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



**AFTER THE MINEWORKERS' STRIKE:
where does our revolution go from here?—page 21**

Also: OUR STRUGGLE IS FOR DEMOCRACY AND SOCIALISM

**Plus: COSATU locals ★ Strategy for SAYCO ★ How to fight UWUSA
Mineworker interviews ★ South Korea ★ Zimbabwe ★ Botswana**



КОММУНИСТИЧЕСК

70th Anniversary

RUSSIAN REVOLUTION 1917

Supplement to

INQABA YA BASEBENZI
Journal of the Marxist Workers'
Tendency of the ANC

OCTOBER 1987

-Our struggle is for democracy- and socialism-



In South Africa we have seen massive struggles waged by oppressed and exploited masses in the past. Today the black working class is determined as never before to free itself from white domination and capitalist exploitation. The ruling class on the other hand has always used the state forces to suppress the rising force of the working class.

National liberation and how we are going to achieve it is the central question for the masses.

This demand of the people to free themselves from national oppression comes into conflict not only with white minority apartheid rule but with the whole capitalist system. National oppression has been used by the capitalists to exploit the black people as cheap labour. Any attempt to free ourselves will be viciously crushed by the ruling class so long as they have power to do so. We have seen how they have used the state in the past. They have sent the army into the factories and townships when we

**By Nkululeko Nomji
A local SAYCO leader**

tried to fight cheap labour and oppression.

The main obstacle standing in our way to liberation is the existing state power. **Not until we break this power could we consider ourselves free.** Nobody has yet discovered any way of doing this except through armed revolution of the mass of the people. Without such revolution we cannot achieve democracy. If we can achieve such a victory the ruling class would be left

absolutely defenceless and the power will be in the hands of the working class. When we have state power in our hands we can have democracy but with no power we will have nothing.

The working class will have to construct its own democratic state, only then can we implement the Freedom Charter and begin moving to socialism. Without state power we will have nothing, with state power we can have democracy and socialism.

Conflict

This comes in conflict with what some of our leaders tell us. They correctly point out that in SA there is conflict, always conflict between the rich and the poor, between the bourgeois and the proletariat. But

The Russian Revolution, 1917

The Russian Revolution was the greatest step forward in history.

The working class, though a minority, led all oppressed and exploited people in smashing the Tsarist dictatorship. Taking state power through their Soviets (councils), the armed workers overthrew landlordism and capitalism, laying the first foundations for a state owned and planned economy.

Tragically, the workers' democracy established in October 1917 became isolated and was later destroyed by the rise of Stalinist dictatorship. The way to genuine socialism has been barred by a new bureaucratic elite.

Nevertheless, the Russian Revolution itself remains a lighthouse to the black working class of South Africa and to struggling workers and youth everywhere. Seventy years on, its lessons are no less vital for us to study today.

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(Reprint of articles appearing in *Militant*, Marxist weekly of the British labour movement, to mark the 70th anniversary of the Russian Revolution.)

Anton Nilson

70 years ago Anton Nilson fought alongside Lenin, Trotsky, and countless others to preserve the gains of the October Revolution against the armies of imperialism and the White guards in the civil war.

His political commitment to the working class had begun 12 years earlier when, inspired by the 1905 revolution in Russia, he joined the Swedish Young Socialists. In 1908 he was sentenced to death in Sweden for blowing up a ship in which scabs, brought from England to break strikes in the textile industry and on the docks, were being housed.

Fury at the sentence among workers in Sweden and abroad forced this to be commuted to life imprisonment.

By 1917 the turmoil in Russia was reverberating amongst workers in Sweden and on May Day 10 000 workers demonstrated outside the prison demanding Anton's release. They threatened to storm the prison, and the government issued an order that if this happened he was to be shot. The workers were persuaded to remain outside the prison, and Anton kept his life. However, the demonstration precipitated the resignation of the right-wing government, and within a few months he was free again.

Revolution

In September 1918 he arrived in a Russia gripped by the fervour of the revolution and arming itself against the counter-revolution. He became a pilot in the newly formed Red Army and organised the air defence of Moscow, later taking command of the air-force on the Baltic Front. For his services his comrades elected him to receive an award from Trotsky.

'The scarcity of fuel during the civil war made flying hazardous: "We had to use wood alcohol... this created a lot of black smoke, with flames belching out behind. Luckily the fuel was so bad, it could not burn clothes. Nevertheless it was somewhat disconcerting to be 3-4 000 feet up with flames all around you."

After victory in the civil war Anton stayed in the Soviet Union until 1928—witnessing the rise of the bureaucracy around Stalin: "Stalin took the state police, which had been formed against the counter-revolution, and turned it against socialists," he says. In contrast Trotsky "tried to follow the line of the October revolution."

When he returned to Sweden, Anton opposed discussions held by the Communist Party with the Nazis: "If they came to power, I said, they will not discuss with the CP; they will hang us."

The Stalinists responded by expelling him from the party.

But despite the terrors of Stalinism, and the setbacks in the world revolution which followed, Anton maintained a commitment to Marxism and his belief in the inevitable victory of the working class:

"My political life has been based on one belief: 'October is correct'".

On November 11 Anton Nilson celebrates his 100th birthday. *Inqaba Ya Basebenzi*, the journal of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC, salutes him and his enduring role in the struggle of the working-class of the world to complete the process begun by the October Revolution of 1917.

they go on to say there unfolds "national democratic revolution" in SA. By this they mean we have to fight for democratic rights first and leave till later the overthrow of the capitalist system. This is a wrong conclusion.

Because there is always the fight between the capitalists and the working class, it will only be settled by one class winning it. It is true that the majority of the people have no democratic rights, but the point is how are we going to fight for and win those rights?

Armed power

To carry out a "national democratic revolution" the working class will have to defeat the existing armed forces which maintain capitalism and establish instead our own armed power. The revolution which is able to achieve the democratic tasks is the same revolution which will sweep away the defences of the capitalists. It is made by the force of the working class essentially. It must smash the state. If successful, it can only mean that the working class places itself in power.

The democratic tasks are therefore part and parcel of a proletarian socialist revolution. The theory of "national democratic revolution" is being aimed to counter the fact that in SA there unfolds socialist revolution.

It is not enough to use that we are nationally oppressed to argue against socialist revolution. What we are already seeing is the black working class striving towards the seizure of power. The nation itself is overwhelmingly working class. Even the tiny black middle class is oppressed not only by apartheid but also by big monopolies. It is in their interests to join with the working class to end the diseased system of capitalism.

We have been told that the Freedom Charter does not visualise the transfer of power to any single class but to the people. But what is confusing is that if the working class is not going to take power in its name who will have that power? Already we have begun to create the organs to take power, in the form of democratic committees in the factories, the mines, the townships, the schools and so on. We

have already seen that the capitalists won't tolerate these bodies because they come into conflict with their rule. They always try to smash them if they can, using their state. Until the working class takes power in its name then surely power will stay in the hands of the capitalists and their state and we will not be free.

It is important at this stage to examine our route to power; to freeing of the nation. Some of our leaders say that by rallying round us all the forces against apartheid and pressuring the capitalists we might be able to make a settlement with them and get democratic rights. The fighting forces know that, whatever negotiations take place, the capitalists will never accept majority rule. What comes out of negotiations can only count in favour of the capitalists and we won't be free at all. Is there any short cut apart from organising the working class and arming it politically and physically for seizure of power? No, there is not. Therefore we must succeed in rallying all the oppressed around this task.

Some of those who say fight for a democratic stage and for socialism later argue that the working class needs the "democratic stage" to prepare itself to achieve socialism. It is obvious that we can't reach socialist society without democratic freedom, but again how can we get democracy without defeating the state?

State

The theory of "national democratic revolution" does not explain what will happen to the state. We always come across the state when we fight, therefore there is no victory without smashing the state. The whole theory of liberation without overthrowing the capitalists is false and will not liberate the nation. How can we be liberated if still we have to fight against capitalists? It is false to expect that the capitalists will surrender their army in favour of the democratic stage. While they still have the SADF and Koevoet and the vigilantes they will do everything to crush us.

The ruling class feels strong because they still enjoy the support from the white workers. But this is

beginning to turn upside down now. Some white workers are even being fed by Operation Hunger. Unemployment is increasing among them. Capitalism is less and less able to ensure them the privileges and security of the past.

Only the black working class united in action and armed with a socialist programme can appeal to the white workers, and split them from the capitalist class. It cannot do so except by putting forward the alternative of workers' democratic rule. Success in this would leave the capitalists and their state crippled.

The black working class will have to be armed as a mass to overthrow the state. Comrade Slovo, when he was still commander of MK, said that MK is only being used as a pressure against the state to force them to the negotiation table. This is a complete contradiction. The state is the instrument of the capitalists. How can you try to make peace with the bosses at the same time attacking their state?

What our movement needs is an effective strategy for the armed overthrow of the state. We must set aside illusions in freedom through negotiation.

Thousands of youth and workers have died calling for MK to arm the masses in the country. Vigilantes and the SADF have given heavy blows to our organisations because we were unarmed to defend our democratic structures. Through the struggle more and more workers and youth are seeing that the only way forward is arming the mass movement for self defence and to prepare for insurrection. This is what the forces of MK should play their part in.

When the proletariat takes power then we will see who is going to say we must hand it back to the capitalists because this is "only a democratic stage". The working class will establish its own democratic workers state to carry through democratic demands and to transform the society. Only then will the nation be free. There is no liberation except the liberation from capitalist rule.

We will take the revolution to all parts of Africa, and join with workers round the world to build socialism.

MAYIBUYE IAFRICA!

Revolutionary greetings to comrades in South Africa from Anton Nilson, on the seventieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution.

ANTON NILSON SENT THIS MESSAGE TO *INQABA*:

"To all freedom fighters in South Africa—

"Ever since my youth, throughout this century and part of the last, the imperialist powers have ruled over Africa, and held its people in slavery and underdevelopment. Today across Africa millions are locked in a great struggle against world capitalism.

"I have followed these developments closely from my youngest years, and today still follow the heroic struggle that you are involved in. The most important thing is that you in South Africa keep united in your struggle.

"Capitalism is guilty of your oppression. Ultimately, there is no alternative but socialism. Private property over the resources of the earth is the greatest theft by those who have taken it and made other people slaves, unpropertied, proletarians.

"In Africa, as in all parts of the world, the task is to destroy this system, and to take over the entire globe for common management. Then a future for the people to live on this earth can be kept and developed. If you carry this struggle forward, we in Europe will be inspired by your achievements.

"In the history of working-class struggle only the October revolution successfully conquered capitalism and carried through public ownership for the people. From 1918-1928 I participated personally in this revolution, and it is the best period in my hundred year life.

"We fought against military occupation by the capitalist powers that wanted to crush the revolution. The Russian October Revolution became no episode of a local kind but united all the Russian peoples psychologically—defeating all attempts by capitalism to smash it.

"In the first days of the revolution the bourgeois papers of the world wrote that Bolshevism, the leader of the revolution, would only be an episode of 14 days or so. But this year the Revolution celebrates its seventieth anniversary, with the Soviet Union having become since then one of the world's strongest countries.

"The whole idea of the revolution penetrated deep into the oppressed peoples, and was the foundation of a will and determination to win. The Bolsheviks built their revolution as a world revolution, but were left alone to follow Marx's appeal 'Proletarians of all countries unite'. They had no other country to follow, but had themselves to pave the way for a new Russia, abolish serfdom and Tsarist absolutism, and carry through the elimination of capitalism in the country.

"Your struggle too is of the utmost importance to the downtrodden workers of all countries in the international struggle for socialism. I therefore appeal to



Top: Anton Nilson today. Bottom: During the civil war, with an Albatross aircraft.

you that reforms to the capitalist system will not be enough—you must lay the foundations for a socialist system in order to achieve lasting progress.

"I salute you all good fighters in South Africa. Unite together and liquidate Apartheid. We must work hand in hand in Europe, Africa, and Asia if we are to achieve our goals.

"Long live the October Revolution that has shown the way! Long live the South African struggle for liberty!"

Anton Nilson 30.9.87

Umzabalazo wethu ngowe democracy ne socialism

Kwii minyaka edlulileyo siyibonile imizabalazo yabacinezelayo naxhatshazwayo eMzantsi Afrika. Namhlanje udidi lwabasebenzi abamnyama (bonke abobaphila okanye baxhokeke kwimivuzo, abasebenzi nentsapho yabo) luzimisele kangangohlobo olungathethekiyo ekuzikhululeni kwigcinezelo nomfifitho gazi lobu ngxowankulu.

Kwelinye icala abaphathi basebenzisa uRhulumente wombuso wabo ekucinezeleni imizabalazo yethu.

Inkululeko nohlobo esakuthi siyilwele isemilonyeni yoninzi lwabantu.

Lemfuno yokuzikhulula kwethu ayiphikisani nomthetho wocalucalulo kuphela koko iphikisana nobungxowankulu buqu. Oongxowankulu basebenzisa legcinezelo ekusimfifitheni igazi. Besenawo amadla abaphathi bayakulicinezela phantsi naliphi ilinge esithi silitathe. Sibabonile uhlobo abamsebenzise ngalo lorhulumente wabo. Baye bathumela Amajoni ezifektri nasezi Lokishi xabesizama kulwa ingcinezelo nomfifitho gazi.

Umbuso

Eyonanto ime phambi kwethu nenkululeko ngulombuso siphila phantsi kwawo. Sakuthi zesikhululeke siwise lombuso. Akukho namnye umntu othe wafumanisa ndlela yimbi ngaphandleni kokumanyanisa nokuxhobisa inginginya yabantu ibeyiyo ebhuqula umbuso. Ayikho enye indlela yokuzikhulula ngaphandle kwale. Ukuba singaphumelela kwelidabi Oogxowankulu bangashiyeka bethe nkaa imilomo amandla oburhulumente angawela ezandleni zabasebenzi. Xa si nawo amandla oburhulumente ezandleni zethu singayizuza inkululeko kodwa ukuba asinawo lamandla soze sizuzento.

Udidi lwabasebenzi (working class) kuya kufuneka lumise umbuso wolawulo lalo. Kulapho kuphela ke apho iimfuno ezikwi Freedom Charter (umqulu wenkululeko) zakuthi ziphenduleke khona

Ngu Nkululeko Nomji Inkokheli kwisebe leSACYCO

kwaye siqale ukuya kwi socialism (umasilingane). Asinakuzuzisa nto singe nawo lamandla olawulo; Xa sinawo lamandla singazuzisa inkululeko (Democracy) nesocialism.

Oku ke kuthi kuphikisane nento esiyixelelwa zezinye iinkokheli zethu. Ziye zithi ke ngokunyanisekileleyo ukuthi eMzantsi Afrika kukho imfazwe phakathi kwezityebi namahlwepu, kusoloko kukho imfazwe phakathi kwabaqeshi nabaqeshwa. Kodwa zigqibele ngokuthi umzabalazo wethu ngowamalungelo (national democratic). Zithetha ukuthi kufuneka silwele amalungelo (democracy) kuqala size lombuso wobugxowankulu siwubhuqule mva. Ingayinyaso njani into enje?

Ngenxeni yokuba kusoloko kukho imfazwe phakathi kwabaqeshi nabaqeshwa,

Iyakuthi ze iphele kubekho oyi-phumelelayo. Kuyinyaniso ukuthi uninzi lwabantu alunamalungelo, kodwa ingxaki ngoku yeyokuba sizokuwalwela siwafumane njani lamalungelo?

Ukuze siwafumane lamalungelo abasebenzi kuyakufuneka bawise lombuso ukhusela ubugxowankulu bamise owabo umbuso. Umzabalazo oyakuthi usizisele amalungelo ngulo uyakuthi waphule amandla oongxowankulu. Lo mzabalazo uthi wenziwe ngetshova lwabasebenzi. Kufuneka uwise umbuso wobugxowankulu. Ukuba ungaphumelela ungathetha ukuba udidi lwabasebenzi luzithathela kulo iintambo.

Ngoko ke umzabalazo wamalu-

ngelo yinxalenye yomzabalazo wokuwisa ubungxowankulu. Abo bathetha ngomzabalazo wamalu ngelo kuphela bazama kuphikisa ukuba kufuneka siwise nobungxowankulu.

Akwanelisi ukuba kuthiwe sicinezeleke kanga ngokuba asinakho ukuthetha ngokuwisa ubungxowankulu. Sesibona ukuba udidi lwabasebenzi abamnyama lusingiselela ekuhlutheni amandla. Isizwe esimnyama sona kuqala singabasebenzi. Kwaye negcutswana loo nobhizinisi abamnyama alicinezelwanga ngumthetho wocalucalulo kuphela koko licinezelwe kwango nobhizinisi abakhulu (big monopolies). Ngoko ke kuyiminqweno yabo ukumanyana nabasebenzi baphelise isifo sobungxowankulu.

Sizivile ezinye zenkokheli zethu zisithi iFreedom Charter ayiyaleli kunika didi (class) luthile lwabantu amandla koko abantu ngokubanzi. Eyonanto ixakayo kukuba udidi lwabasebenzi aluthathi mandla egameni lalo ngubani ozakuba nalamandla? Sesiqalile ukulungiselela kuthatha amandla, ngokwakha iikomiti zolawulo lwethu ezifektri, emigodini, ezilokishini, ezikolweni njalo-njalo. Sesibonile ukuba oongxowankulu abana kuzinyamezela ezikomiti kuba ziyaphikisana nolawulo labo.

Bayakuzama ukuzichitha besebenzisa lorhulumente wabo. Amandla ayakusoloko esezandleni zoongxowankulu kwaye asisokuze sikhululeke de sibesemandleni.

Indlela eya enkululekweni

Kubalulekile kengoku ukuthi si-phonononge indlela yethu esingisa ekukhululeni isizwe. Ezinye zenkokheli zethu zithi ngoku qokelela kwicala lethu bonke abantu abaphikisana nocalucalo nangoku nyanzelisa oongxowankulu kuthe-othothethwano singawazuza amalungelo. Ulutsha nabasebenzi layayazi ukuthi noluphina uthethothethwano olunokubakho abasoze ba

The revolution that shook the world

Peter Taaffe,
editor of *Militant*, summarises the story
of 1917 and its lessons for workers today

Vital role of Bolshevik leadership

The revolution, and the introduction of a planned economy, laid the basis for the transformation of Russia from the 'India' of Europe to the second most powerful economy and country on the globe. Despite the squandering of the advantages of the planned economy by the monstrous one-party, totalitarian regime which subsequently arose, the Russian Revolution has been more than justified in the colossal development of industry and society and also the living standards of the mass of the population since 1917.

It is impossible to understand the present world situation without understanding the Russian Revolution and its subsequent degeneration. But the Marxists will also be analysing the revolution from another standpoint. Only in Russia, following the overturn in October, did the workers' take power and establish real workers' democracy. In the last 70 years there have been not a few opportunities for the working class to follow the path of the Russian workers of 1917.

In its sweep, scope and potential for victory of the working class the Chinese revolution of 1925-27 was equal to, if not greater, than even that of Russia. The working class in Spain, not once but ten times between 1931-37, attempted to take power.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, a revolutionary wave even greater than that which followed the Russian revolution, swept Western Europe. In 1968 in France, the working class organised a general strike of ten million. De Gaulle fled to Germany believing that 'the game was up' yet the French workers were not able to emulate their Russian counterparts of fifty years before.

And we have had the experience of the Portuguese revolution of 1974, when the capitalist state disintegrated. The great majority of the Portuguese officer caste were radicalised, groping in the direction of 'socialism'.

In the Russian revolution, the officers remained hostile to revolution. And yet nowhere except in Russia did the working class take power.

Lenin and Trotsky.

The one factor that was missing in all these revolutions, but which was present in October 1917, was the 'subjective factor', a workers' leadership capable of preparing in good season the working class for the socialist transformation of society. It was the policy and the tactics of the Bolshevik Party, under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky, which led the Russian workers to victory.

Lenin prepared for the Russian revolution by a study of the lessons of the Paris Commune of 1871 and the first Russian revolution of 1905. In the same way, the advanced workers today can prepare for their struggles, which will be on a higher plane even than 1917, by examining the process of the Russian

revolution.

Events will not develop in exactly the same fashion as, nor with the speed of, the Russian revolution. Nevertheless, the struggles of the working class are similar in all capitalist countries. The laws of revolution and of counter-revolution, which Trotsky brilliantly analysed in his masterly *History of the Russian Revolution*, apply in all countries.

The first condition of revolution is the split in the ruling class. "Revolution starts from the top" said Marx. Feeling the subterranean revolt of the masses, the summits of society split into different groupings. One section seeks a solution in the suppression of the mass movement. Another sees the need for 'reforms from the top' in order to prevent revolution from below.

Although only in outline at this stage, we see a similar process developing in the Tory party in Britain in the split between the 'dries' and 'wets'.

Miliukov, the leader of the capitalist Kadet Party, in urging concessions from the Tsar in 1915, declared: "We are treading a volcano...tension has reached its extreme limit...a carelessly dropped match will be enough to start a terrible conflagration". Albeit in more diplomatic language, this is the warning Tory 'wets' have given many times to Thatcher and her right-wing cabal in the Tory cabinet.

The Chirac government in France did 'drop a match', and was only saved temporarily from a conflagration, a movement involving the majority of the French working class, by hasty concessions to the students. In Spain this year, the refusal of the Socialist government to retreat before the students and then the fact of its retreat under pressure—ignited an explosion of the working class.

'We cannot live like this any longer'

The fear of Miliukov in 1915 was well founded. Russian workers and peasants were groaning under the burdens placed on them by the First World War. Two and a half million Russian workers and peasants were killed, and an additional two and a half million were wounded in the war. The Russian soldiers based in France were sent to their slaughter by the French general staff eager to conserve French troops. The workers and peasants were just cannon-fodder. "The one thing the Russian generals did with a flourish was to drag human meat out of the country. Beef and pork are handled much better" (Trotsky).

Striking workers were automatically sent to the front, thereby increasing the circle of agitators who began to raise their heads and find support amongst the soldier mass in opposition to the war. The army itself began to disintegrate with desertion and the shooting of officers. Fabulous war profits were made by the capitalists while the court jeweller, Faberge, boasted that he had never before done such flourishing business.

The opposition of the Russian working class was reflected in the colossal increase in strikes. A widespread strike developed in January 1916 in Petrograd on the anniversary of 'Bloody Sunday' when workers were massacred in the 1905 revolution. The number of strikes doubled during that year. From economic strikes to political strikes, from partial and sectional struggles to the idea of a general strike, the movement of the Russian workers and peasants took on a convulsive form in 1916.



Xa si nawo amandla oburhulumente ezandleni zethu singayizuza inkululeko kodwa ukuba asinawo lamandla soze sizuzento. Sinawo lamandla singazuza inkululeko ne socialism.

vume ukulawulwa sisininzi (majority rule) oongxowankulu. Izigqibo ezinokweziwa apho iziyakuncedisa noogxowankulu kuphela kwaye asisayi kukhululeka tu. Ingaba ikhona na indlela emfitshane kunoku manyanisa abasebenzi nolutsha baxhobe ngopolitiko nangezigo balungiselele uthatho mandla? Hayi bo ayikho. Ngoko ke kufuneka siphumelele ekumanyaniseleni lomsebenzi.

Abanye babo bathi idabi lelamalungelo kuqala luze ubhuqulo bungxowankulu luze mva bathi abasebenzi kufuneka babenamalungelo kuqala ukulungiselela isocialism. Izicacele into yokuba asinakuyifumana isocialism singenamalungelo, kodwa ke umbu ngulo singa wafumana njani lamalungelo ngaphandle kokuwisa lombuso?

Abo baxhasa ezigcinga abayicacisi into eyakwenziwa kulombuso. Sasoloko sithwixwa ngulo mbuso koko akukho mpumelelo ngaphandle kokuwisa. Ezicinga zenkululeko ngaphandle kokuwisa

ubungxowankulu bubuvuvu obungasayi kusikhulula.

Singathi sikhululeke njani xa futhi siseza kulwela imivuzo koogxowankulu? Bubuntwana ukucinga ukuba oogxowankulu bangawuchitha umkhosi wabo kuba befuna ukunika thina amalungelo. Besenayo i SADF, i Koevoet nama vigilante bayakuzama nantoni na ekusinyatheleni.

Abasebenzi abamhlophe

Abaphathi baziva besemandleni kuba kaloku abasebenzi abamhlophe bakwicala labo. Kodwa ngoku izinto ziyaqalisa ukuguquka. Abanye babasebenzi abamhlophe bondliwa ngumbutho wendla (i operation hunger). Unqongophalo misebenzi luyanda nakubo ngoku. Ubungxowankulu buyabuphelelwa ngamandla okuba nika amalungelo abawaqhelileyo.

Ngabasebenzi abamnyama kuphela bemaneyene edabini bexhobe ngeprogamu yokuchitha ubungxowankulu nangezigo abangatsalela abasebenzi abamhlophe kwicala labo. Bangakwenza oko ngokubonisa ukuba idabi lethu lelukumisa umbuso wabasebenzi ongacalucaluliyo ngebala.

Ukuba singaphumelela koku umbuso woogxowankulu ungashiyeka uqhwalala.

Abasebenzi abamnyama kufuneka bexhobile ngokwesinzi nangezigo ukuze babe nokuwiswa lombuso. Uqabane uSlovo mhla wayese ngukhondo weMK wasixelela ukuba umsebenzi weMK kukunyanzelisa oongxowankulu ngokuhlasela mbuso bavule uthethothethwano. Ezizinto zimbhini azidibani. Umbuso sisixhobo soogxowankulu. Awunakuzama ukwenza uxolo noogxowankulu kodwa kwelinye icala uhlasela umbuso wabo.

Umbutho wethu jikele kufuneka uneqhinga lokuwisa lombuso. Masiwabekeleni ecaleni amathemba enkululeko eyakuza nothethothethwano.

Izixhobo zokusikhusela

Inginginya yolutsha nabasebenzi ife ikhalela izixhobo kwi MK. Imibutho yethu ihlaselwe ngamavigilante neSADF kuba besingaxhobanga koko asikwazanga kuyikhusela. Idabi liyasifundisa ukuba eyona ndlela phambili kukuxhobisa abantu bakwazi ukuzikhusela babenakho nokuzilelwa. Lo ngumsebenzi ebekufanelwe ukuba iMK incedisa kuwo.

Xa abasebenzi bewathathele kubo amandla sokhe sive abo bazakuthi masiwabuyisele koogxowankulu kuba idabi lelamalungelo okwangoku. Abasebenzi bayakuthi bakhe umbuso wabo banike amalungelo kuwonke wonke kwaye bayichithe tu imeko yobungxowankulu. Kumhla ke soze sikhululeke. Ayikho inkululeko ngaphandleni kwenkululeko kubungxowankulu.

Siyakuthi sicedisane nabantakwethu kwiAfrika jikelele ekubhuquleni ubungxowankulu. Sakumanyana nabasebenzi kwilizwe lonke ekwakheni isocialism.

MAYIBUYE IAFRICA!

The year 1917 opened with strikes and food riots in Petrograd. The idea that "we cannot live like this any longer" gripped the working class and peasant masses. Thus another condition for revolution, the preparedness of the working class to go the whole way, developed in the months before the February revolution.

The intermediary layers, particularly the peasantry, were drawn behind the working class in this period. Trotsky points out: "A revolution breaks out when all the antagonisms of a society have reached their highest tension". It is possible that in 1916 if the Tsarist regime had made concessions, events could have perhaps have developed differently in the first period of the revolution. But the process would not have been fundamentally different.

The tasks which confronted Russia were the need for a thorough going land reform with land to the peasants, the solution of the national question with the right of self-determination to the oppressed nationalities, democracy and the development of a modern economy. Historically these were the tasks of the capitalist democratic revolution.

But Lenin, unlike his alleged disciples in the leadership of the Communist parties today, had taught the Russian workers that the liberal capitalists were incapable of carrying through such a democratic revolution in Russia. Trotsky, in his famous theory of the Permanent Revolution, and Lenin in his *April Theses*, showed that the industrialists and bankers were bound with iron hoops to the semi-feudal landlords.

The capitalists invested in land and the landlords invested in industry. 4 000 million roubles were owed by the landlords to the bankers and the expropriation of the landlords would endanger the investments of the bankers and industrialists. The landlords and capitalists were linked with the bureaucracy and the system was crowned by the Tsarist regime which was used to alternately stupefy the masses and crush the opposition.

The capitalists had wanted the monarchy to give limited democratic reforms. But this would not have fundamentally altered the course of the revolution as the experience of the Spanish revolution between 1931-37 showed. King Alfonso dismissed the dictator Primo de Rivera in the hope of avoiding revolution, but ended up following him into exile.

Running like a red thread through Lenin's teachings is distrust of the liberal capitalists by the workers. This policy is diametrically opposed to that pursued by the present leaders of the Communist Parties on a world scale.

Lenin was utterly opposed to a programmatic bloc with the liberal capitalists. **He argued that only by the decisive action of the working class was it possible to tear the middle class, including the peasantry, away from those parties.**

The working class takes power

The honour of beginning the February 1917 revolution fell to the women textile workers of Petrograd on International Women's Day. Indignant at bread rations, whilst the capitalists made fabulous war profits, and with many of them having husbands and sons at the front, 90 000 came out on strike.

The next day, half the industrial workers struck in support. Slogans of "Down with the aristocracy, down with the war" were raised by demonstrating workers who fought with police, but attempted to win over the soldiers and Cossacks (who had suppressed the 1905 revolution).

An attempt to use the troops against the workers failed, with only the officers being prepared to fire on demonstrators. After clashes with workers, the troops turned on the officers and the Tsarist army collapsed.

Thus by 28 February the 1 000 year old Tsarist autocracy had collapsed. The working class was the real power, but they were not conscious of this.

The Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries handed power to the capitalists. Even the Bolshevik leaders in Petrograd, led by Stalin and Kamenev gave 'critical support' to the capitalist coalition. Only Lenin in Switzerland and Trotsky in New York understood the significance of the February events as the beginning not only of the Russian revolution but of the 'international revolution'. Lenin demanded that the workers



Armed workers and revolutionary soldiers attacking the Tsar's police during the first days of the February revolution.

THE 1987 MINE STRIKE



Could the mineworkers have won?

The 1987 mineworkers' strike which began on 9 August was the most important strike in the history of the black workers' movement. For three weeks 340 000 mineworkers struck against the most powerful bosses in South Africa.

In the course of the dispute nine strikers were killed and 500 injured in clashes with police and mine security. But the main tactic used was mass dismissals.

The strike was called off on 30 August without securing any additional concessions from the Chamber of Mines on the central issue of wages. Management have continued to victimise workers, and are refusing to reinstate worker militants who have been at the front of building the NUM.

Could the bosses have been forced to concede more? Could the mineworkers have won?

We reprint here a pamphlet issued immediately after the strike by comrades in the Transvaal who were active in the strike.

Following the pamphlet, we print extracts from interviews conducted by *Inqaba* correspondents with mineworkers in several of the main mining regions during and after the strike.

SALUTE THE MINEWORKERS THE BIGGEST STRIKE IN HISTORY

The supporters of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC salute the mineworkers. This strike was against the most ruthless bosses in the world. It was carried out in the face of Botha's brutal state of emergency. It has shown that nothing can break the will of the workers to change society.

Tribalism and factionalism, which the bosses have used to divide the ranks of the NUM, were overcome by the power of the mineworkers united in action. The strike-breakers and murderers of UWUSA were nowhere to be seen.

No matter what, the bosses cannot break this union now. The future belongs to us. *Phambili nomzabalazo ya basebenzi, phambili!*

The 1987 claim: could the bosses have paid?

Every cent of the 30% claim put to the bosses was justified. In 1986 the gold mines made a profit of R8 420 million and the coal mines made R989 million. The Chambers' shareholders are growing fat whilst our families are starving. We have paid with our blood, our sweat and our lives for these profits. 681 mineworkers died in the goldmines in 1986 and now another 62 of our comrades have died at St Helena. We have paid; we should make them pay.

place no trust in the provisional government.

However the Bolsheviks were only 8 000 strong after the February revolution. Lenin explained that it was necessary for the Bolsheviks to base themselves on the consciousness of the masses. In the first phase of the revolution the masses had taken the line of least resistance, giving massive support to the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries. Big events would teach them the correctness of the perspectives, strategy and tactics of the Bolsheviks.

But the working class learns rapidly in revolution. The Bolsheviks grew quickly. They numbered 2 000 members in Petrograd in February 1917, 16 000 by April (with 79 000 nationally) and by late June 32 000 members. By the time of the October revolution, they had developed into a force of 240 000 on a national scale.

Sharp turns

But the revolution did not develop in a straight line. Within the nine months between February and October, there were many sharp turns in the situation.

In the April days, with the continuation of the war, already the workers in Petrograd were becoming disillusioned with the Provisional government. Even the workers' and peasants' councils, the soviets, which the masses themselves had improvised based on the experience of the 1905 revolution supported the continuation of the war. The national soviet congress in April, dominated by the Mensheviks and the *Social Revolutionaries*, refused to ratify the eight hour day.

The 'July Days' saw the working class of Petrograd, 400 000 strong with soldiers participating, demonstrating for the eviction of the ten capitalist ministers from the coalition: "Down with the offensive, and All Power to the Soviets".

The 'July Days' was a stage we have seen in all revolutions. The 'June Days' of 1848, the 'Sparticist Uprising' in January 1919, and the 'May Days' in Barcelona in 1937, represented the understanding of the masses that the gains of their revolution were being snatched out of their hands, and their deliberate attempts to prevent this.

The Bolsheviks opposed the July demonstration, but were compelled to go along with it. Already the workers of Petrograd were ready to overthrow the government, but the Bolshevik leadership opposed this. Lenin and Trotsky warned that the rest of the country and particularly the peasants and soldiers at the front, needed time to see through the coalition of the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. The masses could only learn this from bitter experience.

The July days led to reaction, with repression against the Bolsheviks and the imprisonment of Trotsky, while Lenin was driven underground. But when the counter-revolution, in the figure of General Kornilov, attempted a coup in August, it was defeated by the working class, with the Bolsheviks playing the most prominent role. The troops of Kornilov refused to take action against Petrograd once the real situation was explained to them by delegates and agitators from the soviets. The railway workers completely disintegrated the army of Kornilov by stranding them in railway sidings etc.

Revolution sometimes need the whip of counter-revolution. The August events gave an enormous access of strength and support to the Bolsheviks. In the two months that followed, the majority of the workers' and soldiers' soviets were won over to the Bolsheviks. Using the 'Military Revolutionary Committee' set up by the soviets in Petrograd, under the leadership of Trotsky, the working class took power on 25th October.

Some European and American capitalists dismissed the

October revolution with the prediction that it would be over in a week. *The Times* quoted approvingly Naklukoff, the overthrown Kerensky government's ambassador to Paris: "The situation must be regarded seriously but not tragically. Even if the facts be true there is no occasion for undue alarm...It is better that it should have taken place and be disposed of once and for all. The Maximalist (Bolshevik) movement by its arbitrary action is already doomed. I have no doubt that the movement will be stopped by the first Cossack regiment that appears on the scene". (9 November 1917).

The capitalists in Russia took a longer and more 'tragic' view than this worthy. General Zalessky mournfully surveyed the situation: "Who would believe that the janitor or watchman of the Court building would suddenly become Chief Justice of the Court of Appeals, or the hospital orderly manager of the hospital, the barber a big functionary, yesterday's ensign the commander-in-chief, yesterday's lackey or common labourer burgermaster, yesterday's train oiler chief of division or station superintendent, yesterday's locksmith head of the factory?"

Now to complete the work begun in 1917!

Lenin and Trotsky had seen the Russian revolution merely as the prologue to the international revolution. In isolation, backward Russia was not ready for socialism. The beginning of socialism meant a higher level of productive forces than even the most developed capitalist economy. This was only possible on a world scale. In the phrase of Lenin, capitalism had broken at its weakest link. But the Russian revolution was envisaged as the beginning of a series of revolutions in Europe and on a world scale that would usher in a world socialist federation.

Lenin's confidence in the possibility of world revolution was justified by the convulsive events of 1918 and particularly 1919, when the ruling class itself believed that it was about to be overthrown. The only thing that saved them were the leaders of the Social Democratic Parties.

The isolation of the revolution in turn allowed the growth of a privileged bureaucratic caste in Russia itself. Gradually power was taken from the soviets and concentrated in the hands of millions of officials in the state machine, the party and the army. The mass of the working class were elbowed aside and the original democratic and internationalist aspirations of the Russian revolution were suppressed.

The Gorbachev regime today, despite its recent declarations on 'democracy', is a million miles removed from the Russian revolution in the heroic period of Lenin and Trotsky. There was more democracy in the weak Russian workers state of October 1917, beset by civil war and the 21 armies of imperialism, than in Russia today.

Political revolution

It will take a new revolution, a political revolution to restore workers' democracy, before Russian society can begin to move towards socialism. Drawing on the treasure trove of ideas of Lenin and Trotsky in this way, it will be possible to complete the work that the Russian workers began 70 years ago and establish a socialist Britain as a link in a world socialist federation.

1987 MINE STRIKE

The Chamber: "1987, time to hold the line"

A lot has been written about the strike already. But the bosses' newspaper *Business Day* said it all on Friday 4th September:

"Anglo officials conceded that it was not a matter of being unable to afford the NUM demand. Nor was it that the mineworkers didn't deserve it. It's just that the time had come to hold the line on pay increases."

The truth, at last!

A stalemate or defeat?

Now we have heard words like these before. The bosses at OK, at the Railways and at the Post Office all said, in one way or another, that they had to 'hold the line' against union power.

But the workers in these industries won historic victories. In contrast the mineowners were not forced to yield. They did not concede one major element of the 1987 claim. They did not retreat. They forced the union to retreat.

Mineworkers are going back to work united, but on the bosses' terms. Many militants and fighters will be victimised and thousands will have lost their jobs.

We have to face the truth. The bosses won the test of strength this time. This was not a stalemate, it was not a draw. Given what we wanted, and what we got, it was a defeat.

A fight to the finish—nothing else will do

The bosses won partly because of their power. The SA mining capitalists are amongst the most powerful capitalists in the world. They are ruthless. They have mine security, the police, the army—in fact the whole system—behind them.

So we can never be over-confident or underestimate what they will be prepared to do to defend their profits. The workers at Ergo and Vaal Reefs in particular know all about that.

But the bosses did not win simply because of their power. They won because of mistakes and weaknesses on our side. Fighting the mine bosses involves preparation to fight to the finish. Nothing else will do.

Fighting mass dismissals

Any plan to defeat the mine bosses has to include a strategy to fight mass dismissals. The bosses will always use this tactic, so the NUM's response to this is crucial to the future of the struggle.

It is not an answer to say, as comrade Cyril did, at the start of the strike, simply, "How can they sack 300 000 mineworkers?"

But a plan to fight mass dismissals has to look beyond the NUM itself. NUM has to raise the risks for all the capitalists, by mobilising the ranks of COSATU as well. The NUM cannot win these battles alone—national solidarity action is vital.

NUM—discuss a strategy for victory

The mineworkers who support the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC, have discussed many of the issues of

the 1987 strike. We want to put forward the following as a contribution to the discussion on the 1987 strike and better preparation in 1988 and the years following.

An advance plan for the strike

The NUM leaders must plan and organise the strike long before it is called. In the final days before a national strike, rallies like the one that took place in Secunda this year, must be the rule, **not** an exception.

These plans should also include an overtime ban for a long period before the strike is called. This year mineworkers worked overtime for months before the strike—giving the bosses the stockpiles which helped them to hold out.

Every shaft stewards' committee should give the bosses notice of the seriousness of their intentions by building a strike fund from mineworkers donations **in the year before** the strike.

No to dismissals— occupy mine premises

We think that the strategy suggested by the leaders at the start of the strike—for mineworkers to go home—was a fundamental mistake. It caused confusion, made scabbing easier and meant that when dismissals were issued the strike was weakened when thousands gave up and went home.

Instead, mine workers have to organise against mass dismissals by refusing to leave the mines when dismissed and refusing to go home. The way in which the mineworkers at Witbank organised this is an example of what can be done. Similarly the Namibian workers at Tsumeb and the NUM workers at Westonaria who occupied the kitchens gave examples on which to base further action.

