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1985

# WORK

# IN

# PROGRESS

THE CAPE TOWN  
TRADE UNION  
LIBRARY

Namibia  
NO HONOURABLE PEACE

SAIN  
Media Murders

COAWUSA  
new maternity  
agreement

America  
challenge  
engagement

Dockworkers  
convening

in search of  
South African  
feminism

CWU and SASOL

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# Editorial

Police shootings in Uitenhage's Langa township have deepened an already serious crisis of township rule. In rural and urban areas alike, black townships look more like war zones than residential areas. With police and army occupation, and a legal ban on gatherings in areas most affected, the claim of civil war is not far-fetched.

Under pressure from organised capital and conservative Western interests, government lurches from blunder to crisis in an attempt to give substance to its 'new deal'. Increasing pressure from a surprisingly united disinvestment lobby in the USA and elsewhere, is matched by a growing international belief that the Botha government cannot deliver even limited reforms. Moderate and conservative Western interests have at last realised that change South African government-style does not necessarily involve progress.

While the rebellion of the townships involves attacks on the symbols of political power - police, local authority or community council representatives - the underlying basis of rebellion is increasingly economic.

Millions are unemployed. More and more school leavers and boycotting pupils know that they will never be employed. Retrenched workers experience a desperate situation as one-time family breadwinners - with little or no social security, savings, or prospects of employment.

Sustained economic recovery seems unlikely without transforming the very nature of the economy. And any containment of the ever-growing township crisis is dependent on high economic growth. Neither world economic trends, nor government's monetarist policies, seem likely to pull the economy out of its fatal combination of high inflation and stagnation. If recession is to be a permanent feature of the next few years, then an increasingly ungovernable crisis-ridden society is a real prospect.

The nature of **Work In Progress**, which is to stimulate debate and present views on a wide range of issues, ensures that the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editorial collective.

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WORK IN PROGRESS 36 - APRIL 1985

# Behind Closed Doors Media Murders

Reasons for the death of the Rand Daily Mail and the Sunday Express are something of a mystery, writes South African Society of Journalists' vice-president ANTON HARBER. But the consequences are unfortunately rather clearer.

When 42 000 miners downed tools at the Vaal Reefs mine on 21 March - the biggest wildcat strike this country has seen in about 35 years - the Rand Daily Mail carried the story on page one the following day.

Only a few paragraphs were devoted to the story and it was noticeably underplayed. However, the RDM was the only morning newspaper that carried it at all, and the afternoon newspapers had missed the story on the day it happened.

On the same morning, the RDM was also the first newspaper to publish eye-witness accounts of the Uitenhage police shooting that contradicted official descriptions of what happened. The other major Transvaal newspapers had at first accepted the official version.

For many of the RDM staff, these two stories brought home for the first time some effects of the decision to close the RDM at the end of April. As truncated as the RDM has been in recent months, as muted as its voice has become, it still covered many of the key areas of South African life more fully than its competition.

If nothing else, the RDM ensured that its competition could not totally ignore these areas. Now that it has disappeared as competition, there is no reason why other newspapers should worry about missing such stories.

These two stories appeared a week after the Friday afternoon when the RDM editor, Rex Gibson, had called his staff together for a formal announcement.

'When one has bad news to tell, it is best to tell it quickly', he said. 'The Rand Daily Mail will close on 30 April'.

## CLOSURE OR MURDER?

In reality, closure was too euphemistic a word for what the board of directors of SA Associated Newspapers (SAAN) had done that day, 15 March. (Only if they had waited until 1 April to make the announcement could they have found a more appropriate date than the Ides of March). It was murder. In fact, it was double murder, since they simultaneously killed the RDM and its sister newspaper, the Sunday Express.

The reasons given by the board of directors were that the RDM had lost R45-m over the last few years and R15-m in the last year. For the first time ever, SAAN as a whole was making losses, and these losses were substantial.

This meant that the profits of the Sunday Times, the Financial Mail and some of SAAN's coastal papers could no longer carry the long-standing losses of the RDM and the more recent losses of the Sunday Express.

In the words of the managing director, Clive Kinsley, 'An untimely combination of financial blows overcame the RDM in its struggle for survival'.

The board of directors (only one of whom, incidentally, actually works in the newspaper industry) saw no prospect of the RDM achieving profitability. On the other hand, a 'feasibility study' had indicated the viability of a national financial daily newspaper.

Such a newspaper, modelled on the Financial Times of London, would be launched by SAAN on 1 May, under the title Business Day.

WIP

Observers immediately smelt a rat. All was not as the SAAN board of directors made it out to be. For a start, although SAAN is in the communications business, it has traditionally seen no need to communicate any information to its shareholders or the public that it was not obliged by law to reveal. The result of this secrecy is widespread scepticism about the figures given for the RDM's losses, and the prospects for Business Day.

Furthermore, nobody had ever heard of management's recent 'feasibility study'. The board decision took everyone by surprise, and some of SAAN's own experts in financial publishing - such as Howard Preece, the former RDM finance editor, and Stephen Mulholland, editor of the *Financial Mail* - had not been consulted.

In fact, an earlier study by the *London Financial Times* had indicated severe problems with the creation of a financial daily in South Africa, such as the shortage of highly specialised and skilled finance writers.

One of the fundamental problems created by the closure of the RDM was the collapse of the Morning Group arrangement, by which all the morning newspapers share information and swap stories from their own areas for those from other areas.

A feasibility study would have had to address the problem of who would supply the Morning Group with Johannesburg copy in the absence of the RDM. After all, if *Business Day* was to fill the gap, then it would contain the same news (and even the same business news) as some of its competitors, like the *Cape Times*.

A week after the board decision, SAAN management was still unable to say how this problem could be solved. In other words, this 'feasibility study' had failed to ask some of the most basic questions arising from the decision. Even for SAAN management, notoriously inept and incompetent, this was an extraordinary way to make a major decision.

decision when SAAN senior management informed the South African Society of Journalists that there was still no budget drawn up for *Business Day*.

The implication was that the decision, supposedly made for financial reasons, was made without any budget that would indicate its likely costs.

If this sounds insane, then one must bear in mind the history of SAAN management. After all, these are the men who reduced the cover price of the Saturday RDM to 10c in its battle with *The Star* for the morning market. With the price of getting the RDM to people's doorsteps hovering at about twice this price, SAAN management ensured that the more newspapers they sold, the more they stood to lose.



SAAN MD Clive Kinsley -  
his Board accused of incompetence

These were also the men who waited until *The Star* had completed its bid to capture the *Express*'s property advertising before splurging vast amounts of money in a futile bid to win it back.

And when the new Saturday morning *Star*

#### A POLITICAL DECISION

What it points to is that the motivation for the decision was not simply financial. And if there were any remaining doubts that this was the case, they were dispelled two weeks after the

hit the streets, SAAN pulled out of the Allied Publishers distribution network. This cost Argus a significant amount, but cost SAAN even more, as the costs involved in setting up an alternative distribution network must have been immense.

SAAN is now rumoured to be considering rejoining Allied for the distribution of *Business Day* as well as its other Transvaal newspapers.

This does not mean that the RDM was not losing money. Indeed, everyone was aware that something had to be done to stem the losses. Expectations were that the RDM might be turned into a financial newspaper, cutting costs and staff significantly and going for a more specialised market.

This would have made much more financial sense. Management would have had a well-established, 80-year-old title that was already selling 120 000 copies daily, and would not be starting from scratch with an entirely new newspaper.

Bearing this in mind, there can only be two reasons why they chose to throw the RDM title out the window and start from scratch. First, they wanted to clear out the RDM staff and give the new *Business Day* editor, Ken Owen, a free hand to build up a staff from nothing.

The only other possible reason is to get rid of the political and journalistic tradition of the RDM.

Neither of these are economic reasons. Both point to a desire to get rid of the RDM tradition and form a more conservative newspaper.

It is more than mere coincidence that the two newspapers closed down were the only two 'white' Transvaal newspapers that called on white readers to vote 'no' in the 1984 referendum - and the two that played a key role in the Info Scandal exposé.

After all, most businessmen made little secret of the fact that they supported a 'yes' vote in the referendum. They have become increasingly positive about government's 'reform' package.

#### CAPITAL STEPS IN

When the mining house JCI bought a substantial number of SAAN shares last year, its head, Gordon Waddell, made it

clear that he saw the need to stop the 'phoney war' between SAAN and the Argus Company. The market was overtraded and there was a need to 'rationalise' it.

Suddenly, as the head of a company which controlled a large amount of both SAAN and Argus shares, he became the obvious middleman in a bid to bring the two companies closer together and 'rationalise' the newspaper market.

But rationalisation can only mean the closure of newspapers, and since the Argus Company was winning the first battles in the newspaper war, it had no reason to question the existence of its own newspapers.

Further, it became apparent that JCI and the other mining houses had lost the will to keep the RDM alive. When the RDM was threatened with a takeover by Louis Luyt in the 1970s, these interests moved in swiftly, forming the Advowson Trust to protect SAAN from a takeover.

When the RDM was threatened with closure two years ago, these interests, along with the PFP and other business interests, stepped in to ensure that this did not happen.

But this time round they remained silent. In fact, the suspicion is that they had decided some time ago to stop supporting the RDM.

It soon became obvious that whatever the decision, it would reflect only the facade of behind-the-scenes negotiations between SAAN and Argus, probably with Waddell as go-between.

That such negotiation took place was proved beyond doubt when it was also announced that the *Sunday Star* would incorporate the *Express* and become a joint SAAN - Argus venture.

It was no real surprise. That the war between the companies was a phoney one was obvious in the light of the fact that Argus owned about 40% of SAAN and SAAN owned a small but significant share of Argus (about 20% - although these were sold in January 1985).

This raises questions about the role played by Argus in the SAAN decisions. Argus had previously said that it would not exercise its right as a shareholder to be represented on the SAAN board, but that it would exercise its rights in the event of major policy decisions that affected its shares.

This may have created the extraordinary situation where the Argus Company participated in the decision to close down one of its keenest competitors.

The SAAN decision remains shrouded in secrecy. But what is absolutely clear is that the RDM and Express closures are likely to be only the first in a series of shakeups in the newspaper industry.

One of the reasons SAAN supported the Express so gallantly (if briefly) was that the Express was seen as defending the flank of the Sunday Times. As long as The Star and the Express were fighting, the Sunday Times would be fairly safe.

Now the Sunday Times is exposed. It is almost inevitable that the Argus Company will make a bid for its personnel advertisements, which are a key to the Sunday Times's financial success, in the same way it grabbed the Express's property adverts.

One must wonder whether the troubled SAAN company still has the resources to fight such a battle.



Ousted Mail editor Rex Gibson

Argus, on the other hand, is looking reasonably healthy, having successfully diversified in recent years. Its relatively conservative attitudes are paying off in hard economic times.

SAAN's other profit-maker, the **Financial Mail**, is also under attack. The independent **Finance Week** appears to be increasingly popular and has been boosted by the fact that Howard Preece has chosen to join it in favour of any of the SAAN business publications.

The **Financial Mail** will also face new competition for advertisements and readers from its own sister newspaper,

Business Day. This could weaken it.

#### TOWARDS ARGUS CONTROL

Business Day has itself got off to an ignominious start. The appointment of Ken Owen caused much surprise. Known as an unpredictable maverick, he has a record of being unable to keep senior staff.

This problem has already risen at Business Day, with most of the RDM's new senior staff preferring to take severance pay rather than work for the new newspaper.

Add to this the fact that Business Day could well find itself in competition for both readers and advertisers with some of SAAN coastal newspapers, and you can see that the problems are just beginning.

Nobody is likely to read both Business Day and, for example, the **Cape Times**. Either readers will defect to the new publication, thus weakening the **Cape Times**, or they will stay with their local newspaper, thus blocking out Business Day.

Overall, it is clear that a lot more changes in the newspaper industry are inevitable and further 'rationalisation' is likely. So far, the Argus Company has won almost every round of the battle and seems set to continue winning.

This has led to the growing belief that in a few years Argus will control the English-speaking commercial press, either through the effective destruction of SAAN, or through greater control over it.

The long-term significance of this cannot be over-estimated. In a country which contains an enormous diversity of views and opinions, the mass media already represents only a minute segment of these views. Every newspaper closure or takeover means that the already small range of views represented in the press becomes even smaller.

If this process continues, South Africa's already battered commercial press could end up resembling the Rhodesian press during the last years of Smith's rule, reflecting only the views of a tiny minority. It is worth recalling that the Argus Company played a major role in the Rhodesian press.

Now more than ever, the prospect of South Africa's press following a similar path is real and something to be seriously concerned about.

## American Dockworkers

# Challenging Constructive Engagement

This account of anti-apartheid action on the West Coast of the US reflects some trends and attitudes of the broader North American campaign.

For 11 days in late 1984, San Francisco dockworkers of the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) successfully resisted unloading South African cargo from a ship.

Although this action and others like it were later forbidden by court order, it served as a rallying point for a broad-based anti-apartheid movement in the Bay Area. But it also raised the question: where to go from here?

### SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

Like the union itself, the Bay Area branch of the ILWU, Local 10 has a history of militancy in support of progressive causes. In October 1984, prompted by the uprising and repression in South Africa, members of Local 10 planned action against unloading South African cargoes - and the Local's Southern African Liberation Support Committee (SALSC) organised it.

On Friday 23 November the Nedlloyd Shipping Company's vessel **Kimberley** was due at San Francisco's pier 80. Two hundred and fifty supporters gathered at 6 pm to urge longshore workers not to handle South African cargo on the **Kimberley**. But the ship did not dock as scheduled. Its Dutch officers later said they had been notified of the planned demonstration.

The ship docked during the night, and demonstrators returned to pier 80 at 7 am the following day. The gang assigned to the ship refused to work the cargo and were dismissed from the shift.

The evening shift went through, but unloaded only Australian cargo. They

refused to work the South African goods - which included safety glass, steel, wine and apple concentrate - and were greeted with applause from supporters waiting at the gates.

The chairperson of the SALSC of Local 10 said, 'We want to call to the attention of the American people that the so-called constructive engagement (with the South African regime) of the Reagan administration is a sham, and really intended to aid and abet the South African system - economically, politically and socially.

'We see our action as an expression of solidarity with the rebellion. We support not only the struggle of the trade unionists there, but the armed struggle as well.'

Workers continued to refuse to move South African cargo until 4 December. About 30 workers were dismissed from each shift. At each shift change, often in bitterly cold weather, anywhere between 30 and 150 community members gathered at the pier gates to show solidarity with the longshore workers.

Support for the boycott grew steadily. On 26 November the San Francisco Central Labor Council, representing 150 000 members of local branches of AFL-CIO unions, unanimously endorsed a letter of support for the ILWU members.

People in the community rallied to give organisational support, and committees were established to extend outreach in church, labour and community groups, and to contact the media.

Plans were made to alert longshore unions at other ports in case the ship was moved.

The action was extended on Wednesday 28 November to the Oakland regional offices of the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA). The PMA is the agent for the 120-odd shipping companies operating on the West Coast of the United States, and represents them in negotiations with the ILWU.

Under the PMA/ILWU labour contract, longshore workers receive a weekly pay guarantee. Workers refusing to handle the cargo sacrificed this guarantee as well as wages for each shift from which they were dismissed.

While supporters picketed the PMA building and heard speeches from, among others, Democratic Party congressman Charles Hayes (recently arrested for demonstrating outside the SA embassy in Washington DC), the third arbitration between Local 10 and the PMA was beginning inside. By this time almost 300 workers had refused to touch the cargo.

ILWU members insisted their boycott was a collective action on the basis of individual conscience. As one longshoreman said, 'It's been individuals making the decision not to unload. I believe South Africa's government is an illegal regime, and the United Nations has condemned it as a "crime against humanity"... I just have a conscience which says that if I unload that cargo, if I help South Africa's government in any way, I couldn't live with myself. It's just not in me to do it.'

The chairperson of the SALSC stated that not protesting against apartheid would be like 'not saying anything about the six million Jews killed in the Holocaust'. He cited Martin Luther King Jr in arguing that there is a 'higher law' than legal contract.

The conclusion reached in the third arbitration on 30 November, overturning previous decisions, favoured the PMA which argued that the refusal to handle the cargo was a union action, and not one of individual worker conscience. Thus the union should be found guilty of breach of contract and fined heavily.

So all the members of Local 10, regardless of whether or not they participated in the boycott, lost their pay guarantee and the union faced prohibitively expensive fines and court actions.

On Saturday 1 December, following the arbitration decision, a rally of over 600 people was held at 7-30 am at pier 80 to pledge support for the longshore workers.

