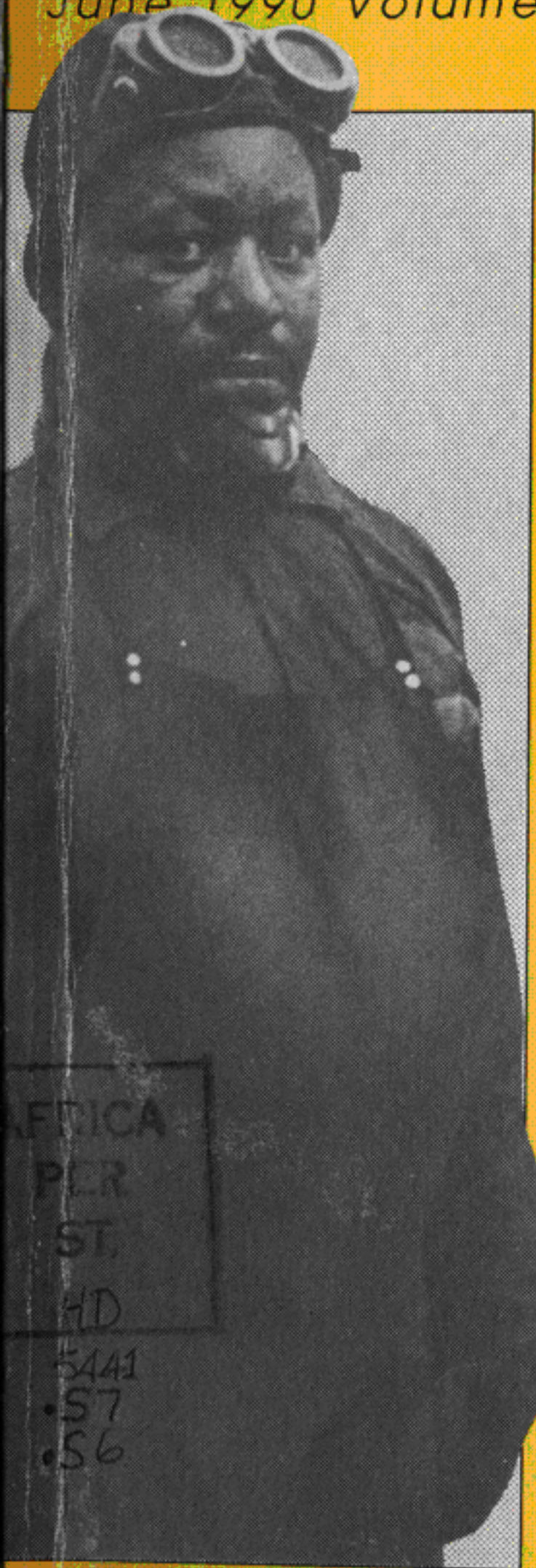


South African

LABOUR BULLETIN

June 1990 Volume 15 Number 1

Health workers' strike
Closed shop?
Socialism in Yugoslavia



SAC RESOURCE CENTRE

New
jobs

new
skills



EDICA
PER
ST.
HD
5441
.57
.56

new *divisions*

The South African Labour Bulletin

(Published by Umanyano Publications c.c. 89/00595/23)

700 Medical Arts Building
220 Jeppe St (cnr. Troye St)
Johannesburg
2001 South Africa

P O Box 3851
Johannesburg
2000 South Africa

Telephone: (011) 337 8511 - 4 Fax: (011) 337 9207

Editorial Board

Cape Town:

Di Cooper, Johann Maree

Durban:

Ari Sitas, Bonginkosi Nzimande, Charles Meth

Johannesburg:

Amrit Manga, Eddie Koch, Eddie Webster, Karl von Holdt, Phil Bonner

Production and distribution:

Devan Pillay, Karl von Holdt, Lumkile Mondli, Renée Roux, Maimuna Suliman, Morice Smithers

Eight issues per subscription. A subscription form and a set of guidelines for contributors appear just after the Contents Page of the Bulletin.

The views expressed in the contributions are not necessarily those of the editorial board.

Published since April 1974

*Cover picture:
Morice Smithers/Labour Bulletin*

South African
**LABOUR
 BULLETIN**

Volume 14 Number 8 May 1990

Table of Contents

Editorial	Editorial notes	1
Letters	Letters to the Bulletin	2
Labour Action	★ SACWU ★ PPWAWU strikes ★ Agreement with SACCOLA ★ Women's march ★	4
Features: Public sector	Public sector struggles: an overview <i>Community Resource and Information Centre (CRIC)</i>	8
	Cape Health workers strike <i>Renée Roux</i>	18
	Teachers down chalks <i>Mandla Nkomfe and Ian Moll</i>	23
	University workers <i>Labour Bulletin correspondents</i>	27
Feature	Interview with Joe Slovo <i>Labour Bulletin and New Era</i>	35
	SACTU: end of an era <i>Renée Roux</i>	47
	Farmworkers <i>Andrew Ball</i>	52
Debate	Constitutional guidelines: reply to von Holdt <i>J.L.</i>	62
International	Soviet Union: visit to the forbidden land <i>Morice Smithers</i>	64

CONTENTS

Review	Township Fever <i>Carol Steinberg</i>	72
Organisers Notes	Hextex and the right to strike <i>SACTWU</i>	75
Legal Notes	Public sector workers <i>Centre for Applied Legal Studies</i>	77
The economy	Economic Notes: ★ Rich man's budget ★ Police pay ★ The building industry's stamp benefit system ★ Company profile: Old Mutual ★ Inflation ★ <i>Labour Research Service</i>	80
Profile	Obituary: RD Naidoo <i>RD Naidoo Memorial Committee</i>	84

Subscription form

✉ South African Labour Bulletin
P O Box 3851
Johannesburg
2000 South Africa

☎ (011) 337 8511/2/3/4
Fax (011) 337 9207

New Please open a subscription for me, starting with

Volume: Number:

Renewal Please renew my subscription, starting with:

Volume: Number:

Name : _____

Address: _____

Telephone number: _____

Occupation: _____

Rate: _____

(see below)

Current rates for eight issues

Please make cheques and postal orders out to: Umanyano Publications c.c.

	Southern Africa	UK/Europe S.America Rest of Africa	N.America Australia Asia
Workers	R 16.00		
Students	R 24.00	\$ 32.00/£ 18.00	\$ 38.00
Salaried individuals	R 40.00	\$ 44.00/£ 25.00	\$ 50.00
Progressive organisations (trade unions, community or service organisations etc)	R 60.00	\$ 52.00/£ 30.00	\$ 58.00
Institutions	R120.00	\$ 85.00/£ 50.00	\$ 90.00
Companies	R250.00	\$180.00/£100.00 or equivalent	\$190.00

Please note the following:

Overseas rates include the cost of airmail postage in all cases.
Subscriptions for individuals cannot be paid with company cheques
Workers & students should say where they work or study & provide
some proof (e.g. photocopy of student card, union card, payslip etc.)

For in-depth analysis of current developments in the South African labour movement, you need the *South African Labour Bulletin*. Started in 1974 with the re-emergence of independent black trade unions, the *Bulletin* attempts to reflect the constantly changing face of industrial relations in South Africa. Workplace issues, the political interface with unions, and international unionism - it's all in the *Bulletin*. Subscribe now!

South African Labour Bulletin Publication Guidelines

The *South African Labour Bulletin* is a journal which supports the democratic labour movement in South Africa. It is a forum for analysing, debating and recording the aims and activities of this movement. To this end, it requires contributors to the Bulletin to conform to the following publication guidelines:

1 Constructive criticism of unions or federations is welcome. However, articles with unwarranted attacks or of a sectarian nature which have a divisive effect on the labour movement will not be published.

2 Contributions to the *Bulletin* must not exceed the following lengths:

- *analytical articles and debates* 10 000 words
- *reviews, documents, reports* 5 000 words
- *briefs* 500 words
- *letters* 500 words

3 *Articles* should be submitted in a final and correct form and in duplicate. Some articles may be refereed where necessary; all articles may be edited by the *Bulletin*. In the event of the editors deciding that other than minor editing changes are required, the article will be referred back to the author.

4 *Briefs* cover topical events and developments of concern to the democratic labour movement. They would usually appear under *Labour Action* or *Broadly Speaking*

5 *Reviews, reports and documents* are intended:

- to make important statements and information from the labour movement more widely available;
- for reviewing new literature or other material of relevance to labour;
- to make more in-depth reports and research available to readers.

6 Contributions should be written in clear, understandable language.

7 Contributions to the *Bulletin* must be typed and, where applicable, include proper footnoting and references.

8 Except in the case of public documents, all material submitted will be treated in confidence.

9 The editors reserve the right to recommend to the author of any material that it be placed under another category to that under which it was submitted.

**For more details,
please contact the editor.**

Editorial Notes

The organised trade union movement has won an important victory in the campaign against the LRA. The employers have made significant concessions to union demands (see *Legal Notes*). The fact that the Department of Manpower has moved so fast to incorporate the CO-SATU/NACTU/SACCOLA proposals into a new draft bill shows how rapidly the balance of forces is shifting in South Africa.

Already, before central political negotiations have started, the major forces are starting to restructure society through a combination of struggle and negotiations. Labour, education and economic policy (on privatisation) have seen tentative contact between the state and the democratic movement, while mass struggles are changing South Africa on the ground.

The state and big business can see quite clearly that the writing is on the wall for apartheid, and they are retreating. But they are trying to retreat in an 'orderly' way that preserves as much of white privilege and capitalist power as possible. This poses important challenges to the democratic movement. As it moves forward, will it be bound by the strategies of business and the state, or will it be able to break up the centres of elitist power?

Several articles in this edition raise important questions for the transformation of South Africa. Adrienne Bird describes NUMSA's proposal for union participation in shaping training policies in the metal industry. This has important implications for industrial development and worker participation in a democratic South Africa.

Other articles in the focus analyse the economic and technological trends that provide NUMSA with the opportunity to intervene in this way.

Rod Crompton advocates that the unions campaign for a closed shop system, and Eddie Webster discusses the contradictions of workers self-management in Yugoslavia. Both have implications for the system of industrial relations in post-apartheid South Africa. ☆

Wheels for Karl

A recent SABC TV documentary estimated that there are over 200 000 paraplegics in South Africa. The problem is compounded by the fact that we pay very little attention to the social consequences of disablement. Disabled people get very low compensation or disability grants. They usually find it difficult or impossible to get decent jobs. Few buildings are accessible to the disabled, and our transport system is not geared to meet their needs.

The need to make it possible for disabled people to live independently is one of the many challenges facing us in the decade of transformation that lies ahead.

The nature of the challenge was brought home sharply to us at the *Labour Bulletin* when our editor, Karl von Holdt, had his car stolen. Karl is a paraplegic and is totally dependent on his car for his independence and his work.

A group of friends organised a campaign to raise funds for a new car. We would like to thank the many people who have responded to our campaign. The tremendous response has brought us very close to our target.

Eddie Webster
for the Editorial Board
Cheques can be sent to:
Wheels for Karl,
c/o *Labour Bulletin*,
Box 3851, Johannesburg 2000.

Letters to the Bulletin

AECI responds to Bulletin article

In response to the article "AECI bows to racism" (*SALB* Vol 14 No 7) which concerned the recent strike at Modderfontein, we would like to point out three facts.

The article states that AECI Modderfontein management ignored the "disciplinary code" and simply reprimanded the white fitter who assaulted his assistant. AECI does *not* have a disciplinary code. Each disciplinary case is assessed on its own merits (or demerits) and whilst taking precedent into consideration, management does have discretion in each case. Management has since accepted that their "discretion" sometimes gives the perception of being inconsistent, and is now applying its mind to this.

Secondly, it is true that management suggested a public shake of hands between the two people involved, to take place in the presence of all co-workers in the section where the assault took place. The union suggested that this should happen in a mass meeting with the entire workforce (5 000 people) outside the factory premises in the social club, but the union also refused to have any management representatives present. They would also not take responsibility for the fitter's safety. On this basis management refused the suggestion as any employee in those circumstances may have been in danger of a retaliatory assault.

Lastly, the settlement reached in the strike was that five SACWU members who were dismissed for assault in the past two years would be re-employed (not reinstated as the article says) and two other SACWU members who were dis-

missed would have their cases submitted to arbitration. Management conceded that a more consistent approach to assault was required. Effectively the re-employment of those SACWU members still emphasised our strong stance against assault in that the persons concerned all had lengthy periods of suspension without pay. A final letter of reprimand against the assaults would remain valid on their personal files for two further years. We have since communicated to all our employees that due to the destructive effects of assaults, strict disciplinary action will result which will most likely mean dismissal.

The above facts should clarify the situation at Modderfontein and more importantly, should also help both parties get on with repairing their relationship.

Heidi Miller

Industrial Relations Officer
Group Industrial Relations Dept
AECI Limited

Sanctions, Zimbabwe and the future

In his review 'Sanctions against apartheid' (Volume 14.7), Eddie Webster asks, "Sanctions may have contributed to the collapse of Rhodesia, but what effect have sanctions had on the long-term prospects of the post-liberation Zimbabwean economy?" This is a crucial question for progressive South Africans to consider, since Zimbabwe has so many (negative) lessons for the construction of a post-apartheid economy.

Webster notes that "the economy experienced rapid growth because Rhodesian factories made goods that were previously imported". But representatives of

organised manufacturing capital (the Confederation of Zimbabwean Industries) claim that these benefits of sanctions have dried up because "import substitution" can only work for very unsophisticated kinds of production. Now, they claim, it is important to bring in much more advanced machinery (made possible by more big World Bank loans) and to implement a trade liberalisation programme to encourage manufacturing exports.

By implementing this programme, the economic gains of the sanctions era are being jettisoned.

According to industry's top economist, "In the early phase of the programme an extensive phase of rationalisation will have to occur in many of the existing manufacturing companies. Companies will have to concentrate on a much reduced product range with greater production runs" (*Africa South*, May-June 1990). This means retrenching a lot of workers in the protected manufacturing sector, and encouraging new small businesses to emerge for outsourcing of goods and services that exporters will need.

When the long-awaited trade liberalisation programme is introduced in July, this strategy will become paramount. Even World Bank President Barber Conable, who visited Harare last November, insists that Zimbabwe can become a Newly Industrialising Country (NIC) using this manufacturing export ap-

proach. How Zimbabwe's goods will compete with South-East Asian products in increasingly protectionist Northern markets is not clear.

The stated goal of big capital and friendly state bureaucrats (especially Finance Minister Bernard Chidzero) is to conclusively address Zimbabwe's notorious investment crisis — a crisis reflected in the huge flows of capital away from production into speculative outlets such as the stock market and property. But without regulating the financial system more tightly (only 3% of bank loans now go to black borrowers) and without limiting the sky-high returns from speculation, these flows won't be reversed. Predictably, the World Bank insists on financial deregulation.

There is a much better approach than the NIC fantasy, one that would probably also work in the post-apartheid South Africa. That would be to renew the import substitution begun during the sanctions era, to redistribute wealth (and to finally implement meaningful land reform), and to thus promote the local production and consumption of low-tech goods by and for the masses (this strategy is spelled out in the excellent collection edited by Colin Stoneman, *Zimbabwe's Prospects*, London: Macmillan, 1988)

But the profit orientation of Zimbabwe's leading capitalists and their state allies, the speculative fevers that rage in the economy, and the current weakness of worker and peas-

ant organisations, ensure that even this Keynesian reform capitalist approach will remain a dream. Perhaps when South Africa is free, there will be a more rational economy oriented to use-values, not exchange-values, which can then teach Zimbabwe new lessons and give confidence to poor and working people.

Patrick Bond

Department of Political and Administrative Studies
University of Zimbabwe

A reader comments on the Bulletin

The report/analysis of other areas in struggle (Palestine, China, etc) is very valuable - it's nice to see what South African activists think of other struggles for socialism and national liberation. With the *Bulletin's* circulation in the trade unions, this seems to be a good way of keeping your pages from becoming too academic, as well as linking up the struggles that are unfolding globally.

I've been a subscriber to the *Bulletin* since 1986, and I find the quality of all the articles and reviews first-rate and, overall, invaluable. I certainly wouldn't want to miss out on any of your coverage - not when the struggle against apartheid is moving into the endgame phase.

Tom Whelan

New York
USA

Labour Action

COSATU campaigns enter second phase

COSATU's campaign for fair labour law entered its second phase during a national week of action from 20 to 25 May. Over the past two years the focus of COSATU demands was for the repeal of the 1988 LRA amendments. The focus has now shifted to look at the issues and rights that workers want included in a charter of workers' rights and a completely new LRA.

Over the past few months affiliates and regions have been setting up their own campaign committees to co-ordinate with the COSATU National Campaigns Committee and its various sub-committees. Workshops at various levels have discussed the content of COSATU demands, and strategies for how best to campaign for laws that meet workers' needs (see COSATU comment in *Legal Notes*). In the Highveld region, the workers even included the demand for an Interim Government and Constituent Assembly as a means of ensuring that a post-apartheid state is representative and democratic.

Action ranged from lunch-time demonstrations and marches to a sit-in in post offices and a two-day stayaway in the Highveld region. Participation amongst affiliates and regions varied.

The action was planned to coincide with a number of high-level meetings - between public sector unions and the ministers of various state departments, between COSATU and Barlow Rand, and the National Manpower Commission hearings on its working document on a new LRA. Out of all of these, only the meetings with the Minister of Manpower to plan the process of amending the LRA was successful.

Employers and workers square up for major wage battles

Workers may have been justified in believing that in a less repressive climate they would have more bargaining power, and certainly the level of militancy illustrates their confidence. But they were wrong if they believed that employers would approach 1990 wage negotiations with a spirit of reconciliation.

In a number of national negotiations there is already clear evidence that employers are set to put their mark on the political process, by establishing that their economic power can not be challenged now or in the future.

OK Bazaars uses right-wing scabs

Deadlock in OK bazaars negotiations has already resulted in a bitter national legal strike. SACCAWU's demand for an R800 minimum is modest. OK is again arrogantly proposing a service-related wage increase, knowing how offensive this is to workers and that it has been a source of conflict in previous strikes.

OK also announced that the union is naive and that the company will sit out the strike, a pattern of SABreweries subsidiaries in recent years.

SACCAWU is not accusing OK of *deliberately* hiring right-wing thugs to scab, break up picket lines and physically threaten workers. But this has come to be a consistent and widespread phenomenon. Incidents have occurred in Pretoria, Eloff Street, Cresta, Kroonstad, Potgietersrus and Natal and other areas. Why has OK been unable to prevent this type of action, particularly as many of the culprits are also

employees of OK? The SAP have also been very active in trying to break the strike, including the arrest of over seventy workers during one week. On Tuesday 11 June, the union was given a deadline from John Vorster Square to break up all pickets, otherwise the police would do it.

At present the strike involves 6 500 workers in 127 stores. In spite of intimidation their spirits remain high. Most of the workers are involved in canteen sit-ins or in pickets. According to SACCAWU, enormous community support has meant that most stores are very quiet. The theme of the strike - "Fight low wages and OK's baasskap attitude" - has proven to be very appropriate.

SEIFSA and NUMSA in for a long haul.

Metal employers are also digging their heels in, and refusing to come anywhere near workers' demands. NUMSA has demanded an increase of R2 per hour across the board. After five meetings with SEIFSA, NUMSA reported that little progress has been made on the major issues, with SEIFSA offering 55c. SEIFSA wants to introduce changes to the industrial council agreement which are in total contradiction to the demands that NUMSA and COSATU are popularising:

- SEIFSA is encouraging deregulation by campaigning for the Minister not to extend the agreement and minimum conditions to rural and small factories;



- While COSATU is fighting for shorter hours and more jobs to create employment, SEIFSA is proposing to increase the overtime limit.
- While NUMSA is fighting for across the board increases, SEIFSA is not guaranteeing a minimum increase. For example, if a worker is presently paid above the minimum, he/she may get less than the 55c per hour presently being offered on the minimum.

NUMSA's mid-June National Bargaining Conference will decide whether to settle or to take action to secure a Living Wage. Already the union is taking action at plant-level to show that they are serious about the demand for a forty hour week.

NUM wage policy under fire

The Chamber of Mines is taking an equally provocative and hard line in their negotiations with NUM. NUM has had a clearly stated policy for the last two years to close the wage gap in the industry, and to win a national minimum wage and a standard system of grading wages (See *Labour Bulletin*

Vol 14 No 4). The mining houses on the other hand are still insisting on having their own individual wage structures, and are refusing to close the gap between black and white wages. They are in fact making offers that widen the gaps between mining houses, backed up by the recent scare that a number of "marginal" mines may close down.

Postal unions present a united front

About 50 000 Postal and Telecommunications workers are gearing up for national action if the P&T do not increase their 1990 wage offer. Three unions representing African, coloured and Indian workers are still standing on their demand for a minimum wage of R1 100 (the present minimum being R627) and an across-the-board increase of R200 per month. This they say can be achieved by collapsing the five lowest grades of pay for general workers and putting everyone on a minimum of R843.

Management however is only prepared to collapse the first four grades and put the lowest paid on a minimum of R789, with no additional across the board increase. This would mean an increase in the region of 19% for the lowest paid, while those above the minimum would only get the 10% increase granted to all civil servants. Only 31 000 out of the 95 000 employed in P&T would receive more than the 10%, and all workers would be lowering their living standards, according to Vusi Khumalo, the general secre-

tary of the Postal and Telecommunication Workers' Association, POTWA.

Out of the 50 000 workers represented by COSATU affiliate POTWA, the South African Post and Telecommunications Employees Association (Saptea) and the Post Office Employees Association (Peasa), at least half find themselves on the minimum of R627, as do about 1 000 white workers. The proposed increase has angered them, as was shown by the widespread participation in sit-ins and stoppages during May, at the start of negotiations.

According to POTWA, the chances of joint action are high; unlike previous years, the leadership of the other unions are committed to a democratic process of representing their members views. With the mood on the ground being what it is this can only lead to the unions taking a more united and militant stance. If this process does continue and results in joint action, it will considerably improve the chances of the three unions merging to form one non-racial trade union in the near future.

Domestic, cleaning and security workers on the march

Three very historic actions have taken place in the last few weeks that show growing worker confidence even in the sectors that have historically been among the weakest and



most oppressed.

TGWU has since its last national conference put a lot of effort into the cleaning and security sectors, with the particular aim of establishing national industrial councils for each sector. Workers are dispersed amongst a myriad of small companies, and are extremely difficult to service.

In Natal a strike of 2 500 cleaning and security workers from Stanger to Port Shepstone quickly spread to include 7 000 workers from different companies. The strike lasted five days, and the union has commenced talks with employers association.

A series of national marches have also been successful, and a very important way of bringing together workers who are so dispersed by their work. Cleaning and security workers around the country marched during the COSATU week of action, again demanding national bargaining.

A national march by security workers on 1 June was successful in getting the controversial Security Officers Bill shelved till 1991. In terms of this Act, all security wor-

kers had to prove that they had no criminal record and pay an annual registration fee.

Domestic workers march
Another significant march took place when the Johannesburg West branch of COSATU affiliate, the South African Domestic Workers Union (SADWU), took to the streets on Saturday 9 March.

This was probably the first time in the country that domestic workers were able to collectively approach their employers and say "this is what we need!" Their demands were carried high on placards for all the employers of Fordsburg, Mayfair, Homestead Park and Brixton to see:

- a minimum wage of R400 per month
- a 46 hour working week
- the right to receive visitors in our rooms
- decent accommodation
- extension of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act and the Labour Relations Act to cover domestic workers
- decent maternity, UIF and pension benefits.

While some employers looked sympathetic, the majority in areas like Mayfair West and Brixton were hostile, and hurled racist abuse at the workers. At Brixton Police Station they were met by a group of right-wingers with their own banner. Though pathetically constructed, its message was clear - 'THEY STEAL R400'. Obviously domestic work is supposed to be done for nothing!

Job security and social security

No one can ignore the greater awareness in COSATU that it has a vanguard role to play in terms of economic and social restructuring. This awareness is not confined to seminars and campaign committees, or to meetings with the ANC. The need to create and protect jobs and demand social welfare/security from the state and capital has crept into almost every affiliate's negotiations and campaigns.

Textile and garment workers will campaign for job protection

Thousands of textile, garment and leather workers have already been affected by a serious slump in the industry. Workers are on short time, factories have closed down and thousands are laid off or threatened with retrenchment. From reports submitted to SACTWU head office over 8000 workers in Natal, Transvaal, and Western Cape have been affected by layoffs or short-time in the past few months. Eastern Cape figures are not yet known. Recently SACTWU was informed that, after negotiating a small-scale retrenchment, Frame now intends closing down at least two plants. If this proceeds it will affect up to two thousand jobs.

At present the union is examining the specific reasons for the present slump, so that they can work out how to protect their membership. Reasons for the economic slump include:

- the government increasing

interest rates to curb spending and inflation, and thereby slowing down the growth of industry

- factories cutting back on production
- people cannot afford to buy clothing, which is becoming more expensive
- the knitting and textile industries have been affected by competition from foreign producers.

While the union accepts that there is a slump and that the retrenchments are not simply a plot to weaken the union, they also understand that ultimately the blame lies with the state and capital's current economic programme. The state does very little to protect jobs or to ensure an unemployed worker's income. Thus the union bears the responsibility. The union is presently planning to launch a campaign to save jobs.

Chemical workers fight for a living pension

Workers at a number of Chemical plants organised by COSATU affiliate CWIU are also taking seriously their right to old age social security, and the right to share control of their savings. CWIU started a campaign three years ago to establish a national provident fund for the whole chemical industry.

The motivation for a big industry fund is that it will be stronger and able to provide a pension that workers can live on, when they are forced to retire. It would be more efficiently controlled and administered than hundreds of small funds. It would also provide a strong

fund for investing in housing, and workers' other medium-term needs.

So far 32 companies have either joined the fund or agreed in principle to join. Ironically, the most resistance has come from a tightly organised group of chemical and pharmaceutical multi-nationals, particularly those based on the East Rand. In the last few months a number of these companies have been rocked by legal strike action, demanding that the companies join the Chemical Industry National Provident Fund (CINPF)

- Rolfes workers were on strike for eight weeks during March and April
- Ciba Geigy workers have been on strike since the beginning of May
- 400 Reckitt and Colman workers joined Ciba Geigy on strike on 28 May. On 13 June 350 workers were arrested in the company premises.

All these companies are afraid to lose sole control of monies in the existing pension funds, and are insisting on company provident funds. Much as the union tried to motivate the benefits of an industry fund, the foreign companies are stubbornly refusing. Is this because they suspect they may not be able to export super profits for much longer, or is it simply what CWIU General Secretary, Rod Crompton, describes as their "paternalistic colonial mentality", which makes it difficult for them to believe that workers can look after their own money? ☆

Broadly speaking

Bosses organise against workers

The bosses are adopting our slogans: "Cosatu and Nactu have organised and co-ordinated their forces. We invite you to join us in the same strategy on a national basis. 'An injury to one (employer) is an injury to all'.

These remarks are from a confidential circular addressed to employers, which found its way into our offices. It is from the little-known Labour Foundation, inviting employers to a conference on 'Labour Stability for Growth'. The circular says:

"Business confidence has taken a dive due to various threats to our future. The Labour Foundation identified the onslaught of radical trade unions as a major threat. To succeed against this threat we now call on all employers for a co-ordinated strategy for the protection of employer rights.

"It is important to us to influence legislation and the industrial court for a positive business climate which is conducive to wealth and job creation...."

The Labour Foundation has 400 members, who are organised into its Federation of Employers' Organisations and Employers of South Africa. It has existed for at least a few years. In its newsletter *Labour Affairs* No.6 it states: "our primary objective is to support employers against radical trade unions." Services include a 24 hour 'hotline' to a labour law attorney; 'consultations' during wage or strike negotiations; 'training' to suit the individual employer, and a 'strike fund' to support employers during strikes.

Most ominous of all for workers is the 'surrogate workers' service, which is a "databank" to provide employers with "an alternative

workforce should you be the victim of a strike".

The Labour Foundation also calls for 'co-ordinated actions' to "curb salary inflation..., protect employers' rights" and "to neutralise the powerful Cosatu". ❖

Union educators picket union

The Johannesburg-based Urban Training Project (UTP) is set to close because its funding from the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) has been withdrawn.

The UTP has been around since the early 1970s, as a worker education project from which the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA) - the forerunner of NACTU - emerged. UTP staff allege that funds were withdrawn because NACTU intervened, after the UTP refused to become its education department, preferring to remain independent. In protest, UTP staff picketed NACTU's Johannesburg offices. ❖

ANC, PAC and AZAPO take action against inter-organisational violence

It is heartening to see a commitment by the leadership of liberation groups to act against undisciplined and destructive violence amongst activists. After recent violence between people claiming to be supporters of their organisations, the leaders of the ANC and AZAPO held a joint mass meeting in Kroonstad's Maokeng township, to condemn inter-organisational violence. AZAPO has adopted

'Peace in the townships - an end to inter-organisational violence' as its June 16 commemoration theme.

Talks have also been held between the ANC and PAC over violent clashes between supporters in Vosloorus, where at least two lives were claimed. The two organisations committed themselves to "explain in detail" to their membership the following principles:

- Recognition of freedom of association and expression
- Respect for the right to belong and organise for any group
- Political tolerance
- No public vilification of each other
- The recognition of the autonomy of students' representative councils

There was also agreement that a civic association in the township should represent everybody, and not just members of the ANC or PAC.

Meanwhile, in Natal, the ANC-UDF-COSATU have given up hope of reaching an accord with Inkatha, to end the terrible violence there. Instead, COSATU has threatened country-wide strikes and demonstrations if President de Klerk does not take action against Inkatha's "rein of terror".

COSATU is also demanding the disbanding of the kwaZulu Police, and the removal of Buthelezi as kwaZulu's Minister of Police, amongst other things. COSATU regards the ZP as the "armed wing of Inkatha". ❖

RED EYE

Exorcising the ghost of Stalin

The publication of SACP general-secretary Joe Slovo's frank critique of Stalinism, 'Has Socialism Failed?' (see *Labour Bulletin* Vol 14 No 6), has added strength to the spirit of *glasnost* (openness), which has taken root in South Africa.

Democratic debate and discussion has had a long and checkered history in the liberation movement. Too often has it been cast aside in favour of dogmatism and conformity to 'the line'. The trade union movement, more than any other mass organisation, was built on the principles of open democratic debate, and through the eighties it has played a major role in re-asserting these values throughout the liberation movement. However, until recently, it was difficult to openly and critically discuss certain topics, like 'Stalinism' or Soviet-style 'socialism'.

Only a few months ago, at a seminar in Cape Town, a trade unionist issued an ominous warning to three speakers who had presented papers on the problems of 'socialism' in Eastern Europe. He told the three academics (who happened to be socialists), that their negative portrayal of Eastern bloc 'socialism', which for him amounted to an

approval of capitalism, could find them without a place in the struggle. Everyone was stunned into silence, not daring to stand up to this dogmatic and intolerant intervention.

This contrasts with a seminar organised jointly by the *Labour Bulletin* and COSATU recently, to discuss Slovo's critique. It was attended by influential trade unionists and ANC activists. There was an open, critical discussion of Stalin and 'Stalinism', as comrades debated, argued, agreed and disagreed on various points of theory and history. A few months ago many would have considered the views expressed there heretical!

RED EYE would like to think that the strengthening spirit of *glasnost* and self-criticism would eventually eradicate all traces of 'Stalinism' and dogmatism that still persist within our ranks. ❖

The PAC softens its line

It was pleasantly surprising to hear that, in a comprehensive economic policy document, the PAC has softened its opposition to negotiations. But RED EYE thinks that the document's sub-title - 'an exploratory, diagnostic and contingency exposition' - is somewhat verbose, pedantic and obfuscatory. Don't you? ☆



*New
jobs
New
skills
New
divisions*

*looking at the
changing structure
of the
working class,
the lack of skills
on the shopfloor,
and the
training strategies
of NUMSA,
employers and
the state*

NUMSA's Vocational Training Project

by ADRIENNE BIRD, NUMSA Wits Region Educational Officer

On 28 May NUMSA invited leading employers from the engineering, motor, automobile and tyre industries to attend a union presentation on vocational training.

As Alec Erwin, NUMSA's National Education Secretary, told the meeting, "For a union in South Africa to invite employers to a presentation on training is quite an unusual event. It is certainly a sign of very changed times." Some sixty-odd people, both employers and shop stewards, attended from more than twenty leading companies. Two major employer organisations were also represented.

After four hours of speeches and debate the majority agreed that a very important initiative had been launched by NUMSA. It could well mark the beginning of a fundamental break with old training policies and the development of new strategies based on the full participation of progressive trade unions.

