

# **SOUTH AFRICAN LABOUR BULLETIN**

## **CONTENTS:**

**Economic Growth and Workers**

**Analysis of Laws Controlling  
Labour Movement**

**Problems of African Unions**

**MAY, 1974**

**Vol. 1 No. 2**

## **ERRATA**

Please read first paragraph on page 5 before first paragraph on page 4, and last paragraph on page 4 before copy on page 6.

SOUTH AFRICAN LABOUR BULLETIN.Vol. 1No. 2APRIL, 1974.

Published by THE INSTITUTE FOR INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION  
P.O. Box 2103, Durban.

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CONTENTS:

Comment: 1. TUCSA and the African Workers	. . .	Page 2
2. The Unions and the Universities	. . .	" 3
Is Economic Growth Beneficial to Workers?		
	Alec Erwin . . .	" 7
Comment on British Parliamentary Sub-Committee Report		
	Foszia Fisher . . .	" 10
Recommendations of the Report	. . .	" 14
Control of Movement and Employment of African Workers		
	Dudley Horner . . .	" 20
The Post Office Workers' Strike .		
	Peter Hudson . . .	" 35
The Problems of African Unions .		
	Linda Ensor . . .	" 39
Book reviews:		
Richard Hyman: "STRIKES"		
	Foszia Fisher . . .	" 49
Michael Buraway: "THE COLOUR OF CLASS ON THE COPPER MINES: FROM AFRICAN ADVANCEMENT TO ZAMBIANISATION"		
	Alec Erwin . . .	" 52
I.I.E. NEWS . . . . .		" 59

**COMMENT 1: TUCSA AND THE AFRICAN WORKERS.**

Relations between Black and White in South Africa are, if nothing else, bedevilled by mistrust. Again and again Black South Africans have been let down by whites. Whites can no longer demand to be trusted as of right. They have first to deliver the goods.

It is against this background that the dispute between the KwaZulu government and a leading TUCSA spokesman has to be seen. In Natal about 10,000 African workers are organised in four unregistered unions. These unions get little co-operation either from employers or from the government. Under these circumstances they have approached the KwaZulu government on a number of occasions to intervene on their behalf. The KwaZulu government has co-operated fully. Its interventions in the labour field have always been at the request of the workers. This relationship has now been formalised by the founding of a Trade Union Advisory and Co-ordinating Council (TUACC) which liaises between the Unions and the KwaZulu government. Thus, at the request of organised African workers, KwaZulu spokesmen are kept informed of their opinions, and in fact reflect these opinions on labour matters.

The fact is that, rightly or wrongly, African workers in Natal do not as yet trust the motives of TUCSA, and this is not altogether surprising. TUCSA does not have a particularly good record in this regard. Under government pressure it has expelled all its African unions. Since then it has made statements in favour of the unionisation of African workers, but it has still not delivered the goods. It may well be that there has been a change of heart within the TUCSA unions in the last few years, and we sincerely hope that this is the case. But representatives of some of the more conservative and whiter unions in TUCSA still seem to be thinking in terms of granting African workers second class union rights. It is scarcely surprising then, that African workers, and those that they have requested to act as their spokesmen, remain suspicious.

We feel that co-operation between TUCSA and the new unregistered African unions is of crucial importance to both parties. To further this co-operation TUCSA needs to understand and to attempt to allay the suspicions of African workers. This cannot be done by polemics, with those whom many African workers recognise as their spokesmen. It can only be done by concrete aid

from TUCSA, and such aid has also to be given in a spirit of humility, as that which is owed as of right by the most privileged workers in South Africa to the most exploited of their fellow workers. Africans in South Africa resent paternalism above all things, and it is paternalism which, rightly or wrongly, they have come to expect from TUCSA; Perhaps African workers have now become over-sensitive, but the fact is that these are their feelings, and TUCSA spokesmen should take them into account if real co-operation is to be brought about.

COMMENT 2 : THE UNIONS AND THE UNIVERSITIES.

Every year in South Africa hundreds of University graduates go into management. If a young personnel manager with a degree in Business Administration is involved in helping management to defeat a strike he is not usually described as a "student". Yet if a University graduate or former University student takes a job with a Trade Union he or she is still likely to be described months or even years later by the Press or even by other Trade Unionists as a "student", who should not be occupying his or herself with such matters. To a certain extent this reflects a reality. After all we all know that the University is supposed to be a management preserve. It is not for the sons and daughters of workers, nor is it to serve the interests of the working classes. So when the order of nature is suddenly upset and a handful of ex-University students decide to work for the Unions, it is to be expected that employers and their political spokesmen should be horrified.

But it is sad that some Trade Unionists also seem to have come to take submission so far granted that they also have to look for peculiar ulterior motives behind such behaviour. After the banning of four Durban Trade Unionists, three of whom had at one time in their careers been at University, but had been working full-time for workers' organisations for over a year, one Cape Trade Unionist is reported to have commented: "Why does Harriet Bolton have to bring in White students to educate her workers? There are many people with degrees in her industry. Why doesn't she use them?" Apart from the fact that the four were not students and were not educating garment workers, but organising workers in textiles and other industries, it is also quite unlikely that there are University graduates of any colour employed as workers in the garment or any other industry. University graduates, whether they are Black, White or Brown, almost invariably join management or take professional jobs. As a result they neither join Unions nor understand what Unions are for, nor take any positive interest whatever in Unions. To our knowledge there are not more than half a dozen University graduates involved full-time at any level in Union work in South Africa today.

University students do have several disadvantages. They tend to be young, inexperienced, and impatient. They also often think that they know more than they actually do. Most University students, Black or White, come from a middle class background in which they have had no experience of sustained and unpleasant work. University is a temporary place, and they tend to think in temporary categories. They insist on changing the world by next Friday, and when it remains the same often do not have the stamina to go on trying. As a result they are very good at starting things, but not very good at carrying them on, and usually terrible at finishing them. In a Labour movement where all struggles are slow, and organisation must be thorough, this can be very dangerous. Also they often do not try to understand the sensibilities and perhaps prejudices of the people that they are working with. By their unconscious youthful arrogance they can offend people and slow down the Union's organising work.

All these things can happen. But they do not need to happen. Students themselves can guard against these dangers, and older and more experienced people with whom they are working can also help them to avoid them. If this happens, then students can be useful. Sometimes they can even introduce new ideas, but more obviously, they can help Unions with basic research work, and perhaps also with some organisational tasks. But, since students have a very short attention span, it is probably best to make sure that the things that they are given to do, at least at first, are short term projects.

University graduates who come into the labour movement are quite a different kettle of fish. They are people who have a wide range of well-paid jobs open to them. If they choose poorly paid and exhausting union jobs it is only because they are highly motivated and have sense of social duty. They are also older and more mature than students, as well as being better educated. Such people are likely to be reliable and efficient workers. It seems to us that such people can make a valuable long term contribution to the movement, whether directly as organisers and officials, or indirectly by offering training and educational services. \*

At the moment TUCSA has one full-time education officer to run programmes for the 180,000 TUCSA members, as well as for approximately one million African workers. With such a staff-student ratio TUCSA's own programmes, or for that matter, the programmes run by the I.I.E., the Urban Training Project, and the Worker's Education Project in Cape Town cannot but be inadequate. The

But have Universities, graduates or students anything to offer to the Trade Union movement? Can anyone who has not actually been a worker really understand the problems of workers, talk to workers and help them to organise? This is a question which cannot be answered with an easy yes or no. Also, University lecturers, University graduates and University students should not all be lumped together in one category. They are different people with different skills and different interests.

Members of University staff are obviously not going to have the time or the inclination to "organise" workers in their spare time. But they do have special skills which can be of use to the Trade Union movement. Employers have an advantage in any negotiating situation through their virtual monopoly of knowledge. This monopoly can be at least partly broken by research. Management spends hundreds of thousands of Rand annually on research into better ways of manipulating workers. Trade Unions need research into better ways of outwitting Managers. There exists a fear that what happens at Universities is "academic" and therefore not really of use to "practical" people. This is nonsense. Nobody does research by sitting in an armchair theorising. Any "academic" book is the product of the shared practical experience of many people.

Of course researchers and writers often produce results that are useless. But they are useless not because the work is "academic" but simply because it is bad research.

Of course it is important to have some knowledge of the problems faced in specific situations, for then it becomes easier to uncover in the wide range of other people's experience what is relevant to this immediate situation. And for this it is important that there should be close contact between unionists and academics.

Academics can help workers organisations through research and also through their teaching and writing, by helping to explain to a wider audience the problems faced by workers. The example of University-based Poverty Datum Line studies shows how effective this work can sometimes be. Not nearly enough research of this kind is being done. South African Universities still are a management preserve. But closer ties between individual academics and the Trade Union movement can help to overcome this, and should be encouraged from both sides.

need for worker's education could only be completely satisfied by an institution as big as any of South Africa's major Universities. In this situation it is vital to work for a better understanding between Unions and Universities. Trade Unions need all the help they can get. They must encourage interest from Universities, graduates and students, even if it is at times misguided. In this, both sides should be willing to learn.



### IS ECONOMIC GROWTH BENEFICIAL TO WORKERS?

The term economic growth has positive connotations and is conventionally viewed as a desirable goal. The South African Economic Development Programme for 1970-75 accepted that "...a 5,5% growth rate in the G.D.P. (Gross Domestic Product) represents the maximum target rate which the Republic can finance from its own resources and can cope with, given its supply of manpower." Many criticised this rate as being too low and pointed to the "miracles" of Japan and Brazil where rates in excess of 10% have been achieved in recent years. The fact of the matter, viewed as lamentable by the majority of commentators, was that the average rate of growth between 1970 and 1973 was fractionally under 4% in real terms (14,2% at market prices).

However, exactly what do we mean by economic growth? In particular what are its implications for the worker in South Africa? What follows is a layman's guide to economic growth designed to discourage uncritical acceptance and to encourage questions. In talking of economic growth some fundamental assumptions are made and it is these that are worth exploring.

Our measure of economic growth is the increase in final goods produced between one year and the next expressed in monetary terms. This monetary measure will be corrected for price increases to avoid the price inflation of a constant bundle of goods masquerading as growth — this corrected measure being referred to as growth in real terms. What has been done, therefore, is to use money prices as a unit of account or as a means of aggregating the wide variety of different goods, both capital and consumer, that are produced.

So if twenty more Rolls Royces, valued at R10,000 each, are produced this year, their effect on economic growth will be ten times that of twenty new schools costing R1,000 each. This clearly presents a problem since with money prices as our yardstick, a school is in some sense one tenth as valuable as a Rolls Royce. Is this a valid ranking?

Economists theorise that the price of a good is determined by the interaction of consumer demand and the costs of production or supply. So in the case of a Rolls Royce all the people involved in its production, both past and present, will have received an income in the form of wages or profits, if they are among the fortunate few who own capital. Since consumers were prepared to pay the R10,000 needed to make those wage and profit payments, the price in a sense represents the value of the Rolls to society. Consumers wanted the car and were prepared to pay the costs of producing it. This apparent fairness was reinforced by the belief that the forces of competition would ensure that the profits earned were not excessive and that the wages paid rewarded the marginal worker for the physical product he added by his effort.

Rational choice on the part of people and the forces of competition caused the system to establish prices of goods, these prices being a reflection of the goods value to society. Given all this the fact that one Rolls Contributed ten times as much to economic growth as one school need not really be questioned.

But what happens if the forces of competition are not working so well since there are large monopolies in the economy? One can no longer accept with equanimity that profits are not excessive nor can we accept that the consumer was prepared to pay the price he did since choice is now restricted. It remains true that the consumer may or may not buy the good, although the extent of freedom in doing so would depend on factors such as whether the good was a necessity or not or whether prevailing social norms placed pressure on the consumer to buy the good. Price as a reflection of value, therefore, becomes dubious.