Simultaneously the **Kimberley** was surrounded by boats from the 'peace navy' - a tactic similar to that used several months previously when a US vessel bound for Central America was encircled and forced to turn back.

Later in the day a small group of protesters initiated a campaign to expel the South African Airways from San Francisco, chanting 'Hey! Hey! Ho! Ho! SAA must go' to startled Christmas shoppers.

The South African consulate was kicked out of San Francisco some years ago. Since then the SAA has run a suspiciously large and busy office in the city; SAA does not fly to any West Coast airports.

On Monday 3 December the boycott wound to a close. A federal district court judge handed out a restraining order against the union, ordering that the cargo be unloaded.

That evening a majority of the Local 10 executive committee voted to stop the boycott because the penalties against the union were overwhelming. The union secretary said, 'We agreed with a gun to our head.'

The following day small gangs of longshore workers began reluctantly to unload the cargo.

The focus of resistance and protest now moved to the doorstep of the PMA offices in Oakland. Since that date, into February, between 30 and 200 people have picketed and demonstrated daily at the offices. Young and old, black and white, gay and straight, workers and students, the poor and the well-off could be seen there.

The PMA action was organised by an ad hoc committee. It initially aimed to pressure the PMA to drop charges against Local 10, to allow workers the right to act according to their consciences and stop handling South African cargoes.

On 4 December several civic and church leaders staged a brief sit-in at the PMA offices, until the PMA officials agreed to discuss these issues, but the talks proved fruitless.

Following the breakdown of discussions, six leaders were arrested in the foyer of the PMA building on 11 December. A further boost to the campaign was given when Rev Jesse Jackson addressed the protesters.

Saying that he was glad the Reagan administration had eventually condemned apartheid as 'repugnant', Jackson continued, 'If apartheid is morally repugnant and we're South Africa's number one trading partner, that makes us just as morally repugnant, and (we) must move beyond rhetoric to diplomatic and economic leverage'.

Five hundred people attended the

demonstration on Saturday 22 December, and, after encircling the entire PMA building, marched through downtown Oakland to a rally outside the City Hall.

In January 1985, apart from the regular demonstrations at PMS, there were protests and arrests at the South African Airways offices, the Federal building and the Port Commission offices.

In the weeks that followed the conclusion of the longshore workers action, significant trends emerged. The ad hoc committee started to consolidate its community support and set up organisational structures beyond those of the picket line. In January it was constituted as the Bay Area Free South Africa Movement (BAFSAM), affiliated to the national movement.

Church groups in the Netherlands were contacted to put pressure on NedLloyd Shipping Company at its head office. On 21 January, 22 religious leaders were arrested in a civil disobedience action at the PMA offices. Plans were made to halt the sale of Krugerrands in the Bay area, and after picketing several local outlets, some success has been achieved.

The Oakland City Council - at the time considering a city divestment motion - entered the fray. On 18 December the Council made a unanimous recommendation that the Port Commission investigate means of blocking all South African cargo.

Early in January the Port Commission resolved that South African trade was 'repugnant', but explained that because international commerce is controlled by federal law and is contracted by private agents, there was little more it could do.

Later, on 22 January, legal counsel informed the Commissioners that they were nevertheless empowered to refuse to do any business with contractors, banks or financial institutions with South African links. It is not known what, if any, action the Port Commissioners will take.

#### CONTEXT OF THE ACTION

Although organised independently, the surge of anti-apartheid activism in the Bay Area since November 1984 was strongly influenced by events in South

Africa and elsewhere in the United States.

Reports of massive unrest and brutal police and military repression in South Africa angered many Americans, stirring them into action. Apartheid and US ties with Pretoria were put firmly on the American political agenda by Jackson's presidential campaign.

Black Americans in particular have for years linked the struggle of oppressed South Africans to their own fight for civil and economic justice. Speakers at rallies and demonstrations frequently referred to the Transvaal stayaway in early November, the detention of trade union and UDF leaders, and the use of the military in the townships. ILWU members were encouraged in their action by a letter of support from a Durban trade unionist.

Elsewhere in the US, anti-apartheid action escalated rapidly, and received considerable media coverage. In recent years the movement to divest from SA has grown significantly.

Locally, a majority of San Francisco citizens voted on 6 November that city pension funds should be divested from companies and institutions doing business with South Africa. The Oakland City Council debated a sweeping divestment ordinance, and similar proposals have been placed before the Richmond City Council and the Boards of Supervisors of the Counties of Alameda and Contra Costa.

On 21 November 1984 the campaign of protests and arrests at the South African embassy in Washington DC began. At a press conference the organisers announced the formation of the Free South Africa Movement (FSAM), and stated their immediate aims:

- to oppose and change the Reagan administration's policy of 'constructive engagement' with the apartheid regime;
- to secure the release of detained black trade unionists; and
- to secure the release of, and start meaningful negotiations with, jailed black leaders like Nelson Mandela.

As one supporter, boxing champion Larry Holmes, said, 'This is one fight that I want all of us to win'.

The nationwide campaign against apartheid soon spread to Albany, Albuquerque, Baltimore, Boston, Charlotte, Chicago, Cleveland, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, Minneapolis, Mobile, Newark, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburg, Portland and Seattle.

By the end of January 1985, there had been 1 200 arrests across the country and several South African honorary consuls had resigned from their posts.

Eventually the White House was forced to say that it opposed and condemned apartheid, but stood firm on its constructive engagement policy.

Further vitality was generated by the award of the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize to Bishop Desmond Tutu, and his subsequent meeting with Reagan and testimony before the House of Representatives Foreign Relations sub-committee on Africa.

On Sunday 26 November at the Washington DC cathedral he thanked anti-apartheid protesters and activists for 'putting your bodies where your mouths are', and assured them that, 'whatever you do to protest this evil system does not go without notice among those for whom it has been done.'

Media attention on apartheid was sustained by the cumulative effect of FSAM protests, Tutu's speeches, the visit of Senator Edward Kennedy to South Africa, the controversy over Jesse Jackson's visa, and the continuing civil war in South Africa.

Unexpected support came from 35 conservative Republican representatives, who stated in a personally-delivered letter to SA ambassador Fourie that they would support withdrawal of US investments from South Africa, the imposition of economic sanctions, and stronger diplomatic pressures on South Africa, unless there was a rapid change away from apartheid and towards a 'multi-racial, integrated free society.'

In the Bay Area, apart from the ILWU/PMA activities, divestment measures were and are being discussed in several cities and counties.

At the Berkeley campus of the University of California, students started in September to organise a coalition to pressure the University Regents to get rid of the \$1.7-billion funds invested in companies doing business with SA. After a rally and march on 7 December by some 600 students, 38 were arrested for blocking one entrance to the university administration building. In January there were more rallies, educational events and a petition drive for divestment.

Thus the determined action by the longshore workers and their supporters was by no means an isolated event: it coincided with and contributed to a much

broader resurgence of public opposition to apartheid.

## THE ILWU AND LOCAL 10

The ILWU was at the forefront of the 1934 San Francisco general strike. 'Bloody Thursday' is still commemorated every 5 July. On that day in 1934 a longshoreman and a cook were killed by police, sparking off a strike eventually supported by over 100 000 workers in the city, which lasted for over 100 days. Led by an inspired unionist, Harry Bridges, Local 10 has had strong ties with the Communist Party of the USA.

In the 1970s, Local 10 members participated in the anti-Viet Nam war movement, and opposed US intervention in Chile. One example: in May 1978, a shipping clerk in Local 34, the ILWU shipping clerks' union in San Francisco, spotted military equipment intended for export to Chile - in violation of a 1976 Congressional arms embargo.

The union decided not to handle the cargo, and frustrated various attempts by the authorities to dispatch the goods. Eventually the State Department was forced to withdraw the shipment.

In late 1980, Local 10, with the support of religious, civic and labour leaders, refused to handle military equipment designated for export to El Salvador.

Action against cargoes from racist regimes in Southern Africa began in the East Coast ports of the US. In 1972, members of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) - the East Coast equivalent of the ILWU - in New Orleans and Davao, Louisiana, refused to unload chrome from Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). Although the chrome was eventually unloaded, there was a considerable delay. As a result, shipping companies used Baltimore rather than southern ports for Rhodesian chrome.

Then a picket was set up in Baltimore, and the shippers moved on to Philadelphia. In December 1973 a ship was turned back to Mozambique where the cargo had been loaded. By then boycotts of Rhodesian products had spread to New York, Boston and Norfolk, Virginia. In 1974 the boycott on the East Coast was extended to South African coal imports.

Action was taken by the ILWU on the West Coast in 1976 and, following the invasion of Angola by South African troops, Local 10 voted to ship relief supplies to Angola.

In June the Soweto uprising began, and the Local 10 Southern Africa Liberation Support Committee (SALSC) was formed. The SALSC's first activities included:

- \* a collection of clothes for Zimbabwean refugees in Mozambique - 32 tons of clothes were sent;
- \* education within the union about apartheid and the liberation movements;
- \* participation in the boycott of the Bank of America, because of that institution's investments in and loans to SA;
- \* organising to boycott South African and Rhodesian cargoes. A resolution calling for a boycott was put forward in July 1976 to the International Executive Board of the ILWU. The Board agreed in principle, but decided not to do anything until all constituent Locals had been polled. When, after many months, a majority of the Locals had not responded, the issue faded away.

Because of the failure of the Executive Board to take any action, the SALSC started organising Local 10 members to refuse to handle SA cargoes.

As one member explained, 'With the growing understanding of apartheid and the ILWU's connection with it, we felt that this was a good time to call attention to the fact that we are handling these cargoes, even though many longshoremen oppose this'.

On Easter Sunday 1977 over 500 people gathered at pier 27 in San Francisco to protest the arrival of the NedLloyd Kingston from SA.

Only a handful of workers went onto the ship, but a gang was eventually mustered and the goods were unloaded. Although the boycott failed, it provoked considerable discussion within the union, and anti-apartheid committees were formed within other Locals.

An attempt was made to get Locals to renegotiate their contracts with shipping companies to specify that there must be no handling of South African goods, but this was watered-down by the Executive Board.

Since then, until 1984, the SALSC concentrated on collecting material aid for refugees in Southern Africa, and on internal education about apartheid.

Underlying the progressive positions and actions taken by Local 10 is the

high percentage of black and minority groups in the union. At present over 60% of the 1 500 members of Local 10 are black Americans. (Nevertheless the boycott was supported by both black and white longshore workers, and was endorsed by other ILWU Locals that have predominantly white membership.)

Further, the nature of longshore work, which is organised in groups working co-operatively, reinforces worker solidarity and facilitates strong organisation.

Workers' contact with sailors from all parts of the world encourages a broad internationalist perspective. And the crucial commercial and financial significance of the job gives workers an immediate sense of the muscle they can flex.

But these characteristics of longshore work are being undermined and changed. Containerisation and mechanisation mean that the co-operative nature of the work has been eroded, and ships are now in port for much shorter lengths of time.

The commercial shipping slump has caused serious loss of jobs and a diminution of employment security. And the weekly pay guarantee system has placed workers and the union at the mercy of employers, especially if a work stoppage is declared illegal.

It has therefore become increasingly difficult for ILWU Locals to maintain progressive and militant stances on issues other than those directly related to the work-place, and this trend is likely to continue.

## IMMEDIATE ISSUES

The refusal by Local 10 members to work South African cargo initiated a wave of energy and enthusiasm for anti-apartheid action that soon dwarfed the pre-existing small anti-apartheid groups in the area.

Once the boycott was halted and the ship had been unloaded, the movement became dominated by people from the broad community rather than by the longshore workers and SALSC. The relationship between the ad hoc PRM committee/BAFSAM and Local 10 remains undefined and uncertain.

Similarly, although constituted as part of the national Free South Africa Movement, the BAFSAM - to a much greater

extent than the national embassy-centred movement - is a grassroots movement centred on local issues and politics.

Partly this is due to the origin of the BAFSAM in a local labour action, rather than in a strategically co-ordinated campaign by a congressional lobbying group (like Transafrica). The fact that there is no SA consulate in the Bay area is another cause.

BAFSAM is now facing a range of organisational and structural issues, of which some could become problems if not skillfully addressed:

- how to sustain the energies of the movement through what will obviously be a long and difficult struggle;
- how to establish democratic structures that would make co-operation between different local politicians, political groups, labour unions and church members possible, but which would prevent the 'hijacking' of the movement by predominance of any one group or individual;
- how to establish organisational

structures that do not stifle the spontaneity of the picket line;

- how to maintain direction and focus when there are so many specific projects that can be undertaken.

These are some of the challenges that face the anti-apartheid movement in the Bay Area in early 1985. In a short time much has been achieved. People and groups that have never worked together before are now united against apartheid. New constituencies have been reached. The relationship between SA and the US has been spelt out more clearly and more immediately to people in the Bay Area, ten thousand miles from South Africa.

A source of inspiration to the anti-apartheid movement is the resistance and organisation of people in Southern Africa.

Tutu's words to Congress are remembered: 'We shall be free. And we will remember those who helped us to become free. That is not a threat. It is just a statement of fact.'

## Dutch Banks End Krugerrand Sales

In October 1984, the Holland Committee on Southern Africa started a campaign to induce Dutch banks to stop the sale of Krugerrands; by February 1985 the banks had agreed to end sales.

Holland is not a large market for Krugerrands, with only about 20 000 sold annually. The distributors, Intergold, used banks as their main distribution channel.

In 1976, responding to pressure from churches, trade unions, and anti-apartheid groups, Dutch banks agreed to stop loans to the South African government and to parastatal institutions.

Shortly afterwards, they decided to stop promoting the Krugerrand. However, clients were often advised to buy the coins. The few banks which did not sell the coins at all were those associated with trade unions and the postal bank, which is linked to the state postal company.

In October 1984, petitions were delivered to the five major Dutch banks demanding that they stop selling Krugerrands. Delegations consisted of representatives from churches, the FNV trade union federation, political

parties, and the Holland Committee.

Similar letters were sent to smaller banks, and petitions were accompanied by demonstrations and pickets.

Three weeks later the banks responded: they refused to stop the Krugerrand sales.

A large-scale campaign began in earnest. Two hundred local support groups sprang up over the country. They picketed, posterised and stickered local banks, and some groups occupied local branches.

Individual account-holders were asked to threaten withdrawal of their accounts unless the sale of Krugerrands was stopped. Magazines and some 240 000 postcards were used in the appeal.

City councils and non-profit institutions played a crucial role in the campaign. Leiden City Council, with a 90% majority vote, threatened to withdraw its bank account. So did the University of Amsterdam, youth organisations, broadcasting companies and Third World institutions.

The Labour Party and some local branches of the Christian Democratic Party supported the campaign.

In January, national church

organisations sent appeals to local church boards to put pressure on their banks.

The banks reacted by sending out letters explaining their decision. More important clients were visited by bank public relations representatives and local bank directors.

On 6 February, one of the major banks met with a number of important client institutions under the chairmanship of the Leiden alderman for finance. The bank asked for time to reconsider its decision.

Within a few days, three major banks agreed to stop selling Krugerrands. A week later almost all the banks sent letters to the Holland Committee undertaking to stop sales.

Crucial to the success of the campaign was the support of the FNV trade union federation with its almost one million members. The federation favours severing all economic links with South Africa. In January the more conservative Christian

union federation, (the CNV), also gave support to the campaign.

Employee boards of three major banks supported the banning of the Krugerrand. This initiative came from bank unions affiliated to the FNV and the CNV.

Letters from the Holland Committee went to all branches in an attempt to stimulate discussion about the Krugerrand among bank employees.

In a follow-up to the campaign, the Holland Committee has requested a meeting with four major banks, to demand that they do not sell Krugerrands to their foreign branch offices.

The Committee will also request that the banks only buy Krugerrands from their own clients until the end of the year.

Public relations departments of the major banks have evidently decided that it is not advisable to risk confrontation with Dutch public opinion on the issue of Krugerrands.

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# Namibia's New Regime No Honourable Peace

Namibia could soon be on the receiving end of yet another interim regime. But, reports MAX DU PREEZ, the political balance between SWAPO and the rest of the field may also change.

'SWAPO is Namibia and Namibia is SWAPO. The MPC is speaking for South Africa, not for the Namibian people. They cannot bring us freedom. We have no alternative but to fight for it and we are still prepared to die for it. But we will lay down arms tomorrow if SA will also do it. But then they must not send us the puppets, the pretenders' - SWAPO acting president Nathaniel Mahuili, recently unbanned, in an interview with the author in April 1985.

'The Multi-Party Conference is a national effort committed to bringing about peace, national reconciliation, independence and economic prosperity. These objectives can neither be achieved by the condition of continued political subjugation or a pious belief in the omnipotence of the military struggle. National reconciliation and meaningful negotiations can also speed up the process of independence' - The MPC's Windhoek Declaration of 23 January, 1984.

