

SOUTH AFRICA'S WORKING CLASS - A PILLAR OF THE
REVOLUTION. A PAPER PRESENTED BY RAY SIMONS
TO THE IN-HOUSE SEMINAR ON CONSTITUTIONAL
GUIDELINES IN A DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA -
ANC LUSKA 1ST TO 4TH MARCH, 1988.

There has been a remarkable upsurge in African trade unionism during the past decade. This growth is related to the increasing self-confidence and maturity of the working class and their understanding of the class struggle. A related factor is the legislative changes brought about by the Labour Relations Act of 1981 and its immediate predecessors. These Acts removed the monstrous discrimination perpetrated by the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924.

The Labour Relations Act abolishes all discrimination in the labour laws, includes Africans as "employees", gives them full rights of collective bargaining, does away with job reservation and trade union segregation. The public sector, farm and domestic workers are denied these rights while workers in so-called "essential services" are denied the right to strike. The Act's narrow definition of legal strike allows for extensive police intervention in industrial disputes. Other repressive legislation such as the Riots Assembly Act, the Intimidation Act and the Emergency Regulations override the Labour Relations Act and give security forces vast powers to crush strike action. There can be no real collective bargaining if workers have no power to strike.

The registered trade union membership on 31 December, 1986 stood at 1.7 million. This is about 20% to 25% of the labour force and includes working people of all racial groups. Not all trade unionists have the same attitude towards the class struggle; there are notorious members of the white group who practise racism and refuse to accept the new dispensation abolishing the industrial colour bar. They prefer white supremacy, practise racism and support the Conservative Party and other ultra-racist organisations. The white workers are employed mainly in the mines. Isaac Escom, Sasol and

central and provincial government. About one in three economically-active whites ^{are} ~~being~~ state employees.

With few exceptions, white workers regard themselves as members of the master race. ^A ~~The~~ great majority voted either for Botha's Nasionale Party in May 6, 1987 elections or for Treurnicht's Conservative Party. A significant proportion~~y~~ are in sympathy with extremists such as Terreblanche's Afrikaans Weerstandsbeweging. Notorious racists such as Arrie Paulus, secretary of the white miners union, openly repudiate the new labour laws and declare that when the Conservative Party takes power, it will do away with the reforms and go back to colour bar regulations of 1912. Another notorious racist, Attie Nieuwoudt, a former member of the Wichahn Commission, and resident of the South African Municipal Employees Association~~s~~ called on the government to prohibit the transfer of funds from abroad to COSATU and its affiliated unions. (Citizen, 28.08.87).

Divisions in the ranks of the working class extend further than the major cleavage between white and black workers. There are serious differences in outlook and material interests between groups of Coloured, Indian and African workers. This is far from being an absolute condition. A great many Coloured and Indian workers are fraternally linked in such unions as the Food and Allied Workers Union (FAWU), Commercial Catering ^{and} Allied Workers Union of South Africa (CCAWUSA), National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa (NUMSA), and Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

Among Africans themselves, there are regrettably serious cleavages. Some of them result from ideological differences. The Nation^{al} Council of Trade Unions (NACTU), its parent bodies-Council Unions of S.A. (CUSA) and Azanian Congress of Trade Unions (AZACTU)-fall in this category. They are black consciousness oriented and Africanist in opposition to white leadership.....

~~in trade unions.~~ They are closely aligned with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the social democratic camp to which it belongs, ~~and~~ at home ^{key} ~~are~~ underpinning of the PAC. (Pan African Congress).

A different kind of split is manifested in the hostile and brutal attitude adopted by the United Workers of South Africa (UWUSA), the trade union wing of Inkatha, towards the progressive trade union movement and the radical United Democratic Front. UWUSA was registered as a trade union on the 26th August, 1987. ~~UWUSA's~~ ^{its} General Secretary, Godwin Radobe, an ex-industrial relations officer with TONGAAT HULLETS SUGAR CO., claims that UWUSA is recognised by at least 150 companies and ~~has~~ a paid up membership of 150,000 .

UWUSA started training classes at the Training Trust at Umgababa in KwaZulu which were conducted by Tjaart van der Walt of the Industrial Consultancy Services, ~~and~~ a respected Broederbond and rector of the University of Potchefstroom. UWUSA opposes sanctions and disinvestment and argues that liberation politics should be kept out of trade unions (FINANCIAL MAIL 11/09/87). UWUSA is helped by employers and rich farmers.

