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IN

PROGRESS

FUTURE MOVES



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National Forum

Editorial

Politics dominates this issue of Work In Progress, much as it dominated the first weeks of 1985. As an interventionist American administration increases pressure on Botha's government, the ANC moves towards a highly significant consultative conference which could alter the face of opposition struggle.

American pressure to halt forced removals is mirrored in the Indian and coloured houses of the new tri-cameral parliament. Parties in the House of Representatives and Delegates are discredited. Nonetheless, they are unlikely to sell out their demands around Group Areas, Mixed Marriages and some other aspects of apartheid administration.

There are persistent rumours of talks between ANC and government personnel. And while these have been denied by both parties, some ruling class interests believe that this should take place sooner rather than later.

Newspapers which for years ignored black opposition politics are quoting ANC views, and the speeches and statements of Nelson Mandela have suddenly moved from the pages of underground journals to the columns of the commercial media.

It is easy to be cynical about these events. Ten years back John Vorster asked the world for six months to prove sincerity about changing apartheid. At that time, Zambia's Kaunda hailed Vorster's speech as the 'voice of reason' Africa had been waiting for. More recently, Jimmy Carter's human rights policy aimed at pressurising the apartheid state - with little effect.

Yet there is a sense that the field of politics - both ruling class and oppositional - is changing. The state is more vulnerable both locally and internationally. Some opposition groups openly debate and propose socialist alternatives to capitalist structures. Powerfully organised trade unions have intervened in national politics. And the rift between organised capital and government is widening on some issues.

This does not mean that progressive change is round the corner. Changes in state power are not on the agenda. Nor does it mean that the remaking of South Africa will be achieved by the interventions of an imperialist power, or the moves of an anti-democratic government.

But it does suggest that many old formulas are losing validity, and some tried-and-tested opposition responses have to be rethought. In a volatile and fluid situation, all formulas, clichés and assumed truths are challengeable.

WIP has been asked to point out that Georgina Jaffee's article in WIP 34, 'Living with unemployment: strategies for survival', was based on research funded by the Richard Ward Trust of the University of Witwatersrand. Research for this article was directed by Professor Jeremy Keenan.

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ANC Prepares for Consultative Conference

HOWARD BARRELL recently visited Lusaka, and interviewed ANC leaders. He outlines the debates and issues under discussion in the ANC as it prepares for its first consultative congress since 1969.

Conditions of underground struggle and exile do not favour debate - at least not of the kind conducted in liberal fashion. Security and a profile of unity can sometimes claim higher consideration. Conversely, debate is one of the vital foods of such a struggle. Without it, burning issues are smothered, and the fire of revolution can be doused.

This is a political and organisational contradiction that has long confronted revolutionary movements the world over - and the African National Congress is no exception. It is a problem with which the ANC is currently grappling as it prepares for its second consultative conference since it was outlawed in 1960.

Indications are that powerful leadership elements, supported by ANC president Oliver Tambo, are determined to have 'open season' declared: that there should be absolutely free and open debate both in the current preparations for the conference and at the conference itself. Among the rank and file, there is discernible excitement at the prospect of a conference at which their voices will be heard much more loudly than usual on several pressing issues.

Once the congress is over, however, members of the ANC will be bound to implement the decisions and policy positions reached.

ANC sources say scores of position papers and recommendations are being received from underground units inside the country. In exile, different units in ANC structures are themselves holding discussions and forwarding position papers.

These are being combined by a consultative conference national preparatory committee, and an agenda is being developed from them. This preparatory stage is viewed as most important by ANC members - the period that will largely determine the success of the conference.

The consultative conference looks set to last two to three days, and between 100 and 200 delegates are likely to attend. More than one timing and place has already been fed to journalists. This is beginning to look increasingly like a disinformation exercise motivated by ANC security considerations.

MOROGORO'S LEGACY

Whereas the last consultative conference - at Morogoro in Tanzania in 1969 - took place in a situation of crisis for the ANC, the general feeling among ANC sources is that this year's conference comes at a time of considerable advance.

Over the past 24 years, the ANC has divided its struggle into four broad areas: the development and extension of the ANC underground machinery inside the country and its overall generalship; the legal mass mobilisation of people politically and economically inside the country; the development of armed struggle; and the international isolation of the apartheid government.

A set of distinctly organisational issues - such as whether or not to open up the ranks of the National Executive

Committee (NEC) to non-Africans for the first time, and whether or not to allow non-Africans to now become members of the domestic ANC - do not seem likely to cause problems of any significance.

Of course, these issues again raise some (old and largely settled) debates around the 'national question', on the advisability of racial groups having separately structured organisations to oppose the different levels of oppression faced by each. But all indications are that delegates will want to extend full formal organisational rights to proven coloured, Indian and white members.

The ANC's 1969 Morogoro consultative conference decided that coloureds, Indians and whites could belong to the External Mission of the ANC but not to the domestic ANC. It also continues to restrict membership of the NEC to Africans.



Oliver Tambo - 'leadership unassailable'

The Morogoro decisions were constitutional technicalities in deference to the many ANC leaders then in jail and underground. It had not been possible to fully canvass their views. When the issue of opening up the ANC to non-Africans had come before the full NEC in 1959, while the ANC was still legal, it had been decided then that the time was not yet right for such a move.

But the feeling at Morogoro was that the argument for building a completely

non-racial ANC, embodying all elements of the old Congress Alliance, was politically compelling. And, at a practical level, it made no sense having small groups of exiles representing the South African Indian Congress, the Coloured People's Congress and the Congress of Democrats working separately. Solidarity between these organisations, the feeling was, should be transformed as best as then could be into organisational unity.

The Morogoro conference restricted itself largely to decisions it could readily take in the name of the External Mission of the ANC. It allowed coloured, Indian and white membership of the External Mission, and it set up operational and other structures - notably the now-disbanded Revolutionary Council - which comprised all races and which was sometimes authorised to take decisions in the name of the NEC.

When new operational structures replaced the Revolutionary Council in early 1983, this non-racialism was consolidated. Political trials in recent years have shown that the constitutional bar on non-Africans being members of the domestic ANC has also been honoured more in the breach than in the observance.

There appears to be a strong majority view, from Tambo down, that the ANC must now correct this constitutional anomaly; that the ANC must reflect fully within its own structures the non-racial goals it espouses.

But, with these changes could come the demand that more coloureds, Indians and whites make their way into Umkhonto we Sizwe.

NEC ELECTIONS

New elections are to be held for the NEC, and there are signs that more youth could be promoted onto the executive. The younger members of the NEC currently include Thabo Mbeki, publicity director and son of imprisoned former ANC and SACP leader Govan Mbeki; Chris Hani, political commissar of Umkhonto we Sizwe and formerly Lesotho ANC representative; Joe Jele, a senior official in the political department who used to head the ANC's international department; Simon Makana; and Joe Nhlanhla, former administrative secretary of the ANC.

The presidency of Tambo, who enjoys a

remarkable degree of respect and affection from ANC members of all ranks and ideological emphases, is unassailable.

Some changes to structures are also likely. The emphasis in this respect will be towards making more effective the structures dealing with the home front and increasing co-ordination between them. It is possible these changes could reach up to the NEC.

ANC exiles talk with some pride of an 'outstanding group of middle-ranking leaders' emerging, and authorised spokesmen say a substantial number of young men and women who have left the country since the 1976 uprising have already taken up responsible positions, particularly in Umkhonto we Sizwe.

The conference is likely to re-assert the correctness of overall ANC strategy. Some areas and methods will, however, be more closely examined.

THE MAIN DEBATES

The hot debates for the conference are over armed struggle and the extension of the underground. And cooler, though searching, debate is raging over the need, and the way in which, to establish much more firmly the leadership role of the working class first formulated at Morogoro in 1969.

On the issue of armed struggle, the period 1976-1984 is, correctly, being termed a stage of 'armed propaganda'. That is, a period in which the ANC has sought to show that armed struggle is feasible under South African conditions.

But there are signs of new directions emerging in line with the ANC's declared intention to mount 'people's war'. Loosely, that is a situation in which the ANC hopes every one of its supporters, and others, becomes a 'fighter'.

One new direction seems likely to be the more distinct combination of armed struggle with political or labour mass actions. There have already been several halting moves in this direction - such as the attacks on Sigma and Leyland showrooms during labour disputes with these companies, and attacks on Department of Education and Training offices during student boycotts. But the pattern of linkage could now become much more direct.

Top ANC sources have also disclosed that Umkhonto we Sizwe fighters could be allowed to exercise much less caution about incurring civilian casualties. Some shift towards softer targets (a broad category) looks definite - and they are unlikely to be black (apart from those whom the ANC designates 'enemies of the people'). But the ANC has said that the military escalation it plans will not be directed 'specifically against any civilians'. Certainly, the established preference for sabotage of installations looks set to become a thing of the past.

Of course, the anti-ANC security pacts the South African government signed with FRELIMO and the Swazi ruling group have presented the ANC military with logistical problems. But guerilla attack statistics show there is no reason to believe these problems have been anything like as serious as the government might have hoped they would be. And the ANC considers armed struggle still to be a viable and vital weapon in its armoury. The conference is likely to state that position unequivocally. With at least 7 000 formally trained guerillas (this is the only estimate competent ANC sources will give), the ANC considers it has the trunk of a people's army from which many branches can grow.

But the pacts necessitate that the ANC develops a capacity to sustain armed struggle inside South Africa with far less reliance on routes through, and resources within, neighbouring states. From its perspective, its guerillas have to be rooted more firmly among ordinary people willing and able to provide them with shelter and intelligence. And that is where the ANC's concern about the state of its underground comes in.

INTERNAL STRUCTURES

From Tambo down, there is a feeling that the ANC internal underground has not been operating well enough, nor is it sufficiently extensive.

The ways and means of improving it will be thoroughly discussed at the consultative conference. In fact, this issue will likely be the lens through which most other problems are viewed. The ANC holds that success in almost all areas of its struggle depends on sound

and extensive internal underground structures more than on any other single factor. What appears to be considerable support for the ANC inside South Africa must, from the ANC's perspective, be transformed in appropriate cases into underground structures.

The ANC has declared 1985 'The Year of the Cadre', as if to drive home its intentions in this regard. Clearly, it will be seeking to step up the development of a disciplined cadre operating under the co-ordination of a centralised leadership. Closer definition of the primary position of the working class and its interests also has structural and organisational ramifications. And it will be interesting to see how the ANC deals with the role of the working class in the national liberation struggle.

At the level of argument, the debates among ANC exiles mirror almost exactly those which have raged internally over the past two years. One difference is the way in which the debates outside are conducted. Protagonists of the different positions appear more confident. There is less, if any, recourse to perjoratives like 'workerist' and 'populist'; and different positions adopted around the degree and form that working class leadership should take are seen as dialectical (and hence positive within the traditionally broad politics of a liberation movement structure) rather than contradictory (and hence a basis for disunity).

THE WORKING CLASS

Sources say it is highly likely the consultative conference will consolidate and further elaborate the ANC's view, first clearly indicated in 1969, that the (black) working class is the motive force of its national liberation struggle. This will confirm an ongoing swing to the left which is as discernible within the ANC as it is among mass organisations operating legally inside the country.

One area in which the nature of working class leadership is being debated is in the composition of Umkhonto we Sizwe. Currently, by all accounts, it is made up mainly of young black men and women (largely from working class origins) who left South

Africa after 1976. Some people argue for a greater and more distinctive working class 'being' in the army. And the principle of working class primacy also has implications for the linkage of armed struggle to struggles waged distinctively by the working class.

Although the ANC appears well pleased with progress made over the past two years, in particular in legal mass political and labour mobilisation, it will be looking at ways of building on the successes scored. From its point of view, organisation of the unemployed and of people in the rural areas has lagged badly, and it will be making plans in these two areas.

Over the past 24 years, ANC External Mission diplomats have played a major role in efforts to isolate the apartheid government internationally. The international balance of forces and how this relates to the issue of apartheid is seen as an important factor. And the ANC is pleased with progress thus far.

The ANC currently sees particular international significance in the 'Free South Africa' campaign being waged in the United States. And it was in this context that it recently held talks with Senator Edward Kennedy. Adding Kennedy's political clout to the campaign against the Reagan administration's 'constructive engagement' with apartheid is the prize ANC diplomats wanted out of the meeting. And it seems they have got it.

The ANC's view of the small anti-Kennedy boycotts organised by AZAPO is that these displayed a disappointing immaturity and a dismal lack of understanding of the tactics of the international struggle against apartheid. While an anti-apartheid stance can be a convenient (and it can also be a sincere) political plank for a wide range of political outlooks, the point as far as the ANC is concerned is to reduce the foes and multiply the friends of the liberation struggle. For ANC diplomats, the bottom line is at very least to neutralise potential enemies.

In the ANC's view, to campaign in international forums in this way does not mean to surrender the definition of the objectives and character of its struggle to sincere (or opportunistic) foreigners. Nor does it mean conferring upon a foreigner the mantle of liberator. Instead, in the ANC's view, anyone seriously working for an end to apartheid in all its forms can remain

confident that the definition and ultimate onus of the struggle remains the South African people's. The rest is a very basic question of tactics.

THE TACTICS OF TALKS

In history, the moment comes for almost every revolutionary movement at some time to talk to its adversary - if only to find out what contradictions within the enemy's camp are prompting the enemy to want to talk.

Calls for government - ANC talks by assorted white businessmen and members of the Afrikaner intelligentsia have aroused much analysis and debate as to motive within the ANC's External Mission.

The general view is that these calls for talks indicate one or a combination of the following: that these white elements consider that the new constitution and the black response show the Botha government is incapable of developing political options able to safeguard their interests; that these whites believe the ANC is in a position of comparative weakness after the Nkomati Accord, and that therefore now is the time to talk; that these whites recognise that, whatever the socialist rhetoric of the Mugabe government, the Lancaster House Agreement guaranteed Zimbabwe would be a capitalist haven for years to come, and a similar pre-emptive agreement with the ANC might, given the balance of forces, guarantee them a similar future for South Africa.

The fact is - and it is a fact - there have been no talks, negotiations, contacts or diplomatic exchanges of any kind between the ANC and the South African government over the past year, according to a wide range of official and unofficial ANC sources and contacts from the top down. Why at least one journalist should have claimed otherwise is cause for speculation only at this stage.

What has happened is that Professor Harvey van der Merwe of UCT and Beeld journalist Piet Muller have visited Lusaka and had discussions with individual ANC members on the ANC's perspectives. Van der Merwe visited as an individual interested in seeing government - ANC talks, and Muller apparently with the same motive in the

role of a journalist. At most, these visits might be termed 'preliminary reconnaissance' by individuals or small groups interested in a more radical version of what is termed 'peaceful change' to establish if there is a segment of pro-talkers within the ANC.

The clear indications are that, if a National Party MP (such as Wynand Malan) visited Lusaka as an individual and sought informal discussions with individual members of the ANC on ANC perspectives, the ANC leadership would not stand in his way. But, the ANC would not be prepared to meet him as a representative of the National Party, the ANC would not consider itself bound in any way by such informal discussions, nor would the ANC consider such a chat as constituting any formal or informal contact with the government or ruling party.

'We have a Department of Information and Publicity (DIP), and they can meet anybody - that's their job,' one ANC source said.

As far as the issue of formal ANC - government talks goes, authorised ANC spokesmen have laid down two broad conditions: one, that the talks be premised on an agreement that apartheid must be completely dismantled and that they centre on the practical ways and means of constructing a united, democratic and non-racial country; and two, that the ANC have the agreement of the 'entire democratic leadership of South Africa' to such talks and is able to call on some jailed or detained leaders, as well as people not in the ANC, to help it exercise its mandate in such talks.