However, even if we allow the forces of competition to work some serious doubts exist. As we have seen the consumer influences what is produced by agreeing to pay a certain price for a good. But the ability to pay depends on the income earned. The only reason that Rolls Royce are produced is that there sufficient rich men to pay for them. Now income can be earned as a wage (or salary) by selling one's labour or received from the ownership of capital in the form of profits (ownership of land and/or buildings would give rise to rent). So a person's earning assets are either labour or capital or both. The distribution of such assets therefore determines the distribution of income.

We could see the ability to pay as a process of exercising a money 'vote' as to what should be produced which gives the rich more 'votes' than the poor. That there are so many motor cars produced in South Africa compared to say clinics and so many medical specialists rather than para-medics can be largely attributed to the simplified analysis provided above. Some indication of the income disparities is provided by the following tables. The source of income reflects the ownership of assets.

Racial composition of the G.D.P. and the population in 1960.

	Whites	Coloureds	Asiatics	Africans
Percentage of population	19,3	9,4	3,0	68,3
Percentage of G.D.P.	76,5	4,2	1,6	17,7

## Other Income as a Per Cent of Work Income 1960.

Whites	Coloureds	Asiatics	Africans	All Races
119	12	67	19	83

Source: Income Distribution and Economic Growth in South Africa Vol. 1 p182; A.M.K.M. Spandau (Doctoral thesis) Grahamstown 1971.

The tables show a racial breakdown but it should be borne in mind that large income disparities also exist within racial groups.

So even if the forces of competition work then the bundle of goods produced is also determined by the distribution of assets and hence income in that economy. If we change this distribution we can expect changes in the bundle of goods produced. Economics provides no satisfactory way of evaluating these different bundles of goods against each other. Removal of the assumption of competition decreases the likelihood of any equation between price and social value. In addition monopolistic distortions will have an important effect on asset holdings and therefore income distribution.

How does all this relate to the worker in society? It has raised serious questions as to what is meant by economic growth. Economic growth measured in monetary terms says remarkably little about society's evaluation of the goods produced since money prices cannot be equated with value. In addition the interdependence between prices and income distribution means that the composition of the bundle of goods reflects the wants of a particular social structure, a structure within which the rich are relatively powerful and the poor weak.

It is both true and important that economic growth since it creates new products also gives rise to new income and in most cases new jobs. The important point discussed here, however, is that economic growth per se is not good. It is rather questions such as what products have been created and how do they affect society, who gets the new incomes and jobs? In South Africa with a relatively high level of unemployment it is also vitally important to know how many jobs were created since this has an effect on the income generated and its distribution. The capital intensive products demanded by the rich do not necessarily give rise to the jobs demanded by the poor.

It is the discussion of these questions and their possible answers that is needed not the ostensibly enlightened clamouring for economic growth in South Africa.

Comment on the House of Commons Sub-Committee Report

The House of Commons sub-committee report on "Wages and Conditions of African Workers Employed by British Firms in South Africa" is a sober and well-researched document.

It shows that at the end of 1971 direct long-term private investment in South Africa in the sterling area was valued at £1,150M. During the period 1965-71 new British direct private investment averaged £45M per annum. Three-quarters of this, however, was made up of reinvested profits. During the same period total profits averaged £74M per annum. 41% of this, just over £30M, was remitted to the United Kingdom. Thus remitted profits to the United Kingdom are greater than the amount of new money which flows into South Africa from the United Kingdom. South Africa is not the most profitable area for British investment, but after the tax profit rate of 10.5% compares favourably with the world-wide average of 8.7%. The amount of investment in South Africa represents 9% of the total of British investment overseas.

The most significant point about these figures is that they indicate the extent to which South Africa has reached the point at which it can generate its own capital. Only 13% of total annual average gross domestic fixed capital formation is provided by foreign investment, and, if the British figures are representative, this amount is well covered by the value of the profits on the capital. In cash terms, if South Africa stopped the repatriation of profits this would make up for any loss resulting from any cessation of investment. However, what is probably very important is the extent to which foreign investment is accompanied by the introduction of new methods of production, specialised skills and specialised manpower. Thus more important than the total amount of investment may be the specific strategic role which it plays in the development of the economy, and the nature of the sectors in which it is concentrated. Unfortunately the report does not make such a qualitative analysis so it is not really possible to assess the significance of British investment for the South African economy.

It is evident from the report that British firms do not, on the whole, take any special interest in working conditions in their South African subsidiaries: "None explicitly denied responsibility for the wages and conditions of African employees in their subsidiaries, but almost none had laid down a precise wage policy..which its subsidiary was required to pursue. None of these admitted to being in disagreement with

the management of the subsidiary on the matter of wages and conditions of employees". (p.21). It seems clear that British firms are interested solely in the rate of profit of their subsidiaries, and that, provided this remains satisfactory, they are happy to leave local management to adopt "traditional" South African employment practices. This is, of course, scarcely surprising, but it does refute the argument that foreign investment is likely to have some sort of "civilising" influence on South African employers. It is also evident that many of the companies, and perhaps also their South African subsidiaries, were ignorant of South African law, specially with regard to Trade Unions for Africans, since many witnesses stated, incorrectly, that trade unions are illegal for African workers in South Africa (p.25).

In discussing conditions for African workers, the Report deals very clearly with the PDL, refuting in passing a number of the main arguments used by employers against the PDL. It then goes on to discuss some of the possible obstacles in the way of improving African wages. Here the Report makes two very important points. The first point is that African wages at present make up a relatively small percentage of total costs: "In the manufacturing sector as a whole the African wage bill was approximately equal to 5% of sales, 12% of value added, and 25% of the total wage bill" (p.69). In most of the companies investigated the wage and salary costs of the smaller white work force exceeded African wage costs. Hence African wages could be increased quite dramatically without a proportionate increase in costs.

The second important point is that the low productive capacity of African workers alleged by some firms may well be the fault of bad management, rather than the fault of the workers themselves: "Companies which complain of the quality of their labour might examine the quality of their management" (p.88).

The full recommendations of the sub-committee for a Code of Practice for United Kingdom companies with interests in South Africa follows this article. It is obviously a desirable code for all companies to adopt, but, in our view, it does have one major weakness. This is the relatively low priority which it appears to give to the question of African unions. One of the criticisms which has been levelled against the report in South Africa is that wages in other British subsidiaries in other countries are often much lower than they are in South Africa, and

that it is unrealistic to attempt to view wage levels in South Africa from the perspective of wage levels in Britain. These two arguments contradict one another to some extent, since if wage levels in Britain are not relevant to judging wages in South Africa, then neither are those in Sri Lanka. But this type of argument does indicate a problem. Wage levels in any country are to some extent at least determined by the general level of the development of that country's economy. If the country is poor, then workers cannot expect especially high wages. Therefore, firstly, wage levels can only be judged in relation to other incomes, and to the general level of development, in the country under consideration. Wages in Britain or in Hong Kong are equally irrelevant to judging wages in South Africa.

But this also means that an abstract figure such as the PDL or the Minimum Effective Level is also not all that reliable a guide. If the economy can afford more, then the PDL is unjust; if the economy can afford less, then the PDL is utopian. The Report is careful to argue that in fact African wages in South Africa are unjust in South African terms, and in particular in relation to White wages. It also shows that wages can be increased in the direction of the MEL.

The fact that present wage levels in South Africa are below the Minimum Effective Level remains a powerful moral argument for raising wages to that level, which the economy is in any event sufficiently developed to afford. But the real argument should revolve around workers' rights. Wage levels are set as the result of implicit or explicit bargaining between workers and employers. Within a capitalist system the wages can only be "fair" if the two parties have equal rights and resources in this bargaining process. If the legal framework in which bargaining occurs favours the employers, as it does in South Africa, then wages will be set low, and all employers will be enjoying exploitative profit rates. Thus the only way in which morally defensible wage rates can be arrived at within a capitalist system is by giving workers collective bargaining rights - the right to union organisation and the right to strike - so that they can use these rights to force the employers to pay the kind of wages which the economy can afford. Any set of recommendations to employers should aim mainly at getting them to recognise and bargain with African workers, and to refrain from calling on the state to intervene against their workers, to enforce low wages. To put it another way, British employers should not necessarily be expected to pay the same wages everywhere, but they should be expected to grant their workers the same rights as they would have in Britain. The Report should have spelled this out in much greater detail, with special reference to ways in which employers in South Africa could

legally bargain with African Trade Unions. The call to increase wages is a call for a unilateral act of charity on the part of the employers. The call to recognise and negotiate with Unions is on quite a different level. It is the demand that the workers should be allowed to participate in setting wage levels, and that they should be given a certain amount of power in the enterprise. Improved wages will be one consequence of this. But, just as important, there will also be an improvement of the status and dignity of the workers in the factory and in the society.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REPORT.CODE OF PRACTICE.

## Guidelines for United Kingdom Companies with interests in South Africa.

1. Government policy is summarised in a statement of the Prime Minister made in March 1973: "I hope that British companies in South Africa would recognise their own interests in establishing a name as good employers, i- particular by keeping abreast of the current practices and opportunities for advancement". These guidelines are intended to assist companies in achieving and maintaining good employment practices.
2. In general, companies should ensure as a minimum that as far as possible the management attitudes and practices adopted by their affiliates in South Africa in relation to their employees are consistent with and can bear examination against the attitudes and practices adopted towards their employees in the United Kingdom.
3. British companies having business interests in South Africa or contemplating operations there should ensure that they have a thorough knowledge and understanding of their African workers, and of the economic, social and political forces which govern their lives. There is an abundance of unskilled labour available in the Republic, so that the operation of market forces cannot be relied upon to ensure adequate wages for the unskilled. Because Africans lack the normal trade union rights and there are very few African trade unions, there can be no certainty that collective bargaining will ensure that African wages are adequate. Considerable differences exist in the average earnings from employment of Africans and Whites in all sectors of the economy. Government laws and regulations on the movement, residence and employment of Africans place great power in the hands of employers over their African employees: dismissal may entail the loss of rights to urban residence and employment. The migrant labour system, which has been subject to criticism not only for its economic but also its social consequences, is in many cases legally imposed on companies and their African employees. Various legal, institutional and customary obstacles to equality of opportunity and to the advancement of Africans into better and higher-paying jobs are encountered. The setting in which their subsidiaries and associates operate should be well understood by British companies. It is because of this setting that the present Guidelines have been produced.
4. The impression that employers are effectively prevented from improving the wages or conditions of service of African employees is mistaken. The South African Government has expressed itself in favour of increases for Africans, and it is not opposed to the



training and advancement of Africans provided that White workers do not object. It has spoken against the resistance of White trade unions to African advancement. Many South African employers have set progressive goals, as evidenced by statements of an employers' association in favour of trade union rights for Africans, and the minimum wage objectives of various associations. Progressive views have been attributed to some White trade unions. The great shortage of skilled and educated manpower which prevails in South Africa is generally acknowledged to have produced a greater incentive to, and possibility of, African advancement than existed in the past.

5. It is right for British companies to accept a responsibility in relation to the wages and conditions of African employees in the their business interests in South Africa, in so far as the companies have the power to control or influence these wages and conditions. The wages and conditions of African employees are an important issue, on which the parent company is advised to formulate certain broad policies. The Main Board director responsible for industrial relations should be no less concerned with industrial relations in South African affiliates than the financial director is with their financial policies.

6. To increase their impact in South African subsidiaries and associates, it is important for parent companies to develop good relationships with them. These can be fostered through periodic visits to the Republic by the Chairman and others in the parent company. Personal visits also enable the parent company to acquire knowledge of wages and conditions in the affiliate. Main Board representation on the South African board is to be recommended. To monitor and assess an affiliate's policies, information should be required regularly on wages and conditions expressed in relation to the policy objectives of the British board.

