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# inqaba

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## YA BASEBENZI

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***No to Botha's new constitution!  
For majority rule in an undivided  
South Africa!***

Also in this issue: Maseru massacre \* Housing \* Unemployment \* Argentina \* Middle East

# inqaba YA BASEBENZI

## Maseru massacre— what strategy now?

The slaughter by the SADF in Maseru follows the killing of black miners in July and more murders of detainees.

For all the talk of 'power-sharing' and 'reform', it is these continued horrors which show the real nature of the apartheid state.

The 'liberal' PFP's response to Maseru was support for the SADF's "pre-emptive strike". The *Financial Mail*, paper of the 'progressive' businessmen, demanded that the ANC be "hunted down" and "eliminated".

Whatever their differences, every section of the capitalist class is united against challenges to the 'law and order' of the state which protects their property and privilege.

In all comrades of the ANC, as among the oppressed and exploited people generally, there is a burning urge to avenge these atrocities.

But the real question is: what strategy of struggle can provide the way to overthrow the regime and liberate our people? This needs to be frankly and soberly re-examined in our movement.

The Maseru massacre has demonstrated again the immense military might of the Pretoria regime, greater by far than all the surrounding countries combined. This power is based on SA's industrial strength, which dominates the whole sub-continent.

MK's reply has been further guerilla actions—most strikingly the bombing of the Koeberg nuclear power station. But can these commando-style raids, however sophisticated and frequent they may become, lead to the overthrow of the regime?

In fact, in SA the necessary conditions do not exist for a guerilla war to defeat the regime.

In a number of underdeveloped colonial countries, where the social basis of the oppressor regime has

been weak, and where peasants make up the mass of the population, rural guerilla armies have succeeded in coming to power.

Not one of these conditions applies to SA.

Never has guerilla struggle succeeded in toppling the state in an industrially developed country.

But this does not make the SA regime invincible.

Industrialisation has itself created the force with the power to destroy the regime—the working class.

Concentrated in large numbers at the strategic centres of production, the working class has the capacity to paralyse the system.

A strong united workers movement is a magnetic force that can draw all classes of the oppressed behind it. By confronting the ruling class as a united movement, it demoralises and splits the social forces on which the regime rests.

Offering the alternative of a secure future for all working people through the socialist transformation of society, the working class movement can win to its side many of the white youth and workers who now bear arms for the regime.

With mass organisation and under a revolutionary leadership, the working class will finally defeat and dismantle the state by means of an armed insurrection.

Guerilla struggle, in contrast, serves neither to divide and weaken the regime and its supporters nor to strengthen and unite our own ranks.

In fact the consequences are the opposite of those intended by the guerilla fighters themselves.

Rather than neutralising the poison of white racism, splitting the whites along class lines, and isolating the regime, guerilla struggle can only lead to a closing of white ranks and the whipping up of racist reaction to new frenzies.

Stepping up attacks on the white

population is now being threatened again in the wake of the Maseru horrors. This will stampede the whites even more rapidly in this direction.

The response of the state to guerilla activities will be not only more and more repression in SA, but more and more frequent murderous reprisals against neighbouring countries.

Clearly these countries cannot serve as secure launching bases for an escalating guerilla war in SA.

The result of pursuing a guerilla strategy would be to turn Southern Africa increasingly into a Lebanon, as pointed out in *Inqaba* before the Maseru attack.

From this could come a terrible racial civil war that, whatever its outcome, would devastate the region and consume millions of lives.

Some argue that guerilla action serves to back up and encourage the development of the workers' movement.

Such comrades are repeating the mistake of the 19th-century anarchist revolutionaries, who believed that "propaganda by the deed"—bombings and assassinations by small groups of heroes—would inspire the workers to revolution.

In reality the opposite is the case, however much the oppressed people may sympathise with bombings. The escalation of armed incidents outside the control of the workers' movement serves to diminish workers' recognition of their role as the class which must organise itself consciously to transform society.

Guerilla struggle appears to offer a short-cut to victory. In fact it is a path to frustration and disaster.

To defeat the regime the task is to build a mass revolutionary workers' movement.

This may seem a long and roundabout road. As yet, the vast majority of workers remain to be organised. Only a tiny minority, even among the organised workers



# **inqaba**

## **YA BASEBENZI**

**FEBRUARY-APRIL 1983**

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***This is a supplement to INQABA YA BASEBENZI, journal of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the African National Congress. Readers are urged to make photocopies of this publication and pass them on to other comrades. Subscriptions for readers outside South Africa can be ordered from: BM Box 1719, London WC1N 3XX.***

# Introduction

In this supplement we reprint an article, written in 1978, explaining the character of the revolution which took place in Ethiopia in and after 1974.

A huge movement of workers and peasants, sparked off by an army mutiny in January 1974, brought the empire ruled by Haile Selassie to the ground, and destroyed the power of the feudal landlords.

The working class was unable to take power; but at the same time the basis of capitalist rule was shattered.

The radical army officers who installed themselves in power (known as the "Dergue") were forced to nationalise such industry as existed and effectively bring the economy under state ownership and planning.

For the 30 million people of the country, the revolution has brought gains in living standards, and big improvements in health and education for the masses. The peasants, 80% of the population, now control the land which they work.

The Ethiopian revolution vividly confirmed the fact—explained by Marxism—that none of the burdens of oppression, poverty and exploitation on the mass of society today can be removed without ending capitalist private ownership.

This was the lesson first proved in practice in the Russian revolution of 1917. But in Ethiopia, unlike Russia, it was not the consciously organised working class which overthrew capitalism and took power.

In Russia, by the mid-1920s, as a result of the backwardness of the economy and the isolation of the revolution, the working class had lost power to a privileged bureaucratic caste, which continued to rule on the basis of a state-owned economy.

In Ethiopia, the revolution occurred in conditions which deformed and distorted it **from the outset**, as explained in the article reprinted here.

The Ethiopian revolution is one of a series of revolutions which have occurred in the former colonial world since the Second World War. The appalling bankruptcy of capitalism in the "third" world has flung millions of workers and peasants into struggles which, in the particular balance

of forces existing after the Second World War, have culminated in the overthrow of capitalism.

But in none of these has the revolution been carried through **by the consciously organised working class**.

The first of these revolutions, as explained in the material published in the supplement to *Inqaba* no. 8, was in China 1944-49. With the peasantry as the driving force, the Chinese revolution was led by ex-Marxist petty bourgeois standing at the head of a peasant guerilla army.

The overthrow of landlordism and capitalism in China resulted in the establishment of a workers' state, but ruled by a bureaucratic elite with their origins in the guerilla army. The guerilla wars in Cuba, Vietnam, Mozambique, Angola, etc.—though all with their specific conditions and peculiarities—had similar outcomes.

In other countries, similar revolutions have resulted not from guerilla struggle, but from events within the old state machine—in particular, from coups by army officers, sparking off mass movements from below.

As in the case of China, etc., the **social** base of the movement of transformation has been the peasantry, but under a leadership of army officers. Such deformed revolutions have taken place, for example, in Burma and Syria—and also in Ethiopia.

The Dergue soon proclaimed themselves 'Marxist-Leninist'. Yet in reality they are a self-selected clique, who have consolidated their position through murdering their opponents—including revolutionary workers.

As an instrument of the new ruling bureaucracy, they formed a "Commission to Establish a Workers' Party in Ethiopia"—COPWE. In the Central Committee of COPWE, formed in 1980, 79 out of 103 members were military or police officers, while no representatives even of the officially approved trade unions and peasant bodies were included!

At the end of 1981 the wages of soldiers were doubled while those of workers were frozen. At the Fourth Congress of COPWE in 1982 the

head of state, Mengistu, was compelled to denounce its members for seeking privileges and ignoring the plight of the masses.

In January 1983 it was announced that an "Ethiopian Workers' Party" would be inaugurated in September. It is to have close links with the Stalinist 'Communist' Party of the Soviet Union.

As the article reprinted here explains, the Dergue continued Haile Selassie's war against the Eritrean people, and the subjugation of other national minorities. In 1982 it was involved in new fighting against Somalia.

As a result of its wars, the regime is in debt to the Soviet Union for arms to the tune of over \$2 billion.

The *African Communist*, journal of the SA Communist Party, uncritically supports the Dergue, falsely describing it as "Marxist" and "socialist". Moreover, it shamefully supports the Dergue in their war against the Eritrean people, justifying this in the name of defending the Ethiopian revolution. (*AC*, Fourth Quarter, 1980, page 57-58).

As the article reprinted here shows, that is in fact the opposite of Lenin's revolutionary approach to the national question and the right of self-determination.

Despite its progressive character in overthrowing landlordism and capitalism, the Ethiopian revolution is trapped by the Stalinist dictatorship that has arisen out of it, and by its confinement within bureaucratic and national bounds. One of the poorest countries in the world, Ethiopia is hamstrung by backwardness, and is today faced once more with a famine in the Wollo region which threatens hundreds of thousands of lives.

To carry through the socialist transformation of Ethiopia—and to solve the problems of Africa as a whole—depends fundamentally on the victory of the working class and the establishment of regimes of workers' democracy above all in the industrialised countries. In this, the revolutionary struggle of the SA working class holds an important key.



themselves, yet sense the full power and historic mission of the class.

Yet the mobilisation of the workers' movement, preparing the way to smash national oppression and capitalism through an eventual armed insurrection, is the only way

to freedom.

In contributing to this task, every activist can most effectively serve the memory of the murdered comrades and all those slaughtered by the regime.

The ANC leadership, instead of

encouraging illusions in guerilla struggle, must throw all its resources into building the workers' movement, as a magnet for all the oppressed.

That would enormously shorten the road to victory—to majority rule and socialism.

## Polao tsa Maseru— sela ke efe joale?

Polao tse sehloho tsa sesole sa Maburu Maseru, li latela tse ling tsa basebetsi ba Merafong ka Phupu lemong se fetileng esita le tsa bats'oaruoa.

Leha Maburu matsatsing ana a itlatlarielitse ka hoo ba ho bitsang "kopa-kopanelo ea matla" kapa tsona "liphetho" ke lihloho tse ts'oanang le tsena tse bonts'ang boleng ba 'muso ona oa khethollo ea 'mala.

Esita le ho bitsoang mokha oa bohanyetsi PFP, Afrika-boroa o ts'ehetsa polao tsena ka hore ke 'nete li ne li raka ho bitsoang "bokhukhuni" ba ANC. Koranta ea boralichelete ba basoeu, *Financial Mail*, e tsoela-pele ka hore ANC e ts'oanetse feela ke ho tsongoa le ho felisoa tu!

Re ea tseba hore leha baikhabi le boralichelete ba ka 'na ba fapana ka maikutlo, ntlheng tse itseng; bonyane ba tlabe sale ba lumellana ha ba nepane le eng kapa eng e ts'oenyang hoo ba ho bitsang khotso le botsitso, ba 'muso le naha e sireletsang maruo le tokelo tsa bona tsa khethollo.

Pelong tsa bahlabani ba ANC le pelong tsa bohle ba hateletsoeng ke maburu, hona le lenyora la ho phetetsa mali ana a batho ba bats'o.

Empa potso ke hore na: ke ka meralo le theko efe re ka phetholang 'muso oo; 'me ra lokolla sechaba sa rona? Re ts'oanela ho boela re hlahloba taba ena moleng oa rona oa

ntoa, re sa ithetse kapa hona ho tatasela.

Koluo ea Maseru e boetse e bonts'itse matla a ts'osang a 'muso ona oa Pretoria. Ntlheng ea sesole, matla ana a feta a linaha tsohle tsa baahisani le Maburu. Hantle-ntle matla ana a sesole a thehiloe holim'a matla a moruo.

Sesole sa ANC se bitsoang MK kapa *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (Lerumo la Sechaba); se ile sa iphethetsa ka tlhaselo tse ling haholo-holo re ka bolela tlhaselo ea Koeberg. Empa na kannete litlhaselo tsa mofuta oo li ka liha 'muso oa Maburu leha li ka ba tsa eba ngata?

'Nete ke hore Afrika-boroa ha ho maemo ao ka 'ona ntoa ea mofuta ona e ka hlohang sera. Ke 'nete hore linaheng tse ngata tseo e neng e le hona li neng li ntse li hola, 'me batho bongata e le ba itjereng ka temo e tlaase haholo, ba iphelisa ka eona, linaheng tsena mabotho a mofuta oona a ile a fela a liha mebuso ea bohatelli.

Ha ho na le bo bong ba maemo ana a fumanehang Afrika-boroa. Ha ho na le 'muso le o mong o kileng oa phetholoa ka ntoa ea mofuta oona le masole a loanang ka mokhoa oa MK oa "guerilla warfare", ha feela 'muso po e le oa naha e ntlafetseng moruong le ho tsoela pele joale ka Afrika-boroa.

Empa ha re potlake, re bofele hore leha ho le joalo 'muso oa Maburu o ka putlamisoa faats'e: ke 'ona matla

a moruo le lifeme a entseng hore ebe ho ntse ho ka etsahala hore 'muso ona o phetholoe. Re riatso hobane; moruo le lifeme tsa Afrika-boroa li khobokantse 'moho karolo e matla a lifefo ea sechaba sefe kapa sefe; e leng basebetsi.

Khobokano ea basebetsi khubung ea moruo e ba fa monyetla oa ho holofatsa leano lena la tlatlapo.

Ee, mokhatlo oa basebetsi o matla, 'me o kopaneng ke koeetsa e hohelang batho bohle ba ba tlatlapo. Ha ba hlasela babusi—batlatlapi, basebetsi ba nyahamisa esita le ho khaola likotoana bats'ehetsi bohle ba leano lena.

Ke feela ha basebetsi ba ka bonts'a molemo oa ho fetolela moruo molemong oa sechaba ka kakaretso ho se khethollo le tlatlapo e etsetsoang mang kapa mang, ba ka atlehang ho hapa le lipelo tsa basebetsi ba basoeu le bacha ba bona, bao hajoale eleng bona ba tsoereng libetsa ho ts'ireletsa 'muso oa khethollo le khatello.

*Boetapeleng* bo matla, 'me bo seli, basebetsi ba tla lahla fats'e 'muso oa khethollo ka mokhoa oa ntoa oa sechaba kaofela eseng ka sehlotsoana sa batho feela.

Ntoa ea sesole sa rona (guerilla struggle) ha e nonyetse 'muso oa khethollo esita le hona ho fa sechaba ka kakaretso matla a ho loana.

'Nete ke hore babusi-batlatlapi ba tsoha molota ke liketso tsena, hobane ho ena le ho felisa chefo ea



# What is happening in Ethiopia ?

By Lynn  
Walsh.  
March 1978.

**In the last few weeks the Ethiopian regime has begun a massive counter-offensive against Somali-backed forces in Ogaden, the region of Ethiopia claimed by Somalia. From all accounts, vast quantities of Russian arms have been air-lifted in and the Ethiopian army has been stiffened with about 6 000 Cuban advisers.**

**World-wide predictions in the capitalist press that the Dergue's regime was about to collapse because of the war in Ogaden, the bloody battles in Eritrea and turmoil within Ethiopia, are being confounded.**

Quite apart from the massive aid now being received from the Eastern bloc, the Ethiopian regime has acquired an enormous resilience through the land reforms and nationalisation measures which have given it a mass basis, particularly among the peasantry.

United States imperialism is incapable of intervening directly against Ethiopia in this post-Vietnam era. The capitalist powers have had to content themselves with secondary support for Ethiopia's enemies, mainly through the Arab states supporting sections of the Eritrean liberation movement and Somalia.

Yet while the Dergue has been consolidating its position and preparing for counter-offensives on two fronts, the country has certainly been convulsed by violent struggles. There has been a bloody struggle for power within the Dergue itself, while at the same time the Dergue has launched a savage repression against all its political opponents.

What, then, is going on in the Horn of Africa? The key to understanding the complex and rapid events undoubtedly lies in an analysis of the revolutionary changes which have occurred in Ethiopia since the fall of Haile Selassie in 1974.

The Ethiopian revolution was set off in 1974 by a mutiny in the army. Profound discontent among the junior officers and in the lower ranks reflected a deep crisis in the feudal despotism of Haile Selassie. For the young officers—like the students and intellectuals who had already openly demonstrated their opposition to the regime—the Wollo famine, in which over 100 000 died early in 1974, became a symbol of all that was rotten and corrupt in Ethiopian society.

At first, the wider aims of the young officers were vague. Linked to their immediate demands for improved professional status was their desire for the thorough reform of archaic institutions to open the way to the modernisation of the country. But once they toppled the Emperor's own government, they unleashed powerful forces for change, unforeseen and beyond their control.

## Dergue sparks mass upheaval

The Dergue, the provisional military administrative council, quickly took power into its own hands. Like its counterpart in Portugal, the Armed Forces Movement

which brought down Caetano, the radical officers triggered off a revolutionary upheaval. Ferment among the soldiers, strikes by workers, the arousal of the cruelly exploited and oppressed peasantry, and demonstrations by the students, pushed the Dergue irresistably to the left.

When the Dergue took over, however, they found that the levers of power had gone dead. As with the AFM in Portugal, they faced the complete crumbling away and collapse of the old regime. Far from developing the economy, capitalism and imperialism, in so far as they had penetrated Ethiopian society, had only intensified its problems. Given the enormous pressure for change, bottled up for so long under Haile Selassie, the Dergue was forced to carry out fundamental social changes to ensure it kept its own position of power.

Each move of the counter-revolution, based primarily on the big landlord families which formed the backbone of the old ruling class, only served to push the Dergue forward. As the original, 'moderate' leadership of the Dergue hesitated and stalled they were pushed aside by the radicals, like Lt-Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam, who were prepared to go the whole way. The pace of events, moreover, was accelerated by the crisis in Eritrea and Ogaden and the threat of intervention backed by the capitalist powers.

Thus, utilising the revolutionary energy provided by the mass movement of workers and peasants, the Dergue presided over rapid social changes which spelled the end of landlordism and capitalism and effected a decisive break with world imperialism.

Early in 1975 land reform measures which ended feudal landlordism and chattel slavery were carried through. All the main industries and the banks were nationalised. Education and welfare began to be extended to much of the rural population for the first time. Peasant associations took over administration in many areas; and workers' and peasants' militias were formed 'to defend the revolution'.

Does all this, it must be asked, add up to a 'socialist revolution'?

## The direction of social change from above

As it implemented sweeping changes, the Dergue increasingly adopted Marxist language. It now describes itself as 'Marxist-Leninist'. In reality, however, the Dergue has nothing in common with the Marxism of Lenin and the Bolsheviks who led the Russian revolution.

**The fundamental changes over which the Dergue has presided could not have happened without the intervention of the masses.** But the country's barbarously low cultural level, the weakness of the working class and the absence of a genuine Marxist party, have meant the direction of the revolution from above by an officer caste



# inqaba YA BASEBENZI

likarohano lipakeng tsa ba basoeu le ba bats'o haholo-holo *basebetsi*, 'me ka hona ho siea poaneng 'muso oa khethollo; ntoa ea sehlotsoana sa masole (guerilla struggle) e kopanya ba basoeu, 'me e atisa litlhaselo le lipolao tsa maburu.

Litlhaselo tsa sesole sa rona (guerilla struggle) ho ba basoeu li kotsing tsa ho tisa lipolao tse ts'oaneng le tse sa tsoa etsahala koluoeng ea Maseru. Ba basoeu ba tla tiea le ho feta morerong oa bona oa ho bolaea.

Karabo ea 'muso oa khatello litlhaselong tsa sesole sa rona (guerilla attacks) ha e na ba feela ntlafatso ea tlatlapo Afrika-boroa ho batho ba bats'o empa e tla ba kataloso le ho feta pele ea litlhaselo linaheng tsa boahisani.

Hoa hlaka ke hona hore linaha tsa boahisani li sitoa ho boloka sesole sa rona litlhaselong sa tsona Afrika-boroa.

Litholoana tsa ntoa ea 'guerilla'

etlaba ho fetolela karolo ena ea Afrika-e-Boroa 'Lebanone' joalokaha re bonts'itse koranteng ea rona ea *Inqaba* pele ho koluo ea Maseru.

Ho feta moo re ka iphumana re jere ntoa e tla ts'olla mali a merabe eo hore na re ea e hlola kapa che, e tla fetola lefats'e la rona naha-thothe le ho senya maphelo a likete-kete.

Ba bang bare ntoa ea 'guerilla' e ts'ehetsa esita le ho ntlafatsa mokhatlo ea basebetsi.

Banna ba habo rona ba boetse ba etsa liphoso tseo baloani ba khale linaheng tse mose ho maotle ba neng ba "bua ka liketso"—ba qhomisa le ho bolaea ka 'bokhukhuni', 'me ba lumela hore liketso tseo tsa bona li tla khothatsa basebetsi ntoeng ea bona ea ho phethola 'muso oa khatello.

Bonnete ke hore liketso tsa mofuta oo; leha eba basebetsi ba ka lumellana le tsona joang le joang, li sitoa ho ba fa molota. Ho mpang ho etsahala ke hore lintoa tsena li loaneloa kathoko ho makhotla a basebetsi, 'me li etsa hore basebetsi ba ikhakanye, ba sitoe ho lumela hore ke bona, 'me ke bona feela ba ka itokollang esita le ho lokolla sechaba kaofela kholehong.

Litlhaselo tsa sesole sa rona (guerilla struggle) e shebahala e le tsela a bonolo e isang tokolohong.

Empa bonnete ke hore ke tsela e nyahamisang pelo, 'me e isang kotsing.

Ho hlola 'muso oa Maburu, tsela ke feela ea ho aha lekhlotla la basebetsi le nametseng sechabeng ka kakaretso.

Hona ho ka 'na ha bonahala mahlong a ba bang e le tsela e telele ho sa hlokaleng: Ha re bua tjena basebetsi ba bangata ha ba es'o kane mekhatlong ea basebetsi. Ke ba seng ba kae feela, har'a ba seng ba kene mekhatlong, ba eelloang hore ke bona e le basebetsi ba nang le hona ho lokolla basebetsi le sechaba sohle.

Ke feela ha makhotla a basebetsi a kopane, ho itihela holim'a tlatlapo ea bosehaba le moruo re ka bonang tsela e isang tokolohong.

Ha re kenya letsoho mosebetsing ona o boima oa tokoloho, re hopola ka hlomphe banna le basali ba habo rona ba oeleng Maseru esita le bohle ba bolailoeng ke 'muso ona oa khethollo.

Boetapele ba ANC, bo ts'oanetse ho itihela ka setotsoana ho aha makhotla a basebetsi ho ena le ho ithetsa ka 'guerilla struggle'. Hona ho tla kopanya bohle ba phelang kholehong 'moho, re sa natse 'mala. Hona ho tla khutsufatsa tsela e isang tokolohong.

## Ugetyengo eMaseru— liliphi icebo ngoku?

Ubugebengu obenziwe ngamajoni eMzantsi Afrika eMaseru bulandele ezithendeni zokubulawa kwabasebenzimidodini abantsundu ngo-Julayi, nokubulawa roqo kwamabanjwa ezintolongweni.

Kula mampunge-ntetho 'kamasiphathisane-mbuso' neka 'songuqulelo', kukuzingisa kwalamanyumnyezi okubonakalisa esona simo sombuso wocalu-calulo ngebala.

Umbutho 'wothandabantu', PFP, uphendule ngokuxhasa obubuhelegu "bokuvala amanzi emthonjeni" ngamajoni eMzantsi Afrika eMaseru. Iphephandaba, (*Financial Mail*) loongxowankulu

'bokhanyo' lubeke umbandela wokuba Inkongolo (ANC) "mayizingelwe", "itshatyalaliswe".

Nokuba kungasiphi na isizathu sokungevisisani phakathi koongxowankulu, bamanyene kambe ekulweni nayiphi na imo echukumisa 'umthetho nocwangco' lombuso okhusele ubutyebi nezimuncumuncu zabo.

Kubo bonke abalingane beNkongolo, nanje ngoko kunjalo nakwaba cinezelweyo, abacukuthwayo, kukho ukutshisana kokufuna ukuziphindezela ngenxa yobubuhange.

Kambe owona mbuzo ngulo: liliphi icebo edabini lenkululeko elingabonakalisa eyona kuyiyo indlela

yokubhukuqa lombuso khona ukuze abantu bakuthi bakhululeke? Kuyanyanzeleka ukuba lombuzo, entshukumeni yethu yenkululeko, ma uqwalaselwe kwakhona ngokuphandle nango kucacileyo.

Ububelegu obehle eMaseru bubonakalisile kwakhona ukomelela kwemikhosi yorulumente wase Pitoli, amandla alemikhosi aqgitha awamazwe onke amelene noMzantsi Afrika ehlangene. Isiseko salamandla yindyebofektri eyongamele uMzantsi ne-Afrika uphela.

Umkhonto we Sizwe uphindise ngegalelo lokuphekula—uhlaselo esikhululweni 'sombane' eKoeberg lutsho



*drawn from the middle layers of society.*

The weakness of world capitalism almost automatically ruled out the stabilisation of a new regime on a capitalist basis. Step by step, without any conscious strategy, the Dergue was pushed by the threat of counter-revolution and the pressure of the masses into taking 'socialist' measures. The language of Marxism was adopted after the event, as a rationalisation. Because the changes were directed from above, and were not determined by the democratic initiative and control of the workers and peasants, the Ethiopian revolution has from the very beginning taken a distorted form.

*Compelled to break from the chain of world capitalism, the Dergue turned to the ready-made model of the deformed workers' states in Russia and Eastern Europe. From the start, the officers adopted the bureaucratic methods and policies that came to predominate in Russia, after the isolation of the revolution, with the degeneration of workers' democracy and the crystallisation of a bureaucratic ruling caste represented by Stalin.*

Not only has the Dergue adopted the Stalinist model, but given the division of the world into two camps, dominated by US imperialism and the Russian bureaucracy respectively, the new Ethiopian regime inevitably gravitated towards the latter and already has become dependent on Russian aid and support. This can only mean that it will increasingly come to replicate its dominant counterpart in Russia.

