

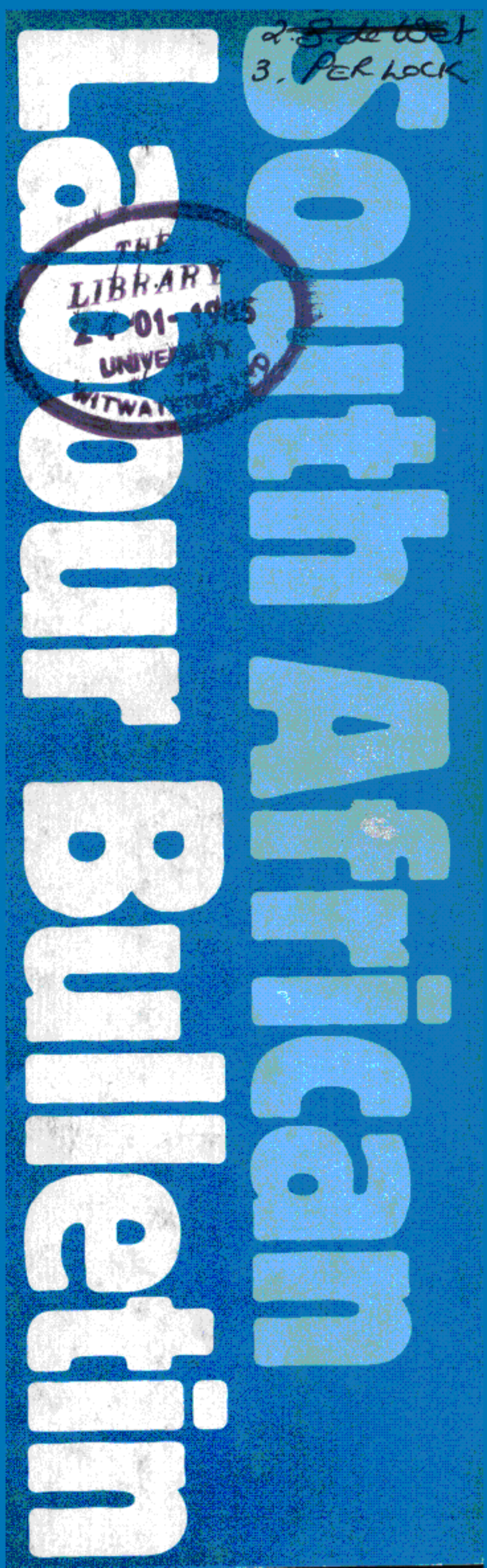
FOCUS: MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Sasol . IMF . Auto . India . OK
Dairy Maid Botcott . CCAWUSA . Spar
Quality Circles . Unemployment
Workstudy . Ford (UK) GWU-WP
NUM . Workmen's Compensation