One of these statements must be true and the other false. Or perhaps Namibia in 1985 is not that simple any more.

Namibia today is simplified in one way at least: the wide array of political groupings and parties has been reduced to two significant political forces - SWAPO and the MPC.

THE SOUTH WEST AFRICAN PEOPLES' ORGANISATION OF NAMIBIA (SWAPO)

SWAPO was formed in 1960 and began a

guerilla war against South Africa in 1966. This has been limited mainly to the northern Ovambo region, but has cost South Africa billions of rands and many lives.

SWAPO is recognised as the 'sole and authentic representative' of the Namibian people by both the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity. Few observers disagree that SWAPO has the support of most Namibians, if only because its main tribal base, the Ovambo, is the biggest single group, comprising 47% of the population.

At present, SWAPO faces the worst crisis of its 25 years of existence. Its military onslaught is at its lowest ebb. This is a result of South Africa's attacks on SWAPO bases, of the February 1984 Lusaka Agreement between Luanda and Pretoria, and the success of the security forces in northern Namibia.

For two years now, SWAPO's annual high profile rainy-season infiltrations have failed. Indications (including bomb explosions in northern Namibian towns this year) are that SWAPO may shift to urban warfare with a high civilian kill rate - something alien to the party's tradition. Publicity secretary Hidipo Hamutenya stated in a January Voice of Namibia broadcast that the war is going to be taken to the towns.

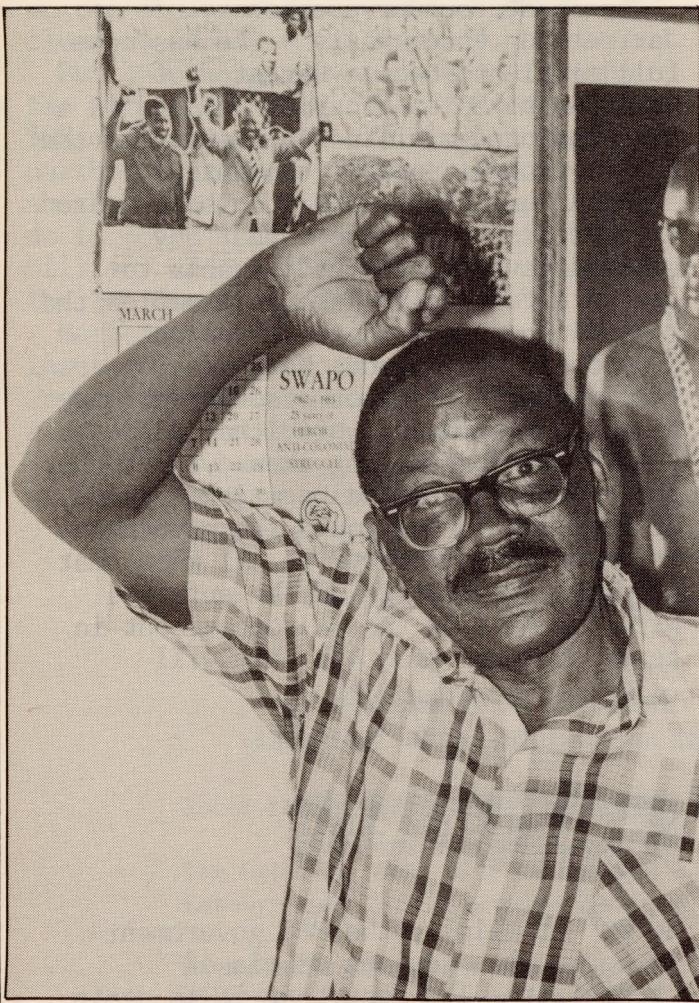
Secondly, SWAPO has lost some international and African support, and stands to lose more, partly because of successful diplomatic offensives by the US, SA and the MPC.

In fact, if the MPC succeeds in plans for a transitional government, and if it makes all the right moves, the very legitimacy of SWAPO's armed struggle - as perceived through African and Western

eyes - is at stake.

Finally, the international view - that the central Namibian issue involves a conflict between SWAPO and South Africa - is shifting. Namibian politics now appears a very complicated internal ball-game, and the international spotlight focuses on it less than before. This shift could cost SWAPO dearly, and it is important because the crucial segment of SWAPO leadership is based in Luanda or Lusaka, and has tenuous contact within Namibia itself.

As a result of years of attrition, there is almost no formal SWAPO organisation inside Namibia, and internal leaders have scant room to manoeuvre. For example, when plans for a transitional government were announced recently, there was no local SWAPO voice to issue an immediate counter-statement - it had to come days later via several news agencies from Angola.



SWAPO acting president Mahuileili - 'Still prepared to die for freedom'.

SWAPO's major opportunity to re-establish internal leadership followed the release last year of ex-Robben Island prisoner Andimba Toivo ja Toivo, a strong, immensely popular leader. But

SWAPO leadership apparently ordered him to base himself in Lusaka. He has not been in Namibia since September last year, and has never been permitted to visit his birthplace and power base, Ovambo.

Despite setbacks and shortcomings, though, SWAPO's popular support inside Namibia has not visibly waned. The statement of acting SWAPO president Mahuileili that 'SWAPO is Namibia and Namibia is SWAPO' still seems largely true.

### THE MULTI-PARTY CONFERENCE (MPC)

The MPC was formed in late 1983 after the DTA-controlled interim government was disbanded, and SA-sponsored attempts to create a State Council to replace it failed.

MPC members are:

- \* The Herero/Mbanderu-dominated South West African National Union (SWANU). Formed in 1959 with strong Chinese backing, it still claims Maoist tendencies. SWANU's participation in the MPC caused half its leadership to break away and form a SWANU dissident group which seeks alliance with SWAPO;
- \* The Democratic Turnhalle Alliance consists of Dirk Mudge's white Republican Party, Herero paramount chief Kuaima Riruako's National Unity Democratic Organisation, and one party from each of the other nine ethnic groups;
- \* The SWAPO-Democrats were formed by SWAPO renegade Andreas Shipanga, after a leadership struggle with Sam Nujoma which landed him in jail in Tanzania;
- \* The National Party, a remnant of the SA NP, is exclusively white and ultra-conservative;
- \* The Rehoboth Liberated Democratic Party is the majority party of the conservative and ethnically exclusive Basters of Rehoboth; and
- \* The Labour Party is a coloured party based mainly in Windhoek's coloured township, Khomasdal.

In short, in tribally divided Namibia the MPC seems to represent most whites, Hereros, coloureds, Basters, Tswanas and Bushmen, while SWAPO seems to represent most Ovambos, Kavangos and Namas. The Damaras are divided between the DTA and Justus Garoeb's Damara Council, which was a founder party of the MPC but is

now in loose alliance with SWAPO; and Caprivians are divided between the DTA and the secessionist Caprivi African National Union.

On 27 March this year, in Cape Town, MPC leaders were given a provisional go-ahead from State President PW Botha for their proposed 'government of national unity' (also known as GNU) to be formed by mid-year. If Botha agrees, they will have all the powers of the Administrator General: full governing power excluding only defence and foreign affairs.

According to the document handed to Botha, 'the government shall conduct its business in the style of a transitional government of national unity in order to promote national reconciliation, the national welfare and nationally acceptable and internationally accepted independence. It will therefore be unnecessary to have an election to precede the institution of government'.

The government will consist of a National Assembly of 62 members, a cabinet of eight with eight deputies, and a constitutional council of 16 members with a judge as impartial chairman. The constitutional council - and this generates some suspicion - will draw up an 'independence constitution' for Namibia. It will sit for a maximum of 18 months.

The cabinet will, within three months of receiving the draft constitution, 'arrange to have it submitted to the electorate for its approval'.

The question is: what will happen if the MPC gets a 'yes' vote in this referendum? They deny any suggestion that they have a UDI in mind, but it seems very clear that they are working in the direction of an alternative to UN Resolution 435. Indeed, the latest MPC document states: 'The MPC is aware that the road to independence which the conference has selected by requesting the SA government to install a transitional government in Namibia, will be a difficult one. (Ivory Coast) President Houphouet-Boigny's positive reaction to the MPC proposal was encouraging and creates the impression that at least certain African states may be prepared to demonstrate understanding for the need for an indigenous Namibian effort to promote national reconciliation and stable and prosperous independence'.

Mahuilili comments: 'The MPC fools no-one when it talks of speeding up independence. If they were not there, we

would have had (UN Resolution) 435 already'.

And veteran politician Bryan O'Linn responds: 'The simple fact is that if South Africa succeeds in setting up some form of transition government or UDI, it will have more scope to delay or totally avoid implementation of Resolution 435. It will be a classic example of divide and rule'.

The new MPC buzz word is 'nationally acceptable'. Rarely does an MPC leader open his mouth nowadays without saying any solution in Namibia must be 'nationally acceptable', and it has become a more important precondition in their language than 'internationally recognised'. No MPC leader has actually spelt out exactly what is meant by 'nationally acceptable', but it is insinuated that a solution with SWAPO in government will not be 'nationally acceptable'.

The SWANU founder-president, Jariretundu Kozonguizi, - who has come full circle to become Director of Government Liaison in Windhoek and is a DTA-appointed minister-in-waiting in the new government - puts it bluntly: 'Certain questions remain to be answered if there is to be a hope that any elected government would be able to govern effectively. Take as examples the following groups: whites, Hereros, Ovambos in Ovamboland, Kavangos, Caprivians and Rehobothers. Would they accept a government which they do not regard as representing them even if that government is elected by majority? And if they don't, how would the government enforce its authority? We all know that at present authority can be enforced with the help of the SA forces, but in terms of Resolution 435 they will withdraw from Namibia'.

#### MPC'S CREDIBILITY CRISIS

To put it mildly, the MPC government-to-be faces a serious crisis of credibility. The fact that it is again dominated by the DTA, and, even more, is acceptable to right-wing whites in the NP and to the SA government, makes it suspect to many Namibians.

But the MPC has already won a psychologically very important battle: they succeeded in getting the NP-controlled white ethnic government out

of the traditional seat of power, the Tintenpalast, which stands on a hill overlooking central Windhoek. This has been a symbol of white mastery for years and was only conceded with much white agony. What is more, the MPC is committed to scrapping the unpopular ethnic second tier governments or at least reducing them to cultural councils. Already they have agreed in principle to scrapping mandatory racial classification.

They are also committed to much-needed changes, like taking over the expensive and symbolically important white Training College in Windhoek, opening all hospitals to all races, Namibianising the civil service, and working out some formula to partly open up white state schools to all. Also, they are set to change drastically the draconian security proclamations, AG 9 and AG 25, and to impose proper control on the mining industry which has come close to raping the territory.

But one thing they cannot do is stop the war. And that is what the more than 50% of the population living in the northern war zone desperately want. Another thing the MPC government cannot do is control the behaviour of SA military and police units, and that of the SWA Territory Force.

Members of the notorious SAP counter-insurgency unit, Koevoet, have repeatedly been found guilty in court of atrocities involving innocent civilians. Koevoet has become a symbol of South African oppression in Namibia.

Units like Koevoet and 32 Battalion, a mixture of black FNLAs and white mercenaries, are simply uncontrollable. What is more, if the transitional government succeeds in disbanding Koevoet, they could well be faced with a SWAPO military resurgence. Koevoet, mainly through its rough and indiscriminate tactics, is by far the most effective anti-guerilla unit, responsible for the deaths of almost 80% of all SWAPO insurgents killed by the security forces.

These are the dangers facing the MPC government. The dangers facing SWAPO are probably more severe, because as the established liberation movement it has more to lose. As Kozonguizi ominously ended his recent address to the Namibia Education Forum: 'If the game is power, who has the power in Namibia?'

Meaning, of course, that the MPC has it now.

The absence of any public enthusiasm about the MPC's new regime is indicative. Says Mahuili: 'If I could announce that I am going to form a new government tomorrow, Namibians will be dancing and singing in the streets. Even the monkeys will come and join us. Do you see any of that now?'

O'Linn sums up: 'It is abundantly clear that the MPC, far from encouraging implementation of Resolution 435, is now searching for an alternative. Those who believe in an honourable peace in terms of the Resolution cannot allow their case to go by default, but will have to stand up and be counted'.

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# Chemical Workers Industrial Union

## Settling With Sasol

**FOSATU's Chemical Workers Industrial Union has settled its dispute with SASOL over workers dismissed after November's stay away. KAREN JOCHELSON spoke to union officials Chris Bonner and Rod Crompton.**

Following the signing of the SASOL settlement agreement on the 5 March, Chris Bonner, secretary of the Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU), commented: 'After the dismissals we had nothing. SASOL had effectively smashed our organisation at Secunda. Management would not negotiate. Our members were scattered in all the "homelands" and we were faced with fighting back against a powerful parastatal'.

The decision to adopt an agreement incorporating a final offer of settlement from SASOL management was taken at a national congress of CWIU shop stewards on the 2 March, following lengthy negotiations between the union and SASOL. The congress was the culmination of weeks of report-backs and debate at all levels within the CWIU.

In the final agreement, management guaranteed to re-employ a minimum of 70% of workers sacked after the stayaway who re-applied, and to take back half the shop stewards. Originally they refused to accept any shop stewards at all.

Further, SASOL will continue to recognise the union even if membership is not formally 50% of the plant.

Shop stewards are also formally recognised, and are now allowed ten days leave for training, of which five are fully paid. Each month the shop steward committee will be given an afternoon off with pay, to meet to discuss union matters in the SASOL plants.

The CWIU also has access to an office in the hostels, and shop stewards now have telephone facilities, which are particularly important in so large a plant.

Commenting on the importance of the dismissals, Bonner said: 'Now the majority of the dismissed workers are back, and we have better union facilities at SASOL than ever before'.

Bonner stated that it appears SASOL's decision to settle with the CWIU came not from Secunda local management, but from SASOL HQ.

'In the past, management saw the union as a complaints service. They never said they wouldn't deal with us, and they played it very carefully. But they had no idea of direct shop-floor representation'.

CWIU began recruiting at SASOL in 1983. As the manufacturer of oil and petroleum products from coal, its base chemical products provide raw materials for the rest of the heavy industry, making it a key complex in the chemical sector.

It took a year for CWIU to build up a majority membership in the SASOL II and III plants at Secunda.

According to Bonner, 'A significant problem was the very rigid security conditions in the hostels and plants. We were only given official access when we had a membership of 30%.

'We set up recruiting committees in hostels, with an informal network of recruiters who reported back to the steering committee'.

### INDUSTRY STRUCTURE

To a degree, CWIU's strategy is dictated by the nature of the chemical industry, which is dominated by multinational and parastatal companies. The big three are SASOL, AECI (a subsidiary of the international holding company ICI) and Sentrachem. These have tended to share market sectors, and thus avoid competing with one another.

The Big Three form the backbone of the

10 - 15 major 'upstream' chemical plants which produce hard chemicals and raw chemical resources. Of the 'downstream' chemical plants producing consumer products, some 20 - 30 employ 500 - 1 000 production workers, but most plants are small and very capital-intensive with between 10 - 500 workers.

The limited market in South Africa has also led to a highly fractionalised industry with many plants being the sole manufacturer of a particular product.

Growth in the chemical industry over the last 30 years has been based on a policy of national self-sufficiency and strategic import replacement.

Government-imposed quotas limit the quantity of chemicals that can be imported, and import tariffs ensure that imported chemicals are more expensive than locally-produced substitutes.

Protectionist policies account for the industry's rapid growth rate. According to the Department of Statistics, chemical products have increased from 11,2% of manufactured goods in 1960 to 17,9% by 1982 - but total value of sales has soared from R306,2-million in 1960 to R7 351,4-million in 1982.

Under the shelter of protectionism, chemical companies made the huge capital investments to set up high-tech plants. AECI, for example, has invested R1 000-million in 'strategic industries' over the last ten years.

The high incidence of capital-intensive production causes specific problems for plant organisation.

Chris Bonner explained: 'In small factories you still require as extensive resources and effort to organise the work-force as you do in the larger factories. This lays us open to financial problems, as the union income from membership dues is lower.'

'Smaller plants are also more vulnerable to total dismissals in the event of a strike. We have managed to negotiate our way out of this'.

The CWIU has sometimes drawn on international trade union leverage to win rights for workers. In the hostile environment of the early years, the union adopted the strategy of seeking management recognition from selected multinational companies. At times this involved using pressure both from the International Chemical and Energy Federation (ICEF), and local consumer boycotts.