These ANC spokesmen have added the ANC will not allow the fact of talks with the government to remain a secret from its base.

The ANC recognises that the anxious voices calling for government - ANC talks represent an important class-derived hairline crack in the white bloc. Like any other revolutionary movement, the ANC must pay some attention to worsening any contradictions and creating disarray within the ranks of what can be termed 'the generalised enemy'. The best way for it to do so is, obviously, to substantially increase its offensive. That thrust is the subject of the consultative conference - from its perspective, talks are not on the agenda for now.

Reagan Proposes, Botha Disposes?

The Proxmire Bill, designed to block further US investment in SA, moves through the Senate in the next few months. SUSAN BROWN examines US strategy on South Africa in the light of this Bill.

Anti-apartheid politics has over the past year become significantly entrenched within the US political system, as it becomes part of the Democratic Party's opposition programme to the administration's foreign policy. It is a development with unprecedented significance for South Africa, and the coming half-year will mark a number of turning points.

First and most significant, the Proxmire Bill, designed to block all further American investment in South Africa, moves through the Senate over the coming two months.

The South African economy is now more desperate than it has ever been for foreign investment to help it claw its way out of the present slump, and most urgently to arrest the slide of the rand against the dollar, with its hair-raising inflationary and recessionary consequences.

All imports, fuel above all, have doubled in cost, and if, as seems probable, South Africa must again import some four or five million tons of maize from the United States this year, the cost in inflation and in social unrest will be rather harder to pay than its bill in cheap rands.

EFFECTIVE SANCTIONS

Against this background, there are several factors which transform the possible effect of the Proxmire Bill from a painful but non-lethal slap to a

body-blow. The Bill prevents any further loans by private banks to South Africa. If, as is likely, the provision is stretched to cover private borrowers, and if it prevents the period of existing loans being extended, then South African corporations, parastatals and government will be faced with paying an impossible debt of some R30-billion.

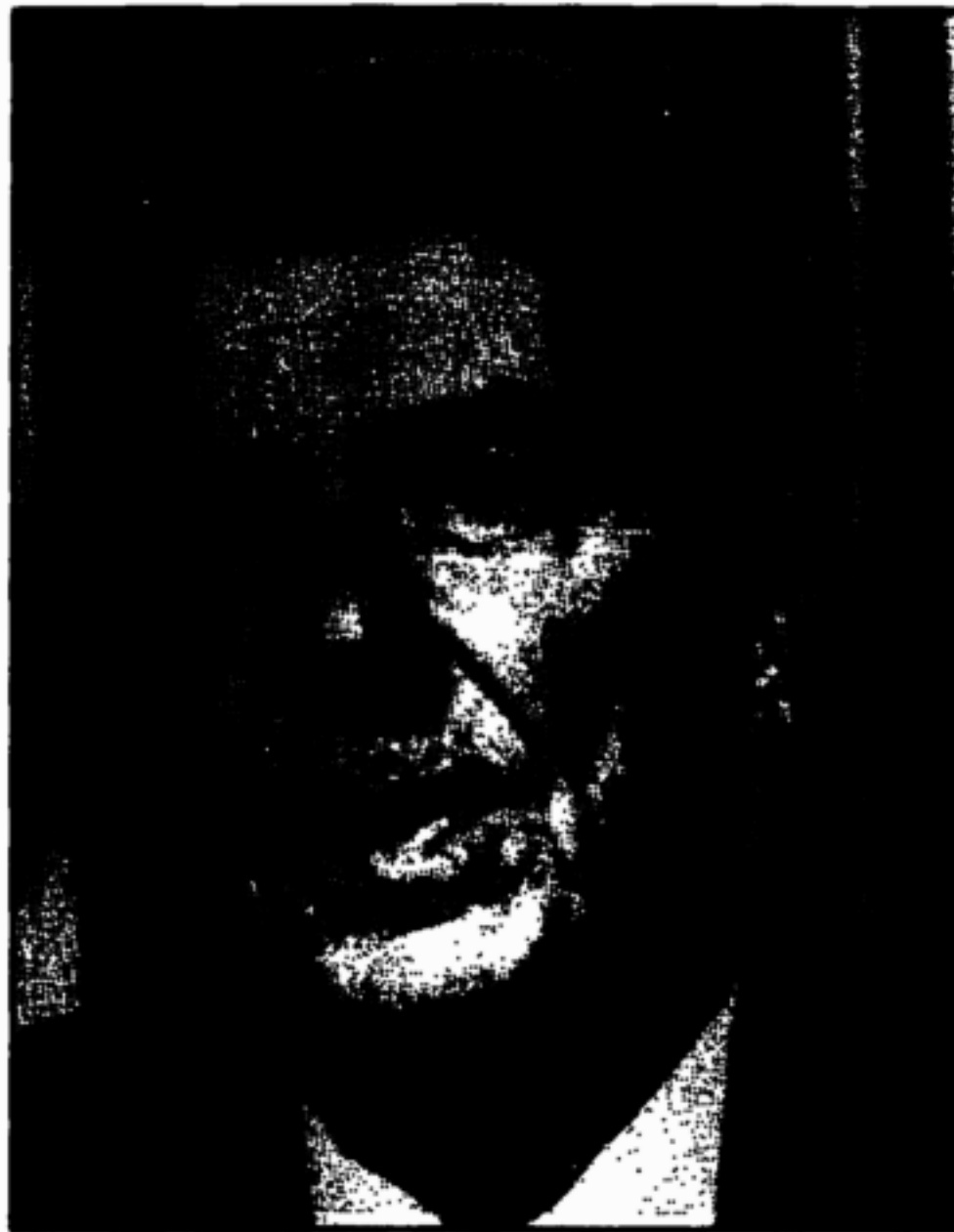
South Africa would have to default, in whole or in part. That in turn would affect its international credit rating, resulting in higher interest rates and higher costs of servicing other debts, renewing pressure on the rand in any case.

The US is South Africa's largest trading partner, though that trade is relatively insignificant to the US. Losing access to the world's largest market for both raw materials and consumer commodities would put an end to South African hopes of an export-led recovery from recession - and all previous South African economic upturns have been fuelled by the increased economic activity and liquidity generated by rising demand from Western industrial economies for primary sector exports.

Krugerrands too are an important source of foreign exchange, and the US is the largest buyer. The proposed ban on their sale there would cut still more deeply into South Africa's ability to pay for imports.

The sum of these and other provisions in the Proxmire Bill would cause the rand to drop still more sharply than it has. A severe enough drop could realistically drive inflation close to Israeli levels (100% and up). Without the US to act as paymaster as it does to Israel, and with continued domestic stagnation, the economic effects would be literally ruinous.

In fact, if the Bill became law, South Africans would have the opportunity to judge empirically the accuracy of all



Reagan - pushing Botha towards real reform?

those predictions about the social consequences of massive sanctions.

AMERICAN OBJECTIVES

But neither the American legislature nor the Reagan administration desires or intends to oversee the destruction of capitalism in South Africa.

The Bill was drawn up by committees of the Democratic-dominated Congress. The Senate, through which it must now pass, has a slender Republican majority, but a number of Republican senators have publicly taken a stance critical of the non-achievements of constructive engagement. In all probability it will pass there. If so, it will face no problems with ratification by Congress.

Congress is currently considering processing a model bill, that is to say one identical to the Proxmire Bill. The effect will be that by the time the Senate has passed the Proxmire legislation, Congress will have completed deliberations and due process on the same piece of legislation and the Bill can move without further delay to the White House to be signed into law. If this is done without procedural

delays - proposed amendments in the Senate would delay it by months - the Bill would arrive on the Reagan administration's doorstep in April or May this year. If delayed by amendments or reformulations, it would face the President by about mid-year.

Once there, it faces a Presidential veto. Last time anti-South African legislation came up, the Reagan administration indicated that it would use the veto - 'given enough reason'.

THE SHOPPING LIST

Reason, as is being intimated to PW Botha's regime at present, means the cessation of forced removals and release of key political prisoners, the items at the head of the State Department's shopping list.

Congress is neither unaware nor unapproving of this message, nor are its members unaware that South African organised capital is lobbying with unprecedented unanimity and desperation for the same reforms. Their lists of undesirable measures are similar: removals, influx control, group areas, bannings and detention without trial, the Mixed Marriages Act and Section 16

of the Immorality Act, to start with.

Regular and normalised negotiation with the ANC is also being urged, along with release of men like Mandela, Sisulu and Mbeki. Possibly both the US state department and Pik Botha's Foreign Affairs Department have hopes that differing perspectives (on issues such as 'soft targets,' perhaps) between ex-prisoners and the External Mission will sow discord - though Herman Toivo ja Toivo's release a year ago should indicate that the protagonists will be at pains to avoid the fact or appearance of conflict.

Ultimately, though, the possibility of ANC's legalisation is a more long-term objective - on the agenda after the worst social friction points have been removed, and depending on whether 'normalised negotiation' does develop.

EASY LEVERAGE

Both Congress and the Reagan administration are at present in an ideal position to exercise leverage. The executive should be able to use the Bill's potent threat to extract concessions that justify the constructive engagement policy, in the face of the growing support for US anti-apartheid movements in the politically vital East and West.

Both Democratic and Republican Congressmen who face pressure from such groups are able, at no major risk to themselves, to back a gesture that may help to placate black constituents restive under welfare and social security cuts.

True, the Pentagon (which subscribes to the argument about South Africa's importance as a supplier of strategic minerals) and some business and industrial lobbies are against the Bill, but ultimately the cost to US interests in terms of desirable investment opportunities is small. With the dollar as strong as it is, US investors have a global sweet-shop to choose from.

It may seem unduly cynical to suggest that were the gold price nearer to \$800 than \$300, neither the anti-apartheid lobby nor the Bill would have got as far as they have. But the present relative economic insignificance of South African prospects to US investors is a decisive factor, as are South Africa's own

economic straits, which render it far more vulnerable to pressure.

SOUTH AFRICAN OPTIONS

Of course, were South Africa privately to agree to end removals, obtain the veto, and then to go back to business as usual, it would fuel the possibility that enough Republicans would join the liberal Democratic majority to provide the two-thirds vote in both Houses necessary to override the veto.

It is still not impossible that the South African state will gamble on toughing it out, though where it would find resources to pay for the increased domestic repression that would be required is a puzzling question. Meanwhile, PW Botha's statement at the opening of Parliament this year points in the other direction, as do the suspension of removals and the publicity about the impending release of political prisoners.

On removals, it is worth remembering that Co-operation and Development Minister Gerrit Viljoen's recent statements are not that different from those Piet Koornhof produced in such abundance. Certainly the constraints and possibly the intention differ this time, but Viljoen's remarks that removals would be undertaken with the agreement of 'leaders' leaves an ominous loophole.

The government is likely to set up a network of committees to 'evaluate' shopping list items, and declare official or unofficial moratoria on implementation of several of them. This would simultaneously give reformists an indication of good intentions, and stagger the blows to the right wing.

Probably government will send strong instructions to its bureaucracies to suspend the more heavy-handed practises of the past. But the police, the administration boards, the security police and even the military are not docile house-dogs to be called so easily to heel after their long years of near-autonomy. Any of them is perfectly capable of perpetrating an inconvenient atrocity at the worst time.

On the other hand, if even half the items of the reformists' shopping list is obtained, the organisational scope for opposition groups in South Africa will be transformed.

UDF and AZAPO:

Evaluation and Expectations

KAREN JOCHELSON interviewed UDF leaders 'Terror' Lekota and Trevor Manuel, and SUSAN BROWN spoke to AZAPO president Ishmael Mkhabela, asking them to comment on last year's salient issues and to spell out their organisations' intentions for 1985.

During 1984, almost all opposition organisations grew. Those describing themselves as 'progressive democratic', and many in the black consciousness fold, have claimed credit for the year's widespread local-level resistance. Both groupings have intensified their search for influence and membership on civic and local levels.

Organisations of both persuasions have perceived themselves in direct competition for the fruits of a wave of popular resistance largely triggered by economic hardship.

But it is misleading simply to counterpose the UDF and National Forum (NF) as organisational incarnations of progressive democratic vs black consciousness political movements. As UDF officials themselves say, there is by no means a clear ideological coherence across the spectrum of the Front's members.

And while BC predominates in the NF - particularly in the Transvaal through the influence of AZAPO - equation of the NF with hardline BC is simplistic. For example, at the recent NF conference, traditionalist BC objections to whites' presence, and to working with whites at all, were resolved without fuss.

And the Cape Action League (CAL), a NF affiliate with Unity Movement roots, is not BC (see interview in this issue). Itself a front, CAL claims some 40 affiliates of which 25 are 'active'. In the face of conflicting claims by UDF and NF organisers, some unaligned observers believe that the CAL generates at least as much political activity and support in the Western Cape as UDF affiliates.

DEFINING DIFFERENCES

To clarify the issue in a different way - what are the differences between the UDF and NF? Are they merely differences in personnel, history and rhetorical emphasis?

The NF's policy defines it as anti-imperialist, anti-racist, anti-sexist and anti-collaborationist. Few UDF organisations would quibble with those principles. The NF is explicitly left wing and socialist in its self-defining manifesto and programmes, while the UDF is not; opponents say that the UDF is explicitly ambiguous.

The NF accepts affiliate organisations with white members and says it has no difficulty in working with individual whites. But it would not accept affiliates organisations made up 'predominantly of the ruling class' - such as UDF affiliates NUSAS and JODAC. One NF official explains the all-out anti-Kennedy campaign as, at least in part, the seizing of an opportunity to show up the UDF as 'petty-bourgeois leaders of a middle-class constituency.'

The UDF, of course, would return the compliment with interest, arguing that BC intellectuals equivocate about their blackness to depict themselves - a bourgeois and petty-bourgeois intelligentsia and constituency in reality - as a working-class vanguard.

It appears that at present the UDF is more heterogeneous and less explicit on policy than the NF. But policy statements alone do not illuminate the gulf between the two groups. Their factual (as opposed to rhetorical)

differences would emerge clearly were it possible to get accurate accounts of the scope and nature of both bodies and their affiliates. But extravagant claims, both in power and opposition, are often made about the extent of support, activities, contacts and authority.

It could be argued that what the NF and the UDF have in common is that their anti-collaborationism guides them inexorably into the politics of protest. This limits the scope for the long, slow battle to serve constituents' specific local interests, which consolidates long-term grassroots organisation. It is not inevitable that anti-collaborationism results in issue-based 'consciousness-raising' campaigns, though that seems to be the tendency to date.

Both progressive democratic and BC organisations have been reviewing last year's policies and performance - and deficiencies - in particular the fruits of the Vaal and the November stay away. The views of UDF and AZAPO leaders on desirable strategic and tactical evolutions and on the directions they would like to see their organisations take may indicate the shapes of developments to come.

UDF DIRECTIONS AND DESIRES ||||||||||||||||||

For the UDF, 1984 was marked by major campaigns: the Million Signatures Campaign, support for the November stay away; and those against the Black Local Authorities Act and the coloured and Indian elections.

The UDF expanded in both rural and urban areas and now claims operational regional committees in the Southern Transvaal, Southern Cape (Oudtshoorn, George, Beaufort West), the Karoo, the Northern Cape (Vryburg, Kimberley, Bloemhof), and affiliates in the OFS and Northern Transvaal.