**The abolition of landlordism and capitalism in Ethiopia is nevertheless a tremendous step forward.** For the first time millions of peasants have been lifted from the position of pack animals to play a part in the development of society. In spite of all the difficulties, the land reforms have undoubtedly given the Dergue an enormous fund of popularity among wide sections of the peasantry.

*But the bureaucratic character of the regime makes it certain that the revolution will only be secured at enormous human cost. This has already been made clear in two key respects: (1) by the violent, repressive character of the internal political struggle; and (2) by the bloody national conflicts in Eritrea and Ogaden, which have turned the Horn of Africa into a new "cock-pit of the powers" (albeit by proxy as far as the US is concerned).*

## Political repression and bloody purges

In Ethiopia the revolution has been faced with fundamental tasks comparable to those of the Russian revolution of 1917:

(i) the carrying through of a fundamental land reform, historically the task of the capitalist class, but indefinitely postponed because of its extreme weakness and political incapacity;

(ii) telescoped with the first task and all the changes that go with it, the nationalisation of modern industry, the key to socialist development and historically the task of the working class.

In Russia, the Bolshevik party led by Lenin and Trotsky based themselves on the small, but concentrated and well organised, working class which through its programme gained the support of the poor peasantry. The tasks of the revolution were carried out through the

*soviets of workers', soldiers' and sailors', and peasants' representatives, the most democratic institutions ever created. This alone guaranteed the defeat of the counter-revolution and the foreign capitalist intervention in the first period after 1917.*

The Dergue, however, is using the entirely different methods employed by the Stalinist dictatorship which usurped the democratic workers' control exercised through the soviets. Thus the internal political struggle in Ethiopia since the overthrow of Haile Selassie has been stained with bloody purges and horrifying repression.

## Dergue's terror

In recent months the 'red terror' has reached unprecedented heights. "A figure of 80 000 to 100 000 political prisoners in all would probably fall short of the real number," writes *Le Monde's* correspondent (16th February). Reports coming out of the country indicate that summary trials, public executions and night-time assassinations of the Dergue's opponents are the nightmarish norm.

The Dergue now brands most of its opponents as "members of the EPRP" (Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party). Actively opposed to the regime before 1974, the EPRP, which was based mainly on students, welcomed the Dergue's social measures but expressed opposition to the military leaders' dictatorial methods. In Autumn 1976, the EPRP characterised the Dergue's regime as "fascist" and began to prepare a guerrilla struggle in the countryside.

It was the assassination of leading members of the Dergue by the EPRP which provided the justification for the government's bloody purge against the EPRP or suspected EPRP militants. These mistaken tactics indicate that the EPRP is far from having a clear Marxist perspective. But because it offers virtually the only active opposition to the Dergue's dictatorship within Ethiopia, the EPRP has undoubtedly won significant support from young workers looking for a non-military, democratic road to socialist revolution.

For Marxists, the leading role of the working class, even in a country where they form a minority of the population, is of key importance. In Ethiopia, the trade unions based on the working class concentrated in the big (mainly textile) factories around the capital played a crucial part in destroying the old regime and in providing the steam to implement the Dergue's nationalisation measures.

Yet the Dergue soon showed itself hostile to the independent action of the workers. In December 1975, less than a year after it took over the 75 major companies, the Dergue decreed the abolition of the old Confederation of Ethiopian Labour Unions and its replacement by the state-controlled All-Ethiopian Trade Union, in which opposition to the Dergue was outlawed.

Even in the countryside, where the regime is most popular, measures have been taken to curb the initiative of the masses. When the land reforms were carried out, peasant associations, or 'kebeles', were formed in many areas to supervise the reforms and take over local administration. More recently, these bodies, originally organs of popular power, have been transformed into



kanye ukubonisa oku. Ingaba na okukuhlasela ngokuzuma, okubonakalisa kambe ubuchule obukhulu, nokuzondelela roqo, kuza kuba nako ukubhukuqa urulumente?

Ebunyanisweni, indlela yokhubhukuqa umbuso ngempi yokuphekula ayikho eMzantsi Afrika.

Kumazwe amaninzi enziwa izidodo ngumbuso wobukoloni, apho intsika yombuso ibingumphara-phara, apho, futhi, oonondinyana bangumndilili omkhulu esizweni, imikhosi yokuphekula emaphandleni zidolophi ithe yabanako ukuphumelela yakhe imibuso yayo.

Akukho nanye imo eloluhlobo eMzantsi Afrika.

Impi yokuphekula ayizange yaphumelela ukudiliza umbuso welizwe elimaziko-ndyebo aphakamileyo.

Kodwa oku akwenzi umbuso woMzantsi Afrika inqaba engena kudilizwa.

Ukuphakama kwamaziko-ndyebo ngokwawo adale ubukho bamandla anokudiliza umbuso—amandla abasebenzi.

Abasebenzi, ngenxa yokuba beqokelelwe ngokubanzi emazikweni okusebenza anobom besizwe, bana mandla okushwabanisa esisimo sombuso.

Umanyano olungqingqwa lwentshukumo yabasebenzi lunamandla kazamlandela ongahlanganisa zonke indidi zabacinezweyo phantsi kobunkokheli babasebenzi. Ngokugquba, ijongene nabalawuli besizwe, intshukumo emanyeneyo yenkululeko iza kungenis'intaka, yahlule phakathi bonke abaxhase urulumente.

Ngokwalathisa bonke abantu abasebenzayo ingomso elibhetele ngokuguqula isizwe sibe phantsi kombuso wabasebenzi, intshukumo yabasebenzi iya kuphumelela ukomeleza icala layo ngokudoba ulutsha labamhlophe, nabasebenzi abamhlophe abanamhla oku baphethe izikhali bekhusele lo rulumente.

Ngombutho womndilili ophantsi kobunkokheli benguqulo, abasebenzi, ekugqibeleni, baya koyisa, baphahlaze umbuso ngemvukelo exhobileyo.

Idabi lokuphekula, linomahluko, alikwazi ukuthambisa urulumente, nokukhuthaza abantu abaxhasa urulumente ukuba bamjikele; alikwazi futhi ukumanyanisa, nokomeleza idabi lenkululeko.

Enyanisweni, iziqhamo zedabi lokuphekula ziphikisana kanye nenjongo zamaphekula.

Idabi lokuphekula, endaweni yokuphelisa itshyefu yebala-bulungu, lahlula-hlule abelungu ngokwendidintlalo, lijajise urulumente ame ze, lenza abelungu bamanyane phantsi kwempambano yebala-bulungu.

Ekwehleni kobungbenga eMaseru, inyathelo lokuhlala abelungu kuthenjiswa ukuba liza kuqiniswa. Oku kuza kwenza ukuba abelungu baphaphatheke ukuya kuzimela ngebala-bulungu.

Urulumente uza kuphindisa kwizenzo zokhuphekula, hayi nje kuphela ngokuqinisa ingcinizelo eMzantsi Afrika, kodwa futhi ngokuhlasela ngobuhelegu obuphindaphindeleyo kumazwe angomakhelwane.

Ngokucacileyo, lamazwe akanako ukuzenza indawo apho amaphekula angahlasela ngokubanzi uMzantsi Afrika.

Isiphumo sokusebenzisa icebo lokhuphekula siza kwenza uMzantsi ne-Afrika ufane kanye ne-Libhanoni, nje ngoko *Inqaba* yalathile phambi kohlaselo eMaseru.

Oku kuza kubanga imfazwe yebala phakathi kwabantu sundu nabelungu, eyakwenza imbubhiso kule ngiqi, nokufa kwezigidi zabantu nokuba isiphumo sayo singaba luluphi na uhlobo.

Abanye abantu babeka intetho ethi: izenzo zokuphekula zixhasa, zikhuthaze ukukhula kwentshukumo yabasebenzi.

Aba balingane baphindinda kwakhona iziphoso zabavukeli-mbuso bethuba lekhulu leminyaka esele idlulile, ababe kholelwa kwintetho efana nale: "ikhuba lithengwa ngokubonwa"—oko kuthi ukuze abasebenzi bavukele umbuso kufuneka kugityiselwe amabhom kubulawe amapolisa, amajoni, abaphathi-mbuso nempimpi ngama-

qelana amakhalipha.

Nokuba abantu abacinezweyo banovelwano kangakananina nokuqhashumba kwamabhom, inyaniso yona yalatha ukuba le asindlela eya enkululekweni. Izenzo zokhuphekula zingekho phantsi kolawulo lentshukumo yabasebenzi ziphazamisa ukuqonda kwabasebenzi ukuba ngabo nje ngodidi labasebenzi ekufanele baziququzelele ngenjongo yokuguqula isizwe sibe phantsi kombuso wabo.

Idabi lokuphekula libonakala ngathi liyi ndlela emfutshane eya enkululekweni. Ebunyanisweni, liyindlela yokuxakekisa nengozi.

Ukuze urulumente oyisiwe kufuneka kwakhiwe intshukumo yokuvukela umbuso womndilili wabasebenzi.

Oku kungabonakala ngokungathi yindlela ende nejikelezayo. Okwa ngoku, umndilili omkhulu wabasebenzi usa funa ukuququzelelwa ungene emibuthweni yabasebenzi elwa uncukutho ezifektrini. Liqagobana kuphela labasebenzi abasemibuthweni esele liqonda amandla abasebenzi abanawo nomsebenzi omkhulu ojongene nabo ekuguquleni isizwe.

Kambe, ukuququzelela ukwakha intshukumo yabasebenzi, ukulungiselela indlela yoku phelisa ingcinezelo yabantu sundu, nokuphelisa umbuso wobungxowankulu ngendlov'ayingeni yovukelo oluxhobileyo yiyona ndlela kukuphela kwayo eya enkululekweni.

Ekuncediseni kulomsebenzi, umlwele nkululeko ngamanye uyakuba uthathe inxaxheba enkulu ekukhumbuleni nasekuwongeni abalingane nabo bonke abagetyengwe ngulorulumente.

Iinkokheli zeNkongolo, endaweni yokuba zikhuthaze amampunge edabi lokuphekula, kufanele zisebenzise onke amandla ezinawo ekwakheni umbutho wabasebenzi, oza kukhokela bonke abacinezweyo.

Oku kuza kuyenza mfutshane kakhulu indlela eya enkululekweni—eya embusweni ngobuninzi, umbuso wabasebenzi.

## Maseru bloedbad— watter strategie nou?

Die slagting deur die Suid-Afrikaanse Weermag in Maseru volg op die moord van swart mynwerkers

in Julie en die dood van nog meer politieke gevangenes.

Ondanks al die praatjies oor

'magsverdeling' en 'hervorming', laat hierdie aanhoudende gruweldade die ware aard van die apartheidstaat sien.



agencies of control from above, acting as "committees of public safety" to suppress, exile, imprison, or execute all opposition elements.

Under Mengistu, the Dergue has also moved against the 'Marxist' intellectuals with whom it worked to begin with. When they first seized power, and were groping their way forward, the young officers looked to the intellectuals for support. As in other under-developed countries, the intellectuals exerted a disproportionate political influence. Intellectuals returned from exile in Europe supplied the Dergue with Marxist terminology and ideas. For a time, the Meison (All-Ethiopian Socialist Movement), a 'Marxist' party based on middle class intellectuals, acted almost as a civilian 'politbureau' to the Dergue.

In January 1975, 40 000 students were sent to the countryside to help carry through the reforms, and played an important part in raising the political awareness of the peasantry.

Soon enough, however, the Dergue began to fear the rival influence of the intellectuals and the danger that they would channel deeper-rooted opposition. In the Summer of 1975, the Dergue recalled the rural 'Zematcha' of the students. It began to warn against the "dangers of ultra-leftism" and to identify "law and order" with the security of the revolution.

In October of last year serious fighting erupted in Addis Ababa, provoked by the execution in jail of the leaders of the Meison, which had previously been forced underground. Over 350 were killed in fighting in the capital in the space of a few days.

In November, the deputy head of state, Lt-Col. At-nafu Abate was deposed and executed. He himself had become vice-president of the Dergue the previous February, when Mengistu had replaced the former vice-president, Brigadier Teferi Bante, who had been executed. Thus, through a bloody internal struggle, Mengistu concentrated the leadership of the Dergue in his own hands.

Following this, the Dergue intensified its campaign against the EPRP. Gun battles became a nightly occurrence in Addis Ababa. Various reports suggested that over 3 000 students and workers were killed last November alone. "The purges among members of the EPRP have been much more drastic than the killings six months ago, when bodies, including those of children, were left by the roadside as a warning to the public," stated one report at the end of November.

These developments, continuing now, clearly testify to the bonapartist character of the Dergue and the complete lack of democracy in the new state organs created by the regime.

## The character of Ethiopian regime

What attitude should socialists take to the momentous changes in Ethiopia in the last four years?

First, it is necessary to recognise the fundamentally progressive character of the social changes that have taken place under the Dergue. Landlordism and capitalism have been abolished. The fact that the Dergue was forced to carry through the land reform and the nationalisation of industry is proof of the utter inability of capitalism to develop countries like Ethiopia, and these measures provide the only means by which the country can be pulled

into the modern world.

At the same time, however, it is equally necessary to adopt an implacably critical attitude towards the dictatorial, bureaucratic regime that has arisen from the revolution. Its reactionary, nationalistic position on the national question (which we will come to later) is the counterpart of its repressive role internally.

**Ethiopia cannot be regarded as a socialist state, only as a deformed workers' state, in which new social relations corresponding to the interests of the working class have been established in a grotesquely distorted manner.**

Some of the basic economic tasks of the socialist revolution have been taken on by military middle class leaders because such terrible social contradictions have developed that Ethiopia could no longer wait for change. Under the conditions of extreme backwardness which prevail in Ethiopia, a bonapartist leadership has been pushed into pre-empting the tasks of a genuine socialist leadership because of the weakness and isolation of the Ethiopian working class—and because of the long delay of socialist revolution in the advanced countries of western capitalism.

With its mass basis among the peasantry and aid from the Russian bureaucracy, it is very unlikely that the regime of the Dergue will fail to consolidate itself in the next period. But the revolution itself can only be taken forward through a struggle for democracy by the working class. Its demands must be:

- \* **Freedom of speech, assembly, and the press;**
- \* **Democratic trade unions independent of the state;**
- \* **Democratic workers' control and management of the nationalised industries;**
- \* **Soviets of democratically elected workers', soldiers', and peasants' representatives;**
- \* **The abolition of the army and the placing of the workers' and peasants' militias under the control of the soviets to defend the gains of the revolution;**
- \* **The right of the peoples of Eritrea, Ogaden and other national minorities to self-determination;**
- \* **For a Socialist Federation of Ethiopia and Eritrea and Somalia;**
- \* **For a Socialist Federation of Africa.**

## The national question

**The attempt of the Dergue's regime to retain control over Eritrea and Ogaden have nothing in common with genuine Marxism.**

When the Bolsheviks came to power in Russia in 1917 they immediately conceded the right of self-determination to the oppressed nationalities which had been shackled up in the old Russian empire's "prison-house of nations". By proclaiming the right to independence, the Soviet government was able to gain the confidence of the exploited classes within the subject nations, and convince them of the enormous advantages of opting for a voluntary socialist federation with full autonomy.

Under Stalin, however, the bureaucracy which usurped the political control of the soviets returned to a narrow, nationalist policy. The Greater Russian chauvenism of Stalinism fanned all the smouldering embers of nationalism, giving new life to national aspirations which



# inqaba YA BASEBENZI

Die 'liberale' PFP se reaksie op Maseru was steun vir die SAW se aanval. Die *Financial Mail*, weekblad van die 'progressiewe besigheidsmense, het geëis dat die ANC vervolg en vernietig moet word.

Wat hulle verskille met mekaar ookal is, staan elke groep van die kapitalistiese klas saam teen bedreiging van die 'wet en orde' van die staat wat hulle eiendom en voorregte beskerm.

In alle kamerade van die ANC, nes onder die uitgebuite en onderdrukte mense in die algemeen, is daar 'n bragende drang om die moord te wreek.

Maar die werklike vraag is, watter strategie in die stryd kan die weg voorsien om die regering omver te werp en ons mense te bevry? Dit moet eerlik en nugter heroorweeg word in ons beweging.

Die Maseru-bloedbad het weereens die ontsaglike militêre krag van die Pretoria-regering—groter as al die omringende lande tesame—bewys. Hierdie krag berus op SA se industriële mag, wat die hele subkontinent domineer.

*Umkhonto we Sizwe* se antwoord hierop was meer guerilla-aksies—veral die aanval op die Koeberg atoomkragstasie. Maar kan sulke kommando-tipe aanvalle, hoe goed georganiseerd en gereeld hulle ookal mag word, tot die omverwerping van die regering lei?

In werklikheid is daar in SA geen basis vir 'n guerilla-oorlog wat die staat kan verslaan nie.

In 'n aantal onontwikkelde koloniale lande, waar die sosiale basis van die onderdrukkende staat swak was, en waar arm landwerkers die oorgrote meerderheid van die bevolking uitmaak, kon plattelandse guerilla leërs aan die mag kom.

Geen een van hierdie kondisies is in SA aanwesig nie.

Nog nooit het guerilla-oorlog

daarin geslaag om 'n industriële-ontwikkelde staat te oorwin nie.

Maar dit beteken nie dat die SA regering onoorwinbaar is nie.

Industrialisasie self het die mag voortgebring wat die regering kan vernietig—die werkende klas.

Gekonsentreerd in groot getalle by die strategiese middelpunte van produksie, het die werkende klas die vermoë om die hele sisteem te verlam.

'n Sterk, verenigde werkersbeweging het die magnetiese krag om al die onderdrukte klasse aan te trek. Deur die heersende klas as 'n verenigde beweging te konfronteer, kan dit die sosiale kragte waarop die regering berus, ontmoedig en verdeel.

Deur die alternatief van 'n versekerde toekoms vir alle werkende mense te bied, deur middel van die sosialistiese verandering van die samelewing, kan die werkersbeweging baie van die wit jeug en werkers, wat nou wapens dra vir die regering, na hulle kant wen.

Met massa-organisasie en 'n revolusionêre leiding sal die werkende klas uiteindelik die staat vernietig en ontbind deur middel van gewapende opstand.

Guerilla-oorlog, aan die ander kant, kan nie die regering en sy ondersteuners verdeel en verswak nie, nog minder kan dit ons eie geledere verenig en versterk.

In werklikheid is die gevolge die teenoorgestelde van wat die guerillavegters self bedoel.

In plaas van die gif van wit rasisme te neutraliseer, die blankes op klasselyne te verdeel en die regering te isoleer, kan guerillastryd net lei tot die sluiting van wit geledere en die opsweping van rasistiese reaksie.

Meer aanvalle op die wit bevolking word nou weer gedreig na die Maseru-moorde. Dit sal die blankes nog vinniger in hierdie rigting op loop sit.

Die antwoord van die staat op guerilla-aktiwiteite sal nie net meer onderdrukking in SA wees nie, maar meer en meer moorddadige wraakaksies teen die buurlande.

Hierdie lande kan duidelik nie as veilige lanseerbasisse vir 'n toenemende guerilla-oorlog in SA dien nie.

Die resultaat van 'n guerillastrategie sal wees om Suidelike Afrika meer en meer in 'n

Lebanon te verander, soos *Inqaba* al voor die Maseru-aanval gewaarsku het.

Hieruit kan 'n verskriklike burgeroorlog tussen swart en wit ontstaan wat, hoe dit ookal eindig, die gebied sal verwoes en miljoene lewens vernietig.

Sommige beweer dat guerilla-aksies dien om die werkersbeweging aan te moedig en te ondersteun.

Hierdie kamerade begaan dieselfde fout as die 19de-eeuse revolusionêre anargiste, wat geglo het dat "propaganda deur die daad"—bomontploffings en sluipmoorde deur klein groepies helde—die werkers tot revolusie sou inspireer.

In werklikheid gebeur die teenoorgestelde, hoeveel die onderdrukte mense ookal mag simpatiseer met bomaanvalle. Toenemende gewapende voorvalle buite die beheer van die werkersbeweging verminder die werkers se herkenning van hul rol as die klas wat homself bewus moet organiseer om die samelewing te verander.

Guerillastryd lyk na 'n kortpad na oorwinning, maar in werklikheid is dit 'n pad na frustrasie en ramp.

Om die regering te verslaan, is dit nodig om 'n revolusionêre massabeweging van die werkers op te bou.

Miskien lyk dit na 'n lang ompad. Die oorgrote meerderheid van die werkers moet nog georganiseer word. Net 'n klein minderheid, selfs onder die georganiseerde werkers self, besef op die oomblik die historiese taak van hul klas.

Tog is die mobilisering van die werkersbeweging, om voor te berei om nasionale onderdrukking en kapitalisme uiteindelik deur 'n gewapende opstand te vernietig, die enigste weg na vryheid.

Deur hiertoe by te dra, kan elke aktivis die beste die herinnering dien van die vermoorde kamerade en almal wat deur die regering gedood is.

Die ANC-leiers, in plaas van illusies in guerilla-oorlog aan te moedig, moet al hulle krag gebruik om die werkersbeweging op te bou as 'n magneet vir al die onderdrukte mense.

Dit sal die weg na oorwinning—na 'n meerderheidsregering en sosialisme—baie korter maak.



would have soon been satisfied and outgrown in a democratic federation of soviet republics. Today, throughout Russia and Eastern Europe, national sentiments amplify all the grievances of workers in the subject states and nationalities and, in turn, provide a means of expressing opposition to the totalitarian dictatorship which rules over the planned economy.

**On this vital issue, as on others, the Dergue has followed the example, not of the Bolsheviks, but of the Stalinist bureaucracy. This is not simply a question of mistaken choice of policy: it reflects the narrow social interests of the petit-bourgeois military caste on which the Dergue is based. Its lack of internationalism and hostility to national aspirations are the counterpart of its determination to direct all social change from above and at all costs to retain power in its own hands.**

Far from defusing the explosive national antagonisms which built up under Haile Selasse's empire, the Dergue, by attempting to crush the hopes aroused by the Emperor's fall, actually triggered a critical reaction which has come near to blowing Ethiopia apart.

## Struggle in Eritrea

The armed struggle of the Eritrean liberation movement against the regime in Addis Ababa is now 17 years old. During the war to free Ethiopia from Italian rule in 1941, when the British army backed Haile Selassi's forces, Eritrea, formerly an Italian colony, was promised independence. After the war, however, the United Nations recommended its federation with Ethiopia under the Emperor's throne.

In 1962, the party which dominated the Eritrean Assembly and which reflected propertied interests, decided to take Eritrea into union with Ethiopia. Moves in this direction had already given rise to the Eritrean Liberation Front, founded in Cairo in 1958, which had initiated the armed struggle in 1961.

By 1971, the ELF had established a strong position for itself, and its operations forced Haile Selassi to declare martial law in Eritrea. But in the 1972 ELF split, provoking bloody conflict between the two wings of the movement. The ELF, backed by Sudan and a number of Arab states, claims to be "socialist" but characterises the present struggle as "the stage of national democratic revolution", postponing socialist aims to a later "stage".

The split-away EPLF (Eritrean Popular Liberation Front), however, claims to be "Marxist-Leninist" and appears to have much wider support among the exploited masses and petit-bourgeois in Eritrea. Ironically, the EPLF counts among its heroes the same Fidel Castro who is now supplying its mortal enemies with military advisers. Such are the tragic contradictions.

Both the ELF and the EPLF seized on the collapse of the regime in 1974 to launch a new offensive struggle for independence. After two years of intense fighting, the liberation force took most of the province out of the Dergue's control, occupying most of Eritrea's towns, and cutting off Ethiopia's route to the vital Red Sea ports of Massawa and Assab.

Only the divisions within the Eritrean liberation movement and its lack of a viable political strategy saved the Dergue from complete defeat in Eritrea. The extent of

mass support for the independence struggle is indicated by the fact that, in May 1976, the combined guerrilla forces of the ELF and the EPLF were estimated at 30 000 to 40 000. When the Dergue offered limited autonomy to Eritrea, it was rejected outright by both wings of the liberation movement.

Faced with this, the Dergue began in May 1976 to recruit a peasant force to march in Eritrea against the liberation movement. Drawing on the peasant associations formed when land reforms were carried through, the Dergue assembled a peasant army of 30 000 to 40 000.

Thousands of peasants would undoubtedly have been prepared to mobilise to defend—as the Dergue claimed—the gains that had accrued to them under the new regime. But the Dergue also attempted to whip up support on the most reactionary basis, concentrating recruitment in the predominantly Christian provinces, and waging an hysterical propaganda campaign against Eritreans, accusing them of "selling Ethiopian territory to the Arabs." In such an approach, there is not an iota of Marxism.

The Dergue's ill-prepared and poorly-equipped peasant army disintegrated when it came up against the Eritrean forces. Most of Eritrea still remains outside the Dergue's control. Although the fighting continues, the Dergue appears to be concentrating its military efforts in the south, against the Somali-backed forces in Ogaden.

With the military and economic aid it is now receiving from Russia, and the training of its army by over 6 000 Cuban advisers, it is possible that the Dergue will be able to retake Eritrea. But the reconquest of Eritrea could be achieved by the Dergue only with an enormous toll of death and destruction, which would confirm with the blood of tens of thousands the nationalistic, repressive character of the new regime, in spite of the progressive social changes from which it draws its strength.

Had the new regime offered full independence to Eritrea, while offering autonomous participation in a socialist federation, who can doubt that the land reform measures and nationalisation would have an enormous attraction for the workers and peasants of Eritrea? As it is, the Dergue appears to be as despotic as Haile Selassi's regime, if not more so.

To national opposition is added repulsion at the savage, dictatorial methods of the Dergue. The intensified struggle of the Eritrean liberation movement, moreover, has also had the effect of stimulating renewed separatist demands within Ethiopia, notably among the peoples of Tigre and Afar, who are kicking back at the tyranny imposed on them by the Dergue.

