

# WORK

# IN

# PROGRESS



**INKOMATI: PROGRESS FOR SOCIALISM**



**UNITRA BOYCOTT**

**WESTERN CAPE UNIONS**

**INTERVIEW:**

**SWAPO'S HAMUTENYA**

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

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# Editorial

The past few months have seen a number of splits within independent trade unions. SAAWU's expulsion of three senior officials, and the subsequent conflict over this, has been widely reported. But expulsions from MACWUSA and MAWU, and a breakaway from CCAWUSA, have received little attention thusfar.

Union splits are notoriously bitter. Allegations of corruption, anti-democratic practices, and racism are often levelled. But these specifics aside, union conflicts sometimes reveal genuine differences over strategic questions: how to organise, relationships to national politics, and what union democracy and leadership mean in practice.

These issues are important to all those committed to working class organisation and leadership - not because they have the right to interfere in union affairs, but because open and informed debate can only strengthen a labour movement which continues to grow and change.

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# Books and Batons



After the recent clashes at the University of Transkei (Unitra), students were detained and four staff members deported. ROBERT MORRELL, Unitra history lecturer until his deportation, sets out the origins and development of the Unitra conflict.

The library of the University of Transkei is the main building on campus. On the third and top floor, its books are stored in serried racks as laid down in the august tradition of librarianship. It was amongst these library stacks that, on the afternoon of 15 May, a large number of students gathered. Here, amid the stern notices admonishing readers to silence, they were attacked by baton-wielding policemen. Some were beaten up, and all were left to ponder the University's motto of 'Progress through Learning'.

## THE NEW FLAGSHIP OF TRANSKEI EDUCATION

The University of Transkei (Unitra) began academic activities in 1976, though its initial progress went unnoticed as South African education became a site of opposition to state repression in the months following 16 June. The University itself was a gift from the South African government to Transkei prime minister of the time, KD Matanzima. This was part of an agreement which saw the Transkei awarded 'independence' on 26 October 1976. Unitra was built on a hill overlooking the capital, Umtata. Close by, and overlooking the University in turn, is the ministerial complex which houses Transkei's rulers. Known to local inhabitants as 'the palace', its opulence in a land of poverty serves to highlight its role as the ever-watchful monitor of university affairs. The

geographical relationship between government and university is faithfully reflected at political and academic levels, where Transkei President KD Matanzima is also Chancellor of the University; his brother, George, as prime minister and minister of police is effectively responsible for campus discipline.

Unitra was expected to raise the Transkei's prestige above the constellation of other as yet 'non-independent homelands'. The pretensions of the Ciskei with 'its' Fort Hare University were particularly galling to the Matanzima brothers and it was hoped that the new flagship of Transkei education would overshadow the institution which the Sebe's held so dear. More ambitiously, it was hoped that the University would attract international recognition. Finally, Unitra was looked to for the personnel needed to fill the gaping holes left in the bureaucracy after seconded South African officials left after independence.

The new university was not entirely free to pursue these goals as it chose. In the first place it had been cloned from Fort Hare and was thus manned by Fort Hare staff; and secondly the matter of financial dependence on South Africa determined the pace of developments. Its economic subordination was a constant reminder of the Transkei's position within the sub-continent. The Transkei is chronically underdeveloped. Boasting little industry, its exports are basically limited to lollypop sticks, trout flies and dagga. Given this situation, one could reasonably ask questions about the viability of a university in such surroundings, and its potential to attract sufficient students to warrant its existence. The problem of student numbers never materialised since the University was regarded as something

of a godsend in the area. Apartheid had deprived the Transkei of educational as well as economic facilities and was now, by a process of inverse logic, apparently reimbursing it for more than a century of exploitation. The incongruity of a university in one of the poorest regions of Africa was not perceived as a problem by the new Transkei rulers either. On the contrary, they saw it as a marvellous opportunity to show the world that pomp and circumstance Transkei-style was comparable with anything the world had to offer.

#### UNITRA AND INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

To achieve its goals the University, led by an ardent Afrikaner nationalist supporter of KD Matanzima, Professor B van der Merwe, initiated moves to raise Unitra in the eyes of the world. A concerted drive to attract competent staff, international if possible, and to convince the world that the University was 'open', was undertaken. It took some time to attract international staff, but in the meantime much public reference was made to the University constitution which boldly proclaimed that there would be no discrimination on the basis of sex, religious affiliation or colour. Since Unitra was still young, the 'Open University' advertisement was left at that. To gain some status amongst other South African universities, Unitra invited South African academics onto its Council (the ruling body of the University) and onto its extended Senate (the meeting place for heads of department), and canvassed external examiners from virtually every university in South Africa.

Finally, in order to provide the skilled manpower necessary for the burgeoning Transkei bureaucracy, the University ensured that the disciplines required by bureaucrats were offered. Initially these were limited to the classic Western education model of Arts, Law, Economic Sciences, and Science, but as the Transkei has slowly risen amongst the ranks of international powers it has felt the necessity to increase the cultural component - Music - to bring it into conformity with the great European universities, and to add certain service courses such

as Criminology and Police Science to cater for the peculiar needs of the Transkei. A proposal to introduce a military course designed to emulate the great Sandhurst tradition was mercifully unsuccessful.

Nowhere in the debates that surrounded the foundation of the University of Transkei is there any suggestion that the Transkei was part of the third world. Course outlines by and large followed the guidelines set down by universities in white South Africa. Possible courses on alternate technology and applied subjects were overlooked, while the very siting of the University was taken for granted. No concern was shown for potential part-time students in the distant corners of Transkei - Matatiele, Lusikisiki, Cofimvaba or Kentani.

Similarly, those who had hoped for some sort of trickle-down from the University into agriculture were soon to be sadly disillusioned. In 1984, during one of the worst droughts to hit the land in a century, the powers that be were discussing setting up a Medical Faculty costing millions of rand. The cost of international credibility has been high in both human and financial terms.

During its first five years, the University experienced the expected teething problems. The problems themselves were certainly expected, though the exact form in which they presented themselves took some people by surprise. There was the sad demise of the professor of Afrikaans and vice-dean of Arts, Professor Truter - murdered in 1977 while making love to a prostitute. The buildings themselves were not free from problems either - in 1979 the builders went on strike over a wage dispute, and later on a number of projected building operations were scrapped because South Africa, entering a recession, found the Unitra building programme one of its least binding commitments. There was of course trouble in getting suitable staff members, and the University often found itself lumbered with incompetent people who had failed to make it at other universities. In one department in the Economic Sciences Faculty, the bibliography for a three year graduate course plus an honours course consisted of not more than seven texts, two of which had been written by the learned head of department himself.

In the Education Faculty a staff member from Iran rose rapidly under Professor van der Merwe's guidance to the position of Grade A lecturer (just lower than senior lecturer). But he had no proof at all of academic qualification (though he claimed to have studied in the presence of the Shah's wife) and was renowned for his ability for buying expensive audio-visual equipment and a corresponding inability to use it effectively.

As far as the students went, Unitra's first four years were relatively uneventful. In 1980, however, they gave the administration its first severe headache by joining the countrywide school boycotts, along with a number of Transkeian schools. The response of the University and the state together was frightening. The army arrived on campus and forcibly dispersed the students. They detained lecturer Mzolisi Mabude, and hounded SRC president Ezra Mtshontshi into exile, having first deported his family. These problems aside, however, the University made slow but steady progress. By 1984, student numbers were close on 2 500, University staff had been attracted from 16 countries, and it was widely expected that Unitra would at some time take its place amongst the respected academic institutions in South Africa. Sadly, the superficial signs of progress masked the development of serious flaws in the fabric of the University; those with their ears to the ground fearfully anticipated that it would rip at the first sign of crisis.

#### **EDUCATING A NATIONALIST ELITE**

The policies implemented by the University were expected to fit snugly into Transkei politics. With KD Matanzima at the helm, Unitra showed itself capable of producing students who were both Transkei nationalists, and members of a small but growing elite class of traders, senior employees of the Transkei Development Corporation and related state corporations, chiefs and hangers on and, most importantly, members of the massive state bureaucracy (including teachers) centred on Umtata. It was this latter group which constituted the bulk of part-time students who attended lectures in the evening, hoping to get a degree and the

promotion which generally accompanied graduation. The part-time students generally viewed university education as a stepping stone, a means to an end. They were often unconcerned about course content, student politics and the general issue of the place of students at Unitra.

The conservatism of part-time students contrasted starkly with the awareness of full-time students. Many of these came from poor families who had made sacrifices in order to send a chosen son or daughter to university, while many others had gone out to work for a year or two to scrape together enough money to pay the fees. By 1984, fees had risen to over R1 600, again reflecting Unitra's commitment to elitism.

Many poorer full-time students were in close contact with the tragic realities of rural Transkei. They did not forget their roots in accepting the unforeseen opportunity of a university education. Unlike the bulk of the part-time students, they were committed to a non-elitist and democratic future. This commitment was bolstered by the unsuitable living conditions in which many students found themselves. There was not nearly enough residence accommodation, and many students lived in cramped and unlit quarters in town. In some cases up to six students crammed into a room, often having to share beds. In the residences themselves authoritarian directors, strict rules and harsh punishments (frequently expulsion) produced a similar dissatisfaction with the status quo.

#### **1980 - 1983: ABUSES OF STUDENT GOVERNMENT**

Full-time students were prevented from articulating grievances by the administration, which actively intervened in student politics. After the hammer-blow delivered against the students in 1980, the administration took great care to inculcate a non-political ethic amongst 'student leaders', themselves selected by the administration. 'Student leaders' (synonymous with SRC presidents) from 1980 to mid-1983 were thus co-opted and, in turn, muzzled the rising student voice. Prominent amongst these 'student leaders' was Liston Ntshongwana, a good friend of KD Matanzima, and presently a

member of the Transkei Embassy staff in Pretoria. He headed the SRC for one-and-a-half years. During this time he proved unable to control the habit he had developed during his career in the Transkei civil service of spending public funds on himself. By the time he was deposed as SRC president in May 1983, he had managed to throw the SRC accounts into utter confusion; spend 90% of student funds on entertainment and travel (including a number of trips with his close friend and SRC treasurer, Jewboy Pooe, to expensive Johannesburg hotels); and authorise the payment of a R1 000 cheque to himself allegedly used to finance personal business affairs.

This misuse of funds was only made possible with the active connivance of the administration, which controlled SRC purse-strings. But administration involvement went much further. Academic Registrar SD Majokweni controlled student elections (appointed electoral officers, presided over vote counting and frequently failed or refused to publicise election results); prevented rival student groups from constituting societies and holding meetings; sheltered the unpopular and unrepresentative SRC's from student animosity; and generally did all in his power to hinder any form of student organisation.

The actions of the administration met with state approval and support. When in 1980 the administration had been unable to control students, the state lent a heavy hand. Police and army materialised within minutes on campus, and student leaders were dealt with harshly. High profile state activities like this were rare, however, and students were generally kept in check by the popular expedient of using informers. So many informers were there that academic life was stultified by student reluctance to offer an opinion on any subject, fearful that this might be construed as opposition and reported to security police. The web of fear and silence spun by the administration and state only had a limited ability to ensnare students, and as resentment rose, so the web was dismantled.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF DISSENT

The vulnerability of the administration to concerted student action had already

been demonstrated in 1980, but the backlash that followed effectively silenced the students for two-and-a-half years before they once again stirred into action. A number of factors contributed to this resurgence of student activity at Unitra. Steadily worsening economic conditions in the Transkei, compounded by the catastrophic 1983 drought, heightened student awareness. There was an influx of lecturers imbued with revisionist ideas and committed to education for equality. This effect of the University's policy to attract staff who would elevate Unitra's credibility, took the University's professed stand on 'academic freedom' to the limit and began to give students an analytical edge to their social awareness.

Initially student action was directed at local issues. They began to complain about inferior (neo-Bantu) education and incompetent lecturers, and to challenge Ntshongwana's puppet SRC. Two issues received special attention. The first involved the startling number of fatalities amongst Unitra students in 1982 and 1983. A series of car accidents, victims of crime and a number of students who died of natural causes produced a sense of unease amongst students, who began to demand that a traditional ceremony be held to appease the ancestors. Some students felt that the ancestors were expressing anger at the failure to observe tradition. This was an implicit attack on both state and Unitra administration for not conducting the University's opening ceremony correctly in the first place.

A second line of attack blamed the administration directly by suggesting that student deaths could have been avoided had adequate student amenities (especially sport and extra-mural) been provided. Since there was nothing for students to do but work on campus, they had to go into town where the majority of fatalities occurred. Despite mutterings of discontent, no action was taken on this issue, and it was left to the issue of residence food to galvanise students into action.

Residence food at Unitra was provided by Fedics, the highly profitable company responsible for food at most South African universities. As Fedic's profits rose, so did student dissatisfaction with the fare provided. When the administration proved reluctant to take

up their grievances, students resolved on a food boycott. This was followed by a second boycott in February 1984, called to protest an administration move which prevented students attending evening lectures from having supper. These two boycotts were notable feats of organisation since both the residence directors and the phony house committees did their best to prevent them. The extent to which the administration was prepared to go in foiling student action is suggested by a bizarre rape case of March 1984. Residence director H Thipa accused food boycott leader TS Bam of raping a child. The subsequent trial was held in camera, but rumours that the case was unusual were fueled by the not guilty verdict, and the fact that Bam's major interrogators were security police who asked him about his role in student politics.

Contradictions in University policy grew increasingly apparent as students moved from local issues to challenge the administration over the submissive mould into which it had forced student activities. This move into open opposition was intensified by national developments: the formation of UDF, to which the SRC sent representatives; the activities of AZASO; and the volatile debate which surrounded the constitutional reform proposals. In May 1984, Unitra was to become a part of these national developments as it joined Atteridgeville, Cradock, Graaff Reinet, Pietermaritzburg and Cape Town in attacking South Africa's educational structures.

#### **NEW LEADERS, NEW CHALLENGES**

The crisis at Unitra climaxed in May and June of 1984. It was the culmination of a low-key, year-long challenge mounted by students against the administration. Ironically, it could easily have been defused had not the administration opted for the well-tried programme of browbeating and suspension, and when these failed, called in the repressive machinery of the state. Oddly, there was no major upheaval to signify the beginning of the trouble. There was rather a slow, at times hardly perceptible, escalation of friction.

The foundation for united student action had been laid in mid-1983 by the

new SRC, headed by A Dumse. This had replaced the widely discredited Ntshongwana SRC. The Dumse SRC did little that was immediately noticeable. It got the SRC funds into order, rejuvenated society life on campus, and gave the students solid leadership and a sense of direction for the first time in three years. It was followed by the SRC under Zamikhaya Mbalu, which was elected to office in September 1983. Mbalu is slight of stature, quietly spoken and deceptively meek; but beneath this there is a will of iron and a clear perception of political realities. Aply supported by Batandwa Nondo and Thobile Bam, Mbalu began to fire the student body with resolve. The SRC began to adopt a more public posture, and was seen to be active - expanding SRC administrative capacities; taking an active part in campus decision making; holding meetings and establishing links with other universities in South Africa. All these activities made the administration jumpy. It was not that the activities as such were political or threatening. But the university administration was happier when students were quiet and limited their activities to studying.

In the first quarter of 1984, Professor van der Merwe decided that matters had gone far enough. To increase his hold over students he appointed as Dean of Students LM Mbadi, a former residence director who was much disliked by students. Neither staff nor students were consulted in this appointment. Students signalled their disapproval by refusing to recognise or deal with him. In the context of Unitra politics, this was revolutionary. It seems that from this point on, the administration was resolved to bring matters to a head, confront students, and then batter them into submission.

Following on from the rejection of Mbadi, the SRC brought out its first newspaper, **Progress**. This not only repeated the SRC position on Mbadi, but also launched an attack on 'Pretoria', its 'racist policies', and its homeland puppets.

By the end of the first quarter of 1984, the students were united and defiant. The administration had not stood idly by. Instances of intimidation began to increase, Majokweni called in the SRC and warned them that their 'filthy' attitude was going to land them in trouble, and security police

involvement rose with students called to police offices or visited at home. Fears of an impending campaign against them caused a number of SRC members to flee Umtata in the Easter vacation; when they returned at the end of April, everybody waited fearfully, certain that the climax was soon to be reached.

**THE CRISIS:**  
**MAY - JUNE 1984**

As if to precipitate the confrontation, Professor van der Merwe used graduation, the showpiece of the University calendar, to condemn members of his staff for teaching Marxism. In his original speech, he had singled out Sociology Department head, Professor Herbert Vilikazi, for attack. But Vilikazi was on sociable terms with prominent government members, and van der Merwe was prevailed upon not to be specific in his attack. Nevertheless, the gauntlet had been thrown down, and though staff were slow to respond, students were not. An unsigned pamphlet made its appearance at graduation. It charged van der Merwe with squandering the money of poor students, of trying to perpetuate an inferior education system, and of being a puppet of the South African government. The pamphlet ended with a defiant challenge: 'Tell your bosses to come for a crackdown on us. We are ready for them. But should they touch us, you are in shit'.

Four days after graduation, on 9 May, SRC leaders Mbalu, Nondo and Bam, and Political Studies honours student Sakhela Buhlungu, were detained. This bland description conceals the fact that University academic registrar Majokweni had organised for the four to be taken in University transport to security police offices.

Throughout the next three weeks the police and security police were active against students. The University administration has recently disavowed any responsibility for their presence, claiming that police came onto campus independently. This is highly unlikely. Apart from Majokweni's role in ferrying students to the police, which he was to do again before the crisis subsided, he was seen supervising a security police raid on the SRC offices. Majokweni was also seen holding talks on a number of occasions with senior security police

officials, and was heard in telephonic conversation with security police.