Job Evaluation
Jacques Perold
Len le Roux
Bill Cowan

Supervisors
Mike Sarakunsky & Paul Crankshaw

Volume 10 Number 4 Jan - Feb 1985



South African Labour Bulletin

Volume 10 Number 4 Jan – Feb 1985

The South African Labour Bulletin

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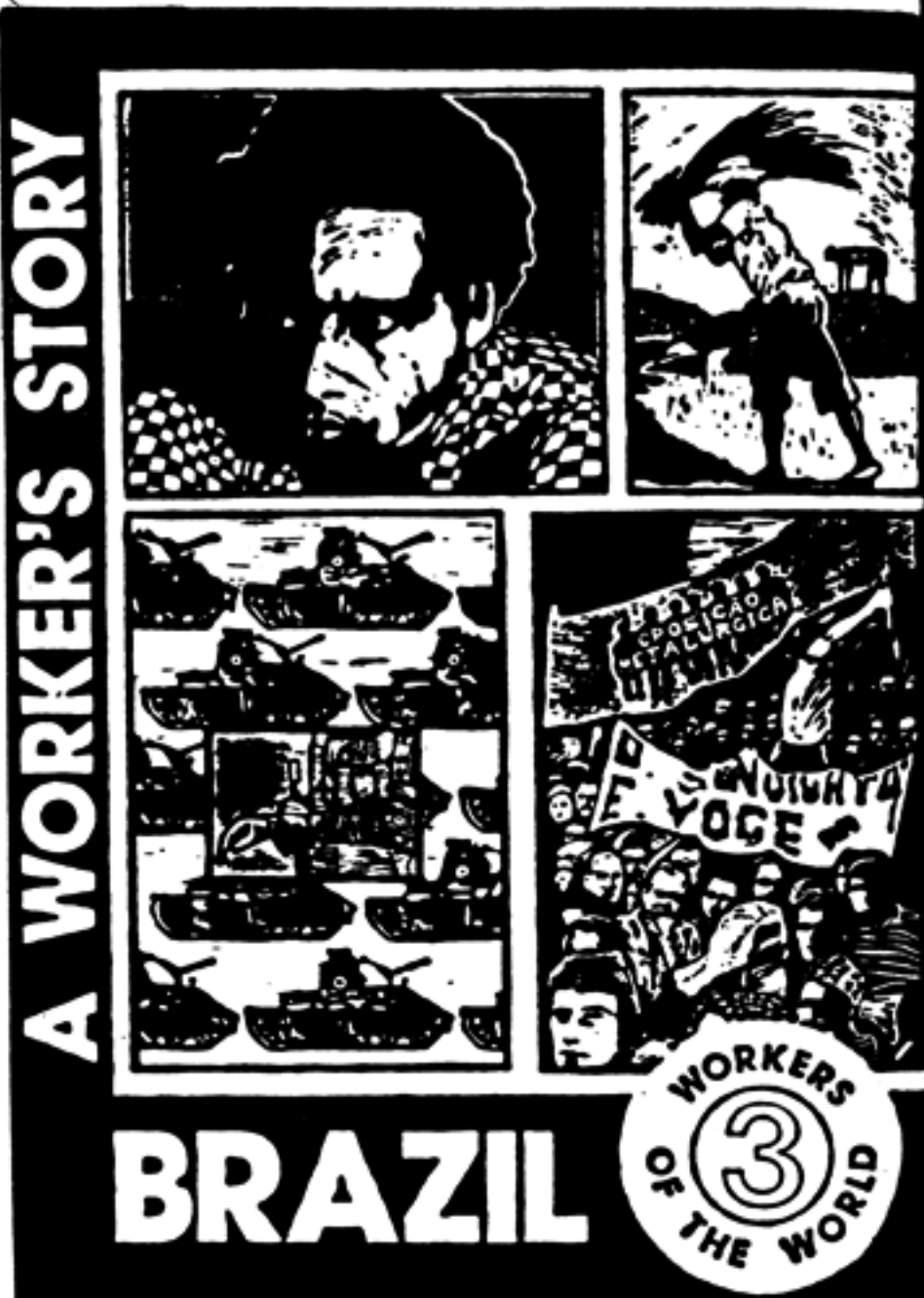
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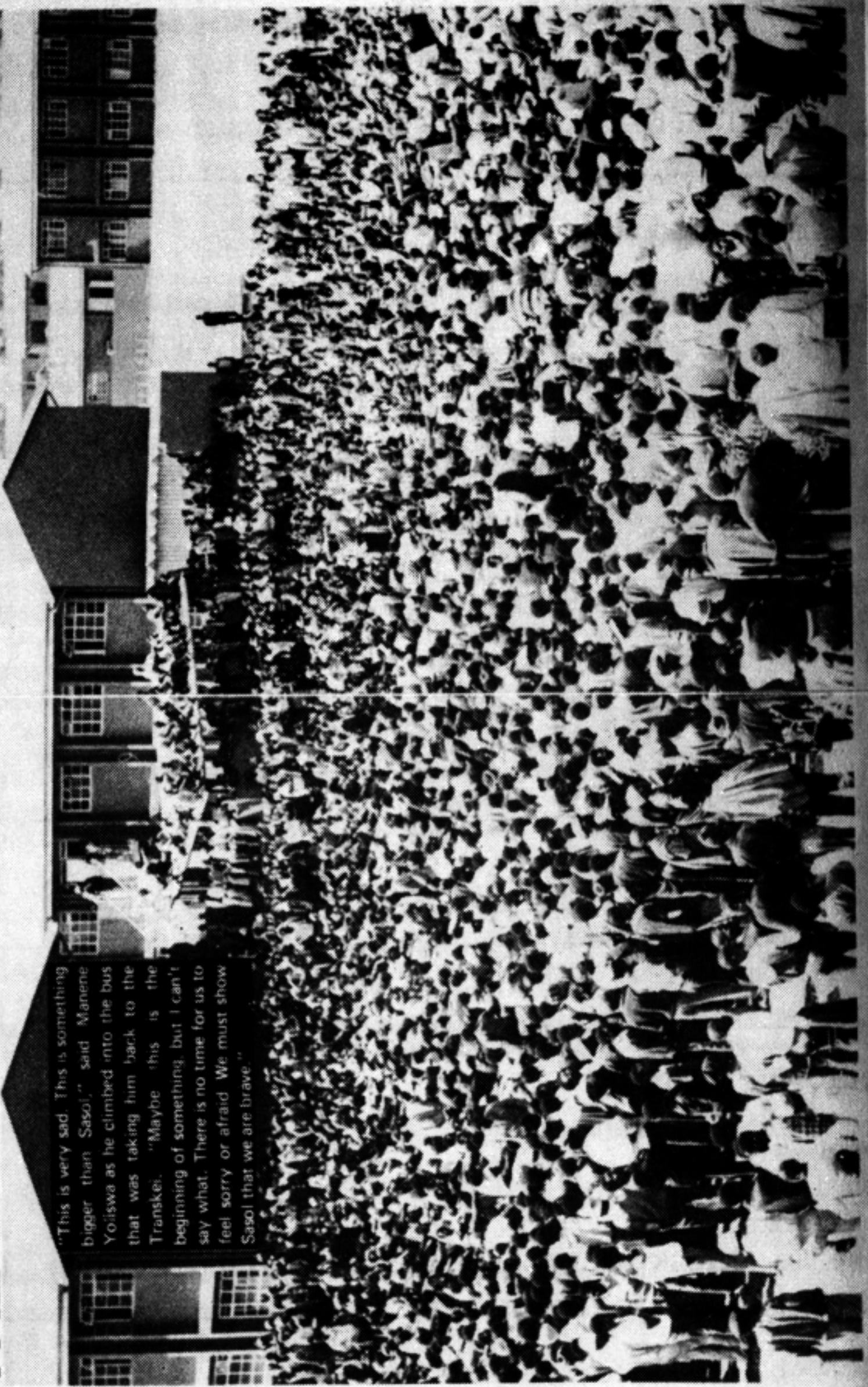
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THE DAY 6500 WORKERS LOST THEIR JOBS

