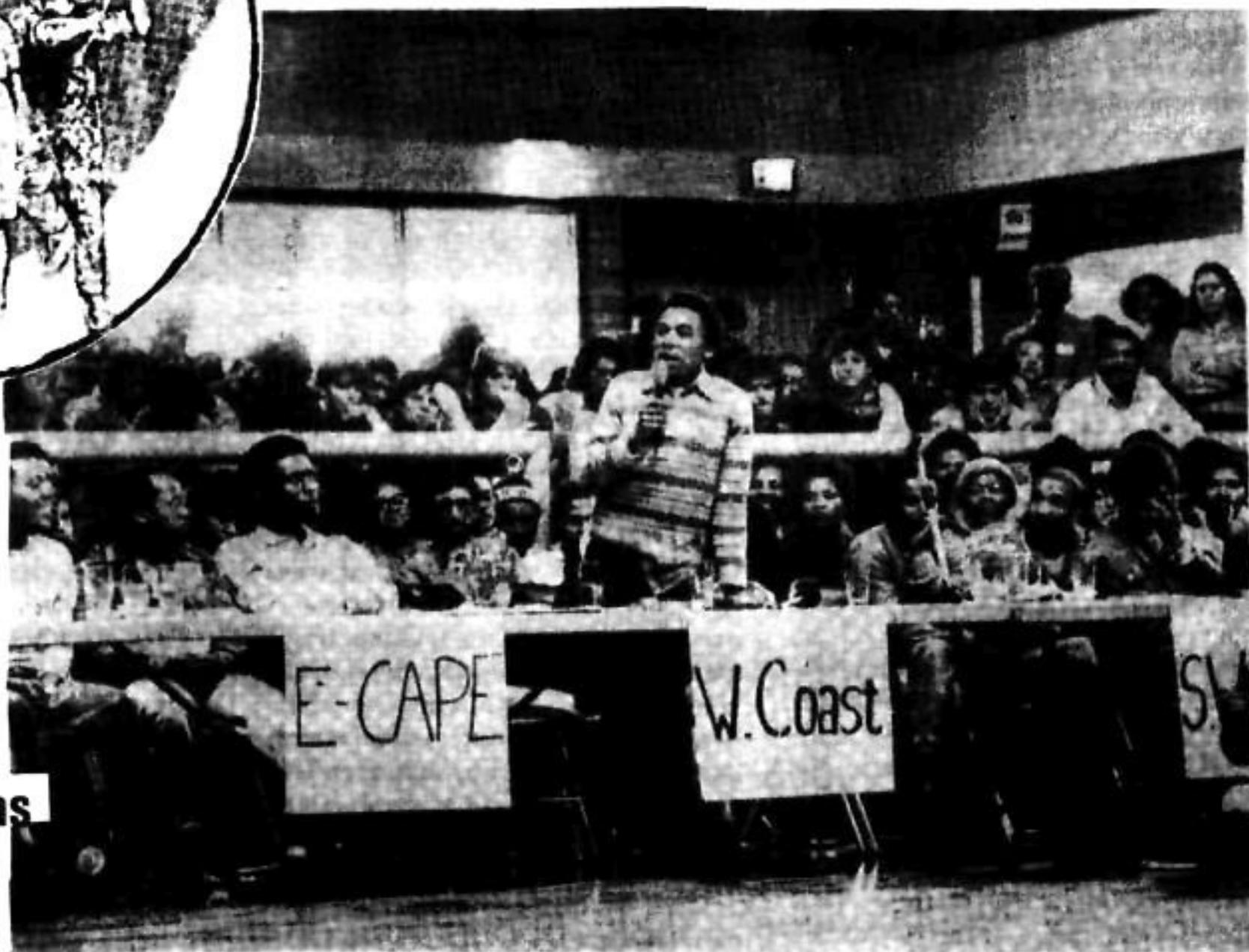


inqaba

YA BASEBENZI

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



Inside:

**Report
from UDF
Conference**

**Trade Unions
and
the UDF**

ARMED STRUGGLE: a reply to Comrade Tambo
REVOLUTION IN CENTRAL AMERICA



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The organised workers must build and lead the United Democratic Front

The 20 August launching of the United Democratic Front is the most important advance in the working-class movement since the Durban strikes.

Those strikes, ten years ago, signalled to the whole of South Africa that the black working class had re-awakened to struggle after the paralysing setbacks and defeats of the late 1950s and 1960s.

That first re-awakening was on the industrial plane, as workers tested their strength against their immediate enemy, *the factory boss*. It has led to the building of the strongest independent, democratic trade unions our country has ever seen. It laid the foundation-stone for the vital efforts towards trade union unity today.

The revolt of the black youth since 1976, the struggles over rents and housing, the bus boycotts, the resistance to removals—all have been spurred on by the advance of the workers' movement, and in turn have given ever wider sections of workers the confidence to organise and fight.

Today, the mass enthusiasm for the UDF—and the revolutionary spirit among the conference delegates, the observers and the 12 000-strong crowd at the rally—signal a new stage in the rise of the working-class movement.

Millions of black working people all over South Africa are looking eagerly for a national political leadership and a united organisation to lead them country-wide against the ruling class and the racist regime.

The UDF means much more than the '400 organisations' affiliated to

it. Millions sense that the UDF is a fore-runner of the ANC's emergence once again as a mass organisation inside South Africa. This is what gives the UDF its enormous potential following.

The UDF is overwhelmingly working-class in the composition of its support. But it is overwhelmingly middle-class in leadership.

At the conference, delegate after delegate recounted the sufferings of black working people under the capitalist system: low wages and rising prices; unemployment; bad and crowded housing and transport; rising rents and fares; migrant labour, passes and removals; beatings, arrests and shootings by the racist state.

A tumultuous reception, the warmest of the conference, was given to a trade unionist who said: "Every one of you must realise that the struggle lies with the working class... All workers must unite under the UDF banner and work for a system where exploitation of man by man is ended and where the means of production will be in the hands of the working class."

The working class, by leading the national liberation struggle, can take state power into its own hands, sweep away racial oppression, expropriate the rich, and organise production on socialist lines to end poverty and take the whole society forward.

This program—the only realistic approach to the revolution—would win a tremendous response from millions of oppressed people

throughout South Africa. But it is not the program reflected in the declarations and statements drawn up by the UDF leaders.

Theirs is the abstract idea of 'democracy' without workers' power; the vague hope of a new society, without recognising the need to end capitalism.

But the UDF can measure up to the tasks only if it rouses and unites the full force of the working class in a struggle against the entire system—racial domination and capitalist rule.

Many of the most militant and experienced worker activists in the unions have stood aside from the UDF. That is a mistake. Millions of workers are looking to the UDF. They must not be left without workers' leadership in the political field at this decisive time.

They must not be left in the hands of middle-class political leaders whose aims are not the same as workers' aims—who do not want a thorough-going revolution to make working people the masters of society.

This problem should be discussed in all the unions. Surely the task of organised workers is to build the UDF on solid foundations, as an organisation predominantly of workers, with a conscious program for workers' democracy, national liberation and socialism.

Every effort in that direction would prepare the way for a mass, socialist ANC in future, able to lead the revolutionary struggle for power.

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YA BASEBENZI

AUGUST—OCTOBER 1983

SUPPLEMENT NO. II

DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

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Introduction

Dialectical materialism is the basic method of Marxism, developed by Marx and Engels for understanding the changes unfolding in the natural world and in society. Trotsky wrote: "Dialectic training of the mind, as necessary to the revolutionary fighter as finger exercises to a pianist, demands approaching all problems as **processes** and not as **motionless categories**."

Dialectical materialism is not a **formula** which can be learned abstractly. It can only be understood through the way it is applied in analysing practical questions—unravelling the contradictory strands that are woven together in every concrete situation, and discovering the living dynamic through which every situation is constantly being transformed.

We hope that the articles in this Supplement will be useful to comrades as an introduction to this method, showing its inner logic and demonstrating its use.

The first article is the edited text of a speech given by John Pickard to an audience mainly of young workers at a school organised by *Militant* (Marxist weekly paper in the British labour movement) in July 1982. It gives a basic explanation of what dialectical materialism—which sounds so complicated—is, and how it is confirmed by the findings of natural science.

The other two texts are extracts from Trotsky's writings. *A Petty-Bourgeois Opposition in the Socialist Workers' Party* was written in 1939 in the context of a split that was developing in the American SWP, at that time a workers' party (though a small one) under revolutionary Marxist leadership.

The split arose over the Marxist position of unconditional defence of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack. This position was in no sense based on illusions in the monstrous bureaucratic regime that had usurped power from the working class in Russia. Despite the bureaucratic degeneration that had taken place, it

was the duty of Marxists to defend the surviving gains of the October Revolution—the state-owned economy and the plan of production.

(It is still the duty of Marxists to defend these gains. But today, in contrast to the 1930s, the Soviet Union is a world power, militarily and economically, and there is no possibility of capitalism being restored.)

In the 1930s the Stalinist regime had completely abandoned any policy of defending the Soviet Union through social revolution in the West. In August 1939 Stalin cynically and treacherously signed a non-aggression pact with Hitler (which, within twenty-two months, Hitler tore up and invaded Russia, resulting in 20 million Russian dead).

With the massive wave of anti-Soviet hysteria provoked by the Hitler-Stalin pact among all sections of the bourgeoisie, a minority of middle-class intellectuals in the SWP found it impossible to continue defending the Marxist position in their universities and circles of friends. Buckling under the pressure of bourgeois 'public opinion' their main spokesmen, Professor James Burnham and Max Shachtman, put forward 'theoretical' arguments for shifting to more popular ground: they discovered that the Soviet Union was "no longer" a workers' state of any description.

Trotsky demolished their arguments. In the course of his reply, he showed that their political somersault could be accomplished only through rejection of the dialectical method and reliance on the primitive and superficial impressions of bourgeois 'common sense'.

Subsequent events proved that Burnham's and Shachtman's rejection of dialectical materialism in fact meant a break with Marxism and with the workers' movement itself.

Within months of his polemic against Trotsky over the question of dialectics, Burnham declared himself an opponent of Marxism, and shortly afterwards brought out his well-known book, *The Managerial*

Revolution.

This book falsely claimed that the evils of capitalism had been overcome because production was no longer organised by profit-seeking owners, but by a technical elite of managers, chosen on merit. This open defence of capitalism came to form a central plank of the propaganda of post-war US imperialism.

From here Burnham continued his slide into virulent anti-communism, and by the early 1970s was an editor of the extreme right-wing American journal, *The National Review*.

Shachtman, while nominally remaining a 'socialist', ended up in the Democratic Party—one of the two big parties of US capitalism—eventually supporting attempts at overthrowing the Castro regime in Cuba and defending the US invasion of Vietnam.

The second piece by Trotsky is from his book *Where is Britain Going?* in which he anticipated and analysed the explosion of class struggle in Britain that culminated in the General Strike of 1926. It deals with the undialectical, unscientific method of thinking of reformist workers' leaders—those opposed to the workers' revolution.

Ramsay MacDonald, Labour Party leader, and Prime Minister in 1924, ended up a notorious betrayer of the workers' movement, splitting the Labour Party by entering an open coalition government with the capitalists in 1931.

Trotsky here briefly shows the necessity of the dialectical method in understanding the workers' struggle for socialism.

Similarly, in Southern Africa today, the conscious use of dialectical materialism will be vital in the struggle to orient and re-orient our movement to changing conditions, to identify new political tasks, to expose mistaken ideas, and prepare for the conquest of power by the mass of working people.

Basebetsi ba ipopileng khokana ea phiri mecheng ea bahoebi ba ete pele 'me ba ahe Khubu-Selelekela Se Ananelang

Khubu-Selelekela Se Ananelang, se theiloeng ka khoeli ea borobeli ha e le matsatsi a 20 selemong sena, ke ntšetso pele ea lekhlotla la basebetsi; ha e sa le ho e ba le meferefere e fololisitseng mesebetsi, motseng oa Durban. Phololiso tseo, pele ho lilemo tse leshome tse fetileng, li hlokomelitsitse Afrika e Boroa hore basebetsi ba Batso ba ile ba falimehela ho loana. Hobane ba ile ba nka mohlala, hoba ba hlolehe lilemong tse leshome ho qala ho 1950 le tse leshome hape ka mekha ho qala ho 1960, ho fihlela li fela.

Ho falimeha hona ha pele, ho no ho itšetlehile ka tsa lefapha la bohoebi, ha basebetsi ba ne ba inonyana matla khahlanong le lira tsa bona: bo 'mampoli ba mesebetsing. Ke khahlano e ileng ea lebisela khahong e matla a fetesisang, a khotla la basebetsi le ananetsoeng e sechaba, ha e sa le; naheng ea abo rona. E entse sesupo sa motheo a bohlokoa o bontšang kopano ea asebetsi kajeno.

Bofetoheli b'o bacha ba bo bontšeng ka 1976, khahlanong le khetho la tefo ea lirente, ho sitisa ebetso ea makoloi a baeti, ho olisa teleko ea ba ahi litšeng tse sa melloang ke molao—kaofela li ile a atleha ka lebaka la matlafalo ea khotla la basebetsi. Ke katleho e ileng ea bontša mekha ea basebetsi bohlokoa ba ho loana e le khokana ea phiri, ba kopano le tšepo.

Kajeno kothalo ea sechaba mabapi le Khubu-Selelekela Se Ananelang, hammoho le moea oa ho fetohela 'muso o ile oa hlahisoa ke baromuoa lipuisanong tsa seboka se akaretsang, hammoho le balepi ba litaba feela ka boeti sebokeng—ka bongata ba palo e kalo ka 12 000 sebokeng. Ke ketsahalo e hlalositse ho re basebetsi ba itseka ka lekhlotla la bona.

Basebetsi ba Batso ba baloang ka merorobela ea limileone hohle Afrika e Boroa, ba tonne mahlo ho itšibollela boetapele bo e leng ba bona ba lipolotiki, ba emetse sechaba se kopaneng, hohle ka hare ho naha, ho heletsa babusi le 'muso oa khethollo.

Khubu-Selelekela Se Ananelang, se fupile tshaloso e fetang palo ea makhotlana a '400' a hlomathiselit-

soeng ka selekane ho sona. Matšoele a baloang ka limileone a nahana ho re: Khubu-Selelekela Se Ananelang, e hlile ke selelekela, se hlahang bocha hape sa ANC; e le lekhlotla la koboanela—Africa e Boroa. Khopolo ena ke eona e fanang ka maikutlo a bontšang ho re lekhlotla lena ke mohloli o ananeheloang ka matla.

Lekhotla lena, le thehehile ka palo e fetesisang—e le lekhlotla la basebetsi ho hang. Empa, ka lefapheng la boetapele ba lona, ho hlaha mokha oa bo khoana tsoana, ba seng ba le mahareng maruong, e se basebetsi ba sebele.

Sebokeng se ileng sa sibolla lekhlotla lena, baromuoa ka bong, ba ile ba pheta tsa tšollitso ea basebetsi ka tlasa tlatlapo ea puso ea linoamali; meputso ea bokhoba le thekiso e hanyapetsang ea thepa; ho hloka mesebetsi; ho hloka matlo a tsoanelang bophelo bo botle le ho se be le mekhoa ea ho tsamaisa thepa—le makoloi a baeti; lekhetho le nyolohang ka mehla la tefo tsa matlo le tsohle tsa boeti; mesebetsi ea likontraka ka ho thaottha mathathakojoana; litlankana-pasa, liteleko litšeng, ho shapuo, ho tsoaroa ke sepolesa le lipolao tsa ho thunngoa ke 'muso oa khethollo.

Sebokeng sena, mesebetsi ea ileng a re: "E mong le e mong oa lona a utloisise ho re boitseko bo matsohong a basebetsi...Basebetsi bohle ba kopane ka tlasa maphutha a folaga ea Khubu-Selelekela Se Ananelang, 'me ba sebeletse ho aha puso e tla felisa khanyapetso ea motho ka e mong, puso e tla etsa ho re moruo oa naha o be matsohong a basebetsi;" mesebetsi eo, a na a opeloa liatla ka mofuthu o babatsehang.

Basebetsi ka ho eta pele boitseko ba sechaba, ho se ntša bokhobeng, ba na le matla a ho nka puso ka matshoho a bona. Ho felisa khethollo ea 'mala le khatello, ho amoha barui maruo a boshulu; le ho aha mecha ea bohloai ba sechaba sohle ho felisa lefuma, le ho ntšetsa sechaba pele.

Lethathama lena ke lona feela, le ka amohelang le ananetsoe ke matšoele a baloang ka limileone, a batho ba hateletsoeng hohle Afrika e Boroa. Empa ka bomalimabe ha se lethathama le hlahang, liqetong le

lipuisanong tse ananetsoeng ke ba sibolotseng Khubu-Selelekela Se Ananelang—ke boetapele ba sona.

Khopolo ea bona ke setšoantso feela sa puso ea sechaba ka sechaba e le ea sechaba, empa ba furaletse basebetsi; puso eo e se matsohong a matla a basebetsi. Ke khopolo e futuhetsoeng ke mafoome e ea le moholi le 'muoane. Ha e ahe sechaba, se felisang khanyapetso.

Empa Khubu-Selelekela Se Ananelang, se ka kopa tšebetso eohle ha se ka falimehisa basebetsi sa kopanya matla a bona, ho heletsa puso ea bahanyapetsi le khethollo ea bona ea 'mala, ka matla a basebetsi.

Basebetsi ba bangata ba nang le tsebo ea boitseko ka mokhotla a basebetsi, ba ile ba emela ka thoko, ba seke ba tšehetsa Khubu-Selelekela Se Ananelang; tšibollong ea ho hlaha ha sona. Ke phoso ho etsa joalo. Melilimela ea basebetsi e baloang ka limileone e talimme Selelekela sena ka tšepo. Basebetsi bao, ba se ke ba furalloa, ba tlohela ba se na boetapele bo metseng e le peo ea basebetsi, ea lipolotiki, nakong e mosenekeng oa ha ho khaoha mo ho khoehlang.

Ba se ke ba tlohela matsohong a boetapele bo nkuoeng ke bo khoana tsoana, ba seng ba le boruing bo mahareng. Bao boikemisetso ba bona bo sa lumellaneng le litakatso tsa basebetsi. Ba sa batleng ho re bofetoheli bo phetholang 'muso, bo etsoe ka ho phethahala, ho re basebetsi e be bona balaoli ba puso e ncha ea sechaba.

Ntsha ena hle e thuhisoe e le lekomo la bohlokoa makhotleng ohle a basebetsi. 'Nete ke ho re boikemisteso ba basebetsi ba kopaneng tšebetsong ena, ke ho aha selelekela sa lekhlotla le hlonngong metheong e matla ruri. E be lekhlotla leo bongata ba lona e tla bang basebetsi. Ka maikutlo a falimehetseng ho rala lethathama le akarelitseng litakatso tsa basebetsi ka kananelo, tokoloho ea sechaba le ho aha bojammoho.

Boitoko bohle bo nkang tsela ena, bo tla hlopha mocha oa tsela e isang ho ANC ea matšoele tšoele nakong e tlang. E tla ba le matla a ho fehla bofetoheli bo tla hlasinya puso.

Dialectical Materialism

By John Pickard

When we discuss the method of Marxism, we are dealing with the ideas which provide the basis for our activities in the labour movement, the arguments we raise in the discussions we take part in, and the articles we write.

It is generally accepted that Marxism took its form from three main roots. One of those roots was the development of Marx's analysis of French politics, particularly the bourgeois revolution in France in the 1790s, and the subsequent class struggles during the early 19th century. Another of the roots of Marxism is what is called 'English economics'—i.e., Marx's analysis of the capitalist system as it developed in England. The other root of Marxism, which was its starting point historically, is said to be 'German philosophy', and it is that aspect of it that I want to deal with this morning.

To begin with, we say that the basis of Marxism is **materialism**. That is to say, Marxism starts from the idea that **matter** is the essence of all reality, and that matter creates mind, and not vice versa.

In other words, thought and all the things that are said to be derived from thought—artistic ideas, scientific ideas, ideas of law, politics, morality and so on—these things are in fact derived from the **material** world. The 'mind', i.e. thought and thought processes, is a product of the brain; and the brain itself, and therefore ideas, arose at a certain stage in the development of living matter. It is a product of the material world.

Therefore, to understand the real nature of human consciousness and society, as Marx himself put it, it is a question "not of setting out from what men say, imagine, conceive ... in order to arrive at men in the flesh; but setting out from real, active men, and on the basis of their real life-process demonstrating the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process. The phantoms formed in the human brain are also, necessarily, sublimates (images—*Editor*) of their material life-process, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premises. Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence. They have no history, no development; but men, developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter, along with their real existence, their thinking and the products of their thinking. Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life. In the first (i.e., non-materialist—*Editor*) method of approach the starting point is consciousness taken as the living individual; in the second (materialist—*Editor*) method, which conforms to real life, it is the real living individuals themselves, and consciousness is considered solely as **their** consciousness." (Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology*, Chapter 1)

A materialist therefore seeks an explanation not only for ideas, but for material phenomena themselves, in terms of material causes and not in terms of supernatural intervention by gods and the like. And that is a very important aspect of Marxism, which clearly sets it aside from the methods of thinking and logic which have become established in capitalist society.

The development of scientific thought in the European coun-

tries in the 17th and 18th centuries displayed some really contradictory characteristics, which still remain typical of the approach of bourgeois theoreticians today. On the one hand there was a development towards a materialist method. Scientists looked for causes. They didn't just accept natural phenomena as god-ordained miracles, they sought some explanation for them. But at the same time these scientists did not yet possess a consistent or worked-out materialist understanding; and very often, behind the explanations for natural phenomena, they also saw, at the end of the chain, the hand of God at work.

Such an approach means accepting, or at least leaving open the possibility, that the material world we live in is ultimately shaped by forces from outside it, and that consciousness or ideas come first, in the sense that they can exist independently of the real world. This approach, which is the philosophical opposite of materialism, we call "idealism".

According to this approach, the development of mankind and of society—of art, science, etc.—is dictated not by material processes but by the development of ideas, by the perfection or degeneration of human thought. And it is no accident that this general approach, whether spoken or unspoken, pervades all the philosophies of capitalism.

Bourgeois philosophers and historians in general take the present system for granted. They accept that capitalism is some kind of finished, complete system which is incapable of being replaced by a new and higher system. And they try to present all past history as the efforts of lesser mortals to achieve the kind of 'perfect' society which they believe capitalism has achieved or can achieve.

Jumble of ideas

So, when we look at the work of some of the greatest bourgeois scientists and thinkers in the past or even today, we can see how they have tended to jumble up materialist ideas and idealist ideas in their minds. For example Isaac Newton, who examined the laws of mechanics and the laws of motion of planets and planetary bodies, didn't believe that these processes were dictated by mind or thought. But what he did believe was that an original impetus was given to all matter, and that this initial push was provided by some sort of supernatural force, by God.

In the same way it is possible today for many biologists to accept the idea that species of plants and animals evolved from one type to another, and that mankind itself is a development from earlier species. And yet many of them cling to the notion that there is a qualitative difference between the human mind and the animal mind, consisting of the 'eternal soul' which leaves the human body after death. Even some of the most eminent scientists jumble up the materialist method with idealist ideas of this kind, which are really backward, scientifically speaking, and are more related to magic and superstition than

Abasebenzi kwinyunyoni ma bakhe bakhokele i-United Democratic Front

Ukuzalwa, nge-20 August, kwe-United Democratic Front kulinyathelo elibaluleke kakhulu, nenqubela kwintshukumo yabasebenzi ukusuka kwizitrayiki zase Thekwini.

Ezizitrayiki, kwishumi leminyaka edlulileyo, zibonakalise kuMzantsi Afrika uphela ukuba abasebenzi abantsundu baphinde kwakhona baphethela emva kwenkantsu zokoyiswa ekupheleni ko-1950s kuye ko-1960s.

Isithonga somgalelo siqale ezifektrini, apho abasebenzi bazive amandla abo ngokuthathana nentshaba zabo kanye, abanini zifektri. Oku kubangele ukwakhiwa kwezona zinamandla, eziphethwe ngumndilili iinyunyoni, ezakhe zabakho ezweni lethu. Oku kwenze kubekwe ilitye lesiseko samalinge, namhla, asingise ekwakheni umanyano lweenyunyoni.

Idabi lolutsha oluntsundu ukusuka ngo-1976, ukunkanisa ukubhatala irente, ukulwela amakhaya, ukwayo lwebhasi, ukulwa nemfudukiso—konke oku kuhlohlwe yinqubela yentshukumo yabasebenzi, kwenza futhi amaqela abanzi abasebenzi abenezibindi zokuzilungiselela ukulwa.

Namhla, ulangazelelo lomndilili kwi-UDF—umoya wokuzimisela ukulwa kwezithunywa enkomfeni, wababoneli nowomhlambi we-12 000 kule ntlanganiso—walatha inyathelo elitsha ekukhuleni kwentshukumo yabasebenzi.

Izigidi zabantu abantsundu abangabasebenzi kuMzantsi Afrika wonke bafuna ngolangazelelo ubunkokheli-politika ezweni, nombutho womanyano oza kuba khokela ekulweni oongxowankulu nombuso webala.

I-UDF inolutho olungaphezulu

kwi '400 yemibutho' ephantsi kwayo. Izigidi zabantu ziyarana ukuba i-UDF itshayelela ukavela kwe-ANC kwakhona ingumbutho womndilili eMzantsi Afrika. Kuko oku okwenza i-UDF ibonakalise ukwamkeleka ngokubanzi.

Inxaso ye-UDF ngabasebenzi yongamele kakhulu. Kodwa ubukhulu beenkokheli zayo ngoziswana.

Enkomfeni, isithunywa emva kwesithunywa sithethe ngentlupheko zabasebenzi abantsundu phantsi kumbuso wongxowankulu: imirolo yendlala; ukudura kwezinto; ukunqaba kwemisebenzi; intlalo-mpi nokuxinana ezindlwini, ezibhasini nako loliwe; ukunyuka kwerenti, nemali yebhasi nololiwe; ubujoyini, amapasi nemfudukiso ngenkani; ukubethwa nokudutyulwa ngurulument webala.

Ihlokondiba lomamkelo, lobudlelwana obukhulu enkomfeni, lunikezwe umfo othe: "Umntu nganye makacacelwe ukuba idabi lela basebenzi...Bonke abasebenzi ma bamanyane phantsi kwesidanga se-UDF, balwele ukuphelisa isimo soncukutho lomntu ngomnye umntu, bahke umbuso apho ubutyebi belizwe buya kuba sezandleni zabasebenzi."

Abasebenzi, ngokukhokela idabi lenkululeko yesizwe, bangathathela igunya lombuso ezandleni zabo, baphelise ingcinezelo ngebala, bohluthe ubutyebi belizwe kongxowankulu, bamise indalo-ndyebo ngendlela yesoshiyalizim ukuze baphelise indlela, baqhubele phambili uluntu lonke.

Le ndlela—ekuyiyo kuphela yenene ekubhukuqeni umbuso wongxowankulu—iyakwamkelwa ngokubanzi zizigidi zabantu abacinezelweyo kuwo wonke uM-

zantsi Afrika. Kodwa iinkokheli ze-UDF aziyalathanga lendlela ezintethweni zazo.

Ezinkokheli zithethe ngentsumantsumani 'kamasilingane' ngaphandle kokumisa igunya lombuso wabasebenzi; ngemfidimfidi yethemba lenguqulo ngaphandle kwemfuneko yokudiliza umbuso wongxowankulu.

Kambe i-UDF inganako ukuchophela lomsebenzi ukuba ingathi iququzelele ihlanganise umkhosi wabasebenzi ekulweni sonke esisimo—ingcinezelo ngebala nombuso wongxowankulu.

Abasebenzi abaninzi abakhaliphe geqe nabanamava kwinyunyoni bamele bucala kwi-UDF. Le yimpazamo. Izigidi zabasebenzi zijonge kwi-UDF. Ma bangashiywa bengenankokheli ezingabasebenzi kwelidabi lobupolitika, kulomzuzu obaluleke kangaka.

Ma bangayekelwa ezandleni zenkokheli zoziswana abanemidla engafaniyo neya basebenzi—abangafuni ncam intshukumo yodilizo umbuso eza kwenza ukubabasebenzi baphathe ilizwe.

Le ngxaki ma kuthethiswane ngayo kuzo zonke iinyunyoni. Eneneni, umsebenzi wabasebenzi aba kwinyunyoni kukwakha i-UDF phezu kwesiseko esomeleleyo, nje ngombutho wabasebenzi gqibi, one mibono ecacileyo yolawulo labasebenzi, yenkululeko yesizwe neye soshiyalizim.

Ilinge ngalinye kwezinjongo luya kulungiselela indlela yangomso ye-ANC yomndilili neye soshiyalizim, eza kubanako ukukhokela idabi lentshukumo yobhukuqo-mbuso wongxowankulu, lokwakha umbuso wabasebenzi.

to science.

Marxism therefore represents a systematic and fundamental break with idealism in all its forms, and the development in its place of a materialist understanding of what is taking place in reality. **Materialism** in this sense provides one of the basic starting points of Marxism. The other basic starting point is **dialectics**.

Dialectics is quite simply the logic of **motion**, or the logic of **processes**. To think of things as being in motion may seem like common sense to activists in the movement. We all know that things don't stand still, they change. But there is another form of logic which stands in contradiction to dialectics, which we call "formal logic", which again is deeply embedded in capitalist society. It is perhaps necessary to begin by describing briefly what this method implies.

Formal logic is based on what is known as the "law of identity", which says that 'A' equals 'A'—i.e., that things are what they are, and that they stand in definite relationships to each other. There are other derivative laws based on the law of identity; for example, if 'A' equals 'A', it follows that 'A' cannot equal 'B', nor 'C'.

On the face of it this method of thinking may again seem like common sense; and in fact it has been a very important tool, a very important device in the development of science and in the industrial revolution which created the present-day society. The development of mathematics and basic arithmetic, for example, was based on formal logic. You couldn't teach a child a table of multiplication or addition without using formal logic. One plus one equals two, and not three. And in the same way, the method of formal logic was also the basis for the development of *mechanics, of chemistry, of biology, etc.*

For example, in the 18th century the Scandinavian biologist Linnaeus developed a system of classification for all known plants and animals. Linnaeus divided all living things into classes, into orders, into families, into species. Mankind, for example, is in the class of mammals, in the order of primates, in the family of hominids, in the genus of *homo*, and represents the species *homo sapiens*.

Fixed and rigid system

This system of classification represented an enormous step forward in biology. It made possible, for the first time, a really systematic study of plants and animals, to compare and contrast animal and plant species. But it was based on formal logic. It was based on saying that *homo sapiens* equals *homo sapiens*; that *musca domestica* (the common housefly) equals *musca domestica*; that *an earthworm* equals *an earthworm*, and so on. It was, in other words, a **fixed and rigid system**. It wasn't possible, according to this system, for a species to be equal to anything else, otherwise the system of classification would have completely collapsed.