One notable example was the CWIU's fight for recognition from the Durban-

based German multinational, Henkel SA. Henkel management did not reject the union completely, but instead persevered in attempting to impose a 'multiracial' works council on workers, despite a boycott of the elections by union members.

Eventually the union was granted minimal rights, but frustration with management mounted as they continued to stall on recognition. In March 1982 when management walked out of the first wage negotiations, unilaterally adjusted wages, increased hours of work and cut shift allowances, workers went on strike.

Within hours the strikers were dismissed and scab labour employed. Despite pressure from IG Chemie, the German union representing Henkel workers, attempts to negotiate a settlement failed.

The union called a consumer boycott of Henkel detergents and glues. And the ICEF threatened to call an international boycott.

Under this pressure an agreement of settlement was signed. Strikers returned to work and a formal recognition agreement was concluded about four months later.

Recession and falling profits have put capital under pressure, and the chemical industry has been hit specifically by government's current abandonment of protectionism.

The new open-door policy is an attempt to beat inflation and make South African industry more competitive through using low cost imports. But it also threatens to undercut local production, by causing dumping of cheaper products on the local market.

## LIFTING PROTECTIONISM

The chemical industry is prey to problems of dependency. The capital-intensive labour process derives from overseas technology. But the cost of building a plant here is 20% higher than in the USA, UK or West Germany, and costs are raised 50% - 70% higher by the costs of coal- rather than oil-based production.

So far, plastics manufacturing is hardest-hit, both by the recession and lifting of protection. Accordingly, retrenchments have been concentrated in

this sector.

Rationalisation programmes resulted in retrenchments and often in closure of entire plants.

Rod Crompton, general secretary of the CWIU, said, 'One of the most highly monopolised sectors is flat glass. The industry is dominated by PG Glass and Pilkington Shatterproof, both part of the holding company Solarised Glass. The only serious competitor was Elgin Glass which was bought out and closed down in a week. We were able to negotiate only severance pay'.

There have also been closures of production units in AECI, SASOL and Sentrachem.

AECI, Crompton argued, is the industry's trendsetter: 'It recently announced its intention to decentralise into smaller plants, and to site plants closer to the market to beat transport costs'.

Decentralisation may see many plants re-sited in bantustans, where they will be major employers in high-unemployment regions. Workers there are more vulnerable to dismissal and easy replacement.

'New plants are also equipped with sophisticated technology. In the industry as a whole, semi-skilled workers are made redundant, and the chemical work-force is increasingly polarised between skilled and unskilled workers', Crompton concluded.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health and safety is an important issue for chemical workers, who are in daily contact with a variety of chemical substances and fumes.

But, Bonner pointed out, 'The CWIU as yet has no fully developed programme for health and safety. Of course, there are isolated demands for better protective clothing, and we have run seminars on health and safety. But to be really effective we would need a massive research programme and the money to finance it'.

'A further problem', Crompton added, 'is widespread ignorance in the state medical profession as to how to diagnose medical problems arising from chemical inhalation or contact. In older factories that produce weedkillers, for example, this is especially dangerous.

Damage occurs through continuous inhalation, but it may take ten years before effects are evident. Chemical dermatitis, too, is difficult to diagnose without training or experience, as it effects people to different degrees. Management and some doctors will argue that the affected workers are "dirty", and then ignore the problem'.

Women's issues are also coming under the spotlight. Women chemical employees are confined to the 'soft' chemical industry, for example cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, plastics and packaging, in jobs which require a 'woman's natural dexterity'. These jobs tend to be labour intensive, unskilled and very poorly paid.

The CWIU has tried to combat the wage gap between men and women. In some cases they have succeeded in winning equal pay for men and women doing the same jobs.

'But what is more difficult', said Bonner, 'is upgrading jobs classified according to women's grades. These are jobs that only women do, and which are therefore graded low and receive low wage rates'.

Maternity rights are also on the agenda. The CWIU was the first union to sign a maternity agreement guaranteeing a woman her job back after her child is born, and paid leave which together with 45% UIF benefits amounts to 78% of her normal wage. The agreement was signed with NCS Plastics in mid-1984.

'The other issue we have tackled, in some cases with success, is sexual harassment', said Bonner. 'Women are often reluctant to press the issue because they fear victimisation or a scandal.'

'At Dunlop, workers realised that the training officer was selling jobs for sex. They literally caught him with his pants down and he was fired on the spot'.

## EARLY DAYS

The CWIU was formed on 24 November 1974 in the aftermath of the 1973 Durban strikes, with the assistance of the General Factory Workers Benefit Fund. This Fund had been set up to establish industrial unions.

Along with the Metal and Allied Workers Union, the National Union of Textile Workers and the Transport and

General Workers Union, the CWIU affiliated to the Trade Union Advisory Co-ordinating Council (TUACC), a newly established federation which included a number of unions that would later form FOSATU. The union endured considerable state harassment, and officials were banned in 1974 and 1976.

From its inception the CWIU was guided by three principles: non-racialism, industrial unionism and worker control.

The union began organising in the hard chemical, petroleum, rubber, plastic and pharmaceutical sectors of the chemical industry. In December 1982 CWIU merged with the Glass and Allied Workers Union and expanded into the glass sector.

Its officials consider democratic shop floor control and direct accountability the pillars of effective unionism, and strive to build them into union structure.

Shop stewards are elected by workers on the shop floor. A plant shop steward committee elects delegates to the Branch Executive Committee (BEC), which meets once a month and runs union activities in the area. A small branch has two representatives per factory, larger branches (of over 20 factories) have one representative per factory. Each BEC elects four delegates to the National Executive Committee (NEC), which meets once every three months. At present, there is no proportional representation, though this has been under discussion. Union officials have no vote on any of the committees.

At present the union is recognised in about 50 plants, and has formal agreements in about half of these. The formal and informal recognition agreements give it rights to elect shop stewards, to conduct negotiations with management and have access to stop order facilities.

Bonner pointed out that the emphasis on recognition has shifted in the past few years. 'Recognition was initially a union strategy aimed at forcing management to deal with us. At the time, managements argued they couldn't recognise and negotiate with an unregistered union.

'The terrain has changed now. Increasingly it is management which demands a formal recognition agreement. They see it as a means to channel and restrict union activities by tying the union down to negotiating over limited issues'.

During 1980-82 CWIU expanded rapidly.

New branches were opened in the Transvaal and Northern Natal. In 1980 a NEC was formed to co-ordinate the activities and resources of the branches. Membership figures have soared - from 460 paid-up members in April 1980, to 13 500 in October 1984.

The Transvaal is the union's strongest region, with 9 000 paid-up members before the SASOL dismissal, and an additional 4 500 signed up.

The CWIU organises mainly on the East Rand, at Secunda and a few additional factories in Johannesburg and on the West Rand.

In southern Natal CWIU organises in Pietermaritzburg, Pinetown, on the South Coast and in Durban. In Northern Natal it organises in Richards Bay and Isithebe.

The CWIU also has a branch in the Eastern Cape, and has recently begun organising in Cape Town.

A rival union in the chemical sector is the CUSA affiliate, the South African Chemical Workers Union (SACWU), which claims a membership of 30 000. Of these, 20 000 are paid-up members. SACWU organises in the pharmaceutical, explosives, plastics, rubber and rubber products, glass and glassware, oil, gas and petroleum sectors.

On the relationship between CWIU and SACWU, Crompton says that 'The CWIU is firmly of the opinion that there ought to be one union in the chemical industry. We hope the unity talks presently in progress will facilitate such a development.

But Michael Tsotetsi, general secretary of SACWU, says that while SACWU and CWIU do co-operate where there is common ground, the issue of a single industrial union is a sensitive one. 'Our members view whites as oppressors. While the CWIU is a non-racial union, we organise only black workers. The issue of an industry-wide union is still under discussion'.

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**CCAWUSA**

# Maternity Benefit Breakthrough

CCAWUSA recently negotiated a maternity agreement with Metro Cash & Carry. INGRID OBERY spoke to Metro shop stewards Georgina Mbileni and Makhulu Ledwaba, and two CCAWUSA organisers involved in negotiating the agreement.

The Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (CCAWUSA) claims to have negotiated South Africa's first full maternity agreement. This was signed with OK Bazaars during 1984. Recently the union signed a far more comprehensive maternity agreement with Metro Cash & Carry, a national retailer that is part of the Kirsh group of companies.

According to CCAWUSA President Makhulu Ledwaba - who is also a Metro shop steward - 'Employers must understand that while the recession is biting them it is strangling us. Companies cannot hide behind having a majority of women employees, or make the excuse that having many women employees increases the cost of benefits.'

The Metro agreement provides a wide range of protective measures and rights for working mothers:

- \* twelve months' maternity leave with a guaranteed right to return to work;
- \* seven of the 12 months are paid leave at 33% of salary. With Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) payments, this amounts to 78% of salary for six months and one month at 33%;
- \* paid paternity leave of three days for the biological father over the period of confinement;
- \* one hundred rand's worth of baby goods free at any Metro store;
- \* time off to facilitate breast-feeding and to attend ante- and post-natal clinics;
- \* a comprehensive health and safety section of the agreement;
- \* a clause preventing management from turning down pregnant job applicants;
- \* a commitment to health and safety

education for pregnant and nursing mothers.

The agreement is flexible. The mother may take leave up to four months before, and up to eight months after, the birth of her child. If she takes less than seven months paid leave the balance is paid to her on return to work.

All women at Metro qualify under the agreement. Women who begin work pregnant, or who fall pregnant within the first month of service, get all leave but it is not paid, and they do not receive free baby goods valued at R100.

In most other maternity agreements in South Africa there is a qualifying period of service ranging from three months to two years. In the Metro agreement this qualifying period is absent.

## NEGOTIATING THE AGREEMENT

CCAWUSA signed a recognition agreement with Metro in April last year. According to Ledwaba, the union then informed management that maternity benefits were next on the agenda.

'After looking at other maternity agreements, workers felt that they wanted to see a totally different agreement', he said.

Following substantial research into maternity agreements and benefits worldwide, CCAWUSA organisers drew up a proposal.

A union organiser said, 'We see the negotiation of maternity agreements and the fight against all forms of sexual discrimination as an important part of the workers' struggle'.

'At the first meeting on 14 December, the negotiating team outlined the proposals. We brought in a doctor, Liz Floyd, to explain some medical points at the negotiations. Examples were the

infant mortality rate among blacks, the importance of breast-feeding for the first six months, and that women must go to ante-natal clinics,' explained Georgina Mbileni.

The doctor also provided information on kinds of work that are dangerous for pregnant women, such as in packing, where a hot wire cutter is used to cut the plastic that wraps goods. Fumes are given off that have a long-term effect on both mother and child.

'This agreement protects women's jobs, and the 33% salary in addition to UIF lessens their financial burden,' says Mbileni.

When CCAWUSA started at Metro many grievances the union dealt with involved pregnant women. Prior to the agreement there were no health safeguards for them.

Supervisors used their own discretion as to whether women had to continue with heavy work, and whether they could go to ante-natal clinics. If women were re-employed after the birth of the baby, they usually did not get their old jobs back.

Ledwaba said that 'we have a case now of a lady who went on maternity leave before the agreement. When she felt fit, she went to the manager and said she wanted to come back to work. He told her there wasn't a job for her then and that she must come back after another three months. When she came back he sent her to another branch where they told her to fill in new application forms.'

Before the agreement, women had to return to work two or three months after giving birth if they wanted their jobs back.

Men at Metro are fully behind the fight for maternity benefits: 'We men accept that female employees have carried this burden for a long time. This agreement opens new opportunities for women workers, and is really a benefit for all workers', said Ledwaba.

'We only managed to get three days' paternity leave. This is not enough. In our tradition a male has to be with his wife at birth. If someone is new in town he does not have sisters or his mother to make sure his wife is all right, and would need more than three days to make sure.'

'The paternity leave provision', added Mbileni, 'is a good start, and Metro have agreed that it could be combined



Irene Ntsibande - first to benefit under Metro maternity agreement

with all or part of annual leave so that the man has more time. We did ask for one month and then one day per month for six months after that.'

Ledwaba commented that 'many employers pretend to be so liberal. Well, we'll will see how honest their liberal conscience is when we demand these benefits from them. Children being born now are future workers and deserve benefits now so that they can be strong.'

'Let us also see if they honestly want to do away with sexual discrimination on the shop floor', added a union organiser. 'This agreement is a good foundation for CCAWUSA to begin to negotiate with other companies. We will continually improve it.'

Shop stewards have five days training leave per year. Some of this time will be used for training on how to implement the agreement. 'Workers must understand the agreement and how to get specialist advice on health and safety. We called a meeting at head office after the agreement was signed. We read it out and explained it. Many non-union members - especially whites - were very interested.'

'After signing we asked management if the agreement would become company

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attention to other substantive workplace issues like health and safety and maternity.

Apart from recognition, most current negotiations deal with wages, but the union is beginning to negotiate on conditions of employment, aiming at substantive agreements on health and safety.

Because of the nature of the retail trade, CCAWUSA's structure, and its methods of organising and negotiating, are substantially different from those of other unions.

As a union organiser put it, 'CCAWUSA workers are concentrated in small pockets, in small numbers, widely scattered all over the country within one company - think of all the OK Bazaars branches, for instance. This means we have to negotiate far more comprehensive recognition agreements - agreements that can work for us.'

'In the Vaal Triangle alone we have approximately 300 establishments to cover - we can't rely on frequent monitoring to ensure that workers get fair treatment'.

This means a large degree of worker education about content of agreements and their implementation. Union organisers maintain that the system works well, although 'we have some regions where we must still do a lot of work'.

In-union education and training includes 'all the standard practices like seminars and shop steward training'. In all agreements, CCAWUSA includes provision for five days' training leave per year for shop stewards.

The union newspaper, **CCAWUSA News**, has been important in 'increasing workers' identification with, and support for, the union'.

CCAWUSA's negotiating strategy includes national negotiating teams of shop stewards for each company. According to an organiser, these are developing into national shop steward councils.

policy. It may do so. They were not prepared to give creche facilities because they said often there were too few workers at a branch. They said that they would consider a central creche for all employees. We are taking that back to members for discussion', explained Ledwaba.

## UNION HISTORY

Trade unions in the retail industry have tended to be sweetheart unions. CCAWUSA appears to be different. In 1984 CCAWUSA members were involved in more strikes than many of the other independent unions.

The union was launched on 1 August 1975, with Emma Mashinini as its first official. The inaugural meeting took place on 29 November 1975 with 96 members in Johannesburg. In July 1979 a second branch was opened in Natal.

CCAWUSA now has ten branches organising in the retail trade throughout South Africa.

The union has remained separate from union federations like FOSATU and CUSA. However, it is an active participant in talks aimed at forming a giant new union federation.

CCAWUSA has 40 000 members on stop order. Approximately 70% of this number are women.

Five years ago CCAWUSA had no recognition agreements and no recognised shop stewards. It now has 14 signed agreements and is negotiating a number of others.

Recognition agreements include Checkers, Pick 'n Pay, OK Bazaars, CNA, Makro, Metro, Foschini Group, Edgars, Woolworths, Allied Publishing, Gallo and African Sales.

Wages are negotiated on an annual basis. More importantly, the union's national negotiating programme which includes recognition and procedural agreements, is now directing more.

# 'Women and Resistance' In Search of South African Feminism

CHERRYL WALKER'S book, 'Women and Resistance', has provoked a lively dispute about the relationship between feminism and national liberation, the ANC and the Federation of South African Women.

A *WIP 34* review of the book criticised Walker's feminism as 'mainline twentieth century Eurocentric women's liberation'. Here Walker responds, arguing that a feminist perspective does not necessarily involve the subordination of other interests to women's struggles.

There is always the risk - personal rather than political - that in replying to a review of one's work, an author appears carping, mean-spirited, unable to take criticism, and generally petty-minded.

I am taking this risk because I think that the review by Budlender, Meintjies and Schreiner in *WIP 34* distorts and oversimplifies my position. I would like to set the record straight, especially since the book has been banned for distribution (but not possession) by the Directorate of Publications, and is thus available to fewer people to judge for themselves.

Some general assumptions about 'feminism', historical research, and South African history are not stated in the review but inform it, and need to be questioned. One gains the impression from the review that 'feminism' is an undesirable (or at best misguided) activity - so clearly undesirable/misguided that merely to label a position or argument 'feminist' condemns it by association.

In this respect the review appears akin to an established tradition within South African political thought, which I describe thus in the preface to my book: 'The restrictions on research into women do not come only from the state. Even within the national liberation movement there is sometimes hostility toward any study which smacks of "women's

liberation." The women's movement is equated with bourgeois feminism; it is regarded as a threat, a reactionary movement that will divide men and women and weaken the combined struggle of both against their common enemy' (ix).

