

# inqaba

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## YA BASEBENZI

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***Only workers' power can end  
the migrant labour system!***



**inqaba  
YA BASEBENZI**

## Only workers' power can end the migrant labour system

The migrant work force, coming from the villages and lands across Southern Africa, forms the mighty backbone of the struggle not only in South Africa, but in Southern Africa as a whole.

The migrant workers are the most numerous, most exploited and oppressed section of the working class. They feel most acutely the whip of national oppression and capitalist exploitation. Only when they together with all workers have cast out the scourge of capitalism in South Africa can there be true liberation from the pass laws, poverty, unemployment and homelessness. Workers' unity for the overthrow of national oppression and its root—capitalism—demands the organisation of the migrant workers together with all workers.

Only this can bring unity of all the oppressed.

In their struggles against dehumanising conditions—poverty wages, living conditions, influx control and the pass laws—the migrant workers have repeatedly demonstrated advancement in political consciousness and enormous strength and militance.

Throughout this century they have taken the initiative in the struggle against the pass laws and, in the historic events of the late 1950s, demonstrated great understanding of the art of struggle under capitalism. They formed underground organisations which forged a link between the workers in the urban areas and those in the reserves.

During the tremendous movement against the passes in 1960, they showed their strength and determination by transforming the protest in front of police stations into a confrontation with the state. The pass laws were suspended for six

weeks. In Pondoland for a temporary period they succeeded in substituting their own rule for that of their oppressors.

The growing confidence and strength of the migrant workers, shown again and again since the early 1970s, provides the central factor upon which the political calculations of the ruling class are based.

The Wiehahn Commission, coming after the 1973 and 1976 movements, was a deliberate attempt to enchain and divide the working class, to force black trade unions to register on the master's terms, and to divide migrant from 'settled' worker.

Under increasing pressure from below, exerted through the unregistered trade unions and outside of them, the regime was forced to back down and allow migrant workers to join trade unions. Now they must seek other means of division to achieve their profit-seeking ends.

In round after round of strike action—Sigma, Ford, Leyland, in rent and bus boycotts—the growing unity of migrant and non-migrant to throw off the tyrants of oppression is adding strength and spirit to the movement of all sections of the oppressed. At the same time, it deepens the crisis which the rulers face at the present time.

The regime tinkers here, dabbles there, moves forward and then retreats, all in search of a stable basis for its rule. It talks of 'reforms', but for the migrant workers there can never be any meaningful reform under capitalism. The bourgeoisie cannot give up the goose that lays its golden eggs—cheap labour. Whatever else might be tampered with, migrant labour must stay. All the leaders of industry agree on this.

All those stooges and puppets who are talking of talks with the government must take heed—the

regime is trying to use them as rods to beat the workers.

There can be no negotiation or compromise on the question of migrant labour and the whole Bantustan/pass law system that goes with it. There can be no compromise between the carriers of passes and those in whose interests they operate—the captains of industry.

The struggle in South Africa boils down basically to whose will must prevail, the bourgeoisie or the workers.

Everything that black people come up against in their everyday lives goes back to one thing—capitalism, and its bedrock, migrant labour. Not until this system is utterly smashed can the oppressed masses get jobs, food, homes and democracy.

A revolutionary programme for South Africa must therefore have at its centre the smashing of the state which rests on, and enforces, migrant labour and national oppression. Anything that falls short of this cannot serve to rally the masses for genuine liberation.

The Freedom Charter, programme of Congress, stands for the abolishing of migrant labour. On that question we are all agreed. But how is this to be carried out? Can this clause, and other clauses of the Freedom Charter, be implemented while the bourgeoisie still owns its property and controls its state?

INQABA says No. It is only a revolutionary movement led by the working class to smash the present state and replace it with a democratic workers' state that can secure an end to the pass laws, national oppression, unemployment etc.

INQABA stands for the building of a mass ANC in South Africa, deeply implanted in the compounds, barracks, factories, mines, farms and townships, to carry forward the struggle for state power.

# **inqaba YA BASEBENZI**

## **SUPPLEMENT NO.3**

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# Editor's Introduction

Lenin wrote **The State and Revolution** in August and September 1917, when the fate of the Russian Revolution hung in the balance. The Tsar had been overthrown by the mass movement in February, but the Provisional Government, a coalition of liberals and 'socialist' compromisers, propped up the old state machine in order to preserve power for the capitalist class.

The workers and exploited peasants found their demands systematically blocked by those very 'revolutionary' leaders they had placed in office.

Against this, under Lenin's leadership, the Bolsheviks tirelessly organised, explained, agitated and patiently waited for events to swing a majority of the working class, and behind them the poor peasants, decisively against the Provisional Government.

In July, using the opportunity of a temporary setback of the movement, this 'revolutionary' Government tried to crush the militants. Lenin was obliged to go into hiding in Finland to avoid arrest and certain death.

There, using material he had gathered in exile abroad, he wrote a work of theory to prepare the Bolshevik Party and the working class for its coming tasks.

Here is how Trotsky later described it:

"With the same painstaking care which he dedicated to thinking out the practical problems of the day, he here examines the theoretical problems of the state. He cannot do otherwise: for him theory is in actual fact a guide to action. In this work Lenin has not for a minute proposed to introduce any new word into political theory. On the contrary, he gives his work an extraordinarily modest aspect, emphasising his position as a disciple. His task, he says, is to revive the genuine 'teaching of Marxism about the state'.

"With its meticulous selection of quotations, its detailed polemical interpretations, the book might seem pedantic—to actual pedants, incapable of feeling under the analysis of texts the mighty pulsation of the mind and will. By a mere re-establishment of the class theory of the state on a new and higher historical foundation, Lenin gives to the ideas of

Marx a new concreteness and therewith a new significance. But this work on the state derives its immeasurable importance above all from the fact that it constituted the scientific introduction to the greatest revolution in history." (**History of the Russian Revolution**, vol. 3.)

Within a month, the Bolsheviks had led the working class to power.

## Today

For us today, **The State and Revolution** remains unequalled as an explanation of the essential ideas of Marxism on this subject. It is a necessary foundation stone for any activist in any organisation which is seriously working for the overthrow of the ruling class.

It should be cemented into the understanding of every cadre of the ANC.

It provides the same crushing answer to all the present-day dreamers of class reconciliation—the liberals, the reformists, the seminar 'socialists'—as well as the muddled 'revolutionaries' who genuinely desire a fundamental change of society while shrinking from the necessary means of bringing that change about.

**The necessary means, Lenin shows, is the political rule of the working class.**

Lenin explains why **only** the political rule of the working class can emancipate all the oppressed and exploited people. And what Lenin proved for a country where the working class made up only a small minority of the population applies a thousand times over in a country such as South Africa where the working class is the great majority.

**The State and Revolution** provides also a devastating answer to the ideas of Stalinism—provides it in advance, for the phenomenon of Stalinism had not yet arisen historically when Lenin wrote this work.

By his attack on the Mensheviks etc., Lenin also refutes the Stalinist notion of 'Popular Frontism'—i.e., of class collaboration with the liberal, so-called 'democratic' capitalists, and the restraining of the working class from

taking power, on the false theory of the 'two-stage' revolution.

The Stalinists' refusal to specify the necessary **proletarian** character of the revolutionary state; their sheltering behind the popular vagueness of 'people's power'—all this is expressly dealt with in Lenin's attack on the opportunist tendencies of his day (who also masqueraded in the name of 'Marxism').

Finally, in his detailed explanation of the features of workers' democracy essential for the transition from capitalism to communism, and for the eventual withering away of the workers' state, Lenin provided in advance the key to understanding why the **deformed** workers' states of the Stalinist world (Russia, Eastern Europe, China, etc.), while historically an advance on capitalism, cannot be called **socialist**. In fact, the totalitarian bureaucracies which rule them are monstrous **obstacles** to the socialist transformation of society.

All this is in **The State and Revolution** for the diligent and honest reader—and yet the Stalinists claim the authority of 'Leninism' for their crimes!

## Relevance

In future issues we will have many occasions to show the relevance of **The State and Revolution** to our struggle today. Limits of space confine us here to these brief introductory remarks, and to a few explanatory notes at the end of the text to ease the reader's journey.

Lenin did not complete **The State and Revolution**. He wrote six chapters but, as he later explained, "I was 'interrupted' by a political crisis—the eve of the October revolution of 1917"—and did not write the intended seventh chapter on the experience of the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917. It is, he said, "more pleasant to go through the 'experience of the revolution' than to write about it".

For reasons of space, **INQABA** is able to reprint only the first five chapters together with a short extract from the sixth. All the basic ideas of the work are to be found there.



# Ke ka matla a basebetsi feela bosebetsi ba merafo bo ka felisoang!

Lebotho la basebetsi ba merafo, le hlahang metseng le litikolohong tsa Afrika-e-borooa, ke lejoe la motheo la bohlabani ntoeng ea tokoloho, eseng feela Afrika borooa, empa Afrika-e-borooa ka bophara.

Basebetsi ba merafo ke bona ba bangata ka palo, ke bona ba hanyapelitsoeng ho feta esitana le ho hatelloa basebetsing ka kakaretso. Ke bona ba jereng le ho feta mahloko a khatello ea bosebetsi esita le bonoamali ba bo-kapitale. Ha bona feela, kopanong le basebetsi, bohle ba tsebile ho hlaola litsehlo tsa bo-kapitale Afrika borooa, ho ka bang le tokoloho ea lete melaong ea lipasa, fumanehing, ho hloka-hala ha basebetsi esitana le ho hloka-hala ha alapa a phethahetseng. Kopano ea basebetsi ho phethola khatello ea bosebetsi esitana le motso oa ona—bo-kapitale—ho hloka hore basebetsi ba merafo le basebetsi ka kakaretso ba ikahe.

Ka hona feela bohle ba hateleteng ba ka kopana.

Lintoeng tsa bona tsa tokoloho khahlanong le maemo a silafatsang botho—meputso ea bofumanehi, maemo a bophelo, melaoana ea khethollo le lipasa—basebetsi ba merafo ba phehelletse ho supa khatello-pele kutloisisong ea lipolotiki le matlahali a bohlabani.

Mengoaheng ena ba bontsitse sehlahlo ntoeng ea tokoloho khahlanong le melao ea lipasa, 'me ka liketsahalo tsa bohlokoahali tsa bo 1950 ba bontsitse kutloisiso e kholo ea maneri a bohlabani tlas'a bohanyapetsi. Ba aha mekhatlo ea bona ka lekunutu e ileng ea aha khokahanyo lipakeng tsa basebetsi ba literopong le ba mahaeng.

Ka nako ea lintoa tse matla khahlanong le lipasa ka 1960, ba bontsitse matla a bona le boikemisetso ka ho fetolela ho se khotsofale ha bona kapel'a lipolitisheishini ho khahlano le 'muso. Melao ea lipasa ea fanyehoa libeke tse tseletseng. Pondoland ha nakoana ba atleha ho theha puso ea bona sebakeng sa puso ea bahatelli.

Ho ba le tsepo ho ntseng ho hola

hammoho le matla a basebetsi ba merafo ho ntseng ho hlaka nako le nako ho tloha maqalong a 1970, ho fana ka taba ea mantlha eo menahano ea lipolitiki ea babusi e thehiloeng ho eona.

Commission ea Wiehahn, e tlileng kamor'a lintoa tsa 1973 le 1976, e ne e le teko e masene ea kholeho esita le ho arola basebetsi ho sutumeletsa mekhatlo-ea-basebetsi ea batho-batso ho ngolisa tlas'a meloana ea bo-base, esita le ho arola basebetsi ba merafo ho basebetsi ba "literopong".

Tlas'a sefutho se holang sa basebetsi, se hlahang ka mekhatlo ea bona e sa ngolisoang, kathoko ho bo-base, 'muso o ile oa tlameha ho checha ka ho lumella basebetsi ba merafo ho ba litho tsa mekhatlo ea basebetsi. Kajeno bo-base ba tsoma litsela tse ling tsa ho arohanya basebetsi, 'me ba atlehe ho ntlafatsa liporofete.

Kamor'a seteraeke se seng le se seng—Sigma, Ford, Leyland, ka lirente le ho hana ho palama libese—kopano e ntseng e hola ea basebetsi ba merafo le basebetsi bohle ho hlohlolla puso ea sheshe ea bahatelli e tiisa matla le moea oa tokoloho ho bohle ba hateletsoeng. Hape, e bontsa botebo ba mathata ao babusi ba lebaneng le oona ha-joale.

'Musu o reketle mona, o tsoare-tsoarelle, o ee pele ha nakoana, o phakise o cheche, tsena tsohle e le ho batla tsela ea puso. 'Musu o bue ka 'liphetohe', empa bophelong ba basebetsi ba merafo ho ke ke hoa eba le phetoho ea 'nete tlas'a bohanyapetsi. Boramerafo ba ke ke ba tlohela tsebetso-ea-mahala—khantsi e behelang mahe a khauta—ho ka lekoa ho fana ka 'maikemisetso' a liphetohe, haele tsebetso ea merafo eona e tla sala e le joalo. Bohle boramerafo ba ea lumellana ntlheng ena.

Bontle bo-tumela-khoela le mahlaba-phico ba kenang lipuisanong le 'musu ba ele hloko—'musu oa bohanyapetsi o leka ho ba sebelisa e le lithebe ho it-sireletsa bohlang ba basebetsi.

Ho ke ke hoa eba le lipuisano kapa litumellano mabapi le tsebetso ea merafo le puso ea mahae kapa ea lipasa, kaha li tsamaea hammoho. Ho ke ke hoa eba le litumellano lipakeng tsa bajari ba lipasa le bao lipasa li sebelisoang molemong oa bona—boramerafo.

Ntoa ea tokoloho Afrika borooa sethathong ke hore na matla a tla ba ho mang, ha ho boramerafo kapa basebetsi.

Eng kapa eng eo batho-batso ba khahlanang le eona bophelong ba bona ba letsatsi ka letsatsi, e khutlela nthong e le 'ngoe—bo-kapitale, le lejoe la eona la motheo, tsebetso ea merafo. Ke feela ha tsela ena ea bophelo e ka choatloa ke bahatelluo, ho ka fumanehang mesebetsi, lijo, mahae le khotso le khutso.

Mohoo oa tokoloho Afrika borooa o tlameha ho beha sethathong ho choatloa ha puso e thehiloeng, 'me e sutumetsang tsebetso ea merafo le khatello-ea-bosebetsi. Ntho efe kapa efe e sa tiiseng mohoo oona e fokolisa ntoa ea boitseko ea tokoloho.

'Freedom Charter', leano la Khonkoroso, e eme holim'a ho felisa tsebetso ea merafo. Tabeng ena bohle rea lumellana. Empa potso ke hore na pheliso e tlisoa joang? Ebe serapa kapa lirapa tsa 'Freedom Charter' li ka phethahatsoa ha borarichelete ba ntse ba ipoloketse thepa molemong oa bona ebile ba tsoere puso?

INQABA e re Che. Ke feela ntoa ea boitseko tlas'a boetapele ba basebetsi e tla choatla puso ea joale, 'me e behe sebakeng sa eona puso ea basebetsi e tla tseba ho fumanela esita le ho felisa melao ea lipasa, khatello-ea-bosebetsi, ho hloka-hala ha mesebetsi joalo-joalo.

INQABA e emetse ka botlalo kaho ea Khonkoroso e le mokhatlo oa sechaba sohle sa Afrika borooa, ka metso ea eona e tibileng kahara likompone, lihoseteleng, lifemeng, merafong, lipolasing, esita le makoishining, ho jara esita le ho ntsetsa pele ntoa ea ho nka puso Afrika borooa.

LENIN

# THE STATE AND REVOLUTION

## The Marxist Theory of the State and the Tasks of the Proletariat in the Revolution

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### Preface to the First Edition

The question of the state is now acquiring particular importance both in theory and in practical politics. The imperialist war has immensely accelerated and intensified the process of transformation of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism. The monstrous oppression of the working people by the state, which is merging more and more with the all-powerful capitalist associations, is becoming increasingly monstrous. The advanced countries—we mean their hinterland—are becoming military convict prisons for the workers.

The unprecedented horrors and miseries of the protracted war are making the people's position unbearable and increasing their anger. The world proletarian revolution is clearly maturing. The question of its relation to the state is acquiring practical importance.

The elements of opportunism that accumulated over the decades of comparatively peaceful development have given rise to the trend of social-chauvinism which dominates the official socialist parties throughout the world. This trend—socialism in words and chauvinism in deeds (Plekhanov, Potresov, Breshkovskaya, Rubanovich, and, in a slightly veiled form, Tsereteli, Chernov and Co. in Russia; Scheidemann, Legien, David and others in Germany; Renaudel, Guesde and Vandervelde in France and Belgium; Hyndman and the Fabians in England, etc., etc.)—is conspicuous for the base, servile adaptation of the "leaders of socialism" to the interests, not only of "their" national bourgeoisie, but of "their" state, for the majority of the so-called Great Powers have long been exploiting and enslaving a whole number of small and weak nations. And the imperialist war is a war for the division and redivision of this kind of booty. The struggle to free the working people from the influence of the bour-

geoisie in general, and of the imperialist bourgeoisie in particular, is impossible without a struggle against opportunist prejudices concerning the "state".

First of all we examine the theory of Marx and Engels of the state, and dwell in particular detail on those aspects of this theory which are ignored or have been distorted by the opportunists. Then we deal specially with the one who is chiefly responsible for these distortions, Karl Kautsky, the best-known leader of the Second International (1889-1914), which has met with such miserable bankruptcy in the present war. Lastly, we sum up the main results of the experience of the Russian revolutions of 1905 and particularly of 1917. Apparently, the latter is now (early August 1917) completing the first stage of its development; but this revolution as a whole can only be understood as a link in a chain of socialist proletarian revolutions being caused by the imperialist war. The question of the relation of the socialist proletarian revolution to the state, therefore, is acquiring not only practical political importance, but also the significance of a most urgent problem of the day, the problem of explaining to the masses what they will have to do before long to free themselves from capitalist tyranny. •

*The Author*

August 1917

### Preface to the Second Edition

The present, second edition is published virtually unaltered, except that section 3 has been added to Chapter II.

*The Author*

Moscow  
December 17, 1918



# Ngamandla abasebenzi kuphela ayakutshitshisa isimo sobujoyini babasebenzi 'magoduka'

Lo mkhosi wabasebenzi 'magoduka', ovela ezixekweni nakumazwe eMzantsi neAfrika jikelele, uyintsika yedabi elilwa umbuso wobungxowankulu, hayi nje kuphela, eMzantsi Afrika, kodwa kuMzantsi neAfrika uphela.

Abasebenzi 'magoduka', yeyona nxenye ininzi, incukuthwayo necinezelayo kakhulu kuba sebenzi bebonke. Ngabo abeva ngakumbi intlungu yomvambo wengcinezelo sizwe, nowo ncukutho ngongxowankulu. Qha ke kuphela, xa bethe kwakunye nabanye bonke abasebenzi batshabalalisa ngondlov'ayingeni uburamcwa bobungxowankulu eMzantsi Afrika apho inkululeko yenyano, yokuphelisa imithetho yamapasi, indlala, ukungabikho kwemisebenzi nokunga binamakhaya, iyakufumaneka. Umanyano lwabasebenzi lokuphelisa ingcinezelo yesizwe, kwakunye nengcambu yayo—umbuso wobungxowankulu—lupoqisa imfuneko yokuhlangana ngomanyano kwabasebenzi 'magoduka' kunye nabo bonke abanye abasebenzi.

Yile ndlela kuphela enokumanyanisa bonke abacinezelayo.

Emadabini abo okulwa nentlalo yobulwane—imirolo yendlala, intlalombi, uthintelo-mthetho namapasi—abasebenzi 'magoduka' abonakalise qho njalo-njalo ubuntshatsheli babo ekuqondeni ezombuso, amandla nokukhalipha okungumangaliso.

Ukusukela kunyaka ka-1900 de kube ngoku, abasebenzi 'magoduka' basoloko bethatha inyathelo eliphambili edabini lokuphelisa amapasi. Kwangokunjalo, kwizehlo zembali ezenzeka ekupheleni koo 1950, babonakalisa ukuqonda ubuchule bokulwa nombuso wongxowankulu. Bakha imibutho yabo efihlakeleyo eyathi yenza ukuba kuhlangukiseke amakhonco phakathi kwabasebenzi abemi ezidolophini nase maphandleni.

Kwisithuba sentshukumo enkulu ka-1960 yokulwa imithetho yamapasi, babonakalisa amandla angummangaliso nokuzimisela okukhulu ngokugququla umbombozelo lokukhalaza balenze idabi lezikhwepha begalela kanye kurulumente wongxowankulu. Elidabi lelinye lezizathu ezanyanzela urulumente axhome okwethutyana ukuphathwa kwamapasi. Amapasi aroxiswa isithuba seeveki ezintandathu. EMampondweni, baphumelela okwethutyana ukukwakha urulumente wabo owawubizwa ngokuba YINTABA ngokuchitha owongxowankulu.

Ukomelela kwesibindi sobugora, namandla okukhalipha ekulweni kwabasebenzi 'magoduka', ekubonakele kwakhona futhi ngonyaka ka-1973 no-1976

de kube ngoku, kwalatha owona mqobo apho oongxowankulu bazingise amacebo abo okulawula.

Ukutyunjwa kwe Komiti-luphando ka Wiehahn emva kwentshukumo zika 1973 no 1976, kwenziwa ngenjongo ecacileyo yokulinga ukuqinisa amatyathanga, abophe abasebenzi abatsundu, nokwahlula-hlula abasebenzi ngokunyanzela ukubhaliswa imibutho-elwa-uncukutho yabasebenzi ngentando yongxowankulu, nokulinga futhi ukwehlula abasebenzi 'magoduka' kubasebenzi abemi ezidolophini.

Ngomfutho wokunkanisa komndilili wabasebenzi abangamalungu yemibutho-elwa-uncukutho engabhaliswanga, nemifutho evela ngaphandle, urulumente uye wanyanzeleka ukuba abuye umva, avumele abasebenzi 'magoduka' athile ajoyine imibutho-elwa-ncukutho. Ngoku banje ngononkala oxinge etyeni, bakekela ngecala bezama ezinye iindlela zokwahlula-hlula abasebenzi ngenjongo zokuba ncukutha khona ukuze bakwazi ukwenza ingenelomali (polofithi).

Kumjikelo ngamnye, ulandelwa ngomnye wezaqwithi zabasebenzi beroxisa amandla abo eluncukuthweni—kwa-Sigma, kwa-Ford, kwa-Leyland, ekulweni unyuso lwerafu zezindlu, nokwayo loombombela—ikwanda komanyano phakathi kwabasebenzi 'magoduka' nabasebenzi abemi ezidolophini, ngenjongo zokuphelisa ulawulo lobungqawangangqwili ihlupheza intshukumo yabo bonke abacinezelayo. Kwangokunjalo, lentshukumo yenza nzulu iingxaki zokulawula kongxowankulu kungoku nje.

Ngobuxelele, urulumente wenza le, akwentsa-kwentse phaya ngamadolo anzima, adlokove elingisa ukuya phambili, adlokove abuye umva engenwe yintaka; wonke lomsina ndozele wokukuntlantlatha lilinge lika rulumente lokufumana iziko elizinzileyo lokulawula. Urulumente uthetha amampunge okwenza ingcinezelo ihlonipheke. La ngamampunge kubasebenzi 'magoduka', okoko umbuso wongxowankulu usemle. Oongxowankulu abanako ukukhulula intaka enyamasi—nokuba kungenziwa yiphi na into kunyenyiswa phaya naphaya, isimo sobujoyini babasebenzi 'magoduka' asiya ndawo, sihleli. Zonke izithwala mixhaka ezilawula amaziko edyebo, ziyavumelana poqo ngale ngongoma.

Zonke izimputsu ezithi makuthethiswane norulumente: maziqaphela oku—urulumente ufuna ukuzisebenzisa nje ngesimolotyisi sokugqobhoza iintloko zabasebenzi.

Akungeke kubheko ntethiswano okanye mvumelwano ngesimo sobujoyini

babasebenzi 'magoduka', nayo yonke imo 'Yondiphethe' (Bantustana), kwanesimo semithetho yamapasi—inkaba yobujoyini. Angeke kubekho mvumelwano phakathi kwaba-ngamakhoboka okuphatha amapasi (abasebenzi), n'abo uburamcwa babo (oongxowankulu) bukhuselwe ngemithetho yamapasi.

Idabi eMzantsi Afrika lilwelwa phezu kwalo mbuzo: Maziphathwe ngubani na iintambo zokulawula, ngongxowankulu okanyengabasenzi?

Yonke into eyingxaki yabantu abantsundu kwimihla ngemihla yobom babo, ibangwa yinto enye—umbuso wongxowankulu, nesiseko sawo, isimo sobujoyini sababasebenzi 'magoduka'. Ayikho enye indlela yomndilili wabantu abacinezelayo abangafumana ngayo imisebenzi, ukudla, amakhaya nokuzilawula, de kube umbuso wongxowankulu ubhujisiwe geqe.

Ngoko ke, indlela yentshukumo yobhukuqo mbuso wongxowankulu eMzantsi Afrika, ma izinze phezu kwemfuneko yokutshabalalisa urulumente wongxowankulu osekelwe phezu kwesimo sobujoyini, onyanzela esisimo, nengcinezelo yesizwe. Nayiphi na ke indlela efinelelayo kwezinjongo ayinako ukuququzelela umndilili wabacinezelayo ngenjongo yokufumana inkululeko eyiyo.

Imibhalo Yenkululeko (Freedom Charter), uludwe lwamabango ka-Nkongolo, ithi ma kupheliswe isimo sobujoyini babasebenzi 'magoduka'. Kule ngongoma siya vumelana. Nto nje ke, sinombuzo othi: Ingaba esisimo sizakupheliswa kanjani na? Ingaba na, lengongoma, kwakunye nazo zonke ezinye ezikwi Mibhalo Yenkululeko ka-Nkongolo, ingafumaneka na entlalweni yesizwe oongxowankulu besa bambe iintambo zokulawula amaziko edyebo yesizwe norulumente wabo?

INQABA ithi, unotshe! angeke kwenzekwe. Ithi, xa intshukumo yobhukuqo mbuso wongxowankulu ikhokelwa, qha kuphela, ngabasebenzi ngenjongo yokudiliza ngezikhwepha lombuso ukhoyo, indawo yawo ithathwe ngumbuso wenkululeko, nowokuzilawula kwabasebenzi engenza kuphele amapasi, ingcinezelo yesizwe, nokunqaba kwemisebenzi njalo, njalo ke.

INQABA imele ukwakhiwa kweNkongolo yomndilili eMzantsi Afrika; yakhiwe ezinkomponi, emahositela, ezifemini, emigodini, emapulazini, ezilokishini nase zilalini emaphandleni; iqhubele phambili idabi lokuhlutha umbuso kongxowankulu eMzantsi Afrika.



## CHAPTER I

## Class Society and the State

## 1. The State—a Product of the Irreconcilability of Class Antagonisms

What is now happening to Marx's theory has, in the course of history, happened repeatedly to the theories of revolutionary thinkers and leaders of oppressed classes fighting for emancipation. During the lifetime of great revolutionaries, the oppressing classes constantly hounded them, received their theories with the most savage malice, the most furious hatred and the most unscrupulous campaigns of lies and slander. After their death, attempts are made to convert them into harmless icons, to canonise them, so to say, and to hallow their *names* to a certain extent for the "consolation" of the oppressed classes and with the object of duping the latter, while at the same time robbing the revolutionary theory of its *substance*, blunting its revolutionary edge and vulgarising it. Today, the bourgeoisie and the opportunists within the labour movement concur in this doctoring of Marxism. They omit, obscure or distort the revolutionary side of this theory, its revolutionary soul. They push to the foreground and extol what is or seems acceptable to the bourgeoisie. All the social-chauvinists are now "Marxists" (don't laugh!). And more and more frequently German bourgeois scholars, only yesterday specialists in the annihilation of Marxism, are speaking of the "national-German" Marx, who, they claim, educated the labour unions which are so splendidly organised for the purpose of waging a predatory war!

In these circumstances, in view of the unprecedentedly widespread distortion of Marxism, our prime task is to *re-establish* what Marx really taught on the subject of the state. This will necessitate a number of long quotations from the works of Marx and Engels themselves. Of course long quotations will render the text cumbersome and not help at all to make it popular reading, but we cannot possibly dispense with them. All, or at any rate all the most essential passages in the works of Marx and Engels on the subject of the state must by all means be quoted as fully as possible so that the reader may form an independent opinion of the totality of the views of the founders of scientific socialism, and of the evolution of those views, and so that their distortion by the "Kautskyism" now prevailing may be documentarily proved and clearly demonstrated.

Let us begin with the most popular of Engels's works, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, the sixth edition of which was published in Stuttgart as far back as 1894. We shall have to translate the quotations from the German originals, as the Russian translations, while very numerous, are for the most part either incomplete or very unsatisfactory.

Summing up his historical analysis, Engels says:

"The state is, therefore, by no means a power forced on society from without; just as little is it 'the reality of the ethical idea', 'the image and reality of reason', as Hegel maintains. Rather, it is a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that it has split into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms, these classes with conflicting economic interests might not consume themselves and society in

fruitless struggle, it became necessary to have a power, seemingly standing above society, that would alleviate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of 'order'; and this power, arisen out of society but placing itself above it, and alienating itself more and more from it, is the state." (Pp. 177-78, sixth German edition.)

This expresses with perfect clarity the basic idea of Marxism with regard to the historical role and the meaning of the state. The state is a product and a manifestation of the *irreconcilability* of class antagonisms. The state arises where, when and insofar as class antagonisms objectively *cannot* be reconciled. And, conversely, the existence of the state proves that the class antagonisms are irreconcilable.

It is on this most important and fundamental point that the distortion of Marxism, proceeding along two main lines, begins.

On the one hand, the bourgeois, and particularly the petty-bourgeois, ideologists, compelled under the weight of indisputable historical facts to admit that the state only exists where there are class antagonisms and a class struggle, "correct" Marx in such a way as to make it appear that the state is an organ for the *reconciliation* of classes. According to Marx, the state could neither have arisen nor maintained itself had it been possible to reconcile classes. From what the petty-bourgeois and philistine professors and publicists say, with quite frequent and benevolent references to Marx, it appears that the state does reconcile classes. According to Marx, the state is an organ of class rule, an organ for the *oppression* of one class by another; it is the creation of "order", which legalises and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the conflict between the classes. In the opinion of the petty-bourgeois politicians, however, order means the reconciliation of classes, and not the oppression of one class by another; to alleviate the conflict means reconciling classes and not depriving the oppressed classes of definite means and methods of struggle to overthrow the oppressors.

For instance, when in the revolution of 1917, the question of the significance and role of the state arose in all its magnitude as a practical question demanding immediate action, and, moreover, action on a mass scale, all the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks descended at once to the petty-bourgeois theory that the "state" "reconciles" classes. Innumerable resolutions and articles by politicians of both these parties are thoroughly saturated with this petty-bourgeois and philistine "reconciliation" theory. That the state is an organ of the rule of a definite class which *cannot* be reconciled with its antipode (the class opposite to it) is something the petty-bourgeois democrats will never be able to understand. Their attitude to the state is one of the most striking manifestations of the fact that our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks are not socialists at all (a point that we Bolsheviks have always maintained), but petty-bourgeois democrats using near-socialist phraseology.

On the other hand, the "Kautskyite" distortion of Marxism is far more subtle. "Theoretically", it is not denied that the state is an organ of class rule, or that class antagonisms are irreconcilable. But what is overlooked or glossed over is this: if the state is the product of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms, if it is a power standing *above* society and "*alienating* itself *more and more* from it", it is obvious that the liberation of the oppressed class is impossible not only without a violent revolution, *but also without the destruction* of the apparatus of state power which was created by the ruling class and which is the embodiment of this "alienation". As we shall see later, Marx very explicitly drew this theoretically self-evident conclusion on the strength of a concrete historical analysis of the tasks of the revolution.



# Net werkersmag kan die trekarbeidsistees vernietig

**inqaba  
YA BASEBENZI**

Die trekarbeiders, wat van die dorpe en lande dwarsdeur Suider-Afrika af kom, vorm die magtige ruggraat van die stryd, nie alleen in Suid-Afrika nie maar in Suidelike Afrika as geheel.

Die trekarbeiders is die mees talryke, mees uitgebuite en onderdrukte deel van die werkende klas. Hulle voel die skerpste die sweep van nasionale onderdrukking en kapitalistiese uitbuiting. Slegs wanneer hulle, saam met al die werkers, die plaag van kapitalisme uit Suid-Afrika gewerp het, kan daar ware bevryding van die paswette, hongersnood, werkloosheid en huisloosheid kom.

Eenheid van die werkers vir die omverwerping van nasionale onderdrukking en sy wortel—kapitalisme—vereis die organisasie van die trekarbeiders saam met alle ander werkers. Alleen dit kan al die onderdrukte verenig.

In hul stryd teen onmenslike toestande—hongerlone, toestromingsbeheer en die paswette—het die trekarbeiders keer op keer vooruitgang in politieke bewussyn en geweldige krag en strydbaarheid getoon.

Dwarsdeur hierdie eeu het hulle die voortou geneem in die stryd teen die paswette en, in die historiese gebeurtenisse van die 1950s, groot verstand van die kuns van stryd onder kapitalisme aan die dag gelê. Hulle het ondergrondse organisasies opgebou wat die werkers in die stede en die reservate verbind het.

Gedurende die kolossale beweging teen die passe in 1960 het hulle hul krag en beslistheid bewys deur die proteste voor die polisiestasies te verander in 'n konfrontasie met die staat. Die paswette is vir ses weke opgehef. In Pondoland het hulle 'n tyd lank daarin geslaag om hul eie beheer in plaas van dié van hul

onderdrukkers te vestig.

Die stygende sekerheid en krag van die trekarbeiders, wat keer op keer bewys is sedert die vroeë 1970s, is die sentrale faktor waarop die politieke berekeninge van die heersende klas berus.

Die Wiehahn Kommissie, wat na die beweginge van 1973 en 1976 gekom het, was 'n opsetlike poging om die werkende klas te boei en te verdeel, om swart vakbonde te dwing om op die baas se voorwaardes te registreer, en om trekarbeiders van 'stedelike' werkers te verdeel.

Onder meer en meer druk van onder af, van die ongeregistreerde vakbonde en buite hulle om, is die regering gedwing om terug te trek en trekarbeiders toe te laat om by vakbonde aan te sluit. Nou moet hulle ander maniere van verdeling soek om hulle doel te bereik.

In ronde na ronde van stakingsaksie—Sigma, Ford, Leyland, in rent- en busboikotte—gee die groeiende eenheid van die trekarbeiders en ander werkers om die geweldenaars van onderdrukking omver te gooi, nuwe krag en moed aan die beweging van alle groepe van die onderdrukte. Terselfdertyd verdiep dit die krisis van die heersende klas.

Die regering peuter hier en daar, beweeg vorenjoe en dan weer terug, op soek na 'n stabiele basis vir sy mag. Hy praat van 'verbeteringe', maar vir die trekarbeiders kan daar geen wesentliche verbeteringe onder die kapitalisme kom nie. Die heersende klas kan nooit die oorsprong van sy wins—goedkoop arbeid—vernietig nie. Wat ook al verander mag word, trekarbeid moet bly. Al die industrieleiers stem hieroor saam.

Al die marionette wat praat oor onderhandelinge met die regering moet oppas—die regering probeer om hulle te gebruik as sambokke om

die werkers mee te slaan.

Daar kan geen onderhandelinge of kompromis wees oor die vraag van trekarbeid en die hele Bantoestan-/paswetsistees nie. Geen kompromis is moontlik tussen die draers van die pas en dié wie se belange hulle dien—die industriebase—nie.

Die stryd in Suid-Afrika kom neer op wie se belange die oorhand moet kry, die heersende klas of die werkers.

Alles wat swartmense in hul daaglikse lewe teenkom, word veroorsaak deur een ding—kapitalisme, en sy fondament, trekarbeid. Net as hierdie sistees heeltemal vernietig word kan die onderdrukte massa werk, kos, huise en demokrasie kry.

'n Revolusionêre program vir Suid-Afrika moet daarom as sentrale punt die vernietiging eis van die staat wat op die trekarbeid en nasionale onderdrukking berus en dit versterk. Niks anders kan die massa verenig vir egte bevryding nie.

Die Freedom Charter, die program van die ANC, staan vir die afskaffing van trekarbeid. Op hierdie punt stem ons almal saam. Maar hoe moet dit uitgevoer word? Kan dié eis en ander eise van die Freedom Charter uitgevoer word terwyl die heersende klas sy eiendom bly behou en sy staat beheer?

INQABA sê Nee! Net 'n revolusionêre beweging onder leiding van die werkende klas om die staat te vernietig en te vervang met 'n demokratiese staat van die werkers, kan 'n einde maak aan die paswette, nasionale onderdrukking, werkloosheid ens.

INQABA staan vir die opbou van 'n massa-ANC in Suid-Afrika, diep gewortel in die kampongs, barakke, fabriek, myne, plase en townships om die stryd vir staatsmag vorentoe te lei.



And—as we shall show in detail further on—it is this conclusion which Kautsky has “forgotten” and distorted.

## 2. Special Bodies of Armed Men, Prisons, Etc.

Engels continues:

“As distinct from the old gentile (tribal or clan) order, the state, first, divides its subjects *according to territory* . . .”

This division seems “natural” to us, but it cost a prolonged struggle against the old organisation according to generations or tribes.

“The second distinguishing feature is the establishment of a *public power* which no longer directly coincides with the population organising itself as an armed force. This special, public power is necessary because a self-acting armed organisation of the population has become impossible since the split into classes. . . . This public power exists in every state; it consists not merely of armed men but also of material adjuncts, prisons and institutions of coercion of all kinds, of which gentile (clan) society knew nothing. . . .”

Engels elucidates the concept of the “power” which is called the state, a power which arose from society but places itself above it and alienates itself more and more from it. What does this power mainly consist of? It consists of special bodies of armed men having prisons, etc., at their command.

We are justified in speaking of special bodies of armed men, because the public power which is an attribute of every state “does not directly coincide” with the armed population, with its “self-acting armed organisation”.

Like all great revolutionary thinkers, Engels tries to draw the attention of the class-conscious workers to what prevailing philistinism regards as least worthy of attention, as the most habitual thing, hallowed by prejudices that are not only deep-rooted but, one might say, petrified. A standing army and police are the chief instruments of state power. But how can it be otherwise?

From the viewpoint of the vast majority of Europeans of the end of the nineteenth century whom Engels was addressing, and who had not gone through or closely observed a single great revolution, it could not have been otherwise. They could not understand at all what a “self-acting armed organisation of the population” was. When asked why it became necessary to have special bodies of armed men placed above society and alienating themselves from it (police and a standing army), the West-European and Russian philistines are inclined to utter a few phrases borrowed from Spencer or Mikhailovsky, to refer to the growing complexity of social life, the differentiation of functions, and so on.

Such a reference seems “scientific”, and effectively lulls the ordinary person to sleep by obscuring the important and basic fact, namely, the split of society into irreconcilably antagonistic classes.

Were it not for this split, the “self-acting armed organisation of the population” would differ from the primitive organisation of a stick-wielding herd of monkeys, or of primitive men, or of men united in clans, by its complexity, its high technical level, and so on. But such an organisation would still be possible.

It is impossible because civilised society is split into antagonistic, and, moreover, irreconcilably antagonistic, classes, whose “self-acting” arming would lead to an armed struggle between them. A state arises, a special power is created, special bodies of armed men, and every revolution, by destroying the state apparatus, shows us the naked class struggle, clearly shows us how the ruling class

strives to restore the special bodies of armed men which serve it, and how the oppressed class strives to create a new organisation of this kind, capable of serving the exploited instead of the exploiters.

In the above argument, Engels raises theoretically the very same question which every great revolution raises before us in practice, palpably and, what is more, on a scale of mass action, namely, the question of the relationship between “special” bodies of armed men and the “self-acting armed organisation of the population”. We shall see how this question is specifically illustrated by the experience of the European and Russian revolutions.

But to return to Engels’s exposition.

He points out that sometimes—in certain parts of North America, for example—this public power is weak (he has in mind a rare exception in capitalist society, and those parts of North America in its pre-imperialist days where the free colonist predominated), but that, generally speaking, it grows stronger:

“It [the public power] grows stronger, however, in proportion as class antagonisms within the state become more acute, and as adjacent states become larger and more populous. We have only to look at our present-day Europe, where class struggle and rivalry in conquest have tuned up the public power to such a pitch that it threatens to swallow the whole of society and even the state.”

