the correct road. Only when workers' rule is established can education serving the interests of a parasitic minority, the bosses, be brought to an end and education put into the service of the producing majority, the workers.

## Middle class

The forward surge of the workers' movement has drawn elements of the black middle class into the struggle through the community organisations. While some of these elements may lapse back into their old ways as the current struggles temporarily recede, only workers' victory can end the second class status of the black middle class. No longer then will they need to return to the humiliating routine imposed by the present system, of following the approved leaders of 'moderation and restraint'.

The pressure of the workers' movement has flushed out of their false comfort some who have persisted in the incorrect policy of trying to 'fight within the system'. Pressed by the forward rush of the mass movement (for which they vainly try to substitute caricatures) they are having to protect their policy by first defending the system itself.

This has been the sad fate of Gatsha who has been forced by the logic of his false position to defend 'law and order' (i.e. the system) and has called openly for the training of Inkatha impis for use against the youth movement in Kwazulu.

Others are getting stricken by an inability to decide which to support, the Oppenheimers or the workers' movement—because it is becoming increasingly difficult to support both at the same time. The growing mass movement draws more and more ground from under the feet of vacillators, threatening to precipitate them into the camp of the enemy.

Even the fort of the white trade unions has not escaped the sweeping pressure of the movement of the black workers. Under the pressure from below, splits have begun to open up in this one time stable bastion of collaboration.

The white unions will split time and again as the black workers' struggles pound their defences round after round in the coming period, exposing the bankruptcy of each false position the white workers take in their futile effort to defend their diminishing privilege. In the end they must go down with the ruling class or come to terms with the mass movement.

## Capitalism

As always the ruling class refuses to identify its system as the real

cause of all the misery and suffering of the oppressed. It answers the struggles of the oppressed with large scale detention of workers' leaders in its chambers of torture. But the workers' movement responds unfailingly with a prolific regeneration of fresh leaders.

The South African capitalist class who draw and can only draw their profits from cheap labour can have no intention of surrendering their profits just in order to assure a living wage for the black worker and his family.

This is their position even during periods of boom. Now that the world economic recession is posing a new threat to their profits, the bosses will be even less inclined to tinker with moral considerations. Like their counterparts elsewhere in the world our bosses will try to take back any gains that previous struggles of the workers may have won.

The bosses, of course, always have to hide their real schemes behind a smokescreen of impending 'reforms', 'changes of heart', 'magnanimous concessions' and other acts or promises of human kindness. Whenever they get compelled to give with the left hand the bosses take good care to take back much more with the right at the earliest opportunity. In the end the position of the workers only deteriorates still further.

It is this decline of the workers' economic position for which the bosses have no remedy that drove the workers back on the road of struggle after the battles of 1973 and 1976 had died down—pushing into the battle arena of the 1980 movement far more numerous regiments than ever before.

This crisis, completely insoluble by any variant of the system of private profit, will drive the

# TO FREEDOM — WORKERS LEADERSHIP

workers back on the road of struggle again and again in the coming period, drawing more and more sections of the oppressed people into the ambit of the workers' movement.

## Workers' rule

As the workers return repeatedly into the battle-field they are compelled to develop more and more their organisations of combat. The process is already underway. Unregistered trade unions, strike action committees, community organisations: these are all products of the past and present period of struggle.

As the workers' organisations of struggle develop their combativity they will increasingly take on the character of future organs of rule. No other force exists except the working class that can rule the new society when the present social order is overthrown. For this task the unfolding struggles will prepare the workers and their organisations.

Whatever the final outcome of the struggles that have started one thing is clear already. It is now impossible to assist the liberation movement to go forward while trying to prevent the working class from preparing to succeed the present ruling class. Those who do not actively support the struggle for workers' rule will put themselves in conflict with the liberation struggle.

It is imperative that all comrades, whatever their present affiliations, carefully examine their position in the light of the new situation that has been created by the struggles of the present period. The urgent task which faces all comrades and indeed all organisat-

ions is to prepare the working class to take over from the present ruling class.

This task, thrust upon us all by the movement of the masses itself, puts all genuine strugglers at once in one camp. Differences of organisation, inherited from the past period, will linger for a while but must be overcome.

## Unity

As the mass movement surges forward and subsides, only to rise again more furious and fierce, the workers and youth are discovering in action their unanimous determination to rise against the system that oppresses them.

The current struggles serve the workers also as a means of taking count of the forces that are ready for battle. As the count gets fuller, the workers and the youth will feel the need more and more for a nation-wide political organisation through which they can channel their will to fight to the finish.

As the regiments of the workers' movement move separately into battle each develops its own leadership. It is through the vision of these leaders that the workers' movement views problems and formulates solutions. The problem of finding a political organisation that can unite the movement as a whole is already engaging the minds of many involved in the struggle. There is no alternative in front of their leaders—many drawn from the post-Soweto youth—except the ANC.

The coming period will see the ANC transformed into a mass organisation of workers and youth. All comrades should be clear that once the workers' movement reaches the stage of moving into the

ANC, no-one will be able to avoid assisting the process because failure to do so will make them obstacles to liberation.

## Marxist programme

The ANC like all other organisations faces immediately the task of bringing its policies into line with the work of preparing the working class for rule. The method, perspectives and programme of Marxism, developed by the working class movement internationally, over many generations of struggle, will provide the indispensable guidelines for carrying this task into practice.

In particular it will be important to integrate the youth of Umkhonto We Sizwe into the workers' movement, so that on that training ground they can receive the education which will develop them into cadres of the workers' movement. When the mass movement reaches the final stage of armed insurrection their military skills will prove a great asset to the revolution.

This is the line of march of the present period. INQABA urges all genuine strugglers for national and social liberation to join it in waging the crucial fight for Marxist policies in the ANC in the present and coming period. We will do our utmost to build up the ANC as a mass revolutionary organisation of the working class that can show the way forward to the socialist revolution.

All those militants both inside and outside the ANC who agree with us will join us in this effort. Once that happens there will be only one road before us all and that will lead—FORWARD TO FREEDOM.

**For a mass ANC with a socialist programme!**

# Workers, Study Marxism!

Nowhere in the world does the proletariat (working class) face a more viciously reactionary, hardened and entrenched enemy than in South Africa. To enslave us in exploitation, capitalism has built here a racial fortress of immense power, armed with the most efficient weapons of repression and destruction, fuelled and fortified by the class-allies of the bosses abroad.

Our movement has laid siege to this fortress. Through organisation, through sacrifice, through stubborn resistance and firmness of will, we have begun to wear away at its foundations and crack its social walls. The tide of battle has begun to turn. Here and internationally it is our forces—the forces of the proletariat—which are rising, while theirs are falling into disarray.

Yet least of all in South Africa does any easy victory offer itself before us. By far the hardest struggles are still ahead. The cornered enemy will lose no opportunity to turn any weakness on our side to advantage, to buy time with deception, to send agents of division and confusion into our ranks, to rain savage blows when least expected on any exposed flank.

Against the 'total strategy' of the enemy, our movement requires its own total strategy for the conquest of power. To organise and arm the mass movement of the black proletariat for revolution is the great task of this period. **But the condition for the success of that task is clarity of understanding—a scientific theory to guide our work.**

## Ideas

The class struggle against the bosses and their state is also a struggle of ideas. Throughout history the ruling classes have made their own ideas, their own view of the world, their own distorted 'science', the ruling ideas of society. Every revolutionary movement has required revolutionary ideas, expressing the interests and outlook of the rising revolutionary class, and breaking the hold of the stifling ideas of the old order.

Our class, the proletariat, has a long history of struggle in many countries, and a long history of fighting for the clarity and supremacy of its own ideas. For 135 years the world proletariat has possessed a scientific theory, expressing its own experience of life, its own general interests, and its own historic task of conquering power. That theory is scientific socialism—or Marxism.

## Science

Because the proletariat is without property and cannot exploit any other class; because in its struggle for power it must consistently champion the democratic interests of **all** oppressed people against tyranny and exploitation—the proletariat alone of all classes can look reality squarely in the face. The proletariat alone has no interest either in deceiving itself or in deceiving society. Thus it is the authentic class ideas of the

proletariat alone which can have a truly scientific character.

Marxism—the revolutionary science of the world proletariat—for the first time laid bare the real material causes of historical development, and explained the socialist and communist future towards which society is advancing.

But the ideas of Marxism did not fall from the skies. They are drawn from the whole body of knowledge gained by mankind in its laborious progress from the most primitive to the most advanced modes of production. The towering accomplishment of Marx was to penetrate the scientific kernels in previous philosophical, historical and economic thinking, while completely discarding the mystifying shells which encased them.

## Fighters

Nor could Marx, despite his genius, arrive at scientific conclusions apart from the proletariat itself. The ideas of Marxism are not the simple product of the library or the study, but were formed in the very midst of the awakening working-class movement.

It is no accident that all the great teachers of this revolutionary science—notably Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky—were active political organisers and revolutionary fighters in the workers' movement. Today it is just as impossible to genuinely master Marxism without the will for revolutionary action.

# inqaba YA BASEBENZI

# PELE-EA-PELE RE KOPANE BO-

Sefefo sa boitseko se aparetse Afrika-Boroa ka matla le bophara bo esong ho bonoe esale. Khahlano ea basebetsi le bahanyapetsi e tsoetse seteraeke sa basebetsi ba 50 000 kanako ea likhoeli tse tharo selemong sena. Ka likhoeli tse latelang boitseko ba phatlalla. Natala, PE, Uitenhage, Kapa, Sosolo, Khauteng esita le naheng ka kakaretso, makoeishine a kene ntoeng ho loantsa ho nyolloa ha chelete-ea-libese, lirente, lipasa, joalo-joalo.

Bacha ba batso bao esaleng ba e hlanaka ka boitelo ho tloha ka 1976, pel'a batsoali ba bona, ba kene khabong le ho feta hajoale. Boitseko ba bacha ba selemo sa 1980 joaloka ba 1976, bo hlohleletsa bohlokoa ba boetapele ba basebetsi ba boitelo. Tsela eo bacha ba keneng ho eona e nepahetse. Ke puso ea basebetsi, ke eona feela e ka fetolang litholoana tsa thuto e le ho etsetsa hore e tsoele sechaba ka bophara molemo, eleng basebetsi, ho e na le hore e be thuto e sebelisoa molemong oa lequloana la linoamali.

## Bo-khooana tsoana

Boitseko ba basebetsi bo atlehile ho hochoela ba bang ba bo-khooana-tsoana ka makhotlana a sechaba (community organisations). Leha ba bang ba bo-khooana-tsoana ba ka khutlela mekhoeng ea bona ea mehla, ha sefefo sa boitseko se thola ha nakonyana feela—ke tlhola ea basebetsi feela e tla lokolla bo-khooana-tsoana bokhobeng ba nyeliso. Ba ke ke ba hlola ba khutlela ho mahlabisa-lihlong a bahanyapetsi, kapa ba latela baetapele ba bo-'butle-butle'.

Sefutho sa boitseko ba basebetsi bo manotse pepeneng bofeela ba 'ho loana kahar'a puso ea sera' hoa bo-khooana-tsoana. Sefutho sa

boitseko se ba tlama hore ba itseretse ka ho sireletsa bohanyapetsi.

Ena hee ke koluoa e oetseng Gatsha hore a iphumane a tlameha ho sireletsa 'khotso le khutso', 'me a bolela pepeneng hore ho koetlisoe limpi-tsa-Inkatha hore li khakhathe bacha ha ba itseka Kwazulu.

Ba bang ha ba tsebe hantle moo ba emeng teng—ho ema le bahanyapetsi kapa le boitseko ba basebetsi. Hoa hlaka hore ho ke ke hoa etsahala hore motho a be le maren'a mabeli. Sefutho sa boitseko ba basebetsi se hola ka letsatsi-le-letsatsi, se koenya esita le ho rahela kathoko bo-ramenyetla, 'me ba iphumane ba eme le sera.

Hoa hlaka hore mekhatlo ea basebetsi ba basoeu e sitoa ho qoba sefefo sa boitseko ba basebetsi ba batso. Ho khaoha-likoto ho qalile ho bonahala qhobosheaneng ena ea bohlabaphieo.

Mekhatlo ea basebetsi ba basoeu e tla khaoha likoto khafetsa ha boitseko ba basebetsi bo tiha ka sekahla ka nako e tlang, bo beha pepeneng bofeela ba bohlabaphieo ba basebetsi ba basoeu tekong e senang thuso ea ho sireletsa 'menatjan'a bona'. Qetellong ba tla tlameha ho phetholoa le bahanyapetsi kapa ba eme le boitseko ba basebetsi ba batso.

## Bo-kapitale

Joalo kamehla babusi ba hana ho lumela hore puso ea bona ea bohanyapetsi ke eona sesosa sa tlhopheho ea sechaba se hateletsoeng. E araba boitseko ba bahatelluo ka litsoaro tse phareletseng tsa baetapele ba basebetsi kahar'a ntloana tsa eona tsa thlokofatso. Empa boitseko ba basebetsi bo phakise bo tsoale boetapele bo bocha.

Puso ea bohanyapetsi ea Afrika-

e-Boroa, e thehiloeng, 'me e tsoelapele ho thehoa holim'a mofutso oa basebetsi ba batso e sitoa ho ntlafatsa meputso oa basebetsi hore ba phele le malapa a bona.

E sitiloe nakong eo moruo o neng o hola. Nakong ea joale ha mathata a hloele manolo holimo moruong oa lefatse ka kakaretso malebana le liporofete, 'mohau' o ke ke oa hlaha ho bahanyapetsi. Ba-kapitalisi ka lefatsa lohle ba tla leka ho utsoa ka letsoho le letona tsohle tseo basebetsi ba iphumanetseng tsona ka lintoa tsa bona tsa boitseko tsa pele.

Bahanyapetsi kamehla ba tloaetse ho pata merero ea bona ea mashano a hore 'liphetoho' lia tla, 'lipelo li fetohle', 'litsepiiso le litumellano tse kholo' li tseleng esita liketso kapa litsepiiso tsa mohau. Ha ba tlanelloa ho fana ka letsoho le letsehali, bohanyapetsi ba phakise ba nke ka le letona ha monyetla oa pele o hlaha. Qetellong bophelo ba basebetsi bo ntse bo tsoelapele ho fokola.

Ke bofuma bona bo khannang basebetsi ho itseka ka ha bahanyapetsi ba hloka pheko—selemo sa 1980 se bone boitseko ba basebetsi bo hatela pele ka matla a maholo.

Kaha qaka ena e ke ke ea felisoa ke puso efe-kapa-efe ea porofete—basebetsi ba tla khutlela tseleng ea boitseko khafetsa ka nako e tlang, ba hochoele sehlopha se seholo sa bahatelluo lehlakoreng la boitseko ba basebetsi.

## Puso ea basebetsi

Ntoeng ea boitseko, basebetsi ba tla aha liqobosheane tsa bona, ba se ba qalile ho etsa joalo. Re bona mekhatlo ea basebetsi e sa ngolisoang, likomiti-tsa-boitseko, makhotlana a sechaba—tsena tsohle ke litholoana tsa boitseko tsa maobane le kajeno.

Ha mekhatloana ea basebetsi ea boitseko e ntse e aha matla, e tla

## Experience

The ideas of Marxism are ideas of the workers' movement—not ideas brought to it from outside. Marxism articulates what workers experience in daily life under the bosses' heel. At the same time Marxism generalises this experience, draws it together internationally, examines its development over time, and so defines the lessons and charts the course for the whole movement.

In periods when the proletarian movement has surged forward world-wide and confronted the ruling class with a revolutionary challenge, the active layers of the workers have turned overwhelmingly towards Marxist ideas. All the mass workers' Internationals—the First, the Second and the Third—arose on a consciously Marxist programme.

But in periods when capitalism has advanced strongly, when the class struggle has ebbed, or when workers' revolutions have been defeated and the bourgeoisie for a time has strengthened its grip—the ideas of Marxism have ceased to be mass ideas, becoming confined instead to narrowing circles of the remaining conscious cadres.

## Preserved

In such a period Marx and Engels found it necessary to wind up the First International, to prevent the staining of its banner by the resurgence of pre-Marxist and reactionary ideas.

In such a period the Second International decayed into reformism and national chauvinism, while many of its most prominent leaders contrived to apply the label of 'Marxism' to anti-working-class policies. The great achievement of the Bolsheviks was to preserve the

method of Marxism against this corruption, building a cadre which could lead the next tide of the revolution on the right course.

The Russian Revolution of October 1917, under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky, brought Marxism once again to unequalled authority within the international proletarian movement and led to the formation of the Third International.

But a period of great defeats of the proletarian revolution in other countries followed. The Russian Revolution was isolated, and itself degenerated, leading to the dictatorship of the bureaucracy under Stalin. The Third International succumbed to the same process of decay, abandoning Marxism for nationalism and reformism. Its Stalinist leaders falsely labelled their anti-Marxist ideas with the name of 'Leninism'.

In fact, after the death of Lenin the authentic method of Marxism was carried forward by the cadres of the Bolshevik Left Opposition, whose international leader was Trotsky. It is to this chain of revolutionary tradition, from Marx and Engels to Lenin and Trotsky, that the Marxists of today must look for political guidance and authority.

## Slender

For a whole historical period the mass of the proletariat world-wide has been without Marxism. Marxist ideas have been defended and developed for well over a generation by only a slender cadre within the workers' movement.

A great flowering of pseudo-Marxist ideas and tendencies has taken place, especially among intellectuals divorced from the workers' life. Endless varieties of reformist, nationalist and other unscientific ideas continue to

flourish under the guise of 'Marxism', as off-shoots of old distortions. This has clouded the path with confusion, and now confronts the fresh generation of revolutionary youth and workers with time-consuming difficulties.

Nevertheless, the real tradition of Marxism has been preserved, and today is raising an unmistakable voice within the mass organisations of labour in a growing number of countries. In South Africa we must urgently strive to recover this tradition for our movement, to master it critically, and to test it and deepen it in the light of our own experience.

The surest route to an independent understanding of Marxism is to study over and over again the original works of the great teachers.

## Study

In this and future supplements, **INQABA** will reprint extracts from these works—works which are mostly suppressed by the regime or which are otherwise not readily available to workers in South Africa. In this way we hope to assist the many study circles which have sprung up among young workers and students, and so shorten the journey of self-education which comrades have to travel in order to grasp the essence of the Marxist method.

Today the racist fortress of the bosses is crumbling. If the cadre of our class masters revolutionary theory and succeeds in popularising it among the masses, our movement can become a conscious fortress of workers' power against which every reactionary wave will break and fail.

And with its ranks fortified in this way, the ANC will the more surely and swiftly rise as a mass force within South Africa and conquer.

# TOKOLOHONG —

## ETAPELENG BA BASEBETSI

ipopa ho nka sebopeho sa makhotla a puso. Ha ho mang ea ka tsoarang matla a puso ha puso-ea-porofete e phethotsoe haese basebetsi. Ho phethahatsa tsebetso ena, boitseko ho tlang ho tla koetlisa basebetsi le mekhatloana ea bona.

Ntoeng ea boitseko ntho ea mantlha e ea hlaka. Ho batla ho le thata ho thusa mokhatlo oa tokoloho ho ntlafala, 'me ka nako e le 'ngoe ho lekhoa ho thibelo basebetsi ho ikoetlisetsa ho nka puso matsohong a babusi ba joale. Ba sa tsehetseng boitseko ba basebetsi ho nka puso ka sehlahlo ba tla ipeha khahlanong le mokhatlo oa tokoloho.

Ho bohlokoa hore bohle basebetsi-ntoeng (comrades), ho sa ntsoe likameng tsa bona hajoale, ba hlahlobe hantle maemo a bona malebana le boemo ho tsoetseng ke boitseko ba hajoale. Mothating oa hajoale basebetsi-ntoeng le mekhatloana eohle ba lebane le tsebetso e potlakileng ea ho koetlisa basebetsi ho nka matla a puso ho babusi ba kajeno.

Tsebetso ena, eo ntoea ea boitseko e e behileng matsohong a bohle basebetsi-ntoeng e re tlama hore re kopane. Liphapang tsa mekhatloana, tsa nako e fetileng, li tle tsoelapele ha nakoana, empa li tlamehile ho lebaloa.

### Kopano ke matla

Ha mokhatlo oa tokoloho o hatela pele ka sefutho o khutsa ha nakoana, o tla boetse o nyoloha ka matla le sefutho basebetsi le bacha ba tla ithuta bohlokoa ba kopano le sehlahlo ho loantsa puso ea bohanyapetsi.

Lintoa tsa kajeno tsa boitseko li tla fa basebetsi monyetla oa ho ithuta boemo ba mabotho a loketseng ho kena ntoeng. Hang-hang ha boemo ba mabotho ho hlaka basebetsi le bacha ba tla fumana bohlokoa ba mokha oa lipolotiki oa naha ka kakaretso oo ba ka loanelang bokamoso ba bona hofihlela qetellong.

Ha mabotho a mokhatlo oa boitseko oa basebetsi a kena ntoeng ka sebopeho sa boikarolo, sehlotsoana ka seng se tla itsoalla boetapele ba sona. Etlaba ka chalimo ea baetapele bana mokhatlo oa boitseko oa basebetsi o tlang ho ithuta mathata esita le hona ho fumana likarabo. Pharela ea ho fumana mokha oa lipolitiki o ka kopanyang sechaba ka kakaretso e se e ntse e le likellong tsa ba bangata ba seng ba ntse ba le ntoeng ea boitseko. Ha ho na o mong mokha—haholo boetapeleng ba bacha ba Soweto—haese Khonkoroso.

Nako e tlang e tla bona phetoho ea sebopeho sa Khonkoroso e le mokhatlo oa bohle basebetsi le bacha. Eka khona bohle basebetsi-ntoeng ba hlake hantle hore hang ha mokhatlo oa boitseko oa basebetsi o fihlela boemo ba ho ikamahanya le Khonkoroso, ha ho mang ea ka iphapanetsang ho thusa khatelo-pele hobane ho se etse joalo etlaba tsitiso ho ea tokolohong.

### Leano la Marxist

Khonkoroso joalo ka mekhatlo e meng e shebane hang-hang le tsebetso ea ho tlisa leano la eona moleng le mosebetsi oa ho lokisetsa

basebetsi ho nka matla a puso. Mokhoa, thatlhobo-ea-bokamoso le leano la Marxist, le ntlafalitseng ke mokha oa basebetsi oa boitseko ka bophara ba lefatse, ka nako e telele ea boitseko, e tla fana ka tataiso ea bohlokoa ho phethahatsa tsebetso ena ka liketso.

Ho mpe ho hlake hore ke bohlokoa hore ho hokahanyoe bacha ba Umkhonto We Sizwe le mokhatlo oa basebetsi, e le hore ba ikoetlise thutong ea basebetsi ba basebetsi. Hang ha mokhatlo oa boitseko o fihlela mothati oa ho qetela oa ho phetholoa ha 'muso ke sechaba se hlometseng, tsebo ea bona ea tsebeliso ea libetsa e tla ba bohlokoahali ntoeng ea tokoloho.

Ena ke tsela ea boitseko ha joale. INQABA e mema baloaneli ba 'nete ba tokoloho ka kakaretso ho loana le rona hore leano la bohlokoahali la Marxist le amehelhe kahar'a Khonkoroso nakong ea joale le etlang. Re tla etsa kahohle kamoo re nang le matla kateng ho aha Khonkoroso hore ebe mokhatlo oa boitseko oa basebetsi ka kakaretso o ka bontsang tsela e isang tokolohong eo moruo oa sechaba o tla jeoa ke sechaba ka kakaretso.

Bohle bahlabani kahar'a esita le kante ho Khonkoroso, ba amehelang leano lena, batla re tsehetsa tekong ena. Hang-hang ha re fihletse boemo bona, tsela e tla ba 'ngoe ka pel'a rona bohle, me ke PELE-EA-PELE TOKOLOHONG.

**Ho KHONKOROSO ea sechaba—ka leano la moruo oohle ho sechaba!**

**FREDERICK ENGELS**

**PRINCIPLES OF  
COMMUNISM**

# inqaba YA BASEBENZI

Isitshi samadabi siligubungele elomZantsi Afrika, amadabi awegqitha onke asele khe abonwa. Ukungqubana kwabasebenzi nongxowa-nkulu be sele kugwayimbhise ama50 000 abasebenzi batrayika kwakwezi nyanga zintathu zokuqala konyaka ka1980. Kanti kusaza kuqhamka madabi matsha kwinyanga ezithe zalandela. EThekwini, eBhayi, eTinara, eKapa, eSekunda, eGoli naphhiphi, iilokishi zariwulwa sisitshingitshane samadabi alwisa ukonyuswa kwemali zokukhwelwa, nezerente, namapasi njalo njalo.

Ulutsha oluntsundu obesele lwayoinayo kakade ehlelweni lwabaphangeli abaluzalayo kwamhla kudlana intsimbi ngo1976 namhla lusesazulwini. Intshukumo yolutsha ka1980, nje ngaleya ka1976, iyiph'amandla le yabasebenzi ngobukhokheli obungoyiki lutho. Eli khondo lungene kulo ulutsha namhla lelona lona. Ngoba kuya kuba xa sele kubusa abasebenzi apho nale mfundo ndini namhla ikhonziwa eli gcuntswana leencukuthu, oongxowa-nkulu, iya kugulwa ukuba ikhonze lo mndilili wenza konke, abasebenzi.