"This is very sad. This is something bigger than Sasol," said Manene Yoiswa as he climbed into the bus that was taking him back to the Transkei. "Maybe this is the beginning of something, but I can't say what. There is no time for us to feel sorry or afraid. We must show Sasol that we are brave."



ditorial Note

Paul Stewart and Ian Macun have resigned from the Editorial Board of the South African Labour Bulletin, both having moved out of the areas covered by their respective local committees. Our thanks go to both for their past work.

Below we publish a reply to a previous article on the Cape Underwear Strike (SALB 10.2). This contribution is by way of a critique of the strategy adopted hitherto by the Clothing Workers Union (CLOWU). In fairness to the author of the original article, it should be pointed out that his brief was a limited one - to record the strike as the workers themselves saw it - and he did not directly address questions of union strategy in the Cape clothing industry.

Capital restructuring and management responses to the recession

For workers the immediate results of capitalist crisis mean falling living standards, short-time working and above all retrenchments (see SALB 10.2). The hardships expressed by unemployed workers interviewed in this edition represent the harsh reality for 2-3 million people in South Africa.

For capital the recession represents a period of falling profits; a failure of the mechanisms of accumulation. Beyond this it is also a period of restructuring - in part spontaneous, as weak firms go to the wall, leading to concentration and increasing domination by those remaining. But it is also a period of intense, and conscious, class conflict as employers struggle to push back the frontiers of control in the factories - taking advantage of the weakened position of labour organisation - and capital attempts to restructure on its own terms the "social structures of accumulation" (ie. the totality of systems of control - legal, political, economic, technological, within the labour process and the division of labour, the system of industrial relations, within education and culture - all of which reflect and make possible the continued dominance of

- editorial -

capital; see D M Gordon, R Edwards, M Reich, Segmented work, divided workers, Cambridge University Press, 1982).

During the current global crisis of capitalism, since the early 1970s, restructuring is being attempted on a number of different levels - some of which have been mentioned in recent editions of the SALB; others we will return to in the future:

- (i) Technology: most dramatic has been the widespread introduction of micro-electronic technology. In its wake comes the threat of mass unemployment, deskilling for the majority of those left in work and increased managerial control over the work process (see SALB 9.7). Already by the beginning of 1984 in South Africa approximately 56 robots were either working about to be installed, with another 15-20 by the end of the year.
- (ii) Relocation: of industry to low wage, non-union areas, leading to a changing international division of labour (see Frobel, Heinrich and Kreye, "New international division of labour", SALB 5.8). This development rests upon 3 preconditions: (a) the existence of a world-wide reserve of potential labour, cheap and non-unionised (and here the use of ultraexploitable female labour should be mentioned); (b) technological developments - eg. in transport, containerisation etc - have made the location of industrial sites less dependent on geographical position and distance, and (c) new technology makes it possible to decompose complex production processes and utilise unskilled labour to perform fragmented, routine jobs.

There are still wider implications. In some cases employers have been able to break down the production cycle to produce in smaller units, with significant advantages in terms of labour control. For example, in a study in the UK it was found that factories with over 2000 workers are 50 times more strike-prone than those with 100 workers (F Murray, "The decentralisation of production", Capital and Class, 19, 1983).

The most dramatic examples of industrial relocation

are the so-called Free Trade Zones such as exist in the Philipines (see SALB 10.3). The decentralisation policy in South Africa is in some ways a local variant of this trend.

