

The regime's desperate effort to gain acceptance for its programme of so-called constitutional reform, is meeting with less and less success. The number of postponements of projected elections for the community councils is a sign that the overwhelming mass of urban dwellers reject this apartheid institution. The sell-out decision by the Labour Party on the new constitutional proposals has been met by massive opposition from the coloured people; the tour of Labour Party leaders to gain national support for their decision could hardly attract an audience prepared to listen to them. So far the regime has been unable to find an organised force among the Indian community to attempt to engage it in a similar sell-out. Instead, the rejuvenation and resurgence of Indian Congress organisations has everywhere been met with enthusiastic support.

The heroic and increasingly effective actions of MK combatants are greeted everywhere amongst the people with acclaim. Despite the most savage repression against the underground activists of our liberation movement there are continuous open demonstrations (during funerals, trials of our cadres, important anniversaries, etc) of support for the ANC and the Freedom Charter. The scale of this defiance has created moments in which the people themselves have legalised the ANC despite the threatening presence of armed police contingents.

We have referred to only some of the signs which point to the growing people's anger and militancy. The road to people's power requires not only regional responses to unpopular measures but also a united national offensive, involving the mass of the people in town and countryside, uniting all the black oppressed and mobilising the support of all classes and strata who reject the rule of the racist autocracy. The regime's attempt to perpetuate white minority rule by fragmenting our people and our country must be vigorously challenged by the masses and counterposed by the vision of one South Africa — united, democratic and non-racial. And, above all, action by the masses is at all times the essential foundation for the unfolding of protracted people's war which is the only viable strategy for the attainment of people's power in our country.

The development of a broad front of popular resistance has taken a significant step forward with the launching of the national United Democratic Front (UDF) at a mass rally of 15,000 people held in Cape Town in August 1983. Already, the UDF is reported to command the organised support of between 1 and 1½ million people drawn from all walks of life and from all corners of our country. Its creation has laid an effective foundation to defeat the regime's constitutional proposals including the Koornhof Bills.

The UDF has the potential of drawing together the mass struggles raging in the urban centres and the pockets of resistance in the rural areas, particularly in the hated bantustans. The growth of regional branches of the UDF is a sign that the broad popular front is beginning to take on a structured and organised form and its shape and content is beginning to acquire definition. The urgent and fundamental task facing all genuine revolutionaries and patriots is to build upon this achievement and not to allow petty differences to stand in the way of creating the broadest possible democratic opposition and resistance to race rule in all its forms.

We are in a period in which the very foundation of race rule can be made to crumble by a united people's offensive combined with the escalation of armed struggle involving the mass of our people. There are many signs that the objective and subjective conditions which make possible a major revolutionary breakthrough are beginning to mature. On the other hand it is clear that the ruling class is finding it more and more difficult to continue to rule in the old way and, on the other hand, the people are increasingly demonstrating their complete and utter rejection of the rule of race domination in all its forms. The political crisis facing our enemy is intimately related to, and grows out of and interacts with, the severe economic crisis through which South Africa is passing. It is a crisis which contains important political dimensions and one which has strategic significance for the future of our struggle.

The economic recession continues and deepens

South Africa is today in the grip of one of the longest-lasting recessions in its history. Apart from a short period in 1980, when the price of gold reached freak levels, the downward slide has persisted since 1975. Even the most optimistic among the establishment economists are unable to forecast an early major reversal of current trends.

The present 15% rate of inflation is double that of all South Africa's major trading partners. The deficit in the balance of payments reached the R5-billion level in 1982. In the first eight months of 1982 the commercial Rand decreased in value by 22%. An economic growth rate of 8% in 1980 has plunged to 1% in 1982 and a negative growth rate of up to 3% is predicted for 1983.

Bankruptcies are devastating small businesses, 350 of whom collapsed in October 1982 compared to 85 in September 1981. Insolvencies and liquidations of companies are now averaging 200 per month. There is a stagnation and drop in the value of the exports of diamonds, platinum; iron

ore, manganese and sugar. Above all, the drop in the price of gold has reduced the dollar value of net gold output by a staggering figure of 45%.

The world capitalist economy, into which South Africa is fully integrated, continues to be in the throes of a major recession which affects every part of the capitalist world. But world factors alone cannot explain the severity of South Africa's crisis. *Many of the economic problems with which it is afflicted are inextricably linked to its character as a capitalist state in which race domination plays the key role in the exploitative processes; a linkage which has always served foreign and local capital extremely well.*

Today, most commentators agree that even if there were to be an upswing in economic activity the absolute shortage of skilled and semi-skilled labour would stand in the way of a major leap forward. The National Manpower Commission reported in 1981 that in the middle of the recession (and despite massive unemployment) labour shortages in the manufacturing industry were responsible for 19% under-utilisation of its productive capacity. There is also a grave shortage of artisans in the building and mining industries. In relation to these economic realities the much-vaunted reforms purporting to create a skilled and semi-skilled work force are pathetic in scope.

It is generally agreed that to maintain a satisfactory growth rate an additional 13,000 skilled workers and 7,500 technicians have to be trained each year and that these can only come from the black population. Yet of 11,967 apprenticeship contracts registered in 1981, only 495 were Africans. By April 1982 there were only 40 indentured African artisans in the whole country. A total of 2,632 Africans were attending technical training courses in 1981, as compared to 47,382 whites. Racial education policy has seen to it that 84% of all blacks have gone no further than primary school level and 30% have had no education at all. The executive chairman of Barlow Rand (the largest of the industrial conglomerates in South Africa) recently stated that in the light of the critical shortage of skilled and semi-skilled workers the call for a non-racial educational system is not a political statement but a *business imperative*.

The very factors which enabled the ruling class to accumulate its massive fortunes (sweated black labour in labour-intensive industries) now act as obstacles on the road of advance into the technological age. *Today, as never before, South Africa's relations of production have become a fetter on the full development of the productive forces. And history has demonstrated that when the relations of production begin to inhibit the potential for economic growth, society stands poised for a radical transformation.* There are forces within the power bloc (to be found mainly among some of the monopoly

conglomerates) which see certain aspects of Apartheid as constituting a brake on their objective of restructuring of the economy along more capital-intensive lines. But short of a military coup, they lack an effective mass political constituency within white politics; they are trapped by their own creation, an apartheid-oriented community of whites, the majority of whom have a vested interest in the status quo.

Above all, South Africa's ruling class is faced with a mounting challenge from national and class forces which demand nothing less than the redistribution of the country's wealth and the dismantling of the whole racist framework. The immediacy of this threat to its very existence as a ruling class tends to inhibit even those sectors of big capital whose profit interests could be served by more radical reforms from rocking the Apartheid boat too violently. As witnessed recently, the conflicting economic interests between segments of capital have led to serious splits in the white political arena which have even affected the hitherto most monolithic of Afrikaner institutions — the Broederbond. But, at the end of the day, all groupings (including the PFP — the ideological representatives of Oppenheimer et al) tend to close ranks, ready to man the white laager, in the face of the revolutionary threat. Together with their imperialist allies they see the ANC-headed liberation front as the most serious threat to their survival. The key thrust of Botha's total strategy is concentrated on the attempt to wipe out our presence both inside the country and in the neighbouring states.

It is the mounting revolutionary challenge by the masses, led by our liberation front, which has made, and is continuing to make, such a profound impact on the immediate character of South Africa's deepening economic crisis. *In other words, the choice of economic options for coping with the crisis is restricted by political factors which stem directly or indirectly from the initiatives of the mass revolutionary movement. As these initiatives increase so will the crisis become more profound.*

The growing effectiveness of the people's resistance and the potential which is being demonstrated by the escalating armed actions are beginning to erode the faith of important sectors of international capital in the very future of the racist ruling class. The prestigious organisation Business Environment Risk Information (BERI) in a recent survey advised businessmen to avoid long term investment in South Africa. In terms of political risk BERI assessed South Africa as falling into the "prohibitive" category. The official French Trade Guide has warned French bankers not to invest in South Africa beyond five years when, it believes, there will be "violence and disorder". The Guide goes on to state that "from 1986 onwards

there will be major financial losses caused by Pretoria's Apartheid policy".

There are already signs that large financial groups are pulling out some of their capital from South Africa; recently Associated British Foods sold its interests in Premier for R337-million, followed by another massive disinvestment by Jardine Mathieson. This appears to be part of a more general trend which was conceded by Dr Van der Merwe, head of the balance of payments section of the South African Reserve Bank, when he recently stated that "increasing political pressure on foreign companies to limit their investments in South Africa has resulted in a change in investment patterns — short term instead of permanent".

It is also the intensity of the struggle which is panicking the regime into massive expenditure on its armed and security services. In the latest budget so-called defence spending reached an all-time record level of over R3-billion. The war in Namibia and the subsidy required for South Africa to maintain its colonial grip is now just over R2-million per day. The amount set aside by the regime to keep its puppets in power in the Bantustans is over R1,000-million for the financial year 1982-1983. These vast non-productive expenditures to maintain race domination make the fight against inflation a formidable one.

