

SOUTH AFRICAN LABOUR BULLETIN

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EDITORIAL BOARD

Fozia Fisher

John Mawbey

Harold Nxasana

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All contributions, comment and correspondence
should be addressed to:

The South African Labour Bulletin
Institute for Industrial Education
4 Central Court
125 Gale Street
Durban

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AFRICAN WORKERS AND UNION FORMATION
IN RHODESIA

Rhodesia forms part of the periphery of the Southern African economic complex. The conditions of African union formation in this area are the subject of this issue, a collection of short papers by persons who have in varying ways been involved with the Rhodesian labour movement. It is hoped that the volume will contribute to the literature on unionism in Rhodesia as well as be of use in informing union organizers both in Rhodesia and South Africa about certain aspects of the economy and its labour system.

It will be noticed that there are certain similarities in the position of African workers in Rhodesia and South Africa. But there are also important differences, some of degree, others of a deeper nature. For instance, 'legal' African unionism has existed in Rhodesia since 1959 when the Industrial Conciliation Act was amended to allow African unionism and collective bargaining in the 'industrial complex' (excluding domestic households and agriculture). The union struggle in Rhodesia has also been closely tied to the African nationalist political confrontation with the State, through the African National Congress, Z.A.P.U., P.C.C., Z.A.N.U., the African National Council, and, to a lesser extent, the (now) 'reconstituted ANC', formed after the Lusaka conference in late 1974. Some of the important contributions made by the union movement to African nationalism are noted by Brand. Many of the personnel of the two (seemingly) disparate organizations have been closely linked through a common experience of poverty, similar political objectives and organizational difficulties.

Some of the employers whose policies have been the focus of union attention have also been South African based, although they have been representing either multi-nationals or foreign-owned corporations whose parent organizations have been based in the United Kingdom or the United States. Rhodesia has thus been a 'peripheral center' in the Southern African complex. It has been subordinate to South Africa

in business and political affairs, has often moulded its legislation upon South African lines (eg. its Masters and Servants Act), though its particular circumstances have also resulted in the pursuit of independent policies through the State (eg. the particular 'non-legalistic' form of job reservation analysed by Harris).

The central feature of similarity between the two economies has been in the State and employer pursuit of a cheap labour policy in respect of most African workers (upon which Sithole, President of the ATUC, comments). In Rhodesia very few blacks have been absorbed into the skilled ranks. Most have received wages below the PDL, i.e., below the costs of subsistence that must be borne by the family in order to reproduce its labour for supply to the market. The difference between wages received and the minimum costs of subsistence has been met by subsidies from the Tribal Trust Lands which have served as a 'labour reservoir' for employers. There has been no unemployment insurance for Africans in Rhodesia. They have had to rely on 'traditional' social security mechanisms to provide for workers who have lost employment after falling ill or dismissal, and for meeting subsistence consumption requirements in old age. Pensions have only recently been introduced in *some* industries, notably those which have been unionised. Other sources of supplementation have come from 'informal' employment and trading by petty producers, 'artisans' and workers producing commodities for sale. A complex social structure has thus resulted from this pattern of labour mobilization, a pattern that has been complicated by growing stratification within the African work force as a class of semi-skilled workers has emerged.

The problems of organizing workers have bedevilled unionists since the first African strike in the 19th century. Various strategies of action have been devised, some successful, others less so. Davies comments on one aspect of this debate within the labour movement, the question of leadership, international aid and ideology.

At present unions are divided, not simply between skilled aristocratic trade unions (the white - controlled Trade Union Congress with its affiliates -

some of which include so-called 'multi-racial' unions like the Associated Mineworkers Union which are biased towards privileged employees) and others, but also between those African unions leaning towards the ATUC and those inclined towards the (new) National ATUC. There are complex issues involved in these divisions, some over choice of strategy within unions (whether to pursue democratic or élitist unionism) others involving national political and ideological affiliation (between various 'strands' of African nationalist politics).

The problems of union organization at national level are compounded by grass roots difficulties. Some of these problems are discussed in respect of agricultural unionism. Other sectors are unfortunately ignored.

Domestic workers (the second largest group of African workers, numbering 125 000) have no representation. Nor is there any minimum wage legislation applying to this strata of the labour force.

Mineworkers on small mines (about 10 000) are also effectively excluded from the Industrial Council Agreement for the mining industry, which covers 30 000 African workers. And even these technically catered for by the AMWU, itself controlled by skilled members, are in effect *nominally* 'unionized'. Minimum wages for mine labourers in 1974 were 26 cents per 8 hour shift and the 'rations' scale was still based on a 1911 regulation.

Skilled 'multi-racial' unions have been *wholly* undemocratic, the skilled workers having been given special voting privileges (under Section 47 of the ICA) to enable them to dictate the composition of the Executive and thereby the union's policy.

Even many African workers in manufacturing industry are non-unionized and are catered for by paternalist Industrial Board regulations that are decidedly influenced by employer and State policy. The difficulties of obtaining registration are well known to African unionists. And even where Industrial Councils have been established, they have on occasion been de-registered (eg., the I.C. for commercial enterprise in Salisbury in the mid-1960's).

Managerial policies towards unions are typically unsympathetic, though this is not so in all cases. Mthobi discusses a number of management attitudes in his evaluation of the role of myth in maintaining the settler colonial socioeconomic system in Rhodesia. In his own words, 'these beliefs about African workers have no basis in social reality'. What then has been their function?

Managerial ideologies have also changed over time. In the 1940's few employers could bring themselves to even tolerate recognition of African unionism. The 1945 railway strike and the 1948 General Strike, as well as extensive union formation in the 1940's and 1950's, were formative in changing these attitudes. They caused some employers as well as the State to accept the need for unions and recognize their collective power. Ultimately this brought about legislative change.

There is no doubt that African unionism will grow in importance in the future. There are now nearly one million African wage labourers enumerated in the economy out of a population of six million. After allowing for the fact that 50 per cent of the population are under 16 years of age, and that most workers are adult males, it can be estimated that up to 70 per cent of African households in Rhodesia are primarily dependent upon earnings from employment for basic subsistence. Pressures for collective mobilization amongst them will probably grow.

The labour links between Rhodesia and South Africa have always been strong. Clements Kadalie came to Rhodesia in the 1920's to help organize the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union. He brought many influential organizers like Robert Sambo with him. Charles Mzingeli, the inspiration behind the Reformed Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union in the late 1940's, also had strong links with the South African labour movement. Many workers now in South Africa originally came from or through Rhodesia. This year Wenela has contracted with the Rhodesian government to supply 20 000 African one year contract workers for the South African mining industry. This has only been made possible by acute domestic unemployment and an economic crisis in

Rhodesia as well as the peripheralization of its economic system.

The discussions contained in the following papers make comments on a few of these issues. Perhaps some of those not covered could be the subject of a subsequent volume.

Duncan Clarke
Dept. of Economics
University of St. Andrews
Scotland.

MAJOR PROBLEMS IN UNION FORMATION

IN RHODESIA IN THE 70'S

by Phineas Sithole

The main objective of labour policy in Rhodesia is the maintenance of industrial peace under a system of cheap labour. This was made clear by the Minister of Labour in 1959 in introducing the Bill which amended the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1934 and 1945, when he said that:

'It could be argued that to provide for these associations is nothing more than a *control measure* and let me be perfectly frank, it is.'

Control of unions was necessary for control over wages. Since 1959 more and more control has been added in amending the Industrial Conciliation Act in 1964, 1967, 1971, and 1973. In the process the final settlement of disputes between employers and employees has been transferred increasingly to the State through the use of Industrial Tribunals or through State proclamations by the President over the legal sanctioning of strike action.

CONSTRAINTS ON UNIONIZATION

Legal representations by trade unions have been limited to participation in Industrial Boards or Industrial Councils. For those industries which do not have unions, which in the Ministers' opinion fully represent employees or which do not have unions at all, wage agreements are negotiated through an Industrial Board. The board is composed of government appointees and operates at his discretion and only in an advisory capacity. Unions have no representation. Appeals via this channel do not meet the expectations of union members who, if they are to justify their association with the union expect to be represented through an Industrial Council. Industrial Councils can only be formed by organised parties. Unions therefore cannot attempt to provide

protection to their members until an Industrial Council meeting can be arranged. This process can take a long time. Even then the system of control has been strengthened through amendments to industrial conciliation procedures, the use of lengthy arbitration procedures, and the effective prohibition of legal strikes. Furthermore agreements of the Council must be submitted for the approval of the Minister who, under the 1973 Amendment to the Act, has the power to amend the terms of the agreement where he considers them to be contrary to the interests of 'consumers' and the 'public as a whole'.

Trade unions therefore exist at the discretion and volition of employers and the state. The whole industrial conciliation system is designed to discourage the growth of strong black unions. State labour policy pays lip service to the existence and growth of black trade unions in order to maintain industrial peace. The main thrust of Rhodesian labour policy remains the creation of a supply of cheap black labour. This policy is pursued through various means one of which has been inaugurated by the Apprenticeship Training and Skilled Manpower Development Authority which limits the entrance of blacks into the skilled trades. Black trade unions have thus been effectively restricted to represent labourers and semi-skilled operators only.

THE NEED FOR SELF-RELIANCE

With very few exceptions the black labour movement has not established itself with regard to services to the community, concerning industry and the workers in general. This weakness is illustrated by the lack of provision for welfare services to union members. The development of these activities through *self-reliance* and cooperation can only strengthen the unions and help democratize union structures by involving the membership more actively. It will also help attract non-members to the union.

The black labour movement has not been consulted

directly or indirectly in the formulation of national socio-economic and labour policies. This consultation has been considered unnecessary since black workers are thought to be temporary workers in urban areas and marginal to the political system. In practice, many workers have been made dependent on the labour reserves of the Tribal Trust Lands. This has only been because of low wages. Methods of direct action have not been developed fully. As a result members do not enjoy the full benefit of union protection and the improvement of wages.

Protection of members' interests will not be generally felt until trade unions can also ensure that benefits to cover sickness, unemployment and old age are provided. In certain industries sickness and pension benefits are provided for the employees by the State. These have been achieved as a result of trade union or worker activity and pressure.

Attempts have also been made by trade unions to provide individual services to members in the form of advice and support in the case of personal conflict in the work situation. This service has been difficult to develop. Management have strongly resented union involvement in shop-floor disputes.

The trade unions have to some extent developed in a perverse direction. The internal function towards members has been neglected and the external function with regard to national issues concerning the ICFTU, employers associations and government have taken prominence. The workers in general have received too little attention.

WORKERS ASPIRATION AND UNION ACTION

The differences between the aspirations and needs of members and the function of trade unions helps to explain why trade unions have partly failed to create greater participation by members, resulting in serious apathy which has sapped the strength of the black labour movement.

The above description is an oversimplification of

the complex tendencies and trends that have been manifested in actual form between black workers at different levels in the economic structure. No study has yet been made on the area of work organisation on the shop floor where the individualisation of the needs of the workers manifest themselves and which present a new scope and opportunity for trade union development. If the Industrial Conciliation Act could be amended to permit trade union representation at the shop floor level.

The extent to which the trade unions will be able to recognise these needs, and the way in which they will be able to relate themselves to them, will determine the relationship between the trade union and its members, and thereby, establish the new overall function of the trade union organisation rooted more directly in worker needs.

This discrepancy between the needs of the workers and their perception of the existing role of the trade union, has led to organisational apathy. This has expressed itself in low attendance at union meetings, low membership, high turnover of members, lack of direction, lack of effective communication, and often wild and uncoordinated strike action.

THE VICIOUS CIRCLE OF BUREACRACY AND WORKER ALIENATION

The underdeveloped trade unions have developed a complex organisational structure with centralisation of power and growing internal differentiation, thereby making it increasingly difficult for the individual worker to perceive participation as meaningful. There is need to remedy this divorce between members and unions.

The overall result has been the developement of the following characteristics:

*Increasing international orientation and complex bureaucratization with a centralization of administration, which has meant that needs have been left unsatisfied.

*Left unsatisfied workers have developed apathy towards the trade union.

*Further centralisation in decision making and in the leadership system has followed.

*Further reduction in the prospect of participation ensues, giving rise to even less satisfaction of the needs of members so that even further apathy of members results.

Whether the trade union can maintain its character as a *democratic* organisation will be determined by the extent to which trade union leadership is able *and prepared* to break this vicious cycle. This means that the trade union has to enlarge in an *appropriate* way, especially its internal function with regard to its own members, in addition to the contemporary roles it performs.

