

# UMSEBENZI



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Voice of the South African Communist Party

# Stop De Klerk!

In the transition period, De Klerk has a clear economic plan. He aims to entrench, even more, white minority power and privilege, BEFORE a new democratic government is elected. This is why De Klerk is in such a great hurry to hand over even more power to the local monopolies and to international capital. This will make it difficult for a new democratic government to restructure the economy to overcome the massive social and economic effects of apartheid.

The new tax, VAT, is part of this. We are now forced to pay VAT on basics like food and medicine.

But the bosses are exempted from paying about R6 billion a year in VAT on machinery and equipment! VAT is just one way that the tax burden is being shifted away from companies and onto the poor.

That R6 billion a year which is being left in the pockets of the bosses is money that could be used by the government to pay for desperately needed social services. Instead, De Klerk is taxing the poor and handing over services like health, transport and housing to the private sector.

It doesn't take a genius to see that where profit governs the supply of social services, the poor and oppressed will be the last to receive them.

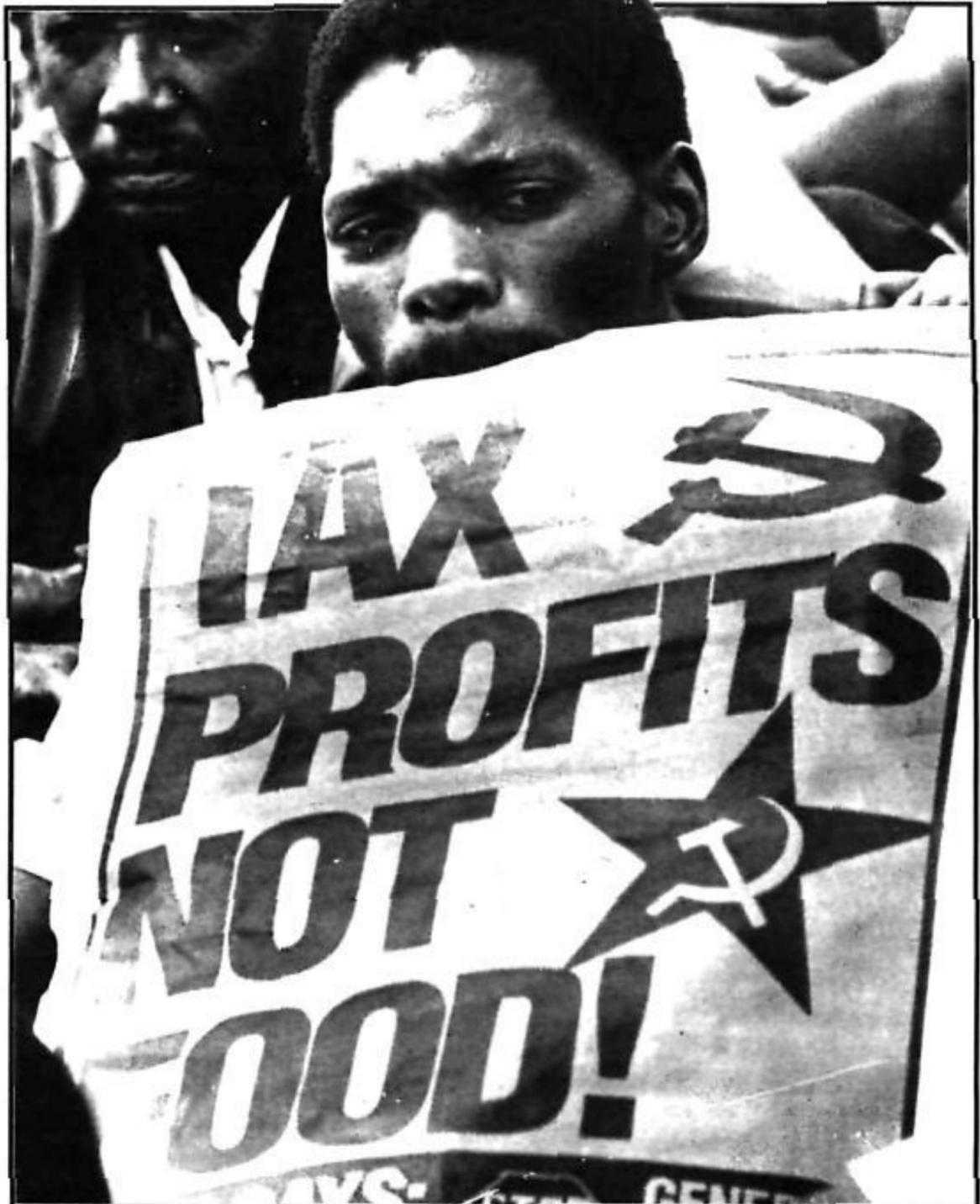
This is De Klerk's economic conspiracy. He wants market forces to continue the job which apartheid politics began.

**HALT ALL  
UNILATERAL  
ECONOMIC  
RESTRUCTURING NOW!**



Read Umsebenzi Comment

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Soweto anti-VAT march, and the message to De Klerk is clear: Tax the bosses, not workers

Photo: Elmond Jiyane

**Self-defence: Tactics & the operational plan**

★ See Pages 10 & 11



**What kind of Interim Government do we want?**

★ See Page 6

## PARTY NEWS

# What does your branch have to say about the

Discussions, debates and workshops in and out of party branches on the Draft SACP Manifesto and Draft Constitution are occurring country-wide.

Comments are also being received from party structures and individuals abroad.

A few of the comments are harsh: "We can see that a determined effort has been made



## CONGRESS

to write the draft (manifesto) in a language which is accessible to workers and broad masses of the people.

"But in so doing the draft has become simplistically descriptive and devoid of any analytical thrust... In our opinion the draft is fatally

flawed and cannot be turned into a satisfactory manifesto..."

Others views are markedly different. "We congratulate the comrades responsible for the first draft and look forward to the next draft." (London).

"I was excited to read the new draft manifesto in the United States where I am

studying... In general the program is exciting and open, democratic and mobilising, directing and giving solutions, with strong emphases. My criticisms are given within this overall framework." (Long serving activist presently studying).

"The conference adopted the draft manifesto with some few additions." (Transkei

SACP region).

But the words of approval are always, appropriately, accompanied by suggested changes and criticisms.

At this point the process of reporting back on branch, district and regional discussion of the drafts is not complete. It is, therefore, not possible yet to give any overall perspective on discussions and

# Forward to our 8th co

Party structures around the country are immersed in preparation for our 8th congress, which will be held in Johannesburg from December 4 to 8.

Over 400 delegates, the majority of them workers, are expected to attend. But intensive debate and discussion is involving each and every member of the SACP.

The theme of congress is: 'The future is democratic socialism!'

Packages containing our draft manifesto and draft constitution have been sent to regional offices for distribution, along with a special newsletter, *Congress News*, which outlines some of the tasks facing branches in the run-up to congress.

### The programme

Registration for congress will start on Wednesday 4 December.

The opening address will be delivered on the 5th by party

## ★ SUPPORT THE PARTY!

We will have plenty of party media on sale throughout congress — including T-shirts and badges, copies of *African Communist*, *Umsebenzi*, and books about the SACP. These will be sold for cash, so bring as much as you can afford!



## CONGRESS

chairperson Dan Tloome. He will be followed by our guest speakers — ANC president Nelson Mandela and Cosatu general-secretary Jay Naidoo.

Most of congress will be taken up by discussion in commissions, which will look at three key areas:

- The constitution.
- The manifesto.
- Party-building.

Apart from delegates and our regional leadership, congress will also be attended by party veterans, the Interim Leadership Group, and the Central Committee

We have invited observers from fraternal organisations such as the ANC and Cosatu, and a number of guests from socialist organisations in other parts of the world.

### One delegate one vote

An independent electoral committee will oversee the entire election procedure at congress, and provide a report on its findings.

