

# inqaba YA BASEBENZI



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***Unite the trade unions!  
For workers' power,  
democracy and socialism!***

**inqaba  
YA BASEBENZI**

# UNITE THE

In building the independent unions, the organised workers have begun to sense their own power. A united trade union movement, joining the mass of the workers together in action, is now demanded by the ranks of all these unions.

The trade union leaders, in working out practical steps towards united organisation, are carrying an historic responsibility.

The ruling class which oppresses and exploits us is deeply divided and uncertain of its future. Their old policies for crushing us have failed to stop our movement. Their new promises of 'reform' are empty because their profit-grabbing system cannot afford the costs of concessions and change.

Their state resorts as ever to savage attacks against our unions—detentions, torture, the murder of Neil Aggett and now the trial of SAAWU leaders.

Especially in this time of economic recession, trade union unity is vital for the defence of workers—against victimisation, against the state's attacks, against worsening conditions at home and at work, against falling incomes.

But trade union unity in action would also mean a breakthrough in the struggle of all the working people towards gaining power over our own lives, over the economy, and over the state. It would mean a big stride towards liberation.

That is the challenging reality facing the unions as they work out their approach to unity in practice.

The Wilgespruit conference of independent union leaders has been an important advance. Its decisions, if vigorously carried out, can take us

to a firm and lasting trade union unity.

Yet many hurdles must still be overcome to ensure that unity is lasting.

The unions were born and grew in different conditions, with different traditions, methods, and forms of organising. There are differences of approach on some central questions. Doubts and suspicions will linger.

The workers in each union are rightly proud of the organisations they have built, and want to defend these achievements. Each tendency in the unions will be on its guard against what it sees as mistaken policies elsewhere.

As most of the union leaders have recognised, these realities must not be allowed to obstruct trade union unity.

Take, for example, the differences over registration. In common with many trade unionists, *Inqaba* opposes registration, and also involvement in the regime's industrial council machinery.

Differences on these questions cannot be wished away. But nor can they be resolved by ultimatums. The position that is correct must be proved to the mass of workers by sound arguments tested in the experience of struggle.

It would be pointless to try merely to preserve a correct position in isolation. To reach agreement among the workers, and to act accordingly, is vital for the development of the *whole* trade union movement. To develop our power against the bosses and the state, the task is to fully discuss and resolve questions *within* a united trade union organisation.

Continued separation would only

play into the hands of the ruling class, which has always sought to divide the workers.

For full discussion to occur, there must be the fullest democracy in the movement. Only on this basis can the correct decisions be reached, leading to determined mass unity in action.

Effective and lasting trade union unity means, therefore, not just unity of leaders. It must mean *common organisation*, within which the membership discusses, decides, and implements decisions at every level.

Lasting trade union unity in action must be based on:

- a single trade union federation;
- full democracy
- united bodies at all levels.

This means carrying forward into a single organisation the best of what has already been built.

Real unity would provide a spring-board for co-ordinating the struggles in every industrial centre into a *programme of national action* capable of mobilising the greatest forces—organising the unorganised, migrant and non-migrant; uniting the mine and farm workers with the factory workers; drawing in the youth. This would also arouse a big response from many TUCSA workers, awakening into struggle despite their conservative leaders.

Out of the battles of the recent period, the basic elements of this programme have already been established:

- no job losses or victimisations;
- trade union freedom and the right to strike;
- a national minimum wage of R100 a week, with automatic increases index-linked to the cost of living.

The mobilising power of a na-

# FOR WORKERS' POWER,

# **inqaba**

## **YA BASEBENZI**

**MAY 1982**

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# Introduction

The course of the Spanish revolution of 1931-37 is filled with lessons that are highly relevant to our movement today.

Conditions in Spain then were different from those in present-day SA in some important respects. Spain was a less developed country, with the working class only a minority of the population. Peasant landlessness was the central problem facing the masses.

Yet the Spanish working class had a long tradition of socialist organisation and their own political parties. This allowed them to move rapidly into action as an independent political force under the pressure of crisis.

But Spain had certain crucial conditions in common with SA. The capitalist class was too bankrupt to meet the basic demands of the masses and govern through bourgeois democracy. The state machinery had been developed over generations as a repressive instrument of capitalist rule. No force in society except the organised working class was capable of demolishing this state and carrying through the democratic transformation of society.

In the 1930s the Spanish working class showed its magnificent combativity and readiness to struggle to the end. Why, then, did the revolution end in a terrible defeat?

The document reprinted here takes up this question. Written in 1973 by Ted Grant, political editor of the *Militant*, Marxist paper in the British labour movement, it meticulously examines the events and lessons of the Spanish revolution from the standpoint of working-class internationalism.

The document shows how the immense movement of the workers and peasants brought capitalism and its state in Spain to the brink of collapse, and fought relentlessly for three years a civil war against the forces of fascist counter-revolution. But their leaders, forming a 'Popular Front' and entering a

coalition government with the remnants of the 'progressive' capitalist politicians, capitulated again and again to bourgeois pressures.

Jose Diaz, General Secretary of the Spanish Communist Party, expressed their general standpoint:

"We wish to fight only for a democratic republic with a broad social content...Libertarian communism, dictatorship of the proletariat, socialism of the state, a federal republic; we will speak of all these after the war."

Thus the workers' leaders refused to "speak of" the workers' and peasants' main purpose in fighting the war—the transformation of society, the social revolution. This more than any other factor, as the document carefully explains, paved the way for the victory of Franco and the reversal of all that had been achieved.

These lessons have still not been learned by the Socialist and Communist leadership internationally. In country after country—such as Chile in the early 1970s—they have persisted in following similar policies of class collaboration, exposing the workers to similar disaster.

## Future

Looking to the future of Spain, the document correctly anticipated the fall of Franco's dictatorship and pointed out the deepening social crisis which was leading towards a new revolutionary situation. Again, however, the question of working-class leadership has proved decisive.

During the 1970s the Spanish capitalist class have been given a breathing space by the weakness of the workers' leadership and their refusal to take the struggle forward—a potential danger already warned against in the document. This is prolonging and complicating the Spanish revolution.

But such is the strength of the working class today that there can

be no question of a decisive capitalist counter-revolution in the short term. The capitalist class internationally is in crisis. Above all, unlike in the 1930s, Marxism has already begun to take root in the Spanish workers' organisations and can grow into a mass force on the basis of events, defeating the false ideas of the Socialist and Communist leadership and opening the road to workers' power.

## South Africa

The same fundamental perspective that faced the Spanish working class in the 1930s is facing us in SA today: **in order to end poverty and oppression, in order to secure democratic rights and decent conditions for all, not only the government needs to be changed but the capitalist system itself must be decisively overthrown.**

But already imperialism is trying to prepare the ground for a 'national convention' at a stage when the regime is no longer able to hold the mass struggle in check by force alone. Its sole purpose would be to ensnare the workers' leaders and protect the state machinery in order to use it against the workers' movement when the tide of revolution begins to ebb—as it must if the chance to seize victory is missed.

Every ANC and trade union activist needs to be prepared for developments of this nature. Our movement and our leadership must stand absolutely firm and united against the treacherous manoeuvres of pro-capitalist 'progressives', and fight instead to complete the revolution that will transfer power to the working people.

Studying and discussing the lessons of the defeated Spanish revolution, and applying them in practice, will help us to ensure that the same tragic history is not repeated in our country in the future.

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# TRADE UNIONS!

*tional* campaign around this demand, even in the present recession, is foreshadowed today on the East Rand, where a common wage demand has involved thousands of workers in strike action.

To this, now, must be added a bold mass campaign for the defence of trade unionists against arrests, detentions and trials.

A fighting national campaign on these issues alone could swell the membership of the trade unions to one million in the next year.

With fortresses of organisation built in thousands of factories, the trade union movement could vastly strengthen the present community struggles also—leading national campaigns against rent and fare increases, against evictions and removals, and against the pass laws.

As every active worker knows, trade union struggle is itself political. The leaders of all the major independent unions now publicly accept this. The recent conference of FOSATU affirmed that its "whole existence is political".

This position accords with the experience of the trade union movement the world over. In practice, unions have found it essential to gain control over the government in order to protect the interests of their members.

In many countries this has meant the building of workers' political parties, supported by the unions, and a struggle to put those parties in power on a programme for solving the problems of the workers.

In our country the unions face a huge political struggle to enforce the workers' interests. The more the trade union movement gains in

strength, the more political tasks will be thrust upon it, both by the pressure of the workers and by the reaction of the ruling class.

Decent wages and pensions, jobs, homes, education and health care for all—none of these basic *trade union* demands will be implemented by the present regime.

While we and the leaders we choose are subject to the laws, jails and courts of the bosses; while we remain the prisoners of the *dompas* and the arrogance of every petty official whom no-one elected; while the torture gangs infest John Vorster Square; while the police and army generals can call up their regiments as firing-squads in the townships, mines and factories—no victory of our movement will remain secure.

A programme of far-reaching social reform could only be carried out by a government committed to the workers' interests. But such a government could not come into existence except on the basis of political democracy; involving the overthrow of the apartheid regime and its replacement by a state under democratic working-class control.

There are no short cuts to this. To accomplish it, the working class will need to become organised around its own interests, not only in hundreds of thousands, but in its mighty millions, rising to full consciousness of its mission. Political leaders not directly controlled by the working class will inevitably tend—as the FOSATU conference pointed out—to "encourage undirected, opportunistic" political activity.

The politics of the trade union movement involves mobilising the fighting strength of workers in preparation for a thorough-going transformation of society.

The practical daily task of the trade unions is, and will continue to be, the struggle around the basic economic needs of the workers.

But this does not create any basis for a "division of labour" between the politics of the trade unions and those of the ANC.

A mass, democratic ANC, built on the power of organised workers, with a programme for the socialist transformation of South Africa, can eradicate oppression and create a new society fit for workers and their children to live in.

The overwhelming majority of workers want to build the ANC as the vehicle of their struggle for political power. In speeding this, the trade union movement has an essential part to play. This is the way to ensure, in the words of the FOSATU April conference, that the "popular movement is not hijacked by elements who in the end will have no option but to turn against their worker supporters."

Thus the capacity of the working class to transform society would become directed like an arrow against the bosses and the state both through the trade unions and through the ANC.

These tasks need to be discussed and clarified throughout the movement, for the necessary concrete steps to be worked out.

Once it is firmly based on a united trade union movement, a campaign to build a mass ANC on a socialist programme would gain an overwhelming response. The beginnings of such a movement could be seen at Neil Aggett's funeral, where the procession to the graveside became the march of a united workers' army—headed by the banners of the trade union movement and the flag of the ANC.

# DEMOCRACY AND SOCIALISM!

# The Spanish Revolution 1931-37

Spain is in the first stages of a movement in the direction of revolution. The fascist regime is completely undermined. The working class has recovered from the terrible defeat inflicted by the forces of reaction in the Civil War. The middle class is filled with hatred for the dictatorship and looking with sympathy to the struggle of the workers. The bourgeoisie is looking for a way out as it feels the pressure of the masses.

The repressive machine of the dictatorship has been enfeebled as it loses all mass support. From a totalitarian fascist state, it has been transformed into a military-police state, relying on the state machinery of oppression and repression—consequently it has become transformed into a Bonapartist rather than a fascist regime. This marks the beginning of its downfall.

Once the workers, peasants and middle class begin to move into action on a concentrated national scale, the hour for the collapse of the regime will have arrived. The great revenge of the working class will begin. By what regime will the Franco dictatorship be replaced? That is the immediate burning question facing the Spanish proletariat and the Socialist Party and Young Socialists of Spain.

The British Marxists, in the spirit of international solidarity, (the Spanish revolution is also **their** revolution, as is every revolution in the world) are turning out some material on the Spanish question for discussion within their ranks and internationally. This study of the origins and course of the revolution of 1931-37 is not intended to be comprehensive but to deal with some of the highlights of this period of history of the Spanish workers' movement.

Unless the Spanish Socialist Marxists have a clear conception of these events, they will not be able to orient the movement and prepare policies in line with the perspectives of Spain at the present time. The lessons of history, if they are not learned, point to the situation where there can be an even more terrible debacle for the proletariat.

Marx and Engels worked out their theoretical conceptions on the basis of the experience of the working class, which they generalised into theory. The conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat was worked out by Marx on the basis of the experience of the Paris Commune.

Lenin and Trotsky prepared the victory of the revolution of October 1917 in Russia by the study of the lessons of the Paris Commune and the defeated revolution of 1905. Without this, the success of the Russian revolution would have been impossible. Similarly, without a thorough study of the lessons of the defeated Spanish revolution, it will be impossible for the victory of the Spanish Socialist revolution to be prepared in the coming days. The history of Spain is rich in lessons. "Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it." That is why, especially with the difficulties of the Spanish comrades in illegal conditions to have access to the necessary material, we make no apologies for turning out material for discussion in Spain. We consider it our imperative, fraternal and interna-

tionalist duty to discuss together with the Spanish comrades the class issues of the coming revolution in order to try and assist, however modestly, in arming the cadres of the Spanish Socialists for the tasks looming ahead.

A victorious Spanish revolution would be a victory for the working class of the whole of Europe and would prepare the collapse of capitalism in Latin America and in parts of Africa. It has world-wide implications. Spain is the key to the international situation. Therefore, the responsibility of the leadership of the Spanish proletariat is all the greater. But the key to the victory in Spain lies in understanding the lessons of the revolution of 1931-37. **Trotsky once explained that the heroism of the Spanish workers was such as to have made possible ten victorious revolutions in the period 1931-7.** Therefore a study of the lessons of this period will arm the cadres against repeating the mistakes of the past.

## BONAPARTIST DICTATORSHIP

Spain even today remains a backward country where the tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution have not been carried out. The bourgeois-landlord regime with a narrow economic base, and without mass support, was defeated in its colonial war against Moroccan independence in 1921-25 and had to be rescued by the armies of French imperialism. This inglorious and expensive adventure, with the exposure of the corruption and incompetence of the monarchist regime, led to the setting up of the Bonapartist—military-police—dictatorship of Primo de Rivera.

This, like all Bonapartist dictatorships, tried to balance between the classes in order to maintain the power of the ruling class. The CNT unions, the CP and the anarchists were illegalised, but the Socialist Party and the UGT were allowed to maintain a legal existence. Caballero, leader of the UGT, even became a Privy Councillor under the dictatorship!

With the world economic slump of 1929, the basis of the regime was undermined and in an attempt to save the monarchy the King dismissed Primo de Rivera in 1930. But the deepening of the slump hit Spain hard, and the bourgeoisie and landlords tried to unload the burden onto the shoulders of the workers and peasants. There was terrible suffering and hunger among the workers and peasants as their already low standards and wages were cut by the ruling class.

In the municipal elections of April 1931 the towns, especially the big towns, with the exception of Cadiz, voted overwhelmingly for the candidates of the Socialists and Republicans.

In a rigged poll, in the countryside, under the pressure of the aristocracy and landlords, monarchists gained the majori-

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# KOPANYANG

Ka go aga makgotla a a etaolang, babereki bakôpane basimolotse go utlwa thata yabônê. Kokwanô e e kôpaneng ya babereki, e kôpanya sechaba sa babereki mo magatong, ke se sebatliwang jaanong ke maloko a makgotla ano otlhe.

Beêtapele ba makgotla a babereki, ka go bêtêkêla kôpanong ka magatô a a bônalang, ba belege boikarabêlô jo bo boitshêgang.

Setlhôpa sa babusi se seregateletseng mme se renwa madi, sekgaogane tôta ebile gabaitse lobaka lo lotlang lwabônê. Sagore thugaka ga go tlhole go tsamaya, ebile go ba paletse go emisa kokwanô ya rona. Ditshepisô tse dintsha tsa bônê tsa gotokofatsa gadire sepê, kagore tsela ya bona ya pêtêkô ya bonwamadi gaekgone gobêlêga tshenyêgêlô yagoresutêla, letlhabolôlô.

Musô wa bônê oikaêga fêla kagotlhasêla setlhogo makgotla a rona—gotshwarwa gosena tshêkô, tlhokohatsô, polawô ya ga Neil Aggett, mme jaanong tshêkô ya baêtapele ba SAAWU.

Thatathata modinakong tse tsabokoa jwa ngomaêlô, kôpanô ya makgotla ke botshelô kabojôna motshireletsong yabereki—motlhorisong, motlhasêlong etswang mmusong, mobonong jobogolang kamašwê lebothata mogae le kwatirong, lemeputsô e e fokolegang malatsi otlhe.

Mme legalê gokopana gamakgotla a babereki katiro ekan-na legatô tôta motlhabanong ya botlhe babereki gôyela gore ret-samaisê botshelô jwa rona, ngomaêlô, ebile le mmusô. Eka nna legatô leleboitshêgang goêla kgololesegong.

O ke ônê morwalô oo sêbaganeng le makgotla a babereki gantse bat-samaêla kopanong ya tirô.

Kôpanô yako Wilgespruit yabaêtapele bamakgotla aa itaolang ene elelegatô tôta. Dikitsisô tsa

bônê, ga dika latêlwa, dikareisa kopanong e nonofileng e e sa feleng yamakgotla a babereki.

Legalê gotla tshwanêla goralala dinaganaga gofitlhêla kopanong e e safeleng.

Makgotla a tsetswe ebile a godile mo mabakeng aa sa tshwaneng, ka mekgwa ee sa tshwaneng, le ditlwaêlô le ditsela tsa goipopa tse disatshwaneng. Gona le diphapano tsa maikutlô mabapi ledilo tse diboteng. Dipelaêlô le gogopolêlana ditlabo dintse dileteng.

Babereki mo makgotleng mangwe le mangwe baitumediswa ke dipopô tsa bônê, mme ba batla gosireletsa maungo a maitekô a bônê. Setlhôpa sengwe le sengwe mo makgotleng se tla bo se shebile ka letshogô seo baithayang gore kediphôshô gosele.

Mme jaaka bontsi jwa baêtapele bamakgotla basetse babone, bonnete jo gago batlege botshwarêlê kôpanô ya babereki ka makgotla a bônê.

A re kê re shebê diphapano mabapi le gokwadisiwa gamakgotla. Jaaka bontsi jwa maloko a makgotla, *Inqaba* eganetsana le gokwadisiwa gamakgotla, le godirisanya le di-indastriale khaonsele tsa mmusô.

Diphapano mabapi le dilo tse gadikake tsa nyêlêla kabotsôna. Mme gapê ga di kake tsa nyêlêla kagoikanêlana. Êmô yamaaruri etshwanetse gosupiwa mosetshabeng sa babereki ka kgang yapônô yatshugatshugano.

Ga go kake ga thusa sepê go leka goithaya gore motho wa itse a eme kamothokô alenosi. Gore go utlwanwê kebotlhe babereki, le gore go dirisangwê jaalo gobothôkwa gotla batlêga goatisa tswêlêlôpele ya kokwanô *yotlhe* wa babereki. Go thatafatsa thata yarona yagokgatlhana le bahiri le mmusô, re tshwanetse gobuisana lego fitlhêla kutlwanong vadikgang *mobogareng* jwa lekgotla le lekopaneng la babereki.

Go tswêlêlapele ka gosautlwane go tla reisa tshwarong ke setlhôpa sa

babusi, ba esaleng bantse ba batla go bôna babereki bakgaogane.

Gore gonnê le puisanô etletseng go batlêga tsamaisô yatekanô e e tletseng. Ke ônê fêla mokgwa wa go tsa magatô a a siameng, a a tla reisang ditirong tsa boikemisetsa jwa sephara mo kopanong.

Kôpanô ya kokwanô ya babereki ee buduleng mme ele pôpôta e ra gore gago kopantshiwa baêtapele fêla ba le nosi. Gobatlêga *popanyô yabotlhe*, mo maloko a tla buisanang, batsêe magatô, mme ba bônê phêthô ya magatô modintlheng tsothhe.

Kôpanô ya babereki ka makgotla ee tileng ka ditirô e tshwanetse go agiwa mogodimo ga:

- kôpanô-kgolo elengwe ya makgotla a babereki;
- mmuso wa batho kabotlalô;
- ditlhopa tse dikôpaneng ka gotlhe.

Jaana go ka kgonêga go kokotletsa mo lekgotleng le le lengwe jotlhe bonôlô jo bone bosetse bo le teng.

Kôpanô yammatôta eka rulaganya ditshugatshugano mo melelwaneng yotlhe ya tirô gore e nnê *boikaêlêlô jwa tirô lefatshe jotlhe* ee ka kgônang go kôpanya gongwe dithatathata—gophuta babereki ba baphatlhaletseng, batswakgakala le batswagaufi; gokôpanya babereki badimayene le badipolase mmôgo le badithugo ledipetlo moditoropong, ebile legogôga lotsha. Gotlhe go, go ka tsosa lerole mo babereking ba maloko agaTUCSA, baitsenya motlhabanong lefa bêtapele babônê babashêbamorago basabatle.

Ditlhabanô tsa malôba di setse dirifile dintlha tsa boikaêlêlô jwa tirô:

- ga go motho o tla latlhelwang ke tirô, kgotsa o tla bogiswang;
- kgolologo ya makgotla a babereki le tokêlô ya goemisa tirô;
- tuêlô-bonyane jwa R100 kabeke gotlhe, le koketso etsamayêlanang le

## GO AGA THATA YA BABAREKI,

ty. But this did not reflect the real feelings of the peasants as events were to demonstrate—it merely showed the terror of the landlords and their agents, the Caciques.

In the towns, mass demonstrations of the workers took place when the election results were announced. Spain was moving towards revolution, so powerful was the movement that the monarchy had to be sacrificed by the ruling class. Hurriedly Alfonso abdicated and fled the country. The Republic was proclaimed. The revolution had begun. A "glorious, peaceful, democratic era of reconciliation of the people had begun", according to the Socialist and Republican leaders. After the elections which followed, a coalition [government] of Republicans and Socialists was formed. This coalition, because of the world capitalist crisis and the crisis of capitalism and landlordism in Spain, was unable to carry out its promises. A whole series of strikes of the workers were broken and repressed. Attempts by the peasants to seize the land were answered by using the police and troops to suppress these "illegal activities". The consequence of this was the growth of despair, apathy and inertia among the working class, and especially among the peasants. **The CNT and Anarchists engaged in a whole series of isolated seizures and local insurrections which were bloodily repressed.**

## ULTRA-LEFTISM

The Communist Party, in common with all the parties of the then Communist International, had the insane line of "social fascism", denouncing all other tendencies in the labour movement as social fascists, and declaring the Republican-Socialist coalition government to be a "fascist government". Thus they added to the confusion and disorganisation of the labour movement by this infantile and ultra-left policy.

This coalition or "Popular Front" government, as the "Communist" Party nowadays terms it, failed to solve a single one of the basic tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Spain. **(At the present time, by changing the name of such a coalition with the liberals, the CP pretend to change the reality of class relations.)**

Today, within the ranks of revolutionaries, within the Socialist Party in Spain, there is still a lack of clarity in our opinion on this question of the "bourgeois-democratic revolution" in Spain, so it is necessary to make a short analysis of the question which is borne out by Spanish experience.

For a hundred years the incapacity of the Spanish capitalists to carry the bourgeois revolution to a conclusion has always ended in the defeat of the revolution and the victory of reaction.

The Spanish bourgeoisie developed late on the scene, like the Russian bourgeoisie. By the time it was fully formed it was already being challenged for the supremacy and leadership of the nation by the proletariat.

**It had many links with the landowners and even the aristocracy. The banks had mortgages on the land.** The landowners invested in industry.

**The church was simultaneously the biggest landowner and the biggest capitalist.** Consequently the main task of the bourgeois revolution, the redistribution of the land and the expropriation of the landlord class, as in Russia, could not be carried out by the capitalists without undermining the capitalist system. **Faced with this situation, the Republicans, like the Cadets (Constitutional Democrats) in Russia, preferred always to do a deal with reaction.**

As the description of events in Spain will show, the Republicans, representatives of capitalism, could not solve the tasks of the bourgeois revolution.

Lenin and Trotsky, especially the latter, in a country with a similar social structure, understood this problem. They taught the workers to have an implacable and irreconcilable attitude towards the cowardly, liberal representatives of capitalism.

With the theory of "Permanent Revolution" advanced by Trotsky even before the 1905 Revolution, he explained that because the capitalists, in consequence of their vested interests, could not give the land to the peasants, take action against the Church and the monarchy—the bureaucratic semi-feudal state—but would always attempt to compromise with it against the workers and peasants, then the task of carrying out the bourgeois revolution falls to the proletariat. But the proletariat, having carried out the tasks of the bourgeois revolution with the support of the peasants and petty bourgeoisie, would not abandon power but would pass on to the socialist tasks by dispossessing the capitalists. But socialism cannot be built in one country. With the accomplishment of the revolution in Russia, the revolution would spread to the most advanced countries in Europe where the proletariat would be affected and stirred by the Russian Revolution.

The revolution in Russia developed as worked out theoretically by Trotsky. It provoked revolution in Germany, Austria and Hungary, and a revolutionary situation in France, Britain and Italy.

For many reasons which cannot be dealt with here, none of these revolutions and revolutionary situations ended in victory, and consequently the revolution in Russia was isolated. This led to the reaction of Stalinism which was to take a terrible toll of the revolutionary movement in the world, especially in Spain.

The Republican-Socialist coalition government of 1931-33 was unable to solve the problems facing the Spanish people because it was a government including representatives of the capitalists. Peasants driven by hunger attempted to seize land and were met by bloody repression by the police and army. Workers striking for higher wages were met by repression and force by the government. The despair and disillusionment of the workers and peasants paved the way for reaction, especially in the countryside.

In the journal of the Communist Party, *International Press Correspondence*, while defending the policy of Popular Frontism, on page 94 of its issue of 1st August 1936, there is an article entitled "Secrets of Spain" which admits the failure of the Republicans to solve the problems of the bourgeois-democratic revolution.

**"Que te de a comer la Republica? (What is the Republic giving you to eat?) ask the peasants.** This is one of the great questions in Spain. Where the land problem dominates politics, because out of 4 Spaniards 3 are peasants [at that time—EG].... Extreme misery is without doubt a characteristic of them all.... About 1931, 1 173 000 peasants owned 6 million hectares and 105 000 landowners 12 million hectares. 5 million land workers (agricultural proletarians) owned nothing....

**"In 1873 the first Republic promised the peasants land.** It was overthrown because it did not keep its promise. In 1931 the Republic of 14th April renewed the promise.... The law was passed on 15th September. It affected a large number of tracts of land, which were to be taken over with or without compensation.... Also the feudal or non-feudal properties of the Jesuits, as well as those of the Spanish grandees and the monarchists who took part in the coup d'état of Sanjurjo, were taken over without compensation—farms—cultivated or poorly cultivated—with compensation—in other words, the land was not given to the peasants as freehold property: it was and is granted to them on lease, for which they pay rent to the Institute (of Agrarian Reform).... **This law was a compromise between the claim of the socialists and the resistance of the bourgeoisie;.... 5 years after the establishment of the second Republic agrarian reform had hardly started...."**

Caballero, leader of the left socialists, later condemned the socialist coalition with the capitalists in the first years of the Republic, but did not draw all the necessary conclusions from it.

By the time of the next election in October 1933, reaction

# MAKGOTLA!

tlhatlhogô ya tlhôtthô ya botshelô.

Lerole le le ka thunyang fa re ka batla tuêlô eno *lefatshe lothle*, le bontshiwa ke ditiragalô tsa koEast Rand, kwa batho kadikete bakopanye mmogo babêa dipeke ledigarawe fatshe, bagana gobereka, lefa gotwe gomathata a ngomaêlô.

Godimo gamowo, jaanong retshwanetse gotswelelepele rebopê kuô ya gosireletsa ba makgotla motshwarong, gotswalelwa kantle gotshêkô, ebile letshêkô.

Goshebagana retsosa lerole kadilo tseno *lefatshe lothle* kegônê go ka atisa tokololô ya makgotla gofitlhêla e amê tlhôtthô ya-millionê ka ngwaga oo tlang.

Dikagô tsa phemêlô tse di ka nnang teng kwa ditirong, e le ônê makgotla, kokwanô ya babereki e ka thatafatsa gothunya ga lerole go goleng teng mo metseng, ebile go ka êtelapele ditlhabanêlô tsa dirêntê le tuêlô ya dipalangwa tse ditlhatlhosiwang, gokobiwa mo malapeng legotsamayisiwa gabatho kakang, le melawo yadipasa.

Jaaka mang le mang mmereki wa makgotla a itse, tlhabanêlô ya makgotla ka boyônê kentlha ya bo-politiki. Baêtapele ka bontsi ba makgotla aa ipusang bagobolêla go, phuô-pha. Kôpanô ya malôba yaFOSATU edumetse gore "botshelô jotle jwa bônê ke jwa bo-politiki".

Seêmô seno setsamaêlana lesa kokwano ya makgotla a babereki mafatsheng otlhe. Moboamaruring, makgotla a bone gore go a batlêga jaang le jaang gore bakgônê go tsamaisa mmusô gore bakgônê gosireletsa maloko a makgotla.

Mo mafatshing a mantsi, go gatelegile gore gotheyiwe dipati tsa bo-politiki tsa babereki, detshegeditswe ke makgotla, legolwanêla gore ditsênê mo mmusong ka maikemisetso a go sêbana lematshwenyegô a babereki.

Mono garona makgotla a

shêbagene le mutsubotsubo wa bo-politiki go diragatsa ditshwanêlô tsa babereki. Fa kokwano ya makgotla entse e gola, ke fa go ntse go oketsêga mmêrêkô wa bo-politiki, bo bakwa kedipatlô tsa babereki legotlola ga setlhopanyana se sebusang.

Tuêlô se tshwanetseng batho le madi a boikhutsô, ditirô, magae, thutô le tlhômêlô ya botshelô go botlhe—tsotlhe ditôpô tse tsa *makgotla* ga dikake tsa be tsa nna teng di tswa mo mmusong o wa gompijeno.

Ga rona le baêtapele ba re batlhophileng re santse re le motlase ga melawo, ditôrônkô, le ditshêkêlô tsa bo-rra madi; ga re santse re le mapantiti a dipasa ebile rerogakiwa kedintja tsa mmusô ba ba berekang mo di-ofising mme re sa batlhopha; ga babolai batletse ko-John Vorster bagotweng ke bammusô; ga mapodisi le bagolo bamashôlê baitse go re thlasêtsa kadintja tsa bônê ba thunya batho mo makeisheng ko dimayneng le kwa dipetlong—ga gona sepê se re kareng ke sa rona.

Gore go nnê le botoka jo bo bônalang mo botshelong jwa batho, go ka batlega mmusô o o inetseng mo botshelong jwa batho-babereki. Le galê mmusô oo gore o nnê teng go ka batlêga pele pusô ya batho; ke gore go tshwanetse go fedisiwê mmuso wa apartheid wakgaoganyô mme go theiwê mmusô wa batho o o tshwerweng ke babereki.

Ga go tsela empe mono. Go re ba fitlhêlê koo babereki batshwanetse goikôpanya mo ditshwanelong tsa bônê, eseng fêla ka dikete, mme ka mashomê-shomê a diketekete, ba tlhatlhogêla kwa gobutsweng ga pitsô ya bônê. Bo rra di-politiki ba ba salaolweng ke setlhopha sa babereki jaaka FOSATU a boletse, ba ka simolola bolotsana ka mothokô.

Tsamaiso ya politiki mo kokwanong ya makgotla a babereki e ra gophutha thata yagoitwêla ya babereki goisa kwa gotshikeng ga

sechaba ka botho, goitshepisa botshelô.

Pêrêkô ya metlha ya makgotla a babereki ke go bôna gore batho ba kgônê goja, le ditshwanêlô tsotlhe tse di bonwang ka thêkô.

Le galê ga gore gore gotshwanetse go kgaogangwê tirô mo-politiking ya makgotla le ya ANC.

ANC e bophara, e tsamaisiwang ka pusô ya batho, e e agilweng mo motheong wa babereki bakopanye, mme e na le maikemisetso a go aga Afrika Borwa wa bojammôgô, e ka kgôna go phimola kगतêlêlô ebe e agê sechaba se sesha se setshwanetseng babereki le bana ba bônê go tshela.

