

The African Communist

NO.101 SECOND QUARTER 1985



**HOW THE
RED ARMY
BURIED
HITLER**

THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST

Published quarterly in the interests of African solidarity, and as a forum for Marxist-Leninist thought throughout our Continent, by the South African Communist Party

No 101 Second Quarter 1985

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AVENGE THE MART

COALBROOK DISASTER

Four hundred and thirty five miners have been trapped and killed 600 feet underground at Coalbrook in the Union of South Africa—the worst disaster in the history of South African mining. The rock-fall which sealed them in is officially described as an “accident”. Yet every miner who has ever worked underground will know that even in a dangerous occupation like mining, ‘accidents’ on this vast scale are almost invariably the result of some human element—of callous disregard for the safety of the lives of working men, or of criminal greed for profit at any cost. To this general rule, the Coalbrook tragedy is no exception. Doubtless the caving of the roof was the result of tremendous natural forces, acting independently of men’s wishes; but equally doubtless, the scale of the disaster was the result of South Africa’s system of race and class oppression. Without apartheid things could not have happened as they did.

Consider the facts. The first rockfall took place at about 4.30 p.m. No one was killed or severely injured. While the rock still creaked and split, many of the African workers rushed from the underground shaft to the surface. They were ordered back to work. Those who protested or argued were given the South African Masters and Servants Act alternatives—obey or be arrested. Two who still refused steadily to return underground were arrested and locked up—to survive. 429 others were driven underground. At 6.30 the mine collapsed and buried them. No one escaped.

NO MINERS’ UNION

Where else in the world could such a scene occur. Except perhaps in the fascist dictatorships of Spain and Portugal, everywhere the miners’ own representatives, their shop-stewards, their trade union officers would have entered upon the scene. Everywhere the trade union would have intervened between the management and the workers, between the time of the first collapse and the first return underground.

Not in South Africa. There is no trade union of African miners. The trade union that existed before the great miners’ strike of 1946 has been systematically smashed. Workers have been sealed off in the mine compounds from all outside influences by an army of private mining-company police. Union organisers and union members have been weeded out by a wide network of spies and informers, sacked and blacklisted. There is *no* trade union.

Macandrew

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Cover picture: Soviet soldiers hoisting the flag of victory on the Reichstag in Berlin in May 1945 marking the end of the war in Europe.

SACP HOLDS ITS SIXTH CONGRESS

Recently, the 6th Congress of the South African Communist Party was held. Attended by tens of delegates, the Congress was characterised by the revolutionary enthusiasm and confidence of its participants who were inspired by the continuing mass upsurge in South Africa and the important contribution of the working class to this struggle.

The Congress carried out an extensive review of the work of the Party in the period since the last Congress. Discussion focussed on the task of further strengthening the Party ideologically, politically and organisationally as well as heightening its contribution to the struggle for the victory of the national democratic revolution and the advance towards a socialist South Africa.

It also debated all aspects of the developing situation in South Africa, paying particular attention to the further enhancement of the role of the working class as the leader of the national liberation and socialist struggles in our country.

The Congress also discussed the international situation. In this regard, it paid particular attention to the counter-revolutionary offensive of the apartheid regime in Southern Africa and the role of US imperialism in this campaign. It also laid special emphasis on the urgent question of world peace.

The participants noted that the Party had continued to grow in strength, especially inside our country, drawing into its ranks outstanding working class and youth activists in particular. Enemy efforts to destroy it, which now span a period of 35 years, have failed.

Lying enemy propaganda which seeks to project Marxism-Leninism as an ideology that is foreign to the people of South Africa, and our Party as a tool of foreign powers, and not a representative and the Vanguard Party of the working class of our country, has also been rejected by the masses of our people.

The conditions therefore exist for the further growth of our Party, attracting to itself the most advanced and conscious sons and daughters of the working class of our country. At the same time, this organisational work as well as the practical, political and ideological involvement of our Party with the workers in particular, will ensure the continued growth of the influence of the communist cause and enable the working class of our country to carry out its historic mission of taking power from the capitalist class and building a socialist society.

The delegates also noted that in the recent past, certain "left" ideological trends, which pose as Marxism, have appeared inside the country. These trends concentrate their attack on the political positions of our Party as represented in our Programme, especially the characterisation of the nature of the oppression of the African and black majority as colonialism of a special type.

The Congress reaffirmed the correctness of the perspectives spelt out in our Party Programme. The delegates emphasised the importance of the involvement of the conscious and organised working class in the struggle for national liberation as well as its leading role in this struggle. This will ensure that the democratic transformation assumes the most thorough-going revolutionary character and form.

In carrying out this vanguard role, the working class not only advances its own interests and creates the conditions for an uninterrupted advance to socialism. It also makes it possible for the rural masses and the middle strata to benefit fully from the national democratic revolution. It is this fact which makes the alliance between the working class and the other classes and strata among the oppressed people, under the leadership of the workers, both possible and imperative.

The Congress also observed that anti-communism and anti-Sovietism remain the main ideological platform of the apartheid regime and other backward political forces in South Africa. The increased intervention in the affairs of Southern Africa by the Reagan administration is also based on the pursuit of the same anti-communist goals.

The participants accordingly agreed that it remains an important task of the Party to combat this enemy ideology, especially among the working and

oppressed masses of our country. It is also important that at all times the Party educates the working class in the spirit of proletarian internationalism, to defeat all tendencies towards tribalism, national chauvinism and racism.

Mood of Revolt

The Congress characterised the mood among the masses of the oppressed people in South Africa as one of revolt. A state of incipient civil war exists in the country. In this situation, the urgent task of the liberation forces of our country is further to raise the all-round political and military offensive against the apartheid regime.

The delegates observed that the racist regime has embarked on a campaign of mass repression in the country and continues with its policy of aggression and destabilisation against the independent states of Southern Africa. All this reflects the growing desperation of the enemy and represents a vain attempt, on its part, to alter the balance of forces in its favour.

However, through struggle, the masses of our people, with the workers at the forefront, continue to shift the initiative into their hands. On the other hand, the peoples of Southern Africa are resisting attempts by Pretoria and Washington to impose the apartheid regime on them as a regional power.

The objective and subjective factors exist for the rapid escalation of the struggle which should aim, in particular, to reduce the capacity of the regime to govern our country. The successful accomplishment of this task requires that all the masses of the oppressed people should be mobilised into struggle. In this regard, special attention should be given to the further organisation and mobilisation of the women and the rural masses, to elevate their involvement in the struggle.

It is also of vital importance that the organised detachments of our revolutionary movement, including our Party, should continue to strengthen their presence among the people, and mobilise the masses to address, in action, the question of the seizure of power.

The Congress pledged that the SACP would continue to work for the further strengthening of the revolutionary alliance of the African National Congress, the South African Communist Party and the South African Congress of Trade Unions, which is headed by the ANC. The delegates hailed the fact of the growth in the strength and popularity of the ANC inside our country and the further heightening of its prestige internationally. They reaffirmed their confidence that the liberation alliance headed by the ANC would carry out its historic mission of leading the masses of our country to

victory in the struggle for the seizure of power by the people and the success of the national democratic revolution.

The Congress reaffirmed the urgent need to struggle for a just and durable world peace. It therefore welcomed the decision of the governments of the USSR and the USA to resume discussion on the limitation and reduction of strategic nuclear weapons.

It expressed its opposition to the continued deployment of Pershing and cruise missiles in Western Europe and denounced the efforts of the Reagan administration to gain military superiority over the Soviet Union. It called on the people of the USA and the peace-loving peoples of the world to compel this administration to abandon the bankrupt and dangerous policy of brinkmanship.

The participants pointed out that the biggest contribution that the communists of South Africa can make to the cause of world peace and international security is the defeat and destruction of the bellicose and aggressive Pretoria regime.

The Congress paid solemn tribute to those members of the Party who had died in the period since the last Congress. It made special mention of the last Chairman of the SACP, the late Comrade Yusuf Dadoo who had served the Party and the struggling people of South Africa with great distinction for many decades.

It also saluted all political prisoners held by the apartheid regime, among them many members of the Party. It went on to call for their immediate and unconditional release.

The Congress also extended its revolutionary solidarity to all forces struggling for national liberation, democracy, socialism and peace, especially the people of Namibia, Western Sahara, Palestine, El Salvador, Nicaragua and East Timor.

It agreed that the international situation demands the convening of a world conference of the communist movement in order further to strengthen the unity and effectiveness of this movement as well as the anti-imperialist forces as a whole.

The delegates adopted a new constitution to regulate the work and functioning of the SACP.

They also elected a new Central Committee.

Comrade Moses Mabhida was re-elected unanimously as the General Secretary of the SACP.

VICTORY SOONER RATHER THAN LATER!

Statement of Central Committee of the South African Communist Party

January 1985

The Working Class is the Key

The revolutionary situation in our country is maturing. The nation-wide crisis is deepening, affecting both the oppressed and the exploited as well as the oppressors and exploiters. Increasingly, the ruling class acts in a way which shows that it cannot rule in the old way. At the same time, growing numbers among the exploited classes and the oppressed fully realise that revolution is necessary and are prepared to die for it.

This situation is the result of the continuing and sharpening confrontation between the ruling class and its supporters on the one hand and the oppressed masses and the black workers, on the other. The challenge that faces the struggling people of our country is further to weaken the racist regime to make it possible for our revolutionary movement to overthrow it.

Our struggle is advancing in a situation in which the apartheid economy is enmeshed in an ever deepening crisis. Inherent to the capitalist mode of production, this crisis is a manifestation of the economic problems affecting the capitalist economy internationally.

At the same time, it is exacerbated by the apartheid system. This system imposes constraint on the development of the forces of production, restricts the growth of the market and results in the diversion of large resources to unproductive uses, especially the maintenance and expansion of the apartheid state machinery, including the army, the police and the civil service as well as the manufacture of armaments.

The crisis of the apartheid economy demonstrates every day to millions of our people the inability of the capitalist system to provide the majority with a decent standard of living.

Instead, every passing day imposes heavier burdens on the shoulders of the working masses, resulting in the further lowering of their living standards.

The capitalist class, supported and assisted by the state machinery which serves it, has used the current economic crisis further to redistribute the wealth of our country in favour of the very rich and thus further to impoverish millions of people. It has also taken advantage of it to intensify the rate of exploitation of the working class.

Thus, despite the crisis, the monopoly capitalist groups in the country repeatedly report higher profits and increased profit rates every year. While the economy has contracted, the general index on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange has continued to rise. This apparently contradictory situation results from the fact that the capitalist class is confident that at this stage of the economic crisis, the profits of the major, "blue chip" companies will maintain their upward trend.

The private owners of productive property have achieved this result through a combination of measures, including the intensification of the exploitation of the working class, raising the prices of goods and services across the board and increasing lending rates to extraordinary levels. The continued decline in the value of the Rand will also serve to reduce the quantity of goods that the working people can purchase with the wages they earn.

The economic crisis has benefitted the very rich in another way. As a result three giant monopoly conglomerates, the Anglo-American Corporation, Sanlam and Barlow Rand, control 75 per cent of all shares quoted on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. Two years ago these shares were distributed among seven monopolies.

To ensure that the state sector succeeds to keep the wages of its workers down and continues to serve the interests of capital in general, the huge state companies have been allowed to falsify accounts so that they can hide their

profits and report losses instead. As a result of this, Iscor did not pay any taxes in the ten-year period up to 1984.

It is therefore clear that the most powerful monopolies have continued to reap huge benefits from this crisis while the working class, and the black workers in particular, have suffered and continue to suffer most. In varying degrees the middle strata, both black and white, are confronted by rising debts. Small and medium-sized capitalist enterprises in towns as well as the countryside have also been hit hard. For these, bankruptcies, take-overs and mergers are the order of the day. Big capital dispossesses the weaker sections of the bourgeoisie and throws some of these into the ranks of the proletariat.

Poorest Hit Hardest

In keeping with the pattern of capitalist economic crises, the recession has hit the poorest sections of the population, first and foremost. As it deepens, its adverse effects spread to other classes and strata, including the bourgeoisie itself. At this point in time, the monopoly section of the capitalist class has been able to take advantage of the crisis further to enrich itself. These monopolists however know that as the situation worsens, they themselves will get affected directly.

The fall in the price of gold continues to have serious consequences for the economy as a whole. Gold accounts for half of South Africa's foreign exchange earnings. The decline in price has contributed significantly to the large balance of payments deficit forecast for 1984. Inevitably this situation will raise the level of indebtedness of the country vis-a-vis the rest of the world, contribute to the reduction of imports and further fuel the process of economic decline.

For the proletariat, the economic crisis has meant a rapid rise in the numbers of the unemployed, the surplus population which Karl Marx characterised as "the lever of capitalist accumulation, nay, a condition of existence of the capitalist mode of production". (*Capital* I, p 632.) It has also meant a continuous attack on the standards of living of those who are fortunate to have jobs. The enrichment of the strongest sections of the capitalist class goes side by side with the impoverishment of those who get the lowest wages.

The apartheid state has also intervened to impose the burden of the economic crisis on the working people by adopting various means designed to ensure that the bulk of the wealth of our country continues to accrue to the dominant bourgeoisie. Changes in the system of taxation and increases in the General Sales Tax have contributed to bring about this result which is

also pursued through the imposition of rising rental and other charges in the urban townships.

At the same time, the enforcement of the pass laws has continued unabated, with the corresponding deportation of “offenders”, as well as retrenched migrant workers, to the Bantustans. Legislation has also been tightened to enable the apartheid state to be better equipped to dump thousands of people in these surplus-population reservoirs. One such measure adopted by the racist parliament was the Aliens and Immigration Act, many of whose provisions are the same as those in the so-called Orderly Movement and Settlement of Black Persons Bill which the apartheid regime was forced to abandon as a result of massive popular resistance.

The masses of the people in the Bantustans continue to be driven deeper and deeper into abject poverty. Here, mass starvation and disease have reached epidemic proportions. The situation is further worsened by the additional burdens which the puppet administrations impose on the people. Faced with a future made hopeless by the capitalist system in confronting this system, these rural masses have nothing to lose but their chains.

Ideological Offensive

Sensing that the masses of the working people would increasingly combine the struggle for the improvement of their material conditions with a direct challenge of the capitalist system, the ruling class and its political representatives have embarked on an ideological offensive to convince the people about the supposed merits of “free enterprise”. In pursuit of this aim, these forces continue to rely on virulent anti-communism and anti-Sovietism.

The dominant economic and political positions of the monopoly bourgeoisie in society have created the situation whereby the capitalist state increasingly reflects the interests and ideas of this most powerful fraction of the ruling class. Indeed, this dominance has resulted in the emergence of a system of state-monopoly capitalism according to which big capital transforms the bourgeois state more thoroughly into its own instrument of rule, dictatorship and self-enrichment.

The major conferences convened by racist Prime Minister Botha in 1979, 1981 and 1983, which were attended by the leaders of the apartheid regime and the most important representatives of capital, were an expression of the extent to which state-monopoly capitalism was developed. The presence of large numbers of businessmen at the signing of the Accord of Nkomati and the role some of them played in preparing the ground for the conclusion of

this agreement, also attest to the degree to which the apartheid state serves the interests of the monopoly bourgeoisie who seek further to entrench their economic domination of Southern Africa.

Whatever state-monopoly capitalism does, it cannot abolish the contradictions between the working class and the capitalists, between the oppressed and the oppressors, between state-monopoly capitalism and the majority of the people. The objective situation demonstrates and emphasises the antagonistic nature of these contradictions. It points to the incontrovertible truth that they can only be resolved through the victory of the progressive forces over those of reaction.

The struggles which the black workers and the rest of the oppressed masses have waged and continue to conduct, themselves an inevitable consequence and expression of these contradictions, have plunged the apartheid regime into a deepening political crisis.

National Liberation Movement

The single most important feature of this crisis is the inability of the racists to stop the growth and advance of the broad movement of national liberation. The ideological, political and repressive measures that the apartheid regime has used during the 37 years of its existence, to try to defeat and suppress the liberation struggle, have all failed.

In South Africa, as in any other capitalist state, the army and the police are organs used for the defence of bourgeois rule and are the chief instruments of state power. To defeat the bourgeoisie therefore means we must destroy these instruments of state power or render them ineffective. To ensure that the principal means that guarantee its survival are protected, the apartheid regime tries its best to destroy the people's army, Umkhonto we Sizwe. The racists have failed to achieve this objective.

Furthermore, over the last few years, the popular offensive has developed to reach levels comparable to those we had attained at the time when fascism resorted to a policy of extreme reaction, starting with the banning of the ANC. Of central importance is the fact that this offensive has been accompanied by the armed actions carried out by Umkhonto we Sizwe.

This escalating struggle has drawn millions of people into struggle, including workers, the rural masses, women, youth and all national groups of our country, including growing numbers of white democrats and revolutionaries. The level of political consciousness of these masses has risen with the progress of the struggle. So has their readiness to die for the revolution, if need arises.

At the same time, the better to be able to use their united strength, the people are organising themselves into democratic organisations, including trade unions, community, youth and women's organisations. The coming together of hundreds of these organisations in a united front and in united action, constitutes one of the most important advances that the democratic movement has made, and is an expression of the objective requirement of the national democratic revolution to unite all classes, strata and national groups that are interested in the victory of this revolution. To quote from Lenin:

“The masses... which have often been ignored and even despised by superficial observers, enter the political arena as active combatants. These masses are learning in practice... feeling their way, defining their objectives, testing themselves and the theories of all their ideologists.

“These masses are making heroic efforts to rise to the occasion and cope with the gigantic tasks of world significance imposed upon them by history; and however great individual defeats may be, however shattering to us the rivers of blood and the thousands of victims, nothing will ever compare in importance with this direct training that the masses and the classes receive in the course of the revolutionary struggle itself”. (Lenin: *Revolutionary Days*.)

The heroic masses of our country have, by entering the political arena as active combatants, destroyed any coherence that the policies of the apartheid regime may have had and reduced this regime to a state of increasing confusion. Through their sacrifices and by the intensity of their political and armed offensive, the people have provoked divisions and strife within the ruling class and its supporters.

The boldest political manoeuvres adopted by the oppressors, and presented by them as the beginning of a process of reform, but which were designed to turn some sections of the black population into puppets and direct the people away from the struggle for the victory of the national democratic revolution, have been rebuffed by the masses of the people in the most decisive manner. Such has been the fate of the bantustan and “separate development” programme and the amended apartheid constitution with its tri-cameral parliament.

Thus, despite all its efforts, the apartheid regime has failed to expand its social base. Even the black middle strata, whom the ruling class and their state have sought to expand and bribe to come over to the side of state-monopoly capital, continue, in the main, to demonstrate their understanding that their interests would best be served by the victory of the national democratic revolution.

The Resort To Force

Faced by a series of defeats all along the line as well as the certainty that this revolution will continue its forward march, the apartheid regime can no longer rule in the old way. It has been forced to adopt a programme of crisis management which has brought to the fore the defence of the apartheid system as the principal objective of state power.

Demonstrating the correctness of the observation made by Engels that this state power “grows stronger ... in proportion as class antagonisms within the state grow more acute”, the apartheid regime has responded to the worsening general crisis of state monopoly-capitalism by strengthening the instruments of repression, especially the army. It has gone further to re-organise the state machinery so that the army generals themselves take control of this machinery, projecting the divisions they command as the only force in society capable of ensuring so-called national security through a policy described as “total strategy”.

Responding to a threat to its survival, the capitalist class is prepared to turn its back on, and has abandoned all pretence at maintaining the bourgeois-democratic rights of even the white settler-colonial minority. For our country and people as a whole, dictatorial government by the most shameless and brutal defenders of bourgeois rule means intensified repression, militarisation, greater regimentation and unbridled tyranny.

Extreme reaction, encompassing all spheres of social life and the determined pursuit of counter-revolution, is the inevitable response of state-monopoly capitalism to the threat it faces as a result of the mass offensive for the victory of the national democratic revolution. Such a response, inevitable as it is, cannot but evoke greater resistance from the conscious masses. The reaction of the ruling class to the deepening general crisis lays the basis for the exacerbation of this crisis and the further ripening of the revolutionary situation.

These circumstances pose a special challenge to the working class and the working people of our country. In the words of Marx and Engels.

“not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons — the modern working class — the proletarians”. (*Communist Manifesto*.)

History demands of the proletarians of our country that they wield the weapons in their hands and, in the van of the masses of our people, sue for the defeat of the racist military monopoly dictatorship. These masses are training and organising themselves in struggle to carry out this task. Every day they display their unwillingness to live under the old order, their

confidence in victory and their determination to make all necessary sacrifices to bring about this victory.

But as Lenin observed:

“Revolution arises only out of a situation in which... objective changes are accompanied by a subjective change, namely, the ability of the revolutionary class to take revolutionary mass action strong enough to break (or dislocate) the old government, which never, not even in a period of crisis, ‘falls’ if it is not toppled over”. (Lenin: *The Collapse of the Second International*.)

The aim of the SACP and of the revolutionary alliance headed by the ANC, the objective pursued by the workers and the oppressed masses of our country is to topple the apartheid regime and take power into their own hands.

In the coming period, these need to advance further towards the situation when we shall take revolutionary mass action strong enough to dislodge the racist regime.

The Workers Take Action

The working class must play a central role in this process. The special product of the capitalist mode of production, the working class has the historic mission to lead the alliance of class and national forces engaged in struggle for the victory of the national democratic revolution.

This means that the organised proletariat has to engage in mass struggle in ever increasing numbers, side by side with other sections of the oppressed masses. Already these workers have stood up magnificently to the capitalist class and its racist and undemocratic state. The economic struggle for higher wages and better working conditions has seen hundreds of thousands of workers resort to strike action in pursuit of their demands. In hundreds of battles, during some of which workers have lost their lives as a result of police repression, the black workers have forced the exploiters to concede many of their demands.

Among these battles, the mine workers’ strike of last year was of historic significance. It was conducted in the militant tradition of the 1946 miners’ strike which was led by such communists as the late J.B. Marks and which was the precursor of the mass struggles which were conducted during the 1950’s. The Transvaal stay-at-home which followed the 1984 miners’ strike and which advanced economic as well as political demands, was an outstanding demonstration of the power of the organised working-class movement and a practical example of what the working class, in alliance with other sections of the democratic majority, must do to bring the day of liberation nearer. The working-class movement should continue to rebuff all

attempts to isolate it from other sections of the struggling masses of our country.

The organised working class movement has both political and economic tasks to accomplish. It must continue its work to expand, strengthen and unify the trade union movement in one federation. The most advanced representatives of the working class have a responsibility to ensure that this movement is revolutionary in character, exactly because it is in the interest of the working class of our country that the national democratic revolution emerges victorious.

Thus the most conscious representatives of the working class should treat the trade unions not only as organisations for the furtherance of the economic interests of this class but also as schools of revolutionary struggle. In struggle, the workers should gain an understanding not only of their economic rights but also of their overall interests as a class. Already, in action, thousands of workers have demonstrated this comprehension. Proceeding from this achievement, we must ensure that the revolutionary trade union movement that we are building takes the lead in the struggle to destroy the racist, fascist and bourgeois state in the interest of the working class as a class.

Political Action

To accomplish this goal, the working class should not be satisfied merely to belong to trade unions, important as these are as mass organisations of the proletariat. In addition, it is in the vital interest of the working class that it strengthens the ranks of the ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe in order to play its role in accomplishing the political and military tasks of the national democratic revolution.

