

# **SOUTH AFRICAN LABOUR BULLETIN**

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# SOUTH AFRICAN LABOUR BULLETIN

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**COMMENT**  
**MANAGEMENT'S DILEMMA**

Richard Hyman in his review of our book on the *Durban Strikes 1973* where we call for the legal recognition of African trade unions poses this problem: "Where class antagonism is overlaid by racial antagonism, the institutionalization of conflict through trade unionism alone may prove impossible . . . . . It is hard to believe that the 'liberalisation' of labour relations which the authors advocate will suffice to curb the antagonism rooted in SA's elaborately institutionalized racism. It is hard to believe that such liberalisation is in any case seriously in prospect" (SALB Vol. 2 No. 2) This raises two separate but related problems. Firstly, are trade unions for Africans likely to be recognised? Secondly, what implications would their recognition have for the classic liberal demand for institutionalization of industrial conflict?

With regard to the first question, the Minister of Labour has indicated that the present legislation on African worker representation is to be amended. Taking into account previous legislation by this Government, we assume that it will be consistent with the principle of separate legislation for African workers. The most likely amendment would then be an amendment to the Bantu Labour Relations Regulations Amendment Act to extend the present scope of works and liaison committees onto an industry-wide basis and to allow them direct representation on Industrial Councils. The Minister would be unwise to do this as it will only delay the central problem of the need for the recognition of independent trade unions for Africans. It will simply create a cadre of coopted leadership easily manipulated by the Department of Labour and Management. These leaders will soon be seen as such by the workers and be rejected. It is not the same as trade union recognition and will, in the long run, be rejected by workers for that reason.

The second problem posed by Hyman is a more

difficult one. In this edition we have published an article, (Management's Counter - Offensive) where it is argued that industrial conflict can only be institutionalized when the working class have been incorporated into the social and political institutions of a common industrial society. This is widely accepted by sociologists and has, become a kind of 'orthodoxy' in that discipline.

This 'orthodoxy' has a clear implication for SA management. The counter-offensive that management is launching at present can at best be a very partial response to the crisis facing South Africa capitalism. If genuine industrial peace is to be won in South Africa then management will have to respond with a great deal more readiness, to the challenge of an increasingly alienated African working class, than they have to date. This involves a readiness not only to recognize their emerging institutions, the trade unions. It also involves the "civic reintegration of the newly created industrial work force" ie their inclusion into the society as citizens with political and social rights. This is management's dilemma.

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PRINCIPLES OF NEGOTIATION AND  
GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE : WITH REFERENCE  
TO MIGRANT WORKERS ON THE MINES

*by L.C.C. Douwes Dekker*

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*Based on an address given on 15 May 1975 to the  
Committee of the Chamber of Mines investigating  
procedures of communication used by the mining  
industry and in other situations.*

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A. THE SITUATION

The South African born sociologist, John Rex, argues that the mining compound complemented by the overcrowded native reserves (or Homelands) is the most rational form of labour exploitation yet devised.

The compound system frees the capitalist enterprise from any obligation to the family of the worker whereas the system of slavery at least requires that the worker becomes the property of the master and this brings with it responsibility for the dependants of the worker. With the compound system the worker has to provide his labour in a closed market, for a period of short duration without his dependants, to live in restriction in accommodation provided by the employer. Rex states, "A very high degree of rationality can be achieved under such circumstances. Enormous economies of scale can be made in what would otherwise be the workers' spending pattern, and he can be effectively sealed off from subversive forces which might lead to his trying to form unions to bargain over the price of his labour. The one great irrationality with which capitalist enterprises have to cope, namely the labour market, is excluded. The cost of labour can, therefore, be not merely a precisely calculable, but a fixed cost." (1)

In view of this it is encouraging that the Chamber of Mines established this Committee to investigate what I call the question of workers' "participation in management decisions affecting their wages, working conditions and quality of life, and how this fundamental prerequisite of any employment situation can be implemented.

Since the Carltonville tragedy in September 1973 132 people were killed and more than 496 people

injured in gold and coal mine riots, extensive damage was done and production was severely affected. For the five month period, August 1974 to January 1975, 16 strikes took place involving 37 000 striking miners. There were altogether 160 casualties and 22 people were killed.

Labour conflicts on the mines are not the only characteristic of the changing situation in the 1970's. They are a response to other fundamental external events and internal changes and a symbiotic relationship exists between all these factors. Some of these are:

\*INCREASED GOLD PRICE AND INCREASED WAGES

The increased gold price was a remarkable blessing. It was particularly opportune as it enabled the mining houses to increase wages for black miners at a time when public pressure was building up against the industry, because real wages had remained constant for more than 50 years. This wage increase must have raised questions amongst many workers as to why suddenly more was paid and why even higher wages could not be granted.

Management felt that the granting of pay increases was the correct way to act on its aim to be more rational in its utilization of labour and introduce the results of job evaluation analysis. But traditional patterns and what the workers regarded as an equitable system of pay differentiation were upset. Management's assumed right to decide unilaterally who should be paid what, was challenged. The mine workers at Western Deep Levels at Carltonville demonstrated that although job evaluation might be a scientific technique, the workers have subjective assessments which must be taken into account. Furthermore, the allocation of monetary values to the scales is arbitrary and should not be imposed. The prerogative of management to decide on rewards was questioned. Surely such awakening will lead to the demand that the share of the wealth produced be negotiated?

The Carltonville tragedy was caused by anti-manage-

ment feeling. As the Chairman of Western Deep Levels admitted, "We may have made a mistake in our wage structure, maybe in the African mind we have done them an injustice." (R.D.M. 13/9/73) The first strike was not due to ethnic differences, but a management - worker dispute.

#### \*CHANGES IN POLITICAL SYSTEMS

\*The fact that Frelimo has become the legitimate Government in Mozambique after decades of extreme opposition against it, must have an impact on the breadth of perspective of the mine workers drawn from that area. Not only is change possible, but fundamental changes in power structures can occur. If at home authority structures can change why not in the work situation?

The dispute arising from the imposed increases in deferred pay involving the Lesotho miners demonstrated that external factors greatly affect internal sentiments and actions. Here again a unilateral decision was challenged. And although it did not affect Management directly, the necessity to consider industrial relations in terms of the tripartite structure of Government (law makers), employer (management), workers as a collectivity, (trade unions) was forcibly brought home. It was only when the essential need for workers to elect their own representatives was accepted that the deadlock was broken. This event, of a delegation of workers going to Lesotho (with the assistance of Mr. Petersen), shattered many myths about the so-called difference between miners and industrial workers. Leadership skills and ability to present a case were demonstrated to be a matter of training. Previously these qualities were believed to be non-existent.

#### \*FROM LABOUR UNITS TO PEOPLE WITH SKILLS

The strikes, in the context of the lack of an institutionalised structure to channel the conflict, resulted in violence and led to an exodus of miners.



During the outflow the industry had to cope with 76% of its normal labour complement. This mass movement by a quarter of the 400 000 people employed is significant. If it is accepted that of that 76% a considerable number had broken their contract but drifted back again during the two year period, then it can be assumed that 200 000 have consciously or not, experienced their ability to reject being subject to a system which traditionally had decided everything for them; a system which could no longer satisfy their aspirations.

However, the permanent trend of change is the decision by mining houses to use less labour. Highly mechanized systems of mining are being introduced particularly in the coal mining sector. The concessions by the white mining unions in 1973 to allow training of Africans as artisan aides, particularly with the opening of new mines, is a vital breakthrough. Your Chamber has reported that the mining industry can cope with 90% of its former labour complement. Mr. Coetzer, Chairman of General Mining states in his Annual Report that the "days of labour intensive mining are over, and an expansion of this order will create a demand for a substantial increase in the skilled labour force employed in the industry." (R.D.M. 9/5/75).

Mr. Oppenheimer in the Annual Report of Anglo American Corporation states that although there are no ascertainable causes for the outbreaks of violence some could have been due to dissatisfaction over wages, alterations in the traditional pattern of operations underground and concern over job status. He does not specifically mention ethnic differences as a cause.

He reports that the Group has established a Manpower Resources Division. The comprehensive facilities of the division must result in a chain of continual activity and services which, irrespective of the planned innovation, must act as a variable of change itself.

This change in approach to the utilisation of and

patterns of communication with, labour, as well as the realisation that it is expensive to retrain people every year because they are not in permanent employment (an issue which concerned the industry prior to the conflicts) is to be welcomed. But job advancement, improved communication systems and training of skills, requires a different definition of the worker who is at present regarded as a replaceable unit of labour. Furthermore, the policy of advancement will bring about amongst those workers, the need for esteem or respect. The next need in the hierarchy, namely that of self-expression will emerge and require to be gratified. The crux of this need is that the people want to conceive their own goals and realise them.

#### B. CONSIDERATIONS FOR LABOUR RELATIONS POLICY

As is apparent from the presentation above, I identify anti-management sentiments in the riots. I am not denying the possibilities of "political agitators" or influence of ethnic differences, but these are not the root cause of the issue confronting this industry. The fact that the violence expressed itself in the compound system does not imply that the actual work situation is acceptable.

Management's power to decide unilaterally over wages, working conditions and quality of life of miners has been successfully challenged. A new labour relations policy for black mine workers is required.

#### FROM FEAR TO LEGITIMATE AUTHORITY:

The Dutch philosopher Idenburg in his treatise on authority in the undertaking (establishment) points out that threat, widely used as a means of influence in the traditional company, must be replaced by legitimate authority.

Two types of power can be distinguished in any relationship which is structured in such a way that the one party (management) can influence the

other party (worker).

- \* *Threat* : The worker obeys management instructions because of personal interest and an awareness of alternatives. Disobedience would provide less gratification or greater disadvantages than obedience.
- \* *Authority* : The worker obeys management instructions because he recognises the legitimacy of management's power to give orders and that he must execute them.

As the need for order in any work situation is accepted, the question arises how can that power of influence arising from the worker having to sell his labour for a wage be transformed from fear into legitimate authority.(2)

The important implication of Idenburg's presentation as well as Wootton's analysis of workers being in a situation of frustration without hope, is that a change is required in the structure of command of the establishment, in order to accommodate the new definition of the situation of and by the worker.

#### INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS SYSTEM

The industrial relations system consists of two components, the human relations and the labour relations dimensions. In ideal-type formulation the personnel department is responsible for the implementation of the human relations components and the trade union for ensuring the expression of labour relations between workers, as a collectivity, and the employer.(3).

