

WORK

30

IN

PROGRESS

In This Issue

LABOUR



and

DETENTIONS

LIBERALISM

**AZAPO
CONFERENCE**

**MWASA
CONFERENCE**

**UDF
INTERVIEW**

*Labour
Action*

Rates

A subscription to the SARS publishing programme includes all issues of:
 a) Work In Progress;
 b) SARS/DSG Information Publications;
 c) SARS Information Sheets;
 as well as notification of forthcoming titles in the Dissertation Series, and of other occasional publications.

RATES for five issues are as follows:

SOUTH AFRICA

Individuals, trade unions and community organisations R 7,50
 Donor subscriptions R15,00
 Institutions and libraries R20,00
 Group and bulk distribution (per copy) R 1,00

Rest of AFRICA (surface mail)

Individuals R10,00
 Organisations and libraries R20,00

WESTERN EUROPE and BRITAIN (air mail)

Individuals (R10,00)* R20,00
 Organisations and libraries (R20,00)* R30,00

USA and CANADA (air mail)

Individuals (R10,00)* R25,00
 Organisations and libraries (R20,00)* R40,00

*surface mail rates.

Rates to areas not listed available from the editors.

Contents

<u>LEKOTA ON THE UDF</u>	4
<u>THE AZAPO CONFERENCE</u>	9
<u>LIBERALISM IN THE 1980s</u>	12
<u>LABOUR ACTION</u>	20
Transvaal	21
The Liberty Life dispute	28
Strikes in the retail industry	31
Eastern Cape	34
Natal	35
New Income Tax Act	36
Mining	38
<u>MASA AND THE POLITICS OF DETENTION</u>	40
<u>THE MASA CONFLICT</u>	46
<u>COURTS</u>	48

Cover by Kevin Humphrey

Address

PO Box 93174
 2143 Yeoville
 SOUTH AFRICA



a sars
 publication

SOUTHERN AFRICAN
 RESEARCH SERVICE

The nature of Work In Progress, which is to stimulate debate and present controversial views on a wide range of subjects, ensures that views expressed do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editorial collective.

This edition of Work In Progress edited and published by an editorial collective of 40 Jorissen Street, 2001 Braamfontein.

Editorial

As the first WIP of 1984 is published, there is turmoil in opposition politics. MWASA has split into two factions, while the recent AZAPO conference launched a series of attacks against the UDF. Some independent trade unions have affiliated to the UDF, while others have argued that such a move could harm the working class interests they represent.

In WIP 29 the General Workers' Union set out its reasons for not joining the UDF. In this WIP, UDF publicity secretary 'Terror' Lekota puts forward a different view. He acknowledges that the UDF is a new initiative, and that some criticisms levelled against the Front by unions are well-founded. But Lekota argues that by affiliating, the larger independent unions could shape both the form and content of UDF politics in a meaningful way.

The emergence of the UDF has stimulated intense political discussion which goes beyond the important questions raised about the relationship between working class trade unions and multi-class political alliances. Attacks on the UDF at the recent AZAPO congress suggest that the debate between black consciousness and non-racial adherents is far from resolved. AZAPO has also - at least at the level of rhetoric - raised the question of socialist programmes in resistance politics, implicitly criticising the UDF for its lack of socialist content.

The recent MWASA congress was deeply divided over these issues. On the face of it, the two MWASA factions approximate to a BC and non-racial position; the issues raised are also broader: they involve the relationship between workers and non-worker intellectuals in an industrial trade union; questions of accountability and responsibility in both politics and trade unionism; and the difficult problem of democratic practice in an organisation still consolidating its base and membership.

These issues are complex. They have been discussed and contested for decades. Yet the sharpness with which they are currently raised is an indication of the vibrancy of resistance

politics. Political resistance is not only about power: it also involves conflict between different interests both in the ruling group and the popular classes. The struggle for ascendancy between different interests is part of the process of political growth and consolidation.

These debates and conflicts are the daily reality of resistance politics, and cannot be ignored. But some have found this difficult to accept. WIP has been criticised for publishing the General Workers' interview where it is argued that the position of trade unions in political class alliances is a difficult one. No doubt others will object to the interview in this issue setting out the UDF position on this and related questions.

Yet the publishers of WIP remain convinced that in this formative stage of resistance politics, many issues are far from resolved. The re-establishment and consolidation of mass politics in a context where the organised working class is stronger than before has created dynamics beyond the experience of some of South Africa's newer political forces.

This is the context in which WIP will continue raising some of the issues of organisation that have always been discussed as part of progressive politics ■

Lekota on UDF

WIP recently spoke to United Democratic Front publicity secretary, 'TERROR' LEKOTA.

WIP: How would you categorise the UDF? For example, is UDF capable of its own initiatives over and above responses to state action?

Lekota: The UDF must be seen as a process. It is a response to government activities and therefore a protest type of organisation. Whether it will develop into something more forceful depends on the competency of those who man its structures, and on our ability to build disciplined organisational structures.

WIP: A number of debates have come up around the UDF: how a national democratic resistance should be structured, particularly in relation to the working class; whether racially or ethnically specific forms of organisation are appropriate at this time in history; and the strength and form of the community organisations presently in the UDF.

To start with the first of these issues: how does the UDF view the alliance which it has articulated, specifically in relation to the working class?

Lekota: Mobilisation against the new constitution and the related legislation affects every section of the population. But our opposition to the 'new deal' is taking place in a capitalist society. We therefore consider the role and participation of the working class to be of crucial importance. If the struggle against the current order is to be maintained at an effective level over a long period of time, the backbone of that resistance must be the working

class.

The working class, by virtue of its continuous exploitation, is the section of the population that finds itself in constant conflict with the current order. It is therefore vital that the working class plays a central role in that struggle. But this does not mean the working class exclusively. Workers will constitute the nucleus of that resistance, while other sections of the population will play a supportive role.

It has to be like this. Some reforms in the 'new deal' will have temptations for non-working class elements. Pockets of the middle class can be won over by the current order, but the position of the working class is such that co-option of workers is rare.

WIP: How can you ensure that the UDF's political programme and form of representation develops this working class primacy?

Lekota: This is a crucial challenge for the UDF. We are challenged to evolve systematic democratic processes which ensure this. The most important thing for the UDF is to insist on participation in as many decisions as possible by everybody. This needs to penetrate the affiliate organisations, both at leadership and membership levels.

But this is easier to say than to put into practice. With the passing of time we should be able to build and penetrate our structures that way. The crucial factor is the leadership of our affiliate organisations. Leaders have to be capable of honesty, and not just seek easy victories.

WIP: The best organised section of the working class is not in the UDF - FOSATU, the Food and Canning Unions,

General Workers' Union, and others. What progress has been made in bringing these unions closer to UDF, or ensuring that their non-affiliation does not cancel efforts to establish working class leadership?

Lekota: Although some of the independent unions have not come into the UDF, we have sought ways of maintaining some co-operation with them. I am quite optimistic about the response we have received from these unions. It is true that some of them, or some personalities from them, have been critical of the UDF. But on the whole the response from these unions has been realistic and encouraging. They have said that they will support some of the campaigns we undertake.

One can view support for and participation in the UDF in a number of forms. Direct affiliation is the most ideal. It means organisations are not just supporting a campaign, but are helping shape the nature and direction of the UDF. But there are also organisations which do not come into the Front, but nevertheless sympathise with its broad objectives, and support specific campaigns.

This is where unions like FOSATU and GWU come in. This is a crucial relationship which needs to be nurtured. The possibility exists for that type of relationship to be galvanised into closer co-operation and perhaps even direct affiliation. Most of the independent unions not in the UDF are non-racial in approach. They have condemned the 'new deal', which is in keeping with the call of the UDF. Their criticisms of the UDF have mainly been with regard to administrative issues. These are important questions, which can and will be resolved once the Front and these unions are prepared to sit together and thrash out ways of working together. I think this can be done, and I am optimistic about our relationship with these unions today.

We have gone out to meet the unions. For instance, we were invited and spoke to FOSATU's Natal shop stewards. The questions that arose for debate were very constructive. Much the same happened in the Transvaal. We know that FOSATU is concerned about their relationship with the UDF. The invitation we received to talk to their shop stewards was calculated to assist the debate taking place in FOSATU about

the UDF.

Some people would like to see immediate gains, they would like to see FOSATU come into the UDF immediately. This misses the fact that every relationship is a process. The debates taking place in FOSATU are generating an important consciousness. Workers are debating the issues, and whether they decide to join us or not, an important process is taking place.

It may be important to spell out what we have said to these unions in the course of discussions. We have told them that we accept in good faith that they are not at this stage able to come into the UDF. But we suggested that it was important to consider co-operation on a limited scale, such as undertaking campaigns together. We raised issues such as a national minimum wage. At some time, the unions might find it necessary to campaign for a national minimum wage. We have made the point that we are not interested in leading such campaigns, but are interested in working together. This is so, even if it means letting the unions take the leadership, with us playing a supportive role. This is especially so with issues that affect the working class.

We feel that both of us would benefit from such a campaign. It would assist us in reaching a deeper understanding of each other.

WIP: Terror, you spoke earlier of 'administrative difficulties'. I don't know if this refers to the question of representation on the General Council, but I'd like to raise that issue now.

Apart from the western Cape, representation to the General Councils in all other regions involves two delegates from each affiliate. Some of the unions feel that this structure does not allow for the kind of worker representation which is both necessary and justified. Is this system of representation negotiable?

Lekota: Union shop stewards have raised this question in some of our meetings. We have made the point that there are no hard and fast rules about the UDF. Today we run the Front on the basis of what is possible and what is acceptable to those participating. If the unions considered affiliation, they could raise these problems, which are meaningful objections. If and when the

unions consider coming into the UDF, they are free to work out together with us how best to meet the question of representation.

I personally support the view that we can't expect a union which has 100 000 workers to have the same representation as an organisation with a membership of 50 or 100. That would be unrealistic. The present fashion of administering the UDF is open to review at any time, as and when the need arises.

WIP: And this has been conveyed to the unions?

Lekota: We have said that in consultations and meetings with them. We do not claim that the present manner in which the UDF is run is the best fashion. We are a new initiative. We are ourselves learning and building. We know that some of the criticisms the unions are raising are well founded and well conceived. But at the same time we have made the point that it would be so much more constructive if some of the organisations which are raising these criticisms actually came in with us and not only criticised us, but actually participated. They could help to eliminate UDF's shortcomings, and forge a democratic structure that would satisfy all of us.

WIP: The Port Elizabeth conference was called specifically to decide on the question of participation/non-participation in any referenda that might be called. It did not come to any decision. Just after the conference, you said that it was not surprising or disappointing that the UDF had failed to reach a decision. Will you explain this view?

Lekota: Some of the regions that went to conference were only a week or two old. Some were not even properly constituted, and operating with interim committees. There are a whole lot of birth pangs that we have to deal with. But the PE conference was a very encouraging experience. It is a major achievement to hold together six hundred organisations in a debate on a sharply contested question, with disagreement on tactical approaches, and yet still come out of that conference a united force. Our success at the PE meeting

lies in the fact that we were able to build a style of politics whereby we could debate an issue on which there were various opinions, and still remain together.

WIP: I've heard it suggested that some UDF elements only want the unions in as a base to further middle class interests.

Lekota: It may be true that middle class elements have their own interests and objectives, perhaps in the long term opposed to those of the working class. But at the same time it is true that in the current situation there are problems which confront the working class and middle class alike. It is not only the black working class that has no political rights. The middle class also have no political rights. In some ways, the middle class elements have their own genuine quarrel with the present order. They are not in the struggle just because they want to use the working class. They have genuine complaints of their own - lack of housing, lack of educational facilities.

What would we say about intellectuals who lead trade unions, people who lead trade unions, people who abandon their class positions, adopt the consciousness of a different class. Some have high qualifications, could live very comfortably, and they sacrificed that comfortable life, actually committed themselves to the struggle of those who come from a different social setting. Many intellectuals from the black communities come from working class homes, have working class parents. Without saying that they are therefore workers, the question of working class life is built into them.

At the same time it is true that unless the working class is vigilant in its interaction and common action with other classes, it can find itself in serious problems.

But because of the common problems that confront the African, Indian and coloured middle classes, the working class can win for itself genuine allies, people who are committed to building a society on a totally new basis.

WIP: What do you see as the main objective of the million signatures

campaign?

Lekota: We see this campaign as providing an opportunity for our activists to move into communities in the country and carry the message of the UDF to those people.

While it is true that we value the question of reaching the target of a million signatures, the campaign would be meaningless if it addressed itself only to the converted sections of the population. It must serve as a foundation upon which we can mobilise support. It's got to be seen in a more profound fashion than just to say that we've got to raise a million signatures.

It is important to us that we reach that target. If we do reach it, it will be living evidence that when we say the people of this country are unhappy about the constitution, it is so. We look upon it as something that we could take to anybody, both at home and around the world, and say that this is what the people felt about this campaign.

But these are secondary considerations. This campaign, primarily, must serve to educate our people as an initial step in pulling them into active opposition to the legislation, to mobilise opposition.

WIP: One of the issues that has arisen around the UDF involves the forms of organisation most appropriate to develop in community areas. There is a view that it might be necessary to adapt some of the lessons learnt from the trade union structures, where members

pay dues, and this reinforces the answerability of leaders to membership. Is there new thinking in the UDF on how to strengthen affiliate organisations, especially in the communities?

Lekota: Community organisations often arise around a particular social problem, with a whole lot of people responding by attending meetings. But the membership is very dispersed. This is unlike a trade union situation where you know that if workers are here today, they will be back at the factory tomorrow because they all work in the same place. That is not the position in community-based organisations. This is why they often lose hold of the initial support they have. In trade unions, it is easier to effect democratic structures and answerability than at community base, as the factory workers will return to the same place each day. These means that democratic organisation and administration of community organisations is much more important. It is the only way that membership can be kept together at community base.

The suggestion that members should pay subscriptions, as in the case of trade unions, is very meaningful. Subscriptions paid on a regular basis may be one of the most important considerations. But that will not be sufficient by itself. It must be combined with other factors.

WIP: Another debate which has arisen around the UDF involves the nation. Certain organisations, although non-racial, have organised on an ethnic



UDF publicity secretary 'Terror' Lekota

basis for what they see as historical and practical reasons. UDF has come in for attack in some quarters, being described as 'an unprincipled alliance of ethnic organisations'. What is your response to these criticisms?

Lekota: Those who argue that they would like a more non-racial approach are honestly motivated. At the same time, they miss a fundamental element of the question. If we are going to mobilise and take people forward, we have to go to the point where they are. Non-racialism is a process. Something to be learnt. In South Africa there is such an emphasis on racial differentiation. People are kept in racial townships, and identify with their residential areas. But this does not imply that they are racist against those in other areas.

Those who argue that the NIC and TIC, for example, are racial organisations, want to pretend that all black people completely accept each other on a basis of equality. This is unrealistic. A significant section do look upon each other as equals, but who can deny that there are still those who have not yet learnt and internalised non-racial attitudes.

Organising people from that level, taking them into forums where they mix together with whites, Africans, Indians, coloureds, provides an opportunity which South African society denies.

One does not establish non-racialism by just saying it. You have to learn the process. The message which TIC and NIC preach daily, in their meetings and from their platforms, does not lend any substance to the claim that they are ethnic in orientation.

Compare this with the early black consciousness days, where we did not provide any opportunity for ourselves and others in the white grouping to experience each other, to begin to break down the racial barriers which the government had established.

WIP: But do these racially specific structures allow for the breaking down of barriers at any level other than leadership?

Lekota: A difficult problem here is one of the location of people. TIC members live in Indian areas. The

coming together with those in the African townships, for example, is difficult.

To some extent I must agree that at the moment, it is taking place more at the level of leadership than of membership. But our activists, when they meet in open gatherings, begin to make acquaintance with each other. But contact at the level of rank and file is less than at leadership level.

WIP: What is the current state of UDF - AZAPO relations?

Lekota: The UDF is a second level organisation, while AZAPO is a first level body. It is very critical of the UDF. We have invited AZAPO to discussions, tried to get them to participate in the UDF. They have rejected us out of hand. They feel that if they participate in UDF, many of their principles would be sacrificed. We feel that the key principle is common opposition to the 'new deal' legislation, and that this is a common feature between UDF and AZAPO. We are not interested whether our affiliates subscribe to black consciousness or the Freedom Charter or any other programme. Our concern is to put together those organisations which are opposed to the legislation.

But relations with AZAPO are far from what one would like them to be. They have attacked the UDF on its non-racial approach. Around the Cliff Saunders saga they made common cause with the SABC and hammered our president, Archie Gumede. They seemed more willing to accept Saunders' version of events as opposed to the version put forward by Archie Gumede and the UDF. Through the course of their conference they issued criticisms of the UDF.

But we think that in the long run they will come round to appreciate the significance and importance of participation in the UDF. We can't engage with them, we can't divert our energies from fighting the Nats to fighting them. Because we are organisations at different levels, there is no way we can engage with them as if we were competitors.

AZAPO is a first level organisation with a political programme that it is pursuing. UDF is a second level organisation with a specific campaign it has launched and is waging

The AZAPO Conference

AZAPO, largest of the black consciousness organisations, held its annual congress in early January. ANTON HARBER reports.

The Azanian Peoples' Organisation used its recent annual congress to reaffirm its unwavering commitment to the basics of black consciousness.

Although the two-day congress at Patidar Hall in Lenasia introduced important changes in AZAPO's organisational structure, the bulk of the congress was used to restate AZAPO's previous ideological and strategic positions.

Much was made of the fact that AZAPO now has 84 branches in 12 regions, and that 1 547 delegates and observers travelled from all over the country to attend the congress.

According to outgoing general secretary Muntu Myeza, this represented a two hundred percent increase in the number of branches over the last year.

To further this process, and in an attempt to break the Reef-centric structure of AZAPO, the national executive was reorganised to include four vice-presidents to deal with the four provinces. 'We have to decentralise as much as we can and only then can we hope to efficiently harness activities in this great organisation of the people', said president Lybon Mabasa, in his opening speech.