National action of this type—where one dismissal was followed by a national campaign of occupations—would have a far greater chance of success than allowing the bosses and police to pick off one mine at a time.

No to dismissals— prepare for the bosses' onslaught

Such a campaign of occupation of the mines and hostels would bring about attacks from the state. So in each mine systematic preparations for organised defence committees need to be made. These defence committees would take up elementary points at the mine but also link with the local townships to involve the youth and other workers in plans to defend mineworkers. *

No to going home

However, mineworkers could not last against serious armed assault by the state for a long time. Although **national action** reduces the likelihood of such state assault. So plans to retreat to local townships should be developed. Long after *the police have gone, mineworkers then could still take action* to save their jobs. They can only do this if they stay near the mine and do not go home.

A campaign against TEBA scabbing

Before going out on strike NUM has to organise in all areas

The fall of the Tsar

By Kevin Ramage

The February revolution in Russia opened nine months of titanic class struggle which culminated in the coming to power of the working class, led by the Bolshevik Party headed by Lenin and Trotsky.

Revolution broke out first in Russia because the war placed the greatest burdens on what was industrially the most backward nation in Europe. In Lenin's words, "capitalism broke at its weakest link."

The outbreak of the war had initially cut across a revolutionary movement which was developing in Russia in July/August 1914. From having the support of 80 per cent of the active workers, the Bolsheviks, who opposed the imperialist war, were driven underground, as backward layers of the working class, mobilised by the war, embraced the ideas of patriotism.

The "unity of the nation" produced at the beginning of an imperialist war is really only a mask. As war drags on, it exposes all that is rotten in society, sharpening all the social contradictions. So it was in Tsarist Russia. The war only postponed the struggle, deepening the eventual revolutionary upheavals.

Fifteen million, overwhelmingly peasants, were drafted into the army, where they faced a uniformity of misery which made them open to the ideas of the working class. By 1917 over 800 000 workers were concentrated in defence industries in Moscow, and 300 000 in Petrograd, mainly in huge factories employing thousands. In contrast with previous struggles in Russia, the cities and countryside were brought together in their determination to be done with Tsarist autocracy.

Every great revolution begins at the top as the ruling class, with no clear way forward, split over what course of action to take. In January 1916 a strike wave developed against food shortages and speculators. Feeling the movement building up from below, a section of the ruling class favoured making limited concessions.

During late 1916, the mystic monk Rasputin was murdered and plots were laid for a 'palace coup' to remove the Tsar and the Tsarina. **The signs of splits in the ruling class opened the floodgates of revolution.** The tensions brought about by the war, of five million dead or wounded, of the army's bread ration being cut by a third between December 1916 and February 1917, of the shortages of food in the towns, burst to the surface.

The February Revolution began on the 23rd (dates are on the old Russian calendar; add 13 days for modern calendar) with a strike by women textile workers in Petrograd. On International Women's Day, 90 000 were on strike, including many soldier's wives. They marched to the Duma (a truncated parliament) demanding bread, which as Trotsky commented was like demanding milk from a he-goat. On the following day half of the industrial workers of Petrograd joined the strike.

As the strikes grew, the slogans rapidly changed to directly political challenges to the regime: "Down with the autocracy! Down with the war!"

Yet none of the workers' organisations initially called for the strikes. Indeed, the most militant Bolshevik organisation, the committee in the industrial Vyborg area, feeling the tension,

but not believing the time was right for an insurrection which they saw could develop out of the strikes, initially opposed the call for strikes on 23 February. **Thus one of the most oppressed and least organised layers, perhaps not as burdened by consideration of where their strike could lead, but burning with desire to take action, opened the floodgates of revolution.**

The police tried to break up the crowds, aided by Cossacks (cavalry), some mounted police, and occasionally by infantry. The crowds fought the police, but tried to neutralise the Cossacks and win over the soldiers in action.

On the 25th, cadet officers fired on demonstrating workers, killing 16. On the 27th there were further demonstrations and troops were called out to suppress them.

After clashes with the workers, the troops began to mutiny. In some places the workers had succeeded in uniting with the soldiers, penetrating the barracks and receiving rifles.

Already too late

The 1 000 year old monarchy fell under these hammer blows. As in the Spanish revolution of 1936, when unarmed workers stormed the barracks in Barcelona, Madrid and Valencia, and were joined by some soldiers, the real power, "armed bodies of men" was in the hands of the workers.

The response of the ruling clique, revolution staring them in the face, was akin to Nero 'fiddling while Rome burned'. Rodzianko, conservative president of the Duma, telegraphed to the Tsar on the 27th: "The situation is becoming worse; measures must be taken immediately, for tomorrow will be too late". In reality it was already too late. But when the Tsar received the telegram he commented: "Once again the fat-bellied Rodzianko has written me a lot of nonsense, which I won't even bother to answer".

The next day the Tsar telegraphed his wife before leaving for the capital by train: "In my thoughts I am always with you. Magnificent weather. I hope you are well and calm". But the rail workers rerouted and blocked the Tsar's train, while in



Tsar Nicholas II in 1917, with members of his family and army officers.

1987 MINE STRIKE

that the mine bosses recruit from—explaining to workers politically why they should not break the strike. This is a huge task but it could be done, especially if the union deliberately politicised the youth in these areas and drew them towards the struggle—otherwise the bosses will always have the possibility of using mass scabbing to defeat the strike. Serious struggle requires serious preparation.

In these aims the NUM can only rely on their fellow workers and youth. Neither the bantustan puppets of Botha nor the governments of Lesotho or Botswana will aid the workers' struggle.

A common settlement date for all mineworkers

The leaders of the union should do everything in their power to create a common settlement date for next year. They should implement a timetable for negotiations by telling the bosses when they will negotiate. Every year the Chamber mineworkers have to think of a strike without the Goldfields workers. It is like fighting with one arm tied behind one's back! Why should we help them to divide our ranks?

For the reinstatement of shaft steward councils

The only regiment in our ranks capable of organising such a complex struggle is the shaft stewards council. They should never have been disbanded in a year of struggle. They are the power base from which to carry out the battle plan!! Reinstatement the shaft stewards councils!

For democratic accountability in all negotiations

Worker democracy is the lifeblood of our union. Why did the union officials give in when there was unanimous rejection of the offer days before by the miners? If the ranks are consulted **before** a strike is called they should also be consulted **before** it is called off.

It should become established procedure that the ranks are consulted at each stage through full discussion and voting where possible. But at least where major decisions are taken there should be a vote on the national strike committee.

For annual congresses to prepare for battle

Wage battles take place every year, so should our congresses! In fact there should be a special congress this year so that we can discuss the lessons and mistakes of this year's strike and prepare for a victory in 1988.

Solidarity action—NUM AND COSATU

The 1987 mineworkers' strike ignited struggle throughout the country. Even the workers at Anglo headquarters struck in solidarity declaring: "We are all mineworkers!"

So far this year 11 million days have been lost in strike action. Last year 1,3 million days were lost. In these

conditions it should have been possible for the leaders of COSATU to have organised far more widespread solidarity action for the NUM campaign.

In fact, the conditions for linking the NUM struggle to a genuine development of the National Minimum Living Wage campaign in solidarity with the NUM could scarcely have been better. This would have united workers and youth across the country. It would have taken the whole movement forward and helped to hold back the bosses and the state.

Instead, after eighteen days of the greatest union battle in South African history all the leadership of COSATU could say was:

"COSATU does not rule out the possibility of sympathy strikes in several industries"!!

This is simply not good enough. Elijah Barayi said at the COSATU congress that "COSATU was here to bury P.W.Botha". The workers were ready. The COSATU leaders should have issued a clear call for action and then organised as never before to ensure its success.

NUM and solidarity action

Such co-ordinated national action would have been one of the keys to victory. The NUM leaders should have raised their call clearly that COSATU should have organised such solidarity action, especially when the COSATU leaders were hesitating. The workers would have responded to such a call.

Solidarity action— at local and national level

This solidarity action also has to be built by the mine-workers themselves. In every area work should be started **now** to build COSATU locals by mineworkers playing an active role, and through these build links with local communities and the local youth—between mineworkers and other workers, and from there to the women and the youth. In all of these strategies all mineworkers must see the vital role that the youth can play in developing the struggles of the NUM!!

Legal and illegal action

One of the main arguments that will be put forward against this general strategy is that much of it is illegal and would open the gates for state repression.

We have no objection to taking legal tactics into account at every stage of the battle. In fact the struggle has won important legal concessions on dismissals and health and safety. But we do not agree that the bosses' courts are the real factors which safeguard workers' rights.

The bosses fight to the finish and therefore we cannot go into battle without recognising this. This year we relied on legal pressure too much. Whilst we fight to their legal rules they are hitting us below the belt with **their** army, **their** police, **their** mine security, **their** informers, **their** lies in **their** press and **their** intimidation. Our leaders should know this.

The union movement was built in struggle—not in the issuing of affidavits. If our mothers and fathers had been afraid to break the law the unions would not exist today!

Tauride Palace (the former house of the Duma) the soviet of workers' deputies was already in session.

Starting where the experience of the defeated revolution of 1905 left off, the workers and soldiers had immediately organised Soviets—committees of workers, soldiers and sailors democratically elected directly from the workplace, barracks, or ships, with no privileges and subject to recall by their electors. From the outset the soviets had a wider scope than in 1905, above all incorporating delegates from the soldiers' and sailors' organisations.

Reflecting the intense pressure of the movement of the masses, at one of its first sittings, on 1 March, the Soviet issued the famous 'Order No 1' which included the following:

"The Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies has decreed:

1) Committees to be elected immediately in all companies, battalions...from the elected representatives of the rank and file of the above mentioned units.

2) In all political actions, troop units are subordinate to the Soviet...and to the committees thereof.

3) The orders of the military commission of the state Duma are to be obeyed, with the exception of those instances in which they contradict the orders and decrees of the Soviet (*Editor's emphasis*)

4) All types of arms...must be placed at the disposal of company and battalion committees, and under their control, and are not, in any case, to be issued to officers, even upon demand..."

The Soviets had the overwhelming support of the workers, soldiers and sailors. All that was required was to link up the Soviets on an all Russia basis, a declaration by the workers' leadership that all power would henceforth be vested in the Soviets, the arrest of the old ministers, and workers' power could have been established peacefully without further struggle.

Provisional government

But as the Communist and Socialist parties, aided by the anarchists, were to do in Spain in 1936, the leaders of the Soviet, at the outset the reformist Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, handed power back to the capitalists. Without Marxist leadership, this led to bloody defeat in Spain.

In Russia, the Menshevik and SR leaders handed power to an unelected "Provisional government" dominated by the liberal capitalist Constitutional Democrats (Kadets). They rationalised their cowardice with high sounding phrases. They argued the workers cannot take power but must support the party of the liberal bourgeoisie. Pointing to Russia's backwardness they argued that, as in France in 1879, the immediate revolution was a bourgeois democratic one, with the tasks of overcoming feudalism, distributing land to the peasants, establishing a democratic regime, and clearing the way for modern development.

No Marxist in Russia disagreed that these were the tasks. But Lenin constantly warned against any illusions in 'liberal' capitalists and for the independence of the working class, seeing the working class in alliance with the peasants as the force that would overthrow the remnants of feudalism. Trotsky in his brilliant theory of permanent revolution which was borne out in the course of 1917, went further, explaining that in the epoch of imperialism, the bourgeois-democratic tasks could only be resolved under the leadership of the working class moving in the direction of socialism.

The Mensheviks claimed to be for socialism, but only in the distant future. The Russian capitalists were linked through the banks by a thousand links to the class of feudal

landowners. This ruled out any thoroughgoing land reform which was the fundamental task of the bourgeois-democratic or capitalist revolution in Russia. On the other hand the Russian capitalists were tied hand and foot to foreign, mainly Anglo-French, capital from which they drew the lion's share of their investment.

This in turn made a just and democratic peace in the war impossible as long as power remained in the hands of the landlords and the capitalists.

While the Kadets had been opposed to the Tsarist regime, which placed obstacles in the way of the free development of capitalism, they were a million times more afraid of the revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants. When finally confronted with the fact of a victorious revolution, they first tried to negotiate with the Tsar to set up a constitutional monarchy, and resisted at every stage attempts to actually tackle the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution.

This paradox of February 1917, of the masses moving towards seizing power, not being fully conscious of the situation and the tasks, and the movement being sidetracked by the reformist leaders, is not unique. It is present in every



Top: The awakened masses. Bottom: The Petrograd Soviet in April 1917, when it was dominated by Mensheviks.

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The real battle is not won by lawyers' debates in the courts. It is our force, our power or their force, their power—which decides. This is the important balance of forces, anything that tips it in the workers' favour is legal in the laws of the class struggle.

Could NUM have won in 1987?

Yes, NUM and COSATU together could have won. Even a few more percent would have been seen as a victory. This could only have been achieved by using the kind of strategy that is put forward in this pamphlet.

Such a strategy would mean that the bosses would be more prepared to settle on wages than face a huge strike wave engulfing the country, uniting the struggles of NUMSA, POTWA, SARHWU, CCAWUSA, FAWU and CWIU.

However, the defeat suffered is in one major sense only a partial defeat. The ranks of the union remain united and committed to struggle. It is not over-confidence or mistaken loyalty which allows us to say that if these strategies are implemented by the leaders of the NUM the warriors of the rank and file will ensure a famous victory in 1988.

For a socialist South Africa

We believe that politics and economics cannot be separated in South Africa, or anywhere else. The bosses took a political decision not to concede the NUM claims. They are happy

with the present balance of forces on the mines. They could afford to pay, but they could not afford to tip this balance in favour of the workers. There is no way that a mineworkers strike is **not** a challenge to the political power of the capitalists in South Africa.

The real solution to the problems that the workers face is to do away with the bosses' system completely. We must replace capitalism where the masses suffer poverty and hardship and the few are rich with socialism, where, as the Freedom Charter says, the wealth belongs to us all.

The great workers' struggles this year mark a new chapter in history. We can see the workers hold the future in their hands. We are going to build an unbreakable movement based on the forces of the workers and the youth, on the NUM, on COSATU, on SAYCO and the ANC to smash apartheid and capitalism forever.

Last words

All these issues must be discussed in the ranks of the NUM so we can learn from our mistakes and prepare for 1988. But we leave the last words to a mineworker:

"We have never achieved anything without struggle. When you fight you strengthen your organisation and that strength can lead to victory. But you must fight for what you want. You can't get anywhere otherwise. When we all speak with one voice, then we'll see what the bosses will do."

Viva NUM Viva!
Reinstate the shaft-stewards councils!
For a special congress to discuss the 1987 strike!
Organise now for the 1988 claim!
Forward to victory in 1988!
Build a mass ANC on a socialist programme!
Forward to a socialist South Africa!



great revolutionary upheaval, as in Spain in 1936 and in Portugal in 1974.

So how did the Mensheviks and the SRs become the leadership of the Soviets? By its very nature revolution draws into activity not only the advanced layer, but also stirs up the mass. They learn very rapidly in the course of the revolution. But in the first instance the majority will seek the line of least resistance. In Russia they tended to support the Menshevik and SR leaders who said: "the revolution has overthrown the autocracy; now all that is needed is to wait for the Constituent Assembly (democratic government) to be convened to resolve the issues of the war, land, etc".

Their patriotic position in the war, combined with mild opposition to the Tsarist regime, led to many of the intelligentsia, lower ranking officers etc, as well as politically less active layers of the working class, initially supporting the Mensheviks and the SRs. Also during the war they had not faced the same hounding which the Bolsheviks suffered. They had the best known faces in the eyes of the masses. At the outbreak of the revolution they had the speakers to address meetings, journalists to write papers etc, while the main Bolshevik leaders were in emigration, exile or in prison.

In his classic *History of the Russian Revolution*, Trotsky asked the question: "Who led the February Revolution? The revolution fell like thunder from the sky, says the president of the Social Revolutionary Party, Zenzinov." Trotsky then records an account of the Menshevik leader, Skobelev, who was to become a minister in the Provisional government within a month, declaring on the 25th February that the "disorders had the character of plundering which it was necessary to put down." "How was it with the Bolsheviks?... Kayurov, one of the leaders of the Vyborg section, asserts categorically: 'absolutely no guiding initiative from the party centres was felt.'

At this stage all the principal Bolshevik leaders were in exile or abroad. Trotsky concludes that while there were no clear leaders, the revolution was not "spontaneous", but was a product of specific conditions that had developed, of the conditions in Russia, the experience of the 1905 revolution, and the presence in the factories and among the soldiers of a scattering of "conscious and tempered workers educated for the most part by the party of Lenin... This leadership proved sufficient to guarantee the victory of the insurrection, but it was not adequate to transfer immediately into the hands of the proletarian vanguard the leadership of the revolution."

This was added to by the confusion which existed amongst the Bolshevik leaders who were in Petrograd. The resumption of the Bolshevik paper *Pravda* was warmly welcomed by the workers, its second issue selling 100 000 copies. But its attitude to the Provisional government was unclear. While some articles correctly attacked it as a regime of capitalists and landlords, others were ambivalent.

The position of the Bolsheviks was further confused with the return from exile of Kamenev, Stalin and Muranov on 13 March, who immediately took over the editing of *Pravda* and turned its line sharply to the right. On the 14 March Stalin made the cautious appeal to "maintain the rights that have been won in order to finally beat down the old powers and move the Russian revolution forward", a position which echoed that of the reformist leaders of the Soviet, to "support the Provisional government in so far as it struggles against reaction, defends democracy etc." This position earned Lenin's sharp rebuke that "it was like asking brothel keepers to give up sin".

The next day Kamenev wrote an article which advocated national defence of the regime of the Provisional government: "we shall stoutly defend our own liberty." **These policies amounted to seeing the Bolsheviks as the loyal 'left**

opposition' in a capitalist government, in a similar manner to the idea of 'Popular Front' blocks between workers' and 'radical' capitalist parties put forward by 'Communist' parties today.

When these issues of *Pravda* reached the factories they aroused a storm of indignation among the workers which forced Stalin and Kamenev to be more cautious, but they still refrained from any fundamental attack on the Provisional government or its war policy.

No support

In reality there were only two people who understood the situation, Lenin in Switzerland and Trotsky in New York. Writing on 4 March, with only scanty information, Lenin grasped the character of the Provisional government: "**the new government that had seized power in Petrograd, or, more correctly wrested it from the proletariat, which has waged a victorious, heroic and fierce struggle, consists of liberal bourgeois and landlords. Only a workers' government... can give the people peace, bread and full freedom**".

Two days later he sent a telegram: "**Our tactics; no trust in and no support of the new government; Kerensky (the one SR in the government, Editor) is especially suspect; arming of the proletariat is the only guarantee, immediate elections to the Petrograd City Council; no rapprochement with other parties.**"

As early as 28 February, receiving only confused reports of 'disturbances' and 'bread riots', Trotsky wrote: "We are witnessing the beginning of the second Russian revolution." When the composition of the Provisional government and its appeals for 'order' became known he wrote: "The powerful avalanche of the revolution is in full swing, and no human force will stem it."

The Mensheviks and SR leaders denounced Lenin's thesis as "sectarian, ultra-left and adventurist." Characterising the revolution as "democratic and not socialist" they effectively postponed the struggle for socialism to a distant future. The policy of 'popular frontism' today is merely a resurrection under a different guise of the Menshevik idea of class collaboration and the theory of 'stages'.

The fatal flaw of Menshevism (and of the Stalinists and their co-thinkers today) is that the only way of carrying through the bourgeois-democratic revolution today is by transfer of power to the working class. That was precisely the position put forward by Lenin in the spring of 1917, summed up in the slogan "All power to the Soviets" and that Trotsky had worked out in his theory of permanent revolution based on the experience of the 1905 revolution.

The magnificent movement of the workers, soldiers and sailors in the February revolution had smashed the old Tsarist regime, and placed power in the hands of the reformist leaders. Petrified they sought compromise with the bourgeoisie. This opened a period of dual power, that is of two opposing forces, the provisional government of representatives of the capitalists attempting to restore "order", and the soviets, which despite their leaders, represented the desire of the workers to overthrow capitalism.

This was to last until the "July Days", when, given time by the reformist leaders of the Soviets, the capitalists inflicted a defeat on the workers. But it was only a temporary setback. An attempted reactionary coup by General Kornilov in August was defeated by the arming of the workers by the Bolsheviks. Very rapidly the Menshevik-SR leadership of the soviets was discredited, the Bolsheviks gained a majority in the Soviets, and in October, only nine months after the fall of Tsarism, power was firmly in the hands of the working class.

THE 1987 MINE STRIKE

Mineworkers speak



Workers' demands

A 30% wage increase

"Our main and foremost demand is the living wage. The mine bosses have for a long time been giving us a dying wage. We don't want that. We want a 30% increase.

"The chief reason we went on strike was for wages. We wanted an increase in our daily pay. Although there are different groups that earn different wages, almost all wages are low especially for black miners. We went on strike because the Chamber stuck to between 13 and 23%. This is incredibly low."

Danger pay

"We decided to demand danger pay. Because you can imagine a person who goes down 5 to 6 kms without any allowance for that whatsoever".

Death benefits

"For a long time we have been cheated, working under difficult and dangerous conditions, just for nothing. When miners died their families received very little benefits. But you should listen to the bosses when they express their sympathies—something that does not come from the bottom of their hearts. How can they say this when they send police to kill miners taking part in a legal strike? Death is the order of the day on the mines. The



Chamber must pay families of the deceased for five years."

June 16—a paid holiday

"Up till now the mines refuse to acknowledge June 16 as a day of mourning for those who gave their lives for the freedom of all, even the white man, yet they acknowledge December 16. We told them that we were prepared to work on December 16 and not June 16. Yet they refused to budge."

Longer holidays

"Paid holidays have been limited to a period of 26 days. Considering the length we spend on the mines underground, it is only fair that we have a paid holiday for a whole month—that is 30 days paid leave."

The mineworkers' strike came on the crest of a wave of industrial struggles. When the strike started over 400 000 other workers up and down South Africa were also involved in disputes. Earlier in the year the victories of workers at OK and SATS inspired workers generally. The mineworkers were steeled for what they knew would be a bitter battle to improve their own conditions.

One said: "To begin with we thought that the strike was going to last for a week, or even a few days because all the unions were in favour of a strike. The South African economy depends on the mines. That is the wealth that is produced from underground through our sweat. Now what is left is that we will continue even if it is too long.

"Our families know that we are on strike. They support us through and through. Even our youngest children support us. They want nice

Bolsheviks adopt a programme for power

Lenin's *April Theses* form one of the most decisive manifestos in the history of revolution. They consist of just a few short notes, the bare skeleton of Lenin's speeches when he arrived back in Petrograd in April 1917. But the ideas outlined within them brought about a decisive reorientation of the Bolshevik leadership. LYNN WALSH re-examines the *April Theses* and their lessons for today.

Lenin's return from exile crystallised a crisis in the Bolshevik party. The leadership in Russia around Kamenev and Stalin, who had assumed responsibility on their return from Siberia in March, endorsed the Soviet's position of conditional support for the Provisional government of Prince Lvov—even though the Soviet held the real power on the streets and in the factories.

Lenin had already rejected this stance, as his *Letters from Afar* in February demonstrated. The Provisional government, in his view, was so bound up with the landlords, the industrialists and the bankers that it was incapable of fulfilling its promises. To believe that the government would end the war, distribute the big estates, solve the economic crisis, and meet workers' demands was a dangerous illusion.

There was no question, as far as Lenin was concerned, of supporting the Provisional government while it carried out reforms in the expectation that, at a later stage, more favourable conditions would emerge for the struggle for socialism. The liberal bourgeois government, pushed reluctantly into power by the February revolution, had already gone as far as it was capable of going. Unless the Soviets smashed the remnants of the old state and placed power decisively in the hands of the workers, the Provisional government would succumb to counter-revolution. The next phase would be a new regime of totalitarian reaction.

Socialist programme

In the *April Theses*, therefore, Lenin called for a struggle for a socialist programme based on the independent action of working class. Its main elements were:

- No support for the Provisional government.
- Fight for the Soviets to take power.
- End the war.
- Confiscate the big estates.
- Nationalise the banks.
- Establish workers' control of industry.
- Replace the police and army with a workers' militia.
- Replace the old state bureaucracy with workers' administration.
- Proclaim a Communist Party: establish a new international.

A programme on these lines, with the strategy and tactics also spelt out, was an essential pre-requisite for the success of the October revolution. In April it was opposed by the leaders castigated by Lenin as 'Old Bolsheviks'. However, by appealing to the leading Bolsheviks at rank and file level.

Lenin won a majority for his ideas. The new upsurge of workers and peasants, which provoked a new crisis for the Provisional government, confirmed Lenin's position in a few stormy months. Without the *April Theses*, 1917 would have ended quite differently.

Underlying Lenin's strategy and tactics was a clear perspective. This provided a clear guide to action during the ebbs and flows of the revolution. On the other hand, it was precisely because they were working on the basis of a confused perspective, derived from a misinterpretation of Lenin's previous position, that the 'Old Bolsheviks' adopted a policy which prefigured the disastrous Popular Frontism of the Stalinist leaders in the 1930's and since.

Permanent revolution

The perspective which Lenin arrived at in 1917 coincided with Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution, worked out following the experience of the 1905 revolution. This resolved the long debate within the Russian labour movement which revolved around three different conceptions of the coming revolution.

All the Russian Marxists were agreed that the tasks of social transformation facing them were those of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. These were: the breaking up of the big estates and the distribution of the land to the peasants. The abolition of the Tsarist monarchy and the establishment of a democratic republic. The separation of the church and the state. The introduction of social reforms, urgently demanded by the workers and the peasants, but also necessary to clear the way for the development of capitalism.

Given this, which political forces would provide the leadership?

Would it be (a) the liberal capitalist representatives? If so, would the workers' parties, including the Bolsheviks, limit themselves to conditional support for the liberals, accepting that the struggle for socialism would come later, under more favourable conditions which would develop under a capitalist regime?

Would it be (b) the working class, in alliance with the representatives of the peasantry, who would take the power—limiting themselves, however, at this stage to bourgeois-democratic tasks?

Or would it be (c) the working class leading the exploited peasantry behind them, who would take the power, carry through the bourgeois-democratic tasks— but at the same time implementing radical changes in their own interest which would begin the transition to socialism?

Position (a) was adopted by the Mensheviks, who formed the right wing of the Social-Democratic party. From Marx, they drew highly schematic conclusions: that feudalism, capitalism and socialism followed in succession and one historical stage had to be completed before another could commence.

There was no question, according to this view, of the working class initiating a socialist revolution until the bourgeois revolution was complete.

This schema, alien to Marx's dialectical method, took no

reports from INQABA correspondents

clothes for Christmas and New Year, they want pocket money. My oldest daughter said if we give up the fight we must not come home. This is the most encouraging thing I have ever heard, the most powerful of all messages of support I have yet received.

"There are problems. Life is difficult without money but we will rather fight for a living wage. At the end of the day we would have lost a few rands, but gained far more than that. This is what is keeping us going."

Worker in Evander region (two weeks into the strike): "Members are resolved to stay on strike. We depend on the strength of our members; it will continue until we get what we demanded from the Chamber. Workers are prepared for more than a month."

Organising for struggle

A strike committee member said: "We were elected after everyone voted in favour of the strike."

"The members of the strike committee went from shaft to shaft boosting the morale of the workers. They also looked for whatever problems the strikers had. We brought messages of support to the miners, and distributed pamphlets giving details of the progress of the strike, and what was happening in other regions. The miners stayed in the hostels. Most of us were discussing the strike and supporting each other. We also discussed problems to give to the strike committees."

Evander: "We called a regional meeting. But the problem is many do not come. And also here we've got a problem of people coming from Malawi and Mozambique. Those people do not want to participate in union activities."

"During the strike we used the E plan. This is a system we use in different conditions. In my branch every day the men arrive here at 3 pm—then all information we have got from other regions, we send back to the workers, and encourage

them.

"In the hostel each room of 18 workers has a representative. This is the only means of communication when the management doesn't allow us to have mass meetings."

Klerksdorp: "Workers were called into the halls, two hours a day, maybe once a week, it depends on the problems. The strike committee was around the mine."

Vaal Reefs: "Workers behaved well during the strike. It was nice to see workers not drinking. Alcohol destroys a person and the way he thinks. It also breaks unity. We want to maintain a cool and rational mind in a sober head."

The call to go home

At the beginning of the strike the NUM leadership announced "Operation Exodus", mistakenly calling on workers to go back to the reserves. The response to this was varied. Most workers saw the necessity to stay on the mines to oversee and strengthen the strike. Others faced practical difficulties in returning home.

Vaal Reefs: "We did not go home because we did not have money. The banks through which we deposit our money were closed to us. We also thought that if others went home this might easily bring a division among our ranks of fighters, whom we are presently building up during these strikes to be brave and fearless fighters and leaders of tomorrow."

Evander: "We don't have the exact figure of how many workers did go home, but at Leslie mine about half of the strength decided to go home; and also at some other branches some of the workers did go home—but not all of them."

"A large number remained to support the strike. You see some workers want to be there in the strike, they want to see what is happening, rather than going home, and being at home."

"And another problem, if everybody can go home then the management will be able to hire some people, let's say temporarily, to work on the mines. Now it's becoming difficult for them to get other people to work."

Far West Rand: "Most of the workers at our mine went home except the shaft stewards. We only stayed a week at home, and then we came back on the 17th and on the 22nd we were fired."

"Management was trying to close the hostel, and said, 'OK, if you don't want to go to work, go home.'"

Management violence

What tactics were management using to try and intimidate workers and break the strike?

Orange Free State: "At Saaiplaas they tried to separate people into their tribes. They say the Basotho must not participate in the strike although it is a legal strike, because these people are foreigners in this country."

"Mine security have forced people to go down. Also the management have encouraged team-leaders to force people underground. No matter whether the man is working on the surface or not, they forced each and everybody."

"In one incident at the road junction outside President Steyn workers were gathered waiting for taxis which are not allowed to go into the shaft but then the security police shot at them using rubber bullets and tear gas—nine people were injured, and others were in hospital."

Evander: "Violence is being caused by management. At Bracken and Kinross the security used to go around the hostel every morning to say the workers had to wake up. Now, they are well armed next to the doors, when they see a worker coming out not having working clothes on they just take him to a



Trotsky and Lenin.

account of the relationship of forces resulting from Russia's uneven development.

Elements of modern industry had been injected, through foreign capital, into a society dominated by landlords and ruled by an absolute monarchy. The capitalists had arrived too late on the scene, and were too cowardly to fight for progressive changes. Long before 1917 they had held the real economic power. But they relied on the Tsar for protection, and feared the consequences of any big movements among the masses. Above all, they feared the working class—relatively small, but compact, highly conscious and combative.

The liberal capitalists, in Lenin's view, had long ago proved their inability to carry through their historical tasks. The workers should place no reliance on the liberals whatsoever. Lenin always argued for an independent policy and organisation for the working class.

In the years before the revolution Lenin had accepted position (b). Given the bankruptcy of the liberal bourgeoisie, the revolution would be carried through by an alliance of the workers, the most conscious and dynamic force, and the peasantry, the preponderant exploited class. This perspective was summed up in Lenin's formula "the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry."

'Dictatorship' did not mean totalitarian rule (this was before the monstrosity of Stalinism!) but class domination, which would be based on democratic soviet-type organisations. 'Democratic' expressed recognition of the bourgeois character of the tasks to be carried out.

However, Lenin was far from putting a Chinese wall between the bourgeois-democratic and the socialist revolutions. He was convinced that, because of capitalism's international character, the Russian revolution would be one link in a chain of world-wide revolutions. A revolutionary government in Russia would, through collaboration with revolutionary workers' governments in advanced capitalist countries, move towards a second, socialist revolution in Russia. How quickly this would happen would depend not on any predetermined historical timetable, but on the relationship of forces. Above all, it would be determined by the strength of the proletariat involved in the struggle. As far back as 1906 Lenin had written: "We stand for uninterrupted revolution. We shall not stop halfway."

Lenin's formula, as he explained in April 1917, was 'algebraic'. It expressed the class relationships but left open the specific weight of the political forces involved, and did not attempt to quantify the concrete tasks to be carried out.

Trotsky, whose perspective was bolder and more concrete, warned in 1906 that any tendency on the part of the proletariat to accept bourgeois-democratic limits would become anti-revolutionary, and could be potentially fatal to the revolution. A failure on the part of the revolutionary dictatorship to implement socialist measures would in practice undermine the forces of the proletariat. The leadership would in reality be conceded, under these circumstances, to the liberal bourgeoisie—opening the door to the danger of counter-revolution.

Old Bolsheviks

By developing the revolutionary essence of his formula in relation to the concrete events of 1917 Lenin avoided this danger. With regard to the 'Old Bolsheviks', Trotsky's warning proved far-sighted and all too true. They clung to Lenin's 'antiquated' and now 'meaningless' (as Lenin made clear in the *April Theses*) formula of the democratic dictatorship.

Kamenev and Stalin claimed to be standing on Lenin's previous perspective (b). In reality, the logic of this position—conditional support for the Provisional government and the postponement of the struggle on the workers' own demands—led them back to the Menshevik's position (a) of an alliance with the liberal bourgeoisie, with the workers playing second fiddle. Was it an accident that, prior to Lenin's return, Stalin and Kamenev supported discussions with the Mensheviks on re-unification?

The remaining position (c), the only one which proved genuinely revolutionary in 1917, was that of the Permanent Revolution. This was the position adopted by Lenin in February 1917, outlined in his *Letters from Afar* and spelt out in the *April Theses*:

"The specific feature of the present situation in Russia is that the country is passing from the first stage of the revolution...to its second stage, which must place power in the hands of the proletariat and the poorest sections of the peasants...The Soviets of Workers' Deputies are the only possible form of revolutionary government..."

The position of Lenin and Trotsky coincided in 1917. Lenin saw that in the epoch of imperialism which dominated class relations internationally, the bourgeoisie of semi-developed countries like Russia had exhausted their historical mission. They could no longer complete the tasks undertaken by their predecessors in the classical revolutions of the past. These tasks now fell on the shoulders of the working class. Lenin now accepted Trotsky's bold conclusion that the working class had to take power notwithstanding its numerical weakness. But in taking on these tasks, left over from a previous era, the proletariat could not avoid linking them with the socialist measures essential to meet the workers' immediate needs.

Given the economic backwardness and barbarous culture of a country like Russia, however, it was clearly imperative for the proletariat to adopt an internationalist outlook, striving to link up with the proletariat of more advanced countries possessing the material conditions for socialist development. For fundamental material reasons, it is only on the basis of the international extension of the revolution that the workers of a backward country could proceed to the construction of socialism.

Referring to the Permanent Revolution, Lenin told his comrade Adolf Joffe: "Trotsky was right." After 1917 the polemics of the past no longer seemed so important. Lenin's contempt for those who clung to his old formula was made clear in the brutal language of the *April Theses*.

However, there are many later comments which remove all doubt about Lenin's view. On the fourth anniversary of the revolution, for instance, Lenin said: "In order to consolidate the achievements of the bourgeois-democratic revolu-

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police van. In most of the houses they used to open the doors and throw some tear gas inside, and when they come out they would beat them.

"Yesterday at Kinross mine-workers were just eating when they threw teargas into the room, then as the workers were coming out they fired rubber bullets, then they got in and assaulted workers with the butt of the gun. Maybe if you go to Kinross mine you can see the

workers pulled out the windows and jumped out of the windows."

Vaal Reefs: "Workers were just sitting in their compounds. There were suddenly tents being erected by management outside the compounds. They said the tents were for those who were not on strike. But at our mine everyone voted for the strike. When the management saw no-one was moving to these camps they tried to cause faction

fighters.

"This also did not work. Then they tried to get in the Russians (vigilantes). We could not sleep; then Hippos started rolling in. It was around four in the morning. They forced us out of the compounds into the houses. Then they shot people, in the hostels, kitchens, and those who were washing.

"They said those who were injured must go to the mine hospital. They went, then they were arrested. They were later released. They were still injured. They were only treated by NUM doctors in Johannesburg. Real bullets, rubber bullets, and teargas were used on us."

Evander: "Management also used other methods. They tried to convince workers by telling them that other mines have already gone back to work. Then they try to reduce their confidence counting the figures of money they are losing per day. Workers seeing the figures think they we are losing a lot by just staying here getting nothing; others decide well they cannot support the strike any more."

Mine bosses recruit scabs

Evander: "Scabs are being recruited from Lesotho. In fact management has control through the agencies; they say each TEBA must recruit one hundred people a day. One of the TEBA people told me they are recruiting workers even if they've got no experience on the mines. That's mainly for Western Deep No 1 and Vaal Reefs."

Did workers try to convince those who were still working that they must join the strike? What approaches did strikers make to scabs?

Evander: "At our mine from the beginning the indunas and tribal reps stayed separately from the workers. So workers went to them and told them not to stay there



Mineworkers waiting for transport to take them home.

tion... we are obliged to go farther; and we did go farther. We solved the problems of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in passing as a 'by-product' of our main and genuinely proletarian-revolutionary, socialist activities."

The April Theses today

Had the Russian revolution been successfully extended internationally, with the development of a socialist federation embracing economically advanced countries, the discussion of pre-1917 perspectives would now be of only historical interest to Marxists.

Unfortunately, with the defeat of the revolution in Europe, Soviet Russia was isolated. The revolution suffered an inevitable degeneration. The democratic control of the workers was usurped by a bureaucratic elite, which found a bonapartist representative in the person of Stalin.

As the bureaucracy became more remote from the working class within Russia, so it increasingly gave up confidence in the proletariat abroad. The Communist International was transformed into an agency of the bureaucracy's foreign policy. Searching for national security, the bureaucracy began to play a counter-revolutionary role on the world arena. The perspective for an independent struggle for socialism was abandoned.

In an effort to provide theoretical, 'Leninist' justification, Stalin exhumed Lenin's old formula of the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. In other words, they returned to the policy they had supported at the beginning of 1917—before they had been defeated by Lenin in the struggle within the party.

The revival of this discredited policy was applied with disastrous results to the Chinese revolution of 1925-26. Against the wishes of the leadership of the Chinese communists, the Stalinist bureaucracy imposed a policy of subordination to the Chinese bourgeoisie led by Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuo mintang. This led to the defeat of China's dynamic working class, with the massacre of thousands of Communists and militants. Since then, the same policy has been applied in many countries—always with the same disastrous results.

In the post-Second World War period the ex-colonial lands have experienced a series of revolutionary upheavals. The communist party leaders, still dominated by Stalinist ideology, have invariably subordinated the workers' organisations to the interests of national-capitalist leaders.

In many cases this has meant support for bonapartist, including military bonapartist leaders, Sukharno in Indonesia, Kassim in Iraq, Goncalves in Portugal—the list could be extended around the world many times.

In Chile between 1970-73, the CP leaders supported the popular government of Allende. This was on the basis of the so-called anti-imperialist, anti-monopoly programme—to make 'inroads' into the power of capital. In other words, their perspective was that of completing a bourgeois-democratic

The July Days

—turning point in the revolution

The Russian revolution is the richest experience in the history of the working class.

February 1917 saw a massive movement which toppled the Tsar's dictatorship. In April Lenin returned from exile and denounced the coalition government of capitalist politicians and compromising socialists, or 'moderates' as the press would undoubtedly call them today. He drew up a programme for his party, the Bolsheviks, which meant a complete break with the 'Provisional government' and the capitalists.

These events are described in the foregoing articles. Here TONY CROSS explains the events that came to be known as the 'July Days', when the capital city teetered on the brink of another revolution.

The Provisional government had solved none of the country's problems.

The war dragged on, meaning slaughter at the front and starvation at home. Workers in the cities were aggravated by food shortages on the one hand, while profiteers made fortunes from arms production and the black market on the other.

In the villages, peasants were beginning to get impatient with airy promises that the land would be redistributed leading to no official action.

The soldiers were demanding an end to the war with more

and more urgency. The bulk of them were peasant conscripts. Not only did they wish to avoid death at the front, but by now they also wished to return to their villages for the harvest, lest their crops rot in the field.

Meanwhile, the capitalists regarded the intervention of the masses into history with hatred. They sabotaged the economy in order to discredit the revolution and organised a creeping lock-out.