The same applies in the field of chemistry, where Dalton's atomic theory meant a huge stride forward. Dalton's theory was based on the idea that matter is made up of atoms, and that each type of atom is completely separate and peculiar to itself—that its shape and weight is peculiar to that particular element and to none other.

After Dalton there was a more or less rigid classification of elements, again based on a rigid formal logic, whereby it was said that an atom of hydrogen was an atom of hydrogen, an atom of carbon was an atom of carbon, etc. And if any atom could have been something else, this whole system of classification, which has formed the basis of modern chemistry, would have collapsed.

Now it is important to see that there are limitations to the

method of formal logic. It is a useful everyday method, and it gives us useful approximations for identifying things. For example, the Linnaean system of classification is still useful to biologists; but since the work of Charles Darwin in particular we can also see the weaknesses in that system.

Darwin pointed out, for instance, that in the Linnaean system some types of plants are given separate names, as separate species, but actually they are very similar to each other. And yet there are other plants with the same name, of the same species, which are said to be different varieties of the same plant, and yet they are very different from each other.

So even by the time of Charles Darwin it was possible to look at the Linnaean system of classification and say, "well, there's something wrong somewhere". And of course Darwin's own work provided a systematic basis for the theory of evolution, which for the first time said it is possible **for one species to be transformed into another species**.

Species changing

And that left a big hole in the Linnaean system. Before Darwin it was thought that the number of species on the planet was exactly the same as the number of species created by God in the first six days of his labour—except, of course, for those destroyed by the Flood—and that those species had survived unchanged over the millennia. But Darwin produced the idea of **species changing**, and so inevitably the method of classification also had to be changed.

What applies in the field of biology applies also in the field of chemistry. Chemists became aware, by the late 19th century, that it was possible for one atomic element to become transformed into another. In other words, atoms aren't completely separate and peculiar to themselves. We know now that many atoms, many chemical elements, are unstable. For example, uranium and other radio-active atoms will split in the course of time and produce completely different atoms with completely different chemical properties and different atomic weights.

So we can see that the method of formal logic was beginning to break down with the development of science itself. But it is the method of dialectics which draws the conclusions of these factual discoveries, and points out that **there are no absolute or fixed categories, either in nature or in society**.

Whereas the formal logician will say that 'A' = 'A', the dialectician will say that 'A' does not necessarily equal 'A'. Or to take a practical example that Trotsky uses in his writings (see *The ABC of Dialectics*, page 10 of this Supplement—*Editor*), one pound of sugar will not be precisely equal to another pound of sugar. It is a good enough approximation if you want to buy sugar in a shop, but if you look at it more carefully you will see that it's actually wrong.

If you weigh two pounds of sugar on an extremely accurate machine, you will always find that one is slightly heavier than the other. And apart from anything else, sugar—or anything else—can never stay the same from one moment to another. There are always some bacteria munching away at it, and there are always some molecules being affected by chemicals in the air, and being degenerated to produce carbon dioxide, water and so on. And there are always some grains of sugar falling off or being blown into the air.

So a pound of sugar never stays precisely the same even from one micro-second to another. And the same will apply to any other substance. The approximations of formal logic are good enough for some purposes; but when it comes to a more careful and accurate analysis, we will always find that no two things can be precisely identical to each other, and that everything is

Die georganiseerde werkers moet die United Democratic Front bou en lei



Die tot standkoming van die UDF op 20 Augustus was die belangrikste stap vorentoe in die werkersbeweging sedert die Durbanstakinge.

Daardie stakings, tien jaar gelede, het aan die hele Suid-Afrika getoon dat die swart werkende klas weer teruggekeer het na die stryd, na die verpletterende terugslae en nederlae van die laat 1950s en 1960s.

Daardie eerste beweging was op die industriële vlak, waar die werkers hul krag uitprobeer het teen hul onmiddellike vyand, die baas. Dit het gelei na die opbou van die sterkste onafhanklike, demokratiese vakbonde wat ons land nog ooit gesien het. Dit het die hoeksteen gelê vir die lewensbelangrike pogings vandag om die vakbonde te verenig.

Die opstand van die swart jeug sedert 1976, die stryd oor huur en huisvesting, die busboikots, die weerstand teen uitsettinge—dit alles is aangespoor deur die opkoms van die werkersbeweging, en het op hul beurt weer aan breër groepe werkers die selfvertroue gegee om te organiseer en te veg.

Vandag is die groot geesdrif vir die UDF—en die revolusionêre stemming onder die kongresafgevaardigdes, die besoekers en die skare van 12 000 by die vergadering daarna—'n teken van 'n nuwe stadium in die vooruitgang van die werkersbeweging.

Miljoene swart werkende mense oor die hele SA kyk gretig uit vir 'n nasionale politieke leiding en 'n organisasie om hulle dwarsdeur die land te verenig en te lei teen die heersende klas en die rasistiese regering.

Die UDF beteken baie meer as die '400 organisasies' wat daarby aangesluit is. Miljoene mense het die

gevoel dat die UDF 'n voorloper is van die ANC se herverskyning as 'n massa-organisasie binne SA self. Dit is wat die UDF sy geweldige potensiele steun gee.

Die UDF is oorweldigend 'n werkersbeweging, as jy kyk na die samestelling van sy ondersteuners. Maar dis oorweldigend onder middelklas leiding.

By die kongres het spreker na spreker vertel van die verdrukking van die swart werkende mense onder die kapitalistiese sisteem: lae lone en stygende pryse; werkloosheid; slegte en oorvolle huise, busse en treine; stygende huur en reiskoste; trekarbeid, passe en uitsettinge; arrestasies en aanvalle met knuppels en gewere deur die rasistiese staat.

Daar was onstuimige toejuiging, die meeste van die hele kongres, vir die vakbondspreker wat gesê het: "Elkeen van julle moet beseft dat die stryd by die werkende klas lê ... Alle werkers moet verenig onder die vlag van die UDF en werk vir 'n sisteem waar die uitbuiting van mens deur mens beëindig is, en waar die produksiemiddele in die hande van die werkende klas is."

Deur die stryd vir nasionale bevryding te lei, kan die werkende klas die staatsmag oorneem, rasseonderdrukking uit die weg ruim, die rykes ontien, en produksie op 'n sosialistiese manier organiseer om armoede te beëindig en die hele samelewing vorentoe te neem.

Hierdie program—die enigste realistiese benadering tot die revolusie—sou geweldige steun kry van miljoene onderdrukte mense dwarsdeur Suid-Afrika. Maar dit is

nie die program wat weerspieël word in die verklarings van die UDF-leiers nie.

By hulle is daar die abstrakte idee van 'demokrasie' sonder werkersmag; die vae hoop op 'n nuwe samelewing, sonder dat die noodsaaklikheid ingesien word om kapitalisme te beëindig.

Maar die UDF kan die take slegs aanpak as hy die volle krag van die werkende klas opwek en verenig in 'n stryd teen die hele sisteem—rasseoorheersing en kapitalistiese heerskappy.

Baie van die mees strydvaardige en ervare werkers wat aktief is in die vakbonde, staan buite die UDF. Dit is 'n fout. Miljoene werkers kyk na die UDF. Hulle moet nie gelaat word sonder werkersleiding in die politieke veld in hierdie beslissende tyd nie.

Hulle moet nie in die hande gelaat word van middel-klas politieke leiers, wie se doel nie dieselfde is as dié van die werkers nie; wat nie 'n grondige revolusie wil hê om die werkende mense in beheer van die samelewing te plaas nie.

Hierdie probleem behoort in al die vakbonde bespreek te word. Dis tog sekerlik die taak van die georganiseerde werkers om die UDF op stewige fundamente te bou, as 'n organisasie wat hoofsaaklik uit werkers bestaan, met 'n bewuste program vir werkersdemokrasie, nasionale bevryding en sosialisme.

Elke poging in hierdie rigting sou die weg help voorberei vir 'n massa sosialistiese ANC in die toekoms, wat in staat sal wees om die revolusionêre magstryd te lei.

subject to constant processes of change—in other words, that 'A' doesn't really equal 'A'.

So we need to have a form of understanding, a form of logic, that takes into account the fact that things, and life, and society, are in a state of constant motion and change. And that form of logic, of course, is dialectics.

But on the other hand it would be wrong to think that dialectics ascribes to the universe a process of even and gradual change. The laws of dialectics—and here is a word of warning: these concepts sound more intimidating than they really are—the laws of dialectics describe the manner in which the processes of change in reality take place.

Quantity into quality

Let us take, to begin with, the "law of the transformation of quantity into quality". This law states that the processes of change—the motion in the universe—are **not** gradual, they are **not** even. Periods of relatively gradual or slight change are interspersed with periods of enormously rapid change—change which cannot be measured in terms of quantity but only in terms of quality.

To use an example from natural science again, let us imagine the heating of water. You can actually measure ("quantify"), in terms of degrees of temperature, the change that takes place in the water as you add heat to it. From, let us say, 10 degrees Centigrade (which is normal tap temperature) to about 98 degrees Centigrade, the change will remain **quantitative**; i.e., the water will remain water, although it is getting warmer.

But then comes a point where the change in the water becomes **qualitative**, and the water turns into steam. You can no longer describe the change in the water as it is heated from 98 degrees to 102 degrees in purely quantitative terms. We have to say that a qualitative change (water into steam) has come about **as a result of an accumulation of quantitative change** (adding more and more heat).

And that is what Marx and Engels meant when they referred to the transformation of quantity into quality. The same can be seen in the development of species. There is always a great variety in every species. If we look around this room we can see the degree of variety in *homo sapiens*. That variety can be measured quantitatively, for example, in terms of height, weight, skin colour, length of nose, etc.

But if evolutionary changes progress to a certain point under the impact of environmental changes, then those quantitative changes can add up to a qualitative change. In other words, you would no longer characterise that change in the animal or plant species merely in terms of quantitative details. The species will have become qualitatively different.

For example, we as a species are qualitatively different from chimpanzees or gorillas, and they in turn are qualitatively different from other species of mammals. And those qualitative differences, those evolutionary leaps, have come about as a result of quantitative changes in the past.

The idea of Marxism is that there will always be periods of gradual change interspersed with periods of sudden change. In pregnancy, there is a period of gradual development, and then a period of very sudden development at the end. The same applies to social development. Very often Marxists have used the analogy of pregnancy to describe the development of wars and revolutions. These represent qualitative leaps in social development; but they come about as a result of the accumulation of quantitative contradictions in society.

A second law of dialectics is "the law of the negation of the negation", and again it sounds more complicated than it really is. "Negation" in this sense simply means the passing away of one thing, the death of one thing as it becomes transformed

into another.

For example, the development of class society in the early history of humanity represented the negation of the previous classless society. And in future, with the development of communism, we will see another classless society, that would mean the negation of all present class society.

So the law of the negation of the negation simply states that as one system comes into existence, it forces another system to pass away. But that doesn't mean that the second system is permanent or unchangeable. That second system itself becomes negated as a result of the further developments and processes of change in society. As class society has been the negation of classless society, so communist society will be the negation of class society—the negation of the negation.

Another concept of dialectics is the law of the "interpenetration of opposites". This law quite simply states that **processes of change take place because of contradictions**—because of the conflicts between the different elements that are embodied in all natural and social processes.

Probably the best example of the interpenetration of opposites in natural science is the "quantum theory". This theory is based on the concept of energy having a dual character—that for some purposes, according to some experiments, energy exists in the form of **waves**, like electromagnetic energy. But for other purposes energy manifests itself as **particles**. In other words, it is quite accepted among scientists that matter and energy can actually exist in two different forms at one and the same time—on the one hand as a kind of intangible wave, on the other hand as a particle with a definite "quantum" (amount) of energy embodied in it.

Therefore the basis of the quantum theory in modern physics is contradiction. But there are many other contradictions known to science. Electromagnetic energy, for example, is set in motion through the effect of positive and negative forces on each other. Magnetism depends on the existence of a north pole and a south pole. These things cannot exist separately. They exist and operate precisely because of the contradictory forces being embodied in one and the same system.

Contradictions in society

Similarly, every society today consists of different contradictory elements joined together in one system, which makes it impossible for any society, any country, to remain stable or unchanged. The dialectical method, in contrast to the method of formal logic, trains us to identify these contradictions, and thereby get to the bottom of the changes taking place.

The formalist who looks at social processes, on the other hand, will often see only one aspect of it. The formalist might look at the Soviet Union, for example, and see that Brezhnev has just as many cars as Ronald Reagan; that the generals in charge of the Red Army have a standard of living at least as high as the generals in charge of the US army; or that ordinary workers in the USSR have no more rights than ordinary workers in the USA. And therefore, the formalist might conclude, the USSR is a capitalist country.

On the other hand, a member of the Communist Party might answer: "But if you look at the Constitution of the USSR, you'll see it says that comrade Brezhnev should get no more than two-and-a-half times the average wage of a skilled worker. Workers have got the right to strike; any worker has the right to demand a special conference of his workmates to deselect trade union representatives or even a works manager, if they get sufficient support in the factory."

It is true that the Constitution of the USSR says all of these things, and a member of the CP could argue that, therefore,

UDF Conference: Workers demand struggle for jobs, homes and freedom



Many workers could not get into the packed hall to attend the rally which concluded the launching conference.

Press coverage of the launching of the United Democratic Front at Mitchell's Plain on 20 August has concentrated on the declaration of principles adopted and the main platform speeches. Little was conveyed, however, of the real life of the conference proceedings or the issues that were discussed.

This special report focuses on the topics and demands raised by delegates during the conference discussion.

The UDF conference during the day was attended by some 2 500 delegates and observers. It was opened by Rev. F. Chikane, who described the origins of the UDF. He mentioned previous occasions when people in SA had come together to discuss the way forward, such as the Kliptown Congress of the People which adopted the Freedom Charter.

**By
Inqaba
correspondents**

Following this, the chairman called for discussion, particularly on the

issues of forced removals, the housing crisis, the cost of living, the condition of workers, the Ciskei and the Bantustans, the constitutional proposals, and the Koornhof Bills.

A delegate from Natal raised the Group Areas Act, a foundation on which apartheid was built. The constitutional proposals gave this a new dimension. The formation of the UDF was a sign that enough was enough and that "we will not take it any more."

A delegate from Huhudi spoke on forced removals. "We are here believing that this conference is a continuation of Kliptown 1955. On this basis we give our support," he said.

In his area, the Administration Board claimed they had a R6 000 shortfall and could not carry out

Russian workers have more rights than American workers.

But this argument, and the argument that Russia is capitalist, are both wrong. Both are looking at the situation in a purely formal way, though from different points of view.

A Marxist would start by recognising that there are contradictory processes at work in the USSR. There is, on the one hand, the development of science and technique on the basis of a planned, state-owned economy, which is an enormously progressive thing. And because the origins of the USSR were steeped in Marxism, in the time of Lenin and Trotsky, the Russian constitution still has to pay lip service to the rights of workers.

But there is also a contradictory aspect which we have to take into account, and that is that the democratic rights of Russian workers have been taken away from them ever since the rise of the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy in the 1920s. In political terms, Russian workers now have fewer rights than American workers.

The conclusion that Marxism would draw from these contradictory aspects, however, is not to denounce Russia as 'capitalist'. It is to recognise that these particular contradictions can only be resolved through the overthrow of the parasitical bureaucracy by the Russian working class, and the re-establishment of workers' democracy on the basis of the planned economy.

I have elaborated this example to show that Marxists are not embarrassed to say that there are contradictory elements within every social process. On the contrary, it is precisely by recognising and understanding the opposite interests embodied within the same process that we are able to work out the likely direction of change, and consequently to identify the aims and objectives which it is necessary and possible in that situation to strive for from the working-class point of view.

At the same time, Marxism doesn't abandon formal logic altogether. But it is important to see, from the point of view of understanding social developments, that formal logic must take a secondary position.

We all use formal logic for everyday purposes. It gives us the necessary approximations for communication and conducting our daily activities. We wouldn't be able to lead normal lives without paying lip service to formal logic, without using the approximation that one equals one.

But, on the other hand, we have to see the limitations of formal logic—the limitations that become evident in science when we study processes in more depth and detail, and also when we examine social and political processes more closely.

Dialectics is very rarely accepted by scientists. Some scientists are dialecticians, but the majority even today muddle up a materialist approach with all sorts of formal and idealistic ideas.

Social sciences

And if that's the case in natural science, it is much, much more the case as far as the social sciences are concerned. The reasons for this are fairly obvious. If you try to examine society and social processes from a scientific point of view, then you cannot avoid coming up against the contradictions of the capitalist system and the need for the socialist transformation of society.

But the universities, which are supposed to be centres of learning and study, are under capitalism far from being independent of the ruling class and the state. That is why natural science can still have a scientific method which leans towards dialectical materialism; but when it comes to the social sciences you will find in the colleges and universities some of the worst kinds

of formalism and idealism possible.

That is not unrelated to the vested interests of the professors and academics who are paid something like £15 000 per year. It is obvious and unavoidable that their privileged position in society will have some reflection, some effect on what they're supposed to be teaching. Their own views and prejudices will be contained in the 'knowledge' which they pass on to their students, and so on down to the level of the schools.

Bourgeois historians, in particular, are among the most short-sighted of all social scientists. How many times have we seen examples of bourgeois historians who imagine that history ended yesterday! Here in Britain they all seem to admit the horrors of British imperialism as far as the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries are concerned; that British imperialism engaged in slave traffic; that it was responsible for some of the most bloody subjugation of colonial peoples; that it was also responsible for some of the worst exploitation of British workers, including women and children, in the coal mines, the cotton mills, and so on.

They will accept all these iniquities—up until yesterday. But when it comes to today, of course, then British imperialism suddenly becomes democratic and progressive.

Lopsided view

And that is a completely one-sided, a completely lopsided view of history, which is diametrically opposed to the method of Marxism. The attitude of Marx and Engels was to view social processes from the same dialectical standpoint from which they viewed nature—from the standpoint of the processes that are actually taking place.

In our everyday discussions and debates in the labour movement, we will often come across people who are formalists. Even many on the left will look at things in a completely rigid and formal way, without understanding the direction in which things are moving.

For example, if we take the attacks upon *Militant* at the present time, then we see that the right wing are rubbing their hands in glee in the expectation that Marxism will be expunged from the Labour Party once and for all. One swift surgical operation, they believe, will remove this 'horrible cancer' from the body of the Party.

But that is a completely formal view of expulsions, a completely unreal understanding of what Marxism in the Labour Party actually represents—a current of thinking, with deep roots among the activists, that cannot simply be expelled.

However, not only the right wing but some of those on the left as well are viewing the attacks on *Militant* in a mechanical and formal way, although from a different standpoint. They say: "Oh, it's terrible—all the Marxists are going to be thrown out of the Labour Party. What are we going to do now? We're all going to be thrown out of the Party."

A Marxist, on the other hand, would take into account the contradictory aspects of the process taking place in order to understand which way it is going. We have to look at the whole history of Marxism in the Labour Party. We have to understand this witch-hunt in the context in which it is actually taking place, and see it for what it really represents.

On the one hand the witchhunt against *Militant* supporters is obviously a setback that will do damage to the whole labour movement and it may even, in the short term, damage the development of Marxism itself. But there is also another aspect to it. The very fact that the right wing of the Labour Party have at this stage decided to launch this attack upon *Militant* is an indication not of their strength and confidence, but of their weakness, their despair, as a result of the fact that the general

Interview with an unemployed worker from Crossroads

When last did you work?

My last work stopped in August 1981. I was working with a construction company building a railway line. I was getting R32 a week. I've been searching for a job since then.

I borrow money to go and look for work. No work. I come back to these shelters. I have six children, they want food. The man wants his money back and I have no money to pay him. It's terrible, man, these whites are killing us.

What did you think of the meeting in Mitchell's Plain?

Yes, the UDF is a very good thing.

What will the UDF do?

The UDF is fighting for freedom, not 'independence' like Transkei and Ciskei.

How will the UDF bring us freedom?

They say Mandela will come out, but I don't know how.

These whites are very powerful. Last week they came here with guns and dogs and teargas, and broke all the shelters. I was watching, and they said "show your pass". I said, "It's there at my place." They said, "Kom." I had to pay R10.

I've been in prison five times since 1960 for passes. Now it's R80. How can I get R80? That's more than two weeks' wages for my brother, and how can he feed his family for those two weeks?

How will the UDF fight this?

I don't know, but they will. **If all the workers were together, we could defeat the government. Do you think that's possible?**

They give the jobs in Cape Town to the coloureds. Now they are going to send all blacks from Nyanga, Langa and Guguletu to Khayelitsha and give the houses to coloureds. They are dividing us. If we all stand together, then the wind cannot blow through.

"We don't need them, we can speak for ourselves."

A delegate from Port Elizabeth argued that the housing shortage was greater than in any other country in Africa.

"The matchboxes we live in are now being sold off at high prices. Some were built in 1948 and earlier. They can't maintain them, and black people have no money to buy them."

In Port Elizabeth, he continued, the community councils were taking over the houses from the Department of Community Development, and immediately there were rent increases. But the rents were not matched by the quality of the housing.

"We didn't move here silently", said the next speaker, from Mitchell's Plain. "We are further from our work, and transport costs are going up. The rent is too high and there are two or three families in a house to help pay the rent. There is only one clinic for every 20 000 people."

Now, she added, we have the UDF: "Forward to the struggle, united and strong."

A Natal delegate stated that the housing question was linked to land. "I can own land but Africans can't." The UDF must demand that land ownership be open to all Africans and all the people of SA, he said.

The next speaker explained how the government's new housing policy was part of the constitutional proposals. By selling off 500 000 homes they hoped to create an African middle class to bring about division within the community.

Big business and the banks, who

housing repairs. But at the same time they were spending R1,5 million on Pudomong, the place to which they were to be removed. He asked delegates to focus attention on these removals.

A Western Cape delegate said that he was "happy to see today that through the UDF we are united and brought closer." He referred to the so-called "new home" which the government was creating for Africans in the Western Cape at Khayelitsha.

"We don't need a new home: we have one here in the Western Cape. Khayelitsha is a threat and we won't accept it." But with the UDF to help, "we shall overcome."

Another speaker from the Western Cape said that not only the government must be held responsible for the removals:

"We stood and watched what happened in District 6. We coloured and Indians must be ready to stop removals of our black brothers from Langa and Guguletu, even if it means going to jail."

The next speaker said that if we understood that forced removals were the denial to 72% of the people

of their rights, then we understood it all.

Speaking in Afrikaans, a delegate from a housing action committee pointed out that the government is absurdly demanding "economic" (i.e. market-level—*Editor*) rents on "sub-economic" housing. The "Coloured Management Committees", he said, were making matters worse.

Delegates at the UDF conference.



move to the left among the ranks of the Party is removing the ground from beneath their feet.

And we would draw enormous inspiration and confidence from that. We would say that despite the fact that blows might be struck against the Labour Party and against Marxism in the short term, there is no doubt whatever—given the whole history of the Labour Party, given the way the Party is moving at the present time, given the crisis of capitalism in which the working class finds itself—that in the medium and long term Marxism will actually be strengthened by the witchhunts taking place now.

So we would disagree with the formalists, who view the developments in a two-dimensional way, who cannot see beneath the surface and don't understand the nature and significance of the processes that are taking place. Marxists have to use formal logic to an extent; we have to deal with certain categories and facts—the very term “Marxists” is an application of formal logic, because we are talking of Marxists as a given category of activists.

But the essence of Marxism, and of dialectics, is to **understand the limitations of all these categories**. It would be completely wrong to use any category in a blind and rigid way, without understanding the particular context and the particular conditions under which we use it.

Falklands war

For example, at the time of the Falklands war there was a dispute over a remark by Trotsky in 1938, when he referred to the theoretical possibility of a war between Britain and Brazil. In such a case, he said, Marxists should support Brazil.

Now of course the ultra-lefts who supported the Argentinian junta in the war have tried to use this remark as a stick for beating *Militant* supporters, because *Militant* refused to support either the Argentinian junta or the British Tory government. But in fact the use of that quotation was a perfect example of the use of formal logic without understanding its limits. The quotation was taken out of the context in which Trotsky used it in 1938, and applied to a completely different context in 1982, without taking into account the completely different circumstances of the Falklands war.

The Falklands war was started, not by an attack by an imperialist state on a colonial country, but by a desperate military adventure by the dictatorship ruling Argentina. The junta was attempting to divert the developing revolutionary movement of the working class by invading the Falkland Islands, which had been occupied by Britain in the early 19th century.

Inevitably the Thatcher government reacted and drove the Argentinian forces out again. Formally, it was therefore a conflict between an old and decaying imperialist power, and a less developed, ex-colonial capitalist state. It is also true that the Argentinian masses were partially diverted from their struggle

against the regime, and for a period supported the war.

But these resemblances with the type of situation Trotsky was talking about are purely superficial. In fact, the move by the Argentinian junta had imperialist undertones as well, since it also represented an effort to secure new sources of raw materials and wealth for the Argentinian capitalist class.

It would therefore be completely false to compare this war in any sense with the struggle by a colonial people to protect or liberate their territory from imperialist occupation.

So while we have to speak in terms of the categories provided by formal logic, we also have to understand how these categories apply in the particular circumstances which we are faced with.

The right wing in the Labour movement, and also some on the left, believe that Marxist theory is a dogma, that ‘theory’ is like a 600 lb weight on the back of an activist, and the quicker you get rid of that weight, the more active and effective you can be.

But that is a complete misconception of the whole nature of Marxist theory. In point of fact Marxism is the **opposite** of a dogma, of the rigid and unreal concepts of idealism and formalism. It is precisely a method for coming to grips with the processes of change that are taking place around us.

Nothing is fixed and nothing remains unchanged. It is the formalists who see society as a still photograph, who can get overawed by the situations they are faced with because they don't see how and why things will change. It is this kind of approach that can easily lead to a dogmatic acceptance of things as they are or as they have been, without understanding the inevitability of change.

Marxist theory is therefore an absolutely essential device for any activity within the labour movement. We need to be consciously attuned to the contradictory forces at work in the class struggle, in order to orient ourselves to the way in which events are developing.

Of course it isn't always easy to free ourselves from the prevailing framework of thinking in capitalist society and absorb the Marxist method. As Karl Marx said, there is no royal road to science. You have to tread the hard path sometimes in grappling with new political ideas.

But the discussion and study of Marxist theory is an absolutely essential part of the development of every activist. It is that theory alone that will provide comrades with a compass and a map amidst all the complexities of the struggle. It is all very well to be an activist. But without a conscious understanding of the processes you are involved in, you are no more effective than an explorer without a compass and a map.

And if you try to explore without scientific aids, you can be as energetic as you like but sooner or later you will fall into a ravine or a bog and disappear, as so many activists over the years have unfortunately done.

The idea of having a compass and a map is that you can take your bearings. You can take into account the changes in the landscape, you can judge where you are at any particular time, where you are going and where you will be. And that is the fundamental reason why we need to get to grips with Marxist theory. It provides us with an absolutely invaluable guide to action as far as our activities in the labour movement are concerned.

supported apartheid, had lots of money from the boom years and *wanted to put it into housing to make more money.* Now the government was taking responsibility for housing only those on R150 per month or less.

Those who could not afford serviced sites, he continued, get nothing, so that they have to become sub-tenants, which leads to overcrowding. If you get a serviced site but have a low income, you will have to build *substandard housing*, in other words, a dehumanising slum.

The government hoped, he concluded, that a home- and land-owning middle class will defuse militancy in the townships.

A delegate from the Transvaal described how wages were rising more slowly than prices. "The big monopolies", she said, "always gain by inflation." *Old age pensioners*

Interview with a shopfloor worker

What did you think of the meeting?

It was great. Things are going to change.

We live in Guguletu and work at Coca-Cola. They are very clever there. They pick the workers, and take older workers from the Ciskei. If they see that you are militant, then they will kick you out.

I am only getting R55 a week. I've come from the Ciskei. It's terrible, there's nothing there. The Sebes are bastards. I hope the UDF grows and grows.

were battling to survive, on payments of R88 every second month for Africans, R88 a month for coloureds and Indians, and R156 a month for whites. "But everyone pays the same for bread," she said.

"Members of Parliament have just given themselves a pay rise of R600 a month—more than most of us earn." The President's Council members got R3 100 a month, while children were grovelling for bread and their parents suffering from alcoholism.

The government, she said, labels protest as "communism", but in reality it was the conditions threatening our children that were creating militancy. "I thank God for the UDF. The UDF Executive must stand up and demand that pensions be equalised."

The next speaker stated that the cost of living resulted from the irresponsibility of the government. "Money should be made for men and not men for money." The wage that a person gets does not take into account clothing, education, and all other needs: it is an unjust wage.

Inflation was continuing while millions were spent on "defence", and on propaganda (as Muldergate had shown). People needed rents they could afford.

An ounce of gold presently sold for R405. "What did a black miner get out of this?" he asked. The UDF must fight this issue and implement a programme to protest the cost of living in SA.

"We must address ourselves to the wealthy," he believed. "The flow of profits must benefit those who are poor. Those of us blessed with wealth

often pay poorly and should pay a good wage."

A veteran Natal trade unionist pointed out that "anyone looking at the history of working-class involvement in the struggle in this country will know that the working class participated for one thing only: decent wages and decent living conditions for themselves and their families".

He first became involved in the trade union movement in the 1930s. Despite the difficulties then, and being forced into illegal struggle, workers fought to organise and win better conditions right up to 1955, when SACTU was founded. Then the unions went forward under the SACTU banner, until bannings and killings forced a reassessment.

"Everyone here, every one of you must realise the struggle lies with the working class." The Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions were trying to create further divisions.

"If we don't unite now we will lose all our rights. Nothing will fall from heaven." The regime would try to destroy the trade unions.

Interview with unemployed worker, aged 26

When did your work stop?

In April. I was with a shelving company getting R59 a week. Before that I was for two months in a food store at R49,50 a week. Then they came and said, "This job is for the coloured chaps".

Now I have no pass. They came at night and broke our shelters. My pass was lost.

I have no money, my three children are hungry, and I can't get any work.

Did you go to the UDF meeting?

Many of us went. They say it will stop us going to Khayelitsha.

How will it do that?

I don't know.

Do you think the UDF will bring freedom?

Yes. It might take time, but I believe it.

When you say freedom, what does it mean to you?

It means a job and no pass, and a house for my wife and children.



From: A Petty-Bourgeois Opposition in the Socialist Workers' Party

By Leon Trotsky

It is necessary to call things by their right names. Now that the positions of both factions in the struggle have become determined with complete clearness, it must be said that the minority of the National Committee is leading a typical petty-bourgeois tendency. Like any petty-bourgeois group inside the socialist movement, the present opposition is characterised by the following features: a disdainful attitude towards theory and an inclination towards eclecticism; disrespect for the tradition of their own organisation; anxiety for personal 'independence' at the expense of anxiety for objective truth; nervousness instead of consistency; readiness to jump from one position to another; lack of understanding of revolutionary centralism and hostility towards it; and finally, inclination to substitute clique ties and personal relationships for party discipline.