Such assumptions fail to do justice to the variety of positions that can be encompassed by so broad and flexible a term as 'feminism.' They also fail to do justice to my arguments about the nature of women's resistance in South Africa - which I do not characterise as feminist, certainly not in the sense it is given by the reviewers: 'mainline twentieth century Eurocentric women's liberation feminism' (*WIP 34:28*).

Finally, the review fails to do justice to the history of women's resistance in South Africa in the twentieth century. This has combined an overriding commitment to liberation for blacks from white oppression and exploitation with a more muted, inconsistent, but nevertheless often-expressed commitment for full equality for women with men. To the extent that it has championed women's rights, it can be characterised as having feminist aspects to it.

I have not the space to supply a full rebuttal to all the points in the review with which I disagree. For the full substance of my arguments I can only refer the reader to the book itself. Since the reviewers rarely cite page or chapter references, and many of their comments are extremely vague, it is often difficult to respond adequately to particular criticisms.

For instance, on page 26 of the review, reference is made to 'new factors' which were affecting the class consciousness of women in the 1950s, but which I do not consider. Since these factors are not mentioned, all one can do is to say, 'Well fine, what are they and where do I ignore them?' Such unspecific criticism does not help advance debate.

## AN INCOMPLETE PICTURE

The reviewers criticise me for giving an incomplete picture of the Federation of South African Women (FSAW). But those seeking a summary of the content of **Women and Resistance** in the review would come away with a still more incomplete picture.

The reviewers describe **Women and Resistance** as a history of the FSAW, and are critical of the way the book is structured. They regard the first two sections as an 'overlong introduction' to the central concern of the book.

This description and criticism is more applicable to the thesis on which the book was based than to the book itself. (The review also gives the dates covered in the second part of the book as 1939-1950, as in the thesis, rather than 1939-1953, as in the book. It may also indicate why I have difficulty tracing other general observations to their sources in the book.)

**Women and Resistance** is not simply about the FSAW. It 'traces the development of a women's movement in South Africa, within the context of a national liberation movement, from 1910 to the early 1960s' (p vii) - a movement which 'came to maturity' with the establishment of the FSAW in 1954, but certainly did not begin then. This is made quite clear in parts one and two. The focus on the FSAW reflects the reviewers' own concerns, not the author's - and the review would have benefited from serious consideration of the earlier, extremely under-researched periods.

The summary of part three on the FSAW is badly incomplete. Since it provides the basis for the reviewers' criticisms, it is worth pointing out the major gaps. According to them, I am concerned in this section with describing the various campaigns of the FSAW and the debates which surrounded them, the linkages which were developed between regional organisations at a national level, and the structure of the FSAW, its financial problems in particular.

My treatment of FSAW campaigns is described as not being 'complete and chronological' since it focuses on only 'a few particular campaigns', namely the Congress of the People, the anti-pass campaigns of 1956, 1957 and 1958, and the Cato Manor riots of 1959. Other

campaigns, specifically against the Group Areas Act, Bantu Education and beerhalls, are 'lost' in my account.

I have not ignored these campaigns, (see pp 175-178, 230-235), though that is the impression a reader of the review would get. I do not claim that my discussion is definitive and there is certainly scope for more in-depth studies of local and regional campaigns than **Women and Resistance** supplies. But I object to the misleading synopsis of my work that the review presents.

## THE FSAW AND FEMINISM

Still more perplexing are the reviewers' omissions in regard to my discussion of the nature of the FSAW. I consider far more than region/centre relationships and finances. I also consider at length: membership, aims, regional differences, decision-making, tactics, and relationships with the ANC Women's League (ANCWL). I devote an entire chapter to the extremely sensitive subject - then as now - of the relationships between the FSAW and the Congress Alliance and particularly the ANC.

The reviewers argue that I distort this relationship by regarding the FSAW as a 'feminist organisation...along the lines of mainline twentieth century Eurocentric women's liberation feminism' (WIP 34:28). (This I take to refer to a form of feminism that regards the oppression of women as the central political issue of our time.) Beyond a totally unspecific reference to two pages near the very end of **Women and Resistance**, they do not substantiate this.

Certainly **Women and Resistance** examines the degree to which the FSAW was concerned with the position of women - I regard this as a legitimate issue for research and analysis. This is not the same as regarding it as a feminist organisation. My conclusions are far more multi-dimensional than the reviewers give me credit for. In a number of respects they actually converge with theirs: that the FSAW's concern with the position of women was neither uniform nor consistent. It was always overshadowed by women's dominant identification with the priorities and programme of the national liberation

movement. For instance: 'The FSAW itself, though far clearer on the need for women to participate actively and as equals in the national liberation movement, was not always consistent on the question of what women's political role should be ...'

'Ultimately, however, it never doubted that its first responsibility was to the general liberation struggle, by blacks, against the white supremacist state. Not till that had been won could most women expect to free themselves from sex-based discrimination' (263).

I also discuss the strength of patriarchal ideology within the FSAW, and note: 'Within the FSAW, the degree to which the importance of the battle against sex discrimination was stressed varied from woman to woman and occasion to occasion. Even amongst the FSAW leadership, where women's rights and the abolition of sex discrimination were strongly endorsed, women's domestic role as wife and, more often, mother was continually being stressed...' (264).

I thus agree with the reviewers when they say that 'for the most part, the Federation's members wanted to be freed to fulfil their female and familial roles' (WIP 34:28), though I might niggle over the formulation 'female roles'. The reviewers seem to deny that the FSAW ever considered that women suffered discrimination as a sex and that this should be challenged, or that there was ever any conflict between male and female supporters of the Congress Alliance over the role of women. If they do wish to deny this, then they must disprove my evidence, drawn from published documents such as the 'Women's Charter', and newspaper reports, and also from unpublished documents such as minutes, letters, transcripts of meetings, internal Congress and FSAW reports, and my interviews with FSAW activists.

Were it not for the husbands, there would have been many more women at the inaugural conference of the FSAW, declared Lilian Ngoyi at the time - the men talked democracy but did not practice it, she said (158). Does this mean that Ngoyi was a bourgeois Western feminist who doubted the primacy of the national liberation movement and ANC leadership within that? Of course not. It means that Ngoyi was aware that being black was not the only factor in the problems that she and other women faced. Refusing to acknowledge this awareness

and the tensions and contradictions it provoked is as much a distortion of the past as would be depicting it as the major concern of the FSAW and its members.

## FEMINIST TELEOLOGY

Once again, contrary to the reviewers' assertions, a cursory glance at **Women and Resistance** shows that at no point do I claim the 1913 pass demonstration, the Bulhoek massacre or the Black Sash as 'roots' or 'prehistory' of the FSAW. What I do say about the relationship between FSAW and the Black Sash (founded after the FSAW) in the 1950s is this: 'The FSAW had high hopes initially that it would draw the Black Sash into its organisation...Most members of the Black Sash looked askance at the Congress Alliance as a radical and potentially subversive organisation' (174).

My assessment of the historic significance of the 1913 anti-pass campaign is in reality fairly sober, and I think refutes the claim that to me women's organisation means mainline, Eurocentric, women's liberation feminism: 'The anti-pass campaign of 1913/14 had nothing to do with the women's rights movement then rocking the western world and to which white South African suffragists looked. It can in fact be argued that in defying the law as vociferously as they had, African women were looking back to a cultural tradition that had allowed women a great deal more independence and authority than western society considered "natural" and "respectable" at the time' (32).

Finally, the reference to Bulhoek in the review is similarly unfounded. The only link between that massacre and the FSAW of which I am aware is in the person of Dora Tamana, the Cape Town leader of the FSAW, who had witnessed the killing of her father and two uncles at Bulhoek.

If the reviewers are trying to make a more general point about the dangers of imposing a misleading continuity on history from hindsight, they do their own argument a disservice by such sloppy assertions.

Clearly there were continuities as well as ruptures between the FSAW and earlier organisations of women within

the Congress Alliance. I presume that the reviewers would agree. However **Women and Resistance** does not take this to mean that the FSAW was the **inevitable** outcome of all earlier political developments involving women, which is perhaps the sense intended by the reviewers' phrase 'feminist teleology' (WIP 34:28). Nor does the book ignore the significance of other political developments within the national liberation movement in the late 1940s and early 1950s, as the review implies. They are discussed at some length in chapters 10 and 11.

## SOURCES

The reviewers have some useful comments to make on sources. Perhaps the most cogent criticism that they offer is that I did not interview any male members of the ANC and Congress Alliance - although they do acknowledge the difficulties of doing this in South Africa. The perspectives of individual men who were active in the 1950s would undoubtedly broaden and deepen one's understanding of that period.

Nevertheless, I cannot see how it would disprove what the reviewers describe as my 'general thesis' (of which they appear so critical) 'that there was some conflict between Federation women and the (male) Congress movement' (WIP 34:27). Some conflict there undoubtedly was, but this was not the FSAW's major battle.

The reviewers also criticise my use of sources. For instance, they refer to my uncritical use of newspaper and documentary sources, **The Guardian** in particular, but fail to show where my interpretation of events is wrong or incomplete because of this.

They also note that had I conducted a wider range of interviews, I would have been able to throw more light on the linkages between the FSAW and other organisations which, 'from other accounts', they understand to have been 'complex and strong' (WIP 34:27). As evidence they recount the testimony of one Paarl leader which indicates that 'in many instances the Federation and the ANC Women's League were not separate in participants' minds' (WIP 34:27). But **Women and Resistance** cites this same leader to make a similar point: '...In

Paarl, the area where the FSAW was probably best known, FSAW meetings were not separate from union ones. Any business of the Federation that needed to be discussed would simply be raised at the end of a union meeting' (241/2).

More objectionable is the reviewers' assertion that 'it seems' that I relied heavily on the testimony of a few individuals - thus ignoring counter-testimonies - and that Ray Alexander was 'obviously' a major informant (WIP 34:27). They do not say what has led them to this conclusion nor, if this is the case, where this reliance has led me astray.

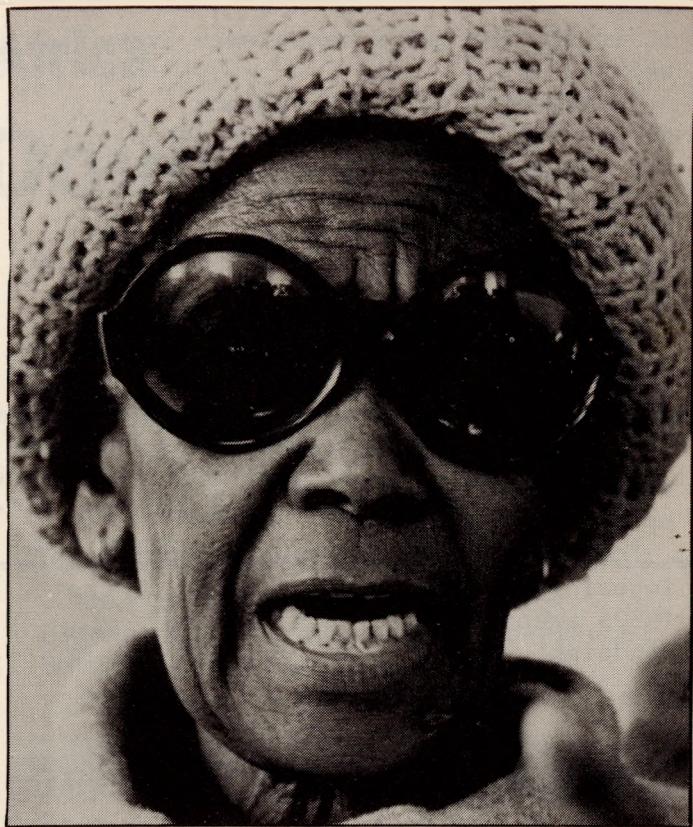
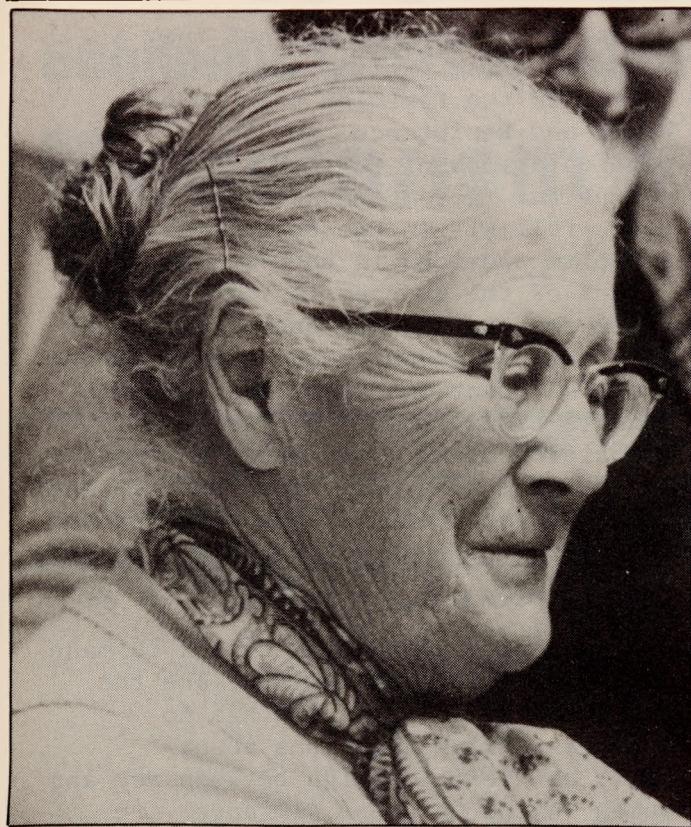
It seems that behind this criticism lurk others: that the role of Alexander and, by extension, the Communist Party within the FSAW is exaggerated and that this is the reason for my misguided feminist reading of the organisation. If this is what the reviewers infer, then I disagree emphatically with their interpretation of both the FSAW and **Women and Resistance**.

There is a difference between saying that Alexander and other members of the Communist Party were very influential in getting the FSAW off the ground, and saying that the FSAW was a communist or communist-dominated body. The former position is supported by evidence from many sources, including the oral testimony of women who were contemporaries of Alexander and avowedly not communists; the latter position is not one that I adopt.

As communists, Alexander and another founding member of the FSAW, Hilda Watts (Bernstein), brought to the inaugural conference ideas which many in the national liberation movement did not fully share. In particular their stand on feminist issues was more explicit than that of many of their colleagues, but in 1953/4 these differences were not at issue.

## RESERVES AND BIRTH CONTROL

The FSAW prepared a draft document, 'What Women Demand', for the Congress of the People in 1955. The reviewers argue that I take this as representing the agreed position of the membership of the FSAW. As evidence of my feminist blinkers and uncritical use of sources, they say that I incorrectly attribute to



Helen Joseph and Dora Tamana - founder members of the Federation

the FSAW membership support for the two clauses dealing with provision of better facilities in the reserves and the establishment of birth control clinics.

Rather, states the review, 'Federation members were only too ready to indicate to the Executive that those two points did not reflect their demands. They believed birth control constituted state interference in their personal lives. And they were under no circumstances prepared to countenance even an implicit acceptance of the reserve system' (WIP 34:28).

This version is incorrect. In my discussion, I make it clear that the document was a 'draft pamphlet' (182), not a final position paper that had been adopted by the organisation as a whole. The clause dealing with the provision of better facilities for the reserves was adopted by the general meeting. This could be interpreted to mean that the FSAW members did not understand the discussion and were misled by their leaders. I do not agree. It was only after this clause had been endorsed and the FSAW subsequently criticised by others in the Congress Alliance for thereby implying support for the reserve system, that the FSAW reviewed its position and subsequently publicly retracted this clause, in a letter published in the newspaper **New Age** on 9 July 1955.

As regards the clause on birth control, in some respects my account is fairly similar to that given in the review. I state: 'It is clear that the call for birth control clinics was formulated by the organisers of the meeting and did not come from the floor. Its inclusion in the list of women's demands sparked off a lively discussion which touched upon many fundamental issues relating to the position of women in the family. The response from the floor was mixed ...' (183).

But women at the meeting did not dwell on their relation to the state, as the review states, but on their relationships with their husbands and families. 'We cannot do it if our husbands want children' (183). One of the women whom I interviewed described how some men in the ANC reacted with derision when they heard that birth control had been discussed at a political meeting. So the call for birth control was a controversial one, and in raising this issue at a public meeting the FSAW was breaking new ground.

Perhaps I do not make it sufficiently clear that the call for birth control was not adopted as FSAW policy, but I do describe how 'Josie Palmer, in the chair, was anxious to avoid any impression that "this very delicate matter" was being forced upon anybody: "Those who accept it, OK! Those who feel

it is against their conscience, very well" (183).