## Oomahluthana

Isikhukhula sentshukumo yabasebenzi siwolele phakathi noomahluthana abantsundu sabafaka edabini kwimibutho yemizi. Noxa wena abanye babo besenokubuya bavukwe likakade, nto phofu emiyo yona yeyokuba kukuphumelela kwabasebenzi kuuphela okuya kubakhulula oomahluthana kumakhamandela obufokazana. Ekungasayi kuphinda ke kube kho mfuneko yakuba nabanina abuye akhokhobe elandela ezi nokkheli zotyunjelo zika "ma-sithambe, sibuye-neno".

# PHAMBILI SIMAYENE

Isaqhwithi sentshukumo sibavumbhule abanye besakhothamile bengeva kukhalinywa kumkhwa wabo ogwenxa wokusoloko begabisa ukuba bona balulwa utshaba ngoku basepokothweni yalo. Eku-the ke yakuvukuziswa ipokotho leyo zinqwithelo zentshukumo [yona le bazama ukuyogquma ngonongogwana] banyanzeleka ukuba baqale ngokukhusela ipokotho kangxowa-nkulu khon'ukuze bakhuseleke nabo.

Naantso ke intlekele eyehlele uGatsha, othathwe libatha lonyawo lwakhe lamlahlekisela ekubeni abe ngumkhuseli womthetho nenzolo [walo mbuso oko kutsho] ngoku kude alitsolise elitini ma kaqeqeshelwe imikhosi yeNkatha aza kufunza ngayo intshukumo yolutsha kwaZulu.

Bakho ke nabambhi abasuke bema nematha, baxakwa kuuketha phakathi kwabasebenzi noo-Oppenheimer, ngoba kusiya kuba nzinyana namhla ukuba macala xesha nye. Ngokuya ikhula oku intshukumo yabasebenzi iyawusonga-songa umhlaba phantsi kwenyawo zoonomathidala, ibasondeza ekuqithikeni esiqithini sotshaba.

Kanti ke nalowo mqolombha wemibutho yabasebenzi abamhlophe awubanga nakusinda kwinyiki-ma yentshukumo yabasebenzi abamnyama. Ngenxa yefuthe elikhuphuka ezantsi kwintshukumo elo qilimbha lamandulo ebefuda bethembhe lona oongxowa-nkulu liqalile nalo ngoku ukuveza iintanda

Isaza kuqhekeka iphinda-phinde wena le mibuthwana yabasebenzi abamhlophe zimbhokodwa zedabi labamnyama ukuna phezu kwayo, de bacacelwe bubuyatha bokuthundezana namalungelo omkhethe abhubhayo. De bakhethe phakathi kokuya phantsi kunye nongxowa-nkulu nokucela indawo kwintshukumo yomndilili.

## Ubungxowa-nkulu

Nje ngasiqhelo oongxowa-nkulu baya khanyela ukuba ngulo mbuso wabo owona wenza yonke le ntlungu nentlupheko yabacinezela. Umzabalazo wabacinezela bawuphendula ngokuwolela inkokheli zabasebenzi kumagumbhi otshutshiso. Kodwa intshukumo yabasebenzi izikhusela ngokusoloko ithulule zintsha qho.

Oongxowa-nkulu belomZantsi Afrika abangenandlela yimbhi yangeniso ngaphandle kokuxhaphaza abasebenzi abanakuba nanjongo yakunikela ngale ngeniso ukuba yondle umsebenzi ontsundu nosapho lwakhe.

Bemi apho oongxowa-nkulu nangamaxesha endyebo. Khona ngoku se kuroxe urwebo ehlabathini lonke nje into ke nayo elengisa ingeniso ngozini yimbhi, baya kucezela mgama kakhulu neengcinga zenceba. Nje ngoozakwabo emazweni aba ngxowa-nkulu bethu baza kulinga ukubohlutha abasebenzi naliphi na isuntswana ababekhe balilwela balifumana.

Kakade ke oongxowa-nkulu bohhlala belifihla elona yelenqe labo ngokupapasha amampunge okuba ngoku bangenwe yingqobhoko, nokufuna ukulungisa, nobubelebele, nazizenzo nendaba ezimnandi. Naxa se bedo banyanzeleka ukuba bancame suntswana bokhawuleza balihlutha nangaphezulu bakubona ikroba. Isiphelo yasoloko ikukubhokoxiswa kwemeko yabasebenzi ukubheka ezantsi.

Lolu bhokoxiso lwentlalo yomsebenzi abangena yeza lalo oongxowa-nkulu olubabuyisele edabini kwakhona abasebenzi emva kokuroxa kweemfazwe zika1973 no1976, bathi ukungena kule ka1980 intshukumo babe se bembutho angaphezulu kwawokuqala.

# Editor's introductory note

Engels wrote **Principles of Communism** in October 1847. At that time he and Marx were actively involved in the formation of the Communist League, which was the forerunner politically of the First International.

In the course of a few months they succeeded in winning the support of the membership of the League for their standpoint, and at the second congress in November-December of that year they were given the task of drafting a programme—the **Communist Manifesto**. Chiefly the work of Marx, the **Manifesto** nevertheless embodies much of the preliminary work done by Engels.

Written with Engels' characteristic directness and simplicity of style, **Principles of Communism** will serve the reader as a useful introduction to Marxism and as a preparation for studying the much longer, but also much richer, **Communist Manifesto**.

The works of Marxism, like any other, must be considered in the context of their time. It is the correctness of their theoretical method, historical materialism, which gives Marxist writings of so long ago their continued, brilliant relevance to the modern world. At the same time, Marx and Engels themselves constantly deepened, updated and corrected where necessary all the particular aspects of their conclusions in the light of later historical experience.

It would be a mistake, in an introductory note, to attempt to bring **Principles of Communism** fully up to date. That is a matter for a whole course of study and discussion which we hope to assist with further publications of this kind. It is necessary here, however, to note some points in Engels' text which, if taken out of context, might mislead or perplex the reader of today.

**1. Communist and Socialist.** In 1847 Marx and Engels used the term communist to distinguish the

more or less conscious revolutionary working-class movement from the utopian tendencies and the various 'social quacks' who at that time were known by the name 'socialist'. Later, as the authority of Marxism became established among the workers, it gained the title of **scientific socialism**, while the pre-Marxist 'socialist' schools of thought quickly sank into insignificance.

Subsequently, however, varieties of national-chauvinist and reformist thinking appeared among privileged layers within the workers' organisations in Europe, taking also the title of 'socialist' for themselves. In April 1917, in the midst of the Russian Revolution, the Bolsheviks reasserted the name Communist in order to distinguish themselves clearly from all tendencies opposed to the proletarian revolution.

But today, tragically, the terms 'communist' and 'socialist' are widely confused, on the one hand, with totalitarian bureaucracies which have stolen these titles to cloak their own oppression of the working class, and, on the other hand, with workers' parties which have degenerated under nationalist and reformist leadership.

It will take mighty struggles and big victories of the workers to decisively establish the popular understanding of these terms in accordance with their real meaning in Marxist thought.

**2. Economics.** Engels' text refers to the sale of the worker's 'labour' to the capitalist; to the cost of production, the value and the price of the commodity 'labour'. Later Marx discovered the vital distinction between 'labour' and 'labour power' (a subject to which we will return another time). Here it is enough to note that it is actually **labour power**—the capacity to labour—which the worker sells to the capitalist; which, as a commodity, has a cost of production, a

value and a price. The point, however, does not affect the general validity of Engels' argument in the text.

When Engels deals with capitalist crisis, with the length of commercial cycles, and with the growth of the proletariat relative to the growth of capital, it should be borne in mind that Marx's and his own further investigations, particularly of later economic developments, enabled them to add considerably to their conclusions on these matters.

**3. Class society.** The text implies that all societies have been divided into classes. Only later did it become clear that there had existed 'primitive communistic society'—a classless society holding land, etc., in common. We know this as early tribal society. In 1888 Engels added a note to this effect to the **Communist Manifesto**, pointing out that in fact it is all **subsequent** societies which have been class-divided.

**4. Manufacturing.** When Engels refers to the manufacturing worker he has in mind, not the worker in manufacturing industry today (who is a full-blooded proletarian), but the worker in cottage industry two or more centuries ago.

**5. Imperialism.** When **Principles of Communism** was written capitalism was passing through its classical age of free competition. By the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century, however, free competition had given rise to its opposite—monopoly capitalism—and the epoch of imperialism began.

The proletariat now faced a new and complex situation. The bourgeoisie had exhausted any capacity to lead the masses in struggle against the remaining bastions of feudalism. The most elementary *democratic tasks had become bound together with the need to overthrow the bourgeoisie.* Impe-

# KWINKULULEKO —

## SIKHOKELWE NGABASEBENZI

Yile nkinge ingena kuconjulwa nasisiphi na isizalwane sophango eya kusoloko isenza ukuba abasebenzi babethe bebuyelela edabini kula maxa azayo, bewolela entendeni yentshukumo amabuthobutho abacinezelwa.

### Umbuso wabasebenzi

Nje gokuba bebuyelela edabini abasebenzi lo nto kanye ibenza babaze imibutho yabo yokulwa. Into ke leyo ese iqalisile. Yimibutho engabhaliswanga yabasebenzi, *ngamaqumru ezitrayiki, yimibutho yemizi*: onke la ngamathole avela kula madabi ezolo nawanamhla.

Ngokuya beyihlupheza imibutho yabo yedabi abasebenzi iya ikulungela nokulawula. Akukho ziko limbhi lakhekayo elinokubusa wakubhukuqeka lo mbuso ukhoyo. Baxozelwa lowo msebenzi ke abasebenzi nemibutho yabo leli xhapheshu silibonayo.

Nokuba yozala thole lini na apho yophela khona into inye esele icacile. Akusekho kunga kuqhutyelwa phambhili idabi lenkululeko lo gama kuthintelwa abasebenzi ukuzilungisela ukuthatha isikhundla kulo mbuso ukhoyo. Abangalixhasiyo ngezenso idabi lokuseka umbuso wabasebenzi bozibona bengqutywa lidabi lenkululeko.

Kubalulekile ke ukuba bonke abalingane nabayiphina imibutho khe baphicothe imo yabo kule meko intsha ivezwe yintshukumo yanamhla. Umsebenzi osixheshayo sonke nemibutho yonke ngowokuncedisa abasebenzi ukuba balwahluthelwa ulawulo kwaba babusayo

namhla. Lo msebenzi owehliswe phezu kwethu yintshukumo ngokwayo ubaqokelele nkampini nye bonke abalwela inkululeko ngenene. Ukwahluka-hlukana ngemibutho, okuvela kumaxa adluleyo, kothi chu okwethutyana kodwa kufuneka kuphelisiwe.

### Umanyano

Nje ngokuba intshukumo le imana ukuthatha unyawo iphinde iroxe kanti izobuya ngomsindo namandla ongeziweyo, abasebenzi bona nolutsha baya becaciselwa zizenzo ukuba ngenene bazimisele *bebonke ukuwulwisa umbuso obacinezelayo*.

Amadabi la siwabonayo akwalubalo ababona ngalo abasebenzi amabutho asele elungele idabi elizayo. Ngokuya ligcwala inani abasebenzi nolutsha baza kufuna umbutho wokubandakanya zvelonke ukuze bafunze bebonke kwidabi lokuqeda.

Nje ngokuba amabutho engena ngamanye edabini apha, ilelo lineenkokheli zalo. Kungemboniso swano-nezi nokokheli ethi imibutho ibe nakho ukuqwalasela ingxaki nokuzicombhulula. Ingxaki yokufuneka kombutho wokumanya izvelonke sele beyiphethu-pethula ezintloko abaninzi. Akunakuba kho mbutho wumbhi emehlweni enkokheli de kuthi ezi zolutsha olulandele intshukumo yakwa-Soweto ngaphandle kweNkongolo.

I-Nkongolo iza kuguqulwa kule minyaka izayo ibe ngumbutho womndilili wabasebenzi nolutsha. Ma bacacelwe ke bonke abalingane kukuba yakuba imibutho yabasebenzi sele ingena kwaNkongolo

akusayi kuba kho ungancedisiyo kuba owalayo woba sisikhubekiso endleleni yenkululeko.

### Imigwaqo yesiMakisi

I-Nkongolo nanje ngamibutho yonke kusafuneka iqale ngokulungelanisa imbhono zayo nalo msebenzi wokuseka umbuso wabasebenzi. Indlela, umkhanyo nemigwaqo yobuMakisi ephicothwe yintshukumo yabasebenzi hlabathi lonke kwizizukulwana zamadabidabi yiyo kuuphela esesona sikhokelo sophumeza lo msebenzi.

Nto ma iqwalaselwe ke kukubuyiselwa komlisela woMkhonto we Sizwe kwintshukumo yabasebenzi khona ukuze bafumane apho ingqeqesho nemfundo eya kubenza amagosa ayifaneleyo le ntshukumo. Koba xa intshukumo yabasebenzi sele ifikelele kwibakala lokuphetha lovukelo-mbuso apho kocaca khona ukubaluleka kwengqeqesho yobujoni le sele beyifumene.

Kuza kuhambeka kanjalo ke kula maxa siwaphetheyo. Thina beNqaba sicela onke amagora okukhulula isizwe neembhacu ukuba asancedise ukulwa idabi elithwelle konke leembhono zesiMakisi apha kokwethu kwaNkongolo namhla nangomso.

Sizimisele ukuyakha iNkongolo ukuba ibe ngumbutho womndilili wabasebenzi wenguqulelo oya kusihlahlela indlela eya enguqulweni yeembhacu. Onke amagora apha kathi nangaphandle kweNkongolo abona nje ngathi ma wafake isandla kulo mgudu. Kwakuba njalo yoqala nendlela ityeneneze ukubheka PHAMBILI KWINKULULEKO.

**Sifuna INKONGOLO eyawonke eyokudiliza**

**oongxowa-nkulu nokwakha ukulingana!**

rialism, by drawing the undeveloped countries into the whirlpool of world capitalism, opened the possibility of the proletariat taking power **first** in an economically backward country. This could not have been foreseen in 1847.

At the same time the integration of the world economy in the imperialist epoch added force to Engels' argument that the communist revolution cannot be merely national—it can only be carried to completion in any country if extended on a world scale. The consequences of its isolation to one or a few countries would be to cripple and deform its course.

**6. Revolution.** The modern reader may be surprised by the emphasis on gradualism in Engels' text. But the matter becomes clear if we consider the context.

Marx and Engels were concerned at that time to refute the ideas of the utopian socialists, who proposed to change society according to preconceived notions of what 'should be'. Marxism explains, in contrast, that the organisation of society depends on the stage reached in the development of the productive forces, nationally and internationally. Private property in the means of production, the basis of capitalist society, can be eliminated only as the development of the productive forces, human and material, and their concentration in large enterprises, allows the possibility of social ownership and control.

Engels' proposals for the 'limitation of private property', the 'gradual expropriation of landowners, factory owners, railway and shipping magnates', etc., reflects the stage in the development of capitalism then reached. Today, for example, railways are almost everywhere already state-owned. Moreover, the rise of monopoly capitalism has so concentrated private ownership of industry and large-scale agriculture that the task of the proletarian revolution today is to nationalise all the commanding heights of the economy at a stroke under workers' control and management. Thereafter, the ending of the remnants of private ownership, of small productive property in town and countryside, remains a matter of gradual development.

Already in 1847 Marx and Engels could see clearly that to end capitalism the proletariat would have to establish its own political rule.

Bourgeois democracy, where it then existed in Europe, allowed the vote only to property-owners and thereby maintained the political rule of the bourgeoisie. Marx and Engels saw in the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat for a fully democratic constitution the means to workers' power and hence the expropriation of the bourgeoisie.

Two important qualifications must be added to their original conception, in the light of experience. Firstly, in many countries, for a longer or shorter time, with a

greater or lesser degree of stability, the bourgeoisie has found it possible to concede to the working people the right to vote, while contriving itself to remain the ruling class. Secondly—and this is bound up with the first—as long as the bourgeoisie has retained the state apparatus as its own, it has retained its domination of society and been able thereby to secure its ownership of the means of production.

On the basis of the actual experience of revolutions in the Nineteenth Century, which Marx and Engels either participated in personally or studied from a distance with meticulous care, they drew the conclusion that 'the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes'. The proletariat needs to destroy the bourgeois state and establish its own democratic workers' state in order to secure its political rule.

The experience of the Paris Commune (1871) where the proletariat for the first time held political power and then lost it, showed also the need of the workers for a tempered revolutionary party at their head in order to wrest power from the bourgeoisie.

**7. Other parties.** For reasons already outlined, Engels' final remarks on the relation of the communists to various other political parties of the time were quickly overtaken by events and have no relevance today.

**inqaba  
YA BASEBENZI**

# VOORWAARTS VERENIG ONDER

'n Storm van stryd oorweldig Suid-Afrika, 'n storm groter en sterker as enigiets wat ons nog ooit ervaar het. Die botsing van die werkers met die fabrieksbase het al gedurende die eerste drie maande van 1980 50 000 werkers in stakings uitgebring. Nuwe konflikte het in die volgende maande uitgebars. In Durban, Port Elizabeth, Uitenhage, Kaapstad, Sasol Sekunda, Johannesburg en ander stede is die swart 'townships' ingetrek in 'n dwarrelwind van teenstand teen verhogings van reisgeld, huisrent, die 'pass laws' ensovoort.

Die swart jeug, wat tydens die opstand van 1976 by die stryd van hul werkende ouers aangesluit het, het nog dieper betrokke geraak. Die jeugbeweging van 1980, nes die van 1976, versterk die werkersbeweging met heldhaftige leiding. Die rigting wat die jeug gekies het is die regte rigting. Alleenlik wanneer die regering van die werkende klas oor die samelewing gevestig is, kan onderwys wat op die oomblik die voordeel van 'n klein uitbuitende minderheid—die base—dien, vernietig word en in diens van die produserende meerderheid, die werkers, geplaas word.

## Middelklas

Die stygende beweging van die werkers het dele van die swart middelklas aangetrek deur middel van die gemeenskapsorganisasies. Hoewel sommige miskien weer in hul ou gewoontes sal verval as die stryd vir 'n tydjie bedaar, is dit net die beweging van die werkers wat die tweederangse posisie van die swart middelklas kan beëindig. Ook hulle sal dan nie meer terug hoef te keer na die vernederende gebak en gebrou om die goedgekeurde voormanne van 'praat en

na-aap' te volg wat hulle onder die huidige regeringsvorm moet verduur nie.

Die druk van die werkersbeweging het hulle wat hardkoppig volhou met hul verkeerde beleid van 'binne die sisteem te werk' aan die kaak gestel. Bedreig deur die massabeweging, waarvoor hulle tevergeefs probeer om plaasvervangers te vind, moet hulle hul beleid beskerm deur eers die sisteem self te verdedig.

Dit is die bitter situasie van Gatsha, wat deur sy valse posisie gedwing word om 'wet en orde' (d.w.s. die sisteem) te verdedig, en openlik roep vir die opleiding van Inkatha-impi's om teen die jeugbeweging in Kwazulu te gebruik.

Andere word verlam deur besluiteloosheid oor wie hulle moet steun, die Oppenheimers of die werkersbeweging—want dit word moeiliker om albei tegelyk te ondersteun. Die groeiende massabeweging grou alhoemeer die grond weg onder die voete van alle draadsitters en dreig om hulle in die kamp van die vyand te smyt.

Selfs die taai vesting van die wit vakbonde kan nie wegkom van die onophoudelike druk van die swart werkersbeweging nie. Selfs hulle word gedwing om hul beleid teenoor die swart werkers so 'radikaal' te verander dat ook hierdie bolwerk van kollaborasie besig is om te kraak.

Die wit vakbonde sal oor en oor skeur soos die stryd van die swart werkers die muur van hul verdediging stuk vir stuk afbreek in die komende tyd, en die hopeloosheid van elke valse posisie wat die wit werkers inneem in hul wanhopige pogings om hul verminderende voorregte te verdedig, aan die kaak stel. Uiteindelik moet hulle saam met die heersende klas ten gronde gaan, of toenadering tot die massabeweging soek.

## Kapitalisme

Soos gewoonlik weier die heersende klas om sy eie stelsel te erken as die werklike oorsaak van al die ellende en lyding van die onderdrukte bevolking. Sy antwoord op die stryd van die onderdrukte massa is om werkersleiers voor die voet in sy moordkamers aan te hou. Maar hierop reageer die werkersbeweging standvastig deur altyd nuwe leiding voort te bring.

Die Suid-Afrikaanse kapitalisteklas, wat sy profyt kry en alleenlik kan kry deur uitbuiting van goedkoop arbeid, is nie van plan om sy profyt af te staan net om aan die swart werker en sy gesin 'n menswaardige betaling te gee nie.

Dit is sy houding selfs wanneer dit goed gaan met die ekonomie. Nou dat die ekonomiese wêreldkrisis 'n nuwe bedreiging vir hul profyt vorm, sal die base nog minder geneig wees om hulle aan ideë van menslikheid te steur. Nes hul uitbuiters in ander lande sal die base probeer om enige vooruitgang wat die werkers deur hul vorige stryd gemaak het, terug te gryp.

Natuurlik probeer die base om hul werklike planne agter 'n dekmantel van 'hervormings', 'nuwe insigte', 'edelmoedige koncessies' en ander menslike dade en beloftes weg te steek. Altyd wanneer hulle gedwing word om met die linkerhand te gee, sorg die base so gou moontlik dat hulle meer met die regterhand teruggryp. Uiteindelik versleg die werkers se posisie nog meer.

Dit is hierdie verslegting van die werkers se ekonomiese posisie, waarvoor die base geen antwoord het nie, wat die werkers na die

# PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNISM

*Question 1:* What is Communism?

*Answer:* Communism is the doctrine of the conditions of the liberation of the proletariat.

*Question 2:* What is the proletariat?

*Answer:* The proletariat is that class in society which draws its means of livelihood wholly and solely from the sale of its labour and not from the profit from any kind of capital; whose weal and woe, whose life and death, whose whole existence depends on the demand for labour, hence, on the alternations of good times and bad in business, on the vagaries of unbridled competition. The proletariat, or class of proletarians, is, in a word, the working class of the nineteenth century.

*Question 3:* Proletarians, then, have not always existed?

*Answer:* No. Poor folk and working classes have always existed, and the working classes have mostly been poor. But there have not always been workers and poor people living under the conditions just stated; in other words, there have not always been proletarians any more than there has always been free and unbridled competition.

*Question 4:* How did the proletariat originate?

*Answer:* The proletariat originated in the industrial revolution which took place in England in the second half of the last [eighteenth] century and which has since then been repeated in all the civilized countries of the world. This industrial revolution was brought about by the invention of the steam-engine, various spinning machines, the power loom, and a whole series of other mechanical devices. These machines which were very expensive and hence could be bought only by big capitalists, altered the whole pre-

vious mode of production and ousted the former workers because machines turned out cheaper and better commodities than could the workers with their inefficient spinning-wheels and hand-loom. These machines delivered industry wholly into the hands of the big capitalists and rendered the workers' meagre property (tools, hand-loom, etc.) entirely worthless, so that the capitalists soon had everything in their hands and nothing remained to the workers. This marked the introduction of the factory system into the textile industry.

Once the impulse to the introduction of machinery and the factory system had been given, this system spread quickly to all other branches of industry, especially cloth- and book-printing, pottery, and the metalware industry. Labour was more and more divided among the individual workers, so that the workers who formerly had done a complete piece of work, now did only part of that piece. This division of labour made it possible to supply products faster and therefore more cheaply. It reduced the activity of the individual worker to a very simple, constantly repeated mechanical motion which could be performed not only as well but much better by a machine. In this way, all these industries fell one after another under the dominance of steam, machinery, and the factory system, just as spinning and weaving had already done. But at the same time they also fell into the hands of the big capitalists, and there too the workers were deprived of the last shred of independence. Gradually, not only did manufacture proper come increasingly under the dominance of the factory system, but the handicrafts, too, did so as big capitalists ousted the small masters more and more by setting up large workshops which saved many expenses and permitted an elaborate division of labour. This is

how it has come about that in the civilized countries almost all kinds of labour are performed in factories, and that in almost all branches handicraft and manufacture have been superseded by large-scale industry. This process has to an ever greater degree ruined the old middle class, especially the small handicraftsmen; it has entirely transformed the condition of the workers; and two new classes have come into being which are gradually swallowing up all others, namely:

I. The class of big capitalists, who in all civilized countries are already in almost exclusive possession of all the means of subsistence and of the raw materials and instruments (machines, factories) necessary for the production of the means of subsistence. This is the bourgeois class, or the bourgeoisie.

II. The class of the wholly propertyless, who are obliged to sell their labour to the bourgeoisie in order to get in exchange the means of subsistence necessary for their support. This class is called the class of proletarians, or the proletariat.