Not all the members of the opposition of course manifest these features with identical strength. Nevertheless, as always in a variegated bloc the tinge is given by those who are most distant from Marxism and proletarian policy.

A prolonged and serious struggle is obviously before us. I make no attempt to exhaust the problem in this article, but I will endeavour to outline its general features.

Theoretical scepticism and eclecticism

In the January 1939 issue of the *New International* (theoretical journal of the SWP—*Editor*) a long article was published by comrades Burnham and Shachtman, "Intellectuals in Retreat". The article, while containing many correct ideas and apt political characterisations, was marred by a fundamental defect if not flaw. While polemicising against opponents who consider themselves—without sufficient reason—above all as proponents of 'theory', the article deliberately did not elevate the problem to a theoretical height.

It was absolutely necessary to explain why the American 'radical' intellectuals accept Marxism without the dialectic (a clock without a spring). The secret is simple. In no other country has there been such rejection of the class struggle as in the land of 'unlimited opportunity'. The denial of social contradictions as the moving force of development led to the denial of the dialectic as the logic of contradictions in the domain of theoretical thought. Just as in the sphere of politics it was thought possible (that) everybody could be convinced of the correctness of a 'just' programme, so in the sphere of theory it was accepted as proved that Aristotelian logic, lowered to the level of 'common sense', was sufficient for the solution of all questions.

Pragmatism, a mixture of rationalism and empiricism,

became the national philosophy of the United States. The theoretical methodology of Max Eastman is not fundamentally different from the methodology of Henry Ford—both regard living society from the point of view of an 'engineer' (Eastman—platonically).

Historically, the present disdainful attitude towards the dialectic is explained simply by the fact that the grandfathers and great-grandmothers of Max Eastman and others did not need the dialectic in order to conquer territory and enrich themselves. But times have changed and the philosophy of pragmatism has entered a period of bankruptcy just as has American capitalism.

The authors of the article did not show, could not and did not care to show, this internal connection between philosophy and the material development of society, and they frankly explained why.

"The two authors of the present article", they wrote of themselves, "differ thoroughly on their estimate of the general theory of dialectical materialism, one of them accepting it and the other rejecting it There is nothing anomalous in such a situation. Though theory is doubtless always in one way or another related to practice, the relation is not invariably direct or immediate; and as we have before had occasion to remark, human beings often act inconsistently. From the point of view of each of the authors there is in the other a certain such inconsistency between 'philosophical theory' and political practice, which might on some occasion lead to decisive concrete political disagreement. But it does not now, nor has anyone yet demonstrated that agreement or disagreement on the more abstract doctrines of dialectical materialism necessarily affects today's and tomorrow's concrete political issues—and political parties, programmes and struggles are based on such concrete issues. We may all hope that as we go along or when there is more leisure, agreement may also be reached on the more abstract questions. Meanwhile there is fascism and war and unemployment."

What is the meaning of this thoroughly astonishing reasoning? Inasmuch as *some* people through a bad method *sometimes* reach correct conclusions, and inasmuch as *some* people through a correct method *not infrequently* reach incorrect conclusions, therefore the method is not of great importance. We shall meditate upon methods sometime when we have more leisure, but now we have other things to do.

Imagine how a worker would react upon complaining to his foreman that his tools were bad, and receiving the reply: With bad tools it is possible to turn out a good job, and with good tools many people only waste material. I am afraid that such a worker, particularly if he is on piece-work, would respond to the foreman with an unacademic phrase. A worker is faced with refractory materials which show resistance and which, because of that, compel him to appreciate fine tools, whereas a petty-bourgeois intellectual—alas!—utilises as his 'tools' fugitive observations and superficial generalisations—until major events club him on the head.

To demand that every party member occupy himself with the



Delegates arriving from Mdantsane.

"The revolution is beginning now", he concluded, "under the banner of the UDF. The working class—mine workers, white collar workers, and all workers—must unite under the UDF banner and work for a system where exploitation of man by man is ended and where the means of production will be in the hands of the working class."

This rousing speech received the warmest reception of any at the conference. It was greeted by a prolonged standing ovation, and five minutes mass singing of Hlanganani Basebenzi.

It was followed by a speech in Xhosa from a woman delegate who

Interview with a trade union delegate

How can the UDF help the workers' movement?

Did you hear that speech by the old man with the beard from Natal? The UDF can change things for the workers. If we are in trouble in one factory, then the UDF can get help for the workers from another area. I feel very happy that things will change.

stressed how rising costs of living were an attack on "us as women".

It is difficult to feed our children, who get diseases from lack of food. Instead of providing subsidies, the government was "disturbing people who had no place to stay, oppressing people who are already oppressed. This is a merciless government, that doesn't care for our demands, but wants to choke us in Khayelitsha".

"We have no money for fares, no places to stay, we are appealing to the UDF."

Amid singing, resolutions were passed on removals, housing and the cost of living. Among these was one stating:

"Workers are the producers of wealth in SA; workers have no job security with rising unemployment and the threat of retrenchment; workers are being subjected to increasing intimidation and harassment and being jailed in their attempts to build genuine and democratic trade unions; the President's Council proposals and Koornhof's Bills are aimed at destroying unity"; and, in the belief that "workers should fully share in the wealth they produce", it resolved "to work for a South Africa where oppression and exploitation of workers was ended, to encourage democratic trade unions", and to

A trade union organiser:

That was a great speech by the trade unionist from Natal. It brought everybody to their feet. I think they should have discussed the aims and put workers' demands into the aims. But this will come.

"encourage links between democratic trade unions and all patriotic and freedom loving people struggling against the regime".

At the insistence of a delegation from the Eastern Cape this resolution from the resolutions committee was amended to also "oppose the migrant labour system and fight influx control".

Another resolution opposed the rises in the cost of living, and the placing of the burden of inflation on the working people and oppressed.

Unfortunately, in the course of the redrafting of this resolution, a critical passage in it was left out, namely that "only when we have control over the riches of the country will we be able to guarantee cheap and nutritional food".

Discussion of the founding declaration and working principles of

philosophy of dialectics naturally would be lifeless pedantry. But a worker who has gone through the school of the class struggle gains from his own experience an inclination towards dialectical thinking. Even if unaware of this term, he readily accepts the method itself and its conclusions.

With a petty bourgeois it is worse. There are of course petty-bourgeois elements organically linked with the workers, who go over to the proletarian point of view without an internal revolution. But these constitute an insignificant minority.

The matter is quite different with the academically trained petty bourgeoisie. Their theoretical prejudices have already been given finished form at the school bench. Inasmuch as they succeeded in gaining a great deal of knowledge, both useful and useless, without the aid of the dialectic, they believe that they can continue excellently through life without it.

In reality they dispense with the dialectic only to the extent that they fail to check, to polish and to sharpen theoretically their tools of thought, and to the extent that they fail to break practically from the narrow circle of their daily relationships. When thrown against great events, they are easily lost and relapse again into petty-bourgeois ways of thinking.

Appealing to "inconsistency" as a justification for an unprincipled theoretical bloc, signifies giving oneself bad credentials as a Marxist. Inconsistency is not accidental, and in politics it does not appear solely as an individual symptom. Inconsistency usually serves a social function. There are social groupings which cannot be consistent. Petty-bourgeois elements who have not rid themselves of hoary petty-bourgeois tendencies are systematically compelled within a workers' party to make theoretical compromises with their own conscience.

Comrade Shachtman's attitude towards the dialectical method, as manifested in the above-quoted argumentation, cannot be called anything but eclectic scepticism. It is clear that Shachtman became infected with this attitude not in the school of Marx, but among the petty-bourgeois intellectuals to whom all forms of scepticism are proper.

Warning and verification

The article astonished me to such an extent that I immediately wrote to comrade Shachtman: "I have just read the article you and Burnham wrote on the intellectuals. Many parts are excellent. However, the section on the dialectic is the greatest blow that you, personally, as the editor of the *New International*, could have delivered to Marxist theory. Comrade Burnham says: 'I don't recognise the dialectic'. It is clear and everybody has to acknowledge it. But you say: 'I recognise the dialectic, but no matter; it does not have the slightest importance'. Re-read what you wrote. This section is terribly misleading for readers of the *New International* and the best of gifts to the Eastmans of all kinds. Good! We will speak about it publicly."

My letter was written on January 20, some months before the present discussion. Shachtman did not reply until March 5, when he answered to the effect that he couldn't understand why I was making such a stir about the matter. On March 9, I answered Shachtman in the following words: "I did not reject in the slightest degree the possibility of collaboration with the anti-dialecticians, but only the advisability of writing an article together where the question of the dialectic plays, or should play, a very important role. The polemic develops on two planes: political and theoretical. Your political criticism is OK. Your theoretical criticism is insufficient: it stops at the point at which it should just become aggressive. Namely, the task consists of

showing that their mistakes (insofar as they are *theoretical* mistakes) are products of their incapacity and unwillingness to think the things through dialectically. This task could be accomplished with a very serious pedagogical success. Instead of this, you declare that dialectics is a private matter and that one can be a very good fellow without dialectical thinking."

By allying himself in *this* question with the anti-dialectician Burnham, Shachtman deprived himself of the possibility of showing why Eastman, Hook and many others began with a philosophical struggle against the dialectic but finished with a political struggle against the socialist revolution.

The present political discussion in the party has confirmed my apprehensions and warning in an incomparably sharper form than I could have expected or, more correctly, feared.

Shachtman's methodological scepticism bore its deplorable fruits in the question of the nature of the Soviet state. Burnham began some time ago by constructing purely empirically, on the basis of his immediate impressions, a non-proletarian and non-bourgeois state, liquidating in passing the Marxist theory of the state as the organ of class rule. Shachtman unexpectedly took an evasive position: 'The question, you see, is subject to further consideration'; moreover, the sociological definition of the USSR does not possess any direct or immediate significance for our 'political tasks', in which Shachtman agrees completely with Burnham.

Let the reader again refer to what these comrades wrote concerning the dialectic. Burnham rejects the dialectic. Shachtman seems to accept, but the divine gift of "inconsistency" permits them to meet on common political conclusions.

The attitude of each of them towards the nature of the Soviet state reproduces point for point their attitude towards the dialectic.

In both cases Burnham takes the leading role. This is not surprising: he *possesses* a method, pragmatism. Shachtman has no method. He adapts himself to Burnham. Without assuming complete responsibility for the anti-Marxian conceptions of Burnham, he defends his bloc of aggression against the Marxian conceptions with Burnham in the sphere of philosophy as well as in the sphere of sociology. In both cases Burnham appears as a pragmatist and Shachtman as an eclectic.

This example has the invaluable advantage that the complete parallelism between Burnham's and Shachtman's positions upon two different planes of thought, and upon two questions of primary importance, will strike the eyes even of comrades who have had no experience in purely theoretical thinking. The method of thought can be dialectic or vulgar, conscious or unconscious, but it exists and makes itself known.

Last January we heard from our authors: 'But it does not now, nor has anyone yet demonstrated that agreement or disagreement on the more abstract doctrines of dialectical materialism necessarily affects today's and tomorrow's concrete political issues...'

Nor has anyone yet demonstrated! Not more than a few months passed before Burnham and Shachtman themselves demonstrated that their attitude toward such an 'abstraction' as dialectical materialism found its precise manifestation in their attitude toward the Soviet state.

To be sure it is necessary to mention that the difference between the two instances is rather important, but it is of a political and not a theoretical character. In both cases Burnham and Shachtman formed a bloc on the basis of rejection and semi-rejection of the dialectic. But in the first instance that bloc was directed against the opponents of the proletarian party. In the second instance the bloc was concluded against the Marxist wing of their own party. The front of military operations, so to speak, has changed but the weapon remains the same.

True enough, people are often inconsistent. Human consciousness nevertheless tends toward a certain homogeneity. Philosophy and logic are compelled to rely upon this homogeneity of human consciousness and not upon what this homogeneity

the UDF followed. In his opening remarks the chairman pointed out how the regime's attempts to sabotage the meeting by preventing delegates from attending had failed. Buses were still arriving!

At this point a delegate, straight from the bus boycott in East London, intervened. Saying that they were not from "Ciskei" but from the "border region", he explained how in order to come they had had to "escape from the prison Ciskei".

"Gqweta (SAAWU leader—*Editor*) is in hiding ... parents are being shot and killed at stations all over Mdantsane. Students see their parents leave for work and are called to identify them at the morgue. They are walking out of school because of this."

This struggle was, he concluded, "the struggle of all the assembled democrats here".

Amendments submitted to the declaration of aims were ruled out of order on technical grounds, and, to the dissatisfaction of many delegates, discussion of this was curtailed.

One of these amendments called for extending the aims of the UDF from the specific issues of the constitutional proposals and the Koornhof Bills to commit the UDF to "fight for democratic rights in SA until full democratic rights have been achieved".

But a representative of the drafting committee opposed this, giving as the reason that "the objectives must be in keeping with our capabilities and what we were set up to do".

Questions were also raised about what was meant in the declaration of principles by including commercial groups among those whom the UDF would seek to mobilise under its umbrella.

The platform explained that this

A Johannesburg shop steward:

That was a great contribution (by the trade unionist from Natal). But it is not reflected in the resolutions or aims.

Why do you think that is?

One of the reasons is that the leadership is not workers. They are talking about 'the worker' and 'the position of the worker in our society'. But even though they are sympathetic, and say that the UDF must be dominated by the working class, it is as if it's because they feel guilty.

Most of the people here support the workers' struggle. The UDF will not remain confined to the constitutional proposals. It can't.

Why do you say workers' leadership is necessary?

I was at the FOSATU winter

school, attended by nearly 500. A speaker from the Federation of SA Women asked why FOSATU women didn't join the Federation. A woman worker got up and answered her: "We are interested in working women".

One of the FOSATU leaders talked about setting up a workers' association in Benoni. He was asked: "Why another organisation? There are so many already." A worker answered: "We need our own organisations."

Somebody had mentioned the UDF and the National Forum, and another worker said: "Those are organisations of intellectuals." This was the feeling throughout the hall.

Is that why FOSATU didn't join the UDF?

It is one of the reasons, but they are giving support.

meant only those groups which supported UDF principles. A Cape delegate stated that he was a businessman and that "we are oppressed too".

Another delegate rose to say that while he did not doubt that this Cape comrade was oppressed, "there were many businessmen who are definitely not oppressed". He would prefer that the term "small trader" should be used.

The platform stated that the acceptance of any group, "commercial or otherwise", would be at the discretion of the elected officers. On this basis commercial groups were retained in the declaration.

After the adoption of the declaration of principles, the conference

elected officers and patrons. The proposal of Nelson Mandela as first patron was greeted with a standing ovation and singing. A spokesman for the Mandela family said that he and his comrades in Pollsmoor prison were aware of the meeting and gave it their support.

The conference was followed by a launching rally, with 5 000 people packed in the main hall, and up to 7 000 more listening in a marquee and outside. The rally was addressed, among others, by Samson Ndou of GAWU (standing in for Thozamile Gqweta), Helen Joseph, Aubrey Mokoena and Archie Gumede. The concluding address was given by Rev. A. Boesak, and was followed by thirty minutes of singing.



lacks, that is, inconsistency.

Burnham does not recognise the dialectic, but the dialectic recognises Burnham, that is, extends its sway over him. Shachtman thinks that the dialectic has no importance in political conclusions, but in the political conclusions of Shachtman himself we see the deplorable fruits of his disdainful attitude toward the dialectic. We should include this example in the textbooks on dialectical materialism.

Last year I was visited by a young British professor of political economy, a sympathiser of the Fourth International. During our conversation on the ways and means of realising socialism, he suddenly expressed the tendencies of British utilitarianism in the spirit of Keynes and others: 'It is necessary to determine a clear economic end, to choose the most reasonable means for its realisation,' etc. I remarked: 'I see that you are an adversary of dialectics.' He replied, somewhat astonished: 'Yes, I don't see any use in it.' 'However,' I replied to him, 'the dialectic enabled me on the basis of a few of your observations upon economic problems to determine what category of philosophical thought you belong to—this alone shows that there is an appreciable value in the dialectic.'

Although I have received no word about my visitor since then, I have no doubt that this anti-dialectic professor maintains the opinion that the USSR is not a workers' state, that unconditional defence of the USSR is an 'out-moded' opinion, that our organisational methods are bad, etc. If it is possible to place a given person's general type of thought on the basis of his relation to concrete practical problems, it is also possible to predict approximately, knowing his general type of thought, how a given individual will approach one or another practical question. That is the incomparable educational value of the dialectical method of thought.

The ABC of Materialist Dialectics

Gangrenous skeptics like Souvarine believe that 'nobody knows' what the dialectic is. And there are 'Marxists' who kowtow reverently before Souvarine and hope to learn something from him. And these Marxists hide not only in the *Modern Monthly*. Unfortunately a current of Souvarinism exists in the present opposition of the SWP. And here it is necessary to warn young comrades: Beware of this malignant infection!

The dialectic is neither fiction nor mysticism, but a science of the forms of our thinking, insofar as it is not limited to the daily problems of life but attempts to arrive at an understanding of more complicated and drawn-out processes. The dialectic and formal logic bear a relationship similar to that between higher and lower mathematics.

I will here attempt to sketch the substance of the problem in a very concise form. The Aristotelian logic of the simple syllogism starts from the proposition that 'A' is equal to 'A'. This postulate is accepted as an axiom for a multitude of practical human actions and elementary generalisations.

But in reality 'A' is not equal to 'A'. This is easy to prove if we observe these two letters under a lens—they are quite different from each other.

But, one can object, the question is not of the size or the form of the letters, since they are only symbols for equal quantities, for instance, a pound of sugar.

The objection is beside the point; in reality a pound of sugar is never equal to a pound of sugar—a more delicate scale always

discloses a difference.

Again one can object: but a pound of sugar is equal to itself. Neither is this true—all bodies change uninterruptedly in size, weight, colour, etc. They are never equal to themselves.

A sophist will respond that a pound of sugar is equal to itself 'at any given moment.' Aside from the extremely dubious practical value of this 'axiom', it does not withstand theoretical criticism either. How should we really conceive the word 'moment'? If it is an infinitesimal interval of time, then a pound of sugar is subjected during the course of that 'moment' to inevitable changes. Or is the 'moment' a purely mathematical abstraction, that is, a zero of time? But everything exists in time; and existence itself is an uninterrupted process of transformation; time is consequently a fundamental element of existence.

Thus the axiom 'A' is equal to 'A' signifies that a thing is equal to itself if it does not change, that is, if it does not exist.

At first glance it could seem that these 'subtleties' are useless. In reality they are of decisive significance. The axiom 'A' is equal to 'A' appears on one hand to be the point of departure for all our knowledge, on the other hand the point of departure for all the errors in our knowledge.

To make use of the axiom 'A' is equal to 'A' with impunity is possible only within certain *limits*. When quantitative changes in 'A' are negligible for the task at hand then we can presume that 'A' is equal to 'A'. This is, for example, the manner in which a buyer and a seller consider a pound of sugar. We consider the temperature of the sun likewise. Until recently we considered the buying power of the dollar in the same way.

But quantitative changes beyond certain limits become converted into qualitative. A pound of sugar subjected to the action of water or kerosene ceases to be a pound of sugar. A dollar in the embrace of a president ceases to be a dollar. To determine at the right moment the critical point where quantity changes into quality is one of the most important and difficult tasks in all the spheres of knowledge, including sociology.

Every worker knows that it is impossible to make two completely equal objects. In the elaboration of bearing-brass into cone bearings, a certain deviation is allowed for the cones which should not, however, go beyond certain limits (this is called tolerance). By observing the norms of tolerance, the cones are considered as being equal. ('A' is equal to 'A'.) When the tolerance is exceeded, the quantity goes over into quality; in other words, the cone bearings become inferior or completely worthless.

Our scientific thinking is only a part of our general practice, including techniques. For concepts there also exists 'tolerance' which is established not by formal logic issuing from the axiom 'A' is equal to 'A', but by the dialectical logic issuing from the axiom that everything is always changing. 'Common sense' is characterised by the fact that it systematically exceeds dialectical 'tolerance'.

Vulgar thought operates with such concepts as capitalism, morals, freedom, workers' state, etc as fixed abstractions, presuming that capitalism is equal to capitalism, morals are equal to morals, etc. Dialectical thinking analyses all things and phenomena in their continuous change, while determining in the material conditions of those changes that critical limit beyond which 'A' ceases to be 'A', a workers' state ceases to be a workers' state.

The fundamental flaw of vulgar thought lies in the fact that it wishes to content itself with motionless imprints of a reality which consists of eternal motion. Dialectical thinking gives to concepts, by means of closer approximations, corrections, concretisation, a richness of content and flexibility; I would even say a succulence which to a certain extent brings them close to living phenomena. Not capitalism in general, but a given capitalism at a given stage of development. Not a workers' state in general, but a given workers' state in a backward country in an imperialist encirclement, etc.

Dialectical thinking is related to vulgar thinking in the same

Trade Unions and the UDF

By
Paul Storey

The editorial in this issue of *Inqaba* calls on the organised workers in the independent unions to go into the United Democratic Front—to build it, transform it, and lead it on a clear program against apartheid and capitalist rule. This position needs further explanation.

At the present time, the policy of a number of major unions, most notably the FOSATU unions, is to remain outside the UDF and instead mount their 'own' campaign against the new constitution, the Koornhof Bills, etc.

Much discussion on this question has already taken place in all the democratic unions, and will continue to take place. What is at issue is more than just the UDF—it is the whole question of the political tasks of the working class, and how the workers should organise to lead the liberation struggle.

It is extremely important to resolve the problem clearly as soon as possible, and reach a common position through frank discussion throughout the movement.

Already political differences are posing a serious stumbling-block in the way of the unity of the trade unions in a new national federation. Fundamental differences of strategy, which put the mass organisations at odds with each other, will also seriously weaken any political campaign against the regime, and allow the cunning enemies of the working class to exploit divisions in our ranks.

The developments taking place in the SA Allied Workers Union, on the one hand, and in FOSATU's Metal and Allied Workers Union, on the other hand, illustrate both the present

differences in policy among the unions—and the way forward to resolving these differences in an effective unity.

SAAWU is strongly for participation in the UDF; MAWU is against it.

Yet the fighting ranks of SAAWU and MAWU share a common interest in the struggle and have a common basic outlook on the vital importance of workers **not limiting** themselves to the field of economic struggles, but taking the lead in **all** the struggles affecting the life of the whole working class and all oppressed people.

SAAWU, indeed, has inspired working people all over South Africa by its heroic leadership of the mass resistance in the Eastern Cape against the Ciskei puppet state.

To survive the murderous repression against it, SAAWU leaders have increasingly stressed the need to solidify their estimated 65 000 members into real industrial organisations, firmly entrenched on the shop floor. Fusion into national industrial unions, joined together in one national federation, is an urgent necessity. The whole logic of development is towards unity on these lines with FOSATU unions, the GWU, and the other key unions now involved in unity talks.

On the other hand, the rise of MAWU as a well-organised force of some 40 000 of the toughest and most militant industrial workers, has been a big factor impelling FOSATU towards taking up political issues facing the working class.

In an interview with *FOSATU Worker News* (October, 1983), Transvaal secretary Moses Mayekiso has said of MAWU:

"It is no longer just a union," he said, "It is a movement of workers."

"He said the union was not only involved in 'bread and butter' issues but was involved in the broader struggle for 'liberation'.

"It is impossible to separate the

two in South Africa when dealing with the oppressed voiceless masses," Brother Mayekiso concluded."

MAWU has resolved to "join other union groupings in their fight against the influx control and pass laws, and the demolition of shacks in black residential areas." (*Sowetan*, 13 September, 1983.)

The question is whether this fight, together with the fight against Botha's constitution and against the state generally, should be carried on **only** together with "other union groupings". **Or should the FOSATU unions, GWU, etc., make a conscious turn towards active participation in the United Democratic Front?**

Advances

The tremendous advances achieved in trade union organisation over the past ten years have already begun to transform the consciousness of the black working class. Never before in our history has there been such a sense of their own strength on the part of the organised workers, and this has trickled through to the unorganised and to the class as a whole.

Workers' awareness of their potential power as a class to combat and overcome their enemies is the ground from which political class-consciousness sprouts and matures.

Democratic shop-floor organisation; workers' self-management of the unions at all levels; the experience of strikes and other forms of struggle initiated and directed by the workers themselves; the drawing of tens of thousands more workers into the unions every year—all this has set up a momentum, leading workers on to higher levels of organisation, to a more general understanding of their problems and their tasks as a class, and to a greater readiness to tackle the **political nub** of their oppression

way that a motion picture is related to a still photograph. The motion picture does not outlaw the still photograph but combines a series of them according to the laws of motion. Dialectics does not deny the syllogism, but teaches us to combine syllogisms in such a way as to bring our understanding closer to the eternally changing reality.

Hegel, in his *Logic*, established a series of laws: change of quantity into quality, development through contradictions, conflict of content and form, interruption of continuity, change of possibility into inevitability, etc., which are just as important for theoretical thought as is the simple syllogism for more elementary tasks.

Hegel wrote before Darwin and before Marx. Thanks to the powerful impulse given to thought by the French Revolution, Hegel anticipated the general movement of science. But because it was only an *anticipation*, although by a genius, it received from Hegel an idealistic character. Hegel operated with ideological shadows as the ultimate reality. Marx demonstrated that the movement of these ideological shadows reflected nothing but the movement of material bodies.

We call our dialectic, materialist, since its roots are neither in heaven nor in the depths of our 'free will', but in objective reality, in nature. Consciousness grew out of the unconscious, psychology out of physiology, the organic world out of the inorganic, the solar system out of nebulae. On all the rungs of this ladder of development, the quantitative changes were transformed into qualitative.

Our thought, including dialectical thought, is only one of the forms of the expression of changing matter. There is no place within this system for God, nor Devil, nor immortal soul, nor eternal norms of laws and morals. The dialectic of thinking, having grown out of the dialectic of nature, possesses consequently a thoroughly materialist character.

Darwinism, which explained the evolution of species through quantitative transformations passing into qualitative, was the highest triumph of the dialectic in the whole field of organic matter. Another great triumph was the discovery of the table of atomic weights of chemical elements and further the transformation of one element into another.

With these transformations (species, elements, etc.) is closely linked the question of classification, equally important in the natural as in the social sciences. Linnaeus' system (18th century), utilising as its starting point the immutability of species, was limited to the description and classification of plants according to their external characteristics.

The infantile period of botany is analogous to the infantile period of logic, since the forms of our thought develop like everything that lives. Only decisive repudiation of the idea of fixed species, only the study of the history of the evolution of plants and their anatomy, prepared the basis for a really scientific classification.

Marx, who in distinction from Darwin was a conscious dialectician, discovered a basis for the scientific classification of human societies in the development of their productive forces and the structure of the relations of ownership which constitute the anatomy of society. Marxism substituted for the vulgar descriptive classification of societies and states, which even up to now still flourishes in the universities, a materialistic dialectical classification. Only through using the method of Marx is it possible correctly to determine both the concept of a workers' state and the moment of its downfall.

All this, as we see, contains nothing 'metaphysical' or 'scholastic', as conceited ignorance affirms. Dialectical logic expresses the laws of motion in contemporary scientific thought. The struggle against materialist dialectics on the contrary expresses a distant past, conservatism of the petty-

bourgeoisie, the self-conceit of university routinists and...a spark of hope for an after-life.

The Nature of the USSR

The definition of the USSR given by comrade Burnham, 'not a workers' and not a bourgeois state', is purely negative, wrenched from the chain of historical development, left dangling in mid-air, void of a single particle of sociology, and represents simply a theoretical capitulation of pragmatism before a *contradictory* historical phenomenon.

If Burnham were a dialectical materialist, he would have probed the following three questions: (1) What is the historical origin of the USSR? (2) What changes has this state suffered during its existence? (3) Did these changes pass from the quantitative state to the qualitative? That is, did they create a historically necessary domination by a new exploiting class? Answering these questions would have forced Burnham to draw the only possible conclusion—the USSR is still a degenerated workers' state.

The dialectic is not a magic master key for all questions. It does not replace concrete scientific analysis. But it directs this analysis along the correct road, securing it against sterile wanderings in the desert of subjectivism and scholasticism.

Bruno R. places both the Soviet and fascist regimes under the category of 'bureaucratic collectivism', because the USSR, Italy and Germany are all ruled by bureaucracies; here and there are the principles of planning; in one case private property is liquidated, in another limited, etc.

Thus, on the basis of the *relative* similarity of *certain* external characteristics of *different* origin, of *different* specific weight, of *different* class significance, a fundamental *identity* of social regimes is constructed, completely in the spirit of bourgeois professors who construct categories of 'controlled economy', 'centralised state', without taking into consideration whatsoever the class nature of one or the other. Bruno R. and his followers, or semi-followers like Burnham, at best remain in the sphere of social classification on the level of Linnaeus, in whose justification it should be remarked however that he lived before Hegel, Darwin and Marx.

Even worse and more dangerous, perhaps, are those eclectics who express the idea that the class character of the Soviet state 'does not matter', and that the direction of our policy is determined by the 'character of the war'. As if the war were an independent, super-social substance; as if the character of the war were not determined by the character of the ruling class, that is, by the same social factor that also determines the character of the state. Astonishing how easily some comrades forget the ABC's of Marxism under the blows of events!

It is not surprising that the theoreticians of the opposition who reject dialectic thought capitulate lamentably before the contradictory nature of the USSR. However, the contradiction between the social basis laid down by the revolution, and the character of the caste which arose out of the degeneration of the revolution, is not only an irrefutable historical fact but also a motor force.

In our struggle for the overthrow of the bureaucracy we base ourselves on this contradiction. Meanwhile, some ultra-lefts have already reached the ultimate absurdity by affirming that it is necessary to sacrifice the social structure of the USSR in order to overthrow the Bonapartist oligarchy! They have no

and exploitation: the capitalist state.

What a contrast now with the early 1970s, when the first seedlings of the new democratic unionism among African workers had to be so cautiously tended! At that time, workers usually had to be convinced that it was actually possible to mount any form of organisation and struggle, because this was at the tail end of the terrible dark period of reaction of the 1960s.

The situation in Natal, after the Durban strike movement, was somewhat different, but nevertheless this was generally the case.

But as the workers took up, at first in a very limited and modest way, organisation and struggle against the bosses, so they gained confidence—and that confidence impressed itself on their fellow-workers, who said: 'Well, if they can do it, we can do it too.'

So the movement expanded, until now there are literally hundreds of thousands of unorganised workers ready to be drawn into the trade unions. Remarkably, despite all the difficulties of industrial struggle during the recession, the momentum has hardly flagged. That is proof of the immense reserves of power, pent up in the working class, ready to be channelled, if a correct approach to organisation, unity, strategy and tactics is followed.

When *Inqaba* put forward (October, 1981) that the independent unions should set as a target **one million workers organised** this was seen as too ambitious by many of the union leaders.

