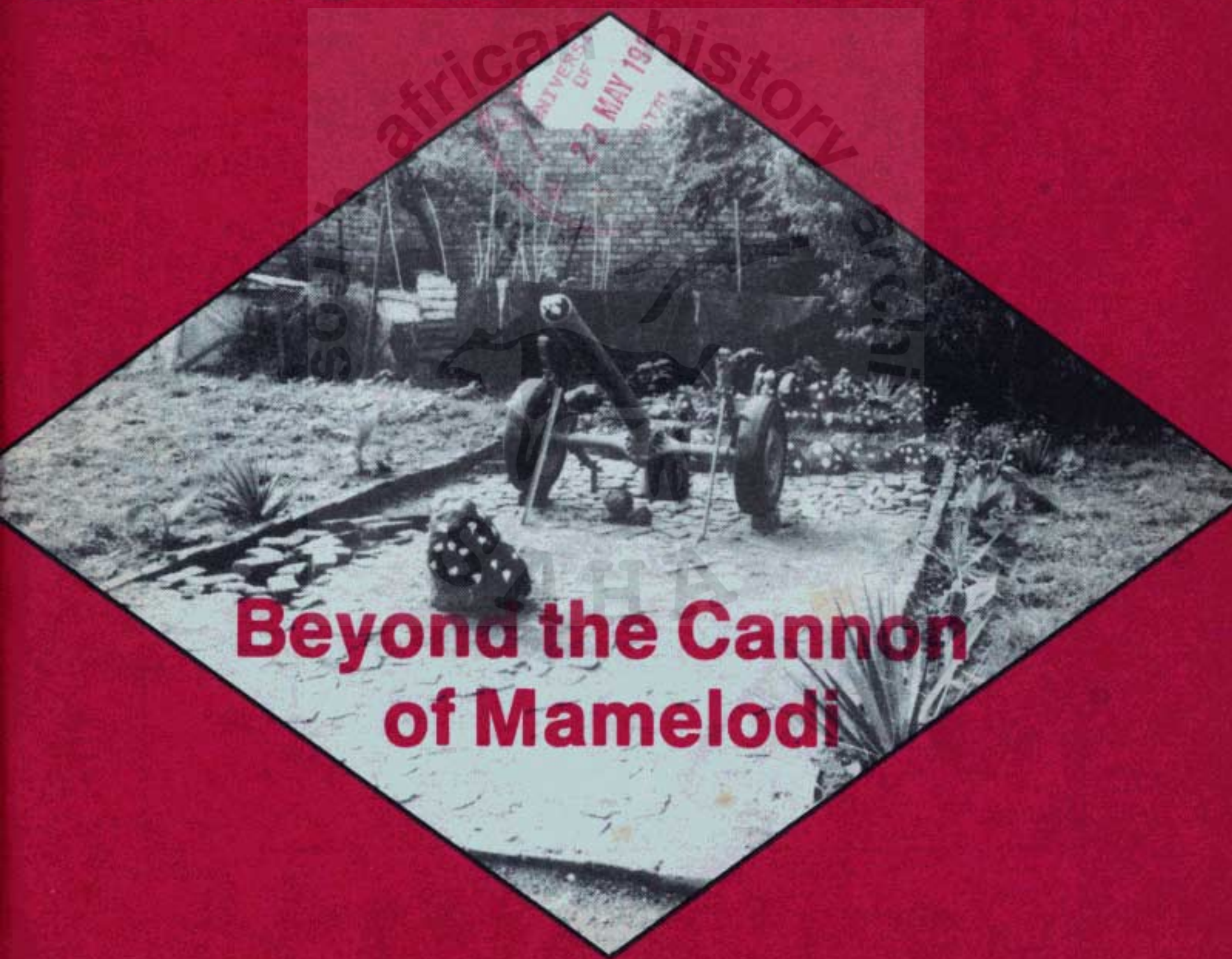


WORK

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IN

PROGRESS



Beyond the Cannon of Mamelodi

In This Issue:

UNITY AND THE FREEDOM CHARTER, DEBATING
WORKING CLASS POLITICS, AFRICAN URBANISATION,
DEBATE ON THE UDF, UNION ACTION ON THE MINES.

Editorial

Working-class leadership of political struggle is essential in creating the conditions for a new South Africa. Most progressive organisations agree on this.

Rhetorically, there is wide agreement on the special role of the working class in politics, and the necessity for working-class leadership of alliances against apartheid, oppression and exploitation.

But establishing what this means is more difficult. Why is the working class different from other classes? How does working-class politics differ from other class politics? What are the limits and potentials for trade unions as vehicles of working-class politics? These are questions discussed in a number of articles in this issue of *Work In Progress*.

Equally important, what is an adequate basis for unity between the organised working class and the popular political organisations? One contributor to this WIP argues that the Freedom Charter is silent on a number of issues crucial to workers, and as such is not a suitable programmatic basis for unity.

The establishment of street committees and peoples' courts raises questions concerning not only alternative forms of government, but also the nature of democracy. Is it just an end, a vision of a future society? Or is it an essential foundation and safeguard for working-class power that must begin to be built now?

These issues involve questions of how to create power for transformation; the relationship between the form and content of progressive organisation; and the meaning of working-class politics. They are central to the current phase of resistance and organisation.

The answers will not be found in the pages of WIP nor other publications. The very process of developing answers to such complex social issues cannot take place outside of the cauldron of struggle and resistance, organisation and conflict. But unless these questions are raised and debated, an acceptable basis for unity of all progressive forces under working-class leadership will not be found.

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Beyond the Cannon of Mamelodi

GEORGINA JAFFEE recently interviewed a number of young activists in Mamelodi township near Pretoria. Their political activities include setting up street committees, people's courts and disciplinary committees aimed at generating an alternative system to that offered by the state.

Mamelodi means 'mother of melody'. But in recent months this large African township east of Pretoria has seen more conflict and violence than melody. To township residents, a turning point was the 21 November massacre, when police broke up a peaceful protest march of 50 000 residents. Over 13 people were killed and hundreds injured.

The marchers, led by the mothers of Mamelodi, were demanding to see the mayor about a ban on weekend funerals, the restriction of mourners to 50 per funeral, lowering rents and the withdrawal of troops from the township.

The massacre changed relations between the generations in Mamelodi. A member of the Mamelodi Youth Organisation (MAYO) said: '21 November proved to our parents that we were right about the police and the struggle - they are now participating with us'.

In the past two years emergent independent political organisations in Mamelodi have successfully organised to discredit its town council. Town councillors have been forced to resign, and militant activity and acts of violence against individuals working within the system are widespread. Since August 1985 at least three councillors have resigned under pressure. Councillor Joe Hlongwane, president of the opposition Mamelodi Peoples' Party resigned after his business was boycotted, and Mayor Alex Kekane resigned after pressure from his family, and anti-town council campaigns. Prior to this, his house was fire-bombed.

* Those interviewed, whose full names are not known to me, were extremely co-operative. My thanks to them, and to Siphso Selane and Lucas Banda who provided background on the township.

Since the landmine blast on 17 February which damaged a casspir armoured vehicle, the situation in Mamelodi is tense. The town council has asked that security forces remain to 'counter a reign of terror by young blacks', according to press reports. Mamelodi councillors are under police protection. Zikhali Ndlazi, mayor and once-popular leader of the Vukani Vulamehlo People's Party which has the majority on the council, awaits the return of municipal policemen from training so that he can be less dependent on the SADF for protection.

COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS EMERGE

The formation of the United Democratic Front and its call for a boycott of the 1983 township elections opened the way for new political groupings in the township. MAYO, made up mainly of unemployed youth, was formed in the same year. The Mamelodi Parents Association (MPA) emerged from the boycotts of 1984.

Both have provided important leadership and organisational strength in Mamelodi. They gained momentum from popular reaction to the presence of the army in the township and the increased levels of violence following the declaration of emergency. After the banning of the Congress of SA Students in August 1985, they became still more active.

Last year MAYO and MPA members co-ordinated campaigns with the Pretoria regional consumer boycott and stayaway committees. Since the November shootings, other organisations have emerged, such as the Mamelodi Relief

Committee, which organises funerals. And a civic association was launched recently.

As well as formulating demands concerned with local issues in the township, these community organisations have also vociferously articulated national demands through their affiliation to the UDF. Specific local demands concern rents and housing, the banning of weekend funerals and the restriction of 50 mourners per funeral. National demands included release of all political prisoners, unbanning of political organisations and the withdrawal of police from the townships.

CLEAN-UP CAMPAIGNS AND STREET COMMITTEES

A recent development is the emergence of street committees, which participate in 'Operation Clean-up' campaigns. The campaigns were first started in June 1985 by MAYO and other youth activists who wanted to weed out criminals and hooligans using the political struggle for their own ends.

After 21 November the 'clean-up' came to include garbage collection, when the town council was believed to have stopped the service in response to the widespread rent strike. Community organisation services also include building of parks named after political symbols.

Such new and constructive forms of popular resistance are predominantly initiated and carried out by young activists. They see themselves as political watch-dogs in the community. But they appear to be broadening their support base as older and more conservative members of the community become increasingly politicised by police violence.

The sounds of SADF activity, gunshots, casspirs and police vans are everyday background noises for MAYO members. They refer to themselves as 'activists', and call one another 'comrade': 'A comrade is a person who does and feels the same as oneself, a person who can be trusted - a loyal friend'.

It is with pride and excitement that they point out the parks and rockeries which they constructed with painted old tyres, wood and stones. These structures occupy almost every open space in the township and may surround a board or

stone painted with the name Oliver Tambo, or Mandela Park. Others have slogans like 'Kutlwano ke Matla' (Unity is Strength) or 'Have Hope'.

More striking symbols are the many vehicle axles with prop shafts pointing to the horizon as if ready to fire. These stand like cannon on street corners: 'If the casspirs knock them down, we build them up again in the evening', said one of the young men accompanying me, as we began our discussion.

“ Can you explain how the 'Operation Clean-up' campaigns developed?

The 'Operation Clean-ups' began in about June of 1985. They were started by COSAS members and unemployed youth, and were set up to fight gangs and rapists and people who were taking advantage of others in the name of the struggle. Mamelodi was characterised by crime carried out by thieves, thugs and lumps. At that time we were trying to talk to our parents about the military occupation but they did not give us much backup. Students were no longer attending school and had no guidelines or direction. We realised that to get anywhere we had to show parents that we can do things on our own and what kind of freedom we want. The campaign became more successful after November.

In what way?

The campaign changed a little. After the November killings we began a house-to-house campaign to get people to agree not to associate with the police or the administration. We wanted to do everything on our own. We tried to persuade them not to pay rent or lay any charge at the police station. We would sort out our own problems and allow the people to choose the best judgement at the people's courts. We realised that we were killing ourselves by paying rent and fines, because the government uses this money to buy hippos.

We also started organising the collection of garbage through MAYO section leaders. At that time the municipality stopped collecting and we raised money by going from house to house to borrow trucks from the business men.

When were the parks and gardens started?

They started after 21 November. We wanted to show the town council that we can do things on our own, and that we will work for the country if we get our rights. A businessman wanted to give a prize for the best garden but we rejected this: we are not launching an individual struggle here but a united one. In the Freedom Charter there is the principle that the land shall be shared - we want to share what we have worked for.

”

PEOPLE'S JUSTICE

Loosely structured and often arbitrary grassroots organisations have been formed in the attempt to create alternative structures of authority and control in Mamelodi. They include 'disciplinary committees' (DCs) and

The first goal involves discouraging and sometimes preventing people from reporting crime to the police. Instead, residents are urged to bring complaints before the people's courts. By enforcing this, it is hoped to encourage resignation of policemen and to undermine the state's system of justice and law enforcement. However, the replacement of apartheid justice with people's justice is open to abuses arising from the lack of discipline, co-ordination and direction that more developed forms of political organisation could supply.

“ **How do you stop people from going to the police station?**

A group of us would wait outside the police station and watch those going in, then we would go up and ask them what the problem was, and tell them that it could be solved at the people's court. After the recent events, we do not have to convince the people, they are just responding. These courts contribute to civil disobedience and will lead to the



A people's park - built by Mamelodi youth activists

'people's courts'. Their functions include controlling crime, politicising township dwellers against the local authorities and educating them about the broader political struggle.

dismantling of apartheid.

But where are the people's courts?

They do not exist all the time. People

just come together and form them when there is a case. In each street there is a sectional delegate from MAYO, as well as a person who is nominated by the street committee to watch for criminals. If there is an accused then a people's court is set up. Anyone can be involved. Normally 20 to 30 people are there when it meets. You have to understand this from the traditional point of view. People in the community must judge others. You cannot look at it from a white point of view.

But if you are an accused and want to prove your innocence, can you appeal?

Yes, accused can bring as many witnesses as they like. The point is to rehabilitate a person. The court of appeal meets every Sunday. We do not intend to destroy a person.

What do you mean by rehabilitation?

We want to educate people about struggle and get the lumps out of the community. Since November the people have lost confidence in government-created institutions and are turning towards themselves so that they can achieve total liberation.

What is 'total liberation'?

Once you cut the confidence of the people in government-created institutions, they become confident in the people and feel that the government is doing nothing for them. Then they will demand independence from the government structures and self-responsibility, and begin to provide for themselves. People will learn about their rights and when they get liberation they will be used to exercising them.

What do you mean by the term 'lump'?

These are the 'unwanted elements' - the people who get involved in anti-social activities and use the struggle - they are the people who carry out crimes in the name of the struggle.

Unwanted elements are also the sell-outs who support the system, and the neutral people who are in-between. If there is one sell-out then ten people suffer. These elements must now be punished and it is up to us, the youth, to do this. The struggle depends on us.

We are in a difficult stage of liberation and we sometimes have to coerce people for their own good. It is better to suffer for a short time and then be free after.

What about MAYO's Disciplinary Committees?

These were formed after November. They are part of the clean-up campaign and linked to MAYO. They are like a wing of MAYO, used to maintain order and discipline. We are trying to set up branches in every section of Mamelodi. Each branch will have ten elected members. We want to show the people which line to follow in politics and to know their rights.

In your constitution you say that the objective of the DCs is to 'mobilise and organise and educate our people on the importance of being in the struggle and to promote a spirit of patriotism'. What does this involve?

We are trying to discipline the people. During the consumer boycott we first issued pamphlets to tell people to stop buying - and then if they continued buying we then took their food away to the old-age home. We want people to feel the struggle. This is the spirit of patriotism. Some people are in the struggle but they do not have the feelings of the struggle.

What are these 'feelings'?

Feelings are knowing your rights and what you deserve as a human being and what one can achieve. There is unemployment and no housing - the people have got to learn to fight this. The DCs also aim to respect our elders, to organise them and make them work in harmony with the youth, and persuade them to join civic bodies and action committees.

There is concern that groups like the DCs take the law into their own hands and perpetrate unjust and violent crimes against some of the residents of the townships. How do you respond to this?

If the state says that we are taking the law into our own hands, and if they do not want us to do this, then they should attend to the demands of the people. The

system is not doing anything for us - the state lets murderers out of jail if they have killed a political person, and detains young children for being part of the struggle for their rights.

Would you punish people through burnings?

We do not encourage this, and state so in the constitution. It is not promoted by the committee but sometimes this happens in the community. It is an example. People have to be judged.

But burning a person is not rehabilitating him.

We do not do this, but sometimes things like this happen. The acts are not criminal, they are punishments and judgements by the people.