Using these concepts it can be postulated that only when the trade union is recognised as an independent force representing workers' interests and the labour relations component allowed to manifest itself as equal to the influence of the human relations component, can the authority of management be regarded as legitimate.

This analysis has bearing on the process of negotiation and grievance procedure to be discussed. However, it is evident that the argument which says that the African worker is not yet ready for independent worker representation, is naive. This argument does not recognise that the changing definition of the employment situation and the nature of the command structure are the criteria which determine that the labour relations component must be allowed to manifest itself. Are mining houses prepared to formulate an industrial relations policy in these or similar terms? However, it is not sufficient to formulate policies. The question is how can management objectives be changed to legitimise the authority.

The 3 000 strong Engineering and Allied Workers' Union recently approached one of the industrial companies in the Anglo American Group. It was felt that an initial form of recognition could be asked for as a considerable number of the employees of the company were union members, and Mr. H. Oppenheimer had publicly committed the Group to dealing with African trade unions. However, the Managing Director of the Company said that no good purpose would be served in an interview with the Union officials. The Union was defined as an external influence and the liaison committee system regarded as adequate. The common courtesy of at least agreeing to a meeting in order to determine credentials was denied.

#### THE SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF CONFLICT

The German sociologist, George Simmel, writing at the turn of the century postulated that conflict has definite functions for a society. If conflict is recognised then hostile attitudes can be translated into action and, through the definition of boundaries of the groups, power balance between the parties is achieved. (4). In other words, conflict, if institutionalised, becomes a means to reconcile the problem arising out of scarce resources, status and power in society and does not become an end in itself. To the problem of the command structure of the employment situation is

added the conflict problem arising out of opposing status positions and different interests of increased profit and higher wages.

However, Simmel does postulate that conflict consists of a test of power between antagonistic parties. And the process of accommodation (reconciliation) is only possible if each party is aware of each other's relative strength.

This implies that assertions of power are periodically necessary to ensure a willingness by the party who conceives of itself as stronger to accommodate to the demands of the other party. It can be assumed that the negative assertion of power by the mine workers in the riots over the past three years (negative because they had no other means) has made mine houses accept that channels through which the conflict can be institutionalised must be created.

#### RECOGNITION OF HIGHER NEEDS

Implicit in the foregoing discussion is that the employment situation is one of frustration without hope because the higher needs of workers as human beings are not recognised. These are: the need to belong (affiliate need), the need for esteem and respect - and this implies recognition, the need for self-fulfilment or self-realisation with, in part, a sense of achievement.

It is also argued that through an equitable system of independent worker representation, these needs can be answered.

It appears however that management does not want worker leadership to emerge. According to Francis Wilson the Mines' Labour organisation keeps accurate records of "trouble makers" to assist in its recruitment campaigns. This is a highly disturbing practice. Are future labour leaders such as Anna Scheepers to be "weeded out" in this process, what criteria are used to define a "trouble maker"?

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RIGHTS

Dr. Kachelhoffer, Professor of Law at the University of South Africa, has stated that industrial workers throughout the Western World enjoy three rights. These rights, which are required to protect their subordinate status are the right to organise to negotiate, and to strike. It can be said that these rights are inter-dependent particularly if the term negotiate means collective bargaining - this is implied because the first right is that of organisation or freedom of association to identify and express collective strength. (5).

### SCOPE TO EXERCISE RESPONSIBILITY.

It is often argued that workers should not be granted the right to organise, negotiate or strike as they are not capable of acting responsibly. This approach begs the question, Responsibility has to be acquired and requires experience. In any case how responsible is management? The case histories of pollution, let alone the present impasse in labour relations of your sector, show how issues of public concern are left at the bottom of the list, and only with pressures are taken into account. Employment practices are public issues because neglect brings forth violence and if the police are involved, the public are brought in.

If a group and its leaders are to be responsible they must be able to exercise control. Otherwise they will not demonstrate their responsibility. This is why the concept of independent workers' participation is relevant. Through the process of deciding with management on matters affecting wages, working conditions and quality of life, control can be exercised and discretion displayed.

### DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH - THREE-CORNERED CONTEST

It is predicted that when Frelimo becomes the official government in Mozambique it will put pressure on the mining houses to increase wages.

The action of the Lesotho Government and the uncompromising approach adopted by the Malawi Government has brought home the role of the State of the countries supplying labour in the industrial relations system of the mining industry. These developments must have an impact on the pattern of negotiation and collective bargaining which will emerge. Little is known of the functions of the Black staff members to be appointed by this Chamber to develop liaison between governments, mine management and Black miners. (23) Problems will arise if it is an attempt to substitute for the emergence of trade union, although they could perform a facilitating role. (F.M. 26/10/74).

The distribution of the wealth produced has become therefore a three-cornered contest. For how long can mining houses retain the right to decide how to distribute profits, particularly where the substantial increase in profits resulted from the higher gold price, something they did not achieve? The Annual Report of Gold Fields last year forms an interesting case study, particularly if the low wages of Africans are seen in real terms and not percentages. For that year, black earnings increased by 83.4%; working profit increased 107%, but shareholders earnings increased 114% from R56-million to R120-million. The question is would the shareholders (primarily overseas) have not been satisfied with less, or, did they have a right to this boost in view of the analysis made by Rex?

#### C. RE-ORGANISATION OF SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE WORK SITUATION.

The foregoing, at times somewhat theoretical, formulation can now be used to discuss forms of workers' participation in management decision-making. At times, the presentation was in the form of ideal-type structures and I accept that there is a process involved in implementing the fundamental changes required. A process of experimentation has to be embarked upon. This is why the Anglo American Group can be complimented

on its attempt to define its role of defender of change. The industrial relations adviser, Mr. Kallie van der Colf, was asked to comment on why Anglo American mines had experienced an apparently greater degree of strikes and violence. Besides the fact that the Group employs approximately a third of the total labour complement, he did not believe that changes brought about were introduced too quickly. He said, "If someone does not break new ground we won't find out where the problems are. The more we do now to improve things, even if we encounter some problems, the more we are able to prevent more serious trouble from occurring in the future".

Of relevance to the deliberations of your Committee is the realisation by that mining house of the direct link between grievances regarding the work situation, and expression of aggression in the compound system. It was argued by Mr. D. van Coiller that problems of introducing a communication system arose out of the large number involved, the yearly turnover and the fact that when a worker with a problem does not know in what manner to contact his representative in the work situation, he uses the compound system of representation to air his grievances.

These observations justify my emphasis on forms of workers' representation in the work situation, although I accept that channels of communication are required in the compounds. It further supports my approach of not emphasising the ethnic differences. Tribal conflicts are a salient feature of the situation, but not the root cause.

#### TOWARDS SHARED DECISIONS

The crux of legitimising managerial authority lies in incorporating the elected leaders in the decision-making process affecting their wages, working conditions and quality of life. The evaluation of industrial relations between management and workers in other countries has been in terms of two structures. A need exists for a structure to solve problems and grievances arising directly from



the work situation (integrative negotiations) and a structure which can reconcile the conflicting interests arising from the distribution of wealth produced (distributive bargaining). The two structures are complementary and if both cannot find expression and, say, only problem solving or integrative negotiation is used, then it must not surprise management if issues of a distributive bargaining nature enter into discussion, or prevent matters from being resolved. Such items can only be ruled out of order if there is another structure to refer them to.

#### WORKS COMMITTEE - INTRODUCTION OF GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Although the Bantu Labour Relations Regulations Act does not apply to the mining industry, its provisions must have a bearing on your deliberations. There are now more than 2 000 such committees registered with the Department of Labour. When there were 1 400, only 200 were works committees and 1200 liaison committees. Why?

The predominance of registered liaison committees is due to the preference by management for this structure and the emphasis which SEIFSA has placed on it. Where workers have known of the choice and the difference between the two, they have, without fail, chosen the works committee, even in situations where the Department of Labour had to hold a referendum to decide on the type of committee.

This preference is explained in the foregoing analysis. The point to be added is that the works committee structure enables the workers to meet before hand and formulate common policy on particular issues. It is the collectivity of workers and how to institutionalise their power which is the new dynamic to be faced. If independent-elected workers' leaders cannot meet on their own it is well-nigh impossible for them to find expression for that collectivity.

Workers have little confidence in the deliberation

of a committee where its representatives can be manipulated. A worker with a grievance is less likely to ask a committee member to deal with it if that member sits in with management representatives and is not seen to meet independently. The committee member who meets independently with other worker leaders is far more likely to be trusted. This, by inference, explains the preference for the liaison committees by management. The liaison committee represents an extension of management influence and control and its ability to maintain a position of threat and prevent the manifestation of the collectivity.

It is increasingly being accepted by both management and African unions that a combination of the two structures is desirable. The advantage of the liaison committee is that worker and management representatives meet and certain issues can be dealt with immediately or clarification gained. However, the worker representatives should have the right, constitutionally, to meet beforehand to decide their approach and tactics to the matters in hand.

The advantage, if not necessity of a works committee is demonstrated if the stages and time elements involved in grievance procedure is discussed. Experience at Urban Training Project, has demonstrated that a host of pent up feelings of workers to work rules and management actions or evasive tactics would be released if some procedure existed to channel them. Hence the increased emphasis during our courses and seminars on grievance procedures. It is essential for the committee to have the support of the trade union in that sector. Without access to an independent source for advice and information it cannot function. An effective grievance procedure allows pent up hostility to be translated into functional conflict. If that hostility cannot be released or is deflected it is a source of energy which readily finds indirect expression in absenteeism, unorganised slow downs, if not strikes and then violence.

The essence of a grievance procedure is that it

allows management time to attend to any inconsistency in its practices, a discriminatory situation or injustice, but at the same time ensures that the matter must be attended to by providing the right for it, in stages, to travel through the management hierarchy until resolved. As it is an upward method of communication, grievance procedure cannot be part of personnel management function, although personnel officers, as part of management hierarchy, are involved.

The problem procedure is fair to both parties. It requires the worker with the grievance to first settle the matter with the supervisor or person seen as the source of the problem or its solution. However, it ensures that the matter is attended to in that the issue must be resolved within a stipulated time period and can then be brought to the attention of the committee. The role of the committee is essential to protect the worker against victimisation, and make the issue objective. The committee might decide there is no substance to the problem and advises the worker accordingly, but because of the stages it ensures that the matter is not left in abeyance, but is resolved. Each work situation will dictate how many stages are required and the time period allowed between each stage. It is accepted that informal discussion will also be used by the two parties to resolve an issue as the procedure takes time to be incorporated and accepted. However, the procedure institutes a neutral force between the two parties.