Van der Merwe, likewise, has tried to wash his hands of the affair, but the guilt stains have proved obstinate. As in Majokweni's case, he has refused to enquire about the safety of staff and students who were deported and detained. His failure to issue any kind of statement during the crisis is suspicious, as is his absence at the time of every flashpoint. Even a court found that van der Merwe had acted beyond the limits of his power in trying to stamp out student opposition.

With administration complicity established, it is easier to understand the unfolding of events. On the evening of 9 May, the four detained students were released, but students decided to boycott lectures until the administration had provided some assurances and some proof of its bona fides. No sooner had the boycott started than a large force of police and security police cordoned off the University.

On 10 May, a state of emergency was declared by the Commissioner and Minister of Police. In terms of this, students were ordered off campus until 14 May, and it was left to the 'authorities' to hammer out some kind of agreement.

Two developments during this period reflect Unitra's idiosyncratic situation. The first was that the University's Chancellor, also the President of the Transkei, tried through this marriage of political convenience to 'solve' the problem using available state machinery. His solution was simple, if somewhat crude: to remove all non-Transkeian students by military vehicle from the Transkei, and to reopen the University only to Transkeian students who had been screened, and were prepared to give an oath of loyalty to the state. This suggestion was rejected by those with a slightly better appreciation of university politics, who pointed out that it would make nonsense of Unitra's claim to be an 'open' university, and would do the public image of the Transkei some harm.

The second development occurred at the negotiation level where cabinet ministers were approached by senior academics. The significance of this move lay in the social position of the University: certain staff hobnobbed with the most powerful people in the



land. They were on friendly terms with government ministers, either because they had known them in the past, or because they taught their children, or because as University academics they were considered to be social dignitaries. On this occasion, however, these ties proved too tenuous: the time of pleasantries and negotiation passed and was replaced by violence.

Students returned to campus in an orderly fashion on Monday, 14 May. They decided to continue the boycott until the administration had made a declaration of good faith. Both staff and students realised that such a move was exceedingly unlikely, and so met to indicate dissatisfaction with the administration's conduct. While the staff meeting went unhindered, the students were informed five minutes before their meeting was due to start that the permission originally granted had been withdrawn.

The next day (15 May), students were issued with an ultimatum by van der Merwe: attend lectures, or they would be 'removed' from campus. This message was interpreted as a warning of impending and officially sanctioned violence.

Though many students had already fled campus, over 250 remained. They were joined by some 40 staff members in the library building, where security police head Brigadier Kawe ordered that the entire SRC hand themselves over for arrest (they had already been summarily suspended by van der Merwe). When this request was refused, the library baton charge was launched. This failed to dislodge the students, but two hours of negotiations succeeded in ending the deadlock without the further use of violence or teargas. As students were marshalled from the campus, many were detained and deportation orders were served on four academics. A fifth was arrested.

In the aftermath of the baton charge, the administration met and decided to close the University until 25 May. They would require returning students to sign an undertaking of loyalty and an agreement not to attend any meetings. Once again, the administration had misread the mood of students, for instead of submissively bowing their heads and admitting guilt, they instituted legal action challenging van der Merwe's suspension of the SRC, and his demand for undertakings of loyalty.

As 25 May approached, students, denied the chance to meet openly, nevertheless prepared to continue the boycott. It was at an Umtata park meeting on this matter, held on 22 May, that a second and more serious baton charge took place. The meeting was illegal in terms of the state of emergency, and 50 police waded into students, arresting more than 150 and applying as much violence as they felt necessary.

A total of 137 students eventually spent nine days in jails throughout the Transkei. At least two of these were so seriously assaulted that they were hospitalised. With so many students in detention, and a further staff member deported, the University was closed until 10 July.

All 137 students were eventually charged, but their case was remanded and they were released. The attorney-general later dropped charges after discovering that the emergency regulations were null and void, having not been passed in parliament. In a related civil action, Judge Davis ruled in favour of two students who had challenged the undertaking of loyalty and SRC suspension respectively. The University was ordered to pay the costs of this action.

The University did not pass through the crisis unscathed. Adverse media coverage, solidarity boycotts by students at the Universities of Cape Town, Western Cape, Wits, Rhodes and Fort Hare, and a Unitra Staff Association resolution calling for the suspension of van der Merwe and Majokweni had the combined effect of forcing the calling of a Commission of Enquiry which, at the time of writing, is gathering evidence.

Matters in Umtata are still in limbo. Academics at Unitra are unhappy with the administration, and many have indicated that they might resign. Some, fearing police action, have gone into hiding, among them Professor Nico Cloete, who fled Umtata after attending a Senate meeting. He was informed in the meeting that the security police had been tipped off about his presence and would soon try and arrest him because he still opposed Unitra's administration. Fear and silence seem set to reassert themselves; and if they do, the University will either die, or go into hibernation.

Finally, we come full circle to 'Progress through Learning'. Progress?

The University as an academic institution has suffered a crushing blow; its academics have been declared fair game by the state and have been deported, detained and driven into silence. The principles of academic freedom and open admission have been violated, the neutrality and political impartiality of the administration have been shown to be false. And Learning? Neither the Transkei state nor Unitra's administration appear to have learnt

anything from their experiences of 1980. Those staff who still cherished some illusions about Unitra have had these dashed, while hundreds of students have been radicalised by their close contact with the realities of political control, bantustan-style. More than anyone else, these students have progressed through learning. But the lessons have been learnt in the classrooms of a harsh political world, not in the lecture halls of academia. ■

# Hamutenya Outlines SWAPO's Options

During May, talks were held between South African and SWAPO representatives in Lusaka. Sue Cullinan interviewed SWAPO Secretary for Information, HIDIPO HAMUTENYA, after the conference.

**SC:** SWAPO started off as a workers' organisation and developed into a nationalist movement. Would it still be accurate to describe SWAPO as the latter?

**Hamutenya:** Very much so. We're still struggling for the liberation of Namibia and in that context we remain a mass movement, an organisation which accomodates different political and ideological trends, people who are united for a common cause - the independence of Namibia. Among those committed to an independent Namibia you will find the church or christians, businessmen, and also those committed ideologically to socialism.

**SC:** So until independence is achieved, can we not talk about what comes afterwards?

**Hamutenya:** We can. The immediate objective after independence will be to democratise Namibian society, and that may take a decade or two to accomplish. It's a horrendous task - to do away with institutionalised structures of discrimination, racism and privilege. We will have to poke holes in some people's privileges in order to address the needs of others who have been left out. That will not really be socialism. That will be a stage of democratisation of society. That will also call for the building up of technical and managerial cadres who will be able to fill the vacuums which may be left by those who run away. This will be a difficult

stage.

**SC:** How would you compare the situation with that of Zimbabwe, and SWAPO with ZANU?

**Hamutenya:** We are talking about two different realities; Zimbabwe achieved independence before us. The strategy and tactics they have adopted will be useful, both in the positive and negative sense. The mistakes they've made will provide lessons, their success will also provide lessons for us. I would not like to say we are going to follow the example of Zimbabwe, but we will learn from their experience as we would from anybody's experience.

**SC:** How many members are there in the top party structures?

**Hamutenya:** In the central committee there are 47 members of whom four are alternative members. There are 19 in the politburo with two alternative members who can participate in discussions but not vote. The rationale for this is that if a member leaves - by death or expulsion - we don't have to call a full meeting to fill that gap. We just draft in one of the alternative members. This was the case with Nanyemba's death. And on Toivo's release, he was appointed to the politburo, as someone else had dropped out for health reasons. But the question of Ja Toivo is not really yet addressed. We will have to meet and decide about his functional position very soon.

**SC:** Can you elaborate on the structure and decision making processes in the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN - SWAPO's military arm)?

**Hamutenya:** The field commander (Hamaambo) and the political commissar are members of the central committee and the politburo. Broad strategies are agreed upon in the central committee and politburo, but operational decisions, issues of strategy and tactics, are entirely up to PLAN. They are based in southern Angola, but are in constant contact with Luanda for anything they need in terms of supplies, political decisions, or changing circumstances.

**SC:** What information have you received about the disengagement process in southern Angola?

**Hamutenya:** It was agreed that during disengagement we would not use any logistic facilities in Cunene province where disengagement has been going on, so we are not involved in any way.

**SC:** What about the alleged clashes between SWAPO and Angolan forces?

**Hamutenya:** Those are lies. I can tell you that.

**SC:** A report stated that PLAN combatants were out of touch with their commissars and that there was a rebellion with some troops wanting to ignore disengagement.

**Hamutenya:** There was nothing of the sort. There were clashes with the South African forces, because they were not doing what they were supposed to do. They would withdraw from Evale and then go northward, up to Cassinga, looking for SWAPO. There were only one or two incidents, but that almost brought a crisis into the Commission. It is simply not true that there were clashes between Angolan forces (FAPLA) and SWAPO. But it was the intention of the South Africans to create the impression that if SWAPO and FAPLA are shooting at each other, then the security in Angola is hopeless.

**SC:** Basil Davidson argues that a rear base is crucial for a successful guerilla war. Angolan independence allowed SWAPO's campaign to be stepped up. But with South Africa occupying and patrolling southern Angola, and the SWAPO rear base fast disappearing,

won't SWAPO have to conduct a more political campaign?

**Hamutenya:** Angola will continue to be a rear base for SWAPO. South Africa has been in Cunene province since August 1981. If they were honest they'd agree that this had not prevented SWAPO from carrying out its action in Namibia. They were in a situation where they had to spend more and more money to maintain an expensive military operation which they knew was hopeless. They could occupy Cunene province indefinitely, they could probably reduce the level of intensity of PLAN operations, but they could never stop the struggle from going on by occupying southern Angola. They know that disengagement will not solve this problem, so they are trying to get SWAPO to agree to a ceasefire without the implementation of UN resolution 435, because they know that stopping the struggle is out of the question. They claim to be leaving Cunene province: the choice is theirs to have to reoccupy it or to accept the fact that the struggle will continue. South Africa has a choice - to agree to a ceasefire with SWAPO and proceed with the implementation of 435 immediately after disengagement. They also have a choice to refuse to do that, and to contend with the armed struggle.

**SC:** But they also have a third choice which is the one that everybody is speculating about: to agree to a ceasefire but not to 435.

**Hamutenya:** We will not accept that.

**SC:** Do you think that President Kaunda would agree to, or press for, an alternative monitoring force of Frontline states, as an alternative to UNTAG (the proposed UN monitoring force)?

**Hamutenya:** It's not up to Kaunda, it's up to the UN secretary general. It's his prerogative. Remember he has to do that in consultation with the security council, and there are different forces in the security council. They can either approve or block things. So it gets a little more complicated. According to the UN plan, the choice of which countries will provide troops for

UNTAG is the responsibility of the secretary general. South Africa has already agreed to the proposed composition by the secretary general. When the secretary general visited South Africa in August last year, they cleared the issue of impartiality and the issue of composition of UNTAG.

**SC:** Why did South Africa try to get SWAPO to consider an alternative to 435 (ie the formation of a government of national unity)? Surely they realised that SWAPO would not agree to circumvent 435.

**Hamutenya:** South Africa is operating from the premise that people and leaders in the region are giving in to South Africa's dictate. There's the assumption that the Cubans will go, and that Angola is ready for an Nkomati-type agreement. I have no indication that this is on the cards. I take the Havana Declaration literally. It says that the South Africans have not only to withdraw from southern Angola but they have to agree to the implementation of 435 before the Cubans will go home.

**SC:** Has SWAPO in any way been tricked into these so-called independence talks? SWAPO expected to discuss independence but South Africa has given the Administrator General no mandate. Did SWAPO know that before the meeting?

**Hamutenya:** We knew. It was clear from Botha's budget statement what was going to happen at this meeting, but we have an obligation to clear our side. In January South Africa sent an invitation to SWAPO through the Zambian government to have discussions with the internal parties in Namibia and the Administrator General (AG). We replied that in all honesty we do not believe that the problem of Namibia is a problem between SWAPO and the so-called internal parties. So we told Botha through the Zambian emissaries that the problem is between the Namibian people, on whose side SWAPO stands, and South Africa. And these are the two parties that must confront each other. Talking to the internal parties will bring no solution to the political problem of independence. We told Botha that we cannot go to Windhoek until the implementation of 435 is started.

During the Arusha meeting, President Kaunda revealed to Sam Nujoma that South Africa had now agreed to talk. The proposed South African agenda included ceasefire and 435, and general discussion. We said we could only talk about the implementation of 435. Everything else is agreed upon. Reluctantly they agreed to discuss the implementation of 435. We questioned all this manoeuvring, but were advised that we shouldn't bother about technicalities and should proceed to the substance of the matter.

Botha's parliamentary budget speech clearly set the tone of what was to be expected. Among other things Botha said South Africa had taken note of SWAPO's call for direct talks, and of SWAPO's call for a ceasefire between South Africa and SWAPO. What was important was that South Africa holds the view that 435 can not be implemented until the Cubans have left Angola, and that the people of Namibia, or parties including SWAPO, can in the meantime make other arrangements without South



SWAPO's information secretary,  
Hidipo Hamutenya

African interference. So we knew then that there would be a proposal for an interim government where SWAPO could lead but would have to agree to share power with the internal parties. Departments to be given to the internal parties included security, transport, telecommunications, home affairs and defence. SWAPO would have no power except the appearance of leading the interim government.

South Africa, I think, set out to achieve the end of disengagement and the setting up of a tripartite meeting between the Americans, Angolans and South Africans, to review progress and to discuss other outstanding issues. These would be the question of Cuban troops in Angola, maybe together with some kind of American recognition of MPLA, and then the implementation of 435.

Now in the course of disengagement, the South Africans were attempting to use the Joint Commission to hunt around for SWAPO, which the Angolans were not prepared to do. Their agreement to participate in the Joint Commission is to monitor the process of South African withdrawal from Angola. Angola said that SWAPO had given them guarantees that they would not send men across Cunene province from Huila provinces. It so happens that there are pockets of SWAPO men in Cunene province, but Angola said that this was not their responsibility, as for the last two years or so they had not had control of Cunene province. Because of this conflict, Angola insisted that they could not discuss what happens after disengagement. The agreement between Angola and SWAPO is that we are not going to send forces and material across Cunene province during disengagement. It ends there. Angola wants to have an answer to what happens after disengagement. There is no agreement between SWAPO and Angola that we stop the war. It is in Angola's interest to help South Africa and SWAPO to come to a standing agreement as to what will happen after disengagement in terms of armed struggle. Angola said they would not meet with the South Africans and the Americans until South Africa talked to SWAPO. In response, the South Africans proposed a meeting between South Africa, Angola, SWAPO and UNITA, which was duly rejected by Angola and SWAPO. South Africa therefore had to arrange the Lusaka meeting, if

only to clear the way for the Americans, South Africans and Angola to meet together.

So this whole charade was necessary to clear the way for those tripartite talks where South Africa hoped to negotiate Cuban withdrawal.

SC: But if SWAPO knew this beforehand, why did they agree to the Lusaka talks? To show that they will go for peace by whatever methods?

Hamutenya: Yes, sure. The South Africans did not say in advance what they were going to do, but it was discernable what they would demand. To have said that we cannot talk to the South Africans because we suspect what they will do would have been irresponsible. The world would have said why don't you go and listen? Why do you assume that you know what they are going to say and refuse to go to the meeting? So we had to come to Lusaka and go through the motions. We are not disappointed because we didn't expect anything better. But our suspicions were confirmed.

There was an assumption that SWAPO might wish to make compromises because its military position is weakened by disengagement - that we might just be in a mood to compromise on 435, to agree that it could not be implemented and that other things could be done in the meantime.

SC: South Africa's main achievement was to get SWAPO to sit round the same table as the Multi-Party Conference (MPC). This was a massive publicity stunt. They failed to get SWAPO to compromise, but didn't they succeed in boosting the status of the MPC and the internal parties?

Hamutenya: They may consider it a success in those terms.

SC: Would you agree to meet the MPC again?

Hamutenya: If they come with South Africa, we will, but we can't discuss anything with them. They didn't have the courage to raise the question of an interim government while waiting for the Cubans to go. But we are not

interested in that, we are not going to budge from 435, because the essence of 435 is elections. The Namibian people must decide who their leaders are. We don't want to be brought to power by anybody except the Namibian people. If SWAPO is defeated in an election which we believe was fair and just, we will accept the consequences honourably.

**SC:** What type of electoral system would you envisage?

**Hamutenya:** We'd reduce the choice to two, either proportional representation or a single member constituency system. South Africa has agreed to choose one of the two.

**SC:** If South Africa is forced to give in to 435 and elections, might they not devise an electoral system with loaded constituencies where SWAPO may be prevented from obtaining a majority?

**Hamutenya:** They may play around with the demarcation of constituencies. But we are not going to agree to anything that runs away from fair elections. Therefore we stick to 435, whatever the price. There can be no really fair and honest solution short of democratic elections.

**SC:** How long do you think it's going to take before South Africa agrees to elections?

**Hamutenya:** We have no illusion that Geldenhuys will raise a white flag for peace. But we know that if we sustain the struggle it's going to reach a stage where they can no longer stomach it. They have to continue to maintain a massive force, they have to pay for the maintenance of those forces, for endless conflicts they cannot win. That is our strategic objective, to force them to the point where they have to admit - 'it's costly, we cannot bear it any more'.

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# Mozambican Socialism and the Nkomati Accord

In looking at the past decade of Mozambican independence, EDUARDO DA SILVA examines the processes of economic collapse and political instability which forced Mozambique into the signing of the Nkomati Accord with South Africa.