## The war in Ogaden and the character of the Somali regime

In the last few weeks, Ethiopia has launched a massive counter-offensive against the Somali-backed forces in Ogaden—backed by Russia (with Cuba as its military agent), Moscow having abandoned its former support for Somalia. In all probability, Ethiopia will retake Ogaden. Whatever the outcome, however, this war in one of the world's poorest regions unmistakably demonstrates the complete lack of internationalism of the Russian bureaucracy, and the narrow nationalist outlook of its



# THE CLASS STRUGGLE AND THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY

**The Coloured Labour Party's decision at Eshowe, to participate in Botha's new constitutional scheme, draws its leaders into responsibility for enforcing the regime's racial 'divide and rule' dictatorship. This directly attacks the basic interests of the working class.**

**"We can't fight for the unity of all workers on the factory floor", the Food and Canning Workers' Union has pointed out, "and allow a constitutional dispensation which discriminates against people of different races and excludes the majority" (RDM, 2/2/83).**

The Eshowe decision violates previous positions taken by the Labour Party.

In 1977 its leaders denounced essentially similar NP proposals on the grounds that they entrenched racial division and dictatorship. In 1979 Allan Hendrickse vowed that "Coloured people would reject any constitutional proposals which did not include other black people" (*Sunday Post* 29/4/79)

In the same year the Labour Party leaders unanimously endorsed the Du Preez Commission's call for one person one vote in an undivided SA.

How is this turnabout by the 'Labour' Party leaders to be explained? What lessons can be drawn for the future course of the struggle for majority rule in an undivided SA?

## Daily struggle

As the FCWU statement underlines, the need of working people for a democratic government of their own arises not from passing fancy but—like the need for shopfloor unity—from the daily struggle for survival.

United struggle is the only means for the working class to defend wages, jobs and conditions against the attacks of the bosses. Only

by  
**Richard Monroe**

through united action, consolidated in the trade unions, has the working class achieved any gains in the hard struggles of the last decade.

But the gains are never secure. Wage increases disappear as the bosses raise prices. Jobs are at the mercy of the bosses' profit-motivated decisions to contract or expand production.

Every struggle in the factories, the townships, the schools and the Bantustans reveals more clearly the basic problem: that power over all the decisions that determine the lives of working people lies with a handful of capitalists protected by the system of white minority rule.

This is because we live in an economic system organised to create profits for those who own the banks, mines, factories and farms. Deprived of other means of survival, the majority of the people must live by selling their labour-power to the capitalists.

The ownership of production is highly concentrated. Every sector of the economy is dominated by a handful of monopolies. Facts recently published show just how tiny—and interconnected—is the parasitic clique which controls the means of production.

The top twenty SA companies account for 60% of the assets of the top 100. Anglo-American, whose annual turnover is believed to be larger than total SA government spending, has directors on the boards of five of the top six monopolies: Barlow-Rand, SA Breweries, Sasol, Amic, and AECI.

Seven of the top ten monopolies have directors on the boards of the major banks.

Even during the 1960s, SA capitalism's 'best' period, the monopolies could prosper only through cheap black labour. Now, with the world capitalist economy in





replicas in the under-developed world.

Ethiopia and Somalia are at war: but the regime in Somalia has the same essential social characteristics as the regime in Ethiopia. While Ethiopia was being convulsed by dramatic and bloody events which attracted the attention of the whole world, Somalia was experiencing similar changes, carried through with little upheaval and almost unnoticed internationally.

In 1975, the military government of Siyad Barre, which had seized power in 1969, completed a radical land reform which eradicated landlordism and satisfied the peasants' demand for land. What little industry there is in Somalia was completely nationalised, and an economic development plan inaugurated.

Proclaiming itself to be a state based on "scientific socialism", Somalia was rapidly adopted as a client by the Russian bureaucracy, which had already given aid and was now eager to assure its access to the naval facilities at Berberer on the Gulf of Aden. The Somali forces began to receive enormous military aid from Russia.

Somalia has long laid claim to Ogaden, a former British "protectorate" handed to Ethiopia by Britain in 1955, but which has a population of about two million (mainly nomadic) Somalis. Ever since its formation as an independent republic in 1960 (unifying British and Italian Somaliland), Somalia has demanded the inclusion of other areas with a predominantly Somali population: *north-eastern Kenya (with about half a million) and Djibuti (formerly French Somaliland)*.

While Haile Selassie ruled Ethiopia, Moscow was quite prepared to approve Somalia's claims to Ogaden—though, ironically, it was Stalin who had vetoed a British proposal at the United Nations after 1945 to hand Ogaden to Somalia!

## Russia changes sides

But the events of 1974 changed the situation. Somalia saw the turmoil in Ethiopia as a golden opportunity to step up the struggle for Ogaden by increasing its supply of regular troops and equipment to the West Somalia Liberation Front. As the Dergue began to move towards more radical measures, however, Moscow began to shift its policy.

The Russian leadership calculated that the social measures would give the new regime a basis, despite the terrible convulsions the country was going through. With its much greater land area and bigger population, Ethiopia has a far greater political and strategic importance in Africa and the Arabian Gulf. First, the Russian bureaucracy tried to negotiate a compromise between Somalia and Ethiopia. But when this failed—demonstrating the cynical basis of their foreign policy—they switched their support to the big battalions, to Ethiopia.

As a result, in November last year, Barre kicked out the 6 000 Russian advisers and ended Somalia's ties with Moscow. He then appealed to the western powers for help. Barre has received some aid from France and West Germany (partly in return for co-operation against the Palestinian hijackers of the Lufthansa jet which ended up at Mogadishu last year). But the US has vetoed any major assistance for Somalia. Apart from their coolness towards the nationalised, centrally-planned economy, and

fear of a new Vietnam-type involvement, they are afraid of the Pandora's box that would be opened by supporting Somalia's claim to Ogaden, which implies a general claim for "ethnic frontiers" embracing all Somalis.

"The United States cannot send arms to Somalia," explains the *Financial Times* (19/1/78) "because, whatever one thinks of Somalia's moral case and the authenticity of the WSLF, virtually every other African state takes the view that Somalia is the aggressor and that its action threatens the principle that borders inherited from colonial times are inviolable. Somalia's contention that the people of the Ogaden are liberating themselves from Ethiopian colonialism are not widely accepted."

## Right to self-determination

Given this situation, Ethiopia will probably retake Ogaden, though it is unlikely to cross the border into Somalia. But could there be a greater condemnation of the grotesque, nationalistic foreign policy of the Russian bureaucracy? Only, perhaps, the war between the regimes of the deformed workers' states in Vietnam and Cambodia after the long, heroic struggle of their peoples against landlordism and imperialism.

The Marxism of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky stands unequivocally for the right of nations to self-determination. Sensitivity to the aspirations of oppressed nationalities goes hand in hand with genuine internationalism.

**Marxists must support the right of the Eritrean people to independence.**

Although the Somali regime has undoubtedly supported the 'West Somali' liberation movement for reasons of its own power and prestige, **Marxists cannot but support the demand of the Somalis in Ogaden to decide their own future.**

**Similarly, the other national minorities within Ethiopia should be granted autonomy, and the right to independence if they decide to separate.**

But while the satisfaction of national aspirations is a precondition for the resolution of the conflicts now raging throughout the Horn of Africa, the formation of a number of small new independent states, even with the abolition of landlordism and capitalism, would in itself by no means provide a solution to the terrible problems facing the impoverished and exploited masses of the region.

**Full recognition of national rights must be linked by Marxists to the call for a socialist federation of Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea and if they decide on independence, other small states in the region.**

**Even this, however, must be viewed as a step in the direction of a socialist federation of Africa, the only means by which the continent will escape from the stifling legacy of colonialism and the continued domination of imperialism.**

These demands must be taken in conjunction with the demands for workers' democracy, explained above in relation to Ethiopia, and which also apply to Somalia.

In the case of Ethiopia and Somalia, both the dictatorial character of the regimes and their complete lack of internationalism arise from the confinement within narrow national boundaries of the fundamental social



a period of irreversible decay, the living standards of even the most privileged sections of the working class are under attack.

At the root of the struggle by black working people for a democratic government lies the burning need to end poverty wages and all the other miseries imposed by the profit system. *The only genuine democracy is that which will take power out of the hands of the rich clique who presently hold it, and place it in the hands of the working majority.*

**That is the threat which the demand for majority rule in an undivided SA poses to the capitalist class.**

To sustain their rule, they depend on a system of government that can hold back the struggle of the exploited masses for a decent life.

At the core of this system is the repressive machinery of the state—the police, the military, and the civilian army of state officials.

Unelected, moulded and trained as a hierarchy obedient to commands from above, the state is the central machinery organising the bosses' resistance to genuine democracy.

Lenin explained that the state acts as an organ of class oppression by "the creation of 'order', which legalises and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the conflict between the classes ... depriving the oppressed classes of definite means and methods of struggle to overthrow the oppressors" (*State and Revolution*).

The state machine cannot indefinitely defend the interests of the capitalist class without a wider base among the population from which to draw for recruits and support.

## Constitution

In the constitution of 1910 the SA capitalist class manifested its hostility to democracy by consolidating white minority rule. For generations the SA state has deprived the oppressed black people of "definite means and methods of struggle to overthrow the oppressors" by drawing the white minority into the camp of privilege, setting them over and against the black masses.

In the experience of the black majority, capitalist rule has manifested itself in the control exercised by white foremen in the factory and by white

**Unelected, moulded and trained as a hierarchy obedient to commands from above, the state is the central machinery organising the bosses' resistance to genuine democracy.**

officials in the pass offices, in the privileged position of white trade unions, in the voting rights accorded only to whites—and in brutal repression by the white-dominated police and armed forces.

**Under the huge pressures brought to bear by the struggles of black workers and youth in the last decade, the system of white minority rule has begun to crack. This has opened up a political crisis for the capitalist class and its political representatives, which is reflected in the increasing turmoil and divisions in their ranks.**

"The strength of finance capital", explained Trotsky (leader, with Lenin, of the 1917 Russian Revolution), "does not reside in its ability to establish a government of any kind and at any time, according to its wish; it does not possess this faculty. Its strength resides in the fact that every non-proletarian government is forced to serve finance capital; or, better yet, that finance capital possesses the possibility of substituting for each one of its systems of domination that decays, another system corresponding better to the changed conditions. However, the passage from one system to another signifies the **political crisis** which, with the concurrence of the activity of the revolutionary proletariat, may be transformed into a social danger for the bourgeoisie." (*"Bonapartism and Fascism," 1934*)

At Eshewe, the 'Labour' Party leaders defended participation in Botha's new scheme on the grounds that, had they refused, the old constitution would have remained in force. **In reality, the new constitution represents an early but necessary effort by the ruling class to substitute for its decaying system of domination another system "corresponding better to the changed conditions".**

Even capitalist commentators ridiculed the 'Labour' leaders' argument: "They surely could not have believed that themselves and must have known that the NP was forced by various factors to initiate reform"

(*RDM*, 18/1/83).

As the ruling class recognises, the "factors" that are cracking open the old white dictatorship will only intensify in the period ahead.

At the root of this situation lies, on the one hand, the worsening conditions of life which is the only perspective that capitalism can offer to the mass of the people. The sheer needs of survival will draw ever wider layers of the workers, the youth and all the oppressed into struggle.

On the other hand lies the increased power of the working class to impose its collective will in struggle against the bosses. The very growth of industry, which has been the source of the monopolists' wealth and power, has drawn the black working class—with no vested interest in any system of exploitation—into the strategic centres of production in greater numbers than ever before.

The bankruptcy of capitalism and the rising strength of the working class open up an irreconcilable conflict threatening not only the system of white minority rule but the survival of capitalism itself.

The perspective of unfolding revolutionary conflict is the "social danger" against which the capitalist class seeks new methods to moderate the conflict between the classes and defend its system. The differences among the capitalists and their political parties are only differences about the methods by which this can be achieved.

Though it can no longer guarantee the economic privileges which most whites have enjoyed in the past, the capitalist class cannot afford to abandon its base of support among them. The state machine would be reduced to a shell without its reliable white core.

But only a tiny minority of the capitalist class, represented in the Conservative Party, presently clings to the old NP belief that exclusive white minority rule and Bantustan methods are alone sufficient to divide



changes over which they presided. On the basis of the extreme backwardness that still prevails, with the survival of feudal conditions and only a very limited development of modern industry, it is impossible to establish genuine socialist relations. Socialism, as Marx explained, requires a level of technique and culture high enough to abolish scarcity and want.

The attempt, under exceptional conditions, of petit-bourgeois military leaders to tackle social tasks which are objectively those of the socialist revolution—thus giving rise to **deformed workers' states**—can be explained only from the point of view of the international balance of class forces.

The revolutionary developments in Ethiopia and Somalia, as in other countries like Cuba, are as much the product of the world situation as of the class struggle within these countries. The regimes which have emerged are the result of the international dead-lock in the class struggle which has prevailed in the post-war period.

While capitalism experienced a long, unprecedented boom in the advanced countries of the west and Japan, it proved incapable of developing the ex-colonial, underdeveloped areas of the world. The postponement of the socialist revolution in the west, where the industrial working class is concentrated, produced intolerable contradictions in the backward countries.

When crisis erupted, triggering the complete collapse of the old ruling class and especially in Ethiopia, provoking the sweeping movement of the workers and peasants, the military leaders at the head of the movement were not only forced to clear away the remnants of the old ruling class, but were compelled to break with private property relations in order to find a way out.

Under Mengistu in Ethiopia and Barre in Somalia, bonapartist leaderships, which in a past era would probably have taken certain limited measures against landlordism and foreign big business in order to foster the growth of their native capitalism, have been pushed by events to carry through the abolition of landlordism and capitalism. They could establish a firm basis for their power in no other way. They have been able to take measures which, historically, belong to the proletariat, because of the extreme weakness of the working class in these countries, and because the working class of the advanced countries, the key to the socialist revolution in-

ternationally, has not yet moved decisively to carry out the socialist transformation of society.

Given the world balance of forces, these bonapartist regimes which have begun proletarian tasks in their own distorted manner, have inevitably turned for support towards the much more powerful deformed workers' states in Russia and Eastern Europe (and in some cases China) which constitute a heavy counterweight to imperialism. The bureaucracy of the Stalinist states not only provides economic and military aid—as they did formerly to Somalia and now to Ethiopia—to allow them to survive in a hostile capitalist world, but provide these new regimes with a ready-made prototype on which to model their own state apparatus. Inevitably, there is a tendency for these relatively weak regimes to become clients of the Russian bureaucracy.

In the case of Somalia, which received enormous military aid, the national interests of the ruling caste have come into conflict with the Russian bureaucracy's wider foreign policy interests in the Horn of Africa. Rooted in the isolation of the Russian revolution, the Stalinist bureaucracy is incapable of surmounting the national antagonisms created by capitalism and imperialism.

But the class deadlock of the post-war period which has produced the distorted transitional regimes of Ethiopia and Somalia is breaking down. The world economic crisis has already provoked enormous movements of the workers in Portugal, Spain and Italy. Tomorrow, there will be similar movements in France, Britain and other advanced countries, including the United States. The socialist revolution has been placed on the agenda in the metropolitan heartlands of capital. Events in Russia and Eastern Europe have also brought much nearer the political revolution in the Stalinist states.

The establishment of workers' democracy and planned production in the advanced countries would transform the world situation. Then the progressive changes now being carried out under such distorted conditions would become the basis for the rapid transformation of these desperately poor countries on the basis of international working class collaboration. The material and cultural standards of the toiling masses would be immeasurably raised and in a manner that fully satisfied national aspirations and the desire to democratically decide for themselves.

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# THE NAT PLAN

## PRESIDENT

Chairman of Cabinet. The same term as Parliament. Not Member of Chambers.



## CABINET

Appointed by President from all three Chambers and from outside. Divided into Cabinet committees for group areas.



## PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL



60 Members: 20 elected by white chamber, 10 by coloured, 5 by Indian and 25 appointed by the President

## PARLIAMENT

Matters of common interest approved by each of the three chambers



COLOURED WHITES INDIANS

GROUP AFFAIRS

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEES



## ELECTORAL COLLEGE



50 Whites  
25 Coloureds  
13 Indians



and contain the forward movement of the masses.

This would rapidly be tested and found wanting were the CP to come to office. A Treurnicht government would either disappoint its own supporters by capitulating to the same compulsions to 'reform'—or its stupid intransigence would accelerate the crisis.

It is these realities which have pushed the NP into changing the constitution. At the cost of a vast and irreversible split in its ranks, its present scheme rests on the gamble of (a) maintaining a white electoral majority while (b) drawing Coloured and Indian politicians into the three chamber 'parliament' and into government offices in defence of capitalism and the state against the African majority.

But the imperialist powers and the SA monopolies, the strongest and most decisive section of the ruling class, are well aware that this is no final answer to the revolutionary upheavals on the agenda.

A US government spokesman expressed support for Botha's scheme "not for what it is, but what it might become" (*Daily News* 6/1/83). Botha's government itself promises that the present scheme is only the beginning of a process whose end is

not yet specified.

While denying any intention of establishing an African 'fourth chamber', the government can see that any 'new deal' that offers no constitutional place to the African majority other than in the homelands is doomed to failure through lack of credibility.

Thus the Cabinet committee recently appointed to consider constitutional solutions for 'urban Africans' debates new methods of dividing the African people.

It is said to be basing itself on the new Black Community Development Act, which aims to draw new layers of black bureaucrats into 'self-government' of the township ghettos, to enforce the authority of the state and the bosses over the masses.

This is to form the bottom layer of a "four layer cake"(!)—including metropolitan-level "co-operation" between white, brown and black

municipal governments, "urban African constituencies" for the Bantustan "parliaments"—and iced with a "grand confederation" of ethnic governments.

The PFP declares its opposition to the present scheme on the grounds that it provides no place for the African people. In reality, the direction being charted by the NP brings them closer to the PFP programme, also based on methods of dividing the African majority so as to deny them their legitimate numerical influence on government.

The PFP formally accepted one person one vote only with the explicit qualification of the continued federal fragmentation of SA into a patchwork of divided communities.

What even the PFP leadership—the 'progressive' wing of the capitalists—recognises is that one person one vote in an undivided SA would bring to bear on the govern-

**The bankruptcy of capitalism and the rising strength of the working class open up an irreconcilable conflict threatening not only white minority rule but capitalism itself.**





Botha—manoeuvring

ment and the bosses the **overwhelming weight of 26 million black citizens in a population of 31 million, demanding an immediate end to poverty wages, the pass laws, slave-education, and all the other burdens of capitalism.**

PFP policy also defends capitalism and its state against the struggle of the masses for a decent life. As Van Zyl Slabbert recently explained, his approach "has always been that one should use the **executive institutions** for the purposes of bringing about peaceful and evolutionary change" (*RDM 27/1/83-our emphasis*). This approach also forces the PFP in reality into the defence of the **white political privilege** which remains indispensable to the survival of that state.

**All the plans of the capitalist class for effecting a transition from exclusive white minority rule to a new system of dominating the African working-class majority rest on their ability to secure the support of black leaders with some authority among the masses.** When, by entering into the regime's schemes, these black leaders undermine their credibility, this only intensifies the ruling class's search for new schemes and other, more credible, leaders.

The decision by the 'Labour' Party leadership at Eshowe is a stage in this unfolding process. Moreover, in

**To view the Eshowe decision purely as a 'sell-out' would fail to arm the movement against being taken by surprise in the future.**

deciding to enter the new scheme, they have **explicitly** abandoned the democratic goals on which they previously stood.

The Eshowe resolution reformulated the Party's goals as "one man one vote in a unitary system (**the latter negotiable**)" (*RDM 6/1/83-our emphasis*). The significance was spelt out by Hendrickse in an interview with the *Financial Mail*, organ of big business:

"If we are going to look at a federal structure, then its emphasis must be geographic rather than ethnic. It is true that, even geographically, areas would have elements of ethnicity within them...can you really see the clock being turned back in terms of Bophutatswana, Ciskei, Transkei, or any of the others? I can't see a *fait accompli* being unscrambled. So I want to believe that the ultimate answer is going to be a federal structure." (*18/2/83*)

Thus, from rejecting racially divisive constitutions, the 'Labour' leaders shift, not only to participating in, but **accepting** their basis. From here it is only a short step to the blatantly 'ethnic' appeal to a "Coloured identity" which has resurfaced at their recent report-back meetings.

In Eldorado Park, Miley Richards, deputy national leader, said that "the coloured people were tired of being in the middle and losing out at both ends, and that the time had come for them to stand up and fight for their rights". Jac Rabie, Transvaal leader, added "They take our farms for a black township, but not one black leader stands up to object." (*RDM 12/2/83*)

Many in the movement have correctly condemned the Eshowe decision, and pointed out its betrayal of the democratic principles the Labour Party once professed. But mere condemnation is not enough to explain the leaders' role, nor the reasons for their turnabout.

To view this purely as an opportunistic 'sell-out' by individuals would fail to explain the past history of 'sell-outs' by those in whom the

masses have placed their trust. It would also fail to arm the movement against being taken by surprise by similar 'sell outs' in the future.

In reality, the vacillation of these leaders is a reflection of the conflicting pressures which come to bear on the middle layers of society in a period characterised by increasing polarisation and conflict between the capitalist class and the exploited workers.

The middle class has always been 'in-between', and therefore lacking any clear identity. Elevated to a position of petty privilege above the masses, it fears being plunged into their appalling condition, while its upper and most educated layers, in awe of the bosses' power, chafe with frustrated social ambition.

But the growing domination of finance capital has dealt harshly with middle-class dreams. Their avenues for self-enrichment are steadily choked off by the spreading tentacles of big business, and the chances of reduction into the ranks of the working class are increased.

## Middle class

In SA the black middle class has been subjected to the additional burdens of racial humiliation and political oppression. This has restricted its growth, and created obvious bonds between itself and the working class.

The growing crisis of monopoly capitalism now squeezes not only the black middle class, but even the the



Hendrickse—trapped



## **As the revolutionary crisis unfolds, the ruling class will be compelled more urgently to seek wider support for their rule.**

far more protected and privileged whites. Thus the small white farmers, despite state assistance, are increasingly indebted to the banks—at present, to the tune of R7 700 million, which means an average of over R100 000 per farmer!

Relaxation of racial restrictions on business enterprise cannot solve the problems of the black middle class. The new “township market” is gobbled up by the big capitalist-owned hypermarkets. For every one black drawn into “junior partnership” by white big business, a dozen or more black traders are bankrupted.

Oppressed by the monopolists and the apartheid state, the black middle class is nevertheless isolated from the collective experience of the working class. It shares neither the workers’ instinctive sense of class struggle against the capitalists who exploit them, nor the power of the workers to combine, paralyse production and challenge the state.

The middle class is weak, flung to and fro between the big opposing classes, and subjected to conflicting pressures from above and below. These contradictory pressures polarise it, and make its various layers and spokesmen vacillate with the ebb and flow of the class struggle.

Under the pressure of the forward movement of the working class, large sections of the middle class—particularly its younger and poorer layers—will be drawn into the struggle against the bosses and the regime. This has been demonstrated time and again in the last decade, and will be confirmed in the period ahead.

Even the traders can at times be drawn to the support of black workers on strike, as in the Cape Town meat strike, the Rowntree’s strike, etc. Only the most reactionary sections of the middle class, who have already thrown in their lot with the state, such as the Bantustan puppets, dare stand out against this process.

The general drift of society towards revolutionary crisis and upheaval, and the increasingly obvious disarray of the ruling class, impel every serious black middle-class

leader towards a radical position. The determination and self-confidence of the masses in struggle encourages such leaders to push themselves to the head of the movement for democracy and social reform.

Many middle-class leaders have condemned the government’s constitutional proposals and the Eshwé decision. “Nothing short of full democracy in a united SA will satisfy our aspirations,” stated Dr Essop Jassat, a leading figure in the moves to re-establish the Transvaal Indian Congress (*Star* 8/1/83). “We shall not betray the ideals we have, the belief in a truly democratic SA,” said Dr Allan Boesak in calling for a united front of opposition to the proposals. (*RDM* 24/1/83)

## **Illusions**

Yet, as the revolutionary crisis unfolds, the ruling class will be compelled more urgently to seek wider support for their rule. Relying on the formidable character of its repressive apparatus, it will play on the illusions of the middle class in the benevolence of “progressive capitalists”, to encourage the belief that the only “practical politics” is within its own system.

“Progressive” change, in the eyes of these middle-class “democrats”, will come to mean limited reforms from above, carried out by the existing state machine, with themselves in positions of power.

And if—as will tend to be the case in a revolutionary crisis—the masses are not satisfied with limited reforms, then the task of the “democrats” becomes to assist in crushing the mass movement in order to save “democracy”.

Only the organised working class, compelled by its conditions of existence towards a life-or-death struggle against the capitalist class and the state, can develop the power to cut across the manoeuvring of the ruling class, and rally the majority of the

middle class behind it in the fight for genuine democracy.

For this the organised workers need a clear class programme, with concrete aims for mass actions, providing a standard by which the actions of all “radical leaders” can be judged.

It is the present weakness of working class organisation (despite the strides that have been made), and the failure of the leaders of the movement to put forward a clear programme of this kind, that gives room for the ruling class to trap the middle class in its manipulations.

In this situation it is inevitable that short-sighted self-interest should prevail again and again among the middle class over the vaguely perceived perspectives for revolutionary change. Ambitious and unscrupulous politicians will enter into deals at the expense of the masses—and at the expense of the majority of the middle class.

History provides us with clear parallels.

In February 1917 a huge movement of workers overthrew the Russian Tsar. But even in this revolutionary situation middle-class leaders who claimed to be democrats were diverted into a scramble for privileged positions tied to the old state machine.

