



**MK's
armed
struggle**



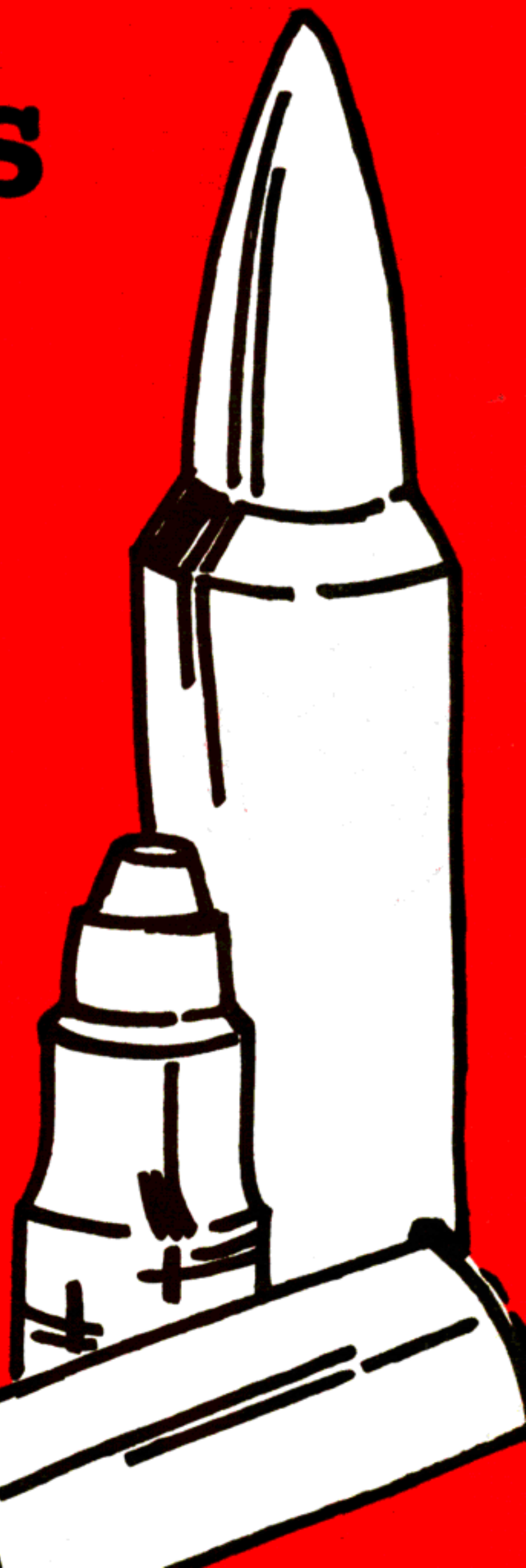
Angola



Maritzburg



Labour



Editorial

As this edition of *Work In Progress* was going to print the state effectively banned 17 organisations and an undisclosed number of individuals, and severely restricted the Congress of South African Trade Unions.

By doing this the government of State President PW Botha has escalated its ongoing war against the people of South and Southern Africa.

Precisely why the state chose to act this way at this time is not clear. Visible resistance to apartheid in the townships has declined under the burden of emergency rule, and popular political and community organisation has been severely weakened.

One possibility is that government is attempting to limit the massive resistance expected against the October local government elections, including the boycott call made by a number of those organisations effected by the latest clampdown.

But whatever the reason, there remains no excuse whatsoever for believing that 'reformers' within the state hold any power. If the distinction between 'militarists' and 'reformers' is real, then the militarists have so obviously won ascendancy that talk of 'reformers' wielding influence in government is absurd.

There is even less excuse for those elements which stubbornly hold to the belief that the Botha administration has a reform programme. There is no doubt that it has plans to change the face of South Africa. So did the Nationalist government of Verwoerd. But it was never suggested that this involved 'reform'. Change can be for the worse - and this is what the changes being made by Botha's militarists involve.

South Africa is a society at war. Government is at war with the majority of South Africans and Namibians, with the Angolan nation, and with the majority of frontline states.

In Natal, it seems unwilling or unable to use the might of its laws against the vigilante perpetrators of a bloody and enduring civil war.

On the labour front, its proposed amendment to the Labour Relations Act, combined with emergency restrictions on Cosatu, aim to close down trade union organisation or render it impotent. This war against the working class has another side, seen in Botha's new economic deal, the wage freeze and moves to privatise substantial areas of the public sector.

Many of the articles in this issue of *WIP* deal with facets of this war - from the ANC's armed struggle to Botha's economic war against the working class; from the Maritzburg civil war to allegations of riot police on the rampage in townships. Government's 24 February banning of organisations and individuals, and the restrictions on Cosatu activity, must be seen in this context of a society at war with itself.

During December 1987, Home Affairs Minister Stoffel Botha formally warned *WIP* that he was considering action against the publication in terms of emergency regulations. This could involve either closure for three months, or government pre-censorship of material.

However, the *New Nation* newspaper has challenged Botha's powers in a supreme court application, and it is unlikely that action against other publications will be taken until the results of this application are known. *Work In Progress* has every intention of surviving this, and other state initiatives to silence the progressive media.



MK and the armed struggle

The often-secret mechanics of Umkhonto we Sizwe, armed wing of the African National Congress, are under scrutiny in a Bethal court room. GLENN MOSS reports.

If security police claims can be believed, the most senior Umkhonto we Sizwe operative to be charged since Rivonia is currently on trial for his life.

In a Bethal court Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim, kidnapped from his Swaziland home on 15 December 1986, faces a charge of high treason together with two alleged ANC guerilla fighters, Acton Maseko and Simon Dladla.

The road from Ebrahim's small Natal birthplace of Eppingham nearly 51 years ago to a Bethal court room spans much of the history of ANC military activity. According to security police brigadier Jan Cronje, Ebrahim had joined Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) by early 1962. Two years later, he was jailed for 15 years for involvement in MK's first wave of sabotage.

Released from Robben Island in February 1979, he was immediately banned and restricted to Pinetown by the then minister of justice, Jimmy Kruger. Eighteen months later Ebrahim illegally left South Africa. He became one of the chief organisers of the ANC's military wing and, according to security police, served as chairman of the ANC's Swaziland Regional Political and Military Committee.

The state claims it has evidence of numerous clandestine missions Ebrahim undertook inside South Africa after his 1980 departure from the country. At the beginning of February 1985, for example, the ANC temporarily placed Ebrahim in charge of its Natal Political Machinery. To do this job, he re-entered South Africa and moved into a Durban

flat using the name Salim Areff.

Over the next three months, according to the state, he had extensive contact with Helene Passtoors. Passtoors is currently serving a ten-year sentence for her involvement in ANC activities, and allegedly operated as a courier for Ebrahim.

By June 1985, Passtoors was involved in 'Operation Mango', planned to assist Ebrahim to leave South Africa and attend the ANC's consultative conference at Kabwe. But her arrest on 28 June made it impossible to carry out 'Mango' on the date planned.

From 'armed propaganda' to 'people's war'

The ANC declared 1986 the year of the people's army, Umkhonto we Sizwe. Insurrectionary politics was on the agenda within South Africa, alternative township structures of street committees and people's courts were functioning in many areas, and the state was struggling to control, never mind govern, much of the country.

In an October Radio Freedom broadcast Chris Hani, at the time political commissar and deputy commander of MK, argued that 'the earlier forms of armed struggle were characterised by armed propaganda... Umkhonto we Sizwe attacked installations and personnel in order to push the ANC before the people of South Africa'. The next step forward, according to Hani, was 'the transformation of armed propaganda into a people's war'.

According to state allegations in the trial, Ebrahim's activities reflect the end of the 'armed propaganda period', and the move towards 'people's war'. For it is claimed he was a member of the structures which oversaw all ANC actions in Natal and the Transvaal between 1982 and 1986.

During 1982 and the first months of 1983, all ANC activities in Natal and the Transvaal were directed by a 'senior organ' of the ANC chaired by John Nkadimeng, with members including Chris Hani, Joe Slovo, Paul Dikeledi and Ebrahim. Examples of guerilla activity of this period provided by the state include the 28 May 1982 attack on fuel reservoirs at Hectorspruit, and a July 1982 attack on a Northern Cape power station.

In April 1984 the structure of the ANC in Swaziland changed, and the military and political machineries of the Transvaal and Natal were joined to form the Co-ordinating Committee. According to the state, this restructuring was necessary because the Nkomati Accord signed with Mozambique was hindering ANC activity in Swaziland.

This committee, appointed by Joe Slovo, was chaired by ANC Khumalo (a name used by senior operative Ronnie Kassrils), while Ebrahim served as secretary and treasurer. In December 1984 Ebrahim succeeded Kassrils as chairman of the Co-ordinating Committee.

Interestingly, the state alleges that between July 1984 and January 1985, no new ANC infiltration units were sent into South Africa from Swaziland, as there were at least 12 established ones operating in the Transvaal. These

included the Kelly Mabuza unit, which provides an example of MK activity undertaken during this period: on 16 June 1984 Mabuza, whose real name was George Ramudzulu, sabotaged the Bethal Magistrates' Court building. A home-made explosive device containing plastic explosives was used. Mabuza was killed in the explosion.

Another unit operating at the time was commanded by Justice Ngidi (codename Wally), and included Boitumelo Leepile (Little Dan) and Siphon Ngwenya. The detention and subsequent trial of members of Wally's unit, as it was called, had a bizarre sequel. Defence lawyers for Ngidi claimed he had been allowed to 'escape' from police custody, and was sent back to Swaziland on a mission to assassinate the head of the ANC's Transvaal Machinery. But when he reached Swaziland, ANC officials did not believe the story of his escape, and tried to kill him. He fled back to South Africa, was re-arrested, charged with treason, and eventually sentenced to eight years imprisonment, half of which was suspended.

According to Ebrahim, one of those who abducted him from Swaziland 'told me about an incident where a detainee by the name of Wally had escaped from a police vehicle... He said he was present when this happened and that the escape was a planned affair because they wanted Wally to be their agent'. But police denied they were involved in kidnapping Ebrahim from Swaziland.

In November 1985, ANC structures were again changed. The line of command was extended to include regional political military committees

operating in the frontline states of Swaziland, Lesotho, Botswana, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Ebrahim became chairman of the Swaziland Regional Political Military Committee (RPMC), under which the Natal and Transvaal implementation machineries fell.

'Apply mine warfare'

During April 1986, the Swaziland RPMC met to discuss an order received from ANC headquarters in Lusaka: 'apply mine warfare'. According to the state, Ebrahim instructed the implementation machineries to concentrate on farming communities, laying land mines on farms and farm roads.

The ANC argued that the use of land mines on white border farms was justified because the government had made them military zones, with white farmers a part of the state security system and provided with the tools of war.

In a January 1986 Radio Freedom broadcast, the ANC reaffirmed that it was not its policy to attack civilians or 'soft targets'. However, it was finding it difficult to distinguish between civilian targets and enemy personnel because the government had organised civilians into paramilitary units and was giving them combat training.

At a meeting of the Implementation Machineries, chaired by Paul Dikeledi, Acton Maseko was instructed to identify targets on farms in the Eastern Transvaal. He instructed Simon Dladla to undertake this task, and Ebrahim authorised the financial expenditure necessary for this reconnaissance.

On 21 April 1986, Maseko and Dladla laid land mines on

the farms Mooiplaas and Vlakfontein, near Breyten. In the subsequent explosions five farm workers were injured, a tractor and motor car destroyed and a trailer damaged.

Six weeks later, on 10 June, Maseko and Dladla placed land mines on roads of the Boshoeck and Bloemhof farms, in the Volksrust district. In the subsequent explosions, two farm workers and the son of a farmer were injured, and a lorry and tractor destroyed.

Subsequently Ebrahim instructed a trained ANC guerilla named Michael Molapo, but using his MK name of Clement, to infiltrate South Africa. According to the state, Clement was responsible for the following attacks:

- * the 5 July 1986 shooting of two Vosloorus Town Council police. One was killed in this attack, the other wounded;

- * an attack, also on 5 July, on a Katlehong petrol station owned by a town councillor;

- * the killing of three Katlehong municipal policemen, and wounding of nine others, on 6 July;

- * the killing of a black policeman, and wounding of a police informer, on 20 July in Katlehong.

On 26 July, Clement was shot and killed by members of the South African police.

The move from armed propaganda to 'people's war' was clear.

The kidnapping

South African political refugees have never been that safe in Swaziland. In August 1964, Rosemary Wentzel was kidnapped from a Swaziland village, driven into South Africa, and then 'arrested' by South African police at a road block near Ermelo.

ANC members Joseph Nduli and Cleopas Ndlovu were similarly abducted from Swaziland in the mid-1970s, detained, charged with 'terrorism', and finally sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

And prominent refugees in Swaziland have been shot at, received parcel bombs, and been blown up by car bombs.

In the Nduli and Ndlovu case, a judge of the Natal Supreme Court ruled that he had jurisdiction to try the men, even if they had been illegally abducted. They appealed against this decision, but a full bench of the Appellate Division decided that unless Nduli and Ndlovu could show the state had authorised their abduction, they had no valid grounds for demanding return to Swaziland. Even if members of the police were involved in the kidnapping, ruled the court of appeal, this made no difference unless state authorisation could be proved.

There is no dispute that Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim was kidnapped from Swaziland on the night of 15 December 1986, and taken to the security police's Compol building in Pretoria.

Neither is there any dispute that just before the kidnapping a young Swiss couple, apparently renting a house previously used by senior ANC personnel, were abducted to South Africa, detained by police, and then returned to Swaziland after interrogation.

There is also no doubt that after the Ebrahim kidnapping, Paul Dikeledi, whom the state alleges was a close military colleague of Ebrahim's, was assassinated in Swaziland together with ANC National Executive Committee member

Cassius Make.

What is in dispute is who was responsible.

Ebrahim has stated that it was members of the South African police who forcibly abducted him from Swaziland. He points out that his interrogation started while he was in a car with his abductors, before his arrival in Pretoria; that cars driven by the kidnapers passed through an army road block with no difficulty; and that leg irons and hand cuffs put on him by his abductors in Swaziland were opened with keys in the possession of Pretoria security police.

Police deny involvement in the abduction. They claim Ebrahim was delivered to security police offices in Pretoria by unknown men. And a supreme court judge has ruled that regardless of the kidnapping, Ebrahim can be tried in a South African court.

South African newspapers have speculated that a key ANC intelligence agent was abducted from a Swaziland police cell earlier in 1986, and was 'turned' while in detention. They further speculate that information provided by him was responsible for the abduction of Ebrahim, the assassinations of Dikeledi and Make, and the activities of agents operating against ANC personnel in Swaziland.

Whatever the accuracy of these speculations, it is true that an ex-ANC member is, as *WIP* goes to press, testifying against Ebrahim in a Bethal court. Witness 'X1' has already given extensive and detailed evidence about ANC military activities of the past few years. But by court order his name may not be revealed, nor may anything be published which could reveal his identity.



Inkatha youths talk 'peace'

Into the valley of death

The situation in townships around Pietermaritzburg can only be aggravated by the state's decision to ban the UDF and restrict its president, Archie Gumede. But even before this action there seemed little hope of ending one of South Africa's longest and bloodiest regional conflicts. DAVID NIDDRIE reports.

The real death toll in the Maritzburg conflict will probably never be known. But as fighting in the townships around the Natal capital entered its tenth month in February this year, the government had recorded 300 dead.

Local monitoring groups say the figure was closer to 400 - but even the official figure makes the Maritzburg fighting

the most vicious and sustained regional conflict in South Africa's recent history. When Cape Town's Crossroads erupted into the murderous witdoek-comrade clashes of 1986, 52 people died; Maritzburg, by comparison, has recorded a higher body count every month since September. And each of those months recorded a higher toll than the

last - in January alone, 108 people were killed.

Much has been written and broadcast by the national and foreign media, but very little has gone beyond the conflict's most obvious causes.

Even some of those well-disposed towards Inkatha - the mayor of Maritzburg, the local chamber of commerce and some individuals linked to the

Natal Indaba - accept that the explosion of violence from last September is largely the result of a membership drive by Chief Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi's organisation. They also accept that the continuation of the conflict can be attributed mainly to Inkatha or elements within it.

Inkatha denies all blame. But identifying the source does not explain why the Maritzburg fighting has continued with such intensity for so long; why it has in fact escalated steadily for the past five months; and why it shows every sign of continuing to do so.

The answer lies outside the battlelines of the conflict.

Where it began

If the fighting has a definable starting point, it is probably the nationwide protest on 5 and 6 May 1987 against the whites-only general election. The UDF and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) called for a stayaway in protest against the election; Buthelezi prorogued the Kwa-zulu Legislative Assembly and told MPs to go back to their constituencies and campaign against the stayaway.

Well over 90% of Maritzburg's 400 000 township residents responded to call, with support in Durban only slightly lower. These stayaway figures were among the highest in the country and came despite Inkatha's active opposition.

In any terms the stayaway was a defeat for Inkatha and Buthelezi himself. And it came shortly after he confidently asserted: 'In places such as the Transvaal and Natal, trade unions will simply not be able to stage a general strike without the full involve-

ment of Inkatha'.

Trade unions, combined with a popular organisation drawing on a constituency Inkatha claims as its own, had staged a highly-successful two-day general strike. On a purely political issue, they drew more than two million people into the biggest political strike South Africa has ever experienced. More importantly, they found some of their strongest support on Buthelezi's turf.

Buthelezi blamed bus drivers organised by Cosatu's Transport and General Workers Union (T&G) for the size of the Maritzburg stayaway. Most surrounding townships have no SA Transport Services trains, and rely almost entirely either on Maritzburg's municipal buses or those of the Sizanani Mazulu bus company.

The conflict has taken a heavy toll on Maritzburg's bus drivers: 12 T&G members have died since last May and at least nine have been detained by South African security forces. Three drivers belonging to Inkatha's United Workers Union of South Africa (Uwusa) have also been killed. Other drivers have been extremely lucky to survive ambushes and attacks on their buses as they wind their way along the Edendale valley south of Maritzburg, unarmed and without escorts for up to four hours.

Since early January, drivers belonging to T&G have faced additional pressure from the management of Sizanani. In turn, the company is under pressure from the Kwazulu government, a Sizanani shareholder.

The first public evidence of these dynamics came after the killing of union activist Phineas Mdluli. While driving his bus on the afternoon of 16

January, Mdluli was chased by men in two cars. He managed to avoid a makeshift roadblock but was forced off the road and shot dead at the wheel. His four elderly passengers have as yet refused to come forward as witnesses to the murder.

As with most incidents in Maritzburg, there are conflicting reports of events. Police said Mdluli's bus was carrying a 'mob' at the time of his death. T&G angrily denies this, offering an audit of his route and ticket sales as proof. Local residents identified one of the cars involved as belonging to a local Inkatha official.

Mdluli was the eleventh T&G fatality and on 17 January the 160 Sizanani drivers went on strike. They returned to work a day later but refused to drive before 5 am or after 5 pm. In solidarity, municipal bus drivers did the same. Sizanani management threatened to dismiss anyone refusing to work normal shifts, but would not offer the drivers any protection.

The drivers put forward a series of demands: improved protection (bullet proofing for driver cabs and two-way radios on all buses); that the company contact the police to urge the arrest of specific suspects; and that management convene a meeting between the union and local Inkatha figures. The union also protested at an invasion of Sizanani's bus depot during the strike by these Inkatha 'chiefs' and their armed supporters.

The drivers saw the invasion - although it proceeded without violence - as part of a sustained campaign to force the union out of Sizanani, a campaign they say included attempts to enforce a bus boycott.

For three days after the strike, SA Defence Force vehicles escorted buses through the main conflict area, Zone 4. But T&G charged that police vehicles which replaced SADF escorts were inadequate: '(They) followed for about 1 km then withdrew ... they were nowhere to be seen on the bus routes'.

Police absence from potential and actual trouble spots has characterised the entire Maritzburg conflict. Police have also failed to carry through prosecutions against individuals explicitly linked to violent crimes, say lawyers monitoring the conflict.

The issue of protection for bus drivers is unresolved. Sizanani driver Patrick Magwasa was shot and wounded a week after Mdluli's death. He died a week later and in the confusion that followed, five drivers were dismissed for failing to book in on time.

In subsequent negotiations, Sizanani executives suggested that T&G's hostility to Inkatha officials was 'creating some problems'. Company executives warned that should the situation not stabilise (if disruptions caused by strikes did not end), Sizanani's Road Transportation Board permit might be cancelled. The disruptions were also jeopardising their negotiations to take over the municipal bus company's operation, they said.

And while company executives were unable to set up a meeting with the 'chiefs', they acknowledged that they had already had extensive contact with them, specifically with David Ntombela. This contact included discussion of the chiefs' accusations that 'T&G is seen as Cosatu ... Cosatu is affiliated to the UDF and sympathetic to the ANC'. In court

affidavits, Ntombela has been linked to several of Maritzburg's more gruesome killings.

Indirectly, Sizanani executives indicated their belief that Inkatha 'chiefs' were responsible for killing some of the drivers, adding that these murders had been carried out 'in retaliation'. Ntombela had accused T&G of killing Uwusa and Inkatha members, they said.

They had talked to Ntombela, they said, but he flatly refused to meet the union. Instead he demanded that the bus service withdraw from Zone 4. The 'chiefs' wanted no compromise, the executives added: they wanted the police to withdraw from the area so the two sides could 'sort each other out'.

These discussions were truly remarkable. Company executives asserted that the murder of 14 of their employees, *because they worked for Sizanani*, was somehow divorced from the disruption of the bus service. They were also prepared to threaten the drivers over their attempts to stop the killings. And they seemed content to debate the relative justifications of the murder of Uwusa/Inkatha and T&G members.

Coming from a relatively neutral source, they also strongly contradict Inkatha's public commitment to ending the fighting by negotiation.

The hows and whys

T&G's experience, a small part of the greater conflict, is important. Firstly, unionised drivers are an explicitly organisational target at a time when Inkatha and parts of the media are publicly attempting to redefine the Maritzburg conflict as 'non-political' and

non-organisational.

Secondly, it vividly demonstrates the two-pronged strategy widely attributed to Inkatha by its rivals. They accuse Inkatha of backing actual or threatened physical attacks with bureaucratic or administrative coercion. Usually, they say, this coercion takes the form of offering or withholding services - pensions, housing, admission to school, among others - to enforce support for Inkatha or to weaken its rivals. At Sizanani, it has meant undercutting the union's relationship with management. The tactic has been partially successful: since Magwasa's death, 19 drivers have resigned.

Elsewhere in Maritzburg, Inkatha has been unable to use direct administrative control to enforce membership of Inkatha. The reason is rooted in the structure of Maritzburg's townships and the way the conflict raging within them - differ from the sites of other Inkatha-UDF-Cosatu conflicts.