Such new strategies will be negotiated and jointly agreed between progressive trade unions and employers alike.

This will have major implications for future state policy.

Training and economic reconstruction

Vocational training cannot be seen in a vacuum. NUMSA speakers argued that it has to be seen as an integral part of broader economic restructuring which aims to address the problems of unemployment, poverty and general social deprivation.

Alec Erwin argued that "we in NUMSA believe that it is only a democratic government that enjoys the support of the majority of people irrespective of race, sex, or creed, and that enjoys legitimacy in the eyes of the international community, that will be able to carry out such a reconstruction."



Erwin argued that the role of the state will be to:

- plan and co-ordinate an environment that sustains the chosen growth path
- provide social and economic services to society
- undertake economic activities that contribute to the growth path where the private sector cannot or will not undertake such activities.

In regard to training the state will need to:

- provide an effective educational base on which training can be built
- stimulate investment in training, as the private sector generally invests very little in this area because of low returns
- co-ordinate certification so that workers can transfer from formal to non-formal education, from industry to industry and from company to company.

"However, we also believe that we do not all have to sit around and wait for a new government - vital work can be undertaken now," he said. "Increasing attention is being paid to how other institutions in so-

ciety can be integrated into both the formulation and implementation of growth path planning. Here we believe that unions and employer organisation can play a crucial role." He concluded by pointing to training as an important area within which to explore such a role.

Problems with training

Four speakers then spoke about the very many problems that exist with training in South Africa today. Toyer Lil-lah, full-time NUMSA shopsteward and trained artisan in an auto company, spoke about the heritage of 'bantu education'.

He opened by saying, "In South Africa today, we as trade unions and employers are faced with a new challenge, the development of skills for a new South Africa. However, a major obstacle to this development is bantu education."

'Bantu education' was set up by the apartheid government to keep blacks out of skilled jobs, and job reservation stopped the few blacks who did qualify from getting training. Trade unions and employers alike have to eradicate this evil system to make South Africa's economy grow.

However, if the system is done away with immediately, for many years we will still be living with the heritage of 'bantu education'. This showed itself in relation to training in a number of ways such as the age of entry, poor maths and science teachers, and inability to compete

equally with white applicants when companies raise their formal entry requirements or set selection tests. These usually presume levels of education and exposure to practical experience which are largely denied to blacks."

Problems of unskilled and semi-skilled workers

Andrew Blaauw, another NUMSA shopsteward artisan then spoke very forcefully about training obstacles to unskilled and semi-skilled workers. He spoke about the frustration of people who are forced to operate the same machine for 20 or 30 years. Their experience is never valued.

Often they suffer overt discrimination, as whites with less experience are trained and promoted while they are left behind. Artisan aides were a particularly clear case of workers who develop advanced skills that are not recognised.

Blaauw spoke of the extreme disadvantage of many women workers who seldom get any training. Most unskilled and semi-skilled workers are only given job-specific training which does not lay the basis for further training or advancement.

He ended up by saying, "Time will not permit me to speak on all problems that we as workers are face. All these problems are of serious concern to us as union members. We believe that workers should be trained to their full potential and that preference for training should be given to workers with job experience at the companies. We strongly

oppose the recruitment of foreign labour into South Africa - which replaces training of South African workers and youth".

Obstacles to skilled workers upgrading

Moffat Lekoba, an ex-tool-jig and die-maker who is presently working as an organiser for NUMSA, then spoke about problems facing artisans. The main problem he highlighted was that "higher wages are offered to skilled workers, but these often replace training opportunities - skilled workers are upgraded to keep pace with new technologies. Their skills hence tend to become obsolete."

He argued that a clearer link is needed between N-stream courses for artisans and T-stream courses for technicians, then again between T-courses and engineering. He ended by saying, "We believe that we need to develop a system of training that enables skilled workers to upgrade their skills, develop specialisation and advance their technical capabilities to the highest level of which they are capable. Full recognition and industry encouragement should be given to such workers."

Structural problems with South African training systems

Les Kettleidas, NUMSA national organiser, who has been involved in training boards for many years, spoke about inadequacies of the present training systems. Segregation and under-resourcing of black

centres were obvious problems, he said, but by no means the only problems. With the new Training Act (1990) certain problems have been made worse. For example Industry Training Boards are now to control training - but how are the different industries going to link together, and how do we ensure national training needs will be met?

Kettledas spoke of many problems. Some of the problems he raised were:

- companies did not invest enough in training. Here he quoted the recent HSRC/NTB Report on "Skills Training in SA", which says, "in South Africa on average 2% of expenditure is allocated to training, while the average allocation in other countries is 5%".
- Companies only train for their own immediate needs, they do not consider the future of the country.
- Training systems do not encourage forward planning with the result that at times of economic upswing there is a shortage of skills. The skilled workers then move to the 'highest bidder' which pushes up wages for the few skilled workers, but which does not solve the skill shortage in the economy.
- No affirmative action programmes exist for workers who have suffered past discrimination such as black and women workers.
- There is no national industry framework for skill bargaining below the level of



His future? - new and better training would offer a more attractive one

Photo: Paul Weinberg/Afrapix

artisans, with the result that operator training is very uneven and inadequate.

Training policy initiative and the ANC

Bernie Fanaroff, NUMSA national collective bargaining department secretary, then looked at some of the recent initiatives on Human Resource Development from COSATU and the ANC.

The ANC initiatives include :

- establishing a Department of Manpower Development (DMD)
- obtaining places for South Africans to study at schools, technical colleges and universities abroad
- setting up a Centre for the Development of Human Resources (CDHR) in co-operation with the Black Management Forum. The CDHR is independent of

the ANC's Department of Manpower Development but liaises with it and co-operates with it. From the end of 1989 COSATU has been actively represented on the CDHR and has assisted with restructuring the organisation and clarifying its aims.

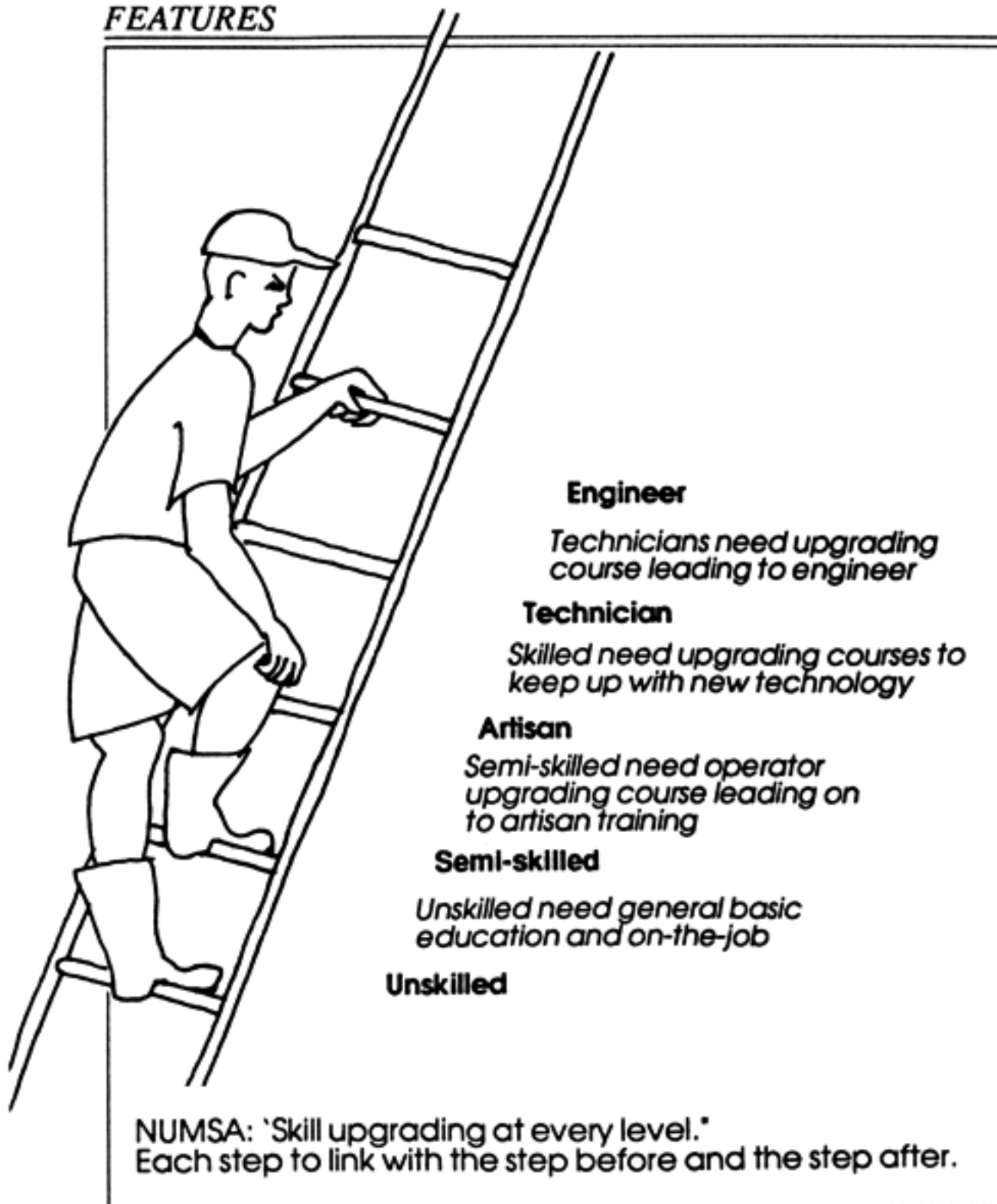
The centre will be involved in co-ordinating and commissioning research, and in identifying training facilities where needs can be met. Where training facilities do not exist, it will explore alternatives and develop an internship programme where delegates can get work experience. The centre will also be active in the area of vocational guidance.

COSATU

Several COSATU affiliates, including NUMSA and NUM, have begun to take training as a collective bargaining issue within their own industries. NUMSA, for example, is demanding that employers take immediate steps to end segregation in training by the end of 1990 and, jointly with NUMSA, develop guidelines for non-discriminatory training in the industry.

NUM, as part of its programme to study the restructuring of the mining industry, has arranged for 100 of its members to be placed overseas for technical training in mining-related subjects. But in addition the COSATU CEC has decided the area of human resources is so important that it requires a sub-committee of the CEC to look at all aspects

FEATURES



of the subject. This committee is now being structured from all affiliates and will begin to operate soon.

Productivity and training

Bernie Fanaroff also touched the question of productivity. He said, "The recommendations regarding the need to make industry competitive and to improve the productivity of the workforce must not be interpreted as an invitation for individual companies or individual industries to enter into productivity bargaining. NUMSA and COSATU unions in general, will strongly resist any attempts to introduce productivity bargaining.

"It is only by drastically up-

grading the educational system and the technical and professional skills of the entire mining, industrial, commercial and agricultural workforce that we can solve the problem of competitiveness in exports and productivity within SA. This is a long process and there can be no short cuts."

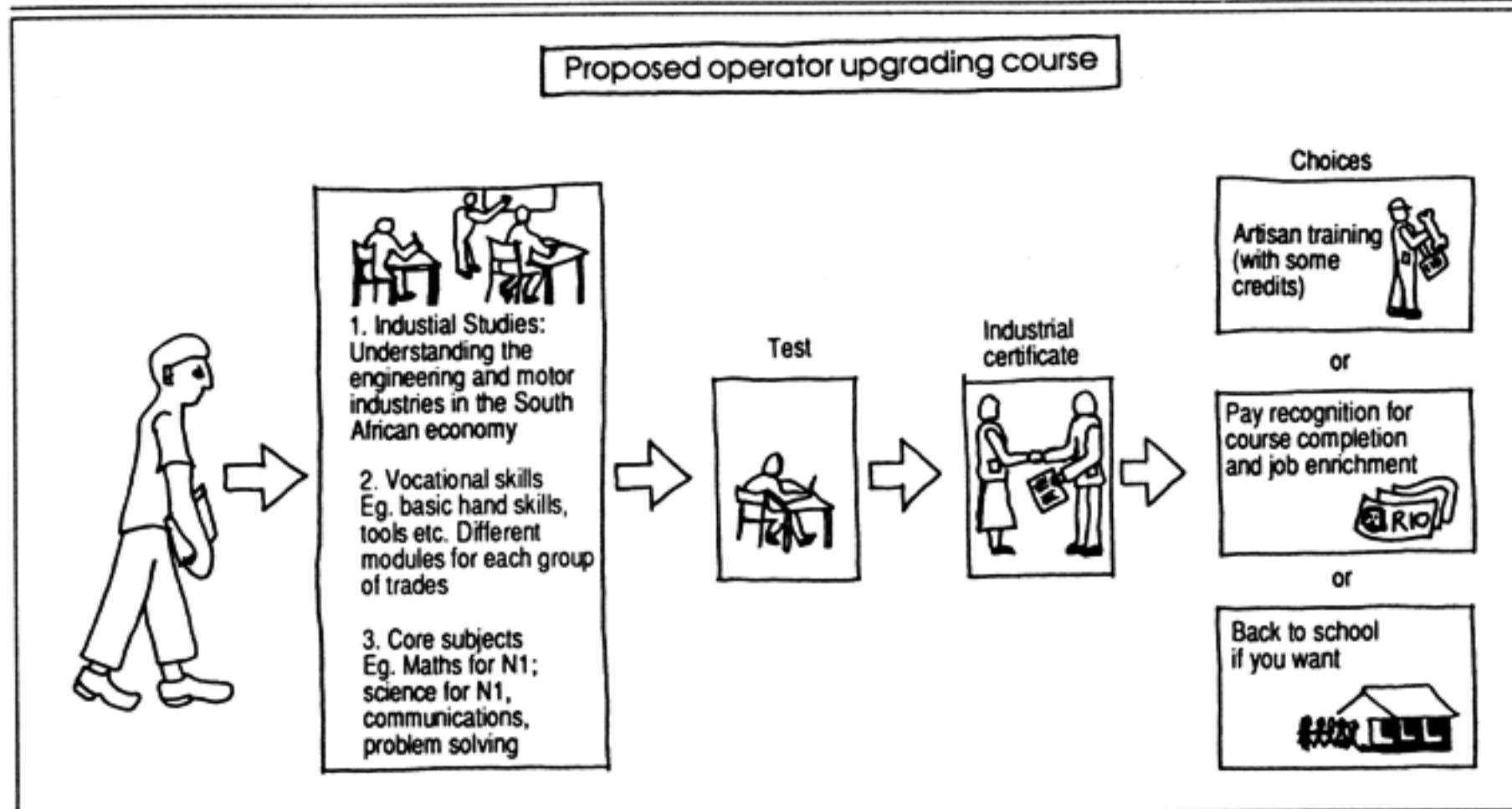
NUMSA training project proposal

NUMSA's vision for the future of training in South Africa can be represented diagrammatically (see diagram) NUMSA believes that an appropriate starting point would be at operator level where a training programme, similar in some respects to that given to arti-

sans, could be developed. The course would need to have the same national recognition as that afforded to trade training - with flexibility built into the framework (see diagram two).

The detailed workings of such a system would have to be based on a systematic analysis of the South African situation. Some important factors are:

- Training in a non-racial, democratic South Africa needs to prepare for economic reconstruction for job creation.
 - Training in South Africa must take into account the legacy of 'bantu education' which has created a poor educational base on which to build vocational training. It is absolutely necessary to develop an integrated approach which combines general education with training. This reality is acknowledged in the recent HSRC/NTB report on 'Skills Training in the RSA' and underlies a number of the recommendations made in the report.
 - Policy making on training in South Africa has historically excluded black workers. There is therefore a backlog of experience and skills which need to be developed in order for the majority of workers, through their trade unions, to play their full and equal part in the formulation and implementation of training policy. If the majority is denied this opportunity then training will simply become a site of conflict.
- NUMSA's project seeks to address these specificities.



The project has been planned with a number of distinct phases:

Phase 1

In phase 1 a number of clear constituencies have been identified. These are based on the present training system's regional apprenticeship committee boundaries in the motor, engineering, auto and tyre and rubber sectors. A total of 25 such constituencies have been identified. The union has facilitated the democratic election of one NUMSA member within each of these constituencies to take part in the project. Those elected are expected to undergo a period of training which will then enable them to play a long-term role on training questions.

Phase 2

Phase 2 is an initial three week training period for the 25 elected workers - from July 16 to August 3. This training will be residential and will focus on the following areas:

- present training provision in South Africa
- problems with the present training system
- analysis of training needs
- building a framework for the future

Phase 3

Phase 3 will be non-residential. Participants will return to work, but will simultaneously conduct research into a number of areas:

- company training
- industrial training within the region
- membership's responses to framework developed in phase 2

Phase 4

Phase 4 will involve a number of international study visits where participants will research training models in other countries. It is hoped to arrange visits in September to Sweden, West Germany, Australia, UK, Italy and Zimbabwe. These will be approximately 3 weeks in

duration.

Phase 5

Phase 5 will again be residential - October 1 to 19. During this period international lessons will be combined with proposals developed in Phase 2. It is envisaged that operator upgrading possibilities will be explored more systematically at this stage.

Phase 6

Phase 6 will begin a process of joint development with employers. The exact forums and procedures for doing this will be discussed with employers and hopefully a joint programme could be agreed.

The project was presented to the employers at the meeting. The union asked the employers to support the proposal and co-operate in the following specific areas:

- Release of elected worker delegates to participate in the NUMSA project in July, September and October.
- Payment of lost wages.

NUMSA will carry the very substantial costs of training, accommodation and travel. We are requesting employers to support the project by paying participants their full wages whilst they are attending the programme.

- Assist elected delegates with gathering information about training at company, local and regional level - the procedure for this assistance to be discussed at plant level.
- Attend a follow-up meeting in November where NUMSA will present its proposals. At such a meeting employers and NUMSA would discuss the most appropriate forums and procedures for taking discussion, research and development further.

The employers were asked to respond to these four points by 15 June.

This project aims to set in motion a process - the outcome of which could be a training system which puts South Africa on a par with the most advanced economies of the world. It could lay the basis for internationally competitive trade and for domestic economic growth where the majority of South Africans are able to enjoy a civilised standard of living and job satisfaction. We hope the employers give them support. ☆

The training strategies of business and government: new opportunities for unions?

NUMSA's proposal for a training strategy comes at a time when both employers and the state are developing new strategies for training workers. ANDRE KRAAK* and KARL VON HOLDT describe the changing training needs in the metal industry, and the responses of employers and the state. They point to some implications for the union movement.

The government has passed a new law placing the control of training in the hands of employer and worker organisations. Previously training was controlled by the state.

The new Industry Training Boards (ITBs) will be established to control training in each industry, and they will consist of representatives from trade unions and employer organisations in the industry.

This change provides exciting new opportunities for unions. For the first time workers could begin to have a say over how they are to be trained. However, the new training law also holds dangers.

It could give the employers powerful weapons to co-opt or entice workers out of the progressive union movement, or indeed to co-opt the unions themselves.

* Andre Kraak is lecturer in the Education Faculty, University of Western Cape. This article is based on a paper he delivered at a NUMSA workshop on employment and training, August 1989

Training problems in the metal industry

Every employer needs workers with specific skills. The kind of machines used, the kind of job, as well as the general economic and political conditions, all influence what skills the employers need.

Over the last twenty years a number of factors have combined to create a shortage of skills in the metal industry.

Decreasing profitability and productivity.

The world economic recession, the uncompetitiveness of SA products on the world market, sanctions and disinvestment campaigns, and the growth of worker organisation and militancy, have all contributed to decreasing profits and investment for SA industry. Many employers see education and training programmes for workers as a way of increasing skills and productivity, and therefore profits.

The rise of monopoly corporations.

In the 1950s and 1960s many small companies flourished and competed with each other. But since the 1970s there has been an enormous concentration of economic ownership and power in the hands of fewer and fewer companies.

For example, in 1979 5% of the companies in the iron and steel sector employed 75% of the employees in that sector, and owned 88% of total assets.

The financial power of these companies allowed them to modernise rapidly, impor-

TABLE 1: PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYEES TRAINED BY OCCUPATION AND POPULATION GROUP

OCCUPATION	WHITE	AFRICAN
Top management	98.0	0.9
Middle management	95.0	2.7
Supervision	75.1	18.6
Engineers	96.8	1.3
Technicians	87.6	6.9
Artisans	92.9	3.1
Machine operators	21.0	71.0
Commercial	63.7	18.3
Clerical	72.1	14.3

ting new machinery and expanding production. A large proportion of production became highly mechanised mass production.

This often meant deskilling skilled jobs as well as requiring workers with new skills.

Deskilling. The differing labour processes (see box on p18) require very different skills from workers. On the one hand many new skills are required (see below). On the other hand, mass production has deskilled many traditional artisan skills.

Machines are introduced to replace the skilled artisans, and this breaks up the artisan's job into a number of less skilled jobs. Thus the skilled artisan is replaced by several semi-skilled machine operators.

In the words of the training officer at Scaw Metals: "It is on the cards that there will no longer be a qualified artisan moulder, because they have deskilled the job by bringing in machine equipment, where there is now very little hand

moulding left."

Employers are very keen to further deskill work in their plants. Deskilling breaks the stranglehold white workers have over skilled jobs. By replacing white artisans with black semi-skilled operators employers can pay lower wages. Artisans can also be upgraded into supervisory and managerial positions.

According to Scaw's training officer: "90% of present artisanal work needs to be broken up into semi-skilled components. The more semi-skilled work you can take off the artisan, the more you can allow him to advance into other skill areas ... for example, allow him to become a better manager, a better organiser, a better planner."

Reskilling. New technology and mass production has not only deskilled work - it has created the need for new skills. The most spectacular reskilling has been the training of hundreds of thousands of black semi-skilled workers. For white artisans this has

Changes in the labour process

The growth of monopoly companies is most often accompanied by large-scale 'mass production' techniques. But this did not happen uniformly throughout the metal industry in South Africa. The industry developed unevenly. In fact, there are three different types of labour process in the metal industry today.

The first type of labour process is 'jobbing'. The Dorbyl-Vecor Engineering plant in Vereeniging, which produces huge pressure vessels, is a typical example of a jobbing plant. Jobbing is a production process which entails limited one-off production runs. Jobbing firms produce short runs of a variety of commodities, rather than mass-producing a few standard commodities.

A Dorbyl representative explained: "This heavy engineering factory will never be automated. Our business is jobbing. We are not making 5 000 small little pieces where we can have mechanised processes. We work with single job pieces, sometimes weighing up to 300 tons, producing one or two units only. They often take us months to produce. The artisan is central to the work done here."

Dorbyl is not a small company. It is a huge jobbing concern, highly dependent on artisanal labour to do the complex work tasks. The work process cannot be easily mechanised or deskilled. There are many other firms in the metal industry, both large and small, that are of the jobbing type.

The second type of labour process found in the metal industry today is mass production. Mass production is quite the opposite of jobbing. Haggie Rand is a good example. This company is based in Germiston and produces steel rope for construction purposes. The mass production of this steel rope is highly mechanised. Most of the productive labour is done by black semi-skilled workers.

According to a Haggie Training Officer: "None of our processes are dependent on artisans. It is all semi-skilled work... There have

been major changes in technology over the last ten years. New machinery has generally produced greater output, eliminating some of the production steps. There has thus obviously been a decrease in skilled numbers, and a reliance on semi-skilled labour."

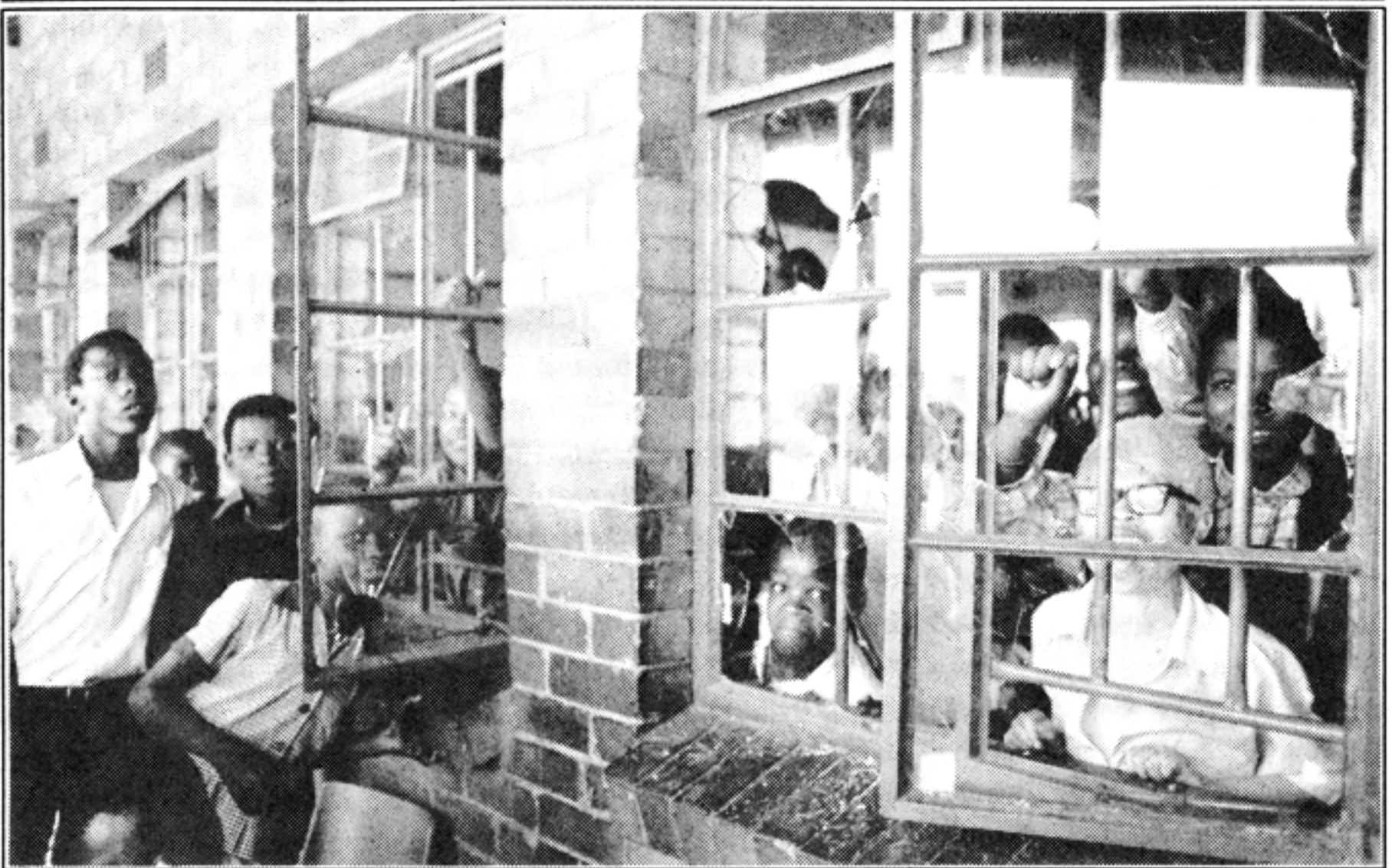
The work process has been broken up into eight distinct operative (semi-skilled) tasks. Each of these tasks requires workers trained in specific operative skills. Haggie employs a much smaller group of artisans, primarily for maintenance purposes. Again, there are many other firms in the metal industry similar to Haggie.

A third labour process in the metal industry is one which involves a mix of the above two: both jobbing and mass production. Scaw Metals in Germiston is an excellent example. Scaw is an iron and steel foundry which was established in 1939. It has undergone three phases of technological change, each introducing a new labour process. The interesting feature is that all three labour processes still co-exist together at Scaw.

In 1939 a manually stoked coal furnace was introduced, involving unskilled workers who would maintain the fire, and artisans who would work the iron ore. In the mid-1960's, a more modern electrical furnace was introduced. The need for large teams of unskilled furnace workers was eliminated. More operators were employed.

By 1979 a very modern furnace had been introduced. Here production is fully computerised and automated. Few unskilled or semi-skilled workers are employed. Most of the employees are computerised-machine programmers and maintenance artisans. All three furnaces operate together, with the 1939 furnace performing 'jobbing' moulding, whilst the 1979 furnace does more 'mass produced' moulding.

These differing labour processes require very different skills from the workforce. On the one hand, jobbing requires well qualified artisans who are capable of doing difficult technical tasks which cannot be automated. On the other hand, mass production has acted to deskill many traditional artisanal skills. ❖



"The real root of the problem lies in the general inadequacy of black basic schooling" - the heritage of Bantu education is a poorly-trained workforce

Photo: Sowetan

been experienced as deskilling their jobs, but for black workers it has meant massive reskilling and an increase in their bargaining power.

A Dorbyl representative describes the new skills required by operators: "They must have the following technical qualities: mechanical insight, mathematical ability, 3-dimensional perception, hand-eye co-ordination, mental alertness. All of these are crucial for the safe and productive operating of expensive and sophisticated machinery."

Operators must read the technical instructions on product order forms, fill in the relevant documentation concerning output per day, and read the automated machine screen instructions. All of these semi-skilled responsibilities require a reasonable

degree of literacy and numeracy.

But there are new skills and reskilling at other levels too, especially when computerised manufacturing is introduced. For example, many trades are being upgraded with skills in pneumatics, hydraulics, electronics and computerisation. New skilled jobs have emerged such as computer programmers, product designers and technologists.

All of these create new training needs.

Skills shortages. The changing mixture of skills needed on the shopfloor has led to a skills shortage.

As outlined above, there has been a massive movement of black workers into semi-skilled and skilled jobs. But employers complain that many

black workers lack the literacy, numeracy and technical understanding they need. For example, only 10% of DET matriculants wrote maths in 1984, and only 20% of them passed.

Employers require workers who can easily be retrained on-the-job in the use of new technologies. Said one: "The introduction of sophisticated and expensive machinery ... is not simply a question now of pushing buttons. You need to know about the machine, its technology, how to intervene, correct any errors etc. We can't leave these expensive machines in the hands of untrained operatives."

Ken Hartshorne, a leading educationalist, strongly stressed the need for flexi-skilling: "The real root of the problem lies in the general inadequacy of black basic

FEATURES

schooling. Having operative labour which hasn't enough numeracy, communicative language and so on...means that there is nothing to build upon. What there is definitely a shortage of, is black men and women who have a sufficient platform of background education, which can enable them to take off and benefit from something more than simply that limited skill. It is a shortage of skills upgrading potential."

White workers also lack the skills needed to handle the new technology. Many white artisans are poorly trained - 50% fail their trade test, but qualify after four years experience. Such artisans are often unable to learn the more advanced skills required by new technology.

Also, many white workers lack the managerial and industrial relations skills needed for their new positions as shopfloor supervisors and management.

Training: employers' record

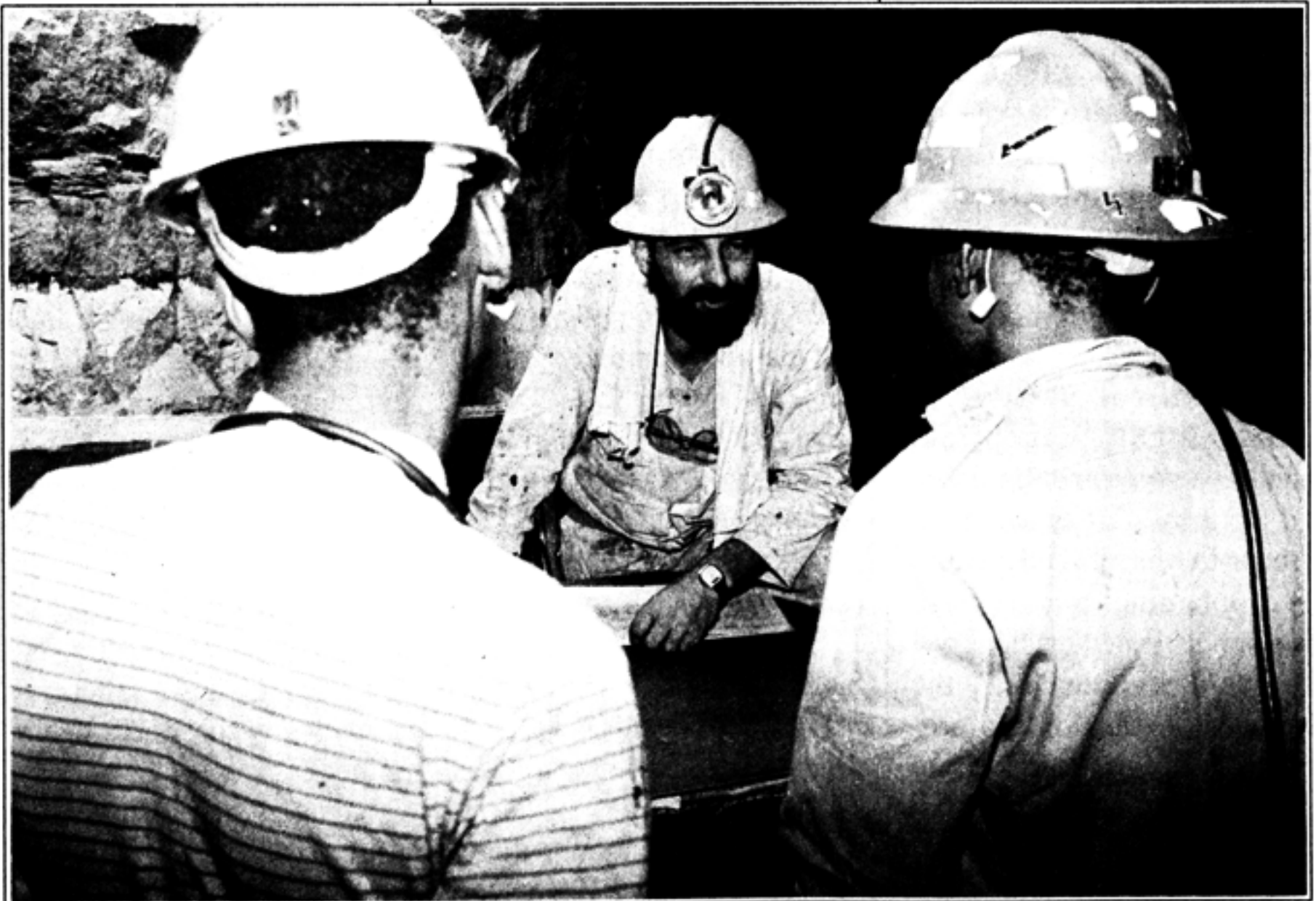
We do not have data for training in the metal industry, but we do have data on training in the private sector generally.