The rate of growth generated a mood of optimism and confidence at the congress. 'The progressive forces of the people in this country are poised for certain victory. AZAPO is well and growing by the day and black consciousness is still inspiring millions of the oppressed and exploited people to stand and fight for what is rightfully theirs - the land', Mabasa said.

Some of the promised big-name speakers never arrived (such as Mamphela Ramphele), and others sent their speeches along to be read out in absentia (such as Cyril Ramaphosa).

But still there were nine lengthy speeches on the first day alone, testing the endurance of even the most ardent BC supporters.

AZAPO AND THE NEW CONSTITUTION

The common vein in all these speeches was a reaffirmation of the organisation's commitment to the basic principles of BC. This meant that those who had expected a reassessment of strategy in the light of the changing constitutional dispensation were disappointed.

Before the congress, rumours abounded on how AZAPO was about to initiate important changes in policy in line with the changing constitution. AZAPO had repeatedly shirked contact with liberal or left wing whites on the grounds that their colour made them, willingly or unwillingly, members of the ruling group. If the new constitution was to co-opt coloureds and Indians into the ruling group, how did this affect their position in BC?

But no such change was on the cards. The standpoint that emerged from the congress was that the new constitution did not give Indians and coloureds real power and therefore did not fundamentally change their position.

In fact, the congress devoted very little time to a discussion of the new constitution. It was rejected and it was condemned, but there was virtually no discussion of the meaning of the new constitution for organisation and strategy.

'AZAPO can never review its stand and commitment to black consciousness because of yet another predictable

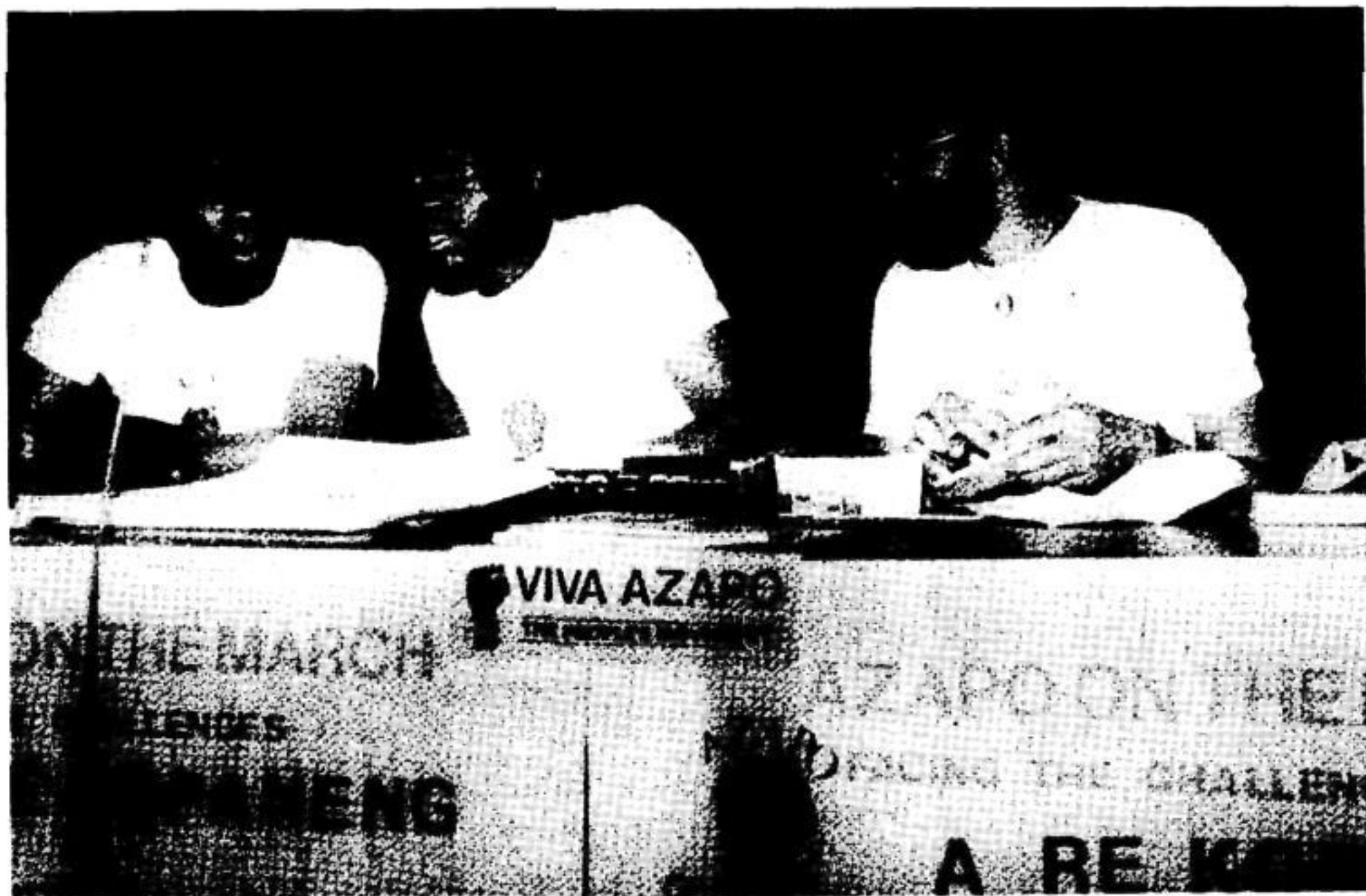
direction chosen by dummy and puppet bodies such as the Labour Party and its ilk. We stand on solid ground and committed to our policies to the letter', Mabasa said.

A resolution dealing with the new constitution committed AZAPO to intensify its campaign to expose 'this political fraud', to work together with 'fraternal organisations in doing so', and stated that the only solution to the country's problems was the establishment of an 'anti-racist, socialist worker republic'.

are stronger than weapons"', Mabasa said.

This principled stand showed itself in debate over a number of issues. A suggestion that AZAPO should modify its boycott of overseas entertainers to accept those who gave funds to 'black causes' was thrown out. The boycott was a matter of principle and could not be altered, since this would cause confusion, the congress decided.

And on the question of non-collaboration, BC stalwart Peter Jones said: 'The principle of non-



PRINCIPLES AND TACTICS

This lack of discussion of the constitution's effects was not an oversight. For AZAPO, nothing is more crucial than purity of goal and ideology. Strategy and tactics take second place to the need to remain true to one's principles.

'We believe that consistency is a hallmark of true revolutionaries. It becomes very sad when revolutionaries vacillate between half-truths and lies...In such a struggle, therefore, a politically conscious, educated people, led by a dedicated revolutionary movement will, by winning at the end, prove the saying that "ideas and men

collaboration cannot just be regarded, in a sterile manner, as a healthy political strategy...From the earliest times of resistance in Azania, non-collaboration has been an ingrained instinct in black people'.

AZAPO AND THE UDF

The new constitution may not have been discussed at great length, but the United Democratic Front (UDF) bore the brunt of criticism dished out at the congress.

While AZAPO made it clear it would co-operate with any fraternal, non-collaborationist organisation, the UDF was 'an ad hoc organisation consisting

of many ad hoc committees and organisations reacting to one thing or another', Mabasa said.

'The UDF, unlike the National Forum (NF), has first constituted itself into an organisation structure with symbolic leadership and has coerced support from across the political spectrum. They have not had a firm commitment as to who is included and excluded', he said.

The main brunt of his criticism was that the UDF was an unprincipled alliance including organisations soft on non-collaboration.

An announcement that the UDF had twice asked to meet AZAPO to discuss the possibility of affiliation brought hoots of laughter from the delegates. 'Unity is good, but not at all costs', Mabasa said.

By comparison, the NF was described as 'a positive political activity initiated by the oppressed...which provided a platform whereby the questions of meaningful and principled unity of the oppressed could be discussed'.

For AZAPO, the basis of future unity is the Azanian Peoples' Manifesto, drawn up by the NF and adopted with minor changes by the congress.

CLASS AND SOCIALISM

Part of the problem with the UDF in the eyes of AZAPO is that it is not truly socialist. It is a common opinion among members, for example, that the 'liberal' press favours UDF over AZAPO because AZAPO is a truly socialist organisation.

Indeed, much of the congress rhetoric was, broadly speaking, more socialist than one hears from any other local organisation. The explicit aim of AZAPO is the establishment of a socialist, worker republic.

In the words of the Manifesto of the Azanian People, 'the black working class, inspired by revolutionary consciousness, is the driving force of our struggle'.

At the same time, the congress was told that the peculiarities of South African history make it impossible 'to classify blacks clinically into distinct economically defined groups or classes'. A black student, woman, or even member of the petty bourgeoisie is 'inseparably connected with and has the experiences of the black working class'. They are black before they are students, Peter

Jones said.

Only one resolution dealt with trade unions. It committed AZAPO to avail itself to 'lead, give direction and actively participate' in all struggles and campaigns of workers and unions. It also committed AZAPO to work tirelessly for black worker solidarity.

Another resolution dealt with unemployment, committing the organisation to encourage the establishment of an unemployed workers' union and promote a national campaign against unemployment.

The only other major sign of a worker or union presence at the congress was the keynote speech read out for Cyril Ramaphosa, general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers.

His speech was centred around a call for trade union unity. The black labour movement was the best possible avenue for achieving the unity of the oppressed, he argued.

The first step towards this was to unite workers into individual unions; the second was to bring those unions into the labour movement; the third - and the one happening at the moment - was to create 'one union, one industry', leading rapidly to the fourth stage of 'one consolidated union federation for Azania'; the fifth and ultimate step was the unity of all the oppressed, Ramaphosa said.

Black workers, he said, had profited least in alliances with white workers. One reason for this is that such alliances have stifled black worker leadership and development.

'I want to point out that alignment between black and white groups in organisations has nothing - as many people believe - to do with love and friendship. Nothing could be further from the truth. Groups do not have love affairs. Groups conduct their business not on the basis of love, but on the basis of what they conceive to be their vital interests', he said.

Ramaphosa's speech was noticeably less rhetorical than the others. He was also one of the few speaking on behalf of a definable and visible constituency.

For the rest, it was a case of renewing calls for black economic self-sufficiency and worker-student solidarity, re-electing almost the same leadership in the national executive, and getting ready to fight for another year along much the same lines as the previous one

Liberalism in the 1980s

While establishment liberalism is drawing closer to PW Botha's administration, radical liberals are cementing alliances with popular political organisations. DARYL GLASER discusses this restructuring of South African liberalism.

South African liberalism has always been internally diverse. At one extreme, its adherents have favoured a cautious process of top-down reform. At the other extreme, radical liberals have allied themselves with both the left and the popular classes. Liberalism's dominant wing has sought to stabilise and streamline capitalism by placating the masses; its left wing has fought to democratise and humanise capitalism by mobilising the masses.

Some liberals perceive mass action as a threat. They see the radicalisation of the people as an ever-present danger, and the support of a section of the black population for the 'free enterprise' system as an absolute necessity.

Other liberals are concerned to heighten and channel mass anger. They are prepared to push reform to the outermost social-democratic limits compatible with capitalist reproduction - or even beyond.

Historically, 'English-speaking' mining and manufacturing interests have favoured a liberalisation of the racial order in South Africa. During the later Smuts years, many manufacturing capitalists needed a stabilised urban African labour force. However, conservative mining, manufacturing and agricultural interests were not willing to countenance such reform. The National Party won power in 1948 with the support of many of these

interests, which prevailed over those favouring a liberalisation of society.

In particular, the National Party victory paved the way for an attempt to curtail urbanisation through a tightening up of the apparatuses of labour coercion. The resultant measures succeeded in keeping labour in white agriculture, and preserved the system of migrant labour on which the mines and many factories depended.

However, these policies, as well as job reservation clauses introduced in the name of the National Party's white working class constituency, created what many big businessmen and industrialists considered to be 'irrational' distortions of the capitalist market mechanism.

In the 1950s and much of the 1960s, most of these largely English-speaking businessmen backed the United Party, with its conservative programme of 'reform'. They hoped that a United Party victory - still seen as possible during this period - would result in the restoration of a more 'rational' and 'colour-blind' approach to economic management, as well as to limited but needed political reforms.

Some of the more advanced and farsighted capitalists backed the Progressive Party breakaway from the United Party in the 1950s. The Progressive Party set out with a more philosophically liberal-democratic and humanitarian approach to reform than the United Party. It shared the UP's preference for meritocracy over racial ascription - both in economics and politics - but was prepared to go further down this road. However, it remained to the right of groups of liberals deeply opposed to 'communism' (the Liberal Party and the Pan Africanist Congress), and those willing to ally with ex-communists (like liberals in the Congress of Democrats). These latter groups were committed to a much more thorough-going democratisation of the political order than were the Progressive Party.

In the 1970s, with the growing dominance of monopoly capitalism, and especially the 1976 revolt, many businessmen began to gravitate towards the programme of the Progressive Party. Others showed a growing sympathy for the pragmatic reformism which began to surface in the NP from 1975 onwards. While the first group looked desperately for an alternative to the inertia of the later Vorster years, the latter expediently took the reality of NP power as their starting point. Caught between these tendencies, the UP disintegrated. Its members drifted to the NP (the South African Party tendency) and the Progressive Party (the Reform Party tendency). Only a marginal Natal element, reconstituted as the New Republic Party, clung to the UP.

The PFP grew in strength, capturing support for the first time amongst the growing number of 'verligte' Afrikaner professionals. Afrikaans financiers and businessmen who had joined the ranks of monopoly capital stayed in the NP, where they agitated for more enlightened policies. Nonetheless, a number came to view the policies of the Progressive Reform (later Progressive Federal) Party more sympathetically.

During the course of the 1970s, those liberals in the white community who leaned towards more radical solutions became isolated within their own organisations (like the Black Sash), or in alliance with the white left (as in NUSAS).

THE RESTRUCTURING OF LIBERALISM

The late 1970s and early 1980s saw the redrawing of divisions within the liberal community. This primarily reflected the reorganisation of liberalism's social base. The dominant feature of this realignment has involved the emergence of PW Botha's technocratic reformism and the United Democratic Front (UDF) as opposite poles of attraction within the liberal community. Their emergence has drawn vitality away from the centre occupied by the PFP and has given expression, respectively, to the new state - monopoly capitalist rapprochement and to the reactivation of popular democratic politics.

Contemporary NP liberalism is a more diverse creature than it ever was. Its internal differentiations have been both crystallised and given more visible

expression in response to the two sets of developments mentioned above.

BOTHA'S REFORMIST INITIATIVES

The first of these initiatives involves the ascendancy of a technocratic-reformist faction within the state. The period since PW Botha assumed office in 1978 has been characterised by a series of hesitant but unprecedented attempts to restructure state policy and state interventions. Its purpose has been to secure political stability and facilitate expanded accumulation in a period marked by the resurgence of popular struggle and the dominance of monopoly capitalism. Government has initiated moves to lift barriers to upward mobility amongst blacks; to extend geographical and occupational mobility of urban Africans; to improve their employment prospects and job security; and, as far as fiscal circumstances permit, to expand collective consumption in urban areas (with respect to housing, transport, lighting and other amenities).

These measures, together with the legal right of Africans to form trade unions, have enabled the state to create conditions whereby black workers employed in the cities can secure - at least when economic circumstances are favourable - a steady upward drift in wages and purchasing power. These modest 'privileges' are, however, bought at the cost of intensified control over influx from rural areas, and burgeoning rural poverty.

Botha's reform measures are intended to foster material and political divisions between 'middle' and working class Africans, between urban and rural or migrant workers, and between the various African 'ethnic' groups.

Constitutionally, the Botha reforms have followed a somewhat different logic. Instead of incorporating African urban residents within the framework of central government, thus giving further weight to their separation from 'outsiders', the state has continued to insist that Africans should exercise their political rights in the 'homelands'. Attempts have been made - without much success - to appease 'insiders' by giving them access to local authority structures with an extended range of powers and functions. Coloureds and Indians, by contrast, have been enfranchised and granted parliamentary rights which parallel those

of the white electorate. The aim here is to forge an alliance between whites, coloureds and Indians, to the exclusion of Africans.

THE 1983 WHITE REFERENDUM

The 1983 referendum was part of an attempt by the Botha leadership to gain support for this reform package from a deeply divided white population. In formal terms, the 'yes' vote was an endorsement of one of the more timid items of this package, being a set of constitutional proposals which had their roots in the 1977 National Party plan.

These proposals were in certain key respects regressive, and contradicted government's stated reformist intentions. Yet their importance extended beyond their intrinsic merits or demerits. The NP called upon the white electorate to vote 'yes' as a way of breaking the political logjam created on the right by the Conservative and Herstige Nasionale Partys, with their recent Transvaal electoral advances. The NP also indicated that an affirmative vote would be regarded as a mandate to proceed with a programme of reforms. Although unspecified, these reforms were supposedly more advanced than those envisaged at the time of the referendum.

It was the Botha leadership's 'courageous' appeal for a 'mandate for change', rather than the much-maligned constitution, which became the focal point of the intense politicking that accompanied the referendum campaign. A process of realignment began within the white community. Various social and political forces, some entirely new, bargained for electoral advantage. On the right, amongst a wide range of liberals, and on the left, the call went out for a 'no' vote. However, the final result - a large 'yes' majority - appeared probable from the outset.

With the 'tribal' politics of English vs Afrikaner breaking down, Botha was able to draw on English rather than Afrikaner support to pull him through. That he could rely on so many English votes reflected the profound divisions currently rending white politics in general, and South African liberalism in particular.

A NEW CHALLENGE FROM BELOW

The other significant development affecting the evolution of liberalism in the 1980s has been the emergence of the United Democratic Front.

The UDF is a vast multi-racial amalgam of community, worker, cultural, media and political groupings united by a deep antipathy to the new constitution and by the demand for universal franchise in a unitary South Africa. It is the outcome of an organisational resurgence of the late 1970s, and traces some of its symbolic, programmatic and institutional roots to the alliance politics of the 1950s.

The UDF brings together a wide range of social strata, organisational forms and ideological positions. Its members differ widely in perspective: they include radical liberals - many emphasising the social-democratic content of the Freedom Charter - as well as those pressing for a clearer socialist direction, and for the working class to play a more assertive role within the UDF.