The manufacturing sector is highly developed, concentrating on the production of consumer goods. But again here, it is the political factor which narrows the possibilities of exporting such goods to what should be South Africa's natural trading area — the African continent and particularly its central and southern regions. Botha's "constellation of states" designed to create a structured economic community centred on racist South Africa, has so far floundered and the creation of the SADCC expresses a desire by the participants to loosen and eventually break economic links with the Apartheid economy.

The first response of an embattled capitalist economy is for the bosses to place more and more of the economic burden of a crisis on the shoulders of the working people. In South Africa the attempts which are being made to do so are meeting with greater organised resistance than ever before in our history. Despite record levels of unemployment and continuing retrenchment which normally inhibit trade union growth, the organised strength of the black workers is growing by leaps and bounds and the number of hours lost in strikes continuously rises. It is this strength which limits the space in which the ruling class can manoeuvre in its efforts to cope with the crisis. And the organised opposition against anti-people economic measures is expressing itself not only at the point of production but also in the urban ghettos.

Strategic significance of the crisis

In general it is clear that the severity and persistence of South Africa's current economic crisis, and the prospects of emerging from it, are bound up with specific political factors which are unique to our situation. And these specific factors have an important bearing on the class and national struggle perspectives of the coming period.

The process of militarisation and the centralisation of economic political power will be deepened. Already the military establishment has virtually become an arm of government and participates officially at all significant levels of decision-making. Indeed, the role of the military as the central policy-making organ has emerged more clearly with the official disclosure that the State Security Council, under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister, virtually acts as an inner cabinet.

With each passing year wealth is being concentrated into the hands of fewer and fewer monopoly giants; already the state and eight private monopolies control 70% of the assets of the top 138 public companies. This growing centralisation aggravates the secondary contradictions between "big" and "small" capital and leads to more intense in-fighting within the white political front. More and more sections of small business are being ruined whilst, even in the current crisis conditions, the net profit of the top 15 companies rose by R251-million in the 1982 financial year.

Political centralisation, the concentration of authority in even fewer hands, is one of the main ingredients of the new constitution. It will give immense powers to an Executive President who, in practice, will be elected by the National Party caucus in the so-called white chamber of the three-tier Parliament which will represent 27% of South Africa's people. The attempt to buy off the Coloured and Indian communities with representation in their ghetto parliaments is part of an attempt by the ruling class to cope with the crisis and has become one of the key issues on the struggle agenda. *It is the task of our liberation front to ensure that the Coloured and Indian masses refuse to collaborate with the racist scheme; a task which is realistically attainable and whose fulfilment will deal a telling blow to white domination, and throw it into even deeper crisis.*

The current crisis also coincides with the period during which the remaining foreign-ruled states in Southern Africa (with the exception of Namibia) gained their independence. South Africa is now completely surrounded by countries which, in varying degrees, support our liberation struggle. The regime is arming itself to the teeth and regards every inch of its thousands of kilometres of borders as potentially hostile. It is engaged in continuous

aggression against its neighbours whose resolve to oppose Apartheid has not been broken. Each blow has led to an increasingly wounding counter-blow by our armed cadres, operating deep inside our country. In financial and manpower terms South Africa's destabilisation strategy is stretching the country's resources dangerously. The recently promulgated new conscription law has aroused bitter opposition from virtually the whole business community who claim that its implementation would reduce even further the already inadequate pool of skilled employees. The business mouthpiece, *Financial Mail*, stated that "the new call-up system is going to affect the vast majority of white men in South Africa and will certainly affect every business enterprise".

South Africa's dependence on foreign capital opens up immense possibilities for weakening its capacity to cope with the present crisis. We have referred to some of the nervous responses already shown by international capital. But increasing political upheavals, the unfolding of People's War and the stepping up of military blows such as Sasol, Koeberg, Voortrekkerhoogte, and the attack on the Air Force and Intelligence Headquarters (including selective action against multi-national presence in the Apartheid economy) will further erode the confidence of foreign capital in the economic future of the racist system. Externally the possibilities for increasing South Africa's isolation from the world community are growing. Imperialist policy always reflects the interest of capital and capital's increasing nervousness about the security of its investments will make some of the Western governments more amenable to pressures from the solidarity movements in these countries. But it remains true that South Africa's role as the key citadel of imperialism in Africa has been supported and encouraged as never before by the Reagan-led imperialist camp.

We have so far touched upon some of the general tendencies which are inherent in the current economic and political crisis. *But whether these tendencies become translated into realities will depend on the extent to which we succeed in raising the mass political and armed struggle to even higher levels. The conditions of doing so are undoubtedly present and will continue to spread.* The absolute and relative deterioration of the living conditions of the black majority in both town and countryside; the growing unemployment, the ghastly nightmare which faces the millions who have been exiled to the Bantustans and the inevitable attempts to shift more and more of the burden of the crisis on to black shoulders, will continue to fuel the anger and hatred of the people against racism. The plight facing our people, and especially the black working population, cries out for a transformation of this anger into even

more effective organised militancy (both political and military) which will relentlessly confront and weaken our crisis-ridden enemy.

The plight of the workers

The greatest burden of capitalist crisis always rests on the shoulders of the working class, but in South Africa it is above all the black workers who take the brunt.

Despite fraudulent claims to the contrary the economic conditions of African workers have steadily worsened. The regime's most recent figures which claim a rise in African wages, conveniently exclude the two largest categories, 1.5-million agricultural and 750,000 domestic workers. The true position is that from the year in which the current recession began (1975) the real earnings of Africans have taken a plunge. According to the Bureau of Market Research of Unisa, Africans in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging complex earned less in 1980 than in 1975. In 1981 (according to Professor Keenan of Wits University) the real income of Africans decreased by a further 1%. Another study has shown that the incomes of African households have declined by 12.4% from 1976 to 1980.

The level of unemployment has reached horrendous proportions. The figure has already hit the three million mark of which more than 50% are African men under the age of 30.

We know what happens to an African who is unemployed in South Africa. It means more than just a loss of income and consequent economic deprivation; it so often also means jail, deportation to the starving rural backwaters and the complete destruction of family life.

The Riekert Commission report which was hailed by the regime's publicists as a document which would lead to an easing of influx control, has in fact been followed by an intensification of pass law persecutions. More than 200,000 were arrested for pass law offences in 1982, an increase of 20% over the previous year. The recent Rikhoto case exposed the fact that the regime was even going beyond its own racist laws and has been illegally deporting people who had acquired Section 10 rights to remain in an urban area. When the courts interfered with those illegalities the racist response once again reaffirmed their complete disregard and contempt for African family life; the wives and children of African workers such as Rikhoto will (according to Koornhoof the "verligte") not be allowed the same "privilege". And there is still worse to come.

The threat of the Orderly Movement and Settlement of Black Persons Bill (the very name conjures up the image of the herding of animals) continues to hover over the heads of all urban Africans. It aims to deprive even larger numbers of permanent urban rights and to push more of them into homelands:

The reaction of the black working class to the assault on its living and working conditions and to the tightening grip of repression is the key to the future of our revolution. And their political responses in the recent period hold out great possibilities of raising the level of political consciousness and of organised resistance from the working people.

Despite the existence of conditions which normally inhibit trade union growth (recession and rising unemployment) the last few years have seen a most dramatic increase in African union membership. The potential for creating a united revolutionary trade union movement which can become a mighty instrument of struggle is greater today than ever before in our history. We will refer later to our Party's approach to some of the problems which still have to be overcome in order to ensure that this potential is fulfilled.

It is however clear that trade union strength and trade union consciousness on their own are not enough; the working class has to be moulded into a politically conscious fighting force which, in alliance with those classes (more especially the rural poor) who share its immediate aims, will sweep away the whole racist structure. *We must ensure that the level of the workers' struggle is raised above the mere fight to defend and advance their economic conditions within the framework of South Africa's system of capitalist exploitation.*

It is our prime task to mobilise the working class as the leading force in the struggle against the tyranny of racist autocracy and for people's power. And this struggle cannot be fought only in the urban centres. Our proletariat is not only to be found in the cities; many millions are to be found on the white farms and in the Bantustans. The overwhelming majority of Africans on the land are not peasants; they are made up of agricultural labourers, unemployed workers who have been exiled from the cities, and those who have spent a lifetime as migrants between countryside and town.

The bulk of the rural masses have been exposed to wage labour and have had varying degrees of contact with urban culture. These factors make possible a uniquely close relationship between urban and rural struggles and can facilitate the spread of proletarian ideology and organisation in the countryside. In the present economic crisis (made even more disastrous by the drought) these proletarians and semi-proletarians share conditions with the rest of the rural poor which threaten their very lives and those of their dependants.