Marxism-Leninism teaches that, as Lenin wrote, “under capitalism the proletariat... (is) the only class which (stands) directly and completely opposed to the bourgeoisie, and therefore the only one capable of being revolutionary to the very end”. (Lenin: *Economics and Politics in the Era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.*)

To be revolutionary to the very end means to fight for the victory of the socialist revolution, for the defeat of the bourgeoisie as a class, for the passing of power into the hands of the proletariat so that it becomes the ruling class. This is an historic task which faces the working class of our country, as it confronts the proletariat of all capitalist countries.

Therefore in the struggle for the victory of the national democratic revolution, the working class cannot lose sight of its obligations as the midwife of the socialist revolution. The proletariat is interested not merely in

the success of the democratic revolution, but also that this revolution is thorough-going and goes as far as possible in undermining the positions of the monopoly bourgeoisie and bringing the maximum benefits to the working class and the oppressed and exploited rural masses.

It is for this reason that the workers cannot stand aside from the struggle to liberate South Africa. It is also clear that these workers must engage in struggle for a democratic South Africa fully conscious of their unique class interests, the necessity to make their imprint on the democratic revolution and to prepare the conditions for an uninterrupted advance from popular democracy to proletarian rule.

Sixty-four years old this year, the South African Communist Party, the vanguard representative of the proletariat of our country, lives on within our country, among the workers, the toiling and oppressed masses. A proletarian party, first and foremost, it fights for freedom and socialism. Vilified, persecuted and feared by the parties of bourgeois rule, including the NP, the HNP, the Conservative Party and the PFP, it stands in the front ranks of the struggle for a democratic South Africa.

Its members have fallen in action both within our country and in our region. Many of its leaders and members suffer long terms of imprisonment together with our colleagues in the national liberation movement. Others belong within the disciplined ranks of the ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe, and working under the leadership of these organisations, share the hazards of struggle with their peers and do their best to advance the popular cause.

The Communist Party is a party of socialism and is convinced of the ultimate victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie and the emergence of a socialist South Africa. To reach that goal, it is necessary that the working class should make the struggle against the colonial apartheid regime its own. It is also of vital importance that the most class-conscious of these workers should join their vanguard, the SACP.

Through the combined political and military offensive of the liberation alliance headed by the ANC, we have forced this regime into retreat. We must turn that retreat into a rout. The black workers of our country have already demonstrated great feats of heroism. In the coming period, the entire people of our country will continue to rely on the working class to intensify the all-round offensive against state-monopoly capitalism for freedom and socialism. We have it within our power to emerge victorious sooner rather than later. The call of the day is:

UNITE! MOBILISE! ON WITH THE OFFENSIVE FOR FREEDOM AND SOCIALISM!



EDITORIAL NOTES

MAKING SOUTH AFRICA UNGOVERNABLE

During the upsurge in the Vaal Triangle last year, the chairman of the Transvaal Stay-Away Committee, Mr Thami Mali, said:

“No amount of intimidation can stop us on our way to liberation... our duty as the oppressed people is to step up our resistance and create an ungovernable situation”.

The Stay-Away Committee had succeeded in organising the most successful strike of its kind ever seen in South Africa. In a bid to prevent the oppressed people stepping up their resistance, the Botha regime went in for a process of wholesale killings, arrests and detentions, and Mr Mali and a number of others were arrested on a charge of “subversion”.

Irrespective of the outcome of this and other cases coming before the courts this year, there is no doubt that South Africa is rapidly becoming ungovernable and the Botha regime is more and more finding itself in a crisis situation. The reason is obvious. The regime is trying to implement a policy which is unworkable because it is not based on consensus and the mass of the people are no longer prepared to acquiesce in their oppression.

Lacking popular support, the regime is forced to resort more and more to the use of force; but the more force it uses, the greater popular resistance grows. The points of conflict, both internally and externally, multiply. The spiral of violence turns inexorably towards catastrophe.

On the surface the Botha regime seems strong. It has an immensely powerful military and police force to do its bidding. It has a huge majority in the white parliament. Despite the current drought, the financial crisis and the collapse in the exchange value of the Rand, it presides over the only developed economy in the whole continent of Africa.

Yet never has a South African government enjoyed less authority both at home and abroad. Never has its lack of perspective and policy been more glaringly exposed.

President Botha thinks himself in a politically invulnerable position because he won the November 1983 referendum on the new constitution by a two-thirds majority, apparently isolating his right-wing opponents in the HNP and Conservative Party. But, as we have pointed out in these columns before, given that one quarter of the electorate did not go to the polls, this meant that only 50% of the white voters endorsed the new constitution, and they did so for widely differing reasons, displaying no ideological unanimity of the sort on which, say, Dr Verwoerd could rely when he presided over the affairs of the Nationalist Party in the 1950s and 1960s. In fact, as an organised force, the Nationalist Party has disintegrated under Botha's leadership, and by-elections since the referendum have made it clear that Botha's electoral base is by no means as secure as he would wish.

He has tried to strengthen his position by calling in reinforcements from the Coloured and Indian communities, but the elections for the Coloured and Indian chambers showed that the ploy was a complete failure, only 18% of the Coloured voters and 15.5% of the Indian bothering to go to the polls. Moreover, the political quality of the Coloured and Indian politicians with whom he claims now to 'share power' is so low that he knows he cannot rely on them for a single instant, that they will desert him at the first sign that his parliamentary ship is beginning to sink. Their credit in their own communities is nil. As a means of mobilising popular support, this rabble of collaborating opportunists are completely useless.

Botha's attempt to gain political adherents among the African majority has been even less successful. In the 29 African townships where elections were held in November and December 1982 for the 'town councils' to be set up under the Black Local Authorities Act, the overall poll was only 21%, while in Soweto it was 10.7% and in Evaton only 5.9%. In some

constituencies, including Alexandra, disregard for the elections was so total that candidates could not be bothered to stand and stooge candidates were returned without a contest.

Nevertheless, despite the fact that these councils have no mandate from the people, the regime has equipped them with powers in the hope that as blacks they will be able to implement the apartheid policies with more success than the white administrators were previously able to achieve. The problem, however, was finance. Because Africans are not allowed to own land freehold anywhere, the township councils could not raise any income from rates — the main source of revenue of town councils in white areas. Revenue for the African councils was to be raised from service charges, site rents, fines for infringing by-laws, beer sales, and fees charged by labour bureaux i.e. from the administration of the hated pass laws.

Not surprisingly, few of the boards could balance their budgets. Equally unsurprisingly, the attempts of the African councils to raise money to cover their deficits by, for example, increasing house rents and service charges met with the most intense opposition from the people. From the time of the elections onwards, the stooge African councillors have been the target for attack. Several have been assassinated, their houses firebombed, their property and vehicles destroyed. During the upsurge of the last quarter of 1984, so many African councillors went in fear of their lives that they simply ran away, many councils resigning en bloc. Township administration was in a state of chaos.

It was the rent increases imposed by these councils that sparked off the violent protest of the people last year. A total of 350,000 Vaal Triangle residents refused to pay the increase and by the end of the year had amassed arrears totalling R10 million in outstanding rent, water and electricity bills. The Lekoa Town Council exhorted the residents to pay and sent police to back up officials going from house to house demanding rent from the defaulters. When this move failed, the Council threatened to evict all those in arrears with their rent, but fear of the consequences if a whole township was thrown on the streets elicited an assurance from the Minister of Co-operation and Development (the euphemism for African Affairs) that the government had no intention of evicting anybody. Employers were asked to deduct the rent arrears from employees' pay packets, but they wisely refused to cooperate. The council then cut off electricity to those houses which had it, but this, too failed to produce any result and the electricity was eventually restored. At the time of writing the arrears were mounting at the rate of R2 million a month, and the residents were refusing to pay a cent until the rent

rise had been cancelled. They were also demanding that the stooge councils be disbanded because they did not represent the people.

The President's Dilemma

In a situation like this, the regime finds itself in a dilemma. It cannot give way because its authority would be destroyed. On the other hand it cannot enforce its authority without provoking further mass resistance. In mid-January it took the next step, authorising 16 African town councils to run their own police force so that they would have a law enforcement agency at their disposal — something not even the white councils possess. We can make the confident prediction that this outrageous step will still further exacerbate the anger and frustration of the people. It was the invasion of the townships by the police and military last year, the house to house searches by Botha's armed and jackbooted Gestapo, the assaults and thuggery that followed, that drove the population to mass resistance and directly produced the two-day stay-away that paralysed industry. The transfer of arbitrary power to unrepresentative and greatly resented stooge councils is a recipe for disaster.

Yet it is precisely this so-called 'devolution of power' that is the essence of the 'reform package' that President Botha outlined at the opening of the current session of Parliament last January. He claimed that the regime "accepts the permanence in the Republic of South Africa, in large numbers, of black population communities who find themselves outside the national states", and promised to consider the establishment of an "informal, non-statutory forum" to enable African leaders and interest groups to discuss constitutional reforms with government representatives. He says he will think about allowing some Africans in the urban areas to obtain freehold title to land. But he insists that it is "neither desirable nor practical" to accommodate all communities in the same way because "no population group should be placed in a position to rule over another".

But the white minority at present rules over all others, and will continue to do so in future according to Botha's plan. He can forget about his 'informal forum', which no one with any self-respect would agree to serve on. The African majority are still denied any form of representation in the central parliament, let alone one man one vote, and are offered as an alternative only bantustan and township tyranny, with the ultimate perspective, once all the bantustans gain their 'independence', of losing their South African citizenship rights and being declared foreigners in the land of their birth.

Botha hopes to get the African people to co-operate in their own genocide. His Bantustans are an example of what he is aiming at — ‘independent’ states where the ‘surplus’ millions of the African people can starve to death in conditions of indescribable misery and squalor, but for which white South Africa accepts no responsibility, on the grounds that African governments are in power and must accept the blame for their own failures. The fact that the whole Bantustan system was imposed on the African people against their will, that not one Bantustan government has come to power in a free and fair election, is irrelevant to Botha. In the Bantustans he has placed millions of South Africans under the control of tyrannical regimes whose outrages against the people, detentions, murders and other atrocities far outweigh even his own, but this causes him no distress, because he does not aim to capture African votes. In his dream South Africa there will be no African citizens, only African guest workers who can be sent back where they came from if they cause any trouble. Even the tiny handful who may eventually acquire freehold land rights will still be liable to deportation under the pass laws.

And in the Bantustans...

Quoting a Witwatersrand University survey, the *Rand Daily Mail* reported on December 12, 1984:

“South Africa is sowing the seeds of a catastrophe in the rural areas ... and could soon be reaping civil unrest worse than the current strife in urban townships. Researchers working in the various ‘homelands’ are increasingly coming across signs of resentment and resistance to the authorities as more and more people are cast into beggary ... without jobs, land or proper food”.

At the beginning of January, the South African Institute of Race Relations called for the abandonment of forced removals which, it said, were placing intolerable strains on the ‘homelands’ and “are the single most injurious aspect of apartheid and the one that besmirches the name of South Africa more than anything else”.

Perhaps the abject failure of the Bantustan concept is best revealed by the statistic that though in 1980, 35.7% of the population of South Africa was resident in the ‘homelands’ (both ‘independent’ and non-independent), they produced only 3.4% of South Africa’s gross domestic product. Now in these poverty- and drought-stricken reservoirs of cheap labour, the spirit of rebellion is spreading fast as one mass removal follows another.

Nothing in the plans of the Botha regime can solve this central contradiction in South African society, because the racists are not prepared to relinquish one iota of white supremacy. The inclusion of the Coloured and

Indian MPs in the new tricameral parliament, for example, leaves the whites with an overall majority of votes at every level, justifiable in racist eyes by the fact that the white population of South Africa outnumbers the combined total of Coloureds and Indians. No plan can be advanced for incorporating the Africans because this would inevitably lead to African majority rule — something Botha and all other elements participating in the present parliamentary set-up, including the white opposition PFP and the Coloured and Indian MPs, are not prepared to contemplate. Hence Botha's frantic and futile attempt to shut out the Africans completely, despite all his boards and committees, talk of a 'new deal', recognition of the rights of urban Africans, promises of freehold rights and all the rest of it.

The only force capable of breaking through this log-jam is the liberation movement headed by the African National Congress, whose programme as embodied in the Freedom Charter presents the only feasible 'alternative South Africa', and whose standing and authority have grown steadily over the years and are now widely recognised both nationally and internationally. In the past, the leaders of the ruling Nationalist Party were confident that they could suppress the people's revolution by force, but not all their detentions, torture and killings, nor all their aggression against the frontline states, their destabilisation of neighbouring governments, their Cassinga, Maseru and Matola massacres, their Nkomati and Lusaka accords, have brought them the security they seek. While pledging 'reform', Botha intensifies repression. The number of arrests, trials and detentions during 1984 was a record; 1985 is full of trials for treason, terrorism and subversion. The Botha administration becomes more and more militarised. A straw in the wind has been the recent appointment of the Deputy Minister of Defence, Adriaan Vlok, as Deputy Minister of Law and Order, which he explained in his own words as "evidence of good co-operation between the police and the defence force".

Overseas Pressures

The more South Africa is turned into a police state, the greater the resistance of the people mounts, to the point where allies are now becoming fearful of the prospect of revolution. It is no accident that on Human Rights Day, December 10, 1984, Botha's relationship with the United States suffered a blow, with Reagan himself calling on the apartheid regime 'to reach out to its black majority by ending the forced removal of blacks from their communities and the detention without trial and lengthy imprisonment of black leaders'. A few days later at the United Nations the US voted for a

resolution passed unanimously by the Security Council calling on all states to refuse to purchase armaments manufactured in South Africa, though the US still balks at imposing economic sanctions.

It is not that Reagan has abandoned his policy of 'constructive engagement' with South Africa. His revised stance has been prompted by the countrywide demonstrations against apartheid which have been sweeping America and the various pressures for disinvestment which have been growing in response to the mounting rebellion of our people. It is not merely Reagan who is disturbed by what is happening in Southern Africa; it is the whole military-industrial complex for which he speaks, and which fears that what Botha is offering in relation both to the amelioration of apartheid in South Africa and Namibian independence may be too little too late. It is this same fear that prodded the Democratic Party Senator Edward Kennedy to visit South Africa and that is luring a number of other prominent figures on to the anti-apartheid bandwagon.

For the US military-industrial complex has a lot at stake in Southern Africa. The United States is South Africa's biggest trading partner, with imports and exports between the two countries amounting to R4.2 billion in 1983. A recent study by Professor Carl Noffke, director of the Institute for American Studies at the Rand Afrikaans University, showed that more than 350 US companies have nearly R6,000 million invested in South Africa; that more than 6,000 US companies are involved in US-SA trade; that loans from US banks to the private and public sectors in South Africa total R12 billion; and that the overall US investment in South Africa, public and private and including share holdings, amounts to R28 billion. South Africa is also of strategic importance to America in the cold war, and is the source of a number of vital strategic materials. A sign of the growing lack of confidence in South Africa was the recent congressional report recommending that the US should reduce its dependence on South Africa for metals essential to US defence.

Events during the coming period will make South Africa more and more ungovernable as the Botha regime suffers a paralysis of initiative in the face of mounting pressures from all quarters. There is literally nothing the regime can do to solve its crisis, for it can offer nothing substantive but violence. This is a time for the liberation movement to step up its offensive and create the conditions for a meaningful shift in the balance of national and class forces in South Africa which will open the way for the transfer of power to the people. The ANC has proclaimed 1985 "The Year of the Cadre". Let our corps of Cadres advance now and finish the job.

THE ANTI—COMMUNISM OF BISHOP TUTU

On arrival back in South Africa last January after a five-week tour of countries on three continents during the course of which he met monarchs and presidents, prime ministers, Congressmen and parliamentarians and received the Nobel Peace Prize at a splendid ceremony in Oslo, Bishop Desmond Tutu addressed a press conference in Johannesburg during the course of which he said:

“There will never be stability, security and peace in South Africa until there is justice for all, until apartheid, that system as evil, immoral and unchristian as Nazism and Communism, has been dismantled”.

We count ourselves amongst those who were delighted at the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Bishop Tutu, regarding it not only as a tribute to his personal contribution to the anti-apartheid cause but as a mark of international support for the national liberation struggle of the African people. We wholeheartedly endorse his view that there will be no security or peace in South Africa until apartheid has been dismantled.

However, we must confess our surprise at the bishop's equation of the apartheid system with Nazism and Communism, as if all three were merely variations of the same theme. Nor is this the first time Bishop Tutu has made this kind of comment. He has done it again and again. In our view it is about time he and others who have voiced similar sentiments changed their tune.

The comparison of apartheid with Nazism is plain to see. Both embody the concept of racial discrimination. Both regard whites as superior to blacks and believe race mixing is a sin. Apartheid, Nazism and fascism are all devices of the ruling class in capitalist states to perpetuate private ownership of the means of production and facilitate the exploitation of man by man — and in particular the exploitation of black men by white men.

In his book *Mein Kampf* Hitler spoke repeatedly of the need to stop “the process of bastardisation” in Europe, of the need to prevent “the infection of the white race with the blood of an inferior stock”, of his determination to halt “the contamination caused by the influx of negroid blood on the Rhine” etc. etc.

“It was the Aryan alone”, he wrote, “who founded a superior type of humanity; therefore he represents the archetype of what we understand by the term: MAN... It was not by mere chance that the first forms of civilisation arose there where the Aryan came into contact with inferior races, subjugated them and forced them to obey his command”.

The whole world knows what Hitler did to the Jews, wiping out 6 million of them in the ghettos, gas chambers and concentration camps all over

Europe. Even larger numbers of other 'inferior' peoples were killed during his offensive against humanity — Russians, Czechs, Poles, Yugoslavs, gipsies, communists. 50 million people were killed in the war brought about by Nazi-fascist aggression. Had Hitler won the war, we know what would have been in store for the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America, regarded by the Nazis as little better than animals and beasts of burden to serve the master-race.

The leaders of the Nationalist Party saw nothing objectionable in all this, and hoped for a Nazi victory. In 1942 P.W. Botha's predecessor as Nationalist Party leader, B.J. Vorster, at the time a 'general' in the fascist Ossewa Brandwag, openly proclaimed:

"We stand for Christian Nationalism which is an ally of National Socialism. You can call this anti-democratic principle dictatorship if you wish. In Italy it is called Fascism, in Germany German National Socialism, and in South Africa Christian Nationalism".

Vorster was interned for his pro-Nazi activities, but later became Prime Minister and State President without altering his philosophy, a great deal. Certainly the Nationalist Party in office has done nothing to abolish the 'colonialism of a special type' which has prevailed in South Africa throughout this century, which has preserved white supremacy and black deprivation, and which Bishop Tutu himself declares has left the African people today in a worse condition than ever before.

Seen in this context Bishop Tutu's comparison of apartheid with Nazism is historically justified, even though we notice that certain Zionist quarters in South Africa have objected, coming to the defence of the embattled Botha regime. In view of Israel's record of pillage, murder and devastation in the Middle East, and the close links between Israel and South Africa, this is understandable — incidentally providing justification for the United Nations' resolutions bracketing Zionism with apartheid as purveyors of racial discrimination and oppression.

The Communist Record

But why does Bishop Tutu bring 'communism' into this company? Nowhere in the writings or speeches of any Communist leader, nowhere in Marxist philosophy, is there to be found any justification of racial discrimination. On the contrary, the *Communist Manifesto* which Marx and Engels wrote in 1848 ends with the words: "Workers of all lands unite". And Lenin in his 1914 work *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination* wrote:

"Complete equality of rights for all nations; the right of nations to self-determination; the unity of the workers of all nations — such is the national

programme that Marxism, the experience of the whole world and the experience of Russia, teach the workers”.

In our own country the journals of the South African Communists, *The International*, *The South African Worker* and *Umsebenzi* from the earliest days carried in almost every issue the slogan of Marx: “Labour cannot emancipate itself in the White while in the Black it is branded”, and the South African Communist Party throughout the 7 decades of its history has stood uncompromisingly by the principle of equal rights for all South Africans irrespective of race, creed or colour.

Where Communists have held state power, they have implemented basic Marxist policies on the national question. In the Soviet Union, with over 100 different national entities, genuine equality of the peoples has not only been written into the constitution but has been implemented in practice, leading to the steady elimination of the inequalities inherited from capitalism and the drawing together of the diverse elements of the population into ever closer bonds of common citizenship.

There are no deprived or oppressed peoples in the Soviet Union today — no ghettos, no slums, no colour bars. The most backward peoples, who in 1917 did not even have a written language, are today able to enjoy all the advantages of Soviet society without any barriers.

The internationalism of the Soviet people was the factor which above all others enabled them to derive the strength of unity to defeat the Nazis in the last war. Moreover, ever since 1917 the Soviet Union has extended a helping hand to the peoples of the world struggling against colonialism for liberation and national independence. Bishop Tutu says he supports the aims of the African National Congress. Let him ask himself — who are the natural allies of the ANC if not the Communists? Is not the South African Communist Party in alliance with the ANC? Have not South African Communists given their utmost, including in many cases their lives, to advance the cause of liberation in South Africa? Who supports the cause of the ANC and SWAPO in votes at the United Nations if not the socialist countries? Who provides Mozambique and Angola, Ethiopia and Afghanistan, Cuba and Nicaragua, Vietnam and Kampuchea, with the means to defend themselves against the forces of counter-revolution?

The glib equation of apartheid with ‘Nazism and Communism’ is an affront to history and reason, an insult to the liberation movement in general, a desecration of the memory of some of our foremost martyrs and freedom fighters. Nor does it help the cause of liberation which Bishop Tutu genuinely aspires to promote. Bishop Tutu is a fierce critic of the

'constructive engagement' policies of Reagan and Thatcher, but it is only Reagan and Thatcher who can derive any joy from the Bishop's frequent references to the evils of 'Nazism and Communism', for 'constructive engagement' is specifically designed to eliminate the possibility of liberation movements and newly-independent countries opting for socialism. By linking 'Nazism and Communism' Bishop Tutu is helping to implement the objectives of 'constructive engagement'.

Perhaps Bishop Tutu thinks his anti-apartheid radicalism can be made more acceptable to his western critics if he dispels any illusion that he is a crypto-Communist. He should rather follow the example of his predecessor as Nobel Peace Prizewinner, Chief Albert Lutuli, who everybody knew was not a Communist but who as President of the ANC did not spurn the help and friendship of Communists, refused to resort to any form of anti-Communism, and lost not a whit of his reputation for that.

Anti-Communism and anti-Sovietism are the main weapons of reaction in today's world, weapons used by Botha, Reagan and Thatcher to justify internal repression and preparations for war. It is to be hoped Bishop Tutu will come to appreciate this and drop the phrase 'Nazism and Communism' from his anti-apartheid vocabulary.

GRENADA NOW A US MILITARY BASE

The world will not forget the tiny Caribbean island of Grenada, population 112,000, victim of United States aggression.

It was on October 19, 1983, that Maurice Bishop, leader of the New Jewel Movement, was murdered in mysterious circumstances in the military barracks of St George's, the island capital. Bishop was one of the co-founders in 1973 of the New Jewel Movement, which in 1979 ended the nightmare dictatorship of Sir Eric Gairy and opened the road to freedom and social progress for the Grenadan people. In the little over 4 years that it was able to exercise power, the Bishop government reduced unemployment from 40% to 12%, illiteracy from 35% to 5%, introduced a free health and dental care system, provided the legal basis for equal rights for women, distributed thousands of acres of idle land to small farmers, improved transport, roads and water supplies and laid the infrastructure for economic development which was maintained at an annual level of 5.5%. It also began, with Cuban aid, the construction of an international airport which was essential for the development of the island's tourist industry.