The table on p 17 shows that training is racially determined: in most occupations far more whites receive training. It also shows that at all management and skilled worker levels black workers receive virtually no training. Only in the lower grade jobs - operators, commercial, clerical and supervision - is there any significant training. Very few African apprentices -

741 in 1982, 582 in 1986 - have been recruited.

Most training is done by large companies which can afford it - 69% of large companies, 34% of medium companies and 19% of small companies have some kind of training programme. 'On-the-job-training' refers to training at the workplace. 'Off-the-job-training' takes place at institutions - eg technikons and universities. Most companies use 'on-the-job' training rather than 'off-the-job' training because it costs less. Operator and apprentice training is mostly 'on the job', while middle and upper management training is often 'off-the-job'.

A further important point is that with the chronic economic recession of the mid-1980s,



Training session in a mine - most companies use 'on the job' training as it is cheaper than 'off the job' training

Photo: Paul Weinberg/Afrapix

there has been a drastic reduction in training programmes. While the chairman of the National Training Board has said there is a "training explosion" (a total of 548 000 workers were trained in 1984, 329 000 in 1986), a SEIFSA training officer had a less rosy view:

"The reality of metal company expenditures is that they are spending less than 0.5% of their total expenditure on education and training. This is not

social responsibility. This is merely responding minimally to their training needs. Only 10% of our workforce are getting any form of training. This is very low."

In 1986 the government's National Manpower Commission blamed the private sector for not training black managers, and saw this as detrimental to the task of "integrating black personnel into management structures."

After completing more advanced modules, he/she becomes a skilled worker. The skilled worker can upgrade his/her skills by doing specialised modules. In this way modular training provides a clear career path for workers.

It allows workers to continually upgrade their skills. It also enables employers to know exactly what skills a worker has been trained in.

Most of these modular training courses will take place 'off-the-job' in institutions such as the SEIFSA Benoni Training Centre.

Employers are very keen on modular training for three reasons:

- It will break the stranglehold of white workers over artisan training by providing path for black workers to advance. By breaking artisan training into a number of modules employers can choose how far to train the workers. They can train many workers in specific and limited skills, rather than giving them the lengthy all-round training that artisans currently receive. This will help them to deskill work.
- It will allow them to reduce the number of trades by streamlining and merging trades with similar skills.
- A modular system will encourage the training of specialised artisans and technicians. Artisans will be able to study advanced modules for specialist skills or management skills. These could serve as stepping-stones to courses at

A new approach to training

The training Act of 1990 makes major changes to the training system. The first change is the establishment of Industry Training Boards (ITBs). The ITBs will replace the government's centralised Manpower Training Committee, and place control of training in the hands of employer and employee organisations in each industry. Each ITB will consist of representatives from these organisations, and one official from the Dept of Manpower. This means that for the first time progressive trade unions could begin to influence training policy.

The functions of these ITB's within each industry will be to:

- accept responsibility for apprenticeship training
- evaluate the various trades, and make proposals for the

rationalisation and reduction of the number of designated trades

- introduce a system of modular training, taking responsibility for the development of syllabi and module content. Each industry will be responsible for the setting up of its own training standards
- take over the evaluation and testing of trade training
- take responsibility for the financing of training.

Modular training

The ITBs are to establish a system of modular training. This means that the training will be broken down into modules or blocks. After completing the basic modules the worker will be graded as a semi-skilled worker.

technikons or universities.

Assessing the new training scheme

The government reforms of the training system offer new opportunities to trade unions and black workers. But they also hold dangers.

Winning workers to capitalism.

The new training scheme will offer a stratum of black workers access to skilled jobs, management positions and better pay. This could provide a material foundation for employers' ideological attempts to win workers over to loyalty to the company and to free enterprise. This could weaken the union movement.

Conservative employers.

Even the 'enlightened' employers tend to speak loudly and do very little to advance the training of black workers. The majority of companies are very conservative in their approach to industrial relations and training. According to the UNISA Project Free Enterprise report: "Management is generally still guilty of totalitarian and autocratic styles of management that negate or prevent any meaningful participation by workers in basic processes such as performance improvement, productivity enhancement and decision making... Management tends to be satisfied with broad generic statements of intent, rather than implementing specific action steps... Management pays lip-service to some important issues such as black advancement and im-

proved incentives."

These attitudes will be a stumbling block for union participation in training policy.

Racial segregation of training.

The government has consistently rejected proposals for a unitary non-racial education and training system. Currently black and white workers from the same factory have to attend different training institutions! Until this changes, the reforms are doomed to fail. Many employers are critical of the state's inability to do this. Union opposition to racially segregated training may be facilitated by the current political situation, where the government is anxious not to be seen as racist.

Dangers of the certification game. Trade unions and workers should be cautious about placing too much faith in certificates. It may seem that they open the doors to better jobs. But as more and more workers acquire certificates employers will simply raise the entrance qualifications for new jobs.

Possibilities and dangers of modular training. The training reforms open the way for union members to advance from unskilled jobs to skilled and even managerial positions. But the employers also intend to use modular training to deskill work, that is, to reduce the number of skilled jobs and increase the number of semi-skilled jobs. This means that black workers will not be able to advance their position very much. The chal-

lenge for unions is to develop a strategy for using modular training to push its members into more and more powerful production positions, while preventing employers from deskilling work.

Conclusion

Skills training is a site of struggle. Up until now, training has been dominated by the interests of white workers, the apartheid state and the employers. For the first time, black workers and their trade unions have an opportunity to influence training.

If the unions do get involved, they should develop a strategy to upgrade the skills of all their members. This strategy is even more important in the context of the socialist perspectives of the democratic union movement. Union members will need to have the skills, both technical and managerial, to take effective control of production. Those skills must be acquired now.

The unions will have to guard against the training strategies of the employers. Employers will try to create a stratum of highly skilled, highly paid workers and try to divide them from their fellow workers. They will concentrate their ideological efforts on trying to win these workers' support for capitalism. Employers will also try to use the training programme to facilitate deskilling many jobs, so that there are fewer skilled positions. Unions will need to challenge these strategies as they arise. ☆

*New jobs, new skills, new divisions - the changing structure of SA's workforce**

Over the last 20 years the structure of SA's workforce has changed greatly. Increasing unemployment for many workers, and more stable, skilled and better paid jobs for others, are creating new divisions in the working class. These have implications for organisation and training. DOUG HINDSON and OWEN CRANKSHAW analyse these trends, both generally and with a specific focus on the metal industry.**

This article is divided into two parts. In the first we describe the changes broadly, and discuss the implications for unions, particularly in the metal industry. In the second part (see p 27) we analyse the changing structure of the workforce in more detail, using figures and graphs.

Over the last 20 years South Africa's workforce has been restructured in important ways. On the one hand, unemployment has grown massively and many workers have lost the prospect of ever

working in the formal wage sector of the economy.

On the other hand, workers who have kept their jobs, and especially unionised workers, have often gained substantially from the restructuring of employment. In the formal sectors many workers have had their skills upgraded, are more secure in their jobs and have earned rising real wages.

These changes - growing unemployment amongst some workers and more stable, skilled and better paid jobs for others - are creating new lines

of division within the working class. The racial division of labour, which characterised apartheid in the 1960s and 1970s is becoming blurred as black workers join whites in the areas of semi-skilled, routine white-collar and semi-professional work. (see box p 24)

At the same time the black working class, especially the African working class, is being split into two main groups, the employed and the unemployed. The employed black working population (African,

* This paper was presented to the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa Workshop on Employment and Training, Johannesburg.

** Doug Hindson is Deputy Director of the Institute for Social and Economic Research at the University of Durban-Westville and member of the Economic Trends Project which undertakes work on the South African economy on behalf of the Congress of South African Trade Unions. Owen Crankshaw is senior research officer at the National Institute for Personnel Research, Human Sciences Research Council.

Indian and coloured workers), is itself becoming increasingly stratified as growing numbers move into supervisory, routine white-collar, technical and semi-professional work.

These divisions seem set to increase over the foreseeable future. They pose a major problem - perhaps the major problem - for the democratic union movement and for the future government in South Africa.

The metal sector

Like the rest of the manufacturing sector, there have been major changes in the structure of the workforce in the metal sector over the last twenty years.

Unskilled jobs decreased and semi-skilled, semi-professional and lower managerial jobs increased in number. The workforce in the metal industry

What do we mean by the structure of the workforce? This can be looked at from a number of different angles: skills, race, gender, economic sector. These different dimensions sometimes overlap and sometimes diverge. In South Africa in the 60s, for example, there was a strong tendency for race and skill levels to overlap. Most black workers were unskilled and most white workers were semi-skilled or skilled. Most African women were in unskilled work in the service sectors and most white women were in routine white-collar work. The structure of the workforce refers to its division in these various ways. Another way of talking about its structure is in terms of the division of labour. The workforce can be looked at in terms, for example, of its racial division of labour, its gender division of labour and so on. We will look at each of these dimensions when we turn to the metal industry. ❖

are mostly men. Whites are employed in jobs from semi-skilled work upwards. African workers are concentrated in the lowest jobs, mainly in semi-skilled and unskilled work.

The restructuring of jobs over the last twenty years has upgraded the workforce. Africans moved mainly from unskilled to semi-skilled work. Whites moved from semi-skilled to skilled artisanal,

In the discussion and tables that follow, we make reference to eleven different occupational groups. The definitions of these groups are as follows:

TOP MANAGEMENT: This category includes only the top levels of management, namely managing directors and general managers.

MIDDLE MANAGEMENT: Includes all levels of management between supervisors/foremen and top management.

SUPERVISORY: Includes supervisors and foremen only.

PROFESSIONAL: Includes all occupations that require a university degree.

SEMI-PROFESSIONAL: Includes all occupations that require a diploma (usually from technikons). Most semi-professionals are technicians, nurses and school teachers.

ROUTINE WHITE-COLLAR: Includes all

occupations that involve non-manual work, and yet do not require post-matric qualifications. Most routine non-manual workers are clerks, cashiers, counter assistants and general salespeople.

POLICING: Includes those occupations (not elsewhere classified) that are directly engaged in the enforcement of law and order and national security. For example the police and defence force, prison warders, firemen and private detectives/security officials.

MENIAL: Includes non-manual, yet relatively unskilled occupations in the service sector such as porters, cleaners, waiters etc.

SKILLED (ARTISANS): Includes all artisans and apprentices.

SEMI-SKILLED: Includes all machine operators and motor vehicle drivers.

UNSKILLED: Includes the occupation of 'labourer' in the Manpower Surveys. ❖

supervisory, semi-professional and managerial work.

Training needs for the future: some tentative thoughts

If the trends we have identified in the metal industry continue, it is clear where the greatest needs are for future training of metal workers. The biggest change over the last twenty years has been the upgrading of unskilled African workers, but this process is far from complete.

There are still nearly 40 000 unskilled African workers in the industry who would benefit from a training programme. Much of this training takes place within the enterprise or industry rather than in separate training institutions, so the unions are in a good position to play a part in the developing and running training courses. In fact they have already taken steps to increase their role in this arena.

There is also enormous scope for participation of African workers in skilled artisanal work. In the case of apprenticeship there is a long history of white union involvement. This is an arena the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) will now have to enter as its members seek improved training opportunities and greater control over apprenticeship. Here the training takes place in technical colleges which are autonomous from the industry and under direct government control. A struggle lies ahead to transform both the racial basis and the course content of



Growing division between employed and unemployed workers

Chris Ledochowski/Afrapix

these institutions.

In the case of professional and semi-professional work of various kinds, the problems of union control or influence over training are going to be more difficult since much of it takes place outside the industry in technikons and universities. In time NUMSA will need to look into these institutions and the courses they offer, with a view to reshaping them to suit the needs of workers and the industry.

Another important question is that of the deracialisation of supervisory and managerial work. At present decision-making and hence real power lies in the hands of top managers, while middle managers and supervisors put the decisions of top managers into effect.

Deracialisation of these levels has different possibilities: it could lead to co-optation of blacks in managerial positions or it could lead to changing the relationship between management and workers in a progressive direction. Union policy and initiatives in these areas could be important in breaking down not only racial barriers but also the massive divide between the working and managerial classes.

Some organisational implications of the changing employment structure

From its re-emergence in the early 1970s the democratic union movement concentrated most of its energy on the organisation of black unskilled



More and more black workers have become skilled or semi-skilled operatives

Photo: Cedric Nunn/Afrapix

and semi-skilled workers. The unions showed relatively little interest in the emerging new middle layers of the working population.

This was understandable given the size of the unskilled and semi-skilled strata, and the need for organisation among them. But union success in organising these strata has not been to the unambiguous advantage of the working class as a whole.

In the context of deepening economic crisis the growing power of the union movement on the shop floor has induced management to adopt the general strategy of retrenching, while upgrading and paying higher wages to a smaller but more skilled workforce. Thus, against their intentions, the power of the unions has accelerated the restructuring of the working class and deepened the division between the

relatively privileged employed workers and the impoverished unemployed workers.

The greatest challenge facing the union movement today is to adopt an approach which, while defending and advancing the gains of its membership, at the same time promotes employment opportunities for the growing masses of unemployed workers.

But our work suggests that there is a further problem that has been neglected: the emergence of stratification within the working class and the growth of new middle layers within the workforce, especially in the service, financial, commercial and state sectors. Not only have these strata grown enormously, but management relies on them both for expertise and controlling the rest of the workers.

Through its policy of upgrading and promotion management constantly draws the most skilled and able workers into the better paid positions which require greater responsibility and command greater authority in the workplace. Often such workers are drawn from union membership and especially from within the ranks of its office bearers, because the qualities needed by management are often the qualities that make for good union leadership.

The state too, has made these middle layers the focus of its attentions. Since the late 1970s the state has focused its resources and energies on the new black middle strata of the population.

But it has not succeeded in winning over the black middle strata politically; on the other

hand, management has been more successful in developing a stratum of economically advanced blacks in the workplace. This is accompanied by a growing individualistic and consumerist culture.

The unions and their membership are thus flanked by two great groups of the non-unionised: the rising middle classes and the increasing un-

employed and impoverished. There also remains a large non-unionised employed working class, mostly in the lowest paid sectors and occupations. Grave dangers lie ahead for the union movement, and indeed for all the democratic forces in South Africa, if attention is focused on one of these large social strata at the expense of the other. ❖

been collected on a sectoral basis. This is a great pity as it means we can only analyse changes sector by sector up until 1985. We expect that the trends we have identified have gone much further in the same direction over the last 5 years, but we are not in a position to show this at the moment.

Employment: sectoral shifts

The structure of employment in an economy does not usually change fast. The changes we are looking at took place over some 20 to 30 years. During that time the South African economy passed through three main periods. From the early 1960s to the mid-1970s employment grew rapidly. From the mid-1970s to late 1970s the growth rate slowed and the economy moved through deepening recessions. This decline was interrupted by a boom between 1978 and 1982, after which the economy fell into its most serious phase of decline and employment growth became negative. Despite short economic upturns, the economy has not yet fully recovered from the deep recession of the mid-1980s.

Over the period of long term decline from the 1970s onwards, the structure of the economy began to change. Agriculture and mining became less important as a source of employment and manufacturing, commerce, finance and

The changing structure of the workforce: 1965 - 1985

In this article we only discuss how the employed working population in the formal wage paying sectors of the economy is being restructured. We do not look at the unemployed, the informal sector or the unregistered small business sector, nor do we look at agriculture. Our discussion is restricted to manufacturing, mining, commerce, the services (government and private) and the financial sector. We begin by looking at the overall picture in these formal sectors and then we focus on the met-

al industry.

The statistical source we have used for our analysis are the Manpower Surveys.*

These surveys were initiated by the Department of Manpower in 1965 and conducted bi-ennially until they were taken over by the Central Statistical Service in 1985.

Prior to 1985 employment was recorded for each economic sector. Since the CSS has assumed responsibility for the survey, occupational information has not

* Our discussion is based on surveys of businesses done by the Department of Manpower every two years. These figures are not completely accurate, there are problems in the way jobs are defined in the surveys, and there are problems in the way the information is reported by business and in the coverage of the surveys. The occupational groups presented in the Manpower Survey Reports are based on occupational and sectoral criteria. Quite often the sectoral distinctions bear no relationship to occupational differences (for example, the distinction between sales, service and transport workers as well as workers in the various manufacturing sectors.) In order to overcome this, we have grouped the whole range of occupations into eleven groups, based purely on occupational criteria. Some inaccuracies will also have come in here because it is not always clear which job belongs in which occupational group. Despite all these problems, we believe the data gives us a reasonably good picture of how things have changed in broad terms over a long period of time.

Industrial Sector	Absolute Employment Figures			
	1960	1970	1980	1985
Agriculture	1 687 486	1 447 899	1 306 442	1 179 590
Mining	614 852	680 384	836 359	743 065
Secondary	947 772	1 548 438	2 005 380	2 028 571
Tertiary	1 984 611	2 831 924	3 731 179	3 664 256
Total	5 234 721	6 508 645	7 879 360	7 615 488

Industrial Sector	Relative Percentages			
	1960	1970	1980	1985
Agriculture	32	22	17	15
Mining	12	10	11	10
Secondary	18	24	25	27
Tertiary	38	44	47	48
Total	100	100	100	100

Table 1.
The Sectoral Composition Of Employment, 1960-1985

The agricultural sector includes forestry and fishing; the mining sector includes quarrying; the secondary sector includes manufacturing, electricity, gas and water and construction; and the tertiary sector includes commerce, finance, transport, communication and services. Agricultural employment in 1980 is estimated on the assumption that employment fell at a constant rate between 1960 and 1980 (*South African Statistics, 1986, p.7:5*). ❖

services became more important (Table 1).

These changes in the different economic sectors were important in a number of ways. Firstly, sectors which shrank or grew slowly were also the ones with many unskilled African workers - especially agriculture and mining. This meant that African workers suffered most from economic decline. It also meant that at the end of the twenty years there were far fewer unskilled jobs (in relative terms) and many more semi-skilled and skilled jobs.

Economic decline and the changing sectoral structure of the economy had different effects on different racial groups within the workforce. While African unskilled workers suffered, white, Indian and coloured workers often improved their positions. The reason for this was that the economic sectors that grew fastest - such as manufacturing, commerce and services - were also sectors which

employed high proportions of whites, coloureds and Indians. The sectors that declined - especially agriculture - were ones with large proportions of Africans.

The effect of these changes on the share of the different racial groups in total employment is clear from Table 2. Between 1960 and 1985 the share of white, coloured and Indian workers in total employment increased and that of

African workers declined.

So one crucial feature of the period of economic decline of the 1970s and 1980s is that whites, Indians and coloureds were not nearly as badly affected by it as Africans, taking each of these groups as a whole. Even now, when most whites are beginning to feel the economic decline, they are cushioned from its worst effects because they are employed in economic sectors which have declined the least.

Industrial Sector	Relative Percentages											
	1960			1970			1980			1985		
	W	C	A	W	C	A	W	C	A	W	C	A
Agriculture	7	7	1	85	7	8	1	85	8	12	1	80
Mining	10	1	0	89	9	1	0	90	11	1	0	88
Secondary	31	14	4	51	25	16	5	54	25	16	5	54
Tertiary	32	10	3	55	32	10	3	56	32	19	3	55
Total	21	9	2	68	22	10	3	65	24	11	3	62

KEY: W = whites, C = coloured, I = Indians, A = Africans.

Table 2: The Racial Composition of Employment By Sector, 1960 - 1985

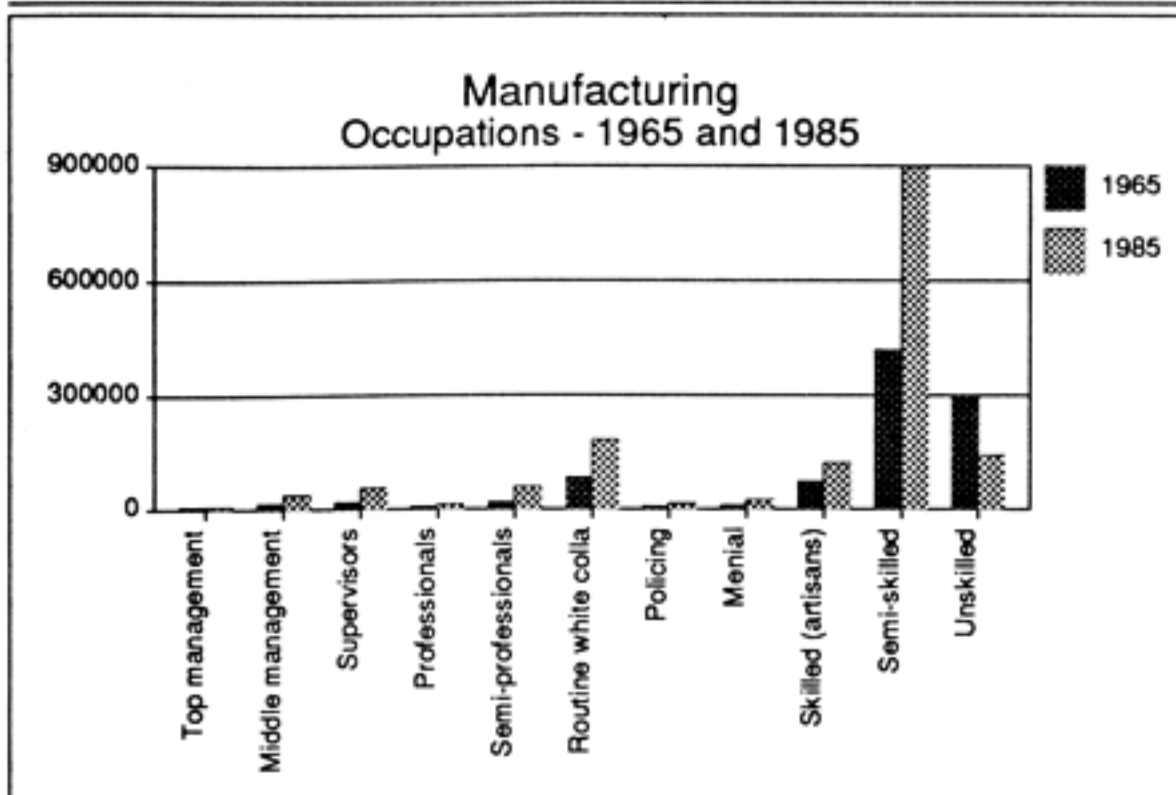


Figure 1: Occupational structure of the Manufacturing Sector, 1965 and 1985

3. Changes in the Occupational and Racial Division Of Labour

Another reason why white, Indian and coloured workers suffered least from economic decline was that the kinds of jobs they occupied were ones which grew in number over the period, whereas the kinds of jobs occupied by Africans were ones which declined in number or grew only slowly over the last 20 years. We can see this, especially in the case of manufacturing industry, as in Figure 1.

Unskilled jobs actually declined over the period from about 300 000 to under 200 000, while semi-skilled jobs increased from about 400 000 to over 800 000.

The groups which lost out from this development were unskilled African workers, many of whom became permanently unemployed. Other African workers gained through the growth of semi-skilled work, increasing job security and higher real wages.

Apart from semi-skilled work, other job categories that grew fast were supervisory work, routine white-collar work, and semi-pro-

fessional work of various kinds. The sections of the workforce which benefited most from this were white, coloured and Indian workers.

Despite the fact that the African workforce as a whole suffered from rising unemployment and deteriorating living standards, a sizeable number of African workers also advanced their position over the 20 years. This can be clearly seen in Figure 2 which compares the occupational structure of African men employed in

1965 and 1987 in all the formal non-agricultural sectors.

The biggest change in the occupational and racial structure was the movement of African workers from unskilled into semi-skilled jobs. In 1965 most African workers were unskilled. In 1987, most African workers (in the formal sectors) were semi-skilled.

Important increases also happened in supervisory, policing, semi-professional and routine white-collar jobs. Nevertheless, by far the greatest majority of employed Africans in 1987 were either semi-skilled or unskilled, despite these shifts in the employment structure.

One important effect of these changes is that racial and occupational divisions began to cut across each other over the 20 years. In the 1960s by far the majority of Africans, coloureds and Indians were either unskilled or semi-skilled workers and most whites were either skilled workers or above. By the mid 1980s this was no longer the case. Each racial group has become increasingly stratified occupationally.

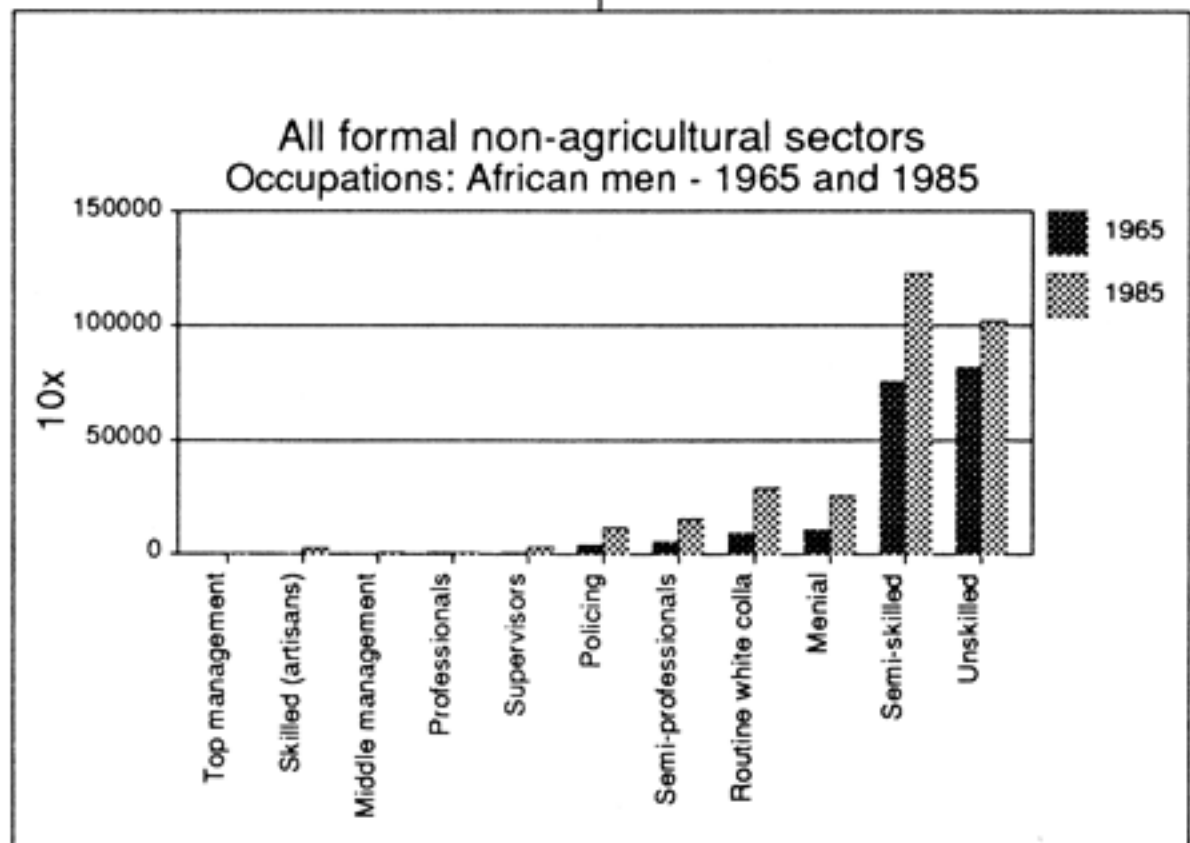


Figure 2: Occupational Distribution of African Men in all Formal Non-agricultural Sectors, 1965 and 1985

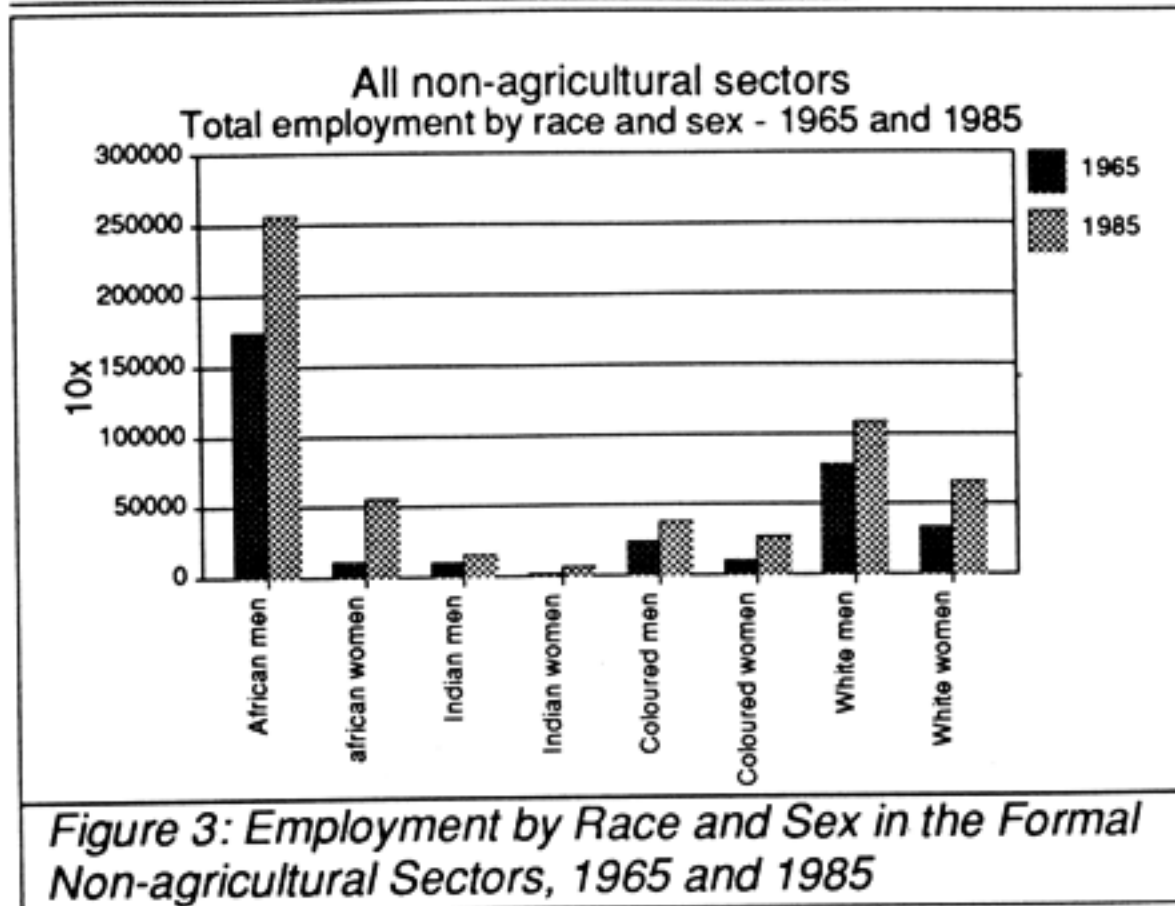


Figure 3: Employment by Race and Sex in the Formal Non-agricultural Sectors, 1965 and 1985

In the case of African workers the big division is between the employed and unemployed, though important differences are emerging between semi-skilled workers and unskilled workers.