The five Maritzburg townships are administered by five different authorities - only one falls under the Kwazulu bantustan authority. Without its normal 'bureaucratic access routes' through Kwazulu control of township administration, Inkatha was forced to rely almost entirely on the other wing of its two-prong strategy, argues Natal academic Nkosinathi Gwala. To gain control of the whole community, it had to attack the whole community.

Many of the early killings fit this assessment: they came during apparently random attacks intended to frighten individuals and communities. Maritzburg mayor Mark Cornell, a former New Republic

Party member, suggested at the time: 'If Inkatha had wanted to make friends, they should have gone and helped the people (after the Natal floods) instead of going to them at three o'clock in the morning and saying sign this (membership) card or we'll kill you'.

With Maritzburg's Plessislaer police station run from Pretoria by the SAP rather than from Ulundi by Kwazulu police (ZP), local policemen - living in the townships - were not excluded from this process. A number of them, as well as locally-resident prison warders, reacted angrily to recruitment-drive threats.

The most vivid example is the massacre of 13 young Inkatha activists on 16 September. Apparently the 13 were part of a group which had unsuccessfully tried to force a policeman to join Inkatha. When he and two colleagues were warned that the group planned to attack him, they launched a pre-emptive strike.

They surrounded and set fire to the house where the Inkatha group was meeting, and shot all those who attempted to escape.

The incident was followed by a rash of stories painting an almost-certainly romanticised picture of local police and youth groupings standing shoulder-to-shoulder to fight off Inkatha. There are a number of documented cases of passive support by individual black policemen for Inkatha victims and community organisations, but generally the stories appear to be based more on wishful thinking than on reality.

But it was all alarming enough to persuade Pretoria to call in predominantly-white, Pretoria-based riot units in



Gladys Sangweni stands in the remains of what was her home.

October - the first of several waves of police and defence force reinforcements sent into the area.

Their arrival, however, did little to change what appears to have been the dominant police tactic throughout: to contain the fighting rather than to stop it. Maritzburg SAP security chief Jack Buch-

ner, who runs the SAP operation, said shortly after the arrival of the riot squads that they functioned as a 'reaction unit', reacting to violence rather than pre-empting it.

The arrival of two subsequent waves of security force reinforcements have not changed this aspect of police tactics. There are, however,

other key elements of police involvement in the conflict:

* The vast majority of the approximately 1 000 state of emergency and security detainees held in Maritzburg are linked to either the UDF or to Cosatu and its affiliates. Peter Kershof of the Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness (Pacsa), says not one single detainee is identifiably linked to Inkatha, despite Inkatha's obvious role in the conflict.

* There are widespread accusations of police witnessing assaults and killings, but taking no action. According to affidavits handed to the Maritzburg Supreme Court - to back a 12 February application restraining specific Inkatha officials from assaulting or threatening to kill members of the community - SAP, defence force and ZP vehicles escorted an Inkatha convoy into Ashdown township on Sunday, 31 January. That weekend, 11 people were killed - most of them in Ashdown or nearby Sweetwaters.

Large groups of armed men, many of them wearing Inkatha uniforms or badges, rampaged through the township, setting fire to houses and attacking residents.

In replying affidavits, Inkatha central committee member Vitus Mvelase acknowledged these attacks, but said the police had not disarmed the attackers 'because they (the attackers) had been provoked beyond endurance'.

Other affidavits spoke of police intervention only when residents of Ashdown tried to defend themselves.

Earlier in the conflict, affidavits supporting similar applications referred to the use of a police firearm by an Inkatha official.

* Police have also failed to follow through or even initiate legal action against individuals identified by numerous witnesses as participants or initiators of assaults, arson and killing. Seven Inkatha branch chairmen in Maritzburg have been identified in affidavits as participating in violence. None has faced criminal action. The only court actions against them have been applications to restrain them from further assaults.

The most recent vivid example of this trend has been the case of Johannes Nkomo. A 70-year-old Inkatha member, Nkomo fell foul of the organisation because of his son's support for the UDF.

In an affidavit supporting the 12 February applications, Nkomo detailed assaults on himself, arson attacks on his home and attacks on his wife. He named the two men who lead the attacks and carried out the assaults.

Before giving the affidavit, Nkomo reported the incidents to local Inkatha officials who took no action. He and his wife laid complaints with the police on 3 February. By the time the application reached court, they had taken no action.

In his affidavit Nkomo said he was 'living in fear that the Inkatha warriors will again attack our community'.

The affidavit was handed to court on Friday, 12 February. In a replying affidavit Mvelase said he had no knowledge of the allegations, and denied that Inkatha would attack again.

On Sunday, 14 February, an armed gang broke into the house, slaughtered Nkomo and injured his wife and his daughter, Nomabheka Nkomo.

Ms Nkomo detailed the attack in a separate affidavit and identified those who stabbed her and killed her father. The affidavit was handed to court three days later, and although lawyers had offered it to the recently-created Maritzburg unrest investigation unit, it had not been collected by then.

And at the time of writing, Mahlamvana Ndlovu - identified by both father and daughter - had not yet been arrested.

The Maritzburg conflict has offered up dozens of such examples, and lawyers have offered dozens to the courts to back up restraining orders. In the rare cases where Inkatha members were arrested, court testimony says a number were almost immediately released.

A day after Nkomo's murder, Judge Page - hearing an application to restrain Inkatha officials - summoned Natal Deputy Attorney-General Les Roberts to appear before him. The judge demanded to know what was being done about allegations in the affidavits given to the court.

Roberts assured him all allegations contained in the court papers were being investigated.

A day later, Judge Wilson - hearing a separate application - also summoned Roberts who, according to *Sapa*, gave the same assurance.

But Roberts also referred to 'the difficulty police are having in tracing witnesses as they are in hiding' - an increasingly routine explanation for police failure to bring charges.

The major exception to this was the jailing of 43 members of an Inkatha-linked vigilante squad early this month for attending an illegal gathering. This 'illegal gathering' con-

sisted of taking the conflict into central Maritzburg armed with pangas, knives and sticks. Some eye-witnesses said they were trying to reach Cosatu's local office, but were sidetracked along the way. Three people were injured in subsequent street fighting.

Charges of public violence were dropped when the 43 appeared in court on 9 February. During the trial, defence lawyers said the men believed they were going to protect Inkatha members under attack by UDF supporters.

The incident is exceptional: it took place in Maritzburg's 'white' business district and thus could not be ignored.

Seen against this background the belief about police involvement long held by Cosatu and UDF officials and members, and by many in the Maritzburg community, is difficult to reject: that police action is intended primarily to contain the fighting within the townships - and in the townships police act mainly when the wrong side gains the upper hand.

A perspective from which the police action can be explained was outlined early this year on SABC's Network programme by the man overseeing the SAP operation, Maritzburg security chief Jack Buchner.

Police were aiming to impose peace in Maritzburg's townships, he said. They would then 'return' control to 'traditional leaders' and 'parents'. Whatever Buchner's personal attitude, this translates as 'returning' to Inkatha a control it did not exercise in the first place.

Roots of the conflict

Maritzburg's townships have

been less seriously affected, where they have been affected at all, by many of the country's post-1975 upheavals.

Afrikaans-medium instruction in Bantu Education schools, the immediate spark for the 1976 uprisings, was of little concern in Maritzburg's African schools. At the time they were being taken over by Kwazulu, under which Afrikaans-medium instruction was not an issue. And Buthelezi was a less contentious figure - his first confrontation with Natal scholars lay three years in the future.

Similarly, in 1984 the massive upsurge of resistance against rents and local authorities found only partial resonance in Maritzburg. Only in Sobantu was there an immediate and strong response - the community council resigned under community pressure.

Of Maritzburg's other townships only Imbali (Stage 1 and 2) has a community council, controlled by Inkatha. Attempts to establish a council in Ashdown collapsed in 1983. Only one candidate could be found in the entire township. Imbali stage 13 is administered by Pretoria through a liaison committee. And as a peri-urban area, Vulindlela falls under the control of Kwazulu through local chiefs.

By 1984 neither Inkatha nor UDF could claim dominance in the area. Organisationally, the major political presence was among the youth, for whom education and unemployment were central issues.

The trade union movement, organising in response to issues cutting across the specifics of Maritzburg's townships, advanced far more rapidly. The first mass community action was sparked by a community issue - residents staged

a highly-successful stayaway to protest the dismissal of BTR Sarmcol workers who had battled for four years to win recognition of the Metal and Allied Workers Union (Mawu).

This was followed immediately by a consumer boycott, jointly backed by the UDF and Fosatu (shortly to merge into Cosatu), and opposed by Ulundi.

The first mass political rally in Maritzburg since the 1950s took place on May Day in 1986 - the day Buthelezi showed his concern at the unions' increasingly vigorous intervention in Natal's daily life by launching Uwusa.

The situation was moving steadily towards a clash. Mawu officials were murdered at Mpophomeni, home of most of the Sarmcol strikers. Then Sarmcol decided to recognise Uwusa at its Howick plant. In Maritzburg, political organisation expanded but remained largely the domain of the youth.

Then came the anti-election stayaway. Sporadic killings and skirmishes escalated into the bloody war which exploded across Maritzburg in August and September.

Imbali's Inkatha MP, Velaphi Ndlovu, maintains the conflict resulted from a UDF membership drive. But political developments had lagged behind those elsewhere, and there were no civic or adult affiliates for UDF activists to force residents to join. 'How could we recruit people into organisations that didn't exist?' asked an Edendale Youth League official last November.

But there is strong evidence to back up the counter-claim of an Inkatha membership drive. Before he was detained



Inkatha leaders Velaphi Ndlovu, member of Kwazulu Legislative Assembly (left) and VV Mvelase, Kwazulu assistant urban representative for Imball Township.

in November, Siphwe Khanyile of Pacsa referred to a church meeting in Mpumaza at the actual start of the conflict. During the meeting a local chief announced that 'everyone must join Inkatha ... and woe unto them if they don't'.

'The next Tuesday a mother and son who didn't want to join Inkatha were killed', says Khanyile. Opposition to membership of Inkatha went beyond ideological hostility. 'It cost a lot of money - parents had to pay R5, and students R2'.

Maritzburg's war had begun. Hundreds of township residents were forced to sleep in the open, or not sleep at all, to avoid attacks. Maritzburg's business community immediately began to feel the impact

of the conflict, experiencing plummeting production and rocketing absenteeism.

At first Buthelezi defined the conflict as Inkatha 'retaliation', without explaining what the retaliation was in response to. But later, replying to a *Weekly Mail* query on enforced membership, he said: 'The kind of coercion alleged ... is strictly contrary to the dictates of the movement ... Inkatha leadership would not tolerate such behaviour'.

Whether it would or not, by January this year both Buthelezi and the Inkatha Institute's Gavin Woods had changed their analysis of the underlying cause of the conflict.

Buthelezi's new analysis was that the causes were socio-economic. Although his

assessment of the Maritzburg conflict included charges against the ANC, UDF and Cosatu, he added: 'The area has, for many years, had an extremely high rate of unemployment and crime and I believe it is relevant that - for the most part - it is in depressed areas where violence is taking place'.

In a *Daily News* article, Woods backed this up by referring to a survey carried out by the Institute which 'found that the majority of killings in Maritzburg townships are not politically motivated at all'. Almost 90% of the Institute's survey's sample believed Inkatha-UDF rivalry was *not* a vital component. Instead, researchers operating under 'a qualified sociologist' found 'economic depression

on such a scale to make this *the* most significant factor in the unrest'. Woods appeared to suggest that a massive influx of work-seekers had exploded unemployment in the past two years from 30% to 85%.

But Woods has not made the actual research available and the sociologist has declined to be interviewed. So the answer as to how 'economic depression' of itself can motivate groups of people to slaughter 400 others, remains a secret.

But the implications of Buthelezi's statement and the Institute's 'findings' are clear: apartheid and big business (Inkatha's increasingly restive allies in the Indaba) are the villains ... so why blame Inkatha?

By this argument, economic depression murdered 50 people in the first eight months of last year - at the rate of two UDF or Cosatu supporters to every Inkatha supporter. In September and October it killed more than 100 in a similar ratio. This ratio was distorted by the massacre of the 13 Inkatha youths in KwaShange; without it the ratio was closer to 4:1.

In September and October around 50 people of no known political persuasion were killed. In November and December the numbers in this category rose to about 100, while the real ratio of UDF-Cosatu:Inkatha deaths dropped to about 2:1. In total about 160 people died in the fighting in November and December.

Some idea of the ebb and flow of fighting can be drawn from those stark statistics.

Defence committees

In September, the sporadic clashes between political ac-

tivists in and around Maritzburg exploded into a murderous onslaught directed indiscriminately at the community as a whole. But the attackers singled out UDF and Cosatu loyalists, killing more than at any other stage in the fighting, before or since. Inkatha also suffered casualties, although not yet seriously, from groups identifying with UDF and Cosatu.

By November the fighting spread into the semi-rural areas around Maritzburg. Random killings and deaths of 'political unknowns' accounted for well over half the victims. But, as young UDF affiliates began to draw communities into defence committees, Inkatha suffered more casualties. The tide was beginning to turn.

Both sides continued to attack soft targets: that is, non-combatants who nevertheless had clearly identifiable political loyalties.

A joint Cosatu-UDF statement in October called on members and supporters to organise themselves against violence and vigilantes, rather than direct their anger at people on the basis of their Inkatha membership. At the same time, the peace talks began.

Possibly attempting to stem the gradually turning tide, vigilantes increased their attacks on T&G bus drivers in mid-January. These attacks, as well as the incursion into central Maritzburg and the invasion of Ashdown, were part of an Inkatha counter-attack called 'Operation Doom', Cosatu and UDF said afterwards.

The 31 January Ashdown invasion followed an Inkatha mass prayer meeting in Sweetwaters. Many of the reported 15 000-strong crowd arrived

bearing arms.

At least 11 people died in the hours following the prayer meeting as hundreds of Inkatha supporters swept through Sweetwaters and into Ashdown - a township which had loosened Inkatha's grip on it during an upsurge in fighting over Christmas and New Year.

The next day, Ashdown residents stayed at home to avoid vigilante roadblocks set up in and around the township. Cosatu warned the chamber of commerce that workers could not come to work. The chamber contacted the local MP to approach the ministers of justice and law and order. Announcing that UDF-Cosatu elements were 'clearly winning the war', Mayor Cornell flew off to Cape Town to demand that the government send in the army.

Whatever else these events show, they are clearly not part of a non-political conflict. Nor are the battles being fought, as Woods suggests, by 'a generation (alienated by appalling poverty and hopeless unemployment) who have little ideological motivation but find an outlet for their frustrations in anti-social mayhem'.

The conflict has obviously been fed by chronic unemployment and bitter poverty in Maritzburg's townships. This is also true for conflict elsewhere in the country. And obviously not all the killing, maiming, looting and destruction has been carried out for purely political reasons.

Chronic unemployment and poverty are not unique to Maritzburg, Crossroads or any other South African township ripped apart by violence. And Maritzburg's townships are not the worst hit by 'economic depression'. The source of the conflict and the reasons for its

ferocity and duration must be found elsewhere.

Inkatha on the defensive

The challenge Maritzburg's townships pose to Buthelezi's claim to unquestioned leadership of 'the Zulus' is also a direct challenge to one of the foundation stones of the Natal Indaba.

Through the Indaba, big business has for the first time allied itself *as big business* with a black political organisation.

Buthelezi was a godsend for big business: a 'moderate' African leader, 'supporting and willing to defend capitalism by force', says Gerry Marè, co-

author of the recently published analysis of Buthelezi and Inkatha, *An Appetite for Power*.

Tony Ardington of the SA Cane Growers' Association said, in the run-up to the Indaba, that white Natal should 'act quickly to ensure that the asset (Buthelezi) and the opportunity are not lost'.

Nor is the asset - or the Indaba initiative - purely regional. Many of the business interests in the Indaba are merely regional representatives of national and international corporations.

Spokesmen for the Indaba have explicitly posed the initiative towards multi-racial

regional government as a blue-print to be copied.

But before the initiative can be taken into the national arena, its regional base - and thus that of Buthelezi, its regional prime minister - needed to be secured.

For Buthelezi this need to break out of a predominantly bantustan base long pre-dated the Indaba. Inkatha's earlier relationship with the ANC might have promised the possibility of developing into a major national force. But the break with the ANC following Natal school boycotts in 1979 closed off that route. A year later the Buthelezi Commission opened up another -



Inkatha vigilantes

raising the possibility of a combined Kwazulu-Natal regional authority.

The Indaba, leaning heavily on the commission's findings, followed two years after the commission published its findings. In alliance with big business - which recognised a good thing when it saw one - and amid encouraging noises from the British and, initially, the Americans, Buthelezi began tailoring for himself a suit fit for a regional prime minister. From there, the road to the premiership of a federal South Africa - in which 'Zulu' Natal would obviously be the dominant ethno-geographic area - was open.

But this plan needed a number of things to be settled first: Buthelezi had to demonstrate that he did speak for, or at least control, the region's African population - the '6-million Zulus'. Thus Inkatha's early hostility towards the UDF (competing for the same mass constituency) and Cosatu (as a class-specific organisation, undercutting the basis of Inkatha's populist appeal).

The 400 000-strong Maritzburg election stayaway proved that Natal's second-largest community visibly rejected the Indaba's basic thesis - that Buthelezi could deliver a placid black Natal into a moderate alliance. Other forces were contending, clearly with some success, for influence. Inkatha did not stand alone for the '6-million Zulus'.

Peace talks break down

Cosatu and UDF's acceptance and encouragement of the chamber of commerce's offer to mediate as an honest broker in Maritzburg won

them a tactical advantage which could outlive the conflict.

When the fighting began both the local business community and the local media tended to follow interpretations of the conflict from 'their' man. This soon became very difficult for the media, as evidence of Inkatha's central role mounted. References to 'a mysterious third force' and 'criminal elements' began to appear.

But the business community, faced with plummeting productivity and extensive absenteeism, wanted a solution. They offered themselves as arbitrators.

As peace talks continued the business community began to realise 'their' man was less convinced of the need to end the fighting than the 'radicals'.

By mid-January the possibility of a negotiated settlement was rapidly vanishing. Chamber of Commerce Manager Paul van Uytrecht effectively admitted this, saying: 'We hope we can persuade Inkatha that negotiations are still fruitful'.

A month earlier, two days before one negotiating session broke down, Buthelezi had told Maritzburg Mayor Cornell publicly that UDF and Cosatu should not be afforded the status of organisations with which to negotiate.

As the talks struggled into the new year, Buthelezi again publicly rejected the possibility of settlement - telling one journalist he fully endorsed the view of Inkatha Youth Brigade chairman Musa Zondi that it was futile to continue peace talks.

The negotiations organised by the chamber were a problem for Buthelezi for precisely

the same reason that they were ideal for Cosatu and UDF - because they were an entirely regional affair. They also came at a very inconvenient time for his supporters - they were losing the fighting.

Buthelezi had been more enthusiastic about earlier initiatives by Anglican archbishop Desmond Tutu and UDF national president Archie Gumede. A peace jointly negotiated with an internationally revered cleric and the president of a national organisation would have given acknowledgement of Buthelezi's status as a national political figure.

A settlement locally negotiated with regional officials would have decisively reinforced what the anti-election stayaway announced: that Inkatha is just one contending force among many in one area of one province.

From this perspective, 'Operation Doom' was a success: militarily it seized the initiative, and brought in hundreds more police without, apparently, affecting Inkatha's capacity to continue its 'self defence'; it hammered the final nail into the coffin of locally-based peace talks; it forced back on to the agenda the possibility of a nationally-negotiated end to the conflict.

But 'Operation Doom' has not ended the war, nor eased the growing discomfort among Inkatha's allies. The conflict has extracted a substantial cost from them - both financially and in its effects on the communities from which Maritzburg's commerce and industry draw their labour.

Commitment to the Indaba may remain. But for many, the earlier, heady enthusiasm has been blunted.



Curbing union power

Despite state attempts to restrict Cosatu to 'trade union activity only', the Labour Relations Amendment Bill - and the battle to stop its approval by parliament - will no doubt become a major political issue during 1988.

The bill is the most serious legal threat to the gains and stature of an assertive and still-militant trade union movement. And the interests which drafted it will not easily surrender its key proposals - precisely because they see those gains and that stature as a real and immediate threat.

The bill has come to the fore now because the pure power of organised workers has, in the space of just one year, exploded out of its threatened potential into

Whatever else develops within the trade union movement this year, the Labour Relations Amendment Bill, together with new restrictions on Cosatu, will be the central labour relations issues.
GREG RUITERS and DAVID NIDDRIE report.

the beginnings of a real threat.

This change was most clearly shown by the huge eruption of strike action in 1987: 9-million work-days were lost last year, as opposed to only 1,3-million lost in 1986.

For every one day lost through strikes in 1986, there was a full week lost last year.

But last year's convulsion of worker militancy is only one factor among many which have virtually guaranteed repressive measures from President PW Botha's government. Each factor alone necessitated a serious government re-assessment of labour relations policies. Combined, they resulted in the bill.

The statistics of industrial action over the past two years demonstrate these factors vividly:

- Almost 40% of South Africa's economically-active population belongs to trade unions, making this country substantially more unionised than most West European and North American countries. And the proportion of union members is growing faster than anywhere else in the world,

says Cosatu General Secretary Jay Naidoo.

- In 1986 the economy lost three times as much work-time through political stayaways than it did through strikes and related industrial action.

Last year that proportion turned around dramatically: industrial relations consultant Andrew Levy says that in 1987 strikes cost the economy eight times as much work time as political stayaways, (despite the 5 and 6 May anti-election stayaway, probably the biggest purely political strike in South Africa's history).

At first sight, this suggests a drastic switch from 'political' action directly challenging the state to 'economic' action affecting only employers.

But it has obviously suggested something far more serious to both state and employers. For Cosatu, now embracing over a million workers, continues to take an explicitly political stance.

When the state rallied and counter-attacked with the second state of emergency in 1986, it left the United Democratic Front bloodied and weakened. In 1987, instead of experiencing a comparable drain of energy, unions oversaw an outburst of worker anger, militancy and energy that dwarfed anything before it. With Cosatu pushed to the fore by the weakening of the UDF, activities were defined mainly by the unions, and strongly reflected worker experiences.

- This worker upsurge cannot be accounted for purely as a result of the peaks of 1987 industrial action - the mines' strike, the SA Transport Services' strike and the series of actions in which the Post Office and Telecommunications Workers' Association (Potwa) ambushed a totally unprepared postal service. The miners' strike alone lost mining corporations four times as many work-days as were lost to the entire economy

during the previous year.