Bontsi jwa babereki ba batla go aga ANC e nnê yônê koloi ya go ba fitlhisa kwa dikgorong tsa boipusô. Go re re fitlhêlêlê, kokwanô ya makgotla a babereki e batlêga jang le jang mo ntweng eo. Ka mafoko a gaFOSATU mo kopanong yabônê yaga April, ke yônê tsela ya go se ipilaetse gore "kokwanô yasephara sa sechaba e seke ya tsiediwa ke dinokwane tse di tla reng morago be dija batho dirêthê".

Ke ka moo go ka nnang gore thata ya setlhôpa sa babereki go bopa sešha *lefatshe* e ka tshwana le lerumô le tlhaba bo rra-madi le mmusô wa bônê ka tsamaisô ya makgotla a babereki le ka ya ANC.

Morwalô ono o tshwanetse go shebisiswa go buisangwê mo magareng a kokwanô ya batho, go re go bônwê sentlê seo se tshwanetsweng go dirwa.

Ga re ka thea tirô ya go aga ANC e e sephara mo maikemisetso a bojammôgô mo godimo ga kokwanô ya makgotla a a kôpaneng, batho ba ka itshêla jaaka ditsie mo tirong ya sechaba. Re bontshitswe gosekae ka phitlho ya ga Neil Aggett, fa mokôlôkô wa phitlho o ileng wa nna mophathô wa babereki o gata mmôgô—balatêla mokgêlê wa kokwanô ya makgotla a babereki, mmôgô le wa gaANC.

## MUSO WA BATHO LE BOJAMMOGO!

had taken advantage of the failure of the Republicans and Socialists. Women had been enfranchised and came under the pressure of the priests to vote for reactionary candidates. In the general disillusion, the right republicans of Lerroux and the clerical fascists of Gil Robles made big gains. The latter engaged in the usual demagoguery of the fascists.

But the coming to power of Hitler in 1933, the crushing of the Austrian workers in February 1934 alarmed the international working class. They saw the suppression of the workers' organisations and the taking away of the hard-won rights of the German and Austrian workers. They were reduced to the condition of slaves. The Spanish workers were determined that the same thing would not happen to them.

Under the influence of this mood, Caballero secretly organised the importation of arms, and armed many socialist militants. Caballero issued a warning, as the Lerroux government moved further towards reaction and began discussions with the leader of the CEDA of clerical fascism, Gil Robles. The working class would never tolerate the coming into the government of the fascists as this would mean a move towards the destruction of their organisations and rights.

Lerroux vacillated and then took the CEDA representatives into the Cabinet. The Socialist Party replied by organising a general strike, and in the Asturias and in Catalonia, armed insurrection.

This resulted in the seizure of Asturias by the workers, and the organisation of the Asturian Commune. **This could have succeeded were it not for the stupidity of the anarchists.** Arguing that this was a "struggle between politicians" and had not the Republican-Socialist coalition suppressed and even shot them, they blacklegged and even transported on the railways the troops sent to crush the Asturian Commune. **The Moors of the Foreign Legion under General Franco brutally crushed the movement.**

Many workers were executed and tens of thousands imprisoned, but because the workers had fought arms in hand, the spirit of resistance remained uncurbed. Unlike after the betrayal of the German workers by the Communist and Socialist Party leaders, it was impossible to consolidate a fascist regime.

There followed the *Bien Negro* (the Two Black Years), but the struggle of the workers continued. The Communist Party, at the behest of the Stalinist regime in Moscow, had changed the "line". They dropped the Stalinist theory of "Social Fascism" without explanation. **In its place they put the discredited theory, implacably condemned by Lenin, of coalition with the "liberal" bourgeoisie, which they refurbished, in order to make it more palatable to their members and the working class, as the theory of the "People's Front" or "Popular Front".**

The bourgeoisie in Spain found themselves in difficulties. They could not maintain the reactionary government in power. They felt the rising tide of resistance of the workers and of the peasants. Under these conditions they had recourse to the "strike-breaking" conspiracy of the "People's Front", as Trotsky termed it.

The POUM and the Anarchists joined with the Socialist Party, Communist Party and the "left" Republican Parties to form the Popular Front.

Because of the experience of the workers of the "left" Republicans in the period of 1931-33, they were distrustful of the Republicans, and the leaders of the Communist and Socialist parties, behind the scenes to their members, presented the People's Front as a "manoeuvre" where they were "using" the liberal leaders. That is the way they persuaded their members to accept it.

However, in the elections of February 1936, because of the rising tide of radicalisation of the workers and of the peasants, the Popular Front slate was victorious. **As a result of the Popular Front agreement the left Republicans were given far more seats to contest than their real support in the population**

**would warrant, with the result that their number of deputies, as compared with the workers' parties, was inflated.**

The Popular Front secured 268 seats, of which the bourgeois left republicans held 153. The Communist Party won 16 seats and the Socialist Party 98. The right wing parties secured 157 seats, and the so-called centre parties 48 seats. However, the vote for the right was inflated by the terror and intimidation especially in the villages. So in reality the Popular Front victory was much greater.

**The working class, which had learned to distrust the liberals through bitter experience between 1931 and 1933, immediately moved into action.** Within days by direct action they carried out the Popular Front programme. Holidays with pay, 44 hour week and wage increases were imposed on the employers. Without waiting for an amnesty the workers marched to the jails, tore down the walls where necessary, and released the 30 000 political prisoners still languishing there as a result of the general strike and the Asturian insurrection. They imposed conditions on the employers not in the Popular Front programme. They expelled the fascists and blacklegs, who had been taken on after the defeat of 1934, from the factories. They forced the employers to re-employ the tens of thousands victimised and to reinstate them with two years back pay.

The reason for the Popular Front victory in the elections is indicated in the *International Press Correspondence* of 4th April 1936, page 461:

"Not one of the questions raised by the bourgeois-democratic revolution has been solved. On the contrary, they have become more acute. The unbearable political, social and economic situation which the parties of the right, by their reactionary and fatal policy, have created for the toiling masses, the workers, peasants, clerks, small shopkeepers, etc.

"The great experience which the masses have acquired in all their former struggles, and above all, from the insurrectionary movements of October 1934, the heroic deeds of the workers of Asturias.

## WORKERS UNDER ATTACK

"The two years of government of the Radicals and the CEDA were characterised by a constant state of emergency. The workers and peasants were deprived of all their achievements. The strikes and movements of the workers and peasants for their demands and for immediate improvements were brutally throttled and suppressed. Attacks upon and murders of workers by the fascist gangs, who were protected by the government were a 'normal' everyday occurrence in Spain. Workers' organisations were persecuted and dissolved and their premises closed, meetings and conferences of workers were prohibited.

"100 death sentences, 30 000 imprisoned and tortured....The landowners and capitalists reduced the wages and worsened the already miserable living conditions of the workers....The wages of the workers in the towns were reduced from 10-12 pesetas to 4-5 pesetas. Wages in the countryside were reduced from 8-9 pesetas to 1,50 pesetas for men and 50 centimes for women, for a working day lasting from sunrise to sunset....

"Unemployment increased from 536 100 in 1933 to 780 242 in 1935. As a matter of fact, however, there are more than 1½ million unemployed in Spain. The Budget for 1933 provided 873 million pesetas for public works, but the 1935 Budget provided only 628 million...." In its issue of 29th February 1936, the IPC deals with the results of the election victory:

"But Spain shows also something else, namely that the People's Front is not a Parliamentary Coalition (?!)

"The working people of Spain, however, gathered in the streets and shouted out with firm resolution 'We are not going to wait until parliament meets and repeals or does not

# inqaba YA BASEBENZI

## IINKUNDLA

Abasebenzi baqale ukubona amandla wabo ngokwakha inkundla yabasebenzi. Inkundla yabasebenzi ehlanganise imihambo yabasebenzi bonke yiyo inkundla efunwa ngamalunga wenkundla yabasebenzi.

Inkokheli zenkundla zabasebenzi sezenze umsebenzi omkhulu ngamanyathelo athathiweyo, ukuhlanganisa iinkundla zabasebenzi.

Abacindezeli abahlangananga ngokwabo banovalo langomso. Incindezelo yabo ihlulekile. Nezithembiso zabo angeke zifinyezwe, ngoba iindlela zabo zoku fumane imali azisoze zilunge.

Into abathembele kuyo hukusibamba, basidlukuze njengoba sebefezele ukubulala uNeil Aggett nokubamba inkokheli zeSAAWU.

Kakhulu ngenkathi zokungemanga kahle kwezemali zombuso. Kufuneka ukuthi abasebenzi bahlangane bakwazi ukuthi bazilamlele, ekubanjweni nesimo sokuhlala emakhaya nasemsebenzini. Ngenxa yokwehla kwemihlo.

Ngokubhlangana kwemibutho namasebe wabo bathathe amanyathelo kuzakusiza ukuba sikwazi nokuthatha umbuso. Lokho kuzosiza kakhulu kwimpi yenkululeko.

Kwintlangano yase Wilgespruit ye (independent) yenkundla zaba sebenzi, isiqibo zalomhlangano

umazingalandelwa zakusiza ukuhlangisa iinkundla zabasebenzi.

Umsebenzi omele wenziwe ukuhlanganiso iinkundla zabasebenzi usemkhulu, ngoba iihlangano zithatha isikhathi.

Iinkundla zakhiwe zakhula ngezindlela ezehlukeneyo nangemi khuba yokwakha ehlukele. Ukunga thembani nokungazwani kuza kuba khona ngesikati esincane. Kuze izinto zilungiswe.

Abasebenzi bayaziqenya ngezinkundla abazakhile. Bazimisele nokukhusela iinkundla zabo kwimposiso zemisebenzi zenkundla ezinye.

Kodwa loko kungenzi ukuba kungenisi ukuhlukana kwezinkundla zabasebenzi.

Nango umzekeliso ukubalwa kwenkundla zaba sebenzi. Inqaba ayihambisani nokubhaliswa kwamalunga nokuzifaka ezintweni ezinokwenza nohulumeni (umbuso) emisebenzini.

Imihluko efana nayo le ayifanele ukuthi inyathelwe kufuneka kukhulunyiswane ngayo. Kuzabekungasizi lutho ukulungisa izinto ecaleni.

Ukulungiswa kwezinto kufanele kuhambisane nokwakhiwa kwenhlanganiso yenkundla zabasebenzi. Ukwakha amandla ethu ekulwiseni umbuso. Loku kuzolungiswa ngokuhlala kwethu phansi sikhulumisane ngenxhakizethu.

Ukunga hlangani kwethu kusiza lowo osicindezeleye ngoba akafuni sibe yinto enye.

Ngomanyano lweenkundla zabasebenzi asikhulumi nje kuphela

ngomanyano lwaba khokeli benkundla. Sikhuluma ngomanyano lwa wonke amalunga. Kufuneka siphonipe amalungelo wawo wonke amalungu kulamanyathelo.

Umanyano lweenkundla zabasebenzi equbela phambili (ezinzileyo) yakhiwa:

- embutweni omunye;
- nokuhlonipha amalungelo amalunga;
- nama sebe asebenza kunye.

Ukuhlangana kuzakusiza uma sesithatha amanyathelo wokulungisa indaba zesizwe. Lapho sizokwazi ukusebenza nabasebenzi basemigodini, basemasimini nabasemafemini. Loku kuzokwenza sihlangane sisebenze, nabasebenzi benkundla ezinje nge TUCSA. Ngaphandle kwenkokheli zabo ezithukileyo.

Kubonakele emva kwezimpi ezandlula ukuthi sikhone ukuthi:

- abantu bangasalahlekelwa imisebenzi;
- babe namalungelo weenkundla zabasebenzi we "strike";
- nokufumana imali engephantsi kwe R100 ngeveki enyuka njalo njalo ngemivuso ngenxa yemekho.

Lokhu sokubonakele kwinqubeko zase East Rand "strikes" ngezigididi gidi zabasebenzi okokuba abasebenzi bangaphumelala uma besebenza kunye.

Okusuke manje ukuthi sikwazi ukukhusela amalungu wezinkundla

# KUMANDLA WABASEBENZI,

repeal the reactionary laws! Open the workers' clubs and meeting places at once! Open the prison gates at once!' The armed forces appeared on the scene. But like the glorious fighters of the Commune and every people's revolution, the masses fraternised with the troops; they won them over to their side....

"The fate of the coup d'état (being prepared by Franco and the Generals) was thereby sealed. Of course the gates of the prisons were opened, just as the doors of the workers' clubs and meeting places had already been opened....

"The state and municipal employees and also other workers who had been dismissed during and after the October 1934 insurrection for having taken part in the fighting were reinstated and on the other hand, many employees who had acted as strike-breakers in October were dismissed (in Madrid municipality alone over 1 000). The reactionary agrarian measures were rescinded.

"We read in the London Sunday papers that the Chief of the General Staff, General Franco, the friend of Gil Robles, and General Goded the Chief of the Air Force, who were at the head of the proposed military coup d'état were simply removed from their positions instead of being stood up against the wall. It is highly probable that all the authorities, all the judges who took part in crushing and sentencing the October fighters are still holding their positions."

## INDEPENDENT ACTION

The masses moved independently. What was necessary was to organise them, to increase and strengthen their distrust of the Liberal government. As the *Liberal News Chronicle* of July 20th, 1936 announced of the programme of Azana's government: "With the support of the left (who still refused actually to join the government-EG) his (Azana's-EG) government announced a programme which was nothing more radical than a return to the constitution of 1931, with quite ordinary reforms such as new schools, public works and the revision of the banking system." It was necessary to begin the setting up of independent committees and prepare the taking of power by the masses. They clearly were not prepared to rely on the discredited liberals. In the same issue of IPC on page 294, in a letter from Spain, it reports in a way that unconsciously condemns root and branch the whole policy of Popular Frontism.

"The masses of the people are reaping the fruits of their victory in a way very different from what happened after the fall of the monarchy in 1931. While at that time the masses poured onto the streets with a great deal of noise and rejoicing, their action now is much calmer and more far-reaching...

"In general the movement of the masses all over the country is aimed at independent action. All the efforts of the government and its press to hold the masses back have only had the effect of increasing their militant spirit and strengthening their desire to act on their own." (my emphasis)

*Claridad*, the organ of the Left Socialist Largo Caballero, writes as follows:

"We shall be on the side of the government in order to help it to carry out the Joint Programme with all the necessary determination, even if this programme does not satisfy us entirely. We will, however, not give the government our unreserved confidence as we did from 1931-33. The lesson was too hard, and we will not renounce our right to criticise in order to maintain the vigilance of the working class, which is now marching forward to the final goal of our class, and, at the slightest sign of weakening, to set the working class itself against its present allies." (my emphasis throughout!)

**This course, dictated by the distrust of the "liberal" capitalist representatives by the masses and their pressure, was nevertheless false. It should have been the duty of the "left"**

**Socialists to put no trust in the lying promises of the liberals**, in the circumstances of Spain at that time. They should have reinforced and strengthened the distrust of the masses and prepared for the inevitable struggle by constructing workers' and soldiers' committees of action of an incipient character, even at that stage. That was what the masses were striving for even if inarticulately and in a certain sense unconsciously, as indicated by the attitude and actions of the workers' parties.

Behind the screen, under the protection of the Popular Front government, the conspiracy of the generals, monarchists and fascists began immediately. A comedy of musical chairs began. Franco was transferred to the Canary Islands, General Sanjurjo and De Llano were moved to the Balearics and Morocco and to Seville. The army command was shuffled around.

The Syndicalist, Socialist and even Communist Party press were warning of the danger of a fascist or military uprising. **But the Socialist Party and CP all exhorted the government "to take action"**.

**This was impossible, if one accepts the Marxist analysis of class society. The Republicans were representatives, in one way or another, of capitalism. The power of capitalism depends on the power of the state machine, which is composed of the army, police, courts and prisons etc.** The ruling class, both in its liberal and conservative or fascist form depends on the support of army generals and officers of the army caste, police officers and the top civil servants, who have been specially selected and picked and educated to serve the capitalist system. **To take action against these would be to undermine and destroy the whole basis of the capitalist state. To ask liberals to do this is like asking a tiger to turn vegetarian. For class reasons this is impossible!**

That is why, right up to the insurrection, the bleats of the workers' leaders about the government "taking action", if it had any effect, merely tended to lull the working class and to prevent them from taking the necessary action themselves.

**The Popular Front government did not take action against the fascist army officers. How could they when it meant the destruction of the state machine on which the ruling class relies?**

At the same time the big capitalists, lavishly supplying them with funds, unleashed their reserve weapon: the fascist bands, against the organisations of the working class. A little over two months after the "Great Victory", Cesar Falcon was complaining in the *International Press Correspondence* pages:

"Since the electoral victory of the people, the fascist gangs, recovered from the momentary disarray....incited by the reactionary leaders, and especially by the big landowners, have started a campaign of provocation and assault extending all over the country....Madrid....villages....with the full co-operation of the fascist elements in the army and in the Civil Guard....**They relied mainly on the passivity of the—Popular Front—government**". (my emphasis)

"The Ministry of the Interior which had pledged itself to a constitutional and tolerant attitude, hesitated (?) to take those vigorous measures which both the nature of the offence and popular opinion were demanding....assault on the Socialist Deputy for Madrid....The young students belonging to the Spanish Falange tried to murder Largo Caballero and bomb the home of Ortega y Gasset—Liberal....The leniency of the government only drove the fascists further."

"Jimenez Asua—SSP Madrid Deputy—The fascists immediately replied by murdering a judge....**What speedy and drastic steps were then taken against the fascist provocateurs and criminals? Not one.**" (my emphasis)

Constantly up to the period of the army uprising in July 1936, the workers parties were appealing to the "Popular Front" liberal government to "take action". They behaved as the Social Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders behaved after the February Revolution in 1917. **Also the Bolsheviks under**

# ZABASEBENZI MAZIDIBANE!

ekubanjweni. Umasenza loku singongoza inani lenkulungwane zamalungu kakhulu kulonyaba ozayo.

Uma iikundla zabasebenzi zinenqaba ngeenqaba emafemini bangakokhela isizwe kwi-intlupheko zabantu. Kwimali zezindlu, nokubanjwa kwabantu bathunyelwe kwibantustans, nokuphata idompaas.

Njengoba sekwaziwa ukuthi impi yenkundla zabasebenzi yimpi yepolitiki nalabo abakhokhelayo bayambe njengoba sekwenziwe emhlanganweni weFOSATU.

Manje kucacile, kuyobonakala ukuthi iinkundla zabasebenzi zifanele ukuthatha umbuso ubese Zandleni zabo ngengoba seku thathiwe amayathelo aloluhlobo kwamanye amazwe. Ukwenzela ukukhusela iifundo zabasebenzi.

Kumazwe amaningi loku kwakhe imibutho, yabasebenzi, yampolitiki nokwenza ukuthi balwe ukufumana isikhundla embusweni, ukwenza nokuba babe namandla nokulwela amalungelo wabasebenzi.

Ezweni letu inkundla zabasebenzi zibekene nempu enkulu yokulwela amalungelo wabasebenzi.

Imisebenzi elungileyo, izindlu zokuhlala, imfundo nempilo entle yabo bonke abantu. Zonke lezi zinto azisoze zenziwe ngulombuso.

Thina nenkokheli zethu singaphansi kwemithetho yenkundla zalabo abasiphethayo (uhulumeni).

Siyiziqila zeDompas nohulumeni esingazange samkhetha. Sihlalele ukushaywa emaJohn Vorster Square amaphoyisa namasotsha wona ahlalele ukubulala abantu emalokishini, emigodini nasemafemini. Ukunqobo kwethu ngeke kwazi ukukhuseleka.

Ukunqoba kwethu kungakhuseleka ngaphasi kohulumeni wabasebenzi emva kokususa kombuso weapartheit sibeke ubuhulumeni wabasebenzi.

Ayikho indlela emfishane yokwenza lokhu. Ukwazi ukuthi sikhona kufuna ukuthi abasebenzi bonke bahlangane. Kuyafuneka okobuba abasebenzi babe namandla okuphata iinkokheli zabo. Njengoba beku shiwo kwintlanganiso yeFOSATU ukuba iinkhokheli ezingazwani nemphatho yabasebenzi, ziyaduka zilahleke zingahambisani nemiqondo yabasebenzi.

Iipolitiki zenkundla yabasebenzi zihamba nokwaka nokukutaza amandla wokulwa kwabasebenzi noku vula indlela yemphilo entle yabantu bonke.

Imisebenzi yayonke lemihla yezinkundla zabasebenzi ukulwela imfuno ze "economy" yabasebenzi kodwa lokhu akwenzi ukuhlukanisa umsebenzi ngaphakathi kweANC nenkundla zabasebenzi.

Uma iANC yakwe ngamandla weenkundla zabasebenzi, yona le eyakhiwe ngamandla wabasebenzi nokuzimisela ukwakha umbuso womasilingane, ingasusa incindezelo yakhe inhlalo entle yabasebenzi nezingane zabo.

Uningi lwabasebenzi lufuna ukwakha iANC ukuthi ibe ngombutho zolwela amandla wobupolitiki. Ngokusheshisa loku izinkundla zabasebenzi kufanele zisebenze kakhulu. Ingendlela yokunqinisa nokulandelwa amazwi akulunywe entlanganisweni yeFOSATU ngalendle izithembiso azisoze ziphulwe, neenkokheli azisoze zilwe nabasebenzi.

Amandla wabasebenzi ekuphenduleni isizwe kuzofuneka ukuthi kukhunjiswe njengomkhonto ebuhulumendeni uphethwe yizinkundla zabasebenzi neANC. Lemisebenzi ifanele ukukhulunywa ihlazululwe phakathi kweenkundla ukwenzela ukuthi kuthathwe amanyathelo afanelekileyo.

Uma yakhiwe phezulu kwezinkundla zabasebenzi, namandla okwakha iANC. Phezulu kwemfuno zobuhulumeni bomasilingane ukuthi iANC ibe namandla.

Ukuqala kwaleyonkundla sekubonakale emncwabeni wakaNeil Aggett lapho abasebenzi abaningi babonisa emathuneni, bahamba bophethe ifulaga le ANC nefulaga yenkundla yabasebenzi ngaphambili.

## NEMPILONTLE NELOBUDLELWANO!

the leadership of Kamenev and Stalin, up till the arrival of Lenin, used the formula "support for the Provisional government in so far as...". It was Lenin's April Theses opposing this and demanding preparations for a new revolution, patiently explaining this to the masses, which won the overwhelming support of the rank and file, making the victory of the Russian Revolution possible.

Adoption of this standpoint of the Spanish CP and SP would have resulted in the shipwreck of the revolution. The policies of the leaders of these parties were as if plagiarised from the policies of Menshevism and Social Revolutionism. More correctly, they were a helpless response to the pressures of class conflict and their failure to implement clear class policies.

After gaining the promises of the government to take action and dissolve the fascist organisations, two months later in the issue of June 4th of *IPC*, Vincent Uribe's writes: "the courts of justice, before which the fascists are brought, either acquit them, or sentence them to two months imprisonment, a mere parody of justice. In innumerable cases fascists have been acquitted of charges of murder. This mildness and complicity where fascists are concerned contrasts vividly with the barbarous penalties imposed on the workers during the period in which reaction was in power, and with the punishment still dealt out by the courts to workers found with arms in their possession." (my emphasis)

## OFFICERS' TREACHERY

**The courts, the police, the army and the civil service top layers are the basis of the state, and consequently it was baying at the moon to expect the liberal politicians who represent the bourgeoisie to destroy their own state machine and leave themselves entirely without defence from any assault by the masses, especially as the army officers had gone over overwhelmingly to the reaction.**

In its issue of July 4th the *IPC* reported in an article entitled "Secrets of Spain": "There are only a few Republican officers. I was told that there were 3%....then an officer who works for the Chief of Staff told me....'Your informant is an optimist....there are perhaps 100 officers of whom one can be fairly sure'."

Army generals and officers ignored orders, fraternised with fascists and provoked the workers into conflicts. They ceaselessly prepared a bloody settlement with the workers.

Meanwhile, the Popular Front was incapable of carrying out fundamental reforms in the interests of the workers and peasants. The land question had bedevilled Spain for more than a century and a half.

The liberals were incapable of solving the problems of the bourgeois democratic revolution.

Castrillo Santos in his book *Four Years of Republican Experiment 1931-5* declared: "95% of the total agricultural undertakings in Spain comprise only about 5 million hectares of land, whilst 0,35% of the total comprise 9 million hectares. One million owners possess 6 million hectares, whilst 100 000 owners possess 12 million hectares. These statistics represent in the last resort the social problems of Spanish agriculture."

*IPC* says in its issue of June 4th: "30 000 landowners own two-thirds of Spain" and commenting on the role of the Spanish capitalists says, "Sabotage of the agrarian revolution when it has gained office with the assistance of the revolutionary forces, and then a repentant return to the camp of reaction in order to crush with its assistance the rebellious workers and poor peasants and re-establish order."

**In the six months of the Popular Front, 190 000 landless peasants gained land. This was two and a half per cent of the peasants.**

In the articles "Secrets of Spain" continued in the issue of

August 1936, page 27, it deals with the attitude of the capitalists and big landowners:

**"In words they declared their readiness to reconcile themselves to the democratic republic which had been created in Spain. But actually they began with economic sabotage and underhand intrigues immediately after the overthrow of their government.**

"The financial oligarchy began to transfer its capital abroad. The most despicable stock exchange sharks began to undermine the standard of the Peseta...the big manufacturers demanded the annulment of the government measures which were intended to alleviate the want of the broad masses of the people, failing which they threatened lock-outs.

"The big landlords, supported by the bankers, threatened a "strike" by declaring that unless the government desisted from its plans for agrarian reform...they would not proceed with the autumn sowing...the government displayed extreme tolerance towards the reactionary elements who had suffered a common defeat at the elections. Despite the warnings and advice of the workers' organisations, the leaders of the monarchists and the fascists were allowed to remain in freedom, even remaining in high positions in the army, the navy, and inside the state machine..."

"The condition of the peasants and the landworkers was that of starvation and semi-starvation. **Less than one in forty received any land as a result of land reform: 190 000 out of 8 million...**There are villages in Hurdes in le ancha...where the peasants in absolute despair revolt no longer. They eat roots and fruit...Thirty miles from Madrid, the villagers exist on soup made from bread, water, oil and vinegar..."

"The Caciques still have some power...the usurers are still carrying on their rapacious business and not all the big landowners have been dispossessed. One has seen how in Almenoralejo, in the province of Badajoz, twenty millionaires are systematically starving one of the richest corners of Spain by refusing even to discuss the question of the wages of the landworkers...Not all the land is under cultivation.

What has the Republic given you to eat? Things should be speeded up to the starved peasants it seems...The peasant leaders calculate that the agrarian law plans 50 000 settlements a year, **which means that it will take 20 years to settle a million peasants: more than a century to give land to all.**"

In Russia, before the October revolution, the bourgeoisie reckoned that it would take about a quarter century to measure out and divide the land and therefore land reform was impractical. **The peasants under the leadership of the working class and of the Bolshevik Party achieved the agrarian revolution in days by seizing the land.**

In Spain too the peasants began to seize the land, but unlike the Bolsheviks, neither the Socialist nor Communist Party leaders made it their policy to carry out the agrarian revolution.

The peasants provide the broad infantry of the revolution. The working class under modern conditions is the decisive class and the driving force in the revolution. In Spain the gains in wages made by working class militancy were cancelled out by inflation. There were constant clashes between workers and employers. The police and the fascists were used by the bosses to try and terrorize the working class. All these attempts failed. The workers were tempered and fired in the struggle. They were not demoralised by the failures of the trade union and Socialist and Communist leaders to press home the attack. The reaction grew more and more alarmed.

## DAILY CLASHES

After the murder of Calvo Sotelo, spokesman for the monarchist reaction and fascism, by civil guard policemen in

**inqaba  
YA BASEBENZI**

# VERENIG DIE

Deur die opbou van die onafhanklike vakbonde het die georganiseerde werkers begin om hulle eie krag aan te voel. 'n Verenigde vakbondsbeweging, wat die massa van die werkers in aksie saambind, word nou geëis deur die lede van al hierdie bonde.

Die vakbondsleiers, deur praktiese stappe na 'n verenigde organisasie uit te werk, dra 'n historiese verantwoordelikheid.

Die heersende klas wat ons onderdruk en uitbuit is diep verdeel en onseker van hulle toekoms. Hulle ou beleid om ons te vertrap het nie reggekry om ons beweging te stop nie. Hulle nuwe beloftes van 'her-vorming' is leeg omdat hulle winsgrypsisteme nie die koste van konsessies en verandering kan betaal nie.

Die staat gaan soos gewoonlik oor tot brutale aanvalle op ons vakbonde—arrestasies, marteling, die moord van Neil Aggett en nou die verhoor van SAAWU-leiers.

Veral in hierdie tyd van ekonomiese resessie is vakbondseenheid noodsaaklik vir die beskerming van die werkers—teen wraakaksies, teen die staat se aanvalle, teen verslegterende kondisies tuis en op die werk, teen vallende inkomstes.

Maar vakbondseenheid in aksie sou ook 'n deurbraak beteken in die stryd van al die werkende mense om mag te kry oor ons eie lewens, oor die ekonomie en oor die staat. Dit sou 'n groot stap na die bevryding beteken.

Dit is die uitdagende werklikhede voor die vakbonde by die uitwerk van hulle benadering tot eenheid in die praktyk.

Die Wilgespruitkonferensie van onafhanklike vakbondsleiers was 'n belangrike stap vorentoe. As sy besluite doelbewus uitgevoer word,

kan dit 'n sterk en blywende vakbondseenheid afgee.

Tog moet baie probleme nog opgelos word om te verseker dat die eenheid blywend word.

Die vakbonde is gebore en het opgegroeï onder verskillende omstandighede, met verskillende tradisies, metodes, en vorme van organisasie. Daar is verskillende benaderings tot party sentrale vraagstukke. Twyfel en agterdog sal bly hang.

Die werkers in elke vakbond is met reg trots op die organisasies wat hulle opgebou het, en wil verdedig wat hulle bereik het. Elke stroming in die vakbonde sal versigtig wees vir wat hulle sien as die verkeerde beleid van andere.

Soos die meeste vakbondsleiers herken, moet daar nie toegelaat word dat hierdie werklikhede in die pad van vakbondseenheid staan nie.

Neem byvoorbeeld die verskille oor registrasie. Saam met baie vakbondslede is *Inqaba* teen registrasie en ook teen deelname in die regering se 'nywerheidsraad'-masjienerie.

Verskille oor hierdie vraagstukke kan nie weggedink word nie. Maar hulle kan ook nie deur ultimatus opgelos word nie. Die posisie wat reg is moet aan die massa van die werkers bewys word deur gesonde argumente op die proef gestel in die ervaring van die stryd.

Dit sou niks help om maar net op jou eie te probeer om 'n korrekte posisie vol te hou nie. Om ooreenstemming onder die werkers te bereik, en daarvolgens te handel, is noodsaaklik vir die ontwikkeling van die *hele* vakbondsbeweging. Om ons krag teen die base en die staat te ontwikkel is dit nodig om vraagstukke heeltemal te bespreek en op te los binne 'n verenigde vakbondsbeweging.

Om langer verdeel te bly sou net

speel in die hande van die heersende klas, wat altyd probeer het om die werkers te verdeel.

Vir 'n volledige bespreking moet daar die volste demokrasie wees. Net op hierdie basis kan die korrekte besluite geneem word, wat kan lei tot vasberade massa-eenheid in aksie.

Effektiewe en blywende vakbondseenheid beteken dus nie net 'n eenheid van leiers nie. Dit moet *gesamenlike organisasie* beteken, waarin die lede op elke vlak saampraat, besluit, en besluite uitvoer.

Blywende vakbondseenheid in aksie moet berus op:

- 'n enkele vakbondsfederasie;
- volledige demokrasie;
- verenigde liggame op alle vlakke.

Dit sou dit moontlik maak om die beste van wat daar alreeds opgebou is, voort te sit in 'n enkele organisasie.

