The release of Nelson Mandela on February 11 was a day of jubilation from Cape Town, South Africa, to Harlem, New York. It marked a hard-won victory for the anti-apartheid movement and an enormous concession by the apartheid government.

It appears that South Africa’s rulers have finally recognized that apartheid cannot be sustained or cosmetically reformed. It appears they comprehend that a process of transformation must begin, based on negotiations with the democratic forces. And so South Africa is moving from a period of defiance against apartheid to a period defining the terms of power and participation in a post-apartheid society.

The questions are now: how much power will the white minority give up, over what will the majority rule, and how far will conditions of inequity change? The chasm between present-day apartheid and a unified, democratic, non-racial South Africa is vast and perilous.

How Far?

Pres. deKlerk’s order to release Mandela was dramatic. He simultaneously ended the banning of the African National Congress, the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, the South African Communist Party and 33 other democratic organizations. He limited detentions under the State of Emergency decrees, released certain political prisoners, suspended political executions and partially lifted press censorship.

But deKlerk did not end the State of Emergency or renounce coercive government laws. In fact, demonstrations are still being brutally suppressed and activists still face violence and arrest. deKlerk did not release all
A New Stage of Struggle

Continued from front page

detainees nor the 2,500 political prisoners who remain in apartheid's jails. He did not stop political trials or end the occupation of black townships by government security forces.

These steps, outlined in the ANC's Harare Declaration, are important preconditions for negotiations to begin. The democratic organizations insist that they cannot start negotiations until there is freedom of political activity.

The ability to participate without threat of repression is crucial to mobilizing the majority behind a democratic platform for change. It is equally necessary for DeKlerk to demonstrate that he can deliver on his promises, control the police and army, and isolate the fanatical white right-wing.

Why Now?

While the road to negotiations seems rocky, there are also some powerful reasons why the process is going forward nonetheless. Probably most compelling is the depth of crisis in South African society, on both political and economic fronts.

South Africa's rulers face a democratic opposition that has grown organizationally strong and militant in the past five years. The State of Emergency did not suppress activism, but instead generated protracted conflict with the regime at the grassroots level, in workplaces, churches, schools, townships and homelands.

The growth of COSATU and the labor movement to over 1 million members across the country has been particularly decisive. When the United Democratic Front was banned, COSATU unions stepped forward to help UDF organize the Mass Democratic Movement and last year's Defiance Campaign. When white South Africans voted in their elections last September, more than three million black South Africans staged a two-day national protest strike.

Nelson Mandela saluted this work as he was released in Cape Town, saying, "I extend my greetings to the working class of our country. Your organized stance is the pride of our movement. You remain the most dependable force in the struggle to end exploitation and oppression."

The government's State of Emergency was enforced at rising costs internationally as well. The worldwide movement behind sanctions has been steadily gaining ground, as have citizen campaigns in Europe and the U.S. to pressure multinational corporations to disinvest from South Africa. The impact of sanctions and disinvestment has been estimated in billions of dollars, but equally important has been the chill effect on new investment and the isolation of South African corporations from global economic developments.

What Next?

The coming weeks and months will spur organizing on both sides. DeKlerk will be consolidating support among business leaders, centrist whites in his National Party and liberal whites in the Democratic Party, in order to meet conditions for negotia-
majority rule and the key principle of one person, one vote on a common voters roll. Whites want to retain special political privileges; some even want to retain distinct white areas. The autonomy of the homelands is also in question, although recent popular uprisings in the Transkei, Ciskei and Bophuthatswana make it clear there are strong forces which favor total reunification of the country under one democratic system.

While political rights are the first priority, issues of economic democracy and social justice are also on the table. Apartheid is not only a system of white political power, but also a system of white economic privilege. The system has been enforced by class as well as race. The result was described by Nelson Mandela after his release in February:

“My return to Soweto fills my heart with joy. At the same time, I also return with a deep sense of sadness—sadness to learn that you are still suffering under an inhuman system. The housing shortage, the school crisis, unemployment and the crime rate still remain.”