Industrial Relations in Rhodesia involving black labour have been recognised at two different levels though trade unions themselves have not developed enough to take full advantage of these opportunities and facilities for promoting their development.

*At the national level where trade unions can participate with the government and employer organisations in long term planning and development.

*At the Industrial Council Level and company level where the management and the union get involved in direct negotiations concerning conditions of employment and increases in wages.

AID AND UNION DEMOCRACY

The Rhodesian Labour movement has been divided into a number of segments, with titular black trade union leaders, some dependent on the ICFTU, to lead them. This type of structure has been imposed to conform with the structural development taking place elsewhere, e.g. in the British Labour movement. What is forgotten (by the ICFTU for example) is that amalgamations and the combin-

ation between trade unions in the United Kingdom have taken over a hundred years to mature.

The formal black labour movement is less than 30 years old and has not attracted into its ranks the mass of black workers. How can the present structural impositions of the ICFTU bring about pressure for change in industry when the lofty structure it preposes inevitably widens the gap of communication between the top leaders and the individual member? Employers and the Government cannot seriously consider demands made by leaders when it is obvious from any external examination that some trade unions do not enjoy the active support of the majority of workers. This can only weaken the African labour movement as a whole.

The black worker is being programmed to accept international ideological concepts of trade unions (antithetical to his requirements) and is thus being denied the opportunity to bring about necessary structural changes through organised collective direct action. A trade union devoid of active membership is practically a 'talk shop' because the leaders, isolated from members, cannot enter into any active negotiations or strikes. It is clear that the black labour movement is risking gaining international ideological purity at the expense of developing trade union power and democracy and the development of structures which in the contemporary situation can only be brought about through collective action and organised strikes.

Phineas Sitole
President
African Trade Union
Congress.

BLACK TRADE UNIONS

by Rob Davies

The modern history of black trade unions in Rhodesia dates from the passing of the Industrial Conciliation Act in 1959, although important black unions did exist before that date. It was only then that black trade unions were given the recognition that, in theory at least, eased the task of establishing a base from which to organise.

THE RECORD OF UNIONS

It has often been noted that the record of Unions during the fifteen years since the passing of the Act has been somewhat unimpressive. Such comments are borne out by most criteria one might use to assess the impact of trade unions. The share of black wages in the GNP has remained constant, while that of profits has increased. It may be argued that, rather than securing wage increases for members, the task of unions at this stage of their development is to build a democratic organisational base. This is true, but the record of Black trade unions on this count is hardly more impressive. Paid-up membership of unions is at approximately 50 000, out of a work force of 900 000. Most of the gains in membership were made in the early 1960's; since then the rate of enrolment has been slow. There still exist a number of unions whose very existence depends upon a single leader. The number of powerful well-established unions can be counted on one hand. It is therefore difficult to sustain the argument that the union movement has built up a strong organisational base.

EXTERNAL CONSTRAINTS

The reasons for this unimpressive record are many, and the fault does not lie entirely with the unions. The Industrial Conciliation Act (ICA) is not designed to promote trade unionism, but rather to protect the privileges of white workers. It places a

number of difficulties in the way of black unions, both in so far as organisation and material gains are involved. Industrial Councils are biased towards maintaining the *status quo*, since voting powers are generally distributed equally between employers and trade unions. The Minister has the power to prevent any changes, even if employers and unions wish them - another conservative force. Furthermore many workers are excluded from the ICA. Farm workers and domestic workers are covered by the archaic Masters and Servants Act of 1901, thereby excluding some 475 000 workers from trade union protection. The general political climate, with the Emergency Powers Regulations and the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act, places further obstacles in the way of unionist activity.

INTERNAL WEAKNESSES

It must be recognized that some of the weaknesses of the union movement do arise from within that movement. This paper intends to examine what I consider to be a major cause of weakness within the movement, namely lack of responsibility of leaders to their rank and file membership. The existence of this problem, the fact that it *is a problem* and possible solutions will be illustrated by a case study :- the question of trade union unity and the moves made to achieve it during 1974.

DIVISION OVER NATIONAL CENTRE

There have always been divisions between black trade unions in Rhodesia as regards their affiliation to national centres. The existing split originated in 1962 when some leaders of the Southern Rhodesia Trades Union Congress (SRTUC) broke away to form the African Trades Union Congress (ATUC). According to one of the leaders of the break-away group, the reasons for the break were:

- * Inefficient administration and inadequate control of funds;
- * Too close co-operation with the Minister of Labour;
- * Too much power vested in the central office;

- * The powerful influence of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) over the SRTUC.

The split was reinforced by the split in the African nationalist movement in 1963, with ATUC becoming identified with ZANU and SRTUC with ZAPU. The SRTUC split again in 1964 with some leaders going into ATUC and others forming ZACU. After being banned in 1965, this latter organization became NAFU. Up to 1974 the African trade union movement in Rhodesia was divided between ATUC and NAFU, with a number of unions remaining unaffiliated to either.

ATTEMPTS AT UNITY

There has always been talk about unity but never much action. An abortive attempt at unity was made in 1967. In 1972 moves were made again, culminating in a fairly active year in 1974. The outcome of these moves, however, was the dissolution of NAFU and the formation of the National African Trades Union Congress (NATUC), consisting mainly of ex-NAFU affiliates and dissident ATUC affiliates. Thus the present moves, far from uniting the movement, have resulted in deeper splits and a weakening of what national centres existed previously. In order to understand the issues involved, it is necessary to examine this recent round of merger moves in greater detail.

THE RECENT MERGER MOVES

During the course of 1971 several calls were made for NAFU and ATUC to 'settle their differences' and form a single national centre. Although these calls were repeated intermittently nothing substantial happened until last year. On 17th March, 1974 a meeting attended by some 30 unions, affiliated to one or other of the existing centres, was held in Salisbury. The ICFTU representative, W.G. Lawrence, also attended. The meeting called upon NAFU and ATUC to dissolve themselves, and set up a 'National Interim Committee' to look after union affairs until a properly constituted national centre could be formed. The NIC constituted of 11 members, 5 (including the chairman) from ATUC and 6 from NAFU.

RESPONSE OF THE NAFU

NAFU responded to the call of the NIC and dissolved itself at its AGM in August. It has been suggested that NAFU's willingness to answer the NIC's call was because of its weakened state: by 1974 NAFU had only one large union affiliated, the Tailors and Garment Workers Union, whose secretary, Robert Gwavava, was also president of NAFU. All other affiliated unions were small and either unregistered under the Industrial Conciliation Act, or had been deregistered. Indeed, even the TGWU had been deregistered for the first 5 months of 1974, on the grounds that it was 'unrepresentative'.

RESPONSE OF ATUC

In stark contrast to the response of NAFU, the ATUC refused to dissolve, but the 'unity' call of the NIC caused a great deal of dissension among its leaders. Three of the ATUC's national executive, the General Secretary, the Financial Secretary and the Treasurer were also serving on the NIC. To make matters worse, these three all came from the Railways Associated Workers' Union (RAWU), the ATUC's strongest affiliate and historically Rhodesia's most developed black Union. Matters were left undecided until the AGM of ATUC, held in September. RAWU did not attend on the grounds that it was not prepared, and asked the ATUC president, P.F. Sithole, to postpone the AGM. This Sithole refused to do on the grounds that he was not empowered by the constitution to override a decision made by the General Council. At the AGM calls were made from the floor for RAWU's expulsion. Sithole managed to avoid such a move. He argued that, firstly, RAWU was an affiliate in good standing, and secondly, that the action of individual members of a union were no cause for expelling that union. However, a motion was passed calling for action against those individuals who co-operated with the NIC.

In line with this motion, a meeting of the General Council of ATUC was held in October, at which the three members concerned were removed from the executive.

of the ATUC. Those removed reacted by claiming that the action of the General Council was unconstitutional and, rather contradictorally, that it amounted to the expulsion of RAWU from the ATUC. Sithole was quick to point out that this interpretation was patently mistaken. The books of the ATUC in the hands of those removed were handed by them to a lawyer, effectively tying the ATUC's hands financially. As at the time of writing (Jan. 1975) this position has not been resolved ; however, RAWU apparently continues to pay its ATUC affiliation dues.

THE FORMATION OF NATUC

Early in 1974 a third grouping of unions, the Salisbury 'Get-together Unions', was formed to act as a pressure group for unity. The group consisted of unaffiliated unions, lead by the Salisbury Municipal Workers' Union. They held a series of meetings designed to find out the position of the various involved parties so that the unaffiliated unions could play a part in forming a new unified centre. After a number of exploratory meetings with the ATUC and the NIC, a meeting was called for November 17. It was hoped that either a new, unified centre would be formed, or a new centre would be set up in opposition to the ATUC. In the event the latter was the outcome, and a new centre, the National African Trades Union Congress, was formed.

While it is still too early to judge properly, there can be no doubt that the formation of the NATUC has weakened the ATUC. It is not clear just who is affiliated to the NATUC. No constitution has yet been drawn up, and to date only two unions have paid any affiliation fees. According to reports, NATUC has drawn about six unions away from ATUC. Except for RAWU (whose position is in any case not clear) the unions involved are of little consequence, being for the most part small, inactive and unrepresentative. Still affiliated to ATUC are the United Textile Workers, Motor Trade Workers and Clothing Industry Workers (three strong registered unions) plus several unregistered unions. It is claimed by NATUC that the following registered

unions have moved to them from ATUC : Brickmaking and Clay Product Workers, Railway Associated Workers, Asbestos Cement Workers, Catering and Hotel Workers, and Commercial and Allied Workers. However, the position as regards both RAWU and C&AWU is not clear. RAWU has not formally disaffiliated itself from ATUC, and apparently continues to pay affiliation dues. The C&AWU has been in disarray for some time, with what would appear to be three separate groups claiming to be the true union. One faction, probably the strongest, broke away from the C&AWU to form the Commercial Workers' Union; this now has about 2 000 paid-up members in the Salisbury Region and is seeking registration: it is an ATUC affiliate.

The situation vis-a-vis the unregistered unions is even more difficult to determine. A number of such unions were members of NAFU and could be expected to join NATUC. The Rhodesian United Food and Allied Workers' Union has moved from ATUC to NATUC, but it is a strange union, being itself a Federation of several unions formed in order to secure money from its International Trade Secretariat, and now split over the manner in which that money should be distributed. In all NATUC claims to have 15 unregistered unions affiliated, but most of these are small. The situation therefore seems to be that ATUC has been weakened by the formation of NATUC, but more in terms of loss of affiliates than in terms of the membership of those affiliates. Thus ATUC probably still represents more workers than NATUC, although the latter has more affiliates.

REASONS FOR THE SPLIT

Having outlined the events leading to the present situation, it is now relevant to consider why the split exists and continues. As was mentioned earlier the origins of the split lie in the early 1960's, and with the split in nationalist politics. But this should hardly be the reason today why it appears to be impossible to obtain unity. We must look at the existing situation to find out what the present obstacles are.

As might be expected, there are many factors combining to prevent unification. Firstly, it is

plausible to suggest that there are political and ideological differences between the two existing centres. Secondly, it is also possible that personality clashes are important. Finally, the whole style of black trade union leadership in Rhodesia could itself present an obstacle. Each of these factors will now be considered.

IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

All trade unions in every capitalist country are confronted by the problem of determining the degree to which they should actively co-operate with the State. For black trade unions in Rhodesia this problem is compounded by the racial dimensions of class antagonisms. A basis for an ideological split therefore exists in the Industrial Conciliation Act, since unions must decide whether or not to register under the Act. When the Act was first introduced there was strong resistance to registration, but this died away, and by 1974 some 17 black unions were registered, including all the most viable ones. There is no evidence to suggest that the two centres differ in their attitudes towards registration, since both have registered and unregistered unions as affiliates.

However, some of the statements by the president of the ATUC, P.F. Sithole, concerning the unity moves, might be interpreted as expressing an elitist philosophy. He has consistently said that the ATUC is prepared to discuss unity but only with *bona fide* unions, and often criticised the unions in NATUC as being weak and non-existent unions. In view of NATUC's apparent willingness to allow any type of union to affiliate, it may appear that there is some sort of ideological difference, with ATUC adopting an elitist approach, keeping the established unions apart from those yet to be established. Were this true the ATUC would justly be subject to the charge that it is simply an instrument for the protection of a labour aristocracy. However, the charge does not appear to be true. ATUC's criteria for a *bona fide* union is that its leaders must represent the workers in the industry in which it operates; this can generally be judged from the size of the unions membership.