Ware eenheid sou 'n springplank wees om die konflikte in elke industriesentrum saam te bind tot 'n *nasionale aksieprogram* wat die grootste kragte sou kan mobiliseer—die ongeorganiseerdes, kontrakwerkers en nie-kontrakwerkers, organiseer; die mynwerkers en die plaaswerkers met die fabriekswerkers verenig; die jongmense betrek. Dit sou ook 'n groot reaksie opwek by baie TUCSA-werkers, wat bewus word van die stryd ten spyte van hulle konserwatiewe leiers.

Deur die gevegte van die afgelope tyd is die basiese elemente van so 'n program alreeds vasgestel:

- geen ontslae of wraakaksies deur die base;
- vakbondsvryheid en die reg om te staak;
- 'n nasionale minimumloon van R100 per week, met outomatiese verhogings gelyk met die lewenskoste.

## VIR WERKERSMAG,

reprisal for the murder of their Socialist police lieutenant by the fascists, both the fascists and monarchists withdrew from parliament. This was in preparation for the fascist rising.

This incident merely precipitated the preparations being made by the army generals since the February elections. The capitalists were thoroughly alarmed by the mood and combativity of the working class. Economically, financially, politically, they could see no other way out than the crushing of the organisations of the working class.

Daily clashes were taking place between the workers and the fascists. On July 5th, 1936, the *Times* reported: "The fascists were murdered on Thursday...As a reprisal men armed with a sub-machine gun opened fire on Friday night on a group of men who were leaving their union headquarters, killing two and injuring five."

On July 13th the *Times* reported that on the previous day:

"six armed men entered the union broadcasting station at Valencia...and after having over-powered the speaker and his assistant, one of them announced through the microphone that fascist forces had seized all the strategic points of the town. The men had disappeared before the police could arrive."

"In spite of the lateness of the hour, Republican (?) and other left groups organised a demonstration of protest which paraded the streets. The mob set fire to the headquarters of the Regional Party, which is the principal party of the right, and the building was destroyed. There was an attempt to burn the buildings of the newspaper...The house of the right politician, Senor Lucia and the furniture of one of the largest cafes...several political clubs of the right wing were set on fire."

The economic situation is indicated in the report of the *Times* of July 14th, 1936, almost on the eve of the insurrection. "The budgetary deficit has become chronic. The Peseta is sinking whilst trade languishes owing to the rising cost of production and failure to pay for imports."

## SHOWDOWN

The capitalists felt the need to crush the trade unions and workers organisations so that they could drive down the living standards of the workers. Because of the economic and political impasse in which they found themselves, one conflict after the other had been taking place between the workers and the bosses in industry and on the land. There were 113 general strikes and 228 partial strikes between February and July in the cities and towns of Spain. Therefore the capitalists were demanding that "order" must be restored, i.e. that terror must be used to subjugate the working class.

The classes were preparing their forces for the showdown. The *Times* of July 15th, 1936, reported that "the monarchists and traditionalists issued a statement: Senor Calvo Sotelo's murder was a true 'state crime' without precedent in Spain." "It (murder) had become possible as a result of the incitement to violence against deputies of the right expressed in parliament. The note adds that the monarchists cannot continue to collaborate in a state plunged in anarchy."

On the other hand Lieutenant Castillo's funeral was arranged for 6 am by the authorities to try and prevent demonstrations. **In spite of this** there were immense crowds. The "body was saluted with clenched fists. The coffin was draped in a red flag...Socialist militias with banners paraded."

The stage was being set for a struggle to the death between the workers and the forces of capitalism and landlordism. The entire false policy of the leaders of the labour movement from February and throughout the civil war was indicated in the statement of Largo Caballero in an interview with the *London News Chronicle* on July 9th, 1936: "Do you believe that the change from this Republican government to a Socialist government will be accomplished by a ballot?...That I do not know, **really there would be no Republicans without us. We are their**

**strength and if we withdraw our support they are gone.**"(my emphasis)

Significant words when one considers the course of the civil war and the actions of Largo Caballero and the other workers' leaders in the ensuing conflict.

The army generals and officers had been preparing the rising from the first days of the Popular Front government. From July 17th, the rising began in Morocco and the Canary Islands. The Popular Front government tried to hide the news from the Spanish people. When it could no longer be suppressed, Quiroga, the Prime Minister, and the government tried to pretend that this did not affect the mainland. The Madrid radio under the control of the government announced on July 18th that "no-one, absolutely no-one on the Spanish mainland, has taken part in this absurd plot."(The *Times*, 20th July, 1936)

**The news of the revolt had been radioed to the workers by the sailors of the Spanish fleet who seized the ships in the Moroccan harbours. 100 000 workers in Madrid demonstrated demanding arms.** Quiroga, the Prime Minister, refused. Announcing that "anyone who gave arms to the workers without his orders would be shot." Meanwhile throughout Andalusia according to the arrangements of the conspirators, risings began. Even according to Hugh Thomas, the academic 'historian' of the Civil War, "Nearly everywhere on the 18th July the civil governors in the large towns followed the example of the government in Madrid and refused to co-operate fully (!) with the working class organisations who were clamouring for arms."(page 185, of *The Spanish Civil War*)

**In Seville, Granada and Cordoba** the fascist officers were successful, because after demonstrating and demanding arms the workers were persuaded by the Socialist and Communist leaders to go to their homes. The same night the officers armed with lists went to the workers quarters and summarily executed every trade union secretary, Communist Party secretary and Socialist Party secretary and prominent militants on whom they could lay their hands.

Quiroga's government tried to reach a compromise with the fascist generals. The Quiroga government resigned **and an even more right wing government of Martinez Barrios took their place.**

They wanted to make an agreement with the fascist officers. They thought that a right wing government could make a compromise.

## COMPROMISE

**Had it depended on the liberals the position would have been lost to fascism without a struggle. They feared the movement of the masses far more than they feared the coming to power of Franco. This was a class question. Without the treachery of the bourgeois liberals, the fascists would never have been able to seize any of the towns in Spain. The insurrection would have been stillborn. But much as they feared a fascist Spain, the liberal politicians feared an armed working class a thousand times more.**

The government remained passive in the face of the onslaught of the army. The pathological class fear of the liberals of an armed working class is shown by the reports from all over Spain. It is best indicated by the situation in Valencia more than two weeks after the insurrection. Out of the report of the Communist Party official journal *IPC* itself, in its issue of 5th August, 1936, page 987, under the heading "Valencia":

"For fourteen days, since July 18th, a mutineer troop of the 18th cavalry regiment had kept the town in constant insecurity.

"The workers of Valencia, half of them members of the UGT, half of them CNT had been demanding for days that the population should be armed. In order to reinforce the militia and the regulars (how many?—EG), making them

# VAKBONDE!

Die mobiliserende krag van 'n *nasionale* veldtog rondom heirdie eis, selfs in die huidige resessie, kan gesien word op die Oosrand vandag, waar 'n gesamenlike looneis duisende werkers in stakingsaksie betrek het.

Nou moet 'n kragtige massaveldtog vir die verdediging van vakbondslede teen arrestasies en verhore, by hierdie eise gevoeg word.

'n Aktiewe nasionale veldtog rondom hierdie eise alleen sou die ledetal van die vakbonde tot 'n miljoen in die komende jaar kan laat groei.

Met vestings van organisasie in duisende fabriekes sou die vakbondsbeweging die stryd in die townships ook geweldig kan versterk—deur nasionale veldtogte te lei teen rent- en busgeldverhogings, teen uitsettings en deportasies, teen die paswette.

Soos elke aktiewe werker weet, is die vakbondstryd self politiek. Die leiers van al die belangrike onafhanklike vakbonde aanvaar dit nou in die publiek. Die afgelope FOSATU-kongres het verklaar dat sy "hele bestaan politiek is".

Hierdie posisie stem ooreen met die ervaring van die vakbondsbeweging oor die hele wêreld. In die praktyk het die bonde gesien dat dit noodsaaklik is om beheer oor die regering te kry om die belange van hul lede te beskerm.

In baie lande het dit tot die opbou van politieke werkerspartye, gesteun deur die vakbonde, gelei, en 'n stryd om daardie partye aan die mag te bring met 'n program om die probleme van die werkers op te los.

In ons land staan die bonde voor 'n geweldige politieke stryd om die werkers se belange af te dwing. Hoe sterker die vakbondsbeweging word, hoe meer sal sy politieke verantwoordelikhede op hom

afgedruk word, deur die eise van die werkers sowel as die reaksie van die heersende klas.

Behoorlike lone en pensioene, werk, huise, skole en hospitale vir almal—nie een van hierdie basiese *vakbondseise* sal deur die huidige regering uitgevoer word nie.

Terwyl ons en die leiers wat ons gekies het bedreig word deur die wette, tronke en regters van die base; terwyl ons die gevangenes bly van die dompas en die hooghartigheid van elke amptenaar wat deur niemand verkies is nie; terwyl die martelendes John Vorster Square vervuil; terwyl die polisie en die leëgeneraals hulle regimente kan oproep as vuurpelotons in die townships, myne en fabriekes—sal geen oorwinning van ons beweging veilig bly nie.

'n Program van vergaande sosiale hervorming kan net uitgevoer word deur 'n regering wat staan by die werkers se belange. Maar so 'n regering kan net op basis van demokrasie daar kom, wat beteken dat die apartheidstaat omvergegooi moet word en vervang word deur 'n staat onder demokratiese beheer van die werkende klas.

Daar is geen kortpad hiernatoe nie. Om dit te bereik sal die werkende klas rondom sy eie belange moet organiseer, nie net in sy honderduisende nie maar in sy magtige miljoene, en rys tot 'n helder bewussyn van sy taak. Politieke leiers wat nie direk deur die werkende klas beheer word nie, sal onvermydelik neig—soos die FOSATU-kongres gewaarsku het—om "ongerigte, opportunistiese" politieke aktiwiteite aan te moedig.

Die politiek van die vakbondsbeweging hou in om die strydkrag van die werkers te mobiliseer in voorbereiding op 'n diepgaande omwenteling van die samelewing.

Die praktiese, daaglikse werk van

die vakbonde is, en sal bly, die stryd om die basiese ekonomiese behoeftes van die werkers.

Maar dit beteken geen 'taakverdeling' tussen die politiek van die vakbonde en die politiek van die ANC nie.

'n Massa demokratiese ANC, gebou op die krag van die georganiseerde werkers, met 'n program vir die sosialistiese verandering van Suid-Afrika, kan die onderdrukking met wortel en tak uitroeï en 'n nuwe samelewing skep wat geskik is vir werkers en hul kinders om in te woon.

Die oorweldigende meerderheid werkers wil die ANC bou as die middel van hulle stryd om politieke mag. Deur dit te versnel, het die vakbondsbeweging 'n noodsaaklike rol. Dit is die manier om te verseker, in die woorde van die FOSATU-kongres, dat die "populêre beweging nie gekaap word deur elemente wat uiteindelik geen keuse sal hê behalwe om teen hulle werker-ondersteuners to draai nie".

So sal die vermoë van die werkende klas om die samelewing te verander soos 'n pyl deur die vakbonde sowel as deur die ANC gemik word teen die base en die staat.

Hierdie take moet bespreek en opgehelder word deur die hele beweging, sodat die nodige praktiese stappe uitgewerk kan word.

Sodra dit 'n vaste basis in 'n verenigde vakbondsbeweging kry, sou 'n veldtog om 'n massa-ANC op 'n sosialistiese program te bou oorweldigende steun kry. Die begin van so 'n beweging was al te sien by die begrafnis van Neil Aggett, waar die optog na die kerkhof die opmars van 'n verenigde werkersleër geword het—met die banier van die vakbondsbeweging en die vlag van die ANC vooraan.

# DEMOKRASIE EN SOSIALISME!

strong enough to storm the fascist nest. The government members of the nation's Republican Union of Valencia (the moderate republican trend of Martinez Barrios) vacillated and finally refused to distribute arms. There upon the workers declared a general strike, which had already gone on two days before the pressure of the masses finally made the government and the military leaders decide on open action to take the cavalry barracks...within a few minutes the workers created barricades of motor lorries...the anti-fascist militia, the soldiers and the workers strengthened their positions and were ready to storm in spite of the irresolution of the leaders...the workers stormed into the barracks and took the rifles without asking anyone."

This speaks volumes for the attitude of the bourgeois "People's Front Allies" of the Communist Party. It hardly requires comment.

However, to the insurrection and counter-revolution of the fascists the revolution of the working class came in reply. Beginning with the immortal workers of Barcelona the working class took the initiative. Responding to the call of the sailors, who in many cases had thrown the fascist officers overboard, the Barcelona workers marched against the army. Quoting again the Stalinist correspondent of the *IPC* in the same article, under the heading "Barcelona":

"Events have completely refuted the reformist theory according to which it is impossible for the working class in towns with modern broad streets to stand up to any army equipped with modern weapons. The masses of the people of Madrid, Barcelona and dozens of other towns in Spain, with a few pistols, daggers and their bare fists, have rendered an army *hors de combat* [out of action]... Barcelona... the workers told us how the first machine gun was captured: they ran across the huge square with only a small force in the middle as cover, in the front ranks against a raging fire, the workers in the front ranks fell dead or wounded, but no one wavered, the advance continued till the workers captured the machine gun...when the artillery batteries appeared in the streets...the workers mounted light motor lorries and drove suddenly from the side streets, at speeds of 120 km.per hour into the flank of the artillery.

"With the exception of the flying corps, the whole garrison mutinied and it was the masses of workers (my emphasis), the Young Socialists, Communists and Republicans who mobilised with amazing rapidity and determination and captured the main positions of the fascist uprising."

According to the reports of the bourgeois correspondents the courage and ingenuity of the workers was unsurpassed. They marched against the barracks with legs of chairs, table knives and a few sporting guns snatched by breaking into sporting shops. The *Times* of July 24th, 1936 reports from Barcelona: "San Marti...streets swarming with men...carrying army carbines and pistols...armed women...in some lorries...we have taken all the arms from the San Andrea barracks."

Whole books could be written about the way in which an unarmed working class spontaneously, without guidance from their leaders, marched into action against the threat of fascism and defeated the fascists in most of the towns and in two thirds of Spain. Without the vacillation of the Communist and Socialist Party leadership in the South, it would have been all of Spain.

But now in so-called Republican Spain the army was smashed, the police had disappeared and there was only one decisive armed force—the working class.

In the analysis of society made by Marx and Lenin, they explained that the power of the state can be reduced to armed bodies of men and their appendages, courts, prisons, etc. In that sense the workers had smashed the capitalist state. **They held the power: the "Republican government" was suspended in mid-air.** Most of the factory owners had fled and were supporting Franco. The workers seized the factories and began

operating them without the capitalists.

The workers were instinctively trying to change society and begin the socialist revolution. The capitalist class supported Franco. Azana and Companys represented nothing. The leaders of the proletariat refused to accept this initiative of the masses. **They made a coalition not with the capitalists but with the shadow of the capitalists**, as Trotsky put it: the lawyers, MPs etc. of the liberal parties who in this situation represented nobody but themselves.

The capitalists understood the situation clearly. The before-quoted correspondent in the same dispatch continued his report to the *Times* by stating what one of the armed workers said to him: "A man told me...many officers got away and the others were arrested. The soldiers were told they could go where they liked. **Is it not nice that the workers should have arms and power**" (my emphasis).

This rank and file worker understood, as undoubtedly did instinctively the mass of the workers, that the power was de facto in their hands. It was the leaders of their own organisations who blocked the path of socialist revolution and thus betrayed the revolution and led it on the road of a terrible defeat.

The spokesmen of the capitalist class understood clearly what was at issue. They posed the problem in serious terms, if from the opposing pole of the class struggle as the Marxists did. On July 23rd, 1936 an article in the *Times* commented soberly: "An armed proletariat was in possession of the city (Barcelona). Who was to disarm them? What would the sequel be? Had the uprising of military and armed forces merely paved the way for proletarian rule in Catalonia? Such were the questions on every tongue, and at the government 'war' headquarters it was evident that this question was of paramount concern."

Again indicating the real situation, the *Times* of July 25th reported:

"Barcelona: revolutionary committees composed of anarchists and communists have intervened in factories to an extent that seems nothing short of their seizure...the office and technical staff are working under the watch of the proletarians...Catalan government issued decree declaring their intention to intervene in all banking in the region...appointing a banking commission." (Thus they prevented the workers from seizing control of the banks, a vital measure without which the developing social revolution could not go forward. **Marx pointed out that the failure of the Paris Commune to seize the banks as a first step, was one of the main factors in its downfall. One of the first steps of the Bolsheviks after the October Revolution was the taking over of the banks.**)

"...Your correspondent has just obtained permission from the revolutionary committee at Puigcerda to return to Barcelona..."

## DUAL POWER

**This shows the existence of what Marxists have termed dual power. The government in Barcelona and Madrid had no armed forces on which they could rely.** They were suspended by a thread. They could exist by the toleration of the leadership of the workers parties who were not prepared to brush them aside and thus betrayed the revolution. For the time being they had to tolerate the workers' incipient power. Participating in this betrayal or lack of understanding, was the leadership of all the workers parties: the Socialists, Anarchists, Poumists and above all, as the main force of counter revolution in the workers camp, the leadership of the Communist Party. They resisted all the strivings of the workers and aborted the growing revolution.

In an article in the liberal *News Chronicle* of July 21st the

## ECONOMIC DOWNTURN—

# The workers' struggle will continue

As the economy has slowed down, the bosses have been hoping for a respite from the pressures of the workers' struggle. According to their conventional wisdom, the threat of unemployment should be enough to bring the workers to heel.

But, to their dismay, the bosses are finding that the growing organised struggle of the black working class has no respect for their 'wisdom'. Employers in important industries have been "startled by wage demands confronting them this year", wails the *Financial Mail* (23 April): "after all, profits are going to drop."

And, to rub it in, the giant multinationals have been warned by their publication *Business Environment Risk Information (BERI)* (to which they subscribe at \$400 an issue), that "militancy in black unions will continue to develop."

It is more than just the amount of their profits that is worrying the bosses. In parliament on 5 February the Minister of Manpower spoke of "demands that wages be trebled or quadrupled". These "unreasonable demands which are being made by trade unions", he complained, "could, if they are met, totally destroy the free market economy."

The critical change in the situation has been brought about by the increasing organisation of the militant black workers' movement. Since 1979 the workers, pounding the bosses with a flood of strikes, have been showing the power to press for demands which are not only "reasonable", but vital for a decent life.

Now, the independent trade union movement, stronger than ever before, is confronted by a ruling class needing more than ever to take back what has been won. Against the background of the deepening

By  
**Simon Freedman**

crisis of the capitalist economy in SA and internationally, a new and critical period of struggle is opening up. What are the perspectives?

Indeed the SA economy has entered a deep downturn.

In 1980 the economy grew by no less than 8%, one of the highest rates in the world. Yet even during this boom, the living standards of the black working class as a whole did not rise.

Now the bosses' forecast growth of only about 1% this year and in 1983 perhaps even an absolute drop in output.

SA is part of an interlocking world economic system, and exceptionally dependent on the course of the crisis-ridden world economy.

The OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, whose membership includes all the advanced capitalist countries) estimated in December 1981 that the economic growth of its members in 1982 would be 1,25%. Recently this was revised downwards to only 0,3%.

This means that a recovery of the SA economy will be delayed longer than expected—perhaps until 1985.

SA's dependence on world economic developments is illustrated remarkably in the case of gold, which in 1980 accounted for nearly a half the value of exports.

The gold price is unstable, subject to wide fluctuations under the influence of international events. Its record 1980 average price (\$614 per oz) contributed greatly to the boom that year, and was an important factor in the balance of payments surplus (amount by which payment for SA goods and services exceeds payment for foreign goods and services) of R2,8 billion.

average price of \$460 contributed much to a balance of payments deficit of over R4 billion. So far this year the gold price has averaged \$357—and few of the bourgeois are at the moment risking predictions on its future movements!

### Bad year

But not only gold had a bad year in 1981. The prices of many other minerals which SA exports also plunged. According to Harry Oppenheimer, the situation on the world diamond market is the worst he can remember for 50 years.

With world markets remaining depressed, there is little immediate prospect for an increase in demand for SA goods in general.

Inflation is at present running at an annual rate of 16,5%—the highest in SA since 1920. Besides eating away at the value of workers' wages, inflation erodes business confidence, making investment decisions hazardous and con-

correspondent relates:

"My night's journey by car from Madrid to Barcelona...we were stopped every few miles by either gendarmes of pickets of workmen or peasants.

"...They (men of the Popular Front) attribute the collapse of their people in the Southern cities partly to the fact that in Seville and Granada, for instance, the local authorities failed to act to the instructions (?) of the central government and arm the workmen."

(As we have already quoted Casares Quiroga, there were no instructions by the central government. The liberal republicans found themselves without police or armed forces).

The *News Chronicle* correspondent continued: "The part of Catalonia adjoining the French border is in the hands of a revolutionary committee composed partly of anarchists and partly of communists. The Soviet flag (Red flag—EG) is flying on the town hall of Puigcerda...Popular Front composed partly of workmen, partly of peasants..."

On July 23rd, the *News Chronicle* wrote of "Crews of practically all the warships seize control..." On the same date this journal of the liberal capitalists in Britain, blood brothers of the republican bourgeois party in Spain, wrote in fear and trepidation:

"Whatever might have been the menace of communism (ie. the socialist revolution—EG) before the fascist generals chose it as a pretext to rise against the republic, **it is a reality now.** (My emphasis—EG)

"Socialist and Communist militia and their elements in the army and navy have been the backbone of the defence against the fascist onslaught. They are fighting for the republic and the Popular Front but under the red flag.

"The red flag flies from Malaga as well as banners marked 'Union Hermanos Proletarios' (the sign made famous by the proletarian insurrection in the Asturias—EG)

"If the generals are beaten will the crews of the warships that have had a taste of blood and the troops that have worsted their officers be prepared to knuckle down even to republican officers and the workers of the cities be reconciled to a bourgeois republic which they practically alone defended?"

The same issue contained the following item:

"In Northern Catalonia yesterday communists, socialists and anarchists, armed with weapons captured from defeated rebel troops, are in control. At Puigcerda the workers army seized the town hall, took control of the city." On July 24th the correspondent reports: "Talking with these members of the workers militia...hardened labourers, skilled artisans, young apprentices...Algeciras...fascist homes set on fire by workers...though town occupied by fascist army...the Republicans see the regime already smashed. The Popular Front is ancient history now.

"It is hard to imagine the socialist, communist and syndicalist elements that have borne the brunt of the fighting for the defence of the republic in the South **continuing under the tutelage of a handful of purely bourgeois republicans.**"(my emphasis EG)

This "handful of bourgeois republicans" was to retain decisive control because of the policy of the leadership of all the workers' organisations—anarchists, POUMist, Socialist and Communist. In one way or another they betrayed the heroic spontaneous reaction to the fascist uprising. They betrayed the elementary **class** movement of the workers, **by collaborating with the rotten republican bourgeois leaders, who by this time represented nobody but themselves.**

In this dirty work of "democratic" counter revolution the leadership of the Communist Party played the principal part. They did this under the instructions of Stalin. By this time the parties of the Communist International had become agents of the foreign policy of the Russian bureaucracy. The latter was terrified that a successful socialist revolution in Spain, or in any other country of Western Europe would undermine their power and lead to their overthrow, and the restoration of

workers' democracy in Russia. In fact the revolution in Spain stirred the Russian workers more than any event since the usurpation of power by Stalin. In attempting to maintain their power, through Stalin, the bureaucracy were compelled to launch the "witchcraft trials", murder practically all the leaders of the revolution and the old Bolsheviks, murdering hundreds of thousands of the rank and file of the Communist Party. This was due partly to the repercussions of the revolution in Spain. Victory to Spanish socialism would have sounded the death knell for the Soviet bureaucracy.

In addition to which the bureaucrats were not concerned with revolutionary diplomacy, as under Lenin, but purely nationalist considerations. They wanted at that time to placate the capitalists of Britain and France, to gain an alliance against Germany. They did not wish to upset this by a revolutionary conflagration which would have spread to France and destroyed entirely the world political and social equilibrium.

In Spain the Communist Party set the pace for the betrayal of the revolution and thus the terrible defeat of the working class. But the Communist Party was not the **decisive element.** Far more powerful were the anarchists and the Socialist Party, the CNT and the UGT.

The anarchists betrayed every principle of anarchism, let alone of socialism. The tenets not to support any government were abandoned by entering the **bourgeois government**, at a time when the base of such a government, in the real relationship of class forces, had disappeared.

The Prieto right wing socialists stood for collaboration with the republican bourgeoisie, but at that moment would have carried little weight with the rank and file. Had Caballero and the left wing of the Socialist Party stood firmly against such a course, as did Lenin and Trotsky in Russia in 1917, the situation would have changed fundamentally. **The position was far more favourable objectively than in Russia after the revolution of February 1917. The workers were practically the only armed force. They endeavoured to seize industry, as the peasants endeavoured to seize the land. Thus the workers heralded the attempt at socialist revolution that they were instinctively trying to undertake.**

Had Caballero and the left socialists organised committees of workers or Soviets, in the factories and districts and advocated the setting up of a workers' government, getting rid of the remnants of the capitalists and the representatives of the republicans—capitalist politicians who no longer reflected, directly at least, their class. There was nothing to stand in the way of organising a workers' government and thus a victorious working class who could then have waged a socialist struggle against Franco.

The Poumists in Catalonia dragged at the tail of the anarchists and entered the bourgeois government in Catalonia, thus preparing their terrible fate at the hands of the Stalinists.

Caballero surrendered to the pressure of the Stalinists instead of launching the struggle for power—this is an exaggeration, it would have been only a question of brushing aside the discredited republicans representative only of themselves—by calling on the workers to set up their revolutionary juntas and organising socialist power and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Stalinists would have been unable to resist. Had they done so they would have lost the overwhelming majority of their worker followers. The anarchists would have been compelled to follow this lead. The POUM (centrists standing between reformism and Marxism) would have supported and the Prieto wing of the Socialist Party would have been isolated and incapable of resistance. A workers' government could then have begun a revolutionary socialist war against Franco and appealed to the international working class for support. Caballero and the left socialists failed to understand the opportunity and the dangers and thus inevitably prepared the way for the crushing of the revolution and then the victory of Franco.

The *Daily Worker* of July 27th, 1936, reported a speech by

tributing to a further fall in economic activity.

Foreign investment is unlikely to continue providing capital at the same rate as in the past. *BERI* told its subscribers that long-term investment in SA is not recommended because "risk levels are increasing and profit levels diminishing".

To further darken the gloomy economic outlook, the crippling drought gripping widespread areas of the country has already cost the economy billions of rand, and its effects will be felt for years to come.

These changes in the economic situation will have their effects on both workers and bosses.

While the flood-tide of revolution continues relentlessly rolling in, its tempo is affected by innumerable social factors. Inevitably it must have its ebbs and flows.

Trotsky, one of the great leaders

of the Russian Revolution, emphasised the need for working class activists to have a clear understanding of the "determination of the temper of the masses, their activity and readiness for struggle", as a guide to action.

During the economic upswing, the workers' confidence gained as they felt the tempo of production quickening.

The bosses hired extra workers and wanted to keep production as high as possible to meet the demand for their products. The workers saw this, as well as the massive profits being raked in, and seized the chance to demand better wages and new rights.

Now with the economic decline the bosses have begun sacking and laying off workers or threatening to do so. Inevitably this has increased the pressures of unemployment and

the risk of mass dismissals for workers who go on strike. A recent Manpower International survey found that the demand for labour is at its lowest since late 1979.

**But it is entirely wrong to expect that the downturn will mechanically dampen the workers' struggle.**

As Trotsky wrote: "The mood of the masses...is not predetermined. It changes under the influence of certain laws of mass psychology that are set in motion by objective social conditions...to understand the dynamics of the process it is necessary to determine in what direction and why the mood of the workers is changing."

This is what the bosses will never grasp.

## Dammed-up anger

The dammed-up anger of the black working people at the hardship heaped upon them by apartheid and the cheap labour system cannot be contained for long by a further tightening of the screws.

The swelling strike wave during 1979-81 gave the bosses cold shivers. They reacted at first with their customary methods—mass firings, calling in the police (backed up by the army at times) to bludgeon the workers into submission with batons, dogs, teargas and bullets, victimisation and arrest of workers' leaders.

**But these tactics only increased the determination of the workers.** The bosses were forced to reconsider their methods. More and more of them began to discover the need for 'communication'—i.e. to negotiate with workers on strike rather than simply calling in the police and aggravating the workers' fury.

The bosses were taught a similar lesson on the question of trade union recognition. Their stubborn refusal to recognise the unions supported by the workers led to a whole series of bitter disputes. However, so great was the pressure on the bosses that, although they had signed only one or two recognition agreements before 1980, today there are over 200.

**Such gains by the workers have only been wrung from the bosses through the organisation and unity**



*Car workers facing redundancy have fought back resolutely*

the leader of the British Communist Party, Harry Pollitt:

"In the light of the present events it can now be seen that a great mistake was made in not removing all the army officers opposed to the people's front....the aim (of the counter revolution) undoubtedly was to destroy the people's Spain and to safeguard the interests of the landlords, feudal families, big capitalists and monarchists, and to check any further possibility of the workers advancing...The workers of the world behind the Spanish people means victory..."

Thus the futile demand that the bourgeois republicans dismantle the bulwark of bourgeois rule—the guardian of its domination and property rights—the army, is repeated just when the spontaneous movement of the proletariat has demonstrated its stupidity, its lulling of the proletariat—leaving them defenceless before the reaction. One may as well ask the capitalists to voluntarily donate their property to the proletariat, as was done by the utopian socialists, as ask them to dismantle the apparatus of their rule—the state machine—armed bodies of men and their various appendages.

The actions of the fascists were determined by the interests of the landlords, feudal families, and big capitalists, says Pollitt, and was repeated ad nauseum by the leaders of the Communist Parties of the world. But to overthrow them was precisely the task of the socialist revolution. To "defend property" and "order" was to defend the interests of the organisers and financiers of the fascist counter revolution. The words of the CP leaders were hopelessly in contradiction. They betrayed the workers while making anti-capitalist statements inconsistently.

## WORKERS' MILITIAS

On July 27th, 1936, Frank Pitcairn, the correspondent of the *Daily Worker* in Barcelona, wrote:

"Among the demands already put forward by various organisations, however, are the immediate nationalisation of the entire merchant marine, and the handing over of a number of vital factories to the trade unions..."

"The workers armed militias will remain a permanent defence corps, taking over most of the functions of the army. Large numbers of soldiers sent officially on leave to be beyond the influence of fascist officers have already enrolled in the militia."

And again on July 29th:

"...Everywhere I found calm confidence and swift progress as the workers develop their control of affairs in the defence against fascism.

"For example, at Targea, the President of the local committee told me 'The socialisation of all essential products has been an accomplished fact here since last Wednesday. Corn, olives, wine, and all the other main agricultural produce of the area are now the property of the workers, through their co-operatives. This year's crops will be entirely owned by the poor peasants. It was first necessary to carry out the reorganisation of the landowner's co-operative which, until last week, consisted of both poor and rich peasants with the latter naturally dominating policy. Now the big landowners have been rejected, the co-operative, which is entirely in the hands of the poor peasants, has taken over all the crops.'

"These co-operatives were under the supreme control of the defence committee, on which the Labour Alliance, and the small bourgeois parties, are also represented.

"...We are now working not for the rich, but for ourselves and for the workers of Barcelona and other cities of Catalonia.

"...Barcelona, there is strict control of prices and heavy fines are imposed for profiteering.

"...The anarchists have issued instructions for the formation of flying squads to deal with looters."

These quotations in the early days of the revolution show the situation developing in Spain—the workers wanted to

make the revolution and the peasants of Catalonia and Aragon, following their lead, seized the land, going further than the Russian peasants in the early days of the revolution—and collectivised the land.

Harry Pollitt, writing in the *Daily Worker* of July 29th, from Paris:

"...The fascists had made their preparations well. When the signal for the revolt was given a fortnight ago only one regiment in the whole of Catalonia had refused to join.