In fact, the days following Mandela’s release saw major demonstrations by teachers seeking equal pay, nurses seeking desegregated hospital housing, and township residents seeking lower rents and electrical rates. And in recent months, labor conflicts have sharpened not lessened, especially in response to the repressive Labor Relations Act.

A democratic South Africa will have to deal with these conflicts, which are rooted in enormous economic inequities and unmet human needs. Here again, the labor movement will play a key role, in defining labor rights under a new constitution, in building democratic structures for economic policymaking, and in proposing alternative approaches to human and industrial development.

A Message From COSATU

In the meantime, COSATU is reminding the international community that the struggle against apartheid is far from over. Like the ANC, the unions have called for increased sanctions pressure until all the people of South Africa, regardless of race, can elect a constituent assembly to draft a new constitution. Responding to DeKlerk’s announcements in early February, COSATU stated:

“The cornerstones of apartheid still remain intact. The Group Areas Act, Population Registration Act, etc. still remain in the statute books. The Internal Security Act, the Public Safety Act, the Suppression of Communism Act, and many other repressive pieces of legislation still prevent free political activity in our country...”

“We call on DeKlerk to create the conditions of free political activity as enshrined in the Harare Declaration. This will serve as a real platform to forge a permanent and lasting peace.

“Until then, we call on all South Africans and the international community not to relax the pressure. Step up the struggle against apartheid so that the momentum of change in South Africa is not arrested. If we fail to do so, we will have tragically missed a historical opportunity to end the suffering and conflict in our country.”

COSATU LEADER IN NEW YORK

Last December COSATU General Secretary Jay Naidoo met with anti-apartheid activists including the American Committee on Africa and the NY Anti-Apartheid Coordinating Council, while attending the United Nation’s special session on apartheid. In a briefing to LCAA members, Naidoo discussed a range of topics, including the ongoing campaign against the 1988 Labor Relations Act (see page 5).

Commenting on DeKlerk’s “liberalization” moves and sanctions, Naidoo stated: “The next year is unpredictable. We have no common ground with the government at this time. DeKlerk ultimately has no intention of letting go of group rights. Our goal is a democratic, unitary, non-racial state.

“If sanctions are lifted as a reward for starting negotiations, we could have talks about talks for the next ten years while the government regroups its forces...Now is not the time to lift international economic sanctions. You must not lift pressure on the U.S. government and employers.”

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Coordinators: Vicky Williams and Kate Pfordresher
South Africa is back in the news. And one of the major stories is the violence experienced in the homelands, especially Kwazulu of Natal Province, where nearly 3,000 people have been killed and over 20,000 homes burned during the past three years.

These incidents are often described by the media as “black-on-black” violence and are attributed to “traditional tribal hatreds.” But there is another, more complex story behind the violence, which reveals the powerful hand of apartheid itself and the desperate poverty it has created.

INKATHA’s Vigilantes

The extreme violence which has plagued Natal in the 1980s has its wellspring in an organization called INKATHA. INKATHA is the mass organization of Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi, the appointed chief minister of the Kwazulu homeland, created under apartheid’s grand design for racial and tribal segregation.

Although INKATHA is portrayed as a Zulu cultural organization, it functions more as a system of patronage through which regional and local warlords, many of whom are members of INKATHA’s Central Committee, try to dominate Zulu communities. In many areas, INKATHA membership is essential to get a job, secure a plot in the sprawling rural squatters camps, find a place for your children in school, or even use the communal water tap. Buthelezi himself commands considerable power as the nominal head of Kwazulu, using its police force and civil service to help build INKATHA.

While criticizing apartheid, Buthelezi opposes sanctions and has established a separate labor organization, the United Workers Union of South Africa (UWUSA), which has attempted to undermine COSATU unions.

INKATHA has been enormously threatened by the growth of support for COSATU and the UDF in the Natal over the past five years. In response, INKATHA has sponsored armed vigilante gangs and paramilitary guards to wage what some describe as “unofficial civil war” against activists and communities associated with the UDF, COSATU and the ANC.