The February revolution had exploded independently of even the socialist parties and had succeeded in destroying Tsarism. But, above the heads of the masses, the Menshevik and Socialist Revolutionary leaders formed a coalition government with liberal princes and capitalists in the leading positions.

February also saw the revival of the soviets, councils elected by workers, soldiers and peasants in city wards, towns and villages and then at regional and national level. They were a focus of workers' democracy, which had more authority with the masses than the Provisional government.

The Mensheviks and SRs had the majority in them. The masses had confidence in these leaders whom the Tsar's regime had denounced as dangerous revolutionaries and in some cases gaoled or exiled.

But the compromisers, as the Bolsheviks called them, had accepted the dictates of the Kadets, who controlled the provisional government. The government and Soviet leaders

because they are doing management's work. 'Let's be all on strike and fight together'. They asked them to leave and come and join the strike—which they did!

"Then the workers put their own reps, not mine security, at the entrance to the hostel and in the kitchen. But now the management is taking a hard line and expelling them."

Vaal Reefs: "There were lessons that non-strikers learnt. The team-leaders especially. They went underground to work. When they got there they were forced to 'layisha' (load). Some of them refused. The white miners then beat them up. Those who worked were forced to work hard. They have learnt the hard way, nothing pleases the bosses. If you become their sweet boy, the more they make you work hard for peanuts.

"One team-leader called Tola had his jaws crushed. He refused to 'layisha' saying he was a team-leader. A white miner told him that all those who did not work were not underground but in their hostels fighting for better wages. All those who were underground were there to work. Many workers were injured in this way but the management told them to say they had been beaten by strikers.

"Those who were forced to work hard later came to us and begged forgiveness!"

Have there been any cases where mine security have joined the strike?

Evander: "No. I think they joined them in some ways; let's say they co-operate with the workers, but they do not go with the workers. The security are not allowed to join our union in this area; that is all these Gencor mines. They do not go with the workers, but they support the workers.

"Management don't always trust their own mine security. During the strike they bring other security from other mines. For instance we've got a problem here, there are security from as far as Rustenburg.

Mass dismissals

In the last 72 hours of the strike 36 000 workers lost their jobs, bringing the total number of dismissals to 46 000. The mining houses had already announced that a further 50 000 would lose their jobs if they did not return to work, and that they would accelerate the pace of these dismissals.

For the whole period of the strike management had used the threat of "return by... or the sack" as a weapon to force miners back to work. At Vaal Reefs No 6 workers were told by the bosses that strike action would "force" them to close the shaft.

OFS: "Some were dismissed at No 1 Western Holdings...and there's others at No 2 and at No 4. At President Steyn they dismissed 90 shop stewards. They were told that if they don't want to go back to work they will dismiss them. Even those who ran away from the strike, and went home, and when they came back what they say is that they took a date for them. And if you failed to report on that day then they dismiss you."

Klerksdorp: "I think about 18 000 were dismissed in the end from Vaal Reefs. Everybody who didn't adhere to their ultimatum was summarily dismissed. This was before the 29th...before NUM was meeting management to discuss violence.

"When workers decided to come back from home they are refused by management to enter their hostels. You come to the gates, which are manned by security, and they don't want to let you in. But still most workers are staying away."

The end of the strike

On the weekend of 29-30 August NUM leaders again met with the Chamber, and on August 30 it was announced that the strike was over. NUM leaders accepted the Chamber's offer of 23%, which had been

"We are also miners"

Business Day (16/8/1987) reported:

About 180 black workers at Anglo's Johannesburg head office staged a solidarity sit-in at a nearby church for the mine-workers. They were also protesting against the Anglo's structure for airing grievances.

"What we want to say to management is that we are also miners," the office-workers said.

...But some aren't

In the corridors of power. The Anglo-American building, Johannesburg 10.20 am (20 minutes after official 'tea' time)

First white: Have you had your tea yet?

Second white: No.

First white: Oh!

Third white: I haven't had my tea either, have you had your tea?

Fourth white: No, I wonder if it's coming, let me go and have a look.

Third white: Yes, have a look, its twenty minutes late.

Fourth white (returns): The kitchen door is locked. I wonder where everybody is.

Second white: No, the black staff are all on strike.

Fourth white: Oh!

First white: Why?

Second white: They are striking in solidarity with the miners.

Third white: Oh!

First white: I suppose that means we won't get any tea today. We'll just have to get some ourselves I suppose.

Third white: Oh!

Fourth white: We've never not had tea before you know.

rejected by the workers four days earlier. Workers returned to work, but in many cases management has refused to reinstate sacked workers, especially NUM activists.

Far West Rand: "At Randfontein

stage of revolution, with the struggle for worker's power and socialism postponed beyond the horizon. Following this line, the CP leaders helped to restrain the magnificent movement of the Chilean workers—who are still living with the horrendous results.

Similarly, in South Africa the Stalinists within the leadership of the ANC base themselves on the theory of stages. In spite of the magnificent movement of the black workers and youth, they believe that the programme of revolution must be limited, at this stage, to national democratic tasks. They fail to see that capitalism has completely exhausted the progressive role it once played.

Crisis of Stalinism

The crisis in Stalinism and the reformist degeneration of the various communist parties has severed many of the links with Moscow. But the CP leaders nevertheless perpetuate the false ideas of Stalin in 1917—ideas which had to be swept aside by Lenin in order to ensure the success of the revolution.

If in 1917 the idea that the bourgeois-democratic revolution had to be exhausted before the workers could move towards socialism was incorrect, today it is totally absurd.

On the one side, the capitalist class of the underdeveloped countries is even more subservient to the big monopolies and

banks of the advanced capitalist countries than in the past. It is unable to play an independent, progressive role. Even where the national bourgeoisie has taken over, they have failed to complete their traditional tasks. On the contrary, given the world-wide capitalist crisis, they have accumulated even more problems and fostered grotesque social contradictions.

On the other side, the national bourgeoisie of the ex-colonial lands is almost everywhere confronted by a powerful working class. Especially in the semi-developed countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, the capitalists are paralysed by fear of the proletariat—much stronger now than the workers of Russia in 1917.

Many strikes, general strikes, and insurrectionary movements have proved the preparedness of the workers to struggle.

The weakness of the proletariat in the ex-colonial lands cannot be attributed to the incompleteness of the national bourgeois-democratic revolution. The failure of the workers in these regions to assume the leadership of the exploited peasantry and the impoverished petty-bourgeoisie and to lead society out of its present blind alley is due to its political weakness. This reflects the absence of revolutionary Marxist policy based on the ideas of Lenin and Trotsky and put to test in 1917.

That is why the controversy of 1917 is still a live issue. The lessons of the *April Theses* have to be learned, re-learned and carried to class conscious workers throughout the world.

seemed paralysed by the contending class forces the revolution had aroused and the masses became increasingly frustrated with the compromisist leaders.

The workers of Petrograd were the quickest to draw the political conclusions from their frustration, and their politicisation infected the soldiers posted in the city. The centralised Tsarist state had meant that the capital had a decisive social weight in Russian society. A large proportion of the working class was concentrated in the city too. So rotten was the Tsarist regime, that insurrection in Petrograd alone had been enough to finish it off. The provinces had followed Petrograd with little trouble.

So, when the compromisers betrayed their hopes before their very eyes, the Petrograd workers and soldiers moved quickly towards the slogans of Lenin and the Bolsheviks.

The Bolsheviks understood that they could not win the Menshevik and SR workers and peasants simply by issuing an ultimatum to them to drop their established party allegiances. Just as today workers support mass parties, because of the tradition they represent, so most Russian workers and peasants looked to these reformist leaders.

Soviet power

So the Bolsheviks' slogans demanded of these parties' leaders that they do the job their supporters expected them to do.

Their key demands were that the socialists break with the Kadets and take political power into their own hands. The compromisers could easily have done this by declaring the executive of the Soviet the government of the country. The Bolshevik slogans "Down with the ten capitalist ministers!" and "All power to the soviets!" became increasingly popular amongst the masses.

Already in June, the Bolsheviks had called a demonstration

to coincide with the first all-Russian soviet congress. They had been under special pressure from the soldiers who opposed the government's plans for a new military offensive.

The compromisers had an overwhelming majority at the congress. It demanded that the Bolsheviks call off their demonstration. But it had been forced to call an official soviet demonstration for the following Sunday, under the blandest possible slogans.

It was a huge success...for the Bolsheviks! 400 000 attended, but to the compromisers' horror, their banners bore the Bolsheviks' 'extremist' slogans. Despite this, the government continued on its rightward course. On 18 June the new offensive started.

The June demonstrations showed the Bolsheviks were the leading political force in Petrograd. But the same was not yet true for the rest of the country.

Millions of soldiers at the front and peasants in the provinces had only just heard of them, and that through the usually vitriolic reports of the capitalist press and the compromisers. They still had confidence in their leaders, even though they often put forward the Bolsheviks' demands of "bread, peace and land".

Lenin understood that soon these illusions would turn into their opposite. But pressure was mounting in Petrograd for immediate action against Kerensky's government.

Ultra-left sectarians imagine that revolutionaries merely have to find the most left point on the political spectrum and occupy it. But a serious workers' party has to weigh all the political, strategic and tactical considerations in a situation in order to achieve victory.

The Bolsheviks could have taken power in Petrograd in June or July. But the rest of the country would not have followed suit. There would have been a repeat of the Paris Commune of 1871. There the workers in the French capital had taken power briefly, but were eventually butchered into submission by the Prussian army in collaboration with the French capitalist class.

1987 MINE STRIKE

Estates where the strike was 100% all the shaft stewards, and some members, have been dismissed. Then at unrecognised mines like Venterspost, Western Point, Durban Deep, only a few people went on strike, and they fired all of them. 52 workers were fired at Durban Deep.

"The union is trying to assist workers to get their jobs back but in the meantime, management has called workers to come and report for duty.

"At Randfontein, when they went back to report for re-employment, they were called in numbers of ten and then management asked the vigilante group inside the office: 'Do you need this one, do you need this one?' And if they say, 'No, this is a shaft steward, we are no more interested in him', then they chase him away. These vigilantes are made up of hostel indunas ... And one is the manager."

Lessons of the strike

Far West Rand: "Workers feel very unhappy about the end of the strike."

But "last year very few people believed the union would be able to pull out so many workers and let alone for three weeks. I think we've

proved many people wrong and I think the same will apply for the future as well. The Chamber themselves acknowledged this—the muscle and the discipline and the organisation of the NUM. They never expected so many workers, they expected about 6 000 workers. workers.

"The fact that the strike went on created a loss of profits. For the Chamber, this was their main concern, and was the cause of the repressive measures with which they dismissed workers and tried to break the strike in the end.

"On this question of dismissals we feel that the problem of this year's strike is the fact that the other mines were still continuing working. So we feel we should organise those mines who didn't go on strike.

"We also feel that in future we must try by all means to make it a point that TEBA does not recruit."

Vaal Reefs No 8: "There is only one lesson there, if we go on strike we must be sure that most of us are on strike, and we must be united. Unity is something the bosses saw they cannot break and also our fighting spirit.

"If the strike is 100% on with proper support structures, and understanding from the community about our demands, the strike can be successful.

"Although we failed to achieve our chief demand, an increase in wages up to 30%, there have been significant gains and lessons. Unity is the chief important factor. We also have to remember that we must always move forward. A strike like this is preparing us for tougher battles ahead. It is building up the militancy of the workers in their demands for a living wage.

"The next time we will obviously avoid this and that mistake, but we know the history of the mines, the mine bosses, the state, the police, and the workers who go on strike. This will forever build our strength, correct our weaknesses, to fight for a living wage since we, and not the bosses, produce the wealth under the earth."

Strike committee member, Vaal Reefs: "The message that we got from COSATU was that we cannot go backwards, we must go forward. But we think that other COSATU affiliates must put into practice the slogan 'an injury to one is an injury to all'.

"We know that most of the factories derive from the mines, or these factories supply the mines. The mine bosses have control or shares in those factories, so that when we are on strike the other bosses feel the pinch. But industrial action will make them feel the punch. Should workers in the factories also go on strike, we will get what we want."



Mine security guards seal off a mine entrance during the strike.

One of the reasons for this tragic defeat was the Commune's isolation from the rest of France, which allowed the reactionaries to regroup outside the city.

In Russia there was the added danger that many front-line soldiers at that stage believed that their comrades' refusal to go to the front jeopardised their chances of going home. So the Bolsheviks had to restrain the Petrograd masses from a showdown with the government.

This was not the most popular policy, especially with many of the soldiers who imagined that the possession of guns gave them an easy solution to all problems. They imagined that a further revolution could be accomplished as easily as February's.

Even sections of the Party, the rawest recruits and those closest to the impatient masses, were affected by the prevailing mood, and were less than enthusiastic in putting the Party's position over.

Government in crisis

On 2 July, the Kadets threw the government into crisis. Using some timid concessions to Ukrainian nationalism as a pretext, the four Kadet ministers resigned. In reality, they knew that the offensive was collapsing and decided to let the compromisers deal with the consequences on their own.

At the same time a company of machine-gunners were due to leave for the front. On hearing that the coalition had been

destroyed, and with it the compromisers' excuses for their political inaction, the gunners' regiment sent delegates round factories and regiments calling for an armed demonstration.

By 7.00 p.m. the factories were at a standstill and a massive demonstration had assembled. Unlike in the early days of the revolution, middle-class well-wishers were absent. "Today only the common slaves of capital were marching" said one participant. The Liberal, Nabokov, saw only "insane, dumb, beastlike faces".

The Bolsheviks were faced with an accomplished fact. They tried to restrain the masses, but to no avail. The Party's Petrograd Committee, which was meeting at the time, had to reconsider the position. Just as irresponsible as advocating a mistaken course of action, would have been abandoning the masses to their fate once they had taken that course.

Marxists cannot always choose the ground on which to fight. Sometimes workers feel forced to take action regardless of whether their leaders feel it is tactically advisable. If battle becomes inevitable, Marxists must advocate the best tactics in the circumstances so that the masses will suffer fewer setbacks and draw correct conclusions from their experiences.

By now, reactionaries were provoking skirmishes with the demonstrators which they hoped would come to a bloody head. The Committee, along with representatives of the Central Committee, issued an appeal for a peaceful demonstration which would present its demands to the Soviet executive, and joined the march.

The demonstrations continued for a second day, this time joined by 10 000 from the Kronstadt naval fortress. Inevi

"The fact of the matter is that it was not an ordinary demonstration; it was something considerably more than a demonstration, but less than a revolution. It was an outburst of revolution and counter-revolution together, a sharp, sometimes sudden elimination of the middle elements, while the proletarian and bourgeois elements made a stormy appearance." Lenin on the July Days.



Scene in Petrograd, July 1917, after a demonstration was attacked by troops loyal to the Provisional Government.

LETTER

During the strike *Inqaba* received this letter from a former mineworker who has been actively involved in the recent past in building the NUM. Although we were unable to publish it at the time we think the comrade's letter will be of interest to our readers.

Dear comrades,

11/8/1987

Comrade Cyril Ramaphosa has told the mineworkers to go home for the period of the strike. He said he was doing this to prevent them from being killed by the police.

I believe that if the workers accepted this decision it will weaken the strike very much.

First of all, that unity the workers have got is going to be damaged.

Where the strike is not 100% solid, how can you deal with strike-breakers if the strikers have gone home? The strikers need to be able to identify those who have doubts, those who think that half a loaf is better than none, and take measures to show them that if they stand and fight together victory can be theirs.

We work 5 kms down. It is no joke, but the wage we were getting last year was R300 per month and that includes Sunday working. The majority of the workers did not get R400. Imagine the numbers that would support the living wage campaign if properly prepared and fought for.

When there were strikes previously, we just sat quietly in the hostel. It was difficult for them to attack us when we were united. The violence there came when mine security wanted to protect scabs.

We used to sing freedom songs for encouragement and have a meeting every day on the mine premises to discuss the strike.

For some mineworkers, Malawi is home. Where are the workers to get the R100 to take them home? It is many days travelling. What happens if the bosses make an offer? How will the NUM leaders contact the rank-and-file if they have gone home? Must they use SABC and *Ilanga*?

Families will expect money from returning workers. They will have to draw money unexpectedly as there was no plan before for them to go home now.

There should have been a plan

two months back by the NUM leadership to collect extra rands from the workers and explain to them that it is going to be used during the strike to feed them and organise transport to meetings.

In the homelands, it will be easy for Gatsha and Zwelithini to address the workers in tribal language. They will try to persuade them to go back to work, as the Lesotho government already seems to be doing. The state will work with the tribal authorities to control the movement of the workers.

If the workers go home, how are they going to fight UWUSA?

Other unions should be asked to support the miners. How can the working class as a whole support the mineworkers if they are sent home to rest in the reserves, and when they weren't even chased there by the bosses in the first place?

No place

Comrade Cyril should not go along with the migrant labour system in any way. By telling the workers to go home that means there is no place for them here if they are not working.

The workers must stay as near to where they are working to protect their mines and to keep that unity.

The workers' power comes from being together where they work. This is shown by the workers at Western Deep and elsewhere who have taken over mine kitchens and hostels. At some mines it is reported that the workers have set up roadblocks and are controlling the hostel gates to stop people going to work.

The NUM leaders must appeal to township dwellers to work hand in hand with the miners for food and a place to stay. At Kloof gold mine last year, the 30 people from the local township of Bekkersdal who worked at the shop servicing the mine went on strike. The Youth Congress asked the miners to boy-

cott the shop which they did. Now the miners can go to the community and ask for that support to be returned.

Youth spoke at our strike meetings during last year's pay strike at Kloof. Shaft stewards had got to know the activists through their visits to the township. Those contacts must be made into firm links now.

Township dwellers will easily support the mineworkers. Even taxi-owners provided us with free transport during last year's strike.

People can have respect for mineworkers. It takes guts to work in the mines. The person working next to you can just die. Many give up working after a day.

The whole country is going to shake with the strike. There won't be money for Botha's Hippos.

It is a very favourable opportunity for COSATU's living wage campaign. Small factories who are fearful of taking action because of their size can now join with the miners. COSATU must call a general strike around this question.

Each and every strike taking place at present has the same grievances. It may not be the same bosses, but everywhere workers are treated the same. Everywhere workers are demanding an end to cheap labour.

It is not going to be easy to dismiss so many mineworkers. It takes time to recruit their replacements, and then you cannot just go underground. You have to learn how to handle yourself down there, and the people who do the training are the ones on strike! It looks like the bosses are just going to have to do with one house and one Benz.

June 16th last year the miners did not participate in the general strike. They do feel part of the struggle, but want to know how.

A clear strategy for this strike and action by the rest of the working class will end the isolation of the mineworkers for ever. Our movement will be powerfully strengthened in its fight for national liberation and socialism.

Yours in the struggle,

A former Kloof mineworker.

tably, provocateurs fired on the demonstration. In the evening, two Cossack squadrons sparked off a small battle which claimed 13 lives.

When they finally faced the Soviet leaders, the workers got nothing but empty phrases. "Take the power, you son of a bitch, when they give it to you", one worker shouted at a 'socialist' minister.

At the height of the demonstrations, the rich had rushed to the stations, desperate to get out of town. As the movement began to subside, workers found in the better-off areas were attacked and beaten as the reactionaries regained confidence.

The Bolshevik Central Committee called on workers and soldiers to end the demonstration and this time their call was heeded. At five o'clock in the morning, the Soviet's leaders were 'saved' from the workers lobbying them by officers and soldiers led by a well-known Menshevik lieutenant.

Vital lesson

Workers and soldiers were disoriented by the lack of results from this massive movement. Why was it not possible to repeat February's success with the same ease? The July Days were a temporary blow to their morale.

The rightists on the other hand were tremendously emboldened. The compromisers had been terrified by the masses and had proved that they would not act against capitalism. The reaction raised its head. The Bolsheviks were particularly viciously attacked. They were accused of organising an attempted insurrection, the exact opposite of the truth.

Despite the painful consequences, in some senses the July Days were an essential experience for the Bolshevik Party and the advanced workers.

Afterwards Lenin pointed out that if the compromise leaders had put the slogan "All power to the Soviets" into action, Russian society would have been transformed peacefully. In the July Days, Petrograd's workers and soldiers tried to force the Mensheviks and SRs to adopt a common programme with the Bolsheviks. "Many still cherished the illusion that everything could be obtained by words and demonstrations," remarked Trotsky.

The partial defeat taught them that the Bolshevik leaders had been right in warning that the task was not so easy as it had seemed at first. They learned that the reformist leaders had to be replaced.

For a final showdown with the capitalists, the Petrograd workers were forced to conclude, a general staff was necessary and that general staff was the Bolshevik Party. Even out of a setback the Party won a deeper loyalty from and authority over the masses.

Trotsky later pointed out that the most difficult task of the October revolution was not the seizure of power, but enduring the struggles and privations necessary to hold onto it.

Here too, the July Days and their aftermath were an essential lesson "...At that time our workers and soldiers would not have fought and died for Petrograd," Lenin said. Subsequent events were to teach them that power could be won and kept only by their own efforts and self-sacrifice tied to the leadership of Lenin's and Trotsky's party.

"As a technical trial," the Kadet leader Miliukov wrote, "the experience was for them (the Bolsheviks) undoubtedly of extraordinary value...It was evident that when the time came for repeating the experiment, they would carry it more systematically and consciously."

The Bolsheviks did absorb the lessons of the July Days and they were invaluable for the victory in October.

July—August

The month of the great slander

After the defeat of the July days, the Bolsheviks had their backs to the wall. Their press had been smashed and many of their leaders were being hounded. The reaction was further boosted by the 'revelation' that Lenin was really in the pay of the German government (with which Russia was still at war). This lie peddled by a couple of drunken adventurers, implausible though it was, was suddenly seized upon by the press with all the power of the establishment behind it.

The ruling class had felt the full weight of the revolutionary threat to their rule, in the July demonstrations and in the growing sympathy amongst the masses for Bolshevism. So all the forces of capitalist opinion turned their fire on those who dared to challenge the accepted order the Bolshevik leaders. As Trotsky explains, all the parties virtually ceased attacking each other, to concentrate on "their common baiting of the Bolsheviks".

For workers and youth today slanders and gross personal abuse by the capitalist press and politicians are all too familiar.

The Bolsheviks survived this month of lies and slurs. Their members were tempered and hardened by the experience. By August a new chapter in the Russian Revolution was already opening, in which the Bolsheviks were able to take a leading part, throwing off any mud that might have stuck, and building the support in the ranks of the working class that allowed them to be the decisive force in the dramatic days of October.

Here we reprint extracts from Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution*, on the 'month of the great slander':

On a scale hitherto unheard of, the slander was sown in the thick of the popular masses, a vast majority of whom had heard of the Bolshevik leaders for the first time only after the February revolution. Mud slinging here became a political factor of primary importance...

But how did it happen that the materials of a preliminary investigation appeared in print, and moreover just at the moment when the shattered offensive of Kerensky (in the war with Germany) was becoming a catastrophe, and the July demonstration in Petrograd was revealing the irresistible growth of the Bolsheviks? One of the initiators of this business, the attorney general, Bassarabov, later frankly described in the press how, when it became clear that the Provisional Government in Petrograd was wholly without reliable armed forces, it was decided in the district headquarters to try to create a psychological change in the regiments by means of some strong medicine...

Zinoviev appeared at a sitting of the bureau of the Executive Committee (of the Soviet), and in the name of the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks demanded that immediate measures be taken to exonerate Lenin and to prevent possible consequences of the slander. The bureau could not refuse to appoint a commission of inquiry.

But the July days had produced a serious shift of power to the

'Nithini na ku nje nje?' — The railway workers' historic victory

On Tuesday 9th June railway workers came back to Johannesburg in their thousands, to sign on for their return to work. They had won an historic victory.

This did not seem possible in the dark days of April, when 16 000 strikers were sacked, and the government seemed determined to smash the strike by brute force. Strike meetings were attacked; seven railworkers were killed on 22 April in clashes with the police; COSATU house was raided and bombed. The government had embarked on a display of *kradadigheid* for the white elections.

But the railway workers stood firm. Only 300 out of the 16 000 railway workers who were sacked had applied to the South African Transport Services (SATS) for their jobs back. This was one of the things which won the strike. SATS lost half a million rand for each day of the 12 week dispute and it consumed nearly 1 million worker-days of lost production. On bloody Wednesday, after the siege of COSATU House, an old railway worker stood on the steps of the union headquarters and said, "We are not going back until we win." It turns out that he was speaking for thousands.

White election

After the white elections Botha needed to go back to manoeuvres of so-called reform. He sought to overcome the rejection by blacks of his constitutional schemes. He feared to provoke still further the resistance of the working class demonstrated in the May 5-6 general strike. This was the second reason for the concession to the railway workers—which could never have happened unless they stood firm.

SATS management in settling the strike had to agree to re-employ all those sacked, that workers who were detained would get their jobs back, that African workers would get the same staff status as white and coloured workers and that

By David Jones

workers could elect their own representatives. **The last concession effectively means the end of BLATU, the sweetheart company union on the railways.**

The settlement was announced on Friday 5th June and on the days that followed SARHWU offices in Durban, Cape Town and elsewhere were under siege as thousands rushed to sign up. Union organisers claimed that SARHWU could net as many as 75 000 of the 100 000 workers.

All this, too, in the face of the most vicious onslaught by the state on COSATU. All this during a State of Emergency when the state tried to use 5 000 special police drafted into Johannesburg to smash the strike. And all this in one of the most viciously policed industries in the apartheid state!

What a marvellous victory! What a wonderful confirmation that the future of the people of South Africa is in the hands of the workers. What a slap in the face to those faint-hearts who said these workers were too undisciplined to win!

The workers knew that they had won a victory. One said in the street on June 5th "I am very much happy today. We won, oh yes, we won."

You had to see the scenes in central Johannesburg on that Tuesday to believe them. By mid-morning 2 000 workers had packed into the main hall at Lekton House to hear of the settlement. Another 2 000 at least were gathered outside. Inside, the workers were packed together, like at a football match, row upon row of shining faces. Hard worn faces many of them were. And some which had seen the bottom of many beer bottles! There were old men with grey hair, young men with shaved heads, some dressed in their Sunday best, others in threadbare suits, coats and jackets, but everywhere there was unrestrained joy. "Phanzi, BLATU, phanzi! Viva, SARHWU, viva!", the cries rang

out.

On the same day outside it was like a carnival. A carnival created from the barest human essentials, human voices, human expression and body rhythm. There was a sea of smiles, so much that it seemed you could pluck a handful of joy from the air and put it in your pocket to give to the kids when you got home.

It was some day that June 5th. They sang and danced all morning. They sang "Botha is on the run", "We hit the bosses", and the railway workers' favourite: "Nithini na ku nje nje".

Chant

This last is a long sonorous chant and can be a celebration of victory or an intoning of defeat. "Well, what do you say about it now?" it says. Really "what do you say of the future?" As they danced, swayed and sung with such fervour it was impossible to watch without your eyes filling with emotion.

This slave revolt was not just a celebration of a victory. It was a celebration of a future, of what is still to come. After an hour, or maybe more, thousands danced their way from Lekton House one kilometre to Joubert Park for more celebration.

You had to see those faces to get even a glimpse of what the strike meant to them all, of what it meant in their lives. A celebration of their own faith in themselves.

We stood up to baasskap, no more "Hey kaffir" for us. No more "Ja my baas". We stood up...and we won.

Of course for those railway workers the strike victory did not make life a paradise. There will be other battles to come. This strike was only a beginning. But you could not have started to talk to any of them about all that on June 5th. No way. Because on that day they were there for the dancing. When the strike started they were slaves. On June 5th they announced to the world they were here as a power, as workers. Amandla!

right, and moreover the Soviet commission was in no hurry to fulfil a task obviously in conflict with the political interests of those who had entrusted it. The more serious of the Compromise leaders—that is, properly speaking, only the Mensheviks—were concerned to establish a formal disconnection with the slander, but nothing more. In all cases where it was impossible to avoid making some direct answer, they would in a few words clear themselves of guilt. But they did not extend a finger to ward off the poisoned sword poised over the head of the Bolsheviks. A popular image of their policy was once provided by the Roman pro-consul, Pilate...

Dirty accusations

Speaking on the 17th at a joint session of the two Executive Committees, Trotsky said: "An intolerable atmosphere has been created, in which you as well as we are choking. They are throwing dirty accusations at Lenin and Zinoviev. (Voice: 'That is true.' Uproar. Trotsky continues.) There are in this hall, it appears, people who sympathise with these accusations. There are people here who have only sneaked into the revolution. (Uproar. The president's bell long tries to restore order.)... Lenin has fought thirty years for the revolution. I have fought twenty years against the oppression of the people. And we cannot but cherish a hatred for German militarism... A suspicion against us in that direction could be expressed only by those who do not know what a revolutionist is. I have been sentenced by a German court to eight months imprisonment for my struggle against German militarism... This everybody knows. Let nobody in this hall say that we are hirelings of Germany, for that is not the voice of convinced revolutionists but the voice of scoundrels" (Applause)...

On July 5 Lenin, in a conversation with Trotsky, raised the question: "Aren't they getting ready to shoot us all?" Only such an intention could explain the official stamp placed upon that monstrous slander. Lenin considered the enemy capable of carrying through to the end the scheme they had thought up, and decided not to fall into their hands...

The disinclination of the Soviet Commission to begin the promised investigation finally convinced Lenin that the Compromisers were washing their hands of the case, and leaving it to the mercies of the White Guards.

The officers and the Junkers, who had by that time broken up the party printing plant, were now beating up and arresting in the streets everyone who protested against the charge of espionage against the Bolsheviks. Lenin therefore decided to go into hiding—not from the investigation, but from possible attempts on his life.

While agitators of the hostile camp were telling a thousand stories—Lenin is on a destroyer, Lenin has fled to Germany in a submarine, etc—the majority of the Executive Committee hastily condemned Lenin for avoiding an investigation. Ignoring the political essence of the pogrom situation in which, and for the sake of which, it was launched, the Compromisers came out as the champions of pure justice.

In company with Zinoviev, Lenin passed a number of weeks in the environs of Petrograd in a forest near Sestroretsk. They had to spend the nights and find shelter from rain in a haystack. Disguised as a fireman Lenin then crossed the Finland border on a locomotive, and concealed himself in the apartment of a Helsingfors police chief, a former Petrograd worker. Afterward he moved nearer the Russian border, to Vyborg. From the end of September he lived secretly in Petrograd. And on the day of the insurrection he appeared, after an almost four months' absence, in the open arena.

The German government could obviously have helped the Bolsheviks, not with ideas, but with money. But money was just what the Bolsheviks did not have. The centre of the party abroad during the war was struggling with cruel need; a hundred francs was a big sum; the central organ was appearing



Cartoon from a capitalist paper in July. Caption reads: "Lenin wants a high post?... Well, a position is ready for him."

once a month, or once in two months, and Lenin was carefully counting the lines in order not to exceed his budget. The expenses of the Petrograd organisation during the war years amounted to a few thousand roubles, which went mostly to the printing of illegal leaflets. In two and a half years only 300 000 copies of these leaflets were distributed in Petrograd.

However, in spite of the swift growth of the party and of money receipts, Pravda was, in physical proportions the smallest of all the party papers...

In order to send papers to the front, it became necessary again and again to take up special collections among the workers. And even so, the Bolshevik papers arrived in the trenches in incomparably fewer number than the papers of the Compromisers and Liberals. Complaints about this were continual. "We are living only on the rumour of your papers," wrote the soldiers...

The character of the accusations, and of the accusers, inevitably give rise to the question, how could people of normal mould believe, or even pretend to believe, in this notorious lie which was inept from beginning to end? The success of the Intelligence Service would in truth have been unthinkable, except for the general atmosphere created by war, defeat, ruin, revolution, and the embitterment of the social struggle. Since the Autumn of 1914 nothing had gone well with the ruling classes of Russia. The ground was crumbling under their feet. Everything was falling from their hands. Misfortunes were coming down on them from all directions. How could they help seeking a scapegoat?..

The July slander against the Bolsheviks least of all fell down out of a clear sky. It was the natural fruit of panic and hate, the last link in a shameful chain, the transfer of a stereotyped slanderous formula to its new and final object, permitting a reconciliation of the accusers and the accused of yesterday. All the insults of the ruling group, all their fears, all their bitterness, were now directed against that party which stood at the extreme



THE RAILWAY WORKERS HAVE RISEN

This leaflet was produced by comrades in South Africa, during the strike against SATS.

The hatred and the bitter tension of the six-week long strike of railway workers exploded onto the streets of Johannesburg on Wednesday 22nd April. By the end of the day many workers and police were injured. Eight workers were shot and at least three policemen are close to death in hospital. On the same day COSATU house was smashed to bits and more workers were assaulted and arrested. The management wanted to break the power of SARHWU.

This was the planned exercise of the iron fist to force striking workers back to work and to stop the strike from spreading to other unions and pushing the workers' struggle forward. Since early April the South African Transport Services (SATS) have refused to negotiate with the South African Railway and Harbour Workers' Union (SARHWU). Instead, thousands of extra police were drafted into the city. They slept in tents at the sports grounds of a Railways recreation club to be ready to use their guns and whips to smash the strike.

City Deep

The strike began in the middle of March. Workers at the City Deep Depot walked out in protest because a driver was sacked. This was the start. The dispute over a small trade union issue developed into a strike movement of railway workers throughout the whole of the northern half of the country. It involved more than 18 000 workers and demanded the recognition of a union that would fight the racism and oppression that railway workers have suffered under for many years.

The ruling class in South Africa has always considered the mines and the railways to be vital in preserving capitalism. Even during the magnificent struggles of the 1970's, which laid the foundation for COSATU, the unionisation of the

mines and railways was successfully resisted by the bosses.

The first mineworkers' conference (since the 1946 strike) took place in 1982. 18 000 members were represented by this conference; this has grown to a huge and powerful 370 000 signed up members today. Now, in 1987, after generations of beatings and torture and despite the strength of the most militarised industry in South Africa and the constant threats of mass dismissal and deportation, the railway workers have risen. The days of accepting being spat on and called a "kaffir" are over for the railway workers.

Vicious repression

The vicious repression suffered by railway workers and the current regulations of the State of Emergency make this revolt one of the bravest in history. One old railway worker, who had fought in the battle of Doornfontein, said that he would mourn his fallen brothers, but he was proud of what the railway workers had done. "At last we have stood up to fight them," he said.

But if courage and mourning were all that was needed then the workers of South Africa would have won the struggle long ago. The events of the 22nd bring this strike to its most critical point. VICTORY CAN STILL BE ACHIEVED. Now is the decisive hour for the leaders of the railway workers, and most importantly, the leaders of COSATU. On the 23rd April all the workers of South Africa were waiting to be called to action. COSATU House was in a state of shock and despair. Burning in everyone's minds was the question—"What action are we going to take?"

Now is the decisive hour for COSATU and its leadership. The days of big words are also over. There must be action, organised on a nation-wide scale to force the state and the bosses back. COSATU was not built in the issuing of law affidavits; COSATU was built in struggle. Every day that passes without decisive direction from the top will make the mobilisation of workers more difficult and the defeat of the railway workers more likely.

It is true that since the state of emergency the balance of

left and incarnated most completely the unconquerable force of the revolution. Was it in actual fact possible for the possessing classes to surrender their place to the Bolsheviks without having made a last desperate effort to trample them in the blood and filth? That tangle of slander, well snarled up from long usage, was inevitably fated to come down on the heads of the Bolsheviks...

During the July events the Bolsheviks themselves sought for an alien and criminal hand in certain unexpected excesses that were obviously provoked with aforethought, Trotsky wrote in those days: "What role has been played in this by counter-revolutionary provocation and German agents? It is difficult at present to pronounce definitely upon this question... We must await the results of an authentic investigation... But even now it is possible to say with certainty that the results of such an investigation will throw a clear light upon the work of Black Hundred gangs, and upon the underground role played by gold, German, English or 100 per cent Russian, or indeed all three of them. But no judicial investigation will change the political meaning of the events. The worker and soldier masses of Petrograd were not, and could not have been, bought. They are not in the service of Wilhelm, or Buchanan, or Miliukov. The movement was prepared by the war, by oncoming hunger, by the reaction lifting its head, by the headlessness of the government, by the adventurist offensive, by the political distrust and revolutionary alarm of the workers and soldiers."

The history of all revolutions and civil wars invariably testifies that a threatened or an overthrown ruling class is disposed to find the cause of its misfortunes, not in itself, but in foreign agents and emissaries...

Under these theories about the revolutionary role of foreign agents, as under all typical mass-misunderstandings, there lies an indirect historical foundation. Consciously or unconsciously, every nation at the critical period of its existence makes especially broad and bold borrowings from the treasury of other peoples. Not frequently, moreover, a

leading role in the progressive movement is played by people living on the border or emigrants returning to the homeland. The village against the city, the backwoods against the capital, the petty bourgeois against the worker—they all defend themselves under the guise of a national force resisting foreign influence. Miliukov portrayed the Bolshevik movement as 'German' for the same reason in the last analysis that the Russian peasant has for a hundred years regarded as a German any man dressed up in city clothes. The difference is that the peasant was making an honest mistake... When it comes to a threat against their material interest, the educated classes set in motion all the prejudices and confusion which humanity is dragging in its wagon-train behind it...

The struggle of the other parties among themselves was almost like a family spat in comparison with their common baiting of the Bolsheviks. In conflict with one another they were, so to speak, only getting in training for a further conflict, a decisive one. Even in employing against each other the sharpened accusation of German connections, they never carried the thing through to the limit. July presents a different picture. In the assault upon the Bolsheviks all the ruling forces, the government, the courts, the Intelligence Services, the staffs, the officialdom, the municipalities, the parties of the soviet majority, their press, their orators, constituted one colossal unit. The very disagreement among them, like the different tone qualities of the instruments in an orchestra, only strengthened the general effect. An inept invention of two contemptible creatures was elevated to the height of a factor in history. The slanders poured down like Niagara. If you take into consideration the setting—the war and the revolution—and the character of the accused—revolutionary leaders of millions who were conducting their party to the sovereign power—you can say without exaggeration that July 1917 was the month of the most gigantic slander in world history.

August 1917:

Kornilov's coup fails

By Rob Sewell

Russia in 1917 saw the forcible entry of the masses on to the stage of history. The sharp pace of change reflected the swift changes in consciousness amongst the mass of the people.

But no revolution ever proceeds in a straight line. This struggle of living forces unfolds through dialectical contradictions; revolutions, the ebb of revolution, periods of reaction, followed by a further impulse towards revolution on a higher

level.

The July period was in many ways the watershed between the February revolution and October. In all great revolutions, there are times when the masses, in a period of retreat, feel the gains of the revolution slipping from their grasp and move spontaneously to recapture lost ground.

This happened in June/July in Russia. A similar pattern can be seen in Spain in 1937 and Portugal in 1975. The main difference lay in the existence of the Bolshevik Party in Russia which put itself at the head of the struggle in order to keep the forces of revolution intact for more decisive future struggles.

The inevitable immediate result of the Bolsheviks' restraining of the masses' revolutionary impatience was to open up an attack by the forces of the Right. July was the "month of the great slander," where an intense hate campaign was instigated against the Bolsheviks.

However the July reaction was neither deep nor long lasting. The hostility whipped up by the right evaporated within weeks and by early August support for the Bolsheviks was visibly recovering. Layers of workers, drawing the lessons of their own experience turned again to the ideas of revolution.

The Bolsheviks made electoral gains as people registered discontent with the moderate socialists who controlled the Central Soviet. Lenin's Party did not gain a majority in the Petrograd soviet until early September but the tide was beginning to turn.

Worsening economic conditions and unpopular government policies such as the restoration of capital punishment boosted the Bolshevik cause. Pro Bolshevik resolutions were now passed condemning the government persecutions of those

forces has swung in favour of the state and the bosses. The brutal exercise of the power of the police and army, mass detentions, new repressive labour laws and the muzzling of the press have brought in a period of reaction. The vigilantes have won temporary ground in many townships over the revolutionary youth, and the state armed murder squads of UWUSA have grown to challenge COSATU in factory and mine. All this does not mean that to call for action to support the railway workers is ultra-left madness which threatens the continued existence of COSATU.