Undoubtedly the unions' resources are limited, and there are difficulties in consolidating the shop-floor foundations of the unions while they are undergoing rapid growth. But the example of MAWU has provided an answer to this general problem.

A report in *SASPU Focus* (June, 1983) gives this account of the explosive growth of MAWU:

"The Metal and Allied Workers Union almost doubled in size to 35 000 in 1982 with most of the growth occurring on the East Rand. At the time there was only one organiser to handle these workers. With some 27 strikes in the first four months of 1982 it is easy to realise the situation was impossible to handle.

"Mawu's treatment of the situation placed a number of interesting items on the labour movement agenda.

"To cope with the organisational load Mawu's organiser decided to shift some of the responsibility for organising factories onto the shop stewards of already organised factories.

"A Shop Stewards Council was established to bring all the shop stewards together to discuss the state of organisation in their region and to work out ways of extending and consolidating their organisation."

Now, at the annual general meeting of MAWU in the Transvaal, the union secretary has said that, "by organising all the big steel producers, MAWU should have a membership of about 100 000 by 1984." (*FOSATU Worker News*, October.)

It is true that a union like MAWU has advantages in organising in a heavy industrial sector of large firms with a mass workforce. But wouldn't many of the problems now facing all the smaller and general unions be overcome, and opportunities for massive and stable growth on the MAWU lines be opened up generally, **once the unions fused together into single national industrial unions within a single national federation?**

It is vital to recognise that the **period** has changed. The growth of the independent unions to 300 000 and more means a **qualitative change**—in the outlook of the organised workers, in the outlook of the unorganised, **and in the role thrust upon the workers' organisations by the general upheaval in society.**

If there are serious problems in stabilising rapidly-growing unions, **these problems pale in comparison with the crisis which would open up if the unions fail to rise rapidly to their full potential in the next period.**

South Africa is entering the first stage of a drawn-out pre-revolutionary situation.

For all the monstrous, racist, anti-democratic and anti-worker features of Botha's new 'reform' constitution, it is a sign of the system coming apart at the seams.

The ruling class is in disarray, and the sense of this fact among the masses is the main reason for the tremendous enthusiastic response to the launching of the UDF—far greater than either the government or even the organisers of the UDF themselves expected.

The high poll and unexpected size of the 'Yes' vote in the white referendum is not at all a sign of faith in **any quarters** that this constitution will be workable or will lead to a solution of any of the problems facing society. Rather the whites voted 'Yes' mainly to avoid a paralysing crisis of government and state at what they know to be a critical time.

At precisely this time, the most militant and far-sighted organised black workers and their leaders are recognising that it is their task to lead the struggle to transform society.

All the ingredients are beginning to come together for a thorough **transformation of the mass movement**; to lift it to a higher stage; to mobilise the whole of the oppressed people consciously under workers' leadership along a revolutionary road.

This is what gives the current dispute over the attitude of the unions to the UDF a vital significance.

Healthy

The suspicion towards the UDF, most notable in the ranks of FOSATU unions, is itself a **healthy and progressive sign**—a sign of rapid advances in class-consciousness which are taking place. This has come from the very fact of genuine, shop-floor, democratic organisation, created by the workers' own efforts and extending to every level of most of these unions.

To an extent without parallel in South Africa in the past, workers know and feel that they have authentic class organisations **of their own**, which they themselves **independently control**. It would be hard to exaggerate the importance of this advance.

The interview with the Johannesburg shop steward, printed on page 10, sums up the feeling of thousands of the most militant organised workers that bodies such as the UDF and the National Forum do not really belong to the working class; that their leadership is mainly middle-class in character and is not democratically controlled by the working class; that, for all their sincerity, they cannot truly and completely express or consistently fight for the demands of working people.

Speaking at MAWU's annual general meeting in the Transvaal, Brother Mayekiso, for example, said that the union supported the FOSATU stand on the UDF and other political organisations.

"We believe that workers as a class should fight their own problems. As the enemy is only one—capitalism—and all other things like influx control are merely appendages," he said.

suspicion that the USSR minus the social structure founded by the October Revolution would be a fascist regime.

Evolution and Dialectics

Comrade Burnham will probably protest that as an evolutionist he is interested in the development of society and state forms not less than we dialecticians. We will not dispute this. Every educated person since Darwin has labelled himself an 'evolutionist'. But a real evolutionist must apply the idea of evolution to his own forms of thinking.

Elementary logic, founded in the period when the idea of evolution itself did not yet exist, is evidently insufficient for the analysis of evolutionary processes. Hegel's logic is the logic of evolution. Only one must not forget that the concept of 'evolution' itself has been completely corrupted and emasculated by university professors and liberal writers to mean peaceful 'progress'.

Whoever has come to understand that evolution proceeds through the struggle of antagonistic forces; that a slow accumulation of changes at a certain moment explodes the old shell and brings about a catastrophe, revolution; whoever has learned finally to apply the general laws of evolution to thinking itself, he is a dialectician, as distinguished from vulgar evolutionists. Dialectic training of the mind, as necessary to a revolu-

tionary fighter as finger exercises to a pianist, demands approaching all problems as *processes* and not as *motionless categories*. Whereas vulgar evolutionists, who limit themselves generally to recognising evolution in only certain spheres, content themselves in all other questions with the banalities of 'common sense'.

The American liberal, who has reconciled himself to the existence of the USSR, more precisely to the Moscow bureaucracy, believes, or at least believed until the Soviet-German pact, that the Soviet regime on the whole is a 'progressive thing', that the *repugnant features of the bureaucracy* ('well, naturally they exist!') will progressively slough away and that peaceful and painless 'progress' is thus assured.

A vulgar petty-bourgeois radical is similar to a liberal 'progressive' in that he takes the USSR as a whole, failing to understand its internal contradictions and dynamics.

When Stalin concluded an alliance with Hitler, invaded Poland, and now Finland, the vulgar radicals triumphed; the identity of the methods of Stalinism and fascism was proved! They found themselves in difficulties, however when the new authorities invited the population to expropriate the land-owners and capitalists—they had not foreseen this possibility at all! Meanwhile the social revolutionary measures, carried out via bureaucratic military means, not only did not disturb *our*, dialectic, definition of the USSR as a degenerated workers' state, but gave it the most incontrovertible corroboration.

Instead of utilising this triumph of Marxian analysis for persevering agitation, the petty-bourgeois oppositionists began to shout with criminal light-mindedness that the events have refuted our prognosis, that our old formulas are no longer applicable, that new words are necessary. What words? They haven't decided yet themselves.

(FOSATU Worker News.)

This position far outstrips the public standpoint of the UDF, which confines itself to abstract principles of democracy and fails to link the democratic and social demands in any clear way to the need for workers' power and the overthrow of capitalism.

But, as our report from the UDF conference clearly shows, the mass of **supporters** of the UDF (overwhelmingly working-class), **want** working-class leadership of the struggle, **want** power to pass into the hands of the working class, **want** a program for a thorough-going democratic revolution in which the means of production are taken into public ownership under workers' control and management, thus clearing the way to a socialist solution of all society's problems.

Their dilemma is how to organise for that, how to fight for that, in and through the UDF.

Our difference with the present policy of MAWU and other FOSATU unions, as well as the GWU, is that it **leaves these workers stranded** in the UDF, under essentially middle-class leadership, and fails to direct the organised forces of the working class effectively towards the **transformation of the entire mass movement on proletarian lines.**

This difference reflects the fact, we believe, that the militant workers in these unions have not yet thought through to a conclusion the **strategic problems** facing the working class in the coming revolution.

They have not been helped in this by the arguments of the union intellectuals, but on the contrary, unfortunately, seriously hindered.

At the same time, however, the unions which **have** gone into the UDF have, on the whole, **not** prepared their ranks politically or organisationally to fight there for the leadership of the movement, and have been far too willing to attach themselves uncritically to a mainly middle-class leadership, to an amorphous and unrepresentative structure, and to an abstract democratic program of class-compromise which will dangerously hamstring the working-class movement on the political plane.

The recognition of these dangers caused worker leaders in FOSATU to hold back from the UDF.

In July, FOSATU President, Chris Dlamini told *FOSATU Worker News*:

"I am convinced that the worker movement cannot be pushed to link up with non-worker organisations because they might hinder or misdirect its programme of action.

"Workers at this stage are enslaved by the economy and the challenge facing them and their unions is to make the economy their slave."

He recounted what he had recently seen on a union visit to Zimbabwe:

"During the time in Zimbabwe, I noticed that although some people were liberated workers were not.

"While there I visited a factory where we were shown round by a black general manager who kept on telling us about the good relations there were between the workers and management since they had taken over.

"Well, I sneaked off and talked to one ordinary worker who painted a very different picture of what was happening in the factory.

"The worker said they did not have a union inside the factory, wages were low and conditions were bad...

"It seems to me that the people in Zimbabwe were taken up with the popular struggle but failed to organise themselves into a worker organisation, like a union, which would have then liberated them as workers in their workplaces.

"Now they are faced with the problem of starting from scratch—having to organise themselves into a union to fight the bosses in the factory.

"Worker liberation can only be achieved by a strong, well-organised worker movement."

Brother Dlamini's argument is a powerful one, and it goes very far along the road which *Inqaba* has also tried to point out—but **it does not go far enough. It does not take the problem fully to its logical conclusion.**

Certainly, without powerful trade unions under democratic workers' control, without an independent class policy in the unions, workers are defenceless. But trade union strength alone is not enough to liberate the working class.

The liberation of the working class depends not only on workers' organisation in the workplace, not only on "fighting the bosses in the factory"—**but on workers' organisation to drive the bosses out of the workplaces and out of their mastery of society.**

The bosses' power rests on two pillars. On the one hand, it rests on **private ownership of the means of production.** Unless the workers' movement succeeds in putting an end to the bosses' ownership, it will **not** be possible for workers and their unions to "make the economy their slave".

On the other hand, the bosses' power—and the defence of bosses'

ownership—depends on **the state**, which, as Engels put it, is **essentially 'armed bodies of men'** and their appendages like the courts, prisons, etc., organised to protect the ruling class.

The workers cannot be liberated only "as workers in their workplaces", but **through the conquest of state power by the working class.**

Trotsky wrote about this in a letter to a French syndicalist (a trade unionist who believed that trade union organisation would be sufficient for the liberation of the workers), in August 1920:

"For we have to topple the bourgeoisie and tear the state apparatus from its hands. The bourgeoisie in the form of its state rests on the army. Only an open insurrection where the proletariat collides face to face with the army, inflicting cruel blows on its counter-revolutionary elements and winning over its better part, only such an open insurrection of the proletariat is capable of making it the master of the situation in the country."

"But for the insurrection energetic and concentrated preparatory work is essential: agitational, organisational and technical.

"It is necessary, day in and day out, to expose the crimes and villainy of the bourgeoisie in every area of social life: international politics, colonial atrocities, the domestic despotism of the capitalist oligarchy, the rascality of the bourgeois press; all this must form the material for a really revolutionary exposure, together with all the consequent revolutionary conclusions. These topics are too broad for a trade union and its tasks."

Without powerful trade unions the workers in South Africa could win neither economic nor political power. **But with** the strong shop-floor, regional and national organisations of the workers that have already been built, the workers can enter vigorously into the political field and give the lead to the whole oppressed people in the struggle for power.

The workers have to be consciously **organised** in the political struggle—in **working-class organisations under their own control**—but the trade union form of organisation is not **adequate** for that. The central question already confronting the **mass** of working people—confronting the millions who are unorganised as well as the hundreds of thousands organised—**is the overthrow of the apartheid regime.**

The problem is not that the people are "taken up with the popular struggle", but that the popular struggle is not yet mobilised round, and led by, the organised workers.

From: Where is Britain Going?

By Leon Trotsky

When the course of events, usually of a catastrophic nature, such as great economic disturbances, crises, wars make the social system unbearable to the workers, they have neither the possibility nor the desire to lead their revolutionary agitation into the channels of capitalist democracy.

In other words: when the masses comprehend how long they have been deluded they carry out a revolution. A successful revolution transfers the power to them, and the conquest of power enables them to construct a new State apparatus, answering to their interests.

But it is just this that MacDonald will not accept. "The revolution in Russia," he says, "taught us a great lesson. It showed that revolution is a ruin and a calamity, and nothing more." Here the reactionary Fabian stands before us in all his revolting nakedness. Revolution leads only to calamity!

But the British democracy led to the imperialist war, and not only in the sense that all the capitalist States were generally responsible—no, in the sense of the direct and immediate responsibility of British diplomacy, consciously and calculatingly thrusting Europe into war.

If the British "democracy" had declared that it would enter the war on the side of the Entente, Germany and Austria-Hungary would no doubt have withdrawn. But the British government acted otherwise: it secretly promised support to the Entente, and calculatingly deluded Germany with the possibility of its neutrality.

Thus British "democracy" deliberately led to the war, with the ruin of which the calamities of revolution cannot, of course, be compared in the very least.

But in addition to this, what deaf ears and shameless face are necessary in order in the face of a revolution which overthrew Tsarism, nobility, and the bourgeoisie, shook the Church, awakened to a new life a nation of 130 millions, a whole family of nations, to declare that revolution is a calamity and **nothing more**.

Here also MacDonald repeats Baldwin. He has no knowledge or understanding either of the Russian revolution or of British history. We are constrained to remind him of that which we recalled to the mind of the Conservative Premier. If in the economic sphere the initiative belonged to Britain until the fourth quarter of the last century, so in the political sphere Britain developed during the last century and a half in large measure with the assistance of European and American revolutions.

The great French revolution, and the July revolution of 1830, and the revolution of '48, and the North American civil war of the sixties, and the Russian revolution of 1905, and the Russian revolution of 1917, all pushed forward the social development of Great Britain and left their marks on her history in the signposts of the greatest legislative reforms.

Without the Russian revolution of 1917 MacDonald would not have been Premier in 1924. It will be understood that we

are not trying to claim that the MacDonald Ministry was the greatest conquest of October. But in any case it was in great measure its by-product. And even the children's books teach us that it is not wise to gnaw the roots of the oak-tree from which you are gathering acorns.

And, moreover, what senseless Fabian arrogance: as the Russian revolution has taught "us" (whom?) a lesson, "we" (who?) will arrange our affairs without a revolution. But why in that case did not all the preceding wars enable "you" to dispense with the imperialist war?

Just as the bourgeoisie calls every succeeding war the last war, so MacDonald wishes to call the Russian revolution the last revolution. But why exactly should the British bourgeoisie give way to the British proletariat, and peacefully, without a struggle, renounce their own property, when they have previously received the firm assurance of MacDonald that after the experience of the Russian revolution the British socialists will never go the way of violence? When and where did the ruling class ever yield power and property on the order of a peaceful vote—and especially such a class as the British bourgeoisie, which has behind it centuries of world rapacity?

Organic evolution

MacDonald is against revolution, but in favour of organic evolution; he applies to society a badly digested biological conception. For him evolution, as the sum of accumulated partial changes, is comparable to the development of living organisms, the transformation of a chrysalis into a butterfly, and so on, while in this last process he ignores exactly the decisive critical moments, when the new being bursts from the old chrysalis in revolutionary wise.

Here, too, in passing it is revealed that MacDonald is "for a revolution similar to that which took place within the womb of feudalism, when the industrial revolution came to maturity". Evidently, in his blatant ignorance, MacDonald conceives that the industrial revolution took place molecularly, without disturbance, without misfortune and devastation. He simply does not know the history of Britain (there is no point in mentioning the history of other countries), and, most of all, does not understand that the industrial revolution while it was still maturing within the womb of feudalism, in the form of trade capital, led to the Reformation, brought the Stuarts into conflict with Parliament, gave birth to civil war, and ruined and devastated Britain, in order afterwards to enrich her.

It would be wearying to occupy ourselves here with the interpretation of the process of transformation of the chrysalis

There is no way that the trade unions can be regarded by the mass of the working people to be a substitute for a **political organisation** for the purpose of leading the revolutionary struggle for power.

There is the struggle of the youth. There is the struggle in the communities. There is the struggle against demolitions and removals. There are the bus boycotts and the struggles over rents. There is the need for a united nation-wide movement to cripple the new constitution.

Any organisation which is capable of coming forward as the political leadership of the revolutionary movement has to give the lead in all aspects of that struggle.

Trade unions as such cannot do that—and in a very real sense SAAWU has gone beyond, has been **forced** by the situation in the Eastern Cape to go beyond—the capacities of a trade union.

The answer, of course, is not to turn the unions' backs on politics, imagining that the 'economic struggle' can live a life of its own. The majority of activists in FOSATU unions, as in SAAWU and other unions, already reject that idea.

The problem boils down to this: how to carry the **already existing** organised strength of workers (on the shop-floor and at every level) **onto the field of political struggle**—to take the **lead** in the 'popular movement', to show the way **forward**, to mobilise the **youth** and the entire working class in the communities, and to weld them together around the hard core of organised labour.

If we look to the future, isn't it clear that only two possible alternatives present themselves? One would be the creation of a **mass revolutionary workers' party** arising directly out of the unions. The other would be the **conscious turn by organised workers to the ANC banner**.

The problem needs to be worked out as clearly as possible in advance, so that a consistent approach to organisation, strategy and tactics can be followed by the workers' movement.

Many trade union activists, realising the power of the workers that is still just beginning to rise up, are already straining in the direction of political action by their organisations. In response to this pressure, FOSATU, for instance, launched its own cam-

"Changing society is the responsibility of the workers because they have the power..."

Samson Ndou of GAWU, at the UDF launch.

"My belief is that only the workers and nobody else will break the bones of bondage holding them back."

Oscar Mpetha, speaking to the Labour Bulletin, August 1983.

These ideas must be carried forward through organising workers to build and lead the UDF.

paign on the constitution. This is also the reason why some worker leaders are often saying now that their organisations are no longer 'just' trade unions, but 'a movement of workers.'

That expression, 'a **movement of workers**', shows the correct direction of development, **but it does not answer the problem we have posed.**

In this connection, it is useful to look back at the speech given at the FOSATU Congress in April 1982, by its General Secretary, Joe Foster. In it he set out some ideas on the relation of the unions to political struggle, and these have exerted a considerable influence on the discussion among workers ever since.

At the time, we confined comment to what was the most significant **advance**, namely the clear recognition that unions could not be non-political, and that a definite 'working-class politics' and 'working-class movement' had to come and was coming into being.

We also argued, however, that the correct course would be for the organised workers to build the ANC, under their own democratic control, as the vehicle for their struggle for political power. (See *Inqaba* No. 6, May 1982.)

Unfortunately, Brother Foster did not develop his points to any clear conclusion in relation either to a **workers' party** or to the **ANC**.

The **reason** for this was **not** any necessary caution there might have been about speaking openly in South Africa on revolutionary issues. There was an **actual, inherent ambiguity** in his position, which has been carried into practice in the FOSATU policy towards the UDF.

(In the following passages, the page references are to the text in the *SA Labour Bulletin*, July 1982.)

Brother Foster's starting point is

sound:

"We have no intention of becoming self-satisfied trade unionists incapable of giving political direction to the workers' struggle." (p.68)

"If we were to think in terms of our members only, we would have a very limited political role. If, however, we are thinking more widely of the working class then we have to examine very much more carefully what our political role is." (p.69)

"The working class have experienced a birth of fire in South Africa and they constitute the major objective political force opposed to the state and capital. There is no significant (black) petty bourgeoisie or landed class with an economic base in our society." (p.74)

"In the economy," he continues, "capital and labour are the major forces yet **politically the struggle is waged elsewhere.**" (p.74—our emphasis.)

Now, why is this the case? If (as is true) the working class constitutes "**the major objective political force**" **opposed to the state and the ruling class**, and if the political struggle is nevertheless waged "elsewhere", then this must surely mean that the political force of the working class *has not been mobilised as it should be*, and that the political struggle has been suffering from **limits** imposed on it by the **insignificant** black petty bourgeoisie which has "no... economic base in our society."

But is this the logic which Brother Foster develops and carries into his conclusions? Unfortunately not!

Instead he looks for the **reason** for the political struggle being waged "elsewhere" in something **built into** the "South African context"—namely the racist oppression of the black people. This leads him to **accept** the limits imposed on the mass political struggle in the past by the black petty bourgeoisie.

Surely, because racist oppression is founded on the **capitalist system** and

into the butterfly in order to get the necessary social analogies. It is simpler and shorter to recommend MacDonald to ponder over the old comparison of revolution with birth. Is it not possible to gain a "lesson" here, as well as from the Russian revolution? Since births give "nothing" but pains and misery (the child does not come into the reckoning!), in future the population is recommended to multiply in the painless Fabian fashion, availing themselves of the talents of Mrs. Snowden in the capacity of the unqualified midwife.

We must point out none the less that the matter is not at all so simple. Even the chick, when formed inside the egg, must apply force to the calcareous prison enclosing it; if some Fabian chick, out of Christian or other considerations, decided to refrain from violent activities, the calcareous envelope would inevitably suffocate it.

Shortening beak

British pigeon fanciers, by means of an artificial selection, achieve special varieties, with a continually shortening beak. But there comes a moment when the beak of a new stock is so short that the poor creature is unequal to breaking the egg-shell, and the young pigeon perishes, a sacrifice to compulsory restraint from revolutionary activities, and a stop is put to the further progress of varieties of short-bills.

If our memory is not at fault, MacDonald can read about

this in Darwin. Having entered upon MacDonald's favourite course of analogies with the organic world, one can say that the political art of the British bourgeoisie consists in shortening the revolutionary beak of the proletariat, and so not allowing him to pierce the shell of the capitalist State. The beak of the proletariat is its party.

If we look at MacDonald, Thomas, Mr. and Mrs. Snowden, we have to confess that the work of the bourgeoisie in selecting short-billed and soft-billed has been crowned with astonishing success, for these individuals are not only not fit for the piercing of the capitalist shell, but indeed are not fit for anything.

Here, however, the analogy ends, revealing all the conditionality of this kind of hasty search in the primers of biology as a substitute for the study of the methods of historical development. Although human society grew out of the conditions of the organic and inorganic world, it presents them in such a complicated and concentrated blending that it demands an independent knowledge.

Social organism is distinguished from biological organism by, among other things, a much greater flexibility, and by a capability of regrouping its elements, of conscious selection to a certain degree of its instruments and processes, of a conscious utilisation within certain limits of the experience of the past, and so on.

The pigeon in the egg cannot change its too short beak, and so it perishes. The working class, confronted with the question—to be or not to be—can drive out the MacDonalds and Mrs. Snowdens and arm themselves with the beak of a revolutionary party for the destruction of the capitalist system.

the exploitation of the black working class, the racial system would **not** be a sound reason for the political struggle being waged "elsewhere"—it would rather be the most powerful reason for the organised black workers to take in their own hands the leadership of the **entire** struggle of the oppressed.

As this has not yet taken place, despite the "birth of fire" and explosive growth of the working class, it **must** be because the working class has hitherto lacked the strength of independent organisation and the political leadership of its own needed to rouse it and direct its forces to its political tasks.

Unchallenged petty-bourgeois leadership of the political mass movement has been the **result** of this lack of workers' leadership.

Instead of posing the problem clearly in this way, however, Brother Foster takes his argument up a *cul de sac*:

Since "the major political task of the oppressed peoples has always been to attack that oppressive and racist regime", **therefore** "what has developed in South Africa is a very powerful tradition of popular or populist politics" in which "a great alliance of all classes (*all!??*) is both necessary and a clear political strategy." (p.71)

For this purpose, and for the "mass mobilisation (which) is essential" (p.71), there is the ANC. "Various political and economic interests gather together in the popular front in the tradition of the ANC and the Congress Alliance." (p.76.)

But, hold it a minute! Haven't we agreed that the 'masses' are overwhelmingly the **working-class masses**?

What Brother Foster ends up accepting—if we connect up logically all the threads of his argument—is a most peculiar **division of labour**.

On the one hand, he says, there must be a political mass movement against the state, under the Congress banner, **not** led by the organised workers but, in the sacrosanct "tradition", by a **petty-bourgeois leadership** as in the past, reflecting a "great alliance of all classes".

And, on the other hand, there must be a trade union and "workers' movement" with its 'own' "workers' politics", which is to be kept somehow distinct, "even whilst they (workers) are part of the wider popular struggle." (p.77)

This is enough to crack the brain!

What could it possibly mean in practice?

What would be the task left to the workers' political movement, if it does NOT take up the LEADERSHIP of the mass struggle to overthrow the state? The conclusion is inescapable: only the political tasks which flow immediately and directly from the limited economic struggles of workers!

That is an approach which Lenin furiously attacked as 'economism' when it was put forward in the Russian workers' movement some eighty years ago.

That is an approach which would condemn the workers of South Africa to continued subordination politically under the petty-bourgeois democrats, in the UDF and Congress movement.

It is **not** the approach towards which FOSATU's own ranks are now groping—even while under the influence of arguments such as those which Brother Foster put forward.

Party?

As if sensing this implication in his position and recoiling from it, Brother Foster provided at least some **hints** in his speech that a "workers' movement" could or might be taken to mean a **workers' party**.

The hint was enough to produce a loud protest from leaders of the SA Communist Party (see, e.g., 'Toussaint' in *African Communist* No. 93), to the effect that it would be criminal to set up "a new 'workers' movement' in competition with or alongside the still living Communist Party."

Not only is the CP "still living"—apparently it has long fulfilled the need of SA workers for their own working-class political organisation! On another occasion, we will take space to show that this claim, quite frankly, doesn't hold water.

But there is a serious reason why it will not be possible to solve the revolutionary-strategic problems now confronting the SA working class by attempting to move directly towards the creation of a mass workers' party on the basis of the trade unions.

Clearly the working class needs a party of its own in South Africa, as everywhere else. But we are experiencing the need for this in a revolutionary period in which the working

class has to mobilise and organise itself to overthrow the state. No other force will do it. Therefore, any workers' party that is **viable** for the needs of the class would **have to be** a **mass party with a revolutionary program**. It would have to be capable of drawing the oppressed people in their millions behind it.

How is such a thing to be created? It cannot be sucked out of the thumb, as the silly sectarian grouplets imagine.

It must be built upon the organised foundations already laid by the workers in the factories, mines, docks, plantations, offices, shops, etc. But how is this to be done?

How is it to attract the necessary **mass following** of the **millions** of unorganised workers, the youth, the women, the unemployed, the people in the reserves? The combined forces of all of these are essential if the state is to be defeated.

Even the formation of a united trade union federation—**so urgently needed by the working class**—is lagging dreadfully as a result of all sorts of secondary obstacles.

How long would it take to even begin the formation of a mass workers' party by this route?

In the advanced capitalist countries the emergence of workers' parties in the 19th Century was very complicated, was affected by many temporary setbacks, took a number of different forms, and was only consolidated over a long period of struggle, in the course of which the working class differentiated itself from the petty-bourgeois democrats who had held sway over the mass movement in the bourgeois-democratic revolutions of that time.

That was, let us remember, the period of the forward movement of capitalism, not its death agony; a sustained period of capitalist development, with long intervals, often decades between revolutionary explosions.

In South Africa today, revolution is knocking at the door. We are living in a period in which the intolerable burdens of capitalism, of an international economic system in crisis, combine with a racist state system rotting on its feet.

The working people are compelled to make a **proletarian revolution** in order to carry out even the democratic tasks. The **mass** of the working-class will see no choice but to take what appears the shortest route—the route which seems least

Explanatory notes

Page 3

Metaphysics—term generally used to distinguish abstract philosophy from experimental natural science.

Page 8

Eclecticism—Philosophical method of selecting ideas from different systems of thought, without regard to the contradictions between those systems.

Aristotelian logic—The method of “formal logic” (see page 4) was first put forward as a coherent system by the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle.

Pragmatism—A variant of ‘empirical’ (see below) philosophy, developed in the USA in the late 19th century, stating that the only meaning of ideas lie in their practical usefulness, seen from an immediate ‘common sense’ point of view. The popularity of this philosophy corresponded to the rapid advance of US industry.

Rationalism—Philosophical approach based on the belief that abstract reasoning, as opposed to sensual perception, can grasp “objective truth”, which was supposed to be eternal, universal and independent of human experience.

Empiricism—Philosophical method which emphasises the part played by experience in shaping knowledge, as opposed to the part played by reasoning.

Eastman, Max—One-time supporter of the Russian revolution and admirer of Lenin and Trotsky, who translated several of Trotsky’s books into English. Never a Marxist, he later shifted to the right and in the 1940s became editor of the anti-communist *Reader’s Digest*.

Page 10

British utilitarianism—Theory that an action is ‘right’ if it achieves the ‘greatest good’ of the ‘greatest number of people’. Developed by the British bourgeois philosopher Bentham in the 18th century.

Keynes, John Maynard (1883-1946)—British bourgeois economist who in the

1930s put forward the idea of stimulating the capitalist economy through “deficit financing” by the state, i.e., spending more than its income, through borrowing and printing money. Keynesian policies were adopted in most capitalist countries during the post-war period of economic upswing, but could not resolve the underlying contradictions of the capitalist system and, by the 1970s, had led to soaring levels of inflation.

Souvarine, Boris—Leading member of the French Communist Party who in 1924 supported Trotsky against Stalin. Subsequently expelled from the CP, he succumbed to frustration, broke with Trotsky and denied that any of the gains of the October revolution survived in the Soviet Union.

Page 11

Hegel, in his *Logic*—A reference to the book *Science of Logic* in which the German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel (1770-1831) asserted the dialectical method of understanding the development of ideas. Marx and Engels regarded Hegel’s method as a huge step forward—but they applied it to the material world.

Bruno R.—Bruno Rizzi, an Italian ex-Trotskyist who claimed that the Russian bureaucracy had become a new ruling class, and that the system of “bureaucratic collectivism” in Russia represented an advance on capitalism. These ideas were largely taken over by Burnham in his book *The Managerial Revolution*.

Page 13

Fabian—The Fabian Society, formed in 1883 by middle-class social-democratic intellectuals, has served and continues to serve as a ‘think tank’ for the right wing of the British labour movement.

The imperialist war—The First World War of 1914-18, brought about by intensified competition between the rival imperialist powers.

Entente (cordiale)—Alliance between

French and British imperialism established by an agreement of 1904; later joined by Tsarist Russia and Serbia.

Baldwin, Stanley (1867-1947)—Conservative prime minister of Britain in 1923-24 and 1925-29.

Great French revolution—The first and decisive period of the bourgeois revolution in France, between 1789 and 1795, when the regime of the absolute monarchy and the landowning aristocracy was smashed, and the rule of the capitalist class was established.

July revolution of 1830—Overthrow of the reactionary monarchy which had been placed in control of the bourgeois state in France following the defeat of Napoleon in 1815. Carried through by armed mass insurrection in Paris, it led to political victory for the bourgeoisie and the installation of Louis Philippe as “citizen king”, subject to parliamentary control.