The Nkomati Accord signed between the People's Republic of Mozambique and the South African government on 16 March 1984 raises a number of important questions for the democratic movement in South Africa. Despite claims that the Accord represents a victory for Mozambican diplomacy, there is no doubt that through the signing and implementation of the Nkomati Accord, Pretoria has achieved one of its major foreign policy objectives in Southern Africa - ie agreement by an important Frontline State to deny the ANC access to South Africa from its territory and to police the remaining ANC presence in Mozambique. In addition the Accord has created the most favourable conditions ever for the South African state to launch an offensive aimed at ending its long standing international isolation.

This article examines why South African strategy was able to achieve this success with respect to Mozambique. It focuses on two issues: the development of South Africa's regional strategy after 1978 and the internal political and economic processes in Mozambique within which South African strategy could intervene to such effect.

## THE EVOLUTION OF SOUTH AFRICAN REGIONAL STRATEGY

Mozambican and Angolan independence in 1975 as a result of armed national liberation struggles, fundamentally shifted the balance of power in

Southern Africa. It undermined the hitherto single most important prop of South African policy in the region - the maintenance of a series of colonised 'buffer states' around South Africa. The rapid collapse of Portuguese colonialism gave rise to a hasty reformulation of regional strategy in 1974. South African military capacity was expanded and a new political-diplomatic initiative known as detente was launched. Its objective was the search for influential allies within the OAU. Despite some initial successes, the detente initiative collapsed in the debacle of the first South African invasion of Angola in 1975-6 and the brutal suppression of the 1976 Soweto uprising. This prompted sharp debates within the South African state over the strategy, objectives and tactics of both internal and regional policy. These debates and conflicts eventually led to the fall of Vorster, the assumption of office by the Botha/Malan government and the adoption of 'Total Strategy' as official state policy.

Total Strategy's ultimate objective was defined as the establishment of a 'Constellation of Southern African States' - an anti-marxist grouping, informally allied with and tied to apartheid South Africa through a range of economic projects. More immediate objectives within this framework were also defined. These were: a) to deny external ANC cadres access to South Africa through neighbouring states and to induce these states to police the ANC presence in their countries, b) to



prevent states in the region from aligning themselves with socialist countries, c) to maintain and deepen the economic dependence of Southern African states of South African capitalism, d) to prevent and undermine the development of alternative economic linkages between Southern African states, e) to cajole these states into moderating their criticisms of apartheid.

The Total Strategy initiative involved the mobilisation of the full range of economic, political and ideological as well as military resources available to South African capitalism. The tactical package consisted of a combination of sanctions and inducements.

'Disincentive levers' against non-cooperative states included both the threat and actual implementation of various forms of military action - from raids to the cultivation of puppet groups such as Unita, MNR and the LLA. Economic pressure included disrupting export and import traffic through South Africa, limiting the recruitment of migrant workers, and placing curbs on the supply of important commodities to Southern African states. The combination of military action with economic disruption as part of the Total Strategy, is generally referred to as 'destabilisation'. 'Incentive levers' included offers of aid, investment and cooperation in joint infrastructural projects to states willing to collaborate with Pretoria. These were originally to have been channelled through the institutions of the Constellation of States, particularly through the proposed Southern African Development Bank. However, other institutional forms, such as the Southern African Customs Union and straight bilateral channels have also been used as a means of passing on 'incentives'.

Detente attempted to win the collaboration of individual decision makers. 'Incentives' however, were designed to influence the objective socio-economic context within which decisions were made.

The application of the Total Strategy policy can be divided into four distinct phases. Each has involved a different combination of destabilisation and incentives applied differently to each of the countries of the region.

#### **PHASE ONE 1978 - 1980 LAUNCHING A CONSTELLATION**

In its original form the Constellation of States proposal was predicated on Zimbabwe achieving independence under a collaborationist Muzorewa government. Zimbabwe would then have served as the magnet attracting other states into the Constellation. This vision collapsed with the defeat of the Muzorewa forces in the Zimbabwe independence elections in February 1980. The Constellation proposal was further set back by the establishment two months later of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC). Formed on the initiative of the Front Line states, SADCC defined its primary objective as the reduction of economic dependence on South Africa. The inclusion of even the most conservative states in the SADCC was a major reverse for Total Strategy.

#### **REFINING DESTABILISATION**

The second phase of Total Strategy from mid-1980 to the end of 1981, involved the application of destabilisation tactics in a fairly generalised and indiscriminate manner. Military aggression against independent states escalated with invasions of Angola, the January 1981 raid against ANC residences in Matola near Maputo, increased support for puppet groups, threats to turn Swaziland into a 'second front', and numerous individual acts of terrorism by South African agents. Simultaneously, South Africa applied economic techniques of coercion such as the withdrawal of railway equipment from Mozambique and Zimbabwe and impeding Zimbabwean imports and exports passing through South African ports.

The third phase began in 1982, with the South African state responding more selectively to the specific conditions in each country. Two objectives were stressed: a) that regional states should limit both the numbers and activities of ANC members, and b) that SADCC attempts to reduce regional dependence on South African capitalism should be curbed. The selective application of the destabilisation/incentives tactical package clearly sought to divide the

states of the region.

Potential collaborator states, particularly Swaziland and Malawi, were offered greatly increased incentives. For example, under the notorious 'land deal' South Africa offered to cede to Swaziland the KaNgwane bantustan and the Ngwavuma region of the KwaZulu bantustan. Through the Customs Union Agreement a R50 million 'gratuity' was paid to the Swazi government in the form of an excess revenue payment. Assistance was provided for the financing and construction of an alternative rail link to the existing connection with Maputo. In return, the Swazi ruling clique entered into a secret 'Non-Aggression Pact' with Pretoria in February 1982, and took strenuous action against ANC cadres in the country.

States which South Africa regarded as either most vulnerable or as its major adversaries, were subjected to an intensified destabilisation campaign. The prime targets here were Lesotho, Angola and Mozambique. Direct military aggression by conventional South African forces, and an escalated campaign of terrorist violence by puppet groups were designed to destroy the capacity of governments to govern. Direct and indirect forms of economic sabotage were coordinated from Pretoria. This 'softening up' process caused intense suffering and material damage inducing severe crisis in each of these states.

By mid 1983 the Mozambican government concluded that in order to survive, it had no option other than to sue for peace. To do so it turned to the western powers, launching a diplomatic offensive which sought to persuade them that in return for a measure of support it was prepared to loosen its ties with socialist countries.

This occurred at a time when the western powers favoured a settlement within the framework of the Reagan administration's 'regional security' doctrine. From at least the beginning of 1981 South Africa's activities had clearly enjoyed the not so tacit support of the Reagan administration and other western governments. This support was implicit within the doctrine of 'constructive engagement'. However by mid 1983, in the context of the worst drought this century, such was the scale of the human

suffering directly caused by destabilisation that even the major imperialist powers could no longer turn a blind eye. These conditions generated fears in western countries that Mozambique might appeal for military support from its socialist allies. Thus when Mozambique indicated its preparedness to treat with Pretoria in mid 1983, it met a receptive climate in the west. This created the conditions for direct negotiations at the end of 1983, resulting in the Nkomati Accord.

#### PHASE FOUR - NKOMATI

The signing of the Nkomati agreement inaugurated the fourth phase in South African policy in the region. Whilst it is still too early to be able to predict the full range and combination of tactics likely to be employed, some indications are already clear. The Accord has created greater opportunities for South Africa to use economic weapons against neighbouring states. In Botha's speech at Nkomati he pointedly referred to his vision of a 'veritable Constellation of states' in Southern Africa. South Africa clearly views a programme of selective investments as a means of deepening dependence on South Africa and transforming SADCC into a complementary institution to the Constellation of states. Whilst open militaristic tactics appear to have been put to one side for the moment, South Africa has no intention of dismantling or even reducing the size of its military machine. This was made clear in the March 1984 budget which increased military expenditure by 21%. As well, the amount authorised to exceed the budget was R40 million. The intention to maintain a threatening military capacity was also stated in the April 1984 Defence White Paper, which emphasised the successes achieved by what it called 'the policy of deterrence', and stressed that a strong military posture was essential if the 'peace process' was to advance.

The Nkomati Accord was however not simply the result of South African policy. It grew too out of internal contradictions and struggles within Mozambique since its independence in June 1975.

## POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PROCESSES WITHIN MOZAMBIQUE

There have been numerous attempts to analyse political and economic developments in Mozambique since 1974. One approach portrays FRELIMO as having attempted to implement a 'correct' revolutionary programme in the face of tremendous 'external' difficulties deriving from the heritage of Portuguese colonialism and/or South African destabilisation. This approach ignores the crucial internal contradictions as well as certain basic strategic and tactical errors made by FRELIMO which have in part generated the conditions in which external intervention would be effective. Others argue that FRELIMO was never a 'genuine' workers/Marxist-Leninist party and that the whole project could never have risen above that of petty-bourgeois 'socialism'.

However, in any society where a national liberation movement has seized power, complex and shifting alliances of oppressed class forces have gone to make up the conditions for that seizure of power. In the time after liberation, there are continued processes of class formation, class struggle and evolving forms of political and state organisation.

The following sections attempt to outline the major dimensions in this process as well as the complex articulation between 'internal' and 'external' factors which is indispensable to an understanding of post-independence Mozambique.

## FORMING FRELIMO

The colonial state in Mozambique was racist, highly centralised, repressive and authoritarian, and characterised by outmoded bureaucratic practices which reflected the backward character of Portuguese capitalism. No forms of political organisation outside of the colonial institutions were permitted. Trade union organisation was virtually non-existent, except for reactionary sindicatos, open only to whites and 'assimilated' blacks, and incorporated into the corporativist structures of the state. Cultural organisations were likewise severely repressed. The repressive apparatus of the colonial

state was notorious for its practice of brutal torture and assassination routinely applied against any form of dissidence.

All of these features had profound implications for the type of economy and state structures inherited by the FRELIMO government. Four questions were posed. 1) How to break from the dependence on migratory labour to South Africa and transform the economy of the south. 2) How to free peasant agriculture in the centre from the deforming impact of seasonal labour on the plantations. 3) How to produce an indigenous cadre of skilled manpower. 4) How to smash the colonial state and create a people's democracy.

FRELIMO was formed in 1962 through a merger of three disparate nationalist organisations. It represented an alliance of nationally oppressed class forces. During the armed struggle, the organisation underwent a number of severe internal struggles, which FRELIMO interprets as a struggle between different class lines. Through this process, an indigenous Marxist perspective of the national liberation struggle and the type of society which was to replace colonialism was developed.

The armed struggle was mainly confined to the three northern provinces of Cabo Delgado, Niassa and Tete. This struggle was based predominantly on the poor peasantry of these regions and saw the emergence of liberated areas in which new, collective forms of production were developed. Whilst FRELIMO enjoyed overwhelming popular support in the urban areas, by 1974 it had not yet succeeded in translating this into an organised working class base in the cities. In the southern region as a whole, its organised presence remained weak.

As a result of the internal struggles within FRELIMO during the armed struggle, when FRELIMO came to power in 1975 it was committed to socialist transformation in Mozambique. As part of the global anti-imperialist struggle, this implied aligning with other liberation movements and establishing close links with the socialist world.

Despite its current emphasis on unity and cohesion, FRELIMO was never a monolithic organisation. Nor did it ever simply represent the interests of workers and peasants. It embraced all those class forces oppressed by Portuguese colonialism. Thus the

issue of which of the colonially oppressed class forces is able to assert its leadership over the organisation, has always been a central question.

FRELIMO took power in a country whose economy and class structure posed very difficult problems for any process of socialist transformation and which brought class contradictions sharply to the fore.

To understand post independence developments, the interaction of internal class struggles with external factors, derived from the changing balance at both the Southern African regional and world levels, must be understood.

### 1975 - 1977: ATTEMPTING SOCIALIST PLANNING

Mozambican independence on 25 June 1975 marked a change in the balance of forces at three levels. Firstly the fundamental change in relations between the colonisers and colonised within the country. Secondly, it represented a major advance for the national liberation struggles in the Southern African region. Thirdly, together with the defeat of imperialist intervention in Angola and the emergence of a socialist oriented government in Ethiopia it was a marked defeat for imperialist strategy in Africa and had a modest but nonetheless significant impact on the global balance of forces.

Independence did now bring an end to struggles on any of these levels. They intensified as the internal and external forces for whom Mozambican independence represented a setback initiated fierce rearguard actions against the new state.

Immediately after independence most settler owned farms, factories, shops and other property were abandoned. Most Portuguese professional, technical, skilled and supervisory personnel left the country. With the drop in production levels and the collapse of rural commercial networks, export earnings and the provision of food to the cities decreased considerably.

At the same time Mozambique was subject to intense pressure from South Africa. By 1977 the number of Mozambican migrant workers for the South African mines had been cut from 118 000 to a mere 41 000, a move which created severe unemployment in the

Southern region. Because of increased mine wages, resulting from struggles on the mines around this time, and the rising 'unofficial' price of gold, the Mozambican government was able for a while to derive increased foreign exchange earnings, despite the decline in the numbers of workers employed on the gold mines.

However, the mid 1970s saw sharply rising import prices, while world prices for Mozambican agricultural export products of cotton, tea, cashew nuts and sisal were either static or declined sharply.

During this period FRELIMO adopted both defensive actions as well as measures intended to bring about economic, political and social transformations. The sectors of health, education, housing, legal services and burial services were nationalised as an offensive measure in July 1975. All other nationalisations were essentially defensive responses to abandonment by the former owners. The result was the emergence of a state sector substantially larger than anything planned for by FRELIMO. With the creation of nationalised lojas do povo (people's shops), the state was obliged to assume direct responsibility for the bulk of wholesale and retail trade in the rural areas.

At the political level a mobilisation campaign to involve all Mozambicans directly in local administration was instituted. Grupos Dinamisadores (Dynamising Groups - GDs) were set up, and in the rural areas the GDs replaced the collaborationist chieftaincy. Communal villages were also established and the Organisation of Mozambican Women (OMM) and the Youth Organisation (OJM) were mandated to mobilise women and the youth into local administrative structures.

For the first time in Mozambican history, workers and peasants were drawn into forms of organisation with some collective power to materially affect and alter the day to day conditions of their lives, as well as to intervene in discussions over national policy. These organisations began to develop into embryonic forms of popular power and although a coherent strategy of collective organisation and social transformation did not emerge, a social and ideological impulse which stressed mass initiatives and local organisation was generated.

These developments formed a crucial element in debates within FRELIMO over the meaning of socialist transition. However, organisation remained populist in form, addressing social welfare issues without tackling the question of the transformation of production.

In addition to new forms of popular organisation, FRELIMO partly re-organised the state apparatus. A virtually free health service was set up, which stressed preventative medicine and included a network of small local primary health care clinics throughout the country. Free national education and a mass literacy and adult education campaign significantly raised the general literacy and educational level of Mozambicans.

However while the beginnings of a socialist planning process did emerge, the state apparatus retained many of the archaic bureaucratic practices of the colonial state. Post independence government policy stimulated processes of class formation which significantly affected the position of the workers and peasantry and led to the emergence of important new class forces.

Urban and rural workers made important gains in terms of money wages and general standards of living. The nationalisation of housing led to stable and low rents for most workers. On the other hand, widespread shortages and gathering unemployment gradually undermined the economic position of workers. Independence had liberated the middle and poor peasantry from the extreme oppression and economic coercion of Portuguese colonialism and an emerging system of cooperatives did give peasants access to more land. The new state also introduced higher prices for peasant produce. But the rapid collapse of urban/rural trade and shortages of basic industrial commodities needed by the peasantry, had severe economic effects on the peasantry.

As well as changes in the position of workers and peasants, new class forces emerged. The flight of trained personnel meant that those Mozambicans with a modicum of education were required to fill the large number of vacant administrative posts in the state sector. The shortage of technical skills gave this stratum a degree of influence over day to day policy formulation. Although the politics of this stratum reflected contradictory tendencies, a strongly technicist view

of socialist development emerged, which favoured a 'growth pole' approach. Islands of 'modern' development would drag the 'backward' sectors of the economy into 'modernity' without having to confront directly the problems of transforming peasant production.

The concern with strict hierarchies and discipline in the workplace which marked the ideological position of this class force gave rise to conflicts with embryonic institutions of popular power.

Both FRELIMO itself and the state apparatuses remained sites of struggle. No single class force was able to impose itself decisively over the others and this was reflected in divergent state policies. On the one hand various attempts were made to organise collective forms of production, particularly in the agricultural sector. Workers were encouraged to form cooperatives in smaller abandoned enterprises. On the other hand numerous larger abandoned agricultural holdings were consolidated into state farms which consumed a large proportion of the scarce resources under state control.

Progress towards socialist transformation therefore depended on developing organisationally competent structures of popular power to be involved in planning, as well as considerable democratisation of state structures and the establishment of a balanced relationship between these state structures and those of popular power.

During this period FRELIMO attempted to cement alliances with liberation movements, and both the non-aligned and socialist countries. A dominant regional issue was the Zimbabwean question. All internal classes agreed with the policy of active support for the Zimbabwean liberation struggle. The South African question was of a different order. Mozambique's material capacity to support the South African struggle was limited, and FRELIMO was wary of provoking South African intervention. Nevertheless there was a powerful sense of solidarity with the South African struggle. The ANC was never allowed to establish bases in Mozambique and received no logistical assistance, but ANC members could live there and transit facilities were available for the organisation.

In the world arena, the new state adopted a position of vigorous non-alignment. It did however seek to win

strong material and political support from the socialist countries. Significant technical, personnel and cheap credit facilities were made available from these countries at a time when the imperialist bloc was imposing a virtual boycott against Mozambique.