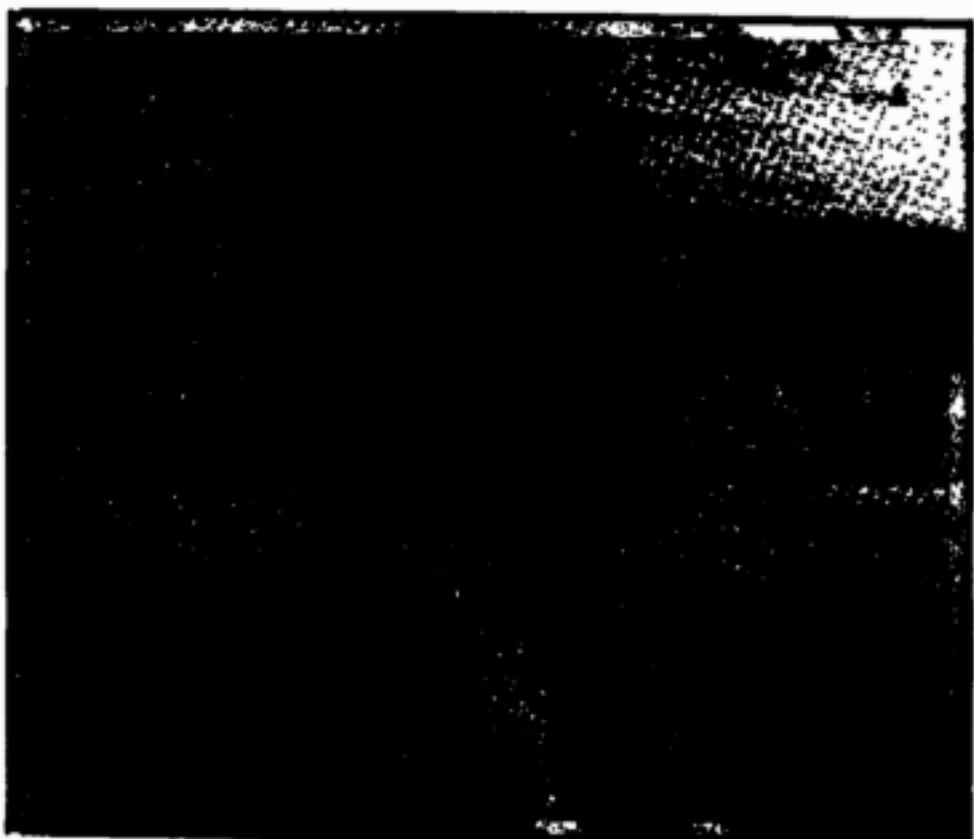
In some cases, says Western Cape branch secretary Trevor Manuel, 'the Front went into outlying areas and itself generated organisation which then affiliated to the Front'.

The UDF is divided into six regions composed of the local affiliates, usually civic, women's and student organisations. Nationally there are more than 600 affiliates. Each region has a

general council and executive committee which debate and define policy.

The National Executive co-ordinates regional decisions and establishes a national position on pertinent issues. However, the Kennedy visit is an issue which has so far generated ambiguity and confusion from the UDF. When asked after the event to clarify whether support or non-support for the senator's visit was dominant within the UDF, Lekota, national publicity secretary, replied that the matter is still 'internal' and 'under discussion'.

In response to charges of being top-heavy, the UDF maintains that the links between national and local organisations are a 'two-way process'.



Lekota - 'from mobilisation to organisation'

The large-scale support claimed by the UDF necessitates a change in direction, Lekota believes: 'We must move from mobilisation to disciplined organisation and effective action.'

'IDEOLOGICAL BATTLE' ||||||||||||||||||

But Manuel adds, 'After 18 months, the UDF is far from monolithic. Divisions were blurred in the euphoria of the Front's formation, but different opinions and perspectives are emerging. It is necessary to do battle at an ideological level to define a clearer ideological stance.'

'One of the major tasks we have to address is the building of a national consciousness. This is only possible through active debate around traditional positions... You will find groups in the

UDF who have already adopted the Freedom Charter, and others who have not reached that point yet.'

Unions, it seems, are viewed as vehicles of working class consciousness. Manuel states that 'there is also the question of class consciousness. Within the Front there are people who place different emphases on class and national consciousness. I believe the place of unions is within the Front so they can generalise the kind of consciousness they now hold.'

Lekota, however, denies that the process of forging a coherent and disciplined ideological programme suggests the makings of a political party. 'Uniform political policy would undermine the concept of the Front. But unity in action does give birth to common perceptions, programmes and styles of work.'

The November stay away was possibly the most significant campaign of the year. Responding to criticism of the stay away's demands as 'vague', Lekota contends that they were 'precise and realistic'.

'Demands for the release of detainees, meeting the students' demands, and scrapping the Black Local Authorities may not have been immediately realisable but tallied with reality,' he says.

STAY AWAY LESSONS

Lekota draws several lessons for future stay aways. Date and duration of a stay away must be widely publicised, he believes, and committees 'with a sober leadership' must be set up well in advance for adequate planning: 'In the last stay away there were oversights, but there was an earnest effort to plan effectively.'

Future stay aways 'must have manageable proportions,' with regional rather than national boundaries, for instance.

'We also learnt that for short-term co-ordinating structures, public statements must still be discussed and agreed upon before being issued. Finally, the central condition for any large-scale action is adequate organisation,' Lekota concludes.

The Million Signatures Campaign has been described by critics as a dismal failure. Although just under half a

million signatures were collected, Manuel admits that 'our earlier projections actually overshot what was possible in reality. We hadn't seen the campaign having the kind of publicity that we were forced to give it.' Lekota adds that 'The Million Signatures Campaign was unrealistic, not unrealisable'. He attributes the failure to reach the campaign's objectives to state intimidation.

Lekota argues that the campaign was important in 'laying an educational basis for other campaigns', and that it is now necessary 'to move towards mass participation... to pull people into direct action'.

During the UDF's coloured and Indian anti-election campaign, it adopted a principled stance of non-collaboration. 'There was never any debate as to whether the UDF should participate or put up boycott candidates for the elections. There was some discussion whether the UDF should call for a referendum. That was resolved with the decision that the UDF should not become party to state initiatives in any way', says Manuel.

Although the initial *raison d'être* of the UDF was to combat the new constitution and the Koornhof Bills, it seems that the Front is to continue with generalised resistance against all future state initiatives.

Manuel asserts that 'the third tier of the constitutional scheme, local government, will probably not be implemented before 1988. In the meantime we expect that management committees and local affairs committees will be given slightly more power. But we will treat them with the same contempt that the community councils and local authorities were treated.'

'The terrain that has become a bit more difficult,' explains Manuel, 'is that of social welfare where people will be referred to departments set up under the Houses of Delegates and Representatives. It is a matter that will be raised at our national conference.'

'But the 18% of eligible voters who participated in the elections will soon be wooed away from support for the tri-cameral parliament onto the side of those who stand for democracy. The monopoly of political power still remains in the hands of whites. There is no question about this.'

As for the Black Local Authorities

Act, Manuel states, 'Local authorities are still being established in terms of the Act, and there is a tremendous amount of work to be done just in resisting the formation of those structures.'

'The Black Local Authorities are falling apart. The state's response has been to set up cabinet committees to consider the question of "urban blacks" and the possibility of a fourth chamber. That is the clearest indication to us that the Black Local Authorities have collapsed entirely.'

AZAPO REVIEWS ITSELF

The preoccupations of the AZAPO leadership parallel to a certain extent those of the UDF: method and locus of organisation, and the nature of links with civic and local-level bodies.

As could be expected with the extensive involvement of school student organisations in the Vaal unrest and the November stay away, AZAPO claims that both reflect the pre-eminence of black consciousness organisations among the youth.

At least one such group's leadership asserted that it had avoided affiliating to COSAS, 'because it gets you into needless trouble.' But such an instance does not support or deny the claims by either national-level organisation that their presence was decisive in the area. Still less, though, does it support either set of assertions.

AZAPO national president Ishmael Mkhabela unhesitatingly advances clear-cut views on behalf of his organisation. These are the fruit of a recent critical evaluation of a range of last year's developments.

His interpretation of the Vaal unrest rests strongly on the economic basis of the grievances. 'We saw worsening recession, increasing unemployment and rising cost of living overlaid by the imposition of undemocratic community councils, and bantustan authorities, and the tri-cameral parliament. This caused a process which defined a long list of grievances, leading the people finally to challenge the very right of state structures to govern them.'

Asked about AZAPO's position on stay aways in general and the November stay away in particular, Mkhabela is

concerned to refute reports that AZAPO criticised stay aways as a weapon. 'That is incorrect. We can't reject stay aways and boycotts as weapons in the hands of the people. The truth is, we subjected the boycotts, protests and stay aways of last year to a critical evaluation, reflecting on the gains and losses of the communities'.

'CANVASS AND PREPARE'

'In the report prepared by our deputy president, Father Joe Seoka, we concluded that as such tactics call for risk, sacrifice and suffering on the part of the people who support them - so they must be used wisely. And if preparation is inadequate, if the people are not well canvassed and prepared for any eventuality beforehand, the establishment can afterwards exploit their pain and losses to turn them against the campaign.'

Certainly AZAPO was critical of the way the November stay away was run. Mkhabela says, 'We felt there was a bit of confusion as to what it was intended to achieve. We felt it would have been an advantage to clarify the demands, and to have clear, realisable goals and objectives. But remember, in spite of this, it was a success. We all supported it and stayed away.'

On relations with trade unions outside the BC union grouping, Mkhabela says that the operative principle is to support 'genuine and legitimate struggles, as we did during the Simba-Quix boycott. We got in touch and monitored developments, only discontinuing support when the prospect of the resolution of the dispute came about.'

Asked what he anticipates in the way of developments in tactics of popular mobilisation, Mkhabela says he anticipates that protests, stay aways and boycotts will continue to dominate opposition politics in the foreseeable future.

'But there will be an escalation of demands. When a popular demand is made, the state tends to ignore it. Thus by the time the original substance of the demand is addressed, it has been outstripped, and the original problem has given birth to perceptions of others, while community pressure has

continued to escalate.'

THIS YEAR'S GOALS

AZAPO's own organisational objectives for the immediate future, Makhabela explains, are to set clear objectives and attainable short-term goals for organisation and for campaigns.

AZAPO has 96 branches, divided between the regions of Northern and Southern Transvaal, Natal, the OFS, and the Eastern and Western Cape. It is strongest in the Transvaal and Eastern Cape regions, and has 'quite good prospects' in Natal. A branch may be started with as few as 20 members, but there is no upper limit.

Asked how many people there are in a large branch like the Soweto one, Mkhabela (who was chairman of that branch in 1983) says that AZAPO did not have a complete list of membership and was working on one.

Consolidation of membership and structure, in fact, is one of the objectives for the present year, he says. 'Our organisers will have to agree on organisational objectives, but the ideal is to consolidate into increasingly independent branches, rather than to spread further outwards while crumbling behind.'

The reciprocal flow of information between AZAPO, as a national organisation on the one hand, and civic and local bodies on the other, is not surprisingly also being given considerable attention by AZAPO.

Mkhabela considers it vital that AZAPO members should play an active role within civic bodies. 'Participation on the level of common grassroots membership is very significant. Leaders may have some bias for or against you, but leadership may vacillate or not be in tune with the general membership. It's better to work among ordinary members than to get into public arguments with the leadership.'

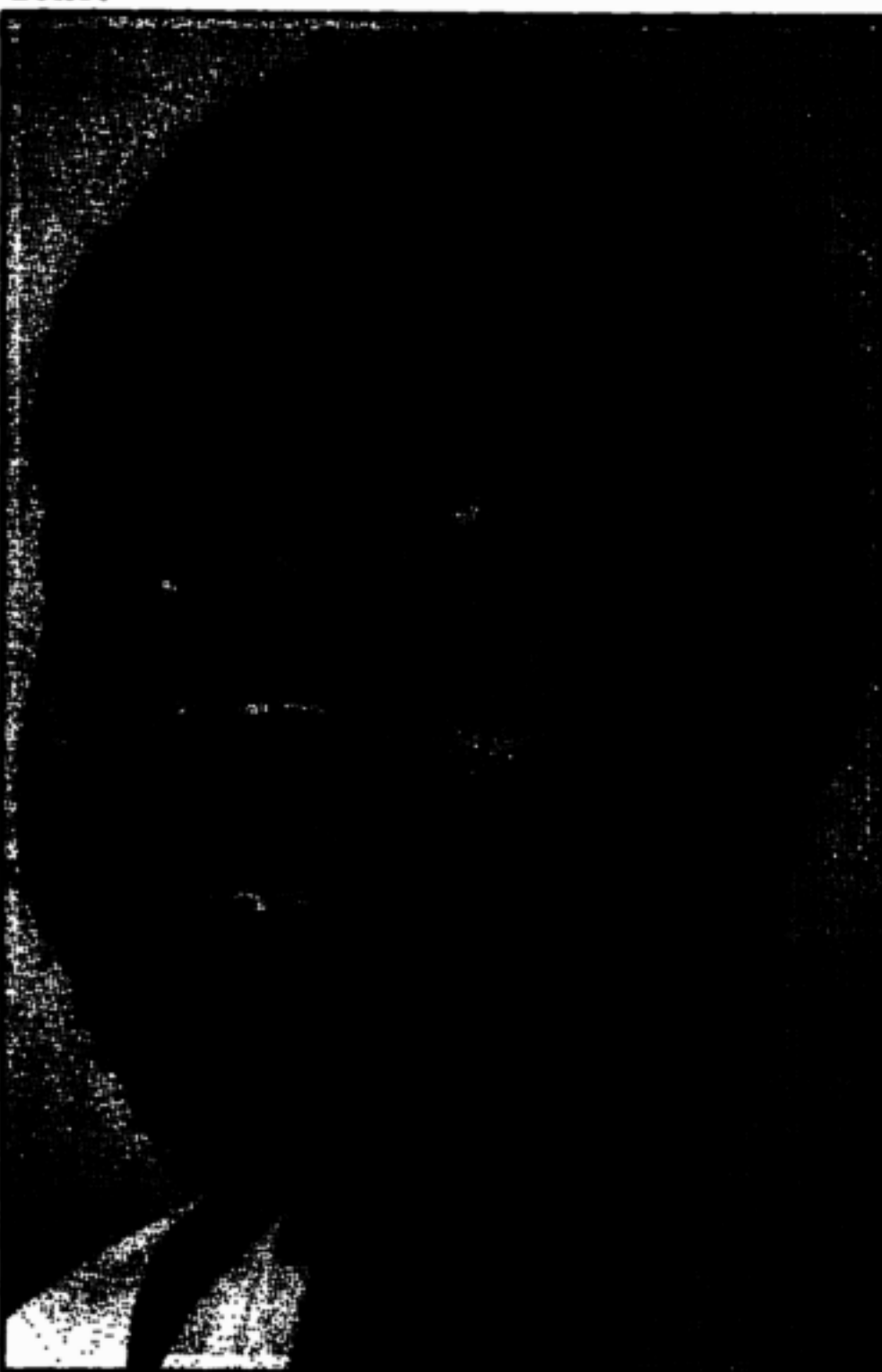
Mkhabela and other national officials regularly attend meetings of the Vaal Civic Association in Sebokeng 'as an act of solidarity and to take the opportunity of sharing perspectives with them.' He and his fellow office bearers are all members of the Soweto Civic Association or their local equivalents, and some provide leadership at branch

level.

True, Mkhabela agrees, 'issues tackled on the civic level are not the same as those that concern us at a national or political level. But we see it as our duty to infuse political implications and perspective into civic matters.'