The problem with UWUSA is the problem of Inkatha which is a dagger aimed at the heart of the struggle for national unity against apartheid. UWUSA is a formidable enemy and will remain a threat to trade union solidarity as long as Gatsha Buthelezi pursues his hegemonic ambition to replace the ANC as the acknowledged leader of the African people. COSATU and the entire liberation movement must find ways and means of detaching workers from UWUSA and Inkatha. This will be done by united workers' action to advance the industrial and farm workers' standard of living.

An outstanding example of progressive trade unionism is the giant COSATU. Its 2nd National Congress held on 15-17 July, 1987 took place in a situation of increasing repression and a third State of Emergency. In spite of the severe repression and increased unemployment, COSATU nearly doubled its paid up membership from 450,000 at 1st December 1985 to 712,231 in July 1987. The signed up membership stood at over one million making COSATU the most powerful trade union federation in the country.

Before COSATU's 2nd National Annual Congress, a number of its affiliates ^{organised} mergers into industrial unions. They adhere to the industrial principle of organisation and not craft unionism as was the case in the past.

The Congress demonstrated COSATU's phenomenal political development as a pillar of strength in the mass democratic movement. It took a firm decision to adopt a higher political profile and strengthen alliances with national democratic organisations. Thirteen industrial unions were represented by 1438 delegates. The biggest delegation came from the National Union of Mine Workers (524), NUMSA (262) FAWU (131) and CCAWUSA (112).

The strongest COSATU affiliate is NUM with 262,000 paid up members. At its Fifth National Congress, the Union adopted the Freedom Charter as a guide to socialism. This was seen as a powerful statement that workers were locating themselves in the democratic struggle and assuming a leading role in the liberation movement.

Delegations came from all corners of our country, from big centres and small places. Not only has the membership grown, but also the structure, from 10 local committees to 33.

COSATU and its affiliates are rooted in the shop-floor, with about 30 000 shop stewards in factories and 20 000 shaft stewards on the mines. This army of trade union organisers, given proper political education and guidance will mobilise the unorganised for trade unionism and working class politics. COSATU has given a lead by adopting a formal declaration of political intent denouncing the apartheid regime and calling for its overthrow.

This pronouncement made in the tradition of SACTU rejects the old outworn policies of a political neutrality put out by opportunists who say that trade unions should struggle only for the economic interests of the working class and stay neutral in the political struggle. This was the policy of the white-dominated South African Trades and Labour Council (SATLC) and the Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA) to which the big African Garment Workers Union headed by Lucy Mvubelo adhered. As Lenin observed "The class interests of the bourgeoisie inevitably give rise to a striving to confine the trade unions to petty and narrow activity within the framework of the existing social order, to keep them away from any contact with socialism; ^{and the neutrality} ~~and Neutrality~~ theory is the ideological cover for these strivings of the bourgeoisie".⁽¹⁾

For such reasons, therefore, COSATU's stand adopted at the 2nd National Congress is of great significance. Elijah Barayi's presidential address set the correct political tone. He stated *that*

V.I. Lenin Coll. Works, Vol. 13, pp 466, 467

"Politics and especially the lack of even the most basic democratic rights for the majority of our people is a bread and butter issue for the working class.

It is the fundamental question which is tormenting the millions of workers and we are obliged to answer it. The solution to this problem has to come and can only come from the democratic movement under the leadership of the working class. Our place is in the frontline of struggle and to the frontline we must go".

He further declared:-

"While we are involved in a struggle for national liberation, true liberation can only be achieved through an economic and social transformation of our society to serve the interests of the working class."

The Congress adopted the Freedom Charter as a guiding document which reflects the aspirations of the black majority in our struggle against national oppression and economic exploitation. In a dominated and oppressed people, this realisation may take place slowly over a long period and through many efforts including strikes, propaganda, agitation, education and all other methods of instilling revolutionary ideas. That is why the enemy concentrates on disposing of agitators, the teachers of the revolution and all who make it their business to carry the message to the working people.

7.

White Terror

The state from the very formation of COSATU identified it as an enemy. COSATU faces a combined offensive by the State and employers. They rely on physical assault, infiltration, a misinformation campaign, the promotion of fragmentation, cooption, destruction of COSATU buildings and its affiliates' offices and the killing of trade union leaders.