In your constitution you lay great emphasis on protecting members of the community, eliminating hooliganism and 'thuggerism'. But if such elements are produced by the system, is it fair to punish them?

We know that the system creates these people, but they are crippling the struggle and should rather take their actions into other areas and not cripple the people of the townships.



SHAPING THE FUTURE? 

The Mamelodi activists interviewed were students or unemployed. They projected purpose, urgency and a sense of responsibility. They spoke of 'the struggle' with idealism. They want desperately to live in a liberated society, though they are not very clear as to what it would look like.

They want to free their parents from hardship, and refer repeatedly to high rents, poverty, unemployment and the struggle to survive. They say their major success is the support they have won from their parents. This was confirmed by reliable adult sources, who also said that the street committees, disciplinary campaigns and people's courts are widespread. It was also stated that these have helped control

crime, and have led to the resignation of a number of policemen.

The youths' sense of urgency is reflected in their actions. Punishment meted out to so-called unwanted elements is harsh, arbitrary and open to abuse. There have been attempted burnings by unknown people, and reports of people who have sustained serious injuries from beatings. One disciplinary committee constitution sets out punishments of up to 25 lashes with a light, short sjambok. Suggested penalties for offenders include 15 lashes for rape, 25 lashes for stabbing or 'robbery in the name of the struggle', and five lashes for disrespect shown to teachers.

Their activities take place within organisational structures which are not clearly defined. It was very difficult to find out how groups were organised internally, or how the decisions to punish offenders were taken. But to some extent this reticence may result from the semi-clandestine nature of these groups.

The tendency towards coercion and violence has generated much controversy, but not much public discussion or analysis of the background to actions, how these are perceived by the community, and their effects. Other community sources acknowledge an important educative component in the youth's activities. They print pamphlets, publicise campaigns and have played an important role in organising mass resistance in stayaways and boycotts.

National political organisations often fail to grasp the present role and potential of grassroots forms of control and political activity, as exemplified in Mamelodi. In some cases all their activities are uncritically accepted, on the grounds that what is done in the name of the struggle can only be good.

But such grassroots activities raise questions as to whether national political organisations will be able to channel positive initiatives and discipline negative ones. As yet there is little evidence of this. On the other hand, it is no longer meaningful merely to see such youth initiatives as motivated by 'nihilism', as a South African Institute of Race Relations researcher recently remarked. Attempts to control crime and reorganise aspects of township life are more than mere defiance. The question is: are they the beginning of a grassroots vision of a new society?

Community and Council

The march on 21 November, which so many Mamelodi residents see as a turning point, was a consequence of local grievances about rents and tariffs, as well as demands for troops out of the townships and an end to restrictions on weekend funerals.

In July 1985, the town council announced that electricity and water tariffs would not be raised, in view of the economic climate. But between July and November residents' rent and tariff accounts reflected increases which fluctuated from month to month.

This caused anger and confusion. The council claimed that fluctuating amounts were caused by a faulty computer system, and by the fact that the council was forced to charge on the basis of past averages, since unrest prevented the municipality from getting around the township to read meters.

After the deaths on 21 November, attitudes hardened. Mamelodi residents decided to go on a rent strike. The strike seems to be widespread, and the council is using both propaganda and bureaucratic pressure in an attempt to stop it. The latter tactic includes evicting tenants, and refusing to register births, deaths and marriages until rent is paid.

One result of the strike is a shortage of council funds: some residents allege that the council was forced to borrow funds from the Central Transvaal Development Board in December and January. But the council has always had financial problems. After the 1983 elections, the Department of Co-operation and Development did not hand over township liquor outlets to the council, but sold them off to private individuals. The local authorities thus lost a central source of income.



EARLY RENT AND HOUSING STRUGGLES

In a sense, Mamelodi reflects in microcosm the stresses of apartheid. When the Group Areas Act was introduced in 1950, the Pretoria City Council bought up the 'black spots' of Lady Selbourne, Eastwood and Riverside which had been proclaimed 'white' areas. The Non-European Affairs Department of Pretoria City Council then developed the township to accommodate the African populations of these 'black spots'. From 1953 Africans were forcibly moved to Mamelodi and today the township has a population of over 118 000.

Grievances about accommodation are

a continuous theme in the lives of Mamelodi residents. In the mid-1950s landlords who moved from the 'black spots' were promised compensation, which they never received. The township has always had a large housing backlog, with high rents and tariffs. In 1968 the state froze housing construction, a tactic designed to prevent permanent African urbanisation. Over 4 606 heads of families have been on the waiting list for accommodation since 1976, with no result.

Mamelodi's electricity and water tariffs, too, have always been higher than the average in other townships, because the services are bought through the Pretoria City Council rather than directly from Escom and the Rand Water Board. This means that an extra levy is charged for administration.

The leasehold system is also a source of discontent. In the 1950s some residents bought houses on 30-year leases when Mamelodi was officially a 'temporary' residential area, from which people would be relocated to the bantustans. Then 99-year leases were introduced in 1981 as part of a strategy to make Mamelodi a township with a permanent urban elite. Thirty-year leaseholders protested at paying the additional costs required to convert to 99-year leases. They were ultimately offered their houses at half-price, while those taking new 99-year leases paid the full price. By 1984 only 201 houses had been sold under the 99-year

leasehold scheme, 7 732 under 30-year leasehold scheme and 5 554 are rented.

In February 1986 the Family Housing Association announced a private sector housing scheme to be called Mamelodi Gardens. It proposes to provide homes for 6 500 people. But it appears that this project will cater to a higher income group and will not resolve the housing backlog, as many will not afford this new accommodation. A lower-income housing project is in the pipeline, but has not yet materialised. Nonetheless, the town council has negotiated an increase in land allocated to the township, which will increase by half.

THE TOWN COUNCIL

Unlike those in other townships, the Mamelodi council initially enjoyed some support, although in recent months much of it seems to have disappeared. The community council's initial popular legitimacy in the period before the 1983 elections was a result of the active opposition of the Vukani Vulamehlo People's Party (VVPP).

Formed in 1980 by Bennett Ndlazi, the VVPP's pre-1983 election campaign was based on a promise to solve the housing backlog. It also called for lowered rents and tariffs and more low-income housing. The VVPP gained support through criticising the 99-year leasehold scheme, and was also involved in organising against the administration board's decision to remove backyard shacks and prefabricated dwellings in 1982. These housed tenants or married dependents of householders.

In 1983 the VVPP supported 200 residents who took legal action to prevent the Central Transvaal Administration Board from removing married dependents of householders from house files until other accommodation was found.

Prior to its participation in the 1983 elections, the VVPP constantly attacked the council through party leader Ndlazi, who was a council member. It called for investigation into alleged irregularities in granting business licences. In 1981 it drew up a petition to the Department of Co-operation and Development protesting the announcement that elections for the town council had been postponed, and it called for a boycott of Mamelodi's 30th anniversary celebrations in 1983.

But once it had won the 1983 town council election, the VVPP found itself unable to prevent rising rents and tariffs. After the promulgation of the Black Local Authorities Act, the VVPP council called a meeting of residents to explain that it had to increase rents by R15 to support various infrastructural projects. This was however met by widespread protest, and the council agreed to reduce the increase to R9.

The VVPP's history of protest may explain Mamelodi's percentage poll in the 1983 elections of 27,79%, high in comparison with other Reef townships. However the fact that the poll was not higher must be attributed to the forceful boycott campaign waged by the UDF through its affiliate, the Mamelodi Action Committee. COSAS was also active in promoting the election boycott, and was particularly critical of the VVPP for its engagement in the system.

At the time the VVPP seemed sincerely committed to revitalising the community council. It believed that the councils, by allowing development of greater local autonomy, would make it possible to fight for African representation in parliament. In view of subsequent developments in Mamelodi, this appears a grievous miscalculation.

Worker Politics and the Popular Movement

Transformation politics raises the question of the relationship between popular and working-class movements. DUNCAN INNES considers whether the Freedom Charter offers a basis for unity between the two, and discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the workers' movement.

Activists in the liberation struggle have long debated the relationship between its two most powerful forces: the popular and working-class movements. The debate revolves around several questions: to what extent are the interests of these two movements compatible or in conflict? If they unite, how should they be linked? If the latter, then on what terms?

In light of this debate, a critical consideration of the Freedom Charter is well overdue. It is necessary to consider limitations inherent in the document, and whether it inhibits development of a working-class political movement. Equally important is a consideration of why the working-class movement has not yet taken a leading role in the liberation struggle, and whether this can be changed.

Several recent articles dealing with these questions attempt to shift debate about the progress of the liberation struggle from the narrow confines of past discussions, which depended on static and often divisive concepts. Alec Erwin's article 'The Question of Unity in the Struggle' (SALB, 11[1], 1985), Jeremy Cronin's reply (SALB, 11[3], 1986), my own article 'The Freedom Charter and Workers Control' (SALB, 11[2], 1985) and Bob Fine's 'The Freedom Charter: A Critical Appreciation' (SALB, 11[3], 1986) all indicate willingness to break new theoretical ground. This development encourages debate and criticism on key issues, while those involved remain committed to working towards broad unity in struggle.

THE ERWIN-CRONIN DEBATE

Erwin and Cronin's articles consider the relationship between what Erwin terms on the one hand 'liberation politics' and on the other 'transformation politics' within the liberation struggle.

Liberation politics, which includes national defence, nation-building and populism, can be equated broadly with the politics of the popular movement. Transformation politics, which is necessary to secure the interests of the working class (including the rural proletariat) in a future society, embraces the politics of the working-class movement. Thus while the popular movement seeks an end to apartheid without necessarily transforming the social relations of production, the working-class movement, though also seeking an end to apartheid, regards the transformation of relations of production as crucial to the liberation struggle.

Erwin argues that the unity demanded by liberation politics means that issues fundamental to transformation politics - in particular the need for an economic programme serving the interests of the working class - tend to be excluded. He states that 'the nature of the unity forged in liberation politics of the form of nation defence, nation-building and populism suppress (sic) class interests and transformation problems'.

Cronin disputes this, maintaining that Erwin's emphasis on the 'antagonistic' relationship between 'these two forms of struggle' is misplaced. He sees a more

harmonious and even evolutionary relationship between the two: "Transformation politics" can, and has emerged (sic) from the impetus of "liberation politics". They do not belong to two irreconcilable tracks, forever presenting us with a dilemma'. Thus while Erwin believes liberation politics places obstacles in the path of transformation politics, Cronin regards liberation politics as contributing to the development of transformation politics. In an attempt to resolve this issue, both authors move beyond previous explanations.

Erwin points out that in the past 'the usual way' of resolving this issue was to posit 'a two-stage argument' in which the first stage of struggle challenged 'the oppressive and anti-democratic regime' and the second stage created 'economic equality, production and consumption'. He clearly rejects this, as does Cronin, who points out that 'in dealing with the South African struggle, Erwin correctly queries the validity of the "usual two-stage argument"'. With the two-stage argument disposed of, both authors can broach the important issue of how to develop transformation politics within the current liberation struggle.

Cronin's brief critique of workerism and populism gets to the heart of the matter: 'Workerism, while correctly calling for the leading role of the working class, fails to see that this leadership must be exercised on all fronts of the struggle, and not just in narrow "p working-class, shop-floor issues. Likewise populism, while correctly emphasising the need for maximum popular unity against a reactionary regime, mistakes the common factors that unite classes and strata for a simple identity of interest'.

Cronin envisages liberation and transformation politics merging, firstly by openly raising the issue of transformation within 'all progressive organisations', and secondly by 'deepening mass-based democracy in all sectors (labour, civic, student, youth, women, sports, etc). This means developing the collective character of decision-making, tightening up on discipline, and on accountability of leadership. Deepening democracy is in principle an important means to ensuring greater working-class participation, responsibility and leadership within our struggle'.

If Erwin's description of what constitutes transformation politics is similar to Cronin's, his approach is rather different and more problematic. For instance, in explaining transformation politics, he draws his non-military examples exclusively from 'the independent shopfloor-based unions'.

He then attempts to go further and draw from them 'more general principles' applicable to other areas of society, such as 'cultural activity, health, education, engineering, science, administration, technology'. But this generalisation does not entirely eradicate the dangers of syndicalism and economism inherent in his discussion.

Syndicalism is based on the view that capitalist power relations derive from the economy. Politics, law, culture and ideology are seen as subordinate to economic relations. Syndicalism emphasises direct working-class action at an economic level (particularly in the workplace and through the mass strike), in the belief that this will be sufficient to bring about the collapse of the state.

Erwin's argument borders on syndicalism, first in his emphasis on shopfloor activity as the main area of transformation politics; and second, in his direct generalisations from the shopfloor to the rest of society, as if there are no important differences between the spheres of capitalist society. But these do exist, and must be specified before meaningful generalisations can be made.

Economism is a theoretical approach which reduces fundamental social contradictions to economic forms or relations, either directly, or indirectly by asserting their determinance 'in the last instance'.

The danger of economism lies in Erwin's basic theoretical assumption. Early in his article he refers to 'the conditions for an alliance of classes whose economic interests differ but who find common cause against the regime'. But surely antagonistic classes in capitalist society differ not only as to their 'economic interests', but over non-economic issues too - such as the form of the state, the nature of democracy in society, or control of the police and military?

Since Erwin incorrectly locates major class differences in purely economic terms, his subsequent analysis of what

constitutes transformation politics is largely confined to examining economic issues which concern workers, rather than embracing wider social and political issues.

For instance, he points out that liberation politics does not raise the issue of an economic programme serving workers' interests. Why focus just on the economic programme? What about the form of state? Though he does raise some wider issues subsequently, the way in which he does so, as mentioned above, is wrong.

However, these problems do not invalidate the central thrust of Erwin's argument: that liberation politics has at times constrained the emergence of specifically working-class issues within the liberation struggle. Cronin's counter-argument - that the antagonistic relationship between liberation and transformation politics is 'a dilemma more of Erwin's own making' than a reality - seems to me wrongly to deny a good deal of world history. The dilemma cannot be glossed over so easily. One thinks of the course of liberation struggles in Spain, Greece or Chile, for example, where the interests and demands of the working class were sacrificed to promote (unsuccessfully) a broad-based popular unity against oppressive powers. Erwin is right to draw attention to this problem in the South African context.

However, these debates can never be resolved finally at a theoretical level. Ultimate resolution will occur only through organisational practice and activity. An examination of the Freedom Charter, a document endorsed by a range of active political organisations, and of the strengths and weaknesses of the workers' movement, may throw some light on Erwin and Cronin's dilemma.

THE FREEDOM CHARTER AND THE POPULAR MOVEMENT

The popular movement emerged during the 1950s as the major force in the liberation struggle with the Freedom Charter as its standard. Undoubtedly its capacity to mobilise people against apartheid was a major achievement, but the movement was not without its problems.

Fine points out that when the Charter was formulated, trade unionists were

unhappy, as it offered little in the way of a workers' vision of a future South Africa. Equally, demands put forward by the Women's Federation were never included in the final draft of the Charter. Thus, though it was a significant statement of popular principles, important sections of the popular movement felt that it fell short of their aspirations.

The workers' movement was most dissatisfied with the clause on nationalisation of mines and industries which did not mention workers' control.

Certainly, nationalisation as such is not necessarily in workers' interests. Sasol, a South African nationalised company, arbitrarily sacked 7 000 workers for supporting the November 1984 stayaway. Likewise the SA Transport Services refuses to negotiate with the General Workers Union, which represents the majority of its workers in the Eastern Cape. And in England, management of the nationalised coal mining industry took a year to crush the National Union of Mineworkers, which was trying to save jobs under the threat of pit closure.