RELATIONS WITH UDF

Asked about relations with the UDF, he says that in some recent campaigns, such as those against the town council elections and the tri-cameral parliament, AZAPO has when feasible - for example in Nelspruit in the Eastern Transvaal - shared a platform with the UDF. 'And on other civic issues, we rub shoulders and work with them. At that level, it's the issue that's important. If an issue affects the whole community, there isn't a UDF zone and an AZAPO zone.'



New AZAPO president Ismael Mkhabela

Referring to AZAPO's vehement opposition to the Kennedy visit,

Mkhabela points out that AZAPO never issued a statement directed against the UDF's ambiguous stance on the matter. 'They are entitled to their opinion and to share a platform with the man, as we felt equally entitled to create a diversion and to make a point against imperialism.'

AZAPO, he says, does not see the US political establishment as an asset to any liberation struggle in the world. Of the Regina Mundi meeting where hundreds of AZAPO supporters prevented Kennedy addressing some two thousand waiting Sowetans, Mkhabela said that it had been made it clear from the time the meeting was first mooted, that AZAPO opposed a 'red carpet reception for

Kennedy in Soweto.'

He adds that AZAPO supporters objected to Bishop Desmond Tutu trying to use his considerable public stature to swing the gathering in favour of hearing Kennedy. And he concludes that the crowd of between two and three thousand assembled to hear Kennedy was in itself an indication of lack of support, as Regina Mundi gatherings usually run to five or six thousand.

Ultimately, UDF and AZAPO interpretations of the reality they face, and of its requirements, are not dissimilar. It will be interesting to see to what extent the ways they act on those interpretations diverge in the coming year.

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Cape Action League: Challenging the Clichés?

WIP: Could you set out the background leading to the formation of the Cape Action League (CAL)?

Abrahams: A number of us felt that the 1981 anti-SAIC campaign was hijacked by charterist organisations, although it had been organised on a completely different basis. The symbol of the Freedom Charter was placed over the whole campaign, although a number of non-charterist organisations had been involved in anti-SAIC. After that, people felt extremely wary about any other joint action. But after a lot of persuasion, groups from different tendencies came together in the Disorderly Bills Action Committee (DBAC). The Women's Front had brought up the question of the Koornhof Bills. But the legacy of the tensions from the anti-SAIC campaign played a significant role in the subsequent tensions and squabbling in the DBAC.

After a period of mistrust from both sides, the unions quite justifiably withdrew from the DBAC.

One of the main issues in the DBAC was the participation of organisations like NUSAS, POLSTU and the Black Sash. Our tendency opposed their participation.

WIP: Could you spell out your position on that question. It was an ongoing dispute in the DBAC, and seems to be part of CAL's critique of the UDF.

Abrahams: The fundamental point is that the constituency or social base of these

organisations is inherently bound by a capitalist perspective. They cannot go beyond a mere anti-apartheid stance. Individuals in these organisations, especially in leadership positions, are radicals, are people who are prepared to go beyond an anti-apartheid stance. We have no problems in working with such individuals. Our critique is not the same as the black consciousness one, which is against white participation. We do not have problems with the integrity of such leaders. But we differ on the tactics of bringing organisations with such a social base into an alliance of the oppressed. This applies as much to the Western Cape Traders Association as to NUSAS or the Black Sash. The Western Cape Traders, despite the fact that it is a black organisation, has a common interest in the accumulation of capital. It cannot go beyond an anti-apartheid stance, and won't accept an anti-capitalist perspective.

There are individuals who will go beyond an anti-apartheid position, and we work with those individuals without any problems in the CAL, as well as in other contexts.

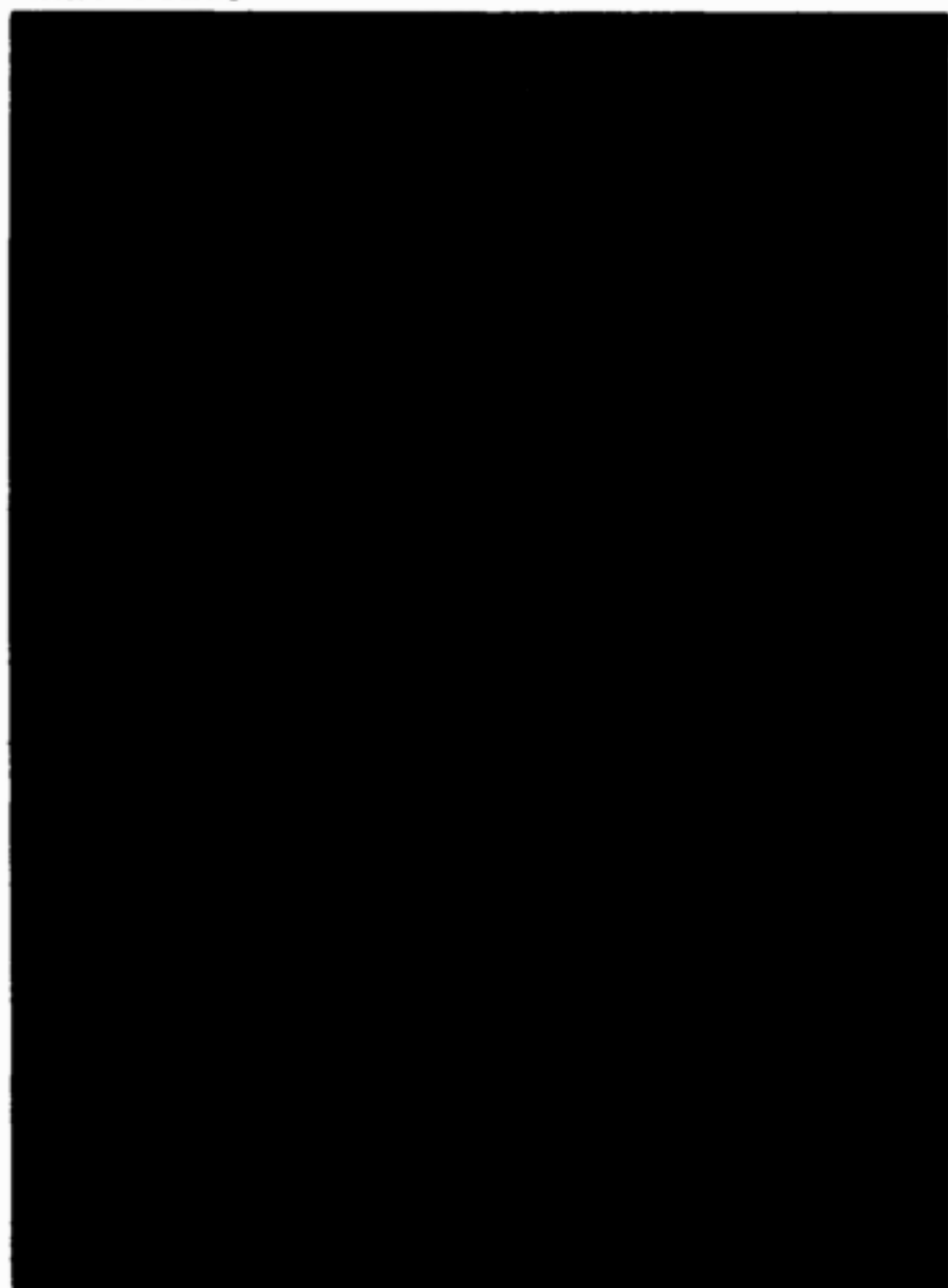
This critique derives from a rejection of the two stage theory of struggle. If we were to accept some sort of national democratic phase, then we couldn't have that particular critique. We would accept that the first stage is to tackle apartheid. Our initial point of departure is the rejection of the two stage theory.

WIP: Would your rejection of, for example, NUSAS, apply equally to all student organisations because of their social base, or only to predominantly white student organisations?

Abrahams: To predominately white

organisations, because of the social origins of the majority of white students, and the social matrix within which they operate. It is highly unlikely that any of those organisations will be able to play a liberatory role as organisations. But we accept that individuals within those organisations might do this.

With organisations like AZASO and COSAS and SOYA (Students of Young Azania - a Western Cape student organisation affiliated to CAL), it's a different matter. Most of the students come from working class homes, although especially university students might have upwardly mobile aspirations. But all black student organisations have the potential to play a liberatory role. Our task is to make them genuinely non-racial, where the individual commitment of students, irrespective of colour, is the criterion of membership. SOYA has gone far along that road.



CAL's Abrahams - 'challenging the clichés of the liberation movement'

WIP: What happened after the unions withdrew from the DBAC?

Abrahams: At that stage, things were really bogged down, people weren't able to take any serious action. Then in

early November 1982, certain AZAPO leaders talked to some of us here, and we suggested that there was a need for national political organisation. We suggested that they take the initiative, along the lines of the DBAC, to call together people to discuss the 'new deal', and to prepare some sort of joint strategy.

They thought it was a very good idea, and went back to discuss it in the AZAPO general council. After discussing the matter, they said that AZAPO shouldn't call the conference because they were stigmatised as a BC organisation, and inevitably it meant that the charterists and other groups would not participate. They suggested that we rather form a committee of notables, and use that committee as a catalyst to bring the organisations together. At the first conference, a democratic committee would be elected.

The AZAPO group then took the initiative and invited people from all tendencies, including the charterists, who initially agreed to service on such a committee of notables.

Towards the end of the year, some of these people reneged. We didn't realise then what was happening - that the charterists felt it wasn't a good idea to allow BC to take this important initiative.

Boesak, who by that time had agreed to serve on the National Forum Committee, like all of us had quietly and publicly put forward the idea of a united front on a national basis, to oppose the new deal. What Boesak did at the Transvaal Anti-SAIC Conference was no more and no less than that, and completely in line with the NFC.

The idea of a national united front was hijacked at the Transvaal Anti-SAIC Conference. While all of that is history now, it is important to note that the idea of a national united front, of a national forum, was born before the United Democratic Front. The idea was hijacked by charterists to steal a march on the black consciousness movement, to prevent them gaining the prestige which such an initiative would have led to.

At this stage, charterist organisations withdrew from the DBAC. We thought at the time that this was because, like all of us, they were dissatisfied with the squabbling in DBAC. But already there was murmuring about forming a Cape united front.

That put an onus on the remaining

bodies in the DBAC to re-consider the form of the DBAC. It was out of those discussions that the DBAC was renamed the Cape Action League.

A large number of tendencies remained within the DBAC - from the Federation of Cape Civics, which is influenced by a Unity Movement view, to some BC organisations. A lot of the debates were very productive, and took place over a period of time. The first of these meetings, for example, was attended by some 250 people, with delegates from 60-70 organisations.

This first meeting started a gestation period which gave birth to a set of principles adopted by the Cape Action League three months later.

This involved three months of intense discussion which ranged over hours at a time, with participation by large numbers of people. There were diverse tendencies discussing and arguing and exchanging points of view on a much more fruitful basis than had been the case in the old DBAC.

There were questions raised about how that sort of discussion could have gone on in such a public way. The discussions were very explicit for a public forum, but they carried on from meeting to meeting, and people took them back to their organisations. It was during this period that DBAC changed its name to the CAL.

WIP: There is an argument that in a highly repressive anti-democratic situation it's not possible to discuss openly fundamental tactical and strategic questions. This will alert the state, or ruling class forces, or other enemy interests, to progressive programmes and positions. Can you comment on that in the light of the openness of discussions in the DBAC?

Abrahams: During this period of the appearance of liberalisation, it is very important to take advantage of it, and shift debate from talk of petty bourgeois democratic struggle. CAL has deliberately encouraged and pushed that discourse, without going so far ahead of the consciousness of the people to seem eccentric.

WIP: What is the structure of CAL?

Abrahams: CAL is based on organisational affiliation, not individual membership. We inherited a lot of structures from the DBAC, and there is a lot of dead wood. Nominally CAL has something like 40 affiliates - principally the civic organisations. There are 11 or 12 civics inside CAL. Then there are student organisations, youth organisations, workers clubs.

Workers clubs are not meant to take the place of unions. They bring advanced workers together to share their ideas and look at problematic issues. They also concentrate on leisure activities. They are not meant to provide the broad membership that a union does.

WIP: Are there any unions affiliated to CAL?

Abrahams: No. This arises out of the peculiarity of Western Cape politics. The Western Cape unions have members supportive of both UDF and CAL, and these unions have stated that they cannot be allied with either group. There are some Western Cape unions in UDF, but they were started by people in the UDF. But CAL has a good relationship with unions. We have ongoing discussions with people inside the unions. On a number of occasions common positions have been adopted after discussions between people in CAL and the unions.

WIP: Can you tell us about decision making in CAL, and how the structures function?

Abrahams: We have a co-ordinating committee, with regular general and special general meetings. We don't vote, and everything except procedural questions is done by consensus. The question of delegates and organisational representation is almost irrelevant at present. But obviously people present at meetings have to have accreditation from their organisations. This whole structure is exploratory. It's very difficult to retain cohesiveness because there are different tendencies in CAL.

WIP: What underlying principles in CAL

give it coherency through being accepted by all tendencies?

Abrahams: What binds CAL together is a full commitment to the leadership of the working class, and the idea that only socialist solutions will bring about radical change in South Africa/Azania.

WIP: Could you explain the relationship between CAL and the various black consciousness tendencies and organisations?

Abrahams: We have come together with AZAPO and other organisations in the National Forum. This is on the basis of the Azanian Manifesto, the four basic principles being anti-imperialism, anti-racism, anti-collaboration and anti-sexism. On that all CAL affiliates, as well as BC, would agree. We have problems on some issues, for example AZAPO's position on whites. But we have agreed that we will not allow this to prevent us working together.

AZAPO's consistent anti-collaboration position is very important. To work with them, despite differences on some issues, is better than giving up our stand on anti-liberalism and going into the UDF.

BC has started accepting ideas of class, although in a way that we do not necessarily accept. It's a question of refinement and a question of learning through practice for BC. It's a young movement, it hasn't got any sacred cows which it can't reject, like the Freedom Charter is to charterists. For example, some charterists have said that whoever dares to criticise the Freedom Charter is betraying the struggle. That's a hopeless attitude, and that is where BC adherents are very different from the charterists. They are very willing to review anything.

WIP: Can you explain what you mean by anti-liberalism? For example, isn't there a liberal tendency within BC, and doesn't this affect CAL's relationship to the BC groups?

Abrahams: We would say that there are

petty bourgeois liberal elements in the Cape Action League itself, and in some of its affiliate organisations. Before the Azanian Manifesto, BC had not explicitly come out against imperialism. To that extent it was always capable of being described as a potentially liberal organisation. But the black consciousness organisations are in many cases mass based, even though the leadership is still largely in the hands of petty bourgeois individuals. AZAPO's anti-collaborationist stance, its mass base and its anti-imperialist stance, as shown in its attitude to the Kennedy visit, indicates its commitment to anti-liberalism. In our joint actions with AZAPO we have found the organisation very consistent.

WIP: Are you equating anti-liberalism with anti-capitalism?

Abrahams: Yes.

WIP: Could you tell us about the campaigns you have run?

Abrahams: As the DBAC we ran a very large campaign, where we went into the community to explain the dangers involved in buying houses. We held a large meeting - over 900 people - of tenants from all over the Western Cape, and representatives of organisations.

The way we did this not only focused on people's inability to pay for bought housing, but also added an extra dimension of the dangers involved.