The postal and SATS strikes combined to lose the post office and railways almost 1,4-million work-days - also more than the entire economy lost in 1986.

Even excluding these strikes, work-days lost in 1987 more than doubled the 1986 figure. And Andrew Levy has identified food and chemicals as the most strike-prone industries, rather than mining and the public sectors, which come in third and fourth respectively.

- The peaks of 1987 industrial action also overshadow another vital factor - the huge increase in the number of multi-plant strikes. In 1986 Levy estimated the 'number of strikes involving more than one location' at 3,8% of all strikes that year. Last year one in ten of all strikes was a multi-plant strike.

This appears to reflect a growing perception within unions of the necessity of tailoring their response to the implications of increasingly centralised ownership of the economy. It also reflects an increasing willingness by workers and their unions to take actions which are not in their own immediate interests, through sympathy and solidarity stoppages.

Where single-plant strikes enable bosses to switch production to other plants with relative ease, multi-plant or industry-wide strikes, or those covering all workers of one company make this far more difficult.

- The sheer size of last year's strikes has also hidden another factor - that for every strike, there were two go-slows, overtime bans or stoppages.

- Finally, there was the impact of Cosatu's Living Wage Campaign. Although its effects on the labour movement and workers generally cannot be broken down into statistics, the campaign clearly struck a chord in the country's

working class. It found a resonance within Cosatu itself, in other unions and in community organisations. Jay Naidoo acknowledged, at last year's Cosatu congress, that the campaign had been 'severely handicapped by poor union participation'. But its success in distilling into just two words - 'living wage' - the policy thrust of the entire union movement undoubtedly fed the wave of worker militancy and the flood of new members into Cosatu - averaging last year 500 a day.

'A citadel of democracy'

Adding to all these factors - reinforcing each other - has been Cosatu's increasingly central role as what Naidoo called 'a citadel of democracy' in the broad opposition.

The role was, to a degree, thrust on Cosatu by its survival in the face of a state onslaught that left the UDF badly weakened. But it was in any event already being demanded by a democratic movement based increasingly on class power and looking to the organised working class to lead it.

Individually and combined, these factors steadily elevated the union movement, and Cosatu in particular, into the status of a major player on the national political and economic stage - its activities no longer merely disruptive locally to individual businesses, but impacting on the entire economy.

This alone would have ensured that the state struck back to blunt Cosatu's most powerful weapon - strike action - as it is planning to do through the Labour Bill.

But other factors have added to the the assertion of worker power to guarantee such a response.

Faced with a wayward economy that has refused to function as a stable base for the reformed apartheid society he is attempting to build, Botha last month

announced a major shift in economic policy. This alone necessitates hobbling the unions. Although 'Bothanomics' differs in some respects from the 'Thatcherism' the basic aim is the same: to free a profit-based economy of all those social, political and economic institutions which limit the potential for increasing profit. Part of this involves government shedding its responsibility for services - Botha plans to sell off Escom and the country's highway system.

It also involves severely restricting organised labour's ability to enforce a wage package that eats into profits - Botha has already



announced a public sector wage freeze, and is encouraging big business to follow suit. Government plans to deregulate areas of the economy are similarly motivated. Thatcher's 'democracy' allows the courts to impose huge fines on unions for strike-damages; supports scabs financially and legally; prohibits sympathy strikes and promotes the splitting of unions by taking away the closed shop agreement.

The Labour Bill dovetails neatly into this policy.

Employers on the line

If 1987 saw a huge escalation of worker action, it also witnessed a marked hardening of employer attitudes. The most vivid examples of this trend were the Chamber of Mines' handling of the miners' strike; and Highveld Steel's pre-emptive dismissal of 4000 metal workers after they had voted to strike but before they had the chance to do so. In the mines strike, employers overriding commitment to defeat the union actu-

ally cost them three times as much in lost revenue as granting the NUM wage demands would have done.

Almost universally, employers wanted to see existing labour laws tightened - despite Manpower Minister Pietie du Plessis' claim that the miners' strike had demonstrated the maturity of South Africa's industrial relations mechanisms.

By the end of the year Du Plessis himself had caught the mood, and spoke of the need to 'redress the balance' in favour of employers.

The bill's if-it's-a-union-stomp-on-it approach does not, however, appear to have been met with complete satisfaction by employers.

For many, the attraction of a legislatively hobbled labour movement has been moderated by the spectre of a worker movement so alienated by the new law that it sees little point in interacting with it at all.

For a few the prospect has led to complete rejection. Premier's

Theo Heffer suggested recently that if the bill is passed, employers and unions should create independent industrial relations structures through which to negotiate.

A few others have indicated a willingness for joint employer-union attempts to approach the government. In the next few weeks, a great many more are going to be asked to do the same.

As parliament re-convened in February, Cosatu's chemical and metal industry unions, CWIU and Numsa, were already mobilising against the bill. This process included approaching employers for joint action.

At its February meeting Cosatu's central executive committee voted to back these initiatives and extend them to all affiliates.

Linking in with the CWIU-Numsa action, Cosatu has initiated seven weeks of lunch-time factory protests and demonstrations against the bill.

Cosatu itself has begun approaching national employer organisations, while affiliates will handle local and corporate managements.

The unions are not relying on these alliances to block the bill, however.

Reluctant employers could face the possibility of unions declaring disputes and striking - legally - over refusal to oppose the bill. And if the bill seems likely to pass through parliament and into law, the unions will have little option but to escalate their protests, probably into some form of national industrial action - in which, it is increasingly clear, Cosatu will attempt to draw workers from outside its affiliates.



What the new labour bill means

1. Sympathy or solidarity strikes will be illegal.

2. Workers cannot strike on the same issue in 15 months.

3. The bill makes the procedure for going on a legal strike even more complicated, ie the president and general secretary of the union have to sign papers when declaring a dispute that could lead to a legal strike; unions have to refer their dispute to a conciliation board or industrial council within 21 days of a dispute being declared for a strike to be legal, but no reference is made as to when the dispute begins; if the minister of manpower is not notified about the dispute within 21 days then there can be no legal strike; an inspector has the power to delay forever the calling of a legal strike.

4. The bill gives bosses the

power to interdict legal strikers.

5. The bill lists a number of labour practices which are specifically not unfair and can be removed from the ambit of the industrial court: it is not unfair for bosses to re-employ workers selectively after a strike; it is not an unfair labour practice to dismiss a worker without the holding of a disciplinary hearing; and it is not unfair to dismiss an employer with less than one year's service.

6. It is an unfair labour practice for a majority union to demand the right to negotiate for the whole workplace.

7. Unions can be registered in areas where they are not representative of all workers, eg racial unions like the whites-only unions which are not representative of all workers can register.

8. The union is seen to be

responsible for all strikes and can be sued and their assets confiscated to compensate for company losses caused by the strike.

9. It will be an unfair labour practice for a union to call for a consumer boycott.

10. The minister will decide what an unfair labour practice is, and he has the power to change this definition without any warning and parliamentary process.

11. The bill restricts the power of the industrial court by the creation of a special labour court which will be superior to the industrial court. The special labour court will handle appeals against decisions made by the industrial court.

12. The bill makes unfair dismissals and unfair retrenchments legal.

Compiled by Shareen Singh

Freezing wages — and reform

PW Botha's recently-announced economic package represents a major shift in government economic policy, which has far-reaching implications for the South African working class and the poorer sections of society.

Despite Botha's claim that the package will help build a 'prosperous future' for 'every South African', its initial phase promises to undermine the living standards of South African workers of all races. This has been clearly recognised by the two major black trade union federations, Cosatu and Nactu, both of which have opposed the package, as well as by unions representing white public sector workers. At the same time, spokesmen for commerce and industry have given unequivocal support to the new economic proposals.

The main features of Botha's package are as follows:

1. Government expenditure, including both current and capital expenditure, is to be drastically cut. This will be achieved through a one-year salary and wage freeze for all public sector employees. However, 'normal incremental adjustments and specific professional adjustments' will be allowed. Botha has also appealed to the private sector to exercise wage restraint.

There will also be a 'drastic reduction' in the creation of new civil service jobs. The standard of existing public services may be lowered and the prices of such services increased. All capital expenditure in the public sector will from now on be closely monitored and require cabinet



The economic package announced by PW Botha at the opening of parliament aims to cement an alliance between big business and government. The private sector has been invited to share the fruits of South Africa's wealth — as long as it supports apartheid. DUNCAN INNES argues that the new economic deal not only freezes wages: it also freezes political reform

approval.

2. The government is to embark upon a major privatisation programme. This will include the privatisation of the state's assets in the following public companies and areas: Escom; Sats; posts and telecommunications; Iscor; Foskor; the Mossel Bay gas project; several functions of the Atomic Energy Corporation; and several of the shareholdings held by the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) in other companies.

3. Sections of the national road network are to be privatised. Private companies will take over some roads and charge users a toll for travelling on them.

4. The government is to introduce further deregulation measures. Food-handling regulations, as well as those governing trading hours and licenses, will be revised. Legal prescriptions governing trading rights and business premises for black businesses will also be revised - but such businesses will remain confined within their 'own areas'.

5. GST is to be abolished and replaced by a new tax, Value Added Tax (VAT).

Unwrapping the package

The first three items listed are aimed at helping the government to overcome its fiscal crisis. Writing in 1985 Stephen Gelb and I noted that: 'The seriousness of the fiscal crisis should not be underestimated... In fact the state (is) technically insolvent'. The source of this crisis is that state revenue is no longer adequate to cover both the state's capital spending (on investments) and its current spending (on goods and services).

However, the fact that the state is running a budget deficit does not in itself create a crisis. What turns this into a crisis is that the state's options for correcting the deficit are seriously limited.

Under normal circumstances, the state might seek to correct the imbalance by raising taxes, which would bring in more revenue. However, this has been done so often in the past that South

Africa's level of taxation has soared, and any further major tax increases are likely to restrict the economy's growth potential seriously. This is, therefore, not an option at present.

The state might try to borrow more money to enable it to finance the deficit.

However, borrowing huge amounts of finance on the local market will only drive up interest rates, thereby discouraging private companies from borrowing. This will in turn choke off the fragile economic recovery. At the same time, the government's capacity to borrow money on foreign markets is curtailed because of the international sanctions campaign against South Africa. Thus borrowing cannot resolve the problem without, as far as local borrowing is concerned, creating a different set of major problems.

The state might simply print more money to enable it to pay off its debts. This approach has also been used in the past. However, increasing the money supply in this manner is a major cause of inflation, which is currently a serious problem. It is thus not an option which the state can follow without making an already serious inflationary situation worse.

The only alternative is to cut state expenditure on both the current and capital accounts - and this is what PW Botha's package seeks to do.

By freezing public sector salaries and wages the state hopes to save approximately R2,5-billion. By not creating new civil service jobs and cutting back on the provision of public services the state will save more money.

Privatisation of state assets will save the state considerable capital expenditure, since the financing of these corporations will become the responsibility of the private sector.

And, from the state's viewpoint, privatisation has the added advantage of bringing in huge amounts of revenue. The total assets of the biggest public corporations which Botha identified for privatisation are valued as follows: Escom R31-billion; Sats R19-billion; the post office R8-billion; Iscor R5-billion; Mossel Bay gas R5-billion; and the IDC R3-billion. The state thus has the potential to make a grand total of R71-billion by selling off these assets alone.

Unravelling Botha's new economic plans produces plenty of reasons why the private sector should be pleased with them. For essentially he has put together a package which meets many of its major demands. These include: waging war against inflation by slashing public expenditure and attacking the position of public sector employees, who are perceived as highly privileged; embracing free-market principles more vigorously; and re-organising the tax system.

But, perhaps, what pleases the business sector most about Botha's package is that it represents a clear shift in government policy away from defending sections of the white working class against capitalist intervention. Instead, the package reveals that he wants to commit his NP government to becoming the party of big business.

The politics of the package

In assessing the economic package it is important to bear in mind both its political origins and its potential political consequences.

Botha's wage and salary freeze for public sector employees will seriously reduce their living standards. Over half-a-million whites, approximately one-third of the economically active white population, are employed in the public sector as a whole. This represents a sizeable voting constituency

and, with whites due to go to the polls this year in municipal elections and possibly next year in a general election, Botha's wage and salary freeze could spell electoral disaster for the government.

However, Botha's capacities as a politician should not be underestimated. He is astute enough to have seen the potential electoral dangers inherent in his package and is also sure to be aware that public sector employees have long been a target for Conservative Party (CP) recruitment campaigns. So why has he acted in this way?

One possible answer is that, given the strength and depth of the fiscal crisis, he had no alternative. This is highly unlikely since there were other options open to him which, although damaging, might have provided him with enough time to get the forthcoming elections out of the way before announcing the package.

Another possible answer is that he does not intend holding a white general election next year. This is quite feasible given the government's publicly stated preference that the election should wait until 1992. The only reason an election is being contemplated for next year is because the Labour Party is refusing to lend its support to the postponement of the elections unless the government makes concessions on the Group Areas Act.

Although there seems to be some serious tension between the government and the Labour Party at the moment, it is possible that the two will do a deal to enable the elections to be postponed. After all, the Labour Party can hardly be relishing the thought of another election any more than the government is.

Although such a deal would enable Botha to postpone, and possibly avoid a humiliating result in a general election, it does not affect the municipal elections

which will be held this year. While not as serious, a bad showing for the National Party in these elections could give the Conservative Party an important boost.

A third possibility is that Botha has finally decided to sacrifice white working-class support, including that of Afrikaans-speakers, in exchange for winning new political support from the English-speaking business community.

On this argument, he is no longer trying to retain white workers' support because he knows he has effectively lost most of it to the CP already. At the same time, the signs from the English-speaking business community, both in the 1984 referendum and in last year's white election (with major swings to the Nationalists occurring in Natal and the Eastern Cape), were far more favourable.

The rapture with which his economic package was greeted by the English-language business community and the English-language press suggests that Botha has correctly targeted his potential market, which is now ripe for the taking. If this is the case then we can expect to see the government increasingly cast off the mantle of racial social democracy in favour of the full-blooded free market capitalist approach which the English-language business community has long been calling for.

Cutting expenditure

A major part of Botha's package involves a two-pronged attack of freezing salaries and wages in the public sector for one year and cutting back on government services.

Before Botha announced this freeze as part of his drive to combat inflation his own Economic Advisory Council had made it clear that it did not believe 'that wage and price control' would have any real impact on inflation

since wage and price rises were a symptom of inflation, not a cause. This view was enthusiastically supported by employers' associations like Assocom.

Despite these objections, Botha went ahead and announced his policy of wage controls - but without any corresponding effort



Botha is no longer trying to retain white workers' support, because he knows he has effectively lost most of it to the CP

to control prices. Not surprisingly, the very same employers' associations which had come out strongly against wage and price controls earlier, now found that since the controls excluded prices, they were actually in favour of the policy.

Botha's wage and salary freeze is just one illustration that his economic package is designed to win political support among the business community. That support will be won at the immediate expense of public sector employees, but will also create a ripple effect extending to municipal workers and private sector employees as well.

What exactly does the wage and salary freeze mean? With the rate of inflation currently running at

14,7% it involves a substantial fall in the living standards of those affected by the freeze. For poorer workers the situation will be even worse, since the inflation rate for the lower income groups is running at 17,5% - largely because of a massive 25% food price rise last year.

But some commentators have argued that the freeze is good because it will hurt the white bureaucrats who are over-paid anyway. While this group certainly will be affected, the majority of public sector employees are in fact black.

According to Barry Standish, there were 966 000 black employees in the public sector in 1986, compared with 551 000 whites. Since the majority of these white employees are workers and not bureaucrats, it is clear that it is black and white workers who will be the largest group affected.

Botha's package actually affords most of the white bureaucrats the opportunity partially to escape the freeze, since he has allowed for 'the normal incremental adjustments and specific professional adjustments' to continue.

White bureaucrats will be the major beneficiaries of both these adjustments, since the vast majority of black employees and most white workers do not qualify for them. For instance, only 30% of white Sats workers qualify for the incremental adjustment.

Following the outcry from both black and white trade unions against the gross injustice involved in freezing wages while leaving prices untouched, the state has shifted its position somewhat. The freeze, says Director General of Finance Chris Stals, was never intended to bring down inflation, but rather to 'enforce fiscal discipline' (ie curb state spending). 'The only sure way of cutting R2-billion off government's total spending bill', says an unidentified state official,

'is not to grant salary increases to public servants'.

But surely there are other ways of cutting government spending? What about withdrawing the South African army from Angola? Stopping South Africa's military occupation and administrative control of Namibia? Ending conscription which will reduce defence expenditure on personnel? Withdrawing troops from the townships? Or ending the absurd triplication of government services which the tricameral system entails, not to mention the even more absurd replication of services through the bantustan structures?

One can go on citing alternative ways of cutting government expenditure, but the point to emphasise is simply that the government has chosen to attack wages rather than other areas of expenditure because this suits its political strategy. Cutting public sector workers' wages frees the government to continue financing its apartheid structures and the wars which apartheid creates.

The commercial press in general has welcomed Botha's attack on wages as part of his new commitment to Thatcherite economics. 'As an exercise in orthodox Thatcherism', raved *The Star* in an editorial, 'President Botha's speech at the opening of Parliament could hardly have been improved upon'. This is not the case. While Thatcher certainly stands for cutting state expenditure, she does not believe in wage controls. Yet, clearly, PW Botha does.

Many of those business associations, economists and journalists who favour abolishing state controls over the economy seem to have missed this point: the wage controls Botha has introduced are fundamentally anti-free market. One cannot free the labour market and arbitrarily freeze wages simultaneously; it is a contradic-

tion in terms.

Yet Azar Jammine, chief economist of Econometrix and a stalwart free marketeer, is able to praise Botha's wage freeze as a 'courageous initiative' which forms part of his 'coherent philosophy in support of free enterprise'. Would Jammine have said the same, one wonders, if Botha had arbitrarily frozen prices instead of wages?

Cutting state services

Leaving aside these inconsistencies on the part of the ideologues of capital, Botha's policy of cutting public services is broadly consistent with Thatcherism.

The freezing of public sector wages and salaries will undoubtedly have a harmful effect on public services. The standard of services will fall as public sector employees move into the private sector in search of better financial rewards.

The South African Nursing Association has pointed out that the freeze may cause state hospital wards to close as staff leave state-run hospitals for private institutions. A recent report carried out for the Federation of Teachers' Associations revealed that 38% of male teachers in white schools resigned last year. The freeze can only intensify this tendency.

The statement by the president of the African Teachers' Association that the freeze was 'catastrophic' and would hit black teachers 'below the belt' suggests that this trend could soon hit black schools as well.

The government and business are both well aware of the effects the freeze will have, but far from being concerned by this development, they actually welcome it. To quote Jammine again: 'The second thrust announced by Mr Botha denies the public sector a general increase in salaries this year. Since salaries in the private

sector will not be subject to quite the same discipline, it is probable that many public servants will leave the public sector to seek new posts in the private sector. So much the better, for it will reduce public expenditure and at the same time increase competition for jobs in the private sector, thereby limiting the extent of wage hikes in this sector too'.

Furthermore, the cuts in state services go well beyond those which flow directly from the wage freeze. Sats recently announced that, in accordance with its new austerity policy, it is likely to close down uneconomical commuter and branch line services. 'Uneconomical services', said the Sats deputy general manager, 'will have to be withdrawn, or communities wanting them must pay highly increased tariffs'.

This year universities face huge cuts in state subsidies of up to 29% which could involve well over R300-million. According to Professor Charlton of Wits University, the cuts will inevitably affect the quality of education.

Because of a shortage of air traffic controllers arising out of low pay and poor working conditions, the state has effectively cut the controllers' training period from three to two years rather than pay them more. This move may well endanger the lives of air travellers.

In Britain, Thatcher's policy of cutting expenditure on state services has led to a crisis in the social services with the health and education sectors suffering the most. It has also been argued that the London tube disaster at King's Cross station was a consequence of Thatcher's cuts, since essential maintenance work was neglected because of staff shortages.

Leaving aside the specific argument of the tube station, the general argument on which it rests is beyond dispute: if the state cuts expenditure on services, the quali-

ty of those services must decline and the population will receive fewer benefits in return for the taxes it pays. In South Africa, where social services are nowhere near as well developed as in Britain, the effect of such cuts on the poor could be catastrophic.

Privatisation

Privatisation is another policy area in which PW Botha seeks to emulate Thatcher. In South African Review 4 I analysed the policy of privatisation in great detail, arguing that it primarily serves the interests of big business, will lead to greater unemployment and, in the South African context, becomes racist in practice. Here some of the more important consequences to flow from the privatisation measures Botha announced in his package will be looked at.

Privatisation is a viable strategy to promote economic growth. Reports from the United Kingdom, where privatisation has been practised for almost ten years, testify to that. In 1980, while under state control, the Jaguar Motor Corporation recorded a loss of over £40 million; in 1986, under private ownership, it made pre-tax profits of £120 million.

The argument against privatisation is not that it will fail to promote economic growth, but that it does so in a way which favours private share owners at the expense of working people. Nick Mitchell of the UK-SA Trade Association recently conceded that privatisation has caused unemployment in Britain to rise. Greater unemployment also creates downward pressure on wage rates which benefits share owners at the workers' expense.

The privatisation lobby has sought to counter this problem by arguing that the policy should be accompanied by promoting share ownership among working peo-

ple, so that they may benefit from whatever growth privatisation produces. The problem with this argument is that, while workers and the poor may be able to scrape together sufficient finance to buy a few hundred shares each, they do not reap the lion's share of the benefits. That privilege is reserved for the multinationals



Who else is going to acquire the vast majority of shares in Escom, Iscor, the post office and Sats other than our very own multinationals and financial institutions?

and financial institutions which accumulate literally billions of shares each.

A brief look at the list of public companies the Botha government seeks to privatise reveals the importance of this argument to South Africa. Who else is going to acquire the vast majority of shares in Escom, Iscor, the post office and Sats other than our very own multinationals and financial institutions?

Consequently, if privatisation does succeed in making these corporations more profitable, the effect will be for the private business sector to accumulate the bulk of the profits while, in all probability, workers in these corporations are being retrenched in the interests of efficiency.

But how efficient are privatised companies anyway? The British experience provides conflicting evidence on this point. On the one hand some companies, such as Jaguar, have improved efficiency dramatically. On the other hand, the privatised British Telecom company is so inefficient that its chairman was recently forced to resign in the wake of a barrage of public complaints against the company. Yet it makes a profit of £2-million a day.

British Telecom could achieve this remarkable feat simply because it has a monopoly over telephone services. Consumers have no alternative but to use the company's more expensive services even though such services are atrocious.