A union which is not registered under the ICA is unlikely to be representative, although the ATUC does recognise the difficulties that some unions face in trying to obtain registration. However, a union such as the Engineering and Metal Workers' Union, which has been deregistered, has clearly suffered from falling membership. A union which has been registered has clearly at some stage overcome the obstacles which employers place in the way of recruitment. Its deregistration is therefore likely to be due either to the indolence of the leaders or to their failure to satisfactorily represent their members. The President of the EMWU is General Secretary of NATUC. Thus there do not appear to be any ideological differences between ATUC and NATUC as regards their attitudes towards affiliates. If anything, it would seem that the ATUC is more insistent than the NATUC that its affiliates are genuine trade unions.

THE PROBLEM OF INTERNATIONAL AID AND DEPENDENCE

There is, however, a substantial difference between the two federations on the question of international aid. Indeed, some observers believe that the present split is caused either *over* the question of aid or *by* the operation of aid agencies in Rhodesia, particularly the ICFTU.

The ICFTU has been active in Rhodesia since the early 1960's. It is the major international trade union body operating in Rhodesia; the World Federation of Trade Unions is a proscribed organisation, and the World Congress of Labour's operations are still on a very small scale. The ICFTU's function has been primarily to finance unions and to arrange educational courses both within Rhodesia and externally. The amount of aid given is unknown. The local ICFTU representative, W.G. Lawrence, has been in Rhodesia since 1964; he also represents the various International Trade Secretariats.

Since Sithole became president in 1967 the ATUC has consistently criticised the *method* in which ICFTU gives fund. This method has consisted in the main of

supporting individual unions and, more particularly, individuals within the unions. For example, the assistance given to the Agricultural and Plantation Workers' Union was given in the form of paying the general secretary, P.J. Mpofu. When he was detained in 1973 the assistance ended because there was no contact with other officials in the union.

DENIALS FROM LAWRENCE

It is obvious that if aid is given in this way it is a bad thing and does nothing to promote the development of *unions*. However, it is difficult to obtain evidence to support or refute ATUC's accusations that this is the way in which the ICFTU operates. Lawrence of course denies them; he claims that all monies distributed are disclosed in the union's accounts. However, although this much may be true it would not cover monies given direct to individuals. Members of ATUC claim to have been offered money by Lawrence in exchange for their support. Lawrence has reason to seek such support, for the ATUC has on a number of occasions requested the ICFTU headquarters in Brussels to send out a team to investigate his activities; such requests have always been refused, and clearly letters in support of Lawrence from trade union leaders have played a role in such rejections.

An interesting case, which typifies the situation, is that of Mr. J.J. Dube, formerly on the ATUC executive and now President of NATUC. On 19 April 1974, he, as chairman of the National Interim Committee, issued a statement supporting Sithole's claims that ICFTU finances were being abused. On 17 May 1974, he issued *another* statement accusing Sithole of trying to destroy black trade unions in Rhodesia, saying that it was 'unbelievable' that ICFTU funds were being abused. Dube has acknowledged that he went from Bulawayo to Salisbury in the intervening 27 days expressly to see Lawrence to 'tell him that he should stop giving monies to individual persons or unions anymore'. Dube's *volte face* would suggest that some pressure was brought to bear on him. Thus, although rumours abound, there does seem to be enough corroborative evidence to suggest that the ATUC's criticisms of Lawrence's methods

do have some substance.

NATUC'S RELATION TO THE ICFTU

The NATUC has not yet made its views on ICFTU unambiguously clear. On the one hand its publicity secretary, D. Mudzi, has attacked Sithole for the ATUC's links with the ICFTU in the past:

'If Mr. Sithole has found something wrong with ICFTU, the first thing to do is to apologise to the unions for having committed them along the lines based upon the ATUC's external policies.'

On the other, it is known that Lawrence was instrumental in forming the National Interim Committee, the forerunner of the NATUC, and that the NATUC committee includes a number of prominent supporters of Lawrence and the ICFTU. Both the unions which Lawrence acknowledges aiding in 1973 are affiliates of NATUC. Mudzi's attack on Sithole is to some extent based on a misunderstanding of Sithole's position vis-a-vis aid. It is true that ICFTU has aided ATUC affiliates in the past, including Sithole's own United Textile Workers' union. Sithole, however, argues that the need for that aid is past, and that its continuance will create dependency, undermining the black trade unions even further. Now, he argues, all assistance to the trade union movement should be channelled through a national centre, rather than given to individual unions. If the ICFTU is still prepared to give aid this should be done *under* that national centre, not simply through it. If the ICFTU does not wish to subordinate itself in this way it should withdraw, for the trade union movement would be better off without aid of the type given at present. Furthermore, Sithole is critical of the fact that aid is continued to unions even after they have shown themselves to be wasting it. This, he argues, is harmful both for the workers the union supposedly protects and for the trade union movement as a whole.

PARTY POLITICS

Neither of the two groupings is openly allied to nationalist parties, and it is unlikely that party

politics is an important factor in the continuing split. NATUC has been at great pains to deny that it is politically motivated. It is noteworthy, however, that both Ndabambi and Dube of the NATUC's executive are members of the ANC, and serve on its labour committee, a committee which has largely been defunct. ATUC continues to have personal links with ZANU, but these make no obvious impact on its style. It is apparent therefore that the political issues which divided the labour movement initially are no longer as important as previously.

THE PROBLEM OF PERSONALITY AND IDEOLOGY

It is always difficult to assess the importance of personality clashes in public organisations, and doing so carries a danger of ascribing less maturity to leaders than they in fact possess. However, it is clear that personalities have come to form an obstacle in the way of any merger. This is so in two ways. Firstly, there has developed a degree of personal animosity between Lawrence and Sithole that has assumed some importance as a factor preventing unity.

THE CASE AGAINST LAWRENCE

Sithole will have nothing to do with any move associated with Lawrence, on the grounds that he, and the ICFTU, are deliberately weakening the black labour movement in Rhodesia. This is a serious charge, and may seem to be implausible because it is difficult to see why Lawrence should do this. However, there are a number of possible reasons. Lawrence was sent to Rhodesia initially in order to patch up the rift in the movement. This he has failed to do. In order to show that his time has not been wasted it is necessary for him to come up with something soon; he can only get a merger if Sithole's is out of the way, because of Sithole's attitude towards international aid. Sithole can only be removed if his support is removed - and this is to a large extent what the formation of the NATUC has attempted to do.

HIS INCORPORATION

One can also point out that, although Lawrence may initially have been opposed to the Rhodesian Front regime, he has in the ten years he has been in Rhodesia, become incorporated into the system. He has acquired two houses in elite white suburbs (he appears to live in both, thus avoiding the charge that he is a rentier); he is a regular attendant at the Borrowdale race course, going to the predominantly 'white stands'; he voluntarily submits detailed records of his work to the Ministry of Labour; his courses are run through Ranche House College, an adult educational centre catering mainly for whites and run without effective black participation. Finally, in the context of Rhodesia, it is pertinent to wonder why, if he has been performing his job of promoting a strong black labour movement satisfactorily, the Rhodesian Front regime has allowed him to remain uninhibited in Rhodesia for over ten years.

ICFTU AND RHODESIA

Strange as it may seem, the ICFTU also has reasons not to undermine the RF regime too much. The ICFTU's much larger rival, the WFTU, is a proscribed organisation in Rhodesia. This situation would be unlikely to continue under a Zimbabwean government, and the ICFTU would probably lose support if it had to compete openly with WFTU. The ICFTU therefore does have an interest in maintaining *some* of the RF's present policies.

Apart from these charges, Sithole would point out that even if Lawrence is not *deliberately* undermining the black trade unions, his *methods* are having this effect. The aim of all aid should be to make itself redundant; given the ICFTU's role in the cold war, the aim of its aid has been to increase its world support.

Sithole's reasons for criticising Lawrence are therefore well worked out in his mind.

THE CASE AGAINST SITHOLE

Again, however, it is possible to make the charge

that Sithole wishes to maintain his power, and therefore wants to avoid the situation where weak unions, supported by Lawrence, would have a majority representation in his centre. This charge is probably correct in essence, and might well be accepted by Sithole. He has often stated that he is prepared to stand down if necessary, but that he is not prepared to jeopardize those unions which have been successful by allowing them to be placed under the control of leaders who have to rely on Lawrence for their positions.

Lawrence's objections to Sithole seem to be more strongly based on personal attitudes. The only explanation is that Sithole is a threat to Lawrence's job, since he would at least like to reduce the importance of the ICFTU in Rhodesia, if not remove it altogether. Lawrence would probably deny that he is personally antagonistic towards Sithole; however, he has privately attacked him, has suggested that Sithole is receiving kickbacks from employers for avoiding industrial unrest, and in a recent article in the 'Free Labour World' on his work in Rhodesia, avoided any reference to Sithole's contribution and played down the relative importance of the United Textile Workers' Union, the second largest union in Rhodesia and probably the most democratic and active. (Sithole's answer to Lawrence's charges, that he was receiving kickbacks, was to make all documents, records and accounts open to Lawrence *if* the ATUC could have free access to all Lawrence's records. Lawrence refused.)

There has, therefore, been an element of personality clash preventing unity. It might seem strange that the other unionists involved do not simply ignore the two people involved; however, the clash has extended itself to those union leaders who support one or other of the sides; there have recently been signs of such clashes between Sithole and those members of NATUC who were removed from the ATUC executive.

PERSONAL AMBITIONS

Personalities are an important factor from another point of view, and this ties in with what will be

dealt with in the final section of the paper. It would appear that a number of the individuals who have switched their unions from ATUC to NATUC have done so because of the limited opportunities available to them for advancement with the ATUC. Mudzi, the Publicity Secretary of NATUC, was earlier involved in the so-called Salisbury Regional Council of the ATUC, formed in 1970. This group had been at odds with the Bulawayo based headquarters of ATUC for some time. At the 1973 AGM of the ATUC members of the group walked out after they were refused voting rights since their unions had not paid affiliation dues. Previously they had spearheaded a move to oust Sithole as president of ATUC. The regional council was in fact not sanctioned by the ATUC congress and in October, 1973, on ATUC orders, it dissolved itself. However, Mudzi promptly set up and headed the Salisbury Trade Union Liason Committee. Nothing was then heard of Mudzi until he appeared on the executive of the NATUC. It is possible that the break away of some of the unions from ATUC was due to the personal ambitions of the leaders of those unions.

DEMOCRATIZATION OR ELITISM

Finally, we come to the question of the style of leadership of black trade unions in Rhodesia. The whole debate concerning unity seems to have been conducted with little regard for the ordinary members of the unions involved. Attitudes of the leaders, both inside and outside the ATUC, indicate that unity is regarded as something to be agreed upon by them. If Sithole and Dube were now able to agree on the form of some merger, that merger would indeed take place. It appears to be regarded as unnecessary to take the issue back to the rank and file membership of the individual unions.

Nowhere is this failure better illustrated than in the actions of RAWU and the other unions which left the ATUC to join the NATUC. In no case has the decision been made by persons other than the leaders. The question of affiliation to a national centre is presumably important, and yet the members' wishes are not consulted. Indeed the RAWU AGM appears to have been carefully stage-managed so as

to avoid any discussion of the question of affiliation, despite the fact that it is known that a number of minor officials and other members are unhappy with the present situation.

This characteristic seems to permeate all trade union activities and indeed it is found in other black organizations, as for example in black political parties. But the politicians have the (partially) valid excuse that the actions of the RF regime have been designed to limit communications between the leaders and the rank-and file; it is difficult for black political leaders to consult directly with their grass-roots supporters. Such difficulties do not obtain to the same extent in the union movement. Where there is a failure to communicate the fault lies largely within the union, with either the leaders, the members, or both. Many leaders regard their offices as placing them above the workers they supposedly represent; most of the workers reciprocate this attitude.

THE REASONS FOR ELITISM

The reasons for this situation are many. Firstly, in a country in which few people have trade union experience, there is a premium placed on those who have it. There is therefore an unwillingness to replace experienced leaders, even when they perform badly. This is natural and it would indeed be unwise to do so lightly. However, the danger is that leaders become so well entrenched that they are able to maintain their posts even against the wishes of the members. This is compounded by the second factor, that rank-and-file members are at an educational disadvantage to their leaders. There is a tendency to hold the educated in awe, and to refuse to criticise them. Leaders can also manipulate the membership, organising affairs so that their (the leaders') wishes are carried out. The 1974 AGM of RAWU, referred to above, is possibly a case in point. Furthermore, there is always an apparent lack of leadership material to replace deposed leaders; those in power seldom set out to train people to replace them.