Revolution of ‘48—Against the background of industrial growth and the strengthening of the proletariat, the economic crisis of 1846 and repeated struggles to extend the franchise, the 1848 revolution in France overthrew Louis Philippe and established the Second Republic. But in June 1848 the working class was defeated and power was eventually seized by Louis Napoleon, who installed himself as Bonapartist dictator in 1851, abolished the Republic and proclaimed himself Emperor.

North American civil war—Fought between the northern states of the USA, where most of industry was concentrated, and the southern states which were dominated by the slave-owning capitalist landowners. The war ended in victory for the northern industrialists and bankers, and paved the way for the emergence of the USA as a world capitalist power.

Russian revolution of 1905, and ... 1917—The Russian revolution of 1905, in which the working class led the struggle against Tsarism but was defeated, was the forerunner and ‘dress rehearsal’ for the revolution of October 1917 when the working class, led by Lenin and Trotsky, came to power. The Russian workers’ victory had a profound effect on the

strewn with difficulties and uncertainties—towards the building of a revolutionary organisation for that purpose.

In the years immediately ahead, **millions** of black working people will take to the road of struggle. They will want above all to unite their forces under one banner.

For this purpose, they will seize hold of the main political vehicle already existing, with the deepest roots in the traditions of mass resistance—the ANC.

Anyone who imagines that the attractive power of the UDF comes from the '400 organisations' affiliated to it, is failing to look beneath the surface of events. The support for the UDF—of the millions of working people who are not yet **activists**, but will later become so—this support comes from the fact that everyone knows that the UDF is a forerunner of the future emergence once again of the ANC at the head of the mass movement inside South Africa.

Because this will be a movement of millions of previously unorganised and previously passive working people, it will break like a wave over the heads of the previously organised trade union workers. Even they will be drawn, despite their doubts about middle-class leadership of Congress, towards the ANC banner.

It is essential to prepare the most advanced, organised and conscious workers for that.

The only viable strategy for taking forward the working-class political movement to the achievement of its tasks; the only viable strategy for the **presently organised workers** to fight for and win **leadership** of the entire mass movement—is to consciously go into the UDF, build it, transform it and lead it.

The arguments of GWU General Secretary, Dave Lewis (*Work in Progress*, No. 29), against entry into the UDF **collapse** when tested against this approach.

He wants the unions to stay out of the UDF, while at the same time "supporting" the UDF, having "joint campaigns" with it, and encouraging trade union members **individually** "to join the UDF".

This will give us the worst of all possible worlds!

Now and in the past, Brother Lewis has done a service to the movement by spelling out ideas and arguments, so that the level of discussion can be raised, problem areas confronted, and mistakes put right.

In the interview, he makes a number of correct points about the multi-class character of the UDF, its leadership, and the bulk of the 'activist' organisations affiliated to it; about the deficiencies of its program of action from the workers' point of view; about the inequalities of representation within it, loaded against the workers, and the lack of democratic accountability of the leadership to the rank-and-file.

It would at least have had the merit of consistency if Brother Lewis, on these grounds, had urged workers to stay out of the UDF and instead work consciously towards the formation by the unions of an independent party of labour. For reasons given above, however, such a conclusion would nevertheless be mistaken.

But Brother Lewis does not proceed down that track. Much of his argument, in fact, tends towards a non-political conception of the trade unions' tasks.

"For one thing, unions will inevitably be organisations that incorporate a great diversity of political views and affiliations. We'll have in our ranks members with militant political views, and we'll have in our ranks members with fairly conservative political views. We'll also have within our ranks a great many members who have few political views at all, people who have joined the organisation purely to fight their bosses. With a certain degree of tension now and again, these diverse views can all be contained within an organisation, because they are all held by workers." (p.13)

Firstly, this is an entirely static conception, which seems oblivious of the **earthquake** that is beginning in the movement of the South African working class, and the rapid **changes** of consciousness and political outlook that workers have undergone and will continue to undergo through struggle. (Is the thinking among the GWU leaders perhaps weighed down by the effects of the SATS defeat?)

Secondly, there **must** be political struggle **in** the unions, to convince **all** workers of the correctness of revolutionary ideas—not to drive out 'conservative' workers, or other tendencies, but through free and democratic debate to win the willing support of the entire membership to the ideas and policies which alone can liberate the class.

Brother Lewis says, "Union leaders don't claim to represent the views of the working class. They represent the views of their members."

Trade union leaders are bound by the internal democracy of their

organisations to uphold the interests of their members in the way the majority dictates. But take the point any further, and it becomes a sheer cop-out from political responsibility.

Trade union leaders can represent their **members'** interests in the final analysis **only** by representing the interests of the **working class**. The point of leadership is to help, encourage and persuade the members to clearly understand their interests **as a class** in the fullest sense.

Thirdly, would Brother Lewis argue, for example, that British trade unions should not be affiliated to the Labour Party because included in their ranks are workers who support the Tories, Liberals and SDP? Most surely he would not—for that would place him in very embarrassing political company.

Fourthly, all the noble concern for the "great diversity of political views and affiliations" among workers in the union, seems suddenly to vanish when it comes to the highly **political** decision of the union leaders to "encourage our members to join the UDF", support it, and wage joint campaigns!

So the crux of the argument must be that the UDF is not a workers' organisation, but is multi-class. **Therefore what?** Apparently you can support it without a qualm, even encourage your members to go into it individually—the only thing you can't do is **affiliate** to it!

You refuse to do the one thing which would put the organised workers in a position to **change** the UDF and bring it under their control!

The workers are sent in defenceless, disarmed, without organisation—into the arms of the 'multi-class' community grouplets and petty-bourgeois democrats from whom, by washing its hands of the UDF at the level of 'affiliation', the union imagines it can maintain its independence.

'Independence'

Lenin tirelessly explained when arguing against the Mensheviks in Russia (who also claimed to be for the 'independence' of the workers' organisations) that **the only way to preserve the independence of the workers' organisations was to establish the organised workers' leadership over the entire revolu-**

workers' movement internationally and contributed to revolutionary upheavals and major advances by the workers' parties in many countries.

Civil war (in England)—Revolutionary struggle in the 1640s between the forces of parliament, representing the rising bourgeoisie, and the forces of the king, representing the landowning aristocracy and the remnants of feudal absolutism. The war ended in victory for the bourgeoisie and laid the basis for the development of modern British capitalism

and imperialism.

Snowden, Philip (1864-1937)—Member of parliament for the Independent Labour Party from 1906 to 1931 and chancellor of the exchequer (minister of finance) in the reformist Labour governments of 1924 and 1929, when he was responsible for cutting unemployment benefits and other attacks on the working class. These policies led to the break-up of the Labour government, while Snowden was rewarded with a seat in the House of Lords. **Ethel Snowden**

(1881-1951), was another leading reformist in the ILP.

Thomas, James (1874-1949)—right-wing leader of British railwaymen's union who played a notorious part in betraying the General Strike of 1926. Served as Colonial Secretary in Ramsay MacDonald's government. Subsequently sacked and expelled, and cut off without a pension, by the National Union of Railwaymen when, together with MacDonald, he joined the 'National Government' with the Tories in 1931.

tionary movement.

The strength, clarity and vigour of the organised workers can win people of all oppressed and exploited classes—including, for example, the small traders—to the side of the working class.

What characterises the middle class in all its various sections is that it has no independent basis in society. It therefore has an inherent tendency to vacillate between the conflicting pressures of the two powerful classes in society: the bourgeoisie and the working class.

In South Africa the black middle class sympathises with the working class, while at the same time clinging to its meagre privileges and tenuous 'freedom' from wage labour. It is itself exploited and oppressed by the capitalist system.

Marxism has long pointed out that petty-bourgeois politicians who compromise with capitalism are not **representing** the interests of the middle class, but **politically exploiting it**. The liberation of the majority of the middle class depends on the capitalist system being overthrown—and if the working class is held back from achieving this in a revolution, the oppressed middle class becomes itself a helpless victim of savage capitalist counter-revolution.

For this reason the support of the middle class must be won **not** through compromising with capitalism, but in an open tug-of-war against the capitalist class.

It is possible, right and necessary for the working class, in its program, to put forward specific demands to cater for the practical needs of various sections of the middle class.

The only condition must be that the program of struggle against the big bourgeoisie must not be watered down in any way, and this means no compromise whatsoever with the liberal capitalists.

The possibility of a revolutionary workers' government making ample specific concessions to the middle class, without opening dangers of counter-revolution, depends on two things.

It depends, firstly, on the complete conquest of the state power, and the smashing of the capitalist state machine. It depends, secondly, on the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism being carried through completely in the main branches of the economy, so that the commanding heights of economic and political power pass unreservedly in-

to workers' hands.

When Trotsky was writing on the problem of the German revolution in the 1930s, he answered those who said: "It's wrong to talk about a working-class revolution because actually 95 per cent of the people are interested in revolution, and consequently it's really a *people's* revolution."

Trotsky explained that the worker revolutionaries should say to those who put forward that point of view:

"Of course 95 per cent of the population, if not 98 per cent, is exploited by finance capital. But this exploitation is organised hierarchically: there are exploiters, there are sub-exploiters, sub-sub-exploiters, etc. Only thanks to this hierarchy do the exploiters keep in subjection the majority of the nation. In order that the nation should indeed be able to reconstruct itself around a new class core, it must be reconstructed ideologically, and this can be achieved only if the proletariat does not dissolve itself into the 'people', into the 'nation', but on the contrary develops a programme of *its* proletarian revolution and compels the petty bourgeoisie to choose between two regimes. The slogan of the people's revolution lulls the broad masses of workers, reconciles them to the bourgeois-hierarchical structure of the 'people', and so retards their liberation." (*The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*, Penguin edition, p.62.)

The point is not altered by the character of the struggle in South Africa, in which the overthrow of the racist regime is the first point on the political agenda.

It is correct that there should be a 'popular alliance' in this struggle—but a terrific amount of confusion is usually buried under the use of this term. The question is, what is the **character** of the popular alliance to be?

When centred round the organised workers, and driven forward by the workers' strength and clarity of purpose, the 'popular alliance' would resemble the relationship between a magnet and iron filings. That is as it should be.

The petty-bourgeois politicians, however, like to present the 'popular alliance' as some sort of compromise arrangement between different 'class interests' in which none tries to assert predominance! Such an alliance would resemble a collection of potatoes in one sack—and, while the proletarian 'potatoes' would be the most numerous, as we all know it is the few petty-bourgeois 'potatoes' which find their way to the positions of real influence on top.

Moreover, because the petty-

bourgeoisie can maintain no independent standpoint from the main classes in society, the result is that whenever the organised power of the working class is not asserted, **it is the influence of the liberal bourgeoisie (openly or behind the scenes) which becomes paramount. This ends up crippling the mass movement.**

Inqaba is preparing material on the struggle in the 1950s, to show how these problems laid the basis for the defeats at that time.

Trade union leaders who abdicate the responsibility of **organising** the intervention of the advanced workers into the UDF—and later into the ANC itself—only prepare the way for future crippling, division and demoralisation of the entire movement. Can there be any doubt that that would bring a catastrophe on the unions themselves?

We believe that the urgent task of unifying the trade unions should be approached without political preconditions by the leaders of the democratic unions.

Nevertheless, because the policy of abstention from the UDF is **not** a coherent strategy for the workers' movement, it is likely even in the short run to bring disarray and confusion into the attempts to form a united federation.

Demands

In a passage which is pleasantly inconsistent with the rest of his conclusions, and gives us hope, Dave Lewis says:

"The point of this digression is not to say that workers should never co-operate, never work together with organisations of non-workers, or organisations in which non-workers are also members. We would expect this of our members. But we would not be surprised, and nobody else should be surprised, if when our members do work in this way, they insist on carrying into these organisations the culture and demands of the working class, and the culture and demands of a working class organisation." (p.15)

That is exactly what should take place!

This is an understanding which the leaders of SAAWU, GAWU and other unions in the UDF need to take on board.

The present artificial structure of the UDF, undemocratically weighted against workers' organisations, must be deliberately challenged and chang-



MAWU members carrying the union's banner into their AGM. Who could doubt the workers' ability to control the UDF if they set their minds to it?

ed. We are not arguing for trade union leaders simply to go into the UDF to 'represent' their members on their own.

The point is that the workers in the factory committees, shop-stewards committees, branches, joint councils, etc., should discuss and **organise** their intervention into the UDF; should discuss **independently** their own demands and policies, to be fought for within the UDF; should strictly mandate their delegates, and so on.

Judging by the interview in *Work in Progress*, the GWU leaders themselves have not learned the necessary lessons either from the experience of the meat strike or from their more recent experience in the Disorderly Bills Action Committee.

If you send one or a few individuals along to 'represent' a mass workers' organisation in a place where petty-bourgeois 'representatives' are swarming, of course it will be a disaster! It would be surprising if any worker put through that experience wasn't turned off politics for life.

The tactic must be to constantly overwhelm the petty bourgeois with numbers, in meetings of this kind, to let them feel the hot breath of the workers and never forget it, and make them respond to workers' initiative and demands. Is it so difficult to organise this?

There is a need for a clear program of **national action** on the part of the UDF, aimed particularly to mobilise the forces of the unorganised working class, which only the already organised workers would be able to carry forward successfully.

But to get such a program of action, the **workers' organisations** will have to work it out, including demands of all the oppressed, but putting workers' demands to the forefront—and then see to it that the **UDF wholeheartedly adopts the campaign.**

Dave Lewis is absolutely right to say that "the workers don't understand what programme of action is envisaged by the UDF." Talk for no clear purpose is "anathema to an organised worker." Without active involvement of the organised workers in deciding, organising and directing an action campaign, the UDF itself will be enfeebled.

Of course there will be 'big' problems and loud objections to workers' demands to change the initial 'structures' and give class-content to the 'principles' of the UDF.

Brother Lewis speaks about the UDF's present structure as though it is carved in stone. But who can doubt the capacity of an organised workers' movement which (in a police state) has learned to deal with such powers

as Frame, SEIFSA, the Chamber of Mines, etc., to overcome any petty-bourgeois resistance within the UDF—**once the workers set their minds clearly to the task.**

Conception

If organised workers are to transform the UDF, it will be necessary to have a clear conception of the tasks of the coming revolution, and the tactics appropriate to them.

In the workers' movement in Russia, the errors of 'economism' and Menshevism were bound up with the false idea of separate revolutionary 'stages'. Those who thought it was **not** the task of the Russian working class to lead the struggle to overthrow the Tsarist dictatorship and carry the revolution through, naturally wished to confine the workers' movement to limited aims **within the framework of capitalism.**

Politically, they were content to allow the working class to serve as pack-horses for the liberals, petty-bourgeois democrats and intellectuals. If it hadn't been for the strength of the Bolsheviks and the clear policy for workers' power which

Lenin and Trotsky put forward in the revolution, the 'two-stage' leaders would have caused the terrible, bloody defeat of the revolution.

Essentially the same applies to South Africa.

In the August 1983 issue of the 'liberal and radical' journal *Reality*, Steven Friedman uses these words in describing FOSATU's present policy:

"It argues that alliances between black workers and other strata of black society have **inevitably** become dominated by elite groups to the disadvantage of workers. Because workers suffer from educational disadvantages and a lack of time which are not shared by the black 'elite' it is **inevitable**, they argue, that the elite will come to dominate the alliance and that its priorities will then become those of the elite." (Our emphasis.)

What gross contempt for the power and capacities of organised workers! If this report is true, then it must reflect the attitude of some **intellectuals** within FOSATU—but **it cannot be the attitude of the worker militants in FOSATU.**

Friedman goes on:

"Behind this is also a fear that any black nationalist government which came to power would tend to rule in the interests of the black elite—unless an independent worker movement existed, articulating specific worker interests which would then be in a position to influence the policy of that Government."

Here we have the two-stage idea stated in all its baldness! How, one may ask, is a 'black nationalist government' going to come to power unless it is carried to power by the working class? And this would mean that the working class allowed itself to be led in the revolutionary struggle by a petty-bourgeois elite leadership!

The task of the independent worker movement is **not** to be in a position **merely** to "influence" some future government, but to so organise and struggle that government and state power passes into **its own hands.**

We refuse to believe that the argument reported by Friedman genuinely reflects the views of the fighting ranks of FOSATU and the other democratic unions.

However, there have been several disturbing indications recently from both GWU and FOSATU, which imply that the workers ought to distinguish, **for political purposes**, between 'good' bosses and 'bad' bosses—whereas in fact the **entire capitalist class**, and indeed **particularly** the 'liberal' **big capitalists** are the most formidable, subtle and

dangerous enemies of all the fundamental interests of the working class.

Precisely when the liberal capitalists parade as opponents of the racist regime, they need to be exposed to the workers as the chief beneficiaries of exploitation and oppression, for the protection of whose property **every** capitalist state primarily exists.

PFP spokesmen, for example, declare vigorous support for the SA military machine, and for all the core components of the **state**, not as some reluctant 'compromise' to get white votes, but **because the bourgeois class they represent depends on this repressive apparatus to maintain its power over the working class.**

Heartsore though they may be about the brutal 'excesses' of repression, this is the only state they have got. They cannot saw off the limb of the tree on which they sit.

When FOSATU launched its 'own' campaign against the new constitution just before the white referendum, thousands of workers responded eagerly, wearing the 'One man one vote' stickers to work. Excellent!

But a grave misjudgement lies behind the idea of FOSATU leaders to make it a point of the campaign to question the bosses whether they supported a 'Yes' vote. Consider the implication—the **political lesson** which this establishes in the minds of workers. That the bosses who favoured a 'No' may be considered to be on the workers' side?!

Oppenheimer, for example—the most ruthless and cunning, as well as the most powerful of the big boss class—tactically changed sides not long before the referendum for the precise purpose of pulling the wool over the workers' eyes. Having previously indicated support for the permanence of the Bantustans and the sincerity of Botha's 'reforms', Oppenheimer piously switched to supporting 'on balance' the 'No' campaign.

Can he have been much displeased by the thrust of FOSATU's pre-referendum campaign? Still more delighted must have been those middle-class democrats in the UDF who want to hold the workers to a compromise with the so-called 'progressive' capitalists. And these are the very leaders from whose political influence the policy of abstention from the UDF is supposed to save the workers!

For all the bosses, whether to sup-

port a 'Yes' or a 'No' was a purely tactical decision, **calculated from their capitalist class standpoint.**

Workers' tactics in the struggle always involve difficulties—and mistakes happen, especially when an underlying revolutionary conception is lacking or is not clear. But mistakes, once recognised, can be avoided in future.

The main point of political campaigns among workers should be to show—not any fundamental difference between 'liberal' or 'progressive' capitalists and 'reactionary' capitalists—but the reactionary heart of the entire bourgeoisie which ties it inseparably to the state power; to the forces of 'law and order'; to the splitting up of South Africa on 'federal' or 'confederal' lines; to the holding down of workers' power and the impoverishment and exploitation of working people for the sake of profit.

Through such an approach alone can revolutionary class-consciousness become generalised in the proletariat.

Program

Finally, and most important of all, a clear political program must be fought for, in and through the UDF.

The *Freedom Charter* still provides a good basis for a workers' program. The present UDF leaders have put forward, not the Freedom Charter itself, but a filleted version of abstract 'principles' drawn from it.

Workers ought to insist at least on the Freedom Charter as a starting-point, emphasising, together with the democratic demands, the specific social demands contained there, and stressing the nationalisation of the mines, banks and monopolies as an **immediate** task of a revolutionary government.

The main thing lacking in the Freedom Charter is any explanation that these demands can be carried out only with the conquest of state power by the working class. This point the organised workers would be well placed to hammer home in the UDF.

If we can reach a common standpoint on these issues of strategy and tactics in the trade unions over the next few months, then much of the ground will have been laid for big advances of the workers' movement towards power.

TUCSA workers must be won to a new federation

On paper, TUCSA is the largest trade-union coordinating body in the country. Since 1979 its membership has swelled to nearly half a million, including 140 000 African workers.

But internally TUCSA is torn by growing crisis, as was evident at its recent conference. The leadership is presiding over contradictory pressures which it is incapable of resolving.

Growing capitalist crisis means that increasing numbers of TUCSA members feel the same need as hundreds of thousands of other black workers who have entered into struggle—to organise, unite and fight against low wages, retrenchments, rising prices, and all the other burdens.

More and more of TUCSA's members have nothing to lose and everything to gain through linking up with the workers in the independent, democratic unions in joint struggle against the employers and the regime which defends their interests.

Yet the recent TUCSA conference bowed to the pressure of its bureaucratic leadership and the officials of privileged white unions to launch a struggle against—the **independent unions!**

The conference passed a resolution from the Mine Surface Officials Association calling on the government to **outlaw unregistered unions!**

This echoes the reactionary Anna Scheepers, outgoing TUCSA President, who in June called on the government to prosecute all workers striking illegally.

Of course, during the last ten years of determined struggle by the black workers, the employers and the government have discovered that implementing such measures is impossible. The independent trade union movement has achieved its present stature **despite** repression, **despite** vic-

By
Richard Monroe

timisation, **despite** the weight of the courts and the police.

This, in the eyes of TUCSA's leaders, is precisely the 'crime' of the independent unions—through militant struggle, rooted in the organisation of African workers, they have exposed the bankruptcy of TUCSA's methods.

From its start until 1962 TUCSA excluded African workers from membership; in 1967 it again forced them out; in 1968 it readmitted them; in 1969 under government pressure it again excluded them. Then, in 1973, after the Durban strikes, it again voted to accept them—as **members of separated "parallel" unions!**

TUCSA's recent increase in African membership is based on exploiting check-off facilities and closed shop agreements—not to build factory-floor bargaining power, but to try and insulate sections of workers from the militancy of the independent unions.

TUCSA is, and has always been, dominated by privileged sections of the working class (mainly white), whose leaders have sought to defend the narrow self-interest of these sections by maintaining cosy relations with the employers. This, and not the need for working-class solidarity, has determined the TUCSA leaders' attitude towards the mass of workers.

When TUCSA was formed, the bargaining power of craft unions was already being challenged by job-fragmentation and skill-dilution

resulting from the introduction of new manufacturing processes by profit-hungry bosses.

Since at least World War II in SA this has involved the renewed threat of replacing skilled white workers by less skilled Coloured, Indian and, ultimately, African workers at starvation wages.

Instead of struggling against the profit system at the root of the problem, white workers have been encouraged by their leaders to direct their hostility against black workers who might displace them. They have sought to protect their position through agreements with the employers and government—by statutory colour bars, racial restrictions on entry into apprenticeships, etc.

These means have been able to regulate, but never to halt, the drive of the capitalists to substitute machinery for human skill. From the 1950s to the present, more and more industrial work has been done by 'semi-skilled', mainly black, operatives. White skilled workers have formed a steadily declining proportion of the workforce.

While SACLAs has defended sectional privilege through "whites only" unionism, TUCSA has developed other methods with the same aim. Its leaders have resorted—despite their hostility to blacks—to organising some sections of Coloured, Indian, and later African, workers. To leave them at wage levels unilaterally determined by the bosses would have left white workers more vulnerable to undercutting.

In the 1950s and 60s layers of Coloured and Indian workers could be unionised in ways which maintained the domination of white skilled workers. With the economy growing rapidly there was room for the bosses to grant economic concessions.

White workers, and sections of

Coloured and Indian skilled workers in their wake, made big advances in living standards without having to struggle. Real bargaining power was meanwhile passing out of their hands unnoticed.

Wage increases and fringe benefits also trickled down to some other sections of TUCSA workers.

But these conditions have irrevocably altered. The bosses and the government are loading the effects of capitalist crisis onto the backs of the majority of workers. Even the skilled workers' privileges are no longer guaranteed to them.

The main counterforce to these attacks is the African majority of the working class—most impoverished and oppressed—drawn by the increasing use of modern machinery into immensely powerful strategic positions in the big factories and mines throughout the country.

This struggle—of the mass of the workers against the employers and their apartheid regime—puts all intermediate social layers under intense conflicting pressures. All the old 'certainties' are challenged.

More and more the choice is pos-

ed to those in the middle: cling to the waning strength of the capitalist class and its system, or join with the African proletariat in its struggle.

These new realities are sometimes noticed in the strangest quarters. The Amalgamated Engineering Union is a whites-only union, the largest union affiliated neither to SACLA nor TUCSA. Yet this year its General Secretary Tom Neethling wrote in the union journal about the old 'industrial relations system' of cosy Industrial Council bargaining:

"For many years while we objected to employers abusing the system and taking advantage of the delays it permitted, we supported it, believing that its provisions were responsible for maintaining labour peace.

"And so they were. But, having observed the manner in which employers have backed down quickly in the face of strike action by emergent unions, we have come to realise that the system...was, in fact, weakening our bargaining power." (*Financial Mail*, 4/2/83)

At TUCSA's conference, too, incoming president Lief van Tonder, conceded that "on its own" it "could

not achieve such a goal as the introduction of a statutory 40-hour working week." (*FM*, 7/10/83)

Yet—as the hostility to the independent unions displayed at the conference shows—TUCSA's leaders remain locked into their old sectional, divisive methods, which play into the hands of the bosses.

These methods leave the bulk of their members defenceless. Take, for example, the clothing industry, where TUCSA unions dominate. 3 000 workers were thrown out of jobs in the Transvaal up to July this year alone—and a further 1 000 laid off when three factories closed in September.

A Divisional Council conference of the Garment Workers Union in August reported on retrenchments and short-time also in PE, East London, Kimberley and Bloemfontein. In East London, the Union's Welfare Fund had to stop paying benefits because of the demands being placed on it.

What struggle is being mounted against these conditions by TUCSA's leaders?

In the Transvaal, trainee workers in the clothing industry start on R100 a month—R15 less than the wage for domestic workers, and about one-third of the 'household subsistence level'.

This pitiful wage was agreed to at

The bulk of TUCSA's members have the same interests as workers organised in the independent unions—in struggling against the bosses and their government.



Transvaal garment workers, members of TUCSA.

the Industrial Council by the NUCW leadership!

The new IC agreement for the Cape worsted textile industry, to which TUCSA's Textile Workers' Industrial Union is a party, includes a minimum wage of R41,25 a week; many other grades are below R50 a week.

A recent letter to *The Star* (11/7/83) illustrates the nature of the "democracy" in TUCSA's affiliates. Responding to Scheepers's claim that, in contrast to the independent unions, "our only paymasters are our own members", a 'Concerned Tucsalite' writes:

"As a dues-paying member of Tucsa, I and my fellow employees in the Johannesburg Combined Municipal Employees Union are our own paymasters, yet we have not seen our secretary.

"Our chairman, Mr George Huntley, who is a senior official with the Johannesburg municipality, has the power to hire and fire the very workers he is supposed to represent!

"Did Dr Scheepers not read of how Mr Huntley tried to oust Mr Gavin Harris or how Mr Terry Jeevanamthan almost lost his job because of the closed shop agreement?

"Dr Scheepers is quick to respond to criticisms of Tucsa from outside, but has not responded yet to the injustices perpetrated by the executives of its own affiliates.

"Aggrieved, we ask: Why?"

Reform group

In this union, as in some other TUCSA affiliates, a reform group exists—campaigning for a change of leadership, election of shop stewards, and a struggle against retrenchments and dismissals without proper representation.

For such reform groups, and generally for TUCSA's rank and file, the power and fighting spirit of workers in the independent democratic unions will inevitably exert increasing attraction. "Black support for TUCSA unions has crumbled during the past few years when workers have had the option of joining emerging unions" say independent union leaders. (FM, 7/10/83)

The Natal Sugar Industry Employees Union, which left TUC-



TUCSA General Secretary Arthur Grobelaar: cosy with the bosses.

SA in 1981, recently joined FOSATU. Its members see that the sugar bosses can be fought more effectively along with FOSATU's Sweet, Food and Allied Workers' Union.

A victory for democratic trade unionism has also been won in recent months by another FOSATU union. At factories in the Transvaal and Natal, workers signed up into TUCSA's SA Typographical Union through a closed shop agreement have won a struggle to join the Paper, Wood, and Allied Workers' Union.

A closed shop—employment for union members only—is a major gain for trade unionism **when it is based on workers belonging to the union of their choice.** But it is indefensible when used by bureaucrats to frustrate democratic unionism in the interests of a privileged minority of workers.

Undoubtedly TUCSA will lose more members to the independent unions as the fight against the abuse of the closed shop intensifies in the period ahead.

TUCSA's leadership strives to keep it "non-political". At the recent conference two-thirds of the delegates bowed to General Secretary Grobelaar's call to abstain on a tabby-cat resolution from the Motor Industry Combined Workers' Union, calling on the government "to reconsider its divisive constitutional proposals."

Yet in maintaining this "non-political" stance, the TUCSA leaders will increase divisions in their ranks and alienate membership. Athol Margolis of the NUCW reflected the views of many in saying: "no amount of money will buy a better image for TUCSA when it squirms away from issues such as squatter camp demoli-

tions and death in detention and fails to raise opposition to the banning of SAAWU—all matters which affect workers". (RDM, 6/10/83.)

Leaders even of some skilled workers' unions are also escaping from this sinking ship. In protest against the decisions hostile to independent unions taken at the conference, the 54 000-strong 'multi-racial' Boilermakers' Society has pulled out of TUCSA.

This, too, is a sign of the future. When the Boilermakers' Society previously withdrew from TUCSA, between 1976 and 1980—it was because TUCSA had decided to accept African membership! Their present stance reflects the new conditions—that, within the industrial sectors where the Boilermakers are organised, the shopfloor muscle is in the hands of MAWU.

Disintegration

All these factors doom TUCSA to disintegration. Even the bourgeois press already recognises its "declining prestige." (FM 16/9/83). There is no place in the development of the workers' movement for a coordinating body based on defence of privilege and class-collaboration.

What workers organised in the independent unions are striving for is a single non-racial democratic federation representing the interests of the mass of workers.

This should be the natural home, too, for the bulk of TUCSA's membership. Yet TUCSA's leaders stand as a barrier against this—a barrier aggravated by their warlike stance against the independent unions in defence of their bureaucratic positions.

Playing on traditional loyalties of their members, the TUCSA leaders can wage a protracted struggle against the unification of the workers' movement—to the advantage of the bosses.

Against this, to speed the development of workers' unity, it is the task of the independent union movement—especially of the new federation when it comes into existence—to call on TUCSA unions to join in a **united front of struggle** against the employers.

This must be a call, not just for talks among union leaders, but for

united campaigns, involving a coming together of members of different unions in the factories to establish joint committees of action.

The widest power of workers in different unions can be mobilised in campaigns for the burning demands shared by the vast majority of workers: for a national minimum wage linked to the cost of living; for a 40-hour week without loss of pay, to fight against job losses; for an end to government repression and victimisation of trade unionists; against racial division and for workers' unity.

This call should be extended also to the unaffiliated unions. Reflecting the pressures on them, some of their leaders—like van der Watt of the Boilermakers' and even Neethling of AEU—have expressed a desire for "unions to present a united front to employers." (*FM*, 4/2/83).

All these leaders should be put to the test in the eyes of their members, through a call for an action campaign.