**1977 - 1979:  
A FAILING ECONOMY**

This phase began with the Third Congress of FRELIMO which assessed the situation after two years of independence, and approved a strategy for the following period. These years were characterised by attempts to consolidate and stabilise production, and the attempted restructuring of FRELIMO into a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party.

Implementation of UN sanctions by Mozambique against Rhodesia resulted in a loss of revenue and international compensation fell far short of the amount promised. In April 1978 South Africa had terminated the 'premium' previously paid on the remitted wages of migrant workers. An intense foreign exchange squeeze resulted and by 1980 the Mozambican current account deficit stood at USD 300 million. Import

shortages of raw materials and spare parts necessary to maintain industrial production meant an underutilisation of installed capacity. The state was increasingly unable to supply the cheap basic consumer goods to the peasant sector necessary to stimulate urban/rural trade and to cement worker/peasant alliances.

The Third Congress spelled out a fairly pragmatic programme of economic recovery. However these directives remained at a very general level and over the period sharp struggles over their interpretation and implementation occurred.

The decision to transform FRELIMO into a vanguard party initiated a year of intense political mobilisation and discussion throughout the country. Although workers and peasants emerged from this programme with a stronger institutional political base, technicist and statist conceptions of the path of socialist development gained an important influence within the party itself. Struggles over the future direction of state policies intensified within and between all institutions.

Statist and technicist notions were reflected in state economic policy. In the organisation of production, the bulk of resources tended to be

concentrated in over-mechanised, poorly planned and managed state farms. For example, by 1980, 85% of the entire rice production process of the GAIL agro-industrial complex in the Gaza province was mechanised. Gaza was experiencing high levels of unemployment, and large numbers of workers were laid off in order to further mechanise the production process. New equipment had a very short life, while the foreign exchange shortage and failure to secure spare parts soon reduced much of the complex combine harvesters and other machinery to rusting wrecks.

This experience illustrates the emerging planning process. Targets were set in the agriculture ministry with scant reference either to the undertaking itself and without consulting or involving workers in the planning process.

Cooperatives and family agriculture continued to be starved of resources and at the same time an increasing 'commandism' emerged in relations between state officials and peasants. Most basic decisions about production, marketing and revenue distribution were taken out of the hands of members of cooperatives and assumed by officials. In the subsequent demobilisation, a number of cooperatives collapsed and the general popular impetus for collective forms of production began to wane.

### 1979 - 1983: PROPOSALS FOR THE 'DEVELOPMENT DECADE'

By 1979 it was clear that any advance in accordance with the technicist, statist conception of socialist development would depend on substantial external investment funds and a tightening up of labour discipline and reorganisation of the management process.

The 'Prospective Indicative Plan' (PPI) for the 'Development Decade', and the 'Organisational and Political Offensive' launched by President Machel in the so called 'Hospital Speech', formed the basis for planning in this period. The PPI planned for a 14,7% annual growth rate over ten years, arguing that this could be achieved because 'we have a vanguard party and we are determined'. To achieve this an accumulation rate of 30% per annum to be financed mainly by injections of

external investment was necessary. This was expected to be provided by the socialist countries at an average rate of interest of 6% (almost half that of the prevailing market rate). Repayment of the financing was to be completed in 1990 and was entirely dependent upon the achievement of the PPI's proposed growth rate.

Complementing the PPI was the 'Organisational and Political Offensive'. The theme of the speech was the need to tighten up labour discipline and to reorganise management systems. The state was presented as a instrument of the worker/peasant alliance. However as a result of 'leftist' and 'liberal' practices, there was too much interference in management decisions by workers and political structures. On the other hand, certain corrupt practices were said to have developed among senior officials. To solve the first problem, directors were to be made individually responsible for decisions and accountable only to higher structures. It was argued that 'ours is a hierarchical society' and that these hierarchies should be respected. To combat corruption and abuses of power by senior officials, socialist legality would be made stronger and structures through which the public could register complaints would be introduced.

Acknowledging the failure of the 'people's shops' to supply basic necessities, President Machel said that it was not the business of the state to 'sell razor blades and matches'. Mozambicans, including those who had fled the country, were invited to bid for and take over now denationalised small enterprises.

Further reorganisation of the state apparatus included the 'modernisation' of the army which was to be equipped to fight a conventional modern war. Top FRELIMO leadership were all given high military rank, and officers could only be promoted above the rank of captain if they were party members.

Zimbabwean independence fostered the expectation that an era of peaceful coexistence in Southern Africa was possible. There were hopes that the Botha government 'reforms' would transform South Africa into a normal capitalist society which would not constitute a threat to its neighbours. The first Matola raid however, put paid to any delusions of 'peaceful coexistence' with South Africa, and

Pretoria's increased support for the MNR made it clear that South Africa was the principal enemy of the Mozambican state.

A major feature of Mozambican foreign policy at this stage was an attempt to have the People's Republic of Mozambique recognised by the socialist countries as 'a new socialist state' rather than a 'country of socialist orientation'. Mozambique also played a leading role in the formation of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) and subsequently sought substantially greater economic aid both for itself and the SADCC.

The levels of aid received however, fell short of Mozambican expectations. Socialist countries inability to provide the required investment funds was largely the result of increased military, diplomatic, ideological and political pressure placed on them by imperialist countries. Moreover, given the situation in Afghanistan, Poland, the Middle East, South East Asia and Central America, Southern Africa ranked low in the order of priorities of the USSR and other socialist countries.

In the event the PPI strategy failed dismally. The first draft of the PPI was put in abeyance pending 'a period of accumulation' which would generate sufficient internal investment funds. Production levels on all state farms fell, organisation deteriorated and resources were increasingly scarce. In response, peasants in all areas of the country began withholding their surpluses from sale on state bodies and instead sold goods on emerging 'parallel markets'. By the end of 1981 there were severe food shortages in both the urban and rural areas.

The economic collapse had certain political effects. Despite falling living standards, peasant support for FRELIMO had largely been maintained. However the general neglect of the family section, unavailability of basic necessities and the growing distance of most state and party officials from the masses, and the emerging authoritarian practices of such officials undermined this support. There was a growing hostility to state farms which swallowed up expensive resources and dragooned peasants into 'voluntary labour'. Some state farms expropriated peasant land and in at least one district peasants spoke of the state farm complex as 'our enemy' and in the same breath described the state farm as 'the government'.

Such political errors by FRELIMO created fertile ground for the terror activities of the MNR, when South Africa intensified its support for the MNR at the beginning of 1981. Political demobilisation in the rural areas meant that FRELIMO could not mobilise popular resistance to MNR bandits. While MNR activities did not win popular support, in many instances the peasantry remained neutral in the battles between the FPLM (Mozambican armed forces) and the MNR.

Destruction wrought by South Africa on Mozambique through the MNR was immense. Thousands of Mozambicans were killed, mutilated or raped, their farms destroyed, crops burned, and implements broken. Eight hundred and forty schools were destroyed, 16 health centres, 24 maternity centres, 174 health posts, and 140 villages with a total population of 110 000 people, were destroyed. The direct cost of this undeclared war in the new socialist state was calculated at USD 3,8 billion. South Africa also imposed a partial boycott on Maputo port which resulted in a further drop in revenue.

This immense damage coupled with the devastating effects of the worst drought of the century and the growing unresolved problems of the organisation of production and exchange, brought the fragile economy to its knees by early 1983.

### 1983 ONWARDS - THE RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS

At the Fourth Congress held in April 1983, FRELIMO sought to rebuild its links with the masses and revive its semi-moribund political structures. Army personnel said that the campaign against the MNR necessitated large scale mass mobilisation in support of army counter insurgency.

The campaign to revitalise party cells and mass political participation did elicit genuine mass participation. However even before the congress was convened, a number of economic saboteurs were executed and, apparently in response to demands for stronger measures against thieves and black marketeers, public flogging was introduced for minor economic crimes.

Much fear was generated by these measures, but mobilisation for the congress proceeded and a number of criticisms of the party emerged. The FRELIMO secretariat admitted that



errors of 'excessive formalism' which had distanced the party from the masses in many areas, had been made. It was also agreed that there had been a number of other 'mistakes', particularly in economic policy.

The overall atmosphere at the congress seemed to indicate an intention to involve the masses more directly in political processes and to return to FRELIMO's popular base. The new Central Committee elected, brought in a significant number of militants from the rural areas and veterans of the armed struggle. A number of leading cadres who had been based in Maputo were transferred to the provinces where their skills could be used to benefit programmes in hitherto neglected areas. A number of senior party officials, including members of the Politburo and some ministers, were sent to take charge of provincial affairs.

The congress adapted a three year interim plan aimed at reducing hunger, defeating the MNR and consolidating a base for more rapid development in the second five year period of the 1980s. Small projects and local initiatives would be emphasised as the immediate means of providing for the needs of the people. State structures were directed to implement an effective programme of support for peasant agriculture. Greater encouragement was given to 'the private sector'.

It would be wrong to see the lines emerging from the congress as a victory for workers and peasants. The 'popular lines' were orchestrated from above and were largely populist in character. Moreover the adoption of the final programme was the result of protracted struggles between the various forces within FRELIMO. Particularly there was disagreement over whether this 'new direction' was a short term tactical retreat or a longer term shift in strategic vision.

While the congress did in some ways mark a return to the masses, at the same time, decision making powers within the FRELIMO leadership were being restricted to an ever smaller group concentrated around the office of the president. In late 1982, the Central Committee took a secret decision to implement strategy to defeat the MNR. Methods included a stepped up military offensive, the launching of a 'diplomatic offensive and the transformation of the economy onto a

war footing.

The future direction of state policy depended on which of these two trends came to predominate - the turn to the masses or the increasing concentration of decision making power in a small secret group. In the year following the Fourth Congress, the turn to the masses appeared to bog down. Increased support for family agriculture was often interpreted as a licence to give resources to the most successful peasant producers and not to stimulate peasant production as a whole. Also 'Operation Production', instituted after the mass pro-FRELIMO May Day demonstration, attempted to remove all 'unproductive' people from the urban areas. Such 'unproductives' were either sent to their 'areas of origin' in the countryside, at the time of the worst drought and famine in living memory, or they were forceably removed to the remote northern areas ostensibly to work on the labour starved state farms.

This generated fear and resentment as every single resident of the major urban areas was compelled to go through an exhausting, confusing and authoritarian bureaucratic process to 'prove' that they were 'productive'. Local administrative officials were able to assume unchecked powers to determine the fate of those living in their areas. Reports from the relocation areas told of appalling conditions and lack of food. Perhaps the most important consequence of this campaign was that for the first time Mozambicans expressed the idea that the state was no longer 'theirs'.

It was in this context of a collapsed economy, a deteriorating military and political situation that those in the FRELIMO leadership who argued for an accomodation with South Africa were able to persuade the rest of the leadership, and in particular the president, that to preserve the Mozambican state they had no option other than to sue for peace with Pretoria.

## THE NEGOTIATIONS

No attempt is made to trace the step by step process of these negotiations, nor the full range of interests involved. Rather the analysis concentrates on the demands of, and gains made by each of the two major parties involved.

Mozambican state representatives entered negotiations with the central objective of achieving a peace which would ensure the survival of the state and allow for economic recovery. Within the FRELIMO leadership there appeared to be a strong current of opinion that economic recovery was dependent upon attracting external investment. Since this was not forthcoming from socialist countries, it would now have to be obtained from the west. The peace settlement would therefore have to be of a kind to attract foreign capital. In order to achieve these aims, Mozambique was prepared to make concessions at a number of levels - internal socialist policies, regional alignments and the country's international alignments.

The first concession was made in this latter area. During Machel's visit to Western Europe in October 1983, there was much effort made to convince western countries that Mozambique was not a Soviet 'puppet' and that it was prepared to loosen ties with socialist countries. The immediate objective of this visit was to persuade western powers to pressurise South Africa into abandoning its undeclared war against Mozambique. A number of western governments were persuaded that Mozambique seriously wanted to negotiate within the framework of the 'regional security' doctrine. However, the visit failed to extract promises of immediate investment and very little military support. It appeared that western investment was dependent on an agreement with South Africa, and any subsequent investment would be in one of two forms: a) through South African subsidiaries of western companies, and/or b) in the form of tripartite deals in which US banks provided the finance, Portuguese firms the technical manpower and South African based firms the imported components.

The United States played a central role in persuading South Africa to enter realistic negotiations with Mozambique. Western countries had initiated this process once it became clear that Mozambique was prepared to make concessions on issues such as internal control over private capital.

The process of reaching an agreement took nearly four months. For the South African government, the agreement in the early stages, was directly linked to the situation in Angola and Namibia. However, once the South Africans were

convinced of FRELIMO's sincere intention to control the ANC, they realised that their major objective vis-a-vis Mozambique had been achieved. A small, controlled, purely diplomatic ANC presence in Maputo was acceptable to South Africa. Agreement was then reached and the Accord signed on 16 March 1984.

#### POST NKOMATI

The operative clauses of the Accord explicitly forbid each of the 'High Contracting Parties' from allowing their territory to be used for any form of military activity by any group directed against the other party. However, the Accord does not oblige Mozambique to expel any ANC personnel as long as they do not carry on activities linked to the armed struggle.

Nevertheless, Mozambican authorities have implemented the Accord with a vigour far beyond the letter of the agreement. The reasons for this are not clear. There may well be secret clauses to the agreement and there are certainly powerful South African pressures on Mozambique through the Joint Security Commission set up by the Accord. The Mozambican authorities appear eager to be seen to be implementing their side of the bargain in the hope of putting pressure on the other party. South Africa however has patently not acted with anything like the same rigour in controlling MNR activities.

Since 16 March FRELIMO has embarked on an intense campaign to sell the Accord to the Mozambican people. All decisions leading up to the Accord had been secret, and came as a shock to many Mozambicans. This campaign has involved numerous public meetings, a 'Solemn Act of Homage' to President Machel, the revival of nation-wide 'political study' of Machel's speeches on the issue. The Central Committee and the People's Assembly have been called upon to endorse and applaud the fait accompli.

The campaign's central theme represents the Nkomati Accord as a victory for Mozambique and a defeat for South Africa. Official word has it that the imperialist powers were forced to recognise that the People's Republic of Mozambique was a sovereign state whose leaders took their own decisions independent of 'superpower pressures'. The militarists in Pretoria had been forced to abandon their attempt to

overthrow the FRELIMO government and to retreat from their militaristic 'destabilisation strategy'.

FRELIMO on the other hand was said not to have abandoned any of its fundamental principles. The Accord was depicted as the culmination of FRELIMO's twenty year 'socialist policy of peace'. The government could now destroy the MNR and concentrate its energies on economic recovery under the slogan of 'peace and production'.

The Nkomati Accord is clearly not a victory for a revolutionary Mozambique. However, if South Africa implements its side of the bargain the Accord frees Mozambique from South African military assault. The Mozambican authorities have gained, but at the cost of conceding to most of South Africa's major demands. Pretoria is in this sense clearly the major beneficiary of the Accord.

By the end of 1982, South Africa had defined a clear set of objectives which for good reason fell somewhat short of overthrowing a FRELIMO government. These reasons were well stated by Deon Geldenhuys, one of South Africa's academic theoreticians; 'Assuming that South Africa is either engaged in destabilising Mozambique or contemplating it, several objectives are readily discernible. First and foremost, South Africa would want

FRELIMO to abandon its active support for the ANC, which means denying it sanctuary. A more ambitious objective would be to influence Mozambique to loosen, if not cut its close ties, particularly in the military field, with communist powers. South Africa would also welcome Mozambique toning down its condemnation of the Republic. What Pretoria essentially desires is a friendly cooperative neighbour instead of a Marxist state threatening its security. To achieve these objectives, support for the MNR and the severe manipulation of economic ties are the two obvious means to employ. To talk of the MNR overthrowing FRELIMO or even forcing it into a compromise seems highly premature and indeed unrealistic. South Africa would therefore have to confine its objectives to changing political behaviour, not political structures'.

Since Nkomati, there have been numerous moves to tie Mozambique into closer dependence on South African capitalism. A trilateral agreement between Mozambique, South Africa and Portugal has been signed, covering the supply of electricity from the Cahora Bassa dam. This agreement provides for joint action by South Africa and Mozambique to protect the dam and its powerlines. Further agreements on the use of the Maputo



Some light relief for Mozambican troops - but the MNR threat lingers on

port and an increased labour quota for Mozambique on South African mines are likely.

There are also indications that some capitalists are considering making selected coordinated investments in Mozambique. A number of highly publicised visits by leading businessmen, such as David Rockefeller and Tiny Rowland, and a smaller number of actual investment proposals have been made. Some indication of the pattern of future approaches towards Mozambique has already emerged. Any substantial foreign investment inflow will depend on a substantial 'improvement in the investment climate' as was made clear by Rockefeller during his visit. Such investment will be confined to defined sectors - tourism, transport and related services, and agri-business projects producing for export on the land of dismembered state farms. Pik Botha is reported to have urged diplomats from the United States, West Germany, Britain, France Canada, Italy and Japan to 'involve themselves in greater development efforts in Mozambique ... The matching of political expectations with economic progress is one of the most pressing needs facing both Pretoria and Maputo in the wake of the Nkomati Accord'. He also stressed that 'South Africa had begun its own initiative to coordinate domestic private sector investment interest in Mozambique to assist the long and difficult path back to reestablishing the Mozambican economy'.