The redistribution of wealth which took place under the Bishop government was not to the liking of the bourgeoisie who had prospered under the Gairy regime; nor of the Americans, always nervous of anything resembling socialism developing in their backyard. The split in the New Jewel Movement gave Reagan his chance. When Bishop was deposed on October 12 by a Revolutionary Military council headed by army chief General Hudson Austin and Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard, the Americans started their preparations; and when Bishop, three other Cabinet Ministers and two leading trade unionists were amongst a number of Grenadan leaders killed in the confused events of October 19, Reagan put into operation a plan code-named "Operation Urgent Fury" which had been worked out by the Pentagon some months before.

Reagan claimed that the lives of US citizens in Grenada — in the main some 800 students at the US-run St George's University School of Medicine — were endangered and their safety had to be ensured. He called the US invasion of Grenada which took place on October 25 a 'rescue' mission: he was rescuing not only the endangered Americans but also the Grenadan people who, he claimed, were opposed to the Coard-Austin military dictatorship.

Reagan also claimed that Grenada was nothing more than a Soviet/Cuban military base, and that the international airport was being built to promote communist terrorism and subversion in Central America and the Caribbean. He professed to be merely responding to an invitation by the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and Grenadan Governor-General Scoon to take action to prevent chaos in the region and restore 'democracy'.

None of these claims were true.

*The US medical students were in no danger until the US invasion force landed and started shooting — they and their college administrators said so themselves.

*The OECS issued no invitation to the US to intervene — it did not even have the right to do so. The 'invitation' issued by a group of US satellite states in the region (which did include some members of the OECS) was in fact illegal and in violation of existing treaties.

*Governor-General Scoon never issued an invitation until he was taken from his residence to the US helicopter-carrier Guam and made to sign the necessary authorisation — after the US paratroops had landed.

*Far from Grenada being a Soviet/Cuban military base threatening to spread 'terrorism' in the region, the tiny Grenadan army did not have the

firepower or the trained manpower or anything approaching the necessary economic resources to present a threat to any of its neighbours, let alone the mighty US. The total number of Cuban citizens on the island, mostly airport construction workers, was 784, including diplomats and their families. There was no Soviet military presence at all.

By contrast, the US threw 3,000 of its elite troops on to Grenada — and it had taken more than one week to prepare them for action. Talk of an ‘invitation’ was merely a cover — the invasion came first, then the ‘invitation’.

Illusions Dispelled

The population of Grenada was in turmoil at the time. Their popular leader Bishop had been killed, and there may well have been some Grenadians who welcomed the overthrow of the Coard-Austin clique which had seized power. But if any Grenadians had any illusions that the Americans had come to bring them ‘freedom and democracy’, they were soon disillusioned.

Freedom of the press and information was the first to disappear. During the first week of the invasion an intensive propaganda campaign which had evidently been carefully prepared was unleashed at full blast by the Reagan Administration. The independent press of Grenada was closed down, and propaganda discrediting not only Coard and Austin but also Bishop and the New Jewel Movement was spread throughout the island. All citizens of Cuba, the Soviet Union, Libya and even Western countries (technicians, doctors, nurses etc. suspected of sympathy towards New Jewel) were expelled. The only source of information was the Voice of America and other US propaganda. The progressive Grenadan press was closed down and its journalists either jailed, exiled or thrown into unemployment. In all, over 3,000 people were detained in US military prisons or war camps. The orders for the administration of the island’s affairs came from the US, and the CIA was everywhere. Coard and his wife, Austin and others were put on trial for their lives. The US undoubtedly aims to put in the dock not only the prisoners but the entire Grenadan revolution.

In May, 1984, the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement (MBPM) was set up with Kenrick Radix, a former Cabinet colleague of Maurice Bishop, as chairman. In its inaugural manifesto it pledged “to continue the struggle to bring bread, peace and justice to the poor and working people; democratic and progressive forces; and to the nation as a whole” in continuation of the Maurice Bishop tradition. In an interview with the Cuban newspaper *Granma*, Radix explained that the American invasion had brought no benefits to the Grenadan people, was no victory.

“There is no victory because our people for the first time in four and a half years are really hungry. Unemployment is something of 40 per cent as opposed to a previous 12 per cent. That is no victory. It is no victory to be hungry! It is no victory to be out of work! There is no victory in not having medical and dental facilities, which were there prior to the invasion. It is no victory for a people to experience the dismantling of all the social and economic programmes. Housing is in short supply. Electricity supplies are short and short still; water supplies are short and short still. The right of education is not guaranteed as it had been before”.

Thousands of vagrants were to be seen in the cities and villages; prostitution rose sharply and crime reached unprecedented proportions. Drug addiction became a new and unwelcome phenomenon, and there were even reports that the American ‘liberators’ were themselves growing marijuana. State farms and peasants’ co-operatives were ruined. The tourist industry was reduced to almost nothing.

When the invasion, which Reagan called an act of liberation, took place, Reagan predicted, in reply to a question at a press conference, that his troops might remain in Grenada for, say, a week. They are still there, nearly 400 of them, and US helicopters still hover in the skies overhead. The US has completed the airstrip the Cubans were building, but it is now US military aircraft which are landing there. In addition to the Americans, the island is policed by men from US satellite states in the region.

Elections

Wishing to give the new set-up a veneer of ‘democracy’, the US persuaded Scoon to call elections on December 3, 1984. Thanks to the sustained US propaganda campaign to which the islanders were subjected, the US-oriented coalition which had been hammered together for the purpose, the New National Party headed by Herbert Blaize, won 14 out of the 15 parliamentary seats at stake, with one seat and over one third of the votes going to the United Labour Party of the former dictator Sir Eric Gairy. Gairy himself had not stood for election, but he immediately ordered his successful member to resign, charging that voting irregularities had taken place. The hate campaign which had been orchestrated against the New Jewel Movement resulted in the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement receiving only about 5 per cent of the votes, but the Movement also alleged corruption at the polls.

The first action of the new Premier Herbert Blaize was to call on the United States not to withdraw its occupation forces until he had been able to knock together an adequate security force of his own. Blaize had been Grenada’s Prime Minister from 1962 until 1967, when Gairy took over. During the

election campaign Blaize received massive financial and organisational backing both from the US government and the AFL-CIO's American Institute for Free Labour Development (AIFLD) which projected him as a 'moderate' between Gairy and Radix. After his victory Blaize declared December 5 a public holiday, and called for a special ecumenical celebration to "dedicate this land to the service of Almighty God". Reporters spoke of "a land plastered with Reagan-Bush '84 stickers".

Anti-imperialist Unity

What of the future? The question of Grenada cannot be considered in isolation from the situation in the entire Caribbean and Central America, and here the guidelines for future developments were laid down at the First Consultative Meeting of Anti-Imperialist Organisations of the Caribbean and Central America held in Havana from June 11 to 13, 1984. The meeting had been called largely to iron out differences of interpretation which had manifested themselves in the wake of the events in Grenada, and to ensure the maximum unity in the ranks of the anti-imperialist forces fighting against the Reagan administration's offensive against peace and progress throughout the world.

The meeting called for the immediate withdrawal of US forces from Grenada in line with the resolutions passed by the United Nations General Assembly and the Commonwealth Conference held in India in November 1983.

"Stating that the defeat of the Grenadian Revolution constituted a serious setback for the Caribbean and international revolutions, the participants in the meeting denounced the execution of Maurice Bishop and other revolutionaries and expressed their conviction that, sooner rather than later, the people of Grenada would once more take up the torch of national and social freedom given them by their beloved leader and martyr Maurice Bishop".

The meeting surveyed and denounced the effects of US aggression and destabilisation throughout the region, and declared that the following objectives should be achieved in order to make the Caribbean a zone of peace:

- *the dismantling of all foreign military bases;
- *an end to all acts of economic aggression and destabilisation;
- *an end to the use of mercenaries;
- *an end to colonial and foreign domination;
- *non-interference and non-intervention in the internal affairs of the states in the region, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity;

40 Years on

How the Red Army Buried Hitler

By ANC Khumalo

The hearts of the people of the world were beating for the soldiers of the red Army as they fought their way into Berlin during the latter days of April, 1945. The victorious Soviet army that had driven back the fascist hordes from the gates of Moscow, Leningrad and Stalingrad in the grim days of 1941-42 had now launched the final onslaught on Hitler's citadel.

When they started the war the fascist adventurers did not imagine this was how it would end. The hour of reckoning for all their evil deeds had come.

By the end of April the red banner was hoisted over the Reichstag and the Berlin garrison surrendered two days later. Hitler, who had dreamed of one thousand years of world domination, could only marry his mistress and commit suicide.

On May 8, representatives of the vanquished nazi Germany signed the documents of unconditional surrender and the following day Soviet forces went on to complete the liberation of Czechoslovakia where the last remnants of the German forces surrendered. May 9 witnessed the victorious end of the war in Europe and the entire world celebrated this epic deliverance from fascist slavery in a war that cost incalculable suffering, destruction and the loss of fifty million lives.

Particular gratitude was felt for the Soviet Union which had borne the brunt of the war, lost 20 million people and been so instrumental in Nazi Germany's defeat. As we prepare to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of this historic event, it is important that all should understand the full meaning of the war and the significance of that great victory.

To begin with, we need to examine the causes of the war and the question of who was to blame for it. We need to consider whether it could have been prevented. This is all the more necessary because forces similar to those that built Hitler threaten once again to plunge the world into war as a result of their anti-Soviet crusade. We need to show that the principal force that crushed Hitler's Germany was the Soviet army and people. Western ideologists constantly falsify wartime events in order to exaggerate the significance of their side's contribution and diminish that of the Soviet Union. They wish to obscure the power and ability of the Soviet Union which won such prestige in the struggle against Hitler, so that it should not be viewed as the champion of peace and security today.

Pre-War Events in Europe

The Second World War commenced on September 1, 1939 with Nazi Germany's unprovoked attack on Poland. Britain and France declared war on Germany. At this stage the Soviet Union was a non-participant, as was the other wartime ally, the USA.

Behind the outbreak of war lay complex events and forces. Most salient was the fact that Nazi Germany and its allies had enjoyed the connivance of the rulers of Britain, France and the USA, since the chief aim of fascism was the destruction of the Soviet Union. Sharp contradictions between the imperialist states, however, led in 1939 to the outbreak of armed conflict between fascist Germany and Italy in the one camp and Britain and France in the other.

Ever since the advent of Soviet power in October 1917, the imperialists had sought to destroy the world's first socialist state. During the civil war of 1918-22, fourteen invading imperialist armies in support of internal counter-revolution had attempted, in the words of Churchill, "to strangle the Bolshevik baby in its crib."

Alone and isolated, but enjoying enormous support from revolutionary movements in all countries, the young Soviet Union built up socialism under very difficult conditions. It was resolute in the struggle to prevent war, following Lenin's principle of peaceful coexistence, and constantly sought to forge collective security pacts to preserve peace and prevent fascist aggression.

The Rise of Hitler

The internal situation, already tense and fraught with danger after the capitalist economic crisis of 1929-33, worsened with the coming to power of Hitler's nazi party in 1933. Hitler was backed by the German monopolists, assisted by foreign imperialists who dreaded the possibility of a socialist revolution in Germany. The crisis of world capital had resulted in 4 million unemployed in Germany alone, galloping inflation, and the growth in strength of the communists.

What happened in Germany was a classic example of the bourgeoisie dispensing with the niceties of parliamentary democracy and calling to power fascist dictatorship in order to protect the capitalist system.

Hitler called his party 'national socialist' (nazi for short) in order to deceive the German people about his objectives. The first step in his programme was the elimination of the powerful Communist Party and the democratic rights of the German people. With billions of marks at his disposal (30 billion from the USA alone between 1928-33), he began war preparations and built Germany into a gigantic military machine. His declared aim was to crush the Soviet Union and proceed to the domination of the world with the extermination or subjugation, according to his racist creed, of all the 'inferior' peoples such as the Slavs, Jews and blacks.

In the belief that war could be averted, the Soviet Union called for a firm alliance against Hitler, but Britain, France and the USA were not interested in seriously opposing him. Hitler proclaimed that his main area of interest lay in finding 'lebensraum'. Moreover he was the servant of imperialism.

The attitude of all the powers was expressed during the Spanish civil war, where only the Soviet Union sprang to the defence of the legally elected republican government, whilst Britain, France and the USA followed a disastrous policy of non-intervention. This allowed the fascist General Franco, openly supported by German and Italian forces, to succeed in his criminal rebellion. In 1938 nazi Germany was allowed to annex Austria, and in September of that year came the shameful betrayal of the Munich conference where Britain and France consented to the seizure of Czechoslovakia by Hitler. In a last effort to save Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union offered tanks and troops to the bourgeois government, but Romania and Hungary refused to give them the right of passage.

After the fall of Czechoslovakia, Poland came into the line of fire, with Hitler demanding the return of Danzig (made a free city after World War 1) and the Polish corridor giving Poland an outlet to the Baltic Sea but separating the territory of East Prussia from Germany proper. Poland, itself

ruled by a fascist clique at the time, placed obstacles in the way of an agreement between Britain, France and the Soviet Union designed to prevent a Hitler attack — obstacles which Britain and France did nothing to eliminate.

When the Soviet Union realised that all attempts to build a firm anti-Hitler alliance were in vain because of imperialist intransigence, it came to the conclusion that it would have to take a different course to protect its own security. In August 1939 it signed a non-aggression pact with Germany, winning a breathing space of nearly two years during which it was able to build up its defences and strengthen the socialist foundations of the Soviet state, threatened as it was on two fronts — nazi Germany to the west and militarist Japan to the east. This non-aggression treaty has been much criticised by the enemies of the Soviet Union, but subsequent events were to prove its validity.

For Britain and France the agreement was a chilling signal that Hitler was not going to carry out his struggle against Bolshevism on their terms. The nazi leadership reasoned that it would have to subjugate the whole of Europe before it would be safe to launch an attack against the Soviet Union.

After Poland was overrun, the period of the 'phoney war' set in, with Britain and France failing to act, whilst nazi Germany invaded Denmark, Norway, Holland and Belgium. France's turn came next with the bourgeois government capitulating in July, 1940. The invasion of Yugoslavia, Albania and Greece followed and in the far east Japan occupied large parts of China and Korea. In all these countries only the communists offered organised resistance, but the speed with which the fascist forces took over, owing to the lack of resistance by those bourgeois governments, built up the myth of Hitler's invincibility.

At this stage nearly all of Europe, with the exception of Britain, lay at Hitler's feet. At his disposal he had the combined economies of all the occupied countries and the support of the fascist coalition which, apart from Japan and Italy, included such allies as Finland, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania. As far as the west was concerned, it was a case of the monster biting the hand that had fed it. Under his command, Hitler had 300 million people and he had more coal and steel than the USSR. Europe was thus a source of labour and resources for the war he now felt more confident of waging to the east. Moreover, since his forces were in control of the Atlantic shoreline, he considered that he had secured his rear.

The Soviet Union Attacked

The thunderclouds of war had built up over the Soviet Union. On June 22, 1941, the nazi generals unleashed a blitzkrieg (lightning strike) across the

Soviet frontier. A three-million-strong army had been assembled with 193 divisions comprising the first echelon of attack. The Nazi forces, having overrun many countries, were experienced in modern warfare and, despite stiff resistance, their tank and motorised units sped deep into Soviet territory. The aim was to knock out the Red Army and within two months reach the Ural mountains, the line dividing the European part of the Soviet Union from the Asian part. Japan was expected to advance on the Urals from the east. So confident was Hitler of success that he already had invitations printed for a victory dinner at Leningrad's famous Astoria hotel and the Nazi dictator expected to enter Moscow within six weeks.

Thus commenced the Great Patriotic War, so named because the Soviet people were defending their socialist motherland in a war on which the future of all mankind depended. This was a just war against the fascist aggressor, but it was not merely a war between two states. In the first place it was a class war in which the mission of the fascist enemy was to destroy socialism and with it the world working-class and national liberation movements.

The Enemy Advance Halted

The early days of the war were grim ones indeed. The Red Army was compelled to retreat and relinquish large parts of Soviet territory. From the outset, Leningrad had been besieged by Nazi forces operating from Finland. The Baltic republics, Byelorussia and the Ukraine were overrun, the enemy broke through to the Black Sea and advanced steadily on Moscow. But the time for easy war for Hitler's forces was over. The small Brest Litovsk fortress on the Polish frontier had held out for six weeks. By the time the winter of 1941 was setting in, one-third of the enemy invasion force lay dead or wounded.

The Soviet people were shaken but not demoralised by the initial success of the invasion. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union rallied and organised them for the war effort. The whole country was put on a war footing under the direction of the State Defence Committee headed by Stalin. Everywhere Communist Party members were to the fore, inspiring the soldiers and the people, volunteering for the most dangerous missions and tasks, be these on the battlefields, at the points of production or in the occupied territories where partisan (guerilla) detachments were formed to harass the aggressor's rear and make Soviet land burn under his feet. In a tremendous feat of organisation, 1,360 industrial and agricultural enterprises were moved to the Urals and the eastern Republics of the Soviet Union, where they were soon in operation for the war effort.

Already Hitler's blitzkrieg had failed, for the Soviet Union was no easy victim like the other countries he had overrun. The fascist offensive began to weaken, whilst Soviet resistance increased and became steadily better organised. The order of the day in this grim opening phase of the war was to halt the enemy, who had to fight for every inch of territory. Besieged Leningrad was turned into an impregnable fortress and was to hold out for an incredible 900 days of starvation and bombardment until its relief. By October, with the enemy 16 kilometers from Moscow, the battle for the Soviet capital had begun.

This was the most critical stage of the war, with the nazis launching what they hoped would be the final offensive on the city. They had brought up fresh reserves, and a force of 80 divisions converged on Moscow. The traditional November 7 parade was held in Red Square, with the columns of infantry, tanks and artillery passing the Lenin mausoleum and going straight on to the front. With the Party declaring "The defeat of the enemy must begin at Moscow!" the Soviet command brought up fresh organised forces and in December launched its first major counter-offensive. This was a tremendous test for the Red Army which crashed through the nazi lines and, by the spring of 1942, had thrown back the enemy 400 kilometres from the Soviet capital.

The battle of Moscow was a decisive event of the war. It shattered the myth of the German army's invincibility, wrecked Hitler's blitzkrieg plan and forced him into a prolonged war. It revealed the strength of the Soviet Union in war, gave hope to the world and strengthened the anti-nazi camp.

Anti-Fascist Coalition

On January 1, 1942, twenty six states, including the USSR, USA and Britain agreed to form an alliance to defeat the Hitler-Mussolini-Tokyo Axis. The more sober British and American statesmen understood the dangers of fascism presented to their own countries. They realised that without the Soviet Union it was impossible to halt Hitler. Moreover, the USA had cause to understand the treachery of the aggressors when the Japanese launched a surprise attack on their naval base at Pearl Harbour. A compelling motive behind the US and British decision was to see imperialist Germany, as a competitor in the world market, crushed. At the same time they hoped to see the Soviet Union weakened.

Senator Truman, the future American President, summed it up when he said: "If we see that Germany is winning we should help Russia, but if Russia is winning we should help Germany." Put another way, the wish was "to see

Hitler in the grave and Russia on the operating table.” But the people of Britain and America, inspired by the heroic Soviet feats, forced their rulers to adopt a more resolute policy. Britain and the USA undertook to open a second front in Europe as soon as possible, but it was another three years before they fulfilled this promise, and in all this time the Soviet Union stood alone in Europe where 70% of the world war was being waged.

Whilst the Americans fought the Japanese for control of coral islands in the Pacific, Churchill followed the myopic policy of regarding the north African desert rather than the English channel as the shortest route to Germany. This conduct prolonged the war and therefore cost millions more lives.

Decisive Battles

During the course of 1942 the initiatives still lay with the nazi aggressor who built up a new offensive in the south. With a million strong force the enemy broke through the Soviet defences and drove on to the Volga. The aim was to seize Stalingrad (now Volgograd) and push on to the Soviet oilfields at Baku. Success would have enabled Hitler to smash through to the Middle East and India.

On August 23, 1942, the great city on the Volga was flattened and the fiercest battle of the war took place as literally every street, house and room was fought for. The fighting raged for months while the world watched anxiously, aware that its fate hung in the balance. The Soviet command's plan was to wear the enemy down while building up fresh forces on his flanks. By November 19, a shattering blow was unleashed and Hitler's 6th Army of 330,000 troops was encircled and gradually crushed. In February, 1943, 96,000 survivors surrendered. Never before in history had such a large formation of troops been surrounded and destroyed.

The tide of war was turned on the Volga and the German army could never be the same again.

Churchill tried to make out that it was the Battle of El Alamein that changed the course of the war. It is instructive to point out that the German general Rommel had a mere 9 divisions under his command in the African desert, whilst the German forces at Stalingrad comprised 22 divisions, out of a total of 257 fascist divisions on the 'Russian' front.

With this signal victory the Red Army at last wrested the initiative from the enemy and, in what can be regarded as the second period of the Great Patriotic War, commenced the struggle for the expulsion of the invaders from Soviet soil.

This was no easy task. The fascist beast had been lamed, but it was not yet beaten. Hitler had built up freshly equipped armies, but so too had the Soviet Union. Soviet scientists and workers improved tank and aircraft design and developed weapons like the ferocious rocket missiles popularly known as 'Katyushas'. Factories functioned round the clock and a continuous stream of improved arms and equipment flowed to the front. Soviet industry was producing 2½ times more tanks and 20,000 more planes than Germany. Not only was the Soviet Union beginning to produce more weapons, but these were proving superior in battle.

By July, 1943, the Nazi command sought to reverse their Stalingrad defeat by attempting to launch another powerful offensive. They concentrated their forces in the region of Kursk, south of Moscow, and with a battering ram of 50 divisions, 20 armoured and motorised, hoped to smash through the Soviet defence line. The battle that developed at Kursk was the biggest in history, involving huge numbers of planes, tanks and artillery. The German offensive was not only halted, but the Red Army launched a spectacular counter-offensive which demolished the enemy and hurled him back across the Dnieper, opening the way for the liberation of Kiev and the Ukraine. Kursk placed the German forces in a near catastrophic position. They were never again able to assume the offensive. The outcome of this battle so significantly altered the balance of forces and capacity between the two adversaries that it is rightly considered the turning point of the war.

The Enemy Driven from Soviet Soil

By the end of 1943, the tide of war was irreversibly changed in favour of the Soviet Union. During the course of 1944, tremendous blows rained down on the enemy formations in Byelorussia and the western Ukraine. These were dramatic proof of the Soviet army's mastery of military art, with generals such as Zhukov and Rokossovsky proving themselves the most outstanding. The enemy had to contend with the Soviet partisans who came into their own as the Red Army advanced. Tremendous chaos was sown in the enemy ranks as they attempted to retreat. The aptly named 'Railway War' launched by the partisans against the enemy supplies accounted for five times more damage than allied bombs. In the summer of 1944, the Red Army mounted a general offensive along the whole front from Leningrad to the south. By the autumn the enemy had been driven from Soviet soil. Tens of thousands of captured Germans who had once dreamed of seeing Moscow received the opportunity as they were marched through the city's streets to captivity. On

Soviet soil the German army lost 8 million men, killed and captured, 19,000 guns, 62,000 planes and 55,000 tanks.

But the nazis had exacted a horrific toll in the Soviet lands they had overrun. They had destroyed 1,740 towns and cities, razed to the ground 70,000 villages, slaughtered civilians or driven them into slavery. Wherever they set foot, they left ashes and ruins. Four hundred mines were destroyed in the Donetsk coal basin; 25 million people were made homeless. The loss to industry was 679 billion roubles and the estimated complete cost of the war was 2½ trillion roubles. The 20 million dead (one million alone in the siege of Leningrad) was an incalculable loss.