The development of liberalism in the 1980s can be further measured against the emergence of a second oppositional force, the National Forum (NF). Though hostile to white liberals, the NF has attracted a considerable number of black liberals into its fold. It has also elicited a generally hostile response from white liberalism.

The NF appears to be a rather superficially organised synthesis of black exclusivism and socialism. It is suspicious of the UDF's non-racial or multi-racial politics, and insists on the Freedom Charter's replacement by a more radical document calling for socialism and worker leadership. The NF constitutes a partial, though arguably confused, radicalisation of the black consciousness politics of the 1970s. In its definition of the world, all whites and blacks who 'collaborate' with whites - whether they be Matanzima or AZASO - are 'bourgeois': the remaining blacks are part of the working class.

A third challenge from below evoking a response from liberals has come from the emerging independent trade union movement. Since the unions are organised around the capital-labour contradiction within production, and since in many instances they have concentrated their attentions on 'progressive' monopoly firms, they

have struck at the very material base of white liberalism. The unions appear less immediately as a challenge to the 'irrationality' of apartheid - which liberals too abhor - than as a challenge to the 'rational' forces of capitalism, the market and 'free enterprise'.

Broadly speaking, the emerging unions have fallen into two main categories. The one group - non-racial, militant and aligned to the UDF - has still to develop a clear organisational direction and presence on a national scale. The second consists of large, well-organised and militant unions with a nationwide industrial reach. Whereas the first group is still very young, the second traces its roots to the period of working class upsurge of 1973.

The unions of the first category are closely linked to national politics and from the outset developed a strong 'community' role. Those of the second category have tended to be suspicious of what they see as the 'petty bourgeois' politics of the UDF and NF alike. Traditionally insistent on the need for African working class strength, independence and leadership secured through power on the shop floor, they have only recently started moving into 'the community'.

THE LIBERAL RESPONSE

How has South African liberalism responded to these opposite but equally crucial developments, namely 1) the reorganisation of state policy around reformist objectives; and 2) the growing organisational strength and militancy of the masses? What follows is a rough and impressionistic breakdown of liberalism as it has shaped up in the 1980s.

ESTABLISHMENT LIBERALISM

This is the faction of liberalism most closely allied to and sympathetic towards the Botha initiatives. Broadly speaking, it encompasses most large financial institutions and monopolies, business-oriented journals and newspapers like the Financial Mail, Sunday Times and Business Times, and a conservative minority within the PFP. Establishment liberals are defined by the following:

a) A strong orientation towards

conservative fiscal and financial policies, a distrust of state interference in the economy, and a hostility to institutions or processes seen as inflationary or unproductive. (This group generally approves of Horwood's financial 'discipline').

However, establishment liberals criticise apartheid-related institutions (excessive interference in the geographical and occupational mobilities of labour, for example), and state economic mechanisms which are seen as inefficient and inflation-generating.

Many of establishment liberalism's ideologues, in a much-favoured twist of logic, insist that South Africa is basically 'socialist'. Racial discrimination and friction, as well as economic distortions would, they argue, be eliminated if the state let the market 'take its course' (for example in housing, or in the location of industries).

The establishment liberals view with considerable sympathy Botha's initiatives to liberalise industrial relations, reduce restrictions on the job and spatial mobility of African workers with residential rights in the urban areas, and scale down state intervention in the market.

The current regime's obsessive emphasis on 'free enterprise', its willingness to co-operate with big business in the formulation of policy, and its aversion to welfare statism, strike a sympathetic chord within this group. Like the government, they are strongly opposed to social-democratic solutions of the type propounded by, for example, Harry Schwartz. Nonetheless, they are critical of Botha to the extent that he has not gone far enough in tackling the bureaucratic 'tortoise' which, in their view, fetters rational economic development, private initiative and competition. (Typically, for this breed and their counterparts in the capitalist world, there is considerable ambiguity in their attitude to private monopolies, whose implications for 'free enterprise' they are unsure about.)

b) One sees in mainstream establishment liberalism a tendency to give economic reform priority over political reform. Whereas its adherents favour radical economic innovation in a laissez faire direction, they are concerned that political change should be orderly, pragmatic and incremental, and that it should, as far as possible, come from the

top down.

Since there is a tendency to take NP dominance as a given, signs of flexibility within the ruling party are welcomed. This is why the established liberals have treated the new constitution as a 'step in the right direction'. It is a concession granted by an entrenched party with a past record of deep inflexibility. In the view of establishment liberals, any glimmer of reformism within NP ranks ought to be encouraged and prodded along rather than rebuffed. To do otherwise - to spurn the NP's 'imperfect' moves in a reformist direction - would be to engage in the politics of 'protest' and 'boycott' rather than the politics of power; to be visionary and to miss crucial opportunities for restabilising capitalism on a reformist basis.

c) Finally, establishment liberalism is deeply suspicious and fearful of the masses and their organisations. Adherents stress the need to create and win the political allegiance of a stabilised black urban 'middle class'. They do their best to promote black 'moderates' like Buthelezi and the Labour Party leadership, and view with alarm signs of radicalisation amongst the masses.

Establishment liberals have greeted the UDF and NF with undisguised hostility; the Financial Mail, for example, responded to the Azanian People's Manifesto with hysterical vitriol. These organisations are seen as 'radical' and 'socialist', and as constituting a potential threat to the position of moderate black leaders.

Establishment liberals make no attempt to distinguish the radical liberal from socialist currents in the emerging movements. Their fear of mass action precludes the possibility of striking an alliance with those in the UDF and NF whose anti-capitalist commitment has not yet crystallised. This blinkeredness is reflected, for example, in the tendency of establishment and other liberals to interpret the Freedom Charter as unequivocally socialist.

With regard to the independent trade union movement, establishment liberalism holds an increasingly hostile view. When the scale and militancy of the emerging unions first became evident, establishment and other liberals consoled themselves with a twofold response.

Firstly, they viewed industrial unrest as an inevitable but transient accompaniment to the establishment of an industrial relations bargaining system.

Secondly, they accepted that black

workers would, given their lack of political rights, inevitably use trade unions as vehicles for political agitation against apartheid - a situation which, though awkward, should be treated with understanding. Over the past few months, however, references have increasingly been made to the dangers of 'monolithic' unionism (Sunday Express); to fears of a repetition in South Africa of the 'British experience' which, we are told, saw unions become too powerful (The Star); to the fact that the strike record of the black working class is encroaching on that of some European workers; and to the inflationary results of 'unrealistic' wage demands in the absence of commensurate productivity growth.

This rising antagonism towards the unions culminated in the recent attack on FOSATU by Barlow Rand chairman Mike Rosholt (RDM, 01.12.83). Rosholt, who presides over a 'progressive' empire with 42 trade union agreements to its name, described FOSATU's publically-stated policies and industrial practices as a 'threat to free enterprise'. He charged that FOSATU unions had challenged the right of management to manage and were seeking to take control of factories, especially those belonging to 'progressive' companies.

The conservative character of establishment liberalism tallies closely with the position of the liberal wing of the monopoly bourgeoisie. This economically dominant class fraction in South Africa is the main source of sustenance for establishment liberalism. South Africa's liberal capitalists fear mass action and are willing to trade economic reform for political reform. They are economically well-established and thus exhibit none of the political radicalism - nationalist, anti-oligarchic, or anti-traditionalist - that has led less secure capitalist fractions openly to enlist popular support in other countries (Nicaragua before 1979 and contemporary Phillipines being obvious examples).

If apartheid is 'archaic' then - for liberal capitalists - it is best changed through 'reform from above'. The alternative - a challenge from below - not only threatens to disrupt production but could develop into a challenge to capitalist property itself.

INDEPENDENT ESTABLISHMENT LIBERALISM

This group is represented in newspapers like the Sunday Express, and has a significant presence in the PFP. With some anomalous exceptions (like Harry Schwartz) it shares the same basic approach to economic policy as the first group. It is in favour of conservative economic management and a minimum of state intervention in accumulation.

The independent liberals also share with the establishment liberals a hostility to mass organisation (reflected, for example, in the recent Sunday Express attack on the UDF). However, they are concerned to maintain some distance from the Botha regime and stress the political inadequacy of the new constitution. During the referendum campaign they voiced the fear that the constitution would, if implemented, polarise the population, radicalise blacks and generate instability.

Independents emphasise the need for thorough-going political reform and are holding out for more fundamental changes than those currently envisaged by the government. They tend to favour the logical extension into politics of the Riekert Commission recognition of the irreversibility of African urbanisation. They would like to see a more inclusive political dispensation, probably including the granting of some form of franchise to urban Africans.

There is evidence that this faction within liberalism retains the sympathy and support of some sections of the monopoly bourgeoisie. Though a self-confessed elitist, and willing to co-operate with the Botha government where necessary, Harry Oppenheimer did endorse the call for a 'no' vote in the referendum campaign. This put him in opposition to his successor at Anglo American, Gavin Relly, and to most of the business community.

BOURGEOIS-DEMOCRATIC LIBERALISM

The third strand of liberalism is today represented in the left and centre of the PFP, in the centre and right of the Black Sash, in the Institute of Race Relations, the senior church hierarchies and amongst remnants of the Liberal Party. Bourgeois-democratic liberalism also embraces the

'moderate' wing of black consciousness, and is represented in the National Forum.

Democratic liberals are characterised by a deep antipathy towards racial discrimination. They remain hostile to the Botha regime for its failure to clear the statute books of such discriminatory laws as the Group Areas, Population Registration, Immorality and Mixed Marriages Acts, and for its determined pursuit of 'homeland' policy.

This group called for a 'no' vote in the referendum out of their conviction that the new constitution, if implemented, would entrench apartheid, pave the way for 'strongman' rule, fail to win African acceptance, and generate polarisation and conflict.

In general, bourgeois-democratic liberals are guided by western conceptions of liberal democracy and civil liberties. However, they differ in their conception of how this vision can be realised in South Africa's complex conditions. Some favour qualified franchise, federalism and 'minority vetoes' as safeguards for the white minority; others are in favour of universal franchise in a unitary state.

Bourgeois-democratic liberals are similarly divided on the question of social policy. While all favour a broadly capitalist framework, some are oriented to social-democratic interventionism and others toward classical liberal economics.

In their attitude to the masses, the bourgeois-democratic liberals find themselves ambiguously placed. They generally view popular anger and radicalism with a degree of sympathy and understanding, and are prepared to accept that certain 'radical' black leaders have enough popular legitimacy to justify their inclusion in negotiations leading to a new dispensation. Nonetheless, especially white democratic liberals maintain a clear distance from radical and left organisations, time and again expressing pained anguish that these exist at all, and laying the blame at government's door.

The PFP has been willing to go no further than to set up an informal alliance with Buthelezi's KwaZulu patronage network, a hardly radical step but one which does give them some access to black support and a mass base of sorts. The Black Sash decided after much agonising that it would stay out of the UDF and retain an independent position (although its Natal branch did affiliate). Leading figures in the Institute of Race

Relations appear to be closely tied to Inkatha and to certain liberal elements of black consciousness.


Thus we see in the democratic liberals a tentative extending of the hand to black 'moderates', coupled with a discomfort in the face of mass radicalism.

At the same time the monopolies, which during the late 1970s and early 1980s saw the PFP as a vital and growing reformist pressure group, had begun to withdraw their hand of support from the party. Today, more and more big business money is being mobilised behind the NP.

Simultaneously with the deterioration of the relationship between capital and the PFP, the party's electoral strength has peaked. In all probability, the PFP will from now onwards face declining support, even in some of its traditional areas, as more and more white voters of conservative-reformist hue turn to the NP as the best hope for cautious and orderly change.

Nonetheless, it seems unlikely that monopoly capital or the English-speaking electorate will abandon the PFP to die. The party continues to be seen as a valuable pressure group prodding government on the left, and encouraging it to take bolder reformist steps.

The magnetic attraction which Botha's initiatives exert over pragmatic reformers has been felt in the PFP's own internal structure, and the possibility of an eventual split between the party's left and right factions has grown. If that were to happen, the PFP's left wing - especially its youth - would in all probability gravitate towards the other pole of attraction in the liberal community, the UDF.



The final strand within South African liberalism is the only one that has been willing to form alliances with the left or the organisations of the masses. Non-racial and welfarist in orientation, its adherents have been ready and eager to activate and mobilise the strength of the popular classes behind its vision of a unitary democratic South Africa. Their militancy and links with the left have deprived them of the support of big capital. They furthermore lack any social base in the white population beyond a small but active intelligentsia. Their class base lies instead in the black -

and especially Indian - petty bourgeoisie. This, at any rate, is the stratum whose demands and interests the radical liberals most forcefully articulate.

On the other hand, the popular-democratic politics which they espouse enjoys considerable working class support, and they are more than willing to mobilise and consolidate a proletarian base in the pursuit of their goals.

What defines this faction as liberal, rather than left, is not any coherently pro-capitalist position; indeed, many radical liberals express a commitment to socialism. Their liberalism consists rather in their vague and tendentially social-democratic definition of socialism, and in their failure to articulate a clearly anti-capitalist position.

Nonetheless, their political doctrines and allegiances are sufficiently vague, their opposition to the state and to mainstream liberalism sufficiently intense and their passion for radical mass action sufficiently strong, to allow for the possibility that they may be mobilised within an alliance of forces with a basically socialist thrust.

The real question for this group, so many of whose members, white and black, are now in the UDF, is whether the weight of the proletarian social base and radical intelligentsia will be sufficient to ensure the hegemony of a socialist programme. If it is, radical liberals will eventually be disarticulated from capitalism and its reformist requirements, and merge with the socialist project. If not, their own vague social democracy will be likely to prevail over rival political positions and the popular movement will become linked to a reformist project.

It is significant that the bourgeoisie itself is at this stage completely unwilling to court allies within this 'dangerous' group. The organised working class, by contrast, is at least in some instances, very willing to do so (eg SAAWU, GAWU, MACWUSA, etc). The FOSATU, GWU, and Food and Canning union leadership is generally averse to co-operation with liberals, and have refused to join the UDF or NF. Radical liberals reciprocate this dislike, claiming that union leaders are 'workerist'. The future of radical liberalism clearly depends on the way tensions between these diverse political positions and constituencies are played out in the months and years to come.

Contemporary liberalism is being restructured around two opposite polarities: at one extreme, the reconstituted power bloc over which Botha presides; and at the other, the organisations of 'the people', most notably the heterogenous United Democratic Front. The bourgeoisie, in a manner consistent with its traditional conservatism, has gravitated towards a regime that places growing emphasis on 'free enterprise'; which seeks co-operation between government and leading businessmen; and which has embarked, however 'imperfectly' and hesitantly, on a path of pragmatic reform.

In consequence the traditional business-backed liberal pressure group, the PFP, is losing much of its capitalist support. The party itself has been rent by the attraction of Botha reformism, with some

of its leading figures tending towards a qualified endorsement of government moves. The remaining bourgeois-democratic liberals, presently dominant in the PFP, are likely to find themselves increasingly isolated and staging a kind of holding operation to prevent the further erosion of the party's financial and electoral support.

By contrast, the radical liberals are cementing alliances with two large and politically critical forces, namely the radical black petty bourgeoisie and the organised working class. While radical liberalism's own destiny remains dependent on its relationship to socialism and the working class, the middle-ground liberalism of the PFP is increasingly being marginalised from the field of political class struggle in South Africa ■

SOUTH AFRICAN REVIEW 1

Same Foundations, New Facades?

Can the ruling group in South Africa introduce real reforms?

Is South Africa destabilising other Southern African countries?

How powerful is the new black trade union movement?

South African Review takes a searching look at recent developments in South Africa.

The following topics have been singled out for interpretation: South Africa and Southern Africa; Politics; the Economy; Labour; Health, Housing and Education; Women.

Each section contains a brief introduction followed by studies which are wide-ranging in scope and compact in treatment.

Price: R11.50 plus GST
ISBN 0 86975 161 1

 **RAVAN PRESS**

 **a SARS
publication**

Labour Action

The first three weeks of 1984 heralded an unprecedented wave of strikes for so short a period. Wages appeared to be the overriding cause of these strikes. Other issues involved included unfair dismissals, union recognition and the new uniform tax system.

Philip van Niekerk, writing in the **Rand Daily Mail**, examined the increase in strikes during the second half of 1983, and the acceleration of worker resistance during January 1984. Making use of research carried out by University of Cape Town economist Charles Simkins, he notes a drop of 41 percent in the standard of living of blacks between May 1982 and May 1983. Simkins suggests that it is unlikely that this decrease changed between May and December 1983.

Unemployment and population growth rate both rose by 2,8 percent during the period. The fact that real wages rose by 1,5 percent was of little consequence because of the increases in unemployment and population growth. The cost of providing for the unemployed had to be borne by the wage earners.

Africans experienced a rise in financial expectations in that the past three years allowed for an improved standard of living compared to the 1970s. When the recession hit during 1983 frustrations increased as living standards dropped.

From the middle of 1983 these pressures increased, causing intensified strike activity towards the end of the year. Workers appeared less cautious during the year, and were prepared to strike even if the consequences involved

dismissal.

The introduction of a new uniform taxation system may increasingly integrate shop floor and national political issues. Workers have already struck against the system, and many commentators expect this to happen again. African workers resent contributing directly to a system which frustrates their political aspirations. And while some workers will pay less tax under the new system, opposition to it may be political, rather than economic in emphasis.

During 1983 many trade unions responded to the recession by using official dispute-resolving procedures. One hundred and seventy cases were referred to the industrial court during 1983, compared to 41 the previous year. According to the Department of Manpower, 119 conciliation boards were appointed last year, compared to 60 in 1982. Conciliation boards can be used to settle disputes formally declared in terms of the dispute procedures set out in labour legislation.

Over the past six months workers have challenged management in a number of key industries. Strikes occurred at Impala Platinum Refinery, at the Ucar mine in BophuthaTswana, as well as at AECI. In all these cases, management adopted a tough attitude: dismissal or threat of dismissal. The months ahead will show how the unions involved cope with the trials of strength emerging between management and the organised working class.