## PERSPECTIVES

Prospects for changes in the conditions which led Mozambique to seek an accommodation with South Africa are not bright. The debt situation is such that even if production levels were to recover rapidly, these would not be translated into equivalent rises in the living standards of the Mozambican people. This has been implicitly acknowledged in an official document distributed by the National Planning Commission to western embassies. Even if exports were to reach record levels in the next two years and a debt rescheduling favourable to Mozambique were negotiated, a reduction in the Balance of Payments deficit would be dependent on holding the level of imports at roughly current levels. Moreover, there are grave production

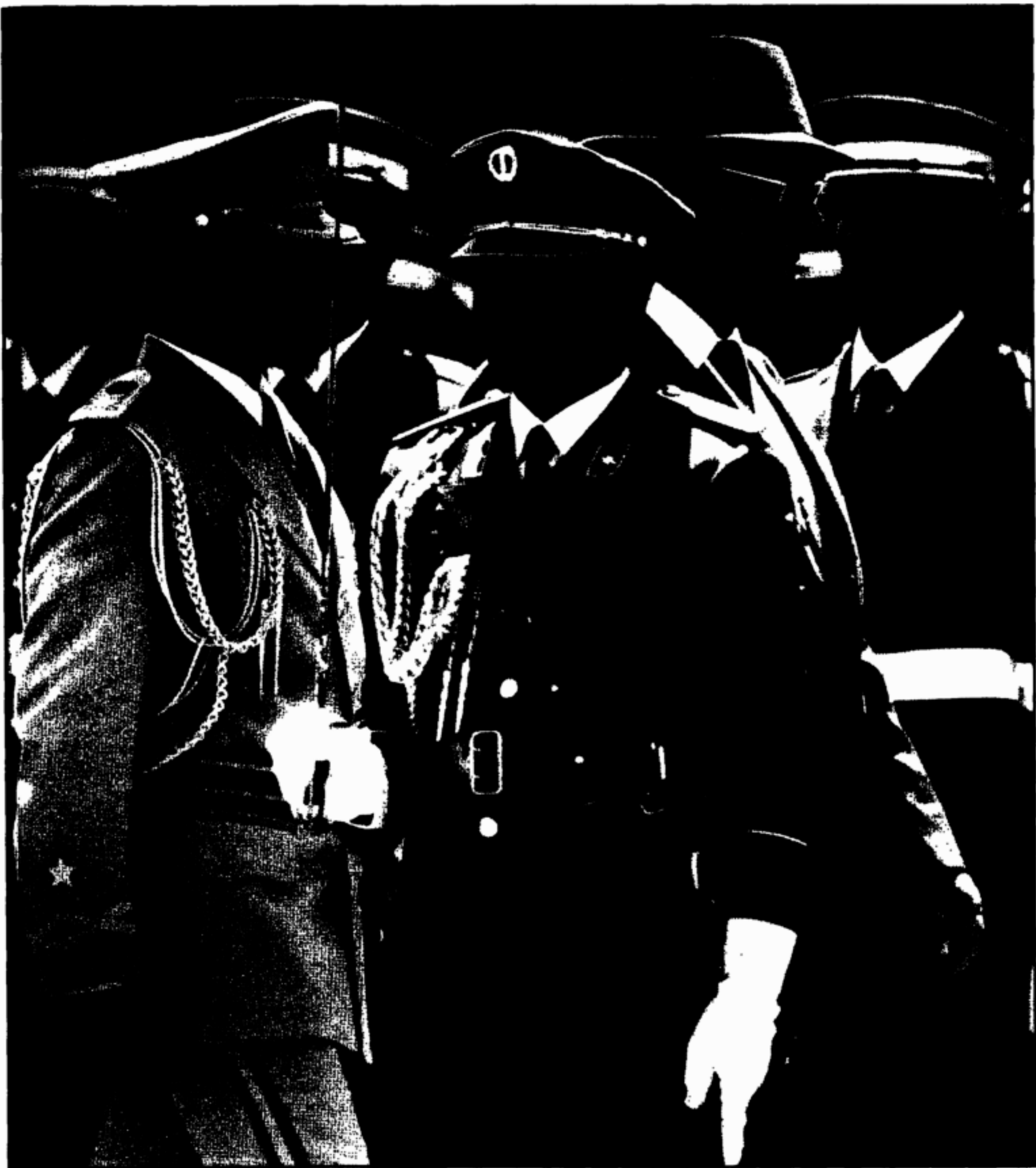
problems to be solved, particularly in the state sector, which according to calculations by the Ministry of Finance, recorded a combined deficit of nearly USD 500 million in 1983.

FRELIMO response to this crisis has involved a retreat from state and cooperative forms of property. Kulaks, small private capital and foreign multinationals are all being invited to submit proposals to take over the assets of collective enterprises in deficit. The 1984 state plan (PEC 84) indicates that drastic cuts in existing social services are being discussed if not planned. The document speaks of the need to end a 'spirit of freeloading' and proposes the introduction of charges for medical services, prescriptions and basic education. It further proposes a reduction in the total number of people employed in the state apparatus and a sharp rise in basic taxes. One of the major objectives of such measures is to reduce the money supply in Mozambique.

There are differences within FRELIMO as to how far this process should go. Some argue that such measures are a temporary retreat, necessary to attract private capital. Others appear to regard this as a longer term strategy, with a more permanent presence envisaged for the private sector and foreign capital. It is argued that western capital investment can be 'controlled' by a determined party leadership.

Yet there is little short term prospect of foreign capital rescuing Mozambique from its current economic woes. The Nkomati Accord has improved the investment climate in southern Africa, but the bulk of new foreign investments are likely to be concentrated in their traditional location in the region - South Africa. Since foreign investment coming to Mozambique is likely to be restricted to tourism, transport services and agri-business for export, there will be no immediate benefits to the mass of workers and peasants. A marked improvement in the security situation will also be necessary before most likely investors will commit funds to Mozambique. Despite the Accord, there seems to have been little real progress against MNR forces.

Increased foreign investment will generate new social pressures. For some class forces in the urban areas it is likely to provide access to presently



### The Nkomati Accord: peace for Mozambique - progress for socialism?

unavailable goods and services. These forces are a potential source of pressure for closer accommodation with private capital and South Africa.

Mozambique signed the Nkomati Accord to cut the ground from under the MNR. Since 16 March the MNR have escalated the terror campaign. Even if South Africa does cut off logistical support, attacks are likely to continue for some time as the MNR attack the only available sources of food, peasant

settlements, army and government depots. The MNR is not an 'alternative' movement to FRELIMO, but its continuing presence and activity does have an impact on the forms of political discussion. The central issue around the question of MNR activity is the ability of the FPLM to wage a politicised campaign against the bandits. In the words of FRELIMO's major slogan, at all levels within Mozambique, 'a luta continua'.

# Unions and the UDF

In WIP 29, General Workers Union general secretary, David Lewis, explained why the union would not affiliate to UDF. SAAWU's SISA NJIKELANA, writing in his personal capacity, disagrees with Lewis' argument. Njikelana questions whether trade unions will represent the interests of the working class any better than community organisations,

The state is preparing to introduce the new constitution in an attempt to co-opt sections of the oppressed majority and halt the advance being made in the struggle for a democratic South Africa. Given this, it is vital that every effort be made to strengthen and develop the democratic trade union movement, and to reject any attempts to isolate workers from the national democratic struggle.

With the above in mind, it is necessary to respond to the views of David Lewis, general secretary of the General Workers Union, on working class participation and the nature of this participation in the UDF. Special emphasis is placed on the role that should be played by the trade unions in the broad democratic front.

## CLASS ALLIANCES

Certain points need to be made with regard to the issue of class alliance which seem to underlie much of this debate. The debate has sometimes been reduced to the level of individual contributions without the dynamic participation of class forces themselves, especially the working class.

From our experience in struggle we know that individual or group political actions, in terms of what class position they adopt, do not mechanically correspond at every instance to the

ultimate interests of their class.

Rather, they assume positions which at any given moment, to some degree, depend on political, ideological and historical factors.

It is therefore important to note that continuing national oppression and its resultant limitations, insecurity and deprivation are continually felt by every class and group within the black community.

While the state is attempting, through various concessions, to co-opt groups and individuals within the black community, we must be careful in our endeavours to unite people for liberation, not to allow positions to be adopted which might push them unwittingly into the state's camp.

We also have to recognise that there are those whose experience or awareness of national oppression and economic exploitation will prevent them from going all the way in accepting co-option and/or collaboration with the state. The people must continually be encouraged to play their part in the struggle for national liberation. With this firmly in mind it becomes all the more important that the black working class, as the most determined and consistent force in the struggle for national liberation, must lead the way forward.

## WHY A BROAD DEMOCRATIC FRONT?

A front is an alliance of a broad spectrum of autonomous organisations of differing class origins who come together having identified a common political grievance. It is a forum, a rallying point, providing the structural form which guarantees the broadest possible unity in action of different social groups. It is a mechanism that

ensures the maximum concentration of energies and resources of organisations previously acting independently.

The representatives of affiliate organisations of a broad front democratically decide the direction of the front. For instance, if a union or any other organisation feels it cannot take part in a campaign, it would make its opposition or inability known. This threatened abstention, hence the weakening of the campaign, requires a compromise to be forged in order that the broadest unity in taking up the specific political issue at stake be secured. If no compromise is reached the front faces a dilemma and the campaign may fail.

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### **TRADE UNIONS: A PARTICULAR ORGANISATIONAL FORM**

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Much has been made of the 'critical' difference between a trade union as an organisational form and other forms of organisation. Trade unions, it is said, 'to all intent and purposes have identical structures'. This may be the case, but to follow it by asserting that 'this is, as far as we see it, what a mass-based organisation means', raises a number of questions.

It must be noted that the organisational form within which any mass based organisation operates is related to the specific conditions in which such an organisation develops. Likewise, the form of democracy adopted by such organisations is determined by those conditions within which the organisation operates. Any organisation which upholds the principles of democracy has to ensure that maximum participation of its members in decision making takes place. The concentration of workers within a single factory concern or industry creates the conditions under which unionists organise. All factories have a limited and fixed number of workers (normally), and the workers are concentrated within that environment for the period of each working day. As such this environment allows the establishment of formal structures, and established membership and regular contact among members of the organisation through the form of shop stewards. This particular form of mass based organisation, made possible by the conditions within which it operates, cannot be simply transposed

onto all other historical and environmental conditions.

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### **A MASS BASE?**

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Although it may be desirable that community, womens', student and other organisations establish formal and working structures, this is not always possible. It would be unreal to insist that a student organisation establish formal branch structures from classroom to classroom and school to school in an historical situation where student organisations are banned from the schools. For a community organisation to have a committee in each street may be the ideal, but under certain conditions this is extremely difficult to accomplish. To say as a result that a community organisation does not have a mass base is totally out of touch with the realities of the environment in which those organisers are working. Whatever the conditions, activists must nevertheless continue to build organisation if they are serious about advancing the struggle for fundamental change.

The mass base of organisations which are unable to issue membership cards, collect dues, have dues deducted, pay full time organisers and operate through formal structures, can only be assessed according to the support their programmes enjoy. Therefore it is primarily in the struggles waged by these organisations that the extent or lack of mass base can be assessed. Even formally structured organisations such as Buthelezi's Inkatha movement cannot be judged as mass based merely on the grounds of its annual membership figures. It is the organisation's ability to act and respond in struggle that exposes the degree of support, or the mass base, that it can call upon. In considering the question of organisational form and its validity or lack thereof, it is important to note Gramsci's warning not to fetishise any particular form of organisation, but to adapt to the terrain offered by reality.

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### **WORKING CLASS ORGANISATION**

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Union organisation has historically been a tremendous step forward for the

working class. The emergence of union organisation has created and solidified workers unity, and by spreading organisational experience has advanced the cause of working class organisation. The experience gained through economic struggles serves to: raise workers' consciousness, develop organisational ability, and teach the value of unity and united action.

It is here that the question of the relationship between trade unions and the working class needs to be considered. It seems that there is a tendency to conflate the definition of the working class as a class with that of trade union membership, and hence to see trade unions as the only true form of working class organisation. This tendency emphasises the distinction between trade unions, which are characterised as single-class organisations, and other organisations, which are characterised as multi-class organisations and hence not working class organisations.

Although it is recognised that unions do have other elements within them which can 'influence the mandate that is given', it is asserted that they will always 'represent the views of their members'. Again it is accepted that 'unions will inevitably be organisations that incorporate a great diversity of political views, and... members with militant political views, and...members with fairly conservative political views'. And yet it is asserted that 'workers' and by inference the trade unions themselves 'must have a special status in multi-class organisations'.

This implied claim by certain trade union leadership to 'special status' within multi-class organisation needs to be carefully examined.

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#### **OTHER FORMS OF WORKING CLASS ORGANISATION**

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It is questionable whether trade unions, with their accepted ambiguities, will represent the interests of the working class any better or more thoroughly than community organisations based within the residential areas of the same workers who are members of trade unions.

To conflate the working class with

union membership, is to confine the membership of the working class to union membership only, to the exclusion of dependants (husbands, wives, elderly parents and children) of those union members. Non-unionised workers and the unemployed constitute a vast portion of the working class. The community, women's, student, youth and other organisations based within working class communities are also in a position to express the views of the working class and are also legitimate organisations of the working class.

It is true that these other mass organisations will include other elements who often participate in the leadership and as activists. But this level of activists, often of petty bourgeois (and sometimes even bourgeois) origins and backgrounds, exists both in the mass organisations and in the trade union movement.

The distinction between trade union struggles and struggles engaged in by other mass based organisations has tended to be exaggerated in an attempt to show that the economic struggles waged by the unions are far more real and working class in nature than other mass based struggles. How real is this distinction within the context of the historical conditions imposed by the apartheid system? Are workers' struggles for higher wages that unrelated to rent or bus boycotts? Even those community and other struggles which are not so clearly economically based, such as those waged in the schools for a free and better education system, are issues which directly affect the working class. These issues link the community based and often more political struggles directly to the economic struggles being waged by the unions. Then the broad democratic front which takes up these wider struggles undoubtedly represents the interests of the working class to the extent that the working class must combine economic struggle with political struggle. It must be recognised that the economic struggle cannot be successfully conducted on a large scale if workers have not won elementary political rights such as the freedom to organise without the threat of bannings, detentions and the violent breaking of strikes. Although some of these struggles have been won over the last few years, these areas still remain contested terrain.



## **TRADE UNIONS AND THE BROAD DEMOCRATIC FRONT**

What is the role of trade unions in relation to the UDF and its affiliate organisations?

The starting point of any programme aimed at securing fundamental changes in society, must be an understanding of who the main enemy is, and which is the principal social grouping and its allies on the side of the struggle for such fundamental social change. Looking to other revolutionary experiences, such as those in Vietnam and Nicaragua, shows us that the progressive forces, unlike the 'left' sectarians, drew the broad strata of the population into the revolutionary struggle; and had to struggle for leadership of the democratic organisations of the peasants, small shop owners, professionals, artisans, students and other petty bourgeois strata. In these experiences, the working class did not become the leading force of the broad democratic front spontaneously, nor by demanding that 'workers must have the opportunity to lead the pace and style and tone and language - in fact the whole discourse - of the organisation'.

The mere presence of the union, or of individual members of the unions who are 'encouraged' to take part in the broad democratic front, is not going to guarantee that the front expresses the view of the working class or has working class leadership. Unions, by the very nature of their organisational forms and activity are not, and cannot be, political parties of the working class. As such, they cannot demand to lead the broad democratic front, for as it is

argued above, the working class is not reduceable to trade unions, and trade unions do not necessarily express the views of the working class. Do we want to say that Lucy Mvubelo's Garment Workers' Union expresses the views of the working class?

The only way the working class can lead the broad democratic front as learnt in the experiences of other struggles, is through active participation within the organisations and structures of the broad democratic front.

The responsibility of the union leadership in this situation, if it has the interests of the working class at heart, demands of them that they lead the union's membership into the broad democratic front and into active participation within all its structures (regardless of their imperfections); to struggle for and ensure maximum working class participation; and finally working class (not just union) leadership of the broad democratic front. ■

**Sisa Njikelana - It is questionable whether trade unions will represent the working class any better than community organisations. To conflate the working class with union membership is to limit the definition of the working class to trade union membership.**

# Labour Action

## Inkatha's new labour wing

The Natal/KwaZulu-based National Sugar Refining and Allied Industries Employees' Union (NASARAIEU) affiliated to Inkatha in mid-May, becoming Inkatha's first affiliate union member. It claims a paid up membership of 25 000 and has developed into something of a general union, although its origin and initial activity was in the sugar industry of the Natal coast. Its public relations officer, Mr. BAM Dlamuka, said that the 'union's scope has grown so tremendously' that the union is now active in the building, steel, food distribution and maize-milling industries, as well as in the sugar milling sector. The union's general secretary, Mr Selbey Nsibande, said that it went without saying that the union was to be the 'labour wing of Inkatha'.

The union was formed in early 1980, and was registered with the Department of Manpower in November of that year. It seems to have originated in the management created 'mill councils' of the sugar milling industry. Out of these liaison committee type structures a 'black caucus body' developed, composed of two delegates from each sugar mill, who met regularly, and they established the union in 1980. These delegates formed themselves into the National Executive Committee of the union. Since its formation, the union has concluded 21 recognition agreements with companies and claims that a further 35 are in the pipeline. Amongst the companies it has organised, are the Apex foundry at Isithebe in KwaZulu, the Natal based National Food Distributors, Huletts Engineering at Mount Edgecombe, Vianini Pipes (which manufactures concrete pipes for bridges and drains and which is part of the Everite group), Delta Manufacturing in Nelspruit, and Vickers Lenning at Isithebe, with which it is currently negotiating a

recognition agreement. The union has seven full-time organisers and three officials. Its PRO explains its affiliation to Inkatha in terms of its admiration for the organisation's anti-disinvestment stance. Furthermore it claims that the majority of its members are also paid up members of Inkatha. A seat for NASARAIEU on Inkatha's Central Committee is in the pipeline.