After that there were a number of smaller campaigns. The second big campaign was the rural campaign. This involved CAL affiliates sending activists to the countryside on a regular weekly basis. We sent out 30 people at a time to places like Genadendal, Paarl and Atlantis over several weeks where we did door to door work and spoke to people, trying to stimulate them on the need for organisation.

WIP: Were there specific issues focused on in the rural campaign?

Abrahams: Yes. When we went into particular areas there were specific problems which emerged. For example water supply was an issue in one town we went into. In Atlantis there were issues on water, rent and electricity where people were really being fleeced by the council. In all the areas we went into there were alive issues which we had become aware of. These were used in our pamphleteering and when we went to speak to people. It wasn't an uninformed group of people going into the community.

The tenants and the youth that went on the rural campaign were themselves conscientised in the process of distributing pamphlets. For example in the youth organisation I am in - Lotus River Youth - there was initially some reluctance over the rural campaign. It was seen as boring work. But enthusiasm grew as people worked in the campaign, went out to different places, distributed pamphlets at homes, and went inside the homes to discuss the pamphlet.

Not only activists went out in the rural campaign. Ordinary members from affiliates participated, and learnt from their participation and the process.

WIP: The rejection of two-stage theories of struggle seems very important for CAL. Could you explain the critique involved.

Abrahams: You may well be able to mobilise thousands or even millions of people on the basis of opposing racial discrimination. But in view of the real nature and function of the South African state, you are not going to move the state to a position of granting an equal franchise. This is the argument of the two stage position - that once you've got an equal franchise all sorts of other things become possible.

It is deceiving people to claim that mere mobilisation against racial discrimination is going to bring about national conventions, negotiated agreements. It may be that some of this can happen, but it will be for the strengthening, rather than the erosion, of capitalism.

WIP: But you wouldn't deny the

possibility of a liberalisation of capitalism?

Abrahams: No. Certain superstructural changes are possible. You can draw more and more blacks into managerial and supervisory positions. Members of the black petty bourgeoisie can become individual components of the ruling class. But the fundamental racial inequality is not going to be eliminated or appreciably reduced through those kinds of absorption of elites. It will be a liberalisation only for certain layers of the middle class. You are duping people when you claim that that process is the same as national liberation or an attack on class exploitation.

There are organisations in the UDF who share our position, and with whom we can and do co-operate. But as it stands at the moment, the left wing of the UDF is not in control. Take the recent Kennedy visit. The left wing in the UDF was very unhappy about this, but had to shut up.

WIP: Some see CAL as a continuation of the Unity Movement. Do you differ from its position?

Abrahams: It is true that there is a thread of continuity. We recognise that background, and in some senses are carrying forward many of the traditions and principles which were generated and developed in the early stages of the Unity Movement. But certain shifts have taken place, and we do not regard certain positions as unchangeable. We are more rigorous in our understanding of our position inside the liberation movement. As capitalism changes, so we have to look afresh at our positions.

But we differ from those people who still feel they hold the keys to the Unity Movement. The nature of the struggle at this moment is a working class struggle. We must take our ideas into our community and test them against day to day struggles and conditions.

Our differences with the Unity Movement are largely ones of political practice. If the Unity Movement reorganised itself, we would look for ways, possibly through the National Forum, to work with them. We have a very

good relationship with the Federation of Cape Civics, which is generally seen as following a Unity Movement line. But it's wrong to say the Cape Action League is merely the old Unity Movement under a different name.

WIP: What do you see as the contribution of CAL to national struggle?

Abrahams: The existence of a group like the Cape Action League has stimulated a lot of discussions around, for example, working class leadership, national conventions vs peoples' assemblies, popular vs united fronts, about the franchise, etc. This has been very important.

One of the spin offs from all the free discussions - which some people have problems with, not because of the nature of the discussions but the fact that they are held in the first place - is that the issues have fed into other organisations and forums. There are factions, for example, in the Cape UDF, which hold positions identical to ours.

One of CAL's practical contributions to struggle has been this theoretical input which has filtered through to other organisations.

We have challenged all the cliches of the liberation movement - liberalism, populism, popular fronts, united fronts, national conventions, - we have challenged them, and people have been compelled to reconsider these things whether we were right or wrong. We have only been able to do this because we are committed to mass struggle. CAL is not a group of intellectuals sitting around, but activists engaged in mass struggle. To that extent people have been compelled to take note and to answer, whether they have been in alliance with us or not. That has been a major contribution.

When we first raised the question of a national convention, and said that as usually seen it was no different to the Lancaster House situation leading to Zimbabwean independence, people said we were being sectarian. But we forced them to look at it, and we found people even in the UDF beginning to question it. In some of the populist organisations people are at least now raising issues, even if they are not resolving them.

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IMPULSES

The origins of the National Forum (NF) can be traced to a call for a national united front of people's organisations against the New Deal and the Koornhof Bills made at the December 1982 congress of the Azanian People's Organisation.

AZAPO leadership supported the idea and a National Forum Committee (NFC) was set up to plan and co-ordinate the first Forum. The Committee included church leaders like Manas Buthelezi and Desmond Tutu, unionists Piroshaw Camay from CUSA and Emma Mashinini from CCAWUSA, and political figures like Neville Alexander, Saths Cooper, Khehla Mthembu, Frank van der Horst, Colin Clarke and Don Mattera. Alan Boesak was approached and agreed to serve on the Committee but failed to turn up for the first Forum.

The contributions of church leaders at Forum meetings have, for all practical purposes, receded into the background over the past year.

The NF was conceived as a broad front against the New Deal and included a number of cultural, student, civic, women's and church organisations. Initially it was even attended by 'pro-

Charterist' organisations like COSAS and SAAWU.

At present the main impetus for the NF project comes from AZAPO and other black-consciousness orientated

organisations on the one hand, and a number of other explicitly socialist-inclined organisations on the other.

AZAPO, for its part, remains the principal BC organisation. It has become more explicitly left-wing over the past few years, grafting a class analysis onto its perception that colour rather than class is the main contradiction in South African society. But, as in any other organisation, there are conflicts and contradictions within AZAPO. At one end of the political spectrum there is a grouping which asserts that the main objective of the liberatory struggle is the reconquest of the land by the black people of Azania. At the other end, a grouping informed by more explicitly socialist ideas has emerged. It demands not only the repossession of land confiscated, but also addresses questions of class ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange.

The Azanian Students' Movement (AZASM), the student wing of AZAPO, has played a prominent role in the Vaal uprisings. It generally follows the political positions of its parent body.

The unions inclined towards the Forum, especially the powerful Black Allied Mining and Construction Workers Union (BAMCWU), have adopted independent positions, and tend to support socialist perspectives at NF meetings.

In addition, a number of organisations not formally part of the BC movement, like Cape Action League affiliates, have adopted explicitly socialist positions. For organisations like CAL, support for and alliances with radical nationalist organisations are consistent with a struggle for socialist Azania.

THE FORUM MEETINGS

At the first National Forum, about 200 organisations and some 800 delegates and observers gathered in Hammanskraal in June 1983. Papers delivered covered a wide range of topics from the role of the church in the liberation struggle to interventionist considerations in black education and questions related to nation-building. The Forum broke up into four commissions to discuss the land question, a basis for principled unity, the anti-New Deal campaign and a framework for a set of minimum demands.

These deliberations and discussions were crystallised in a 'Manifesto of the Azanian People' which was unanimously approved at the end of the Forum. It was then referred back to the constituent organisations for discussion and was adopted with some minor changes at the July 1984 meeting of the NF.

The question of white participation in NF meetings was hotly contested. On the left, Alexander forcefully argued that 'whites who are committed to the ideal of liberation...must be allowed to play a part in the struggle, but the leadership of the struggle must remain with the black working class'.

Opposing this thesis, the undiluted BC position was that 'there is a handful of dedicated whites who happen to find themselves as members of the white class. We say these people have a role to play. But...the only role they can play is within their own communities.' AZAPO has not opened its membership to whites but at the same time does not prescribe to other organisations how they should organise. This has theoretically paved the way for a working relationship with organisations like CAL which are not prepared to compromise on their position regarding white participation.

At present, the question has largely been resolved and at the last Forum several whites were present as observers although there were some heated comments about the issue.

SUMMIT ON NKOMATI

The second meeting of the NF in Pietermaritzburg in April 1984 was an internal summit on the Nkomati Accords.

The gathering was ambivalent about the Accords. Although there was general agreement that they were 'a blow to the entire liberation movement', there were some who wanted to affirm their solidarity with Mozambique and stress that 'there is no basis whatsoever to talk about a "sellout" on the part of FRELIMO or Machel. Nkomati must be seen as a short-term measure to gain breathing space for economic reconstruction in Mozambique.'

The official NF view of the Accords was much less conciliatory - it saw Nkomati as part of 'the intensification of the imperialist assault, and hegemonic interests in the region which is aimed at stemming the tide of the total liberation of the people of South Africa.'

Although it acknowledged the economic and military difficulties faced by FRELIMO, the statement continued that FRELIMO had chosen 'this dangerous path of placing their faith in the hands of South Africa's racist designs and American imperialism.'

The NF even went as far as stating that some statesmen in Southern Africa had 'become the tools of imperialism by promoting the general project of weakening the liberation movement and entrenching racism in South Africa.' It was generally agreed that the liberation movement will have to focus more on internal organisation and mobilisation. An input paper stressed this point, but emphasised that the logic of the position of guerillas in the external movements 'seems to indicate an amendment, not the abandonment, of the struggle they have waged up to now.'

THE ANTI-NEW DEAL CAMPAIGN

The second forum, ie the third meeting of the NF, was held in Lenasia in July 1984. It formally adopted the Azanian Manifesto with some minor changes, but most of the time was devoted to the practicalities of running the anti-election campaign.

The most recent NF meeting was a workshop in Cape Town in December 1984 to assess the anti-New Deal campaign and to reflect on its organisational structure.

Neville Alexander delivered an input.

paper which assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the NF in the wake of the August elections. Amongst the gains made were the increased unity brought about by the formation of the NF, the creation of many new organisations especially in the rural areas, and the building of a strong core of activists steeled in struggle. The NF could also claim much of the credit for the anti-election campaign although 'their efforts were largely ignored in the media'.

Some of the weaknesses of the NF are that it has hardly begun to organise in the countryside, that it suffers from a great lack of material resources and that there has been little systematic co-operation with the unions and the people's organisations in the UDF.

The meeting also discussed a focus for NF activities in 1985 and decided on an 'Away with collaborators' campaign. This focuses on those institutions which are part of the state's incorporationist strategy directed at the black middle class, and aims to make these institutions unworkable or unrepresentative. The campaign is a response both to the implementation of the New Deal proposals and to the uprisings in the Transvaal which have rendered many of these institutions defunct.

Some individuals put forward a proposal for a workers' united front. Their proposals were not, however, taken up by any of the organisations at the workshop. There seemed to be a general recognition that, in view of the absence of most of the independent unions, the NF should not presume to take such strategic initiatives on behalf of the working class.

PROBLEMS AND ISSUES

The original National Forum Committee's members were drawn from the intelligentsia. While they formally participated in their individual capacities at the first Forum, they have constituencies which influenced, at times decisively, the class positions assumed and advanced in the NF.

For example, the multi-class, religious constituencies of the church notables were considered instrumental in determining the extent of their conservative and, at the same time,

militantly liberal appeals (see, for example, speeches reprinted in National Forum, published by the NFC, 1983).

Similarly, for those on the left, the social base of their constituencies moulded the political and ideological framework of their interventions.

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE NATIONAL FORUM

At the top of the list of misconceptions about the National Forum is that it was set up to challenge the supposed hegemony of the UDF in the mass movement. According to some NF committee members, the NFC is older than the idea of the UDF itself.

The NF is not an organisation even though some individuals and organisational representatives have suggested that the Forum transforms itself into a national liberation front. The NF convened in June 1983 with an explicit appeal to all known progressive organisations of the oppressed and exploited to attend. The UDF as an organisation was launched in August of that year.

A second misconception about the NF is that it is dominated by the BC movement. This view has led to a blanket dismissal of the NF project by strands that have aligned themselves with the Freedom Charter, as well as by the somewhat divided 'white left'. This dismissal does not make a scientific appraisal of the class positions, class interests and social composition of either the NF or its adherents.

A third misconception assumes that the NF is exclusively black in composition. The question of radically-inclined whites participating fully in the struggle might be an issue and a strategic problem in AZAPO. But to suggest that the NF excludes whites on the basis of their 'whiteness' or any other superficial criterion, is a gross misrepresentation of NF adherents and the anti-racist project and method of struggle adopted by the Forum.

A fourth misconception surrounds the Azanian Manifesto. There are two variants. Firstly, it is claimed that adherents of this Manifesto have tried to impose a working class leadership from above and have therefore been opportunistic. It is not my purpose to answer these claims. More important is

to say that the Manifesto is not a programme nor does it claim to be. At best, it is a set of transitional demands which condense aspects of a popular consciousness. With time and through constant reassessment, the Manifesto might become the kernel of a political programme and a socialist vision.

Secondly, there are groupings inside and outside the NF that tend to conflate socialist rhetoric with socialist practice. Adoption of an Azanian Manifesto with its socialist overtones does not necessarily imply, nor can it guarantee, a socialist movement. Although socialist theory may be premised on radical processes of social change, a set of demands like those in the Manifesto can at most condense some of the popular aspirations that have been thrown up in the mass struggles of the 1970s and early 1980s. In this sense the Manifesto is the property of ordinary men and women and not the exclusive preserve of this or that tendency in the political movement. For it to remain so, the activists and militants who have committed themselves to Forum positions will have to pay diligent attention to democratic practices and procedures.

These and other misconceptions have made non-NF and anti-NF organisations and people generally wary of public association or identification with the Forum and what it stands for. It is a sad but salutary fact that the attitudes expressed against the Forum and the activities of organisations under its umbrella have affected working relationships between NF-oriented structures and some people's organisations in the UDF.

THE NATIONAL QUESTION AND THE NATIONAL FORUM

It is no accident that the political-strategic questions dealing with the state, the nation and power have been raised at annual NF meetings and workshops. At the nub of it all is the fact that the struggle against apartheid is merely a point of departure in the general struggle against racial capitalism. According to Neville Alexander, 'The class struggle against capitalist exploitation and the national

struggle against racial oppression become one struggle under the general command of the black working class and its organisations. Class, colour and nation converge in the national liberation movement'.

The questions that were addressed included: which social class will control the central state apparatus in an independent and free SA/Azania; what is the relationship between a national liberation struggle and the struggle for socialism; why building a nation is not necessarily contrary to working-class internationalism.

The position advanced by NF leadership suggests that a socialist solution to the national question in South Africa can and will be brought about by setting in motion structures of national unification under the general command of the black working class. In the struggle, this section of the working class is charged with the historic task of reshaping the emergent Azanian nation in its own image. The national struggle becomes, in this context, the prism through which the general class struggle against capitalist structures of exploitation is prosecuted.

AN ALTERNATIVE PARLIAMENT

At the present stage of its development, the NF can be conceived of as a non-legislative people's parliament - a forum in which the liberation movement can debate and discuss the burning issues of the day and develop, through democratic participation and intervention, coherent strategies.

While this is partly the strength of the National Forum, it is also one of its weaknesses. It has meant that little organisational activity takes place under the aegis of the NF. A significant consequence of this is that it has marginal organisational presence and has not been able to give the organisations associated with it the impetus derived from membership of a national organisation. Forum activities are resultantly quite uneven and seldom co-ordinated.

A NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT

The question of organisation was raised

at the first Forum where it was suggested that the NF constitutes itself as an organisation and develops a structure to be considered at the next meeting. To this day the question remains unresolved. Alexander touched on this at the December 1984 NF: 'We have not yet reached the point where we can say that the differences that keep us in separate organisations have disappeared. We are not in a position to form a national movement'.

These differences revolve largely around ideology, organisational strategy and forms, and class positions. In addition there would also be serious problems about the delineation of work areas and the responsibility between such an organisation and its adherent structures. These issues have already been raised in practice during the mass struggles in the Transvaal anti-election campaign. Some organisations waged campaigns under the mantle of the NF, while others chose to retain their organisational independence.

A realistic assessment within the NF is that while the future of the assembly needs to be discussed, its transformation into an organisation would be premature. As a start, consideration could be given to forging common commitments and initiating a process of establishing comradely political practices within and between the many organisations that support the Forum's positions.

RELATIONS WITH INDEPENDENT UNIONS

One of the crucial factors which will determine the future of the National Forum is its present and developing relationship with the independent trade union movement.

For the present, the NF maintains cordial relations with some of the independent unions. The Forum would welcome participation by the Feasibility Committee of the emerging union federation. But there are many problems which militate against co-operation.

Firstly, at the most recent Forum, the importance of working with the independent unions was stressed as one of the main reasons for rejecting the exclusion of whites by a member of the Cape Action League. He was supported by Pandelani Nefolovhodwe, general

secretary of the Black Allied Mining and Construction Workers Union, and one of the unionists in AZAPO. He emphasised that the question of 'white participation' should be referred to the forums and organisations where this poses constitutional problems. The NF was not considered to be such a forum.

But the historical hostility to 'white participation' in the struggle has meant that there have seldom been opportunities to establish working relations between some of the non-racial unions and sections of the black consciousness movement. The absence of any significant political contact has made it difficult to establish the mutual relationships and levels of trust that are pre-requisites for meaningful co-operation. Perhaps this obstacle will be overcome at the level of inter-union co-ordination but it remains a formidable one nonetheless.

Secondly, the leadership of the independent unions has not confronted, and not been asked to address, the question of NF affiliation in any serious way. For the unions, there are doubts about the extent to which the socialist project of the NF has permeated to mass-based levels. There are also issues around the identification of the NF with what is seen as the nationalist strains and constrictions of some BC organisations.

However, at the level of potential political programmes, the explicitly socialist positions developed in the Azanian Manifesto co-incide with the unions' concern for working class leadership and the primacy of black working class interests in the struggle for national liberation. It is significant that more and more people in the NF see the need to work closer with the independent unions. If the commitment to working class leadership is to be taken seriously, the unions should play a dominant role in the NF were they to affiliate, and shape its form and the content of its political project.

From the point of view of the unions, a decision about the forms of their intervention in the political arena will be on the agenda more sharply in the coming period. What seems certain is that they will be subject to some very divergent pressures both from their membership and from political organisations that have emerged over the past couple of years.

NAAWU and the Motor Industry Keep on Truckin'

WIP spoke to Taffy Adler, national education officer of the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union (NAAWU).

All industries are hit by recessionary cutbacks. More often than not, employers are being accurate in their terms when they say to unions, 'We can't afford to pay - we must retrench'.

Unions, it seems, must find a way to go beyond negotiating adequate retrenchment packages. But it is unlikely that re-organisation of production and profit is up for negotiation in any substantial sense, so it is hard to see how unions can break new ground in demands and negotiation.

The motor industry is a particularly interesting example of these issues, because it is one of the most highly capitalised industries, using the most advanced technology in the country.

NAAWU, the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union, represents well over half the workers in the motor assembly industry, a fair number in the associated tyre and rubber industry, and a small percentage in the vehicle components industry. It is a FOSATU affiliate.

INDUSTRY CHANGES

'The embattled motor industry has slashed production by a third as pressure for rationalisation among the giants grow' (Star, 18.11.84).

Rationalisation and re-organisation into more efficient production and marketing units has been the order of the day for most manufacturing industries over the past two years.

The motor industry is certainly not backward in this. Most large

manufacturers have close links with their Japanese or British parent companies. Japanese organisational principles have been under particularly close scrutiny. Toyota, the market leader, claims to have been making use of these 'total involvement strategies for productivity' for over three years. If productivity levels are anything to go by, the method works.

But as NAAWU official Taffy Adler comments, 'Toyota definitely produces more cars with fewer workers. But I feel it has a lot more to do with common sense than with any particular method. For example they announced that they were reducing their components stockload. That makes sense. I also think that Toyota's management is far more in touch with what's happening as regards production than other managements.'

Ford also announced a new approach last August. The programme, called 'Employee Involvement', aimed at improving the job satisfaction and productivity of the whole work-force and establishing a 'quality awareness' among all employees.

Other manufacturers have not survived the crippling effects of falling sales in 1984 as well as Toyota. Sigma Corporation, which changed its name to Amcar in July 1984, recorded losses of R69,1- million in 1983. By June last year they recorded borrowings of R300-million. This meant finance charges of approximately R60-million per year. Amcar would need to sell 5 000 vehicles a month to pay for this.

This they couldn't do, especially as July car sales dropped by 38%. Many plants also began stockpiling vehicles. By August 1984 Amcar was still running up huge losses. Admittedly losses by August were 27% less than in the equivalent period during 1983, but they were still over R25-million, and a R70-million loss was predicted for the year.

All in all, 11 car manufacturers and 14 commercial vehicle manufacturers were fighting for a bigger share of the finite market of 450 000 vehicles per year.

Rationalisation means more than beefing-up productivity and in-company relations. Mergers and co-ordination of production of different models on one production line would mean huge savings on production costs for manufacturers. As Adler says, 'I don't set much store by employers threatening to move up to the Transvaal from Port Elizabeth because of labour problems. The Transvaal has had its fair share of labour problems - a major strike in every assembly plant in the last three years.

'I think if companies do move up here it has to do with overcoming geographical distance from the market and supplies. It also concerns rationalising plants and the fact that newer plants are in the Transvaal.'

Certainly this makes sense. And the Ford/Amar merger, a dark secret for some time, is now in the open, and will mean many retrenchments.



There is a trend of opinion in the industry that it would be cheaper all round to import some models, as well as more components, rather than to produce them locally. But presumably this would not be allowed in terms of government local-content requirements.

'From the motor companies' point of view', says Adler, 'there are too many companies in the country, and too many vehicle models. But the union's concern is jobs, secure jobs for our members. We have been involved in many discussions to see how best to keep all plants going both in assembly and components. We are starting to get advance warning of retrenchments and rationalisation. But the problem is what to do about jobs.'

Capital's concern is a stable, untroubled work-force, rather than full employment. As a Ford spokesman said in February 1984, 'A private company cannot provide jobs when no useful market demand exists for their product. The only thing that counts at the end of the

day is a sound and profitable company'.

Another potential problem facing the union is the short-term contract. This contract is already used in the Nissan plant where the United African Motor and Allied Workers Union organises. Workers are employed on short three or six month contracts. Adler emphasises that 'this would be a big problem especially for retrenchment agreements, because one of the most important demands is for long-service payments, as well as other accrued benefits. But NAAWU would certainly fight the implementation of such contracts in plants where we organise.'

For NAAWU, then, the question has gone beyond retrenchment negotiations. Adler sums up: 'We are looking at viable alternative economic strategies, and proposals for avoiding closures as well as retrenchments. Retrenchment negotiations this year prompted us to start thinking of alternative proposals. In some cases we managed to save some jobs. We turned retrenchments into layoffs at CDA (Mercedes Benz), we cut the number of retrenchments at Sigma. We worked out a scheme where workers were



kept on the roll but could at the same time draw UIF benefits, so if the company could re-employ workers, they could go back without losing any accrued benefits. But we have reached the end of these kinds of strategies.'

A YEAR'S UPS AND DOWNS

1984 was a year of contrasts for both the industry and the union. Although the industry entered 1984 with much 1983 stock unsold, from January to June it seemed set for a record year. But after mid-year the bottom fell out of the market, and many manufacturers were hard hit and left fighting to keep afloat.

For NAAWU, the year started with over 700 retrenchments at Sigma and 490 at Ford. By November 1984 approximately 5 000 workers in the assembly industry had got the chop - General Motors

retrenched 449, Volkswagen 680, Amcar 1 180, and Ford 1 150. Nationally membership of NAAWU dropped by 2 000 during the year because of retrenchments. Expansion in the Transvaal made up for this numerically so that national membership figures remained constant.

Most manufacturers were also down to three- and four-day weeks by the end of the year. Many producers either closed early in December or extended their Christmas break well into January - General Motors only re-opened on 28 January. According to Adler, 'It's hard to say what companies are going to do. The next logical step is to stop production because there is no point in stockpiling. But by March we should have a sense of what the rest of the year will be like.'

Despite or perhaps because of the recession there were numerous strikes during 1984, mainly over wage negotiations, and one or two solidarity actions with retrenched co-workers.

In January 1 500 BMW workers at the Rosslyn plant downed tools over failed wage negotiations. Workers rejected management offers of a 10c/hour increase. The plant was forced to close for 10 days. The dispute cost BMW R1,6-million in lost production. However, in June NAAWU negotiated a 13% increase bringing the hourly average wage at BMW to R2,73. NAAWU also negotiated an attendance allowance.

Other work stoppages included a strike at Volkswagen by 300 workers in August. At Alfa Romeo's Brits production plant in July, workers downed tools demanding a 50c across-the-board increase. The settlement reached was for a 16c increase followed by a 4c increase in October, making the total increase negotiated for the year 37c.

NAAWU claims to be growing rather than weakening in the bad economic climate.

'Traditionally the strongest area is Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage. The fastest-growing area is the Transvaal. Membership at Toyota and CDA (Mercedes Benz) has improved dramatically, and Leyland has always been very strong,' Adler explains.

NAAWU started in 1967 as NUMARWOSA - the National Union of Motor Assembly and Rubber Workers of South Africa. It was based in the Eastern Cape, which reflected the location and composition of the industry. The union spread to Cape Town and Durban and finally in

about 1976 to the Transvaal.

Workers in the Port Elizabeth factories were mainly coloured. It was only when the union moved to Uitenhage that African membership became an issue.

NUMARWOSA started off within the TUCSA fold and went into the industrial council. TUCSA refused to support it when it began to organise African workers, so NUMARWOSA left TUCSA in about 1976.

The union began expanding rapidly after uniting with the United Automobile Workers of South Africa, and the Western Province Motor Assembly Workers Union, to form NAAWU.

Part of the legacy of the registered, TUCSA-type origins of NAAWU is the benefit fund which is maintained entirely from subscriptions. The fund pays R25 for four weeks to retrenched workers, maternity benefits, provides sick pay and a distress fund. In 1984 some R200 000 was paid out in retrenchment benefits. Overall benefits paid out by the fund amounted to approximately R500 000.

SCOPE AND STRUCTURES

The majority of NAAWU's present membership of about 20 000 works in the motor assembly industry. Organisation has expanded into tyre and rubber factories and the components industry, as well as some small metal companies who make pressings for the motor industry. It organises in all rubber plants except Dunlop (organised by fellow FOSATU member MAWU), and General Tyres, which is still not organised.

Out of 150 000 workers in the industry as a whole, NAAWU organises 45-50% in assembly plants, only about 1 000 of the 80 000 in components, and over 50% in tyre and rubber.

'NAAWU is both more national and more decentralised than other FOSATU unions. There is a high degree of co-ordination over agreements and negotiation strategies,' Adler says. National policies include the minimum wage, maternity agreement demands, and shorter working hours.

Branches are also structured differently from other FOSATU unions. Instead of having one or two branches per province, NAAWU has about seven in the Transvaal alone. This is mainly because of the scale of the work-force

at motor plants. Large plants can each accommodate a branch. At Amcar, for example, where the work-force makes up a branch of the union, 15 of the 39 shop stewards make up the branch executive. Components factories are much smaller, so a number of them make up another branch.

This kind of structure makes for more participation and discussion, according to Adler.

Branches send representatives to an area committee. 'This committee is particularly useful in Pretoria where factories are so widespread. In Durban it is not as necessary because the factories are so close together', explains Adler.

The area committee reports in turn to the national executive. Also for the first time this year a national congress is to be held. The union has only had an effective national presence since 1981 when the merger with the other two unions was effected and Transvaal membership increased substantially. Provision for the national congress was made in the new constitution drawn up after the merger with the other unions. It was only approved in 1982/3.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER UNIONS

NAAWU, the Metal and Allied Workers Union and the Chemical Workers Industrial Union have a joint co-ordinating committee for the rubber industry.

'At Dunlop, for example, we are working together to try to extend the Industrial Council to cover the whole country. If this was achieved it would force Dunlop to pay significantly higher wages than they are now doing, to bring them in line with wages in the Eastern Cape. Conditions of service at Dunlop are far worse than at Firestone or Goodyear,' Adler says.

NAAWU is developing closer relations with the Motor Industry Components Workers Union which has about 23 000 members. Adler says, 'Given their withdrawal from TUCSA, their stand on the new constitution, their membership of the IMF, and the fact that we are discussing negotiating strategies, we are looking more to co-operation than competition with them.'

Nissan is the only major assembly plant where NAAWU does not have majority

membership. 'We do not have very good relations with the union organising there. But we are making inroads in the plant.'

NAAWU relations with old enemy MACWUSA (the Motor Assemblers and Component Workers Union of South Africa) is a non-issue now, it seems. MACWUSA moved to the Transvaal after the Sigma strike in 1981. But Adler says that 'they aren't a threat here, nor in Port Elizabeth. Their only real presence affecting NAAWU is at Ford and Firestone. They aren't active, but neither are we gaining on them. The guys do not want to come over. It does seem to have overtones of a racial split. MACWUSA is still entirely African.'

AGREEMENTS

NAAWU has recognition agreements with nine manufacturers. They range from the 'over-comprehensive' BMW agreement, to the presently undocumented working relationship with Alfa Romeo.

Following its practise in the Eastern Cape, in the Transvaal NAAWU has started negotiating full substantive agreements separate from recognition agreements.

'So much effort goes into a recognition agreement that it's better to negotiate them and then file them away. Then if there is a dispute about a substantive issue in the plant, the recognition agreement is not jeopardised', says Adler.

The substantive agreement includes issues like wages, grievance procedures and retrenchment packages and procedures.

'Employers have recognised that strikes are not the end of the world, that they are just part of life in the assembly industry,' Adler comments.

NAAWU is currently negotiating the Industrial Council agreement in the Eastern Cape. National union demands for 1985 include a minimum wage of R3,50/hour, a 40-hour week, May Day as an extra public holiday, maternity benefits and retrenchment severance pay equal to one month's pay for each year of service.

'We have not got very far with maternity agreements in the industry. About 10% of the total work-force are women, mainly concentrated in components, trim sectors and quality control. At Sigma, where there are women

on the production line, we have won the right for leave, but it is unpaid and we could not guarantee the job. At Autoplastics we have a guaranteed job and a payout of sick leave - about 30 days worth.'

NAAWU's membership of the Industrial Council is pragmatic rather than principled. Adler explains: 'We have been able to use our bargaining strength there and we have managed to keep the minimum wage consistently above the Consumer Price Index. But we will pull out of the council if necessary.'

He argues that some councils, rather than wishing independent unions to join, are making a concerted effort to keep them out. 'It seems to be the trend. We have been refused access to the National Industrial Council for the Motor Industry. We have applied to the Components Industrial Council and have been refused. And our application to extend the current Eastern Cape Tyre and Rubber Council agreement to Transvaal and Natal was refused.'