TRANSVAAL

Company: AECI
Date: 17 - 20 January
Workers: 8 650
Union: South African Chemical
Workers' Union (SACWU)

SA Chemical Workers' Union members at AECI were involved in a protracted dispute with management. This conflict, involving a worker demand for a monthly minimum wage of R400, came to a head in mid-January.

AECI plants at Umbogintwini, Modderfontein and Somerset West are covered by an industrial council agreement under which workers can apply to the council to declare a dispute. If the dispute is not settled within 30 days of the application, workers are legally able to strike. In the case of AECI's Midlands plant, which is not covered by an industrial council agreement, workers can apply to the Minister of Manpower for a conciliation board. If the dispute is not resolved by the board within 30 days of the application, workers are also legally able to strike.

SACWU referred this dispute to the relevant bodies. No settlement was reached with the prescribed 30 days. Strike ballots were held prior to the expiry date (Friday 13 January): 3 200 workers at the Modderfontein plant voted in favour of the strike. Ballots held at the Somerset West and Natal plants also went in favour of a strike.

On Monday, 16 January, 5 000 workers at AECI's Modderfontein plant went on strike. The following day more than 3 000 workers at Somerset West and Natal Midlands joined the strike, soon to be followed by workers at Sasolburg and Umbogintwini. Within two days some 8 560 AECI workers were on strike. The South African Allied Workers' Union (SAAWU), which had been involved in joint negotiations with SACWU, gave its full support to the union, although its members at AECI did not join the strike.

While previous legal strikes had occurred at Armourplate in 1976, and Natal Thread in June 1983, AECI was South Africa's first national legal strike.

In theory, a legal strike offers some protection to striking workers. It excludes the possibility of criminal prosecution, and could prevent employers from firing striking workers.

In the AECI case, workers stayed out

until Friday, 20 January, when management issued an ultimatum to return to work or face dismissal. Strikers not returning immediately would be able to reapply for their positions, and wages were not deducted for days on strike. However, management was not prepared to revise its original offer of a R373,47 minimum monthly wage.

Strikers returned to work to avoid dismissal. This decision was made amidst threats to replace strikers with other workers.

If the legally striking workers had been dismissed, the industrial court would have been called on to rule on whether management can fire workers involved in a legal strike. However, SACWU was reluctant to test this point in the AECI case.

During the strike, workers received messages of support from both the United Democratic Front, and the African National Congress.

AECI workers admit that the national strike failed, but say this was because of the strike laws. 'Workers are not protected during a strike', a SACWU representative said. Although the strike was legal, management had still used the threat of dismissal to break the strike.

Although the strike failed in its immediate objectives, it was not a disaster for the union or its members. There was a total stoppage by SACWU members at all AECI plants. (By agreement between the parties, this excluded hospital and hostel kitchen staff).

CORNELIUS ZAKWE vs AECI

The industrial court recently turned down Cornelius Zakwe's application in terms of section 43 of the Labour Relations Act. Zakwe had applied for reinstatement in his employment with AECI (Sasolburg).

The applicant was first employed by AECI during July 1969. After almost 13 years service he was transferred to the Polyethelene II department as the company medical officer recommended that he be moved from a work environment involving paint. With the transfer Zakwe was downgraded, and his salary reduced by R45 per month.

Papers filed in court by Zakwe alleged that he had lodged objections against

this action. AECI, however, claimed that it was unable to find records of these.

Zakwe further contended that during August 1983 he was instructed by a foreman to enter a vessel and clean a strainer. He was confronted by a process operator and ordered out of the vessel, as he did not have the required clearance. In the ensuing disciplinary hearing at AECI, he received a written reprimand for misconduct, described by the company as being 'of a very serious nature'.

Within a month, Zakwe faced a second disciplinary hearing where it was claimed that he had failed to obey the instructions of his superiors. The misconduct related to three separate incidents over two days where the company alleged that Zakwe had

- * refused to move a welding machine;
- * not brought a wire brush when requested to do so;
- * refused to attend a meeting in the plant engineer's office.

Zakwe claimed that he had not moved the machine because it was too heavy, and that he had forgotten the wire brush. He stated that he had gone to the plant engineer's office, but had not been prepared to remain there unless his shop steward was present. When this request was turned down, he left the office.

The disciplinary hearing decided to terminate Zakwe's contract of employment.

At the industrial court hearing it was argued on behalf of Zakwe that even if the alleged misconduct had occurred, the supreme penalty of dismissal was not appropriate. He was an employee, with 14 years service, and no record before the court of previous misconduct.

In delivering judgement advocate Hiemstra, a member of the industrial court, ruled that he had to take into account the applicant's reasonable prospect of success if a conciliation board was appointed. He found that Zakwe had committed serious breaches of discipline, and that his prospects of success before a conciliation board were remote. He therefore refused the application. Advocate Hiemstra further stated that while English law accepted that long service was a mitigating circumstance in disciplinary decisions, this should not necessarily always be the case.

Company: African Cables (Vereeniging)
Date: 6 January
Workers: About 500
Union: Engineering and Allied Workers' Union (EAWU)

Workers began their strike on 6 January in protest against bad working conditions. When both the day and night shifts refused to work, the factory was closed for those shifts. The following Monday (9 January) workers arrived at the factory, and demanded to speak to the company's managing director. Management told them to return to work, and offered to refer grievances to the works council. The strikers refused this offer.

Management claims that they attempted to contact the Engineering and Allied Workers' Union - which represents the majority of workers at African Cables - but was unable to do so because the union offices were closed. When union representatives contacted management, they were informed that all striking workers had been dismissed.

The union has threatened to take legal action unless all fired workers are reinstated. Union representatives claim that there is 'ample proof that management has ignored the rights of the workers'. A union spokesperson said that workers had been provoked by management, who phoned the police after workers demanded an explanation for the switch from a four to five day shift.

When management agreed to talk to the EAWU, union demands were not met. EAWU has recently sent a five point document to management, arguing that all fired workers be unconditionally re-employed, and paid for the period of the strike.

Company: Asea Electric
Date: 25 - 27 October
Workers: About 450
Union: Metal and Allied Workers' Union (MAWU)

For previous details, see WIP 28:47. After a three day stoppage, management fired all striking workers. They refused to agree to worker demands for the reinstatement of a dismissed fellow worker.

Company: Barlows (Kew)
Date: 28 - 30 September
Workers: About 500
Union: MAWU

See WIP 28:47 for previous details.

The third stoppage of 1983 in support of higher wages by Barlow's workers took place in Kew at the end of September. Management had offered to raise the minimum weekly wage to R90 by January 1984, but workers rejected this.

According to management, workers broke an agreement between Barlows and MAWU by striking during negotiations.

Management agreed not to take disciplinary action against the workers as the strike had been settled within 36 hours. Striking workers agreed to return to the job pending further negotiations.

The agreement between Barlows and MAWU regarding negotiations allows for both parties to proceed with negotiations until either party declares a deadlock. At that point, provision is made for a mediator to be called in. In this case the wage increase was settled through mediation. Both parties finally agreed to a R2,00 minimum hourly wage to be introduced over a period of time. The total increase was to be effected by January 1984.

Company: B & S Steel Furniture
During May 1982 black workers at B & S Engineering and Steelbrite - two Brits metal companies making metal units and furniture - organised themselves and formed a union committee affiliated to FOSATU's Metal and Allied Workers' Union (MAWU). By June 1982 they claimed eighty percent membership in both plants.

The 12-person committee made several attempts to negotiate terms of recognition with management. But in July management fired the entire committee, claiming that they had been retrenched. This led to a work stoppage which forced management to rehire all 12 committee members.

Eventually Tuesday, 7 September, was set down for a meeting between management and the committee to discuss grievances and recognition. The day before this meeting the vice chairman of the committee presented management with a list of demands to be discussed. He was later fired after being told that he was not working properly.

The following day (7 September) the

planned meeting between management and the committee did not take place. Instead, management dismissed the entire work-force of 900, saying that the plants would be closed for three days and that workers would be selectively rehired if they applied on 10 September.

Management claimed that workers had been involved in a go-slow, whereas workers alleged that management had turned off the machines. Two hundred and seventy workers refused to reapply for work on the basis of selective rehiring, and with MAWU decided to institute legal action.

Due to the complexity of the matter, the case was unusually delayed, leaving the workers involved unemployed for almost a year. Despite this, the 270 remained united and organised, holding daily meetings at the Brits Catholic Church hall. Here they discussed the problems they were having, and planned ways to pool resources such as savings. They also organised requests for support. Workers made many sacrifices to maintain this unity. Children were sent away and taken out of school, livestock and other commodities were sold. Some people, being unable to pay rent, were forced to give up their homes.

By September 1983 the group was penniless, and many were in debt to family members and friends who had been able to give financial support.

A year after the dispute had begun, the company - which had in the interim been taken over by Gundle Plastics - settled out of court, and promised both reinstatement and compensation for the 270 workers.

The union charged management with unfair labour practises, and cited numerous cases of victimisation, bribery and intimidation of union members.

The outcome of the case is regarded as significant as it revealed the tactical way in which the Unfair Labour Practice clause may be used. In addition the workers' victory has increased the confidence of those unionising in Brits - a decentralised zone notorious for backward industrial relations policies. But the obstinancy of management still persists: although the workers have all been reinstated, the company is still avoiding recognition of the union.

The strength of the workers - a commuter population - and their increased consciousness of union politics

and worker rights has penetrated the villages and resettlement areas on the borders of BophuthaTswana. This may yet have a significant impact on local political issues.

Georgina Jaffee

Company: BMW (Rosslyn)
Date: 17 - 18 January
Workers: About 1 500
Union: National Automobile and Allied Workers' Union (NAAWU)

Dissatisfaction over wage increases led to a one-day work stoppage at this firm. Almost the entire work-force participated in the protest against management's unilateral five percent across the board increase. Workers agreed to call off the stoppage while negotiations continued. Production of about 80 cars was affected as a result of the strike.

On 24 January, workers again went on strike when management refused to alter their initial offer. The union accused management of 'not negotiating in good faith' by making the same offer which had led to the initial strike.

In response to the second strike, management shut down the plant indefinitely, saying that they had taken this step because of 'threats and acts of violence against black supervisory staff'. The plant would remain closed until management was confident that 'the intimidation' had ceased.

During the strike, BMW was losing R1 750 000 a day. As the second stoppage entered its fourth day, management said that the demands made were unreasonable, as the company paid its workers the highest minimum wage in the industry (R507 a month). NAAWU demanded a minimum hourly wage of R3,50, although this figure was negotiable.

On 31 January management met union representatives at a Pretoria hotel. NAAWU accused BMW of going back on an undertaking to negotiate, and said that the workers would not return unless BMW agreed to negotiations. BMW management refused to reconsider the 10c an hour increase which had sparked off the strike.

Nineteen workers appeared in disciplinary proceedings. Management, which alleged that they had intimidated other workers during the strike, said that they would be fired if found

guilty. It was also announced that the plant would not reopen until the disciplinary hearings were over.

Management revealed that it was preparing to employ new workers if 'intimidators' and other strikers were fired. In response, NAAWU national secretary Fred Sauls claimed that management was using the strike for retrenchments.

Strikers indicated that they would not return to work until management undertook not to fire those summoned to disciplinary hearings.

Early in February, BMW alleged that workers were resigning from NAAWU because of the union's handling of the dispute. They gave no details of how many had resigned. In terms of the agreement between NAAWU and BMW, workers wishing to resign from the union hand in their resignation to the company, which passes these on to the union.

NAAWU denied that workers were resigning from the union, saying that they had no knowledge of any resignations.

Company: Caramel Sweetmaking
(Germiston)
Date: 8 December
Workers: 120
Union: Sweet, Food and Allied Workers' Union (SFAWU)

Caramel Sweetmaking fired their entire work-force a few days before closing down for annual leave. A company spokesperson said workers had approached management ten days before with grievances about working conditions and wages. They had also 'mentioned' their union (SFAWU), but the company had not been prepared to discuss recognition.

The work-force stopped work for two hours and were subsequently given a week's notice. One day before the notice period elapsed, 'the entire work-force stopped working and we politely asked them to leave', explained management.

David Makhene, a SFAWU organiser, said workers had started joining the union in November. They had approached management about recognition but were told to either resign from the union or be fired. The workers refused and were given one week's notice.

Makhene described the company as totally 'anti-union' and said the union was considering legal action if other workers were hired in the place of those dismissed.

Company: Carlton Paper Mill (Wadeville)
Date: 6 - 8 December
Workers: 250
Union: Paper, Wood and Allied
Workers' Union (PWAU)

Workers struck over the dismissal of a fellow worker. In October 1983, Carlton and PWAU had signed a recognition agreement. According to management, workers had gone on strike without waiting for the agreed-upon grievance procedure to be set in motion.

When management and the union agreed to call in a mediator to settle the dispute, the strikers returned to work.

The strike could have been a test of a further stipulation in the recognition agreement, whereby management is bound to fire all or no strikers in the event of a stoppage (see above). However, in the event of this issue emerging, management would have argued that the whole agreement fell away because workers did not follow the procedures as set out in the agreement.

AGREEMENT ON RIGHT TO STRIKE: Carlton Paper Corporation and the Paper, Wood and Allied Workers' Union

A recognition between these two parties stipulates that in the event of a strike the company will either fire the entire work-force or no workers at all. This implies that the company cannot selectively rehire workers if they have been dismissed during the course of a strike.

The dismissal and selective re-employment of strikers is often used by management in an attempt to remove what they see as 'trouble-makers' from the factory floor.

Unionists see this clause in the recognition agreement as very significant. If employers can only fire strikers at the risk of losing the entire work-force, they will be loathe to dismiss strikers.

The only agreement containing a similar provision involves Hammarsdale Textile Company, Natal Thread, and FOSATU's National Union of Textile Workers.

Company: Coalequip
Date: 30 September
Workers: 76
Union: Metal and Allied Workers'
Union (MAU)
Seventy-six workers at this mining

equipment firm downed tools demanding that a fellow worker be reinstated. The worker was fired for being absent from work. But he had produced a letter testifying to the fact that he had been in prison for part of his absenteeism.

Management gave striking workers 60 seconds to return to their posts or face dismissal. According to union sources, the workers were all fired as they did not have sufficient time to return to the job. But management claims that the workers were given several warnings to return to work. By failing to do so, they did not comply with the grievance procedure agreed upon with the company.

Management agreed to reinstate the dismissed worker, but refused to re-employ those who had gone on strike.

After lengthy negotiations management agreed, in mid-November, to re-employ workers who had gone on strike.

Company: Colgate-Palmolive
Date: October
Workers: About 300
Union: Chemical Workers' Industrial
Union (CWIU)

A series of incidents culminating in the dismissal of a worker led to a strike. Striking workers claimed that their action was in protest against a manager who treated them 'as if they were in jail'. There was also a complaint about the way this manager handled wage payments, especially after he had lost a dispute with shop stewards.

Workers demanded that the manager be removed from the department during an investigation into the matter. Agreement to return to work was reached, pending an enquiry into the manager's attitude.

Company: Cullinan Industrial Porcelain
and related strikes
Date: 3 November
Workers: 300
Union: Building, Construction and
Allied Workers' Union (BCAWU)

Several strikes by members of the CUSA-affiliated BCAUW occurred in the Olifantsfontein area. Police surveillance of workers as well as pass raids during the strikes heightened the already tense situation.

At Cullinan Refractories a strike over wages occurred on 29 September. Management denied reports that police were present during the strike.

Tension re-emerged in the area in

early November when 300 workers employed by Cullinan Industrial Porcelain (CIP) marched 10 kilometers from the plant to Tembisa. Marchers carried placards calling for a 50c per hour across the board increase.

Management refused to negotiate with worker representatives and dismissed all the strikers, agreeing to selectively re-employ workers. Those workers who were offered re-employment chose to remain on strike with their colleagues.

In solidarity with workers at CIP, workers at other factories in the area organised by BCAWU pressurised their employers to intervene.

At Johnson Tiles, workers struck in late November. While there were other issues involved in their strike, workers had asked the Johnson management to intervene at CIP.

Workers at Cullinan Refractories, Johnson Tiles and Armitage Shanks wrote to the CIP management, demanding the reinstatement of the fired strikers.

Meanwhile, those fired from CIP staged two demonstrations outside the plant. Police raided their hostels in Tembisa, arresting over 100 workers for pass offences. Management claimed that the arrests were related to 'reports of intimidation at the hostel'. Police denied that the arrests had anything to do with the strike.

The CIP plant had been temporarily closed during the strike, but reopened towards the end of November. Some workers were rehired.

Worker demands at CIP were not met. BCAWU has only 25 percent membership at the plant, and management has refused to negotiate. However, the militant campaign waged in support of the CIP workers indicates that BCAWU is establishing a cohesive presence in the area.

Company: Fresh Meat Supply
Date: 30 November
Workers: 160
Union: Sweet, Food and Allied Workers Union

When employees were asked to work a 12-hour week they refused, and left the premises. Management claimed that they left of their own accord, but workers say they were told to go home. When they returned to work the following day, they had been locked out. Initially management refused to re-employ the workers, but did so a week later. A

recognition agreement is currently being negotiated between the union and the firm.

Company: General Tyre and Rubber Company (Booyens)
Date: 28 December
Workers: 52
Union: General and Allied Workers' Union (GAWU)

Workers struck when two co-workers were dismissed over allegations of theft. According to the union, the strike stopped production at the firm.

On 9 December the company fired the 52 striking workers. The union has referred the matter to the industrial court.

Company: Golden Era Stationers
Date: 22 - 24 November
Workers: 100
Union: PWAU

Half the work-force struck demanding recognition of PWAU, exemption from the closed-shop forcing them to join the rival South African Typographical Union, and reinstatement of a dismissed fellow worker.

The company agreed to recognise PWAU and apply for exemption from the closed-shop agreement. Management also agreed to investigate the disputed dismissal, and all strikers returned to work.

Company: Kleenim Brush Works
Date: 18 October
Workers: About 310
Union: African Allied Workers' Union
A strike over wage increases occurred after negotiations reached deadlock. During the strike, a strong police presence was observed at the plant.