INKATHA forces have been implicated repeatedly in breaking up public meetings, torching activists’ houses, and inciting ethnic conflicts. Community and union leaders have been harassed, beaten, tortured and even killed. Yet even though the police have identified INKATHA vigilantes as the culprits, they refuse to prosecute. These violent attacks have provoked counter-attacks, drawing more and more people into the web of violence.

There have been several attempts toward reaching a peace agreement, but INKATHA has backed out each time. Given the new political opening, COSATU and the UDF have recently agreed to make all attempts needed to bring peace and reconciliation to the region. One positive new factor is the formation of the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (CONTRALESA), allied with the UDF, which may mediate the conflict through its influence in Zulu communities.

Apartheid’s Dividend

While violence has devastated black South Africans, it has served apartheid’s purposes. South African security forces have actively abetted INKATHA’s vigilantes, by participating openly or refusing to intervene, and by detaining UDF and COSATU leaders who could help diffuse antagonisms. In many communities, residents no longer even report incidents to the police for fear of retribution.

In effect, apartheid’s rulers have helped INKATHA do much of their own dirty work. They have allowed the violence to reach such proportions that by now many dispossessed black youths know little else but fighting to resolve problems. The overcrowding and destitution of both urban and rural black communities continues to feed this explosive situation. Political vigilantism has fueled blood feuds, gang warfare, and criminal activity in a cycle of violence which is verging on anarchy in some areas.

Meanwhile, the government and the right-wing point to black violence to explain why whites can’t give up power, at least not yet. Hopefully, a new investigation into police violence, the Harms Commission, will help expose that myth. The Commission is also charged with investigating the role of police death squads in attacking and assassinating anti-apartheid leaders.
Railway Strike

If anyone needs a reminder of how violent labor conflicts in South Africa have grown, they could look at the three-month railway strike which ended on January 31. The strike pitted 26,000 members of the South African Railway and Harbor Workers Union (SARHWU) against the state-run transportation giant, South African Transport Services.

When the workers finally emerged victorious, 27 people had died and at least 60 others were injured. It was the bloodiest strike in South Africa in nearly 70 years.

The dispute was sparked by union demands for wage increases and a fairer disciplinary procedure, although the core issue was a three-year battle for union recognition. In addition, the government has announced plans to sell parts of the SATS empire to private business in April. The union maintains that workers have been laid-off to sweeten the sale to private owners.

When the strike began in October, all 26,000 railway strikers were immediately fired and scabs hired. Police and armed vigilantes ignited violence on both sides. Demonstrations were fired on and COSATU's Germiston office was stormed by police. At the Germiston station, on January 9, roughly 1,000 vigilantes fired tear gas into two trainloads of striking workers on their way to a union meeting. As workers fled, vigilantes beat them with knives and stones while 100 policemen looked on.

The strike was finally settled when SATS agreed to recognize SARHWU, reinstate all fired workers, and negotiate over wages in April. One bright spot in the bloody strike was the role that COSATU, UDF, and the white liberal Democratic Party played in bringing SATS to the bargaining table.
**Labor Update**

**Whose Pension Is It?**

Pension funds in South Africa were originally set up for white workers. As the workforce changed, more and more black workers have been covered by pension plans. But black workers barely make a living wage and suffer frequent lay-offs, injury and illness. They rarely make it to retirement age in one company and usually lose any right to a pension.

For this reason, pension funds in South Africa have accumulated huge reserves remaining under direct company control. Rather than benefitting workers, pension funds have really become capital funds for the company.

This flagrant injustice is now being taken up by South African unions. Two recent campaigns by COSATU affiliates focus on the U.S. multinationals American Cyanamid and Ford Motor Co., giving American unions a part to play as well.

**CWIU vs. Cyanamid**

The Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU) has been battling for two years to change the pension fund at American Cyanamid from a company-controlled fund to a national provident fund, which would pool contributions from several petrochemical companies and allow workers a lump-sum payment on leaving their job.

Cyanamid has refused to negotiate the issue. When 200 CWIU workers went on strike in November in protest, the company fired them all. Cyanamid then offered to rehire those individuals willing to commit to the company pension fund "for life." The workers stayed out for five weeks, but convinced that the company was out to bust the union, they finally accepted reinstatement and returned to work. However, they vow to continue their fight by other means.