Despite the difficulties and setbacks, the foundations of the power of the workers are as strong as ever. There has been a shift in the consciousness of the mass of the workers and youth to understand the role of the power of the labour movement in the battle for liberation and socialism.

The future of the youth and workers in South Africa will not be decided in the bush or by isolated guerilla attacks. It will be decided on the streets of the cities, and in the townships, factories and mines by the power of the workers and youth.

The great victory of the OK Bazaars workers showed what worker power can mean, even in a state of emergency. The fighting spirit of the NUM and MAWU is clear in the decisions of their national meetings. Now there is the rise of the railway workers. On the same day that the railway workers were being shot, whipped and beaten, 25 000 mine workers took strike action against the retrenchments at JCI mines, and the whole of Soweto was on the second day of a stay-away.

It is not adventuristic to call for action; nation-wide action is essential if we are to protect COSATU from further attacks, and support the railway workers. Action in the bosses' courts is not enough to protect COSATU. The solidarity of the post office workers, 6 000 of whom have

been on strike for weeks, shows what will be achieved if COSATU mobilises effectively. Holding the workers back will cause a defeat for the whole movement and set back the struggle for socialism.

Willing to fight

We must not underestimate the difficulties involved. The most important thing is that the workers are willing to fight. There should be a two-day regional strike in the Transvaal leading up to May Day. There must be a two-day national stay-away around the white general election. Every youth activist and every COSATU official should be working around the clock to make this action a success.

A show of strength will split the bosses: they will see the cost involved in the game that the state is playing.

A show of strength will hold the state back: they cannot risk too much before the general election.

A show of strength will provide the best platform for the launch of the national living wage campaign.

A show of strength will take the movement forward and put an end to these murderous attacks.

UPDATE: SATS has now begun dismissing striking workers. Police have again raided COSATU House and arrested more workers. Workers and youth must respond as united force to these attacks. Without solidarity action SARHWU rank and file will be driven to more desperate action. Failure to act effectively will mean a serious setback for the whole movement and make us vulnerable to further attacks.

**Vote by staying away! Forward with the workers' struggle!
Build COSATU defence committees! Viva ANC! Viva socialism!**

Produced by supporters of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC



Railway workers clash with police at Doornfontein, central Johannesburg, on April 22nd, after police had shot dead three of their comrades in Germiston.

involved in the July events. As one contemporary noted: "The repression of the extreme left served only to increase its popularity among the masses."

Towards the end of July the Kerensky government faced a deepening social, political and economic crisis. Food shortages, economic dislocation, inflation, civil disorder and peasant unrest all served to fuel the growth of revolutionary ideas, which caused acute alarm amongst the ruling circles.

The government was paralysed. The Russian bourgeois, anxious to destroy the revolution searched desperately for a way out. John Reed, in his famous book, *Ten days that shook the world* relates that a large proportion of the ruling class would have preferred a German victory in the war to a complete victory of the Soviets. In the ruling circles, there was great disdain for Kerensky's weak-kneed government.

The idea of the "salvation of the motherland" by a strong dictatorship which could end revolutionary anarchy seized their minds more and more. This view was shared by the main capitalist party, the Kadets, the All Russian Union of Trade and Industry and the Union of Landowners.

General Knox of the English Military Mission put into blunt words the attitude of the privileged: **"What is wanted is a strong dictatorship; what is wanted is the Cossacks. This people needs the whip! A dictatorship—that is just what it needs."**

In these circumstances the emergence of an officers' plot was inevitable. Even the premier Kerensky had fed this conspiracy by discussions he had with the military command. His ambition was to establish a strong personal dictatorship to do away with Bolshevism—led by himself. Trotsky pointed out "Kerensky wanted to use the revolt of the generals to reinforce his own dictatorship."

But the Military High Command had other ideas. For them the obvious candidate for such a bonapartist role was the newly appointed Commander in Chief, General Lavr Kornilov.

As a military man, and an admirer of the fascist Black Hundreds, Kornilov made little distinction between the Moderate Socialists and the Bolsheviks—they were all revolutionary scum. After all, wasn't it the soviets which had created all this mess in the first place; they were the "enemies within."

General Kornilov became the symbol and focal point of the counter-revolution and a national hero for every reactionary section in Russia. On 11 August he pronounced it "high time to hang the German agents and spies headed by Lenin."

If the Provisional government was too weak and impotent to act then he would do so independently. On 24 August under the pretext of a "Bolshevik rising", Kornilov told his general staff to redirect the army to march on Petrograd.

Parallels can be drawn with Franco's rebellion in 1936 and Pinochet in 1973. When the ruling class sees no alternative it will drop all its democratic talk and turn to military dictatorship to crush the masses by force. The Bolsheviks gave leadership to the struggle in Russia, defeating Kornilov and building the forces which carried out the successful revolution in October. The lack of such a party in Chile and Spain had terrible consequences.

The counter-revolution in Russia began in earnest from that time on. Kornilov's plans were simple. "The coup will be in place in the suburbs of Petrograd by the evening of August 28. I request that Petrograd be proclaimed under martial law on August 29."

Kerensky had opened up secret negotiations with the conspirators, aiming to incorporate Kornilov into a new 'national government'. The General replied that such a government could only be under himself and that Kerensky had better leave Petrograd at once.

As Trotsky commented, "At the same time that Kerensky and Savinkov were intending to clean up the Bolsheviks and in part the soviets, Kornilov was intending also to clean up the Provisional Government. It was just this that Kerensky did not want."

Faced with this predicament, Kerensky turned tail and ran to the cabinet with news of the attempted coup. True to form the



Top: General Kornilov. Bottom: Bolshevik soldier persuading Kornilov's troops to disobey orders.

Kadet ministers resigned on 26 August wanting no responsibility for putting down a "patriotic" revolt!

As in Spain in July 1936, the majority of the High Command went over to the counter revolution and high government officials were almost all sympathetic to Kornilov. Divisions were dispatched from the front to crush the revolutionary capital. On 28 August prices in the Petrograd stock exchange rocketed; the counter revolutionaries had high hopes of victory.

But the reaction had misread the political situation, especially the mood of the masses. The coup's social basis was still very shaky. The essence of counter-revolution as of revolution is timing.

S'KHOKHELE COSATU THE HOUR IS NOW!

On 22 August, at the height of the mineworkers' strike, Western Cape supporters of *Inqaba ya Basebenzi* in SAYCO, COSATU and the UDF issued a leaflet calling for a decisive lead by COSATU to join all the forces of the movement together in support of the strike. We reprint extracts from it here.

The revolutionary upsurge of millions under the Congress banner has shown the determination of workers and youth to end the rotten system of oppression and exploitation...

Botha and the bosses have learnt that they can bomb and besiege COSATU offices; they can kill and detain union officials, but they will never be able to break the will of the black working class to fight for freedom and socialism. Workers and youth are now deeply confident that the future lies in their hands.

The present strike wave is the biggest ever in SA history. In the past month alone more than 180 strikes have occurred. It is estimated that about 500 000 workers are presently on strike and 10 000's are waiting to join their ranks.

Throughout this year workers have shown that they are the most powerful force in society. The strikes of OK, SATS, Potwa, SAB and NUM workers have taken our struggle to new heights. These have all been co-ordinated national struggles in which the question of armed defence against the state and vigilantes has become vital.

The Western Cape is experiencing the biggest strike wave since 1980. Municipal, brewery, milling, fruit, plastic and Spekenham workers have fought side by side with the rest of the country. The temporary downturn in political struggles and increasing state attacks have not stopped the struggles of the working class. This is because of the enormous power of the industrial workers. Because of their position in the economy, as the producers of wealth, workers have the power to bring society to a standstill. It is the use of this power that has rocked the foundations of capitalism in SA.

The struggle of workers in factories, mines and on the farms is central to the struggle for political power. It is indeed a continuation of the struggles of 1984-6. At Spekenham workers learnt that the fight for a living wage is a struggle against the bosses and the state, when "Botha's dogs" were called in to beat them up.

Capitalism must be overthrown

The gains to be made in these struggles, higher wages and improved conditions, cannot be sustained under capitalism. The improvements granted today are eaten away by inflation tomorrow. The bosses will always use every opportunity to turn back the hard-won gains of trade union struggle. The struggle for higher wages must therefore be linked to the struggle to overthrow capitalism.

In the Western Cape school boycotts have also occurred in solidarity with Langa High students, municipal workers and against the harassment of teachers and students. At the same time communities are engaged in opposition against high rents.

The question that confronts all serious activists is: **how can all of these struggles be successfully taken to higher levels so as**

to regain the political initiative for the working class?

Link struggles together

The strikes, boycotts and campaigns are part of the broader struggle for socialism. When we engage in these different struggles we must aim at gaining immediate success around the specific issues AND at the same time take further the struggle for socialism.

The majority of these struggles are about wages. The rent crisis is really about the poverty our people have to live under. Presently all these struggles are occurring separately from one another. It is vital that these different struggles be united into a single campaign. A united and nationally co-ordinated campaign led by COSATU would enormously strengthen the struggles of all workers for a minimum living wage and take forward the struggle of the whole movement.

Failure to do so will lead to a defeat of workers fighting separately against an increasingly co-ordinated attack by the bosses and the state.

COSATU must lead fight for a national minimum wage

It is now more necessary than ever that COSATU builds the national minimum living wage campaign into the campaign that the founding resolution of COSATU called for. A political campaign around a definite figure to force the government to pass a minimum wage law should not be postponed any longer. If a definite minimum wage figure was set it would provide a focus for millions of low-paid workers to unite around and fight for. It would mean that the organised workers in COSATU were consciously placing themselves at the head of the movement.

Worker-youth unity: the way forward

In order to further advance these struggles the youth must unite with the workers in joint action...The marvellous initiative of Manenberg students and youth has shown the way forward. They successfully combined the struggles of municipal workers for higher wages with their struggles on the schools and the struggle against high rents when the school students dumped garbage at the rent offices!

We now must go further. The youth must turn their energies to the industrial areas and give full support in action to the struggles of workers. Around the Spekenham strike, youth can go together with the strikers to factories to organise support for the strike. Together, the energies and determination of the workers and youth can muster enormous support from other workers for the Spekenham strikers. This must go together with taking the issue to our schools and communities, where it should be easy to collect money and food for workers...

Community struggles should be linked to workers' struggles

Our struggle in the communities can be given strength and

The Bolshevik Party was still operating in semi-illegal conditions after the July events. The Party leadership was scattered: Trotsky was in prison and both Lenin and Zinoviev were in hiding. Nevertheless the Bolsheviks swiftly went into action as soon as the news broke.

From Finland, Lenin warned the Bolsheviks that in the fight against Kornilov, they should give no credence or support to the moderates, the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. There could be no mixing of their political banners.

"In these circumstances" wrote Lenin, "A Bolshevik would say our soldiers will fight the counter-revolutionary troops. They will not do so to protect the government....but independently to protect the revolution as they pursue their own aims."

United front

This was the policy of the United Front. In the face of a common enemy the United Front serves to unify different workers' parties in action to achieve a particular object. It does not mean abandoning different political programmes or criticisms under the guise of 'unity'.

There is no merging of political differences but a unity in action. "March separately under your own banners but strike together" was the dictum. This not only raises the level of consciousness but it shows in practice the superiority of militant struggle.

A United Front of Socialist and Communist Parties in Germany could have prevented Hitler coming to power in 1933. But such a vital policy, proved in action in the past was rejected by the Stalinists as 'counter-revolutionary'. This prepared the defeat of the German proletariat at Hitler's hands.

In Russia the local soviets were reinvigorated under the guidance of the Bolshevik activists as the enthusiasm of the masses centred on the defence of Petrograd. Mass meetings were held which passed resolutions attacking Kornilov and demanding the release of the July prisoners.

A "Committee of Revolutionary Defence" was set up where the Bolsheviks played a prominent role. Large numbers of workers were organised to erect barricades, dig ditches and put up barbed wire as part of the defence of the capital. Workers' organisations immediately took over the supply and distribution of food to the population.

The Soviet of Factory-Shop Committees helped co-ordinate the distribution of arms. "Red Guard" units were created and supplied with weapons and materials from the armaments factories. Many new recruits got military training from the Bolshevik Military Organisations. The Petrograd Carters' Battalion pledged their 500 carts to help shift military supplies, while the Sixth Engineers organised a 600 man detachment to build defence fortifications.

The Baltic Fleet followed suit with the Kronstadt garrison dispatching 3 000 armed sailors for Petrograd's defence. The fleet's crew had arrested some disloyal officers, some of whom were summarily shot for treason.

After the Provisional Government asked for assistance the Kronstadt Military Technical Committee sent a message demanding the release of "our comrades, the finest fighters and sons of the revolution who are at this minute languishing in prison."

The Bolsheviks categorically refused to enter the Kerensky government but they were the best fighters against Kornilov. The most militant sailors and soldiers were Bolsheviks.

Trotsky reflects: "During the insurrection....Kerensky

must go to the sailors of the Baltic fleet and demand of them to defend them in the Winter Palace. I was at that time in prison. They took him to the guard and sent a delegation to ask me what must be done: arrest Kerensky or defend him?I said: 'Yes you must guard him very well now; tomorrow we will arrest him.'"

The telegraph and railway workers dealt an enormous blow to the counter-revolution. Their leaders instructed their members to redirect 'suspicious' telegrams and by any means block Kornilov's path. They should dismantle tracks and bridges, leave their posts, misdirect trains and delay all counter-revolutionary shipments.

In Trotsky's words: "The railway workers did their duty. In a mysterious way echelons would find themselves moving on the wrong roads. Regiments would arrive in the wrong division, artillery would be sent up a blind alley, staffs would get out of communication with their units."

Petrograd stayed a fortress of the revolution. The counter-revolutionary army's movement was paralysed. Detachments of revolutionary agitators from the factories and Soviets surrounded the stationary troops and harangued them with political propaganda.

Mutinies

The troops had no idea what was happening as their officers had kept them in total ignorance. Mutinies broke out. Officers were arrested in the Savage Division made up of Caucasian mountaineers, and the Ussuriishy Mounted Division, which now pledged themselves to the cause of the revolution.

The "counter-revolutionary" army simply melted away; there was never any fighting between Kornilov's troops and Petrograd. Kornilov's next in command, General Krymov, encircled by his own troops, reluctantly agreed to negotiate. General Denikin was locked up by his own troops. The revolt had crumbled.

Krymov realised the hopelessness of the situation. "The last card for saving the Motherland has been beaten - life is no longer worth living," he said, then shot himself. Kornilov was arrested on 1 September.

This defeat for the counter-revolution abruptly shifted the balance of forces to the left. The revolt radicalised the masses; in the words of Marx, the revolution sometimes needs the whip of the counter-revolution.

A surge in support now developed for the Bolshevik Party. "This upswing" explained Trotsky "was made possible only thanks to the double edged Bolshevik policy. While participating in the front lines of the struggle against Kornilov, the Bolsheviks did not take the slightest responsibility for the policy of Kerensky.

"On the contrary they denounced him as responsible for the reactionary attack and as incapable of overcoming it. In this way they prepared the political premises of the October revolution."

Through patient and consistent work, with correct tactics and slogans, the Bolsheviks gained a majority in the Petrograd Soviet in early September. This became the springboard for winning the majority of the working masses to their banner.

Within two months, the leaders of Bolshevism emerged from underground and prison to lead the first workers' state in history. The events of August 1917 played a decisive role in preparing the party and its leadership for that historic transformation.

be effective by linking it to the struggles of workers. Students are the children of workers. The schools crisis therefore directly affects workers. Students must campaign actively amongst workers to support their struggles in the schools. The state has been forced to concede to the re-opening of Langa High because of the determined opposition of the parents to the closure move. It could feel the depth of opposition to the closure move.

The demands of Langa High and students everywhere could be won by calling on workers to defend the right of their children to a decent education. The struggle of students for a better education is part of the struggle to establish a new society.

High rents and poor living conditions are directly related to low wages. Organising joint action with workers is the best way to stop the Council from enforcing higher rents. The work-to-rule by municipal workers was supported by the community. Now municipal workers must oppose any action by the Council to evict residents.

Defend the movement! Build a mass socialist ANC!

Building mass organisations through joint action in our daily struggles is the way forward to defend our organisations. Defence committees of workers and youth will protect

striking workers and committees of workers and youth from attacks by the State and vigilantes. Strong mass organisations linked to a clear programme for socialist revolution will draw into its ranks many new layers of workers and youth. This will effectively counter the development of vigilante groupings.

In the present period with the national movement of workers, especially the mineworkers, COSATU must prepare the movement for a general strike. The outcome of the miners' strike will have an important effect on the struggles of the working class. The attacks by the state and bosses on the miners through mass dismissals and killings is an attack on the whole of COSATU. A general strike, initially of 2 days, will bring the strength of the whole working class to the defence of the miners. At the same time it will unite the different wage struggles of the workers nationally. It will strengthen the struggles against higher rents and the students' struggles against the attacks by the state on the schools.

In this action the youth will play a central role in mobilising the forces for a successful strike. The South African socialist revolution has begun. Our task is to build the forces which will be able to carry through this revolution. This will be achieved by building worker-youth unity in action in our daily industrial and community struggles. This will provide the basis for building a mass ANC which, led by the working class on a socialist programme, will lead the workers and youth in their struggle to overthrow capitalism and establish workers' democracy.

Forward to a socialist ANC government!



Defend Moses Mayekiso!

Moses Mayekiso, heroic workers' leader, is on trial for high treason for leading struggles of workers and youth in Alexandra, in MAWU, and in COSATU.

Through this trial, the state intends to issue a warning to trade union leaders not to take up the political struggle for democracy and socialism—but it will fail in this. We join all struggling workers and youth in demanding his unconditional release, along with all other political prisoners.

October 1917: the Bolsheviks take power

By John Pickard

November 7 (new-style calendar, October 25 old-style) marks the 70th anniversary of the greatest event in human history. For the first time ever, a state came into existence which represented the majority of society, the labouring masses, as against a narrow class of exploiters. Through their elected soviets (councils) the workers, peasants and soldiers of Russia took power into their own hands.

Except for the few far-sighted among them, the world's bankers, capitalists and war-profiteers paused only momentarily in their scramble for war booty. But the workers in the factories and the soldiers knee-deep in mud did not fail to register the tremors beneath their feet. For them, the events in Russia were a signal of hope, ushering in a new period of struggle of class against class instead of worker against worker. The soviet state became an inspiration and a call to arms for workers everywhere.

The Bolshevik Party was subjected to fierce repression in July: its papers banned, its leaders jailed or in hiding, all subjected to the slanderous accusation that they were "German agents". But by the end of October, the Party was in power, at the head of a mighty movement of the working class.

These titanic events, in just four short months, are a textbook demonstration of the sharp changes in the mood and political consciousness of the masses in a revolutionary situation. Although the Bolsheviks provided the necessary leadership—the subjective factor without which the October revolution would not have taken place—it was the elemental movement of the many-millioned Russian people that gave an unstoppable impetus to the revolution.

After the suppression of the Bolsheviks, reactionaries of all stripes and shadings began to raise their heads with new confidence and hope. Officers began to demand salutes, ignoring the soldiers' committees; factory owners in increasing numbers began to threaten to close their factories to break the power of the workers' committees. Thus, the ground was prepared for the attempted coup by General Kornilov.

Workers' movement

But the reaction was not too deep and long-lasting, and, before the Kornilov coup dissolved in ignominy, the workers' movement had already begun to recover. Even in late July, the Bolsheviks had begun to regain ground in the soldiers' meetings, in the navy, and in the workers' districts.

In reply to the capitalists' lock-out a wave of strikes spread all over Russia, bringing into action for the first time completely fresh and untried layers of the working class. While the more experienced and battle-hardened sections of the workers bided their time—beginning to realise that a different, more serious struggle was necessary—others were

catching up in their understanding of the class forces and the issues at stake.

The workers began to ponder over the slanders against the Bolsheviks: is it a co-incidence, they asked, that the same people who exploited them and denounced their committees are also the loudest shouters about "German agents?"

The soldiers mulled over the same problems: why was it always the worst and most repressive officers who foamed at the mouth and went into apoplexy at the mention of Bolshevism?

The workers and soldiers knew that they themselves were not German spies and yet their every action, every democratic demand, was denounced as "Bolshevism". There was hardly a factory or a military unit that didn't have its "Bolshevik" who in reality had never been near the Party.

Polarisation

An enormous polarisation was taking place within Russian society. Soldiers' committees demanded an end to the interminable and bloody war; peasants demanded—and in hundreds of cases occupied—the landowners' estates; workers took over factories to break lock-outs and management sabotage. The Provisional Government, meanwhile, went on with the war, urged "patience" and "restraint" and denounced the Bolsheviks.

The Kornilov revolt in August petered out into a farce, as Bolshevik soldiers and workers agitated among his troops, spreading the seed of revolution. But the revolt gave a powerful impetus to the leftward shift of the masses.

The warnings of the Bolsheviks, about the Provisional Government preparing the ground for reaction, were remembered by the workers and soldiers. The worst slanderers of all had even supported the attempted coup. The leaders of the other "left" parties, the Social Revolutionaries (SRs) and Mensheviks, had scoffed at the Bolsheviks' dire predictions before August and were now discredited in the eyes of their own members.

There now began a flood-tide of support towards the Bolshevik Party, a tide that would carry the Party through to October and beyond. Bolshevism, already synonymous with any forward movement or struggle of the masses, was thus made the property of the masses. The Party ranks swelled out of all proportion to their former size.

The SRs lost hundreds of thousands of supporters among the soldiers. These became millions. In the cities, the Mensheviks were virtually wiped out, as workers surged towards the Party of Lenin and Trotsky.

Soviets all over the country followed the lead of Petrograd and returned a majority of Bolshevik delegates. Factory and shop committees, trade union committees, military units and land committees began to be transformed. The soviets of February and March had been weakened by their SR and Menshevik leadership, vacillating and compromising with the capitalist class, tail-ending the Provisional Government, itself slavishly following the policies of the imperialist powers. The July reaction had dealt yet more blows to the soviets.

But now the revival began. The delegations to the

After the mineworkers' strike: where does the revolution go from here?

Editorial Board Statement,

Inqaba ya Basebenzi, Journal of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC

Four weeks after the mineworkers' strike was called off, the realisation has set in among many activists that the cornerstone has been removed from the 1987 strike movement. This is causing frustration, and even depression among some.

Among some sections of workers, doubts have begun to arise. If the mineworkers, strongest regiment in our army, did not carry on the fight for their wage claim, they ask, what can we hope to achieve on our own?

This industrial movement, unparalleled in our history, has been looked to by active workers and youth to break the stalemate which followed out of the revolutionary upsurge of 1984-6.

The insurrections which burst out in township after township at that time, spearheaded by the youth, rested on the foundations of trade union and youth organisation created over more than a decade of struggle—and raised our movement to a qualitatively new level.

These huge battles decisively marked the opening of the SA revolution. It is a revolution brought about by the irreconcilable conflict between the brutal dictatorship of apartheid and the demands of the overwhelmingly working-class black majority; between diseased capitalism and the determination of working people to end poverty wages and to secure jobs, decent homes, decent education, majority rule and socialism.

Township insurrections ebb

In 1984-6, the movement ran again and again against the formidable obstacle of the SA state, its strength based upon industry, and upon the social cohesion of more than four million privileged whites. It became clear that insurrection in the townships alone, even when combined with limited general strikes, could not defeat this state. Yet how could the revolution sweep beyond that? Testing and feeling these limits, the movement in the townships ebbed; reaction set in, as the ruling class sought to regain the initiative.

But—despite the stepped-up repression by state forces and their vigilante jackals—the limits to reaction at this point have also become clear. Township organisation may have been driven back, but the re-established state controls are fragile and would at once be swept aside again by a general forward movement. Most obviously, the bosses and the state have not been able to carry through serious attacks against the foundations of our movement's strength in the thousands of organised workplaces.

The white-based state, for all its viciousness and firepower,

is increasingly impotent as an instrument for turning back the arising movement of the black working-class. Despite the havoc that vigilantes have wreaked, they cannot compensate for this weakness.

Avalanche of strikes

Within months, sensing the weakness of the reaction, encouraged by the temporary economic upturn, workers were testing and advancing on the industrial front.

The tenacity, and then the victory, of the OK workers lifted the mood nationally. Each victory became a stimulus. The iron will of the railway workers' struggle inspired millions. The May 5-6 general strike, completely overshadowing the white elections, confirmed to the black working class its unrivalled power as an industrial and political force. Every section of the class prepared to march.

As the mineworkers moved to confront the Chamber, the strike movement had become an avalanche: 5,5 million strike-days up to the end of August, (compared with 1,3 million in the whole of 1986).

What a magnificent confirmation of the unbreakable will of the working class to break the chains of apartheid and capitalism and to transform society! It was obvious to the ruling class that this was not merely an "industrial" but a political movement.

On the basis of this tidal wave, COSATU's national minimum living wage campaign could have been used to unite the forces of the movement—making gains on the wage front, organising the unorganised, thus breaking the stalemate and regaining the political initiative from the bosses, their state, and their collaborators.

This required that the COSATU leadership put forward to every worker and youth in SA a clear and definite plan of action for taking forward the campaign.

It is necessary to recognise that this was not done.

Tasks of COSATU

The bosses and the regime, realising the threat of a new and more dangerous working-class explosion, had gone on the attack—the shooting of railway workers, the bombing of COSATU House, the unleashing of UWUSA killers, were the most glaring expressions of this.

While some COSATU leaders talked of the need for self-defence and of action on the wage campaign, they did not take concrete steps to turn this into reality, but instead devoted themselves to misconceived appeals to the bosses in the name of a "Hands off COSATU" campaign. The readiness of youth and workers to defend their organisations was not tapped.

Trade union organisation is not an adequate substitute for

established soviets underwent a rapid transformation. At the same time millions of workers and peasants in the far-flung corners of Russia began to establish them for the first time.

As the soviets revived, they were Bolshevised. In the bigger soviets the Bolsheviks were stronger than in the average; among the soldier-worker masses the Party was stronger than in the soviets. Similarly, the closer the committees were to the workers on the shop-floor, the sooner there was a majority for the programme of Lenin.

After Kornilov had shown the threat of reaction, new leaders crowded to the front in these bodies, forming special committees for the defence of the revolution: military committees, often charged by the soviet with arming the workers, arresting reactionaries and deploying troops. These new leaders, hardened and steeled by events, were overwhelmingly Bolsheviks. The October revolution was to be no "putch" by a small minority. In their millions the workers, soldiers and peasants looked at the programme they needed: "Bread, Peace and Land", realised which Party supported it, and acted accordingly. If that's Bolshevism, they reasoned, then I'm a Bolshevik!

In Finland, the Bolsheviks formed a majority coalition in the soviets with the Left SRs who had split from the old party. Immediately, the Finnish soviets commanded the loyalty of the working class and the soldiers stationed there. When the Provisional Government demanded that certain units withdraw from Finland, they refused, citing the authority of the Finland Soviets. Finland had already had its "October", weeks before the rest of the Russian empire.

After having dropped the slogan in the weeks after the July events, the Bolshevik Party once again raised the demand of a Soviet Government. In the first week of September the key Petrograd soviet voted for this policy. Others soon followed: Finland, Moscow, Kiev, in days the trickle turning to a flood.

The whole of Russian society was polarising into two irreconcilable camps. As the attempted coup had shown, the

capitalist class now saw no way out other than outright counter-revolution. But the workers had also drawn conclusions: they were now more sober, more serious. The heady days of February were gone, along with any illusions in an "easy" end to the war.

The capitalist Kadet Party, along with the Compromisers, the SRs and Mesheviks, now cooperated in the convening of a "Democratic Conference" to give legitimacy to the Provisional Government and bolster their sagging morale. This artificial body, whose size and distribution of seats were decided from above, bore no relationship to the true balance of class forces in the swirling waters of revolution outside its doors.

The in-built right-wing majority voted, against the Bolshevik and Left SRs, for a new coalition, but could come to no conclusion about its composition. This indecision, what Trotsky described as a "public confession of its bankruptcy", corresponded exactly to the paralysis of the ruling class in the streets and barracks.

But like a dying body that clings to life, the representatives of capitalism and their hangers-on continued to go through the motions. They elected a "Council of the Republic" or "Pre-Parliament" to continue its deliberations. The Bolsheviks withdrew from this body, leaving it to its own impotency.

Thus, while society moved inexorably to a decisive conflict over who was to hold power, Prime Minister Kerensky fuffed and fiddled and shuffled the seats around in his Cabinet Room. His new government, the fourth coalition since February, was met among the masses by a mixture of indifference and scarcely concealed contempt.

The orders of the Provisional Government and its representatives were increasingly ignored in the factories, the soviets and, crucially, in the military units. Kerensky's authority was rapidly shrinking to an area conforming approximately to the walls of the Winter Palace.

A serious economic and military crisis now threatened. The capitalists were openly sabotaging industry, closing factories



Armed workers from the factories of Petrograd on guard in one of the streets of the capital in November 1917 after the Bolsheviks took power.

mass political organisation of the working class. Nonetheless, the workplace organisations are the foundations of our class's strength. The creation of unions like NUM and NUMSA, and especially the creation of COSATU, have been the greatest advances in our history. Not accidentally, COSATU was brought into being in the fire of 1984-6. 1987 cried out for this strength to be used in action.

An *Inqaba* Editorial Board statement of 1 March explained all this, and proposed how the national minimum living wage campaign could be used to take the whole movement of workers and youth forward most effectively.

But no serious and systematic attempt was made by the leadership to **combine** in action the different sections of the industrial workers, or to involve the revolutionary energies of the youth as **strike organisers** to support each struggle and assist in organising the unorganised.

Even without a vigorous lead from COSATU, it would still have been possible for big unions like NUMSA and the NUM to draw the movement together nationally round their own wage disputes. Hundreds of thousands of workers were ready to move, as evidenced in the NUMSA and NUM strike ballots. The youth eagerly looked towards the industrial arena. But the NUMSA leaders called off their action. And what happened to the NUM strike?

Far from energetically linking this decisive struggle to the rest of the movement, the NUM leaders insisted on projecting it as "non-political", legal, a matter for mineworkers alone. Even then, they did not prepare the membership to deal with the strike-breaking measures prepared by the Chamber. Soon the attacks on strikers and mass dismissals brought home to the NUM leadership the scale of the battle that would be needed to win the wage claim against SA's most powerful employer. Having insufficiently prepared for this, and having not mobilised the forces of COSATU and the youth, they considered it necessary to call off the strike.

The COSATU and NUM leaders now say that more can be achieved next year when there are larger numbers organised. With all workers and youth we will do all we can to help ensure victories in 1988. But, for that, it is necessary to recognise that much more could have been achieved this year with the forces already organised. The size of the mine strike exceeded everybody's expectations. But numbers in themselves are not enough to win. **The point is how the forces are used, how they are led.** And using our present forces effectively is itself the best way to draw in bigger forces for the future.

National strategy of action needed

From its origins in the early 1970s through the struggles of 1984-6, and up to the present time, the impetus to the development of the movement has come not from national leadership or plan but **from below**—from active fighters in the workplaces and the townships. The movement has fundamentally pulled itself up by its own bootstraps to the point of mounting a revolutionary challenge to the state.

Now, however, it is increasingly more difficult to alter the balance of forces in favour of revolution, and prepare the necessary forces for the defeat of the state, **without a national strategy of, action on the part of the leadership.**

The roots of state power lie, not in the townships, but in the centres of industry, finance, and commerce. Against it, the most powerful force of our movement lies in the collective power of the workers at the point of production. It is around this power that all the forces for revolution must be drawn together.

The crux of the problem is to link together in action the full collective power of the employed workers with the revolutionary energy of the mass of working-class youth.

This is a complicated task, difficult for the separate forces of the movement to solve "spontaneously", by improvising. Uniting our forces in action nationally requires a common understanding of perspectives and tasks. The authority of the national leadership is decisive in generalising and organising this understanding, and imparting it to every section of the movement in a systematic way.

Revolutionary potential

The essence of the problem now is that the Congress leadership, possessing this authority, bases its approach to the liberation struggle not upon developing to the full the revolutionary potential of the black working class, but upon the hope of avoiding that by pressing the bosses and the regime to concede democratic change. By separating the issues of political democracy from those of capitalist class rule, they imagine they can persuade the enemy to concede the one without sacrificing the other.

The whole experience of the working class teaches that the present racist state defends the bosses' property and wealth and serves to maintain exploitation. This state power will not be surrendered peacefully—it can be conquered only by a revolution, by an armed mass movement led by the conscious working class. The democratic and class questions are tied together.

So acute are the revolutionary antagonisms in our society on race and class lines that anyone who shrinks from these conclusions must draw back also from mobilising to the full the forces of the black working class in action. Every serious struggle, whether on wages or any other issue, now threatens to become general and therefore poses these political dilemmas in front of the leadership.

We fully accept that the leadership is suffering heavy blows from the state. If this fact explained the deficiencies, we would be the first to acknowledge it. But that is not the case. The central problem is political.

The fundamental obstacle to the advance of the movement is now within the movement itself. Until the approach of the leadership to the nature and tasks of the revolution is altered, we will continue to encounter this obstacle again and again in many forms.

The shortcomings in the approach of the national leadership have most effect upon the activists. Working tirelessly, seeing the opportunities missed for transforming the situation, they can become frustrated and, some even demoralised—especially when they notice that previously combative sections of workers are increasingly cautious about throwing themselves into action. In fact the more experienced workers have come to realise the need for effective leadership to ensure a breakthrough.

But the "ebb" is only one side of the picture. Despite setbacks, the underlying capacity to fight of overwhelming sections of the working class remains. There is a deep sense that the collective power we have built cannot and will not be easily conquered—and that the real potential at our disposal has barely yet been exercised.

Even now, in the wake of the mineworkers' strike, previously passive and isolated sections of the class—like farm workers, or those in Saldanha—are moving into action inspired by the magnificent conquests of the last years. In Natal, where participation in the 1984-86 upsurge was cut across by the Inkatha reign of terror, the tide is beginning to be turned against Gatsha's vigilante gangs.

Nor can the ruling class take any comfort from our problems. Beset by economic, political, and social crisis, they do not know which way to turn. Our problems can be overcome; theirs cannot.

and disrupting transport. Food was becoming scarce in the cities. In frustration, more and more sections of workers took to strike action. The front was in danger of collapsing and the ruling class looked with glee at the prospect of the German army capturing "Red Petrograd".

In the countryside, land seizures and insurrections were increasing. The radicalisation of the peasantry interacted with and fed the leftward shifts within the army, overwhelmingly from a peasant background.

This whole period was characterised by an enormous ferment within the masses. Trotsky describes in his *History of the Russian Revolution* how meetings were going on everywhere. Debates, arguments, discussions, mass meetings, and in the centre of every one of them—a Bolshevik. In the barracks and factories, there were thousands of "Lenins". Karl Marx long before had explained that an "idea" can become a great material force, if it corresponds to a social movement, and such were the ideas and programme of Bolshevism in October. As workers visited the front, soldier-delegates visited the factories and both visited the villages, "Bolshevism took possession of the country".

Because of the dislocation of the economy and transport, the soviets were increasingly obliged to intervene and organise the supply of food, light, fuel and transport for the cities and the front. The question of power was being raised in all its aspects. Who was going to run the economy and therefore the government? The soviets or Kerensky? As Trotsky explained, the soviet government grew up from below. But it would only be confirmed by decisive action against the remaining centres of capitalist authority in the army, the ministries and the Winter Palace.

That decisive action came to revolve around the Second Congress of Soviets, organised for October. The leadership elected by the First Congress, the Central Executive Committee, was dominated by the compromisers. They called the new Congress only under the pressure of the soviets. Fearing the worst, they promptly began an agitation against it.

But with the Bolshevik Party conducting a campaign in favour, there began an unstoppable wave of telegrams and resolutions demanding the CEC convene the Congress, and, moreover, demanding that it take power. The CEC did not succeed in postponing the Congress for more than a few days, to October 25.

The question of the Congress was the dominant political question throughout October. Every vital question: the economy, the war, food supplies, the land question, etc. raised the question of power. The masses now understood this and anxiously demanded the question be resolved by the Soviet Congress.

The decisive initiative was taken by the Petrograd Soviet. On the same day that the fourth coalition had been announced, the soviet had elected a new executive with Trotsky, released from prison "on bail", as its president. A few days later, it also elected the Military Revolutionary Committee, once again under Trotsky's leadership.

This committee immediately began to establish permanent lines of communication and command with all the different workplaces and military units in the city. It was consolidating a state—what Engels described as essentially "armed bodies of men"—which corresponded to the power that the soviets already possessed. One after another, the remaining military units transferred their allegiance from the army command, still under the nominal control of the Provisional Government, to the soviets through the MRC.

The Committee also began systematic arming of the workers—Red Guards—with the active support of the soldiers. Mixed detachments of armed workers, soldiers and sailors were now seen to be stationed at key points in the city. The capitalists could only look on, wide-eyed with horror, but unable to stem the tide of history.

From his place of hiding, meanwhile, Lenin was directing insistent demands to the Bolshevik leadership that they should prepare the Party to take power. Conditions were

"We choose the Bolsheviks.."

In many parts of the world, because of the absence of an alternative leadership, social movements have often taken on the mantle of a religious movement of one kind or another. In this light it is interesting how the American journalist, Albert R. Williams, who was in Russia with John Reed in 1917, described how reaction tried to use the Orthodox Church against the Bolsheviks:

"The Bolsheviks made no direct assault upon religion, but separated Church from State. The flow of government funds into the ecclesiastical coffers was stopped. Marriage was declared a civil institution. The monastic lands were confiscated. Parts of monasteries were turned into hospitals.

"The Patriarch (Archbishop) thundered his protests against these sacrileges but with little effect. The devotion of the masses to the Holy Church proved to be almost as mythical as their devotion to the Czar. They looked at the Church decree giving them hell if they sided with the Bolsheviks. Then they looked at the Bolshevik decree giving them land and factories." 'If we must choose', some said, 'we choose the Bolsheviks.' Others chose the Church. Many merely, muttered 'Neechevo' (it doesn't matter much), and walked in the church procession one day and in the Bolshevik parade on the next."

Bourgeoisie's last resort

"In their efforts to befuddle the brains of the masses the bourgeoisie saw an ally in alcohol", writes Albert Williams, "The city (Petrograd) was mined with wine cellars more dangerous than powder magazines. This alcohol in the veins of the populace meant chaos in the life of the city. With this aim the cellars were opened and the mob invited in to help themselves. Bottles in hand the drunks would emerge from the cellars to fall sprawling on the snow, or rove through the streets, shooting and looting.

"To these pogroms the Bolsheviks replied with machine-guns, pouring lead into the bottles—there was no time to break them all by hand. They destroyed three-million roubles-worth of vintage in the vaults of the Winter Palace, some of it there for a century."

"Tomorrow you may be ministers"

Fyodor Raskolnikov, one of the Bolshevik leaders among the Kronstadt sailors, describes in his memoirs how he found himself in the Kresty Prison, along with Trotsky and other Bolsheviks, after the July days. Noting the way the "politicals" were treated with more caution, or even courtesy compared to other prisoners, he asked why, only to be told by one of his warders: "Here you are today, in prison, but tomorrow perhaps, you may be Ministers."

over-ripe for a soviet government, but Lenin feared that some of the old Bolshevik leaders would hesitate at the critical moment. Throughout October, he denounced with increasing anger those he called the "waverers" in the Party.

Lenin understood that in this situation timing was of critical importance. If the Bolsheviks were to fail to give a lead and the soviets let slip the opportunity to take power, then the psychology of the workers may have suffered a decisive reverse, leading to disillusionment and inevitable defeat by a new Kornilov.

As it turned out, Lenin's fears were not without foundation: at the Central Committee meeting that voted in favour of organising an insurrection, two long-standing Bolshevik

Against the rising power of the black working class, they can neither carry through a crushing counter-revolution, nor offer reform that has any real credibility for the mass of workers and youth.

They can only twist and turn between bouts of unavailing repression and unavailing reform, and combinations of them. Thus, after a period of leaning on his right foot in an unsuccessful attempt to hold off the white drift towards the ultra-right. Botha, within weeks of the election, has been compelled to lean more on his left foot, once again presenting himself as a reformer.