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*Question 5:* Under what conditions does this sale of the labour of the proletarians to the bourgeoisie take place?

*Answer:* Labour is a commodity like any other and its price is therefore determined by exactly the same laws that apply to other commodities. In a regime of large-scale industry or of free competition—as we shall see, the two come to the same thing—the price of a commodity is on the average always equal to the costs of production. Hence the price of labour is also equal to the costs of production of labour. But the costs of production consist of precisely the quantity of means of subsistence necessary to keep the worker fit for work and to prevent the

# NA VRYHEID — WERKERSLEIDING

gevegte van 1973 en 1976 terug op die pad van stryd forseer het, en hul regimente talryker as ooit tevore op die slagveld van 1980 gestoot het.

Hierdie krisis, totaal onoplosbaar deur enige vorm van die stelsel van privaat profyt, gaan die werkers oor en oor in die komende tyd op die pad van stryd dwing, en meer en meer groepe van die onderdrukte bevolking agter die beweging van die werkers bring.

## Werkersregering

Soos die werkers oor en oor terugkeer na die slagveld, word hulle gedwing om hul organisasies te versterk en te ontwikkel. Hierdie proses is alreeds aan die gang. Ongeregistreerde vakbonde, gemeenskapsorganisasies, stakings-aksiekomitees—almal is resultate van die afgelope en huidige tydperk van stryd.

Soos die werkers se organisasies hul vermoë om te veg ontwikkel, sal hulle meer en meer die karakter van toekomstige regeringsliggame kry. Daar bestaan geen mag behalwe die werkende klas wat die nuwe samelewing kan regeer nadat die huidige stelsel vernietig is nie. Vir hierdie taak sal die toenemende stryd die werkers en hul organisasies voorberei.

Wat ook al die resultaat van hierdie stryd sal word, is een saak nou al helder duidelik. Niemand kan nou die bevrydingsbeweging vorentoe help terwyl hy probeer om die werkersbeweging te dwarsboom in sy voorbereiding om die huidige heersende klas op te volg nie. Almal wat nie aktief die stryd vir werkersregering ondersteun nie, sal bots met die bevrydingsstryd.

Dit is noodsaaklik dat alle kamerade, ongeag hul organisasie-agtergrond, hul posisie versigtig oorweeg in die lig van die nuwe omstandighede wat deur die stryd gebaar is. Die dringende taak vir ons almal, asook vir alle organisasies, is om die werkende klas voor te berei om oor te neem van die huidige heersende klas.

Hierdie taak, wat op ons skouers geplaas word deur die beweging van die massa self, bring alle opregte strydters in een kamp. Verskille van organisasie, wat ons uit die verlede oorgeërf het, sal 'n tydjie lank voortduur maar moet oorwin word.

## Eenheid

Soos die massabeweging opkom en terugval, om dan met nog meer krag en woede vorentoe te bars, ontdek die werkers en jeug in aksie hul eenstemmige vasberadenheid om op te staan teen die stelsel wat hulle onderdruk.

Die huidige gevegte is ook vir die werkers 'n geleentheid om hul troepe vir die stryd te tel. Soos die aantalle aangroei, voel die werkers en jeug meer en meer die behoefte aan van 'n nasionale politieke organisasie waardeur hulle hul wil kan laat geld om tot die einde toe te veg.

Soos die regimente van die arbeidersbeweging afsonderlik die geveg betree, ontwikkel elkeen sy eie leiding. Dit is deur die oë van hierdie leiding dat die werkersbeweging sy probleme ondersoek en antwoorde vind. Die probleem om 'n organisasie te vind wat die hele beweging kan verenig, word alreeds oorweeg deur baie in die stryd. Vir

hul leiers—waarvan baie afkomstig is uit die jeugbeweging na Soweto—is daar geen alternatief nie behalwe die ANC.

In die komende tyd sal die ANC verander word in 'n massa-organisasie van die werkers en die jeug. Alle kamerade moet duidelik insien dat wanneer die werkersbeweging die stadium bereik om in die ANC te vloei, sal niemand dit kan vermy om die proses te bevorder nie, want wie ookal negatief daarteenoor staan sal in die pad van die bevryding kom.

## Marxistiese program

Soos alle ander organisasies kom die ANC onmiddellik voor die taak te staan om sy beleid daarop te rig om die werkers voor te berei om te regeer. Die metode, perspektiewe en program van die Marxisme, ontwikkel deur die internasionale werkersbeweging oor baie geslagte van stryd, sal die nodige rigting verskaf om hierdie taak uit te voer.

Veral is dit belangrik om die jeug van Umkhonto We Sizwe met die werkersbeweging te integreer sodat hulle op hierdie terrein die opleiding kan ontvang wat hulle tot kaders van die werkersbeweging kan maak. Wanneer die massabeweging die uiteindelijke stadium van gewapende opstand bereik, sal hulle militêre vaardighede 'n enorme bate vir die revolusie wees.

Dit is die rigting van die ontwikkelinge vandag. INQABA spoor alle opregte vegters vir nasionale en sosiale bevryding aan om hulle by ons aan te sluit in die stryd vir 'n Marxistiese beleid in die ANC in die huidige en komende tydperk. Ons sal ywer om die ANC te bou as 'n revolusionêre massa-organisasie van die werkende klas, wat die weg vooruit kan wys na die sosialistiese revolusie.

Alle militante buite sowel as binne die ANC wat met ons saamstem, sal by ons aansluit in hierdie werk. Wanneer dit gebeur sal daar net een pad voor ons wees, en dit sal lei—VOORWAARTS NA VRYHEID.

**Vir 'n massa-ANC met 'n sosialistiese program!**

working class from dying out. The worker will therefore get no more for his labour than is necessary for this purpose; the price of labour or the wage will therefore be the lowest, the minimum, required for the maintenance of life. However, since business is sometimes worse and sometimes better, the worker receives sometimes more and sometimes less, just as the factory owner sometimes gets more and sometimes less for his commodities. But just as the factory owner, on the average of good times and bad, gets no more and no less for his commodities than their costs of production, so the worker will, on the average, get no more and no less than this minimum. This economic law of wages operates the more strictly the greater the degree to which large-scale industry has taken possession of all branches of production.

*Question 6:* What working classes were there before the industrial revolution?

*Answer:* According to the different stages of the development of society, the working classes have always lived in different circumstances and had different relations to the owning and ruling classes. In antiquity, the working people were the *slaves* of the owners, just as they still are in many backward countries and even in the southern part of the United States. In the Middle Ages they were the *serfs* of the land-owning nobility, as they still are in Hungary, Poland and Russia. In the Middle Ages and right up to the industrial revolution there were also journeymen in the towns who worked in the service of petty-bourgeois masters. Gradually, as manufacture developed, there emerged manufacturing workers who were even then employed by larger capitalists.

*Question 7:* In what way does the proletarian differ from the slave?

*Answer:* The slave is sold once and for all; the proletarian must sell himself daily and hourly. The individual slave, the property of a *single* master, is already assured an existence, however wretched it may be, because of the master's interest.

The individual proletarian, the property, as it were, of the whole bourgeois *class*, which buys his labour only when someone has need of it, has no secure existence. This existence is assured only to the proletarian *class* as a whole. The slave is outside competition, the proletarian is in it and experiences all its vagaries. The slave counts as a thing, not as a member of civil society; the proletarian is recognized as a person, as a member of civil society. Thus, the slave can have a better existence than the proletarian, but the proletarian belongs to a higher stage of social development and himself stands on a higher level than the slave. The slave frees himself when, of all the relations of private property, he abolishes only the relation of slavery and thereby becomes a proletarian himself; the proletarian can free himself only by abolishing private property in general.

*Question 8:* In what way does the proletarian differ from the serf?

*Answer:* The serf enjoys the possession and use of an instrument of production, a piece of land, in exchange for which he hands over a part of his product or performs labour. The proletarian works with the instruments of production of another for the account of this other, in exchange for a part of the product. The serf gives up, the proletarian receives. The serf has an assured existence, the proletarian has not. The serf is outside competition, the proletarian is in it. The serf frees himself either by running away to the town and there becoming a handicraftsman or by giving his landlord money instead of labour and products, thereby becoming a free tenant; or by driving his feudal lord away and himself becoming a proprietor, in short, by entering in one way or another into the owning class and into competition. The proletarian frees himself by abolishing competition, private property and all class differences.

*Question 9:* In what way does the

proletarian differ from the handicraftsman?

[Engels left half a page blank here in the manuscript. He evidently intended to repeat the answer he had written to the same question, a few months earlier, in his 'Draft of a Communist Confession of Faith':

"*Answer:* In contrast to the proletarian, the so-called handicraftsman, as he still existed almost everywhere in the past [eighteenth] century and still exists here and there at present, is a proletarian at most *temporarily*. His goal is to acquire capital himself wherewith to exploit other workers. He can often achieve this goal where guilds still exist or where freedom from guild restrictions has not yet led to the introduction of factory-style methods into the crafts nor yet to fierce competition. But as soon as the factory system has been introduced into the crafts and competition flourishes fully, this perspective dwindles away and the handicraftsman becomes more and more a proletarian. The handicraftsman therefore frees himself by becoming *either* bourgeois or entering the middle class in general, *or* becoming a proletarian because of competition (as is now more often the case). In which case he can free himself by joining the proletarian movement, i.e., the more or less conscious communist movement." —Editor]

*Question 10:* In what way does the proletarian differ from the manufacturing worker?

*Answer:* The manufacturing worker of the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries almost everywhere still had the ownership of his instrument of production, his loom, the family spinning wheels, and a little plot of land which he cultivated in his free hours. The proletarian has none of these things. The manufacturing worker lives almost always in the countryside under more or less patriarchal relations with his landlord or employer; the proletarian dwells mostly in large towns, and his relation to his employer is purely a cash relation. The manufacturing worker is torn out of his patriarchal conditions by large-scale industry,

# STRIKE WAVE POUNDS BOSSES

**The strikes which have swept through South Africa in 1980 have shown that the black workers are determined to put an end to their crushing oppression by the bosses and their state. Never has it been clearer that the working class itself, in its struggle for life and freedom, will be the decisive force to topple the racist capitalist state.**

The year opened with running strikes at the Ford Cortina factory in Port Elizabeth. Action followed in the huge Frametex mill in Pinetown. Strikes broke out in Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage, paralysing these towns. The big battle of the municipal workers in Johannesburg brought the workers' struggle into the streets of the largest city of Southern Africa.

Side by side with these massive struggles, the workers in the smaller plants such as the Fattis and Monis factory and the meat industry in Cape Town, have shown their determination to fight for weeks and even months for their demands.

Including the Cape stay-at-home on June 16th, hundreds of thousands of workers have been involved. Throughout the country the workers' spirit has been held high by the disciplined mass struggle of the strikers and by the victories which have been won.

The workers in South Africa are no strangers to the strike weapon. What has made the strike movement of 1980 so important to the struggle to end apartheid and the rule of the bosses?

## National movement

The events of the past months show that enormous advances have been made by the black workers. As the capitalists become more confused about the way forward,

by Ken Mark

and manoeuvres like the 'President's Council' are exposed to the ridicule of the masses, the workers' movement is growing in strength and determination.

We are witnessing the unprecedented development of strike action on a **national** scale as the actions in one area spark off those in another: in Port Elizabeth, Cape Town, Durban, again Port Elizabeth and

**"...the unity of migrant and non-migrant workers..."**

Uitenhage, Johannesburg and East London. These strikes bring back memories of the Natal strikes of 1973 and the political strikes of 1976. **But the workers' movement reaches further ahead with each assault—grasping the future with both hands.**

## Political demands

While there have been setbacks in the Cape Town meat strike and the Johannesburg municipal strike, the workers' movement stands unbowed. The strike wave sweeps up the beach of reaction, retreats for a moment, but then pounds again forward with renewed vigour.

Nowhere has this been better shown than in the municipal strike. Although the vicious municipal

bureaucrats and the police thought they had broken the workers' spirit by crushing the strike with force of arms, the strikers remain loyal to the Black Municipal Workers' Union and the workers still continue to join up in large numbers. There is none of the back-biting and confusion as on the side of the bosses.

The advance of the workers' movement is clear from the increasingly political demands being made.

As in Brazil and many other capitalist countries—and now also in Poland—the demand for free trade union organisation and the right to strike raises the trade union *question itself into a major political issue.*

The regime is forced to change its laws to accept the living reality of the workers' organisation. But strikers have taken the issues

further. The strike movement itself spills over into bus boycotts (as in Cape Town) and rent strikes (as in Soweto). The workers are connecting the township and factory struggles, working through many political organisations of the oppressed (as in Port Elizabeth), and demanding the right to free meetings.

These developments point to the increasingly **organised** nature of the strike movement. Most of the strikes now taking place are in factories where the unions have been active. When strikes break out, increasingly strike committees are set up to build financial and political support. Steeled workers' leaders arise continually from the rank and file.

The municipal strike showed the

loses the property he still owns and in this way himself becomes a proletarian.

*Question 11:* What were the immediate consequences of the industrial revolution and of the division of society into bourgeois and proletarians?

*Answer:* *First*, the lower and lower prices of industrial products brought about by machine labour totally destroyed in all countries of the world the old system of manufacture or industry based on manual labour. In this way, all semi-barbarian countries, which had hitherto been more or less strangers to historical development and whose industry had been based on manufacture, were forcibly dragged out of their isolation. They bought the cheaper commodities of the English and allowed their own manufacturing workers to be ruined. Countries which had known no progress for thousands of years, for example India, were thoroughly revolutionized, and even China is now on the way to a revolution. We have come to the point where a new machine invented in England today deprives millions of Chinese workers of their livelihood within a year's time. In this way large-scale industry has brought all the peoples of the earth into contact with each other, has merged all the small local markets into one world market, has everywhere paved the way for civilization and progress, and thus ensured that whatever happens in the civilized countries will have repercussions in all other countries. Therefore, if the workers of England or France free themselves now, this must set off revolutions in all other countries—revolutions which sooner or later will lead to the liberation of the workers there too.

*Second*, wherever large-scale industry displaced manufacture, the industrial revolution developed the bourgeoisie, its wealth and its power to the highest degree and made it the first class in the country. The result was that wherever this happened the bourgeoisie took political power into its own hands and ousted the hitherto

ruling classes, the aristocracy, the guild-masters and the absolute monarchy representing the two. The bourgeoisie annihilated the power of the aristocracy, the nobility, by abolishing entail, that is, the non-saleability of landed property, and all the nobility's privileges. It destroyed the power of the guild-masters by abolishing all guilds and craft privileges. In their place it put free competition, that is a state of society in which each has the right to engage in any branch of industry, the only obstacle being a lack of the necessary capital. The introduction of free competition is thus a public declaration that from now on the members of society are unequal only to the extent that their capitals are unequal, that capital is the decisive power, and that therefore the capitalists, the bourgeoisie, have become the first class in society. Free competition is necessary for the establishment of large-scale industry because it is the only state of society in which large-scale industry can make its way. Having destroyed the social power of the nobility and the guild-masters, the bourgeoisie also destroyed their political power. Having risen to the first class in society, the bourgeoisie proclaimed itself the first class also in politics. It did this through the introduction of the representative system which rests on bourgeois equality before the law and the legal recognition of free competition, and in European countries takes the form of constitutional monarchy. In these constitutional monarchies, only those who possess a certain amount of capital are voters, that is to say, only the bourgeoisie; these bourgeois voters choose the deputies, and these bourgeois deputies, by using their right to refuse to vote taxes, choose a bourgeois government.

*Third*, everywhere the industrial revolution built up the proletariat in the same measure in which it built up the bourgeoisie. The proletarians grew in numbers in the same proportion in which the bourgeois grew richer. Since proletarians can only be employed by capital, and since capital can only increase through employing labour,

the growth of the proletariat proceeds at exactly the same pace as the growth of capital. Simultaneously, this process draws the bourgeoisie and the proletarians together in large cities where industry can be carried on most profitably, and by thus throwing together great masses in *one* spot it gives the proletarians a consciousness of their own strength. Moreover, the more this process develops and the more machines ousting manual labour are invented, the more large-scale industry depresses wages to the minimum, as we have indicated, and thereby makes the condition of the proletariat more and more unbearable. Thus, by the growing discontent of the proletariat, on the one hand, and its growing power on the other, the industrial revolution prepares the way for a proletarian social revolution.

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*Question 12:* What were the further consequences of the industrial revolution?

*Answer:* Large-scale industry created in the steam-engine and other machines the means of endlessly expanding industrial production in a short time and at low cost. With production thus facilitated, the free competition which is necessarily bound up with large-scale industry soon assumed the most extreme forms; a multitude of capitalists invaded industry, and in a short while more was produced than could be used. The result was that the manufactured goods could not be sold, and a so-called commercial crisis broke out. Factories had to close, their owners went bankrupt, and the workers were without bread. Deepest misery reigned everywhere. After a while, the superfluous products were sold, the factories began to operate again, wages rose, and gradually business got better than ever. But it was *not long* before too many commodities were produced again and a new crisis broke out, only to follow the same course as the previous one. Ever since the beginning of this [nineteenth]



*"The strike movement itself spills over into bus boycotts..."*

extent to which disunity between migrant and non-migrant workers can be healed in the forward march of the struggle.

But, more than ever, it has become clear that the workers can only be united in the compounds and townships through organisation. In the municipal strike it was the members of the Black Municipal Workers' Union themselves—particularly the transport workers—who carried the information between the compounds and places of work and acted as union organisers.

The enormous strength of this strike came from this unity of migrant and non-migrant workers. The compounds were transformed into strongholds of the workers' movement. It was the rank and file, mainly migrants, who insisted on the need to back up the demand for an increase in weekly wages from R35 to R58 with strike action.

Some in the union leadership argued for the union to be registered and for negotiations to begin. But it is important to be clear on this issue: the unity of migrant and non-migrant workers cannot be achieved through registration with a regime which regards blacks as foreigners.

Despite the courage and determination of the migrant workers

—present also in the Fattis and Monis strike, the meat strike, and elsewhere—the leadership of **some** of the open trade unions has not given this question of unity enough serious attention.

### **Bold demands**

Fearful of the explosive force of the workers united and organised, reformist trade union leaders shrink from the bold wage demands and attack those unions refusing to register. Despite this discouragement the workers hold to these demands with a firm grip. Increasingly the reformist leaders look isolated and out of temper with the strike movement, as in the Eastern Cape motor industry.

**All trade union leadership which refuses to give priority to the organisation of the mass of the black workers—the migrant workers—will be operating as a brake on the struggle against the bosses' system.**

As a result of the indifference and even hostility of the leaders of the registered unions, and the reformist and corrupt leadership of some open and parallel unions, the workers on strike often turn to the community organisations in the

townships.

The workers' expectations of assistance from the community organisations in the townships are increased by the unity of the oppressed created in the struggle against apartheid, especially against racist education and the stooges in the 'community councils'.

Faced by the powerful strike movement the middle-class leadership in the community organisations is pulled in the direction of the workers and supports many of the demands of the workers. But until the working class develops its own **political** organisation to unite the workers in the factory and township, the middle class will make claims on the workers' behalf only to retreat again when compromises are at hand.

### **Solidarity**

Up to now community support has mainly taken the form of consumer boycotts and money collected for strikers. It has been shown most clearly in the boycott movement around Fattis and Monis products and meat in Cape Town. Such support has been useful, but the **strength** of the

century the condition of industry has constantly fluctuated between periods of prosperity and periods of crisis, and a fresh crisis has occurred almost regularly every five to seven years, bringing in its train the greatest hardship for the workers, general revolutionary stirrings and the direst peril to the whole existing order of things.

*Question 13:* What follows from these periodic commercial crises?

*Answer:* First, that although large-scale industry in its earliest stage created free competition, it has now outgrown free competition; that for large-scale industry competition and generally the individualistic organization of industrial production have become a fetter which it must and will shatter; that so long as large-scale industry is conducted on its present footing, it can be maintained only at the cost of general chaos every seven years, each time threatening the whole of civilization and not only plunging the proletarians into misery but also ruining large sections of the bourgeoisie; hence either that large-scale industry must itself be given up, which is an absolute impossibility, or that it makes unavoidably necessary an entirely new organization of society in which industrial production is no longer directed by mutually competing individual factory owners but rather by the whole society operating according to a definite plan and taking account of the needs of all.

*Second,* that large-scale industry and the limitless expansion of production which it makes possible bring within the range of feasibility a social order in which so much of all the necessities of life is produced that every member of society is enabled to develop and to apply all his powers and faculties in complete freedom. It thus appears that the very qualities of large-scale industry which in present-day society produce all the misery and all the commercial crises are those which under a different social organization will abolish this misery and these catastrophic fluctuations.

It is therefore proved with the greatest clarity:

1. that all these evils are from now on to be ascribed solely to a social order which no longer corresponds to the existing conditions; and

2. that the means are ready at hand to do away with these evils altogether through a new social order.

*Question 14:* What kind of a new social order will this have to be?

*Answer:* Above all, it will generally have to take the running of industry and of all branches of production out of the hands of mutually competing individuals and instead institute a system in which all these branches of production are operated by society as a whole, that is, for the common account, according to a common plan and with the participation of all members of society. It will, in other words, abolish competition and replace it with association. Moreover, since the management of industry by individuals has private property as its inevitable result, and since competition is merely the manner and form in which industry is run by individual private owners, it follows that private property cannot be separated from the individual management of industry and from competition. Hence, private property will also have to be abolished, and in its place must come the common utilization of all instruments of production and the distribution of all products according to common agreement—in a word, the so-called communal ownership of goods. In fact, the abolition of private property is the shortest and most significant way to characterize the transformation of the whole social order which has been made necessary by the development of industry, and for this reason is rightly advanced by communists as their main demand.

*Question 15:* Was therefore the abolition of private property impossible at an earlier time?

*Answer:* Right. Every change in the social order, every revolution in property relations has been the necessary consequence of the creation of new productive forces which no longer fitted into the old property relations. Private property itself originated in this way. For private property has not always existed. When, towards the end of the Middle Ages, there arose a new mode of production in the form of manufacture, which could not be subordinated to the then existing feudal and guild property, this manufacture, which had outgrown the old property relations, created a new form of property, private property. For manufacture and the first stage of the development of large-scale industry, private property was the only possible property form; the social order based on it was the only possible social order. So long as it is impossible to produce so much that there is enough for all, with some surplus of products left over for the increase of social capital and for the further development of the productive forces, there must always be a dominant class, having the disposition of the productive forces of society, and a poor, oppressed class. The way in which these classes will be constituted will depend on the stage of the development of production. The Middle Ages depending on agriculture give us the baron and the serf; the towns of the later Middle Ages show us the guild-master, and the journeyman and the day-labourer; the seventeenth century has the manufacturer and the manufacturing worker; the nineteenth century has the big factory owner and the proletarian. It is clear that hitherto the productive forces had never been developed to the point where enough could be produced for all, and that for these productive forces private property had become a fetter, a barrier. Now, however, when the development of large-scale industry has, *firstly*, created capital and the productive forces have been expanded to an unprecedented extent, and the means are at hand to multiply them without limit in a short time; when, *secondly*, these

workers arises through unity and organisation **at the point of production.**

The boycott of spaghetti, meat, and now furniture, can develop as consumer campaigns because these things are within the reach of many blacks. But consumer action cannot stop the flow of heavy steel or gold.

The boycott campaigns have added weight to the support of the workers' movement, but they cannot take the place of **national** action by organised workers in support of each others' struggles.

Support from the churches and liberals can only be a temporary phase in the struggle. **As the workers' demands sharpen politically this money will dry up.**

To sustain strikers' families, unregistered unions can raise support for each other through

donations by members and collections in the townships. This money must be held under the full control of the workers' committees with regular reports to mass meetings.

### Support Committees

Strikes can be supported by workers in other factories refusing to handle products of factories on strike. In this way, the workers can bring colossal pressure to bear on the employers. Post can be halted to factories on strike, no goods delivered or taken out by transport workers, and even the electricity cut off. As workers rally to the support of a particular struggle the basis is laid for general strike action.

Effective organisation is needed to develop the struggle to this level. As a means to this end, strike

support committees should be considered by workers involved in the struggles, to be made up of representatives from **all** the local trade unions and factories in the area.

Where trade union leaders refuse to participate, the demand for support should be taken to the rank and file, shop stewards and branches. Reformist leaders can be decisively exposed when they refuse to support other workers in struggle.

The workers' movement must advance with all speed to create a popular trade union press to support and spread its case. We must not be dependant on putting our case through the bosses' press.

The establishment of national federations and the amalgamation of unions express the strivings for

## LESSONS OF THE 1980

We now have in existence a nation-wide mass black youth movement, as a youth wing of the black working-class movement.

This youth movement, however, has yet to develop its inner machinery of co-ordination and its national leadership. That is a task of the present period.

The youth movement is not now at a peak. This temporary and necessary 'resting' stage must be used to identify and digest the lessons of the past period. On that basis, the leaders of the youth can undertake the very serious and difficult tasks that the struggle now demands in order to reach the next and higher stage.

History has launched the risings of the black youth in two instalments—1976 and 1980. Together, these have made up the first round of the black youth movement of South Africa.