The affiliation of NASARAIEU to Inkatha was facilitated by KwaZulu's Industrial Conciliation Amendment Act (No 10 of 1981). While KwaZulu's labour legislation is similar to that operating in 'white areas', a major difference is that it does not prohibit unions from joining a political party or assisting it. Nor does it prevent unions from influencing its members with the object of 'assisting any political party or candidate for election to any office or any position in a political party or to any legislative body established by any law'. KwaZulu also allows unions to establish their head offices outside KwaZulu.

Addressing the Union's representatives at Esikhawini on 13 May, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, president of Inkatha, referred to NASARAIEU and Inkatha as 'natural allies in the struggle for liberation' and told the union that it could have a seat on Inkatha's Central Committee. Inkatha, he said, would not interfere with the union or demand the right to tell it what to do. 'Trade unions cannot run Inkatha', he said, 'and Inkatha cannot run the trade unions, but together we can stand shoulder to shoulder and march into the future to dominate over racism and the politics of apartheid.'

In a significant memorandum for discussions with the American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organisations (AFL-CIO) in

Geneva in June 1983, Chief Buthelezi said that some formal interaction between Inkatha and trade unions was needed. Inkatha would like to see trade union interests represented on its Central Committee, he said, to influence its decision making. He hoped that in due course, trade unions would 'reciprocate and establish possibilities for Inkatha's presence on their decision making bodies'. This would enable effective planning of strategies that would mount the 'right degree of pressure' on industrialists to force them to discharge their 'wider responsibilities'. He suggested the use of the Inkatha Institute as a base from which negotiations on a course of action serving the joint interests of the trade union movement and Inkatha could proceed.

Inkatha, although portraying itself as a 'liberation' movement of 'workers and peasants', has increasingly identified itself with reformist business interests, and become preoccupied with 'stability' within the country. In line with this, it portrays the interests of the working class as synonymous with the attainment of economic benefits, not the transformation of the present social system but a fairer share of its product for blacks, and the reform of its political relationships. Addressing NASARAIEU on 13 May, Chief Buthelezi said that 'every step that every black man, woman or child takes to improve his or her lot is a step taken by the nation. Those of us who are employed in

factories, seek only the right to labour honestly and the right to be promoted to positions which we ourselves can hold with honour. We seek opportunities for advancement and in this vital advancement of black workers, trade unionists play a fundamentally important role.'

Inkatha perceives its role in industrial relations as being a conciliatory, mediating one. In the words of KwaZulu's chief labour officer, Mr ZA Khanyile (addressing FOSATU's Northern Natal branch in February 1982) 'The KwaZulu government supports the formation of trade unions because it believes that harmonious relationships will be guaranteed by the cooperation of industrialists and trade unionists.' He affirmed the KwaZulu authorities' commitment to the 'free enterprise system under which every worker through his trade union, may decide and negotiate under what conditions his labour and skills are offered.'

The significance of the affiliation of NASARAIEU to Inkatha, must be assessed against this background of Inkatha's attitude to organised labour, where trade unions are envisaged as part of a 'liberation' strategy in which blacks will fight to be offered the 'full benefits' of the 'free enterprise' system - that is, extended political rights and the improvement of the bargaining position of blacks in the capitalist labour market.

Colleen McCaul

## RAWU and CLOWU: controversial twins

Two new trade unions are hitting the headlines in Cape Town. The Retail and Allied Workers' Union (RAWU) and the Clothing Workers' Union (CLOWU).

Both unions are controversial in that they organise in industries in which registered unions have a long-established presence. While all progressive trade unionists recognise the faults of the older unions, several have criticised the formation of RAWU and CLOWU as premature, believing that workers should be organised to challenge reactionary unions from within rather than in a separate union.

RAWU and CLOWU are distinguished from the 'progressive trade unions' in Cape

Town (FOSATU unions, Cape Town Municipal Workers Association (CTMWA), the General Workers Union (GWU), and the Food and Canning Workers' Union (FCWU)), by their youth (they are not involved in the unity talks) and by their very close links with 'community organisation' in Cape Town. Both attended the UDF 'May Day' rally on 6 May and not the May Day rally organised by the other trade unions.

RAWU and CLOWU have begun to have an impact on the trade union scene in Cape Town which deserves attention. RAWU was formed little more than a year ago to organise shop and distribution workers in Cape Town. It originated from a

series of disputes within the National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers (NUDAW) - which is an old union registered for whites and coloureds. A group of about 300 workers and organisers left this union and attempted to join up with the Commercial Catering and Allied Workers' Union (CCAWUSA). They were unable to do this as CCAWUSA only admits African workers as members under its constitution. Such a narrow racial definition to membership appears not to hamper the organisation of shop workers on the Witwatersrand but it is absurd in Cape Town where coloured workers far outnumber African workers.

### Retail and Allied Workers Union

RAWU was formed as a non-racial union. Its organisers state their belief that there is a need for a national union in the retail trade that is non-racial.

RAWU's major success has come in the organisation of dairy workers. A series of stoppages and short strikes followed by speedy settlements has gained the union three recognition agreements (there are four major dairies in Cape Town). Dairy workers make up the majority of the membership of the union which stands at just over 2 000.

RAWU functioned under a steering committee until June when an executive, a controlling committee and officials were elected at its first AGM. The union is building up organisation at Grand Bazaars (a large chain store), and has 17 functioning factory committees.

RAWU has encountered an enormous suspicion of trade unionism amongst coloured workers. Many have in the past paid subscriptions to unions and found this did not lead to any change in their conditions. NUDAW for example, has a stop-order and access agreement with several concerns, but little effective organisation. NUDAW's good relations with employers sometimes extends to workers signing stop-order forms as a condition of employment. 'Coloured workers are disorganised by reactionary unions', said RAWU general secretary, Alan Roberts. 'They are suspicious that unions are just there to rip them off'. RAWU therefore does not begin to collect regular subscriptions from workers until it has sufficient members to allow a functioning factory committee in a concern. Suspicious or NUDAW oriented

workers can then not accuse RAWU of simply collecting money. Members can see the real presence of the union in the factory or shop.

### Clothing Workers Union

CLOWU was formed at the end of last year to organise workers in Cape Town's biggest industry. There are 60 000 garment workers, mainly coloured women, employed in over 400 factories. The workers are all members of the giant Garment Workers Union of the Western Province (GWU-WP) which has a closed shop agreement with employers. This union, a reactionary stalwart of TUCSA, promotes itself as the provider of a wide range of impressive looking, but really mediocre, benefits. It regularly negotiates appalling wages (currently starting at R40 per week). The union is rather like a family business. Father and son are the general secretaries and daughter also works there.

The GWU-WP is a formidable opponent. In the words of one manufacturer, the union has been 'in bed with the employers' since its formation 60 years ago. It has enormous financial resources. It is well experienced at dealing with dissidents. It forms part of the structures controlling and defusing worker discontent in the industry. It has never ever called or supported a strike. The union serves to disorganise workers.

CLOWU has tried to take the Garment Workers' Union by storm. In its brief nine month existence, it has issued over 125 000 pamphlets and newsletters attacking the GWU-WP and agitating on wage, price, housing and transport issues. This pamphlet onslaught has had an electric effect on the 'old union', as CLOWU calls it. GWU-WP has issued direct replies to CLOWU called FACTS (Fair and Accurate Comment based on Truth and Sincerity) and the front page of every issue of the weekly newspaper Clothesline has been filled with skillfully written rhetoric and tough talk against 'the outsiders'. The GWU-WP portrays CLOWU as ignorant outsiders who know nothing of the industry and have political motives behind their pretended concern for the workers. CLOWU made the mistake of using the University SRC kombi (big signs on the doors saying 'Student Affairs Administration') in its early organisation and this lent credence to the attacks of the GWU-WP.

WIP

A striking worker at Cape Underwear gives GWU-WP's Cedric Petersen a piece of her mind



Beyond this battle of words and publicity, CLOWU has twice jabbed through chinks in the GWU-WP armour. Late last year a factory fired three workers who were recruiting for CLOWU. The union threatened an Industrial Court action for unfair dismissal. The three workers were immediately re-employed and paid their wages for the time they had been off work. In addition the factory issued a letter to each worker saying that it had no objection to workers joining any union they wanted to.

In April this year CLOWU assisted a group of 137 workers at the Cape Underwear factory who came out on strike in support of a R10 per week wage demand. This strike followed an intensive CLOWU pamphletting campaign protesting at low wages and rising prices. The employers responded to the workers' grievances (which were reflected in the pamphlets, in several work stoppages and in the strike) by bringing forward and increasing the wage increments due in June under the industrial council agreement. CLOWU assisted the striking workers to negotiate an agreement with their employers for all to be re-employed. The workers would receive an effective R5 per week increase and workers agreed to raise no further wage demands until the end of the year. The GWU-WP was seen at this factory regularly just before and during the strike and gave the workers no assistance or advice beyond that they should be satisfied with the wages the registered union had negotiated for them.

Once the strike began GWU-WP officials became the target of angry slanging matches and arguments outside the gates. It is understood that they were asked by the management not to come to the factory as their presence 'provoked unrest' amongst the workers not on strike.

Since the strike, CLOWU has toned down its broad publicity campaign 'to get the new union known' and is now organising intensively in just a few factories. The union has a real problem in the closed shop system. Workers already pay R2,65 to the GWU-WP every week and can't be expected to pay CLOWU subscriptions as well. Until they achieve a majority membership in one factory they can't hope to challenge the closed shop. Even then this involves complications as there is a benefit package included in the GWU-WP subscription which workers may be reluctant to abandon. Also it is unclear how the union would negotiate wages outside the industrial council.

At present these are all academic questions. CLOWU is still a very young union. It is controlled by an interim committee and has yet to have its first AGM. Its paid organisers all work for R54 per week, the wage paid to a female machinist.

Whatever the controversy surrounding their origins and tactics, both RAWU and CLOWU represent a new effort to challenge the disorganisation of workers in reactionary unions in Cape Town.

**Martin Nicol**

# NUM vs the Chamber of Mines

By 6 July, after a month and a half of talks and strikes, wage negotiations between the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the Chamber of Mines remained deadlocked.

The NUM, which claims to have over 70 000 members in the coal and gold mining industries demanded that this years increases for mineworkers should provide for a living wage. Miners wages ranged from R129 a month for unskilled workers to R290 a month for semi skilled workers. The NUM demanded 60% and 40% increases for these two categories respectively. The union also demanded that the wage gap between black and white miners be narrowed. White miners often earn more than R900 a month.

After the first set of talks between the NUM and the Chamber collapsed, the NUM organised a conference to discuss their wage demands. The NUM also warned the Chamber of the possibility of labour unrest if they could not come to an agreement satisfactory to workers.

The conference mandated the NUM to drop the minimum acceptable increase to 25%. The Chamber however, only offered increases of between 9,5% and 10,9%. The union also rejected the Chambers' final offer for gold mine workers which ranged from an increase of 14,4% for surface workers to 13,3% for underground workers. The union further rejected the proposed fringe benefits of service increments and overtime and shift allowances on the basis that these offers did not meet union demands and that only a small proportion of workers would benefit. In some mines workers already had better benefits than those proposed.

## Possible first legal strike

The NUM declared a dispute with the Chamber of Mines, charging them with unfair labour practice for failing to offer an increase at the opening meeting of the wage talks. On 20 June NUM extended the dispute to include black coal miners. The NUM action meant that for the first time, the Chamber had to consider the possibility of facing a legal strike by mineworkers. The union requested that the Chamber should not go ahead with unilateral wage increases until an

agreement could be reached. The Chamber however, was set on implementing increases, arguing that the NUM did not represent the majority of mineworkers and that workers were expecting the July increase.

On 25 June the first of a number of strikes over the proposed increases occurred. 1700 workers at the Coronation colliery near Vryheid went on strike. Workers returned to work but only after violent confrontation with mine officials, local white miners and the police. A number of workers were shot and injured and one worker was killed by an 'unknown gunman'. Teargas was used to disperse groups of workers and 50 workers were subsequently arrested on allegations of public violence.

Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, general secretary of the NUM, said that the strike was just the beginning of the mineworkers struggle for a living wage, and that employers would increasingly be faced with similar unrest unless they were prepared to negotiate a satisfactory settlement. The Chamber of Mines agreed to meet with the NUM, but they were only prepared to discuss ways of avoiding further labour unrest and were not prepared to re-open wage negotiations. The Chamber said that their proposed increases were ahead of the increasing cost of living and that they compared favourably with wage increases in other industries. The NUM refused to negotiate on these terms, since the wage increases were the issue which had sparked the worker actions and nothing could be resolved until the issue of wage increases was settled. Also they only had a mandate from their membership for wage negotiations.

## More stoppages

More stoppages occurred in early July. On 3 July over 2000 workers at the Goedehoop and Kriel collieries in the Eastern Transvaal downed tools. They returned to work the next day, but discussions over wages between the mineworkers, NUM and management continued.

On 5 July, 300 black mineworkers at the Rand Mines Douglas colliery near Witbank went on strike. Management of

Barlow Rand Mining Division said that the dispute was a worker/management problem and that the union was not needed since it was 'not representative'. Management questioned the motivations behind the strike, and said that workers wanting to return to work had been prevented from doing so by 'intimidators'. However, management attempts to act against the 'intimidators', 'only unified the workforce'. Workers were presented with

an ultimatum to return to work or to face dismissal. NUM general secretary, Cyril Ramaphosa visited the mine and advised workers to return to work. Ramaphosa said that the union was committed to using the legal channels and only wanted their members to come out once a legal strike was declared. But, he said, the strike was the result of the 'type of anger we warned the Chamber of Mines about'.

## TRANSVAAL

**Company:** Auto Cables  
**Date:** 25 April  
**Workers:** 300 - 400  
**Union:** Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU)

Strikers downed tools because they believed that one of their colleagues had been dismissed as a result of his trade union activities. MAWU has been involved in organising workers at this company for some time, but management has consistently refused to hold talks with the union. Management's response to the stoppage was to fire all those on strike. It claims that workers refused to leave company premises and were consequently arrested for trespassing. Two MAWU officials who were at the factory at the time had their briefcases searched by police, and one was ordered to produce his pass.

The following day, the arrested workers appeared in court, and bail was set at R100 each. MAWU said it would be unable to raise the R176 000 needed to pay bail, and that the workers would have to remain in prison until 25 June, when the trial was due to begin.

In this case, the workers are charged with trespassing on company property. According to management, the workers were sacked for refusing to return to work, despite repeated warnings. They were arrested for failing to leave company premises when ordered to do so.

MAWU claims that the workers were arrested only three hours after the strike began. The union has also stated that it is investigating claims by workers that they were beaten with sjamboks and batons by riot police inside the factory.

Bail for the arrested workers was in fact raised 'quite by accident',

according to Bernie Fanaroff, a MAWU organiser. He said that the fact that management had confined the workers to prison for merely withdrawing their labour in protest against an arbitrary dismissal was despicable.

**Company:** Colgate Palmolive (Boksburg)  
**Date:** 24 May  
**Workers:** About 300  
**Union:** Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU)

Workers downed tools in protest against management's offer of a 10c an hour increase. After negotiations with the union, management offered a minimum hourly wage of R2,60. This involved increases of between 32c and 40c an hour - three times more than management's original offer. Leave benefits, shift allowances and public holiday pay were also increased as a result of the negotiations.

**Company:** Dunlop Industrial Products (Benoni)  
**Date:** 26-27 April  
**Workers:** 650  
**Union:** CWIU

Members of the CWIU employed by this company struck in support of higher wages. They demanded a 35c an hour increase from 1 May. This was in response to Dunlop's offer of an 18c hourly increase from the beginning of June. Although neither the union nor management were prepared to compromise, striking workers returned to work. Dunlop's director warned workers that if there was further strike action, there would be no further negotiations.

According to a dismissal clause agreed upon by management and the union, management is prevented from

dismissing workers 36 hours after the start of a strike. The company interpreted this as an opportunity to dismiss workers if they struck again during this dispute. The union believed the clause to mean that workers could return to work and then strike again. In the event of this taking place, the company was not legally entitled to dismiss the workers, according to the union.

However, further strike action did not occur. The CWIU and Dunlop negotiated a R2,00 minimum hourly wage with a further increase in November. Workers at Dunlop accepted this and the dispute has been settled.

**Company:** Freight Forwarding (City Deep)  
**Date:** 17 May  
**Workers:** ?  
**Union:** Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU)

TGWU members employed by this company refused to work as they claimed they were having to do the tasks of two people, and were not being given new assistants. People leaving the company or being fired were not replaced, and workers found that they were driving trucks as well as offloading when they reached their destination. The trucks were also overloaded.

During the stoppage, workers demonstrated to management how they were having to work, and management agreed to ensure that every truck had a driver and two assistants in the future.

A union official said that the strike was a victory for workers who had fought management attempts to get them to work harder without extra pay. She said that while management called this 'improved productivity', the union called it 'extra exploitation'.

On the same day, workers at **Freight Services** at Jan Smuts Airport also stopped work. Their grievance was against ill-treatment by a foreman, and related specifically to an incident where he swore at some of the workers. An investigation resulted in the foreman's suspension for three days, and he was issued with a final warning by management.

**Company:** GEC Traction Signal Company  
**Date:** 23 May  
**Workers:** 250  
**Union:** MAWU

Management dismissed the entire workforce when 250 workers refused to work in protest against the sacking of three MAWU shop stewards. The shop stewards had been physically forced out of the company premises following a deadlock between MAWU and the company over the union's recognition. Management alleged that the stewards had been dismissed due to 'an infringement of procedure'. The stewards attempted to inform the workers of their dismissal while they were being escorted from the premises.