The nightmare of the Bantustans

54% of the African population (close to 11-million) now live in the

Bantustans, a population that has grown by 69% between 1970 and 1980. The overwhelming majority of these people face an indefinite future of degradation and absolute starvation. *Of all sections of our people these multitudes have indeed nothing to lose but their chains.*

According to the Bureau for Economic Research (Benso) over 5.2-million of the 6.2-million living in the non-'independent' Bantustans had no measurable income during 1980. And in the same year only one million of the 4.6-million living in the 'independent' Bantustans could be classified as economically active. Despite a population increase in the Bantustans of over 7-million since 1960, a grand total of 75,000 jobs have been created there in the same period. According to economists, one third of the Bantustan population lives in resettlement camps in which conditions are such that one in every four babies born in them dies during its first year of life.

The brutal distortion of normal family life is exposed by some of the population figures. In the Bantustans adult women outnumber men by three to one. Close to 50% of the population is under 15 years of age and about 60% are under 20. This spells out families without men, wives without husbands, children without fathers! This is the kind of ethnic "nation" which the racists have conjured up — a wasteland of fragmented families for the breeding of migrant and commuter labour for the "national homeland" of the five million white group which owns 87% of the land and virtually all its riches.

The figure for the migrants and commuters from the Bantustans in 1981 was 2,074,000. It is becoming more and more clear that the Bantustan administrations were set up to carry out the functions of a glorified WENELA recruiting structure. The boss-boys of the Bantustans (such as Matanzima) never cease to boast about how much labour they have managed to export to their masters in white South Africa. But even their efforts do not seem to be enough. Initially all the labour recruiting was handled by the Bantustan administrations. However, recent reports indicate that their bureaucratic structures seem to be disintegrating and the regime is once again beginning to play a more direct role in the recruitment of labour through its regional Administration Boards. In 1981 these boards between them "requisitioned" 1,396,944 workers from the Bantustans. The word "requisitioned" was used by Koornhof in a Parliamentary answer and it aptly describes the handling of humans as pure objects of commerce.

The build-up of population in the former reserves (which everyone agrees cannot possibly sustain the lives of their inhabitants) is the end of a process which in itself constitutes one of Apartheid's most cruel crimes. Conservative estimates are that between 1960 and 1980 a minimum of three million people

have been forcibly uprooted from their homes and dumped in barren veld. And this process is still under way.

The economic plight facing the overwhelming majority of the people in the Bantustans cries out for organised resistance, a task which demands priority treatment by our whole liberation alliance. The potential for mobilising the people and gaining their support in a growing revolutionary war against the racist regime and its local puppets, is enormous. There can be no doubt that the conditions in the countryside are transforming it into a tinder-box of anger, frustration and discontent; passions which can and must be channeled into a mighty river of resistance.

Apartheid's search for allies — the black middle class

Every sector of the racist social and economic structure is heavily dependent upon black participation. Even the direct instruments of national repression — the army and police — are forced increasingly to rely on black recruits for much of their dirty work. With the passing of each year this dependence becomes greater and, according to demographers, the beginning of the next century will see a South Africa of approximately 50 million people of whom 44-million will be black.

It is clear that the survival of white domination increasingly requires the "consent" and collaboration of strata from the dominated majority who will help to ensure their own people's subjugation. A great part of ruling class political strategy is therefore directed towards a search for such collaboration. In an attempt to pursue this strategy the regime is, generally speaking, concentrating its attention on three main categories:

- (a) The emerging administrative and business strata in the Bantustans;
- (b) The black middle strata outside the Bantustans, and
- (c) The upper layers of the Coloured and Indian communities who may be tempted to participate in the new constitutional proposals for their own individual gain.

Although all three categories of the middle strata share an economic status which is considerably above that of the mass of the people, they also each have distinct characteristics which have an important bearing on their likely responses to the unfolding revolutionary struggle.

The middle strata in the Bantustans

By far the biggest category of the middle strata in the Bantustans is the growing political and administrative elite. Already by 1979 the number of permanent posts on fixed establishments in seven of the Bantustans

(excluding Transkei, Bophuthatswana and KwaNdebele) was 27,625. Membership of legislative bodies (close to 800 MPs) and ministerial posts attracts relatively large salaries and allowances. In Venda, for example, one of the poorest of all the Bantustans Mphophu receives an annual salary of R48,700 (plus allowances), an amount which is only R3,752 less than the salary of P.W. Botha. Apart from direct earnings (almost completely subsidised by grants from Pretoria) political office becomes the launching pad for acquiring land and business interests. The accumulation of such wealth by the Matanzima brothers in the Transkei is well-known and recently in Venda, cabinet ministers and government officials were accused of "lining their pockets" with profits from Venda's casino.

The most important characteristic of this administrative stratum is that it was the creation of the Apartheid regime and is completely dependent upon its favours. The very existence of this group depends on the existence of the Bantustan "state" itself. Its function has been aptly described as one of managing the affairs of South African capital, more especially the smooth flow of the cheapest possible migrant and commuter labour.

It follows that the class interests of the higher echelons of the Bantustan Administrators are completely subservient to those of the ruling class in "white" South Africa. As a group they will obviously be tempted to do everything possible to undermine African unity, to defend the monstrous creations of Apartheid and to line up with the enemy in its struggle against the liberation alliance. The Sebes of the Ciskei do not come second to their bosses in Pretoria when it comes to vicious anti-communism, persecution of the trade union movement and torture and killing of liberation fighters.

There can be no compromise with these defenders of Apartheid who have traded in their people's birthright for a mess of pottage. *The so-called Bantustan states must be completely destroyed and their administrations overthrown as part of the struggle for the total liberation of every inch of our people's soil.* In the fight against the puppet administrations and their racist masters some categories which are traditionally grouped as part of the middle strata can be mobilised on to the side of the people, especially those which have not been directly incorporated into the Bantustan's governing apparatus and whose future is therefore not inextricably bound up with the survival of the Bantustan itself. This applies to small traders as well as professional groups and teachers. The latter began to play a significant opposition role to Matanzima in the middle Seventies which led to legislation debarring all public employees from participating in party politics and from belonging to political organisations.

The African middle strata outside the Bantustans

The mobilisation of the broadest possible contingent of black social forces against racist rule continues to be a revolutionary imperative in our country. And the black middle strata outside the Bantustans are an important sector of that contingent. At the same time the regime's intentions are clear: to create a larger African middle class which will be tempted to defend the status quo through the lure of economic concessions.

Despite enemy manoeuvres it continues to remain true that the fate of the majority of the black middle strata is more closely connected to the black workers than to their white counterparts and that the destruction of the system of national domination is in their interests. We have always stressed that South African racism is indivisible and that for it to continue operating it must sooner or later show its face to every class which makes up the dominated community. As our Central Committee stated in its 1980 statement (Forward to People's Power):

"In general it is clear that the ranks of white property owners, businessmen, finance etc etc are not being opened to blacks. It is also clear that whatever concessions are made to the other sections of the black petit bourgeoisie, they will not, in many important respects, be allowed to join the ranks of their white counterparts. All that is happening is that, within the framework of continued national domination over all classes and groups which constitute the black community, some sections of the black middle strata will be allowed a little more scope for development; but always along their own lines. In their personal lives they will continue to face most of the humiliation of inferior status, politically, socially and culturally"...

Those amongst the black professionals who are involved in management occupy its lowest rungs and it is illegal for a black manager to have a white subordinate. According to the *Sunday Tribune* (5.9.82) African managers constitute less than 0.2% of the country's managerial complement.

In the public sector African doctors, school principals and accounts clerks earn less than their white counterparts, doing exactly the same job.

South Africa's land policies go to the very root of the Apartheid structure and all "concessions" to African business and trading interests are premised on the monopoly by whites over 87% of the land area. The Group Areas Act allows Africans to trade in only 13% of the land area and, even then, it is white capital which dominates.

It is impossible for African entrepreneurs to expand into farming outside the 13% tribal areas in which, in any case, the system of land tenure acts as an obstacle.

The much-publicised scheme to allow home ownership by Africans in urban areas has so far involved only a small handful of Africans. By March

1981 a total of 1,881 99-year leases had been registered.

In a police force which is mainly black there is a total of 75 African commissioned officers, earning less than their white counterparts and with no power over white subordinates.

In almost every area of African middle class advancement the pattern is broadly the same; a small group is allowed to decorate the fringes of the white preserves but it is totally barred from crossing into them. The black middle class (and the fact that we can even describe a class by its colour tells its own story) is not only a class entity, it also forms part of the larger entity of those who are victims of national oppression. The members of the African middle strata gain economically from some of the reforms but the houses they occupy remain in the ghettos, their right and the right of their children to freedom of movement is subject to the same influx control legislation as the workers, and they remain foreigners in their own country without any political rights except perhaps in their ethnic wasteland.

It is clear therefore, that the black middle class is, by its very nature, subjected to two contradictory pressures. On the one hand immediate economic "improvement" could tempt some of its members to play a collaborative role; on the other hand the national restrictions and humiliations from which it continues to suffer and which will frustrate its fuller economic growth, will make it receptive to many of the immediate aims of the liberation alliance.