SA's most powerful monopoly boss, Anglo American's Gavin Relly, laments that SA is in a cul-de-sac out of which he sees no resolution in sight. (*Sunday Times*, 13/9/87)

All this is a recipe for increasing splits and divisions in the ruling class, which will sap confidence and open up divisions among the ranks of the whites also. Even the turn by sections of whites to the reactionary and unworkable policies of the far right shows that the social cohesion of the white minority is beginning to break up.

While our movement needs to promote and take advantage of splits among the whites, it is quite incorrect to believe that the liberals can be used to provide a short-cut towards breaking the stalemate and achieving victory.

Unfortunately, there are many signs that Congress leaders, instead of putting forward a plan of action, are looking to the big capitalists—or even to the Western powers—to break the stalemate. Some are even suggesting that these, because they fear social revolution in SA, will force Botha to the negotiating table to carry through a democratic settlement!

Because of the sickness of their system, every section of the capitalist class—including the so-called 'liberal' capitalists—are implacably opposed to democracy in SA. When they brand even our demand for a living wage as intolerable "communism," how can they possibly afford to concede majority rule?

This they openly admit. As an SA Foundation spokesman said at a recent "Business International" conference in London—attended by Comrade Tambo—"SA business feels it would be suicide to leave the economic system of a future SA to the democratic wishes of the majority to decide on." (*Cape Times*, 13/6/87).

Even if the big SA capitalists or the Western powers find apartheid an embarrassment, they have no viable alternative for the defence of their interests save the white-based state. This state machine is the foremost obstacle to the establishment of democracy—and they will not surrender its power.

Whatever talks and negotiations may be organised in the future between spokesmen of the ruling class and the leaders of our movement, they cannot lead to majority rule. To sow illusions in what they can achieve only diverts attention from the need to mobilise the forces already at our disposal—to break through the stalemate, regain the initiative against the state, and prepare the working class for power.

Entrenched obstacles

If Marxism was now the predominant tendency in the working-class movement, able to imbue with a common purpose the hundreds of thousands of workers and youth who are the active vanguard of the movement—then the present stalemate could rapidly be broken.

But the conscious forces of Marxism are still weak, and are confronted by entrenched obstacles in the form of reformism and Stalinism in the hierarchy of the mass organisa-

tions.

This weakness of the **subjective factor**—of revolutionary leadership—has become a factor in the **objective** situation, which cannot be quickly or easily overcome.

As a result, for quite a protracted period our movement is likely to face a whole number of unnecessary difficulties in trying to move forward decisively. Many blind alleys may be explored before they are rejected. Workers and youth will be compelled to tackle these difficulties and improvise solutions by trial and error without the theoretical clarity which Marxist leadership of the movement would provide in advance.

It is possible that once again next year workers will look for a way forward on the industrial front. But their outlook will now be tempered with doubts as to whether a **national** wage campaign will become a living reality. Short of a decisive lead from the top, there are no simple keys which can transform the situation.

The central task is to strengthen the forces of Marxism among the active layer of workers and youth.

Even without a clear national lead, many hard-fought struggles will erupt locally, providing many opportunities to build. In addition, there will be many who, out of the experiences of the past period, are now searching for the answers that Marxism can provide.

Building the movement for power

Again and again, supporters of *Inqaba* must explain that there is no way forward through compromises with the liberal bosses; that the need is for worker-youth unity around campaigns on all the basic social and political issues; for systematic armed self-defence against Inkatha/UWUSA, vigilantes and all the forces of reaction; for non-racial workers' unity, workers' power, democracy and socialism.

These are the lines along which to build the movement for power which will be capable of splitting the whites on class lines and bringing down the state.

The mighty organisations of our class have all been built upon the countless initiatives of rank-and-file activists. Upon them rests now the task of ensuring that these organisations are correctly led. Locally, regionally, and nationally it is necessary to struggle loyally within the Congress organisations to make Marxist policies the guiding influence in the movement. We must build—and, where necessary, rebuild and transform—the mass organisations on these lines. No-one should sit bemoaning the enormity of the tasks and the weakness of our present forces. By joining with the Marxists in Congress the present problems can and will be overcome.

For all the obstacles, the barren future which is all apartheid rule and capitalism can offer will drive the working class again and again into struggle. The ruling class will expose its bankruptcy again and again both through its reformist retreats and its repressive provocations.

The unconquerable determination of the South African working class which has inspired the exploited and oppressed around the world, the huge reserves of strength still to show themselves in action, will lead inevitably to explosions bigger by far than 1984-6. Shortcomings of leadership will generate a ferment of questioning as to how to overcome the problems.

Attempts to witch-hunt Marxists out of the Congress movement will fail, and rebound against their instigators. Patiently assembling the forces of Marxism in the Congress movement through all the sharp turns and sudden changes that the period ahead will bring, we can play a significant part in building and transforming the ANC into a mass revolutionary party of the working class, capable of leading all the oppressed to national liberation and socialism.

leaders, Zinoviev and Kamenev, voted against. Zinoviev argued that "the forces of the opponents are greater than they appear"—but this was merely covering up a lack of confidence in the working class.

That was bad enough, but Zinoviev and Kamenev then published openly their personal opposition to the line being pursued by the Party in a way which exposed to the enemy the plan for insurrection. Lenin fumed at this treacherous conduct, and although it was not acted upon, he even demanded their expulsion from the Party.

But Zinoviev and Kamenev—supported from the sidelines by Stalin, then a little-known figure—were swimming against what was a strong tide in the Party and even more so outside it. The overwhelming majority of the Party, pushed by the now impatient masses, were on the road to power.

As Trotsky later explained, in *Lessons of October*, this episode demonstrated the social law that every serious turning point creates a crisis, even in the leadership of a Marxist party. As with the political re-arming of the party in April, so also in October, Lenin had to base himself on the class-conscious traditions of the worker-Bolsheviks to ensure a correct line of march.

The episode also demonstrates the vital importance of the subjective factor in revolution. The October revolution could not take place spontaneously. It needed a leadership with a conscious understanding of the laws of history, a realistic appreciation of the living forces of the revolution, and from these, a perspective and a goal.

Like a human tidal wave, the Russian masses were hurled in the direction of power. But without a guiding party tied by a million threads to every factory, barracks and village, no order could have been created out of the maelstrom. Likewise, without the conscious role of Lenin and Trotsky guiding the Bolshevik Party itself, the October Revolution would not have taken place, or would have ended in disaster.

The final denouement began on October 24. The Provisional Government at last began to stir itself out of its torpor. It ordered the Military Revolutionary Committee be closed down, and the Bolshevik press be banned. The battleship *Aurora*, whose crew, like those of all the big ships and the navy in general was overwhelmingly Bolshevik, was ordered to sail and, for good measure, Kerensky ordered "reliable" units to move to the capital.

In reply, the Military Revolutionary Committee, under Trotsky's guidance, organised the defence of the Bolshevik press by detachments of soldiers, ordered the *Aurora* to stay put and defend itself from reaction if necessary, and called on all railway workers and troops to hold up any forces advancing towards Petrograd. Kerensky could do nothing.

The MRC was now functioning day and night. There were 200 000 soldiers, up to 40 000 Red Guards and tens of thousands of sailors under its command. All bridges, rail depots, stations, intersections and key buildings were occupied. The Smolny Institute, home to the Petrograd soviet and the Bolshevik Party, was fortified.

On the morning of October 25, the Smolny announced to the world: "The Provisional Government is overthrown. The state power has passed to the hands of the Military Revolutionary Committee". The last remaining stronghold of the Provisional Government, the Winter Palace, was taken virtually bloodlessly in the next 24 hours.

Power had been taken in Petrograd with barely a shot being fired because of the audacity and determination of the Bolshevik Party and its leadership. In reality, soviet power was consolidated over a period of two or three weeks, but the insurrection, begun on October 12 with the election of the MRC, was only consummated on October 25.

With an overwhelming majority of Bolsheviks and Left SRs, the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets accepted the power presented to it and proceeded to elect the first-ever workers' government.

In his classic book *Ten Days That Shook The World*, John Reed described how Lenin, coming out of hiding for the first time since July, addressed the Congress and was given a tumultuous welcome. "The trench delegates gaze with all their eyes at this mysterious being whom they had been taught to hate and whom they have learned, without seeing him, to love." Lenin began his speech simply, saying, "We shall now proceed to construct the socialist order."

Flame of revolution

The soviet government kindled the flame of revolution in the minds of workers throughout the world. The October revolution was infused with the finest traditions of the working class: workers' democracy and workers' internationalism.

The very first resolution of the Congress was an appeal directed "to all the warring peoples and their governments" for a "just, democratic peace." The Bolsheviks and their supporters understood this as no purely Russian affair, but the beginning of a new world.

Impelled by the horrors of the World War, and with the example of the Russian workers' government to guide them, the workers of Europe launched themselves in the direction of revolutionary struggle. The German and Austro-Hungarian emperors followed their Russian cousin into oblivion; soviet republics were established in Germany and Hungary; strikes and social upheavals threatened every ruling class. Only the absence of Marxist parties with the same traditions and leadership as the Russian Bolshevik Party prevented the victorious spread of the October revolution in the way Lenin and Trotsky had anticipated.

In their instinct for class self-preservation, the capitalists of Europe, Japan and America forgot the bitter rivalries that had led them to war among themselves a few years earlier. They now turned their attentions to their common enemy. Capitalist states, large and small, sent their armies (21 in all) against the young workers' republic at one time or another between 1917 and 1921, in an attempt to crush it.

That these attempts failed was due to a combination of factors: the newly-formed revolutionary Red Army, under Trotsky's leadership, the support and boycotts by workers overseas, and the frequent mutinies of the soldiers and sailors sent against Russia. By 1921, the Revolutionary regime prevailed, although by then isolated and greatly weakened.

The October Revolution is rich in lessons for the labour movement today. The exact social conditions of Russia in 1917 are unlikely ever to be repeated, but the methods of Lenin, unbreakable in his determination and his principles, yet flexible in tactics, have a greater relevancy than ever before.

The objective conditions faced by workers today in South Africa, the Philippines and Latin America—and tomorrow in Europe, North America and Japan—are a hundred times better than those faced by the Bolsheviks. The social weight of the working class and its potential power have grown immeasurably in the last 70 years.

But the key issue that still needs to be addressed, and the one that stands out in any study of October, is the subjective factor: the question of leadership. No matter how great the courage, self-sacrifice and combativity of the working class, the socialist transformation of society also needs conscious leadership.

Since the Stalinist reaction, the ideas of Lenin have been distorted beyond recognition or suppressed in Russia, while that same Stalinism is used to discredit what socialism is. But in both East and West, in the storms and convulsions of the years ahead, the genuine traditions of October will be rediscovered by millions of workers.... and put to good use.

UNITE WORKERS AND YOUTH IN ACTION BUILD INDUSTRIAL LOCALS!



The mine strike was a test in many ways. The bosses made it a test of strength with the workers. For our movement it was a test of trade union solidarity, and of worker-youth unity in action.

Millions of workers and youth all over South Africa were ready to move with the 340 000 striking mineworkers. The strike was a focus for COSATU's National Minimum Living Wage campaign. It was an opportunity to turn the UDF/SAYCO/COSATU "national united action" policy into reality.

However, as comrade Jay Naidoo, COSATU general secretary, frankly acknowledged to *New Nation* (3/9/87), the strike revealed "real weakness on our side in mobilising support for the miners". And: "The breakdown in co-ordination of the (living wage) campaign in all sectors...allowed employers and the state to exploit weaknesses."

Similarly, the mass reserves of SAYCO and the UDF were not drawn into the battle.

From identifying our weaknesses, we need to go on and identify how to remedy them, to fit our movement for even bigger battles ahead. This is a responsibility shared by every ordinary COSATU, SAYCO and UDF member.

By Jake Wilson
a banned trade unionist

How to go forward now? While many important local strikes and other struggles continue (to which all possible support must be given), it is clear that the peak of the 1987 wage-strike movement nationally has passed.

Nevertheless, the National Minimum Living Wage Campaign should on no account be seen as a thing of the past.

The wage question confronts workers and their families day after day. It is a question of the necessities of life.

In the main industries, major wage disputes are annual events. We have the opportunity, starting now, to build the National Minimum Living Wage Campaign towards a new peak in 1988.

By building worker-youth unity on that basis, by preparing systematically as from now, we will also be in a good position to make a turn to fighting on any other issue which comes to the fore meanwhile as a focus for national action.

Key to these preparations will be the building of effective locals to link union and youth congress members—and, with that, the development of political leadership at this and every level.

The basis of effective locals has to be the industrial areas, because the organised workplaces are the solid basis of strength of the industrial working class. Linking organised township youth with organised workers is not easy. But it is vital to understand that only by linking with workers **first and foremost at the point of production** can the youth join their revolutionary energies effectively to the real power-base of their class.

Everything else will follow from this. From this point the combined energies of the workers and youth can be directed upwards and outwards through COSATU, SAYCO, and the UDF—to help overcome the obstacles to united action both in the industrial and community fields.

The adoption of the Freedom Charter at the Second Congress of COSATU shows that the organised workers want to play an active and leading part in fighting for its implementation. They have understood the need to link up with the youth, who have inspired the whole class by their determination to overthrow apartheid and capitalism.

Link up

For more than ten years, revolutionary youth have been looking for ways to link up with the workers' movement. The Second Congress showed equally that the workers don't want to be separated from the youth.

In the shop stewards' committees and COSATU locals the workers are agreed on the need to join forces with the township struggles without turning away in the slightest from continuing to build and make advances in the workplaces.

Industrial locals will provide the best means of achieving these aims together.

A good example is to be found on the East Rand. The shop stewards' councils there were formed from 1981 to pool the experience of the organised workers and to assist in organising the unorganised. They were used to build and extend workers' power at the point of production.

From building their strength through the whole industrial area the workers were then drawn to take up township issues, to link up with the youth, and to

An explanation of some terms used in this supplement.

Bolsheviks: Revolutionary wing of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party which, under the leadership of Lenin, led the working class to the taking of power in October 1917. Trotsky and his supporters joined the Bolshevik Party at its conference of July 1917, past differences between them having been resolved through the experience of the revolution. He was elected to the Bolshevik central committee and, with Lenin, led the struggle for power.

Mensheviks ('minority'): The reformist wing of the RSDLP got their name from the split with the Bolsheviks ('majority') over organisational questions at the 1903 Party Congress. In 1917 with their mistaken 'two-stage' theory of the Revolution, Menshevik ministers helped prop up the capitalist Provisional Government, supported its imperialist foreign policy and fought against the proletarian revolution. After October, they became an openly counter-revolutionary party.

Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs): 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 they became, with the Mensheviks, the mainstay of the bourgeois Provisional government. 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.

Kadets: The Constitutional Democratic Party of the liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie in Russia. Failing to save the monarchy in February 1917, they took the advantage of their key position in the Provisional Government to pursue their counter-revolutionary and imperialist policies. After the October revolution they actively supported the invasion of Russia by the armies of the imperialist powers.

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 revolutionaries and were the chief instigators of pogroms (massacres of Jews).

Cossacks: Cavalry soldiers who formed a caste and almost a 'nationality' in Tsarist Russia, since they

enjoyed exemption from taxes and privileged land allotments in special territories.

Provisional government: After the overthrow of the Tsar in February 1917, the Provisional Government held formal power. It was made up of landowners and industrialists, mainly Kadets, together with Kerensky, and was supported by the Mensheviks and SRs. The precise composition of the Provisional Government changed between February and October, but not its essential character as defender of capitalism and the old state.

Soviets: Councils of workers' and soldiers' deputies—bodies of elected delegates, created by the initiative of the masses. Until August 1917 the Mensheviks and SRs had a majority in the Soviets.

Kerensky: A Socialist Revolutionary, on the right-wing of that party, who was Minister of Justice, then Minister of War, before becoming President of the Provisional Government in the period leading up to its overthrow in the October revolution.

Zinoviev and Kamenev: members of the Bolshevik Central Committee, eventually executed on Stalin's orders in 1936 after the Moscow Trials.

Petrograd: Capital of Tsarist Russia, today called Leningrad.

Winter Palace: The Tsar's official residence in Petrograd.

1905 (First) Revolution: The "dress rehearsal" for the revolution of 1917, when the working class clearly established itself as the leading force in the struggle and gave rise to the first Soviets, before it was crushed.

Bloody Sunday: 9 January 1905, when a peaceful demonstration of workers led by a priest, Gapon, tried to present a petition to Tsar Nicholas II and was met with volleys of gunfire. This massacre sparked off the revolution of 1905.

Social Democratic Parties: The term was originally used in the late 19th century to distinguish the workers' parties based on Marxism from the parties of capitalist democracy. With the growth of a conservative bureaucratic leadership during the long period of relative stability and economic growth in Western Europe and North America in the last part of the century, however, these parties underwent a profound degeneration. On the outbreak of the 1914 World war the vast majority of their leaders took up a nationalist position in support of their own capitalist classes, thus demonstrating their abandonment of Marxism.

organise for the November 1984 political strike which heralded the national upsurge in revolutionary struggle.

These councils, meeting with representatives of the youth, were nothing other than **industrial locals**. They were built around delegates from the factories in an industrial area, and could thus bring the industrial muscle of the workplace to bear on the political level. **It is this strength which attracts the youth.** It is by linking with this struggle, that the youth and community struggles can be carried forward most effectively, and the township-based organisations rebuilt or strengthened.

The achievements of the Springs local show what is possible. It has recently been reported that, in the absence of a national lead from COSATU on a specific national minimum wage demand, the local adopted R3.50 an hour for a 40 hour week as the basic hourly rate. Where longer hours were being worked, the workers demanded a cut to 40 hours with no loss of pay. The local has served to unite workers in different unions in struggle and has even drawn NACTU members towards COSATU.

The real effectiveness of this local is shown in solidarity action mounted to support workers in factories running up against the bosses' opposition to the minimum wage demand.

A roneoed script of a speech by one of the shop stewards leading the Springs local explains:

"When some bosses refused to discuss this minimum wage demand with us seriously, the workers went on a sit-in strike. All the members of the Shop Stewards Local from different factories would phone that particular management as well as their own management and inform them that we support the demands of the striking workers.

Solidarity action

"We all warned that we would take solidarity action if there was no real progress for the workers at the striking factory or if the bosses tried to take any action against them.

"We have found that this puts a lot of pressure on the bosses and they begin to take the strength of the workers seriously. We have won many victories with this strategy."

He went on: "...we used to think issues like rent increases or bus and train fare increases were issues that only the community organisations should

take up. Workers throughout South Africa have now learnt that these issues must be fought side by side with the organisations in the community.

"Unionised workers must take an active part in these struggles... We have had some important victories, for example, we stopped PUTCO (our local bus company) from being able to increase its fares.

"We won this struggle because we as workers joined forces with our community organisations. We have learnt that this co-operation is very important to us. For this reason all the organisations in our community, including the unemployed workers organisation, have a seat in our Local...

"We in our region have been under a very hard attack since September 1984, the time of the mass stayaways about the rent boycotts. We won huge victories and the rents could not be increased. Thousands and thousands of families have not paid rents since that time. These victories we won by standing together with our communities—the students, youth, women, unemployed, civic, sport and church organisations."

It is clear that the **basis** of these successes has been the strength of the industrial organisations, and the coming together of the work-place representatives uniting an entire **industrial**

National Minimum Living Wage Campaign —letter from a SAYCO branch.

Dear comrades,

I have read the Editorial Board statement *Skhokhele COSATU!* (see *Inqaba* No 23) and find it extremely good and interesting.

We took the ideas to our SAYCO branch and discussed them, and the general feeling was that we must take up the campaign.

We showed the advantages of the campaign and how it would help in reviving and building our organisations.

We started to present programmes for the workers and youth which were very well attended. Our first programme attracted more than a hundred people. One third were workers and the others were students and unemployed youth.

The second programme was even better attended and we had a very good discussion on the setting of a figure (for the national minimum wage campaign). All the workers agreed that R140 per week was a good figure to mobilise a campaign over, even

though it falls short of an adequate living wage. One worker said that if the workers had a common demand they would support each other. We explained to them that the figure will only serve as a stepping stone, and that no worker's wages must be below that.

As well as the discussion on the advantages of the national minimum living wage campaign, we also emphasised the importance of worker-youth unity. Through these programmes we succeeded in recruiting young workers and youth to our SAYCO branch.

Some of us feel that the COSATU leadership are not serious about taking the campaign forward. It's clear to us that if COSATU was prepared to link all the struggles of workers into a united campaign then there could be a mobilisation such as we have never seen. Do they not want to lead the workers towards a socialist revolution?

I am a serious revolutionary and won't be satisfied with anything less than a socialist revolution. While I was

in detention I used to shout: "No retreat from the Freedom Charter".

As we see this as a very serious issue, we would like you to give us advice on what we as a SAYCO branch and serious revolutionaries can do to take the national minimum living wage campaign forward.

Yours fraternally,
Anna Swartz

Editor's note: The issues raised are important. They are taken up in the article here and in the editorial which precedes it. Regarding the wage demand, it remains vital for COSATU to name and publicise a specific figure as a rallying point. Some COSATU leaders have mentioned an hourly figure which would amount to **R180 for a 40 hour week**. If that is COSATU's policy, *Inqaba* supporters, together with workers and youth everywhere, will be eager to campaign for its implementation.

The Langa Local

By Xolile Mava

The Langa local is composed of the Food and Allied Workers' Union (FAWU), the South African Allied Workers' Union (SAAWU), the South African Railway and Harbour Workers' Union (SARHWU), and the Transport and General Workers Union (T&GWU).

The Cape Youth Congress (Langa branch) is always within this local to fulfill the slogan of worker-youth unity—not an 'alliance' as most people shout about, because we as the youth don't see ourselves as making an 'alliance' with our parents as if we were a separate group from another planet; but we are being born from the working class. What is needed is to strengthen the unity with our parents—which is the proletariat.

The local has strong feelings concerning the strike of Nabe Bazaar exploited and oppressed workers. They had a collision with their black employer who failed to meet their demands and recognise their union. Although the Nabe Bazaar workers took the matter up on their own with their union, SAAWU, they were in

fact supported by the whole community.

Even the PSG (Peninsular Security Guards) took their problem up with their union and asked for support from the local after some of their workers were murdered, and about low wages and the poor conditions where they stayed. The workers were believed to have been murdered by vigilantes.

The local also took concern about the Langa high school issue of being disrupted by athletes who took part in a multiracial sport organised by the Department of Education and Training without the mandate of the staff and the students.

Members took part during the May 5th and 6th stayaway and put posters around the whole of Langa to advertise the stayaway.

The community organisations see the link with the local as a way of linking with the organised workers. But the local has not succeeded in linking the community to the factories.

**Forward to workers' control!
Forward to socialism!**

area. From this point they could link their strength effectively to the communities where the workers lived.

The fact that the Springs local meets most conveniently in a township venue does not make it a "township" or "community" local. It was and remains an industrial local. It embodies the industrial strength of the workers united in the local industrial area. We think the comrade whose speech is quoted above confused the matter when he said (speaking of locals generally): "Even if all the Shop Stewards who live in a particular area all work in different industrial areas, they will form their locals where they stay."

Debate

In fact, there is quite a lot of debate going on about whether locals should be industrial or residential. We think it is necessary to concentrate first on building powerful industrial locals. That would not exclude any co-ordinating bodies being formed additionally in

townships which are not directly connected with particular industrial areas.

Of course, where a township is directly connected with an industrial area—where most of the workers living in the township work in the same industrial area—then the industrial local would naturally meet in the township, and no additional co-ordinating body would be necessary.

The 'residential' or 'township' locals which are currently being suggested are not based on the industrial strength of the workplaces, but made up of shop stewards and activists who happen to live in the area.

In such a 'township local' the workers who attend work in several industrial areas. They can carry proposals and ideas from the township to their particular workplace. But they cannot effectively join the organised strength of workers in their entire industrial area to the movement in the township.

The vehicle needed for that is an industrial local in which activists from the townships take part.

Here we carry a report on the activities of the Langa local. This township local has good links with the workers housed in the compounds in Langa and

with the youth, but it does not embody the industrial strength of the workers in the adjacent industrial area, Epping.

The difficulties experienced by the comrades in the local in tackling the problems raised for discussion show that the township local has not been able to bring the industrial strength of the workers to bear in the township.

The effectiveness of the Springs local within the township depended upon systematic links between the local factories having been made.

Without a turn to the factories in Epping, is it not inevitable that the Langa township local will be unable to bring to bear on township problems the wider forces which are required to solve them? It will probably end up merely duplicating the civics—and also be unable to assist effectively in unionising unorganised factories.

Political lead

The confusion which surrounds the question of building locals, and the difficulties the workers and youth have experienced with the national minimum living wage campaign, has brought out the present limitations of the trade unions.

Unions are not an adequate substitute for working-class political organisation. Nor is it enough that workers are strongly organised for problems of the movement to be solved. There remains the need for a clear revolutionary strategy and the development of a leadership capable of carrying this through to the end.

Although we argue that the unity of the youth and workers should centre on the workplace we do not expect a solution to the problem of leadership to arise automatically from this. (See the editorial on pages 21-3)

But nor is it an answer to the problem to argue as comrade Murphy Morobe did at the Second Congress of COSATU that the industrial movement should be subordinated to the townships.

At this Congress the workers were looking to the UDF speaker for an explanation of how the workers can link with the youth, for a national plan of united action on specific issues. But instead of answering the questions in the minds of the workers, Comrade Morobe insisted that the 'political centres' already existing in the townships should be looked to for political leadership—and not the COSATU locals. Other UDF leaders have argued that in community struggles there should be the "complete submergence" of worker organisation in the

UDF. (*New Nation*, 20/8/87)

Since 1983 the working class has looked to the UDF for leadership, but frankly can we say the workers have been given a lead? Since the successful boycott campaign against Indian and Coloured elections in 1984, there has not been one single UDF-led national action campaign to mobilise the strength of the black working class. Surely, comrades, there has been no shortage of issues!

Workers have thrust a political role on COSATU partly because they failed to get leadership in action elsewhere. But without a clear strategy, the COSATU leaders have tended simply to pass the ball back to the UDF.

Now, without putting forward an action campaign, Comrade Morobe puts forward the organisational prescription that the mighty industrial organisations must be subordinate to the township forums.

Meanwhile, contrary organisational 'solutions' are put forward within the unions which likewise avoid the nub of the matter: **the political responsibilities of leadership.**

Quoted in *Learn and Teach* (No 3, 1987), comrade Frank Meintjies argues that the answer to the problem of the national minimum wage campaign is more Living Wage Committees. "Each union in COSATU will have a living wage committee. These committees will help organise and educate workers about the campaign. These committees will send people to the COSATU living wage committee. This committee will be called the NCC (National Co-

ordinating Committee)."

We are in danger of being swamped by committees. Instead of real committees of action **to implement bold plans and calls to action by the national and regional leaderships**, there is a tendency to form committees as a substitute for action. This is the fatal disease of **committee-itis!**

Quite apart from the fact that a proliferation of committees is not known to be very good at leading anybody, this idea means that the national executive, regional executive, and other leading bodies of the unions can shrug off their responsibilities. It's always someone else who can be blamed.

Work-place strength

Unity of the youth and workers centred on work-place strength in industrial locals should be the starting point now to prepare the movement for struggle—on the national minimum wage and many other questions.

At the moment, because there is no national plan of action, the workers are forced to improvise, to draw on past experience. We must certainly examine every struggle, every success (such as the wage increases won by postal and Mercedes Benz workers) to learn what tactics bring success. But we must also go further than that.

The battles we have fought since 1973

have educated workers that in building the unions they would have to take on the struggle to defeat the apartheid state. Wider and wider layers now understand that the working class is the only force capable of overthrowing apartheid and capitalism—that the organised workers have to take their place in the front rank of struggle.

Around the industrial locals a conscious socialist leadership can develop, building on the unity in action of the workers and youth. From this point the energies of the youth and workers can be directed upwards in the Youth Congresses, UDF, and COSATU, to transform leadership and forward a socialist programme.

We recognise the difficulties that have held back the national minimum living wage campaign, but we are also determined there will be success in 1988. We must fight together against disillusionment of workers and youth which could sap the energies of the movement.

We call on the COSATU leaders to set a specific minimum wage demand and draw up a plan of action for the wage battles in 1988, and to build industrial locals as the organising centres in every industrial area.

The youth have energy and an instinctively **political** approach; the workers have steadiness and strength. Together let us prepare to lead the industrial battles and political struggles which will again turn the movement towards victory.

'n CWIU lid skryf: "COSATU moet die verskillende vegte saambring in die national minimum living wage campaign"

Dit is baie duidelik dat werkers 'n nasionale veldtog vir die national minimum living wage ondersteun. Werkers wil krag en eenheid sien. Maar die veldtog moet nie nadelig vir die werkers wees nie. Wat ek hiermee bedoel is indien die veldtog nie nasionaal opgeneem word nie sal dit makliker vir die base van die verskillende industries wees om werkers te viktimizeer.

Daar moet 'n nasionale syfer gestel word sodat al die werkers kan saamstaan. As COSATU eis dat alle werkers ten minste die spesifieke syfer per week moet kry, sal dit COSATU kan versterk en dit sal ook ongeorganiseerde werkers nader aan COSATU bring. Dit is veral belangrik om die UWUSA werkers na COSATU te kry, omdat UWUSA maar net

'n wapen is wat die base wil gebruik teen COSATU, en ook net hoop om COSATU te verdeel.

As die veldtog 'n sukses kan wees, sal ook van die wit werkers meer vertrouwe in COSATU het. Hulle sal dan sien dat daar eenheid en krag in COSATU is, en dit is wat COSATU suksesvol maak. Wit werkers sal nie onmiddellik lede raak van COSATU nie, maar hulle sal meer na COSATU kyk, en meer belangstel in COSATU.

Ook kan ons die werkers van ander lande vra om die werkers in S.A. te ondersteun in hulle veldtog teen die base vir 'n nasionaal minimum living wage. Hierdeur kry ons dan internasionale werkers-klas solidariteit.

Dit is nie genoeg nie om net die verskillende affiliates se wage negotiations te gebruik as die Living Wage Campaign. Dit maak glad nie gebruik van die krag wat die werkers het as hulle verenig is nie. Ons leiers in COSATU moet die verskillende vegte saambring sodat die veldtog 'n ware nasionaal stryd teen die base word. Aksie, in die vorm van strikes, sit-ins, general strikes ens., moet georganiseer word.

Die jaar het die COSATU leiers baie kans gemis om die veldtog voor te neem. Maar die werkers will nog steeds die veldtog opneem, en hulle vra daagliks onder mekaar by die fabriek oor die living wage campaign.

A STRATEGY FOR SAYCO



Today, as the struggle for power in South Africa becomes more hard fought and severe, it is more important than ever for the movement to have a programme of action and organisation that will enable us to smash the state, take power into our own hands and implement the Freedom Charter.

We, the youth, have a vital role to play in formulating the correct strategy for power and building the forces to do it. Youth are not a section of society that considers itself to have class interests separate from those of the workers. Black youth are mainly working class youth.

To a great extent the youth have carried political struggles but despite these brave efforts, the state will only be smashed if the **industrial working class**, leading the rest of the oppressed, is mobilised to its full strength and taken to the height of revolutionary consciousness.

As the most powerful affiliate of the UDF, SAYCO should act as young class fighters together with COSATU to build the political power of the proletariat. Thereby we will contribute to developing the ANC as a mass revolutionary organisation inside the country.

by Pieter Carelse
A SAYCO activist

For this task we want SAYCO to unite the youth movement with the workers' movement at the point where their strength is concentrated: the mines, factories, farms, docks and all workplaces. At the same time, by bringing the strength and discipline of young workers into the forefront in SAYCO the youth congresses themselves will be built.

**Joint
campaigns emphasising
class issues**

Since the beginning of the year the working class movement has

concentrated its efforts in the industrial field in the fight for better wages and control over the wealth of the country. Some important gains have been made, drawing thousands of workers into COSATU as well as winning increases in many industries.

Youth labour has always been amongst the most exploited labour in the country and therefore young workers have stood to gain from these battles. However, we do not simply have an economic interest in the wage campaign; if a victory is scored at the point of production the whole movement will gain in political strength and confidence.

Unity of youth and workers should thus be built around all the issues affecting the working class: wages and working hours, unemployment, education and rents—as well as self-defence, the *State of Emergency*, detentions, and the political demands of the Freedom Charter.

Unemployment is one of the most serious problems facing the youth. Despite many attempted campaigns against it millions of young people can see no prospect of

ending this horror. To fight for jobs the unemployed should be mobilised together with the organised workers in the campaign for a minimum wage and a shorter working week. Our demand is that work should be shared among available workers without loss of pay.

The working and the jobless masses should be bound in the National Minimum Wage Campaign, and the unemployed organised into COSATU's unemployed workers union. All these steps are needed to cut across the problem of scabbing and the fear of workers of losing their jobs when they go on strike.

Among student and unemployed youth everywhere there have been many attempts to link up with the organised workers in COSATU. On a number of occasions strikes have sparked flare-ups amongst students. We salute the high school youth in Manenberg who showed support for the Cape Town City Council dustmen by marching to the local Council offices and dumping their rubbish there demanding that the workers' demands be met. If youth join forces with workers in all disputes taking place the bosses will be under much greater pressure to make concessions and the whole movement would gain confidence and unity.

SAYCO has already stated its support for the Living Wage Campaign. We should make it clear that it has to be seen as a joint campaign with COSATU and not just as "their" campaign. We can take the initiative to go to the workers and link up with them. We do not have to wait for COSATU to call upon us before we actively join with Post Office workers, chemical workers, metalworkers, food workers, and mineworkers. In fact for months they have fought the bosses and the state without the necessary solidarity from the movement as a whole.

The SAYCO executive has said that it will encourage its young worker members to join trade unions. What better way to bring this about than by going **directly to the factory gates** and win workers to COSATU and SAYCO? Millions of workers and youth are yet to be involved in struggle and organised into Congress. We should make it a priority to take campaigns to the fresh young layers of the proletariat

YOUTH BUILD COSATU

I am a municipal worker and a member of a union which is affiliated to COSATU. I would like to explain how we were organised.

Two years ago the youth movement in our area started with a worker health project. Once a week workers and youth came together and talked about unsafe working conditions and other causes that make workers sick. This continued for about seven months. We realised that we needed a strong union to secure our jobs and help make the workplace safer.

The youth movement approached the union officials. They asked the youth to help organise in the area. Firstly the youth went from worker to worker, from door to door with a form with questions. Through these questions we could see that the majority of workers wanted to be members of the union.

This took more or less six months. The youth movement decided to call a general meeting. The youth kept the workers up to date through pamphlets and

newsletters. The planning of the meeting, the preparation of the speakers, and decoration of the hall was all done by the youth. At that mass meeting more than 70% of our workers joined the union.

After the meeting, the union officials did not mind the extra members, but did not want to mobilise the workers to struggle for recognition from the municipality, and other demands. They saw no further role for the youth. The workers who joined the union were not involved in any activity.

The youth felt that their assistance was not wanted anymore and stayed away from the weekly meetings. As far as I can see the union organisers do not want to build links with the youth. On the other hand the youth helped to organise us and not the union organisers.

To the youth movement and the union organisers I say forward to worker-youth unity!

From Andre Janson

riat.

During the Spekenham strike in Bellville the CAYCO branches were providing programmes for the striking workers. It would be in the best interests of the workers if the youth were to go to the surrounding factories in the industrial area to rally support for the striking workers and thereby lay the basis not only for the unionising of new workers but for industrially-based locals in each area.

Such industrial locals, consisting of elected representatives of the factories in a particular industrial area will harness workers' collective strength at the point of production, especially during strikes. This is a **political** task for it will be the vehicle for the workers' industrial strength to be translated into a conscious political power.

This will strengthen struggles in the community. For example workers' strength in the workplaces can halt Botha's schemes for breaking the rent boycott by getting the

employers to deduct rents from wages. Strong industrial locals will also make it easier to mobilise general strike action on political issues.

Realising the political need for industrial locals we should put it forward to all the workers that we come in contact with. In a number of townships residential or community locals have been set up that do not fulfil the purpose of industrial locals. Where SAYCO branches have representation on these locals it can be used to find out what is going on in the factories with the aim of taking the youth to wherever disputes are on and joining up with the workers.

By building the locals, and building SAYCO at the same time, it would not be necessary to form special committees every time there is a new campaign. We would then already have all the necessary machinery to get down to the job at hand of mobilising and organising the masses.

Stop strikebreakers! Stop vigilantes!

During the mineworkers' strike the SAYCO youth defended the NUM headquarters. What a difference the youth would have made if they had been sent out to mobilise workers generally in support of the strike. Trotsky wrote (in a period like this): "In connection with every strike and street demonstration, it is imperative to propagate the necessity of creating workers' groups for self-defence".

Only the organised force of masses of workers or youth have so far succeeded in stopping and driving back vigilante attacks. This lesson should be applied by the SAYCO and COSATU leadership

to equip us for the defeat of vigilantes like Inkatha/UWUSA and their fellow gangs around the country.

Legality and peace talks have not protected us. Legality cannot be our main tactic. While it can be used **it should never be a substitute for the mobilising of the masses.** Especially now we cannot afford to answer the attacks with complacency or timidity. The calls for armed self-defence to be organised must be turned into action by the leadership.

The experience of Crossroads, the massacre of youth activists in Natal by Inkatha, has taught us the need for armed self-defence. Through systematic persistent political and organisational work the job of forming defence militias

should be tackled. A vigorous campaign, linked to the campaign for a national minimum wage on a national scale can break reaction in the black communities while laying the basis for the ultimate arming of the proletariat for the smashing of the state.

"Save the 32"

Presently numbers of workers and youth are on death row after the courts have convicted them for the killing of police informers, and other agents of state control in the townships. Comrades Wellington Mielies and Moses Jantjies have recently been executed. Youth around the country are eager to take up the "Save the 32" campaign launched by the SAYCO executive.

But letters of protest to the United Nations or the Western governments will not stop Botha. When it is a question of defence of revolutionaries, the ruling class will not be impressed by a campaign for mercy waged on humanitarian lines.

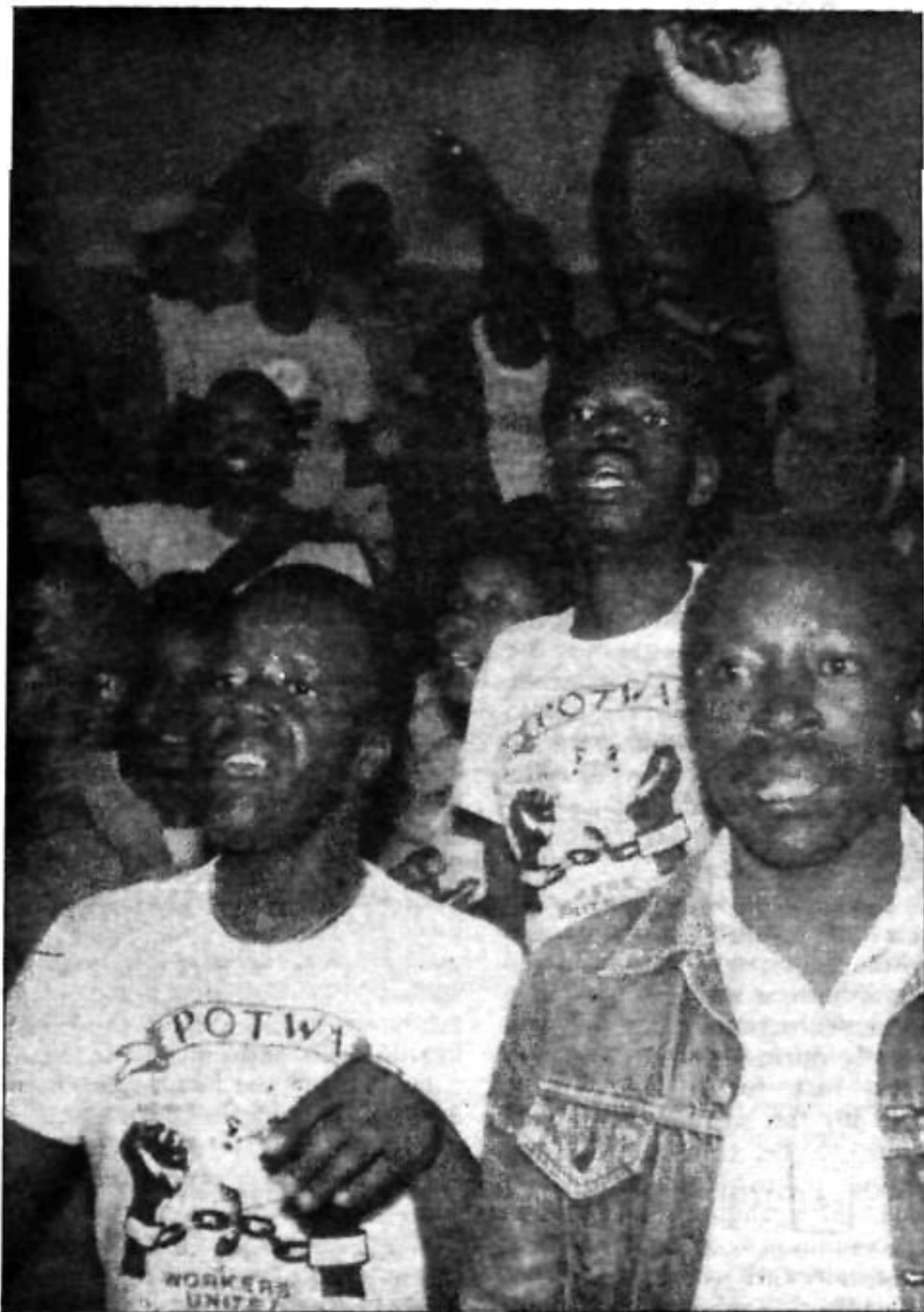
The government tries to criminalise the actions of the youth and hopes to teach us a lesson. In defending our comrades we must not be apologetic. During the mass uprising of 1984-86 we all understood the necessity of driving out, or eliminating, the apartheid state's agents in our midst.