This carries important lessons for South Africa, since most of the public companies Botha has ear-marked for privatisation are monopolies. Following privatisation, there is every likelihood that the new owners will raise tariffs (on electricity, postal and transport services, steel, etc) and pull in ever-growing profits without doing anything to promote efficiency because there will be no competitive pressure on them to do so. Since these monopoly concerns play a crucial role in providing infrastructural services to the economy, any tariff increases they introduce will rapidly feed through the system, causing inflation to rise.

The government is aware of these dangers. The white paper on privatisation and deregulation released last year specifically opposed selling off a public sector monopoly 'if it is to be replaced by a private sector monopoly' on the grounds that this would lead to higher prices. So why has Botha decided to go ahead with the sale of these monopolies anyway?

The answer may be found in the same white paper. Privatisation,

states the paper, must contribute to 'the maintenance of a comprehensive political system which will ensure self-determination for the various communities'. Privatisation 'must not entail a real risk to state security or internal order', nor must it 'defeat the constitutional objectives' of the state. Finally, privatisation 'must be integrated with the total economic strategy for the Republic' and there should be 'closer liaison and co-operation between the authorities and the private sector'.

Government's privatisation policy is intended to pull the private sector, especially big business, into a closer political alliance with the state. The policy of privatisation is thus motivated not only by the government's need to resolve the fiscal crisis, but also by its political programme of seeking to draw big business into its political web.

The announcement by Deputy Minister of Finance Kent Durr that the government intended to hang on to a controlling interest in the corporations to be privatised and that this implied 'a partnership arrangement between the private sector and the state' is further evidence of this strategy. So, too, is the fact that nowhere in his economic package does Botha make a single reference to political reforms. In fact, on the issue of deregulation, while he accepts the need for deregulation of black businesses, he makes it clear that such businesses will remain confined to their 'own areas'.

The private sector is thus being invited by the government to share in the fruits of South Africa's wealth so long as it supports apartheid. (Sanctions provide another opportunity to this end, as the government encourages the private sector to work more closely with state departments on sanctions-busting exercises, while ignoring calls for meaningful reform). Given the

enthusiastic support Botha's proposals have so far received from the private sector, it seems that private capital has swallowed the bait.

PW Botha and the redistribution of wealth

Steven Friedman of the SA Institute of Race Relations recently argued that 'Botha's speech aims partly to redistribute wealth from white to black'. For that reason, he concludes that: 'The economic plan may well be the government's most ambitious attempt thus far to improve black material conditions and so ensure long-term stability'.

Friedman's case rests largely on a few short sentences contained in Botha's speech. The first claimed that the state would use some of the money raised through privatisation to fund infrastructure in 'developing areas' (by which one assumes he means upgrading black townships). The second was that, while state services would be cut or their prices raised, such services would still be available on an individual basis to those in need.

As already pointed out, Botha's wage freeze will hit black public sector workers hardest of all. His call for wage restraint in other sectors is likely to hit black workers there as well. It is thus difficult to reconcile a policy aimed at 'improving black material conditions' with one that cuts black wages.

Although it is no doubt true that the government will retain some state services for the poorest section of the population, cutting state services leads to a general decline in standards.

With privately-financed schools able to attract the best teachers and resources, the state schools to which underprivileged black children are sent must deteriorate further.

The same applies to health ser-

vices, transport and everything else. What, for instance, will happen to the already-poor standard of health care at Baragwanath Hospital if the state introduces further cuts?

It seems certain that the government intends pumping some money into upgrading of black townships. But three qualifications are important. First, as in its bantustan policy, the state tends to use political criteria, rather than the criterion of need, as the basis for its choices on where to invest money. If this occurs, it is questionable whether in fact there will be the general improvement in black material conditions which Friedman implies.

Secondly, neither Botha nor, subsequently, du Plessis spelled out how much money would be used for upgrading or what it would be allocated for.

While there are those within the state who do place a priority on improving black material conditions, there are others who have different priorities. So long as South Africa remains at war with the rest of the sub-continent as well as internally, by far the greatest proportion of government finances will go into defence, police and security expenditure. To the extent that the war increases, so it will drain ever more financial resources away from other sectors of society.

Finally, as is clear from Botha's statement in parliament, not only is there a wage freeze in South Africa at the moment, there is also a political reform freeze.

Consequently, whatever money is channelled into black development occurs within the parameters of apartheid. There is every likelihood that, at some point in the future, whatever money the state raises from the sale of its public assets to spend on schools, buildings and infrastructure may end up in great clouds of black smoke.

A battle of words and weapons



The war in Angola is being waged on two fronts - the military and the diplomatic. It links invader troops from South Africa, rebel guerillas, and Cuban and Angolan forces with Namibian independence, American diplomacy and covert aid for destabilisation.

DAVID COETZEE reports.

South Africans, despite censorship, know there is a major war going on in Angola. Angolan army chiefs say the fighting around the strategic town of Cuito Cuanavale - involving over 6 000 South African troops - is the heaviest in Africa since the Second World War.

But, simultaneously, there is another war going on - a diplomatic one, into which the United States has thrown its heavy armaments.

The two battles are closely linked, as was evident when US envoy Chester Crocker visited Luanda for talks earlier this year. Crocker was supposed to be the mediator between Angola and South Africa. The final assault on Cuito Cuanavale - 300 km inside Angola - was planned to coincide with his visit, adding strength to the US negotiations.

The anticipated military victory did not take place on schedule, but that did not prevent a premature victory announcement by Unita. By

the same token, the planned US diplomatic victory did not take place - but that, too, did not stop Washington from heralding Crocker's visit as a success.

While Luanda tries to focus the talks on Namibia's independence and South Africa's military withdrawal, Washington tries to focus them on Cuban withdrawal and the installation of a joint Unita/MPLA government in Luanda.

Crocker's latest visit to Luanda raised questions about his strategy: is it as unconnected from Pretoria as he implies, or is he operating a twin track strategy of South African military pressure to soften up the Angolans while he offers them sops on the economic front?

The talks were hailed in Washington as having secured major concessions. The Angolan side (facing Crocker for the first time together with a Cuban representative) has not only agreed that the southern Cuban forces will withdraw on

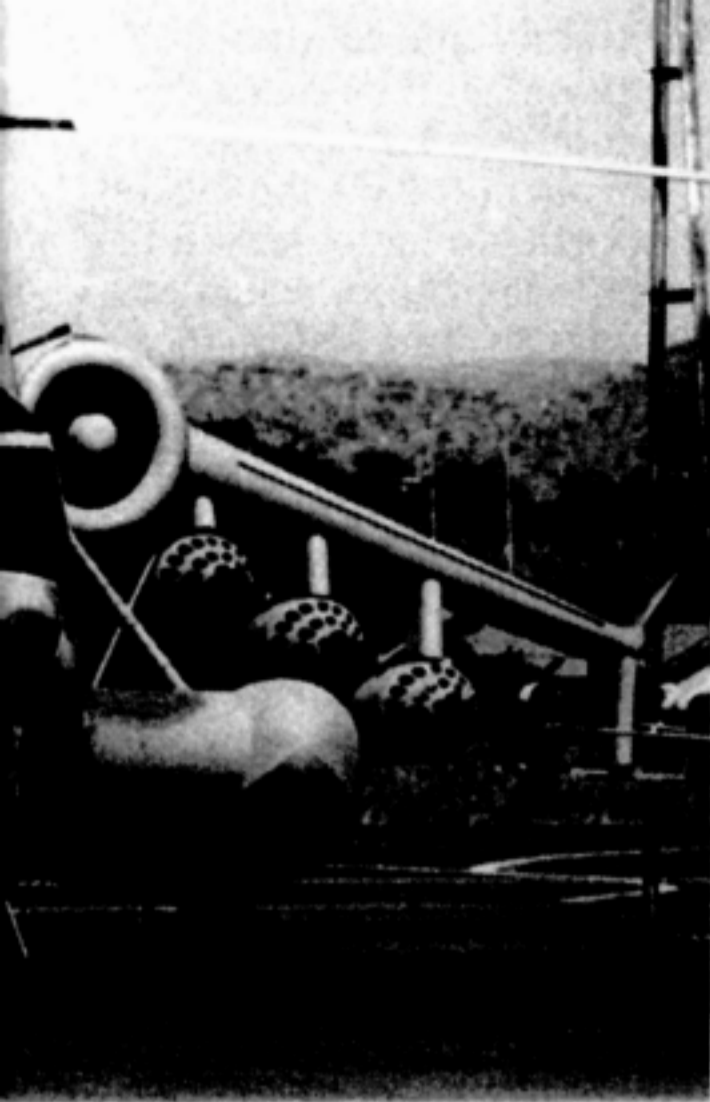
an agreed timetable when UN security council resolution 435 is adhered to and the South African forces leave their territory; they have also agreed that the northern contingent will leave.

The Cubans recently said they had 20 000 troops in each sector - a total of 40 000.

The US seems happy with the agreement for two reasons: at the tail-end of the Reagan administration and after eight years of fruitless negotiation, Crocker can say he has achieved something.

At the same time there is every indication that Zaire is being prepared to give more backing to Unita, supplying US material to the south-east sector through the refurbished Kamina base in Shaba province.

However, the Angolans do not believe they have yielded too much. It seems the Cubans will only be withdrawn if the rest of Angola's 1984 proposals are acceded to - that the South Africans leave, and that Namibia is launched towards



called on in 1975, Fapla was still a guerilla force, on the way to becoming a standing army. Now it has its own gunners and fliers, back from ten-year training courses in the Soviet Union.

The Cuban forces have been held as a deep defence line, above the 16th parallel (Cuito Cuanavale is 90 km to the north of that).

Who runs Unita?

Perhaps the real issue today is: Who runs Unita? Up till now the SADF has been the main puller of the strings, but Unita has also for years been supplied with weapons by the US via Zaire (even before the lifting of the Clark amendment which should have rendered this kind of covert war aid impossible).

Savimbi was in contact with

the US in Zaire during his time in the United Peoples of Angola (UP) and later, it seems, worked with the Portuguese to try to eliminate the MPLA.

In 1974 correspondence between him and the Portuguese high command regarding joint actions against the MPLA was published in a Paris magazine. Savimbi claimed it was a forgery.

The papers, from the PIDE (secret police) archives, date from 19 September 1972 and give an account of a successful Unita ambush of a 30-strong MPLA column; Savimbi also asks for supplies and a passage for his men through Portuguese lines.

Jan Breytenbach, who helped form the SADF's 32 Battalion from FNLA and Unita remnants in 1975, is

its independence in terms of United Nations Resolution 435.

According to some sources, Angola is also no longer as concerned about the maintenance of the Cuban forces - its own Fapla forces have shown themselves a match for the invading forces and, by SA Defence Minister Magnus Malan's admission, would have beaten Unita last year if the South Africans had not intervened heavily in favour of their proteges.

The South Africans, for their part, initially responded angrily, and then said that they would support regional peace talks - as long as Unita was included. Their reasoning must be that if the linkage ploy has run its course, it is time for another delaying tactic.

Cuba, in an official response in February, said the success of the negotiation depended now on the attitude of the US government, but that 'a solution in a relatively short time is, in reality, objectively possible'.

When the Cubans were



Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos

also in no doubt; he says there were 'numerous armed clashes between MPLA and Unita with the Portuguese administration surreptitiously supporting Unita. The Portuguese rarely, if ever, launched operations against Unita and there are indications that they even supplied them with arms and ammunition in certain parts of south and eastern Angola'.

Policies and practices

Savimbi's policies for a future Angolan state have been tailored to what the hearers wanted: before 1974 he used Maoist phraseology; in 1975, when the Portuguese were keen to be reassured, he said he favoured 'social democracy'; later his lobbyists in the US stressed that Angola would be a free enterprise country.

An indication of Savimbi's attitude to those under his rule came in 1975, during the South African invasion, when Unita established itself for 100 days in the Angolan highlands. Unita's period in power in that part of the country has been described by some journalists as an 'anti-civilian terror campaign' in which many hundreds, not only MPLA supporters, were killed.

And, as the Angolan army and Cuban forces advanced, Savimbi told his supporters to expect no mercy from the men from the north and to flee into the bush. Thousands did, and only started returning to civilization years later.

Many of those who fled met up with retreating SADF columns near the Namibian border, and were established in separate camps at Rundu, the military base in northern Namibia. According to reports, they were all taken north of the border in 1978 or 1979 and moved into Unita

camps.

The US is at pains to differentiate between Unita and the Mozambique National Resistance - the MNR. Last June Crocker explained to the senate foreign relations committee why: the MNR had shown no concrete evidence of democratic practice, he said.

Unita is integrated into SADF military structures: much of the fighting in Angola is done by 32 Battalion...

It is 'organised as a military hierarchy, employing highly centralised, authoritarian lines of command. In the countryside, the MNR seeks to align itself with and exploit tribal and other traditional forms of government and administration. It has not made any systematic attempts to introduce democratic principles or to implement any detailed political programme.

'Moreover there are credible reports of brutal MNR attacks against civilians that are inconsistent with its professed commitment to democracy and protection of the human rights of individual Mozambicans'.

Unita, too, has a record of 'human rights violations' - but this has gone largely unrecorded in the West. Journalists who have visited Angola say the rebel movement has massacred villagers, bombed civilians in towns and cities and sabotaged lines of communication essential to the movement of food.

Unita has a policy of planting mines on paths to fields, to deter in the most bloody way

the women and children working those fields, and to worsen the food problem shortage.

Angola may have the highest proportion of amputees in the world. Huambo, where if anywhere Savimbi should be seeking his support, has a large number of crippled adults and orphans.

Unita receives extensive US aid through Zaire. The amount was officially set at \$15-m, but the former CIA station head in Angola, John Stockwell - who had continuous logistics dealings with the FNLA and Unita - regards this as a large underestimate of what is actually going in. He calculates a figure of \$500-m from various foreign sources.

The US is also claimed to have supplied Stinger surface-to-air missiles to Unita.

The reasons why Washington backs Unita and not Renamo are not hard to find: Angola is potentially rich in oil, diamonds, coffee and agricultural products, with strategically important seaports - yet it is run by avowed Marxist-Leninists, often trained in the Soviet Union, and has a real military alliance with the Soviet Union and Cuba. So there was a greater chance to demonstrate the path to real development in Angola than anywhere else in Africa.

Since independence, Angola has also given full backing, training and refugee facilities to the African National Congress and Swapo.

South Africa also backs Unita strongly. It is integrated into SADF military structures: much of the fighting in Angola is done by 32 Battalion - estimated to be about 2 000-strong. This battalion, technically part of SADF command, takes orders directly from Pretoria, not Windhoek.

It is difficult to distinguish this set-up from Unita itself - though some observers view it as the logistics and heavy weaponry support for the rebel movement. The battalion is based at Buffalo on the corner between western Caprivi, Kavango and Botswana.

Unita seems to be paying part of its way through exports of valuable teak, ivory and skins from Angola to South Africa, according to reports.

Angola's economy

Washington's diplomatic pressure and Pretoria's military thrust have come as Angola undertakes the most deep-reaching reorganisation of its economy in its short independent life.

The economy is in a bad state, the result of the attrition of war and home-grown mistakes.

In early 1976, after the South African invaders had retreated, it was found that more than 30 000 middle- and high-level technicians had left the country; some 2 500 factories were inoperative (about 75% because their owners had abandoned them); only 8 000 of the 153 000 vehicles registered in 1973 were still in use; dozens of bridges linking provinces had been destroyed; commercial networks had collapsed; the education system was in disarray; because there had been no systematic transition of the administrative services many files, studies and projects had disappeared.

The economy is in a bad state, the result of the attrition of war and home-grown mistakes.

Since then damage in the protracted war of attrition has been estimated at \$12 000-m, with more than 600 000 displaced people, 150 000 refugees, 60 000 dead and a high number of disabled people.

trying to overcome US opposition to its entering the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

There are political differences in Luanda over this programme and its chances of working - differences which have been interpreted in Washington and Pretoria as between 'pragmatists' and 'nationalists' (the good guys) and 'dogmatic, pro-Soviet hardliners'.

The jargon hides more than it explains. In the same way,

the programme is not the return to free enterprise that Angola's opponents would like to see in it.

A sound relationship has never been developed between urban workers and peasants -

whereby peasants exchange their product for the commodities made in the towns. Yet the worker-peasant alliance is stressed in all official statements.

Under the impact of war, the government has been unable to adequately link the elements of the national economy together: foreign exchange earners have been disrupted or have suffered price collapses; too few commodities are made or can be imported; peasants struggle to produce a surplus; transport is disrupted, making it difficult to distribute commodities. Internal trade does not work, and the economy crumbles under the joint impact of war and stagnation.



A captured SA tank, and a Russian tank, in central Luanda

Today there is famine in many parts of the country, and the currency has lost its value (commodities are calculated in crates of beer rather than kwanzas).

Yet the economic problems are not being blamed solely on the war. Angola was depending on oil prices staying high - and when they fell two years ago, it was forced to begin a period of even more severe austerity.

This January it began an entirely new programme of restructuring and rehabilitation, taking out of the hands of the state that which the state is clearly not in a condition to run - small internal trade, primarily, and services. It is also

Essential and strategic economic units

Last August, Angolan president Jose Eduardo dos Santos issued a major policy statement on the country's economy.

'While the war waged against the Angolan people by the racist South African government, supported by the US, is a decisive factor in characterising the crisis, we must admit that there are other factors which we can eliminate to improve the situation significantly', he said.

Because of the 'rapid, excessive and disorderly growth of the state sector' the state will concentrate on essential and strategic economic units. 'State and enterprise invest-

ment cannot be made without prior domestic saving'; war bonds will be established, to be repaid after the war.

The problems included lack of co-ordination between departments, excessive centralisation of socialist planning methods, a consequent bureaucratisation of economic management, 'disorganised and badly managed enterprises, galloping indiscipline and corruption, and inadequate protection of social property'.

In 1986 the second congress of the MPLA-Workers Party laid down six guidelines to solve these problems in the next five year period; of the six, only the guideline which gave 'absolute priority to the country's defence needs' was complied with.

At the same time there was a drastic fall in foreign exchange from oil exports and imports of consumer goods had to be halved in 1986; a lack of raw materials or maintenance stopped production

in many factories.

The level of external debt increased as capital inflow increased by 20% in 1986.

Rather than look at a thoroughgoing restructuring of the economy, attention was focused on austerity measures; now, said dos Santos, there can be no more room for 'palliatives or partial measures'.

The first question was a re-scheduling of the country's debt (about \$4 000-million) - the problem was not its size but the high concentration of repayments over the next few years.

'The fact of the country not having been active in international financial institutions has prevented access to very long-term credit grants', said dos Santos.

Links with Western countries could not be avoided. But, he said, it was important 'to ensure that economic relations with western countries are advantageous' to Angola.

Two days with the riot squad

The murder trial of two riot squad members focused attention on often-hidden police conduct in townships. PETER AUF DER HEYDE of Albany News Agency reports.

Mlungisi Stuurman was badly beaten up. Arrested by the riot squad for wearing a 'political' T-shirt, he had been systematically assaulted - or 'panelbeaten', as the police put it - in the back of a bus.

Now, he was too seriously injured to be taken into custody. He had to be 'taken out'.

And that, according to evidence from members of the riot squad involved, was what happened. Stuurman, his face still bloody from the assault, was taken to a nearby river and executed by unit commander Leon de Villiers.

De Villiers, a warrant officer, is on trial with Constable David Goosen in the Grahamstown Supreme Court for the murder of Stuurman and another Cradock resident, 45-year-old Andile Alfred Plaatjie, in July 1986.

They are also charged with assaulting Zixolisiwe Goniwe

and Michael Qhina, and with trying to defeat the ends of justice by ordering or persuading other members of their unit to give a false report of the incidents.

Both de Villiers and Goosen were part of a ten-man 'unrest unit' which had been sent to Cradock to 'keep order at a terrorist's funeral'. The majority of the ten men were very young policemen, just out of college.

The court has been told how, on the Friday night before leaving for Cradock, the unit went to shebeens in Port Elizabeth to collect liquor as a present for de Villiers. They did not pay for it. They started drinking along the way, and continued drinking when they reached Cradock. There, they were joined by two members of the police video unit, and the drinking continued.

Constable MPA Booysens,

who has been warned as an accomplice in the case, testified that he and de Villiers participated in a drinking competition, but that he had been unable to drink as much as his commanding officer.

At about 2 am, all but Constable Goosen - who did not drink - were well under the influence of liquor when they heard a radio report about people who had thrown stones at a casspir in the township. De Villiers decided to show the people in the casspir 'how to deal with unrest' and ordered his men to get ready.

Bloodbrothers in the townships

Before going into the township, the unit went through a 'bloodbrother' ritual. They cut their forearms with a blunt knife and mixed blood by pressing their arms together.

This ceremony was meant to enhance the unity in the unit and make sure all the members would stick together.

A former member of the Koevoet counter insurgency unit, Sergeant Heinrich Bloemental, told the court that soon after they entered the township, someone immediately said: 'There he is, suspect number one'. The members jumped out of their van and surrounded the man. When they left, the man was lying on the ground. As they gathered at the van for their return, Goosen told them: 'I have just stabbed a man. I felt the knife go in'.

Township resident Monde Ngindi told the court he had witnessed the police arrival in the township. He said he and some friends were on their way home when they saw a van racing towards them. They scattered and ran.

Five policemen got out of the van and ran into the yard, and Ngindi tried to hide. The men saw him, and he was then attacked by a man in a police uniform and a balaclava, wielding an axe.

'The man started to throttle me, but I managed to break loose and escape', he said.

Another township resident, Phumlani Williams, said he had seen Plaatjies with friends in Ngindi's room on the night of 25 July. When he went out later that night he found Plaatjies lying in the yard. He helped him into the house and went to sleep. The next day he found Plaatjies was dead, and noticed a wound on his stomach.

Captain G Grobbelaar - who last year was acquitted on eight counts of assault relating to his activities as station commander in Fort Beaufort, and is now senior staff officer in

Cradock - told the court the trip into the township had been 'irregular'. He said the unit was only required to report for duty at 7 am on Saturday. If they had gone into the township before that, it was without his permission or knowledge. He had in fact only become aware of their excursion two days later.

Arrested for a T-shirt

The next morning the unit went out again - this time on an official patrol during the funeral. They had been told beforehand to interfere as little as possible. One of the members of the unrest unit, Constable MD Neveling, told the court he had seen other policemen use teargas and had also heard shotguns being fired.

His unit had later seen three men lying on a patch of grass. One of them was wearing a Cradock Youth Congress (Cradoya) T-shirt, which had 'power to the people' written on the back. This man - Stuurman - was then arrested.

When asked by one of the assessors in the trial why Stuurman had been arrested, he answered: 'Because he was wearing a Cradoya T-shirt, and tried to run away when we approached him'. The assessor then asked if he thought these were good enough reasons to arrest a man. Neveling conceded that the arrest was illegal.