A second, greater round of the youth movement is bound to follow, if there is a lack of preparations, this will not prevent it. But a lack of

preparations can lead to tragic disasters.

With proper preparations, the coming round of the youth movement will mean a huge advance for the whole struggle.

### Learned

We have learned to evaluate the claims of the state about their good intentions, not on the basis of their utterances, but on the basis of their actual bloody deeds. We must urgently learn to evaluate both the words and deeds of our enemies on the basis of their real class needs.

The inevitability of a new round of the youth movement flows from the fact that official South Africa is incapable of removing the terrible *regimentation of the black school* youth. It found this system absolutely essential even during the past period of capitalist world boom. Much less can it choose to change in the present period of crisis.

The 1976 movement which preceded the 1980 movement by four years gave them enough warning to change if they could. Their failure to change precipitated the 1980 movement and was proof, if any was needed, of the total irreconcilability of their interests with those of the black youth.

Capitalism needs to train the black youth for docility and inferiority. Varnishing the vicious regimentation in the schools with a thin coat of 'better classrooms', etc., will not in any way change the system of preparing the black youth for wage-slavery.

The only system of production which will need the black youth to be trained in independent judgement and confidence, as a vital part of their preparation for life and work, is socialist production under the control and management of the workers.

The place of the black youth in their fight against inferior education is alongside their working parents in the struggle for workers'

productive forces are concentrated in the hands of a few bourgeois, while the great mass of the people are increasingly falling into the ranks of the proletarians and their situation is becoming more wretched and intolerable in proportion to the increase of wealth of the bourgeoisie; when, *thirdly*, these mighty and easily extended forces of production have so far outgrown private property and the bourgeoisie that they unleash at any moment the most violent disturbances of the social order—only now, under these conditions, has the abolition of private property become not only possible but absolutely necessary.

**Question 16:** Will it be possible to bring about the abolition of private property by peaceful means?

**Answer:** It would be desirable if this could happen, and the communists would certainly be the last to oppose it. The communists know only too well that all conspiracies are not only useless but even harmful. They know all too well that revolutions are not made at will and arbitrarily, but that everywhere and at all times they have been the necessary consequence of conditions which were quite independent of the will and the direction of individual parties and entire classes. But they also see that the development of the proletariat in nearly all civilised countries has been forcibly suppressed, and that in this way the opponents of the communists have been working towards revolution with all their strength. If the oppressed proletariat is thereby finally driven to revolution, then we communists will defend the cause of the proletarians with deeds just as we now defend it with words.

**Question 17:** Will it be possible to abolish private property at one stroke?

**Answer:** No, no more than the existing productive forces can at one stroke be multiplied to the extent necessary for the creation of a communal society. Hence, the proletarian revolution, which in all

probability is approaching, will be able gradually to transform existing society and abolish private property only when the necessary means of production have been created in sufficient quantity.

**Question 18:** What will be the course of this revolution?

**Answer:** Above all, it will establish a *democratic constitution* and thereby directly or indirectly the political rule of the proletariat. Directly in England, where the proletarians already constitute the majority of the people. Indirectly in France and Germany, where the majority of the people consists not only of proletarians but also of small peasants and petty bourgeois who are now in the process of falling into the proletariat, who are more and more dependent on the proletariat in all their political interests and who must therefore adapt themselves to the demands of the proletariat. Perhaps this will cost a second struggle, but the outcome can only be the victory of the proletariat.

Democracy would be quite valueless to the proletariat if it were not immediately used as a means for putting through measures directed against private property and ensuring the livelihood of the proletariat. The main measures, emerging as the necessary result of existing relations, are the following:

1. Limitation of private property through progressive taxation, heavy inheritance taxes, abolition of inheritance through collateral lines (brothers, nephews, etc.), forced loans, and so forth.

2. Gradual expropriation of land owners, factory owners, railway and shipping magnates, partly through competition by state industry, partly directly through compensation in the form of bonds.

3. Confiscation of the possessions of all emigres and rebels against the majority of the people.

4. Organisation of labour or employment of proletarians on publicly owned land, in factories and workshops, thereby putting an end to competition among the workers and compelling the factory owners, insofar as they still exist, to

pay the same high wages as those paid by the state.

5. An equal obligation on all members of society to work until such time as private property has been completely abolished. Formation of industrial armies, especially for agriculture.

6. Centralisation of the credit and monetary systems in the hands of the state through a national bank operating with state capital, and the suppression of all private banks and bankers.

7. Increase in the number of national factories, workshops, railways, and ships; bringing new lands into cultivation and improvement of land already under cultivation—all in the same proportion as the growth of the capital and labour force at the disposal of the nation.

8. Education of all children, from the moment they can leave their mothers' care, in national establishments at national cost. Education and production together.

9. Construction on national lands, of great palaces as communal dwellings for associated groups of citizens engaged in both industry and agriculture, and combining in their way of life the advantages of urban and rural conditions while avoiding the one-sidedness and drawbacks of either.

10. The demolition of all unhealthy and jerry-built dwellings in urban districts.

11. Equal right of inheritance for children born in and out of wedlock.

12. Concentration of all means of transport in the hands of the nation.

It is impossible, of course, to carry out all these measures at once. But one will always bring others in its wake. Once the first radical attack upon private property has been launched, the proletariat will find itself forced to go ever further, to concentrate increasingly in the hands of the state all capital, all agriculture, all industry, all transport, all commerce. All the foregoing measures are directed to this end; and they will become feasible and their centralizing

unity in the workers' movement. Yet unified national and even regional trade union organisation is still fragile. A major task of the next period is to bring into existence a single trade union federation, uniting migrant and non-migrant workers in their millions under one umbrella. Among leaders of the existing trade unions, shop stewards, and in all factories whether unionised or not, discussion should take place to work out how to bring this about. A key issue to be taken up is how a national conference of delegates from the workplaces could be convened to resolve the question of trade union unity.

The strike movement has proved to all who had to be convinced that the 'new dispensation in labour relations' promised by Professor Wiehahn is simply a new version of

the old recipe of control and repression. The regime has declared open warfare on the strike leaders. In Pinetown, Samson Cele, a textile strike leader awaiting trial, was murdered. Other leaders have been arrested and tortured.

The Johannesburg municipal strikers were removed from the city at gunpoint and dumped in the Bantustans. Leaders of the Black Municipal Workers' Union have been charged with sabotage and faced a possible death sentence.

### **United action**

Nothing other than the united action of the workers can hold the regime back from measures of this kind.

The strike movement thus forms part and parcel of the political

struggle for national and social liberation. The struggle for revolutionary leadership in the trade unions cannot be separated from the development of underground political leadership and a socialist programme as the guideline for trade union as well as political struggle. Throughout the land the workers should be fighting for the growth of the African National Congress as an organisation led by the working class on the basis of Marxist policies.

The question of programme is vital since the workers' demands can only be met with an end, not only to the apartheid regime, but also to the system of capitalism which it defends. The bosses are united in denouncing the workers' present demands for wages double or even three times the existing level, as a threat to the profit

## **YOUTH MOVEMENT**

democracy in South Africa.

Only work among and with the various sections of the black workers can provide the basis for unity of the youth on any significant national scale. And it is only through such work that the youth leadership scattered all over the country will find the way of creating a national leadership for the whole youth movement.

All discussions of the problems of inferior education which do not have as an immediate aim and do not achieve the involvement of the youth in actual political work within the workers' movement, are bound to become abstract. They will lead only to frustration and division of the black youth.

All those who honestly devote themselves to work within the workers' movement (irrespective of their political affiliations at present) will in fact develop in the correct direction. Participation in the workers' movement must be used as a measure of one's seriousness in the struggle, as also

it must be used to promote such seriousness.

There is an urgent need to expose at all times all the enemies of the workers' movement, who for that very reason cannot be genuine friends of the black youth movement.

### **Underground**

All the activists of the youth movement should continue to develop their underground links with the movement of the black working class as a whole, not neglecting but rather emphasising links with the migrant section of this movement. The underground links created during the high tide in 1976 and 1980 should be consolidated, and extended to areas not previously reached.

If careful preparations are made, the next round of the black youth movement can quickly take on a general national character and

receive the backing of the black workers on a nation-wide scale. But for that very reason, organisational preparations will not be enough. What is needed is a clear perspective, programme and strategy for a revolutionary victory of the working class in the coming period.

It is by thoroughly mastering the ideas of Marxism—the revolutionary science of the international working class—that the black youth can fulfil their potential in struggle. The need is for young militants to develop themselves consciously as Marxist cadres within the fighting ranks of the workers' movement.

In that way the youth movement and the workers' movement can rise together to their common tasks.

**NEXT ISSUE: The rise of the youth movement and the future of Black Consciousness.**

effects will develop in the same proportion as that in which the productive forces of the country are multiplied through the labour of the proletariat. Finally, when all capital, all production, and all exchange have been brought together in the hands of the nation, private property will disappear of *its own accord, money will become superfluous, and production will have so increased and men will have so changed that the last forms of the old social relations will also be sloughed off.*

**Question 19:** Will it be possible for this revolution to take place in one country alone?

**Answer:** No. By creating the world market, large-scale industry has already brought all the peoples of the earth, and especially the civilised peoples, into such close relation with one another that none is independent of what happens to the others. Further, it has co-ordinated the social development of all civilized countries to such an extent that in all of them bourgeoisie and proletariat have become the two decisive classes of society and the struggle between them the main struggle of the day. The communist revolution, therefore, will be not merely a national one; it will take place in all civilized countries simultaneously, that is to say, at least in England, America, France and Germany. It will in each of these countries develop more quickly or more slowly according as one country or the other has a more developed industry, greater wealth, a more significant mass of productive forces. Hence it will go most slowly and will meet most obstacles in Germany; most rapidly and easily in England. It will have a powerful impact on the other countries of the world and will radically alter and accelerate their course of development up to now. It is a universal revolution and so will have universal range.

**Question 20:** What will be the consequences of the final abolition of private property?

**Answer:** Society will take all the productive forces and means of commerce, as well as the exchange and distribution of products, out of the hands of private capitalists and will administer them in accordance with a plan based on the available resources and on the needs of the whole society. In this way, most important of all, the evil consequences which are now associated with the conduct of large-scale industry will be abolished. There will be no more crises; the expanded production, which for the present order of society is over-production and hence a prevailing cause of misery, will then be insufficient and in need of being expanded much further. Instead of generating misery, over-production will reach beyond the elementary requirements of society to assure the satisfaction of the needs of all; it will create new needs and at the same time the means of satisfying them. It will become the condition and the stimulus to new progress, it will achieve this progress without invariably, as heretofore, throwing the social order into confusion. Large-scale industry, freed from the pressure of private property, will undergo an expansion comparing with its present level as does the latter with that of manufacture. This development of industry will make available to society a mass of products sufficient to satisfy the needs of all. The same will be true of agriculture, which also suffers from the pressure of private property and the parcellation of land. Here existing improvements and scientific procedures will be put into practice and mark an entirely new upswing, placing at the disposal of society a sufficient mass of products. In this way such an abundance of goods will be produced that society will be able to satisfy the needs of all its members. The division of society into different mutually hostile classes will thus become unnecessary. Indeed, it will not only be unnecessary, but irreconcilable with the new social order. The existence of classes originated in the division of labour and the division of labour as it has been known hitherto will completely

disappear. For mechanical and chemical devices alone are not enough to bring industrial and agricultural production up to the level we have described; the capacities of the people setting these devices in motion must experience a corresponding development. Just as the peasants and the manufacturing workers of the last [eighteenth] century changed their whole way of life and became quite different people when they were impressed into large-scale industry, in the same way, the communal operation of production by society as a whole and the resulting new development of production will both require and generate an entirely different kind of human material. Communal operation of production cannot be carried on by people as they are today, when each individual is subordinated to a single branch of production, bound to it, exploited by it, and has developed only *one* of his faculties at the expense of all others, knows only *one* branch, or even one branch of a single branch of production as a whole. Even present-day industry is finding such people less and less useful. Communal planned industry operated by society as a whole presupposes human beings with many-sided talents and the capacity to oversee the system of production in its entirety. The division of labour which makes a peasant of one man, a cobbler of another, a factory worker of a third, a stock-market operator of a fourth, has already been undermined by machinery, and will completely disappear. Education will enable young people quickly to familiarize themselves with the whole system of production and to pass successively from one branch of production to another in response to the needs of society or their own inclinations. It will therefore free them from the one-sided character which the present-day division of labour impresses on every individual. Society organized on a communist basis will thus give its members the opportunity to put their many-sidedly developed talents to many-sided use. But when this happens

system which keeps them in power.

Against the workers' movement the regime has tightened the pass system and threatens to outlaw those unions refusing to register. The big capitalists say frankly that real reforms are not possible under capitalism. Etheredge of the Anglo-American Corporation said recently that the mines were committed to migrant labour even if apartheid was abolished!

While the regime can threaten the African governments with the

### **"...arena of combat for workers' rule in South Africa..."**

atom bomb and undertake military invasions of the 'front line states', in the last few months it has been forced to admit that the industrial areas of South Africa, the very basis for its military strength, are the real 'operational zones'.

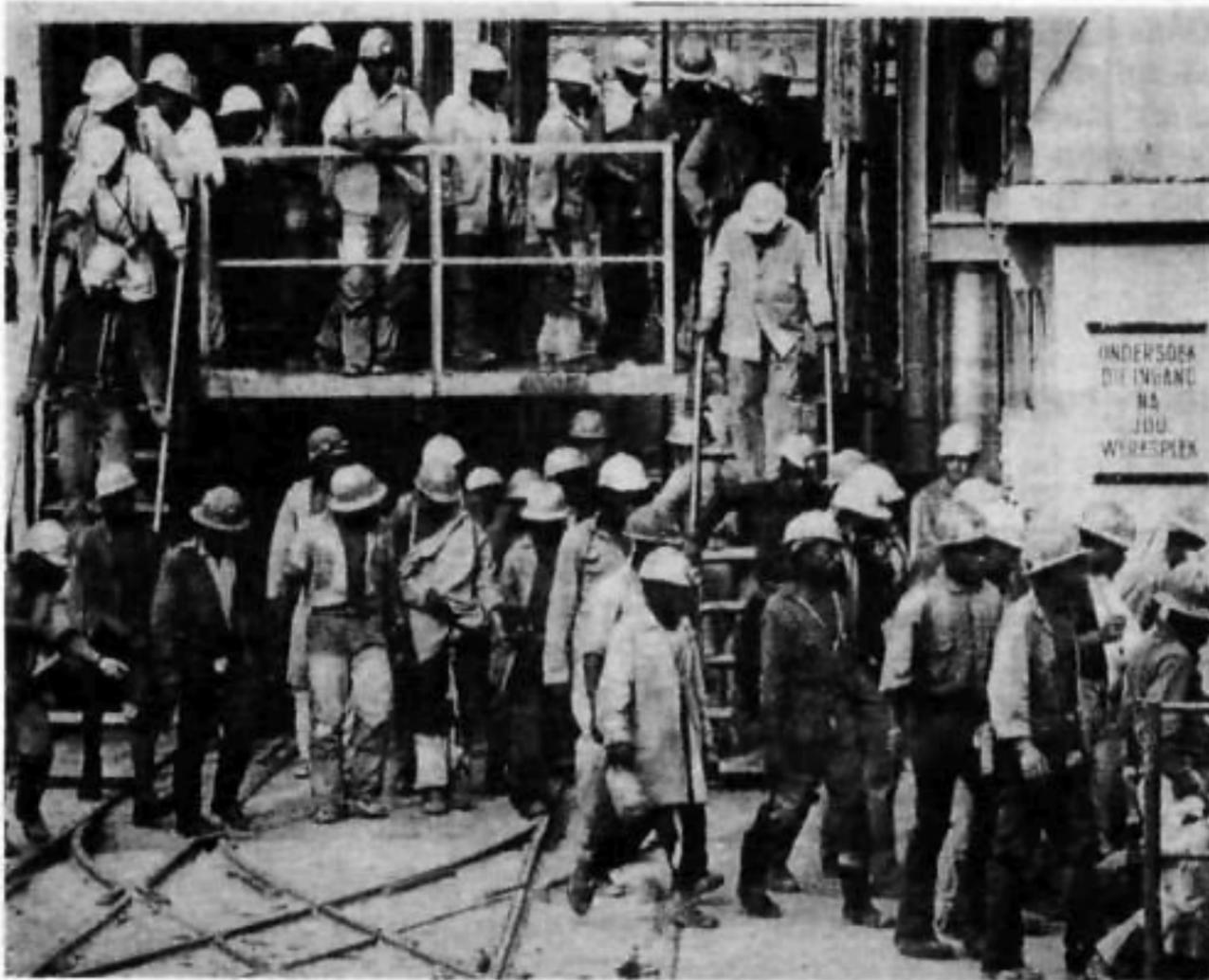
More blows have been rained on the ruling class by the mass of the workers in action in the space of one year than in twenty years of

guerilla operations. The social power of the working class is greater than the military power of the state.

The movement of the working class itself has thrown the ruling class into confusion as the old basis of its rule begins to crumble. Already in the case of the militant strike action by the black municipal workers, some white workers (relied on by the regime), stood to one side rather than risk themselves in scabbing.

The workers movement offers the prospect of overthrowing the apartheid regime in the nerve centres of its power, and the construction of a democratic socialist order in South Africa. 1980 has shown how the strike movement can serve as a rallying point in this struggle and a school of learning for making clear the revolutionary tasks which the working class alone has the power to undertake.

The workers have shown the way forward. Through strike action they have turned the city streets, the factories, harbours, and mines, into the arena of combat for workers' rule in South Africa.



*Of all the workers in South Africa, the mine workers possess the greatest power to challenge the bosses' rule.*

# Free

**TEBOHO PHIRI** is the pseudonym of a comrade who was a political prisoner on Robben Island—better known to the prisoners as **Esiqithini** or **Makana**—during the 1970's. He remembers the rigorous efforts by the prison authorities to ensure that Mandela and the other leaders of ANC and PAC who were kept in the Isolation Section should have no contact with their fellow prisoners. The only time that the other prisoners could even steal a glance at Mandela was by peeping through window-cracks from an adjoining corridor when the prisoners in the Isolation Section were having their exercise period or playing outdoor games.

On one such occasion a door to the yard of the Isolation Section was accidentally left open at a moment when other prisoners were passing on their way to hospital. The prisoners surged towards each other, exchanging greetings of "Amandla!" Handshakes were hurriedly given before the warders intervened to break them apart again.

Today, in South Africa and abroad, campaigns have been launched for the release of Mandela and other political prisoners. The "Post" newspaper has collected 75 000 signatures in support of Mandela's release. **TEBOHO PHIRI** discusses this demand and the important issues it raises for the workers' movement.

The incarceration of political prisoners on Robben island and in the mainland jails of South Africa shows the complete inability of the apartheid regime to concede democratic rights or decent living standards to the masses. The ruling class, forced against the wall, strikes mercilessly where it can at those who protest.

The capitalists act in this way to defend the cheap labour system on which they totally depend. The mass of the people are condemned

classes will necessarily disappear. It follows that society organized on a communist basis is incompatible with the existence of classes on the one hand, and that the very building of such a society provides the means of abolishing class differences on the other.

A corollary of this is that the antithesis between town and country will likewise disappear. The running of agriculture and industry by the same people rather than by two different classes is, if only for purely material reasons, a necessary condition of communist association. The dispersal of the agricultural population on the land, alongside the crowding of the industrial proletariat into big towns, is a condition which corresponds to an undeveloped stage of both agriculture and industry and is already quite perceptible as an obstacle to all further development.

The general co-operation of all members of society for the purpose of joint planned exploitation of the productive forces, the expansion of production to the point where it will satisfy the needs of all, the ending of a situation in which the needs of some are satisfied at the expense of the needs of others, the complete liquidation of classes with their contradictions, the rounded development of the capacities of all members of society through the elimination of the present division of labour, through industrial education, through alternating activities, through universal sharing of the universally produced sources of enjoyment, through the fusion of town and country—these are the main consequences of the abolition of private property.

*Question 21:* What will be the influence of the communist order of society on the family?

*Answer:* It will make the relations between the sexes a purely private matter which concerns only the persons involved, and in which society must not intervene. It can do this since it does away with private property and educates children on a communal basis, and in this way removes the two bases of marriage up to now—the depend-

ence of the wife on the husband and of the children on their parents resulting from private property. And here is the answer to the outcry of the highly moralistic philistines against the communistic "community of women". Community of women is a condition which belongs entirely to bourgeois society and which today finds its complete expression in prostitution. But prostitution is based on private property and falls with it. Thus communist society, instead of producing community of women, in fact abolishes it.

*Question 22:* What will be the attitude of the communist society to existing nationalities?

—unchanged.

[*The answer given by Engels in his earlier 'Draft' is:*

"The nationalities of the peoples associating themselves in accordance with the principle of community will be compelled to mingle with each other as a result of this association and thereby to dissolve themselves, just as the various estate and class distinctions must disappear through the abolition of their basis, private property."  
—Editor]

*Question 23:* What will be its attitude to existing religions?

—unchanged.

[*The answer given by Engels in his earlier 'Draft' is:*

"All religions so far have been the expression of historical stages of development of individual peoples or groups of peoples. But communism is the stage of historical development which makes all existing religions superfluous and brings about their disappearance."—Editor]

*Question 24:* How do communists differ from socialists?

*Answer:* The so-called socialists are divided into three categories.

The first category consists of adherents of a feudal and patriarchal society which has already been and is still daily being destroyed by large-scale industry and world trade and their creation, bourgeois

society. This category concludes from the evils of existing society that feudal and patriarchal society must be restored because it was free of such evils. By hook or by crook, all their proposals are directed to this end. This category of *reactionary* socialists, for all their seeming partisanship and their scolding tears for the misery of the proletariat, will nevertheless be energetically opposed by the communists for the following reasons:

1. It strives for something which is utterly impossible.

2. It seeks to establish the rule of the aristocracy, the guild-masters and the manufacturers, with their retinue of absolute or feudal monarchs, officials, soldiers and priests, a society which was, to be sure, free of the evils of the present-day society but which brought with it at least as many evils without even offering to the oppressed workers the prospect of liberation through a communist society.

3. Whenever the proletariat becomes revolutionary and communist, these reactionary socialists show their true colours by immediately making common cause with the bourgeoisie against the proletarians.

The second category consists of adherents of present-day society whose fears for its future have been roused by the evils to which it necessarily gives rise. What they desire, therefore, is to maintain the existing order of society while getting rid of the evils which are inherent in it. To this end, some propose mere welfare measures while others come forward with grandiose schemes of reform which under the pretence of reorganizing society are in fact intended to preserve the foundations, and hence the life, of the existing order of society. The communists must unremittingly struggle against these *bourgeois socialists* because they work for the enemies of the communists and protect the society which the communists aim to overthrow.

Finally, the third category consists of democratic socialists, who favour some of the same measures the communists advocate, as

# Mandela ...

to the daily misery of unemployment, starvation, bad housing, inferior education, poor medical services, and above all, the chains of the migrant labour system.

The liberation movement demands the unconditional release of all political prisoners! But this demand cannot stand in isolation. The release of Mandela and other political prisoners cannot be granted by the ruling class as a concession to petitions because by

## and

doing so they will expose their weakness before the enormous movement of the workers and the youth. If the regime should release its opponents from prison, the terror of mass arrests and detention will lose its purpose.

The demand for the release of Mandela, and all political prisoners, is a part of the programme for freeing South Africa from capitalist exploitation and racist oppression.

end. This has led some of them to the conclusion that a compromise with the leaders of the masses may become necessary.

The major concern of the ruling class is the capitalist system itself. They will do everything to save capitalism and, with it, their own interests. If a black face can save capitalism, they will use it gladly.

The ruling class is well aware, however, that dummy leaders can command no authority over the masses. Hence the PFP's rejection of the President's Council in its present form. The idea is to push forward individuals who have support among the masses.

Against this background, the capitalist class cannot ignore Mandela. While hating and fearing the tradition of struggle that he stands for, the capitalists are forced to consider the question of Mandela's release. Their hope is to use him as a hostage, to involve the ANC in a compromise for the preservation of capitalism along the lines of the Lancaster House

pleads for a 'National Convention', the time will have come for the working class to strike the final blow—to sweep aside the remnants of the capitalist state, to take power and carry the demands of the black masses into practice.

It is most likely that the release of our brothers and sisters still in prison will only be accomplished in this way—by the advance of the revolution itself. The release of the political prisoners will mean the breaking open of apartheid's prisons by the mass movement. This will only be possible when the capitalist class has been paralysed and defeated, and all its oppressive instruments of rule—the state, the police and the army—have been destroyed.

The demand for the release of Mandela and all political prisoners, therefore, must be combined with full and democratic discussion in the ranks of the mass movement as to the method by which this demand will be achieved. Only then can a strong movement be built,

# all political prisoners!

We note with interest that a section of the capitalist class seemingly gives its support to the demand for the release of Mandela. The Progressive Federal Party, in particular, with Helen Suzman in the forefront, has taken an interest in the release of black leaders from Robben Island, subject to strict conditions, to form part of a 'National Convention'.