Workers resolved to return to work until their wage and recognition demands had been met.

Nineteen strikers were charged with intimidation on 27 October. Charges were subsequently withdrawn.

Company: Nampak Tissue (Pretoria)
Date: Late October
Workers: Over 250
Union: Unknown
Workers struck for two days in protest against management's refusal to meet pay demands. Management agreed to wage negotiations on condition that the strike ended immediately.

Company: Pienaar and Grabe Wood Factory (Rosslyn)
Date: October
Workers: About 50
Union: South African Allied Workers' Union (SAAWU)
Workers at this factory elected three representatives to negotiate a 30c an hour wage increase on their behalf. This demand was turned down by management. One of the worker representatives said that he was accused by a foreman of 'recruiting workers to join an outside union'. When he denied this, he was punched and kicked by the foreman and two other men.

Fifty one workers then downed tools in protest against these events. Management responded by firing the workers. A SAAWU representative said that if negotiations with management failed to bring about their reinstatement, court action would be considered.

Company: Poole Industries (Pretoria)
Date: 11 October
Workers: 300
Union: National General Workers' Union (NGWU)

This strike, staged by NGWU members, was in support of higher wages. Workers were also protesting against pension deductions for a fund run by the industry's industrial council. There were also complaints about a laundry deduction which workers had to pay for the cleaning of overalls.

Prior to the strike, Poole Industries and the NGWU had been involved in negotiations over recognition. Management refused to recognise the union because it did not belong to the industrial council for the motor industry.

Management further refused to negotiate on worker demands, and the following day fired all those on strike. At the end of October, 150 of the workers accepted re-employment.

The NGWU is to take the company to

the industrial court, claiming that the workers were unfairly dismissed.

Company: PUTCO
Date: 15 December
Workers: 170
Union: Transport and Allied Workers' Union (TAWU)

A strike in protest against the dismissal of seven workers was staged by 170 PUTCO bus drivers. The seven workers were fired after a disciplinary hearing earlier in the week. Workers demanded that the official who conducted the inquiry should leave the premises. Management refused to order this, but agreed to investigate the cases of the seven who had been fired.

The 170 strikers agreed to return to work pending an investigation into the matter.

Company: St John's Knitwear (Hammanskraal)
Date: 8 - 11 November
Workers: About 200
Union: SAAWU

BophuthaTswana police dispersed more than 200 workers on the second day of a strike which St John's general manager said was 'about nothing'.

A spokesperson for the workers said that negotiations for wage hikes, increased night shift allowances and sick and leave pay had begun two weeks earlier. He said workers were told their demands had been rejected. According to SAAWU most of the workers at St John's earn R22 a week.

After workers demanded to see St John's general manager G Licker, they were told to return to work or go home. Licker allegedly repeated this ultimatum in the presence of a large contingent of BophuthaTswana police.

Licker was reported as saying that most of the 82 (?) strikers had returned to work, with the exception of ten identified as 'ringleaders'. He claimed that discussions prior to the strike had revolved around minor complaints, and not higher wages or allowances. He denied that all the workers' demands had been rejected.

THE LIBERTY LIFE DISPUTE

The campaign against Liberty Life by members of the Insurance Assurance Workers' Union of SA (IAWUSA) came to a head in July 1983. Between 90 and 150 black employees at Liberty Life struck on 13 July in support of increased wages and recognition of their union which has majority representation amongst Africans, Indians and coloureds at the firm. Management refused to consider recognising the union on the grounds that it was a multiracial company and the union was not.

Pending further negotiations the workers returned to work on 19 July. By the end of September the negotiations were still deadlocked. About 90 of the workers staged a second strike and later a placard demonstration outside the Liberty Life offices in Braamfontein.

Liberty Life dismissed all the striking workers on 4 October. The

company stated that they would not be selectively employing the workers as they believed this could be construed as an unfair labour practice.

The strike led to three of the workers being charged for distributing pamphlets during the strike. The charges were withdrawn three weeks later.

By the end of October, IAWUSA had called for a boycott of companies linked to Liberty Life. They received support in their campaign from overseas and local organisations. Support committees have been established in both Durban and Cape Town.

About 45 of the workers held another protest outside Standard Bank in Braamfontein on 18 November where Liberty Life's Donald Gordon was attending a meeting. The placards criticised Liberty Life's low wages and the lack of freedom of association at the company.

Industrial relations can never be isolated from the context in which it operates. In South Africa, more than any other country IR is fraught with political overtones, with labour one of the few outlets for black frustration and expression.

For this reason, the struggle by the Insurance Assurance Workers Union of South Africa to gain recognition from the insurance giant Liberty Life has assumed a particular importance in the labour arena.

When the fledgling union began applying pressure to Liberty Life late in 1982, a superficial reading of the situation might have indicated that representation was the issue at stake.

IAWUSA claimed a representative majority, but only among the black employees of Liberty's Braamfontein head office. Management's view was this was not enough. IAWUSA needed to prove a substantial majority among both black and white personnel before the company would even begin bargaining.

But, at the outset IAWUSA made it clear that it had no aspirations to represent a multi-racial majority at the insurance company. Not only does the union's constitution provide for 'blacks, coloureds and Asians only'

but it also has a firm Black Consciousness base, with strong links with the Azanian Peoples Organization. The reverend Joe Seoka (35), president of the union expressed it quite simply when he stated: 'The interests of the black and white workers are really very different. It would be impossible to be representative on a multi-racial basis'.

Given the development of trade unionism in South Africa, the repressive legislation and subsequent growth of uni-racial unions, it is not altogether surprising that in the majority of instances black workers choose not to cast their lot with whites. In essence, history has determined a clash of interests.

Notwithstanding this, Liberty maintains that as an equal opportunity employer the interests of black and white employees on the shop floor do not differ. Hence, why recognise differences which the company is doing its best to combat in the work situation.

At best this stance could be viewed in two ways; in the moral context it could be seen as an admirable attempt by a company striving for the ideal in the midst of the impossible; alternatively as a company determined

not to be drawn into the fragmented morass of South African politics.

It also became apparent at an early stage that IAWUSA would not confine the struggle to the shop floor but would take cognisance of problems faced in the community.

This gave Liberty the opportunity to label IAWUSA 'political' - a naive response considering the context, but another reason given for not recognising the union.

The ongoing battle for recognition achieved a sharper edge with the dismissal of 89 striking IAWUSA workers in July. The strike - for recognition - did not succeed, but the confrontation between union and Liberty Life continued in the form of demonstrations and pickets.

One of the more successful slogans adopted by the picketers was 'racist Liberty Life' raising the pertinent question: if the company truly believes in freedom of association can it then prescribe to its employees which union to join and which not to? The question still remains. One alternative open to the union, but one which it has not yet taken is the legal route. However, it is important to note that IAWUSA would be unlikely to win a case for registration based on race.

A decision handed down by the Natal Supreme Court early in 1983 favoured the Federation of South African Trade

Unions' application for non-racial registration. The court ruled that while race could be seen as an interest in registration, different race groups should not be automatically held to have different interests.

Although the decision does not hamstring IAWUSA, the considerable vested FOSATU interests could preclude the union from upsetting the apple cart.

And so back to the drawing board. IAWUSA has had to resort to a campaign of pickets, public embarrassment of Liberty Life head Donald Gordon and a national boycott of Liberty Life's associate companies, namely Sales House and the United Building Society to try and win the battle. This because insurance companies are notoriously good at surviving consumer boycotts.

But in the long run, labour observers question the wisdom of Liberty's continued stubbornness. Would it not be better to bargain with a union albeit racially-based and representative only of the interests of black insurance workers, than to face the bitterness and animosity which rejection at this stage could cause in the years ahead? Instead of cultivating a climate of multi-racialism and equality, Liberty Life, maintains the union, might succeed in doing just the opposite.

Carolyn Dempster

Company: Siemens (Isando)
Date: 9 December
Workers: About 300
Union: Metal and Allied Workers' Union (MAWU)

Workers at electronics giant Siemens struck in protest against the dismissal of a worker who apparently failed to meet a production target. Some said it was unfair to punish workers for failing to meet targets when they were not rewarded for bettering them.

Striking workers returned to work while their union began negotiations with management.

Company: Silvertown Engineering (Pretoria)
Date: 13 December
Workers: About 600
Union: Unknown

This work stoppage resulted from worker dissatisfaction with their annual bonus payments. A source close to the workers said payments were far less than the R100 - R200 bonuses of the previous year.

Workers were told to go home but warned to return to work the following day or be fired. Personnel manager at the company, Bill du Toit, said that there had been a misunderstanding. Public holiday money had been deducted from the bonuses because it was now included in annual leave pay. He said that the new procedure had been explained to workers and everything was back to normal.

Company: Simba-Quix
Date: 24 - 28 November
20 - 22 December

Workers: 700
Union: Sweet, Food and Allied
Workers' Union (SFAWU)

Workers and management gave different explanations for this strike. Simba industrial relations officer J du Toit said it was sparked off when management asked to postpone its regular monthly meeting with the workers' committee. According to workers the strike was caused by the aggressive actions of the factory's production manager. They demanded his transfer before returning to work.

After negotiations with SFAWU, management acceded to this demand. SFAWU signed a recognition agreement at the beginning of 1983 and claims majority representation at the plant. Members of other food unions at the plant were also reported to have taken part in the stoppage.

On 20 December, 400 workers at the same plant went on strike in support of pay demands. The strike was prompted by the company giving increases to supervisory workers only. Earlier, wage talks between SFAWU and management had broken down. SFAWU was calling for a 20 percent increase across the board. Du Toit said these workers had been given raises because they had not benefitted from a 30 percent wage rise negotiated with the union in mid-year.

On 22 December striking workers resumed work, pending further union - management talks.

Company: Union Carriage and
Wagon (Nigel)
Date: 11 - 12 October
Workers: About 900
Union: MAWU

Nine hundred workers at this firm downed tools calling for the reinstatement of 150 colleagues who were retrenched. When the workers arrived at work on 11 October they staged a sit-in strike. The next day they were locked out and promptly elected six of their 17 shop stewards to negotiate on their behalf.

Agreement was finally reached when management undertook to suspend the retrenchments until 1984. According to MAWU's David Sebabi the union represents over 500 workers at the plant.

Significant features of the strike include the number of workers involved,

and the area in which it occurred. Sebabi says that although MAWU is extremely active on the near East Rand, strikes by metal workers in Nigel have been rare.

Company: Van Drimmelen Laboratories
(Johannesburg)
Date: 27 September
Workers: About 60
Union: General and Allied
Workers' Union

Dissatisfaction with working conditions sparked this strike at a Johannesburg medical laboratory. Workers complained that starting pay was as low as R100 a month, rising to R120 after six years' service. Other complaints included lack of job security, compulsory overtime, and the absence of consultative structures between management and staff.

After three workers were fired as alleged 'ringleaders', their reinstatement was included as a condition for ending the strike. After approaches from Van Drimmelen workers, GAWU sent a representative to form a committee and to negotiate on the workers' behalf.

Company: VSP Steel Strip (Brakpan)
Date: 26 October
Workers: Unknown
Union: MAWU

A MAWU spokesperson said that the entire work-force had been fired after going on strike. He said management refused to discuss the matter beyond confirming that all the workers had been dismissed.

Company: York Timbers (Pretoria)
Date: 7 - 12 October
Workers: Over 200
Union: SAAWU

Workers went on strike demanding wage increases. SAAWU Pretoria branch organiser, Zolile Mtshekwane, said workers downed tools when they did not receive wage increments. They asked SAAWU to negotiate on their behalf.

Two hundred workers were reported fired after ignoring a management ultimatum. Subsequently York Timbers said only 43 had been fired, and they were expected to seek re-employment.

Strikes at various retail outlets between October 1983 and January 1984 were largely an expression of worker dissatisfaction over wages, management attitudes and retrenchments. Nearly 3 000 workers belonging to the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union (CCAWUSA) came out on strike at various intervals over the last four months.

Workers at Kentucky Fried Chicken struck at 15 different outlets in support of the demands of their fellow workers at the Orange Grove branch. They demanded the reinstatement of a retrenched worker, and payment of weekly instead of a varying hourly wage. In addition, workers complained that they had to ask permission from management to go to the toilet.

Workers agreed to call off the strike once management reinstated their colleague, and undertook to refer the wage demands to the American head office.

Several Checkers' stores were the scene of strikes last year. Most involved protests against abusive treatment from store managers. In July 1983 a strike at the Killarney branch spread to about 20 other branches. It lasted for ten days (see WIP 28:48-9 for details). A major issue in the strike involved the attitude of a manager, which workers claimed was racially insulting. Agreement was finally reached when Checkers transferred the manager involved to another department.

At Checkers' Eastgate store, 30 workers struck for three hours on 7 November, alleging that the manager had sworn at them and hit one of them with a plank. They also claimed that workers on nightshift were not paid overtime. A protest was staged outside the shopping centre to voice worker dissatisfaction.

Seventy-two workers struck in protest when two of their colleagues were insulted by supervisors at Checkers' Virginia branch. This occurred on 18 October.

At the Monument Park store about 50 workers downed tools on 30 September, protesting the abusive behaviour of the manager. When management agreed to monitor his conduct, they returned to work.

An unusual strike occurred at the Primrose branch on 10 October, lasting

two days. In a show of solidarity 50 workers downed tools because a white worker was demoted. They returned to work after she was allowed to take up her previous position.

In October, 54 workers who had struck for the reinstatement of four retrenched Grand Bazaar workers, were dismissed. Management did however re-employ the four who had been retrenched. Two of them accepted re-employment, while the other two remained out of work with those who had struck.

The 54 who had been dismissed discovered that Richard Maponya was opening a large Soweto store in association with Grand Bazaars. Grand Bazaars has a management contract with Maponya to train and employ workers for his store. Shop stewards organised a picket outside the store on 1 December, the opening day. This aimed to put pressure on Maponya to take up their dismissal with Grand Bazaars. They also hoped that consumers would pressurise Maponya by boycotting his store. However the store attracted over 2 000 shoppers on its first day of trading.

Maponya denied that Grand Bazaars had anything to do with his venture. But some of the picketers claimed that they had seen garments in the store with the Grand Bazaars label, 'Grandware'. They also claimed that they had been able to delay the shop's opening time.

The first conciliation board appointed in the retail industry settled a wage dispute between CCAWUSA and OK Bazaars. The board was appointed by the Minister of Manpower in December. CCAWUSA was joined by the National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers' Union (NUDAW) against OK Bazaars in the dispute. This was the first time that CCAWUSA, representing African workers, and the Indian and coloured NUDAW had been involved in joint negotiations. If agreement had not been reached at the conciliation board, workers would have been able to call a legal strike.

Workers had demanded a monthly across the board increase of R50. Management responded with an offer of R20 to be granted at the end of December, with a further R15 to follow in February 1984. These increases were to apply only to workers earning over R350 a month.

A settlement was reached on 15 December. The unions accepted management's offer of a R35 a month

increase across the board, backdated to December 1983. They also accepted the offer of a further R10 a month increase covering the period April - September 1984. It was agreed that wage negotiations for the period October 1984 - October 1985 would begin not later than July 1984. The result of these negotiations means that country workers will receive the same increase as city workers.

A three day strike in December 1983 at Pick 'n Pay's Vereeniging and Kroonstad branches led to a further strike involving about 2 000 workers in January this year. The cause was a mid-December demand made by about 400 Vereeniging workers for an increase in weekly wages from R45-56 to R80. Management stalled negotiations saying that no decision could be taken without a mandate from head office.

According to CCAWUSA representative Mongezi Radebe, wages for African workers at the company differ substantially from those of white casual workers. They earn more for working two days than an African on permanent staff earns in a week.

thereafter they agreed to a nine percent increase in July 1984. Contrary to workers' perception of the company's wealth, Pick 'n Pay chairman Raymond Ackerman said that it was not possible to meet their original demands due to the general economic climate. Workers were paid for two of the three days they had been on strike.

The low wage increase, coupled with the confusing manner in which management informed workers of the increase, led to further strike activity in early January. On 5 January, over 100 workers at Pick 'n Pay outlets throughout the Witwatersrand went on strike. They said they had been promised a 20 percent increase, but had only received ten percent.

By the end of the strike over 2 000 workers at 15 stores were out on strike. Management refused to alter its offer of a ten percent increase, claiming that anything more would bankrupt the company. They also refused to negotiate further wages until they had signed a recognition agreement with the union.



Striking workers at Checkers support a white colleague

Radebe also said that the company's monthly turnover was R4-m and rejected management's claim that it was not possible to meet the workers' demands.

On 15 December, 75 percent of the work-force returned to work. Management agreed to a ten percent increase effective from 1 January 1984, and

Workers told the union that when Ackerman had addressed them over an internal video system the previous year, they had understood that they would be receiving a 20 percent increase at the beginning of January. Management claimed that they had agreed to pay an increase of ten percent in January, and

a further nine percent in July. According to CCAWUSA general secretary Emma Mashinini, Ackerman failed to convey his message to the workers with any clarity.

In Pretoria, meanwhile, Donsie Khumalo, general secretary of the National General Workers' Union, met with Pick 'n Pay to discuss dissatisfaction with wages paid by the company. The 800 workers employed by the company in the northern Transvaal also rejected the pre-Christmas offer of a ten percent wage increase.

Over 1 600 workers were out on strike by 9 January. CCAWUSA claimed that strikers from more than ten stores in Johannesburg, Carletonville, Krugersdorp, Florida and Witpoortjie gathered at their offices while management and union officials were locked in negotiations.

Pick 'n Pay meanwhile employed casual workers at most of its stores hit by the strike. Management said it was difficult to ascertain whether sales had been affected, but that shoppers were most understanding: some even appeared not to notice that a strike had occurred.

Pick 'n Pay threatened the workers with dismissal if they did not re-apply for their jobs by 12 January. Some workers began trickling back but most refused to re-apply. They demanded that Pick 'n Pay chairman Ackerman explain the increases to them personally as he had addressed them initially and caused the confusion.