Whether or not the leaders of TUCSA or other unions accept the call, it could evoke a huge response in their ranks, especially among lower-paid African, Coloured and Indian members.

The call for a united front can be taken up by activists in every union,

to press on their own leadership, and discuss with their fellow-workers, trying to involve them in struggles.

A united campaign would make it easier to struggle also against mistaken practices in these unions, which divide and weaken our class. An example is the old system of separate racial branches, which some 'mixed' unions such as the Boilermakers' Society still maintain.

Insulate

This system serves only to insulate white members against the democratic weight of the majority. In the course of co-operation in action, its weakening effects can be clearly demonstrated.

Campaigns of this nature at any level—a single workplace, a region, or nationally, will test and expose for the members of TUCSA and other established unions the bankruptcy of their leaders' policies—and the power of militant democratic non-racial unionism rooted in the most oppressed majority of the class.

They will hasten the process of uniting the working class into a single independent federation.

An objective of such a federation

must be one non-racial democratic union in each industrial sector. This can be achieved in the course of common struggles—not by ultimatums, but by discussion and explanation to break the barriers and prejudices which divide workers.

Presently, advances towards joint struggle and then towards amalgamation under one union banner will be most rapid where the need is felt most strongly—among the lower-paid, less-skilled and racially oppressed workers.

In several instances, the independent unions have proved their ability also to win small groups of white workers. In *SASPU FOCUS* (June 1983), Chris Dlamini, FOSATU President, described what happened at Kelloggs, where he works:

"Our union has a strong factory-floor organisation and has been able to win significant benefits for our members. The artisans in question have no representation. They have various grievances, for example, some of them have been unfairly dismissed."

He explained to the artisans that on the factory floor workers are divided because white artisans traditionally supported management. He told them that they were all workers and would be stronger if they spoke with one voice to management.

As a result, thirteen white artisans were won to the Sweet, Food and Allied Workers' Union.

As the capitalist crisis deepens and the apartheid regime crumbles, the correctness of this approach will be seen by more and more white workers—especially among fresh youth—as the only practical alternative to a future of insecurity.

The old methods of 'trade unionism from the top, for those at the top' are in irreparable decay. The hysteria of TUCSA's bureaucrats is a symptom of this.

The future lies with mass unionism uniting millions, embracing all workers who want to join in the struggle of our class to win decent living conditions and rights for all.

In the course of this struggle it will become clear that lasting gains can be achieved only through democratic workers' rule and the socialist transformation of society.

The struggle to unify the trade union movement is a vital step towards that.



The Garment Worker reprinted this cartoon from a US trade union journal. But in practice the TUCSA leaders lick the boots of the same capitalist economic dictators!

GALLO strike —



June 1983: striking Checkers workers gathered at CCAWUSA office cheer as they learn that management has met their demands.

In *Inqaba* No. 3 (July 1981) a worker at Gallo reported on some of the problems faced by black workers and the need for trade union organisation.

This report by a Gallo worker takes up the developments at the factory since then.

Until the strike in February 1983 we at Gallo were not organised in any trade union. As a result there was disunity and division among the workers.

People were concerned with their own individual problems and trying to protect their own jobs as much as they could. This was our weakness. In turn, this weakness was used by the bosses for quite a long time.

We were being ill-treated. Our wages were low. For long periods a big number of workers were employed at daily rates, having no rights at all (this occurred when the demand for goods was high, and they

would be laid-off immediately work returned to normal).

Even the full-time workers would be dismissed without any notice, nor furnished with reasons.

We were forced to work overtime. This was strenuous, especially for the driver who had to deliver workers at their homes at night. He would arrive at his home around 1 or 2 in the morning, and leave again at 6 or 6.30 to be in time to collect workers for work.

In the few months prior to the strike, the situation had got worse. Many workers were being retrenched. The bosses argued that business had slowed down because of the unfavourable economic situation in SA. We were surprised, because it seemed we were being held responsible for that, but we were not. We were always working hard.

There was bitterness among the workers. Suddenly four workers were dismissed. The bosses' explanation

was that there was no work because of bad conditions. But many of us felt that the four were expelled for their activities in trying to improve our conditions.

As we were discussing the incident just informally, it turned out that many of us felt that the bosses had been left for too long now. Something had to be done. A few of us then discussed with other workers and called a meeting.

We were not denying that the economy in the country was going through a bad spell, nor that it affected Gallo as well. All we demanded was fairness. We questioned overtime. Why should we be forced to work overtime if the business was not doing well?

We took the position that overtime should be cancelled. We workers should share the few hours' work that are available. We said each one of us should ask himself how the dismissed workers are expected to live and

'The only language the bosses understand''

maintain their families.

On top of that, do we as workers know who will be the next victim tomorrow? Are we not supposed to protect ourselves?

It was then agreed that the following day we would not work until the four dismissed workers were reinstated. The following morning we assembled in the kitchen and refused to resume work until our demand was met.

Further arguments against retrenchments were raised in this meeting. It was argued that our white managers, who were not producing anything, were being given high salaries. Why are their salaries not decreased if the business is bad?

At the same time the firm had just bought new vans and workers felt this had not been necessary. Instead of wasting this money, jobs should be protected.

While we were there the bosses tried to intimidate us, saying we were striking illegally. They further issued instructions that we should either resume work or leave the factory. We just sat there.

Later some workers got frightened and wanted to go and work. But we pressed ahead despite these signs of division that were beginning to appear.

Fortunately a representative from CCAWUSA arrived at this stage. He encouraged us and gave the assurance of his union's support. His arrival brought back the life and strength that was disappearing. Everybody chanted that we were neither resuming work nor leaving the factory until our demand was met.

Later we were told that we had all been expelled. We were to come the following morning to collect our pay packets. We all agreed to come the following morning, but that we were not going to take the money.

To show their seriousness, the bosses hired a bus to take us to the station. We were not taken by the company truck, as was always the case.

The following morning we found the gates locked. As we were still standing there, we saw the managers

coming carrying tables on their heads. Our pay packets were ready. To their surprise, we told them to keep the money.

At this stage CCAWUSA intervened. We agreed to disperse and to meet the following day at CCAWUSA's offices.

These meetings took place for the rest of the days we were out of work. Union people would give us lessons on trade unionism and how to organise and struggle against the bosses. This gave us more strength and confidence.

The bosses thought immediately they dismissed us we would get divided. But actually we got more united. Beyond that, many of us came to understand the importance of joining a trade union, and also gained experience in regard to the struggles against the bosses.

This is what we gained by assembling at CCAWUSA's offices and having discussions, rather than sitting down in our homes as individuals. That leads to demoralisation.

At the factory all the whites and managers had taken over our work. They only managed for a day! They then went to the labour office and recruited workers. But even these failed to cope with the work.

Ultimately, after a week, we were called back with the four workers also being reinstated. Unfortunately, it was on condition that we signed the 'final warning' papers, which we did.

At the factory all the whites and managers took over. They only managed for a day!

But despite that, there were a lot of gains as a result of the strike. The most important is that not only is our own factory unionised, but the whole of Gallo is unionised—the head office and the warehouse departments. It is something that the bosses tried

to obstruct by all means, but they failed.

The head office and the warehouse departments were not involved in the strike. As soon as CCAWUSA began negotiations for recognition, the bosses increased wages in the warehouse department to discourage them against the union.

At the head office the bosses did not intervene because they thought there was no doubt that the workers there are well-off and not interested in the union.

But the warehouse people were not fooled. They immediately said the increases were the result of the strike and the activity of the union.

At the same time we at the factory department sent workers to the warehouse to organise them into the union. We had tremendous success. When the ballot was conducted, the overwhelming majority agreed to join the union.

This influenced the workers at the head office. Though with a slight majority, they also agreed to join the union after we had discussions with them.

The bosses were then left with no alternative but to recognise the union. Since then there has been ever-growing confidence and unity among the workers.

The bosses are no more having it easy. The only people who are fired are those found guilty of stealing. There is no overtime any more.

All this has angered our bosses. While we used to be bribed with records at least once a month—for having done well with overtime—this has come to an abrupt end.

We are not worried in any case, as long as our jobs are secure. We do not eat records.

We have shop stewards who are very active, though more education is still needed.

Strike action is the only language the bosses understand well. This is why workers throughout SA should get organised in trade unions. We are looking forward to the building of a strong organisation of the mineworkers.

NATIONALISE THE MONOPOLIES!

— a central task of the revolution

Recent revelations, exposing how decisively the SA economy is dominated by a handful of giant corporations, have caused consternation in the press.

Capitalism justifies itself as a system of 'free enterprise' and 'healthy competition' among independent producers. In reality, as production expands, enterprises get bigger and bigger. More powerful capitalists swallow up their weaker rivals, and take over their market shares, in a merciless struggle for survival.

'Free enterprise' thus turns into **monopoly**, as Lenin showed in his classic work *Imperialism*, and concentrates power in the hands of a few multi-millionaires. In SA, it is now clear, the degree of monopoly control must be among the highest in the world.

80% of the shares on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange are controlled by seven giant companies: Anglo-American, Sanlam, Barlow Rand, Anglovaal, Rembrandt, Liberty Life and Old Mutual.

In production, 2,7% of enterprises control half of total turnover; 6,3% employ nearly two-thirds of the workforce; 6% own 85% of all fixed assets!

Two-thirds of the assets of the twenty biggest companies are controlled by Anglo-American, Old Mutual and Sanlam alone.

By Daniel Hugo

Moreover, directors of the few top monopolies sit on the boards of all twenty of these companies, and many more besides.

Between them, Anglo-American, Old Mutual and Sanlam control more than 4 500 companies with assets worth R80 000 million! On top of this, in recent months, SA monopolies have continued their spree of buying control over SA subsidiaries of foreign companies, thus further expanding their empires.

'Free enterprise'

Defenders of capitalism now bewail the fact that SA "has become a playground for conglomerates against all the principles of free enterprise". Clearly, monopoly capitalism exposed in its true colours will shake the myths of 'free enterprise' with which the middle class and sections of workers have been deluded, and weaken their political support for the system.

In roundabout language the *Financial Mail* now acknowledges a fact which Marx theoretically anticipated more than a hundred years ago: "Because the (capitalist) SA economy does not approximate a truly free market situation, those who do not join forces to protect their interests (i.e., combine into big enterprises—

Editor) will have little chance of prosperity" (5 August).

In other words, small businesses get smashed!

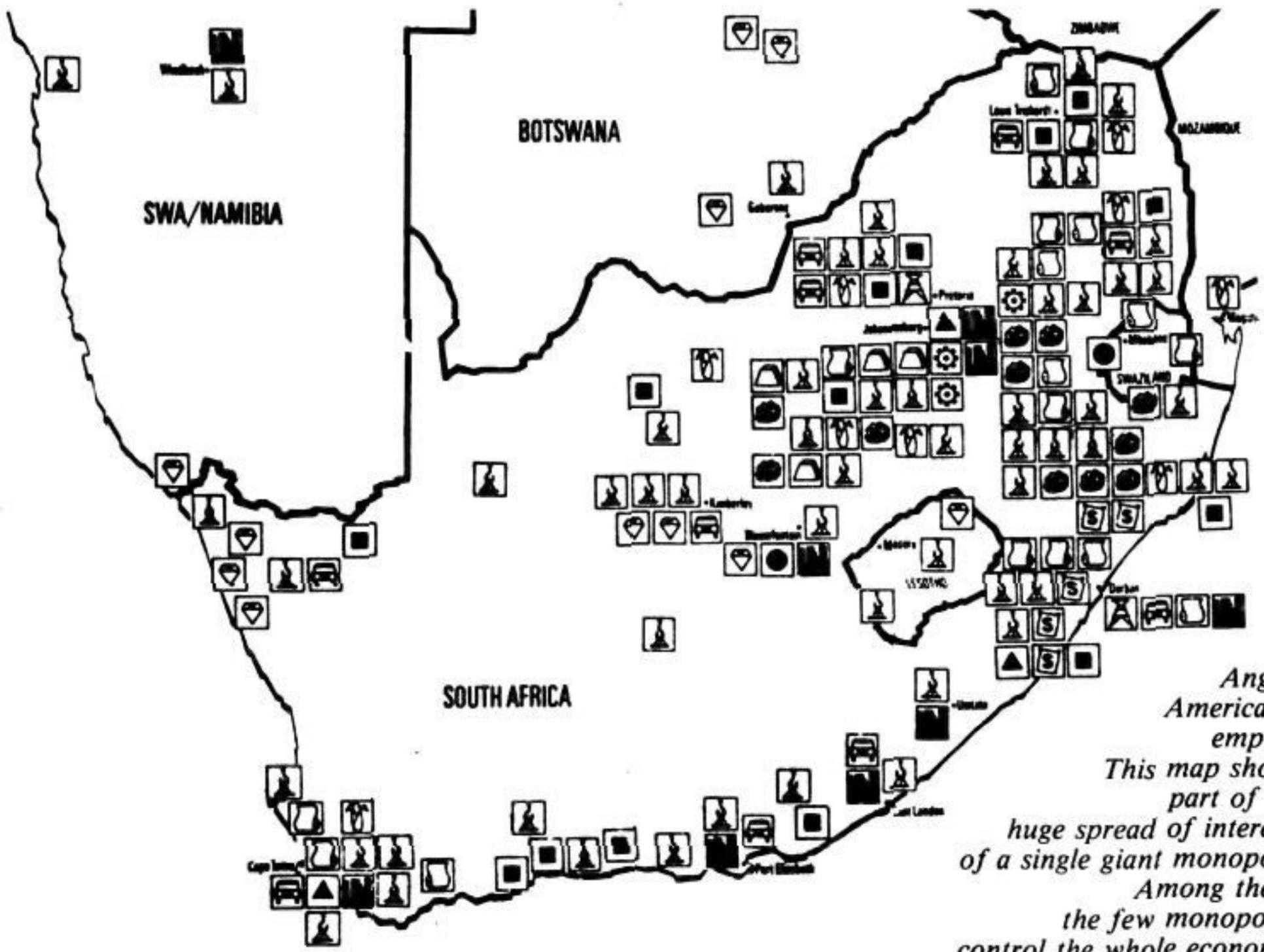
Monopoly capital defends itself by pointing out that its growth has been part of the inescapable logic of capitalist development, and that production today cannot be supported on any other basis.

The government itself, despite its commitment to 'preserving the free market', has stealthily encouraged the growth of monopolies as a means of boosting some crucial sectors of the economy. In fact, the chairman of the state 'Competition Board' openly proclaims his admiration for the monopolies: without them, he says, the economy would not have reached its present stage.

These ideas are indistinguishable from those of the monopoly bosses themselves. Mr D. Gordon, chairman of Liberty Life, praises the "tremendous advantages the economy derives from having well-managed (?) and financially powerful companies able ... to shell out hundreds of millions of Rand to open up new gold mines, to help finance Sasol and Escom", etc.

SA's economic development, he modestly adds, "has been due in large measure to the enterprise and resources of our major corporations and the men who built them."

But, even on this scale, capitalist production remains subject to all the contradictions of the system, falling into periodic crises of overproduction and profitability. Has it escaped Mr



Anglo-American's empire. This map shows part of the huge spread of interests of a single giant monopoly. Among them, the few monopolies control the whole economy.

Gordon's notice that the SA economy, despite the "enterprise and resources of 'our' major corporations" which largely control it, is caught in the worst recession since the 1930s, spelling misery to millions of working people?

The diseases of society today cannot be cured by returning to 'small-scale production'. On the contrary, it is precisely the development of large-scale industry that has created the possibility of production in abundance to meet the needs of the whole of mankind.

But the capitalist system stands in the way, organising production for the profit of the bosses and not for the need of society.

The growth of monopoly is therefore a symptom of the ripeness of capitalist society for a giant leap forward —for the socialist revolution that will place control over production and society in the hands of the working masses themselves.

In the time of Marx and Engels,

taking over the economy in any industrialised country would have involved the nationalisation and integration of literally thousands of small firms. Today, the decisive sectors in a country like SA are controlled by a mere seven monopolies, together with the state, which already owns 50% of total fixed investment.

The slogan of the Freedom Charter, "The wealth of the country shall be returned to the people", can now be translated into the concrete demand: Nationalise the monopolies; for workers' control and management over the entire public sector!

The ANC should declare its intention to nationalise at least the big seven monopolies immediately on coming to power.

This relatively simple programme, which every worker will understand and support, will lay the economic foundations for the abolition of white privilege and the socialist transformation of South and Southern Africa.

-  Gold
-  Coal
-  Nickel
-  Copper
-  Iron ore
-  Diamonds
-  Aluminium
-  Agriculture
-  Sugar
-  Paper, board & timber
-  Motor
-  Heavy industry
-  Construction
-  Property
-  Base & industrial minerals
-  Electrical/Electronic equipment

Arming the workers' movement— a reply to Comrade Tambo

After the Pretoria car bomb blast in May, a rare interview with Comrade Oliver Tambo appeared in the British press. In a large centre-page article in *The Guardian* (6/8/83), he explained the strategy of armed struggle put forward by the ANC leadership.

In the course of this, Comrade Tambo was asked by his interviewer, South African Stanley Uys:

"How do you answer the charge by the breakaway (??) Marxist Workers' Tendency that you cannot win an armed struggle against such a powerful white state—that the black workers alone can achieve this?"

To this Comrade Tambo replied as follows:

"To give up the sabotage campaign would be a disastrous mistake. The workers are potentially decisive, but it is not sufficient to rely solely on them. You are not going to win the vote simply by organising yourselves for higher wages.

"In the 1950s we called a strike almost every year, but it was not sufficient. If we remove the armed component from our struggle, we will be back to square one. No change. We must not have exaggerated notions of what workers as workers can achieve. Power is not achieved without armed struggle when you have a regime which is prepared to shoot and kill to defend its position.

"It would be equally disastrous to say the armed struggle has no need of any other form of struggle. Organisation of the workers is most important. They are a very powerful component of total struggle."

As pointed out in a letter written to *The Guardian* (which it did not publish but which is printed here), Mr. Uys's question diverts Comrade Tambo from addressing the actual position put forward by *Inqaba ya Basebenzi*.

It is not at all a question of "removing the armed component from our struggle." Against the vicious state force is obviously needed.

The real questions which we invite

To: The Editor,
The Guardian,
London, United Kingdom
9 August 1983

Dear Sir,

In his interview with ANC President Oliver Tambo (*Guardian*, 6 August 1983), Stanley Uys asks: "How do you answer the charge by the breakaway Marxist Workers Tendency that you cannot win an armed struggle against such a powerful white state—that the black workers alone can achieve this?"

There are two errors here. Firstly, as Mr Uys should know from his regular reading of *Inqaba Ya Basebenzi*, the Marxist Workers Tendency is part and parcel of the African National Congress, under whose banner the mass of oppressed South Africans must unite.

Secondly, and more seriously, by misstating the position of the Marxist Workers Tendency on the armed struggle, Mr Uys fails to pose to Comrade Tambo the crux of the issue facing the liberation movement. Instead of answering our position, Comrade Tambo is given—and knocks down—the "straw man" of pacifism.

In South Africa it is not a question of posing the struggle of the workers or the armed struggle. Against the vicious state, force is obviously needed.

Our argument is that the guerilla method cannot provide the force to overthrow the regime. Only the black workers, organised in their millions and leading all the oppressed in struggle for the democratic and socialist transforma-

By
P. Qubulashé

Comrade Tambo to answer are: whose force, by what method, used when and where—can achieve the goals to which our movement stands committed?

It goes without saying that the

tion of society, can generate the necessary force.

To achieve victory, this movement will have to arm itself. But it will take up arms as a mass movement, when it has gained the strength to carry the struggle forward by these means.

Guerilla struggle, on the other hand—pitting small groups, necessarily separated from the organised workers, against a powerful industrial state—will produce the opposite of what it intends. Among other things, carried on in the urban areas, it can only drive working whites into more frenzied support for racist dictatorship.

Comrade Tambo misses the whole point in treating the workers' movement purely as an economic strike movement. The organised workers, when raised to their full power, can offer the prospect of democratic rule by the working class, opening the way to security, freedom and prosperity for all. Such a movement, rousing the full energies of the oppressed people, could also win support from white workers, and so fatally weaken the basis of the regime.

This is the movement which the ANC must lead, and this is the issue which the leadership will be unable to avoid.

For Mr Uys to have posed our position on armed struggle in this way would have made more meticulous—and more penetrating—political journalism.

P. Qubulashé,
for Editors,
Inqaba Ya Basebenzi.



*Katlehong:
families evicted.*

workers, **unarmed**, cannot triumph against the barbaric SA regime—"a regime which is prepared to shoot and kill to defend its position".

But does it therefore follow, as Comrade Tambo states, that "it is not sufficient to rely solely on" the workers for victory? Does it follow that there is a need for armed actions organised **separately** from the movement of the workers?

"Potentially decisive"

Comrade Tambo himself concedes that the working class "are a very powerful component of our struggle...potentially decisive". In another recent interview, distributed by the Mozambique Information Agency (AIM) in July 1983 he has made more or less the same points: "the workers...constitute the most powerful contingent in our struggle....And it is clear to us, as it is to the enemy, that the workers, the black workers especially, constitute a force that could pose a serious threat to the regime."

In the AIM interview, in fact, he is even more explicit: "**Our country is highly industrialised. The oppressed population is the proletariat, the working people...The struggle for liberation is a struggle of the workers who constitute the proletariat.**"

But at the same time that Comrade Tambo states that "the struggle for

liberation is a struggle of the workers" and recognises the **decisive potential** of the workers' movement, he cautions against "exaggerated notions of what workers as workers can achieve."

If all he means is that an economic strike movement cannot overthrow the regime, then who could disagree with him?

But he goes on to make a very **different** point. In the interview with AIM, he states, "...we operate on three fronts: the labour front, the front of mass popular actions, as well as the front of armed actions."

But what, in the development of the actual struggle itself, does it mean to talk of a separation of these "fronts"?

Neither in the recent period, nor in the 1950s, has the workers' movement been confined only within the trade union movement, or limited to "organising...for higher wages".

In every "mass popular action"—whether in the factories or the townships; "in the cities or the countryside—it is inevitably working people and their families who are the "mass" driving force.

This is the case, for example, in the current bus boycott in the Ciskei, as it has been in every serious community struggle of the 1950s or the last decade.

Of course, many such actions draw in also the oppressed middle-class, white radicals, etc, but their insignificant social weight gives them no in-

dependent leverage for change. Without the mass force of the workers, "the front of mass popular actions" is a mere phantom.

In reality there can only be **one** mass movement in the country, with the working class inevitably constituting its overwhelming fighting detachments. In the struggle for liberation the workers' movement is not just an economic strike movement, not a "very powerful" or even the "most powerful" contingent—but **the only force with the potential political power to defeat the apartheid state and the capitalist class it defends.**

Lead

Limits are set on the workers' movement only by the limited scope and scale of its organisation. Surely it is the task of the ANC to develop and lead this?

Should the case be any different in preparing the armed overthrow of the state? The ANC leadership has stated that **military** tasks flow from **political** tasks. What does that mean in practice?

At the present stage of the movement, the workers are compelled to suffer daily indignities and barbarities from the forces of the state, lacking as yet the organised means of stopping them.

For instance, at Crossroads, working people are confronted at dawn every day by armoured police vehicles and armed police who tear down and burn any meagre shelters of brushwood and plastic that they find. These people are thus forced to dismantle and bury the only shelter they can call home each morning before dawn, and re-erect it every evening.

Virtually every struggler who has experienced or witnessed such events burns with an angry desire to resist by force and—yes, indeed—**shoot down** the barbarous police and officials who carry out these atrocities.

But it would take a lunatic to suggest that either the people themselves (if they had arms), or units of MK, should fire on the police **at the present time** at Crossroads.

Why? Because, given the present early stage in the development of the **mass movement**, and the still early stage in the weakening and disintegration of the state **under mass pressure**, the resulting police retaliation and slaughter of the people would **set back** the revolutionary movement, not advance it.

At a **later stage**, as revolutionary crisis develops, the **same action** would have the **opposite, necessary and advantageous** effect—despite vicious retaliation—of **advancing** the entire mass movement to a higher level.

At the present time, indeed, as the case of Crossroads shows, it would be wrong to “have exaggerated notions of what workers as workers can achieve” in the sphere of armed confrontation.

Nevertheless, contained within the movement that is developing is not only unlimited political potential, but, with it, military potential. The kind of barbarities occurring at Crossroads, inflicted on the oppressed for generations, are kindling the anger and the determination among the masses to bring to an end the vicious system of oppression and exploitation—by whatever means are necessary.

When the occasion is ripe, the workers will be prepared to ‘storm heaven’, as Marx put it.

Militarily, as well as politically, the workers’ movement requires organisation to bring its potential to fruition.

This is why we argue, in our document *SA’s Impending Socialist Revolution* (p.155), that “the basis of our military policy in SA must be to

prepare the forces for the future armed insurrection against the state” and urge the ANC leadership to “turn towards the preparation of methods and tactics which will lead to” this eventual mass armed insurrection.

Keystone

It is militarily the case, **because it is politically the case**, that the workers’ movement is the only force with the potential to defeat the SA state which is the keystone of apartheid and capitalism.

Ironically, while Stanley Uys implicitly pins a pacifist label on the Marxist Workers’ Tendency, the editors of SACTU’s journal *Workers’ Unity* (April, 1983), wrongly accuse our document of advocating “suicidal missions based on a ‘trained workers’ militia.’ ”

Unfortunately it appears that these comrades have read our document with insufficient care.

It is there clearly stated (p.155) that preparation “would not imply reckless and adventurist policies in the mass movement, immediately provoking massive military retaliation against the black working class and youth, still in a relatively early stage of mobilising their forces. **The point is to prepare**—with the eventual aim of insurrection in mind.”

The point which the ANC leaders should answer is this: if the mass movement presently has limits, can any other force, however well-armed, substitute itself for the development of the mass movement?

Since MK units cannot defend the people of Crossroads—**who, when the time is right must be able to defend themselves**—then what is the present function of MK actions, of the **separate** so-called “front of armed action”?

Purely demonstrations of ‘strength’?

MK can carry out occasional spectacular explosions, but it cannot substitute itself for the workers’ need for self-defence. And when the workers’ movement is able to take this task of armed self-defence upon itself, armed groups which are **separated** from it will give no additional muscle-power.

In reality history shows that energy expended on armed actions isolated from the development of the mass

movement serves **as a diversion from the task of the organisation of the working masses.**

In its pre-1917 development, the Russian workers’ movement had also to address the question of isolated armed actions—in that case assassinations carried out by members of the Social-Revolutionary party, who argued that these actions advanced and assisted the mass movement.

Lenin, Bolshevik leader, was quite unequivocal in dismissing their arguments—as his article on the subject republished here makes clear. Since it was the methods of the Bolsheviks—of Marxism—which led the working class to the armed insurrection which overthrew capitalist dictatorship and established workers’ democratic rule in 1917, Lenin’s views are surely worth taking seriously!

No short cuts

In reality, no attempted military short-cuts can substitute for the central task, posed before the ANC leadership, of developing and organising the unlimited power contained in the workers’ movement itself.

Indeed, as is also said in our document, “in the course of the development of a revolutionary situation in SA, there will be occasions for the effective use of arms in and through the mass struggle, leading to the advance of the movement as a whole.”

“What would be involved in this whole development” states our document, “would be the preparation, underground, of the nuclei of a **trained workers’ militia** and the caching of arms.” These bodies, it continues, would be “democratically controlled.”

Our differences with Comrade Tambo, then concern not the necessity of the use of arms, but the method by which the liberation struggle can employ arms in order to achieve its aims.

A caption to a photograph accompanying the interview with Comrade Tambo in *The Guardian* correctly states that “Nothing short of the armed seizure of state political power is going to satisfy the oppressed.” The ANC leadership ought to concentrate their attention on preparing the working class for this task.

V.I. Lenin—“New events and old questions” (1902)



Lenin addresses Red Army troops in Red Square, Moscow, 1919.

Lenin, leader of the Bolshevik tendency of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (the Russian workers' party) wrote this article for the party newspaper *Iskra*, No. 29, 1 December 1902.

To all appearances the brief “lull” which has marked our revolutionary movement for the past six to nine months, as distinguished from its previous rapid and stormy development, is drawing to a close.

However brief this “lull” may have been, however obvious it has been to every careful and informed observer that the absence (for so short a time) of open manifestations of mass indignation among the workers by no means signifies a stop in the growth of this indignation both in depth and in extent, numerous voices have nevertheless been raised among our intelligentsia—who are revolutionary in spirit but frequently have neither firm ties with the working class nor a sound foundation of definite socialist convictions—expressing despondency and a lack of faith in the mass working-class movement, on the one hand, and, on the other, calling for a repetition of the old tactics of individual political assassinations as a necessary and obligatory method of political struggle at the present time.

During the few months that have elapsed

since the demonstrations of the previous season, a “party” of “Socialist-Revolutionaries” has had time to arise in our country, and has begun to declaim loudly that demonstrations have a discouraging effect, that the “people, alas, are still a long way off”, and that it is easy, of course, to speak and write of arming the masses, but that now it is necessary to get down to “individual resistance” without trying to wriggle out of the urgent necessity of individual terror by obsolete references to one and the same old task (so dull and “uninteresting” to the intellectual who is free from “dogmatic” faith in the working-class movement!) of carrying on agitation among the proletarian masses and organising a mass onslaught.

But what at first sight seemed a most ordinary and “common place” strike suddenly broke out in Rostov-on-Don and led to events which manifestly demonstrated the utter stupidity and harmfulness of the Socialist-Revolutionaries’ attempt to restore the Narodnaya Volya movement with all its theoretical and tactical mistakes.

The strike, which involved many thousands of workers and began with demands of a purely economic nature, rapidly developed into a political event, despite the extreme dearth of organised revolutionary forces participating in it. Crowds of people which, according to

some participants, numbered between twenty and thirty thousand, held astonishingly serious and well-organised political meetings where Social-Democratic leaflets were read and eagerly discussed, political speeches were delivered, the most casual and untrained representatives of working people were told the elementary truths of socialism and the political struggle, and practical and “object” lessons were given on how to deal with the soldiers and how to appeal to them.

The authorities and the police lost their heads (perhaps partly because the soldiers could not be relied on?) and for several days proved unable to interfere with the organising of open-air political mass gatherings, the like of which had never before been seen in Russia.

When armed force was finally brought in, the crowd offered desperate resistance, and the murder of a comrade served as the occasion for a political demonstration at his funeral the following day.... The Socialist-Revolutionaries, however, most likely see the thing in a different light; from their standpoint it would perhaps have been “more expedient” if the six comrades murdered in Rostov had given their lives in an attempt on the lives of individual police tyrants.

We, however, are of the opinion that it is only such mass movements, in which mounting political consciousness and revolutionary activity are openly manifested to all by the working class, that deserve to be called *genuinely revolutionary* acts and are capable of really encouraging everyone who is fighting for the Russian revolution.