To assert that black women's reluctance to endorse birth control in the 1950s was shaped purely by their opposition to the state excludes from history huge areas of human experience concerned with sexuality, the family and the intricate relationships between the private and public domains in modern South African society.

Equally, to assert flatly and against the evidence that FSAW members would never countenance the reserve system, even unintentionally, is to write mythology, not history.

The reviewers themselves are guilty of imposing upon the organisations of the 1950s agendas based on historical hindsight.

## FEMINISM AND HISTORY

If I appear to have dealt harshly with the review, it is because I feel that it adopts a position on feminism that is dangerously narrow and intolerant, as well as misleading.

The reviewers present a curiously polarised, exclusivist view of feminism. They say in effect that if one is a feminist who believes that women are and have been oppressed in our society, then it follows that one is unable to identify with, or support, the struggles of other subordinated social categories such as blacks or workers (even though they be women too). In this view, one is certainly unable to assign to other struggles precedence over those of women.

But 'feminism' is a broad and flexible term, and the mainline Eurocentric women's liberation feminism to which the reviewers refer is but one brand among many.

A feminist may be defined broadly as someone who believes in equality between the sexes and opposes discrimination against women - but then to try and lump together all those who hold that position into a single ideological camp is absurd. As absurd as lumping liberals, marxists and black nationalists into a single political

grouping on the grounds that they all condemn racism.

Neither the feminism that informs **Women and Resistance**, nor the manifestations of feminism that make up one of the foci of investigation in the book, fall within the definition of feminism provided in the review.

Part of the problem is that the reviewers confuse the questions asked with answers given. They take my asking feminist questions about events and organisations in the past as the imposition of an unwarranted feminist identity on that past. I do not present the FSAW as a feminist organisation as such but I do draw out what may today be described as its feminist aspects and moments.

I am concerned that an attack is made on the questions themselves. Are the reviewers saying that one has no business asking questions about political relationships between men and women in the Congress Alliance? Are questions concerning gender or the role and status of women illegitimate, because they were not - in the reviewers' opinion - the concern of the movement whose history is under investigation? The review tends this way, and is disturbing in the limited scope it allows the historian. Relationships between men and women within the Congress Alliance were an issue at times. How these relationships were structured, and how they were affected by the campaigns of the 1950s, is part of the wider history of women's political organisation in South Africa - whether or not the majority in the Congress Alliance saw this as important.

Although I have characterised the questions I ask as feminist, I do not regard them as ideologically limited or loaded. They are not in themselves sectarian questions. They are important for all those concerned to understand not only the position of women but also how South African society functions as a complex whole.

Unfortunately, the reviewers' concern to expose an imagined sectarianism on my part means that the book that I actually wrote does not get reviewed. A pity, because much work on the history of women and resistance in South Africa remains to be done.

# Economic Crisis in South Africa

## Monetarism's Double Bind



STEPHEN GELB and DUNCAN INNES look at the current recession in South Africa, and its international and local causes. They then turn to the long-term economic crisis, analysing the monetarist policies government is using to try to resolve this crisis.

There is consensus in South Africa that the economy is in serious crisis. A conventional wisdom in business and state circles seeks to explain both the nature and cause of this crisis.

Briefly, this states that inflation is the foremost expression of the crisis, and the high level of state expenditure is its main cause. To resolve the crisis, state expenditure must be cut.

Proponents of this view are numerous. For example, ten 'top' economists recently surveyed by the **Business Times** were unanimous that the best way to cure the country's economic ills was to 'hack the public service'. Admittedly this will increase unemployment; but, as the immediate past president of ASSOCOM, William Yeowart, puts it, 'Regrettably, the decision about redundancies is not an option in business; it is a necessity. It must become an imperative in the public service too.'

This argument is often supported by using a metaphor drawn from the medieval medical practice of bleeding where a patient's condition worsened before improving. In the conventional wisdom then, unemployment must rise before renewed economic activity causes it to fall. But in medieval times patients often died during their 'treatment' - which is why modern medicine no longer practices it.

In our view, however, the debate has been one-sidedly restricted to a perception which seeks to resolve the crisis in the interests of the ruling class. In the main, after all, it is not their jobs which are threatened. We hope that this initial attempt to develop a radical critique of the dominant economic orthodoxy will both help to broaden the current debate and help to fill a gap in radical discussion.

This is of course not the first recession South Africa has experienced. Between World War II and 1970, recessions were an integral part of the cyclical growth patterns of all capitalist economies. In general, economic upswings were accompanied by rising consumption, which led to an increase in demand for commodities and, ultimately, a rise in inflation - 'too much money chasing too few goods'. These price rises, including the rise in the price of labour power, would eventually cause demand to fall away and production to slow down. This recessionary phase would be characterised by falling prices and rising levels of unemployment - until demand was re-stimulated and the economy again 'took off'.

What makes recent recessions, and this one in particular, so serious for the South African economy is that the cyclical downswing simultaneously involves high inflation. The combination of stagnant growth and high inflation is captured in the term 'stagflation', often used to describe the present crisis.

We distinguish between **recession**, which is a short-term process lasting approximately one or two years, and an economic **crisis**, which is a longer-term phenomenon lasting as much as 25 years. This distinction is often blurred by the fact that upswings and recessions continue to occur even during an ongoing crisis.

We argue that the South African economy is not simply undergoing a short-term cyclical downswing, but that it is also in a long-term decline.

Short-term upswings may well occur, but fiscal and monetary tinkering, which worked in earlier periods, will not be sufficient to arrest the long-term

decline. A process of fundamental restructuring is needed to achieve this. The monetarist approach currently adopted by the ruling class attempts to secure this end through intensifying social oppression and class warfare. But, we conclude, this strategy is unlikely to succeed at present.

## STAGFLATION AND RECESSION

What are the main indices of stagflation? According to official figures, at the end of January this year South Africa's annual inflation rate was 13,9%. But the impact of a number of recently introduced large price increases (such as the 40% fuel price rise) have still to be felt, and several economists are predicting that the inflation rate will reach 17-18% over the next few months. At the same time, even optimistic forecasts indicate that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) - a primary indicator of the level of the nation's economic activity - will grow by less than 2% in 1985. This is stagflation.

What causes it?

**High interest rates.** These are currently in the 22-23% bracket. Such levels are exceptionally high and are guaranteed to choke off economic activity. Few firms can expect to make profits when they have to pay interest of well over 20% on loans. By comparison, the prime interest rate in the US is currently around 11,5% - and that is regarded as too high.

**The falling rand.** The rand has nose-dived by over 30% against the dollar over the last few months (from \$0,90 to around \$0,50 at present). A fall of this magnitude is highly inflationary.

**The falling gold price in US\$ terms.** Since February 1983, gold has fallen from \$515 an ounce to a low of \$284 in February (it is currently trading around \$300).

This price fall has been offset for the gold mining companies by the rand's greater fall. In fact, the mines are earning record profits (in rand terms), which they can use for local expenditure such as wages and taxes.

But this does not alter the damage done to South Africa's balance of payments by a fall in the dollar price of gold. Gold comprises approximately half of South Africa's exports by value. Consequently, a major fall in the dollar price of gold means a huge loss in

foreign exchange earnings. Without foreign exchange, imports essential to economic recovery, such as machinery and capital equipment, cannot be financed. This again leads to economic stagnation.

**The balance of payments (BOP) deficit.** This is related to the fall in the gold price. In the first quarter of last year the deficit on the current account of the BOP stood at R2,86-bn, which for this country is dangerously high.

Internationally South Africa was spending more money than it earned. Therefore it became necessary to borrow on international finance markets, incurring massive interest repayments which increased when the rand dropped.

The government chose to wipe out the deficit by pushing the economy into recession. As a result of the current recession, the BOP deficit had already been reduced to R1,46-bn by the second quarter of 1984 and by the third quarter a small surplus had even been recorded. This suggests that a turnaround in the BOP is occurring. But the cost is economic stagnation.

Immediate causes of this situation include some external to the South African economy - that is, international developments - and some that originate from within it.

## IMMEDIATE INTERNATIONAL CAUSES OF THE RECESSION

The most direct international cause is the monetarist policies of the Reagan and Thatcher governments, which have played a major role in forcing the world capitalist economy into recession. The US economy is the key factor: because of its sheer size, it is the locomotive of the world economy. If it takes off, the rest of the world gets pulled along behind; if it stops, the rest of the world grinds to a halt.

But given South Africa's historical ties with Britain, the recession which Thatcher forced on that country has also had severe implications for South Africa.

In the US, Reaganomics led to rising interest rates which forced the economy into recession between 1981 and 1983 by raising the cost of borrowing to both corporations and consumers. A further effect of high interest rates was a soaring dollar as international currency speculators invested in the US to take advantage of these rates.

Like other currencies, the rand also succumbed to dollar strength. A

substantial volume of international funds were previously held in the form of gold. As these funds were moved to be held as dollars, the gold price fell and the dollar climbed. Since the value of the rand in currency markets is closely related to the gold price because of gold's importance to the South African economy, the rising dollar not only hit the rand directly, but also indirectly by depressing the gold price.

When the US economy lurched into recession in 1981, production declined in the US, Europe and Japan. Concomitantly, imports into these countries declined - which hit South Africa's exports severely, since these are South Africa's main trading partners. South Africa's imports thus had to be financed by borrowing abroad. This increased the total foreign debt and contributed to declining confidence in the rand.

So the rand suffered a double blow: from the rampant dollar and from the mounting foreign debt, which has now reached record levels. This helps explain why the rand has fallen so dramatically.

But for the past two years the US economy has been climbing out of recession: unemployment has fallen from 10% to 6.5%. The economy grew at an average of 7% in the 18 months between 1983 and mid-1984, while inflation is held at about 4%.

Ronald Reagan gave his views on this phase of growth: 'Rewarding hard work and risk-taking has given birth to an American Renaissance. Born in the safe harbour of freedom, economic growth gathered force, and rolled out in a rising tide that has reached distant shores.'

Despite Reagan's rosy picture, the high level of the dollar relative to other currencies has in fact drawn investment capital away from other economies to the US, thus **hampering** economic growth in these 'distant shores'.

South Africa has the additional problem that Europe, not the now-prosperous US, is the main export market. So only those commodities exported directly to the US, such as manganese, have so far benefited from US expansion.

Even if the 'rising tide' of US economic recovery eventually reaches other shores, will it automatically boost South Africa's recovery? In theory, with strong world demand, South

Africa's primary sector exports (minerals and agricultural products) should flourish, earning ample foreign exchange to purchase imports needed to pull the economy out of recession.

Also, the depreciation of the rand will make South Africa's exports cheaper and more competitive with those of other countries, thus giving the economy an extra boost. Indeed, mineral exports are expected to reach record levels and to comprise 90% of total exports.

But the depreciation of the rand poses two serious problems for the economy.

While it cheapens exports, it makes imports very expensive. Since South Africa's major imports are those capital goods on which industrial recovery depends, such a recovery will be massively inflationary. The only alternative is to limit the extent of imports. But that will of necessity limit the extent of the recovery, since without imported capital goods South Africa's international competitiveness will fall.

Secondly, inflation arising from the low rand pushes the economy into a vicious circle. If productivity increases connected with industrial recovery are smaller than the increase in inflation, the low rand will be of little long-term benefit to our exports, as these will ultimately become more expensive.

Thus any export-led industrial recovery has two obstacles to overcome: either the industrial recovery will be highly inflationary or it will be extremely short-lived. More likely it will be both.

Further, it is difficult to bring interest rates down substantially. One of the aims of high interest rates is to prevent the flight of capital from South Africa, now that foreign investors are no longer bound by exchange control. Should interest rates come down, foreign capital will move elsewhere and the rand will again plummet, fuelling still higher inflation. Just as, in reverse, the sharp rise in interest rates late last year was intended to stabilise the rand. But keeping interest rates high will of course choke off the recovery - perhaps even before it starts.

#### IMMEDIATE LOCAL CAUSES OF THE RECESSION

The government's decision to raise interest rates played an important part

in pushing the South African economy into recession. What local factors led the government to raise interest rates?

Generally, the level of borrowing in South Africa has been far too high. This borrowing has three sources: consumers, companies, and the state.

**Consumers:** White South Africans have come to expect high living standards - and there is growing evidence that a section of the black middle class is following suit. Consumers not only fail to save, but also borrow to finance consumption. While this raises demand for goods, it puts a strain on availability of credit.

To curb consumer borrowing, the government raised interest rates, bond rates and HP rates to extraordinarily high levels. As a result overall consumer demand has fallen.

**Companies** borrow to finance both working capital and expansion. In South Africa the economy has become highly monopolised: large companies tend to dominate many sectors. Because large companies tend to embark on large expansion programmes, their borrowing requirements are high; therefore South Africa has a high level of company borrowing. By raising interest rates the government has also hit at company borrowing, forcing many companies to cut back production.

High interest rates are thus hitting companies in two ways: the decline in consumer spending means their market is shrinking, while they are also being forced to cut back on production. This combination accelerates the slide into recession. Businesses are going into liquidation at an increasing rate following the interest rate hike.

**State expenditure** in South Africa is rising: in 1981 it stood at 22% of GDP; today it is 29%. Much state expenditure has in the past been financed simply by the government printing more money - which is obviously inflationary. Now the government is trying to limit the increase in the money supply. One of the major aims of raising interest rates has been to make more credit available to the government by cutting consumer and company demand.

The reasons for such a high level of government expenditure are manifold:

**Defence:** South Africa is engaged in a war in Namibia, is entering into a war situation in this country, and is supporting military operations in the rest of the region (such as those of the MNR). The 1984/5 defence budget is

R4,2-bn, which is 15,4% of the total budget of R27,3-bn.

**Black education:** The economy's need for more skilled labour and black student demands for improved education have both forced greatly expanded spending in this area. Total expenditure on education today is as high as that on defence.

**'Homeland development':** Central government subsidies to the 'homelands' are crucial to their economic and political survival. In addition, 'homeland' regimes are siphoning off a lot of this money for corrupt purposes, and for wasteful white elephants like international airports. 'Homeland development' also includes central government subsidies for companies (up to R1-bn annually), to encourage them to decentralise to 'border' areas.

#### **White civil servant salaries and wages:**

These are a drain on government coffers, but the government sees them as necessary to maintain a political constituency. Major cuts would provide fertile recruiting opportunities for the HNP and especially the CP.

**Farmers' subsidies:** These are increasingly important not only because of the drought, but because white farmers are politically significant to the government.

The drought also has serious implications for the balance of payments. Exports of agricultural goods have declined drastically, reducing foreign exchange earnings. And last year South Africa was a net importer of food, raising the import bill and hitting the balance of payments from that side as well.

How does the government finance this high level of expenditure? There are five basic sources of government revenue: taxation of companies; taxation of individuals (ten years ago this accounted for 22% of government revenue; today it accounts for 30%); General Sales Tax (GST) on goods and services; borrowing both locally and overseas; and 'printing' money, which means that the Reserve Bank lends money to commercial banks in order for them to expand credit.

During an economic upswing, tax revenue increases as company profits rise, individuals get wage and salary increases, and consumption is high. Conversely, as the economy moves into recession, government income from taxes drops as profits and incomes fall.

Not surprisingly, after 1982, the

government was forced to borrow money on the private European market, and twice from the IMF. Also, the 1984 Budget raised the company tax rate from 42% to 46% (with the effective rate - allowing for deductions - going up from 23% to 38%). Thirdly, in 1984 GST was raised from 7% to 10%. Despite all these measures, the government was forced to increase the money supply at a rate far exceeding its target, to help finance its spending.

All these measures contribute to stagflation: the rise in GST and increasing the money supply are inflationary, while borrowing pushes up interest rates, encouraging stagnation.

Thus government policy has played an important role in creating the conditions for stagflation. But it is committed to policies and projects (like the five mentioned earlier) which it is afraid to discard for political and economic reasons. There has also been an element of bad planning in government policy since it gambled on a rise in the price of gold to bail it out.

Economists' conventional wisdom, in line with monetarist theory, is that cutting expenditure is crucial to resolving stagflation. This reflects their policy priority - to bring down the rate of inflation. So they focus on the '-flation' part of stagflation, rather than on overcoming economic 'stag'-nation and promoting employment. This focus on inflation will exacerbate stagnation and unemployment as high interest rates continue to hold back job-creating investment. This process is worsened by the monetarist demand that government expenditure be drastically cut.

Recently there has been some government support for this argument. Soon after his appointment, the Minister of Finance, Barend du Plessis, announced that he was pruning 1984 spending from R27,3-bn to R27,1-bn. But this was too small a cut to be of any real benefit; 1984 spending was still 21,5% higher than that in 1983.