Lenin explained:

“The development, perfection and strengthening of the bureaucratic and military apparatus proceeded during all the numerous bourgeois revolutions which Europe has witnessed since the fall of feudalism. In particular, it is the petty bourgeois who are attracted to the side of the big bourgeoisie, and are largely subordinated to them through this apparatus, which provides (them) with comparatively comfortable, quiet and respectable jobs raising their holders *above* the people. Consider what happened in Russia during the six months following February 27, 1917. The official posts ... have now become the spoils of the Cadets, Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries. Nobody has really thought of introducing any serious reforms. Every effort has been made to put them off... But there has been no delay ... in the matter of dividing the spoils, of getting the lucrative jobs of ministers, deputy-ministers, governors-general, etc, etc. This game of combinations that has been played in forming the government has been, in essence, only an expres-



sion of this division and redivision of the 'spoils' which has been going on above and below, throughout the country, in every department of central and local government. The six months between February 27 and August 27, 1977 can be summed up beyond all dispute, as follows: reforms shelved, distribution of official jobs accomplished and 'mistakes' in the distribution corrected by a few redistributions." (*State and Revolution*)

At this early stage in the unfolding of the SA revolution, the pressures to abandon the standpoint of democracy and enter this scramble for positions are already making themselves felt among politicians of the middle class.

More and more, however, the struggle of working people for a democratic government will raise the question of whose interests the economy and the state is to serve: the profit-making of the tiny capitalist clique, or the need of the overwhelming producing majority.

There is a need for absolute clarity on this question in the movement, and especially among the leadership. Even small elements of confusion can open the way for later vacillation which in turn can lead to compromise with the capitalist class and betrayal of the workers' struggle.

It is no accident that in the same interview in which he defended federalism, Hendrickse reaffirmed his commitment to 'private enterprise'; notably too the Eshowe decision was preceded by the **open support of the 'Labour' Party leaders for the motor industry bosses against last year's strike by NAAWU.**

Gatsha Buthelezi's Inkatha denounced the Eshowe decision as a "betrayal of the black cause of liberation" and of "sowing the seeds of disunity among blacks" (*RDM* 26/1/83). Buthelezi has also announced his support for united moves to oppose the government's scheme.

Yet at the same time this tireless defender of the 'free enterprise' system has been conducting his own independent negotiations with Mantanzima and other Bantustan leaders

for a... "united demand for a non-racial **federal** solution" (*FM* 28/1/83). It is small wonder that Botha indicated he would not stand in the way of this 'united' initiative... to sabotage the struggle for democracy.

There is a disturbing ambiguity also in the position of some of those who supported the formation of a United Democratic Front against the new constitution.

While rejecting the present scheme as "a ploy to buy time for a government in difficulty", Dr Jassat at the same time stated that "It would be foolish to reject a genuine (?) opening" (*FM*, 4/2/83). In calling for united opposition to the proposals, Dr Boesak hoped that the PFP "will be given the wisdom to decide to remain in the mainstream of opposition—that is, with us" (*Star*, 24/1/83).

Bishop Tutu, commenting on the new constitution has been "(at a) loss to understand why Mr Botha, a courageous man, risked so much and yet stopped short of what would help to solve the crisis of our country.... Why did he hold back from going the whole hog? Why did he vitiate his total strategy by the fatal-flaw of excluding blacks?" (*Star*, 2/12/82)

These statements show a failure to understand that it is only the organised revolutionary struggle of the working class that can create a "genuine opening" to democracy, and that only the working class has a consistent interest in going the "whole hog" towards majority rule in an undivided SA. Between this struggle, and the interests of the big business backers of the PFP, there lies an unbridgable gulf.

To oppose this struggle the main efforts of the ruling class are concentrated on fortifying its state machine.

The new constitutional scheme itself is based on **reducing the influence of every "chamber" of parliament, while strengthening the Executive Presidency.** The implications were not lost on one awestruck press commentator reporting on the first week of the 1983 parliamentary ses-

sion. General Magnus Malan, he wrote, "left no doubt about who is in control in SA ... This is not to suggest that Mr Malan runs the Prime Minister or vice versa... the two men are involved in a symbiotic relationship feeding on each other's considerable power and combining it into the most formidable administration the country has had... The week ended with the unmistakable impression that Government emphasis on security and internal repression still outshadows its moves towards internal reform" (*RDM*, 5/2/83).

Today the army is employed in colonial occupation of Namibia and in open and covert foreign adventures. These, together with 'joint operations' with the police in the townships, are intended to prepare it for future confrontations with its principal enemy: the SA working class in revolutionary struggle.

## Core of state

At the same time it is the armed forces at the core of the state which will increasingly provide the fulcrum on which the ruling class balances, as it manoeuvres this way and that in its efforts to win black middle-class 'democrats' to its defence without sacrificing white support.

These manoeuvres may or may not buy time, but they cannot avert the day of reckoning for the ruling class. As Lenin pointed out in explaining the events in Russia after the revolution that began in February 1917:

"The more the bureaucratic apparatus is 'redistributed' among the various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties... the more keenly aware the oppressed classes, and the proletariat at their head, become of their irreconcilable hostility to the **whole** of bourgeois society. Hence the need for all bourgeois parties, even for the most democratic and 'revolutionary-democratic' among them, to intensify repressive measures against the revolutionary proletariat, to strengthen the apparatus of coercion, i.e. the state machine. This course of events compels the revolution to 'concentrate all its forms of destruction' against the state power, and to set itself the aim, not of improving the state machine, but of smashing and destroying it." (*State and Revolution*)

**Only the working class has a consistent interest in going the 'whole hog' towards majority rule in an undivided South Africa.**





Workers reject 'Labour' leaders' plans for class collaboration at stormy meeting

That was the task carried out by the Russian working class in October 1917.

The victory of the working class in the SA revolution alone can lead to the establishment of a genuine democracy—a workers' democracy. The democratic mass organs which will be built by the workers will need to confront this task concretely as the question of power is posed. The class struggle internationally has shown the essential basis for a democratic workers' state:

- \*all officials elected and subject to instant recall;
- \*officials' pay not to exceed the average wage of skilled workers;
- \*immediate introduction of control and supervision by all;
- \*no separate army but the people armed, so that no military or police power can be the tool of a minority against the majority.

This is the key to ending the undemocratic economic stranglehold of the capitalist class through the banks and monopolies. This will open the way to nationalisation, under workers' control and management, of the commanding heights of production. On this basis production can be planned for the needs of the people, not the profits of the rich.

In the present struggle against the new constitution, only the working class can effectively resist the manoeuvres of our rulers. In taking up and leading this struggle, the organised workers will also develop and prepare their forces for the revolutionary tasks ahead.

Reflecting the workers' understand-

ing of the inseparable connection between the industrial and political struggle, some trade union leaders have already called for united mobilisation against the new schemes.

But it is not the workers' leaders who are at the fore in forming the United Democratic Front. The UDF is dominated by a political approach which remains entangled with capitalism, and reflects the contradictory position of the middle class.

Yet in any real campaigns of action launched by the UDF it will inevitably be the organised workers who carry the brunt of the struggle. It is the responsibility of the trade union leaders to ensure that campaigns of this nature serve to build up the organised power of the working class, **and to develop its consciousness of that power.**

## Workers' power

Decisions to participate in campaigns should be based on full democratic discussions in the ranks of the trade union movement. The power of the workers must not be subject to decisions arrived at outside their own ranks.

The struggle for unity of the workers' organisations in order to take the lead in the fight for democracy can restore the momentum towards trade union unification around a campaign of social and

political demands.

Linking the social with the political demands of the working class can provide a clear beacon for the youth to rally around and join hands with the workers' organisations—contributing all their fighting energy, enthusiasm, and dedication.

AZAPO opposes the UDF because one of the organisations that will support it, the TIC, is 'ethnically'-based. But the mistake of basing organisation on ethnic division will not be overcome by ultimatums or standing apart—only by the force of example of workers' unity in action.

*Inqaba* supporters in the unions and among the youth will be in the forefront of raising these ideas, and will take the opportunity in every campaign to explain the need for the working class to retain its independence of action. "March separately, strike together" must be the watchword.

Rather than simply expressing its "deep regret" at the Eshowe decision, it is the task of the National Executive of the ANC to explain why that decision took place, and to arm the working class with a consciousness of its own power to transform society.

A mass campaign of action against the government's proposals, drawing fresh layers of workers into organisation, can serve at one and the same time to build the trade unions and consolidate the struggle for democracy and socialism—for workers' rule—which, in time to come, will be organised openly under the banner of the ANC. ■



# STORM CLOUDS OVER

The flight to Britain by ZAPU leader Joshua Nkomo, the terror attacks by pro-ZAPU 'dissidents', and the counter-terror by the 5th Brigade in Matabeleland, highlight one side of the difficulties facing the Zimbabwean people as the third anniversary of independence approaches.

The Shona-speaking majori-

ty of workers and peasants are also experiencing mounting problems because of the government's failure, despite mass support, to carry through land reform, or effectively tackle unemployment and poverty.

The government's 'Christmas present' to workers was an extension of the 1982 freeze on wages, and a ban on

bonuses higher than those of Christmas 1981. (As a result, some municipal workers found their payslips had bonuses of \$180 crossed out and replaced with bonuses of \$50.)

The articles on these pages show why the optimism at the time of independence has begun to sour, and points out the only way for the working people to solve the crisis.

## Empress Nickel Mine closes

By Sam Parkin

Just one month after the Zimbabwean government announced a Three-year Development Plan hoping for an increase of 36 000 jobs a year, one of the largest mines in the country has been closed down.

Despite government aid of \$2,7 million to keep production at the Empress Nickel Mine going, a Cabinet meeting in December allowed the owner to shut down the mine and its technical administrative, and managerial services from 1 January 1983.

This decision by the ZANU-led government, which will result in the loss of 1 200 jobs was taken **without any consultation with the Associated Mineworkers Union (AMWU) which represents the workers.**

The president of the AMWU, Jeffrey Mutandare, said on hearing the news: "The closure of the mine will create a ghost town". He warned that this could be the tip of the iceberg. If other multinationals followed suit it would mean disaster for mining in the country.

"Why does this Government not practise what it preaches?" he asked. "It has allowed 1 200 comrades to lose their jobs. What kind of socialism is that?"

The closedown shows clearly that agreements made between govern-

ments and capitalists to maintain jobs inevitably work to the benefit of the capitalists and cannot be relied on by workers.

The only answer to the crisis of capitalism in Zimbabwe and internationally is the nationalisation of the big capitalist companies without compensation of the wealthy bosses.

On the basis of a planned economy with the mines and factories under workers' control and management jobs could be protected.

Instead the miners of Empress Nickel are to be sent to an agricultural training school for six months and then face an uncertain future. Meanwhile the considerable facilities at the mine wait on the government to decide what to do.

How can workers build the forces to prevent job losses in future? The lessons of the events at Empress Nickel Mine must be learnt.

The most important lesson is that the workers can only hope to hold back the attacks of the bosses if they join together on a countrywide basis.

**A mobilisation of the workers throughout the country by the workers' committees and the union in every mine is necessary to prepare**

**a national campaign to save jobs.**

Only in this way would it be possible to put firm demands on the government to stop the mining monopolies from abolishing more jobs.

The mining monopolies operating in Zimbabwe also own mines in Botswana, Zambia, Swaziland, etc.—and above all in South Africa. In every one of these countries workers sweat for the mining bosses for poverty wages in atrocious working conditions—and depend on the whims of the mineowners for their jobs.

Mineworkers throughout Southern Africa need to get together, strengthening their organisations and the links between them, and discussing how to struggle most effectively against their common capitalist enemy.

The struggle to defend jobs in Zimbabwe cannot rely on the goodwill of the governments.

The rank-and-file membership of ZANU and ZAPU must mobilise to demand that their parties hold the fullest consultation with the miners' union and come out with a definite commitment to defend the workers' interests by defending existing jobs. The future of thousands of miners is at stake.



# ZIMBABWE

## A railway worker's view

**Q: How has independence affected working people in Zimbabwe?**

**A:** Well, the war has come to an end, refugees have come back home and we have had a genuine election.

We now have free education for all our children and in the countryside some people are getting their own land. Most people there are getting regular milk—this is why cheese is scarce. We are also having many blacks in the civil service and the government service and the government ministries.

But in the towns food is becoming more expensive every day, while our wages have not improved much. There is also not enough bread, sugar, oil or mielie-meal in the shops.

Because I work on the railways I know that we are exporting sugar and so on to other countries like Botswana. And in Botswana these things are cheaper and you can buy as much as you like—but in Zimbabwe there is a shortage.

**Q: What is the reason for this?**

**A:** I don't blame Mugabe or ZANU

personally. I think the reason why Mugabe can't really change things for working people in the towns is because he doesn't have the money to.

The whites had the money and the knowledge of how to run the country for themselves. Zimbabweans need the same things to rule the country properly.

But everything still belongs to the same people who were paying us low wages during the time of Smith. Independence hasn't changed that. It is difficult to see how we will change that.

**Q: To use the train as an example—can we not say that this government is like a new driver driving the train, but on the same old railway line, with the same old engine as before?**

**A:** My friend, that is an important thing you have said. The people are like travellers on a train, wanting to reach a place where there is a roof for everyone, work and education for all our children and enough food to feed all the poor. But on this train we might not reach our destination.

If you only change the name of the train but not the engine, and if you continue on the same lines as before, then no matter who says what, we will not reach our destination.

What has been the fate of those who fought in Zimbabwe's war of independence? Some, not only in Matabeleland, have turned to banditry and dissident activities. Others are struggling to build a new life as civilians in the ranks of the working class.

A letter to the *Harare Herald* recently provided an insight into the living conditions of those ex-guerillas who have been provided with a demobilisation allowance:

*"We are becoming increasingly disgruntled by the manner in which our demobilisation allowance parade is handled. We are sometimes made to spend more than two months without getting paid.*

*"What we are supposed to be surviving on during that period, I will never know or guess. Our lives are characterised by endless trips to post offices and the demob directorate.*

*"One cannot even guarantee the paying of school fees or credit instalments in time. Some of us are lodgers and paying our rents is worrying, to say the least...*

*"As for food, I thank the struggle for teaching me to eat anything! When the money does come one has to wait for days to get it, if one is patient. The scenes at the post offices depicts cattle being herded into dip-tanks.*

*"One thing is certain. Nobody is caring about how we fare in this increasingly material world. Is this allowance meant to be a charity handout, or is it a right accorded to all former combatants?*

*"Are we meant to beg for it. With the irregularity of this allowance, ex-combatants are forced to look for any work to secure school fees or meet expenses.*

*"They cannot be blamed for that and they cannot have their allowance forfeited because they are working. This can only drive us to desperation.*

*"Perhaps suicide is the only solution to our problems, as people of the ghetto."*

The way forward for ex-guerillas is not through despair, but in becoming part of the organised ranks of the working class struggling for a socialist future.



Signing the Lancaster House agreement in 1979.



# Two-stage theory: Zimbabwe gives the verdict

By Paul Storey

**The ending of white minority rule in Zimbabwe three years ago was enthusiastically hailed by oppressed people in SA as an important victory in our fight also. Everywhere it raised confidence in the liberation struggle and infected the apartheid bosses with gloom for their future.**

But many people went further, believing that, merely by the election of a popular black government, the basic problems facing the Zimbabwean people would be solved. Low wages, unemployment, landlessness, white privilege, discrimination and oppression—surely all these could now be ended?

ANC leaders pointed to Zimbabwe as a model for the changes they wanted to bring about in South Africa.

All this ignored the fact, which Marxists emphasised, that the Zimbabwean revolution was far from completed—that it had in fact become trapped by the ZANU and ZAPU leaders' willingness to compromise with capitalism and maintain the system of private ownership of the economy.

It has not taken long for events to show that this was right.

Despite initial increases in minimum wages, wages are now frozen while prices rise at 20% or more per year. Unemployment continues to mount as the capitalists—the very bosses who exploited the workers under Smith—cut jobs, refuse to invest and even close firms to safeguard their profits during the recession.

Food subsidies have been withdrawn as the government seeks ways to cut its expenditure on the insistence

of the big monopolies, the bankers and the International Monetary Fund.

On the land, the peasants who sacrificed most during the liberation war still hunger for land, while the government feels obliged to protect the property rights of the white landowners.

Thousands of workers who have gone on strike for higher wages during the past three years have been met with arrest, dismissal or heavy threats from their 'own' government. While this has been going on, the black middle class (of all parties) has had no problem enriching itself along with the white—getting farms, business opportunities and loans, high-paid positions, fine houses, etc.

The country remains deeply divided politically between the majority Shona and minority Ndebele people. In Matabeleland, as a result of terrorist murders by ex-ZIPRA 'dissidents' and vicious counter-terror by the ZANU government's 5th Brigade against ZAPU supporters, over 1 000 have been arrested and over 500 (mainly peasants and workers) reported killed.

The way is now prepared for the Mugabe government to move towards eliminating political rivals

and the establishment of a one-party state—at the point of a gun.

Two years ago, when there was the first major outbreak of fighting in Bulawayo, *Inqaba* (No.2, April 1981) gave this explanation, which subsequent events have fully borne out:

"The bitter armed clashes which erupted around Bulawayo in February, leaving over 300 dead, are a symptom of the huge unsolved problems facing the people of Zimbabwe.

The fighting between ZIPRA and ZANLA former guerillas and units of the national army is not simply a reflection of party rivalries and still less the result of ethnic or 'tribal' differences, as the capitalist newspapers portray it.

The mass of the workers and peasants in all parts of the country—ZANU and ZAPU supporters alike—are basically **for unity in carrying the revolution forward**. They are united in wanting to gain the land, jobs for all, and an end to the twin evils of black poverty and white privilege.

But they are being forced to bear the continued burden of landlessness, unemployment, deprivation and discrimination of all kinds. This is because the coalition government of the ZANU and ZAPU leaders with the rich landowners, factory bosses, and bankers has meant a **compromise**

**Every elementary demand of working people comes unavoidably into direct conflict with the capitalist class and the conditions of its survival**





over white privilege, property and profits.

Instead of real power passing into the hands of the masses, the result has been the concentration and manipulation of power at the top, among the elite. Because of this, a destructive struggle for mere status and position between the ZANU and ZAPU leadership has been inevitable.

In turn this has sharpened old rivalries between the former guerillas, embittered by the immense sacrifices of the war and the failure of the government to bring about the fundamental change of society that was fought for...

Some comrades in the ANC have the idea that the unresolved problems in Zimbabwe are attributable to ZANU's victory and that, if ZAPU had gained the upper hand, the situation would have been fundamentally different. **But this is not true.**

Nkomo and the ZAPU leaders are

equally committed to compromise with capitalism as Mugabe and the ZANU leaders are."

Events are the test of theory. From the time of the Lancaster House agreement, the independence elections and the coming to power of Mugabe's "Marxist" government, there has been a chorus from the "left", proclaiming that a compromise with capitalism was the only "realistic" course in Zimbabwe.

The exponents of "two-stage" revolution have declared Zimbabwe the proof of their argument that a democratic transformation could be carried through, and national oppression eliminated, without the need to overthrow capitalism.

Proof indeed! Realism indeed! Isn't it time that these theorists frankly acknowledged their error?

In the capitalist world, we are living in the age of what Marxists call "permanent revolution." This does

not mean that the classes in society are everywhere, constantly, without pause, in open and armed revolutionary conflict. Nor does it mean that the working class is able at every moment to launch a determined struggle for power.

What it does mean is that the productive system of capitalism is now so rotten, so incapable of taking society forward, that the mass of working people can no longer secure their elementary needs, or gain improvements in conditions for any length of time, on a capitalist basis.

The demand of working people for freedom of speech and assembly, for the right freely to elect the government, for the right to organise, demonstrate and strike for better conditions, comes unavoidably into direct conflict with the capitalist class and the conditions of its survival. As a result—and this is most acutely the case in the under-developed countries—capitalist governments are chronically unstable and must move more or less rapidly towards repression, giving democracy its notice of redundancy.

Thus, through all the particular struggles, confused upheavals and crises, society polarises more and more sharply around the fundamental questions: for or against capitalism; for or against the dictatorship of the bosses; for or against workers' power and workers' democracy; for or against the socialist transformation of society.

In Zimbabwe, too, these are the unavoidable questions. But it will take time, organisation, explanation and the proof of still greater events before they are posed in stark clarity before the masses.

To build the workers' organisations; to unite the working class, both Shona and Ndebele-speaking, both ZANU and ZAPU supporters, on a common programme; to draw the peasants behind the workers' movement in the struggle for the land; to win over the youth and radical middle class searching for a way forward; to link the mass movement to the strength of the industrial working class in South Africa and to the unfolding revolution there and internationally—these are the tasks which hold out the real solution for Zimbabwe.

They are difficult tasks, but they are inescapable. Every alternative will prove itself bankrupt. ■■



# LESOTHO: Workers must join in SA revolution for their liberation

By R. Molapo

**The memory of the unbridled savagery of the SADF in the early hours of 9 December, when 42 ANC refugees and Basotho civilians were slaughtered, will remain with the Basotho for a long time.**

The massacre underlined, as it was intended to do, their perilous situation. Lesotho is defenceless, exposed to attack without warning by the apartheid regime, as it strikes again and again.

The fundamental purpose of the SA regime is to maintain the cheap labour demanded by the capitalist system, which keeps Basotho and all black Southern African workers under the iron heel of repression.

Lesotho is economically a Bantustan. Independence, in 1966, has brought little improvement to the lives of the people.

Only 13% of the land is arable, and there is almost no industry to provide jobs for the people who cannot survive on the land.

Between 1980 and 1982, for example, the Lesotho National Development Corporation created only 3 650 jobs—although some 60 000 youth were looking for their first job.

On 1 December last year a sales tax was imposed (without any discussion) and is probably the worst single blow to Basotho living standards since independence.

Political power was usurped in 1970 by Leabua Jonathan's BNP, after losing the election to the opposition BCP under Ntsu Mokhehle (who had led the campaign for Lesotho independence). This has increased the hardship for all Basotho, except

those tied to the government through jobs and privilege.

The degeneration of the BCP during the 1970s can be traced to a false understanding of the perspectives for Lesotho, leading to the belief that Lesotho could somehow be really independent despite its geographical position and lack of industry.

**But the struggle for democracy and a better life for the Basotho people cannot be won within the borders of Lesotho alone.**

This was shown as early as 1868, when the British and Boers forced Moshweshwe to accept the alienation of Basotho land and people to the Orange Free State, and the present borders were agreed.

## Workers

It remains the position today, after more than 100 years during which the Basotho workers in their hundreds of thousands yearly have contributed with their sweat, blood and many lives to the building up of the enormous wealth of white SA.

**160 000, 40% of Basotho male workers, work in SA. Lesotho's people are overwhelmingly a working class and a part of the South African working class.**

There is no possibility of freedom, social liberation and democracy in Lesotho until the struggle of the SA workers is successful and the capitalist system in SA is overthrown, ending racism and white privilege.

**The Basotho workers must look to and join in the SA revolution for their liberation.**

**This means organising in trade unions together with the South African workers, and building political links with them.**

Links were built in the past as, for

example, between the SA Communist Party and the Lekhotla la Bafo (the League of Commoners) in the late 1920s.

It is unfortunate that the leaders of the ANC are building links not with the Basotho workers, but with Leabua and the BNP leadership.

*Ironically, at the funeral of the massacre victims, where he shared a platform with Oliver Tambo, Leabua Jonathan called for the trade unions of Lesotho and SA to unite, to protect Basotho migrants threatened with repatriation by the Pretoria regime.*

He also said (*Lesotho Weekly*, 24 December): "guns are destructive, but nothing could be more destructive than a mass strike throughout SA."

It is true that the workers have the real power to change society, but how serious is Jonathan in these statements?

The Basotho people know the origins of the BNP, its virulent anti-communism, and the direct support given to Jonathan by the Pretoria regime in the 1965 and 1966 elections, and in clinging to power in 1970.

They have suffered 17 years of BNP government, with no elections since 1970, corruption and misappropriation of aid money, the growing wealth and ostentation of a small number of Government ministers and supporters, imposition of the Sales Tax, no political meetings allowed, and the repression of opposition tendencies by the Lesotho Paramilitary Force.

The *Lesotho Weekly* carries a report of a court case arising from an attempt by Basotho workers to organise in Maseru, where even the magistrate criticised "frequent involvement of police in trade disputes". It was revealed that the



police were called to "drive the striking workers out of the firm, if they did not return to work".

The magistrate also criticised the police for "not carrying out an order I gave at the start of the case to allow the accused to see a doctor", pointing out that the "accused had visible open wounds as a result of the assault by the police."

During the strike at Barclays and Standard Bank last April, the government forced the members of the Lesotho Union of Bank Employees back to work by placing the banks under the Essential Services Act overnight.

Because of the anti-worker policies of the BNP, many Basotho youth and workers look instead to the BCP/LLA for a way forward. For example it was reported (*Capital Radio*, 1 December) that a young Basotho miner had been sentenced to 4 years at Maseru court for collecting money at a Free State gold mine for the LLA.

But now, for their own devious

purposes, the apartheid regime is giving covert support to the LLA. After the Maseru massacre Basotho opposition supporters must see that any one who allies with these South African thugs cannot be a friend of the Basotho people, no matter what his past record. Such alliances can lead only to disaster.

At the same time it is hardly useful, as some do, to condemn the BCP/LLA **without at the same time putting forward to the youth and workers the reality that liberation for the Basotho can only come through the liberation of SA.**

This will require the building of the ANC by the working class as its own organisation fighting on a socialist programme to rally all the oppressed.

It is necessary for the ANC to assist in the organisation of the Basotho workers, always explaining the shared exploitation and the common struggle of all Southern African workers.

As the crisis of the SA economy intensifies, the regime is likely to

repatriate many Basotho workers, both as a lever on the Lesotho government to put the screws on the ANC, and as they continue to orient recruitment towards the Bantustans.

Fighting for workers' solidarity is necessary against such 'divide and rule' tactics by the bosses, which set the Basotho against the Xhosa, the Zulu, the Shangaan, etc.

## Killed

In the raid, Basotho were killed along with refugees from East London, Cradock, PE, Umtata, Cape Town, Soweto, Matatiele, Evaton and Bloemfontein. This has underlined that the struggle against exploitation and oppression involves the working people of all the countries of Southern Africa.