This was written not later than the early nineties of the last century, Engels’s last preface being dated June 16, 1891. The turn towards imperialism—meaning the complete domination of the trusts, the omnipotence of the big banks, a grand-scale colonial policy, and so forth—was only just beginning in France, and was even weaker in North America and in Germany. Since then “rivalry in conquest” has taken a gigantic stride, all the more because by the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century the world had been completely divided up among these “rivals in conquest”, i.e., among the predatory Great Powers. Since then, military and naval armaments have grown fantastically and the predatory war of 1914-17 for the domination of the world by Britain or Germany, for the division of the spoils, has brought the “swallowing” of all the forces of society by the rapacious state power close to complete catastrophe.

Engels could, as early as 1891, point to “rivalry in conquest” as one of the most important distinguishing features of the foreign policy of the Great Powers, while the social-chauvinist scoundrels have ever since 1914, when this rivalry, many times intensified, gave rise to an imperialist war, been covering up the defence of the predatory interests of “their own” bourgeoisie with phrases about “defence of the fatherland”, “defence of the republic and the revolution”, etc.!

## 3. The State—an Instrument for the Exploitation of the Oppressed Class

The maintenance of the special public power standing above society requires taxes and state loans.

“Having public power and the right to levy taxes,” Engels writes, “the officials now stand, as organs of society, *above society*. The free, voluntary respect that was accorded to the organs of the gentile (clan) constitution does not satisfy them, even if they could gain it. . . .” Special laws are enacted proclaiming the sanctity and immunity of the officials. “The shabbiest police servant” has more “authority” than the representatives of the clan, but even the head of the military power of a civilised state may well envy



# ● No to a capitalist National Convention - ● Yes to a Revolutionary Congress of the People

The idea of a National Convention to 'settle' the future of South Africa by negotiation, has become a theme tune of the 'liberal' section of the capitalist class and is repeatedly echoed by the PFP and the English-language press. The idea has also become popular with those members of the black middle class (Buthelezi, Tutu, Motlana, for example) who fraternise with the liberal bosses and preach the benefits of capitalism.

What lies behind this 'National Convention' idea, and what attitude should our movement take towards it?

Today the struggles of the oppressed are growing on every side, while the ruling class is being thrown increasingly onto the defensive.

The white elections in April demonstrated, not the strength and self-confidence of the government and its supporters, but their deep divisions and lack of perspective for the future.

The 20th anniversary of the white Republic demonstrated, not the stability or security of the racist regime, but the determination of the black majority—and a growing number of young whites—to overthrow it. Even *The Star* (3 June) had

By  
**Daniel Hugo**  
and  
**Paul Storey**

to admit that the "celebrations" only "highlighted the huge differences in South African society."

Renewed conflict has erupted between school students and the police in Bosmont, Coronationville, Newclare, Westbury... Struggles have broken out over rent and housing at Tembisa and Reiger Park... Above-all, there has been a massive increase in trade union strength and militancy of the black workers.

The Buffelsfontein miners' strike, the solidarity of Ford and GM workers with their brothers at Firestone, the confrontation at Leyland, the strike and boycott involving Wilson-Rowntree ... these are only recent examples among 250 recorded strikes since January 1980.

Just the increase in black trade union membership from 60 000 to 200 000 over the past year has already impressed on the whole country the mighty potential of organised labour to unite and lead the mass movement to victory.

This lesson has not been missed by the bourgeoisie, at home or abroad. The *Sunday Express* (10 May) quotes a 'political commentator': "The pressures Mr Botha is

going to have to face over the next few years do not even bear comparison with the tasks of his predecessors. The labour unrest that Mr Botha is going to have to cope with will make June 1976 look like a tea party."

The British *Financial Times* in its survey on South Africa (26 May) carries the headline: "Black unions the greatest threat"—and doubts whether the "artificial distinction between politics and labour relations can be sustained."

It cannot and will not be sustained. Increasingly, the class movement of the workers is proving to be the magnetic pole of unity for all the oppressed in the struggle for national and social liberation.

This, above all, terrifies the bosses and underlies the deepening splits within the ruling class and the regime.

The ultra-right who dream of turning the clock back to unvarnished baasskap, can at this point offer no convincing policies either to the big bourgeoisie or even to the majority of white voters. This accounts for the present stalemate of the right wing of the NP, and the failure of the HNP so far to take off as a mass force.

At the same time the 'liberal' capitalists (from Botha/Malan in the NP to the PFP and Oppenheimer), while indulging in empty talk of reform, in practice cannot abandon ruthless police-state methods in confronting the black



the elder of a clan the "unstrained respect" of society.

The question of the privileged position of the officials as organs of state power is raised here. The main point indicated is: what is it that places them *above* society? We shall see how this theoretical question was answered in practice by the Paris Commune in 1871 and how it was obscured from a reactionary standpoint by Kautsky in 1912.

"Because the state arose from the need to hold class antagonisms in check, but because it arose, at the same time, in the midst of the conflict of these classes, it is, as a rule, the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class, which, through the medium of the state, becomes also the politically dominant class, and thus acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class. . . ." The ancient and feudal states were organs for the exploitation of the slaves and serfs; likewise, "the modern representative state is an instrument of exploitation of wage-labour by capital. By way of exception, however, periods occur in which the warring classes balance each other so nearly that the state power as ostensible mediator acquires, for the moment, a certain degree of independence of both. . . ." Such were the absolute monarchies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Bonapartism of the First and Second Empires in France, and the Bismarck regime in Germany.

Such, we may add, is the Kerensky government in republican Russia since it began to persecute the revolutionary proletariat, at a moment when, owing to the leadership of the petty-bourgeois democrats, the Soviets have *already* become impotent, while the bourgeoisie are not *yet* strong enough simply to disperse them.

In a democratic republic, Engels continues, "wealth exercises its power indirectly, but all the more surely", first, by means of the "direct corruption of officials" (America); secondly, by means of an "alliance of the government and the Stock Exchange" (France and America).

At present, imperialism and the domination of the banks have "developed" into an exceptional art both these methods of upholding and giving effect to the omnipotence of wealth in democratic republics of all descriptions. Since, for instance, in the very first months of the Russian democratic republic, one might say during the honeymoon of the "socialist" S.R.s and Mensheviks joined in wedlock to the bourgeoisie, in the coalition government, Mr. Palchinsky obstructed every measure intended for curbing the capitalists and their marauding practices, their plundering of the state by means of war contracts; and since later on Mr. Palchinsky, upon resigning from the Cabinet (and being, of course, replaced by another, quite similar Palchinsky), was "rewarded" by the capitalists with a lucrative job with a salary of 120,000 rubles per annum—what would you call that? Direct or indirect bribery? An alliance of the government and the syndicates, or "merely" friendly relations? What role do the Chernovs, Tseretelis, Avksentyevs and Skobelevs play? Are they the "direct" or only the indirect allies of the millionaire treasury-looters?

The reason why the omnipotence of "wealth" is more *certain* in a democratic republic is that it does not depend on individual defects in the political machinery or on the faulty political shell of capitalism. A democratic republic is the best possible political shell for capitalism, and, therefore, once capital has gained possession of this very best shell (through the Palchinskys, Chernovs, Tseretelis and Co.), it establishes its power so securely, so firmly, that *no* change of persons, institutions or parties in the bourgeois-democratic republic can shake it.

We must also note that Engels is most explicit in calling universal suffrage an instrument of bourgeois rule. Universal suffrage, he says, obviously taking account of the long experience of German Social-Democracy, is

"the gauge of the maturity of the working class. It cannot and never will be anything more in the present-day state".

The petty-bourgeois democrats, such as our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, and also their twin brothers, all the social-chauvinists and opportunists of Western Europe, expect just this "more" from universal suffrage. They themselves share, and instil into the minds of the people, the false notion that universal suffrage "in the *present-day state*" is really capable of revealing the will of the majority of the working people and of securing its realisation.

Here we can only indicate this false notion, only point out that Engels's perfectly clear, precise and concrete statement is distorted at every step in the propaganda and agitation of the "official" (i.e., opportunist) socialist parties. A detailed exposure of the utter falsity of this notion which Engels brushes aside here is given in our further account of the views of Marx and Engels on the "*present-day*" state.

Engels gives a general summary of his views in the most popular of his works in the following words:

"The state, then, has not existed from all eternity. There have been societies that did without it, that had no idea of the state and state power. At a certain stage of economic development, which was necessarily bound up with the split of society into classes, the state became a necessity owing to this split. We are now rapidly approaching a stage in the development of production at which the existence of these classes not only will have ceased to be a necessity, but will become a positive hindrance to production. They will fall as inevitably as they arose at an earlier stage. Along with them the state will inevitably fall. Society, which will reorganise production on the basis of a free and equal association of the producers, will put the whole machinery of state where it will then belong: into a museum of antiquities, by the side of the spinning-wheel and the bronze axe."

We do not often come across this passage in the propaganda and agitation literature of the present-day Social-Democrats. Even when we do come across it, it is mostly quoted in the same manner as one bows before an icon, i.e., it is done to show official respect for Engels, and no attempt is made to gauge the breadth and depth of the revolution that this relegating of "the whole machinery of state to a museum of antiquities" implies. In most cases we do not even find an understanding of what Engels calls the state machine.

#### 4. The "Withering Away" of the State, and Violent Révolution

Engels's words regarding the "withering away" of the state are so widely known, they are so often quoted, and so clearly reveal the essence of the customary adaptation of Marxism to opportunism that we must deal with them in detail. We shall quote the whole argument from which they are taken.

"The proletariat seizes state power and turns the means of production into state property to begin with.

But thereby it abolishes itself as the proletariat, abolishes all class distinctions and class antagonisms, and abolishes



working class. Botha is notorious as a butcher. Also Oppenheimer's 'liberalism' was exposed in its true colours by the actions of his managers against the Sigma workers.

Nowhere in the world has the capitalist class ever agreed to dismantle the military-police machinery for repression of the working class. And yet the SA capitalists daily discover that brute force alone cannot hold back the mass movement.

This is the background on which we should assess the liberals' call for a National Convention. They reflect the growing understanding of capitalists that at some point in future, the old methods of military-police repression will have to be decisively supplemented ... by relying on the co-operation of leaders from among the blacks.

"Of course the tendency in this direction is not new. Both Vorster and Botha have repeatedly set up puppet bodies, like the Bantustan assemblies, the CRC, the SAIC, the President's Council and the stillborn Black Council, in the hope

of hoodwinking the masses.

But the more far-sighted strategists of capital have seen that outright collaborators and stooges among the blacks, far from holding back the mass movement, have only attracted contempt and inflamed the anger of the people.

Instead these capitalists take as their example the Lancaster House 'settlement' in Zimbabwe, where they were able to negotiate with acknowledged leaders of the struggle and, with the latter's help, to rescue capitalism (for the time being) from the jaws of revolution.

As a result, while important changes were conceded in Zimbabwe, the capitalists preserved their property in land and in industry, preserved their position as bosses, preserved the exploitation of the toilers, preserved privileges for whites, and preserved the state machine as an instrument for defending capitalism against the aspirations of the working people.

That is the example they hope to see repeated in South Africa. That is what they have in mind when they call for a National Convention.

The **Rand Daily Mail** (11 April) comes as near as we can expect to spelling out the purpose of the 'liberal' bosses' National Convention strategy:

"Nationalists say a convention would be a 'sell-out' of the whites. On the contrary, it is probably the only way to safeguard the security of whites in South Africa over the long term.

"Whites have white rule. Blacks want majority rule. An agreement has to be struck somewhere in between." (Emphasis added.)

To the liberals, therefore, a National Convention represents not a vehicle for the orderly concession of democratic rights and equality to the majority, but a conspiracy against democracy and against equality. Here is revealed the gulf which exists between the democratic poses of the liberals and the concrete class interests they defend.

An enormous gulf also exists between the idea of the capitalists' National Convention and its coming





also the state as state. Society thus far, operating amid class antagonisms, needed the state, that is, an organisation of the particular exploiting class, for the maintenance of its external conditions of production, and, therefore, especially for the purpose of forcibly keeping the exploited class in the conditions of oppression determined by the given mode of production (slavery, serfdom or bondage, wage-labour). The state was the official representative of society as a whole, its concentration in a visible corporation. But it was this only insofar as it was the state of that class which itself represented, for its own time, society as a whole: in ancient times, the state of slave-owning citizens; in the Middle Ages, of the feudal nobility; in our own time, of the bourgeoisie. When at last it becomes the real representative of the whole of society, it renders itself unnecessary. As soon as there is no longer any social class to be held in subjection, as soon as class rule, and the individual struggle for existence based upon the present anarchy in production, with the collisions and excesses arising from this struggle, are removed, nothing more remains to be held in subjection—nothing necessitating a special coercive force, a state. The first act by which the state really comes forward as the representative of the whole of society—the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society—is also its last independent act as a state. State interference in social relations becomes, in one domain after another, superfluous, and then dies down of itself. The government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of processes of production. The state is not 'abolished'. *It withers away*. This gives 'the measure of the value of the phrase 'a free people's state', both as to its justifiable use for a time from an agitational point of view, and as to its ultimate scientific insufficiency; and also of the so-called anarchists' demand that the state be abolished overnight." (*Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science [Anti-Dühring]*, pp. 301-03, third German edition.)

It is safe to say that of this argument of Engels's, which is so remarkably rich in ideas, only one point has become an integral part of socialist thought among modern socialist parties, namely that according to Marx the state "wither away"—as distinct from the anarchist doctrine of the "abolition" of the state. To prune Marxism to such an extent means reducing it to opportunism, for this "interpretation" only leaves a vague notion of a slow, even gradual change, of absence of leaps and storms, of absence of revolution. The current, widespread, popular, if one may say so, conception of the "withering away" of the state undoubtedly means obscuring, if not repudiating, revolution.

Such an "interpretation", however, is the crudest distortion of Marxism, advantageous only to the bourgeoisie. In point of theory, it is based 'on disregard for the most important circumstances and considerations indicated in, say, Engels's "summary" argument we have just quoted in full.

In the first place, at the very outset of his argument, Engels says that, in seizing state power, the proletariat thereby "abolishes the state as state". It is not done to ponder over the meaning of this. Generally, it is either ignored altogether, or is considered to be something in the nature of "Hegelian weakness" on Engels's part. As a matter of fact, however, these words briefly express the experience of one of the greatest proletarian revolutions, the Paris Commune of 1871, of which we shall speak in greater detail in its proper place. As a matter of fact, Engels speaks here of the proletarian revolution "abolishing" the *bourgeois* state, while the words about the state withering away refer to the remnants of the *proletarian* state after the socialist revolution. According to Engels, the bourgeois state does not "wither away", but is "abolished" by the proletariat in the course of the revolution. What withers away after this revolution is the proletarian

state or semi-state.

Secondly, the state is a "special coercive force". Engels gives this splendid and extremely profound definition here with the utmost lucidity. And from it follows that the "special coercive force" for the suppression of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie, of millions of working people by handfuls of the rich, must be replaced by a "special coercive force" for the suppression of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat (the dictatorship of the proletariat). This is precisely what is meant by "abolition of the state as state". This is precisely the "act" of taking possession of the means of production in the name of society. And it is self-evident that *such* a replacement of one (bourgeois) "special force" by another (proletarian) "special force" cannot possibly take place in the form of "withering away".

Thirdly, in speaking of the state "withering away", and the even more graphic and colourful "dying down of itself", Engels refers quite clearly and definitely to the period *after* "the state has taken possession of the means of production in the name of the whole of society", that is, *after* the socialist revolution. We all know that the political form of the "state" at that time is the most complete democracy. But it never enters the head of any of the opportunists, who shamelessly distort Marxism, that Engels is consequently speaking here of *democracy* "dying down of itself", or "withering away". This seems very strange at first sight. But it is "incomprehensible" only to those who have not thought about democracy *also* being a state and, consequently, also disappearing when the state disappears. Revolution alone can "abolish" the bourgeois state. The state in general, i.e., the most complete democracy, can only "wither away".

Fourthly, after formulating his famous proposition that "the state withers away", Engels at once explains specifically that this proposition is directed against both the opportunists and the anarchists. In doing this, Engels puts in the forefront that conclusion, drawn from the proposition that "the state withers away", which is directed against the opportunists.

One can wager that out of every 10,000 persons who have read or heard about the "withering away" of the state, 9,990 are completely unaware, or do not remember, that Engels directed his conclusions from that proposition *not* against the anarchists *alone*. And of the remaining ten, probably nine do not know the meaning of a "free people's state" or why an attack on this slogan means an attack on the opportunists. This is how history is written! This is how a great revolutionary teaching is imperceptibly falsified and adapted to prevailing philistinism. The conclusion directed against the anarchists has been repeated thousands of times; it has been vulgarised, and rammed into people's heads in the shallowest form, and has acquired the strength of a prejudice, whereas the conclusion directed against the opportunists has been obscured and "forgotten"!

The "free people's state" was a programme demand and a catchword current among the German Social-Democrats in the seventies. This catchword is devoid of all political content except that it describes the concept of democracy in a pompous philistine fashion. Insofar as it hinted in a legally permissible manner at a democratic republic, Engels was prepared to "justify" its use "for a time" from an agitational point of view. But it was an opportunist catchword, for it amounted to something more than prettifying bourgeois democracy, and was also failure to understand the socialist criticism of the state in general. We are in favour of a democratic republic as the best form of state for the proletariat under capitalism. But we have no right to forget that wage slavery is the lot of the people even in the most democratic bourgeois republic. Furthermore, every state is a "special force" for the suppression of the oppressed class. Consequently, *every* state is *not* "free" and *not* a "people's state". Marx and Engels



into being.

Previously in **INQABA** we have explained why capitalism depends on cheap labour in South Africa, and why this makes it extremely difficult for the ruling class to launch any concerted moves towards democratic reforms. They simply cannot afford to release the working class from its chains.

The US Under-Secretary of State for Africa, Chester Crocker, was reflecting this problem for capitalism when he explained to the American Congress in 1980 the **obstacles** in the way of a National Convention:

"In some policy circles, there is a fixation with the goal of getting Pretoria to schedule a national convention.... This is a benign wish, but the practical obstacles are awesome and the prospects at this stage dim.... The basic structure of racial legislation, white political control and the homelands policy will not be dismantled in one dramatic conference—at least not until key elites have developed a far more extensive basis for mutual respect and awareness, or not until the situation has first become desperate. Neither of these conditions exist today."

What the imperialist Crocker means is that for the capitalists to open up negotiations about a democratic constitution at the present stage would be madness.

The "mutual respect and awareness" of "key elites" is already quite "extensive". Bishop Tutu, for example, is so "aware" of capitalist interests, and "respects" them so utterly, that he is quite willing to see the pass laws only "phased out" (!) in order to "avoid chaos" (!!). Nevertheless a National Convention would place demands on the table which the capitalists cannot possibly accept.

It would awaken enormous expectations among the people that would spill over into revolutionary confrontations once the convention fails—as it must—to meet the demands for immediate and complete democratic rights.

For this reason a National Convention would only be convened as an **absolute last resort**—when the state is losing control, when the

working class is on the point of conquering power factory by factory and street by street, and when the bosses have **no alternative** but to depend on black leaders to salvage their system.

That time will come in South Africa. It will be the time of greatest opportunity for the working people—when victory is within our grasp, and when a firm revolutionary leadership at the head of the masses would enable the ruling class to be overthrown, the bosses' state to be destroyed, apartheid to be

## **Neither guerilla attacks nor a 'national convention', but mass armed insurrection in a revolutionary crisis, must be seen as the only possible means to seize power from the ruling class.**

abolished, and the building of a democratic socialist society to commence.

But that will also be the time of greatest danger. If the leadership trusted by the masses then wavers from the path of revolution, leans towards compromise with the ruling class, and allows itself to be snared in the capitalists' National Convention strategy, a catastrophe will be prepared.

A revolutionary situation is not a time when the classes are 'reconciled', but precisely when their antagonism reaches the greatest height. It is not difficult to foresee the likely consequences which a South African version of 'Lancaster House' would entail.

The black leaders involved would be forced to call on the people to suspend their actions 'for the time being' and await the outcome of the talks. The momentum of struggle could thus be broken and the unity of the mass movement begin to waver.

Whole sections of workers could lapse into inactivity instead of relentlessly pursuing their drive to wrest power from the capitalist class. New provocations from the ultra-right would spark new outbursts of mass anger, but now unco-

ordinated and without a central lead.

The bosses could drag out negotiations, relying on the popular leaders in the National Convention to appeal for 'patience' and 'order', and so wear down the movement with frustration, uncertainty and resulting division.

At the same time, behind the cover of 'negotiations', the bosses would regroup the forces of reaction and prepare for counter-attack.

Under such conditions the ground would be prepared for counter-

revolution, with the state machinery, still uncrushed, playing the crucial role. The police and military would provoke confrontations in the streets, gunning down workers and youth to create an atmosphere of confusion and defeat. Sporadic resistance would be met with savage racist repression.

While the outcome of a resulting civil war would not be a foregone conclusion, on one point we can be sure. Should counter-revolution triumph in South Africa, not only the conciliators of the 'National Convention' would be trampled underfoot. Every independent organisation of the working people would be systematically destroyed before the capitalist class could be satisfied that a 'healthy economic climate' had been re-established.

Repeatedly it has been shown in history that a policy of class compromise in a time of revolutionary crisis fatally disrupts the workers' movement and opens the way to defeat. In Spain in the 1930s, the victory of fascism resulted from precisely such a policy; in Chile in 1973, counter-revolution slaughtered over 50,000 workers and peasants. In South Africa a still greater bloodbath could result.

This holocaust of counter-



explained this repeatedly to their party comrades in the seventies.

Fifthly, the same work of Engels's, whose argument about the withering away of the state everyone remembers, also contains an argument of the significance of violent revolution. Engels's historical analysis of its role becomes a veritable panegyric on violent revolution. This "no one remembers". It is not done in modern socialist parties to talk or even think about the significance of this idea, and it plays no part whatever in their daily propaganda and agitation among the people. And yet it is inseparably bound up with the "withering away" of the state into one harmonious whole.

Here is Engels's argument:

"...That force, however, plays yet another role (other than that of a diabolical power) in history, a revolutionary role; that, in the words of Marx, it is the midwife of every old society which is pregnant with a new one, that it is the instrument with which social movement forces its way through and shatters the dead, fossilised political forms—of this there is not a word in Herr Dühring. It is only with sighs and groans that he admits the possibility that force will perhaps be necessary for the overthrow of an economy based on exploitation—unfortunately, because all use of force demoralises, he says, the person who uses it. And this in spite of the immense moral and spiritual impetus which has been given by every victorious revolution! And this in Germany, where a violent collision—which may, after all, be forced on the people—would at least have the advantage of wiping out the servility which has penetrated the nation's mentality following the humiliation of the Thirty Years' War. And this parson's mode of thought—dull, insipid and impotent—presumes to impose itself on the most revolutionary party that history has known!" (P. 193, third German edition, Part II, end of Chap. IV.)

How can this panegyric on violent revolution, which Engels insistently brought to the attention of the German Social-Democrats between 1878 and 1894, i.e., right up to the time of his death, be combined with the theory of the "withering away" of the state to form a single theory?

Usually the two are combined by means of eclecticism, by an unprincipled or sophistic selection made arbitrarily (or to please the powers that be) of first one, then another argument, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, if not more, it is the idea of the "withering away" that is placed in the forefront. Dialectics are replaced by eclecticism—this is the most usual, the most widespread practice to be met with in present-day official Social-Democratic literature in relation to Marxism. This sort of substitution is, of course, nothing new; it was observed even in the history of classical Greek philosophy. In falsifying Marxism in opportunist fashion, the substitution of eclecticism for dialectics is the easiest way of deceiving the people. It gives an illusory satisfaction; it seems to take into account all sides of the process, all trends of development, all the conflicting influences, and so forth, whereas in reality it provides no integral and revolutionary conception of the process of social development at all.

We have already said above, and shall show more fully later, that the theory of Marx and Engels of the inevitability of a violent revolution refers to the bourgeois state. The latter *cannot* be superseded by the proletarian state (the dictatorship of the proletariat) through the process of "withering away", but, as a general rule, only through a violent revolution. The panegyric Engels sang in its honour, and which fully corresponds to Marx's repeated statements (see the concluding passages of *The Poverty of Philosophy* and the *Communist Manifesto*, with their proud and open proclamation of the inevitability of a

violent revolution; see what Marx wrote nearly thirty years later, in criticising the Gotha Programme of 1875, when he mercilessly castigated the opportunist character of that programme)—this panegyric is by no means a mere "impulse", a mere declamation or a polemical sally. The necessity of systematically imbuing the masses with *this* and precisely this view of violent revolution lies at the root of the *entire* theory of Marx and Engels. The betrayal of their theory by the now prevailing social-chauvinist and Kautskyite trends expresses itself strikingly, in both these trends ignoring *such* propaganda and agitation.

The supersession of the bourgeois state by the proletarian state is impossible without a violent revolution. The abolition of the proletarian state, i.e., of the state in general, is impossible except through the process of "withering away".

A detailed and concrete elaboration of these views was given by Marx and Engels when they studied each particular revolutionary situation, when they analysed the lessons of the experience of each particular revolution. We shall now pass to this, undoubtedly the most important, part of their theory.

## CHAPTER II

### The State and Revolution. The Experience of 1848-51

#### 1. The Eve of the Revolution

The first works of mature Marxism—*The Poverty of Philosophy* and the *Communist Manifesto*—appeared just on the eve of the revolution of 1848. For this reason, in addition to presenting the general principles of Marxism, they reflect to a certain degree the concrete revolutionary situation of the time. It will, therefore, be more expedient, perhaps, to examine what the authors of these works said about the state immediately before they drew conclusions from the experience of the years 1848-51.

In *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx wrote:

"The working class, in the course of development, will substitute for the old bourgeois society an association which will preclude classes and their antagonism, and there will be no more political power proper, since political power is precisely the official expression of class antagonism in bourgeois society." (P. 182, German edition, 1885.)

It is instructive to compare this general exposition of the idea of the state disappearing after the abolition of classes with the exposition contained in the *Communist Manifesto*, written by Marx and Engels a few months later—in November 1847, to be exact:

"...In depicting the most general phases of the development of the proletariat, we traced the more or less veiled civil war, raging within existing society



revolution would not stop at the Limpopo. All the gains of the struggles in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Angola and elsewhere would be ruthlessly attacked.

The greatest clarity is needed in our movement to guard against these dangers. The leaders of the mass organisations, in particular of the ANC, need to clearly expose the pitfalls of class collaboration with the capitalists and spell out the revolutionary alternative.

In his New Year Message for 1981, the ANC President, comrade Tambo, specifically dealt with the question of a national convention.

Correctly, he points out that the call for a national convention is a "call for action" as long as the regime opposes it, and that a national convention could only come about as a consequence of bitter struggle.

The problem arises, however, when the ruling class finds itself with no alternative but to resort to the tactic of the National Convention itself. With this problem, and all its attendant dangers, comrade Tambo unfortunately does not deal.

"The national convention we are talking about," he says, "is one which would be a democratic forum vested with sovereign powers. It would bring together the leaders and representatives of the people of South Africa, and would produce a blueprint of the kind of South Africa that would meet the aspirations of the majority."

Also the SA Communist Party has this demand in its programme.

## Democracy

But a number of important issues arise from this conception, which it is very important that the leadership consider and clarify.

Firstly, the National Convention proposed by the capitalists and their hangers-on would not be a "democratic forum" at all.

A democratic forum would be a public assembly to which the people in every workplace, township and rural locality send delegates in proportion to their numbers, elected on the basis of one person one vote—and subject to immediate

recall to ensure that their electors' wishes are strictly carried out.

No class, group or party would be entitled to a greater voice in such an assembly than corresponds with its support among the people.

But the capitalists—even the most 'liberal'—have in mind no such thing. They want negotiations (if possible behind closed doors) where, far from submitting to the will of the majority, they intend to manipulate, bribe and blackmail, using all their economic power and the threat of the military-police apparatus, in order to secure their interests.

Consequently, on the count of democracy, our demand can have nothing in common with the 'National Convention' idea of the capitalists.

Secondly, the National Convention proposed by the capitalists and their hangers-on would not in reality have "sovereign powers" at all. They take it for granted that the convention would meet under the guns and supervision of the existing state. And that state is nothing but the instrument for capitalist dictatorship and minority rule against the majority.

The majority can be truly sovereign only to the extent that the existing state is demolished and democracy secured by the arming of the people.

Therefore the very conditions which comrade Tambo attaches to the 'national convention'—if consistently adhered to—would make it the opposite of the 'National Convention' which is now conceived of as the last resort by the 'liberal' bourgeoisie.

Would it not be better if we in the ANC spelled out clearly to the people that the capitalist 'National Convention' would be a deception and snare which no democrat—let alone socialist—can support?

And would it not be clearer if, instead of using the term 'national convention' for our demand—the same term which is used by the liberal tricksters—we reached into the fighting traditions of our movement and raised the slogan of a **Revolutionary Congress of the People**?

The Kliptown Congress of the People in 1955 itself adopted a 'blueprint'—the **Freedom**

**Charter**—which, whatever its inadequacies, contained the demand for the takeover of the mines, banks and monopoly industries from capitalism, the central element in a revolutionary programme.

But no part of that programme could be implemented because power was not in the hands of the working people. The Congress itself was surrounded and invaded by the armed racist thugs of the bosses' state.

## Workers' state

Economically and politically, the interests of the working class and all exploited people are directly opposed to those of the capitalist class. The working class needs to organise its full forces and struggle independently of all bourgeois influence, so as to rally round it all the oppressed for the destruction of the capitalist state and the establishment of a democratic workers' state.

The capitalists, far from surrendering their power, will fight frantically to retain it. Nor does guerilla action provide the means to overthrow the present regime and the present state. This state will only be defeated by the mass of society rising, arms in hand, against it.

It is the task of the organised working class to prepare and lead the forces in this struggle. The youth in the guerilla camps need to be freed from their present isolation and integrated into the mass movement, under working-class leadership, to share their skills and fighting spirit with the workers, youth and women moving into action.

Neither guerilla attacks nor a 'national convention', but mass armed insurrection in a revolutionary crisis, must be seen as the means—the only possible means—to seize power from the ruling class. On the basis of these perspectives the ANC can and must be built in the factories, townships, mines, reserves, farms and schools as an impregnable fortress of the coming workers' revolution. ■



up to the point where that war breaks out into open revolution, and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat. . . .

"... We have seen above that the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy.

"The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the state, i.e., of the proletariat organised as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible." (Pp. 31 and 37, seventh German edition, 1906.)

Here we have a formulation of one of the most remarkable and most important ideas of Marxism on the subject of the state, namely, the idea of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" (as Marx and Engels began to call it after the Paris Commune); and also, a highly interesting definition of the state, which is also one of the "forgotten words" of Marxism: "*the state, i.e., the proletariat organised as the ruling class*".

This definition of the state has never been explained in the prevailing propaganda and agitation literature of the official Social-Democratic parties. More than that, it has been deliberately ignored, for it is absolutely irreconcilable with reformism, and is a slap in the face for the common opportunist prejudices and philistine illusions about the "peaceful development of democracy".

The proletariat needs the state—this is repeated by all the opportunists, social-chauvinists and Kautskyites, who assure us that this is what Marx taught. But they "*forget*" to add that, in the first place according to Marx, the proletariat needs only a state which is withering away, i.e., a state so constituted that it begins to wither away immediately, and cannot but wither away. And, secondly, the working people need a "state, i.e., the proletariat organised as the ruling class".

The state is a special organisation of force: it is an organisation of violence for the suppression of some class. What class must the proletariat suppress? Naturally, only the exploiting class, i.e., the bourgeoisie. The working people need the state only to suppress the resistance of the exploiters, and only the proletariat can direct this suppression, can carry it out. For the proletariat is the only class that is consistently revolutionary, the only class that can unite all the working and exploited people in the struggle against the bourgeoisie, in completely removing it.

The exploiting classes need political rule to maintain exploitation, i.e., in the selfish interests of an insignificant minority against the vast majority of the people. The exploited classes need political rule in order to completely abolish all exploitation, i.e., in the interests of the vast majority of the people, and against the insignificant minority consisting of the modern slave-owners—the landowners and capitalists.

The petty-bourgeois democrats, those sham socialists who replaced the class struggle by dreams of class harmony, even pictured the socialist transformation in a dreamy fashion—not as the overthrow of the rule of the exploiting class, but as the peaceful submission of the minority to the majority which has become aware of its aims. This petty-bourgeois utopia, which is inseparable from the idea of the state being above classes, led in practice to the betrayal of the interests of the working classes, as was shown, for example, by the history of the French revolutions of 1848 and 1871, and by the experience of "socialist" participation in bourgeois Cabinets in Britain, France, Italy and other countries at the turn of the century.

All his life Marx fought against this petty-bourgeois

socialism, now revived in Russia by the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties. He developed his theory of the class struggle consistently, down to the theory of political power, of the state.

The overthrow of bourgeois rule can be accomplished only by the proletariat, the particular class whose economic conditions of existence prepare it for this task and provide it with the possibility and the power to perform it. While the bourgeoisie break up and disintegrate the peasantry and all the petty-bourgeois groups, they weld together, unite and organise the proletariat. Only the proletariat—by virtue of the economic role it plays in large-scale production—is capable of being the leader of *all* the working and exploited people, whom the bourgeoisie exploit, oppress and crush, often not less but more than they do the proletarians, but who are incapable of waging an *independent* struggle for their emancipation.

The theory of the class struggle, applied by Marx to the question of the state and the socialist revolution, leads as a matter of course to the recognition of the *political rule* of the proletariat, of its dictatorship, i.e., of undivided power directly backed by the armed force of the people. The overthrow of the bourgeoisie can be achieved only by the proletariat becoming the *ruling class*, capable of crushing the inevitable and desperate resistance of the bourgeoisie, and of organising *all* the working and exploited people for the new economic system.

The proletariat needs state power, a centralised organisation of force, and organisation of violence, both to crush the resistance of the exploiters and to *lead* the enormous mass of the population—the peasants, the petty bourgeoisie, and semi-proletarians—in the work of organising a socialist economy.

By educating the workers' party, Marxism educates the vanguard of the proletariat, capable of assuming power and *leading the whole people* to socialism, of directing and organising the new system, of being the teacher, the guide, the leader of all the working and exploited people in organising their social life without the bourgeoisie and against the bourgeoisie. By contrast, the opportunism now prevailing trains the members of 'the workers' party to be the representatives of the better-paid workers, who lose touch with the masses, "get along" fairly well under capitalism, and sell their birthright for a mess of pottage, i.e., renounce their role as revolutionary leaders of the people against the bourgeoisie.

Marx's theory of "the state, i.e., the proletariat organised as the ruling class" is inseparably bound up with the whole of his doctrine of the revolutionary role of the proletariat in history. The culmination of this role is the proletarian dictatorship, the political rule of the proletariat.

But since the proletariat needs the state as a *special* form of organisation of violence *against* the bourgeoisie, the following conclusion suggests itself: is it conceivable that such an organisation can be created without first abolishing, destroying the state machine created by the bourgeoisie *for themselves*? The *Communist Manifesto* leads straight to this conclusion, and it is of this conclusion that Marx speaks when summing up the experience of the revolution of 1848-51.

## 2. The Revolution Summed Up

Marx sums up his conclusions from the revolution of 1848-51, on the subject of the state we are concerned with, in the following argument contained in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*:

"But the revolution is thoroughgoing. It is still journeying through purgatory. It does its work



# Workers

## ORGANISE GALLO!

By an INQABA reporter

During a discussion with a Gallo worker of the struggles of workers on the factory floor, many of the ideas of INQABA were explained. In the course of this, the following problems facing workers at Gallo were raised:

"Over the past few years, Gallo has grown into a giant monopoly. It has swallowed many smaller firms like RCA, Trutone, Polydor and others. The only company not yet under its control is EMI. They started into business on the 'Music for Pleasure' label (MFP) not so many years ago. In spite of this growth, Gallo has a small work force.

"The problem, however, is not the size of the work force, but the fact that these workers have no history of struggling together, because we are all from different companies. This has made it very easy for management to divide workers and keep wages low. There is a network of informers who keep the management informed on any developments on the floor. This has created distrust among the workers. And even though there are many complaints we have difficulty discussing them because of this.

"It is easy for management to find and use informers—wages are poor and temporary workers threaten especially the unskilled workers' jobs. Management describes many workers as 'temporary' when in fact they are permanently employed. But because they are regarded as 'temporary' they do not have the protection of the law and are deprived of benefits permanent employees are entitled to.

"These temporary workers are usually young boys who have either dropped out of school or cannot

find any other jobs. They have been recruited mainly in Grasmere, near Johannesburg. Transport to and from work is provided for them and they are forced to work overtime.

"This forces all other workers to do overtime—we have to wake up at 4.30 a.m. to start at 6.50 a.m. and in the evenings most of us reach home at 11 p.m. This creates serious tension between the permanent and 'temporary' workers.

"These workers are under the impression that management favours them. The truth is that they are the worst exploited after the cleaners and nightwatchmen. They are paid below the minimum rates of the firm and for overtime they are paid less than half the normal rates of pay per hour. What it does is bring in more profits for the firm and longer working hours for other workers.

"Temporary workers are also deprived of the annual 20 days' paid leave as well as the annual bonus (double pay at Christmas). They can also be fired without notice and have nobody, like the rest of the employees, to speak for them with management.

"The big task at Gallo is to organise the workers into a trustworthy union and for the workers to get to know each other better in order to root out the spies on the floor.

"This should not be difficult to do, because since the kids went onto the streets in 1976, the atmosphere in most factories has changed. The quiet subservient employee is a different person today. In the past, a white man, not necessarily a superior or even employed in the same department, could tell you nonsense and slap and kick you. Today, if a white man lifts his hand up to you, he'll have to be ready for a fight.

"Many whites have realised this and much of the old arrogance is breaking down.

"If we can unite this confidence into something that will fight for us all at Gallo, then we will have the best weapon against management."

INQABA calls for

- ★ Unionisation of Gallo
- ★ A basic minimum wage of R90 per week, indexed to inflation, for all workers
- ★ Time during the working day to be allowed for union meetings
- ★ Overtime rates at double normal rates for all workers
- ★ No forced overtime
- ★ Paid annual leave for all workers
- ★ Rights and benefits to apply to all workers



## MINERS EXPLOITED

By Teboho Phiri

Every black worker in South Africa knows from experience that apartheid is the brutal exploitation and suppression of the working class. But the truth is nowhere clearer than in the mines of South Africa.

The miners in South Africa are herded into compounds on an ethnic basis under the domination of 'indunas'. Underground all work is speeded up by 'boss-boys' under the



methodically. By December 2, 1851 (the day of Louis Bonaparte's coup d'état), it had completed one half of its preparatory work. It is now completing the other half. First it perfected the parliamentary power, in order to be able to overthrow it. Now that it has attained this, it is perfecting the *executive power*, reducing it to its purest expression, isolating it, setting it up against itself as the sole object, *in order to concentrate all its forces of destruction against it* (italics ours). And when it has done this second half of its preliminary work, Europe will leap from its seat and exultantly exclaim: well grubbed, old mole!

"This executive power with its enormous bureaucratic and military organisation, with its vast and ingenious state machinery, with a host of officials numbering half a million, besides an army of another half million, this appalling parasitic body, which enmeshes the body of French society and chokes all its pores, sprang up in the days of the absolute monarchy, with the decay of the feudal system, which it helped to hasten." The first French Revolution developed centralisation, "but at the same time" it increased "the extent, the attributes and the number of agents of governmental power. Napoleon completed this state machinery". The legitimate monarchy and the July monarchy "added nothing but a greater division of labour".

"Finally, in its struggle against the revolution, the parliamentary republic found itself compelled to strengthen, along with repressive measures, the resources and centralisation of governmental power. *All revolutions perfected this machine instead of smashing it* (italics ours). The parties that contended in turn for domination regarded the possession of this huge state edifice as the principal spoils of the victor." (*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, pp. 98-99, fourth edition, Hamburg 1907.)

In this remarkable argument Marxism takes a tremendous step forward compared with the *Communist Manifesto*. In the latter the question of the state is still treated in an extremely abstract manner, in the most general terms and expressions. In the above-quoted passage, the question is treated in a concrete manner, and the conclusion is extremely precise, definite, practical and palpable: all previous revolutions perfected the state machine, whereas it must be broken, smashed.

This conclusion is the chief and fundamental point in the Marxist theory of the state. And it is precisely this fundamental point which has been completely *ignored* by the dominant official Social-Democratic parties and, indeed, *distorted* (as we shall see later) by the foremost theoretician of the Second International, Karl Kautsky.