Our appeal to the black middle strata to throw in their lot with the working people in the national democratic revolution is not based merely on the rhetoric of national oppression; it has an objective basis in the kind of society which will follow the people's victory. In such a society (in which the working class will be the dominant force) the black middle strata will, in every respect, be better off than they are within the framework of white baasskap.

The middle strata by their very nature do not always play a consistent role in a struggle and, especially in one with a national context, tend to shy away from revolutionary radicalism in favour of old-style bourgeois nationalism. But although we are always called upon to guard against the spread of petit-bourgeois ideology within the liberation alliance, the winning over to our side of larger and larger groups from amongst the middle strata remains a revolutionary necessity.

The Coloured and Indian middle strata — a new offensive

The Coloured and Indian upper and middle strata have never been exempt from the restrictions of racist oppression. But despite the fact that they have

been relatively better off than their African counterparts, a great deal of progress was achieved by the liberation movement in the direction of all-black unity.

In the 40's and 50's the Indian Congress movement (radicalised and led by revolutionaries such as our late Chairman, Yusuf Dadoo), even won the adherence of a large section of the Indian commercial bourgeoisie for a policy of growing unity in action with the other national movements, more especially the African National Congress. And this tradition continues to express itself in the current revival of Indian congress organisations in Natal and the Transvaal.

The tradition of solidarity with the immediate objectives of the liberation alliance was, until recently, honoured by the predominantly middle class leadership of the Labour Party which won all-round admiration for its uncompromising stand against the Coloured Representative Council whose dissolution was finally forced on the regime.

It is, however, already becoming clear that groups from among the Coloured and Indian upper and middle strata are seeking a closer accommodation with racism at the expense of their African brothers and the majority of their own people. The proposed new constitutional arrangement which creates ghetto parliaments (perpetually dominated by the white 'majority') and which gives a select group the chance to occupy high political office, has already tempted a few from among the Coloured and Indian upper crust. The last conference of the Labour Party was hijacked by these elements in favour of a policy of collaboration with the latest scheme to perpetuate white domination. And the sell-out elements amongst the Indian upper and middle classes are manoeuvring to gain the support of the Indian community for participating in the three-tier scheme.

There can be no compromise with these Matanzimas and Sebets among the Coloured and Indian communities. Like their Bantustan counterparts, they are trying to sell their people's birthright for the "privilege" of participating in the perpetual domination and humiliation of their own communities. They stand squarely in the enemy camp and everything possible must be done to expose and to isolate them. The overwhelming spirit of rejection of these collaborationist manoeuvres which has already been demonstrated by the Coloured and Indian masses must be maintained and reinforced. The struggle against the Bantustans and the new constitutional proposals is indivisible. We emphasise again that this latest scheme of the white racists can and must be defeated. A people's victory over the collaborators will create a political crisis of enormous dimension for the

ruling class and will constitute a most important step in the struggle for people's power.

The trade union front

The concessions to the African workers in the 1981 Labour Relations Act were won on the ground and not in Parliament. Long before the removal of the colour-bar clauses of the Industrial Conciliation Act, the right to trade union organisation and the right to strike were proclaimed by our working class in the actual arena of struggle, on the factory floor.

The ten years which preceded the Labour Relations Act saw the most persistent strike movement in our history and the mushrooming of trade union organisation. More and more employers, under pressure from their workers, broke ranks and began to recognise and negotiate with the emerging African unions. The laws prohibiting strikes by African workers had little effect on their resolve to engage in industrial action when the situation demanded it.

The ruling class, realising that the building of black trade unions could no longer be stopped, was forced to give them some form of legal recognition in the hope that they could thereby be better controlled and, more especially, prevented from playing a political role on the side of the liberation movement. The legislation was accompanied by an intensified offensive against striking workers and progressive trade unionists. Of the 768 people detained in 1980 only 21 were trade unionists and workers, whereas in 1981, 300 of the 772 detainees fell into this category. And in the same year police were called 191 times to the scene of work stoppages.

The Labour Relations Act has not discouraged the black workers from engaging in organised strike action. They have ignored the procedures which have to be complied with before a strike is considered "legal". In 1982 there were 394 strikes involving 141,000 workers, an all-time record. And every one of these strikes was illegal. Despite the vicious persecution of trade unionists (with the Ciskei being particularly brutal), black trade union membership has already reached 750,000. Significantly, quite a number of disputes with employers have attracted regional and national solidarity actions by the community as a whole (e.g. Red Meat strike, Wilson-Rowntree, Fattis and Monis). There was an impressive response to the trade union call for a national protest against the murder of Neil Aggett. We have also seen a number of examples of direct trade union involvement (in alliance with community organisations) in struggles against rent and bus fare increases, and in protest against Koornhof's genocide bill.

An immense social force is being built; a force whose collective strength constitutes one of the key factors in our revolution. The need to provide effective political leadership to the rapidly growing black trade union movement is a task which stands second to none. If we fail in this task we will not only emasculate the forces on the side of our struggle, but we will also expose the trade union movement to reformist ideological and collaborationist tendencies.

A number of important policy questions are currently being debated in the trade union movement. Recently our Political Bureau convened an enlarged session at which these questions were discussed. Decisions were also taken on the practical steps needed to reinforce and improve work on the trade union front.

Trade union centres and the quest for unity

There are four national trade union centres in existence. The Trade Union Council of South Africa (Tucsa) has 57 affiliated unions with a membership of 430,675. The South African Confederation of Labour has 13 unions with a membership of 126,514. The Federation of South African Trade Unions (Fosatu) has ten affiliated trade unions with a membership of 105,690 and the Council of Unions of South Africa (Cusa) has eleven affiliated unions with a membership which has recently risen to 100,000.

Tucsa and SACL are completely dominated by a white leadership and, for reasons which will be elaborated below, have no immediate place in the process which is under way to attempt to create one national democratic trade union centre. The main participants in this process have been the two national federations of Cusa and Fosatu, and a number of individual industrial and general workers' unions, including Food and Canning, African Food and Canning, Commercial Catering and Allied Workers' Union, South African Allied Workers' Union, General and Allied Workers' Union and the Cape Municipal Workers' Association. It is this latter grouping, representing over 300,000 workers, which is participating in a "feasibility committee" to investigate the establishment of a united trade union federation. This latest move was initiated at the April 1983 Cape Town unity conference (the third such conference in recent years) and is to be welcomed by all who wish to see the emergence of a strong, healthy, democratic and independent trade union movement in South Africa.

The formation of one national trade union federation is a process which requires patient fraternal negotiations and dialogue between the existing democratic trade union centres and progressive unions. To help pave the

way for unity it is also necessary that all opportunities should be sought for joint campaigning between the existing bodies on burning issues affecting the workers such as retrenchment, unemployment, mass removals, the President's Council, the Genocide Bill etc. This unity in action (well illustrated in the Neil Aggett protests) will generate the kind of atmosphere which will improve the prospects of achieving organisational unity.

One of the obvious obstacles in the way of creating one national body is the proliferation of quite a few general workers' unions, some of which are participants in the unity moves. We have always believed that, in the long run, the most effective form of trade union organisation is one union for one industry. It is our view that the general workers' union should be encouraged to separate out into industrially-based groupings. But an immediate commitment to do so ought not to be made a precondition for national organisational unity. Until the general workers' unions have transformed themselves, other fraternal ways must be found to eliminate the competitive tendencies between the general workers' unions and the industrial unions organising the same factories.

Unity and problems of registration

Another bone of contention between the emerging democratic trade unions is whether trade unions should register under the Labour Relations Act. As the law stands at the moment there is virtually no substantial difference between the status of registered and unregistered unions and the provisions of the Act which deal with government interference in the internal affairs of unions apply with equal force to the registered and unregistered.

Apart from acquiring a more "respectable" image in the eyes of some employers (which would perhaps influence their approach in the collective bargaining process) there is no advantage to be gained by the workers if their union becomes registered. The fact that an unregistered union cannot become part of the industrial council system is a gain rather than a loss since this system is designed to undermine workers' militancy and is in any case completely dominated by the white trade union movement. In the circumstances, it is our view that trade unions should not apply for registration.

At the same time we consider that this issue should not be elevated to the level of fundamental principle. The different approaches to the question should not be allowed to become an obstacle to trade union unity. At the end of 1981 there were 23 African unions registered with a total membership of 259,582. In addition, 326,794 Coloured and Indian workers are members of

registered trade unions. Thus close to 600,000 black workers fall into this category, exceeding the number of whites in registered trade unions by over 100,000. It is clear that this vast contingent of black organised labour should not be excluded from the unity process merely because their unions have chosen registration.

Non-racial unions

In contrast to the plight of the black workers, the white wage-earner continues to be racially cushioned against the worst effects of the recession. There is hardly any white unemployment and the white workers continue to draw economic benefit from their privileged status. The 1981 figures of the National Manpower Commission show that the absolute difference between the earning of whites and other population groups has grown larger.