**Rather than fraternising with Jonathan, the enemy of the Basotho workers, the ANC leaders should spell out to the Basotho workers what the position will be for the peoples of the neighbouring countries after liberation.**

Will influx control be abandoned? Will the unemployed masses of these countries be allowed into the cities and towns of SA for jobs not available at home? Will there be enough jobs? Will there be decent wages, trade union rights and freedom to work where one wants, for all Southern African working people?

These questions need answers if Basotho workers are to be won to support for the South African workers' revolution.

It must be made clear that there can be no freedom in Southern Africa until the capitalist system is overthrown and workers' democratic rule is established in South Africa.

Given the choice, the overwhelming majority of the Basotho people would probably seek union with such an SA state. At the same time, a workers' state in SA would recognise and defend the right of the Basotho and all other nations of the sub-continent to states of their own, if they desire it.

Within a federation of Southern African workers' states, the divisions and inequalities created by capitalist rule could finally begin to be overcome.



After the massacre



# Workers fight redundancies

**“We know the hardships involved. The workers will have to return to the homelands where there are no jobs. But we have no choice,” claimed one employer dismissing workers.**

Up and down the country, the Pontius Pilates of SA industry are washing their hands of the worst unemployment crisis since the 1930s. What an indictment of capitalism's inability to provide jobs for all!

It is the workers, as MAWU explained last October, who “bear the brunt of the slump... The drought has made it impossible to grow food in the rural areas. There will also be no money now for people to plough. In most areas workers are supporting many other people who are unemployed”.

No industry and no group of workers has been spared this nightmare. Among the three million unemployed are also some whites, Asians and coloureds amongst whom there has been a 112% increase in joblessness this past year.

In the motor industry, always a barometer of the state of the economy, one in twelve of the workforce has been sacked in just six months. Sales have fallen 26% since October 1981.

General Motors had retrenched almost one-tenth of its workforce and Sigma over one-third by the end of last year. Truck assembly has also been hit with, for example, 400 retrenchments at Mercedes Benz's East London plant.

The future is no brighter. 60 000 black matriculants began job-hunting this year with traditional employers such as the civil service, SATS, ISCOR and private industry not recruiting as widely as before. Barclays Bank's chief economist has warned: “worse is to come and we

**By Alan Green**

would be fooling ourselves if we fail to face this”. (*Rand Daily Mail*, 13/11/82).

Even when the next small upturn in the economy arrives, unemployment will not be solved. There is no way the profit-grabbing SA bosses will be able to create jobs for all workers.

Quite apart from economic crisis, population increase alone will make the problem of unemployment worse every year. **1 300 new jobs a day** will have to be created just to keep up with the increase in the work force up to the end of the century.

To conform with our rulers' Bantustan policies, half these jobs would have to be found in the 'homelands'. But as the chairman of the Economic Development Corporation admits, it is a “disturbing” challenge having to find the R1 200 million a year which would be needed just to hold unemployment at its **present levels** in the Bantustans.

He also shows a more sober approach than some of his fellow capitalists: “Magic words like rationalisation, private sector involvement, establishment of a development bank and so on are seized and admired as if (they) will open the sluice gates of scarce development capital and, with the wave of a magic wand, provide all the necessary skills”. (*RDM*, 5/1/83.)

Slowly it is dawning on the employers that their repertoire of tricks is running out. The grandest ‘magician’ of them all, Harry Oppenheimer, has warned his fellow ‘wizards’ of “a real risk of industrial disturbances and political instability” should unemployment continue to

rise.

But no faith can be placed in their willingness or ability to solve the problem. The boycott of the Kathlehong meeting, to which MAWU invited employers to discuss retrenchment, reveals their attitude.

Instead, they are using the economic downturn as an opportunity to crack down on the unions. At Sigma plants there are now periodic reviews of “unproductive workers”; while in the Transvaal, MAWU has had to contend with dismissals of workers for “not producing enough”.

Despite their access to cheap labour, the SA capitalists have been falling still further behind the major industrialised countries. The *Financial Mail* (1/12/82) revealed that during the 1970s the growth of productivity (production per worker) averaged only 0,3% in SA, compared to West Germany's 2,7%, Japan's 3% and Taiwan's 6,8%.

## Investment

The key to productivity is investment in new machinery. The inroads that foreign imports have been making into SA markets are a result of meagre investment in the SA manufacturing sector. This, in turn, is caused by the fact that the SA bosses do not have adequate markets to justify massive investment.

More and more the SA economy is having to rely on windfalls from rises in the gold price, and increased mineral exports. It is a fatal situation for the bosses, and ruin for the workers.

Volkskas economists have the hypocrisy to call for greater ‘patriotism’ in giving preference to SA-made goods. This false idea, un-





*Three million working people in SA suffer the despair of unemployment*

fortunately, has been echoed by some trade union leaders who see import controls as a way of saving SA workers' jobs.

But this overlooks the fact that import penetration is a **symptom**, not the **cause** of the crisis. A programme of import controls would invite retaliation from abroad. The SA economy, completely dependent on exports, could not afford a trade war.

What is even worse, the idea of import controls threatens to turn workers in one country against those elsewhere.

Workers in different countries face the same problems, and often work for the same companies. Instead of trying to compete against our fellow workers abroad, we should build links with them and struggle together against those responsible for our oppression—the capitalist class.

It is in this spirit that we need to face up to the fight against retrenchments. We must be clear: the bosses must pay for their own crisis. All jobs should be defended. Plant closures should be opposed with all available strength.

Many trade unionists have learned through experience that the fight against retrenchments is quite dif-

ferent from the struggles of the past few years, for higher wages, etc. Then, of course, most companies wanted to increase production, and could be pressurised into making concessions by strike action or even the threat of a strike.

Now management want to close down or run down production, while the workers want to continue.

The struggle for jobs must therefore be fought on a wider basis than the factory itself. It requires the trade union leadership to conduct a broad campaign taking the issue to **all sections** of the trade union movement.

The aim must be to hammer out a **programme of action** against job losses, involving workers in all the major industries, and showing the workers that they can win. If the whole trade union movement is prepared to take a stand against attacks on any of its members, backed by industrial action in key industries, then attempted sackings would carry a higher price than the bosses are prepared to pay.

This would also show to unorganised workers the importance of joining the union.

On a capitalist basis, the future of

every industry in SA will be one of continual 'rationalisation' and periodic shrinkage.

While fighting redundancies with all possible tactics, the trade unions will need to put forward an alternative to the worsening chaos and insecurity of this system. It should be made clear that unemployment could only be solved if available work was shared among the workers.

But this should not be at the workers' expense.

Short-time working, for example—'work sharing' on the bosses' terms—is a one-foot-in-the-grave policy. Whilst in operation, the workers' financial problems mount up and so, when it comes to a fight against retrenchment, the workforce is already half-beaten and demoralised.

A fighting alternative is needed. SA workers, like workers in Europe, would undoubtedly support the call for a **35-hour week with no loss of pay** as a concrete way to share out work without imposing worse poverty on the workers.

Some might claim that such a demand is utopian—and they would be correct, unless the necessary mobilisation is undertaken by the workers' leaders. No demand has ever been won without struggle; but the better organised and more resolute the struggle, the more can be achieved.

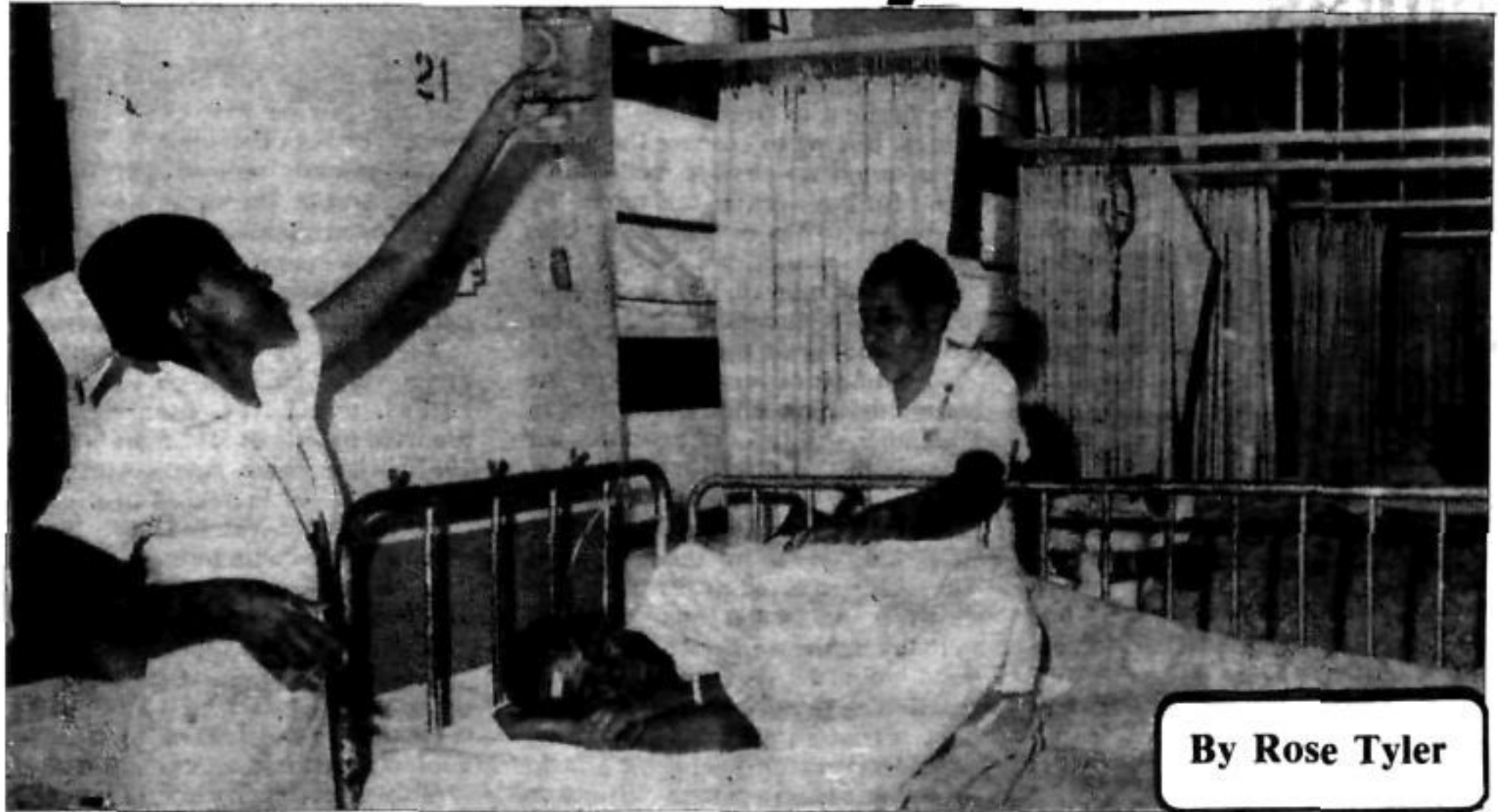
The car workers, for example, have shown that through militant and united action demands can be won that are, according to the bosses in other industries, 'utopian'. Also in the fight against job losses, the car workers have the organisation and the strength to take a lead.

But in this struggle it will be vital to link political with industrial demands. To secure our gains and make them permanent, the Freedom Charter's demands for majority rule combined with the nationalisation of mining and industry, under democratic control, must become the conscious aim of the trade union movement.

Industry planned by the workers themselves, organised as part of a democratically planned economy, could produce the things really needed by the people of SA and neighbouring countries—and provide jobs for all.



# "We work for peanuts"



By Rose Tyler

**On 11 November some 500 workers at the Hillbrow Hospital in Johannesburg came out on strike demanding a 50% wage increase and better working conditions.**

The workers, including clerks, cleaners, porters, radiographers, ward helpers, messengers, and dark-room assistants, had the support of many others, like the nurses, who didn't come out.

The workers presented a list of grievances to the hospital management including the unfair dismissal of pregnant women and gardening and cooking staff being forced to do ward work.

They called for a 50% wage increase as some workers were only earning R100 a month. All workers complain of long hours with no overtime pay.

The strike was a continuation of industrial action which took place at Baragwanath Hospital last October when some 200 workers went on strike for higher pay.

These militant actions expose the crisis in health services. In October 1982 there was a shortage of 19% of nurses throughout South Africa with 15 000 out of 72 000 posts vacant. Even hospitals catering for whites on-

ly are affected.

Poor working conditions and low salaries are the cause of staff shortages. In response the government has been forced to allocate R110 million for nurses' pay increases over and above the 15% granted to all public sector workers in April 1982.

Now some other health workers are demanding similar increases and have taken bold action. But unfortunately the actions have not been co-ordinated with workers in other hospitals.

Now, more than ever, there is a need for a single union to organise health workers into a united force.

The numerical strength and boldness of the less skilled workers such as the cleaners and porters is the essential basis for such a union, round which others such as radiographers will rally. For this strength to be fully realised, the union must develop and campaign around a programme which starts with the interests and demands of the most oppressed workers.

When taking action to enforce their demands, health workers will need to explain the reasons to the other workers and their families who use these facilities, and campaign for their support.

During the Hillbrow Hospital strike, for instance, the hospital security were ordered to lock the patients out (even though doctors and nurses were prepared to provide treatment). Only the health workers could explain to the patients that the inconvenience was the fault of the bosses.

A united health workers union should be given the full support of other trade unions in organising a fighting campaign for better conditions. Shop stewards need to be trained and united action planned between hospitals.

As the recession deepens and health conditions continue to deteriorate, the country's health facilities will become more and more overburdened. Although there may be temporary reforms and occasionally a pay increase there can be no solution to the crisis under the bosses' profit-grabbing system.

A free national health service, run under workers' control and management, would guarantee decent wages and conditions for health workers, and offer proper medical care for all working people.

Only with the establishment of democratic workers' rule will this be possible.



# Union challenge on mines

By Victor Wood

Black miners face a crucial struggle in the period ahead—the struggle to build trade union organisation.

Mining is the backbone of the SA economy. The effective organisation of the 450 000 black miners would challenge the very foundations of the present system.

Disunity of the miners has been a big stumbling block in previous struggles. The need for mineworkers to be organised together was clearly shown during the violent struggles last July, involving 30 000 workers.

The miners' boiling discontent was set off by the insulting wage increases imposed by the Chamber of Mines.

"Management's reaction was to call the mine police", said one worker. "Strange police came in army uniforms in vans and helicopters... Police fired tear gas and three workers got shot in my hostel. One was hung from the gate by his legs to scare other workers."

In the face of this brutality, the bravery and determination of the miners was shown for all to see. It has shown the mineowners that brute force alone is no longer enough to hold the workers down.

As the lesser of two evils, they have now decided to 'recognise' African unions, hoping to ensnare the union leadership in a web of 'conciliation'.

But for the workers this retreat by the bosses offers new opportunities to build a union of their own to unite the mass of miners. The key will be to develop a leadership with a clear understanding of the tasks ahead.

The inaugural conference of the National Union of Mineworkers in December showed the potential for struggle in this direction.

The 1 500 miners present rejected the restrictive conditions for 'recognition' laid down by the Chamber. They also rejected registration, industrial councils and job reservation.

In taking the workers' struggle forward, union activists will face vicious reaction. Already NUM officials have suffered police harassment.

All workers must see these attacks on union organisers as an attack on the whole trade union movement. The NUM needs all possible support from every union in the country.

With solid organisation of the mass of miners, and rank-and-file control over the union's policy and

leadership, the full strength of the workers can be harnessed and the bosses' attacks defeated.

The mining unions will face a serious test in the run-up to July's wage determination. Many black miners will look to the NUM to channel the workers' militancy and compel the bosses to pay a living wage.

There can be no doubt about the mineowners' ability to pay. Barlow's ERPM mine, for example, has reported profits of R17,5 million for 1982, while some Anglo-American mines boast of increased profits.

Effectively organised, the black miners will be able to move into action on their fundamental grievances, and provide a rallying point for unity of all the independent unions.

This struggle goes to the heart of the present system and cannot be separated from the overall struggle to abolish apartheid and capitalism.

Only when the Freedom Charter's demand for nationalisation of the mines has been carried out, and democratic workers' control and management established, will it be possible for all miners to enjoy the just reward of their labour.

## Get rid of this evil capitalism!

Dear comrades,

At this engineering firm where I worked on the Rand there was this woman also working, as a 'teagirl'. She had been working there six years. She had six children and a husband who had been out of a job for four years. She only got R30 a week.

She had to take out one of her daughters from school, from Standard VII, to work in the factory opposite. Her daughter started on R45 a week and then was getting R80 a week.

But she still couldn't come out; she said if she didn't get at least R35 or R40 a week she would be thrown out of her house. I knew she was getting loans from the boss and paying back at, say, R3-5 a week. For that she always tried to work overtime. She would ask if there was any overtime in the evenings or on a Sunday.

This loan business was a whole racket where the boss and the other

managers and supervisors would loan money to the workers on interest of R10 for a R100 loan. They were getting a lot of money they didn't know what to do with, so they lent it to the workers and they made a lot more besides.

When the wage packets came from head office they would just open them up and take out the money week by week, plus 10%. Often the worker wouldn't know how much the boss deducted: some of the workers were paying 10%, but others 15% or 20%.

Every time the tealady paid back a loan, she'd take another loan. She asked me to go and talk on her behalf to the boss and ask for a raise. I did and told him he could ask himself how could she survive on what she got—and she knew the firm in and out, too. She knew how to work the switchboard as well as anyone.

The boss went red in the face and

said the firm did her a lot of favours. They had made her a steel fence for her yard and didn't ask her to pay, and they had made her a coalbin free. (Afterwards I found out this was a lie, because she had paid R50 for the coalbin and he deducted it from her wages). So he said she should be grateful and he couldn't give her any money.

So I said how could he say that, when all of you are too lazy to get up and make your own tea, and none of you clean this place, and you send her out to do your shopping. I was so mad.

That's why its so important to get rid of this evil thing of capitalism. Because that's not what just happens to one family but to thousands and thousands of families.

Yours in struggle  
J.Samson



# Ten years ago : The Durban strikes

The dispute of the 2 000 African migrant workers at Coronation Brick & Tile Co. outside Durban with their employers in January 1973 was over pay.

As events turned out, their action marked the beginning of the Durban strikes—the biggest post-war explosion of industrial struggle in SA up to that time.

The Coronation workers demanded that their minimum wage of R8,97 per week (which had not been raised for five years) be increased to R20. The cost of subsistence for the average African family in Durban was R78 per month at this time.

Management responded by blaming "Communist agitators" and threatening the "ringleaders" with punishment.

The strike began on 9 January and was ended after two days by no less a person than the Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini. A week later management pressurised the workers into accepting a R2,07 increase.

But by this time strikes had begun to spread, first to other factories in Durban, then to other parts of the country.

Outstanding were the struggles of the workers employed by the textile millionaire, Frame. Some of them were earning only R5,00 per week. At the end of January, every single Frame factory was at a standstill, with 8 000 workers on strike.

In the Hammarsdale industrial area the strike became general, involving 7 000 workers from twelve industries. Also in the forefront were Durban's municipal workers: 16 000 laid down their tools, including many Indian workers.

By the end of March there had been at least 160 strikes, involving over 61 000 workers, in every sector of industry. Because of the mass nature of the movement, the bosses in most cases were forced to make concessions. This, in turn, encouraged more workers to join in.

What were the reasons for the

eruption of large-scale industrial struggle at this time? Answering this question will help us to understand more clearly what is involved in building the workers' movement today.

Objectively, in SA as elsewhere, the post-war capitalist boom had been financed increasingly by inflationary credit and state spending. Production was being expanded beyond the limits that the capitalist system—hemmed in by private property and the nation-state—could sustain.

## World-wide recession

With profitable markets being flooded and rates of profit falling, capitalism was heading for the first world-wide recession since World War II, that would open up a whole period of crisis and decline.

But the general problems of society do not immediately confront the working class in their entirety; they appear first of all as a series of specific unconnected problems. For the workers in Durban and elsewhere,

the deepening contradictions of the capitalist economy were expressed first and foremost in rapidly rising prices.

For workers earning starvation wages, without the democratic right of free collective bargaining, this left no choice except struggle to defend their very existence.

At the same time the African working class had been enormously strengthened by the massive growth of industry during the 1960s. The despair that had followed the crushing defeats of the Sharpeville period had worn off. A younger, more militant generation had taken their place in the factories, docks and mines.

Significant strikes by black workers, notably the Durban dock strike of 1969, had already begun to reflect the changing mood. **The Durban strikes, however, brought a fresh, militant proletariat onto the national scene as a mass force struggling independently for its own demands.**

This historic class movement, therefore, was based on the concrete problems faced by large numbers of workers, in the context of a changing political climate; and it ushered







in a new period of industrial and political turmoil affecting every layer in society.

The bosses and the state were shaken and pushed on the defensive. As Graaff, the then leader of the white parliamentary opposition, put it: "I think we all realise that a new era in industrial relations in SA has been rung in as a result of what has happened."

The employers were compelled to concede wage increases. Before 1973, increases for African workers averaged less than 10%—i.e., less than the rate of inflation. But such was the impact of the workers' struggles that the average increase for 1973 was 18%; for 1974, 22%; and for 1975, 21%. (At the same time, inflation has forced the workers to continue the struggle for a living wage.)

These wage gains are all the more impressive when we recall that trade union organisation was almost non-existent among African workers at the time, and all strikes were illegal. The strikes were 'organised' by the workers' spontaneous class consciousness and independent underground activity; all the gains were won through the workers' own courage and initiative.

In the face of this wave of class struggle, even the state retreated. No "ringleaders" were arrested. Instead

the law was amended to 'legalise' strikes by African workers under restrictive conditions similar to those faced by other workers.

**But the great and lasting significance of the Durban strikes has lain in the new confidence it gave black workers in their ability to struggle and, in this climate, the rapid growth of trade union organisation among the mass of workers.**

From only a few thousand in 1972, African trade union membership rose to some 40 000 by July 1974 and 60 000 by August 1975. While only a small part of the total African workforce, this represented a giant step forward out of the terrible repression of the 1960s.

It has created a basis for later waves of struggle and the further growth of the independent trade unions, which will form the key to the mass organisation of the working class in the coming period.

The struggles of the workers have given encouragement and a clearer sense of direction to other sections of the black oppressed. In 1976, there followed the magnificent upsurge of the black youth, who quickly sought ways of linking up with the workers.

By the late 1970s, industrial struggles were becoming a focus for students, community organisations and even shopkeepers to support (as

at Eveready, Rowntree, etc). This has provided a foretaste of future revolutionary upheavals, when the mass organisations of the black working class, led by the workers' ANC, will head all the oppressed in battle.

Many other aspects of the struggles that face us were foreshadowed by the Durban strikes.

Crucial to the success of the strikes was the skilful combination of mass and underground organisation. Correctly distrusting the bosses and the authorities, workers used their own mass meetings to negotiate with employers. Workers' leaders only stepped to the fore when it was considered safe for them to do so.

As a result, the strike movement was highly democratic, with the leadership under the direct control of the workers, and all important issues decided by mass meetings.

These same methods enabled the workers to carry out their decisions in a disciplined way and bring their collective ingenuity to bear on the problems they came up against. For instance, a system of 'flying pickets' was developed by municipal and building workers to involve workers who were scattered over many sites.

Unity in action was created between African and Indian workers, despite occasions of past conflict. Remarkable also was the effect of the mass class movement on white workers. According to a survey, 60% of white manual workers blamed the bosses for the strikes, and almost 90% believed that African wages were too low.

The Durban strikes showed that the class movement of the workers can only be based on their own understanding and experience. Workers will organise and fight to solve their commonly-felt problems, provided they can see some prospect of success.

Only out of the confidence and the organisation built on these foundations will come the power to struggle for the workers' fundamental aims—an end to exploitation and racial oppression, and a free, democratic SA ruled by the working people themselves.

Discussing and learning the lessons of the Durban workers' struggles as a guide to future action is the best way to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the strikes.

**D.H.**



# The junta crumbles - which way Argentina?

**Last December the Chief of the Argentinian General Staff, General Calvi, had a friendly meeting with South Africa's military attache in Argentina, Colonel du Preez. Afterwards they declared that their two governments were "sentinels of the South Atlantic" who had the same enemies and friends.**

They are right. The apartheid regime and the Argentinian military dictatorship are truly blood brothers. Since the generals seized power in Argentina in 1976, over 20 000 people have been kidnapped, tortured and murdered.

Like the SA regime, the Argentinian military see the working class as the main threat to their rule. On coming to power they declared strikes illegal, murdered many working-class activists, banned trade unions and suppressed all democratic rights.

They have not been the only military junta to try and put the Argentinian workers in chains. Since the 1930s there has been a succession of military regimes that have promised 'stability' under an iron fist. But each one has disintegrated or been forced from office by revolt from below.

**The current Bignone regime is now going the way of all its predecessors. The history of Argentina shows that nothing can permanently stop the workers from struggling to change society.**

Even as the blood-stained hands of the SA and Argentinian military clasped in greeting, the workers in the streets outside were showing their power in a one-day general strike.

Nothing moved without the permission of the unions. All public transport came to a standstill, all banks closed their doors, and virtually all production ceased.

Although officially strikes are illegal, the military felt powerless to intervene for fear of provoking an uprising. They knew they could not count on the loyalty of their troops if it came to a conflict with the

**By Jim Chrystie**

Member of Hackney  
North branch of the  
British Labour Party.

workers.

The weekend before, at a military ceremony to honour soldiers who fought in the war against Britain, war veterans chanted: "down with the military junta!" Conscripts booed the head of the First Army Corps; one senior officer only escaped by drawing his pistol and threatening protesters.

**This crisis engulfing Argentina has its origins in the inability of capitalism to develop the society.**

The junta have now been forced to concede elections later this year. But even when the military yoke is lifted, Argentinian capitalism will be in no position to take the country forward. Any new government will be one of crisis from its very first days in office.