By comparison the USA made a profit out of the war of 52 billion dollars and lost only 340,000 soldiers. Car accidents in the USA account for this number of casualties every five years. Of course, not a single bomb fell on America.

Liberating Europe

The Red Army now turned to its campaign of liberating the European countries from the yoke of fascism. Eleven European countries, including Poland, were freed by the Soviet forces who were greeted everywhere as liberators.

By this stage the long awaited opening of the second front in France had taken place in June, 1944. There is no doubt this was spurred on by the decisive victories the Soviet Union had been scoring on the Byelorussian and Ukrainian fronts. By then the war had already entered its concluding stage. As many as 370 enemy divisions had been wiped out on the Soviet-German front and nazi Germany was incapable of making good these losses. The chief consideration of the US and British rulers was to share the 'victory pie', with postwar alignments in mind, and to shake hands with the 'Russians' as far to the east as possible.

The American and British armies made slow progress from the west, even though they had overwhelmingly superior force. The German troops they faced were Hitler's second best, for the most experienced divisions were concentrated on the eastern front. At the time of the Normandy landings there were only 50 German divisions in France and by the time the Red Army was preparing to cross on to German soil in January, 1945, Hitler had only 20 divisions facing the allies in the West.

At this point the Americans and British were engaged in the so-called Battle of the Bulge in the Ardennes mountains of France. When things went wrong for them, Churchill appealed to Stalin to advance the date of the

proposed Soviet offensive and Stalin obliged. Hitler was forced to transfer another 12 divisions to the eastern front and the Germans thus had only 8 divisions to face 1,000,000 American and British troops. It is salutary to note in passing that Tito's partisans in Yugoslavia tied down 16 German divisions.

In the closing period of the war Hitler and his henchmen were hoping that the western allies would do a deal with them and save their skins from the advancing Red Army forces. The nazis were putting up token resistance in the west and desperately digging in against the advancing Soviet tide. In the bitter fighting for Berlin, 300,000 Soviet soldiers gave their lives, but nothing could prevent the final collapse of nazi Germany under the hammer blows of the Soviet forces. Germany was defeated and the fascist leaders and war criminals suffered the grim retribution of popular justice.

As a result of the Yalta Conference the Soviet Union undertook to declare war on Japan in order to bring the war to a speedy end. The declaration was made on August 8, 1945, and Soviet forces immediately acted against the 1.3 million strong Japanese army in Manchuria. This force was routed by September and all its equipment was handed to the Chinese communists. However, on August 6 and 9, 1945, the USA dropped atomic bombs on Japan, killing hundreds of thousands of civilians in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This was an act of barbarism for which there was no military necessity. Japan was already finished as a fighting force. The main reason for dropping the bombs was to warn the Soviet Union of the USA's potential as an aggressor.

Source of Soviet Victory

The Soviet Union played the chief part in bringing the war to a victorious conclusion. It saved humanity from fascist slavery and in so doing fulfilled its internationalist duty to the peoples of the world. The gains of the socialist revolution and of Soviet power had been protected and socialism was turned into a world system. With the defeat of the most reactionary capitalist country and the weakening of others, the world balance of forces was radically altered and many countries in eastern Europe and Asia were set on the socialist path. As a result of the weakening of imperialism and the enormous desire for freedom that spread everywhere in the wake of the war, the colonial system began to collapse.

As to the source of victory in the Great Patriotic War and the crushing of Hitler in Berlin, this is not hard to pinpoint, even though the imperialist falsifiers of history will have us believe it was the Russian winter and particularly Generals December and January who were responsible!

falsifiers of history will have us believe it was the Russian winter and particularly Generals December and January who were responsible!

The Red Army proved more than a match for the nazis, in all conditions, whether summer or winter, on Soviet soil or German soil. The Soviet people triumphed because their socialist system enabled them to mobilise the necessary human and material resources for victory. The Soviet people were fighting to defend their way of life and the gains of the October revolution against an aggressor who was fighting for motives of imperialism and conquest, to subject the world to the bestial control of the master-race in the interests of the monopolists. The Soviet soldier was a patriot and an internationalist. As Lenin prophetically stated: "The workers and peasants can never be defeated if they are fighting for socialist power".

Consequently the Soviet people, united and determined, were able to withstand tremendous hardships and displayed unexampled endurance, sacrifice and mass heroism to make their victory possible. The inspirer and organiser of the people was the Communist Party which welded together the Army and the people, the front and the rear. By their personal example the communists inspired the fighting men and the workers to perform heroic feats. "I want to go into battle as a communist" was the sentiment that fired the best of the Soviet people.

The Fight for Peace Today

The Soviet people's great victory being celebrated on May 9 is also our victory and our celebration. That victory is directly linked to the struggle for world peace today. Now, as then, imperialist warmongering threatens us all with extinction. Now, as then, the Soviet Union is the sheet anchor of world peace and humanity.

ZOYA ON GUARD

By ANC Khumalo

I first saw Zoya
aglow in the Moscow Metro
then learnt her name

It was love at first sight
I was drawn to Zoya
like the moth
to brightly burning flame

A partisan girl on guard
noble and strong
her sculpted form lovingly cast
radiating spirit and life

My guide was quick to impart
the tale of courage and devotion

Guarding Moscow's approaches
from the ice age onslaught
she fell into the grip of demons
who tore away her clothing
hurling her into the ice hard night
hoping to unlock her tongue

But she was frost to them
heart ablaze with love
for her motherland

So they strung her up
like a pagan offering
on their drunken crusade

It is known
how that crusade began
and ended where it began ...

Zoya perished in that pagan night
but forever glows
and not only in Soviet hearts
but for all on our planet
who cherish the sunshine

And in our world today
when ice age pagans
again gamble on ghostly crusades
challenging the right to the light
of every human being

Zoya pulsates lifebeams
of firm resolve
like the sun bestowing energy
into the lushgreen spring

Zoya on guard
at the Izmailovskaya station
stands like a shield
between the pagan night
and the light.

Note: The poem refers to Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, the partisan heroine executed by the nazis in November, 1941. A statue of her stands at the Izmailovskaya Metro station, Moscow. Both Zoya and her brother, who was a fighter pilot, were awarded the title Hero of the Soviet Union.

U.S. "STAR WAR" PLAN MUST BE SCRAPPED!

Some points made by ANDREI GROMYKO, Foreign Minister of the USSR, in a television interview with a group of political analysts from the Soviet mass media in Moscow on January 13, 1985.

If one strives to put an end to the arms race and to the removal of the threat of war, or to put it briefly, if one strives for a lasting peace, it is necessary to ensure that the arms race does not begin in space and is stopped on earth.

Weapons intended for use against objects in space should be categorically banned, just as weapons designed for use from outer space against the Earth as a planet. In other words, against objects on the ground, on the sea, in the atmosphere.

I must say that during a long time US proponents of the plan for the so-called large-scale anti-missile defence were "drowning" individual components, individual phases of that problem, never differentiating between them. Later on they realised, naturally, that that position was weak; facing criticism and, I would say, exposure of its nature, they somewhat corrected it and came to the conclusion that the deployment of relevant

objects and their testing could be prohibited. They first stated this clearly in Geneva.

As for research, they claim that it should be conducted. Their motivation was that research could be not prohibited all the same since such a ban could be verified. The problem of verification is of course difficult. If research is done by way of preparing relevant papers indoors, obviously, verification will not be easy.

But there is often some proving ground next to a laboratory and it is used for relevant purposes.

Even assuming that verification is difficult, why should work be conducted, even if it is called research, when there exists an accord that the goal of the ultimate and complete elimination of nuclear weapons should be pursued?

Why should research be conducted to develop a whole system of new types of weaponry for deployment in space? So the position of the US administration, as regards the research is vulnerable. Why should preparations be carried out, even at the initial stage, for the subsequent testing and deployment of new types of armaments?

And who can guarantee that the line will be drawn after research has been completed? Will not there be people, scientists and others, who will say: we have spent so many billion dollars on research, so why waste all this money? Isn't it better to use it and go over to the next phase, that is, testing and deployment? Can this happen? It certainly can. We know the US administration and know the situation in the United States. That is why the policy of conducting research with a view to developing a large-scale missile defence system stands criticism, both morally and politically, and I want to stress this most resolutely. This policy is vulnerable and must be rejected.

Frankly speaking, there is a very short distance between this position and absurdity.

The fact that this plan or system — they like the word “system” better — has been called “defensive” by the US Administration does not change anything. Some sections of the public are taken in — this should be admitted frankly. But, of course, there is nothing at all defensive about it.

These are offensive weapons and the whole plan, frankly speaking, is a plan for aggression. I emphasise, aggression. We are resolutely against it. We think that anyone trying to take an honest stand on these questions should be aware of the goal pursued by this plan.

Let us allow, by way of theoretical analysis, that the United States has developed this system but does not use its capability to launch missiles at the Soviet Union and to deliver a nuclear strike. But it would have a possibility to do so if it had such a shield. Would it not be used for pressure, for blackmail?

This fits the line of the US administration aimed at securing a position of world domination, a position enabling the United States to dictate its terms. In this case it is a matter of concern to the Soviet Union. We resolutely reject this system, this entire plan. I want to stress anew that the firm basis for doing business in the future is equality. Equality and equal security. There is no other basis.

Even if there are people in the United States who believe that their country will achieve dominance in one way or another, by carrying through its plan to develop the above system or without implementing it, and that the Soviet Union will find itself in a subordinate position, they are mistaken. It is a gross mistake. This will never happen. I want to stress anew, using the occasion, what Konstantin Chernenko pointed out in his statements and what he personally wrote to President Reagan, this is ruled out. We will never allow it.

We have colossal material and intellectual resources, sufficient to ensure our security. This holds true both for the Soviet Union and for our allies and friends. Our people had sufficient strength to emerge victorious from the unprecedentedly devastating war against German Nazism. The world was amazed to see this happen. The Soviet Union carried the brunt of the war. Figuratively speaking, our people, politically, were emitting nuclear energy. And they were victors. They will never allow any country or a group of countries to dictate conditions stemming from ideological considerations. And that the American plans are pervaded in good measure with ideological considerations is beyond doubt and, I think, this is clear to everyone in the Soviet Union and not only in the Soviet Union.

DRAMATIC GROWTH OF THE DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

by L.N. Machlalela

“Our struggle is advancing in a defiant way so that the regime cannot rule in the same old way”. (South African Congress of Trade Unions, National Executive Committee statement, November 1984.)

The growth of the democratic trade unions in the last ten years has accompanied the accelerated resistance to national oppression. The urban working class have at last pressed back the boundaries of state and employer repression and joined the trade union movement in their thousands. They totalled 713,134 in 1975; 974,970 in 1980 and 1,545,824 in 1983, an increase of 58% in less than three years.

For the first time in the industrial history of South Africa, the African workers form the largest single group of organised workers (43.4% as against 33.34% for white and 22.7% for Coloured and Indian workers). Yet only 15% are unionised, and 4.5 million workers remain to be recruited. The democratic trade union movement nonetheless is already a formidable force and despite the fact that it is still in its infancy, it is, alongside the women, the youth and the rural poor, a major component of resistance to the regime, the employers and the state.

Of the one and a half million workers who are attached to trade unions the most important formations are the democratic and independent unions that in greater or lesser degree link their struggles for wages and greater control over the conditions of production with the urban conflicts concerning rents, housing, education, influx control and struggle for political rights. While the

federations (with the exception of CUSA and the independent GWU) have not yet formally affiliated to the United Democratic Front, their constituent unions have directly or indirectly identified themselves with the political campaigns for national emancipation, which they recognise (at times more sharply than their leaders) as indispensable to their success on the shop floor, and the ending of social and economic inequality.

The major configurations of the democratic trade unions are:

	MEMBERS IN 1983	% OF TOTAL 1983
CUSA	140 592	9.1%
FOSATU	108 166	7.0%
INDEPENDENT	696 755	45.1%
TOTAL	945 513	61.2%

The remaining union members (38.8%) are lodged in racist federations from which the more class conscious workers are steadily extricating themselves, although the process is slow. (There was a 10% decline in TUCSA membership in 1983: 54,000 boiler makers and 25,000 members of MICWA). The two main bodies are:

	1983	1984	1983	1984
SACOL	121 890	N/A	7.9%	N/A
TUCSA	478 420	90 000	30.9%	N/A

Before Wiehahn

In the same way as the burgeoning black trade union movement has accompanied the movement of national resistance to the regime, it has also been at the centre of profound and complex changes in the growth and structure of capital. This was manifested initially in the increase in the workforce and (since the seventies) the restructuring of the labour force and labour relations legislation, as the application of new technology made its impact upon the economy.

This process has wrought substantial changes which no analysis of the contemporary trade union movement can afford to overlook: it forms the backdrop to the "Wiehahn legislation" which, on behalf of the larger domestic firms, local conglomerates and monopoly capital, partially reversed three quarters of a century of exclusory labour practices to rearrange the industrial relations system, and by implication, the racial division of labour. The speed of these developments and the historic

transformation of the labour movement over a single decade, quite often mask the enormity of capital's retreat in the face of the national resistance to the regime and the workers' challenge to the gross exploitation that accompanied the economic changes since the end of the sixties.

The Wiehahn Report was officially presented on May Day 1979 — an irony that capital may in the future regard with less enthusiasm than the proposed legislation generated at the time. It reflected the defiant way in which class and national struggles had advanced and the fact that neither capital's needs nor its capacity to contain the struggles made it possible for it to continue in the same old way. For the workers to appreciate the impact of their resistance, they need only look back on the decades of discriminatory legislation that obstructed their earlier organisation: the racist consolidating legislation of 1911; the exclusory provision of the 1924 Industrial Conciliation Act; the War Measures that frustrated their unionisation; the two and a half decades of the bureaucratic imprisonment of the black trade union movement between 1953 and 1979, including the strait-jacketing legislation of the Native Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act of 1953 which was vainly designed to bleed the trade union movement to death; the notorious Industrial Conciliation Amendment Act of 1956 with its extensive provisions for job reservation according to race, and the challenging of industrial negotiation through bureaucrats of the Bantu Labour Office.

The South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) functioned under the most rigid attempts by employers and the state to institutionalise a bureaucratic system of racist industrial relations. SACTU grew in *defiance* of the harsh anti-trade union legislation of the time, which entrenched racist job reservation, recognised NO African trade unions and offered advisory works committees instead. Employers, bureaucrats and police combined to provide a classically repressive structure for the management of black workers. Meanwhile, the last Act of the 50's legislated against strikes and legally registered black trade unions.

Wiehahn in Perspective

Between Wiehahn and the early sixties, the period of the greatest economic growth and technological change, the regime was characterised by the most rigorous national oppression and class confrontation. The former was accompanied by the tightening of labour-regulating mechanisms (labour bureaux — influx controls — pass laws) in order to canalise the workforce and supply labour to the developing sectors of the economy, especially to the transnational and other foreign investors, whose capital has invaded the

mining, automobile, textile, hosiery, petroleum, chemical, capital goods and engineering industries between the Sharpeville and Soweto uprisings. By the beginning of the eighties, total foreign investment had gone over the 25 billion dollar mark and manufacturing alone accounted for 43% of the total foreign investment in 1973 — the year that proved to be a watershed in the history of the democratic trade union movement.

In that year, the class confrontations were characterised by the 1973 strike waves and their aftermath. These were directly linked to the economic growth of the sixties and early seventies, in which profit rates rose to 25% (compared to 14% in some developing countries and as low as 4% in the advanced industrial countries). Gigantic changes in the structure of capital accompanied this growth. This took the form of large-scale replacement of men by machines and the massive recruitment of women's labour as mechanisation changed the labour processes and rendered the work more monotonous and the least well paid.

A new army of unemployed emerged from capital's assault on the cost of production. One million Africans were unemployed in the sixties and, between then and the present, the figure has risen to 3 million, nearly a quarter of the workforce. The armies of unemployed added to the populations of the bantustans, in effect, domestic labour colonies where the inhabitants, already rightless and voteless, were also deprived of their citizenship.

The state assisted this process by revising the institutional machinery of national oppression and revamped the urban areas legislation, the pass laws and the system of labour bureaux to "harmonise" (i.e. coerce) workers to supply their labour power to employers where it was most needed, irrespective of the level of wages or individual choice. Whilst the regime extolled the virtues of the free market, it institutionalised a system of force and compulsion in the labour market that has few, if any, equals in the world.

However much the new labour relations system might be projected as a package that "deracialises" capitalism, collective bargaining is totally undermined so long as it is accompanied by any form of institutionalised command over the labour force. Workplace victories in South Africa have little solidity in the long term without national liberation. This is the Achilles Heel of "Workerism", with its base on the shop floor and its isolation from those forces who are equally oppressed but away from the points of production.

Two phases can be discerned in the period since Sharpeville. The first was highly characteristic of the sixties, where the colour bar in industry was upheld by an assortment of strategies including legislation, negotiation between white unions and management, and customary practice. This

however did not succeed in overcoming the crisis of skills which the 1.4 million white employees could not fill. A policy of "floating" the colour bar was adopted, together with a search for overseas immigrants and a process of job dilution which served to increase the entry into industry of African workers in skilled capacities — at lower rates of pay. This classic phenomenon of contemporary capitalism, the constant fragmentation of the work process, 'deskilling' and job re-classification, was accompanied by changes in technology which enabled large numbers of the black labour force to perform the new mechanical skills. The role of whites as supervisors increased, as well as their wages, the high price of their labour being recognised (as ever) as the cost of the colour bar. For the moment the disadvantages were offset by superior profits.

In effect the floating of the colour bar was a substitute for *statutory* inaction. Changes in the racial division of labour were likely to be as politically subversive among the ruling party's traditional supporters (the white workforce, the petty bourgeoisie) in the sixties, as they are now in the eighties.

What marked off the second phase from the first was the co-operation of monopoly interests, whose capital needs were neither satisfied nor compatible with the existing ordering of the racial division of labour. Moreover, the regime was prepared to confront its former allies and co-opt other elements of the population, something it could not do earlier. The patch-work changes and the ad hoc alterations to the racial division of labour were expensive, inadequate, inefficient and, *as they stood*, inconsistent with the requirements of monopoly capital. They also did not square with the codes of conduct which had been established in the USA and EEC countries to make investments in South Africa more acceptable in the face of growing criticism.

Employers had for a long time, in the earlier phases of the country's growth, capitalised on the historical cheapness and regulation of African labour power. The extensive changes produced in the two decades between 1960 and 1980 — an industrial revolution in many respects — led employers to change their patterns of employment, and the state to change its style of industrial management. But not before the exploitative practices that accompanied nearly two decades of economic growth produced the inevitable explosion — during the strike waves of 1973 and again in 1976, with the urban revolts that started in Soweto.

The industrial scenario that confronted Wiehahn when his Commission of Inquiry into Labour Legislation met in 1976 was quantitatively different from the previous decade, or any other time in the country's history. The

growth in the clothing, textile, metal, machinery and transport industries had transformed the face of the economy — and with it the size and stability of the workforce, the density of the urban population, the demands on housing, transport, schools, services and amenities: the latter being items for which neither the employers nor their state had traditionally felt much commitment to find resources.

It also highlighted the poverty wages. The ratio of average African to average white wages in 1977 — one year after the Soweto Revolt — was one to four in manufacturing; one to five in construction and one to seven in mining. Along with the below-subsistence wages went the dearth in services, the inflated rents and food prices — and the subordinate legal status of urban African workers and the differential legal status of migrant workers on contract.

The changes in the economy and the growth of the urban working population had made it more difficult for the state to contain resistance than at any time before. Moreover the economy continued to expand: in manufacturing, the number of firms had grown by 60% between 1945 and 1976, and led to an increase in employment, output and capital investment. The low level of wages contrasted sharply with the high level of output per average firm. After World War II, the average output per firm was R117. This grew three times by Sharpeville and seven times by the Soweto uprising. What was specially pertinent was the leap in the average investment in plant and machinery — the major factor that revealed the presence of foreign capital — which produced changes in the work process, the division of labour and giant increases in production. The growth in the number of workers, work places and output is best appreciated when seen in table from:

Manufacturing	1945	1960	1976
Establishments (firms)	9,316	10,264	15,461
Av. Output (rands)	117,800	349,600	753,500
Av. investment in plant and machinery (rands)	39,200	77,500	151,800

The significance of this for the labour movement — whose resistance in the mid sixties mirrored the intensified repression that accompanied the urban expansion and industrial concentration — cannot be overemphasised. Compared with the mass strikes of the 1950's, only 2000 workers went on strike during the 1960's. The strikes were for increased wages, improvements in conditions and protests against political repression. But the decade was

not a militant one. It is easy for critics to say with hindsight that had the trade union activity on the shop floor been stronger, better organised, more militant, the character of the decade would have been less bleak for the labour movement. But it was not an era for militant trade union activists: the intense repression of SACTU personnel, the repressive legislation and collusion between police, employers and the state to suppress the labour movement, provided little scope for a democratic mass movement of the trade unions. Other critics point to SACTU's alliance with the Congress Movement in the fifties, and suggest *that* as a reason for the heavy retaliation of the state and the consequent quiet of the late sixties. *But this is to deny the very strength of SACTU: it was from its linkage with the ANC and its allies that it drew its vitality, resources, political assurance and the confidence of the workers — before and long after the banning of the ANC.* The alternative (a workerist approach) was to work within the parameters of the apartheid labour legislation and court co-option by the employers and regime. The problem is not unfamiliar in the present time.

Economic Growth and Change

Despite the relative quiescence of the sixties, the structural changes in employment, output and the impact of mechanisation during the decade and into the seventies, belied the surface "calm". Indeed the processes at work were corrosive to the existing political suppression and form of industrial relations control. In the space of twenty five years, between 1951 and 1976, all the social contradictions that had previously been on the agenda multiplied incalculably as foreign investment advanced to sustain the economy. By 1980, 2000 foreign companies including 65 transnationals had extended their operations to South Africa. Domestic concerns, conglomerates and monopoly capital separately or in co-operation combined to sustain the regime, defend it internationally and determine its strategies. In return, the state (in close collaboration with the military) acted to secure the appropriate conditions for the reproduction of monopoly capital and organise itself to contain the rural poor and the unemployed. At the same time it developed strategies to cope with the impact of the armed struggle and internal resistance to class and national oppression. By the time Soweto flared up into revolt, the level of growth had surpassed all the calculations of the regime's numerous ideologues and social planners, as the following table shows:

Growth of employment in manufacture:

	1951	1970	1976
Total employment	536,275	1,095,577	1,362,079
Output per man (rands)	1,189,381	3,101,889	4,517,513
Av. value of machinery per man (rands)	885	1,481	1,639

The impact of the change was felt in the seventies, when wages fell in relation to inflation; the cost of food escalated and so did the cost of clothing and transport. Between 1958 and 1971, prices rose by 40%. During that time, those who were in employment — euphemistically styled structurally or technically or seasonally out of work — became increasingly desperate.

The industrial expansion produced a new level of determination and militancy among the urban working class and has not abated since it started at the end of 1972, except for brief pauses.

The new militant unionism

The 1973 strikes that heralded the Wiehahn legislation are, on their own, a special chapter of South African labour history. Their significance lies in the scale of strike action — 165,000 workers struck work in Durban in the course of the year, beginning in January with the brick workers, whose 61,000 strikers demanded a rise from R8 to R20 and marched in a demonstration with a red flag before them (for the traffic, they explained!) They did not get all of the rise they wanted but their mass confrontation with the employers and their unity led to their victory and set the scene for other struggles and important victories.