- (iii) Union-bashing: in the present period this takes two forms; direct (repressive) and indirect (ideological).
- (a) The present attack on trade unions in Europe, USA, and the Third World are a response to economic crisis. Falling profits make it imperative for capital to push down wages and defeat organised labour; mass unemployment, objectively undermining union strength, makes such a strategy thinkable. Repressive measures include - wholesale dismissals (Reagan's response to the air traffic controllers' strike, 1980; Sasol); increased use of police and legal controls (eg. against solidarity action in the UK); increased state control over collective bargaining (in Germany since the 35-hour strike); withdrawal of state benefits to strikers (Germany and UK); enforcement of company unionism; no-strike clauses and concessionary bargaining (ie. wage cuts). In Third World countries state repression of labour organisations has been more brutal, in an attempt to encourage foreign investment.
- (b) On the ideological plane there has, in recent years, been a resurgence of free market philosophy, arguing that independent trade unionism is incompatible with the "free" enterprise system. If there must be trade unions, they must be tightly controlled. Allied to this has been the growth of corporatism and the notion of an essential harmony on the shopfloor. The clearest example of this is the so-called "Japanese system" and the introduction of Quality Control Circles

In South Africa this ideological component has assumed greater significance recently because of the depth of the crisis of legitimacy for racial capitalism. This has led at one level to expensive academic studies such as "Project Free Enterprise" which call on management to educate

their workers towards the free enterprise system - summarised in the Star: "Bosses of South Africa unite and educate or your workers will rush into the arms of socialism".

At the factory floor level management faces the task of establishing new forms of bureaucratic control. The rise of black worker power on the shopfloor since the 1970s has broken the power of the white supervisor and with it the arbitrary and unilateral control of management. In its wake employers have had to establish new "rules of the game", agreed with workers representatives - such as grievance procedures, disciplinary procedures, collective bargaining machinery as well as attempts to demarcate areas of "management prerogative" and indeed to define the boundaries between workers and management (we are referring here to the position of black supervisors - see this edition).

The expanded use of job evaluation and work study techniques in South Africa represents an extension of this strategy - to introduce new and bureaucratic rules into the arena of wage negotiations. These techniques tend to individualise wage bargaining and to draw a veil of "scientific management" across the relations of exploitation. The recession, and the urgent need to improve productivity in order to maintain profits, has encouraged these trends. Job evaluation is also concerned with systematising and maintaining hierarchical divisions in the workplace - a theme also explored in the article on supervisors.

In the long-term South African employers would probably like to emulate the more sophisticated corporatist strategies of their overseas colleagues - to get workers to identify with the value and goals of the firm. Quality Control Circles play an obvious role here, whilst non-racial work practices, and genuine Black advancement and occ-

upational mobility remain essential preconditions for the success of such a project.

However, the present economic crisis has also led to the intensification of class struggles generating new forms of worker organisation. Between capital's aims and the final outcome lies a shadow - the worker's struggle. In countries such as Chile, Brazil, the Philipines and South Africa workers have responded to the crisis with new forms of organisation - labelled "social movement unionism" - concerned not simply with the narrow wage contract but also articulating the demands of the wider community. In South Africa dramatic example of this was the November stay-away which brought together the youth, unemployed and working class communities with the union movement playing a leading role.

Even in the older industrial centres struggles against job loss have taken new forms - both in terms of militancy and new strategies (eg. Lucas Plan; see SALB 10.3). In South Africa worker militancy has grown even in the face of recession. Workers have continued to push back the frontiers of management control, whilst attempts to co-opt and divide workers - still embryonic - have so far been resisted.

(Jon Lewis & Eddie Webster)

Sasol Update: the Struggle Continues

The company is currently selectively re-employing the 5-6,000 workers dismissed in November. Some 2,513 out of 4,300 applicants had been re-employed by the end of January (Rand Daily Mail 29.1.85), with some workers having already received rejection letters. The Chemical Workers Industrial Union is continuing to oppose victimisation and has called on workers in South Africa and overseas for solidarity action. As a result of pressure, management began negotiating with the union again in December. However there has been an increase in minor harassment. Racist leaflets have been distributed attacking white union officials - with no effect on workers - and the Branch Secretary, Chris Bonner, was arrested for attending a union meeting in Embalenhle without a permit.

The Sasol question is coming to a head at a time when trade unions in the USA are preparing for a major conference on South Africa, and US companies are already coming under pressure. The American-based company, Fluor is undertaking construction work at Sasol's Secunda complex. Fluor's presence has been condemned by the United Mine Workers of America who point out that the company - a co-sponsor of the Sullivan Principles - has been involved in the construction of "racial housing", the hostels for black male workers who are not allowed to bring their families with them. In addition it is now rumoured that Fluor allowed its workers to be used by Sasol in order to keep the plant going after the November dismissals.