The *Communist Manifesto* gives a general summary of history, which compels us to regard the state as the organ of class rule and leads us to the inevitable conclusion that the proletariat cannot overthrow the bourgeoisie without first winning political power, without attaining political supremacy, without transforming the state into the "proletariat organised as the ruling class"; and that this proletarian state will begin to wither away immediately after its victory because the state is unnecessary and cannot exist in a society in which there are no class antagonisms. The question as to how, from the point of view of historical development, the replacement of the bourgeois by the proletarian state is to take place is not raised here.

This is the question Marx raises and answers in 1852. True to his philosophy of dialectical materialism, Marx takes as his basis the historical experience of the great years of revolution, 1848 to 1851. Here, as everywhere else, his theory is a *summing up of experience*, illuminated by a profound philosophical conception of the world and a rich knowledge of history.

The problem of the state is put specifically: How did the bourgeois state, the state machine necessary for the rule of the bourgeoisie, come into being historically? What changes did it undergo, what evolution did it perform in the course of bourgeois revolutions and in the face of the independent actions of the oppressed classes? What are the tasks of the proletariat in relation to this state machine?

The centralised state power that is peculiar to bourgeois society came into being in the period of the fall of absolutism. Two institutions most characteristic of this state machine are the bureaucracy and the standing army. In their works, Marx and Engels repeatedly show that the bourgeoisie are connected with these institutions by thousands of threads. Every worker's experience illustrates this connection in an extremely graphic and impressive manner. From its own bitter experience, the working class learns to recognise this connection. That is why it so easily grasps and so firmly learns the doctrine which shows the inevitability of this connection, a doctrine which the petty-bourgeois democrats either ignorantly and flippantly deny, or still more flippantly admit "in general", while forgetting to draw appropriate practical conclusions.

The bureaucracy and the standing army are a "parasite" on the body of bourgeois society—a parasite created by the internal antagonisms which rend that society, but a parasite which "chokes" all its vital pores. The Kautskyite opportunism now prevailing in official Social-Democracy considers the view that the state is a *parasitic organism* to be the peculiar and exclusive attribute of anarchism. It goes without saying that this distortion of Marxism is of vast advantage to those philistines who have reduced socialism to the unheard-of disgrace of justifying and prettifying the imperialist war by applying to it the concept of "defence of the fatherland"; but it is unquestionably a distortion, nevertheless.

The development, perfection and strengthening of the bureaucratic and military apparatus proceeded during all the numerous bourgeois revolutions which Europe has witnessed since the fall of feudalism. In particular, it is the petty bourgeoisie who are attracted to the side of the big bourgeoisie and are largely subordinated to them through this apparatus, which provides the upper sections of the peasants, small artisans, tradesmen and the like with comparatively comfortable, quiet and respectable jobs raising their holders *above* the people. Consider what happened in Russia during the six months following February 27, 1917.

The official posts which formerly were given by preference to the Black Hundreds have now become the spoils of the Cadets, Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. Nobody has really thought of introducing any serious reforms. Every effort has been made to put them off "until the Constituent Assembly meets", and to steadily put off its convocation until after the war! But there has been no delay, no waiting for the Constituent Assembly, in the matter of dividing the spoils, of getting the lucrative jobs of ministers, deputy ministers, governors-general, etc., etc.! The game of combinations that has been played in forming the government has been, in essence, only an expression of this division and redivision of the "spoils", which has been going on above and below, throughout the country, in every department of central and local government. The six months between February 27 and August 27, 1917, can be summed up, objectively summed up beyond all dispute, as follows: reforms shelved, distribution of official jobs accomplished and "mistakes" in the distribution corrected by a few redistributions.

But the more the bureaucratic apparatus is "redistributed" among the various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties (among the Cadets, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks in the case of Russia), the more keenly aware the oppressed classes, and the proletariat at their head, become of their irreconcilable hostility to the *whole* of bourgeois society. Hence the need for all bourgeois parties, even for the most democratic and "revolutionary-



# organise!

control of the white miner. Everything is geared for the biggest profits and hardest work. The price is still what it has been—black workers' sweat, blood and death.

Under this barbaric system the Chamber of Mines lays down notoriously low wage levels. This is despite the big rise in the gold price.

In 1977 the total profit before tax was R1 263,9 million and it rose to the huge amount of R7 335,1 million in 1980. While between 1977 and 1980 the industry's average cash wage for underground workers rose from R68,90 per month to only R200 per month. This year it has risen to R240 per month.

The underground minimum wage is now a mere R115.

These superprofits form the basis of South African capitalism. The mining capitalists can maintain them only on the basis of continued resistance to workers' wage increases, family housing and trade union organisation.

Organisation of the mineworkers is therefore a priority. As the black miner rightly pointed out in a letter to *Sunday Times* of 10/5/81, "black mineworkers will soon group together to form an organisation that will show Mr Paulus who the real gold producers are". We can also add by stating categorically who are the real thieves—the capitalists.

For a R390 a month minimum wage (R90 a week)! For a 40-hour week! For trade union freedom in mining!

## AWAY WITH PASSES!

Not that the South African ruling class and their lackeys stop having a genuine concern for black people. Take Professor A.J. Middleton, a member of the Hoexter Commission of Inquiry into the Structure and Functioning of the Courts. He is not that 'racialist'. He considers it un-

fair to expect blacks to carry their reference (pass) books at all times.

To avoid the heavy burden of pass books, Prof. Middleton 'liberally' suggests that it would be much easier if blacks were issued with a disc which they could wear around their necks to prove that they were entitled to be in the urban area.

This is considered an 'excellent' idea by South African liberals like Mr. F.J. Fourie, former chief of the legal aid centre for blacks in Pretoria, because capitalism which survives on pass laws remains intact. To the black working people whose daily harassment and misery is due to pass laws, it is contemptuous.

Away with the pass laws, pass discs and all other abominable products of the racist capitalist system!

## MOTOR INDUSTRY STRIKES

By Jake Wilson

In Pretoria, Cape Town, and Port Elizabeth, the struggle of the striking motor workers has given a lead to the working class.

The strikes started over poverty wages as workers faced enormous price increases. On 9 April the Sigma strikers came out for R3 an hour; the demand first taken up in Port Elizabeth last year. Wages were also the key issue in Leyland in Cape Town.

Then followed an outburst of tremendous solidarity among motor workers as Ford and General Motors' workers refused to handle Firestone tyres. They demanded all workers victimised last January by Firestone for striking against government attempts to tighten the pension system be reinstated.

One worker died as the direct result of the strong-arm strike breaking tactics of Sigma manage-

ment who, like Leyland's, engaged in mass dismissals and victimisations.

But with the Firestone management forced to agree to reinstating the victimised workers in quotas, who can doubt that the workers can more than make up for these setbacks? Who also can doubt that the black working class, organised under fighting leadership, can defeat the regime's latest plans to bring independent trade unions under control!



*Workers in an angry mood at the funeral of the Sigma worker Paulus Mahlangu.*

## MAY DAY

May Day, the international workers day, was once again celebrated in Cape Town by a meeting on the university campus in support of the workers on strike at Rowntrees in East London. Backed by the General Workers' Union and the African Food and Canning Workers' Union, the meeting was attended by 600 workers and students.



democratic" among them, to intensify repressive measures against the revolutionary proletariat, to strengthen the apparatus of coercion, i.e., the state machine. This course of events compels the revolution "to concentrate all its forces of destruction" against the state power, and to set itself the aim, not of improving the state machine, but of *smashing and destroying* it.

It was not logical reasoning, but actual developments, the actual experience of 1848-51, that led to the matter being presented in this way. The extent to which Marx held strictly to the solid ground of historical experience can be seen from the fact that, in 1852, he did not yet specifically raise the question of *what* was to take the place of the state machine to be destroyed. Experience had not yet provided material for dealing with this question, which history placed on the agenda later on, in 1871. In 1852, all that could be established with the accuracy of scientific observation was that the proletarian revolution *had approached* the task of "concentrating all its forces of destruction" against the state power, of "smashing" the state machine.

Here the question may arise: is it correct to generalise the experience, observations and conclusions of Marx, to apply them to a field that is wider than the history of France during the three years 1848-51? Before proceeding to deal with this question, let us recall a remark made by Engels and then examine the facts. In his introduction to the third edition of *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, Engels wrote:

"France is the country where, more than anywhere else, the historical class struggles were each time fought out to a finish, and where, consequently, the changing political forms within which they move and in which their results are summarised have been stamped in the sharpest outlines. The centre of feudalism in the Middle Ages, the model country, since the Renaissance, of a unified monarchy based on social estates, France demolished feudalism in the Great Revolution and established the rule of the bourgeoisie in a classical purity unequalled by any other European land. And the struggle of the upward-striving proletariat against the ruling bourgeoisie appeared here in an acute form unknown elsewhere." (P. 4, 1907 edition.)

The last remark is out of date inasmuch as since 1871 there has been a lull in the revolutionary struggle of the French proletariat, although, long as this lull may be, it does not at all preclude the possibility that in the coming proletarian revolution France may show herself to be the classic country of the class struggle to a finish.

Let us, however, cast a general glance over the history of the advanced countries at the turn of the century. We shall see that the same process went on more slowly, in more varied forms, in a much wider field: on the one hand, the development of "parliamentary power" both in the republican countries (France, America, Switzerland) and in the monarchies (Britain, Germany to a certain extent, Italy, the Scandinavian countries, etc.); on the other hand, a struggle for power among the various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties which distributed and redistributed the "spoils" of office, with the foundations of bourgeois society unchanged; and, lastly, the perfection and consolidation of the "executive power", of its bureaucratic and military apparatus.

There is not the slightest doubt that these features are common to the whole of the modern evolution of all capitalist states in general. In the three years 1848-51 France displayed, in a swift, sharp, concentrated form, the very same processes of development which are peculiar to the whole capitalist world.

Imperialism—the era of bank capital, the era of gigantic capitalist monopolies, of the development of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism—has clearly

shown an extraordinary strengthening of the "state machine" and an unprecedented growth in its bureaucratic and military apparatus in connection with the intensification of repressive measures against the proletariat both in the monarchical and in the freest, republican countries.

World history is now undoubtedly leading, on an incomparably larger scale than in 1852, to the "concentration of all the forces" of the proletarian revolution on the "destruction" of the state machine.

What the proletariat will put in its place is suggested by the highly instructive material furnished by the Paris Commune.

### 3. The Presentation of the Question by Marx in 1852

In 1907, Mehring, in the magazine *Neue Zeit* (Vol. XXV, 2, p. 164), published extracts from Marx's letter to Weydemeyer dated March 5, 1852. This letter, among other things, contains the following remarkable observation:

"And now as to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society or the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists, the economic anatomy of the classes. What I did that was new was to prove: (1) that the *existence of classes* is only bound up with *particular, historical phases in the development of production* (*historische Entwicklungsphasen der Produktion*), (2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the *dictatorship of the proletariat*, (3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the *abolition of all classes* and to a *classless society*."

In these words, Marx succeeded in expressing with striking clarity, first, the chief and radical difference between his theory and that of the foremost and most profound thinkers of the bourgeoisie; and, secondly, the essence of his theory of the state.

It is often said and written that the main point in Marx's theory is the class struggle. But this is wrong. And this wrong notion very often results in an opportunist distortion of Marxism and its falsification in a spirit acceptable to the bourgeoisie. For the theory of the class struggle was created *not* by Marx, *but* by the bourgeoisie *before* Marx, and, generally speaking, it is *acceptable* to the bourgeoisie. Those who recognise *only* the class struggle are not yet Marxists; they may be found to be still within the bounds of bourgeois thinking and bourgeois politics. To confine Marxism to the theory of the class struggle means curtailing Marxism, distorting it, reducing it to something acceptable to the bourgeoisie. Only he is a Marxist who *extends* the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. This is what constitutes the most profound distinction between the Marxist and the ordinary petty (as well as big) bourgeois. This is the touchstone on which the *real* understanding and recognition of Marxism should be tested. And it is not surprising that when the history of Europe brought the working class face to face with this question as a *practical* issue, not only all the opportunists and reformists, but all the Kautskyites (people who vacillate between reformism and Marxism) proved to be miserable philistines and petty-bourgeois democrats *repudiating* the dictatorship of the proletariat. Kautsky's pamphlet, *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, published in August 1918, i.e., long after the first edition of the present book, is a perfect example of petty-bourgeois distortion of Marxism and base renunciation of it *in deeds*, while hypocritically



# The South African State—

**Activists, expressing their anger against the brutally oppressive South African regime, have described it as repressive, racist, fascist and even as a junta.**

**Marxism, the ideology of the working class, is a science. And while, as Trotsky said, a revolutionary must have passion, a revolutionary's analysis of society must be completely dispassionate. The class struggle requires that the workers, in order to deploy their forces in the most effective manner, must know exactly what forces they are up against.**

All the descriptions of South Africa mentioned above have definite meanings which carry with them definite implications. The questions we must ask are: (1) of all the descriptions, which are correct? and (2) more particularly, is it correct to describe the South African state as fascist?

In brief the answer to the first question is yes, the South African regime is repressive and racist, but it is not a junta (the latter being a purely military government). But whether it is fascist or not requires a fuller explanation. In order to understand fascism, we must understand the function of the state in society.\*

## What is the state?

The state has not always existed. It came into being at that point in history when society split into classes or groups of people having different and opposing relations to the means of production.

At first, as we learn from Engels, "men produced only for their own direct needs; exchange was confined to sporadic cases where a surplus was accidentally obtained".

Later "we find that pastoral

**By  
Basil Hendrikse**

peoples [i.e. those who had learnt to domesticate animals] had in their cattle a form of property, which with sufficiently large herds and flocks, regularly provided a surplus over and above needs..." (*The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*)

From this stage onwards, certain groups in society found it possible to live from the surplus produced by others. Society now became divided into **classes**—ruling or possessing classes, with control over the social means of production, and oppressed or exploited classes, forced to toil and produce a surplus for their rulers.

With the development of classes standing in antagonistic relations to each other, a new power was needed to keep the class struggle in check. This new power was the **state**.

What is the state in concrete terms? It essentially consists, in Lenin's words, of "special bodies of armed men". It is, as Engels says, "a public power (which) consists not merely of armed men but also of material adjuncts, prisons, and institutions of coercion of all kinds..."

It would be an error, however, to conclude from this that the state is independent of the classes in society,

and serves merely to hold in the reins of the class struggle.

On the contrary, and once again let us appeal to Engels, "because (the state) arose ... in the midst of the conflict of (the) classes, it is as a rule, the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class, and thus acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class" [Emphasis added.]

The ruling class (and the bourgeoisie has developed this to a fine art) always tries to mystify the state and give it the appearance of standing "above society". This is particularly so in the case of the judiciary, which is usually given the label "independent". But in reality, in the final analysis, the state always expresses and defends the interests of the ruling class.

There are times when, as Engels puts it, "the warring classes balance each other so nearly that the state power, as ostensible mediator, acquires, for the moment, a certain mode of independence of both".

Modern military or Bonapartist regimes are an example of the kind of state Engels is referring to. As a result of the weakness of the ruling class and the inability of the oppressed classes to overthrow the ruling class, a military or Bonapartist dictatorship can take the reins of power.

Nevertheless, in the final analysis, even such states defend their own rule by defending the form of **property ownership** on which the dominance of the ruling class is based.

The dominance of the ruling class does not always, everywhere and under all conditions require that it hold political power directly in its own hands. Thus the state, we repeat, represents the interests of the ruling class, if sometimes not directly, then always in the last analysis.

The South African state is bourgeois, with all the trappings of a bourgeois state machine. It consists of an army, the police, the judiciary,

\* A comprehensive discussion of this question will be found in the Supplement to this issue of INQABA which contains chapters 1—5 of Lenin's *The State and Revolution*.



recognising it in words (see my pamphlet, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, Petrograd and Moscow, 1918).

Opportunism today, as represented by its principal spokesman, the ex-Marxist Karl Kautsky, fits in completely with Marx's characterisation of the *bourgeois* position quoted above, for this opportunism limits recognition of the class struggle to the sphere of bourgeois relations. (Within this sphere, within its framework, not a single educated liberal will refuse to recognise the class struggle "in principle"!.) Opportunism *does not extend* recognition of the class struggle to the cardinal point, to the period of *transition* from capitalism to communism, of the *overthrow* and the complete *abolition* of the bourgeoisie. In reality, this period inevitably is a period of an unprecedentedly violent class struggle in unprecedentedly acute forms, and, consequently, during this period the state must inevitably be a state that is democratic *in a new way* (for the proletariat and the propertyless in general) and dictatorial *in a new way* (against the bourgeoisie).

Further. The essence of Marx's theory of the state has been mastered only by those who realise that the dictatorship of a *single* class is necessary not only for every class society in general, not only for the *proletariat* which has overthrown the bourgeoisie, but also for the entire *historical period* which separates capitalism from "classless society", from communism. Bourgeois states are most varied in form, but their essence is the same: all these states, whatever their form, in the final analysis are inevitably the *dictatorship of the bourgeoisie*. The transition from capitalism to communism is certainly bound to yield a tremendous abundance and variety of political forms, but the essence will inevitably be the same: *the dictatorship of the proletariat*.

## CHAPTER III

### The State and Revolution. Experience of the Paris Commune of 1871. Marx's Analysis

#### 1. What Made the Communards' Attempt Heroic?

It is well known that in the autumn of 1870, a few months before the Commune, Marx warned the Paris workers that any attempt to overthrow the government would be the folly of despair. But when, in March 1871, a decisive battle was *forced* upon the workers and they accepted it, when the uprising had become a fact, Marx greeted the proletarian revolution with the greatest enthusiasm, in spite of unfavourable auguries. Marx did not persist in the pedantic attitude of condemning an "untimely" movement as did the ill-famed Russian renegade from Marxism, Plekhanov, who in November 1905 wrote encouragingly about the workers' and peasants' struggle, but after December 1905 cried, liberal fashion: "They should not have taken up arms."

Marx, however, was not only enthusiastic about the heroism of the Communards, who, as he expressed it, "stormed heaven". Although the mass revolutionary movement did not achieve its aim, he regarded it as a historic experience of enormous importance, as a certain advance of the world proletarian revolution, as a practical step that was more important than hundreds of programmes and arguments. Marx endeavoured to analyse this experiment, to draw tactical lessons from it and re-examine his theory in the light of it.

The only "correction" Marx thought it necessary to make to the *Communist Manifesto* he made on the basis of the revolutionary experience of the Paris Communards.

The last preface to the new German edition of the *Communist Manifesto*, signed by both its authors, is dated June 24, 1872. In this preface the authors, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, say that the programme of the *Communist Manifesto* "has in some details become out-of-date", and they go on to say:

"One thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz., that 'the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes'...."

The authors took the words that are in single quotation marks in this passage from Marx's book, *The Civil War in France*.

Thus, Marx and Engels regarded one principal and fundamental lesson of the Paris Commune as being of such enormous importance that they introduced it as an important correction into the *Communist Manifesto*.

Most characteristically, it is this important correction that has been distorted by the opportunists, and its meaning probably is not known to nine-tenths, if not ninety-nine-hundredths, of the readers of the *Communist Manifesto*. We shall deal with this distortion more fully farther on, in a chapter devoted specially to distortions. Here it will be sufficient to note that the current, vulgar "interpretation" of Marx's famous statement just quoted is that Marx here allegedly emphasises the idea of slow development in contradistinction to the seizure of power, and so on.

As a matter of fact, *the exact opposite is the case*. Marx's idea is that the working class must *break up*, *smash* the "ready-made state machinery", and not confine itself merely to laying hold of it.

On April 12, 1871, i.e., just at the time of the Commune, Marx wrote to Kugelmann:

"If you look up the last chapter of my *Eighteenth Brumaire*, you will find that I declare that the next attempt of the French Revolution will be no longer, as before, to transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to another, but to *smash* it [Marx's italics—the original is *zerbrechen*], and this is the precondition for every real people's revolution on the Continent. And this is what our heroic Party comrades in Paris are attempting." (*Neue Zeit*, Vol. XX, 1, 1901-02, p. 709.) (The letters of Marx to Kugelmann have appeared in Russian in no less than two editions, one of which I edited and supplied with a preface.)

The words, "to smash the bureaucratic-military machine", briefly express the principal lesson of Marxism regarding the tasks of the proletariat during a revolution in relation to the state. And it is this lesson that has been not only completely ignored, but positively distorted by the prevailing, Kautskyite, "interpretation" of Marxism!

As for Marx's reference to *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, we have quoted the relevant passage in full above.

It is interesting to note, in particular, two points in the above-quoted argument of Marx. First, he restricts his



# Is it Fascist?

courts and prisons, in addition, of course, to the huge bureaucratic machine designed to enforce the battery of oppressive laws which are used to suppress blacks in general and the black workers in particular.

The South African Defence Force is, in purely military terms, the most powerful and ruthlessly efficient army on the whole continent. Its 'peacetime' strength (the Permanent Force) is 50 000 men, which can, through a mobilisation of the Citizen Force and the Reserve, be increased to 250 000 and 500 000 respectively.

It has the most sophisticated armaments including the most modern tanks, the most up-to-date warplanes as well as submarines. South Africa is said to possess the capability to produce a nuclear bomb.

The police force, which has been described as the "mailed fist of apartheid", consists of 54 000 policemen and -women. Its function is to "maintain law and order", to harness the black workers particularly through such hated laws as the pass and influx control laws.

The SAP has the dubious distinction of having shot, killed and tortured to death many thousands of blacks. Even without counting the hundreds slaughtered in the 1976 uprising, the police admit killing more than 1 350 people between 1969 and 1979.

It has been said of the SAP that it is the first defence against "internal unrest", by which, of course, is meant a revolutionary uprising by the black population.

South Africa has, as a consequence of the constant and inevitable transgression of its repressive and racist laws, one of the highest prison populations in the world. On any one day there are over 100 000 people in prison, under the most atrocious conditions.

South Africa, in short, bristles with the laws and machinery of repression. As far as the majority are concerned, South Africa is a police state.

But is it on that account fascist?

## What is fascism?

Fascism represents a **mass movement**, essentially that of the disillusioned middle class. A fascist state is a state resting on a movement of this nature.

This explanation is based, not on abstract analysis, but on the concrete experience of the class struggle in Italy and Portugal in the 1920s, and Germany and Spain in the 1930s, when fascist regimes rose to power.

The possibility of fascism arises out of a stalemate between the classes, when capitalism has degenerated to a point where it has not only reduced the working class to abject misery, but has made life intolerable even for that class upon whose support it relies under 'normal' circumstances, that is, the petty bourgeoisie.

The fascists are the most degenerate section of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois politicians, who rally behind them the scum of society, the criminal layers, together with small businessmen, intellectuals tired of parliamentary hypocrisy, paupers and unemployed youth seeking an outlet for their energies.

Fascism is capitalism stripped of all the niceties of bourgeois parliamentarism; it is capitalism terrified to the point of insanity by the shadow of its impending death. It is capitalism transformed into a rabid dog foaming about the mouth with hatred for the working class and having an appetite for only one thing, the head and heart of the proletariat.

**At such critical times in the class struggle, one of the two main contending classes—the capitalist class or the working class—must break the stalemate and release society from the stranglehold of its irresolvable conflict.**

Capitalism at this point is announcing aloud that it is no longer fit to govern society and crying out for burial. Unless the working class



*Police assisted by soldiers conduct a house-to-house raid on Westbury township. This is the first time the army has been called in against the black working-class population since the Emergency of 1960.*



conclusion to the Continent. This was understandable in 1871, when Britain was still the model of a purely capitalist country, but without a militarist clique and, to a considerable degree, without a bureaucracy. Marx therefore excluded Britain, where a revolution, even a people's revolution, then seemed possible, and indeed was possible, *without* the precondition of destroying the "ready-made state machinery".

Today, in 1917, at the time of the first great imperialist war, this restriction made by Marx is no longer valid. Both Britain and America, the biggest and the last representatives—in the whole world—of Anglo-Saxon "liberty", in the sense that they had no militarist cliques and bureaucracy, have completely sunk into the all-European filthy, bloody morass of bureaucratic-military institutions which subordinate everything to themselves, and suppress everything. Today, in Britain and America, too, "the precondition for every real people's revolution" is the *smashing*, the *destruction* of the "ready-made state machinery" (made and brought up to "European", general imperialist, perfection in those countries in the years 1914-17).

Secondly, particular attention should be paid to Marx's extremely profound remark that the destruction of the bureaucratic-military state machine is "the precondition for every real *people's* revolution". This idea of a "people's" revolution seems strange coming from Marx, so that the Russian Plekhanovites and Mensheviks, those followers of Struve who wish to be regarded as Marxists, might possibly declare such an expression to be a "slip of the pen" on Marx's part. They have reduced Marxism to such a state of wretchedly liberal distortion that nothing exists for them beyond the antithesis between bourgeois revolution and proletarian revolution, and even this antithesis they interpret in an utterly lifeless way.

If we take the revolutions of the twentieth century as examples we shall, of course, have to admit that the Portuguese and the Turkish revolutions are both bourgeois revolutions. Neither of them, however, is a "people's" revolution, since in neither does the mass of the people, their vast majority, come out actively, independently, with their own economic and political demands to any noticeable degree. By contrast, although the Russian bourgeois revolution of 1905-07 displayed no such "brilliant" successes as at times fell to the Portuguese and Turkish revolutions, it was undoubtedly a "real people's" revolution, since the mass of the people, their majority, the very lowest social groups, crushed by oppression and exploitation, rose independently and stamped on the entire course of the revolution the imprint of *their* own demands, *their* attempts to build in their own way a new society in place of the old society that was being destroyed.

In Europe, in 1871, the proletariat did not constitute the majority of the people in any country on the Continent. A "people's" revolution, one actually sweeping the majority into its stream, could be such only if it embraced both the proletariat and the peasants. These two classes then constituted the "people". These two classes are united by the fact that the "bureaucratic-military state machine" oppresses, crushes, exploits them. To *smash* this machine, to *break it up*, is truly in the interest of the "people", of their majority, of the workers and most of the peasants, is "the precondition" for a free alliance of the poor peasants and the proletarians, whereas without such an alliance democracy is unstable and socialist transformation is impossible.

As is well known, the Paris Commune was actually working its way toward such an alliance, although it did not reach its goal owing to a number of circumstances, internal and external.

Consequently, in speaking of a "real people's revolution", Marx, without in the least discounting the special features of the petty bourgeoisie (he spoke a great deal about them, and often), took strict account of the actual

balance of class forces in most of the continental countries of Europe in 1871. On the other hand, he stated that the "smashing" of the state machine was required by the interests of both the workers and the peasants, that it united them, that it placed before them the common task of removing the "parasite" and of replacing it by something new.

By what exactly?

## 2. What Is To Replace the Smashed State Machine?

In 1847, in the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx's answer to this question was as yet a purely abstract one; to be exact, it was an answer that indicated the tasks, but not the ways of accomplishing them. The answer given in the *Communist Manifesto* was that this machine was to be replaced by "the proletariat organised as the ruling class", by the "winning of the battle of democracy".

Marx did not indulge in utopias; he expected the *experience* of the mass movement to provide the reply to the question as to the specific forms this organisation of the proletariat as the ruling class would assume and as to the exact manner in which this organisation would be combined with the most complete, most consistent "winning of the battle of democracy".

Marx subjected the experience of the Commune, meagre as it was, to the most careful analysis in *The Civil War in France*. Let us quote the most important passages of this work.

Originating from the Middle Ages, there developed in the nineteenth century "the centralised state power, with its ubiquitous organs of standing army, police, bureaucracy, clergy, and judicature". With the development of class antagonisms between capital and labour, "state power assumed more and more the character of a public force for the suppression of the working class, of a machine of class rule. After every revolution, which marks an advance in the class struggle, the purely coercive character of the state power stands out in bolder and bolder relief". After the revolution of 1848-49, state power became "the national war instrument of capital against labour". The Second Empire consolidated this.

"The direct antithesis to the empire was the Commune." It was the "specific form" of "a republic that was not only to remove the monarchical form of class rule, but class rule itself. . . ."

What was this "specific" form of the proletarian, socialist republic? What was the state it began to create?

"...The first decree of the Commune . . . was the suppression of the standing army, and its replacement by the armed people. . . ."

This demand now figures in the programme of every party calling itself socialist. The real worth of their programmes, however, is best shown by the behaviour of our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who, right after the revolution of February 27, actually refused to carry out this demand!

"The Commune was formed of the municipal councillors, chosen by universal suffrage in the various wards of Paris, responsible and revocable at any time. The majority of its members were naturally working men, or acknowledged representatives of the working class. . . . The police, which until then had been the instrument of the Government, was at once stripped of its political attributes, and turned into the responsible and at all times revocable instrument of the Commune. So were the officials of all other branches of the administration. From the members



now rises to its historical task, the overthrow of capitalism and the construction of socialism; the petty bourgeoisie—ruined by capitalism and disillusioned with bourgeois democracy—will have no alternative before it but the 'national socialist' ravings of the fascist demagogues.

The fascists, who will mesmerise also the most backward sections of workers, make the working class the scapegoat for the incurable ills of capitalism. And the petty bourgeoisie will believe this; for the working class has failed to save it and lead society forward to socialism.

Out of this raw material, intoxicating it with radical demagogy against the monopolies, magical formulas about national glory, racialist poison etc., fascism constructs a human battering ram to attack the organisations of the working class.

To answer the question whether the South African state is fascist, it is helpful to quote Trotsky on the meaning of fascist rule:

**"When a state turns fascist ... it means, primarily and above all ... that the workers' organisations are annihilated; that the proletariat is reduced to an amorphous state; and that a system of administration is created which penetrates deeply into the masses and which serves to frustrate the independent crystallisation of the proletariat."**(from *What Next?*, 1932. Emphasis added.)

**"The historic function of fascism**

**is to smash the working class, destroy its organisations and stifle political liberties** when the capitalists find themselves unable to govern and dominate with the help of democratic machinery." (from *Whither France?* 1934. Emphasis added.)

From this it will be clear that our analysis of the nature of a state is a vital question.

Bonapartist regimes, as well as fascist regimes, are both brutally oppressive from the workers' point of view. Yet there is an important difference between them.

A fascist regime, precisely on account of its mass petty-bourgeois following welded into a "battering ram"—i.e. storm troops and the like—is able to smash the badly-led workers' movement and leave it prostrate for a generation. Thus, in the case of Spain, 30 years needed to pass before the working class began to recover from the bloody rise of fascism in 1936-39.

A Bonapartist regime, on the other hand, lacks this powerful basis and is consequently much less stable. The working class is stunned rather than crushed by the blows it is able to inflict.

That is why in Greece the colonels' junta could last no more than seven years while in Chile, within a few years of Pinochet's seizure of power as a Bonapartist dictator, the working class was once again moving into action.

To the black majority, the South African state is undoubtedly a police dictatorship. But what, more precisely, is its nature and social basis? Do we perhaps give it too much credit by regarding it as 'fascist'? The answer to these questions will shed important light on the perspectives for our struggle.

## Is the SA state fascist?

The brutal nature of the South African state has earned it the contempt of the workers, not only of Southern Africa but of the whole world, a contempt which is reflected in the anti-apartheid postures of even the most reactionary governments. It is also this very repressiveness which has gained it the description "fascist", "Nazi" etc.

The need to question the accuracy of this description stems not out of a supercilious desire to be different or more erudite but out of the need for the working class to gauge as precisely as possible the strength of the enemy in order to work out the proper method, strategy and tactics for defeating it.

The questions that must be asked are: why does the South African regime have such a repressive character; and if it is not fascist, how must it be described? Thirdly, what are the prospects for fascism in South Africa?



Nazi storm-troopers terrorising the streets of Germany in the early 1930s.



of the Commune downwards, public service had to be done at *workmen's wages*. The privileges and the representation allowances of the high dignitaries of state disappeared along with the dignitaries themselves. . . . Having once got rid of the standing army and the police, the instruments of the physical force of the old Government, the Commune proceeded at once to break the instrument of spiritual suppression, the power of the priests. . . . The judicial functionaries lost that sham independence . . . they were thenceforward to be elective, responsible, and revocable. . . ."

The Commune, therefore, appears to have replaced the smashed state machine "only" by fuller democracy: abolition of the standing army; all officials to be elected and subject to recall. But as a matter of fact this "only" signifies a gigantic replacement of certain institutions by other institutions of a fundamentally different type. This is exactly a case of "quantity being transformed into quality": democracy, introduced as fully and consistently as is at all conceivable, is transformed from bourgeois into proletarian democracy; from the state (=a special force for the suppression of a particular class) into something which is no longer the state proper.

It is still necessary to suppress the bourgeoisie and crush their resistance. This was particularly necessary for the Commune; and one of the reasons for its defeat was that it did not do this with sufficient determination. The organ of suppression, however, is here the majority of the population, and not a minority, as was always the case under slavery, serfdom and wage slavery. And since the majority of the people *itself* suppresses its oppressors, a "special force" for suppression is no longer necessary! In this sense, the state *begins to wither away*. Instead of the special institutions of a privileged minority (privileged officialdom, the chiefs of the standing army), the majority itself can directly fulfil all these functions, and the more the functions of state power are performed by the people as a whole, the less need there is for the existence of this power.

In this connection, the following measures of the Commune, emphasised by Marx, are particularly noteworthy: the abolition of all representation allowances, and of all monetary privileges to officials, the reduction of the remuneration of *all* servants of the state to the level of "*workmen's wages*". This shows more clearly than anything else the *turn* from bourgeois to proletarian democracy, from the democracy of the oppressors to that of the oppressed classes, from the state as a "*special force*" for the suppression of a particular class to the suppression of the oppressors by the *general force* of the majority of the people—the workers and the peasants. And it is on this particularly striking point, perhaps the most important as far as the problem of the state is concerned, that the ideas of Marx have been most completely ignored! In popular commentaries, the number of which is legion, this is not mentioned. The thing done is to keep silent about it as if it were a piece of old-fashioned "naïveté", just as Christians, after their religion had been given the status of a state religion, "forgot" the "naïveté" of primitive Christianity with its democratic revolutionary spirit.

The reduction of the remuneration of high state officials seems to be "simply" a demand of naïve, primitive democracy. One of the "founders" of modern opportunism, the ex-Social-Democrat Eduard Bernstein, has more than once repeated the vulgar bourgeois jeers at "primitive" democracy. Like all opportunists, and like the present Kautskyites, he did not understand at all that, first of all, the transition from capitalism to socialism is *impossible* without a certain "reversion" to "primitive" democracy (for how else can the majority, and then the whole population without exception, proceed to discharge state functions?); and that, secondly, "primitive democ-

racy" based on capitalism and capitalist culture is not the same as primitive democracy in prehistoric or pre-capitalist times. Capitalist culture has *created* large-scale production, factories, railways, the postal service, telephones, etc., and *on this basis* the great majority of the functions of the old "state power" have become so simplified and can be reduced to such exceedingly simple operations of registration, filing and checking that they can be easily performed by every literate person, can quite easily be performed for ordinary "workmen's wages", and that these functions can (and must) be stripped of every shadow of privilege, of every semblance of "official grandeur".

All officials, without exception, elected and subject to recall *at any time*, their salaries reduced to the level of ordinary "workmen's wages"—these simple and "self-evident" democratic measures, while completely uniting the interests of the workers and the majority of the peasants, at the same time serve as a bridge leading from capitalism to socialism. These measures concern the reorganisation of the state, the purely political reorganisation of society; but, of course, they acquire their full meaning and significance only in connection with the "expropriation of the expropriators" either being accomplished or in preparation, i.e., with the transformation of capitalist private ownership of the means of production into social ownership.

"The Commune," Marx wrote, "made that catchword of all bourgeois revolutions, cheap government, a reality, by abolishing the two greatest sources of expenditure—the army and the officialdom."

From the peasants, as from other sections of the petty bourgeoisie, only an insignificant few "rise to the top", "get on in the world" in the bourgeois sense, i.e., become either well-to-do, bourgeois, or officials in secure and privileged positions. In every capitalist country where there are peasants (as there are in most capitalist countries), the vast majority of them are oppressed by the government and long for its overthrow, long for "cheap" government. This can be achieved *only* by the proletariat; and by achieving it, the proletariat at the same time takes a step towards the socialist reorganisation of the state.

### 3. Abolition of Parliamentarism

"The Commune," Marx wrote, "was to be a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time. . . ."

"Instead of deciding once in three or six years which member of the ruling class was to represent and repress (ver- und zertreten) the people in parliament, universal suffrage was to serve the people constituted in communes, as individual suffrage serves every other employer in the search for workers, foremen and accountants for his business."

Owing to the prevalence of social-chauvinism and opportunism, this remarkable criticism of parliamentarism, made in 1871, also belongs now to the "forgotten words" of Marxism. The professional Cabinet Ministers and parliamentarians, the traitors to the proletariat and the "practical" socialists of our day, have left all criticism of parliamentarism to the anarchists, and, on this wonderfully reasonable ground, they denounce *all* criticism of parliamentarism as "anarchism"! It is not surprising that the proletariat of the "advanced" parliamentary countries, disgusted with such "socialists" as the Scheidemanns, Davids, Legiens, Sembats, Renaudels, Hendersons, Vanderveldes, Staunings, Brantings, Bissolatis and Co., has been with increasing frequency giving its sympathies to anarcho-syndicalism, in spite of the fact that the latter is merely the twin brother of opportunism.

For Marx, however, revolutionary dialectics was never



The brutality of the South African regime can only be explained by its history. Capitalism came to South Africa from outside. It arrived here "grey-haired" with the experience of its struggle against the workers of Europe, and found in Southern Africa a virtual paradise in comparison to Europe—a society which was at a lower stage of socio-economic development than itself; a population which had no tradition of working-class organisation; a population which, once crushed by conquest, was open to exploitation as the proletariat into which capitalism would have to convert it.

In Europe capitalism had been forced to make concession after concession to the workers, as they pounded the fortress of capitalism.

Eventually it had to concede to the workers bourgeois-democratic rights. Worst of all as far as the bourgeoisie was concerned, it had to admit the elected representatives of the workers—or at least those who agreed not to challenge capitalist power—into government. In South Africa they could not afford to have any such cheekiness from the natives.

**The problem, however, was that capitalism could not begin to operate without a working class. Out of the dispossessed tribesmen it fashioned the proletariat.**

In an attempt to arrest the development of working-class consciousness, which the conversion of

tribesmen into workers would inevitably produce, the capitalists devised institutions of deception. They revived the trappings of tribal rule; endeavouring to detain the consciousness of the new proletariat in the past, to make the tribesmen-turned-workers believe, falsely, that their society remained as it was before its defeat and overthrow by capitalism.

But in giving the dead tribal society the kiss of life, the bourgeoisie breathed into it the breath of capitalism. Conditions had changed, the economic base had been transformed and because of this, the tribal institutions became mere appendages of the bourgeois state. The Chiefs became mere civil servants. The whole edifice of the resurrected tribal society was erected on a foundation of lies.

The workers have seen through these lies. Their consciousness has followed the change in the conditions. The chiefs became the first target of their struggle against capitalism.

Most important of all, South African capitalism arrived late on the world market. The only basis on which it could compete with world capitalism, which had already reached the stage of monopolism, was on the basis of cheap labour.

To provide cheap labour, a system for the regimentation of labour was indispensable. This system required, in turn, a huge and

vicious state machine to enforce its laws.

The system of regimentation involved the forced encampment of the workers in the reserves, where deliberate impoverishment ensured their dependence on selling their labour to the capitalists in industry. Their movement to the cities was controlled through influx control and the pass laws. The presence of workers in the cities was for the purpose of wage-slavery and nothing else, not even to spend the pittance they were paid. The massive army of unemployed in the reserves at the same time served as a means of depressing wages and breaking strikes.

**The bourgeois-democratic rights possessed by the workers in Europe were entirely the fruits of struggle. For black workers in South Africa, such rights were out of the question.** If they were granted, suitably castrated, to the white workers, this was done because the state had to find for itself a social basis on which to rest.

That base could certainly not be found in the conquered black population. Once more the bourgeoisie had to resort to deception. In order to delude the white workers, particularly the Afrikaners, they recruited agents like Smuts from the ranks of the defeated landowners and allowed them to take state power. These agents gave the white workers their



*Germany 1933: Communist Party members in the hands of the fascists—after their leaders allowed Hitler to take power without firing a shot.*



the empty fashionable phrase, the toy rattle, which Plekhanov, Kautsky and others have made of it. Marx knew how to break with anarchism ruthlessly for its inability to make use even of the "pigsty" of bourgeois parliamentarism, especially when the situation was obviously not revolutionary; but at the same time he knew how to subject parliamentarism to genuinely revolutionary proletarian criticism.

To decide once every few years which member of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people through parliament—this is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism, not only in parliamentary-constitutional monarchies, but also in the most democratic republics.