Only when nationalisation is linked to democratic worker control of nationalised industries can workers' interests be safeguarded.

The Charter's demands for land reform are equally limited. Its demand to end racial restrictions on land ownership is progressive. But the key question for a future South Africa is not whether racial ownership of land should be abolished - we all know it must - but on what basis redivision of land will take place.

The Charter only states that 'all the land (shall be) redivided among those who work it'. This is too vague to be meaningful and does not clarify whether redivision will be on socialist lines, that is, collective or communal ownership, or along capitalist lines, that is, private ownership.

Given the strategy of the popular movement at the time, one cannot expect the Charter to be anything but silent on these issues. The document was a standard around which many classes and groups rallied. If it had declared its aim to be capitalist nationalisation and private ownership of land, it would have alienated progressive sections of the working classes. Similarly if it had declared itself in favour of worker control of industry and collective ownership of land, it would have

alienated large sections of the middle classes. Even today the Charter's silence on key issues enables sections of both the middle and working classes to support it.

But this hinders critical evaluation of the Charter's goals. Such ongoing evaluation is crucial to the progress of liberation. Without it, organisations tend to resort to sloganeering and pay mere lip-service to its goals.

The Charter's inadequacies extend beyond the issue of capitalism versus socialism, to its portrayal of democratic ideals.

It proclaims that 'the people shall govern', but its subsequent political demands do not necessarily ensure this. It states that 'every man and woman shall have the right to vote for and stand as a candidate for all bodies which make laws'. But what will happen after we have voted for our representatives? Will we elect them, as happens in most capitalist democracies, to sit in parliament for five years and do as they like? Or will they be directly accountable to their electorate in an ongoing way, and subject to immediate recall if they fail to carry out their promises? The Charter does not tell us.

'All shall have the right to organise'. But how? Will we have the right to organise our own independent political parties? Or will we be told that this divides the people?

'The police force and the army', the Charter says, 'shall be open to all on an equal basis'. Is this enough? That the police and army are open to all races does not ensure they will not still be used against all sections of the people - and especially against workers who might want to strike in a post-apartheid society.

Though the Charter proclaims that 'all who work shall be free to form trade unions', it is strangely silent as to whether these unions shall have the right to strike and picket. Nor does it mention whether these unions will have the right to affiliate to political organisations of their choice.

Certainly the Freedom Charter was - and still is - a progressive document. But its many omissions and vague notions impose serious limitations on the development of the South African working-class movement. A working-class vision of the future demands more than the Charter offers.

This analysis supports Erwin's main argument that liberation politics tends to exclude issues fundamental to transformation politics. The Freedom Charter, as it stands, makes only a limited contribution to transformation politics in South Africa because it excludes such vital issues as worker control, forms of land ownership, the right to strike and democratic accountability. If, as Erwin suggests, the imperative of unity may deny us the right to criticise - and even move beyond - the Charter, then it becomes an obstacle to transformation.

But criticism of liberation politics and the popular movement must not blind us to the many shortcomings within the workers' movement. If we look critically at the popular movement, we must apply the same standards to the workers' movement.

THE WORKERS' MOVEMENT

Several questions emerge from the previous discussion. If the working-class movement can move beyond the Freedom Charter, why has it not put forward its own statement of demands - its own workers' charter? Why, if the working class is so advanced, have the Charterists returned to predominance in the last few years? Why has the working-class movement not taken a leadership role in the liberation struggle? To explore these questions we must look briefly at the movement's history over the past 13 years.

When the working-class movement re-emerged from the mass strikes of 1973, it did so specifically as a trade union movement mobilising around wages and working conditions. While no true working-class movement can afford to neglect these issues, neither can it confine itself to them. It must engage in the spheres of politics and the community too.

Here the early unions were cautious. Many union leaders recalled the fate of the SA Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), a Congress Alliance affiliate, which finally collapsed inside the country under state pressure. Rightly or wrongly they felt that to enter directly into politics, as SACTU had done, would be a mistake: first it was necessary to build a strong base on the shopfloor and then

unions could contemplate political activity.

This strategy, which clearly suffers from an economistic and syndicalist bias, enabled the unions to develop a remarkably solid power base in the economy, but also had its problems.

The first major indication of its shortcomings occurred during the student uprising in 1976. In the face of the

right to strike.

Thus, while this strategy may well have protected the working-class movement when it was weak, it also limited its political growth and helped create divisions between the trade union movement and the community.

The development of the working-class movement has also been limited by sectionalism, where the interests of a



If the working-class movement is to move beyond the Freedom Charter, it must put forward its own statement of demands.

state's brutal and systematic assault on students, most black unions did nothing. Again, when unrest swept across the country in 1980, most unions were not involved. The blame for this inaction rests not only with the workers' movement, but with the student movement too. The result was an unfortunate breach between trade unions and the community - a breach only now being overcome.

The strategy also inhibited the growth of a radical political consciousness among workers. Thus today thousands of workers, particularly in Natal, are at once equally staunch union and Inkatha members. Lack of political awareness has also led many union members to think that the Freedom Charter will liberate them from capitalist oppression - when in fact it does not even give them the

particular section of the working-class movement predominate over the interests of others or of the working class as a whole.

Last year, at the time of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) wage dispute, workers from all the major mining houses united against the Chamber of Mines - until the Chamber itself split. Workers in Anglo American, Barlow Rand and JCI received wage increases. Those employed by Gencor and Gold Fields did not receive an equivalent increase, went out on strike and were defeated. The former group of mineworkers, who had promised supportive strike action, did nothing.

More recently, when Impala Platinum sacked over 20 000 workers, there was no significant solidarity action from workers elsewhere. Even NUM, though prepared to march on Pollsmoor Prison to

hand Nelson Mandela his NUM membership card, has not attempted to organise a march on Impala Platinum.

The Thatcher government exploited the British unions' tendency towards economism and sectionalism to bring the trade union movement to its knees. The miners' union fought for a year to protect members' jobs, while the rest of the trade union movement stood by and watched its gradual defeat. When the government seized the union's assets, no other union offered support; most argued that the government had acted within the law.

Sectionalism is to an extent understandable. The working-class movement grows slowly and in a piecemeal way. It takes time to forge a united movement. COSATU's formation makes possible the beginning of greater formal unity among unionised workers, but much work remains to be done. Real unity must be consolidated, and links forged with other union groupings, while the task of unionising the unorganised continues.

Increased working contact between unions and popular organisations may contribute to extending workers' interests beyond the union sphere. Arguably, the more difficult task is to advance workers' positions within the ranks of popular organisations without succumbing to the lure of populism. Workers, and those who identify with them, have no natural immunity to populism.

THE WAY FORWARD

For the liberation struggle to advance, popular and workers' movements must work more closely together on terms satisfactory to each. The Freedom Charter is an inadequate basis for such unity, since it falls short of goals which are fundamental to the workers' movement.

At the moment it is also unclear precisely what the South African working class demands for the future, since no systematic statement of its demands exists. Demands put forward to date, while often expressing anti-capitalist views (for instance, the 1985 May Day demand for no taxation under capitalism), do not offer a coherent alternative.

I agree with Erwin and Cronin that important developments are occurring within the sphere of transformation politics in South Africa. These include discussions over worker control of factories and pressure on black traders not to take advantage of the consumer boycott and raise prices. But until such developments are combined in a coherent form which the workers' movement can use as a basis for mobilising and linking up with others, their usefulness is limited. The workers' movement cannot tackle the transformation of relations of production in a piecemeal way. It must devise a clear programme, possibly a workers' charter to undertake this task successfully. In the process, it must rid itself of the misdirected strategies of economism, sectionalism and populism.

Defining Working-Class Politics

Many progressive organisations express commitment to working-class leadership in the struggle for social transformation. But there is little clarity over what this means. KAREN JOCHELSON, GLENN MOSS and INGRID OBERY discuss the question of working-class politics.

Most mass-based organisations agree that the working class should lead political opposition to apartheid. But there is little agreement on what this means in practise.

Organisations with vastly different programmes and policies express commitment to working-class leadership. The United Democratic Front, for example, is an alliance of classes. Yet at its August 1983 national launch, the national conference expressed its belief in 'the leadership of the working class in the democratic struggle for freedom'.

The UDF's first national publicity secretary, 'Terror' Lekota, told WIP in a 1984 interview that it was 'vital that the working class play a central role' in the struggle. And Sydney Mafumadi, general secretary of the UDF-affiliated General and Allied Workers Union, and currently both a UDF and COSATU official, told WIP in 1984 that the UDF was 'involved in a national democratic struggle wherein we put special emphasis on the leadership role which has to be played by the working class'.

At the Kabwe consultative congress last year, the ANC reiterated that the working class is the backbone and leader of the national liberation struggle.

And the ANC's two organisational allies, the SA Communist Party and SA Congress of Trade Unions, have always stressed the centrality of the working class in national liberation politics.

Outside of the Congress political tradition, groups like the National Forum, the Cape Action League and AZAPO express similar sentiments. They favour a socialist alternative in South Africa, based on a full commitment to the leadership of the working class.

In a resolution the National Forum noted that 'the black working class is

the vanguard of the just struggle towards total liberation from racist capitalism'. A principle of the Forum's Azanian Manifesto is 'independent working-class organisation' and it states: 'The black working class inspired by revolutionary consciousness is the driving force of our struggle. They alone can end the system as it stands today'.

Most progressive trade unions have expressed commitment to working-class leadership in both economic and political struggle. COSATU's constitution states that a 'united, democratic South Africa, free of oppression and economic exploitation... can only be achieved under the leadership of a united working class'.

But despite this common commitment, there are a number of unanswered questions in debates on working-class politics and leadership:

- * what is the working class?
- * why is this class important in political struggle?
- * what are working-class interests and issues?
- * what makes working-class politics different from the politics of other classes?
- * what is the relationship between trade union organisation and working-class politics?

WHAT IS THE WORKING CLASS?

The meaning of working-class politics and leadership depends on the definition of the working class. For example, if all blacks are seen as workers, then it can be argued that any exclusively black

opposition organisation is led by the working class.

But defining the working class is not that simple. One tendency in national liberation politics sees the working class as a very wide interest group, which includes the unemployed, and the mothers, wives and children of workers. This suggests if almost all people subject to some form of political oppression are members of the working class, any organisation of the oppressed involves a working-class political initiative.

Socialist political thought, however, defines the working class more narrowly. While there is no precise agreement, most socialists argue that the working class is defined primarily by its members' relation to, and dependence on, wage labour. This involves the production, distribution and circulation of capitalist commodities, where the exploitation of wage labour enables capitalists to make a profit.

This definition includes unemployed workers who have been forced out of capitalist employment, but whose interests are still defined by their relation to wage labour. It also includes those involved in the domestic support of workers, who have the same primary interests. But the most important group in the working class is seen as that section which is employed in wage labour.

This has nothing to do with the 'inherent dignity of labour' or the moral righteousness of the exploited. Workers do not have a 'higher morality' than others nor are they necessarily 'better' or 'more progressive' individuals. But the section of the working class employed in wage labour has a primary interest in the abolition of capitalism and, as a result, social transformation based on a socialist programme.

THE WORKING CLASS IN POLITICAL STRUGGLE

Capitalism is based on the exploitation of labour of the employed working class. Its structure necessarily entails a conflict between two classes - capital and labour - and this conflict can only be resolved with the transformation of capitalist relations. The working-class's antagonistic relationship to

capitalism is different from the relationship of any other class or group to the capitalist way of organising the economy.

Peasants, the petty bourgeoisie, the lumpenproletariat, and intellectuals of all stamps may have their primary interests met within some variant of the capitalist system. Only the working class stands in direct and enduring opposition to the capitalist way of producing, distributing and circulating commodities, which is the foundation of bourgeois society.

The working class is the most important social force in political struggle. Not because there are more workers than other class members in South Africa. Indeed, there are more rural poor than employed workers.

Nor is it because the working class suffers greatest oppression. The permanently marginalised - people who will never find employment in capitalist wage labour, and who are forced to live on the fringes of both urban and rural society - may be more oppressed than employed workers.

The working class is also different from other groups affected by, for example, racism or national oppression because it can potentially develop enough power to transform society, to challenge the nature of both economic and social relations. This is not true for other classes or sections of classes acting independently of the working class.

The socialisation of labour - bringing together large numbers of workers in one factory - creates the conditions for forming class power. On the factory or shop floor, workers can develop forms of organisation which weld together individual interests, forming class forces far stronger than the power of groups of individuals. The class power created through this process is much stronger than the sum total of its individual members.

Socialised labour also creates conditions for collective decision-making and democratic structures which enhance working-class power. This is not true for other classes, for example the petty bourgeoisie, peasants, the lumpenproletariat or permanently marginalised. Their conditions of existence entrench the process of individualisation, rather than socialisation. So they have only limited potential to create democratic class

power, which can only take on a progressive form under the guidance of working-class leadership.

WORKING-CLASS INTERESTS

There is no 'ideal' model of working-class politics against which existing structures and programmes can be compared and assessed. The idea of 'working-class politics' suggests a class with its own instinctive political practices and interests. But the working class does not exist only on the factory or shop floor. Nor does it exist in any 'pure' form unaffected by issues of race, ethnicity, and national oppression.

This suggests that, apart from the very general interest in the overthrow of capitalist relations, working class interests are defined by specific historical situations. What might, in one time and place, be in the interests

struggles necessarily reflect working-class interests and politics. But working-class politics means more than the numerical presence of workers in an organisation.

Over the past few years there have been numerous struggles in black communities over rents, housing, transport and schooling. These struggles clearly affect workers. But whether they advanced working-class interests depends on how the issue was organised, what form organisation took, and the nature of democratic practice in organisations leading the particular struggle.

WORKING-CLASS POLITICS

Working-class leadership and politics has been interpreted differently over the years. Some situations where it has been claimed are:

- * where more workers than other class members are involved in an organisation,



Working class campaigns - defined by specific historical situations.

of the working class, could in another context support petty-bourgeois interests against workers. This is why the question of working-class politics in South Africa is so difficult.

It is sometimes argued that because the majority of residents in black communities are workers, community

or affected by an issue;

- * where organisation and activity aims at socialist or communist alternatives to capitalist society;

- * where issues struggled over affect workers, from higher wages to lower rents;

- * where workers are in control of an

organisation, for example a trade union, through democratic structures, and accountable and mandated leadership;

* where a vanguard political party acts in the name of the working class;

* where workers, organised into trade unions, act politically through their union or union federation;

* where there is a mass-based political party, professing to advance worker interests.

Many people are confident that the formation of COSATU has placed working-class politics firmly on the South African political agenda (see for example WIP 40). This implies that at the current historical moment in South Africa, working-class politics is best expressed either through trade unions, or in the developing relationship between trade unions and national liberation, political and community organisations. The form of this relationship is crucial since the fact of COSATU's presence does not automatically advance working-class political interests. This problem has been the subject of a century of socialist debate and is as yet unsolved.

Trade unions have sometimes been labelled inherently reformist and economistic. While expressing the capital-labour conflict on the factory floor, they can never overcome this conflict. Socialists at the turn of the century argued that trade unions could at most express and develop an economistic and reformist consciousness amongst the working class. A revolutionary consciousness, aimed at the total transformation of capitalist society, could only be developed by a political party (mass-based or vanguard).

This debate cannot be ignored by progressives. Some people claim trade unions can function as working-class political parties, others that trade unions can influence national-democratic politics along working-class lines. These positions must be demonstrated, not merely asserted.