A third contributory factor is that in a country of low wages and high unemployment, a paid job in the

trade unions attracts not only those who wish to represent the workers, but also those who seek to better themselves. The number of people who have used Union scholarships to further their education so as to obtain white collar jobs outside the union movement is an indication of this. The aim of such leaders is simply that of maintaining their positions; they do little to promote and develop the unions. In a normal situation they would be forced to do so simply in order to keep their posts. In Rhodesia, however, this need is lessened if not removed, firstly, by the premium placed on trade union skills referred to above and, secondly, by the operation of international aid. It is therefore possible for individuals to become professional leaders, moving from one union to another and, if possible, being supported by ICFTU funds. The needs of these leaders, far from being those of representing workers, become those of maintaining their status in the eyes of the ICFTU representative. Since he depends on trade union leaders themselves for information, this is not difficult. A number of cases are notorious.

CONCLUSION

There can be no doubt that this problem of unrepresentative and irresponsible leaders seriously weakens the union movement. Unions are concerned with maintaining worker unity in the face of exploitation. Unions which are simply shells, vehicles for the ambitions of individuals, provide no threat to the exploiters, but do threaten genuine unions. Workers who have wasted money in paying subscriptions to a useless union become wary about any trade union. The charlatans thus undermine the efforts of genuine trade unionists.

The solution to the problem must lie in a two-pronged policy of both increasing rank-and-file members participation in union affairs, and increasing the accountability of leaders to their members. The first of these prongs requires education of workers as to their role in the movement, greater decentralization of union power, with shop-floor and branch-level activities assuming more importance, and more regular meetings involving ordinary members. The second

requires mainly the removal of outside support to individual unions, thus increasing the need for leaders both to increase membership and to retain its support.

True trade union unity cannot be simply a formal, constitutional unity, decided upon by leaders; it must be an article of faith of all unionists. Only when individuals are integrated within themselves, with leaders being the servants of the workers in the industry, will it be possible for unions to truly unite to serve the whole working-class.

Rob Davies
Dept. of Economics
Rhodes University
Grahamstown.

by C.M. Brand

In Rhodesia it is not difficult to be involved in 'politics', especially if you are black. In a situation where the whole fabric of social and economic life is underwritten by minority domination, any challenge to, and often merely questioning of, a particular aspect of society is likely to be interpreted in a political light. For you cannot challenge inequality without by implication also challenging its guarantor, white power.

THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN SITUATION

As a consequence of Imperial dominance during the nineteenth century many Southern African institutions came to be modelled on British lines. The fact that their eventual form in most instances turned out to be rather different from the British prototype is largely due to the racial situation. It was well understood that autonomous institutions in the black community would in time undermine the security of the white state. This is also why the emergence of black unions was strictly controlled. In Rhodesia they could, in fact, not exist officially until 1960 when the revised Industrial Conciliation Act came into operation. Although this legislation was supposed to foster 'multiracial' unions, it was - and still is, - colonial in concept, allowing as does for the close supervision of formal union activity by the Department of Labour.

Thus in Southern Africa the right of government to interfere with, or even dictate in matters affecting industrial conciliation has been commonly accepted. This follows from the paternalistic assumption that participation in state politics is largely a prerogative of whites and that blacks primarily need to be *administered* in their own interest, seeing that they are not competent to look adequately after themselves anyway. Hence they are expected to be the passive and grateful subjects of the dominant group's policy designs. Merely to look this 'gift horse' in the mouth is to meddle in politics in an uncalled for manner. Any organised

black initiative in the sphere of trade unionism - other than supplications to the authorities - is therefore likely to be viewed with suspicion as agitation. By the same token, any black leader who does not 'know his place', is automatically branded as a political trouble-maker.

UNIONS AND POLITICS IN RHODESIA

Ironically, successive governments in Rhodesia have unwittingly contributed to the politicisation of unions through their precipitate use of police and troops in the case of strikes. Their close involvement in the routine regulation of labour organisation, and power to intervene in industrial disputes, which has been enhanced by recent amendments to the 1960 Act, has tended further to identify government with the 'enemies of the workers', rather than as the mediator between employers and employees.

THE FORMAL STANCE OF AFRICAN UNIONS

What course has the African unions, then, decided to follow in Rhodesia in the face of these odds? The formal stance of most union leaders since the Second World War has been that of 'non-involvement' in politics. Not that there was much opportunity for political activity until the middle-fifties and the emergence of the new African National Congress (or the 'liberal' multi-racial groups). But with the rising wave of nationalist sentiment, especially after the turn of the decade, the pressures on the labour movement to commit itself actively to the struggle became immense.

That it continued to take a prudent, strictly 'unionist' stance was principally due to two factors. First, the leaders clearly recognised the risks this would entail in possible detention or restriction for themselves and the banning of their organisations. This would have been a high price to pay at a time when many young unions were just in the process of getting on their feet. Secondly, their principal, albeit still very limited, outside contact

had been with Western movements which emphasized the need for independence and a relatively circumscribed industrial role for unions. After 1960, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions got heavily involved in the local scene through regular two-way personal contact, financial sponsorship of unions, and later the appointment of a permanent local representative. At more than one critical juncture, the I.C.F.T.U. intervened more directly, not without success, to steer leaders away from too close an alliance with nationalist politicians. This did not mean that individual union members, or leaders, did not join the nationalist parties or actively supported them in their personal capacity. The large number who were detained by the government at various times, attests to this fact. But the convention that one could not hold office in, or speak for, a union or party at one and the same time, was fairly strictly adhered to.

MORE DIRECT INVOLVEMENT

Only during two brief periods did part of the local movement become more directly, if still covertly, involved in politics. The first was during the initial twelve months of the existence of the Southern Rhodesia African Trade Union Congress (S.R.A.T.U.C.) after it had broken away from Reuben Jamela's Trade Union Congress (S.R.T.U.C.) early in 1962, during which time it periodically dispatched or actually maintained envoys in various African capitals. The second was with the establishment of a splinter, the Zimbabwe African Congress of Unions (Z.A.C.U.) which, as its initials would suggest, was in more than close sympathy with the Zimbabwe African Peoples' Union (Z.A.P.U.) and also sought to forge pan-African links. It was banned by the government in 1965, but unfortunately the African Trade Union Congress had by now come to be associated in the popular mind with the Zimbabwe African National Union (Z.A.N.U.), so that a successor to Z.A.C.U. soon emerged in the shape of the National African Federation of Unions (N.A.F.U.). Although all attempts to effectively unite the two factions have failed to date, it can safely be said that the significance of the nationalist division has tended to recede into the back-

ground within the labour movement long before the recent achievement of a united political front under the banner of the African National Council.

A SEPARATE WORKERS' CONSCIOUSNESS

If a few did see the labour movement as an important instrument of political liberation the lesson of what was already happening in independent Africa, where national centres were generally being co-opted into the governing party, was not lost even on some of the more radical unionists. Thus Josiah Maluleke, who led the 1962 S.R.A.T.U.C. breakaway, is reported to have once declared :

'We as a trade union are fully prepared to throw our weight behind the nationalist party's fight - after all, we all want to get rid of the present minority government, but we want to do so as workers, with our own organisation. For after independence the party will be the government and will be as much concerned as any government to increase production to develop the country. This may happen at the expense of the workers' wages and general standard of living. Then we want our own organisation to defend our position and our rights; if we, then are merely an arm of the party we as workers will be defenceless.'

FULL SYMPATHY WITH NATIONALIST AIMS

Whereas there has been, therefore, a formal policy of (political) non-alignment, there can be no doubt about the fact that the African Labour movement has all along been in *full* sympathy with nationalist aims. As such its stance must simply be seen as a *strategy* for survival both in the short run (under white domination) and the long run (under black government). This can also be seen clearly in the way in which labour leaders ventured to step into the breach during periods when nationalist activity was curtailed, either by acting as spokesmen for a wide range of African grievances - as has frequently been the case after U.D.I. - or attempting, in individual

capacity, to get a new party launched, as happened after the banning of the African National Congress in 1959.

TRAINING GROUND FOR NATIONALIST LEADERS

The fact that the unions have provided an invaluable training ground for nationalist leadership should not be overlooked as well. The significance of this contribution is put into proper perspective when one contemplates the limited amount of black organisational initiative which has emerged under the adverse political conditions existing in Rhodesia. Among the most notable figures who started their careers in the unions are men like Z.A.P.U. President, Joshua Nkomo (in the old Rhodesia Railways African Employees Association), George Nyandoro (in Mzingeli's post-war Reformed Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union), Michael Mawema (also in the Railway union) and J.Z. Moyo. The role that the labour movement has played in the broader politicisation of the ordinary worker is much more difficult to establish. But if one studies the impact of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union during the 'thirties, the Federation of African Workers' Unions in Bulawayo immediately after the war, Benjamin Burombo's African Workers' Voice Association and the 1948 General Strike, and the varied career of a man like Charles Mzingeli, one comes to the conclusion that if the labour movement did not actually spawn the rise of a modern mass nationalism, it certainly contributed immensely to its emergence.

THE FUTURE OF LABOUR IN ZIMBABWE

What about the future of labour in Zimbabwe? Experience in independent Africa has indicated that the attempted cooptation or political control of unions has neither depoliticized nor completely emasculated them, so that organised labour remains a force to be reckoned with, in most instances out of proportion with its actual numerical or organisational strength. This has been due largely to the

identity of interests of the employed class; their concentration in the centres of power, the towns; their ability to organise on a trans-ethnic and trans-regional basis; and their position in the key service industries, notably in communications and transport. On this basis the unions can be expected to play an important part in Zimbabwe. The labour force employed in the cash economy in 1973 constituted 15 per cent of the total black population of about six million, which puts it ahead of most of, if not all, the other countries of black Africa which have percentages ranging between two per cent and fourteen per cent.

The comparative weakness of traditional associations and the difficult political climate in Rhodesia also means that workers' associations have had a head-start above many others. It is likely that a number of their most capable leaders would be siphoned off into public positions when blacks achieve a significant, or the controlling, share of power, but there is sufficient depth of talent in the larger unions to compensate for this. Finally, there is little doubt that the past experience of the labour movement in walking the political tight-rope both in the face of government surveillance and nationalist disunity, is likely to stand it in good stead in the future. The complexity of the situation can only have added to the sophistication and determination and determination of the leadership that survived, and the years of restricted operation have ironically provided an opportunity for much needed organizational consolidation. A freer atmosphere is likely to lead to a considerable increase in membership and activity, which should put workers in a relatively strong position in their dealings with government and employers.

FUTURE ATTITUDE TO 'POLITICS'

But what should the attitude of future labour leaders be to 'politics'? They should clearly advance the aspirations and demands of workers as cogently and forcefully as possible at all times, realising at the same time that the workers by themselves cannot adequately represent the will of the people or the nation as a whole. For unionized workers only

constitute a relatively small proportion of people and often a comparatively privileged section at that. Workers should, therefore, also encourage, and perhaps even sponsor where necessary, the organization of other sections of the population, such as the non-organized groups, the self-employed individuals in the so-called 'informal' sector, independent craftsmen, and even the unemployed. At the same time the right of other groups such as farmers, traditional associations, women's groups, etc. to press for a response to their needs and aspirations, should be recognised. The idea of a strictly workers' government as such is in Africa, as elsewhere, a perversion and illusion.

THE RIGHT TO REPRESENT WORKER INTERESTS

On the other hand, just as insistent as the unions should be on their right to represent the interests of workers, so must they emphasise that no government by itself could adequately know and enunciate the wishes of workers, even in the unlikely event of it consisting solely of former workers. For those who occupy the key positions of power invariably develop perspectives and interests of their own. That there would be conflicts and counter-demands between different groups within the state must be accepted. It is healthy and normal, and therefore adequate provision should be made for these conflicts to work themselves out through consultation, bargaining, and the orderly struggle for power, wherever possible. This is why a strong voice and representation for as many of these groups as possible should be sought within the political framework of the state. The job of unions is to guarantee such power for the workers.

C.M. Brand
Dept. of Sociology
University of Rhodesia

ABOUT AFRICAN WORKERS IN RHODESIA

by B. Mothobi

My concern in writing this paper is to reflect briefly on one of the techniques employed by management to maintain the colour-line and the exploitation of African workers in commerce and industry, in a country where there is no legislation which directly enforces the colour-line in jobs.

RACISM AND MANAGERIALISM

A great deal of attention and comment has been devoted in recent years to the employment problems of Africans. In order to account for the low wages, racial discrimination and lowly position of African workers, observers and commentators have attempted to discover what kind of disadvantages and defects they are suffering from. The viewpoint that appears to be widely accepted and used extensively by white management (and white workers) is that African workers suffer from a cultural deficiency as a result of their tribal background. Africans are said to belong to a tribal, rural and agricultural culture, which is characterised by social values, beliefs, behaviour patterns and motivations which are radically different from and dissonant with those of industrial society; as a result the African contributes very little to, and needs very little from industry.