Differences are also emerging between unionised and non-unionised workers, though our figures cannot show this. Whites are spread between semi-skilled work and managerial positions. Coloured and Indian workers are mainly in the middle levels of the occupational structure from semi-skilled to semi-professional jobs.

All this has meant that racial mixing in the workplace has happened mainly in the middle level jobs. At the lowest levels (unskilled, menial and semi-skilled occupations) there are few whites and at the upper levels (management and professional occupations) there are few blacks.

4. The Sexual Structure Of The Workforce

One of the greatest changes that has taken place in the South African economy over the last twenty years has been the increase in the number of women in formal

sector employment. Figure 3 shows this quite clearly.

For all racial groups the rate of growth in the number of women far exceeded that of men. African women entered the workforce at the fastest rate, but the proportion of African women who are employed, compared to those who are not employed, is the lowest. This is because their employment growth took place from a very low starting point. On the other hand a higher proportion of white and coloured women have formal jobs.

5. Changes in the Occupational and Racial Structure of the Metal Industry

What has been happening in the metal industry? Our study covers the three main subsectors of the industry: basic metals, metal products and machinery. The general patterns here are similar to the rest of the manufacturing sector, but there are also some special features.

The occupational structure of the metal industries changed systematically over the period from 1965 to 1985 (Figure 4).

Semi-skilled work grew enormously, skilled work (artisanal) grew relatively slowly and unskilled work actually declined in absolute and relative terms over the period. There was also very rapid growth in semi-professional, supervisory and routine white-collar work.

In racial terms the metal industry is starkly divided. It is an industry largely of African men and white men. This is clear from Figure 5. Of the total workforce of some 303 000 in 1985, 55% were African men and nearly 30% were

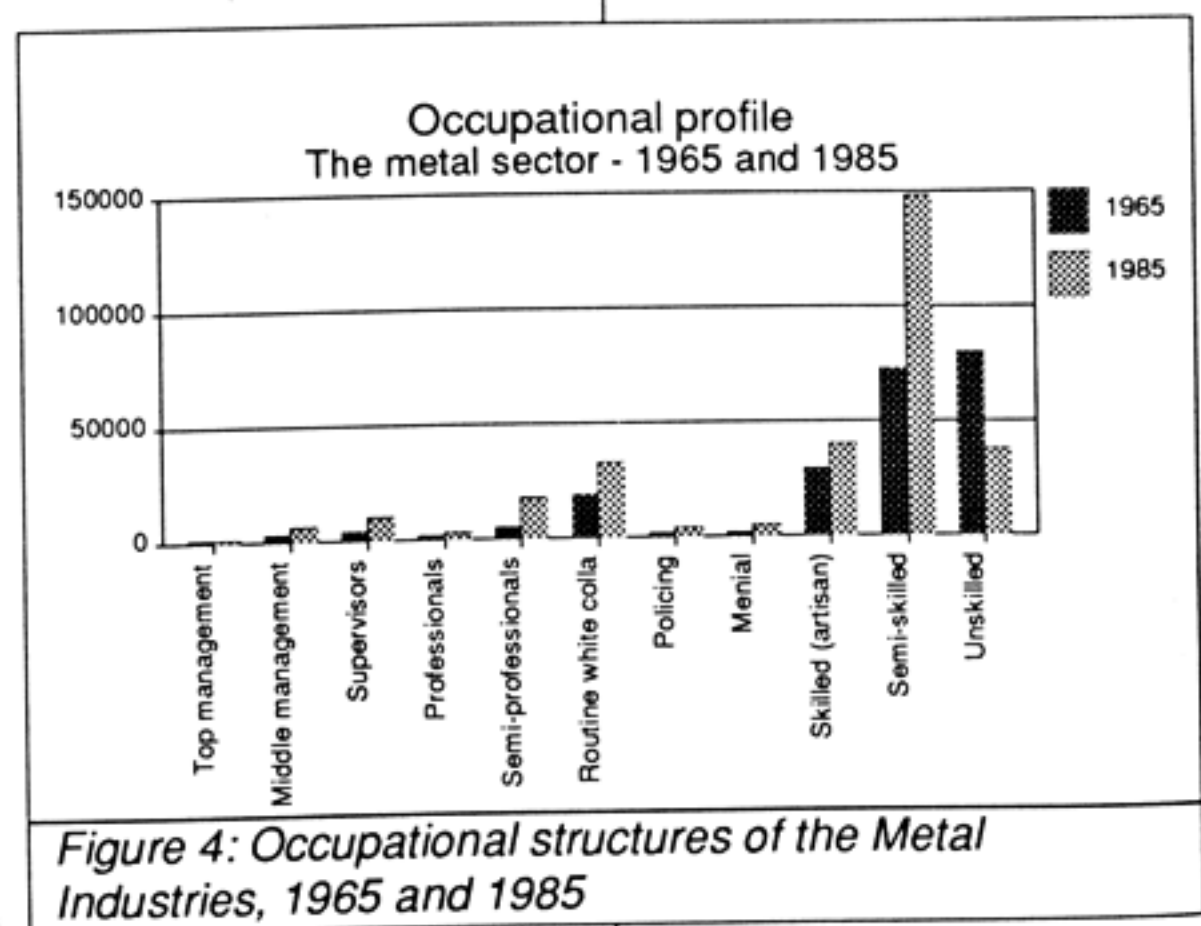


Figure 4: Occupational structures of the Metal Industries, 1965 and 1985

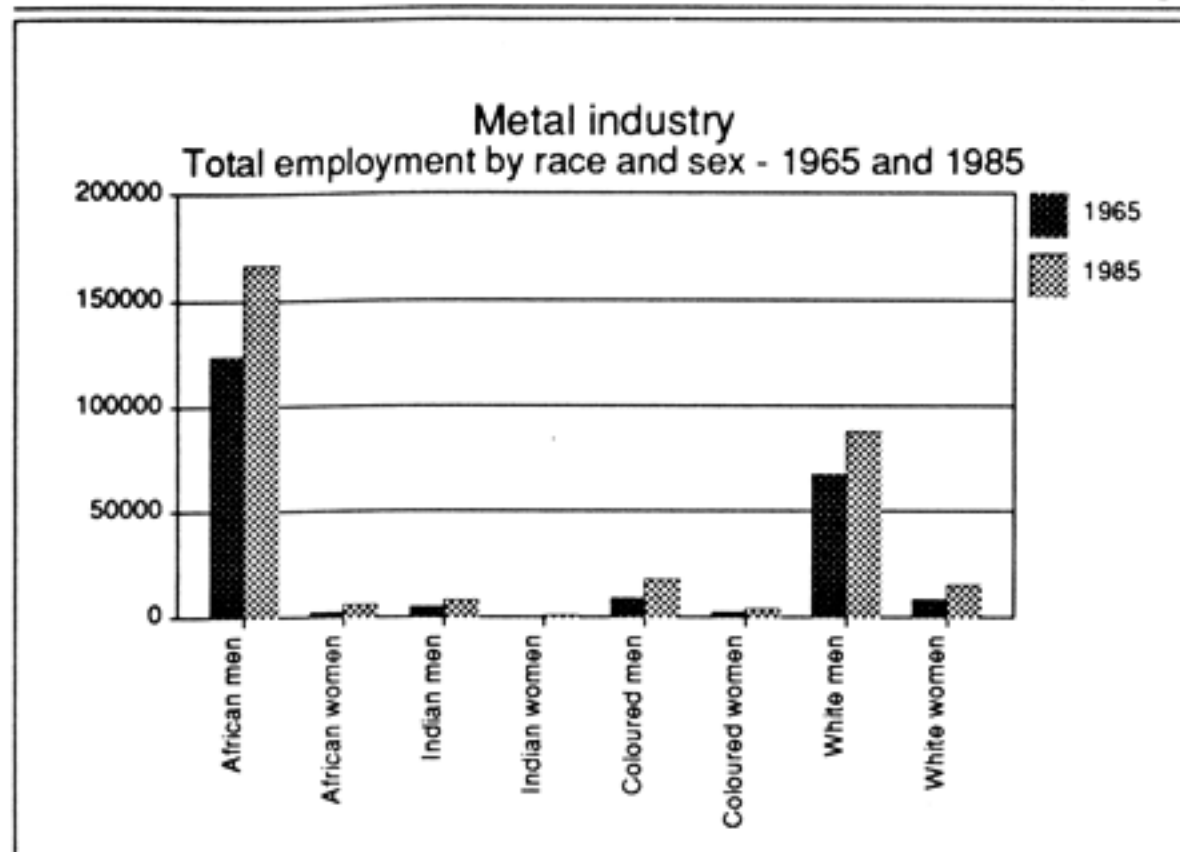


Figure 5: The Racial and Sexual Distribution of Employment in the Metal Industry, 1965 and 1985

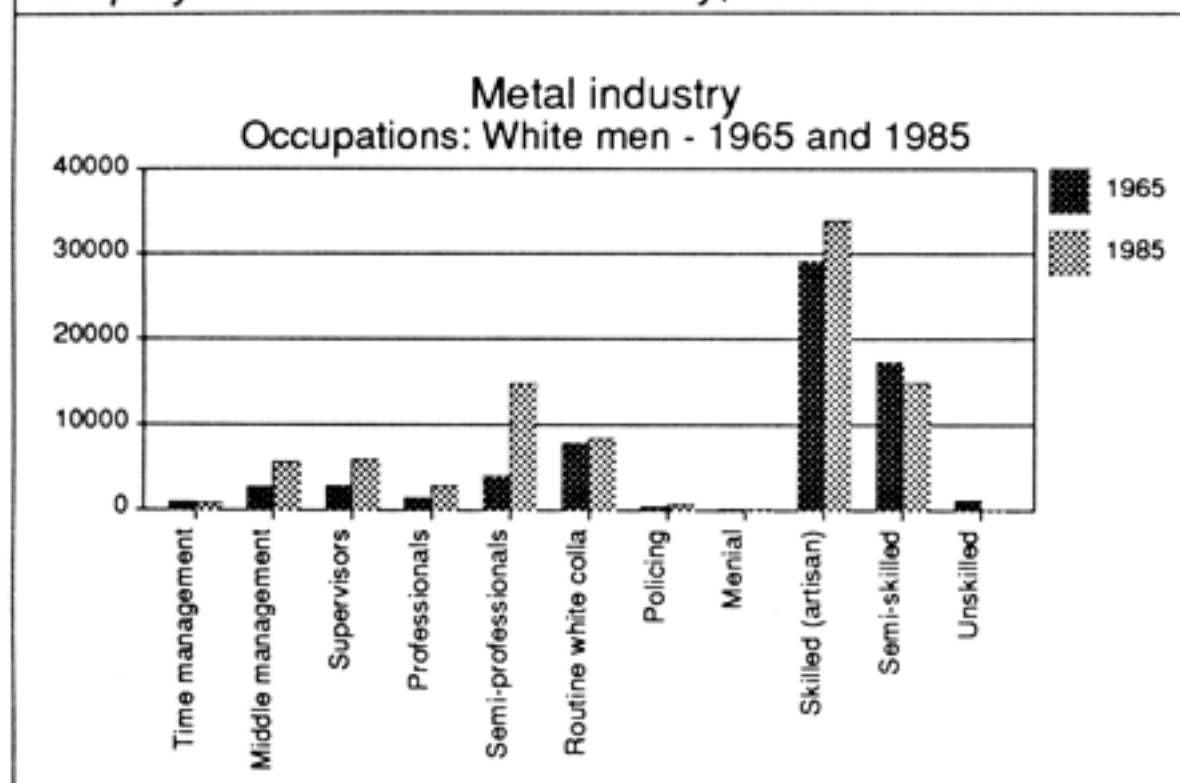


Figure 6: Occupational Distribution of White Men in the Metal Industries, 1965 and 1985

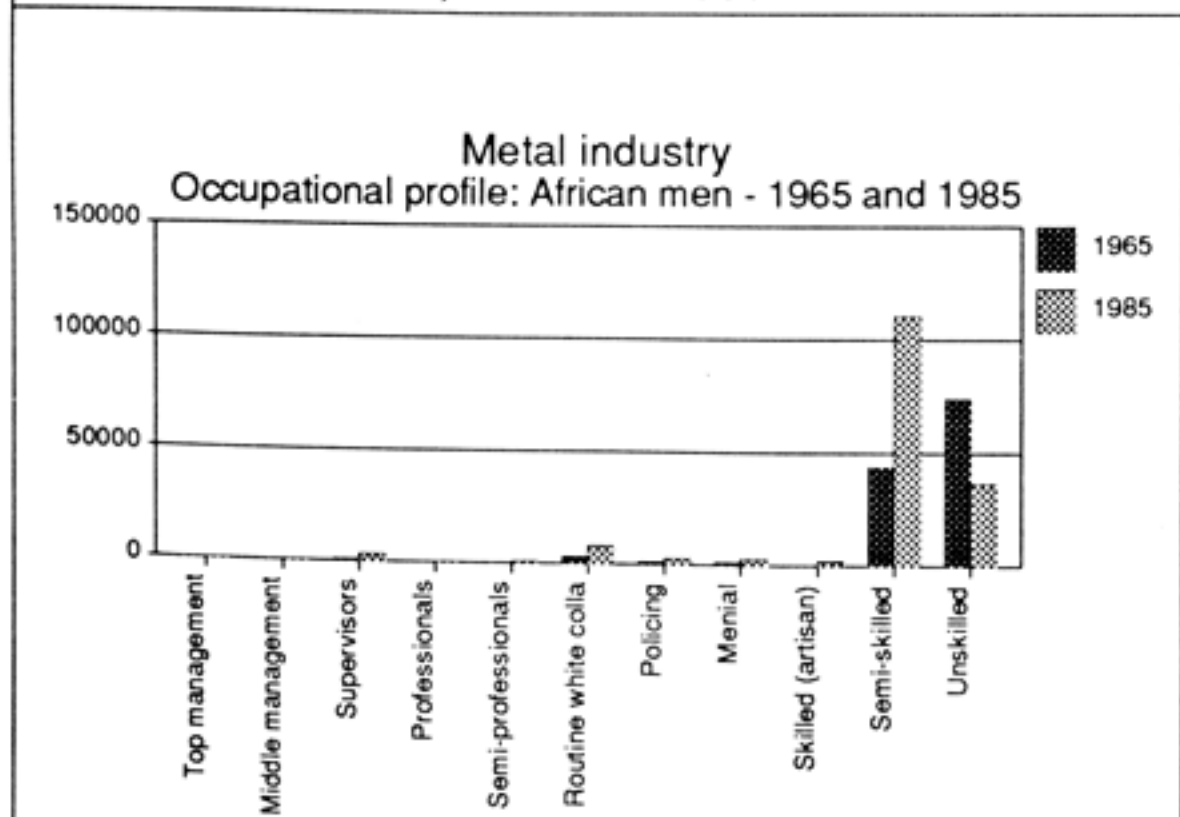


Figure 7: Occupational Distribution of African Men in the Metal Industries, 1965 and 1985

white men. There were a few coloured and Indian men and a few white, coloured, and African women, but no Indian women.

The division of labour between white and African men in the metal industry may have become even more rigid than in the past. As can be seen in Figures 6 and 7, the numbers of white men in semi-skilled operative work have declined, while African men in these jobs have increased enormously. At the same time the numbers of white men in semi-professional, supervisory and to some extent artisanal work have grown.

Most noticeable about white men in the metal industry is that they are spread right across the occupational spectrum, except for unskilled and menial work, where their numbers are small. A second feature is that the growth in jobs for white men has been mainly in the upper levels of the occupational ladder: semi-professional and professional work and middle management. The numbers of white supervisors also grew rapidly. In contrast, the numbers of white men in semi-skilled jobs declined and the numbers of white artisans have grown only slowly.

The perpetuation and possible deepening of the racial division of labour in this industry was accompanied by an astonishing transformation of the African workforce from a largely unskilled to a largely semi-skilled operative workforce over the period. There was also very rapid growth in the number of supervisors, clerks and artisans, but these increases were from such a small starting point that their impact on the overall structure remains slight. ☆

Cracking the public service: Transvaal hospitals strike

The recent hospitals strike in the Transvaal, coming soon after the Cape hospitals strike, has forced the state to break its own rules and negotiate directly with militant trade unions. CAROLE COOPER* reports.

There's nothing like a strike by health workers to spark off hysterical outbursts of moral outrage by the media, the government and sections of the public. The response to the recent strike in the Transvaal by health workers was no exception. However, far from being unfeeling monsters, these workers, themselves victims of gross exploitation, decided to strike only after the Transvaal Provincial Administration



Photo: Justin/Afrapix

*Carole Cooper works for the SA Institute of Race Relations

(TPA) had ignored repeated requests for negotiation on their grievances.

The TPA categorically refused to deal with the workers' union, the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (NEHAWU), and instructed the superintendents of hospitals to do likewise. Rather than take outright strike action, which they recognised would disrupt the health services, workers at first staged lunch-time demonstrations in support of their demands, and when this had no effect, moved first to go-slows, and then finally to a full-blown strike.

Background to the strike

On 2 March workers organised under NEHAWU in the Witwatersrand region



presented a memorandum to the TPA containing a number of demands over which they wished to negotiate. The major demands were as follows:

A living wage: Workers demanded R1 100 per month as a minimum wage, and a guaranteed minimum increase of R400 across-the-board for all workers. According to a union spokesperson, the minimum wage among hospital workers was R223,50 a month.

Recognition of NEHAWU: Workers demanded the recognition of NEHAWU, including stop-order facilities, and the establishment of a centralised collective bargaining system acceptable to all those involved. NEHAWU, which represented 18 900 workers in health and education services in the Witwatersrand region, had already asked hospital authorities to recognise its shopstewards as

democratically elected representatives of the workers.

Initially hospital superintendents refused, arguing that NEHAWU was an outside body. But then some, such as those at Baragwanath, Hillbrow, Johannesburg General and Leratong hospitals, met shopsteward committees. These meetings were, however, unsatisfactory, as hospital authorities have limited powers to deal with workers' demands.

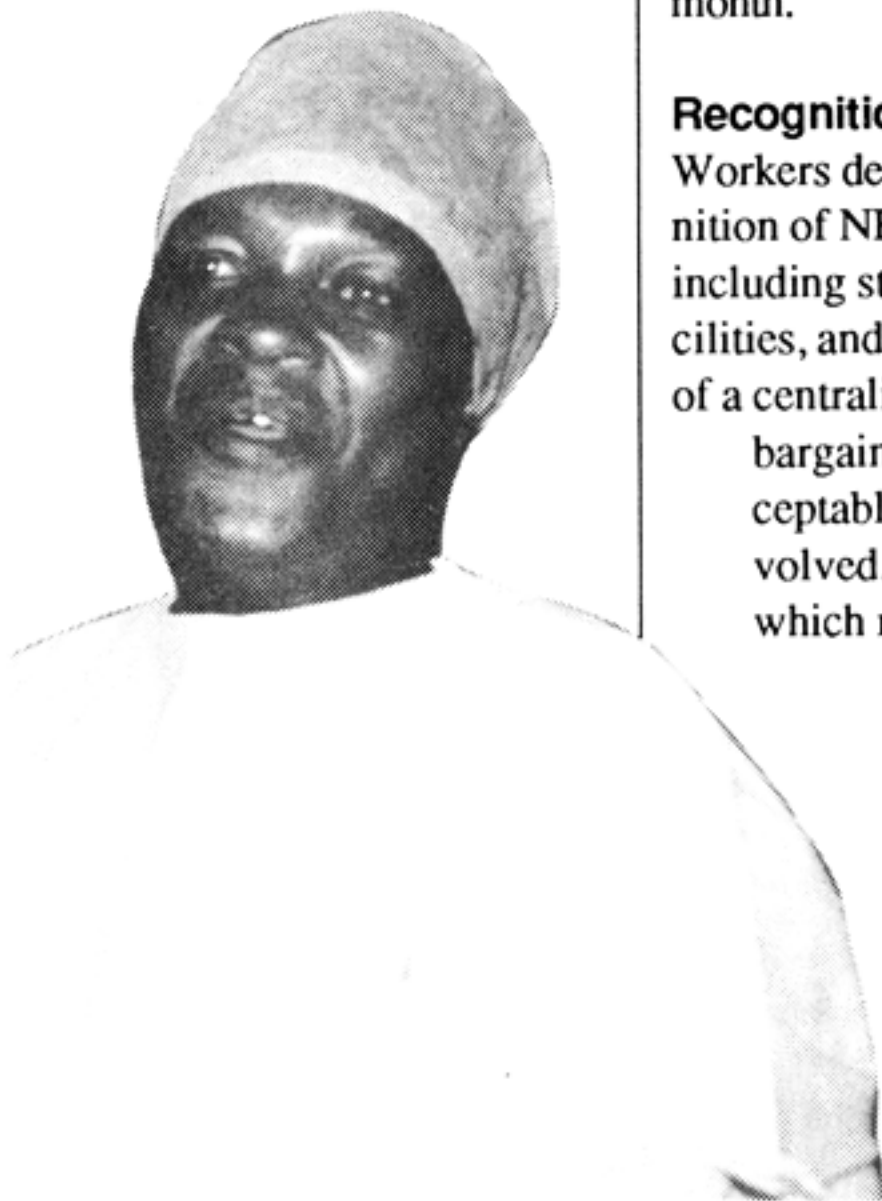
Temporary employment:

A major complaint of workers was that many employees, mainly black workers, in lower categories of work are classified as temporary workers.

Such workers have very little job security and are grossly discriminated against compared to permanent workers (mainly the more highly skilled, white workers), who enjoy a degree of security and receive benefits far beyond what even workers in the private sector can expect. Temporary workers are subject to only 24 hours' notice even if they have worked for a lifetime.

The union demanded an end to temporary employment, and that these workers should receive the same benefits as permanent workers. Alternatively, a new system should be introduced which would apply equally to all workers.

Privatisation: The culminating demand in the memorandum was that the



privatisation of health services be brought to a complete halt. NEHAWU stated that it is the responsibility of the state to provide health services that are free and accessible to all South Africans.

Other: Other demands were for the inclusion of all public sector workers under 'equitable labour legislation' (ie in an amended Labour Relations Act); the desegregation of health services, and an end to racist employment practices.

There was no response to the memorandum. Instead the director-general of the health services of the TPA, Dr Hennie van Wyk, addressed a letter to the hospital superintendents rejecting the demands and saying that in terms of the provisions of the (Public Services Act (PSA) only the Commission for Administration (CFA - see box on p 36) could recognise staff associations. The TPA was therefore not in a position to recognise or enter into a formal recognition agreement with a trade union.

On 28 March the union sent letters to the Minister for Administration and Economic Co-ordination, Dr Wim de Villiers, and the Minister of National Health and Population Development, Dr Rina Venter, requesting a meeting to discuss the memorandum. No response was received from either minister.

In the meantime, the department had announced a



10% increase for all public sector workers as from 1 April. This paltry increase further angered workers, and shopstewards approached the superintendents, asking them to take up the matter with the TPA, and giving them seven days in which to respond. Again there was no response from the TPA.

The strike begins

Workers responded to the employers' intransigence by staging lunch-time protests at the Baragwanath, Hillbrow and Johannesburg hospitals in the second week of April. Despite these protests, there was still no response from the TPA.

In the last week of April Baragwanath workers told the regional shopstewards committee, which had been co-ordinating the protest action and which consisted of two representatives from each institution in the Transvaal, that they wanted to stage a half-day strike. Shopstewards from other institutions felt that workers there were not ready to intensify action, but agreed that Baragwanath workers should be given the go-ahead. These workers then staged a half-day strike in the last week of April.

Bara workers strike first

The continuing lack of response from the employers led Baragwanath workers to decide on a full-blown strike from 1 May. It was only on the eve of this strike that they were informed that an additional increase, of between 16% and 105%, also operative from 1 April, had been granted to general assistants (ie drivers, porters, cleaning and kitchen staff, packers and other unskilled workers).

Salaries for grade 1 general assistants rose from R2 685 to R5 016 a year. But workers were still dissatisfied as the minimum wage was less than the R1 100 a month they had asked for. The striking Baragwanath workers were soon joined by workers at the Hillbrow and the Johannesburg General hospitals and then by workers at other hospitals in the Transvaal.

According to the union, while workers were inspired by the strike of health workers in the Cape in early March (see *Labour Bulletin* Vol 14 No 8), the Transvaal strike was not merely a carry-on from that strike, but arose out of NEHAWU's own plan of action.

The strike proper lasted 10 days from 1 to 10 May, and involved from 11 000 (press figure) to 18 000 workers (union figure) at 16 hospitals in the Transvaal, mainly on the Reef. Workers on strike consisted mainly of non-medical staff, the majority being general assistants.

In some hospitals nurses joined the strike for a short while, the largest and most sustained turnout being at the Natalspruit Hospital. The effects of the strike were felt most strongly in the kitchens, laundries and dispensaries. The TPA called for volunteers, and nurses and TPA staff from other departments were moved to those sections worst hit by the strike. At many hospitals only emergency services operated.

Emergency services continue

Throughout the strike it was the union's intention that minimum services should continue, that no hospital be closed down, and that no patient should die. The union had a meeting with other organisations in the health sector, such as the National Medical and Dental Association (NAMDA), the South African Health Workers' Congress (SAHWCO), the South African Black Social Workers' Association (SABSWA) and the Organisation for Appropriate Social Services of South Africa (OASSSA), to provide emergency services during the dispute.

These organisations published a statement announcing their full support for the demands of NEHAWU and stating that the TPA, by delaying negotiating with the union, had to bear full responsibility for possible effects on patients.

The union also tried to build up support in the com-



munity but acknowledges that events moved too fast for it to canvass widespread support. However, it argues that the community was behind them, pointing to the fact that at Baragwanath some patients joined strikers in *toyi-toying* and singing protest songs.



Nelson Mandela - asked to intervene

TPA and CFA meet union

On 2 May, after an *in loco* inspection of Baragwanath (which had been closed for part of the day, unnecessarily it seems, and contrary to the wishes of the union), the TPA finally agreed to meet NEHAWU. An agreement was reached to negotiate on the dispute at the 'highest

level' (ie with the MEC of health services in the TPA, Mr Fanie Ferreira).

On the same day, at the 'talks about talks' in Cape Town, state president De Klerk asked ANC deputy-president Nelson Mandela to intervene. As a result a NEHAWU and COSATU delegation flew to Cape Town to meet Wim de Villiers and Rina Venter.

At the meetings it was agreed that the TPA as well as the CFA would meet a NEHAWU delegation in Johannesburg to settle the strike. The union insisted that the CFA be present as it was mainly responsible for determining conditions of work in the public service.

However, at the negotiations which took place in Johannesburg on 4, 5 and 7 May, CFA delegates failed to turn up. The TPA kept stopping negotiations to check whether it had a mandate to deal with certain issues.

NEHAWU then approached Mandela, who took the matter up with the acting state president, Dr Gerrit Viljoen, on 8 May. The CFA finally agreed to attend the negotiations. This again highlights the difficulty workers experience when dealing with the multi-level system of authority within the public service, in which their employer - in this instance the TPA - lacks the power to make decisions about working conditions.

An agreement was finalised on 9 May and was signed a day later, workers returning to work on 11 May.

Industrial relations in the public service

Public sector employers' intransigence in dealing with black unions is nothing new. The 1989 railways strike was a prime example of this kind of short-sightedness. There has been a spate of recent strikes in the public service, including strikes by health workers in the Cape and in Garankuwa. This reflects the growing militancy of workers in this sector and their determination to win the same rights as workers in the private sector (see public sector focus in *Labour Bulletin* Vol 14 No8).

The refusal of the Transvaal Provincial Administration (TPA) to deal with black unions reveals the lack of collective bargaining in the public service. Workers have to contend with an oppressive and unwieldy system in order to communicate their demands. Conditions of work in the public service are governed by the Public Service Act (PSA) of 1984. Unlike the Labour Relations Act (LRA), the PSA makes no provision for collective bargaining, nor for the establishment of trade unions. This does not mean, however, that trade unions are prohibited in the public service. Public service employers can recognise and deal with unions under common law. Their refusal to do so is in fact a matter of policy rather than a legal requirement. Public service unions can also register under the LRA, although such workers are excluded from the Act. This means they cannot use any of its structures (such as the industrial court) or procedures (such as the right to strike after conciliation procedures have been exhausted).

The PSA provides for the establishment of staff associations at the

discretion of the Commission for Administration (CFA). This is the body which lays down policy on conditions of work in the public service. The CFA, among other things, is responsible for grading posts, setting wages and salaries, recognising staff associations, and regulating other conditions of work such as leave, hours of work etc. The employers, such as the TPA, have to operate within the limits set by the CFA, but do have the power to deal with issues such as the hiring of staff, and exact hours of work, for example.

Public service staff associations have no bargaining rights. Instead they sit, together with representatives of the CFA, on the Public Service Advisory Council. Staff association representatives merely put forward their views to the CFA, which then makes recommendations to the Cabinet. According to the CFA, a recommendation is more like a decision, since most are simply ratified by the Cabinet. The Cabinet actually decides only on the wage issue. A more informal structure has developed alongside this, where representatives of the staff associations meet the CFA to discuss all decisions which involve expenditure before the budget each year.

Workers who are not members of one of the seven staff associations (which have 207 530 members, representing 49% of the 423 500 workers in the public service proper) can in theory approach their employers directly with grievances. These are passed on to the TPA and then, in turn, to the CFA. In practice, as we shall see below, taking this route is a waste of time. By referring workers from

one level to the next management can avoid dealing with the workers' demands altogether. Even the staff associations, which have a working knowledge of the system, admit that the demarcation of areas of jurisdiction between the TPA and CFA is not always easy to understand. How much more confusing is this for unions who are unfamiliar with the system?

Pressure by the staff associations on the issue of collective bargaining has led to proposed amendments of the Public Service Act. The Amendment Bill provides for a system of bargaining between representatives of the staff associations and those of the CFA, sitting on a bargaining council in equal numbers. The bill, however, has many shortcomings. Firstly, each union, no matter its size, is restricted to one representative on the council. Secondly, it is silent on the question of trade unions, as is the existing PSA. Thirdly, workers are denied the right to strike, this prohibition being explicitly stated in the bill. ❖



The agreement

The union regards the agreement as a victory for the workers. It contains many important breakthroughs.

While workers did not succeed in gaining a wage increase, they did get a commitment from the TPA to establish mutually acceptable channels for negotiating salaries, safety conditions, and job creation and training for 1990 and ensuing years. This means the union will be able to negotiate further wage increases this year.

Recognition for NEHAWU

A major breakthrough was achieved on union recognition. The TPA conceded that its employees could belong to any trade union or recognised staff association of their choice. The TPA also agreed to grant NEHAWU access to the premises of health care establishments and to allow the union to display approved notices on TPA boards; to provide stop order facilities to union members, subject to Treasury approval; and to allow accredited NEHAWU officials and office bearers to represent NEHAWU at

disciplinary meetings involving such members.

A working committee was to be set up with representatives of each party, to negotiate on a number of matters listed in the agreement. These included:

- the implementation of a 40-hour week, which the TPA said it had already agreed to before the strike;
- improved maternity leave; and
- consultation on privatisation. The TPA undertook to inform employees and consult with NEHAWU when any project was being investigated for privatisation. In principle employees should lose neither their jobs nor benefits acquired while working in the public service. However, the union is still strongly opposed to privatisation and intends negotiating further on this issue.

It was noted that the two-year waiting period for general assistants to be admitted to the pension fund had been abolished in 1989, and that the CFA was investigating setting up one fund for all workers.

The parties also agreed that, upon receipt of a documented motivation by NEHAWU, the TPA would recommend to the CFA that employees who are NEHAWU members and who have been employed for a period exceeding three months should be reclassified as permanent workers.

The TPA agreed not to



Public sector militancy... NEHAWU's Monde Mditshwa (right) in a public sector march through the streets of Joburg

Photo: Morice Smithers/Labour Bulletin

take disciplinary action against workers involved in the strike. This was a major concession. Both Rina Venter and the TPA apparently conceded that the workers had genuine grievances. It was also agreed that the days workers spent on strike could come off their annual leave, rather than being taken as unpaid leave.

In addition the TPA undertook to make representations to the South African Nursing Council (SANC) regarding nurses involved in the dispute. During the strike the SANC condemned strike action by nurses and threatened disciplinary action against them.

The parties also agreed to the appointment of an external arbitrator if there was a dispute over the interpreta-

tion of the agreement. This is significant as employers in the public sector are normally hostile to outside parties having a say in their affairs. The arbitrator has to be a retired judge of the Supreme Court who is acceptable to both parties.