These are difficult but crucial issues for all progressive initiatives. The fact that this discussion has reached few conclusions indicates the seriousness and complexity of the questions involved.

One key question - unanswered and unresolved - is what makes working-class politics different from other forms of politics? What are its specific

features? It does not just involve the number of workers affected by, or involved in, an issue. Neither is there an automatic relationship between a programme's contents and its working-class nature. There are some issues and programmes which can never be the subject of working-class politics, but there are many others which can only be assessed in the the specific practices and context of a period.

CREATING MASS POWER

The form in which organisation and practice takes place is crucial in defining working-class politics. If working-class politics is a process of socialist transformation through the creation of popular power, then transformation involves more than the seizure of existing state power. The process of creating power demands a change in the popular experience and understanding of reality through mass-based democratically-organised struggles and conflicts at all levels of society, which contest all power relations.

Democratic political practice is a means of creating mass power. It must be the basis of a new politics where collective power becomes a lived reality. But collective power must be based on democratic principles which include collective responsibility and solidarity, non-hierarchical and anti-authoritarian forms of organisation, breaking down power relations based on access to intellectual and technical skills, and leadership action based on clearly-defined membership mandates.

Democracy then becomes a precondition for creating power, not just an end goal or abstract moral good. This includes representatives' accountability and responsibility to membership, clear and limited mandates, and the right of membership or constituency to recall and replace representatives.

All these questions of organisational form are based on a defined unit of organisation, a constituency with a structured relationship to an organ of potential power. This probably involves a formal membership base. Without this, questions of democracy and the creation of mass power become abstract for the majority of those oppressed under capitalist relations.

Conflict in the Mining Industry

Increasing conflict on the mines reflects growing political militancy as well as the current political turmoil in South Africa. PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK and JEAN LEGER document mine conflict in the first three months of 1986.

Since the end of 1985 there has been an extraordinary upsurge of worker militancy in the mining industry. More than 100 000 workers had been on strike by mid-March 1986. According to recently released Chamber of Mines figures, gold production declined in the first two months of 1986 from 106 448 kilograms to 114 199 kilograms in the same period of 1985. 'While the full decline cannot be blamed totally on labour troubles, certainly a large proportion can', stated a recent press report attributed to management sources.

No single pattern is evident but certain trends do emerge. These include: the current political mood in the townships penetrating the compounds; wage issues; conflicts between workers and clashes with the police or bantustan authorities. The conflicts have been characterised by more sophisticated worker strategies, taking up earlier issues and far lengthier, ongoing industrial action.

MINING DISPUTES SINCE JANUARY

1 January to 7 January: Strike by 30 000 workers at four Impala Platinum mines - Wildebeest North, Wildebeest South, Bafokeng North, Bafokeng South - in Bophuthatswana, near Rustenburg. The strike was over a number of grievances revolving around wages and recognition of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). Among the wage-linked issues was the demand that all workers fall under the same unemployment insurance benefits, and receive the UIF blue card. Because of Bophuthatswana's 'independence', migrant workers from

other 'independent' bantustans such as the Transkei are not entitled to UIF benefits. Workers from South Africa are covered by UIF.

The recognition issue was complicated by the fact that Bophuthatswana has banned South African-based trade unions in terms of its Industrial Conciliation Act. Management refused to deal with NUM, even though mining houses with mines in Bophuthatswana have negotiated deals with the all-white Mineworkers Union (MWU) at head office in Johannesburg.

Bophuthatswana's extremely stringent labour laws also meant greater management ease in firing 23 000 workers who refused to meet an ultimatum to return to work. The dismissals were followed by large-scale condemnation of Gencor, which owns Impala. Some 48 workers were arrested and are still facing public violence charges.

Before the stoppages on 1 January, worker representatives attempted to convey grievances to management. Despite several stoppages in December, days after the January strike began, management still claimed they were baffled about the strike's exact cause. It implied that workers did not know what they were striking about. Gencor's failure to communicate adequately with its staff, and its resort to mass firings, is a pattern in previous disputes involving the corporation. This attitude towards industrial relations could be seen as a cause of the strike.

Other issues which cropped up - there were 22 demands - made the Impala strike particularly significant. Workers demanded that all income tax be refunded ('within one week') and that white workers travel in the same lift-cage as blacks ('The cage of black and whites

must be one'). They demanded married quarters for black workers, since they could not see why white workers should live in different circumstances.

Both directly and indirectly the workers confronted management and the apartheid state. The demand for married quarters shows a clear and direct challenge to the migrant labour system.

6-9 January: Anglo American's SA Coal Estates. Members of NUM wanted 11 workers disciplined for trying to kill the local NUM shaft stewards committee chairman. The strike, involving 2 800 workers, ended after the 11 workers resigned. This action can be contrasted with the February strike at Vaal Reefs where workers demanded the release of nine workers arrested by police in connection with the deaths of four team leaders. Management found workers' support for these people 'inexplicable', arguing that they would not interfere with the rule of law.

8-9 January: A strike by 2 400 workers at Anglo American's Goedeboop Colliery near Witbank over the dismissal of a NUM shaft steward. The strike ended after management agreed to transfer rather than sack the shaft steward.

12 January: 1 000 workers at Anglo's Bank Colliery near Middelburg went on strike demanding the release of a colleague arrested after allegedly preventing people from entering a nearby shop. The shop was one of those being boycotted by workers in the area.

These three strikes in the Witbank-Middelburg area could be linked to the political climate which was heating up in the Eastern Transvaal at the time. The Bank strike, in particular, shows signs of the 'spill-over' effect - workers taking action over community issues.

16 January: About 3 000 striking workers at Foskor and the Phalaborwa Mining Corporation (PMC) clashed with Lebowa police in Namakgale township. At least one worker died, 18 were injured and a number were arrested. This strike was part of a chain of strikes which began in November 1984 after NUM general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa was detained by Lebowa authorities. Foskor fired 389 workers for downing tools in solidarity with Ramaphosa.

In December 1985, some 1 500 workers

were dismissed for striking in solidarity with the 389 whose case was being negotiated by NUM and management. On the first anniversary of the dismissals, employed workers felt the negotiations had gone on too long and demanded reinstatement. They were dismissed and staged a sit-in at their hostels. Here too, workers clashed with Lebowa police: ten were injured, two of them seriously. A large number of workers were finally reinstated.

The January strike involved the demand that five shaft stewards dismissed in the previous month's strike be reinstated. Workers also demanded an end to the victimisation of union members and mine security violence.

As in the Impala disputes, the Foskor and PMC strikes showed confrontation with the bantustan system. Namakgale is a militant township in the forefront of the current political turmoil in the Northern and Eastern Transvaal bantustans. The 'spill-over' of militancy from communities into the hostels is again evident.

19 January: Seven workers were killed and 88 injured in faction fighting between Zulus and Mpondos at Gold Fields' Kloof Mine near Westonaria. A strike following the fighting involved 2 000 workers. The exact cause of the fighting is unknown. It started outside the mine premises when a 'Zulu gang' allegedly harassed Mpondos on their way to a shebeen. It is unclear whether this clash was linked to the simultaneous fighting between Zulus and Mpondos in Umbumbulu on the Natal South Coast which left more than 100 dead.

19-26 January: Randfontein Estates on the West Rand. On Sunday 19 January, some 250 miners were dispersed during an 'illegal gathering'. Some 15 were injured and hospitalised. The next day two white policemen and about 10 black workers were killed as violence erupted near the mine when the police attempted to disperse a gathering of about 500 workers. Management had banned the meeting.

The violence followed more than a month of build up in tension, which began with a strike on 9 December when police killed a miner. The strike occurred during the height of the unrest in the nearby black townships of Kagiso and Munsieville. Miners had also begun a boycott of mine beerhalls.

More than 500 workers were fired and bussed out of the mine for allegedly being involved in the violence. JCI management said: 'This action was taken where we had clear evidence that those dismissed were involved in the incident or intended to cause further unrest'. Some 112 workers were charged with public violence and some are to face murder charges for the deaths of the two policemen.

These killings sparked a white backlash on the West Rand and other white miner strongholds such as Witbank. In nearby Krugersdorp white vigilantes reportedly drive around firing shots at black civilians. Several whites in the area are facing murder charges, and the Afrikaner Weerstand Beweging is rallying substantial support in the area. White miners in Witbank have threatened to arm themselves.

3 February: Consolidated Modderfontein. More than 1 500 workers staged a day-long stoppage in support of two dismissed shaft stewards. The strike ended with the dismissal of a further 72 workers. This could be an example of unsophisticated management. Modderfontein is a non-Chamber mine, and management statements at the time of the strike make it clear that they were not willing to allow unionisation of their workforce.

5 February onwards: Faction fighting at Anglo American's Western Deep Levels involving 4 000 workers left a number of workers dead. The fighting, between Mpondos and Sothos, involved control over illegal liquor sales, and echoed the catastrophic faction fights which occurred at Western Deep in 1973. These led to more than 200 deaths in the industry within ten years.

Widespread deaths on the mines since December last year reflect a period as turbulent as that which preceded unionisation in 1982. Industry sources suggest that one of the reasons for the Chamber's agreement to unionisation was the hope that this would limit faction fights. But it is patently obvious that the causes of faction fighting are much more deepseated than problems of communication.

Following the faction fights on the Free State Goldfields in mid-1985, Anglo American and NUM formed a joint commission of inquiry to establish causes and consider solutions to the

problem. Already NUM has attempted to address these problems. Its 1986 congress considered ways to oppose and remove the migrant labour and closed compound systems, which workers regard as the prime causes of faction fights.

7 February: Gold Fields' Venterspost Mine was the scene of clashes with mine police which left eight miners injured.

16 February: Several collieries in the Witbank area responded to a call from the community to heed a stayaway. Among these collieries were Anglo's SA Coal Estates and Rand Mines' Duvha Colliery. This was the clearest indication yet that isolated migrant worker communities have been touched by the turmoil in the country's townships.

Bobby Godsell, Anglo's industrial relations chief, said: 'Turbulence in the workplace is without doubt being affected by the turbulence being experienced in the black townships. On most of our mines there is a high level of natural interaction between the black townships and the hostels. What we started to see at the end of 1985 is a spilling over of turbulence from the townships into the workplace'.

But this implies that township issues do not apply in the mines. Increasing political activity in the compounds reflects a frustration with apartheid structures in the mining industry itself. It is not simply a spill-over from the townships.

In August 1985 NUM took an important step by openly moving into the political arena and addressing the issues such as the state of emergency and the state president's threat to repatriate foreign workers. The emergence of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in December further politicised the union scene. Political issues are likely to grow into an even bigger area of conflict as organisation extends.

19 February: At Matla Colliery near Witbank, 2 500 workers went on a one-day strike, demanding the reinstatement of six workers. At Gold Fields' Venterspost Mine, two miners were killed during clashes with police, prompting a strike the following day by 10 000 workers.

20 February: A fight at Vaal Reefs' East Number 5 Shaft left four team leaders dead. This sparked further turmoil at the mine. On the same day, 367 workers

at the Optima Colliery near Witbank went on strike.

24 February: Winterveld Chrome in the North-eastern Transvaal. Members of the United Metal and Mining Workers of South Africa (UMMAWOSA) returned to work after a week-long strike. The company obtained a court interdict restraining workers from threatening anyone or damaging property.

25 February: Rand Mines' Wolwekrans Colliery outside Witbank. More than 1 000 workers went on strike in protest against the hostel manager carrying a gun.

The strike reflected a growing racial animosity in industrial disputes. The behaviour of white hostel managers has increasingly been placed under scrutiny by workers and a number of strikes in recent months have centered around hostel managers.

The Wolwekrans workers went back to work after a day, but went out again after two days for a day's stoppage after the white manager was reinstated. On 4 March the workers struck for a third time.

There was also a strike at Goedehoop Colliery involving 1 500 workers on the same day.

25 February - 20 March: Vaal Reefs. On Tuesday 25 February, 12 000 workers at number 1, 2 and 5 shafts of Vaal Reefs East went on strike demanding the unconditional release of nine workers arrested in connection with the deaths on 18 February. The strike spread involving a total of 19 000 workers by the 27 February. Following the release of three of the workers and the persuasion of NUM, the 19 000 returned to work on 28 February.

Workers launched a go-slow on 6 March over the same issue and a host of fresh issues. Workers called for the reinstatement of those dismissed during the 1985 mass dismissals, the abolition of the induna system, removal of a hostel manager, and improvements to the shaft cages, toilets and change houses. In the longer term workers were demanding the abolition of job reservation, the removal of all discrimination, the provision of better protective clothing and the provision of full-time shaft stewards.

Management responded to workers who demanded to be hoisted to surface after four hours by closing the affected shafts. It demanded that each worker sign a form undertaking to work the correct hours and not participate in any illegal work stoppages.

As can be seen from the nature of the demands and the application of fresh tactics, the Vaal Reefs dispute represents a militant workforce not necessarily intimidated by mass dismissals. Although management obtained a supreme court injunction against striking workers they did not use it, indicating the strength of organised labour at the mine.

The climate of conflict on the mine has also produced faction fights in which 15 workers have died.

9 March: A sit in stoppage at Blyvooruitsigt began with the Sunday night shift and continued till Tuesday when management shut the entire mine. Workers were striking over a new production bonus introduced to some parts of the mine but not others, as a result of an earlier demand. In response to what workers regarded as a lockout, 1 200 miners on the Tuesday night shift continued their sit-in underground and stayed down for 36 hours. Conflict on the mine continued until the end of the week when 7 were killed in clashes with the police over the weekend.

11 March: At SA Coal Estates, Witbank, 2 000 miners went on strike again demanding the release of all 'comrades' detained during township unrest in the Witbank area. They called on management to send a telex to the Minister of Law and Order demanding the release of Clement Zulu, NUM's regional treasurer.

12-15 March: A total of 1 300 workers at Dreyrs Pan, De Beers Namaqualand, went on a go-slow, demanding paid leave over Easter. They went back the next day, but 1 000 workers at Kleinsee came out with the same demand. When the Kleinsee workers returned on 14 March, 1 500 workers went on a go-slow at Koningnaas, also in Namaqualand, before going back on 15 March. Workers won the right to take paid leave over Easter, but it was agreed that management would deduct a day's pay at the end of their contracts.

The UDF — 'A National Political Initiative'

In WIP 40, Richard de Villiers argued that the UDF acts as a political party, while structured as a broad front. At times, he suggested, the UDF was therefore undemocratic and directionless. GRAEME BLOCH, member of a Cape Town UDF-affiliate, and active in the UDF, replies in an open letter.

Dear Richard,

Your basic suggestions about the UDF are sound. There is no doubt the primary focus of the UDF in the present phase of struggle should be building and extending mass, democratic organisation, with the absolute priority of maximum participation and development of membership. Leadership must be directly accountable to and mandated by the base, as reflected in affiliate structures. This certainly requires 'tighter and more coherent strategies'.

These concerns come through in current attempts to build working-class control and leadership in the front. These issues are central to debate in the pages of the UDF theoretical journal, 'Isizwe', and are summed up in the slogan 'Forward to people's power'. They are the subject of ongoing discussion within affiliates and at various policy-making levels of the UDF, from national conference to local general council structures.