### Industrial Relations

7. In the absence of African membership of trade unions it is advisable to establish, or continue with, effective works committees of African employees as a means of consultation, communication, and training in industrial relations. To be effective, works committees should be democratically elected, should meet regularly and frequently, and should be able to discuss wages and conditions of employment. Practices which hinder the development of African unions should be avoided. African trade unions are not unlawful, and, although they possess none of the normal trade union rights, there is nothing to prevent a company from recognising and negotiating with a trade union representing African workers. The lawful development of collective bargaining with African employees should be encouraged.

### The Poverty Datum Line.

8. Poverty Datum Line (P.D.L.) and Minimum Effective Level (M.E.L.) estimates can provide a helpful guide to the minimum wages which employers should pay in the Republic. Companies should ensure that there is available an up-to-date P.D.L. and M.E.L. measure appropriate to their lowest-paid workers and their dependants, in each location of operation. Where P.D.L. and M.E.L. estimates are not available, a company should commission experts to undertake such studies, or it should join with other companies - either through an area employers' association or an industry employers' association of British companies (e.g. U.K.S.A.T.A.) or through sponsorship of a national survey - to produce appropriate estimates.

9. The estimators of the P.D.L. regard it as a measure of the barest minimum required to support a family in African living conditions, assuming the wisest allocation of expenditure. A wage equal to the P.D.L. cannot therefore be thought of as a fair one. Companies are urged to accept the M.E.L. as the target for minimum wages, and to establish a timetable for achieving it.

### Fringe Benefits.

10. There is a case for companies to provide benefits in kind for employees if the benefits would otherwise be provided inadequately or not at all. Where companies provide board and lodging for migrant workers, much can be done to raise the quality of life of these employees. Companies should be familiar with the living conditions of their migrant workers and ensure that high standards of provision are achieved and maintained; but they should be mindful of the living conditions and needs of their migrant employees' dependents.

11. Assistance with family housing is impeded by laws relating to freehold and residence, but in the case of employees commuting from nearby Bantu homelands there is a possibility of a company helping Africans to acquire their own homes. Much can be done to further the education of African employees, their children and the African community generally: assistance can range from literacy programmes to bursaries for university education. The high demand for education among many Africans makes this a particularly valuable form of assistance. Companies are in a position to ease the problems and insecurity of Africans resulting from restrictions on their movement, residence and employment, by providing advice and legal assistance when problems arise. Firms should determine whether African employees and their dependents have need of medical services in addition to those provided by the State; and if so, to meet the need. Companies should ensure that African employees are covered by a pension scheme which is comparable in benefits to that

of White employees but suited to the needs of Africans, e.g. migrant employees should not be disadvantaged by broken service. By providing free or subsidised meals, companies can ensure that low-paid employees are nutritiously fed.

12. In the provision of fringe benefits, companies should attempt to redress the disadvantages encountered by Africans in the availability of social amenities and services. Many of the benefits in kind recommended above would be helpful not only to employees but also to employers, by strengthening employee loyalty and reducing labour turnover. There are many institutions and organisations concerned with the welfare of Non-Whites to which companies could make financial contributions.

#### Migrant Labour.

13. Companies should adopt a policy towards migrant labour based not only on the consequences for the company of the migrant system but also on an understanding of the consequences for Africans.

14. There is much that companies can do to see that their employees have a legal right to reside with their families within commuting distance of their work. For instance, there is reason to believe that Government enforcement of migrant employment in some industries is not entirely inflexible. A consideration of importance in choosing a location for a new plant is that some locations permit more use of stable, family-based labour than others. Advice and legal assistance can be given to African employees in relation to the "pass laws".

#### Wage Structure.

15. A company's wage structure should be determined irrespective of race, according to principles of job evaluation. "Equal pay for equal work" will be meaningless so long as Whites and Africans are not employed in the same jobs or grades. Payment of the rate for the job irrespective of race can accelerate the pace of African advancement in times of shortage of skilled labour, because it can give White workers and unions a sense of security against the undercutting of their wages.

16. It should be an objective of company policy to reduce the differential, often large, between the average pay of White and African workers. This can be achieved not only by a narrowing of the wage structure but also by a change in the racial structure of employment.

17. Controlled prices or competitors' practices may hinder British-affiliated companies in their improvement of wages and conditions. It is possible to reduce or overcome these difficulties, as is

shown by those companies which have exerted their influence on their competitors (for example, in employers. associations) to raise wages throughout an industry, or on the authorities to introduce or raise statutory minimum wages or to raise controlled prices.

#### African Advancement.

18. Companies are urged to press hard for the advancement of Africans into more qualified and better-paid jobs . Adherence to the mores, custom and practice of South African society may mean that opportunities for African advancement are overlooked. It is important that racial discrimination be avoided not only by those at the top of the company but also right down the managerial line. There may be need for a programme to change the attitudes of White supervisors of African employees.

19. There is reason to believe that where legal job reservation exists, it can be avoided by obtaining exemptions, and by careful and diplomatic handling of White workers and trade unions. There is no law preventing a Non-White from being in authority over a White, but a company would have to negotiate with the Government, whose general policy is to prohibit such appointments, and possibly with White workers or unions. In order to ensure equality of opportunity among the races, companies should be prepared to meet the costs involved in duplicating facilities where separate facilities are required by law.

20. Companies which complain of a lack of aptitude or ambition on the part of African workers may find that the problem lies with their own management. Where lack of education prevents African skill-acquisition or promotion, the remedy lies partly in a company's own hands. Moreover, an individual company can raise the educational quality of its labour force by offering attractive pay and conditions.

21. It is important to see African workers as individuals with potential for skill-acquisition and career-development. Wherever the scale of operations permits, companies should establish training departments to provide training for African workers, and to develop their full potential. Where training cannot be provided within the firm, the use of external training courses should be explored. Companies can attempt to overcome the problem that Africans cannot be apprenticed to White artisans, either by means of a training school for artisans or through training on-the-job.

22. Companies should recognize that to recruit skilled workers from Britain and other countries for employment in South Africa can retard the pace of African advancement. Where that is the case, companies are urged not to use White immigrant labour but to

but to endeavour to recruit from the Non-White potential within South Africa and to develop that potential by means of training.

#### General Advice.

23. Companies may feel that to follow some of these Guidelines would be damaging to their profitability. But there are profit advantages in being a good employer, and it is in a company's wider interest to maintain a good reputation. The ability to pay basic wages above the relevant P.D.L. now, at least to all adult male employees, should be regarded as one of the minimum conditions for maintaining or establishing a business interest in South Africa.

24. Given the particular circumstances of British companies operating in South Africa and the continuing interest in their performance, companies should conduct a regular review of these matters at Main Board level so that they may be in a position to satisfy shareholders seeking information. Companies should bear in mind that disclosure followed by scrutiny is an essential characteristic of a free society which no one should fear and from which much good may come.

25. The British Embassy in Pretoria, the British Consulates-General in Johannesburg and other centres, and the Department of Trade and Industry in London are able to give detailed information and advice on P.D.L. and M.E.L. estimates and on the organisations and individuals making these estimates; on the training and advancement of Africans; and on other aspects of wages and conditions. They can also give details of organisations in South Africa which provide information and assistance on these subjects, and on laws relating to Africans. Companies will find further help in the Fifth Report of the Expenditure Committee of the House of Commons, 1973-74, and in the evidence given to the Trade and Industry Subcommittee in 1973 (House of Commons papers 116 and 21-1V of 1973-74).

CONTROL OF MOVEMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

REGISTRATION FOR EMPLOYMENT, LABOUR

BUREAUX AND MIGRANT LABOUR

White, Coloured and Asian Groups

South African labour legislation is a complex unity controlling both movement and employment opportunities for workers. This paper is intended primarily as an introductory guide to legislation affecting White, Coloured, Asian and African labour in the Republic. The interlocking nature of such legislation creates difficulties in pin-pointing the significance of particular acts. For the purposes of this article, however, it would perhaps be best to begin with legislation governing the entry of men and women on to the labour market.

The main aim of the Registration for Employment Act (Act No. 34 of 1945), which complements the Unemployment Insurance Act, was to make it compulsory for all workseekers to register at employment offices. Persons employed in agriculture and domestic service were excluded from the scope of the Act. Although provision was made for its extension to cover African workers - after consultation with the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development - it has never so far been so applied. On 1 January 1947 it was applied to all White, Coloured and Asian workseekers in the main industrial areas and has since been extended to certain large rural areas.

It is compulsory for the specified classes of workseekers in the areas to which the Act has been applied to register for employment and to notify the employment officer of continued unemployment. Every workseeker must be issued with an unemployment card and employers must notify the employment officer of the engagement or termination of services of all persons over the age of fifteen years.

Principals of schools are required to register White, Coloured and Asian school-leavers over fifteen years of age if they are bona fide workseekers, i.e. scholars and students of any educational institution need not be registered. The official statistics in this regard would include apprentices.

In the census year 1970 the following numbers, of juveniles, probably only a third or less of people in the age group, registered (the figures include first registration and re-registrations which might inflate the totals slightly):

<u>White</u>		<u>Coloured</u>		<u>Asian</u>	
<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>
12 288	5 005	6 277	5 506	766	194

Of these juvenile workseekers 89,2 per cent of the White boys, 69,7 per cent of the White girls, 60,5 per cent of the Coloured boys, 49,4 per cent of the Coloured girls, 47,5 per cent of the Asian boys and 36,1 per cent of the Indian girls were placed in employment by the Department of Labour (c.f. Department of Labour R;P; 83/1971).

The act extended the establishment of public labour exchange. (c.f. Van der Horst, 1949; Bureau of Census and Statistics, 1960).

### Africans

#### General

The system of influx control with its severe restrictions on African residential rights (both in urban and rural areas) is inextricably linked with the rights of the African to seek employment. People "superfluous" to the labour needs in the common area are either "removed" to the homelands or endorsed out of urban areas and tens of thousands of Africans have been so displaced every year for some fourteen years or more. It is difficult to quantify the actual number but various "guesstimates" have been made (c.f. Table 5).

### Reference Books

In terms of the Bantu (Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents) Act (Act No. 67 of 1952) every African

(boy or girl) must apply for a reference book when he/she turns 16 years of age. In the case of foreign Africans an identity document must be obtained rather than a reference book. It is an offence for an African of 16 years and over not to be in possession of a reference book which should contain particulars of name, identity number, ethnic group, marital status, domicile, employment, payment of tax, etc. In practice these details are often far from complete and various omissions can have serious consequences for the individuals concerned.

### Residential Rights and Workseekers in Urban Areas

The position of Africans in the urban areas within the common area, is governed by Section 10 of the Bantu (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act (Act No. 25 of 1945, as amended). This provides for different categories of residential rights, familiarly known as 10(1)(a), (b), (c) or (d) rights.

In terms of the law as amended up to 1964, an African may visit an urban area for up to 72 hours without obtaining a special permit, but may not remain there longer unless:

- (a) he (or she) has lived there continuously since birth;
- (b) he (or she) has worked there continuously with one employer for at least ten years, or has lived there lawfully and continuously for fifteen years, and has thereafter continued to live there, and has not been in employment outside the area, and has not been convicted of a serious offence;
- (c) he (or she) is the wife, unmarried daughter, or son under the age of eighteen years of an African in one of the categories mentioned above, ordinarily resides with him, and entered the area lawfully;
- (d) he (or she) has been granted special permission to be in the area.

Sections 10(1)(a) or (b) confer a certain measure of security upon Africans who qualify to be in an urban area in terms of these subsections. The most coveted stamp in a reference book is either the one which states that the owner is: "permitted to be in the prescribed area of....in terms of Section 10(1)(a) of Act No. 25 of 1945", or "permitted to be in the prescribed area of....in terms of Section 10(1)(b) of Act No. 25 of 1945". This means that the owner of the reference book is entitled to remain



in that prescribed area provided that he does not lose that precious right by committing any one or more of a wide variety of misdemeanours or crimes or simple acts of omission in some instances.