After further questioning, he admitted that all the arrests made that day were unlawful. The assessor, BP Loots, then asked what they hoped to achieve by the arrests.

Const: You never know until you try. It's pure luck if you get anything.

Loots: And if the person

does not want to talk?

Const: You make them talk.

Loots: How?

Const: As we did... Assaults, plastic bags and so on.

Loots: Is that legal?

Const: No.

Loots: You mentioned a water method.

Const: Yes, you hold them under water until they talk.

Loots: Did you think the same thing was going to happen when Stuurman was taken to the river.

Const: It was a possibility.

Loots then asked whether he, or any other members received any information from the people they arrested in Cradock. Constable Neveling replied that they had not.

Loots: But how did you expect to, when you did not even have anybody who could speak Xhosa?

Const: If you take them far enough, they talk Afrikaans.

One of the men arrested by the unit that day, Zixolisiwe Goniwe, told the court he had been taken into a police bus along with three other men. When he sat on a seat, a coloured policeman hit him on the back of the head with a rifle butt and told him to sit on the floor.

Soon afterwards, the man in charge came and sat opposite him. He knew the man was in charge because of his badges of rank and the fact that others called him 'chief'. This man - whom he identified in court as de Villiers - started hitting him with his fists, and placed a plastic bag over his head while the coloured policeman held his arms. He struggled until they took it off. He said the 'chief' then asked for a fanbelt, which he twisted round his neck until he was unconscious.

Goniwe said he recovered

soon afterwards, near Stuurman's home.

Several policemen got out of the bus, he said, and returned with a man wearing a Cradock T-shirt. The man was taken to the back of the bus and Goniwe was told not to look in that direction, but he could hear what sounded like blows.

'The "chief" then told the driver to go to a farm called Mission, where he was going to kill me', Goniwe said. Near a church, the bus slowed and he was told to get off. The coloured policeman wanted to push him off, but the 'chief' restrained him. He then went to hospital for treatment.

According to evidence, the bus eventually stopped at a quiet spot near the Cradock sewerage works. Most of the members of the riot unit went to 'monitor' the area, leaving de Villiers and Goosen alone with Stuurman. While they were doing this, they could hear screams coming from the bus. When they returned, there was blood on Stuurman's face and there was 'a big difference' in his condition.

De Villiers said Stuurman should be taken to a river and his face should be washed as it was too bloody. As they were driving to the river, de Villiers said Stuurman was 'panel-beaten' and should be 'taken out'. Goosen agreed to this.

Constable RM van der Nest, another member of the unit, said that during the trip to the river, de Villiers told him he would have to shoot Stuurman. He did not reply to de Villiers' order and when nothing further was said, he told the court, he assumed de Villiers had been joking.

When they arrived at the

river, however, Goosen and two other policemen took Stuurman out of the bus. De Villiers asked Goosen for Stuurman's shirt and wiped the blood off the bus with it, before burning the shirt.

One of the policemen who accompanied Goosen, Constable MPA Booyens, said Goosen drew his pistol when they reached the river. Booyens testified that he walked away because he knew Goosen would shoot the man. He heard Goosen shout to Stuurman to walk, and look ahead of him.

Booyens himself stood staring across the river - and seconds later, there was a shot.

When Booyens looked back, he saw Goosen standing legs astride, with the gun next to his side again, pointing down. Stuurman was lying face down on the river bank. Goosen then called on the two other policemen to help him throw Stuurman into the river. Because Goosen let go before the others, however, Stuurman landed face down on a sandbank.

Goosen then went back to the bus and reported to de Villiers that he had shot Stuurman through the neck and had thrown the body into the river. He told de Villiers not to worry, as the river would carry the body down stream.

On the journey back to Cradock de Villiers asked Goosen: 'Coolie, how do you feel now?' Goosen gave a 'thumbs up' sign and winked. De Villiers then decided to send his men into the township for a final patrol. Before they entered the township however, they stopped at a house where some of the

policemen cleaned the blood off the bus.

During their final patrol de Villiers told them he was a good shot - and, to try and prove this, shot close to the feet of a woman. They then returned to their camp.

After their final patrol they returned to Port Elizabeth and reported back for duty on Monday morning. When they arrived, their weapons were confiscated. In the evening, they met at de Villiers' home, where they were told by de Villiers and Goosen that they should all stick together and say that Goosen had slipped and his gun had gone off by accident.

The next day, Goosen allegedly told the other members of the unit that if any of them spoke about what happened in Cradock, he would look for that person - no matter how long it took.

Four days after the killings the policemen were taken to Cradock for questioning. Goosen and de Villiers first appeared in court on 30 July, where they pleaded not guilty.

The investigating officer admitted in court that Goosen had received special privileges while in custody because he was a policeman. He was given clean blankets and allowed to eat in the police club.

While only Goosen and de Villiers have been brought to trial, it has become clear that other members of the unit were also involved. At least one of the policemen has been warned as an accomplice.

The case has again focused attention on police conduct in the townships - conduct which is often shielded by the emergency regulations.



The bumpy road to working class unity

Re-uniting the two factions of Ccawusa will not be easy, despite a recent out-of-court settlement agreed to by both groups. DAVID NIDDRIE reports.

If the road to hell is paved with good intentions, the road to unity for the divided Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union of South Africa (Ccawusa) is not paved at all.

It is a dusty, bumpy road dotted with massive potholes big enough to swallow either of Ccawusa's disputing factions - and the entire unity process.

And there are a number of

side-roads should either side wish to veer off either before or during the national re-unification conference set down for 15 May.

Since signing an out-of-court agreement on 19 January, neither side has yet been tempted to do so. Indeed, by signing, both have agreed to participate in a unification process which does not necessarily work in their favour.

Their decision to do so is one of the few bright spots in an otherwise unremittingly bleak picture.

Ccawusa split last June during a conference held to merge the union with the Retail and Allied Workers Union (Rawu) and the Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union (Harwu). But by then conflict had been brewing for some time, with rival positions consolidating over adoption of the

Freedom Charter.

More than the Charter

The Charter issue and the question of merging were, however, not so much the essential sticking points as symbols of a rather different conflict.

Established in 1975 as a parallel union to the Tucsa-affiliated National Union of Distributive Workers and the National Union of Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers, Ccawusa remained an Africans only union until 1984, when it opened membership to coloured and Indian workers. A year later a further constitutional change made it formally non-racial, although there remains within it an element of the black consciousness thinking present in its first ten years under general secretary Emma Mashinini.

As such, Ccawusa was rooted in a different tradition to most of the unions which combined into the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) in December 1985 - falling outside both the Fosatu tradition which fed the core unions in the new federation; and that of the numerous United Democratic Front-linked unions.

In the two years since Cosatu's launch, other traditions have fed into the federation - with the mergers which brought in the Motor Industries' Component Workers Union, the National Clothing Workers Union and Textile Workers Industrial Union, among others. But Ccawusa and the National Union of Mineworkers remain the only dominant industrial unions drawing on neither of the major trends.

Importantly - for it is this which the Ccawusa antagonists

believe distinguishes them - there developed within the union, and particularly in Johannesburg (the oldest and most powerful branch), a perception of working-class politics distinct from those growing out of the Fosatu and UDF union roots.

It was the growth of this perception which led to the 1985 ousting of Mashinini. The explosion of Ccawusa membership from 1982 brought in its wake divergent and conflicting political opinion - very little of it fitting easily with the position Mashinini had come to symbolise.

The new constitution

The adoption in 1986 of a new constitution consolidated this move away from the union's roots as a small, politically homogeneous union over which Mashinini had presided. It imposed on the union a structure of answerability and responsibility more in keeping with a union of 50 000-plus members. This was most clearly demonstrated in the scrapping of branch annual general meetings attended by all branch members as the ultimate branch decision-making body. This had been acceptable in the late 1970s, when the entire union had only 1 000 members, but became impossibly unwieldy when the Johannesburg branch stretched across much of the Transvaal and had long been counting its members in five figures.

Similarly, the 1986 constitution drastically adjusted representation at national gatherings, limited until then to a maximum of eight delegates per branch,

On an assumption of branch membership of less than 1 000, the 1981 constitution limited each branch to one delegate

for the first 300 members, and an additional delegate for each additional 100 members, 'to a maximum of eight delegates'.

By 1985 this would have given the eight branches equal representation at Ccawusa's national congresses. The 1986 constitution scrapped the maximum limit and adjusted the delegates-per-membership figures.

But even the greater representivity ushered in by the 1986 constitution proved structurally incapable of preventing the disputes which finally ripped the union apart last June.

The split was directly precipitated by the merger with Harwu (or failure to merge, depending on which side of the divide you stand). But the existence of two distinct and increasingly-divergent trends had been evident for some time and, even without the Harwu issue, Ccawusa could have split - whether over the Charter, over gradually warming relations with the black consciousness-aligned National Confederation of Trade Unions (Nactu) or over a number of other issues.

Theoretically the issue which divides the contending factions in Ccawusa involves their views on the correct road to socialism. Most of those grouped around union general secretary Vivian Mtwá (and known as the Mtwá faction) hold that, by *their* map, the road lies straight ahead, with no detour necessary through national democracy - particularly not a national democracy outlined by the Freedom Charter.

The Kganare faction (grouped around one-time rival general secretary Papi Kganare) holds to a more

conventional Cosatu view: that the Charter is a rallying point both for the working class and for all those democratic forces whose muscle will be required to end apartheid - an essential stepping stone on the path to socialism.

For both sides the need for unity of the working class is essential.

These broad political theses translated into trade union politics through a dispute over the proposed adoption of the Freedom Charter and, later, over the Mtwá grouping's links with Nactu.

And, in the name of working-class unity, these issues added to divisions in the union.

Silencing dissent

But an exclusively ideological interpretation of the split presupposes forms of organisation consistent with the various ideological positions. This idea is difficult to sustain in the cold light of the reality within Ccawusa: while repeatedly invoking the language of democracy, officials have been prepared to ram through political policy with questionable majority support. And in support of the principle of allowing differing political positions to co-exist, they have been prepared to silence dissent by constitutional means.

As last July's second Cosatu congress approached - and with it the third Cosatu deadline for the merging of affiliate unions into 13 industrial unions - new issues arose to

superimpose themselves on the divisions within Ccawusa.

The divide seemed to be a fairly even one. And those whose position would be threatened by an influx of pro-Charter Harwu members - and a formal Charter vote at a merger congress - argued, with some logic, that in terms of Cosatu policy no merger was necessary. Harwu should not have been allowed into Cosatu

added to mounting tension, the federation also attempted to diffuse it: Cosatu flatly refused to consider a reported Harwu suggestion that retail and catering be divided into two separate sectors, with one industrial union in each. The inclusion of both retail and catering workers in Ccawusa had been a source of friction for some time, centring on Ccawusa's failure to consider a separate catering sector organiser.

Was there a merger?

In the event, the factions needed little encouragement. As the merger congress was due to take place on 28 June, a heated dispute broke out over the claim of 40 000 members by Ccawusa's Johannesburg branch - power base of the non-Charterists.

Delegates from elsewhere waited for hours for the meeting to begin at the University of the Witwatersrand as a committee tried unsuccessfully to resolve charges that the Johannesburg branch had only 22 000 paid-up members. By the time the meeting was formally convened,

Cape Town and Klerksdorp branch delegates had already left. Whether a merger congress took place at all has since become an issue of principle in the dispute, although under the January settlement both sides have acknowledged that, in the case of Harwu at least, none took place.

The Mtwá grouping argues that the merger meeting



Worker's picketed during the January 1987 OK strike

in November 1986 without first merging with Ccawusa. It was an argument given some substance when the East London-based National Union of Railway Workers was refused admission to the Cosatu congress because of its earlier reluctance to merge with the SA Railway and Harbour Workers Union.

If the vagueness of Cosatu's one union-one industry policy

closed without resolving the issue of Johannesburg's membership. A second meeting took place, but was not quorate and certainly did not have the status of a merger congress.

An equally important factor was the decision by some Ccawusa delegates to break the block union mandate and vote against the union on the merger and adoption of the Charter.

From the other perspective, the meeting closed and reopened. Its adherents point to the presence of all head office officials - including Mtwá - throughout the second meeting, and the election of one of these officials to a new national executive.

Although this official subsequently resigned, his acceptance of the post and the other officials' failure to object to proceedings amounted to recognition of their legitimacy, they add. A merger took place and the enlarged Ccawusa adopted the Freedom Charter, they argue.

Unable to resolve their differences, two Ccawusas went into the Cosatu congress to be refused voting rights by Cosatu vice-president Chris Dlamini, clearly irritated at being asked to decide which was the 'real' one.

A subsequent Cosatu commission was unable to reconcile the two Ccawusa wings and a central executive committee decision to recognise Kganare's union as the 'real' one only served to harden steely attitudes on both sides.

There matters rested until the accidental discovery in November that the 1986 constitution under which all this had taken place had never been officially registered.

A series of tactical ma-

noeuvres by both Ccawusas eventually resulted in the re-unification agreement - an out-of-court settlement accepted as an order of court.

The spirit of the agreement

Both sides agreed to abide by the 'spirit of the agreement', but sniping began almost immediately at the Mtwá group's use of 'apartheid courts' and over who had 'won' the settlement.

To the extent that both sides maintain they have majority support among union members, both stand to lose under the agreement - mainly because re-unification will take place under the 1981 constitution.

This document (with its branch AGMs and eight-delegate-per-branch provisions for national gatherings) provides for a far shakier structure than the invalidated 1986 constitution which was unable to hold the union together last June.

With thousands of members per branch, not all of whom will attend meetings called, the branch AGMs required by the settlement will arguably be substantially unrepresentative. Whoever can bus in the most supporters will win.

And even if the AGMs are accepted as representative, the mediators appointed in terms of the court settlement, Independent Mediation Services of South Africa, face the unenviable possibility of accurately having to count votes which could split 4 999 to 5 001 among 10 000 members.

This is a vital issue given that the AGMs will be electing branch officials and, directly or indirectly, delegates to a national re-unification conference to be held before 15 May.

Similarly the national conference with its 64 delegates will, it could be argued, be substantially unrepresentative of membership opinion. This could be a particular problem for the massive Johannesburg branch, forced to accept voting parity with far smaller branches.

A further factor is that in addition to the 64 delegates, national office-bearers Herbert Mkize and Dinah Nhlapo - both considered Kganare supporters - have voting rights at the conference.

The settlement may be an order of court, but the process is shot through with escape-routes should either side feel sufficiently challenged to want to bail out at any stage with its commitment to 'democracy' still intact.

Both sides are aware of this. The Mtwá group's Kaizer Thibedi has already warned of 'serious consequences' should the other side win formal union endorsement of the Freedom Charter.

To succeed, the process will need a savage commitment to unity at all costs from both sides. It will also require real compromise.

Thibedi argues that, 'for the sake of unity', no contentious political motions be taken to the 15 May meeting ... 'not on the Freedom Charter or on Nactu'.

Similarly, the Kganare wing's Jay Naidoo refers to the need for consensus on the road to unity: 'Our attitude is that we don't want to vote (at the national conference)... You don't build unity by votes'.

Unity at all costs obviously favours such a stance. But both sides emphasise that they cannot control motions which branches send to the national gathering.

Difficulties in re-uniting Ccawusa

In addition to the problems created by the unwieldy 1981 constitution, the re-unification process faces a number of other difficulties.

Cosatu's decision to recognise Kganare's Ccawusa is one of these. That decision was confirmed by the federation's first central executive committee (CEC) after the settlement - arguing that the basis for its original decision had not changed. The original decision had been based on what the CEC believed was anti-Cosatu activity and attitudes within the Mtwá grouping's leadership. This, it argues, was unchanged despite the settlement - itself a source of some difficulty for the CEC, which felt the agreement gave a court order greater status than a ruling by one of the federation's highest decision-making bodies.

Despite this, Cosatu gave its blessing to the re-unification process. The CEC called on Cosatu structures and affiliate unions to assist actively in moving towards a single Ccawusa. The federation will recognise unified branches once the AGMs have taken place, and a national leadership once the national conference is over.

The recognition issue is, however, a source of some grievance within Mtwá's grouping, which argues that as both sides have recognised a single group of national office-bearers - Mtwá, Mkize and Nhlápo - Cosatu should follow suit.

But there are other structural difficulties facing Ccawusa, difficulties which would exist under both the 1981 and the 1986 constitutions.

Under the 1986 procedure, branches attending national gatherings take with them mandates binding on all branch delegates - so even if the issue had been won by one vote in the branch, delegate voting would indicate 100% support from that branch. At the 28 June merger congress, the process was taken a step further - with the entire union tied into a single mandate.

With this mechanism in operation, a situation is conceivable in which a straight member majority manifests itself through block voting as a minority.

Whether this occurred when Ccawusa voted against adopting the Freedom Charter at its final pre-merger congress last June is immaterial. The process itself prevented either

over Ccawusa is not about ideologies with their roots in democratic structures, nor about the right of differing political perspectives to be heard. It suggests completely the reverse: a straight battle for control of the union's central structures.

Neither side is, of course, forced to pull out should it lose on 15 May. It can always stay in the union and fight for adoption of its position.

The problem with the entire process is that if one side chooses not to stay in, preferring to break worker unity, it will be able get out with its public commitment to worker unity and democracy partially intact.

But there is a single but powerful factor which favours the possibility of successful re-unification - Ccawusa mem-



Feeding the Pick 'n Pay sit-in strikers in 1986.

side from demonstrating that it had clear majority support for its position, and the union split in consequence - with each side branding the other as the minority.

The fact that either side was prepared to use the mechanism to impose a conceivably minority policy on the union tends to support the contention that the struggle in and

bers. Only one set of negotiations with management - at Ellerines - was affected by the union break-up into two factions. Elsewhere, Ccawusa members won major victories - gains in minimum wages ranged from 50% at Fedics to 98% at Jazz supermarkets. The workers in Ccawusa themselves seem relatively unaffected by the split.

The recent Natal Indian Congress conference raised some of the democratic movement's thorniest organisational problems. Non-racialism and ethnicity, democracy and 'cabalism', forms of organisation and styles of politics were issues that emerged at the conference and a set of workshops which preceded it. The NIC has not resolved policy on many of these matters, but recognises their current importance. YUNUS CARRIM discusses some of the issues and debates which face the NIC.

The Natal Indian Congress:

Deciding on a new thrust forward

About 300 delegates and observers attended the crucial NIC conference held on 29 November last year. The conference had the status of an annual general meeting - last held in 1978. Eighteen branches and 21 fraternal organisations were present.

A warm message of support was received from the African National Congress. The South African Communist Party also conveyed greetings. Messages were received too from a wide range of organisations inside the country, including the United Democratic Front, Congress of South African Trade Unions, South African Youth Congress, National Education Crisis Committee, South African Council of Churches and Natal Organisation of Women.

Setting the scene

The context for the conference was set at two activist workshops held earlier in the year, which essentially focused on the need for greater democracy within the NIC.

The majority of activists present had emerged from the civic and political campaigns waged from the early 1980s, and were particularly active during the highly successful anti-tricameral parliament election campaign of 1984. They argued that the extent of organisational work they did was not matched by the degree of control they had over the organisation, particularly its executive. They pointed out that several executive members were not active; there was unnecessary factionalism; and there were accusations of domination by a 'cabal' within the NIC.

During the anti-election campaign a number of grassroots structures whose relationship with the executive was not clear had sprung up: area committees, the organising committee, and regional formations which did not have constitutional legitimacy. These structures, appropriate to the particular conditions, had eclipsed the branches, which had become dormant. It was recognised that there was a need to formalise these structures, but also revive the branches.

Activists at the workshops argued that branches based on individual membership were necessary for the executive and other structures to function more democratically and effectively.

Branches, it was argued, would serve to discipline and structure the activities of the activists, and aim to prevent them drifting in and out of the organisation as campaigns surfaced and

* YUNUS CARRIM serves on the NIC executive. While the views expressed here do not necessarily represent the official views of the NIC, the article has been endorsed for publication by the NIC executive in the interests of wider debate and understanding.

disappeared. The formation of branches would also help towards the determination of a long-term strategy for the organisation, instead of it being issue-oriented.

They would furthermore enhance the ability of the NIC to contend with the state of emergency. For the more democratically structured an organisation, the greater its capacity is to withstand repressive conditions. The establishment of branches would also be consistent with the restructuring process that the entire democratic movement is undergoing.

It was decided that as soon as branches were created, the annual general meeting would be held. The constitution would be altered, an executive of people active at grassroots level elected, and the NIC put on a more democratic footing.

There were other pressing needs for the conference to deal with. The NIC had fallen from the heights it had reached at the end of the 1984 anti-election campaign. The community as a whole had retreated following the August 1985 conflict in Inanda and the 'racial incidents' at the Durban beachfront. The state of emergency had altered the political terrain. There was a need therefore to review strategy in the light of changed conditions.

It was decided that the conference would be closed. This was necessary because of the state of emergency conditions; the fact that several leading NIC members are being sought by the security police; and the controversial nature of some of the issues being discussed. A public report-back meeting would be held to seek the community's approval for decisions taken. The closed



Delegates to an Anti-SAIC conference in 1981

nature of the conference aroused heated controversy from some of the less-active executive members - and was offered as a reason for the resignation of two senior officials of the NIC. A third official subsequently claimed that the conference was closed to allow preparation for the NIC's participation in the house of delegates.

In the two weeks leading up to the conference 11 papers were distributed to the branches as the basis for formulating resolutions. These were meant to be taken to important sectors of the community - workers, students, youth, women, businessmen, teachers, doctors, and so on - for feedback and comment. But because of time and other practical constraints this was hardly done.

Reviewing the past

The secretarial report presented to the conference reviewed developments since the last annual general meeting. Three periods were identified. From 1978 to 1983, the key structure of the NIC was its executive. However, a number of new activists began to emerge out of the community struggles over the anti-autonomy campaign in Phoenix, the houses-at-cost and anti-local affairs committee campaigns

in Chatsworth, and the rent and school boycotts. The success of these campaigns contributed to the effective boycott of the South African Indian Council elections in 1981. The NIC played an important role in creating wider non-racial structures, like the Durban Housing Action Committee, Release Mandela Committee and the Anti-Republic Celebrations Committee. But the NIC was severely hampered by the detention and banning of a number of its leading figures during this period.

The second period (1983-84) was one of intense mass activity. The focus was mainly on the anti-tricameral parliament election campaign. There was a major influx of activists into the organisation and new grassroots structures sprang up. A massive door-to-door campaign was undertaken. The report notes that the 'organisation was able to mount innovative methods of struggle, as witnessed in the City Hall demonstration of November 1983 and the occupation of the British Consulate in 1984. Attendance at mass meetings topped 5 000 to 6 000'. The NIC also played a highly significant role in the establishment of the UDF in 1983.