In the nature of employer-worker relations some problems or grievances cannot be resolved even if they travel right up the hierarchy of management. This suggests that a system of arbitration be introduced. In Germany the Labour Courts play an essential role not only in cases involving individual workers claiming against their employers over pay, dismissals and redundancies, but with disputes arising from contracts of employment concerning the right of the individual, disputes concerning the interpretation of collective bargaining agreements, and the legality of strike action.

Labour legislation in South Africa, particularly in the mining sector, is non-existent or negative in that it says "you shall not". Until such time as more enabling legislative provisions have been enacted, this Chamber, or one of its more progressive mining groups, could do well to assist in the establishment of an independent body with respected members, to preside and judge over unresolved issues. The very creation of such a body whose deliberations are public, would be proof of this industry's honest concern to share in the decision making process and abide by objective criteria of justice.

The works committee forms a forum whereby their response to changes brought in by job evaluation schemes, technological advances, improved work rules and other work oriented matters can be discussed. In the process of making workers aware not only of their right but also responsibilities works committees perform a vital function.

#### NEGOTIATIONS - AGREEING ON COMPROMISE

In terms of a recent statement made by the President of this Chamber, a trade union of black miners cannot be recognised because, "It is not feasible for an employer in one country, who is governed by the laws of that country, to deal with a union in another country and subject to different laws". However, the issue is not one of legal niceties but what functions a trade union performs. It is accepted that the employment of workers from various countries complicates the issue but this does not absolve the mining houses from responsibility and is no justification for taking a negative non-compromising stance. The following pointers indicate that a bold approach is required:-

- \*The Lesotho Government wants Basotho miners working in South Africa to have the right to strike.
- \*Frelimo Prime Minister, Mr. J. Chissano stated that "at present our workers are being sold like goods".

- Such demands and statements must influence the attitudes and expectations of workers.
- \*The Chamber of Mines instituted a rule that so-called trouble-makers on the mines be dismissed in order to stop the strife, destruction and work refusals. This appears to be a futile and negative show of strength which could not even be implemented, particularly where demands for repatriation are a strong sentiment, and a sad reflection of the helpless state of the industry as a result of the riots.
  - \*The Chamber of Mines had to issue a counter-pamphlet to correct the misleading information put out by the official Lesotho Government statement regarding the deferred pay matter. Having to resort to such tactics indicates something is amiss. It appeared that there were no formal channels between Lesotho and South Africa to discuss such issues.
  - \*The move to increase the complement of miners from South Africa to 50% from the present 30% might assist the situation, but is no excuse to adopt a "wait and see" attitude. The greater complement of South African miners necessitates acceptance of trade unionism.

Surely these pointers, and probably others you can add, suggest that urgent reform is called for and that all the parties concerned in the system of migrant labour must have a chance to participate in the conditions of employment of the miners.

I therefore suggest that serious consideration be given to the Chamber convening a Conference with delegates representing the countries concerned as well as experts from the ILO and other international bodies to debate an industrial relations system appropriate to employment of miners on the gold and coal mines and work out some blue print for bringing about change and institutionalising the labour relations component. The various ILO documents on workers participation, migrant labour, etc. would form valuable background material and if the invitation for such a Conference comes

from South Africa, it would enforce the seriousness of our country's attempt to become accepted by the international community and in particular Africa. The complexities of the situation calls for some agreement on common objectives and agreement on targets to be reached, otherwise continual strikes and conflicts, as well as differences between the industry and the countries supplying labour, highlighted in the public media, will be the order of the day.

This suggestion is made because I realise that the process of negotiation, as I am now going to describe it, is, when it comes to implementation in this sector, a grey area with no clear pointers. However, not to clarify where the conflicts lie and what parties have to compromise about what conditions and clauses in agreements, is inexcusable. At least the question will be raised as to where the Chamber or its constituent mining houses want the locus of negotiation to be; i.e. the work situation with no direct emphasis for the varying conditions in the respective countries or Homelands, or removed from the work situation and close to the specifics of the country of origin of the miners employed.

It is useful to discuss the collective bargaining model in relation to the works committee model. On a different occasion I made the following comments (6).

#### THE PROCESS OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

"A different dynamic enters the relationship between the employer and the worker, if the union leaders negotiate an agreement rather than committee members being consulted on a decision management wants approval of and possibly guidance on.

The collective bargaining process includes the following stages which cannot occur within the works or liaison committee structure. They are:

\*Union members or shop stewards give their

officials a mandate as to what they expect as a collectivity regarding increased wages, improved working conditions, social benefits, and community assistance.

- \*The negotiating team of the Union formulates demands from this mandate and places them before management.
- \*The negotiating procedure of give and take ensures that a form of settlement between the target set by the Union and resistance displayed by management is reached.
- \*The report back by the Union negotiating team to members not only informs them what package deal has been negotiated, but asks them to accept the package deal or indicate on what grounds they reject it. If some aspect of the package deal is rejected, it must be taken back to the negotiating table.
- \*The leadership of the Union has the task of using its status to influence workers to accept the terms of the settlement which, by definition, is less than had been asked for in the mandate. It is this function of putting forward a compromise which is overlooked when the issue of Union demands is discussed. The public media have placed, in their coverage, emphasis on Union wage demands and have ignored (or overlooked) the equally important task Union leaders have to perform when they feel the compromise offer is the best attainable, and then have to "sell" the compromise agreement to Union members.

Workers will accept from their own leaders the need for compromise, but the inherent element of suspicion will manifest itself if management or a committee which is regarded as part of management, asks them to accept an increase which is less than they expected or felt they were entitled to.

Works committees have not built into their structure this report back procedure. To date, committees are apparently operating effectively because they are new and the report back procedure has not been tested, i.e. whether or not the commit-

tee representative can command respect from the workers and can get them to accept a compromise. Up to now employers have either anticipated wage demands or agreed to requests for increases placed before them. But this has placed management in a vulnerable position. Management has set in motion a chain of expectations and they are on the defensive. Only an independent trade union will give management the organisational base through which these expectations can be controlled, rationalised and institutionalised.

#### QUALIFIED INNOVATION WITH COMMITTEE SYSTEM

To the extent that there is no viable mine workers union, besides the one TUCSA is said to assist in Lesotho, some form of innovation can be considered. The following remarks are tentative, personal formulations with the qualification that the suggestion under the next heading ("Facilities and Protection for Committees and their Members" and "The Pre-requisite of Training") are also considered.

Provided a works committee structure, i.e. 100% elected representatives, is allowed to operate it could be argued that there is a process involved in the establishment of independent trade unionism which can, because of the nature of migrant labour used on the mines, receive its impetus through that works committee system. If a trade union with membership existed, as is the case in all the industrial sectors for specific areas, then the formulations fall away.

If the final objective of the Chamber of Mines or a mining house is recognition of a trade union there should be a willingness to commit itself at this stage to abide by requirements regarding the linkage between works committees and trade unions as developed in countries which have this dual system of workers' representation. This would ensure that the committee system is not used as a means to prevent unionism.

In order to identify the complementary relation-



ship between trade unions and committees, I think it is fair to use the objective documentation on workers' representatives in the work place published by the International Labour Office; although I accept responsibility for this summary.

It is appropriate to quote from a background paper prepared by the ILO for its symposium held last year on workers' participation in decision within undertakings.

"While the worker has, of course, human aspirations towards self-expression, sense of purpose in his work and expanding his area of initiative and the field in which he can co-decide on the way his job is to be performed, he also has essential requirements in terms of representation, protection against occupational hazards, job security, reasonable hours, holidays with pay and other working conditions. History and experience have demonstrated that in order to have these requirements fulfilled, he must act as a member of his collectivity, through his trade union." (7)

The following outline could be accepted by the Chamber of Mines or individual mining houses as a system which it is prepared to evolve towards. The proposed Conference could establish the extent of the organic link between the two bodies of representation. What are the issues to ensure that the complementary nature of the two types of worker representation are realised?

\*Employers or employers' associations and the union or unions use the process of collective bargaining to draw up agreements, covering minimum wages and working conditions. As no union exists the Governments of the countries supplying the mine labour would conclude such agreements. The role the supplying migrant country plays in the drawing up of such agreements, depends on the extent to which it operates with a planned or socialist system and whether the trade unions are expected to be involved in the national effort to realise certain politically stated social and economic ideas. Such bilateral or multi-lateral

agreements would set the targets for elimination of the compound system, for instance, by certain dates for married workers. The inclusion of minimum wages and working conditions would not prevent improvements to them in the individual company's of that employers' association via the works committees.

- \*The workers' representatives serving on the works committee are elected from all the workers, irrespective of their trade union membership. However, the trade union or unions are allowed to draw up the list of candidates for the annual election of plant or committee representatives. This would imply there is a weak but definite organic link between the unions and plant committees. Some equitable system to ensure all nationals are represented could be drawn up and a system of first and second balloting could be used.
- \*The committee can be responsible for the handling of grievances directly affecting worker-management relations in the plant. Should that committee desire it can call in the union representative to assist either with information or advice or in the actual negotiations with management on the issue. Any matters not resolved would automatically be referred to the unions for consideration and either referred to the union-employer association meetings to be discussed by the union with the company management, or to the Law Courts and Department of Labour.
- \*Similarly, although the committee would, in conjunction with management deal with such items as productivity, conditions of work, job rotation, job allocation, incentive schemes, etc. they are entitled (or required) to seek the comment and advice of the unions. Whereas initially the plant committees (because there is no union) would determine criteria for dismissal, recruitment, draw up work rules, and be involved in the control over the administration, social security laws and welfare facilities (or actually manage them), the unions would increasingly incorporate minima regarding these subjects in the agreement

it negotiates.

\*If there is some organic link between the union and the committee members, then the involvement of the union in the protection against victimisation of representatives is required particularly in disputes or different interpretation of events.

\*Depending on the recognised link between the union and the committee, members of that committee carry out certain union functions such as collection of Union dues, promotion of union membership, distribution of union literature etc.

This list is not exhaustive. Its purpose is to indicate the nature of the issues involved. It is my contention that when the Chamber of Mines or individual mining houses examine these issues the uncompromising, if not emotional cry of not recognising trade unions will fade and the hard task of working out the details of union recognition will be started in a responsible manner.