But if we deal with the question of the state, and if we consider parliamentarism as one of the institutions of the state, from the point of view of the tasks of the proletariat in *this* field, what is the way out of parliamentarism? How can it be dispensed with?

Once again we must say: the lessons of Marx, based on the study of the Commune, have been so completely forgotten that the present-day "Social-Democrat" (i.e., present-day traitor to socialism) really cannot understand any criticism of parliamentarism other than anarchist or reactionary criticism.

The way out of parliamentarism is not, of course, the abolition of representative institutions and the elective principle, but the conversion of the representative institutions from talking shops into "working" bodies. "The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time."

"A working, not a parliamentary, body"—this is a blow straight from the shoulder at the present-day parliamentarians and parliamentary "lap dogs" of Social-Democracy! Take any parliamentary country, from America to Switzerland, from France to Britain, Norway and so forth—in these countries the real business of "state" is performed behind the scenes and is carried on by the departments, chancelleries and General Staffs. Parliament is given up to talk for the special purpose of fooling the "common people". This is so true that even in the Russian republic, a bourgeois-democratic republic, all these sins of parliamentarism came out at once, even before it managed to set up a real parliament. The heroes of rotten philistinism, such as the Skobelevs and Tseretelis, the Chernovs and Avksentyevs, have even succeeded in polluting the Soviets after the fashion of the most disgusting bourgeois parliamentarism, in converting them into mere talking shops. In the Soviets, the "socialist" Ministers are fooling the credulous rustics with phrase-mongering and resolutions. In the government itself a sort of permanent shuffle is going on in order that, on the one hand, as many Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks as possible may in turn get near the "pie", the lucrative and honourable posts, and that, on the other hand, the "attention" of the people may be "engaged". Meanwhile the chancelleries and army staffs "do" the business of "state".

*Dyelo Naroda*, the organ of the ruling Socialist-Revolutionary Party, recently admitted in a leading article—with the matchless frankness of people of "good society", in which "all" are engaged in political prostitution—that even in the ministries headed by the "socialists" (save the mark!), the whole bureaucratic apparatus is in fact unchanged, is working in the old way and quite "freely" sabotaging revolutionary measures! Even without this admission, does not the actual history of the participation of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks in the government prove this? It is noteworthy, however, that in the ministerial company of the Cadets, the Chernovs, Rusanovs, Zenzinovs and the other editors of *Dyelo Naroda* have so completely lost all sense of shame as to brazenly assert, as if it were a mere bagatelle, that in "their" ministries everything is unchanged!! Revolutionary-democratic phrases to gull the rural Simple Simons, and bureaucracy and red tape to "gladden the hearts" of

the capitalists—that is the *essence* of the "honest" coalition.

The Commune substitutes for the venal and rotten parliamentarism of bourgeois society institutions in which freedom of opinion and discussion does not degenerate into deception, for the parliamentarians themselves have to work, have to execute their own laws, have themselves to test the results achieved in reality, and to account directly to their constituents. Representative institutions remain, but there is *no* parliamentarism here as a special system, as the division of labour between the legislative and the executive, as a privileged position for the deputies. We cannot imagine democracy, even proletarian democracy, without representative institutions, but we can and *must* imagine democracy without parliamentarism, if criticism of bourgeois society is not mere words for us, if the desire to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie is our earnest and sincere desire, and not a mere "election" cry for catching workers' votes, as it is with the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, and also the Scheidemanns and Legiens, the Sembats and Vanderveldes.

It is extremely instructive to note that, in speaking of the functions of *those* officials who are necessary for the Commune and for proletarian democracy, Marx compares them to the workers of "every other employer", that is, of the ordinary capitalist enterprise, with its "workers, foremen and accountants".

There is no trace of utopianism in Marx, in the sense that he made up or invented a "new" society. No, he studied the *birth* of the new society *out of* the old, and the forms of transition from the latter to the former, as a natural-historical process. He examined the actual experience of a mass proletarian movement and tried to draw practical lessons from it. He "learned" from the Commune, just as all the great revolutionary thinkers learned unhesitatingly from the experience of great movements of the oppressed classes, and never addressed them with pedantic "homilies" (such as Plekhanov's: "They should not have taken up arms", or Tsereteli's: "A class must limit itself").

Abolishing the bureaucracy at once, everywhere and completely, is out of the question. It is a utopia. But to *smash* the old bureaucratic machine at once and to begin immediately to construct a new one that will make possible the gradual abolition of all bureaucracy—this is *not* a utopia, it is the experience of the Commune, the direct and immediate task of the revolutionary proletariat.

Capitalism simplifies the functions of "state" administration; it makes it possible to cast "bossing" aside and to confine the whole matter to the organisation of the proletarians (as the ruling class), which will hire "workers, foremen and accountants" in the name of the whole of society.

We are not utopians, we do not "dream" of dispensing *at once* with all administration, with all subordination. These anarchist dreams, based upon incomprehension of the tasks of the proletarian dictatorship, are totally alien to Marxism, and, as a matter of fact, serve only to postpone the socialist revolution until people are different. No, we want the socialist revolution with people as they are now, with people who cannot dispense with subordination, control and "foremen and accountants".

The subordination, however, must be to the armed vanguard of all the exploited and working people, i.e., to the proletariat. A beginning can and must be made at once, overnight, to replace the specific "bossing" of state officials by the simple functions of "foremen and accountants", functions which are already fully within the ability of the average town dweller and can well be performed for "workmen's wages".

*We*, the workers, shall organise large-scale production on the basis of what capitalism has already created, relying on our own experience as workers, establishing strict, iron discipline backed up by the state power of the armed workers. We shall reduce the role of state officials to that



social and economic privileges.

The fact that the system of cheap labour required such a viciously repressive state machine, together with the need to deceive the white workers—or, to put it differently, the need to maintain the white workers' support and prevent them from making common cause with the black workers—gave rise to a state with:

- (a) a narrow base confined to the white section of the population, and
- (b) a powerful apparatus, not entirely under the control of the ruling class but balancing between the bourgeoisie on the one hand, and the white sections of the middle and working classes on the other.

Historically, the South African state must therefore be described as semi-Bonapartist and not fascist. Over the recent period its Bonapartist characteristics have become increasingly pronounced, the more the growing black workers' movement balanced and challenged the capitalist class, and the more the state machine was compelled to reinforce itself still further.

**Notwithstanding the surface similarities between the racist lunacy of ultra-right Afrikaner nationalism and Hitlerism, the South African state is not fascist and never has been. The fundamental conditions for fascism—the catastrophic and decisive defeat of the mass of the working class, and the frenzied mass movement of the petty bourgeoisie under conditions of deep crisis—have never emerged in South Africa up to the present time.**

Is there a likelihood that these conditions will emerge in future?

## The prospects for fascism in SA

South African capitalism until recently provided full employment and increasing living standards for the whites, something that was not possible in the pre-war period. However, since the post-war upswing in the world economy has ended, the South African economy has begun to convulse in response to the spasms of world capitalism and created growing discontent also within the white population.

The spectre of white unemployment reared its head for the first

time, though briefly, in 1976. Reflecting this dissatisfaction there have been threats of strikes among teachers and an unsuccessful strike of white miners in 1979.

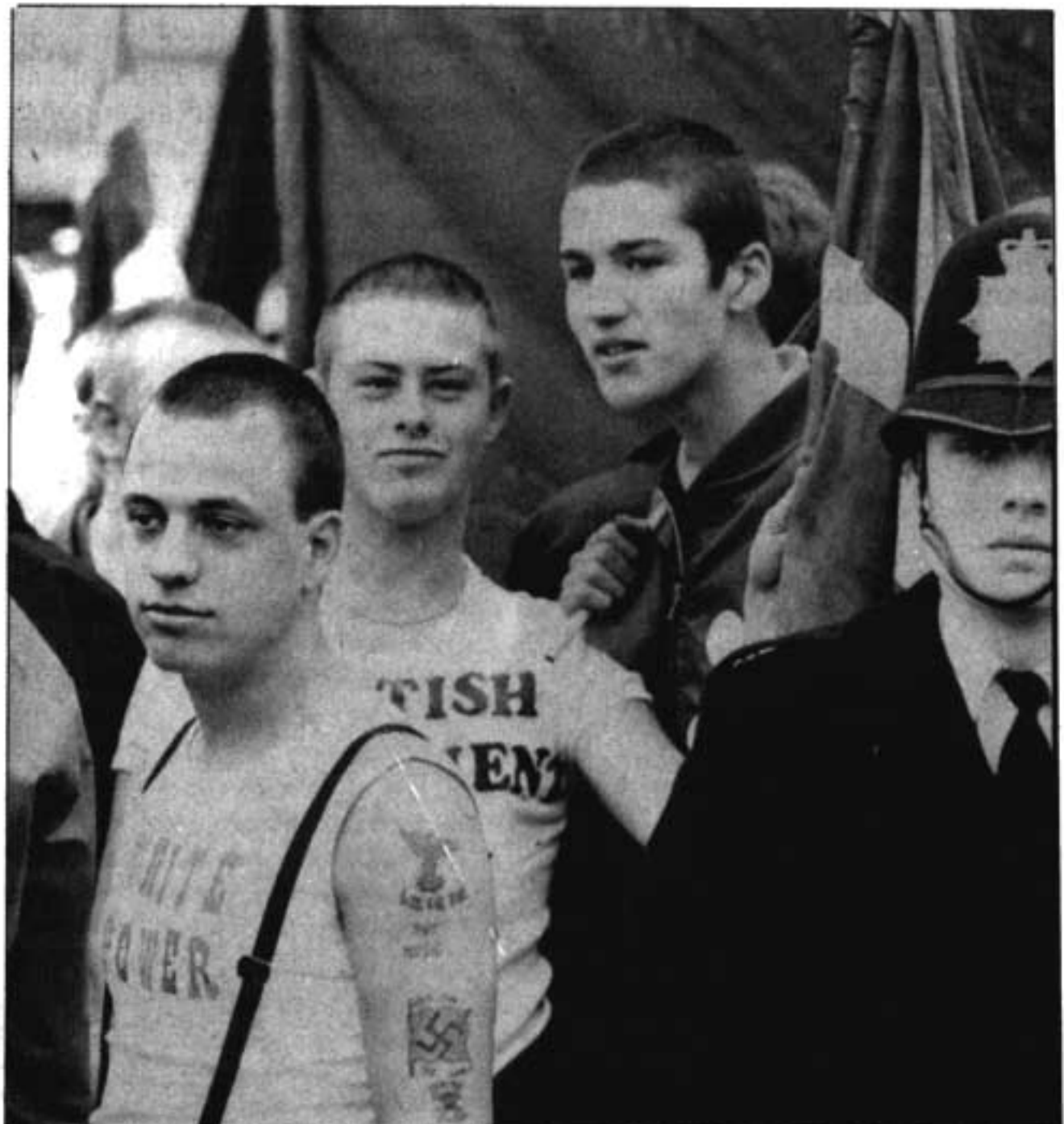
Fascist notions have received organisational expression in the form of SCORPIO, the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging and, on top of this heap of social vermin, the Wit Kommando. These gangs have their political ancestors in the Ossewabrandwag which sympathised with the Nazis in World War II but whose ambitions were thwarted then by its lack of widespread support and by the relatively strong hold of the ruling class.

Today the state is strangely incapable of wiping out these fascist thugs and their organisations. In fact, these forces are being kept in reserve as a last resort to defend capitalism. This policy is not peculiar to the South African bourgeoisie. Capitalism everywhere carries within it the germ of fascism, which under suitable conditions begins to breed.

Today the ruling class is preparing for the mounting convulsions which the crisis, as it deepens, will inevitably bring forth. The most likely result will be an openly Bonapartist regime which, while it will be directed essentially against the black working class, will also be used against confused and rebellious whites.

Already the crisis is bringing the social base of the state into opposition against the ruling party. In the past the white workers regarded the Nationalist Party (incorrectly) as their own; now they are describing it (more correctly, but unfortunately for the wrong reasons) as "a party of the Hoggensheimers"—i.e., the mining capitalists.

At present the bourgeoisie is not entertaining the idea of giving the fascist groups their head. To do so would provoke an uncontrollable confrontation with the mighty, undefeated forces of the black proletariat. This explains the clamp-down on the Wit Kommando which, although it is not really being crush-



*Fascist thugs in Britain, sheltering behind the police—but in Southall in July 1981 even police protection could not save them from a thrashing by black youth.*



of simply carrying out our instructions as responsible, revocable, modestly paid "foremen and accountants" (of course, with the aid of technicians of all sorts, types and degrees). This is *our* proletarian task, this is what we can and must *start* with in accomplishing the proletarian revolution. Such a beginning, on the basis of large-scale production, will of itself lead to the gradual "withering away" of all bureaucracy, to the gradual creation of an order—an order without inverted commas, an order bearing no similarity to wage slavery—an order under which the functions of control and accounting, becoming more and more simple, will be performed by each in turn, will then become a habit and will finally die out as the *special* functions of a special section of the population.

A witty German Social-Democrat of the seventies of the last century called the *postal service* an example of the socialist economic system. This is very true. At present the postal service is a business organised on the lines of a state-capitalist monopoly. Imperialism is gradually transforming all trusts into organisations of a similar type, in which, standing over the "common" people, who are overworked and starved, one has the same bourgeois bureaucracy. But the mechanism of social management is here already to hand. Once we have overthrown the capitalists, crushed the resistance of these exploiters with the iron hand of the armed workers, and smashed the bureaucratic machine of the modern state, we shall have a splendidly-equipped mechanism, freed from the "parasite", a mechanism which can very well be set going by the united workers themselves, who will hire technicians, foremen and accountants, and pay them *all*, as indeed *all* "state" officials in general, workmen's wages. Here is a concrete, practical task which can immediately be fulfilled in relation to all trusts, a task whose fulfilment will rid the working people of exploitation, a task which takes account of what the Commune had already begun to practise (particularly in building up the state).

To organise the *whole* economy on the lines of the postal service so that the technicians, foremen and accountants, as well as *all* officials, shall receive salaries no higher than "a workman's wage", all under the control and leadership of the armed proletariat—this is our immediate aim. This is the state and this is the economic foundation we need. This is what will bring about the abolition of parliamentarism and the preservation of representative institutions. This is what will rid the labouring classes of the bourgeoisie's prostitution of these institutions.

#### 4. Organisation of National Unity

"In a brief sketch of national organisation which the Commune had no time to develop, it states explicitly that the Commune was to be the political form of even the smallest village. . . ." The communes were to elect the "National Delegation" in Paris.

". . . The few but important functions which would still remain for a central government were not to be suppressed, as has been deliberately mis-stated, but were to be transferred to communal, i.e., strictly responsible, officials.

". . . National unity was not to be broken, but, on the contrary, organised by the communal constitution; it was to become a reality by the destruction of state power which posed as the embodiment of that unity yet wanted to be independent of, and superior to, the nation, on whose body it was but a parasitic excrescence. While the merely repressive organs of the old governmental power were to be amputated, its legitimate functions were to be wrested from an authority claiming the right to stand above society, and restored to the responsible servants of society."

The extent to which the opportunists of present-day

Social-Democracy have failed—perhaps it would be more true to say, have refused—to understand these observations of Marx is best shown by that book of Herostratean fame of the renegade Bernstein, *The Premises of Socialism and the Tasks of the Social-Democrats*. It is in connection with the above passage from Marx that Bernstein wrote that "as far as its political content is concerned", this programme "displays, in all its essential features, the greatest similarity to the federalism of Proudhon. . . . In spite of all the other points of difference between Marx and the 'petty-bourgeois' Proudhon [Bernstein places the word "petty-bourgeois" in inverted commas to make it sound ironical] on these points, their lines of reasoning run as close as could be." Of course, Bernstein continues, the importance of the municipalities is growing, but "it seems doubtful to me whether the first job of democracy would be such a dissolution [Auflösung] of the modern states and such a complete transformation [Umwandlung] of their organisation as is visualised by Marx and Proudhon (the formation of a National Assembly from delegates of the provincial or district assemblies, which, in their turn, would consist of delegates from the communes), so that consequently the previous mode of national representation would disappear". (Bernstein, *Premises*, German edition, 1899, pp. 134 and 136.)

To confuse Marx's views on the "destruction of state power, a parasitic excrescence", with Proudhon's federalism is positively monstrous! But it is no accident, for it never occurs to the opportunist that Marx does not speak here at all about federalism as opposed to centralism, but about smashing the old, bourgeois state machine which exists in all bourgeois countries.

The only thing that does occur to the opportunist is what he sees around him, in an environment of petty-bourgeois philistinism and "reformist" stagnation, namely, only "municipalities"! The opportunist has even grown out of the habit of thinking about proletarian revolution.

It is ridiculous. But the remarkable thing is that nobody argued with Bernstein on this point. Bernstein has been refuted by many, especially by Plekhanov in Russian literature and by Kautsky in European literature, but neither of them has said *anything* about *this* distortion of Marx by Bernstein.

The opportunist has so much forgotten how to think in a revolutionary way and to dwell on revolution that he attributes "federalism" to Marx, whom he confuses with the founder of anarchism, Proudhon. As for Kautsky and Plekhanov, who claim to be orthodox Marxists and defenders of the theory of revolutionary Marxism, they are silent on this point! Here is one of the roots of the extreme vulgarisation of the views on the difference between Marxism and anarchism, which is characteristic of both the Kautskyites and the opportunists, and which we shall discuss again later.

There is not a trace of federalism in Marx's above-quoted observations on the experience of the Commune. Marx agreed with Proudhon on the very point that the opportunist Bernstein did not see. Marx disagreed with Proudhon on the very point on which Bernstein found a similarity between them.

Marx agreed with Proudhon in that they both stood for the "smashing" of the modern state machine. Neither the opportunists nor the Kautskyites wish to see the similarity of views on this point between Marxism and anarchism (both Proudhon and Bakunin) because this is where they have departed from Marxism.

Marx disagreed both with Proudhon and Bakunin precisely on the question of federalism (not to mention the dictatorship of the proletariat). Federalism as a principle follows logically from the petty-bourgeois views of anarchism. Marx was a centralist. There is no departure whatever from centralism in his observations just quoted. Only those who are imbued with the philistine "superstitious belief" in the state can mistake the destruction of the



ed, is being removed from circulation for the moment.

Also for other, more general reasons the bourgeoisie does not trust the petty bourgeoisie, even though it is forced to adopt a posture of being at one with it in order to gain its support. Trotsky explains:

“The economically powerful big bourgeoisie, in itself, represents an infinitesimal minority of the nation. To enforce its domination, it must ensure a definite mutual relationship with the petty bourgeoisie, and through its mediation, with the proletariat ... Nevertheless, the relationship between the bourgeoisie and its basic social support, the petty bourgeoisie, does not rest upon reciprocal confidence and pacific collaboration.” (This is especially true of the weak black petty bourgeoisie—B.H.) “In its mass the petty bourgeoisie represents an exploited and disfranchised class. It regards the bourgeoisie with envy and often with hatred. The bourgeoisie, on the other hand, while utilising the support of the petty bourgeoisie, distrusts the latter, for it very correctly fears its tendency to break down the barriers set for it from above.”

(From *The Only Road for Germany*, September 1932.)

**Most important, however, is the fact that a fascist movement running wild in South Africa would be more of a danger than a service to the bourgeoisie.** The white section of the middle class, even with white working-class support, is far too narrow a layer of the population to give rise to a mass movement in the true sense of the word, let alone a movement capable of “annihilating” the organisations of the black workers and “penetrating deeply into the (black) masses”. It would be a provocation to armed mass resistance on the part of the blacks, and could result in a race war.

The black petty bourgeoisie, we may note in passing, could form no part of a fascist movement. White racism is the inevitable essence of



*Policemen beating a retreat. In South Africa the forces of reaction are dwarfed by the power of the masses.*

the fascist toxin in South Africa. This must repel the black middle class as much as the black workers, and force them to throw in their lot completely with the latter.

Furthermore the black middle class is too weak, despite the attempts by the bourgeoisie to build it into something resembling a class, to play any significant role in its own right. At the same time, in its socio-economic position, it stands immeasurably closer to the black workers than to the bourgeoisie—and closer also than the white middle class stands to the white workers.

Potential leaders of counter-

### **Fascist groups can serve, at most, as auxiliary forces of the state.**

revolution among the black middle class, such as Buthelezi, will see their present following melt like snow in the sun as the polarisation between the classes deepens and fighting mass organisations arise.

**Even at its most powerful, therefore, fascism in South Africa could amount to no more than the poisonous excrescence of a minority of society. It could command no wider support than the present bourgeois state, since there are no other reserves of reaction in society to draw on than those available to the present regime.**

For all these reasons it is excluded that a regime like that of Hitler or

Mussolini can arise in South Africa.

Faced with the forward movement of the masses, the South African ruling class would lack the social resources to call into being more than a savage but still unstable Bonapartist dictatorship. The fascist groups can serve, at most, as **auxiliary** forces of the bourgeois state.

The most fundamental condition for the rise of a fascist mass movement—the failure of the working class to rise to its task—is not now present in South Africa or on a world scale.

The international balance of class forces at present favours revolution

rather than reaction. The international strength of the working class has grown enormously with its numerical increase in the course of the recently-ended boom.

The post-war economic expansion has seen the proletariat grow into a giant force in South Africa. It now constitutes the overwhelming majority of the population.

The militant response of the black workers and youth to the onset of the crisis has demonstrated the selfless bravery and determination of the working class. The hysteria of the representatives of capital about an alleged ‘total onslaught against South Africa’ really expresses their



bourgeois state machine for the destruction of centralism!

Now if the proletariat and the poor peasants take state power into their own hands, organise themselves quite freely in communes, and *unite* the action of all the communes in striking at capital, in crushing the resistance of the capitalists, and in transferring the privately-owned railways, factories, land and so on to the *entire* nation, to the whole of society, won't that be centralism? Won't that be the most consistent democratic centralism and, moreover, proletarian centralism?

Bernstein simply cannot conceive of the possibility of voluntary centralism, of the voluntary amalgamation of the communes into a nation, of the voluntary fusion of the proletarian communes, for the purpose of destroying bourgeois rule and the bourgeois state machine. Like all philistines, Bernstein pictures centralism as something which can be imposed and maintained solely from above, and solely by the bureaucracy and the military clique.

As though foreseeing that his views might be distorted, Marx expressly emphasised that the charge that the Commune had wanted to destroy national unity, to abolish the central authority, was a deliberate fraud. Marx purposely used the words: "National unity was . . . to be organised", so as to oppose conscious, democratic, proletarian centralism to bourgeois, military, bureaucratic centralism.

But there are none so deaf as those who will not hear. And the very thing the opportunists of present-day Social-Democracy do not want to hear about is the destruction of state power, the amputation of the parasitic excrescence.

## 5. Abolition of the Parasite State

We have already quoted Marx's words on this subject, and we must now supplement them.

"...It is generally the fate of new historical creations," he wrote, "to be mistaken for the counterpart of older and even defunct forms of social life, to which they may bear a certain likeness. Thus, this new Commune, which breaks [*bricht*, smashes] the modern state power, has been regarded as a revival of the medieval communes . . . as a federation of small states (as Montesquieu and the Girondins visualised it) . . . as an exaggerated form of the old struggle against over-centralisation. . . ."

"...The Communal Constitution would have restored to the social body all the forces hitherto absorbed by that parasitic excrescence, the 'state', feeding upon and hampering the free movement of society. By this one act it would have initiated the regeneration of France. . . ."

"...The Communal Constitution would have brought the rural producers under the intellectual lead of the central towns of their districts, and there secured to them, in the town working men, the natural trustees of their interests. The very existence of the Commune involved, as a matter of course, local self-government, but no longer as a counterpoise to state power, now become superfluous."

"Breaking state power", which was a "parasitic excrescence"; its "amputation", its "smashing"; "state power, now become superfluous"—these are the expressions Marx used in regard to the state when appraising and analysing the experience of the Commune.

All this was written a little less than half a century ago; and now one has to engage in excavations, as it were, in order to bring undistorted Marxism to the knowledge of the mass of the people. The conclusions drawn from the observation of the last great revolution which Marx lived through were forgotten just when the time for the next great proletarian revolutions had arrived.

"...The multiplicity of interpretations to which the Commune has been subjected, and the multiplicity of interests which expressed themselves in it show that it was a thoroughly flexible political form, while all previous forms of government had been essentially repressive. Its true secret was this: it was essentially a *working-class government*, the result of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which the economic emancipation of labour could be accomplished. . . ."

"Except on this last condition, the Communal Constitution would have been an impossibility and a delusion. . . ."

The utopians busied themselves with "discovering" political forms under which the socialist transformation of society was to take place. The anarchists dismissed the question of political forms altogether. The opportunists of present-day Social-Democracy accepted the bourgeois political forms of the parliamentary democratic state as the limit which should not be overstepped; they battered their foreheads praying before this "model", and denounced as anarchism every desire to *break* these forms.

Marx deduced from the whole history of socialism and the political struggle that the state was bound to disappear, and that the transitional form of its disappearance (the transition from state to non-state) would be the "proletariat organised as the ruling class". Marx, however, did not set out to *discover* the political forms of this future stage. He limited himself to carefully observing French history, to analysing it, and to drawing the conclusion to which the year 1851 had led, namely, that matters were moving towards the *destruction* of the bourgeois state machine.

And when the mass revolutionary movement of the proletariat burst forth, Marx, in spite of its failure, in spite of its short life and patent weakness, began to study the forms it had *discovered*.

The Commune is the form "at last discovered" by the proletarian revolution, under which the economic emancipation of labour can take place.

The Commune is the first attempt by a proletarian revolution to *smash* the bourgeois state machine: and it is the political form "at last discovered", by which the smashed state machine can and must be *replaced*.

We shall see further on that the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917, in different circumstances and under different conditions, continue the work of the Commune and confirm Marx's brilliant historical analysis.

## CHAPTER IV

### Continuation. Supplementary Explanations by Engels

Marx gave the fundamentals concerning the significance of the experience of the Commune. Engels returned to the same subject time and again, and explained Marx's analy-



fear of the black working class as it flexes its muscles.

Nevertheless it is vital for the black working class to prevent the forces of fascism from gaining any ground in South Africa. The more the fascist gangs are permitted to grow, the more the struggle for socialism will be derailed into a race war and victory would only be gained at enormous cost in lives.

Similarly, the stronger the forces of fascism, the more ferocious would be the counter-revolution should the workers' movement falter.

## Organisation

The black workers must not rest on the laurels of their recent conquests. The answer is organisation, organisation and more organisation. Unity must be forged among black workers of all ethnic groups, between migrant and non-migrant, between employed and unemployed.

The violence of the fascist gangs against the people must be met and crushed by the harshest measures on the part of the workers', youth and community organisations.

In the long run, however, the most effective way of combatting fascism will be for the black workers to offer the white workers a way out of the crisis. The black workers must demonstrate their determination, their strength and ability to rule society in the interest of **all** the working people.

This can only be achieved on the basis of a correct socialist programme. The bourgeoisie must be stripped of its social support and left whining like an abandoned dog.

Internationalism is the lifeblood of the workers' revolution. The revolutionary movement of the black working class can be a beacon not only to the white workers but to the working class of the whole world. The international working class can make it impossible for imperialism to intervene on the side of the South African state.

The black workers have shown themselves to have enormous promise. Workers of the world unite! For a mass ANC with a socialist programme!

# FRANCE      Landslide for Socialist Party

The tremendous victory of the Socialist Party (PSF) in the French Presidential and National Assembly (parliamentary) elections has broken the logjam of French and European politics.

Despite an electoral system heavily weighted against the workers' parties and a campaign of scare-mongering by the press, such was the groundswell of opposition to the former regime of big business that even the small farmers were drawn behind the PSF.

This was the biggest electoral victory for the left in French history, while the right-wing parties, which have been in power for 23 years have suffered a crushing defeat.

For the Communist Party (PCF) also, the elections were a disaster. While the PSF increased its seats in the Assembly from 107 to 270, the PCF was cut down from 86 to 44 seats.

The main reason for the PCF defeat is its failure to present any clear alternative to the reformist programme of the PSF. In respect of Afghanistan and Poland it adopted an uncritical pro-Moscow position—but promptly abandoned it in exchange for 4 seats in the

government.

The workers of France have given the new government an unqualified mandate for socialist change. Yet its programme of **partial** nationalisations and reforms is not enough to break the power of the capitalist class. Presiding over an economy still within the stranglehold of capitalism, the government will be compelled to retreat before the pressures of the crisis.

At the same time the capitalists will set about undermining the new government and cancelling out the reforms, for example by pushing up prices.

Mitterand has been willing to include the PCF ministers as hostages in an effort to prevent opposition from the PCF-led trade union federation, the CGT. Yet not only the PCF but also the PSF will be shaken by rank-and-file revolt when the government fails to meet the expectations of the workers.

Only a programme for the nationalisation of the assets of the top 200 bourgeois families who control France, and a democratic socialist plan of production, can satisfy the aroused hopes of the working class, not only in France but world-wide.



*Paris, May 1981. Jubilant crowds celebrate Mitterand's victory after 23 years of right-wing government.*



sis and conclusions, sometimes elucidating *other* aspects of the question with such power and vividness that it is necessary to deal with his explanations specially.

## 1. The Housing Question

In his work, *The Housing Question* (1872), Engels already took into account the experience of the Commune, and dealt several times with the tasks of the revolution in relation to the state. It is interesting to note that the treatment of this specific subject clearly revealed, on the one hand, points of similarity between the proletarian state and the present state—points that warrant speaking of the state in both cases—and, on the other hand, points of difference between them, or the transition to the destruction of the state.

“How is the housing question to be settled, then? In present-day society, it is settled just as any other social question: by the gradual economic levelling of demand and supply, a settlement which reproduces the question itself again and again and therefore is no settlement. How a social revolution would settle this question not only depends on the circumstances in each particular case, but is also connected with much more far-reaching questions, one of the most fundamental of which is the abolition of the antithesis between town and country. As it is not our task to create utopian systems for the organisation of the future society, it would be more than idle to go into the question here. But one thing is certain: there is already a sufficient quantity of houses in the big cities to remedy immediately all real ‘housing shortage’, provided they are used judiciously. This can naturally only occur through the expropriation of the present owners and by quartering in their houses homeless workers or workers overcrowded in their present homes. As soon as the proletariat has won political power, such a measure prompted by concern for the common good will be just as easy to carry out as are other expropriations and billetings by the present-day state.” (German edition, 1887, p. 22.)

The change in the form of state power is not examined here, but only the content of its activity. Expropriations and billetings take place by order even of the present state. From the formal point of view, the proletarian state will also “order” the occupation of dwellings and expropriation of houses. But it is clear that the old executive apparatus, the bureaucracy, which is connected with the bourgeoisie, would simply be unfit to carry out the orders of the proletarian state.

“...It must be pointed out that the ‘actual seizure’ of all the instruments of labour, the taking possession of industry as a whole by the working people, is the exact opposite of the Proudhonist ‘redemption’. In the latter case the individual worker becomes the owner of the dwelling, the peasant farm, the instruments of labour; in the former case, the ‘working people’ remain the collective owners of the houses, factories and instruments of labour, and will hardly permit their use, at least during a transitional period, by individuals or associations without compensation for the cost. In the same way, the abolition of property in land is not the abolition of ground rent but its transfer, if in a modified form, to society. The actual seizure of all the instruments of labour by the working people, therefore, does not at all preclude the retention of rent relations.” (P. 68.)

We shall examine the question touched upon in this passage, namely, the economic basis for the withering away of the state, in the next chapter. Engels expresses

himself most cautiously, saying that the proletarian state would “hardly” permit the use of houses without payment, “at least during a transitional period”. The letting of houses owned by the whole people to individual families presupposes the collection of rent, a certain amount of control, and the employment of some standard in allotting the housing. All this calls for a certain form of state, but it does not at all call for a special military and bureaucratic apparatus, with officials occupying especially privileged positions. The transition to a situation in which it will be possible to supply dwellings rent-free depends on the complete “withering away” of the state.

Speaking of the Blanquists’ adoption of the fundamental position of Marxism after the Commune and under the influence of its experience, Engels, in passing, formulates this position as follows:

“...Necessity of political action by the proletariat and of its dictatorship as the transition to the abolition of classes and, with them, of the state...” (P. 55.)

Addicts to hair-splitting criticism, or bourgeois “exterminators of Marxism”, will perhaps see a contradiction between this *recognition* of the “abolition of the state” and repudiation of this formula as an anarchist one in the above passage from *Anti-Dühring*. It would not be surprising if the opportunists classed Engels, too, as an “anarchist”, for it is becoming increasingly common with the social-chauvinists to accuse the internationalists of anarchism.

Marxism has always taught that with the abolition of classes the state will also be abolished. The well-known passage on the “withering away of the state” in *Anti-Dühring* accuses the anarchists not simply of favouring the abolition of the state, but of preaching that the state can be abolished “overnight”.

As the now prevailing “Social-Democratic” doctrine completely distorts the relation of Marxism to anarchism on the question of the abolition of the state, it will be particularly useful to recall a certain controversy in which Marx and Engels came out against the anarchists.

## 2. Controversy with the Anarchists

This controversy took place in 1873. Marx and Engels contributed articles against the Proudhonists, “autonomists” or “anti-authoritarians”, to an Italian socialist annual, and it was not until 1913 that these articles appeared in German in *Neue Zeit*.

“If the political struggle of the working class assumes revolutionary forms,” wrote Marx, ridiculing the anarchists for their repudiation of politics, “and if the workers set up their revolutionary dictatorship in place of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, they commit the terrible crime of violating principles, for in order to satisfy their wretched, vulgar everyday needs and to crush the resistance of the bourgeoisie, they give the state a revolutionary and transient form, instead of laying down their arms and abolishing the state...” (*Neue Zeit*, Vol. XXXII, 1, 1913-14, p. 40.)

It was solely against this kind of “abolition” of the state that Marx fought in refuting the anarchists! He did not at all oppose the view that the state would disappear when classes disappeared, or that it would be abolished when classes were abolished. What he did oppose was the proposition that the workers should renounce the use of arms, organised violence, *that is, the state*, which is to serve to “crush the resistance of the bourgeoisie”.

To prevent the true meaning of his struggle against anarchism from being distorted, Marx expressly empha-





# SPAIN'S FUTURE

## DICTATORSHIP OR SOCIALISM?

In February this year, Civil Guards (a para-military force) led by one Colonel Tejero burst into Spain's parliament and held the MP's hostage. Though this adventure collapsed, it emerged that plans for a coup had widespread support among the tops of the Spanish military. Only the fear of the bourgeoisie of provoking the working class into struggle, thus unleashing civil war, led the Spanish King at the last moment to dissuade key army officers from supporting the coup.

To understand the lessons which can be drawn by the workers' move-

ment from these events, INQABA has interviewed ARTURO VAL DEL OLMO, General Secretary of the UGT, (General Workers' Union), Federation of Alava, in the Basque country. The UGT is the trade union organisation of the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE), and the Alava Federation of the UGT is led by the Marxist tendency of the PSOE.

As comrade Arturo explains, this coup attempt highlights the fragile character of the parliamentary democracy that replaced Franco's dictatorship in Spain. Not Franco's death, but the huge struggles of the

working class compelled the bourgeoisie to restore a parliamentary system in Spain. At the same time, at the core of the state, the apparatus of the Franco dictatorship has remained virtually intact.

Democracy, for the workers, provides the means for material and cultural advance. The bourgeoisie of Spain, one of the weaker economies of Europe, weakened still further by the present world capitalist crisis, is struggling to curtail democracy.

As in the later years of Franco's rule, our own struggles in South Africa are beating back the dictator-



sised the "revolutionary and *transient* form" of the state which the proletariat needs. The proletariat needs the state only temporarily. We do not at all differ with the anarchists on the question of the abolition of the state as the aim. We maintain that, to achieve this aim, we must temporarily make use of the instruments, resources and methods of state power *against* the exploiters, just as the temporary dictatorship of the oppressed class is necessary for the abolition of classes. Marx chooses the sharpest and clearest way of stating his case against the anarchists: After overthrowing the yoke of the capitalists, should the workers "lay down their arms", or use them against the capitalists in order to crush their resistance? But what is the systematic use of arms by one class against another if not a "transient form" of state?

Let every Social-Democrat ask himself: Is *that* how he has been posing the question of the state in controversy with the anarchists? Is *that* how it has been posed by the vast majority of the official socialist parties of the Second International?

Engels expounds the same ideas in much greater detail and still more popularly. First of all he ridicules the muddled ideas of the Proudhonists, who called themselves "anti-authoritarians", i.e., repudiated all authority, all subordination, all power. Take a factory, a railway, a ship on the high seas, said Engels: is it not clear that not one of these complex technical establishments, based on the use of machinery and the systematic co-operation of many people, could function without a certain amount of subordination and, consequently, without a certain amount of authority or power?

"...When I counter the most rabid anti-authoritarians with these arguments, the only answer they can give me is the following: Oh, that's true, except that here it is not a question of authority with which we vest our delegates, *but of a commission!* These people imagine they can change a thing by changing its name. . . ."

Having thus shown that authority and autonomy are relative terms, that the sphere of their application varies with the various phases of social development, that it is absurd to take them as absolutes, and adding that the sphere of application of machinery and large-scale production is steadily expanding, Engels passes from the general discussion of authority to the question of the state.

"Had the autonomists," he wrote, "contented themselves with saying that the social organisation of the future would allow authority only within the bounds which the conditions of production make inevitable, one could have come to terms with them. But they are blind to all facts that make authority necessary and they passionately fight the word.

"Why do the anti-authoritarians not confine themselves to crying out against political authority, the state? All socialists are agreed that the state, and with it political authority, will disappear as a result of the coming social revolution, that is, that public functions will lose their political character and become mere administrative functions of watching over social interests. But the anti-authoritarians demand that the political state be abolished at one stroke, even before the social relations that gave birth to it have been destroyed. They demand that the first act of the social revolution shall be the abolition of authority.

"Have these gentlemen ever seen a revolution? A revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is; it is an act whereby one part of the population imposes its will upon the other part by means of rifles, bayonets and cannon, all of which are highly authoritarian means. And the victorious party must maintain its rule by means of the terror which its arms inspire in the reactionaries. Would the Paris

Commune have lasted more than a day if it had not used the authority of the armed people against the bourgeoisie? Cannot we, on the contrary, blame it for having made too little use of that authority? Therefore, one of two things: either the anti-authoritarians don't know what they are talking about, in which case they are creating nothing but confusion. Or they do know, and in that case they are betraying the cause of the proletariat. In either case they serve only reaction." (P. 39.)

This argument touches upon questions which should be examined in connection with the relationship between politics and economics during the withering away of the state (the next chapter is devoted to this). These questions are: the transformation of public functions from political into simple functions of administration, and the "political state". This last term, one particularly liable to cause misunderstanding, indicates the process of the withering away of the state: at a certain stage of this process, the state which is withering away may be called a non-political state.

Again, the most remarkable thing in this argument of Engels is the way he states his case against the anarchists. Social-Democrats, claiming to be disciples of Engels, have argued on this subject against the anarchists millions of times since 1873, but they have *not* argued as Marxists could and should. The anarchist idea of the abolition of the state is muddled and *non-revolutionary*—that is how Engels put it. It is precisely the revolution in its rise and development, with its specific tasks in relation to violence, authority, power, the state, that the anarchists refuse to see.

The usual criticism of anarchism by present-day Social-Democrats has boiled down to the purest philistine banality: "We recognise the state, whereas the anarchists do not!" Naturally, such banality cannot but repel workers who are at all capable of thinking and revolutionary-minded. What Engels says is different. He stresses that all socialists recognise that the state will disappear as a result of the socialist revolution. He then deals specifically with the question of the revolution—the very question which, as a rule, the Social-Democrats evade out of opportunism, leaving it, so to speak, exclusively for the anarchists "to work out". And when dealing with this question, Engels takes the bull by the horns; he asks: should not the Commune have made *more* use of the *revolutionary* power of the *state*, that is, of the proletariat armed and organised as the ruling class?

Prevailing official Social-Democracy usually dismissed the question of the concrete tasks of the proletariat in the revolution either with a philistine sneer, or, at best, with the sophistic evasion: "The future will show." And the anarchists were justified in saying about such Social-Democrats that they were failing in their task of giving the workers a revolutionary education. Engels draws upon the experience of the last proletarian revolution precisely for the purpose of making a most concrete study of what should be done by the proletariat, and in what manner, in relation to both the banks and the state.

### 3. Letter to Bebel

One of the most, if not *the* most, remarkable observation on the state in the works of Marx and Engels is contained in the following passage in Engels's letter to Bebel dated March 18-28, 1875. This letter, we may observe in parenthesis, was, as far as we know, first published by Bebel in the second volume of his memoirs (*Aus meinem Leben*), which appeared in 1911, i.e., thirty-six years after the letter had been written and sent.