The third period (1985-87)

saw the decline of the NIC and its increasing isolation from the masses. The detention of the leadership; the Pietermaritzburg treason trial; the conflict in Inanda; and the state of emergency contributed to this. But so, importantly, did the subjective weaknesses of the organisation: the division, and lack of discipline and accountability within the organisation. 'Our internal organisation lacked cohesion', the report notes, 'with the result that our structures became distant from the masses'. Much of 1987 was spent re-organising the structures and preparing for a new, more determined push ahead.

For this to happen, 'serious attention will have to be given to our subjective weaknesses. The situation demands an organisation and individuals of a new type'. The basic task of the NIC, according to the secretarial report, is to 'transform the nature of our activity to a more grassroots, mass-based politics which is more actively oppositional to the state'.

Deciding policy

Conference noted that deter-

mined efforts are being made to co-opt the Indian community into the apartheid system. Importantly, it was recognised that the Indian community is somewhat insecure about its future.

However, the conference was clear that the Indian community remains objectively oppressed. Its interests lie in joining with the other communities in creating a non-racial democratic South Africa.

The NIC committed itself to mobilising the Indian community as part of the national democratic struggle based on the demands of the Freedom Charter. Besides organising people into the NIC, it will also channel them into national sector organisations of workers, women, students, youth, civics and so on. A resolution was taken to set up a labour commission and to assist actively in the organisation of Indian workers into Cosatu.

The conference noted the surfacing of anti-Indianism. In particular, it referred to Gatscha Buthelezi's attacks on the NIC and Indians as being responsible for violence in the

townships. It was decided to respond more concertedly to this anti-Indianism, in part by participating with 'even greater vigour' in non-racial unity in action.

The conference decisively rejected the KwaNatal Indaba on the grounds that it involved no prior consultation with the vast majority of the people; it was ethnically based; and it offered a regional rather than a national and unitary solution. The conference instead called for national negotiations between the government and the authentic organisations of the people, in particular the ANC.

Resolutions were passed opposing the state of emergency, joint management centres, the Group Areas Act, and ethnic education. A call was made for sanctions and disinvestment to be applied in such a way that the state, and not the oppressed people, primarily suffer.

The boycott of the house of delegates was unanimously reaffirmed. It was decided to campaign even more determinedly for the social, political and international isolation of participants in the house of delegates. Subsequent speculation on NIC participation in the house of delegates is therefore entirely unfounded.

A resolution was also taken to oppose the regional services councils and to campaign against the 1988 municipal elections. A call was made too for a national health service, and for more land and housing.

Exhaustive resolutions were passed on the position of women, calling for their full mobilisation and organisation. Sexism both within the NIC and the wider society had to be addressed. The creation of a women's sub-committee



Durban, November 1983 - Protests against tri-cameral structures

within the NIC was suggested.

Various resolutions dealing with internal organisational tasks were also passed. The constitution was altered to provide for an expanded executive committee of 23 people and a working committee comprising the executive and two people representing each branch. It is expected that between general conferences the working committee will be the key NIC decision-making body.

The structural position of the Indian community

The NIC now has the important task of translating its conference resolutions into practice. But this cannot be done blindly. The NIC will have to be acutely sensitive to the present mood of the Indian people. It will also firmly have to come to terms with the present structural position of the Indian community.

Despite the enormous disparities of wealth within the Indian community and the existence of a substantial working class, the community as a whole has significantly improved its material position since the heyday of the NIC in the 1940s and 1950s. After the whites, it is the Indian community that has benefitted most from the economic boom of the 1960s.

Indian education has improved significantly over the years, despite its present crisis, particularly with the house of delegates take-over. Besides state support, the community itself has invested considerably in education.

Although still clearly inferior to white education, it is substantially superior to 'Bantu Education' - and has opened many doors of advancement for the community.

The majority of the Indian community is still working class, even if it is in general a relatively privileged layer. But the overall composition of the community has changed in a way that separates it significantly from the other oppressed groups, especially the African community.

The NIC will have to be sensitive to the present mood of the Indian people.

The entrenchment of the Group Areas Act and other aspects of social segregation since the 1950s moreover has led to the alienation of the Indian from the African community.

This has been exacerbated by the Inanda and Durban beachfront events; the increase in crime that has coincided with the economic recession; Inka-tha's continual verbal assaults on Indians; and the increasing violence in the townships.

The state has waged a persistent ideological struggle to reinforce the ethnocentrism of the Indian community and keep it apart from the African community. Hindi and Arabic, rather than Zulu, are offered at schools. Pupils are also given a half-day off in mourning for Indira Gandhi's death. 'Indian culture' is given concerted encouragement.

The Indian community has in this context become somewhat anxious about its future. There is a certain uneasè about a non-racial democracy in which the African people will have the main say.

But on the other hand the community is clearly opposed

to white domination - most especially as it affects Indians. The community does not support the tricameral parliament, the local affairs committees, and the basic content of the apartheid system. Even its most privileged strata suffer racial humiliation and have elements of discontent with the system. There is a moral imperative in the community that cannot reconcile itself with the oppression, particularly of the African people, intrinsic to apartheid.

And the NIC, despite its present difficulties, continues to retain a certain credibility in the community, drawing people of considerably better quality and greater respectability than those who participate in apartheid institutions.

Given the structural location of the Indian community in South African society, its status as a minority, and its particular experiences, its anxieties are understandable. Its 'minority syndrome' has a material basis. It is not for the NIC to apologise for this, or to evade it. The NIC must directly address the community's anxieties, and raise these for discussion within the democratic movement as a whole. All sections can then assess the situation and contribute towards the determination of strategies and tactics to mobilise and organise the Indian community.

The Indian community has an important contribution to make in the creation of a non-racial democracy. It occupies a crucial position in the political economy of Natal. The creativity, energies and skills of the community are vital to a post-apartheid society. Through the NIC the community has, particularly since the late 1940s, made a signal contribution to

the wider Congress tradition. More recently the NIC has played a crucial role in the revival of the Congress tradition and the formation of the UDF.

The Indian community has to be won over unambiguously to the non-racial democratic struggle. The state's attempts at co-opting the community must be defeated. The task of the NIC is to make the community understand that it will never enjoy parity with whites under an apartheid regime. The only answer to its subjugation is a non-racial democracy. The community has, more recently, as the economic recession has begun to bite deeper, experienced a decline in its living standards. The NIC has to show it that its conditions will worsen under apartheid. It is only by uniting with the other oppressed communities and establishing a non-racial democracy that its position will improve. The community cannot, in the long term, thrive in a violent and unstable society. It is therefore in its objective interests to seek a non-racial democratic society. Only in such a society can its future be secured.

The 'I' in NIC

In view of the particular position of the Indian community, the legitimacy of the 'I' in the NIC is not being questioned. It is certainly not regarded as obsolete. There is general agreement among the activists that a specifically Indian congress is an appropriate form of organising, given the particular consciousness of the Indian community at present. Increasing insecurity of the community has more recently reinforced the need for this form of organisation. Conference decided that

there was no need for the NIC to apologise for its role despite the criticism of both the extreme right and left. The NIC would however 'remain in constant consultation with the democratic movement on its role'.

The Indian community has an important contribution to make in the creation of a non-racial democracy.

The NIC argues that there is a significant enough unevenness in the degree and form of oppression, the level of consciousness, and the extent and form of organisation between the different communities to warrant its role. If the Indian community is to be mobilised, this must be on the basis of its specific oppression and material conditions

If the majority of the Indian community and not just its most advanced section is to be mobilised, then organisation must begin from where the masses are. The anxieties of the community have already been spelt out above. Any organisation that wants to win the majority of Indians decisively into the struggle must draw them along gradually towards the mainstream of struggle. It cannot leap far ahead of the community, or it will never create a mass base.

Members of the community have a strong sense of being Indian. They do not have an inherent non-racial consciousness, and have to be won over

to non-racialism through active struggle and concerted organisation. The goal of non-racialism must not be confused with the present starting point, argues the NIC.

People are most effectively and democratically drawn into struggle in their immediate locality and over issues that directly affect them. The Group Areas Act - and other apartheid legislation that affects different communities differently - means that the issues around, and the way in which the different communities are mobilised are significantly different. In the circumstances, it would be unwieldy and discordant to force this diversity into a single organisation. It would be abstract, and represent an empty, formal gesture of non-racialism.

There remains a need for an organisation rooted in the concrete conditions of the Indian community, with a strategy based on this. But such an organisation must be part of a larger structure that draws in all the communities around the common goals of creating a non-racial democracy. Through its participation in the UDF, the NIC serves to do this.

The NIC emphatically rejects the argument that it is 'ethnic'. It sees this as a crude and simplistic contention. To determine whether an organisation is 'ethnic', it is not enough to look at its form or appearance only. It is necessary to look also at its content or essence - its principles, aims, the content of its politics, and its activity. The NIC can by no means be considered 'ethnic' in terms of these criteria.

At the most basic level the NIC points out that its

membership is not restricted to Indians. The name 'NIC' has been retained because of its historical significance and the international recognition accorded to it. And it is the only organisation of the Congress Alliance which still legally functions within South Africa. The NIC believes that it is therefore politically useful to retain its name for the present.

The existence of the NIC is consistent with the wider Congress tradition. The strength of this tradition is precisely that while it is firm in principle it allows flexibility in tactics and organisational forms.

This is not to deny that some of the symbols used by the NIC and some of its practices may have served to reinforce an ethnic consciousness. Perhaps more could have been done to give a wider South African content to its activity. And perhaps more should be done to assert the profile of the UDF in the Indian community. These issues must be discussed and debated.

Changes are called for. At the conference, the NIC recognised the importance of directing its members to participate actively in the various national sector organisations. But all this does not detract from the fundamental need to retain the 'I' of NIC in the present circumstances.

This does not mean that the NIC as a specific organisation need always exist. It can in the long term contribute to its own demise. The ideal conditions for this would be: a substantial mass base; a sufficiently advanced political consciousness amongst its members; altered material conditions; a change in the political terrain; and the emergence of a legal national

political organisation.

Organising the community

While the NIC addresses itself to the community as a whole, it is likely to focus on specific sectors in the immediate future.

At the November conference, the NIC committed itself to addressing the Indian workers more directly, and assist particularly in organising them into Cosatu unions. Conditions have not been better for this. With the disbanding of Tucsa, the stranglehold of the established unions on Indian workers has been broken. Workers in many of these unions, as well as unorganised workers, have seen the gains made by Cosatu unions, and are showing an increasing willingness to join them. Mergers have already taken place, especially in the textile and garment sectors, to facilitate this process.

The motivation of these workers for joining Cosatu is often highly economic. But if they actively participate in union activity, they are likely in time to come to acquire greater self-confidence and leadership skills, and develop their political consciousness. They could then, if appropriate, be drawn into the structures of the NIC and give it a new thrust.

The shop floor is a very important terrain for forging non-racial unity. Here workers from different communities rub shoulders, and can be relatively easily mobilised into a single organisational structure, especially where they share similar conditions. It is through winning concrete demands in practical struggles together, and through unity in action, that trust can be built and non-racialism forged. This

is a more materially-based approach to securing unity than relying on abstract rhetorical appeals and moral injunctions at political rallies.

But if the workplace has an enormous potential to unite workers from different communities it can also cause serious racial divisions. If one section of workers strike and the other scabs, enormous racial tension can be created. This is another reason why the NIC has to be more sensitive to dynamics on the shop floor.

But the NIC must also have a commitment to the working class because it acknowledges the leading role of this class in the national democratic struggle. The NIC concedes that there is not significant working-class participation in its structures - unlike the 1940s and 1950s. The infusion of workers into its ranks could markedly alter the calibre of the NIC.

The other major sector of the Indian community is its youth. A significantly high proportion of the community is made up of people under 25 years of age. The young people are more open-minded and socially aware than many of their elders. With increasing social desegregation in recent years, they are being brought up in a racially less rigid society. Objectively they have a greater stake in a peaceful, non-racial future - and so have the potential for being comparatively easily organised. The student sector is also under-organised, and has to be given urgent attention.

Civic organisations in the community are relatively well organised. Although NIC activists are prominent in many of these civic associations, they remain aloof from political issues. In the long term,

A new thrust forward



House of Delegates parliamentary by-election in Lenasia in August 1987: Many helpers and a large military and police presence, but very few voters.

there will have to be some bridging of the gap between civic and political issues. A major campaign of the NIC this year is likely to be a boycott of the October municipal elections.

Education is another vital sector. It has a strong meaning for the community, and teachers constitute a significant group. With the persistent struggle against ethnic education, it has been very much in the spotlight. The NIC is likely to give more concerted attention to this sector.

The NIC also has to develop greater and more consistent contact with the intelligentsia, and orientate them towards a post-apartheid society.

But the potential to organise these various sectors cannot be exaggerated either. Their organisation, as well as the fulfilment of other vital tasks of the NIC, will take a considerable time to achieve, especially given the state of emergency conditions and the

fact that key activists are on the run from the police. If the NIC ultimately finds that it cannot break down the conservatism of the Indian community in general, would it not be more productive to focus on certain key sectors? Perhaps they could be mobilised on the basis of politics that derives a greater impetus from the African community than is the case if the whole community is addressed? These are issues that the NIC may have to consider in the future.

The need for greater democracy

Criticisms of the NIC often confuse arguments about ethnicity with the failure of the NIC to develop a sufficiently strong mass base, particularly among workers; the class basis of its leadership; the lack of a deeply-rooted enough democratic practice; and a certain monopoly of resources and skills. Although some of these problems are to an extent

related to the constituency the NIC organises, they do not automatically flow from the fact that the NIC organises the Indian community. It is possible to address these difficulties without the NIC having to abandon its organisation of the Indian community.

The NIC is committed to responding to these difficulties. With due regard to organisational needs, it is likely in the months ahead to open up discussion on these issues within its structures. There is a recognition that the NIC has not always functioned democratically. Certain individuals coming together have exercised undue influence on its activities. The leadership has been disunited. Personality conflicts have been rife.

The lack of internal democracy has contributed to its decline. And it has also had an effect on the wider democratic movement because of the NIC's relationship with the UDF, particularly in Natal.

Many of these difficulties are not peculiar to the NIC. In different forms most political organisations, in this country and elsewhere, have had to deal with similar problems.

Events have also objectively contributed to the organisation's failure to entrench democracy: the detentions of leaders at the height of the 1984 anti-election campaign; the energies consumed through the consulate siege; the treason trial; the setbacks of the Inanda and Durban beachfront confrontations; the state of emergency; and the outbreak of violence in the townships.

The existence of 'cabalism' has to be rooted out of course. It is important however not to confuse the practice of democracy within a broad political organisation with 'cabalism'. The NIC seeks to organise all classes and strata of people. Anybody who accepts the Freedom Charter and the basic principles, policies and traditions of the Congress movement is accepted as a member.

But the interests of the different sectors organised into the NIC are not always the same. Within a generally accepted framework, there will be different currents of thinking around which groups of people might converge.

Most political organisations have a 'left', a 'centre' and a 'right'. In the National Party there were the 'verligtes' and 'verkrampes'. The British Conservative Party has 'moderates' and 'wets'. The ANC has 'nationalists' and 'socialists'.

Provided that they operate within an accepted framework and are not divisive, the existence of these 'tendencies' should be welcome in any

democratic political organisation. They must however abide by the norms of democratic practice, which would distinguish them from 'cabals'. But their right to exist should not be used as a rationalisation for 'cabalism', which is anti-democratic and highly destructive to the organisation.

Many questions raised about the NIC reflect the complexity of the South African struggle, and point to the difficulties in creating true non-racialism and democracy.

A single event will not solve the contradictions of internal democracy. But the NIC conference is a significant step in the direction of greater democratisation of the organisation. Precisely where this will be taken is not clear at this stage. But discussion has opened out on further changes to the NIC's structures.

It is important that the executive comprises people active at grassroots level. One suggestion to ensure this is that while all the delegates at the AGM should elect the eight office bearers, the remaining executive members should be elected as branch nominations. Each branch would therefore be represented on the executive and would decide who should represent it.

Resolutions at the con-

ference on 'organising strategy' and 'style of work' stressed the need for the fullest democratic practice and the accountability of all members to the organisation and the mass of people. The Working Committee was directed to formulate an appropriate code of conduct for activists.

To the extent that the NIC deepens its democratic practice the question of monopoly of skills and resources can be addressed. This is mainly a problem at the subjective level. But it also reflects the objective situation: NIC activists often have more formal education, more developed skills in certain respects, and greater freedom to operate politically compared to people in the townships.

In addition, the difficulties in establishing structures in the townships, particularly because of the presence of Inkatha, has reinforced dependence on the NIC. The more democratic structures are entrenched in the townships the easier it will become to attend to these problems.

The issues surrounding skills and resources apply to many organisations in this country and elsewhere in the world. In the South African context they take a racial form and are therefore more sensitive. But they must be addressed in their wider general context as well.

Many of the questions raised about the NIC reflect the complexity of the South African struggle, and point to the difficulties in creating true non-racialism and democracy. They have lessons to offer the entire democratic movement. And the challenges they pose will ultimately have to be addressed by the democratic movement as a whole.

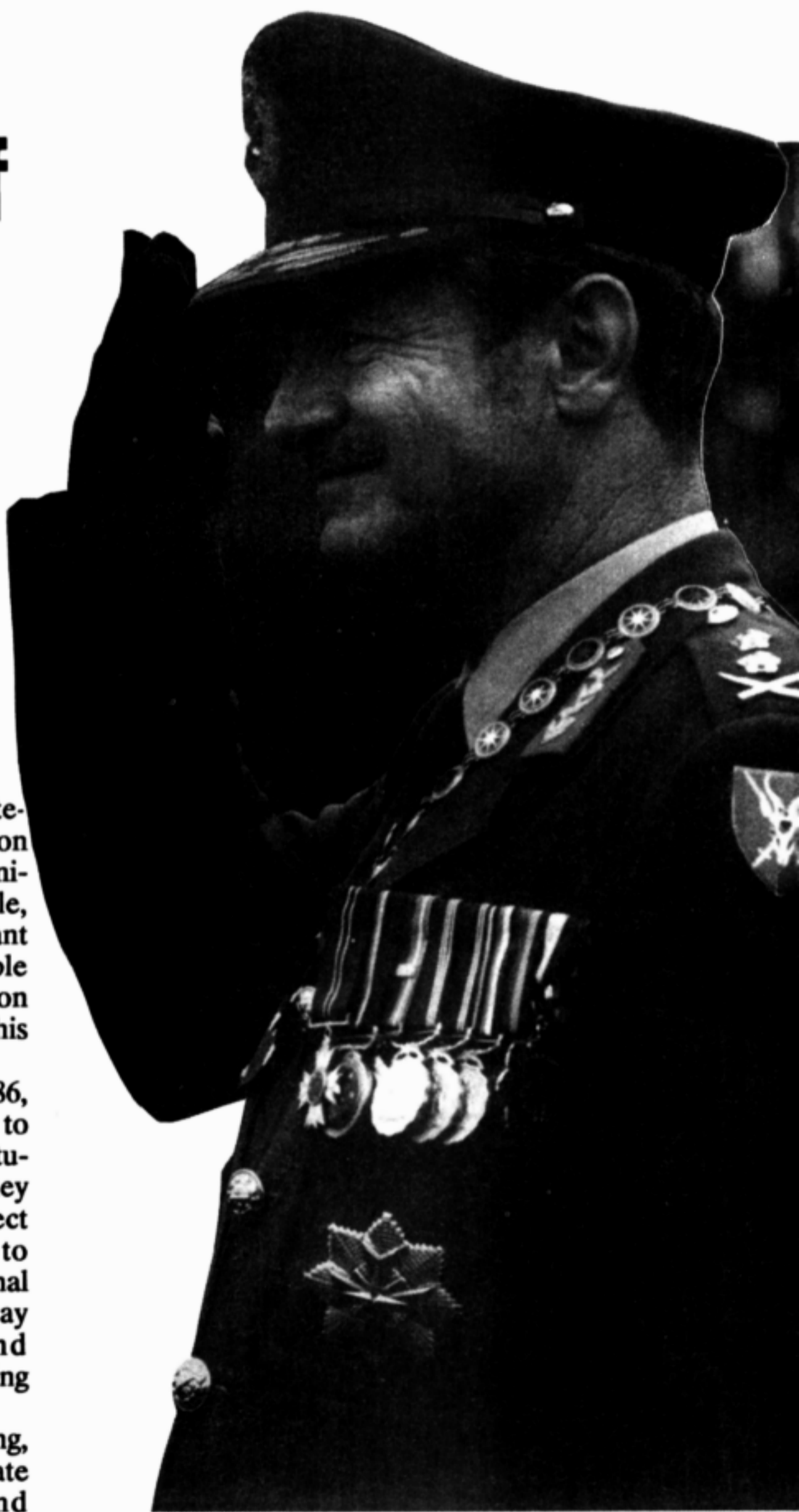
The state of the state and the state of resistance

Militarists currently hold power within the state. But could this give way to a reformist group open to a negotiated settlement of the South African conflict, especially after PW Botha's retirement? IVOR SARAKEYSKY thinks this is unlikely unless state reformists in the state increase in number and develop institutional power bases.

The state's counter-revolutionary strategy has imposed severe constraints on popular community and political organisations. Mark Swilling's *WIP 50* article, 'The politics of negotiation', is important because it raises questions about possible responses to the limitations imposed on the extra-parliamentary opposition by this counter-revolutionary strategy.

Swilling argues that prior to April 1986, reformers within the state had come to the fore in the department of constitutional development and planning. They had 'gained control of almost every aspect of black life' and were attempting to incorporate local authorities into regional services councils (RSCs), move away from the bantustan policies, and dismantle influx control while negotiating with certain community organisations.

After April 1986, according to Swilling, the militarists, represented by the state president, minister of defence and



minister of law and order, replaced the reformers as the dominant bloc within the state. The Eminent Persons Group (EPG) mission collapsed because the militarists, by bombing frontline states and activating the National Security Management System (NSMS), made it clear that they were not prepared to negotiate a settlement to the South and Southern African conflict.

The militarist faction believed that internal and external opposition to apartheid could be controlled or eliminated by coercion.

They put forward a three-stage theory of counter-revolution. This firstly involved the re-establishment of law and order in the townships. The Joint Management Centres (JMCs) and mini-JMCs were to play an important role at the local level in isolating or eliminating activists as well as destroying community structures such as street and area committees.

The second stage, closely related to the first, was to facilitate the socio-economic reconstruction of the townships, removing the causes of unrest and undermining activists by eliminating the real grievances around which they mobilised communities. The RSCs were to play a crucial role in 'creaming off' finances from richer white local authorities for this socio-economic development. At the same time Escom and the department of finance made huge amounts of money available for such projects.