While the agreement contains many positive points, the union believes that a lot hinges on whether the TPA will negotiate in good faith on the issues listed for further discussion. The agreement in many instances is similar to that negotiated by the Health Workers' Union (HWU) in the recent hospital strike in the Cape. According to NEHAWU, however, the HWU has since expressed dissatisfaction with its agreement.

Conflict with HWU

This point became an issue between the two unions during the critical report-back stage in the Transvaal strike. The HWU, with the agreement of NEHAWU, had sent observers to Johannesburg to be present at the 8 May report-back meeting where the decision was taken to end the strike.

At the meeting HWU tried to convince NEHAWU that this was a mistake, and suggested instead that there should be a national strike. NEHAWU refused, however, and reported that the HWU representatives had then tried to undermine the union by approaching workers at the hospitals and urging them to continue with the strike.

An HWU spokesperson said, however, that as their

settlement applied nationally there had been no need for NEHAWU to negotiate on issues which HWU had already won. The only issue which NEHAWU should have negotiated on was the wage demand, as this had not been resolved during the Cape Town strike, she said.

The HWU representatives who had visited the Transvaal had conveyed this to NEHAWU, urging it not to call off the strike until the wage issue had been won, she said. HWU had been prepared to join NEHAWU in striking for the wage demand.

Regarding NEHAWU's claim that HWU had undermined it by approaching workers individually, the HWU spokesperson said that their intention was not to interfere in NEHAWU's affairs, but to show solidarity and explain to workers what could still have been achieved.

Implications

The strike has far-reaching implications for workers in the public service as a whole. Firstly, along with the Cape strike, it has led to the *de facto* recognition of trade unions, and thus an acceptance of collective bargaining structures outside the system set up in the PSA.

This fact has not been missed by the staff associations which are angry with the way employers have dealt with the situation. They claim that their "disciplined" attempts to achieve better conditions for black workers



were ignored, while the more militant methods of NEHAWU have succeeded.

They believe that if employers had been more sensitive to their demands, then there would have been no need for an outside union to take up worker grievances. Staying within the confines of the law and not striking has got them nowhere, they say.

The strike, however, has also raised the question of collective bargaining on a much broader level. Progressive unions have been pressing for the inclusion of public sector workers under an amended LRA for some time. This view has also received support from the government-appointed National Manpower Commission which, in its recent working document, argues for the extension of the act to cover such workers.

This issue was also discussed when COSATU met Wim de Villiers in the last week of May. There is little doubt that the proposed Public Service Amendment Bill, which has been designed to meet the collective bargain-

ing demands of the staff associations, falls far short of what the progressive unions have in mind. The strike will have underlined this point. The bill has not been discussed in Parliament this session, which could indicate that the state is considering dropping it.

Swelling the ranks of Nehawu

The effect of the strike has also been to swell the ranks of the union (by at least 6 000 members) and to undercut the position and credibility of the recognised staff associations. In deciding whether to enact the bill or not, the state will have to weigh up the balance of power between these two sides.

Given the series of strikes and widespread militancy in the public service recently, it would seem wise for the state to extend the LRA to include the public service. If, however, it chooses to cling to oppressive structures and methods in dealing with state employees, it will set the scene for continuing disputes within the public service. ☆

This article is based on interviews with: Mondli Mditshwa, NEHAWU; Jonathan Joffe, NEHAWU attorney during the dispute; Dr C Cameron, president of Public Service Association; and Danie du Toit, director of labour relations, CFA.

Pretoria municipal workers strike: NUPSW and SAMWU in conflict

A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT in Pretoria reports on the recent municipal workers strike there, where the NACTU-affiliated National Union of Public Sector Workers (NUPSW) and COSATU's SA Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) are competing for the allegiance of the workers.

On 4 April Pretoria's municipal workers embarked on their first industrial action in recent years demanding higher wages, and protesting against the divisive tactics of the Pretoria City Council (PCC). The action was marked by strong rivalry between the Union of Pretoria Municipal Workers (UPMW), which is being incorporated into SAMWU, and the NUPSW. The UPMW, which claimed 5 050 members before the strike, complains that its one-day protest was turned into a two-week strike by the NUPSW, which 'hijacked' and 'intimidated' the workers. The NUPSW, which claimed 3 500 of the 7 500-strong PCC workforce before

the strike, now claims that up to 6 000 workers have become members, as a result of 'dissatisfaction' with SAMWU and the UPMW.

UPMW/SAMWU: organising in Pretoria

How, in the conservative South African capital with its racist and anti-worker municipality, did workers begin to organise? In the discredited workers' liaison committee, explained Paul Sedutla, a veteran of the committee and currently SAMWU's deputy treasurer in Pretoria. Through a process of taking up individual workers' grievances with management and spreading

the message of trade unions, the UPMW emerged in 1983.

Three workers are said to have spearheaded the campaign against bad working conditions, starvation wages, unfair labour practices and intimidation of workers by white supervisors, said Solly Kekane, a shop steward. The fledging union established a strong base when it signed up workers living in the municipality's Mamelodi hostel. A recognition agreement was clinched with the PCC in December 1985.

Merging with SAMWU

UPMW claimed about 5 600 members at the time of recognition in 1985, which also coincided with the national launch of COSATU. The

question of affiliation to the national federation was soon raised.

There were initial misgivings about whether the union, which had since then registered, should ally itself with COSATU or NACTU, or stay independent. Two UPMW office-bearers went to Cape Town in 1987 to attend early talks on forging a single national municipal workers' union, said SAMWU organiser Ngobeni. SAMWU was launched as a COSATU affiliate in November 1987. The UPMW members backed SAMWU's position as a non-racial organisation with similar policies to COSATU, and supported the African National Congress as a political party.

UPMW workers have been joining SAMWU ever since it started recruiting in Pretoria. The UPMW still exists in name, but SAMWU has applied for verification of scope to organise in the Northern Transvaal. This will enable them to approach the city council for recognition. If SAMWU is recognised UPMW will disband. SAMWU's Ngobeni claims all UPMW members belong to SAMWU.

SAMWU presence limited to Pretoria

But besides Pretoria, where UPMW/SAMWU claims to represent about 80% of the council workforce, SAMWU has only managed to establish a marginal presence in other Northern Transvaal

towns. SAMWU is still busy organising municipal workers in Brits, Rustenburg, Zeerust, Thabazimbi, Ellisras, Potgietersrus, Pietersburg, Naboomspruit, Phalaborwa, Nelspruit and the Mamelodi Town Council, where shop stewards have started attending COSATU local meetings. About 400 of the Transvaal Provincial Administration's workforce of 400 to 600 have also been signed up by SAMWU.



The union has shop stewards in all 43 departments in the PCC and tries to sustain a ratio of two shopstewards per 100 workers. SAMWU representatives serve on the Pretoria COSATU shopstewards' local and the union's treasurer, Sam Ngele, holds the same position in COSATU's Northern Transvaal REC. It plays an active part in COSATU's anti-privatisation and Workers' Charter campaigns.

On the surface, UPMW appears to enjoy all the hamstrung rights of a recognised public sector union, but at the same time the PCC has drawn on the Supreme Court, the police and its own by-laws to prevent or break up

at least two public demonstrations of worker solidarity in the city this year.

Marches banned

A march against privatisation in March by public sector workers, joined by their comrades from other sectors in COSATU's Northern Transvaal Region, was disrupted by police (the NUPSW did not take part in the march, because it claims that it was not invited to do so by COSATU's public sector affiliates). Thirty-nine workers, many with bleeding wounds, were arrested after being baton-charged, tear-gassed and bitten by police dogs while peacefully dispersing on police orders.

The PCC banned the march on the grounds that it would disrupt traffic and posed a potential danger to people and property. It also said that the march would interfere with end-of-month shopping. The Pretoria City magistrate said at the time he was obliged to ban the march because of the council's decision.

A month later, the PCC turned to the Supreme Court to get an order preventing a march supporting and popularising the call for a Workers' Charter.

Not only was the interdict granted, but on 28 April the police staged a huge show of force near the COSATU offices in Brown Street, in an apparent attempt to intimidate the workers. As SAMWU organiser, Walter Theledi, remarked: "Pretoria is the

capital city of South Africa, here apartheid is directly practical.....

“The city council is trying to satisfy the far right. Why is the Saambou Street Mile allowed to be run in the morning, but workers can't march? A march and a race will always disrupt. We just want to be able to march to air our views”, he said.

Divisive tactics

The city council has also employed other tactics to divide and disorganise UPMW members. The council has used its own staff regulations to transfer workers, and especially shop stewards, from one department and even area to another, said Thomas Ngobeni. This damages organisation and confuses members, he said.

SAMWU has tried to challenge this divisive practice. But, beside the council's heavy-handed tactics, inter-union rivalry has also bugged efforts to weld the council workforce into a united, democratic union.

NUPSW organises in Pretoria

NUPSW is a NACTU affiliate, and has been organising municipal workers in Pretoria since mid-1987. When it initially penetrated the PCC workforce, NUPSW drew on workers' dissatisfaction with UPMW, which has a closed-shop agreement with the PCC.

“Former UPMW shop stewards approached NUPSW,

citing worker dissatisfaction with that union. They said UPMW was not representing the workers and it merely played the role of a trade union while going through the motions of procedures laid down by the city council,” says Mankoto Lesufi, NUPSW's regional organiser.

The closed-shop is one problem, he claims. Some unpopular UPMW officials were taken 'ready-made' into SAMWU structures, as was



the 'ready-made' UPMW membership.

“Workers are disillusioned with UPMW. When UPMW established links with SAMWU, workers saw SAMWU selling them out. They see the same officials in SAMWU. The same people (UPMW officials) were seen talking to the city council on the workers' mandate, but were unable to achieve anything,” says Lesufi.

NUPSW has recognition agreements with the Phalaborwa and Duiwelskloof municipalities in the Far Northern Transvaal, and besides Pretoria, is recruiting members in Verwoerdburg, the Akasia town council (near Pretoria), Warmbaths,

Pietersburg and Potgietersrus.

The union has about 90 shopstewards in the Pretoria City Council and is active in the local NACTU structures, says Lesufi.

Organising workers not easy

However, organising the workers was not that easy, NUPSW found. Firstly, there was the closed-shop to deal with. A major hindrance discouraging the workers from changing union allegiance was a funeral scheme which workers were loath to leave for fear of losing their benefits. If workers resigned from UPMW and cancelled their monthly R1 stop orders, they automatically dropped out of the funeral scheme. Workers were reluctant to resign because of this, but eventually opted for dual union membership, Lesufi says.

Hostile management

Secondly, NUPSW faced a hostile management which refused to grant it stop order facilities and used delaying tactics to meet union representatives. “The city council promoted UPMW at our expense,” Lesufi says.

NUPSW approached the city council for recognition talks in 1988, but the council argued that NUPSW did not have the required 50% plus one to qualify for recognition. The union was prepared to hold a second meeting with the city council to prove its membership figures, but this was refused, according to Lesufi.

By early this year, NUPSW switched to a different tactic. Instead of approaching management as a union, it got shop stewards organised into a NUPSW-supporting branch executive committee (BEC) to deal with the bosses.

Workers at the PCC took action against the council on 4 April. It was intended as a one-day protest, says SAMWU, but the NUPSW disputes this, saying the workers had decided that a strike was more appropriate.

The strike: SAMWU's version of events

SAMWU planned a one-day sit-in on 4 April as a protest against delays in salary and wage talks (*Pretoria News* 4/4/90). Workers, earning a monthly minimum of R560 after an 1 April increase, demanded R1 000 as a starting living wage.

While the council claims the workers were on strike, SAMWU organisers said the action was a one-day protest. However, what was meant to be a disciplined display of worker unity in support of demands, turned into an unplanned and disorganised two-week stoppage. The reason for this, said Ngobeni, was the intervention in the dispute by the NUPSW.

NUPSW, which was reported by *Pretoria News* to have about 1 000 followers in Pretoria, "foresaw that SAMWU was going to win its demands, and maybe

NUPSW thought they would lose support because of SAMWU's success", said Ngobeni. The upshot was that NUPSW members persuaded their counterparts in UPMW to extend the sit-in into a protracted wage strike. Accusations of intimidation were made against NUPSW.

While about 5 500 workers sustained the stoppage, the city council hired white scabs and holidaying schoolboys to clean the city's



streets and remove rubbish in some suburbs. The school-boy scabs were paid R7 an hour, compared to the roughly R3,50 earned on average by the lowest paid workers.

NUPSW 'misled' workers

SAMWU organiser Walter Theledi asserted that, in any case, workers were "ignorant" and could be "hijacked" by "misleading" claims from NUPSW. NUPSW members, claimed Ngobeni, had also prevented SAMWU members in Verwoerdburg from holding a report-back on wage negotiations. This had obliged SAMWU to change the venue and date of the meeting to Medunsa in mid-May.

Said Ngobeni, "We are not trying to criticise or expose them. We are looking for the reality of freedom of association. We don't have a right to say that a worker cannot join another union, but there must not be intimidation and victimisation." SAMWU and NUPSW do not have formal contact, he said.

The workers stayed on strike for two weeks, until a threatened interdict and out-of-court settlement between SAMWU and the PCC ended the stoppage on April 17. NUPSW, cited as a respondent with SAMWU, failed to appear in court.

Further wage talks were scheduled and took place between the council and UPMW/SAMWU. There has been no movement on either side, but there is no deadlock. The two parties are expected to meet again, according to Ngobeni.

The union believes that the workers have confidence in SAMWU's ability to unite them into a single national union of municipal workers.

The strike: NUPSW's version of events

In January, the BEC approached the council management with a proposal for a R900 minimum monthly wage and 20% across-the-board increase. It also demanded the recognition of NUPSW. Taking its time to meet the BEC, the municipality again ruled out talks,

arguing that NUPSW was not recognised, according to Lesufi. In April workers responded with a strike.

The ensuing confusion in worker ranks and cooling of the relationship between NUPSW and SAMWU can be laid at the door of two unions submitting separate demands on behalf of the same workers, says Lesufi. SAMWU, he says, had tabled their wage proposal to the PCC on April 3, demanding a R1 000 minimum wage.

SAMWU members downed tools on April 4, not to stage a one day sit-in, as claimed by SAMWU, according to Lesufi, but to embark on a strike. NUPSW, which had held several general meetings with its members beforehand to discuss - and agree on - a strike in support of their own demands, was approached by SAMWU to support its members, says Lesufi.

"The NUPSW BEC agreed to this, and workers downed tools in support of two separate sets of demands. We were prepared to strike to support SAMWU. At the same time we saw SAMWU members as supporting our members. The BEC did not want workers divided and decided to engage in action the same day."

The city council and SAMWU met on the same day the stoppage started, with the NUPSW BEC being invited to attend the talks as observers by the SAMWU negotiating committee.

Talks ended with the PCC

quoting a no-strike clause in its recognition agreement with SAMWU, and accusing SAMWU of being in breach of agreement, says Lesufi. SAMWU was ordered to call off the strike and to get its members back to work.

The parties, excluding the NUPSW BEC, agreed to further wage talks once the workers resumed work. Both unions returned to their members the same day to report back, with the NUPSW BEC



telling its supporters that the council still refused to talk to the union. NUPSW members voted to stay on strike until their demands were met.

Workers 'reject' SAMWU report-back

"SAMWU had problems in reporting back. Both unions were negotiating about money. Workers did not understand why SAMWU had decided to go back if the council did not touch the issue of money. SAMWU had a problem with its own members," says Lesufi. Ultimately, he claims, SAMWU was not in a position of control - the workers were.

The strike lasted until 7 April, when both unions agreed to call off the stop-

page in the face of a threatened interdict. NUPSW intended challenging the injunction, but Lesufi was reported at that time as saying that the union was not given the opportunity to challenge the matter in court.

Answering to SAMWU charges that NUPSW disrupted a SAMWU meeting in Verwoerdburg recently, Lesufi says that NUPSW members did participate in the meeting and could, by asking certain questions, have caused a disturbance. "Workers have a right to ask questions. We did not disrupt the meeting, though."

Responding to SAMWU's accusation that its members were intimidated into continuing the strike, Lesufi says this was possible, but workers themselves had rejected the SAMWU report-back and favoured continuing the stoppage. Also, he adds, if the Supreme Court heard that 7 500 workers were to be interdicted and NUPSW had only 1 000 members in the PCC, as claimed in the press, "how could 1 000 workers intimidated 6 000?"

Workers 'flocking' to join NUPSW

"SAMWU could have represented the larger proportion of the workers before the strike, but since then they have been flocking to us," he says.

The NUPSW claims its membership at the Pretoria City Council (PCC) leapt from an estimated 3 500 workers to 6 000, out of the total

workforce of 7 500. The union believes it can oust SAMWU as the representative union when it meets the PCC in late June to verify its membership figures.

Despite these differences, however, Lesufi sees the two unions as sharing the right to freedom of association and believing that the majority is the one to be recognised. "We don't believe in destroying our relationship or taking their members. We would like to sit down with SAMWU to thrash out these issues," he says.

Assessment

Workers in the PCC are faced with having to choose between three different trade unions - the NUPSW, SAMWU and UPMW. While SAMWU is in the process of absorbing the UPMW into its structures, the latter is still a separate union with a 'sweetheart' reputation. SAMWU and the NUPSW, on the other hand, are both progressive unions, in that they seek to advance working class control and democracy.

However, they follow different political traditions. SAMWU, as a COSATU affiliate, is aligned to the ANC tradition of non-racialism, while NUPSW, through its NACTU affiliation, is in the Africanist/black consciousness camp. Both unions in Pretoria have been relying on workers' dissatisfaction with the relatively tame and ineffective UPMW to, in

different ways, draw members into their respective ranks.

Both unions claim to have organised the majority of PCC workers, although only SAMWU is on the verge of achieving recognition. The city council negotiates with SAMWU on the basis of its incorporative policy towards the almost defunct but still-recognised UPMW. This is a *de facto* acceptance of SAMWU's representativity.



NUPSW, on the other hand, has failed to prove its claimed majority. Until it does so, it cannot expect to be recognised by the council.

Mass support for the strike

The recent strike, however, seems to have undermined SAMWU's claims to be *the* representatives of PCC workers. While it is possible that intimidation played a role, it appears that the strike had mass support. Whether it was intended or not, the strike showed that the PCC workers were willing to back their wage demands with a protracted and militant withdrawal of their labour power. This was regardless of whether these demands were

forwarded by SAMWU or the NUPSW.

The optimistic view is that the PCC workers were militant, prepared to risk strike action and clearly rejected 'sweetheart' unionism. The pessimistic view is that organisation is in disarray, with neither SAMWU nor NUPSW able to reveal the exact extent of their support.

March separately, strike together

While it seems likely that, as a result of the strike, the NUPSW has encroached on SAMWU's support, without accurate and objective assessments of worker support, the true situation cannot be established. Inter-union competition, if it leads to unsubstantiated claims, recrimination and confusion amongst workers, will only benefit the employers and the state.

Nevertheless, whichever union in the end manages to prove that it has the support of the majority, workers should still have the right to choose their own representatives. This principles should apply even if it means that separate organisations should coexist. Minority representatives should have the right to build support through persuasion and example. Only this democratic process will allow workers to march separately and strike together, as a united, self-conscious force. ☆

Suspect solidarity:

Over the past decade, the US-based American Federation of Labour-Congress of Industrial Organisations has been widely criticised for its programmes in South Africa. The AFL-CIO and its regional branch, the African-American Labour Centre, have been accused of trying to divide the South African labour movement and of having links to the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

As a result of criticism from within South Africa and the United States, the AALC has been modifying its approach to make itself seem more acceptable to the South African trade union movement.

Early years of the programme

Like the US government, the AFL-CIO has a history of fervent anti-communism. At the end of World War II, the American labour federation began funding European trade unions which were anti-communist in orientation, often at the expense of radical unions which had more popular support. During the early 1960s, the federation expanded its international programmes and established

changes in AFL-CIO's South Africa programs

EILEEN FLANAGAN traces the changing policies of the American Federation of Labour-Congress of Industrial Organisations (AFL-CIO) towards the South African trade union movement, in particular COSATU. From initially supporting splinter unions and the Inkatha union UWUSA, the AFL-CIO has come under pressure to use a more subtle strategy to influence COSATU. While the union movement can benefit from this new attitude, this article argues, it is also potentially more harmful.

three regional centres to implement its foreign policies: the American Institute for Free Labour Development (AIFLD) for Latin America; the Asian-American Free Labour Institute (AAFLI); and the African-American Labour Centre (AALC).

All three centres are primarily funded by the Agency for International Development (AID), a branch of the US government closely linked to the State Department. All three have also been accused of having close ties to the CIA, particularly AIFLD which has been linked to numerous CIA operations in Latin America.¹

Although the AALC had sponsored programmes throughout Africa since 1964, their involvement in South Africa before the 1970s was minimal. The events of the 1970s made it obvious that organised black workers were an important force for change in the region. Fearful of the possibility of socialist revolution in South Africa, both the US government and the AFL-CIO began to take a strong interest in the South African labour movement. Both wished to encourage 'peaceful change' in South Africa and American style 'business unionism', which emphasises wage gains and workers' rights within the capitalist system. Thus, in

1981, the AFL-CIO announced that it was launching a 'Programme of Action in Support of Black Trade Unions in South Africa', to be run by the AALC and funded primarily by AID.

South African unionists suspicious

From its creation, the Programme of Action was met with animosity and suspicion by black South African trade unionists. Articles appeared in the South African press describing the links between the CIA and AFL-CIO programmes in other parts of the world. They pointed to allegations of CIA links against Irving Brown, Director of the AALC, and Nana Mahomo,



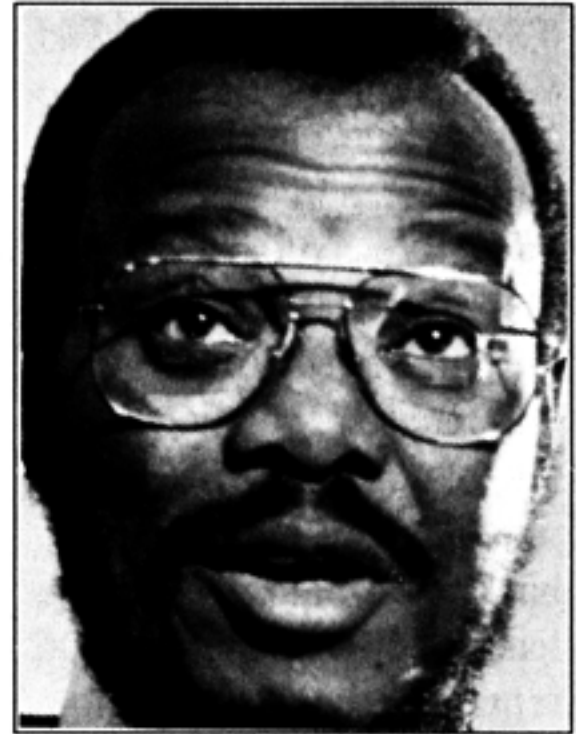
Alleged links between the AFL-CIO and the CIA means South African workers are reluctant to have anything to do with the American federation

director of the new South African programme. When the AFL-CIO sent a high profile delegation to South Africa in September 1982, their reception was cool at best. The South African Allied Workers Union (SAAWU) and the Motor Assembly and

Component Workers Union (MACWUSA) refused to meet with the delegation, while other unionists met the Americans with great reservation.²

Concerns that American union aid could be divisive were substantiated during the first years of the AALC South African programme. Relations between the AALC and the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) were generally hostile, a pattern which continued after the launching of COSATU. Thus most of the American aid went to independent unions and those affiliated to the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA) (now part of NACTU). CUSA also grew wary of the AALC's intentions, however, and in early 1985 announced to the AALC that it would "not tolerate any kind of trade union imperialism".³

Many of the unions which initially received AALC aid were extremely small, and some had broken off from already existing unions. Critics charged that if these unions had not received outside assistance, they would be forced to work with the larger and more established unions in their industries. For example, the African Miners and Allied Workers Union (AMAWU) was a small unaffiliated union formed in 1984 and assisted by the AALC. Although AMAWU was generally unsuccessful at organising workers, the AALC justified its aid to the union



AFL-CIO had 'historic fondness for Gathsa Buthelezi'

Photo: Afrapix

by saying: "NUM (National Union of Mineworkers) must recognise that it is not the only game in town there is room in the mining industry for alternatives to NUM and many non-union workers got a glimpse at differences in union style and leadership."⁴

Fond of Buthelezi

Many South African union leaders were also wary of the AFL-CIO's historic fondness of Gathsa Buthelezi, who like the American federation was fervently anti-communist and anti-disinvestment (the AFL-CIO has since changed its stand on divestment, largely due to pressure from American union members and leaders who have been active in the US anti-apartheid movement).

During the 1982 visit, the American labour federation presented Buthelezi with the George Meany International Human Rights Award. Furthermore, the AFL-CIO

president Lane Kirkland described the KwaZulu Minister as "the single most potent force in resisting the onward rush of apartheid".⁵ Thus when UWUSA was launched in May 1986, there was much speculation that the Inkatha-based union would receive American backing. Although UWUSA leaders did meet with AALC representatives, there is no evidence that UWUSA has actually received AALC funds, largely because of the pressures being put on the American labour centre from within South Africa and the United States.

Pressures for change

While American and South African workers were pushing the AFL-CIO to toughen its stand on sanctions, the federation was also under fire from another source, the US government. In order to evaluate how AID money was being spent by the AALC, the agency hired Arnold M. Zack, a private consultant, in March of 1986. Zack's mission was to study the South African labour programme and make recommendations about future AALC activities. Although he praised many aspects of the centre's performance, he also recommended important changes: get closer to COSATU; don't fund splinter unions; and stay away from

Inkatha.

Zack's first report, which was issued in May 1986, evaluated many aspects of the AALC South African programme. However, it seemed particularly concerned with AALC's image in South Africa and the types of unions which were being selected for assistance. Zack felt that the refusal of trade unions to accept AALC assistance did not "reflect any anti-American or anti-AFL-CIO antipathy". Instead, it stemmed from the bad publicity given to the AALC when it first came to South Africa.⁶



Advised to 'get closer to COSATU'

Get closer to COSATU

He pointed out that many unions preferred identification with the ICFTU, the International Trade Secretariats (ITS), which are closely associated with the ICFTU, or even the AFL-CIO rather than the AALC. He therefore recommended that aid money be funnelled through these or other channels, rather than coming directly from the centre. "Continuation of the AALC presence,"

he said, "may serve as a lightning rod for political attacks against the US and the AFL-CIO."⁷ Thus money could be given through other parties, including individual American unions, while the AALC continued to take the political heat.

This strategy seemed particularly aimed at COSATU and its affiliates. Zack stated that from his discussions with COSATU officials, "it appears that there is a desire to expand relations with AFL-CIO affiliates in union to union programmes with and through the ITSS". He recommended that it would "be desirable to stimulate greater contacts with COSATU unions, since the federation promises to be the largest and most effective in South Africa for at least the near future." However, he warned that it may be premature for the AALC to go out of its way to "establish new contacts with COSATU or its member unions until conditions stabilise within COSATU."⁸

Don't fund splinter unions and UWUSA

In order to foster this new relationship with COSATU, Zack made two other important recommendations, namely that the AALC should avoid "encouraging or supporting any splinter groups that have left the COSATU unions". It should also avoid establishing ties with the proposed Inkatha union UWUSA, because it would be linked to the politi-

cal future of Buthelezi, and its strength would be limited to the Natal region. Evidence of a close relationship with UWUSA would reduce the prospects of building stronger links with COSATU unions.⁹

Since COSATU appeared to be "here to stay", Zack argued, the AALC's influence on the trade unions scene would be better served in the long term by trying to work with the "stronger and more survivable unions of the COSATU federation".¹⁰

Promote 'non-political' business unionism

It is important to note that Zack's recommendations signalled a new strategy for the AALC, but the fundamental goals remained the same. He predicted that as the new federation became more established, and pursued its goal of one union per industry, "the smaller, more political and more vocal community trade unions", would merge into the larger industrial unions. Power in COSATU would then "shift to the industrial unions". The AALC, he urged, should thus be careful to avoid taking sides in this struggle.¹¹

Other comments made in the report confirm the AALC/AID goal of promoting non-political unionism. For example, Zack applauded the AALC's orientation toward unions with "a commitment to business trade unionism". He suggested that a training programme in labour law for

black attorneys would "encourage working within the law" and foster "democratic unions geared to challenging but living within the law."¹²

Zack, who interviewed more white than black people on his visit to South Africa, was evidently not moved by the fact that both major trade union federations in South Africa fundamentally oppose the country's racist laws.

AALC's grant is cut

Shortly after Zack made his report, AID requested that the AALC resubmit its grant proposal for that year. It lowered the proposed amount from over \$1,9 million to \$1,5 million. An AID internal memorandum stated that, in response to the Zack evaluation, discussions were held between AID, the US state, the US Embassy in Pretoria and the AALC to "arrive at some consensus on the programme".¹³ AID believed that "the AALC has steered as steady a course as possible in the support of the more moderate South African trade unions."

However, it had decided not to grant the full amount requested for two major reasons: 1) it doubted "their ability to substantially expand the programme at this time in South Africa", and 2) it saw "a lack of adequate planning for both the AALC training and union-to-union components of the project."¹⁴

The memo also complained that its "Africa Bureau has had consistent problems with the AALC on

both planning and reporting of their AID-funded activities". Furthermore, it stated, "the Bureau feels the AALC has not been doing its homework."

AALC defends itself

Six months later, the AALC submitted a report to AID defending its programme. On the first page of the report, the AALC revealed its opinion of COSATU:

"COSATU was formed on a platform of militancy and rhetoric against the West. Immediate demand for disinvestment and sanctions, meetings with the outlawed African National Congress (ANC) and its WFTU-affiliated labour wing, rejection of assistance from the ICFTU and the AFL-CIO, and an open challenge to the South African government appear to constitute the main reasons for COSATU's existence."¹⁵

The report failed to mention that COSATU's 33 unions had won more recognition agreements than any other group of unions, and that COSATU's membership of over 650 000 far outnumbered the 250 000 combined membership of CUSA and its ally, the Azanian Confederation of Trade Unions (AZACTU).

Although the AALC had repeatedly claimed that it opposed mixing politics and trade unionism, it was willing to make exceptions when the politics were to its liking. "A tribally-based labour federation," the report

claimed, "would seem to work for labour unity and industrial peace and have a good change for survival." Pointing to the "reknowned (sic) leader Chief Gatsha Buthelezi", it said:

"Extending the arms of Inkatha to include labour would seem to be a viable option. Buthelezi's interest in unions is well documented as are his efforts to attract business enterprises to Kwazulu to offset chronic unemployment."¹⁶

The report acknowledged, however, that "unionisation and the desire to increase employment opportunities are not totally compatible" and suggested that UWUSA would not have a strong shop floor base. The AALC also justified the assistance it gave to many independent unions in competition with larger COSATU affiliates.

Further pressure on AALC

A few months later, in May 1987, Arnold Zack submitted another report to AID, this time outlining a strategy for American labour programmes in South Africa. As in his earlier report, Zack recognised the strength of COSATU, but he also emphasised the ideological divisions within the federation.

His interpreted the likelihood of the larger industrial unions becoming dominant within COSATU as meaning that the federation would be primarily composed of skilled trade unionists who

would be more sympathetic to building "a mixed South African economy in a social democracy". They would recognise that the "retention of industry in the country would keep jobs in the country as well. Those holding this view are not supporters of a strong state run economy..."¹⁷

In other words, the best way to help ensure a post-apartheid South Africa that was not hostile to US influence and investments would be to work with COSATU and encourage what he regarded as its 'pro-capitalist' tendencies.

The 1987 Zack report repeated many of the points he had made in 1986, about the AALC's support for marginal unions, and UWUSA's role as a 'spoiler'.¹⁸

The AALC soon came under public fire from another source: the US Congress. Members of the House Sub-Committee on Africa, which oversees the AID programmes in the region, had been concerned about AALC policies in South Africa for several years. In 1986, the issue was raised by a group of House Democrats, including Reps. Howard Wolpe, Bill Grey and Stephen Solarz, who complained that the AALC was not working with COSATU and was funding "splinter unions".

In 1987, when these members of Congress saw the new AALC programme proposal, they were angry to find that the AALC did not plan to change its policies.

They held a number of meetings with the AALC, AID and the AFL-CIO, and finally the Congressmen pulled rank on all of them. For several days in August 1987, Congress held up the funds intended for AALC's South Africa programme. The AALC had to agree to make a greater effort to work with the COSATU unions, and to support more direct union-to-union programmes.