People with 10(1)(a) or (b) rights may change their jobs provided that they register with the labour bureau when they become unemployed. A man with these rights may be the tenant of a house in an African residential area. He could not, however, accept employment in any other prescribed area and retain his right to domicile in the area in which he was registered until recently. *f*

In terms of the Bantu Labour Act (Act No. 67 of 1964), which consolidated and amended an earlier 1911 Statute, and more specifically in terms of the Bantu Labour Regulations (Government Notice No. R. 1892 of 3 December 1965) a system of local labour bureaux under the management of municipal labour officers operates in the major urban areas within the common area. Where no local labour bureau has been established a district labour bureau functions. Every employer of African labour in a municipal area is required to register with the local labour bureau although there are exceptions for licensed recruiting agencies, discussed later. Every African legally permitted to be in the area under Section 10(1)(a), (b) or (c) of the Urban Areas Act 1945 who has attained the age of 15 years must register with the local labour bureau, as must workseekers and the unemployed.

No African may be employed if both he and the employer are not registered with the local labour bureau. Casual labourers or independent African contractors may work and may be employed if they have Section 10(1)(a), (b) or (c) rights in the area, if the municipal labour officer permits them to do so, and in the case of men, upon payment of a monthly fee of 20 cents, if they present their reference books to the said officer for signature each month, and provided that suitable accommodation is available in the area. Africans with Section 10(1)(d) rights may also be granted permission to work in these capacities.

No African worker may be introduced into the urban area without prior permission and no employer may employ an African who is the signatory to a labour tenant's contract with another employer.

*f* The provisions of the Bantu Affairs Administration Act (Act No. 45 of 1971) may increase the mobility of African workers in certain towns.

Every employer of an African male must pay a monthly fee prescribed for the particular urban area in respect of each African male employed. The municipal labour officer is also entitled to charge the employer a fee of 25 cents for every African worker registered for employment.

Certain classes of Africans, including professional men and women, ministers of religion who are marriage officers, and certain categories of teacher and public servant are exempted from having to register provided they are lawfully in the area.

Employers must sign the reference book of every African in their employ every month and must notify the local bureau upon the engagement or termination of services of any African employee.

The "rights" which Africans enjoy under this Act are very tenuous and are in any event at the mercy of wide discretionary powers which may be exercised by the White authorities. Section 29 of the Urban Areas Act schedules a wide variety of instances when an African may be declared "idle" or "undesirable" whereupon he may be removed from any particular urban area to a place indicated by a Bantu Affairs Commissioner.

People with Section 10(1) (d) rights are subjected to even greater insecurity than the other categories of African town-dwellers in the common area. Like their confrères they are subjected to the procedures enumerated above, but municipal labour officers may either "endorse them out" of the area if they are unemployed or not registered as workseekers or refer them to an "aid centre" or to the district labour officer who could induce them to take up employment in the rural areas. It is the 10(1)(d) people together with recruits of officially-licensed employers' agencies who properly constitute the migrant labour force. Some 10(1)(d) people would not fall into the category of "oscillating migrants" i.e. people who work for a stipulated period in an urban area but who are obliged to return to their homelands annually on the termination of their contracts.

There are in fact two types of contract workers:

- (1) those who were in an urban area before the Bantu Labour Regulations (Bantu Areas) of 1968 (Government Notice No. R. 74 of 29 March 1968) came into operation on 1 April 1968; and
  - (2) those who entered an urban area subsequently.
- The position of the former is marginally better than that of the latter. The different conditions which prevail are:

1. (a) The service contract lasts as long as the African continues to work for the same employer;
  - (b) The worker may go home on leave provided:
    - (i) that his employer does not sign off his reference book but endorses it with a statement that the employee is on leave for a specified period;
    - (ii) that he returns to work for the same employer; and
    - (iii) that he stays away from the urban area of not more than six months;
  - (c) unlike 10(1)(a) and (b) people but like his post-1968 confrère he may never be the registered tenant of a house in the urban area;
  - (d) his wife and children may not live with him in the area unless the wife is already residing lawfully in the area;
  - (e) he may apply for a lodger's permit to reside in someone else's house (except in Cape Town);
  - (f) a single man must live in a "bachelor" hostel or on his employer's premises;
  - (g) if such a worker has been continuously in an area and has worked for the same employer for ten years, he qualifies for Section 10(1)(b) rights.
2. Post-1968 Regulations African contract workers are subject to the following conditions;
    - (a) they can only enter into a service contract for a maximum period of one year;
    - (b) their reference books must be signed off at the end of each yearly contract;
    - (c) they must return to their homeland at the termination of every service contract;
    - (d) they can never be the tenants of a house in the urban area and must always live in "bachelor" hostels;
    - (e) they can never change their category of work;
    - (f) they cannot bring their wives into the area.

The official attitude to African workers in the common area in terms of the segregationist Homelands policy is thus that they are "temporary", "casual" or "guestworkers" - a viewpoint most succinctly expressed by the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development in the following statement: "We do not regard the Bantu working in South Africa - even if they have always been working here, for whatever length of time, even if it is from the day they are born until the day they die - as being present here in an entrenched fixed capacity; we regard them as being here in a casual capacity" (cf Hansard 14 9th May 1972 Column 6879).

The effect of these laws and those to be outlined below is to facilitate the realization of the conflicting interests on the part of the whites. On the one hand they view with mistrust the weight of African members attempting to control the influx of labour into the towns and cities. On the other hand the manpower requirements of the economy necessitate a plentiful supply of Black labour. That is there is a tension between the maintenance of White privilege and economic growth which it is the aim of these laws to overcome.

#### Workers in "non-Prescribed" Areas

In the rural areas in the common area the Bantu Labour Regulations of 1965 established a system of district labour bureaux under the management of district labour officers. African workseekers and employers in these areas must register with the district labour bureaux and provisions similar to those outlined for local labour bureau apply.

The presence of Africans on farms in rural areas within the common area is controlled by Chapter IV of the Bantu Trust and Land Act (Act 18 of 1936) which has been amended several times (c.f. Horrell 1971 : 46 - 48). This legislation was aimed at discouraging the system of African labour tenants on White farms and of squatters who form labour pools on some farms. The number of labour tenants was limited and squatters had to be registered annually against a progressively increasing registration fee. The registration of labour tenants and squatters is governed by the Bantu Labour Regulations of 1965. By mid-1970, new labour tenants' contracts had been prohibited in the whole of the Orange Free State, in 41 districts of the Transvaal, 3 of the Cape, and 23 of Natal. The Africans concerned are encouraged to become full-time farm workers as existing contracts expire with a probable loss of the right to keep cattle as a consequence.

Africans who refuse to become farm labourers may be permitted to accept work in country towns, but their families must go to a resettlement village in the homelands and they have to dispose of their stock.

Tens of thousands of Africans have been removed from the common area in terms of these policies and laws. It would appear from the annual report of the Department of Bantu Administration and Development for the year 1971 (R.P. 41/73) which states "during the year more and more stress was laid on the settlement in the homelands of non-working Bantu from the White areas in the Republic" that the tempo of these removals may be accelerating. (c.f. Table 5).

#### Supply and Registration of African Labour from the Homelands

Over and above the system of controls outlined above, the Bantu Labour Regulations (Bantu Areas), proclaimed under Government Notice R. 74 of 1968, extended the system of labour bureaux to all homeland areas. The Transkei which already had its own system was excluded as was the township of Sebokeng near Vereeniging. These additional regulations provided for the establishment of tribal, district and territorial labour bureaux. As the 1971 report of the Department of Bantu Administration and Development (R;P; 41/73) states: "Although the bureaux are established in the homelands, this Division of the Department (the labour Division) remains responsible for matters of policy concerning the bureaux, for the co-ordination of their activities and for handling complaints of the Bantu employees and the White employers". It must also "ensure that labour is made available in an organised manner in accordance with demand, that labourers are properly identified, that they are registered at a labour bureau and are recorded in the Bantu Reference Bureau". Among the more normal activities of the Labour Division of the Department is the maintenance of an Occupation Register of more highly-qualified African workers who are classed in the categories: Professional, Academic/Administrative, Technicians, Tradesmen, Operators. By 1971 a total of 11 000 Africans had been included in the register.

In brief, the 1968 regulations provide that every African domiciled in the area of a tribal labour bureau who is dependent on employment for a livelihood, shall, within one month of attaining the age of 15 years or of becoming unemployed, register as a workseeker with the tribal labour bureau in his area. All workseekers are classified in a particular category of employment. Upon requisition, available vacancies are offered and, if

accepted, contracts are entered into for periods not exceeding a year. Certain categories are exempt from registering as work-seekers but no African workseeker may leave his homeland unless he is registered at the tribal labour bureau.

The employer pays a fee of R1 for every African worker whose contract is attested at a tribal labour bureau. This is utilised by the African authorities concerned and not the Republican Government. The employer is responsible for the cost of transport between the homeland and the place of work but may recover such costs from the worker concerned. While labour contracts may not exceed one year (or 360 shifts in the case of an adult, 270 for a worker under the age of 18 years) an employer may use the "call-in-card" system to re-employ particular workers. He applies at the local labour bureau in the area in which he is located for such a card which is presented to the tribal labour officer in the homeland. On the payment of a fee of R1 the worker is permitted to return to the same employer.

All labour contracts must be attested before the African worker starts work and he may be required to submit himself to a medical examination. The registration of a contract can be refused on certain medical grounds some of which protect the worker and some of which are concerned with public health.

### Recruiting Organisations

The Bantu Labour Act of 1964 governs the licensing of private recruiters of African labour and Chapter IV and V of the 1965 Bantu Labour Regulations provide specific controls in this regard. According to the 1971 report of the Department of Bantu Administration and Development it is policy "to allow as far as possible only organisations which recruit specific workers for the group of employers concerned on a non-profit basis, and not to allow private recruiters, who are remunerated per worker recruited". The latter it is hoped will disappear in due course. The major recruiting agencies represent the mining industry and agriculture. Among the former are Mine Labour Organisations Ltd. and the Natal Coal Owners' Native Labour Association. There are also organisations which recruit African labour for employment on White farms, some of whom have been identified by Wilson (1972: 18, 19, 21, 25). It is of note that while the annual reports of the Department of Bantu Administration and Development contain statistics on recruitment by licensed agencies connected with the mining industry, similar figures are not provided of those recruited for farmers.

Some idea of the scale on which this sort of recruitment takes place is afforded by the annual report of Mine Labour Organisations Limited for the year 1972. This covers the recruitment of African workers in most of the gold mines and certain coal and other mines and presents the following picture:

<u>Area from which recruited</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per Centage</u>
Cape	65 750	15,87
Natal	4 479	1,08
Orange Free State	6 673	1,61
Transvaal	10 275	2,48
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>87 177</b>	<b>21,04</b>
Lesotho	78 492	18,94
Botswana	17 471	4,22
Swaziland	4 273	1,03
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>100 236</b>	<b>24,19</b>
East Coast	97 713	23,58
Tropicals	129 207	31,19
	<b>414 333</b>	<b>100,00</b>

The reliance of the mining industry on foreign migrant labour is rather vividly illustrated by these figures which indicate that although the employment of native-born Africans on these mines rose marginally by 655 between 1971 and 1972, it dropped as a percentage of the total labour force by 1,36 per cent. Foreign Africans constituted 78,96 per cent of the labour force at the end of 1972 compared with 77,60 per cent at the end of 1971. There was a significant increase of 9 841 mineworkers from Lesotho and a very marked increase of 21 447 from tropical territories.

It would provide an interesting comparison if similar data on agriculture was provided by official sources.