Let it be clear to everybody that the demand for Mandela's release, when it comes from the capitalist class, is simply a device intended to divert and confuse the workers and the youth. There is an awareness in the capitalist class, internationally as well as in South Africa, that white minority rule is nearing its

agreement in Zimbabwe.

Yet this 'solution' of the capitalist class is desperate and utopian. A 'National Convention', with or without Mandela, could only come about in a situation of revolutionary crisis. It will be a definite retreat which the capitalist class will only consider when the masses have rendered the state powerless and the ruling class no longer has the strength to impose its will on society.

**But by then it will be too late.** The powerful working class in South Africa, leading all the oppressed, will tolerate no 'compromise' that stands in the way of liberation. Once the enemy has been driven to the point where he

conscious of what it is fighting for and what it is up against. A single leader can easily be done away with, but a conscious working class armed with a revolutionary programme cannot be defeated.

When the demand for the release of political prisoners is linked to strikes and boycotts by the working class, the ruling class will tremble with fear. The working class is the only force in society that has the consistent interest and the necessary strength to draw behind it all the oppressed people moving into struggle, to overthrow capitalism and replace it with a society where for the first time the majority will rule.

described in Question [18], not as part of the transition to communism, however, but rather as measures which they believe will be sufficient to abolish the misery and evils of present-day society. These *democratic socialists* are either proletarians who are not yet sufficiently clear about the conditions for the liberation of their class, or they are representatives of the petty bourgeoisie, a class which, prior to the achievement of democracy and the socialist measures to which it gives rise, has many interests in common with the proletariat. It follows that in moments of action the communists will have to come to an understanding with these *democratic socialists* and in general to follow as far as possible, for the time being, a common policy with them, provided these socialists do not enter into the service of the ruling bourgeoisie and attack the communists. It is clear that this form of co-operation in action does not exclude the discussion of differences with them.

**Question 25:** What is the relation of the communists to the other political parties of our time?

**Answer:** This relation is different

in the different countries. In England, France, and Belgium, where the bourgeoisie rules, for the time being the communists still have a common interest with the various democratic parties, an interest which is all the greater the more closely the socialistic measures they now generally champion approach the aims of the communists, that is, the more clearly and definitely they represent the interests of the proletariat and the more they depend on the proletariat. In *England*, for instance, the Chartists consisting of members of the working class are infinitely closer to the communists than the democratic petty bourgeoisie or the so-called Radicals.

In *America*, where a democratic constitution has been established, the communists must make common cause with the party which will turn this constitution against the bourgeoisie and use it in the interests of the proletariat, that is, with the Agrarian National Reformers.

In *Switzerland* the Radicals, though a very mixed party, are as yet the only people with whom the communists can co-operate, and among these Radicals the Vaudois and Genevese are the most advanced.

In *Germany*, finally, the decisive struggle between the bourgeoisie

and the absolute monarchy is still ahead. Since, however, the communists cannot enter upon the decisive struggle between themselves and the bourgeoisie until the latter is in power, it follows that it is to the interest of the communists to help the bourgeoisie to power as soon as possible in order the sooner to be able to overthrow it. Against the governments, therefore, the communists must always support the bourgeois liberal party but they must ever be on guard against the self-deceptions of the bourgeoisie and not fall for the enticing promises of benefits which a victory for the bourgeoisie would allegedly bring to the proletariat. The sole advantages which the communists will derive from a victory of the bourgeoisie will consist: (1) in various concessions which will facilitate the defence, discussion and spread of their principles for the communists and thereby the unification of the proletariat into a closely-knit, battle-worthy and organized class; and (2) in the certainty that the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletarians will start on the very day the absolute governments fall. From that day on, the communists' party policy will be the same as it now is in the countries where the bourgeoisie is already in power.

# POLENO

## Workers' Democracy or NO

### EDITOR'S NOTE

INQABA prints here extracts from two contributions on the struggle in Poland, written as it developed swiftly over the past few months. They retain their value for the reader as contemporary commentaries, although the movement of events has now passed beyond the stage they reflect.

In the first days of December the movement of the Polish workers against the totalitarian bureaucracy which rules them, reached a *turning point*. The choice was stark—either carry through a political revolution to establish workers' democracy in Poland, despite the threatened invasion of Soviet tanks and up to a million Warsaw Pact troops—or retreat and allow the bureaucracy to consolidate its position once again. Under the urging of their leaders and 'advisors', the workers drew back.

In a revolutionary crisis, there is *no more decisive factor than leadership*. The courageous spirit demonstrated over and over again by the Polish workers in struggle has unfortunately not been matched by the leadership which their movement has so far thrown to the fore.

Courage in action needs a clear understanding and vision to sustain it. But Lech Walesa and the other leaders of Solidarity—the new independent union which mushroomed in a few months to ten million members—were under the illusion that it is possible to reach a stable 'compromise' with the hated bureaucracy. Their idea, pressed on them by the intellectual 'dissidents' and the Catholic Church hierarchy to whom they

mistakenly turned for advice, was that the workers should confine themselves to demanding freedom in the trade union sphere, while leaving the state power to the Stalinist bureaucrats!

No country can be half totalitarian and half free. The privileged bureaucracies of Eastern Europe, which have become absolute parasites on the back of society, now rest their rule solely on the military-police repression of the masses. They have *no necessary* role in production, but on the contrary strangle the productive forces with mismanagement, inefficiency, corruption and waste on a gigantic scale.

In parallel with the crisis of capitalism in the West, the crisis of Stalinism has set in in the East. In the capitalist countries, the problems of society can be solved only by the social revolution, with the working class taking the means of production into state ownership, instituting the economic plan, and democratically managing production themselves under a workers' state.

In the Stalinist states, where state ownership and the plan are the foundation of production—but under workers' states monstrously deformed by bureaucratic rule—the task is the political revolution to overthrow the bureaucratic caste, and to bring the organisation of production and society under workers' democratic control. Socialist society—as that term is understood by Marxists—cannot materialise except through workers' democracy.

In Poland it will prove impossible to sustain the independence of

Solidarity, while the bureaucracy keeps control of the state. The lull which has now begun in the workers' movement will give the regime an opportunity to consolidate its cracked machinery of rule; to infiltrate its agents into the union; to cautiously reimpose repression; to corrupt and incorporate elements of the new union leadership.

But such is the depth of the economic and social crisis of Stalinism, above all in Poland, that a fresh resurgence of the mass workers' movement cannot be long in coming. Whether it takes five or more years—or much less, depending on national and international factors—before a new all-out confrontation of the workers against the bureaucracy, Poland's course towards political revolution is set.

Now the workers face the job of developing a leadership adequate to the tasks of revolution; a resolute leadership able to carry the struggle to completion; a leadership basing themselves on the international outlook of Marxism and able to appeal to the revolutionary interests and consciousness of the Russian, East German, Czechoslovakian, Hungarian and other workers to join in a common movement against their bureaucratic overlords.

Then no military invasion will be able to bar the road to workers' democracy in the East. And at the same time the political revolution against Stalinist dictatorship would sound the death-knell of imperialism, as an irresistible beacon is raised before the working class of the West to carry through their revolution against capitalism.

# Bureaucratic Rule — MIDDLE ROAD

**The bold and determined struggles of the Polish workers in the summer of 1980, sparked off by rising meat prices, have opened a new chapter in the history of Eastern Europe.**

In the period that followed, the workers have carried the struggle far beyond the issue of food prices, above all by enforcing the right to form independent trade unions. In an amazingly short space of time they have created a ten million strong federation of free trade unions, Solidarity.

## Spectre

From the side of the Polish authorities, the Soviet regime and its supporters internationally, a frenzied propaganda campaign has been waged against the Polish workers.

In particular the Stalinist leaders have tried to create the impression that the Polish workers are serving the interests of imperialism. Also the exiled leaders of the South African Communist Party are spreading around this view. Western governments which are hostile to the black workers' movement in South Africa, it is pointed out, are suspiciously 'friendly' towards the Polish workers' movement.

What they fail to add is that there is not the slightest desire on the part of the Polish workers to return to capitalism. Such an idea would be as absurd as Western workers desiring to return to feudalism. As even a Western journalist in Poland was forced to recognise, adapting the opening

**by Daniel Hugo**

words of the **Communist Manifesto**:

"A spectre is haunting Eastern Europe, the spectre of democratic socialism."

In reality, the struggles in Poland have been set in motion by the mismanagement and misrule of society by the Polish regime itself. This was admitted, under pressure from the workers, by Communist Party leader Kania who took over from Gierek in September. "Serious mistakes in economic policies and deformations in public life", he said, were the "basic source" of

the strike wave that has rolled across Poland since July.

The capitalist class has eagerly made use of the crisis in Poland to suggest that socialism itself is to blame. Under 'socialism', it argues, the workers are worse off than under capitalism, and have to struggle even harder for their rights.

This argument is completely false. To understand the present situation and the nature of the system in Poland, it is necessary to understand the process by which it came into existence.

## Planned economy

With the defeat in 1945 of the German forces occupying Poland, the Soviet Red Army was left in effective control. The capitalist state had crumbled. The Polish ruling class, fearing punishment for their collaboration with the



*Shop queues, such as this one in Warsaw, are a common sight in Poland. Bureaucratic mismanagement means shortages of consumer goods.*

Nazis, had largely fled the country.

The state constructed in Poland with the support of the Red Army was similar in all essentials to the deformed workers' state in the Soviet Union itself. [In the next issue we will deal with the nature of the Soviet Union—**Editor.**]

The Polish Stalinist leaders were placed in control of the state. A plan of production and a state apparatus were established in the image of Moscow—not Lenin's revolutionary Moscow, but Stalin's regime of 1945.

Thus, from the start, the 'socialist' state in Poland was in fact a bureaucratic dictatorship resting on the nationalised means of production.

Freed from the anarchy of capitalism and the narrow constraints of the rule of profit, the nationalised Polish economy could develop with giant strides in the period following the war. Between 1951 and 1972, the economy expanded at an average growth rate of 7.0% per year, while industrial production increased at 8.9%—figures that capitalism can rarely attain.

For working people, the planned economy made possible a level of welfare undreamed of in Poland's backward feudal past. Adult illiteracy was reduced from 20% in 1945 to 10% today. 6.5% of the gross national product is spent on

education, compared to 1.3% in the British 'welfare state'. In Poland there are 18 doctors for every 10 000 people, compared with only 13 in Britain.

Yet, without workers' democracy, these advances were only achieved at the cost of enormous corruption, mismanagement and waste. Increasingly the state bureaucracy became a parasite on the gains of the planned economy, carving out a privileged existence for itself while mercilessly repressing the workers.

## Corruption

The workers' movement of 1980, demanding an end to bureaucratic privilege and the punishment of corrupt officials, has lifted a corner of the veil from the lifestyle that the rulers of Poland have built up for themselves.

Hoping to offload responsibility onto scapegoats, the official Polish press has carried many reports about the luxuries which senior state officials have accumulated out of the funds of the 'socialist' state entrusted to their care.

M. Szczepanski, former head of Polish television, was one of those exposed and dismissed from his post in this way. The **Morning Star**, newspaper of the British Communist Party, printed (without comment) the following facts

concerning this 'socialist' leader:

"A preliminary investigation by the broadcasting union is reported to have found that his assets included seven personal cars, two executive aircraft, a helicopter, a £1 million yacht, a sheep farm, a mountain villa, plus a hunting lodge in Kenya!"

It is the rule imposed by this degenerate bureaucracy, mismanaging the economy while protecting its own privileged existence, that has plunged Polish society into the present crisis.

A modern planned economy cannot be run efficiently by a narrow clique of officials. No less than the capitalist class in the West, the bureaucracies in the Stalinist countries have come to form an obstacle to the further development of society. Control by the working class over the complex process of planning and production is essential in order to utilise fully the potential of the planned economy.

## "Western involvement"

The basis for the crisis in food production, which sparked off the present struggles, was laid in 1956. In that year the bureaucracy was threatened by a major movement of the Polish working class. In order to gain support in the countryside,



Gdansk, September 1980: grim-faced state officials arrive to negotiate with the delegates from 400 factories on strike.

the regime handed back to the peasantry 80% of the land that had been nationalised (bureaucratically) in 1945.

Thus the bulk of agricultural land ended up in private hands, subdivided into small, inefficient farms. Chronic shortages of meat, grain and other agricultural products, and a weakening of the economy as a whole, have been the consequence.

In 1970 a new rebellion of the working class shook Poland. Mass demonstrations in Gdansk were bloodily suppressed. Yet to restore political stability, the bureaucracy was forced to make concessions to the workers. Increases in food prices had to be withdrawn. Instead, state subsidies shot upward, increasing from 7 900 million zlotys (R200 million) in 1970 to 170 000 million zlotys (R4 400 million) in 1979.

Industrial expansion on the basis of bureaucratic rule could only be maintained by borrowing massively from abroad, especially from Western governments and banks. Increasingly Poland became dependent on the capitalist world economy, relying heavily on trade with the West, precisely at a stage when capitalism was moving into crisis.

In spite of foreign borrowing, total investment was cut by 10% in 1979 and, in real terms, by a further 20% in 1980. Inflation, partly imported from the West, was estimated at up to 19% in 1979.

The growth target for 1979 was set at a mere 2,8%—and yet, according to Finance Minister Kisiel, actual growth was “well below” this figure. **National Income actually fell by 2,8%.**

The target for economic growth in 1980 was dropped further to 1,4%. Yet by August, industrial production was **10% lower than in August 1979.**

Poland's debt to the capitalist West increased from R5 600 million in 1975 to R13 600 million in 1979. Today it is well over R16 000 million. Interest payments in 1980 alone came to more than R5 600 million; to pay this, a fresh loan had to be raised from a consortium of West German banks.

These facts provide the clearest



*Anna Walentynowicz, a crane driver in Gdansk. It was her dismissal and that of other trade union activists that brought the shipyards out on strike in August.*

reply to Stalinist accusations of ‘Western involvement’ in the Polish workers’ movement. “The West is already engaged in Poland”, stated the British **Financial Times** on 27 November, “through extensive credits.” It went on to conclude:

“There ought to be a common interest [between imperialism and Stalinism] in preventing anarchy, and then perhaps escalation.”

In fact, the concern of the capitalist class throughout has been to preserve ‘stability’ in Poland.

“The authorities and Mr Walesa [leader of Solidarity], the popular hero of the hour, must guard equally against exaggerated political expectations”, warned the **Financial Times** on 11 November. It urged the Polish trade unions to

“proceed with the utmost moderation”. Their task, it said, is to “explain the circumstances to their members and hope that they will not lose patience.”

## Contradictions

It is against this background of deepening crisis that the 1980 strike wave erupted. The bureaucracy attempted to cut costs by reducing the subsidy on food. One result was the rise in meat prices on 1 July which triggered off the strikes.

The response of the regime was to declare that the economic situation “does not permit any widespread wage increases at

present". Yet widespread wage increases, in the face of widespread price increases, are precisely what the workers demanded—and enforced.

Further wage increases of 10% have had to be allowed for 1981. To pay for these increases and step up the production of consumer goods which the workers desperately need, the bureaucracy will resort to further borrowing abroad and further increasing inflation at home. Its efforts to settle the present crisis are laying the foundations for new and greater crises in future.

## **Demands**

The conflict between the bureaucracy and the working class in Poland, and throughout the Stalinist world, is insoluble.

The independent trade union movement, despite all efforts to make it 'non-political', forms an intolerable threat to the regime. Inevitably, the workers will try to use it to struggle for **all** their demands, political as well as economic.

It is for precisely this reason that the Stalinist leaders in Poland and elsewhere are determined to destroy *the workers' independent movement*. Party leader Kania—a former chief of the secret police—condemns the strike movement as "counter-revolutionary" [!] and draws the conclusion that "the crisis has to be settled by political means **as we have none other at our disposal**".

At present the regime is completely isolated. 85% of the working class, the majority of intellectuals and farmers, even sections of the police, have come out in support of Solidarity. Kania's hope is to *incorporate the independent trade unions into the state apparatus through a system of registration*. The Polish bureaucracy has no force to rely on but the threat of Soviet military intervention.

## **Military intervention?**

There can be no doubt that the Stalinist regimes in the surrounding countries are filled with no less hatred and fear of the Polish

workers' movement than the Polish bureaucracy itself.

Already, the struggles of the Polish workers have won widespread sympathy among the workers of neighbouring countries, especially the youth. In one or two cases the workers have followed the example of their Polish comrades. Thus, in August, 3 000 workers at an industrial plant in Romania went on strike in protest against the meat shortage. **Within hours their demands were met.**

Every day that the Polish workers maintain their open defiance of the Stalinist regime increases the possibility of further struggles being set off in other countries. The bureaucrats desperately need to prove that the movement of the Polish workers has been futile and doomed from the start.

In principle, the Soviet bureaucracy is ready to invade Poland—if there is no other way to defend bureaucratic rule. Yet invasion would expose it to enormous risks, and offer it no clear advantage.

On the one hand, no government more loyal to Moscow than the existing government of Kania could be placed in power. On the other hand, titanic struggles are likely to be unleashed, not only in Poland but perhaps in the Soviet Union itself, if the bureaucracy should order its armies to march against the Polish working class.

It is this fear of provoking a general uprising of the masses of Eastern Europe, and not the threat of Western disapproval, that has so far stayed the Kremlin's hand.

## **Leadership**

These are the harsh realities that the Polish working class is faced with. The destruction of their movement and all its gains, or the defeat and abolition of bureaucratic rule, are the ultimate alternatives before them.

The leadership of the Polish workers will prove crucial. The present leadership of Solidarity is inclined to yield before the pressure of the state. Only the determination of the rank and file has so far prevented any major retreat.

Some workers' leaders have

correctly drawn the conclusion that all their gains have come through struggle. Without continuing to mobilise and fight, the movement will be doomed.

"We've been promised reforms in the past—and later disappointed, as they were first granted and then taken away", explained one strike leader in Gdansk. "This time we're not so stupid as we once were."

Others in the leadership of Solidarity—especially its intellectual 'advisers' from the dissidents' committee KOR—are filled with caution and fear of the Soviet tanks. The workers' movement, argues KOR leader Kuron, must "keep within the necessary bounds" so as not to push over the tottering regime and "provoke" the Soviet bureaucracy to invade.

Similarly, the Catholic Church has thrown in its weight on the side of 'moderation'.

Over centuries, the church has formed a rallying point in struggles by the Polish people against foreign domination. Under Stalinism the church was the only national institution permitted to exist apart from the state apparatus itself.

For millions of people, in the absence of any political alternative, the church has provided the only possibility of meeting and organising independently of the regime.

Yet in reality the church itself, in Poland as in the West, is by no means independent of the state. The leaders of the church are committed to a policy of 'peaceful coexistence' with the Stalinist regime. The church may serve as a safety-valve for the grievances of the people; its task, however, is to prevent its followers from challenging the regime.

## **"Reconciliation"**

Amid widespread rumours about an impending Soviet invasion early in December, Solidarity leader Walesa's response was to appeal for "national unity and reconciliation". It is impossible, however, to reconcile the irreconcilable conflicts within Polish society.

A policy of compromise with the bureaucracy would pave the way to the defeat of the workers'

Revolution, and rediscover the programme for workers' democracy that Lenin outlined in 1917:

1. Society should be run through a system of workers' councils with free elections and the right to immediately recall officials.
2. No official may receive a higher wage than that of a skilled worker.
3. No standing army but the armed people.
4. No bureaucratic elite. Posts of office should be rotated among the workers. "When everyone is a bureaucrat in turn, then no-one is a bureaucrat."

To this programme the Hungarian workers in the revolution of 1956 added a further indispensable demand: no more one-party state! Capitalist counter-revolution in the conditions of Eastern Europe is absolutely ruled out. A government of workers' democracy, having the support of the overwhelming mass of the people, would have no need to suppress dissenting parties.

The Polish workers' struggle began to advance along the road mapped out by Lenin. The Inter-Factory Strike Committee (MKS) at Gdansk, which co-ordinated the struggle at 300 factories in the region, was identical in all its essentials to the soviets (councils) formed by the Russian workers 75 years earlier, which later served as the basic organs of the workers' revolutionary state.

In Gdansk in August, power over the running of the city increasingly shifted from the authorities into the hands of the MKS. Here was a practical example of the means by which the working class can break the grip of the bureaucracy and establish its own democratic rule, in due course over the country as a whole.

## Internationalism

Yet, as the threat of a Russian invasion makes clear, the problems of Poland cannot be solved on the basis of Poland alone. The gains of the Polish workers cannot be secure until the power of the Stalinist bureaucracies has been ended throughout Eastern Europe, especially in the Soviet Union itself.



*Lech Walesa, leader of Solidarity, waiting to meet with Cardinal Wyszyński, head of the Polish Catholic Church.*

movement. Nothing but their own independent struggle has won them their present gains and kept the Soviet bureaucracy at bay.

Walesa himself expresses the confusion of the 'moderate' trade union leaders when he describes his own experience:

"I keep on changing my mind. When I was simply a worker, I knew what to think."

But millions of Polish workers still know what to think. They recognise that the struggle for genuine socialism would have to be a struggle to the finish against the Stalinist regime and all its supporters, nationally and internationally. The words of a striker in Gdansk express all the revolutionary confidence by which this mighty movement has been guided in spite of the timid fears of some leaders:

"The Russians? It's not we who are afraid of them, but they who

are afraid of us. There's not going to be any Czechoslovakia you know."

This is an indication of the determined resistance which any Soviet invasion of Poland would encounter.

## Programme

The task of the workers in Poland, as in other Stalinist countries, is to abolish the bureaucratic regime and build genuine workers' democracy on the foundations of the planned economy. What the Polish workers require is a political leadership equal to this task.

As in all countries, the workers of Poland will find the clearest guidance in the method and perspectives of Marxism. They will return to the ideas of Lenin and Trotsky, the leaders of the Russian

As in Poland, so in **all** Stalinist countries the working class has the power to cast aside the bankrupt bureaucracies. Not a defensive or nationalist policy is called for on the part of the Polish workers, but the opposite—a **bold class appeal to the workers of the Soviet Union and other Stalinist ruled countries.**

Only a political revolution in the Soviet Union—the overthrow of the bureaucracy and the establishment of workers' democracy—can finally remove the threat of armed intervention in Poland. By linking up with the Soviet workers on the basis of a Marxist programme, the *Polish workers will make a gigantic contribution to spreading the workers' political revolution throughout Eastern Europe.*

Freed from bureaucratic mismanagement, the planned economy can be developed to heights previously unknown. Obsolete national boundaries would have little

importance to the workers. In place of the patchwork of separate states into which Eastern Europe is presently divided, a socialist federation of democratic workers' states could come into existence.

Societies of workers' democracy in Eastern Europe, or anywhere on earth, would expose the capitalist lie that the Stalinist dictatorships represent socialism. They would serve as living examples to the workers of the West and the former colonial world of the tremendous possibilities that lie within our reach, and provide a mighty impulse to the socialist revolution *world-wide to which their fate is linked.*

Already the movement in Poland has begun to open up new perspectives for the working class both East and West. Everywhere workers are discussing these events.

In Italy, one such discussion was overheard by a journalist at the

gate of the Alfa Romeo factory in Naples.

"The workers of the world are the strongest power—stronger than the Russians, stronger than the Americans, stronger than the bosses of every country", one worker declared. "They [the Polish workers] have got their ideas clearer than we have, they've shown us how to fight."

Socialist construction can be carried to completion only when the most advanced industrial economies are integrated through the victory of the working class in the West. Like the socialist revolution, *the political revolution begins on the national arena, it unfolds on the international arena and is completed on the world arena.*

**December 1980**

## **THE POLISH STRUGGLE IS INTERNATIONAL**

The Polish bureaucrats cannot themselves use the method of arms against the workers even if they want that. They have learnt that their own army, if it should be used against the workers, would crumble in their hands. Most of it would move to the side of the workers, as was shown in Hungary in 1956, where most of the rank and file moved to the side of the revolution. Only the secret police would be left firmly supporting the regime and that is not enough of a basis to rule.

Therefore the bureaucracy is playing for time in granting the workers certain demands. Until the time when there is a lull—when they can try to bribe the leaders of the independent trade unions, or blacklist them by framing charges against them, or use intimidating methods against the working class, by moving the armies of the other Stalinist countries into the outskirts

**by Neville Olifant**

of the towns, displaying them in order to scare off a certain section of the working class.

It is true that every state is a body of armed men. But what one has to understand is that the armed men in Poland do not represent the bureaucrats and their privileged position. First and foremost the young generation are forced into the army, unable to find access to industry, just like the armies of Western Europe, which began as armies of unemployed.

The Polish trade unions have to rally support amongst the soldiers in order to overthrow the Stalinist regime. Also the arming of the working class, and the disarming of the officers in Poland and Eastern Europe should be the order of the day, to avoid what happened in Hungary, Poland 1970 and East

Germany 1953. The arming of the working class is a necessary feature in the overthrow of any oppressive regime.

The Polish working class should see their strength not only in a struggle confined within their national borders, but in an international struggle of the working class: both against Stalinist bureaucracy in Eastern Europe, and against Western capitalism.