The workers agreed to end the strike and return to work on 13 January. This decision was taken after a two-hour meeting between management and the union at CCAWUSA's offices on the same day. Management agreed not to victimise any of the striking workers but stated that they would not be paid for the duration of the strike. The return-to-work agreement was that the second ten percent increase would be brought forward from July to April.

The workers' dissatisfaction over their low wage increase was intensified by management's sponsoring of Gerrie Coetzee abroad, and donations of large sums to charity. Workers felt that while the company could afford to spend money on its public image, it was unable to pay decent wages.

The ten percent increase was calculated on the total wage bill, not granted across the board. This meant

that many workers received almost no benefit. Personnel director Rene de Wet said that the company realised the inherent conflict between itself and the workers, and that management was 'already working on a formal recognition agreement with CCAWUSA and is prepared to alter our wage policy if that is what our employees demand. The dispute has merely intensified our belief that agreements with workers must be negotiated'.

A few days after the strike at Pick 'n Pay had ended, about 180 workers at the OK Hypermarket (Sandton) downed tools protesting against the dismissal of a shop steward.

Management claimed that the workers had broken the grievance procedure agreed upon with the union in 1983. The workers, however, claimed that management broke the agreement first by not allowing the shop steward any representation.

The strike began on 16 January and after four days management had fired all the workers. They responded by holding a placard demonstration outside the elite Sandton shopping centre.

OK workers at several other branches (Randburg, Blairgowrie, Brixton and Yeoville) took up these dismissals. They struck on 23 January in sympathy with the Sandton store workers. Sympathy strikes were also staged at five OK branches and one warehouse.

Workers agreed to meet a return-to-work deadline under threat of dismissal. (CCAWUSA and OK have an agreement which gives the union 24 hours to settle a strike before management can take any disciplinary action).

CCAWUSA members employed as cleaners at the Carlton Centre went on strike for five hours on 24 January - the reason being the dismissal of a co-worker. Management agreed to reinstate the worker and the strike was called off.

At Southern Suns Airport Hotel, 150 workers went on strike briefly on 9 January. They were objecting to the lack of rest facilities during shifts. They returned to work pending negotiations over facilities and salaries.

Workers in the retail trade have demonstrated an increasing shop floor strength. They have made significant gains, and have also shown the organised presence which CCAWUSA has achieved in a number of areas.

EASTERN CAPE

Company: Carborundum Universal
(Port Elizabeth)
Date: 27 October
Workers: About 200
Union: Metal and Allied Workers'
Union (MAWU)

About 200 workers downed tools for five hours in sympathy with six security guards who had received retrenchment notices the previous day. Carborundum's manpower resources manager, MJ Ackhurst, had said that the guards would be replaced by a private security firm which, he believed, would help cut costs.

According to MAWU branch secretary Vuyani Tu, the guards had been working 60 hours a week. But they were paid only R117 - the same as production staff who worked a 45-hour week. He said that an agreement to pay guards R169 a week had not been implemented. A week before the stoppage, however, management paid the guards over R5 000 in back pay. This, according to Tu, was the reason for the retrenchments.

Management denied this, and described the move as part of a general reorganisation of staff.

Tu said that workers refused to return to work without management's assurance that the guards would not be retrenched. The dispute was settled after discussions with MAWU. Management agreed to absorb the guards into the factory production line. But an agreement was also made that general retrenchments would still take place in the new year if business had not picked up.

According to MAWU, the union negotiated a total recognition agreement at Carborundum in August 1982.

Company: Ford (Port Elizabeth)
Date: 13 December
Workers: 700 - 800
Union: Motor Assemblers' and
Component Workers' Union
(MACWUSA);
National Automobile and Allied
Workers' Union (NAAWU)

Just two days before annual shutdown, workers at Ford's Struandale assembly plant downed tools and walked off their jobs after a dispute over the dismissal of a worker.

According to MACWUSA general secretary Dennis Neer, problems at Ford began when workers on the Ford Sierra

production line were told to begin work at 6.30 the next morning instead of the usual 7.30. Workers, who are members of both MACWUSA and NAAWU, defied this instruction and started work at the usual time.

That day (Friday), a NAAWU member was dismissed because the company claimed that he had been behind schedule. Workers from both unions then downed tools for two hours, demanding his reinstatement.

On the following Monday, workers on the trim and chassis lines refused to start work until management assured them that the dismissed worker's case would be reviewed. They gave the company until 10.00 on Tuesday morning to reply. On Tuesday management informed shop stewards that the worker had not been dismissed but suspended for five days. A MACWUSA official, Thomas Kobese, said workers found this explanation unacceptable and walked off.

At a meeting on Tuesday night, workers decided to return to the factory on Thursday to collect their outstanding wages, holiday pay and bonuses. 'Workers felt that it was strictly a shop floor issue and the unions should not be involved', said Kobese. However, union officials were kept informed of developments.

When asked if MACWUSA was concerned over lost time and wages resulting from the stay away, Kobese said the unity among workers of the two unions provided the 'entertainment'.

According to one of the workers, the order to work an extra hour was to catch up with backlog in the Sierra's production before shutdown. 'We felt our bodies could not take the pressure any more, not at this time of the year. We are used to sacrificing and can accommodate the loss in wages', he said.

Company: Ford (Port Elizabeth)
Date: 20 January
Workers: 1 500
Union: NAAWU

Although the motor industry improved sales in the first nine months of 1983, this was not maintained in the last quarter of the year. Furthermore, management did not expect the position to improve.

These were the reasons both Sigma and Ford gave when they announced massive retrenchments (850 and 490 workers respectively) on 18 January.

NAAWU alleged that Ford had departed from normal practice whereby the union was consulted and asked to seek other solutions before workers were retrenched.

Ford workers struck in protest against the retrenchments on 20 January. The plant was closed indefinitely that afternoon because of the strike.

The last time Ford retrenched workers was in July 1982 - a move which led to a wave of strikes in the eastern Cape motor industry.

Company: Shatterprufe Safety Glass
(Port Elizabeth)
Date: 8 November
Workers: 520
Union: Chemical Workers' Industrial Union (CWIU)

Workers at Shatterprufe stopped work for one hour after CWIU representatives reported back on negotiations with management. Workers were reportedly dissatisfied with wage and bonus increases.

CWIU, which has about 400 members at the factory, resumed negotiations with the company that day. On 17 November it was announced that workers would receive at minimum a R205 bonus and a ten percent across-the-board wage increase from December.

FOSATU spokesperson Les Kettledas said workers were happy with the increase and had accepted management's offer at a report-back meeting. A weekly attendance bonus of R2 had also been guaranteed to workers and would be incorporated into their wages.

NATAL

Company: Amico International
(Newcastle)
Workers: 300
Union: Textile and Allied Workers' Union

Workers were dismissed after they struck in protest against the dismissal of a colleague. The union, a SAAWU affiliate, indicated its intention to take the matter to court.

Company: Central Post Office (Durban)
Date: 11 January
Workers: Over 100
Union: National Post Office and Allied Workers' Union

Workers struck in protest against management's introduction of a six day

week, opting instead to work a 40 hour five day week. Work on Saturdays would then become optional and subject to overtime rates.

In addition, workers alleged that management had forbidden them to take holidays at the end of the month when they collected their wages, forcing them to take leave during the month.

Workers claimed that management had dissolved their liaison committee and refused to recognise the union.

Company: Epol (Pietermaritzburg)
Date: End of October
Workers: Unknown
Union: Sweet, Food and Allied Workers' Union (SFAWU)

Workers in this firm struck after security police had confiscated posters and pamphlets, which were part of FOSATU's anti-constitution campaign.

Epol, a subsidiary of the Premier Group, denies that they called police in. They point out that Premier chairperson Tony Bloom is himself opposed to the new constitution, and that it is company policy not to call security police to any factory.

Company: Umfolozi Sugar Mill
Date: Early November
Workers: 500
Union: National Union of Sugar Manufacturing and Refining Employees (NUSMRE); SFAWU

Varying reports of a strike at this mill indicate that inter-union tensions exist there. NUSMRE claimed that 500 workers downed tools in protest against the proposed constitution and in support of recognition for their union. SFAWU, on the other hand, claimed that the strike occurred after NUSMRE demanded that management dismiss certain SFAWU members.

SFAWU claims that nearly 300 workers resigned from NUSMRE, representing 'a massive switch of workers to SFAWU'.

SFAWU alleges that the strike was in protest against the NUSMRE demand for the dismissal of SFAWU members.

'Harmonisation' is a new buzz-word among industrial relations consultants and managers. From the beginning of March 1984, income tax will be 'harmonised': Africans will be taxed on the same basis as other population groups.

Management and unions are concerned about how this new system will affect employees' take-home pay. They are also worried about who is responsible for communicating details of the new system to employees. According to the *Financial Mail*, there are 'no signs that government realises how dangerous the black tax issue can become...Once again it is counting on employers to do the work of communicating the advantages of the new system to employees. Employers, with memories of the pension preservation fiasco in mind are not enchanted (20.01.84).

FOSATU's Alec Erwin is not convinced that there are advantages for workers in the new tax scheme, and has predicted 'great difficulties' once it is implemented.

It does however seem that some workers will benefit, having less money deducted from their wages in March. Single people with no children will pay less tax than before if they earn below R83 a week. The same will apply to single people with one child, as long as they earn less than R130 per week. Those with more than one child will also pay less tax than they are at present.

Married men will have less tax deducted during the year, regardless of the level of their earnings. The large majority of workers will therefore have more money in their pay packets with the introduction of the new system.

The Directorate of Inland Revenue has instructed employers that they are not required to obtain proof of marriage, or birth certificates when placing workers in the new tax categories. Customary marriages will also be recognised. This is intended to ease the communication exercise employers face in explaining the new system to their employees.

Married people will be taxed as an entity. And given the sex discrimination of South Africa's PAYE system, married women will have considerably more deducted from their wages during the year. A married woman earning R60 a week used to pay approximately 40c in

tax. Now R2,90 will be deducted. Those earning R80 a week, and previously paying R1,50, will have R5,20 deducted in tax from March. This is because the PAYE system deducts tax from all married women in the same way during the year, regardless of the husband's earnings. It is only at the end of the financial year that the couple's combined income is taken into account. A married couple will now pay less tax as an entity than they did individually under the old system. An assessment is made at the end of the year on how much tax the couple should have paid. This amount is then compared with what was deducted by employers during the year. If too much was deducted, the couple completes the required documentation and applies for a rebate. The extent of the rebate will depend on the portion of the couple's income which the wife has earned during the year. Most couples will have more tax deducted during the course of the year than they have in the past. A difficult and time-consuming procedure awaits those who apply for rebates. And any rebate is paid to the husband.

For those women whose husbands are unemployed, and where the combined annual earnings of husband and wife are less than R8 000 per year, large rebates will be available at the end of the year. Inland Revenue is encouraging employers to apply for tax directives exempting these women from tax deductions during the year. But applications for tax directives are likely to take three or four months to process, so even those women who qualify are still expected to pay more tax for the first part of 1984.

The new system promises positive effects for most workers' pay packets. But it remains to be seen whether this will be enough to offset the shock in store for married women.

There will be a degree of added hardship for those families where the wife is the sole breadwinner; and, depending on management's 'communications' ability, one can expect a degree of industrial unrest in the textile and clothing industries. African nurses and, to a lesser extent, teachers, also face a large increase in tax.

Management, particularly in unionised sectors, has developed a degree of sophistication in labour relations over

the last few years. They learnt a number of lessons from the pension strikes of 1981, and do not relish a repeat of this. Yet all the ingredients of the pension fund debacle are there:

- * employers and the state believe that what they are doing is in the interests of the workers;
- * there are complicated concepts which have to be explained;
- * workers have not been consulted in the introduction of this system.

A number of audio-visual packages on the new Black Tax Act are available, all in the R500-a-time range: management demand for them is great. These programmes are used to supplement extensive 'communication' exercises run throughout the country. Standard management tactics have emphasised the 'positive aspects', as the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce puts it in a circular to all employees. Chambers of Commerce in the major centres have already run seminars and workshops explaining to employers the implications of the new system. These bodies, as well as government, are hoping that the deduction in tax for single women, and single and married men, will be sufficient to prevent a repetition of the worker resistance which led to the scrapping of the Pension Bill.

The effect PAYE will have on wage packets is not employers' only concern, and 'communication' with workers will not simply be a question of 'stressing the advantages' of the new system. The

move has also been justified as a rationalisation of tax gathering departments. There will now only be one tax authority instead of two, and the Department of Co-operation and Development will no longer administer African taxation.

Therein lies the problem for management. By centralising tax gathering, the destination of that tax comes to the fore. Workers will ask employers what the Directorate of Inland Revenue does with the tax. Replies that the money is spent on hospitals and roads will not suffice. Before long, employees will ask about the police, the defence force and the administration boards. Once workers realise that the vast amount of government income is spent in maintaining the oppressive apartheid system, no amount of glib reference to reduced deductions will avoid the politicisation of the tax issue.

The *Financial Mail* has pointed out that management faces more than a test of communication in the tax issue. Employers have been placed squarely between the state and the disaffected workers of South Africa's industries. 'Harmonisation' is more than simply communicating a new system to employees, and more than a question of what workers take home in their pay packets. In the next month the destination of tax paid to an unrepresentative regime will be hotly discussed on factor floors, in change rooms, and in worker canteens.

Company:	Wayne Rubber (Isipingo)
Date:	16 - 17 January
Workers:	About 300
Union:	SAAWU

Management's failure to meet a demand by workers for a 12 percent increase in wages resulted in a two-day strike at the Wayne Rubber Company. Workers demanded a six percent rise over and above the six percent the company had granted in January.

According to worker representatives, the stoppage was also in protest against the new Income Tax Act, due for implementation on 1 March. However, management denied that the stoppage related to the taxation issue.

Workers claim that, in preparation for the new taxation system, they have

been asked by management to provide certain personal details. According to SAAWU's Sam Kikine, workers say that because they were not consulted when the legislation was drawn up, they are not prepared to be a party to it. 'Management has argued that this is a political stance and there is nothing they can do about it', says Kikine. 'But the workers said that if management chose to vote for the new constitution on November 2, this was also a political action and they made their choice'.

Kikine predicts that the tax issue is going to 'be worse than the pensions crisis in 1981'.

MINING

Company: Crown Reef Restaurant
Date: 27 October
Workers: About 30
Union: Hotel, Liquor, Catering and Allied Workers' Union (Hotelica)

Workers at this restaurant owned by the Gold Mine Museum struck in protest against their employer, the Chamber of Mines. They were protesting against the fact that they had not been paid their October increases. The strike led to the dismissal of all but three of the workers, who returned to work and were given substantial increases. According to the union, the three who were re-employed received increases of R160 a month. Management denied this, saying that the men had been on leave and that when they returned their salaries were adjusted in line with wages laid down by the Industrial Council.

On 21 November the workers staged a protest outside the Anglo American Corporation's offices demanding that the company exert pressure on the Chamber of Mines to recognise their union and grant them their increases. According to a union spokesperson the workers had decided to picket because management had refused to negotiate with their union. After picketing outside Anglo American the workers moved on to the Chamber of Mines building. The placards they were carrying called on management to 'Have a social responsibility to (their) workers' and said that the salaries paid by the Chamber of Mines ranged from R180 - R330 a month.

Company: Impala Platinum Refinery (near Springs)
Date: 12 - 13 January
Workers: 1 500
Union: National Union of Mineworkers (NUM)

The dismissal of seven workers at Impala Platinum Refinery brought 1 500 employees out on strike. Almost all miners at the plant participated. The seven were dismissed after they claimed that a white supervisor had called them 'kaffirs', and demanded that he be transferred.

Management initially refused to negotiate with the union, but agreed to do so after a preliminary meeting between the two parties.

At the talks worker representatives demanded that the seven be reinstated before the strikers would return to work. Management refused to consider reinstatement until the strike was called off. Workers also demanded that the supervisor involved be dismissed.

By Friday, January 13, the talks had broken down. When striking workers refused to meet management's return-to-work deadline, they were dismissed. Management at Impala Platinum concedes that production could be severely hampered. Whether supplies to customers can currently be met is questionable.

This involved NUM in its first shop floor dispute involving its members. Its previous disputes with management had involved primarily legal battles.

Company: Rietspruit Coal (Witbank)
Date: 13 January
Workers: 1 000
Union: NUM

About 1 000 miners downed tools for two hours in sympathy with two co-workers who had died while repairing a lift cable. During the stoppage, workers visited the homes of the dead men. This is the second stoppage where mineworkers have mourned the deaths of workers killed in mine accidents, the first being the stoppage associated with the Hlobane Colliery deaths (see WIP 29:51-2).

Management dismissed a worker for participating in the stoppage. On 17 January workers struck again in protest against this dismissal. They returned after management agreed to reconsider the case.

The dismissed worker was subsequently reinstated.

Company: Ucar Mine (near Brits)
Date: 23 - 26 January
Workers: 390
Union: NUM

This Union Carbide-owned mine in BophuthaTswana was the scene of the first strike against the bantustan government's decision to ban South African-based unions in the territory. The BophuthaTswana Industrial Conciliation Bill, which comes before its legislature in February, provides for the establishment of BophuthaTsana-based unions only. According to Rowan Cronje, Minister of Manpower in the territory, all other unions will be illegal once the Bill becomes law.

The strike occurred during recognition

talks between NUM and Ucar. According to NUM general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa, the union received a directive to the effect that it was operating illegally in the territory. SAAWU and CCAWUSA have received similar directives.

Strikers returned to work the same day after management agreed to hold further talks with the union. But the following day workers began a three-day strike after management told the union they would not recognise it. Ucar industrial relations manager Robertson admitted that the company had been briefed by the Department of Manpower, who instructed them not to deal with NUM.

Another strike in protest against the BophuthaTswana ban took place at Metro Cash and Carry in Johannesburg a few days later. This involved CCAWUSA members.