"But the initiative and daring of the masses quickly made itself felt. **Seizing what arms were available, the workers took the field and, in 36 hours, had crushed the fascist rising in and around Barcelona.**

"The workers' militia stormed the barracks, captured rifles and artillery (my emphasis), improvised primitive tanks, captured the radio centres and quickly passed from the defensive to the offensive.

"Soldiers in the rebel regiments began to desert to the side of the workers militia. Those who were captured were interned in the barracks and workers were sent to fraternise with them and explain the foul work for which their officers had tried to use them..."

Thus the class lines were clearly drawn. All it required was for the workers, under Marxist leadership, to organise their own state, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and begin a revolutionary war against Franco. Yet the CP, in obedience to the dictates of their Stalinist masters in Moscow deliberately muddled the issues. In the *Daily Worker* of July 27th, it states:

"Everyone can now see that the fascists in Spain were able to organise a military revolt not because the government was 100 'revolutionary', but precisely because it believed (like the Labour leaders) that it could 'Shape and adapt the state to its democratic purpose'.

"...If the Spanish government had driven the fascist officers out of the armed forces, if they had dismissed the fascist officers in the police force, if they had created a workers militia to defend the government and to enforce its decisions, **there would have been no fascist military revolt and thousands of lives would have been saved** (their emphasis). But the people of Spain had learned their lesson even if the British Labour leaders are too blind to see the meaning of the heroic struggle in Spain."

The blind leading the blind! Thus the Stalinists refused to pose the problems in class terms. They preferred to regard the bourgeois republican measures of the Casares, Quirogas, of the Azanas and Companys' as "mistakes" rather than motivated by class interests and ideology. Thus they abandoned completely the Marxist method. Marx, Lenin and Trotsky constantly emphasised the need to abandon abstract rhetoric and to mercilessly expose the flaws in the arguments of the bourgeois democrats.

At a time when real power was in the hands of the working class the Socialist and Communist leaders preferred to hand back power to the discredited representatives of the republican bourgeoisie, while the bourgeoisie itself had gone overwhelmingly to the side of Franco—in that lay the tragedy of the Spanish revolution and the Spanish Civil War.

If there was not social revolution in Spain, what is a social revolution supposed to look like? The few lawyers, doctors and MPs on the side of the Republic constituted a tiny minority—the early victories over the fascists were obtained by the workers fighting for workers objectives.

The Communist Party in Spain was the fighting vanguard of the democratic counter revolution in republican Spain. They drew the Anarchists and the Socialist leaders behind them. The Socialist Party leadership, not having a worked-out perspective, were dragged behind the Communist Party, the right wing wholeheartedly supporting and the left wing round Caballero protestingly. But the Caballero wing were not prepared to stand firm. Had they done so events in Spain would have taken an entirely different course and a socialist victory would have been possible.

of the working class on an ever-growing scale, and the determination to struggle regardless of the consequences.

Of course, like every despotic ruling class which will accept 'democracy' only as long as it is unable to crush it, the SA bosses' state will tolerate the independent unions only while curbing or smashing them is impossible.

Towards the end of 1981, the state tried to test if the time was right to move against the unions. Neil Aggett was a fatal casualty. Many leaders have been detained or banned, including SAAWU's entire leadership. Thozamile Gqweta, Sam Kikine, Sisa Njikelana and three other activists have been charged under the Terrorism Act.

Far from being intimidated by this vicious state action, the workers have become all the more determined to resist. The militant mood has been impressed on their leaders: even previously 'non-political' trade union leaders have come out openly against political repression by the regime.

This implacable stand by the workers has compelled the state to reflect, and prevented an all-out assault to crush the unions. But the struggle is still at an early stage.

Following the workers' magnificent victory over the pensions issue last October, there was a relative lull in the strike wave. But in the last few months there have again been huge struggles.

One of the most outstanding has

been the action of 10 000 workers from about 45 factories in the Isithebe-Mandini complex who came out in support of fellow-workers at Sappi.

Another has been the walk-outs by 5 600 Volkswagen workers in Uitenhage against the retrenchment of 316 of their comrades.

In the Transvaal a whole rash of strikes have occurred in the clothing and metal industries, mainly over wages.

Clearly the momentum of 1979-81 has far from died away. The burning need to struggle for jobs and a living wage will continue to drive section after section of workers into action.

It is mainly the character of these struggles that has been affected by

## New laws - no reform, more repression

**On May 13, the President's Council came out with its proposals for a new constitution.**

**If accepted, this will mean a 'multi-racial' parliament and government. But the African majority will still be excluded.**

Real power will rest in the hands of the proposed executive president. The first one will be elected for seven years by the present white parliament.

This president will appoint the prime minister and executive council. He will have the power to appoint and dismiss ministers, to introduce laws and dissolve parliament. It will mean increased dictatorship over society as a whole.

These proposals reflect the pressures of the more far-sighted section of SA capitalism, who see a move away from all-white rule as their only chance of survival.

They want to be freer from the white electorate, who will dig in their heels against any threat to their privilege.

As the report says, "Cabinet members must not feel constrained by immediate political and electoral considerations. Their prime loyalty must be to the President to whom they would owe their position."

The move away from all-white rule has already been widely criticised—by the right for going too far, by liberals for not going far enough.

The fear of loss of white privilege was summed up by Marais, leader of the HNP, who rejected the proposals for being a "dangerous point of departure to further race integration and the eventual destruction of white South Africa".

The desire for genuine democracy among the mass of the oppressed has meant overwhelming rejection of the proposals as an attempt to bribe coloureds and Indians into defending white dominance.

Even moderates like Soweto's Committee of Ten have completely rejected the President's Council proposals.

**The government's intentions are more openly revealed in the new security laws proposed by the Rabie Commission.** These have come as a reaction to the upsurge in the struggles of the black workers and youth in the recent period.

SA's numerous security laws are to be streamlined into three major acts, to be administered by a new Ministry of Law and Order.

On top of the existing repressive measures, new penalties are proposed—mainly to deal with the rising militancy of the workers, community boycotts and the growing support for the ANC.

"Terrorism" will be treated as treason, "subversion" will be punished with 20 to 25 years imprisonment, "sabotage" with 20 years.

A new Intimidation Act is proposed, which will be widely used against trade unionists. A call to strike, the regime will treat as "intimidation"—trade unionists will be locked up for 10 years or fined R20 000.

Anyone seen by the regime as helping to "endanger the safety of the state" will be liable to the same penalty as if found guilty of this.

Controls and limitations will be placed even on funerals—to prevent them becoming political rallies.

Continued detention will remain, except for the cosmetic change that a detainee should be visited by a magistrate and district surgeon once a fortnight.

The new laws—proposed by the President's Council and the Rabie Commission—are meant to behead the militancy of the oppressed by throwing activists in jail for many, many years.

**Instead, the new laws will confirm to the oppressed that the regime is incapable of reform. They will increase the determination of the workers and youth to fight back.**

The Rabie Commission itself highlights this insoluble dilemma faced by the regime: "Laws in themselves are no solution. Reforms have to be implemented to eradicate social, economic and basic injustices. Without reforms, the new laws will aggravate the situation."

**E.L.**

The POUM was the most left organisation, parading itself as Marxist, and it followed the Anarchists in Catalonia into the government and prepared the way for their destruction. They had jumped from a party of 1 000-1 500 to 30 000 in six weeks. According to some reports this rose to 60 000 members. In proportion to population they were thus stronger than the Bolsheviks were in the early days of the Russian revolution. Moreover, the situation in Spain was far more revolutionary.

The workers' militia remained organised as a workers' army. But the CP of Spain had had its orders. On August 5th, 1936, a little more than a fortnight after the attempted counter-revolution and the answering movement, it issued the following declaration:

"The control committee of the Communist Party of Spain...the Spanish people, in their struggle against the rebellion, **are not striving for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat BUT KNOW ONLY ONE AIM: The defence of the Republican order while respecting property.** (my emphasis)

"This work has the co-operation of such conservative parties as the Basque Nationalist Party, whose members are Catholics. This fact gives lie to the declaration made by General Franco on the 'Marxist Danger' in Spain, and demonstrates **the duty imposed on all order loving people, without exception, to take sides with the defenders of order, in Spain** (my emphasis). Reported in the *Manchester Guardian* of August 6th, the traditional liberal paper in Britain.

What an inspiring and morale building appeal to the Spanish masses: they should take no action against property of the millionaire landowners and industrialists, who had prompted and financed the movement of the fascists and the insurrection of the army generals. This was even to the **right** of the position of the left republicans. Jose Giral, the Prime Minister in Madrid, manoeuvring under the pressure of the workers and fearful that they would seize the banks, is reported without comment in the *Daily Worker* of August 8th:

"Explaining the measures for the control of industry and the banks Senor Giral said 'It is necessary to undermine the economic basis of fascism. Big banks and big industry have been the pay-masters of fascism, supplying funds with which the fascist generals have been able to carry out a criminal attack on our people. That is why the most vigilant control is now necessary'."

What an annihilating argument for the expropriation of the landowners, bankers and capitalists! What did the 'control' amount to? It merely preserved the basis of capitalism till better times came or the victory of Franco. It was not for this that the workers so self-sacrificingly and heroically shed their blood.

Take a few random despatches from the liberal paper the *Guardian* dealing with the measures taken by the Spanish workers. On the 23rd July, 1936, the *Guardian* reports from Madrid:

"A committee of syndicalist organisations today took over the control of all railway services in Madrid, dismissed the director, sub-directors, and officials of the Northern Railway Company, and replaced them by proved republicans."

Then a despatch from Barcelona on 27th August, 1936:

"A government decree issued this week-end makes effective a 40 hour week and a 15% increase of wages for industrial workers earning less than 600 pesetas a month. PSUC (United Socialist and Communist Party of Catalonia) and anarchist proposals ...a 36 hour week. 10% increases in wages below 500 pesetas a month. A 25% decrease in rents. Payment for strike days, indemnity for the unemployed. Control of production by workers. A clean-up of various army sections. The continuance of the popular militias. A summary court-martial of the military chiefs of the present insurrection."

This was—in words—accepted by the Catalan President, Companys, as he manoeuvred desperately and powerlessly

for a time in the hope that the situation would improve.

In the same issue it is reported by foreigners fleeing from Barcelona: "The travellers said that the strike was the workers' counter-stroke to the fascists. Next day there were no servants in the hotel and little food."

In the *Guardian* of 29th July, 1936, there is an interview with a French garage proprietor in Barcelona who had fled to Toulouse:

"No one in Barcelona obeys the government any longer. or, rather what is left of the government. Power has passed into the hands of the workers' groups, who are often guided by their political and social passions. The people obey the leaders of these various groupings, many of which are Anarchist and Communist. It is rather curious to find that the Mairie of Port Bou is the only one left that still functions normally under the control of the civil guard. Everywhere else local committees have been set up in other buildings and the Mairies have been abandoned. In the countryside the peasants continue to work in the fields and they are paid for poultry, cattle and other provisions in bonds. Most of these bonds are signed by the Communist Party or the United Trotskyist Workers' Party (In reality the POUM, composed of ex-Trotskyists and Catalan Nationalist former Communist Party members—EG)...The banks are open and they receive signed cheques but do not pay them."

And then again on August 3rd and 4th from Barcelona:

"The public services are running efficiently under the direction of syndicalists, who are now controlling all transport including the Catalan railways and certain important industries."

And again on the 4th August, 1936:

"All public services such as water, gas, electricity, tramways and railways, are now administered by the workers. The former managers and technical experts are, however, retained and consulted where necessary. But whereas the salaries of the workers have been raised by 30%, those of the technical services are strictly limited to 1,500 pesetas a month."

Sometimes the essence of an event can be discerned in trifling things, that are symptomatic of deeper processes. Thus the *Daily Worker* of August 7th, 1936, reports about the same time as the Spanish Central Committee of the Communist Party is babbling about order and the defence of democracy and property: "Towns held by the Spanish government troops are *having the street names changed*. Names which have any connection with capitalism are being taken down. Proletarian 'liberty' and Karl Marx streets replace them."

This report from the Stalinist press itself shows the real wishes and aspirations of the armed working class at the time. They were trying to impose a revolutionary policy on the leadership which was too blind or cowardly—or in the case of the CP leadership and that of the right wing socialists too sceptical, cynical and treacherous to understand the realities of the situation. In the same issue of the *Daily Worker* their correspondent from Madrid reports:

"...The aircraft factory at Cuatro Vientos is working directly under control of a workers committee, composed of representatives of workers of all branches ...Similarly the majority of factories, railways, tramways and power plants are working under the control of factory committees...All banking operations too are under the strict control of committees composed of representatives of the clerks union, thus ensuring the impossibility of wealthy fascists putting across any operations harmful to the republican cause."

These few quotations and the material in the former pages can give only a pale reflection of the magnificence of the revolution—of the workers' revolution—let us call it by its right name; the Socialist revolution, which was unfolding in Spain. The workers were trying to break with capitalism, in small things and on the question of power. The leadership of their organisations, and through them, the organisations themselves, blocked their path. There was no party, or faction

the slowdown in production. Today the workers are being faced with the pressing need to **defend** living standards and jobs and with greater difficulties in taking the offensive.

The bosses' resistance to the workers' wage demands is leading to head-on collisions around the country. Even the privileged white workers have been affected by the bosses' attitudes, forcing their leaders to declare official disputes in the metal and mining industries.

Of course, as long as the white workers 'go it alone' and refuse to enter a united struggle with the black workers, their power to get concessions from the bosses will be limited.

Industrial action by black workers is also increasingly focusing on the issue of retrenchment. The question was sharply posed in January when Sigma laid off or dismissed about 850 workers.

NAAWU demanded that the bosses discuss with them before taking any action. Unfortunately, the severance pay and other arrangements settled for by NAAWU were no adequate substitute for the

jobs the workers had held. But it is a sign of the present strength of the unions that these benefits were obtained at all.

### Explosive issue

On the other hand, the Volkswagen strikes showed the potential for resolute mass action on this issue. Even the bosses have understood how explosive the issue of redundancies can become.

Long before the Volkswagen strikes the *Rand Daily Mail* had warned: "Far from hammering the unions, layoffs could underline the need for effective bargaining between management and labour on the shop-floor." (13 January).

But no stable agreement is possible where the workers' livelihood is directly threatened by the bosses' greed for profits. More than "bargaining" will be required before this head-on clash of interests disappears.

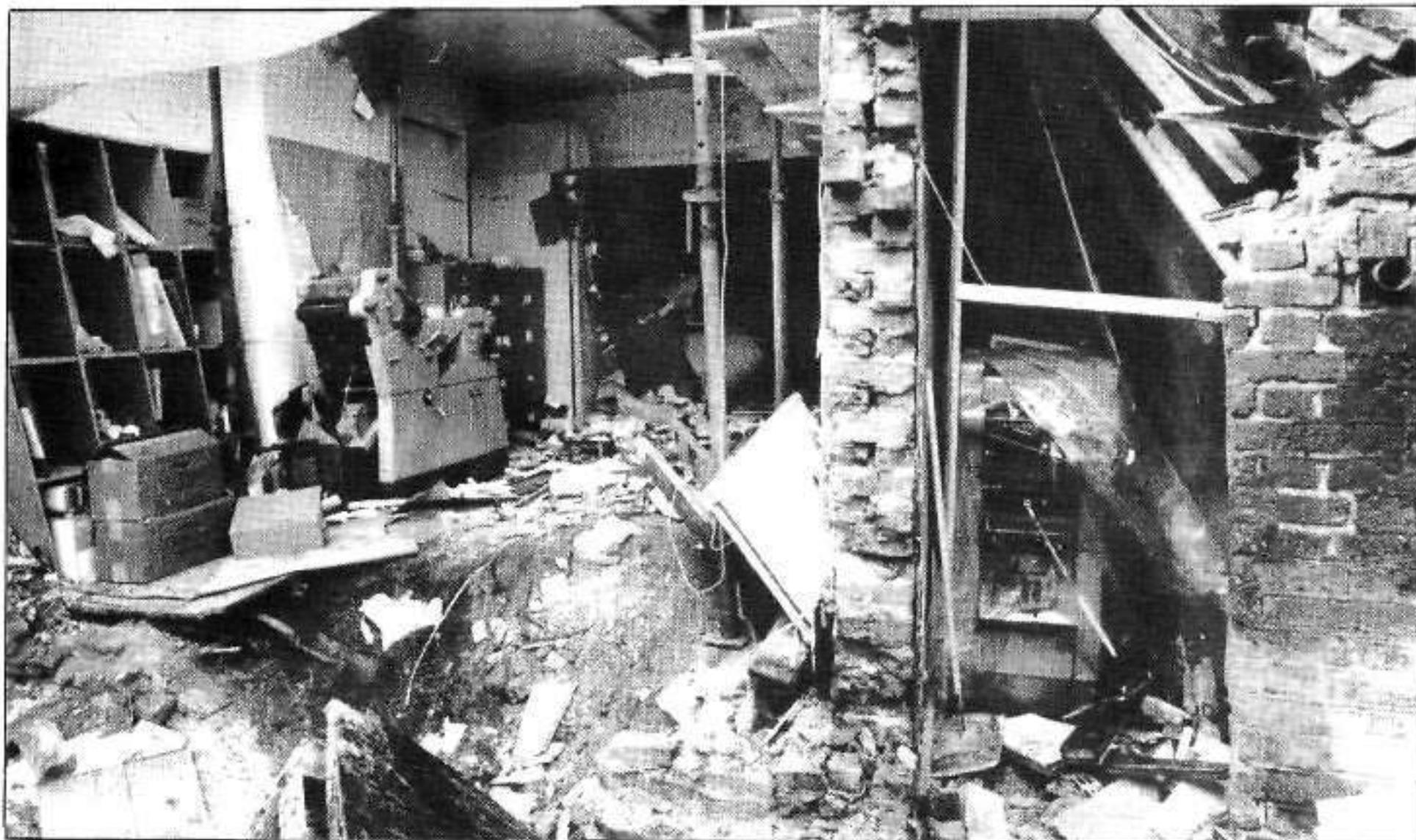
What makes redundancies an even hotter question is that the bosses have always used it as a way

of dismissing trade union militants. But again, the workers' power was recognised by a manager who admitted that attempts to fire militants "could go either way, putting a temporary lid on unionism—or inviting a lot of trouble".

The Flekser bosses in Wadeville "invited a lot of trouble" when they fired three workers. They were rocked when 200 workers struck in support of their colleagues. The bosses quickly backed down.

For all these reasons, bitter defensive struggles can be expected on the industrial front this year. The *Sowetan* pointed out on 22 April: "There have never been so many strikes or retrenchments in such a short time as now."

The bosses are certain to harden their resistance as profit levels sink. Following the strikes in the clothing industry, which has been less affected by the recession so far, the bosses quickly granted wage increases. But in the metal industry, harder hit by the crisis, the bosses are taking a tougher line. The workers have won far fewer struggles than last year.



*The ANC office in London after bombing attack on 14 March by agents of the regime*

in the parties, prepared to make a stand, as did the Bolsheviks in Russia, or Rosa Luxembourg and Karl Liebknecht in Germany.

The Bolsheviks, from a small minority, became the majority of the Russian revolution and led the workers to victory. In Spain in an exceptionally favourable situation, more favourable than in Russia before the October 1917 revolution, there was no party or leadership capable of making a correct estimate of the situation, drawing the necessary conclusions, and leading the workers firmly to take power. All that was necessary in the situation was to explain to the workers the real relationship of forces, the necessary and vital steps and to show them how their leaders and organisations stood in the way.

Power was in the hands of the workers, but it was not centralised or organised. Committees, Juntas or Soviets, the name does not matter, should have been organised in every factory and district, elected by the workers, housewives and all sections of the working population, including the peasants and of course the workers' militias. These in turn should have been linked by delegates to form area, regional and an all National Committee. This could have formed the framework of a new regime pushing aside the contemptible and powerless government and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat.

## REVOLUTIONARIES ISOLATED

The mood and actions of the working class would have gained an overwhelming response. Outside Spain, day by day, Leon Trotsky and the Trotskyists made the correct analysis but at that time in Spain they had neither the authority nor the organisation to influence events. The overwhelming majority of the active militants—the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, the POUM, and the Anarchist militants unfortunately had no access to the material issued by the Trotskyists, and thus could not react to it. That was the tragedy of the Spanish revolution, which doomed it to defeat and prepared the way for the victory of Franco in the Civil War.

The events of the civil war can only be given in a sketchy form and even a synopsis here. If necessary we will return to this theme with the necessary documentation. However Felix Morrow has written a Marxist classic *“Revolution and Counter Revolution in Spain”* dealing with the first 18 months which is an invaluable record of the facts. We hope that it will become available in Spanish for the benefit of the YS and Socialist Party comrades.

Jose Giral, as Prime Minister of a cabinet composed exclusively of Left Republicans, became more and more incompatible with the real relationship of forces. Consequently Giral resigned on September 14th and handed over to Caballero, who formed a government consisting of Socialists—left and right, Communists, Left Republicans and even right Republicans. **Thus instead of dismantling the bourgeois state, Caballero and the Left Socialists collaborated with the Stalinists in shoring it up with the ‘correct’ parliamentary forms.**

They represented neither the decisive sections of the bourgeoisie nor even a sizeable section of the proletariat. They hung in limbo, without even the “normal” basis of a bourgeois state—control of the armed forces. The workers' militias were under the control of the workers' organisations and looked to them for guidance and leadership.

Instead of encouraging the workers in their endeavours to take control, Caballero promised a better world...After the war! In the Cortes [parliament] he announced: “It is important to state at once that the structure of the country will be changed after our victory and that the first article of the constitution according to which Spain is a republic of the toiling masses can be realised...” (page 1260, *International Press*

*Correspondence*, 19th September 1936).

But the whole essence of a civil war is that the masses cannot wait! A change in the social structure has to be carried out immediately if it is to have an effect on the workers, and especially the peasants. They have been deceived so many times, that they become sceptical and indifferent to promises. **Statements of social changes especially when couched in such vague, indefinite phrases can have no appeal, especially to peasants.**

**They want deeds not words in a situation where words are punctuated by bullets. Lenin explained long ago that “An ounce of experience is worth a ton of theory”, especially where promises are concerned. If the masses are to make great sacrifices of blood and suffering it must be for a worthwhile aim—and not that of the discredited bourgeois “republic” which has paved the way for the fascist counter-revolution.**

Gilding the “republic as was done by Caballero can carry no conviction to the peasants. They think in terms of the land. That is the reality to them. When propaganda by loudspeakers to the rebel army was conducted in the trenches, the reply of the conscripted peasants in Franco's army to appeals to come over to the republic was “what has the republic ever done for us?” To them it was a struggle between generals. They didn't want to fight but they could see no fundamental differences between the two sides. Why risk reprisals to their families and risk their own lives by coming over? Consequently they fought for their own enslavement as well as that of the workers and peasants of all Spain.

Just to make sure that there were to be no real social changes the General Secretary of the “Communist” Party wrote in the same issue: **In order to alarm international opinion** [whose opinion, that of the capitalists? EG] its enemies have asserted that it is a socialist-communist government. In reality it is nothing more nor less than the continuation of the republican and democratic ministries.” This is for once correct, and we have seen the record of these ministries! “Where the peasants en masse have taken up the armed struggle against the rebels and are now organising a guerrilla struggle at the rear of the reactionary bandits....”

Hunting for examples of that mythical creature under modern conditions, the “revolutionary bourgeoisie”, the Communist Party writer continues: “The considerable success of the party of Martinez Barria at the elections (of February 1936) cannot be explained otherwise than by the anti-fascist sentiments of part of the bourgeoisie (after the July fascist insurrection!). Jose Hiral, Francisco Barnes, Casares Quiroga (his role is sufficiently dealt with in his threats to give instructions to shoot anyone arming the workers), Enrico Kames and Manuel Blasque Garon—industrialists and landowners who form part of the ministry of Jose Hiral.” In fact they represented not **their class** but themselves as individuals—within the republican camp desperately manouevring against the socialist revolution.

Apart from the fact that in the early days and hours of the fascist uprising, before they had lost control of events, the liberal government tried to compromise with the Franco gangsters. The article continues with grisly and unconscious humour: “Had the development of events been different it is possible that some of these people would have sought for a compromise with reaction....”

The article continues: “There can be no doubt that the overwhelming majority of the bourgeoisie sympathise with the insurgents, and support them, but there are groups of the bourgeoisie, especially among the national minorities, therefore these groups must not be left out of account in the anti-fascist camp. **A wide social basis at a moment of such sharp struggle is one of the factors guaranteeing the success of the revolution, the Spanish anti-fascist people's front, as a specific form of the unification of various classes in face of the fascist danger** [my emphasis]...At the same time the peculiarity of the Spanish people's front, the relatively slow pace at which the masses of the peasantry are

Any 'success' the bosses may have at present in holding back the trade union struggle is likely to backfire in their faces. The more the workers are blocked on the industrial front, the more likely they will be to seek a way forward through intensified political action.

The workers on Neil Aggett's funeral march, defiantly raising the

ANC flag, openly asserted the indivisible connection between the industrial and the political struggles—between the struggle for decent jobs and working conditions and the struggle for a decent society.

The coming trial of trade union leaders underlines this connection still more clearly. The actions of the regime are spelling out that trade

union activity is a **political** question, that trade union freedom cannot be secured while the present system continues.

But the state may find that it will burn its fingers on the trial of the SAAWU leaders. Conditions are ripe for the workers' organisations to seize the initiative firmly on this issue.

## NP 'monolith' splits

**The split in the Nationalist Party is a further sign of the crisis in the ruling class and in society.**

The capitalists, pressurised by waves of mass struggle, are now incapable of agreeing for long on policies for their own survival. Even the 'monolithic' NP is falling apart under these strains.

Neither the capitalists, nor any government enforcing the capitalist system, can appease the black workers and youth who are determined to end exploitation and oppression. SA capitalism cannot exist on any basis other than cheap labour.

But neither can the government control the mass movement by brute force alone. This dilemma is the basic reason for the deepening political fragmentation of the ruling class and all its political parties.

Such disarray within the ruling class is a classical feature of every pre-revolutionary situation. As Lenin explained, the approach of a revolutionary explosion is signalled by the inability of the ruling class to rule in the same way as before, by the refusal of the masses to submit to the old system, and by splits among the middle classes who previously gave the capitalists their support.

All these conditions are maturing in SA today.

For black workers there is nothing fundamental to choose between Botha and Treurnicht. It is indefensible to give critical support to Botha's new 'power-sharing' manoeuvres, as Bishop Tutu does. Botha is still the same cold-blooded butcher in Namibia and Angola and at home.

The main difference between them is that Botha has the backing, at this stage, of most capitalists in SA and internationally. Treurnicht

is seen as sailing too close to the winds of extreme white racism, incapable of manoeuvre and threatening to provoke a premature confrontation with the black masses on the move. For the time being, most capitalists prefer Botha's 'pragmatic' methods.

All the speculation in the 'liberal' press about a possible 'verligte coalition' between sections of the NP and the PFP is partly wishful thinking, partly futile attempts to convince black people that 'better things are on the way'.

### Extreme right

Also Treurnicht's granite facade is hollow. Though his Conservative Party has emerged as the new colossus of the extreme right, as yet its support has been concentrated mainly in the Transvaal, among limited sections of whites—farmers, the platteland middle class, some workers and students.

Moreover, Treurnicht has been incapable of reaching agreement with the even more reactionary HNP, fishing for support in the same waters. Squabbling and feuding among the would-be 'saviours of the white race' will continue.

For the present, Treurnicht has little alternative but to balance uneasily between the respectably 'pragmatic' policies of Botha and the racist demagoguery of the HNP—a completely sterile position. Should Treurnicht be voted to power (an unlikely perspective except in a situation where the classes have become more polarised) he would be subject to precisely the same pressures as Botha, and his policies

would be likely to go the same way as Botha's in the circumstances.

**The majority of white working people who now support Treurnicht do so out of lack of alternatives**—out of fear of losing their privileges as a result of Botha's 'reforms', and of the 'swart gevaar' which Botha is incapable of stopping.

But Treurnicht can offer them nothing more than Botha! Even less—since his boastful promises to turn the clock back, if carried into practice, would lead to a racial civil war resulting in death and destruction also to his followers.

These are the realities which black workers and all activists need to explain to those of their white colleagues who are at this stage prepared to listen. By making clear the socialist alternative of workers' democracy and a society run in the interests of **all** working people, they can begin to undercut the fears and ignorance that white reaction feeds on.

Above all, the practical example of the non-racial workers' movement forcing concessions from the employers will drive the point home to white workers—as the recent move by some Yster en Staal members in Uitenhage to NAAWU has shown.

The very emergence of Treurnicht's party reflects the breakdown in the authority of yesterday's white leaders. By boldly addressing the questions in the minds of white workers, ANC and trade union activists can begin to pull them away from their dangerous dead end of *white racism*—thus striking at the heart of the power base of the capitalists and the regime.

**D.H.**

being drawn into the armed struggle..."

To "add" fire to petrol hardly increases one's forces. To have the support of the remnant of the bourgeoisie was, as events were to demonstrate, to weaken and undermine, not to strengthen, the struggle against Franco. Action expropriating the landowners and capitalists would have strengthened the workers' camp a million times more. But in reality the Stalinists, at the instructions of Moscow, were desperately trying to restore the bourgeois republican regime. In Catalonia, and Spain, as the party that stood for "law", "order", "the defence of private property", **they became the party of the middle class in the towns and the rich peasants in the countryside.** At that time two thirds of the membership were composed of shopkeepers, foremen, small businessmen, rich peasants, top levels of technicians, etc. Only one third was composed of workers—mostly the most backward section of the working class.

## WORKERS' OR CAPITALIST ARMY?

The Stalinists as defenders of the "revolutionary bourgeoisie" were trying to restore the situation in republican Spain as it existed before the revolution. This required counter revolution—bloody and vile—within the republican camp.

As early as October 1936 they prevailed on Caballero to begin the process of transforming the militia into a "regular army". Now it is clear that in a civil war centralised command is necessary. But the whole point of an army in modern society is in whose interests it is organised, what class basis does it possess, what is its motivation, which class do the general staff and the officers come from, whose interests do they represent, what class basis does the army fulfil? No mythical appeals to anti-fascist unity can avoid the **class** issues while class society remains.

Trotsky and the Bolsheviks built an army also from scratch. **But it was the army of the workers in power. They used tens of thousands of the officers of the Tsarist army, but they were under the strict control of workers' commissars loyal to the workers' state and to the ideals of the socialist revolution.**

If a centralised army is to be built it can only be the tool of a workers' or capitalist state—it cannot be a non-class army—a **mythical class neutrality is impossible.** Consequently, afraid or incapable of consummating the socialist revolution, Caballero and the other leaders assisted in carrying through the organisation of a **capitalist army.** This again was to have disastrous consequences for the civil war.

As already shown, the overwhelming majority of the officers and generals went over to the fascists, far more apparently than even in Russia. In a purely military struggle they would clearly have the advantage. But war, and even to a magnified extent civil war, is the continuation of politics by forcible means. In war, says Napoleon, the moral is to the physical as 4 is to 1.

By creating an army not on the model of the Red Army of 1918-20 but of a capitalist army, the whole basis of the workers' struggle was undermined. Systematically in Barcelona and Madrid the Stalinists toiled to recreate the bourgeois state. The first great successes had all been achieved by the methods of social revolution. The militias in the first rush conquered Aragon. The land was seized in Catalonia and Aragon. Advancing further than the Russian revolution in its early days in response to generations of anarchist propaganda, the land was collectivised by the peasants themselves. The militia stood at the gates of Huesca, Teruel and Saragossa.

But the central government starved this front of arms and supplies for fear of the social revolutionary consequences that victory on this front would mean. Caballero allowed himself to be blackmailed by the CP under threat that the Russians would cease to supply arms, the bulk of which were being sent to the

Madrid front, where the CP played an important role.

It was the growing conflict between the aspirations of the workers and the gradual return to bourgeois "normality" which precipitated the crisis which came to be known as the "May days of 1937".

**Every revolution has seen similar movements of the workers when they felt the revolution being betrayed. The June days of France in 1848, the July days in Russia of 1917, and the January days in Germany in 1919. The masses feel power slipping out of their hands. They rise convulsively in protest against the "sell out" to the bourgeoisie in an elemental movement.**

The immediate cause of the uprising of the working class in Barcelona and Catalonia was the attempt of the Stalinists to seize control of the telephone exchange for the Catalan government. This had been under the control of the workers in the CNT since the first days of the revolution, and represented an element of workers' control.