Engels wrote to Bebel criticising that same draft of the Gotha Programme which Marx criticised in his famous



ship of the ruling class. In the future the bourgeoisie may be forced to retreat before the people's democratic demands and put on the cloak of 'democracy'. But, as in Spain, they will seek to preserve the state machine intact, as the weapon for destroying our gains.

As Franco's rule disintegrated, the Spanish working class under a determined leadership could have pressed forward to defeat the state and overthrow capitalism—a necessary condition for establishing real democracy and progress. Instead the leaders of the mass workers' parties—the PSOE and the Spanish Communist Party (PCE)—preached the need for 'stabilising democracy on a capitalist basis.

Government fell into the hands of the UCD, a bourgeois party. The abortive coup—a premature attempt to reverse the workers' gains—signals that the Spanish workers are now reaping the consequences of the class-collaboration policies of their leaders.

Tragically, the PSOE and PCE

leaders are repeating the disastrous policies of their predecessors in the 1930s. In July 1936, Franco's military revolt was met by an uprising of the working class which soon placed four fifths of the country in the workers' and peasants' hands. But, rather than complete the taking of power by the working class, the PSOE and PCE leaders remained in a "Popular Front" government with the 'liberal' bourgeoisie in the name of 'defending democracy against Fascism'.

In reality, the bourgeoisie had already deserted to Franco. The state machine hung by a thread. But the policies of the workers' leaders gave the bourgeoisie time to reorganise. The Popular Front government (with the workers' leaders in it claiming that socialism was "not yet on the agenda") launched vicious attacks on all the advances of the working people against the bourgeoisie and landlords.

By 1939 the workers and peasants were exhausted. Not only had they fought heroically for three years

against Franco, at the same time their militants were being massacred by their 'own' Republican government. Thus Franco was enabled to win the Civil War.

Their organisations destroyed, the Spanish working class was plunged for more than a generation into the nightmare of Fascist dictatorship.

In the revolution that is unfolding in South Africa, our leaders must learn the lessons of Spain—in the 1930s and today. These lessons are that national liberation and democracy cannot be secured unless the power of the capitalist class and its state is shattered.

To ensure that our victory will be complete, we must build the trade unions and the ANC on a socialist programme, linking the struggle for national liberation and democracy, for wages, jobs, houses and decent education, to the struggle to abolish capitalism and lay the foundations of socialism throughout Southern Africa.

**Q: Why did the attempted coup on February 23rd take place and what did it reflect?**

A: On the one hand it reflects the enormous tensions which are being accumulated within society and the inability of the bourgeoisie to find a way out of the severe economic crisis, together with the policies of the leaders of the workers' parties which have led to a weakening of the consciousness and confidence of the workers in their own strength.

On the other hand it shows the

continued existence of the old Francoist state apparatus which constitutes a permanent threat to the formal democratic rights achieved by the working class.

It was an attempt by a section of the bourgeoisie to defend their class interests and find a way out of the crisis outside the framework of a bourgeois democracy.

**Q: Could you explain how the transition came about from Francoist dictatorship to the present bourgeois democracy?**

A: After Franco came to power in 1939, there was a period of so-called "economic self-sufficiency". But after 1950 this was ended, and gave a strong impulse to the development of Spanish industry.

This development brought in its train an enormous growth of the working class, with a massive outflow of workers from the countryside to the towns. Thus we have seen the reduction of the peasantry, which in the past made up the overwhelming majority of the Spanish population, to no more than 20% today.

Then in the 1970s, coinciding with the economic crisis, there were a whole series of class struggles and movements all over Spain, with general strikes at provincial and regional levels. Franco's repressive apparatus was incapable of holding back the movement.

In Vitoria in 1976, despite the complete lack of free trade unions, the absence of the democratic right to organise, and the denial of freedom of expression, 8 000 workers kept up a two-month long strike. Mass meetings were held in church buildings, or wherever else they could find. The only thing the police managed to bring about by their intervention was an ever-increasing radicalisation of the situation which culminated in the murder of five workers.

This led the majority wing of the bourgeoisie to realise the need to change something, in order to change nothing—that is to say, to change the form of their domination in order to preserve their class interests which would have been put in jeopardy if they had continued on the same road.



*Arturo val del Olmo speaks at a workers' meeting in Spain.*



letter to Bracke. Referring specially to the question of the state, Engels said:

"The free people's state has been transformed into the free state. Taken in its grammatical sense, a free state is one where the state is free in relation to its citizens, hence a state with a despotic government. The whole talk about the state should be dropped, especially since the Commune, which was no longer a state in the proper sense of the word. The 'people's state' has been thrown in our faces by the anarchists to the point of disgust, although already Marx's book against Proudhon and later the *Communist Manifesto* say plainly that with the introduction of the socialist order of society the state dissolves of itself [sich auflöst] and disappears. As the state is only a transitional institution which is used in the struggle, in the revolution, to hold down one's adversaries by force, it is sheer nonsense to talk of a 'free people's state'; so long as the proletariat still *needs* the state, it does not need it in the interests of freedom but in order to hold down its adversaries, and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom the state as such ceases to exist. We would therefore propose replacing *state* everywhere by *Gemeinwesen*, a good old German word which can very well take the place of the French word *commune*." (Pp. 321-22 of the German original.)

It should be borne in mind that this letter refers to the party programme which Marx criticised in a letter dated only a few weeks later than the above (Marx's letter is dated May 5, 1875), and that at the time Engels was living with Marx in London. Consequently, when he says "we" in the last sentence, Engels undoubtedly, in his own as well as in Marx's name, suggests to the leader of the German workers' party that the word "state" be struck out of the programme and replaced by the word "community".

What a howl about "anarchism" would be raised by the leading lights of present-day "Marxism", which has been falsified for the convenience of the opportunists, if such an amendment of the programme were suggested to them!

Let them howl. This will earn them the praises of the bourgeoisie.

And we shall go on with our work. In revising the programme of our Party, we must by all means take the advice of Engels and Marx into consideration in order to come nearer the truth, to restore Marxism by ridding it of distortions, to guide the struggle of the working class for its emancipation more correctly. Certainly no one opposed to the advice of Engels and Marx will be found among the Bolsheviks. The only difficulty that may perhaps arise will be in regard to the term. In German there are two words meaning "community", of which Engels used the one which does *not* denote a single community, but their totality, a system of communities. In Russian there is no such word, and we may have to choose the French word "commune", although this also has its drawbacks.

"The Commune was no longer a state in the proper sense of the word"—this is the most theoretically important statement Engels makes. After what has been said above, this statement is perfectly clear. The Commune *was ceasing* to be a state since it had to suppress, not the majority of the population, but a minority (the exploiters). It had smashed the bourgeois state machine. In place of a *special* coercive force the population itself came on the scene. All this was a departure from the state in the proper sense of the word. And had the Commune become firmly established, all traces of the state in it would have "withered away" of themselves; it would not have had to "abolish" the institutions of the state—they would have ceased to function as they ceased to have anything to do.

"The 'people's state' has been thrown in our faces by

the anarchists." In saying this, Engels above all has in mind Bakunin and his attacks on the German Social-Democrats. Engels admits that these attacks were justified *insofar* as the "people's state" was as much an absurdity and as much a departure from socialism as the "free people's state". Engels tried to put the struggle of the German Social-Democrats against the anarchists on the right lines, to make this struggle correct in principle, to rid it of opportunist prejudices concerning the "state". Unfortunately, Engels's letter was pigeon-holed for thirty-six years. We shall see farther on that, even after this letter was published, Kautsky persisted in virtually the same mistakes against which Engels had warned.

Bebel replied to Engels in a letter dated September 21, 1875, in which he wrote, among other things, that he "fully agreed" with Engels's opinion of the draft programme, and that he had reproached Liebknecht with readiness to make concessions (p. 334 of the German edition of Bebel's memoirs, Vol. II). But if we take Bebel's pamphlet, *Our Aims*, we find there views on the state that are absolutely wrong.

"The state must...be transformed from one based on *class rule* into a *people's state*." (*Unsere Ziele*, German edition, 1886, p. 14.)

This was printed in the *ninth* (the ninth!) edition of Bebel's pamphlet! It is not surprising that opportunist views on the state, so persistently repeated, were absorbed by the German Social-Democrats, especially as Engels's revolutionary interpretations had been safely pigeon-holed, and all the conditions of life were such as to "wean" them from revolution for a long time.

#### 4. Criticism of the Draft of the Erfurt Programme

In analysing Marxist teachings on the state, the criticism of the draft of the Erfurt Programme, sent by Engels to Kautsky on June 29, 1891, and published only ten years later in *Neue Zeit*, cannot be ignored; for it is with the *opportunist* views of the Social-Democrats on questions of *state* organisation that this criticism is mainly concerned.

We shall note in passing that Engels also makes an exceedingly valuable observation on economic questions, which shows how attentively and thoughtfully he watched the various changes occurring in modern capitalism, and how for this reason he was able to foresee to a certain extent the tasks of our present, the imperialist, epoch. Here is that observation: referring to the word "planlessness" (Planlosigkeit), used in the draft programme, as characteristic of capitalism, Engels wrote:

"When we pass from joint-stock companies to trusts which assume control over, and monopolise, whole industries, it is not only private production that ceases, but also planlessness." (*Neue Zeit*, Vol. XX, 1, 1901-02, p. 8.)

Here we have what is most essential in the theoretical appraisal of the latest phase of capitalism, i.e., imperialism, namely, that capitalism becomes monopoly *capitalism*. The latter must be emphasised because the erroneous bourgeois reformist assertion that monopoly capitalism or state-monopoly capitalism is *no longer* capitalism, but can now be called "state socialism" and so on, is very common. The trusts, of course, never provided, do not now provide, and cannot provide complete planning. But however much they do plan, however much the capitalist magnates calculate in advance the volume of production on a national and even on an international scale, and however much they systematically regulate it, we still remain under *capitalism*—at its new stage, it is true, but still



**Q:How did the workers' parties react to this strategy of the bourgeoisie?**

**A:** The policy of the leaders of the mass workers' parties, the PSOE (Socialist Party) and the PCE (Communist Party) has unfortunately been based, from the beginning of the transition when they emerged from underground, in trying to convince us of the "weakness" of the working class and the need to be "realistic" and "responsible".

Using this kind of argument they tended to demobilise the workers, as happened with the Atocha massacre in Madrid, where members of the Communist Party were murdered by the fascists and the only response which the workers got were appeals for calm and "responsibility".

The acceptance of the "Political Reform" by the workers' leaders amounted to agreeing to the continued existence of the old repressive state apparatus and legal system of the Franco regime. It meant giving democratic credibility to former fascists and thereby granting a breathing-space to the bourgeoisie, which had been shaken by the mass movement of the working class.

From that moment, the policies of the PSOE and PCE leaders have been based entirely on class conciliation and "consensus" rather than on giving a lead to increase the revolutionary consciousness of the working class movement.

Later on came the constitution which accepted the legality of lock-outs; denied the right of self-determination of the oppressed nationalities; created a two-chamber parliament in which the Senate is designed to control and restrict the legislation passed in the lower house; and which perpetuated the restored monarchy. All this was endorsed by the leaders of the PSOE and PCE without a murmur.

Thus we can say there is no real democracy in Spain equivalent to the European democratic system, although, formally, there are certain rights and freedoms. Parliament plays a secondary role, since the government can make or unmake it whenever it likes.

**Q:Have the political changes brought any improvement in the economic situation for the workers?**

**A:** From an economic point of



*In the Spanish Civil War, workers' militias were a pillar of the revolutionary struggle.*

view, the situation becomes worse and worse with every day that passes.

In 1980 the gross domestic product increased by only 1%, which was mainly due to an exceptionally good agricultural year, which will not be repeated in 1981. Unemployment is officially reckoned to be 1 600 000 (12% of the population), and the rate of inflation for this year is around 17%.

Unemployment and falling living standards have meant the slashing of the home market. As a result there has been an attempt to boost exports to foreign markets, mainly to the EEC. However the economic crisis has also caused the other European capitalists to resort to all kinds of protectionist measures which affect Spanish industry, for example, restrictions against Spanish steel.

In this situation, a whole series of key sectors of the economy are in crisis. The Ministry of Industry recently stated that there was an excess of 10 000 jobs in the giant car company, SEAT. The steel industry is only working at 75% of its productive capacity. The ship-building industry has been gradually cutting back its production from 7,6 million tons in 1973 to 1,5 million last year.

We could give similar figures for machine-tools, textiles, the footwear industry, electrodomeotics, etc.

Despite some disagreements among themselves, all the sections of the Spanish bourgeoisie are agreed on a policy of austerity and sacrifices for the working people. They are attempting to carry out a further reduction of the workers' living standards, by means of wage controls (which have existed for several years), a further reduction of the workforce, productivity deals for those who still hold onto a job, as well as abolition of the legal minimum wage, privatisation of social security, and the reduction of public spending on things which are "unproductive" from the capitalists' point of view such as education, unemployment benefits, etc.

And this is despite the fact that last year a million workers were still on the legal minimum wage, which at present is 759 pesetas a day (R7,14) or 23 000 a month (R216), and that four million workers were on less than 30 000 gross (R282) (that is, before the deductions made by social security and tax).

In addition, there are in reality two million workers who are unemployed, of whom only 40% get unemployment benefits.

The situation is even more serious in the depressed areas such as Andalusia in the South and Extremadura in the South-West (where people have nothing left to eat except potatoes and olives) although



capitalism, without a doubt. The "proximity" of such capitalism to socialism should serve genuine representatives of the proletariat as an argument proving the proximity, facility, feasibility and urgency of the socialist revolution, and not at all as an argument for tolerating the repudiation of such a revolution and the efforts to make capitalism look more attractive, something which all reformists are trying to do.

But to return to the question of the state. In his letter Engels makes three particularly valuable suggestions: first, in regard to the republic; second, in regard to the connection between the national question and state organisation, and, third, in regard to local self-government.

In regard to the republic, Engels made this the focal point of his criticism of the draft of the Erfurt Programme. And when we recall the importance which the Erfurt Programme acquired for all the Social-Democrats of the world, and that it became the model for the whole Second International, we may say without exaggeration that Engels thereby criticised the opportunism of the whole Second International.

"The political demands of the draft," Engels wrote, "have one great fault. *It lacks* (Engels's italics) precisely what should have been said."

And, later on, he makes it clear that the German Constitution is, strictly speaking, a copy of the extremely reactionary Constitution of 1850, that the Reichstag is only, as Wilhelm Liebknecht put it, "the fig leaf of absolutism" and that to wish "to transform all the instruments of labour into common property" on the basis of a constitution which legalises the existence of petty states and the federation of petty German states is an "obvious absurdity".

"To touch on that is dangerous, however," Engels added, knowing only too well that it was impossible legally to include in the programme the demand for a republic in Germany. But he refused to merely accept this obvious consideration which satisfied "everybody". He continued: "Nevertheless, somehow or other, the thing has to be attacked. How necessary this is is shown precisely at the present time by opportunism, which is gaining ground (einreissende) in a large section of the Social-Democratic press. Fearing a renewal of the Anti-Socialist Law, or recalling all manner of overhasty pronouncements made during the reign of that law, they now want the Party to find the present legal order in Germany adequate for putting through all Party demands by peaceful means. . . ."

Engels particularly stressed the fundamental fact that the German Social-Democrats were prompted by fear of a renewal of the Anti-Socialist Law, and explicitly described it as opportunism; he declared that precisely because there was no republic and no freedom in Germany, the dreams of a "peaceful" path were perfectly absurd. Engels was careful not to tie his hands. He admitted that in republican or very free countries "one can conceive" (only "conceive"! ) of a peaceful development towards socialism, but in Germany, he repeated,

"...in Germany, where the government is almost omnipotent and the Reichstag and all other representative bodies have no real power, to advocate such a thing in Germany, where, moreover, there is no need to do so, means removing the fig leaf from absolutism and becoming oneself a screen for its nakedness."

The great majority of the official leaders of the German Social-Democratic Party, which pigeon-holed this advice, have really proved to be a screen for absolutism.

"...In the long run such a policy can only lead one's own party astray. They push general, abstract political questions into the foreground, thereby con-

cealing the immediate concrete questions, which at the moment of the first great events, the first political crisis, automatically pose themselves. What can result from this except that at the decisive moment the party suddenly proves helpless and that uncertainty and discord on the most decisive issues reign in it because these issues have never been discussed? . . .

"This forgetting of the great, the principal considerations for the momentary interests of the day, this struggling and striving for the success of the moment regardless of later consequences, this sacrifice of the future of the movement for its present may be 'honestly' meant, but it is and remains opportunism, and 'honest' opportunism is perhaps the most dangerous of all. . . .

"If one thing is certain it is that our party and the working class can only come to power in the form of the democratic republic. This is even the specific form for the dictatorship of the proletariat, as the Great French Revolution has already shown. . . ."

Engels repeated here in a particularly striking form the fundamental idea which runs through all of Marx's works, namely, that the democratic republic is the nearest approach to the dictatorship of the proletariat. For such a republic, without in the least abolishing the rule of capital, and, therefore, the oppression of the masses and the class struggle, inevitably leads to such an extension, development, unfolding and intensification of this struggle that, as soon as it becomes possible to meet the fundamental interests of the oppressed masses, this possibility is realised inevitably and solely through the dictatorship of the proletariat, through the leadership of those masses by the proletariat. These, too, are "forgotten words" of Marxism for the whole of the Second International, and the fact that they have been forgotten was demonstrated with particular vividness by the history of the Menshevik Party during the first six months of the Russian revolution of 1917.

On the subject of a federal republic, in connection with the national composition of the population, Engels wrote:

"What should take the place of present-day Germany (with its reactionary monarchical Constitution and its equally reactionary division into petty states, a division which perpetuates all the specific features of "Prussianism" instead of dissolving them in Germany as a whole)? In my view, the proletariat can only use the form of the one and indivisible republic. In the gigantic territory of the United States, a federal republic is still, on the whole, a necessity, although in the Eastern states it is already becoming a hindrance. It would be a step forward in Britain where the two islands are peopled by four nations and in spite of a single Parliament three different systems of legislation already exist side by side. In little Switzerland, it has long been a hindrance, tolerable only because Switzerland is content to be a purely passive member of the European state system. For Germany, federalisation on the Swiss model would be an enormous step backward. Two points distinguish a union state from a completely unified state: first, that each member state, each canton, has its own civil and criminal legislative and judicial system, and, second, that alongside a popular chamber there is also a federal chamber in which each canton, whether large or small, votes as such." In Germany, the union state is the transition to the completely unified state, and the "revolution from above" of 1866 and 1870 must not be reversed but supplemented by a "movement from below".

Far from being indifferent to the forms of state, Engels, on the contrary, tried to analyse the transitional forms with the utmost thoroughness in order to establish, in accordance with the concrete historical peculiarities of each





*Fascists calling for a return to the 'good old days' of Franco.*

there is also enormous poverty in parts of Barcelona, Madrid and the Basque country.

Farm labourers have no right to unemployment benefit. They depend upon so-called "community employment" schemes, by which the government pays a small and irregular subsidy, which is far below the legal minimum wage. This has turned Andalusia into a real powder-keg, where there has been one social explosion upon another, characterised by land-seizures, clashes with the para-military armed police (the Civil Guard), sit-ins and hunger strikes.

**Q: What is the response of the workers' leaders to the economic situation?**

A: In 1978 the leaders of the PSOE and PCE signed the Moncloa Pact, which accepted a wage ceiling lower than the increase in the cost of living and a restrictive monetary policy which led to an increase in unemployment through the closure of thousands of firms. Shortly afterwards came new laws which make for easier sackings and cut unemployment benefits.

The unconditional defence of the Moncloa Pact by the PCE and its union, the Workers' Commissions, signified a hard blow for the workers' struggle. Instead of basing themselves on the power of the working people, they have confined themselves to the limits of parliamentary discussions and deals with the bourgeoisie from a position of weakness.

This has steadily led to a rise of apathy and weariness within the

working class as a whole, and strengthened the boss class which is now howling for still greater "sacrifices" and "austerity"—but only for the workers, of course.

The only alternative proposal that has been made by the labour leaders has been the idea of boosting public investments in those sectors which employ most labour. However, in a situation in which the budget deficit (shortfall) has reached 500 000 million pesetas (R4 760 million), any new increase in public spending would mean a new explosion of inflation.

The idea of a reform of the tax system would not solve the problem either. A progressive tax reform would mean less profits for the capitalists, at the very time when they are complaining about lack of profitability. And a tax reform which was biased against the workers would reduce the home market and would meet with serious resistance.

**Q: How do you view the struggle in the Basque country?**

A: The Basques are one of the nationalities of Spain which suffered most from repression during the forty years of dictatorship. This meant that the Basque working class was in the vanguard of the struggle against the dictatorship.

In the first general elections held for forty years, in 1977, the PSOE won a majority in the Basque parliament. While in government the PSOE leaders offered no solution to the economic problems of the workers. They did not support the

right of self-determination and failed to organise a serious movement against repression.

Thus, in the latest elections, many workers abstained, or supported Basque nationalist movements, who won 42 seats between them, as opposed to 9 seats for the PSOE and only one for the PCE.

The weakness of the Spanish capitalist-finance oligarchy is reflected in the fact that its party, the UCD, only won 6 seats in the Basque parliament. This in turn forced them to consider granting concessions to the Basque bourgeoisie with the idea of handing responsibility over to it for police operations against ETA, the armed Basque nationalist organisation.

ETA has been waging war against the Spanish police over more than two decades. Because the workers' parties have failed to support the right of self-determination for the Basque people, ETA has won increased sympathy.

The brutality of the police arouses the hatred of the majority of the population and, while not actively supporting ETA, most Basques certainly tolerate and support them passively. Very few would collaborate with the police or pass on information about ETA.

The situation has been producing increasing demoralisation in the ranks of the police.

On the other hand, ETA's tactics of the senseless murder of UCD politicians, kidnappings, blackmail, killing workers under the pretext of eliminating "police informers", placing bombs in the south of Spain during the tourist season, organizing assassination attempts which kill people "by mistake", is achieving just the opposite of the aims ETA claims to pursue.

They attempt to substitute themselves for the struggles of the working class, and thus place obstacles in the development of the workers' consciousness. They claim to be fighting the police and every day there are more police. They claim to fight for amnesty for political prisoners and every day there are more political prisoners, and every day fewer people who support amnesty.

Now, after the coup, both the bourgeoisie and the leaders of the workers' organisations have hasten-



particular case, *from what and to what* the given transitional form is passing.

Approaching the matter from the standpoint of the proletariat and the proletarian revolution, Engels, like Marx, upheld democratic centralism, the republic—one and indivisible. He regarded the federal republic either as an exception and a hindrance to development, or as a transition from a monarchy to a centralised republic, as a “step forward” under certain special conditions. And among these special conditions, he puts the national question to the fore.

Although mercilessly criticising the reactionary nature of small states, and the screening of this by the national question in certain concrete cases, Engels, like Marx, never betrayed the slightest desire to brush aside the national question—a desire of which the Dutch and Polish Marxists, who proceed from their perfectly justified opposition to the narrow philistine nationalism of “their” little states, are often guilty.

Even in regard to Britain, where geographical conditions, a common language and the history of many centuries would seem to have “put an end” to the national question in the various small divisions of the country—even in regard to that country, Engels reckoned with the plain fact that the national question was not yet a thing of the past, and recognised in consequence that the establishment of a federal republic would be a “step forward”. Of course, there is not the slightest hint here of Engels abandoning the criticism of the shortcomings of a federal republic or renouncing the most determined advocacy of, and struggle for, a unified and centralised democratic republic.

But Engels did not at all mean democratic centralism in the bureaucratic sense in which this term is used by bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideologists, the anarchists among the latter. His idea of centralism did not in the least preclude such broad local self-government as would combine the voluntary defence of the unity of the state by the “communes” and districts, and the complete elimination of all bureaucratic practices and all “ordering” from above. Carrying forward the programme views of Marxism on the state, Engels wrote:

“So, then, a unified republic—but not in the sense of the present French Republic, which is nothing but the Empire established in 1798 without the Emperor. From 1792 to 1798 each French department, each commune (Gemeinde), enjoyed complete self-government on the American model, and this is what we too must have. How self-government is to be organised and how we can manage without a bureaucracy has been shown to us by America and the first French Republic, and is being shown even today by Australia, Canada and the other English colonies. And a provincial (regional) and communal self-government of this type is far freer than, for instance, Swiss federalism, under which, it is true, the canton is very independent in relation to the Bund (i.e., the federated state as a whole), but is also independent in relation to the district (Bezirk) and the commune. The cantonal governments appoint the district governors (Bezirksstatthalter) and prefects—which is unknown in English-speaking countries and which we want to abolish here as resolutely in the future as the Prussian Landräte and Regierungsräte” (commissioners, district police chiefs, governors, and in general all officials appointed from above). Accordingly Engels proposes the following wording for the self-government clause in the programme: “Complete self-government for the provinces (gubernias or regions), districts and communes through officials elected by universal suffrage. The abolition of all local and provincial authorities appointed by the state.”

I have already had occasion to point out—in *Pravda* (No. 68, May 28, 1917), which was suppressed by the government of Kerensky and other “socialist” Ministers—how on this point (of course, not on this point alone by any means) our pseudo-socialist representatives of pseudo-revolutionary pseudo-democracy have made glaring departures *from democracy*. Naturally, people who have bound themselves by a “coalition” to the imperialist bourgeoisie have remained deaf to this criticism.

It is extremely important to note that Engels, armed with facts, disproved by a most precise example the prejudice which is very widespread, particularly among petty-bourgeois democrats, that a federal republic necessarily means a greater amount of freedom than a centralised republic. This is wrong. It is disproved by the facts cited by Engels regarding the centralised French Republic of 1792-98 and the federal Swiss Republic. The really democratic centralised republic gave *more* freedom than the federal republic. In other words, the *greatest* amount of local, regional and other freedom known in history was accorded by a *centralised* and not by a federal republic.

Insufficient attention has been and is being paid in our Party propaganda and agitation to this fact, as, indeed, to the whole question of the federal and the centralised republic and local self-government.

### 5. The 1891 Preface to Marx's *The Civil War in France*

In his preface to the third edition of *The Civil War in France* (this preface is dated March 18, 1891, and was originally published in *Neue Zeit*), Engels, in addition to some interesting incidental remarks on questions concerning the attitude towards the state, gave a remarkably vivid summary of the lessons of the Commune. This summary, made more profound by the entire experience of the twenty years that separated the author from the Commune, and directed expressly against the “superstitious belief in the state” so widespread in Germany, may justly be called the *last word* of Marxism on the question under consideration.

In France, Engels observed, the workers emerged with arms from every revolution; “therefore the disarming of the workers was the first commandment for the bourgeois, who were at the helm of the state. Hence, after every revolution won by the workers, a new struggle, ending with the defeat of the workers”.

This summary of the experience of bourgeois revolutions is as concise as it is expressive. The essence of the matter—among other things, on the question of the state (*has the oppressed class arms?*)—is here remarkably well grasped. It is precisely this essence that is most often evaded both by professors influenced by bourgeois ideology, and by petty-bourgeois democrats. In the Russian Revolution of 1917, the honour (Cavaignac honour) of blabbing this secret of bourgeois revolutions fell to the Menshevik, would-be Marxist, Tsereteli. In his “historic” speech of June 11, Tsereteli blurted out that the bourgeoisie were determined to disarm the Petrograd workers—presenting, of course, this decision as his own, and as a necessity for the “state” in general!

Tsereteli's historic speech of June 11 will, of course, serve every historian of the revolution of 1917 as a graphic illustration of how the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik bloc, led by Mr. Tsereteli, deserted to the bourgeoisie *against* the revolutionary proletariat.

Another incidental remark of Engels's, also connected with the question of the state, deals with religion. It is well known that the German Social-Democrats, as they degenerated and became increasingly opportunist, slipped



ed to claim that terrorism was the real cause of the coup. But in reality the terrorists only provided the conspirators with a convenient excuse.

Behind this excuse the bourgeoisie, with the support of the workers' leaders, have approved laws like the so-called law "for the defence of the constitution". This allows the closing of a newspaper without a legal hearing and provides a further backup for the earlier anti-

### **Only a socialist lead is capable of offering a solution to the economic problems of the workers and nipping the danger of reaction in the bud.**

terrorist law which permits detention without trial, without access to lawyers, etc.

At the same time, the army has now been drawn into the "fight against terrorism". The first step in this direction is the posting of soldiers along the frontiers and at key strategic points in the Basque country.

The degeneration of ETA increases in the measure that it loses popular support. Nevertheless, the only way to end the vicious circle of terror and counter-terror is for the workers' parties to fight for broad freedoms for everyone and for the end of repression. Also we have to remove the causes which make certain sections of society, especially the youth, think that the armed struggle of minorities is a short cut to solve its problems—causes which

include unemployment and the deterioration of the conditions of life and work.

**Q:What are the immediate political perspectives in Spain?**

**A:** In the period after the coup, the leaders of PSOE and the PCE have stepped up their demand for a coalition government with the party of the Spanish bourgeoisie, the UCD.

As a matter of fact, the UCD for the moment has rejected this

possibility. Quite simply, the bourgeoisie has no need of the Socialist leaders in the government, because the same leaders accept and support the bourgeois government on all the basic questions even while in opposition.

This feebleness of the workers' leaders, and their failure to lead any mobilisation against the reactionaries, is making the fascists more bold.

However, the monarchist generals have achieved most of their immediate aims for curtailing democracy thanks to the concessions made by the PSOE and PCE leaders since February 23rd. A coup might provoke the working class to an uprising in defence of democracy, leading to a civil war in which capitalist rule would itself be threatened. For these reasons a

military coup in the immediate future is unlikely.

The real task of the workers' movement at the present time is to mobilise for a **government of the workers' parties on a socialist programme**. Only a socialist programme is capable of offering a solution to the economic problems of the workers and nipping the dangers of reaction in the bud.

Nevertheless, unfortunately, a coalition government with bourgeois parties cannot be excluded as a possibility in the future, if the workers' leaders retain their present class-collaborationist outlook. When the situation deteriorates still further, particularly when the working class returns to the mass struggle to demand solutions to their problems, then the bourgeoisie would see some point in a coalition government on the slogan of maintaining "calm and order" with the exclusive object of slowing down the workers' struggle.

Such a coalition would serve the workers' leaders as an excuse for not carrying out even their present programme of reforms. This would discredit the workers' parties and sow confusion in the minds of the workers. At the same time such a government could solve no problems. In the long run it could not fail to result in an explosion of opposition within the workers' parties to the class-collaborationist policies of the leaders. In such conditions the ideas and programme of Marxism can rapidly become a material force in the workers' movement.

Vitoria 20/5/1981.



*Huge demonstrations on May Day this year show the immense latent power of the Spanish workers, despite the temporary loss of confidence resulting from the vacillation of the leaders.*



more and more frequently into the philistine misinterpretation of the celebrated formula: "Religion is to be declared a private matter." That is, this formula was twisted to mean that religion was a private matter *even for the party* of the revolutionary proletariat!! It was against this complete betrayal of the revolutionary programme of the proletariat that Engels vigorously protested. In 1891 he saw only the *very feeble* beginnings of opportunism in his party, and, therefore, he expressed himself with extreme caution:

"As almost only workers, or recognised representatives of the workers, sat in the Commune, its decisions bore a decidedly proletarian character. Either they decreed reforms which the republican bourgeoisie had failed to pass solely out of cowardice, but which provided a necessary basis for the free activity of the working class—such as the realisation of the principle that *in relation to the state* religion is a purely private matter—or the Commune promulgated decrees which were in the direct interest of the working class and in part cut deeply into the old order of society."

Engels deliberately emphasised the words "in relation to the state", as a straight thrust at German opportunism, which had declared religion to be a private matter *in relation to the party*, thus degrading the party of the revolutionary proletariat to the level of the most vulgar "free-thinking" philistinism, which is prepared to allow a non-denominational status, but which renounces the *party* struggle against the opium of religion which stupefies the people.

The future historian of the German Social-Democrats, in tracing the roots of their shameful bankruptcy in 1914, will find a fair amount of interesting material on this question, beginning with the evasive declarations in the articles of the party's ideological leader, Kautsky, which throw the door wide open to opportunism, and ending with the attitude of the party towards the "Los-von-Kirche-Bewegung" (the "Leave-the-Church" movement) in 1913.

But let us see how, twenty years after the Commune, Engels summed up its lessons for the fighting proletariat.

Here are the lessons to which Engels attached prime importance:

"...It was precisely the oppressing power of the former centralised government, army, political police, bureaucracy, which Napoleon had created in 1798 and which every new government had since then taken over as a welcome instrument and used against its opponents—it was this power which was to fall everywhere, just as it had fallen in Paris.

"From the very outset the Commune had to recognise that the working class, once in power, could not go on managing with the old state machine; that in order not to lose again its only just gained supremacy, this working class must, on the one hand, do away with all the old machinery of oppression previously used against it itself, and, on the other, safeguard itself against its own deputies and officials, by declaring them all, without exception, subject to recall at any time...."

Engels emphasised once again that not only under a monarchy, but also in a democratic republic the state remains a state, i.e., it retains its fundamental distinguishing feature of transforming the officials, the "servants of society", its organs, into the *masters* of society

"Against this transformation of the state and the organs of the state from servants of society into masters of society—an inevitable transformation in

all previous states—the Commune used two infallible means. In the first place, it filled all posts—administrative, judicial and educational—by election on the basis of universal suffrage of all concerned, subject to recall at any time by the electors. And, in the second place, it paid all officials, high or low, only the wages received by other workers. The highest salary paid by the Commune to anyone was 6,000 francs.\* In this way a dependable barrier to place-hunting and careerism was set up, even apart from the binding mandates to delegates to representative bodies, which were added besides...."

Engels here approached the interesting boundary line at which consistent democracy, on the one hand, is *transformed* into socialism and, on the other, *demand*s socialism. For, in order to abolish the state, it is necessary to convert the functions of the civil service into the simple operations of control and accounting that are within the scope and ability of the vast majority of the population, and, subsequently, of every single individual. And if careerism is to be abolished completely, it must be made *impossible* for "honourable" though profitless posts in the Civil Service to be used as a springboard to highly lucrative posts in banks or joint-stock companies, as *constantly* happens in all the freest capitalist countries.

Engels, however, did not make the mistake some Marxists make in dealing, for example, with the question of the right of nations to self-determination, when they argue that it is impossible under capitalism and will be superfluous under socialism. This seemingly clever but actually incorrect statement might be made in regard to *any* democratic institution, including moderate salaries for officials, because fully consistent democracy is impossible under capitalism, and under socialism all democracy *will wither away*.

This is a sophism like the old joke about a man becoming bald by losing one more hair.

To develop democracy *to the utmost*, to find the *forms* for this development, to test them *by practice*, and so forth—all this is one of the component tasks of the struggle for the social revolution. Taken separately, no kind of democracy will bring socialism. But in actual life democracy will never be "taken separately"; it will be "taken together" with other things, it will exert its influence on economic life as well, will stimulate *its* transformation; and in its turn it will be influenced by economic development, and so on. This is the dialectics of living history.

Engels continued:

"...This shattering [Sprengung] of the former state power and its replacement by a new and truly democratic one is described in detail in the third section of *The Civil War*. But it was necessary to touch briefly here once more on some of its features, because in Germany particularly the superstitious belief in the state has passed from philosophy into the general consciousness of the bourgeoisie and even of many workers. According to the philosophical conception, the state is the 'realisation of the idea', or the Kingdom of God on earth, translated into philosophical terms, the sphere in which eternal truth and justice are, or should be, realised. And from this follows a superstitious reverence for the state and everything connected with it, which takes root the more readily since people are accustomed

\* [Footnote by Lenin:] Nominally about 2,400 rubles or, according to the present rate of exchange, about 6,000 rubles. The action of those Bolsheviks who propose that a salary of 9,000 rubles be paid to members of municipal councils, for instance, instead of a maximum salary of 6,000 rubles—quite an adequate sum—throughout the state, is inexcusable.



# Europe - youth in struggle

By  
Lesley Reed

Over the last eighteen months a wave of youth protest, violently repressed by the police, has swept Europe. City after city in West Germany, Britain, Holland, Austria and Switzerland have been turned into battlefields to the alarm of the bourgeoisie.

From Johannesburg the **Sunday Times** attacks what it calls "the dead-end kids of Europe". This shows a complete failure to understand the situation—just as the 'liberals' understand nothing about the struggle of the black youth in South Africa itself.

In reality the movement of the youth in Europe reflects a growing protest against the conditions of a



*Squatters fight back against police in Amsterdam.*

## Brixton

By Sam Browne

Labour Party Young Socialists,  
London Regional Committee  
member for the Brixton area.



Over the weekend of 11/12 April, Brixton—a run-down area of London—exploded with pent-up anger. The riots focussed attention on the appalling unemployment and atrocious social conditions facing young people in the area.

In the 1950s, when the British ruling class encouraged immigration from the colonies as a form of cheap labour, Brixton was one of the areas where immigrants first settled.

Today, Brixton typifies many of Britain's inner-city ghettos, with old dilapidated housing, much of it condemned for demolition in the 1920s but where people still have to live due to the enormous housing shortage. Recreational and social facilities are virtually non-existent. The ruling class, finding that they can no longer make profits out of this section of the working class, has cynically discarded them to rot in deprivation and squalor.

In the past two years of Tory government we have seen an intensification of racism and all other problems facing working people in Britain. Unemployment has doubled—but among blacks it has risen three-and-a-half times. Government spending on housing, social services and unemployment benefits has been slashed. All this is part of an attempt by the Tories to reduce the living standards of the working class in order to increase the profitability of big business.

Notable exceptions to the policy of cutbacks have been the police, the armed forces and the judiciary. The ruling class can see that there will be resistance by the working class to the attacks on their living standards, hence the need to bolster the state apparatus.

The ruling class is aware that the blacks, being the most oppressed section of the working class, are also the most volatile and potentially the quickest to draw revolutionary conclusions. It is therefore in the interests of the ruling class to isolate blacks from the rest of the working class.

In the recent period they have used the police to constantly harass and intimidate blacks.

On 3 April "Operation Swamp 81" was launched in Brixton. The area was saturated with police. The number of people who were stopped and searched doubled, and there was a marked increase in the raids on houses and cafes.

After a week of this blatant provocation, and following one particularly brutal arrest, the youth of the area exploded with violent anger.



from childhood to imagine that the affairs and interests common to the whole of society could not be looked after other than as they have been looked after in the past, that is, through the state and its lucratively positioned officials. And people think they have taken quite an extraordinarily bold step forward when they have rid themselves of belief in hereditary monarchy and swear by the democratic republic. In reality, however, the state is nothing but a machine for the oppression of one class by another, and indeed in the democratic republic no less than in the monarchy. And at best it is an evil inherited by the proletariat after its victorious struggle for class supremacy, whose worst sides the victorious proletariat will have to lop off as speedily as possible, just as the Commune had to, until a generation reared in new, free social conditions is able to discard the entire lumber of the state."

Engels warned the Germans not to forget the principles of socialism with regard to the state in general in connection with the substitution of a republic for the monarchy. His warnings now read like a veritable lesson to the Tseretelis and Chernovs, who in their "coalition" practice have revealed a superstitious belief in, and a superstitious reverence for, the state!

Two more remarks. 1. Engels's statement that in a democratic republic, "no less" than in a monarchy, the state remains a "machine for the oppression of one class by another" by no means signifies that the *form* of oppression makes no difference to the proletariat, as some anarchists "teach". A wider, free and more open *form* of the class struggle and of class oppression vastly assists the proletariat in its struggle for the abolition of classes in general.

2. Why will only a new generation be able to discard the entire lumber of the state? This question is bound up with that of overcoming democracy, with which we shall deal now.

## 6. Engels on the Overcoming of Democracy

Engels came to express his views on this subject when establishing that the term "Social-Democrat" was *scientifically* wrong.

In a preface to an edition of his articles of the seventies on various subjects, mostly on "international" questions (*Internationales aus dem Volkstaat*), dated January 3, 1894, i.e., written a year and a half before his death, Engels wrote that in all his articles he used the word "Communist", and *not* "Social-Democrat", because at that time the Proudhonists in France and the Lassalleans in Germany called themselves Social-Democrats.

"...For Marx and myself," continued Engels, "it was therefore absolutely impossible to use such a loose term to characterise our special point of view. Today things are different, and the word ["Social-Democrat"] may perhaps pass muster (*mag passieren*), inexact (*unpassend*, unsuitable) though it still is for a party whose economic programme is not merely socialist in general, but downright communist, and whose ultimate political aim is to overcome the whole state and, consequently, democracy as well. The names of *real* [Engels's italics] political parties, however, are never wholly appropriate; the party develops while the name stays."