'It is not crucial that we use the Industrial Council in the motor industry, because the industry is so concentrated that it's quite easy to get co-ordinated action. The opposite is true of the wide-spread components industry. It is impossible to organise all the small components plants, where employers tend to be "pre-1976" types of employers. So rather than spend time battling for recognition, we gain improvements directly through the Council.'

'The Components Council is a bad one, though, and so are industry conditions. In all components plants we've organised we have negotiated at least 50% better conditions and wages. But we can improve things for a vast number of workers if we could improve minimums in the Council.'

ORGANISING IN THE MOTOR INDUSTRY

NAAWU is a relatively progressive and organised union. This has much to do with the industry, the nature of the work and the nature of the factories.

'Because of the multi-national nature of most of the motor manufacturers it is much easier to get into an assembly plant, and so initial agreements come

easier. You get catapulted into quite sophisticated bargaining', says Adler.

The plants themselves are fairly complex. Ensuring in a large plant that the four or five thousand components going into each vehicle are correctly integrated, necessitates sophisticated labour relations.

As a result, Adler thinks, 'we have encountered problems which other unions may not yet have come up against. For example, shop stewards may be asked to go and assess how the flow-line at a particular section is going.'

Other instances are productivity agreements, measured day work agreements or grading systems.

Lack of technical knowlege has been a problem. NAAWU has some training programmes and the union has now set up separate research and education departments, but often 'it is a question of hit and miss.'

Management may also lack technical expertise. 'Often management is not as clever as it thinks it is. So they start off with talk of productivity, but end up talking about housekeeping or lower absenteeism. These contribute but are not as important as things like getting components to the line in time, making sure the line flows evenly.'

'We did one productivity exercise where we discovered that because the line-management miscalculated costs, workers were being paid 45% more than they should have been.'

'In another case a batch of supplies was lost, so a new batch was flown in to keep production going. A few weeks later the original supply was found in the back of a storeroom.'

An interesting negotiating development in 1984 was the signing of a productivity agreement with Sigma. The agreement included an increase of 10 - 13c/hour, productivity incentives with a minimum of 10c/hour, an increased incentive of 26c/hour for improved productivity in relation to negotiated productivity formulas, as well as rewards for regular attendance.

However Adler says that although the success of such agreements would be closely observed, they 'would not be a significant part of negotiating strategy in future.'

NAAWU has refused to sign any agreements which lead to rationalisation or loss of jobs, but 1985 will be another difficult year for the union.

Courts

Ntombi Regan Shope (34)

The accused, of Nkowankowa township near Tzaneen, faced three charges. The state's main charge was terrorism under the Internal Security Act of 1982. The state alleged that Regan

*was an active supporter and/or member of the ANC;

*was found in possession of banned ANC publications;

*made contact with members of the ANC in Swaziland and Botswana with the view to furthering the aims of a banned organisation;

*organised people to join the ANC and/or undergo military training to overthrow the government;

*sent messages to the ANC personally or through couriers;

*set up a dead letter box on ANC instruction to conceal banned literature and/or arms and ammunition;

*formed the Pfunanani Womens' Organisation to politicise its members and as a front for the ANC.

The state's first alternative charge accused Regan of contravening section 13 of the Internal Security Act through being an active supporter of and furthering the aims of a banned organisation.

The second alternative count was the possession of literature produced by a banned organisation.

Emma Ntimbana, a cousin of Shope's, was called by the state as a witness, but refused to testify. She argued that if she gave evidence she would lose the respect of her community, it would conflict with her loyalty to the struggle, and she would be unable to guarantee the safety of her children who were studying in Tanzania. Ntimbana was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment.

Shope pleaded not guilty to all the charges.

In 1983 she established the Pfunanani (Seek Each Other) Women's Organisation to teach women in the bantustans

handicrafts and vegetable gardening, and to politicise them about their position in the 'homelands'. The organisation later affiliated to the UDF.

Shope was also a member of the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW), and as a student at UNISA, was also a member of the Azanian Students Organisation (AZASO).

The defence claimed that while Shope had grown up in a household espousing the aims of the ANC, she had never advocated a violent overthrow of the state.

Shope's father, Mark Shope, formerly secretary general of the South African Congress of Trade Unions, left South Africa in 1963. He became a member of the National Executive Committee of the ANC and was based mainly in Lusaka.

Regan Shope had not seen her father for 20 years and there had been no communication with him for the past 10 years. She claimed that she visited Swaziland and Botswana to make contact with him. The only way to reach him was through the ANC and the dead letter box was set up purely to maintain contact with him.

She denied allegations by state witnesses that she had discussed the ANC with them.

Shope admitted putting a bag containing leaflets in her clothing before entering South Africa from Botswana. But she claimed she did not know it contained ANC leaflets.

Verdict: Shope was found guilty on all charges.

Sentence: Three years.

(Tzaneen Regional Court, 31.01.85).

Maxine Sandra Hart (25)

Hart, a social worker at the University of the Witwatersrand, was detained in September 1984. After two months of solitary confinement and four weeks in

custody as an awaiting trial prisoner, she was brought to trial on 3 January 1985.

Hart pleaded guilty to a charge under the Internal Security Act involving activities promoting the aims of the ANC. She admitted that, between February and August 1984, the following had taken place:

*During a visit to Botswana in February she became aware that men named George and Zwelakhe, and a woman named Pat, were associated with the ANC.

*She illegally brought an ANC Women's Section pamphlet into South Africa which she read and destroyed.

*She assisted with the distribution of ANC pamphlets entitled 'Down with the Traitors' and 'Burn Registration Certificates' received from George, advocating a boycott of the coloured and Indian elections.

*She reported on activities of the Johannesburg Democratic Action Committee (JODAC) in four letters to Zwelakhe between last March and August.

Hart ended contact with Zwelakhe and George when advised to do so by David Johnson, former chairperson of the Wits Black Students Society (BSS), whom she visited in exile in Botswana.

The defence led evidence in mitigation of sentence. Mendelle Mendelow, assistant director of the Centre for Social Development, and Stan Rogers, headmaster of the Goud Park Primary School in Eldorado Park, attested to her selfless dedication to children and her responsible and committed attitude to her work.

Sentence: Hart was sentenced to three years imprisonment suspended for five years. The magistrate commented that although her offences were serious, they were less so than others charged under the same section of the Act. She had been naive and foolish to become involved in ANC activities.

(Johannesburg Regional Court, 22.01.85).

Frans Morule

The accused was detained by security police on about 30 May 1984, and appeared in the Bloemfontein Regional Court on 24 October 1984.

He faces three counts under the Internal Security Act:

* that, between 1979 and 1983 he underwent military training in Angola and East Germany;

* that, between 1979 and 1983 he

served in the ordinance department of the ANC's military wing in Mozambique, Swaziland, Botswana and/or Lesotho;

* that, sometime during 1983 in Lesotho he provided one Andreas Sejeng with explosives with the aim of undermining law and order in South Africa.

When the accused first appeared in court, he had no legal representative present. He pleaded guilty to all counts, and refused to answer questions put to him by the presiding magistrate until he had seen his lawyer. However, Morule did admit to being a member of the ANC.

His trial is due to begin in the Bloemfontein Supreme Court on 6 March.

Patrick Bobby Sebotsa

The accused faces three counts framed under the Internal Security Act.

In count one, it is alleged that in Lesotho during 1983 he unlawfully, and with intent to overthrow the state, underwent military training in the handling of guns, ammunition and explosives.

The second count deals with an incident on 14 December 1983, where it is claimed that the accused caused a bomb to explode on a railway line at Hamilton, near Bloemfontein.

The final charge relates to the possession of a South African Communist Party publication, 'The African Communist'.

The accused, who was detained by security police on 26 June 1984, first appeared in court in early November. By order of the attorney general, the granting of bail was prohibited.

Sebotsa's trial begins in the Bloemfontein Supreme Court on 13 May 1985.

Collins Ohm Tshabane

The accused faces five charges in terms of the old Terrorism Act and the 1982 Internal Security Act. They relate to terrorism, furthering the aims of the ANC, and possession of ANC and SACP literature.

The trial begins in the Tzaneen Regional Court on 30 April, and the accused is in custody following an order by the attorney general that no bail may be granted.

Mongezi Joseph Radebe
Paulus Matsogo Ramakau

The accused face two counts under the Internal Security Act, and various alternative charges.

The state alleges that, in Sharpeville on about 4 November 1984, the accused attempted to persuade the government to abandon high rents, electricity and water tariffs. In doing this, they intimidated the residents of Sharpeville and attempted to disrupt the distribution of goods and food.

In the course of these activities, they incited Sharpeville residents at a meeting on 4 November

* not to pay stipulated rent, lights and water tariffs;

* and not to go to work on 5 and 6 November.

In addition, it is alleged that the accused threatened that the homes of those who went to work would be set alight, and they would be murdered or harmed.

Mandla Emmanuel Dlamini (23)

Clive Radebe (23)

Manase Jonas Msibisi (19)

The accused face one count of murder, and a further five of attempted murder.

The charges emerge from an incident in Soweto during the work stay away of 6 November, when a petrol bomb was thrown into a Soweto bus, and passenger Sarah Nkudimeng Motsumi was killed.

Eric Tsietsi Makomoreng (25)

The accused faced two charges under the Internal Security Act. The state alleged that, by playing an ANC tape to packers at the Market Street branch of Edgars, he had contravened the Act. In addition, the state charged him with possession of an ANC recording entitled 'Amandla'.

Verdict: Guilty on both counts.

Sentence: For playing the tape at Edgars, the accused was sentenced to five years imprisonment, two of which were conditionally suspended.

For possession of 'Amandla', he received a further 12 months, to run concurrently with the other sentence. Effective jail sentence is accordingly three years.

Makomoreng has been released on bail of R2 000 pending an appeal against conviction and sentence.

(Johannesburg Regional Court, 10.01.85).

Thebinkosi Marrand (23)

Lucky Maphumulo (19)

Sipho Msomi (22)

Aleck Cheriwe (22)

Phelelani Mahengu

The accused faced charges of inciting others to leave South Africa to undergo military training. State evidence alleged that Marrand and Msomi had encouraged the other accused to leave the country and undergo military training under the auspices of the ANC. Charges related to the period June 1983 - March 1984.

Another accused, Ephraim Mthethwa died while in police custody on 25 August 1984, while awaiting trial.

Verdict: Guilty

Sentence: Msomi, who was also found guilty of possession of ANC literature, was jailed for six years.

Marrand received five years, and the other accused were sentenced to four years imprisonment.

(Durban Regional Court, 07.12.84).

Sundrasegarad Thevar (29)

Manogran Thevar (21)

Ms Tholsiamah Pillay (21)

The state alleges that the three accused took part in the activities of the ANC by preparing a pamphlet which threatened to kill candidates and their assistants involved in the House of Delegates (Indian) election.

The pamphlet argued that candidates for the tri-cameral parliament had made themselves targets for elimination, and unless those assisting them ceased to be agents of the 'criminal Pretoria regime', they would also become targets.

The trial continues in the Durban Regional Court.

Sipho Bridget Xulu (25)

Clarence Lucky Payi (20)

The accused face a charge of murder, one of conspiracy to murder, one count of terrorism, and three counts of unlawful possession of arms, ammunition and grenades.

The state claims that both accused received ANC military training, and that they returned to South Africa in May 1984. Their objective was to murder Ben Langa and other persons whom they considered hostile to the ANC.

It is alleged that, with Dennis Hadebe and George Martins, they intended to murder Dr Faith Matlaopane. It is also claimed that they murdered Ben Langa on 20 May 1984.

The trial is due to be heard in the Pietermaritzburg Supreme Court.

Labour Action

CCAWUSA and the OK: Layoff not Retrenchment

Layoff rather than retrenchment was the compromise reached between OK Bazaars and the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union of South Africa (CCAWUSA), when they faced an unavoidable work-force reduction programme.

On Monday 14 January, OK Bazaars informed CCAWUSA and the National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers (NUDAW) that 1 500 workers would be retrenched on Monday 21 January, and a further 500 workers by the end of March. There was no prior consultation with the unions and less than a week's notice was given.

On January 19 the unions declared a dispute with OK Bazaars, warning the company not to implement the proposed retrenchments before thorough negotiations with the union.

OK Bazaars agreed to enter into negotiations with the two unions' joint national negotiating team. This consisted of a shop steward from every branch in the country.

While CCAWUSA draws on an African constituency, NUDAW caters for coloured and white employees in the catering and commercial distributive trade. The two unions work together on an ad hoc basis. Over the next week (Monday 21 - Saturday 26) OK, CCAWUSA, and NUDAW hammered out an agreement for the first phase of the retrenchment programme.

The unions demanded that

- * proper four weeks notice of the intended retrenchment be given
- * the company justify the retrenchments through financial disclosure
- * alternatives to retrenchment be discussed and negotiated.

OK's decision to allow an independent auditor to verify the company's statements broke new ground in the

retail trade industry.

This investigation revealed that while OK Bazaars is certainly not in a weak financial position, its future trading prospects are dismal.

The company has been hard hit by high interest rates. The chain stocks household appliances, clothing and furniture, which require large stocks on hand and overdraft loans (with high interest rates) are needed to pay for them. Demand for HP contracts has also been adversely affected.

To maintain its share of the market, OK Bazaars will need considerable capital investment to close down old stores and follow the market to new areas. The increase in the price of fuel, a probable future increase in GST and the effects of recession foreshadow a reduction in consumer spending. This in turn will cause turnover, already dropping, to fall further. Again, as consumer spending shifts away from household accessories to food essentials, profit margins will be reduced, since the markup on food is less than that on other commodities.

Alternatives to retrenchment that were examined included short-time, rolling layoff, and overall wage cuts. These were rejected by management as administratively impractical.

The final agreement allowed workers to choose between layoff and retrenchment. OK Bazaars also agreed to lay off fewer employees than originally proposed. And among the 1 051 workers to be given notice on 31 January were several eligible for retirement and early retirement.

The laid-off workers will be paid two weeks wages, and are also guaranteed re-employment by August 7 1985. Meanwhile

they will remain members of the medical aid and pension fund and will be entitled to draw their unemployment insurance benefits.

OK Bazaars will also give preference to laid-off workers should casual, part-time or full-time staff be required in future.

The retrenchment package gives workers their pensions in full, adding the employer's contribution to their own.

Severance pay will be determined according to service: two weeks pay for up to two years service, four weeks for 2-3 years, six weeks for 3-4 years and eight weeks pay for 4 or more years service.

The battle is not over and negotiations are continuing over the fate of the remaining 950 proposed retrenchments.

The Empangeni Bus Boycott

At the beginning of December 1984, residents in the three townships of the Richards Bay/Empangeni area (Esikhawini, Enselewi and Ngwelezane), received circulars from the Empangeni Transport Company informing them of a 10% increase in bus fares.

FOSATU shop stewards in the area met to discuss the issue, and mandated their regional secretary to write to the Transport Board to protest against the increases. The Board replied that the increase had already been granted in November.

The boycott of Empangeni Transport buses started at Esikhawini on 14 January. It quickly spread to Enseleni and Ngwelezane and by the afternoon there was almost full support in all three townships.

Commuters in Enseleni had gone to work but used mainly cars and company trucks for transport. When some employers heard of the boycott, they sent trucks to fetch their workers.

Monday 14 January was marked by sporadic violence. In Enseleni a group burned two buses and two vans. At Esikhawini on the same day three buses carrying passengers were stoned.