A change of strategy

The combined pressure on these various forces had indeed prompted the AFL-CIO to modify its policies. As stated above, the pressure from South African and American unionists eventually forced the federation to come out in support of comprehensive sanctions against South Africa. Likewise, pressure from South African unionists, the Agency for International Development, and democratic members of Congress have helped to reshape the AALC's programme in South Africa.

Trying hard to work with COSATU

The most obvious change has been in the AALC's attitude toward COSATU. The 1988 AALC budget proposal went to great pains to show how hard it was trying to work with COSATU, which by that time had over 700 000



American dollars to buy the loyalty of trade unions

Graphic: ILR

members. The proposal reported that in 1987 there had been two meetings between representatives of the AFL-CIO and COSATU. The AFL-CIO's testimony to Congress regarding sanctions had helped to ease the tensions between the two federations. It also pointed out that in 1987, COSATU was invited to a number of AFL-CIO/AALC sponsored events, but that in most instances, "COSATU did not attend, citing passport difficulties." The report was hopeful, however, that "these efforts will lead to a better relationship based on more frequent communications and contact."¹⁹

The AALC also modified its policy toward independent unions. The 1988 proposal stated, "The two most important criteria (for AALC funding) are the

union's representation within the industry and the union's movement within or towards the black federations and their affiliates."²⁰ This dramatic change in criteria was reflected in the industry by industry breakdown of proposed AALC programmes. It repeatedly announced plans to work with COSATU and NACTU affiliates in conjunction with American based AFL-CIO affiliated unions in that industry. Likewise these union-to-union contacts were to be encouraged with some subsidy from the AALC.²¹

Also in accordance with the Zack reports, the AALC appears to have distanced itself from Buthelezi and UWUSA. There is no evidence that the AALC has given any financial support to UWUSA, which the 1988 proposal referred to as "one of the major stumbling

blocks within the trade union movement today."²² When recently asked about the centre's relationship with the Inkatha union, Michael Lescault, AALC Programme Officer for Southern Africa, stated that the AALC had never supported UWUSA because they were opposed to using strikes as a weapon. This was in opposition to the AFL-CIO's own history.²³

Implications for South African trade unions

What do these recent changes in AALC programmes mean and what implications do they have for unionists within both South Africa and the United States? Does this change in AALC programme signify a change in overall objectives in the region, or merely a change in strategy? Is this new policy of working with COSATU unions better or worse for the long term interests of that federation? How should South African workers respond to what on the surface appears to be an improvement in AFL-CIO policies? How should American unions, particularly AFL-CIO affiliates, respond to the new initiative in union-to-union contacts?

On the one hand, the shift to union-to-union programmes offers great potential for more fruitful forms of solidarity between American and South African workers. Many American unionists are more progressive than the leadership of the AFL-CIO, and are sin-

FEATURES

cere in their desire to assist their South African counterparts. As well as financial resources, they can share expertise on important issues such as health and safety in the workplace. They can also demonstrate their solidarity with South African workers through their support of the anti-apartheid movement in the United States.

On the other hand, however, it is important to point out that the AALC's shift in policy is not based on any new-found love of COSATU or its political tendencies. Rather, it is a move made to ensure continued funding of

its programmes from the Congress, through AID. For its part, AID still has the same objectives in mind. They want to ensure that the changes which take place in South Africa are more reformist than revolutionary. In addition, when black people eventually come to power in South Africa, they want them to be more friendly towards US economic, political and military interests in the region.

To this end, AID and the US State Department clearly feel that it is important to keep COSATU from becoming a strong force for

revolutionary change. The move to influence COSATU from the inside, rather than from a distance, is a more subtle strategy than funding its rivals, and potentially more harmful.

South African union leaders are certainly aware of these dangers and continue to be wary of the AALC, though many have begun engaging in union-to-union programmes. It is likely they will continue to grapple with the potential risks and benefits of American union aid for some time to come. ☆

References

1. See for example, Michael J. Sussman, *AIFLD: US Trojan Horse in Latin America and the Caribbean*, EPICA Special Report in English and Spanish, July 1983; Jack Scott, *Yankee Unions, Go Home! How the AFL Helped the US Build an Empire in Latin America*, (Vancouver: New Star Books 1978); and Dan Thompson and Rodney Larson, *Where Were you Brother? An Account of Trade Union Imperialism* (London: War on Want, 1978).
2. *SA Labour Bulletin*, Vol 8 no. 3, December 1982, p. 61. Also *Work In Progress*, no.24, 1982, p. 23.
3. "South African Unionists Tell AFL-CIO: 'No Trade Union Imperialism!'", *Labour Notes*, no. 72, February 1985; Steve Askin and Barbara Yuill, "AFL-CIO Angers South Africans", *In These Times*, January 23, 1985, p 2.
4. "South Africa Programme Report, 1986", AALC, March 1, 1987, Appendix 1, p 1.
5. *AALC Reporter*, vol 17 no 6, November-December 1982, p.4.
6. "Evaluation of the African American Labour Centre Project in the Republic of South Africa", conducted by Arnold M. Zack, May 12, 1986, p 11.
7. *Ibid*.
8. *Ibid* p 11, p 9.
9. *Ibid* p 9.
10. *Ibid* p 12.
11. *Ibid* p 14.
12. *Ibid* p 12, p 17.
13. "Action Memorandum for the Assistance for Africa", from Laurence Hausman, AFR/PD, in regard to Authorisation for Amendment to the African-American Labour Centre (AALC) Grant for Support to Black South African Trade Unions (690-0223), AID, PDBBD907, p 1.
14. *Ibid* p 3.
15. "Report: South African Programme, 1986", AALC, March 1, 1987, p 1. Emphasis mine.
16. *Ibid* p 2.
17. "Development Assistance for the South African Labour Sector in South Africa: A Strategy", Prepared for US-AID by Arnold M. Zack, May 10, 1987.
18. *Ibid* p 18, p 10.
19. "Programme of Action for Black Trade Unions in South Africa: 1988 Proposal", AALC, p 26.
20. *Ibid* p 58
21. For a Description of some of these union-to-union contacts see *AALC Reporter*, vol 23 no 4 1988, p 1.
22. 1988 Proposal, p 3.
23. Interview with Michael T. Lescault, Programme Officer, AALC, 1/3/89.



Free riders - re-thinking the closed shop

Debate around the closed shop has lately livened up in COSATU. CHRIS ALBERTYN and ROD CROMPTON* look at some of the issues surrounding 'free riders' and union security. They argue that the unions urgently need to campaign in support of the closed shop.

Job security is one of the basic demands of the COSATU Living Wage Campaign, but till now COSATU has failed to focus on an important threat to job security. This is the effect that non-union members (free riders) can have on the jobs of union members.

The problem of non-union members or free riders is as old as trade unions themselves. Free riders take advantage of the benefits won by the union. They are also manipulated by employers against the interests of union members. They seldom contribute in a particular struggle with management, and by scabbing during strikes, free riders often make it easier for employers to dismiss striking union members.

Despite all this, COSATU has failed to come up with a demand to protect union members from the free riders. In many countries union members have protected themselves and their organisations by negotiating some form of closed shop, or a union security agreement. In this country the progressive trade union movement has been very wary of the closed shop, because of the way in which the racist white minority unions have used it to reserve jobs for whites and to resist the growth of the progressive, democratic trade union movement. Within COSATU there is mistaken concern that closed shops limit freedom of association, that they are by definition undemocratic and serve to

extend racial or other privileges.

Urgent need to assess the closed shop demand
COSATU's LRA/Living Wage Conference of 12-13 May acknowledged for the first time that the closed shop is a contentious but serious issue facing the trade union movement. There are a number of reasons why it is crucial for COSATU to debate the issues. It must develop some form of demand to protect union members against the employers' tendency to use the free riders against the unions.

1. Basic Trade Union Rights:
Union security, ie an agreement which defines the rights of union members in relation to non-members or mi-

* Chris Albertyn is a labour lawyer in Durban and Rod Crompton is the General Secretary of the Chemical Workers Industrial Union.



Closed shop - strengthening workers' unity and democracy

Photo: Afrapix

norities, is a basic trade union right. This right is under increasing attack by Barlow Rand and other companies that try to bolster minorities.

2. Membership Objections:

Unions have had high levels of membership in some companies for several years, and members frequently object to free riders.

3. The LRA:

The infamous amendments to the Labour Relations Act in September 1988 specifically attacked the organised strength of the working class. The spear-head of this attack is the clause that makes it an unfair labour practice for a majority union to demand sole collective bargaining rights. Secondly, the LRA makes agency shops and closed shops illegal in pri-

vate agreements. They can only be introduced through gazetted Industrial Council or Conciliation Board agreements. These changes largely favour racist white unions with existing closed shop agreements.

4. The Workers Charter:

The 1989 COSATU Congress resolved to draw up a Workers Charter. Debate around the Workers Charter is an important campaign in 1990 for COSATU affiliates. A crucial debate is whether or not the Charter will include the right of unions to deal with the free rider problem.

5. Majority Rule and Individual Rights:

In the speculation about a negotiated settlement in SA and the call for a bill of rights, various groupings are

preparing their draft bills. The state, in the form of the South African Law Commission, has already had much publicity for a bill of rights which specifically excludes the closed shop. If passed, this bill would seriously limit workers' rights to deal with the free rider problem.

6. Violence:

Recently there has been marked increase in the level of violence surrounding strikes. Much of this is caused by free riders who are manipulated by management during industrial action.

7. Negotiated Settlement:

The attack by capital and the state on trade unions through the LRA amendments must also be seen in the light of the looming negotiations for a political settlement in

South Africa. If big capital, through its agent the state, has to negotiate a new dispensation, it would choose not to negotiate with a powerful opponent. The progressive trade union movement inside South Africa represents the most organised internal anti-apartheid power base. To defend its control of the economy capital will try to weaken the progressive unions in the run up to the negotiations.

Ways of dealing with free riders

Over the years and under different circumstances, unions have developed various ways of dealing with the free rider problem. Agreements have been negotiated, and usually became law, which in different ways gave protection to the collective rights of the union membership. They are outlined below, beginning with the weakest example of a union security agreement.

All but the first, the preferential shop are outlawed by the 1988 LRA amendments. The minister has the power to block all new union security agreements, while protecting the existing closed shop unions.

- **Preferential shop**

Union members are given preference when there are job vacancies and free riders are retrenched before union members.

- **Agency shop/solidarity subscriptions**

All workers within the bargaining unit must pay union dues once the ma-

jority have signed up. Non-members are not compelled to join the union, but merely to pay solidarity subscriptions. The worker decides whether or not to join the union and is still free to join another union if she/he wants, and to pay two sets of dues.

There are a number of possible variations here. The majority union could, for example, require free riders to pay part, say 75%, of the full union due; the union could require the free rider to pay an amount equal to the union dues to a charity nominated by the union. These options are outlawed in SA. In terms of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act deductions may not be made from a worker's wage without written consent. Only a gazetted Industrial Council or Conciliation Board Agreement can overcome this problem.

- **Union shop or post-entry closed shop**

A worker must join the union within a certain time after becoming employed in the bargaining unit. The union decides whether or not the applicant may become a member. If the union decides not to admit the applicant that worker must look for work elsewhere.

- **Closed shop proper or pre-entry closed shop**

A worker must be a member of the union before



he/she can be employed in the bargaining unit. There are two kinds of closed shop. The *exclusionary* like that of the early craftsmen, is still practised by lawyers and doctors in SA to this day. The *inclusionary* is the most common today, and tries to include all the workers in the bargaining unit/plant.

Union security in other countries

How have workers in other countries dealt with free riders? Under Western capitalism workers have used what power they have to get laws passed which protect them.

The closed shop is permitted in all its forms in Sweden and the Netherlands. In the United Kingdom approximately 40% of union members are covered by closed shop agreements. With the rise of Thatcherism the closed shop and workers rights in general have come under attack. New closed shop agreements have now been outlawed.

In Japan and Mexico the law permits the closed shop proper. The agency shop is permitted in Switzerland where collective agreements may require payment of solidarity subscriptions by workers who do not belong to a trade union.

Solidarity subscriptions



are required of free riders, to be paid to the majority union, in the Bahamas, Grenada, Zaire, Gabon, Mali, Nigeria and Tanzania. Preferential treatment of union members in respect of recruitment and other union security provisions are practised in Australia and New Zealand. In most of Canada and New Zealand compulsory payment of solidarity subscriptions is provided for.

In West Germany the law does not permit the closed shop. But it operates in practice because the Works Councils have the right to select new employees. Since the Works Councils are usually dominated by the trade unions, they are able to ensure that new employees are union members before they are employed.

In Italy and France the trade unions are affiliated to federations founded by or closely linked to political parties. Membership of a political party and a trade union go hand in hand. There a worker must belong to one of the trade unions in the bargaining unit and chooses which one he/she will join.

In the USA the pre-entry closed shop is not permitted. But in most states other forms of union security are permitted and they are common in the most industrialised states.

Approximately 80% of

unionised workers in the USA are covered by some form of union security agreement.

Democratic unions and the closed shop

The closed shop can be seen as a way of protecting the union as a democratic institution which aims to represent workers in general. Democratic trade unions are a significant historical development which develops and encourages democratic practices. They encourage discussion and the right of people to express themselves and to put their view. They encourage a process whereby those issues which can be settled by talking are settled in this way rather than by force.

The value of this institution for workers' lives and society as a whole should not be underestimated. Institutions in society which in and of themselves promote the concept of democracy, co-operation and the non-violent resolution of disputes amongst people, should be preserved and protected.

Where free riders are obliged to belong to a union through some form of union security agreement, moderate workers who might scab or return to work during a strike

are obliged to go to union meetings to argue their position, to try and persuade the militants why there should be a return to work (and vice versa). This is far better than meeting each other at the factory gates ready to intimidate or kill each other. As long as free riders are not covered by some form of closed shop there will be conflict during industrial disputes, particularly when the majority decides to take action.

Non-members undermine the union

At present many employers who promote the anti-worker, 'all comers approach', use the free riders to undermine the union members and the democratic process whereby the majority of workers make decisions and protect themselves.

For example:

1. When wage negotiations reach deadlock the employer's final offer is paid to non-members. When settlement is finally reached with the union, the employer refuses to backdate the increases for the union members, but gives the benefit of the higher wages negotiated by the union to the free riders.
2. Free riders are used as scabs during strikes.
3. Free riders are given bonuses or rewarded for not striking.
4. Free riders have their wages back dated to a date earlier than the date for union members, etc.

These actions elevate the

rights of the non-members above those of the members even though the free riders are the minority. This is victimisation of the union members and undermining of their collective bargaining rights.

Closed shop responsibilities for democratic unions

Sadly, in SA the closed shop has been a tool of oppression by racist minority trade unions. They have used it to

prevent the advance of progressive and democratic trade unions. In some countries the closed shop has promoted the growth of a complacent bureaucracy. This has given the closed shop a bad name.

However we need to bear in mind that just because some people got their sums wrong does not mean there is anything wrong with arithmetic.

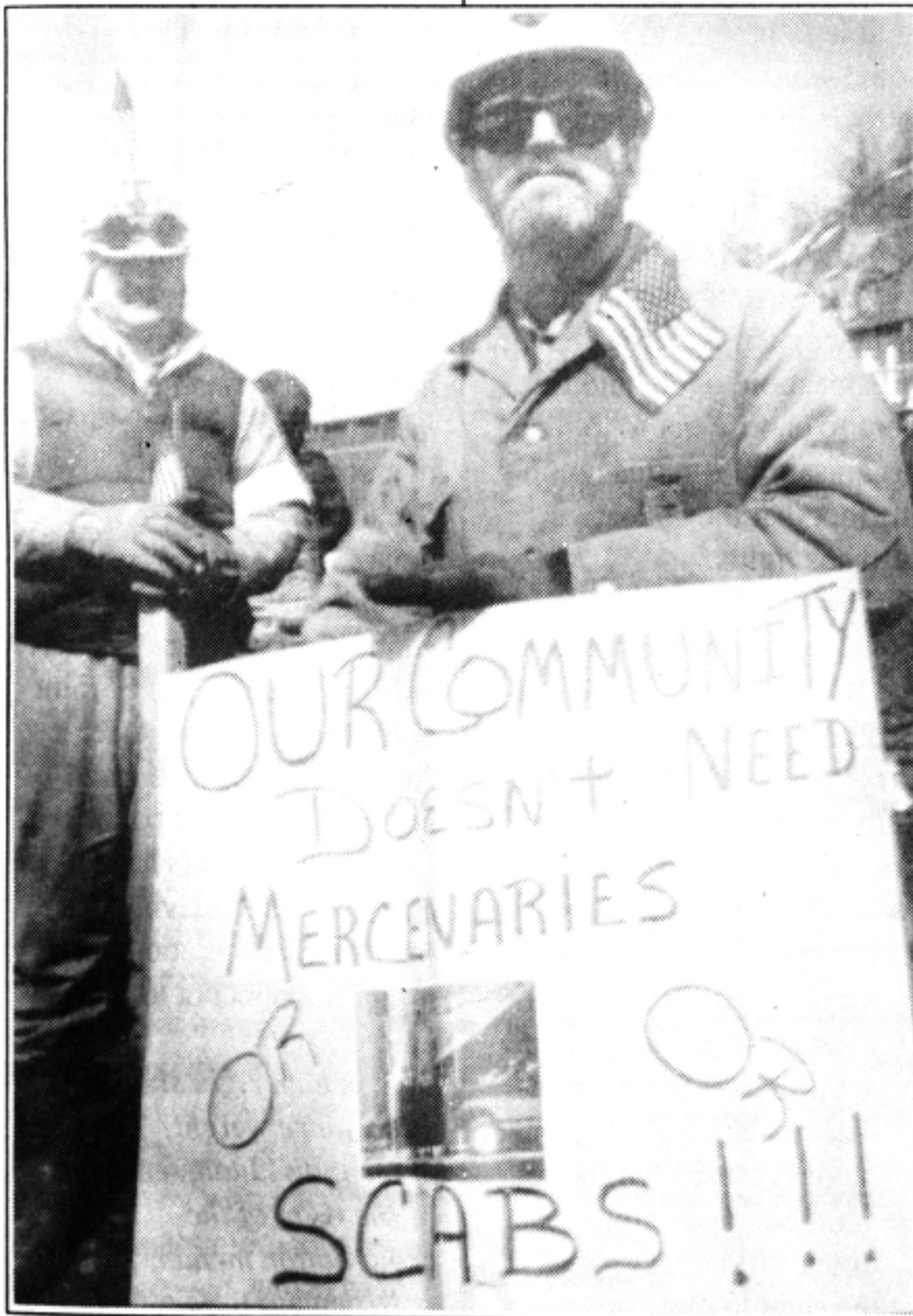
All workers, including free riders, are entitled to



democratic restrictions on the exercise of union security rights, so that they do not become oppressive.

The right to the closed shop should be accompanied by requirements to ensure that it remains a democratic extension of workers' rights, and not a bureaucratic protection for lazy union officials or small minorities. The following suggestions are made. There are doubtless others that could be introduced.

- A significant majority should ballot in favour of introducing the closed shop.
- It should be reviewed regularly, once every two years for example.
- A significant minority (30 - 40%) should be able to petition for a re-ballot during the two year period.
- If the union loses the ballot it should have to wait for a specific period before trying again, for example one year.
- The disciplinary and grievance procedures within the union must be fair and clear. People who object to the closed shop, such as conscientious objectors, must have access to these procedures.
- The union should be worker-controlled.
- All workers in the bargaining unit must be informed and able to influence the mandates and decisions.



American workers on picket - the closed shop can reduce the incidence of scabbing and violence

Photo: ILR



- The interests of all parts of the bargaining unit must be equally promoted.
- The union should be able to admit all possible employees in the bargaining unit, irrespective of race, gender or creed.
- Workers in the closed shop should be entitled to belong to another union as well.
- The union should not affiliate directly to a particular political party. This does not mean that a union should not be entitled to engage in politics, but that its support of a particular political party should not bind all the members.

In British law members are only obliged to pay dues into the general union fund, but not into the union's political fund which it uses to finance political parties. Contributions to the union's political fund are voluntary and those who do not contribute may not be discriminated against in the union.

Under the LRA it is an offence for any union to affiliate to a political party, to give financial assistance to a political party, or for the union to influence its members with the object of assisting any political party. The only exception is KwaZulu.

However with the current debate about a Workers Charter in mind consideration

needs to be given to these issues for the post-apartheid society.

Debating principles: Freedom of association and dissociation

The closed shop debate raises several questions about the freedom of association.

1. If all workers in a bargaining unit are obliged to have some form of association with a union, do free riders lose their freedom of association?

It is important to understand what freedom of association means when answering such a question. The common understanding is that freedom of association means freedom of each individual to choose which organisation to join and freedom to choose not to join an organisation. But this ignores the fact that the collective also has rights.

The standard reference for Freedom of Association is the ILO's Convention 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise (1948). In sum the critical clauses say that:

- Workers and employers, without distinction whatsoever, shall have the right to establish and, subject only to the rules of the organisation concerned, join organisations of their own choice.
- Workers' and employer's organisations shall have the right to draw up their constitutions and rules, to elect their representatives in full freedom, to or-

ganise their administration and activities and to formulate their programmes.

What this means in practice is that if the union decides that non-members undermine the union, it could amend its constitution or adopt a policy in favour of the closed shop, union shop or agency shop. In other words, freedom of association is a two-way relationship and the union members may decide: "We want them to be part of us even if they do not want to be part of us, because we need each other to help further our common interests."

So freedom of association is also the right of workers to associate with whom they want to, *even if they want to associate with workers who do not want to associate with them!* This aspect of freedom of association is often lost in SA. The common interpretation of freedom of association at work, and the one that the employers conveniently quote, only sees the "negative" right of the individual/free rider "not" to join the union, and not the rights of the collective. Even some workers have been confused into believing that freedom of association only means the right not to join a union.

2. Which right should carry more weight? The right of the individual/free rider, or the right of the group/union members?

When are the rights of the individual more important than the rights of the group or collective? Should the in-

dividual have the right to stop the collective from including him/her in the association, where they have a common interest?

In each country some rights are given more weight than others. Rights must be seen in their social and political context. Under democratic government the will of the majority prevails over the will of the minority on several issues, for example compulsory taxation and military service. The majority government decides all citizens should pay taxes. So even those who do not support the government and so do not want to pay taxes, are compelled to pay.

Why should the free rider's right carry more weight than the members' rights? Is it not an abuse of freedom of association if only the free rider is protected?

3. *Do the benefits of compulsory union membership in a closed shop outweigh the individual's loss of the right to decide for her/himself?*

Clearly workers are better off with trade unions than without them. History has shown that unions have promoted good industrial relations and prevented arbitrary managerial practices. Unions have improved the incomes of members above the incomes of non-unionised workers. That higher income is then spent by workers which in turn creates more jobs for the unemployed, which benefits the society as a whole.

What are the burdens of compulsory membership?

- paying union dues
- attending union meetings
- accepting decisions and resolutions of union meetings

These burdens are far less than the burdens of compulsory taxation or military conscription, but they are necessary for the good of the society.



Should the Free Rider problem be addressed in a Workers' Charter?

What if the members say: "We are not prepared to be associated at work with free riders, we demand our right to disassociate from them. We do not want free riders to work alongside us".

The member's right to disassociate from the free rider is preferable to the free rider's right to dissociate from the union when compulsory membership is regulated by fair and democratic procedures.

But are the consequences equal? Some people say that if the members 'disassociate' a free rider he/she will lose his/her job. On the other hand, the union members will not



lose their jobs if a free rider does not join the union.

Is this true? Yes, but only during labour peace. It is not true during a strike. The free rider scabbing may just make the difference which allows the employer to win. At the very least scabbing increases the suffering of strikers and their families. When members lose a strike they may well be losing their jobs as well or suffering some other form of loss such as back pay, warnings, broken service, etc. These burdens are far more serious than paying dues and attending meetings.

In short the two rights are not equal. The member's rights outweigh the free rider's rights.

Conclusion

In the absence of an acceptable Labour Relations Act and political rights in SA, union security will need to be set out in agreements at industrial councils or conciliation boards. If violence and suffering are to be avoided and if justice is the goal, progressive unions will have to develop a means of dealing with the free riders. In the light of the current debate over the Workers Charter, the campaign against the LRA and the possibilities of a post apartheid society, the debate over free riders, union security agreements and the closed shop needs to be held urgently, and a position adopted which the labour movement can advance. ☆

Self-management in Yugoslavia: a failed experiment in democratic socialism?

In 1986 EDDIE WEBSTER* went to Yugoslavia on a study visit. In this article he describes the Yugoslavian system of worker self-management, and analyses the contradictions that manifested themselves in the system. He draws some lessons for South Africa. This article continues the debate about socialism started by our coverage of China (Vol 14 No 2), the publication of Slovo's paper (Vol 14 No 6) and several other articles.

For forty years 'a conspiracy of silence' has existed in South Africa on what socialism is and how it works in practice. The Suppression of Communism Act in 1950 effectively isolated the South African Left from the many debates around the shortcomings of actually existing socialism.

Supporters of the SA Communist Party (SACP) have not until very recently felt the need to put forward a clear socialist alternatives for South Africa (see 'SACP draft Workers Charter', *Labour Bulletin* Vol 14 No 6). They accepted the leadership of the ANC in the fight against apartheid, and insisted that the SACP would only begin pursuing its own programme once a democratic South Africa had been achieved.

Attempts by courageous individuals, such as Richard Turner, to develop a democratic socialist alternative for South Africa were brutally

**Eddie Webster is a founder member of Labour Bulletin and head of sociology at Witwatersrand University*



Debating socialism

crushed by the apartheid state. His socialist manifesto, *The eye of the needle*, was banned in 1973 and he was tragically assassinated five years later.

The unbanning of the SACP has changed all this, and has opened up the possibility of a South African *glasnost*. For the first time local economists are putting forward clear socialist alternatives for a democratic South African economy. At its Third National Congress last year, COSATU decided to embark on a workers charter campaign.

Most dramatically, SACP general secretary Joe Slovo, influenced by perestroika and the democratic spirit of the trade union movement, has denounced 'Stalinism' in the Soviet Union as 'a bureaucratic-authoritarian style of leadership which denuded socialism of most of its democratic content and concentrated power in the hands of a tiny, self-perpetuating elite'.

Centralised economic planning: the Soviet model

How was the Soviet economy organised? Soviet thinkers and party and technical bureaucrats had no experience to draw on. Under Lenin, and especially under Stalin, from the 1920's onwards they developed a

system of centralised economic planning and control which hung together and actually worked.

These early socialist planners believed a planned economy would overcome the severe economic recessions, gross inequalities and unemployment that charac-

and health services and social welfare for all.

Until perestroika economic planning in the Soviet Union was highly centralised and hierarchical. The first step in planning was to formulate broad political and economic objectives. Priorities were established by



terised the capitalist economic system.

Indeed, the achievements of the Soviet Union over the next two decades were impressive. A heavy industrial base was constructed at break-neck speed. More impressively, the Soviet Union achieved important social goals such as full employment, expanded education,

the central party and state apparatus.

For example, they might decide on rapid economic growth through developing heavy industry. The plan would then be developed around these goals. The plan would be elaborated at different levels of the bureaucracy. Targets were set. Finally, directives would be sent out to

Debating socialism



the various enterprises stating what must be produced.

Planning decisions were thus made in a top-down fashion. Little or no formal provision was made for negotiation with enterprise management. There was thus very little participation at the base.

Problems of central planning

Gorbachev has called the Soviet system of planning the 'administrative-command economy'. There are two major problems with central planning. Both problems cause inefficiency.

- The first problem is that it takes an enormous amount of time to develop a detailed plan for the whole country. By the time the plan is formulated many things have already changed. Factories sometimes get their plan a year late.
- The second problem is that information is often 'lost' between the planning centre and the enterprise because so many people have to make so many decisions. In a famous case, hairpins were forgotten in one Polish plan, and because of this no new hairpins could be found anywhere in Poland in 1957.

As Blazyca writes: "The majority of people have abso-

lutely no voice in the construction of the plan. The basic source of the waste and inefficiency of Soviet planning lies in this feature - the system's lack of democracy."

Soviet economists recognised the shortcomings of the centrally planned economy about 30 years ago. They saw that their country had failed to make the transition to a sophisticated consumer-oriented society 30 years ago, but they could not work out what to do about it.

The emergence of perestroika and glasnost in the mid-1980's in the Soviet Union, and the collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe, has led to a widespread belief that socialism has failed.

The ideas of the free-marketeer Hayek enjoy high prestige in the Economic Institute in Moscow. Visitors to the Soviet Union have remarked ironically that British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher seems to be more popular in the Soviet Union than in Britain.

Abandoning socialism?

So has the time come to abandon the ideals of socialism? I would argue not. But socialists need to analyse the lessons of existing socialism in order to learn lessons for the future. If we accept the arguments of perestroika and

Joe Slovo, that the Soviet model has failed, what form of socialism are we offering?

Socialists need to demonstrate that they are not merely offering to end the present concentration of economic and political power. Socialism should genuinely avoid a new concentration of power.

One example of socialism that was the reverse of the Soviet model is the example of Yugoslavia. Yugoslavian socialism has been based on decentralisation and worker self-management in the workplace.

What lessons can we draw from what has been called 'the boldest experiment in workers' democracy since the Paris Commune of 1871'?

Yugoslavia: revolution from below

Yugoslavia took a fundamentally different route towards socialism than the Soviet Union and other East European countries. Tito, the long-standing leader of the Yugoslavian Communist Party (YCP), broke with Stalin in 1949-1950. With the break, Yugoslavia avoided the Soviet path of an 'administrative-command system'.

Instead, after 1950 it virtually turned the Soviet model upside-down. It did this by purposefully weakening the



central state machinery.

Unlike the Soviet Union, the Yugoslavs believed that economic development could be linked to 'emancipation of

per year. During the 1960's Yugoslavia was widely seen as the one country that offered socialists a model of workers' control.

Debating socialism

and sharp ethnic conflict.

In 1988 Milovan Djilas, ex-communist and one of the early leaders of the YCP, wrote that "Yugoslavia's economic crisis was the manifestation of a fundamental political sickness presaging the imminent death of communism. I believe that what is happening today is the beginning of the end of communism.

"The Communist Party in Yugoslavia is disintegrating and many things are out of control. I am convinced we are witnessing the last stages of communism throughout the world and that Yugoslavia will be the first European nation to divest itself of the system" (*Business Day*, 11/10/88).

Djilas turned out to be remarkably accurate in his prediction. A year later Yugoslavia's reformist prime minister, Ante Markovic, announced a package of sweeping changes designed to introduce a 'Western-style economic system' in order to overcome the economic crisis.

As part of the package Yugoslavia will welcome large-scale foreign investment, has opened a stock exchange, and has introduced financial reforms. Instead of developing an alternative route to socialism, Yugoslavia, its critics joke, is the first example of the socialist path to capitalism!

CROQUIS RÉVOLUTION

PAR PILOTELL.



QUE LE PEUPLE VEILLE !!!!

The Paris Commune - the first (shortlived) experiment in workers' democracy

the masses' through decentralisation of political and economic power.

In the decade that followed the break with the Soviet model, production increased faster than any other country in the world, averaging 13%

In the 1970's this success story began to crack. Yugoslavia began to experience major economic and social problems - large-scale unemployment, massive international debt, declining real wages, triple digit inflation

The break with Stalin



Why did Yugoslavia break with the Soviet Union and the Cominform in 1949-1950? Until the Second World War Yugoslavia was an economically backward country run by a monarchy that goes back to the Austro-Hungarian empire. In 1941 the YCP called for a general mobilisation and rebellion to throw out the occupying Nazi armies. The YCP led a revolutionary armed struggle for liberation from Nazi occupation.

This struggle took on the character of a socialist revolution. After the war the new communist government nationalised property on a wide scale. Nationalisation was accompanied by a tightening of economic and political control at the centre. In many ways it was similar to the Soviet model of socialism. The party took control of the state apparatus. It immediately appointed administrators to oversee all aspects of the economy, including the appointment of factory managers.

Despite its obvious shortcomings this period of 'administrative socialism' (as it is now termed in Yugoslavia) yielded important gains. The government succeeded in rebuilding the post-war economy. But towards the end of the decade industrial workers began to show discontent. They became increasingly disillusioned with the inefficiencies of the state bureaucracy. Furthermore the peasants, who had fought the war on the slogan of 'the land to those who culti-

vate it', resisted the collectivisation programme.

Although the

YCP kept its belief in the socialisation of agriculture even after the break with the Soviet Union, *de facto* peasant farming continued and currently accounts for 85% of agricultural land.

Amidst these rising frustrations the break with Stalin occurred. Yugoslavia refused to subordinate itself to the discipline of the Soviet Communist Party and was expelled from the Cominform. The YCP then dropped the highly centralised economic model of the Soviet Union, and encouraged decentralisation through establishing workers' councils. These councils were to be elected in all workplaces.