While there are other factors that are also responsible for the situation of the African worker, these managerial beliefs about the African are in themselves important, because it is not so much the facts about the African worker, as what management and white workers believe to be the facts, which determine in what jobs Africans will be employed and how much they will be paid. The facts of actual ability to do the job, of intelligence are, at best, of very secondary importance.

SOME MANAGEMENT BELIEFS

The Personnel Manager of a large manufacturing concern in Salisbury: 'Europeans are better equipped to work in industry but not on repetition work. He is better in managerial and directive positions. This is because of history, i.e. the European's long association with industry. First regarding interest, the European has more association with people who are interconnected with industry on the level where he is employed, whereas the African only comes into such contact during his daily stint at the factory. The European has been used to seeing and hearing this from a very early age of environmental upbringing. The African confines himself to the vernacular and so is limited - he has to break down this mode of thinking - i.e. the European starts learning early on, while the African starts later. Thirdly, the European is more favourably disposed through language. As regards intelligence, I assume that, with equal qualification, they have equal intelligence. But I quote: 2 men, equal qualifications, started same day as apprentice fitters and turners, but the white is far ahead of the African. This is because of background - the European is accustomed to using tools, assisting his father etc., while the African has been limited to spanning oxen or making jukskeis'.

According to the chairman of the Rio Tinto Group: 'The necessary level of efficiency in an organization could only be achieved by a community within which, among other things, the different levels of responsibility and remuneration were established according to individual ability and suitability to exercise responsibility according to Caucasian customs, but that within the structure of industry it must be recognised that for a considerable time African candidates for promotion with the necessary Caucasian approach to organization and responsibility would be rare.'

White artisans in a manufacturing establishment in Bulawayo: 'Africans under me can make machine adjustments but not fine adjustments because they don't have an enquiring mind'.

'Africans lack versatility and they have no mechanical background or ability to be trained to be as good tradesmen as Europeans'.

'The first year apprentice (European) who has mechanical aptitude and interest is nearly as good as the fourth year 'battler' (European) and the African would be of the same 'battling' type.'

'The African apprentice wants to learn but cannot'.

COLONIAL NOTIONS OF 'TRIBALISM' AND 'TRADITIONALISM'

Unfortunately, the beliefs are based on the thoughts of people who know very little about the nature of this society and care even less about the situation of the African worker. The theory of the 'tribal man' has no basis in social reality. Certainly, anyone who knows and cares about the African workers would not accept this hideous caricaturing of a people.

Without doubt, new workers coming into industry from rural and agricultural environments have of necessity to learn new forms of behaviour and acquire new values, but, to argue that rural and agricultural values are innate in these workers, that their societies are tribal by nature, and to impute such characteristics as 'loafers', 'idlers', 'ignorant' etc., requires a violent distortion of historical and contemporary facts and a drastic limitation of one's field of vision.

SOCIALLY PATTERNED DEFECTS

These beliefs are part of white mythology developed since the 19th century about the African people and workers. They have become what Erich Fromm has called 'socially patterned defects' which arise when members of a society confuse consensual validation with rational justification. That is to say, 'it is naively assumed that the fact that the majority of people share certain ideas and feelings proves the validity of these ideas and feelings.' Thus the employers are not aware that their ideas and feelings are defective, and their security is not threatened

by the experience of being different and outcast as would happen to them if they lived in a society where such ideas were not considered normal. They are secure in the knowledge that they fit in with the rest of the business community and society and as a matter of fact their very defect is raised to a virtue by their society.

From the very beginnings of 'Rhodesia' it has been common folklore among white employers, as with white society, that Africans are tribal, agricultural and backward and as a result, are by nature, prone to idleness, stupidity, irresponsibility and other such deficiencies. They have said and heard these things long enough, often enough and loud enough, without any contradiction, that they have come to accept them as indisputable truth.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Furthermore, academics have lent their support to these beliefs, thus giving them a pseudo-scientific basis. Professor J.L. Sadie, once advisor on economic development in this country, writes: 'A study of the Bantu peoples of Africa reveals the absence at this stage of most of those elements which are conducive to economic development as an indigenous process Breaking the fetters of tradition is a most difficult operation, and it may take a long time before the needed supply of individual entrepreneurship, and initiative and enterprise in modern trade and finance are generated, and a still longer time before the necessary know-how, experience and sophistication about exchange, budgeting, management, and the competitive spirit have been acquired.'

And Professor Reader of the University of Rhodesia: 'The rural African at any rate, far from learning items in his home culture which will be useful to him in the western industrial milieu, still absorbs values which actively disqualify him from competition in it against Europeans of comparable formal education'.

J.P. Dankwerts, when at the same university: 'anyone who grows up in African society acquires a set of values and ethics which are not only different

but frequently in conflict with those implicit in the European legal system. Africans must therefore operate in what is a strange or even hostile environment'.

SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY

The managerial beliefs also benefit from the operation of the concept of the 'self fulfilling prophecy' which is in the beginning a false definition of the situation evoking a new behaviour which makes the originally false conception come true. In such a case the operant factor is not whether the image or the theory is true, but whether it is believed.

For example, most employers believe that the African is stupid and cannot exercise intelligence and initiative. As a result, the African worker is generally given menial and, at best, semi-skilled repetitive and routine jobs which call for very little application of intelligence, initiative and responsibility. This is then taken as conclusive proof that the African worker is indeed stupid and irresponsible. Where the African worker does a job requiring use of initiative and involving a certain amount of responsibility, this is either deliberately overlooked or the man is referred to as an exception.

As a second example, let us look at the argument that the African is by nature tribal and an agriculturist. As a result of this belief, the worker's wages are pitifully low and his conditions of living generally atrocious, so that he is compelled to maintain very close links with the rural areas which provide a supplement to his wages and security against unemployment and for retirement. However, these continued links with the rural areas are taken as conclusive proof that the African is indeed tribal and an agriculturist by nature.

Furthermore, a superficial observation of the African worker and his situation will reveal the fact that certain other aspects of the beliefs about tribal man do in fact *appear to correspond* to the reality. Not only do tribal areas, tribal organizations, tribal customs and laws, members of tribes, clearly developed tribal sentiments and tribal consciousness, and

appalling underdevelopment exist, but also, there are a great number of African workers who show the underdevelopment of character and aptitude said to be typical of all Africans.

However, a more perceptive analysis of the situation will reveal that since the 19th century there have been active processes in this country which have in fact produced the situation now to be observed. What is now observed is not pre-colonial structures but is the direct product of the imposition of white rule and capitalism in this country. There is conclusive evidence that the policy of the ruling class in this country to persist with 'Reserves' or 'Tribal areas' in which the overwhelming majority of Africans have been to live under so-called tribal chiefs, customs and laws, has been a deliberate attempt to mummify and truncate relics of pre-colonial structures in order to serve political and administrative ends. These are the structures which are now used to define the African worker and they do so without giving him the chance of appeal. 'Tribes', 'Tribal man', 'Tribalism' no longer exist in the objective sense. They are the creations of the present system and are diversions from the real situation of the African worker in this country.

THE FUNCTION OF MANAGERIAL IDEOLOGY

While these managerial beliefs about African workers have no basis in social reality, they do nevertheless serve an important function in commerce and industry. They are, in fact, an integral part of the ideology of the ruling class and the major function of these beliefs is to justify and rationalise the existing structures of privilege and wealth. As C. Wright Mills once wrote 'people with advantages are loathe to believe that they just happen to be people with advantages.'

What makes these beliefs particularly dangerous is that they divert attention from the real defects of management's policies and practices to the imaginary defects of the African workers. They make the African worker entirely responsible for his own condition. As one Works Manager told me 'The African is entirely responsible for his own ex-

ploitation'. Inevitably, of course, these beliefs have carried with them the insidious assertion that the African is inferior to the white worker, that his value to the economy and to society is minimal, and that his remuneration must be correspondingly minimal. Discrimination in wages and opportunities is justified in terms that the white minority is more fitted to run and direct the economy and contributes more to the creation of the national wealth.

The operation of these beliefs makes it quite unnecessary for management to pay much attention to the genuine problems of the African workers. These beliefs are like a piece of smoked glass which management and white workers hold in front of their eyes when they look at the African workers so that they will not have to see the real situation. Thus the very real problems of low pay, security against arbitrary treatment and dismissal, atrocious working conditions, boredom and the meaninglessness of work, opportunity for advancement, recognition of the full value of labour, proper selection and training, security for old age and retirement, transport, housing and welfare programmes, recognition of workers' organizations, and many others, are generally passed over or very inadequately dealt with.

Some employers are making particularly unscrupulous use of these beliefs to further exploit African workers who are increasingly being used in skilled and junior management jobs previously performed by white workers, but are paid at a much lower rate because, it is argued, they bring in less skill and have a lower standard of living to support.

SHORTAGE OF WHITE WORKERS

For quite some time now Rhodesian industry has been faced by an increasingly growing shortage of white workers especially in the skilled trades, and this has compelled employers to pay high wages in order to attract and retain artisans. At the same time management has introduced new devices aimed at making use of semi-skilled African workers to do the work that was previously done by white workers, but at a significantly lower rate. This has happened the most in the building trade and the president of

the Associated Mineworkers of Rhodesia has charged that similar replacement of skilled whites by lower paid African workers is also taking place in the mining industry. While a great deal of this replacement appears to be done illegally by employers, a good deal of it has been sanctioned by industrial agreements involving the white trade unions, although many of such cases that I am aware of appear to be in situations where the African worker is confined to an African area or clientele where, it is argued, the rate for the job does not apply.

'JOB FRAGMENTATION'

A related and increasingly popular device to cut costs and meet the labour shortage is 'Job Fragmentation' the process whereby the employer hires up to about five Africans, variously called 'journeyman's assistant', 'artisan's aide' and other such glorified titles, to do the work of one white artisan at a much lower rate than the white artisan commanded, while the white worker retains the most skilled and best paid part of the job. This is justified by the argument that the white worker is more qualified and experienced, than the African workers.

Under job fragmentation the assistants or aides are allowed to do the same work as the artisan but may not do the skilled part of a job, such as the use of machines. But in reality, in a number of cases I am aware of, the assistants do the whole job either because there is a shortage of artisans or because the white artisans prefer to let them do the whole job, only intervening when there are difficulties. However, the assistants continue to be paid less than 30% of what the white artisan is paid.

A number of observers commenting on these developments argue that there is a 'silent revolution' occurring in industry through which employers are gradually - admittedly very slowly - allowing Africans into the skilled trades even if not at the artisan level. This they see as a definite improvement in job opportunities for Africans. While I do not deny that job fragmentation and similar devices for using African workers in skilled jobs, but at lower

rates, may have increased the number and quality of jobs available to African workers. I am not at all convinced that this 'silent revolution' has brought any end at all to the exploitation of and discrimination against the African worker. The insinuations about the African workers' inability to do skilled work continue and some even argue that job fragmentation brings the skilled job to the level of the African's ability.

A SILENT REVOLUTION OR RATIONALIZATION?

All that this so-called 'silent revolution' has really accomplished is to move the colour-bar in jobs upwards while (and I am convinced this is its major purpose) enabling management to cut down on wage and salary costs, since four or five African workers employed on the fragmented jobs are much cheaper than one white artisan paid the rate for the job plus the premium that this group of white workers is able to command because of the shortage of their skills in the economy. In his Chairman's Review, dated 31st March 1974, R. Walker of the Rio Tinto Group made this rather interesting statement: 'While accepting the advisability of separate facilities for housing, education and hospitalization, the Group policy with regard to job opportunity and working conditions is to eliminate racial discrimination. The severe shortage of tradesmen has forced an abnormal increase in artisan wage rates together with the acceleration of plans to train Africans as artisans. At the same time the urgent necessity of attempting to curb inflation by increased productivity is to be met by providing greater incentives for semi-skilled workers by the provision of improved housing and facilities.'

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that it appears to me that management beliefs about the nature of African workers have become an increasingly attractive technique for continued discrimination against and exploitation of African workers in a country where there is no legislated colour-bar to hold back ever increasing African demands for

advancement and equality. By using these beliefs management can and does argue that it is not being racist, but is interested in efficiency and progress which the African at present is not equipped to provide. These beliefs are in fact an essential tool in the modernisation of racial domination.