The wave of militancy was too powerful for the employers to respond to with customary force. Moreover the changes in technology and their higher return on capital (profits) made it easier for them to absorb the increase in wages that the workers had won. Mechanisation in the future would mean fewer workers and the process of intensified mechanisation therefore proceeded throughout the decade. The large-scale investment (capable of sustaining short-term losses) made employers less dependent on police intervention in their industrial relations and they sensed the potential for widespread disruption of production. To some extent this was borne out in the following year when the strikes assumed a national character: 22,000 in the Transvaal, 23,000 in the OFS, 18,000 in Natal and 13,000 in the Cape.

It is from this period that the democratic unions emerge, some new, some previously formed. In 1971 there were 10 pathetic parallel unions, some of them a fiction of their parent bodies. By 1974, in the wake of the strike wave

there were twenty five unions with 66,000 workers, 17 of these formed after 1973. Their traditions were informed by SACTU in that political involvement in the communities and in the struggle for national emancipation was accepted as indispensable to meaningful advances at the economic level.

The unions learnt by trial and error on the shop floor or in the process of organisation. What characterised the new militant unionism was their determination to confront the power of the employers, despite the heavy social, political (and physical) consequences. They developed their unions without the institutional procedures of collective bargaining that the subsequent Black Labour Relations Act provided, although they were to learn that not even this gave them immunity from the state, employers or the police. They were formed despite the lack of information about the formal methods of trade union organisation — or difficulties normally associated with the organisation of those who had never before been unionised.

Conflict — Settlement

The Soweto uprising fuelled the flames of the new unionism, demonstrating once again the significance of struggles beyond the shop floor. It is significant that Wiehahn followed closely on the Soweto uprising, his Commission beginning in 1976 and addressing itself to the potentiality of crisis in labour relations — but not immune to the wider ramifications of industrial conflict. The Commission, appointed to investigate labour legislation, was confronted by a rapidly expanding number of black independent trade unions. The economic development over the past decade had run into crisis, described by the ruling class as structural. But it was clearly deeper. Wiehahn was ordered to cope with “the crisis in labour” and the drift of capital away from South Africa in the aftermath of Soweto: to deal with the increased internal disputes, especially mechanisms of conflict-settlement that did not include the security police and which were more consistent with the various recommendations and conventions of the International Labour Organisation and the codes of conduct referred to above.

Transnational investment in South Africa reflected a sensitivity to accusations of coercive labour practices: not only at the point of production but in the framework of the system itself. Its investment in South Africa was dictated by the high annual return it yielded, and the earlier capacity of the regime to contain industrial and political conflict. The entrepreneurs had in a sense invested in the regime as much as in the various economic enterprises. The conditions that would be most conducive to the reproduction of their

capital required a re-ordering of the institutional arrangements, particularly those that were overtly discriminatory. Together with the task of finding a formulation that would meet these requirements, Wiehahn was finally set the task of eliminating “bottlenecks” within labour policies — ie to find a way to eliminate strikes. His report was presented on May 1st 1979.

The government responded with indecent haste: a White Paper was circulated between May and October 1979 and in the latter month a new Industrial Conciliation Amendment Act was introduced. In the following month the National Manpower Commission was established, headed by Professor Wiehahn himself. Industrial relations were seen to be fluid and the role of the original Wiehahn Commission was more or less to design and plan a labour policy and programme for the sustained surveillance and control of the industrial relations system. Its recommendations included one unitary trade union system rather than separate systems, although there was provision for racially exclusive trade unions. At the outset, the recommendations included the need for registration for full participation in the industrial relations system. This meant the disclosure of membership records, names of officials and the union’s financial affairs to the registrar. Initially, only permanent urban workers were eligible for trade union organisation — but following an outcry from the organised movement the right to trade union membership was extended to contract workers. The establishment of an Industrial Court to deal with unfair practices was clearly intended to condition employers to the new dispensation and to provide a carrot for registration.

Co-option?

There are various interpretations of the Wiehahn legislation. Their importance lies in the degree to which unions take the legislation at face value and accept the provisions of the Labour Relations Act and its subsequent amendments. Full participation in the Industrial Relations System includes registration, access to industrial conciliation boards, the industrial courts and the various other ‘concessions’. The danger lies in the possibility of co-option by the employers and control by the State. Wiehahn set out to design and plan a labour policy and programme among other things for the sustained surveillance and control of the industrial relations system, the importance of the registration process ought not to be minimised. It is the first step in the process of control and the institutional mechanism by which the finances, membership, office personnel and proceedings of the union can be monitored by the State.

It comes as no surprise that the Labour Relations Amendment Act of July 1984 retrieved the initiative for the state and made it more difficult for unregistered unions to reach agreements with employers. The amendment provides that agreements reached between employers and unions are not enforceable in court if either party fails to supply the Dept. of Manpower with details of their constitutions, membership, office address, names of office bearers and fails to keep its finances in good order. The amendment was a response to the success the unions had in winning recognition agreements without succumbing to the monitoring processes involved in formal registration. By 1983, 194 unions with an average membership size of 6,566 had registered and many of them had participated in the industrial conciliation machinery and the Industrial Court. In the latter case with some success, although the flexibility and favourable disposition of the Court is in jeopardy with hints from the state that the interpretation of unfair labour practice will be more limited in the future. Approximately 46 unions with an average membership size of 9,712 have refused to register in the belief that militant leadership and shop floor unity could force employers to sign recognition agreements irrespective of formal registration. On principle, however, they rejected state control and the voluntary submission of information to the state that could place the union, its personnel and its membership in jeopardy. The 'registration debate' as such began with the advent of the Wiehahn legislation, although the process of state control and cooption is not new to the South African labour movement.

The Co-option of the white workers

The industrial conciliation mechanism was the option the state imposed on the white working class, following the 1922 Rand revolt and nearly a decade of white union militancy. It was less than an historical compromise but preferable to outright suppression of trade unions at the time. Instead it institutionalised the unions' power and left capital in command. The historians of the 1924 I.C. Act confirm the state's success in co-opting and bureaucratising the labour movement. The Act facilitated the formation of unions and enabled them to take advantage of the new network of regulations and institutions. But the 'adroit negotiator' and the bureaucratic office administrator replaced the militancy of the shop floor so that the rank and file became increasingly alienated from the bargaining process. Accommodation rather than confrontation was more often the case as the strike weapon became more or less obsolete. Between the passage of the Act and 1929, only 6 strikes had taken place and the succeeding years reduced

LESSONS OF THE TWO-DAY STAY-AWAY

By R.E. Nyameko

For two days, November 5th and 6th, 1984, workers in the Transvaal stayed away from work in response to the leaflet distributed for a regional Transvaal stay-away. The leaflet was distributed in many thousands in the black townships. It read: "Your sweat, your labour and your energy have been exploited for years and centuries.

"For decades and generations, the blood of your people has been shamefully spilt in vain.

"Stand up, you who are oppressed and crushed.

"Wake up, you who are oppressed and exploited.

"Rise up, you who have been fooled and hoaxed."

The leaflets demanded:

No more rent increases in the township.

No more bus fare increases.

No more tax and GST increases.

No more police and army in the townships.

No more community councils in the townships.

Trade union leaders and other leaders must be freed from jail.

The Simba Quix workers must get their jobs back.¹

The government must give students a better education. They must stop teachers beating students. They must stop age limits and allow all students to finish school. And the government must allow students to choose their own SRC's.

“In previous stay-aways there were problems with the hostel dwellers, we realised we had not done our work there. This time we did a lot of groundwork there before we produced the stay-away pamphlets. The first meeting convened by COSAS was on October 10th. We decided to go to the communities and assess our strength there... We got a very good response.”²

Chief Gatsha Buthelezi warned that stay-aways are ill-advised until there is black unity. The police said the same. The people have proved in action that they are not going to listen to Buthelezi’s reactionary advice.³

The people did not rush into the stay-away. People chose a special Committee — the Committee decided to have the stay-away on the 5th and 6th November. Workers needed time to talk about it.⁴

A shop steward from a big factory in Johannesburg said:

“Workers need time to decide such things... Workers must talk about things like stay-away. They must have meetings and decide for themselves.”⁴

The people decided. According to the findings of the Labour Monitoring Group (LMG), an academic body which has produced a preliminary analysis of the stay-away, they attempted to contact all firms in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand and Vereeniging — PWV — area which have recognition agreements with an independent union. Responses were received from 71 firms; six firms refused to divulge information. The findings of the group were: Unionised factories gave overwhelming support to the stay-away with some 70% of the companies in their sample reporting a stay-away rate of over 80%. The unionised factories were concentrated in the East Rand and the Vaal — the areas where the stay-away rates were highest.

The stay-away in Atteridgeville township was almost total, but commuters from Bophuthatswana went to work. The pattern was similar in Brits with township dwellers supporting the stay-away and commuters working. All sectors where unions were present were equally affected. Mining was an exception, with lack of participation being attributed to isolation from the townships and the aftermath of their recent strike.

The stay-away did not weaken on the second day: 56% of establishments maintained the same level of stay away on both days; 20% weakened; and 24% actually intensified on Tuesday. There was no significant difference in the response of migrants and township dwellers to the stay-away. Migrants formed a significant proportion of the work force in nine of the 71 establishments surveyed. In five of these there was more than 90% participation which suggests a critical weakening of the influence of Inkatha on the Rand. Chief Gatsha Buthelezi’s opposition to the stay-away call distances him even further from the mainstream of opposition in South Africa.

In short, the two-day stay-away elicited a 60% response in the PWV area — with anything up to 800,000 people participating. It was most successful where strong trade union organisation existed. The numbers involved in the stay away are considerably higher if the approximately 400,000 students who boycotted school on those two days are included.⁵

The Bosses were shocked

Employers and government were shocked by this two-day stay-away, which was a big success. The reaction of the regime was brutal. Ten people were killed, mostly in battles with police on the first day of the strike. Six mothers were killed on the night of November 5-6, while at least 12 Africans and one white, a policeman, were injured.

On November 8 security police raided three offices — UDF, The Media and Research Services (MARS) and FOSATU — detained six members, including four members of the TASC, Thami Mali, Mr Moses Mayegiso, Regional Secretary of MAWU, Mr Themba Nontlanane of the Municipal and General Workers' Union, Mr Peter Makgoba, Regional Chairman of COSAS and Mr Obed Bapela, an employee of MARS — in fact by then at least 50 trade union, student and community organisations' members were in detention.

The regime warned that it could not allow "its labour and economic spheres to become a political battlefield. No matter how unpopular it might make us in the outside world, strong action will be taken against instigators, arsonists and radicals".⁶

Very few employers took action against their employees for participating in the stay-aways. But the government's oil-from-coal plant Sasol at Secunda fired 6,500 workers — because they supported the stay away in the Transvaal.

The regime's vicious revenge

On the first day of the stay-away, at 5 o'clock in the afternoon, helicopters flew over the hostels and dropped thousands of pamphlets. The pamphlets told the workers to be back at work by 10 o'clock the next morning — or they would lose their jobs. The workers' leaders had an all-night meeting. They decided to call a meeting of the workers early in the morning. The leaders wanted to tell the workers to think about going back to work.

They told the bosses about the meeting and the bosses agreed to let the workers have a meeting in the hostel grounds. They also agreed not to call the police or the army. The meeting started at 6 o'clock that morning. But soon

after two 'hippos' drove into the hostel grounds and straight into the workers' meeting. The workers got very angry and decided to carry on with the strike.

On Tuesday the 6th November the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union was informed that 6,500 workers were fired. The next day the police surrounded the hostels. The workers were told to pack their belongings and leave. Outside the workers found the money vans, and they were paid off under the eyes of the police. Next to the money vans, the buses were waiting with signs on them — Qwaqwa, Bushbuckridge, KwaZulu and Transkei. In the words of the union, the workers "were bussed back to the human dumping grounds in the bantustans". The manager at Sasol blamed instigators "who forced workers to stay away from work". The fired workers maintained that nobody forced the workers to stay away from work; in fact their union told their members that workers from government factories did not have to join the stay-away. But the workers at Sasol wanted to stand together with all the other workers in the Transvaal.

Clearly the regime had decided to fire the 6,500 workers to punish them and the thirty or forty thousand people for whom they were the only breadwinners. The regime also hoped to break the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union.

How the Union was Built

Mr Tshidiso Mothupi, who spoke at the workers' meeting, had worked at Sasol for four years before becoming an organiser for the Union. He said: "Sasol is one of the biggest factories in South Africa, but they pay very low wages". Other leaders said: "The bosses saw that the union was getting stronger in the factory".

The leaders built the union by meeting with small groups of workers in hostel rooms and in private homes in the township late at night. They spoke about their best weapon — unity. Slowly they built their union... Slowly the union won rights for the workers — to pay membership fees to their union by stop order, to let the organisers talk to the workers in hostels and the hall. When the bus fares went up, the union got the bosses to pay for part of the bus fares. When the workers said they didn't want to get their wages sent straight to their bank accounts, the union again got the employers to pay workers in cash.

"Everytime we won more rights for the workers, we won more members", said Tshidiso. "Just a few weeks ago, the workers elected shop stewards. Now that the workers and their families will go hungry, our union is much weaker. We all know that in the struggle there are ups and downs. We will now work even harder. The struggle does not end here".

Mr Manene Yoliswa, as he climbed into the bus that was taking him back to the Transkei, said: "There is no time for us to feel sorry or afraid. We must show Sasol that we are brave."

On the very day that Mr Yoliswa spoke, the *Rand Daily Mail* published the stay-away figures released by the Federated Chamber of Industries members as; Kempton Park 100%; Springs 90%; Germiston 85%; Wadeville 95%; Industria between five and 50%; Boksburg up to 98%; Denver 20%; Vanderbijl-park 90%; Benoni 50%; Benrose 60%; Elandsfontein 20%; Randfontein 9%; and Sandton 20%.⁸ These figures are higher than those of the Labour Monitoring Group quoted above. This is no doubt due to the fact that six firms refused to divulge information and that LMG had not researched in the Pretoria area.

Steve Mbatha, Assistant Secretary of Inkatha on the East Rand, spoke the language of the Sasol bosses when he said: "We feel they were victims of a situation not of their own making ... We in Inkatha believe ... the stay-away was ill-timed".⁹

Comrade O.R. Tambo, President of the African National Congress, in his message on January 8, 1985, on the occasion of the 73rd anniversary of the birth of the ANC said: "We should treat the injury done to the 6,500 Sasol workers as an injury to all workers, and to all of us".

FOSATU and all democratic unions campaigned for the reinstatement of the 6,500 Sasol workers and mobilised international working-class support for this aim.

It should be noted that the two-day stay-away was called for the Transvaal only. Social and labour analysts and journalists declared the stay-away a success, with the exception of the *Citizen* which declared it a failure because the strike did not take place in Natal, for which the paper thanked Chief Gatsha Buthelezi.

AZAPO Negativism

The black consciousness organisation AZAPO at its fifth national congress in Cape Town held on December 17, 1984, discussed a paper delivered by Rev. Joe Seoka (the present Deputy President). After abusing the organisers of the stay-away for being caught up in the "passion for self glorification", he maintained that the two-day stay-away on the Reef had not advanced the working-class struggle in South Africa. "Seven thousand workers had learnt a very bitter lesson never again to heed the calls for stay-aways, for only

distress and suffering follows from them... the boycott or stay-away was basically a weak weapon”.

His views are quite contrary to those of Mr Manene Yoliswa.

After lengthy discussion and the expression of negative attitudes reminiscent of the Unity Movement’s hostility to strikes, stay-at-homes and other forms of militant action, AZAPO was obliged at its Congress to give what it called ‘qualified’ support to legitimate weapons of protest. Saths Cooper, the outgoing Deputy President, told the Congress that “the resolution was intended to rebut the charge that Azapo rejected all boycotts... and express the organisation’s support for the revolutionary black working class”.

AZAPO also declared that the main enemy is capital. Some delegates protested that denunciation of apartheid alone without opposition to capital was counter-productive.¹⁰

This is an advance on the defeatist attitude adopted in the past by the Unity Movement, the National Forum and AZAPO spokesmen towards the concept of mass struggle favoured by the liberation movement as a whole and articulated in the programme of action of the United Democratic Front. However, one must note AZAPO’s singling out of the ‘revolutionary black working class’, thus ignoring the working class of other communities.

Let us make no mistake about the composition of the South African working class. The SA Communist Party throughout its history has emphatically applied the concept of the working class in a Marxist-Leninist way to include wage earners of all races and both sexes. We stand by this, while condemning those white workers who introduce racial chauvinism into the trade unions and working-class organisations.

With reference to Rev Joe Seoka’s statement that the “stay-away has not advanced the working-class struggle in South Africa”, we could do well to refer to Lenin who said:

“Every strike concentrates all the attention and all the efforts of the workers on some particular aspect of the conditions under which the working class lives. Every strike gives rise to discussions about these conditions, helps the workers to appraise them, to understand what capitalist oppression consists of in the particular case and what means can be employed to combat this oppression. Every strike enriches the experience of the entire working class. If the strike is successful, it shows them what a strong force working class unity is, and impels others to make use of their comrades’ success. If it is not successful, it gives rise to discussions about the causes of the failure and to the search for better methods of struggle.”¹¹

The two-day stay-away brought to the fore the conflict between elements of big business and the state. It jolted white South Africa into a realisation of

how dependent the country is on the contribution of black workers, how vulnerable commerce and industry are to the withdrawal of their labour and how deep the level of black discontent has become.

The leaders of big business expressed their wish to preserve the “free enterprise system, to ensure their economic survival and position of control over economic resources as an issue separate from white supremacy”. Tony Bloom, managing director of Premier Milling, one of South Africa’s major corporations, called on the government to open negotiations with the ANC. Representatives of capital called for the removal of ‘influx control’, the Group Areas Act and other pillars of the apartheid system.

Gavin Relly, Chairman of the Anglo American Corporation, said:

“If we, and the country, are to reap the benefit of investments we have to be able to rely on the on-going use of more skilled labour without the disruptions of a migratory labour system... If we are to realise the full potential of a free enterprise society it is not enough only to be racially integrated on a work basis... Important changes to the Group Areas Act are needed if we are to be able to attract professional people of colour to manage our mining operations.”

Mr Justice Jan Steyn, Chief Executive Officer of the Urban Foundation, said: “We in South Africa believe in a free enterprise economic system. Blacks currently perceive capitalism to be the other side of racism...” He said it was necessary to destroy “the myth that salvation lies on the road to naive socialism.”

Regional congresses of the Progressive Federal party have called for an end to military conscription and for the party to open its membership to members of all races, defying the Political Interference Act which prohibits people of different racial classifications from belonging to the same political party.

The leader of the ultra-right Conservative Party, Dr Andries Treurnicht, told a political rally on November 27 that the government is ignoring its own warnings of a few years ago that racial integration would lead to civil war.

Within the ruling party itself there are growing differences as to what form a ‘solution’ to the present crisis should take. Emerging from these conflicts is a new movement among verligte (enlightened) Afrikaner intellectuals within the Party who demand that changes be made now — not only in style but also in structure.

The debate goes on. The stay-away has activated political discussion among people of all races, nationalities and classes.

The main component of the stay-away

The Transvaal Stay-away Committee was formed after the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) called a meeting of black organisations to discuss the educational, civic and labour ‘crisis’ confronting blacks.

Trade union delegations were present. The Committee consisted of Thami Mali, Themba Notlotane of the Municipal and General Workers' Union, Moses Mayegiso, Transvaal Secretary of MAWU, and Mr Ephraim 'Oupa' of the Soweto Youth Congress. The two trade union leaders on the Committee succeeded in mobilising the unions' support for the stay-away.

The Unions which supported the stayaway included: the Federation of South African Trade Unions, with nine affiliates and a membership of nearly 110,000; the Council of Unions of SA, with 12 affiliates and a membership of more than 140,500; the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union of SA, with a membership of between 100,00 and 130,000.¹²

Professor Edward Webster of the Witwatersrand University had this to say: "The two-day stay-away strike on Monday and Tuesday was the most successful stay-away strike in the 35 years that it has been used as political weapon... There is a strong correlation between the degree of organised labour in an area and the success of the stay-away."¹³

For some years radicals at home and in exile have debated what role the African trade unions can play in the national liberation struggle. Some radicals have argued that the changes brought about by the Labour Relations Act 57 of 1981 do not represent any forward movement, but are cosmetic and intended to tame the African unions. Most progressives, however, have argued that the Act was a blow against racialism, a triumph for militant working-class action and the international support it received, and an advance in the position of the dispossessed working class.

There is no doubt the two-day stay-away provided a striking vindication of the latter view. However, it also exposed problems that must be dealt with in the future.

*The scabbing of the commuters who went to work in Pretoria and Brits. We have to get to the workers in the bantustans and explain tirelessly that our struggle is their struggle, and that workers' solidarity is essential for victory. We succeeded with the migrant workers; we must now win over the commuters.

*The non-participation of the African miners, largely due to their isolation in the compounds. It is time for the trade union movement to campaign for the abolition of these antiquated and dehumanising institutions and the labour system they represent.

*The scabbing activities of Inkatha with Chief Buthelezi at its head. It is now clear that Buthelezi supports the regime on the key issues of armed struggle, disinvestment, strikes and boycotts. We must explain to the people that under his leadership Inkatha is an obstacle to their liberation. Members

of Inkatha can and must be mobilised to work and fight side by side with their brothers and sisters in the democratic trade unions, youth, women's and all organisations of our movement.

*The role played by unions affiliated to TUCSA in this stay-away must be examined.

In the words of Thami Mali, the stay-away has shown "that we have power in our hands. It showed that we can bring the machinery of this country to a standstill."¹⁴

This has been proved in the Transvaal. Our country is big. Now we have to organise the workers in all centres to have "power in their hands" at the same time.

References:

1. This factory fired nearly 400 workers in September. The workers got their jobs back just before the stay-away began.
2. *Financial Mail* November 16, 1984, page 56.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Learn and Teach*, November 6, 1984.
5. *Financial Mail*, November 16, 1984.
6. *Cape Times*, Nov 9, 1984.
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8. *Rand Daily Mail*, 9/11/84.
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AFRICA NOTES **AND COMMENT**

By Macandrew

ETHIOPIA: Socialist and Capitalist Aid

One of the greatest scandals of the Ethiopian famine has been the way Western politicians and media have attempted to blame and punish Ethiopia because of the alleged sins of its government — always described as “Marxist” and “Soviet-backed”. The fact that famine has gripped many countries in Africa, both capitalist and non-capitalist, including our own South Africa, where the maize crop has been a disastrous failure, is hardly ever mentioned. Ethiopia has been singled out for attention — possibly because it is one of the few countries in Africa which has attempted to cope with the drought in an organised way. It is acknowledged that many western countries have been slow to come to the aid of the suffering Ethiopian people because they are reluctant to do anything to help the economy of a socialist-oriented country survive the present crisis. Remembering that the regime of the late emperor Haile Selassie was overthrown because he had failed to do anything to limit the effects of the great famine of 1974, the enemies of socialist Ethiopia have been hoping that popular discontent arising from the present famine will similarly lead to the destruction of the government of Mengistu Haile Mariam.

In October 1984 the British academic Charles Elliot, former director of the charity Christian Aid, accused both Britain and the United States of deliberately withholding food aid from Ethiopia in the hope that their action might contribute to the destabilisation of the Mengistu government. In Elliot’s own words:

“Their long hostility to the regime caused them to refuse to release adequate funds for food”.