Since the dismissals the following actions were taken by the CWIU in their campaign for reinstatement:

1. FOSATU and other unions were called upon to support Sasol workers. Regional meetings were held all over South Africa:
 - a) Shop stewards from organised plants were asked to

approach their employers to pressurise Sasol. This was done quite widely.

- b) Many pension funds have shares in Sasol. Many union members belong to these funds, eg. the Metal Industry Pension Fund. Shop stewards were requested to put pressure on the Boards of Trustees to pressurise Sasol for reinstatement.
2. Press publicity and pamphlets were used to inform membership and general public of the true story of the Sasol dismissals.
 3. International pressure:
 - a) the ICEF (International Chemical Energy Federation) were contacted. They in turn informed all affiliates worldwide. Many responded by sending telegrams to Sasol and to the Minister. Where there are direct contacts with Sasol by overseas companies particular pressure was put on them by the unions organised in such plants.
 - b) FOSATU General Secretary personally visited ICFTU who in turn informed national centres affiliated to them.
 - c) CWIU Transvaal Branch Chairperson visited the USA and rallied support from unions and protest groups.
 4. Transvaal Branch of CWIU:
 - a) Branch meetings were held every Saturday in November /December to plan action and monitor progress.
 - b) Shop stewards maintained contact, attended the meetings and assisted organisers in Secunda.
 - c) Shop stewards were sent to homeland areas to give support and information to dismissed workers.
 - d) General meetings for Sasol workers were held. Meetings were attended by dismissed workers from the township and membership who were not dismissed.
 - e) Sasol mineworkers were active and achieved a majority membership of the union. Management were approached and stop orders submitted for verification.
 - f) Workers from far flung areas maintained contact with the union. In many areas groups of Sasol workers were formed in the "homelands".

- Sasol -

5. Unions involved in the Unity talks were asked for support. In December, 24 unions submitted a letter of demand to Sasol Management demanding:
- a) Negotiation with the CWIU
 - b) Reinstatement of the workers

Sasol management responded by inviting CWIU to a meeting. Two meetings were held at which no settlement was reached. In particular the union could not accept the management's criteria for re-employment, ie. "intimidators" would be excluded.

The union, supported by the Unity unions submitted an application for a Conciliation Board to the Minister on 10 January 1985; should the Minister refuse to appoint the Board the way will be open for national legal industrial action by all the unions. The decision whether or not to go forward with such action will be taken after meeting Sasol management at the end of January.

(CWIU communique January 1985)

Motor Workers Unite – First IMF African Auto Conference

The first International Metalworkers Federation African Auto Conference, as noted in the keynote speech delivered by the IMF General Secretary, Herman Rebhan, gave concrete expression to the economic reality of an African auto assembly industry. Approximately 50 delegates representing 12 unions from 10 countries met in Maseru, Lesotho, on 14th November 1984, to discuss their various conditions of employment, negotiating strategies and general problems.

By 1982 546,001 motor vehicles were being assembled in seven African countries stretching from the Mediterranean to the Cape. (Figures for Africa are difficult to come by. These figures are based on statistics provided by the IMF at the Conference.) 71 226 workers were involved in the actual assembly of these vehicles, and this number would increase considerably if workers involved in the components and service industries were to be included.

The establishment of an automobile assembly industry creates some common conditions and problems. Assembly plants are generally relatively large and integrated production units, universally giving rise to working conditions which have spawned militant unions. The automobile industry is also perhaps the most internationalised and monopolised of industries with about 10 multinationals accounting for total world production. Workers in developing countries therefore immediately find themselves up against highly sophisticated production and industrial relations practices developed in Europe, America and Japan. Against this background, the first meeting of auto unions in Africa was an important and historic occasion.

A major feature of the conference was the comparison of conditions of employment, not only between the various African countries, but also with conditions in Europe and America. Present at the conference to give insight into

the European car industry was Lief Bloomberg, newly elected President of the Swedish Metal Workers Union, a significant presence given the major assistance of Swedish metal workers to workers in the developing countries.

Arising out of the discussions it was clear that multi-nationals take advantage of their trans-national status by trading off conditions in one country against those in another and using the lack of worker organisation in one country as a threat against more highly organised workers. Clear examples came from the comparison of wages between companies, as well as productivity figures. In one case it was found that a company had misinformed a union about productivity figures in another of its operations in another country in the course of negotiations. Such misuse of information will clearly be more difficult in the wake of the contacts made at the meeting.

South Africa accounts for 70% of the vehicles produced in Africa and well over half the total of auto workers. The South African industry is also the oldest, with the first plants being established in Port Elizabeth in 1924. A considerable amount of discussion therefore revolved around the experiences and problems of the South African unions. By virtue of size, penetration and age, representatives of the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union were able to share their considerable experience with the other African unions.