B. Mthobi
Centre for Inter Racial
Studies
University of Rhodesia.

by Peter Harris

The South African system of 'job reservation', under which there is legal provision for members of specific race groups, has received considerable attention in the literature on South African labour problems.

Job reservation is important to those members of the group for whom the job is 'reserved' because it prevents competition from persons outside the group who may otherwise gain the necessary qualifications and challenge existing workers for places in the higher-paid job categories. Under a system of job reservation a dual system of payments (a high wage for those doing the reserved jobs, and a low one for those outside of them) can emerge. However, it can only be maintained if entry to the reserved jobs is prevented.

NO LEGAL BARRIER

In South Africa an unacceptable (for whites) rate of entry by blacks is prevented by the law, which enables a selected and controllable relaxation of any job barrier. In Rhodesia the situation is completely different. There is no legal job reservation along racial lines. No qualified person can be excluded from the relevant skilled trade union on the grounds of race; employers are able to select apprentices for the skilled trades from any race; persons doing the same job must be paid the same minimum rates of pay regardless of race; and the technical training colleges offer instruction to apprentices of all races in the same institution.

THE ACTUAL SIMILARITY

Under these conditions, commentators who see the legal job reservation system in South Africa as providing the most important barrier to the advance of black people in industry, would expect to find a fully integrated, non-racial, competitive employment structure in Rhodesia. In fact, the Rhodesian system appears very little different to that existing in South Africa. Most of the skilled job opportunities

are taken up by white immigrants. There are virtually no qualified black artisans in the printing, electrical, engineering and mechanical trades, and only in the building industry has there been significant advance by blacks into the skilled trades. Very few Africans are accepted into apprenticeships. From 1962 to 1967, an average of only 8 Africans were admitted to apprenticeships in each year. After 1967 the pattern changed somewhat, and in 1968 17 Africans started apprenticeships, this number rising to 49 in 1969 and to about 80 in 1970. (There are no exact official figures available from 1969 onwards). Even so, advance has been limited almost exclusively to the building trades. Alongside these black apprentices about 450 whites were admitted each year. The 'non racial' Rhodesian system has its negative side-effects as well. In 1961 a special trade school was opened for Africans, but it was closed in 1964. The government argued that since Africans could now enter the formally segregated technical colleges, there was no longer a need to offer separate facilities.

HOW THE RHODESIAN SYSTEM WORKS

How has a legally non-racial system produced a system that in effect is racially segregated? The answer is that 'job reservation, Rhodesian style' has been achieved by administrative methods, not by laws. (The Rhodesian example may have implications for South Africa as well: it is not enough to change the laws (ie. apartheid bye laws) because there are numerous ways that the same effects can be achieved without resorting to a rigid system of legal rules and regulations.)

Let us now consider how the Rhodesian system of job reservation actually works. Under the Industrial Conciliation Act, the trade unions can enter into legally enforceable agreements with employers that certain jobs in the industry can only be done by qualified and approved workers. The agreements carefully divide all aspects of a job up into those that can be done by skilled, by semi-skilled, and by unskilled workers. If a semi-skilled worker is found to be doing that part of the job which is reserved for the skilled worker, his employer is

fined and he has to be taken off the job. Inspectors from the Industrial Councils visit factories and other job sites to make sure that the agreements are being kept. There is therefore formal job reservation by *skill* groups, but not by *race* group. How then, do the skilled groups remain almost exclusively white? The answers lie in the way workers are recruited, and in the way they are admitted to the ranks of the qualified through the completion of an apprenticeship or by passing a trade test.

APPRENTICESHIP AND ASSISTED WHITE IMMIGRATION

The difficulty with apprenticeship, as a way of gaining a skill, is that employers have to indenture the apprentice, and supervise his on-the-job training. It is fairly expensive to train apprentices, particularly when employers are able to hire already qualified workers at no cost at all if the government brings them in under the assisted passage immigration scheme. The immigration scheme is aimed at recruiting white artisans, and hence as long as tradesmen arrive in Rhodesia in sufficient numbers, the employers see no need to train large numbers of apprentices. It is only the skilled worker needs of employers that cannot be satisfied by immigration that are satisfied through the training of apprentices.

EASIER ACCESS TO APPRENTICESHIP FOR WHITES

There are a limited number of apprenticeship vacancies each year, and white school leavers have easier access to these apprenticeships than black school leavers for a number of reasons. Firstly, the (white) employers have their own race prejudices and provided that sufficient whites apply for the vacancies, they will normally give them preference. Secondly, they fear that the existing white artisans may look for other jobs if they face the prospect of working alongside black apprentices. This fear is probably not justified, but it exists and is frequently used as an excuse. Thirdly, they fear that customers may object if the skilled work is done by blacks, and they prefer not to take any chances. The government and municipalities are

important in the field of training apprentices, and they probably fear that the white voters might object if they recruit blacks in preference to whites for the available vacancies. Finally, many established tradesmen may be able to speak directly to an employer about getting his son or the son of a friend an apprenticeship. Since these tradesmen are usually white, the people they apply on behalf of are also usually white.

HOW BLACKS ARE APPRENTICED

It is only in those trades where there are insufficient skilled white immigrants arriving to fill the expanding job vacancies, and where there are not enough whites applying for the apprenticeship vacancies, that blacks gain access to apprenticeship. The most notable example of such an industry is the building industry.

TRADE TESTING

Trade testing is a little more complicated. Where a worker has been doing a job that is very similar to one for which a certificate is required, he may apply to be tested. If his work is good enough, he will be issued with a certificate, without having to go through a full apprenticeship. It is claimed that it is very easy to apply different standards to the work of whites and blacks who sit the trade tests, because the test is so arbitrary, but this is not the main problem. In the electrical, printing and mechanical trades, blacks would usually not have had the opportunity to develop skills that would lead them on to a trade test. In building, on the other hand, mission schools sometimes run training programmes, and the pupils have the opportunity to improve their building skills in the reserves and on the mission stations. Once again, it is easy to understand why the advance of blacks into skilled trades has taken place largely in the building industry.

HOW THE SYSTEM IS MAINTAINED

The system thus keeps a form of racial job reservation without having to write it into the laws of the country. Employers prefer immigrant tradesmen because they do not have to spend money on training them. The government prefers immigrants for political reasons: the white immigrants have a high standard of living, and they have to support the government if they wish to maintain it. If enough immigrants came into the country, relatively few apprentices are trained. Provided that only a small number of apprenticeship vacancies have to be filled, it is probable that the very small white population will be able to supply applicants from amongst its members. There is no pressure on the government to build more technical training colleges because the existing ones are large enough to accommodate all of the apprentices in training. At the same time the system is very flexible: if there is a skill shortage in a *specific* trade, blacks can be trained without the government having to tear down its whole system of job reservation.

THE AFRICANISATION OF A TRADE

However, for those who wish to use the system to protect white living standards, there is a weakness. Once blacks gain access to a trade, it is difficult to prevent a more or less gradual but constant Africanisation of the trade. In a discriminatory society, black workers are not in as strong a bargaining position as white workers. Wages in the Africanised trade fall behind those in other trades where a white work force is able to use its political and economic power with greater effect. In 1964, average wages for skilled workers in the building trades were \$1.18 per hour, and only \$1.10 in engineering trades. By 1972, hourly wages in engineering had risen to \$1.72, but those in building had only risen to \$1.39. Under these conditions whites seeking apprenticeships have gone into the other trades when blacks have come into a trade. The available vacancies cannot be filled by whites, and more blacks are accepted for apprenticeships. Wages fall behind still further, and the

process of Africanisation continues.

KEY ASPECTS OF SOCIAL CONTROL

There are therefore three key factors which maintain the system of job reservation - Rhodesian style :

- * There is the actual reserving of the job for the members of a certain skill group. Job reservation can only work if there is some barrier. It does not *have* to be a race barrier (as it is in South Africa): once any sort of barrier is introduced, a racially segregated structure can be achieved by the administration of training and recruitment programmes.
- * There is the system of preference which is used to allow white workers to 'cross' the barrier and enter the higher-paid job groups.
- * There is the immigration programme which prevents shortages of skills emerging within the country, which could lead to a more rapid rate of Africanisation. The immigrants come in on assisted passages, and they receive other benefits. The government can therefore select and can try to recruit more artisans into those jobs in which a shortage seems likely to result in Africanisation.

CONCLUSION

If this analysis is correct, the immigration programme is the most important factor maintaining job reservation in Rhodesia. It is the immigration programme that prevents the 'trickle' which turns into the 'flood'. That is why the Rhodesian government put so much money into its '*Settlers '74*' campaign when it seemed as if the immigration flow was slowing down at the end of 1973. That is why the immigration figures are seen as being so important in Rhodesia.

Immigration in Rhodesia is more important to white Rhodesians than it is in South Africa to white South Africans, because the white population in Rhodesia is so much smaller than it is in South Africa. It is a critical part of the elaborate

style of the country's system of job reservation:
a system that is in some ways more flexible than its
South African counterpart, but which is in every way
more vulnerable.

Peter Harris
Dept. of Economics
Massey University
Palmerston North
New Zealand.

by Duncan Clarke

This note is intended primarily as a record of some activities of the Agricultural and Plantation Workers' Union (APWU) in Rhodesia. It is based on the correspondence of the Union as well as discussions with the General Secretary during 1972 and 1973. Attention is also drawn to the difficulties faced by the APWU which have arisen out of socioeconomic conditions in Rhodesia in the post-1960 period.

SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Firstly a note on the background to plantation production and employment. Nearly 38 percent of all African workers (349 000) in Rhodesia were employed on 'European' owned farms in 1973. The enterprises on which they have been employed have had various production structures. The following classifications can be made:

- * Large-scale foreign-owned estates, owned by South African interests, which also have mining and industrial investments throughout the Southern African 'complex', including Rhodesia (e.g. Anglo American Corporation and Triangle Sugar Estates).
- * Large-scale locally owned enterprises, private and State owned, in both ranching and forestry.
- * Smaller settler plantations engaged in arable, pastoral and mixed production (forming the 'spine' of the industry and varying in size).
- * Estates principally maintained as speculative investments by 'absentee landlords'.

A variety of social and economic conditions pertain in these enterprises. Their labour requirements are not necessarily uniform and a number of forms of wage employment are to be found including the following:

- * Contract workers recruited from Malawi by the Rhodesian African Labour Supply Commission under 2 year contracts at very low rates of pay (approximately 3 000 per annum).

- * Locally contracted workers undertaking short-term tasks who are contracted through private African labour contractors (about 18 000).
- * Permanent and semi-permanent workers, constituting the bulk of the labour force (about 230 000 workers), many being foreign workers who have come originally from Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia and Botswana, and most of whom reside in farm compounds and have been in varying degrees of dependence on wage-labour and plantation owners for cash, 'rations', health services, education, and social security (i.e. the 'right' to stay on the farm, obtain tillage to a small plot of land and enjoy the prospect of a 'retainer' to provide for post-employment subsistence consumption).
- * Squatters' who enjoy an insecure usufruct to a small defined area of land and who conduct peasant farming operations in exchange for which they provide labour to the landowners.
- * Casual workers (about 40 000, mostly women and children) who are drawn from the compound at peak periods or for specific tasks at wage rates below those prevailing for permanent/male labourers.
- * Employees in 'agricultural services', teachers, clerks, mechanics, technicians, etc.) who are *relatively* well paid and who number approximately 12 000.
- * A supervisory class of 'boss boys' and quasi-managers mostly placed below white 'farm assistants' and managers in the occupational hierarchy (probably about 6 000).

Approximately 115 000 farm workers were non-Rodesian in 1972. Their relative and absolute preponderance in plantation employment has diminished since 1960.

DIFFICULTIES OF UNIONIZATION

This complex pattern of production and employment makes it difficult for unionization. Those most in need of union protection are the most dependent. Social controls in white farming areas and on the

compounds make it difficult for unions and branches to organize. Farmers have also exerted a quasi-political and judicial authority on their farms which cannot be easily matched by unionism under prevailing political conditions. Workers have been ultra-dependent not only for wages. A host of non-wage relationships have 'tied' workers to estates (e.g. credit and indebtedness policies of farm stores and farm health and educational policies). Even though *real wages* have fallen by 17 percent from 1963-73, other socioeconomic pressures, like controls on foreign workers to exclude them from urban employment, urban influx controls to push local workseekers to farm jobs, and extreme poverty in the reserves, have ensured that increasing numbers of local workers have taken up farm employment. The existence of a small 'floating' unemployed population *within* the European areas has also provided pressures for workers to accept low levels of subsistence. Indeed, the spread of wage-employment in the Tribal Trust Lands and African Purchase Areas ('communal' and private owned farming areas respectively) at wages even lower than in many plantation jobs, has meant that farmworkers have had little option once they have been forced to become dependent on the plantation.