What we see here is not the much-vaunted “individual resistance”, whose only connection with the masses consists of verbal declarations, publications of sentences passed, etc. What we see is genuine resistance on the part of the crowd; and the lack of organisation, unpreparedness and spontaneity of this resistance remind us how unwise it is to exaggerate our revolutionary forces and how criminal it is to neglect the task of steadily improving the organisation and preparedness of this crowd, which is waging an actual struggle before our very eyes.

The only task worthy of a revolutionary is to learn to elaborate, utilise and make our own the material which Russian life furnishes in only too great sufficiency, rather than fire a few shots in order to create pretexts for stimulating the masses, and material for agitation and for political reflection.

The Socialist-Revolutionaries cannot find enough praise of the great “agitational” effect of political assassinations, about which there is so much whispering both in the drawing-rooms of the liberals and in the taverns of the common people. It is nothing to them (since they are

free of all narrow dogmas on anything even approximating a definite socialist theory!) to stage a political *sensation* as a substitute (or, at least, as a supplement) for the political education of the proletariat.

We, however, consider that the *only* events that can have a real and serious "agitational" (stimulating), and not only stimulating but also (and this is far more important) educational, effect are events in which the masses themselves are the actors, events which are born of the sentiments of the masses and not staged "for a special purpose" by one organisation or another.

Participation

We believe that even a hundred regicides can never produce so stimulating and educational an effect as this participation in a struggle, which really *rouses* ever new and "untapped" sections of the proletariat to greater political consciousness, to a broader revolutionary struggle.

We are told of the disorganisation of the government (which has been obliged to replace Messrs. the Sipyagins by Messrs. the Plehves and to "select" the vilest scoundrels to serve it), but we are convinced that to *sacrifice* one revolutionary, even in exchange for ten scoundrels, means only disorganising our own ranks, which are thin as it is, so thin that they cannot keep up with all that is "demanded" of them by the workers.

We believe that the government is truly disorganised when, and only when, the broad masses, genuinely organised by the struggle itself, plunge the government into a state of confusion; when the legitimacy of the demands of the progressive elements of the working class becomes apparent to the crowd in the street and begins to be clear even to part of the troops called out for the purpose of "pacification"; when military action against tens of thousands of the people is preceded by wavering among the authorities, who have no way of really *knowing what this military action will lead to*; when the crowd see and feel that those who have fallen on the field of civil war are their comrades, a part of themselves, and are filled with new wrath and a desire to grapple more decisively with the enemy.

Here it is no longer some scoundrel, but the existing system as a whole that comes out as the enemy of the people, against whom are arrayed the local and the St. Petersburg authorities, the police, the Cossacks, and the troops, to say nothing of the gendarmes and the courts, which, as ever, supplement and complete the picture in every popular uprising.

Yes, uprising. However far the beginning of what seemed to be a strike movement in a remote provincial town was from a "genuine" uprising, its continuation and its finale nevertheless evoke in-

voluntary thoughts of an uprising.

The prosaic motive for the strike and the minor nature of the demands presented by the workers throw into particularly bold relief, not only the mighty power of the solidarity of the proletariat, which at once saw that the railway workers' struggle was the common cause of the proletarians, but also its *receptiveness of political ideas and political propaganda*, and its readiness to defend with might and main, in open battle with the troops, those rights to a free life and free development which all thinking workers have already come to consider common and elementary.

And the Don Committee was a thousand times right when it declared in its proclamation, "To All Citizens"... that the Rostov strike was one of the steps towards a general upsurge among the Russian workers with the demand for political liberty.

In events of this sort we really see with our own eyes how an armed uprising of the whole people against the autocratic government is maturing, not only as an idea in the minds and programmes of the revolutionaries, but also as the inevitable, natural and practical *next* step of the movement itself, as the result of the growing indignation, growing experience, and growing boldness of the masses, who are being given such valuable lessons, such a splendid education by the realities of Russian life.

An inevitable and natural step, I have said—and I hasten to make the reservation; *if only* we do not permit ourselves to depart by a single step from the impending and pressing task of assisting these masses, who have already begun to rise, to act more boldly and concertedly; of giving them not a couple but dozens of open-air speakers and leaders; of creating a real, militant organisation capable of guiding the masses, and not a so-called "combat organisation" that guides elusive individuals (if it does guide them at all).

That this is a difficult task goes without saying, but we can quite justifiably adapt Marx's words which have so frequently and so ineptly been quoted of late, and say: "Every step of *real* movement is more important than a dozen" individual attempts and cases of resistance, more important than a hundred organisations and "parties" belonging only to the intelligentsia.

Besides the Rostov fighting, the penal sentences passed on demonstrators are outstanding among recent political events. The government has decided to use every possible method of intimidation, from floggings to penal servitude.

And what a splendid reply it received from the workers...; how instructive this reply is to all those who were especially loud in their outcries about the discouraging effect of demonstrations, not because they wanted to encourage further work in this direction, but because they wanted to preach much-vaunted individual

resistance!

These speeches (in court), coming as they do from the very thick of the proletariat, are excellent commentaries on events like those in Rostov, and, at the same time, they are remarkable statements ("public manifestations", I would say if this were not so specifically police terminology), imbuing with boundless vigour the long and difficult work for the "real" steps of the movement.

What is remarkable in these speeches is the simple, authentically precise description of how the most everyday facts, occurring in *scores and hundreds of millions*, of the "misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation" of the workers in present-day society lead to the awakening of their consciousness, to their growing "revolt", to a revolutionary expression of this revolt.

(I have put in quotation marks the words I *had* to use in describing the speeches of the Nizhni-Novgorod workers, for they are the famous words which Marx uses in the last pages of the first volume of *Capital*, and which evoked such clamorous and unsuccessful attempts on the part of the "critics", opportunists, revisionists, etc., to refute the Social-Democrats and accuse them of not telling the truth.)

Ordinary workers

For the very reason that these speeches came from ordinary workers by no means advanced in their development, workers who did not even speak as members of any particular organisation, but simply as men in the crowd, for the very reason that they stressed not their personal convictions but facts from the life of every proletarian or semi-proletarian in Russia, for that very reason their conclusions are so inspiring: "that is why we consciously went to the demonstration against the autocratic government."

The ordinariness and "mass character" of the facts from which they drew their conclusions are a guarantee that thousands, tens and hundreds of thousands, can and inevitably will come to the same conclusion, provided we prove capable of continuing, extending, and strengthening systematic, theoretically consistent, and all-round revolutionary Social-Democratic influence over them.

We are ready to be condemned to penal servitude for fighting against political and economic slavery now that we have felt the breath of liberty, said four workers from Nizhni-Novgorod. And thousands of workers in Rostov, who for several days won for themselves the right to hold political gatherings, fighting off a series of attacks on the part of soldiers against the unarmed crowd, repeated after them as it were: we are ready to face death.

By this sign shall ye conquer, is all that remains for us to say to those who have eyes to see and ears to hear.

BUDGET: A heavy load for workers

Workers have been angered by the 2% tax which the July Budget placed on all workers, even those earning as low as \$100 a month.

As one worker wrote to the *Sunday Mail*, (28/8/83): "Is it fair for a person weighing 50kg to carry a 100kg bag?"

This anger has not been lessened by the paltry wage increases announced in September. Farmworkers and domestic workers (on a \$50 minimum wage) are to get \$5 a month; miners (on \$105 minimum) get \$5 a month; and industrial and commercial workers (on \$105 minimum) get \$10

By Florence Bosch
and Richard Monroe

a month.

The increases apply only to those earning less than \$300 a month.

Nor is anger lessened by the delay in implementing the 2% tax until next January.

Since the start of the wage freeze in January 1982, workers' standards of living have fallen—even according to Labour Minister Kangai—by over a third.

The Budget also pushed up sales tax on all but the most basic goods from 16% to 18%, and moved

chibuku and cigarettes into the category of 'luxury' goods, on which sales tax is 23%.

In addition, the Budget removed most food subsidies. This directly attacks the poorest, who spend over half their wages on food.

Already milk prices have gone up by 50%, bread by 25%, and mealie meal more than 40%. Meat, cooking oil and margarine are also going up, with other price increases in the pipeline. This is on top of big increases, announced not long ago, in fares and school uniforms.

A ZAPU MP has criticised the removal of food subsidies—but only because this had been done "so rapidly" as to "shock the people"!

Even capitalist economists concede that these changes will further push up the cost of living for low income families by up to one quarter.

But that is not all. Workers' living standards have come under attack from this Budget in other ways as well.

Money for housing has been cut by nearly two-thirds, so there will be fewer new houses built for working people. (Yet the government is for the first time allocating \$3 million to subsidise housing costs for Ministers and MPs.)

The transport budget has been cut, which will mean higher passenger fares and higher transport costs for moving goods into and around Zimbabwe. This will force up the prices of these goods.

Health services will suffer because less money has been made available for hospitals etc. The money allocated to education will mean less spent per child, with cuts on furniture and equipment.

In the rural areas much less money is now available to buy land from white farmers for resettlement. \$25 million was made available last year for this; only \$6,5 million this year.

A further tax has been placed on goods imported into Zimbabwe from



outside, which will put up the prices of those goods.

The budget means higher prices and fewer social services. Working people are going to have to pay more for less.

The government says it is moving on the socialist road. At independence it said it would move on this road by improving health, housing and education, by increasing wages, extending the freedom of the people, buying up farms for resettlement by those without land, and taking over the capitalist system "gradually" by bringing sections of private industry under state control.

Certainly independence brought improvements. But this budget is a **capitalist budget**, like the capitalist budgets of Thatcher, Britain's Tory Prime Minister, whose policies are to raise taxes, put up prices and cut social services for working people.

This budget shows that the government, rather than moving towards 'socialism', is standing in defence of capitalism.

Submitting in Parliament what he admitted "must be the toughest budget ever introduced" in the country, Finance Minister Chidzero claimed that he had "tried to spread the burden as widely as possible." Indeed, the capitalists too have squealed about increased tax rates on them.

But in reality, because of generous tax concessions introduced for the capitalists in 1981-2, their tax contribution is much lower than the official rate. In the 1982-3 financial year, for example, they were paying only 23% of their profits in tax—less than half the official rate of 52%.

Three out of four commercial farmers pay no tax at all.

In fact the new Budget actually **decreases** the proportion which the capitalists will contribute to total tax revenue—from 23% of government tax income last year to 16% this year.

The squealing of the capitalists is pure hypocrisy. This budget's guidelines have been approved by the International Monetary Fund: it is **their** budget. Small wonder that the British High Commissioner has praised the government's "financial responsibility"!

Far from furthering the government's proclaimed strategy for 'socialism'—of increasing the share

of the state in production—this budget virtually wipes out funding for this purpose. \$5,5 million is allocated, as opposed to \$40 million last year.

In reality, basing itself on continued capitalist ownership of production, the government is caught in a fix. The capitalist class want higher prices for their goods and low wages; the working class wants higher wages and lower prices. **The government cannot satisfy both.**

If the government does not satisfy

An 'O' level student speaks about popular anger over the recent huge bus fare increase between Seke township and the centre of Harare:

"Many, many Seke people work or study in town or have to go through town to get to work or school. There is no train. Few people have cars, so all are affected by the fare rise.

What exactly were the price changes?

In 1981, it was 17c. It rose to 23c, then 27c, and now 40c. Meanwhile there has been no increase in the minimum wage.

What reasons were given for the increase?

In the past Zimbabwe Express motorways did the route alone with few buses and big queues. So Omnibus came to help, on condition fares went to 40c for any journey between town and Seke. So the full journey costs the same as a one stop journey—people hate that.

What are Seke residents doing to cope?

The neighbouring township of Zangeza 4 is the same distance to town, but the bus ride is only 25c. So we walk there to get a bus to town. But they are very full.

Have school children's fares also increased?

Yes, 10c in 1981 to 12c to 16c to 20c now.

My family has four children all at school in Highfields, two bus rides from here. My father is on the minimum wage and his bus fare bill for us has gone from about \$16 in 1981 to \$21 now. He still only gets \$105 per month.

We all want this socialism soon."

the capitalist class, they will refuse to invest and produce, and there will be fewer jobs and fewer goods produced. So long as the capitalist class own the factories, farms and mines, it is they who will decide what investment should take place, and where.

Dr. Chidzero has made the peculiar claim that paying the 2% tax "will make the people become increasingly and directly masters of the government". According to this novel political theory of the 'comrade's', the people must have been masters of the Smith government by virtue of paying poll tax!

In reality it is the capitalists who continue to hold a gun to the head of the government. If they cannot get what they want, they will simply refuse to produce and continue to sabotage the economy through their tricks and devices, getting out of paying income tax and sending money out of the country. **And they will go on doing this as long as they own the means of production.**

Capitalism in Zimbabwe is in deep crisis. This year the value of goods and services produced is likely to fall by 3-5%, even though population is growing by some 3% a year. For the second year in a row, income per person will fall.

Over the past year only 10 700 new jobs have been created, by comparison to 26 400 last year. 80 000 new workseekers are coming up each year, so the crisis of unemployment, for young people especially, is immense and worsening.

Zimbabwe has to pay more for what it buys from other countries than it gets for what it sells abroad. To cover this gap, it has to borrow money from the outside world at very high rates of interest, and then try to sell more abroad to pay off the interest and loans. Next year debt repayments will amount to nearly a third of export earnings.

There is no way to be free of unemployment, low production, low wages, high prices and high taxes so long as capitalism controls the economy in Zimbabwe.

Fundamental to the growth of production is **increased investment**. In fact, despite the concessions made by the government to the capitalists, there is a lower rate of private investment now than under the Smith

ZIMBABWE

regime. In 1975 capitalists reinvested two-thirds of their gross profits; in 1981 it was only one-third.

Instead they have been remitting hundreds of thousands of dollars abroad.

The capitalists and the government blame the situation on the drought and the world economic recession. It is true that these factors make the crisis even worse.

Problems

But there is no escape from these problems on capitalist lines. Some argue for re-orienting capitalist production in Zimbabwe to the "internal" market rather than the export market. But the capitalists will not be persuaded to invest more locally unless it is profitable—and local buying power is too little to make this the case. Besides, export earnings are needed to pay debts and buy goods abroad.

Zimbabwe's economy is inextricably entangled with the world economy.

But to justify the harsh attacks on working people's living standards by claiming that there is 'no alternative' because of the world recession—as is claimed also not only by the government but also by ZAPU MPs—is incorrect.

Speaking no doubt for many workers, "Anti-confusion" wrote to the *Herald* from Kambuzuma:

"What is this world recession which all of you talk about? What does it mean to the common man? Do you want to blame our suffering on this 'world recession', knowing that none of us knows what these words mean? That way we will accept that the evils of this world cannot be changed because of the 'world recession'.

"Why don't you tell the truth? 'World recession' is the cover word you use for capitalism.

"I have not been to university but I know that the evils of the so-called 'world recession' are caused, pure and simple, by capitalism.

"And if we in Zimbabwe do not want to suffer this 'world recession' of yours the step we need to take is practically to do away with capitalism" (30/8/83).

The grip of the multinationals and Western banks over the Zimbabwean economy will only finally be broken by the coming workers' revolutions in the advanced capitalist countries. But this is no excuse for Zimbabwe's government to bow passively to external forces: on this road unlimited concessions will be made to the needs of the bosses.

The only real way out is to make a start through genuine socialist policies: nationalise the mines, big farms and factories under the democratic control and management of the working class, and plan production democratically. Then the surplus from production could be us-

ed to extend social services, raise wages and lower prices.

The struggle for, and winning of, these gains would spur on workers in SA, Britain etc in their own endeavours to end the capitalist system.

These are the targets that ZANU should set itself and mobilise the working people to achieve.

Workers should draw the conclusions from the budget; trade unions, ZANU and ZAPU branches should discuss what is needed to strengthen the working class in its struggle to defeat the capitalist class and change society.

Clothing worker, age 26, living in Mbare:

(This interview took place shortly before the recently announced tax increases, cuts in food subsidies and increases in minimum wages.)

"Most of the people in Mbare are in the low income bracket. These people receive the minimum wage of \$105 per month. But they have big problems.

The minimum wage was introduced in about September 1981. Then electricity used to cost \$3,50. Now it is \$7,50 for the same amount, despite the freeze on wages.

If that was not enough the commercial sector has now decided to increase the price of their goods.

So are price rises a big problem?

Yes, but housing is worse. The housing problem alone remains a nightmare.

Has the situation improved since independence?

Before independence if you lost your job, you lost your house, or maybe they put the rent up. All that has gone. Now we feel more secure. After 30 years we own the house.

But the problem now is paying bigger rates and electricity, which is just as bad as high rents. Especially with no increase in the minimum wage.

No-one is thrown out of a house now, but if you are seven days late with rent, it doubles.

Have rates increased?

Yes, in 1980 they were \$18 a month for an average house with no toilet. Now it is \$29,95. And soon the elec-

tricity will go up.

Is there a housing shortage?

What! A housing shortage! You wait years for a place. When I raise the problem at my ZANU(PF) meetings it goes up and up to higher authority and never comes down. There's no action.

What do Mbare residents say about all this?

There is much heartache and anger. We hope for a higher minimum wage. But the government is just playing for time and will just add a few dollars.

How do you think you can solve the problem?

My friend, a ZANU(PF) chairman said the community must try to organise themselves and put a resolution on the housing question to the party. If it's not met, we must start a rent strike.

The housing problem touches all aspects of life. It's due to a low minimum wage, which is due to a lack of socialism.

The low income group have been driven to the wall, and yet are expected to survive this suicidal cruelty of capitalism. My friend, soon there will be a deadline—unless the policy of socialism is adopted, nothing will change."



On the outskirts of Lobatse live and work one of the most downtrodden groups of workers in Botswana. They work in a quarry of Lobatse Stone Crushers, owned by a Mr. Patel who stays in a mansion on his farm.

The working hours are from 8am to 5pm from Monday to Friday, with one hour lunch. On Saturdays work starts in the morning until 12 midday. Should there be a high demand for the products, they knock off at 5pm on Saturday and work on Sunday as well.

The workers are employed as casual labour. They have no rights or benefits at all. They can be expelled at any time without notice. They are entitled to no pension or paid leave. They have no medical benefits as well.

At the same time the wages are extremely low. An old man of about sixty years, who has worked for the company since 1976, still earns about P40 a month. (A Pula is about a Rand.) It is only with overtime that the wage reaches a bare P50. This is not enough even to buy food for two weeks, nor does it make it possible for the workers to send their children to school. As a result, many of the children have never been in a classroom and there is no hope that they will.

The worst case is of an old worker of about 100 years who has worked for the company since it started. Up

**By
Faith Moyo**

to today he is still forced to work because he gets no pension money. He is weak, ill and struggles to walk.

Even though the workers are provided with dust masks, this has not helped them. Their ears are not protected against the noise of the machines. They are also not protected against the sharp stones. The ground is not watered before the resumption of work. They are required to resume work immediately after blasting.

The 150 workers live on land next to the quarry in shanties built from mud, grass, zinc, plastic and old cardboard sheets. They live with their families. The place is crowded and unhygienic.

There is no running water, no electricity and no sanitary facilities. In the twenty years or more of its operation, the company has done nothing to improve these appalling conditions.

In the past, the company had promised to build houses for the workers away from the quarry. This never happened. Now the company argues that it will be expensive and it can only get land if the workers will meet the expenses. The employers argue that they do not make enough money to be in a position to build houses.

As a result, cooking takes place

"Getting away with murder"

under unhealthy conditions. At times, the dust from the workplace reaches the residential area, and cooking takes place nevertheless.

The extent of the problem faced by these workers was revealed in 1980 when a medical team was sent to conduct a health survey.

It found that a total of about 350 people (including children) lived in those shanties. Fifty percent of them suffered from TB and were underweight, especially children. Twenty-five percent of the workers suffered from silicosis (a wasting away of lungs), contracted through the dusty conditions at work.

The medical team was so shocked at these conditions that they reported the matter to the Department of Labour, with X-rays of all the people to back it up.

The department agreed to see to it that the workers with TB received treatment at the Lobatse TB clinic and those who were underweight were supplied with free food by the town council. The workers with silicosis were told that nothing could be done for them.

The medical team then decided to ask the owner of the place either to drastically improve the living conditions of the workers or to build new houses far from the quarry. But Mr. Patel refused and is still refusing because the Department of Labour is not interested in any way. Lobatse Stone Crushers is able to get away with murder.

The Labour Department has a long history of not assisting workers with

BOTSWANA

their problems. Always the cases brought by workers remain unattended to for years and are ultimately forgotten. It is the kind of work they are not concerned with.

Never even once will the department take action independently to investigate the health and safety conditions in different workplaces. All the laws relating to conditions of health and safety are just there to decorate the offices. This is because the labour officials never want to "antagonise" their masters, the capitalists.

The functions are performed hastily and well if it is the bosses who bring complaints. This is especially when workers threaten industrial action. In such cases, the labour bureaucrats will dig out all the labour laws to show that whatever the workers are intending is illegal.

Early in 1981, 15 men were told one morning, when they were about to start work at the quarry, that they should leave because there was no more work for them. They were not given notice, nor were they given their wages for the previous month. They were simply told to go anywhere they wanted to.

The workers reported the matter to the Department of Labour, but the labour officials refused to help. Ever since, these workers have been unable to find other jobs because they are either too old or too ill. They do not receive any pension. They have become so weak and ill that they can

no longer find ways of feeding themselves and their families.

It is this kind of murder that the Labour Department allows its masters to get away with.

The only way in which the conditions of these workers can be improved is through struggle in the trade union.

Though the workers are organised in the Botswana Mineworkers Union, the union itself has many problems. As a result, the plight of these workers has not been taken up. No regular visits are made by the leadership to the place. No meetings are organised to discuss tactics and strategies.

Trade unions

If the union is properly organised, there is no reason why workers cannot score a victory against management. The workers' movement in Botswana has a record of having struggled and succeeded in improving similar conditions.

This was the case in 1963 at Lozi Quarry near Mahalapye where the issue was taken up by the then existing Bechuanaland Trade Union Congress.

At this quarry, workers were paid four shillings a day instead of the

stipulated five shillings. They worked with dangerously sharp stones but were not supplied with protective clothing free of charge. There was no clinic on the premises to cater for injuries.

The 180 workers were not provided with housing and, as a result, had to make themselves mud huts. They worked ten hours a day without a break. Workers were required to resume work immediately after blasting. As a result, eight incidents had occurred in which people were fatally injured. None of them were compensated.

The BTUC took up the matter and demanded a complete change in the conditions. They further demanded that the workers be given rations certified by health authorities as fit for human consumption.

As a result of the bold stand taken by the leadership and the justifiable and worthwhile demands they raised, they had the fullest support of the workers. In turn, this gave the leadership itself more strength.

Again, the Labour Department took a position that the mud huts were satisfactory. They said the huts were in every way equal to the type of temporary accommodation in which local people were accustomed to living at the cattle posts and at their fields, and they were not experiencing hardship. The manager of the quarry was very happy with this and supported the view.

Despite the resistance of the management, the BTUC pressed on and threatened to support a strike by the workers if the demands were not met. As a result of the threat, management conceded.

Wages were increased, free rations and accommodation were provided. It was agreed that two days' notice would be given before a worker could be expelled, and that there would be 26 days' paid leave. This victory earned BTUC popularity among the workers.

In the same way, the Mineworkers Union should take up these issues at Stone Crushers. There is no doubt of getting support, not only from the workers there, but from workers throughout the country. That would ensure victory. The task should be to build the union on a democratic basis.



Workers at Lobatse Stone Crushers live in appalling conditions

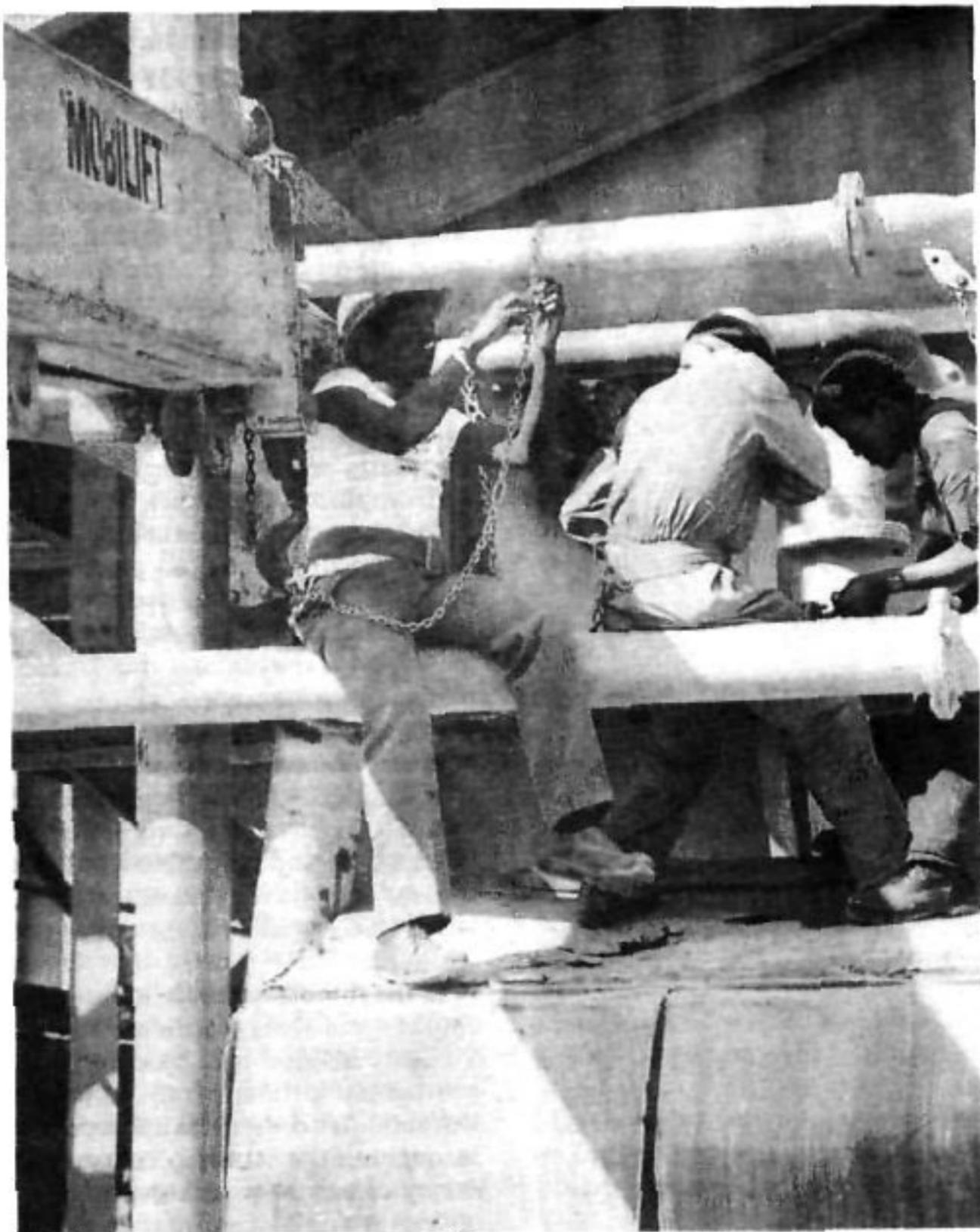


WORKERS TREATED LIKE ANIMALS

Botswana has this year overtaken SA to become the third largest diamond producer in the world, largely as a result of the opening of the Jwaneng mine, which alone produced 3 million carats in 1982.

But for the workers of Botswana, there is only misery to talk about—extreme exploitation by multi-national companies based in South Africa, abject poverty, unemployment and oppression by the capitalist state.

A white-collar worker speaks here about his experiences while working for CMGM, a construction company owned by Anglo American Corporation. It is one of the many companies that were involved in the construction of the plant in Jwaneng.



Maintenance work on the plant at Jwaneng

I started working for CMGM in 1979. I was taken to Orapa, one of the diamond mines in Botswana, to train as a personnel officer. I spent three weeks in Orapa, then I was transferred to Jwaneng as a qualified personnel officer.

I left Orapa with about 30 skilled workers to go and begin the operation in Jwaneng. As for the unskilled workers, they were to be recruited in Kanye, a village 75 km from Jwaneng.

I then went to Kanye for recruiting which was done in a kgotla. There were about 250 unemployed workers assembled there, all of them looking for jobs. Their ages ranged from between 22 and 60. All of them were desperate for work, some promising to give me money out of their first wages if I took them.

Selection

Unfortunately I had to select only a few of them. This selection is done by simply looking at the physical appearance of a person. There is no medical check-up.

In Jwaneng, there was no proper accommodation provided for all these workers. The company had provided only three big tents. There

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was no proper floor, just dust.

The workers were given stretchers, but had to bring their own blankets. There were about fifty workers in each tent.

Myself, as an educated skilled worker, I was given a caravan with a kitchen, bedroom and a lounge. All were well-furnished. Perhaps to protect me from the noise and the dust made by the 'animals' in the tents, I was kept a distance from the workers.

Food

Food was provided by the company. For breakfast, it was bread and coffee—prepared and eaten inside the tent. For lunch, they had bread and tinned fish. This was also prepared in the tent. Every morning three workers would be selected to remain behind and prepare food.

The other workers would take their plates and spoons to work. At lunch-time, food would be taken to the plant in big drums.

Lunch-time was a mere thirty minutes. This meant that workers had no time to wash their hands before eating, nor to sit down and eat properly.

For supper they had pap and tripe prepared and eaten in the tent.

Work

Work started at 6.30 in the morning. They were supposed to work eight hours a day but were always forced to work overtime. Usually they would work till 5 pm. But if the manager, De Boer, felt that work was going slow, he would instruct them to work until 8 in the evening.

If any of the workers complained, he would be sacked on the spot. They just had to do it.

All the unskilled workers were paid 28 thebe (cents) an hour. Overtime was calculated as time plus half, i.e. 28 plus 14 thebe. Thirty minutes lunch was not calculated as part of working time.

The workers were all required to be at work on time, otherwise their wages would be cut. The distance bet-

ween the compound and the workplace was about three kilometers.

They had to wake up very early to catch the truck that took them to work. They were working each day of the week, only getting a day off fortnightly. They would knock off at 3 pm on a Friday, and report back at 4 pm on Sunday.

They were provided with overalls and helmets. The helmets were of different colours: red for the unskilled, yellow for the skilled, blue for the foremen, and white for the whites.

I did not need one myself because I was always in the office. I started work at 8 in the morning. I worked no overtime and had a weekend off from 12 midday every Saturday. I was earning 2,70 pula per hour, and on top of that received a carton of cigarettes and a bottle of whiskey from the company every fortnight.

But for the unskilled workers, on top of their meagre wages, they were subjected to all sorts of deductions. The average wage was P42 per week. P3 per week was deducted for tax. P1 per week was deducted for accommodation, and P1,50 per week for food.

The whites, who were mainly from SA, were having it good. Free cigarettes every Monday, accommodated in big houses by De Beers, free liquor, delicious food in the mess, and company cars.