From the onset of the States of Emergency ~~1 and 2~~ in July 1985, June 1986 and June 1987, COSATU and its affiliates have been targets of the state as its main enemy in the trade union movement. Shop stewards, officials and striking workers were detained.

A new dimension of the state and employers' offensive is the involvement of the South African Defence Force. It was reported that:-

" The business sector and the SADF have joined forces to regulate manpower" through a system ~~of~~ of Defence Manpower Liaison Committees (Demalcom's). Col. Chris Du Toit, administrative manager of the Johannesburg Demalcom, says the committees are bona fide "forums for the exchange of ideas" between the SADF, commerce, industry and local authorities. But he admits that minutes of Demalcom meetings are sent to the controversial Joint Management Centres (JMC's) (Financial Mail, 24.7.87.).

The JMC's were originally created to help cope with security in unrest situations. It is also known that

the JMC's feed information to the State Security Council (SSC), chaired by the State President, which advises government on the formulation and implementation of security policies and strategies.

Another function of these committees will be to provide statistics on unrest-related incidents and to forewarn the SSC of possible stayaways. Such data will be handled by the SADF. This implies that spies will be infiltrated in all working places.

The main force in our democratic revolution is the black working class. It was the membership of CCAWUSA that immediately gave leadership, organising sit-ins and sleep-ins in plants in support of demands for the release of trade union leaders from detention. It was the labour movement under the leadership of COSATU in cooperation with student and community organisations that put May Day on its 100 Anniversary in 1986 back into our history of resistance. They organised the largest stay-away ever recorded with an estimated 1 500 000 workers taking part and calling for May day to be declared a paid public holiday. Workers often withhold their labour for a variety of reasons; to enforce wage demands; improve working conditions, for trade union recognition, against unjustified dismissals of leaders, illtreatment by foremen and other grievances. Our workers have a great record of strike action.

Our workers went on strike again on the 5th and 6th May, 1987 against the white-only parliamentary election, on 1st of May and 16th June, 1987

STRIKES

According to government statistics there were 793 strikes in 1986 involving 424,340 workers. The estimated number of days lost was 1,308,952. Most strikes occurred in manufacturing (433), mining (96), trade and other services (130), government services (19), finance and insurance (65) and electricity (4). These total 853.

Most of the strikes were about wages and working conditions, the other strikes arising from disciplinary measures and related matters. In addition more than a million workers took part in political stay-aways.

In 1987, COSATU unions took part in an almost continuous series of strikes. Up to the end of August 1987 there were seven major strikes in railways, postal services, South African Breweries, milling, ISCOR, OK Bazaars, Motors (Mercedes Benz), metal and mining. The OK and railway workers' strikes together cost the economy more than 755,000 man-days, the postal workers' strike about 300,000, and Baragwanath hospital auxiliary staff ^{strike}

The two day stay-away cost a minimum of one million man-days. During the 21 days miners' strike about 500,000 workers downed tools in almost every section of the industry. C&AWUSA led strikes at three black township super-markets herald a new era in labour relations between unions and the emergent black business sector. Strikes occurred at SASOL's collieries, processing plants in the Eastern Transvaal, among chemical workers, and metal workers ^{at Matieland} ~~at Matieland~~ Rustenburg refineries and at Wadeville East Rand, this ^{last strike was} ~~being~~ a legal ^{protest} strike ~~to~~

~~protest~~ against company plans to move to Bophuthatswana where foreign unions are outlawed.

The GREAT MINER'S STRIKE

This was the biggest strike in South Africa's history. It was called by the National Union of Mine Workers (NUM) on 9 August 1987. More than 340,000 workers downed tools in 52 gold and coal mines. The loss to the mine owners is estimated at something like R250 million.

The NUM demanded:

- 30% increase in wages;
- 30 days annual paid leave;
- The payment of an amount equal to 5 years annual wages in the event of death while at work;
- Better working and safety conditions; and
- 16th June to be declared a paid holiday.

The NUM had no doubt that the mining industry can afford substantially increased wages. In 1986, shareholders of gold mines received R2,545 million in dividends, more than the total earnings of 484,000 black miners who received R2,484 million. This amounts to only 15% of value of every ounce of gold sold. The total pretax profits on the other hand equalled 51%. The Chamber offered an increase of a 15% plus fringe benefits and refused the union's offer to submit the dispute to arbitration or mediation.