At the political level this reflects itself in the continuing reactionary alignments of the majority of white workers. The constituencies which have a big proportion of white wage-earners continue to return the most racist of candidates. Strike actions and industrial confrontations are things of the past; it is the wielding of political clout by the white workers which plays such a big role in protecting and advancing their privileged status, often at the expense of their black counterparts. Whereas in 1982 the black workers had to defend themselves against an assault on their living conditions by engaging in an all-time record number of strikes, the white workers succeeded in increasing the earnings gap between themselves and the other population groups without a single strike! Indeed, the only serious threat of strike action by white workers came when the mine owners once again moved to desegregate certain job categories.

In the light of the existing class attitudes of the white labour aristocracy and the negative role in the political struggle by most of their trade unions, black workers should exercise extreme caution before they agree to become members of entrenched white organisations which will continue to dominate them under the guise of a new non-racial image. In principle our Party has always favoured and worked for the creation of a completely non-racial and democratic trade union movement. But the incorporation of blacks into existing white dominated trade unions will not necessarily be a step in this direction and could result in continued minority control. We therefore believe that the main task of the black workers in the present situation is to organise themselves into strong, viable industrial unions in order to ensure that the principle of democratic majority leadership will apply in the non-racial unions which will emerge.

Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA)

When Neil Aggett was murdered Tucsas declared its opposition to the nationwide workers' protest. More recently its president, Anna Scheepers, appealed to the police to be more active in the prosecution of African strikers. These are just a few examples which demonstrate that the leadership of Tucsas has learnt nothing from the new workers' forces that are emerging and continues to maintain its reactionary and baasskap position in the trade union movement.

It is ironic that Scheepers talks on behalf of an organisation the majority of whose affiliates are now black. Of Tucsas's total membership of 430,673 only 101,145 are white. The balance is made up of 226,860 Coloured and Indian, and 102,670 Africans. This large and important sector of organised labour must be weaned away from Tucsas's reactionary leadership. All efforts should be made to isolate those black trade union bureaucrats who have been placed into their positions by patronage of racist trade union leaders and who therefore continue to cling desperately to their coat-tails. Everything possible must be done to ensure that the 320,000 black workers in Tucsas become an integral part of the quest for genuine trade union unity.

The role of SACTU

There is no organisation in the trade union field which can measure up to the historic role played by Sactu in its stand against racism in the trade union movement and its contribution to the organisation of workers into democratic industrial unions. In addition, Sactu's commitment to the general struggle against racist exploitation and oppression and its full integration as a constituent of the Congress Alliance have played an important part in the struggle to mobilise the working class against the racist regime and to bring the day of our people's victory nearer. Many old Sactu stalwarts are continuing to play an important role in the current upsurge of trade union organisation, and many other trade union militants find their inspiration in the tradition of revolutionary trade unionism which Sactu has done so much to spread among our working people.

Because of Sactu's record as a militant revolutionary trade union centre and its open adherence to the Congress Alliance, it is for all practical purposes treated by the regime as an illegal conspiracy. It is therefore clear that in present conditions Sactu can no longer operate in the old way; more especially it cannot realistically advance the aim of winning the immediate formal affiliation of the emerging trade unions. In other words, in the quest

for the creation of a new united trade union centre, Sactu does not compete with the existing organs.

At the same time Sactu has a vital role to play in ensuring that the principles upon which it was founded continue to inspire and give direction to the growing forces of trade unionism within the country. It is for this reason that Sactu can continue to claim to be a legitimate spokesman of genuine trade union aspirations of the South African workers.

It is clearly more vital than ever for Sactu to carry out its historic role to influence the trade union movement to move in a radical and democratic direction and to ensure that the united trade union centre which is being striven for, will be built in the image of Sactu. To carry out this task it is necessary that Sactu should strengthen itself organisationally. In collaboration with all the constituents of the Congress Alliance it is called upon to intensify propaganda with an emphasis on the main content of revolutionary trade unionism. The unorganised must be organised. The vast army of unemployed workers both in the towns and in the countryside must be mobilised to express their protest and anger about their plight and the plight of their families. The negative features in the Labour Relations Act must be exposed and a cry must go out from the organised trade union movement to demand their repeal.

Our Party has a long and proud record in the field of trade union organisation. It can truly be said that the South African Communist Party is the father of black industrial unions in our country. The period of the 30s, 40s and 50s bristles with the names of outstanding communist trade unionists who devoted themselves to trade union building. Johannes Nkosi, Bill Andrews, George Poonen, Steve Dlamini, J.B. Marks, Ray Alexander; these communist trade union giants and scores of other communists have forged an unbreakable link between the Party and the trade union movement. As activists in the various progressive trade union federations which emerged from the 30s onwards, communists laid the very foundations of militant revolutionary trade unionism.

Against the background of this great tradition our Party is called upon to do everything possible to strengthen the mass organisations of our working people. The advance of revolutionary trade unionism is not just the preserve of the trade union movement; it is the concern of the whole liberation alliance and of our Party as the vanguard of our working class. We dare not fail in this task.

In its assault on the liberation movement the enemy has selected the South African Communist Party as one of its most important targets. Not a day

passes without an attempt by the enemy to smear the name of our Party, to spread the slander that it controls and manipulates the African National Congress, to accuse communists of being "mere appendages of Moscow" and to distort the role of non-African communists. In addition racist South Africa has become one of imperialism's most vociferous pureyours of anti-Sovietism in the world.

Why do they hate and fear us so much? It is because, in the first place, our Party is an historically vital component of the revolutionary alliance for national liberation headed by the ANC. Our Party has won a place in this alliance precisely because it has always respected the integrity and independence of the national movement. The enemy and its allies are fully aware that our Party constitutes a powerful organisational and ideological force against the kind of "national liberation" which will allow a few black exploiters to join the boardrooms of the white ruling class. As the struggle intensifies so will the enemy's efforts to find solutions which will prevent the destruction of the capitalist system of exploitation which, in South Africa, is the very foundation of racism. They want to destroy our Party because it stands in the front rank of those who will never accept such a "solution".

They fear us too because they know that we are part of the great international working class movement and that we support and defend the achievements of workers and peasants who have taken power in their own lands and who are continuously threatened by imperialism. We have never hidden our admiration for the great October Socialist Revolution which created the Soviet State. This state has not only become the main citadel of the expansion of the socialist world system, but it has also been one of the vital factors in the massive decolonisation process which gained momentum in the period since the end of the Second World War. Anti-Sovietism is one of reaction's key instruments and the need to counter it is today rather greater than ever before.

Communists believe that there is no conflict between proletarian internationalism and revolutionary patriotism. Throughout our history we have never deviated from the historic interests of our own working people. It is precisely because of our internationalist outlook that we are regarded as the chief enemy of narrow and backward nationalism and racism.

They hate us also because we are the pioneers of non-racism in South Africa. It is a matter of pride that our Party has always had within its ranks members and leaders from all national groups. Those from the minority groups who have made common cause with the struggle for liberation and socialism and who are among the Party's leaders have won their positions

through an unflinching commitment to the revolutionary cause and through a readiness, if necessary, to die for it. The racists live in a world in which every level of social intercourse implies the domination and "superiority" of whites. It is part of their racist sickness that they cannot understand the possibility of black and white working together in complete equality and without the arrogance of baasskap. The very history of our Party is a glowing example of this higher proletarian ethic which we will never abandon.

We must answer the enemy's offensive against our Party by devoting even greater efforts to strengthen it organisationally and to reinforce its role not only as a constituent part of the liberation alliance but also as the independent political vanguard of our proletariat.

The task of spreading the liberating ideas of Marxism-Leninism, especially amongst the workers and the youth, has assumed greater urgency than ever before.

The ranks of our underground must be strengthened through the recruitment of advanced activists especially from among the proletariat.

Imbued with proletarian internationalism, we must continuously sharpen our ideological weapons to combat backward nationalism and chauvinism in all its forms and spread an understanding of the connection between racial oppression and capitalist exploitation.

The perspective of a future socialist society in South Africa must be spread with greater vigour.

As a Party we must provide effective political leadership to the working class and ensure that its mass organisations do not become instruments of reformist collaborators.

The struggle for world peace and against the regime's continued aggression against the neighbouring states demands urgent attention.

Above all, as an integral part of our liberation alliance headed by the African National Congress, we face the immediate challenge of leading the masses in all-round assaults on the racist autocracy and for the winning of people's power. Victory will be ours through a combination of massive united political action and military confrontation which increasingly involves the mass of our people.

Racism must be destroyed!

Racism can be destroyed!

People's power will be won through people's unity and people's war!

Forward to a free socialist South Africa!

THE MOST PRESSING DUTY BEFORE ALL HUMANKIND IS TO AVERT THE DANGER OF A NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST

International Resolution Adopted by the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party, September 1983

Today, when the capitalist system as a whole is in deep crisis, the bourgeoisie grows more and more desperate as the demand for social progress intensifies. Everywhere the imperialists oppose revolution with counter-revolution, physically intervening on the side of the reactionary classes throughout the world, on the grounds that their "vital interests" are threatened by "Soviet imperialism". In pursuit of their criminal aims they have resorted to a policy of nuclear brinkmanship.