#### FACILITIES AND PROTECTION FOR COMMITTEE AND THEIR MEMBERS

For workers' representatives to carry out their functions far more is required than merely holding of elections and recording their names on a piece of paper. Role functions are acquired, not ascribed and representatives must have a geographic point in the establishment in order to map out the nature of their territory, and a time span to perform the duties. Without facilities the workers will see them as no different to themselves and certainly not their representatives. Their independent operation must be visible besides their meetings with management which are not always seen as an expression of labour relations. The following points are some of the issues raised in a report by the ILO on the Resolution regarding protection and facilities afforded to workers' representatives in the undertaking (8). What is required?

- \*The job security of elected representatives on works committees must be guaranteed in order to protect their status as workers' representatives. That is, they may not be dismissed during their period of office and some time subsequent except on grounds of serious misconduct. The establishment of a Labour Court or such equivalent is essential to ensure the effectiveness of this ruling, to judge cases of dispute. This pre-requisite of making the employer account for his actions is imperative particularly in a situation where no strong trade union exists.
- \*A place where meetings can be held and full-time representatives contacted by the employer. This office should not be part of management and furnished accordingly, but be in the work area where workers can have normal access. Such material facilities should include telephone, clerical assistance, other administrative requirements, etc.
- \*In order for the representative to exercise his functions it is essential he has time off from work duties. Again the temptation on the part of management will be to appoint its own elected full time departmental personnel officers. In order to ensure the trust of the workers the elected representative should be allowed full or part-time release but only for the period of their office. And a system of some full-time and some part-time representatives seems desirable.
- \*The representatives should retain their job category and the same earnings, except some compensation for loss in bonus or overtime rates which would have been normally earned.
- \*For representatives to carry out their function they need expert advice and information. Hence any committee or its members should be freely allowed to contact service organisations to provide them with information.
- \*Representatives should have time off to attend

courses and seminars on their roles and responsibilities as well as to meet workers absent from work for some reason or other.

\*Access to different departments or sections of the plant should also be permitted.

#### TRAINING AND EDUCATION OF UNION REPRESENTATIVES

A strange anomaly exists in management thinking in that the attendance of managerial personnel to courses and seminars is regarded as essential for the effective function of their roles and exercising of their tasks and responsibilities, but the training of workers' representatives is looked upon with great suspicion. Role performance, particularly that of representation requires training and knowledge of agreements, work rules, etc., must be taught.

In the summary of the discussion at the ILO seminar on workers' participation, the statement was made that the wish and will to participate is not enough. People who desire to participate must possess the necessary information and necessary technical skills to enable them to participate. Mr. J. Schregle, Chief Labour Law and Labour Relations Branch of the ILO said - "The first conclusion is the absolute necessity of having a solid and effective training system as pre-requisite and as a basis for the functioning of any scheme of workers' participation." In his summary of the proceedings, he said that no-one opposed the notion that the cost of the training should be borne by the Government and employers, and delegates "emphasised that trade union must have a decisive say in the working out of the contents of training programmes, their arrangement and the running of courses." (9)

#### D. CONCLUSION

Conflict of interest and the emergence of different values in the mining industry have been demonstrated by the strikes of mine workers during the past three years. There has, however, been no shift in the power balance. Will the black mine workers, as people, attempt to spread this conflict to other, possibly political, institutions,

or will the Chamber of Industries or individual mining houses try and reconcile the conflicting interest in the work situation by establishing a new order.

The present position is hopefully leading to what John Rex calls a truce situation in that management wants to adjust to a new balance of power. As outbreaks of strikes and violence are continuing, impetus is given to management to try and institutionalise the conflict particularly since the opposing party to the present order (400 000 unorganised miners) has no formulated demands. A value system regarding the work situation based, hopefully, on common concerns of management and workers should be defined in the truce situation and new institutions (e.g. two way systems of communication) are being created to reflect this. Two warnings are made by Rex which are worth noting in conclusion. (10)

\*The new institutions belong to the truce situation and neither to management, as holding the power, nor workers, as a collectivity. This is why the suggestion made in this paper regarding an independent Labour Court is important. Furthermore, any committee system must not be regarded as an expression of the collectivity of the workers or a substitution for a trade union. Furthermore, training of representatives of management and workers for resolving conflict requires to be done independently from management personnel functions, etc.

\*But because of the weak countervailing power of the opposing party, the temptation presents itself for the controlling party to revert back to old patterns of behaviour and action. As the black miners have no organised expression their power is depended on wild cat strikes. Hence it is essential for management to resist introducing the threat system to maintain control instead of legitimising their authority. The practical operational test of this need to remain in the truce situation is the degree of concession made by management.

If no concession is made and sharing of decisions is made a ~~game~~ instead of a reality, the truce situation is changed to the old order and the potential of revolution becomes a reality.

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MANAGEMENT'S COUNTER - OFFENSIVE

*by Eddie Webster*

Over the last six years SA management have been faced with offensives on two fronts. They have been faced with strike action on the part of the African working class. After nearly a decade of relative "industrial peace" (the number of Africans involved in officially reported strikes does not seem to have risen above 2000 per year between 1962 and 1969) industrial conflict has re-emerged in the factories and on the mines.

It began in Durban in April 1969 when 2000 dockworkers struck in support of a demand for higher wages. 13000 Ovambo workers went out on strike at the end of 1971 in Namibia. Again in Durban in October 1972, 2000 dockworkers struck. The climax was the mass strikes in the Durban metropolitan area in Jan-Feb 1973 when nearly 100 000 workers went out on strike. This was followed by continuing strike actions in the Durban area and growing conflict on the mines. Many were taken by surprise because it was widely assumed that the repressive status apparatus in SA was wholly effective in containing dissent within narrow limits. This then was the first offensive faced by the management.

The second offensive was the international one. With the repression of effective political action within SA the struggle against apartheid had been forced clearly onto the international arena. This was to have its effect in the late 60's with the emergence of strong criticism of SA's poverty wages in the media, and at companies' annual shareholder meetings pressure groups began to attack the holding companies abroad about their treatment of African workers. The most significant result was the parliamentary enquiry in 1973 in the House of Commons into British companies operating in SA.

What effect have these two offensives had on management? It led to a flood of speeches, articles, and even new journals and organisations, where what could be called, the managerial intellectuals,



tried to persuade the managers and owners of industry to adapt to the changing situation. These managerial intellectuals have a simple message - if companies are going to continue to operate profitably in SA they must move away from the old master-servant approach towards the African worker which tended to rest on the "induna" system, a heritage of colonial employment practices where "traditional" leaders are used for purposes of control. It is argued that a more sophisticated method of control is now needed that involves an element of democratic participation by the worker in his place of work. It is necessary to regulate the conflict and to build a core of leaders in the factory who could both represent the workers and negotiate with management. Personnel consultants began to advertise their skill at "understanding and motivating the African worker" and organisations have been set up to help managers improve the negotiating skills of their African employees. Even academics wrote books on how to motivate African workers. These are boom times for the managerial - intellectual.

Being economically motivated men, managers have treated these managerial-intellectuals with cautious but increasing interest. Sometimes they see their ideas as potentially useful instruments for more effective social control and possible co-optation. A way of legitimizing the changing nature of SA capitalism.

Most of the time they are complacent about the status quo but are prepared to try and make the Government's alternative to trade unions for Africans, the Works Committee or Liaison Committee work. In a study undertaken among employers in the Durban area in 1972, Schlemmer and Boulanger found less than 60% preferred Works Committees, 12% were prepared to support the idea of registered African trade unions, 2% the possibility of Africans in mixed unions, and 6% merely suggesting that some form of African labour organisation would be advantageous. The respondents perceived disadvantages of African trade unions emerged in

the following order of importance:

- \*they cause unnecessary trouble
- \*they are vulnerable to outside infiltration and agitators
- \*they cause management to bear the brunt of problem and malpractices in other firms
- \*they are 'a waste of time'
- \*they develop patterns of leadership which are authoritarian/dictatorial
- \*they are the first step towards communism
- \*they have leaders who speak for themselves, not for workers
- \*the running of trade unions is beyond the ability of Africans

The authors conclude "the general impression emerging from these results is that the basic orientation of representatives of management as regards African labour relations is defensive and, in various ways, antipathetic to the idea of organized and clearly defined negotiation as between factions with interests which are opposed in many respects". (1)

Two points need to be made about the Governments' policy on African worker representation. The first point is that the Bantu Labour Act 1953 which set up Works Committees and the Bantu Labour Relations Regulation Amendment Act 1973 which extended representation to Liaison Committees were both intended as alternatives to trade unions. Faced by growing industrial unrest during the second World War and the emergence of at least 100 unregistered African unions (Smuts figures in 1946), the United Party Government set up what was to become known as the Botha Commission to investigate industrial relations. Although the Commission recommended the recognition of heavily circumscribed separate African unions, the by now Nationalist Government rejected the Commission's proposals and introduced the Bantu Labour Act instead. That they were set up as alternative to trade unions was made clear by the Minister of Labour when the Bantu Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act was debated in Parliament. "My propo-

sals are the following. First of all we do not prohibit native trade unions. Consequently the question of freedom of association does not arise. They will still have the right to associate, they will have the right to form their own trade unions. We do not prohibit it. But what we do in this Bill is to create machinery which will ensure justice to native workers, which will enable them to channelise their grievances and bring them to the attention of the authorities - some alternative machinery. If that machinery is effective and successful, the natives will have no interest in trade unions and trade unions will probably die a natural death" (Hansard Col 872, 1453).

Again the Minister of Labour made the intention of the Act clear when he replied in the debate on the Bantu Labour Relations Regulation Amendment Act 1973. He said: "If we had wanted to prohibit these Trade unions, Minister Schoeman would already have done so in 1953. This has never been done, we have felt that they could simply struggle on like that, I think that the establishment of these workers committees will really deprive these Bantu trade unions of the Hon. Member (a reference to Mrs. Suzman) of their life's blood and any necessity for existence. I think therefore that such a prohibition is unnecessary". (Hansard Col 8779 1973).

The second point is the extent to which employers are using these committees as alternatives to trade unions. An attempt has been made by Ravi Joshi, of the IIE, to gather information from the African Unions on the tactics adopted by employers of using works and liaison committees to evade union recognition. Although the evidence is tentative, it does seem to suggest that management are deliberately using these committees to neutralize working class leadership by channeling it into institutions i.e. works and liaison committees, which have no power base. (2)

## CARAVANS INTERNATIONAL

"At Caravans International, which is 80% owned by Caravans International Ltd. (U.K.), a Works Committee was set up after the 1973 strikes by management to prevent unrest at the factory. However, this elected Committee remained defunct after the first meeting. The Metal and Allied Workers Union began organising workers in mid 1973 and by November 1973 when the union strength was 30% the union approached the management. After a time it became clear that management would not recognize the union and would actively fight its presence at the factory. The management claimed that the Works Committee was fully representative of the workers and they would not brook outside interference.