As a one day meeting, the conference could only touch the surface of many of the important concerns of all African car workers. Its significance lies in the fact that this first contact has been made, bringing together in a manner not possible in many other spheres of international activity, organised workers with common interests and adversaries. At the end of the conference the following declaration was adopted:

We, delegates to the first IMF African Auto Conference, meeting in Maseru, Lesotho, November 14, 1984:

1. Declare our strong fraternal solidarity with auto

workers in Africa and South Africa in particular, in their great struggle to win political, social and economic justice for all workers regardless of race, sex, creed and religion.

2. Although there are more than ten million vehicles registered in all of Africa, of which we assemble only a small fraction at the moment, we affirm the fact that we should be able to own the product of our labour. Therefore we call for a decent living wage for all African auto workers.
3. Aware of the urgent need to find more industrial jobs and training for the unskilled and semi-skilled, we call for development, financial and trade authorities to study where and how auto assembly operations with access to large integrated regional markets could be established in co-operation with unions, companies and governments.
4. Where assembly operations already exist, we pledge ourselves to the development and growth of free democratic unions capable of defending and advancing the interests of workers and their families, without government and employer intimidation.
5. We call on all 3.5 million autoworkers, members of the IMF-affiliated unions in the Americas, Europe, Asia and the Pacific to militantly support in words and deeds the need to organise, educate and raise the consciousness of African auto workers in their struggle to harmonise wages and working conditions on a world-wide basis.

(Taffy Adler, NAAWU, January 1985)

“We are One” – Fighting Philips in India

To take strike action against the giant Dutch multinational Philips is a step that workers in its factories in India do not take without some fear. In previous strikes at Philips plants strikers have had to face beatings by police and hired thugs. The company has starved workers back with lock outs, and used scab labour. Nevertheless workers at the Philips factory at Kalwa, producing lamps, tube lights and welding electrodes, are giving 100% support to their union's plans to strike if the company refuses to yield to their demands for an improvement in their conditions. After ten months of fruitless talks workers are on a work to rule

The "Mahaunion"

Philips has seven plants in India, in Bombay, Pune, Madras, Calcutta and Delhi. Despite the huge distances between these sites the workers have formed a network linking the unions in all the plants. The workers call this coordinating body the Mahaunion (greater union). This form of co-ordination has emerged in the last few years out of the hard struggles that have had to be fought against the Philips management.

The Mahaunion first proved its effectiveness in 1981, when in support of workers locked out at the company's plant in Pune, it was able to organise demonstrations and strikes in all the other plants, and force the management to back down on new production levels it was trying to impose. Philips has since sought to destroy the Mahaunion. The plant at Pune has been seen as key to the strength of this inter-union co-ordination. Accordingly after the 1981 strike and lock out, the company replaced the personnel director at the Pune plant with a Mr D N Ghose. Ghose has been previously at ICI and has a reputation for being able to break union militancy. In June 1983 union leaders at Pune including S N Hadke, President of the Mahaunion were summarily dismissed. The Pune union immediately struck to defend its leaders.

Lock-out

The management reacted with a five month lock-out. Strikers were arrested in their homes and many received police beatings. The Mahaunion organised solidarity actions and demonstrations with the Pune workers, but as the lock-out lasted and workers and their families grew short of food, the workers were eventually forced to go back, though only after having gained an agreement that the dismissed workers cases would be taken to court - where they are still pending - and that 150 suspended strikers be reinstated.

However, harrassment of workers continued in the plant when it re-opened. Philips have also widened their strategy for weakening the union by increasingly sub-contracting out parts of production. Nearly 50% of Philips radios in India are in fact now manufactured by other companies.

Directed from Holland

The Philips workers Mahaunion believes that Philips labour policies are directed from the Dutch parent company which owns the controlling interest in the Indian subsidiary, (known as Piece Electronics Ltd). The Philips personnel director Ghose refused to talk about personnel policies of the company except to try to deny that Philips India was part of a multinational.

However, the chairman and managing director, C J Seelan and factory managers are Dutch, and all senior staff are appointed from Holland and given 6 months training there. The union claims that the lock out at Pune came only after direct communication with the Dutch head office and that subsequent management action has been taken in close consultation with Holland.

(Mike Jacobs, first published in International Labour Reports, Nov-Dec 1984)