The dialectician Engels remained true to dialectics to the end of his days. Marx and I, he said, had a splendid, scientifically exact name for the party, but there was no real party, i.e., no mass proletarian party. Now (at the end of the nineteenth century) there was a real party, but its name was scientifically wrong. Never mind, it would

"pass muster", so long as the party *developed*, so long as the scientific inaccuracy of its name was not hidden from it and did not hinder its development in the right direction!

Perhaps some wit would console us Bolsheviks in the manner of Engels: we have a real party, it is developing splendidly; even such a meaningless and ugly term as "Bolshevik" will "pass muster", although it expresses nothing whatever but the purely accidental fact that at the Brussels-London Congress of 1903 we were in the majority. Perhaps now that the persecution of our Party by republicans and "revolutionary" petty-bourgeois democrats in July and August has earned the name "Bolshevik" such universal respect, now that, in addition, this persecution marks the tremendous historical progress our Party has made in its *real* development—perhaps now even I might hesitate to insist on the suggestion I made in April to change the name of our Party. Perhaps I would propose a "compromise" to my comrades, namely, to call ourselves the Communist Party, but to retain the word "Bolsheviks" in brackets.

But the question of the name of the Party is incomparably less important than the question of the attitude of the revolutionary proletariat to the state.

In the usual arguments about the state, the mistake is constantly made against which Engels warned and which we have in passing indicated above, namely, it is constantly forgotten that the abolition of the state means also the abolition of democracy: that the withering away of the state means the withering away of democracy.

At first sight this assertion seems exceedingly strange and incomprehensible; indeed, someone may even suspect us of expecting the advent of a system of society in which the principle of subordination of the minority to the majority will not be observed—for democracy means the recognition of this very principle.

No, democracy is *not* identical with the subordination of the minority to the majority. Democracy is a *state* which recognises the subordination of the minority to the majority, i.e., an organisation for the systematic use of *force* by one class against another, by one section of the population against another.

We set ourselves the ultimate aim of abolishing the state, i.e., all organised and systematic violence, all use of violence against people in general. We do not expect the advent of a system of society in which the principle of subordination of the minority to the majority will not be observed. In striving for socialism, however, we are convinced that it will develop into communism and, therefore, that the need for violence against people in general, for the *subordination* of one man to another, and of one section of the population to another, will vanish altogether since people will *become accustomed* to observing the elementary conditions of social life *without violence* and *without subordination*.

In order to emphasise this element of habit, Engels speaks of a new *generation*, "reared in new, free social conditions", which will "be able to discard the entire lumber of the state"—of any state, including the democratic-republican state.

In order to explain this, it is necessary to analyse the economic basis of the withering away of the state.



rotting capitalist system. Capitalism is unable to offer the youth any prospect of a decent future. As even the bourgeois *Newsweek* admits "Many in the restless generation have no job, no housing—and no faith in the future" (20 April 1981).

In the advanced capitalist countries, unemployment has reached 25 million. Youth are the worst hit—40% of the unemployed are under 25 years old, and many are faced with the grim prospect of never finding a real job in their lives.

In Amsterdam, illustrating the housing shortage of many European cities, 70 000 people (out of a population of 700 000) are on the municipal housing list—that is one in ten! Similarly, in wealthy Switzerland, "housing is scarce. Subsidised housing is not available for the unmarried young" (*Financial Times*, 13 April 1981).

In many cities particularly in Holland and West Germany, young people have 'squatted' (i.e. occupied) empty houses as the only means to secure a roof over their heads. In doing so they come into conflict with the property owners,

and often with the state.

Sometimes the owners illegally send in their 'goon squads' to forcefully evict the squatters. At other times the state has intervened and even tanks have been used against the squatters.

For example, recently in Amsterdam, 2 000 police and cavalry were mobilised to evict squatters. The police were backed up by water cannons, dogs, helicopters, spotter planes, boats and sharpshooters on cranes.

The squatters involved in this incident stated that "practically nothing is done for social housing ... The municipality prefers money-making projects such as the town hall, opera house, hotels, offices and luxury apartments".

Speculators and 'property developers', financed by the banks, make fortunes. This really shows the chaos of capitalism—where buildings are built for profit and not for social need.

Young people have fewer illusions left in bourgeois 'democracy' after being faced with police and military violence. Squatters and other youth,

seeing the links between landlords, big business and the banks, have vented their anger by throwing stones at bank windows and expensive shops.

But individual protest offers no solution to their problems. Only nationalisation of the banks, building societies and real-estate companies under workers' control and management can end speculation in property and provide homes for all the homeless.

The working class alone has the power to defeat capitalism and bring about the transformation of society. The workers' political parties and unions need to develop a socialist leadership that will turn them into genuine fighting organisations of the class.

The youth, with its unstoppable energy and spirit, has a tremendous role to play. The youth need to link up with the labour movement in its struggle to abolish capitalism. That is why in Europe, as elsewhere, the organisation of the young workers and with them, the unemployed and school-going youth, is a task of the greatest importance.

The riot was spontaneous. Although initially directed at the police, the smashing and burning of stores and shops demonstrates the bitter frustration of young people with no jobs, atrocious living conditions, and no hope of better things to come.

Contrary to the propaganda of the government and the media, this was not a 'race riot'. The fighting mostly involved blacks because it is mostly blacks who live in the decayed central area of Brixton, but in fact also white youth were involved. White people moving about the area were not attacked or intimidated; anger and violence was directed against the police.

The Tory government have appointed a judge, Lord Scarman, to investigate the rioting. But what use is an inquiry by an official representing the same system that the people have been fighting against?

What is needed is a genuine people's inquiry initiated by the labour and trade union movement together with black organisations. Such an inquiry must serve as the basis for a political campaign to end the police repression, social depriva-

tion and racism which were the cause of the riots.

This demand was enthusiastically endorsed by a mass meeting called by the Labour Party Young Socialists in Brixton immediately after the riots.

On the initiative of the LPYS, a Labour Committee for the Defence of Brixton, involving many Labour Party and trade union branches in the area, has been set up to carry forward this work and aid the victims of the police.

The events in Brixton have shown in an acute form the situation developing in all the main cities in Britain. There is no doubt that similar riots will occur elsewhere.

The task of the labour movement is to galvanise that anger and channel it into the organisations of the working class. Isolated riots can offer no way forward for the oppressed masses. The fight is a political fight, to transform the working class organisations into a force capable of overthrowing capitalism and abolishing unemployment, poverty, victimisation and despair.

3/6/81





Gotha Programme brought into the question of the relationship between state and society. He wrote:

" 'Present-day society' is capitalist society, which exists in all civilised countries, being more or less free from medieval admixture, more or less modified by the particular historical development of each country, more or less developed. On the other hand, the 'present-day state' changes with a country's frontier. It is different in the Prusso-German Empire from what it is in Switzerland, and different in England from what it is in the United States. 'The present-day state' is, therefore, a fiction.

"Nevertheless, the different states of the different civilised countries, in spite of their motley diversity of form, all have this in common, that they are based on modern bourgeois society, only one more or less capitalistically developed. They have, therefore, also certain essential characteristics in common. In this sense it is possible to speak of the 'present-day state', in contrast with the future, in which its present root, bourgeois society, will have died off.

"The question then arises: what transformation will the state undergo in communist society? In other words, what social functions will remain in existence there that are analogous to present state functions? This question can only be answered scientifically, and one does not get a flea-hop nearer to the problem by a thousandfold combination of the word people with the word state."

After thus ridiculing all talk about a "people's state", Marx formulated the question and gave warning, as it were, that those seeking a scientific answer to it should use only firmly-established scientific data.

The first fact that has been established most accurately by the whole theory of development, by science as a whole—a fact that was ignored by the utopians, and is ignored by the present-day opportunists, who are afraid of the socialist revolution—is that, historically, there must undoubtedly be a special stage, or a special phase, of *transition* from capitalism to communism.

## 2. The Transition from Capitalism to Communism

Marx continued:

"Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.*"

Marx bases this conclusion on an analysis of the role played by the proletariat in modern capitalist society, on the data concerning the development of this society, and on the irreconcilability of the antagonistic interests of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

Previously the question was put as follows: to achieve its emancipation, the proletariat must overthrow the bourgeoisie, win political power and establish its revolutionary dictatorship.

Now the question is put somewhat differently: the transition from capitalist society—which is developing towards communism—to communist society is impossible without a "political transition period", and the state in this period can only be the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

What, then, is the relation of this dictatorship to democracy?

We have seen that the *Communist Manifesto* simply places side by side the two concepts: "to raise the proletariat to the position of the ruling class" and "to win the battle of democracy". On the basis of all that has been

## CHAPTER V

### The Economic Basis of the Withering Away of the State

Marx explains this question most thoroughly in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (letter to Bracke, May 5, 1875, which was not published until 1891 when it was printed in *Neue Zeit*, Vol. IX, 1, and which has appeared in Russian in a special edition). The polemical part of this remarkable work, which contains a criticism of Lassalleism, has, so to speak, overshadowed its positive part, namely, the analysis of the connection between the development of communism and the withering away of the state.

#### 1. Presentation of the Question By Marx

From a superficial comparison of Marx's letter to Bracke of May 5, 1875, with Engels's letter to Bebel of March 28, 1875, which we examined above, it might appear that Marx was much more of a "champion of the state" than Engels, and that the difference of opinion between the two writers on the question of the state was very considerable.

Engels suggested to Bebel that all chatter about the state be dropped altogether, that the word "state" be eliminated from the programme altogether and the word "community" substituted for it. Engels even declared that the Commune was no longer a state in the proper sense of the word. Yet Marx even spoke of the "future state in communist society", i.e., he would seem to recognise the need for the state even under communism.

But such a view would be fundamentally wrong. A closer examination shows that Marx's and Engels's views on the state and its withering away were completely identical, and that Marx's expression quoted above refers to the state in the process of *withering away*.

Clearly there can be no question of specifying the moment of the *future* "withering away" the more so since it will obviously be a lengthy process. The apparent difference between Marx and Engels is due to the fact that they dealt with different subjects and pursued different aims. Engels set out to show Bebel graphically, sharply and in broad outline the utter absurdity of the current prejudices concerning the state (shared to no small degree by Lassalle). Marx only touched upon *this* question in passing, being interested in another subject, namely, the *development* of communist society.

The whole theory of Marx is the application of the theory of development—in its most consistent, complete, considered and pithy form—to modern capitalism. Naturally, Marx was faced with the problem of applying this theory both to the *forthcoming* collapse of capitalism and to the *future* development of *future* communism.

On the basis of what *facts*, then, can the question of the future development of future communism be dealt with?

On the basis of the fact that it *has its origin* in capitalism, that it develops historically from capitalism, that it is the result of the action of a social force to which capitalism *gave birth*. There is no trace of an attempt on Marx's part to make up a utopia, to indulge in idle guess-work about what cannot be known. Marx treated the question of communism in the same way as a naturalist would treat the question of the development of, say, a new biological variety, once he knew that it had originated in such and such a way and was changing in such and such a definite direction.

To begin with, Marx brushed aside the confusion the



# THE RENT CRISIS

**The year 1980 was the year of the gold bonanza. The price of gold was more than \$800 an ounce which brought millions of rands into the coffers of the government and the capitalists. Far from putting money into the pockets of the poor, however, the government was busy trying to find ways of taking more money out of their pockets.**

An instrument of the government in this conspiracy against the people was the Browne Committee, which was set up by the government to look into the financial positions of the municipalities and other local authorities. The response of this committee was that the municipalities should find ways of increasing productivity in their areas and economise on expenditure. Also that the municipalities should find a source of finance within the municipal areas.

The report says that it is "unavoidable" that the residents will have to keep paying more for services. The authorities, they claim, can only raise funds by raising rents and increase productivity by dismissing more municipal workers.

In addition the government has decided to phase out rent control which will in the long run result in very high rents.

The poor will have to finance the development of black municipal areas which are there to house cheap labour for the capitalists. This is what the bonanza means to the poor.

Wherever the local authorities attempt to introduce these measures they meet enormous resistance from the residents. In Durban, Indian and Coloured residents refused to pay the increased rents.

The Durban City Council decided to cancel outstanding rents but made matters worse by gross injustice. For whites the amount written off was R541.95 per resident per year, while for Indians and Coloureds it was R38.91 and R31.51 respectively.

**By Gerald Desai**

A 66-year-old resident has gone on a hunger strike and about 10 000 other residents have come out in support of the rent strikers. The chairman of the Durban Housing Action Committee sees the rent increases, correctly, as "a way of getting blacks to foot the bill".

In the Transvaal the decision of the East Rand Administration Board (Erab) to increase rents brought thousands of people onto the streets demonstrating and damaging property belonging to Erab worth more than R80 000. The immediate response of the residents

of Tembisa township, which includes migrant workers working in the mines, was not to pay the increases.

These increases were between 30% and 40% for houses and beds in hostels respectively. Rent for the houses went up by R5 and residents will now have to pay as much as R22 for the small houses they live in. The migrant workers on the other hand will have to pay an extra R4, bringing the rents per bed up to R14,50 at Sethokga and R10,50 at Makaulong hostel.

In order to fight the increases the residents of Tembisa set up the Tembisa Residents' Action Committee to negotiate directly with senior Erab officials. They thus bypassed the community council and its members, whose petty properties were also damaged by the angry residents.

Eight days after the decision was taken, senior Erab officials announced that the 15 community councils in the East Rand were to decide whether they wanted to go ahead with the rent increases or not. The community councils were told to do so only because the government feared the disturbances would



*Overcrowded misery in R4 000 houses if the workers are lucky!*



said above, it is possible to determine more precisely how democracy changes in the transition from capitalism to communism.

In capitalist society, providing it develops under the most favourable conditions, we have a more or less complete democracy in the democratic republic. But this democracy is always hemmed in by the narrow limits set by capitalist exploitation, and consequently always remains, in effect, a democracy for the minority, only for the propertied classes, only for the rich. Freedom in capitalist society always remains about the same as it was in the ancient Greek republics: freedom for the slave-owners. Owing to the conditions of capitalist exploitation, the modern wage slaves are so crushed by want and poverty that "they cannot be bothered with democracy", "cannot be bothered with politics"; in the ordinary, peaceful course of events, the majority of the population is debarred from participation in public and political life.

The correctness of this statement is perhaps most clearly confirmed by Germany, because constitutional legality steadily endured there for a remarkably long time—nearly half a century (1871-1914)—and during this period the Social-Democrats were able to achieve far more than in other countries in the way of "utilising legality", and organised a larger proportion of the workers into a political party than anywhere else in the world.

What is this largest proportion of politically conscious and active wage slaves that has so far been recorded in capitalist society? One million members of the Social-Democratic Party—out of fifteen million wage-workers! Three million organised in trade unions—out of fifteen million!

Democracy for an insignificant minority, democracy for the rich—that is the democracy of capitalist society. If we look more closely into the machinery of capitalist democracy, we see everywhere, in the "petty"—supposedly petty—details of the suffrage (residential qualification, exclusion of women, etc.), in the technique of the representative institutions, in the actual obstacles to the right of assembly (public buildings are not for "paupers"!), in the purely capitalist organisation of the daily press, etc., etc.—we see restriction after restriction upon democracy. These restrictions, exceptions, exclusions, obstacles for the poor seem slight, especially in the eyes of one who has never known want himself and has never been in close contact with the oppressed classes in their mass life (and nine out of ten, if not ninety-nine out of a hundred, bourgeois publicists and politicians come under this category); but in their sum total these restrictions exclude and squeeze out the poor from politics, from active participation in democracy.

Marx grasped this *essence* of capitalist democracy splendidly when, in analysing the experience of the Commune, he said that the oppressed are allowed once every few years to decide which particular representatives of the oppressing class shall represent and repress them in parliament!

But from this capitalist democracy—that is inevitably narrow and stealthily pushes aside the poor, and is therefore hypocritical and false through and through—forward development does not proceed simply, directly and smoothly, towards "greater and greater democracy", as the liberal professors and petty-bourgeois opportunists would have us believe. No, forward development, i.e., development towards communism, proceeds through the dictatorship of the proletariat, and cannot do otherwise, for the *resistance* of the capitalist exploiters cannot be *broken* by anyone else or in any other way.

And the dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e., the organisation of the vanguard of the oppressed as the ruling class for the purpose of suppressing the oppressors, cannot result merely in an expansion of democracy. *Simultaneously* with an immense expansion of democracy, which

for the first time becomes democracy for the poor, democracy for the people, and not democracy for the money-bags, the dictatorship of the proletariat imposes a series of restrictions on the freedom of the oppressors, the exploiters, the capitalists. We must suppress them in order to free humanity from wage slavery, their resistance must be crushed by force; it is clear that there is no freedom and no democracy where there is suppression and where there is violence.

Engels expressed this splendidly in his letter to Bebel when he said, as the reader will remember, that "the proletariat needs the state, not in the interests of freedom but in order to hold down its adversaries, and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom the state as such ceases to exist".

Democracy for the vast majority of the people, and suppression by force, i.e., exclusion from democracy, of the exploiters and oppressors of the people—this is the change democracy undergoes during the *transition* from capitalism to communism.

Only in communist society, when the resistance of the capitalists has been completely crushed, when the capitalists have disappeared, when there are no classes (i.e., when there is no distinction between the members of society as regards their relation to the social means of production), *only* then "the state . . . ceases to exist", and "it becomes possible to speak of freedom". Only then will a truly complete democracy become possible and be realised, a democracy without any exceptions whatever. And only then will democracy begin to *wither away*, owing to the simple fact that, freed from capitalist slavery, from the untold horrors, savagery, absurdities and infamies of capitalist exploitation, people will gradually *become accustomed* to observing the elementary rules of social intercourse that have been known for centuries and repeated for thousands of years in all copybook maxims. They will become accustomed to observing them without force, without coercion, without subordination, *without the special apparatus* for coercion called the state.

The expression "the state *withers away*" is very well chosen, for it indicates both the gradual and the spontaneous nature of the process. Only habit can, and undoubtedly will, have such an effect; for we see around us on millions of occasions how readily people become accustomed to observing the necessary rules of social intercourse when there is no exploitation, when there is nothing that arouses indignation, evokes protest and revolt, and creates the need for *suppression*.

And so in capitalist society we have a democracy that is curtailed, wretched, false, a democracy only for the rich, for the minority. The dictatorship of the proletariat, the period of transition to communism, will for the first time create democracy for the people, for the majority, along with the necessary suppression of the exploiters, of the minority. Communism alone is capable of providing really complete democracy, and the more complete it is, the sooner it will become unnecessary and wither away of its own accord.

In other words, under capitalism we have the state in the proper sense of the word, that is, a special machine for the suppression of one class by another, and, what is more, of the majority by the minority. Naturally, to be successful, such an undertaking as the systematic suppression of the exploited majority by the exploiting minority calls for the utmost ferocity and savagery in the matter of suppressing, it calls for seas of blood, through which mankind is actually wading its way in slavery, serfdom and wage labour.

Furthermore, during the *transition* from capitalism to communism suppression is *still* necessary, but it is now the suppression of the exploiting minority by the exploited majority. A special apparatus, a special machine for suppression, the "state", is *still* necessary, but this is now a transitional state. It is no longer a state in the proper





*Under workers' government this house, recently on the market for R70 000, will be used to house the homeless!*

spread to other townships. The community councils really had no choice in the matter because the minister (Koornhof) had the final say.

The residents likewise have no choice. They have to pay the higher rents or risk being thrown onto the streets.

Once again the poor people will have to carry the burden of an ailing economy. Not enough funds are allocated to develop the infrastructure in black residential areas and the workers in these townships are forced to pay higher rents in order to pay for the development of their residential areas.

As well as this, even where funds are available, government policy prevents their use. Erab, in whose area there is an official shortage of 21 000 housing units (excluding hostel bed shortages), has R34 million in investments which it cannot allocate to housing because of government anti-inflation curbs on capital spending.

The increase in rent therefore is not because the value of the houses increased or that the houses have been improved. Nor does it mean more houses for the homeless. The extra R4 and R5 the residents will have to pay means that the people will have less food to eat. Conditions will worsen in those areas.

What is worse, the workers are often dumped in the worst areas in the towns and crowded into small houses with little or no sanitary facilities.

The rich, on the other hand, live in the best areas of town with big houses, spacious gardens and lots of trees. Very often there are many more rooms in their houses than there are people. In most cases these people also have summer houses and cottages by the sea. The poor therefore not only pay for their own upliftment but also for the privileges of the rich.

## Solution

The government is not only aware of the serious shortage of houses but is also unwilling to do anything about it. The figures the government released indicate that there are 160 000 houses needed for Africans outside the 'homelands'. In Soweto alone, the official shortage of housing has grown over the last ten years from 3 000 to 33 000 units.

In four Indian townships in the Transvaal about 14 250 houses are needed. Community leaders argue that a lot of applications disappear mysteriously and the real number of people who would be on the waiting list is much higher.

The Johannesburg City Council provided figures for the number of living units needed for whites and coloureds as 749 and 5 640 respectively.

Just these figures make a total of 180 000 which, we can be sure, is only the tip of the iceberg.

The crisis is so serious that the Minister of Community Development decided to appoint a National Housing Commission to look into ways of shortening the waiting lists. What the Commission discovered was that the cost to build a house had increased by more than 25% per year over the past few years. They worked out that it would cost about R125 000 in the year 2000 to build a house that costs about R20 000 today.

In the past it has taken the Department of Community Development about 5 years to build only about 150,000 houses. The state was not willing to build houses when the cost was still below R20 000 and will be no less unwilling to provide it at higher costs. The poor who are exclusively dependent on meagre wages cannot build or even buy houses.

The growing need for housing is a consequence of the migration of people from the countryside to the towns in search of employment. (And to a lesser extent the increasing number of people born each year.)

The number of workers and unemployed is increasing faster than the capitalist state can provide houses. What happens in this case is that slums and squatter camps blossom around the towns. These squatter camps are inhabited by people who cannot make a living in the rural areas and cannot find houses in the urban areas.

The housing crisis is also worsen-



sense of the word; for the suppression of the minority of exploiters by the majority of the wage slaves of *yesterday* is comparatively so easy, simple and natural a task that it will entail far less bloodshed than the suppression of the risings of slaves, serfs or wage-labourers, and it will cost mankind far less. And it is compatible with the extension of democracy to such an overwhelming majority of the population that the need for a *special machine* of suppression will begin to disappear. Naturally, the exploiters are unable to suppress the people without a highly complex machine for performing this task, but *the people* can suppress the exploiters even with a very simple "machine", almost without a "machine", without a special apparatus, by the simple *organisation of the armed people* (such as the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, we would remark, running ahead).

Lastly, only communism makes the state absolutely unnecessary, for there is *nobody* to be suppressed—"nobody" in the sense of a *class*, of a systematic struggle against a definite section of the population. We are not utopians, and do not in the least deny the possibility and inevitability of excesses on the part of *individual persons*, or the need to stop *such* excesses. In the first place, however, no special machine, no special apparatus of suppression, is needed for this; this will be done by the armed people themselves, as simply and as readily as any crowd of civilised people, even in modern society, interferes to put a stop to a scuffle or to prevent a woman from being assaulted. And, secondly, we know that the fundamental social cause of excesses, which consist in the violation of the rules of social intercourse, is the exploitation of the people, their want and their poverty. With the removal of this chief cause, excesses will inevitably begin to *wither away*. We do not know how quickly and in what succession, but we do know they will wither away. With their withering away the state will also *wither away*.

Without building utopias, Marx defined more fully what can be defined *now* regarding this future, namely, the difference between the lower and higher phases (levels, stages) of communist society.

### 3. The First Phase of Communist Society

In the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Marx goes into detail to disprove Lassalle's idea that under socialism the worker will receive the "undiminished" or "full product of his labour". Marx shows that from the whole of the social labour of society there must be deducted a reserve fund, a fund for the expansion of production, a fund for the replacement of the "wear and tear" of machinery, and so on. Then, from the means of consumption must be deducted a fund for administrative expenses, for schools, hospitals, old people's homes, and so on.

Instead of Lassalle's hazy, obscure, general phrase ("the full product of his labour to the worker"), Marx makes a sober estimate of exactly how socialist society will have to manage its affairs. Marx proceeds to make a *concrete* analysis of the conditions of life of a society in which there will be no capitalism, and says:

"What we have to deal with here [in analysing the programme of the workers' party] is a communist society, not as it has *developed* on its own foundations, but, on the contrary, just as it *emerges* from capitalist society; which is thus in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, still stamped with the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it comes."

It is this communist society, which has just emerged into the light of day out of the womb of capitalism and which is in every respect stamped with the birthmarks of the

old society, that Marx terms the "first", or lower, phase of communist society.

The means of production are no longer the private property of individuals. The means of production belong to the whole of society. Every member of society, performing a certain part of the socially-necessary work, receives a certificate from society to the effect that he has done a certain amount of work. And with this certificate he receives from the public store of consumer goods a corresponding quantity of products. After a deduction is made of the amount of labour which goes to the public fund, every worker, therefore, receives from society as much as he has given to it.

"Equality" apparently reigns supreme.

But when Lassalle, having in view such a social order (usually called socialism, but termed by Marx the first phase of communism), says that this is "equitable distribution", that this is "the equal right of all to an equal product of labour", Lassalle is mistaken and Marx exposes the mistake.

"Hence, the equal right," says Marx, in this case *still* certainly conforms to "bourgeois law", which, like all law, *implies inequality*. All law is an application of an *equal* measure to *different* people who in fact are not alike, are not equal to one another. That is why the "equal right" is a violation of equality and an injustice. In fact, everyone, having performed as much social labour as another, receives an equal share of the social product (after the above-mentioned deductions).

But people are not alike: one is strong, another is weak; one is married, another is not; one has more children, another has less, and so on. And the conclusion Marx draws is:

"...with an equal performance of labour, and hence an equal share in the social consumption fund, one will in fact receive more than another, one will be richer than another, and so on. To avoid all these defects, the right instead of being equal" would have to be unequal.

The first phase of communism, therefore, cannot yet provide justice and equality: differences, and unjust differences, in wealth will still persist, but the *exploitation* of man by man will have become impossible because it will be impossible to seize the *means of production*—the factories, machines, land, etc.—and make them private property. In smashing Lassalle's petty-bourgeois, vague phrases about "equality" and "justice" in *general*, Marx shows the *course of development* of communist society, which is *compelled* to abolish at first *only* the "injustice" of the means of production seized by individuals, and which is *unable* at once to eliminate the other injustice, which consists in the distribution of consumer goods "according to the amount of labour performed" (and not according to needs).

The vulgar economists, including the bourgeois professors and "our" Tugan, constantly reproach the socialists with forgetting the inequality of people and with "dreaming" of eliminating this inequality. Such a reproach, as we see, only proves the extreme ignorance of the bourgeois ideologists.

Marx not only most scrupulously takes account of the inevitable inequality of men, but he also takes into account the fact that the mere conversion of the means of production into the common property of the whole of society (commonly called "socialism") *does not remove* the defects of distribution and the inequality of "bourgeois law", which *continues to prevail* so long as products are divided "according to the amount of labour performed". Continuing, Marx says:

"But these defects are inevitable in the first phase of communist society as it is when it has just



ed because the capitalists also decide to demolish houses to open up old mines or to build new highways or office blocks. Capitalists also do not have any interest in building houses in these areas because the poor will not be able to pay the rents they would like to demand. Even the petty-bourgeoisie complain that the private home owners demand rents which are exorbitant.

## Expropriated

The Actonville Community Council (ACC) proposed that the Group Areas Act be scrapped so that the empty houses in white areas could be occupied by other people. But then the Johannesburg City Council indicated that even among the white community there are waiting lists. The ACC's proposal, good in itself, does not go far enough.

Mrs Newton Thompson of the PFP argues that the only practical approach is to introduce a system of housing loan finance which has to be paid back monthly by the purchasers. The question we ask is: How will a worker with a family who earns a mere R56 per month be able to buy a house? Furthermore, how will the freezing of rent increases help to solve the housing problem?

All the proposals put forward by the capitalists, the middle class, as well as the state and its so-called experts only tinker with the rent crisis and the housing crisis.

The crisis of housing and of rising rents cannot be solved without a crash programme using to the full the resources of society to provide homes in accordance with the needs of the working people. This would at the same time create jobs for the unemployed and set in motion equipment and machinery which is lying idle.

But that cannot be done in an economy governed by private profit instead of by people's needs.

The solution of the housing crisis at the same time demands an end to race and class segregation which secures for the rich few their ownership of luxury mansions, while hundreds of thousands are homeless.

Housing which is owned by landlords and used as a source of



rent must be expropriated. The big houses of the rich must be divided to accommodate the homeless. The Group Areas Act, and all racial barriers on residence, must be removed and give way to a democratic programme for integrating all residential areas.

These measures cannot be carried through without dismantling the whole capitalist structure in South Africa. The rent crisis as well as the housing crisis are but two of the thousand evils of present society. The only solution to all these evils lies in the overthrow of the capitalist mode of production and the seizure of the instruments of labour by the working class itself.

The struggle against housing shortages and rent increases must become a conscious part of the

whole struggle to overthrow the apartheid regime and replace it with a government of the working people. Only a united working class with a socialist programme can effect this change in society.

A democratic workers' state in South Africa would ensure that, as a minimum:

- \* all families will have adequate living space in proper houses;
- \* rents will be determined democratically, according to what families can afford;
- \* segregation of housing will be abolished.

A socialist plan of production under workers' control and management would ensure that slum conditions are ended and that housing for all people is constantly improved.



emerged, after prolonged birth pangs, from capitalist society. Law can never be higher than the economic structure of society and its cultural development conditioned thereby."

And so, in the first phase of communist society (usually called socialism) "bourgeois law" is *not* abolished in its entirety, but only in part, only in proportion to the economic revolution so far attained, i.e., only in respect of the means of production. "Bourgeois law" recognises them as the private property of individuals. Socialism converts them into *common* property. *To that extent*—and to that extent alone—"bourgeois law" disappears.

However, it persists as far as its other part is concerned; it persists in the capacity of regulator (determining factor) in the distribution of products and the allotment of labour among the members of society. The socialist principle, "He who does not work, shall not eat", is *already* realised; the other socialist principle, "An equal amount of products for an equal amount of labour", is also *already* realised. But this is not yet communism, and it does not yet abolish "bourgeois law", which gives unequal individuals, in return for unequal (really unequal) amounts of labour, equal amounts of products.

This is a "defect", says Marx, but it is unavoidable in the first phase of communism; for if we are not to indulge in utopianism, we must not think that having overthrown capitalism people will at once learn to work for society *without any rules of law*. Besides, the abolition of capitalism *does not immediately create* the economic prerequisites for *such* a change.

Now, there are no other rules than those of "bourgeois law". To this extent, therefore, there still remains the need for a state, which, while safeguarding the common ownership of the means of production, would safeguard equality in labour and in the distribution of products.

The state withers away insofar as there are no longer any capitalists, any classes, and, consequently, no *class* can be *suppressed*.

But the state has not yet completely withered away, since there still remains the safeguarding of "bourgeois law", which sanctifies actual inequality. For the state to wither away completely, complete communism is necessary.

#### 4. The Higher Phase of Communist Society

Marx continues:

"In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labour, and with it also the antithesis between mental and physical labour, has vanished, after labour has become not only a livelihood but life's prime want, after the productive forces have increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly—only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois law be left behind in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!"

Only now can we fully appreciate the correctness of Engels's remarks mercilessly ridiculing the absurdity of combining the words "freedom" and "state". So long as the state exists there is no freedom. When there is freedom, there will be no state.

The economic basis for the complete withering away of the state is such a high stage of development of communism at which the antithesis between mental and physical labour disappears, at which there consequently disappears one of the principal sources of modern *social* inequality—a source, moreover, which cannot on any account be re-

moved immediately by the mere conversion of the means of production into public property, by the mere expropriation of the capitalists.

This expropriation will make it *possible* for the productive forces to develop to a tremendous extent. And when we see how incredibly capitalism is already *retarding* this development, when we see how much progress could be achieved on the basis of the level of technique already attained, we are entitled to say with the fullest confidence that the expropriation of the capitalists will inevitably result in an enormous development of the productive forces of human society. But how rapidly this development will proceed, how soon it will reach the point of breaking away from the division of labour, of doing away with the antithesis between mental and physical labour, of transforming labour into "life's prime want"—we do not and *cannot* know.

That is why we are entitled to speak only of the inevitable withering away of the state, emphasising the protracted nature of this process and its dependence upon the rapidity of development of the *higher phase* of communism, and leaving the question of the time required for, or the concrete forms of, the withering away quite open, because there is *no* material for answering these questions.

The state will be able to wither away completely when society adopts the rule: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs", i.e., when people have become so accustomed to observing the fundamental rules of social intercourse and when their labour has become so productive that they will voluntarily work *according to their ability*. "The narrow horizon of bourgeois law", which compels one to calculate with the heartlessness of a Shylock whether one has not worked half an hour more than somebody else, whether one is not getting less pay than somebody else—this narrow horizon will then be left behind. There will then be no need for society, in distributing the products, to regulate the quantity to be received by each; each will take freely "according to his needs".

From the bourgeois point of view, it is easy to declare that such a social order is "sheer utopia" and to sneer at the socialists for promising everyone the right to receive from society, without any control over the labour of the individual citizen, any quantity of truffles, cars, pianos, etc. Even to this day, most bourgeois "savants" confine themselves to sneering in this way, thereby betraying both their ignorance and their selfish defence of capitalism.

Ignorance—for it has never entered the head of any socialist to "promise" that the higher phase of the development of communism will arrive; as for the great socialists' *forecast* that it will arrive it presupposes not the present productivity of labour and *not the present* ordinary run of people, who, like the seminary students in Pomyalovsky's stories, are capable of damaging the stocks of public wealth "just for fun", and of demanding the impossible.

Until the "higher" phase of communism arrives, the socialists demand the *strictest* control by society *and by the state* over the measure of labour and the measure of consumption; but this control must *start* with the expropriation of the capitalists, with the establishment of workers' control over the capitalists, and must be exercised not by a state of bureaucrats, but by a state of *armed workers*.

The selfish defence of capitalism by the bourgeois ideologists (and their hangers-on, like the Tseretelis, Chernovs and Co.) consists in that they *substitute* arguing and talk about the distant future for the vital and burning question of *present-day* politics, namely, the expropriation of the capitalists, the conversion of *all* citizens into workers and other employees of *one* huge "syndicate"—the whole state—and the complete subordination of the entire work of this syndicate to a genuinely democratic





# MONONO'A BONA — MASAPO A RONA

The South African bourgeoisie, represented by the Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut, the Federated Chamber of Industries and Assocom, recently issued a 12-point programme outlining new approaches to the problem of inflation.

These included "a suggestion that the government should not introduce minimum wage laws; lengthening the working week and abrogating certain measures in the field of social security that induce unemployment." Just the kind of people who understand the problems of the working class, our bosses.

Mind you, luxury flats are going to be built for top civil servants in Pretoria. They will be subsidised out of public money to the tune of over R1 100 per month each. The lowest rent that the tops will pay will be well below R20 per month.

But at a time when the latest estimates point at a growth rate of only 2% this year the workers, especially the black workers, will be expected to pay for these excesses by accepting cuts in their living standards. Workers' problems of joblessness, housing shortage and starvation wages will continue and get worse.

One suggestion we can make about how to 'beat the inflation monster': overthrow capitalism in South Africa and rising prices can be stopped.

A certain army sergeant in the former Belgian Congo has made quite a career for himself. Ex-sergeant, now General Mobutu, President of Zaire since seizing power 15 years ago, is now believed to be the richest head of state in the world.

His possessions include blocks of flats, stately homes and land in Belgium, Switzerland, France, Spain and Africa. Presumably he uses the R125 million or so which he has stashed away in a Swiss bank account for small change.

In 1978 only the aid of French paratroopers enabled the general to survive a popularly-supported armed rebellion in the mineral-rich Shaba province. Since then Mobutu has become even more of an embarrassment to his backers in the West. They have lent Zaire around R2 000 million to support his vicious and corrupt dictatorship which enables them to make fabulous profits from copper, cobalt and manganese mining. But the

general's government claims that it cannot repay even the interest on its debts to Western banks. It is difficult to prove otherwise—Zaire's budget has not been made public for several years.

Mobutu is aware that he needs more than the troops of Western imperialism to protect him from the overwhelming majority of the people. But we don't think his new 4,5 kilogram, gold-plated bullet-proof waistcoat will be enough to stop the revolution of the oppressed workers and peasants of Zaire.

Italy, as one of the capitalist countries where the ruling class governs by means of a parliament instead of police dictatorship, is a showcase of 'Western democracy'. The recent P2 scandal shed some light on what this democracy consists of.

An investigation revealed that Italy has virtually been run for years by a secret bourgeois clique, the 'P2' freemasons' lodge, consisting of 962 bankers, industrialists, politicians, judges, TV and newspaper chiefs, and generals. Behind the back of parliament they took the real decisions.

P2 leader Gelli is a fascist who served as a torturer under Mussolini. Today he is a millionaire. An example of the group's operations: a plan to syphon off R100 million from the state oil company to chosen politicians.

Because of these disclosures, the Christian-Democratic coalition government was forced to resign—only to be replaced by a similar government headed by a bourgeois Republican.

So great was the public indignation that a determined lead by the workers' parties, the Communist Party (PCI) and Socialist Party (PSI), could have drawn behind them the mass of society and struck a real blow at the corrupt power of the capitalist class.

Instead, the perspectives of the workers' leaders have been limited to what PCI leader Berlinguer has called "a government of honest men" from all parties.

But 'honest' capitalist politicians must 'honestly' defend the interests of their class—which is precisely what they have been doing. Only workers' rule can stamp out the inevitable abuses of government for, by and on behalf of the capitalist elite.



state, *the state of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies*.

In fact, when a learned professor, followed by the philistine, followed in turn by the Tseretelis and Chernovs, talks of wild utopias, of the demagogic promises of the Bolsheviks, of the impossibility of "introducing" socialism, it is the higher stage, or phase, of communism he has in mind, which no one has ever promised or even thought to "introduce", because, generally speaking, it cannot be "introduced".

And this brings us to the question of the scientific distinction between socialism and communism which Engels touched on in his above-quoted argument about the incorrectness of the name "Social-Democrat". Politically, the distinction between the first, or lower, and the higher phase of communism will in time, probably, be tremendous. But it would be ridiculous to recognise this distinction now, under capitalism, and only individual anarchists, perhaps, could invest it with primary importance (if there still are people among the anarchists who have learned nothing from the "Plekhanov" conversion of the Kropotkins, of Grave, Cornelissen and other "stars" of anarchism into social-chauvinists or "anarcho-trenchists", as Ghe, one of the few anarchists who have still preserved a sense of honour and a conscience, has put it).

But the scientific distinction between socialism and communism is clear. What is usually called socialism was termed by Marx the "first", or lower, phase of communist society. Insofar as the means of production become *common* property, the word "communism" is also applicable here, providing we do not forget that this is *not* complete communism. The great significance of Marx's explanations is that here, too, he consistently applies materialist dialectics, the theory of development, and regards communism as something which develops *out of* capitalism. Instead of scholastically invented, "concocted" definitions and fruitless disputes over words (What is socialism? What is communism?), Marx gives an analysis of what might be called the stages of the economic maturity of communism.

In its first phase, or first stage, communism *cannot* as yet be fully mature economically and entirely free from traditions or vestiges of capitalism. Hence the interesting phenomenon that communism in its first phase retains "the narrow horizon of *bourgeois* law". Of course, bourgeois law in regard to the distribution of *consumer* goods inevitably presupposes the existence of the *bourgeois state*, for law is nothing without an apparatus capable of *enforcing* the observance of the rules of law.

It follows that under communism there remains for a time not only bourgeois law, but even the bourgeois state, without the bourgeoisie!

This may sound like a paradox or simply a dialectical conundrum, of which Marxism is often accused by people who have not taken the slightest trouble to study its extraordinarily profound content.

But in fact, remnants of the old, surviving in the new, confront us in life at every step, both in nature and in society. And Marx did not arbitrarily insert a scrap of "bourgeois" law into communism, but indicated what is economically and politically inevitable in a society emerging *out of the womb* of capitalism.

Democracy is of enormous importance to the working class in its struggle against the capitalists for its emancipation. But democracy is by no means a boundary not to be overstepped; it is only one of the stages on the road from feudalism to capitalism, and from capitalism to communism.