Argentina's debt to the international bankers is one and three-quarters times the total value of the goods it exports in a year—that is worse than any other major country in the world.

economy. In 1947 five Argentinian pesos exchanged for one US dollar. Officially the dollar is now worth over 40 000 pesos; on the black market the figure is much higher.

In 1981 the first one million peso note was issued. Officially inflation now stands at 400%; but the real figure for basic goods is calculated to be nearer 600%!

This means, for example, that a casual labourer in Buenos Aires ear-

ning 500 000 pesos a week now finds half his wages gobbled up by fares alone.

For the capitalists, inflation is a cancer which threatens production, because they never know what new costs will suddenly appear. For example, last July the state-owned steel works put up the price of sheet steel by 23% in one week. As a result Ford and Renault, the country's two largest vehicle manufacturers, refused to sign a new contract with them.

All the economic statistics now point to deeper recession.

In 1981, even before the war with Britain, overall production fell by 6%, industrial output by 14% and investment by 22%. The war, that was meant to distract workers from this picture of disaster, has made the situation still worse. Out of a potential workforce of 8 500 000, one million are now officially without jobs and a further million barely employed.

## Leadership

Tragically, the leadership of the workers' movement has no programme or strategy to end this nightmare. This will prolong the twilight of Argentinian capitalism.

Because of the absence of a socialist leadership, the modern history of Argentina has consisted of cycles of mass upheaval followed by military repression, with only brief intervals of civilian rule.

Even now, as power slips from the hands of the military, the workers' leaders are not prepared to take it. They want to arrange a coalition with the bosses, leaving economic and social power in the hands of the present exploiters, and hope to obtain some concessions for the workers on this basis.

It was only mass rank-and-file pressure which forced December's general strike. The workers' leaders





*Argentinian trade unionists demonstrate against the junta*

had spent the previous months trying to arrange secret pacts with various military leaders.

**Instead of bowing to the bosses and their uniformed thugs, the workers' leaders should be mobilising the full power of their class.** As in SA the working class holds the key to the situation. In Argentina 82% of the population live in the cities, one of the highest proportions in the world.

To understand the present problems of the Argentinian workers' movement, it is necessary to understand how it developed. Historically, the Argentinian workers have been organised under the banner of Peronism. This movement takes its name from Juan Peron, the military dictator who ruled the country from 1946 to 1955, and again from 1973 to 1974.

In the 1945 elections, which swept him to power, he said the choice for Argentina was either "Peron or Braden" (the American ambassador). He denounced "Yankee imperialism" and the local ruling class.

Presenting himself as the workers'

champion. Peron helped build up new mass organisations of the Argentinian working class. In 1943 only 10% of the workforce had been in trade unions. Under Peron's rule, 66% of workers became union members.

The leaders of the Socialist and Communist parties were totally unable to understand Peron's role or present a Marxist alternative to the workers. The result was a split in both parties. The Communist-controlled Labour Federation and some Socialist unions voluntarily dissolved and joined the Peronist Federation.

In fact, the reasons for Peron's actions were purely opportunistic. He had first come to office as Minister of Labour in the **pro-Fascist** coup of 1943. "Hitler's fight in peace and war shall be our guide", declared this government.

But the regime soon changed its tune as the tide turned against Fascism in the Second World War. Two months before Hitler was finally defeated it even declared war against Germany!

Peron, who could see the way the

wind was blowing, began to exploit his position as Minister of Labour. He imprisoned leaders of the old trade unions and formed his own unions. Using the army and gangs of thugs, he forced individual bosses to recognise these unions.

His wife, Evita, whipped up mass support for Peronism with demagogic attacks on the rich elite. She aimed her appeal not at the workers' movement, however, but to the *descamisados* (the shirtless ones)—i.e., the poor in general.

Although Peronism put forward no working-class programme, some of the military officers were scared of the passions being aroused and tried to arrest Peron. Showing his true colours, the would-be strong man hid in fright. But the workers took to the streets. Fearing a genuine workers' revolution, the capitalists retreated and allowed Peron to come to power.

## Independence

Relying on the army and his regimented trade unions, Peron had a degree of independence from the capitalists. But he was careful not to attack their basic interests.

He also made no move against the rich landowners. During his rule there was no major land reform and no improvement in the position of rural workers.

*Peron's role as a popular, reformist dictator* was only made possible by the unique advantage which Argentina's economy enjoyed in the late 1940s.

War-torn Europe was desperate for its main export—beef. Using state power, Peron bought beef cheaply from the landowners and sold it dearly abroad.

This money was used to help the industrial capitalists develop the economy. Some progress in industry, construction, mining and transport was made during the early years of Peron's rule.

As a result of the devastation of Western Europe and Japan, Argentina for a brief period found itself among the top ten industrial countries of the world. With British imperialism only a shadow of its former self, Peron felt confident enough to take over its major assets in the country (though at the same time paying



substantial compensation).

It was these peculiar and temporary conditions which provided the basis for the reforms which Peron was able to hand out to the workers as long as the boom lasted. **These reforms explain the hold that Peronism still has on Argentinian workers up to the present day.**

Among the measures introduced in the late 1940s were free medical care, better housing, some social welfare, higher wages, paid holidays and an eight-hour working day.

But this was combined with vicious repression against socialists and genuine worker militants. Torture was common and censorship rigid. Peron's thugs attacked opponents and political parties were driven underground.

While acting in the main as an agent of the industrial capitalists, Peron's dictatorship was in some measure independent of them, and leaned for support also towards the working masses. It was what Marxism calls Bonapartist (after Napoleon Bonaparte, the military dictator who seized power after the French Revolution of 1789). Peron consciously accepted this description, falsely calling himself "the workers' Napoleon", when in reality all his policies were based on strengthening the Argentinian capitalist class.

## Product of crisis

But however they dress themselves up, Bonapartist regimes are in the last analysis the product of social crisis.

They arise—as was clearly the case in Argentina—precisely because the ruling class is unable to rule on the basis of stable popular support. The bosses now need a 'strong man' to rule in their interests.

In these circumstances, the forces of the state acquire a certain degree of independence, and do not always follow the day-to-day direction of the capitalists. State power can fall into the hands of military dictators or adventurers of many descriptions. In Africa there are many such Bonapartist regimes, ruling with an iron fist, desperately trying to save capitalism and crush any struggles of the workers and peasants.

But these capitalist Napoleons find themselves faced with the same crisis



*Peron and his wife Evita in 1952*

and conflict in society which the capitalists have found impossible to cure. Ultimately they can only maintain themselves by playing off different social forces against another and balancing between the classes.

Demagogically they can denounce the rich in order to win—for a time—mass support. Often such regimes make rhetorical attacks on foreign imperialism (for example, the recent conference of Non-Aligned States in India verbally condemned the US no less than 20 times). They may even, when forced to, deal blows against some individual capitalists—without, however, making any attempt at abolishing the capitalist system itself.

Thus all the regimes of this nature in the underdeveloped world have remained at the mercy of the world market, world imperialism and other forces beyond their control.

In Argentina Peronism—the so-called "middle way between capitalism and socialism"—proved totally incapable of sustaining economic growth.

As Europe recovered, it was no longer compelled to buy Argentinian beef at blackmail prices. Argentinian industry, likewise, was in no position to compete with the capitalist giants of the US and Western Europe as they got back onto their feet.

The so-called "Argentinian economic miracle" was over. By 1952 meat exports were only a third of that at the height of the boom.

To prevent collapse, Peron—who

had vowed he would never ask for credit—went cap in hand to American financiers. Anti-imperialist rhetoric was abandoned. A new law encouraging foreign investment was introduced.

For the workers, the days of reforms were over. Now all wage rises were forbidden unless they came from an increase in productivity.

By this stage Peron had served his purpose for the capitalist class. The workers felt disillusioned and saw no way out. The Socialist and Communist leaders, having capitulated to Peronism, were unable to provide an alternative.

## Coup

The capitalists now felt confident they could get rid of Peron without provoking a workers' revolution. The pretext they were looking for came in 1955, when Peron denounced the Catholic Church for refusing to make his late wife a saint.

A bloodless coup was staged. No workers came onto the streets in support of Peron. The ex-dictator was allowed to slip quietly away to exile—in Fascist Spain.

But Peron's removal solved none of the problems facing the Argentinian economy. Successive regimes tried to develop the capitalist economy on a national basis, but only found themselves slipping deeper



into crisis. By the early 1960s, production was below that of Peron's time.

With declining living standards and more repression, workers began to look back nostalgically to the early days of Peron's rule. The unions Peron had created remained, and were in constant opposition to the military and civilian regimes which succeeded each other in power.

The Peronist movement by now contained both fascists, who wished to suppress the workers, and socialists who believed Peron's denunciations of the rich and wanted an end to capitalism.

During the 1960s there was a considerable growth of the left-wing Peronist youth movement, the Monteneros. The tragedy was that many of the youth and left-wing workers did not understand the class nature of Peronism, nor the role that the Bonapartist dictator had played.

As the crisis in Argentinian society developed, so polarisation between the classes deepened. **But now it was concentrated within the Peronist movement.**

In May 1969 an uprising broke out

### **'Urban guerilla' tactics have proved counter-productive for the workers' movement and a tragic waste of militants' lives.**

in Cordoba, the second-largest city. The workers held power for a few days until they were crushed by the military.

In this way the issue of armed struggle was placed concretely before activists in the movement.

Marxism stands for the political mobilisation of the working class on the basis of its own revolutionary programme for social transformation and, when conditions make this possible, the smashing of the capitalist state and the establishment of state power by the workers organised as a class.

To the extent that the capitalists resort to armed repression in their efforts to cling to power, the mass organisations of the workers will likewise be compelled to take up arms. The task becomes to disintegrate its armed forces and replace them with, as Lenin put it, the "armed people".

When sections of workers are

thrown into armed conflict with the forces of the state—as in Argentina in 1969—the task is to generalise that struggle, to mobilise a country-wide movement of the workers which could wrest power from the capitalists' hands. The alternative will be a bloody defeat that could pave the way for national counter-revolution.

If the left wing of the Peronist movement had adopted a clear Marxist policy, the nightmares of the 1970s could have been avoided. Tragically, however, no Marxist leadership existed to channel the anger and militancy of the workers and the youth in the Monteneros into revolutionary mass struggle to place the working class in power.

Instead, lacking the clear perspectives and the patience needed for this task, many of the left-wing youth plunged into 'urban guerilla' activities. An armed wing of the Monteneros was set up and, outside the Peronist movement, the 'Marxist' ERP (People's Revolutionary Army) was formed. But, as its methods proved, it had nothing in common with Marxism.

The experience of Argentina during the 1970s showed beyond any doubt that 'urban guerilla' tactics are a dangerous blind alley in a modern industrial society. It has proved counter-productive for the workers' movement and a tragic waste of militants' lives.

The ERP was one of the largest guerilla organisations in Latin America, operating on a scale far greater than anything so far attempted in SA. It carried out bank raids, kidnapped rich businessmen for ransom to buy arms, executed 'traitors' to the working class and performed many 'Robin Hood' actions, such as hijacking food lorries and distributing their loads among the poor in the shanty towns.

Often they linked their activities to industrial disputes. In May 1971, for example, they kidnapped the manager of a packing plant, demanding the reinstatement of sacked workers and the distribution of goods

to shantytown dwellers. These demands were met, and the manager was released.

Obviously the ERP won much sympathy among the workers concerned. The task of revolutionaries, however, is not to win sympathy but to seek to raise the level of organisation and political consciousness of the working class.

Guerilla actions, on the other hand, inevitably tend to **lower** the workers' consciousness. If the ERP through its actions could secure the workers' demands, then what was the point of the workers themselves organising and struggling?

### **Avenging angels**

The logic of the guerillas' method was that the workers could sit back, support the guerillas when necessary, and leave political struggle and leadership to this band of avenging angels.

It was their failure to involve themselves in the crucial task of developing the organised struggle of the workers that proved the fatal error of the Monteneros and the ERP.

In 1973, with the whole of society in crisis and ferment, the capitalists in desperation allowed Peron to return. Peron, they hoped, would be able to control the working class and restore political stability.

Three million people turned out to greet Peron, out of a population of just over 20 million. But Peron never saw them. Such were the class tensions within the Peronist movement that a gun battle broke out between fascist and left-wing Peronists before he set foot on Argentinian soil. Peron had to be whisked away to safety.

He returned to a different Argentina from that of the late 1940s. This time there were to be no reforms. He expelled the Young Peronists from the leadership of the movement. Their radical pressure had helped him to return to power; but now they had served their purpose.

In 1974, however, before the class nature of his rule had been fully demonstrated to the workers, Peron died. This has meant that even today illusions in Peronism still remain in the minds of Argentinian workers.

After Peron's death, class polarisation in society and in the Peronist



movement accelerated. The workers were moving into action as the economy, now hit by the world recession, slid deeper into crisis. In 1975 they forced their leaders to call a general strike against the regime of Peron's second wife, Isobel.

The fascist Peronist magazine, *El Caudillo* (named after the Spanish fascist dictator, Franco), threatened the left wing of the movement: "To those who argue that a million people died in the Spanish civil war, we reply, this country could do without a million Argentinians". The right-wing terrorist organisation, AAA, backed by Peron's widow, was used as a murder machine against left-wingers.

Again the country was in a period of revolutionary crisis, with the possibility for the working class of taking power and carrying through the socialist transformation of society. But no leadership existed in the Peronist movement capable of mobilising the workers for this task.

Against the shock troops of reaction, the tactics of the 'urban guerillas' proved futile, precisely because they were isolated from the organised mass power of the working class. Their pin-prick actions could only enrage the ruling class still further.

## Reign of terror

A revolutionary crisis, however, cannot drag on indefinitely but must be resolved, either by the workers' victory or by capitalist counter-revolution. Saddled with a reformist leadership, the working class was tragically unable to take power. Inevitably, the stage was prepared for ruling class revenge. This took the form of the reactionary military coup of 1976 which unleashed a savage reign of terror against the workers' movement and all opposition.

The guerillas could not sustain a prolonged struggle against the ruthless military dictatorship. What a contrast to the general strike of 1975, when the military dared not lift a finger for fear of provoking mass insurrection!

Within a year of the coup, the ERP had to all intents and purposes been crushed. Notwithstanding the personal heroism of its members, one of

the strongest guerilla movements of Latin America had proved totally incapable of withstanding the power of an industrialised state.

Its leaders were murdered, gunned down in the streets, or taken away, tortured and 'disappeared'. A similar fate befell the guerillas of the Monteneros.

The tragedy of Argentina today is that no Marxist party has yet developed which has learnt the lessons of the past period.

The 'Communist' Party is incapable of playing any revolutionary role. It **supported the 1976 military coup** because it was ordered to do so by the Russian bureaucracy, who put their desire for Argentinian grain above the very lives of Argentinian workers.

In return for their grain deals with Russia, the Argentinian junta allowed the small Argentinian CP to survive, so long as it did not criticise the regime.

## Mistakes

The Peronist movement, to which the mass of the working class look for a lead, now forms part of a five-party coalition with the capitalist parties. The Peronist leaders have learned nothing from the terrible experiences of the 1970s and are prepared to repeat all the same mistakes.

When elections are held later this year, it is most likely that the Peronists will emerge as the biggest party, though hopelessly split internally along class lines.

But a new Peronist government, even if it breaks with the capitalist parties, would be hopelessly hamstrung by the crisis of the economy if it tries to govern on the basis of the disintegrating capitalist system. The *Financial Times*, mouthpiece of British big business, sums up the desperate situation of Argentine capitalism in the aftermath of the South Atlantic war:

"Argentina is hurtling back towards the hyper-inflation of seven years ago... Industry remains in a state of virtual collapse... Pastore (Minister of Finance) had to resign after only two months in office having reluctantly concluded that the political divisions raging in the country had made the economy virtually

unmanageable." (1 September 1982.)

The economy can only be made "manageable"—i.e., the bosses' power restored—if the workers' reawakening movement can again be smashed and a new capitalist dictatorship installed. In the short term this is impossible; that is why the generals are forced to retreat and allow a return to civilian rule.

## Breathing space

But in the longer term, on the basis of the diseased capitalist system, there can be no security for the *workers of Argentina*. Any civilian government propping up the system, any alliance of the Peronist leaders with the ruling class, will be eagerly used as a breathing space by the bosses—much like Peron's regime in the early 1950s, or that of his widow in 1974-76.

Then, when the capitalists are confident that the workers are demoralised, the jackboot would return.

**The only way to break the vicious cycle of mass upheaval and military dictatorship is for the advanced workers, and especially the youth, to draw the lessons of past defeats, to understand the nature of Peronism, and to work out clear socialist perspectives for the future.**

Argentinian workers have displayed a truly magnificent capacity to defy military dictatorship and economic degradation. They need to build a leadership worthy of their own fighting qualities which could carry through the socialist revolution.

Only by taking power into their own hands and expropriating the imperialist monopolies as well as the 'national' capitalist class can workers prepare the way for an end to oppression and a decent society.

A successful workers' revolution in Argentina would have enormous consequences in the rest of Latin America. It would spark off struggles in other countries and strike blows against US imperialism as well as the junta's friends in South Africa.

The struggle against imperialism and capitalist oppression can only be carried to a successful conclusion by the working class, fighting on an internationalist programme. That is the basic lesson that all workers need to learn from the experience of the Argentinian workers.



# Writing for a workers' paper

The piece below is extracted from a leaflet written in December 1904 by Lenin, the great Marxist teacher and leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution.

It was written, and distributed in Russia, to prepare the ground for the launching of *Vperyod*, organ of the Bolshevik ("majority") tendency of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. (*Iskra*, of which Lenin had previously been an editor, had fallen into the control of the Menshevik—"minority"—faction of the Party).

It is reprinted here because its call for the new paper to be based on writing from worker-correspondents in order to become a real organ of the workers' movement is just as true today.

All readers of *Inqaba* will find here valuable guidance on how they can contribute to its development as an effective fighting organ of the working class for national and social liberation.

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"It is a misconception that writers and only writers (in the professional sense of the term) can successfully contribute to a publication; on the contrary, it will be vital and alive only if for five leading and regularly contributing writers there are five hundred or five thousand contributors who are not writers.

One of the shortcomings of the old *Iskra*, one which I always tried to rid it of (and which has grown to monstrous proportions in the new *Iskra*) was that too little was done for it from Russia.

We always used to print everything, practically without exception, that we received from Russia. A really live organ should print only a tenth of what it receives, using the rest as material for the information and guidance of the journalists.

We must have as many Party

workers as possible correspond with us, correspond in the ordinary, not the journalistic sense of the term....

Let all remember that we want in fact, and not just in word, to consider (and to *make*) our organ the organ of the entire "majority", the organ of the mass of Russian comrades.

Let everyone who regards this organ as his own and who is conscious of the duties of a Social-Democratic Party member abandon once and for all the bourgeois habit of thinking and acting as is customary towards legally published papers—the habit of feeling: it is *their* business to write and ours to read.

All Social-Democrats must work for the Social-Democratic paper. We ask everyone to contribute, and especially the workers.

Give the workers the widest opportunity to write for our paper, to write about positively everything, to write as much as they possibly can about their daily lives, interests, and work—without such material a



Lenin

Social-Democratic organ will not be worth a brass farthing and will not deserve the name.

In addition, please send us *private letters*, not intended as contributions to the paper, i.e., not for publication, but by way of comradely intercourse with the editors and to keep them informed, and not only about facts and incidents, but about the prevailing sentiment and the everyday, "uninteresting", humdrum, routine side of the movement....

## Discussions

So write to us about the discussions at the workers' study circles, the nature of these discussions, the subjects of study, and the things the workers ask about; about the state of propaganda and agitational work, and about contacts among the general public, in the army, and among the youth; above all write about any dissatisfaction the workers feel with us Social-Democrats, about the things that trouble them, about their suggestions, criticisms, etc....

Of course, not everyone has the ability or inclination to write, but...don't say "I can't", say "I don't want to"; given the desire, any one or two comrades who could write can be found in any circle, any group, even the smallest, even the most minor (the minor groups are often especially interesting, for they sometimes do the most important, though inconspicuous, part of the work)....

Only given such a wide correspondence can we, by our joint efforts, make our paper a real organ of the working-class movement in Russia. We earnestly request, to have this letter read to every kind of meeting, study circle, subgroup, etc., etc.—as widely as possible—and to be informed how the workers receive this appeal."



# FOR EVERY FAMILY A DECENT HOME — impossible under capitalism!

**A roof above the head is one of the most basic needs of human life. Yet for the overwhelming majority of the population, a decent house is out of the question.**

Dr Joop de Loor, Director-General of Finance, worked out that 463 houses have to be built every working day to eliminate the housing backlog before the year 2000. (Other sources estimate almost twice this figure.) But De Loor admits that the state is unable to solve the housing problem in the next twenty years.

For black workers who live from hand to mouth throughout their lives, the housing that does exist is expensive and bad. Even what is called 'low cost housing' is only available to them at crippling rent.

According to researchers Dewar and Watson, "it appears that people in the lowest income group (under R70 a month) are paying up to half their income in rent, and up to 40% of household heads in 8 sample areas fell into this category. Because these rents are unaffordable, during 1980 alone 100 993 eviction notices were served on a total of 16 419 divisional council letting units, indicating that on average each tenant fell behind with rent six times that year."

Lack of housing has compelled thousands to put up shacks. In one township, Katlehong, there are 34 000 shacks alongside only 17 650 houses.

The community council asked ERAB to demolish only the shacks occupied by those who do not qualify to live in the area, and 18 shacks were demolished as a result. Still, Katlehong remains the shack yard it has become.

It is difficult to tell how many shacks there are in Soweto, but

**By S. Goba**

30 000 people have been on the Soweto Council waiting list since 1969. WRAB has not built a single house in the last 14 years. Yet WRAB continues to raid shackdwellers as though it has provided alternative accommodation.

In another incident WCAB officials demolished shacks at Crossroads, Cape Town, leaving hundreds of legals homeless.

Linked to the demolition of shacks is the clearing out of illegals from the 'white spots'.

As the economy slows down, more and more unemployed are thrown into the streets. Koornhof answers this by tightening up the influx control laws. More and more legals become illegals. Dawn raids take place.

Community organisations organise not to pay increased rents, not to evacuate shacks, and go to court in some cases.

Sometimes rent increases are postponed—bosses have learnt that it sometimes pays to be patient when you can afford to.

But protest cannot be kept up indefinitely, whether or not concessions are made. Gradually, militancy wears out the protesters. Organisation passes into disorganisation. Rents shoot up. The state moves in to demolish shacks. The courts rule that it is a right of the bosses' state to stand in the defence of capitalism by oppressing the workers.

The workers' struggle for homes is irreconcilably opposed to the interests of the ruling class.

Judge Steyn, head of the Urban Foundation, claims that the private

sector is willing and able to move into the housing field. Private companies, he is saying, can build the houses that workers need.

But the capitalists put their money where it fetches the highest returns. Housebuilding, like everything else, attracts the moneybags only when it is lucrative. And what chance is there of making fat profits from black workers' meagre pay packets, already stretched to keep their families alive?

Nor is there any prospect of the state solving the problem. Less and less money for housing will be forthcoming as the economy declines and the state cuts back on social spending.

To carry forward the struggle for decent housing, the community organisations should link themselves to the organised workers in the trade unions. The unions should organise conferences of all those involved in the struggle to discuss how the day to day problems can be tackled.

## Control

But whatever the immediate issues (rents, demolitions etc.), we must understand that the struggle for a home is a struggle for control over house-building and the allocation of homes. This must involve nationalisation of the land, banks, building societies under control of the working people themselves. Only then will these resources be used to provide homes for all.

Such a programme can only be carried out through the overthrow of the apartheid state and the establishment of democratic rule by the working class. The ANC, by putting forward a socialist housing programme, can rally millions to this task.



How to struggle for decent housing at a manageable rent is a burning question for hundreds of thousands of families. Here an *Inqaba* reporter discusses this question with two young activists with experience in community housing struggles.

We welcome further contributions to the discussion, in particular on how the struggle and organisation of workers in the community can be linked with that in the workplace.



**What are housing conditions like in your area?**

**S:** Very bad—no lights in the houses, no ceilings, no doors inside the houses and the toilets outside.

They look for every cheap way of building these houses. For example, they use aluminium front doors, which are terrible because all the neighbours can hear if someone knocks. It costs a lot of money to put a yale lock in a door like that, so people settle for padlocks, which anyone can open.

In some areas there are enormous difficulties, like the township where we have been living. It was very badly planned, with the houses on a slope. When it rains the toilets often get flooded, and when there are heavy rains it floods the houses. Then the people are housed in tents or move in with other families until the water is taken away.

**J:** The flats aren't much better, though they cost almost double the amount of rent you would pay for an ordinary council house.

They are made of cheap concrete

slabs mixed with ash. There aren't enough washing lines—in one block of flats you have twenty families but just five washing lines, so you should see the methods people have to use. You just take a piece of rope from one side of the stairs to the opposite side and pull it tight. So the washing hangs all over the flats, on all four floors.

There is no hot water in some of the flats or in the maisonettes. This is very dangerous, because the bathroom is on the second landing, so if you want to take a bath you have to boil water in the kitchen downstairs and carry it all the way upstairs.

The cheapest of these flats are R32 a month even when people are only earning R40 a week—so where is the money for food, clothes, and the children at school? Added to that is electricity and those never-ending instalments on furniture which is ruined long before it is paid up.

**S:** In the houses without ceilings and electricity it gets freezing cold in winter. So to keep the place warm one has to spend a lot on gas, wood

and coal for the stove and paraffin for lighting.

Some people say the whites would never allow their horses or dogs to live in a place like that. Usually they blame the whites for all their suffering.

**What actions have been organised to try and improve conditions?**

**S:** The students realised after the Soweto uprisings that the only way they could make any gains was to link up their struggle for decent education to that of the rest of the community.

During the 1980 school boycotts this took on the form of students carrying out surveys in the townships, listing all the grievances which would form a basis for organising civic and tenants' organisations, which could mobilise people for taking up these issues.