The management has started having regular meetings with the Works Committee, and they have been having regular elections at the factory. But the management has cracked down on union membership. Members have been intimidated and threatened with firing. Checks have been instituted early in the morning as workers are coming in to work to make sure that nobody takes the union membership forms from union officials."

## CHROME CHEMICALS

"Chrome Chemicals factory in Merebank is part of the Tauber Corsson group of companies. The work force of about 160 makes chrome by-products for use in the leather and soap industry. There has been a Liaison Committee in existence at the factory for many years which is 50% elected. Workers, however, have been dissatisfied with its functioning. There is no machinery whereby elected representatives report back to the general workers and there is complete lack of consultative communication.

The Chemical Workers Industrial Union began organizing workers early last year and within months 130 of the workers had joined the union. This was indicative of the rising expectations among the

workers as well as lack of faith in the existing channels of communication. At this stage the union officials approached the management for recognition as the only true representatives for the workers in the factory. Management responded by suggesting instead that the union members in the factory contest elections for the Liaison Committee. The union delegation rejected this and wanted management consent to establish a Shop Steward Committee which would meet with management once a month. Management, however, rejected this and said that the workers were satisfied with the existing committee.

Early in 1975 the management made an attempt to introduce a funeral benefit. At the meeting called to discuss this scheme, the workers refused to accept or negotiate anything without union officials being present. This plan was subsequently shelved. Workers also boycotted an election for a new member to the Liaison Committee when one of the seats became vacant. In February, a delegation consisting of two elected workers representative and the union secretary made another attempt to see the management but the manager refused to see them.

At a recent meeting of members of the union the liaison committee was unanimously rejected. Management promised to inform their parent companies in Germany about the union's request for recognition. The response to this request was negative. After pressure from international trade union the company is now investigating the question of labour representation in its plants, nine months after the initial request.

The Union has in the meanwhile managed to establish on its own a Shop Steward Committee at the factory. Union support at the factory is firm and fully 70% of the members are paid up members of the union."

## THE CILLIERS COMMITTEE

It is against the background of a managerial counter-offensive that the Institute for Industrial Education (IIE) and the Trade Union Advisory and Co-ordinating Council (TUACC), were to treat with caution an invitation by two employees of Anglo-American, Dr. Alex Borraine and Mr. Bobby Godsell, to attend a meeting to discuss the feasibility of a joint management labour centre. After careful consideration we decided that the proposal was premature and distributed the following memo at the meeting in February in Johannesburg:

"The establishment of 'neutral' institutions between management and labour has been achieved in countries such as Sweden, Germany and Holland at an advanced stage of industrialization when the working class have been incorporated into the vital economic and political institutions of a common industrial society. Joint management-labour bodies have been relatively effective in the 'management of discontent' precisely because labour has won recognition for its central economic institution that is, trade unions, and has won the right to common citizenship through universal franchise and the emergence of powerful working class political parties. Industrial relations assume a relationship between two equally well-organised and independent groups. This requires a willingness on the part of management to accept the status of equal to labour. The necessary condition, therefore, for the success of your proposal is a viable organised labour movement. We welcome your recognition that there is a need to train management and labour in the basic principles of industrial relations and we accept your proposal as a legitimate goal for both management and labour to strive towards. However, we feel at this stage in the evolution of the labour movement when management are well-organised into powerful employer organisations, that a joint management-labour body would be *premature*. As steps in the direction of your proposal, we would like to suggest the following:

## 1) MANAGEMENT EDUCATION CENTRE

Hostility, ignorance and misunderstanding on the part of management is a major obstacle facing the growing trade union movement in South Africa. The management problem has many aspects. One of these is obviously a misperception of self-interest; a failure to recognise the long-term advantages accruing from institutionalised rather than disorganised conflict. A second facet is the prevalent racism of white management in South Africa. A third facet is connected with the whole question of status and self-image. Both their early socialisation and the cultural milieu in which executives move leads them to feel threatened by any suggestion that they should be willing to relinquish total control by sharing decision-making power with workers. The business-culture places heavy stress on the necessity of 'retaining the initiative' in all circumstances. Status and self-image are therefore bound up with control over the work force. A demand by the workers to share in decision-making is therefore often experienced as an attack on the very personality. This naturally results in irrational reactions which may do much harm. A manager in this position experiences a demand for a R2 pay rise as an all-or-nothing struggle with ramifications far beyond the issue at hand. It threatens his definitions of his status amongst fellow managers. Since his career prospects are intimately bound up with these questions, he feels himself to be threatened on all fronts.

We believe that it would be valuable to initiate training courses for managers which would educate them about workers rights, the causes of industrial conflict and the principles of trade unions. We agree that it is important for trade union organisations to play a part designing and running such courses. Trade unionists could act as resource people and participate in seminars with management in order for both sides to establish and learn the basic ground-rules of industrial relations. Undoubtedly the trade union leadership could gain much from a more precise under-

standing of issues as they effect management.

## 2) CONCRETE SUPPORT FOR AN ORGANISED LABOUR MOVEMENT

However, the necessary condition for our participation in such a centre would be the concrete recognition and support on the part of management for the emerging African trade union movement. This involves support in three areas:

- i) *Support for existing worker education groups:*  
At present there are educational institutions in each of the major centres for worker education. These organisations have to a great extent grown organically with the African trade unions. They co-operate closely with the union in designing their educational courses. The further development of the African trade union movement is of course dependent on education and training in organisational skills. We therefore believe that an important part of your proposal should consist of financial aid to the existing organisations.
- ii) Even more important is the question of the *recognition of trade unions*. Although some leading management spokesmen have come out in favour of the recognition of trade unions, very little has yet happened in practice. African trade unions cannot be expected to take part in any general projects with management representatives until these bodies have given concrete recognition to the unions already operating within their establishments.
- iii) *Research* needs to be undertaken into the factors inhibiting the development of African trade unions in South Africa. We suggest that such research could be undertaken in two stages:
  - \* the appointment of a top level commission of enquiry into the factors inhibiting the



development of African trade unions in South Africa. They should investigate the needs of the trade union movement, the attitudes of management and the various management organisations, and the attitudes of the Government and the white trade unions.

- \* at this stage ongoing research projects could perhaps best be undertaken through the universities. We therefore suggest that consideration should be given to financing research fellowships at the universities.

As we were unable to persuade those present, the representatives from IIE and TUACC (Bekisisa Nxasana, Eddie Webster, June Rose Nala, Omar Badsha) withdrew from the meeting.

However the proposal was accepted by the majority of those present and a committee under the chairmanship of Prof. S.P. Cilliers, Professor of Sociology, at Stellenbosch was set up.

As the Committee's proposals have not yet been made public, we are unable to comment further on the proposed centre.

Our approach to any proposal will be in terms of the extent to which we think such a centre will facilitate the creation of an independent organizational base for the African trade unions in the factories. This must involve recognition on the part of management of shop steward committees - not works and liason committees - as the true representatives of the workers, and as the only legitimate persons with whom to settle complaints and bargain. It is this insistence on an independent power base which made us treat the initial proposal cautiously. To accept the need to enter into agreements with management does not imply that the trade unions should enter into any sort of alliance. We shall be obliged to negotiate with management, but not to espouse their interests when it lies in our power to do otherwise.

We await the Committee's proposals before we make our final judgement as to whose interests we feel the centre to be.

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ments.

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BRITISH TRADE UNIONS IN THE 'SEVENTIES :  
FROM "MODERATION" TO "MILITANCY"

*by Jim Fyrth*

The last six or seven years have seen more conflict than any since the early 'twenties - the period which ended with the General Strike of 1926. For the first time for half a century there have been national strikes of coalminers and, at the time of writing, there is notice of a national rail strike. One index of the change is the number of work-days lost by strikes. This averaged about 2 million a year in the mid-sixties, rose steadily from 1968 to 11 million in 1970 and 24 million in 1972, with 14 million in 1974. These figures do not include those lost by 'work to rule', a tactic used successfully by railway and other workers.

New tactics have been found, especially the 'work in' or 'sit in'. In the first half of 1972 there were 48 factory occupations involving 25,000 workers. The most famous was at Upper Clyde Shipbuilders where the workers 'took over the gates' for 18 months and stopped the yards from being closed. Nor has militancy been confined to manual workers. Teachers, hospital workers, local government officers and many others who, a few years ago, would have been horrified at the idea of striking, have stopped work. Indeed trade unionism has grown most rapidly among 'white collar' workers and among women workers. Beginning with Fords of Dagenham in 1968 there have been many strikes of women for equal pay or grading with men.

Another sign of change has been unions striking for political ends. In 1969 trade union opposition, including strikes and demonstrations, forced the Labour Government to withdraw a bill which threatened legal sanctions against some strikes. When, in 1970, the Heath Government brought in its Industrial Relations Bill strikes and demonstration were even more widespread and unions refused to co-operate with the Act, or, in some cases, to obey the court. In 1974 it was the coalminers' strike

which led Heath to call a general election on the slogan "Who rules Britain - the Government or the Unions" which led to his defeat.

Ten to fifteen years ago all this seemed unthinkable. The dominant trade union leaders were happy to work in 'consensus' with any government, Conservative or Labour, and damped down any militant action. Britain was among the least strike-prone of the industrial nations. How did the change come about?

To understand this we must go back to the end of the war in 1945. After the defeats, depression and falling union membership of the twenties and thirties the war brought new strength and power to the British trade unions. By 1946 there were eight and three quarter million trade unionists, more than twice as many as during the depression and the most rapid growth had been in the engineering and other industries vital for the economy. In these the shop stewards, building and leading the unions and negotiating piece rates and conditions directly with managements, had become strong and important. During the war unions had held new responsibilities, from the Cabinet, where Ernest Bevin leader of the largest union, the Transport and General Workers, was Minister of Labour, to the shop-floor, where stewards had sat with management on Joint Production Committees. A new confidence that there was no need to return to the poverty and unemployment of pre-war was reinforced by admiration for the war effort of the USSR and the Red Army. There was a swing to the 'left' in the unions with engineers, miners, firemen, foundryworkers and electricians electing 'leftwingers' to leading posts.