Democracy means equality. The great significance of the proletariat's struggle for equality and of equality as a slogan will be clear if we correctly interpret it as meaning the abolition of *classes*. But democracy means only *formal* equality. And as soon as equality is achieved for all members of society *in relation* to ownership of the means of production, that is, equality of labour and

wages, humanity will inevitably be confronted with the question of advancing farther, from formal equality to actual equality, i.e., to the operation of the rule "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs". By what stages, by means of what practical measures humanity will proceed to this supreme aim we do not and cannot know. But it is important to realise how infinitely mendacious is the ordinary bourgeois conception of socialism as something lifeless, rigid, fixed once and for all, whereas in reality *only* socialism will be the beginning of a rapid, genuine, truly mass forward movement, embracing first the *majority* and then the whole of the population, in all spheres of public and private life.

Democracy is a form of the state, one of its varieties. Consequently, like every state, it represents, on the one hand, the organised, systematic use of force against persons; but, on the other hand, it signifies the formal recognition of equality of citizens, the equal right of all to determine the structure of, and to administer, the state. This, in turn, results in the fact that, at a certain stage in the development of democracy, it first welds together the class that wages a revolutionary struggle against capitalism—the proletariat, and enables it to crush, smash to atoms, wipe off the face of the earth the bourgeois, even the republican-bourgeois, state machine, the standing army, the police and the bureaucracy and to substitute for them a *more* democratic state machine, but a state machine, nevertheless, in the shape of armed workers who proceed to form a militia involving the entire population.

Here "quantity turns into quality": *such* a degree of democracy implies overstepping the boundaries of bourgeois society and beginning its socialist reorganisation. If really *all* take part in the administration of the state, capitalism cannot retain its hold. The development of capitalism, in turn, creates the *preconditions* that enable really "all" to take part in the administration of the state. Some of these preconditions are: universal literacy, which has already been achieved in a number of the *most* advanced capitalist countries, then the "training and disciplining" of millions of workers by the huge, complex, socialised apparatus of the postal service, railways, big factories, large-scale commerce, banking, etc., etc.

Given these *economic* preconditions, it is quite possible, after the overthrow of the capitalists and the bureaucrats, to proceed immediately, overnight, to replace them in the *control* over production and distribution, in the work of *keeping account* of labour and products, by the armed workers, by the whole of the armed population. (The question of control and accounting should not be confused with the question of the scientifically trained staff of engineers, agronomists and so on. These gentlemen are working today in obedience to the wishes of the capitalists, and will work even better tomorrow in obedience to the wishes of the armed workers.)

Accounting and control—that is *mainly* what is needed for the "smooth working", for the proper functioning, of the *first phase* of communist society. *All* citizens are transformed into hired employees of the state, which consists of the armed workers. *All* citizens become employees and workers of a *single* country-wide state "syndicate". All that is required is that they should work equally, do their proper share of work, and get equal pay. The accounting and control necessary for this have been *simplified* by capitalism to the utmost and reduced to the extraordinarily simple operations—which any literate person can perform—of supervising and recording knowledge of the four rules of arithmetic, and issuing appropriate receipts. \*

\* [Footnote by Lenin:] When the more important functions of the state are reduced to such accounting and control by the workers themselves, it will cease to be a "political state" and "public functions will lose their political character and become mere administrative functions" (cf. above, Chapter IV, 2, Engels's controversy with the anarchists).



# Meat Prices –

By  
Florence Bosch

# ANARCHY AND CORRUPTION

Anarchy, profiteering and corruption lie behind the astronomical 70% increase in the price of red meat over the past year. The price of meat is now so high that for most people it has become a rare luxury. It is out of our reach, and we are told it is to go still higher. Just three kilos of liver would already take up a quarter of the wage of a worker earning R40 a week, and it is soon to go up.

There has been a lot of argument in the press about why meat has gone so high so quickly, but for all the hot talk, the real reasons are carefully hidden from view.

On the one hand, the Meat Board (which controls meat marketing and pricing) says the price has gone up because of a shortage of beasts of slaughter, and because prices were in any case too low before. On the other hand farmers are complaining that, because of corruption on the Meat Board, they can't get permits for slaughtering the cattle they have ready for the market.

Can they both be right?

## Structure

The meat market is made up of three elements—the farmers, the 'middle men' (agents, abattoirs, meat processors, wholesalers and retailers) and the buyers (us!)

In order to send cattle for slaughtering in the urban areas, farmers have to obtain permits from the Meat Board. Some cattle are bought for immediate slaughtering by agents—others are bought for fattening before slaughter.

Carcasses are then sold by public auction from the abattoirs to the wholesalers, who in turn sell to retailers (butchers, supermarkets etc.)

It all sounds very simple. But there is no clearcut separation between producers of meat, agents slaughterers, wholesalers and retailers. **The whole of the meat**

**industry is dominated by three giant monopolies—Imperial Cold Storage, Karoo Kanhym and Vleissentrale.** The total turnover of all three taken together is in the region of R1500 million year.

## Domination

These three giants exercise a dominant interest in ranches, lending to farmers, livestock agencies, auctioneering, abattoirs, wholesaling and retailing, hides and skins and meat processing.

From the hoof to the supermarket or butchery, they have the meat industry effectively in their hands. With the financial muscle they wield together and separately, they can squeeze small operators aside, and set prices and regulations to suit themselves.

Vleissentrale **alone** controls around 50% of the total meat industry; Kanhym Karoo handles 25% of South Africa's beef. All three control the Compound Pool, which sells meat to the mines; all three control the Offal Pool, which has the monopoly on the sale of offal.

Health and refrigeration regulations favour the big operators over the small, so that at Johannesburg's City Deep Abattoir, for example, the biggest in the country, there are seldom more than 5 buyers at the auctions—usually only 3!

The domination of the Big Three extends further than just the production and marketing side. Today the overwhelming majority of members on the Meat Board (which was set up in the 1930's to protect farmers against low prices and profiteering by middlemen and which allocates slaughter permits) are associated in one way or another with the Big Three. Eight of the 13 members are associated with Vleissentrale alone, which also has its men on the Abattoir Corporation, which is responsible for the slaughtering of more than half the cattle in the country.

So in every important respect, the Big Three have the supply of meat in their grip. **They can manipulate the supply of meat through permits (which they can get first for themselves) and the price of meat, to keep their profits rolling in.**

Inevitably, with the outcry over the rapid rise in the meat price and the dissatisfaction of small farmers who cannot compete with the monopolies attention has been focussed on the stranglehold exercised by the Big Three. the government has been forced to appoint a Commission of Inquiry to investigate.

A number of elements underly the public outrage surrounding the Meat Board at the moment. One is a conflict between the farmer and the middleman over the allocation of profits between them. For every R1

## FINANCIAL MAIL ESTIMATES OF MARKET SHARES [1979]

	Asokor *	ICS	Vleissentrale
Livestock auctioneering	30%	-	35%
Livestock agency marketing	20%	-	40%
Trade wholesaling	30%	35%	20%
Trade retailing	15%	30%	10%
Trade processing	30%	20%	10%

\* (now combined with KK)



When the *majority* of the people begin independently and everywhere to keep such accounts and exercise such control over the capitalists (now converted into employees) and over the intellectual gentry who preserve their capitalist habits, this control will really become universal, general and popular; and there will be no getting away from it, there will be "nowhere to go".

The whole of society will have become a single office and a single factory, with equality of labour and pay.

But this "factory" discipline, which the proletariat, after defeating the capitalists, after overthrowing the exploiters, will extend to the whole of society, is by no means our ideal, or our ultimate goal. It is only a necessary *step* for thoroughly cleansing society of all the infamies and abominations of capitalist exploitation, and for further progress.

From the moment all members of society, or at least the vast majority, have learned to administer the state *themselves*, have taken this work into their own hands, have organised control over the insignificant capitalist minority, over the gentry who wish to preserve their capitalist habits and over the workers who have been thoroughly corrupted by capitalism—from this moment the need for government of any kind begins to disappear altogether. The more complete the democracy, the nearer the moment when it becomes unnecessary. The more democratic the "state" which consists of the armed workers, and which is "no longer a state in the proper sense of the word", the more rapidly *every form* of state begins to wither away.

For when *all* have learned to administer and actually do independently administer social production, independently keep accounts and exercise control over the parasites, the sons of the wealthy, the swindlers and other "guardians of capitalist traditions", the escape from this popular accounting and control will inevitably become so incredibly difficult, such a rare exception, and will probably be accompanied by such swift and severe punishment (for the armed workers are practical men and not sentimental intellectuals, and they will scarcely allow anyone to trifle with them), that the *necessity* of observing the simple, fundamental rules of the community will very soon become a *habit*.

Then the door will be thrown wide open for the transition from the first phase of communist society to its higher phase, and with it to the complete withering away of the state.

"The most varied forms of enterprises—bureaucratic [??], trade unionist, co-operative, private...can exist side by side in socialist society," Kautsky writes. "...There are, for example, enterprises which cannot do without a bureaucratic [??] organisation, such as the railways. Here the democratic organisation may take the following shape: the workers elect delegates who form a sort of parliament, which establishes the working regulations and supervises the management of the bureaucratic apparatus. The management of other enterprises may be transferred to the trade unions, and still others may become co-operative enterprises."

This argument is erroneous; it is a step backward compared with the explanations Marx and Engels gave in the seventies, using the lessons of the Commune as an example.

As far as the supposedly necessary "bureaucratic" organisation is concerned, there is no difference whatever between a railway and any other enterprise in large-scale machine industry, any factory, large shop, or large-scale capitalist agricultural enterprise. The technique of all these enterprises makes absolutely imperative the strictest discipline, the utmost precision on the part of everyone in carrying out his allotted task, for otherwise the whole enterprise may come to a stop, or machinery or the finished product may be damaged. In all these enterprises the workers will, of course, "elect delegates who will form a *sort of parliament*".

The whole point, however, is that this "sort of parliament" will *not* be a parliament in the sense of a bourgeois parliamentary institution. The whole point is that this "sort of parliament" will *not* merely "establish the working regulations and supervise the management of the bureaucratic apparatus", as Kautsky, whose thinking does not go beyond the bounds of bourgeois parliamentarism, imagines. In socialist society, the "sort of parliament" consisting of workers' deputies will, of course, "establish the working regulations and supervise the management" of the "apparatus", *but* this apparatus will *not* be "bureaucratic". The workers, after winning political power, will smash the old bureaucratic apparatus, shatter it to its very foundations, and raze it to the ground; they will replace it by a new one, consisting of the very same workers and other employees, *against* whose transformation into bureaucrats the measures will at once be taken which were specified in detail by Marx and Engels: (1) not only election, but also recall at any time; (2) pay not to exceed that of a workman; (3) immediate introduction of control and supervision by *all*, so that *all* may become "bureaucrats" for a time and that, therefore, *nobody* may be able to become a "bureaucrat".

Kautsky has not reflected at all on Marx's words: "The Commune was a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time."

Kautsky has not understood at all the difference between bourgeois parliamentarism, which combines democracy (*not for the people*) with bureaucracy (*against the people*), and proletarian democracy, which will take immediate steps to cut bureaucracy down to the roots, and which will be able to carry these measures through to the end, to the complete abolition of bureaucracy, to the introduction of complete democracy for the people.

## CHAPTER VI

### The Vulgarisation of Marxism By the Opportunists

[The bulk of this chapter has been omitted here owing to limitations of space—Editor.]



we pay in the butchery for meat, 54c goes to the farmer and 46c to the various middlemen.

Towards the end of 1980, for example, the average farmer received R314,79 for 196,5 Kg carcass. If we deduct the levies, tariffs, slaughter fees etc. he has to pay, and add on what he gets for offal and hides and skins, he gets R294,16; just under R1,50 a Kg. By the time the meat reaches us in the shops, it is closer to R3 a Kg!

The advantage for the Big Three is that as farmers, agents, slaughterer's, wholesalers and retailers rolled into one, they get the 54c and 46c as well!

## Permits

Another area of conflict is between small farmers and the Meat Board. Obviously, The Big Three make sure they are first in line for permits, preventing the small farmers from getting their slice of the beef. So their complaint against the Meat Board is a complaint against the monopolies at the same time.

No one, of course, has said anything about the agricultural workers, or the industrial meat workers, who are denied trade union rights and who cannot afford to buy the very things they produce.

The meatworkers of Cape Town waged a long and bitter struggle last year against the combined meat bosses for the right to organise into democratically elected committees of their own choice. They felt the whip not only in the bosses' refusal to budge, but also in the price of red meat which went up around the same time.

## Food prices

A further aspect is the conflict between industrialists in the urban areas, and agricultural control boards in general. Industrial capitalists are concerned to maintain an efficient food industry to keep prices as low as possible. The lower the food bill, the less they need to pay in wages.

South African farming is wasteful



*To support the meat workers' strike in Cape Town, 1980, residents of Guguletu and other townships boycotted red meat. Many of them bought chickens instead.*





# Explanatory Notes

## Page 3

**Imperialist war**—Lenin is referring to the First World War, 1914-1918.

**Opportunism**—For a short definition, see the passage quoted from Engels, top of the second column, page 21.

**Social-chauvinism**—Support by workers' leaders for the 'national interest' of their 'own' country, i.e., in reality support for the interests of their own national capitalist class against the international unity in struggle of the working class.

## Page 4

**Kautskyism**—The opportunist ideas of Karl Kautsky and his followers. Kautsky (1854-1938) enjoyed a high reputation as a former comrade of Engels, a founder of the Second International, and early defender of Marxism against the revisionism of Bernstein. However, the nearer the practical tasks of revolution approached, the more Kautsky vacillated, skilfully covering up his rejection of revolutionary Marxism with 'Marxist' sophistry and phrases. He became a bitter opponent of the October Revolution in Russia.

**Socialist-Revolutionaries**—Combining various Narodnik groups in Russia, the SRs based themselves on the peasantry. Their programme called for "free popular rule, nationalisation of the land and nationalisation of all great industries". After the February Revolution of 1917 they became, with the Mensheviks, the mainstay of the bourgeois Provisional Government. Their agrarian programme, which they failed to carry out (SR Ministers sent punitive expeditions against peasants who seized land from landlords!), was in fact implemented by the Bolsheviks when they took power in October. By the time of the October insurrection, the right wing of the SRs sided openly with counter-revolution. The left wing of the SRs, having split, formed a short-lived agreement with the Bolshevik government.

**Mensheviks**—The reformist wing of the Russian Social-Democracy got their name from the factional split with the Bolsheviks over organisational questions at the 1903 Congress. The fundamental

political differences between Menshevism and Bolshevism became clear during 1904 and were confirmed in the 1905 Revolution, but they remained opposing tendencies in the RSDLP until 1912, when separate parties were formed. The Mensheviks held to a 'two-stage' theory of the Russian Revolution, arguing that the proletariat must limit itself to establishing a bourgeois republic in alliance with the liberals, leaving the socialist tasks till "later". In 1917 Menshevik Ministers propped up the Provisional Government, supported its imperialist policy and fought against the proletarian revolution. After the October Revolution, they became an openly counter-revolutionary party.

## Page 6

**Soviets**—After the overthrow of the Tsar in February 1917, the Provisional Government held formal power. But real power lay in the Soviets (Councils) of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies—bodies of elected delegates, created by the initiative of the masses. **Dual power** thus existed, because the Mensheviks and SRs, having control of the Soviets at first, failed to take state power into the hands of the Soviets but used their authority to support and staff the bourgeois Provisional Government. In July this allowed the government to consolidate, temporarily, its counter-revolutionary hold, while the Mensheviks and SR leaders disorganised the Soviets. This is the period which Lenin is reflecting here. Shortly afterwards, this situation was reversed: the Bolsheviks gained a majority in key Soviets and, raising anew the slogan "All Power to the Soviets", led the October insurrection to victory.

## Page 7

**The state ... withers away**—The fact that the Russian workers' state, instead of withering away, later developed into a monstrous parasite on society, is often cited by bourgeois writers as proof of the 'error' of Marxist theory. In fact for this development and its tragic consequences for the world revolution there is a perfectly consistent and scientific explanation ... provided by none other than Marxism itself. We shall deal with

the question in a future supplement.

## Page 8

**Thirty Years' War**—A war, religious in form, involving most of the states of Europe, that began in 1618 and ended in 1648 with the Peace of Westphalia which completed the political dismemberment of Germany.

**Gotha Programme**—A compromise between two German socialist parties, the 'Eisenachers' and the 'Lassalleans', which united at the Gotha Congress in 1875. It made important concessions to the ideas of Lassalle, which Marx severely criticised in *Critique of the Gotha Programme*.

## Page 9

**Only by the proletariat**—Since World War 2, in China and a number of other countries of the colonial world, in circumstances unforeseeable to Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, bourgeois rule has been overthrown without the proletariat leading the revolution or directly taking power. We will deal with this also in a future issue, and show why the invariable consequence has been the rise of a privileged bureaucracy and the distortion of the revolution on national lines. Lenin's explanation in the passage to which this note refers, applies without qualification to the general process of the world socialist revolution, and specifically wherever capitalism is relatively developed and the basis of the bourgeois state in society strong.

**Revolution of 1848-51**—A wave of revolutionary upheavals which spread through France, Germany, Prussia, Austria, Italy and Hungary.

**Louis Bonaparte (1808-1873)**—Nephew of Napoleon I; after the defeat of the 1848 revolution in France he was elected President. On December 1, 1851, he carried out a coup. From 1852 to 1870 he was Emperor, with the title Napoleon III.

## Page 10

**Bourgeois revolutions**—The term conventionally used in the period of the rise of capitalism for the revolutions against



and inefficient; hence the large number of control Boards to keep prices up and farmers in business. Prog MPs, the Press and captains of industry, in the interest of higher profits, want them whittled down.

For the workers, nothing will come of this Commission of Inquiry into the Meat Industry. The government will continue to protect the monopolies, although a few sops may be given to quieten the anger of small white farmers. Profiteering and anarchy will continue to disrupt meat production, like production in general, for as long as it remains in the hands of individual capitalists, and takes place for profit, not need.

## Anarchy

Together with the profiteering by the monopolies, the anarchy of production lies at the heart of the increase in the meat price.

Three or four years ago, there was a so-called 'surplus' of red meat. (By that they mean, of course, not that there was too much to eat, but that there was too much to sell at fixed prices!) Because of the drought, farmers considered it cheaper to slaughter, or move into the production of other things, rather than try and maintain their herds. "Excess supplies" of meat built up, which were then kept in cold storage or sold overseas, all at substantial cost. In the space of 18 months, the national herd fell from 9,4 million to 8,4 million.

Now, the Meat Board tells us, with the end of the drought, and higher prices, meat farming has become more profitable, and farmers are once more building up their herds. This is creating a meat 'shortage' and further high prices. Dr J. Lombard of the Meat Board said earlier this year that there would be a

15% reduction in the supply of beef, mutton and pork this year which, he claims, is "an essential mechanism to adjust prices to a profitable level".

This means that the Meat Board is deciding to limit slaughtering in order to **create a shortage in order to keep prices and profits up**. Why else would some farmers complain about not getting permits?

What would happen in five or six years, when the herds have been restored and supply 'stabilises'? Will prices come down? We know the answer to that already.

The Meat Board could well find itself then with 'too much' meat at too high prices, and will have to store, destroy or export meat at great cost, as is done by the Egg Control Board, the Maize Board and so on. Shortage today; surplus tomorrow; what we know for certain is that the price of red meat is high and will stay high.

## Planning

Only the working class in the towns and on the land have an answer to this anarchy, corruption and profiteering. That is to take the land and industries under democratic workers' control, and through a plan of production ensure that enough is produced to meet the needs of the people. Production for need, not profit!

Under a plan of production, working people themselves will decide what is needed and the most efficient way of producing it. Proper planning could allow for a steady supply of cheap meat and take care in advance of the effects of drought, disease etc. Then there will be no manipulation of prices for the benefit of the few; no artificial shortages.

Everyone will be able to eat meat.

# Capitalis

In our society we find rich people travelling in expensive cars, living in big luxurious houses, and eating the best food ever produced. Life looks so splendid to this class of people—the rich ones.

On the other hand we find poor people, the mass of the people, going barefoot, dressed in tattered clothes, for days without food and staying in terrible places. The unemployed search for food in rubbish dumps, for shelter in car scrapyards or dump heaps, and roam the streets in search of work. For them life is so disgusting and hardly worth living.

In South Africa the working class suffers so terribly because they work under the worst conditions, live in poor houses, eat bad food, never get good hygienic treatment, **but they produce the best results at work**. They own nothing on earth except their own labour power which the capitalists buy so cheaply.

Here the capitalists base their exploitation on racism and apartheid. They know where they can always get cheap labour: among the black working class.

But the last eight years have witnessed the great strength of the working class in South Africa: an uncontrolled wave of strikes, sit-ins, mass demonstrations, and student boycotts. The capitalists retaliate by sending their ruthless police to the strikers, demonstrators, and boycotts. But all the violence and harassment couldn't stop the working class and the youth who are on the warpath.

Many employers stay in fear of strikes which always disrupt their evil plans. It is clear that the capitalists do not want to believe that their time is over and that they should give way to the workers to rule society.

Instead they hope they will manage to bribe the working class leadership and convince the workers that there are no profits in the factories. They hope the workers will stop striking, but this is a false belief.

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the feudal ruling class. The classical bourgeois revolutions, of which the French Revolution of 1789 (the "Great Revolution") is the foremost example, served to carry the bourgeoisie to power on the tide of a mass movement under the banner of democracy. It was the experience of all bourgeois revolutions that the bourgeoisie tended to become **counter-revolutionary** to the degree that the masses threatened to carry the democratic slogans to their practical conclusion. The Russian Revolution began as a bourgeois revolution but, because the bourgeoisie opposed all the democratic tasks and adopted a counter-revolutionary position, leadership passed to the proletariat, which eventually took power at the head of the poor peasants and carried through the revolution as a **proletarian revolution**. This was the process of "permanent revolution" predicted and explained by Trotsky.

**February 27, 1917**—The date on which the Tsar was overthrown and the Provisional Government formed.

**Black Hundreds**—Popular name for the "Union of the Russian People"—a league of the most reactionary monarchists and nationalists who employed methods of criminal terror against the revolutionaries and were the chief instigators of pogroms (massacres of Jews).

**Cadets**—The Constitutional-Democratic Party of the liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie in Russia. Failing to save the monarchy, they took advantage of their key position in the Provisional Government to pursue their counter-revolutionary and imperialist policies. After the October Revolution they involved themselves actively in the invasion of Russia by the armies of the imperialist powers.

## Page 12

**Plekhanov (1856-1918)**—First propagandist of Marxism in Russia; founder of the first Russian Marxist

organisation—the Emancipation of Labour Group—in Geneva. He fought the ideas of Narodism (including terrorism) and revisionism in the labour movement, and wrote a number of works popularising the materialist world outlook. With Lenin, he was an editor of the *Iskra* newspaper. However, he tended to the 'two-stage' concept of the Mensheviks, whom he later joined. During the First World War he abandoned internationalism for social-chauvinism, and in 1917 was opposed to the October Revolution.

**1905 Revolution**—The forerunner and "dress rehearsal" for the Revolution of 1917, the 1905 Revolution clearly established the proletariat as the leading force in the struggle and gave rise to the first Soviets, before it was eventually defeated.

## Page 16

**Herostratus**—The Greek who burned down the Temple of Diana at Ephesus (356 B.C.) in order to achieve immortal fame.

## Page 17

**Girondins**—One of the bourgeois parties in the Great French Revolution.

## Page 18

**Blanquists**—Supporters of a utopian trend in the French socialist movement, led by Louis-Auguste Blanqui (1805-1881). The Blanquists expected that "mankind will be emancipated from wage slavery, not by the proletarian class struggle, but through a conspiracy hatched by a small minority of intellectuals." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 1, p. 392.) Instead of preparing an uprising of the masses when revolutionary conditions matured, they attempted to substitute themselves for the conscious action of the proletariat.

**Proudhonists**—Followers of Proudhon (1809-1865), who criticised big capitalist

ownership, not from the Marxist (or proletarian) standpoint, but from that of the petty bourgeoisie. They sought to perpetuate small private ownership by the creation of "people's" banks and other utopian reforms, combining these with anarchist views on the state and a repudiation of the proletarian revolution. Marx refuted Proudhon's ideas in *The Poverty of Philosophy*, and the Proudhonist trend was ultimately defeated by Marxism in the ranks of the First International.

## Page 20

**Erfurt Programme**—Adopted by the German Social-Democratic Party in 1891. An advance on the Gotha Programme, it nevertheless made concessions to opportunism. These had already been attacked by Engels in his critique of the draft programme, but the criticism was concealed by the Social-Democratic leaders (including Kautsky, to whom Engels sent it) and ignored.

## Page 21

**Reichstag**—The German parliament.

**Anti-Socialist Law**—Enacted by the Bismarck regime in 1878 to combat the working-class movement in Germany, this law banned all mass organisations of workers and the socialist press and literature. The Social-Democratic Party countered by organising underground, while also using all possible legal opportunities. Its paper was published abroad and thousands of copies smuggled into the country each week. In 1890 the ruling class was forced by the pressure of the working-class movement to annul the law.

## Page 22

**Cavaignac**—French general and "moderate republican" who, as Minister of War, suppressed the insurrection of the Paris proletariat in June 1848. On his orders to shoot down the "red peril", 10 000 were killed.



# ts, your time has come!

**by Headman Sasa**

In defence of their wealth, the capitalists now turn to new tricks to turn the workers from the path of struggle. A (black) so-called U.S. economist, Professor Walter Williams, recently said: "The economic system is, in fact closer to socialism (?!!) than to true free enterprise". He warned it was dangerous to call the present South African system free enterprise.

"People, especially blacks, who were most disadvantaged by the Government control, tended to reject the present system, wrongly believing

him for these words! It is clear that Prof Williams is a 'good boy' campaigner of capitalism. He sees that the black working class is rejecting capitalism outright. Not even those right of the National Party would confuse South African capitalism or so-called 'free enterprise' with socialism!

To the working class 'free enterprise' means the 'law' of no limit on exploitation of the workers. Professor Williams wants society to have 'economic liberty'. One may wonder what 'economic liberty' means? Is it not the same as private ownership of property which impoverished the workers?

We all know that in the USA the

much to listen to his malicious words, but the middle class might listen to him.

All the agents of capitalism are like this professor. They tell untrue stories about capitalism so as to win the support of the workers. The so-called 'free enterprise' or pure capitalism which has never existed anywhere in the world will never do anything for the workers except to keep them chained to the factories and give them nothing in exchange for labour.

Throughout the country union leaders are arrested, tortured, charged with terrorism and inciting others to strike. The courts and police are cruel to the workers, and the workers never get fair trials.

The capitalists spend millions to try improve their system which is too rotten to be improved. The worst part is that they never rest as they try to manoeuvre the failure of the coming workers' revolution. They know the strength of the working class and they will do everything possible to divert the workers.

That is why in February 1981 Mr Harry Oppenheimer, chairman of the Anglo-American Corporation, said: "If the South African government does not take substantial steps towards blacks, there could be a revolution within five years".

He sees that events are moving to that situation where he will also be given an overall and a pick-and-shovel.

Capitalism is decaying and all the talk of the so-called free enterprise and freedom cannot stop its decay in any way. The working class must see that they are carrying everything on their swollen backs.

No force is as powerful as the working class and they must overthrow capitalism and replace it with a workers' government pledged to implement a socialist programme.

The task of INQABA is to raise the consciousness of the working class, to show the working class the power they possess through their organisations. Power to the workers!



*Defiant Leyland workers in Cape Town.*

it to be free enterprise. Instead of seeking true free enterprise they turned to socialism."

He concluded by saying: "I would **strongly** (my emphasis) recommend that you start by admitting that what you really want to reject is socialism not free enterprise".

Let the working class not pardon

working class is also exploited. Does the Professor say the same thing in the USA? Quite possible! And yet, mind you, the professor was educated with the money of the workers he wants to be suffocated by capitalism! What a way to be grateful!

The working class is suffering too



# The white workers -

Over the last few years, important changes have taken place in the position of the white working class in South Africa. There has been a steady erosion of their standards of living and their importance within the economy.

Especially in the public sector, once the bastion of white employment, the white workers' incomes have been sharply cut by repeated pay freezes. As a result they have been leaving it in droves, to be replaced by black workers.

Between 1979 and 1980, for example, the postal services lost 17 204 white employees—nearly a quarter of the total white staff! In the same period the SAR & H experienced a staff shortage of 40% and according to the SAR Artisan Staff Association, "the railways

now use more than 20 000 blacks in jobs previously reserved for whites".

Pay 'rises' in February in fact meant a further cut in real wages of at least 3%. White pensions were cut, in real terms, by 6%. These cuts will be more than doubled by inflation in the course of the year.

Politically, the white workers have been thrown into confusion. Some have swung behind the HNP; others have relapsed into apathy or frustration. More and more of the skilled workers' unions have found it impossible to preserve their privileges on the traditional whites-only basis.

The April elections merely emphasised the general confusion. None of the white capitalist parties is able to offer the white workers

any convincing perspective for the future.

How will the white workers move? Will they always continue to provide the capitalists with armed support against the struggles of the masses? Can they be pulled en masse behind the banner of racist reaction and ultra-right terrorism? Is there any prospect of building class unity among South Africa's workers by involving sections of white workers in the struggle of the blacks for national and social liberation?

In this article D. SIKHAKHANE examines these questions which will be of major political and strategic importance to the black working class and youth in the revolutionary period ahead.

The whole capitalist world has gone into a period of crisis, the most serious ever in its history. The South African economy, despite its short-lived upswings, is in a process of decline. Over the coming period a general deterioration is inevitable.

This economic instability has, in its turn, fuelled an enormous explosion of the class struggle.

The bourgeoisie has been mounting vicious attacks on the jobs and already low living standards of the black workers. The consequence has been an upsurge in the mass struggle of the black workers and an enormous increase of their organisations.

The black workers have always been in the forefront of the struggle against capitalism in South Africa. Today, however, the crisis is also beginning to seep into the consciousness of the white working class. Their protected jobs and privileged positions are now under attack. Old alliances and relationships are breaking up.

Up to the present, the white workers have found themselves trapped in the camp of the ruling class. They have collaborated with the bourgeoisie in maintaining racism in South Africa. This has

been a consequence of the conditions created by capitalism to serve its economic and political interests. The white workers' consciousness has been determined by these conditions, which appeared to favour them.

From the start, capitalism in South Africa depended on the use of cheap black labour. White workers had to be imported in the early period of mining, at higher rates of pay, because their skills were needed. These original divisions were encouraged and, later, systematically exploited by the capitalists to the detriment of the entire working class.

## Profit

In the early period the mine owners attempted, as now, to replace white workers with cheap black labour. The basic issue was profit.

The white workers' organisations, the craft unions, were created mainly for protecting their skilled jobs and higher wages against undercutting by the capitalists—which the white workers saw as 'en-

croachment' by blacks. Originally these unions were formed by English-speaking workers and directed against the unskilled Afrikaners as well as the black workers. Later, when the Afrikaner workers learned skills, they got assimilated into these unions and reinforced their racist traditions.

Thus the white workers saw the black workers not as a liberation force but as a battering ram for employers against them. In their conflicts and struggles against the bourgeoisie, the white workers' leaders failed to draw the conclusion that the capitalists can only be defeated by the class movement of the workers, which must involve building unity with the black workers.

As the black workers learned to handle every form of manual labour, the white workers became increasingly dispensable to the productive process. As a result they suffered defeat after defeat.

In 1907, white miners were instructed to supervise three drills operated by black miners instead of two, while at the same time their wages were cut. The white miners' union accused the capitalists of "diluting skilled labour in prepara-



# towards defeat or towards revolution?

tion for large-scale retrenchments of whites". They called a strike but were badly defeated because the capitalists simply introduced the black workers and production was carried on without them. Hundreds of strikers were dismissed and replaced with landless Afrikaners at lower rates of pay.

Similar strikes were fought by the white miners in 1913 and 1914 which, after some initial successes, were broken by military force. One lesson that should have been drawn by the leadership from these events is that as long as they divide themselves from the main body of workers, it is very easy for the bourgeoisie to defeat them.

Hence the importance of workers' unity, not only of employed and unemployed, but of black and white workers. Linked to this was the need to develop a programme on which workers' unity could be built.

But the white workers' leaders, their minds clouded with racialism, were unable to draw any lessons. Again, on the basis of racism, they plunged the white workers into the deadly hands of Smuts during the 1922 Rand Revolt.

The white workers had gone on strike against cuts in their wages, the continued employment of black workers in skilled jobs and the threat of mass dismissals. The strike was brutally suppressed.

Much as it was correct for the white workers to stand up against cuts in their wages and retrenchment, the basis was incorrect. The division between black and white workers had arisen out of the need for the capitalist class to maintain the mass of workers at the level of cheap labour. The cheap labour policy was (and remains) the key also to the capitalists' policy towards the white workers.

The only way forward for the white workers, the only way in which their jobs and wages could be

protected on any lasting basis, was through unified struggle by both black and white workers to eliminate the wage gap—i.e., for the increase of all wages up to the levels earned by whites—and the guarantee of a job for every worker.

The struggle for such a programme, which capitalism in South Africa is incapable of granting, would have raised the understanding of all workers of the need to overthrow the capitalist system and establish a workers' state, in which the provision of jobs and decent living standards for everyone would be entirely possible.

Faced with the unified force of black and white workers in the revolutionary world climate of the early 1920s, capitalism in South Africa could have suffered a great defeat. Instead, capitalism was allowed to gain a victory by the disastrous racist policies of the white workers' leaders which deepened the gulf between the two sections of the working class.

Having defeated the white

workers in 1922, what led the capitalists to spare them and maintain their privileged position? It was not, as the capitalists would like us to believe, the pressure of the white workers and the threat of another 1922—such a prospect had been ruled out for a whole period. Fundamentally, it was the interests of the capitalists themselves which determined their racist policies.

Following World War I, the South African ruling class was faced for the first time with the rising mass movement of the black working class. In 1920, the black miners went on strike in the Transvaal. The ICU, formed in 1919, spread "like a veld fire" across the country and filled the bosses with alarm.

Also sections of the white workers had been radicalised by the impact of the Russian Revolution of October 1917. If the bosses now proceeded to crush them into the ground and take away all their privileges, this could force whole layers of them to turn to the black workers' movement as the only re-



*The scene outside Johannesburg Trades Hall on 10 January 1922 as white miners' leaders announce the strike.*



maining alternative. Among the poorest sections of whites, this possibility continued to exist throughout the 1920s and early 1930s.

During this period 41% of the Afrikaners were living in the cities, many unemployed and living under very poor conditions. As the Carnegie Commission reported: "The number of whites who are very poor rose from 106 000 in 1921 to 300 000 in 1933".

## **"Militant non-racial workers' movement"**

This situation could not be left as it was. It could ultimately give problems to the whole capitalist system. A Parliamentary Select Committee, for example, warned that these workers would "sink into a corrupting intercourse with non-Europeans spearheading a militant non-racial workers' movement". This is what the ruling class was afraid of.

We thus have the paradox that even while crushing the white workers' rebellion, the capitalists found it an advantage—and indeed a necessity—to meet their demands for protection on a racist basis. **It had become vital for them to maintain the white workers as a separate privileged group that could be relied on to defend the capitalist system against the mass movement of the blacks.**

This is the basis of the legal protection that was extended to the white working class after 1922, first by the Smuts government and later by the Nationalist-Labour Pact government. The defeat of 1922 enabled the bosses to impose the class compromise on their own terms.

Thus Smuts's Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924, which 'recognised' white trade unions for the first time, at the same time brought them under state control. It also illegalised strikes except under certain conditions. Hertzog's Wage Act of 1925 completed the legal control of the capitalist class over the wages and working conditions of the working class as a whole.

Concessions towards the white working class were made possible by the industrial growth of the South

African economy from the mid-1920s onwards. A key part of this was the establishment of state enterprises such as ISCOR and the railways.

Under these conditions Hertzog was able to introduce the so-called 'civilised labour policy'. In terms of this policy the state was to employ 'civilised' persons (i.e. whites) in preference to 'uncivilised' blacks. As a result, the number of whites employed in the public sector rose from 10% to 39% between 1924 and 1938, while that of Africans fell from 75% to 50%.

This was the beginning of a process that led to closer and closer ties between the white workers and the ruling class. The Nationalist Party served as a special vehicle for developing and cementing these ties. This process culminated in the coming to power of the Nationalist Party in 1948. After World War II, with the advanced capitalist countries in a period of upswing, South Africa underwent rapid industrial expansion. With the super-exploitation of the mass of black workers in the mines, factories and farms, profits increased tremendously. The bourgeoisie was enabled to bribe the white workers with ever-improving wages, social security, health services and other amenities. At the same time it financed the growth of white employment in the public service, the police and the army.

On the other hand, such rapid growth in the epoch of imperialism meant the accumulation of industries in the hands of the monopolies, resulting in the slow strangulation of the middle classes. Thus the white middle class became increasingly virulent towards the black middle class which competed for its dwindling share of the market.

**Along with these developments was the continuing growth of the black working class, both in size and strength.** The efforts of the state to maintain its grip on the growing black proletariat resulted in more discrimination and more vicious oppression of the black population as a whole.

The leadership of the white workers collaborated eagerly with the ruling class. The openly racist SA Confederation of Labour played on the fears of the white workers of

seeing their position undermined by the influx of cheap black labour. Also the 'liberal' TUCSA, in words supporting 'the rate for the job', in practice supported the status quo. Thus during the 1950s and 1960s racism got even more entrenched in the consciousness of the white workers.

But with the end of the post-war boom and the onset of social crisis in South Africa, the class collaboration of the white workers with the capitalists is beginning to be shaken.

Obviously it is the black working class which suffers the consequences of the bosses' crisis first. Their wages and jobs are the first to be attacked.

However, the bourgeoisie is being forced to mount attacks also against the privileged position and protected jobs of the white workers. Driven by the need to increase profits, the capitalists are intent on lowering the cost of labour. This is why the white workers are experiencing a general reduction in real wages and are also being pushed out of their jobs to be replaced with cheap black labour.

The Wiehahn Commission was simply brought into the picture to justify and formalise a process that has been long in operation. It was to give the bourgeoisie more effective control over black and white workers alike.

These developments, together with the manner in which the Chamber of Mines defeated Arrie Paulus's mineworkers' strike against the scrapping of job reservation in 1979, reflect the seriousness of the bourgeoisie in cutting the costs of production. The Nationalist Party, for the first time, failed to come to the white workers' assistance.

## **Cuts**

This process is accompanied by cuts in state expenditure, a measure by which capitalism tries to restore itself in times of crisis. This explains the problems of the workers in the public service. For a long period their wages have stagnated, resulting in a defection—especially of teachers—to the private sector.

Had it not been for the April elections, it is doubtful whether the 12% increase in public sector wages



would have come. In any case, the 12% rise is nothing compared with the present rate of inflation.

Not only for economic but also for political reasons it is becoming necessary for the capitalist class to undermine the exclusive privileges extended to the white workers and middle class in the past. Unable to control the mass movement by armed force alone, the ruling class is compelled to look for new allies among the black middle class and try to split the black working class by creating divisions between migrant and 'settled' workers.