At the beginning of this year, the Minister announced further cuts in state expenditure: government subsidies on petrol and transport fares were substantially reduced, the total wage and salary bill for state employees was cut - and there is currently informed speculation about large cuts in basic food subsidies.

In a further attempt to increase revenue, the government announced a tax

on company 'perks'. However, following an outcry from the business community and middle class salary earners, the government **diluted** its initial proposal. This makes clear which classes are expected to bear the brunt of monetarist policies and bail the government out of near-bankruptcy.

### THE LONG-TERM CRISIS

The government also recognises and is trying to deal with other deep-rooted (structural) problems underlying current stagflation. We too need to consider this recession in a longer-term context, to understand its deeper causes and to examine the limits on ruling class action to resolve it.

During the period after World War II, the South African economy, together with the rest of the capitalist world, enjoyed rates of economic growth higher than ever before. The period up to the end of the 1960s can be seen as a long-term upswing.

But from the start of the 1970s, certainly after mid-1974, the capitalist world has gone into a long-term downswing - or crisis - with much lower rates of economic growth. The long-term upswing and the crisis differ not only in growth rates, but in that the **short-term** business cycles of boom and recession (within each long period) take a different form.

During the long-term upswing, recessions in South Africa were generally very short (the longest being 20 months in 1971/2), and not very deep. Fundamental restructuring of the economy was not necessary to re-stimulate growth. Recessions were generally resolved fairly easily by government use of fiscal and monetary policies. This involved increasing government spending to raise overall demand, thereby stimulating production and higher employment; or expanding credit provision to encourage investment by companies and HP spending by consumers.

This phase was usually characterised by price increases, which caused the rate of inflation to rise as the 1960s proceeded. Nonetheless, booms during this period were generally long and vigorous.

But after 1970 each South African recession has been longer than the last, and far worse than any experienced since 1945. Each of these major recessions has been followed by a half-hearted upswing

(except for the more sustained upswing which occurred when the gold price went shooting up to \$850 during 1980).

During the recessions of the past 15 years, the government's remedial approaches have not worked very well, either in moving the economy out of a recession or in sustaining a boom. Instead, the effect of these policies has often been to create new economic problems.

One example is the government's handling of the 1983/4 'mini-boom'. During the long-term upswing a short-term boom would have been extended by an increase in government expenditure. But circumstances have changed. Government policies could not sustain the minor upswing which began in early 1983, despite increases in government spending which went far beyond even those budgeted.

Instead inflation, the trade deficit and government borrowing all began to rise towards dangerously high levels. Crucially, however, corporate investment did not rise, as businessmen's views of future profitability remained negative so they limited themselves to bringing unutilised capacity back into use.

The subsequent rise in imports in response to government spending did not result from new investment in machinery and equipment as in earlier booms, but from higher imports of consumer goods. The fact that business confidence remained low despite growing consumer demand is indicative of the inability of government policy to sustain the boom.

Governments in other countries face similar difficulties. For example, recent US economic policy has been to keep interest rates high so as to offset the inflationary effects of the massive budget deficit and to strengthen the dollar to fuel an economic recovery.

But the effects have been firstly to damp down any significant recovery of investment in the US which might sustain growth. Secondly, investment capital has been drawn away from Europe and other capitalist countries as it seeks to benefit from high US interest rates, thereby impeding the recovery in these countries as well. Last, and worst of all, the interest burden of Third World debtor countries has been raised, pushing them to the brink of default, and threatening to collapse the entire international financial system.

This inability of monetary and fiscal policies to resolve immediate economic problems suggests that these problems

are manifestations of a long-term downswing. They have deeper roots in the socio-economic structure. A more permanent solution - a return to a long-run upswing - requires fundamental restructuring of wider social relations. This is what monetarism aims to achieve.

In a narrow sense monetarism (as the word implies) refers to 'the use of financial controls to stabilise the price level', as John Wells notes (**IDS Bulletin**, December 1981). The term has also acquired a broader meaning. Following the policies adopted by Reagan, Thatcher and various Latin American governments, monetarism has also come to mean the attempt 'to achieve a major change in the balance of power... and a restructuring of the system of production'.

Thus monetarism does not simply deal with technical economic issues, but ranges far more widely and has involved vicious oppression. As Wells noted, 'The duration and intensity with which harsh, anti-social economic and social policies have been applied; the explicit desire by governments to introduce radical transformations of an enduring character in structures of production, in attitudes, in behaviour and in social relationships; and the ruthlessly authoritarian character of the political regimes in the Southern Cones (of Latin America) have few parallels in modern history'.

## SOCIAL RESTRUCTURING IN SOUTH AFRICA

**Wages and inflation:** Perhaps the central issue of monetarism in South Africa is the attempt to change the balance of power between capital and labour both on the shop floor and in the labour market. A key reason for the emergence and continuation of the crisis during the 1970s was the increased power of labour relative to capital.

Business leaders respond in two ways: by complaining that high wages are inflationary, and demanding that workers tighten their belts for the common good; and by constantly bemoaning low productivity levels. Based on the view that growth must be export-led (rather than domestic consumption-led), they argue that both lower wages and higher productivity are necessary to increase South Africa's competitiveness within world markets. Similar arguments were developed in Britain and the US,

accompanied by attempts to smash the power of trade unions directly, as well as to weaken them by inducing recession and high unemployment.

While black wage increases gained in trade union struggles over the past decade have **contributed** to inflation, they were not the original cause. Historically black wages in South Africa have been low. When they did begin to rise from the early 1970s it was largely in response to an already existing inflationary situation. Companies met these rises by further increasing prices so as to preserve their rates of profit, thereby bringing about an inflationary spiral. The blame for inflation cannot simply be laid at the door of unions; rather, it arises out of a conflict over the distribution of income in society.

The government is trying to resolve this conflict and end the inflationary spiral by attacking unions so as to weaken their bargaining power - both directly (by banning unions, detaining and banning leaders, breaking up strikes and banning meetings), or indirectly.

During the 1970s working class power increased. For political reasons the ruling class was forced to tolerate (and in a few instances, even encourage) trade unionism. The aim was to tame working class militancy by enmeshing it in unions which, it was hoped, could be persuaded and pressurised into becoming bureaucratic and economicistic. This has not been very successful to date.

Nonetheless, substantial opposition remains within the ruling class itself to a return to the pre-Wiehahn approach of smashing labour organisation by direct physical repression. While the immediate aim of the current recession is to bring down the rate of inflation, its longer-term objective is to draw the unions' teeth, forcing them onto the defensive in the face of massive retrenchments. This would both reduce their future ability to win wage increases and weaken their power to resist 'productivity improvements' on the shop floor (in the form of greater discipline, speedups, reorganisation of work, etc).

If successful, the balance of power would be shifted back to capital's side while unions would remain, but in a weakened form. The political costs (domestic and international) of crude repression of worker organisation would be avoided.

The long-term goal of the monetarist-induced recession is consistent with the

original aim of the post-Wiehahn labour dispensation: to restore capital's power over labour.

#### **Exchange rate and fiscal policy:**

Policy here also has short- and long-term aims. Both the immediate balance of payments problem and attempts to promote future export-led growth required a substantial reduction in the value of the rand. There are a number of ways to achieve such a depreciation. The way the government deliberately chose - to allow the rand to plummet over a very short space of time - was intended to shock several groups in the economy into developing a consciousness of 'economic crisis'. These included: consumers (especially whites), state employees and consumers of state services (again, mainly whites), and finally, corporate investors.

Having prepared the ground, the government could then tackle the fiscal crisis. It seeks to force these groups to cut down on their own spending and/or demands for higher salaries, while hoping to limit the political backlash as it reduces state services and subsidies.

The seriousness of the fiscal crisis should not be underestimated. State revenue from taxes is no longer adequate to cover current spending on goods and services. So instead of borrowing only to cover its capital investments, the state now needs to borrow to cover immediate commitments as well. One senior state bureaucrat recently noted that in fact the state was 'technically insolvent'.

While the massive drop in the rand's value and cutbacks in state subsidies are intended to reduce inflationary pressures in the economy, in the short term both will increase the inflation rate. This has already climbed to 16%. Current state policies are not without their contradictions - the attempted solution to one set of problems generates others.

**The 'free market':** Closely related to the above is the state's attempt to remove obstacles to the so-called 'free play' of market forces across a range of areas of the economy, such as production, consumption, finance and foreign trade.

First, this has involved cutting back both direct state support to the private sector and indirect aid through selling off shares in SASOL. There has also been some talk of future 'privatisation' plans involving ISCOR and SA Airways,

among others. Should this occur, such corporations will be forced to compete at market prices as opposed to having their prices heavily subsidised.

Second, the central government has cut its provision of a wide range of services, such as white education, health care and municipal services.

Finally, financial and foreign trade controls have been eased. This includes lifting exchange controls on overseas residents, and allowing the rand to float on international currency markets. These latter changes make the South African economy more 'open' - and we would argue, more vulnerable - to forces in the international economy.

The state justifies these initiatives as attempts to 'depoliticise' the market so as to stimulate the efficiency and productivity which is supposedly characteristic of an unfettered market. But the relationship between a 'free market' economy and high productivity is open to question. In any event, are these initiatives in fact producing a 'free' market?

While the state cuts spending in **some** areas, it is actually increasing it in others, notably black education, industrial decentralisation, and defence. It can be argued too that the withdrawal of state subsidies, especially on black consumption items, necessitates increasing state spending on the police and military. A 'free' economy is not at all incompatible with a strong state.

In effect, the state is not so much removing itself from the economy, as changing its role. Since this involves increased expenditure in some areas, it contradicts the state's attempts to overcome the fiscal crisis through a reduction in spending.

Nevertheless, 'free market' policies will produce a substantial transfer of control over resources and future income. This is true not only in the sense that forcing consumers of services to pay more (eg township rents, white school fees) constitutes a redistribution of resources away from these groups. Also, the removal of state protection and subsidies leaves weaker firms prone to bankruptcy or takeover by stronger monopoly corporations, exposing their workers to retrenchment.

In Chile, such policies have led to the widespread collapse of industry, generating rampant unemployment even among the middle classes. This is less likely to occur in South Africa because

of the presence of a few extremely powerful local monopoly corporations, which are moving in to take over smaller firms feeling the pinch. 'Privatisation' therefore contributes to the next aspect of restructuring.

**Centralisation of ownership:** Over the last few decades the South African economy has become highly cartelised. This process is intensified during recessions, particularly if these are monetarist-induced. While small companies might be the first to go, larger ones are not immune either. For instance, retail chain stores which operate on a large turnover with small profits per unit, are hit severely by a substantial drop in demand. Dion's is an example. Following a sharp drop in sales it had to be rescued by the Kirsh group, itself recently absorbed into the Sanlam empire.

The recession has had a similar effect in the motor industry where 11 manufacturers competed on the relatively small market. Leaders in the industry began emphasising the need for 'rationalisation' to overcome the harmful effects of competition. (What price the free market here?) Recently, a new motor giant, SAMCOR, was created out of the merger of Ford SA with AMCAR - at a cost of 2 000 jobs. SAMCOR is firmly entrenched within the Anglo American group.

The process of centralisation rolls relentlessly on: in 1984 there were 21 major take-overs in South Africa involving assets over R1,1-bn. Instead of being invested in new production to create jobs, this money was used in purely financial transactions which further strengthened ownership and control structures within capital. This contributes to the ruling class overall aim of shifting the balance of power away from the working class.

**Political institutions:** A critical area of restructuring is that of political institutions. The South African crisis has manifested itself not simply in the economy, but in all aspects of society. Faced with increased political and ideological challenges over the past few years, the state has reorganised the political institutions through which it seeks to incorporate various oppressed groups.

Initial attempts to rejuvenate the bantustans through a 'constellation of states' were followed by introduction of the President's Council, urban black community councils, the tricameral

parliament and the Black Local Authorities Act. The repeated rejection of each of these has led elements within the state to examine aspects of federalism as a possible future option.

The question of political rights is of course crucial to the overall struggle for change in South Africa, but also has important implications for economic growth.

## CONCLUSION

The major priority of the state and leading business sectors is to carry through these restructuring policies. To do this, they have to inflict severe damage on various social groups, especially workers and the poor in general. These social costs are presented as a positive virtue. As Wells says, 'Such self-inflicted economic masochism is lauded as a means of self-rejuvenation.'

What, then, are the chances of the ruling class succeeding? Our answer is: very small.

The ruling class is in fact caught in a vicious circle. Resolving the crisis depends on social restructuring, which in turn depends on high economic growth, which is impossible so long as the crisis persists.

In order to succeed over the long term, any form of political representation would need to be supplemented by increased welfare based on **some** 'trickle down' of the benefits of economic growth. Without this, the continuation of poverty and income disparities will severely restrict the state's capacity to neutralise political opposition. Unless and until neutralisation succeeds, the state will continue using the familiar policies of direct repression - which is in any event necessitated by the move towards 'free market' policies, as we saw recently in the Vaal.

Restructuring also requires a higher level of state spending - on police and military, 'constitutional development', industrial decentralisation, and other items. Resolution of the crisis thus depends on a robust economy.

It is partly recognition of this which leads the ruling class to insist upon a rising level of productivity. But attempts to achieve this may also be self-defeating. For one thing, productivity improvement requires a more skilled and better disciplined labour force, involving even higher expenditure on black education. Secondly, productivity improvements need either to be enforced - which increases conflict on the shop floor and is therefore counter-productive - or they need to be accompanied by financial incentives (and not, as at the moment, an attack on workers' living standards).

But incentives in turn undermine the drive to bring down inflation. But productivity hikes do not just involve workers: they also depend on new technologies. This means keeping imports (of machinery and capital equipment) high, so preventing any 'fundamental' improvement in the balance of payments. Major productivity improvements will not be easy to achieve.

There may well be further short-lived, minor booms in South Africa over the next few years, similar to that of 1983/4. This is more likely if South Africa's exports are boosted, either by a sustained recovery in the international economy or, alternatively, by an appreciable rise in the dollar price of gold.

But a **sustained** economic recovery in South Africa does not appear to be on the cards for the near future: the restructuring of social relations on which it depends is itself dependent on high economic growth. This is the double bind in which the ruling class finds itself.

# Courts

## Sipho Bridget 'Machina' Xulu (25) Clarence Lucky Payi (20)

The accused were detained by security police under section 29 of the Internal Security Act on 7 June 1984. They first appeared in court at the end of November, charged with murder, conspiracy to commit murder, terrorism, and illegal possession of arms.

The state alleged that in 1981 Payi left South Africa to undergo military training under the auspices of the ANC. He received such training in Angola and East Germany. Xulu, it was claimed, left South Africa to undergo military training during 1983.

In May 1984, according to the state, they returned to South Africa with the intention of murdering people hostile to the ANC, to recruit and train people in subversion and warfare, and to establish communication with ANC agents outside South Africa.

The state alleged that, on the night of 20 May 1984 Payi and Xulu, who were both armed, were driven to the home of Ben Langa, a former SASO activist and an ANC member. They believed that Langa was also a police informer. They were driven by Dennis Nzama Hadebe, and accompanied by George Martins. Martins' brother, Ben Dikobe Martins, was at the time accused in a treason trial, and subsequently was sentenced to ten years imprisonment for participation in ANC activities.

After a discussion between Martins and Langa the accused each shot Langa twice, killing him.

The state claimed that after this, the accused conspired to murder Dr Modise Faith Motlaopane, but decided not to proceed with their plan.

Xulu allegedly asked Hadebe and Matlaopane to find recruits to undergo military training, and also to find a suitable place to train recruits. The state claimed that Zulu asked Eunice Zandile Ngcobo to travel to Swaziland,

passing on messages to ANC contacts.

Xulu also allegedly instructed Hadebe in the use of secret codes in order to send and receive secret messages.

Both accused pleaded guilty to the murder, conspiracy to commit murder, and terrorism counts, but claimed that there were extenuating circumstances surrounding their acts. The state refused to accept the pleas of guilty to murder with extenuating circumstances, and led evidence as if the accused had pleaded not guilty.

A state witness, who - on the judge's ruling may not be identified in any way - told the court that Langa had been eliminated because he had supplied incorrect information to the ANC.

Police testified that they had found a coded message under Xulu's mattress which he had not yet sent to the ANC. The decoded message was handed in to the court as an exhibit, and read: 'Ben Langa eliminated on May 20. Reason: Leopard (a high-ranking ANC official) informed us on the day we left that Ben is the guy who handed two comrades to the Boers. Also that he operated fully for the enemy'.

