

JUNE 16

A day to remember

THE struggles by students against racist Bantu Education form part of the struggle for national liberation led by the working class.

On June 16, 1976 20 000 students started a peaceful march through Soweto to protest against Afrikaans being used as a medium of instruction in schools.

The reaction of the racist government was violent and direct. Over 600 people were killed while more than 3000 were arrested. Hundreds of our youth were maimed or had to flee into exile.

Thirteen years of bitter struggle have followed since then. Thousands of our people have died in ongoing state violence in South Africa.

Loss of lives

The working class has been drawn directly into this bitter struggle. It has suffered the loss of its sons and daughters. Along with the students, thousands of workers have been victims of the State and its collaborators.

In 1976 the youth of South Africa took the struggle against inferior education into their own hands. In doing so, they broadened the liberation struggle and attacked the very roots of oppression and exploitation.

In the last 13 years we have seen struggle and organisation develop in many areas.

The demands of the students include a free and equal "People's Education", the right to form democratic SRCs, an Education charter, the removal of racist and sexist forms of education; proper facilities and free books, improved facilities etc.

Why should workers involve themselves in the students demands? This is a question often asked, and because people have not been clear on it this sometimes leads to confusion and division.

The working class must recognise the sacrifices of our children and we must take forward the claims they have made for a proper system of education.

Parents and workers

Students have called on workers for their support in the struggle both as parents and as members of the working class.

The youth and students, on the other hand, have on many occasions offered their support and solidarity to workers such as in the Great Miners Strike of 1987 when student groups collected blankets and tins.

Sometimes there are problems and conflict between workers and students. We have to recognise this weakens the struggle as a whole and attempt to build unity among all sections of the African people.

For this unity to be built we have to understand the problems and differences in organising students on the one hand and wor-



The youth of today are the workers of tomorrow

Every June 16 hundreds of thousands of workers stay away from work. NUM is demanding June 16 as a paid public holiday on all mines. Why is it important for workers to support the education struggle?

kers on other. We must also see how important the education struggle is for workers, and the liberation of the working class and all of society.

Racist ideas

Education is important because of the skills it gives and because of the ideas people learn. In South Africa the content of education is that of the bosses and the racist government.

Our youth do not learn the history of the struggles against the early colonialists, of the great battles in the past, of the militant struggles of the people, and of the growth of the working class and organisations.

For the workers struggle it means that people only really learn about their past or the benefits of organisation when they join trade unions.

Education and knowledge must liberate us, it must allow us

to develop as human beings. At the moment in capitalist South Africa knowledge is used to oppress workers.

We are told our work is "manual" or unskilled labour and we do not deserve to get paid as much as "mental" or thinking people such as doctors or engineers. This is as if we do not work as hard. Or we do not think about our work while daily risking our lives.

In socialist countries this division between "mental" labour and "manual" labour is seen as false and people get paid according to their work.

The present education system is created for the purpose of keeping the working class in ideological bondage.

The education system is meant to teach only the ideas, values and ways of the ruling classes. But we know education is vital in the liberation struggle. Education must serve the interests of the vast majority of people.

call to workers to discuss constitution

The Guidelines suggest a unitary, democratic, non-racial state with the power belonging to the people as a whole and exercised through one central legislature, executive and administration.

For more efficient administration and democratic participation powers will be delegated by the central authority to subordinate administrative units. Universal suffrage based on one person one vote is advocated.

The people's government will strive to create a single national identity as South Africans above loyalties of race, ethnicity, religion, language and religion.

To encourage foster national unity, the government would have to carefully sketch a policy to counter all the remains of apartheid, especially the forces of ethnicity.

Government policy should aim to reach all the people in all areas, especially the rural areas where the bantustan system is presently rooted.

Bill Of Rights

The NUM congress noted under the brutal racist regime there is no guarantee of fundamental human rights of all citizens - indeed the majority is exploited.

The guidelines advocate a Bill of Rights guaranteeing the fundamental rights of the citizens and the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination.

The practice of racism and the encouraging of ethnic or regional exclusiveness or hatred will be punishable by law.

A multiparty system, the right to education, the protection of the right to work and social se-

curity are guaranteed. The Bill of Rights would be a means of enlarging people's freedoms in order to improve the quality of their lives.

Mixed economy

The economic policy advocated by the guidelines is a mixed economy. The State will ensure the entire economy serves the interests and well-being of all sections of the population.

Development policy will be the task of the State. There would be a public sector, private sector, co-operative sector and a small scale family sector.

The private sector shall be obliged to co-operate with the state in the realisation of the broad development goals of the country.

Racial ownership of land will be abolished through a pro-

gramme of land reform that will ensure that land is given to those who have a real need for it like victims of forced removals.

Workers' Charter

Recognising the leading role of the working class in our struggle for freedom and the building of a new society, the Guidelines suggest the inclusion of a Charter protecting worker's trade union rights, such as the right to strike and collective bargaining.

For the gender question, the guidelines advocate equal rights in all spheres of public and private life for women. The state has to ensure that inequalities and discrimination between the sexes is eliminated.

A free South Africa will be committed to the policy of non-alignment and the principles of the OAU Charter and the Char-

ter of the United Nations. A post apartheid S.A would declare its solidarity with the forces of national liberation, world peace and disarmament.

The oppressed people organised in their democratic structures have to participate in the process of mapping out our future constitution. The guidelines can be a basis for further discussion and enrichment.

Thus the guidelines have to be studied critically by the people for further development.

They have to be studied and criticised in the actual field of struggle for mobilisation and organisation against the apartheid system.

The guidelines should serve as a campaign to mobilise and organise the broad spectrum of all anti-apartheid forces.