The NUM thereupon balloted its 262,000 paid up members of 27 gold and other base metal and 18 coal mines. Of these 96% voted for strike action, 3% spoilt ballot papers and 1.3% voted against. NUM was anxious to demonstrate that the miners were union conscious and committed in spite of ethnic, ~~and~~ cultural and nationality differences.

The government and mine owners have used these differences ever since the beginning of industry to play off one group of miners against another. Of the 700,000 Africans working on the mines, as many as 35% come from foreign countries.

The strikers maintained a high degree of internal discipline. There was no drinking of alcohol, no violence, no intimidation, no noise when men sang freedom songs or shouted slogans "Viva Comrade", "Siyaya Nakanjani e Jerusalem" and Bakhala nge Freedom Charter".

NUM received no support from the white miners who have been sworn enemies of African workers since the beginning of the industry in our country.

The police, together with the mine security guards, arrested NUM members, raided NUM offices and wounded or killed 15 strikers attached to the President Steyn Mine. Cyril Ramaphosa, General Secretary of NUM, accused the police of taking part in a well orchestrated campaign by the Chamber and the government to crush the strike.

The vicious offensive mounted by the mining house, the large scale dismissals, the growing terror, and the Reserve Bank move to cut off foreign funds to NUM, forced NUM to settle the strike. It was legal in the formal sense. But without political power, the miners like the rest of the African working class faced overwhelming odds from the State's oppressive apparatus, the capitalist class and white racists.

The strike was a training ground which made a major contribution to those forces leading the country's blacks to freedom. The miners' strike demonstrated that even if the miners ^{could not} impose ^a settlement they could inflict great loss on mining houses.

The bosses anticipated that the strike would last 48 hours and involve a few thousands. The fact that the NUM was able to bring out 340,000 miners on a strike which lasted three weeks, was an important victory. The strikers received support from COSATU, UDF affiliates and international miners and trade union federations.

The NUM issued a public statement declaring that:

"The NUM salutes all the mine workers who joined the struggle to make it one of the biggest strikes of this century. We made it clear throughout that no amount of violence, harassment and detentions will stop the mine workers' struggle for a living wage and improvements in the mining industry. In spite of the dismissals of more than 45,000 mine workers, our union remains united."

During the miners's strike the Lesotho Trade Union Federation was revived by the Lesotho military government and the South African Security forces, which actively opposed and urged Lesotho miners not to join the NUM. A further blow to NUM was the withdrawal of recognition by Anglo-America's President Brand Free State mine.

NUM must be given help by all progressive movements to fight the formidable enemy.

COSATU has entrusted FAWU to organise the farm workers. This is a gigantic task. The estimated one million farm workers are beginning to shake off the chains of slavery. A ten week strike by farm workers at the Sapekoe tea estate near Richmond, Natal and the historic recognition agreement between the Farm Workers Union ~~and~~

and Be'gylei Chicks and Poultry Farms is the beginning of a long campaign to organise farm workers. A rural researcher who monitored the SAIBKOE strike said:-

"The entire strike and the solidarity shown by the villagers at Ezithendeni, near Izopo, reflect the growing resistance of rural people. There is also a growing realisation that trade unions can further their interests."

In this campaign COSAFU and SAAWU will face Inkatha which has boosted its campaign against the Congress of Trade Unions with a recruiting drive among farm workers in parts of rural Natal.

The rate of unemployment was "unacceptably high" declared the report of the Committee for Economic Affairs of the President's Council. Only 7.5million of the 10.8million workers in South Africa were employed in the formal sector. The remaining 3.3million have been accommodated in the informal sector and subsistence agriculture or are unemployed. One in three economically active South Africans does not have a regular job.

COSATU merits support for its efforts to establish the National Unemployed Workers Coordinating Committee (NUWCC), in which leading activists of affiliated unions have been the prime movers. The organisation of the unemployed deserves the attention and support of the entire liberation movement to detach them from vigilante and other reactionary groupings.

South Africa together with the rest of the capitalist world is in the middle of a severe economic slump

amounting to a prolonged recession. Our country's enormous mineral wealth and highly developed food, ^{and} fishing industries should enable it to weather the economic blizzard of depression. But the country can ^{not} overcome the effects as long as the apartheid regime remains in office.

Right now there is before parliament an anti-working class bill to amend the Labour Relations Act. The Minister of Manpower F. du Plessis told ~~said to~~ the Cape National party Congress that there was a "slight" problem.