Branches should send their lists of nominations to their regional offices as soon as possible. However, nominations will also be taken from the floor on the first day of congress. Voting will take place throughout Saturday, and all delegates will be entitled to vote. ★



★ 'The future is democratic socialism', the theme of this year's party congress, is already being

## Into the future: Guiding principles for

The party's objectives for the future are spelt out clearly in section 4 (guiding principles) of the Draft Constitution, which is currently being debated in party structures.

### Guiding principles

In leading the working class towards national and social emancipation the Party is guided by those principles of Marxism which have proven universal validity by historical experience. The foundations for these principles were laid by Karl Marx and Friedrich



## CONGRESS

Engels and enriched by Marxist revolutionaries among whom Lenin occupies a foremost position. In applying the general principles of Marxism the SACP is, in the first place, concerned with their indigenous elaboration and application to the concrete realities of our own developing situation. More particularly, the Communist Party will work:

1. To end the system of capitalist exploitation in South

Africa and establish a democratic socialist society based on the common ownership of, and participation in, and control by the producers of the key means of production. Such a society will respect and protect all personal non-exploitative property and such other private property as may be necessary for effective economic development and growth.

2. To organise, educate and lead our working class in pursuit of this strategic aim and the more immediate aim of winning the objectives of the

# Party's Draft Manifesto?

criticisms. But it may be useful for comrades to get a preliminary sense of what others are saying.

For instance, there is a fairly widespread concern about the apparent dropping of "Leninism" in the draft manifesto. "We commit ourselves to return socialism to its true and original vocation as envisaged by Marx, Engels 'and many

other great socialist pioneers.' Are we afraid to mention Lenin? Or is he too now out of favour? But we should discuss Leninism because many of the concepts for which Stalin was blamed began with him." (party veteran).

There is also unhappiness in a number of branches with the use of the concept "democratic socialism". "Why do we

need to qualify socialism in this way? Isn't socialism inherently democratic?" argues one comrade in the Transvaal.

His view is echoed in almost identical terms by comrades in an East London branch.

Although the draft constitution speaks explicitly about a "vanguard party", it is clear that many comrades want to emphasise this aspect more forcefully.

The question of a mass party and a vanguard party is clearly going to be debated at our national congress. Can mass and vanguard be reconciled? Are they opposed to each other? "The SACP should have a mass character, but a vanguard function", suggests one Johannesburg central comrade.

It is clear that we will emerge from our congress with a strengthened manifesto and constitution.

The process of discussion and debate among our nearly 20 000 members to collectively develop a socialist perspective for South Africa is almost certainly unprecedented in our country.

But it is also clear that the debate will and must continue on all these, and many other, crucial questions in the months and years after December's congress.

• If you have not received copies of the draft manifesto or the draft constitution, contact your region NOW! ★

# ongress!



taken up by our cadres

## the Communist Party of the 1990s

national democratic revolution which is inseparably linked to it. The main content of the national democratic revolution is the national liberation of the African people in particular, and the black people in general, the destruction of the economic and political power of the racist ruling class, and the establishment of one united state of peoples power in which working class interests will be dominant and in which economic conditions will be created making it possible to move steadily towards social eman-

ipation and, eventually, the total abolition of the exploitation of person by person.

3. To participate in and strengthen the liberation alliance of all classes and strata whose interests are served by the immediate aims of the national democratic transformation. This alliance is expressed through the liberation front headed by the African National Congress.

4. To spread the widest possible understanding of our basic ideology and its application to South African conditions, par-

ticularly among the working class.

5. To combat racism, tribalism, sex discrimination, regionalism, chauvinism and all forms of narrow nationalism.

6. To promote the ideas of proletarian internationalism and the unity of the workers of South Africa and the world, and to encourage an ongoing international dialogue with all organisations which are committed to a socialist future, and to act in solidarity with all struggles for liberation and social emancipation. ★

## Border regional congress: Under the junta's nose



### ORGANISATION: REGIONAL WORK

The Border regional congress was hearing a report about the destabilisation of democratic structures by Ciskei's military junta under OupaGqozo. The SACP has been a particular target for such actions. As if to illustrate the point, the junta's agents at that very moment were ripping down the SACP banner displayed outside the congress venue.

The regional congress of the SACP in Border was held at the Bisho. Fort Hare campus on September 21. It was the first of a series of regional congresses presently being held nationwide to produce fully elected SACP regional leaderships.

The Border region, with 3964 members in 65 branches at the time of its congress, may well become the biggest party region in the country. Although Transvaal has over 5300 members, it is in the process of sub-dividing into five separate regions.

The development of the Border region in the new situation was greatly assisted by the fact that, since the late 1970s, a strong underground SACP leadership core was present in the region.

Indeed, Border was represented two years ago at the 7th SACP congress in Cuba.

Speaking at the regional congress about this underground core, re-elected Border chairperson Matthew Makalima said: "The core helped the party to be firmly grounded. Within its ranks it has seasoned cadres from MK, the trade unions, and the MDM formations."

The combined experiences of these cadres "became a good ingredient for the building of the party."

The newly elected Border SACP leadership includes five MK cadres trained externally, three internal MK operatives, MDM leaders, and Barend Schuitema from the religious front.

The chairperson is Matthew Makalima, the secretary is Skenjana Roji, the treasurer is Trevor Campbell, and additional members are Thobile Mseleni, Penrose Niloni, Smuts Ngonyama, Victor Nyezi, Busisiwe Dinga, Neumisa Kondlo, Barend Schuitema, Mzwandile Masala, Bongzi Zokwe, Boyce Soci, Andile Sishuba and Vuyo Jack. ★



Send articles about developments in your party branch or region to:

Umsebenzi

PO Box 1027

Johannesburg 2000.

You can write in any South African language!

## UMRABULO

I believe there are only two kinds of people you can rely on: A good communist and a good believer. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, as we know, is the latter.

I, however, take issue with his recent remarks that there is "no way a Christian could be a member of the communist party", because "you cannot be a person of faith and one of no faith".

Although he pays fulsome tribute to the contribution of the SACP to the fight against injustice, Archbishop Tutu sees an inconsistency between Christian positions and "classical communism".

Many believers who have joined, and are continuing to join, our party would not agree with him. They see faith and spirituality as a way of acting and living. And they experience in the practice of our party a more valid expression of this spirituality than can be found in most of South Africa's political formations who pay lip service to Christian positions.

Our party's message of egalitarianism, of unconditional commitment to the poor, of liberatory hope is, in its ethical content, closer to the true foundation of Christ's social teaching than the actual practice of so many in history who repeat a daily ritual of faith without a glimmer of charity.

It is partly because so many crimes against humanity have been committed under the cover of faith that "classical communism" has dismissed religion as the "opium of the people". I happen to believe that this oversimplified aphorism is both unmarxist and undialectical. It is precisely because of

**IF YOU WANT  
FAITH,  
YOU'VE  
GOT IT  
(JUST DON'T EXPECT ME TO  
HAVE FAITH IN EVIL)**

## UMRABULO



A personal column by  
**JOE SLOVO**

liberation giants like Tutu, those who have committed themselves to the Kairos document and the growing strength of the school of liberation theology in many parts of the world, that we endorse the statement made by the Nicaraguan Sandinistas that:

"Our experience shows that, when Christians, relying on their faith, can respond to the needs of the people and history, their belief stimulates their

revolutionary militancy. Our experience shows that a person can be both a believer and, at the same time, a consistent revolutionary and that there is no insurmountable contradiction between the two."

There is, undoubtedly, a great deal in the practice of the previously existing socialist states towards religion which poses a real problem to true believers. The lack of democracy which infected every level of social life in these countries showed itself also in an attitude of intolerance, and even acts of persecution of religious communities. To dispose of the future of the socialist project because of these distortions is as groundless as it would be to dispose of the Christian inheritance because of the massive crimes (not least the crimes of apartheid) which have been committed in its name over the centuries.