These factors have not provided conditions which have been conducive to successful unionization. Thus by 1972 the APWU only had a reported 900 paid-up members (though their nominal 'book membership' stood at 8 000). Paid-up membership thus constituted less than 0.5 percent of all farmworkers. In effect the plantation labour force has remained non-unionized. However, structural conditions alone have not accounted for this fact as is demonstrated by the history of the union, and the socioeconomic situation within which it arose.

UNION FORMATION

The General Secretary of the APWU has informed the author that the union was formed initially by workers in the Western Matabeleland area near Bulawayo. Observing the treatment meted out to 'squatters' (their lifelong neighbours) on adjacent farms they decided (because they were *fearful of*

their own security') to form the APWU; The 'squatters' concerned had always lived on the land, the area having been alienated by white farmers after colonization. The original owner left the 'squatters' to their own devices, provided they supplied the full statutory amount of labour to him (6 months per annum).

The legal position of these labour-tenants changed after the introduction of the Land Apportionment Act in 1930 and when, in the early 1950's, the Act was being implemented, their continued tenancy on the farm became dependent upon the contracting of a wage-employment relationship with the plantation owner. The owner gave verbal promise that such a contract was agreeable to him and he undertook to pay workers 50 cents monthly. The amount was entered onto the workers' Registration Certificate as '50 cents'. No period was specified. The workers were illiterate and did not verify the agreement. The farmers also agreed that under no circumstances would they be evicted from the farm. This situation continued for 10 years though the workers did not collect any wages. Their quid pro quo for labour was a 'freedom' to extend cultivated acreages and accumulate as large a herd as they could afford.

The sale of the farm in the 1960's brought new ownership. The 'boss' decided to demand the removal of all 'squatters' from the farm, a situation legally permitted at the time. The workers appealed to the farmer claiming that they had engaged in a wage-labour contract with the previous employer. The farmer thus altered his stance but refused to meet 'back pay' claimed by the workers at 50 cents monthly. The appeal by the workers to the District Commissioner was of no avail. There had been no written agreement specifying the period to which the 50 cents applied.

In the end, after the matter had been referred to the Dept. of Labour, the workers were discharged with 50 cents each for 10 years labour. All went eventually to the Matetsi Reserve. The drastic nature of this experience prompted neighbouring workers to mobilize collectively for protection.

PROBLEMS OF UNION ORGANIZATION

Employment contracts in agriculture have come under the Masters and Servants Act (1901) which was introduced on the basis of the 1856 Cape Colony statute and designed to stop 'desertion', penalise breaches of contract and ensure that bargaining power remained in the employers hands. Under the Act there is no provision for collective bargaining or Industrial Councils and Boards. Wage-setting has been left to individual 'bargaining' under conditions which have not favoured workers. Though the Act does not technically prohibit union formation, it does deny such unions a legal status as 'registered' unions. However under the 1959 Industrial Conciliation Act the APWU has had to register as an 'unregistered union' with the Industrial Registrar. This has made the APWU liable to many onerous provisions, but unentitled to any of the normal benefits that flow from registration, circumscribed though these may be.

EMPLOYER OBSTRUCTION

The APWU has no ability to influence the wage bargain by negotiation in advance of contract for the sale of labour, or to control the utilisation of labour once sold. Their ability to conduct 'negociations' directly with individual employers (there are over 6 000 seperate production 'units' has not been technically restrained by the Masters and Servants Act. Employers have simply refused to entertain such a situation. The Anglo-American Corporation, Arbor Acres (PTY) Ltd., and other individual farmers, have adopted this strategy of resistance, along with the Rhodesia National Farmers' Union. The RNFU have made it a condition in writing that they will give no assistance to agricultural unionism.

ROLE OF THE R N F U

The RNFU have thus refused to condone changes in the ICA to enable the Masters and Servants Act to be repealed and allow the industry to function under condions of collective bargaining. The Chief Executive of the RNFU has written to the APWU

General Secretary (1st October, 1971) saying that
 'Under the circumstances I regret that we cannot subscribe to or support *any* approach you might make to Government in connection with this matter.'

The RNFU political lobby has been powerful and effective in influencing State labour policy in this direction. Its representatives in the Southern Rhodesian legislature successfully stopped pressures (paradoxically from the white Farm Assistants and Salaried Managers' Association) to have the sector incorporated under the provisions of the ICA when it was amended to incorporate African industrial workers in 1959.

The Rhodesian Front party has a strong rural bias which is also reflected in the constituency distribution between urban and rural seats. In 1974 there were 17 of the 49 RF Members of Parliament who were themselves farmers, including 10 of the 18 Cabinet Ministers as well as the Prime Minister.

The RNFU itself has been active in thwarting union formation. The words of the RNFU Labour Committee Chairman (L.T. Molam) in 1973 sum up their hostile attitude:

'I would like to turn to another warning sign which has very serious implications - that is the threat of trade unionism. We have a very *sympathetic* Minister of Labour, and you can rest assured that an agricultural trade union will *not* get official recognition. In addition we have prepared a very well documented case against trade unionism should the time ever arise when it might be needed to fight moves towards it ----- trade unions are willing to support any grievance the workers may have. A recent example is the intervention of Mr. Mpofu (the APWU General Secretary) at a chicken farm near Salisbury.'

THE "DOUBLE BIND"

The union has thus been caught in an intended 'double bind'. Employers refuse to negotiate because (they say) the ICA does not apply to agriculture. The State will not change the law because it represents only employer interests. Nor will it intervene to provide minimum wage laws or other protections. The RNFU oppose any move towards collective bargaining, recognition of unionism, or co-operation with the APWU through a reform of industrial relations. The union is not powerful enough to provide leverage for affecting this change.

POLITICAL CONSTRAINTS

Political constraints have been crucial as constraints on union formation. The nature of the Land Tenure Act and the all-embracing control provided under the Emergency Powers Regulations (in force since 1965) have made it very difficult for union officials to travel freely in 'white areas', hold meetings and visit workers in the compounds (always the property of the employer). Farmers have generally regarded union officials as 'subversive' and regular attention has been given to this issue at RNFU Annual Congresses. Much of the control over agricultural unionism has been left to the powers of the State. Thus, upon formation of the APWU, concern was expressed at the RNFU Congress of that year. Mr. C.G. Tracey is on record (RNFU Proceedings, 21st Annual Congress, June 1964) as noting that the government said to the RNFU : ' Don't have anything to do with it (the APWU) (the APWU); we will contain the matter.' The RNFU President requested members to 'stop the union' by reporting their meetings to the Police. The 1966 Congress re-iterated this concern over farm unionism. It has remained an article of faith for the RNFU since, in clear contradiction to their claims to be working for better conditions for farmworkers.

The State has largely kept its promise. Union officials have been harassed continuously and

executive members, among them the General Secretary, have been detained without trial for various periods on offences that have not been specified. Mr. Mpofu was detained in mid-1973 and, as has been usual in such matters, his family have experienced considerable difficulties as a result. He has also been seriously ill in detention and has been unsuccessful in appeal against his detention order.

VICTIMIZATION OF UNION MEMBERS

Workers have also been victimised for joining the Union. Union members have been dismissed at Arbor Acres Chicken Farm, Hippo Valley Estates and elsewhere. At the time of the Pierce Commission's visit a 6 day industrial strike by 1200 at Hippo Valley Estates was put down with the assistance of the police and reservists. The Union claimed that 250 of its members were dismissed. APWU complaints against victimisation have been frequent but powerless.

ORGANISING DIFFICULTIES:

Foreign and casual workers have been difficult to effectively unionize. The union has focussed on the large commercial estates (eg. Hippo Valley in the Lowveld) in order to maintain contact with as many workers as possible. The rest of the agricultural labour force have been widely dispersed in up to 6000 compounds throughout the country. It has been impossible to make contact with even a fraction of these workers. Although membership fees have been low (joining fee 25 cents and monthly subscription 10 cents) these are not inconsiderable amounts for impoverished farm labourers. Their average earnings (cash and *all* payments in kind) in 1973 were valued by the Central Statistical Office at \$11.00 monthly (35 per cent of which on average has been supplied in the form of 'rations', services and an imputed value for accommodation - almost always built by workers during their 'leisure time').

THE FARM WORKERS' BUDGET

The budget that farm workers and their families have

had to survive on has been austere in comparison to basic subsistence consumption needs (the PDL in urban Rhodesia for a family with 2 children in 1974 was \$55). The subsistence wage has thus been pressed down to an extremely low level. Under-consumption of basic items (food, shelter, children's education, health services, recreation, etc.) has provided the means whereby sub-PDL existence has been catered for in the plantation system. Non-permanent workers have often had to obtain income supplementation from the reserves. Permanent labourers have attempted to increase family income by sending wives and children to work (usually though not exclusively on the same farm), by living off the land, and compensating for low wages through theft and by the sale of petty commodities (beer-brewing for local sale being such an example).

FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

Financial problems have also resulted from the high cost of collecting union dues from members scattered across the country. The union has thus been heavily dependent on international aid from the International Trades Secretariat (International Federation of Plantation, Agricultural and Allied Workers) whose *small* contributions have been channelled through the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions' representative in Rhodesia (Mr. W.G. Lawrence). These funds, with contributions from membership dues, have been inadequate to meet the minimal effective requirements of a small skeleton staff of executive members. The union has not therefore been able to build up a grass-roots organization wholly supported by workers and independent of foreign funding. The reliance on a small cadre of organizers has also rendered the APWU vulnerable. Detention of leaders has removed much of the union initiative and left donors without effective organizations to channel resources towards. Whilst aid has been necessary to get the APWU going, it has not succeeded, as yet. Serious revisions to existing policies appear to be required.

ACTIVITIES OF THE APWU

The farm workers case has been represented by APWU

at the national level through National African Federation of Unions (NAFU) affiliation, and through the African Trades Union Congress (ATUC) in its regular condemnations of the policy of keeping workers under the Masters and Servants Act. The APWU has actively worked for a merger between these two organizations. However, neither of these labour confederations has been registered. The ATUC for instance, was denied registration in 1969. The direct impact of the labour confederations on State policy in the late 1960's and early 1970's has been relatively small because government has been able to ignore them. Their calls for changes to the ICA, like those of the APWU, have fallen on unsympathetic ears.

APPROACHES TO MINISTER

The APWU has made numerous approaches to the Minister of Labour to change the Act (at least 6 formal submissions since 1968). All have been curtly rebuffed by brief notes of acknowledgement from the Minister's Private Secretary; none of the replies have contained any reasons for non-consideration or rejection of the APWU case. Requests from the APWU to meet the Minister (made on numerous occasions) have been refused. The APWU's case was broadly supported and adopted by the NAFU Congress in September, 1968. It condemned the exclusiveness of the ICA and called on the Minister to amend the Act. It criticized the rise in health charges because of their regressive impact on lower paid workers in agriculture. Called for a Commission of Inquiry into the conditions faced by agricultural workers, expressing concern at the state of housing provided for farm workers (mostly wattle and daub, except nowadays in the North-East where guerilla penetration has caused farmers to provide better accommodation) and condemned the fact that many farm animals have been better provided for in terms of housing than workers; called for an inspectorate to overlook farm employment practices and conditions, to ensure the provision of piped water, adequate drainage and sanitary arrangements in farm compounds. These complaints, including others about C.I.D. raids on union offices, had been made before - both locally and to the British Government (in Memorandum in October, 1966). The British Government did nothing, a fact later con-

demned by the APWU in its appeals to the IFPAAWU for financial assistance.

THE APWU AND THE PEARCE COMMISSION

The APWU has thus had to use various policies to publicize the plight of farm workers. Direct petitioning of the RNFU proved unsuccessful. It submitted a memorandum to the 1971 Pearce Commission which was sent to Rhodesia to assess the 'acceptability' of the Anglo-Rhodesian Settlement Proposals. The Union rejected the terms of settlement after holding meetings in all 18 branches and receiving a unanimous condemnation of the terms from its members. The grounds for rejection were similar to those of the African National Council, but with *significant additions*. The APWU condemned the exploitation of cheap labour, the union's inferior legal status under existing legislation, the fact that union members would not gain from the 'Settlement Package', the situation in which they were denied freedom of assembly and association, the system whereby their wages were depressed by the State's contract labour policy, the fact that even under ICA the effective '*right to strike*' had been removed and made dependent upon the President's discretion, the poor conditions of education for the children of farm workers (i.e. the lack of State subsidized schools, high fees and the 'tying' of education to child labour on the farms), and the élitist franchise proposals which would disbar almost all farmworkers from qualification as voters.