It was alleged that a worker was assaulted during the strike.

**Company:** Industrial Lead Works  
**Date:** 7 May  
**Workers:** 400  
**Union:** General and Allied Workers Union (GAWU)

A brief stoppage at this firm led to management agreeing to negotiate a recognition agreement with GAWU. The union claims majority representation at the firm, and management has agreed to negotiate once the union had provided proof of its representivity. Workers downed tools in the early morning demanding that management recognise the GAWU shop stewards at the plant, and that the minimum hourly wage be raised to R2,50. They returned to work at 2pm the same day, after agreement was reached. Management undertook not to deduct wages for time lost during this brief work stoppage.

**Company:** Johannesburg hotel strikes at the Carlton, Landdrost, Rand International, Southern Suns Airport Hotel, Sandton Sun and Park Lane  
**Date:** 11 May  
**Workers:** 550  
**Union:** Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (CCAWUSA)

Dissatisfaction over wages sparked off a strike by CCAWUSA members, which spread to seven Witwatersrand hotels. Wages for whites and coloureds in the hotel trade were settled after three mediation sessions at the Industrial Council for the Hotel and Liquor Trade shortly before the strike. A minimum wage of R218 for whites and coloureds



was agreed upon at the Industrial Council. Following the outcome of these talks, CCAWUSA called on management to negotiate a R350 minimum monthly wage. The minimum laid down by the industry is R196 per month.

Go-slows and strikes broke out on 11 May with the workers supporting the demand for a R350 minimum monthly wage. Workers also demanded that hotels form an industry-wide bargaining unit to negotiate outside the industrial council system. Several hotels responded by dismissing striking workers three days after the start of the strike. The largest number of workers dismissed was at the Southern Sun's Sandton hotel, where 175 workers were sacked.

Management said they had taken this action because workers refused to return to work once negotiations had begun. According to Southern Sun's management, demands for industry-level bargaining with other Johannesburg hotels was in conflict with their recognition agreement with CCAWUSA, providing for company bargaining. This was denied by the union, which said it had no such agreement with management.

A week after the strike began, negotiations were still continuing. High on the agenda was the fate of the dismissed workers. During the negotiations, management refused to reinstate a total of 197 workers dismissed from the Sandton Sun, Rand International and Landdrost hotels. The workers were, however, offered restraint from further dismissals if they returned to work on 16 May: according to company figures, about 300 striking workers had not been dismissed.

Other proposals made by management during the talks were that the union withdraw its demands for industrial wage talks outside the industrial council; that a certain union official be reassigned within the union and that he no longer play an active role in the organisation of Sun employees; and that recognition talks with Southern Sun commence.

Workers agreed to end their week-long strike by either accepting their jobs back or being paid out. Southern Sun workers collected their pay. CCAWUSA refused to endorse these dismissals, and claimed that management had 'dictated' the terms of the agreement, refusing to look at CCAWUSA's counter proposals.

**Company:** Jabula Foods (Springs)  
**Date:** 23 April  
**Workers:** About 300  
**Union:** Sweet, Food and Allied Workers Union (SFAWU)

The SFAWU negotiated with management for Easter Monday to be an unpaid holiday so that workers could return home to their families over the long weekend. Just as workers were about to leave, management issued a document stating that anyone not returning to work on Easter Monday would be disciplined.

Many of the mostly-migrant workers had made preparations to return to the rural areas for the weekend. The senior shop steward who was given the document said it would therefore be impossible to get the workers to report for work on Monday.

On Easter Monday few workers reported as the shop steward had predicted. On Tuesday, management fired two workers who had not reported in on Monday. The entire work-force responded by downing tools in sympathy. They returned the following day when the union said it would discuss the issue with management. Management initially refused to talk to the union, but eventually agreed to do this.

According to SFAWU president, Chris Dlamini, union representatives explained to Jabula management that their handling of this issue proved that the Premier Group, of which Jabula is a subsidiary, has a 'very negative attitude to trade unions'. He said management had clearly provoked the strike.

Unionists left the manager's office while he telephoned the company chairman. When they were called back, they were told that the workers were on strike again, and that they (the unionists) were to leave the premises. According to Dlamini, they were not even allowed to address the workers.

Management threatened striking workers with dismissal if they did not return to work. They were not given adequate time to return to their jobs, and were all fired. Legal action against the company has been taken by the union, on behalf of the dismissed workers.

**Company:** Medical University of South Africa (MEDUNSA)  
**Date:** 28 May  
**Workers:** 48  
**Union:** CCAWUSA  
Forty-eight workers downed tools

demanding that a colleague be reinstated. He had been dismissed because it was alleged that he had been responsible for food which had gone missing from the kitchen. The strike occurred in the students canteen, which is run by Fedics.

Fedics employed new workers to replace the strikers. MEDUNSA students supported the striking workers by refusing to eat in the canteen. In negotiations with Fedics, CCAWUSA demanded the reinstatement of the dismissed worker, and improved working conditions for all the workers. Management offered to reinstate the dismissed worker, but at another institution. Students refused to accept this and began a boycott of lectures. This led to management agreeing to reinstate the worker; to give back-dated increases to those who had not received rises in March, and to better uniforms and unpaid maternity leave.

**Company:** MRT Bartons (Boksburg)  
**Date:** 5 July  
**Workers:** About 600  
**Union:** Steel, Engineering and Allied Workers Union (SEAWU)

This was the first strike in protest against the Metal Industry's Industrial Council wage increases. Employers in the industry offered increases of 40c an hour for skilled, and 20c an hour for unskilled workers. The SEAWU signed an agreement to this effect at the Industrial Council, but indicated that it would be bargaining for more pay for their members at plant level. Workers at MRT Barton rejected the Industrial Council increase, and demanded increases that would provide them with a 'living wage'.

**Company:** Nissan, Magnis and Motorware plants (Rosslyn)  
**Date:** 27 June  
**Workers:** About 6 000  
**Union:** United African Motor and Allied Workers Union (UAMWU)

Nissan motor company and two of its sister companies were the scene of strikes by workers demanding a 75c across the board hourly wage increase. They demanded that the increases be granted across the board because they disapproved of being graded into different sections and being paid on that basis. The strike began on Thursday

27 June when wage talks deadlocked. Management had offered increases of between 8c and 10c an hour. The union demanded a 45c across the board hourly increase. The company improved their offer to 16c an hour. Most of the workers returned on 28 June but more than 1 000 workers at Nissan resisted pleas by the union to return to work.

Management said it was not prepared to negotiate until the total work-force had returned to work. Most of the workers returned, but the Nissan workers returned only to collect their pay. Those workers who had been paid out left the premises at 1-00pm. The way that their pay packets had been stamped led some of the workers to believe they may have been dismissed.

Workers accepted an offer by management of a 20c hourly increase. The union, which accepted the offer on 3 July, pointed out that it more than doubled management's initial offer which had led to the strike.

Another strike by motor workers in this area occurred the previous week. Employees at Bosal Garage Equipment struck, demanding a 20% across the board wage increase. The workers, also members of UAMWU, rejected management's offer of a 6% increase. The strikers were back at work by Friday 22 June pending further negotiations.

**Company:** Triomf Fertilisers (Potchefstroom)  
**Date:** 13 June  
**Workers:** 400  
**Union:** SA Chemical Workers Union (SACWU)

Police activity in a strike involving the entire work-force at this plant led to severe consequences for the workers - dismissal and criminal charges. Workers downed tools in sympathy with several of their fellow workers who had refused to undergo alcohol tests. Management issued workers with an ultimatum to return to work or be fired.

According to the union, police prevented workers from returning to work, so that they could not meet the return-to-work deadline. All were then dismissed.

The union also alleges that the company security officer alerted the police to 'intimidators'. Nineteen strikers were arrested and charged with intimidation. They were released on

R500 bail each. Six workers were later arrested in the company hostel for trespassing.

The union pointed out that the company security officer was the complainant in the Intimidation Act charges - an indication of his active co-operation with police. The company admitted that they had called the police during the strike, but denied being party to the arrests. When the case was heard at the end of June, all workers were acquitted because of lack of evidence.

**Company:** Unilever  
**Date:** 5 April  
**Workers:** 450 (according to management)  
1 000 (according to the union)  
**Union:** Food, Beverage and Allied Workers Union (FBAWU)

Workers at this firm struck for two hours against what a union source referred to as 'selective justice'. According to the union, a white manager was found having sex with a black employee. The woman was 'forced to resign', and no action was taken against the manager.

Over a month after the incident occurred, Unilever issued a statement to the effect that a white woman had been involved in a 'unsubstantiated personal incident involving a white male colleague', and had resigned 'of her own accord'. The statement denied that there had been any 'black woman involved in sex across the colour line', and stated that 'no-one was harassed or forced to resign'.

#### **N A T A L**

**Company:** Blaikie Johnstone (Mobeni)  
**Date:** 14 May  
**Workers:** 500  
**Union:** -

A wage strike was staged at this building materials merchant. Workers demanded increases because of the hike in the General Sales Tax introduced at the beginning of July. Workers had been granted a R2,80 weekly increase prior to the strike, but were demanding a R20 across-the-board increase. A union spokesman said that their minimum weekly wage of R56,80 was largely spent on foodstuffs and that the latest increase in GST was going to erode buying power, leaving very little over for basic foodstuffs.

Striking workers returned to work the following day, having been unable to secure their desired increase.

**Company:** Edendale Hospital (KwaZulu)  
**Date:** June 1984  
**Workers:** 16  
**Union:** -

Sixteen black doctors employed at this hospital refused to work overtime until they had been paid their arrear salaries. According to KwaZulu's secretary of health, the salaries had been corrected and the delay had been caused by the processing of the details by a computer. Meanwhile, white doctors came in to fill the overtime gap caused by the ban on overtime.

Black doctors at Edendale are paid by the KwaZulu administration, while whites are paid by the department of health. White doctors received their increases several months ago. The hospital superintendent said that if black doctors continued to refuse overtime work, he would have to close wards and turn away emergency cases.

**Company:** Hart Ltd  
**Date:** 2 May  
**Workers:** About 700  
**Union:** MAWU

Hart Ltd's refusal to negotiate wage and work conditions outside the industrial council led to a stoppage at the company. Workers returned to work later the same day. MAWU said, however that talks held during the strike were not satisfactory and warned of further unrest.

The dispute centres around the fact that most metal companies will only negotiate wages at industrial council level. MAWU believes that although the union is a member of the industrial council for the industry, it has the right to negotiate pay directly with companies where it has majority representation.

**Company:** Keeley Forwarding  
**Date:** 7 May  
**Workers:** 80 - 100  
**Union:** General Workers Union

Two employees at this concern were dismissed, allegedly for union activities. This sparked off a strike by stevedores. The two dismissed were fired on Friday, but returned to work

on Monday. When they were told their jobs were not available to them, other workers struck in protest. Management denied the strike had occurred, saying that while workers were not at their work positions, they were just discussing the dismissals.

Nevertheless, reports were that cargo handling on three ships in the Durban harbour came to a standstill for about ten hours during the stevedore strike. The strike was called off after negotiations between management and the union resulted in the reinstatement of the dismissed workers. It was also agreed that management would negotiate wages and conditions of service. An allegation, denied by management, was that workers had been receiving less than R1,00 an hour wages prior to the strike.

**Company:** Kempar and seven factories in the Isithebe area.

**Date:** End of April

**Workers:** ?

**Union:** MAWU

Workers, represented by their shop stewards, informed management that there had been reports that an 'induna' was forcing women workers to have sex with him. Management refused to fire the 'induna' and insisted that workers who were unhappy with him leave the company. An argument between some of the workers broke out when shop stewards reported management's attitude. The shop steward's chairman managed to stop the fight and persuaded workers to return to work. Police arrived half an hour later, accompanied by management, and arrested 18 workers.

The entire work-force downed tools, outraged at these arrests. Shop stewards were unable to reach a settlement, and seven Isithebe factories came out in sympathy. These strikes failed to bring about any change in management's attitude, and striking workers returned to the job.

One course of action open to MAWU would have been to take the issue to the Industrial Court. But the legal position of workers in the bantustans is ambiguous and MAWU is still investigating the position of its members in KwaZulu. The union is also considering action against the 'induna'.

**Company:** Mondi Paper (Merebank, Piet Retief, Springs)

**Date:** 18 April

**Workers:** 433

**Union:** Paper, Wood and Allied Workers Union (PWAU)

Wage negotiations between PWAU and Mondi have twice reached deadlock, with PWAU already having declared two disputes with the company. If negotiations reach deadlock three times, the union is entitled to call a legal strike or take legal action.

Workers staged a stoppage during the third round of negotiations in support of their union's demand: that Mondi bargain with PWAU outside of the pulp and paper industry's industrial council system. The industrial council wage increase negotiated in January provided a 13c hourly pay rise. PWAU is demanding a R3 minimum hourly wage, which is higher than the increase negotiated in the industrial council. Mondi refuses to bargain with PWAU unless it joins the industrial council and agrees to negotiate with other unions representing skilled workers. These unions, according to PWAU, represent only 10% of the work-force.

Thirty three workers struck at Piet Retief, 250 at Springs and 150 at Merebank. Springs and Piet Retief returned to work the same day. The Merebank workers decided they wanted a strike ballot held, when they heard that no future negotiations between PWAU and Mondi had been arranged, and that PWAU had agreed to negotiate alongside the other unions as an interim measure for this year.

PWAU has recently reconsidered its attitude towards participating in the industrial council. The issue was discussed at the shop stewards' council and the national executive decided in May to enter the industrial council.

A PWAU organiser said this did not imply that the union had given up the fight for plant-level negotiations. The organiser said PWAU would also insist that the union received more seats on the council than other unions.

PWAU said it had decided to join the industrial council talks because failure to do so would have resulted in an indefinite date for independent wage talks. Mondi had said it would not set a date for further wage talks until the union joined the council. Joining the council meant that PWAU

members would be represented in the council's wage negotiations for the first time in October. PWAU claims that 4 000 of its members are in the pulp and paper industry, which gives it three times the number of members other unions have on the council. PWAU has also won majority membership in five of the six paper mills in the Mondi group, which makes one half of South Africa's paper.

**Company:** Motorvia (Pinetown)  
**Date:** 7 - 11 May  
**Workers:** 300  
**Union:** Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU)

Striking drivers at this firm demanded a R55 weekly wage instead of payment per trip. The strike occurred after the TGWU informed the company that the 'trip-system' did not comply with the Basic Conditions of Employment Act. This Act states that workers are to be paid a basic weekly wage, overtime wages, and sets a limit to the hours of overtime. The union threatened to take the matter to court. Motorvia attempted to obtain an exemption from the clause. When this failed the company began negotiating with the union, but according to the TGWU management stalled and the workers struck when they saw that no progress was being made.

Workers refused to meet a return to work deadline on 10 May, and were fired. The company responded to the strike with an offer of R1,35 an hour for a 46 hour week, and for every additional hour offered time-and-two-thirds. This was accepted, and workers returned on 11 May. A union spokesman said that although this was not what they had asked for, he believed it to be a step in the right direction. 'Previously our members did not get a basic salary and were paid by the number of trips they made'.

**Company:** Stewart's Estate (near Stanger)  
**Date:** 19 June  
**Workers:** 400  
**Union:** South African Allied Workers Union (SAAWU)

Management dismissed about 400 striking workers employed at this sugar estate - some of whom had been in service 40 years. When the workers struck on 19

June, they had been demanding the recognition of SAAWU. They were also protesting unfair working conditions at the plant. Most of the workers are from the Transkei, and management had forbidden their wives to stay on the premises for longer than two weeks.

SAAWU representative Richard Gumede claimed the union had been unable to arrange talks with management and had been threatened with prosecution if its officials entered the premises.

Indian workers who were dismissed feared that they would lose their company homes, some of which had been occupied for over 50 years. An Indian worker claimed that they had been forced to join the strike. The Transkeian workers were also housed in company houses.

Management agreed to selectively re-employ the workers. About 40 workers were refused re-employment because management claimed they were 'ring-leaders'. They appealed to the Transkei Consulate in Durban to help them to get back their jobs. Gumede led a deputation of the fired workers to the Consulate. Workers said they had not been paid their pensions and had to spend a night in the open after they had been evicted from the company houses they occupied.

**Company:** Uniply (Cato Ridge)  
**Date:** Mid-May  
**Workers:** 500  
**Union:** Paper, Wood and Allied Workers Union (PWAU)

Four shop stewards were fired for allegedly organising a May Day demonstration at this Barlow Rand subsidiary. The entire work-force struck to protest the dismissals and two of the four stewards were reinstated. The workers continued to express their support for the other two by staging a go slow. Management fired all 500 striking workers on 15 May. Police were called to the scene to prevent striking workers from going into the factory. PWAU general secretary Pat Horn said it was the police and not management who informed them that there was no work for them. The company has a recognition agreement with PWAU, but the union was not consulted or informed of management's decision.

Neither the workers nor union

officials present were informed of the workers' dismissal. They were told to sign for their pay, and given one week's extra pay. Many workers realised that this constituted dismissal and refused to accept their pay.

A week later the workers decided that they would collect their pay. They had resolved to challenge their dismissal in the Industrial Court, and seek a temporary reinstatement in terms of section 43 of the Labour Relations Act pending the resolution of the dispute.

Although they have accepted their pay, the workers say they have not accepted their dismissal. An application for a Conciliation Board to settle the dispute has also been made.

Workers distributed pamphlets to those who had taken their jobs. They described their plight without pay. They have also resolved to hold regular meetings to maintain the unity of their group.