**J:** We started off going from door to door, finding out what the most pressing problems were. Electricity was the biggest grievance. We asked people how much they spent on gas, paraffin and candles, and we work-





ed out that it was definitely more than they would pay if they had electricity.

After that we organised street meetings, getting representatives from each street to discuss the issues and what plan of action to follow. In this process a number of newsletters were started by the students in different communities, with contributions from the local residents.

In these newsletters were put forward the demands that people hoped to achieve in the long term and also what they wanted to be done immediately, like laying on electricity. The long-term demands were for things like ceilings, repairing damp walls, street lights, parks and creches.

#### **Were any of these demands met?**

**S:** It varied from area to area. Beginnings were made in setting up civic and tenants' associations. Where these associations were strongest, gains were made on issues where the council could most easily give in, like washing lines, after a little pressure through protests and demonstrations by these organised bodies.

**J:** But unfortunately the leading figures in these organisations were mostly middle-class people and students. They are in a different position from ordinary workers, and you

could see this in the leadership they gave—they weren't really able to put forward **solutions** to the workers' problems, and this meant they couldn't involve many people in a really effective campaign.

For example, the Cape Areas Housing and Action Committee—the umbrella body for all the civic and tenants' associations in Cape Town—called a public meeting to discuss what action could be taken about the Council's refusal to do repairs on houses. They came up with the solution that the residents should be able to buy their houses from the council, and do their own repairs!

Who could afford the huge sum of a deposit to buy a house, if the only reason for living in those derelict houses anyway is precisely because people can't afford anything better?

#### **How do you think these issues should be taken up?**

**J:** Well, the problems the workers face at home are linked to the low wages they are paid at work. We all know it is the employers who have real influence with the Council and even the government. They pay the workers only just enough to live on. So they accommodate the workers in houses where the rent is as low as possible, to pay them lower wages.

If you ask for an increase because

your rent is high, they answer that you pay R14 or R26 and that's not so high when there are people who pay R200. The bosses usually know how much rent one pays because it's one of the questions on the application form for jobs.

**S:** As such the residents don't have any real power. The people who have that power are the workers. The tenants' demands could only be won if the community struggle was linked to the trade union struggle.

We can learn a lot from the example of the MAWU members on the Rand, who were living in shacks which the authorities knocked down. So they took it up in the union, and told their shop stewards to put their grievances to the employers.

The employers and the government are aware of the strength of the working class, without them production would grind to a halt. So they can be forced to give in to demands made by the workers, when their profits are under a direct threat.

## **Real gains**

By campaigning in unions like MAWU, and ensuring that Fosatu and the other trade union federations take a stand and fight together for proper housing conditions for the workers, real gains could be made in the communities.

In other words, for the community struggle to have real impact, it would have to be led by the trade union movement, linking up the social and industrial struggle on a national scale. This would strengthen us in the overall struggle for an end to apartheid and exploitation.

The big task for everyone, including the activists in the community, is to help build and unite the trade unions into an even stronger class-conscious force, prepared to fight against the system of racism and capitalism, and replace it with a planned economy under the democratic control of the working people.

Then things could be produced according to need, with better housing for everyone, better wages, free health services, education, and all the other things we need.





# MONONO'A BONA — MASAPO A RONA

Not everyone has suffered hardship as a result of the slump in the economy.

The Johannesburg Stock Exchange had its busiest day in history on 7 February, the day the government lifted restrictions on foreign investors moving their money out of SA. R52 million worth of shares changed hands that day and the stockbrokers creamed off record commission.

The more generous among them paid their employees bonuses of five times their monthly salaries. Some telex operators got R5 000 each.

Perhaps the stockbrokers were getting a just reward for their 'productivity' and 'hard work'—buying and selling bits of paper entitling the capitalists to shares in the profits extorted from our labour.

Meanwhile, in the Ciskei, a quarter of the workers have no jobs. Poverty and diseases like cholera, typhoid, leprosy and gastro-enteritis are rife. There is only one hospital bed for every 338 people.

Now 'President' Sebe has come with a bold plan to end unemployment and starvation. He wants to spend R40 million over the next few years to provide jobs for all in public schemes like road-building, afforestation, etc. Wages are expected to be R2 a day.

Is that a plan for ending starvation—or making it official policy?

President Houphouet-Boigny has decided to move his government from Abidjan to his birthplace—the town of Yamoussoukro, 150 miles inland.

Already he has built himself a magnificent palace there,

surrounded by high walls, its doors flanked by golden rams. The town has been provided with a 5-star hotel (named *Hotel le President*), excellent roads and brilliant street lighting.

The only peculiar thing is that almost nobody lives in Yamoussoukro. Inhabitants say it's the world's only town with more street lights than people.

This seems to be the main reason for Houphouet-Boigny's move. Abidjan's population has grown from 50 000 in 1960 to 1,8 million, mostly living in desperate poverty. The President knows that his bankrupt regime has nothing to offer these people. Understandably, he would rather be somewhere else when their anger boils over.

The question is, when this happens, will 150 miles be far enough to save him?

Nowadays the British ruling class is falling over itself to honour Mahatma Gandhi and his role in the Indian independence struggle. Perhaps, with the struggles of the working people threatening their interests all over the world, they hope workers' leaders can be influenced by Gandhi's tactics of 'non-violence'.

But fifty years ago, when the Indian independence struggle was in progress, their attitude was quite different.

After four years in prison, Bombay textile workers' leaders were brought to trial, charged with conspiracy against the King. Before the trial began, the President of the All-India Trade Union Congress died in jail.

The British Labour government refused passports for defence witnesses to come from England. The trial itself was held in a rural district well away from Bombay. Denied the right of a trial by jury, the main defendants were sentenced to transportation ranging from ten years to life.





*Lagos port: thousands of 'strangers' try to get away*

# Foreign workers expelled - no answer for Nigeria's crisis

**The decision by the Nigerian government in January to expel up to two million 'illegal' immigrants should have come as no surprise.**

Nigeria's economic boom years during the 1970s made the country look like a land of oil recycled as milk and honey, at least to people in impoverished neighbouring countries like Benin, Chad, Ghana, Niger, Cameroon and Upper Volta. The now expelled 'strangers'—mainly Ghanaians—helped to produce profits for the capitalists in Nigeria as long as the boom lasted.

Today they are unwanted because Nigeria's boom has collapsed. More than eight million Nigerians are out of jobs. The government, soon facing elections, decided to blame this

**By a Ghanaian  
socialist**

on the presence of the 'strangers'. The paralysis of the Nigerian economy—in Africa's most populous and most-developed country north of the Limpopo—vividly demonstrates the limits on development imposed by capitalism.

Oil exports during the boom were the basis for purchasing imported

goods to develop industry, and also provided massive revenues for government to spend. Yet the contribution of manufacturing to total production remained less than 10%, and the standards of living of most Nigerians actually worsened.

Overshadowed by the imperialist powers which dominate the world market, Nigerian industry could only develop behind protective walls, and on the basis of cheap labour—meaning a restricted domestic market.

Speculators and bureaucrats used the boom period mainly to enrich themselves.

Corruption became rife in high places. Under President Shagari, one could say that it has got official



recognition.

The lack of initiative on the part of Nigeria's leaders to solve the problems of food, housing and employment have reached a point where civil revolt has begun to break out, e.g. the riots in Kano. But the ruling party as well as the other bourgeois parties are only interested in obtaining maximum benefits from the government, like big housing loans for members of parliament and trips abroad.

The last straw has been the onset of new world recession since 1979 and the drop in Nigeria's oil revenue.

The government's economic plans were based on oil production of 2 million barrels per day. Yet for two years now, production has been well below that figure—during January and February it was less than 1 million. Now the price of oil has been slashed as well—and is likely to drop further.

This drying up of the country's main source of income has burst the fragile balloon of 'boom'. Last year the costs of imports exceeded oil earnings by \$0.35 billion a month. This has vastly increased the foreign debt, estimated at \$5 billion at the beginning of 1983.

To deal with the situation, the government seeks on the one hand to cut its own spending and borrow still more money from the imperialist bankers and the IMF. On the other hand it attempts to cut back imports.

The results are to paralyse the economy. Public and private investment is slashed—and unemployment soars. "It may take years to get industry going again", said one leading businessman.

Thus the decision to expel foreign workers will solve nothing. Most of these 'strangers', in any case, have been doing low-paid jobs like unskilled labourers in factories, road-building, canteens etc. Many of the women have even been pushed into prostitution as a result of poverty.

## Ugly scenes

Following the expulsion order, the quayside of Lagos port and the international airport saw ugly and depressing scenes of confusion and uncertainty—made worse by lack of sanitation and food supplies—as thousands of 'strangers' tried to get away.

Nigerian immigration officials, some of them armed, went scouring hotels and cafes, looking for foreigners defying the order. However, skilled workers were given until the end of February to leave.

Ghana is the country most affected by these expulsions. Due to economic hardship, large numbers of Ghanaians have gone to look for work in Nigeria.

Now at least 650 000 have been shipped back to joblessness and even worse economic crisis. It seems that at least a dozen have died in the rush to leave Nigeria.

People fled Nigeria by whatever means they could find. For example, 25 people went in a canoe with their belongings, others trekked up to 70 miles through the bush to the border post.

This cynical exercise by the Nigerian government, of whipping up nationalist sentiment and diverting people from the actual problems in the country, is not new among West African capitalist governments.

In 1969, for example, the right-wing government then ruling Ghana also blamed foreign workers for the problems of the economy, and ordered them out of the country within two weeks.

## Unity

Under these conditions, the chances for Africa to unite are very thin.

The Nigerian expulsion order, added to those by Ghana, Niger, Cameroon etc., will strengthen nationalist moods throughout the region. But expelling foreigners from a country will not help it to overcome the problems of underdevelopment and imperialist domination.

The mass of the working people desire international unity and cooperation in order to improve their conditions. But the possibility of unity is being undermined by the leaders of our countries, who have continued to rely on the world capitalist system, and hence perpetuate economic crisis throughout the continent.

In Ghana, for example, with inflation about 100%, with an egg costing nearly R1, a loaf of bread R1,80 and the average monthly wage around R27, it is clear that the 'military revolution' has not succeeded in transforming society. There is now

the danger that the military regime could resort again to expelling other nationals in order to divert Ghanaians from the actual situation.

There will be no unity in Africa if we have to continue in this way. Tomorrow may be the turn of the Ivory Coast to expel foreigners if the present influx into that country continues.

For national divisions to be overcome, the working class throughout the African continent will need to build up its own links.

It is only when the workers succeed in taking power, with an appeal to their counterparts in other countries to support them through revolutionary struggle, that the whole of the region could be transformed into a federation of states truly of the working people.

Only then could the rich resources of the different countries be brought together and used for the benefit of all the people, and genuine regional cooperation brought about, through a socialist plan of production.

This would be an enormous step towards unity of the working people throughout Africa in a socialist federation of workers' states.

## MARX ANNIVERSARY

*This year marks the 100th anniversary of the death of Karl Marx, who together with Frederick Engels laid the theoretical and organisational foundations for the modern socialist movement. Our next Supplement will commemorate his contribution to the workers' struggle internationally with an outline of his life, his work and the basic ideas of Marxism.*



# CRISIS in the MIDDLE EAST

## PART TWO

By Daniel Hugo

What lies at the root of the conflict between Israel and the Arab states, which led to the war in Lebanon and the massacre of Palestinian refugees in Beirut?

The first part of this article described the historical development of the crisis in the Middle East—how the region and its peoples were fragmented by imperialism, and how Jewish immigration into Palestine laid the basis for the emergence of Israel as the main bastion of imperialist power in the region after World War II.

The struggle of the Palestinian people expelled from Israel remains the central issue in the Middle East. Scattered throughout the Arab world, with hundreds of thousands still trapped in refugee camps, the Palestinian workers and peasants cannot solve their problems except through the revolutionary overthrow of the reactionary Arab regimes as well as the Israeli regime.

But how can this be done? The policies of the leadership of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation have proved completely bankrupt. They have relied on the support of the rotten Arab régimes in waging war against Israel.

But the backward Arab states, wracked by national and class oppression, have not been

able to match the military power of the modern state of Israel, based on the cohesion of the Jewish population in the face of external attack.

Palestinian guerilla attacks have been mere pinpricks, enraging the Israelis and leading to savage reprisals. This, in turn, has sparked off terrorist counter-attacks by embittered Palestinian youth.

The result has been a horrifying spiral of violence, which has swung the Jewish workers even more solidly behind the Israeli regime.

The second part of the article examines the way forward for the Palestinian workers and peasants, and the working people of the whole Middle East, on the basis of Marxist policies.

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Against the purely military challenge of the Arab states, the PLO leadership and the terrorist groups alike, the Israeli regime has proved invincible. But, under the pressure of 35 years of continuous crisis, all the factors that led to Israel's military preponderance have increasingly turned into factors of social instability.

The policies of massive immigration, so vital to the military effort, threw together in Israel a Jewish population deeply divided within itself, united only in war against the Arab regimes.

The 'Western' Jews (from the USA, Europe etc.) have formed the upper, most privileged layer. The

'Eastern' Jews who fled from the Arab states found themselves second-class citizens in Israel, serving as cheap labour next to the Arab 'third-class' citizens.

Because of their experience at the hands of the Arab regimes, the Eastern Jews have backed the right-wing Zionist parties. The more liberal parties, including the Labour Party which ruled Israel from 1948 to 1977, have found their support mainly among the Westernised middle class and the upper layers of workers.

The 1977 election victory of the right-wing Likud coalition, led by the former terrorist Begin, reflected this split.

Thirty years of Labour-led governments had failed utterly to solve any of the problems facing Israel. With policies only marginally different from those of other Zionist parties, Labour had led the country into a state of permanent war.

The economy, hit by world recession and strained by its military burden, had sunk into a mire. Total growth for 1976-77 was a mere 2.6%, while inflation had been more than 30% for five consecutive years.

These conditions weighed most heavily on the workers. The number of work-days lost in strikes nearly doubled from 1975 to 1976. In 1976, three-quarters of the strikes officially recorded were due to wage demands.

Tainted with corruption and offering no perspective of improvement, Labour massively lost votes to Likud.

The most potent factor in rallying support behind Begin, however, were the activities of the Palestinian terrorist groups. Begin, in the eyes of the Jewish voters, stood for a hard-



line policy and seemed more capable of commanding the armed fortress Israel had become.

But Begin's policies for shoring up the capitalist economy, no less hard-line than his foreign policy, have weighed most heavily on precisely the poorer, 'Eastern' workers who have given him their vote. The result has been deepening class tensions and a climate of chronic industrial unrest.

These problems, however, have been overshadowed and compounded by the inability of the ruling class to solve the national question. Their policies of armed repression, far from crushing the Palestinian struggle, have in fact laid the basis for new and greater revolutionary upheavals in the future.

Through military victories the Israeli regime has made considerable territorial gains. The 1967 war, ending in the occupation of the Sinai, the Golan Heights, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, brought the whole of the former Palestine under Israeli control.

From the military point of view this expansion has been essential to the Israeli rulers. Their pre-1967 borders were difficult to secure. The West Bank, in particular, formed an Arab enclave thrust into the centre of Israel, placing Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem within range of Arab guns and rockets.

## Settlers

But having conquered the West Bank, the regime needed to hold it. The initial pretence that the occupation was only temporary has been dropped. Thousands of Jewish settlers are being moved onto the West Bank, forcing Arabs off the land. Begin has made it clear that his government will never allow the West Bank to be returned to Arab rule.

By driving the Arab forces off the Golan Heights and across the River Jordan, the work of the Israeli generals has been simplified. Socially, however, it has confronted the regime with new contradictions.

1 300 000 Palestinians inhabiting the West Bank and Gaza have been brought under Israel's rule, greatly diluting the preponderance of the more than three million strong Jewish population on which the power of the ruling class depends. The people of



*PLO activists, looking for a revolutionary way forward, have been trapped in exile guerilla camps.*

the occupied territories have been denied democratic rights, first being placed under military rule and later under a no less repressive civilian administration.

These measures, far from breaking the spirit of the Arab population, could only harden their resentment. In effect, the regime has incorporated into Israel, for the first time since 1948, a basis for mass struggle against its rule.

On the West Bank and in Israel itself, the 'Arab' Communist Party, Rakah (a separate organisation from the 'Jewish' Communist Party), became the focus of Arab opposition. Rakah mayors and town councils (subject to the arbitrary power of the Israeli administration) were elected in many West Bank towns. In Israel, Rakah's share of the Arab vote rose from 11% in 1970 to 50% in 1977.

In the 1977 elections, Rakah formed an electoral alliance with a section of the radical 'Black Panther' movement among the Eastern Jews, and increased its members in parliament from four to five. This reflected the potential for uniting the struggles of the Palestinian masses with that of the oppressed Jews.

The Rakah leadership, however, instead of putting forward a socialist programme for the transformation of Israel and the liberation of the occupied territories, have declared their support for the bankrupt nationalism of the PLO leadership.

While offering no perspective for the Arab masses, this policy could only alienate the vast majority of Jewish workers and deepen national divisions.

On the West Bank, militancy among the Arab population has erupted again and again into strikes, demonstrations and riots. Inevitably, however, Rakah's failure to lead this movement and develop its enormous revolutionary potential has doomed it to setbacks and stagnation.

In one town after another, the Israeli authorities have deposed the elected municipal leadership and installed puppet 'Village Leagues' in their place. Village League leaders have had to be armed to protect them against the anger of 'their' people.

Despite the heroism and personal martyrdom of many local leaders, despite massive support among the working population, Rakah has stood by helplessly and allowed the



Israeli regime to clamp down.

The policies of the PLO itself, far from giving a lead or defending the mass struggles, have taken fresh layers of youth into the dead-end of exile guerilla camps.

**Yet the possibility remains on the West Bank for new, mass-based struggles taking on a revolutionary momentum, throwing up new leadership and carrying across to the Arab workers in Israel and the Arab states. This perspective, a nightmare to the Israeli rulers, far overshadows any military threat to their power.**

Increasingly, Israel's military blows against the PLO in exile have been aimed not only at the PLO itself but also at the morale of the West Bank population.

This was clearly the case with the invasion of Lebanon last June. "From the outset of the fighting", reported the *London Times* (5 August 1982), "Ariel Sharon, the Israeli Defence Minister, has made no secret that the aims of the invasion extend not only to Israel's most northerly region but also to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

" 'The bigger the blow and the more we damage the PLO infrastructure, the more the Arabs in Judea and Samaria (the West Bank—*Editor*) will be ready to negotiate with us and establish coexistence', Mr Sharon predicted..."

In the longer term, however, the shock created among the Palestinian masses by Israel's ruthless action will wear off. To the dispossessed workers and peasants there is no alternative but struggle; and each temporary setback will harden and educate them further.

While fanning the fires of national hatred, Israel's invasion of Lebanon has at the same time sharpened the social contradictions in Israel itself.

At the beginning of the war there was overwhelming support in Israel for Begin's stated aim of removing the PLO rockets and artillery from within range of the northern Israeli villages. Even when it became clear that Sharon intended to go all the way to Beirut to drive out the PLO forces altogether, there remained a groundswell of support.

But the destruction of Tyre and Sidon, and the ruthless bombing of Beirut, brought horrifying numbers of civilian casualties as well as a growing number of Israeli dead.

Alarm and revulsion began to spread among the Israeli population, at first on the university campuses, later among sections of the working class.

Massive anti-war demonstrations took place. Even the Israeli military was affected, with reservists on active duty protesting against the war. Anti-war leaflets and newspapers circulated among the troops. The army's best young commander resigned over his disagreement with the aims and conduct of the war.

An Israeli soldier describes the mood within the army: "You clean out one apartment block and before going on to the next one, while you are resting, an argument breaks out: yes PLO, no PLO; yes a just war, no



*Sharon—dropped as Defence Minister but still in the cabinet.*

a just war. During the actual fighting we were having these political discussions."

Such opposition is unprecedented in Israel, especially in wartime. Then followed the Chatila and Sabra massacre, throwing the country into political turmoil never before experienced.

This was reflected, for instance, in the amazing vote of senior army officers overwhelmingly calling for Sharon's resignation.

Even when the immediate tensions wear off, the war will have sown seeds for future struggles between the classes and layers of Israeli society.

What the Lebanese and Palesti-

nians have paid in blood, the Israeli workers will have to pay in money, falling living standards and lengthened military service. The total financial cost of the war has been put at \$1 600 million, or 5% of Israel's Gross National Product. This is a crippling burden to an economy already in hopeless crisis, propped up by US aid.

Inflation is now running at a staggering 130%. Israel's foreign debt totals \$18 000 million, i.e. approaching that of Poland, but with a population and an economy only a fraction of the size. Interest and repayments came to \$2 200 million in 1981—equivalent to total US aid.

To pay the war bill, the government is cutting \$200 million from non-military spending. Value-added tax has been put up from 12% to 15% and there will be a compulsory 'war loan', equalling about 6% of take-home pay, deducted from workers' wages.

But Israeli workers will not be prepared to make endless sacrifices. New struggles will blow up as the ruling class try to unload the burdens of the crisis onto their shoulders.

## El Al strike

These tensions have been reflected in the struggles by workers of the national airline, El Al, towards the end of 1982 when, after a five-week strike, the government attempted to shut it down. In one incident, workers stormed the building where management was meeting and prevented them from taking the decision to close.

In another protest, workers closed down Lod airport, driving back the riot police and forcing the government to retreat—events remarkable even by the militant traditions of Israeli industrial struggles.

The airline was later 'saved' when the trade union leadership agreed to wage cuts, job losses and loss of fringe benefits—a recipe for continuing bitterness and future struggles by the workers.

On a capitalist basis, being used to defend imperialist interests, Israeli workers have no better prospect before them than continuing wars and permanent armed siege. More and more among them will become



receptive to socialist ideas, showing them a way to peace, security and democratic rights for the Palestinians as well as the Jews—if such an alternative were to be put.

But thus far the only programme advanced by any section of the Israeli labour leadership has been based on virulent nationalism while, on the other hand, Jewish workers have been confronted with the political dictatorship and economic backwardness represented by the Arab regimes and their clients in the PLO leadership.

It is the crisis of leadership among the Palestinian as well as the Israeli masses that has continued to trap the Israeli workers in the camp of the imperialist bourgeoisie. Only the ideas of Marxism can show them a way out.

## A society ripe for revolution

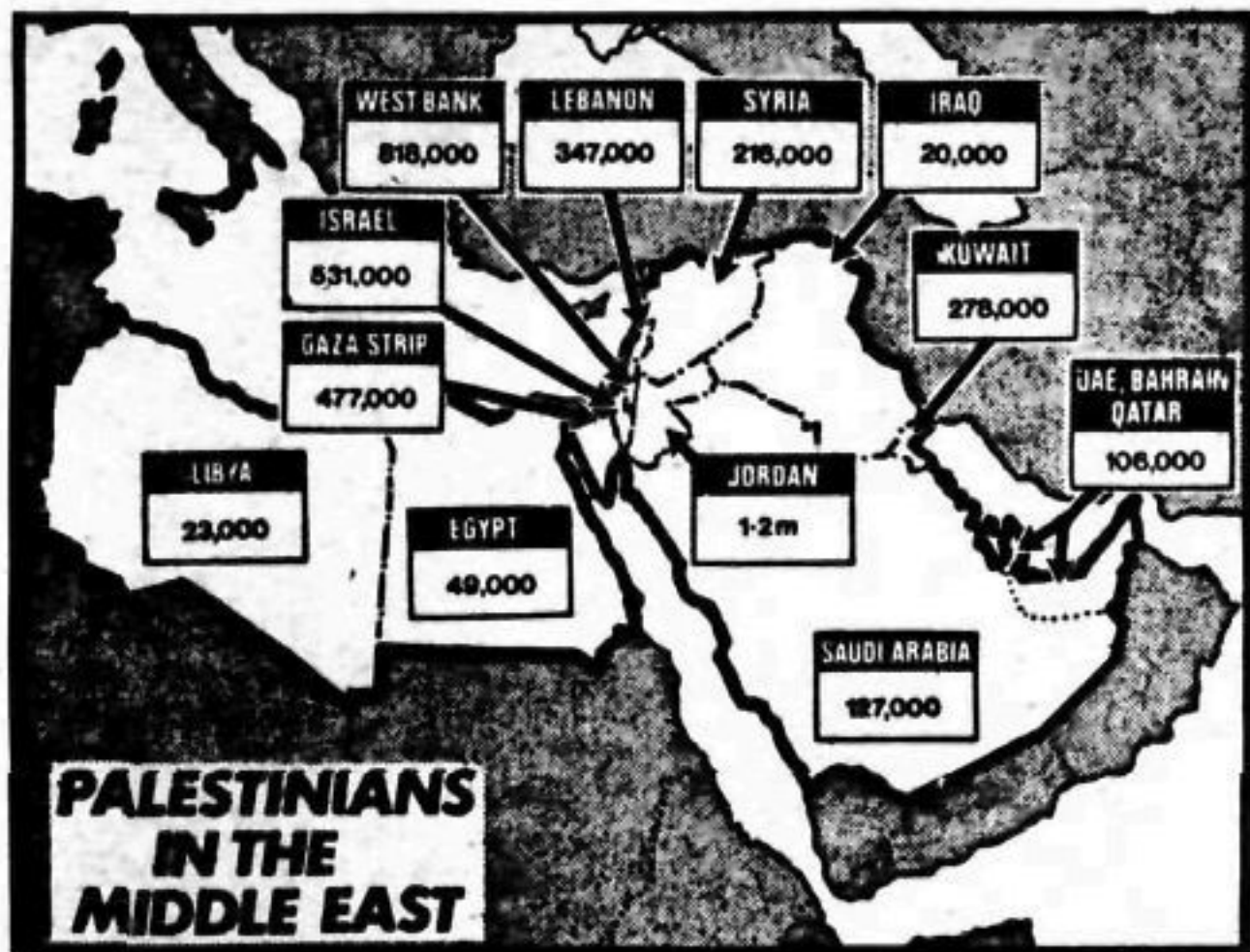
In every Arab country conditions are ripening for revolution. Mass poverty, illiteracy, disease, starvation and homelessness, side by side with spectacular wealth in the hands of oil-rich rulers, sum up the hopeless incapacity of capitalism and landlordism to take the Arab countries forward.