CWIU has appealed for international solidarity to help pressure Cyanamid. CWIU credits joint efforts by the national offices of the UAW, OCAW, ACTWU, ICWU, IAM and USWA, along with the Industrial Relations Department of the AFL-CIO, with forcing the company to reinstate all the workers. Various shareholder groups, such as the New York State Teachers Retirement System, have taken up the issue as well. The Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility has made Cyanamid one of its seven target companies.

**NUMSA vs. Ford**

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) is suing the Ford Motor Co. for control of the pension fund earned by Ford workers in Port Elizabeth. In 1985, Ford closed its Port Elizabeth plants and, in a merger, moved its operations to the Transvaal. Thousands of black workers were laid off. Through union negotiations, they were able to get severance pay and a return of their own contributions to the pension fund.

But workers lost any right to benefit from the pension monies set aside for them by the company, more than R41 million which remained under Ford's control. Then Ford proceeded to pay the severance settlement out of the pension fund, deducting R15 million. Calling Ford's actions "outright theft," NUMSA is suing for Ford to repay the R15 million and distribute the total pension fund to the Port Elizabeth workers.

The case is now being heard in the Port Elizabeth Supreme Court. NUMSA believes international pressure will strengthen its chances of a just settlement. American unionists can send messages to Ford Motor Co., P.O. Box 1899, Dearborn, and FAX to NUMSA, (011-27-41) 41-4092.

**Things Don’t Go Well At Shell**

In a recent poll, CWIU shops stewards and organizers rated Shell Oil as the worst employer in the South African oil industry. Shell refuses to join industry-wide or even company-wide bargaining. Its intransigence on wages, working conditions, overtime, and pension issues has earned it the highest strike rate in the industry. It has a record of harassing employees who participate in the union and refuses to negotiate a fair disinvestment procedure with CWIU.

Shell's record is no surprise to the North American anti-apartheid movement, which has scored some new victories in the international boycott of Shell. Five more cities and towns have declared themselves "Shell Free": Philadelphia PA, New Haven CT, Highland Park NJ, Takoma Park MD, and Vancouver, British Columbia.

Valerie Caffee of the N.J. Anti-Apartheid Mobilization Coalition declared: "Mandela's release shows that economic pressure through sanctions and boycotts works. Let’s turn up the heat on Royal Dutch Shell."

**Illinois Network Keeps The Pressure On**

The Illinois Labor Network Against Apartheid is off to an active start in 1990 with several protests at the South African consulate in Chicago. At the rally above, a UAW member speaks on behalf of the Network's Steering Committee. The Network also sponsored a Nelson Mandela Celebration, hosted by the OCAW. In May, the Network plans a southern state conference in Danville. In June, it will hold a Soweto Day Rally for Sanctions in Chicago. For more information, contact Network coordinator Kathy Devine at (312) 583-6661.
INDEPENDENCE FOR NAMIBIA

Namibia celebrated its full independence on March 21 with a formal transfer of power to the SWAPO-led government. That day marked a tremendous victory over South African occupation, and over 100 years of colonial rule. It also opened the question of what an independent Namibia will look like.

It has been six months since the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), backed by Namibian trade unions, won U.N. supervised elections with 57% of the vote. But since SWAPO did not gain a two-thirds majority in the new constituent assembly, it had to enter some tough bargaining over a new constitution during this period.

The process of drafting the constitution concerned many Namibians because it was written entirely in closed session, by a committee of the constituent assembly. The chief labor federation, the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW), was particularly wary since they did not have members on the constitution committee and early drafts mentioned only the general labor right to form unions. An early draft also allowed preventive detention without trial, a holdover from South Africa's rule.

After concerted pressure from NUNW, the constitution's Fundamental Rights and Freedoms section was expanded to include the right to strike, stated as workers' right "to withhold their labor without being exposed to criminal penalties." The preventive detention clause was also dropped. A final constitution was unanimously ratified in February.