Further data on registered African workers given below present a fuller picture of the extent of migrant labour in the Republic. The system has been severely criticised both in the Republic and beyond its borders. Its evils have been subjected

to rigorous analysis by Wilson (1972 a) who has provided fairly exhaustive coverage of many of its facets, and most of the major churches in South Africa have roundly condemned it (c.f. Wilson, 1972 a: 263-6). Wilson has suggested a phasing out of the system of migrant labour with a target being adopted for the gradual dismantling of the legislative framework upon which it rests.

### Registered African Workers in 1972

According to the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development (c.f. Hansard 16, 29 May 1973, Question Columns 943-5) the following numbers of African workers were registered in each category of labour in 1972.

	<u>Local Labour Bureaux</u>		<u>District Labour Bureaux</u>		<u>Total</u>
	<u>South African Nationals</u>	<u>Foreign Africans</u>	<u>South African Nationals</u>	<u>Foreign Africans</u>	
Agriculture, etc.	89 612	4 783	312 906	13 299	420 600
Manufacturing	569 558	10 834	32 133	941	613 466
Mining and Quarrying	46 475	4 182	54 569	47 153	152 379
Construction	271 647	5 951	38 408	2 576	318 582
Wholesale and Retail Trade	214 581	3 119	5 780	51	223 531
Financial Institutions	16 003	265	567	-	16 835
Private Transport	34 126	383	2 015	10	36 534
Accommodation A Catering Services	91 256	2 014	3 356	18	96 644
Other Private Business Ser- vices	47 246	610	2 666	141	50 663



	<u>Local Labour Bureaux</u>		<u>District Labour Bureaux</u>		<u>Total</u>
	<u>South African Nationals</u>	<u>Foreign Africans</u>	<u>South African Nationals</u>	<u>Foreign Africans</u>	
Public Corporations	41 669	2 694	7 002	374	51 739
South African Railways and Harbours	67 927	4 903	10 857	91	83 778
Government Departments, etc.	130 524	1 798	9 471	91	141 884
Local Authorities	119 133	2 460	8 829	36	130 458
Semi-Government Organisations	10 146	152	1 511	18	11 827
Domestic Servants	561 798	8 746	27 869	174	598 587
Other	117 772	2 483	2 773	22	123 050
	<u>2 429 473</u>	<u>55 377</u>	<u>520 712</u>	<u>64 995</u>	<u>3 070 557</u>

Included in the figures given above were 357 527 African workers registered at tribal labour bureaux in the homelands. It is difficult to obtain a reasonably accurate reflection of the number of oscillating African migrants upon which the economy in the common area depends so heavily. Obviously people with Section 10(1)(a) or 10(1)(b) rights form part of the settled work force in the common area. Those with Section 10(1)(d) rights who arrived in an urban area before 1 April 1968 would also form part of the more settled work force and would not necessarily be oscillating migrants. The picture is further complicated by those Africans in the employ of the State and teachers and other exempted classes of workers some of whom may "move to and fro" on a regular basis between the common area and the homelands either because of legal and/or economic constraints or from choice.

What can be said with some certainty is that, on the available statistics for 1972, some 357 527 Africans from the homelands, plus some 120 372 foreign Africans, plus some 87 177 South African nationals and some 327 156 foreign Africans recruited for the mining industry, could have been classed as temporary migrants. In other words, 892 232 African workers or over a quarter of those attested for service or recruited by licensed recruiting agencies fell into that category. This figure would probably be considerably increased if the hard data on the other recruiting agencies were publicly available.

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TABLE 5.

AFRICANS REMOVED FROM THE COMMON AREA

1957 - 1971.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>From "Black Spots" Mission Stations, etc.</u>	<u>From the Common Area</u>		<u>African Traders, Industrialists, and Professional People.</u>
			<u>Rural</u>	<u>Urban<sup>1</sup></u>	
1957/8	140	-	140)	-	-
1959	)	- )	)		
1960	)	)	)		
1961	) <sup>2</sup>	) <sup>2</sup>	)		
1962	)	)	) <sup>4</sup>		
1963	51 123)	51 123)	)		
1964	4 577	4 577	)		
1965	4 728	4 728	)		
1966	4 440 <sup>3</sup>	4 440 <sup>3</sup>	)		
1967	98 843	8 750 <sup>3</sup>	86 076)		17
1968	61 656 <sup>5</sup>	17 937	23 730	19 882	107
1969	119 619	23 264	44 089	52 128	138
1970	64 576	6 151	21 177	37 219	29
1971	48 697	11 083	14 553	23 026	35
	454 399	132 053	189 765	132 255	326

Source: Annual Reports of the Department of Bantu Administration and Development (formerly Department of Native Affairs) for the years 1958/9 to 1971. U.G. 51/1960, R.P.78/1964, R.P. 41/1965, R.P. 14/1966, R.P. 18/1967,

R.P. 24/1968, R.P. 48/1969, R.P. 39/1970, R.P. 58/1971, R.P. 44/1972.

#### NOTES:

1. The annual reports of the Department did not include figures for removals from urban areas within the common area until 1968. It may be reasonable to infer from the average of the figures given from 1968 to 1971 that roughly a further 297 576 Africans have been removed from urban areas, giving a grand total of some 751 975. If this assumption is correct, then, an average 53 713 Africans a year, or 147 a day, have been removed from the common area in roughly fourteen years. On the official, published statistics tabulated above 32 457 Africans in the average year, or nearly 89 a day for fourteen years, have been removed. These figures differ from those of Horrell (1972) who has taken other factors into account. They are in any event, very conservative.
2. This is a cumulative total including the preceding years.
3. These are estimates based on the number of families given in the reports for these years. A family has been taken to consist of 5 units - a conservative estimate.
4. This is a cumulative total including preceding years.
5. The official report contained an error, corrected here.

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### POST OFFICE STRIKE

At 7.30 a.m. on Wednesday, May 1st, 500 Coloured and African Post Office workers from the Old Fort Road and Mobeni depots employed as telephone installators and cable-layers refused to begin work. They informed Mr. N.G. Black Regional Director of Posts and Telecommunications for Natal that they would not recommence work until their salaries (they are paid by the month) were raised in accordance with a written assurance made to them in October last year that their salaries would be substantially increased in April of this year. They argued that their April pay packets contained only very minimal increases of between R2,00 and R3,00. One of the workers expressed the general dissatisfaction when at a meeting towards the end of the strike between some 350 Coloured and African workers and Louis Rive, the Post Master General, he asked, "Can you drive a motor car without petrol? We are hungry, we have no strength and our families are dissatisfied".

At about 11 a.m. on Thursday, May 2nd, about 200 African Postal workers at the Durban Central Post Office stopped work. They recommenced work later the same day after having extracted a promise from Mr. Black that a decision concerning the allayment of their grievances would be taken within the next few days. On Friday and Monday however, groups of Postal workers from the Central Post Office struck sporadically and on Tuesday morning at least  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the C.P.O. workers were on strike.

These workers offered the same reason for striking as that offered by the Engineering workers from the Mobeni and Old Fort Road depots, namely, the assurance made in October that their wages would be drastically increased was not fulfilled and consequently they were still forced to live in gripping poverty. All the striking Post Office workers, Africans and Coloureds, put forward a uniform demand of R120-00 per month.

On Friday morning the workers stationed at the Old Fort Road and Mobeni depots arrived at their respective depots at the usual time but upon learning that the senior Natal Post Office officials were unable to give them an immediate undertaking on their pay demands, decided at 8.30 a.m. to return home.

On Monday May 6th, at 8.45 a.m. Mr Black and his deputy, Mr Brown, addressed about 150 workers at the Old Fort Road Depot. They told the workers that unless they returned to work immediately the Post Master General would not attend to their demands. The workers however refused to return to work. In spite of Mr. Black's ultimatum Mr. Louis Rive, the Post Master General, arrived in Durban in the early afternoon and later addressed about 350 workers at an open-air meeting at the Mobeni workshops.

He told the workers, "I know you are experiencing hardships, but you are not doing things the right way. There must be no repetition of this strike. .... I undertake to approach the Government within two weeks and will recommend what the Post Office can afford to give you. However, the Government must decide how much you can have and when you will get it."

On the next day, Tuesday the 7th, however, at least half the workers were still on strike. Early on Tuesday morning about 80 workers grouped themselves into a column at Umzinto railway station and marched a short way through Durban to the Central Post Office. There were altogether about 150 striking workers at the Central Post Office and about 250 at the Old Fort Road Depot. A smaller number of workers at Mobeni were also still out on strike.

On this occasion the workers were told by the police and by Post Office officials that their group presence constituted a "disturbance" and that they must either return to work or else return home, in which case they would be regarded as "deserters." A "deserter" from the employ of the Post Office is given a month in which to return to work or otherwise be dismissed. The bulk of the workers at all three depots chose to return to work immediately. According to the Post Office only four resigned and four deserted.

However it seems that not all the workers who absented themselves on the day on which the majority resumed work were treated as deserters. It has been confirmed by the Post Office that six workers from Mobeni and Old Fort Road were fired, and we have heard of six other cases of dismissal. A few days after the strike some twenty workers were summoned by a Post Office official and accused of being "agitators". They were warned that unless they conducted themselves "properly" in the future they would be fired. It appears that no one has as yet been charged with violating the Bantu Labour Relations Regulation Amendment Act, which forbids strikes by workers in essential services.

Mr. Rive claimed that, "there was clear evidence of outside influence. This was not a spontaneous demonstration." He added, however, "I conceded that in common with all other post office workers they had a case for a wage increase." The workers to whom we spoke laughed at the idea that there was outside interference in the

strike. Certainly no concrete evidence has been produced to support Mr. Rive's allegation. The striking workers claimed to be earnings salaries of from R39 to R65 per month. The Post Office was not willing to release salary figures, but the lower figure of R39 was reported in the press without being denied. The workers were demanding approximately R120 per month, which is only a little above the current Poverty Datum Line for Durban, estimated by the Department of Economics at Natal University to be R110,56 in March 1974.

These salaries also compare very unfavourably with those earned by Whites, as published by the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs in March 1973:

<u>Annual Salary</u>	<u>No. of Whites</u>	<u>% of Whites</u>
R600 or less	0	0
R601 to R1200	793	1,9%
R1201 to R2400	22294	54,6%
R2400 plus	17761	43,5%

These salaries are also very low. They were increased by a 15% pensionable allowance in April 1973. The African and Coloured workers nevertheless could be suffering from "relative deprivation" both in relation to their white fellow workers and in relation to other black workers.

As far as we can gather, African and Coloured Post Office workers have been contemplating strike action for some time. When, in October 1973 all workers at the three depots were issued with forms which they understood to be an assurance of a large salary increase commencing in April 1974, they decided to wait until April, and then to reassess the situation. Some of the workers say that they were expecting an R27 increase. Others were uncertain, but seemed to have been expecting some such large amount. All were confused by the document, which was in English, contained inscrutable calculations, and was laced with accounting jargon. If any attempt was made to explain the document to the workers it certainly failed. The increases which they received in April were of the order of R2-R3 per month, and so fell far below their expectations. They demanded an explanation of the Post Office management, and their claim that they had been promised larger increases was denied. The workers claim that the officials implied that they, the workers, were lying. This only aggravated their original sense of grievance. They felt that they had been first deceived and then insulted. Not even the Post Office management care to deny that there was no communication between themselves and the workers. From October 1973 to May 1974 they were, it appears, ignorant of the fact that many of their workers were awaiting a large salary increase which they believed had been promised to them.

According to our information there were no in-factory committees of any sort functioning at any of the three depots at the time of the strike. The workers at the Old Fort Road Depot said that there had been a Works Committee, but that the most forceful and articulate member, who was also the Chairman of the Committee, had been transferred. The workers suspect that he was in fact transferred because he was articulate and unimpressed by managerial authority. In any event the workers did not seem to have much faith in such committees. According to an African worker from the Central Post Office the management had invited the workers there to form a Committee. But the workers had refused. He said that the workers think that such a committee is very insecure, and that they will in fact get into trouble from management if they raise contentious issues. Thus it is possible that even if there had been a Committee in operation communication would not have been very effective. However, it could scarcely have been any worse.