Even in imperialism's showcase, Israel, capitalism can provide no security for the relatively privileged Jewish workers, let alone the Arabs.

Because of the national, religious and communal divisions created in the Middle East by centuries of feudal and capitalist rule, the seething discontent among all sections of the masses will tend to find expression in struggles on national, religious or sectional lines. Every mass struggle, however, will reflect aspirations that cannot be realised on a capitalist basis, and will come into conflict with the capitalist order.

Nowhere is the revolutionary potential greater than among the Palestinian people, especially the Palestinian working class on the West Bank, in Israel and in the different Arab states.

A revolutionary movement of the Palestinian workers, drawing behind them the Palestinian masses as a whole, would usher in a period of decisive struggle for the socialist



*How the Palestinians have been scattered—but they could become a revolutionary yeast throughout the region.*

transformation of the Middle East. The greatest obstacle to such a development has been the existing PLO leadership and their policy of collaboration with the Arab regimes.

The Arab ruling classes have never been remotely concerned about the interests of the Palestinian people, any more than they have been concerned about the interests of the workers and peasants in their own countries. During 1949 to 1967, when they controlled the West Bank and Gaza, the rulers of Jordan and Egypt cynically confined the Palestinian refugees to camps, maintaining them as open sores to divert the anger of the masses onto the external enemy, Israel.

By building up the Sadats, King Husseins etc. as the 'friends' of the Palestinian people, the PLO leaders have for years disarmed and disoriented the movement.

In Jordan, in 'Black September' 1970 (dealt with in Part I), the Palestinian masses paid in blood for the refusal of their leaders to wage the struggle on a class basis.

Again in Lebanon in 1975, a revolutionary crisis opened up, placing the tasks of overthrowing capitalism and landlordism on the immediate agenda. The simmering class tensions erupted into civil war between the militias of the predominantly Christian right and the predominantly Moslem left.

Radical Palestinian guerilla forces

were drawn in on the side of the left. The PLO leadership, however, tried not to be involved.

Only in January 1976, when right-wing militias attacked the Palestinian refugee camps, were the PLO leaders forced into the struggle.

The right-wing offensive was beaten back. The Lebanese army fell apart. Outright victory over the forces of the ruling class was within reach of the Palestinians and the Lebanese left.

This prospect alarmed the Israeli regime and the capitalist class internationally; but Israeli or Western intervention at this stage would have inflamed the struggle even further. It was left to the Syrian regime to deal with the situation.

Nominally supporting the Palestinian cause, the Syrian ruling elite is in reality committed even more to maintaining the uneasy status quo in the region. The overthrow of capitalism in Lebanon would have opened a volcano on its very borders, involving certain conflict with Israel and heightening revolutionary tensions throughout the region.

For these reasons the Syrian regime was concerned no less than the capitalists to halt the developing revolution in Lebanon. In January 1976, with the connivance of the US and Israel, Syrian-controlled Palestinian forces were sent into Lebanon to prevent victory by the left.

The revolution now entered its





*Massive anti-war demonstrations took place in Israel during the invasion of Lebanon.*

decisive phase. So powerful was the attraction of the revolutionary movement that the Syrian-controlled Palestinian forces disintegrated and crossed en masse to their brothers and sisters.

The PLO leaders, commanding the bulk of the left forces, carried the main responsibility for achieving victory. No other option remained now except to mobilise and arm the Lebanese workers and peasants for the expropriation of the ruling class and the crushing of the right-wing militias—and, at the same time, to launch an all-out campaign for the support of the working masses in Syria and throughout the Arab world.

Such a policy, however, was alien to the PLO leadership. Not only had they failed to involve themselves with the day-to-day struggles of the Lebanese population; their militias were isolated from the local workers and regarded virtually as an army of occupation.

Thus, when the Syrian army invaded four months later, the outcome was a foregone conclusion. By September it had broken Palestinian and left resistance, and reinstated the bourgeois regime in office. The Arab heads of state—the ‘allies’ of the PLO leadership—gave their blessing to the Syrian invasion, renaming the Syrian army in Lebanon the “Arab

Deterrent Force”.

An opportunity for the revolutionary seizure of power, once lost, cannot easily be regained. The ruling class, permitted to recover control, will want to stamp out the remaining opposition. The workers and peasants, disoriented and shaken, will be faced with worsening odds as the forces of reaction gather momentum.

The manner and form of counter-revolution, like that of revolution, will depend on the nature and the leadership of the class forces opposed to each other. In Lebanon, the bourgeois regime remained suspended in mid-air. Syrian forces occupied half the country. Israel watched the southern border. The rest was effectively split between the Christian militias and the remaining pockets of Palestinian control, mainly in the cities.

The forces of counter-revolution were therefore divided and in a precarious position. This was compensated for, however, by the even greater weakness of the PLO leadership, which had learned nothing from past defeats.

In the absence of a serious struggle to regroup the movement and prepare a new mass offensive, it could only be a question of time, before the forces of reaction would be able to finish their work.

Israel invaded the south of

Lebanon in 1978 to attack Palestinian positions, creating a ‘buffer zone’ under the control of a right-wing Lebanese private army. A UN ‘peace-keeping’ force was deployed along the southern border. In June 1982 this force looked on passively as Israeli tanks rolled by.

Under the guns of the Israelis, the counter-revolution in Lebanon was carried to a bloody climax with the expulsion of the last Palestinian forces from Beirut, the disarming of Moslem militias, and the naked terror in Sabra and Chatila.

As in Lebanon, so in the other countries of the region revolution—the overthrow of capitalism and landlordism—or counter-revolution are the stark alternatives facing the workers and peasants in the struggles that lie ahead.

## **The PLO leadership turn right**

Events in Egypt in 1977-79 spelled out even more clearly the bankruptcy of the PLO leadership’s policies. Egypt, the most powerful of the Arab states, had always formed the key in any military alliance against Israel. Now, as a result of internal class struggle, the power of the Egyptian regime to threaten Israel’s southern border collapsed.

Nasser had weakened Egyptian capitalism without breaking its parasitical grip on the country. The economy, while more industrialised than that of other Arab states, remained completely inadequate to meet the basic needs of the people. In the big cities millions of slum-dwellers lived in horrifying want and squalor.

In foreign policy, Nasser had balanced between the Stalinist powers and imperialism, leaning mainly on the Soviet Union for support. In the late 1960s, however, the regime swung increasingly towards the West.

Following Nasser’s death in 1970, Sadat swept aside the last of Nasser’s reforms. Egypt was thrown wide open to imperialist plunder, the power of the capitalists and landlords was restored, and political opposition crushed.

But this zig-zag exposed Egypt all the more to the ravages of capitalist world recession. Foreign debt, and a



crippling deficit on the balance of trade, mounted up. Foreign investment created new wealth for only a small elite, while the mass of the people sank deeper into nightmarish poverty.

The cost of permanent military preparedness against Israel had always been the biggest drain on the economy. But repeated military defeats had dealt shattering blows to the authority of the regime.

Following the debacle of 1973, Sadat clearly calculated that the social consequences of renewed fighting would be too dangerous. Just as the regime had previously needed hostilities with Israel to divert the masses from internal struggle, it now needed peace with Israel for much the same reason.

In January 1977 mass discontent broke to the surface with the biggest anti-government strikes and riots since the overthrow of King Farouk in 1952. The movement was sparked off by the removal of state subsidies on essential foods. Sadat quickly retreated. Even then it took days before the army was able to regain control.

At the same time the US, increasingly dependent on Arab oil, was concerned about the deepening revolutionary ferment in the region and anxious to prop up pro-capitalist Arab regimes. By signing a peace agreement with Begin, Sadat calculated that he could get increased American patronage and use this to squeeze concessions out of Israel.

On this basis, following the Camp David agreement of 1978, the Sinai peninsula was returned to Egypt.

## Futility

These developments further undermined the policies of the PLO leadership. The Israeli regime was now free to concentrate on the west and the north. The invasion of Lebanon, and the further consolidation of Israel's overwhelming military supremacy, demonstrated the complete futility of *relying on either guerilla struggle, or on the Arab regimes, to carry the Palestinian struggle to victory.*

The Arab leaders clearly have no intention of risking another confrontation with Israel. Even the 'revolutionary' Colonel Gaddafi of Libya,

during the height of the battle for Beirut, could suggest no better solution to the PLO leaders than committing suicide rather than surrendering to Israel!

The imperialist powers hope to exploit the present situation and impose a Middle East 'solution' in their own interests. Their intentions are, firstly, to restore the stability of the Lebanese regime and arrange the withdrawal of the Syrian and Israeli forces. More importantly, they propose to 'settle' the Palestinian struggle by designating the West Bank and Gaza as a 'homeland' for the Palestinian people.

As Reagan has made clear, however, there is no question of such a 'homeland' becoming independent. It would only get powers of local self-government—i.e., less independence than a Bantustan—and remain under military control of Israel in association with Jordan.

## Unstable

These bankrupt plans have little chance of getting off the ground. The situation in Lebanon will remain volatile and the regime there will remain unstable. The workers and peasants will recover from their wounds, while the ruling class will be incapable in a period of world recession of rebuilding the economy and establishing its authority over society.

Reagan's proposals for a Palestinian 'homeland', which are completely unacceptable to the Palestinian people, have also been flatly rejected by Begin.

Under cover of the war in Lebanon, the Israeli authorities have embarked on their biggest land-grab yet on the West Bank, precisely to prevent its return to Arab hands. 40% of the area, including five Arab towns, has been earmarked for Jewish settlement, and 50% for agriculture (with strict controls on Arab building). Only 10% will remain for Arab towns and villages.

Between Reagan's offer and Begin's refusal there is no way forward for the Palestinian people. The PLO leaders, however, have learned nothing from these events. Out of the disasters produced by their policies of class compromise, they have embarked on a policy of—more class

compromise.

Arafat's negotiations with King Hussein of Jordan (the butcher of the 'Black September' days) over a 'federation' or a 'confederation' of a Palestinian West Bank with Jordan can offer no solution. Hussein's only concern is to save his own skin a little bit longer from the ever-present threat of revolution.

"I have never seen King Hussein of Jordan so despairing", commented the West German foreign minister during the fighting in Lebanon. An alliance with Arafat, Hussein hopes, will buy him credibility in the eyes of his people.

## Concessions

But Hussein's and Arafat's plans are only the counsel of despair, and can lead to nothing but a worse fiasco. Far from basing themselves on the struggle of the Palestinian masses, they are looking to US imperialism to squeeze concessions out of Israel.

Even if US pressure forced Israel to retreat, the only 'Palestinian state' that would be tolerated by imperialism, Israel and the Arab rulers would be a puppet state. The talks between Arafat and Hussein hold out the prospect of some Jordanian involvement in running such a puppet state—nothing more.

Yet on the basis of class compromise with the Arab rulers, a rotten deal of this nature is the most that the PLO leadership can hope to achieve at present.

No solution to the Palestinian struggle is possible for as long as capitalism and landlordism, embodied by Israeli militarism and the corrupt deadweight of the Arab regimes, dominate the region. The Arab rulers, the Israeli regime and imperialism alike are terrified of the impetus which a Palestinian victory would give to the struggles of the masses in all the Arab countries and in Israel.

An independent Palestinian state would be caught up in revolutionary turmoil from the start. On a capitalist basis it could not satisfy the demands of the working people, nor is there a Palestinian bourgeoisie capable of ruling it on any stable basis.

Such a state could only exist as a





1976: Syrian troops pour into Lebanon to prevent victory by the Palestinians and the left.

focal point of struggle against both Zionism and Arab reaction, carrying the movements of 1970 and 1975 to their logical conclusion. For these reasons the Arab regimes pay mainly lip service to the idea of an independent Palestinian state.

## Tasks of the revolution in the Middle East

Israel is the main bastion of capitalist reaction in the Middle East, the ultimate defender of imperialist interests and the most powerful obstacle to the national and social liberation of the Palestinian people. The defeat of the Israeli regime is the key to the victory of the Palestinian struggle; which in turn is the most burning issue in the Middle East.

Yet how can the Israeli regime be defeated?

Military victory by the weak Arab states is ruled out.

To the Arab rulers, the present balance of forces is the cornerstone of their political survival. The threat of Israeli attack is the main factor that can justify their own existence to the masses and postpone revolutionary struggles (while 'peace in-

itiatives' can be unfolded when the people become weary of war).

More importantly, neither of the great super-powers would support any major escalation of military struggle in the region.

US imperialism will use all its resources to cling to its oil and strategic interests in the Middle East, and continue to back Israel. At the same time it will try to curb the worst excesses of Israel's militarist regime, which threaten to store up incalculable explosions for the future. (In much the same way Western governments, frightened of the approaching revolution in South Africa, try to 'moderate' the policies of the apartheid regime.)

The Soviet bureaucracy, while not dependent on Middle East oil, need to maintain some check on the expansion of US power along their southern borders, and prevent any serious weakening of their international position. This is the basic reason for the limited support which Russia has given to the PLO and the Arab regimes.

At the same time, the Russian leadership have no interest in a struggle for Arab victory against all-out imperialist resistance. Like the Arab rulers, they fear any shift in the present situation of armed truce in the

Middle East.

With the war in Lebanon, their lack of commitment to Palestinian victory was glaringly exposed. Even the leader of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine—a pro-Soviet group in the PLO—declared in a public statement: "The Soviet Union cannot secure its solidarity with us and with the people of Lebanon by confining its support to political and diplomatic pressures."

The defeat of the Israeli ruling class can only come about as a result of a class movement involving the Jewish majority of the Israeli working class. This fact is central to the struggle of the Palestinian workers and peasants. Only on the basis of a Marxist perspective and programme, however, is it possible to mobilise such a movement.

No fundamental shift in the social support for the ruling class by Israeli workers is possible, despite all the growing economic and political strains, as long as the Palestinian struggle is fought on a nationalist basis. Faced with the choice—as they see it—between the Zionist state and terrorist violence, the mass of Israeli workers will continue to support the capitalist class.

The policies of the PLO leadership, tying their struggle to the Arab regimes and confining it to nationalist perspectives, thus guarantee a bedrock of Jewish support for the Israeli ruling class, and render the Zionist state indestructible except at the cost of an unimaginable bloodbath.

## Socialist transformation

Only a Marxist programme, linking the national struggle of the Palestinian people to the socialist transformation of the whole Middle East, could show a way out of this vicious circle.

Calling for the overthrow of the regimes of the capitalists and landlords, and for the establishment of democratic workers' rule in every country of the region, a determined campaign for Marxist policies would open up entirely new perspectives to Israeli as well as Arab workers.

Under workers' rule, all the problems created by capitalism and





*The Beirut massacre brought out deep splits in Israeli society.*

landlordism could begin to be eliminated. Poverty could be alleviated, and privilege abolished, by placing production on a planned basis under the control of the working people.

Land could be given to the peasantry. Together with the working class internationally, the struggle could be waged to break the grip of imperialism over the region.

This is the only basis on which the long and bitter struggles for self-determination by the oppressed nations of the Middle East can be resolved, and the interests of Arab and Israeli workers reconciled with each other.

In 1948, Marxists opposed the creation of a separate Israeli state because it was clear from the outset that this artificial state would be a source of conflict and division among workers. But does that mean that Marxists should now stand for the destruction of the state of Israel?

The majority of Israeli Jews today were either born in Israel or in Palestine before 1948; and under no circumstances can socialists be in favour of their 'repatriation', i.e. expulsion. Unlike the position in 1948, the more than three million Israelis now represent a sizeable and distinct nation in the Middle East.

Subject to certain conditions—e.g. guarantees of the rights of minorities and of returning Palestinians—the need for an Israeli state to exist within agreed borders must be accepted today. Indeed, that is virtually the posi-

tion of the PLO now.

But restoring the rights of the Palestinian Arabs expelled in 1948, and those dispossessed on the West Bank since 1967, unavoidably raises the question of the socialist transformation of society. Capitalism cannot provide homes, jobs and secure living standards even for the Jewish population of Israel, let alone the Arab masses.

## Spearhead

While the Israeli working class will play a decisive role in the unfolding revolution in the Middle East, the Palestinian workers, scattered across the region, are in a key position to spearhead the struggle and link together the workers and peasants in the different countries.

Organised as a class, the Palestinian workers can join forces with their brothers and sisters in the countries where they live and work, and explain to every section of the oppressed Arab masses the future that could be theirs under workers' rule. With correct demands and tactics, a Marxist leadership of the Palestinian workers could stand at the head of a vast revolutionary movement spanning the whole Middle East.

The Arab rulers would fight desperately to crush the danger from below. The struggle against these regimes would be no less vital than the struggle to defeat Zionism. But

with clear socialist policies, the workers and peasants would be in an immeasurably stronger position than in 1970 or 1975.

Offering land and freedom to the peasant soldiers, they would win the bulk of the Arab armies to the side of the revolution. The flimsy ties of tradition and fear, which are all that hold the Arab states together, would disintegrate under the first stirrings of mass revolution—as has already been foreshadowed in Lebanon and Jordan.

Under these conditions the Israeli regime would be paralysed. With the spectre of Arab reaction removed, it would be possible to win over Israeli workers, even in a revolutionary war against the Israeli capitalist state. The Israeli rulers would be left isolated and unable to resist the social revolution.

Revolutionary states of the working people would come under furious attack from imperialism as well as the Stalinist regimes, which would correctly see the rise of workers' revolution as a deadly threat to their privileged existence. But with a bold internationalist policy, appealing to workers across national frontiers and organising common struggles, the fires lit in the Middle East could spread around the world.

Capitalism and landlordism would be destroyed throughout the region, and threatened in growing parts of Asia, Africa and Europe as workers are impelled into action by the impact



of the Middle Eastern revolution. The bureaucratic regime in Syria would collapse and be replaced by democratic workers' rule.

On the basis of workers' democracy, the national divisions fragmenting the region could begin to be resolved. The Palestinians and other oppressed peoples—such as the Kurds—could exercise their full democratic rights as nations, either in common states or, where the majority desire it, in states of their own.

The working class has no vested interest that would be threatened by the self-determination of nations. Revolutionary workers' governments, with a common interest in peace and economic development, would be able to accommodate the demands of national minorities and agree to territorial divisions, where necessary, in order to lay a foundation for economic and political cooperation.

Marxists would explain the need for the closest possible integration in developing the resources of the region on a planned basis, and argue for a socialist federation as a means of linking independent workers' states together. This could pave the way to unity of all the peoples in the future.

## Scattering seeds of revolution

In the aftermath of the Lebanon war, there is the danger of a renewed swing to terrorist violence among embittered sections of Palestinian youth. In January, for instance, grenades were thrown into a bus in Tel Aviv, injuring eleven people. 86 Arabs were arrested in retaliation.

Also the PLO leadership, in an effort to repair their prestige, have uttered hollow threats of renewed guerilla war against Israel.

At the same time, however, with the horror and futility of the Lebanon war still fresh in their minds, many Palestinian and Israeli workers could be won to Marxist policies showing an alternative to the vicious cycle of suffering and bloodshed.

The sorry conduct of the Arab rulers has severely undermined the PLO leadership's traditional position. Among the PLO fighters evacuated from Beirut there was no

mood for continuing to put their faith in these regimes.

"Save your tears", said one fighter to a group of women weeping to see them go. "Save your tears for the Arab leaders."

Another said: "We are going to push Israel aside for five years, and clean up the Arab world. All our rulers are traitors."

Even the Syrian regime was viewed with deep mistrust. "We might get a heroes' welcome in Damascus—although I doubt it", commented a Palestinian journalist. "But then we shall be marched off to barracks. As good as prison."

Arafat's renewed wheeling and dealing with King Hussein has therefore aroused deep anger among Palestinian activists. His second-in-command was even compelled to flee from Syria and seek political asylum in the reactionary kingdom of Jordan!

Crown Prince Hassam of Jordan (Hussein's brother) put the fears of all the Arab rulers into words: "If the present PLO leadership are eliminated they will be succeeded by others, perhaps more extreme, more radical, more desperate, simply because the need will still be there."

More and more Palestinian activists will be determined to change the PLO's policies of class compromise, to remove the leaders committed to these policies, and put forward new leaders who are willing and able to lead the national struggle to its revolutionary conclusions.

Dispersing the PLO fighters across the Arab world—the only option available to imperialism, Israel and the Arab states—will at the same time have far-reaching consequences. It will scatter the seeds of revolution throughout the Middle East. Betrayed by the leaders and repressed by their 'hosts', PLO activists will seek ways of linking their struggle to that of the workers and peasants locally.

In Israel itself, class struggles will deepen. Armed with a clear Marxist perspective, working-class activists in Israel as well as the Arab countries can lay the basis for a revolutionary leadership that can mobilise the masses of the region, eliminate national oppression, capitalism and landlordism, and usher in a new period of peace and social progress under working-class rule.

**inqaba  
YA BASEBENZI**

**To overthrow white domination, to win the struggle for democracy — we will have to break down the entire state machinery created over generations by the bosses and their supporters to enslave us for exploitation.**

**Only the mass of the working people, when organised and armed, can carry through this revolution.**

**To eliminate poverty and hunger, to secure work and homes for all — we will have to end the capitalist system and take the factories, mines, banks and farms into common ownership, so that production and distribution can be democratically planned and controlled for the benefit of the people.**

**Only when equipped with a clear socialist programme and strategy for workers' power, can our movement carry through these tasks.**

**Seeking open political expression of their revolutionary aims, tens of thousands of workers and youth are turning to the banner of the A.N.C. as their rallying point.**

**For the A.N.C. to effectively unite and lead the liberation struggle of the working people to the conquest of power, it must be consciously built and transformed into a mass organisation with a socialist programme.**

**INQABA YA BASABENZI ('Workers' Fortress') fights for this. The task of supporters of INQABA, in the course of every struggle, is to convince other comrades of the need for these policies.**

## WHERE TO START

### I. FORM AN INQABA READERS' GROUP OF TRUSTED COMRADES.

**Study and critically discuss the articles in the journal, as well as other publications of the movement. Study the theoretical sup-**



# Support *INQABA YA BASEBENZI!*

## Build a MASS A.N.C. with a SOCIALIST PROGRAMME!

plements with every issue of *INQABA*. Also get hold of other writings especially of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky to discover the *rich lessons and traditions of the international working class*.

Plan together how to fight for socialist ideas in all the specific conditions in which you are involved — in building the trade unions and community and youth organisations; and laying the basis for building the A.N.C.

### 2. MAKE *INQABA* AN EFFECTIVE VOICE OF THE WORKING CLASS.

Because of its experience, the working class is the instinctive bearer of socialist ideas — which Marxism clarifies and puts together scientifically. In the daily life of every worker is an armoury of facts and arguments to prove the need for socialist policies to overcome their problems. Bring them to the fore!

Use your initiative to the full. Collect facts, opinions, interviews, reports on struggles, criticisms of the journal and suggestions for improvements. Write about local, national and international issues. Send articles, letters, photographs, cartoons, reviews — whatever should be brought to the attention of comrades in the struggle all over the country.

Encourage workers to write about their own conditions. The best articles are those which are drawn directly from experience. Because the ruling class has systematically denied the working class access to education, many workers feel they lack the ability to contribute.

It is essential to overcome this hesitation. Even workers without literacy can speak about what they know and think, so that other comrades who have the ability can write down what they say.

Encourage also those activists

who disagree with *INQABA*, but whose ideas have an echo within the working class (or even a section of it) to write for the journal. *By raising important questions for debate in this way, we can make the journal a more effective instrument in raising political consciousness in every area.*

### 3. HELP TO CIRCULATE *INQABA*.

The name "*INQABA*" is already fairly well known among activists in South Africa. But all too few are able to get hold of a copy; much less to receive it regularly. This is because of the big problems of clandestine distribution.

*INQABA* supporters need to give systematic and careful attention to this, using all possible facilities for copying the journal and then getting copies swiftly through reliable networks into the right hands.

Every individual reader should try to pass on a copy regularly to at least one other person, and if not already part of an *INQABA* readers' circle, work to form one.

In distributing *INQABA*, the main concentration should be on workers, especially in the large industrial and mining areas. For added effectiveness, translations of material from *INQABA* should be made into the different languages spoken by workers in all areas, and reproduced.

### 4. USE *INQABA* TO BUILD THE BASIS OF A MASS, SOCIALIST A.N.C.

It will not be enough for the A.N.C. to simply have the *support* of the working people. The working class needs to make the A.N.C. *its own* — by building it within South Africa, organising it, filling it with the power of the workers' movement and bringing it under the democratic control of its membership in struggle.

The most resolute fighters in all

the various organisations of the working class — especially in the trade unions and the youth movement — are the backbone for the mass, socialist A.N.C. of the future. *INQABA* supporters among them must work steadily to group together those who share our ideas on the building of the A.N.C., to begin putting these ideas into practice.

The A.N.C. will take on flesh — will be able to develop structures embodying large numbers of workers in open organisation — as the strength of the mass movement drives back the state's powers of repression and enlarges the space for open revolutionary work.

*INQABA* supporters should themselves combine open with 'underground' work, proving themselves the most steadfast builders of the trade unions and the youth and community organisations of action, which will form the basis for a mass A.N.C.

We must be able to show in our own work the correctness of the policies we stand for. That is the only way to arm the movement with the ideas of Marxism and to win the struggle for a socialist programme.

Apply the ideas and method of *INQABA* to every local struggle. Summarise the main arguments and conclusions from articles in the journal to use in agitational leaflets. Combine the general demands raised in *INQABA* with the detailed demands put forward in each particular struggle. Link the day-to-day struggles over wages, education, transport, housing, etc., to an understanding of the need for the *socialist transformation of society*.

Organise round the ideas of *INQABA* to build the A.N.C. Let every workplace, college and locality where *INQABA* supporters are present become a fortress of this work — a firm foundation for the mass, socialist A.N.C. of the future.



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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.