Necklacing these villains struck terror among the informers and raised the revolutionary confidence of whole communities. Necklacing has undoubtedly led to many abuses—but there are always abuses and excesses in a revolution. The use of necklacing is absolutely wrong in settling factional disputes in the movement. But we cannot renounce violence against our oppressors—and what other means did comrades have against state agents?

We should take our case boldly to those who can understand and genuinely support our revolutionary struggle—we must take it to the "court" of the working class movement in South Africa and internationally.

We must use the example of our

(continued on page 32)



Striking postal workers: they won a marvellous victory.

Fight to save comrades on death row!



A prison service official informs family members that their sons have just been hanged. More than thirty comrades remain on death row, including three NUM members.

How the campaign to save Sacco and Vanzetti was fought

Sixty years ago two worker-activists, Sacco and Vanzetti, were executed in the USA.

They had been arrested and sentenced to death in 1921 on framed-up charges of robbery and murder. Their real 'crime' had been to fight for better conditions and the end of capitalism.

A magnificent international campaign was waged to fight for their release. This forced the state to stay execution for six years. Although the campaign failed in its objective, it involved millions of workers world-wide and raised their understanding of the role of capitalism and its state.

The way the campaign was fought remains an example for us today. An article in the campaign paper, *Labour Defender*, October 1927, by its secretary James Cannon, described how the campaign was approached:

"The ILD (International Labor Defence) devoted much of its resources and energies to organising the protest mass movement in America and throughout the world. It was due to the work of the militants that the crucifixion of Sacco and Vanzetti was not prepared and carried out in a quiet and 'orderly' way in whispered consultations behind closed doors, but became a tumultuous issue, storming through the streets and factories of the world.

... "In appealing to the workers for solidarity with Sacco and Vanzetti, and in organising the protest movement on their behalf, the I.L.D. never considered the case as simply that of two individuals involved in a trial at law. We always pointed out its direct connection with the general issues of the struggle between classes. We endeavoured to link up the fight for Sacco and Vanzetti with the general defence of the scores of labour prisoners confined in the penitentiaries

today, and with the broader fight of the toiling masses for liberation from the yoke of capitalism.

"Viewing the case always as an issue of the class struggle, we had no illusions about the possibilities of 'justice' from the judges or the governor. Time and again we warned against these illusions, against confining the defence to the task of collecting money for lawyers whose vision did not extend beyond Judge Thayer's courtroom.

... "The best defence for Sacco and Vanzetti was to concentrate all energies in arousing the protest movement of the masses. Sacco and Vanzetti themselves understood this. These humble workers saw with clear-eyed vision that their hope lay in the masses and not in the court's or the governor's commission. The contemptuous refusal of Sacco to sign the legal papers brought to him was a gesture more eloquent than all the arguments of all of the lawyers (attempts

to extract confessions of guilt in return for life imprisonment had been courageously rejected by Sacco and Vanzetti - Editor). Every utterance that came from them was infused with this spirit. Sacco and Vanzetti were blood brothers to all labour militants, bound by a thousand ties to the labour fighters in the front ranks of the class struggle, and to those languishing in prisons today for the cause of labour. The deathly heritage of the two great martyrs belongs to the militants, and they need no-one's permission to carry on their work in the name and spirit of Sacco and Vanzetti.

... "For the labour militants who fought with them and for them, the light of Sacco and Vanzetti burns more brightly and fiercely than before. For us the last word has not yet been spoken. We have work to do and we must be about it. The great movement of the working masses for Sacco and Vanzetti must not be allowed to dissolve. The first and foremost task in honour of the memory of the martyrs is to bind this movement more closely together; and to infuse it with a stronger spirit and a broader vision of the manifold questions which were involved in the Sacco and Vanzetti case.

"The electric flames that consumed the bodies of Sacco and Vanzetti illuminated for tens of thousands of workers, in all its stark brutality, the essential nature of capitalist justice in America. The imprisonment, torture and murder of workers is seen more clearly now as part of an organised system of class persecution."



Forces of the state 'on duty' in a township.



Unemployed white worker from Alberton.

martyred comrades, and those facing execution, to inspire millions with revolutionary understanding and determination. Only if we conduct our campaign in that way might Botha doubt the advantage of murdering these comrades—and possibly be induced to back off.

If we take the issue to the workers and win their support for these militants we will strengthen the political bond between the youth and the workers. With the support of the working masses nationally and internationally enlisted, our demand for the release of the youth can be backed up by the threat of action by the movement. Amongst the working class of the world there is enormous sympathy and solidarity with the struggle in South Africa. This class solidarity of the proletariat is the only international support that we can depend on.

Paralyse the white state

Lenin explained that for the revo-

lution to succeed the state has to be paralysed and split along class lines so that it can be overthrown. In South Africa the white working class youth bear arms in defence of capitalism and apartheid. SAYCO has to begin to address the question of getting significant sections of those youth to break with capitalism and the state.

Ultimately only a fully conscious and armed black proletariat can convince the white working class that it has no future under the present system—that its future lies with working class power, democracy and socialism. With skill SAYCO can now already begin to lay the foundations for winning white youth.

The ferment at the white universities among middle-class youth is an early sign of the anxieties that will develop among working-class white youth. Capitalism can no longer guarantee secure jobs or privileges for them; instead it drags them into the army in a futile fight on the borders and in the townships against the growing strength of the black majority. Even in the schools

there is increasing militarisation.

SAYCO branches should find ways of approaching youth in white working-class schools, to discuss these issues, explain the way forward, and try to draw them into our movement.

Build unity!

Comrades, at this point in the revolution all the youth, under the leadership of SAYCO, has to take up the task of building unity with the workers' struggle. Let SAYCO be built not just as a mass youth wing of the UDF but as the youth wing of COSATU also. This will prepare the way for the rise of a mass ANC, led by the working class on a socialist programme, with SAYCO as its youth wing.

Let SAYCO play its full part in leading us onto the road of smashing the state and establishing democratic workers' rule as the only conditions for securing the implementation of the Freedom Charter and opening the way to socialism.

LET US UNITE

DON'T BREAK OUR STRIKE



ORGANISE OR STARVE!



Op Woensdag 5 Augustus het 600 werkers van Food and Allied Workers Union (FAWU) op staking gegaan vir beter lone en die erkenning van die unie.

Werkers was ontevrede oor hulle R60. per week lone. Die base se weiering om met unie amptenare te onderhandel is ook onaanvaarbaar vir die werkers. Die base was net bereid om met die shop stewards te praat.

Op Donderdag het die staking voortgeduur. Die gevoel onder die werkers was baie hoog. Al die werkers het saam met die unie amptenare na die base gegaan. In plaas om te gesels, het die base hulle self opgesluit in hulle kantore en weggesteek van die werkers.

Die base se enigste reaksie was om die werkers te dreig met afbetaling as hulle weier om terug tekeer na hulle werk.

Werkers het die dreigemente gehoor en besluit om 'n 'Siyalala' aksie te begin. Hulle het besluit om te oornag in die fabriek sodat die base hulle nie kan uitsluit en afdank as hulle terug kom die volgende oggend.

Die bestuur het toe die telefone afgesny sodat werkers nie met hulle families kan kommunikeer nie. Teen ongeveer 7.30 het die bestuur die polisie ingeroep. Werkers is gesjambok, slaan en van trangas is ook gebruik gemaak om die werkers uit die fabriek te kry. Baie swanger vrouens is in die proses beseer.

Sommige werkers is onmiddelik hulle afdankingsbriewe gegee. Al die ander werkers is later afdank.

The Spekenham staking bewys weereens dat die base maak staat op Botha se polisie en weermag om hulle stelsel te beskerm. Werkers kan alleenlik staat maak op hulle medewerkers vir ondersteuning en beskerming!

'n Oorwining vir die Spekenham werkers is 'n oorwining vir al die uitgebuite werkers. Om die oorwining moontlik te maak is dit nodig om die ondersteuning van al die fabriek en gemeenskappe in Kraaifontein en Bellville te kry.

Werkers en gemenskappe moet nie net met geld en kos die werkers ondersteun nie. Direkte druk moet uitgeoefen word op die Spekenham bestuur om te onderhandel.

Alle werkloses en ander in gemenskappe moet ingelig word rondom die staking en hoe hulle positiewe ondersteuning kan bied. Hulle kan kom uitvind by die Spekenham werkers wat elke dag bymekaar is by die NG Kerk Saal in Dammert Straat, Bellville Suid. Alle ondersteuning moet onderneem word met die aktiewe betrokkenheid van die Spekenham werkers.

Die eise van die Spekenham werkers moet bekend gemaak word:

- ALLE WERKERS TERUGEVAAT MOET WORD SONDER ENIGE DISKRIMINASIE!
- VOLLE LONE MOET BETAAL WORD VIR DIE TYDPERK VAN STAAKING!
- ERKENNING VAN FAWU BY SPEKENHAM!
- 'N LEWENDE LOON VIR SPEKENHAM WERKERS!

'N BESERING VIR EEN IS 'N BESERING VIR ALMAL!*****

The Spekenham strike has been one of the most important disputes to have taken place in the Western Cape recently. Among the articles that appeared in the

movement press in support of these workers was the above, in the August issue of *Amandla*, the paper of the Bellville branch of SAYCO.

HOW TO FIGHT UWUSA



The launch of UWUSA, announcing that it intended to bury Elijah Barayi and COSATU, was a direct challenge to organised workers and youth.

UWUSA was launched by Buthelezi's Inkatha in May 1986. It is not a union. It is not even a "tribally-based union". It is an armed gang created for no other purpose than to break strikes and unions. For all its claims of more than 100 000 worker "members", UWUSA has not led a single strike since its foundation.

UWUSA is part of the organised counter-revolutionary apparatus of the bosses. Unable to defeat, penetrate, or divide the workers' movement with its white forces of repression alone, the ruling class is increasingly compelled to unleash auxiliary forces of reaction in the form of black vigilante murder squads—both in the townships and the workplaces.

Of these forces, Inkatha is the most formidable, because of the political base that vigilante-in-chief Gatsha Buthelezi has built in Zululand through fear and appeals to conservative tribal prejudices. UWUSA is the arm of the reactionary Inkatha gangster clique extended into the workplaces.

Over the last period, vigilantes have engulfed township after township, with the support of the police and the army. The ravages of the *witdoeke* in Crossroads in May–June 1986 were a grim warning of the extent to which the use of vigilantes had become an

open and conscious part of the policies of the ruling class. Since then, civil war has raged in Natal, and the vigilantes have penetrated even strongholds of our movement in the Eastern Cape and elsewhere.

Hundreds of activists have been murdered, with scarcely an official prosecution coming to court—while workers and youth accused of "necklacing" collaborators are rushed by the state to judgment and to execution.

The assault of UWUSA vigilantes on the NUM at Hlobane Colliery in Natal in May 1986 was the counterpart of Crossroads for the trade union movement. At least 11 and possibly 20 NUM activists were murdered; a strike was broken; and the NUM was smashed at the mine. In December Inkatha impis, led by their national youth organiser and backed by Kwazulu police, invaded Mphophomeni *en masse* to attack BTR strikers; three shop stewards were abducted, tortured, and murdered. UWUSA has since been invited by BTR management to "unionise" the scabs.

This was the start of a murderous offensive by UWUSA in factories and mines of Natal, the East Rand, and the Eastern Transvaal. Among the casualties have been worker-activists at Zincor refin-

ery, and an NUM organiser murdered in his office at Coronation Colliery in Vryheid by a group of men who mashed his brains with a section of piping filled with lead.

The liberal capitalists are promoting Buthelezi, Inkatha and UWUSA with the conscious purpose of dividing and defeating the revolutionary workers' movement. Gavin Relly, head of Anglo American, put it in a nutshell: "You can't expect us to run away from the one black leader who says exactly what we think. I've been told that Buthelezi plays a rough game in Natal. But SA is not for the fainthearted." (*Business Day*, 2/5/86)

Workers and youth everywhere need to discuss how to challenge and defeat UWUSA's penetration of the workplaces, and vigilantes everywhere. For activists especially it is a matter of life and death. To work out and put forward a clear national strategy to defeat Inkatha, UWUSA and all vigilantes is an urgent task for the leadership of COSATU, the UDF and the ANC.

Supporters of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC put forward the following points for consideration, based on experience.

Morale, organisation and armed self-defence

UWUSA's infiltration of workplaces tends to follow a general pattern. Management hire Zulu workers from UWUSA. They arrive at the factory and begin to split the workers on ethnic lines, instituting a propaganda campaign against the leaders of the COSATU union. Then at some stage the leaders of the UWUSA gang get arms and murder several of the union activists. This takes place either to try directly to bring a strike to an end by eliminating its leaders or, more generally, to try to induce a state of paralysis amongst the workers and establish UWUSA as the main union.

The starting-point in the fightback against UWUSA is recognition of the central factor favouring the workers—their elemental power when organised collectively. UWUSA thugs seldom arrive at a factory or mine with a majority of the workers on their side. In fact UWUSA killings are generally carried out by small bands of armed men, five or six in number.

In the first stages of battle there is therefore a decisive social weight in

favour of the organised trade union. But this will not last for long if mistakes in tactics are made when the UWUSA scum set to work. Their tactic is not to take on the mass of the workers but to have them stand aside so that they can deal with the union activists separately. They will say to the bulk of the workers: "Our quarrel is not with you—it is with these ANC communists who are your leaders."

Thus in the early stages of defence against an UWUSA assault a key element is binding the workers together, in unity, as a force. We would suggest that any factory where UWUSA arrives should have a mass meeting of workers to explain the issues, raise worker morale and put forward a plan of action.

This plan of action has to have, as its main components: the organisation of the workers' use of their collective power, and preparations for armed self-defence.

Where UWUSA attacks, these elements have to be put into operation swiftly and resolutely.

For organised defence committees

Immediately some form of self-defence committees must be established not only at the workplace but also where the workers live. If the workers live in hostels near to the place of work this is especially important since this will be where they are most likely to be attacked. A complete security system is necessary including day and night patrols of the living area because in these struggles management-employed security will most often operate in the interests of UWUSA.

Defence can be organised on the basis of groups of 10 or 20 workers, each with a team leader. These leaders, or some among them, should meet in a central defence committee to discuss strategy and tactics.

The first task of the defence committee is to organise a warning system which mobilises all the workers to come out together to meet an attack. A mass of three



hundred workers is a considerable force for a group of UWUSA scum to take on, even if they are armed. It cannot be emphasised enough that this collective organisation of the mass of the workers is a key. The same will apply in township battles with the vigilantes.

It might happen, for example, that UWUSA launches an initial attack in a band of 10 or 11, and kills two or three union activists before workers are prepared for it. The next morning four shop stewards are in the hostel area and see two UWUSA thugs. What should they do?

The immediate response might well be "We are four, they are two, let's get the bastards". There may be instances where that would be correct. But it is dangerous to look for short-cuts or ways of defeating UWUSA through heroic actions of individual workers. We must concentrate on the key thing. Better for the shop stewards to prepare for battle, mobilise, and organise the workers, build their confidence and then from a position of strength deal a crushing blow to UWUSA.

This approach is in no way a shrinking from armed conflict. To achieve success, workers need to strike hard at the decisive moment **from a position of strength**, not lash out in desperation like a wounded animal.

Arming for self-defence

Once defence committees are in operation, much can actually be done with rudimentary weapons to transform seemingly defenceless workers into a formidable fighting force.

In this respect workers can learn from the battles of the township youth. Basic stiff-arm metal slings can be purchased from dealers for





around R5 or R6. Or they can be made. Twenty people armed with such slings firing ball bearings or old spark plugs or pieces of metal waste can wreak a lot of damage on any band of assailants. That and detachments armed with pangas, kieres and bricks will in action make these UWUSA murderers think twice.

This is not to underestimate the advantages of the fire power that they will have on their side. So, if it is possible some fire-arms should be procured. A proper system for their hiding and use should be devised. We know of hostel areas searched for arms by security forces in the day before an UWUSA attack was launched.

The UWUSA scum are expecting to inflict the blows, not receive them. The first casualties they suffer have a big effect on the morale of the rest of them. They begin to wonder whether acting as killers on behalf of the bosses is worth the price they may have to pay.

To COSATU locals and SAYCO for support

Wherever UWUSA appears our defence plans should include immediate attempts to mobilise other workers and youth in the local area and regionally. If UWUSA becomes established in one workplace, the bosses can bring it into the next. Urgent approaches should be made to shop stewards in the COSATU locals as well as to the SAYCO branches to engage jointly in organising armed self-defence. There should be a thorough campaign of political education and propaganda against UWUSA directed to every workplace in the area.

Strike back against the bosses

It is the bosses who bring UWUSA to attack the union and in one way or another are responsible for arming them. Strike action is thus a key element in the armoury.

But the arrival of UWUSA is not necessarily the occasion for immediate action on these lines. Often the bosses may welcome a strike at this point, or try to provoke it, to provide grounds for mass dismissals and mass hiring of

UWUSA scabs. Nevertheless preparation of a strike is a vital element in strategy.

The ground has to be prepared politically and organisationally. Special efforts should be made to patiently explain the issues to Zulu workers and win them over. Not all of them are cannon fodder for UWUSA. We know of cases where Zulu workers hired to boost the numbers of UWUSA have been won to the COSATU union and been the bravest fighters in the struggle to defend it!

To win such workers it is necessary to emphasise again and again the importance of unity in action within COSATU in struggle over all the problems common to workers. A vigorous national campaign for a definite living wage would have a powerful impact in winning away potential recruits from UWUSA.

Efforts should also be made to win the support of company security guards for the union.

The bosses generally are responsible for the attacks of UWUSA. To stop them, ultimately we will have to overthrow them. But even now there are measures of self-defence that could be taken against individual bosses who are clearly seen by the workers to be directly involved in organising UWUSA attacks. They should realise that they cannot do this with impunity. If they unleash violence against us, ways can be found of showing them



BTR Sarmcol strikers in Howick have suffered attacks by Inkatha impis.

that they are standing at a door which can swing in both directions.

Remember UWUSA always comes back

One further warning is necessary. Seldom is victory what it seems. UWUSA have powerful resources and backers and will not readily accept their first repulse. Usually they will be back for more within weeks. This is why vigilance is necessary and the maintenance of the defence committees essential long after UWUSA seem to be vanquished.

Organised defence, worker action or legal action?

While our strategy must base itself on the power of organised workers, legal action can be used as an auxiliary. While not propagating any illusions in what the bosses' courts' can do for us, we can try to make use of them where possible.

However recourse to the courts should never be presented as the **main** course of action open to unions against UWUSA attacks and murders.

Time and time again there has been resort to legal action in the courts, for instance by the leaders of NUM, as an **alternative** to the active building of armed defence committees. This legal strategy has

not worked. Court orders have been issued in favour of NUM restricting the action of UWUSA, and still the carnage goes on.

Could a court order have saved the brave leaders of the Sarmcol workers butchered by an Inkatha mob? Did affidavits save the NUM organiser at Coronation Colliery? Did they save the activists murdered at Zincor? The answer is no, one thousand times no!

For a national campaign against UWUSA!

If this strategy for fighting UWUSA was carried forward in a vigorous national campaign led by COSATU then, in our opinion, in a relatively short period of time this mob of gangsters would be a thing of the past. Literally the grip of UWUSA could be broken in a matter of weeks, not months.

UWUSA's claimed "membership" is nothing compared with the organised force of COSATU—with more than 700 000 in its ranks and a capability of mobilising millions.

Even a sharp propaganda campaign against UWUSA, which left the organisation of defence to workers locally, would have an enormous effect on the ranks of workers, organised and unorganised.

The more the bosses see that attacks by their UWUSA and other vigilante thugs are leading to widespread arming of the workers in self-defence, the more they will hesitate, and the momentum of the



whole vigilante movement can be paralysed.

In all battles it helps to call things by their real name. The present policy of the leaders of COSATU is not to brand UWUSA as a strike-breaking murder squad, but rather to dignify it as a "tribally-based union". This softness and hesitation on Inkatha and UWUSA is a recipe for disaster. Venomous snakes do not become harmless worms because they are referred to as such—on the contrary, they are made bolder by conciliation, which also disarms workers in the face of these assaults.

Zincor shows the way

The three biggest confrontations so far between UWUSA and COSATU, according to the labour correspondent of *Business Day* (30/4/87) have been at Hlobane colliery, Jabula Foods and Zincor zinc refinery in Springs.

From the limited information now available it seems that the workers at Zincor achieved a significant victory, while at Hlobane and Jabula the problem with UWUSA has continued. It appears also that at Zincor a number of the tactics outlined above were applied in one way or another which resulted in victory.

Tribute to fallen comrades

At this point we would like to pay tribute to all our brave comrades who have fallen prey to the murderous assaults of the vigilantes in township and factory.

But tears and mourning are not enough. We have to organise. We have to fight back with all our strength. These ideas, the ideas of Marxism, of class struggle, of preparing for a fight to the finish, are the only strategy for victory in our struggle.



THE BATTLE AGAINST UWUSA AT ZINCOR

After the battle with UWUSA at Zincor, NUM members at the plant wrote a pamphlet to tell other workers what happened. This is what they wrote:

What is UWUSA?

UWUSA leaders say that UWUSA is a trade union. But UWUSA is not a trade union, it is an organisation of strike breakers and union bashers. UWUSA works with the bosses and is paid to do their dirty work.

UWUSA and Zincor— the murder of unionists

UWUSA arrived at our mine early in January 1987. Inside two weeks they attacked with knives and guns and three shop stewards were murdered. We were angry and fought back and UWUSA left the mine.

Zulu workers

We learned that it is wrong to think that all Zulu workers support UWUSA. While UWUSA was away from our mine, management brought another 41 workers to our mine from KwaZulu. NUM shop stewards spoke to them patiently and explained what was happening and they joined the NUM. They are our comrades now.

Viva Vivi!

Then on April 2nd Vivian Mbambe and a woman comrade were shot down in cold blood by an assassin hired by UWUSA. Vivian was a strong comrade and we were very sad and angry at his death. Management taunted us after his death: "Where is your Vivian now?" they asked.

A battle plan necessary

Many workers were frightened because UWUSA kills people. UWUSA, at our mines had guns and pangas and they used to walk proudly around the hostels with their chests sticking out. They work by fear and try to divide other workers. We knew we needed a plan. The workers had to be brought together to feel their strength and to organise defence committees—courage and organisation will beat UWUSA. So we had a big meeting to warn about UWUSA and build courage amongst the workers. We organised defence committees.

Defence committees—the only way

Our defence system represents all the workers. There are representatives for each room and block—and a committee to organise things. We explained to every one at the mine that this thing is serious. And we took all precautions in case we were attacked.

UWUSA goes for more killing

The UWUSA sell-outs knew that the NUM members were organising. They knew that the time was running out for them. So, in the middle of the night on Saturday 11th April, they attacked us. They burst into a room with a shotgun and some hand guns and shot at our sleeping comrades. Five of us were badly wounded. On Sunday, in another fight, an UWUSA member died in circumstances that are not known.

NUM strike at Zincor

When the first three comrades were killed, NUM officials took court action against UWUSA. That did not stop the killings. After Vivian was killed and UWUSA was brought back to the mine to try and kill more of us, we went on strike. We were on strike for two days.

Zincor management— blood on their hands

The Zincor management encouraged UWUSA at our mine and so was responsible for these killings. Their hands are stained with the blood of our comrades. Not only are they prepared to let us die in their mines because they don't care about safety. They are prepared to let us die on their compounds if it means an end to NUM. One worker told us that he knew that management had given guns to UWUSA. Even now they may be plotting to kill our leaders. At Zincor the bosses are thirsty for profit. In the last six months they have made as much as R17 000 profit from each mineworker. This is still not enough for them. All the bosses are the same.

The defence committees guard our members

We workers at Zincor have had to learn the hard way. We are not going to let UWUSA surprise us again. We keep our committees working. We have our own security patrols and watchmen. We cannot rely on the mine security; they did not warn us or protect us when UWUSA attacked us.

An injury to one is an injury to all

All our members are now ready, they know that if UWUSA attacks us they all have to come out to fight. One night a group of painters arrived to paint the hostels. The whistles blew and three hundred mine workers came out together to meet them. It is lucky for them that they were not UWUSA.

UWUSA will never beat us!

Even now we know that UWUSA will be back or that management will try more dirty tricks. We are willing to die for our union. UWUSA will never beat us. There are lessons in our struggle for workers everywhere.

**DOWN WITH UWUSA! VIVA NUM! VIVA!
UNITY IS STRENGTH! VIVA COSATU! VIVA!
FORWARD WITH THE WORKERS STRUGGLE!**

NO TRUCE WITH INKATHA!

Buthelezi claims Inkatha is a "liberation movement". He always lied. He has built Inkatha to promote himself and a clique of corrupt gangsters in KwaZulu, by duping the people and violently crushing resistance.

The real liberation struggle exposes these criminals completely. To survive, they are compelled to fight it to the death. This is why Buthelezi has sent his impis to slaughter UDF and Youth Congress activists in the townships; why he has organised UWUSA and pays its assassins to attack COSATU members in Natal and Transvaal. He has become a police agent of the bosses and Pretoria.

Years ago, the ANC leadership made the mistake of helping Gatsha to create Inkatha, thinking it would build opposition to the government. Comrade O.R. Tambo openly admitted this mistake at the Kabwe Conference in June 1985.

On 30 May this year, 'Radio Freedom' went further and broadcast a sharp attack on Buthelezi, denouncing him as the "vigilante chief" and "treacherous puppet" of Pretoria. He has "sold himself heart and soul to Botha". He is "nothing less than a Jonas Savimbi", whose job is "to crush the democratic movement" in KwaZulu and elsewhere.

Civil war has long raged in the townships of Natal and KwaZulu. At first Inkatha had the initiative—the aggressor is usually the better prepared. The horrible atrocities they have committed are uncountable. At KwaMakutha, Gatsha's thugs gunned down 13 defenceless people, including 7 children, in their home in the dead of night.

But the Congress youth have fought back—bitterly, tenaciously, individually and together, with the utmost heroism.

They have fought with little or no concrete help or guidance from the national leadership. But how they have fought!

Many are the martyrs whose sacrifice has now begun to turn the tide against Gatsha and Inkatha's reign of terror in these townships.

Most incidents are unpublished, many 'unexplained'—such as the deaths of 13 Inkatha Youth Brigade members in KwaShange. But the signs are clear that Inkatha is beginning to suffer severe consequences for its crimes.

It is not just armed self-defence and retaliation against Inkatha which has begun to have effect. The political bankruptcy of Inkatha has enabled Congress youth to win many of Gatsha's former supporters over to the side of the revolution.

In Mpumalanga, after years of bitter resistance to Inkatha vigilantes, the Hammarsdale Youth Congress won over scores of Inkatha Youth Brigade members, including former local leaders.

No wonder Gatsha began squealing for 'peace' with the UDF!

This was the opportunity for Congress leaders to drive home the advantage, and go on a determined political offensive against Inkatha, generalising for youth and workers everywhere the practical lessons of the successes that had been won.

Instead, this month, UDF President comrade Archie Gumede signed a truce with Inkatha!

Worse still, the two organisations issued a **joint statement** declaring that **both** "believe strongly in national unity" against the "common enemy ... apartheid". Differences between them "should not be allowed to escalate to black-on-black violence", etc, etc.

What has happened to the standpoint

broadcast by 'Radio Freedom' on 30 May? Why has the "treacherous puppet" of Pretoria turned miraculously into an "enemy of apartheid" like the UDF? The hated dictator of KwaZulu whose job has been to divide black people and "to crush the democratic movement" suddenly becomes ... a strong believer in "national unity"!?

Glossing over little trifles like Inkatha's years-long counter-revolutionary war against the liberation movement, comrade Gumede hurries to sign an alibi for the villain. "Differences" (!) "should not be allowed to escalate" (note the future tense) to violence.

And here the crowning insult to the valiant Congress youth who have begun to drive Inkatha onto the defensive: "black-on-black violence". This is nothing other than the patent phrase used in ruling-class propaganda to suggest that political violence in the townships is a matter of black savages who can't resolve political differences peacefully and democratically—when the truth is that a barbarous war has been unleashed by vigilante and police forces, acting on the order of the racists and capitalists, out to crush the freedom struggle.

And comrade Gumede calmly puts his signature to this!

The danger innate in a truce is that it allows Inkatha to regain the support slipping away from it.

In fact, however, the fighting continued. As we go to press, reports indicate that **Buthelezi** has repudiated the 'truce'. That expresses the reality of the situation—the **inevitability** of a fight to the finish between the forces of revolution and of counter-revolution within the townships, and ultimately in South Africa as a whole.

Let the UDF leadership now take advantage of this to correct its error, make it clear that 'peace' with Buthelezi and Inkatha is impossible, and lead a determined offensive, politically and in every way, to smash their remaining power decisively.

How we defended the NECC conference

I was one of the youth activists who was delegated to the NECC conference of March 1986. On our arrival in Durban, we passed two police vehicles. We could smell the smoke of a previous battle which was fresh although the battle was not over yet.

On our arrival we were nearly attacked by our own comrades—but we were later identified. What really struck my mind was the fact that the township youth were armed due to daily confrontations and battles with the enemy. We were later informed of the incidents which took place.

The conference was attacked by Inkatha impis in a Hiace, but it cost two of them their lives. Dr Beyers Naude and others reported the assault at the police

station. We had to guard ourselves against the enemy and thus secure a successful conference.

The township youth openly volunteered to be guards due to the daily battles.

On Saturday night we moved to a safer venue where the conference was officially held. The conference was shortcut for one day and not for two.

The lessons which I draw from my experience is that while we have gatherings, we should guard and defend ourselves. Nobody else is going to defend us and our movement.

The launching of the giant COSATU in 1985 in Durban was successful because the MAWU workers organised

self-defence. We must also guard the bases of the working class eg. the COSATU House in Johannesburg was destroyed but it would have been something else if the COSATU house was guarded. I believe there are many workers and youth who would do this (including myself).

It seems that if self-defence is out, in my point of view more and more serious attacks will be made on our movement. We cannot rely on the police and courts to protect us.

The militant youth and volunteers protect themselves willingly but what they need is guidance and clear direction.

By Andre Kleynhans

Heroism in the Winterveld

By Solomon Khumalo

The events of 26 March 1986 placed Winterveld—a squatter settlement in Bophuthatswana, near Pretoria—on the calendar of the South African revolution. These events marked the turning point in the history of Winterveld. For on that day the squatters clashed with the police, leaving many squatters dead.

The area had been simmering with revolt for months.

When there is discontent, Mangope, the great dictator of the Bantustan, is accustomed to summon people to meetings. One of his established platform tricks is to hold a piece of paper in his hands while addressing. The paper is held in such a way that everybody can see it.

At the end of his usually monotonous speeches, he tells people that the paper contains the names of "trouble-makers". The trouble makers are then urged to hand themselves over to the police before their names are called out. Apparently this nonsense has worked well in the rural areas.

In Winterveld the people decided to call a mass meeting, and invite the authorities to hear their grievances, including the fact that many youth had been detained. They would not be taken in by such tricks!

The rendezvous was to be the local soccer stadium. Like always, the police and the army made their way to the stadium before anyone else. The whole squatter camp turned up for the meeting. As people swarmed the stadium one contingent of troops got isolated from the larger force.

What followed can best be described as horror worse than hell. People were singing as they came to the stadium. Out of sheer chickenery, the commander of the isolated contingent ordered the troops to open fire. About nineteen people—the exact figure is controversial—were hit and killed on the spot. An unknown number were to die in hospital.

One soldier I spoke to said in describing the incident: "Everybody was singing. They seemed determined to do something. We were afraid and so we shot them. I am sure I got more than six." He spoke of how the injured were bundled like bags of corn into the Hippos.

The government blamed the whole incident on "the comrades who refuse to see the need of the police and army to defend themselves." The police said the ANC were behind the deeds of the comrades—apparently an ANC flag was hoisted by people who came into the stadium.

To prove their point the police launched an offensive. House to house, or rather shack to shack, searches were attempted. This feat proved difficult for the police to execute.

Cat and mouse

There are literally no roads in and through Winterveld. It is just a long string of *mkhukhus* going in all imaginable directions, interspersed with passages. In order to cordon off and search an area of 100 metres square, 2 000 police and soldiers had to be used. Thus the raid quickly turned into a cat and mouse battle, as youth sought to defend the community from the army. Winterveld was turned into a 'Beirut' as residents described it.

Three days after the shootings the squatters called a meeting to discuss the events and to decide on action. The meeting was announced from one corner of the squatter camp to the other by word of mouth.

This time the SADF was brought in to back up the Bop army whose incompetence was daily becoming an embarrassment.

Winterveld is comparable to a jungle inhabited by ferocious beasts. The comrades grouped out to fight the scoundrels. All methods of combat were used, stones, petrol bombs, and in some cases bare knuckles. Trenches were dug up to make the area inaccessible.

One night the comrades put corrugated iron over a trench and covered it with gravel. To lure the army into the trap tyres were burned on the other side. The troops closed in to arrest the comrades who were singing and dancing around the burning tyres. Their Casspir fell into the trench. The eight occupants of the Casspir were all injured. The comrades liberated their guns and their uniforms before setting them together with their armoured car on fire.

One of the guns was used to kill a notorious cop in the squatter camp. This offensive provoked an all round attack from the state.

Hundreds of the comrades were arrested. Many were tortured. The most wild and weird forms of torture were used. A nurse at Garankuwa hospital spoke of how horrified they were by the conditions comrades reached the hospital in. Some were so brutally assaulted that they were little more than a breathing heap of human material. One comrade had his testicles crushed with pliers. This is the reality many workers and youth faced in Winterveld.

In the end the armed power of the state defeated the workers and the youth. But their courage will remain undimmed throughout the revolution of South Africa. Their unbreakable will to change society will be on the lips of many workers in the greater battles still to be fought with the state.



Brigadier Molope—responsible for the massacre.

The people must be armed

In 1984-86 we took the call to make South Africa ungovernable with great enthusiasm. But because we were faced with a developed and well-equipped state, they were able to deal with us.

The youth were convinced that with "one big push, Botha will fall". We were calling for arms, but didn't get it. So we had to equip ourselves.

One day I was nearly shot down by police. I was on top of the shack at the back yard of a certain house and the Casspir drove next to the yard. The soldier started aiming at me and if I had not jumped down, I don't know what would have happened.

The other day when one youth was killed we were out in the streets confronting the SADF with stones. We would run into the houses if the Casspirs appeared and the houses were kept open for us. I was so surprised when I saw how militant were the women youth. They were the first people to throw stones and to chase police vans and Casspirs. This comrade was killed when we came near a policeman's house. We were not going to kill the policeman, but he panicked and started shooting. We were going to burn the post office.

The Crossroads attack by vigi-

By Themba Limbe
A SAYCO activist

lantes was another drama. Youth were angry and again there was a call for MK to hand over arms to us—but also that was never answered. Vigilantes managed to destruct Crossroads precisely because we were unarmed. This opened a lot of questions amongst the youth about whether this state can be defeated.

The truth of the matter is that no lead was given by the movement leadership.

We must use the power of the working class to defeat the state. All production depends on the workers. The working class is the vast majority. Acting together it can carry out the revolution to the end and build a new society. No other class will lead this struggle.

Political negotiations with the bosses will not bring freedom. When we raised the red flag we meant national liberation and socialism not

class compromise.

The street fights showed the beginning of the South African socialist revolution. But without clear leadership. We will have to come out and fight in the streets and factories, but there must be leadership and guidelines if we want to succeed.

The street fights proved to us that there can be no people's war without arming the people. How can we fight the sophisticated SADF with five bazookas and three grenades? They have everything from air, sea and ground equipment. Our strategy must be to arm the black workers and win over a large number of white workers who constitute the SADF. We can only win then on a socialist programme. We say the fight has started and will continue but organise and arm the workers and youth. Youth will see the results!





After the murder of Ivin Malaza, supporters of Militant the British Marxist paper for labour and youth, made this banner to salute our fallen comrade.

WHEN IVIN MALAZA DIED

Not only at BTR and Zincor, but also at a number of other workplaces, leading worker militants have been murdered by UWUSA. Comrade Ivin Malaza, a supporter of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC, was one of those killed. A close comrade of Ivin's spoke to an Inqaba correspondent:

I saw Ivin on the day he died, you know. I said to him "Look here now you be careful coming back from church. Those UWUSA bastards know you go there every week." He said, "Oh yes I'll be OK. Don't you worry." But one guy waited for him. He had been sent by UWUSA. He waited and shot him.

I was working night shift so I did not find out he was dead. Then when I finished work I heard he had not been at work in the day so I

went looking for him at the hostel near the factory where we work. Then I phoned the police. They said "We have a body here with union badges on the man's jacket. Can you come and identify it?"

So I went down to the mortuary and it was Ivin. I could not believe it. He had been shot three times. It was awful I'm telling you. Him, there, dead, and I spoke to him the day before. He lived for the struggle. A lot of people at the factory lost hope when he was

killed. We lost a lot of members at first. They were so scared.

The factory management are up to their necks in this. We have a young manager now. He is just a kid. He's thirty-four or thirty-five. He thought he could break the union at the plant. He brought in UWUSA. They are all bastards.

I went to Ivin's funeral at his township in the Bantustan. The management at the plant phoned the Bantustan government and told them I was a member of the ANC coming to cause trouble. I spoke at the funeral. I said Ivin lived for the struggle. He was no collaborator with the system. He was a proud man with the courage of a lion who stood up to them. The police de

tained me after the funeral.

They took me in a van, pointing their machine guns at my head. I had to put my hands on my head. They would not allow me to put my hands in my pockets! They interrogated me for hours. They said "Look, see here, we know you are a trained terrorist of the ANC. We know you have been to Czechoslovakia for training". Yes, that's what they said, I'm telling you. Me, Czechoslovakia, I don't know how to spell it.

Factory manager

Eventually they gave up though and spilled the beans. They told me the factory manager phoned them and told them I was an ANC terrorist. They let me go once they realised they could prove nothing against me.

But when all this was going on the UWUSA attacked again at the factory. They attacked the workers in the hostels. They came with guns and eight people were shot as the factory security guards watched. The police came and took some of the UWUSA. But they were all

released. Just like that. They were on the streets the next day.

But this time it was different. They had people to bury too. It was the collective action of the workers that made the difference.