It is only on an international level that the crisis of Poland can be solved, which coincides with the preparation of the World Socialist Revolution.

Socialist construction can be carried to completion only when the most advanced industrial economies are integrated through the victory of the working class in the West. Like the socialist revolution, *the political revolution begins on the national arena, it unfolds on the international arena and is completed on the world arena.*

**November 1980**

# Sri Lanka General Strike



The whole of the Indian sub-continent, from Pakistan to Sri Lanka, is engulfed in vicious and ever-intensifying class conflict. The decaying capitalist system wreaks vengeance on the working class in an attempt to gain time; the working class strains to unleash its power, seeking the revolutionary programme and leadership which can unite it against its tormentors.

Most recently we have seen the gigantic struggles of the Sri Lankan workers against the reactionary UNP government of J.R. Jayawardene. INQABA interviews two comrades from Sri Lanka who played a crucial role in the events of the 1980 general strike.

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**Siritunga Jayasuriya** who is the organising secretary of the NSSP—New Sama Samaja (or Socialist) Party—formed in December 1977. Comrade Siri was a lathe machine operator until 1970, after which he worked on the buses and then became first full time organiser of his party.

**Gunaseena Mahanama** who is General Secretary of the Government Clerical Service Union (GCSU), which has 17 500 members out of the 22 000 clerical workers in the public sector. The GCSU supports the NSSP. Comrade Maha was a clerical worker for 15 years before becoming General Secretary.

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**Can you give us the background to the general strike which took place in Sri Lanka in 1980?**

**S**—To do this we must go back to the period of the 1970s. In 1970, a Popular Front government was

elected by a big majority to the parliament. The PF included the workers' parties—the LSSP (Lanka Sama Samaja Party) and the Communist Party—but was dominated by the liberal bourgeois SLFP (Sri Lanka Freedom Party) of Mrs Bandaranaike.

All the workers and masses believed this government would do something for their problems, but they found it worked against them. It is true this government nationalised the tea and rubber estates (as far as 80% of the economy) and made concessions to the workers like guarantees against dismissal.

But living standards were cut 50% in 7 years, and the LSSP and CP leaders were branded by the actions of the SLFP like crushing the JVP youth uprising in 1971, the chauvinist policies against the Tamil minority and the general strike-breaking slogan of 'Work, Sacrifice and Struggle Not.'

**M**—The Sri Lankan workers have a long history of struggle. Through this they achieved over the years the

vote, a free universal rice ration, cheap transport, subsidised food and free education to university level. During the PF government, they saw these achievements coming under attack, in the name of socialism.

**What was the response of the working class?**

**S**—The workers began to organise against these coalition politics, and in 1976 there was a big strike. There had been a big confrontation inside the government in 1975, and the SLFP, having finished with the LSSP leaders, threw them out. The CP was in the government at the time of the strike, but under pressure from the workers they pulled out.

The 1976 strike meant the government was forced to dissolve parliament and call an election in 1977.

**M**—We can really learn how PF politics affects the masses. Everyone was completely fed up with the

PF government. They said "This type of socialism we don't need." In place of the PF government came the most reactionary government ever, the UNP (United National Party) government. All the left MPs lost their seats. The SLFP came down from 98 to 16 seats. This was the biggest majority since the 1930s.

**How was it that such a reactionary party could win such a victory?**

**M**—The UNP said they would cut living costs, cut food prices, cut unemployment and achieve socialism! But they did none of these things. When they came into government, they turned on the workers.

**S**—The UNP used the unpopularity of the old government. The CP and LSSP leaders thought they could achieve socialism in the framework of capitalism. They created a complete mess. There were food shortages and food queues. It was clear you can't have socialism and capitalism together! The LSSP and CP leaders called themselves real socialists, and after what they did, the workers said, well then we don't like this socialism.

If we look at the effects of PF governments in China in 1927, Chile, Indonesia and so on, we see that in each case the defeat of the PF resulted in a bloodbath for the workers. But this didn't happen in Sri Lanka because of the 1976 strike and the strength of the working class.

**What role did you in the NSSP play in the events leading up to the 1980 General Strike?**

**S**—We had predicted long before that the UNP would win the election and would act against the masses. So after the 1976 strike, when we were still members of the LSSP, we called on the leaders to rally and unite the working class and help to build a united independent trade union movement, but they refused.

After the formation of the NSSP in December 1977 we began to campaign for the Joint Trade Union Action Committee (JTUAC) to unite all trade unions in the fight against cuts, redundancies, repressive laws and so on. We knew when fighting for the JTUAC that it



*Average wages in Sri Lanka are 500 Rupees a month—yet a family with 3 children needs 1500 Rupees just to survive.*

would not in the beginning be a real democratic body with workers' delegates, but that it would be a first step from which to build unity. From the start the JTUAC was dominated by the CP, LSSP and SLFP leaders.

**M**—Soon after the government came to power, it produced a new trade union system. Under this new law, all trade unions were to come under government control, with government nominating all the leadership of the unions. This was opposed by the JTUAC, after pressure from our party. The government retreated and kept quiet about it for a time.

**What happened next?**

**S**—After that the government tried to introduce a new economic system. The PF government had a closed economy, but the new government wanted an open economy, calling on all the Tories in the world to come and invest their money in Sri Lanka. There they could get cheap labour and earn more money to take back to their own countries.

So the UNP introduced a free trade zone, like in Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong. Some Tories are willing to come, but they need one major condition—that there will be no trade unions and no left parties. This UNP government

is trying to smash the trade unions because of that.

At the beginning of 1978, they couldn't smash the trade unions because of the strength of the working class. From 1978, they began to remove the subsidies of the masses, taking away rice rations and so on. They devalued the currency, and really went on to the economic side because they had failed on the trade union side.

They began to put more and more pressure on the masses in the country.

**M**—The government declared war on the working class. Because of this a big force came up from the rank-and-file in the trade unions for something to be done. But the opportunist leaders of the trade unions refused to prepare their organisations to face this government action. They ran away. We said we needed to prepare our forces to resist.

With this situation, in March 1979, the government reintroduced its trade union legislation as a white paper. The JTUAC decided to launch a mass protest campaign against the white paper from 1st to 31st March, with mass picketing and so on. The government retreated again. They couldn't pass their law because of the pressure of the workers. After that there were several campaigns against the government.

**We have heard about the Workers' Conference that took place in March of 1980. Can you tell us more about it?**

**S**—Our party and trade unions had been campaigning for a long time in the JIUAC to call workplace leaders together to discuss the situation. Many of the workers' leaders were not prepared to act, but the workers were. The JIUAC leaders couldn't resist and eventually the conference was called for 8th and 9th March.

At the Conference the workers decided to have a general strike if the government did not agree to their 23 demands, for increased wages and subsidies, an end to repressive laws and so on.

**M**—The conference decided to prepare for the general strike with preliminary actions; distributing leaflets, organising lunch hour meetings etc. A day of protest, called for 5th June, was part of this preparation and had a good response in the whole country. The main action taken was picketing campaigns.

**What is a picketing campaign?**

**M**—A picketing campaign means that all the workers in their lunch hour come on to the street and have placards with slogans and demands. It is not the same as strike action.

The government didn't stand by and watch us picketing on 5th June. They organised to crush it. They sent their own picket lines against the workers' picket lines, which meant basically organised thugs under picket boards to attack the workers.

Right opposite our trade union headquarters a militant CP worker was killed by a bomb thrown by these thugs.

**When was a decision made for the date of the general strike?**

**S**—On the day of the funeral of the comrade who was killed, all the Colombo area workers decided to participate. A half-day general strike resulted because more than 50 000 workers marched to the funeral.

This was the real beginning of the general strike. The railways management refused to take the workers back, so the workers

decided to strike. This happened elsewhere as well, but mainly the railways.

**When did the JIUAC become involved?**

**S**—The railway workers came out on 7th July, about one month after the funeral. Because the government refused to reinstate, nearly 5 000 workers at the main railway depot came out, even those in the UNP unions.

This spread to the whole railway sector, with workers demanding reinstatement, a wage rise of 300 Rupees (about R14.28) per month and a 5 rupee increase for each rise in the cost of living index. Average wages in Sri Lanka are 400 Rupees a month (R19.04).

Workers at trade union branches all over began to pass resolutions in support of the railway workers, and calling for strike action as they all wanted the 300 Rupee increase. The JIUAC leaders delayed, but eventually called a general strike from 14th July.

**Did the whole of Colombo come out?**

**S**—The JIUAC made a mistake when deciding for the general strike. They didn't fix a date, only a time period between 14th and 21st July.

On 14th July all the largest sections came out; others followed. The unions led by our Party came out. On the 17th the government declared an Emergency. All workers in the government sector on strike were sacked under the Essential Services Law. Bank accounts were frozen, trade union buildings seized, and union presses closed down.

As a result no more workers came out after the 17th. Their leaders no more actively worked to bring them out.

**What was the extent of the strike in other areas?**

**M**—The strike spread all over. The most important place after Colombo for strike action was Jaffna, a Tamil city in the North. **S**—The strike spread over the whole island, involving 200 000 workers. The strike could have reached a much higher point if all the workers' leaders had attempted

to mobilise all sections.

**Did you receive support from the peasantry?**

**S**—This was the first time really that the peasants gave straightforward support to a strike. Usually the bourgeoisie tries to prevent them supporting workers' action, playing on the fact that food isn't transported and everything comes to a standstill.

But this time, they collected food and organised transport themselves of food to the cities. This has been important because the unions can't afford strike pay. We have to rely on food and collections from the masses.

**What about the plantation workers?**

**S**—40% of the Sri Lankan workers are in agriculture, who have the most terrible conditions. But the UNP controls their unions. The leader of the plantation workers, Thondaman, is a Minister in the UNP government. The workers supported the demands of the strike, but were held back by their leaders.

**Has the strike been called off?**

**M**—No. It has been going six months now. The government says there isn't a strike. It has sacked 100 000 government sector workers, and there is no point to call off the strike until they are taken back.

Very few workers have gone back. The businessmen are worried about their money, and have taken workers back. But the government doesn't give a damn about the country. It has taken on some new hands, but the administration has collapsed.

**What is the future of the GCSU now that so many workers are sacked?**

**M**—Our union has 17 500 members out of 22 000 clerical service workers. 15 500 have been sacked, which means big financial and organisational problems, but we will continue.

**What was the role of the different parties in the strike?**

**S**—All the opposition parties supported the strike in words but not all in action.



**SCENES FROM THE GENERAL STRIKE: (right) Police thug threatens workers; (below) Mass meeting of the GCSU.**



The CP is the main workers' party, with unions in the government sector, postal, health, transport and private sector. The CP gave instructions to workers to come out on strike but didn't organise for them to come out. The SLFP and LSSP leaders supported the strike in words but are still looking to the next election. All these parties came to the 8th August protest day, but not in real strength.

Only our party and trade unions came in strength, and our General Secretary and many leaders were arrested.

**M**—Not even all the unions inside the JIUAC took part in the strike. Bala Tampoe for example, a leader of the Ceylon Mercantile Workers' Union and a leader of the Mandelite so-called "Fourth International", threatened to sack some of his branches from the union when they came out on strike.

#### **What was the nature of government repression of the strike?**

**M**—Nearly 500 were arrested. 100 000 lost their jobs. They imposed press censorship so that all material to be published had to go to a censorship board. All they would allow us to publish was blank papers! But illegal papers came out and were distributed.

#### **Did the government succeed in seizing the trade union offices?**

**S**—They closed 14 trade union buildings. They announced they were going to take the GCSU headquarters as well, with the army, navy, armoured cars etc. But hundreds of workers gathered inside, and said the armed forces could take the building only if they killed the workers first. The government retreated. All night long the bourgeois reporters and cameramen waited for the armed forces, but they didn't come.

#### **What was the role of the army?**

**S**—The conditions in the army are not very good. So we got sympathy from the army who didn't really want to take action against the workers.

When the workers were marching in the streets on 8th August the army was sent to harass them. The

workers shouted "We want your support; we need solidarity", and the army took their feet one step back. So their officers were sent instead, and an inquiry was held afterwards to find out why the troops disobeyed orders.

It was the police and UNP thugs who were the most vicious to the workers.

#### **What were your own particular responsibilities during the strike?**

**S**—We proposed to the JIUAC to organise a secretariat to convey messages and maintain contact with other cities and villages because the bourgeoisie had the radio and press to spread lies about the strike. But they refused. So we went ahead.

We had comrades on duty 24 hours a day on a rota, answering questions, distributing materials, helping with legal facilities and so on. Workers came from all the different unions to discuss this. Everyday we would be addressing meetings in Colombo.

We had a chart also and each day leading comrades were sent to all parts of the country to discuss the strike. The Party leaders were organising the branches, for support and the distribution of food.

**M**—I had responsibility for my union, discussing with the strikers, and also for the Party and participating in the JIUAC. I was arrested with Comrades Vasu and Bahu and other leaders of our Party and trade unions on 8th August and so for 45 days I was in prison.

We are facing trial now and if we are found guilty we could go to jail for 20 years. There are 14 bogus charges, like attempted murder, misleading the workers, riotous assembly and so on.

#### **What effect did the strike have on support for your party?**

**S**—It had a great effect. Many area organisers in the CP and SLFP are looking to our party. They see that we have not only been talking but really acting against the UNP government. They see other parties saying a lot of things about the working class, but when a real situation comes, we can't see them.

Only our party committed all its forces. Only our party went to the prisons. Only our party had the

structures to organise the strike.

#### **What are the main lessons you draw from these events?**

**S**—From the beginning of the strike our party put forward the idea that we couldn't get our demands from this government. To win our demands we would have to get the support of the masses, and in order to get the support of all sections of the country, we must have a political alternative. We said all the left parties must get together and form a left front to defeat the government.

Unite the working class, and unite the left against the capitalist government, that was our slogan.

From the very beginning we knew we didn't have the support of the whole working class. But the strike came up from the bottom, and as a revolutionary party, as Bolsheviks, we had to organise to support the strike.

The lesson we have to learn is that the bureaucrats and opportunist workers' leaders are a barrier to the workers' struggle at this stage. Without a proper democratic organisation of the workers, without the organisation of all workers, we cannot move the strike to a higher stage.

Also, without a political alternative in the country, we can't have mass scale support for the working class and the youth. This is a major lesson to learn from the strike.

#### **What is your perspective for the period ahead?**

**S**—We think the government has gained a temporary hold on the situation. But the whole economic crisis is opening up.

The working class has taken one step back to prepare for the next struggle. The working class is not demoralised, and continues to campaign for its demands. We think that next year there will be another big strike movement and that the government won't be able to repress it like now. The masses are angry and they won't wait three years for the next election.

At the party level we are putting forward the idea of organising a left front to defeat this government. We have taken all the concrete problems of the masses—unemp-

# The Garbage "Strongarm"

In eight days, a strike of ten thousand black workers in the pay of the Johannesburg City Council was crushed. In terms of both the duration of the strike and the staggering number of workers involved this sounds incredible. The fact remains that this section of the workforce has suffered a heavy blow at the hands of the capitalist robbers.

The City Council authorities used the police in forcing the workers, at gun point, to work. When this failed, these capitalist bandits continued to use the police. At gun point, the police split the workers and subsequently succeeded in bundling—they have coined a word 'busing' to hide their savage

acts against the workers—1 200 workers to the Bantustan poverty graveyard.

These workers were not allowed to collect their belongings. The compound officials, the sergeants-at-arms who enforce order in the labour camps called compounds, described the belongings of the workers as "rubbish". The workers were starved for two days until 3.00 a.m. Friday when they were given a half-loaf or a loaf of bread. The 1 200 workers are to be replaced with a contingent—dragooned by poverty—from the Bantustans.

Besides the very criminal act on the part of the government in using Council officials and police armed with shot-guns, TI rifles, and

by P. Qubulashe

[The writer, born in the Transkei, first worked as a 'paniwela' on a Natal sugar plantation at the age of 13. Returning to school, he was expelled for political activities; participated in the Pondoland uprising; went as a migrant worker to the gold mines; and later entered industry as a machine operator. He has many years' experience in underground political work.]

semi-automatic pistols against defenceless workers, the same government orders the arrest of the union leader, Joseph Mavi, as a political offender. He faces charges under either the Riotous Assemblies Act or the General Law Amendment Act, both of which contain sections referring to breaches of contract by employees in public utility services and the disrupting or threatening of these services.



Fanie Botha, Minister of Manpower Utilisation, and his civil servant bureaucrats give funny explanations in trying to justify the police action against workers.

Fanie Botha complained that "the Government's conciliation machinery was available to the strikers, but they had chosen not to use it". But if the strikers ignored it, as they did, was Fanie troubled to ask the question: why do the workers refuse to use his machinery?

## Slapped

A little bureaucrat, a so-called senior civil servant, adds his funny arguments to Fanie's. He convulses in an epileptic fashion: "For years these people (which people?—P.Q.) bombarded us with demands that we allow black trade unions to register and join the system (sic). Now, when we agree to that, they slap us in the face."

Unfortunately, the workers did slap the face of this bunch of bureaucrats! For the trap was set for workers in the form of what Fanie Botha calls "Government conciliation machinery". In other words, the so-called legal permission of the capitalists for the workers to form and register their trade unions.

But this trap did not frighten the workers. Instead the capitalists themselves got frightened as the workers beat them at their own trick.

For what is this so-called legal permission? Here this learned civil servant along with his master betray their total dishonesty. The government refused to register the Black Municipal Workers Union under its "conciliation machinery". The City Council refused to negotiate with this union on the grounds that it is not registered. And further, the Council sponsored a reactionary union, the Union of Johannesburg Municipal Workers, which does not represent the workers but represents the Council against the workers.

Of course, no worker expects honesty from this crowd of bandits. The workers slapped the face of the bureaucrats—by striking.

The liberals and their sycophants

wildly moan over "the disgraceful tactics" and the "strongarm tactics" of the Council in breaking the strike. Now, to be morally indignant, like these liberal gentry and some political cranks, over the criminal acts of the capitalist government against the workers is either not to understand the whole class issue or to cloud deliberately that very class question.

It is like some learned people who claim to be fighting for the interests of the workers (not that the workers need anybody to fight for them), but insist that the workers should only involve themselves in trade union activity but not in class political activity.

For the government has always been making the point clear that this is a class conflict. The capitalist laws weigh down heavily on the workers. Hence a breach of contract by workers is a criminal offence. The stoppage of work by workers in support of their wage demands is by the same laws stipulated as an act of sabotage. The municipal workers were operating an "essential service", where strikes are always illegal and disputes must be submitted to "compulsory arbitration by a third party"—in other words the government and the whole crowd of capitalists hiding behind it.

## 'Public order'

In fact the same wailing liberals did not object to the presence of the police. The Rand Daily Mail of August 1st stated "Policemen were present, which they must be when public order might be endangered". In addition to this, a policeman stated, for the benefit of his masters, that "our interests are simply to ensure peace and calm, and to stay out of domestic grievances".

But there was no evidence that "public order might be endangered" by the workers. And when and how did the issue cease to be "domestic grievances"?

All this crowd—the liberals and the government alike—have chosen to ignore the fact that the City Council authorities, when refusing to meet the demands of the workers, were therefore responsible

for "public order" being "endangered"; and that for that very same reason the "domestic grievances" had ceased to be "domestic"; and that Fanie's "government conciliation machinery", consequent on the refusal to register the workers' union, rendered that machinery useless for the workers.

## Conviction

On their grounds, the liberals should have argued for the conviction of the City Council under the Riotous Assemblies Act and the General Law Amendment Act. But they didn't, which makes it outrightly clear, despite the apparent bickering within this variegated crowd, that they are unanimous on the question of police intervention on the side of the capitalists, for they also consider strike action by workers as constituting a public disturbance. Hence the same issue of the **Rand Daily Mail** notices no absurdity in the statement that "At least up to yesterday morning the police approach to the strike was proper and correct".

Marx long ago explained this question of class conflict in terms which up to date still remain true: "a class struggle is a political struggle". And the important point is that class conflict can never be resolved by arguments but by force. So the "proper and correct approach" for the capitalists is when the police are there—strategically positioned to assault the workers whenever the authorities, intoxicated with the possibility of victory, find reason to massacre defenceless workers.

In fact the "strongarm tactics" the liberals secretly appreciate and endorse. But there is a nightmare, inherent in this action, that haunts them.

This fear of the liberals is expressed in the editorial of the **Rand Daily Mail** in this manner: "That is no way to end a labour conflict; it does not resolve grievances but at best can only force them out of sight, perhaps to surface later in more virulent form". Since these workmen limited their grievances to wage questions, say these able agents of capitalism, the liberals, the City

Council should have met the wage demands.

For what has offended the liberals in relation to the brutal handling of workers is the fact that such puffed up arrogance and savage recklessness of the City Council through the actions of the police betrays the stupidity of the capitalist authorities. **This in turn, and this being most feared by liberals, enables the workers to explode, in their class workers' consciousness, the myth that the**

workers, on the side of the capitalists. That has never played a decisive role in the defeat of the workers. At most it has been a contributory factor.

One learned commentator of the SABC noted that in Johannesburg the employer and production did not suffer from the strike. But he failed to explain why. Perhaps, we may assume, he feared to reveal the truth. We, on the contrary, are not averse to truth.

This commentator should have



**police force or the whole capitalist state machinery is neutral on the question of class conflict between the capitalists and workers.**

We may permit ourselves to ask Mr Editor of the RDM a question. Since, Mr Editor, you mention the consequences "at best", what will it be "at worst"? Is it not when the capitalist state is itself the issue at stake?

The liberals and their kind explain the defeat of the strike by the "strongarm tactics" of the police and the council. But this is no explanation. The police have always intervened, in every dispute between the capitalists and the

known that the fifty electricians who started it all, and who have since been fired, constituted a very significant number to affect production and employers. But white electricians came to man the electric installations. These white workers work with the assistance of what they call "piccanin" electricians who do most of the work at low wages. And these white worker electricians have not yet found reason to down tools.

That is not because they are "responsible", but because their high wages and all the socio-economic privileges accorded to them as a capitalist political measure to

swindle them have blurred their working-class consciousness. Hence they cannot even support their black counterparts. This then, is one aspect of the explanation of why the strike failed.

The second aspect of the defeat of the strike is that the capitalists designed the Bantustan in such a manner that there should always be a huge army of starving unemployed workers in the Bantustans. These starved unemployed workers are, at a moment's notice, brought in to replace dismissed fellow workers.

This state of affairs is confirmed in no uncertain terms by the reactionary Mr N.E. Mulaudzi, so-called deputy director of the Homelands Information Service, who is reported to have said that "the Council had approached the Venda government for help in recruiting fresh labour", and that "magistrates in four districts would report by next Wednesday on whether labour would be available". Thus the question of recruiting unskilled labour, the majority of the municipal workers, played well right into the hands of the City Council scoundrels, thereby enabling these capitalist villains to smash the strike.

## United

From these two points, which make up the cause of the defeat of the strike, a disturbing fact emerges—that the workers are not well organised.

If the workers were properly organised, the Bantustan bubble would have burst asunder at the slightest touch. The question of unskilled labour could not have been decisive in the defeat of the strike if the workers of other industrial sectors had come up in support of the Municipal workers.

Therefore the question of national working class unity is fundamentally important and necessary for the struggle of the working class at whatever level it is carried on. That unity of the working class would have forced the police, pursuing their "interests" of truncheoning, booting and butting defenceless workers, to stop this pursuit altogether.

The same commentator on the SABC announced that the horrors of Europe and America, where society is held to ransom by "irresponsible people", (he means workers) had arrived in Johannesburg.

We may, in passing, give a friendly piece of advice to this learned commentator, that it is important to know history in order to understand the social processes. This same section of the black working class—the municipal workers—struck in 1918 in support of wage demands. The defeat of 1980, like that of 1918, is not a new phenomenon in South African labour history.

Instead 1980 reveals a continuous process in the history of South African capitalism. A process which is subject to laws of change both in quantity and in quality. It is this character of changeability that gives more and more strength to the combativity of the working class. In this process of developmental change the workmen get more and more well organised in big fighting contingents. This is precisely what terrifies the liberals, the able agents of capitalism.

But we also agree with the learned commentator, but not from his expressed point of view of horror and dismay, that the deadly intensified class conflict in Europe has now become a way of life in capitalist South Africa.

For us that is a point which shows the decay of capitalism the world over, and the maturing development of the working class not only in Europe, but all over the world.

Decayed capitalism is a social garbage. That the ten thousand strong workmen have been defeated by this garbage is like the act of a man who deviates from the path that leads him to his decided goal. He had to deviate because on that path there is a heap of garbage that emits choking stench and he happens not to have a mask to protect himself. And, indeed, a garbage stench is a killer, given certain conditions.

In that respect, the ten thousand strong workforce has merely retreated—in order to regroup at a higher plane, with more battle equipment.

# TRADE UNION

Last year a number of activists in SACTU published a pamphlet: "The Workers' Movement, SACTU, and the ANC—A Struggle for Marxist Policies." It explained their position in a political dispute within SACTU which the organisation's leadership had refused to allow to be debated.