**Boesak's worry**

Recently comrade Allan Boesak (whose election as chairperson of the Western Cape region of the ANC we heartily welcome) has reflected publicly on the ANC/SACP alliance. What is this alliance about? In brief, the alliance between the ANC and SACP reflects two major streams of revolutionary consciousness - class and national - which in our country have had a unique and mutual impact on one another. The ANC's ideological thrust - with a bias in favour of the black working people - clearly owes something to the influence of the party. But, equally, the party's own indigenous elaboration of its strategic perspectives was influenced

by its long-standing relationship with the national movement.

Today the basis of the organisational alliance is a broad consensus between the party and the ANC on a shared vision of the post-apartheid society and how to get there. Comrade Boesak concedes the normality of political alliances and coalitions, but is worried about dual membership which, he claims, cannot be "explained logically".

Well, the 2 000 delegates at the July conference of the ANC (commonly accepted as the most democratic political event in our country's history) had no problems at all about the logic of dual membership. Well-known communists received a most generous share at the top of the poll. This happened because the logic of more than a half century of experience of the alliance had provided ample evidence of the trusted role which communists had played in building the ANC.

What of the future? A political alliance is obviously not indissoluble and, of course, there could come a time when members of the alliance may go their separate ways.

In the meanwhile, our interventions in this debate must take into account what the regime is trying to achieve by its anti-communist offensive. It is a continuation of the same offensive which for dubbed anti-apartheid militants like Boesak as communists. The design is clear: to hit at the ANC through its long-standing alliance.

Currently, among the key targets of this offensive are the middle strata among the black minorities whom De Klerk hopes to win as allies. Comrade Boesak is right to insist that we need to address the fears of these minorities whether it be about the atheism of communists or the way socialism was practised in eastern Europe.

But the reality of our own history also needs to be expressed. Despite the long-standing participation of many communists in the ANC, no-one can suggest that there exists even a hint of an anti-religious tendency in its ranks. Indeed, the ANC's proposed Bill of Rights (drafted by a group which included communists) proclaims the inalienable right to religious belief.

Communists like Moses Kotane helped to found this tradition which, among other reasons, serves to explain why a deeply religious ANC leader like Chief Albert Luthuli placed so much value on Kotane's dual membership. ★

## Ken Owen's conversion

*Sunday Times* editor Ken Owen seems to have had a conversion on the road to Beijing. Forgotten totally are his fulminations about Tiananmen Square. In his regular Sunday morning anti-communist sermon (October 20) he says that he emerged from his recent visit to China impressed and "stunned". It seems that socialism does work after all!

But, Owen tries to explain, that this is due to the fact that "after a dozen years of economic liberalisation people talk not of redistribution but of privatisation, not of past injustice but of 'opportunity'."

We are not told how many of the 1,3 billion Chinese he talked to, but most of them would have told him that the foundations of China's economic advance were laid by a massive redistribution and a redressing of past injustice. The free trade zones he mentions are merely adjuncts of an economy which remains overwhelmingly socialist and socialised. This is not disputed by Owen.

But what impresses this liberal most of all is that "six Chinese farmers would live comfortably on any Soweto plot because they use space, as they use time, frugally." And, what's more, "they eat anything from snakes to birds' nests and water buffalo."

Knowing Owen's addiction to the sanctity of private wealth and property he should choose his words more carefully. Some bright spark at the ANC (inspired by Owen's arithmetic) might take his calculations seriously and decide that 20 Soweto families could live comfortably on Owen's plot...if they used his space "frugally". ★

# De Klerk's economic strategy

In February 1991, the Economic Advisory Council, which advises De Klerk on economic policy, published proposals for a 5-year economic strategy.

The draft proposals give a good idea of the thinking of big business and government on restructuring the economy. These include:

- lowering company tax;
- reducing the government's role in the economy and in providing social services;
- deregulating the labour market, by weakening legal protection for workers and minimising the role of the trade unions; and
- linking wage negotiations to productivity.

All these measures are designed to tilt the economic balance of forces even more decisively in favour of big business. This explains why the regime is in such a hurry to embark on unilateral measures to restructure the economy. The aim is to introduce far-reach-

**VAT is just one way in which the tax burden is being shifted from companies onto the poor**

ing measures which will tie the hands of any future government. Any attempt to reverse these measures would incur the wrath of the monopolies and international capital.

The introduction of VAT is in line with all this. It has shifted the tax burden onto the poor. While the poor are being forced to pay VAT on basic necessities like food and medicine, corporations are being exempted from paying VAT on capital goods (equipment, machinery, etc.). About R6 billion of tax on capital equipment which should go to the government to pay for social services, housing, and hospi-

tals is going into the pockets of business.

VAT is just one way in which the tax burden is being shifted away from companies onto the poor. In the last few years the amount of tax collected from individuals has increased from 40% to 70%. In other words, there has been a massive shift of the tax burden away from business onto individuals.

This is creating a situation which will make it difficult for a future democratic government to finance the reconstruction process. Any attempt to do so will meet with threats of economic sabotage, invest-

ment strikes and capital flight. Already we have seen the hue and cry which greeted the mere discussion of a wealth tax in an ANC seminar.

Selling off state assets, or privatisation, is another way in which the regime is trying to vest all economic power in the hands of the monopolies. When privatisation began a few years ago, many people realised the regime was trying to deny a future democratic state access to resources needed to run the country. As a result of mass opposition, the regime officially suspended privatisation.

But, in the meantime, they have been devising ways to bring in privatisation through the back door. This is being done through:

- the "commercialisation" of state corporations (like posts and telecommunications);
- the breaking up of state enterprises into "business units"; and
- the contracting out of state functions to the private sector.

By making state corporations run on lines of maximum profit (as opposed to making efficiency the criterion), the way is being prepared for the selling off of these units to the very monopolies which own the rest of the economy. ★

## Our message to De Klerk: Halt your economic restructuring!

The regime has tried to conceal its programme of unilateral economic restructuring. It claims it is not a political issue, but really a technical question of how to manage the economy "more efficiently".

But they have been caught with their pants down. In particular, the anti-VAT campaign has helped to lay bare their cynical economic strategy. So now the regime is trying to shuffle the issue into a side-room of the negotiations process. In response to demands by the trade unions, in particular, for structured negotiations on economic restructuring, De Klerk hopes to deflect the issue into a working group of the All Party Conference.

The reason for this is obvious. De Klerk doesn't want to get tied down into negotiations with an organised constituency like COSATU. He is hoping economic questions will be lost in the welter of political and constitutional issues discussed at the APC. With all the pro-apartheid, and free-market forces at the APC, the government hopes to be able to diffuse opposition to its economic programme. In the meantime it hopes to push ahead with economic restructuring.

**The government must enter into an economic negotiating forum in which all the major players in the economy participate!**

- This forum must:
- Ensure that any economic restructuring during the transition period is broadly acceptable; and
  - Negotiate transitional arrangements to address burning economic problems facing the masses of our people.

**The government must immediately halt all unilateral restructuring of the economy! ★**

## Pretoria and the International Monetary Fund

De Klerk's programme of economic restructuring has unique South African features. It is being orchestrated by a minority government, in order to pre-empt a future democratic government from having control over the country's resources.

But the process also has many features in common with economic restructuring in Africa and other parts of the world.