"Unhappily, certain radical elements had begun to infiltrate unions and certain union leaders were politically inspired". ^{They used} ~~used~~ the unions to destabilise and bring the economy to a standstill. Many were being "held", - meaning detained under emergency laws- 'because they had made themselves guilty of undermining the security of the state'. The government would not act against leaders who confined their attention to ~~the~~ wages and working conditions, but if they moved out of the labour field they then became fitting matter for the security police.

He assured employers that under the proposed amendment to the LRA, union members guilty of striking illegally could be summarily dismissed without recourse to any court for a restoration order. The Bill would make it illegal for a union to strike twice on the same issue in a 12 months' period, outlaw 'sympathy strikes' and define 'unfair labour practices' in such a way as to assist employers to ignore correct procedures when dismissing workers'.

The Minister's task was to provide a dose of soothing syrup to National Party members who want employer to 'hit back' at unions that demand improved wages and working conditions and urge the government to take action against the 'increasing number of strikes that are politically inspired'.

A commission actually recommended, in 1964 that criminal penalties for illegal strikes should be repealed for both technical and political reasons.

Police intervention and prosecutions have had effects on labour relations, tending to provoke rather than settle disputes.

South Africa's labour laws in common with industrial legislation developed economies provide a measure of protection to unions and workers taking part in strikes that reinforce collective bargaining structures. Section 78 of the LRA grants immunity to registered unions against restraining orders - known as 'interdicts' - and actions for damages arising out of a lawful strike.

These include 'sympathy' strikes under the present Act. The Draft Bill would make them illegal.

The labour movement has to cope with the ability of monopoly capitalism and multiple owners of firms transfer production from one plant to another to frustrate a strike. The workers' response to this manoeuvre is to call on employees in the second plant to down tools in support of the strikers in the first plant. The Bill proposes to make the secondary strike unlawful. Workers would commit a crime by taking part in a strike arising out of a dispute in which they are not directly involved; or by going on strike for the same cause twice within 12 months. Other impediments to lawful strikes contained in the Bill involve changes to procedures laid down for Conciliation and Industrial Boards and Industrial Councils, the key institution in the system of collective bargaining.

Furthermore, the Bill would greatly weaken the protection now given to unions against claims for damages arising out of strikes and make unions responsible for the actions of any member who provokes an unlawful strike. The purpose is to force unions to stop 'wildcat' strikes or pay damages claimed by employers for losses ~~suffered~~ caused by the strike.

A long and complicate definition of 'unfair labour practices' in the Bill would penalise commercial boycotts, other kinds of solidarity campaigns organised in support of strikes and attempts to expel 'scabs' who refuse to join a union having a majority of workers employed in a plant. The aim of the proposed amendment is to resist the demands of unions for exclusive bargaining rights; the effect will be to encourage the emergence of minority and racially exclusive unions.

Finally, the propose introduction of a special labour court should be noted. Its functions will be to decide on questions submitted by the industrial court, review its decision and hear appeals from unfair labour practice cases.

The effect would be to downgrade the status and weaken the power of the industrial court which is ^a popular forum among unions and workers for legal redress against arbitrary and unjustified dismissals.

DEFEAT THE BILL

A massive campaign to force the regime to withdraw the Bill needs to be mounted. Large scale efforts are needed to explain its purpose to trade unions and workers generally,

mobilise them for action, and enlist the support of the international working class and solidarity movement generally. COSATU has announced a multi-pronged campaign against the bill, planning weekly demonstrations, in the form of lunch time rallies at all organised factories. A special executive meeting was called in March 1988 to discuss what action to take in response to ^{steps taken by} ~~action from~~ employers and the government. NACTU says it will focus its energies on renegotiation of recognition agreements and protect its members' rights in a collective bargaining system that would operate outside the statutory framework. Thus they are not campaigning against the Bill.⁽²⁾

We are meeting at a time when the regime has just banned the UDF and 16 other people's organisations and restricted COSATU to deal only with factory floor problems. This restriction is a violation of COSATU's concepts of their tasks to organise, defend and advance our oppressed and exploited working class interests. Our people, our working class will not accept these fascist attacks and it is our solemn duty to mobilise all support in the struggle to defeat this fascist police state.