The new mood led to the overwhelming election of the 1945 Labour Government which nationalised coal, electricity, gas, railways and the Bank of England and set up the National Health Service and other provisions of the Welfare State.

This phase did not last. One reason was the alarm felt at the new mood of the British workers. Not only the Conservative Establishment was worried, many Labour and union leaders thought the mood too radical. Naturally there was a campaign to swing opinion, and this was aided by the 'Cold War' as hostility grew between the USSR and the western allies. The other reason was the economic crisis. This differed from the slump of the thirties. British industry was run down and needed re-equipping. Food and raw materials had to be bought with foreign currency, which meant dollars at that time, and exports were not enough to acquire these. Traditional British income from shipping and foreign investment had been cut by the war. In 1950 the Korean War brought the start of re-armament and rising prices.

To meet the crisis the Labour Government relied on U.S. aid and economies at home. Wage increases were to be allowed only if they would help the economy, investment was cut, reforms postponed and the £ sterling devalued. The majority of trade unionists accepted these policies because the Labour Government appealed for 'loyalty'. Also the idea was pushed, by politicians and academics, that the trade unions were now in power and must show their responsibility by saving the economy and not use their strength to get advantages for their members.

Even so, some of the largest unions opposed the Government's policies and a tremendous campaign was launched to drive militants from positions of power and isolate them from their members. In 1948 and '49 the Labour Party and TUC called on unions to "Defend Democracy" and to exclude 'communists' and 'fellow travellers'. Left wingers were pushed out of the TUC General Council, the governing body. The Transport and General Workers altered their rules to exclude Communists from office. And the TUC broke away from the World Federation of Trade Unions which it had helped to form after the war to include

Eastern European as well as British and American unions. For more than a decade authoritarian 'right wing' leaders dominated the movement; Arthur Deakin, Bevin's successor in the Transport and General Union, Harold (later Lord) Williamson of the Municipal and General Workers, the second largest union, Will Lawther, a former 'left', of the coal miners (his general Secretary, Arthur Horner, was a Communist), Sir Lincoln Evans of the steel workers, and Bill (later Lord) Carron of the engineers.

In spite of the campaign the unions split with the Labour Government over incomes policy and over attempts to use the courts against unofficial actions of electricity and gas workers and dockers. (An unofficial action is one not sanctioned by the union leadership). This split was one of the reasons for the fall of the post-war Labour Government. For thirteen years the Conservatives ruled and the TUC leadership were happy to co-operate with the Government. On its side, the Government more and more tried to draw the unions into partnership with the employers and the state, in machinery to guide the economy. This policy had its finest moment in 1961 when the National Economic Development Council ("Neddy") was set up bringing union leaders, employers, civil servants and government together to discuss and advise on economic problems. Another reason why British workers were, at that time, politically and industrially quiet was that the shortages of war and the post-war were past, consumer goods were coming on to the market and millions of people were enjoying television sets, cars, washing machines and other such goods for the first time. Often husband and wife had both to work to afford them but Harold Macmillan was able to coin the slogan "You never had it so good".

This does not mean that there were no conflicts in the 'fifties'. Indeed the higher living standards were partly the result of the success of engineering workers in pushing up wages from 1953-5. When, in 1957, the employers wanted to stand firm against further increases the

government withdrew its support from them because of the economic difficulties which followed the Suez crisis. And the strength of the shop-floor union organisation meant that stewards were able to push up earnings by local bargaining and action. There were many local 'unofficial strikes'. A great campaign began against the stewards. In 1957 a report by Lord Cameron blamed stewards for unrest at Briggs Bodies, a subsidiary of Ford, and another by Prof. Jack blamed stewards for unrest at London Airport. In 1960 Bill Carron, President of the Engineering Union, described militant stewards as "werewolves who are rushing madly towards industrial ruin and howling delightedly at the foam upon their muzzles, which they accept as a guiding light." Press, television and films took their cue and presented stewards as sinister agents of a foreign power, or else as ignorant bores, figures of fun.

Although the left wing was able to win increasing support for votes on foreign policy and nuclear arms the more conservative union leaders were able to use their power to make Hugh Gaitskell leader of the Labour Party. And in the early 'sixties, the leaders of the Electrical Trades Union were, after a long campaign of accusation by former left-wingers, found guilty of rigging the ballot for General Secretary in 1959.

By the early 1960s, then, 'consensus' policies, broadly agreeable to the Government, employers and the 'responsible', 'moderate' union leaders, held sway, in spite of a militant minority, mainly at the workplace. Why, within ten years, was the scene so different? I would suggest five, interwoven causes. First, we have shown that during and after the war there was a major shift in the balance of power between employers and workers in industry. For some twenty years unions were persuaded not to use their power or felt that they did not need to. But the shift had taken place.

Second, The British economy has grown steadily more sick. Since the war no government has succeeded in maintaining economic growth and full employment without bringing increasing prices and a widening of the balance of payments gap, usually leading to a run on the £ sterling and a financial crisis. Steps to improve the balance of payments and stabilise prices have then led to economic stagnation and rising unemployment. By the end of the '60s economic stagnation and rising unemployment were accompanied by rising prices and a bad balance of payments. All had gone wrong. The way out was seen as joining the EEC and pumping money into the economy. These steps made inflation worse. The blame for all ills was more and more put on the trade unions and an attempt made to lessen the share of production going to wages and social services. Through all this period the rate of take-overs and mergers increases and the British Economy came more and more under the control of multinational companies, based in Britain, the USA or Western Europe.

Thirdly, faced with these difficulties governments since the early sixties have increasingly tried to impose curbs on union wage demands. These have had short term successes but have led to growing union militancy.

Fourthly, to back up the wage curbs, and especially to try to stop shop-floor negotiators from pushing up local wage rates, the Labour Government in 1968-9 and, more severely, the Conservative Government from 1970, tried to impose sanctions on the unions through the law. These attempts led to a major revolt by the unions.

Fifthly, the unions have been influenced by the emergence of radical political movements and by events in the world at large, whether Eastern Europe, the U.S.A., South East Asia or Latin America. This influence began with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in the late 'fifties. These movements usually began with young



people, students and political radicals but have led, for almost the first time in British history to close links between political radicals and many trade union leaders. This is seen, for instance, in the movements for Workers' Control or Industrial Democracy, which have brought together a wide variety of academics, politicians and trade unionists. The change had begun by the early 'sixties. A 'left', Frank Cousins, had followed Deakin to lead the Transport Workers, In 1960 anti-nuclear resolutions were carried against the leadership at the TUC and Labour Party Conferences. In 1962 the Tory Chancellor, Selwyn Lloyd, tried to impose a "guiding light" of 2½% as the 'norm' for wage increases and was met by stubborn opposition. Ten thousand nurses marched through London for a higher amount, an unheard of event. The TUC refused to co-operate with the Government's wages policy in any form.

In 1964 a Labour Government was faced with a desperate balance of payments crisis and imposed wage restraints. At first this was voluntary but was then imposed by law and in some years there was a 'nil norm' for increases. This policy was largely defeated by shop-stewards making 'productivity bargains' in the workplace, which pushed up earnings. In 1966 merchant seamen won an increase above the norm in a long drawn out strike, in spite of the declaration of a state of emergency by the government and the denunciation of their leaders by the Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, as "a tightly knit group of politically motivated men". In 1969 the policy was completely smashed by a strike of London dustmen who pushed up their basic wage from £15.45 to £20. Wage increases flooded through the gap made by the dustmen.

Meanwhile the Government had tried to bring in legal curbs on the unions. In 1965 it had set up a Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Organisations, chaired by Lord Donovan. This reported that unions and

shop-stewards were essential for the smooth running of British industry and should be encouraged - a picture very different from that presented by the media. It argued that the unofficial, shop-floor system of bargaining, now so widespread, should be brought into the official system - and so of course controlled - by the drawing up of plant and company agreements which would be deposited with the Department of Employment (formerly Ministry of Labour). It firmly opposed any legal curbs on the unions.

However, the Labour Government published a white paper "In place of Strife" and a bill based on this, which gave the government power to impose a 'cooling-off period' and call for a ballot of union members if it thought a strike harmful to the economy. The whole trade union movement opposed this. A Liason Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions called strikes and demonstrations and trade union MPs threatened to vote against the Government. It climbed down. But the split again helped to ensure defeat of the Government at the polls. By now, several unions, including the engineers-where Hugh Scanlon followed Lord Carron, had elected militant leaders and even the TUC General Council contained a substantial 'left-wing' minority.

Now the Heath Government brought in its Industrial Relations Bill which included the restrictions for which the most 'backwoods' Tories had been calling. Even the Confederation of British Industries opposed some of its clauses and most big employers ignored it because they knew that, if applied, it would worsen industrial relations. Under the Act many kinds of strikes were declared 'unfair industrial practices' and could be prosecuted in the National Industrial Relations Court (NIRC). This special court, set up to enforce the Act, was presided over by Sir John Donaldson, who, as a Conservative lawyer, had helped to originate the ideas in the Act.

Many lawyers found the NIRC opposed to British legal traditions. The Act also aimed to make collective agreements, between unions and employers, enforceable by law. It encouraged people who wished to opt out of unions and made 'closed shops' illegal. It set up a Registrar of Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, with whom the unions must register if they were to have full legal protection and to avoid heavy taxation. But if they did register he could determine their rules. In particular rules should make sure that union leaders disciplined their militant rank and file.

In London 150 000 trade unionists marched against the Bill and, nationally, more than three million struck work for a day. Never before had British unions taken such political action. Unions refused to register or to recognise institutions set up by the Act and the engineers and transport workers refused to pay fines imposed by the NIRC. When five dockers were sent to Pentonville Prison for refusing to obey the NIRC there were large demonstrations and the TUC threatened to call a one-day general strike. They were released.

Meanwhile, too, there were actions against unemployment, such as that at Upper Clyde Shipbuilders. In London a group of print workers took over their factory and ran it for several months when threatened with closure. In East Anglia - an area not strong in union organisation - a group of women workers refused to allow their workplace to close and set up a workers' co-operative to keep it going.

By now the cost of living was rising quickly. When in 1971 post office workers struck for a 15% increase and gave in after 47 days, it seemed that the Government's aim of reducing wage increases was succeeding. But a year later the coalminers struck nationally for a big increase. Railmen, transport workers and power workers helped to stop the movement of coal. 'Flying pickets' prevented coal from reaching the power

stations. After a Commission of Inquiry, under Lord Wilberforce, the Government climbed down. Now power workers, teachers, local government officers and others joined the militant movement.