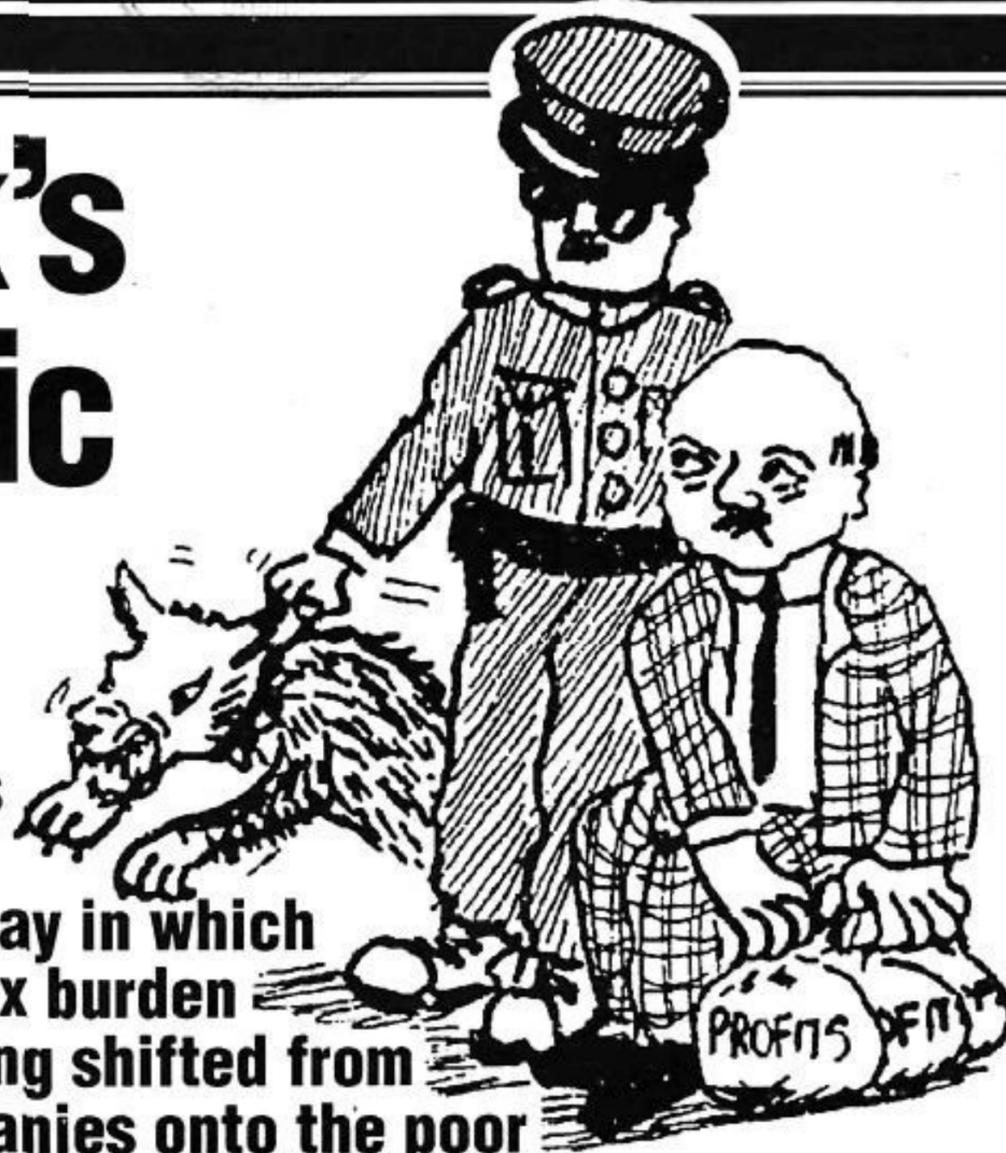
The common feature in this is a programme which has been introduced by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank - known as "structural adjustment". This package incorporates all the elements that De Klerk's economic strategy involves: privatisation, deregulation, restructuring of taxation, and unfettered conditions for local and foreign capital to exploit

the country's resources.

It is no accident that the IMF was the key advisor to the South African regime around the introduction of VAT. In fact, the regime ignored its own advisers when determining the rate and level of VAT. Instead it relied on the IMF to do its mathematical calculations, and determine the rate!

This shameless subservience to the dictates of the IMF has completely ignored the fact that its structural adjustment programme has been a social and economic disaster where it has been applied.

It has been specifically rejected by bodies like the OAU and Non-Aligned Movement, whose member states have experience of its effects. ★



## THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT DEBATE

## All-embracing interim government

In this version, the existing government resigns en bloc. The present constitution is suspended. An all-embracing interim government is constituted. This IG rules by decree. It is completely sovereign (that is, it has ultimate power) over all aspects of running South Africa.

### Advantages

- The present government has no right to rule. It must make way for a more neutral and more acceptable IG.
- The present government is also the major obstacle to creating a favourable climate for real negotiations. The sooner it resigns en bloc the sooner real progress can be made.
- The ANC's phased approach to the lifting of sanctions (as adopted at its July Conference) is based on three phases. The second phase, when financial sanctions may be lifted, is marked by the formation of an IG. But this assumes an all-embracing IG. The logic is that an all-embracing IG will have to govern the country, and it will need substantial finances. This three phase approach has already been widely canvassed internationally.

### Disadvantages

The disadvantages of an all-embracing IG are of two kinds:

- **Is it practical?** Given the present balance of power, and given the government's outright refusal to resign and suspend the constitution in the interim period, can our demand be won? Of course, this argument that an all-embracing IG might be difficult to win is, on its own, not sufficient. After all, there are many things in the past which the government has refused outright, but which we have won through hard struggle. If an all-embracing IG is critical for a transition to democracy then we might just



## INTERIM GOVERNMENT

# What kind do we want?

The SACP, our allies in the tripartite alliance, and now the broader Patriotic Front are demanding an Interim Government (or Transitional Authority). But what kind of IG are we demanding? At present there is a debate within our ranks about this. There are broadly two different versions of the kind of IG that is desirable. In the interests of encouraging discussion and debate we present these two versions, each with its own advantages and disadvantages.

have to slog away until we win this demand. But there are also other disadvantages:

- **Is it desirable?** Who will be represented in an IG? We don't yet know, of course. But remember, an IG would be formed before any democratic elections. So the composition of the IG would be the result of some kind of compromise between the main parties. There are at least three possibilities: [i] A joint ANC-NP arrangement; [ii] An ANC-NP-IFP troika; [iii] A broader multi-party set-up.

A troika arrangement is almost certainly the worst option of all. Number iii is perhaps the most desirable and the most likely. But in the context of an all-embracing IG any one of the three possibilities above contains enormous problems:

### Joint responsibility, unequal power

An all-embracing IG that takes over the complete running of

the country will have responsibility for a huge range of things — including housing, education, local government, water affairs, prison services, etc. But it is a purely interim structure, lasting perhaps 18 months or so. And it is a structure whose policies, like its composition, will be based on compromises between parties with vastly different agendas and vastly different numerical support. This means there is no way it will be able to transform existing apartheid South Africa. It will not have the time, coherence or ability to move decisively.

In short, the ANC alliance will carry joint responsibility for governing what remains essentially an apartheid South Africa. There will be shared responsibility but very limited power to begin to change the terrible social and economic heritage of apartheid.

### Wasting our cadres

There is one other disadvantage to an all-embracing IG. The ANC is emerging out of

30 years of illegality, the SACP out of 40. Rebuilding our formations remains a massive challenge.

Of course, sooner rather than later the ANC alliance hopes to govern this country. But can we afford right now to have most of our best cadres tied up in the Union Buildings, bogged down in trying to run the country jointly with the IFP, Solidarity, the NP and heavens knows who else?

## Scaled-down interim government

In this version the IG is seen as an interim mechanism specifically related to the negotiations and transitional process.

Its function would be to level the playing field. It would supervise the process of negotiations, constitution-making and the first elections. This scaled-down IG would not attempt to take over all functions of the existing government, but it

would have supreme authority over at least four critical areas:

- the security forces, to ensure they were not deployed to favour one party;

- the electoral process (voters rolls, actual polling, etc.);

- the public media — specifically the SABC, to ensure some parties are not unfairly privileged; and

- defined areas of budget and finance, to ensure the regime does not unilaterally move the economic goalposts in the present transitional period.

### Advantages

A scaled-down IG avoids (or diminishes) the problems of an all-embracing IG.

- It is a more immediately realisable demand. It will be hard for our opponents to resist its obvious reasonableness.

- It also greatly diminishes the problem of carrying joint responsibility for an apartheid South Africa. Its role would be specific and narrowly defined.

- It would also bog down far fewer of our cadres.

### Disadvantages

- It can be argued whether a scaled-down IG would represent a real retreat or not from our legitimate demand. But there is no doubt that many comrades would see it as a back-down.