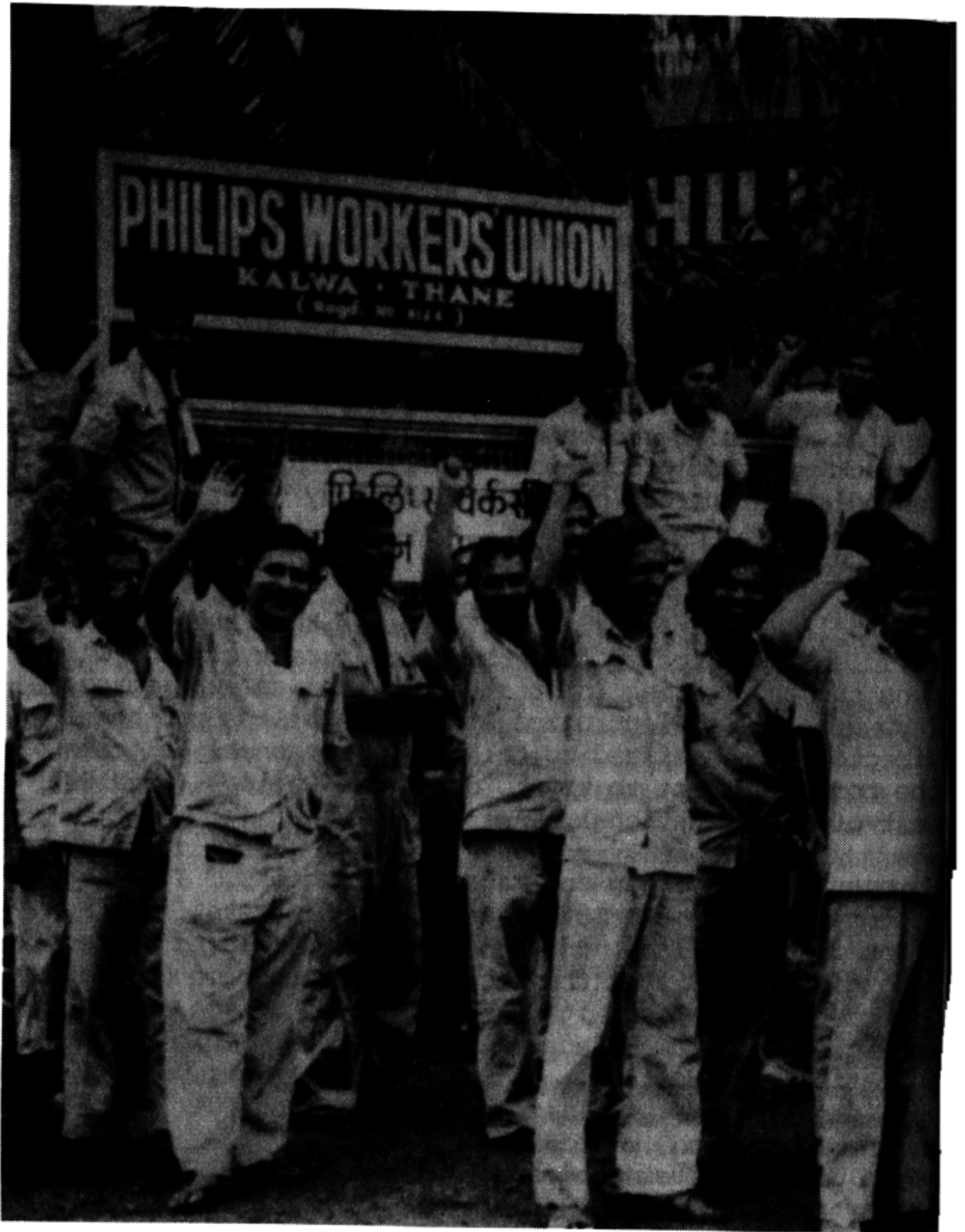


photo: Philips workers protest at Kalwa, September 1984

Dairy Maid Boycott

The Dairy Maid Workers Committee (DMWC) has called on all trade unions and community organisations to support their boycott in solidarity with some 200 workers dismissed by the firm in February 1984. This call follows the successful Simba Quix boycott (SALB 10.2). As in the case of Simba chips, Dairy Maid products (Choc Stick, Orange Maid, Superstar, Screwball) are not essentials and alternatives exist.

The Dairy Maid plant at Olifantsfontein employs about 400 workers. The company is a subsidiary of Imperial Cold Storage Ltd which in turn is a subsidiary of C G Smith Ltd which in turn is part of the Barlow Rand group. Workers believe that the "liberal" parent company is more sympathetic to their case, with Dairy Maid and ICS management resisting reinstatement. The DMWC is currently investigating other ICS subsidiaries to determine the nature of their products and to see which other unions are directly involved.

The sacked workers are all members of the Food Beverage Workers Union of South Africa, a CUSA affiliate. The union began organising at Dairy Maid in 1983 and soon signed up all 400 workers. In September 1983 the company began negotiations with the union towards signing a recognition agreement. Prior to this, "industrial relations" at the company had been based on management dictate. In the event negotiations were deferred and no agreement was ever signed.

The events leading up to the mass dismissals of Dairy Maid workers began on February 1, 1984 when union member Mr Frans Mokwalakwala was assaulted by a white supervisor, K Zastron. Workers allege that this was the thirteenth assault on them by a managerial employee. Workers in the cold room where Zastron worked walked out at 5.30 pm in protest - although their shift was only due to finish at midnight.