Practical results of these concerns are evident: in attempts to make executive structures more specialised and even 'professionalised' in relation to particular sites of activity (student women, youth etc); in mechanisms developed to ensure maximum consultation while maintaining a co-ordinated impetus of work under emergency conditions, lessons which will remain central to UDF style in the repressive environment that will continue in the phase ahead; in encouraging grassroots level initiative from affiliates. This will enable them to build on the substantial gains of the recent period and still maintain a powerful thrust towards achieving state power, which is of course the primary goal of our present struggle.

You need not be so defensive about the importance of criticism, although the pages of WIP are not necessarily the most appropriate forum. I hope too, that your criticisms have developed out of a thorough discussion within the affiliate of which you are a part.* Be that as it may, there is some confusion in the way you formulate your problems. I shall attempt to deal with these as best I can.

We need to understand the advantages and limitations of the front form of politics thoroughly. There are two starting-points for such an analysis: the concrete and changing situation on the ground; and the particular level of development of organisational structures that seek to intervene in this situation. It was an assessment of these that suggested the formation of a front, which could build on structures existing at the time of UDF's formation and at the same time allow strategic reactions and initiatives in relation to the political demands of a rapidly changing South Africa.

Unfortunately, your analysis does not really give us many clues as to either aspect. In other words there is not a clear political assessment forthcoming. The front was launched in a context where two factors had to be considered. One was the existence of a democratic movement based on organisations whose concerns were day-to-day community issues such as rents, child-care, corporal punishment at schools and a divided education system, high prices and unemployment. In all of these

* The ideas in Richard de Villiers' article (WIP 40) were based on extensive discussions within a UDF affiliate - eds.

struggles, 'economistic' as many of them were, the question of who makes decisions - of political power - was continuously thrown to the fore. Tentative as these advances were, they were sufficient to undermine the state's piecemeal attempts at reformist co-option as seen in the Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions. It was these popular struggles, although uneven and unco-ordinated, that forced the state to develop a centralised response. This touched the heart of the issues and sought to find a solution at the highest level.

Thus the second major factor was a state initiative to undercut the increasing democratic content of these demands - the launching of the tricameral parliament and the Koornhof Bills. This initiative threatened the very basis of non-racial unity. Its success would have had severe consequences for the liberation struggle in general. The people's response was to form the UDF: not merely to co-ordinate the activities of various affiliates, but to directly challenge at a political level a political initiative, and to do this at a national level where few affiliates extended beyond local areas.

Taking advantage of a space that the state itself had created, the front took its first steps on a plane that was new and untested. Let us merely note that subsequent campaigns (in particular the anti-election and anti-black local authorities) did more than subvert the goals of the Botha regime and big capital. They contributed in an unexpected and startling way to the political consciousness and determination of millions of people. Organisations formed in a particular context and structured to operate in a particular period, discovered that the masses were ready for action far beyond anything imagined.

The history of last year - massive uprisings, spontaneous power and creativity, as well as unbridled brutality from a directionless state - all required a response that was new, flexible, dynamic and organised. It was not the UDF that extended the boundaries of political activity, although it gave impetus and shape to this. Rather, pressure from the dominated classes drove the UDF forward.

There is no doubt these campaigns revealed key weaknesses. Affiliates undoubtedly emerged relatively battered

and it was clear the front had geared itself to mobilisation rather than solid organisation. Nonetheless these responses must be situated in the context of the historical demands of that initial period; and in the fact that criticism is not simply a matter of abstract critique but concrete understanding that grows out of the very real experience of struggle itself. The question was, did the approach of the front allow for the correction of errors that had developed?

Yes, this period taxed affiliate priorities and energies. Yes, it challenged the very mode of organising and structuring democratic forces. It meant difficult and confusing conditions and taking on tasks for which we were neither organisationally nor ideologically prepared. But most significantly, millions of new people demanded a place in the struggle.

Let us look at a few responses. In Port Elizabeth today, and significantly in many rural towns, street and area committees have emerged. They have structures which allow every resident to voice an opinion and act upon decisions. Consumer boycotts and stay-aways have been powerful and creative weapons. In the schools, the recent Soweto Parents' Crisis Committee initiatives signal the germ of people's control over education and the extension of student power despite the banning of the UDF's largest affiliate, COSAS.

Lastly, the worker-giant COSATU has been launched with a programme and priorities that go well beyond the limited mandates and immediate shop-floor concerns of earlier periods.

No doubt, being in Natal with its peculiarities and very specific complications, it may sometimes be difficult to understand the enormity of these advances. Yet they mark historical leaps of a national character. Let me deal with some examples you quote of so-called 'misdirected' UDF responses. The East London support campaign grew out of Sebe's direct assaults on a major UDF affiliate, SAAWU. Surely, the anti-Ciskei campaign was directly within the UDF's mandate and fell squarely within the decision to oppose artificial bantustan division, of which the Koornhof Bills were one manifestation?

Nor was the front acting 'like a political party', as you suggest. In Cape Town in fact, it was UDF-affiliated detainee support committees which first

focused attention on the need for an active response. They felt that, as relatively weak affiliates, they could not respond alone to the urgency of the situation. This opened further possibilities. Thus, the UDF tested its ability to generate a national response, it exposed locally and internationally Sabe's atrocities and it successfully created a breathing space for organisation to consolidate.

How else do we explain today, for example, the disciplined re-imposition of a 100% effective consumer boycott in East London? The very growth of the UDF Border region, which recently held a highly democratic and vibrant AGM, has much to do with the important successes of earlier UDF campaigns.

Your other examples (Ngoye and Natal Medical School) are far too vague. What was the state of UDF affiliates at the time? Indeed, how can you say the UDF took initiative from the hands of students, and in another breath argue that the Joint Staff Association should have led?

Looking around at the real depth of leadership in numerous sites today, and knowing the current UDF emphasis on education and training, I cannot accept that the UDF generally intervenes to leave organisations with 'few of the skills' to advance beyond a crisis. Your analysis lacks a sense of the dynamic of struggle, a dialectic that includes mistakes and rectification, but in a context where the masses themselves have experienced their capabilities and have chosen strategies in action.

Other constructive points you make get lost in a range of unsubstantiated accusations. You argue the UDF was formed to unite as many diverse opinions as possible (is that all?). This 'seemed sound in the political context' (why seemed?) and the UDF collected paper constituencies that have since collapsed.

The UDF 'chases after issues', it consistently acts outside its 'limited mandate'. There is little direction, little democratic discussion, too many hasty decisions and a leadership that rushes blindly all over the place. You argue that the UDF must 'limit its objectives: this is what its present structures dictate' (is it only structure which dictates our responses?).

This is heavy stuff, and not really very helpful. You begin to veer close to

platitudes, combined with a deep-seated pessimism. The consequence is a shopping-list approach to political issues, which neither helps us understand the front nor guides affiliates as to how to build their strength. The analysis just does not square with the requirements of the current phase of struggle and your solutions are too mechanical.

Democratic mandates, grassroots activity, the building of affiliates - on these, we do not have fundamental disagreement. But they are complex issues, and you fail to address this complexity. The front is more than the sum of its parts.

Does leadership not have a task of advancing understanding and capabilities of affiliates beyond their immediate limitations? At the very least, leadership is responsible for thorough and ongoing political assessment at a national level and for outlining a range of options and responses that may be fed back into the various affiliates. This does not grow spontaneously in a simple one-way fashion from the day-to-day concerns of affiliates, and at its ideal serves to enhance and give direction to their ongoing campaigns.

On the other hand, how limited in fact is the UDF mandate? UDF resolutions and policies decided at the 1985 National General Council, show democratic opinion on a range of issues, from imperialism to pass laws to working-class leadership. The question of mandates is not a simple and formal one. Within the wide scope of UDF policy, maximum consultation ensures a clear strategic and tactical understanding amongst the broadest possible membership. In many ways these are also practical and political issues. Their resolution needs to take into account the unevenness of various affiliates as well as the pressing tasks of the current political reality.

Further, if we approach questions in the purely formal way that you do, other issues become difficult to address. For example, must area structures, such as those in many parts of Cape Town, simply disband? What potentials do they have? How has the front been able to expand despite 'crippling blows' from the state?

Again, in the Western Cape, despite 1 300 detentions, a major anti-repression campaign over Christmas forced the release of nearly all detainees. Most

importantly, you ignore the real growth of deep-rooted and solidly-organised affiliates from De Aar to Cradock to Ratanda to Motjadidi.

If anything, it has been structure-bound older affiliates with outdated ways of working that have struggled most to adjust and absorb the lessons of these examples. A recent Cape Town UDF general council saw affiliates tackling precisely their own responsibilities and acknowledging that it is not only at the level of the front that adjustments are needed. How do affiliates become more inclusive, less activist-bound, more able to allocate tasks to working-class membership, and at the same time also develop the capacity for timely and creative initiative. The way forward is not a mechanical and formalistic list of preconditions for a party, counterposed to a set of rules for a front.

The front hardly has political parties as affiliates, yet it must act in the realm of politics. There have been profound transformations in the recent period. The state itself is weak and vulnerable, though far from defeated.

The front has helped advance many of the preconditions that you suggest would call for a party: politicised masses, grassroots organisation, frequent meetings and democratic policy on a range of issues.

Yet there are good reasons why UDF is not set to transform itself into a party structure. Some of these include: UDF's unwillingness to replace existing liberation movements that enjoy this status; unevenness amongst affiliates at regional and sector level; vulnerabilities to repression; and the

very real priority of extending mass democratic structures as the seeds of the future new society, where organs of people's government will be needed at all levels of the people's lives. In short, the extensive potential of the front form of politics has hardly begun to reach its limits.

There are many tensions and contradictions. How do we understand the present favourable conditions to extend and deepen our work? How do affiliates formulate strategies appropriate to this phase and enable mass, democratic organisation to flower on the fertile soil of our people's struggle?

History has marched with seven-league boots. We cannot get off and simply fall back on comfortable but formalistic rules. We need debate, criticism and analysis that gives content and shape to the demands of our liberation struggle. In particular, we must take slogans, which have grown out of the current reality and potentials, very seriously. We need to move forward to people's power.

Richard, I hope this reply creates a wider context for your problems. Your questions are useful and I certainly do not have the answers. But I do have the confidence that the UDF today, with its experience, its approach, its wealth of organisational capacity and loyal membership, and its vision, is well placed to take up the tasks and responsibilities that this difficult period entails.

Yours in the struggle

Graeme Bloch

ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES

Fourth-year architecture students at the University of Witwatersrand offer architectural services/assistance to community and development organisations. Phone Jennifer Sandler at (011) 648-0912 or write to PO Box 93540, Yeoville 2198.

Creating New Controls

In the second part of his examination of the President's Council report on urbanisation, DOUG HINDSON reviews its proposed changes in mechanisms to control african urbanisation.

Government intends to pursue an urbanisation strategy based substantially on the recommendations of the President's Council report on urbanisation. This was confirmed by President Botha in his address at the opening of parliament and by subsequent speeches and pronouncements inside and outside parliament. But government has also confirmed that it intends to retain the Group Areas Act, and hence residential apartheid, as the basis for this strategy.

The first part of this article (see WIP 40) focused on the way the PC's recommendations on 'orderly urbanisation' derive from and complement the state's new regional development strategy, with its regional and metropolitan levels of government. But the report also recommends changes in the direct means of controlling urbanisation, which include documentary controls, and residential, health and squatting restrictions. It also proposes the use of employment strategies to complement its policy of residential deconcentration.

DOCUMENTARY CONTROLS

Historically, opposition to the pass system focused on a number of points: the pass book is issued only to African people; it must be carried and produced on demand for inspection by police and other officials; and it is associated with enforcement of racially discriminatory restrictions on movement, presence, residence and employment in designated areas.

Addressing these objections, the PC

report recommends that the reference book system be abolished and replaced by a uniform identification document for all citizens of South Africa. The new identity document, it recommends, should be kept on one's person and produced on demand. Failure to carry the document should not be made a criminal offence.

These recommendations are a significant concession. But on their own, they do not guarantee that all controls of the kind associated with the traditional pass system will disappear. Clearly, the PC report is concerned to disassociate its proposed new system of personal identification from controls over labour mobility, employment and residence rights. However, it remains adamant that an effective system of identification be maintained - for what it calls security reasons, among others.

The PC proposals recommend measures to ensure the effectiveness of such a system. The report refers approvingly to provisions of the Criminal Procedure Act which enable any peace officer to ask for the identity and address of any person suspected of committing a crime or subject to legal arrest. The Act empowers police to detain such a person for up to 12 hours without a warrant.

Such substitute measures provide ample scope for police and other law-enforcement authorities to continue implementing control measures which require identity documents to be carried and produced. These measures will be regarded by the people subjected to them as continuation of the pass system, even if all race groups are theoretically subject to them.

Then too, the nature of the institutions responsible for enforcement of pass laws - the courts, police and development boards in particular - are

crucial in assessing the substance of mooted reforms. The PC report, following the recommendations of the Riekert Commission, envisages a process whereby the development (formerly administration) boards are gradually dismantled. Their functions would be reallocated to different branches and levels of government: black commissioners' courts to the Department of Justice, labour bureaux to Manpower, housing and policing of townships to local authorities, and so on.

Neither the future of the boards' pass officers (who were previously the municipal police), nor the question of the South African Police (SAP), is clearly addressed by the report. Government has already begun training black policemen to take over the policing functions of the boards. But there is nothing to suggest that the 'blackjacks' - as these municipal police are known to township residents - will face any less hostility than their white predecessors and mentors.

Nor does the PC report provide insight as to how the other repressive state agency traditionally associated with enforcement of pass laws, the SAP, might change its practices to alleviate criticism.

The pass system, after all, is not merely a set of laws. It is deeply embedded in the organisation and practices of development board bureaucracy, the courts, and the policing apparatuses of the state. The PC report goes some way towards recognising this in its recommendation that development boards should be dismantled and replaced by an Urbanisation Board. But it falls far short of demanding what is ultimately essential if the pass system is not merely to go, but is to be believed by the mass of the people to have gone: abolition not only of laws but of the bureaucratic machinery of pass control; the dismantling, reconstruction and reorientation of all these institutions towards new purposes in a newly constituted society.

HOUSING, SQUATTING AND LAND SITES

The Riekert Commission of 1979 argued that the 72-hour restriction on the presence of people without rights under

section 10 of the Urban Areas Act in towns should be dropped. Riekert envisaged its replacement by stricter controls over residence and employment in urban areas.

This approach shifted responsibility for ensuring that an individual is legally employed and resident in an area to employers and township home-owners. The latter are easier to identify and trace in the case of infringements, because they have fixed residential or work addresses. This, the Riekert Commission hoped, would eventually obviate the need for individuals to carry and produce documents of identification on demand, and ultimately reduce the number of purely technical pass offences.

The shift from direct coercion of the individual by documentary policing measures, to more indirect means of regulating provision of housing and employment, is a principle now incorporated into the PC report - with a number of crucial modifications.

Above all, the report's concept of orderly urbanisation entails modifying the radical distinction between urban 'insiders' and 'outsiders' which was basic to the Riekert Commission's urbanisation strategy. The emerging policy envisages not only a far larger permanent urban population, but also a national population far more differentiated in terms of housing, infrastructure, municipal services and living conditions.

In this approach, commuter populations and squatter communities in bantustans on the peripheries of the metropolitan centres are seen as part of the regional labour markets of such centres. The bantustans themselves are now seen as components of wider regional economies, rather than as potentially independent economic entities.