Perhaps this is also the explanation why much of the aid promised so freely by western leaders in the last quarter of 1984 failed to arrive at its destination, or was sent instead to anti-Mengistu secessionist groups in neighbouring countries.

Mengistu Replies

Speaking at a press conference in Addis Ababa last November, President Mengistu attacked western journalists and politicians for spreading “false and baseless reports” that the Ethiopian government had been more concerned with spending money on celebrations accompanying the foundation congress of the Ethiopian Workers’ Party than with relieving the famine. In particular, he attacked those who tried to make out that the western countries had supplied far more aid than the Soviet Union, which was supposed to be Ethiopia’s “best friend”.

While expressing gratitude for aid coming to Ethiopia from all quarters, President Mengistu said:

“It is very difficult to compare assistance given to socialist Ethiopia by the socialist camp, and the USSR in particular, with the food aid given to us at present by the USA and some Western countries. To show that the assistance to revolutionary Ethiopia by the USSR cannot be compared to a limited amount of food, one just has to see — even during the celebration of the 10th anniversary of our revolution — the parade reflecting Ethiopia’s growth in a short time which it had not seen in the previous 40 years, the building of various development institutions and industries, and the question of how big a share the USSR and other socialist countries made in achieving this”.

President Mengistu said that in addition to aid by way of food supplies, the Soviet Union had contributed the means of delivery.

“It is the helicopters and aeroplanes of the USSR that are now transporting three-quarters of the relief aid to various parts of the country. As you know, the Arab world refused us fuel, and the fuel which we are using to activate our economy and deal with the current dangerous situation comes from the USSR”.

President Mengistu said some western countries were hoping to promote their own political aims through their humanitarian aid to Ethiopia. They were trying to undermine the revolutionary process now under way in the country by forcing the government to negotiate with the terrorists and secessionists in the northern regions where the famine was most severe, alleging that the Ethiopian government was keeping back food from these areas. President Mengistu replied:

“It is true, it is not something which we deny, there are some terrorists in some parts and some corners of our country. After moving around in some of the forests and mountains, they live by stealing from the peasants, who are suffering a lot. There are also certain mercenaries who oppose the economic system pursued by Ethiopia. We do not deny this.

“But the majority of such terrorist mercenaries and mafias are not in Ethiopia. There are terrorists and mafias in every European country, who kill leaders in broad daylight and destroy property. So what is just? That these terrorists and anti-people bodies be brought to justice or that they be given a political forum in the

name of humanitarian aid? Is this a humanitarian view? Is it not interfering in the internal affairs and violating the sovereignty and unity of a country?”.

President Mengistu said:

“We have heard of efforts made in other parts of Africa to use the temporary natural and man-made problems and weaknesses of some countries to blind them to apartheid, the most revolting system of our time, and to help it. Now we see some quarters, who have a similar objective and desire, trying — individually or as a team — to use the current drought in Ethiopia. This is something which cannot be tried in Ethiopia. It cannot be contemplated, let alone carried out. We will never negotiate with terrorists, let alone now. Even at a time when the (Italian) fascists were raining poison, dropping chemical bombs, our people never negotiated with fire.”

The world was shocked into a realisation of the gravity of the famine in Ethiopia as a result of the screening on television last November of scenes of suffering and death amongst the starving population in the worst affected regions. The impression was created that until that moment the Ethiopian government itself had done little or nothing to cope with the famine. In fact, the Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commission established by the Ethiopian government in March, 1984, reported that over 5 million people were facing a food shortage in 13 administrative regions and appealed for urgent international aid. There was very little response to this appeal until the TV pictures were shown. Who, it may be asked, authorised the visit of the TV crews to the famine area? How is it that the foreign relief agencies operating in Ethiopia have all praised the work of Ethiopian government agencies in distributing famine relief?

Imperialism and Neo-colonialism

But above all it should be realised that the recurring famine and deepening poverty of African and other third world countries is not merely an act of God, but largely a consequence of centuries of plunder and exploitation of the human and natural resources of the third world by imperialism and neo-colonialism. The United Nations Report on Children published in 1961 stated:

“It is a tragic fact that at the beginning of the Second United Nations Development Decade there are more sick, under-nourished and uneducated children in the world than there were ten years ago.

“Unless the international community is prepared to give vastly greater support, the next ten years will find the number of neglected children increased by millions — despite all the efforts of developing countries including some to curb population growth.”

Commenting on this report Stan Newens, former Labour Party MP and at present a member of the European Assembly for Central London, wrote in *The Morning Star*:

“Yet overseas aid has been cut by Britain and many other western countries and states not oriented towards the West, like Ethiopia, have been subjected to callous political discrimination in the provision of development funds. The bulk of investment in Third World countries is in actuality carried out by western-based multinational companies, whose objective is not to improve living standards for the poverty-stricken masses but to establish profitable enterprises producing raw materials or manufactured goods destined for the world market”.

Investment by these multinationals focuses on the exploitation of mineral resources and crops whose price is forced down by cartel agreements and pressures, while the price of industrial goods imported by third world countries has increased enormously. The result is that most third world countries have become hugely indebted to western banks. Between 1971 and 1981, the external debts of developing countries increased from 35 billion dollars to 500 billion dollars. It is estimated that by 1985 they will have doubled again. The interest payments alone in 1982 amounted to almost 10% of the export earnings of all developing countries.

Thus, says Newens, “many desperately poor countries far from receiving a net import of development capital are expected to export capital to developed countries, but without any possibility of a return”. It is a vicious circle, turning perpetually to the disadvantage of the developing countries, but ultimately threatening even the financial security of the developed countries, who face the prospect of ever-mounting bad debts and the collapse of the banking sector.

Newens concludes:

“It is therefore not enough just to fight for famine relief today — absolutely vital as this is. Socialism and a new international economic order are the only solutions in the interests of humanity as a whole”.

The socialist world has for years been taking practical steps to bring about this change. Whereas western aid to Ethiopia has largely taken the form of a charitable hand-out which leaves the underlying problems unsolved, the aid of the socialist countries from the inception has been designed to strengthen the national agricultural potential, attain self-sufficiency in the production of foodstuffs, and establish an independent economy at all levels.

Soviet Aid

The Soviet government, for example, has in the present emergency sent Ethiopia foodstuffs, equipment to drill water wells and specialists to operate

it. The main problem has been to deliver food to the drought-stricken areas and evacuate their population to more fertile areas, and to achieve these objectives the Soviet Union has sent transport facilities with drivers, transport aircraft and helicopters with crews. The Union of the Soviet Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies sent medicines, blankets and food.

But longer-term co-operation between the Soviet Union and Ethiopia is already well under way. In 1977 for example, a scientific phytopathological laboratory (SPL) was opened in Ethiopia with Soviet assistance.

“Today”, reported the journal *Sovetskaya Rossia* on December 25, 1984, “all Ethiopians know about this laboratory. For Ethiopia, where there was practically no plant selection work to speak of before the revolution, improvement of the seed stock and the introduction of new disease-resistant varieties of agricultural crops are of primary importance. The construction of the laboratory and the delegation of Soviet specialists to work there have all been accomplished on a free basis.

“The SPL annually carries out more than 60 investigation programmes which are part of the general national programme of agricultural research. This autumn, a tractor assembly plant which is yet another project of Soviet-Ethiopian co-operation turned out its first machines.”

A Long-Term Programme of Economic Co-operation between the Soviet Union and Ethiopia was signed in Addis Ababa on September 8, 1984, providing for the delivery of Soviet land-improvement equipment to Ethiopia which will not only help to overcome the consequences of the drought but will also develop agricultural production in the valley of the river Avash on an irrigated territory of up to 60,000 hectares. The Soviet Union is also assisting with the establishment of a state veterinary service. Ethiopian agriculture will also receive thousands of qualified specialists trained with the participation of Soviet teachers.

Other socialist countries are also helping with famine relief. A large number of lorries and huge consignments of food and other necessities have arrived from the GDR, while tons of polyvitamins come from Poland. One hardly needs to mention the extensive aid in all spheres which has been rendered by Cuba. Specialists from all the socialist countries are involved at all levels in the economic development of Ethiopia. President Mengistu has more than once expressed the thanks of the people and leadership of Ethiopia to the government and people of the socialist countries for their disinterested and timely assistance.

A hullabaloo has been raised in some sections of the western media over the Ethiopian government's plans to move 1½ million people from the drought-stricken regions of the north to more fertile regions in the south. On January 18 the Johannesburg *Stars* said that the resettlement programme was

“described by reporters as a program comparable only to the World War 2 organised massacre of Jews by Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler.” Other commentators have alleged that the scheme, which depends on Soviet logistical support, has been undertaken for political reasons — to undermine the secessionists in Tigre and other northern areas.

A more balanced view was provided in an Associated Press report from Addis Ababa published in the Johannesburg *Star* on January 4.

“While it is clear that inhabitants of some areas of Tigre do not want to move, foreign relief workers have not reported any coercion”, said the correspondent. He quoted one “western diplomatic source” as saying: “You cannot overlook the fact that people have to be moved”, while a western economist who had visited a resettlement area said: “It was a very impressive community effort”. The economist had personally seen 275 Wollo region people warmly received by earlier settlers from their home province who had built them shelters in advance of their arrival. “They’re much better off than where they came from”, he commented.

Poor Ethiopia! Poor Soviet Union! No matter what they do, the professional anti-communists will find fault with them. Its all part of their cold war tactics. By contrast the Israelis, who secretly whipped off tens of thousands of Ethiopian Falashas (black Jews) from the drought-stricken north to resettlement camps in Israel, were hailed in the bourgeois press as heroes. It all depends whose side you’re on.

SWAZILAND: NOT YET UHURU

From a friend in Mbabane

Swaziland has been an object of politico-analytical neglect by the relevant progressive forces that in one way or another are supposed to bring revolutionary influence to bear in Southern Africa. It is true that finally it is from us, the people of Swaziland, that such an initiative should come, being in the thick of the situation. But Swaziland’s role in the South African liberation struggle is a matter of concern not only for the Swazi people but also for the senior and leading organisations of the South African freedom struggle.

When you leave a vacuum of political influence here, please know that the South African racists will not fail to fill it, and this country will gravitate more and more towards being another South African Bantustan.

For the ordinary Swazi in the street, independence is a meaningless term. What independence? Independence to live in slum conditions, those crudely built mud structures in Msunduzi, Nkwalini and KwaKhoza locations where people are so crammed and so close together that one can almost hear someone else breathe next door? No privacy! No street lights! No water and sanitation facilities! Cholera, yes. Tuberculosis, yes. What a fine example of how neo-colonialism leads to a death trap. Hospitals, even right down at Hlatikhulu, are full with patients whose living standards are terribly low. The gap between the highest paid and the lowest paid in this country is an embarrassing figure.

You have to be in Swazi prisons, see the attitude of the detainees — the poor diet coupled with the beatings to extract confessions — to understand the level of alienation of the government from the people. You have to live with the unemployed youth in the ghettos to understand the simmering discontent among the people against these intolerable conditions. Then there are the unemployed women who, because they are unable to satisfy basic needs from tilling the small plots of land in the rural areas, as well as from unreliable remittances sent by migrant husbands, flock into the towns seeking employment of any kind, including entertaining the South African white tourists who visit Holiday Inns, Royal Swazi Spa, Highland View and other entertainment centres, to make a living — ‘the ladies of the night’ we call them.

When the question “What will happen when the king dies?” was asked in virtually all circles of Swazi society before the death of King Sobhuza II, it partly reflected just how much the politics of this country pivoted around him. To many a Swazi the name Sobhuza came to be synonymous with Swaziland, and to imagine one without the other could be achieved only by straining one’s imagination. For 60 years he ruled the tiny nation (there are less than a million Swazis) with feudal power that kept even the most militant of his political opponents still under his armpit. For example, when the leader of the once powerfully developing Ngwane National Liberatory Congress (NNLC), Dr Ambrose Zwane, at one stage after a series of detentions under the emergency laws eventually left the country to continue political opposition to the Kingdom from exile, King Sobhuza simply sent a delegation to call him back home and, like the biblical prodigal son, Dr Zwane unconditionally came back.

The figure of King Sobhuza towered behind the seeming political stability of the Kingdom, although it should be said that the strength of the ties of the Swazi people with the King were more cultural than political.

An Economic Hostage

Although it is politically independent, Swaziland, like Botswana and Lesotho (with whom it has a common political heritage as former British Protectorates) is an economic hostage of South Africa. South African capital has an octopus-like grip on the Swazi economy, preventing with its power not only the possibility of the rise of a native bourgeois class but also bringing to its knees for worship the very feudal government under whose political direction it is supposed to operate. Making a virtue of Swaziland's cheap labour structure, and the infamous Southern African Customs Union agreements, etc., South African capital has rapidly risen to dominance, displacing in the process British capital with all the historico-colonial advantages it had in the period before 1968, the year of independence. That Dlamini man you see going up and down Allister Miller Street or Nkoseluhlaza Street in Mbabane and Manzini respectively, in a 7351 BMW car, is only a manager but not the owner of the South African company or agricultural estate named after Swaziland.

Foreign capital has developed an economic alliance with the Royal family (the ruling section from the Dlamini clan), and whereas in the past the economic base of the traditional political power was the pre-capitalist sector of the economy, nowadays financial institutions like Tibiyo Taka Ngwane Fund (a parastatal organ which is controlled by the King but is run jointly with Lonrho and Tate and Lyle) indicates the material basis for ideological partnership as well. It is no wonder then that the attitude of the government to workers' organisation is so hostile. The Swazi rulers' fear of trade unionism can best be illustrated by the fact that, twice during 1982, the *Times of Swaziland* ran the headlines: "BEWARE OF COMMUNISTS!", the first one reporting a response to an article in the same newspaper about attempts at forming trade unions, by Senator Nhlabatsi, and the other, some months later, a report by the *Times* News Editor, James Dlamini, of an address by Siphetse Dlamini, Minister of Education. We asked ourselves: now who are these communists suddenly threatening Swaziland?

In actuality no trade unions are allowed in Swaziland. The permanent state of emergency declared by the late King in 1977 when he suspended the constitution and ruled the country by decree, prohibits even the holding of a meeting of a motorcycle club without the written permission of the

Commissioner of Police, not to mention a meeting by the workers. The absence of functioning trade unions of course makes Swaziland very attractive to foreign investors, who reap super profits from imprisoned labour.

Most of the news reporting about trade union activity in this country has referred to the small Bank Workers' Union, a petty-bourgeois orientated union of intellectual workers (the only union that is recognised by the employers) which never takes up issues beyond trying to improve promotion prospects of the Swazis who do not receive promotion as quickly as white employees. A visitor to a workers' seminar recently, supposedly organised by the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions, found a group of workers' representatives being lectured by one George Palmer of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on how to stabilise industrial relations, to avoid "mischief and riotous methods of settling disputes with the employers."

The Government Labour Department, run by the Deputy Prime Minister's office, always sides with the employers in the event of a labour dispute. Therefore government participation in such companies as Commonwealth Development Corporation, Libby's Citrus, etc. does not benefit the Swazi worker in any real way — except as a politically expedient excuse to enable the royalists to claim that the Swazi people have a share in the Company.

"The government ends up with the task of holding the whip over the workers," said a sociology lecturer in a lecture at the University of Swaziland, "reminding them that the companies are here to help them, and that they should be grateful for the jobs that they have."

Government claims that Swaziland is a peaceful country, perfect for foreign investment, do not reflect the real mood of the people at the grass root level, the mood of the workers in the sugar plantations of Simunya and Big Bend, Usuthu Pulp and Ubombo Ranches who make these excessively high rates of profit for the foreign companies. The Swazi urban workers and rural toilers know that they are exploited, they know how much these multinational companies are making every year, because they produce the wealth. What they need is a political outlet.

The Myth of the 'Peaceful Swazis'

Views that the Swazi people are traditionally peaceful and obedient to authority are quite non-materialistic, unscientific and go contrary to the class approach at analysis. Whether they are held by our traditional rulers or by other people outside our country, they remain untrue and ahistorical.

But such views do exist. For example, when the students as well as teachers (organised under the now banned Swaziland National Union of Teachers) went on strike in 1977, voices were heard from as high as Parliament in Lobamba condemning such a just uprising as traditionally unSwazi, and many politicians blamed the event on the “bad influence of the Soweto children” who were increasingly seeking refuge in Swaziland. Again, responding to a miners’ strike at Havelock, Zonke Khumalo, the then Deputy Prime Minister said:

“Trade unionism is a foreign ideology to the Swazis. All workers in this kingdom are his Majesty’s regiments.”

What an insult to the intelligence of the Swazi people! Do we need foreigners, “Soweto children”, to influence us to fight against what is unjust, what is wrong? If then we are “traditionally peaceful and obedient”, why make the 60 days detention without trial laws, why the banning of political parties and organisations?

The Swazi petty-bourgeoisie and its intellectual spokesmen will certainly find continuation of the Dlamini rule an obstacle in their aspiration to meaningful control and ownership of the land and other small-commodity enterprises. Their tactic may include the mobilisation of the working masses as the storm troops of the impending class battles. Appointments to senior posts in the civil service, police force and army on the basis of how related one is to the royal family will be politically challenged in defiance of the laws that bar such activity.

My view, however, is that South African capital as well as racist political power, more interested in securing Swaziland as a buffer zone against the drive of the South African liberation struggle, will judge the balance of forces and assist whoever is likely to control state power in favour of South Africa (in a broad sense). If it shall be the bourgeois democratic forces rather than the feudal structure that can best fulfil the role of making Swaziland an ‘anti-communist’ outpost of apartheid, then be sure that Swaziland will simply be ‘Kenya-ised’. Even if it is the other way round, the most influential and determining forces will be considering Swaziland not only for itself but in relation to the developing liberation struggle in South Africa.

Can Swaziland be Turned into a Lebanon?

Now that King Sobhuza is gone, one suddenly remembers that he had an attachment to the ANC. At the inaugural conference of the African National Congress in 1912, the Swazi royal family was represented. When Swaziland, under the Queen Regent Labotsibeni, sent deputations to England to argue for the Swazi land, founding leaders of the ANC were part of the delegation.

So that, in actuality, the relationship between the Swazis and the South African people should go beyond the question of Nguni kith-and-kin; it should be a political relationship of an African people in a common struggle against imperialist forces that still colonise some parts of Africa.

Those few of us in Swaziland who understand that the ANC does not seek to fight its wars on foreign lands (Swaziland not excluded), hope that the ANC men found by the Swazi army or police on their way to South Africa (for they cannot fly over Swaziland nor swim under it) should never be provoked and create a situation which the Pretoria boers would very much love to see, African fighting African, battles fought outside South Africa instead of inside.

You would be surprised to find out how many people in Swaziland are with you in your just struggle.

LESOTHO: No Truck With Apartheid

Vincent Makhele, Foreign Minister of Lesotho, recently visited the Soviet Union at the invitation of the Soviet Committee for Afro-Asian Solidarity. He gave an interview to INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS concerning a number of issues, including the situation in Southern Africa.

Q. The Pretoria regime seeks to foist a "non-aggression treaty" on Lesotho. Your country has refused to yield to the racists' pressure. Could you elaborate on the stand Lesotho takes on this issue?

A. The situation in southern Africa remains exceedingly complex. Our country is one of those affected by the destabilization policy pursued by the Pretoria regime. A case in point is the pressure the racists are putting on Lesotho in various forms to sign a non-aggression treaty.

We do need peace in order to solve our numerous social problems. However, we feel that peace will not be achieved through the signing of a treaty that lacks sincerity. I want to emphasise that our experience of contractual relations with South Africa indicates that we cannot be absolutely sure of its strict observance of the provisions of a non-aggression treaty.

And another thing I would like to stress: we are positive that there can be no genuine peace as long as apartheid exists. If Pretoria does not give up its criminal practices of apartheid, I do not think that a country like ours can cooperate with it.

Lesotho adheres to the principle of peaceful coexistence. It will never act as an aggressor, nor will it ever serve as a base for aggression. We have never attacked South Africa and have no intention to; therefore, the demand for a non-aggression treaty, in our opinion, has no grounds.

Q. In the Republic of South Africa, in a situation of violence and coercion, elections were staged to a new, three-chamber parliament where, apart from the whites, "coloureds" and Asians are to be represented. What is your assessment of these "reforms" carried out by the racist authorities?

A. I have no intention to interfere in other countries' internal affairs. But it is clear to any unbiased observer that the "reforms" have in no way brought South Africa closer to the solution of the problem of apartheid. The election returns confirm this.

Frankly speaking, some believe that the racist system is being "improved". But it is my opinion that nothing new is taking place, since the majority of the population there remains deprived of the genuine human rights. Having failed in their election scheme, the authorities have to seek other means to deal with the people.

In this connection I should also point out that the racist system generates the problem of refugees. To escape racist repression many flee to Lesotho. We have pledged to give asylum to these people. We feel it binding on us to provide asylum to the apartheid refugees. We in Lesotho regard this our humanitarian duty.

Q. What is Lesotho's stand on the Namibian problem?

A. We support Resolution 435 of the UN Security Council, which charted the way towards independence for Namibia. And we are indignant that Namibia is not yet free.

We reject outright any attempt to link up the process of Namibia's decolonization with any conditions. The issue of this country's independence has no relation to the Cuban internationalists assisting the People's Republic of Angola in repulsing Pretoria's attacks. It is well known that it is the Namibians themselves, not Angolans, who are fighting for the

freedom and independence of Namibia. Therefore, one feels perplexed at the attempt to make the Namibian settlement conditional on the withdrawal of the Cuban military assistance from Angola. All of this is deplorable because it obstructs Namibian independence and portends a continued occupation of Namibia. Lesotho appeals to everyone who is party to the process of Namibia's independence to make every effort to help the country become free.

Q. Could you speak on Lesotho's relations with the USSR and other socialist countries?

A. Our position is absolutely clear and unequivocal. We pursue the policy of non-alignment. Lesotho is prepared to have friendly relations with any country that wishes them. This especially concerns those who support freedom and independence in Africa. I would like to emphasize that we are aware of the efforts of the Soviet Union to promote decolonization in Africa. We highly appreciate the Soviet contribution to the cause.

Since diplomatic relations were established between Lesotho and the Soviet Union, the contacts between our countries have been steadily expanding. And we would like to see them continue to grow.

At present, many Lesothans enjoy the benefits of the Soviet system of education. Some have already graduated from Soviet universities and now work in their own country. It should be stressed that all of them are noted for their patriotism and internationalism. They acquired these qualities, along with knowledge, while studying in your country. We are very grateful to the Soviet Union for its part in training specialists for Lesotho.

Lesotho highly values and supports all peace initiatives the USSR has come out with an effort to prevent a new world war, especially a devastating nuclear war.

(Lesotho established diplomatic relations with the USSR in 1980.)

INDIAN PEOPLE ON THE MARCH

Congress Boosted by Constitution Boycott Campaign

by Georgie

The outcome of last August's elections for two of the three chambers of South Africa's new Parliament have once again emphasised the vital role which can be played by the Coloured and Indian peoples in the revolutionary alliance of the South African people struggling for national liberation. Only 18% of the Coloured and 15.5% of the Indian voters went to the polls. The boycott for which the United Democratic Front, the Indian Congress and other bodies had worked so hard was an outstanding success, effectively stripping the new constitution of any legitimacy and exposing as a fraud President Botha's attempts to restructure the apartheid state.

In this article I want to concentrate mainly on the significance of these events for the Indian community, without wishing in any way to diminish the importance of the Coloured contribution, which can perhaps be the subject of another article.