Separating party from state

At the same time Kardelj called for the separation of the party (the YCP) from the state apparatus to avoid bureaucratisation. He also called for a form of 'direct democracy' which would transcend Western multi-party or Soviet one-party representation. The utopian idea of everyone physically voting by popular ballot on every issue was rejected. Instead, the government adopted a system of direct voting on some issues, while others would be decided by elected and accountable delegates in regional and national parliaments.

Kardelj believed that formal political parties would be unnecessary as working people would have direct control. Power would be at the base. This was how the Yugoslavians saw Marx's idea of 'the dictatorship of the proletariat'. The working class would be organised as the state.



Marshal Tito



**Debating
socialism**

**Worker self-
management**

Yugoslavia was the first country to establish a democratic system of worker self-management of the economy. But contradictions have led to an economic crisis in this system.

After the revolution, the Yugoslavs say, socialism faces two dangers. Firstly, the danger of a capitalist restoration. Secondly, the danger of monopolistic tendencies within socialism, because of the total power which the state exercises. When a centralised state is allowed to concentrate enormous power in its hands, a new stratum of bureaucrats emerges which resembles the capitalist class of old.

State management of the economy perpetuates the alienation of the worker from the means of production, for he/she has no more control over them than before. The crucial element of ownership is *control*.

Under bureaucratic despotism, as Djilas calls the Soviet system in his classic book, *The new class*, the economy, and therefore the position of

The aim was to transform the party from an organ of power to an ideological and political vanguard. It was believed that when self-management enjoyed ideological hegemony the YCP would no longer be needed. The state would 'whither away' as it was replaced by the structure of self-management. In 1952 the YCP was renamed the League of Communists to show that it no longer intended being a conventional political party.

The YCP was able to risk this break with the Soviet Union and the Cominform because it had such widespread support within Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia was the only country in Eastern Europe that succeeded in liberating itself from Nazi occupation without any assistance from the Soviet army. It faced little opposition to establishing socialism.



**THE CHARGES
AGAINST TITO**

**BACKGROUND TO COMINFORM
MOVE**

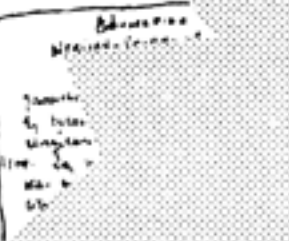
(From Our Political Correspondent)
THE news that Marshal Tito and other leaders of the Yugoslav Communist Party have been expelled from the Cominform has taken the whole world by surprise. News so far received in South Africa gives no indication of the immediate cause, but one thing must be borne in mind: the charges levelled against the Yugoslav Communist Party are very serious, and the Cominform would not have taken the drastic step of expelling some of its most prominent members unless the situation warranted it.

The Cominform alleges that the Yugoslav Communist Party has split from the united socialist front and "started on the road leading to the betrayal of the international solidarity of the working people". Replying to the Cominform indictment, the Yugoslav Communist Party has described some charges as "shameful and disgusting", and others as "lies and slanders".

YUGOSLAV COMMUNISTS CRITICISED

The Cominform says Marshal Tito's Communists make propaganda against the Soviet Union and try to discredit the Red Army. They adopt a hostile attitude towards the Russian Communist Party and critics are accused of cruel measures of repression. Laws are passed pre-emptively such as the nationalisation of small shops, for which the country was not ready.

**SMUGGLED
FROM**



**The Guardian,
South Africa's
Communist Party
aligned - paper in
the 1940s,
responds to the
expulsion of the
Yugoslavians
from the
Cominform**

Debating socialism

the working class vis-a-vis the means of production, is in all ways similar to the capitalist economy.

How can this state capitalism be prevented? *Worker self-management* and *decentralisation* are the key features of the Yugoslavian system of 'socialist democracy'.

Decentralisation

Each of the eight Yugoslavian republics has a great deal of autonomy and decision-making power. The YCP in each state uses distinct languages, policies and practices. The national central committee of the party acts to co-ordinate the policies of the various states at the national level.

At the economic level decentralisation meant moving away from strict central planning to a market economy. Strict central planning, the Yugoslavs believed, was not consistent with worker self-management because decisions would be made by the central planning apparatus rather than by the workers.

The retreat from central planning and the opening up of the market was obviously not achieved overnight. Laws were changed over time. Today central planning still exists, but it has taken on a new character.

The Yugoslavian system

of planning is called indicative planning to distinguish it from the top-down commandist system of directive planning. Indicative planning has two components:

- National plans are drawn up from the reports of local self-managed institutions - the communes and enterprises.
- Plans are established by elected delegates on the basis of consensus.

Plans - usually five year plans - are therefore more representative of what the direct producers themselves consider is possible. The plan does not dictate to them what goods should be produced, nor how and who should market them. In theory at least, indicative planning overcomes some of the problems of the Soviet model.

Decisions about the production and distribution of goods are not always made by the direct producers alone. There are times when the interests of a particular group of producers comes into conflict with the general interest of the particular republic or the national state.

In such cases the state has to intervene. But these interventions are decided by the elected indicative planning bodies, not by state-appointed bureaucrats.



Workers manage the factories

The premise underlying worker self-management is that producers should have genuine control over the surplus they generate, and that no person may exploit another. This means that workers manage the means of production. However, they do it in the name of the community where true 'ownership' lies.

Ninety-two per cent of the economy is socially owned. A small number of privately-owned enterprises exist, such as family-run restaurants. But an owner may not employ more than five employees, and the owner must work in the enterprise him/herself.

Nationalisation, the Yugoslavians argue, is the lowest form of socialism. All the Yugoslavian architects of self management - Djilas, Kidric, Popovic and Kardelj - drew a crucial distinction between state ownership and social ownership. By social control they meant collective ownership by the whole community. The key difference was the idea of control - the aim of social ownership, they believed, was to take control away from the central state to the direct producers and consumers.

Workers councils

The structure of workers' management is made up of two bodies in each enter-



Debating socialism



A call from the Freedom Charter - but how? In South Africa, many see the answer in nationalisation - "the lowest form of socialism" according to Yugoslavian communists

Picture: Eli Weinberg

prise; the workers' council and the management board. Members are not paid extra for being on these committees, and much of the business is done after working hours. The key instrument of workers' control is the workers' council. A council must be elected in every company.

The council holds all the formal power: it can veto all important management decisions, it appoints management personnel, sets salary scales, decides on hiring and firing, establishes capital investment programmes, carries out long-term planning, and in general runs the company. As stipulated by law, workers' councils comprise between 15 and 120 members, depending on the size of the company.

The term of office for council members is fixed at two years. Half the members are replaced each year. No council member may serve two consecutive terms. Elec-

tions are run according to universal suffrage, secret ballot and direct elections.

Workers cannot be fired or transferred while serving on the council, but they can be recalled at any time. There is evidence that the elections are legitimate contests and are not manipulated by the Communist League.

Every year the workers' council re-elects its executive organ, the management board. The board members number between 5 and 11, plus the director. The board members are usually chosen from the ranks of the workers' council. To prevent the formation of a bureaucratic elite within the enterprise, only a third of the management board may be re-elected. No member may serve more than three consecutive terms, and at least 75% of the board must be workers directly involved in production. The management board maintains close contact with the management personnel, and play a more

active role in the company's day-to-day operations.

The director is the chief executive of the firm. He/she is responsible for organising production and carrying out the plans approved by the workers' management bodies. The director represents the company in dealings with the state and other parties. In theory the director's powers are strictly limited by the workers' management bodies. One director interviewed in a study stated: "I don't make the decisions. I only make suggestions to the workers' council. Most of the time they are accepted. If the council decides differently and I don't accept the decision, they can make me resign."

Increasing power of the directors

In spite of this formal position, in reality often the directors do have a lot of influence over the councils. This is because they are full-time professional managers

Debating socialism

with a great deal of expertise. The workers find it difficult to control them. In practice the directors are no longer accountable for their actions and decisions. The director has power without formal authority. In contrast the workers council has formal authority without real power. This can make the system confusing and inefficient. A further criticism of the system is that it is very time-consuming. Referendums have to be held to get the support of workers for re-investment plans.

It is important to note that no independent union organisation existed during the struggle for liberation. The unions acted as a 'transmission belt' for the party both before the revolution and after. Under the system of worker self-management unions are in an ambiguous position. They have no independent base on the shop floor, and are in fact the arm of the state in the factory. Wages are set by the workers council and workers do not have the right to strike.

Instead the trade unions function to educate their members about self-management and assist them to make it function better. Candidates for the workers council elections, for example, are usually nominated by the trade unions. In addition, the unions are expected to look

after the social interests of their members by arranging sports and social events .

Contradictions in self- management

How effective has the system of workers' self-management been? In his book *The economics of feasible socialism*, Alec Nove describes the system of worker self-management in Yugoslavia as "a bundle of contradictions". He identifies five of these contradictions:

1. There is, first, the question of income distribution.

The aim is to distribute income according to the contribution of the individual worker on the principle of 'to each according to their work'. As a result those who are more skilled or work harder get a higher income. But no worker may get more than five times that of the lowest paid worker in that factory.

However, in Yugoslavia income is linked directly to the results of the enterprise. Income will depend more on whether the enterprise is or is not economically successful, than on the individual's contribution. The success of the firm may have very little to do with workers' efforts. It

could be effected by factors outside their control - such as a fall in price, an increase in costs or, more commonly, regional factors. The result is that sharp differences in income exist between the same jobs in different factories.

Regional inequalities are caused by different natural resources and by historical differences in productivity. In fact these differences have widened since 1945, partly because of the policy of decentralisation. This makes it difficult for the state to re-allocate resources from wealthy regions to poorer regions. Regional inequalities have contributed to the intensity of national conflict in Yugoslavia.

These contradictions, Nove concludes, are unavoidable wherever payment is related to a firm's success. Yet if pay is not related to the success of the firm, then where is the workers' material interest in the success of 'their' firm?

2. The workers council decides how to distribute the firm's profit. This stimulates wage inflation. The workers council is tempted to distribute most of the profit to the workers, and then borrow money for investment. This causes high inflation. In 1986 Yugoslavia owed the World Bank \$12 billion, which had been borrowed largely to finance imports of





machinery and equipment. Repayment is difficult because of the low productivity of local industry.

3. The workers as a collective have no long-term economic interest in the success of the company.

Workers are in no sense co-owners or shareholders. They are involved in managing the company, but only while they work for it. When they resign to go elsewhere (which happens frequently) or when they retire, they have nothing to sell. This means they have no material interest in the value of the company.

4. Yugoslavian experience suggests that workers do not all have the desire to participate. Many workers are not keen to sit on committees and to acquire the detailed knowledge that would enable them to be in any significant sense co-managers. It is for this reason above all that the power of the directors has increased.

5. The final contradiction identified by Nove is that of unemployment. Yugoslavia has a high unemployment rate - 30%. This was disguised in the 1960's when over a million migrants went across the border to work in West Germany. Now that most have been sent back to Yugoslavia, the unemployment crisis is visible.

Is there a connection be-

tween self-management and unemployment? It seems certain, says Nove, that there is.

Under the Yugoslavian system the workers council usually divides the profit between all the workers employed in the firm. The more workers there are the smaller the share of profit for each worker. This means there is no incentive to employ more workers - and the problem of unemployment gets worse.

In addition to the five contradictions identified by Nove, two further ones need to be mentioned.

1. In a capitalist society profits can be reinvested in production in a completely legal fashion - for example through the stock exchange. But in Yugoslavia until recently no capital market existed, and private property is limited. In such societies wealth is accumulated through fraud and corruption, and is spent on illicit consumption rather than productive investment.

A similar tendency exists in all socialist countries where democracy has been absent, as the recent corruption scandals in both East Germany and Rumania reveal.

2. The form of production inherited from the Soviet Union is large scale production with an emphasis on quantity rather than quality.

Debating socialism

This inhibits productivity and the development of more advanced technology and more flexible systems of production. As Avril Joffe argues, this belief that 'big is beautiful' has contributed to the economic crisis of existing socialism.

Employees per enterprise

Socialism	Capitalism
USSR	USA
712	53
Hungary	Canada
1070	58
Yugoslavia	Japan
531	15

Assessment

Has the Yugoslavian experiment in worker self-management failed? The answer is a qualified yes. At first, as in the case of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia experienced a period of rapid economic growth.

Its socialist system was able to redistribute the power and to some extent the wealth which was previously monopolised by the land-owners and monarchy. It was also successful in building the basic structure of modern industry - the steel plants, electrical generating capacity and transport.

But it has not succeeded in sustaining this economic growth nor in creating a genuine democracy. There is

Debating socialism



South African workers call for socialism - what does this mean in the light of the dramatic lessons to be learnt from the experience of Eastern Europe

Photo: Benny Gool/Afrapix

widespread belief in Yugoslavia that the system has to be changed. Changes have already begun; where it will end is not yet clear.

Some lessons for South Africa

As we begin a new decade with high expectations of a new society in South Africa, four 'lessons' seem worth drawing from Yugoslavia.

The first lesson is that a decentralised system of worker self-management with a strong role for the market deepened the regional inequalities in Yugoslavia. Decentralisation can only encourage uneven

development and increase the inequalities between regions. Market socialism strengthened the more developed regions of Croatia and Slovenia at the expense of the poorer rural areas of Kosovo and Montenegro, contributing to ethnic conflict.

In South Africa a decentralised state with strong market forces is likely to deepen the inequalities that already exist between the core urban areas and the peripheral rural areas. Unequal development can only be overcome through the planned redirection of resources by the central state.

The second lesson relates to worker self-management. If those who 'manage' the firm are going to make long-term decisions about investment they need a relatively free hand to do so. If management is too directly accountable to workers in the plant, it will be inhibited from making the tough choices that are sometimes necessary for the long-term survival of a firm. This problem resulted in the wage inflation described above.

An alternative would be to give workers a direct financial stake in the firm, such as in the Mondragon co-operatives in Spain. This means



that workers have a long term interest in the firm.

The third lesson is that workers' participation in decision-making in the firm is not enough to make management accountable. The evidence from Yugoslavia is that it is utopian to assume that all employees in an enterprise desire to participate. The best way of ensuring that management is accountable - in a worker-managed firm, a state-managed firm or a capitalist enterprise - is by building strong industry-wide unions which have an independent organisational presence on the shop-floor. This must include the right to strike.

One final point is important when assessing Yugoslavian experience. It is a difficult task to build socialism in one country. To build it in isolation from other socialist countries, as Yugoslavia attempted to do at first, means that the economy is drawn inevitably into the world capitalist system. This certainly happened to Yugoslavia, as with the export of labour to Germany and the international borrowing from Washington.

In an attempt to develop an alternative foreign policy Tito launched the Non-Aligned Movement from Belgrade in 1955. Yugoslavia has remained the key actor in the NAM ever since.

The most recent NAM conference was held in Belgrade last year. However, with the final destalinisation of Eastern Europe Yugoslavia can at last find common ground with its neighbours. Whether this common ground is found on the basis of full-fledged capitalism, or whether these countries try to develop a more subtle 'mix of market and plan' while retaining the positive effects of workers'

Debating socialism

participation in management remains to be seen. ☆

Acknowledgements

To Geoff Schreiner who accompanied me on a study visit to Yugoslavia in December 1986, and whose ideas I have drawn on; to the Yugoslavian Centre of Theory and Practice of Self-Management in Ljubljana who hosted us and kindly provided us with a guide and interpreter.

Bibliography

- Blazyca, George, 1986 *Planning is good for you*. Pluto press, London.
- Blumberg, Paul, 1968. *Industrial democracy: the sociology of participation*. Constable, London.
- International Labour Office, 1985. *The trade union situation and industrial relations in Yugoslavia*. ILO Office, Geneva.
- Joffe, Avril 'Fordism and post-Fordism in Hungary', *SA Sociological Review*, Vol 2, No 2.
- Munck, Ronaldo, 1986. *Marxism and nationalism: the unresolved dilemma*. Zed Press, London.
- Nove, Alec, 1983. *The economics of feasible socialism*. George Allen and Unwin. London.
- Riddell, David, 'Social self-government: the background of theory and practice in Yugoslav socialism', *British Journal of Sociology*.
- Schreiner, Geoff, 1986. 'The origins of the system of worker self-management in Yugoslavia', *Unpublished paper*. University of Warwick.
- Slovo, Joe, 1990. 'Has socialism failed?' *SA Labour Bulletin*, Vol 14, No 6, February, 1990.
- Turner, Richard, 1973. *The eye of the needle*. Ravan, Johannesburg.
- Wright, Phil, 1985. *The political economy of the Yugoslavian revolution. Occasional Paper No 102*. Institute of Social Studies, The Hague.

'Chalk down' in Mozambique

Striking teachers have created a sensation in Mozambique with many people speaking about the "intellectualisation" of the strikes since their beginning in January. Speaking to the heart of the people, this has been the most popular strike so far. PRABHA KHOSLA reports.

The school year began on Friday, February 16 with a strike by teachers in the northern town of Nampula. By Monday teachers were out in Maputo and Quilimane, followed soon by the towns of Beira and Chimoio. Rumours had been circulating for weeks that the teachers would strike with the beginning of the new academic year. They did.

Yet this strike is very different from the others. For one, teachers have a special history in this country. Soon after independence many teachers, mostly Portuguese nationals, fled the country. This created a tremendous vacuum, which undermined the government's policy to make education accessible to all. With an illiteracy rate of more than 95% at independence, the focus was on literacy campaigns and the expansion of all levels of schooling.

Students from the university and pre-university were recruited, given crash courses

in teacher training and sent off to teach in remote areas of the provinces. Living and working conditions were harsh and salaries did not always arrive on time.

In addition to this, because teachers are some of the people in a village who can read and write they ended up doing a lot of other tasks.

Targets of Renamo

As the destabilisation war escalated, teachers became a favourite target of the RENAMO bandits. The provinces abound with stories of teachers under attack, and escaping from RENAMO assaults by walking kilometres and kilometres with their pupils, leaving behind them burnt-out ruins of homes, schools and health posts.

Over the years 500 teachers have been killed or kidnapped, and 6 000 have been made redundant as a result of the destruction of over 2 655 schools. This corre-

sponds to 65% of Mozambique's primary school network.

In the provinces of Tete and Zambezia 80% of the schools are not functioning.

Formation of the ONP

The National Teachers Organisation, the ONP, was formed in 1981 by a decision of the Frelimo party. This was the first time in the history of the country that teachers had an organisation of their own.

For most teachers this has been a mixed blessing. Since its formation, the ONP has been closely tied to the Party and more often than not, tied to the Party's agenda and not to the teachers. This caused a fair amount of confusion.

Teachers have not really claimed the ONP as "theirs". Current thinking is that the ONP needs to separate itself from the Party, and create an independent organisation that truly belongs to the teachers. It will then address their spe-

try staff.

Instead, on February 10 the Minister announced a wage hike of 6 000 meticaais for all those whose wages did not increase by that amount in January when wages went up generally. He also agreed to a bonus for teachers with seniority, retroactive wages for teachers reclassified since 1987, and the completion of the integration of all education personnel into the new system by the end of the year.

However, this was not enough and the strike started six days later. The teachers' demands varied from school to school, even in the same town. Generally speaking the demands included a 100% wage increase with a minimum wage of 75 000 meticaais per month. (US \$84,26 at current exchange rate; the meticaais is being devalued regularly), a 100% increase in wages for extra shifts, salaries compatible with those of foreign teachers, incorporation of all teaching staff into the new career and wage scales, etc.

Drop in living standards

As with others, this strike is also the result of a severe drop in the standards of living. Prices have soared and wages have fallen. The South African sponsored destabilisation war has taken a heavy toll. With the implementation of the IMF structural adjustment programme in 1987, the situation has worsened. In classic IMF style, sub-



Mozambican school teacher and his pupils: back at school, but not happy.

Photo: Paul Weinberg/Afrapix

cific needs in the broader context of the constraints facing this war-torn country.

With regard to the strike, in September 1989 the ONP informed the Minister of Education, Dr Aniceto dos Muchangos, the Prime Minister Mario Muchungo and the Frelimo Party, that they had certain grievances that they would like to see discussed and addressed. Amongst others these included wage increases, medical assistance,

the re-classification of teachers into the new wage and career structures, and professional development. The deadline given was December 31 and nothing happened by its expiry. In fact, the teachers have been trying to have a meaningful dialogue with their Ministry since 1984, but never to their satisfaction.

There are about 25 000 teachers in the country and about 5 000 Education Minis-

sidies to food, health and education have been removed, with a greater impact on the urban population. In rural areas teachers can supplement their incomes from their *machambas* - family farms.

The teachers' problem was that they were not well organised. There was an insufficient co-ordination of the strike and its demands. This is a reflection of the weakness of the ONP.

All events need to be planned in the long-term, since Mozambique has a poor communication infrastructure. Normally, phones do not work, the teachers do not have a telex system and mail is highly irregular. Sometimes the only means of communications is VOR, the Voice of Rumours.

Alfredo Mcuacua, a secondary school teacher said, "the strike is doomed because we do not have food". There is no strike fund. All operational costs of the ONP come from the state and membership fees are hardly ever collected. All these elements weakened the strike.

The government for its part has been more severe in dealing with the teachers than other strikers. For one, the Council of Ministers decided to suspend the school year on February 24, effectively locking out the teachers and the students. Neither the Minister of Education nor any other senior member of the Party or the State met with the teachers as a group. For many tea-

chers this is a sign of disrespect, as the country has a culture of the Party 'talking with the people'.

To top it off, on March 1, when Maputo teachers went on a spontaneous march after a mass meeting, riot police were sent out to disperse the peaceful demonstration. Six teachers and five members of the public were injured. Street talk was of total disbelief that the government could send riot police to beat up the teachers.

Street talk was of total disbelief that the government could send riot police to beat up the teachers

The only meetings with government leaders were with the "ad hoc" Commission set up by striking teachers with some members of the ONP executive.

Strikers return to work defeated

In fact the teachers did not "win" this round and a majority of their demands have not been met. The government announced that the school year would begin again on 5 March. Teachers in other parts of the country returned to work, except in Maputo.

In Nampula there was no teaching in the first day as teachers spent the whole day explaining to students why

they had struck. Similar discussions took place in other towns. Finally, on 7 March, sixteen days after they had walked out, Maputo teachers went back to school, unhappy and dissatisfied.

They issued a communique saying:

- without a feeling of defeat, but because of a feeling for the children, the teachers had decided to return to school
- that the "ad hoc" Commission would continue in the hope to better the working and living conditions of the teachers
- that the teachers vehemently repudiate the contempt and physical violence that has been targeted against them.

So what lies ahead? Mario Souto, the Secretary for International Affairs of the ONP says,

"It all depends on what happens in the next few months. We have to see whether teachers will organise to create another organisation for themselves or organise to change the ONP, and thus build an organisation that is truly theirs and will speak in their voice".

As usual, Voice of Rumours is busy transmitting. This time announcing that the teachers are unhappy. They will work somewhat for now, but in a few months when they are better organised they will strike again. ☆

The right to picket facilities:

a Workers' Charter demand

In our last edition, Ebrahim Patel, SACTWU education officer, described the effects of picketing on the Hextex strike. In this edition, he argues that workers have a right to picket.

Striking workers stand outside the factory gates to build support for their strike among non-striking workers. They picket factories to bring all production in the factory to a standstill and thereby to make their strike as successful as possible. The demand to strike can therefore not be separated from the right to have picket facilities.

What are the reasons for demanding picket rights?

Firstly, it is a democratic human right to hold meetings, to assemble or gather. In all democratic countries citizens are granted legal rights - such as the rights to free speech, assembly and association. These rights are written into the constitutions of other countries.

The holding of a picket is an assembly or gathering of free men and women. They are gathered together for a common lawful reason. Today in South Africa there is a move away from repression to

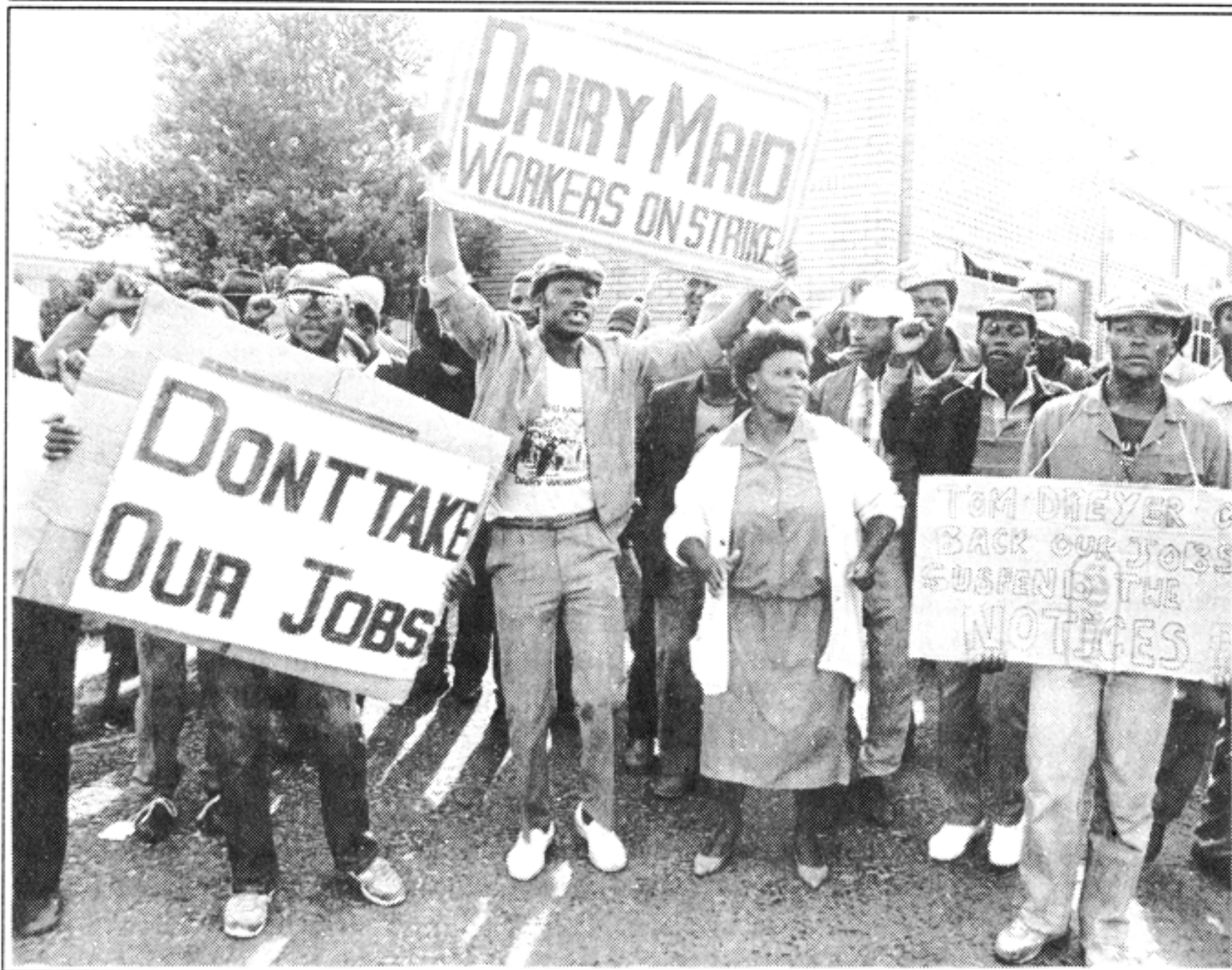
greater freedoms. Why then are such rights not recognised for workers and trade unions?

Secondly, during a strike employers are free to take on temporary workers to replace strikers. The lack of picket facilities denies workers the equal right to try and stop recruitment. Without picket facilities they cannot convince other workers not to take strikers' jobs.

Thirdly, it is only sensible to legalise picket facilities. Workers will use pickets whether it is agreed to or not. Workers need more than just formal legal rights. They also need the facilities to put legitimate pressure on non-striking workers.

Danger on the picket line

The biggest danger is violence on the picket line. But banning or denying picket facilities does not reduce violence. For example, laws that make abortion illegal, do not stop women from having abortions. It merely drives the practice of



Dairy workers on the picket line - the legal right to picket allows a union to exercise discipline during a strike; it also gives workers a fair means of countering efforts by management to break a strike.

Photo: Dave Hartman/Afrapix

abortion to the alleys and backrooms of the townships with painful and horrifying results.

Equally, by banning the right to picket we drive it from the open factory to the bus-stop, trains and townships. Here the trade unions are unable to monitor it. It is here that it leads to unnecessary violence. The lack of proper union rights and facilities invites and encourages illegal acts of violence.

It is only when it is open, with picket marshals, that

trade unions can control and monitor these activities.

More equality of weapons

Finally, picket facilities give workers a fair choice of weapons, more equal to the weapons that employers have to break a strike. It also allows organised workers to realise their potential strength.

The employers may ask why they should engage trade unions in negotiations that will strengthen union power.

Society benefits from nego-

tiations that produce a fair, workable system of industrial relations to which all parties are generally committed. If unions are powerless and rightless, industrial conflict will not go away. It simply becomes less controllable and less predictable.

The right to strike and the right to picket will not make workers strike more often. Rather, it is a way to ensure that strikes are used sparingly and with control. ☆

The COSATU/ SACCOLA/ NACTU agreement

The Centre For Applied Legal Studies (CAL S) writes on the COSATU/SACCOLA/NACTU agreement on proposals for a new Labour Relations Act.

After months of negotiating, COSATU, NACTU and SACCOLA reached agreement on interim amendments to the Labour Relations Act. They also agreed to jointly request the state to legislate the proposed changes. The Minister of Manpower then published a Bill: the LRA Amendment Bill, which is summarised below. The parties also agreed to pressure the state to enforce a set of *basic worker rights* for all workers.

The parties agreed that all workers are entitled to the following basic rights:

- The right to belong to a trade union without victimisation.
- The right to bargain collectively, including trade union rights such as stop order facilities, access, representation, and the right to negotiate about conditions of employment.
- The right to withhold labour.
- The right to work.
- The right to protection.
- The right to development.

SACCOLA agreed to urge its members to act in accordance with

these principles, even where workers are not covered by the LRA, eg. farm - and forestry workers. The parties agreed to urge the state to translate these rights into law to cover workers throughout the country.

The Labour Relations Amendment Bill

A part of the agreement between COSATU, NACTU and SACCOLA concerns specific amendments to the Labour Relations Act. This agreement was submitted to the Minister of Manpower and a final Bill is to come before the parliamentary standing committee on 18 June.

The following are the amendments contained in the Bill:-

Definition of an unfair labour practice The Bill amends the definition of unfair labour practice. It reverts to the broad definition it was before the 1988 amendments. The proposed definition also says that a fair dismissal can only take place with good and sufficient cause and after following proper procedure.

Concerning retrenchment, the employer has to consult in good faith to reach agreement over the need to retrench, the manner of retrenchment, the selection for retrenchment and how to lessen the hardships caused by retrenchment.

Most significantly strikes and lockouts are no longer covered by the definition. The Industrial Court will therefore no longer decide on the fairness of a strike or lockout and will not be able to interdict strikes.

Scope of the Act The Bill proposes to bring workers working out at sea in South Africa within the scope of the Act.

The Act will also be amended to allow for the registration of trade unions whose scope of registration includes both the private and state sector.

Registration The Bill proposes that racially exclusive unions will not be allowed to register.

The Industrial Court

The Bill sets out a procedure for a party who fails to refer a dispute within the time period concerned to apply to the In-

dustrial Court for special consideration so that the dispute can be heard.

The Bill allows for two expert assessors to assist the judge during appeals in the Labour Appeal Court. This panel of assessors will be appointed by the Minister of Justice on joint nominations by the major national federations of employers' organisations and trade unions.

The Bill introduces a procedure for appeals: any person appealing to the Labour Appeal Court must serve and file all documents within 30 of noting the appeal. The Judge President the Supreme Court Provincial Division will convene a hearing of the appeal within 60 days of the documents being filed.

Referral of disputes

Industrial councils The Bill scraps the bureaucratic and complicated requirements of deadlock, the notice of deadlock, and the certificates that accompany the referral. It will also be unnecessary for an industrial council dispute, eg. a wage dispute between NUMSA and SEIFSA to be referred back to the council before legal strike action can be taken.

The only remaining time-limit is with disputes of rights, which will have to be referred within 180 days from the date of the unfair labour practice,

unless the parties agree to a longer period. As mentioned earlier, the Industrial Court also has the power to allow the late referral of a dispute.

Conciliation boards

Much the same provisions apply in the application for the establishment of a conciliation board: the certificates and deadlock notices are scrapped and the application must be signed by an official or office bearer of the trade union or employer's organisation. The applicant must also have proof that a copy of the application has been sent to other parties. Again, in the case of rights disputes, the application for a conciliation board must be lodged within 180 days from the date of the unfair labour practice.

