

The decade of the 1980's was a decade of mass struggles of the working masses. During the course of those struggles all over our country, workers developed first hand experience of the nature of the struggle. They have learnt to identify their problems and also what they must do to solve those problems.

In factories, on farms, in schools, in squatter camps - indeed at every level of their lives - workers have first hand experience of apartheid. Apartheid divides workers. It makes workers rightless and powerless. It keeps workers poor. It prevents worker unity. It keeps workers disorganised. For example when "settled" workers go on strike, migrant workers are brought in to break the strike. Or when "african" workers go on strike, "coloured" workers are brought in to break the strike. Apartheid is therefore a big enemy of the working class.

But that is not all. Workers have first hand experience of how the system of capitalism works. Workers suffer exploitation under capitalism. Workers produce all the wealth of the country but what do they get in return? Very little. Hardly enough to support themselves and their families. More and more workers have no homes. More and more workers cannot afford to send their children to school. More and more workers have no work. They cannot afford health care. And so on. And so through their own experiences, workers have learnt to identify capitalism to be their enemy as well.

Throughout their experience also in the last decade and more, workers have learnt that capitalism and apartheid go hand in hand. The one helps the other. There has always been close working together between the state and the bosses. The bosses use the apartheid state to keep themselves strong and united. On the other hand, to keep the workers divided, fighting each other and disorganised.

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And so the struggle of workers is against apartheid and against capitalism.

#### WHAT ARE WORKERS FIGHTING FOR?

Firstly, workers fight day to day battles for a living wage, to improve their working conditions and to improve their living conditions. Day to day struggles on the factory floor and day to day struggles in the areas where they live as well as at schools. Because they have no political rights, workers have realised that their struggle is not only on the factory floor but in the areas where they live as well. The struggle for political rights is the key to taking control over their own lives. Without political rights, workers cannot exercise political power. They will not be able to change the economic order which exploits them.

But our experience in Africa and elsewhere teaches us that political rights without social and economic transformation does not help the working class. Mere political independence in Africa, Asia and Latin America has not brought an end to poverty and starvation. Workers remain suppressed and exploited.

Equality between rich and poor is meaningless to the working class. Fighting for equal rights is a good thing but no real equality can exist when wealth is concentrated in the hands of a small class and the vast majority of the people are starving. The rich can make use of that equality whereas the poor cannot eg in elections, in the exercise of freedom of speech and assembly, etc. Our experience over the last decade and more has therefore taught that for freedom to be real, there must be a redistribution of the wealth of the country. There must be economic transformation which ensures that the wealth which is produced in the land is shared equitably. Freedom will only be real if there is an end to poverty and starvation. Hence more and more workers in our country are saying - and correctly so - that our struggle is against capitalism and for socialism.

#### EASTERN EUROPE

I know that because of what has been happening in Eastern Europe,

newspapers, radio and television have been shouting that capitalism is better than socialism. They have been twisting the real meaning of socialism. In the same way they are distorting the meaning of "nationalisation". We must understand that the words "democracy" and "socialism" are labels. We must go behind the labels and examine the content. The oppressed and exploited people are fighting for the right to take control over their own lives. Each individual on his own cannot control his/her own life. Because millions of people live together in one country, a system must be worked out where together all the people take part in shaping their own lives and determining the political destiny of their country. That is what the struggle for democracy is all about. There must be full and equal democratic rights for all. For this purpose the unity of our country is also important. Hence we fight for a single non-racial unitary democratic South Africa with one single parliament in which every adult shall enjoy the franchise, i.e. the right to elect and be elected to all decision-making bodies on the basis of full equality. In this way together the whole population will share in controlling and exercising political power in the country.

The economic system is controlled by those who exercise political power. If we have democracy, peoples power, workers could use that power to bring about those changes in the economic system which would be in the interests of all. What I am saying is that economic transformation is vital but only possible through the exercise of political power. Hence the fight for full and equal democratic rights. The major lesson of Eastern Europe is that you cannot have socialism without democracy. The essence of the revolution in Eastern Europe is the struggle for democracy. Not against socialism. Of course in the eyes of many, socialism has become tainted because those who said they were socialists did not practise democracy. The experience of Eastern Europe does not mean that capitalism is good. Our own experiences tell us that capitalism is bad for the vast majority of the population.

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What the experience shows is that democracy and socialism go together. That is why the struggle in our country is the struggle for democracy and socialism.