It seems to me that the Indian community as a whole has spoken, in this election, with a unity and authority it has not displayed since the days of the Congress Alliance. The political consciousness of the Indian people has been raised to a pitch not seen for many years. The new constitution has been massively rejected and the Indian people have made it abundantly clear that they refuse to be absorbed in the white laager.

This development raises several questions: why and how did this development take place? What is its historical basis? What is the way forward for the Indian people?

The *Strategy and Tactics* of the African National Congress declares that “the struggle in South Africa is taking place within the international context of the transition to socialism”. It is within this context that the struggle of the Indian people must be analysed, because like other South Africans the Indian people are deeply influenced by what has been happening in the rest of the world.

The International Context

Over the last few decades the forces of progress and socialist revolution have scored a number of victories. From Cuba to Vietnam, Algeria to Angola, the forces of imperialism and reaction have been uprooted. The response of imperialism, however, has not been to accept these victories, particularly with the advent to power of Reagan and Thatcher — apartheid’s strongest allies ever! With the sworn policy of halting and indeed rolling back the forces of revolution, the viciousness of imperialism has known no bounds. The criminal invasion of Grenada, the attempts to invade and destabilize Cuba and Nicaragua and the propping up of fascist dictatorships in Latin America, the Middle East, Africa and Asia bear gruesome witness to this.

Finding encouragement and support in western strategy, the racist caretakers of imperialism in Southern Africa, Botha and Malan, have through the use of naked terror and aggression sought to neutralise the forces of revolution by imposing on their neighbours ‘agreements’ such as the Nkomati Accord.

Within South Africa, however, this attempt to halt the revolutionary process has been dressed in the garb of the new constitutional proposals. The restructuring of the apartheid state has been forced upon the racists for two basic reasons. Firstly, to counter the heightening revolutionary fervour prevailing in the country and the major strides made by the national liberation movement, the racists hoped to destroy our revolutionary alliance by coopting the Coloured and Indian people in their fake parliament. Secondly, the restructuring of apartheid is the regime’s attempt to accommodate and neutralise the pressures of the political and economic crises both international and national.

Apartheid Restructured

Despite the brutal repression, politically the people have organised themselves into a broad united front representing all levels and sections of the

oppressed masses. As for the workers, they are being organised in unprecedented numbers and the democratic trade union movement is growing in strength. Militarily, the gallant combatants of Umkonto We Sizwe have increased the frequency and sophistication of their attacks.

The escalation of the political and military struggle, the division in the ranks of the white rulers, the increasing mobilization of forces internationally against apartheid, together with the world recession, have all been ingredients in the crisis that South Africa is facing at present. Hence, the restructuring in the nature of the apartheid state machinery which the Botha regime is attempting.

According to the *Financial Mail*

“In theory, the ‘new era’ is to be a transition from baasskap to consensus. The sponsors of the new deal would like the world to believe that it represents a substantial broadening of the base of consent. The U.S. government, for one, justifies its policies of constructive engagement in the affairs of South Africa precisely on these grounds.”¹

In fact, the condition of the oppressed masses has worsened considerably since the introduction of the new constitution. The number of forced removals has increased and so have efforts to deprive the African people of their South African citizenship. The new constitution is not merely an adaptation, but above all, an entrenchment of the existing apartheid system. In the final analysis, it still remains a formula for the preservation of the supremacy of the white minority.

As regards the Indian and Coloured communities, any benefits that may accrue to them through the tricameral parliaments cannot, under the new constitutional proposals, be either regulated or controlled by their respective chambers. The Indian and Coloured MPs do not have the power to alter the overall system either on their own or in alliance with opposition Whites, even if the combination constituted a majority in favour of changes. The majority white group will retain power because the white chamber is all-powerful. Even if both the Coloured and Indian MPs withdrew from the system they would not bring the government to a halt.

Despite the fact that white supremacy remains intact, the authors of the new constitution have seen fit to endow the office of the President with almost unlimited powers. According to the Van der Merwe Commission, the President has the power “to take such steps as he may deem necessary for the security of the state whenever the independence of the state is threatened or whenever the functioning of public institutions of government is interrupted”.²

Through these unlimited powers, the President is able to push through any policy or make any decision irrespective of whether it has the support

even of the white chamber. Thus the new constitution gives the President power to override, not merely Coloured and Indian opposition, but even white opposition, and is thus the first structural recognition of the split in the ranks of the white supremacists.

The attempt by the racist regime to impose this “new deal” on the Indian people has been met with an overwhelming rejection. For this there are two main reasons: firstly, the authors of the new constitution failed to understand that the Indian people have a proud record of resistance behind them; secondly, the deteriorating material position of the Indian people has served to spur them on to greater militancy in their struggle against the apartheid system.

The Dynamics of Resistance

The history of the resistance of the Indian people since their importation into South Africa as indentured labourers in 1860 passed through three phases: firstly, the defence against the erosion of basic political and economic rights; secondly, the assertion of a South African identity; and thirdly, the association with other sections of the oppressed people in the struggle for a new South Africa based on the Freedom Charter.

In the Transvaal the Indians had already by 1887 been prohibited from acquiring rights of citizenship or ownership of property. In the Cape and Natal, however, the “liberal” policies of the administration had conceded these rights to a limited extent, though their exercise was not unaccompanied by their share of racist humiliation. It was the threat of Indian disfranchisement in Natal in 1894 that gave rise to the formation of the Natal Indian Congress in May of that year under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Thus the NIC became the first political organisation of the oppressed in our country.

The imposition of the pass laws and poll taxes in 1908 and 1913 respectively provoked the first campaigns of passive resistance which was to form the basis of Gandhi’s philosophy of Satyagraha. Despite the limited nature of the victories won by the Indian people, these campaigns converted what was formerly an unorganised and fearful community into a more cohesive national entity.

In keeping with the ruling ideology that the Indian people were mere temporary sojourners, the racists made vigorous attempts to repatriate them by 1933. The response of the South African Indian Congress was to assert the South African identity of the Indian people. By this time 80 per cent of the Indian population were born South Africans. This marked the second phase

of the Indian people's struggle — a struggle which was later to find them allies with the African majority in the fight against exclusion from the political process.

The character of the Indian community was changing. In 1946 the Indians constituted 2.5% of the total population with 72.8% living in officially classified areas. This was reflected in the occupations of Indian workers. Between 1936 and 1946 there was a drop in the number of Indians earning a living off the land from 27.9% to 15.4% and a sharp increase in the number employed in industry, primarily manufacturing, from 17.8% to 27.12% of the total working population.

This massive increase in the urbanisation and proletarianisation of the Indian people due to industrialisation led to the emergence of a radical leadership in the Transvaal and Natal Indian Congress, led respectively by Communist leader Dr Yusuf Dadoo and Dr G.M. Naicker. On the part of the Indian community, it was the resistance to the Pegging and Ghetto Acts which had transformed the Congresses into mass-based organisations drawing their strength from the militancy and cohesion of the workers who constituted their main support base. In 1947 Dadoo and Naicker joined together with Dr A.B. Xuma in the famous "Doctors' Pact" cementing the unity of the ANC and the Indian Congresses in the struggle for national liberation. The Xuma-Dadoo-Naicker Pact was later to form the core of the Congress Alliance which dominated the political scene in the fifties.

It was the adoption of the Freedom Charter at the Congress of the People in 1955 that set the pace of the last phase — the struggle for a new South Africa. However, with the massive repression of the sixties and the silencing of our leaders and organisations through bannings, detentions and exile, the racists were led to believe that the will and determination of our people had been crushed. Ironically, it was precisely when the racists thought that they could finally eliminate our revolutionary alliance by coopting the Coloured and Indian people into the apartheid laager that we saw the re-emergence of Congress strength and militancy.

The Economic Crisis

The South African economy is in a state of crisis. Inflation has been in double figures since 1973, the rand has reached a record low in relation to the US dollar, the General Sales Tax is up to 10% and the consumer price index of almost 300 was 12% higher in 1984 than the previous year. Since the bourgeoisie are never prepared to part with their huge profits they are making the burden fall squarely on the backs of the oppressed masses.

Government expenditure on basic social services has had to make way for the enormous military budget. Of the R1.143 billion 'aid' to Namibia, R450 million has been allocated towards defence. As for the SA Defence Force the amount allocated to it last year alone was R3,755 million, a 21% increase over the previous year.

To the worker this has meant an exorbitant increase in the cost of living, less real income earned and many retrenchments. Already in January 1984, the price of maize was increased by 7%, brown bread by 16.6%, canned foods by 14.75%, eggs by 3.5%, sugar by 10%, etc, etc. Further increases took place during the year and were one of the main factors causing the people's revolt towards the end of the year.

The new constitutional proposals make no provision for the repeal of the Group Areas Act, and this continues to be an area that inflicts great hardships on the Indian people. In the two areas of concentration, Durban and Lenasia, there are more than 20,000 and 4,500 families respectively on the waiting lists for housing. The few houses that are available can only be afforded by the wealthy. In Durban, where 80% of those applying for houses earn less than R 250 a month, houses are being sold to the highest bidder. In Lenasia, houses previously valued at R 5,500 are now being sold for between R13,500 and R15,000. According to Mr. Pen Kotze, the Minister for Community Development, the first priority in future will be to make land and infrastructure available to those who can afford to construct their own homes. The total amount allocated for housing decreased by R 57,680,200 in 1983. Moreover, the recent increase in interest rates on loans from an already record level of 22% to 25% with the concurrent increase in the General Sales Tax can only exacerbate the housing crisis.

According to the National Manpower Commission, while job opportunities for Indians in the non-agricultural sector between 1975 and 1981 generally fell by 23,926, in the trade and accommodation services sector alone 43,891 jobs were lost.³ Between June 1982 and June 1983, South Africa's biggest employer, manufacturing industry, which employs almost 40% of working Indians, was most severely hit by the recession. Thus during the year 4,563 Indian workers were retrenched, ie. 4.4%.⁴ Worker militancy and anger were reflected in the dramatic increase in strikes by Indian workers, from an average of 180 workers per year between 1975 and 1980 to 1865 in 1981 (ie. ten times as much) and 1170 workers in 1982.⁵

The August 1984 elections were the most elaborately stage-managed elections ever held in South Africa. Indeed, they were a diabolic experiment in subversion — but they failed. While it has been established that under

16% of the eligible Indian voters went to the polls, there is considerable evidence that even this figure was fraudulently achieved. In some cases, dead people were found to have voted. According to the UDF, the real poll was in fact closer to 10%.

Nevertheless, there are several important aspects arising from the election results that need to be considered. Firstly, instead of being faced with a choice of differing party political and economic policies (as would be the case in a normal election), the crucial question confronting the Indian people was whether to vote at all and thus accept the new dispensation, or, to boycott it and thus reject the new constitution as a viable mechanism through which their aspirations could be satisfied. In the event, almost 85% of the Indian people rejected the new constitution.

Secondly, from a glance at the results in detail, the political leadership offered by the Rajbansis, Poovalingams and the Reddys has obviously been rejected by the people. In their own home constituencies, Rajbansi, Poovalingam and Reddy only managed to achieve 10%, 7% and 19% of the registered voters respectively. Furthermore, the fact that those who stood for election did so only out of self-interest was underscored by the ease with which they moved from one party to the other, feeling equally at home in each of them. The majority of candidates were representatives of big business who had a long history of collaboration with apartheid.

Thirdly, the racists had banked on the fact that besides a long period of relative political inactivity by the Indian people, especially in the Transvaal, there had developed a significant group of wealthy merchants amongst whom they would find a sympathetic constituency. Once again, the racists miscalculated. This becomes particularly clear when one considers that the new constitution does not repeal those racist laws that have effectively barred the aspirant bourgeoisie from achieving their goals. In fact, it is from this very same wealthy group of merchants that the Congress, particularly in the Transvaal, has received substantial material and moral support. It is facts like these that once again powerfully vindicate the theoretical approach adopted in the *Strategy and Tactics* and *The South African Road to Freedom* with regard to the national question and its tactical implications for the national liberation struggle.

Finally, while the historico-material conditions of the Indian people explain why they rejected the new constitution, one has to look at the dynamism of the grassroots mobilization conducted and the leadership to fully understand why their rejection was so total.

“The Hour for organisation and unity has come”

The successful implementation of the new constitutional proposals posed a serious challenge to the struggle for national liberation. It threatened not only to subvert the revolutionary alliance, but furthermore, to continue the process of denationalisation of the African people and intensify the oppression and exploitation of *all* black people. The response to this challenge saw the birth of the UDF and the development of countrywide resistance to apartheid.

While the mobilization of the Coloured and Indian people against the elections was central, the campaign was non-racial in character. The basis of the opposition to the constitutional proposals was that the constitution had been imposed on South Africa without any consultations; it was undemocratic because it was not based on the principle of one person, one vote; it excluded the majority of the population from access to political power; and it maintained apartheid.

The campaign took the form of a two-pronged attack. While on the one level there was the direct mobilization of the Indian people through the Natal and Transvaal Indian Congress, on another level, every potential anti-apartheid force was mobilised through the trade unions, youth, students, women's, religious, civic and other organisations including white democrats.

The essence of the campaign was the basic grassroots mobilization of the people. It is here that the dynamism of the UDF and its affiliated bodies was displayed. The activity which provided the main thrust was meeting the people in their homes, churches, streets, sports grounds and elsewhere. The Natal Indian Congress alone covered more than 100,000 homes in Natal. Integral to this was the Million Signature Campaign against the constitution which is still continuing. The large number of activists who were recruited were thoroughly briefed and thus were in a position to relate to the people they met and explain to them the link between the grievances and hardships they were experiencing and the way the new constitution would affect them. Besides mobilizing the people against the new constitution, the purpose of the campaign was to consolidate and entrench grassroots organisations among the masses. As Virgil Bonhomme of the United Committee of Concern explained:

“Grassroots support doesn't come from public statements or meetings. Standing on platforms and shouting political slogans doesn't give people enough confidence in you”.⁶

As a result of the struggles waged, the national liberation movement has made a number of advances which are of significance. These can broadly be categorised as political and organisational;

(a) *Political*

* The low polls are indeed a victory and indicate the opposition of the large majority of Coloured and Indian people to the new constitution. Furthermore, the revolutionary alliance of the oppressed has come out of this campaign strengthened and steeled.

* The militancy and consciousness of the Coloured and Indian people have been raised to a level where they refuse to have anything to do with any of the sell-out parties or leaders.

* Since the banning of the ANC, there has been no other campaign in which the people's allegiance to it and its leadership has been so pronounced.

* The political education achieved by the propaganda during the campaign extended the people's consciousness beyond localised grievances such as GST, housing and other problems and highlighted the aggressive nature of apartheid, the illegal occupation of Namibia and the destabilisation of the frontline states.

* While political organisation in the rural areas is not yet compatible with that of the urban areas, the campaign has seen much advance in this area.

* The people's confidence in Umkhonto we Sizwe has been boosted by the fact that its cadres were able to strike with such frequency and ferocity despite claims that the Nkomati Accord would see the end of it.

(b) *Organisational.*

* The united front tactics as seen in the UDF have been employed with much success. The dynamism of the campaign depended largely on the high level of organisation and coordination between the local, regional and national bodies as well as the coordination of the various sections. The ability to organise the many rallies, mobilise and direct the activists and create the organisational structure needed to conduct the campaign demonstrated that the UDF at the grassroots level represents almost every section in South Africa.

* The revival of the Transvaal Indian Congress has seen the restoration of its former status as the only authentic voice of the Indian people.

* The boycott campaign has also witnessed the revival and consolidation of the Women's Federation and youth organisations.

* In the struggle to raise the political consciousness of the masses we have witnessed the emergence of various community newspapers and journals which are beginning to enjoy wide readership.

The successes and advances scored in the campaign against the elections have not gone without the repression and reaction that has accompanied all our struggles. The state's response to the people's resistance has been vicious.

Its arsenal has included the use of naked terror, detentions and assassinations. Nevertheless, the struggle continues and the crucial question now being debated in the liberation movement is: where do we go from here?

Conclusion

Having scored a major victory in the anti-constitution campaign the time has now come for us to assess the campaign and analyse what exactly are our weaknesses and strengths. Any victory won has to be consolidated! In order to achieve this we will have to continue strengthening and entrenching our grassroots organisations among the people. Equally important is the raising of the political consciousness of the masses. The massive opposition the people have demonstrated against the new constitution stems from their rejection of apartheid rule. Thus, the task that faces us now is to ensure that, having rejected the new constitution we must refuse to allow it to govern us. According to Cedric Kekane of the Saulsville/Attridgeville Youth Organisation;

“We must be difficult to control. We must render the instruments of oppression difficult to work. We must escalate all forms of resistance.”

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1. Financial Mail; 13/7/84
2. Van der Merwe Commission; para 6.6.2. (j).
3. 1982 Survey of Race Relations; SAIRR; p 77.
4. 1983 Survey of Race Relations; SAIRR; p 144.
5. 1983 Survey of Race Relations; SAIRR; p 200.
6. Interview with Saspu National; March 1984.

SECOND THOUGHTS ON THE NKOMATI ACCORD

By Z. Nkosi

Opinion about the Nkomati and Lusaka agreements is gradually hardening in the frontline states. In the dying days of 1984 Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos arrived in Maputo at the head of a high-powered delegation on a two-day visit to Mozambique. A joint communique issued at the end of talks with Mozambican President Samora Machel emphasised “a high degree of fraternity and a similarity of views on the main issues of the struggle against imperialism and its agents, the armed bandits”.

Mozambique declared its support for the proposals submitted by Angola to the UN Secretary General as a basis for negotiations with South Africa. These were:

1. Completion of the withdrawal of South African troops from Angola as laid down in the Lusaka Agreement.
2. Cessation of South Africa’s support for UNITA and the dismantling of UNITA’s bases in Namibia.
3. Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 435 laying down the procedures for Namibian independence.
4. After the establishment of UN forces in Namibia and the reduction of South African forces to 1,500 infantry, the Angolan and Cuban governments will start the gradual reduction of the Cuban internationalist contingent from Angola on the basis of a programme to be presented.

The Angolan side to the Maputo talks expressed support for “Mozambique’s efforts to ensure that South Africa carries out the Nkomati Accord to the full” and for Mozambique’s struggle to destroy the MNR bandits.

In their document, the two Presidents reaffirmed “their solidarity with the liberation struggle of the peoples of Namibia and South Africa, led respectively by SWAPO and the ANC.”

The two sides pledged co-operation in the struggle against imperialism, the strengthening of national independence and the building of socialism in the two countries.

In a commentary on the visit and the talks, the Maputo daily newspaper *Noticias* predicted that the Mozambican and Angolan governments would harden their positions towards South Africa as a result of the Botha regime’s failure to honour its undertakings. Both governments, the paper observed, “have more than sufficient justification to complain that the Lusaka understanding and the Nkomati Accord are not being honoured”.

Noticias added that the South African regime’s cool response to Angola’s recent proposals showed that Pretoria “is not interested, or not able, or perhaps not willing to participate in efforts to establish peace and security in Southern Africa.”

Speaking a few days later at the traditional end of year reception given for leading figures in Mozambican public life, President Machel said:

“The real architects of the conspiracy against Mozambique are based in certain Western European capitals” and added that they benefit from “the complicity of individuals and organisations in neighbouring countries from whom they receive the necessary logistic support and who infiltrate terrorists, saboteurs and mercenaries” — a remark clearly directed towards, and duly resented by, South Africa.

President Machel said the aim of the conspiratorial network led by imperialism was “to change the course of our history, and create conditions for the return of those who were always the sworn enemies of the Mozambican people”. In 1985, the tenth year of Mozambican independence, “we must act decisively to secure peace and eliminate banditry”. This was “the basic condition for economic recovery”.

The Mozambican Information Agency report stated: “President Machel repeatedly stressed the socialist nature of the Mozambican revolution, and praised the assistance received from other members of the socialist community. Solidarity from other socialist countries had meant that ‘at critical moments and on favourable terms’, Mozambique had been able to acquire fuel and consumer goods. The President also pointed to the strengthening of Mozambique’s alliance with the rest of the socialist world during the past year”.

According to the same agency, on December 27, at a ceremony in Maputo for representatives of the Mozambican community living and working in South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland, South Africa was accused of systematically violating the Nkomati Accord. The ceremony, held in the Presidential palace with President Machel wearing the same full-dress uniform he wore for the signing of the Accord, was attended by about 100 Mozambican workers, mostly from the South African mines.

A representative of the Mozambican workers read a message regretting South Africa's refusal to implement the Nkomati Accord. The message noted that Mozambique had signed the agreement "sincerely, without any subterfuge" in order to establish peace in the region, but "what was previously hidden is now becoming clear". The South African government's agreement to sign the Accord was "nothing but a trick" and the regime never intended to carry out its obligations under the Accord. "South Africa never stopped supporting, training and infiltrating the bandit gangs, and it never stopped sending planes with weapons destined for the bandits inside Mozambique".

This view was supported in a speech by Frelimo Party Political Bureau member Marcelino dos Santos in an end-of-year reception in Beira. He said:

"Our enemy is called imperialism, and in this part of the world its spearhead is South Africa. We are continuing to detect radio communications transmitting orders to the bandit gangs, and reports from the bandits back to their leaders". He directly accused South Africa of trying "to give political status to the bandits and criminals which it created in the first place".

President Machel himself returned to the theme in a speech at a New Year reception for the diplomatic corps held in Maputo on January 4. Although the South African government had pledged to implement the letter and spirit of the Accord, he said, "violence and terrorism are continuing to claim lives and spread destruction in Mozambique". There were clear signs that the Accord was being violated "from the territory of South Africa and of other neighbours of Mozambique".

The dean of the diplomatic corps in Maputo, Czechoslovakian Ambassador Vaclan Brelac, read a message condemning the "increasing violence used by certain forces in some countries to prevent social progress and to maintain their own domination and exploitation". He added: "We all know it is not the fault of the Mozambican government that the Nkomati Accord is not being implemented satisfactorily". The MNR bandits, he said, "are supplied from outside by those who are eager to return to the old colonial order".

President Machel was most specific when speaking to a party of French journalists in Maputo on February 6, 1985. The deterioration in the situation

in Mozambique, he said, "is because South Africa is not fulfilling the (Nkomati) Agreement. I don't know if it is unable or unwilling to".

The first national congress of the MPLA-Workers' Party was held in Luanda from January 14 to 19. In his opening speech President dos Santos said:

"It has been proved more than once that it is South Africa that is responsible for maintaining the present climate of tension in our region".

Pretoria, he said, was "still banking on eliminating the legitimate governments of frontline countries in order to put its own puppets in power . . . The serious and constructive new peace proposals presented by our government have met with an arrogant response harmful to our sovereignty on the part of South Africa, which has outdone itself in making unacceptable demands contrary to the ethics of international relations". President dos Santos noted "the premeditated inability of the South African government to comply with what was stipulated in the Nkomati Accord". At the same time South Africa was continuing to occupy part of Angolan territory despite the undertakings entered into in the Lusaka agreement.

"There are no valid reasons to justify that act of continued aggression", he said. "All the facts lead us to conclude that the South African government wished to use the hope of peace that was created merely to try to break out of its international isolation and to ensure the survival of the apartheid system". Furthermore, there was "no longer any doubt that the vast plan of aggression and destabilisation carried out against our country over these years by the racist South African regime was only possible because of the active support and connivance of certain western countries".

By contrast, said President dos Santos, "the bonds of friendship and solidarity with the parties and peoples of socialist countries have been consolidated and expanded . . . Inter-party co-operation has been implemented and inter-governmental co-operation is developing satisfactorily in the economic, technical and cultural fields". Angola would continue its efforts to use existing possibilities for the constant strengthening of the material basis of its relations with the socialist world.