There are two further points of interest worth noting about this strike. The first point is that it was a joint strike by African and Coloured workers. In these branches of the Post Office they do the same jobs for the same wages, and therefore reacted together as a group. Our impression was that there was a very close relationship between the different races during the strike. There were no Indian strikers, but as far as we could make out this was because there were no Indians earning the same salaries.

The second noteworthy point is that this was the first strike in the strike wave of the last 18 months to affect government employees. It is particularly significant in that the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs, Mr. Marais Viljoen, is also Minister of Labour. Nevertheless the strike was handled with considerable caution, and the Post Master General himself flew down from Pretoria to address the workers. Although he made the traditional allegations about agitators his speech was relatively conciliatory. Admittedly the strikers were finally forced back to work by the threat of dismissal and/or police action. But the important point is that the Post Office granted at least some legitimacy to the strikers. This may indicate that the Government is beginning to come to terms with the fact that strikes are a normal part of life in an industrialised capitalist society, and should be treated as such.



## The Problems of African Trade Unions

From a study of the state's attitude towards African or open trade unions, African trade unions referred to in the paper are not necessarily racial unions and are usually, in terms of their institution, open to all races thereby implicitly challenging registered trade unions which are explicitly racial. It is obvious that recognition will not be granted until African trade unions are firmly established. This is an important point which helps to deflate the optimism evoked by businessmen who prophesy that such recognition is 'inevitable'. There is a long hard road along which definite signposts have to be passed before this legitimate destination is reached.

Certain sets of problems are encountered in the development of African trade unions which are quite different from those of registered trade unions. Undoubtedly one of the most psychologically inhibiting factors (for members, officials, and employers) is the lack of statutory recognition. It is worth adding here, however, that the advantage of statutory recognition is often exaggerated. But even taking this into consideration, African trade unions are limited in membership, unconfident in their own capabilities, and isolated from the life-blood of trade unions; the negotiation table. To be able to discuss guidelines for the future development of African trade unions within the repressive environment in which they operate, the specific problems have to be analysed, and possible solutions proposed.

To return to the issue of legality which is dominant in the minds of most people considering African trade unions, until quite recently it has been assumed by workers and management that African trade unions are illegal. This attitude, which is a result of the banning of trade union leaders, is just beginning to disappear now that the pros and cons of African trade unions have been discussed in the press, at employer conferences, and raised into prominence by the British Trade Union Congress visit. A recent survey carried out by Market Research Africa found that fifty-one per cent of all businessmen favour the formation of integrated Black and White trade unions, while more than a quarter would prefer separate trade unions for Black workers. Despite apparent widespread acceptance at one level, recognition of existing African trade unions is not in sight, and their present legal standing has to be examined. There are several important points which can be made about the legal status of African trade unions:-

- (1) African trade unions are voluntary associations which are unincorporated, but which function via a constitution in the manner in which a voluntary association can act in South African law.
- (2) African trade unions may sue and be sued.
- (3) The victimisation clause of the Wage Act covers African trade union representatives in the undertaking. It has been widely assumed that African trade union representatives would have to be members of works committees or liaison committees to have legal protection in terms of the victimisation clause of the Bantu Labour Relations Regulation Act of 1953 and the Wage Act has been ignored.
- (4) If employees and employers constituting an industrial council agree, then African trade unions can legally attend industrial council meetings.
- (5) The issue of stop order deductions for African trade unions has not been finally resolved i.e. there have not yet been any prosecutions of employers making deductions from the wages of African workers for trade unions. The matter seems to be governed by the over-riding provisions of the Bantu Labour Act No.67 of 1964. Section 10 of the Act reads as follows:

'16. (1) Any employer who, save with the written consent of the Director or an officer of the public service authorised by the Director in writing to give such consent, or when otherwise authorised thereto by any law or by order of any Court -

- (a) pays the whole or any part of the wages due to any Bantu employed by him to any person other than such Bantu;
- (b) withholds the wages of any Bantu employed by him or any portion thereof without reasonable and probable cause for believing that such wages or portion thereof is not due; or
- (c) makes any deduction from the wages of any Bantu employed by him,

shall be guilty of an offence.'

This section directly prohibits the payment of the wages of an African employee to any person other than the worker himself. This on the face of it would cover a deduction in order to make a payment to a trade union. It would also make deductions for pension schemes, provident funds, industrial councils, sick funds and many other legitimate funds illegal. The only possible conclusion can be that as usual South African law is observed in the breach, and in the absence of a firm conviction in terms of this legislation, stop order deductions for African trade unions should not be assumed to be illegal.

There is obviously a wide scope for further legal interpretation and guidance in respect of African trade unions, a field which has been totally ignored by academic lawyers and legal handbooks. It is also imperative that African trade unions can make use of lawyers who can fight test cases on many of the issues on which it is impossible to get clear legal opinions.

The development of African trade unions has to take into consideration firstly organisational problems, and then the problem of recognition by employers and statutory bodies.

(1) Workers' attitudes are the key to organisational capabilities. What African trade unions lack in terms of legal recognition has to be won through mass membership and organisational strength, factors which registered trade unions lack. The workers' attitudes towards the trade union are crucial to be able to build up large, solid, membership. Workers' attitudes are determined by the environment in which they live and communications which they receive. Crucial to the attitude of African workers to trade unions has been found to be: (i) the attitude of the employers - either repressive or progressive; (ii) the policy of homeland governments; (iii) experience of Coloured or White trade unions; (iv) indirect knowledge of the trade union movement through the press or radio. Attitudes are clarified when the African trade union makes propaganda on its behalf, but crystallises only during a dispute which can serve as a severe test for the trade union. Even where the workers are receptive, however, careful explanation of trade union policy and structure is needed.

Workers' attitudes to trade unions could possibly be changed by pursuing the following proposals; (i) a campaign to

clarify the issues of African representation for employers; (ii) requests to Homeland Governments to propagate amongst workers that Trade Unions are not illegal and that they have the approval of the Governments; (iii) publication of African Trade Unions including encouragement to African workers to join Trade Unions and the dissemination of information concerning benefits, for example - unclaimed compensation due to workers in the area. This could be achieved by means of careful handling of the press and also the radio if possible.

(2) Victimisation. Both direct and indirect victimisation by employers is being practised on the African Trade Union leaders. African Trade Unions are relatively new and weak thereby facilitating a repressive attitude on the part of management towards Trade Union members. Thus organisers have to operate in terms of a tactical approach. Following the death benefits which are being provided by most African Trade Unions at the moment, victimisation benefit seems the next obviously necessary benefit. A victimisation benefit issued between the time of giving and the reception of benefits from the Unemployment Insurance Fund, would be valuable but would also have certain disadvantages.

Firstly, those who have received victimisation benefits tend to become wards of the Trade Union, becoming disinterested in fighting for themselves. Secondly, the victimisation benefit becomes very expensive, if operated on a non-contributive basis. An alternative job, preferably with higher remuneration is always the best solution for victimised individuals. The successful transfer of a worker to a new occupation can also, through publicity, help to animate the morale of the remaining workers. However, in order to absorb cases of victimisation in this manner, a co-operative relationship with other registered and African trade unions is vital.

(3) Difficulties in maintaining membership. One of the major internal weaknesses of the African labour movement is the high proportion of paper membership. It is fairly accurate to say that at least 40 per cent of membership of any African Trade Union is not paid up membership, to within a fortnight; in older unions this is probably higher. Problems of membership maintenance arise out of other problems faced by the African Trade Unions; problems of stop order deductions, problems of the effective organisation of stop order deductions and problems of effective organisation. One can easily imagine the immense difficulties in collecting subscriptions in a situation where management is hostile, where there are a number of factories,

large distances, excessive overtime and different shifts. An analysis of the time consumed by African Trade Union organisers would probably demonstrate that 50 per cent of the working day is allocated to recruiting and collecting subscriptions, 30 per cent in meeting members and taking complaints and the remainder in office administration. Organisers have invaluable experience of the real problems by visiting the factories, but the frequency of such visits tends to result in the procrastination of dealing with other urgent organisational problems. For example, it is vitally important that the Trade Union in order to maintain membership can show results, particularly the successful resolution of a complaint, and this requires management recognition of the Trade Union.

(4) Financial control and the establishment of committees. Closely related to the difficulties of maintaining membership, is the problem of establishing effective committees which can determine union policy and exercise financial control. In African Trade Unions there tends to be an inverse relationship between centralisation and the difficulties faced on the periphery. The branch executive committee members are frequently inexperienced in committee procedure and in handling fairly substantial funds. But it is imperative that these committees exercise control over policy and finance as soon as possible. African Trade Unions as well as registered Trade Unions in South Africa tend to develop structures centred around the Trade Union Secretary. The Committees tend to be too uncritical toward expenditure and of secretaries who act without specific authorisation. They tend to trust the secretaries to an unhealthy extent.

This defect points to the necessity of revitalising the totally deficient training schemes for branch executive committees and secretaries. Perhaps the formation of local branches on the basis of the American model, would assist in decentralisation and the encouragement of initiative at the level of the undertaking. The executive of these locals could assume responsibility for factory meetings and the formulation of policy. However the effective operation of a local depends on workers knowing that they are guaranteed against victimisation. The exercise of financial control by committees is not only a matter of education. It needs a certain style of secretariat which is prepared to produce month to month comparisons of expenditure, details of cheques for specific items and other techniques to illuminate essential transactions without obfuscating the issue with too detailed an account.

(5) Active opposition from employers. The formation and rapid growth of membership of African Trade Unions is forestalled by the employers who use the works committee system for this purpose. Workers' representatives on works committees define their interests in opposition to those of the Trade Unions and its members. Doubt is instilled in the workers by the proliferate growth of works committees and liaison committees as to what constitutes an effective form of representation. In the absence of such institutions, they would perceive the Trade Union as the only effective instrument of representing their interests.

Associated with the extension of works committees has been the expansion of the "human relations" approach by management. Managers have been observed arriving at the factory earlier than usual in order to be present when organisers speak to the workers and to see which workers display an interest in the Trade Union. The initial introduction of the Trade Union is usually followed by an intensification of the "human relations" activity which assumes several forms. Management tells workers that they are available at all times to listen to the complaints of individual workers about wages and working conditions. Workers are also told that the minimum wages which the Trade Union is bargaining for is significantly lower than that which the firm can offer. This creates division amongst the workers, those having a potential for promotion being divided from the mass of low wage workers.

(6) Harassment by the Police. The Security Police scrutinizes closely the African Trade Unions. Former members of political organisations are disallowed to assume official positions in Trade Unions. Leadership in the factories are subjected to police action which, though fairly widespread, has as yet only been sufficient to establish a case against a secretary or organiser. The experience of police action or investigation against Trade Union officials has obvious effects on the willingness to engage in worker action and on worker morale. There is not much which can counter-act these effects other than helping workers to view police action as intimidation, and by limiting rumours of expected action.

(7) Problems of Recognition. De facto recognition of African Trade Unions by management is essential if Trade Unions are to be able to perform their functions. Recognition by management provided it is genuine would tend to reduce the adverse effects of legal lack of recognition. Given the increasing influx of African workers into industry and the fact that

they constitute the largest proportion of workers in all industry with the exception of the Western Cape industry, management is more likely to grant recognition to African Trade Unions at this stage than previously.