The issue of siting, provision and standard of housing is at the centre of the urbanisation strategy set out in the PC report. The main elements of its housing strategy are:

- * to lower the cost (and standard) of officially approved housing;
- * to reduce state provision of subsidised housing, and instead encourage private construction and ownership;
- * to foster differentiated housing standards to meet differences in need and ability to pay;
- * to provide differentiated municipal

services within and between residential areas; and

* to promote a process of dispersal or deconcentration of residential areas around the metropolitan centres.

Existing townships should, according to the report, be expanded to accommodate natural population increases. New residential areas (referred to in the report as 'catchment' or 'deconcentration' areas) should be established on the peripheries of metropolitan centres to cater for the inflow of new arrivals.

These areas should be sited so as to provide ready access to employment, whether in deconcentrated industrial areas or in established industrial and commercial centres. A chapter of the report is devoted to urban transport costs, and ways of reducing them by judicious siting of new residential and industrial areas.

Within existing townships, infrastructure and services will be improved and maintained at a relatively high level. They will be paid for by a population which is expected to earn higher salaries and wages in core metropolitan areas. In the newly established, dispersed residential areas, lower standards of accommodation, infrastructure and services will be tolerated, with the long-term aim of upgrading them.

The issue of squatting is central to the report, which distinguishes between 'squatting' and 'informal settlement'. The former is defined as settlement involving illegal occupation of land and non-compliance with health and building standards. Squatting is called 'informal settlement' by the report - if it is legal in respect of land occupation as well as housing, health and related standards.

The report's policy recommendation is that informal settlements should be 'ordered': that is, brought under state regulation by siting and provision of residential land, and by re-directing new migrants or resettling existing squatter communities in such approved areas. As a model of planned informal settlement it cites Botshabelo (otherwise known as Onverwacht), an ethnically organised resettlement area to the east of Bloemfontein. Onverwacht, significantly, is one of the 'dumping grounds' set up in the 1970s to accommodate workers and their families expelled from farms in the Orange Free

State.

Illegal squatters and new urban arrivals would be diverted to areas like Onverwacht, and supplied with sites and minimal residential services. Here they would be allowed to erect their own dwellings, within the framework of regulations set by the central state. In this way the PC report hopes to relieve local authorities of responsibility for providing housing, and impose this obligation on squatter families instead.

The role of local authorities would thus diminish, becoming limited to enforcement of health and safety regulations, and to provision of the minimal infrastructure and services needed to maintain health standards.

In short, the aim of the strategy of ordered informal settlement is to re-establish state authority over communities resisting influx and residential controls. This would involve pre-empting their formation, or relocating them in spatially dispersed, racially - and, if present official policy continues, ethnically - segregated residential areas. The policy makes a virtue of necessity by not merely accepting, but encouraging, self-construction of dwellings, with the obvious aim of relieving the local and central state of responsibility for a major cost of African urbanisation.

There is a hint of panic in the report here. It stresses the need for extreme haste in allocation and siting of new land for squatters, in order to divert newcomers from the towns, and to cope with mushrooming squatter communities near major centres. But however rapidly the authorities move to set up new deconcentration areas, efforts to relocate squatter communities are likely to be met with strong resistance if new sites are in locations more distant and thus more costly than the areas where such communities chose spontaneously to settle.

The housing strategy set out in the PC report is undeniably an advance on the present policy of frozen township family housing, resettlement and cross-border commuting. No doubt elements of a policy of informal settlement would have an important place in any housing policy concerned to meet the needs of the mass of South Africans. A positive feature is the idea, implicit in the report, that the power of people to initiate and create, once released, will be an enormous resource for solution of

problems in provision of housing, services and infrastructure in the cities.

However, the positive elements in the PC recommendations are subordinated to a policy framework whose principal aims lie elsewhere: to reduce the costs and increase the efficiency of reproduction of labour, to displace the costs of urbanisation from employers and the state to the working people, and to create a pattern of population dispersion which fragments and politically disorganises South Africa's subordinated people. To the extent that such aims take priority over housing needs, the PC strategy will surely meet with determined resistance.

A number of difficulties and objections, all of which depend on the manner in which the policy is implemented, can be foreseen:

* Removing state subsidies and privatising existing townships may destabilise settled urban communities - an effect the report is concerned to avoid. Families which cannot afford to buy houses or pay unsubsidised rents (the majority of township dwellers at present) would become vulnerable to removal. Ironically, such people have at present some protection under section 10 of the Urban Areas Act. Abolition of section 10 would entail not only removal of influx control, but also the potential residential destabilisation of groups with rights of permanent residence under the Act.

To protect these groups, a policy is needed which extends positive rights to individuals to stay and work where they are, coupled with subsidies based on the ability of families or households to pay rents and service charges. The unemployed, the handicapped, the aged and single-parent families should clearly be eligible for special forms of housing assistance.

* The needs of migrants and recent urban settlers also call for a massive programme of state assistance to provide infrastructure, services and cheap building materials, on a scale far greater than the PC report envisages.

* Finally, acquisition and siting of residential areas will be decisive in determining the cost of living in such areas. As a model, Onverwacht (Botshabelo) does not auger well for the PC report's urbanisation strategy. In addition to their cost, the siting of residential areas will be extremely

sensitive politically. If the deconcentration of residential areas follows the existing pattern of establishing sites remote from core residential and industrial centres, it will rightly be condemned and opposed as racial segregation - whether or not this takes place within the framework of the Group Areas Act.

DIRECT CONTROL MEASURES

Direct controls over movement and settlement do have a part in the thinking of the PC report. Its central recommendation is that influx control and the pass laws be replaced with indirect controls: siting of residential areas, provision of housing, and fiscal incentives and disincentives. But it argues that such measures, on their own, are not enough to ensure that urbanisation remains orderly.

Accordingly, it considers the use of a number of direct control measures, including laws against squatting, health and safety measures, and trespass and vagrancy laws.

The report notes several advantages in the use of such laws. Most already exist on South Africa's statutes, they are widely used in other countries, and can be presented as racially neutral.

The issue at stake here is how such laws are used against urban populations. While it would no doubt be relatively simple to excise racial clauses from the existing Slums and Squatter Acts, in application these laws will inevitably fall most heavily - and in some regions exclusively - on black people. This is certain, not merely because the greatest poverty and unemployment are to be found among black South Africans, but also because it is ingrained in law-enforcement agencies as presently constituted to discriminate against blacks in favour of whites. Only a change in their personnel, organisation and aims would change this.

However, reports from research groups monitoring removals in South Africa indicate that moves are already afoot to substitute measures under the slums and squatter laws for traditional influx control measures.

In the Eastern Cape and the Transvaal, court orders and attorney's letters served by soldiers at the dead of night

are replacing the traditional pass raids by administration board officials. Prosecution is less frequently threatened because of illegal presence, and increasingly on grounds of erecting and living in unsafe and unhealthy structures, or occupying land illegally. Instead of deportation to a bantustan, some residents are being offered sites in newly laid-out deconcentration areas. Such offers are backed by the threat of prosecution and heavy fines for refusal.

If this is what deracialisation and deregulation are to mean, these reforms will surely be no more acceptable to the urban poor than the hated pass system.

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT STRATEGIES

The employment strategy put forward by the Riekert Commission in 1979 aimed to foster development of a relatively privileged and occupationally mobile urban African working class. This was to be achieved by protecting it from competition by African workers from bantustans and white farms. Controls on work-seeking and registration of employment contracts would be exercised by strengthened labour bureaux called assembly centres. These, with housing controls, were to be the primary means of regulating the influx of Africans to white urban areas.

The PC report turns this strategy on its head. It calls for deregulation of traditional controls over employment, fostering of small businesses and informal sector activities, and abolition of employment-related influx control measures. As with squatting, activities previously believed to threaten urban control systems are now put forward as a way to resolve the urban crisis.

The PC report calls for legalisation, promotion and regulation of informal sector and small business activities to generate employment and incomes in and near urban areas: 'With the necessary deregulation and adjustment in standards, small businesses could promote a measure of orderliness in the process of urbanisation, at the same time contributing to successful urban functioning through initiation and training in urban practices'. (5.48)

And further on: 'The creation of employment in urban areas can be

promoted by, among other things, making policy adjustments where necessary in respect of artificially and unrealistically high standards of health, safety, and urban development requirements and by providing more flexible wage and salary structures, in terms of which greater bargaining, in conjunction with productivity, is possible'.(5.52)

The Riekert insider/outsider strategy tended to raise urban wages relative to rural wages. This both raised urban labour costs and increased the incentive for people to move to town. The policy set out in the PC report aims to reverse this trend by opening up labour markets and subjecting protected workforces to competition from outsiders.

The details of this policy have been set out in reports of the National Manpower Commission (NMC) and in a White Paper on an Unemployment Strategy for South Africa. Its aim is to lower labour reproduction costs and to foster differentiated labour markets within and between regions, to meet the differing labour requirements of industry. This would establish a more highly-skilled and better-paid workforce in the core metropolitan areas, and low wage markets in the deconcentrated areas on metropolitan peripheries. Wage differentiation is intended to match the policy of graded provision of social services such as housing, township infrastructure and community services in core and peripheral urban areas.

Promotion of employment through deregulating production and loosening controls on markets within a newly constituted regional framework is increasingly linked to a reformulation of industrial relations policy. Recent moves by the NMC and Department of Manpower aim to dismantle and restructure industrial relations to fit more closely with the regional industrial and residential location strategy accepted by the report.

In a memorandum circulated in September 1985, for example, it is proposed that the scope of applicability of industrial council wage determinations be restricted to the organised parts of industries and not applied automatically to whole sectors.

The aim of this memorandum is to foster differentiation of wages and working conditions within the workforce, and to structure this process to accord with industrial and residential

dispersal within and between the development regions. An objective of this policy is to prevent the gains of strong industrial unions based largely within core metropolitan areas, from spreading automatically to peripheral areas - the bantustans and border areas in particular - through industrial council wage determinations. This would generalise the present system, whereby all bantustans and certain prescribed industrial decentralisation points are exempted from industrial council wage determinations.

This strategy is not a frontal attack on the right of unions to organise all workers, a right fought for and won over the last decade and a half. The aim is rather to erode the gains that followed the Riekert and Wiehahn Commissions, when economic expansion and influx control strengthened unions in wage negotiation, and raised the cost of labour.

The state's manpower apparatus wants to weaken the power of unions by exposing workers to stronger market pressures and by reinterpreting the meaning of freedom of association to favour the rights of the individual over organised labour. It seeks, above all, to protect and entrench rights attached to the ownership of the means of production - especially control over the labour process, hiring and firing and the right to relocate production.

CONCLUSIONS

The PC's urbanisation strategy reflects and seeks to re-order fundamental processes and forces operative in South Africa since World War II - forces which can no longer be accommodated within the political and spatial framework we have come to know and despise as apartheid. It is a response to the present intense conflict and deep uncertainty in South Africa. It was commissioned by the state (on behalf of the ruling classes) to find a way of re-constructing South Africa's political economy which unshackles it from apartheid, but which preserves and rejuvenates the conditions for expanded capitalist development.

Subject to this fundamental aim, the PC report does attempt to address the economic demands that have come out of the townships, particularly the lack of housing, infrastructure and services, and the problem of unemployment. It also addresses the demand for abolition of the pass laws, though it leaves the machinery responsible for their implementation intact.

Critics of the PC report and its objectives should not seek evidence of some subliminal wish on the part of the commissioners to retain old style influx control or the pass system. Nor do its recommendations inherently predispose the proposed urbanisation strategy towards racial and ethnic segregation or its corollary, political fragmentation - though they are open to use for these ends.

The strategy set out in the report is open to alternative interpretations and uses, and the practical form it or any other urban strategy finally takes will depend crucially on the question of which forces in South Africa are capable of acquiring, or holding onto, state power, and how this power is used.

The report's weaknesses lie rather in its faith that deracialisation of state structures, liberalisation of markets and privatisation of housing can provide fundamental solutions to the urban crisis in South Africa. It falls far short of addressing the urgent material needs of South Africa's impoverished urban and urbanising communities. This is because its primary aims are not to see that they are met, but on the contrary to release employers and the state from responsibilities.

Equally, it avoids any consideration of the political frustrations and aims of Africans in the towns - a fundamental flaw for any policy which seeks to map out a future urban policy for South Africa. The acceptability of the new urbanisation policy to the majority of South Africans is inextricably bound up with the parallel issue of their political rights. There is every reason to believe that an urbanisation strategy implemented in the absence of full and unqualified political representation for all South Africans will not be considered acceptable, whatever its merits may be relative to urbanisation policy under grand apartheid.

White ANC Member Guilty of Treason

Eric William Pelser (21)

At the end of May 1985, a young white man crossed illegally from Botswana into South Africa. In the company of two armed ANC couriers, he travelled to Mafikeng, where he booked into the Station Hotel.

The next evening, he took a train to Johannesburg, arriving there just before 5-00 am. Eric William Pelser, trained as an ANC guerilla, had come home.

Two months later, on 29 July, security police raided his Hillbrow flat, rented under the alias of Alan McDonald. They had received a tip-off that the flat's occupant had banned books in his possession. On searching the flat, police found not only banned material, but also an AK 47 rifle, two hand grenades, and 120 rounds of ammunition. Pelser was arrested, and subsequently detained under section 29 of the Internal Security Act. Shortly after being taken into police custody, he confessed to being an ANC member, and admitted that he had undergone military training in an Umkhonto we Sizwe camp in Angola.

At the end of December, after six months in security police custody, he appeared in court charged with treason.

Pelser is one of the first whites to face charges of undergoing ANC military training. He was relatively unpoliticised when he left South Africa in 1984. According to a statement he handed in to court during his trial, he was loath to do service in the South African army, which he viewed as 'an enforcer of the perpetuation of injustice towards legitimately aggrieved people'. He also did not wish to be part of a force which was 'illegally occupying Namibia and engaged in destabilising neighbouring countries'.

After matriculating, Pelser began studying English and Philosophy at the University of Witwatersrand, but during his first year became restless, and left. His sister sponsored a trip to Europe for him where he began to learn about a South Africa he had not known before. 'That perspective reinforced my opposition to the racial policies of the state'.

When he returned to South Africa, the question of military service began to plague Pelser. Called up for July 1984, he had regular discussions with an ex-teacher and friend, who advised him that if he was going to leave South Africa, it was best to travel to Botswana. He gave Pelser the name and address of friends in Botswana.

Just before he was due to report for military service, Pelser and his parents took a holiday together in Natal. He left them there to report to the army. 'However, when I got to the Johannesburg railway station to join the muster, I simply could not face going into the army'. He decided to leave South Africa, 'with no fixed intention beyond avoiding military service. I then hitch-hiked to Botswana and crossed the border on 4 July 1984'.

After spending some time with the friends of his ex-teacher and confidant, Pelser approached officials of the Botswana government, as he had no rights of residence there. He was placed in a refugee camp.

There he met representatives of the ANC, and became 'convinced of the justice of their cause. I joined the ANC, but not at that stage Umkhonto we Sizwe'.

ANC officials offered to assist Pelser to study in Europe. But after two months in a 'safe house' in Lusaka, he became impatient and began to have reservations about his chosen course. 'My parents are quite elderly. The envisaged period of absence on a scholarship, I was told, would be six years. I began to wonder if I would see my parents again. I became frustrated and desired to return home'.

Pelser confided these feelings to an ANC representative, who explained that he could return to South Africa at an early stage. This 'would involve a short period of training in the use of arms and explosives, and I could be home within three months'. He accepted the offer, and in January 1985 joined Umkhonto we Sizwe.

Shortly afterwards, the ANC sent Pelser to Angola. Over a period of three months he was trained in the use of arms and explosives.