1. Cape Times 13/11/87, Extracts from Department of Political Education, ANC.; The Anti-Labour Relations Bill Ref. 81/88, 5/2/88
 2. Weekly Mail February 19 to 25, 1988, p.2

PART 2 THE WORKING CLASS IN A LIBERATED South Africa

From part one of this paper, you will have noted the class consciousness and mass organised structures of our working class. The working class movement has stated an ~~an~~ intensify debate about its relationship with the politics of a national liberation. There is a ^{search} ~~search~~ by the organised trade union movement - affiliates of COSATU - for a way to assert the class role of the organised workers as an independent force and part of the liberation alliance.

They have come clearly for sanctions and disinvestment; and reject offers by some companies for workers to become shareholders. Their statements demonstrate the workers' understanding of the class struggle, national liberation, reformism and the development of a socialist outlook which Marx said was the objective of the workers' struggle when addressing the General Council of the First International in 1865, he said

" Trade Unions work well as centres of resistance against the encroachment of capital, ~~but~~. They fail partially from an injudicious use of their power. They fail generally from limiting themselves to a guerilla war against the effects of the existing system, instead of simultaneously trying to change it, instead of using their organised forces as a lever for the final emancipation of the working class, that is to say, the ultimate abolition of the wages system"

Within the context of Marx's statement are;

(a) last year's strikes for higher wages and against race discrimination which swept the public sector in more than 20 strikes involving thousands of workers not covered by the Labour Relations Act, ^{and} regarded as "non-classified"

staff employees on a temporary basis despite their length of service, or those employed in "essential services". Their action has involved strikes, go-slows, work-to-rule and a boycott of canteens, etc. Workers employed by SABS Post Office, municipal and quasi-municipal sector at 14 different local authorities and municipal police, ^{struck work} Other forms of class struggles is the rent boycott in which union membership participate, COSATU shop stewards in the Western Cape have forced long distance bus fares down, between R10 -R15 and forced bus owners to consult COSATU and local communities before implementing future increases. Unity between migrant workers and township residents has been established in organisational structures.

(b) NUMSA's resolution passed at their inaugural conference stated: "That the vast majority of the working masses of our country recognise the Freedom Charter as containing the basic minimum demands of a free and democratic South Africa. That the Freedom Charter enjoys mass support from organised workers nationally."

(c) COSATU 2nd National Congress resolved:

"To unite all workers in broad-based national industrial unions under the constitution and policy of COSATU. It must not hesitate to take political action to defend and advance the interest of its members ^{and} the working class in general".

(d) NUMSA's Congress passed another resolution of great significance "asserting (a) that only the working class masses under the leadership of organised industrial workers, can truly liberate our country from the chains of capitalist exploitation and apartheid oppression.

(b)(ii) that the national democratic struggle against apartheid and the socialist struggle against capitalist exploitation are complementary parts of the uninterrupted struggle of organised workers for control over the industry and government of a liberated South Africa";

~~2.~~ (c) The winning of the national democratic revolution, the moulding of the South African nation, and the longer term socialist transformation of our country depend crucially on the working class assuming its leading role in the struggle."

In our present discussion we should refer participants to Lenin, in assessing the role of the Russian trade unions played in bringing about the victory of the October 1917 Socialist Revolution. Without their backing, ^{he said,} it would have been impossible to gain or hold Soviet power. [The Freedom Charter declares that all who work shall be free to form trade unions, elect their officers and make wage agreements with their employers; The State shall recognise the right and duty of all to work, and to draw full unemployment benefits. Men and women of all races shall receive equal pay for equal work. There shall be a 40 hour working week, a national minimum wage, paid annual leave and sick leave for all workers and maternity leave for all working mothers.

~~It does not however guarantee~~ The right to strike. This principle is contained in paragraph 't' in the Constitutional Guidelines for a Democratic South Africa; " A Charter protecting workers, trade union rights, the right to strike and collective bargaining shall be incorporated into the constitution." This is most welcome to the trade union movement.

After the triumph of the October Socialist revolution the status and role of the trade union were radically changed. No longer harassed and persecuted, they ^{the} for first time became a paramount organisation of a working class that took power, a pillar of the working people's state.

Lenin further observed:

"In this greatest revolution in history, when the proletariat has taken state power into its own hands, all the functions of ~~the~~ change. The trade unions are becoming the chief builders of the new society".