ROLE IN POST-STRIKE SITUATIONS

The union has also had a small but effective role to play in post-strike situations. A role which has been pressed onto it by the conditions that have pertained, and Special Branch activities in calling out Union officials to help settle disputes through 'third party' intervention. These activities have not been unrewarding for workers and in a number of cases the finalized wage settlements have been very beneficial.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF LABOUR

Soon after the strike at Arbor Acres, the Minister of Labour made a public statement on the reasons why the ICA would not be changed to incorporate the farming industry. It was claimed that there were inherent difficulties in prescribing comprehensive conditions of service for farm workers. This was an excuse for inaction. Certainly the exercise would provide some unique problems, but they would have been no more complex than in other industries where Industrial Councils have been effectively established. The Minister used the excuse of a technicality to evade a matter of principle. The APWU have been fully willing to participate in an Industrial Council and assist in devising appropriate measures in order to obtain protected conditions for workers. It was also claimed by the State that the large, seasonal and fluctuating labour force on farms prevented the incorporation under the ICA. Again, similar problems have been found in other industries (eg. textiles). Expediency in response to the union's request thus characterized the Minister's reply. This excuse blatantly ignored the 70 per cent of permanent farm workers; and it also did not reflect the contemporary tendency towards labour stabilization in farm employment. Finally, the State claimed that a larger inspectorate would be needed to enforce regulated conditions. This could not have been a significant objection. Since it involved nearly 40 per cent of the African labour force, it was not unreasonable to expect that more inspectors would be needed. The normal system of Industrial Council levies could easily have helped finance this need for expansion in the administrative system.

CONCLUSION

This account of the APWU, its formation and some of its activity, provides evidence about the union formation process in contemporary Rhodesia and highlights the many difficulties facing 'unregistered' unions. The position facing the APWU has been additionally complicated by the settler -

colonial political economy of the plantation system. Employers have resolutely opposed union formation. The State has backed them in this policy.

There are also many other rural workers whose problems have not been dealt with by the APWU. The union has had limited resources and has had to try and concentrate them to best effect. It has thus had little to do with the condition of workers on African owned Purchase Area farms and of wage - workers in the Tribal Trust Lands. As the dislocation of the 'traditional' socioeconomic formation has proceeded, under the penetration of commercial relations in peasant agriculture, so the difficult situation of these workers has come to the fore. Until 1973 these groups did not engage APWU attention. Undoubtedly this will become a more permanent issue.

It is possible, though not certain, that the contemporary political re-alignments which are taking place in Southern Africa (especially Rhodesia) may assist the APWU in pursuit of its objectives. However, the emerging pattern of agricultural unionism cannot be easily predicted. What is more or less certain, however, is that protections for workers are desperately needed in rural Rhodesia, and will be whatever the political complexion of the future.

Duncan Clarke
Dept. of Economics
University of St. Andrews
Scotland.

BOOK REVIEW :

VERITY S. CUBITT AND ROGER C. RIDDELL:

THE URBAN POVERTY DATUM LINE

IN RHODESIA

During the last few years, and particularly since the labour unrest in Natal in 1973, the term 'Poverty Datum Line' has become familiar to the South African public. Unfortunately, however, it has not been well understood, and before appraising the book under review it would be as well to attempt to clear the semantic confusion which exists.

PDL studies in Southern Africa originated in the work of Professor Edward Batson in Cape Town in the late 1930's. The authentic PDL study in the Batson tradition is designed to measure the *extent of poverty* in a community; it does so by comparing the income of each house in a sample with a PDL calculated separately for each individual household. By adding 50 per cent onto the PDL of a household, that household's 'Effective Minimum Level (EML) is obtained. The PDL and EML then measure different levels of poverty. To the best of our knowledge the last such study in South Africa was that conducted by ourselves among East Rand Indians in 1969. Although some of the studies which have appeared since 1973 have used the term 'PDL', they have tended to be aimed at assisting in wage-setting. To this end, variations on the PDL theme were introduced by the Bureau of Market Research (BMR) with its concept of 'Minimum Subsistence Level' (MSL) and 'Humane Subsistence Level' (HSL), and the University of Port Elizabeth (UPE) with its 'Household Subsistence Level' (also abbreviated HSL). More recently, researchers from the BRM and the University of Natal met in Pretoria and reached a general agreement with regards to methodology and terminology; a new term, 'Minimum Living Level' (MLL) would be used in studies orientated towards the determination of wages, while the term 'PDL' would be confined to poverty studies undertaken in conjunction with household income studies. The fact that 'PDL' was substituted by

new terms was significant; it indicates that there were differences in methodology and, perhaps most important, that the researchers are not undertaking poverty studies.

The study by Miss Cubit and Mr. Riddell is need-orientated - it sets out to calculate the minimum income required to satisfy the minimum income required to satisfy the minimum consumption needs of families of different sizes. There is no attempt to cost more than the basic needs and thus no EML is calculated.

It is not, therefore, a PDL study in the traditional sense of the term - it makes no attempt to measure the extent of poverty. In fact it is more akin to an MLL study. Yet the authors in discussing the problem of naming the study (p.14) reject the idea of a new tag and chose to use 'PDL' because it is better known. We appreciate the difficulties facing the authors but although they correctly point out (p.14) that the public are confused as to the details of the PDL, they themselves contribute to the confusion surrounding the use of the term. In Chapter 1 they trace the development of the concept of the PDL, and maintain (p.4) that up to the time of Batson 'PDL studies can be seen as a clear development of the first studies on poverty conducted in Britain'. However, they go on to state that 'recent PDL studies in South Africa have tended to complicate our understanding both of what the PDL is supposed to be measuring and what it is meant to establish' (p. 4). They correctly state that the aim of the PDL is to assess the extent of poverty, but in almost the same breath they then quote the BMR study to the effect that it is not a poverty study. By its own admission, therefore, the BMR did not undertake a PDL study, yet this is one of the 'recent PDL studies in South Africa' which the authors criticise! On p.4 and again on p.14 they state that the PDL and MSL apparently describe the same concept - this despite the fact that the first MSL study of the BMR made it quite clear that it was not concerned with poverty and that it included additional component items.

The confusion which undoubtedly exists must be blamed not on the academics, who have their objectives clear, but on journalists and businessmen who have latched onto the term 'PDL' without a proper understanding of either the concept or its mechanics. To accuse South African academics of confusing the issue, as the authors do, is without justification.

The authors also state (p.4) that a previous publication by one of the present reviewers (*P.N. Pillay: A Poverty Datum Line Study Among Africans in Durban, 1973*) distinguished between the Primary and Secondary PDLs. This is not strictly true; Pillay (p.2) mentions the distinction but at no time does he calculate a Primary PDL and in fact (p.24) states that the distinction between the two levels serves no useful purpose. This distinction was, however, made in the work of Batson and others who followed him.

These criticisms notwithstanding there is much in Chapter 1 that is pertinent. Of particular importance is the discussion on p.6 relating to the construction of PDLs for different race groups. Many people find such an exercise abhorrent but, as the authors state, as long as institutional constraints on a racial basis (such as segregated residential areas) are present in a country, such exercises are valid.

The PDL usually consists of the following items: food, clothing, fuel and lighting, accommodation, transport and taxation. These are the only items which are regular and obligatory. The authors, however, make no provision for taxation and subsume cleansing materials in two items known as 'personal care and health' and 'replacement of household goods'. In addition, they include two further items, viz., education and the provision of post-employment consumption.

In Chapter 2 they calculate 'PDLs' for families of different size in Salisbury; in the following two chapters they do the same for Bulawayo and Fort Victoria respectively. These three chapters

afford a useful comparison of two cities and a small town and give the lie to a not uncommonly held view among the public that there can be such a thing as a national PDL. Regional differences in respect of the availability and popularity of certain foodstuffs, commodity prices, rental and transport costs, etc., are clearly illustrated. However, there is a great deal of repetition in these comparative studies which tends as a consequence to be tedious. The same is true of the summary chapter- was it necessary, for example, to repeat on pp. 116-117 the tables previously shown on pp. 53, 83 and 104? The authors could merely have referred to them in the text, and this summary as well as Chapters 3 and 4 could have been shortened.

There is little that is new in their discussion of the calculation of food, clothing, fuel and lighting, transport and accommodation costs, although it is always interesting to see the particular problems facing them in different areas and the way in which they adapt their methodology.

The difficulties inherent in attempting to arrive at an estimate for items which are not regular and obligatory are well illustrated in the case of 'personal care and health' (pp. 32-33). The methodology here involves so many guesstimates that its value is questionable.

In our opinion the authors' real contribution is to be found in their discussion of education and the provision of post-employment consumption.

On pp. 46-47 they make a powerful case for the inclusion of education costs. The most important aspect here relates to whether there are minimum educational qualifications necessary to obtain urban employment. According to the authors the minimum requirements for obtaining such jobs in Rhodesia are rising rather than falling; school-leavers with only a primary education find it increasingly difficult to obtain a job and the authors, therefore, base their method of calculation on government policy which is to provide

secondary education for a half of all pupils who complete their primary schooling.

The book makes a strong case for making provision for post-employment consumption, i.e. for retired couples. They mention the conditions under which urban workers might retire to rural areas, but realistically assume that they will continue to live in urban areas. In making their calculations the authors enlist the aid of a life insurance society; even then the difficulty of estimating a realistic monthly contribution is shown. Some provision for post-employment consumption is clearly necessary if no old-age pensions are provided; the authors do not state what the position is in Rhodesia but in South Africa, were such pensions are provided, this would not be a necessary item. This illustrates that the sort of calculation which might be necessary for one country are not necessarily applicable to other countries.

An attempt is also made to assess the 'PDL' costs for unmarried men. This is not the first such attempt but nevertheless represents a departure from the normal disregard of them; most studies concentrate only on households. This is an extremely useful discussion, covering the different needs of married and unmarried hostel dwellers, the adaptations which have been made in calculating the specific requirements of unmarried men, and the rural ties represented by cash remittances and expenditure on visits home. They point out that the concept of the unmarried man is short-term in nature; these men require to save for labola payments and the 'PDL' figure is an underestimate of their consumption needs.

One further statement of the authors deserves some attention. On p. 13 they appear uncritically to accept the findings of the British Parliamentary Select Committee on South African Wages that the EML should be the recommended minimum wage level. Leaving aside the conditions which obtain in South Africa, it is surprising that a Rhodesian study should make no reference to the problems

inherent in minimum wage regulations in less developed countries. The nearest that the book comes to mentioning this is in the Preface where it is emphasised that the study is not one of income requirements for individual wage-earners. So far so good. But it is equally important to mention, in a study of this nature, the adverse effects which such regulations might have on employment creation; these have indeed been mentioned in many recent works on LDCs, i.e., in the International Labour Office series on unemployment and by Professor Hans Singer of the University of Sussex who has in fact redefined dualism in terms of those with and those without jobs. This is one of the basic misrepresentations of the PDL concept, i.e., its adaptation for wage-setting purposes. It is measures such as the MLL which are really intended as guides to wage setting.

But, one might ask, if the PDL is not used as a guide to wage-setting, what is its practical use? Is the game worth a candle? The answer lies in its use as a measure of poverty. Many countries have constructed an official poverty line. However, subsistence measures of poverty, of which the PDL is a good example, have come under increasing criticism as being inadequate. Rather, poverty should be viewed as relative deprivation. In this respect, are we comparing urban Africans with the rest of the urban population or with rural Africans? We would argue that there are elements in both these comparisons which should be considered. For example, low-income urban Africans certainly suffer relative deprivation in comparison with urban Whites, but they may also be relatively deprived if they cannot afford to participate in certain traditional customs. Thus it has been argued that the EML, together with a deprivation index, should be devised as a measure of poverty (G. Maasdorp and A.S.B. Humphreys: *From Shantytown to Township, Juta, 1975*). The PDL is, of course, the basis for calculating the EML.

The authors point to two aspects which are also very relevant in South Africa, viz., first, the need for surveys of urban African dietary patterns, and second, the need for a comparative study of urban

and rural areas. The University of Rhodesia intends to undertake such a comparative study and we look forward eagerly to its publication.

The book contains an appendix showing various dietary tables as well as a useful bibliography.

Despite the above criticisms and reservations, we regard this as a useful book. The authors have been meticulous in their calculations and have paid more attention than usual to small items. This book is a welcome addition to the poverty / wages debate in Southern Africa.

Gavin Maasdorp

Nesen Pillay

Dept. of Economics
University of Natal

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