Determination of unfair labour practices The Court will determine what the nature of the dispute is and whether it is an unfair labour practice.

Industrial

Court Judgements The Bill removes the old secrecy clause. It provides for the proper publication of judgements, preserving where appropriate, the right to confidentiality.

Liability Clause The Bill deletes the whole of the controversial Section 79 which presumes that a trade union authorised unlawful industrial action.

The bill also contains new provisions concerning strike

interdicts. Interdicts will only be granted 48 hours after an application has been made. In exceptional circumstances, the period may be shorter, but then the other parties must be

warned. Other parties must have a reasonable opportunity to be present at Court to oppose the application. If a trade union or employer gives at least 10 days notice of a strike

or lockout, no interdict will be granted unless the other party has been given at least 5 days to reply. ☆

COSATU comments

Labour Bulletin requested commentary from COSATU's LRA Working Committee.

The two-year long Anti-LRA campaign and the new political situation have pushed employers and the state to agree to amend some of the most objectionable clauses of the Act. In addition employers have agreed that **basic worker rights** should be protected by law and to put pressure on the public sector employers to implement these rights. Employers have realised that, where they were once spearheading reform, the state itself is today moving faster.

The most significant amendments proposed in the Bill are briefly:

- a strike can no longer be interdicted on the basis that an employer claims it is unfair
- the new dismissal/retrenchment procedures are in line with ILO (International Labour Organisation) principles and give greater job security
- the time limits and bureaucratic procedures for referring disputes are scrapped, except for the 180 days limit for referring disputes of rights
- appeals are heard sooner and a panel of expert assessors is agreed to by the unions
- racist unions cannot register
- unions with private and public sector members can register
- off-shore workers are covered by the Act
- interdicts should only be sought after procedures have been followed.

Campaign must not lose momentum

While it is significant that the anti-LRA campaign spear-headed by COSATU has scored victories, the struggle for a progressive LRA is far from over and the campaign has not lost momentum (See Labour Action). During the

week 11-15 June, COSATU made representations to the ILO to stress the urgency for the bill to be passed and for other demands to be met. COSATU will discuss mass action if legislation is not passed.

Outstanding issues

The most anti-worker aspects of the LRA still remain. What the trade union movement wants of labour law is that it should:

- protect strikers from dismissal
- cover all workers
- protect union rights to represent workers
- endorse appropriate bargaining forums, particularly industrial bargaining
- provide an industrial court system which is expert, while also being cheap, quick and efficient.

COSATU/NACTU and SACCOLA have agreed in principle that the industrial court system and legal rights of strikers should be reviewed and two sub-committees have been set up. At the recent ILO conference attended by SACCOLA, the NMC, COSATU and NACTU the ILO supported the unions' position that procedural strikers should not be dismissed, considerably strengthening the demand.

The most serious failure of the negotiations has been the state's refusal to extend basic rights and the LRA to all public servants, ban-tustan, domestic and farmworkers, and their refusal to seriously involve themselves in discussions. The only breakthrough here is that the public sector employers are prepared to sit on the NMC if it restructures itself, as proposed, into a National Labour Council which represents all the major players. ☆

Economic Notes

Economic Notes is written by Labour Research Service (LRS), Cape Town.

Company profiles: 1. Perskorgroep

A blank wall was the end result of our attempts to trace the ultimate ownership and control of the two major publishers of the Afrikaans press: Perskorgroep Bpk and Nasionale Pers Bpk.

According to McGregor's *Who Owns Whom* Perskor is ultimately controlled by Dagbreektrust Ltd. But who controls Dagbreektrust?

Rembrandt has some control over Perskor through a number of companies, including Dagbreektrust Bpk. We are, however, unable to assess the extent of Rembrandt's control.

Nasionale Pers ownership hidden

The ownership of Nasionale Pers is totally hidden. Clearly, however, the control of both Nasionale Pers and Perskor lies with Afrikaner capital.

In much the same way, control over the English press lies with the owners and management of English capital. Here, however, we know that the bulk of the English lan-

guage press is owned by Johannesburg Consolidated Investments (JCI) - which is ultimately controlled by Anglo American.

Die Transvaler is Perskor's major daily Afrikaans newspaper. It had a daily circulation of 55 000 on average in 1989.

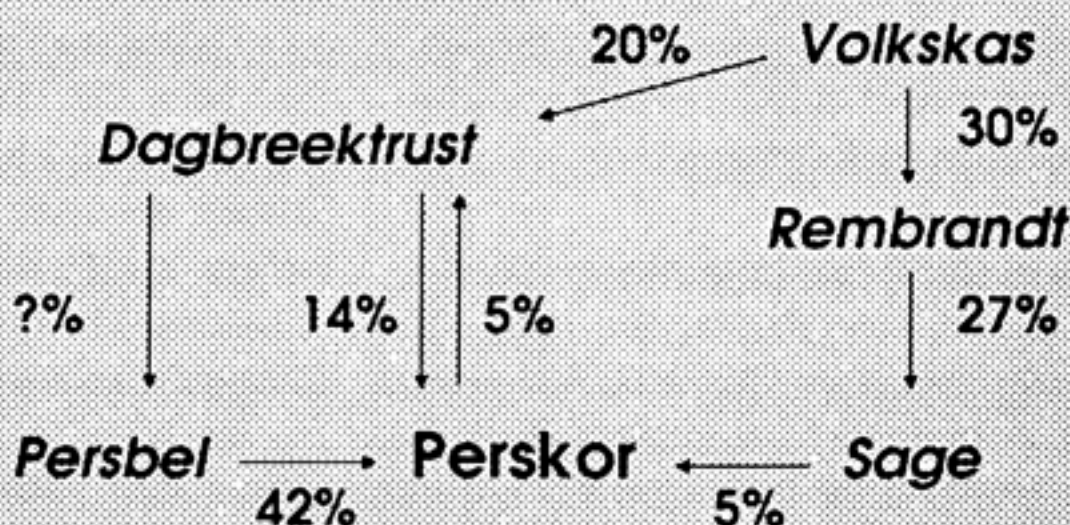
The other two major newspapers run by Perskor are the English daily, The Citizen and the Afrikaans Sunday paper, Rapport. The total average daily circulation of Perskor's two daily papers was 168 000 in 1989. Rapport's circulation amounts to 395 000.

Nasionale Pers publishes the following major newspapers: Beeld (Tvl), Die Burger (W Cape), Oos-terlig (E Cape) and Die Volksblad (Orange Free State). Their total average daily circulation amounted to 207 000 in 1989.

Perskor is not only a newspaper publisher. It also publishes eleven glossy magazines, has a 23% share of M-Net, a 25% share of Maister Directories (the Yellow Pages), and publishes books too.

Perskor does not have a wonderful financial history. Over the past four years its return on assets has been below 14%. Most other companies have recorded returns above 20% during this period. Its profits in 1989, however, reached a re-

Perskor's ownership links



Perskor's magazines		
<i>Living & Loving</i>		
<i>Rooi Rose</i>	<i>Farmer's Weekly</i>	
<i>Your Family</i>	<i>Garden & Home</i>	
<i>Bona</i>	<i>Scope</i>	<i>Talk</i>
<i>Keur</i>	<i>Thandi</i>	<i>Personality</i>

them they shared R476 000 in directors' pay and R1,2 million in dividends during the year to February 1989. Calculated on a weekly basis, each director received R6 320 per week on average during the year!

In 1989 Longrail directors decided to re-invest R4,1m of the company's profits. This money will be used to expand both the Long Distance and Railit divisions. ❖

Factory operatives: How their wages compare

Higher skilled jobs have commanded relatively high wages because of skill shortages and because higher skilled jobs have historically been occupied by whites.

spectable R23 million, an increase of 14,9%. ❖

2. LONGRAIL

Longrail might be small compared to some of the big trucking companies but it certainly packs in big profits.

The company has two divisions: *Railit* which specialises in small scale transportation, like door-to-door loads and small consignments; and *Long distance* which transports goods and equipment in bulk between all the major centres in South Africa

Since 1985 it has been recording massive returns on shareholders' investment. At the same time its profits before paying tax have risen from R370 000 in 1985 to R7,1 million in 1989.

There are many ways to examine a company's profitability. A company's *return on shareholders' investment* is one. This measure of profitability compares profit before tax with the investment made by shareholders (the owners of the company).

For example, for the year to February 1989, Longrail recorded a profit before tax of R7,1 million. The shareholders had R28,7 million

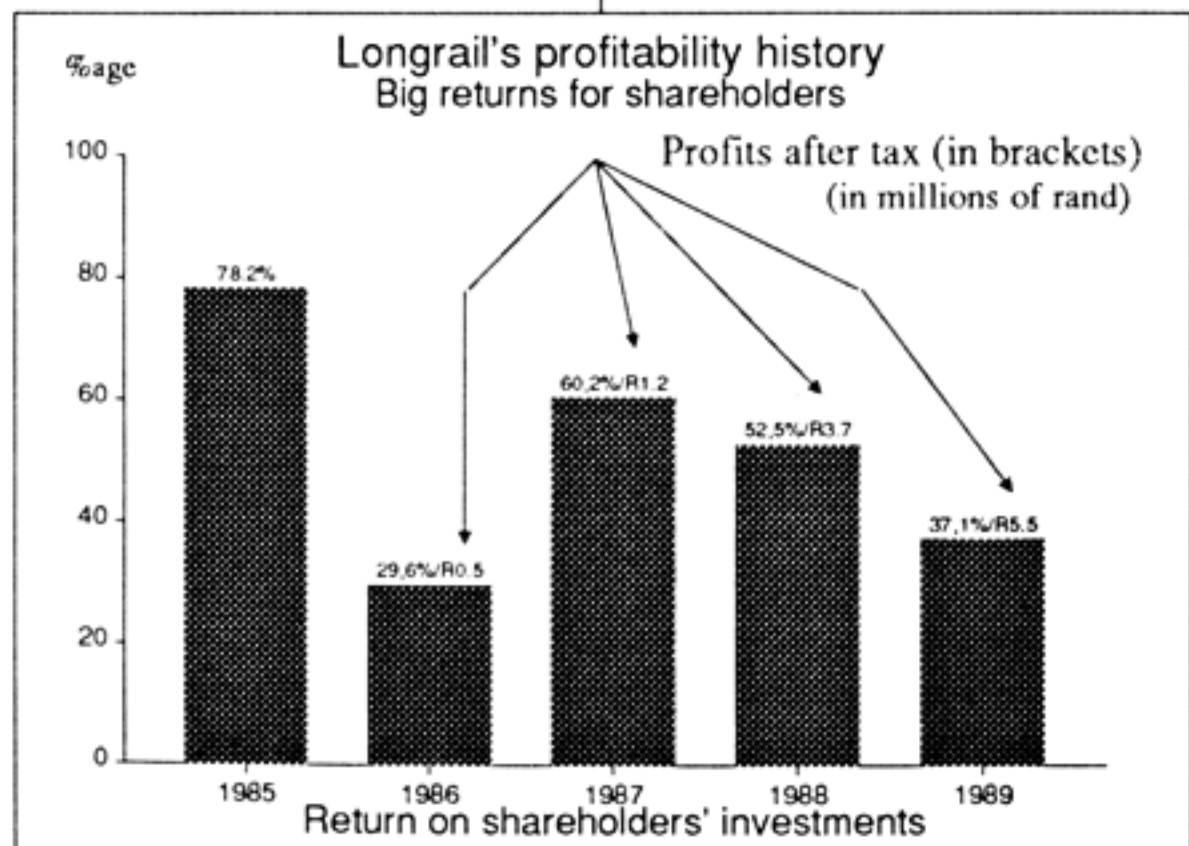
invested in the company in February 1989.

Dividing profit before tax by the shareholders' investment gives the *return on shareholders' investment*. For the year to February 1989 the return was 37,1% (R7,1 million/R28,7 million). This means that for each rand invested in the company, the shareholders made a profit of 37 cents.

If the company continues to record a return of 37% on shareholders' investment, it will take just over two years for the shareholders to get back their original investment. And they would still own the company!

The graph shows Longrail's return on shareholders' investment from 1985 to 1989.

The directors own 64% of Longrail's shares. Between



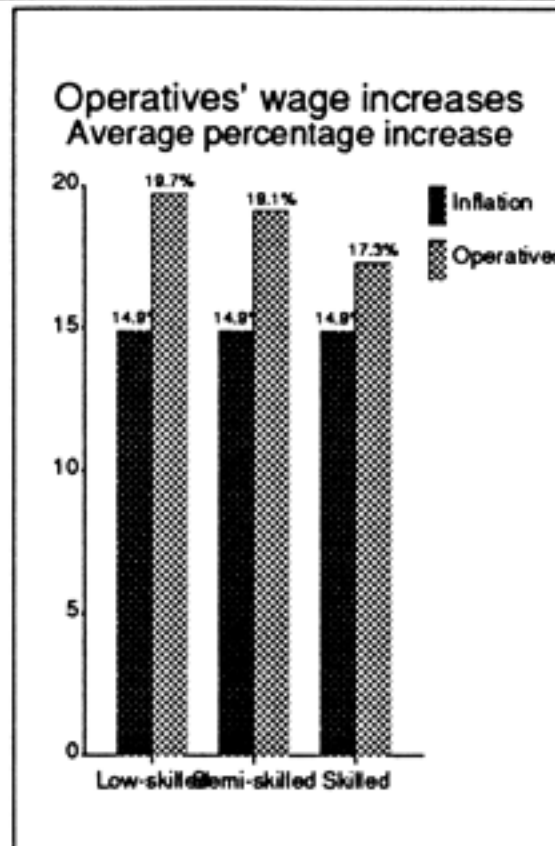
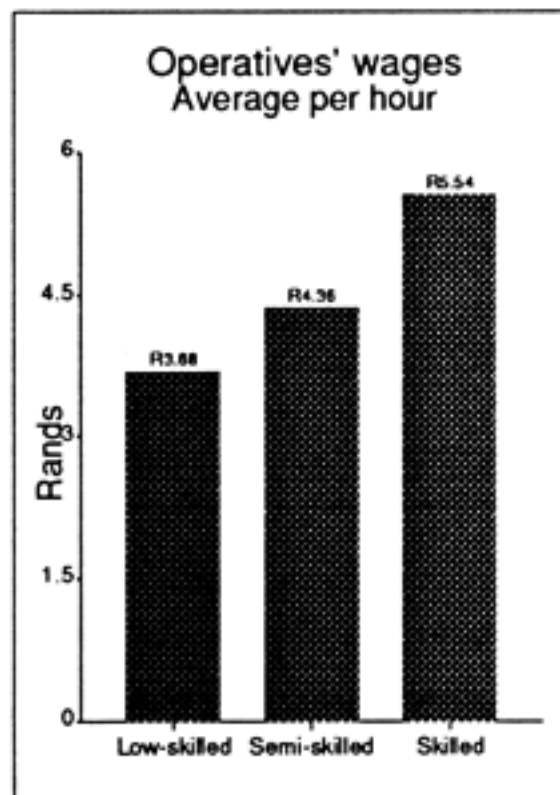
This is highlighted by the Labour Research Service's latest publication on operatives wages.

Wages paid to three levels of operatives were surveyed: low-skilled operatives, semi-skilled operatives and skilled operatives. The survey covered 158 bargaining units where wages were settled by negotiation in the period April 1989 to March 1990.

The survey showed that on average semi-skilled operatives earn 68 cents per hour (or 18,5%) more than low-skilled operatives. The pay difference between semi-skilled and skilled operatives is even higher. Skilled operatives earn R1,18 (27%) more than semi-skilled operatives.

In all three categories of operatives, average wage increases exceeded the inflation rate of 14.9%.

The increases granted to low-skilled and semi-skilled operatives are in line with the average increase of 19.7% granted to labourers in the second half of 1989. ❖



Capital: what is it?

Capital can take two forms: productive capital and money capital.

Productive capital: machinery, factories, mining equipment, tractors, sewing machines. These are things which workers can use to produce other things. The more productive capital that workers have, the more they can produce. This creates wealth and raises living standards.

Money capital: money that is set aside to buy productive capital. Money that is used up to buy food or clothing or pay rent (in other words consumed), is not capital.

In company financial accounts, productive capital is usually referred to as "fixed assets". Fixed assets are part of productive capital.

South Africa had capital worth R629 billion in 1988. Of this huge amount, 5,2% became worn out during the year.

So an extra R33 billion had to be invested in productive capital just to keep up its value to the same level! In 1988, this was done, and another R7 billion was added, an extra 1,2% of productive capital.

In other words, productive capital grew in 1988 by just 1,2%. The population of South Africa grew by about 2,5% in the same period! So each South African worker had less capital to help him produce than the year before.

In the manufacturing industry on its own, the situation was worse. The bosses failed even to replace the machinery that was worn out during the year. The real capital stock in manufacturing in 1988 was 1,6% less than in 1987 - and fully 8,9% less than in 1984! ❖

Utilisation of production capacity

In an economy which is slowing down, fewer goods than normal are produced. The amount of factory space and machinery is unlikely to have changed, however. The result will be a falling utilisation of production capacity.

Utilisation of production capacity measures how busy a factory is. That is, the level of use to which a factory and its machinery is put. It is measured as a percentage.

When a factory is fully used, it will achieve 100% utilisation.

This means that its machinery cannot run faster to produce more goods - and neither can the workers work faster.

But a factory is unlikely ever to run at 100% utilisation. Unexpected delays in the supply of raw materials, the breakdown of one of the machines or a cut in electricity supply are just some of the reasons for this.

Normally a high level of utilisation is said to be 85%. When an industry reaches this level, companies will in general be unable to expand production without investing in new machinery. So industries which reach 85% utilisation should be thinking about new factories and extra machinery.

A low level of utilisation means that the company can expand production cheaply. No new money has to be invested; no new machines have to be bought. When production rises in such factories profits really soar!

The latest figures (for November 1989) show that on average factories had recorded 84.6% utilisation. Iron and steel industries were at over 90% - transport equipment was only 76.7%. But we expect these figures to be lower now. ❖

A note on the building industry's stamp benefit system

The article on the building industry's stamp benefit system in the last edition of the Bulletin (Vol 14 No 8) included a pie graph showing the value of a building worker's weekly benefits.

The pie graph showed that

Inflation

Area	Consumer Price Index (1985=100)	Annual rate of inflation (% increase over 1 year)
	Mar 1990	Mar 89 - Mar 90
Cape Town	194,9	14,1%
Port Elizabeth	198,9	14,4%
East London	191,7	15,0%
Durban	187,8	15,9%
Pietermaritzburg	192,3	15,1%
Witwatersrand	198,8	15,7%
Vaal Triangle	193,0	14,7%
Pretoria	204,4	13,5%
Klerksdorp	205,1	14,1%
Bloemfontein	178,5	13,0%
OFS Goldfields	195,8	14,6%
Kimberley	188,2	13,9%
South Africa	196,4	14,9%

Source: Central Statistical Service

Inflation

Area	Consumer Price Index (1985=100)	Annual rate of inflation (% increase over 1 year)
	Apr 1990	Apr 89 - Apr 90
Cape Town	196,7	13,8%
Port Elizabeth	200,5	13,2%
East London	193,9	15,0%
Durban	190,1	15,6%
Pietermaritzburg	193,8	14,1%
Witwatersrand	201,0	15,6%
Vaal Triangle	194,2	13,9%
Pretoria	206,4	13,0%
Klerksdorp	206,1	13,0%
Bloemfontein	179,6	12,3%
OFS Goldfields	197,8	13,5%
Kimberley	189,6	13,4%
South Africa	198,3	14,6%

Source: Central Statistical Service

a general worker in the Cape Peninsula can receive, each week, a stamp containing benefits worth R34.80. The graph did not show who paid for these benefits. All these benefits *must* be paid for by the employer.

Many building workers are not aware of this and building bosses have exploited this,

sometimes deducting the value of "benefits" from the worker's weekly wage.

A general worker should, therefore, receive a wage of R136.43 per week and benefits of R34.80 per week. A general worker's total weekly earnings amount to R171.23. ☆

Profile

Ronald Mofokeng, shopsteward, CWIU treasurer and COSATU national treasurer.

Treasurer of CWIU

In 1981, at the second congress of the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union, I was elected treasurer. It has only happened once that the books did not balance. The books were out by R10. It would have been easier for me to take a R10 note out of my pocket and balance the books. But I wanted to find out why they could not balance. I had to expose that to the workers and say, Look comrades, I have been with you for many years as a national treasurer, but today I could not balance with R10.

Unfortunately some treasurers may not have the required skills, but have been elected into the position because of their commitment to the working class. That is why many treasurers cannot explain certain transactions when asked to. The treasurer should be in a position to understand the financial statements, because of the policies and principles of our union.

When you talk about worker control, worker control spreads everywhere, into factories. You must control the books in order to be able to advise branch treasurers, and they should realise from you how you control those things.

From a poor family

My parents come from Bethlehem in the Orange Free State and that is where I grew up. I am from a poor family and it was very hard for my family to satisfy my needs. My father used to work in the mines. You know when you are growing up under those problems, you carry them along and you still have the feeling of how can I change the life of the family that made me grow up?

Such things start conscientising your own mind. There is nobody who is going to teach you about the politics. You start seeing these things happen-

ing and the problems coming up until you interview your own mind.

An early strike

I started working at PG Glass in Germiston in 1971. It was during those years of the liaison committees and works committees. We found that we could not get anything from them as they were part and parcel of management. I was elected chairperson of the liaison committee at PG Glass. The bread price was increased. We decided to ask management for an increment to cover the bread increase. The manager told us to leave the office and that he would pretend as though we did not talk to him.

We reported back to workers. There was anger and we decided on a stoppage. The following day, having heard about the proposed work stoppage, the manager called us back to his office. He told us that everything had been passed to the head office and the head office was looking into the matter. That was too late. The stoppage lasted for two days, until the company gave in to our demands. We got just more than the bread increase.

Then we read about a union meeting in the newspaper. It was organised by the Urban Training Project (UTP). We contacted UTP and got advice. We contacted workers at Pilkington Glass in Springs, and started organising. We hitch-hiked to the meeting in Hammanskraal.

We formed Glass and Allied Workers Union (GAWU). That carried on until late 1978 when the Consultative Committee was convened to form a federation, involving most unions across industries. We were trying to bring all unions together under one umbrella and one federation. We decided to leave UTP with other unions like

SFAWU and T&GWU and joined the federation, FOSATU.

One of the reasons for moving from UTP was the concept of worker control. At that time UTP was close to the American labour movement. The argument was that one does not have to be controlled by any outside movement.

There was a great difference between FOSATU and UTP. We used to have a lot of training in UTP, but UTP was not as active as FOSATU on the shopfloor. FOSATU was committed to building the shopstewards. We had more worker control.

In FOSATU, GAWU negotiated with Chemical Workers Industrial Union to merge.

Mandate and corruption

As far as books are concerned I think we have been doing well. I think this is because of worker control through mandates.

Even in unions which have financial problems I would not see it as corruption. I think they are missing a mandate somewhere. Immediately you do something that the workers did not mandate you to do, then that starts being seen as corruption.

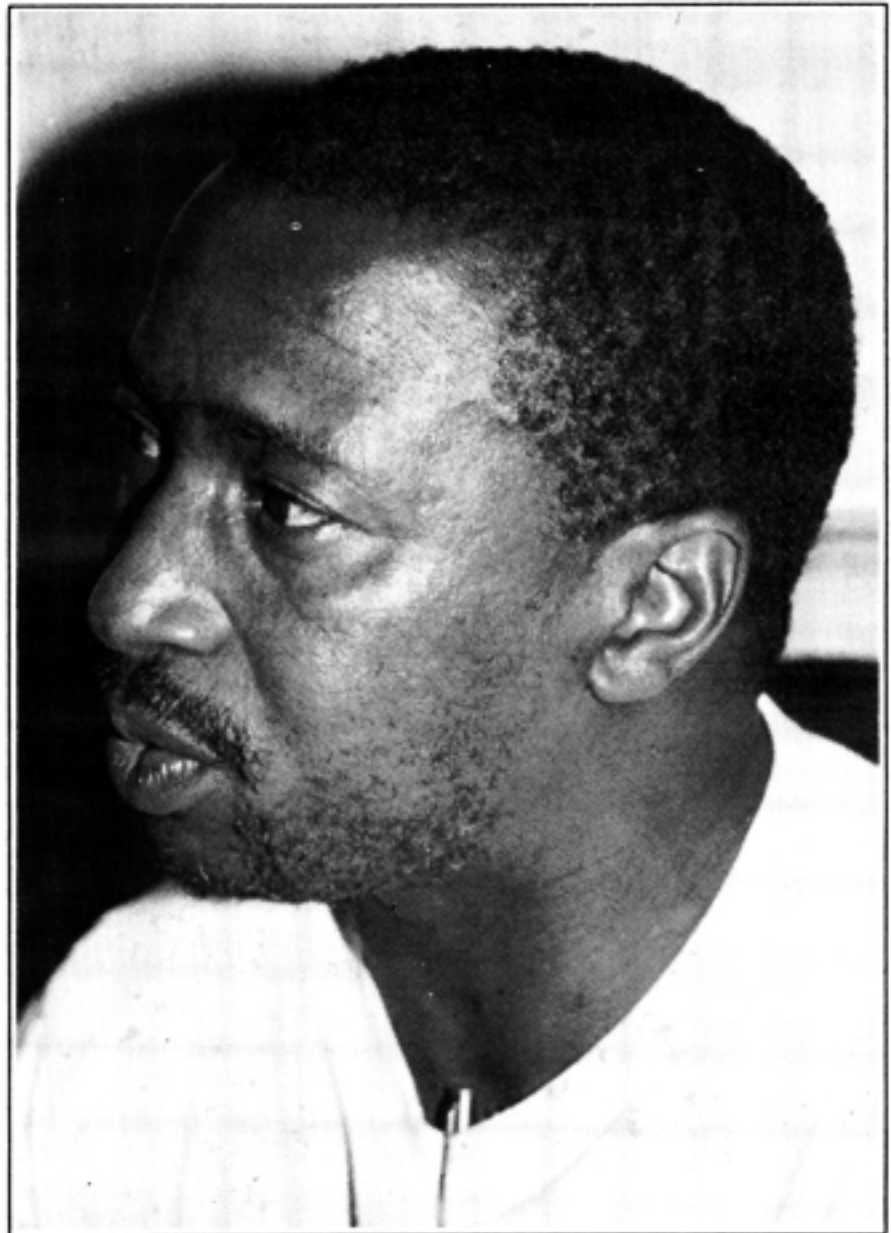
I do not have the answer as to how to overcome the problem of undermining a mandate. The problem with the structures is that they work under the pressures of political tyranny, the pressures at factories, and in our communities and other levels under this regime. You might find that you are forced to jump over and above those mandates. You do not have time, you do not have the resources to call your office bearers to come from Natal or Cape Town to deal with the problems. Those might be the root problems. It means that one has to be strict.

I was elected national treasurer of COSATU last year. In COSATU office bearers work as a team, so if I get a mandate to address a meeting, I do not have to say this is not my task, that task is supposed to be Barayi's. But my first goal is to see that the accounts department is running very smoothly and fairly well. Right now the head office is running very smoothly. There is a team spirit in the accounts department and we have got comrades who qualify for the jobs and they are very committed.

Self sufficiency

At our last congress we took a resolution not to rely on foreign funding. It was informed by the importance of moving towards self-sufficiency. In COSATU we want worker control. We do not want donations and being told what to do with them. We do not want someone outside COSATU to control us.

You ask how we will get enough money? The question is, are you putting this to the workers? Are you telling the workers the problems as they are? Surely the workers are not so stupid, they under-

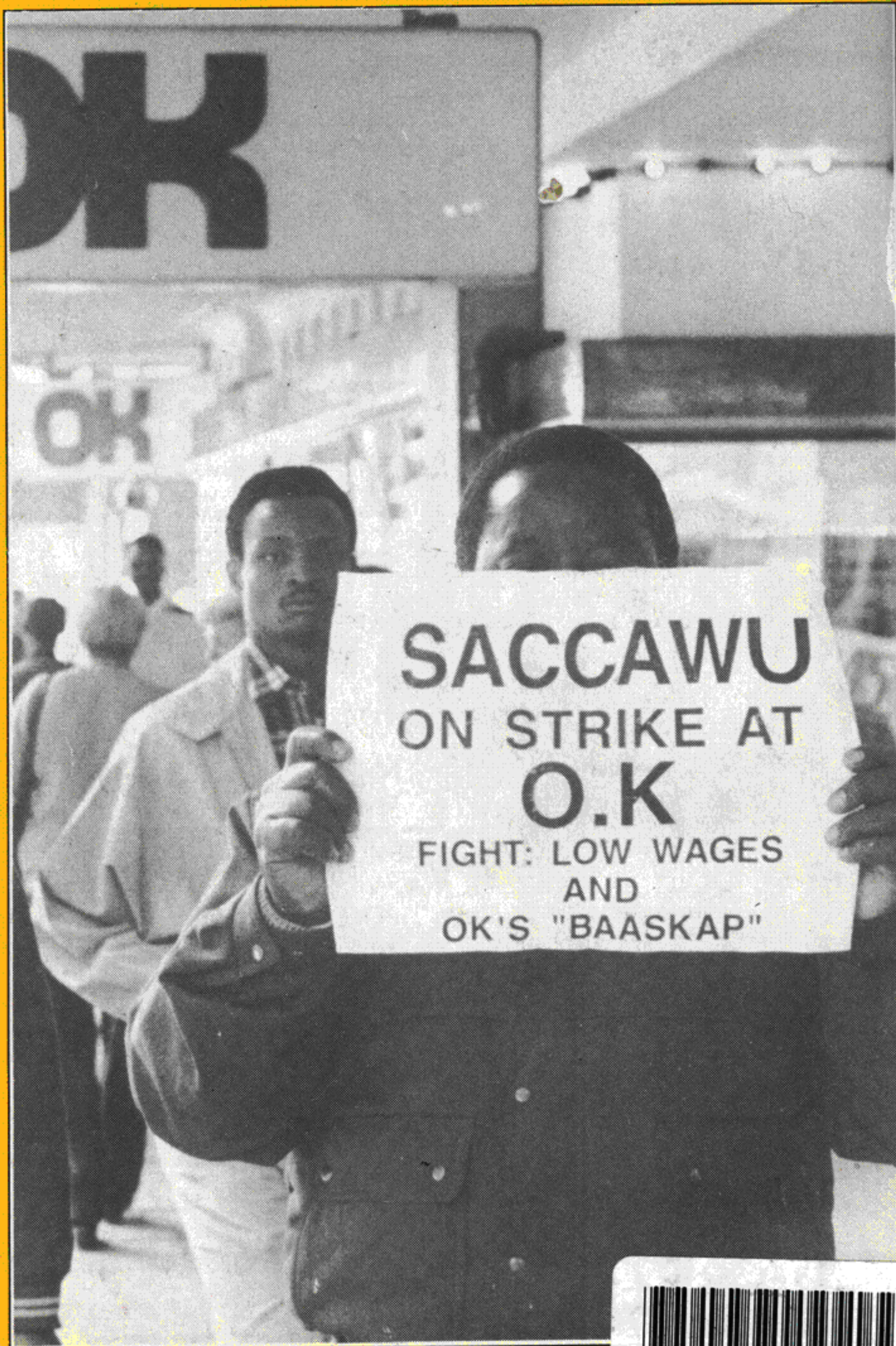


stand. If you address the workers, where you get your mandate, whom you are accountable to, then they will come with a solution. How about increasing our subscriptions? If you are doing it over the heads of workers, then you will not solve the problem.

Negotiations and mass action

The working class has been all along pushing towards power. So now there is a confusion about negotiations. Some believe negotiations are an alternative to be used instead of taking power. I do not see it that way. I think they go together. We negotiate, but we know our ultimate goal is: we want power.

I do not think we should cheat our minds and say that this will be done in a diplomatic manner around those tables there, and if we are beaten around the table we are doomed. The leadership can concentrate on the issue of negotiations, but we the second layer of leadership definitely should not forget our defiance campaigns. I think we should intensify our defiance campaigns. We should ask the question, how did these negotiations come about? Did we force these negotiations to come into question or was there somebody through his leniency who said, let us negotiate? I think we should analyse those things. If this was through mass activities, then we should continue with mass action until we get to the ultimate goal. This will make sure that there is accountability and there are report backs on the developments. A person calling for suspension of such actions should be questioned as to what he wants us to do. ☆



**SACCAWU
ON STRIKE AT
O.K**

**FIGHT: LOW WAGES
AND
OK'S "BAASKAP"**



TJ079216