- In fact, would a scaled-down IG really be a government, rather than some kind of transitional mechanism?

- A scaled-down IG would complicate our whole phased sanctions strategy.

### Other points

There are other important issues which we have not touched upon, for example:

- Should there be an international component within the IG? This is a question that is relevant to both versions.

- An IG isn't the only way, and perhaps it is not the most effective way, in which we prevent the regime from ruling unilaterally. With or without an IG, mass struggle is crucial. ★

## A READER'S ADVICE ON THE PF: DON'T LET THE PARTY BE SEEN AS A MINORITY GROUP

Dear Editor

The decision to establish a patriotic front represents a major advance for the cause of democracy in our country. But I am worried by some aspects of the PF:

Why was there two-tier representation at the PF conference in Durban, with the ANC and the PAC enjoying double the representation of other

parties? The ANC is correctly placed in the first tier. It is by far the biggest political formation in the country. But who agreed to placing the PAC (and AZAPO, until it pulled out) alongside them?

If any party deserved recognition as one of the major players alongside the ANC, it is our party. At rallies and meetings the SACP has demon-

strated greater support than either the PAC or AZAPO managed at the height of their popularity. And who can deny that both are a long way past their peaks?

In addition, the only comparable survey indicated that the SACP is second only to the ANC in popular support.

But the primary question is not why were we excluded

from the ranks of the 'major players'. It is why these tiny parties were given special privileges.

Two questions now arise:

- Why did our negotiators agree to PAC and AZAPO demands about being regarded as 'major players'?

- And, having agreed to treat small parties like big ones, might our negotiators not do

so again, when the National Party and Inkatha demand equal status with the ANC in a post-apartheid government?

If and when it is tactically necessary I believe the SACP will take a back seat. But by demoting the SACP, are our negotiators not doing Pretoria's anti-communist work for them? — *Joe Staalman, Johannesburg* ★

## JOE SLOVO'S ADVICE TO THE PF: LET'S LEARN TO WALK TOGETHER BEFORE WE RUN

**O**n the final day of the Patriotic Front conference, Joe Slovo made an important intervention. His intervention helped to shape the conference's conception of the organisational and strategic character of the PF.

"I think we would all agree that what was accumulated at this conference is one of the richest struggle resources in our history. And it must not be squandered. It can be squandered in one of two ways. It can be squandered if we fail to take measures to consolidate and build upon it. And it can be squandered by a premature leap forward which fails to see the building of unity as a process.

In approaching our immediate unity prospects we must try to balance two conflicting imperatives.

- The first imperative is to maximise unity of purpose and united action by the patriotic forces, including those who have not yet seen fit to be among us.

- The second imperative is to safeguard the democratic integrity and independence of the myriad of organisations which make up the patriotic forces.

Two considerations flow from this approach. Firstly, we have to find a means of effective liaison and co-ordination to hammer out and implement agreed minimum platforms. Secondly, we must avoid, in our enthusiasm, creating a super-executive which binds the constituents and paralyses their right to act bilaterally, multi-laterally or unilaterally outside the front on issues pertinent to their specific policies.



Let me take an example. The SACP is committed to a longer term socialist perspective. (Incidentally, I noted that comrade Clarence Makwetu in his opening address to this conference said that the PAC is committed to "overthrow white domination and establish a socialist state"... Perhaps this is a non-antagonistic difference with the ANC which the SACP and PAC share in common!) In the coming negotiations the SACP (and I presume the PAC) position will be informed by our longer term socialist perspective. In the SACP we certainly have no intention of re-

nouncing either this perspective, or our independent right to propagate it.

Perhaps the most successful example of a political front is the Tripartite Alliance (even if some people don't like it). Initially it grew out of united action in the 50s and this eventually led to institutionalised structures. For instance, there are regular meetings of the three secretary generals, and tripartite meetings of the executives. But neither of these structures can take binding decisions on behalf of the three organisations. In other words, there is consultation and co-ordination, but no

"third force" in an organisational sense.

Translated into the patriotic front, this experience suggests an approach which we can apply mutatis mutandis - as we ex-lawyers like to say.

We propose that the existing liaison group (which has proved its capacity) should continue with a mandate to encourage common actions and approaches on certain minimum agreed platforms. And in the first place to campaign on the issues on which we have already agreed.

In the initial period it should make recommendations on both strategic and tactical issues to the constituents of the front for the consideration of the collectives which lead the individual organisations.

It should take steps to broaden the base of the front by attracting those patriotic forces who, for whatever reason, did not see fit to attend this conference. In order to give effect to its mandate it should aim to organise events like this one (from time to time) to reflect on broader issues. In between it should organise smaller meetings of, say, one or two representatives from each organisation to ensure an ongoing exchange of views and ideas.

Finally, I must emphasise again that we see unity as a process. There is no essential conflict between unity and diversity.

But we must remember that a unity which artificially frustrates diversity will be an unworkable unity. So let us learn to walk together before we try to run." ★

# The Patriotic Front

## CURRENT AFFAIRS/REPRESSION

# 'Just in case I die...'

**O**n Friday 11th October Vuyani "Mpinga" Mabaxa reported to the SACP head office in Johannesburg that he was being followed by unknown people. He feared for his life.

Two days later, at 7.30am on the morning of Sunday 13th October, he received a telephone call at home. He was heard saying, "I'm coming now". Immediately after he left a blue police kombi (registration number BHM 925 B) was seen driving at high speed in his street. Half an hour later, in full view of numerous eyewitnesses, he was chased and shot by the occupants of this police vehicle.

According to the police, comrade Mabaxa was armed and he fired at them first. This is flatly contradicted by eyewitnesses who insist Mabaxa was unarmed — in fact he was not carrying anything.

The police say two white policemen, a constable Botha and a constable Brits, shot him. According to eyewitnesses, a black constable, Mukwevho,



★ Diepkloof turns red as SACP and ANC members say their last farewell to Cde Vuyani Mabaxa

who stays in zone 6 Diepkloof, fired the final shot at Mabaxa at close range while he was lying on the ground. (This constable Mukwevho is well known to comrade Mabaxa's family, since he was involved in raiding Mabaxa's house during the state of emergency.)

Onlookers say that after the wounded comrade had fallen, and had been shot at close range, the police then placed a gun near the injured Mabaxa.

Although Baragwanath

Hospital was a few hundred metres away, and although comrade Mabaxa was still alive, the police refused to let by-standers and later Mabaxa's own father take him to hospital. They also prevented them from rendering any first aid assistance to the mortally wounded comrade.

Comrade Mabaxa's death occurred just three weeks after his closest friend and former class-mate, Papo Manyakalle, had also been gunned down.

Three eyewitnesses to comrade Mabaxa's slaying were arrested on the spot by the police and their whereabouts are not known.

Comrade Mabaxa, like his friend Manyakalle, was a staunch SACP member. He served on the steering committee of our Diepkloof branch. He was also active in the ANC Youth League and he worked as a full-time organiser for the National Education Health and Allied Workers Union. ★

## Timol: Dedicated underground fighter

Twenty years ago, Ahmed Timol was killed while in police custody. The police claimed that he jumped out of a window of John Vorster Square police station while being interrogated.

The apartheid killers had removed from our ranks a wonderful, generous human being.

Timol had taken a keen interest in our struggle while still a student at high school and his interest increased at teachers' training college.

As a teacher, he took a passionate interest in education and in the development of students and was immensely popular with both students and

**SACP Central Committee member Essop Pahad pays tribute to Ahmed Timol (right), a member of the ANC and party underground who died in police custody 20 years ago**



teachers.

Coming from a devout Muslim family, Timol was well-versed in the teachings and practice of Islam. His political dream — a socialist South Africa — was consistent with the progressive, humane and democratic traditions of Islam.

In the mid-60s, after a pilgrimage to Mecca, Timol went to London. His interest in Marxism-Leninism flourished and, after joining the SACP,

he studied for a year at the Lenin Party School in Moscow. This proved to be a seminal experience as Timol would often relate with enthusiasm his experiences at the school and in the Soviet Union.