The third stage was simply termed 'constitutional reform'. No details were provided other than the proposed National Statutory Council (NSC).

With the declaration of the second state of emergency, the state began to implement the first stage of its counter-revolutionary strategy. Swilling is ambiguous about the effects this had on extra-parliamentary opposition. At one point he asserts that the liberation movement has 'strengthened and consolidated its political and organisational structures'. But elsewhere he claims that 'local-level grassroots organisations were badly hit by repression'. Nonetheless, there is a broad consensus that state action has severely curtailed the activities of opposition organisations.

Swilling is correct to argue that the militarist response shows they believe the political crisis was caused by socio-economic factors and agitators; while reformers see it being caused by the lack of political rights for blacks. But he is wrong to present an optimistic view of the possibility of open-ended negotiations and the re-emergence of reformers as the dominant force in the state.

Particular policies put forward or implemented in one state institution may conflict with or contradict policy priorities of other institutions. And officials have different views as to how best to cope with issues directly affecting their area of administration. The ambiguities and differences in various state department programmes must be discussed within this broad and general framework.

Militarists in power

For Swilling, April 1986 is the crossroads for state policy, when militarists removed reformers from their dominant position within the state. Having consolidated their position

within the state, they activated their counter-revolutionary strategy.

But this does not account for the dominance which the repressive arm of the state, particularly the military, acquired as a result of state restructuring which began in the late 1970s.

The most important aspect of state restructuring was, with PW Botha's accession to the leadership of the NP, the establishment of the NSMS as well as the consolidation of the military and pro-Botha elements in the state security council, which was established in 1972. All intelligence operations were centralised under military control. By the end of the 1970s the military had emerged as the dominant state institution and played a crucial role in policy formation due to its position on the SSC, and no policy could be implemented without SSC approval.

While the structures for what are now called JMCs were set in place some time ago, they were only activated to deal with the particular form of township resistance which emerged in 1982 as a result of state attempts to impose local authorities on townships.

Security was the backbone of state restructuring which began in the late 1970s, and is still the foundation of state policy.

Swilling implies that before the EPG visit, reformers were as, if not more, influential within the state as the militarists. They were not. But this does not detract from the significance of the constitutional and structural changes which they implemented. However, reformers' activities in the department of constitutional development and planning were, to a large degree, reliant

on the consent of the SSC.

This gives a clearer understanding of why the EPG mission failed. The SSC had decided the state was militarily self-sufficient and could defend itself; sanctions-busting networks had been established and loyal countries such as Taiwan, Israel, Chile and Paraguay could be relied upon for import and export networks as well as technology transfers.

Thus sanctions, if imposed, would hurt. But they would not seriously weaken the state. It was therefore decided to 'go it alone' by implementing policies which would seriously weaken extra-parliamentary opposition while allowing the state to pursue its own course without foreign interference.

With the collapse of the EPG mission, state reform policy became clearer. Reform was mainly understood in terms of socio-economic reconstruction, and can be traced back to the Riekert commission report of 1979. The tri-cameral parliament, local authorities and RSCs were never intended to incorporate the previously-unfranchised into decision making. The President's Council, the power of the state president and the structure of the RSCs show how white dominance has been restructured within the state.

Stellenbosch University academics were important in formulating and popularising a reform initiative. However, Stellenbosch Professor Hennie Kotze recently suggested that from as early as 1981 it is questionable whether the NP was committed to meaningful reform. And as far back as March 1987, another Stellenbosch academic, Sampie Terreblanche, argued that 'the

reform strategy was little more than a public relations exercise to improve the image of apartheid and not endanger the Afrikaner'. More recently, Terreblanche has referred to state policy as 'the government's ill-conceived reform programme' and stated that even this has 'ground to a standstill'.

So the EPG mission collapsed not only because of the reasons outlined above, but also because dominant state institutions had already decided not to relinquish or dilute white dominance of state power.



When PW goes

The military and other repressive apparatuses are the most influential in formulating and implementing state policy. The small number of officials in the reformist camp are on the fringes of, or even marginalised from, institutional power where important decision making takes place.

This view is confirmed by the former editor of *Rapport*, and brother of Transvaal NP leader FW de Klerk, Willem de Klerk. He estimates that there are only 18 radical reformists in the NP caucus, and four in the cabinet, only one of

whom sits on the SSC. De Klerk acknowledges that 'this is not an impressive figure'.

In *WIP 50* Swilling does not examine the institutional structure of the state. Nor does he evaluate the reformers' institutional power (or lack of it). This allows him to claim that with PW Botha's retirement from the presidency, there is a chance of the reformers emerging as a powerful caucus within the state.

No doubt PW Botha's personality has played a significant role in shaping contemporary politics. But irrespective of who is president, the repressive wing of the state will still be influential.

For the reformers to emerge as a significant force, institutional restructuring will be necessary to enable them to pursue and implement their constitutional proposals, which are not yet clear. Alternatively, the reformers could consolidate if the militarists re-thought their policy and opted for constitutional reform. But this option seems very unlikely in the near future.

Another aspect of Swilling's argument which is misleading is his characterisation of the state as split along a single axis: that is, a single tension between militarists and reformers.

This ignores significant differences and tensions within these camps. The recent retirements of Constand Viljoen of the SADF and Johan Coetzee, commissioner of police, are evidence of these tensions. Viljoen was probably to the right of mainstream thinking within the state. And Coetzee was reportedly severely criticised for advocating a policy allowing radical

organisations to continue operating - albeit under strict constraints. Coetzee's thinking seems to reject the banning of organisations, as this forces them underground. His was a strategy of containment, severely hindering organisational consolidation by continually removing leadership. Nonetheless, both Viljoen and Coetzee fall into the 'militarist' camp.

Tensions also exist within the reform camp. This is evident within state departments: for example between minister Chris Heunis and his deputy, Stoffel van der Merwe, who is a strong PW Botha supporter. Van der Merwe, described as a 'radical' in the state by Swilling, is on record as defending the same three-stage theory of counter-revolution set out by Law and Order Minister Adriaan Vlok.

But in recent interviews, both Heunis and Van der Merwe put forward the same model for constitutional development. Both present a consociational model based on group rights which will, according to them, prevent one group dominating another. Blacks are divided along ethnic and regional lines. This idea seems to be the foundation for future reform - the proposed NSC - and again illustrates the dominant bloc's reluctance to consider real reform seriously.

Swilling is correct to point to the radically different agendas which some members of the reform camp hold. But he does not clarify what he means by reform. This makes it difficult to identify who the real reformers are

and what institutional power they hold.

With the mini-split in the NP, many of the most radical MPs, state functionaries and party ideologues such as the Stellenbosch academics, left the party. The implication is that few *real* reformers remain active within the state, further weakening an already marginalised pressure group.

Swilling discusses the state in terms of reformers and militarists. This obscures the relationship between state institutions such as foreign affairs, finance, the President's Council and the tri-cameral parliament, and the more influential military-oriented institutions and less influential reform-oriented institutions such as the department of constitutional development and planning.

These complex networks are difficult to unravel. But to see the state in terms of reformers and militarists prevents a discussion of other important state institutions and the effects that their different policies have on each other.

been achieved. The Pietermaritzburg townships may be an exception to this: there the state seems to see conflict between Inkatha and the UDF/Cosatu as in its interests. But in general 'law and order' has been re-imposed.

It is unclear whether the state has the economic resources to remove grassroots grievances. Significant socio-economic development has taken place in townships like Alexandra. But the state does have limited resources. Township upgrading will thus only occur in areas which the JMCs have pinpointed as being militant and having strong community organisations.

Repression thus still forms the keystone of state policy, and due to economic and political restraints the state does not seem to be moving beyond the first stage of counter-revolution.

The state's free market-oriented privatisation programme to stimulate growth and decrease unemployment is partly an attempt to avoid the glaring political questions it faces. In this way it is

attempting to define political rights in economic free-market terms.

This situation is similar to Chile where a top-heavy regime, protected by a highly repressive state machine, has implemented 'free-market' policies to avoid political questions. It may be significant that the new commissioner of police, General De

Witt, recently visited Chile on a good-will mission and that Pretoria has cordial relations with Santiago.



Law and order has been restored

Three stages of counter-revolution

The first stage in the state's counter-revolution has largely

Seizure of power or negotiations?

Swilling begins his discussion by commenting on those who simply see the state in terms of repression and see social change occurring by a revolutionary seizure of power and smashing of the present state. He says such views are cynical and out of touch.

This may be so, but in terms of liberation movements' revolutionary rhetoric since 1963, this has been the dominant theme in their programmes. That is, until a very recent policy statement made by a high-ranking cadre.

Despite the strong possibility that negotiation has always been on the agenda of the liberation movements, it has only recently been openly discussed. This same senior member of the liberation movement referred to above, is reported to have said as far back as February 1985 that the armed struggle is not aimed at the seizure of the state but to force the ruling group to the negotiating table.

This assumes the state will have to be forced into negotiation, that it will not (at the moment) consider negotiations as an avenue of conflict resolution.

In opposition to this view, Swilling cites the case of Stoffel van der Merwe making overtures to the UDF. Swilling also refers to 'senior officials in reformist circles' who argue for an open-ended negotiation agenda. No doubt this is true, but the real significance of such views within the state can only be measured in terms of the institutional and numerical strength which such officials possess. Swilling does not in any way *demonstrate* the significance of this group and

seems to deduce a general trend in state circles from a few isolated and ambiguous statements.

Swilling also conflates two levels of negotiation, the local and the national. At a national level, there is no strong indication of the state's willingness to negotiate. And in terms of its power and success in containing internal and externally-based opposition, why should it? Negotiations only occur when a previously dominant party sees itself losing or running out of options. Neither applies to the regime at present.

At a local level, negotiations have taken place between community-based organisations and sectors of the local state. But there are limits to what this can achieve. Such negotiations also limit the possibility of a nationally co-ordinated response. Important issues which are specific to a particular area dominate the agenda. And local-level negotiations occur where the state is at its strongest, where the JMCs and mini-JMCs can easily intervene at the expense of community-based organisations.

No negotiations without power

Advocating negotiations while assuming the state's good faith, engages the regime where it is strongest. For the state determines the arena in which the extra-parliamentary opposition operates, and so can use negotiations to achieve its own particular strategic objectives.

There is no reason for the state to negotiate in good faith, unless national and community-based organisations have institutionalised bargaining power through their

strategic intervention in state structures. This could be done by, for example, putting candidates forward for tri-cameral and local authority elections. To negotiate without an institutionalised or any other power-base means negotiations occur directly on the state's terrain.

Even if national or local-level opposition organisations can establish this kind of power-base, there is still no guarantee that the state will negotiate in good faith. But access to institutionalised power, in the form of procedure and legislation, could provide organisations with both an unstable legal institutional foundation and a platform for blocking or hindering the legislative and procedural intentions of dominant groups within the state. This could give opposition groups some bargaining power at a local and national level.

Meaningful social change will only be achieved by a strong, organised and democratic mass-based movement. All means available to help with such consolidation and growth should be carefully explored and debated. This flexibility seems to be emerging and is definitely a positive development.

Sampie Terreblanche has recently commented that reform has been deferred in favour of economic revival. He also suggested that the misguided economic policies announced by State President PW Botha will further delay economic recovery. If this is the case, any constitutional change envisaged by 'reformers' is not on the short-term agenda. This must even further weaken the 'open-ended negotiation' lobby in which Swilling puts so much faith.

According to SARS monitoring*, 28 480 workers were involved in strikes and work stoppages during the period mid-October to 19 February 1988.

The largest number of strikes and disputes were in the metal, motor and engineering sectors. Numsa was the union most often involved, with a few disputes conducted by other IMF-affiliated unions. This sector makes up approximately 10,5% of all unionised workers in Cosatu and Nactu.

Most strikes recorded were of short duration, averaging three days to a week, with the exception of the national Ellerines strike which lasted six weeks.

Wage negotiations

Over 20 unions covering most economic sectors were involved in wage negotiations during the period. A large number of strikes and disputes were accordingly over wages and working conditions. In a number of cases managements gave way to union pressure, improving their wage-increase offers or acceding to some union demands. Examples are Ellerines and Southern Suns.

Harwu managed to secure a favourable agreement with Southern Suns and Holiday Inns: four months paid maternity leave; 12 days leave for pre- and post-natal care; a 13th cheque for workers with four years service and over; abolition of split shift; and a R500 minimum wage.

The settlement between CCAWUSA and Ellerines provided a minimum wage of R441 to R705 in five job categories; and reduced sales targets from R3 400 a month to R2 500 a month.

These sets of negotiations were conducted on a national level.

Hardening management attitudes

Although some unions scored victories in wage negotiations, the hard-line attitude adopted by management during the miners' strike last year surfaced in other cases. Highveld Steel and Vanadium locked out and dismissed 4 000 workers before they could go on a legal strike. Workers decided to return to work on management's terms.

During last year's mine strike, miners were also forced to return to work without much gain. And although the strike was legal, more than 50 000 miners were dismissed - most are still trying to get their jobs back.

In both these cases the union followed the correct procedures to embark on a legal strike.

This year, several other companies - Associated Furniture, Cemenco, Kohler Xactics, Rand Window Cleaners and SA Timber and Joinery Works - locked out striking and

protesting workers. The new Labour Relations Amendment Bill, if passed, will support and further entrench this trend towards a hard-line attitude by management.

National bargaining and maternity benefits

National bargaining is an issue that unions are striving for: currently this involves Ppawu at Nampak Mills; and Fawu at Sasco and Tiger Oats. Ccawusa has won the right to negotiate at a national level at most major chain stores in the industry: Checkers, Pick 'n Pay and OK Bazaars.

The demand for maternity leave has become an integral part of wage negotiations. Unions, particularly in the metal and commercial catering sectors, have won major victories in this area. Ccawusa negotiated South Africa's first full maternity agreement with OK Bazaars in 1984 which included 12 months unpaid leave. A more comprehensive agreement was concluded between Ccawusa and Metro in 1985 which included among other things 12 months maternity leave with seven of the 12 months on 33% pay, three days paid paternity leave and time off for breast-feeding and ante- and post-natal care.

Because of the predominance of women workers in the commercial catering sector, Ccawusa has made great strides regarding parental rights. The union is currently involved in parental rights negotiations with Pick 'n Pay and Checkers' managements.

The metal sector saw an important breakthrough in 1987 with the first national industry-wide maternity agreement between Seifsa and unions party to the Industrial Council for the Iron, Steel, Engineering and Metallurgical Industries.

An agreement concluded last year in the chemical sector between the CWIU and Caltex Oil, provided for six-months maternity leave (of which five months are paid), and one day's paternity leave.

In the courts

Most cases referred to the industrial court since October last year concerned unfair dismissals. Rulings during this period appear not to have favoured unions. In most cases recorded the court ruled against the union. Some examples where workers' dismissals were upheld: Spekenam - 500 workers (Fawu); President Brand Gold mine - 73 workers (NUM); Bax Brothers - 40 workers (Cawu).

It appears that the number of supreme court orders against unions are on the increase. At least six unions, together with individual members, received court interdicts

restraining them from calling strikes or intimidating other workers.

The courts have also not been lenient in cases of public violence during strikes. In November last year 22 Ccawusa members were sentenced to three years' imprisonment each for public violence during a 1986 legal strike at OK Bazaars. And a Nels Dairy worker was sentenced to death for the murder of a worker killed during a strike in 1986.

Sympathy strikes

Growing worker solidarity was evident as workers displayed a willingness to take action in support of colleagues. The largest number of strikes and stoppages for the period concerned the dismissal of colleagues. In over 95% of the cases recorded, management gave in to worker pressure and either re-instated or re-employed dismissed workers; suspended the dismissal order; or the matter was referred to arbitration.

There were sympathy strikes at the Cemenco group of companies and at Checkers stores on two different occasions. More than 18 Checkers stores went on strike over the dismissal of a worker at the Evander store. The second Checkers strike, over a dismissal at Emmarentia, was supported by workers at several Checkers stores on the Reef and Pretoria.

This form of solidarity action has become common practice in the commercial catering and food sectors over the last 18 months: in a Fawu action at SAB in June 1987, workers at plants in the Cape and Witwatersrand went on strike in support of workers at Rosslyn; during the OK strike by Ccawusa members between December 1986 and January 1987, Fawu members refused to deliver goods to OK outlets; and in Fawu's strike at Clover in 1986, Clover workers at many depots went on strike in solidarity with Pietermaritzburg Clover workers. The proposed Labour Relations Amendment Bill rules out such sympathy strikes.

The public sector

The public sector, following suit from last year's upsurge in industrial action, was involved in at least seven strikes. Most strikes in this sector were at town councils and involved the National Union of Public Service Workers.

Public sector strikes were mainly over union recognition, wages, working conditions and re-instatement of dismissed colleagues. Worker militancy and organisation has continued to grow in this sector since the Sats and post office strikes last year. This sector is still not covered by the Industrial Relations Act, and until recently was noted for its lack

of industrial unrest.

Although small and few in number, the municipal strikes are as significant as the major public sector strikes in terms of worker solidarity and militancy. Throughout 1987 there were strikes by municipal and town council workers and this trend appears to be continuing. The formation of two unions covering public sector workers, Samwu and the NUPSW, makes it possible to envisage future national activity in this sector.

Contributing to the already-tense situation in the public sector is the threat by more than 200 000 white Federation of Trade Union members to strike in protest against the government wage freeze.

Another important sector that came into focus in mid-1987 is agriculture. Management has adopted a very harsh

approach towards unions and workers who belong to unions. In June last year Sapekoe Tea Estate dismissed 900 workers who were on strike demanding union recognition, and better wages and working conditions. In December 1987, Crookes Brothers' 400 sugar cane workers went on strike in solidarity with a detained co-worker. In both instances workers were forcibly evicted from their compounds.

Retrenchments in mining and building

The mining sector has been relatively quiet since the wage strike last year. But thousands of miners have been retrenched on gold and coal mines and the NUM believes more retrenchments are expected during 1988. The building and construction sector was also hit with retrenchments. At least 1 216 workers at nine building and construction companies were retrenched in the period reviewed.

Despite setbacks through dismissals and retrenchments, the labour movement is expanding. Cosatu's current recorded membership stands at approximately 874 023, which is 74 023 up on its recorded membership at the same time last year. Cosatu claims the increase is actually higher, as affiliates have not submitted up-to-date figures. Nactu's membership stands at approximately 450 000 which is 70 000 up on last year's figures.

Almost every single strike recorded during the period would have been an offence, had it taken place under the conditions of the proposed Labour Relations Amendment Bill. This may be an indication of the state's determination to control and undermine the progressive labour movement.

* SARS monitoring is based largely on press reports and information from trade unions. It is not comprehensive.

Union briefs

Samwu

On 25 October 1987 five municipal unions merged to form the 200 000-strong South African Municipal workers union (Samwu). Samwu comprised the former Cape Town Municipal Workers Union of South Africa and the municipal members of the Transport and General Workers Union, South African Allied Workers Union and General Workers Union of South Africa. At the Samwu launch, resolutions were passed on sexual discrimination, the right to strike, the campaign for a living wage, non-racialism, military conscription and the migrant labour and hostel systems. The congress elected Petrus Mashishi of Johannesburg as chairman, Joseph Spambo of Natal as vice-chairman, Sidney Adams of Cape Town as treasurer, and John Erntzen of Cape Town as general secretary. Samwu formally affiliated to Cosatu.

Ppwawu

On 18 October 1987 two Cosatu affiliates, the Paper, Wood and Allied Workers Union (Ppwawu) and the National

Union of Printing and Allied Workers (NUPAW) merged to form the the Paper, Printing, Wood and Allied Workers Union (Ppwawu). Ppwawu was launched with a paid-up membership of 24 260. Resolutions at the congress included the adoption of the Freedom Charter as the basic minimum demands of the oppressed and exploited in South Africa, and rejection of the Labour Relations Amendment Bill.

Actwusa

On 7 November 1987 Cosatu's National Union of Textile Workers (NUTW) and two former Tucsa affiliates, the National Union of Garment Workers and the Textile Workers Industrial Union merged to form the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (Actwusa). The 70 000-strong union affiliated to Cosatu. NUTW leaders Amon Ntuli and John Copelyn were elected president and general secretary respectively. Sipho Nene from NUGW was elected vice-president and Norman Daniels from TWIU was elected assistant general secretary. Actwusa resolved not to adopt any particular political programme or affiliate

to any political organisation in order to avoid dividing its membership along political lines.

Garment Workers Union (GWU)

On 6 December 1987 the Garment Workers Industrial Union of Natal and the Garment Workers Union (Western Province) merged to form the Garment Workers Union (South Africa). GWU launched with a membership of more than 100 000, making it the third largest union in the country. The president of the new union is Ismail Muckdoom, vice-president Paul Adams, general secretary Desmond Sampson and treasurer David Perumal. Delegates at the congress mandated the new union to seek affiliation to Cosatu.

Mwasa affiliates to Nactu

At its sixth annual national congress held in mid-November 1987, the Media Workers Union of South Africa (Mwasa) resolved to affiliate to Nactu. The decision followed a series of education seminars on Nactu and Cosatu held by Mwasa's education committee. Mwasa's membership at the time of affiliation was approximately 10 000.

Strikes and Disputes: Transvaal

Company	Union	Workers	Date	Events
Amalgamated Plastic Industries - Springs	Ppwawu	70	16.11.87	About 70 Ppwawu members were dismissed following a strike in protest against the dismissal of two workers. The workers were re-instated after negotiations between Ppwawu and management.
Argus and Times Media Limited	Mwasa		January 1987	Mwasa declared a dispute with Argus Printing and Publishing and Times Media Limited after management refused to consider the union's demand for a 20% across-the-board wage increase. Management offered a 16% across-the-board increase.
Associated Furniture Johannesburg	Numsa/ Ppwawu	2 100	28-30.10.87	About 2 100 workers at six Afcol plants in Johannesburg returned to work after a two day lockout. The workers were locked out after a demonstration against management's wage offer. The union demanded a R40-a-week increase. Management offered R16 a week. Management lifted the lockout and settlement was reached on an increase of R30 a week.