Payi testified that he had been recruited to the ANC when he was 15, while still at school in KwaMashu. He had participated in the 1980 school boycotts, and joined the ANC because he 'wanted to contribute to the struggle of the people'.

Xulu told the court that he had become a spokesperson for the residents of Sobantu Village over rent increases and grievances about living conditions. Through his political activities he came into contact with Langa and Motlaopane. After clashes between police and residents of Sobantu, Xulu went on the run, and Langa subsequently recruited him for the ANC.

Both accused stated that they did not regret killing Langa, as they had been acting under orders of a senior ANC

officer and were bound by oath to obey. They said that they believed Langa was a police informer posing as a recruiter for the ANC. If they had not carried out their orders, they would have faced an ANC firing squad.

**Verdict:** After the state had withdrawn charges of unlawful possession of arms and ammunition, presiding judge Kriek (sitting with two assessors) found the accused guilty of murder, conspiracy to commit murder, and terrorism.

**Sentence:** The state argued that any extenuating circumstances did not outweigh the premeditated nature of the murder of Langa, and that both accused should be sentenced to death.

Judge Kriek agreed, and sentenced both accused to hang. In addition, sentences of eight years imprisonment on each of the other counts were imposed: four years of the terrorism sentence to run concurrently with the conspiracy to murder sentence.

(Pietermaritzburg Supreme Court, 26.02.85).

In a subsequent development, the ANC denied that it had ordered Langa's murder. A Lusaka statement read: 'The organisation is convinced that agents of the Pretoria regime put out false information aimed at discrediting Langa. When the real truth emerges, it will be shown that the ultimate responsibility for Langa's death lies with the Pretoria regime'.

The possibility of a state security organisation falsely discrediting anti-apartheid activists was again raised shortly after Xulu and Payi had been sentenced to death. Transvaal UDF administrative secretary, Patrick Lephunya, alleged that he was taken from his Soweto home by four men, two of whom claimed that they were members of the National Intelligence Service (NIS). They warned him that if he did not co-operate with them, they would 'frame' him as an informer. The ANC would then order his execution as a traitor.

NIS denied that its agents had been involved in this incident.

#### Frans Maserumula (29)

The accused faced charges of attempted murder, and of contravening the Internal Security Act.

The state alleged that he left South Africa in 1980 to undergo ANC military training, and returned with the aim of

committing acts of terrorism, furthering ANC aims, and recruiting people for ANC activities.

Maserumula was also charged with attempting to murder three people in the Northern Transvaal town of Nebo in October 1983.

Detained by security police on 15 June 1984, the accused told the court that he was 'proud to be an ANC member'.

A state witness, Selatule Mampuru (22), testified that during September 1983 the accused told him that he had undergone training in Angola and Mozambique. Mampuru said that Maserumula had shown him and six friends how to strip an AK-47 rifle, and demonstrated how to use it. They had also been urged by the accused to listen to 'Radio Freedom'.

**Verdict:** Guilty.

**Sentence:** Five years for undergoing military training; three years for furthering the aims of the ANC; and two-and-a-half years for firing at three people (ten-and-a-half years in total). (Middelburg Regional Court, 29.03.85).

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#### Sundrasegarad Thevar (29)

Manogran Thevar (21)

Ms Tholsiamah Pillay (21)

The state alleged that, by writing threatening letters to candidates in the House of Delegates election, and by claiming these letters came from the ANC, the accused had furthered ANC aims.

During the trial, the accused testified that they were not ANC members or active supporters, but had used the name of the ANC to 'instill fear into the hearts' of candidates involved in the tri-cameral parliamentary election. The court accepted this evidence.

**Verdict:** Guilty of conspiring to further the aims of the ANC.

**Sentence:** Sundrasegaran Thevar was sentenced to two years imprisonment, of which 18 months was suspended; his brother, Manogran, was sentenced to 18 months, suspended; and Pillay was sentenced to 12 months, suspended.

The magistrate took note that the accused had all been in custody since August 1984, including two-and-a-half months in solitary confinement as section 29 detainees.

All three accused intend appealing against conviction, and the elder Thevar will appeal against sentence as well. (Durban Regional Court, 19.02.85).

# Strikes & Disputes: Tvl

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	ISSUE	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
AECI Modderfontein	SACWU	Safety, wages, danger pay	1 000+ / 600	13.02.85- 22.02.85	Explosion killed four instantly, injured 27. Death toll (all black workers) reached 14 by 18.02. On that day, 1 000+ workers stopped work in protest against factory safety conditions, demanding danger pay of R500/month. Workers blame careless supervisors for blast. Union accepts offer of R60/month danger allowance, and strikers return to work 22.02. On that day, 600 workers down tools in legal strike after three conciliation board hearings fail to resolve wage dispute. Management had offered R370 monthly minimum wage, but workers demanded R480 (R100 across-the-board increase).
Anglo American Corp Two OFS gold mines	NUM	Alleged police assaults during 1984 legal strike	164	Feb 1985	NUM members sue Minister of Law and Order for damages arising out of alleged police assaults during legal strike. Claims range from R5 000 to R30 000, and total R2-m.
Dairy Maid (Barlow Rand) Pretoria	FBWU	Consumer boycott of products over unfair labour practices, and union recognition	80	Feb 1985	Union called off community boycott after Dairy Maid agreed to reinstate 80 dismissed workers, and pay them R70 000. Company agreed to recognise union on proof of representivity. Workers were dismissed after a work stoppage a year ago.
East Driefontein Mine (Gold Fields) East Rand	NUM	Quality of food, disciplinary cases, white miner assaults on black workers	1 100	15.02.85- 17.02.85	Violence erupted after an unofficial work stoppage was called. Police called to the mine. Over 100 workers wounded by birdshot. Management claimed police called in to prevent intimidation. Strike officially over on 17.02. When 794 workers did not report for weekend shift, their contracts were terminated, and ordered to leave premises. Six shaft stewards arrested on 15.02. On 19.02, Gold Fields applied for Supreme Court order to evict fired workers. By 27.02, 91 workers ordered to evict hostel. Nine workers opposed the application, and case postponed to 30.04. Workers have applied to Industrial Court for reinstatement, claiming they were under police arrest when management gave ultimatum to return to work.
Fedmis Phalaborwa	SACWU	White foreman seen in police uniform	870	18.02.85 -	Workers struck after seeing a foreman at the plant in police uniform. Union alleged foreman was armed and intimidated workers. Management began firing workers who did not arrive for shifts on 21.02, saying negotiations with SACWU had failed.
Hartebeesfontein Mine (Anglovaal) Klerksdorp	NUM	Five week boycott to break monopoly of mine liquor stores		Feb 1985- March 1985	Management acted against independent liquor traders outside hostels. Mine security and police called in, and use rubber bullets and teargas on gathered workers - 13 injured on 12.03. Returned to work on 14.03. Recent boycotts at mine include local concession store and taxis.

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	ISSUE	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
Kloof Gold Mine (Gold Fields) Westonaria	NUM	Hostel manager, leave pay, grievance procedures	13 000	11.02.85	Workers refused to go on early shift. Management discussed issue with NUM, and workers returned to work in evening when management undertook to look into grievances. Workers claim hostel manager victimised them because of boycott of mine shops. Management agreed to discussing better dates for payment of leave pay. Union says three-month boycott of 'shark shops' near mine will only be called off if owners stop harassing miners; stop offering bubblegum instead of small change; stop selling rotten food; charge legal prices.
OK Bazaars Pretoria	CCAWUSA	Protest at hiring of five white workers after 15 black retrenchments	500	08.02.85	Workers stopped work at the Van Der Walt Street branch of OK, demanding that the newly hired whites be dismissed. Management fires three white workers. At Gezina branch of OK, workers strike over same issue, and canteen food prices. Union negotiating.
Packsure Plastic Manufacturers Pretoria	GWUSA	Union recognition, wages	54	11.03.85- 14.03.85	Two union members dismissed over demands for union recognition and wage increases. All co-workers down tools. Workers restart work while union and management negotiate. When management stipulate that workers belong to a 'company union', workers strike again. Police called in, and a truck is sent to union offices by management to fetch striking workers. On 14.03, management and union organisers meet. Management agrees to election of interim shop steward committee before going on to negotiate a recognition agreement.
Pick 'n Pay	CCAWUSA/ RAWU	CCAWUSA wage dispute. RAWU recognition	12 000	31.01.85	CCWAUSA reached agreement with company after a mediated dispute. Wage increases backdated to 31.12.84 applied to workers earning less than R750 a month. Agreement covers workers of all colours. RAWU concludes preliminary recognition agreement with Pick 'n Pay in the Northern Transvaal.
Pilkington Tiles Meyerton	BCWU	Wage increases, working hours, union recognition	540	14.02.85 -	Workers struck, claiming management had failed to implement promised wage increases in June and December. Following the November stay away, they were forced into shorter working hours rather than retrenchment. Workers claim management has delayed union recognition talks and has threatened union members with dismissal. Workers have demanded to meet company chairman from England.
Pioneer Ready Mixed Concrete Johannesburg	BAMCWU	Retrenchments	100	19.03.85	Truck drivers struck in protest against retrenchment of 29 drivers. Returned to work while BAMCWU negotiated with management. Workers demand that proposed wage increases be scrapped to save the 29 jobs.

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	ISSUE	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
Plascon Paint Luipaardsvlei, Cham dor, Johannesburg, Alberton	SACWU	Wage increase, re-instatement of 100 dismissed workers	620	31.01.85 -	Workers at four plants went on strike after wage negotiations deadlocked. Three plants went back to work, but Luipaardsvlei workers refused until 100 co-workers, dismissed on 01.02 following the strike, were unconditionally re-instated.
Potchefstroom Municipality	SABMWU	Union recognition, victimisation, retrenchments	200+	20.02.85 -	Seventeen workers retrenched in past weeks. Union claims an executive member unfairly dismissed. Workers strike on 20.02, demanding union recognition. All 200 fired that afternoon when they refused to return to work. All strikers arrested and charged with illegal strike.
Pulp and Paper Industrial Council	PWAWU	Factory floor wage negotiations			Employers agree to refer wage negotiations to factory level to break deadlock with unions. Council will take lowest minimum wage negotiated at factory floor as legal minimum for the whole industry.
Raleigh Cycles Springs	UMMAWSA	Wage talks deadlock		Feb 1985	Union declared a dispute, claiming that Raleigh had not bargained in good faith. Earlier in February, Raleigh laid-off 70 workers in terms of an agreement negotiated with the union.
Rand Broom and Brush Manufacturers	BCWU	Dismissal of 60 workers; union recognition	60	Feb 1985	Brushes and Cleaners Workers Union declared a dispute, accusing the company of firing workers because they belonged to a union. Mediator appointed, nine workers re-instated, and management recognises the union. BCWU plans to affiliate to CUSA.
Rietspruit Colliery (Rand Mines and Shell) Witbank	NUM	Dismissal of two shop stewards	70	21.02.85	Seventy workers dismissed after ignoring ultimatum to return to work and end five day strike. NUM general secretary flew to Holland where he spoke to Shell management and Dutch unions in attempt to mobilise international pressure for re-instatement of workers.
Siemens Pretoria and East Rand	MAWU	Retrenchment of 500 coloured, African and white workers	2 500	20.03.85	Two thousand workers at five Siemens plants downed tools over threat of redundancies caused by new technology. Management calls for voluntary redundancies, offering four weeks wages in lieu of notice, one weeks pay for each year of service, two weeks pay for each year over ten years service, and offers training for alternative employment. Workers demand better severance conditions because redundancies due to technology, not state of economy. Return to work while negotiations take place with union.
Central state	Ten unions for state employees in transport, postal, teachers, etc	Cabinet announces one third cut in 13th cheque, and wage increase freeze	1-m	March 1985	Public sector workers hold nation-wide protests against proposed cuts. Railway workers call for strike action, and pass no confidence vote in government. Nursing Association and Posts and Telegraph Association accept cuts. State President agrees to meet SATS, teachers and public servant and postal associations. Public Servants Association accepts cuts. Police, prison and SADF prevented by regulation from mobilising.

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	ISSUE	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
Vaal Reefs Mine (Anglo American) Klerksdorp	NUM	Wage dissatisfaction	42 000	20.03.85- 25.03.85	Underground work stoppage when workers protested against wage adjustments of certain monthly-paid workers without union consultation. Night shift returned to work after talks began between management and union. On 21.03, 42 000 workers downed tools demanding the same increases as monthly paid workers. On 24.03, 35 miners injured by police on way to meeting. Union warns management not to involve police. Talks continued as most strikers returned to work on 25.03.

## Strikes & Disputes: W Cape

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	ISSUE	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
Continental China Blackheath, Cape Town	SAAWU	Wage increase	450	08.03.85 -	A union demand for a minimum wage of R2,00 an hour was refused by management. Workers refused to work until union demands were met, and management closed the plant. SAAWU refuses to negotiate until workers are re-employed. Workers also demand the disbanding of a works committee, and the re-instatement of 650 workers dismissed from the company's Rosslyn plant in November 1984.
SA Nylon Spinners (SANS) Bellville	NUTW	Wage dispute	600	22.02.85 -	Union called one-day legal strike following breakdown of protracted wage talks. Workers had rejected management's offer of a 10,5% increase. Union proposed 16,5% increase.
Table Bay Spinners	NUTW	Stop order facilities for union		Feb 1985	The textile industry in the Western Cape operates a closed shop, restricted to IUCSA's TWIU. NUTW applied for exemption from the industrial council agreement for its members at Table Bay Spinners, but this was blocked by the council. NUTW took the issue to the industrial court, which refused to overturn the industrial council's decision. NUTW will now appeal to the Supreme Court on this issue.

## Strikes & Disputes: Natal

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	ISSUE	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
AECI Newcastle	SACWU	Workers demand R100 across-the-board increase. Management offers only 9%	600	22.03.85	No agreement could be reached on this wage dispute, which was then unsuccessfully referred to a conciliation board six times. Workers held a strike ballot on 21.03, and legally struck on 22.03. Unemployed workers began queuing for jobs at the factory.

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	ISSUE	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
Bakers Biscuits Durban and Isando (Ivl)	SFAWU	Demand for basic wage of R110 per week, or across-the-board R25 per week increase.	1 000	08.02.85- 22.02.85	A two-week legal strike was held at Westmead (Durban) plant over pay demand. On 11.02, workers at the Isando plant joined the strike. The strike followed lengthy negotiations since July 1984. Workers had rejected management's offer of a 12% increase because it was lower than inflation rate. On 22.03, workers accepted a 16,5% increase, ie minimum wage of R96 per week.
Consolidated Frame Cotton Corporation Durban	NUTW	Unfair dismissal	27	22.02.85	Union claimed in industrial court that 27 workers had been unfairly dismissed. Frame applied to Supreme Court to prevent industrial court re-instanting the workers. This application was dismissed.
Dunlop SA	MAWU	Payout over unfair dismissal	4	13.02.85	Dunlop was unwilling to accept the finding of a jointly appointed mediator that the dismissal of four (of five) workers dismissed last year was unfair. Dunlop wished to refer the matter to the industrial court, which MAWU refused to consider. On 13.02, Dunlop made an ex gratia payment of R15 000 to the four workers, and agreed to negotiate disciplinary and procedural matters with MAWU at a future date.
ISCOR/Durban Navigation Collieries		Strike over unfair dismissal	144	23.02.85	One-hundred-and-forty-four workers were fired and deported to the Transkei after they went on strike over alleged unfair dismissals.
King Edward Hospital Wentworth Hospital Durban	HAWU	Wage demand	500 100	04.02.85 -	Employees struck on 04.02, claiming that a wage increase of 10% was inadequate. They had received no increase since 1981. Strikers were told to return to work the next morning, or face dismissal. The MEC in charge of hospitals said the increase would be effective from 01.02, but strikers refused to return until their salaries were put on a par with other provincial hospitals. Strikers marched to Natal Medical School for a meeting, and 500 were subsequently fired and charged with trespassing. Medical students marched on the hospital in protest. On 09.02, 211 Wentworth strikers accepted the pay offer and returned to work. Most King Edward strikers were re-instated, and trespass charges withdrawn.
Robertsons Ltd Durban	FCWU	Dismissal of three workers	360	Feb 1985	Workers struck over the dismissal of three co-workers, including the chairman of the union's shop steward committee. Management said the issue was being resolved through internal grievance procedures.
WG Brown Group (Spar) Durban and Pietermaritzburg	CCAWUSA	Re-instatement of dismissed workers		March 1985	After a December 1984 strike over wages and union recognition, 143 workers were dismissed. CCAWUSA called a boycott of all Spar outlets. International Union of Food and Allied Workers Association called on WG Brown Group to negotiate with CCAWUSA in good faith.

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