Even myself, as a personnel officer, I never came to know how much they were paid. It was one of the secrets of the company.

As a result of the horrible conditions, there were a number of complaints from the unskilled workers. Because I had 'employed' them, all

the complaints were brought to me. Those were the most disheartening days I ever experienced.

I remember one old man came to me. He said he had lost all hope in life.

"I thought things would be better if I got work, but they seem to have gotten worse. I have children, the eldest is 22 years and is still at school. My wages cannot help to further his studies, I think we will have to give up, so he looks for work. When I get home, small children come running to me, asking for sweets, but only to get nothing. Is there nothing you can do to help us?"

Age

Another old man, of about 60 years, came complaining that the wages were too little. All his sons were in the mines in SA. They had their own families to look after, and could not afford to give him money.

That is why he had been forced to find a job at that age. He was complaining of back-ache and swollen feet, suffering for a wage that was not enough to provide mealie-meal for his family.

One came crying tears. "There is no food at home. It would have been better if I was sharing this ration with my family!" I became very sad.

The same night I visited them in their tents, and told them to go on strike. But the next day I was told to go on leave. I was never told when to come back. Eventually I received a letter informing me that my services had been terminated.

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United States intervention will not stop the...



President Reagan, representing the interests of the most rapacious sections of American big business, and especially those with investments and markets in Central and Latin America, is edging towards direct military intervention against the Nicaraguan revolution.

Four thousand troops have been landed in Honduras, and airfields are being built. The Honduran army is giving artillery and other military backing to the Somocista invasion force, supporters of the reactionary ex-dictator of Nicaragua, Somoza. They are financed and armed by the CIA.

The 12 000 Somocistas will be beaten back by the armed masses of Nicaragua, while in El Salvador the ruling oligarchy are losing their war against the guerrillas. Reagan and his clique are desperate. They are trying to manufacture some incident, some pretext to make war on Nicaragua.

Reagan's first step may be to unleash the Honduran army like a pet bloodhound, saying he is "only" aiding the Hondurans to prevent an invasion of that country. Then, when

they are defeated, the US would send in more battleships and troops to defend them.

In the same way Johnson piously promised no escalation of the conflict in Vietnam, and then manufactured the pretext of the Tonkin Gulf incident in 1964.

There are similarities between developments in Central America and Vietnam in the 1960s. Even the emergence of Henry Kissinger as head of the special US commission on Central America is reminiscent of the bloodstained role he played in the Vietnam war, including involvement in the bombing of Cambodia (now Kampuchea) in 1970.

However, the road to another Vietnam is strewn with massive difficulties. The American workers, and most of the rest of the population, are hostile to their sons and brothers being involved in another repressive war. Also, the moment US troops intervene massively and actively in El Salvador or against Nicaragua, there will be a tremendous movement of demonstrations and boycotts throughout the continent of South America demanding that "Yankee imperialism withdraw".

On the other hand, Reagan and the millionaire cliques in America are

afraid of the collapse of their power in all Central and then Latin America. They are faced with an insoluble dilemma.

However, it is important to see the revolution in this area in the context of the present international crisis.

World capitalism is in an impasse at the present time. Since the mid-1970s, even in booms, the capitalists have been unable to fully use the resources created by science, technique and the labour of the working class. In recessions, only 70% of industrial capacity can be used and in the case of some industries, such as steel, only 60% of capacity in Britain and 40% in America is used!

The recession of 1979-82 has been succeeded by a minor boom, and production will go ahead in most of the capitalist countries at the rate of 2, 3, or 4% per annum. This will be succeeded, probably in 1985, by a new slump deeper than the previous recession. Capitalism will oscillate between small booms and deeper slumps, until there will be a collapse like that of 1929-33.

This crisis of the system bears particularly harshly on the so-called Third World. The goods that they sell, raw materials and foodstuffs,

Revolution in CENTRAL AMERICA

This article is reprinted from *Militant*, (5 August 1983), Marxist weekly paper in the British labour movement. It was written by TED GRANT, Political Editor. Since it appeared, the conclusions put forward have been brutally confirmed by Reagan's counter-revolutionary invasion of Grenada. This imperialist assault on a small island is intended to test the waters for intervention in Central America.



have fallen in price, while the goods that they buy, capital goods, machinery and industrial products are still increasing in price. With the demand for their products falling, the result resembles a treadmill—the harder they work to produce more goods, the less they can sell, and the less they receive in payment for the products which they produce.

In addition there is the burden of increased interest rates. Latin America alone owes \$300 000 million in debts to the Western World which will be impossible to repay.

The burdens of capitalism, landlordism, and imperialism are loaded onto the backs of workers and peasants of this continent. As in some of the other backward countries of the world throughout the last decade, capitalism is threatening to break at its weakest links.

That means that in Asia, Africa and Latin America, the scene is set for revolts by the peasantry and the working class. Living on a level below that of subsistence in "normal" times, when capitalism is in deep crisis they find themselves in a position of semi-starvation or even total starvation.

Latin America for these reasons is in the front ranks of revolutionary

disturbances and explosions. In Chile, there has been a general strike and various days of action against Pinochet's dictatorship, and also in Mexico, Argentina and Brazil there have been massive struggles against the regimes. As in all the smaller states of Latin America, the scene has been set for enormous movements by the working class and peasants against landlordism and against capitalism in the next period.

Step forward

The revolution in Nicaragua is an enormous step forward for the whole of the world working class; a step towards revolution in the whole of Latin America, even if for reasons we will sketch out it takes a perverted form in Central America at the present time.

On the other hand, the only form of revolution that would be successful in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, or Chile would be a socialist revolution taking a classical form. In these countries, the working class is by far the most decisive force in society, and from the very beginning the revolution would be based on the organisations of the working class. A suc-

cessful revolution in these, the most important industrial countries of Latin America, would have a bigger effect on the entire world than even the Russian revolution of 1917.

The conditions of capitalism are such that all the burdens are unloaded on to the Third World, and a great part of the exports of the Third World go to pay the debts they incurred from the Western industrial nations; while at the same time, the Third World forms 20% of the world market, and the shrinking of this market has had an immediate effect on the economies of the United States, Western Europe and Japan.

The far less industrialised countries in Central America are the classical 'banana republics', in reality colonies of American imperialism. American capitalism has dominated this region since the turn of the century in the interests of profit. This has meant the maintenance of semi-feudal landlord, police and army oligarchies. A handful of millionaires and landowners dominate the economies of the region.

In the past, any attempt get rid of these oligarchies by the people of these countries has been met by the military intervention of American troops, usually US Marines. In the

pre-war period America intervened militarily in Nicaragua, occupying the country from 1912 to 1933. Thus American imperialism used all the resources, military, diplomatic and financial, to maintain the rotting semi-feudal regimes in this area, and even intervened in the Caribbean state of the Dominican Republic as recently as 1965.

For the masses of Central America, the only solution to the problems of the region would lie in the overthrow of landlordism and capitalism and the establishment of a Federation of Socialist Central American States, preparing for a Socialist Federation of all Latin America.

The revolution in Central America requires the carrying out of the tasks long ago achieved in the West in the bourgeois (capitalist) revolutions against feudalism: land to the peasants, equal rights to minorities, the overthrow of the autocratic state—tasks carried out in Britain, for example, centuries ago. **But the modern epoch in the ex-colonial countries has shown the absolute incapacity of the capitalists to carry out these democratic tasks.**

Trotsky, in his theory of permanent revolution, explained that in the economically backward countries, it is impossible for the capitalists to carry out a bourgeois-democratic revolution. He explained that in a country such as Russia, the **working class** would be compelled to come to power to carry out the tasks which the backward and feeble capitalist class is incapable of carrying out.

But once having taken power, the working class would not stop at the bourgeois-democratic tasks, but would then go on to carry out the socialist revolution, abolishing the bureaucratic capitalist state, carrying out the division of the land and then expropriating the capitalists completely.

They would carry through the tasks of the socialist revolution by establishing a workers' democracy. But they could not stop at the borders of their own country. Beginning as a capitalist revolution in one country, this would turn into a socialist revolution, and would spread on a world scale. Socialism is impossible in a single nation, even one as massive as Russia.

That is the theory of the permanent

revolution, which was brilliantly confirmed by the Russian Revolution in 1917. On the other hand, Lenin had a much more cautious formula, that the bourgeois revolution in Russia would be carried out by a "democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasantry", but would be reversed without socialist revolution in Western Europe. This was an algebraic, or abstract, formula which was not entirely clear; and in 1917, Lenin abandoned it and put forward the same policy as had been advocated by Trotsky.

Deformation

The rise of Stalinism, on the basis of the backwardness of Russia and the isolation of the revolution to Russia alone, led to the deformation of the policies and theories of Marxism. The theory of "socialism in one country" was adopted as an expression of the interests of the bureaucracy—the millions of officials who turned themselves into a privileged elite.

In the Chinese Revolution of 1949 the theory of the permanent revolution was confirmed, though in a distorted way, when the ex-Marxist leadership of the "Communist" Party used the peasantry as a means of eliminating first landlordism and then capitalism.

This was, with the Russian Revolution, perhaps the greatest event in modern history. One-quarter of the world's population began to build a modern industrial state, obviously an enormous step forward.

But as the Marxists explained in advance, socialism can only come about through the conscious and organised movement of the working class, beginning with workers' democracy, workers' control of industry and the state, and then moving on to socialism.

But in China, unlike in Russia, workers' democracy was not even temporarily achieved. True, landlordism and capitalism were eliminated, but in their place came, from the outset, the rule of a totalitarian Stalinist bureaucracy. The model for China was not that of Russia 1917, but the bureaucratic Stalinist Russia of 1949.

Following the Chinese Revolution, the revolution of the Latin American continent began with the revolution in Cuba. This, too, began as a bourgeois-democratic revolution under Fidel Castro. The model for Fidel Castro was the democratic capitalist republic of the United States. Having smashed the dictatorship of Batista, the Castroites **intended** to install a model capitalist democracy.

But Castroism came into collision with American imperialism because the Castro government insisted on taxes on American firms. These were less than on the mainland of the USA; but they were sufficient to provoke the American government to organise a blockade of Cuba.

Cuba replied to the blockade by seizing American assets. As this was nearly nine-tenths of industry and a great part of the land, it would have been incongruous to stop there; so therefore they also expropriated the one-tenth of industry in the hands of the Cuban capitalists. Using Russia and China as their model, they established a one-party totalitarian regime on the basis of the planned economy—i.e., a proletarian-bonapartist dictatorship.

This was another huge step forward in the elimination of landlordism and capitalism, and undoubtedly, even at the present time, the majority of Cuba's population support Castro. The regime abolished illiteracy, and improved health and living standards. Though formerly more backward, Cuba has outstripped practically all of the countries of Latin America in output per head of population.

However, the reverse side of this achievement has been the establishment of a one-party dictatorship, which has inevitably produced a privileged bureaucratic elite. This in turn leads to waste, mismanagement, corruption, arbitrary rule and an all-pervading terror by the secret police.

In the long term Cuba, like the Soviet Union and other Stalinist countries, will end in a blind alley. A workers' regime cannot work unless there is broad participation of the mass of the population, checking, guiding, and organising the planning of industry with the full inspiration and capacity of the working class, and controlling the state democratically.

Before Cuba could continue the movement in the direction of socialism, it would require, as in Russia, China and other Stalinist countries, a **political** revolution to install genuine workers' democracy, which in its turn would prepare the way for socialism.

However, for the countries of Latin America, particularly the countries of Central America, without a mass Marxist organisation to explain the alternative, Cuba stands out as a beacon for the oppressed workers and peasants.

As a consequence, in the countries of Central America, guerrilla movements have been organised by the revolutionary parties, with Cuba as a model. But, like Castro, none of them have had a conscious programme for ending capitalism and landlordism.

The fundamental problem of the revolution in Central America today is the lack of a Marxist leadership of the working class.

The military-police dictatorships established in Central America in the 1950s were the tools of the CIA and of American imperialism. Their coming to power, however, was linked to the lack of Marxist perspectives and programme on the part of the leadership of the mass movement.

In Guatemala, for example, the CIA succeeded in overthrowing Jacobo Arbenz's Popular Front government in 1954. This government had been established through

elections. But because it failed to arm the workers and peasants, it was fairly easy for right-wing émigrés, organised by the CIA and US imperialism, to overthrow it.

Nicaragua

US imperialism has tried to repeat this tactic in Nicaragua over the past few years. But here it has been a dismal failure because the masses of workers and peasants have carried out a revolution to achieve the overthrow of the Somoza regime.

Nicaragua has built up a formidable army of 30 000, with tanks and helicopters, and an armed militia of 70 000. No such force existed in Guatemala when the US intervened in 1954.

Somoza was a dictatorial puppet of the USA, cruel and oppressive, ruling through a front organisation called the National Guard, composed of criminals and armed killers recruited to terrorise the population. It is this scum, which fled from Nicaragua in 1979, which is now being used in an attempt to re-establish the previous dictatorship.

In the Civil War, 50 000 were killed, that is one in fifty of the population. Practically everyone in Nicaragua had a friend or relative killed in the bloody battles to get rid of the Somoza dictatorship. The

country is in ruins, most of the towns have been thoroughly destroyed, and are still being destroyed by the vicious bombing against their own countrymen by the henchmen of Somoza.

The revolution was accomplished through a general strike of the working class, and an uprising of the peasants together with the guerrilla movement of the Sandinistas. **However, the only sure way forward for the revolution would have been to take power completely out of the hands of the landlords and capitalists, and organise a democratic workers' state on the lines of that in Russia in 1917.**

Of course, a small country like Nicaragua could not solve the problems on its own. But with the perspective of spreading the revolution to the rest of Central America, and then to the whole of Latin America, the result of the revolution would have been entirely different from the present situation.

The Sandinistas have used the movement of the masses of workers and peasants to establish their own control as an elitist organisation. Even in a country of only three million people, it is absurd that the ruling party should limit its membership to 5 000. When the revolution was carried through, they only had a membership of 800!

The revolutionary government which has been established in Nicaragua is incapable on present lines of solving the problems. Miskito

Nicaraguan militias return to the capital, Managua, after patrol against attack from across the border with Honduras.



Indians have been forcibly resettled and have become enemies of the regime.

Reagan has declared a relentless campaign against Nicaragua, where, he falsely claimed, "the Marxists took over and created their own totalitarian government". Now US imperialism is trying to use the old National Guard as a means of fastening a new dictatorship on the people of Nicaragua.

American policy is explained by the need to hold all Central American countries in order to "defend Panama" and in order to "defend their interests in the whole of Latin America". As *The Economist* remarked: "if the Central American region fell, then Panama and probably Mexico as well, the United States would have to send in its own fighting men."

The ripeness for revolution of Central America is indicated by the analysis of capitalist economists, one of whom wrote: "goaded ahead by increasing costs and tight credit they are in trouble, and many market producers have already gone to the wall. Internationally the high stock, low prices and tight quotas for coffee and sugar, then limit the room for manoeuvre of these countries."

The crisis can be seen in the problems of the cotton and coffee growing industries in Nicaragua.

Standard Fruit, United Brands (formerly United Fruit), and Delmonte are the multinationals that really control these countries' economies. In Costa Rica and Honduras, preparing the way for an explosion in those countries, the multinationals have demanded the reduction of export tax as a condition for their continued activity.

Honduras offered to cut 40% off the export tax of these products, but the Shylocks on Wall Street demanded a further 10% cut. All these figures are the statistics for a peasant war.

Sixty per cent of industry and about ninety percent of the land is still in private hands in Nicaragua. Thus an unstable balance of forces has been achieved.

The real state power—which, Marxism has explained, is armed bodies of men—is in the hands of the Sandinistas. With a few thousand members of the party, they control the militia and the army that have

been set up in Nicaragua after the collapse of the capitalist army, the National Guard of Somoza.

Capitalist class

The capitalist class still dominate the economy, however, and thereby remain the ruling class in society as a whole. But with state power in the hands of the Sandinistas, the capitalists have a feeling of helplessness. They are sabotaging the development of industry in Nicaragua, refusing to invest the surplus extracted from the labour of the workers, and are smuggling as much money as possible out of the country.

The black market currency rate is 60 cordobas to a dollar, rather than the official rate of 20 cordobas to the dollar; but even at that rate, enormous sums of money are being smuggled out of the country.

The capitalists are running industry on a care and maintenance basis only. There is no question of expanding industry even to pre-civil war levels.

The contradiction between the new revolutionary state and the old capitalist economy cannot be maintained indefinitely. Either the economy will have to come under the control of the state, or the state will have to come in consonance with the economy.

Nicaragua faces enormous problems of reconstruction after the American capitalist-backed Somocist civil war, with its slaughter and destruction. As a consequence, the standard of living is now far lower than under Somoza. But nevertheless the undying hatred amongst the overwhelming majority of Nicaraguans of the former dictator means that most will continue to support the Sandinista regime.

But the US imperialists, under pressure of the banana, coffee, sugar and other millionaires in the USA, have decided on the smashing of the Nicaraguan regime as soon as possible. This is because of their fear of the effect that the example of the revolution in Nicaragua will have on the other countries of the region, which could potentially lead to revolution in the whole of Latin America.

That explains what seems inexplicable to the other imperialists: the determination of the United States not to allow what is, after all, a **coalition** government of capitalists and revolutionaries in Nicaragua to maintain itself in office.

For despite its limitations, the Sandinista government is not under the control of imperialism, but stands under pressure of the masses to carry out policies in conflict with imperialist interests. For this reason the idea of a negotiated settlement between the US and all the governments in the region, to agree on a stable status quo, is utopian and does not take account of the real conflict of class interests.

The delusion of the Sandinistas that it was possible to arrive at a compromise with American imperialism (in which they were undoubtedly encouraged and pressurised by the bureaucracies of Cuba and of the Soviet Union), has therefore collapsed in ruins. It is impossible, under the circumstances existing in Central America, to arrive at such a compromise. **The struggle against landlordism and capitalism and the struggle against imperialism has to be carried through to a conclusion, or it will in the long term inevitably result in the collapse of the revolution.**

Leaving the bulk of industry and land in private hands clears the way for possible counter-revolution from the capitalists in the government, the state machine and the economy during the coming years, once there is an ebbing of the revolution. Inevitably, after a period, disillusionment among the masses will set in because there is no way forward on the basis of capitalism. Those are the circumstances where capitalist counter-revolution would be possible.

However, the dilemma for American imperialism is that it cannot wait till this process comes to a conclusion. The US ruling class are determined to destroy the Nicaraguan revolution in order to stabilise the position of the landlord-capitalist oligarchy in El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Costa Rica.

The Stalinist powers are trying to square the circle.

In an interview in the *Guardian* (28 April 1983) Professor Viktor Volsky, Director of the Latin American Institute in Moscow, cynically declared: "We have never abandoned a friend-

ly country, but it has cost us a lot to send oil to Cuba—two tankers a day for twenty years. We wouldn't like to have to repeat that on a larger scale."

Professor Khatchaturov, Vice-Chairman of the Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee with special responsibility for Latin America, believes that the Nicaraguan revolution is unique: "it has no leaders, there is no frontal collision between the bourgeoisie and the revolution and the private and mixed sector of the economy still remain". The only real danger to the Sandinistas, he claimed, comes from abroad.

This would retain more conviction if the same nonsense had not been said about Chile, thus preparing a catastrophe.

"No more Cubas", says Professor Volsky, who then tries to lecture the American imperialists about their own interests: "What seems unintelligent on the part of the United States is that they push countries towards socialism"!

Thus the advice given to the Sandinista leadership by the Russian bureaucracy is not to 'provoke' the American imperialists by carrying the revolution to a conclusion!

In reality, as events are demonstrating, **the very existence of a revolutionary Nicaragua undermines the rotting regimes of Central America.**

Therefore no attempt at stopping the revolution halfway will succeed in placating the American imperialists, with their enormous investments in Central and Latin America, who fear the consequences of the revolution spreading throughout the continent, and are hence determined to achieve counter-revolution in Nicaragua.

The Somocistas cannot succeed in overthrowing the regime in Nicaragua, but can cause enormous damage, and they may establish for a time a basis in the more remote parts of Nicaragua. But the mass of the population will never stomach the vile and rapacious bands whom they have successfully expelled from Nicaragua through revolution.

Instead, the revolution could be pushed forward through the inevitable attempts at counter revolution, and the attempts at conspiracy by sections of the Sandinista government with the capitalists to take over power.

But it will be impossible to have a

government indefinitely attempting to lean on the working class, the capitalists and the landlords simultaneously. Either there will be a completion of the revolution, at least in the bureaucratic mould of Cuba, China and Russia, or the Nicaraguan regime will face inevitable overthrow.

That is why the arguments of certain sectarians in America are so pitiful. They capitulate completely before the claim of the Sandinistas that the government in Nicaragua is the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry"—a hybrid that never existed in history and never will.

As we have seen, Lenin abandoned this formula in April 1917 when it became clear that even the tasks of the bourgeois revolution in Russia could only be completed if the working class took power—a position identical to Trotsky's.

Yet it is in the name of 'Leninism' as opposed to 'Trotskyism' that these sectarians justify taking up the position which Lenin had abandoned!

Compromise

In fact, the Nicaraguan government is an uneasy compromise between the capitalists and the workers. Power rests in the hands of the workers and peasants indirectly, through the Sandinistas' domination of the government politically. But economic power remains basically in the hands of the capitalists who in turn look towards American imperialism to give them assistance for the overthrow of the regime.

It is an unstable situation in which the Sandinistas may be forced to go further than they intend, and carry through a bureaucratically deformed revolution which could spread to the other backward economies.

As the *Financial Times* editorial warned on 29 April, "the fundamental causes for the economic instability were long-standing domestic problems of poverty, violence and political instability". It summed up the present position as follows: "The problem ... is that it is (US) policy to push the Nicaraguan government further into the Soviet trap."

This analysis is fundamentally cor-

rect. But the capitalists' problem is that on the basis of the present ruins, and of landlordism and capitalism, it will not be possible to build stability, let alone democracy, in Nicaragua or any of the other countries of Central America.

Because of the blockade, sabotage by American imperialism, the capitalist crisis and the fact that there is not a socialist planned economy, both public and private concerns in Nicaragua are only operating at 60 percent of capacity. There is a shortage of foreign exchange, of raw materials and spare parts.

As one private sector leader declared, "the future is black, or black and red in fact". The ruling class understand better than the Sandinistas the difficulties which they themselves are facing at the present time.

The officials of the Consejo Superior de la Empresa Privada (COSEP), the Nicaraguan equivalent of the Confederation of British Industry, demanded negotiations between the Contras (the counter-revolutionaries) and the Sandinistas.

COSEP leaders issued a statement in which they refused to condemn the United States and the CIA in moving the so-called Somosa "army of liberation" into Nicaragua, or the cutting of the nation's sugar quota (50% of the sugar industry is in private hands). In fact, they condoned imperialism's sabotage and economic war against Nicaragua, arguing that "a sovereign nation" (the USA) can do whatever it wanted with its trade relations."

This was said **openly** despite the rule of the Sandinistas. What the capitalists are saying in private can be imagined.

The pro-government daily *Nuevo Diario*, in an editorial headed 'The patriotism of COSEP', said: "Certain captains of industry are hoping to regain their old privileges as a result of the military and economic attacks against Nicaragua". But empty threats will have no effect on the capitalists; on the contrary, it will encourage counter-revolution, unless the revolution is carried through to a conclusion.

On 1 February 1982 the Sandinista government offered a non-aggression pact and joint border patrols to Costa Rica and Honduras, and negotiations to the USA. It also "repeated its



Resistance and.....repression in El Salvador.

commitment to follow a non-aligned foreign policy, preserve political democracy and a mixed economy, and to hold democratic elections before 1985”!

In reality, despite its present popularity, the Sandinista government is in the hands of a political elite. The absence of democracy is exposed by the government’s own promise to hold democratic elections “before 1985”.

But even then, for the reasons already outlined, there will be no room for democracy on a capitalist basis. Democracy, and the completion of the tasks of the bourgeois revolution, will only be possible through the taking of power by the working class, and the process of the permanent revolution.

The economy can only go forward on the basis of a plan of production, which in turn would mean the taking of the economy into the hands of the state.

But the American imperialists are in the unhappy position of having to try and crush even bourgeois-democratic revolution in Nicaragua, because of the effects it would have on neighbouring countries. Yet in doing so they are pushing these countries in the direction of eliminating capitalism completely.

El Salvador

The revolution in Nicaragua triggered off a movement in El Salvador, a full-scale guerilla war. The rotten, degenerate regime of landowners, reactionary priests and army thugs, which has controlled the country for 162 years, can only maintain itself, at least temporarily, by support of aid, arms and material from American imperialism. However, the same process is taking place in El Salvador as took place in Nicaragua.

El Salvador is slightly larger than Wales with a population of 5 millions. 8% of the population receive 50% of the income. While there are 20 000 landowners owning 75% of the land, 370 000 small farmers own 25% of the land. On top of this, no less than 65% of the rural population are landless seasonal labourers.

These figures are **much worse than anything in Czarist Russia or in India or the countries of Asia or Africa.** In order to maintain their rule, the regime has (particularly after the Nicaraguan revolution) carried out a reign of terror which, in proportion to the population of the country, has been seldom equalled.

Doctors, nurses, and medical

students have been murdered for even treating the poor because they were regarded as being sympathetic to the aspirations of the masses. The regime maintains itself with 12 000 police and the organisation of thugs called ORDEN, with a hundred thousand vigilantes rewarded with land and money. They are, of course, safe from the security forces.

In addition, in the towns there is a squadron of murder gangs for the purpose of establishing terror in the city as well as on the land. In the jails and in the police stations there are trained torturers, with a refinement of torture unequalled even in the most brutal dictatorships of Latin America in the past.

The guerillas were organised in groups composed mainly of students, market traders, peasants and some union organisers.

In 1982 there were 5,000 murders as a result of the roaming of the land by the ORDEN terror gangs; there were 300 000 refugees outside the country and 200 000 refugees inside the country itself, meaning that 10% of the population are refugees internally and externally.

The imperialists’ attempt to “pacify” El Salvador after their failure to “hold” Nicaragua is meant to “strengthen the resolve of other

governments in the area".

The American government is frenzied because two-thirds of the oil of the USA, and a large part of its trade, come through the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico. It controls a big part of the supplies to Europe.

The regime refuses to use the tactics suggested by American imperialism, of small patrols of a dozen or twenty to fight the guerillas, because the army rank and file are reluctant to take the war seriously. Night patrols are ruled out because of the fear of soldiers deserting; even the staging of permanent guards on railways and power stations called for much persuasion.

The soldiers are press-ganged into the army and therefore have no particular interest in the struggle. The guerillas have adopted the tactic of releasing soldiers once they are captured.

But the army generals stick to large sweeps by thousands of men through the different provinces, as otherwise there would be the danger of complete collapse of the troops that they send. If they sent small groups, these would melt into the country and surrender to the guerillas.

The elections of March 1982 were a farce. The Christian Democrats emerged as the biggest party in parliament, but the combined parties of the extreme right won a majority of seats. They formed the new government on 22 April and the leader of the far right murderers, Robert D'Aubuisson, became President of the Assembly.

The elections took place without electoral registers and there was compulsory voting. Yet, in spite of the terror, more than one third of the population abstained and another 11-18% of voters spoilt their ballots.

It is also clear, according to a Jesuit priest in the University of Central America, that only half the turnout claimed actually took place. The rest were fictitious ballots put in by hired thugs.

The nature of this rigged Parliament is indicated by the fact that on 18 May 1982 the Constituent Assembly voted by 37 to 18 to suspend the "Land to the Tiller" scheme (the Junta's "land reform" programme) for one crop year. This was justified on the grounds that the landowners had no incentive to plant cotton or sugar cane if their land was

expropriated, even though they would get compensation.

This was extended to capital and grain land, and to 95% of all rented land. The bulk of the country's land is back in the hands of relatively few people. 10,000 peasant families were evicted from the land two months after the election.

The guerilla leaders offered negotiations to the US, but General Haig replied on 2 February 1982 that "whatever is necessary to prevent the overthrow of the Junta by the guerillas backed by Cuba and Nicaragua would be done". This was a threat of intervention by the army, which it is not impossible for American imperialism to try.

Hypocrisy

In the face of a terror campaign, and the murder of thousands in the cities and countryside, dozens of deaths every day, rape, arson in the villages to try and terrorise the peasants, Reagan has nevertheless declared, with the most monstrous hypocrisy, that attempts are being made to establish a democratic regime in El Salvador!

\$160 million of military aid and \$28 million of new economic aid in a year has been given to this small country. The total economic and military aid from the US comes to \$748 millions. 1 000 troops and 500-600 junior officers have been trained by the United States. But all this will be in vain in the face of the peasant war being waged in El Salvador.

The guerillas have become more and more organised, with arms mainly taken from the soldiers, and even radio stations. In spite of the terror of the regime in the regions of Chalatenango, Cunthelean and Morozan, the guerillas are in control of large areas of these regions.

In El Salvador, in spite of all the attempts of American imperialism to "succour" and "save" the regime, they will not succeed. Once the revolution succeeds in El Salvador it will spread to Honduras and Guatemala, where the regime is carrying out a policy of almost genocide against the majority of the population of the country, who are of Latin

American Indian origin.

Even if American imperialism should send troops, the example of Vietnam shows that could only delay the revolution and not at all prevent it. At the present time, as in Vietnam, the US campaigns for the "hearts and minds" of the people. This campaign must fail, because **what the El Salvadorian peasants want is land, and the only way they can get the land is through the overthrow of the regime.** No amount of "concessions" or terror will prevent them from supporting the guerillas against the hated regime.

The crimes of the last five years have resulted in an undying hatred by the mass of the population of the rulers. Under these conditions it is only a question of time before the El Salvador regime is overthrown.

Because of the bloody nature of the struggle, it is most likely that in the event of victory the guerilla leaders will be compelled to go further than they are planning, and not only carry through the bourgeois revolution, giving the land to the peasants, but expropriate the capitalists and try and establish a regime such as that of Cuba in El Salvador.

No amount of aid in arms, money and supplies, or even direct military intervention, will prevent the victory in the next decade of the movement of the workers and peasants. Now that the revolution has begun in Nicaragua and spread to El Salvador, there is no way even the strength of US imperialism can prevent its continuation and development.

There may be ups and downs, and bloody defeats, but history has condemned these regimes to the dustbin of history.

But this in turn will be dwarfed by the events of the future in Latin America. The basis is being laid for explosions throughout the continent, which could result in the victory of the working class on classical Marxist lines, as was the case in Tsarist Russia, where the workers will come to power in countries like Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and Chile, and give the land to the peasants.

The expropriation of the landlords and of the capitalists prepares the way for socialist United States of Latin America which will prepare the way for a World Socialist Federation.

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For security reasons, fictitious names have been used by writers of articles in this issue of INQABA YA BASEBENZI. In every case, however, care has been taken not to give a misleading impression of the background and experience of the comrade concerned. Details about writers are provided only when security considerations make this possible.