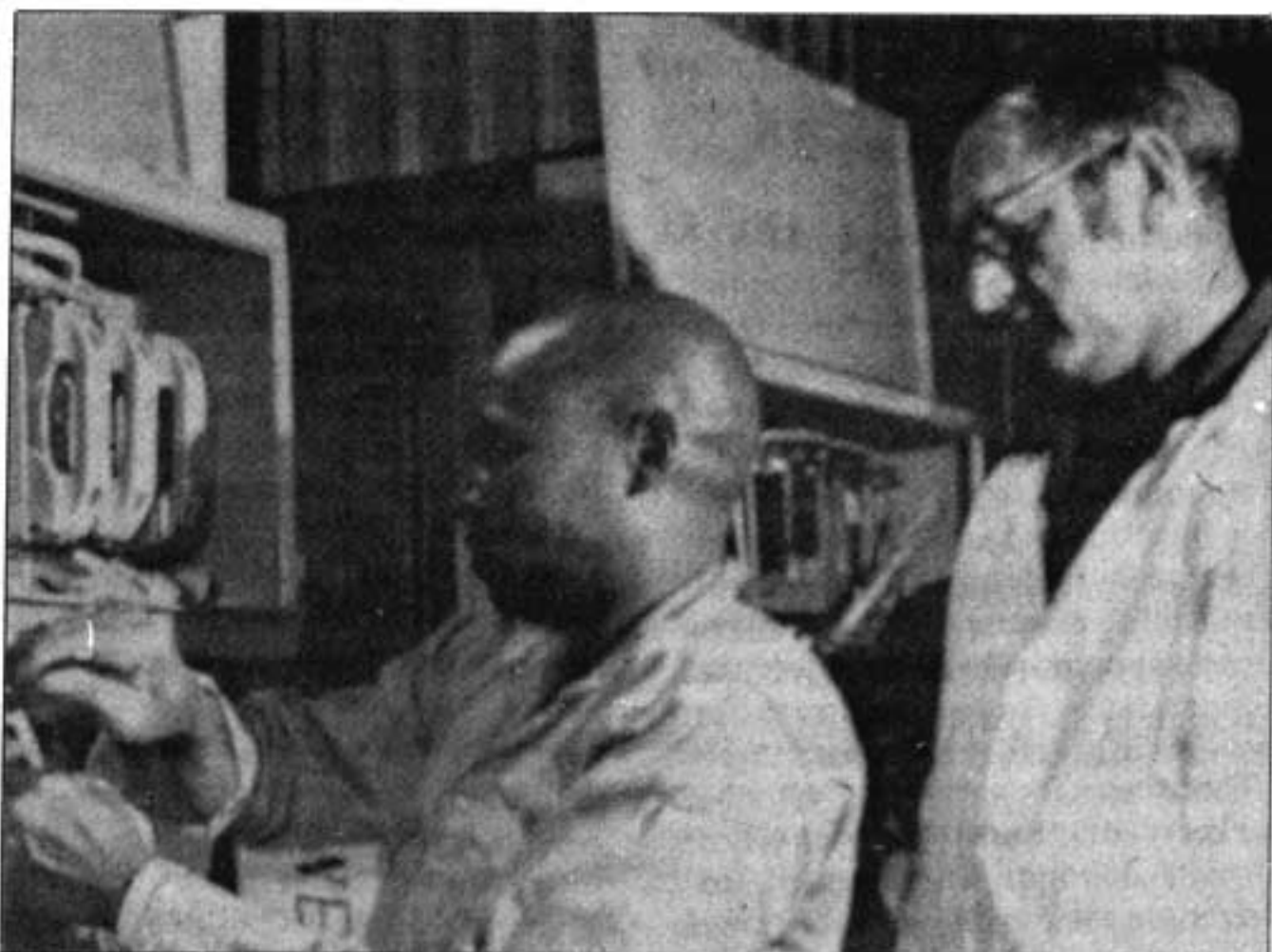
Coming in a period of economic crisis and falls in living standards, these political changes are eagerly being exploited by the white racist demagogues of the middle-class ultra-right. It is the 'concessions' made to blacks, they claim, which are the cause of all the problems!

## Turmoil

With their position under attack, the white workers will be forced to respond. For a whole period, cushioned by rising standards of living, they were lulled into political passivity by their right-wing trade union leadership. On the other hand the black working class, with its growth and its harsh experiences in the townships and countryside, on the mines and farms, has advanced enormously in political consciousness. This is shown in the growth and militancy of their trade unions.

These general relations are in turn reflected in the growing turmoil throughout the white trade unions, the conflicts and the splits with the Nationalist Party. The Mineworkers' Union is pulling away from the Nats towards the HNP while the Artisan Staff Association, like the Underground Officials' union, has retreated to the more liberal position of accepting black members. The white railway unions, like the public sector unions in general, have long been angry over the cuts in their real wages. The Teachers' Union is constantly threatening the government. Even the white civil servants' union, for the first time in its history, has been forced to consider industrial action.

As a result, wider and wider cleavages are opening up between



*Black 'artisan aide' being trained by white 'artisan' on West Driefontein gold mine. In fact the black workers do most of the skilled work that was formerly reserved for whites.*

the Nats and their traditional white worker following. The NP came to power in 1948 as a result of its alliance with the majority of white workers. It gave guarantees to these workers for the protection of their jobs, privileges and wages. But with the growth of capitalism, with the rise of the Afrikaans-speaking financiers, industrialists and mine-owners, its bourgeois aims were exposed.

Now, under the impact of economic crisis and the struggles of the black workers, its leaders are forced to trample on all the traditional dogmas of the Party as they stumble in search of stability. Afrikaner nationalism has become a mere rallying cry for maintaining a semblance of unity between the opposing class interests.

The immediate result has been apathy and frustration among broad layers of the white population. However, under conditions of more acute crisis, they could turn in desperation towards ultra-right reaction, which will lead them to their death.

Under present conditions the capitalists have nothing to gain and everything to lose by allowing ultra-right reaction to provoke a confrontation with the black masses. If the HNP or the extreme right wing of the Nationalist Party were to emerge as a serious contender for power,

the ruling class would use all possible devices to head it off.

In fact, the bourgeoisie has long made its preparations. The machinery of the state has been strengthened and refined. The police and army have been massively expanded and equipped with the most effective techniques of repression. It is here that the hopes of the bourgeoisie increasingly rest.

Already heads of the military have been drawn into the uppermost councils of the state and raised to ministerial office. Parliamentary power is being slipped quietly out of the hands of the white voters and concentrated in the Executive. The President's Council is being set up for the purpose of relegating parliamentary power. It is one of the reasons why Botha called his elections in April—he needed the endorsement of his President's Council before its implications became well apparent to the white workers.

These moves by the bourgeoisie have produced the greatest confusion in the ranks of the white workers. Their present leaders, utterly degenerate and soaked in class collaboration, are incapable of learning and cannot provide even a glimmer of a progressive class response.

Among sections of the white trade union leadership there has been a



shift in a 'liberal' direction. This leadership rejects extreme racism as suicidal but has nothing to propose in its place except to follow the lead of the bourgeoisie.

A pertinent example is provided by the leadership of TUCSA. On the one hand they are turning their unions 'non-racial' and inviting black workers to join. On the other hand they willingly submit these same unions to state control, objecting only to 'unreasonable' powers of control, and insist in the most despicable manner that **stronger control** should be exercised over the independent trade unions that courageously refuse to register.

The way forward for all the workers of South Africa lies through common organisation to overcome their racial divisions, and common struggle for a programme of social transformation that will end the power of the bourgeoisie and place the working class in control of production. No concessions can be made to white privilege or to bourgeois interests. Common organisation must be **independent** of state or bourgeois control, and unite black and white workers under democratic working-class leadership.

**For the white workers there is no separate solution and no possibility of securing their future by clinging to the capitalist class in its period of decline.** Along this road they will encounter nothing but disaster. They will pay in blood for their last remaining 'privilege', that of defending the property of their masters, while being rewarded with growing insecurity and losing all political power to the dictatorship of the capitalist class.

On the other hand it is important for the black workers' movement to draw white workers out of the camp of the capitalist class. The power of the state to wage a bloody war against the revolution will depend entirely on its continuing support among the whites, especially the white workers.

As capitalism moves into its death throes, the conditions of struggle are swinging into the favour of the workers' revolution. This opportunity must be grasped to show the white workers that their fate is tied up with that of the black workers. If the white workers remain in the



*The Nationalist Party has become openly a party of big business. Here P.W. Botha and Koornhof pose with their fellow Directors of Nasionale Pers.*

hands of reaction, liberation will only be achieved at a great cost of lives. This does not have to be so.

By winning over sections of white workers, or even raising doubts in their minds over the wisdom of continuing with the capitalist class, the black workers' movement will seriously weaken the bosses' reaction and increase the prospects for its own victory.

### **Workers' unity**

It is therefore necessary for the black working class to understand the leading role it has to play in the struggle of the workers. The fact that a majority of white workers may at first take a right-wing direction should not confuse us. At the root of the white workers' struggle will be their fight against the consequences of capitalist crisis upon their living standards. But because of their ingrained racist ideas, and because they will constantly be encouraged to blame their problems on the concessions made to blacks as well as the black workers' militancy, the white workers may at first be led further to the right.

Only if the strength and militancy of the black workers grows and remains undefeated, only if the leadership of the black workers' movement advances the clear perspective of a democratic socialist future for all workers, and only if it fights for the real unity of all workers on this basis—only then can the white workers begin to swing over to the left, bringing a

significant number of them to the revolutionary camp.

Clarity on the question of the white workers is part of the clarity that is needed on the nature and tasks of the revolution as a whole. With the further development of their political consciousness, the black workers cannot help but realise the importance of bringing over white workers to the side of the revolution. The knowledge that the struggle is not only against the colour bar but against the capitalist system itself will bring with it a clear understanding of the need to unite the entire working class in that struggle. Comrades throughout the labour movement should fight to bring about a correct position by their workmates and their organisations on this question.

Above all it is vital that the leaders of the ANC and SACTU, who will not only be looked to by the mass of the black workers but will also be taken seriously by most whites, should campaign for the programme of revolutionary working-class unity in struggle. By patiently explaining this position in the face of all capitalist propaganda and distortion, enormous strides can be taken towards shattering the foundations of capitalist rule and bringing the working class to power.

Only in this process can South Africa's working class be united and conditions created to heal the racial divisions that capitalism has inflicted on our society as a whole.



# SPORTS BOYCOTT

The clamour, locally and internationally, for the isolation of South African sports has become an important issue for sportsmen and -women everywhere. Many organisations have taken up this call, hoping to force the South African government to scrap apartheid. What they have achieved thus far is to underline clearly that questions of sport cannot be separated from politics. And in reality, politics means the class struggle capitalist society.

Apartheid reflects itself in all aspects of South African life, sports included. Black sportsmen, due to the national oppression of blacks under capitalism, are subjected to the most inferior standards and facilities.

Gymnasiums are usually a backyard or a ramshackle shack; soccer fields consist of pavements or streets and derelict grasslands; golf courses are any old field and cricket pitches are gravel strips. Plastics filled with old rags make for soccer balls; old tennis balls substitute for cricket balls and netballs.

The result is that black sportsmen have to make twice the effort of their white counterparts, who usually have all the necessary facilities as well as qualified coaches. And when

the majority of sportsmen have to make do with these conditions, the standard of sport must suffer generally.

Many commentators complain that the levels are low because of a lack of international competition. This is only partly true; if athletes do not have proper facilities, no amount of international competition will improve the standards.

These commentators want the door to international sport opened through 'multiracial' sport in South Africa. Multiracial sport, however, means blacks competing against whites, with token blacks playing for white clubs and vice versa. Facilities remain poor and apartheid remains the same oppressive machine.

## Big business and sport

The main force behind 'multiracial' sport is sections of big business. Among them are South African Breweries, Mainstay, Adidas, Datsun, Shield, Dion, Iwisa, Induna, Holiday Inns, Pepsi Cola and so on. The aim of sponsoring 'multiracial' sport is profit—it opens up a huge advertising market for their products.

However, since the entry of big

business into sport, it (sport) has split almost down the middle. On the one hand there are the 'multiracial' big business and government-sponsored organisations. On the other hand there are the non-racial organisations, who argue that normal sport is impossible in an abnormal society. They refuse to participate in 'multiracial' sport because normal sport will only be possible when apartheid is completely scrapped.

Big business does not support non-racial sport. This has resulted in defections from non-racial sport to multiracial sport.

The reason for this lack of big business sponsorship is obvious. South African capitalism can only survive on the basis of apartheid—a system that ensures the availability of cheap black labour. To call for the scrapping of apartheid would therefore, in the final analysis, become a call for the overthrow of capitalism.

While the non-racial organisations do not yet base themselves on this understanding, nonetheless activists in the labour movement should support their stand against government-sponsored 'multiracial' sport.

The black working class, barracked in the poverty-ridden matchboxes of the sprawling townships, lead a dreary life. Each day the crisis of capitalism brings them more misery and worry. If it is not higher food prices and rents, it is higher bus fares, school fees and so on.

This impels the working class to intensified struggle for higher pay and better conditions. It throws them onto the streets in protest against their steadily worsening living conditions. Struggle burns up much of their energy and time. It is only natural then that workers must seek some recreation.

The most popular recreation is spectator sports, particularly soccer and boxing. The tradition of support for these two forms of recreation goes back decades. And for most workers, when a black sportsman makes it at the level of inter-





national sport, he/she is to be lauded. Not so much because they are South African, but because of the tremendous odds the black sportsman is required to make battle with.

For this reason workers will sacrifice from their meagre resources to see such athletes and teams. At such times the problems of their existence are temporarily forgotten.

Big business and its state make political capital out of these developments. They gleefully ask: does the high turnout at 'multiracial' matches not reflect support for the government's sports policy?

The answer is that it does not. Because multiracial sport has all the money, it has attracted the best athletes and players. The best teams have the highest standards and the highest standards mean the highest entertainment value. This is what attracts the workers.

The call for boycotts of certain athletes and games must take these facts into consideration before they are launched. To propose a boycott without a programme and without

preparing the support of workers and players shows an inadequate understanding of the role of sport in society.

Unfortunately AZAPO made precisely this error when it called for the boycott of the Terror Mathebula fight on the grounds that it "entrenched the rule of apartheid" and because P.W. Botha was to attend the fight.

## Championship

The support for Terror stems precisely from his ability to win a championship in spite of the odds against him. The workers were not going to be fooled by P.W. Botha's attendance at the fight and the propaganda the state would have liked to make out of it.

Everybody knows that the SABC and TV did not bother to cover the fight when Terror won the world championship; their sudden interest afterwards served only to expose the opportunism of the state and big business.

The workers were more interested in seeing a champion, born in the

midst of common poverty and oppression, and the boycott call therefore fell flat.

What was regrettable about the call was the failure to discuss it among the workers and organise support around a clear programme. Instead the call was made arbitrarily through the press. This should serve as a lesson to all activists that without the mobilisation of the working class, any battle against the state is doomed to failure.

We support the call for the international isolation of the South African ruling class, including sports isolation. But such isolation can only be effective through the combined action of the South African and international working class.

The labour movement must take its example from the response of the trade union federations in New Zealand and Australia to the proposed Springbok rugby tour, and in Ireland to the rugby tour of South Africa. These organisations resolved to do all in their power to halt the tours by withdrawing all passenger, customs and other services under their control.

The call for boycotts and the normalisation of sport in South Africa must be organised around a clear programme or come to nothing. The sporting associations of the working people must come together with the trade unions and other workers' organisations, and with the organisations of the youth and students, to work out a united programme of action. The aims of this programme should be—

- \* the full integration of sport on the basis of scrapping all apartheid laws
- \* an end to the manipulation of sport by big business
- \* democratic control of sport and the financing of sport
- \* provision by the state of sports facilities for all at a cost that the working people can afford.

The struggle for such a programme must begin now, although it cannot be finally successful under capitalism. For it is only under socialism where recreation will be organised for entertainment and not for the profit of big business.

20/4/81

**By R. Malgas**





How to prevent nuclear war —

# Detente, or World Revolution?

By  
Richard Monroe

**Over the last two years, in a process speeded up by the election of Reagan, the United States government has resumed an increasingly aggressive and warlike posture on the world stage.**

The US military budget, already a massive \$220 000 million per year, is to be vastly increased, to amount to \$1 000 000 million over the next three or four years (one third of total US government spending).

US government spokesmen, as well as Thatcher in the UK, urge the European and Japanese capitalists to step up their military spending in turn. The US is preparing a "Rapid Deployment Force" numbering some 150 000 soldiers, for "intervention anywhere in the world".

At the same time the US strategists are set on building and deploying new generations of nuclear weapons, giving a new twist to the spiral of the arms race between the super-powers.

The renewed militarism in the West, echoing the Cold War, is

welcomed by the South African regime and other reactionary regimes around the world. Held diplomatically at a distance for some time by the West (at the same time that the West has helped it to develop the ability of producing arms independently) the South African ruling class now hopes to be welcomed back openly into the fold of the Western military alliance against the Soviet Union on the one hand, and on the other hand against the forces of liberation in Southern Africa. Already there are discussions about a South Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

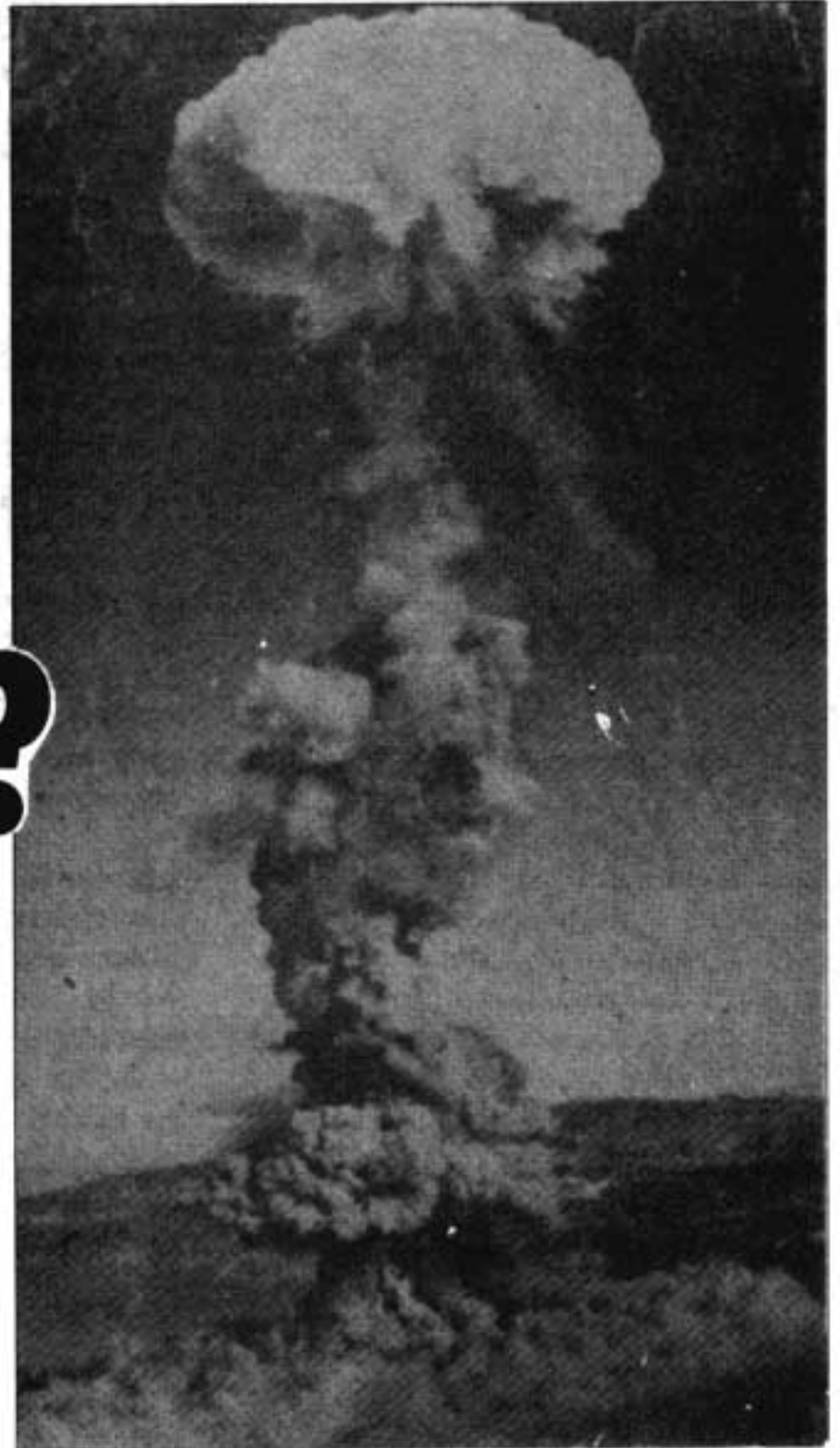
These developments bring to the fore important questions for the labour movement world-wide. Spiralling arms budgets highlight the enormous wastefulness of international arms spending—presently

amounting to \$500 000 million a year—at a time when 800 million people live on the edge of starvation.

The huge technological advances made by mankind during this century are squandered in producing more sophisticated weaponry. Yet the money spent on just one missile could build countless hospitals. The allocation of just 1% of what is spent on arms could ensure safe drinking water throughout the planet within ten years.

Arms spending and the sabre-rattling of Western governments also give rise to renewed fears of war, which has brought a resurgence of a peace movement in the advanced capitalist countries.

It is true that the world as a whole has hardly known 'peace' since the Second World War. Since that time,







*The face of detente—Soviet President Brezhnev with the former US President Nixon.*

it is estimated, there have been at least 25 million people killed in wars, many in the course of struggles for national liberation.

Today the renewed militarism of the US government evokes, for the first time since the barbarities of the Vietnam War, the spectre of counter-revolutionary interventions in the 'Third World'. Already the US has stepped up military assistance to the reactionary regime in El Salvador.

Also the spiralling of the nuclear arms race appears to sharpen the threat of a Third World War that would engulf the whole of humanity in a nuclear holocaust. Already in 1969 the nuclear stockpiles of the superpowers contained the power of 1 300 000 of the atom bombs dropped on Hiroshima; and were enough to kill the world's population 690 times over. A new World War would mean the annihilation of humanity, leaving the earth to the plants and the insects.

What is the way to a secure peace? How can the prospects of a counter-revolutionary intervention by the US in the 'Third World' be averted? What are the prospects of a new World War and the annihilation of humanity?

In the resurgent peace movement in the West, there are calls for governments to reduce arms spending and to disarm, on their own, or through negotiations. There are calls in particular for renewed

negotiations and treaties between the superpowers, the US and the Soviet Union. There are appeals for world disarmament under the auspices of the United Nations.

In the same spirit, the plea is raised in the anti-apartheid movement abroad for Western governments and the United Nations to isolate the South African regime which, particularly with its new nuclear weapon capability, constitutes a threat to world peace.

These calls are also voiced by many of the governments in 'socialist' countries. Thus a "World Parliament of the Peoples for Peace", meeting in Bulgaria in September 1980 with participants from 137 countries, called for renewed negotiations between the USA and the Soviet Union on arms limitations. It called also for the disbandment of all military alliances and winding up of all foreign military bases.

## Colonial world

A return to conditions of detente between the USA and the Soviet Union, it was argued, provided the "best possible opportunities" for the "wars of liberation" in the colonial world—and in South Africa—to be brought to a suc-

cessful conclusion.

Can world peace be secured, and imperialist intervention in the Third World be halted by these means?

For Marxism, questions of war and peace are class questions. As was said by Clausewitz, the pioneer bourgeois military strategist, "war is the continuation of politics by other (i.e. violent) means". Politics is essentially an expression of class struggle; and the potential for war is rooted in the existence of class society.

In our epoch, the potential for war is rooted in the inner contradictions of capitalist society, and in the inevitable conflict of interest between capitalist states and those states where capitalism and landlordism have been abolished.

Over centuries, to create a world market and enslave millions of producers to wage-labour, the capitalist class has engaged in endless bloody wars of colonial conquest and extermination, and violently suppressed revolts of the masses. In this century millions of lives have been lost in two World Wars, caused by the cut-throat competition between imperialist powers for markets, raw materials, spheres of interest and colonies—competition which is inherent in the capitalist system of private ownership and rival nation-states.

After the Second World War the capitalist class in the USA, dominating world capitalist production, emerged as the policeman of world imperialism. The building up of arms and military organisation by NATO and the West in this period has not been 'senseless', as many in the peace movement argue. It is been money well spent from the capitalist point of view.

The old colonial powers of Holland, Britain, France, Portugal etc., as well as the US, have fought continual wars to protect the interests of imperialism. They have used their military resources to engage in subversion and destabilisation wherever it has suited their interests.

With the onset of the world crisis of capitalism over the last few years there have been sharpened efforts by the capitalist powers to defend the sources of their wealth and power, and a heightened rivalry among them.

At the same time, throughout this



century, the capitalist class has been increasingly losing the battle to defend its position on a world-wide basis.

The First World War, as Lenin explained, already signalled the world-wide seize-up and decay of capitalism, and the objective need for the working class to take production and society into its own democratic control, overthrowing the capitalist order, and commencing the world socialist revolution.

## Russian Revolution

The Russian Revolution of 1917, giving birth to the first workers' state, established a foothold for this new social order. Despite the political counter-revolution in the Soviet Union which entrenched the power of a privileged bureaucracy, the framework of nationalised production and planning created as a result of the 1917 revolution has survived. This social system has established its superiority over the chaos of capitalism, where production is based on the law of the jungle, and remains objectively in conflict with capitalism.

For this reason the capitalist class has never completely lost hope of reversing the gains of the October revolution. The 1918-21 war of intervention by 21 imperialist armies, and the Nazi invasion of 1941 which resulted in the loss of 20 million

lives of Russian workers and peasants, show the threat that imperialism has posed to the Soviet Union.

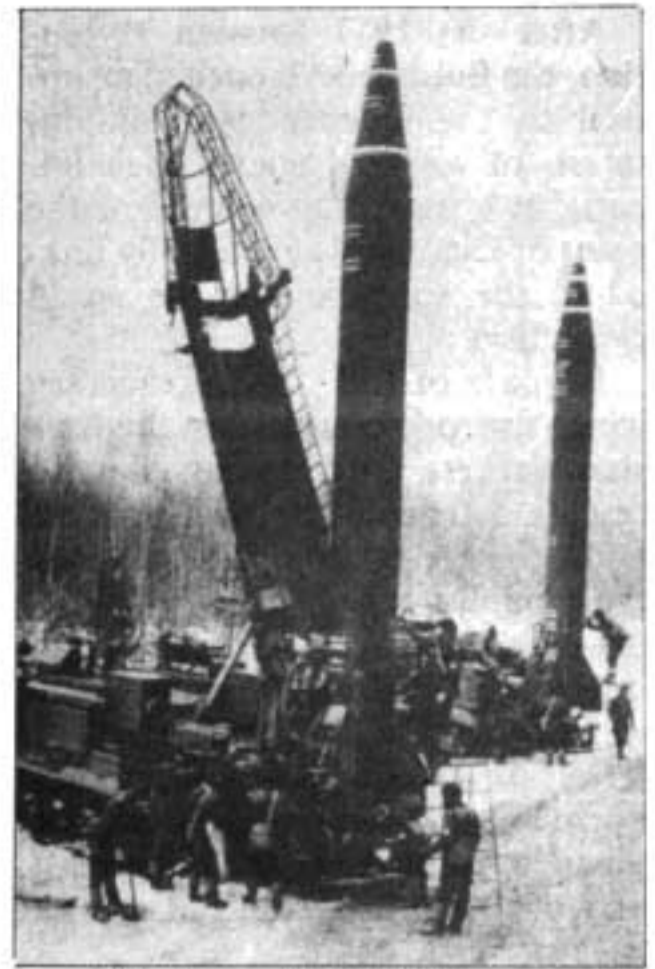
Since the Second World War capitalism has lost further ground. In Eastern Europe, China, Syria, Burma, Cuba, Vietnam, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Angola and elsewhere capitalism and landlordism have been overthrown.

The revival of the capitalist system in the advanced industrial countries in the 25 years after the Second World War never extended to the 'Third World'. Indeed the very prosperity of the advanced industrial countries depended in part on the super-exploitation of the workers and peasants of the 'Third World'.

The absolute stagnation and decay of the capitalist social order in the former colonial world has been intolerable to the masses, who have pressed forward in country after country to smash it. Planned economies under state ownership and control were established.

Without socialist workers' parties to lead the revolution, power has tended to fall into the hands of bureaucratic or military regimes modelling themselves on the 'socialist' pattern of the regimes in Russia and China. At the same time in country after country economic advances have demonstrated the superiority of the planned economy.

The catastrophic effects of the world capitalist crisis in the 'Third World' only intensify the pressures



*Soviet nuclear missiles.*

in more and more countries towards a break with capitalism. It is this, also, which underlies the renewed ferocity of a weakened US imperialism.

For all these reasons, as was explained by Lenin, "capitalism means war". It is pointless to expect that the capitalist class can be induced to disarm, and give up the means of defending their wealth and power, through appeals to 'reason' or 'humanity'.

As the workers' movement knows when it comes to wages or jobs, it is a relentless struggle to wrest concessions from the bosses. It is no different on the issues of arms and war. For all the treaties, negotiations, and calls for disarmament that preceded the First and Second World Wars, those wars could not be prevented in that way.

It is only by linking the struggle for peace with the struggle of the labour movement against the capitalist class itself, for the transformation of society, that there can be any guarantee of success.

This is not the approach of the leadership either of the Social Democratic parties or the 'Communist' parties of the major capitalist countries. The 'communist' movement has, as a result of the political counter-revolution in the Soviet Union in the 1920's, completely abandoned the international struggle for socialism which was the hallmark of the Communist International in its first five years.



*US bombing of Vietnam.*



After the 1917 Russian revolution, the Bolsheviks launched an appeal to the independent class interests of workers against their imperialist bosses. The defence of the gains of October was integrally linked to the spreading of the world revolution.

In place of this, the bureaucracy which usurped power from the Russian workers progressively came to rest its defence of its own position and privilege on compromises with the capitalist class in the West. During the Second World War the Comintern itself was dissolved by Stalin to appease the imperialists. At a series of meetings—at Yalta and Potsdam—the post-war world was 'divided up' between the imperialist powers and the Russian bureaucracy.

The ability to conclude such

agreements is a reflection of the mutual fears of the working class revolution held by the capitalists and the Stalinist bureaucracies. This mutual fear also lies at the root of the continual search for 'detente', particularly as the class struggle intensifies in the East and the West.

### Conflict of interest

At the same time, there remains an objective conflict of interest between the capitalist powers and the Stalinist states. Thus it is pointless to expect either the imperialist powers or the Soviet Union to disarm voluntarily.

But neither can the defence of the Soviet Union by arms alone provide

a lasting guarantee of peace and security for its people.

In conventional terms, certainly, the Soviet Union is militarily secure. After the Second World War, the forces of the Warsaw Pact rapidly gained conventional military superiority over NATO. Today it is accepted that Warsaw Pact forces could occupy West Germany within days and reach the English channel within a week. The same is true in the Middle East.

After the Second World War, the United States capitalist class massively expanded their nuclear arsenal as a threat to the Soviet Union. The effect has been to provoke the same development on the side of the Soviet Union.

Once begun, the nuclear arms race assumed a crazy logic of its own, despite the increasingly crippled

## The golden 'detente' between

**In March and April 1981 articles appeared in the international press with headings like "The Kremlin Connection—The clandestine partnership of South Africa and the USSR".**

### What are the facts?

In 1980 the Soviet Union and South Africa accounted for 75% of the world's total gold production. Besides gold, the two countries also dominate world production of diamonds, platinum and chrome.

No official trade or diplomatic links exist between the Soviet Union and South Africa. The Soviet bureaucracy is supposedly in the forefront of the campaign to impose economic sanctions against South Africa.

But the facts reveal that instead of economic sanctions, economic collaboration takes place. It has, for example, been an open secret since the 1950s that Moscow sells its rough diamonds to De Beers, who bring them on the market.

The Soviet leadership is also interested in exchanging mining expertise and metals technology with South Africa. In this way they hope to meet their targets for gold production which they failed to achieve in 1980.

The South African ruling class

**By Elma Louw**

also hopes to gain from co-operation with the Soviet authorities. Gold Fields, for example, is interested in buying Russia's Kivcet lead smelting process for use in lead and silver mining in the North-Western Cape.

Leaders of the two countries keep in touch through trading centres and banks in London, Frankfurt and Zurich. South African mining directors have also been secretly visiting Moscow. In November 1980 Mr Gordon Waddell, a director of Anglo-American Corporation, was spotted in Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre with Soviet officials—at the same time that President Brezhnev was receiving President Samora Machel of Mozambique on a well-publicised state visit to the Soviet Union.

Waddell's 'explanation' to the journalist who saw him was, "I am just passing through"!

Publicity about these facts has been highly embarrassing for the Soviet authorities. Their government newspaper *Izvestia* branded the reports in the western press as lies, and claimed: "The whole world knows that the Soviet Union ... strictly adheres to United Nations decisions on economic sanctions with regard to the racist regime."

Confronted with the evidence; however, the Soviet authorities can offer no explanation. This is how a senior Soviet official, Vladimir Bykov, attempted to answer the question by a BBC interviewer (broadcast on 6 April) of what Waddell had been doing in Moscow:

"You know and I know that in South Africa there is a lot of multi-national corporations and companies and you call the name of the company Anglo-American. It means that British and American capital is involved and he represents in Moscow British and American capital."

Nor could Bykov deny a recent meeting at London's luxurious Connaught Hotel between Harry Oppenheimer himself and top officials from the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Trade.

"But," Bykov claimed, "I



ing burden that it has placed on both the US and the Soviet economies.

The 'balance of terror' is maintained by means of a spiralling stockpile on each side of the scale. Both the US and the Soviet Union have the means to eliminate humanity hundreds of times over. Yet the military strategists on each side continue to search for a 'first-strike' capacity capable of knocking out their opponent's arsenal, and eliminating the power of retaliation.

There are those who argue that this crazy arms race in itself increases the likelihood of war and annihilation. Even some 'accident', they believe, could trigger off a full-scale nuclear war.

But, historically, wars have never broken out by accident. Where 'accidents' have set off wars (e.g. the

shooting of Archduke Ferdinand in 1914 which triggered World War I), it has been because the conditions for war have already been prepared by events.

## Safeguard

The existence of nuclear weapons does not alter this situation fundamentally. Despite the scares created in the capitalist press on occasion, the rulers of society take good care to safeguard against such 'accidents'.

Thus, when Mitterand recently was elected President of France, the first act of the outgoing President was to personally entrust him with the codes to France's nuclear

weapons.

There are good reasons why the capitalist class avoids direct military confrontation with the Soviet Union at the present time. Any serious confrontation would threaten to escalate into a full-scale nuclear war—and hence to the destruction of civilisation.

It would mean the annihilation of the productive forces, and of the working class, i.e. the destruction of the basis of the wealth of the capitalist class itself. This is equally true for the capitalist class in SA which cannot suppress the struggle of the SA masses in this way, because it would mean dropping nuclear weapons on their own cities.

As more and more countries gain nuclear weapons the danger increases of their use in wars between the smaller powers. Nor can it be en-

# Moscow and Johannesburg

again assure you that our representative, when he talked to him (Oppenheimer), he talked to him as a businessman perhaps from the United States or from Great Britain. I am sure of that, not like to a South African businessman. I am sure of that."

Black workers employed by Mr Oppenheimer's Anglo-American will know what to think of this story!

Can there be any justification for Moscow's secret links with the South African ruling class?

All countries—including the Soviet Union—have to buy and sell on the world market. On the other hand, it is in no way essential for the Soviet Union's survival to collaborate with the South African ruling class.

While the Soviet bureaucrats are involved in secret deals with South Africa's mine owners, the workers in these mines are fighting bloody struggles for living wages and conditions.

In May, for example, 1 600 workers at Buffelsfontein were sacked after going on strike. How must these and other workers view the links between Moscow and Anglo-American's bosses except as a shameful betrayal of their strug-

gle? And what would the Soviet workers think if they were told the truth?

A policy of co-operation with South Africa's murderous capitalists cannot be combined with support for the revolutionary movement of the workers and the youth. The Soviet Union cannot genuinely support the liberation struggle without breaking all links with South Africa's ruling class.

The leaders of the ANC and the SACP should do their utmost to expose these secret dealings to the workers in South Africa, in the Soviet Union and internationally. They should demand that the Soviet government end its links with apartheid and, instead, give all-out support to the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism in South Africa and the establishment of workers' rule.



Workers at a South African gold mine.





*Test launch of a US "Minuteman III" nuclear missile.*

*Despite repeated "arms limitation" conferences between the powers, more and more horrific weapons of destruction continue to be developed.*

*International "agreements" have never been enough to halt the arms race. In 1898, for instance, 23 powers (including the USA and Russia) agreed unanimously to ban the dropping of explosive projectiles from hot air balloons!*

*Today the same powers possess rockets and explosives capable of destroying the world hundreds of times over.*

tirely ruled out that the SA regime will use nuclear weapons against other countries. But this would not of itself lead to a war between the super-powers.

For a Third World War to come about would first require a fundamental change in the relationship of class forces within the major im-

## **Treaties are no more than the words of those who sign them. When conditions change, those words will be repudiated.**

perialist countries. Why is this so?

The present-day states in these countries have been perfected over many decades as instruments of capitalist rule. A long period of bourgeois democracy, in the USA and elsewhere, has enabled the bourgeoisie—both through parliament and, behind the scenes, outside it—to select and refine its control over the key officials of the executive, military, etc.

Thus the bourgeois ruling class (which has everything to lose from a nuclear holocaust) can in its own interests stay the hands that might provoke and trigger a Third World War.

Paradoxically, this balance is maintained in the last analysis by the strength of the **working class** and its organisations in the advanced capitalist countries, which firmly defend the democratic rights gained for the masses through struggle. Eager as the bourgeoisie now is to curtail democracy in order the more freely to attack the workers' living standards and raise profits, every move in this direction is and will be fiercely resisted by the labour movement.

But the present balance cannot last indefinitely. Staggering into its death-agony, world capitalism is rotten-ripe for socialism. If in the coming period the working class fails to take power and so resolve the contradictions, the capitalist class will launch waves of counter-revolutionary action in an effort to restore a profitable and stable basis for capitalism.

This could only be achieved through the coming to power of military dictators, who would need to crush the workers' movement and to eliminate all democratic restraints

on the state. Maniacal generals would have the nuclear button at their command.

Already, even in the early stages of the crisis, US generals have been toying with the possibilities of a 'pre-emptive' nuclear first strike against the Soviet Union. Counter-revolution in the advanced capitalist

countries would remove the 'responsible' bourgeois politicians from the scene and bring their watchdogs unmuzzled to power. Sooner or later, under such circumstances, a nuclear war would be inevitable.

This is the terrifying danger which will arise in the next ten to twenty years—unless the working class of the US, Europe and Japan take power and establish socialism.

Against these dangers, there is no solution through the call for a resumption of the 'detente' negotiations of the 1970's.

'Peace' has depended on the balance of power between the USA and the Soviet Union, and on the balance between the classes in the past period. 'Detente' reflected the desires of the US capitalist class and the Soviet bureaucracy to limit arms spending because of its burden on the economy, and to defuse tension because of a mutual interest in expanding trade.

### **Temporary agreements**

Through such negotiations, it has been possible to establish temporary agreements—though each one is displaced or torn up and no agreement has halted the spiralling of the arms race.

Treaties are no more than the words of those who sign them. When conditions change, those words will be repudiated.

Particularly at the present moment, with Reagan in office in the US reflecting the interests of the military-industrial complex, even temporary agreements are unlikely.

Nor are the "best possible oppor-



The reliance on these means alone is a reflection of the fundamental break made since the 1920's by the Soviet bureaucracy from the internationalism of the Bolsheviks.

In 1918-21 Russia was in ruins. Imperialist intervention was combated not only through the military organisation of the Red Army, itself built on revolutionary self-sacrifice, but through international political propaganda and campaigns. A class appeal to the workers in uniform in the imperialist armies and to the workers in the imperialist countries was able to undermine those armies and their channels of supply.

The workers of each country have common interests with the workers of each other country to overthrow both the capitalist bosses and the Stalinist bureaucracies in order to achieve workers' democracy and socialism. This is the key to a successful struggle for securing lasting peace.

Socialism is the only means by which the ultimate threat of nuclear annihilation can be averted. The inevitability of nuclear war if the workers fail to take power is the fundamental reason for the urgent necessity of transforming society on socialist lines.

The strength of the workers' movement internationally, which makes it at present impossible for the imperialists to launch a world war, also gives the working class an overwhelming superiority of social power in the battle to decide the future of society. Putting 'peace' before socialism, and the slogan of 'detente' in place of the struggle for socialism, can only delay the development of conscious mass support for socialist aims.

The aim must be the socialist transformation of Western Europe, Japan and the United States, as well as the overthrow of the bureaucracies of the Stalinist states, leading eventually to a world Socialist Federation. The potential for this has never been greater. On this basis not only can hunger and poverty be totally abolished. Arms will be beaten into ploughshares, and the horrendous weapons of the present time will live on only in museums as relics of an age that is gone for ever.

## Common interests

INQABA YA BASEBENZI ("Workers' Fortress") 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.

Not negotiations between the ruling cliques of the super-powers but social upheaval in the USA and Portugal helped to create the conditions in which the working people of Vietnam, Mozambique and Angola could defeat capitalism and landlordism.

It will be the rise of the class struggle internationally that will tend to prevent the use of nuclear weapons against the colonial peoples and also frustrate imperialist intervention by conventional military forces. Even the first moves towards US military intervention in El Salvador have already provoked greater immediate resistance in the West than the decision in 1965 to deploy US troops in Vietnam.

Neither arms alone, nor negotiations with the capitalist powers, can guarantee the security of the workers of the Soviet Union or the countries with a planned economy.



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**For security reasons, fictitious names have been used by writers of articles in this issue of INQABA YA BASEBENZI. In every case, however, care has been taken not to give a misleading impression of the background and experience of the comrade concerned. Details about writers are provided only when security considerations make this possible.**