INQABA agrees with the viewpoint in the pamphlet, but we think the political points in it need to be developed further, showing their full implications in practice not only for the trade unions and SACTU, but also for the ANC.

Recently, an article attacking the pamphlet has appeared in the African Communist. We are publishing here a reply to that article.

Regrettably, the writer in the African Communist quite wrongly supports the unconstitutional action taken against the SACTU activists, who were suspended from ANC membership without any hearing, and are still suspended

more than a year later!

The writer in the African Communist says an amazing thing. He thinks that "we" should "not rest content with disciplinary action", but should "try to understand the incorrect theory" in the pamphlet. In other words: "shoot first and ask questions afterwards"! That approach may be the hallmark of Stalinism, but it is totally foreign to the democracy of the workers' movement.

A proper debate on the issues raised in the pamphlet, in the African Communist, and in the article published here would be very important in the ranks of SACTU and the ANC.

INQABA calls on the ANC National Executive to lift the suspensions imposed on the comrades in October 1979. There should also be an immediate end to undemocratic practices like excluding them from meetings—even public meetings!—of the ANC.

A central feature of the surging mass movement in our country in the 1970s has been the struggle for organisation at the point of production—in the factories, the docks, the mines, the farms—and, out of this, the rebirth of independent trade unions. As each forward thrust of the movement ebbs into a temporary lull, it reveals ever more factories organised, and a swelling membership of an increasing number of trade unions.

The growth of factory organisation and of the trade unions is spurred by the same fierce determination which marks the movement as a whole, in township, countryside and school. The extent to which open organisation has been built during the 1970s is an unprecedented historic achievement, reflecting favourable objective circumstances for the mass movement. At the same time, as yet only a tiny fraction of the African workers are organised in the workplace. The unions which have come into existence live, for the

most part, on the edge of legality. The independent union movement as a whole as yet contains many divisions; national organisation is rudimentary. The huge strides that have been made are dwarfed by the tasks that lie ahead.

What is the role of the trade unions in the revolutionary struggle which is unfolding in South Africa? What is the role of revolutionaries in the trade unions? The answer to these questions is vital for the whole liberation movement.

In early 1979, Robert Petersen, then Editor of *Workers' Unity*, the official journal of the South African Congress of Trade Unions, submitted a memorandum to the SACTU NEC as a contribution to the discussion of these questions. The NEC, making no response to this memorandum, dismissed the Editor from his post, and in subsequent months stifled all attempts to have these important issues debated in the ranks of SACTU. Comrade Petersen and some of those supporting the ideas of the memorandum were later

# STRUGGLE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN REVOLUTION

unconstitutionally suspended from membership of the ANC.

Throughout this period, neither the SACTU nor the ANC leadership offered any political arguments for their actions. The SACTU leadership asserted only, without further explanation, that the Editor was "putting forward policies which were not those of SACTU". However, nearly a year after these actions, a reply to the Editor's memorandum has appeared—in the *African Communist* [2nd Quarter 1980], official journal of the South African Communist Party. The reply is by an anonymous "Reader".

All South African revolutionaries will be concerned to consider this article, titled "The Role of Trade Unions in the South African Revolution", and to weigh its arguments against those of the memorandum, published in a pamphlet, *The Workers Movement, SACTU, and the ANC*. [abbreviated below as WM]. This is not a question of academic theorising. For, in the huge struggles that lie ahead, the penalties for mistaken policies can and will be devastating.

## Capitalism

The struggles of the masses over the last decade expose ever more clearly the burdens heaped on the majority of the people. Starvation in the Bantustans, poverty wages, the lengthening queues of the unemployed, the degrading pass laws, prices which rise from day to day, slave education, homelessness,

By Richard Monroe

squalid amenities—these are the daily lot of the masses.

In the face of the mounting struggles, the rulers of society reveal, more and more starkly, **their total inability to satisfy a single demand of the masses**. At the same time, in the mass movement there is a growing determination to call no halt until the heavy load of oppression is lifted from the shoulders of **all** the people. This irreconcilable clash of forces is the essence of the impending revolutionary situation in South Africa.

What lies at the root of this conflict? As Marxism explains, the clash is not accidental. Revolution in society comes about because the

existing order is acting as a **brake** on the development of society, and as this fact impresses itself of *necessity in the experience of the masses*.

At the root of the unfolding revolution in South Africa lies the bankruptcy of capitalism. For generations South African capitalism, dependent on a system of cheap labour, has held back the all-round development of society and confined the mass of the people to an existence of misery and humiliation. Today, as the capitalist system through the world moves once again into crisis, the capitalist class in South Africa can survive only by intensifying its control and exploitation of the people.

These basic realities were the departure point of Petersen's memorandum, and are apparently accepted by the comrade writing in the *African Communist*:

"the **fundamental** economic and political demands of the people cannot be achieved on the basis of the capitalist order in South Africa...national liberation can only be achieved on the basis of the destruction of the political and economic foundations of the apartheid system"(AC, p.83).

## Bridges

Yet to merely state this in words is nothing more than a beginning. For Marxism, as for the mass movement, the critical questions are the **practical means** by which this struggle is carried through to its conclusion. It is here that our comrade in the *African Communist* falls into dangerous errors.

More and more, in the experience of mass struggle, the oppressed are discovering that **there is not a single concrete need that can be fully satisfied without sweeping away, not simply the**



Car workers are showing their growing determination in struggle.

**apartheid regime, but the capitalist class that shelters behind it.** The bourgeoisie themselves, shivering in their boots, identify their basic struggle as the defence of 'free enterprise'.

As Petersen's memorandum explains, the task of revolutionaries is to clearly draw out this lesson; it is to strengthen and unify the movement by linking together all the struggles over day-to-day needs to the central tasks of the revolution.

## Programme

How is this to be done? A vital aspect of this is the development of a programme of revolutionary demands—of demands, stemming from the daily needs of working people, which show the way forward to the revolution. For the revolution will come about precisely as the masses are united in determination to strike at the heart of the fetters which block the satisfaction of daily needs.

While the demands of the trade unions are primarily economic, as Petersen's memorandum points out they are linked on every side to political issues. In every sphere of struggle—whether it is a question of wages, trade union rights, the pass laws or political rights—the same method of posing demands applies. In a section focussing on economic demands, the memorandum spells out this method very clearly:

**"How do we correctly link the workers' economic demands to the revolution? This is an art which we can fully master only when we are actively involved in leading the actual struggles of the workers themselves. But there is one basic rule, which we have tried to follow in 'Workers' Unity'. This is to put forward demands which are supported by the workers as clearly right and reasonable, but which strike at the very root of apartheid and the capitalist system. They are demands, in other words, which cannot be conceded by our enemy—in some cases not at all, in others at least not on any per-**

manent basis...

**"We have to bring out in practice—not merely through the demands, but through struggles organised round the demands—the total incapacity of the system in South Africa (or any reforms within that system) to provide a decent life for the working people."**[WM,p.48]

Thus the revolutionary movement must put forward demands that:

**"clearly answer the needs of the people in their daily lives—but cannot be secured in practice except through the overthrow of the apartheid regime and (because they come up against the barriers of the capitalist system) on the basis of the transition to socialism.**

By organising and struggling on the basis of these demands, the mass of the workers will be drawn through experience towards revolutionary consciousness and action." [WM,p.47]

The comrade in the **African Communist** concedes the need for strengthening the self-confidence and power of the mass movement in day-to-day struggle:

**"The mobilisation of the masses and their success in winning concessions as the outcome of struggle is of fundamental importance in overcoming frustration and developing self-consciousness in the struggle."** [AC, p.84]

The demands raised, he concedes also, must be linked with "the revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the regime"[AC, p.85]. Yet he categorically rejects the organisation of struggle around a programme of demands **"which cannot be met except as the outcome of a successful revolutionary transformation of the society,"** [AC,p.85]. To formulate demands in such a way, he argues, "is to guarantee that the struggle will fail to achieve them." [AC,p.85]!

This, comrade is a startling conclusion! The masses, you concede, need to overthrow capitalism in order to solve any fundamental problem. Yet to organise the mass struggle around a programme of their concrete demands which capitalism cannot meet is doomed

to failure. The masses need to be rid of capitalism, yet cannot overthrow it!

What alternative does the comrade offer? In contrast to the position put forward by Petersen, this article in the **African Communist** does not put forward any concrete demands at all. The writer argues merely for the mobilisation of the mass struggle around what are vaguely called "specific demands" or "intermediate demands"—presumably demands which he believes can be met within the framework of South African capitalism. In this way, he claims, "frustration" is prevented by ensuring for the mass movement "success in winning concessions as the outcome of struggle."

Indeed it is true that the mass struggles of the last decade in South Africa have achieved important if partial victories. But this in no way contradicts the fact that South African capitalism is bankrupt.

That these gains have been won reflects the strength of the mass movement—and each such gain further weakens the South African capitalist class. Revolutionaries in the mass movement fight alongside their fellow-workers in every struggle for every partial gain, striving to strengthen the fighting capacity of the movement.

## No lasting basis

But the ruling class cannot in any way afford to permit such gains to survive on a lasting basis. It wrestles ever more desperately to dilute them and take back more than it has been forced to concede. **Thus no illusion must be sown that these gains are anything more than partial, subject at the slightest weakening of the workers' movement to reversal.**

The comrade in the **African Communist** seems to reject this reality:

**"The idea that every gain won by the working class is merely absorbed by capital to its own advantage is an old one; it is an idea which totally underestimates the gains made in many spheres by the working class (political and trade union rights**

etc) in different countries." [AC,p.84]

For a start, who is arguing that capital can "absorb" our demands "to its own advantage"? The point made in the memorandum is the opposite one—that the capitalists inevitably battle to claw back every concession which strikes at the root of their profits.

## Concessions

Indeed the working class in many countries, through struggle, has wrested concessions from the capitalist class. In the boom after the Second World War, workers in the major capitalist countries secured substantial advances in standards of living and rights. Here, for a period, the capitalist class had room to manoeuvre.

Yet, inevitably, capitalist crisis has recurred and the capitalist class is launching an assault on every one of the gains that have been achieved. Increasingly, those right-wing leaders of Social Democracy who have preached the possibilities of continuous secure "gains" within the framework of capitalism incur the wrath of the workers.

Subject to reversal even in the major capitalist countries, the gains achieved through mass struggle under capitalism are **infinitely**

more fragile in South Africa.

Must the inability of capitalism to make permanent concessions to the workers lead inevitably (as the **African Communist's** "Reader" suggests would be the case) to demoralisation and passivity of the working class?

On the contrary. Over the last decade in our country the mass movement has, with the exertion of huge energies, won only partial gains. Some of these have already been taken back. **Yet today the working class stands stronger and more confident than ever in South African history.** In the face of the crisis of the capitalist class, its very frustration impels it not into passivity, but **into an even more determined search for the way forward to the destruction of the regime and the overthrow of capitalism.**

It is to develop a programme that **builds the bridges** towards that end that revolutionaries in the mass movement must direct their energies. For, as the crisis deepens, the gulf will grow more irreconcilable between what capitalism can afford and what the people need.

Can South African capitalism survive while paying a living wage to the whole of the working class? Can it survive without the pass laws? Can it survive while conceding the right to strike? Can South

African capitalism guarantee jobs for all the people? The answer, revealed in its whole history, and revealed more starkly in the current crisis, is **NO**—a hundred times **NO**!

In this situation, to draw back towards raising only those demands which capitalism can afford will more and more tail behind the explosive forward movement of the workers themselves. In contrast to the practical development of a bold revolutionary programme, **it is the attempt to confine the movement within these narrow limits which (far from ensuring success) would threaten it with "frustration"—and, ultimately, with "passivity", "demoralisation", and defeat.**

## Trade unions

The comrade in the **African Communist** appears to believe that Comrade Petersen's memorandum accords the **leading** role in the revolution to the trade union movement, and reduces the struggle to the struggle at the point of production. But this is not the position of the memorandum and indeed it would be a ludicrous position for any Marxist to argue. The memorandum deals, on the one hand, with the general nature and tasks of the revolution in South Africa and the corresponding tasks of the workers' movement. On the



*Pass-burning in the 1950s. Can South African capitalism survive without the pass laws?*

other hand, it deals with the responsibilities of **SACTU as a trade union organization** in relation to these general tasks.

The struggle against national oppression and capitalism in South Africa is in no way confined to the trade union struggle or the struggle at the point of production. At the same time, the struggle to build factory organisation and independent trade unionism is a vital part of the struggle as a whole. Within the trade union sphere, as in every other sphere of struggle, the task is to unify and strengthen the movement of the masses around a single revolutionary programme.

It is not for nothing that all around the world the building of the trade union movement is etched in blood in the history of the working class. For, under capitalism, the fight to combine at the point of production against the boss is a fight for the very survival of the workers. Friedrich Engels, the life-long comrade of Marx, summed up this lesson of the workers' movement in 1881:

"If the isolated workman tries to drive his bargain with the capitalist, he is easily beaten and has to surrender at discretion; but if a whole trade of workmen form a powerful organisation, collect among themselves a fund to enable them to defy their employers if needs be, and thus become enabled to treat with those employers as a power, then, and only then, have they the chance to get even that pittance which according to the economical constitution of present society, may be called a fair day's wages for a fair day's work." [**The Wages System**].

## **"Can South African capitalism guarantee jobs for all the people?...The answer is NO."**

Just the fight for the means of survival itself represents, therefore, a challenge to the right of the capitalists to exact unlimited profits. But it is more than this. For, in building the trade unions, the working class—"defying" and "treating with the employers as a power"—constitutes itself as a collective force, and strengthens its



*Capitalism cannot concede pensions or basic social welfare to the majority of the working class in South Africa.*

organised confidence in its ability to overthrow capitalism.

The trade unions, the great teachers of Marxism have pointed out, are **schools** of the working class. As Engels pointed out in the same article, "the whole action of Trade Unions as now carried on, is not an end in itself, but a means, a very necessary and effective means, but only one of several means towards a higher end: the abolition of the wages system altogether."

For all these reasons the capitalist class has, wherever possible, waged a relentless struggle to hold back the development of trade unions. The establishment of open legal trade unions, and the gains won by those trade unions, has been achieved only through the struggle of the workers.

Where trade union rights have been secured, the capitalist class—no longer able simply to repress—

jeopardy at the hands of a capitalist class in the throes of mounting economic crisis.

Thus the struggle to build strong and united trade unions is in no way separated, anywhere in the world, from the struggle to overthrow the capitalist class.

## **SA trade unions**

The same need of South African capitalism for cheap labour, which has held back the all-round development of society, has resulted in a ruthless war by the ruling class against the creation of trade unions by the mass of the workers.

At various stages in our history, mass trade unionism has begun to blossom, only to be crushed: the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union in the 1920's, the Confederation of Non-European Trade Unions in the 1940's, SACTU in the 1950's. Today, out of the repression of the 1960's, independent trade unionism flourishes again on an unprecedented scale.

The sphere of legal trade unionism enlarges itself precariously, subject always to the retaliation of the apartheid regime and the bosses. Yet it is among the partial gains of the last decade, a historic achievement of the workers' struggle.

To this day, the struggle for trade union freedom is met by the

supplements its tactics by trying to control, influence, bribe and corrupt the workers' leaders. Thus it hopes to lull the workers' movement, preparing to take back the gains that have been won. In Britain and the other major capitalist countries the gains in the trade union field, no less than elsewhere, are once again placed in



*The richest 10% in South Africa receive 58% of the national income.*

imprisonment, banishment, torture and murder of workers' leaders and the harassment and victimisation of trade unionists in general. Yet, reflecting its own weakness, the ruling class cannot contain this movement by repression alone. It is forced to supplement its tactics with new means of control and division—attempts to take back by manoeuvres the gains that have been won.

The comrade in the **African Communist** not only misunderstands the tasks which Comrade Petersen identifies for SACTU. His vague and abstract phrases about the need to "differentiate [the trade union struggle] from and yet link it to the general political struggle" [AC, p.85] completely fail to offer any concrete way forward to developing and building on the gains that have been achieved in the last decade. The founding principles of SACTU remain the most developed expression of the tasks of trade unionism in South Africa, striking a strong echo in the class. In what way, comrade, do **you** propose that a mass trade union movement should be built in South Africa which can develop these founding principles into a material force?

If the demands within the trade union field are to be limited to "specific demands", within the confines of what capitalism can afford, does this mean that trade

unionism should be restricted to what is legally recognised by the South African regime? Should the open trade unions accept registration?

Petersen's memorandum, in contrast, offers a method of work, in the trade union arena as elsewhere, which **draws on the lessons of the 1970's and on those of the workers' movement internationally.**

## Underground

In the present period the growth of open trade unions is gaining momentum, while at the same time is constantly under the threat of the sword. Increasingly the workers' movement has learnt that the foundations of this trade unionism, like those of the mass movement as a whole, must be built **underground.**

From here, the expansion of the legal arena and the open organisational framework of the trade unions can be built, based on strong factory shop-floor committees. The organisational linking of these underground networks can proceed hand in hand with the forging of a unified programme of demands, centred on wages and conditions of work, but embracing all aspects of the workers' life.

Through these means, the struggle for mass independent trade unionism, taking forward the founding principles of SACTU, can

serve, in the words of Engels, as "a means, a very necessary and effective means, but only one of several means" towards the abolition of national oppression and capitalism.

## Arming the mass

The comrade in the **African Communist** counterposes the mass struggle, where in his view the task is the raising of (unspecified) "intermediate demands", to the role of Umkhonto We Sizwe, which, he argues, stands alone in "direct and total opposition" [AC, p.85] to the state. But what is the reality?

Throughout its history, the South African ruling class has met the resistance of the masses with naked and unrestrained repression. Today, under the attempts to cloak its weakness in the rhetoric of "reform", the ruling class intensifies that repression. **Thus, more and more, even the most localised and partial struggle faces the threat of the full might of state power, and comes to stand "in direct and total opposition" to the state.**

Against this threat, as Petersen's memorandum pointed out, each local struggle increasingly poses the concrete need for organised and armed self-defence against the terror tactics of the state: for "armed defence, in favourable circumstances, of strikes, demonstrations, 'squatter' camps and schools; against police raids, pass arrests, forced removals and so forth." [WM, p.35]

The violence wielded by the apartheid regime against the masses and against mass struggle will not be ended until the ruling capitalist class is itself removed from power. Since at least the 1950's, this reality has impressed itself on wider and wider layers of the masses. As Petersen says,

The most advanced and politically conscious layers of the working class have never counterposed **armed struggle to mass struggle**, as if they were different things. For them and for us, it is a **question of the organization, mobilisation and arming of the mass of the people, headed by the organised workers, towards**

**the eventual armed insurrection and seizure of state power."**  
[WM,p.34]

Apparently acknowledging the correctness of this view, the "Reader" in the **African Communist** nevertheless comments:

"The question arises, however, of how and under what organizational form this self defence is to be organised? In our movement it has been recognised that while the armed movement must be under the command of the political, nonetheless it requires its own, separate form of organization." [AC,p.87]

Separate from what? "A Reader" does not deny that the task is to arm the mass of the people—and

**"...to carry through eventual mass armed insurrection, the cadres of MK must be integrated within the mass struggle."**

yet plainly argues that the armed cadre, instead of being under the discipline of the workers' movement, must be organised separately from the organisations of the masses!

Such a separation can only weaken the masses, depriving them of the means for defending their daily struggles. At the same time the organisation of the armed cadre separately from and outside the mass movement serves to isolate that cadre itself, exposing it more easily to the retaliation of the state.

Organised **separately** from the mass combat with the ruling class, MK cannot in practice constitute a force standing "in direct and total opposition" to the state. Already there are many indications that the right wing of our movement seeks to use armed struggle not for the defence and advance of the mass struggle, but as a lever towards negotiations with the ruling class.

Outside the practical control of the organisations of mass struggle, MK could be misused in this way. Along the path of negotiations there lies **no** solution to the basic problems of the masses. To prepare the mass movement to carry through eventual mass armed insurrection, the cadres of MK must be integrated within the mass struggle.

The comrade in the **African Communist** regards Comrade Petersen's arguments as "a particular economic and 'workerist' approach" [AC,p.81]:

"Implicit, and underlying the entire document, is the 'workerist' conception that the political struggle grows **directly** out of the immediate struggles at the point of production. For them, the wage struggle leads directly to the revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of apartheid and capitalism....The end result of the analysis...is...the abandonment of any conception of an alliance in the revolutionary struggle between the working class and the 'rural poor', together,

under the appropriate conditions, with the petty bourgeoisie." [AC,pp.82, 88]

Lenin, in the early years of the century, criticised as "economistic" that tendency in the Russian labour movement which sought to limit the activity of the working class to the trade union field alone. This, Lenin pointed out, **left the political sphere in the hands of other classes.**

But this is not the position of Petersen's memorandum. The memorandum does not seek, as "A Reader" suggests, to "reduce the complexities of the general revolutionary struggle to the trade union struggle". [AC,pp.88-9] Indeed, its position is the very opposite of this. Its entire thrust is to point at the need for **strengthening the full range of political activity by the working class, within the trade union field as well as outside it.**

The memorandum argues, not that the "wage struggle leads directly to the revolutionary struggle", not that "the political struggle grows directly out of the struggle at the point of production", but that neither the wage struggle itself (the struggle against poverty wages), nor any struggle at the point of production, can be resolved except through the overthrow of the apartheid regime and capitalism. *This can be achieved only through the working class arising en masse to its full historical tasks, not only in the factory, but in every realm of society.*

This position does not, as "A Reader" believes, neglect "the role of other classes" [AC,p.89]. It does not reduce the rural poor, or any of the oppressed, to "simple passive entities". [AC,p.89]

The mass movement of the 1970's has embraced widely diverse sections of the oppressed, all engaged



*To stop rising prices, capitalism must be overthrown.*

actively in struggle. Yet it is no accident that, against the intransigence of the regime, all other layers of society moving into action find it increasingly necessary to link up with the movement of the workers—or be reduced to impotence.

## Driving force

For the black working class, over the last decade, has revealed itself as the driving force in the mass struggle. At the start of 1981 it stands bloodied but undefeated.

Although black workers and their families constitute the overwhelming majority of the people, the role they have assumed is not simply a result of numerical weight. The black workers, without any privilege or property, feel the full impact of every burden heaped on the masses. At the same time it is the workers, concentrated in the factories, the mines, the docks and the farms, who turn the wheels of production—and can bring those wheels grinding to a halt.

As Marxism explains, only the working class as a mass **combines the consistent interest and the social power** to carry the struggle for national liberation, democracy, and the abolition of capitalism to its conclusion—through the establishment of a workers' democracy, and through initiating the building of socialism. It is for these reasons that the movement of the workers has the capacity to lead the struggle for the solution of the problems of all the oppressed.

**It is the comrade in the African Communist, in reality, who wishes to limit the tasks of the working class.** For him, the tasks of the working class are confined to the "immediate struggles at the point of production". For him there are



*The organisation of the migrant workers into the trade unions will have revolutionary significance.*

"structural conditions which tend to limit the horizons" [AC, p.88] of the workers in the trade unions. For him, it is impossible to conceive of mass struggle led by the working class around a programme of demands which capitalism cannot meet. For him, the workers' movement is not to be entrusted with the organisation of its armed self defence, which requires "separate organisation".

## "Other classes"

Beyond these narrow boundaries, for "A Reader", everything is "the role of other classes". **It is these arguments, and not those of Comrade Petersen's memorandum, which are precisely the "economism" which Lenin criticised.**

In the workplace, and outside it, the mass struggle will intensify in the coming period. The struggles of the 1970's and of 1980 are only a foretaste of what is to come. Their

resolution, the comrade in the **African Communist** correctly points out, is a **political** task.

Already, in the struggles of the last decade, a workers' leadership is taking shape in South Africa, as the vertebrae, sinews, and muscles of the living mass struggle as a whole. In this mass struggle of the oppressed, which will increasingly organise itself under the umbrella of the ANC, the working class must rise to the full tasks which lie before it: the overthrow of the apartheid regime and the capitalist class through mass armed insurrection. To achieve this goal, the active cadre of the workers' movement must grow, digesting the lessons of the struggle in South Africa and internationally—by mastering and applying the **real** method of Marxism.

The debate around SACTU and the role of the trade unions can, by raising for discussion questions that are vital to the struggle, make an important contribution towards clarifying the tasks facing workers and youth in South Africa today.

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# MONONO'A BONA — MASAPO'A RONA

Mr Basil Hersov succeeded his father as chairman of the giant Anglovaal group of companies in 1973. Life, however, is not all a bed of roses, despite after-tax profits of R72 623 000 in 1979: "My father used to say that it was easy to make money. The problem was to keep it".

From an interview in the *Financial Mail*, we learn how Mr Hersov relaxes from his worries: quail-hunting in Georgia, skiing in Switzerland, jaunting in his own twin-engined jet.

He piously claims that he has a responsibility to contribute to society, saying that it is basically just "morality—something you inherit from your parents. It's a way of life". He and his fellow businessmen (he says) are "leaders of change... alert to the needs of the time... planning for a completely non-discriminatory, free-market society with complete mobility".