For the purpose of this paper I examined the constitution of Bulgaria, the People's Republic of Czechoslovak Socialist Republic of the Union of Soviet Republics, ~~USSR~~ ^{the 9} ~~USSR~~ ^{craft}. In these and other socialist countries the workers are the main rulers, of their countries. This does not mean that ~~we~~ ^{one} shall one day of liberation from the apartheid regime have a socialist economy. Our President announced on 8th January 1986 that we shall have a mixed economy. Whatever economy we shall have the mere destruction of the apartheid regime, ~~white minority racist, fascist regime~~ ^{will} we shall meet with vicious opposition.

Here again we can learn from comrade Lenin, ~~who~~, when the bourgeoisie came to power after ~~the~~ ^{the} February 1917 ~~bourgeois-democratic revolution~~ ^{they} brought Russia to the brink of an ~~unprecedented~~ ^{Lenin's} catastrophe. ~~His~~ ^{Lenin's} resolution entitled: "Measures to cope with Economic Disorganisation", said:

"The only way to avert disaster is to establish effectual workers' control over the production and distribution of goods. For the purpose of such control it is necessary first of all, that the workers should have a majority of not less than

In all the decisive institutions.. Secondly, that shop committees, the central and local soviets, as well as the trade unions, should have the right to participate in this control. (3)

Our working men and women will have to, armed to defend the liberated South Africa. There is a debate whether

our army of revolutionaries will be able to take over the running of the monopolies, mines, banks, factories and firms ^{after} ~~in the liberation struggle~~. Let us now work and be prepared for that day.

As can be seen from these successful strikes conducted by ^{NUM} ~~SACU, IOWA, NUMBA, NUM, FAWU, CCANUSA~~ the African workers of today are not of the same status as of 20 years ago. The entry of Africans into vital sectors of the industrial and commercial workforce ^{since} ~~during~~ the 1960's, ~~1970's~~ and ~~1980's~~ has greatly enhanced their role. Another important factor is the Mines and Workers' Amendment Act introduced in spite of strong opposition by the white miners' unions who have been the ^{staunch} ~~worst~~ enemies of the African workers since the beginning of the century.

Even on farms, workers have displayed a capacity to organise, strike and win victories. A rural researcher who has been monitoring ^{the} SAPEKOE strike said: "The entire strike and the solidarity shown by the villagers at Ezithendeni, near Ixopo, reflect the growing resistance of the rural people. There is also a growing realisation that trade unions can further their interests".

We ~~do~~ have great scarcity of skilled artisans with high level technology ~~and people~~ able to organise, direct and manage the economy at different levels. Trade Unionists ~~who are~~ loyal to our ^{cause} ~~cause~~ ^{should} occupy ^{key} positions in ~~the~~ plants. We all know the reasons for this shortage. We should act now to educate workers for the upper ranks of skilled personnel. This ^{is} something for SACTU and ANC departments of Manpower, National Education and Political Education to ~~work out plan~~ ^{implement} and ^{develop} project to ~~get~~ the necessary skills in mining, ~~chemical~~ engineering and other layers of ~~skilled men and women~~.

(1) V.I. Lenin Coll. Works., Vol 24, pp.513-514.

as well as in management and administration. We shall have problems because our working class is not entirely united, as ^{is} shown ~~is~~ ^{above} Part 1. We shall have problems with white skilled workers on the mines, engineering and chemical plants. We ~~will be able~~ ^{expect} to call upon the international working class and people's solidarity to help us. In the early years of soviet power, engineers from Britain, USA and France came to the Soviet Union and gave their skills to develop the Soviet Union. For the last 25 years, expatriates, corporants have come to liberated ^{Zambia} Zambia, Tanzania, Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe to help in ^{development} this task. We can be certain ^{of} that we shall receive help in the gigantic work of developing our country to advance the living standards of ^{the} our oppressed and exploited people. Now our foremost task here and at home is to ~~work~~ to destroy the white racist, fascist minority regime and win a free democratic South Africa.

The racial divisions in the trade union movement has plagued the labour movement since the beginning of the century. Its solution will depend, as James LaGuma pointed out 60 years ago, on the power, solidarity and determination of the black workers to emancipate themselves from white domination.

Regrettably the black white dichotomy is not confined to racial divisions, as ^{explained} ~~set out~~ in Part 1 of the paper, but our Marxist-Leninist theory convinces us that the basic contradiction between workers and capitalists will ultimately compel workers to unite and combine their forces against exploitation and ~~repression~~ of the capitalist mode of production.