#### WESTERN CAPE

**Company:** Allied Publishers  
**Date:** End of April  
**Workers:** 75  
**Union:** Media Workers Association of South Africa (MWASA)

Two work stoppages occurred at Allied Publishing when 75 MWASA members demanded pay for Good Friday, which they claimed was a paid holiday. When management agreed to alter their pay packets, the workers continued work.

**Company:** BKB  
**Date:** April  
**Workers:** 90  
**Union:** -

At BKB, workers have been on short time since the beginning of 1984. Most of the workers are migrants with families to support in the drought-stricken Transkei. They have been living on R37 a week because of having to work shorter hours.

In April, some of them were told to work on a Wednesday afternoon. The sixty workers who were affected refused to work unless all workers at BKB were offered full-time work. They said that short time was not justified because management brought in casual labour

anyway.

The sixty workers were fired for their stand and ninety of their colleagues struck in their support. Police were called to the scene and marched the strikers back to their hostels in Guguletu. Four days later all the workers were forced to sign a new contract agreeing to work on Wednesday afternoons.

**Company:** City Tramways  
**Date:** 16 April  
**Workers:** 1 200  
**Union:** Tramways and Omnibus Workers Union

This strike began when about 1 200 workers introduced a ban on overtime, demanding a 15% wage increase. The strike followed two industrial council meetings which had both deadlocked.

The attitude of City Tramways towards increases is that they will have to be met from fare increases. The UDF, which supported the strikers, claimed that 'increases must come from the pockets of City Tramways. There is more than enough money in the pockets of the bosses to pay these increases'.

The Tramways workers were dissatisfied with the conduct of some of their union officials. The workers belong to the Tramways and Omnibus Workers Union, and allege that union officials sold them out by telling the bosses that they (the workers) were going to stop the overtime ban. A worker source said that they would continue the ban until they had received their increase. Some workers were also unhappy that the union decided to go to the Industrial Court without consulting them first and because they felt that the Industrial Court sided with the bosses.

**Company:** Clothing industry strikes (Cape Underwear, Bibette, Rex Trueform)  
**Date:** End of April  
**Workers:** See specific strikes  
**Union:** Clothing Workers Union (Clowu)

Workers in the clothing industry demanded a R10 increase in wages. Wages for clothing workers are not more than R54 a week in the Western Cape. Some sources estimate that the minimum living wage is R76 per week.

At the end of April, strikes at

three clothing factories broke out within one day of each other: at Cape Underwear, Rex Trueform and Bibette. At Rex Trueform and Bibette and Cape Underwear, the workers are members of Clowu. The Rex Trueform workers issued a statement in support of the Cape Underwear workers who had been first to strike, saying that if they got their increase it would be because of the Cape Underwear workers. 'Their fight is the fight of all clothing workers', they said.

Management was not prepared to take back 52 out of a total of 137 workers whom they had dismissed for striking. The workers refused to accept the offer: 'Ons sal nie terug gaan sonder al die werkers en sonder die increase nie', they said.

The strike at Rex Trueform began on 24 April on the 4th and 6th floors of the factory. Workers on the other floors subsequently came out on strike. However, the floor managers misinformed the 4th and 6th floor workers and told them that other floors were prepared to do the work in their place. Some workers did not know what was going on in the other sections and returned to work. The rest of the workers stayed out for a week and returned pending a management decision on the increase.

One of the workers said of the strike: 'I think what we learnt from this is the need to organise...It is easy for the boss to divide us. We must be organised and make sure that all workers know what is going on'.

The workers at Cape Underwear and Rex Trueform all received increases of R5 per week after negotiations between management and Clowu. At Cape Underwear after the second round of negotiations where the company had been threatened with a consumer boycott, management finally agreed to the increase and the workers' reinstatement.

**Company:** Dairybelle  
**Date:** 11 April  
**Workers:** 600  
**Union:** Retail and Allied Workers Union (RAWU)

Workers belonging to RAWU staged a successful strike at Dairybelle. Six hundred and eighty workers stopped work on 11 April and returned after management agreed to hold recognition talks. A preliminary recognition agreement has been signed.

(Western Cape strike information obtained from Grassroots, May 1984).

## Registration and the NMC report

In May the National Manpower Commission (NMC) tabled two reports before Parliament. The first reported on an investigation into levels of collective bargaining and works councils and the Industrial Court. It also dealt with the registration issue. The second contained guidelines for the removal of restrictions on the development of the small business sector.

### Registration

Of the two reports, the first has been of greater significance to the labour movement, particularly in its recommendations regarding union registration. The first report has recommended the scrapping of union registration for a new system of minimum standards for all trade unions. In the new system, an Industrial Registrar may decide whether or not an organisation qualifies for registration

based on certain criteria.

If the registrar believes that a union's 'main objective' is not to serve the interests of its members or if it does not have a 'proper' constitution, the registrar could refuse it registration.

The union's objection to these recommendations was that a decision could be reached on the basis of a government official's opinion only. The Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA) summed up this feeling when it referred to this as the vesting of 'powers in the hands of civil servants'.

Unions who, in the view of the registrar, associate themselves with a political party, could be closed down. The Commission also recommended that unions which did not receive approval from the registrar, be given the right of appeal. The appeal would be heard in the Labour Court (the Commission's new name for the Industrial Court).

The report recommends that worker

organisations may only be registered if they fund themselves. Many unions who presently receive funds from overseas may find themselves barred from operating if these recommendations succeed in becoming law.

Registration would be mandatory and organisations not registered could be liable to prosecution. If any officials operated without registration, they too could face prosecution. The government registrar will have access to union constitutions and to financial records before the union may become registered.

'Only organisations complying with all the requirements should be able to operate as trade unions or employers' organisations, and participate in the process of collective bargaining at any level (within or outside the Labour Relations Act), and avail themselves of the dispute settlement mechanisms of the Act.' Thus only organisations that were registered would have statutory bargaining rights .

### **Defining an unfair labour practice**

The report made recommendations for certain practices to be included as statutory unfair labour practices:

- + employer interference in union affairs and union interference with employer affairs,
- + victimisation of trade unionists, works/workers' council members,
- + unjustifiable dismissal and the replacement of an employee(s) with an employee(s) of another population group where the purpose is to provide less favourable terms and conditions of employment,
- + unjustifiable refusal to grant membership to a person who satisfies the criteria for membership of the organisation concerned,
- + unjustifiable refusal to grant benefits or the justifiable disciplining and expulsion of a member of an organisation,
- + blacklisting of employees and employers,
- + failure or refusal to comply with a collective agreement.

Generally, the introduction of the 'unfair labour practice' into South Africa's labour legislation has offered greater protection for the workers than for management. Employers objected to the Industrial Court which they felt

sided with workers, and demanded a curbing of its powers. This report has responded to these demands by adding to the list some further instances of unfair labour practice, including:

- + the use of unconstitutional, unfair and misleading recruiting methods,
- + secondary product boycotts by a trade union or employee, resulting from a labour dispute,
- + the abuse of its organisational or negotiating power by a trade union or group of employees to the detriment of other groups or individuals.

The latter makes it an unfair labour practice for a union to force an employer to deal only with it and not with a minority union. Emerging unions which claim that they represent the majority of workers at a plant have been resisting participation in joint negotiations with management and smaller unions representing skilled workers. The report's recommendations have attempted to curtail this practice.

### **The Industrial Court**

The Commission recommended that the Industrial Court be renamed the Labour Court, and the proposed appellate body, the Labour Appeal Court. It recommended that the Court be independent. The State President, rather than the Minister of Manpower should appoint judges on the same basis as appointments to the Supreme Court.

### **Works councils**

The NMC report recommended that workers councils consist of employees only. Council members should be free from victimisation, and it recommended that the Labour Relations Act should be amended to provide for this.

Options and suggestions made by individuals and organisations to the commissions recommendations will be taken into account. They will be presented in the form of a white paper to the Commission. If, however the Commissions recommendations are accepted, the government will exercise significant control over any union activities it wishes to curtail.

Information supplied by Institute of Industrial Relations Information Sheet, No 67, May 1984.



# Courts

## TREASON TRIALS

Rufus Mrashiya Nzo (34), Douglas Moyisile Tyutyu (48), Siphon Fielden Hina (44), James Ngqondela (54), Temi Mzayifani William Khame (57), Mzimkhulu Khame (22), Siphon Nodlawu (35), Vukile Tshiwula (43), Lindile Patrick Mbelakana (27), Wellington Vukele Gumenge (29), and Nceba Faku (27).

Petros Bokala, one of the associates of the accused, was probably killed on 26 January 1983, when a bomb which he had allegedly planted, exploded at the offices of the Eastern Cape Administration Board.

Another associate of the accused was probably killed during the SADF raid on alleged ANC bases in Maseru in December 1982.

The main charge which the accused face involves high treason, and working with each other and other parties to further the alliance between the SACP and the ANC.

Furthermore the accused are charged with

- \* importing, from or via Lesotho, arms and ammunition, hand grenades, limpet mines and explosives, and distributing and concealing them;

- \* bringing in, distributing and concealing banned ANC and communist literature;

- + bringing in funds from Lesotho to further the aims of the SACP, the ANC or the alliance;

- + recruiting persons in the Port Elizabeth area for the ANC, for training in warfare and sabotage;

- \* forming ANC cells and recruiting persons for them;

- + accommodating such persons;

- + organising arms and explosives caches;

- + liaising and communicating with the ANC in Lesotho;

- + preparing, placing and triggering explosives at

Constantia Centre, Port Elizabeth, 29 May 1982

New Law Courts, Port Elizabeth, 28 June 1982

Offices of East Cape Administration Board, New Brighton, 26 January 1983

Railway line between Port Elizabeth near Swartkops, 6 April 1983

+ killing Mrs Nkosi Tshiwula, Kwazakhele, 8 May 1983.

The alternate charges arise out of the substance of the main charge. Apart from damage to property and injury to persons, they include

- participation in 'terrorist activities';
- sabotage;

- undergoing of military training in Lesotho, Angola and other places;

- possession of explosives;

- harbouring of persons associated with the ANC;

- participation in activities of unlawful organisations;

- unlawful possession of publications;

- unlawful possession of ammunition;

- leaving the country without a passport (Tyutyu only);

- Fraud (Nzo only).

The accused were arrested in May 1983 and held under the Internal Security Act until 11 July 1983, when they first appeared in the Port Elizabeth Magistrates Court. After several postponements due to difficulties encountered by the defence in preparing for the trial, the hearing was resumed on 22 February 1984, and then from 1 March onwards.

The accused pleaded not guilty to the main count and all alternative counts.

Police specialists displayed and commented on the arms and ammunition allegedly seized from the accused, and two witnesses told the court how they found explosive devices at the Port Elizabeth law courts and the Constantia shopping centre. After this evidence was heard, numerous other witnesses were called. The judge ruled that they should give evidence in camera; the press was allowed to be present, but the identity of these witnesses was to be withheld.

The first witness told of how, during 1982, he brought banned literature, arms and

explosives to Port Elizabeth, which he delivered to Hina and Tyutyu. The second witness, who was arrested because 'he knew some people' and was accused of keeping firearms, was sentenced to two-and-a-half years imprisonment for refusing to give evidence.

Other witnesses stated that they had accommodated trained guerillas, amongst them some of the accused. The guerillas had been introduced to them by one or other of the accused, and the witnesses had wittingly or unwittingly kept hidden objects containing arms, ammunition and explosives.

On 16 April, a trial-within-a-trial started, to determine the admissibility of certain statements made by the accused while in detention, and of admissions made by one of the accused.

The defence submitted evidence of torture, assault, threats and ill-treatment from nine of the accused.

Rufus Nzo was allegedly tortured, assaulted and threatened on various occasions by Colonel Janse van Rensburg and Captain Roelofse, and by police in Aliwal North and at Jeffrey's Bay police station. These assaults were denied by police witnesses.

Tyutyu was allegedly tortured and assaulted at various times at Algoa Park police station. He was allegedly forced to admit to knowing the other accused, and to receiving guns and firearms. All these allegations were again denied by police.

According to Sipho Hina, he was harassed and threatened by the police. He did not report this, nor the appalling conditions under which he was being held, to either the magistrate or the district surgeon, as he did not trust them. Hina claims that he made a statement because of this pressure brought to bear on him.

Khame submitted that he was tortured and assaulted on various occasions. He did not report these assaults to district surgeon Dr Benjamin Tucker. According to Khame's evidence, he was threatened and forced to make a statement; he was made to recite a statement written by a policeman, and repeated that statement before a magistrate.

Sipho Nodlawu alleged, through the defence, that he was tortured, assaulted and threatened at Algoa Park police station. He made a statement to the police for fear of more assaults.

Vukile Tshiwula was allegedly tortured and threatened by his interrogators, and told that he would not be released unless he made a statement which satisfied

the police.

The subsequent court hearings were centred around the evidence of district surgeon Dr Benjamin Tucker, the Acting Inspector of Detainees in the area, S Haasbroek, and the additional magistrate of Alexandria. They had all seen the accused while in detention.

The magistrate told the court that he saw no signs of injury on any of the accused, while the Inspector of Detainees took statements of assault from Nzo, Tshwula and Khame.

Tucker testified that Faku had told him that he had been assaulted by police, and that other detainees had made certain complaints to him. However, Tucker said that Tyutyu and Faku had no signs of injuries; and the injuries of Khame and Ngqondela were unrelated to their detention. Tucker did not follow up the complaints of the other accused.

While in detention, Rufus Nzo was admitted to hospital with severe head injuries and severe shock. It was alleged by police that he had attempted to commit suicide.

The trial has been postponed until 13 August, to continue in the Grahamstown Supreme Court.

**Sithabiso Edgar Mahlobo (25), Benedict Anthony Dikobe Martins (27), and Duma Gqubule (19).**

The accused were charged with high treason, terrorism, illegal possession of arms, causing explosions at the Pietermaritzburg New Supreme Court on 21 March 1983 and at the old Supreme Court on 21 April 1983.

According to the charge sheet, Mahlobo 'underwent military training at two ANC camps in Angola, returning to South Africa around February 1983 to reconnoitre bases and targets, gauge the feeling of the local population, establish arms caches, and commit acts of warfare, subversion and violence'.

In February 1983, Mahlobo allegedly came to Pietermaritzburg bringing with him arms and ammunition which he asked Martins to conceal. Martins allegedly drove him to the city centre, where Mahlobo placed and detonated explosive devices at the New Supreme Court (March 1983) and the Old Supreme Court (April 1983). He left South Africa and came back in November 1983 via Mozambique and Swaziland, bringing another ANC member, David Jiba Bhengu, with him. They were allegedly accommodated by Gqubule. The next day they were taken to KwaShange, where they were arrested by police on 20

November 1983. They were allegedly in possession of a pistol and ammunition, and subsequently pointed out two arms caches to police in Edendale.

In addition to the charge of conveying and concealing arms and explosives, and of transporting Mahlobo, Martins was accused of arranging for several young people to go to Maseru to be instructed in the history, aims and objectives of the ANC.

The accused were held under section 29 of the Internal Security Act, and first appeared in the Pietermaritzburg Magistrates Court on 10 March 1984. The case was remanded until 2 May for trial in the Supreme Court. The accused pleaded not guilty.

In subsequent hearings, numerous witnesses were called. The state noted 40 names on its list of witnesses, more than 30 of them being members of the South African police. Witnesses from the security police gave evidence on the nature and effects of the arms, ammunition and explosives which were either seized from the accused, found in arms caches or at the site of explosions.

After various police witnesses were heard, the presiding judge ruled that part of the case was to be heard in camera. The press was allowed to be present, but the names of witnesses were to be withheld.

The first unidentified witness was allegedly asked to accommodate Gqubule and conceal a trunk of arms. The second witness, Dr Mvuyo Ernest Tom, medical officer at Edendale hospital, refused to give evidence and was sentenced to three years imprisonment. The third unidentified witness stated that he was an associate of Mahlobo; together they had undergone ANC military training in Mozambique and Angola. Mahlobo was allegedly sent for further training to East Germany, after which he returned to a camp in Angola. Mahlobo and the witness himself returned to South Africa via Mozambique and Swaziland. Two further witnesses were called to give evidence concerning the movements of the accused, and the storage of arms and explosives.

A report allegedly compiled by Mahlobo

May 1983 containing a list of possible sabotage targets to be hit in Pietermaritzburg and Escourt areas was read to the court.

The defence told the court that Mahlobo had been assaulted physically and psychologically during detention. One of the witnesses also stated that he had been assaulted by security police and had changed his statement to make them happy. Cross-questioned by the defence, another witness told of assault and threats by the police. The defence further contested the admissibility of the evidence given by one of the witnesses, and some of the charges.

Verdict: Mahlobo was found guilty of high treason, and Martins on an alternative charge of terrorism. Gqubule was found guilty of taking part in ANC activities by housing Mahlobo and a fellow insurgent.

Sentence: Mahlobo was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment, Martins to 10 years, and Gqubule to 30 months, suspended for five years.

**Frans Madumetsa Ranoto (28), and  
Phillamon Modisagarekoe Morake (24)**

The accused were arrested on 11 June 1983 in Venda. They first appeared in court on 4 December 1983 in Louis Trichardt where they pleaded not guilty to a charge of high treason, and alternative charges of participation in terroristic activities and attempted murder.

Ranoto and Morake allegedly underwent military training in Lesotho, Angola and Zambia and then entered South Africa via Zimbabwe. They were found in possession of arms, and Ranoto allegedly attempted to murder a policeman. He contested this, claiming that he had fired shots aimlessly while being pursued by the police. This was rejected by the judge, who further found that both accused returned to South Africa on a mission to recruit members to the ANC, study conditions, and establish ammunition caches.

Verdict: Guilty of high treason and attempted murder.

Sentence: Twelve years imprisonment each.