Crossing from Botswana into South Africa, Pelser brought with him an AK 47 rifle, four AK magazines, 120 rounds of ammunition, two hand grenades, and two ammunition pouches. 'This equipment was intended primarily for the border crossing should my escorts and I run into a South African army or police patrol. I, however, chose to retain the equipment which would be of use to me in carrying out my objectives on behalf of the ANC'.

Prior to his entry to South Africa, the ANC gave Pelser R7 000 for use in his activities. His objectives, on behalf of the ANC, were:

- * to recruit people to join and support the ANC;
- * to set up a base from which to operate on behalf of the ANC;
- * to establish a communication system with the ANC;
- * to gather information of use to the ANC; and
- * to commit acts of violence.

In his statement to the court, Pelser admitted that he had a number of unlawful publications in his possession. These included a SA Communist Party publication, 'The African Communist'; an ANC publication entitled 'Torture and Death - South Africa'; Nelson Mandela's 'No Easy Walk to Freedom'; 'Guerilla Warfare and Marxism'; and volume 1 of the 'Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung'.

Pelser faced a charge of treason, as well as various counts of possession of banned publications, unlawful possession of arms and ammunition, and possession

of lysergic acid (LSD).

He pleaded guilty to a charge under the Internal Security Act, namely that he was party to a conspiracy to bring about change through acts of violence. However, the prosecution did not accept this plea, and proceeded with the treason charge.

An old school friend of the accused, PW Myers, testified that he had met with Pelser in July 1985. They discussed politics, and Pelser told him that he was a commander in the ANC, and was in South Africa to perform tasks for the ANC. 'When I encouraged him to show what sort of credibility he had, he showed me the AK 47', said Myers.

Pelser asked Myers to accept a letter from Botswana for him at his flat, but when the letter was delivered, Myers burnt it and said it had not arrived.

Another witness, Vicky Ecksteen, stayed with Pelser for a week in his Hillbrow flat. She testified that Pelser had shown her an AK 47 and hand grenades.

Verdict: Guilty of treason, possession of banned literature, and possession of LSD.

Sentence: Treason - nine years, of which three were suspended;

Possession of banned literature - two years, of which one year was suspended, plus a fine of R200 (or two months);

Possession of LSD: one year, suspended.

The effective sentence which Pelser will serve is therefore seven years imprisonment.

(Rand Supreme Court, 25.02.86).

Brother of Hanged Guerilla Sentenced

Daniel Motaung (26)

Liptures Charles Mbeza (33)

Essu Ramontsho (27)

Marcus Motaung, Daniel's brother, was executed in June 1983. Judge David Curlewis found that, as an ANC guerilla, he had participated in attacks on the Moroka and Orlando police stations during 1979.

When arrested at the beginning of May 1982, police shot him in the hip. He was only hospitalised and operated on two days later, after he had pointed out weapons caches to security police interrogators. When asked why she had

not objected, a district surgeon who examined Motaung said she thought it more important for him to assist the police than to undergo necessary medical treatment.

Marcus Motaung told Judge Curlewis that the anger he felt during the 1976 uprising led him to join the ANC and to fight in South Africa. His attitude hardened when he saw a two-week old baby choke to death in tear gas fumes.

Despite national and international campaigns, and calls for clemency, Motaung and two colleagues were executed.

Less than three years later, his brother, Daniel, stood in court, accused of being an ANC guerilla. The state alleged that he and his co-accused were guilty of terrorism, and that he was also guilty of ANC membership.

Alternatively, claimed the prosecution, they were guilty of possessing a machine rifle, hand grenades and ammunition.

Daniel Motaung became a member of the ANC after his brother was sentenced to death. The arrest, trial and execution of his brother seriously influenced his decision to join the ANC as a guerilla fighter.

In January 1985, while in Botswana, he took possession of an AK 47 rifle, four magazines, 120 rounds of 7,62 calibre bullets, two offensive hand grenades with detonators, and two defensive grenades, also with detonators.

He illegally entered South Africa from Botswana via Bophuthatswana, carrying with him the arms, ammunition and explosives described above. His mission was to recruit people to the ANC, and train them in the use of limpet mines and hand grenades

In the first three months of 1985, according to the prosecution, Daniel Motaung recruited a number of people to the ANC, and trained them in the use of arms, ammunition and weapons.

With the assistance of one of his co-accused, Esau Ramontsho, he obtained a false Bophuthatswanan travel document so that he could travel to Botswana, and there liaise with ANC members. Ramontsho also assisted one Dennis Mofokeng, now believed by the accused to be a police informer, to obtain a false travel document.

Motaung travelled to Botswana on a number of occasions, and there obtained money, and a sketch showing the location of an arms cache, from ANC representatives. On one occasion he communicated with the ANC in Botswana by means of a coded telegram.

The state alleged that Motaung's co-accused accommodated and transported him, knowing that he was an ANC guerilla fighter. They received training from

Motaung in the use of weapons, and provided a hiding place for arms, ammunition and explosives.

Finally, claimed the state, all three accused conspired to launch attacks on the Jabulani and Protea police stations, and the church of a white community in Krugersdorp.

Motaung was arrested on 2 March 1985 by Bophuthatswana police. Held in Mafikeng for a few days, he was then handed over to Protea security police. His co-accused were detained a few days later.

The state alleged in its further particulars to the charges that, in addition to his co-accused, Motaung incited Simon Motaung, Tobago Motaung, Dennis Mofokeng, Phillip Moteka and Patrick Moteka to receive the arms, ammunition and weapons he brought in from Botswana. At the start of the trial, Motaung pleaded guilty to the terrorism charge, admitting that he was a member of the ANC, had undergone military training outside South Africa, and was in possession of arms, ammunition and explosives with the intention of endangering the state.

In pleading guilty to an alternative charge of unlawful possession of weapons, Mbeza admitted that he knew Motaung had placed them in his room.

The third accused, Ramontsho, admitted that he had possessed a hand grenade for a few days. This had been given to him by Dennis Mofokeng, a suspected police informer, who had previously received the grenade from Motaung.

In mitigation of sentence, defence counsel told the court that Motaung had renounced violence when his comrade, Vincent Tshabalala, was killed in a police shoot-out in Alexandra.

Tshabalala, Motaung and a comrade known as James had been part of an ANC group in Botswana. James had also died in a police shoot-out in Mafikeng at the end of 1984.

Sentence: Motaung - six years;

Mbeza - two years;

Ramontsho - one year.

(Johannesburg Regional Court, 14.02.86).

In Brief

A male youth (17)
 Nyakale Solomon More (22)
 Vincint Sakhwe Khumalo (19)
 Lefu Lucas Thobejane (21)
 Solly Nathaniel Phakoe (19)
 A female youth (16)
 A male youth (17)
 William Kangwe Manye (18)
 A female youth (14)
 A male youth (16)
 Bayeza Aletta Monyai (19)
 Tsietsi Dingaan Tsolo (20)
 Kopo Ben Masisi (20)

Thirteen members of the now-banned Congress of South African Students (COSAS) face a charge of terrorism, with alternative charges of arson (three counts), attempted arson (five counts), and malicious damage to property (four counts).

According to the state, 11 of the accused attended an Evaton meeting commemorating the Freedom Charter on 30 June 1985. Police arrived at the meeting while a speaker identified as Setshedi was addressing it. The crowd was incited to violence, and shouted 'The houses of policemen should be set alight'.

The meeting then broke up, but the accused regrouped. The second accused, More, allegedly suggested that the group set fire to the houses of policemen. Everybody present agreed, and More handed out petrol bombs.

The accused stopped vehicles and demanded petrol from the drivers, and then went to a house in Sebokeng, which they stoned.

They moved on to a second Sebokeng house, stoned and threw a petrol bomb at it. The house did not catch fire because the bomb was defective. When another petrol bomb failed to set fire to a third house, the accused went to an open field, where they manufactured more petrol bombs. They then stoned and attempted to set fire to three further houses in Sebokeng.

The next day, 1 July, a meeting was held in Sebokeng where it was decided to continue setting fire to houses of police, and to homes of officials of the Vaal Relief Fund. That evening all but one of the accused went into the veld near Sebokeng where they manufactured more petrol bombs.

The accused then split up into three groups. Each group went to a separate house in Sebokeng, and attempted to

petrol bomb them. They were partially successful in the case of one house.

On 2 July, six of the accused decided to request branches of COSAS throughout the Vaal Triangle to set fire to houses occupied by police. The request was communicated to the Evaton and Sharpeville branches.

On 28 July, according to the state, three of the accused set fire to the Sizanane School at Sebokeng.

The trial is due to begin during April in the Vereeniging Regional Court.

Denmark Tungwana (19)
 Lungile Nomeva (25)
 Ntsikelelo Qaku (30)
 Andile Xintolo (35)
 Zukile Ronnie Gxavu (23)
 Ncedile Godfrey Maku (22)
 Thembeni Samuel (23)
 Simon Spelman (23)

After a brief court appearance in East London, eight Queenstown men faced charges of terrorism, furthering the aims of the ANC, and organising a schools boycott. All but one of the accused were arrested in August and September 1984, and have been in custody ever since.

The terrorism charge was based on allegations of recruiting people for guerilla training in Lesotho, and transporting them there. Other incidents included the production of a pamphlet bomb, a petrol bomb attack, and attending a demonstration on dismantling an AK 47.

The charge of furthering the aims of the ANC involved production of a pamphlet calling on women to join the liberation struggle, receiving copies of the SACTU publication, 'Workers' Unity', organising transport of a roneo machine acquired by the ANC to produce pamphlets, addressing COSAS meetings on the ANC, listening to taped speeches by Oliver Tambo, and possession of banned publications.

A third charge dealt with the schools boycott in Queenstown.

Verdict: Seven of the accused were convicted of terrorism. Two accused (Nomeva and Qaku) were also found guilty of furthering the aims of the ANC. Samuel was acquitted on all counts.

Sentence: Tungwana, Gxavu and Maku - three years;

Nomeva, Qaku and Spelman - six years;
 Xintolo - four years.

(Burgersdorp Regional Court, 12.03.86).

Strikes and Disputes: Transvaal

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
AECI - Alrode plant Alberton	SACWU	270	14-19.02.86	Workers went on strike protesting against the dismissal of a shop steward. strikers were fired on 18 February after failing to meet an ultimatum to return to work, but unconditionally reinstated the following day.
Asea Electric Pretoria	MAWU	850	10.02.86-	<p>MAWU's struggle for plant-level bargaining in the metal industry continues as over 850 workers at four Asea plants stay out on strike over the issue.</p> <p>Management obtained an interim court order, restraining strikers from intimidating or threatening the safety or property of Asea personnel. The court also ordered strikers occupying Asea premises to vacate these.</p> <p>During February, Asea agreed to facilitate discussions on sectoral and company-level bargaining. This was after MAWU agreed in principle to defer its demand for plant-level bargaining if sectoral bargaining was introduced. These proposals were taken back to the workforce on 21 February.</p> <p>In March Asea declared a dispute with MAWU, alleging an unfair labour practice. Management at one Asea plant gave about 570 workers an ultimatum to return to work by 12 March or face dismissal. The ultimatum was suspended pending urgent negotiations requested by MAWU.</p>
Carlton Paper Mills Wadeville	PWAWU	130	11.02.86-	Workers staged a sleep-in strike demanding a wage increase of 50c/h on the lowest scale, 5c more than the company offered; the recognition of 1 May and 16 June as paid public holidays; and a holiday bonus. Agreement was reached over the wage increase but the deadlock continued on the other issues.
Dunlop Benoni	CWIU	600	05-06.03.86	<p>Workers went on strike protesting over the dismissal of two cleaners. The two were reinstated without loss of pay, and those hired in their place were retained at the union's insistence. CWIU demanded the dismissal of a personnel manager who refused a union organiser access to company premises, and a security guard who escorted the fired cleaners off company property. These demands will be considered in a joint management-union inquiry.</p> <p>Strikers also demanded that Dunlop management telex the Minister of Law and Order urging him to release MAWU unionist Moses Mayekiso, who was detained under emergency regulations.</p>
Ekandustria Pretoria		1 000	20.02.86-	Unorganised workers went on strike protesting against low wages of R35 a week for men and R25 for women. Transport to and from work costs some workers R12/week. Police fired teargas to disperse strikers, and two women workers were injured.

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
Expandite Isando	CWIU	50	05.02.86	After wage negotiations deadlocked, CWIU declared a dispute in January. Workers went on strike demanding a 20% (R23) wage increase - the company offered only 13%. Strikers also demanded recognition of 1 May and 16 June as paid public holidays, and job security for women workers on maternity leave. The Union and management finally reached settlement agreeing to a R20 across-the-board increase (18%).
Gypsum Industries Pretoria West	BCAWU	250	04-07.03.86	Workers staged a sleep-in strike on company premises after management unilaterally imposed a wage increase of 13c/hour. Workers had demanded an increase of R1/hour. Management refused to negotiate with workers because it did not recognise their union. Those on strike were dismissed when they ignored an ultimatum to return to work and 100 temporary white workers were hired to replace them.
Haggie Rand Jupiter and Germiston	MAWU SEAWU	2 000	04.03.86	Following a deadlock in wage negotiations, workers staged a sleep-in strike to prevent the company from hiring scab labour. They demanded a R3,50/hour minimum wage and a 50c across-the-board increase where the minimum already applied. In addition, workers demanded long-service bonuses, a 40-hour week, long-leave allowance, increased overtime rates and compassionate leave. Workers were given an ultimatum to return to work by 17 March, or face dismissal.
Metal Box Rosslyn	SAAWU	500		Workers went on strike when management employed three whites after retrenching 22 black workers in November 1985. About 300 strikers were fired when they ignored a management ultimatum to return to work. On 31 January the industrial court rejected SAAWU's application for temporary reinstatement of the workers as beyond its jurisdiction, as the union had not applied for a conciliation board hearing.
Metal Industry Transvaal and Natal	MAWU		05.03.86	Thousands of metalworkers stopped work at noon on 5 March in protest against the detention of Moses Mayekiso, MAWU's Transvaal secretary, under emergency regulations.
Nampak Printpak Gravure	PMAWU		10.03.86	PMAWU declared a dispute in January, demanding a R20/week across-the-board increase, and the recognition of 1 May and 16 June as paid holidays. Agreement was reached through mediation and workers will receive increases of R18-R18,50/week. The company indicated it was willing to discuss the holiday issue.
Nampak Tissue Pretoria West	SAAWU	160		Negotiations over wage increases reached deadlock after mediation. Workers went on strike and were dismissed. The company and the union held discussions concerning the dismissals.
National Co-op Dairies Mayfair	FBWU	300	12-14.03.86	Striking workers returned to work after settlement was reached over wage increases. The strike disrupted residential milk deliveries.