When asked to return home to help in the dangerous task of helping to build SACP and ANC underground structures, Timol accepted without hesitation. There was no room for the braggart and the boisterous in his character.

Back inside South Africa, Timol was captured by the security police. But he stood firm, even under interrogation. He refused to give in to his torturers and died on October 26, 1971 at the age of 30.

So many of our dearest comrades have been murdered while in custody. The police have claimed they slipped on a bar of soap, jumped from a window, or fell down stairs.

We demand that a judicial enquiry be held to determine the truth. We owe it to Ahmed Timol, as well as all the other patriots who have died while under arrest such as Looksmart Ngudle, Elijah Loza and Suliman Saloojee. ★

**'I know  
I cannot  
survive  
forever'**

A week after his friend's assassination and less than two weeks before his own death comrade Vuyani Mabaxa wrote this poem:

**JUST IN CASE I DIE**  
Please forgive me I must say these things:  
Please forgive my enemies  
Maybe their background is unfortunate,  
I am a very proud soldier of the movement.

I know I cannot survive forever  
I know many of my fellow combatants will survive forever  
Do not ask me why I know.

I know that freedom is around the corner.  
I know that when freedom is around the corner  
Many un-understandable things happen. Ask SWAPO and UNTAG  
This is called transition (a very funny word, Ne?)

I am very proud of the contribution I have made, though negligible.  
I have never been alone in this struggle.  
I have never had any regrets.  
I have found this struggle on.  
This struggle is on as I write this.  
And I will leave it on.  
Oh no I will participate as an ancestor,  
By the way I am an African.  
I am not more African than others.

Our people have a communal background (History)  
And I know a Communist future.  
Pass my warm childish greetings to the Young Lions. And most of all to iinkokheli zethu  
- Cdes NMR Mandela; OR Tambo; Joe Slovo; Harry Gwala; Peter Skosana and Jay Naidoo.

— "Mpinga"

**A**s democracy looms closer, and with it the inevitable loss of white economic privilege, the handsome liberal mask of this country's major newspapers is slipping.

For years they have presented themselves as the country's strongest champions of freedom of speech.

But now it seems there may be something in the pre-1990 argument that the newspapers' enthusiasm for freedom of speech would exist only as long as National Party repression succeeded in denying it - through imprisonment, exile or death - to anyone with anything to say.

As people begin to use the right of freedom of speech to say things the newspapers don't like, editors are rapidly losing their taste for it.

This was graphically demonstrated in the October 15 editorial comment in South Africa's biggest newspaper, *The Star*, which explicitly argued for the suppression of political debate in the ANC because it scared white people.

The target of the editorial was the "wealth tax" proposed by a participant in an ANC workshop a week earlier, and seized on gleefully by the press as a stick to beat the ANC.

This is part of an ongoing attempt to crack the foundation-stone of ANC economic policy: redistribution of wealth and restructuring South Africa's network of wealth distribution - acknowledged even by conservative economists as among the world's most unequal.

Although the newspapers pay lip-service to the need to redistribute (*The Star* calls it "the wholly honourable task of finding practical ways in which to give a fair deal to this country's majority"), the pattern of distort, attack, condemn is now so routine. The past month alone has seen three such efforts:

• On "ANC plans to national-



# The liberal mask is starting to slip

**The Media: Black and White and Read All Over**  
**STEVEN WOTWU**

ise the mines" allegedly articulated by president Nelson Mandela.

What Mandela actually said was that the ANC was committed to redistribution of wealth and resources in South Africa; that one means of achieving this was nationalisation of the mines; but that businessmen were welcome to

come up with their own proposals on how to achieve it. Most South African papers translated this into advocacy of nationalisation and attacked Mandela for it.

• On supposed threats by ANC secretary general Cyril Ramaphosa that a democratic government would not pay foreign debts incurred by the apartheid regime.

Ramaphosa's statement was, in fact, no more than a mild warning to foreign banks that a democratic government

would re-evaluate the terms of repayment of loans made to the De Klerk regime. His argument was quite simple: a democratically-elected government, operating on behalf of the entire population, could not be bound by the terms of repayment (the period, the interest rates etc.) agreed to by a regime operating on behalf of a tiny minority. None of this worried *The Star*: they reported Ramaphosa's statement as if he had threatened not to repay the loans at all.

• On alleged ANC plans to impose a "wealth-tax" equal to a third of the value of the tax-payers' property and payable over 10 years.

The idea is hardly radical. It was used in West Germany after World War 2 to generate revenue to rebuild the economy.

And, even when the storm of newspaper hysteria began, it was clear that the proposal came from an individual participant at a conference on affirmative action.

However good an idea it might be, it has never enjoyed the status of ANC policy, or even been discussed.

On all three issues, when the ANC managed to finally get its position on the various topics published, newspaper editors criticised it for changing its mind.

"No-one is quite sure which ANC statements should be taken as authoritative," mused *The Star* pompously. And in what must be the most bizarre piece of journalistic logic of 1991, *The Star* political correspondent Peter Fabricius breathlessly informed his readers that the wealth tax "has not been repudiated by a senior ANC economic spokesman".

(Must we assume that because Fabricius has not repudiated dishonest journalism he approves of it?)

To return, however, to the question of freedom of speech.

In its October 15 editorial comment, *The Star* argued: "What really matters is that (the wealth tax proposal) should have been put forward at all ... (the ANC) should try to ensure that such statements are not made in the first place." In other words, silence anyone who says anything "ordinary people" don't want to hear.

Ban debate, ban discussion. With friends like this, free speech cannot afford any enemies.

• Watch this space for the John Bishop story

**SELF-DEFENCE (a.k.a. SELF-PROTECTION)**

# TACTICS AND THE OPERATIONAL PLAN

## BUILDING SELF-DEFENCE UNITS

### Umsebenzi Series — Number 6

• Tactics and the operational plan



#### 1. Introduction

Tactics are the different methods and ruses used between opposing forces.

For example a boxer might use constant left jabs to wear his opponent down and at the right moment decide to connect with a devastating right hook.

In football high crosses into the penalty area are used to give strikers the chance to get a shot at goal.

Just as there are various tactics in sporting games so there are tactics in war situations.

There are different tactics for defence as there are for attack.

Since we are the defenders we must make a careful study and analysis of the tactics used by the hostile forces.

#### 2. Operational plan

Battle tactics, just as in sport, are used within the context of an overall plan or strategy.

This means being well aware of the overall situation - the operational situation:

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of our opponents?

- Where are they located?
- What assistance are they being given?
- What methods are they using?
- What weapons do they have and what is the state of their morale?
- How do our forces compare to theirs?
- How can we use the terrain to our advantage?