The Stalinists in the Generalidad, the autonomous Catalonian government, sent some tanks and troops to seize control of the exchange. The workers replied with a general strike. Barricades appeared in Barcelona and other Catalonian towns. The government was powerless. **An attempt to send assault guards from Valencia and to send the international brigade to put down the movement of the workers collapsed because of the refusal of the troops to be moved to take action against the workers.**

Once again, power was in the hands of the workers! There were no troops in Barcelona or elsewhere on which the government could rely to put down the movement.

Here the CNT and the POUM came to the rescue of the revived bourgeois state. Arguing that it was impossible to start a Civil War within a Civil War these "Marxists" appealed to the workers to return to work. Some way of ending the conflict would be found by agreement between the workers and the government. For four days the workers controlled the streets. Had the POUM issued the call to take power there was no force to stop them! The anarchists and the POUM prevailed on the workers to "go back to work". The crisis was over! The opportunity to transform the situation was lost.

Had the POUM taken power they could have offered a united front against Franco to the government in Madrid. The government had no troops on which it could rely. Very rapidly the masses in Madrid, Valencia and at the fronts would have rallied to the banner of socialism in Barcelona. The power of the Madrid government would have crumbled and disappeared.

The POUM failed to act. They had entered the Catalonian bourgeois government with the Anarchists and hoped for miracles. In words they were against class collaboration, in deeds they collaborated with the shadow of the capitalist class.

Within six weeks they received the reward for their cowardice and lack of perspective. In a revolution the masses learn fast, but these "leaders" had learned nothing. The Stalinists seized the opportunity provided by the fact that the masses had been reduced to passivity and despair. Using the pretext that the POUM were involved in a plot with Franco they were declared illegal. Nin and other leaders were murdered by GPU agents in Spain. The Party had disappeared from the scene.

Caballero had refused to agree to the suppression of the POUM. Consequently he had to be removed. The CP hatched a plot with Prieto and the right wing socialists and with the bourgeois republicans in the cabinet. Caballero was replaced by Negrin, who was more pliant in the hands of the Stalinists. Passionaria hailed this as the "government of victory"! There were some military victories. Very few! But by transforming the struggle into a purely military one the seeds for defeat had been sown. The bourgeois officers who had the military training were not reliable.

After the dissolution of the militias, Malaga and the Basque country were betrayed by a section of the staff into the hands of the Fascists.

The trial of Oscar Mpetha and 18 other activists has already attracted great interest and support for the accused. A militant campaign for the defence of the SAAWU leaders and their co-accused could act as a magnet for the struggles of all the oppressed, and would find a strong echo in the labour movement internationally.

This would be the most effective defence, not only for those on trial but for all trade unionists against future state action.

And, if the industrial struggle encounters obstacles in the short term, this will only store up determination to recover what has been lost when production temporarily speeds up again in the future.

To prepare for this, and to meet the present vicious attacks by the bosses and the regime, the independent trade union movement will not only have to be **consolidated** but to **grow more rapidly than ever before**. The effective defence of jobs and living standards, as well as the defence of those arrested, cannot be separated from a concerted effort to build up the movement into a mass force.

Unity of the independent trade unions, now seriously on the agenda, would be a decisive step in this direction. United around a bold programme of action, the movement would confront the regime with an enormous potential for struggle, capable not only of beating off state attacks but of enforcing the workers' demands.

As the recession leaves growing numbers of workers unable to find jobs, the task of organising the unemployed together with the employed becomes more urgent. This will prevent the bosses from playing off the workers inside the factories against those queuing for jobs outside.

### Elected committees

**Such a united movement could rally the unorganised workers and the youth in their tens and hundreds of thousands.**

With elected committees in thousands of workplaces linked together, all the spontaneous militancy and ingenuity of the

workers could be drawn into a single mighty movement. These committees would be a training ground for workers to take up the tasks of leadership, organisation and education at all levels.

At the same time, the task of developing an underground network of leadership, secure against the police, cannot be neglected at the present stage. If an all-out attack on the unions should be attempted in the future, and if the mass movement were to be disrupted for a time, it is vital that the workers in the factories and elsewhere should not be left leaderless and disorganised.

Out of all these struggles, political and industrial, open and underground, the ANC can be built as a mass movement based on the organised workers, round a revolutionary programme combining the demands of all the oppressed—for the overthrow of apartheid and capitalism, for the destruction of the bosses' state, for a new democratic workers' state that would lay the foundations for the socialist transformation of Southern Africa. ●



*The ANC flag has been proudly raised even in the centre of Johannesburg*

But in any event, as a purely military struggle the war could not be won! **The general excuses, if they deal with the subject at all, to explain the defeat by the reformists and Stalinists, are foreign intervention and the Moors. Hitler and Mussolini supplied troops, 100 000 Italians and 20 000 to 60 000 Germans. Tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of Moors were in Franco's Army.**

But in the Russian revolution, too, there was intervention from foreign troops. 21 armies, of all the great powers, intervened. Russia was blockaded. In the early stages of the Civil War only one province with Petrograd and Leningrad remained in the hands of the Bolsheviks. The rest of Russia was in the hands of the White Guard and the armies of intervention.

The Bolsheviks won not because of superior military arms or skills but because they waged the civil war as a social struggle. **Land to the peasants, freedom for the oppressed nationalities, factories to the workers and proletarian internationalism was the method of the Bolsheviks. Consequently every Russian army sent against the Bolsheviks and Russian workers and peasantry, and their power, mutinied and had to be withdrawn.** Behind the capitalist and imperialist lines the peasants and workers sabotaged the struggle. They supplied the Red Army with invaluable information about their enemies. They organised guerrilla war. The White Guard armies, feeling the hostility of the people, became demoralised. Tens of thousands conscripted, deserted to the Reds. The Russian workers were victorious in the Civil War.

In China Mao Tse Tung and the Chinese CP, waging a semi-revolutionary war, gained victory. The Civil War started with an overwhelming majority of Chiang Kai Shek forces, militarily and numerically. They were supplied with the most modern equipment in tanks, planes and guns, by American imperialism. The greater part of China was in their hands. But giving land to the peasants, reserving a piece of land to the soldiers of Chiang's armies, in the villages from where they came, won over the troops. By hundreds of thousands, and by whole divisions, they deserted to the Red Army. Waging a social war—a semi-revolutionary war—resulted in military victories too, because of the high morale of the troops, from the peasant officers to the smallest corporal and private, that is the way—though lacking sophisticated material—which was brought over by the soldiers deserting to their side—though the military odds seemed to be overwhelmingly against them in territory, numbers and material, they were victorious.

When the Spanish Civil War is examined, the opposite process is to be seen. The magnificent initiative of the workers gains dazzling victories of an unarmed working class in two-thirds of Spain. The fleet comes over to the side of the workers. Part of the air force and artillery.

But the revolution is not consummated. Inch by inch the workers are blasted back. The democratic counter-revolution in the rear is repressed by the landlords. The bourgeois state and bourgeois armies are restored. Power is in the hands of "democratic capitalism".

What are the consequences? The Moors were Franco's crack troops. Why did they fight for enslavement of themselves and their Spanish brothers, the workers and peasants? Abd-el-Krim, who led the struggle for Moorish independence from Spain and France, was in exile on an island in the Mediterranean. He offered the Republican government to come to Spain and appeal to the Moors to come over to the side of the Republic. All he asked in return was autonomy for Morocco. **But to give autonomy to Morocco would offend the "democracies" of Britain and France by undermining their empires in Africa. Moreover, was not the Popular Front government pledged to maintain all the Spanish land? Not waging the war by revolutionary means, the offer was rejected.** Throughout the conflict the Moors remained the fiercest and best troops. The crowning irony of this particular fact is that later, fearful of the collapse of his regime were he to wage a colonial war, Franco conceded—not autonomy—but in-

dependence! Thus the Fascists gave at the first risk what the miserable Popular Front government was not prepared to concede when it was fighting for its life!

It is true that Mussolini and Hitler supplied enormous quantities of material and also troops to Franco. But these troops were Italian peasants and workers, German peasants and workers. They could be reached—they could only be reached—by an international socialist appeal as with the Bolsheviks in Russia. But in spite of all, foreign troops and Moors were auxiliaries. The main body of Franco's troops were Spaniards, mainly peasants conscripted into Franco's army. They could only be won over by showing the fundamental social differences between the armies. **Land to the peasants, factories to the workers, freedom for the oppressed nationalities in Spain and Africa**—that was the only programme for victory. The programme of transferring the power back to the landlords and capitalists could have had no effect on the troops in Franco's army. Militarily superior in officers, tanks, on this level all the advantages were on the side of Franco. Waging the struggle as a "military war"—not as a social war waged by arms—guaranteed defeat. "Popular Front" France and "democratic" Britain starved "Republican" Spain of arms with the hypocritical farce of "non-intervention". Stalinist Russia participated in this farce. Only after precious months had been lost did they supply arms, and then only on the condition of halting the social revolution.

The policies of the workers' parties in the revolution and civil war guaranteed defeat. But let us assume for a moment that by some fantastic miracle **military** if not **social** victory could have been obtained. What then? Power had been handed back to the capitalists and landlords. The remnants of the old officer caste and middle class had taken over the officers' jobs in the reconstructed bourgeois army. The country was ruined and had been laid waste in the terrible civil war.

The repression of the initiative of the workers and their nascent control of the factories had demoralised and thwarted the ideals of the working class. The generals, placed in full command of the renewed army, decided everything. Towards the end of the struggle it was apparent that victory was far away.

The uncontrolled army command, of the refurbished regular army, seized power to try and propose a compromise with Franco! **General Casado and General Miaja—Miaja with a Communist Party membership card in his pocket—established a military dictatorship!** As a reward for being the fighting vanguard of democratic counter-revolution, the "Communist" Party was made illegal and forced underground. **There were now two dictatorships in Spain—on both sides of the trenches!**

Even had "Republican" Spain won the civil war there would have been a military police state in Spain! This was the final condemnation of the policies of all the workers' organisations.

Spain, after more than three decades of dictatorship, is moving once again towards revolution. The CP leaders, having learned nothing, play the same perfidious role.

It is the task of the Spanish Young Socialists to carry the lessons of the civil war to the working class, and of course to the rank and file fighters of the Communist Party. Internationally and nationally the perspective is favourable. Anarchism is discredited in its former "Last Latin hide-out" and is very weak. The Socialist Party and the Communist Party are the two real forces within the working class. The CP rank and file will respond to a bold lead from the SP and the YS if it is based on the ideas of Marxism.

Victory of the Socialist revolution in Spain can transform the international situation. The only road for the Spanish workers to ensure the success of the revolution is to learn the lessons of the Spanish revolution of 1931-7 and of the civil war. Without this understanding they would be doomed to make similar mistakes and suffer the fate of their fathers and grandfathers.

# NEIL AGGETT -

## Trade union militant

Neil Aggett, "found hanged" in his detention cell at 1.30am on 5 February, is believed to be the 51st person to die in the custody of the security police since 1963. At his death, aged 28, he was Transvaal organiser of the Food and Canning Workers' Union and African Food and Canning Workers' Union.

Born in Kenya of settler parents, qualifying as a medical doctor at UCT in 1976, Neil died as a fighter for the working class. In the half-hour work-stoppage protesting his death, at his funeral and in many statements of tribute, thousands of workers have shown their anger at the murder of a comrade.

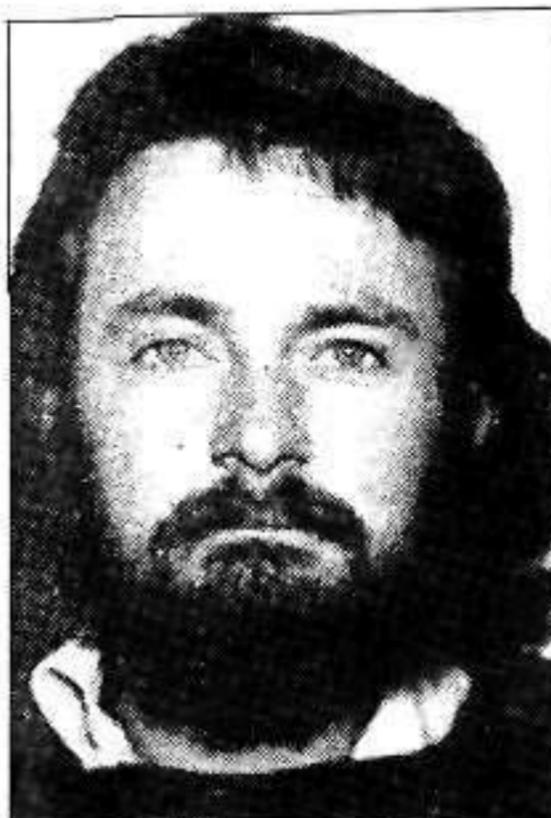
The course of Neil's all-too-brief life reflected his growing understanding that the struggle for democracy and social justice in SA is wholly bound up with the struggle of the working class to organise for taking control of society.

Though an able student, Neil learnt mainly from his experiences, and through the experience of others. Living simply, approaching all he met with equal respect, he exuded a quiet strength which won him the trust of those he met and those he worked with.

In overcrowded black hospitals in Umtata and Tembisa, and at Baragwanath, Neil's work exposed him to the nightmare inflicted on workers and their families by the system of profit and racial dictatorship.

The 'Friday night shift' at Baragwanath is an assembly line for sewing up shattered bodies: each weekend 40-50 deaths are recorded. Neil worked this shift to earn his keep even when a full-time organiser; and afterwards would report straight to the union office for the day.

He won respect among staff and patients as one of the few white



Baragwanath doctors who made an effort to speak Zulu to consult directly with those he treated.

Neil maintained an appreciation of life which ranged from Sartre's novels to boxing. He never wrote anyone off. Living in Doornfontein and Kensington, he kept warm relations with his white working-class neighbours, despite political differences.

Neil showed his honesty, courage, and resolve by unflinchingly taking up in practice those tasks which he came to understand were necessary in order to further the struggle.

Through the Industrial Aid Society—where he was involved in setting up a section dealing with work injuries—and then as a trade union organiser, he applied himself to what was required of him with modest, hard-working dedication.

The tribute by his Union bears witness to this:

"The Union had no resources whatever—no funds with which to buy a vehicle, or pay salaries, rent offices—other than the 20c subscriptions that each member contributes. Neil...was always willing to assist officials with lifts to the

factories. Later...he was asked to help in an official capacity...

"At the time all the resources of the Union were thrown into the Fattis and Monis strike...the Union resolved...to organise the Fattis and Monis factory in Isando....After various attempts...had failed, Neil was entrusted with the task. He set to work with commitment and great persistence, organising house meetings, and...in the hostels of Tembisa.

"...the gains won by the workers (at Fattis and Monis) were the basis on which other workers in Tembisa were organised. Neil....sought to root the Union in the daily lives and struggles of the working people of Tembisa. As a result this was the area of the Union's most rapid growth. Through the same methods...our Union also grew and was consolidated in other areas.

"Neil...never sought to build up a personal following....He was greatly loved by the workers and our Union is proud to have been associated with a person of his calibre."

In the months before his detention when (like other organisers) he was increasingly harassed by the security police, Neil had been entrusted with convening the follow-up meeting to the Langa unity conference. His choice for this work reflected his commitment to the building of a strong, united democratic trade union movement, and his ability to see beyond the personal and political tensions which inevitably arise in uniting different organisations.

In striving to build mass democratic trade union unity, activists will strengthen the struggle for workers' democratic rule through which alone health and prosperity can be achieved for all—a goal for which Neil gave his life.

# Explanatory Notes

## Page 3

**Paris Commune**—The municipal government through which the working class took power in Paris, the French capital, in March 1871, following the defeat of the French ruling class in its war with Prussia. This was the first form of workers' state in history. Failing to carry through the expropriation of the capitalist class or to move against the capitalists' army outside Paris, however, the Commune was defeated in May 1871 with the massacre of 20 000 men, women and children.

**Defeated revolution of 1905**—The forerunner and 'dress rehearsal' for the revolution of 1917, the Russian revolution of 1905 clearly established the working class as the leading force in the struggle and gave rise to the first Soviets (councils of workers' representatives) before it was eventually defeated.

**Bonapartist**—The term derives from the character of the military dictatorship set up by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1799, during the early period of the bourgeois revolution in France. Crushing the democratic movement and usurping political power from the bourgeoisie, it nevertheless defended and enforced bourgeois property relations. Trotsky wrote: "The essence of Bonapartism consists in this: basing itself on the struggle of two camps, it "saves" the "nation" with the help of a bureaucratic-military dictatorship". (*Whither France?*)

**CNT**—Spanish syndicalist trade union federation. Syndicalism held to the position that the workers should struggle for power through their trade unions and through the weapon of the general strike, and avoid political organisation—a position impossible to maintain in practice. Spain until the 1930s was the country where syndicalism had by far its biggest following in the working class.

**Anarchists**—The central idea of anarchism is that the state is responsible for social oppression and that the task of the revolution is to abolish all forms of state power. Linked to the syndicalists, the Spanish anarchist organisation FAI had a following among militant workers. But everything anarchism stood for was practically repudiated by its leadership in becoming part of the Popular Front government.

**UGT**—Trade union federation traditionally linked to the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE).

**Privy Councillor**—Advisor to the king.

## Page 4

**Alfonso**—King of Spain from 1906 to 1931.

**"Social fascism"**—This was one aspect of the ultra-left course followed by the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union from 1928 to 1935 and enforced on all the parties of the (then) Communist International. This false position was reversed in 1935 to the opposite but equally false position of 'popular frontism'—seeking coalitions with the 'democratic' capitalists.

**"Bourgeois-democratic revolution"**—Originally the term referred to the revolutionary overthrow of the feudal ruling classes during the period of the rise of capitalism. The classical bourgeois revolutions, of which the French revolution of 1789-93 is the foremost example, served to carry the bourgeoisie (capitalist class) to power on the tide of a mass movement under the banner of democracy. Its historical achievements included parliamentary government, division of the land among private farmers, free trade, uniting the nation, etc. But increasingly during the 19th century, as the working class developed into a powerful social force, the capitalist class which emerged in less-developed countries, became incapable of carrying out the democratic tasks without endangering its own rule, and moved into the camp of counter-revolution.

## Page 5

**POUM**—A Spanish workers' party, at this time led by Andres Nin, based mainly in Catalonia. To the left of the Communist and Socialist parties, and described as a 'Marxist' or even a 'Trotskyist' party, the POUM was in fact a classical centrist party—revolutionary in language and programme, but with a leadership shrinking from carrying that programme into practice.

## Page 6

**Menshevik**—The reformist wing of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, the Mensheviks ('minority') got their name from the split with the **Bolsheviks** ('majority') in 1903. The fundamental political differences between Menshevism and Bolshevism were confirmed

in the revolution of 1905 but they remained opposed tendencies in the RSDLP until 1912, when separate parties were formed. In 1917, with their false 'two-stage' theory of the revolution, the Menshevik ministers helped prop up the capitalist Provisional Government and fought against the proletarian revolution. After October, they became an openly counter-revolutionary party.

**Social Revolutionary**—Based on the peasantry, the Social-Revolutionary party in Russia called for "free popular rule, nationalisation of the land and nationalisation of all great industries". But after the overthrow of the Russian Tsar (emperor) in February 1917 they became, with the Mensheviks, the mainstay of the bourgeois Provisional Government and refused to carry out their own programme (which was in fact implemented by the **Bolsheviks** when they took power in October). After October the right wing of the SRs sided openly with counter-revolution.

## Page 10

**Junta**—This word is here used to refer to workers' councils equivalent to the soviets formed in the Russian revolution.

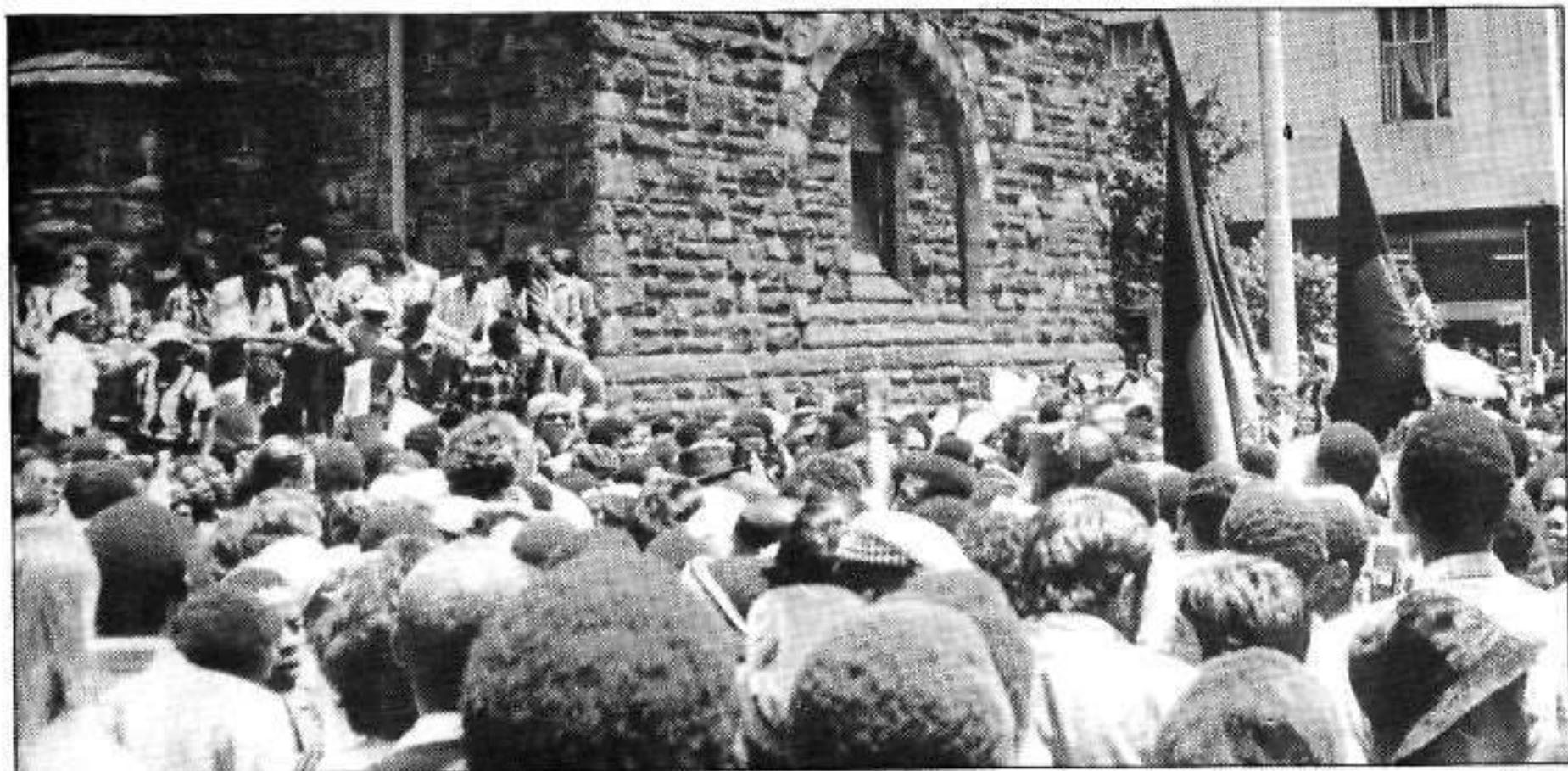
## Page 13

**Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht**—Leaders of the revolutionary wing of the Social-Democratic Party in Germany, they opposed the right-wing SPD leadership over the latter's support for the imperialist First World War, and laid the basis for the formation of the Communist Party of Germany in December 1918. Both were murdered in January 1919 in the course of the defeat of the German revolution by reactionary troops mobilised by the Social-Democratic government.

## Page 14

**GPU**—Stalin's secret police, agents of which were sent to Spain to help in the suppression of the workers' revolution.

**Passionaria**—Dolores Ibarruri, a leader of the Communist Party of Spain.



*At the funeral*



# WORKERS ORGANISE!

## A LIVING WAGE FOR MINEWORKERS!

**This year all mine-workers are facing a huge struggle to improve or maintain their wages. With the gold price falling to \$330 an ounce, the bloated companies are now pleading 'poverty'.**

The recent earth tremor at Free State Geduld mine near Welkom, killing at least four miners and injuring others, emphasises the dangerous conditions in the mines. 7 000 other workers could only escape by walking two miles underground to reach the remaining undamaged shafts.

Another tremor and pressure burst at Vaal Reefs mine near Klerksdorp killed at least one worker.

Mineworkers are faced with even worse conditions as the bosses cut costs in all possible ways to boost their profits.

Even the white miners are feeling the pressure. A dispute has been declared as the eight white unions' present demand of a 15% increase and up to one week's extra leave has been rejected by the Chamber of Mines.

But no demand has been put forward by white union leaders for the black mineworkers who face the bulk of the work and the danger.

Last year, without a trade union, the black miners were not even compensated for the official rise in the cost of living. The recent announcement that a Black Mine Workers Union has been formed signals an important change in the situation. The potential for a fighting trade union to organise and unite the black mineworkers is enormous.

To enforce the black workers' demands, mass trade union mobilisation and uncompromising struggle will be needed. But to seek registration, as the Black Mine Workers' Union leadership are reported to be doing, would be a step in the wrong direction.

Unless the union is prepared to

fight against the vicious mineowners, whose profits rest entirely on the brutal state-enforced system of cheap compound labour, the workers will continue to be at their mercy.

The slave conditions of the black miners are a challenge to the whole labour movement. If cheap labour on the mines is not combated by concerted trade union action, all workers will be threatened with worse conditions.

Equally, the mineworkers organised would enormously strengthen the labour movement. Producing 60% or more of South Africa's exports, they have a key strategic position.

If the mass of the miners were organised as part of the independent trade union movement, they would have enormous power to compel the bosses and the state to make concessions, opening the road to a serious struggle for national and social liberation.

Now is the time for the trade

unions, the community organisations and the youth to actively support the organisation of the mineworkers.

Close means of contact exist between miners and other urban workers. Miners are often in the same shops, attend churches and use the railways. Out of such links common organisation can be developed.

In July the Chamber of Mines will declare what wage they consider appropriate for the black miners. In the time before then, the black mineworkers will need to organise in support of demands unambiguously reflecting their own interests;

- A minimum wage of R100 a week linked to the cost of living;
- Abolition of the migrant labour system and compounds;
- Family accommodation for all black miners;
- The right to strike and trade union freedom.

**J.W. & L.R.**



*Black mineworkers: their unionisation will have explosive results*

# WORKERS ORGANISE!

## Garment industry strikes

**The industrial council agreement in the clothing industry expires at the end of June. The employers refused to re-negotiate it earlier, despite the huge increases in the cost of living.**

In February, the leadership of the Garment Workers' Union told workers what to do to get wage increases. Was it to prepare for strike action? No. You must, intoned the *Garment Worker* (5/2/82), "maintain or increase your productivity, don't be late for work, don't stay away for no good reason".

But the workers (some on basic wages of R30-33 a week) were already giving their own reply. By March there had been at least 11 strikes of clothing workers, including H.J. Henochsberg (500), SA Weatherwear Manufacturers (140), Jay's, Lovable, Ram Sem Clothing, and Adonis knitwear (200)—involving over 2 000 workers.

In fact workers who had managed to gain increases were using the advertisement pages of the *Garment Worker* to let their fellow-workers know!

The *Garment Worker* put an end to this. And the leadership cravenly announced: "If deadlock is reached we and the employers will have to decide whether to go to arbitration...or to the workers. If we go to the workers for a strike ballot then the workers can show their strength by voting for a legal strike—but not before then" (19/2/82; emphasis added).

Not only in the clothing industry, TUCSA workers are getting fed up with their leaders, tied through the broken reeds of Grobbelaar, Scheepers, etc to the bosses and the government.

At a March mass meeting of the National Union of Furniture and Allied Workers in the Transvaal, three-quarters of those present walked out, dissatisfied with the running of their benefit funds, and demanding the scrapping of the industrial council. "The leaders seem to have cosy relations with the employers", said one worker.

Despite the detention of Emma Mashinini, TUCSA leaders scandalously opposed the huge protest at

Neil Aggett's death. It is small wonder that, although Emma Mashinini has now been released, her husband Tom resigned as an organiser for the National Union of Clothing Workers.

A strong mood is developing in the TUCSA unions with large black memberships to link up with the movement of the mass of the black workers. The fact that TUCSA leaders are now opting for dissolving parallel unions into "non-racial unions" need not stand in the way of this.

**Whether through transforming their unions into truly democratic fighting organisations, or through joining independent unions, the way ahead for militant TUCSA members is clear. To secure decent conditions, dignity, and liberation, they need to become part of the developing movement for the transformation of society.**

The independent trade unions, in their progress towards unity, have a responsibility to assist these developments in every way possible,

**R.M.**

Farm workers have always faced the most difficult conditions to organise. But the militancy affecting every layer of the working class is reaching them also.

That has been shown by the Orange Vaal General Workers' Union, which has signed up 140 of the 230 workers on farms owned by Anglo-American in the Vereeniging area.

Union meetings have provided a sounding board for farmworkers' grievances and demands.

Long hours—8,5 to 10,5 a day—are worked for this 'liberal' employer. Wages are as low as R40 per month plus 'free housing and rations'.

What rations? A journalist reports the workers' answer: "One man shakes his head. The others laugh." The meat they get is "bad—it has fungus on it by the

## Farm workers organise!

time we get it home." The vegetables are "rejects—not good enough to send to the mines" (*Rand Daily Mail*, 3 March).

Housing is an even more desperate problem. African farm workers cannot qualify for "section 10 rights"—if they lose their jobs they lose their houses, and must go the Bantustans or look for work on other farms.

But with increasing mechanisation, farm jobs are more and more difficult to find.

The union organisers were concerned to make the workers' grievances heard to the National Manpower Commission which investigated farm conditions. But the

workers had their doubts.

"The enquiry," they pointed out, "will be done by people who own the farms, the Nationalists—how can they help the workers?"

**Farm workers face the same problems as their urban brothers and sisters, often in the harshest forms. But like the urban workers they are able to fight back.** One worker gives an example: "They increased Saturday work by an hour—but we ignored it so they went back to the old times."

The work of the OVGWU is a significant step that shows the potential for organising farm workers up and down the country. As part of a united non-racial trade union movement, the organised farm workers would bring new reserves of strength to the struggle of the whole working class.

**D.H.**

# WORKERS ORGANISE!

## What wage do we need?



Striking metal workers from four factories in Wadeville meet to discuss their demands

## Bosses in sheep's skins

Already, with only about 7% of black workers organised in independent trade unions, the more far-sighted wing of the bosses half-heartedly demand that the government should keep out of labour disputes.

Even a wolf looks like a sheep when it is in a sheep's skin. They hope that if they deal directly with the workers' leaders, they may be able to bureaucratise and win into their pockets the trade union leadership in order to prevent a further unionisation or to have it only on their terms.

The editorial of the *Rand Daily Mail* of 12 March spelled this out clearly. Asking "Will the real Government trade union policy please stand up?", it goes further to

say: "Strikers have been arrested and sometimes charged under tough security laws for activities which are commonplace in democracies... These actions were raising tempers in the factories, damaging the credibility of labour reforms and prompting greater unity among emerging unions". It is the prospect of "greater unity" that haunts the bosses.

For the trade unions to continue to represent the interests of the workers, and to abort the bosses' plan to make the trade unions too humble to fight super-exploitation, the unions will have to launch an offensive struggle. This calls for bold demands, and mass organisation to make sure that these demands are met.

**M.Z.**

Workers throughout the country this year have exploded into action with demands for wage increases. There have been demands for raises of 50%, 100% and more in many sectors.

In February and March at least 25 work stoppages took place in the metal industry alone.

The most common demands were for a R2 per hour minimum wage or a R1 per hour increase.