No legal action had been taken against the miners' 'flying pickets' but when, in 1973, a successful building workers' strike used the same weapon the Government (after a gap of six months) saw to the arrest of 24 leaders of the strike in non-industrial North Wales. Several were given prison sentences under the conspiracy laws. Once again there were many union actions in their support but, at the time of writing the Labour Home Secretary still refuses to release two of them.

The successful wage battles led the Heath Government, in 1973, to impose statutory control of wages once again. And this brought its final downfall. In late 1973 the coalminers demanded a further increase. The Government refused. The miners called an overtime ban followed by a strike. Heath put the country on a three day working week, a disaster for the economy and, in the knowledge of most experts, quite unnecessary. It was an attempt to isolate the union. But it failed and a Court of Inquiry found, in the main, in favour of the miners. Heath then tried a gambler's throw. He dissolved Parliament and called a General Election with the strike and the three-day week still on. The press worked up a 'red scare' against the miners' leaders especially against Mick McGahey, the union Vice-President. The result was the fall of the Heath Government and the return of the Wilson Labour Government. This ended the statutory wage controls, gave the miners their demands and set about repealing the Industrial Relations Act and disbanding the NIRC. What happened next is told in the following article.

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### BOOK REVIEWS:

W.J. de Villiers : *The Effective Utilization of Human Resources in the Republic of South Africa* (Federale Mynbou-General Mining Group, Johannesburg 1974)

and Alan Fox : *Man Mismanagement* (Hutchinson, London, 1974)

*by Foszia Fisher*

In one sense, W.J. De Villiers' book, "The Effective Utilisation of Human Resources in the Republic of South Africa", is an important work. De Villiers is a top official of General Mining and Finance Corporation Limited, one of the largest mining houses in South Africa. What he has to say, therefore, must be taken to be representative of the thinking of at least a section of the South African managerial class. It is valuable to have these ideas written down, and to learn that their intention is progressive, and that they are concerned with human dignity: De Villiers dedicates his book, *inter alia*, to his parents, who, "brought home to me the essential meaning of the concept of human dignity, particularly in its application to our Black compatriot" (the singular is his). De Villiers is willing to embody this concern for human dignity in suggestions of a positive kind about black wage levels:

"A reasonable approach by management can, however, only be developed if it is accepted that Black workers should be paid reasonable wages and that the argument of supply and demand, which is so often used in an attempt to find moral justification for exploitation, is not valid in its absolute sense in the South African situation; that an increase in the cost of living requires an increase of wages; that the fruits of an increase of productivity should be shared between shareholders and employees; and that the raising of the current low level of Non-white wages should come partly from a decrease in the profitability of the enterprise."

And yet at the same time he can base his entire strategy on the concept of a "leader group",

"by which", he says "is meant essentially the whites," and which, in practice, he takes to mean exclusively the whites. He takes entirely for granted a pyramidal structure, in which, although black conditions may and indeed must be improved, whites remain firmly at the top. Although this is partly a question of moral insensitivity, it also comes from his interpretation of the situation in South Africa. So to complain about his assumption of the priority of white interests is not solely an "ideological" objection to a practical scheme which demands to be judged in practical terms. It in fact takes us to the heart of the question of the practicality of his strategy. I shall begin by outlining what he has to say about effective utilisation of human resources in South Africa, and then I shall return to this issue.

De Villiers' first concern is with the development of effective management techniques. Here he points out, correctly, that people are not motivated purely by economic rewards. There are at least three additional factors. These are the need for security; the need for stimulation; and the need to establish one's identity through self-realisation and individual achievement within the group. A large bureaucratic enterprise, in which all decisions are made at the top, may satisfy the desire for security, but it cannot satisfy the desire for stimulation and achievement. It is also inefficient and wasteful. By separating "managing" functions from "technical" functions, and reserving the latter for the topmost rung, it wastes the managerial skills of those lower down the ladder.

The alternative is a system of "decentralised management", leaving much greater initiative to lower-rung personnel, and associated with a process of "job enrichment" in order to create a satisfying work environment. All this is unexceptionable, and I won't go into the details.

But it is made to depend on a very sharp distinction between the kind of work and the pattern of motivation available for the "leader group" (or

the whites) and that for the physical workers (the blacks). Job enrichment for the leaders is to go together with job fragmentation for the led:

"Acceptance of the fact that under South African conditions the technical aspects of the work of an artisan should be separated from the physical execution of the task, particularly in cases in which a high degree of skill is not needed for this aspect" (52).

Productivity on the part of the workers is not to be increased by job enrichment, but by improved training in the physical execution of tasks, together with a system of promotion on merit along a carefully defined promotion route. Better training and clearly defined promotion possibilities would of course be an improvement on the situation in most South African enterprises. But there is reason to believe that, as a method for intergrating black workers and bringing about large scale improvements in productivity, it will be totally inadequate.

Alan Fox's book "Man Mismanagement" might almost have been written as a reply to De Villiers. Fox analyses the various techniques of personnel management which have been developed over the period since it became apparent that it is not productive simply to coerce workers. These include: the welfare approach, providing workers with large non-cash fringe benefits; Taylors "scientific management" approach, based on the idea of "economic man"; the human relations approach, based on the idea of "social man" (accepted by De Villiers in his discussion of the leaders); and more recent attempts at introducing "participation" and job enrichment.

He concludes that, in so far as each of these techniques has attempted to get the whole-hearted moral adhesion of workers to the aims of management in increasing production, they have all failed. Or, to be more precise, to the extent that they have succeeded, it has been in improving

relations between the "management team", and not at all between managers and workers. It is interesting that De Villiers, in suggesting the use of "human relations" techniques for management "leaders", but not for workers, seems implicitly to recognise this. But he interprets it in racial terms, as a function of the difference in culture and motivation between blacks and whites. Fox agrees that there is a motivational element involved, but his account of its nature is very different, and much more convincing. De Villiers argues along the following lines:

"The low average level of education of the black, coupled with his particular psychological make-up, outlook, traditional way of life, customs and beliefs, which, taken as a whole, represent a low general *level of development*.

.....  
 .....The achievement drive, which is a fairly general characteristic of the individual in Western industrial communities, is practically absent in the tribal black. His approach, founded upon his primitive subsistence economy, is to do only that which ensures his immediate survival" (pp 66, 70).

Fox compares the attitudes of a machine operator and of a research scientist to their respective jobs. It is worth quoting his description at length, because it gets to the nub of the issue with which De Villiers is struggling:

"The former, occupying a low-status, low discretion subordinate role closely circumscribed by rules and controls, is likely to display little or no normal involvement with job or organisation. He may draw a sharp line between job and leisure, measure his contribution with grudging calculation, and generally distrust management as much as he perceives management distrusting him. The (research scientist), occupying a high status, high discretion superior role, is more likely to display moral involvement with his work, feel that it expresses him as much as, possibly more than, do his leisure activities, offers himself to it



freely and without stint, and be conscious of a measure of fraternity with seniors and superiors.....The attitudinal and behavioural differences we have noted are not to be explained solely in terms of objective facts about the two job situations. Each, before he takes up his job, is likely..to have come under educational, subcultural and family influences whose effects are to prepare him for his work role by encouraging an appropriate set of attitudes. The machine-operator-to-be, as he moves through his secondary modern school, picking up clues about society and his probable place in it from family, newspaper and television, and exchanging impressions with his friends and peers, is likely to form expectations that work will be a dull and largely frustrating subordination to the mysterious and uncontrollable purposes of others, with the pay packet as its most important meaning and purpose. The research scientist, passing through private or grammar school and university, will more probably learn the very different set of expectations that he will make serious and considered choices about something called a career, which will have a central meaning and purpose in his life, will develop, stretch and challenge him as a person, and will yield him both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards" (Fox p 79)."

Both Fox and De Villiers are, with greater or lesser clarity and insight, describing the same phenomenon: the alienation of unskilled and semi-skilled workers from the work process. But they are offering very different explanations. De Villiers explains it in terms of crude and abstracted "racial cultural differences". Fox, on the other hand, offers an account of the way in which this arises from the work process itself, and is reinforced by attitudes and ideas in the wider society.

Fox's main conceptual tool is the distinction between "high trust" and "low trust" situations. In a high trust situation, there is likely to be a high degree of moral obligation experienced by

all members of the collectivity. This can be achieved within the management group, and this is why human relations techniques are possible at that level. In a low trust situation, it is impossible to get moral commitment. The best one can hope for is low key acceptance, and at worst coercion will be necessary. The thrust of Fox's argument is that in modern society the work situation is inherently a low trust situation. There is, and workers are fully aware that there is, a conflict of interest between management and labour. It is no use saying with Taylor, as does De Villiers, that workers and management should not fight over slices of the cake, but should rather work together to make a bigger cake. However large the cake, there is still going to be dispute over how to slice it. Fox stresses that the whole idea of fairness is very important to workers. The fact is that their jobs are dull and their wages are low compared to management salaries. All the "human relations" techniques for making them satisfied run in to the irremovable obstacle presented by the technical and organisational demands of efficient and profitable production.

Fox sees the "low trust" problem arising on two different levels. The first level is within the factory itself. The second level is that of the society as a whole. The fact is that advanced industrial societies remain fundamentally unequal:

"the more government upholds a social system which, through its institutions of private enterprise, profit-seeking, market relationships, and massive inequalities, sanctifies and institutionalises material and status self-seeking through power, the less the participants in such a system can be reached by moral appeals from government to restrain their own hand "for the common good". Such appeals are tantamount to a demand that men behave in a high trust manner within what they perceive as a low trust situation".

Fox's solution to this problem is the obvious,

although difficult one of trying to bring about greater equality of opportunity and a closer correlation between effort and reward. But that is a long term and indeed almost utopian goal where South Africa is concerned.