Recognition by management would entail the following practices:-

- (a) A guarantee against victimisation of union representatives in the firm;
- (b) Permission for union officials to enter the firm outside working hours at regular periods;
- (c) Acceptance of the principle that union officials have the right to deal with management concerning complaints;
- (d) Recognition of shop stewards as the true representatives of workers' interests and as the only legitimate person with whom to settle complaints;
- (e) Co-operation in the formation of systematic means of collecting union dues and/or subscriptions to benefit societies administered by the Union;
- (f) Acceptance of the principle that wage increases must only be given in consultation and through negotiation with the Union;
- (g) Acceptance of the principle that the Union is the body to settle disputes and not Government bodies;
- (h) Co-operation in developing social security benefits to be jointly administered by the Union and the employer.

Although acceptance of these principles is far from being granted in South Africa, (at most stage 1 has been reached by African Trade Unions), it is obviously in the interests of African Trade Unions to gain recognition as soon as possible. This poses the question of whether it is tactically better to approach the workers or management first. The latter seems to be best for the following reasons:-

- (i) Management is less antagonistic to organisers with whom they have met and who have explained their position. Organisers have to meet management at some stage and it is better if they do so first;

- (ii) Related to the first point, is the point that management has no excuse for accusing the Union of being irresponsible and provocative;
- (iii) Management may prove to be more co-operative than expected and may even grant access to workers;
- (iv) Management may provide useful data such as the number of workers in the factory, whether an industrial council controls the factory and details of existing benefits of which workers are sometimes ignorant or mis-informed;
- (v) Management can learn about the industrial relations system in South Africa and may respect the Union for being more informed than he is.

There are important reasons for not contacting management first. Management may attempt to seduce workers away from the Union by raising wages and improving conditions but this can be forestalled if workers are approached immediately after management has been contacted, or management may attempt to establish works committees through workers who have learnt about the union often correctly perceive this as a defence mechanism on the part of management. Management thereby subverts its own goals. It can also be argued that if the Union represents enrolled members which have been quietly recruited, its meeting with management would be more successful. Finally there is the danger that if recognition is granted too readily, it would be easier for better paid workers and favourites to assume leadership positions in the factory. This could engender a situation where members are dissatisfied, reluctant to pay their Union subscriptions and where they fight amongst themselves which is detrimental to the Union's negotiations for wage advances and better conditions.

The strength of the African Trade Unions is crucially affected by the attitude of the Department of Labour or the relevant Industrial Council. Some officials of the Department are interested in seeing that complaints are solved and that workers get their due. Such officials in the sections of the department dealing with Unemployment Insurance and Workmen's compensation are obviously invaluable.

The position of Industrial Council Officials is such that they could provide assistance to African Trade Unions in their development and in their attempts to gain recognition. African Trade Unions should request the permission of the



officials to accompany them to factories where there are wage disputes in which Union members are involved, to settle complaints or to help interpret new regulations of the Industrial Council to the workers.

Registered Unions can also provide crucial assistance in achieving degrees of recognition by the Industrial Council and by employers. When the registered Union together with the Industrial Council agent visit a factory, the official of the registered Union can request the presence of the African Trade Union official. This can markedly affect the attitude of the employers of the Union.

In terms of the prevailing statutory wage machinery, representations to the Wage Board provide an avenue for the greatest recognition of African Trade Unions. In the past the Wage Board has always been willing to listen to the views of African Trade Unions and has even encouraged representations.

The Botha Commission reported:-

"The Board is required by Section 11 to give interested persons an opportunity to submit representation to it. Individual workers are on the whole, not very helpful in this connection as they have little knowledge of the methods of wage fixation and as a rule are not able to gather information, whether statistical or otherwise, on a sufficiently extensive scale to be of use to the Board. Organised bodies of workers, including Native Trade Unions are, therefore, encouraged by the Board to appear before it, in preference to a number of individuals. Such de facto recognition of Native Trade Unions has become a regular feature of Wage Board Investigations."

The Trade Union concerned is more effective at Wage Board sittings if it has a direct mandate from the workers to negotiate for certain wages and changes in working conditions laid down by the wage determination. In the past well prepared representations and communication of the results to workers, has stimulated the growth of African Trade Unions.

We can conclude that the strength of African Trade Unions depends on a thorough comprehension of the relevant legislation and of tactics necessary in terms of that legislation, on the transcendence of organisational problems and on securing

recognition from employers, the registered Trade Union, the Wage Board and finally the State. Despite the overwhelming problems faced by African Trade Unions arising out of the peculiar position of African workers, there are also certain advantages which include the following:- (a) the fact that African workers comprise the majority of workers in industry, (b) the receptivity of African workers to institutions which facilitate their advancement as workers and as human beings and (c) the broad scope of membership which is possible outside the petty constraints of industrial demarcation.

It is not helpful to minimise the problems faced by African Trade Unions but neither is it precise to exaggerate the benefits accruing through State recognition.

Compiled from papers and discussions at an I.I.E. seminar in October 1973.

Book Reviews.

Strikes.

Richard Hyman.

Fontana Paperback.

As we all know, workers everywhere are happy with their lot. They enjoy doing the dirtiest, dullest and longest jobs in society. They are happy that they get the lowest incomes for doing these jobs. It is only when AGITATORS come along that there is any trouble. Agitators, who are usually communists or students, (and sometime, horror of horrors, both) can, with a flick of their forked tails, suddenly make the contented workers stop blessing their betters for being so kind as to employ them. Then the poor misled workers go out on strike, with no result other than getting higher wages, which they do not really need and certainly do not deserve. This, roughly, is what we are told when textile workers strike in Durban or miners strike in Britain. Strikes are caused by agitators. Ban the agitators, and everybody (except, presumably, the agitators) will be happy.

We all know that this is nonsense, don't we? No, we obviously don't all know it. Even those South African newspapers which have at last discovered that South African workers strike as a result of real grievances still diagnose "RED CANCER" (Natal Mercury editorial February 6th) when miners strike in Britain. People with privileges must believe in agitators, otherwise they must make the inadmissible admission that their privileges are unjust.

The agitator theory is of course an attempt by management to evade its responsibilities. But it is also more than that. It is a way of thinking about the world. It is the result of an inability to understand society sociologically. The American sociologist C. Wright Mills distinguished between personal troubles and social issues. When one man is unemployed, that is a personal trouble, and we might try to explain his unemployment in personal terms -- he is an alcoholic, or he is lazy, or something like that. When half a million workers are unemployed, it is a social issue, and we cannot explain it by looking at the characteristics of each individual. We have to look at the way in which the society is organised, and the way in which the structure of the society affects different groups in it. A series of strikes is just such a social issue, but the agitator theory is an attempt to explain it in personal terms. The theory results from a lack of what Mills calls the "sociological imagination", the ability to relate individual behaviour to social structure, and to understand that much individual behaviour is a response to tensions within the social structure. Because different groups have different positions in the social structure, they will have to cope with different kinds of tensions. It requires some sociological imagination to understand the problems faced by groups other than ones own. It is this

capacity that is lacking in people who blame all social problems on agitators.

Richard Hyman's book "Strikes" is an excellent example of the Sociological imagination at work. As such, it should be read by all South Africans interested in industrial problems. Even though it deals mainly with Britain it will help South African trade unionists to understand their own problems more clearly, and it will introduce managers to a world under their noses which they apparently do not know exists.

The book contains an immense amount of information and analysis in 74 pages, and I cannot hope to summarise it adequately here. Hyman begins by attacking the myth that Britain is especially strike prone, and that the strikes are the responsibility of bad trade union leadership. An important point which he makes here is that although trade union leadership may have a more coherent ideological critique of capitalism, nevertheless in terms of actual industrial action the membership is almost invariably more militant. Unions do not force unwilling workers out on strike. Indeed, it is much more usual for union leadership to try to prevent a strike. This is because the union leadership has an interest in preserving the organisation and in preserving the institutional bargaining relationships with the employer: "Concern for union security is likely to make the official particularly committed to the bargaining relationship with the employer, and thus particularly reluctant to take militant action where this appears to jeopardise relations. For the same reasons union leaders have a strong inducement to see and preserve the social legitimacy of unionism, and to accommodate their relations with governments and with employers nationally to this end. It is scarcely surprising, then, that the pressures toward caution and conservatism are normally so powerful" (page 82). This is a vital point to remember in the argument over African trade unions in South Africa.

The central part of the book is an analysis of the social causes of industrial conflict. Here he quotes with approval the following opinion: "The industrial worker, for the most part, works harder than he likes at tasks which are frequently arduous, usually monotonous, and sometimes dangerous. On the job he is nearly always subject to the direction of higher authority. His income is seldom sufficient to cover what he thinks his needs demand. The natural state of the industrial worker, therefore, is one of discontent." (page 125)

The most surprising thing about strikes is that anybody should be surprised that they occur. Hyman concludes with an invaluable chapter which considers the way in which "public opinion" is socially produced. He points out how the creation of anti-worker public opinion is made easier by the fact that, "since strikes involve initiative by the workers involved, the natural assumption is that they must be the aggressors" (page 165). This

chapter is particularly important for an understanding of the behaviour of the press in Britain (and in South Africa) towards the recent miners' strike.

Hyman ends with a discussion of the attempts to suppress strikes, and comments "while action against strikes is pursued as a means of securing a more compliant labour force, it is more likely to create a body of resentful employees whose resentment are expressed in less overt and less manageable forms of conflict" (page 168). South African employers please note.

MICHAEL BURAWAY : THE COLOUR OF CLASS ON THE COPPER MINES :

FROM AFRICAN ADVANCEMENT TO ZAMBIANIZATION

UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA, INSTITUTE OF AFRICAN STUDIES, ZAMBIAN PAPERS NO. 7  
LUSAKA 1972 (K2,50 L1.44 121 pages)

Buraway believes that social scientists should be wary of stressing the uniqueness of events in developing countries. In this study he attempts to show that Zambianization in the copper mines can be "...raised out of its local context and viewed as a particular case of a more general phenomenon - succession" (p.7). Since the major effect of Zambianization is to replace white expatriates by black Zambians, there is a racial dimension to the succession. This being the case, the study is also intended to provide insights into the relationship between class and colour.

Analysing the process of Zambianization within the framework of succession proves fruitful and allows Buraway to escape the confines that the issue of race too often imposes. However, in building on this and probing the relationship between class and colour the study is more suggestive than it is complete. Another of Buraway's articles (Another Look at the Mineworker, African Social Research, December 1972) provides an important complement to the book under review and I shall draw on it here.

Buraway sees Zambianization as a case of forced succession. A concomitant of this is that many of the Zambians moving into new positions have not received adequate formal training. This makes it difficult for some of the new incumbents to assert the legitimacy of their succession. However, what proves to be more important are the numerous factors Buraway identifies that perpetuate a myth of Zambian incompetency. So whilst lack of formal training is, in part, responsible for incompetency, these factors give rise to a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The interaction between whites and blacks in Zambia is tainted by that country's colonial heritage and the racism that went with it. Furthermore, the expatriate whites are the "victims" of Zambianization. This has meant that the process has been effected in such a fashion as never to place a white under the authority of a black. In the case of the personnel departments, the Zambianization has taken place in toto so eliminating the possibility of black authority over whites (apart from a small number of secretaries who are white).

A Zambian shift boss or mine captain therefore has little assistance from or interaction with his white counterparts, who are far from willing participants in the process of Zambianization. In addition it would seem that the level of competency amongst the expatriates themselves is falling as they are recruited from abroad and their work situation is unfamiliar to them. The loss of white political power precludes the use of the harsh disciplinary measures employed in the colonial era. Whilst in principle Zambianization would lead to the replacement of expatriates in practice, job fragmentation and redefinition of authority means that new expatriate positions are created.

The new Zambian incumbent is therefore faced with a number of influences that erode his authority. He is in many ways isolated from his white counterparts therefore finding it difficult to draw on traditional lines of authority. His promotion is very often disputed and resented by his compatriots. Furthermore, the morale of the white expatriates is relatively low with little commitment to the companies or the country and they are denied the previous modes of discipline. In these circumstances the ironical situation arises where the Zambian can be seen as a harsher superior than the whites. Finally, much of the formal authority previously attached to more senior positions has been removed via job fragmentation. The personnel departments being the most extreme example of this, their nature having changed from that of an all pervading influence on the miners to what amounts to glorified wage clerks.