During the course of the day, Esikhawini residents decided to send the local KwaZulu MP to talk to the bus company. He was mandated to tell company manager Steenkamp to attend a meeting the following morning.

As early as 2 am on Tuesday 15 January, workers had blocked all entrances to Esikhawini township, preventing anyone leaving or entering.

Active community members spent the early hours of the morning urging all adults to attend the meeting scheduled for 10 am. By about 9 am between 45 000 and 50 000 residents had gathered on an open field at the crossroads to

Esikhawini.

The crowd waited until 10 am when the KwaZulu MP addressed the meeting. He said that manager Steenkamp was unable to attend, but that the bus company was prepared to negotiate with the community and to reach some sort of agreement about fares. But the meeting felt that there would be no negotiation unless Steenkamp himself came to address them.

Both South African and KwaZulu police had been continuously present since early on Monday morning. During the course of the Tuesday meeting the army arrived. They did not interfere, however but informed the meeting that it was an illegal gathering and requested them to disperse.

Spokespeople for the community replied that they could not do so until either Steenkamp came to address them, or they reached a decision on alternative action. The meeting was allowed to continue for a few hours.

When it became clear that Steenkamp was not going to arrive, a committee - the Committee of Ten - was elected. It was mandated to investigate other bus companies which could operate in the area. The committee was also instructed to send delegations to the town clerks of Richards Bay and Empangeni, to ask them to persuade employers to provide transport for their workers.

After the meeting dispersed there were several shooting incidents involving KwaZulu police. Four people were injured and a woman subsequently died in hospital.

Residents responded by converging on the houses of policemen, dragging their furniture into the street and burning it, and breaking windows.

Meetings similar to the one in Esikhawini were held in Enseleni and

Ngwelezane, and local committees were elected. The three formed a joint committee and met on Tuesday evening. Committee members included the Transport and General Workers Union branch chairman, the Metal and Allied Workers Union president, representatives from the KwaZulu government, tribal authorities including Prince Gidoen Zulu and Chief Biyela, and popular elected representatives from the community.

On Wednesday 16 January the joint committee met with the KwaZulu Chamber of Industries and Chamber of Commerce. The Chambers undertook to ensure that people would not be dismissed from work if they arrived late. They also agreed to provide transport but only for an unspecified but limited period. The Chambers undertook to mediate between the community and the bus company if the community decided to re-open negotiations.

On the Friday of that week the joint committee met again. They decided to inform the Minister of Transport, Hendrick Schoeman, that the people had decided not to use the Empangeni Bus Company. He was invited to meet with the joint committee.

The committee felt it was necessary to explain to the Minister why there was such opposition to the bus company, and why they wanted another bus company in the area.

The committee felt that too many grievances had gone unheard in the past. People had complained of very dirty buses, broken bus windows, buses that were always late, as well as fare increases which had been introduced without consulting the community.

The committee has decided to await Schoeman's response before taking the matter further. Meanwhile the bus company issued a statement saying that they wished to negotiate as soon as possible. They also alleged that people were being intimidated and so prevented from using the buses, and that 'pirate' taxis were taking over transport in the area.

There have been rumours that the Richards Bay and Empangeni town boards will start fining taxis which do not have licences to work the roads between the towns and the townships.

On the 29 and 30 January the joint committee once again met with the Chambers of Industry and Commerce. The chairman of the KwaZulu Chamber of Industries, RA Barbour acted as

chairman. S Conco, a member of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly acted as the key speaker for the commuters. There were two representatives from the Department of Transport, H Claassens, chief director of land transport administration, and W Kempen, director of road transportation. Also present were various members of the local business community and Willie Heine, MP for Umfolozi.

The commuter committee once again presented their grievances and re-affirmed their refusal to negotiate with the Empangeni Transport Company. They stressed that if the company insisted on bringing their vehicles into the township serious unrest and social disorder could result.

Chris Albertyn, attorney acting for the commuters, submitted the following requests:

- * that a commission of enquiry be urgently appointed by the Minister of Transport to investigate the standard of services provided by the Empangeni Transport Company;
- * that it should make recommendations regarding the withdrawal or otherwise of the company's permit;
- * that the Minister encourage the relevant authorities to issue temporary transport permits to those who wish to transport commuters in the area pending the outcome of the investigation;
- * that law enforcement authorities be directed not to prosecute contravenors of the Road Transport Act for a reasonable time until permits could be issued;
- * that the company be requested to suspend its services in the interim;
- * that employers be tolerant if workers are late and that they continue to provide transport for their employees.

The Department of Transport representatives agreed to the setting up of a commission. But they noted that its terms of reference would have to be finally determined by the Minister. They further suggested that the commuter committee set up a forum for grievances to be investigated and resolved.

They could not issue temporary transport permits however, they said, since the Act did not provide for this 'under the prevailing circumstances'.

The Chambers of Industry and Commerce did not believe that this was a practical alternative and refused to 'associate themselves with the continuation of such practices, as they

are unsafe and undignified and not cost effective'. They argued that such arrangements left workers' families, school children and shoppers without transport. So, they said, the company should be allowed to operate in the interim.

The commuter committee rejected this as it would cause unnecessary violence. Alternative transport, they argued, would be better than no transport at all.

The bus company agreed to appoint an official at senior management level to ensure ongoing adequate channels of communication with 'the public at large and specifically with commuters'. They offered to alleviate the hardship in the area by absorbing the cost of the recent fuel increase until the end of May at a cost of approximately R100 000 per month. They also offered various refunds on season tickets not used during the boycott.

The committee once again reiterated that it could not respond to these offers in view of commuters' decision to remove the company from the area.

The Chambers put it to the meeting

that they had fulfilled their role 'in good faith' by bringing all the parties concerned to the conference table, that the proposals should be seen by the commuters as a total package. If the proposals, including continued use of the buses in the interim, were not accepted by Monday 4 February the Chambers would withdraw all support and mediation.

W Heine, MP for Umfolozi, undertook to inform the Minister of the decisions and demands of all parties.

The meeting ended with the understanding that the commuter committee would report back to the community, the Transport Department representatives would inform their Department of the requests and would subsequently inform Barbour and Albertyn of the decisions. The Chambers would also suspend final decisions until all parties had replied.

The commission appointed by the Minister meets on Monday 11 and Tuesday 12 February. Meanwhile, the community remains resolved in its refusal to have the Empangeni Bus Company in the area.

Strikes and Disputes — Transvaal

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	ISSUE	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
AECI	CMIU	Wage increases	11 000	25.01.85	Last year's wage talks deadlocked, and resulted in a legal strike. In terms of this year's agreement, workers will receive between 10,5% (for higher grades) and 12,5% (lower grades) increases.
African Sales Johannesburg	CCAWUSA	Dispute over wages	70	01.12.84	Union demanded R25 per week increase across-the-board. Company insists increases should be on merit. Union declares dispute, and also accused company of unfair labour practice, because it by-passed union in negotiations, and appealed directly to workers.
Chamber of Mines (Tweefontein Colliery)	NUM	Dismissals/excessive working hours	1 600	03-4.01.85	Workers struck over alleged forced overtime, and the dismissal of six workers who refused to work overtime. Strike ends, and NUM and Chamber began discussions on the issues.
Chamber of Mines	NUM and the white mining unions	Job reservation			NUM has indicated that it will be bringing the issue of job reservation to the negotiating table this year. The white unions will resist attempts to abolish job reservation.
Dairy Maid (Barlow Rand) Transvaal	FBWU	Union-backed boycott of products		19.12.84	A boycott of Dairy Maid products was called after 90 striking workers were fired from the Pretoria plant in February 1984. Dairy Maid has threatened legal action to stop the boycott.
Durban Deep Gold Mine (Rand Mines)	BAMCWU	Reinstatement of shop stewards	5		Five BAMCWU shop stewards, charged with intimidation after a strike in September 1984, were acquitted in the Roodepoort Regional Court. BAMCWU threatens legal action unless workers are reinstated in previous jobs. Management said two had already been reinstated, and the remaining three had not yet approached management.
East Driefontein gold mine	NUM	Boycott of local store on mine	13 000	04.12.84	Boycott to force owner to lower prices and improve quality of merchandise

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	ISSUE	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
Happy Valley Hotel Mount Grace Hotel Magaliesberg	CCAWUSA	Wage disputes			CCAWUSA intends challenging the exemption Happy Valley has been granted from minimum wage agreement by industrial council. Union accused Mount Grace of paying workers less than minimum wage.
Main Tin Manufacturing Co		Strike over white supervisor, and racial discrimination	300	24.01.85- 29.01.85	Strike demanding dismissal of white supervisor, and an end to racial discrimination at plant. Strikers returned to work after management jointly addressed black and white employees, and undertook to end discrimination. Management also agreed to pay wages for the strike period.
Orange-Vaal Development Board	SA Municipal and Allied Workers	Dismissals, support strike, and call for boycott of liquor outlets	17		More than 17 workers were fired from two subsidiaries of the Board after striking in protest against the dismissal of colleagues. Union calls for a boycott of Board's sorghum beer, malt and liquor outlets.
Raleigh Cycles Springs	UMMAWSA	Deadlock in wage negotiations			Union considers legal strike, accusing management of refusing to negotiate in good faith. UMMAWSA negotiates retrenchment deal with management whereby 70 workers receive severance pay based on length of service.
Rietspruit Colliery Witbank	NUM	Legal strike following wage dispute with Rand Mines	1 000	04.12.84- 06.12.84	NUM demanded 40% increase, but only 11% offered. Strike ballot held, and 59% vote to strike. Strikers return to work 'determined to press wage claims'.
SASOL	CWIU	Dismissal of workers who heeded November stay-away call	6 000		After dismissing all workers involved in the November stay-away, SASOL refused to negotiate with the union, and began selective re-hiring of dismissed workers. National strike threatened unless all dismissed workers reinstated.
Tubatse Ferrochrome (Union Carbide) Lydenburg	UMMAWSA	Dismissal of striking workers	500	Dec 1984	Workers downed tools demanding the dismissal of a white supervisor who had allegedly assaulted a black worker.

Strikes and Disputes — Natal

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	ISSUE	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
Afraship Maydon Wharf		Bonus dispute	19	18.12.84	Workers expected large bonuses and wage increases at the end of 1984. When these failed to materialise, 19 went on strike. When they failed to meet a management ultimatum to return to work, all were fired. Police protected those who did not strike.
Allied Publishing	CCAWUSA	Wages; union recognition	250		After a September 1984 strike over union recognition and wages, management agreed to negotiate with the union. As a result, Allied's Transvaal recognition agreement with CCAWUSA was extended to Natal, and the wage gap between Allied workers in Natal and Transvaal was narrowed from 11% to 6%.
BTR Sarncol Howick	MAWU	Severance pay, and union recognition	750	12.12.84- 19.12.84	MAWU claims that management refused to sign a recognition agreement negotiated over two years. Then Sarncol announced that 21 workers to be retrenched would receive little severance pay. Union imposes go-slow and overtime ban. Management employs white schoolboys as scab labour. Workers down tools for one day, and MAWU declares a dispute with the company over failure to negotiate in good faith.
Corobrik. Pietermaritzburg	GWU	Payment of annual bonuses	700	14.12.84	Workers downed tools after a misunderstanding over date of payment. Management pays bonuses, but refuses to pay workers for day of strike. Union claims misunderstanding fault of management.
Dunlop Sydney Road plant Durban	MAWU	Unfair dismissal			Last year, 2 000 Dunlop workers struck for four weeks over the dismissal of five workers. Matter referred to advisory mediation, and ruled that four of the five dismissals were unfair. Dunlop refuses to accept the finding, and says will refer matter to industrial court.
Rainbow Chickens Hammersdale		Wages	2 000	11.01.85	Workers strike over dissatisfaction over wages and 'holiday schemes'. Management claims increases of 15% were granted in December.

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	ISSUE	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
SM Goldstein (construction)		Leave pay	200	18.01.85	Workers demand refund of money deducted from their holiday for leave stamp system. Strike while management considers demand.
Spar Group and other outlets owned by WG Brown, Natal	CCAWUSA	Management refusal to negotiate wage increase; union recognition; retrenchments	100		Workers at three Spar outlets struck after management refused to negotiate wage increases. The strike spread to three other outlets. 150 strikers from seven outlets dismissed. Union applied for a conciliation board hearing, after declaring dispute with WG Brown, and threatens boycott of outlets. CCAWUSA members picket Spar stores, but are arrested and charged. CCAWUSA lays charges of assault against police. Workers set up fund raising committee and meet daily to maintain solidarity. Union meets with other unions to launch national boycott of outlets belonging to WG Brown after company refuses to reinstate fired workers.
Sylko Paper Company Jacobs	Printing and Allied Workers (SAAWU)	Refund of money deducted for union dues	200	06.12.84	Workers had resigned from SA Typographical Union, and joined Printing and Allied, a SAAWU affiliate. But money was still being deducted from wages for SATU dues. Workers strike, demanding that deductions be paid back before factory closes for December.
Wispeco (window frames) Mobeni	MAWU; Engineering & Industrial Workers; SA Boiler-Makers	Retrenchments and severance pay	400	03.11.84- 07.12.84	Management retrenches 95 workers, and refuses to negotiate severance pay with the unions. Total work-force strikes, but management insists that will only negotiate at industrial council. 14.11.84 MAWU members at Hart Ltd vote to join strike in solidarity. 06.12.84 Negotiations deadlock as strike enters sixth week. 08.12.84 Strike ends as MAWU refers dispute to industrial court. But workers refuse overtime and work to rule. During strike, management employs white scab labour at higher rates than workers paid. Scab labour instrumental in breaking strike. 15.01.85 Wispeco management informs MAWU that a further 100 employees will be retrenched. MAWU claims that Department of Manpower colluded with management during strike by channeling white scab labour to Wispeco. MAWU also announces national campaign against 'right-wing labour policies' of the Dorbyl-Metcor group, parent company of Wispeco.

Strikes and Disputes — OFS/W. Cape/E. Cape

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	ISSUE	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
Cape Town City Council	CT Municipal Workers Association	Arbitration over wage demand	11 000		The union demanded a minimum wage of R116 a week, but the city council implemented R76 a week. An arbitration court was set up to rule on the dispute. The hearing continues during 1985.
CDA (Mercedes Benz) East London	NAAWU	Retrenchments	500	11.12.84	500 day-shift workers downed tools over the proposed retrenchment of 280 workers. Negotiations between the union and management resulted in a compromise whereby the retrenchments will not be final. If there is an improvement in the motor industry, they will be rehired.
Grand Bazaars Cape Town	RAWU	Dismissal of workers			The consumer boycott called by RAWU continues in support of worker demands.
Hartebeesfontein Mine OFS	NUM	Boycott of taxi service		Nov 1984	Black workers at the mine boycotted the local taxi service in protest against high fares. In a number of recent cases mine workers organised by NUM have boycotted to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with services like transport and local mine stores.
PG Glass Cape Town	CWIU	Celebration of May Day		Dec 1984	In what is believed to be the first agreement of its kind in the Western Cape, management has agreed that workers can work a half day on May Day, international labour day.
Pilkington Glass East London	CWIU	May Day as paid holiday		Dec 1984	Company agrees that May Day can be celebrated as a paid holiday.
USA Brush Manufacturing Company Belville	Plastic and Allied Workers	Wage dispute	400	06.12.84	Workers downed tools in support of a 25% wage increase, union recognition, and an undertaking that there would be no retrenchments. Management raised its previous wage offer of 10-13% to 17%, a recognition agreement is in the process of being signed, and management agreed not to retrench until the end of 1984. Workers ended the strike.

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