Bloody cowards

In the end we won. Management dismissed the UWUSA. They knew we were serious. It was how we organised and when we hit back the UWUSA turned out to be bloody cowards. See they thought we would never organise and fight back.

Now the union is strong at the factory. We are going to show them when the annual wage round comes up. Already the workers are saying "Let's go on strike." I have to explain procedures. Sometimes they are very difficult. They just say "Never mind percentages. What is it in rands?" But we are strong. They say they don't care if we are sacked—we'll stay put till we get what we want.

A lot of people lost hope when Ivin was killed. Oh yes what a loss. But we are strong now.

Ivin Malaza Memorial Fund.

Immediately after the assassination of Ivin Malaza by an UWUSA gunman, supporters of *Inqaba ya Basebenzi* set up a Memorial Fund to help his family and to continue the work he had begun.

The response has been magnificent. A trade union branch of engineering workers in Britain wrote: "we never knew Ivin personally but please use our contribution to continue his work." This is typical of the feelings expressed by workers around the world. Supporters of *Labor Militant* in the USA have collected almost R4 000, while Spanish socialists have sent R3 300. A group of dockers in Aarhus in Denmark organised a fishing trip and sent the proceeds, R720.

Money has also come from Belgium, Greece, Italy, Cyprus and Sweden and elsewhere. Irish Marxists, who have also suffered the death of a comrade, Colum McCallum, at the hands of a Protestant sectarian gunman, have responded generously.

In Britain typical donations include R120 from a branch of the National Communications Union; R100 from a Civil and Public Service Association (CPSA) Regional Committee.

Members of the National Executive of the CPSA have collected R400, including R180 from John MaCreadie, the Deputy General Secretary, and representative of the union on the General Council of the TUC.

Several thousand Rand has been collected from delegates at trade union conferences in Britain. Street collections, public meetings and factory meetings have all helped to swell the total.

Money continues to be sent in from ordinary workers angered by the brutal murder of a fellow union activist.

Supporters of the Marxist Workers Tendency of the ANC would like to thank everyone who has contributed. We will continue Comrade Ivin's work to build CO-SATU and a mass ANC with a socialist programme.



We would like to dedicate this issue of *Inqaba ya Basebenzi* to the memory of our comrade Ivin Malaza who fell like many others to an UWUSA assassin.

We can never forget you Ivin, nor what you fought for. In your memory we will fight to the finish.

Provide a strategy for victory—don't attack

At the COSATU Congress in July, the two key-note speakers, UDF leader Comrade Murphy Morobe and SAYCO President Peter Mokaba, devoted a large part of their speeches to attacking the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC.

BERNARD FORTUIN, active since 1976 in building Congress youth and community organisations, for which he has been repeatedly imprisoned, responds to the attack.

Many workers facing bitter struggles had travelled hundreds of kilometers to the COSATU Congress. Like the youth they hoped to hammer out the road for the entire movement. They did not expect to hear an attack on the Marxists in the ANC.

Comrade Morobe made a very serious charge. He said the Marxists promote splits in the movement. This is completely false. Comrade Morobe did not have a shred of evidence for this accusation. No supporter of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC has ever split from Congress or in any way obstructed the unity in action of the mass organisations.

What does our Tendency stand for?

We stand for the united struggle of the black working class at the head of all the oppressed to overthrow the apartheid state and to take power into its own hands.

We say that neither compromise nor alliance with any section of the capitalists, but only resolute struggle against them and the apartheid state, can win freedom.

We stand for arming workers and youth in self-defence against the police and army, against Inkatha/UWUSA, all the vigilantes and forces of reaction. The Congress movement must prepare the black working class for an eventual armed insurrection.

We believe only when the working class has conquered power will it be possible to implement the Freedom Charter, against the resistance of the racists and the capitalists.

We stand for non racial workers' unity, workers' democracy, national liberation and the socialist transformation of South Africa.

We say let us join together to build a mass ANC on a socialist programme.

If the leadership is opposed to these ideas, they could have explained why. Instead the false charge of "splitters" was made and the Marxists in the ANC lumped together with ultra-left sectarians and right-wing reformist trade union leaders, with whom we have **nothing** in common.

We oppose splits which weaken the fighting strength of our class. Marxists have every interest in maintaining the unity of the working class in action. Marxist ideas are the living experience of the working class in struggle against oppression and exploitation everywhere. Marxism expresses the will of the working class to conquer power.

We are confident that through experience of this struggle, with the patient explanation of what we stand for, the majority of the working class can be won consciously to Marxist policies. For this reason we base our progress not on promoting splits in the working class, but on arguing for our ideas along with the greatest unity in action of the working class under the banner of the ANC.

It is the unity of the working class with a clear programme and strategy which will enable it to draw together all the oppressed sections

Only time for commands?

By Joseph Ngubeni

On 30th April at Wits university SAYCO President, comrade Peter Mokaba, said "SAYCO is about political power in this country, to seize political power." Good!

He said our struggle is unfolding in the epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism, and that we recognise the workers as leaders when they are organised politically.

But then he said in South Africa "there unfolds the national democratic revolution." Of course we are fighting for national liberation and democracy. But to get that we need worker's power. Nothing else can smash the apartheid state.

Comrade Mokaba didn't say this,

he didn't explain how power has to be seized. Instead he said there is no time for discussion: "we have got time for only one thing—only commands."

Youth have always had discussions and debates around questions such as the significance of the Freedom Charter, and whether negotiations can advance our struggle; about the long and difficult battles that lie ahead; and how to prepare for victory through armed insurrection.

How can it be that in the movement there is no time **now** for discussion, but only commands? This could not but be received with shock by a significant number of the audience.

One student remarked: "The discussions we have on the Russian rev-

olution and that one of its chief lessons is that the capitalist state must be smashed and workers' rule established in South Africa... the writings by Lenin and Trotsky that we read and discuss... I mean surely all of that is important?"

The point that must surely be emphasised is the need for constructive debate in the movement, rather than demand that everyone must simply toe the line without thinking. There surely has to be maximum unity in the struggle, but unity cannot be based on blind obedience.

The youth above all must be encouraged to think. A lack of freedom of expression can only weaken the youth movement in the long term and raise the danger of defeat. In this I believe most of the youth will concur with us.

the Marxists in the ANC



COSATU Congress, July 1987.

of the people in struggle.

To the COSATU Congress came workers and youth who have strained every nerve to maintain **unity**. But they knew also that **more** than unity will be needed to overthrow the state. In every factory, school and township workers and youth discuss, debate and think hard about the road forward—about a strategy for the victory of our revolution.

The revolution is against a formidable enemy, the apartheid state. Workers and youth realise we have a long, long way to go before taking power. The revolution asks of us to fearlessly examine our methods, ideas and strategy at all times. This is only to ensure victory, not to promote splits.

The danger of splits doesn't arise from discussing ideas or from the existence of tendencies. The real danger of splits comes from leaders' intolerance of questioning; it comes from wrong policies which are not corrected; from threats against opponents in place of reasoned argument; from expulsions—not from the struggle to clarify ideas.

Even if comrades of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC are attacked, or even expelled by the leadership they will loyally continue to build Congress. We abide by the discipline of the working-class movement, which is uniting in action against our class enemy under the banner of the ANC.

In his speech Comrade Morobe was right to identify our enemy as

the huge monopolies whose unbridled profiteering the government protects, while it attacks, jails and murders workers who struggle for a living wage. He said "The strategic objective of the liberation movement and the working class is to go forward and to take power from those who have it today."

To this Congress came workers and youth who wanted to know HOW we are going to get rid of Botha-Malan-Relly? HOW we are going to take power from those who have it today? HOW do we use battles like the Mineworkers Strike to build the unity and power of the whole working class?

On these matters the two speakers gave no lead. Instead comrades Morobe and Mokaba diverted attention by making the completely false accusation of "splitters" against the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC.

Did Comrade Morobe and the leadership not think this might be disloyal to the memory of Comrade Ivin Malaza, Marxist, ANC and COSATU militant, murdered by Inkatha/UWUSA? The attack was also disloyal to staunch Marxist builders of Congress, who like Comrade Morobe have suffered, and will continue to suffer, in the jails of the apartheid regime. We call for the immediate release of Comrade Murphy Morobe and all political prisoners.

Viva COSATU!

Viva SAYCO!

Viva ANC!

Fighting origins of the "political hobo"

In his guest speech to COSATU Congress comrade Peter Mokaba described supporters of the Marxist Workers Tendency of the ANC as "political hobos". Many people laughed because a good insult always goes down well. We can also take a joke, but in this instance the joke is on Peter.

It's not the first time that "hobo" has been used against revolutionaries. At the beginning of this century enemies of the American labour movement used it to slander activists of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).

The IWW was the first to organise unskilled workers, black and white, against the barbarous conditions of American capitalism. In its short life it won well over 100 000 members. Many bitter battles, now legend in American labour history, were fought against state forces and vigilantes called in by the mine, steel and textile bosses against strikers.

In 'The Wobblies', a history of the IWW, Patrick Renshaw writes: "The words 'hobo,' 'tramp,' and 'bum,' all more or less terms of abuse denoting an idle, shifting way of life, were bandied about freely in descriptions of the IWW."

'Shifting' yes, but 'idle' they were not. Many of its members were migrant workers, who showered their guts in what became known as the "free speech fights" when whole detachments of workers hitched rides on trains, sometimes travelling up to 3 000 miles, to defend their comrades.

These workers, to show their contempt for the bosses' insults turned them on their head.

As Renshaw points out: "The union's own song, which became almost its signature tune, was *Hallelujah, I'm a bum*. In fact the terms were not synonymous. Ben Reitman... who suffered at the hands of the San Diego vigilantes, drew a neat distinction between the three modes of life these terms encompassed. 'The hobo works and wanders,' he explained, 'the tramp dreams and wanders, the bum drinks and wanders.'"

If we are political hobos, into which category do our opponents fall?

Top Soviet official on South Africa: Socialist revolution may have to wait a century!

By Gavin Jantjies

In the last issue of *Inqaba* we criticised proposals put forward by Gleb Starushenko, a Soviet 'expert' on Southern Africa.

He said that "the ANC should not advance plans for a broad nationalisation of capitalist property" and should be "willing to give the bourgeoisie the corresponding guarantee". Also that, to sooth white anxieties, the ANC should accept a constitutional settlement on the basis of a "two-chamber parliament", in which the white minority would essentially have a veto! (*Weekly Mail*, 9-15/1/87)

These proposals would throw away not just the socialist tasks of our struggle: they would fatally compromise the democratic demands of the black majority as well. Nevertheless, we explained, they are consistent with the whole policy of the Soviet bureaucracy, which fears working-class revolution not only in SA but throughout the world.

Since then Starushenko has amplified his views. In an interview with the West German *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (reported in the *Cape Times*, 31/8/87) he said he "would like to see a pink and not a red South Africa"; that "negotiations for a settlement in South Africa should be broadly based, and that Inkatha leader Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi and other homeland leaders should not be written out of them."

Charming. As well as the white veto, vigilante-in-chief Gatsha and the other Bantustan puppets should be regarded as among the "democratic" representatives of the people. If workers and youth were asked to guess where such statements come from, most would answer: 'from the bosses or from Botha!'

Embarrassed by the initial press revelations of Starushenko's openly reactionary proposals, the SA Communist Party hurried to the Moscow bureaucracy's defence. In *The African Communist* (2nd Quarter, 1987), they referred to the Soviet academic having made "a few controversial points" about guarantees to the whites, and declared:

"Starushenko does not represent or claim to represent the views of the CPSU or of the Soviet government. Like other academics in the West he is entitled to express his views, on the developing revolutionary process in our country..."

"From our experience we know that

the Soviet Union and the countries of the socialist (?) community are our most consistent allies... Those who seek to undermine the life-giving alliance between our revolutionary movements and the Soviet Union will no doubt continue to indulge in mischief making, mud-raking, lies and distortions" such as the claim that Starushenko's ideas reflected official Soviet positions.

A convincing reply? Well, wait a moment comrades.

Not permitted

One just has to be a genuine socialist or even an honest democrat—not at all an admirer of 'the West'—to recognise that freedom of opinion and expression is **not** permitted by the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union, or its official *academies*, *except within narrow limits* tolerable to the reigning bureaucracy.

What is more, if we look a little closer, it turns out that Starushenko is not some eccentric professor, but one of the five deputy directors of the Institute of African Studies of the Academy of Science—a pillar of the bureaucracy and guardian of orthodoxy!

But, be that as it may. Let's concede that, on this occasion, the luckless Starushenko over-stepped somewhat the bounds of official policy. Does that justify the wounded indignation of the SACP?

Unhappily for them, and for their rosy effusions about the "life-giving" alliance with the Soviet regime, comrade Starushenko was soon to be replaced in the attention of the media by a weightier figure: that of comrade Goncharov. Nominally of the same rank as Starushenko, Goncharov made it clear he spoke for "the Soviet Union". (See articles by Howard Barrell, *Weekly Mail* 12-18/6/87 and *Work in Progress*, 48, July 1987.)

While dismissing Starushenko's 'two-chamber' and 'white veto' ideas as "personal", Goncharov raised no objection to his other proposals. In fact Goncharov went on to reveal even more completely how anti-revolutionary the policy of the Soviet bureaucracy really is.

The Soviet Union "is not interested in the undermining of world economic relations" (that is to say, the undermining of world capitalism), he said.

In approaching the question of the national liberation struggle in SA, the Soviet Union "does not seek to infringe

upon somebody's legitimate (!) interests, including the interests of the Western countries in the region." As far as the Soviet bureaucracy is concerned, **imperialism can continue to hold sway over the lives of the Southern African peoples!**

"When I say that we are not going to infringe on somebody's interests and that we are not going to interrupt international trade and economic relations, we are pursuing our own interests also"—the interests of the bureaucracy being to maintain its own rule over the working class, while trying to reach a stable accommodation, economically and diplomatically with the imperialist powers of the West.

This is exactly what *Inqaba* has all along explained: that the conservative national self-interest of the Soviet bureaucracy, which also governs all those linked to it, is threatened by revolution, above all by workers' revolution, in the West.

Because the democratic power achieved by the working class in the Russian Revolution in 1917 was usurped and eliminated by a bureaucratic caste, the internationalist traditions on which the Soviet Union was founded have been trampled underfoot. The bureaucracy is not a revolutionary force in the world, as imperialist propaganda continues to insist, but has become a powerful factor for frustrating revolution where it can.

Starushenko and Goncharov, like the rest of the bureaucracy, are parasites on the nationalised and planned economy of the Soviet Union and the other deformed workers' states where capitalism has been overthrown. The 'Communist' Parties linked to them no longer stand for workers' revolution, but for the preservation of bureaucratic rule and compromise agreements with the capitalists.

Bureaucratic regimes

What the SACP misleadingly describes as a "socialist community" is not socialist but a collection of bureaucratic regimes. Genuine socialism would require workers' democracy, fundamental equality, and a withering away of class divisions and of the state.

That is not happening in those countries, but will require a political revolution by the working class to bring about.

Imperialism—world capitalism—

forged the chains of exploitation and oppression tying down the black working class of South Africa. The imperialist powers help sustain the SA state; their support of 'reforms' to apartheid is subordinated to the need to keep power in capitalist hands.

For liberation we have to smash the racist state in SA, break the power of the capitalists, and free our country and the region from the domination of imperialism. To declare—as Goncharov does—imperialist interests "legitimate", to stand for not "infringing" upon them, means quite simply to abandon the struggle of black workers and youth to destroy the chains which bind them.

How will *The African Communist* answer that?

Goncharov also says that the Soviet Union would like to see more "flexibility", more "objectivity" and less use of 'dogmatic formulations' by the ANC. What does he mean by this?

He has been disturbed, he says, at attempts by some ANC members to "put before the national liberation movement now the tasks of the socialist revolution. ... firstly it is necessary to settle the problems of the liberation struggle, and then to come to the next stage of the social revolution in South Africa".

"Liberation"—but without a revolution to disturb imperialism and the capitalist system!? Then a "next stage" of the social revolution. How, and when precisely?

National liberation, Goncharov believes, may come in "not less than ten years.... South Africa will become socialist, maybe not in 25 years but in a century... I am an optimist."

The abolition of capitalism postponed for a century! This perspective will astound those workers and youth in South Africa who, through the experience of years of bitter and costly struggle have drawn the conclusion that the struggle for national liberation is inseparable from the struggle to end capitalism, and who do not intend to wait a century, or even twenty-five years, for that.

The apartheid dictatorship defends the bosses; to achieve national liberation it must be overthrown by working-class revolution. Against this, Goncharov 'warns' that if the ANC were to put forward "the ideas and principles of the socialist revolution before the settlement of the problems of national liberation, they will lose their allies in the population."

Which allies? Goncharov does not mean the worker next door, but 'liberal bosses' like Oppenheimer, Ackerman, and Bloom. These people are not our allies but our irreconcilable enemies. They have already declared their hostility to majority rule; and they will not surrender their state.



Clapping hands—but behind our backs the Stalinist bureaucracies want to hold the ANC back from revolution

Does Goncharov, like Starushenko, want to offer them 'guarantees' of their property also? This will not appease them. To suggest these people are our "allies" is to consciously disarm our movement and make it vulnerable to future attacks.

The SACP proclaims the Soviet bureaucracy as the highest fount of revolutionary wisdom. What is their response to such statements?

And what about the fact, revealed by Starushenko, that Soviet officials have had 'friendly discussions' with the murderer Gatsha Buthelezi in Washington? (*Cape Times*, 31/8/87)

The conservatism of the Soviet bureaucracy finds additional confirmation from a surprising source. Dr. Philip Nel, an academic from Stellenbosch University, visited Moscow in August. He met members of the Communist Party Central Committee and officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Spokesmen of the SA ruling class usually attempt to terrify blacks and whites with ideas of the 'red scare', the 'total onslaught' and the 'Kremlin conspiracy for world conquest'. But what Nel reports he heard were views essentially the same as those of Starushenko and Goncharov.

For example he says that those he met "were concerned that overhasty nationalisation in South Africa could ruin the economy." (*Cape Argus*, 4/9/87)

The big capitalists like Gavin Relly, who have been telling the ANC leaders the same thing, will be pleased at this: no matter that it is their diseased capitalist system that is ruining the lives of millions.

The Soviet leaders, continues Nel, have "realised (!) that the white group would not be brought down by violence but that there would have to be (!) a negotiated settlement."

This position is absolutely false and defeatist.

Firstly, as to "violence": If by this they mean the strategy of guerrilla

struggle pursued by the ANC/SACP leadership since the 1960s (with the bureaucracy's support), then *Inqaba* has consistently argued that it would prove impotent and actually counter-productive. Are they now conceding that?

But if they mean that an organised and armed movement of the great mass of the working class can never succeed in taking power in South Africa by insurrection, then workers and youth in their hundreds of thousands should and will repudiate this pessimism. It only confirms the opposition of the bureaucracy to workers' revolution, and shows that, **to arm the mass movement**, we cannot depend on the Soviet bureaucracy for support.

Secondly, as to "negotiated settlement": The whole experience of our movement teaches that the ruling class, the apartheid regime, and the monstrous armed state machine on which they rest, will not concede majority rule through negotiations. They must be overthrown, and those who spread illusions in "negotiated settlement" weaken and disarm the mass movement politically.

It is one thing to accept material aid where we can get it. It is another thing entirely to become politically obligated or dependent.

The leadership of the ANC should end any dependence upon the Soviet bureaucracy. Although the bureaucracy is different from the capitalist powers, and has no interest in dominating or exploiting South Africa, nevertheless it is interested, for its own protection, in frustrating the revolution here.

Our movement must be independent as much from the bureaucracies in the East as from the imperialist powers in the West. Alliance with them is not at all "life-giving", but the exact opposite.

To strengthen our movement we must look to the working class, in the West and in the East, and the working class and rural poor in the Third World, as our only real allies.

ZIMBABWE: victory for Zim-Leaf

An enormous struggle for national liberation was waged in Zimbabwe; 30 000 of the oppressed gave their lives. But the ZANU(PF) government which came to power is defending capitalism. It has introduced a "Labour Relations Act" whose effect is state control of the trade unions. Here we report an example of how workers are beginning to struggle against these conditions.

Zim-Leaf workers in Harare who staged a sit-in strike early in August have now succeeded in getting the general manager dismissed. This victory is a real breakthrough in the struggle of industrial workers in Zimbabwe against the employers and the labour and state bureaucracy which supports them.

The Zim-Leaf workers suffer, like other tobacco workers, from starvation wages and insecure jobs. In the industry a few are permanent, but most are seasonal workers. The workers demanded an end to seasonal and casual labour, so that all should have permanent jobs. But instead of improving conditions, the Anglo American Corporation multinational management made them worse.

During July this year, management introduced a system of contract labour to lower wages and to avoid paying bonuses and pensions. A worker who had laboured for a month was not considered to have started the season yet. Using this trick the bosses hoped to avoid

paying the annual bonus.

In this way, the manager even succeeded in reducing long service workers to below the wage level of casual workers in the past. Despite industrial laws which are meant to protect the workers, laying down Z\$15-20 a day, the contract workers were made to work for only Z\$36-50 a week **without** bonuses.

Meetings

For a week the seasonal and permanent workers held meetings on the burning issue of contract labour. Then on Tuesday, 4 August, the workers decided enough was enough. The workers gathered outside the office demanding the manager, Musaka, should be sacked. Musaka is deeply hated by every worker and their wives because of the money he had taken

from them by introducing contract labour. One by one the workers came forward to state their grievances.

"We have had enough, how much more can they take from us? We have to prove our strength. Pamberi nevashandi! (Forward with the workers!) Pasi nekutya! (Down with fear!)", shouted a worker.

The fear of losing jobs and having to stand up to corrupt government officials who support the employers had reduced the official workers' committee to powerlessness. The anger of the workers swept aside their fears. They now carried out a tinorara (sit-in) against the policies of the whole management. None of the workers were allowed out of the factory gate.

The compound security guards supported the action as they consider themselves as being in the same position as the other workers. They saw to it that every worker stayed in. The bosses trembled when they heard about a sit-in.

Now that the workers had acted, the union and labour department officials turned up. A man called Marwodzi was introduced to the workers as a Labour Ministry official. At this point many workers still imagined that a government official could be expected to be on their side against the bosses, or at least impartial.

But Marwodzi was not unknown among these workers. Some said that he worked at the Bakke Furniture company, a Zim-Leaf subsidiary. All could see that he was with the manager. Workers began to murmur that he was a fraud.

Mood

Marwodzi did not realise the mood which had arisen. When he opened his mouth every worker shouted, "Down with the Musaka and Marwodzi link! Ngaarohwe! (let's beat him!)" The workers would not hear a word from him; instead they demanded he produce his identity. Then they discovered to their astonishment that he was an



Zimbabwean workers on strike at Arcturus mine in April.

workers

Industrial Relations Officer.

At this point the General Secretary of the Zimbabwe Tobacco Workers' Union, Cde Mhembere, spoke to quieten the workers with expressions of sympathy. But the workers immediately asked, "If we workers tell you as our trade union leader that we feel a sit-in against the management is the only alternative, will you support us tomorrow if we are accused of taking illegal action?"

Holds back

He did not answer. Instead he went on to talk about the Labour Relations Act, the same law which holds back workers from expressing their anger and bitterness.

He tried to persuade the workers, "What you have done is enough. You should not go further. Those who consider they have been victimised by managers should appeal to the Labour Officials. Pamberi ne production!—Forward with production!"

"How many workers have you rescued from victimisation?" demanded the workers. Mhembere could not name a single one. Instead he tried to rescue the Industrial Relations Officer.

This fool pleaded with the workers to wait a month while their demands were being investigated. With a plastic smile he asked that the workers should put forward any other grievances they had.

"How can my enemy tell me to bring more swords to stab him?", said a permanent worker. "Our demands are enough for now. If they are met then there is more to come...much sharper swords."

The general secretary then tried to frighten the workers by echoing what the white general manager had said earlier, "An occupation would be robbing or stealing the owner's property, so it's illegal."

Then all the workers shouted, "This plant is ours, this is where our lives rest. Are those so-called owners aware of the lives they had spoiled and led astray? This plant

belongs to the workers, we will stage a tinorara and continue production."

"Pamberi ne chimurenga chevashandi!—Forward with the workers' struggle", the workers shouted and broke into chimurenga songs.

The Labour Official was told not to leave the platform until he had answered why he was cheating the workers. He had to escape through the back door.

It seemed as though the workers had lost all fear of the Riot Police outside, but their anger overcame fear. They then contacted the Ziana news reporters to give a full report of their demands, but almost nothing was reported.

Sit-in at factory

H
5/8/87

Herald Reporter

WORKERS at Lytton Tobacco in Harare yesterday staged a work-in demanding the expulsion of a personnel manager whom they alleged had been mistreating them.

Ministry of Labour, Manpower Planning and Social Welfare officials were allegedly barred from leaving the factory after they failed to resolve the dispute.

Police last night confirmed that they were aware of the incident.

The workers have succeeded in getting Musaka sacked. Now for action on the other demands:

- * An end to contract labour;
- * Reinstatement of workers sacked for little or no reason;
- * Decent paid leave during family illness or to attend a family funeral;
- * The ZCTU demand of \$277 a month;
- * Workers' committee control of employment of seasonal workers.

Despite the sacking of Musaka, workers still have to fight back against these merciless managers. The South African miners are fighting against contract labour, and now so are the Zimbabwean workers.

Let us unite to defeat our bosses!
Workers of the world unite!

Anglo donates \$18 000 to party

Herald Reporter
THE Anglo American Corporation yesterday gave \$18 000 to the Zanu (PF) Deputy Secretary for the Commissariat and Culture, Ode Nelson Mawema, to be used by Zimbabwe's nine provinces during the forthcoming independence celebrations.

Each province will receive \$2 000. The provinces to benefit are Matabeleland North and South, Mashonaland East, Central and West, the Midlands, Masvingo, Manicaland and Harare.

The money was handed over by the corporation's chairman and chief executive, Mr Roy Lander.

Accepting the gift, Ode Mawema said the money showed Anglo American's appreciation of Zanu (PF)'s efforts in keeping workers disciplined and urged other multinationals to copy the example.

This report should be an eye-opener for those with illusions still in the "socialism" of the Zimbabwean government. Published in the state-controlled Harare Herald (3/4/87), it gives a glimpse of what really goes on behind the scenes between the ruling elite of ZANU(PF) and the big capitalists.

Anglo American, as in South Africa, is the largest company in Zimbabwe. The workers in its banks, mines, farms and factories are still largely unorganised in unions. While supporting overwhelmingly Mugabe's ZANU(PF) party, workers and peasants in Zimbabwe have no real control over its leadership.

30 000 died to free Zimbabwe from white minority rule. But the lesson is: if you don't overthrow capitalism, you end up bowing down to the same old exploiters. Nationalise the monopolies!

Botswana: BNF Youth League launch— chance to mobilise youth for struggle

Easter saw the gathering of about 1 000 youth to found the BNF Youth League in the town of Selibe-Phikwe, scene of the July 1975 strike of over 2 000 mineworkers.

Young people from all over came to form a political youth organisation after the collapse of the Botswana Youth Federation. The BYF was regarded by many people as the youth wing of BNF until 1985. By then the BYF faced problems which the leadership was unable to solve mainly due to lack of correct perspectives, strategy and tactics. It became defunct. The general feeling was that a new and fighting organisation was needed.

The conference was opened by BNF leader Dr Kenneth Koma, the party's theoretician. He urged the youth to organise young people all over the country into the Youth League. This was greeted with enthusiasm by the youth who were shouting "kopana" (unity) and "down with BDP (the ruling capitalist party) and imperialism."

The mood was high among the youth who showed they want a socialist organisation where they will use their vigour to struggle against capitalism—which has brought nothing but unemployment, homelessness, and an uncertain and bleak future.

Preparedness

The recent riots in Bontleng show the preparedness of young people to fight the evils of present society. The abduction of the child was assumed to be connected with making *muti* for the rich to prosper in their businesses. The anger was fuelled by the *sangoma* who is said to have boasted that no-one will touch her because she is a staunch BDP person.

Also, indirectly, it was a protest against the very high unemployment and conditions of squalor in Bontleng.

School students, too, are frustrated that their only future is to go for Tirelo Sechaba (national service) for a year, after which they are offered no jobs nor places at university.

The youths' main outcry at the conference was thirst for political education—not just any political education, but

By a BNF YL member

rather a socialist study programme geared to link the youth with the struggles of the masses.

Other proposals that came up included house-to-house campaigns and visits to factories to discuss with workers their problems, linking them to general problems of society. Youth stood up to emphasise the importance of linking up with other youth organisations, especially the South African youth who have daily experience of fighting.

What was evident was the enthusiasm of the youth to have a democratic, fighting organisation.

The most controversial discussions were those around the political commission. Dr Koma took this opportunity not to put forward what the policies and programme of the Youth League itself should be, but to call for the formation of a "left grouping" within the Youth League to be called "Socialist Working Youth". At a fringe meeting he emphasised the need for its immediate formation more than ten times. He said that this group, like a Communist Party, must be composed of conscious and committed Marxists only.

Youth were puzzled and asked many questions about this. They could appreciate the need for socialists to organise and struggle for the BNF YL itself to have policies to mobilise the masses against the capitalist monopolies. But this was not what Dr Koma seemed to have in mind.

He specifically rejected the idea that a mass party like BNF or the BNF YL should be transformed into a Socialist or Workers' Party, because, he said, the Marxists in the party cannot claim the "party composed of different elements to be socialist as this will rob the non-socialists."

But the mass of the people in Botswana—workers, working-class youth, the rural poor—have every interest in, and need for, an organisation that will mobilise them around the problems that confront them daily, and build the forces that can change society.

To those of them not yet socialists, we need to explain and show the power of socialist policies in action. This cannot be done by confining the ideas of

Marxism to those who pass grades in "study groups", or to drawing up programmes in offices. We need to have a fighting Youth League, and a fighting BNF.

What has been obstructing this are the real "non-socialists" in the BNF who dominate its leading bodies. The BNF central committee is today filled by successful small businessmen who were previously members of the BDP.

They have no interest in the overthrow of capitalism. On the contrary, they want to protect it in the vain hope that they will be the big bourgeois tomorrow. Less and less is there a fundamental difference between the BNF leadership and the openly capitalist BDP. In fact Dr Koma himself has called for a coalition government of the two parties.

Problem

Dr Koma appeared to recognise this problem when he explained that without the "Socialist Working Youth", the right-wing would gain the upper hand, and that this would sooner make the BNF a mere capitalist party, when it would lose its membership and support and die a natural death.

His point seems to be that the role of socialists in the BNF is to keep the sympathy of the masses, without disturbing the pro-capitalist elements while they go about their business. But how can you have a fighting mass party—a party which really fights for the interests of working people—without running into the determined opposition of the right wing?

It would require a massive struggle by the rank-and-file, organising into BNF ranks the presently inactive masses, to destroy the domination of these pro-capitalist elements.

Dr Koma would be foolish to think that it is possible to balance and manoeuvre indefinitely between right-wing and left-wing groups. As the youth pointed out, "Socialist Working Youth" would immediately be seen as a threat by the right wing, who would organise to try to crush it.

Without mass mobilisation and struggle, the right wing will win. Consequently the task is to transform the BNF, and in this a mass Youth League on socialist policies could play a decisive role.

Dr Koma says he did not know of any mass party which has been transformed into a socialist party. A socialist party, he said, could only be formed of "real Marxists" right from the beginning, where there wouldn't be any question of compromise with the "national bourgeoisie".

Conscious expression

Of course it is correct for Marxists to organise themselves. But Marxism is only the conscious expression of the real interests of the mass of the oppressed and exploited people. Therefore Marxists do not conduct themselves as a separate or isolated clique but engage in struggle in the mass organisations to which the working people adhere, striving to transform them on socialist lines.

If that is to be the role of "Socialist Working Youth"—struggling to transform the BNF into a socialist party—well and good. But Dr Koma's approach—that "real Marxists" preserve their "purity" through a sectarian existence in a completely separate party—would doom it in advance to sterility. Meanwhile those workers and youth who look to the BNF would remain exactly under the "compromising" influence of the middle-class BNF right wing.

At the root of Dr Koma's confusion is the idea, which also came up at the conference, that Botswana is at the stage of "national democratic revolution" in which the "national bourgeoisie" are "allies" of the masses, and therefore have a "place" in the BNF.

But to secure real self-determination for the oppressed Botswana, and a solution to the problems of working people, the stranglehold of SA imperialism and capitalism must be broken. Only a revolution led by the working class, inevitably linked up with the working-class revolution in SA, can accomplish this.

It is on the basis of this understanding that the youth need to build the BNF YL. This means organising the tens of thousands of young people still politically inactive, it means linking with the struggles of the workers in Botswana, and of the workers and youth in South Africa. It means taking up the problems of the rural poor.

The BNF YL stands the best chance of doing this the more clearly we show and prove our determination to fight. The party right wing, like the govern-

ment, will oppose action and try to hamstring the youth.

Therefore we need, without any delay, to elaborate a practical system of measures whose aim will be to guide the struggle of the youth against BDP and capitalism. We need a programme of action which must be strictly practical, objective, and to the point. This is what the socialist youth in the YL need to take the lead in.

Every township should be built into a bulwark of the YL. A campaign against unemployment and for jobs for all should be begun immediately. Pamphlets and leaflets should be drawn up and distributed throughout the townships. It has to be explained how, because of lack of jobs, the social life of Botswana youth has deteriorated, resulting in drunkenness, high crime rates, and so on, and how the youth can fight back effectively.

Together with that, rallies should be organised which would be a build-up towards a demonstration on unemployment and a demand for jobs. BNF councillors, MPs, and other leaders should be asked not only to come and speak, but to march at the front of the demonstrations that will be organised.

Mass campaign

There should be a mass campaign which the BNF-controlled councils should be called upon to lead, to force the government to allocate the necessary funds for housing.

In the struggle against unemployment, the factories occupy a very important position. Every factory must become a stronghold of the YL with every branch taking responsibility for a particular workplace, and developing a practical programme of action through discussion with the workers. We cannot allow divisions between the employed and unemployed to be deepened.

Also vital for our victory is the support of the rural masses. The ability to win this will instil the towns with more confidence, add to our strength, and weaken the enemy who rests partly on their passivity.

A demand for a national minimum living wage for workers, for example, should be linked to solving the problems of rural households, whose members depend on income from relatives in the towns. The demand for jobs is vital for the thousands who have left the rural areas because of drought. We

must organise activity around demands for tractors, fertiliser, and other assistance without which the rural poor cannot make a living.

Equally important is the need for practical links with the SA youth and workers. There was great enthusiasm generated by the statement made by the SA Youth Congress calling on young people in Southern Africa to struggle together against the murderous racist regime. The statement added that any one of the Southern African governments who stand in the way of this would be regarded as an enemy of the people of the region.

Let the opportunity be taken to expose the hypocrisy of the BDP government on these questions. Let us invite visitors from the SA youth to address the meetings we will organise. Let us invite SA trade unionists to our factories.

In the event of strikes and struggles in SA, Youth League branches should rally support among workers in Botswana, raising money to send. We can organise concerts for fund-raising, make BNF YL badges and stickers to sell.

In this way we will be playing our part in the struggle to free our country from the threats of the apartheid regime and exploitation by the SA capitalists. At the same time, it is an investment, for tomorrow it is us who will be engaged in bitter struggles for which we shall need assistance from a strong movement in SA.

The young people of Botswana cannot leave for any other place. Should the present problems continue, we will perish. Our salvation lies in merciless struggle. Let us build a fighting unity under the banner of the Youth League to bring victory!

STOP PRESS: SANCTIONS FIASCO

The SA capitalist press and government are falling over themselves to congratulate Mrs Thatcher for her reactionary stance against sanctions.

The Commonwealth conference has shown that we cannot look to the capitalist powers to implement sanctions against the apartheid regime; and that the front-line states are too weak to implement sanctions.

If we want sanctions, we must campaign for workers' sanctions. It is the workers of the world who are the only reliable allies of our revolution.

To the Editors:
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May Day rallies

Dear comrades,

In the week of May Day, rallies were attended by hundreds of thousands of workers and youth in South Africa and many millions of workers and youth internationally.

It was a celebration of the traditions of organisation and solidarity within the workers' movement. Here in South Africa in 1987 most industries and factories were closed.

But May Day in the Western Cape was not organised in a good way by the COSATU leadership. We say, and we understand, that we must mobilise our black working class because it is the most exploited and oppressed, and it is the only formidable class that can lead us to freedom and socialism.

But what happened was the May Day rallies were mainly taken to the coloured areas and left the pure black workers at the back in the townships. The COSATU leadership used May Day as a cultural day. At the central rally there were a lot of bands, tribal music and tribal dancers, and soccer games. They didn't speak thoroughly about the national minimum wage campaign.

The pure youth there were unmanageable while the soccer game took part on the ground. They sang freedom songs and toyi-toyed around the stadium, because the youth were there to listen about May Day and the youth thought that they would have got a good clear strategy of programme and socialist revolution and how to reverse the ebb—but they didn't get that.

Next year May Day must be better organised.

Yours in struggle,

Themba Tansi

We will conquer

Dear comrades,

Our tendency is the one who's going to dominate time to come.

We the workers we cannot run away from ourself, because no matter from which side but we want workers' democracy.

Most of the youth who are active in the township they fight and they forward the struggle aiming to the left but the drivers are going to turn to the right.

The drivers are hiding under the left flag so Marxist let them know the truth—we are going conquer up to the ruling class.

All this I prove from myself because I was asking too much of the so-call "arm struggle"; and I was politicised by my friends to get the greenlight.

From Mar

Poem

Written by a comrade's mother while her daughter was in detention.

I hear your voice
 above the sound of the waves
 I feel so angry because
 at the moment you are
 injured as a trapped dove
 but with your strength
 you will come out tops
 flying forward with your
 wings outstretched
 to a warmer place.
 I am flying like a hawk
 trying to swallow
 everything that is cruel
 and hateful
 so one day beautiful
 creatures could be
 free and survive.

Angry mother

British LPYS expose 100 years of oppression

Dear comrades,

Over 100 Labour Party Young Socialists 'celebrated' the 100th anniversary of Consolidated Gold-

fields with a picket of its headquarters in London.

Singing revolutionary South African workers' songs YS members marched on the offices as part of a youth campaign to expose the blood links between British capitalism and apartheid.

Banners and placards carried by YS members exposed these links, and a leaflet produced for the lobby explained how 75% of Goldfields' earnings came from South Africa. We explained how its massive profits of £162 million in 1986 are protected by Goldfield's own private security force, and the rubber bullets it has developed itself.

During the picket a personnel manager argued with several comrades pointing out that Goldfields representatives had met with the ANC, and that they were prepared to negotiate wages and conditions of mineworkers with the ANC. Is this true?

We also campaigned to expose how in Britain Goldfields adds to its profits through the Amey Roadstone Corporation (ARC). ARC is a quarrying and construction materials group that depends on contracts mainly from local councils and health authorities. But it also launders profits made on South African mines, which then appear as ARC profits to try and hide the extent of its bloody involvement in South Africa.

In a number of areas the YS lobbied Labour councils to boycott ARC, and campaigned amongst council workers. We also visited ARC quarries where workers were keen to show their solidarity.

The campaign was fully supported by the Broad Left of the British NUM with joint meetings and joint activities. We campaigned to build direct links with mineworkers in South Africa and to twin British and South African pits.

The Goldfields campaign was just part of our fighting programme in support of the struggle in South Africa. Across Britain public meetings have been held, and local activities to publicise the heroic battles of South African workers and youth have been organised. Nationalise the mines!

Forward to worker's control!

Yours fraternally,

April Ashley

LPYS member

South Korea

Giant of labour awakes

Last Wednesday thousands upon thousands of shipyard workers poured through the streets of the city of Ulsan, preceded by 100 forklifts and heavy vehicles, after wage negotiations broke down. Riot police, sent to halt their advance, decided that discretion was the better part of valour, and let the workers into the city centre unhindered.

In Seoul, striking taxi drivers were clashing with scabs; 31 strikers were arrested. 80% of the city's 17 000 company-owned taxis were idle.