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
Noristan Pretoria	SACWU	230	12.03.86	Workers went on strike in solidarity with 60 workers fired earlier in the week for allegedly sabotaging production. The workers, the company's entire wage-earning staff, ignored a management ultimatum to return to work on 13 March and were dismissed. Talks began over the dismissals.
OK Bazaars	CCAWUSA		05.02.86	OK management brought an urgent application against CCAWUSA and an interim court order was granted, valid until 11 February. The union undertook not to instigate or incite employees of OK to participate in an unlawful strike arising from disciplinary proceedings against a worker at Menlyn Hyperama. The union said it had not intended calling an unlawful strike and that the rumour was a result of unauthorised statements by a minor official.
Pick 'n Pay Pretoria area	RAWU	1 000 - 1 500	19-25.02.86	Workers went on strike at the Verwoerdburg, Lynwood, Arcadia and Sinoville outlets protesting against the dismissal of two shop stewards, the alleged assault of one of the stewards by a white manager, and the company's use of black staff from Pretoria to break a week-long stayaway in Witbank. The next day the strike spread to the Faerie Glen, Boornkloof and Gezins outlets. On 21 February RAWU was served with an interdict restraining it from calling on other employees to join the strike. Workers returned to work when the company agreed to the appointment of an arbitrator to investigate the dismissal of the shop stewards. The arbitrator's decision will be final. Workers will not receive pay for the days on which they were on strike but they will not lose any benefits. The union undertook not to call strikes which breached its recognition agreement with the company. The agreement was suspended during the strike and will be renegotiated and amended.
Plascon Evans	SACWU		Feb-March	Plascon Evans is involved in wage negotiations at nine plants. On 21 February, after several acts of alleged sabotage, go-slows and intermittent strike action, the company dismissed 380 and 56 workers from the Krugersdorp and Polycell Alrode factories respectively. At both plants workers were on strike following previous dismissals of colleagues. On 3 March, 120 workers at the Alberton plant went on strike in sympathy with those dismissed. The company successfully applied to the Rand Supreme Court for an order to prevent workers from burning down the premises. The court also ordered workers to leave the premises if not working, and restrained strikers from intimidating or threatening workers to join the strike, or interfering with the conduct of business at the premises. There were further sympathy strikes at five other Plascon Evans companies in the Transvaal and Cape bringing the total of striking workers to over 1 000. Negotiations reached deadlock when the union insisted on the unconditional reinstatement of dismissed workers. SACWU rejected management's demand to return to work while wage

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
				negotiations continued, to call off a boycott of Plascon products, and end the sympathy strikes. In mid-March the company obtained another three court interdicts similar to the previous one.
Printpak Industria	PMAWU	90	13-17.02.86	Workers staged a sleep-in strike after a deadlock in wage negotiations, and the subsequent failure of mediation. The company refused to disclose financial information to the union. On 14 February the Rand Supreme Court granted the company an urgent interdict to evict workers from the premises. Negotiations resumed on 17 February.
Renown Fresh Meat City Deep Johannesburg	SFAWU	300	13.02.86	Workers downed tools in protest against the arrest of a colleague for alleged theft. The worker was arrested on 10 February by police who were called in by company security personnel. The union objected to police intervention in a union/management matter and claimed that the grievance procedure was ignored. As a result of the strike the theft charges were withdrawn and will be dealt with in terms of the union's agreement with management.
Renown Pork Packers Olifantsfontein	SFAWU	100	17-18.02.86	Workers went on a sleep-in strike when wage negotiations broke down. They turned away trucks laden with feed for pigs housed on the premises, but returned to work when negotiations were resumed. The union demanded a minimum weekly wage of R138/week instead of the present minimum of R64/week. Management offered R83/week. PMAWU finally agreed to a minimum wage of R85/week, to be increased to R88/week in September. Workers will also receive an average of R200 in backpay due to them since October 1985. Negotiations to secure May Day and 16 June as workers' holidays are still to be finalised.
SA Breweries Krugersdorp	FBWU	200	10.02.86	Workers staged a protest strike following the arrest of eight unionists who attended a weekend funeral of an unrest victim.
Metal industry	MAWU SABS EIWU SEAWU			SEIFSA has declared a dispute with four unions affiliated to the International Metalworkers Federation. The giant employers' federation claims that the unions are undermining the bargaining process by demanding decentralised bargaining and trying to make gains before industry-level negotiations begin. MAWU declared disputes with about 80 companies last year, demanding plant-level bargaining.
3M SA Elandsfontein	CCAWUSA	350	14-19.02.86	Workers went on strike when 3M, which retrenched 55 workers in 1985, did not adhere to its undertaking to employ retrenched workers on a full-time or temporary basis. Instead an unknown number of new workers, some allegedly white schoolboys, were hired to work overtime at night. Management subsequently agreed to observe its undertaking.

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
3M SA Elandsfontein	CCAWUSA	350	28.02.86	Workers held a two-hour work stoppage to protest the closure of 3M's Freehold, New Jersey plant which would result in the loss of 450 jobs of their American colleagues. The workers were not paid for the hours on strike.

Strikes and Disputes: OFS/Cape

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
Allied Publishing	MWASA	209		Vendors went on strike in protest against low wages in November 1985. They were dismissed on 18 January. Various organisations threatened to boycott the Argus newspaper if the vendors were not re-employed. Following discussions between Allied Publishing and a delegation led by Allan Boesak representing community organisations, agreement was reached. MWASA accepted that a wage agreement signed in November 1985 was still valid, and the vendors were reinstated.
Eastern Province Automobile Manufactures	NAAMU			Workers at Ford, General Motors, Volkswagen and Mercedes Benz received increases ranging from 16c-22c/hour following industrial council negotiations. Minimum pay rates rose from R2,70-R3,00/hour. The increases are effective from 1 February.
Fort Hare University		900	03.03.86-	Workers went on strike over the rector's refusal to allow them to join trade unions. Students organised a solidarity lecture boycott. Workers defied a court order to return to work on 12 March. An appeal has been lodged against the order.
George Municipality		400	Feb	After two weeks of wildcat strikes, unrest and failure to report for work on 17 and 18 February, 400 workers were dismissed. They were dissatisfied with a directive ordering them to move out of the municipal compound, situated near a white suburb, by the end of April. The municipality began employing a new workforce. The town clerk said the workers had not been fired, but had 'deserted' and that it was not a wage issue as 'they get too much money already, we pay them too much'.
Murray and Roberts	SAAMU	1 250		On 7 February the industrial court found that SAAMU had committed an unfair labour practice at Murray and Roberts, as it intended to instigate strike action. This is the first time the court has found a union guilty of an unfair practice. On 12 August 1985, shortly after SAAMU began organising at Murray and Roberts, 1 250 workers downed tools. They went on strike again on 26 August. When they ignored a company ultimatum to return to work they were dismissed and told to leave the hostel by 1 September. On 30 August, the company was granted an interim court order restraining SAAMU from organising, inciting, or directing any acts of violence, strike action;

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
				impeding access to company property; or holding meetings on company property. Union officials were also barred from company property. SAAWU denied responsibility for the strike. On 13 February charges against 165 workers for trespassing at their hostel after being dismissed were withdrawn, after a test case against one worker failed.
Nampak Paper Bellville	PMAWU	150	18-21.02.86	Workers downed tools when wage negotiations broke down. Workers demanded a 50c increase on their wages of R2,18/hour while management offered 30c/hour effective from January, and a further 8c to lowest paid workers effective from July. Workers decided not to end their strike until the outcome of the conciliation board meeting was known. Management refused to continue negotiations until workers returned. Agreement was finally reached on a minimum wage rate of R2,52/hour with effect from 9 February and a further increase of 12c/hour from the beginning of July.
Plascon Evans Paint Epping	SACWU	128	07.02.86-	Following a deadlock in wage negotiations, workers began a legal strike. They had rejected an increase of R50/month in favour of an across-the-board increase of R150/month. During the strike management increased its offer to R52/month. Workers defied an ultimatum to return to work on 17 February or face dismissal. They returned to work on 25 February pending further wage negotiations. During the strike union members at four other Plascon factories in the Transvaal and Cape held sympathy strikes. On 27 and 28 February workers again went on strike in support of workers dismissed from Plascon factories in the Transvaal. They were locked out on 3 March and told not to return until the wage dispute was settled.
Building industry Cape Town	SA Woodworkers Union Building Workers AUBTW	18 000	Feb 1986	Pay talks stalled due to the disparity in employer and union demands. The unions demanded a 19% increase for workers whose wages were increased in May 1985 and 30% for workers whose wages were increased in November 1984. Employers offered an average of 5% increase for each category.
University of Cape Town	UCT Workers Committee			A union recognition agreement including the right to strike and the recognition of May Day was signed. Workers will be allowed four hours off for union educational programmes on May Day.

Strikes and Disputes: Natal

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
AECI Chlor-Alkali Umbongintwini			10-14.03.86	Zulu factions who make up the bulk of the 900 employees at the factory refused to work in protest against the expected return of Pondo former workers who had fled their homes

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
				during recent tribal clashes in the area. Negotiations between the two groups were successful and they returned to work.
Natal Die Castings	MAWU	120		The industrial court ordered the reinstatement of 120 union members who were dismissed in May 1985 after a two-day lawful strike over production, long-service bonuses and travel allowances. The reinstatement was made retrospective by six months from 21 February 1986 and commits the company to paying 26 weeks back pay to each worker. The finding that the company's refusal to bargain at plant level on substantive matters constitutes an unfair labour practice, will have major implications for the 80 disputes declared by MAWU over the right to plant-level bargaining. The finding also affirms the right of legal strikers to protection against dismissal. NDC has decided to take the case on review to the supreme court and will not reinstate workers until review proceedings are completed.
Vitafoam Mobeni	NUTW	80	12.02.86	Workers went on strike demanding a R20/week pay rise and rejecting management's offer of R14/week. The strike ended when workers agreed to a R15/week increase.

Strikes and Disputes: Mines

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
Chamber of Mines	NUM		Feb 1986	NUM's demand for May Day as a paid holiday, and its decision to encourage miners to stay away on 1 May, has led the Chamber to apply for a conciliation board. The Chamber has said that demands which have cost implications can be negotiated at any time but are usually negotiated during the annual wage review. The Chamber has also accused NUM of unfair labour practice and an 'unreasonable attitude'. NUM's demand is part of a broader campaign by many unions to demand May Day as a paid holiday. Workers are prepared to 'sacrifice racist political holidays like Republic Day in exchange'.
Blyvooruitzicht Mine (Rand Mines) Carletonville	NUM	7 000	09.03.86-	Between 7 000 and 10 000 thousand miners staged an illegal strike on 9 March demanding that the bonus system applied at two sections be applied to all. On Tuesday 11 March about 200 workers staged a sit-in underground which effectively closed the mine. They only agreed to surface on Thursday 13 March. Management said the current bonus system was experimental and would eventually be applied throughout. Management claimed most miners were intimidated by a minority. On 13 March 7 000 miners were shut out of the mine. NUM claimed management refused to meet workers to discuss the bonus. On 14 March miners were given an ultimatum to return to work or face dismissal. Many miners were apparently keen to return to work. That evening, a group of miners marched on a white residential area. Police were called in. Six died and more than 100 miners were injured when fighting broke out.

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
Douglas Colliery Wolwekrans Witbank Collieries	NUM MWU	950	Feb-March	White Mineworkers Union members threatened to arm themselves after a strike by 1 500 miners at Anglo's Goedehoop Colliery (returned to work on 27.02), a week-long stay away to protest the arrest of 800 workers attending a meeting on unemployment, and an on-going strike by African workers at Wolwekrans. Miners went on strike on 26 February and again on 1 March. NUM demanded the suspension of a white hostel manager at Wolwekrans for carrying a gun. The matter was resolved when management said he could carry a gun because he handled money. Miners returned to work on 4 March.
Marievale Consolidated (Gencor)	NUM	527		NUM and Gencor agreed on the reinstatement of 413 workers who were temporarily reinstated last year by an industrial court order that ruled their dismissals unfair. The company also agreed to reinstate a further 124 union members who did not report to the mine before the deadline set by the court, and to hold further discussions on the outstanding wage dispute.
Vaal Reefs (Anglo American)	NUM	19 000	25-27.02.86 10.03.86	Eight miners were arrested after the death of four team leaders on 18 February. More were arrested and miners began an illegal strike on 24 February, demanding the release of their colleagues. Management claims the leaders were murdered when they refused NUM membership. Management did not accede to demands but miners agreed to return to work on 27 February. The strike cost Anglo R5-million. Five of those arrested faced charges of public violence and were refused bail. On 5 March 7 000 miners staged a go-slow protesting the continued incarceration of the five, and selective rehiring of some of the 14 000 miners fired at the mine last April. On 7 March management applied for a court interdict to halt the go-slows and to bring about a 'return to normal, safe working conditions'. The miners returned to work on 10 March.
Western Deep Levels Carletonville	NUM	4 000	05.02.86	Over 4 000 of a 22 000-strong workforce failed to report to work after faction fights resulted in three deaths and 76 injuries. NUM and management attempted to resolve differences between the factions and persuade workers to return to work.

TRENDS

From the strikes and disputes monitored by WIP in the February-March period - and only selected instances are listed above - three trends emerge.

The first involves a growing use of 'sleep-in' strikes, where strikers refuse to leave factory premises, physically occupying buildings.

A second trend identified involves management's increasing recourse to court applications in the face of actual or threatened worker action. In a

number of cases, this has resulted in supreme court orders restraining workers and their unions from various activities; in other instances, employers have taken unions to the industrial court, alleging unfair labour practices.

Finally, there are an increasing number of instances where workers demand May Day and 16 June as paid worker holidays. In some cases this demand has already been won by unions.

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SOUTHERN AFRICAN
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RAVAN PRESS

IN TOWNSHIP TONIGHT!

South Africa's Black City Music and Theatre

A unique social history of over three centuries of black South Africa's city music, dance and theatre.

Against the harsh background of the apartheid system black popular culture is a dynamic force which continues to give life and hope to the people of the townships such as Soweto and Sharpeville. It has produced artists of international reputation — Abdullah Ibrahim (Dollar Brand), Miriam Makeba, Hugh Masekela — but they represent just a small fraction of this rich, vibrant and diverse urban culture. Every night musicians and other performers draw enthusiastic audiences to dance halls, jazz clubs and shebeens throughout the townships. It is a culture which has a long and complex history.

This book explores that history, taking us from indigenous musical traditions into the world of the slave orchestras, penny whistlers, clergyman-composers, the gumboot dances of the dockers and mineworkers, and the touring minstrelsy and vaudeville acts. It traces the emergence of the first jazz bands — the Darktown Strutters, the Merry Blackbirds, the Jazz Maniacs and the *Xarabi*, *kwela* and *mbaqanga* dance styles. It records the development of black theatre from the first all-black musicals, to the popular drama workshops and the internationally successful Market Theatre, Johannesburg.

At the same time the author, a distinguished social historian, anthropologist and musicologist, examines the social, political and economic environment within which these developments took place: slavery, diamond and gold discoveries, the industrial explosion in the Transvaal, the boom and destruction of Sophiatown, and the consolidation of apartheid.

In Township Tonight! is a tribute to the resilience and achievements of black South African artists who, in the author's words, have 'humanised a wasteland of oppression and neglect'. It is a book which will be of great interest to social historians, musicologists, jazz enthusiasts and all those concerned about contemporary South Africa and its development.

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TWO DOGS AND FREEDOM

Township Children Speak Out

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One finds here honest answers and the refreshing absence of ideological bias inevitable in adult interpretations of the same issues.

On the fringes of the world the children depict, and in the words they use, one detects the presence of the adults who (in many ways) influence and control their perceptions. But this does not diminish the brightness of a future in which eight-year old Moagi 'would like to have a wife and two children, a boy and a girl, and a big house and two dogs and freedom.'

This book is the result of a project of The Open School, a cultural education programme that runs workshops for young people.

"Out of the candour of childhood comes a picture of the present in the black townships, sad, funny, brave; chilling and shaming. These are not the tender years, for black children. Out of the expectations of these same children comes a longing for freedom, generous to all South Africans. We need to listen."

— Nadine Gordimer

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