Company: Winterveld Chrome Mine
(near Steelpoort)

Date: Early November

Workers: 900

Union: MAWU

A work stoppage at this Rand Mines-owned mine over wages lasted three days. Strikers agreed to return to work after management undertook to negotiate future wage increases with the union ■

JOBS IN RURAL TRAINING WORK

The Environmental and Development Agency (E D A) is a small, independent group involved in community programmes in 5 rural reserve areas in South Africa. Our objective is to train groups in technical and organisational skills, and to provide resources in order to promote local democratic organisation and control.

We are looking for 2 people to take over co-ordinating work in 2 village projects.

1. NORTHERN TRANSVAAL HEALTH PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR

Applicants should be women with some of the following qualities:

- fluency in Sotho or Tswana
- experience in health work. We do not necessarily want a qualified nurse, but someone with health training or experience which will equip her to train village women in curative and preventive health skills
- ability to plan, co-ordinate and evaluate a health programme with women's groups in 6 villages
- experience in, or willingness to learn techniques in adult education

2. BIRCHMEL TRAINING PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR

Applicants should have some of the following qualities:

- fluency in Xhosa or Sotho
- experience or training in adult education
- ability to plan, co-ordinate and evaluate training courses for members of 5 farmers associations. The training aims to promote the democratic organisation of the associations and improve participation in the running of the farm centre and tractor scheme which serves them.

Applicants should have an understanding of the history and problems of people in the rural areas of South Africa. They should also be prepared to live in the project area concerned, or be based in EDA's Johannesburg office and travel to the project for at least 2 weeks per month. The work will involve quite a lot of driving, so applicants who do not have a driver's licence should be ready to learn immediately.

In both jobs, co-ordinators will be working closely with other EDA staff members in all aspects of their work. We would like people who can commit themselves to doing the work for at least 2 years.

If you are interested in either job, please phone us on Johannesburg 836- 0188 or write to P O Box 62054, Marshalltown, 2107.

Interviews will be held in Johannesburg and we will pay for travelling costs.

MASA and the Politics of Detention

The Medical Association of South Africa (MASA) has done little to improve conditions for security detainees. And by taking part in MASA's inquiry into the health care of detainees, the organised anti-detention movement lent legitimacy to MASA's inadequate findings and recommendations. So argues psychology lecturer GRAHAME HAYES.

Detentions continue in South Africa as part of the ever-increasing repression and control needed to maintain society in its present form. Detentions, and the reports supposedly safeguarding detainee rights (for example the Rabie Commission and MASA Report) give the lie to government's programme of reform. For so-called reform imposed from above goes hand-in-hand with a high degree of coercion, repression and control. In the context of developing resistance to this repression, Detainees Parents' Support Committees (DPSCs) and Detainee Support Committees (Descoms) were formed country-wide after a massive wave of detentions towards the end of 1981.

The Descoms* are still quite strong and active organisations, and recently held their second annual conference in East London (September 1983). In a situation where repressive state activity is massive (removals, the Ciskei crisis, Namibian and Angolan interventions), it is necessary to maintain an ongoing debate on forms of state repression, and responses to repressive initiatives. This article discusses some of the issues which relate to the health care of detainees, a major area of Descom activities. It focuses on the Medical Association of South Africa's 'investigation' into the health care of detainees (the MASA

Report), and a related area called the 'psychology of detentions'.

Two broad areas in which the Descoms have been involved are

- * the general (health) care of detainees; and
- * the politics and history of repression in South Africa.

In the first area (involving mainly the Parents' Support Committees), Descoms have tried to secure as many basic human rights for family, relatives and friends in detention as possible. This has revolved around practical work like getting food parcels, clothes, medicines, radios, books, etc, to detainees, and sometimes (although rarely) visits. What the Descoms have been able to secure has varied from place to place, depending on particular detention conditions. These activities have been concerned with the care of detainees on a day to day basis. They have also involved assisting detainees and/or their families and relatives once a detainee has been released.

This work is often difficult because family and friends of detainees are sometimes intimidated by state functionaries and fear participating in Descom support activities. Sometimes also unaware of Descom activities, they are reticent in approaching the various committees. However, with the formation of a number of community organisations and the broad organisational umbrella of the UDF, Descoms have been given a wider coverage and legitimacy in the communities and townships. This was clearly evident at the East London Detainees Support Committees' conference.

The second area of activity has involved political campaigning and education around the politics of repression in South Africa. Repression is large (and wealthy), while the Descoms are small (and poor). They see

* In this article I shall use 'Descoms' to apply to both Descoms and DPSCs.

their primary task as the care of detainees. Because of this, insufficient work has taken place on the politics of repression and detention.

In terms of the wider political arena, detentions are a 'limited issue' (see the WIP 22 article on detentions) and hence it is vital to assess continually the tactics and strategies adopted by the Descoms. In this regard it is important to focus on the health care of detainees for a number of significant political reasons:

*in the last 20 years, the state security system has killed more than 50 people in detention;

*no person has been found responsible for these deaths in inquest proceedings (see the good article on inquests in WIP 22);

*there have been widespread allegations and evidence of torture during interrogation sessions;

*the general health of detainees held in solitary confinement commonly deteriorates;

*an increasing number of people, both in detention and after release, develop psychiatric and psychological problems (mostly severe anxiety and depression).

It is these issues which become a likely reality for people when they are detained. These facts also constitute the background of any health care work done by the Descoms, or any other body.

THE MASA REPORT

During May 1982 the Medical Association of South Africa constituted an ad hoc committee to inquire into the medical care of prisoners and detainees. A year later, on 21 May 1983, the MASA committee published its report in the SA Medical Journal.

In view of the reception the report received from both establishment and some progressive groupings, it seems necessary to reopen discussion on it. Generally welcomed for its findings, the report was also criticised for its ineffectual and conservative recommendations. But the findings were not separate from the recommendations, and I suggest that all groups involved in the struggle against repression at the level of detainee rights, should have rejected both the report, and the basis on which the committee of inquiry

was established. This can be justified on three grounds: the context of the MASA inquiry; its findings; and its recommendations.

THE CONTEXT OF THE MASA INQUIRY

The Medical Association subscribes to both the Hippocratic Oath and the Tokyo Declaration on the torture of detainees and prisoners. Yet MASA was slow in establishing an inquiry into detentions. After all, Steve Biko had died in detention in 1977, as had many before him and quite a few since. The 'Biko affair' is still unsatisfactorily settled, as are other deaths in detention which indict both security police and the medical profession. A special committee appointed to consider 'certain ethical issues' in relation to the medical care received by Biko found that the doctor's certificate issued was 'unsatisfactory and incomplete'. But this matter was not taken further.

Late in 1981, the state detained large numbers of people, among them Dr Neil Aggett, who died in detention on 5 February 1982. The resultant public outcry, both national and international, again focused attention on conditions of security police detention. It was obvious that detainees are defenceless, having no effective safeguards for their safety and health.

This was the context in which the Full-Time District Surgeons' Group, the Natal Coastal and Southern Transvaal MASA Branches requested MASA to set up an inquiry into the medical care of detainees. At least two comments can be made about the establishment of this inquiry.

Firstly, the request to establish it does not necessarily imply concern for the rights and medical care of individual detainees. It can just as easily be seen as a desire on the part of the medical profession to avoid contamination through association with deaths in detention. I am not here raising the question of how individual doctors or district surgeons might have treated particular detainees. But the realities and history of security police detention indicate that the medical profession has not safeguarded the health of detainees as actively as it might have.

Secondly, it seems reasonable to conclude that the MASA investigation

was motivated by strong professional interests, rather than a strong human rights orientation. In particular, it aimed to clear district surgeons from any implication of malpractice in the medical care of detainees and prisoners.

The MASA investigation can also be seen as an attempt to re-establish its integrity with the World Medical

Association. MASA's status within this body had been precarious over the Biko affair; now it had the death of Neil Aggett on its hands!

In short, the context in which MASA decided to investigate the health care of detainees gave little optimism for the improvement of detention conditions, let alone the abolition of the whole detention system. It seemed more a

DECLARATION OF TOKYO

Preamble

For the purpose of this Declaration, torture is defined as the deliberate, systematic or wanton infliction of physical or mental suffering by one or more persons, acting alone or on the orders of any authority, to force another person to yield information, to make a confession, or for any other reason.

Declaration

- * The doctor shall not countenance, condone or participate in the practice of torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading procedures, whatever the offence of which the victim of such procedures is suspected, accused or guilty, and whatever the victim's beliefs or motives, and in all situations, including armed conflict and civil strife.
- * A doctor must have complete clinical independence in deciding upon the care of a person for whom he or she is medically responsible.
- * The doctor shall not provide any premises, instruments, substances or knowledge to facilitate the practice of torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or to diminish the ability of the victim to resist such treatment.

(As adopted by the 29th World Medical Assembly, Tokyo, Japan, October 1975).

formal gesture by the established medical profession, an attempt to distance and absolve itself from responsibility for deaths in detention. The Descoms, however, together with others involved in detainee support work, responded to the setting up of the MASA inquiry by arguing that the established medical profession could play a more direct and active role in safeguarding the health and safety of detainees.

THE 'FINDINGS' OF THE MASA COMMITTEE

The media, and some progressive organisations, welcomed the findings of the MASA committee. Contrary to this, I want to argue that the report's 'findings' are neither surprising nor commendable.

The first point the findings establish is that there are no legislative safeguards for detainees. The more than 50 deaths in detention and the inquest findings that no persons were legally responsible for these deaths are clear enough evidence of a lack of legislative safeguards. Detentions involve a secret, self-contained and self-regulating system. This is the very issue that those campaigning against security legislation for years have been struggling against. Furthermore, the Rabie Commission into security legislation did not change the closed, self-regulating nature of detention legislation. Published two days before trade unionist Neil Aggett died in detention, it served only to refine and legitimate the system of security police detention. Legislation flowing from the Rabie report did nothing to improve the safety of detention conditions. It was therefore hardly a 'finding' when the MASA report told us that there are no legislative safeguards for people in security police custody.

The area of legislative safeguards is crucial in assessing the rest of the MASA findings and recommendations. Without potent legislative controls the closed and secret system of security police detention will go on unmonitored. It is within this context that the MASA report presents its findings and recommendations which amount to nothing in terms of the politics and ideology informing the present Internal Security Act.

MASA offers its findings and

recommendations in a political vacuum, as though the whole problem of the health care of detainees is merely a technical issue. For example the MASA report says, in introducing its recommendations, that 'the Committee is of the opinion that insofar as a system of indefinite detention is regarded as necessary by the authorities, a number of safeguards pertaining specifically to medical care must be introduced so as to prevent abuse of the system as far as is possible' (emphasis added).

But it is exactly the history and politics of security legislation which are at stake, and MASA cannot simply and conveniently put the political context of detentions aside in their report and recommendations. It is the politics of health care in detention which should have been the thrust of their investigation.

The other findings are placed in the context of the lack of legislative safeguards. MASA introduces these by saying that it is difficult to prove the truth of allegations that security police maltreat detainees. Of course this is difficult: the system of detention is closed and self-regulating, and the legal apparatus is biased against detainees and their representatives. Nevertheless, the MASA investigation found that:

- * there are potential health hazards for those detained under security legislation;
- * the condition of solitary confinement has a negative effect on a detainee's normal psychological integration;
- * there have been allegations of physical torture and also intensive and lengthy interrogations by teams working in rotation;
- * the abovementioned conditions of detention, plus the general hopelessness that detainees experience, can result in serious mental breakdown; some people may not recover.

These are not particularly surprising findings; nor are they that commendable, coming from a committee of professionally-trained people who carried out their investigations over a year. Those opposed to detention have said these same things for years - yet received less acknowledgement and response from the authorities than did MASA.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MASA INQUIRY

MASA made a number of recommendations, none of which seem to have been adopted by the authorities. Besides the initial contacts MASA made with the relevant Ministers at the time of the report, it has not followed up any of the recommendations. MASA has been silent since the report last May - even when some doctors in Edendale (Pietermaritzburg) were detained late last year.

A major concern of the MASA recommendations was to secure some clinical independence for district surgeons. MASA proposed that district surgeons should have free access to detainees at all times; and that there should be a system of 'peer review' monitoring of the adequacy of district surgeons' health care of detainees. It was suggested that this could be a standing committee appointed by MASA and the Department of Health. Furthermore it was suggested that, if requested, an examination by an independent medical practitioner (of the detainee's choice and at the detainee's expense) should be provided. None of these medical safeguards was agreed to by the Minister when MASA met with him.

Although MASA Federal Council Chairman Guy de Klerk declared himself satisfied with MASA's 'cordial' meeting with the Minister, the recommendations were not accepted. Neither has MASA fought the state on this issue. The report was published, making certain 'findings' and recommendations. MASA made representations to the Minister. These were rejected, and MASA complied passively. Its work was done!

This is not a picture of a body fighting for the health care rights of detainees. MASA's actions in this regard cannot make detainees and those closely associated with them feel that the medical profession is committed to safeguarding health and health care rights.

The MASA committee also suggested that 'a detainee should under no circumstances be kept in prolonged isolation (in any event not exceeding seven days) in the absence of regular physical and psychiatric assessment'. This implies the legitimization of 'short-term' isolation, with the appropriate medical backup in the form

of regular physical and psychiatric assessments. This could easily be used by interrogators as a 'safe' monitor for 'isolation/torture' techniques - a medical monitor of torture.

This bears a resemblance to those Brazilian doctors who administered sedatives to detainees rendering them less resistant to interrogation, and who tried to ensure that torture imposed by interrogators did not kill detainees. Unfortunately for Brazilian detainees, this medical monitoring was not fool-proof, and a number of people died under interrogation. Others were seriously maimed.

It cannot be accepted that because isolation and severe interrogation occur in detention, the medical profession may as well monitor them to ensure that detainees are not too seriously affected. Detentions under security legislation should be on trial, not merely the internal problems which arise in solitary confinement.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF DETENTIONS

The final set of MASA recommendations relate to the question of psychiatric and psychological monitoring and assessment of detainees. For example the MASA report argues that: 'It is essential that all detainees should be within 24 hours - but preferably immediately - after their detention be medically examined and in particular should a proper assessment of the detainee be required, this should be made as soon as is reasonably possible'. But who decides on these assessments, and why should it be necessary to psychiatrically examine (some) detainees just after they have been detained?

Furthermore, MASA recommends that 'the detaining authority should have as a member of its personnel an adequately trained person with a knowledge of psychology or psychiatry'. Who are these 'adequately trained' people? The MASA report suggests that the 'psychiatric treatment of detainees should be the responsibility of psychiatrists, general practitioners with a psychiatric background, psychologists, psychiatric nurses and/or suitably trained occupational therapists'.

Again, without much consideration, MASA is asking certain professional groupings to 'co-operate' with security

police detention activities. Part of the task of these professionals would be to monitor detainees' mental health so that they do not suffer severe mental breakdowns. They would also be expected to be alert to the possible 'suicide risk' of detainees. The MASA report acknowledges that 'the possibility of suicide on the part of detainees is an ever-present risk'.

The objection to all these 'psychological' recommendations is that they place the responsibility for how detention affects someone with each individual detainee. It becomes the individual's responsibility to withstand abnormal stress - ie detention conditions - that is important. Suddenly detainees must be protected from themselves, and not from the conditions of detention and interrogation!

These recommendations also make mental health professionals responsible for the monitoring and care of 'psychologically affected' detainees. Two things have happened here. Firstly, the system of detention, and especially the interrogators, have been let off the hook. And secondly MASA is absolved of any major responsibility if the care of detainees can be shifted to mental health professionals. This focus on the detainee is not only a problem in the MASA report, but has also characterised certain discussions and programmes within the Descoms themselves. It has also been evident in some of the more 'progressive' writings on detentions - for example the now-banned **Manual on Detention**, and to a lesser extent the WIP 23 article, '**Detentions: tampering with the mind**'.

If anybody's psychology needs to be investigated, it is that of interrogators, not detainees. The MASA report is particularly silent on the role and psychology of interrogators. It is important not to confuse the therapeutic assistance that can be given to detainees with a curiosity of 'studying' the 'psychology' of detainees'. It is necessary that those involved in the detention issue maintain a clear perspective on why they are interested in the psychological problems which some detainees experience.

More and more people are being affected psychologically as a result of their detention experiences. This points to increased stresses in detention conditions, longer periods of detention, and harsher and more

persistent methods of interrogation. Ex-detainees are also needing more specific, and sometimes professional help to get over their detention experiences. Organisations like the Descoms offer assistance, psychological and other, to ex-detainees, their family and friends. While this comradely concern and support work must continue, it must always be seen in the wider context of political repression and the progressive political strategies that need to be developed in response to that repression.

The MASA report has done little, if anything, to improve conditions for security detainees or to guarantee their safety and health care while in detention. In view of the context of the report, and its political history, little else could have been expected. Furthermore, the proceedings and investigations of the MASA ad hoc committee were closed and secret. It was certainly not an open investigation into detentions. MASA's silence since meeting with the Minister raises questions about its sincerity in relation to the plight of detainees.

This point was evident at the September Descom National Conference, where for a number of Descoms the 'MASA affair' was of minor significance for their everyday committee work. These groups have tended to organise their support activities with the co-operation of sympathetic doctors in their areas, and for some of the reasons mentioned above expected little of value from the MASA inquiry. It is politically more effective for disaffected professionals to put pressure on their associations than for outside bodies like the Descoms to do this.

It seems that some of the Descoms spent too much time and effort on the whole MASA inquiry and report. In doing so they lent a certain respectability and legitimacy to MASA's investigations, with nothing much gained in the long-run.

The struggle against political repression and security law detention, which is the focus of the Descoms' work, needs to be organised with grass-roots support and progressive professional commitment (primarily health workers). It also involves a sensitive tactical approach to those political issues which should be taken up and fought, and those which are best left alone. ■

The MWASA Conflict

Controversy surrounds the split in MWASA which occurred at its recent East London conference. A MWASA member sets out the position of one faction.

The fourth annual congress of the Media Workers' Association of South Africa (MWASA) in East London on 28 - 29 January turned out to be a watershed meeting for the young trade union. It split into two ideologically opposed factions.

The split was inevitable in the long run. The union - which had been accommodating members of diverse political beliefs and class backgrounds - finally cracked under pressure to align itself with a particular ideological position.