The most pressing duty before all humankind today is to avert the danger of a nuclear holocaust. Whatever the differences between classes and countries, resort to nuclear warfare cannot solve them but only lead to the destruction of civilisation as we know it and the possible extinction of the human race. The fight for peace and life must be a top priority for Communists and progressives everywhere, for no social advance is possible if human society — indeed life itself — ceases to exist.

The Reagan Administration in the United States, which represents the most bellicose section of US monopoly capital, pursues a policy of confrontation against the forces of national liberation, peace, freedom and socialism. Throughout the world it supports with arms and money the forces of reaction. Whilst hundreds of millions of people suffer from the scourge of hunger, poverty, disease and malnutrition, imperialism is escalating the arms race, including in the nuclear field. Instead of seeking solutions to some of these vital global problems, US imperialism has increased international tension to dangerous levels by its threat to resort to nuclear war. This threat has become a reality due to the insane belief of the military-industrial complex, which greatly influences the policies of the US administration, that such a war is not only possible but also winnable.

Under conditions of detente in the political and military spheres, peaceful co-existence between the two different social systems, and a reduction in the arms race, in particular nuclear arms, it is possible to ensure the most basic necessities of life to people throughout the world.

It is of primary significance that, whereas the Soviet Union has given the unilateral and categorical assurance that it will never be the first to resort to nuclear warfare, the United States and its allies have consistently refused to make a similar declaration. The imperialist powers reserve their right to launch a first strike. The weapons they are installing in Europe today — the Pershing and Cruise missiles — are first-strike weapons. The policies they are following are the policies of reckless aggression and sabre-rattling which can easily spill over into suicidal conflict.

Over the past few years the Soviet Union and its allies have offered more than 100 proposals designed to reduce international tension, curb the arms race and avert the threat of a nuclear catastrophe. Recently the Soviet Union formally proposed a treaty banning the testing and deployment of weapons in outer space. The proposals for peace and detente which are continually advanced by the Warsaw Pact are either ignored or treated with derision as if they were not genuine.

The reckless policies of the Reagan Administration must be strenuously opposed by the peoples of the world if the real danger of nuclear war is to be averted. The campaign for the limitation of nuclear weapons, for real steps towards disarmament, for detente and peaceful co-existence must be stepped up to the point where it becomes irresistible. The peoples of the world must demand from Nato a real response to the peace initiatives launched by the Warsaw Pact powers which, if implemented in good faith, would reduce world tension and promote the cause of international security.

The United States must be compelled to ratify the SALT 2 treaty, undertake, like the Soviet Union, never to be the first to use nuclear weapons, and accept the offer of the Warsaw Treaty states issued in the Prague Declaration of January 5, 1983, "to conclude a treaty of mutual renunciation of the use of military force and on the maintenance of peaceful relations". This would pave the way for further measures of disarmament and the ultimate disbandment of both alliances as indicated in the Prague Declaration.

The Reagan Administration which heads the imperialist coalition makes no secret of the fact that it is determined to prevent social change which may lead any country to abandon capitalism and choose the socialist road of advance. Not only does it oppose the socialist countries themselves in everything they do, but it also labels freedom fighters everywhere communists or "agents of Moscow". The United States and its allies are to be found everywhere propping up right-wing and reactionary regimes committed to maintain the status quo.

We live in the era of change world-wide from the capitalist to the socialist way of life. Capitalism and imperialism have exhausted their potential of bringing the benefits of scientific and technological advance to the majority of the world's people. The gap between the haves and the have-nots is growing wider. Fired by the profit motive the ruling class of the developed capitalist countries directs its enormous energies and ingenuity to devising ever more fearsome weapons of destruction in order to protect its way of life from the challenge of the deprived and under-privileged majority. And this deprived and under-privileged majority is to be found not only in the ranks of the exploited toilers of the so-called "third world". There are today between 11 and 13 million unemployed in the world's richest country, the United States; over 30 million are unemployed in the capitalist countries of Europe. Nevertheless, it remains true that the worst poverty is to be found in the under-developed countries. Today over 1,000 million are starving and 30 to 40 million annually die of hunger in the developing countries whose wealth is looted by the transnational corporations of the western world. About 25% of the people of the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America are malnourished, compared with 3% in the industrialised capitalist states. In Africa as a whole most countries have seen no growth at all in their economies over the past decades. Indeed, Africa is the only continent in the world where per capita food production has declined steadily. Throughout the developing world the living standards and hopes of the people are crushed by the increasing burdens imposed by the exploitation of their natural resources and labour power by imperialism and its transnational corporations,

massive indebtedness and the unequal economic relations between them and the most developed capitalist countries.

The crises of "over production" which regularly rack the capitalist world and which lead to the destruction of thousands of tons of foodstuffs while the people are hungry, are inherent in the capitalist system. Only under socialism is it possible to strike a balance between production and distribution, due to the elimination of the private ownership of the means of production and the exploitation of man by man. It is only in the countries of the socialist community that slums, poverty, hunger and illiteracy have been eradicated, thus meeting the basic needs of its people and laying the foundations for a steady improvement in their living and working conditions.

The impressive achievements of the socialist countries have not gone unnoticed by the rest of the world. More and more countries and peoples are rejecting capitalism, imperialism and neo-colonialism and turning towards socialism as the only way out of the crisis in which they find themselves. National liberation movements acknowledge the socialist countries as their natural allies. But what has been the reaction of the United States and the other western nations? From the 1917 revolution onwards the Soviet Union, the world's first socialist country, has been faced with invasion, war and the threat of war by imperialism determined to "strangle the Bolshevik baby in its cradle".

In the interests of peace and social progress, all manifestations of rabid anti-Sovietism and anti-communism must be vigorously combated. It is our duty to explain that there is no such thing as "Soviet imperialism". Unlike the imperialists, the Soviet Union has no shares in the companies which own the land and exploit the human and material resources of other countries. The alleged fear of Soviet aggression against Europe and America is groundless. It is the Reagan Administration which threatens to annihilate the Soviet Union in a planned five-minute nuclear first strike because it thinks, incorrectly, that without the Soviet Union the world-wide impetus for social revolution will disappear.

The United States Administration pursues a policy of open hostility towards the Soviet Union, which Reagan has described as the main source of evil in the world. From being an ally in the crusade against Hitlerism in the last war — an ally who bore the main burden and sacrifice in the last war — the Soviet Union has been painted by the propaganda of the cold war as a dastardly enemy against which no holds are barred. By means of economic warfare and boycotts the United States tries to hinder the economic development of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, and

bludgeons its allies into co-operating with its plans. The aim of this futile campaign is to undermine the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries technologically, economically and morally, to the point where they will be unable to resist the threats and pressures of the imperialist countries, or to survive if war should break out.

Direct military expenditure by the United States passed the 100 billion dollar mark in 1978, when the budget reached 105 billion dollars. By 1983 the budget had more than doubled to 215 billion dollars and by 1988 it will be nearly double again, to 386 billion. The section of the budget which is the biggest source of profits, "procurement", almost trebled from 20 billion dollars in 1978 to 55 billion dollars in 1983 and will reach 131 billion dollars by 1988 — 6½ times the 1978 figure. The profits of US arms manufacturers in 1982 rose by 23% compared with 1981 — and 1982 was a year of so-called "recession" in which the profits of all the large corporations combined declined by 24%. The US military-industrial complex has a huge vested interest in war and preparations for war.

Utilising this military might, US imperialism and its principal allies, Britain, France, West Germany, Italy, Canada and Japan intervene on the side of the reactionary classes throughout the world. In Africa, imperialism and its agencies such as the CIA seek to destabilise those countries taking a socialist path of development or pursuing anti-imperialist policies. Chad, one of the most impoverished countries in the world, is used as a battleground by France and the United States to interfere in the internal affairs of that country and to whip up anti-Libyan feelings on the continent. Namibian independence is deliberately delayed under the pretext of demanding the withdrawal of Cuban internationalist troops from Angola. The stationing or withdrawal of Cuban troops is a matter solely within the competence of the two governments concerned. Morocco is armed to the teeth so that it may continue to deny the people of Western Sahara their freedom and independence.

In the Middle East, Israel, with the full support and backing of US imperialism, pursues a policy of genocide against the Palestinians, illegally occupies part of Lebanon, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and threatens to engulf the region in another war, thereby threatening world peace. In Central America and the Caribbean, heroic Cuba, the Island of Freedom, is constantly threatened with military aggression, Grenada is under pressure to reverse its revolutionary process, overt and covert military aggression is committed against revolutionary Nicaragua, and right wing murderous military regimes in El Salvador and Guatemala are armed and financed in

an attempt to crush the ever-growing armed revolutionary struggles in those countries. In Asia, counter-revolutionaries in Afghanistan, representing the most backward feudal elements, are given military, political, economic and diplomatic assistance in their attempt to overthrow the legitimate government and to install a pro-imperialist reactionary regime. A condition of the settlement of the Afghan dispute must be the cessation of arms supplies to the reactionary forces. Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea are under constant threat of attack from imperialism and its local allies. Separatist forces who seek to destroy the territorial integrity of India are assisted by the CIA. These and many other examples clearly demonstrate that all the acts of aggression come from the side of imperialism and its allies.