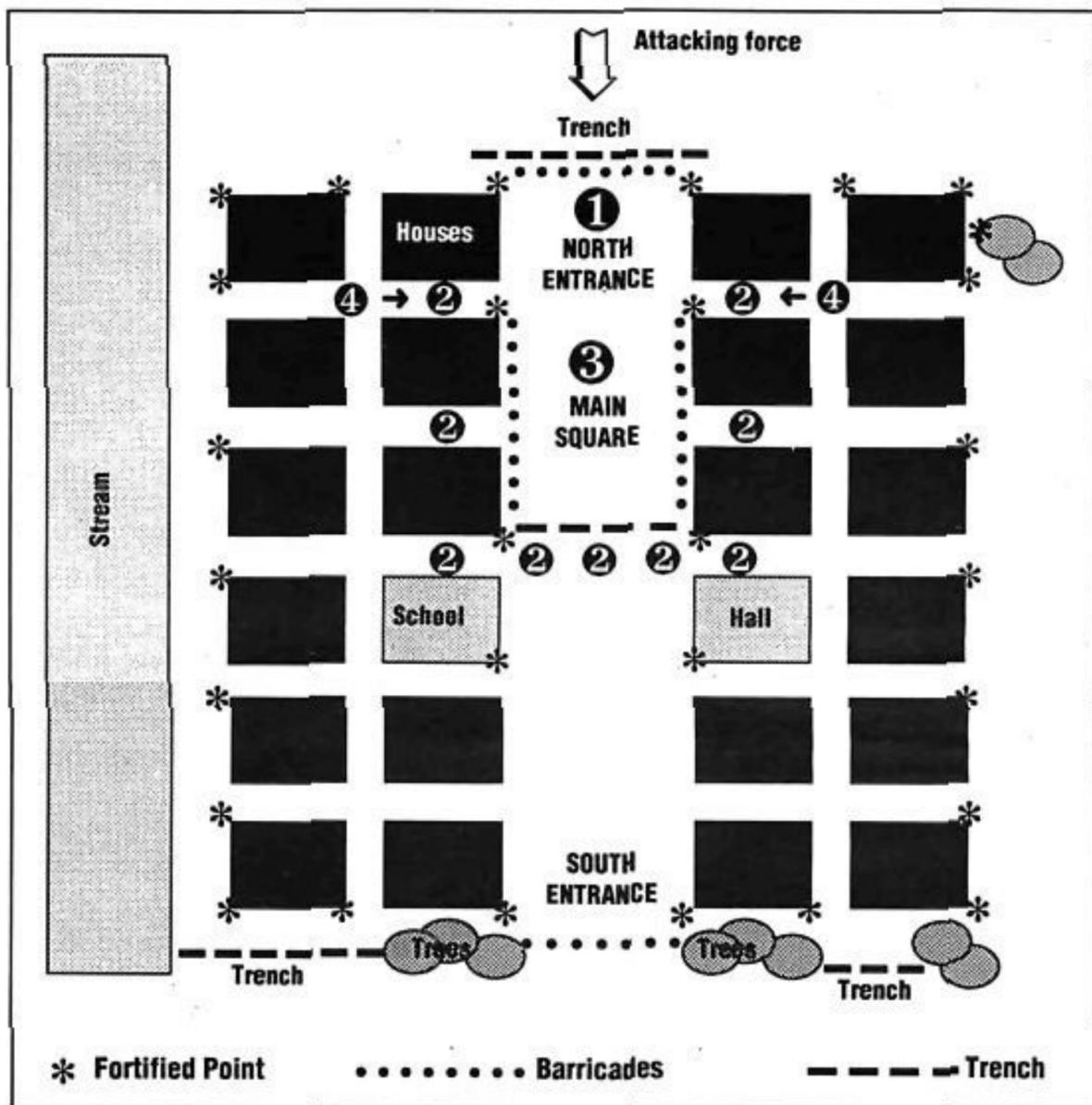
Understanding the situation enables us to decide what tactics we should employ.

This is our operational plan and it changes from time to time just as the overall strategy for a particular football or boxing match might.

#### 3. Developing the plan

If we are well organised then we are watching and observing every movement of our opponents and getting reports about their plans. We should not be caught by a surprise attack.

We have noticed for example that they generally prefer to attack as one solid body and usually do so from one or at the most two directions.



But we must keep a sharp watch out to see if they are assembling at other points and intend to attack from various directions.

They invariably get assistance so we must watch out to see what forces are assisting them and whether vehicles are accompanying them.

The presence of vehicles will indicate whether they intend to enter the township by the roads or side lanes.

Most important is to observe the size of the attacking force and what weapons are being carried.

All this advance information gives the Township De-

fence Committee (TDC) a general idea of what to expect and what defence plan to implement. This is of enormous advantage and can make all the difference to the outcome of the attack.

If there is time, the political leadership alert journalists and issue protests to the police and the authorities, demanding that the attack be stopped.

The TDC puts the defence force and entire township on alert.

When the authorities see that the township means business they might be forced to intervene and stop the attackers.

Everything in fact must be

done to attempt to achieve this.

The greatest victory is won when the objective — repelling an attack — is achieved without a shot fired or a blow struck.

#### 4. Into action

On a signal, all defence units and auxiliary forces take up their allotted positions and are ready to repulse the aggressors. All know exactly what to do and what is expected of them.

Everybody can see that the time spent in training is paying off and there will be a feeling of confidence with a high morale as a result.

## Get the complete series

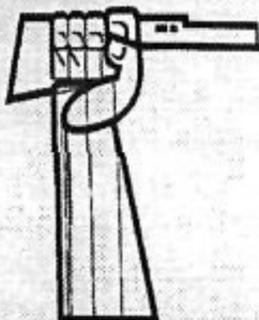
Have you missed previous editions of Umsebenzi, containing the earlier parts of our series on building self-defence units? Back copies of Umsebenzi, which include these articles, are still available from the head office of the SACP.

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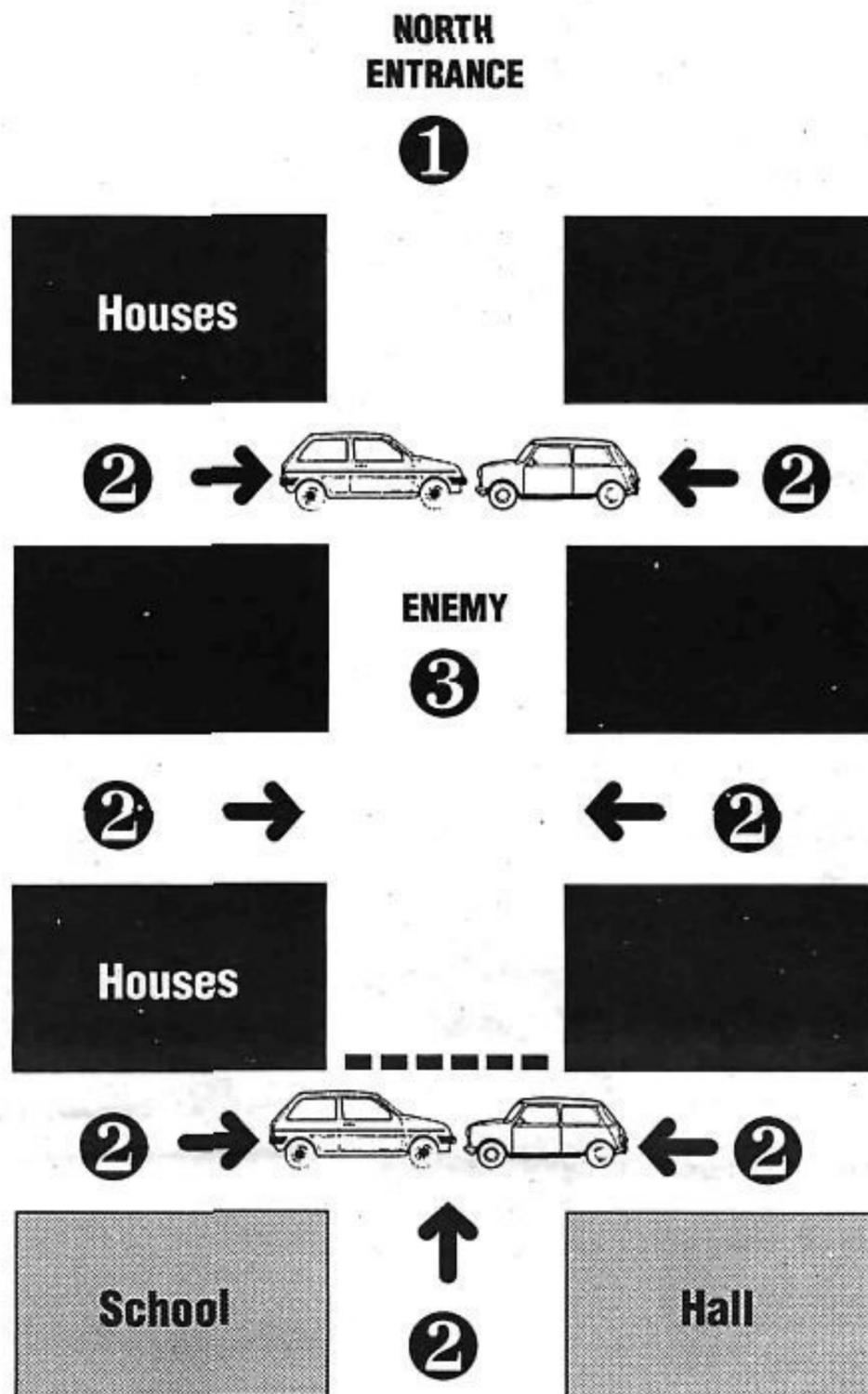
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Remember to include your own name and address!