#### UNBANNING OF ANC, RELEASE OF N R MANDELA ETC

Comrades, in the last few weeks exciting events have taken place. There has been the unbanning of the peoples organisations, the release of some political prisoners and leaders, the highlight of which was the release of comrade Nelson Rohlhlahla Mandela. De Klerk and his nationalist party want to claim the credit for it. Margaret Thatcher, George Bush etc are praising De Klerk for his actions. They are trying to boost him. The fact of the matter is that it is your struggles, the struggles of the vast masses of our country which compelled the regime to take this action. De Klerk was forced to do what he did because of the mass struggles of our people. It is important that we understand this otherwise instead of intensifying the struggle, we will wait for De Klerk to make more changes. There will be no more changes unless we are prepared to fight for those changes. Mass struggles must continue. We must not allow our struggle to become demobilised.

#### CHANGE THE SITUATION

Having said that our mass struggles must continue, we must however understand that the whole situation has changed. We must change our style of work radically and immediately. Up to now we have been forced to work in semi underground ways. In our mass struggles we fought for legal space in which to conduct our struggles. Our struggles have won that space. We must now make use of that space as quickly as possible because we do not know how long that space will last. We must conduct mass struggles on an open basis. Mobilise our people and build our organisation on an open basis. We must recruit membership on an open basis. We must build up our organisations and liberation movement into a mighty force as quickly as possible. For the imperialists and ruling class in South Africa, our peoples struggle must come

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to a stop. They know that the mass struggles of our people teach our people a very important lesson, namely that they have the power to change their lives, that they through their struggles can bring about change, that they through their struggles can put an end to the whole system of oppression and exploitation. The oppressors know that this kind of political understanding by the masses is dangerous for the system. So they want to stop the struggles of our people in its tracks. If we put our faith in De Klerk and other sections of the ruling class, we would be committing suicide. Whilst therefore the working masses have scored exciting victories in the last decade, we are faced with a great challenge now. We need to mobilise, organise and consolidate our forces urgently. In this way we will make sure that the movement towards democracy and socialism becomes irreversible.

#### WORKING CLASS LEADERSHIP IN STRUGGLE

We have always said that the working class is the vanguard of the struggle. It is the leadership of the struggle. We must say that this vanguard role does not come automatically. It must be built and it must be built now. Working class leadership does not only mean that workers and their organisation must be in the leadership but also that their ideas and ideology must reflect the long term and short term interests of the working class. Building working class leadership therefore means building the organisations of the working class and also ensuring that the ideology of total liberation is spread and becomes part and parcel of that leadership.

#### WHAT ARE OUR TASKS AT THE MOMENT

1. We must organise. Our fundamental task is to organise, organise and organise. We must organise every single father, mother, student - everyone - into our organisations. The greatest weapon of the working class in the current situation is organisation. We must build and strengthen our trade unions and all other organisations. Because the situation has changed, our organisational strategy must also change.

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We must organise openly and aggressively everywhere. Because the problems of workers do not stop on the factory floor, workers in trade unions must also play an active role in organising themselves in the areas where they live. We need to go on a membership recruitment drive in all the areas where we live and for all our organisations. We must embark on a door to door campaign. Organisation is important because those who want to maintain the existing system are well organised. Those who are opposed to economic transformation will never tell the workers that they must organise. For us therefore organisation is a matter of life and death. Secondly, political education has become more important than ever. It is important for our mass organisations to embark consciously on political education. In this way we will learn who is fighting for what. We will learn that in South Africa different classes have different interests. We will learn how apartheid is changing and not changing. We will learn who are our allies and on what basis we can work with others. We will learn that those who want to build big businesses in our country do support the struggle against apartheid in many ways. But we will also learn that they are opposed to the ending of the capitalist exploitation system. We must have more political education at the work place, at the places we live, in our federation, in the UDF, in schools - everywhere. Thirdly, we must understand that change will only take place if the masses of our people bring it about. There will be no further change in our country unless we intensify the struggle in an organised and disciplined way. That means that on the basis of our understanding of the situation, we must embark upon mass struggles of our people. Only in this way will we ensure that the changes which take place are changes which really benefit all the people of our land.

Let us be heartened by what has taken place so far. It is exciting. Let us also be optimistic because we can see that our struggle is making progress. We can see that the regime is in crisis. We can see that we are on the winning road. But let us intensify our struggles through our trade unions and other organisations to ensure that victory is certain.

ALUTA CONTINUA! AMDANDLA NGWETHU!

DULLAH OMAR