This gives an all too brief an indication of the factors that lend a self-fulfilling nature to the apparent incompetence of the Zambians who are promoted. This myth of incompetency is important for Buraway's argument. He suggests that those promoted are in many senses not accepted by any of the other groupings in the mines - a set of circumstances conducive to anomie

The other major influences on Zambianization are the attitudes of the mining companies and the government. The companies have appeared accommodating in their acceptance of the Zambianization programme and nationalisation (the government has a 51% share in the mining companies). As indicated, however, there is an element of window-dressing apparent in the Zambianization effected. Whilst top management in the Lusaka head offices has accepted the principle of Zambianization, its actual implementation is largely carried out at mine level.

The technical difficulties and uncertainties surrounding the copper mines have given mine management a scarcity value and therefore considerable autonomy by virtue of their particularised experience and skills. Similar circumstances apply to many of the non-management expatriates

thus giving them an important bargaining position. The implementation of Zambianization is, therefore, undertaken by fairly powerful but not particularly enthusiastic agents, some of the results of this being indicated above.

The government attitude to Zambianization is also ambivalent. Zambia relies on the copper industry for about 95% of its visible exports and as much as 60% of government revenue. They, therefore, see continued high level production as being of prime importance. This being the case, government is not prepared to pursue actively a policy objective that it has been persuaded will be detrimental to production. This causes us to return to the myth of Zambian incompetence.

The government has been prepared to accept that Zambian workers are unproductive, prone to absenteeism and undisciplined, and that these tendencies have been on the increase since independence and the initiation of Zambianization. Various reports, one by Prof. H. Turner for the International Labour Office, have purported to substantiate this. Buraway seriously questions this assumption. He provides a more detailed critique in his article than in this book (Another Look at the African Mineworker). He correctly points out that the question of productivity heavily depends on management assumptions and indices used, whilst absenteeism in turn depends on what management define as zero absenteeism. Buraway disputes one management finding by indicating that the facts of the matter were the existence of faulty wheelbarrows, incorrect setting of work targets and unduly long overtime shifts. Two reports on productivity contradict those that indicate a decline. He shows that measures of absenteeism present contradictory evidence. For instance the number of shifts has been increased so whilst the percentage of shifts lost through absenteeism might have increased the actual number of shifts worked has increased. If management demands more work without increasing the reward then it seems quite obvious that absenteeism will increase, but hours worked will have also increased.

Buraway presents convincing evidence that the myth of Zambian worker indolence and lack of discipline cannot be substantiated by the evidence. In a comparison between the Zambian worker and his compatriots elsewhere in Europe, Japan and America, regarding absenteeism and strike action, the Zambian compares favourably. The myth is a product of management beliefs and this has been accepted by government, a point I shall return to.

This has affected the government attitude to the Mineworkers Trade Union. Established in 1949, the union proved a strong one, achieving successes in wage and African advancement negotiations in the 1950's. Under government pressure union policy now "... is to condemn strike action, absenteeism, etc., and to exhort the membership to greater



productivity" (p.3). The union leadership has been "tamed" and militants at branch level and those in UNIP who venture into labour relations have had their activities curtailed by government. Workers no longer perceive the union as effectively pursuing their interests.

Since the government is concerned with output and accepts that indolence and lack of discipline on the part of the workers exists and is detrimental to output, it intends the union to be a means of reinforcing discipline and raising productivity. The nature of the union changes from an organisation concerned with labour problems to one concerned with output, a concern shared by the companies and government.

Government have also justified their pressure on the union by pointing to the fact that the mineworkers are, relative to other workers and peasants, a privileged group. Whilst this is true it can only argue for wage constraints in this sector if this applies to all privileged groups and what is more if it can be seen that such restraint is benefiting the development effort in Zambia. Humanism, Zambia's form of socialism, must be seen to work for all, not just against the interests of some.

This raised the issue of class and colour. Buraway by no means provides a complete analysis in the book and here I have drawn on the article cited earlier. As I understand Buraway, he is contending that an analysis of Zambianization accepting race as the predominant factor is to oversimplify and will prevent the identification of important factors affecting its implementation and success. One has to take cognisance of emerging class interests and their conflicting nature. However, in this situation what does one define as a class interest? The main 'actors' involved are the Zambian workers, the expatriates, the mining companies, the union and government. In addition the mine workers are a comparatively privileged group. A class presupposes some relationship to the means of production - in the simple case ownership and non-ownership thereof - and some consciousness of being a class. In this case it would seem invalid to impose a two-class model. However, it remains the relationship to the means of production and a consciousness which Buraway uses to characterise certain interests as class interests.

At the risk of oversimplification, one could assess the 'actors' involved in terms of whether their actions, not their words, indicated their interests to be in maintaining the essentials of the pre-independence economic structure or altering it. If the interests lie in maintaining the structure then probably the easiest way of viewing such 'actors' is that they constitute part of the superstructure of the capitalist class. So, for instance, whilst the expatriates do not own the means of production, being part of the superstructure of such ownership their interests are best served by the maintenance of the

existing economic system.

The Zambian government is an elite using the tactic of worker chastisement in the mines, ostensibly to pursue the goal of a socialist development for Zambia. The union and party (U N I P) are instruments to such an end. Accepting this would place them outside class interests as a force attempting to transcend them. This is the formal stance taken by the government. What Buraway tries to show is that actions often belie this and that through the workers eyes the government is not seen to be playing such a role.

To quote Buraway:

"Though we have not been able to quantify worker perspectives, an examination of the interviews and comments made by miners at work lead to the conclusion that the mineworkers may, though in rather less sophisticated terms, perceive the main leadership, white management and black government as three pillars of a corporate 'power elite' determined to exploit and sap the workers of their energy in the pursuit of increased profits to be used as much for their own private benefit as for the development of the country." (Another Look at the Mineworker, p. 263).

Growing wealth disparities between black and black, lack of determination in implementing Zambianization, the uncritical acceptance of the idle worker myth (so characteristically employed by owning classes) and the calls for worker discipline and increased productivity - all these factors indicate emerging class interests in the black elite. In addition the miners begin to perceive class rather than race oppression.

The book (with the article forming an essential complement to it) serves as a fascinating case study of the interaction of class and colour. Buraway readily accepts no complete analysis has been provided. His major, and important, contention is that to ignore the existence of class interests, be they difficult to define at this stage, is to provide an incomplete analysis. Analysis that accepts government's role as an agent for development will also tend to be uncritical of the assumptions of worker indolence and stress the overall harmony of interests based on race rather than point to areas of conflict.

As Buraway says, it should not be the intention to "substitute one one-sided view for another". The importance of Zambia's dependence on copper and therefore world markets and the mining companies, - exceedingly important factors in perpetuating neo-colonialism - must not be ignored. However, a more complete understanding of the situation is what is required to effect change since it is too easy to accept all-embracing Panaceas.

To quote Buraway:

"In addition to the forces of 'neo-colonialism' and 'underdevelopment'; the vested interests of a ruling class obstructs the transformation of the economic base" (p.117).

Whilst it would be wrong to draw too loose an analogy between the situation in South Africa and that analysed by Buraway in Zambia, it is interesting to draw certain inferences. The most important seems to be that it is very often the position within the productive structure that defines a group's interests so that race is used as an idiom to protect those interests, rather than define them. Such an inference is double-edged. Firstly, it implies that the racial composition of a union need not be the factor influencing its policies. For instance, if the position in South Africa has allowed Indians to attain more skilled jobs in some industries, the desire to protect that position could be an important factor in their policy. Secondly, however, and more important, is the need to be aware of those forces in order to overcome them. Why is it necessary to overcome them? An answer to this is indicated by the Zambian experience.

After the African Mine Workers' Union had been established in 1949, the white unions perceived it as a threat to themselves and tried to take it over but failed. However, the union did not overcome the next hurdle. The first important agreement for African advancement was signed in 1955 and it led to a split in the union. Those workers who moved into better jobs formed an African Staff Association which was recognised by the companies and whose members received the new jobs created from that time on.

This certainly weakened worker solidarity and it is interesting to speculate whether a stronger more unified union could have resisted the post-independence government pressure. The very lesson of Buraway's study is the importance of class interests, therefore the weaker worker solidarity, the more likely it is that class oppression will take place.

In South Africa, like Zambia, there is an unemployment problem, which weakens the power of the unions and too often leads to those who have jobs, trying to protect themselves against those who do not. As we have seen, the Zambian government used this as a justification for suppressing the Mineworkers' Union. However, they tended to look after their interests as an elite rather than to forcefully promote development in the country. So the position remained as ever, that those closer to the ownership of the means of production enjoyed the fruits thereof whilst the worker had been divided and continued to be exploited.

Unionists in South Africa should remember that they represent the interests of all workers, not that of any privileged group. The more divided the worker movement the longer it is subjected to class oppression. This states the nature of the problem to be overcome and the importance of solidarity but it by no means provides all the answers.

Race is obviously important in South Africa and there are privileged groups who are protected either by legislation or their power in the bargaining process. What has to be done is to probe deeper, for race is often just a veil that has to be lifted in order to disclose the complex forces at work. Just as neo-colonialism is a theoretical veil, the lifting of which is needed to truly comprehend the obstacles that they have to over-

Buraway's book seems to bring home once again that movements - trade unionism, independence, revolution - are not automatically "good" things. They are "good" insofar as they are understood and operate in a particular situation. It is uncritical acceptance that so often turns these movements against the interests of those they were designed to assist.

References:

Mr. Buraway. ANOTHER LOOK AT THE MINERWORKER. African Social Research No 14, December 1972.

## I.I.E. NEWS

### STUDENT ENROLMENT

When late enrolment finally closed 139 students had registered for the course. This is higher than our target figure, but, in any event, as is normal with a correspondence course, we expect that there will be a relatively high drop-out rate. We have not insisted on any entry qualifications this year. In fact most of our students have a relatively high level of formal education. 75% reached Standard 5 or higher at school. About 40% have standard 8 or higher. Most of our students are younger workers. About 50% are under 30, but there are students in all age brackets. Nearly 90% of our students are men.

As is to be expected, the industries most represented are those with organised unions. 18 of our students are full-time employees of worker organisations. The largest number of students are from the textile industry, followed by metal, transport, chemical and furniture.

### SEMINARS

We have decided to supplement our quarterly weekend seminars with regular Saturday seminars to discuss problems in the workbook for that fortnight. We hope that this will overcome some of the difficulties inherent in correspondence tuition.

### REGIONAL ADVISORY PANELS

The I.I.E. is going ahead with plans to offer its courses on a nationwide basis from next year. James Polley and Johann Maree, both members of staff at the University of Cape Town, have agreed to initiate a Cape Regional Advisory Panel. Michael Nupen, acting head of the Department of Political Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, will set up an Academic Advisory Panel in Johannesburg. The Johannesburg-based Urban Training Project also co-operates with the I.I.E.

PASS RAID

On Thursday, 9th May, the I.I.E. offices were entered by 8 officials of the Bantu Administration Department. Two arrests were made. Mrs. Makoape and Mrs. Dhlamini were released on bail later in the day, and have since appeared in Court charged with "failing to produce a reference book". The Trial is proceeding. Apart from its effect on the two victims, the Trial has also had a disruptive effect on our office routine. Two officials of the neighbouring Textile Workers Union were arrested at the same time, but they were released later in the day without being charged.

STAFF

After a brief stint as Managing Editor of this Bulletin, John Copelyn has left the I.I.E. to join the staff of the Textile Workers Union. He has been replaced by Linda Ensor, a graduate of Natal University.

*Printed by: I. I. E.*  
*Bound by: Haliburton & Glover*