Of greater significance for us is the solution which Fox puts forward to the problem of low trust relations within the factory. This is that we must simply accept that these do exist and will continue to exist, so that there is no chance of getting moral commitment from the workers to the enterprise. We have to make the best of a bad job, and the way to do that is through collective bargaining. Workers are not going to learn to love management. But they are much more likely to co-operate to some extent in carrying out agreements about wages and working conditions which have been reached by genuine collective bargaining than they are in any other circumstances:

" There is recognition..that to see leadership only in terms of rallying and offering personal inspiration to a unified team is too narrow and restricted a definition of that function. In the context of the modern industrial organisation leadership can take the form of promoting a joint search for the highest negotiated reconciliation of divergent interests (as perceived by the parties) which secures that all parties are conscious of making a net gain...The demands that such a strategy will make on their (the managers) creativity, ingenuity, analytical skill and negotiating techniques lift it far above the quality and insight manifested by the panaceas offered them in the past" (Fox 130-1). "

Once more, De Villiers partially grasps this idea. He suggests that black workers be given the right to organise, negotiate and even strike, but only "within the framework of a collective unit limited to the particular enterprise in which those workers are employed"(90). In addition to this serious qualification, it is clear

that he does not really envisage a serious process of bargaining, but rather some sort of "communication" mechanism through which the workers could be convinced that "management is looking after their interests." (91).

His reasons for adopting this position are two. The first is that he does not recognise the basic conflict of interest between workers and management, and so fails to realise that workers are *never* likely to believe that management is looking after their interests. The second reason is that he believes trade unions are dangerous, both for workers in general, and for black workers in particular. His reasons for this belief are worth examining in detail, because they are likely to be widely shared. I shall quote his own words extensively, since any summary would run the risk of appearing to be a caricature. There are two main reasons:

The broad pattern of the development of the trade union movement in Britain over the past decade has certain lessons for South Africa. In the early sixties, control of the British trade unions rested largely with responsible, moderate officials. Established negotiating procedures were followed before any stoppage of work. Although unofficial strikes did occur, they were infrequent.

In 1969, however, *under a Labour government*, the country suffered a national, politically-motivated strike. *Strikes before negotiation* had by then become a common occurrence, due to trade union officials gradually losing control of their members and of the situation as a whole. Wage demands proliferated; inflation soared; and in 1972 the workers successfully assailed the Industrial Relations Act - Britain was on the verge of economic impotence. A classic demonstration had been given of the damaging potential of trade union power in the hands of leftists assaulting the entire political and economic structure of the country.

It should be stated here that the essential

motive of radical leftist leadership is not the orderly conduct of management/labour relations, nor even assuring a just wage for the workers they represent. Their actions are inspired by the basic ideological tenet that working conditions can only be improved satisfactorily once social relationships as a whole have been changed. The leading ideologists are clear on the point that this calls for the overthrow of the existing social and political order.

The process in Britain was taken a step further in 1974 by the communist leader of the mine workers' union, with political chaos as a result. *The lesson for South Africa is clear.*

He continues this passage by saying that one of the main reasons why this sort of thing happens is that under this system the initiative for wage increases comes from the trade union leader, the measure of whose success then becomes "the amount of trouble he causes". (p.89).

This further illuminates the fundamental incoherence of the theory. On the one hand De Villiers would have us believe that Britain's economic problems are caused by trouble-making radical leftists with political motives. On the other hand, he himself states that by 1960 trade union leaders were "gradually losing control of their members". The fact is that, when it comes to wage demands, members are virtually always more militant than are officials. It has nothing to do with left-wing agitators. To the extent that present trade union leadership in Britain is more militant and more leftist than the leadership of the 1950s, it is because they have been pushed that way, not because they have managed secretly to manipulate the workers.

This means that the sort of incoherent theory offered by De Villiers simply will not do. We need first to begin with something more close to a reasonable description of the situation than

is contained in the quoted paragraphs. And then we need to try to understand why it is that over a period of time such a large section of Britain's workforce has become alienated from the system as it exists at present. Fox's explanation, in terms of the idea of a "low trust society" may be inadequate, but at least it starts off in the right direction, by looking at the way in which the society works.

De Villiers really does not seem to have read further than a few unreliable headlines. Certainly there is nothing in his bibliography which suggests serious study of the role of trade unions in Britain.

His second argument against trade unions is the following:

Unlike the White child who is fed at regular intervals - usually every four hours - the Black baby is fed only when he cries for it. From infancy, this develops an expectation in the child that his needs will be satisfied on demand. This tendency is further encouraged by the fact that the baby is fed at the breast up to the age of two whenever the fancy takes him. Later in life the tribe appears on the scene as the bearer of authority, imbued with a paternalistic responsibility. If he experiences any form of need, he knows that he can depend on the tribe to provide on request, within of course the limits of its ability. He will arrive uninvited at every feast, confidently expecting to be allowed to enjoy whatever is available.

This ethos of his tribal society he bears with him when he enters the White man's world of economic activity. The new society, with its figures of authority and all that goes with it, *assumes the place of the old and at once also inherits the obligations of the old society towards the individual.* The employer must not only exercise authority and discipline, but he

must also provide in all needs without there necessarily being any relation to the individual's own contribution. If the worker's material needs are only met in part, he needs simply to ask for complete satisfaction. Against this background he may easily interpret his collective bargaining power *merely as a way in which to put demands which must be satisfied*, and not as a medium for negotiating the basic agreement.

On reading this, one does not know whether to laugh or cry. Perhaps the only reply is a counter theory:

In South Africa most white children, and especially those in the managerial classes, are brought up by black nannies. They therefore get used to having black people ready on demand to do anything that they want them to do. The nanny naturally has to look after the child without any recompense from the child, and so the child grows up without grasping the relationship between services rendered and adequate recompense. As a result he may easily interpret the collective bargaining situation as a situation in which he simply communicates his wishes and commands to the black workers, rather than as a means for negotiating the basic agreement.

Certainly my piece of nonsense is a lot more convincing than De Villier's. The idea that, after well over one hundred years of contact with the white employers in South Africa, black workers still expect employers to provide for all their needs without their having to work for it is an incredible insult to their intelligence. De Villiers, like most whites in South Africa, seems to be totally incapable of seeing South Africa in the way the blacks see it.

Apart from the crude and absurd psychological reductionism based on inaccurate observations of black and white child-rearing habits, he bases his argument on a romanticised vision of early

contact between white and black. And this brings us back to the point made at the beginning of this review: the fact that De Villiers' calm assumption of the paramountcy of white interests, does not just involve a degree of moral insensitivity: it involves also a complete misunderstanding of the nature of South African society. The IIE has analysed this misunderstanding at some length in Chapter 5 of "The Durban Strikes 1973". The assumption underlying De Villier's position, although contradicted at times by his own evidence (see for example his discussion of inflated wages on page 83) is that the differences of income that exist in South Africa are purely a function of the difference between the individualism, rationalism and achievement motivation of the White, as opposed to the primitivism and lack of achievement orientation of the Black. The poor Black believes furthermore, that only manual labour is productive:

It is, against this background, hardly surprising that the Black, with his incomplete appreciation of the situation in which he finds himself, often fails to understand why his standard of living, earning capacity and status should be below that of almost all his White colleagues. Under such circumstances he may be easily convinced that the standards being enjoyed by whites *are being deliberately withheld from him.* (p67 De Villier's stress)

The idea that the difference in income is solely the result of such cultural differences simply sweeps under the carpet the fact that the history of South Africa is the history of conquest, in which the blacks were deprived of most of their land, forced by land shortage and taxation to work for the whites for low wages, deprived of the political rights that would allow them to take their share of education and the development of skills, and deprived of the massive help to white agriculture, commerce and industry given by the state, and paid for out of taxes on the wealth created by black manual labour. One cannot document all this in the course of a single book review. But the point is that it is the duty of anybody writing about South Africa to familiarise



himself with the history of the country, and in particular with the process whereby black South Africans came to be wage workers. Their expectations and attitudes as wage workers cannot be divorced from that history.

That is why all the human relations techniques in the world are not going to create trust in South African factories. De Villiers speaks hopefully of that "loyalty to the enterprise" which is said to exist in Japan. Fox admits that the question of low trust is strongly affected by the history and culture of the society in question, and that Japan or Germany may be different from Britain. But the point is that in South Africa there is no historical or cultural base whatever for trust. One of the incredible myths in the management mind is that black workers are too stupid to recognise that their wages are low unless agitators tell them. The fact is that black workers in South Africa know that they are exploited, and they know that they are a conquered people. They may not feel strong enough to do anything about it, but that is another question. All this means that the task of getting any sort of co-operation between management and workers is going to be extraordinarily difficult. For the reasons advanced by Fox, the introduction of genuine collective bargaining, based on independent worker organisations controlled by the workers, is the only possible way to make a significant advance in this field.

I would like to conclude by asking a question about Mr. De Villiers. In reading his book I was struck by his good intentions. He really was seriously concerned about human dignity, and I am sure that he is honest, and would deny that he is a racist. Why, then, can he present, as a serious contribution to management thinking, a set of ideas about black South Africans and about trade unions which are quite simply an insult to the intelligence of the reader? It just does not seem to have occurred to him that the role of trade unions in Britain or of the socio-cultural background of African workers are enormously complicated phenomena

which have been investigated and argued about by social scientists for a very long time. Instead, he seems willing to trot out what can only be described as Country Club platitudes with only the haziest attempt at verification, or even at coherence. It would not matter if these were merely by-the-way remarks. But in fact they deal with the very core of the problem he is setting out to solve.

One possible explanation can be derived from Fox's account of the way in which managers in general react to trade unions and workers. He points out that the idea of collective bargaining does not only threaten the incomes of managers and owners; it also poses a serious threat to their status, involving "resentment at being called upon to explain and justify one's actions and negotiate on them with persons of inferior occupational status" (Fox p 136). Also, the whole idea of collective bargaining with its recognition of a conflict of interests, calls into question the moral legitimacy of management positions, and nobody likes to have his moral legitimacy questioned:

Among men of power and influence, therefore, few were likely to feel driven to turn a searching eye upon the system which favoured them, and to see its basic features as responsible for the responses, at best often lack-lustre, at worst alienated and hostile, of rank and file employees. Less disturbing and more convenient was to see these responses as caused by foolishness, moral weakness or subversive agitators, and as being curable by managerial action, attitudinal changes or marginal modifications in the work situation which left the fundamental features of the structure intact." (Fox 69);

In South Africa the idea of the stupidity and moral weakness of the workers gets formulated in racial terms: sometimes in crude biological terms of innate inferiority; at other times in the more sophisticated jargon of cultural difference used by De Villiers.

As Fox suggests, this kind of ideology can best be understood as an unconscious protective device used by managers, and this accounts for its persistence in managerial circles. But this still doesn't explain why De Villiers felt able to put the ideas in a book without any serious attempt at verification. Presumably only he can answer that question. But the fact certainly illustrates the great confidence with which the most baseless stereotypes can be held by otherwise intelligent people when it comes to the basic questions of race and material interest.

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