This is the latest episode in a virtual brush-fire general strike spreading to all parts of South Korea during August.

The entire car industry has been crippled. A strike by 18 000 bus workers in Seoul was only averted when the government forced management to give them a 20 per cent wage rise. At the parliament buildings, MPs' chauffeurs left the reactionary lawmakers stranded.

Engineering workers, miners, taxi drivers, textile workers, shop workers, even the country's 2 500 pop-singers—all have taken action.

Pitched battles

On 10 August, 1 500 striking coal miners fought a pitched battle with the infamous riot police for 15 hours at a key junction of the railway network at Wohan, occupying the station.

At the country's largest shoe manufacturers, Kukje-ICC in Pusan, strikers who had occupied the plant were attacked by scabs, armed with iron bars and shields, and forced out of the factory. But the workers regrouped, armed themselves, and beat back the scabs, who by then had been joined by the riot police.

The awakening of the giant of labour has shocked all sections of the ruling class.

3 600 strikes have been recorded since early July, compared with 226 throughout 1986. At one stage 100-

200 new strikes were breaking out every day.

The movement will not end here. The death of 21-year-old shipyard worker Lee Sok Gyu from tear-gas shrapnel wounds has further inflamed the mood. The call has gone out for his funeral to be marked by a general strike.

On the crest of the strike wave, workers' organisation is mushrooming.

Only company unions are legal; yet workers have struggled un-

A report from a correspondent in Seoul, South Korea, received in early September



South Korean workers on strike at the Ulsan shipyard, the largest shipyard in the world.

South Korea

derground for years to build independent trade unions. Despite repression, these courageous unions have not been broken.

Now, following the retreat by the regime and the promise of reforms by the ruling DJP's presidential hopeful, Roh Tae Woo, dozens of new independent unions have been established. In one week in the Seoul area alone 34 new unions were formed!

In one incident the Chong Yii Garment Workers' Union was told it could start operating openly. But when workers arrived at the union headquarters on 7 July they found it surrounded by hundreds of police.

Only after fighting and bloodshed did the workers regain possession of their headquarters.

Management concessions have been too little and too late. Not only are workers demanding better wages and conditions, but also the dismissal of company union officials and the right to elect their own representatives.

Workers in Hyundai's plants in Ulsan dismissed company union officials and elected their own representatives. The government was forced to intervene and order management to recognise the new workers' leadership.

South Korea's rapid economic growth since the 1960s has been at the expense of the working class. The bosses have kept the masses in poverty in order to compete on the world market.

Car workers, earning 300 000 Won (R770) per month are well off by Korean standards. But this is one-fifth of the rate for the job in Japan.

For most workers, real wages are much lower. Women assembling semi-conductors at Anan Industries earn 17 200 Won (R44) for a 55-hour week. Textile workers are paid as little as 100 000 Won (R260) per month for a 15-hour day, six-day week.

These conditions will lay the basis for a powerful independent trade union movement organising millions of workers. August's victories will have an enormous effect in transforming the consciousness of the working class, and giving them new confidence.

A layer of class-conscious militants will emerge. Mobilising on

The huge strike movement described here by a correspondent on the spot marks the opening of the revolution in South Korea.

It was preceded, and stimulated, by weeks of protests and clashes on the streets of South Korea's cities, culminating in "peace marches" involving over 1 million people on 26 June. A quarter of those in these demonstrations were students, who had spearheaded the whole movement, fighting running battles with riot police.

The student movement was a renewed outbreak of mass protest against President Chun's vicious dictatorship, sparked off by the case of a student tortured to death by police, and inflamed by Chun's decision to postpone the presidential election and nominate another general to head the government.

The government combatted the movement with violence. But the state forces were on nume-

issues of wages and conditions, these advanced workers will rapidly advance political demands to liberate their class.

There is widespread mistrust of the military regime's promises of reforms. Slogans on the walls of Seoul read: "For a revolutionary constituent assembly!". "Kill Roh Tae Woo!"

The Workers' Combined Committee for a Democratic Constitution—an umbrella of different unions and radical workers' groups—campaigns not only for decent conditions but for an end to the ban on political activity by trade unions.

At a rally organised before the August strikes, held in a room with a 500 capacity, 5 000 turned up and applauded the demand, amongst others, for the building of a workers' political party.

These demands will be given jet propulsion by the feverish strike activity.

The regime fears a united movement of the workers and the students, who have been to the fore in the heroic struggle against the dictatorship. Correctly, students in many

rous occasions overwhelmed; conscript riot police were surrounded and disarmed.

Fearing escalation on the pattern of the Philippines a year ago, the ruling "Democratic and Justice Party" backed off before the end of June, announcing a sweeping programme of democratic reforms.

Reforms

After 80 years of foreign occupation and military rule with hardly an interlude, direct elections were promised. Assurances were given on press freedom, releasing political prisoners, restoring civil liberties, attacking corruption and reforming education and local government.

Now the industrial working class has taken advantage of this retreat to begin to assert its power. The accumulating contra-

areas are orienting towards the labour movement.

The events have thrown all classes into turmoil. But at this stage the dictatorship is still intact. Roh Tae Woo has made his promise of reforms not at the eleventh hour, but at the opening of the struggle.

Unlike in Portugal in 1974, or the Philippines last year, the armed forces are not yet split. The soldiers are not yet ready to come over to the side of the movement.

The newly-discovered velvet glove of democracy is an extremely poor fit on the mailed fist of the dictatorship. But a new coup is the least likely perspective at this stage. Attempts to hold the lid down will only lead to greater explosions.

The South Korean revolution has begun. Under capitalism there is no solution to the problems of the workers and youth. Even basic democracy cannot be guaranteed.

A mass movement of workers and youth, based on the revolutionary traditions of their past and armed with Marxist ideas, would be invincible.

South Korea

dictions of a dictatorship attempting to maintain a servile cheap labour system on the basis of modern industry are thrust explosively to the surface.

The conditions which sustained South Korea's economic growth are rapidly ending, as the article by Mick Brooks reprinted here explains.

Faced with the threat of revolution, fearing the spread of discontent into the rank-and-file of the army, the ruling class has made concessions, but a "democratic" government in Korea will bring new headaches for the capitalist class. They depend on low wages and high returns to capital; but, for the mass of workers, democracy is a bread and butter question—a weapon in the fight for reduced working hours, higher wages, and better conditions. These irreconcilable interests come into fundamental collision.

At this stage most workers are looking to the opposition Reunification Democratic Party to win

the elections and carry through reforms. In particular, illusions exist in its more "radical" leader, Kim Dae Jung. A recent rally of his was attended by 300 000. But he holds up capitalist West Germany as a model!

He, as well as Kim Young Sam, more conservative of the RDP leaders, have opposed the strike movement on the grounds that it would "give anti-democratic forces an excuse to hamper democratisation."

A right-wing coup attempt at this point would only inflame the situation. But the military regime is still intact. Twice before, brief periods of "democratic reform" have been followed by military coups.

Attempts to appease the generals will not eliminate this danger for the future. The course of events will be determined by the struggles, above all by the extent to which the working class comes to the fore as an independent force, organised on the basis of Marxism to draw the

lessons and conclusions on how to guarantee the gains and freedoms that they are fighting for.

None of these can be guaranteed within the framework of capitalism; only the working class has the power and interest to dismantle the military clique-ridden state machine and carry through democratic and socialist transformation of society.

East Asia has become a key area of international capitalism, particularly for the United States. Since 1983, US trade across the Pacific has outstripped its trade with Europe.

Now the effects of the deepening crisis of world capitalism are destabilising one country after another in the area—the Philippines, now South Korea, even tiny Fiji. A victory for the working class in a major country in the area would be a major blow against imperialism, providing a springboard towards toppling rotten US-backed dictatorships by workers' revolution throughout the region.

Economic miracle —the end is in sight

Reprinted from *Militant*, (9/10/87), British Marxist paper for labour and youth

South Korea has managed average growth of 9 per cent a year over the past two decades. Gross National Product has shot up fourteen times over in the last 30 years.

Similar "economic miracles" have taken place in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore.

Can capitalism deliver the goods after all?

In the industrialised countries, the capitalist class carried through the so-called "bourgeois-democratic revolution"—national unification and land reform, establishing parliamentary democracy, raising agricultural productivity and sending a steady stream of ex-peasants to

By Mick Brooks

work as wage labourers in the towns.

These are basic preconditions for the development of capitalism. But, in the third-world countries dominated by imperialism, they have been carried out only very partially, and in a distorted manner.

Korea is a classic example.

At the turn of the century Korea was one of the most backward countries in the world. Conquest by Japan led to a typically colonial development of mining and agriculture. The big farms and mines were Japanese-owned. All

the newly-created wealth was sucked back to Japan.

After the Second World War US forces, occupying the South, were confronted with a revolutionary mood.

In the north, capitalism and landlordism were overthrown and a Stalinist regime took power. War between the north, supported by the USSR and China, and the US and its United Nations' allies in the south, ended in the partition of the country in 1954.

The war left Korea devastated. The economy in the South had nowhere to go but up. Since Korea remained in the "front line" of imperialism's "global struggle against communism", the US puppet regime in the South became one of the largest recipients of US aid.

Land reform was carried out in the 1950s under massive pressure from below. But capitalist rule could only be maintained through the creation of a repressive anti-Communist state machine. Super-exploitation of the workforce has remained the bedrock of

South Korea

capitalism in South Korea.

With the country remaining on a permanent war footing, the regime took unprecedented powers over the economy. Growth was seen as essential for the maintenance of capitalism.

Lenin used the expression "state capitalism" to describe the military regime that planned the German capitalist economy in the interests of conquest during the First World War. South Korea is a classic example of state capitalism.

The government established a monopoly over the grain trade. By imposing low prices on the farmers, they were able to bring about a drift of the population from the countryside to factory jobs in the towns. Two-thirds of the people now live in the big cities.

Until recently the banks were state-owned. They still direct cheap credit to the big corporations according to targets fixed by the state.

A powerful industry ministry decrees five-year plans and undertakes the investment in infrastructure required by a modern economy. The state is responsible for two-thirds of all investment, and has effective control over foreign trade.

Industry is dominated by giant corporations, called "chaebol", such as Hyundai, Daewoo and Samsung, which imitate the Japanese conglomerates. Hyundai's interests, for example, are spread from shipbuilding, steel and electronics to car production.

Dependent

But even this large-scale industrialisation has remained dependent on imperialism for markets, technology and finance. South Korea is head over heels in debt to the world's big banks. Standing at \$50 billion, its foreign debt is higher per person than Brazil's.

To pay debt charges and finance growth, the economy is crucially dependent on exports, in particular to the USA. Exports have regularly been more than 30 per cent of

GNP. The number of cars exported has moved from nothing to 450 000 in three years.

But Korea remains a country poor in modern design and know-how. All the major car makers have deals with Western auto makers to build their models under license.

Japanese companies

The Japanese companies evidently look with resignation to the imminent closure of their United States markets through protectionism, and salvage what they can by selling capital goods and technology to the Koreans.

Thus South Korea has not been able to kick foreign domination. As fast as trade surpluses with the US pile up, the deficits with Japan get bigger. As fast as they export cars to the US, they import car plants from Japan.

Any hiccup in the growth of world trade can have catastrophic effects on Korea. Industrialisation has only tightened the chains that bind its people to the capitalist world economy.

The "economic miracle" has brought no prosperity to the working people. On the contrary, it has only been won on the backs of a super-exploited working class.

Koreans work an average of 54 hours a week—the longest in the world. Last year there were 120 000 industrial injuries and 1 700 deaths.

Official wage figures are a tissue of lies, but labour activists reckon half the workers in industry are living below the poverty line on £77-£115 a month. The minimum cost of living for a single person is £155, and £403 for a family of four.

Hence the enormous movement of labour and the growth of organisation since the liberalisation of recent months. The developing recession in the USA, and the disaster this spells for the Korean economy, will speed up the processes and push even greater sections of workers into struggle.

The conquest of free trade unionism for a sustained period would mean the banks and multinationals packing their bags. Then Korea's "economic miracle" will finally be laid to rest, and with it, any hope of restabilising the capitalist system.



Cars exported from South Korea's giant Hyundai monopoly

On Monday 19 October, share prices on Wall Street (the New York stock exchange) fell by 22 per cent—far exceeding the historic crash of 'Black Tuesday' in October 1929. \$600 billion was wiped off the value of shares. As we go to press, the volatility continues on stock exchanges round the world.

The 1929 Wall Street crash triggered the 'Great Depression'—a massive slump in capitalist production. What will the impli-

cations be today?

The article reprinted here was first published in July this year. Ted Grant analyses in advance the background to developments such as these, in the organic crisis of world capitalism and the weak and 'artificial' nature of the upturn of the last few years.

He looks ahead to the likely character of the impending capitalist recession or slump, and its consequences.

World economy heads for slump

We are now nearing a new turning point in the development of capitalism, a qualitative change in economic and political perspectives. On the surface, Britain is in a period of boom. The same is true for America, and for Western Europe.

But the basic crisis of capitalism, which has been spoken about by Marxists for three generations now, means that the capitalist system has reached its limits. Rather than developing the productive forces, because of the restrictions of the nation state on the one hand and private ownership of the means of production on the other, it has become an absolute fetter on the development of production.

Of course this does not mean that there will be no further increases, and then falls, in production, but that the rhythm of slumps and booms will be ever more convulsive.

The enormous economic upswing of world production between 1950 and 1975 seemed to have cancelled out the laws of capitalism. Capitalism partially succeeded in this period in overcoming the organic crisis of capitalism, which has existed now for about 60 or 70 years, by an enormous development of world trade of about 12.5 per cent a year. This in its turn gave a huge impetus to the development of the productive forces, to a greater extent than ever before in history.

Organic crisis

In addition, the organic crisis of capitalism has been disguised to a certain extent by the simultaneous crisis of Stalinism in Russia and Eastern Europe, shown by the recent reforms of Gorbachev. All the major journals of capitalism, the *Financial Times*, *The Economist*, *The Banker* etc hammer home the point that centralised planning does not work. Of course, **bureaucratic** planning does not work once you have a sophisticated, developed economy. But democratic workers' management of industry and

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

the state would work.

Undoubtedly, this crisis in the East has had an effect on the intellectuals, the ideologues of capital, who say "that is not the way out". The fact that the "mixed economy" was not able to prevent the development of the capitalist crisis meant that it too has been abandoned. The bureaucratic nationalisations in Britain, France, Germany and even in America, measures which in reality are not socialism but state capitalism, do not work for the same reason that bureaucratic centralised planning does not work in the Stalinist states, but with the additional fact that the major part of the economy is in the hands of monopoly capital which determines the development of the economy. Because the mixed economy does not work and does not prevent the possibility of slump there has been a big swing against state ownership, not only in the countries where the Tories are in power but also where the so-called Socialists are in office.

Thus in Spain and in Sweden there have been denationalisations and in France the Socialist Party is not putting up a vigorous struggle against the denationalisation that Chirac wants to carry

out. To a certain extent "Socialism" has been discredited and under these conditions the idea has developed that "untrammelled capitalism" is the means to develop the economy. The capitalist countries will suffer all the consequences of this in the next slump.

For the process whereby capitalism was able to partially overcome its organic crisis between 1950 and 1975 has now reached its limits. This is proved by the nature of the "boom" that capitalism has experienced from 1981-87. This has dragged on for 6 years, but in the language of the bourgeois economists it has not been a boom but a "growth recession", in the sense that production has only crawled ahead at the rate of just 2-3 per cent overall. This compares to the period of economic upswing when growth in output of 6-8 per cent was quite normal in the countries of Western Europe and when American output too grew in some years by 8 per cent. In Japan, there was sometimes a 12 per cent or even 17 per cent annual growth.

This latest "boom" should have collapsed long ago. We thought that it had reached its limits and predicted its end 2 or 3 years ago. In fact, the boom **would** have collapsed before now if it had not been for the massive armaments programme of the United States, now reaching \$375 billion a year, and the budget and trade deficits built up by the US.

This colossal arms expenditure puts into the shade Hitler's re-armament programme prior to 1939 which absorbed 7 million unemployed. In the US the capitalists claim to have created 30 million new jobs in the last 20 years. But 9 out of 10 of these new jobs are in the service industries, completely dependent, in reality, on the development of industrial production.

Germany reached the limits of its armaments boom in 1939 and was faced with a choice of either going to war (Hitler had always intended going to war) or a collapse of the economy. Now the enormous armaments boom in the

US, which is principally for the benefit of the military-industrial monopolies in America but is also a means of propping up American imperialism against the colonial revolution and of course against the mortal enemy of Stalinism, has also reached its limits.

Armaments boom

The armaments boom of Hitler prepared the way for either war or a devastating slump in Germany and in the West. In fact, at that time America was not spending much on armaments, about 1 or 2% of GNP. But in 1938 they had a slump which threatened to rival the slump of 1929-1933 and therefore they saw in war a solution to their problems. But today (as explained later in the article) the capitalist powers cannot find a way out through world war as they could have in a different period—not while the trade unions and political parties of the working class continue to exist and the democratic rights which go with them—although there will be “little” wars, perhaps, like the Vietnam war.

America's armaments boom was a form of “negative Keynesianism”. (During the post-war upswing the momentum of production was sustained by expansion of state and private credit to artificially enlarge the market for goods, partly through social welfare spending: a method first proposed by the capitalist economist Keynes.) Now the US arms boom is based on “guns instead of butter.” Reagan's deficit financing, spending more than the state income, has not gone to improve the infrastructure, social services, pensions, etc. On the contrary, growth has been at the expense of those sectors and at the expense of the working class in the US where real wages have fallen by 14 per cent in the last ten years.

Nonetheless, a byproduct of the American arms boom and the state budget deficit was an expansion of the world economy, of Western Europe and particularly Japan, by expanding the market in the USA. The US Government's spending sucked in goods from other countries. Japan and Western Europe have had their market increased by at least 1% as a result of the expansion of the American market. Along with this the US has built up an enormous trade deficit, ie excess of spending on imports over earnings from exports.

To finance the massive budget deficit, America sucked in enormous amounts of capital from her rivals and even the under-developed world, but predominantly from the developed world and especially Japan, by paying sky-high

interest rates. That in its turn (because of the demand created for dollars) drove up the value of the dollar to the highest level it had reached for decades, in comparison to the currencies of the other developed countries. This further weakened America's trading position (cheapening imports and making exports more expensive), building up enormous contradictions for the future.

Another reason for the continuation of the boom in the last few years, has been the fall in the prices of raw materials, oil and foodstuffs. The advanced capitalist countries have prolonged the boom by shifting the burden onto the back of the colonial world, by worsening their terms of trade with the advanced industrial countries. Colonial countries have received less for their predominantly raw materials exports, and had to pay more for their manufactured imports.

To cover the difference, they have borrowed from the big banks in advanced capitalist countries. This has meant an enormous increase in the foreign debts of the colonial countries. One thousand billion dollars worth of debt has been incurred in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

Worse off

With worsening terms of trade, interest on debt, etc, there has been an estimated drain of \$750-\$1000 billion from the underdeveloped to the developed world in the last few years. Now the real average per capita income in 1984-87 is 14 times higher in the developed world than in the underdeveloped world. This is the result of the growth of the developed world and an actual decline in growth in Latin America and Africa and in some of the countries of Asia. In the underdeveloped world people and countries actually became worse off in absolute terms—in Africa, Latin America and in most of the countries of Asia, apart from Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan and of course South Korea.

These factors, the US arms programme and the shift in the terms of trade in favour of the advanced capitalist countries, gave an initial impetus to the so-called “boom”. But even with all these factors production has only crept forward. There has been nothing like the growth reached during the world economic upswing of 1950 to 1975.

At the same time, as an indication of the complete sickness of capitalism, in this period of boom only 80 per cent of productive capacity in all the advanced capitalist countries has been used. That means, in reality, that capitalism is in a

crisis of over-production. Because monopolies dominate production, and cut back production rather than blindly throwing more goods onto the limited market, the tendency to “over-production” reveals itself in a crisis of over-capacity. For example, only 68 per cent of steel capacity in all the capitalist countries is being used, and this in a boom. What is it going to be like in the slump that is coming?

This overcapacity has continued despite the capitalists' policy of destruction of ship-building, textiles, steel etc., that revealed itself at the time of the last slump. In the early history of capitalism workers enraged at their exploitation, known as Luddites, used to destroy the machinery they worked on: now, in the terminal decline of capitalism, it is the capitalists who are the Luddites! During this boom, the EEC has reduced steel capacity by 31 million tons. Now the EEC is demanding that another 20 million tons of steel capacity be destroyed.

All the factors are being gathered together for a slump, most likely within the next two or three years, a slump much deeper than anything experienced in the post-war period.

With the armaments boom reaching its limits, America has become the biggest net debtor in the world, with a foreign debt of \$410 billion, 4 per cent of GNP. In 1986 the US had a budget deficit of \$200 billion and a trade deficit of \$170 billion. In 1986 the total US debt, federal and private, topped 7 trillion dollars, a trillion dollar rise in a year. The total debt is 1.7 times the Gross National Product, the highest ratio since the depression of 1929-33. This is a time bomb ticking away under US capitalism.

Trade deficit

America's accumulated trade deficit for the 1980s totals \$630 billion. Manufactured goods account for 68 per cent of US exports and 75 per cent of US imports. The US trading deficit in manufactures makes up 84% of the total deficit. Now in the US, service industry employs 75% of the workers with only 25 per cent in manufacturing industry (though, incorrectly, they include transport and building in the service sector).

All these figures show the complete change in the situation that has taken place in the world economy. The *Wall Street Journal* recently spoke of the disintegration of the world economy. It tried to find analogies with what happened with the collapse of the economic domination of British imperialism in the 1870s and 1880s, which prepared the

way for the First World War and the slump of 1929-33. It identified three *fundamental factors* which it said were the disintegrating forces of the world economy then, which are present today: rapid changes in the world economy producing protectionist pressures; the stagnation of domestic economy; and the end of the "hegemonic" position of any one power.

Japan today challenges America on a world scale. Japan's Gross National Product per head of population is higher than the USA. Japan now has a \$50 billion surplus of trade with the USA even though the dollar has plunged by over 40 per cent against the Japanese yen, making Japanese exports to the US more expensive.

With home industry providing less profitable opportunities, Japan has also become the world's leading exporter of finance capital, \$650 billion in 1985 compared to the USA's \$600 billion. In 1986 Japan invested \$50 billion in US government bonds and \$15 to \$20 billion in Eurobonds to become the world's largest creditor. Japanese banks make up 45% of foreign banking in the US and conduct 40% of foreign currency transactions in Britain.

Japanese capitalism is a peculiar capitalism. The Japanese capitalists have succeeded partly because they refuse to waste resources on arms spending, which is still only just over 1% of GNP, and also because Japanese capitalism is a highly monopolised capitalism which is intimately connected with the state.

Despite all the bleatings of Thatcher, Chirac, Reagan and so on about the "free market economy", it was with the help of the state that Japan produced the cars, motor bikes and electrical equipment etc. which took away the market from their competitors.

At the same time, Japan has protected its home market by having more real barriers to trade than other countries. While the average tariff rate in Japan has been reduced to 3 per cent, compared to 4 per cent in the USA and 4.9 per cent in the EEC, the real barriers are the non-tariff trade barriers.

Contradictions piling up

All the contradictions that make for a devastating slump are piling up. The price of stocks and shares is not in proportion to the economy. On the stock exchange, an average US company's shares trade at 5 times the value based on earnings. It is fictitious capital—not present capital-value but, as Trotsky explained in the 1920s, "mementoes of deceased capital or expectations of capital still to come." Enormous quantities of fictitious capital are being piled up. The value of speculative trading in foreign currencies ev-

ery day amounts to twenty times the value of world trade in goods.

The bankers and the stock brokers are under the illusion that the increase in prices in stocks and shares will lead to an increase in production to match it. In fact they will have to come down with a bump as they came down in the past. Stocks and shares will have to come into line with the real economy.

Inevitably when capitalism goes beyond the limits of the capitalist system the pendulum swings back. Marx already explained in relation to credit that it results in production developing beyond the limits of the capitalist system. Expanding consumer credit to unprecedented levels initially increases the market but then inevitably limits it. You can't spend your money twice. If you spend your money on mortgages, hire purchase and so on, you can't spend it again.

At the same time, the US government's budget deficit and the debt being piled up by the colonial countries threatens a financial collapse. In the US, in this period of alleged boom, 135 banks failed in 1986 and 1,486 were in difficulties. Two Canadian banks failed, the first failures in Canada since 1923. Japan's 6th largest bank was rescued from failure. In Hongkong there has been a collapse of the banks, and this is one of the world's financial centres.

The US banks have loaned out \$1,400 billion, the seven biggest banks \$550 billion, much of it to the colonial countries which will never be able to



Brazil: the poor are condemned by the crisis of capitalism to scavenging off rubbish dumps.

repay. \$375 billion was added to the debts of the Latin American countries between 1975 and 1985. Ironically, nearly half of that disappeared in investments by Latin America into the US and the other developed countries of the world!

All these events are the first heat lighting of the coming storm. New contradictions have been generated over the last 6 to 7 years especially. Japan's comparative advantages are becoming disadvantages. There is not only a surplus of capacity but also a surplus of capital piling up in Japan. What we have seen in regard to GEC in Britain, one of the biggest manufacturers which has over £1,000 million in the banks collecting interest rather than being invested in industry, we now see in regard to the big monopolies in Japan. They have a colossal surplus of capital lying idle in the banks. There is nowhere they can invest it profitably in Japan and nowhere abroad. While in the US we see the same phenomenon as in Britain with feverish speculation in takeovers and mergers, because there is no profitable investment possible in new industry. There has been \$88 billion worth of mergers in 1986 and they expect there will be \$135 billions worth in 1987.

Worse off

Another condition of slump appearing at the present time is the cut in the top rates of taxes. This is something that Thatcher and Reagan think they invented but in fact is nothing new. In 1926 the reactionary Premier Poincare cut taxes by 50 per cent in France and in the USA President Coolidge slashed the top rates by half allegedly in order to encourage production by giving the capitalists money to invest. That is not a nice augury—for three years later, in 1929, a devastating slump in production began! Yet then, from 1924 to 1929, there was a genuine boom in production; today there is not even that. The capitalists will not invest. Tax cuts will not solve any of the problems of capitalism.

The organic nature of the crisis is revealed by the fact that even in this alleged boom there has been an increase in unemployment. There has not been a fall in unemployment in any of the developed countries, except in the US on account of the increase in service sector jobs. This level of unemployment is not the "normal" reserve army of labour of capitalism in its heyday which would disappear in a boom, but a permanent drain on the economy and society.

At the same time, wages have been held down, further cutting the market



The London Stock Exchange: capitalist speculators make windfall profits while more than three million are without jobs.

for the capitalists. They are faced with the insoluble problem of capitalism that they want to increase their profits and therefore they hold down the wages of the workers. But as a consequence they cut the market on a world scale. In 1986, overall growth in world manufacturing trade was only 3 per cent in volume terms—the lowest for 30 years despite the US trade deficit of \$170 billion. And it is expected to slow down further to 2.5 per cent in 1987.

The capitalists are faced with an insoluble dilemma. Reagan's armaments boom, which in accord with the unplanned nature of capitalism was a sheer accident and not planned at all, did result in a "boom" throughout the developed world, providing an enormous market in the USA. But, as explained, this only built up enormous contradictions for US capitalism, wea-

kening America's trading position. So the dollar was allowed to devalue with the intention of increasing US exports by making them cheaper.

But all the capitalist nations have massive surplus capacity and they are all clamouring for markets. The dilemma is this: if the falling dollar increases US exports, it must mean an increase in imports in Japan, West Germany, Britain and other countries, and decreased exports for these countries. Thus the US is demanding a 20% share of Japan's market in semi-conductors by 1991 even though Japan's share in the US market is only 15%. But Japan cannot provide a market for further substantial US imports. Total imports presently only take 5% of Japan's home market.

Similarly, all the other capitalist countries can not allow their exports to

decline or their own home markets to be taken over by further US imports. They will not be able to accept that. And therefore there is an undeclared trade war, with competitive devaluations of each country's currency, just as happened from 1929 to 1939.

Dollar falling

The dollar has fallen 35 per cent in two years: against the Yen, 42 per cent, and 48 per cent against the Deutschmark. Out of 52 countries' currencies, 20 manufacturing nations' have risen against the dollar since 1985.

The trade war has begun with devaluation. But as a first tremor of what will come in the future we have the dispute over semi-conductors between the US and Japan. There is an enormous overproduction in computers and semi-conductors in Europe, the US and Japan.

As a side-show we had the trade dispute between Britain and Japan. But the British capitalists are too weak to imagine that they could take on Japan and therefore they were forced to compromise. They did not even get backing from the EEC. They ran to their alleged brothers and partners in the EEC who just pushed them off to officials to "discuss" the question. In other words they were not backing Britain at all because they are afraid of an open trade war.

The dilemma that they face is that unilateral action in relation to tariffs always triggers off retaliatory actions. That is why the idea that is still being put forward by the Labour leaders, especially the Stalinists, that through import controls capitalism can solve its problems, is false.

Trade wars put the burden on the weaker nations. The United States has 25 per cent of world imports, but the exports of America are only 6 per cent of the Gross National Product. So if it comes to a trade war, America will be affected, but not as much as the other capitalist economies—Britain exports about 33 per cent of her GNP, West Germany the same, Holland, Sweden and Belgium 50 per cent. They will be hit harder by a slump than American imperialism, although the latter will be hit hard.

The bourgeois economists point out that the US trade balance could improve this year—not because of the fall of the dollar, but because of slower domestic growth. Protectionist pressures in the USA will mount and attacks on the EEC's Common Agricultural Policy are likely to become more violent. Trotsky, during the inter-war period, spoke about agriculture as the

"kept whole" of industry in Germany. What he meant by that is the capitalists deliberately subsidised agriculture for social reasons, in order to subsidise the peasantry. There is very little peasantry now but in Germany, France, Britain and other countries, the farmers have been subsidised throughout this period, on the one hand as a market but also for social reasons to balance the rural areas against the industrial areas.

Inevitably, the moment it comes to a slump, those countries which have currencies that have appreciated will then devalue. The Japanese will depreciate the Yen, the Germans the Deutschmark or, if they do not do that, they will turn to open trade protection to keep out the goods of the other countries.

Some of the serious capitalist commentators are really worried. They say that the "liberal economic order" is now at stake. "Free trade" is only possible when world production and trade are expanding. When it is a question of a general crisis of capitalism the law that operates is "every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost".

The industrial countries' imports are the major part of world trade: the proportion actually rose in the 1980s. Imports from the underdeveloped world fell from 20% to 13% of the world total. That is a programme for revolution in the underdeveloped world. The smaller countries in Asia—South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan—which were given a privileged position in the US market in the post war period to head off the threat of revolution, and

which are therefore largely dependent on the US market, will suffer greatly once tariff barriers are mounted against their goods.

Moreover, with a trade war, Japan will become one of the weakest countries, because she has built up an enormous productive apparatus that is completely dependent on foreign markets. Therefore Japan will be affected worst of all. They already have 3.5% unemployment. With 30 million jobs in services a slump would be an absolute catastrophe in Japan.

If it were not for the threat to the capitalist system presented by the planned economies of Eastern Europe and Russia, the second most powerful country in the world, then undoubtedly the world would be on the road to war, between Japan and the EEC, between Japan and the US, or possibly a war between the European powers and the USA.

Greater

There is no "collective imperialism" as is sometimes imagined. The contradictions now between the US, the EEC and Japan are greater than the contradictions which led to war in 1914-1918 and 1939-45. The reason for the drive to war in the 1930s was that world trade in industrial products by the eve of World War Two was less than at the eve of

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World War One. The world output in industrial products had doubled in the inter-war period but trade had actually dropped. But now there is the immense power of Russia and Eastern Europe, which rules out war under present conditions.

The contradiction between capitalism and the planned economies of the Stalinist states represents the basic contradiction of this epoch. But full-scale war by the capitalist powers against the USSR is ruled out at present. If this was nuclear war, which it would come to, then there could be no winner, as everyone would be dead. The "victors" would not add to the market or gain any loot. The capitalists don't want this. They cannot launch a conventional war either as the Russians, because of the balance of forces, would win easily.

An actual war by the capitalist powers against the USSR could only take place following the physical destruction of the organisations of the labour and trade union movement in the US, Western Europe and Japan. This could only come about through civil war and the installation of uncontrolled military-police dictatorships in the major capitalist countries.

But at the same time international competition is greater than it was in the period before 1939. A trade war will undoubtedly break out, probably next year. Because there is no way out, with war ruled out, there will be a slump. A slump is absolutely inevitable in the period that lies ahead, prepared for by a

trade war.

This year and possibly next year they will avoid a slump, a slump being an actual fall in production. Production will probably crawl along as it has done at the rate of 2-3 per cent. In Britain it is projected to be 3 per cent, France 2 per cent, the US 2.5, Japan from 2.5 to 3 per cent, and West Germany 2 per cent. Next year, in 1988, they may also avoid a slump. But if they do then in 1989-90 there will probably be even bigger falls in production. In the last slump of 1979-81 there was only a fall of half a per cent in production. In the next one there are likely to be falls in production of 2,3 or 4 per cent, if it is a "normal" slump. This is compared to 1929-33 when production in the USA fell by 40 per cent and by 11 per cent in Britain.

Another 1929?

It is correct to raise the possibility, not the certainty, of another 1929. All the factors that made 1929 are there at the present time: the undeclared trade war through competitive devaluations; the stock market speculation; the consumer credit explosion; the massive debts; the advanced overcapacity, which never happened in the pre-war period in the same way. There was overcapacity for a time, but the constant, continual overcapacity means

that capitalism really has reached its limits and whichever way they turn, there might be another 1929. What is likely, is that there will be a deeper slump in one to three years time than any slump in the post war period.

But at all times we must make a caveat. We must take into account the enormous resources that have been created by the labour of the working class, by science and technique, in the course of the last 50 years. Under conditions of slump capitalism may have to use up much of these resources.

Can they defer the onset of a fresh recession, given the accumulation of the US budget and trade deficits? It is possible, temporarily, but it would depend on a whole series of circumstances. Are the capitalists prepared to waste the resources accumulated in the course of the last 50 years? They will do, but only under the impact of a political movement of the working class. In *The First Five Years of the Comintern*, Trotsky makes that position quite clear—when there was an enormous offensive of the workers of Germany, France, Italy, or Spain, the bourgeoisie drew back for a time and gave concessions in hours, wages, conditions and so on. Then within a matter of months or years as the case might be, once the movement had receded, they then took back what they had given and a bit extra as well.

That is the situation that they could face—and faced with revolutionary developments it is possible that they would carry through Keynesian mea-



Car workers in Japan: an uncertain future as the contradictions accumulate.

tures. We must remember that in future there will be big leftward swings of the Labour Party and of the Socialist parties in Europe, possibly even the "Communist" Party in France. There will be upheavals in the Italian "Communist" Party. The "left" leaders will be talking about Socialism, about revolution, and will remember all the things of the past once the crisis assumes an organic form.

Could America force Japan and Germany to reflate, i.e. to increase money in circulation to try to "prime the pump" of growth? Of course they tried it and got a dusty answer, just as when Europe and Japan asked the Americans to reflate about ten years ago. America refused and took no notice of what the Europeans were saying. Now Japan and West Germany aren't going to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for American imperialism at the cost of their own economies. Therefore, at this point in time, they are not prepared to reflate, which would result in an explosion of inflation and stimulate again the class struggle in those countries.

Anyway, even if Europe and Japan doubled their growth rates, which they will not do, it is estimated it would cut the US trade deficit of \$170 billion by a mere \$20 billion.

Advantage

However, circumstances might arise where Japan might go for arms expenditure as a means, of course, of boosting the economy rather than as a means of fighting with other countries. What gave Japan an enormous advantage over the last forty years was the mere 1% that she wasted on armaments in comparison with the 6-7 per cent that the other capitalist economies spend on arms. Even now she hasn't allowed herself to be cajoled into spending much. It is a fraction over 1 per cent now of GNP that they spend on arms. Therefore it is possible that the military industrial complex in Japan might go for arms expenditure. If they did build up the arms economy, it could have the same temporary effect as in the US, although under the present conditions and with the present world situation, the result would be an enormous inflation in Japan.

The capitalist countries will increase trade with Russia. Even the Americans have now done an 180 degree somersault from when they were deliberately trying to limit trade with Russia by threatening all sorts of reprisals against the economies of Western Europe and Japan if they traded in goods that were allegedly of defence significance. Now

they are hurriedly scrapping the list and will trade with Russia. That happened at the time of the 1929 slump when the capitalist powers saw a market in Russia. But this will not solve the problem. All it indicates is that the capitalist countries are in a desperate position for markets.

At all events, the economic policies of the different capitalist powers aimed at avoiding a slump will only exacerbate the problems in the long run and will only serve to make the slump deeper when it finally comes.

All this indicates the background to the situation which is developing in Europe and in the world. Capitalism is at an impasse. From a period of developing relatively the productive forces, it is now a reactionary brake against their development. This is the eve of great movements of the working class, of great developments everywhere. The working class is fresh, there have been no really serious defeats in any industrial country, nothing like the defeats that there were in the inter-war period in Germany, Spain, Italy, France and other countries. There will be an enormous change in the political situation, enormous movements of the working class.

Already, as a portent of the storm and stress ahead, we have had the movements in Scandinavia, Spain, France, Germany, Holland, Belgium, Canada, the US, Australia and so on—movements which, of course, are usually not reflected in the capitalist press. All these are a dress rehearsal for the future. Capitalism has held down the wages of the workers, but it will pay the price in future political and social upheavals. Even the reaction in France has failed to stem the tide. After eight months, faced with a movement of the students and workers, Chirac had to capitulate and make concessions temporarily to the students for fear of what would happen. Now in Spain, in reality, the socialist revolution has begun.

Of course, when these events unfold, always belatedly, the left reformists and possibly even the right reformists, will come forward and try to out-bid Marxism in their attacks on capitalism. In the last period there has been a virtual collapse in all the capitalist countries of left reformism. At the same time we have the collapse of the "Communist" Party reformists which are splitting in all directions at the present time.

In fact the crisis of capitalism has had peculiar consequences on reformism. The material basis of reformism, from its origins in the nineteenth century, has been, in periods of capitalist upswing, when reformist leaders could promote illusions in the "evolutionary" transformation of society. In previous crises of capitalism, the attempt to preserve their credentials under the pressure from below has driven reformist leaders to

the left.

This is what we might have expected in the present crisis, with a corresponding influx of workers into the socialist parties, including the development of the Stalinist parties where they are important, such as in Italy and France. Instead we have the peculiar fact, dialectically, that the crisis of capitalism is a real crisis of reformism, and above all a crisis of left reformism, as well.

Jeered

But this is explicable. The bourgeoisie as a whole jeered at the Marxists in the period of economic upswing. The Great God Keynes, they said, had solved all the problems; there would never again be difficulties under capitalism, never again unemployment, poverty and all those horrors of capitalism that we have seen during the last 10 or 15 years. The reformists based themselves on that perspective as well.

But now Keynesianism has completely collapsed, and all the problems it claimed to have solved have returned with a vengeance. The reformists, incapable of facing up to this, are stripped of any "theory" on the basis of which to promise reforms. They simply echo the economic ideas of the capitalists. On the right-wing, their programme becomes one of little more than counter-reforms. At the same time there is a complete rout of left reformism in all the main advanced capitalist countries.

But on the basis of future events, with enormous movements of the working class against capitalism, left reformism will arise again from all sorts of intellectuals, and workers' leaders as well, with demagogic appeals for socialism and so on—but without the fundamental programme for transforming society.

There will be revolutions in the under-developed world and revolutions in the West, that is inevitable. Every active worker must understand the situation in which they find themselves, understand the processes taking place in the world, not to be put off by a victory of Thatcher, of Chirac or whoever else it might be in Europe, not to be put off by a conservative reaction, because that will prepare an even greater reaction on the part of the working class.

In fact, this analysis shows that there is a world revolutionary process taking place simultaneously—a crisis in the underdeveloped world, a crisis in the Stalinist countries, and a crisis in the developed world also—an unprecedented situation in history which will prepare changes in the consciousness of the working class across the globe.

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