Company	Union	Workers	Date	Events
Cadac Limited Industria	Numsa /SABS	400	06.10-05.11.87	Striking workers returned to work after an agreement was reached between Numsa, SABS and Cadac management. According to the agreement, workers would receive an across-the-board increase of 75c an hour and a 45c-an-hour productivity allowance.
Carlton Contract Packaging Johannesburg	Mwasa	47	26.01.88	Carlton dismissed 47 workers for protesting against the dismissal of three shop stewards. After talks with Mwasa the company agreed to re-instate the 47 workers and to suspend on full pay the three shop stewards while negotiations continued. The shop stewards were re-instated after negotiations between management and the union.
Cemenco Group	Numsa	807	December 1987	Cemenco management locked out about 700 workers at Cementation Forging and dismissed a further 107 workers at William Bain following work stoppages over the actions of a supervisor at another company in the Cemenco group. The supervisor had allegedly blamed a worker for an accident in which another worker was injured. The dispute was referred to the industrial council.
Checkers Reef and Pretoria	Ccawusa		21.10-03.11.87	The entire workforce at Checkers Emmarentia went on strike over the dismissal of a colleague for suspected theft. The union said workers were against police involvement in the case. They demanded that the charge of theft be dropped and the worker be re-instated. Ccawusa members at several Vaal Checkers stores joined the strike in sympathy with Emmarentia workers. Workers returned on condition that the charge of theft against the worker was withdrawn by 3 December.
Checkers E Tv and East Rand	Ccawusa		24.12.87-04.01.88	Workers at 18 Checkers stores went on strike following the dismissal of a worker at the Evander store. Workers returned to work after Ccawusa and management reached agreement that the dismissal be referred to arbitration.
Con Roux Boksburg	Bamcwu	300	10.11.87	More than 300 workers were dismissed after a strike over the dismissal of 21 colleagues. Strikers demanded the re-instatement of 21 workers dismissed by the company in the past two months. The union was seeking legal advice on the matter.
Decor Print Johannesburg	Mwasa	11	10.02.88	Decor Print dismissed its entire workforce for allegedly joining Mwasa. The union alleged management told the workers to choose either to belong to Mwasa or work for the company. The workers were re-instated after negotiations between Mwasa and management.
Distillers Corporation Wadeville	NUWSW	500	22.12.87	About 500 workers were involved in a work stoppage protesting the dismissal of a colleague. Workers returned to work after management suspended the dismissal.
Dobsonville Town Council	Mwusa	300	October 1987	More than three hundred council workers went on strike demanding a 40% wage increase and better working conditions. They returned to work pending further negotiations between the union and the council.
Donald Cooks Alrode	FBWU	37	05.02.88	FBWU planned to take action against Donald Cooks management following the retrenchment of 37 workers. The union said management had violated its recognition agreement by retrenching workers without negotiating the issue.
Edilcon West Rand	BCAWU	200	28.10.87	More than 200 BCAWU members at Edilcon construction sites in the West Rand downed tools over the dismissal of two colleagues. They returned to work when the dismissed workers were re-instated.
Ellerines	Ccawusa	2 400	08.12.87-27.01.88	Workers at Ellerines stores nationally went on strike following a deadlock in wage negotiations. Among other things, the union demanded: a R200 across-the-board wage increase, with a minimum wage of R550 for all staff; a sales target of R2 500 a month for outside sales staff and a 10% commission for all beyond the target. Management offered a R95 across-the-board increase to all employees, and a minimum wage of R340 for external sales staff and R464 for internal sales staff. Five weeks into the strike, management agreed to one demand: sales targets were reduced from R3 400 a month to R2 500 a month. The strike was to some degree affected by the divisions in Ccawusa. Natal branches only joined the strike after six weeks. There was also confusion around who could legitimately negotiate on behalf of Ccawusa. Settlement was reached after 51 days. The agreement included a R110-a-month minimum increase and a minimum monthly wage ranging from R441 to R705 in five job categories, both increases effective from 1 January this year. The parties to the agreement also committed themselves to conclude a recognition agreement within six months.
Elida Ponds Wadeville	CWIU	179	28.01.88	Elida Ponds obtained a supreme court interim order against CWIU and 179 workers, restraining them from interfering with the company's production and distribution of its goods. The workers were striking over an official minimum wage. The interim order was only issued after the workers had returned to work because management believed the workers were engaged in a go-slow action. However, CWIU won an official minimum wage of R915 a month.
Evergreen Springs	NUF	31	October 1987	Thirty one Evergreen workers were dismissed by the company for belonging to a union. The dispute started when eight workers were dismissed and the remaining 23 demanded their re-instatement.

Company	Union	Workers	Date	Events
Hercules Cold Storage Pretoria	FBWU	200	04.01.88	More than 200 workers at Hercules Cold Storage went on strike after a conciliation board failed to resolve a wage dispute. The workers claimed they were paid a minimum of R45 a week, and demanded an across-the-board increase of R45 a week. Management offered an increase of R13,50 a week.
Highveld Steel and Vanadium Witbank	Numsa	4 000	21.09-19.10.87	About 4 000 dismissed Highveld workers decided to return to work on management's terms. The workers who were involved in a wage dispute with management were locked out and asked to re-apply for their jobs on condition that they accept management's offer and withdraw from the dispute. According to Numsa, management's threatened evictions of hostel dwellers would have split up the membership and made it impossible to maintain union organisation. The union attacked management's tactic of dividing workers by concluding agreements with minority unions. Highveld Steel dismissed the workers after learning that a strike ballot was to be held in protest against management's wage offer. Numsa questioned the use of legal channels in resolving disputes if the final outcome was dismissal of strikers. The union believed it followed the procedures of the Industrial relations Act to embark on a legal strike, yet workers were dismissed even before going on a legal strike. Numsa was questioning whether it was equally useful to strike illegally.
Highveld Steel and Vanadium Witbank	Numsa	1 000	04.11.87	About 1 000 Numsa members at Highveld Steel and Vanadium held a six-hour work stoppage in protest against the manner in which management conducted a disciplinary enquiry against 170 workers who were suspended following a lockout in August. According to the union, only four workers were called in for a hearing after which all the others were dismissed.
Isando Security Guards	Vukani Guards	50	10.11.87	Workers went on strike in support of four dismissed colleagues who were detained when management called in the police. Some workers returned to work while the union tried to secure the release of the four workers. Management accused the four of intimidating other workers at the company. According to the union, management walked out of court when their witnesses refuted their evidence. The workers were released and management agreed to re-instate them as well as other workers who had not returned to work.
Kagiso Town Council	Sabmawu	1	12.11.86-October 1987	The Pretoria Supreme Court ordered the re-instatement of a Kagiso municipal policeman dismissed after a work stoppage in November 1986. K Dyokololo, a Sabmawu member, was among 140 town council employees dismissed by the Kagiso Town Council for participating in the work stoppage. The re-instatement was retrospective to the date he was dismissed. The case of the other members was referred to the Industrial Court.
Kohler Xactics Benoni	CWIU	300	17.02.88	Workers at Kohler Xactics downed tools after management failed to resolve their grievances relating to the employment of a group of white trainee machine setters, who workers fear are there to replace the current machine setters. Workers demanded the dismissal of the trainees and said internal promotions should be made to fill the jobs. The company called in the police with dogs and teargas to eject workers from the premises. According to CWIU, workers dropped their demand that the trainees be dismissed and replaced it with a demand that there should be no racial discrimination regarding jobs and promotions at the company. Management refused to negotiate on this issue. The union was seeking other channels to handle the dispute.
LTA Transvaal	Cawu	450	November 1987	About 450 LTA members were involved in work stoppages at ten LTA sites protesting the retrenchment of their colleagues. The workers returned to work pending talks between the union and management.
Matthey Rustenburg Refiners Germiston	CWIU	200	26.11-15.12.87	Matthey Rustenburg workers returned to work after a two-and-a-half week strike in protest against the company's intention to relocate to Bophuthatswana. The union said that although it did not win its demand for MRR not to relocate to the bantustan, the company did not succeed in forcing workers to accept its relocation package. The company and the union agreed to negotiate details of redundancy and relocation packages.
Medical & Surgical Johannesburg	Seawu	50	December 1987	Workers at Medical and Surgical went on strike over the dismissal of four colleagues. The case was being handled in the industrial council.
Mono Pumps Kempton Park	Numsa	360	October 1987	Numsa protested management's failure to negotiate its terms of disinvestment with the union. Numsa demanded full disclosure, full union recognition and job security with guaranteed wages for five years.
Motorvia - Pretoria	Sasawu	170	01.02.88	About 170 workers at Motorvia went on strike in support of their demand for a 50% wage increase.
MSN Johannesburg	Numsa	180	October 1987	About 180 Numsa members were dismissed by MSN management following a strike, demanding the re-instatement of a dismissed colleague.
Nampak Mills Roslynn & Pta	Ppwawu	400	December 1987	Workers went on strike following management's refusal to consider Ppwawu's request for 'central' bargaining. The union demanded central bargaining because plant level bargaining resulted in a lack of uniformity in wages at various mills.

Company	Union	Workers	Date	Events
OK Bazaars	Ccawusa	22	19.11.87	Twenty two Ccawusa members were sentenced to three years imprisonment each for public violence during a legal strike at OK stores in 1986. An additional sentence was passed on those workers who were also charged for intimidation. The workers were granted bail totalling R22 000 pending appeal against conviction and the sentence.
Pilkington Shatterprufe	CWIU	2 400	13.10.87	Pilkington Shatterprufe and CWIU reached a wage agreement affecting 2 400 hourly paid workers at six sites throughout the country. The agreement included: an increase of 66c-per-hour, bringing the minimum wage to R4,25 per hour, ie. R810 per month; education benefits; shift and service allowances and housing benefits were improved.
Putco Wynberg	ZTAWU	500	13-20.10.87	The strike by about 500 Zakheni Transport and Allied Workers Union drivers and technical staff at Putco's Wynberg depot ended when management agreed to re-employ all the workers dismissed following a sympathy strike. Management also agreed to re-employ the two workers whose earlier dismissal had sparked off the strike.
Raillet Transport Benrose	Tawu	200	02.02.88	More than 200 Tawu members went on strike following the dismissal of a colleague returned to work after negotiations with management. Management agreed to re-instate the worker dismissed for alleged insubordination.
Randburg Town Council	NUPSW	800	04.11.87 -	About 800 council employees were dismissed following a strike demanding union recognition and a fair hearing for a colleague they claim was unfairly dismissed. In terms of an agreement reached between NUPSW and Randburg Town Council, workers were entitled to re-apply for their old jobs. The agreement also stated that the council had undertaken to resume negotiations on a recognition agreement in February 1988.
SA Timber and Joinery Works - Jhb	BCAWU	100	16.11.87	About 100 BCAWU members were locked out of SA Timber and Joinery Works following a strike over the retrenchment of 15 workers.
Sebokeng Hospital and Verecniging Hospital	NUPSW	300	27.10-09.12.87	More than 300 National Union of Public Service Workers members from the two hospitals were dismissed after a strike. Workers went on strike demanding recognition of their union and re-instatement of eight dismissed colleagues. The supreme court ordered the re-instatement of all dismissed workers.
Shareworld Education and Entertainment	Ccawusa	200	18.12.87	Shareworld dismissed about 200 workers at its entertainment complex. According to Ccawusa, workers were dismissed without notice or consultation with the union. The union planned to take Shareworld management to the Industrial Court.
South African Security Services	TGWU	1 000	December 1987	The SA Security Services re-instated about 800 out of 1 000 workers dismissed following a seven-day strike. About 40 workers who were hostel dwellers before the dismissal appeared in the KwaThema Magistrates Court on charges of trespassing. They were released on bail and the case was postponed to January. The union planned to go to the Industrial Court to secure the re-instatement of those workers still out of work as a result of the strike.
South African Transport Services	FTU	200 000	15.02.88	FTU declared a wage dispute with SATS following Minister Eli Louw's refusal to grant SATS employees a 17% across-the-board wage increase.
Southern Suns	Harwu	8 500	01.12.87-08.01.88	Southern Suns and Harwu were locked in dispute for over a month over wages and working conditions. The union demanded among other things: a R200 across-the-board wage increase with a minimum wage of R500 a month; six months paid maternity leave; May Day and 16 June as paid holidays; abolition of split shift; no racial discrimination; 13th cheque and a five day week. Settlement was reached, narrowly averting a strike by the union's 8 500 members. The agreement, effective from 1 October 1988, included: an across-the-board increase ranging from R140 a month to R250 a month over an 18-month period; minimum wage of R500 per month; four months paid maternity leave and 12 days leave for pre- and post-natal care; a 45 hour-5 day week; improved annual bonus including 13th cheque for workers with four years service and over. A key aspect of the agreement is the abolishment of the split-shift system at all but five hotels where employees live on the premises. The agreement covers about 20 000 workers in the Southern Suns and Holiday Inns chain.
Steele Brothers and Afcol	Ppwawu	2 600	November 1987	The first wage negotiation outside the industrial council system in the furniture industry was concluded by Ppwawu, Steele Brothers and Afcol. The agreements covered wage increase of R25-a-week for Afcol workers and R27,50-a-week at Steele Brothers. The increases were over and above the industrial council increase of R12 per week. It was also agreed that 1 May and 16 June be granted as paid public holidays.
Taycon Johannesburg	Numsa	82	October 1987	Taycon dismissed 82 Numsa members for allegedly assaulting a colleague who did not participate in a wage strike. The matter was referred to the industrial council which ruled against the union. The union was considering taking Industrial Court action.
Tiber Bonvec Sandton	Saawu	800	09.11.87	About 800 workers at Tiber Bonvec downed tools in protest against the Industrial Council's decision to reduce workers' holiday bonus contributions. The council's decision was binding for all workers in the building industry.

Company	Union	Workers	Date	Events
Tshabalala Enterprises Soweto	Ccawusa		07.02.87	Ccawusa members on strike at Tshabalala Enterprises returned to work after reaching agreement with management. Workers went on strike demanding union recognition, overtime pay and the re-instatement of six dismissed workers. Management agreed to re-instate the six workers on full pay and to continue negotiations with Ccawusa.
Vaal Potteries Meyerton	BCAWU	200	February 1988	BCAWU declared a dispute after reaching deadlock in wage negotiations. BCAWU said management refused to change its offer of a 26c-an-hour across-the-board increase. The union brought down its demand from R3-an-hour to 80c-an-hour.

Strikes and Disputes: Cape

Duens Cadora Bakery Epping	Fawu	478	20.11.87	A court order restraining Fawu and 478 workers from inciting, instigating, organising or calling for support for any form of work stoppage of overtime ban was discharged in the Cape Town Supreme Court. The workers were interdicted following a strike in support of their wage demands.
Elite Clothing Maitland	GWU	200	12.02.88	More than 200 workers were to lose their jobs with the closure of the Elite Clothin factory in Maitland. The union negotiated a redundancy package and hoped to find new jobs for most of the workers.
Fattis and Monis Bellville	Fawu	150	13.10.87	About 150 workers went on strike demanding the dismissal of a worker who allegedly assaulted another worker. Management said they could not dismiss the worker for such a minor offence as it would constitute an unfair labour practice.
Jungle Oats Maitland	Fawu	120	09.02.88	Workers at Jungle Oats in Maitland went on strike for higher wages and also to protest against the dismissal of a colleague. Fawu said management offered a R30-a-week wage increase while workers demanded R40.
Llewellyn Construction Port Elizabeth	BIWU	80	02.11.87	Building Industry Workers Union members staged a four-and-a-half-hour sit-in in protest against retrenchments. They returned to work after an agreement was reached between management and union representatives.
National Industrial Council for the Textile Manufacturing Industry	Actwusa	6 500	December 1987 - 15.02.88	Actwusa declared a wage dispute with the Industrial Council after a deadlock in wage negotiations. Frame group, the biggest employer in the council employed about 3 800 of the 6 500 workers affected by the dispute. After several work stoppages and protest actions settlement was reached when the union accepted a 20% wage package offered by the council. The settlement included six-monthly increases, improved night-shift allowances, increased long service bonuses and agreement on shift patterns.
Plascon Evans Port Elizabeth	CWIU	89	20.10-02.11.87	Plascon Evans and CWIU were in dispute over a R10 bonus given to employees who reported for duty during the 5 and 6 May stayaway. Union members who had stayed away demanded the same bonus. The dispute was settled after mediation.
Plessey SA - Retreat Sappi Novobord Port Elizabeth	Eatusa Ppwawu	600 359	09.11.87 14.12.87	About 600 workers at Plessey downed tools over the dismissal of a colleague. Sappi obtained a court order against Ppwawu and 359 employees from continuing an 'illegal go-slow strike' at the plant. The workers were on a go-slow in support of wage demands.
Sappi's Cape Kraft Milnerton	Ppwawu	70	10-14.01.88	Workers on strike against management's final wage offer returned to work after an agreement was reached between Ppwawu and management.
South African Nylon Spinners Bellville	Actwusa	1 200	January 1988	Following several protest marches and work stoppages, SANS and the union finally reached agreement. The agreement included: an increase of 19,5%, bringing the minimum monthly wage for shift workers to R749 a month and R703 a month for non-shift workers; improved allowances and Christmas bonuses and May Day as a paid public holiday.
Spekenam Cape Town	Fawu	500	05.08-16.10.87	The Industrial Court rejected an application for re-instatement by more than 500 workers dismissed by Spekenam during a two-day strike in August last year.
Springbok Electrical Wholesalers - CT	Eatusa	105	03.11.87	Eatusa members staged a one-day work stoppage in support of their demand for an across-the-board increase of R200 per month. The workers also demanded that management negotiate a collective bargaining agreement with the union.
Volkswagen Uitenhage	Numsa	5 000	21-26.10.87	Over 5 000 hourly-paid workers downed tools over the dismissal of a worker who allegedly assaulted a foreman. Workers returned to work after the case was referred to arbitration. Arbitration did not alter the status of the dismissed worker.

Strikes and Disputes: Natal

Amanzimtoti Town Council	NUPSW	500	23.11.87	About 500 NUPSW members were dismissed by the council following a strike over union recognition. NUPSW said its members downed tools after it became apparent management was not prepared to conclude recognition talks. The union was to challenge the dismissals in the Industrial Court.
BB Kokstad	Ccawusa	17	November 1987	Seventeen Ccawusa members dismissed by BB management for belonging to a union were re-instated unconditionally. Ccawusa said that shortly after they launched an application for re-instatement in the Industrial Court, management offered

Company	Union	Workers	Date	Events
				to re-instate the workers, pay them one week's salary and bear the cost of the application.
BTR Dunlop Durban	Numsa	1 200	26.10-30.11.87	About 1 200 workers at BTR in Durban went on strike. They demanded a 2c-an-hour annual service allowance and a shift allowance. After negotiations the union dropped its 2c-an-hour service allowance demand and replaced it with a 75c-an-hour across-the-board wage increase. Agreement was reached after five weeks: all dismissed workers were re-instated and received an across-the-board increase of 53c-an-hour.
BTR Sarmcol Howick	Numsa	1 000	February 1988	Numsa decided to take the Industrial Court judgement in the BTR case on review to the supreme court. The Industrial Court ruled last year that the dismissal of nearly 1 000 workers by BTR did not constitute an unfair labour practice.
Bax Brothers Construction - Dbn	Cawu	40	December 1987	Cawu members dismissed early in 1987 lost their application for re-instatement and severance pay when the Industrial Court in Durban ruled that the company did not act unfairly in retrenching the workers.
Clover Dairies Pietermaritzburg	Fawu	168	June 1986 13.10.87	After fifteen-and-a-half months, Clover dairies and Fawu reached agreement on the dismissal of 168 workers dismissed during a two-day strike in June 1986. In terms of the agreement Clover had to pay the dismissed strikers R1 200 each, withdraw all court cases against the union and to conclude recognition agreements at all factories and depots where the union has majority representation. In return, Fawu undertook to drop all issues pertaining to the 168 strikers and to use its influence to dissolve the Clover worker support committees which prompted a nationwide boycott of all Clover products after the workers were dismissed. The agreement also stated that NCD could dismiss all illegal strikers after 12 hours, all legal strikers after four days and, 'where justified', all strikers could be dismissed for 'misconduct' at any stage.
Crookes Brothers Durban	Fawu	400	December 1987	Crookes Brothers dismissed about 400 sugar-cane workers on strike in solidarity with a detained co-worker and organiser. Workers were then forceably evicted from their compound. According to Fawu which co-ordinates Cosatu's farmworker project, management refused to negotiate, saying farmworkers have no rights under SA labour law.

Strikes and Disputes: Mines

Anglo American	NUM	40 000	January 1988	NUM and three Anglo-American mining companies, Vaal Reefs, Western Deep Levels and Free State Consolidated agreed on independent arbitration following the mass dismissal of workers during the miners strike last year. In terms of the agreement, the decision of the arbitrator was to be binding to all parties.
Elandsrand West Rand	NUM	27	09.02.88	The Industrial Court dismissed the applications for re-instatement of 27 NUM members dismissed at Anglo's Elandsrand gold mine during last year's strike. The court dismissed the application because the 27 were mine officials who fell under a different bargaining unit from that of the other strikers.
ERPM Boksburg	NUM	8	17.10.87	Six miners were killed and two injured in an underground pressure blast at the ERPM gold mine. The accident occurred 3 000m below the surface. NUM reiterated its call for a commission of enquiry into South Africa's mine safety measures.
Ermelo Coal Mine	NUM	1 165	December 1987	Gencor's Ermelo coal mine retrenched 1 165 miners in December last year. According to NUM, retrenchments were also expected at other coal mines.
Grasvalley Chrome Mine Potgietersrus	Bamcwu	600	19.11-17.12.87	About 600 Bamcwu members at Grasvalley Chrome Mine went on strike to support their demands for a 26% across-the-board wage increase. Miners returned to work on condition that management committed itself to mediation or arbitration to resolve the wage dispute and re-opened negotiations to discuss closure of the mine.
Henry Gould Rustenberg	NUM	800	27.10.87	About 800 mineworkers at the Henry Gould chrome mine ended a strike after a wage agreement was reached on 27 October. Miners, on strike for over a week, returned to work after management agreed to a 17% across-the-board wage increase and an increase in holiday leave allowances of between 75% and 100%. NUM and management were in the process of negotiating a provident fund.
Randfontein Estates JCI	NUM	450	03.02.88	NUM met with JCI management to discuss the re-instatement of 450 Randfontein Estates employees dismissed after violence erupted at the mine. More meetings were planned to discuss the issue.
President Brand	NUM	73	07.01.88	The Industrial Court rejected a NUM application for the re-instatement of 73 President Brand gold mine employees dismissed during the August 1987 wage strike.
Stilfontein Gold Mine	NUM	1 700	February	Gencor's Stilfontein gold mine reduced its workforce by 18%. At least 1 700 employees out of the present workforce of 9 845 stood to lose their jobs. NUM expected another 3 000 to be made redundant by June this year. They saw the retrenchments as part of a process of closing down the mine in about four years.

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The nature of Work In Progress, which is to stimulate debate and present views on a wide range of issues, ensures that the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editorial collective.

Work In Progress, a publication of the Southern African Research Service, is published by an editorial collective, 37 Jorissen Street, Braamfontein.
PO Box 32716 Braamfontein 2017. Tel: (011) 403-1912/1586