MWASA's problems were compounded by the nature of the bodies which preceded it - the Union of Black Journalists (UBJ) founded in 1973, and the Writers' Association of South Africa (WASA) which succeeded the UBJ when it was banned in 1973. They were fairly homogeneous bodies - professional groups of people who were journalists. Both openly subscribed to the philosophy of black consciousness (BC). Non-blacks were not eligible for membership. But in 1980 the base of the organisation broadened. At its annual congress in Cape Town that year, WASA changed its name and became the Media Workers' Association of South Africa - now open to all black media workers.

This immediately caused problems for the black consciousness foundation of the organisation. Diverse political beliefs and class backgrounds could no longer be accommodated as easily. Membership was now much larger and of a far more heterogeneous political and class nature.

Yet some of the founders of MWASA's predecessor bodies - particularly in the Transvaal - continued to label the union a black consciousness organisation. This

was both foolish and short-sighted.

MWASA's membership is made up of people from a wide spectrum of political beliefs. Like any other trade union, it has members who support Inkatha, AZAPO, community councils, affiliates of the UDF, the National Forum and various other bodies whose politics differ fundamentally.

It was inevitable that tension and strain would develop. The crunch came at its congress this year when Transvaal delegates once again stated emphatically that MWASA was a BC organisation. The message was loud and clear: if you're not BC, get out of MWASA. It developed into a gloves-off, no-holds-barred ideological fight.

But the Transvaal delegates went even further. They were not even prepared to discuss the issue. BC, they said, was a matter of principle and accordingly non-negotiable. Both the Southern and Northern Transvaal regions came to the East London conference with a mandate to **discuss** the issue, but **not vote** on it. They did an about-turn at congress and would not even discuss the issue.

This immediately plunged MWASA into a crisis. The Transvaal regions, later supported by Natal, had refused to discuss what they termed the two burning issues - opening membership to all workers, and affiliation to the UDF. This betrayed a 1980 pledge that a new constitution would be drawn up once the journalist organisation had drawn in sufficient workers from other job categories in the media.

The rationale behind this was that it was both arrogant and foolish of journalists to draw up a constitution on behalf of all media workers.

But this year, when the workers were supposed to participate in drawing up this constitution, they were blocked from doing so by a reactionary middle class leadership.

The Transvaal delegation, dominated by journalists, refused to allow the democratic process to run its natural course. They came to National Congress with an ultimatum that was tantamount to blackmail. MWASA was not opening up to all workers, and affiliation to the UDF was out.

Either you accept this, or get out of MWASA. That was the attitude.

There was no discussion or debate. The little that did take place was nothing more than a reaffirmation that 'the two burning issues' were non-negotiable.

The congress left one with a feeling of sadness about the political short-sightedness of the Transvaal leadership. For it is extremely naive to tie a trade union down to a particular ideological position.

But, more than that, it also left one with a feeling that MWASA's problems were more fundamental than differences of approach between supporters and non-supporters of BC. It also exposed a fundamental difference in the interpretation of the struggle in South Africa and the role of the working class in this struggle.

There is an interdependence between national and social liberation. But BC supporters continue to ignore this, instead mobilising resistance around the issue of 'race' only.

To them, it seems, there are two phases in the struggle: first get blacks into power, then think of getting rid of capitalism.

BC supporters in MWASA project racism as the root of conflict. This clumsy and distorted analysis poses problems for the tactics and strategies of the liberation struggle.

That is why the issue of opening MWASA to all workers was 'non-negotiable' to BC supporters in the union.

But South Africa is undoubtedly a capitalist society. A nationalist ideology which ignores the class basis of racism is thus inadequate and fraught with dangers. Inherent in this is the development of racism, chauvinism and bourgeois nationalism.

This was demonstrated clearly at the MWASA congress, which revealed the Transvaal leadership's lack of understanding of the working class role in the national and social struggle for liberation. After Transvaal and Natal delegates withdrew from congress, they formed an interim committee made up entirely of journalists (who are by and

large middle class). This was an insult to workers in those regions. They were being allocated a back seat role although only the working class can bring about fundamental change in South Africa.

But, looking back, MWASA's problem at the congress was not only one of political and class differences. There were also differences in the perception of democracy and democratic trade unionism.

How can one come to a national congress - any organisation's most important forum of debate on policy - with a decision **not** to discuss issues and a **refusal** to vote?

And what happened to the 1980 pledge at the union's inaugural congress that a new constitution would be drawn up when a sufficient number of non-journalists had been drawn into MWASA?

Affiliation to the UDF - proposed by the Cape regions - may be unwise because it commits the union to a particular ideological position. But that was not even discussed. It was a side-issue.

Nor was there any analysis of why MWASA should continue to exclude whites from membership. Nothing about tactics or strategies. These issues were reduced to the level of pseudo-ideology.

The issues were deliberately distorted. And this could not even be challenged as the Transvaal regions came to congress with an ultimatum which destroyed democratic practice.

Perhaps this, more than ideological differences, explains the MWASA split. But on the other hand, racism and a lack of respect for democracy are in themselves an ideology - of a perverse and destructive kind which has elements of neo-fascism. ■

CAPITAL RADIO

RADIO JOURNALIST WANTED

- * To compile, script and present news bulletins and news review programmes
- * Journalistic experience and a hard news sense essential
- * Radio experience an advantage.

If you have the necessary skills and enthusiasm and you'd like to join a young, dynamic team, phone Jhb 726-0111 or apply to the Programme Director, PO Box 96400, Brixton 2019, Jhb.

Courts

HIGH TREASON

Carl Gerhardus Niehaus (23)
Johanna (Jansie) Lourens (23)

The accused in this trial faced a main charge of high treason, with alternative charges framed under the Terrorism and Internal Security Acts. Both pleaded not guilty to all charges.

The state's allegations against the accused included the following:

- * they became members and/or active supporters of the ANC, and learnt a secret code for communicating with the ANC;
- * in March 1983 they received instructions to:
 - i start a campaign against the draft Orderly Movement and Settlement of Black Persons Bill;
 - ii oppose the Ingwavuma/KaNgwane land deals and campaign against military call up;
 - iii oppose the government's constitutional plans and promote the Freedom Charter;
 - iv distribute pamphlets furthering these aims and recruit someone to improve communication between them and the ANC;
- * they received coded instructions from the ANC by telephone, post and couriers and through 'dead letter' boxes;
- * they identified the Johannesburg City Council's gas works in Cottesloe as a sabotage target; Niehaus took photographs and made drawings of the plant which were to be sent to the ANC;
- * they placed a pamphlet bomb outside the SADF recruiting office in the Carlton Centre; the pamphlets urged the rejection of national service;
- * Niehaus tried to persuade an SABC employee to provide a plan of the Auckland Park headquarters with a view to possible sabotage;
- * Niehaus and Lourens allegedly passed

on information about a security police spy in Alexandra township so that person could be 'eliminated';

* they reproduced and handed out two pamphlets which they had received from the ANC;

* Niehaus told Gerhardus Kleinhans he wanted to blow up the office of Rand Afrikaans University lecturer Izak de Vries who had given evidence for the state involving the ANC; he asked Kleinhans to draw a plan of de Vries' office for him;

* Niehaus reported to the ANC regularly and Lourens assisted him in compiling, decoding and transmitting these reports;

* in April 1982, Niehaus and Lourens helped four people to leave South Africa illegally for training by the ANC.

At the start of the trial in the Rand Supreme Court, both Niehaus and Lourens made a series of admissions. Niehaus' admitted that

- ° On 23 May 1982 he placed a pamphlet bomb outside the SADF recruiting office;
- ° He wrote and distributed a pamphlet entitled 'Why the Pretoria Bomb Blast was Necessary';
- ° He inspected, photographed and prepared plans of the Johannesburg gas works;
- ° He learnt a secret book code;
- ° He attempted to create the impression an organisation called the Afrikaans-sprekende Socialistiese Assosiasie existed, when in fact it did not;
- ° He attempted to recruit Catherine Hunter to assist with activities on behalf of the ANC in October or November 1982.

Lourens admitted knowing the ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe were unlawful organisations, learning and using a secret book code, and that documents in code had been found in her home. The allegations relating to the pamphlet bomb, and to the reproduction and

distribution of two pamphlets received from the ANC were dropped against her.

The trial was conducted amid tight security. Spectators entering the court were searched and on one occasion security police took photographs of people arriving and leaving court. During the first court appearance of the accused, spectators rose and sang a freedom song. The presiding magistrate ordered police to guard the court doors to prevent people from leaving. Security police then took the names and addresses of spectators.

A number of witnesses were called to testify for the state. Before the trial started, Father Timothy Stanton (63) was jailed for six months for refusing to answer questions before a magistrate concerning Niehaus. He had earlier refused to make a statement to police, and was then subpoenaed under section 205 of the Criminal Procedure Act, which empowers a magistrate to put questions to the person subpoenaed. Failure to answer the questions under oath is an offence, punishable by up to five years imprisonment.

Lionel Murcott told the court he had twice agreed to receive mail from Botswana for Niehaus. He had also helped Niehaus to distribute a pamphlet entitled 'Stand Up Against the Oppressors'. Murcott said Niehaus had suggested he join the ANC but he had decided not to. Murcott was granted indemnity from prosecution. Two other witnesses also said they received letters from Botswana for Niehaus.

Gerhardus Kleinhans told the court Niehaus had said Izak de Vries 'ought to be blown up' and had later asked him for a plan of de Vries' office. Kleinhans also said he had shown Niehaus a security police letter identifying a woman in Alexandra as an informer. SABC employee Roelie Kuikstra said Niehaus had asked her for a copy of a plan of an SABC building.

Robert Whitecross, a student at the University of Witwatersrand and friend and housemate of the accused, told the court he was a warrant officer attached to security police headquarters in Pretoria. He had been recruited while at Wits by major Craig Williamson, and joined the SAP in June 1981. Whitecross met Niehaus in February 1982 and moved into a house with both accused a year later. He assisted Niehaus in photographing the gas works, in making a life size coffin for a 'Save the Six'

prayer service and in other activities, while at the same time relaying information about these to the security police.

A letter from Niehaus to Lourens with certain instructions, and a coded message from the ANC to Niehaus, were handed in as evidence by the state.

Catherine Hunter who was detained for nine weeks by security police as a potential witness was released from custody after Niehaus made certain admissions.

At the end of the state case, defence counsel closed the case for the accused without leading evidence.

The state advocate argued that Niehaus' activities were hostile to the state. He said the accused did not have to commit violent acts to be convicted of high treason. Previous court cases such as the one involving Barbara Hogan found that supplying information to, and carrying out propaganda for the enemy, belonging to an anti-government organisation and committing unconstitutional acts to further a banned group's aim was, in law, treason.

Defence counsel conceded that Niehaus was guilty of the main treason charge. However, it was argued that the state had not proved that the photographs and plan of the gas works were acquired for the purpose of sabotage. Counsel also argued that the other allegations of sabotage, as well as those concerning the Alexandra informer and the four people who left the country, had not been proved.

As regards Lourens, the defence argued that the state had failed to prove she was guilty of treason or Terrorism, or that she had carried out those activities proved against her as an ANC member.

The prosecutor argued that Lourens was associated with Niehaus' activities. He referred to a letter sent to Lourens by Niehaus, instructing her to encode a report to the ANC. By not reporting his activities to the police, Lourens became part of a treasonable conspiracy. **Verdict:** Both accused were found guilty of high treason. The alternative charges under the Internal Security Act fell away. Lourens was acquitted on charges of becoming and remaining a member of the ANC.

Sentence: Niehaus told the court, in evidence in mitigation of sentence, that he believed violent opposition to

the South African government was the inevitable result of structural violence caused by the apartheid system. He referred to pass raids, influx control, bannings and political repression.

He said that he would have continued his activities on behalf of the ANC if he had not been arrested.

Niehaus was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment.

Lourens received a sentence of four years.

(Rand Supreme Court, 24.11.83).

INTERNAL SECURITY ACT

Mathews Thabane Ntshiwa (23)

The accused was charged for engraving pro-ANC inscriptions on his tea mug which he used at work. Ntshiwa pleaded not guilty to participating in the activities of the ANC, alternatively furthering its aims.

He allegedly engraved 'Amandla Gowethu'(sic), 'Release Nelson Mandela', 'Remember our leader', 'Those who were trying to destroy apartheid in our land', 'Umkhodo we siswe' (sic), and 'PW we want our land back' on the mug.

Counsel for the defence contested the admissibility of certain statements made by the accused while in police custody. Captain PEJ Kruger of the Krugersdorp security police told the court he had used his own words in parts of the statement he took from Ntshiwa. He said this had not changed the meaning. Kruger also told the court he had deleted the words 'ask for remand' and 'say nothing at this stage' from the official warning after Ntshiwa had made his statement. Defence counsel argued that once these portions were deleted, the statement ceased to be the statement of the accused.

Defence counsel also said Kruger had failed to ask Ntshiwa whether he was in sound and sober senses or if anybody had assaulted or threatened him. Kruger also did not inform the accused that he was not obliged to make a statement and had the right to consult an attorney.

Regional magistrate Aucamp ruled the statement admissible and said it had been voluntarily made.

In the statement Ntshiwa said a co-worker, Arnold Sithole, had engraved the slogans on the mug. He told the court he had not thought the engravings would 'lead to such seriousness'.

Verdict: Ntshiwa was found not guilty on

the main charge of taking part in ANC activities, but guilty on the alternative count. Aucamp quoted the evidence of ID de Vries, called by the state as an expert on the ANC, who said if the accused had locked up his mug in a cupboard he would not have been guilty. However his co-workers had seen the engravings because he had drunk tea in front of them. Aucamp rejected Ntshiwa's evidence that another worker had engraved the mug.

Sentence: 18 months imprisonment, with a further 18 months suspended. Aucamp said that he had taken into account that Ntshiwa had already spent four months in jail as an awaiting trial prisoner, the attorney general having refused bail in the case. The magistrate also took note that the accused had lost his job.

Defence counsel indicated that the accused would appeal against both conviction and sentence, and bail was set at R3 000.

(Krugersdorp Regional Court, 09.12.83).

Sister Mary Bernard Mncube (48)

The accused was charged with possession of banned literature, and promoting the aims of the ANC.

The state alleged that Sister Bernard was found in possession of the banned publications 'Total War in South Africa', and 'Sechaba', and a photocopy of a speech by ANC president Oliver Tambo which had been published in 'Sechaba'.

The documents were found after a police raid on Sister Bernard's place of residence, during which she was ordered to strip naked before being searched. Sister Bernard was one of four Kagiso residents detained at that time, the others being Isaac Genu, Anna Mogase and Lettie Nzima.

In a statement to the court Sister Bernard said 'Sechaba' was sent to her by an anonymous person. 'Total War' was given to her at a conference where everyone attending was supplied with a copy. She was unaware that the publications were banned.

Verdict: Magistrate IJJ Luther found the accused guilty of possessing ANC publications, but not guilty of possessing seven copies of the NUSAS publication, 'Total War in South Africa'.
Sentence: Twelve months imprisonment, of which eight months were conditionally suspended for five years. In passing sentence the presiding magistrate said that a wholly suspended sentence would

be inappropriate since ANC activities had escalated recently. Although the offence warranted a three year sentence he had taken into account that Sister Bernard was a first offender.

The accused was released on R300 bail pending appeal proceedings. (Krugersdorp Regional Court, 10.12.84).

George Moilola (29)

Amanda Kwadi (31)

Rev Molefe Samuel Tsele (27)

Moilola, an executive member of the Mohlakeng Civic Association and organiser for the Young Christian Workers; Kwadi, an executive member of the Federation of South African Women; and Tsele, a Lutheran minister, were charged with taking part in ANC activities by organising a meeting on National Women's Day in August 1982.

They pleaded not guilty to the main charge and to an alternative charge of advocating, defending and encouraging the objectives of the ANC.

The court heard that the accused had arranged a venue for the meeting and had documents printed to advertise it. The accused were alleged to have 'created support' for the ANC at the meeting held

on 8 August.

The state called RAU lecturer I de Vries as an expert witness on the ANC, as well as a 'Mr X', described as a former ANC guerilla now working for the security police. 'Mr X' gave evidence in camera.

Defence counsel alleged that Captain PAJ Kruger of the security police had threatened one of the accused with a lengthy detention if he did not make a statement. He asked the court to acquit the accused as there was no evidence to suggest that holding a Women's Day celebration furthered the aims of the ANC. The celebration was an annual event.

The state prosecutor did not call for the conviction of the accused.

Verdict: All accused were acquitted. Magistrate W Aucamp said that there was no evidence to suggest the commemoration service would be profitable to the ANC, or further its aims.

The accused had all been held in custody on instruction of the attorney general from their August date of arrest until their acquittal in November. (Krugersdorp Regional Court, 11.11.83).

CRITICAL ARTS

Published since 1980, *Critical Arts* is the only South African journal which offers perspectives on relations between the media and society. It is a cue for creating alternative dimensions to stereotyped views on film, TV, performance, press and popular culture. *Critical Arts* challenges the existing social structure in South Africa, aims to develop radical critical approaches and is concerned with media in a Third World context

Published 3 times a year.

The establishment refuse to recognise us. Isn't it time you did? Subscribe now.

R5.00 (\$10.00) (£5.00) for 4 issues
R1.50 (\$3.50) (£1.00) for individual issues
Institutions add R2.00 (\$2.00) (£1.00)

Name _____

Address _____

A Journal for Media Studies

Write to: CRITICAL ARTS, c/o Dept of Journalism and Media Studies
Rhodes University, P O Box 94, Grahamstown 6140,
South Africa



PSYCHOLOGY IN SOCIETY

PSYCHOLOGY IN SOCIETY is a new journal which aims to critically explore and present ideas on the nature of psychology in contemporary capitalist society. There is a special emphasis on the theory and practice of psychology in the South African context.

SUBSCRIPTIONS are available for three editions at R5-00 for individuals, and R12-00 for institutions.

Subscription rates cover costs of production and postage in South Africa. For subscriptions/details of rates elsewhere, write to:

P O Box 15834
2028 Doornfontein
South Africa