But even Mr Hersov's altruism has its limits. "When I'm flying my plane, and get up to 30 000 feet, I look down and think to myself: 'What are these little people worried about?'"

The workers, whose blood and sweat create all wealth, will answer that question by hauling Hersov and his jetful of friends out of the clouds of their capitalist dream-world.



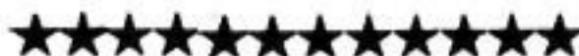
His Excellency, the self-proclaimed 'Life President' of Malawi, Ngwazi (the Conqueror), Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda, is not known

as a prominent supporter of the liberation struggle in South Africa. Not content with being the first head of an independent African country to pay a state visit to South Africa (in 1971), and exchanging ambassadors with the apartheid rulers, he has further cemented his ties with the regime by sending a message of "congratulations and best wishes" to the State President on Republic Day, 31 May 1980. Imports of goods from South Africa have risen from 23% of total imports to Malawi in 1974 to 41% in 1979.

Banda's one-party state is propped up by a private army of 25 000 Young Pioneers who are immune from arrest and act as they wish. As Banda says, "Here I am the boss, and anyone who doesn't know it is a fool."

The workers indeed do know that Banda is the biggest boss in Malawi. He owns 4 999 out of 5 000 shares in Press Holdings, a firm which accounts for an estimated 30% of all economic activity. In Malawi, strikes are forbidden and wage negotiations impossible. Average wages dropped 10% in real terms in 1979.

Like the South African capitalist class Dr Banda is terrified of the day when the oppressed masses will rise and cast off their chains. But he has found a way to keep his spirits up. In 1980 he bought four 20-seater aircraft to fly his teams of dancing women—the Mbamba—around the country to sing and cheer wherever he goes.



The Vestey family in Britain control an empire of 250 companies in 27 countries—worth, according to the London *Sunday Times* (5 October 1980), £600 million.

The head of this family is Lord Sam Vestey. His hobbies are the usual ones of his class: gambling, polo—and tax avoidance.

The Vestey family, probably the richest family in Britain, have paid almost no tax for 65 years. In 1978 their largest firm, Dewhurst butchers, paid only £10 in tax, despite making a profit of £2-3 million. More tax is paid by a British worker earning £30 a week!

But it is not only in avoiding taxes that the Vestey family show the true colours of their class. In Australia they built their fortune by 'paying' the black workers on their huge cattle ranches in kind alone. "We are opposed to the payment of wages to natives," they said in 1947. Since then, forced by the law to introduce wages, they have cut their black workforce by up to three-quarters, and driven the 'redundant natives' off their ancestral lands.

This is the sort of 'free enterprise' admired by the Tories in Britain. The Law Lords, Sam Vestey's fellow-peers, acquitted him in 1980 of criminal charges of evading taxes. Lord Thorneycroft, chairman of the Tory party, said that the Vestey family "deserved the best of luck".

Marx long ago said that we should abolish the right of inheritance. The workers movement, organised internationally, alone can do this—and put an end to the antics of Sam Vestey, his family, and his royal and titled cronies.

# Labour to power on a socialist programme!

## BRITAIN

**On 29 November 1980, 150 000 trade unionists and Labour supporters demonstrated against the massive unemployment created by the policies of the Conservative government of Thatcher—a sign of the growing anger of British working people at the conditions they are forced to endure by capitalism in crisis. Throughout the labour movement there is a growing demand for policies that can show a way out of the capitalist crisis. It is against this background that the ongoing struggles over the leadership and policies of the Labour Party should be seen. TONY SAUNOIS, representative of the Labour Party Young Socialists on the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party, explains the significance of these crucially important developments.**

The election of Michael Foot as leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party in November 1980 reflects the big shift towards the left that has taken place in the Labour Party over recent years. For the first time since the early 1930s, the right wing has failed to get its candidate elected.

Foot's opponent, Denis Healey, was backed by the capitalist press and the right-wing section of the Party leadership. Against Healey, Foot enjoyed the support of the vast majority of Labour's rank and file.

Foot's election was therefore a victory for the rank and file and a serious setback for the pro-capitalist right wing of the Party. It was a blow for the capitalist class, which had been determined that Labour's leadership should pass into the safe hands of Denis Healey. The editor of the leading capitalist newspaper,

"The Times", pronounced the judgment of his class:

"Mr Foot's election as leader of the Labour Party, is a terrible mistake for the Labour Party."

In the weeks following Michael Foot's election, Labour leaped 10% ahead of the Conservative Party in public opinion polls. Yet the struggle over Labour's leadership and programme has not been resolved. In fact, it is still in an early stage.

In Britain and on a world scale, the ruling class and the working class are being forced into collision by the pressures of capitalist crisis. The struggle in the Labour Party forms part of this growing conflict. To understand the course of developments in the British labour movement, it is necessary to look more closely at the crisis of capitalism in which these develop-

ments are rooted.

Britain, once one of the mightiest imperialist powers, is today regarded—together with Italy—as the 'sick man' of industrialised Europe.

The basic cause of Britain's decline lies in the failure of the capitalist class to invest in manufacturing industry, the bedrock of the modern economy. As a result, British industry has become less and less able to compete on the world market with its rivals. The inevitable consequence has been the decline and collapse of one British industry after another.

Between 1953 and 1972, British capital stock (machinery etc.) increased by an average of only 4.2% per year, compared with 5.8% in France, 7.0% in West Germany and 12.5% in Japan. Productivity (output per worker) thus increased by only 3.0% per year in Britain, while in Germany it rose by 5.0%, in France by 5.4% and in Japan by 8.9%.

As a result, Britain's share of world trade fell steadily, declining to 12.7% in 1961 and 7.0% in 1978.

Already lagging behind its rivals, British capitalism was hit all the harder by the capitalist world recession of the mid-1970s. More and more the British capitalist class sought its profits in speculation and investment outside the productive sector, while the country's industrial base went steadily to rack and ruin.

Property, land or works of art seem safer investments to the

British bourgeoisie than building new factories and providing jobs. In a recent auction in London, even some bottles of wine fetched a total of £2 500 000—not to be drunk by their wealthy buyers, but to be stored away and sold in future at even higher prices.

Capital stock actually **declined** by an average of 1.0% per year between 1973 and 1978. At the same time capital is exported from Britain to be invested in countries where conditions are more 'favourable' from the capitalists' point of view. In South Africa, for example, thanks to the apartheid laws, no less than £7 000 million of British capital is harboured.

In 1980, manufacturing investment is likely to be £3 450 million (expressed in 1975 prices), compared to £5 400 in distribution and service industries. In 1981, according to the Confederation of British Industry (the organisation of industrial capitalists), manufacturing investment will fall by more than 10%!

With world capitalism once again in a period of recession, the British capitalist class looks forward to a future of even worse decline. In a report on industrial prospects published in November 1980 the CBI Director, Sir Terence Beckett, openly admitted:

"This is our blackest survey ever and we have not touched rock bottom yet... There is worse to come..."

## 'Welfare state'

For the working class of Britain, the crisis of capitalism has brought growing insecurity and a mounting attack on their living standards by the capitalist class.

As in every crisis, the bosses are out to recover their losses at the expense of the working class. This has been the experience of workers in every country of the capitalist world.

Unprofitable industry is closed down, throwing thousands of workers out of jobs. Fewer and fewer young workers are employed, leaving masses of the youth to rot in unemployment. State expenditure on social services—health care,

pensions, education etc.—is cut back further and further, while huge amounts of public money is handed to the capitalist class.

Unemployment in Britain reached 2 162 874 in November 1980, the highest total since the 1930s—and still the factory closures and mass dismissals continue. Workers are losing their jobs at the rate of 3 000 per day. The government estimates that by March 1981, 2.5 million workers are likely to be unemployed.

Wage limits imposed by successive governments and cuts in public spending have already brought about a worsening decline in the living standards of British workers over the past period.

The housing shortage has become insoluble, at least on a capitalist basis. In London alone, over 300 000 people are on the waiting list for homes. Yet so great is the backlog—last year only 7 300 new homes were built by local authorities—that in future only 'urgent' cases will be helped. **The vast majority of homeless people have no hope of being housed as long as the capitalist system continues.**

The present Tory government—the government of the bosses—has slashed workers' living standards by the equivalent of £15 000 million a year—over £10 a week for every adult worker in the country.

## **Already, 4 million working-class children in the country are living on the margins of poverty.**

But all this is not yet enough. The Tories threaten the working class with even more drastic cutbacks in future.

According to the Treasury plans announced in the autumn of 1980, state spending will be cut by a further £2 000 million. These cuts, if the government succeeds in imposing them, will mean worsening hardship for millions; and inevitably, more and more cuts will follow.

In November, unemployment, sickness and other benefits were reduced by 5%. A further 5% cut is planned for next year. "Supplementary benefits", which are paid out to the poorest of the poor, will also be reduced by 5%.

For workers in the public sector, wage increases are to be limited to 6%, while inflation rages at much higher levels—in effect, a wage cut of up to 10%.

The capitalist class profits shamelessly from the misery of the workers. This is reflected in the widening gulf between rich and poor in Britain. Perhaps the most shocking evidence is provided by the tens of thousands of elderly people who die each winter from the combined effects of undernourishment and cold—because they are too poor to afford both proper food and heating.

Now the Tories have announced that old-age pensions are to be cut still further. Also 30 000 babies will die the same miserable death this winter—while the capitalists enjoy their skiing holidays in Italy and France.

## **Resistance**

Inevitably the working class is fighting back. At times their struggle has suffered setbacks, only to advance again. Today the movement of the working class in Britain is more powerful than it has ever been before.

As in every other capitalist country, it is to their traditional organisations that the workers turn in struggle. With major battles

impending, the workers understand that mass unity is needed. To the tens of thousands of workers now moving into action, no other framework of mass struggle is available except the existing trade unions and their political arm, the Labour Party.

In industry after industry, unions have been forced into action to protect and improve the living standards of the workers. In the public sector, the unions are in the forefront of the battle to hold back *Government cuts*. Sections of workers who have never been in struggle before, such as firemen and nurses, have been driven into militant opposition by the merciless pay-slashing policies of the capita-



*150 000 trade unionists and Labour supporters demonstrate in Liverpool against massive unemployment created by the Tory government.*

list class.

Today the trade union movement in Britain has grown to over 12 million members. Together with their families, the organised workers form the overwhelming majority of the population.

Clearly the giant of labour has the power to defeat the attacks of the bosses and make an end to the misery of the capitalist system. What is needed to make this possible, however, is the necessary programme on the part of the leadership of the mass organisations—a programme for the socialist transformation of society in the interests of the working people.

Especially within the Labour Party, the pressure for a socialist lead is building up from below. As long ago as 1918, the Labour Party was committed to the aim of bringing the means of production under social ownership. Recent Party conferences have overwhelmingly reaffirmed this position. Today, more and more working-class activists are demanding that the Labour Party carry its socialist programme into practice as the only solution to the capitalist crisis.

The question must therefore be asked: why has the Labour Party failed over such a long period of time to mobilise the working class for the socialist policies called for by its programme? The answer lies in the leadership of the Party, which has for many years been dominated by right-wing reformism.

Today, the hold of the right wing over the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the Party has been broken, and even the position of Parliamentary leader has been wrested from their grip. Yet the majority of the Parliamentary party (i.e., the approximately 270 Labour MP's) remain sympathetic to the right.

The power of the right wing is a product of the post-war period of economic boom and relative social stability in Britain.

Thanks to the strength of their organisations, the workers were able to improve their living standards during the 1950s and 1960s even without massive struggle. The generation of leaders that came to the fore in the Labour

Party and the trade unions during this period were 'moderate' men and women, dedicated to working within the capitalist system for the improvement of the workers' lot.

The Parliamentary Labour Party in particular was taken over by middle-class professional people—lawyers, doctors, academics and the like—who saw the Labour Party mainly as a vehicle for their own careers.

With capitalism in decline, however, reformism has turned into its opposite. Capitalism has fewer and fewer concessions to offer to the workers. Instead, the capitalist class is driven by crisis to take back the reforms that were granted in the past.

**Every government—Labour or Conservative—that governs on the basis of the capitalist system must in the last resort carry out the policies demanded by the capitalist class.** The Labour government that was in power from 1974 to 1979, although elected on a radical manifesto, failed to break with capitalism. Thus it ended by attempting to nurse the system back to health.

In its foreign policy as in its domestic policy, the Labour government was forced to carry out the measures required by the bosses. Thus it presided—as the previous Labour government under Wilson had done—over large-scale evasion of sanctions against Rhodesia. Despite its public condemnation of apartheid, it renewed the contract to buy uranium from the Rossing Mine in Namibia.

In Britain itself, like the Tories under Thatcher today, it ended by cutting state expenditure at the expense of the working class. Even more successfully than the Tories, it managed with the help of trade-union leaders to impose wage limits on the workers for four successive years.

**In the end, the workers overwhelmingly rejected these policies.** After a winter of bitter industrial struggles, Labour was defeated in the election of 1979. Millions of traditional Labour supporters refused to vote for the leadership that had so cruelly let them down. Many among the more backward workers even voted for the Tories in protest.

The result was the coming to power of the Conservatives under Thatcher—the most reactionary, anti-working class government in Britain since the 1930s.

## Alternative

With Labour's right wing increasingly discredited among the active rank and file, it is to the left wing that most workers look for an alternative to Thatcherism. How does the left measure up to this challenge? Will the leadership of Foot mean a radical change in the policies of the Party?

Michael Foot has been portrayed as a rabid left-winger by the capitalist press. It is true that, in the past, Foot was associated with the group of MP's on the left of the Party ranged around the weekly paper "Tribune". As a member of Callaghan's government, however, Foot moved to the right and supported the government even when it carried out policies of wage restraint and cuts in state expenditure.

Other left-wing leaders came out in opposition to these measures. The most outspoken among them, Tony Benn in particular, won great popularity among the Party rank and file for their criticism of the right wing and their call for alternative policies.

What alternative policies does the left wing stand for? In fact there is no united programme on the left.

The most radical of the left-wing leaders echo the demands of the rank and file for full employment, increased public expenditure on social services, increased public ownership of the means of production, abolition of the House of Lords and increased democracy in the work-place.

Radical reforms of this nature—necessary though it is to struggle for them—cannot be carried out within the framework of the diseased capitalist system. Even to halt public spending cuts, nothing less than the abolition of capitalism is required and the establishment of a planned economy under the control of the working class.

The present left-wing leaders of the Party, despite their good intentions, fail to explain how their demands can be carried into practice. Many of them call for the protection of British industry by means of import controls, believing that thereby they can salvage British capitalism to the advantage of the working class. In reality, such measures are not only utopian but reactionary. Their effect would be to foster nationalist divisions between workers in Britain and elsewhere, to isolate Britain in the world market, to drive up prices and inflict further hardships on the working class.

The position of the Communist Party of Great Britain is fundamentally no different from the left reformist Labour leaders. The only tendency in the labour movement putting forward a consistent programme for halting the attacks of the capitalist class and bringing about the socialist transformation of society is the Marxist wing of the Labour Party grouped around the weekly paper "Militant".

## Programme

The struggle within the Labour Party is therefore not a struggle between personalities, as the capitalist press presents it, but a struggle over **policies**—a struggle for a programme that can offer the workers a way forward out of the capitalist hell. What must this programme consist of?

A socialist programme does not consist merely of ideas on paper; it is the scientific expression of demands that have been developed, tested and developed further by the working class in struggle. From the experience of the past period, the demands have begun to emerge that can rally the movement as a whole. Here it is only possible to outline some key demands of such a programme.

Cuts in public spending must be halted. Health care, education and other public services must be expanded and improved to meet the needs of working people.

To fight unemployment, the



*Steel production is a sensitive indicator of the state of the economy. With the crisis, the British steel industry bosses have cut back drastically on production, destroying thousands of jobs. Plant closures threaten whole towns and regions with misery. But the steel workers will fight back. Early in 1980 a 16-week strike won an important victory over wage demands. New and greater battles are stored up for the future.*

available work should be shared among the workers. The working week should be cut immediately to 35 hours without loss of pay, and a massive programme of useful public works should be launched to provide new jobs and create facilities—such as housing—that are desperately needed. There should be a national minimum wage of £80 a week, linked to the rate of inflation.

The capitalist system is incapable of granting these basic demands. Therefore it must be scrapped.

To break the stranglehold of the capitalist class over the British economy, it is necessary to nationalise the top 200 monopolies, banks and insurance companies and run them democratically under workers' control and management. This will make possible, for the first time, a plan of production, public services and employment in the interests of the working people.

All protection by Labour leaders of imperialist interests must be

ended. The policy of Labour must be one of active support for the struggles of our brothers and sisters for democracy and socialism in every part of the world. Internationally and nationally, Labour needs to stand firm against the power of the bosses.

"Militant" fights for the mobilisation of the mass of the working class on the basis of this programme for fundamental social change.

To more and more workers, the experience of the past few years, of capitalist crisis and the failure of reformism, has made it clear that a complete break with capitalism is needed in order to solve the problems they are faced with every day. Campaigning for the return of a Labour government pledged to socialist policies, "Militant" has won increasing support in the constituencies of the Labour Party and among the ranks of the trade unions. Its programme is overwhelmingly supported by the Labour Party Young Socialists, the

youth wing of the Labour Party. "Militant" supporters have also been elected to leading positions in the unions.

These developments have not gone unnoticed by the capitalist class and its media. The capitalists are filled with alarm at seeing 'their' people—the right wing—increasingly dislodged from the leadership of the Party. They are determined at all costs to preserve the right-wing Labour leadership as a reliable 'second team' to govern the country in their interests whenever the Tories are voted out of power. Hardly a month goes by without vicious attacks by the capitalist press against the left wing of the Party.

In particular, repeated campaigns have been launched by the press and TV against the "Militant" tendency. The capitalists demand that the right wing should 'deal with' the Marxists, preferably by expelling them from the Party. They recognise that a witch-hunt of the Marxists is vital if the Labour

Party is ever to become once again a reliable instrument of capitalist rule.

Yet the truth of the matter is that among the rank and file there is greater sympathy for the Marxist tendency than for the right wing at present. For this reason all the attacks by the capitalist class and the Labour right wing on the "Militant" have failed.

## 1980 conference

The central issue to emerge from these struggles in the Party over the last few years has been the issue of internal Party democracy.

Through experience, the rank and file have learned that they need to control their Party, its leadership and its programme, in order to commit it to socialist policies not only on paper but in practice. They need to abolish the undemocratic devices by which the right wing in Parliament is able to impose its will on the Party as a whole.

This pressure from below has been fiercely resisted by the capitalist class and the right wing. Yet despite the enormous flood of propaganda against any change in the status quo, Labour's conference of October 1980 confirmed the irreversible shift to the left that has taken place among the Party's ranks.

Against furious opposition by the right, two important measures for greater Party democracy were approved by Conference. It was decided that, in future, all Labour MP's will have to be 're-selected' by the General Management Committee of their constituency Party, representing the active rank and file, before they will be able to stand for re-election.

This decision is a deadly blow against the power base of the right wing in the Parliamentary Labour Party. Right-wing MP's now face the risk of being rejected by their constituencies and replaced with candidates who enjoy the confidence of the rank and file.

Secondly, it was decided that the national leader of the Party should no longer be elected by members of parliament alone but by the Party

as a whole, including the trade unions.

Right-wing trade union leaders managed to prevent a decision being taken by Conference as to how exactly the election of the leader should take place. A special conference will now be held early in 1981 to resolve this issue.

## Outlook

These developments explain why Foot was elected in place of Healey as leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party.

Many MP's considered that Healey would provoke a split with the left and saw Foot as the only candidate capable of holding the Party together. No doubt even some MP's who favoured Denis Healey, faced with unprecedented pressure from their constituencies and the prospect of re-selection, felt obliged to vote for Foot.

Despite this major setback, the right wing has not been finally defeated. Healey has been installed as Deputy Leader of the Party in Parliament. Even the extreme right-wing 'gang of three'—Rodgers, Owen and Williams—remain in the Party, hoping in future to recover their position.

The procedure for electing the Party leader decided at the special conference will be crucial in determining who future leaders will be and this, in turn, will be a major factor in the struggle for socialist policies.

The right wing is determined to push through a procedure that will ensure their undisputed predominance in future. They have nothing to offer the workers except the same policies of 'diluted Thatcherism' which have already been rejected overwhelmingly by the active ranks of the Party. To limit the influence of the rank and file, the right wing therefore proposes that the Party membership should vote by postal ballot. This would prevent the leadership from being elected in meetings where the issues can be democratically debated, and where the right wing fear (correctly) that their arguments will be overwhelmingly defeated.

Instead it is proposed that Party members should vote in the privacy of their homes, 'guided' only by the capitalist television, radio and press praising the right while viciously attacking the left.

Undoubtedly, the most democratic procedure would be for the Party leader, as well as future Labour ministers, to be elected by annual conference. Support for this position, however, is not yet widespread in the Party. Alternatively there is the proposal for an electoral college to elect the Party leader. 40% of the votes on the college should go to the trade unions, 30% to the MP's and 30% to the constituency parties. This proposal is most likely to unite the left and defeat the right-wing plans.

**Whatever the outcome of the special conference, however, the pressure from the ranks of the movement for a fighting socialist lead will continue.** As British capitalism slides deeper into crisis, ever more vicious attacks on the workers will be demanded by the capitalist class to bolster up their profits. The struggle between the classes will pass through different phases; yet, in the course of the 1980s, it will inevitably be driven towards a decisive resolution.

The working class will continue to struggle for a leadership and a programme that will make an end to the ravages of the decaying capitalist system. Only an uncompromising socialist programme can meet up to the workers' demands. In the period ahead the Labour Party and the trade unions will be transformed and retransformed as the working class struggles to develop the **mass** socialist leadership which is essential for victory.

## Solidarity

This is the general perspective not only for Britain but for the advanced capitalist world as a whole. In countries where the crisis of capitalism is as yet less acute, the struggle between the classes may develop over a somewhat longer period. But in the long run the decline of the capitalist system on a world scale leaves no other

possibility than that of increasing struggle between a much weakened capitalist class and a working class that is stronger and more confident than at any previous stage.

Defeat of the working class *would be disastrous for the whole of humanity*. Capitalism can no longer impose its will on the powerful and militant labour movement except by vicious repression. This was proved by the Chilean counter-revolution of 1973. It is proved also by the worsening dictatorship inflicted on the masses in South Africa and many other countries where capitalism has never been able to afford 'democracy' and large-scale reforms.

Today, the same sinister conclusion is suggested by the anti-working class measures being attempted by 'democratic' capitalist governments in the advanced industrial countries.

In Britain, for example, the Tories have embarked on systematic efforts to limit the rights of trade unions in order to leave them defenceless before the capitalist onslaught. This is only a minute foretaste of the fate that awaits the working class in Europe, North America and Japan if the ruling class has its way.

If a series of reactionary capitalist dictatorships were to be established in a number of industrialised countries, conditions would for the first time be created under which nuclear war could be provoked with the Soviet Union. **Only the workers' victory world-wide can avert this dreadful possibility.**

Marx and Engels pointed out long ago that capitalism has internationalised the means of production. Socialism cannot be established within the borders of a single country. The workers' victory must be repeated in country after country in order to bring the productive forces under the control of the working class.

The labour movement in Britain is advancing as one unit in the world-wide movement of our class. **Our victory will create a Socialist Britain. This will be the greatest contribution we can make to the cause of international solidarity.** Our struggle will continue together with our comrades in countries around the world on the basis of all the resources that the British workers' state can muster. Our aim must be a socialist federation of Europe and a world federation of socialist states, democratically con-



*Tony Saunio speaks to young workers at a street meeting of the Labour Party Young Socialists.*

trolled by the working class.

On the basis of a world-wide plan of production, the resources of science and technology need no longer be squandered in creating new means of destruction and repression. Instead we can direct our efforts to eliminate hunger, disease and the terrible misery that, under capitalism, afflict most of the peoples of the world.

**INQABA YA BASEBENZI is being published because of the need for a conscious socialist voice in the movement of the workers and youth. Immense tasks face us, both in the trade unions and in the ANC.**

**Today it is vital to link together those in the movement who, on the basis of experience and events, can explain to their fellow-strugglers the need for socialist policies. INQABA will help to assemble the facts and present the arguments in support of this task.**

**The bosses control the press, the radio and the television. Daily they use it to defend their class interests against the masses, making propaganda and suppressing the truth.**

**Our class needs its own papers in which all the problems of our life are honestly discussed—industrial disputes, migrant labour and the pass laws, unemployment, education, housing and transport, police terrorism, the manoeuvres of the regime. We need our own publications where we can argue for the programme, strategy and tactics needed to overthrow the enemy.**

**Make INQABA your own journal. Discuss it with your comrades. Use it to express your own experiences, agreements and disagreements. Use it to expose the things the bosses and the regime keep quiet about.**

**Write about the daily struggles of life in the townships and workplaces. Write about national and international issues. Send articles, letters, photographs, cartoons, reviews—whatever you want to bring to the attention of your comrades in the struggle all over the country.**

**Those who have no safer way of contacting INQABA or of passing material on to us, can use the following postal address: BM Box 1719, London WC1N 3XX.**

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