One boss has wailed: "You can't have the same wage demand—for a R1 hourly increase—without a coordinated campaign." MAWU, whose members have been putting forward these demands, answers that workers need more money: "no union has to tell them that".

FOSATU's *Policy on a Living Wage* last year correctly raised the demand for a minimum wage (then put at R2 an hour) linked to the cost of living. FOSATU sees a living wage as determined by a combination of two factors: "what workers themselves decide they need to live", and "what workers are able to get from their managements".

But workers, struggling for their needs, cannot agree that "what we are able to get" should be "based on the company's ability to pay" or "its profits" (as FOSATU's document states).

Workers need to feed themselves and their families whether or not companies can afford to pay them enough. One trade unionist indicated that some workers in struggle "are so desperate that even when they are warned that high wages can cause unemployment, they don't seem to care".

The *Financial Mail* took this to show "Black workers' ignorance of economic realities" (23 April).

In fact, the "economic realities" the workers are showing are that if capitalism can't afford to pay a living wage, workers can't afford the capitalist system!

The independent trade unions must organise a national campaign for a living wage, indexed to the cost of living, linking the workers' demands to the need to overthrow capitalism and replace it with a society where the workers themselves rule and decide what "they need to live".

**S.F.**

# SOUTH AFRICA'S IMPENDING SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

Perspective of the Marxist Workers' Tendency  
of the African National Congress

An  
**inqaba**  
**YA BASEBENZI**  
publication

NOW!  
NOW!



*South Africa's Impending Socialist Revolution has been circulating for just over a month among labour movement activists in Southern Africa and internationally. But already some positive comments have begun to reach us. "It explains difficult questions simply", has been the reaction of several readers.*

*As the first perspective document of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC, its main purpose is to raise for discussion the basic tasks and outlook for our struggle. It explains why the battle to overthrow apartheid cannot be separated from the need to overthrow the capitalist system.*

*The regime, with systematic censorship, has been trying for decades to cut off the mass of the workers from revolutionary ideas. For this reason the document has needed to include, at least in outline, an explanation of the basic ideas of Marxism and major developments in the workers' struggle historically, which shed an essential light on our tasks and the nature of the period we are entering.*

*Thus it aims to provide the reader with an introduction to the method of Marxism, which is the indispensable guide to conscious revolutionary action.*

*Several chapters are devoted to explaining the crisis today prevailing in all the main areas of the world—the advanced capitalist countries, the Stalinist countries and the former colonial world. There is a special*

*chapter on Africa. The document shows how all these situations are linked together, and explains how the working class struggle internationally can provide a way out of the crisis.*

*Some may ask whether the consequent size of the document (160 pages) makes it unsuitable for a working-class readership. In fact, the working class has always shown a need and a desire for a fundamental explanation of society, and the way to change it, which is shared by no other class. The notion that 'theory' is something for 'educated scholars', while workers are interested only in 'bread-and-butter' matters, is nothing but ruling-class prejudice.*

*Activists in Southern Africa and elsewhere have already begun to use the document for organising political discussion on a group as well as an individual basis. A series of discussions on the questions dealt with in the different chapters will raise all the fundamental issues confronted by our movement today in Southern Africa and internationally.*

*Absorbing and generalising the rich experience of workers and youth in struggle, the spread of such discussions can assist in sharpening understanding of the perspectives and tasks of our movement. Applying the method of Marxism in practice, activists will lay the cornerstone for the development of revolutionary programme, strategy and tactics in the ANC and also in the trade unions.*

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**Every copy sold will help us to circulate more copies clandestinely in South Africa, and reach workers and young people who are thirsting for Marxist literature but cannot obtain it or afford the cost. Donations to help this work are welcomed.**

# 'People's republic' or workers' state?

With the mighty battalions of the working class today in the forefront of the struggle against oppression and exploitation, new perspectives are opening up for the people.

No longer is it only a question of defending ourselves against the brutality of the regime. The black working class, increasingly organised, is showing itself able to face up to the power of the bosses and the state, and even force them to retreat.

Daily the power to achieve liberation is manifesting itself in the factories, mines, docks and townships. The gathering storm of the revolution is pushing the workers in the direction of the ANC where, instinct and past experience tell them, unity in action—an essential precondition for victory—can be found.

Thus the advancing workers' movement is bringing new questions to the fore. How must the ANC be built in preparation for the overthrow of the regime—with what programme, strategy and tactics? What kind of society must we construct to take the place of the existing system? What economic and social changes are necessary to make possible the national and social liberation of our people?

Our answer to these questions is essential to the future of our movement. A full understanding of our tasks, and the means to carry them out, is the key to a revolutionary programme for achieving and maintaining mass unity in action.

## 'People's democratic republic'

In the recent period, a 'people's democratic republic' has become

By  
**Basil Hendrikse**  
and  
**Daniel Hugo**

seen by more and more people as the aim of our struggle. This call is heard frequently in official ANC publications.

Such a slogan clearly expresses the people's determination to destroy the apartheid system. But is it clear as to the nature of the society which we are preparing to build in its place?

No society can be shaped completely at will. Every society depends on the way that the production and distribution of the means of life is organised. These economic foundations, with laws of their own, decisively influence the organisation of social life in general.

In South Africa it is the capitalist system, geared to provide the bosses with cheap labour, which lies at the root of national oppression. Completely dependent on the machinery of migrant labour, influx control and apartheid for their profits, the ruling capitalist class cannot survive

without a police dictatorship to hold down the mass of the workers.

Does the slogan of a 'people's democratic republic' come to grips with these fundamental questions?

No ruling class in history has ever voluntarily conceded to place democratic power in the hands of the mass of society. Democracy is not, and has never been, a set of abstract ideals which can be carried into practice at will.

## Democratic power

Under capitalism, democratic rights have only been won through hard struggle by the working people, and then only in a small minority of (the most prosperous) countries.

The democracy presently enjoyed by the workers of Western Europe, etc., was achieved only on the basis of unique historical conditions. With the rapid expansion of world production and trade, and with an enormous growth of its wealth, the imperialist ruling class has found it necessary and possible to make concessions to the struggles of the workers.

In SA the course of history has ruled out a similar development. The SA capitalist class came too late on the scene to build national prosperity in a world market dominated by the major imperialist powers. Grinding out their profits through the impoverishment and enslavement of the mass of black workers, they were dependent from the start on a highly repressive state



**“Confronted daily with the links between the bosses and their state, more and more activists are drawing the conclusion that the road to democracy and national liberation involves the abolition of the capitalist system.”**

machinery and policies of divide and rule.

Like siamese twins with one heart, national oppression and capitalism cannot be separated from each other. The very existence of the capitalist class as a ruling class was made possible precisely by the denial of democratic rights to black workers (and their emasculation in the case of white workers).

## The state

Confronted daily with the links between the bosses and their state, more and more activists are drawing the conclusion that the road to democracy and national liberation involves the abolition of the capitalist system.

This understanding points the general way forward for our movement. Our goal must be the **defeat of the capitalists** as well as the murderous guardian of their interests, the apartheid state. As the history of the workers' struggle has shown, however, the greatest clarity is needed as to what this requires in practice.

Not for nothing did Lenin devote a major theoretical work to the

question of *The State and Revolution* (see *Inqaba* supplement no. 3), basing himself on the past experience of the workers' struggle for power in different countries. Failure by workers' leaders to absorb these lessons has resulted in tragic and bloody defeats—in Germany (1918-19), in Spain (1936-39—see the supplement in this issue), in Chile (1970-73) etc.

**In the coming revolutionary struggles in SA our movement must ensure that these mistakes are not repeated, by arming itself with a scientific understanding on the issue of the state and the tasks which flow from this.**

Historically, the state machine—the army, police, courts, bureaucracy etc.—developed as “the instrument for the **oppression** of one class by another” (Lenin, *The State and Revolution*). Inevitably, the state arises out of, depends on, and maintains a particular economic system—serving the interests of the ruling class.

From this analysis, vividly borne out by the experience of every black person in SA, follow conclusions which are central to the conduct of our struggle.

Marx and Engels drew the essential lesson from the crushing of the

Commune of Paris in 1871 (when the working class held power for a few months). “One thing especially was proved by the *Commune*”, they wrote, “viz., that ‘the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery, and wield it for its own purposes’”. (Preface to the 1872 German edition of the *Communist Manifesto*). It was necessary “**to smash the bureaucratic military machine**”.

For Lenin, these words briefly express “the principal lesson of Marxism regarding the tasks of the proletariat during a revolution in relation to the state”.

**In other words, in order to make possible the revolutionary reorganisation of society, the existing armed forces, police, prisons, courts, bureaucracy etc.—created and maintained for the sole purpose of maintaining the capitalist order, and holding all important administrative functions in their hands—need to be completely disbanded.**

What, then, must be established in their place to take over national administration, to defend the gains of the revolution and ensure that society is run in accordance with the interests of the working people?

In answering this question, the

slogan of a 'people's democratic republic' is inadequate. It leaves unclear precisely that which we need to know—how the "people's republic" is to be run, through which machinery, and above all by which class.

The answer provided by Marxist theory, and confirmed in the course of history, is a **workers' state**. The working class must take the running of society into its own hands.

This inevitably involves a transformation of the economic foundations of the state. In place of the chaos of 'free enterprise', a workers' state brings about, and depends for its existence on, the **collectivisation of production**—i.e. the nationalisation of the main means of production subject to central planning.

It is not for nothing that Marxism understands the working class to be the only "consistently revolutionary class" in modern society—the only class, in Lenin's words, "that can unite all the working and exploited people in the struggle against the bourgeoisie in completely removing capitalism".

The revolutionary power of the working class is not simply a result of numbers—although, in industrialised countries such as SA, the workers and their families make up the majority of the population. Nor is it simply the consequence of strategic concentration in the cities. Above all, the historical role of the working class derives from its **role in production**.

The workers, physically operating society's means of production, have the power to bring the existing system to a halt. As the key producing class, they alone have the consistent interest in eliminating exploitation of the producers and reorganising production on the basis of social need. No other class can play this role.

**By boldly asserting its power and its programme to change society, the working class can rally all other oppressed groups around it, isolating the capitalist class and preparing for its overthrow.**

The historical mission of the workers' revolution is to break down the barriers which capitalism puts in the way of the productive forces, and create the conditions for the birth of socialism and ultimately



*The Russian peasants, like the workers, organised Soviets in 1917*

communism.

By 'communism' is meant a society of freedom and plenty, corresponding to a stage in the development of the productive forces where all the needs of mankind can be met.

Such conditions, however, cannot be created overnight out of the depths of poverty and underdevelopment in which capitalism has submerged the greater part of the world. A long and arduous process will need to be gone through before the socialist transformation of society can be completed.

## Socialism

In the first phase of communist society (generally referred to as socialism), the inequality and class divisions left by capitalism will not yet have been completely overcome. Only in the higher phase of communist society, Marx explained, "can the narrow horizon of bourgeois law be left behind in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs". (*Critique of the Gotha Programme*)

Yet even the first stages of communist society will represent an immeasurable advance over the greatest achievements of capitalism. The **starting point** for socialism, in the Marxist sense of the word, is the workers' expropriation of the **most advanced means of production**

**developed under capitalism**, which the working class would then proceed to develop far beyond the limits of the profit system.

Such a transformation clearly cannot be achieved on the basis of a single country, let alone an underdeveloped country. Capitalism has welded production and trade into a world-wide network centred on the advanced industry of the major imperialist countries.

**Socialism cannot therefore come into being except as an international transformation.** Necessary to its breakthrough would be democratic workers' revolutions in the major industrial countries, from where the revolution could be extended to the remainder of the world—making the most advanced resources available for the upliftment of all humanity. (This process could even be triggered off by a successful workers' revolution in a less-developed country).

The conditions for this transformation to occur are emerging increasingly throughout the world.

Marx concisely explained the significance of the workers' state in this process:

"Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but **the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.**"

As we said earlier, the state is an instrument for the oppression of one class by another. Is this true

also of a workers' state?

The answer lies in the nature of the transitional period itself. The capitalists, while expropriated where revolutions have occurred, may still retain a power-base internationally. They, together with other surviving reactionary groups, will not let slip any opportunity to retake power.

Obviously, then, the workers need the state and will use it to suppress another class. "What class must the proletariat suppress?" asks Lenin, and answers: "Naturally, only the exploiting class, i.e. the bourgeoisie. The working people need the state only to suppress the resistance of the exploiters, and only the proletariat can direct this suppression, can carry it out."

## Democracy

**Only to the former exploiting and oppressing classes, however, does workers' rule present itself as a "dictatorship". As far as the mass of working people are concerned, it is the highest form of democracy that can be reached at present.**

By the very conditions of its existence, the working class can exercise its power only in a collective manner, opening the way to mass involvement in government and administration far greater than the narrow limits of the parliamentary system.

Through the October Revolution of 1917, the Russian working class created a workers' state,

## Workers' democracy will make possible an enormous flowering of production, science and culture.

characterised in its first years by the greatest flowering of democracy yet seen in history. Not even the most democratic of capitalist states could have dared to permit the kind of freedoms which workers' rule made possible, e.g. the abolition of secret diplomacy.

**Workers' democracy is essential to the transition from capitalism to communism.**

To lift mankind out of its present conditions of extreme inequality, fragmentation, ignorance and destitution, will require the scientific and harmonious use of all the resources at our disposal, drawing on the full productive capacities of every man and woman.

Such a concerted social effort cannot be forced; it can only grow out of a general identification with the aims of the socialist transformation. For this the fullest democratic participation of all working people in making and carrying out decisions is indispensable.

Workers' democracy, over the period of transition, will make possible an enormous flowering of production, science and culture. Then, with the abolition of exploitation and inequality, class divisions within society will disappear.

The middle classes will increasingly discover the advantages of collective production and abandon the relative hardship of individual labour. **The disappearance of dif-**

**ferent social classes, in turn, will create the conditions for the disappearance of the state as an instrument of class oppression.**

A century ago, Engels brilliantly anticipated this development, which even today still lies in the future:

"along with them [i.e. social classes] the state will inevitably fall. Society, which will organise production on the basis of a free and equal association of the producers, will put the whole machinery of the state where it will then belong—into a museum of antiquities, by the side of the spinning-wheel and the bronze axe".

Or, to use Engels's classic expression, the state in the workers' hands "withers away".

A healthy workers' state, therefore, is not a state in the ordinary sense of a rigid military-bureaucratic apparatus but, as Lenin put it, a "semi-state". In order to fulfill its function and prevent the formation of a new ruling elite with interests hostile to those of the mass of society, the workers' organisations must be prepared to smash the capitalist state apparatus and enforce, consciously and rigorously, the essential conditions for democratic working-class rule (explained by Lenin in *The State and Revolution*):

- replacing the standing army with the armed people;
- rotating all official functions to

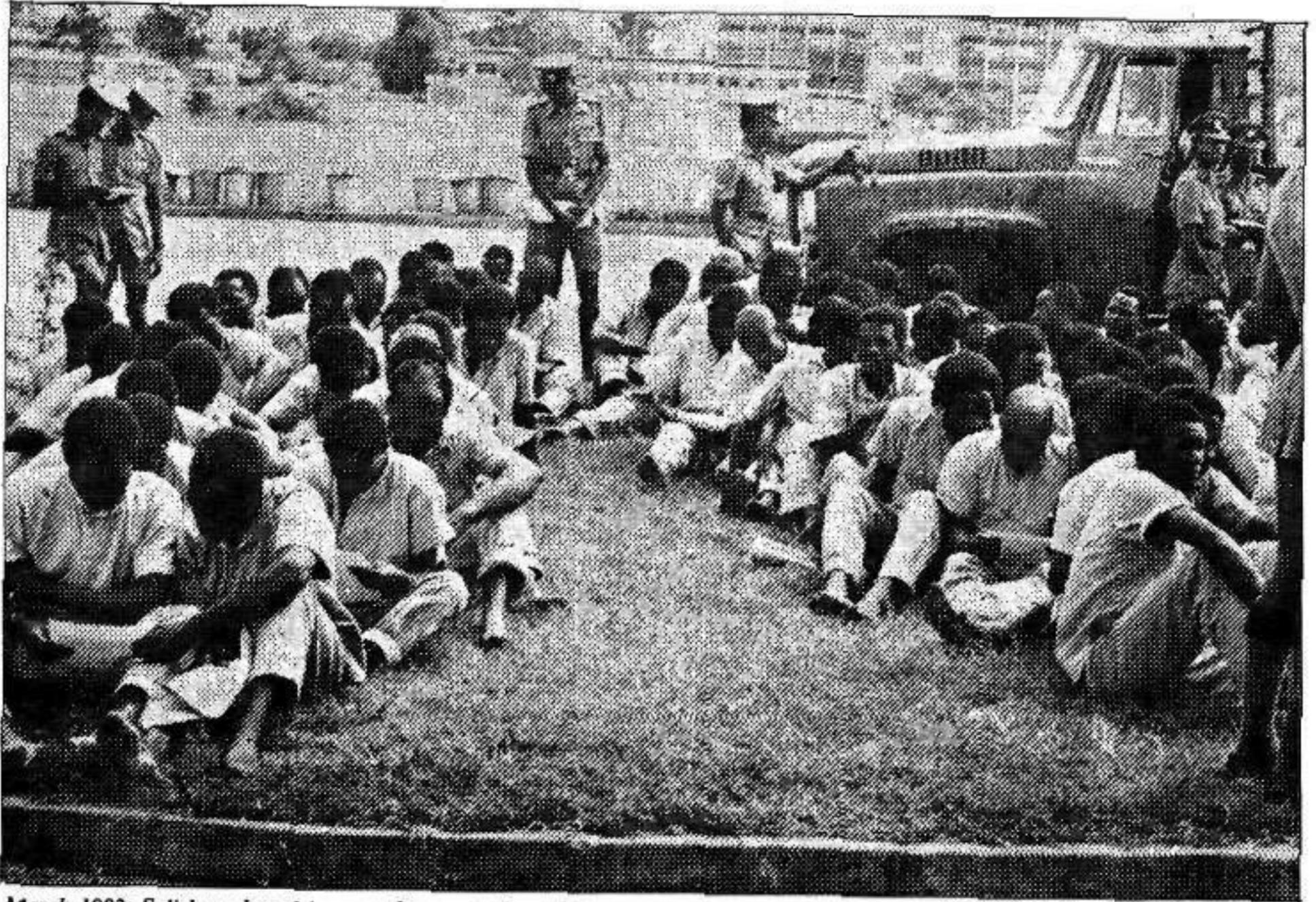


Brezhnev and Nixon (above);  
Queue at Russian shop (right)



# ZIMBABWE:

## *Workers struggle to defend their interests*



March 1982: Salisbury bus drivers under arrest for striking

**The great hopes of the Zimbabwean workers and peasants for jobs, land and democracy through the coming to power of the ZANU-ZAPU government are being increasingly frustrated by the limits of the capitalist system. The post-independence economic boom is gradually losing steam and the ZANU-led government is retreating from its election promises.**

This change in economic conditions has been accompanied by a flurry of political changes. Firstly there has been the split between Mugabe and Nkomo following the discovery of arms caches on farms owned by ZAPU. The dispute has been closely connected with the failure of negotiations between the

**By Sam Parkin**

ZANU and ZAPU leadership over the question of a one-party state. This dispute resulted in Nkomo and

two other ZAPU ministers being removed from the Cabinet. Prosecutions for hoarding arms are promised.

The second political upheaval has come within the white community with a split repudiating the politics of Smith's RF. The 'new politics' is linked up to the strategy of the big capitalists who favour conciliation with the Mugabe government.

All these developments are taking place against a perpetual shuffling of Cabinet posts, particularly since Nkomo's dismissal. The shifts in white politics are undoubtedly linked to the hope by whites of more Cabinet positions.



*Workers face hard times in Zimbabwe. Inflation of 16% is eating away at their wages. With two out of every five adult workseekers in the towns unable to find jobs, another 100 000 youth come onto the job market every year.*

Despite the 'changes at the top', political life here is somewhat subdued: the headlines reflect the balancing and rebalancing of interests among the capitalists and their supporters rather than any decisive movements. Even more political changes can be expected as the Mugabe government has to make difficult decisions—particularly in an effort to attract foreign investment.

Despite a visible lack of progress in meeting demands for land, higher wages, jobs and housing, the government commands widespread support, as demonstrated in mass rallies. The failures in social policy

have to some extent been hidden by improvements in education, by the openings created by departing whites, and by the consumer boom. (This, paradoxically, has resulted in a shortage of milk while milk production is at its highest level ever!)

An anti-ZAPU campaign is now conducted at ZANU rallies, with the burning of ZAPU membership cards, demands for death sentences for the 'ZAPU plotters', and exaggerated claims about ZAPU 'treachery'. This could result in a hardening of political hostilities. A number of recent incidents have shown a dangerous slide into the rivalries of the past with small-

scale (but bitter) clashes in the townships closely linked to mass political rallies.

Underlying these political tensions are the unrealised hopes of the masses. The struggle for jobs particularly has a potential for aggravating unresolved national divisions. A recent offer of 25 jobs in Bulawayo, for instance, resulted in a rush of 400 applicants who could not be dispersed by the police.

Already there have been demands for the removal of some ZAPU hospital employees in ZANU strongholds: any hint of yielding to such sectarian demands has dangerous implications.

### **Divisive strains**

The divisive political pressures exerted by functionaries in both nationalist parties are undoubtedly straining the basic unity of the workers in the factories, mines and townships. But the overwhelming feeling among the workers is for unity in the struggle for housing, a living wage, and jobs.

Conflict between the ZANU-led government and the workers has come to a head over the question of wage increases. An unfortunate 'Christmas present' came in the form of a government regulation (gazetted on 25 December 1981) limiting wage increases to a maximum of 20% including all increases since 1 January 1981.

For workers who managed to win a 20% increase last year—which only just compensated for the rising cost of living—this meant no increase at all!

This wage freeze forms part of the government's approach to the inflation produced by the capitalist system. Prices were frozen from 31 December to 30 April, and rents have been frozen at the December 1981 level until the end of June. The wage freeze, however, has no date of expiry.

Confusion was added to the wage regulations by a section requiring employers to pay the increases before 28 February, along with another section allowing the Minister to waive the provisions if they would 'cause undue hardship'.

The bus drivers employed by United Transport interpreted the regulations as meaning they should receive the maximum of 16% due to their wage bracket. The employers insisted that a 12,5% wage increase paid last year should be taken off the 16%. When the bus drivers, in a remarkable display of solidarity, came out on strike early in March in Gwelo, Umtali, Bulawayo and Harare, the government supported the employers and ruthlessly crushed the strike.

About 1 000 strikers were detained and charged under the Industrial Conciliation Act; and 1 800 were summarily dismissed. The Minister of Labour, Kumbirai Kangai, denounced the bus drivers in the sharpest language, calling them 'reactionaries' and even 'mercenaries'. He hoped the strikers would never again get employment!

Despite the disruption of transport suffered by workers throughout the major urban centres as a result of the strike (and worsened by the detentions) there was overwhelming support for the drivers. Even the ex-guerillas (who have been used as strike-breakers on occasion) were reported to support the strike and criticise the government's actions. The state-controlled media, however, carried no interviews with the workers nor any clear explanation of the issues.

## MPs' salary increases

To add insult to injury, on the day after more than 500 bus drivers were fined \$50 (R70) or 25 days—accompanied by a warning to all workers from senior magistrate David Charlton that there would not necessarily be the option of a fine in the future—the salaries of deputy ministers, MPs and others were increased substantially. Deputy ministers, for instance, got a 21.5% increase which brought their salary to just under \$20 000 to which is added an annual \$2 000 allowance!

The strike brought out clearly the need for strengthened workers' organisation in the trade unions. Because of the weakness of the

**“...there is a growing consciousness that the coming trials of strength with the employers will require the strongest organisation...”**

transport union, the bus drivers tended to rely completely on a workers' committee. It seems there was no consultation with the other trade unions. Throughout the strike there was silence from these, as from the Zimbabwean Congress of Trade Unions.

In a number of trade unions there is now determination to organise the unorganised and to lay the basis for the permanent organisation of the Zimbabwean working class. In unions which have a few organised centres there is now a growing realisation of the need to build real **national** unions to unite workers of all political persuasion.

The defeat of the bus drivers has not led to despondency. But there is a growing consciousness that the coming trials of strength with the employers will need the strongest possible organisation. The workers are rapidly becoming aware that, despite the advances made under the ZANU-led government, there is an urgent need for independent working-class organisation.

The growing mood of scepticism of the ZANU-led government was well expressed by a letter to the *Herald* on 23 March:

“It is very unfortunate that the Ministry of Labour and Social Services acted the way that it did over the bus drivers' strike. The Ministry and the police should not make arrests if a strike is not violent. They should listen, then think before

making those oppressive moves.

“The bus committee wrote to the Ministry, but without any response. Books say action speaks louder than words. When we use non-violent action to draw our superior's attention we get arrested and then fired.

“This shows that we (the workers) have no voice, no freedom of speech or action. We are being held to ransom. If only the Ministry could hear what the management say about them, they would not go on arresting and dismissing employees.

“After such arrests and dismissals managements make provocative statements like 'that's what you voted for'. This hurts so much that it makes us feel unwanted.

“Black and white anti-government elements make fools of us and the Ministry, which is supposed to help us but lays us off. Railway workers also suffered because of the Ministry, which turned a deaf ear to them.”

“I am not a rail worker or a bus driver, but I say people are losing faith in the Ministry of Labour. The Ministry has teeth. It should give the people what they want.”

Despite a recognition of the gains resulting from political independence, the workers will be seeking a way of making their own voice heard within the ranks of ZANU and ZAPU.

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**Black youth reject apartheid education. This message has been hammered home, even through official skulls, by the youth movement of 1980-81.**

The bosses have been forced to take this message seriously. Education plays a key part in their system—to turn out the skilled labour they need, and also to indoctrinate youth with ideas that will make them obedient servants of the ruling class.

On both counts apartheid education has failed completely. The capitalists themselves complain about the “inadequacy” of the skilled labour it provides.

Thus a single big company, Barlow Rand, needed 57 new electronic engineers for its expansion plans from 1981 to 1984—but all the SA universities, taken together, provide only 70 per year.

‘Bantu education’ has been part of the bosses’ traditional policy to maintain a cheap, divided, unskilled mass of workers. This was the historical basis for the profitability of SA capitalism in its efforts to compete with the more developed industrial countries.

Capitalist competition has led to the introduction of new technology at an ever-increasing tempo. It has meant that more skilled workers became needed. But skilled labour did not increase at the same rate as investment in new machinery. This was the inevitable result of SA’s centuries-long history of national oppression and the migrant labour system.

The white minority could no longer provide the numbers of artisans, technicians and university graduates demanded by industry, commerce and mining. But the

**By Rocco Malgas  
and Daniel Hugo**

‘Bantu education’ system has made it impossible to develop more than a handful of skilled people out of the overwhelming majority of the population.

Now the bosses have suddenly discovered the principle of “equal education for all”. But the apartheid system which lies at the heart of SA capitalism rules out this possibility.

**SA capitalism forces the working class to make tremendous sacrifices to educate their children, in an effort to secure a decent standard of living. Yet three-quarters of African children, forced by poverty to look for jobs or condemned to roam the streets, cannot study beyond Standard 2.** Out of every hundred children who began school in 1963, 58 whites could complete the full 12 years, compared with 22 Indian, four coloured and only two African children.

### **Obstacles to learning**

Even those able to go to school face enormous obstacles to learning, living in overcrowded homes, without books or electric lighting.

*The schools themselves are crippled by a lack of government finance.* In 1980, the average amount spent per African child was only 11% of that spent on a white child—the same percentage as in 1960. 6 000 new classrooms are needed every year just to accommodate the 250 000 new students wanting to

come to school—but between 1979 and 1982 only 2 500 new classrooms were built a year.

Thus classes are hopelessly overcrowded (with an average of 47 children per teacher, compared with 25 in white schools); desks and facilities are inadequate and books expensive.

Black teachers, deprived of proper training facilities, remain underqualified and underpaid. Only one-third of black secondary school teachers—and 15% of all black teachers—are qualified for the subjects they teach.

At the same time African teachers are paid four notches lower on the salary scale than whites with the same qualifications.

All these conditions, combined with oppression outside the schools, sparked off the upheavals of 1976 and 1980.

The magnificent struggles of the schoolgoing youth against the system of “junk education” were met with vicious state reaction. But when the teargas and gunsmoke cleared away, the bankruptcy of the system was exposed.

Not only was ‘Bantu education’ incapable of developing skilled labour; not only had it failed to brainwash black youth; it had actually galvanised thousands of youth into struggle against apartheid, the state and the capitalist system itself!

A high point in the students’ movement was the creation of the Committee of 81, which set out to lead the struggle at schools throughout the country. Its programme of demands, issued in May 1981, clearly reflected the political awareness and militant expectations of millions of black youth.

Its educational demands includ-



ed: free and adequate textbooks, free from apartheid propaganda; proper and adequate school buildings; proper facilities in all schools; equal pay and better training facilities for black teachers; more choice of subjects; free access to all educational institutions; equal per capita spending on all students; no examination fees; a single educational authority for all students.

The De Lange Commission was appointed after these struggles to carry out an 'urgent' investigation of the educational situation. Big business in public and private was at pains to impress on the Commission its views on the training of black youth.

**Clearly behind these views is the bosses' fear of a new generation of black youth—the factory workers of tomorrow—being driven to revolutionary politics by the present system. At the same time they are concerned about the lack of skilled labour resources.**

In the short term skilled workers can be imported from overseas at high wages. But in the longer term, politically and economically, the bosses can see important advantages in developing a layer of skilled black workers to supplement the existing supply of skilled labour.

In a planned economy, democratically controlled by the working class, new technology would benefit society as a whole, improving the workers' living standards and drastically reducing the amount of labour-time, while still increasing production.

But under capitalism, more advanced production methods have one purpose only—to increase the bosses' profits. Learning skills in itself does not benefit the worker. Only through organisation and struggle can the workers improve their position.

Thus the SA bosses, while demanding more skilled black labour, have made it clear that what they want is **cheap** skilled labour.

## Crushing burdens

While the relative scarcity of skilled workers might give them slightly better wages than the mass of black labour, skilled black workers would remain hemmed in by all the crushing burdens of apartheid and the migrant labour system.

This would drive down the wages of white workers as well, and remove the need to import highly-paid immigrant workers. For the greater the supply of skilled labour, the less the capitalists will need to pay for it.

Yet the capitalists face intractable difficulties in carrying this policy into practice.

They need more skilled labour, but cannot dispense with cheap labour. Thus they depend on a police state and racial oppression to keep down wages. But 'equal education', necessary to raise the level of skills, cannot be extended to the racially oppressed. Unequal education is inherent in their overall policy—breeding both chronic political tensions and a shortage of sufficiently skilled labour.

These contradictions explain the failure of all the bosses' efforts to increase the skilled labour supply.

Even 'non-formal' training schemes, carried out by employers with subsidies from the state, do not meet the bosses' needs. Because of the limitations of basic education, the bosses must teach workers to read and write before they can teach them skills. Thus most of them find it easier and cheaper to recruit skilled workers overseas.

In 1979, for example, only 8 570 African workers attended in-service training courses, and only 80 000 received some form of training on the job—mainly at a handful of big companies. Since May 1979 only 700

workers have passed through the new state 'Technikons'—established to provide training in skills!

In October 1981 the De Lange Commission produced what big business hailed as "a thorough and objective piece of scientific research which contains lucid and far-reaching recommendations" (*Financial Mail*, 16 October).

What are these pearls of wisdom?

As a result of "thorough research" no doubt, the worthy gentlemen of the Commission had lighted on the fact, announced with truly scholarly under-statement, that there appeared to be "serious problems with regard to the acceptability of educational practices in South Africa."

Even then their proposals, if "far-reaching" for big business, fall well short of any meeting point with the demands which have flowed out of the struggle of the youth:

A single 'multi-racial' SA Council of Education under the Minister of Education; disregarding the Group Areas Act as far as educational facilities were concerned; decentralisation of control over education for the greatest possible autonomy of schools and freedom of parental choice; free, compulsory education for the first six years, but (partially) paid secondary schooling or on-the-job vocational training thereafter; state subsidies and "choice of association" for private schools, so that they can become multi-racial; preparation for the expansion of educational facilities in line with urbanisation in the years ahead; shared responsibility between the state and big business in providing funds for 'non-formal education'.