We South African communists declare our militant and unqualified solidarity with the peoples of Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia in their fight for national independence, democracy, peace and social progress. Together with the PLO, FMNL-FDR in El Salvador, Polisario, Swapo and other revolutionary forces in the socialist and non-socialist world, we can defeat the intrigues, manoeuvres and aggression of imperialism and its henchmen.

Imperialism has constantly sought to undermine and, if possible, destroy the non-aligned movement and the OAU. But they have failed. We fully support the endeavours and policies of the non-aligned movement and the OAU for world peace, negotiated settlement of inter-state disputes and for a new international economic order.

The South African Communist Party is an integral part of the world communist movement. Fraternal relations between its component parts are based on the lofty principles of proletarian internationalism. Despite some differences, the world communist movement remains the most cohesive and united international force fighting for peace, democracy, national liberation and socialism. It is the duty of all communist and workers' parties to strive for greater unity and cohesion in our ranks. There is an urgent need to work for the convening of an international conference of the world communist movement. We shall continue to develop and deepen bilateral relations with communist and workers' parties and support the holding of regional conferences of fraternal parties.

We in South Africa have a special interest in seeing international tensions relaxed. The liberation of the oppressed people of Namibia and South Africa is being held back, the independence of the frontline states undermined, their economies and infrastructure damaged, and the peace of the entire region violated by South African aggression. The Botha regime claims to be

merely acting in self-defence against the "total onslaught" launched on South Africa by the forces of international communism spearheaded by the Soviet Union — thus echoing the voice of its master in the White House. But in truth it is fighting against the majority of the South African people who, denied all political rights, including the basic right of citizenship in the land of their birth, and subjected to ever-intensifying repression, support and nourish the freedom fighters of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the army of the liberation movement headed by the African National Congress. We Communists are an integral part of this liberation front and are proud to carry out our duties side by side with our allies.

Now that the Botha regime, thanks to the "constructive engagement" of its western allies, has acquired a nuclear weapons capacity, South Africa threatens the whole of Southern Africa with nuclear devastation. South African murder squads have already been sent to Mozambique, Angola, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Botswana and Swaziland, sowing death and destruction on an ever-increasing scale. South African armed and trained gangs like Unita in Angola, the "Mozambique Resistance Movement" (MNR), the Lesotho Liberation Army, etc., kill, maim and destroy on the instructions of their Pretoria paymasters. Prime Minister Botha declared in an interview in February 1983: "I'm an African and I believe communism is bad for Africa. If fellow Africans are threatened by the evils of communism we shall assist them". He gave his interview to the New York Times, no doubt calculating that his views would be well received by the Reagan Administration. But the judgement of the real leaders of independent Africa was delivered in the words of Botswana President Quett Masire at the Maputo meeting of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference last July: "South Africa threatens our very existence. It is a matter of life and death". Appealing for international action to restrain South Africa, he said: "We fear the situation will deteriorate to the point where international conflict becomes inevitable and orderly development is impossible."

The danger is that South African aggression must inevitably escalate into continental war. Every step taken by the militarist Botha regime is encouraged by the imperialists as part of their global strategy. For the Reagan Administration, South Africa performs the same role in Africa as Israel in the Middle East — as a custodian, a gendarme to be strengthened for the task of curbing the forces of liberation and independence and keeping the peoples of Africa within the western orbit. Thanks to the policies of the Botha and Reagan regimes, Southern Africa is today an arena of conflict and

confrontation in which the all-consuming flames of world war may be ignited at any moment.

Success in the struggle to prevent not only war in Southern Africa but also a world-wide nuclear holocaust, depends on the unity of all democratic forces in South Africa and the frontline states in the fight for peace and social progress. It is our task to build that unity. Communists, said Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto, "labour everywhere for the union and agreement of the democratic parties of all countries". The only guarantee of peace in Southern Africa is the achievement of liberation, the ending of the race exploitation of South African capitalism, the construction of a new society in which discrimination and exploitation on the basis of race and class will be eliminated and all will enjoy equal rights and opportunities. The fight for liberation and the fight for peace are inextricably linked. We owe it not only to ourselves but to all the peoples of the frontline states, indeed all of Africa, to bend all our energies to bring that fight to a victorious conclusion.



IT IS TIME FOR FRANCE TO GET OUT OF AFRICA

by T. Singh

The present stage of the conflict in Chad serves as a sharp reminder that direct military intervention is a policy option readily exercised by imperialism whenever its "strategic interests" are under threat.

Today, a massive French military intervention in Chad has thrown a protective armoured ring around the pro-western regime of Hissen Habre to prevent its downfall at the hands of the forces of the GUNT (Transitional Government of National Unity) led by Goukouni Oueddei.

Yesterday, it was the CIA and American money and arms, supported by pro-western Arab states, which aided Habre's forces in overthrowing the legitimate government of Chad united within the GUNT. Both France and the United States have invoked the bogey of Libyan "expansionism" to justify their interference in the twenty-year-old civil strife in Chad. The truth, however, is otherwise.

Chad became an independent republic in 1960 after almost seventy years as a colony of France. Its stormy post-independence history can be traced directly to its colonial past and French imperialism's attempts to maintain its political and economic domination over the country since then. Like most of the former French colonies Chad, under its first president, Francois Tombalbaye, opted to become a member of the French Community and the franc zone.

French colonial policy led to a distorted growth, if we may call it that, for the socio-economic process.

The south, which experienced the largest concentration of French occupation throughout the period of colonial rule, became relatively more developed primarily agriculturally through the development of cotton farming. French education and culture permeated the lives of the southern peoples, the majority in Chad, and successive French administrations relied on the French-educated elite to facilitate the rule of colonialism. Christianity was fostered, though a large number of the ethnic groups remained animists. At the time of independence the entire government, civil service and military were drawn from the south.

In contrast, the northern regions of Chad, for long inhabited by nomadic groups whose main livelihood rested on livestock rearing, and predominantly Muslim in religion, were completely neglected. When independence came the peoples of the north were left out of the political power structures, the administration and the civil and military authority.

French colonialism and the practice of post-independent French-favoured presidents and political groups accentuated the diversity of ethnic, social, cultural and religious differences between the various tribes and nationalities into major contradictions which found their expression in the struggle for political power and genuine independence.

The People Take Action

In 1966 the Front for the National Liberation of Chad (FROLINAT) was formed with the aim of overthrowing the neo-colonialist regime of Francois Tombalbaye. Despite often serious quarrels with his French patrons, Tombalbaye enlisted French military support in the anti-guerilla struggle. Mounting successes by FROLINAT, which had succeeded in spreading its base of operations as well as influence, forced the regime to change its composition, though it remained dependent on French military, economic and technical aid. More northerners were brought into government and administration. FROLINAT rejected this tokenism and pressed on with the struggle.

In 1975 the Chad army rebelled and overthrew the regime of Tombalbaye. Felix Malloum, Commander-in-Chief of the army of Chad, took over the reins of political power. The French dutifully recognised the new regime. Tombalbaye, who was killed during the coup, had outlived his usefulness to French imperial interests. The new political authority, armed with a French military pack of aid in return for allowing French military planes staging

rights in N'Djamena, the capital, changed little for the country.

By now there were some 11 different political-military formations lined up against each other in the struggle for political power. FROLINAT, now allied with a number of other political-military groups from central and southern Chad, intensified the armed struggle and in 1979 the Malloum regime collapsed. In that same year the Lagos Conference, acting under a mandate from the OAU, conferred legitimacy on the GUNT with Goukouni Oueddei as president. All 11 of the country's military-political groups attended the Lagos Conference together with Chad's neighbouring countries. The GUNT represented the widest political grouping in the history of Chad.

Whether the FROLINAT line of strong, independent, anti-imperialist Chad would have emerged as the most popular within the eleven-party coalition government is difficult to judge. The GUNT's most pressing priorities were to introduce much-needed social, economic and political measures to benefit the mass of the people who had to endure more than a decade of civil war. What is certain, however, is that imperialism, particularly American, did not allow the process of reconstruction even to begin. Within months of the GUNT's coming into power as a result of the Lagos Accords, reaction struck again, this time crystallising around the figure of Hissen Habre, who held the position of Defence Minister with the GUNT.

Hissen Habre — Imperialism's Hatchetman

In 1980 Habre withdrew from the GUNT and with the Army of the North (FAN) initiated a counter-revolution to overthrow the legitimate government of Chad. This phase of the civil war raged for nine months, mostly around the capital, N'Djamena. It became apparent that the US was actively supporting the counter-revolution, while France was content to watch developments. The GUNT sought and obtained Libya's support and defeated the counter-revolution. At the request of the GUNT Libyan troops remained in Chad as it became apparent that the country's stability was not completely consolidated with Habre in Sudan.