# SPRINGING A TRAP



When the would-be aggressors see that the township residents are prepared to defend themselves and notice the barricades and fortifications which have appeared as if by magic, they will be apprehensive - no matter how many weapons they might have.

No matter how good the advance information, the TDC cannot be certain exactly when and where the attack might be launched.

The attack will begin suddenly and it must be the task of those defenders at the point of attack to resolutely hold back the aggressors even if initially outnumbered.

This is an extremely dangerous and decisive moment. It will quickly emerge where the main force is attacking and reinforcements must be rushed to that sector to help beat back the attack.

This will mean that some platoons will have to leave their sectors and that fewer sections will have to guard a number of streets where there is no immediate sign of attack.

They will keep vigilant in case of the sudden appearance of hostile forces in lightly guarded sectors.

In such an event they will put up resistance until they are reinforced.

## 5. Strong defence

In the section on barricades & fortifications in this series, a diagram was provided to illustrate a way of defending a township (see the diagram on page 10).

Natural and man-made objects such as woods, koppies, streams, dongas, barricades, ditches, trenches, and fortified points together form a defence system designed to give the defenders maximum protection and advantage.

Our tactics must utilise these fortifications in a skillful way so that they give the defenders advantages even over attack-

ers with superior firepower.

If the barricades and fortifications are strong enough the attackers will have to come right up to them.

They will be exposed to what firepower we have, as well as being vulnerable to blows from our clubs and bars and weapons such as gas guns or teargas canisters (which can be legally purchased by anyone). And they will be exposed to the devastating hail of missiles and fire bombs that must descend on them from every side.

Only very bold individuals indeed will endeavour to surmount the obstacles under such conditions.

If the attacking force proves too powerful then at a given signal the defenders will retreat, but in an orderly way, to the next line of defence.

## 6. Springing a trap

In the diagram, the defenders at point 1 protecting the north entrance retreat to secondary positions (2) to lure the attackers into a trap.

This planned retreat allows the attackers into the square (3).

But the square becomes a "no-go" area surrounded by barricades and buses or trucks driven into positions to trap the attackers.

At the appropriate moment, vehicles at point 4 can be driven across the north entrance to block any escape.

Reinforcements will have been lying in wait in the streets around the square waiting for action.

The attackers will find themselves trapped in the

square with the defenders secure behind the barricades and vehicles.

A withering firepower can be laid into the square. Thousands of stones and missiles will descend onto the heads of the luckless attackers.

At the point when their courage has deserted them - as it must - the signal for a counter-attack is given and the defence units show that they too can go on to the attack.

A powerful charge will take place and in a few moments can send the enemy scattering for their lives.

## 7. Conclusion

The above is a simplified description of a tactical situation. But battles are actually simple affairs.

What counts is the preparation, the discipline, the boldness, the tactics, the correct use of the weaponry and the terrain.

Space does not allow us to go on and on dealing with different tactical situations. We are simply giving a general idea, based on one possible example.

There are many trained comrades with tactical knowledge who will know how to plan defence and counter-attack.

What is required is dedicated training in various tactics and manoeuvres.

Included must be a plan for the evacuation of non-combatants from the township to places of safety should the situation become extremely bad.

★ To be continued

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Nicaragua's Sandinista Liberation Front (FSLN) has its eyes on victory again.

The Sandinistas emerged from their national congress recently with a wide-ranging programme for rebuilding the front, after the election loss in 1989. The main objective now is to strengthen the FSLN and

## Sandinistas have eyes on the prize

move towards an election victory in 1996.

A wave of younger members have joined the FSLN since its 1989 defeat, and brought with them a new level of militance which is already changing the

dynamic of the front: trade unions and younger members are agitating for a more militant development of independent FSLN programmes.

The national leadership accepted responsibility for sev-

eral errors of judgement in the past, and admitted to having reinforced bad practices such as authoritarianism, and to stifling criticism.

Throughout congress, delegates expressed a desire to

move away from the 'vertical character' which had developed from 1985 onwards, when the US intensified its campaign against Nicaragua.

This is likely to lead to a revitalisation of FSLN structures and greater freedom of action for Sandinista mass organisations. ★

# 'SOCIALISM WILL BE!'

"Improvements, yes, but without the least compromise on principles."

This was the message Fidel Castro, re-elected first secretary of the Cuban Communist Party, delivered to a rally of 200 000 people at the close of the 4th party congress in Santiago, Cuba.

Castro said the congress, held in the middle of October, was "the best of congresses, a congress in a difficult time, a congress in a special period."

The congress voted in some important changes. Among significant developments were:

- A change in the party constitution to allow religious believers to be party members. On this point Castro said: "It is necessary that all patriots, all revolutionaries, all those who want progress and all those who defend justice should find each other in this party."

- The congress elected a central committee of whose members more than half are new to the CC.

There was also considerable renewal in the composition of the political bureau - 14 of its 25 members are new.

New PB members include the 40-year old Carlos Lage Davila and Roberto Robaina Gonzalez, 35. The latter is president of the UJC (Young Communist Union). The congress also dissolved the party secretariat.

- The congress mandated the National Assembly to carry out major constitutional reforms.

## Castro stresses Cuban Communist Party's undying commitment to socialism

It is mandated to organise elections on the basis of universal suffrage at the local, regional and national levels.

Universal suffrage local elections are already the practice in Cuba. But regional and national elections have been indirect (i.e. those elected locally form an electoral college for the regional level, and those elected regionally form an electoral college for the national level).

The National Assembly has also been mandated to debate the separation of executive and legislative power (in other words, to consider the nomination of a prime minister alongside the president of the

National Assembly).

- On the economic front the congress resolved that it was necessary "to find new forms of economic organisation and management", while preserving "the conquests of the revolution in education, health and social security".

The party agreed to open up the Cuban economy to foreign capital.

It also agreed to the legalisation of the "informal economy" of small artisans and peasants.

"Today, I am not going to say socialism or death," Castro told the rally, "because socialism WILL BE. No matter what the price!" ★



Cuban leader Fidel Castro: No compromise on principles

## Viva Cuba! Down with Yankee imperialism!

The 4th congress of the Cuban Communist Party occurred at a time when the Cuban revolution is confronting grave challenges.

Emboldened by the crisis in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, US imperialism is seeking to tighten its pressure on Cuba.

The US congress is busy discussing a law to strengthen measures designed to choke the Cuban economy.

Since the early 1960s the US has imposed an economic

blockade on Cuba. Now they are planning to impose fines on boats docking in US ports if they have unloaded cargo in Cuba. US aid will be reduced to those countries purchasing Cuban sugar.

US president George Bush also hopes to completely outlaw trade with Cuba by foreign subsidiaries of US companies.

But these imperialist aims are not going unchallenged by the rest of the world. Risking the anger of the US, Chile,

Paraguay and Colombia have recently opened diplomatic links with Cuba.

The Mexican government has granted \$300 million in credit to Cuba. Venezuela is deepening its contacts.

In Bolivia, the parliament voted by a large majority that they should strongly oppose the US blockade at the United Nations.

The Non-Aligned Movement also recently reaffirmed its solidarity with Cuba, and condemned the blockade.

But it is not just governments and inter-governmental organisations that have been expressing solidarity with the Cuban revolution.

In Mexico a massive popular campaign has been launched to send to Cuba a boat-load (5 000 tons) of petrol. In Europe there are numerous Cuban solidarity campaigns underway. Among them is a major campaign in France ("A boat for Cuba") spearheaded by the French Communist Party. ★

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