The hesitant recognition granted to labor rights reflects in part the harsh economic realities Namibia's new government is facing. According to Mike Fleshman of the American Committee on Africa, who was in Namibia for six months, "They're under real pressure from the white business establishment not to rock the boat." Decades of colonialism have left the Namibian economy dominated by white South African business interests and Western capital. There is a real danger of economic destabilization from Pretoria.

"My own guess," says Fleshman, "is that we're looking at a Zimbabwe-style policy, where SWAPO will be very, very careful and very slow in transforming the basic colonial economic structure, which is even more skewed against black people than the structure in South Africa. It's going to be a very challenging problem."

The difference is that the problem now belongs to the Namibian people and their own elected government, with far greater opportunities to build organizations for social justice than in the past.

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Rule. And they want sanctions to enormously to the crisis of apartheid economic sanctions, have contributed South Africa, especially through international campaigns to isolate that international campaigns to isolate. We must be careful, however, not to substitute hope for action. To ensure that the South African government continues down the road to negotiations, and to ensure that democratic forces can prevail in negotiations, we must keep the pressure on.

Keeping the pressure on means it's time to increase sanctions, not weaken or abandon them. Nelson Mandela, the African National Congress, the United Democratic Front, and the Congress of South African Trade Unions have all been clear on this point. COSATU tells us: "Step up the struggle against apartheid so that the momentum for change is not arrested."

These organizations leave no doubt that international campaigns to isolate South Africa, especially through economic sanctions, have contributed enormously to the crisis of apartheid rule. And they want sanctions to remain firmly in place until conditions for free political activity exist and the repressive apparatus of apartheid has been removed.

Here in New York City, we have an ideal opportunity to affirm this position. Last year, a bill was introduced in the City Council, known as Intro. 1137, to close the loopholes in existing City sanctions. The bill had broad backing from Council members and from David Dinkins, then Manhattan Borough President. A revised version of this bill is due to come out this Spring. We believe this bill can be a timely and effective addition to present sanctions, if the following six points are adopted:

1) Current law prohibits City contracts with companies directly doing business in South Africa. The new law should cover companies that maintain indirect, non-equity ties to South Africa, such as licensing and franchise agreements.
2) The new law should prohibit the City from buying goods and services of companies, with business relations in South Africa, through third party vendors.
3) The new law should cover both parent corporations and their subsidiaries.
4) The new law should cover all bank loans and other banking services.
5) The new law should recognize the rights of South African unions to six months' advance notice of a company's disinvestment from South Africa and to good faith negotiations over the terms of withdrawal.
6) The new law should establish an effective enforcement agency to inform the City's purchasing practices, to monitor company compliance with disinvestment mandates, and to monitor labor rights violations. Enforcement should cover all branches of City government, including non-mayoral agencies such as the Health and Hospitals Corporation and Board of Education.

By closing the loopholes in NYC sanctions and recognizing South African labor rights, the citizens of New York will be sending a powerful message to Pretoria at a critical time. We will be saying to apartheid's rulers: Promises and gestures are not enough. If sanctions are to end, then all South Africans must be able to participate freely in determining their nation's future.

That day has not yet arrived. And we, like our brothers and sisters in South Africa, are not stopping to rest at the roadside when the journey to freedom is only halfway done.

Stanley Hill
Exec. Director, District Council 37
Chair, NY Labor Committee Against Apartheid

JOIN THE NYC SANCTIONS CAMPAIGN!

As new sanctions legislation reaches the City Council, we will need your support and participation to get it passed. Anti-apartheid organizations across the City have formed a growing coalition to pass a strong new bill. Initial backers include District Council 37, ILGWU Local 23-25, District 65-UAW, CWA Local 1180, the American Committee on Africa, the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility, the Immobilize Apartheid Coalition, and the NY Labor Committee Against Apartheid.

We have joined to launch a petition campaign to make sure all the City Council members vote right on this issue. For petitions or information, contact any of these organizations, or the LCAA at (718) 768-1756, to find out how you, your union local or organization, can get involved in the coming weeks. And call us to order "New York Divest Now" buttons.