## Token concessions

**It is immediately clear that token concessions only are offered to the youth. The outward badge of second-rate education—racially segregated education departments—can be dispensed with, according to De Lange. But the essence of Bantu education would remain.**

With secondary education 'partially-paid', decent schooling would be accessible only to the children of those who could pay for it, i.e. whites plus a small minority

of blacks. For the overwhelming majority, inferior schooling would remain. The main thrust of De Lange's proposals would be to create a more efficient system of **vocational** training to serve the bosses' needs.

Yet the government's **preliminary** response to even these modest proposals was to reject them out of hand. Why was this?

One reason is financial. A director of Anglo-American, Dennis Etheredge, estimates that the changes proposed by the De Lange Commission alone would require a **doubling** of state spending on education, presently standing at a miserly 16% of the budget.

And "as far as I can ascertain", this representative of 'concerned' and 'progressive' big business concluded, "this proportion (30% of the budget) has not been reached anywhere in the world and it is **clearly asking too much that education should receive so high a proportion**" (emphasis added) (*The Star*, 18 February 1982).

In other words, De Lange's proposals may be "lucid" and "scientific"—but SA capitalism is incapable of carrying them out!

Also politically the government is incapable of making any break with the present system of racist domination.

Capitalism in SA cannot survive without a police dictatorship to control the army of cheap labour. Where, in practice, must the dictatorship find its basis of social support except among privileged whites? How can this support be

maintained except by maintaining white privilege? And how can the mass of the workers be divided except by fragmenting the black population along ethnic lines?

What, in short, would be the effect on the class struggle if the principle of rigid social segregation were discarded in a major area such as education?

The government's views on these questions were made clear in its crude reaction to the Commission, reaffirming that each 'population group' must have its own education authority, and that 'freedom of choice' was acceptable only with each 'population group' having separate schools.

## No change

Thus despite P.W.Botha's solemn promise three years ago that "change is the only alternative to revolution", the youth's demands for change in the schools have been met with a blunt 'no'.

The bosses' will continue to go through the motions of 'considering reform', and tinkering with the machinery for producing cheap skilled labour.

**But this will only convince the black youth yet more firmly that the road to meaningful change in the schools, let alone outside them, is revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the whole rotten system.**

The capitalists themselves are uncomfortably aware of this fact. "If blacks are to be persuaded that free

enterprise is not merely an extension of a discriminatory system", the *Financial Mail* warned before De Lange reported, "commerce, industry and government must give to education the same urgent attention, financially and in all other ways, as is given to defence. **Otherwise free enterprise itself will not survive**". (Emphasis added) (12 June 1981).

You yourselves have said it, gentlemen. Now your "commerce, industry and government" have given the thumbs down to your solution. You must not pretend dismay if the workers and the youth struggle to impose their own solution—taking democratic control of the economy and the state in order to carry through the necessary change.

In a workers' SA, free access to education would not only raise our knowledge of the world around us, but would go hand in hand with a tremendous development of the productive forces. New machinery would not only eliminate the drudgery of capitalist production, but, by streamlining the productive process, would free workers to pursue education and recreation.

The struggles of the working class over the past two years have shown more clearly than ever before that there is no single issue on which its own interests and power cannot be brought to bear. The demands of the students must be taken up also by the trade union movement in a programme of action that will link the youth ever more closely to the workers in their common struggle.





# MONONO'A BONA — MASAPO A RONA

Were the events of Soweto 1976 a riot or an insurrection?

This question was wrangled over by highly paid legal experts employed by Santam, the insurance giant, and the West Rand Administration Board (Wrab)

If Wrab's lawyers could have proved that the property was insured against 'oproer of burgerlike beroering', (riots or civil commotion) then Santam would have had to pay out R7 million.

But the Wrab property was not covered against 'volksopstand' or 'volksoproer' (insurrection or popular uprising). These words are apparently not yet a living part of the Afrikaans language and do not appear in any dictionary.

It will be left to the organised working class to finally settle this dispute, by leading a successful armed insurrection which will abolish the capitalist state, dissolve its agencies like Wrab, and result in the expropriation of the capitalist class including the big insurance companies.

Then 'volksopstand' will not just enter the dictionaries, but will change the course of our history.

After the Argentine garrison on South Georgia, commanded by Captain Astiz, had surrendered, the British officers magnanimously entertained their counterparts to dinner to celebrate the end of their regrettably necessary attempts to kill each other.

Possibly some of the pleasant conversation touched on the SA Navy course Astiz attended in Muizenberg (when he got a medal from the SA government).

Unfortunately, the comradely relations among the officers soon had to be broken off—but only when Swedish officials uncivilly asked to interview Astiz about his role in the street kidnapping and 'disappearance' of a Swedish citizen.

The French government, too, would like to question

him about the 'disappearance' of two nuns.

In fact the heroic Astiz faithfully served his junta in its slaughter of over 20 000 opponents during the 1970s. He was a senior officer at the Escuela torture camp in Buenos Aires, where many Argentinians died gruesome deaths.

We wonder if next time the British officers will be magnanimous enough to invite their own rank and file to dinner instead of butchers and torturers like Astiz.

In a collection of Bishop Tutu's statements on the struggle against apartheid published this year, we read that "Capitalism is exploitative and I can't stand that." With this, the oppressed and exploited in SA would whole-heartedly agree!

But he also seems to believe that these "exploiters" will voluntarily lift the yoke of poverty from us, if only they would listen to advocates of "justice, peace and reconciliation" such as himself.

Where Tutu's wishful thinking leads to was revealed more fully in an article by him in *The Star* in May. Prime Minister Botha, he wrote, is a "remarkable" and "amazing" man—and could even be "great".

The Bishop drew this *amazing* conclusion because Botha had come up with the idea of the President's Council, was willing to defend the policy of 'power-sharing' against his fellow-racist Treurnicht, and had met President Kaunda.

In the March issue of *Sechaba* (official organ of the ANC), 'F.M.' reviews Tutu's book and states that the Bishop "comes across as a very religious person, honest and dedicated to the cause of his people—the African people". But there is no word of warning about the Bishop's illusions.

Now, with Tutu's latest addition to his collection of statements, will 'F.M.' be reviewing his review?

# International



*Gold miners at Obuasi in Ghana*

## Ghana: which way forward?

The New year coup by Jerry Rawlings, which overthrew the Limann government, has been widely supported by the workers and youth in Ghana. Rawlings' Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) is expected to provide a way out of the economic nightmare left by the previous government.

Under Limann, the prices of essential goods rocketed out of the reach of ordinary people. With the minimum wage 12 cedis a day, a packet of cube sugar was costing 20 cedis; a tin of condensed milk 15 cedis; a tin of corned beef 70 cedis. Six yards of cloth could cost from 300-1300 cedis.

(Officially, 6 cedis exchanged for £1 sterling; but on the black market £1 cost 80 cedis or more).

Even locally grown foodstuffs,

**By our Ghanaian  
correspondent**

such as a tuba of yam, sold for up to 30 cedis.

With bridges collapsing, roads in disrepair and no spare parts for lorries, transport to and from the countryside had almost broken down. Though the Limann government improved transport in the cities (to ensure that workers got to work) travel between the cities was enormously expensive: from Accra to Kumasi, for example, cost 100-120 cedis.

Corruption and the black market flourished, putting money in the pockets of the rich and powerful,

and taking more from the poor. Ordinary people joked that "in order for us to live we must be magicians".

The Rawlings government promised to clean up corruption and the black market. As in 1979, when he held power for a few months, Rawlings immediately cut prices. The price of a yam tuba has been cut in half. The prices of milk, cloth, etc have also been slashed; and the army has tried to enforce rationing.

Inter-town transport fares have been cut. Students have been mobilised to bring in the cocoa harvest, so that it can be exported and earn much-needed foreign exchange. Rawlings has warned that those caught smuggling goods across the border will be shot on sight.

# Notes

But these measures—popular as most of them are—are not enough to resolve the crisis in Ghana.

The overthrow of the Limann government was only a beginning of the Ghanaian revolution. The task for the working people is to carry the revolution to completion. To do this, we must be very clear about what is required.

If we look back over the past 25 years we can draw this conclusion, that despite winning our political independence from Britain, the country has not been able to make any economic headway.

Capitalism, which dominates the country, is now in crisis and cannot afford to grant any lasting meaningful reforms to the people of Ghana. Because of this, there is no hope whatsoever of maintaining a parliamentary democracy for any length of time.

## Nationalise

The government must immediately nationalise the big companies and financial institutions that control the economy, and set up a state monopoly of foreign trade. This will enable the drawing up of a national economic plan to utilise Ghana's resources for the benefit of the mass of the people themselves.

The revolution can only be carried out if the workers place themselves at the head of it. The People's Defence Committees which have sprung up in workplaces, villages, and the armed forces since the overthrow of the Limann government can provide the basis for workers' democracy. They need to gain real teeth to exercise political power on behalf of the working class.

This involves extending their influence into every workplace and neighbourhood, and linking them together regionally and nationally. Delegates to regional and national congresses should be democratically elected by the local PDCs.

The national congress of the PDCs would then be in a position to elect a body which would genuinely

express the interests of the working class in running the country.

Putting forward a programme which combined the demands of the poor farmers, soldiers and youth with its own, the working class would gain overwhelming support. The people's militia should be formed as early as possible, under the control of local PDCs in cooperation with the army lower-rank PDCs.

The capitalists in Ghana and internationally will naturally take all steps possible to prevent the implementation of such a programme.

The Ghanaian workers, by join-

ing their struggle to the movement of the working class in West Africa, Africa and internationally would be able to paralyse such attempts.

Dr Nkrumah, on the eve of Ghana's independence, said that "the independence of Ghana is meaningless unless it is linked up with the total liberation of Africa."

But Africa cannot be liberated until the grip of capitalism is wholly removed. Our victory, a workers' victory in Ghana, would in a short time have a big effect on the masses in all Africa in the struggle towards this aim.

March 1982

## UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA CLOSED

During the March term break, four executive members of the Students' Union were expelled from UNZA and 15 others suspended until October 1983.

Their offence was refusing the administration's demand to withdraw or apologise for a pamphlet criticising the new Institute of Human Relations at UNZA. They called it an attempt to put the workers and peasants to sleep as to the real nature of exploitation and corruption in Ghana.

When the university re-opened, the students boycotted classes and held daily public meetings demanding the reinstatement of their comrades.

The authorities tried to get the students to elect a new leadership with whom they hoped to negotiate. But the students insisted that their duly elected leaders were those expelled, and ignored ultimatums to return to class.

On Friday 16 April, armed police assembled near the Graduation square where the students met daily. The Vice-Chancellor announced that there would be no more public meetings on campus. The students ignored the threat and met again the same afternoon.

The university's top administrators were summoned to Party (the ruling UNIP—Ed) Headquarters but no decisions could be taken until President Kaunda's

return on the Sunday.

On Monday morning, the Vice Chancellor met the assembled students and offered to reduce the expulsions of the four students to suspensions, and to shorten the other suspensions, if the students would return to class. The students rejected this compromise.

In the meantime the decision to close the university had already been taken.

At about 3am on Wednesday the campus was cordoned off by heavily armed police and para-military units. Simultaneously, police and army raided the homes of eight expatriate staff members, including the four signatories of an open letter to the university authorities. The searches revealed nothing—except the conviction of the government that "foreign influences" must be responsible for any trouble in Zambia.

The principal announced that all students would have to apply for readmission. Those permitted to return would have to sign a pledge of good behaviour. The signatories of the open letter were to have their contracts withdrawn.

The message to those remaining behind was plain. The government is too insecure and the university authorities too subservient to brook any criticism from students or staff.

By Ian Kramer

# ASBESTOS-KILLER DUST

Nine thousand miners out of the 22 000 currently working in SA asbestos mines can expect to die an agonising death from cancer as a result of the jobs they do.

That is probably an underestimate as it is based on death rates in the USA where there is a legal limit for concentrations of asbestos in the air. In SA there is no such limit.

Asbestos forms very tough fibres, and has many uses as a strengthener, which is why it has become an extremely profitable commodity. In SA it is big business. Exports, mainly blue asbestos, were worth R107,48 million in 1978.

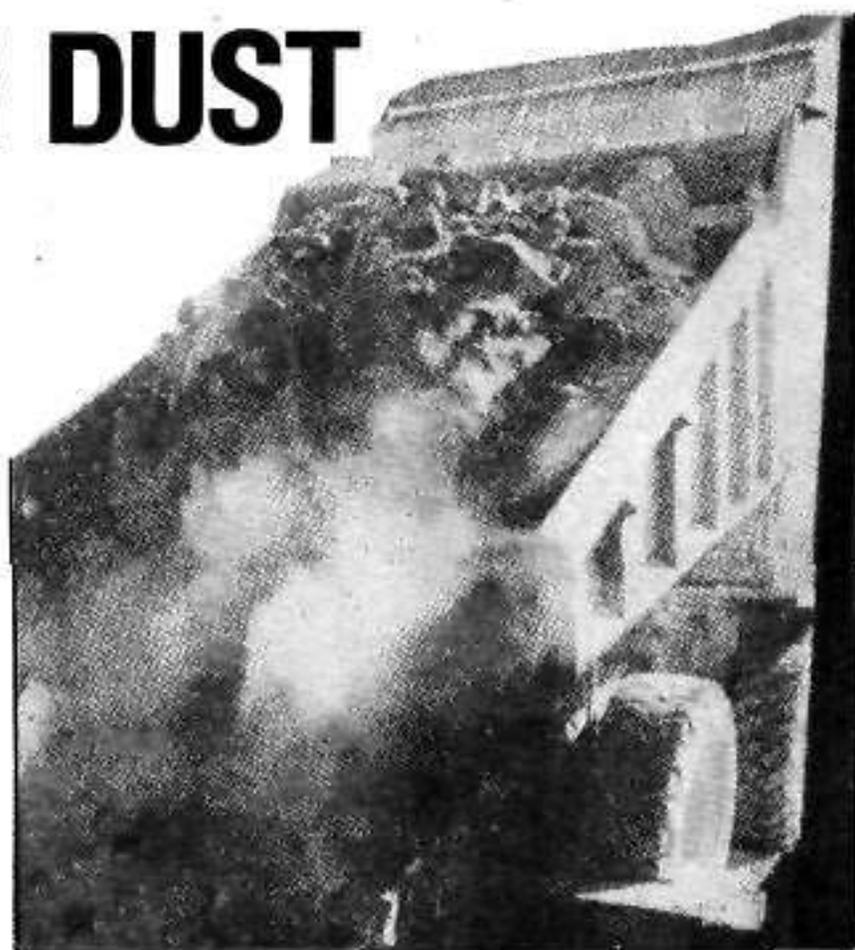
But the very properties of asbestos make it a health hazard too. The tiny fibres, invisible to the naked eye, can wear at the delicate tissue inside your lungs and cause asbestosis, a disabling and eventually fatal scarring of the lungs.

Exposure to asbestos fibres can, up to 30 or 40 years later, produce painful and fatal diseases like lung cancer and mesothelioma (cancer of the lining of the lung or stomach).

A recent British TV documentary interviewed James Ebang, former worker at GEFCO's Kuruman Cape Blue Mines. He has contracted mesothelioma. "My lungs seem as if they close up if I walk too fast", he said. "I cannot carry or pick up anything. I suffer from shortness of breath. I also have pains in my joints so that I feel weak".

"He was a big strong healthy man, beautiful and attractive" added his wife, "Now he is a skeleton. He is finished."

These dangerous fibres menace not only those who work with them. In Britain several women have died from breathing in fibres from their husband's overalls, other people from living within a few miles of an asbestos factory.



**By Vivien Seal**  
Member of the British Labour Party, Ardwick Constituency, Manchester

In fact the first evidence in the world which conclusively linked asbestos to mesothelioma among asbestos workers was obtained in SA in 1960. In most industrialised countries the result (because of the strength of the labour movement) was a campaign to tighten the safety standards.

Blue asbestos—the most dangerous kind and the one most common in SA—has been banned in many countries. In Britain a legal limit of 0.2 fibres per cubic centimetre (cc) of asbestos in the workplace was introduced in 1970.

But so deadly is asbestos that, according to the latest research, there is no identifiable threshold of ex-

posure below which there is no risk of the worker or his family developing cancer.

In SA since 1960 the asbestos industry, assisted by the government, has campaigned vigorously to discredit this research, and to suppress any new results which link asbestos to cancer. The bosses even went to the extent of financing research on asbestosis to ensure a place on the Medical Research Council's (MRC) asbestos research project, in order to be able to sabotage new reports.

Researchers have been banned from company premises, or their work made so difficult that they were forced to resign or leave the country. In 1978 two SA researchers were banned by the MRC from disclosing their full findings at a scientific conference in the US. They were not allowed to report anything that referred to cancer, or to the health hazards they had discovered for people not working in the industry.

Similarly, the Chamber of Mines has told researchers that their findings can only be published if the word "tuberculosis" was substituted for "cancer" throughout.

In 1973 the SA government mining engineer recommended a limit of 12 fibres per cc (60 times the British limit), but declined to recommend that this limit be a legal one. As a result, the asbestos companies have a free hand.

The British TV documentary

**On 2 March a series of explosions ripped through the Alupac/KS Amoils cosmetics factory (owned by SA Druggists) in Kempton Park, and completely wrecked it. At least four workers were killed, seven seriously injured, and a further 83 taken to hospital.**

**Also recently there have been explosions at the Fedmis ammonia plant in the Cape, and the Modderfontein dynamite factory.**

**Not only occupational health standards, but also industrial safety standards, are atrocious under the rule of capitalism in SA.**

**If this year follows 'normal' patterns of recent times, more than 2 000 workers will be killed on the job. 31 000 will be permanently maimed. Several hundred will be hurt so badly they will never return to work. There will be serious damage to 110 000 hands, 50 000 feet, and 40 000 eyes.**

showed evidence in SA of asbestos dust blowing through the air, covering the mills and the ground feet deep, and dumped in open tips. Asbestos waste and dust were being used to make bricks for homes and to repair roads.

**Workers reported how the dust blew into their huts and even into their food. Women are employed, without any respiratory protection, to sort the asbestos from the rock by hand labour—often with babies on their backs.**

There is nothing to stop employers using children to trample down the fluffy fibres into sacks, by getting right inside them. This was observed by a US doctor on a visit. Several children were suffering from asbestosis and failure of the right side of the heart before the age of 12.

Even if there were legal limits, the maximum fine for infringement of occupational disease regulations is R400. It is cheaper to break the law than pay the cost of filters and extraction equipment.

To white miners who contract asbestos-related diseases (or to their widows), employers have to pay R12 000 compensation. But they are only 5% of the workforce. The 95% who are black get only R1 000—if they qualify, which is an obstacle race in itself. If they die too quickly, their widows get only two-thirds of that.

## “We go hungry”

Mr Ebang, interviewed by British TV, was getting compensation payments of R41 every three months. What could he buy? “Only a sack of mealie meal and a little coffee and then it's finished. After that I beg people for help... We go hungry all the time and we have no clothes to wear.”

He had no money to pay school fees for his children, or even to buy soap.

Since regulations have become much stricter in Europe and America, the multinationals are moving asbestos processing to countries with fewer restrictions on their profit-making, like SA. Not only are there no legal limits on dust, but wages are lower. In SA asbestos mines, while white workers earn

R240 a week, the 95% of black miners get less than R30 (and all the highest risk jobs).

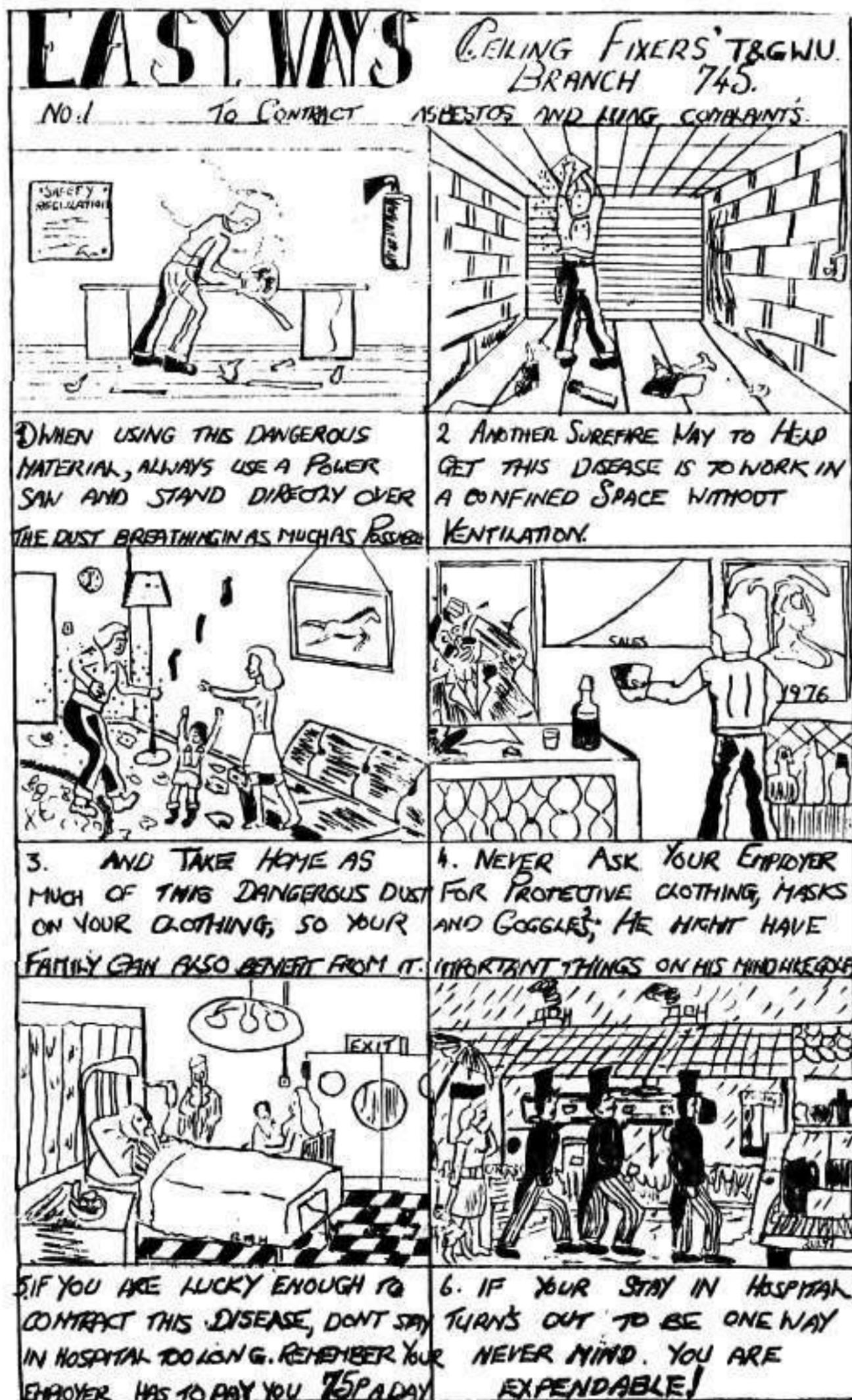
In 1979, for example, Deutsche-Kap-Asbest Werke dismantled their Hamburg factory and shipped it to SA. In 1980 another asbestos firm announced it was transferring from Hamburg to Philippi in Cape Town.

General Mining's GEFCO closed down a plant in London. Cape Asbestos closed a mill at Hebden, Yorkshire—where the asbestos disease toll is still not ended.

The bosses of the asbestos com-

panies are today knowingly killing SA workers with even less concern than in Europe. Multinationals like Lonrho or Oppenheimer's Anglo-American (with fingers in the asbestos pie) threaten mass unemployment in countries where the workers have won better conditions, or disease and death to the workers in SA and the former colonial world.

Nothing could more sharply underline the need for international class solidarity against international big business ●



# BUILD DIRECT LINKS WITH THE WORKERS'

In building workers' unity workers have found it necessary to do more than link their organisations together 'at the top'. In each region and industry, we strive to meet with our fellow workers from other factories and unions to discuss directly how we can organise and fight together against our common enemy.

On 22 October 1981 NUMARWOSA (now in NAAWU), the EAWU and MAWU issued a press statement. It concerned the cancellation of the visit to SA by Bill Sirs, General Secretary of the British steelworkers union (ISTC) and Terry Duffy, President of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers. This visit had been set up through the International Metalworkers Federation (IMF).

These three independent non-racial unions, affiliates of the IMF, had opposed this visit "because of the statements made by Sirs before the visit" which were felt "to be insulting and ill-informed when he spoke of bringing black workers out of the 'dark ages'. Subsequently the visit was cancelled.

At the same time the three unions made clear their principles on fraternal contact between unions:

"We strongly favour fraternal contact between workers in SA and workers in other countries, at all levels, provided this is guided by the interests and requirements of workers.

"Visits to SA and visits overseas should be based on the concrete needs of workers.

"Visits should involve not only top officials, but also plant-based worker representatives.

"The aims of these visits should be to strengthen fraternal ties between organised workers in different countries and to carry forward the struggle for workers in SA to win the same rights as have been won by workers in other countries.

"Several visits to and from our unions have already taken place, with shop stewards and union officials from Europe visiting unions and factories in SA and shop stewards and officials from our unions travelling to Europe and the USA. This contact has been valuable and will be encouraged in the future, provided it takes place in accordance with the above principles and guidelines."

Workers' unity means **direct links** between workers at every level, from the factory floor to the trade union headquarters.

Exactly the same applies to building unity with our fellow workers in other countries. **Effective solidarity depends on direct links.**

**By Paul Storey**

This is instinctively grasped by workers. It is as plain as daylight to the activists fighting to build the independent non-racial unions in South Africa.

But it is not clearly understood in the overseas anti-apartheid circles campaigning for sanctions against the SA regime.

Unbelievably the idea has crept in that to cut off support for our oppressors and exploiters, it is necessary also to stop direct links between the SA workers and the workers overseas! To isolate the slave-owners, apparently the slaves must also be left locked up.

## Good step

Because this mistake has become quite prevalent, the independent unions ought to explain the correct position on direct links to supporters of our movement abroad.

A good step in this direction was the statement by three FOSATU affiliates last October (see box). However, their position was not publicised by the anti-apartheid or trade union leaders overseas.

It might seem that such an obvious matter as direct worker links

should be easy to straighten out. However, the situation is made more difficult because the leadership of SACTU in exile—despite all arguments and appeals—persists in **opposing direct links.**

We reproduce here SACTU's statement entitled "Direct Links Stinks!" from its official paper, *Workers' Unity*. Every point of substance in it was dealt with in advance in **INQABA** No. 4 (October 1981). Here we can sum it up:

● **On the danger of visitors trying to "lead us astray":** The oppressed workers in South Africa are capable of exercising vigilance, through their unions, against the treachery of false friends! We support genuine worker-to-worker links aimed to mobilise joint action and concrete support against a common enemy—the bosses and their governments. We oppose visits by those who are not prepared to join in this struggle.

● **On the risk of arrests:** This should not be under-estimated, nor exaggerated. Every serious step in building the workers' movement has involved such risks and will continue to do so. Our union activists are at risk every day. Those involved in each struggle can best weigh up the wisdom of each specific visit or action. The surest defence against our oppressors is to organise the greatest forces against them—here and abroad!

● **On the danger of exposing underground organisation to the police:** No-one with brains in his head is calling for visiting trade unionists to be introduced to "the underground". The point is to build open links wherever possible between the open trade unions.

● **On the reformism of Western trade union leaders:** This is no argument against direct links. On the contrary it **strengthens the case for direct links between the workers themselves.**

Nor is it enough to go about in suit and tie, shaking hands with these same union leaders, winning verbal and financial support—and leaving it at that.

Everywhere the crisis of

# MOVEMENT IN OTHER COUNTRIES!

capitalism is moving workers into struggle against the bosses and their governments. The activists are fighting to equip the labour organisations with a programme and leadership equal to the battles ahead.

Solidarity is not a one-way street. We must roll up our sleeves and join forces with the rank-and-file workers in other countries, seeking common action in struggle.

That is the task of the SACTU leaders also.

● **On the danger that direct links will "bypass" the Congress movement:** Today the workers are raising the banner of Congress beside the banners of the independent unions. Why is it imagined that direct links between these workers and their counterparts abroad will "bypass" the Congress movement?

The only danger is that, if the SACTU leaders continue to turn their backs on the vital need for direct links—then they will do SACTU itself an irreparable damage.

**The duty of all Congress leaders is to actively support in every way the campaign for direct links.**

In October 1981 we warned: "A wrong position on these issues can only disrupt the painstaking efforts by workers inside the country to broaden their struggle internationally. We urge the SACTU leadership to reconsider its position before serious damage is done."

Unfortunately, the first such damage was not long in coming.

SAAWU, fighting to raise support for the Wilson-Rowntree strike, appealed to the British Transport and General Workers' Union to send a delegation to SA to meet the workers and discuss concrete solidarity. The TGWU, with over 2 million members, has the undoubted muscle to force the capitulation of the management.

But the TGWU leaders have not yet used this muscle. They refused SAAWU's request, thus seriously weakening the position of the strikers.

The General Secretary of the TGWU claimed in writing on 22 February that the union's position

"has the support of the South African Congress of Trade Unions, the African National Congress as well as those bodies that genuinely support the cause of liberation in South Africa."

Within the TGWU active members are calling on the leadership to change its position and take up SAAWU's appeal.

Within our own movement, the necessary conclusions must be drawn. The magnificent movement of the last 10 years has been built by countless initiatives of youth and workers, rediscovering their own

strength. These same qualities will build an unconquerable movement of workers' solidarity internationally.

Comrades of the Congress leadership, it is necessary to change course.

Let us base ourselves on the slogan of Marx and Engels, confirmed by all the experience of the international labour movement: "Workers of all countries, unite"!

Come out publicly for direct links and no major union internationally will stand against it. That is your duty to the workers.

## 'DIRECT LINKS' - STINKS!

WE ARE NOT new to the struggle. We have a history. We have memories of battles—of those who helped us and those who betrayed us, and of those who tried to lead us astray.

There were people from England and from Brussels who asked us not to take part in politics and offered us money. We rejected them. So they used their money for big stooges whose names are remembered only by historians.

There are new visitors who offer money, education, help of all kinds if we will give up following the Congress movement. Over the years we have educated ourselves, we have tried many ways, many paths, our families have starved in order that we may organise ourselves, we have given up our lives to build the Congress movement, why should we give it up now?

A new tokolosh has appeared. This new voice is dressed in new clothes. It carries a red flag. It talks of Marxism. It cries revolution, but if you listen carefully, it sings the same tune—give up following Congress, follow us. They try to trick us with a new slogan 'direct links'. They say trade unionists from Britain, the Federal Republic of Germany and other capitalist countries should come to visit us in our South African prison and we should visit them in America or wherever.

The Special Branch stands at the gate of our prison—at the borders and the airport. All who enter or leave are controlled and followed. Rita Ndzanga and Emma Mashini who travelled overseas and Sean Hosey who came to South Africa all ended in jail. It is true, not all who visit us are arrested but then we ask the question, why? It is because they are doing what the Special Branch wants them to do



Contact between SACTU and CGTP-IN (PORTUGAL) grows

and are acting as a lead to us in the underground or because your reformism does not threaten the regime. Why do you visit us? It does us no good and puts us and our organisation in jeopardy.

It is difficult for some to refuse your invitations to America or Britain. But what can we learn there? What can the AFL-CIO teach us about revolution. We don't need lessons in class collaboration!

'Direct links' an apparently reasonable slogan: in fact, in practice, we have already long-established direct links between the workers of South Africa and the world. There is hardly a country in the world that a SACTU speaker and organiser has not visited except those where the workers are not free to receive us, such as Chile or El Salvador. There is no trade union organisation from which support has been offered that SACTU has not channelled that support to the workers and their organisations in South Africa.