"In this perspective the most correct ways are being studied of achieving not only closer bilateral co-operation with all socialist countries but also broader co-operation within the framework of Comecon".

Denying the insinuations of the western press, President dos Santos said: "Cuba continues to receive no material rewards for the internationalism it practises in Angola in such an exemplary way in the military field". He disclosed that Cuba "decided more than a year ago to cease receiving payment from the Angolan people . . . Cuba is continuing to make sacrifices,

including the lives of some of its finest sons, in helping the Angolan people and their revolution, in an exemplary way, to defend independence, the country's integrity and the gains so far achieved".

The President added that "the Soviet Union is still the main supplier of the weapons and military equipment with which our valiant combatants have been facing enemy onslaughts".

On the basis of Angola's foreign policy aimed at safeguarding the independence, prestige and interests of the People's Republic of Angola, the President said there had been "diplomatic initiatives to normalise Angola's relations with Senegal and the Peoples Republic of China, as well as to increase prestige and a correct understanding of our national realities in Western Europe, with a view to diversifying and expanding economic relations with all countries of interest on the basis of reciprocal advantage".

The second congress of the MPLA-Workers' Party is scheduled to take place towards the end of 1985.

President Nyerere's View

In an interview with the journal *New African* shortly after his election last November as chairman of the Organisation of African Unity, Tanzania's President Julius Nyerere, replying to the question "What do you think about the Nkomati Accord?", said:

"For South Africa it has been absolutely wonderful. And the Americans think it is a tremendous example of the success of . . . what is that policy called? — Ah yes! — 'Constructive engagement'! They keep on saying how wonderful it is.

"We think it is a humiliation. We don't want any more Nkomatis. It is the success of the South African policy of destabilising the frontline states, and it is assisted in this by the USA. And it is proper that we should view it completely frankly. It is a defeat on our part.

"We understand *why* Mozambique had to look for accommodation at Nkomati — but they haven't even got the minimum they thought they could get out of it. But we *understand* why they did it, because there was a promise that South Africa might stop supporting the MNR and Mozambique decided they needed peace to start some development in their country. But they have not even got that. From the very beginning, South Africa never meant to honour that agreement because during the very negotiations the South Africans were actually sending in more armed men. They were breaking the agreement before they had signed it. Even after the agreement they continued sending people and are still doing so". (*New African* January 1985).

BOOK REVIEWS

THE FAILURE OF THE BANTUSTANS

South Africa: African Rural Development, by Maziphula M. Mbongwa. (Dr Govan Mbeki Fund, University of Amsterdam, 1984.)

As is so often the case, titles conceal more than they reveal. This is certainly true of this monograph written by Masiphula Mbongwa whilst ANC Research Fellow of the Dr Govan Mbeki Fund of the University of Amsterdam.

He has produced an interesting and insightful analysis of the relation of the bantustans, and agrarian “development” within them, to the South African political economy. The context in which he sets his analysis is that of national oppression and capitalist exploitation, drawing out the fact that underlying the creation of the bantustans are political as well as economic forces.

Although the monograph is short, it touches on a wide range of issues, all of which are not possible to deal with in the space of a short review. Central to his argument is that:

“Bantustans were created to ensure absolute political control and socio-economic exploitation of African people. Their aims are to preserve and protect the continued system of white dictatorship and capital enslavement. ... The continued pursuit by Pretoria of the process of the apartheid decolonisation — bantustan and bantustan independence — that act in itself constitutes a reminder that African self-determination, political and economic emancipation and one-man-one-vote remain as alive and unfinished issues in South Africa.” (p14/15)

The failure of industrial decentralisation (a fact admitted to by P W Botha in November, 1981, when he announced a new strategy for regional economic development) and the collapse of agriculture in the bantustans,

the alleged economic "raison d'être", expose Pretoria's claim to be promoting "separate but equal development" for the sham that it is. But more importantly, Mbongwa argues, these policies have contributed significantly to the socio-economic crisis facing South Africa today, and particularly the crisis of unemployment and poverty which is affecting the African majority so severely. At the same time, Pretoria's recognition of this failure has given it the excuse to advance the political "solution" of "self-government" and "independence", by which it hopes to absolve itself of responsibility for the failures of its own creation. It is in this light that we can assess the questions of "manpower" and skill shortages, the shift to capital-intensive and automated production in both secondary industry and agriculture, the exodus of whites from the platteland, militarisation and its implications as well as the immediate resort to extreme repression in the bantustans, where Pretoria's "chiefs" have little or no room to manoeuvre.

The monograph is well written and is thought-provoking. It should stimulate further research and analysis into the many problems it raises.

T.T.

ANGOLAN WOMEN BREAK NEW GROUND

Angolan Women Building the Future: From National Liberation to Women's Emancipation; from the Organization of Angolan Women, London: Zed Books Ltd, 1984. Price £5.95

This book is essential reading for all of us in the South African liberation movement. It includes speeches and resolutions of the first congress of the Organisation of Angolan Women (OMA) as well as theses which were widely discussed in preparation for the Congress. It reflects the progressive and concrete way in which our Angolan comrades are tackling the emancipation of women, building on the gains and experiences of the national liberation struggle, overcoming the obstacles imposed by the war South Africa is waging against Angola, and integrating the struggle for the emancipation of women into the general task of national reconstruction.

OMA was set up in 1962 and played a vital role mobilising women to take part in the liberation struggle. In 1973 OMA was awarded Unesco's Nadejda Krupskaya Literacy Award, an honour usually accorded to countries, not to a women's organisation engaged in a national liberation war. By 1983, OMA

had over a million members. (Angola's population is between six and eight million). The laws of the People's Republic and Angola guarantee non-discrimination against women, but new laws relating to specific conditions of women were needed, particularly in relation to the family. Also, legal equality is not enough to make equality a social reality. OMA's national coordinator Ruth Neto, stated:

"Our objective is to raise the economic, social and educational level of Angolan women, so that they may play an increasingly useful part in building a socialist society and in the tasks of national reconstruction."

Participation in national life is seen as the key to women's emancipation, which is part of the struggle to advance the whole people.

The discussion theses encompass women's oppression under colonialism, their role in national liberation and the current struggle for their emancipation, given the historical legacy of subordination, backwardness and obscurantism. To overcome this, eliminating illiteracy among women is seen as vital, as well as raising their level of education. Special attention was given to working women, the important issues of equality at work, support for working mothers, the specific conditions of peasant women and the question of mother-and-child care. Finally, the theses covered women and the family, the problems of young women, unmarried mothers, housewives, sex education and family planning, abortion and prostitution.

In his speech at the opening session President dos Santos noted that women "during the colonial period were those most exploited and oppressed, if we consider that they were subjected not only to colonial domination, but also to the authority of their husbands." He stressed the relationship between the solution of Angola's national problems (the imperialist war of aggression and the economic and financial crisis) and the emancipation of women. If the national problems are not solved, women's problems can't be solved and it is vital for women to contribute to solving the national problems.

Immediate Goals

Ruth Neto, in her report for OMA's National Committee, indicated the achievements of OMA before and after independence and outlined the main immediate goals of the organisation:

1. To increase membership and ensure active participation.
2. To combat illiteracy and raise the educational and scientific level of women.
3. To ensure increased active participation of women in all sectors of national life.

4. To intensify political and ideological work among women so that they understand their role in the revolution.
5. To dignify and significantly improve the living and working conditions of peasant women.

Lucio Lara, of the MPLA-Workers' Party Central Committee, pointed out that the OMA Congress had produced the result that:

“The Party and the State are now in possession of valuable elements which will make it possible to programme action to solve many of the problems facing our women ... This will help to establish more just conditions in society.”

The Congress adopted a wide range of resolutions to implement the process of emancipating women. The resolution on working women stressed the need to enforce equality between men and women at work, already provided for in law. Women should in practice enjoy the same opportunities as men. Women should have access to refresher courses, further training and education at work. Facilities should be provided to minimise the domestic tasks of working mothers in urban areas. Child care facilities should be available in work places, neighbourhoods and agricultural co-operatives. Priority should be given to functional literacy, especially in rural areas. The laws should be revised so that the principle that the inherent tasks of the home should be shared by the couple is enacted.

The resolution on women and the family recommended that new legislation be drafted to ensure equality between men and women. These new guidelines should be publicised by all the country's leading bodies. There should be legal and social protection of unmarried mothers. Young women must have access via training to economic independence. Conditions should be created to ensure the right of women to freely consented motherhood. Sex education in schools and mass media should be used to educate people on contraception. Family planning should be introduced as one of the ways of reducing infant mortality. As a last resort, in an unwanted pregnancy which could harm the physical, mental or social welfare of a woman or girl, abortion should be authorised. There should be frank discussion of prostitution to make society aware of the need to eradicate it. Meetings, talks and symposia should be held for the ongoing education of adults on the new relationships in the family and society. All discriminatory measures and attitudes towards women should cease in state services.

The prestige of OMA is testimony to the calibre of the revolutionary Angolan women who have built this organisation. The achievements of this first Congress reflect the determination of the Angolan people and their government, the MPLA-Workers' Party, to work for the genuine

emancipation of women in Angola. The whole world can learn lessons from this book, which provides an invaluable insight into the relationship of women's emancipation to the national democratic revolution.

Mosadi Wa Sechaba

FAILURE OF A MISGUIDED MISSION

Confessions of an Albino Terrorist by Breyten Breytenbach.
(London, Faber and Faber, 1984.)

The Afrikaans poet Breyten Breytenbach, released after serving seven years of a nine-year sentence under the Terrorism Act, writes: "It was my intention to produce a political text — if it turned out to be more 'literary' than expected it can only be because I couldn't help it." (p. 339). Given this stated intention a reviewer is more than entitled to judge the book on its political content. This I intend to do, but first I will make a few remarks about the 'literary' aspects of the book.

The bourgeois media have been fulsome in their praise of the book as a literary creation. This is an opinion that I do not share. Two distinct styles are used in the book. The long discursive passages are written in a convoluted way. It is often virtually impossible to follow lines of thought in these introspective passages, let alone to determine what is fact and what fantasy. Yet it is these verbose sections of the book that the bourgeois media have lauded. These purple passages are interspersed with very much better written descriptive sections in which the mindlessness and oppression of the South African prison system are brought out. The descriptions of Beverly Hills — the maximum security prison where condemned prisoners are kept — the cells under the Supreme Court in Pretoria and Pollsmoor, are vivid and often very moving. Yet, to my mind, these sections never achieve the immediacy and impact which is sustained throughout Indres Naidoo's *Island in Chains* or Hugh Lewin's *Bandiet*.

Throughout the book, including the descriptive passages, Breytenbach himself is very much in the forefront. The book

"took shape from the obsessive urge I experienced during the first weeks and months of my release ... to tell my story and all the other stories ... (the Book) had to become the reflection of a search for what really happened, and for the identity of the narrator." (p. 337-8)

The existential search for identity can all too easily become an obsession with self and mere self-aggrandisement. Breytenbach does not escape this pitfall.

This great (and I would suggest, from the evidence of inefficiency and lack of real political commitment that emerges from the book, unwarranted) sense of self-importance is very clear from the following passage.

“Okhela split in two — ostensibly on pro-Breyten and anti-Breyten lines. (Both factions have been in contact with me since, both claiming to have remained true.)” (p. 183).

The Okhela factions “remained true” to Breytenbach, the father figure who had handled his first trial in such an abject manner that he ended up apologising to the South African prime minister and offering, in return for his liberty, to spy on the liberation movement for BOSS. “Remaining true” does not say much for the political acumen of his fellows in Okhela. Incidentally, Breytenbach brushes off his handling of his first trial and the subsequent offer to BOSS in the most cursory and unsatisfactory manner.

The Politics of it All

Let me turn to the political content of the book. Breytenbach sees the External Mission of the ANC as being “in the grip of the dogmatists”. (p. 359). When he discusses what is to be done about it, he is emphatic: “Combat dogmatism.” (p. 360). The implication is clear — the External Mission of the ANC must be combatted. (I will make no comment here on the misapprehension that the ANC ‘externally’ is somehow different from the ANC ‘internally’.)

His position on the South African Communist Party is equally unambiguous. While he claims that he is not involved in ‘red-baiting’ (p. 75), he produces, with no attempt at evidence to support his views, the tired old arguments that “The SACP actually has the nerve centres of the liberation movement in its control.” (p. 75). His criticism of the party is twofold. Firstly that it is “in principle and practice a multi-racial, non-racist organisation.” (p. 76). His criticism here is that he felt that the party’s non-racial character was “papering over the real problems of cultural awareness” and thus “diminishing the effectiveness of the militants by confusing the feedback”. (p. 76). Secondly he regards the SACP as dogmatic and doctrinaire. He makes no secret of the fact that an ultra-left position is at the root of his criticism. “Our criticism of the SACP was coming from the left.” (p. 77).

Having rejected the SACP *in toto* and the leadership of the ANC (or at least that part of the leadership that is in exile), Breytenbach’s infantile disorder

can only lead him to individualism and adventurism. His book exemplifies this. Furthermore, the structures created by the ultra-left are particularly prone to be penetrated by the enemy. Thus Schuitema, an Okhela colleague of Breytenbach's and a former secretary of the Dutch Anti-Apartheid Movement, admitted "to having given information to Craig Williamson, one of the South African spies abroad but, he asserted, only from 1978 on, and then only to counteract the communist domination of the liberation movement." Schuitema also admitted to Breytenbach "regular contact with and/or control by various South African security services." (p. 184).

It is particularly instructive to look at Okhela's intended role in the trade union field Okhela had

"succeeded in obtaining the promise of substantial sums of money directed to the nascent Black trade unions inside South Africa and we were going to have our contacts inside the country ... channel this money to the intended recipients. To be able to do that, though, we needed to establish a trade union office abroad, in Europe, manned by a Black and a White trade unionist from inside."

As is so often the case, Breytenbach raises more questions than he answers. What, if anything, was to be SACTU's role in this trade union initiative? Perhaps more important, what was the role of the ICFTU or the AALC? It was Breytenbach's intention, during his trip to South Africa, to recruit Steve Biko as the Black trade unionist who would go to Europe. Surely a surprising choice, for, great as were Biko's political and community skills, he was not a trade unionist.

"Biko was a powerful figure though, a natural rallying point for Black Consciousness and non-ANC forces." (p. 99).

The implication is clear: Okhela's trade union activities were to be aimed at undermining the ANC.

Origins Unclear

Okhela's relationship to the ANC never becomes clear. "Okhela was formed in support of a *faction* within the ANC." (p. 62) (His italics.) Yet he claims that Solidarité, the organisation from which Okhela grew, was formed "on behalf of the ANC." (p. 77). The Okhela Manifesto states: "We derive our legitimacy from the African National Congress who requested us to form this organisation." Breytenbach has a footnote here: "This is not true. In fact the office-bearers of the ANC with whom we were in contact could not and did not encourage us in the name of the ANC." (p. 389) It would have been of great interest if Breytenbach had cast more light on this matter.

Of the Okhela Manifesto, Breytenbach writes: "The Manifesto's analysis of the role to be played by Whites in the struggle for liberation is probably still

fairly valid.” Given this lukewarm approach to the Okhela document, it is surprising that he decided to publish it in full as an appendix to the book.

To my mind the most irritating feature of the book is the use of names.

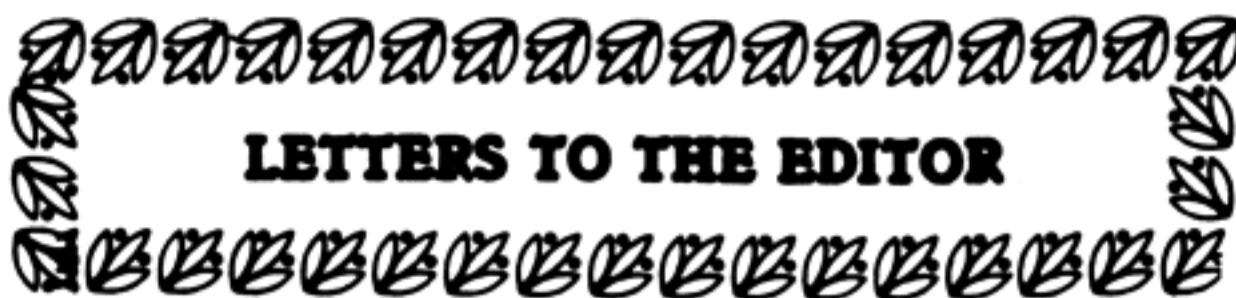
“In some instances I have used the real names of the people involved, mainly because it would have served no purpose to camouflage them. In many other cases I have modified or replaced the names — but behind every name there is a real person, and you may rest assured that the people concerned will recognise themselves.” (p. 338).

What purpose can it possibly serve to hide the real identity of virtually every security policeman or prison warder? Why should the security police torturer, Spyker van Wyk, not be identified as such, instead of hiding behind the pseudonym of Nails van Byleveld? Why should Schnepfel, the parody of a man who had such great power over White political prisoners, be referred to as Schnorff? Why should Denis Goldberg, one of the comrades convicted at Rivonia, become Arthur Goldberg? Why should the UDF be referred to as the Union of Democratic Forces? This obfuscation is carried to such an extent that one almost starts to suspect that Breytenbach wants to protect those who uphold the apartheid system.

I will quote one further example of Breytenbach’s complete lack of understanding of political processes. “Whatever privileges we South African political prisoners had or have are nearly exclusively due to the work of the IRCC.” (International Red Cross Committee). (p. 206). I would rather say that improvements have come about for South African political prisoners primarily because of the disciplined, principled struggles of the political prisoners against the draconian authorities (not to mention the activities of the world-wide anti-apartheid movement). But then Breytenbach himself requested not to be kept with the other White political prisoners — even though he does not mention this.

This book is definitely not a meaningful contribution to progressive writing about South Africa. The sections on prison conditions are worth reading, but the chief interest of the book is as an illustration of the individualistic preoccupations and destructive criticisms which come about when intellectuals are not able to discipline themselves and work within the structures of the mass movement.

Geus van de Suid



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE INTELLIGENTSIA MUST BE WON OVER TO OUR SIDE

From Comrades in Africa

Dear Editor,

We write in response to the article by Comrade Ruth Nhere (*African Communist* No 99, 4th Quarter 1984) on the “Dangers of ‘Legal Marxism’ in South Africa”.

In agreeing with many of the points raised by the author, we must also concur that the ‘ideological battlefield should not be surrendered by default’ and that all manifestations of left or right opportunism must be fought without compromise. However, this ideological struggle cannot be won only by attacks on such trends and tendencies. We must recognise firstly that there is a dynamic and predominantly healthy debate in South Africa on a wide range of issues of crucial importance to our struggle — some of which is reflected in journals quoted by the author.

Secondly, by and large, the input of our liberation alliance into this debate has to date been insufficient. To some extent this can be explained by objective conditions. The SACP in particular has the responsibility of ensuring that this is corrected: by distribution of the SACP Programme and other theoretical material as well as material addressing the burning issues of the day. This material must be supportive where it is necessary to raise the level of debate and uncompromisingly criticise material which serves the interests of the enemy.

Marxism/Leninism has taught us that we must win the intelligentsia over to the side of the revolutionary forces, which in our situation means from all the population groups of South Africa. We also know however that this strata is prone to petty-bourgeois vacillation, to the desire for quick, easy and radical solutions, to the denigration of the painstaking tasks of underground

and mass work and to a rejection of the rigours and discipline required of a vanguard revolutionary movement.

In tracing the roots of petty-bourgeois revolutionism in South Africa, it is inadequate and misleading to see this as a result only of 'the special type of colonialism operating in our society' and the consequent 'composition of the intelligentsia'. The history of our struggle, in particular the activities of the PAC, the NEUM and elements from within the BCM, demonstrates that petty-bourgeois ideology can take and has taken root amongst the oppressed. To argue otherwise is to single out the White intelligentsia as the only source of ideological deviation and to denigrate the positive role played by a small but increasing number of White intellectuals. If anything, the recent period has been characterised by a far wider acceptance within White democratic circles of the theory and practice of our liberation alliance, notwithstanding the right and left deviations of a minority within these circles.

The author uses the terms academics and intellectuals as if they were swearwords commonly accepted in Marxist terminology. Failure to clearly differentiate between revolutionary intellectuals and those who serve the interests of the ruling class is to alienate revolutionary intellectuals and some misguided but well-intentioned individuals and drive them into the camp of the ultra-left who are correctly the object of Comrade Nhere's attack.

We are not informed by Comrade Nhere which writings are "so 'academic' as to appear irrelevant to political reality". When Lenin discussed the existence of only two ideologies — either working class or bourgeois — he referred to the fact that theory objectively serves the interests of either the bourgeoisie or the revolutionary movement. Ideology, whatever form it may take, is never irrelevant to the class struggle and, to assume it can be, is precisely to surrender the ideological battlefield by default.

The author correctly observes that the working class cannot acquire a socialist consciousness purely in the economic sphere but that this must be brought to it by a vanguard party.

However, in apparent contradiction to this truth, she asserts that 'anti-communism will not win them (ie: left or right wing opportunists) support among the organised working class'. Over a century of working class struggle and innumerable setbacks to the international working class movement have amply demonstrated that anti-communism is a powerful weapon, often successfully used to mislead the working class. The only guarantee against this is the capacity of the working class party to impart its ideology to the working class and its allies — to bring to them socialist consciousness and

loyalty to their party, the only party that can unswervingly and unselfishly serve their interests. This is one reason why the working class party must win to its side the revolutionary intelligentsia who have historically played and in future will play a role in this educative process albeit under the guiding influence and discipline of the party and in concert with intellectuals from the ranks of the working class.

HOW FREEDOM CAN BE WON

From Betha Sofo Dlandawonye

Dear Editor,

I was born and raised in Western Native Township next to Sophiatown. My father collected dry cleaning for a dry cleaning factory in Alberton and my mother was a nurse at a hospital in Roodepoort. My parents, like all parents, wanted to give their children an education — that was their main aim in life and therefore their main sacrifice.

I finished school and entered University in the early 1970's. I was expelled from the university because I participated in a political strike and demonstration with other students. My education came to an abrupt end.

The alternative was to look for a job. I had a brother and a sister who were still at school and as the cost of living increased it became increasingly difficult for my parents to meet the rent and other bills. If you are late with your monthly payments you are evicted from your house. Even though the education is inferior if you are black in South Africa, it was important that the two younger children should stay on at school.

I became interested in working-class and liberation politics at the climax of the 1973 Durban strike and other political battles which were being waged by our people — workers, the youth in the Black Consciousness movement and other student organisations. One battle which I will never forget is the Carltonville Anglo American miners' strike when the workers complained of their conditions and 69 workers were murdered in cold blood by the South African police. It was then that I realised the degree of suppression of a fascist state. The miners are the pillar of our economy.

Today the South African economy is in a shambles. The Chief Minister of the Ciskei, Lennox Sebe, intends to build a 25 million Rand airport in his bantustan. The infant mortality remains at 130 per 1,000 births — one of the highest in African rural areas. Hours are spent in fetching water for the family use in their dwellings and almost one-fifth of all schoolchildren show signs of malnutrition.

The homeland and apartheid policies are a financial disaster, a moral degradation and a political nightmare.

It is by linking the political and economic struggles with the armed struggle that we will bring about change in South Africa. This can be achieved through the ANC, SACTU and the South African Communist Party on the one hand, and through Umkhonto we Sizwe on the other hand.

We must attack the enemy daily!

We must resist forced removals!



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