It was at this point that American aims to wreck Chad's fragile stability took more concrete shape. Hissen Habre began to regroup his forces who were now being trained, equipped and armed by Sudan and Egypt and financed to the tune of 10 million dollars by the CIA. Evidence of the military intervention by the United States in the affairs of Chad was given in the secret hearings to the Intelligence Committee of the US House of Representatives. This proved that the CIA was supplying arms to Habre while the Reagan

administration was proclaiming its desire to end the conflict in Chad by peaceful means.¹

At the same time the USA and France, with an orchestrated chorus from some of Chad's francophone neighbours, Egypt and Sudan, began demanding the withdrawal of Libyan troops from Chad. As soon as the GUNT acceded to these demands Habre launched his next offensive. Civil war flared up once more. The OAU now sent in its own peace-keeping force, although it was apparant to all that peace was hardly something which American imperialism and its henchman, Habre, wanted. The half-hearted, indecisive role of the OAU force and the GUNT's own disarray worked decisively in favour of the counter-revolution. Habre entered N'Djamena in triumph in June, 1982. Imperialism had regained its stranglehold on Chad.

Hissen Habre's rise to power has been the result of a long and chequered career of duplicity, treachery and opportunism in the service of imperialism. He was part of the Tombalbaye administration and, according to an interview given by Goukouni Oueddei, was sent to infiltrate FROLINAT at its formation.² He used the financial resources supplied to him by that regime to form his own armed contingent (FAN) and remained within FROLINAT, no doubt realising that the regime was doomed because of its own corrupt practices and inability to deal effectively with the guerilla forces, even with French military support. He broke away from FROLINAT when his own ideas about the aims of the struggle diverged from those of the guerilla leaders, one of whom was Goukouni Oueddei, later the chief of FROLINAT.

At the height of the guerilla struggle against the regime of Felix Malloum, Habre entered into negotiations with that regime, abandoning the armed struggle to overthrow neo-colonialism and French domination in Chad. He became Prime Minister under Malloum. When it became apparent that the march of the guerilla struggle would inevitably lead to their taking power, Habre began plotting against the Malloum regime. Under the terms of the Lagos Accords Habre's political-military formation became a part of the government of national reconciliation. He became Defence Minister of the GUNT. He switched sides once more in 1980 when he led the counter-revolution against the GUNT.

This is the man who today claims legitimacy as the President of the Republic of Chad.

The present situation

Almost a year after their defeat the GUNT forces renewed their offensive, and between June and September 1983, effectively controlled the entire northern

region of Chad. Most reports are unanimous that N'Djamena would have been recaptured by the GUNT. As in the past, however, imperialism stepped in, this time with massive supplies of arms and other military aid to the Habre regime, which itself called for open intervention by France. The civil war, which had its own complications, had become internationalised.

The United States made the initial running. \$25 million of emergency military aid was pushed through to Habre. Two AWACS early warning planes and an escort of F-15 fighter planes were dispatched to neighbouring Sudan. The American administration made it clear that the role of the AWACS was to provide advanced warning communications to Habre about the GUNT forces and their lines of march and disposition. Inside Chad itself American technical advisers arrived to train Habre's forces in the use and deployment of the Redeyes — heat-seeking, anti-aircraft missiles. Thirty of these high-security, high-technology missiles, the most modern of their kind, had arrived in Chad.³ In July 1983 Washington announced that its total aid to the Chad regime would rise to \$100 million.⁴

On the diplomatic front the US administration launched an offensive to involve a number of African and Arab states on the side of its ally in Chad. Zaire, Senegal, Ivory Coast and Gabon, to name only a few, duly received the standard anti-Libyan dosage to lure them into the conflict. Zaire responded with the dispatch of some 2,500 troops and the US State Department was quick to point out that this had been done "at the prompting or suggestion of the US". President Reagan promptly expressed his admiration for the "courageous action" of Mobutu, whom he described as "a faithful friend for some 20 years".⁵ However, it was necessary for the missing imperial factor, France, to intervene directly if Habre's regime was to be saved. This was the thinking which dominated the State Department's calculations. Accordingly the US President entered into direct communication with the socialist President of France, Francois Mitterand, and sent his special envoy, General Walters, to Paris.

It is possible that French ruling circles may have become alarmed at the manner in which US imperialism was using the Chad conflict to widen its own neo-colonial ambitions in a region traditionally regarded by the US as a "French sphere of interest" and forcing the socialist government to intervene militarily. Such speculation, cited to give some respectability to French military intervention, ignores the continuity of French imperial policy in Africa. It was Mitterand himself who laid the facts of French intervention bare in an interview with *Le Monde* about the United States' pressurising tactics:

"We have not ignored the Americans. They have been very much occupied with us. We have met, we have spoken. Mr Reagan has written to me, I have replied. I have listened with great interest to his special envoy, General Walters, who came urgently to see me. When the US decided to send the AWACS and the F-15's to Egypt and Sudan, it was not sought by us. They have communicated to us by themselves what they know of Libyan movements, and we thanked them..."⁶

France, he continued, had acted to the dictates of its own policy and positions. He indicated that as far as American policy was concerned there was a continuity from the past:

"If the method has changed, the objective remains, preserving the role and interests of France, and fulfilling our duties as regards our African friends."⁷

Stripped of its political platitudes, what Francois Mitterand, socialist President of France, was saying was that French imperial interests had to be maintained in Africa.

Having distanced itself from the American connection, France stepped into the Chad conflict to preserve "the role and interests of France". 3,000 combat troops were dispatched, armed with the latest weapons and supported by Jaguar and Mirage strike aircraft, helicopter gunships, heavy artillery and armoured vehicles. That their role was not purely defensive was made clear by President Mitterand. If threatened, he said, they will "riposte" and will not limit themselves to purely defensive retaliation.⁸

Operation Manta, as the French intervention was codenamed, represents the heaviest concentration of French military power in Africa since the Algerian war of liberation. Not for the first time had the French ruling circles enlisted its armed forces to maintain French neo-colonial interests in Africa.

Le Grande France

French imperialism has had a long history of military intervention in Africa. The most notable, because of its enormity, was against the Algerian people in the liberation war which raged from 1956 until Algerian independence in 1962. More than 300,000 French troops were involved in an attempt to crush the freedom drive of the Algerian people and preserve the French empire in Africa intact.

In 1958 France, under the presidency of General De Gaulle, offered its African colonies the choice of becoming free states within the French Community, thus abandoning the pretence that France and "her overseas territories" were indivisible. Direct colonial rule was replaced by a neo-colonial arrangement under which the monetary policy of the francophone states was to be directed from Paris. More importantly, the Community

arrangement allowed French capital and industry unfettered access to the raw materials and markets of these countries.

Whatever benefits may have accrued to the francophone states, French industrial-finance capital has retained its dominant, if not sole, rights to extract the primary products and raw materials of these countries, develop them into finished products in France, and retail these at profitable prices to francophone Africa. To date this pattern has remained unchanged. In 1979, for example, French imports from these countries amounted to \$3.1 thousand million while exports of manufactured goods amounted to some \$6.4 thousand million.⁹ To maintain this profitable neo-colonial exploitation by French multinationals and capital in general, imperial France was not averse to sending in troops whenever a situation threatened to disrupt or sever such avenues of profit.

In February 1964 French troops intervened in Gabon to restore the rule of president Leon M'ba. France relies on Gabon for such strategic minerals as uranium, oil and manganese, most of which is exported to France.

From 1967 to the present France sent numerous military expeditions into Chad to maintain the rule of its own placemen against the guerilla struggle for genuine independence. Chad is one of Africa's poorest and least developed countries with cotton as its main export, most of which goes to France. However, geological reports of substantial oil and uranium deposits in the south and north of Chad are factors influencing France to maintain its foothold in the country.

French forces were also deployed against the POLISARIO when the guerillas thrust deep into the territory of Mauritania, a former French colony and member of the Community which claimed the Western Sahara. Late in 1979, 1,000 French troops occupied Bangui, capital of the Central African Republic, whilst Jean Bedel Bokassa was away on a state visit. David Dacko, former president of the CAR, ousted by Bokassa in 1967 with French collusion, was restored to the presidency. "Emperor" Bokassa had become an embarrassment to the French empire. Not even the gifts of diamonds which he was reported to have lavished on Valeri Giscard D'Estaing, then president of France, could save him. France's military intervention was not limited to the francophone states. French paratroops intervened directly in Zaire to save Mobutu's regime when patriotic forces in Shaba province rose against the dictator in 1978. The province's rich resources — copper, uranium, cobalt and other minerals — served as strong enough motivation for intervention.¹⁰

But it is not only the economic factor, important as it is to French strategic requirements and profits, that has determined French policy in Africa. Both

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