It is not that these new voices

want direct links, it is that they want to bypass the peoples' revolutionary organisations, the ANC (SA) and SACTU. Such actions can only create divisions. It is not SACTU that picks and chooses which strikes or trade unions to support in South Africa, it is those who call for direct links who pick and choose. It is well known that certain people, certain trade unionists, in South Africa are paid and supported by internal and external forces who are against our revolution. Lucy Myubelo is only one such a person.

If overseas trade union bodies want to work for unity in South Africa then let them ensure that their aid, their money goes to all the trade unions not only those which accept their aid along with their reformist philosophy. Apartheid is beyond reform.

'Direct links' are nothing more nor less than a new form of colonialism in which the far Left joins the far Right in opposing the Congress movement in South Africa. ●

**WORKERS' UNITY**

Organ of the South African Congress of Trade Unions

Issue No. 30, April 1982

"An injury to one is an injury to all"

# South Atlantic War

## A Socialist Answer

War, in the last 40 years, has been nothing unusual. In fact, there has been hardly any peace. Our oppressors are fighting the tide of liberation in Namibia, Angola, etc; tens of thousands are dying in wars in Iran, Iraq, and elsewhere.

The war in the South Atlantic has excited greater international attention because it is between two more important capitalist powers. Britain is a senile imperialist power. Argentina is an ex-colonial country, one of the most industrially developed in Latin America. Both are suffering acutely the first throes of the world capitalist crisis—and this is, fundamentally, why their reactionary governments have gone to war.

The interests of the 1 800 inhabitants of the Falklands or Malvinas are the last thing that concerns either government.

Unlike colonial wars, this war embarrasses other capitalist powers. Linked to both ruling classes, they are forced to choose between them. At the same time they know that the losing government will topple under pressure of the workers, posing a severe setback for capitalist interests.

This is why US imperialism sought vainly to mediate. It was trapped between its support for Latin American dictatorships against popular struggle, and its greater need to hold intact the NATO alliance of most major capitalist powers.

The embattled SA ruling class faces a similar dilemma. Isolated diplomatically, the regime has cultivated 'friendships' with all the world's reactionary dictatorships, including Argentina. In fact the SA state has

awarded medals to Argentinian officers responsible for the 'disappearance' of over 20 000 of their political opponents.

But ultimately our rulers are dependent on the major imperialist powers, and would like to use this war to curry their favour. Particularly now that Reagan has relaxed the arms embargo, they will push harder for reintegration into Western defence plans, for the formation of a South Atlantic Treaty Organisation, and the use of Simonstown by the imperialists.

Workers in Argentina, Britain, South Africa, and elsewhere, have nothing to gain from this war. Such 'small wars' are the inevitable result of capitalism in crisis, and are likely to increase in the period ahead.

Only through the conscious organisation of the working class in every country, on the basis of the common interests of workers everywhere, leading towards the socialist transformation of the world, can the causes of war be eliminated.

The article which follows, written by TED GRANT, Political Editor of the *Militant*, Marxist newspaper in the British labour and trade union movement, first appeared as a pamphlet in Britain. It presents a clear strategy for opposing the war from the point of view of the working class internationally—a strategy for Marxists in Argentina as well as in Britain.

We republish it not only because of its clear analysis of the present situation, but because of its general lessons on the Marxist method—in particular on the Marxist approach to war.

The war between Britain and Argentina over the Falkland Islands is a symptom of the world crisis of capitalism. The international economic recession has ushered in a new epoch of upheavals, which will mean mighty clashes between the classes and conflicts between the nation states. Class conflicts will interact with national conflicts, aggravating one another.

A Marxist attitude towards war cannot be dictated by the horrors of war, by the suffering and death, or by the nightmare conditions inevitably imposed on both civilians and the ranks of the armed forces. War merely carries the horrors of capitalism to their ultimate extent. Our attitude towards war is determined by the class interests of those waging the war. In the modern

epoch, wars are determined by the power, profit, and prestige of the ruling classes; and also by the power, income, and privileges of the ruling bureaucracies in the deformed workers' states of Russia, Eastern Europe, China and the other Stalinist countries. The working class of all countries has nothing to gain from capitalism and its policies, either in peace or war. War is the continuation of politics by other means, and, nowadays, peace is the continuation of war by other means.

The Marxist attitude is determined by irreconcilable opposition to any war waged by the capitalist ruling class. Our attitude to war between Britain and Argentina is determined by which class is waging the war. On both sides it is capitalist

powers which are involved, and therefore we are opposed to the war of both Britain and of Argentina.

Why has war broken out now? Argentina has laid claim to the Falkland Islands for 150 years, yet has not dared to take action before now. It is the uncontrollable social contradictions in Argentina which have dictated the resort to arms by the Junta, which heads a military bonapartist regime, using fascist methods. In the same way, it was the social crisis in Germany which pushed Hitler into war. Lurking under the phrases about "national sovereignty" is the capitalists' greed for the potentially profitable oil, fish and mineral wealth of Antarctica. The Junta believes that the exploitation of Antarctica, probably as a junior partner of American

capital, would provide additional support for the Argentine economy and augment the income of big business. They imagine that this would be a means of solving Argentina's aggravated social crisis.

Even so, that is not the main reason for the seizure of the Falklands. Argentina was facing the beginning of revolutionary developments. Only a few days before the invasion, there were mass demonstrations of the workers against the Junta in Buenos Aires. To escape the social crisis the Argentinian dictatorship decided on the seizure of the Falklands in a desperate attempt to divert the social strivings of the masses into nationalist channels. This was their calculation. The mass fervour in Argentina over the seizure of the Malvinas indicates that, temporarily, the Junta has succeeded in diverting the workers' anger against British imperialism. The Junta's motives in waging this war, therefore, are determined by capitalist considerations of grabbing resources and escaping from intolerable social contradictions.

Marxists have always distinguished between wars waged by capitalism and wars waged by a workers' state, deformed or healthy. In the Second World War (1939-45), the only country to which the Marxists gave critical support was the Soviet Union. This was in spite of the most monstrous totalitarian dictatorship of the Stalinist bureaucracy whose privilege and income was based on the state ownership of the means of production and a plan, which they were therefore forced to defend. The deformed workers' state in Russia was relatively more progressive than capitalism. A victory

for Hitler would have ushered in an entire epoch of counter-revolution. Thus Marxists gave critical support to the war of Russia against Nazi Germany. They also gave critical support to China, a colonial country in its war against Japan which seized Manchuria in 1931 and engaged in a war with China in 1937-1945. This was despite the fact that the butcher of the Chinese revolution of 1925-27, the bonapartist dictator Chiang Kai-shek, controlled China. While supporting China, the Marxists pointed out the complete incapacity of Chiang and the landlord-capitalist regime to wage war on Japan. In the case of the Second World War the so-called defence of democracy by the American and European Allies was shot through with hypocrisy and deceit. In reality, they were defending the material interest of the capitalist class. The war was fought for markets, raw materials, colonies, and spheres of influence. The Marxists, therefore, opposed all the imperialist powers in the war. This, however, did not exhaust the problem—as we will explain in a moment—because of the British workers' deep-rooted hatred of the Nazis and their support for a fight to defeat the fascist regime.

In 1935-36 Mussolini, Italy's fascist dictator, invaded Abyssinia (now called Ethiopia) in the interests of Italian capitalism. Despite the existence of chattel slavery in Abyssinia, Trotsky advocated support for Abyssinia in a war of national liberation from the imperialist power out to enslave the country. The position of the ILP (Independent Labour Party) leaders like John McGovern and James Maxton, advocating 'no support for either of the dictators,' was rejected

by the Marxists. Marxism always supports the poor, the oppressed, and the enslaved in their struggle against the rich and powerful imperialist states. At the same time, a powerful consideration was that a defeat for the Italian capitalist and fascist invaders would undoubtedly have provoked a proletarian revolution in Italy.

A Marxist attitude can never be determined by the question of who started the war. The labour leaders, both left and right, are obsessed with defining the 'aggressor' as a means of determining their attitude. This has led the leaders of the Labour Party into a position where they are trailing behind the Tory government. The decisive question is: which class is waging the war and in whose interest? The method of reasoning which starts from who attacked first is completely shallow. There are many cases in history where war has been provoked by one or other power. Our attitude is determined by the class interests of the powers involved in the war.

The ultra-left sects of various descriptions have—quite predictably!—supported Argentina on the grounds that it is a colonial country faced with imperialist aggression. That is nonsense, and shows a completely undialectical approach. Argentina is one of the most highly developed countries in Latin America. Her landowners are not feudal but bourgeois landowners comparable to the capitalist landowners in Britain. Eighty-six percent of the population live in the towns, and the country has a reasonably developed industry. Finance capital, both foreign and local, is intertwined with the bourgeois landowners and the capitalists in the cities. Whoever



heard of a colonial country with a stock exchange! The Argentine has a similar basis to that of the United States. The settlers exterminated the local Indian population, and started out with bourgeois relations, rather than those of feudalism, although Argentina, of course, is not as highly developed as the United States. The regime's motives are not at all those of defending the rights of the workers and farmers, or rather, agricultural proletariat, but of defending the interests of Argentine big business and the country's highly developed finance capital.

**“Under all the masks one must know how to distinguish exploiters, slave-owners and robbers”**

On the Falkland Islands themselves, the Argentine presence consisted of one Argentine, married to a Falkland Islander, who fled from the Islands when he saw the possibility of war. Had there been a colony of, say, 100 000 Argentines, a case for colonial oppression could have been made out. But the Islands have been in British possession for 150 years. There was a fleeting Argentine garrison for only a few months before that, which was expelled by the British. The population of the Islands is English-speaking and of British descent.

Although there are only 1 800 Falkland Islanders, Marxists nevertheless have to take into consideration their rights and interests. The Junta's claim to the Falklands is purely an imperialist claim for loot in the shape of resources which can be developed, although even this is secondary to their aim of heading off revolution by diverting workers along nationalist lines. Had the Junta weighed up the chances of successfully taking the Falklands, they would not have struck now, but would have waited for another 12 months. By that time, Britain's aircraft carriers, frigates, and the Vulcan bombers would have been scrapped, and Britain would not have had the means of resisting the seizure of the Islands. But the hot breath of revolution forced the Jun-

ta to act prematurely. The decisive factor was their fear of revolution. And yet, the ultra left sects are completely unaware of this fact.

The attitude of the Marxists towards this war is decided by all these considerations, and above all by the fact that it is two imperialist powers which are at war, even though the Argentine may in the past have been, like the United States, a colonial country. Therefore we oppose the capitalist war of Argentina against Britain, and we oppose the capitalist war of Britain against Argentina.

Certain of the ultra-left sects have quoted an isolated passage from Trotsky's comments in 1938 on the position of Marxists in the event of a war between Brazil and Britain, without taking his remarks in their context. All the circumstances of a conflict must be taken into account. Trotsky was dealing with a possible attempt by British capitalism to colonise Brazil. Brazil could hardly attack Britain! In that event, as with Chiang Kai-shek or the Negus of Abyssinia, it would have been correct to give critical support to the Vargas dictatorship, though not the uncritical support given to the Argentine dictatorship by the sects. The Argentine is a capitalist country, and its seizure of the Falklands—or Malvinas, which they have not held for 150 years—is an imperialist adventure, just as the reaction of Britain is an imperialist adventure. In this war, a defeat for Argentina will provoke the revolution. If the Task Force is defeated, on the other hand, it will mean the downfall of the Thatcher government. Either result would be in the interests of the working class internationally. After his comment on Brazil, Trotsky goes on to say, “Truly, one must have an empty head to reduce antagonisms and military conflicts to the struggle between fascism and democracy. Under all masks one must know how to distinguish exploiters, slave-owners, and robbers.”

The stupidity of the Thatcher Government, even from a capitalist point of view, has been clearly revealed. As a client state of United States imperialism, British capitalism was obsessed with the struggle against Stalinist Russia. They decided virtually to scrap most

of the navy, and even much of the airforce, and to rely purely upon Trident missiles, against what they considered their main enemy, the Soviet Union. The stupidity and unpreparedness of the British ruling class was revealed by the Junta's invasion, which took the Tory Government completely by surprise. However, the attitude of different sections of the British ruling class is not clear. Finance capital has heavy investments in Argentina, and this is reflected in the luke-warm attitude of the *Financial Times* to the response of Thatcher's Government.

There have been reports in both the serious and the gutter press that the Foreign Office was well aware of the plans for the invasion, but did nothing about them. Apparently, the Foreign Office, and possibly Carrington, miscalculated. They may have believed that they would be able to arrive at some sort of agreement with the Junta after the seizure of the Islands. They were not averse to helping to prop up the Junta by giving them a foreign policy success. But they had forgotten that prestige is an important factor in relations between states and nations, over and above immediate material considerations. The power of British imperialism in its diplomatic dealings would have been completely undermined if they had just accepted the invasion tamely. This is why there was an outcry in Parliament and in the press about the ‘national humiliation’. The Tory government, therefore, rapidly assembled and dispatched the Task Force, the biggest war fleet assembled by British capitalism since the Second World War. However, as far as the Junta was concerned, once they had taken the step of seizing the Islands it was extremely difficult, if not impossible, to draw back.

**The Tories have sent the Task Force to defend the power and prestige of British capitalism**

Thatcher and the Tory Government did not seek a conflict with the bonapartist military-police dictator-



*British troops sailing with the Task Force*

ship. Like Reagan, Thatcher wishes to prop up every reactionary regime: that of Chile, Turkey, and other dictatorships throughout the world. But once Galtieri seized the Falklands the Tories had no choice. It is with regret that Thatcher sees that the defeat of the Argentine regime will result in the collapse of Galtieri and the Junta. It is with complete hypocrisy that they have 'just discovered' that the regime is dictatorial, denouncing it as 'fascist' in order to justify war against the Argentine.

In Britain, finance capital was not pleased with the policy of their government. In America, on the other hand, British diplomacy outmanoeuvred Reagan, who has a hankering to support the dictatorial regimes in Latin America, by winning over Republican and Democrat representatives in the House and Senate of Congress. The press in America from the *Wall Street Journal* to *The Village Voice* is unanimously in favour of British capitalism. This reflects the American bourgeoisie's decisive interests, which are bound up with NATO and the European allies.

The events in the South Atlantic have ruined all the carefully laid plans of Reagan and American imperialism. Their policy has been to prop up the dictatorships in Latin America against the social revolu-

tion. But American imperialism was put in the position where two client states, Galtieri on the one hand and Thatcher on the other, refused to accept the demands of American imperialism. Twenty-four hours before the invasion took place, Galtieri rejected American demands to call it off. Thatcher also rejected the suggestions for a compromise from American imperialism. The fall of the Junta would prepare explosions throughout the length and breadth of Latin America. That is the fear of Reagan. On the other hand, American imperialism could not, in the last analysis, refuse to support the Thatcher government. To have done so would have ruined NATO as well!

Reluctantly, as a last resort, they have had to back British imperialism against Argentina.

British imperialism's position cannot benefit the working class. Its reaction to the seizure of the Falklands is dictated by considerations of prestige, and also by the wealth of Antarctica and the oil and fish around the Islands themselves. The Falklands are the gateway to Antarctica, and South Georgia is the entrance to the Southern Polar Continent. That is why Britain has seized the Dependency of South Georgia, and formalistically draws a legalistic distinction between South Georgia and the Falklands, though

they have always been lumped together in the past, 'for administrative convenience'. After the resort to arms, British imperialism will consider that this is a decisive way of settling the issue. No further claim by Argentina will even be considered. For a whole historical epoch the question will be closed. If Britain takes back the Islands, British capitalism will then begin to develop the resources of the Antarctic, particularly around the Falklands, in a measurable period of time. These are the real war aims of British capitalism. Like all regimes, including that of the Argentine, they are interested in power, profits, privilege, and prestige and that is what dictates their policies.

### **The opposition of Labour's right wing is of the faintest character, completely lacking the realities of a class opposition**

As always, the right-wing labour leaders have come out in support of British capitalism and imperialism in its hour of need. The Parliamentary leaders of the Labour Party gave immediate support to the sending of the Task Force and the seizure of South Georgia. Foot and Healey have compromised themselves with the Tories. Their opposition is of the faintest character, completely lacking the realities of a class opposition. While supporting the sending of the Task Force, they still insist on a diplomatic solution to resolve what is now insoluble except through the 'arbitration' of force. Neither side can back down. If the Junta were now to relinquish the Falklands, it would face immediate downfall and would even prefer the risk of defeat in war. The Thatcher Government is in the same position. Acceptance of defeat would mean the collapse of the Government, and the ruin of British imperialism's diplomatic power.

The Task Force has been sent not to roll Easter eggs at Easter, not merely for a display of force, but to go to war if the enemy does not back down. The leaders of the Labour

Party put themselves in a ridiculous position by supporting the sending of the Task Force but opposing its use. To safeguard its interests internationally, British imperialism, now a decadent and declining power, is fully prepared to undertake the adventure of war.

The opposition in the Labour Party of Tony Benn, Judith Hart, and others, is, in reality, purely pacifist. Tony Benn has put a very courageous position, but without thinking things through to a conclusion. Their opposition towards war will have some effect on the active layers of the Labour Party, and particularly on working women who fear for the lives which will be lost and the suffering that will inevitably be caused by war. Within the Labour Party there is a strong instinctive hatred of war, and a big majority of the active workers have a hatred of the Tory government. But the pacifist opposition of the labour lefts is not opposition to the class which wages the war, and nor is it directed against the aims of that class in waging a war. It is futile opposition which, once the war takes on bigger dimensions, can play into the hands of the imperialists. The demand for the 'withdrawal of the fleet', first put forward by the so-called 'Communist' Party, and then echoed by Tony Benn, Judith Hart and other Labour left wingers, is a meaningless, pacifist gesture. Naturally, the sects enthusiastically follow the Communist Party into this pacifist blind alley. How could the demand for the fleet to be withdrawn be accomplished? By asking Thatcher? She would merely shrug her shoulders and laugh. Throughout history, pacifist demands, to 'stop the war', to halt military mobilisation, or to withdraw the fleet, have never had any effect. The Communist Party is too cowardly, and the sects too stupid, to think things through to a conclusion. In order to get the fleet withdrawn a general strike would be required, and not only a general strike, but also an insurrection. There would be no other means of attaining it. But such demands could get no echo from the mass of workers, or from any section of the labour movement. It would be ludicrous to put forward such demands. It is true that no war

could be waged without the support of the trade union and labour leaders. But most of them are actually supporting the action of the Thatcher government. It would be absurd to call for a general strike at the present time. But this means that the call for withdrawal of the fleet is even more absurd. Marxists do not put forward slogans which are meaningless, and they do not put forward ideas that will not raise the level of the active layers of the labour and trade union movement and of the working class as a whole.

However, the second line of defence, for both the right and the left trade union leaders is to appeal to the United Nations, which should really be called the dis-United Nations.

### **The dis-United Nations can only solve secondary problems**

The whole history of the post-war period has indicated that the United Nations can only solve secondary problems, which are of secondary consideration to the states involved. If the super powers and other powers are united, perhaps some issues can be resolved. Even then, however, it will not be successful if one of the parties is strong enough to flout the (dis)-United Nations. Since the end of the Second World War, there has been a series of wars of a 'minor' type which the United Nations has been unable to prevent or bring to a halt. In fact, since 1945 there have only been about 17 days of peace. There has been a war, or civil war raging, mainly in the third world, every day. The United Nations has been powerless to prevent them.

The United Nations is composed of imperialist powers, the Stalinist deformed workers' states, and the ex-colonial countries. They are inevitably riven with national and class antagonisms. If there is a unity of gangsters, does it mean that if one gangster falls out of line, there will not be a gangster conflict? The history of the Mafia in Italy, and the Chicago gangsters in America, shows that a union of gangsters breaks down the moment one of

them finds that his interests are not being served by an uneasy agreement. The General Assembly of the United Nations can no more serve as a classless, impartial assembly, than the parliaments or assemblies of the member states, which are themselves divided into classes or ruled over by privileged elites. The major powers which form the Security Council, moreover, each have a veto and can vote down any action, or even declaration, by the United Nations. The attitude of the labour leaders on this question stems from the failure to understand that society is divided into classes, and also divided into nations, on which those classes are based. The class struggle is both national and international. Marxists explain that the labour movement must understand that it can no more have any confidence in the Tories' foreign policy than it has in the Tories' home policy. Foreign policy is the continuation of home policy—it is based on exactly the same class considerations.

The task of Marxists is first to raise the level of understanding of the advanced layers of the working class active in the trade unions, the shop stewards committees and the Labour Party. This can only be done on the basis of a clear analysis of the class interests of the capitalist powers.

Britain's capitalist allies in the European Economic Community have now unanimously supported Britain against Argentina. This is to demonstrate the solidarity of the EEC powers, but above all they have adopted economic sanctions for military reasons, showing their support for NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. Nominally, at least, they have implemented a ban on imports from Argentina, and if it comes to decisive battles, American imperialism will reluctantly have to do the same. Sanctions, however, even though they could be a severe blow to the Argentine economy cannot prevent the Junta from going to war because Galtieri fears his regime will collapse if he does not take a stand and defend the seizure of the Falklands.

The retaking of South Georgia gives British imperialism a supply base for the navy and for the troops.

But it seems that Thatcher and the Tory Government have pressing reasons for undertaking immediate action in relation to the Falklands themselves. From the point of view of military strategy it would have been better to build up a base on South Georgia. But even though a delay of six to nine months could prepare the way for the partial collapse of the Argentine economy the Tory Government is not prepared to wait. The Tories fear that it may be difficult to maintain morale for six months, or a year, or more. It therefore appears that the Thatcher government is prepared to risk everything on a quick ending of the conflict through an assault on the Falkland Islands. The navy, part of the airforce and sections of the regular army, together with special forces, (the SAS, the Commandos, the Special Boat Service) will be used in an attempt to retake the Islands. Nevertheless, this will be a minor war for Britain, whereas it is a major war for Argentina.

In Argentina, the role of Marxists must be skillfully to oppose the war. They will expose the inconsistencies of the Junta, showing the mess which the capitalist officer caste have made of the economy. The Junta has, temporarily, been able to divert the Argentine masses on nationalist lines. But the Marxists will demonstrate the incapacity of the officer caste to fight a revolutionary war, without which it is virtually ruled out that Argentina could defeat Britain, which is still a relatively powerful imperialist

power. Why does the Junta fight with kid gloves? The Argentine capitalists, on whose interests the Junta rests, are linked to American and British finance capital. Marxists in the Argentine will demand the expropriation, first of British investments, and then of all foreign capital in the country.

### **Marxists in Argentina would expose the incompetence and rottenness of the capitalist Junta**

They will demand that Argentina be handed back to the Argentines: that is, the expropriation of both landed and industrial capital. They will show the privileges and incompetence of the rotten upper strata of the officer caste, and their military incompetence. Without the genuine planning of industry, and fair rationing and distribution of goods for all, it would be impossible to wage an effective war. The Marxists would criticise the entirely selfish aims of the Junta and the Argentine capitalists, whose aim, if they hold the Falklands, would be to reap profits, as junior partners of American imperialism, at the expense of the working class. The Marxists would explain that victory over the powerful imperialist Britain could not be gained by military means, especially under the direction of the totalitarian Junta, but only through political and social

means. An overthrow of the Junta by the workers and the establishment of a socialist Argentina would be the most powerful weapon against all imperialism, especially British and American. The Argentine working class could then appeal to the labour movement and the workers and soldiers of Britain. The workers of Argentina would then suggest a socialist federation of Argentina, the Falklands, and of a socialist Britain. A socialist government in the Argentine would then point out that the Falklands issue has been magnified out of all proportion by generations of Argentine capitalists for their own ends. They would appeal to the workers of all Latin America to overthrow the economic yoke of capitalism and imperialism, and to overthrow their own Juntas, and to prepare for a socialist federation of Latin America. The Junta's aims cannot be the aims of the working class, either in home or foreign policy. For the capitalists, war will be profitable. For the workers and soldiers, the war will mean bloodshed and suffering. In the course of a long war, if the present conflict were to be prolonged, Marxist ideas of this sort would receive enormous support in Argentina and throughout Latin America. The overthrow of the Junta would mark the beginning of a socialist revolution in Argentina, though because of the absence of a Marxist leadership it would in the beginning take a distorted Peronist form.

Truth is always concrete. In any



*Workers rounded up by the Junta's police in Buenos Aires*

particular conflict, Marxists have always analysed all the strands of the class and national conflicts that have resulted in a war. War in the South Atlantic will have incalculable consequences in Argentina and Latin America, but also in Britain and Europe. Whatever the outcome of the war, Thatcher will probably be ousted as Tory leader within the next six or nine months, just as Carrington was eliminated as a result of his mistakes in the Foreign Office. Pym will probably be pushed forward as the next leader and Prime Minister.

Thatcher and the Tories pretend that the Falkland Islanders and their wishes are their first consideration. In reality, it is the last thing they are concerned about. If it were in the interests of British imperialism, they would sacrifice the interests of the Islanders without blinking an eyelid. It is the prestige of British imperialism and the prospect of exotic riches in the Antarctic, not the interests of the Islanders, which determine the policy of the Tory Government. The Second World War supposedly broke out over the city of Danzig, which was seized by force by the Nazis. In reality, however, it was considerations of markets, raw materials, colonial possessions, and spheres of influence which were the main cause of the war. The 1 800 Falklanders are just pawns in the game as far as British imperialism is concerned. If they launch an assault now it will be a desperate move on the part of British imperialism, though it is not ruled out that they could gain victory through a quick kill. The British troops are highly trained professionals, and the British navy is still the third most powerful in the world. The British forces are immensely powerful, and are equipped with sophisticated technological weapons and defences. The morale of the troops is apparently high.

Marxists must explain that it is the dialectical contradictions, nationally and internationally, which have resulted in this war. It is necessary patiently to explain that the war is not in the interests of the Argentine or the British peoples, or of the Falkland Islanders. If British capitalism succeeds, then the irony of the situation is that Argentina, which might ultimately have suc-

ceeded through negotiations in gaining some sort of finger in the pie of the riches in the Falklands region, will obtain nothing. If British capitalism succeeds, they will turn a deaf ear to Argentine aims, but the social contradictions in Argentina unbalanced the regime and pushed the generals into action.

### **Only a Labour government implementing socialist policies at home and abroad could resolve the crisis over the Falklands**

We must demand a general election now, as a way of bringing down the Tories and returning the Labour Party to power with a socialist programme. The capitalist government has landed us in a mess at home and abroad. This involves advancing our general programme: for the nationalisation of the 200 monopolies with compensation on the basis of proven need; for workers' control and management of industry, and for a socialist plan of production. If necessary, British workers and the Marxists will be willing to wage a war against the Argentine Junta, to help the Argentine workers to take power into their own hands. But only a democratic socialist Britain would have clean hands. A Labour government committed to socialist policies would probably not need to wage war, but could issue a socialist appeal to the Argentine workers to overthrow the monstrous Junta, take power, and then organise a socialist federation of Britain and the Argentine, in conjunction with the Falkland Islands. The fears of the Falkland Islanders could be laid to rest by a socialist Argentine, which would give them full autonomy with democratic control in the hands of the Falkland workers themselves.

An approach on these lines, demanding a general election and the return of a Labour government committed to socialist policies, would raise in the minds of the working class all the issues of for

who and for what the war is being waged. The irony is that finance capital did not want the war, but through their Tory representatives have blundered into a conflict which will have incalculable consequences for Latin America and Britain.

The strategists of British capital console themselves that Argentina is not El Salvador or Nicaragua, in that it has a powerful capitalist industry, and a powerful agricultural capitalist class. They calculate that even if they defeat Argentina and—with many regrets—dispense with the present regime, the military rulers will be replaced, at any rate in the first stage, by the Peronists, and the Peronist trade union leaders. The Peronist trade union leaders have timidly put forward the demand for the expropriation of foreign capital, but it will get short shrift from the Junta. But when the Junta is overthrown, the demand for the expropriation of foreign capital might get serious support. However, the strategists of British capital know that there is no Marxist party, or Marxist tendency, in Argentina.

After an interregnum—and this would be inevitable if the workers did not take power in Argentina—there would be a new military dictatorship 'to end the chaos', a totalitarian regime that would probably be even worse than the present one.

The war in the South Atlantic and its repercussions are a result of the accumulation of contradictions during the course of the last few decades. The analysis which we made of the crisis in British capitalism, and of developments in the Tory Party, has been shown to be correct. Thatcher and the Tories are desperate. Without a victory on this issue they are doomed. The splits between the 'Wets' and the hardline 'Dries' is reflected in the splits behind the scenes on this issue. If no action had been taken, the Tory Party would have been split in three ways. This mirrors the social contradictions in Britain, and the splits in the Tories are an indication, as is the war, of the irreconcilable contradictions between the classes in society. We are now in a new epoch, nationally and internationally, an epoch of sharp turns and sudden changes. The social contradictions

within Britain and Argentina are even greater than the national contradictions between them. Little things illuminate class contradictions. The British officers in the expedition to South Georgia were willing to risk the lives of the men, who were no doubt told that they were fighting against the fascists. But while the officers would not invite the soldiers or sailors to dine with them, they invited the officers of the defeated Junta forces.

### **A genuine Marxist approach can gain the ear of the workers and win them to Marxism in the event of war**

This is only the beginning of a chain of upheavals in all countries in the coming period.

It is noticeable that Thatcher abandoned her snarling at the

Labour leaders and cooed at Michael Foot on the television. Without the support of the trade union and labour leaders it would be impossible to go to war, at least for any length of time. But if things get really serious and Britain risked defeat, then the capitalists would demand a coalition with the Labour leaders, and the right wing leaders would join, under a new leader of the Tory Party and coalition premier. The Tories have embarked upon this adventure because there is no other way to defend their power and prestige, and to assure British big business of a decisive say in exploiting the resources in the Falklands and Antarctica. They are staking their future on a decisive victory.

The Junta miscalculated completely, aided by the miscalculations of the British Foreign Office. But the social contradictions have propelled them into war, and they have no other way out. The bloody equation of war is incalculable. While it is almost certain that there will be a victory for British imperialism, it is not absolutely certain that this will

be so. The defeat of the Junta would have enormous consequences and would promote revolution in Argentina. A defeat for Britain would have enormous social consequences here, too, and would mean the collapse of the Tory Party.

Whatever the outcome, the Marxists, with a correct approach towards the war and the feelings of the workers in Britain, will gain. A correct orientation towards the working people in Argentina is also of decisive importance. The sectarians will remain stewing in their fantastic mish-mash of absurd slogans and spurious explanations, and will gain nothing, except perhaps a few odd-balls. A Marxist approach towards the war could result in a great increase of support for the genuine forces of Marxism. We are the only section of the labour movement which has a clear understanding, first of war in general and the war over the Falklands in particular, and, second, of how to approach the working class and other exploited strata and win them to Marxism in the event of war.

**INQABA YA BASEBENZI ('Workers' Fortress')** is being published because of the need for a conscious socialist voice in the movement of the workers and youth. Immense tasks face us, both in the trade unions and in the ANC.

Today it is vital to link together those in the movement who, on the basis of experience and events, can explain to their fellow-strugglers the need for socialist policies. **INQABA** will help to assemble the facts and present the arguments in support of this task.

The bosses control the press, the radio and the television. Daily they use it to defend their class interests against the masses, making propaganda and suppressing the truth.

Our class needs its own papers in which all the problems of our life are honestly discussed—industrial disputes, migrant labour and the pass laws, unemployment, education, housing and transport, police terrorism, the manoeuvres of the regime. We need our own publications where we can argue for the programme, strategy and tactics needed to overthrow the enemy.

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Those who have no safer way of contacting **INQABA** or of passing material on to us, can use the following postal address: **BM Box 1719, London WC1N 3XX.**

Readers will notice that this issue of *INQABA* is dated May instead of April 1982. The delay has been due to the work involved in producing *SOUTH AFRICA'S IMPENDING SOCIALIST REVOLUTION, Perspective of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC* (see page 21).

For the future it has been decided to change the production schedule of *INQABA* to the more convenient dates of February, May, August and November.

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For security reasons, fictitious names have been used by writers of articles in this issue of *INQABA YA BASEBENZI*. In every case, however, care has been taken not to give a misleading impression of the background and experience of the comrade concerned. Details about writers are provided only when security considerations make this possible.