The next day management agreed to replace Zastron with a supervisor approved by workers, one "Albert". On February 3, Zastron was back again and it was clear that Dairy Maid

- Dairymaid -

had broken the agreement. The union demanded that the company dismiss or transfer Zastron. The company's only action was to issue a final written warning to Zastron despite his record of previous assaults. No formal disciplinary enquiry was held, nor was the complainant, Mr Mokwalakwala asked by the company to make a statement.

On 13 February, in the face of management's refusal to take action against Zastron, workers in the cold room stopped work to voice their protest. By this time management had taken on several new employees anticipating trouble in the cold room. On 13 February workers in all departments stopped work in sympathy with the workers in the cold storage.

On February 15 all workers were locked out. They were then invited to re-apply for their jobs and to sign documents acknowledging the lawfulness of the dismissals. The company began to selectively re-employ. The workers alleged that management victimised active trade unionists by not employing them, and to date some 107 who were not reengaged, remain unemployed. They have been replaced by unemployed workers from local labour recruiting offices. The company has now terminated its relationship with the union on the basis that it is no longer representative.

Zastron's assault was not an isolated incident. Workers allege that white supervisors Espach, Wilhelm and Zastron used insulting language and physically assaulted workers over the period 1983-4. This included three separate assaults by Zastron on one Sage Thathane - including once with a whip(sjambok) and once with a broomstick.

Since February the union has filed representations with the Industrial Council for the Dairy Industry, alleging some 70 unfair labour practices on the part of the company. These include: inadequate rest and meal intervals and poor eating facilities; deductions from workers wages in respect of alleged stock shortages; workers denied annual leave; forced overtime working; non-payment of overtime worked; failure to provide special clothing for workers in the cold room; and intimidation of union members. The Industrial Council after four meetings has been

unable to settle the dispute. The matter will now proceed to the Industrial Court for determination.

This list of practices indicates that responsibility for Dairy Maid's problems lies with higher management. They failed to take immediate effective steps against racist attacks by white supervisors and were insensitive to workers legitimate grievances on this point. Beyond this the union argues that the company failed to maintain standard disciplinary and grievance procedures and had an inadequate system of communication with its own employees. Lacking established "industrial relations" machinery, petty tyranny was allowed to flourish. Although Espach and Zastron have now left the firm, there is no evidence of a more "enlightened" approach on the part of management. Zastron left in somewhat mysterious circumstances; Dairy Maid informed the union that he left because he was "unable to maintain discipline." Former union members still employed at Dairy Maid now feel too intimidated to openly support the union. There is also evidence that dismissed workers are being black-listed by local firms. One worker who applied for a driving job claims he was refused the job only after the firm had made a telephone call to Dairy Maid.

Financial hardship means that many of the dismissed workers are unable to attend union meetings. Nonetheless regular contact is maintained by the union organiser and one of the shop stewards who visit workers in their homes to keep them informed and keep up morale. In planning the boycott campaign the principle has been established that control must remain with the workers themselves and the DMWC. A trade union support committee has now been established with delegates drawn from other trade union bodies. The boycott has the full support of the workers' own union - Food, Beverage - and of CUSA and other federations, unions and community organisations. The union's lawyers have now been threatened with a court interdict to prevent the boycott from taking place, in addition to proceedings also having been threatened against CUSA, Food Beverage Workers Union and the DMWC. Further details and campaign material are available from the DMWC office (Pretoria 3236709).

(SALB Correspondent January 1985)

Memorandum: Dispute Between CCAWUSA and SPAR

1. Background

- 1.1 The Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union of South Africa (CCAWUSA) has been organising at Spar since mid-1983. While, within the Spar group there are several different companies owned by separate individuals/families all holding a franchise to trade in the name of Spar, the union has concentrated mainly on those Spar stores wholly owned by the W.G. Group whose head office is in Pinetown.
- 1.2 On 28 November 1983, a letter was written by the union to Mr John Story, then MD of the retail division (then called Gauntlet Holdings) asking for recognition.
- 1.3 In a week, Mr Story replied asking for the number of members recruited by the union as a prerequisite to talks beginning over recognition of the union.
- 1.4 On 19 January 1984, the first meeting between the company and union representatives was held. Thereafter, several meetings were held and some progress was made towards drawing up a complete recognition agreement and procedural agreement.
- 1.5 However, unfortunately, in April 1984 the Browns Group personnel division became directly involved in these talks which co-incided with their gradual breakdown.
- 1.6 In June, further talks were adjourned for 2 months at the company's request, which the union did not oppose.
- 1.7 In late August, the union wrote to the company, asking for negotiations on wages to begin and proposing a wage increase of R80,00.
- 1.8 In September, the company wrote back saying it had reorganised, had incorporated additional stores, had changed its name to Browns Retail and was now withdrawing from further meetings with the union until 2 pre-conditions had been met; was withdrawing the right of union organisers to have access to workers inside the store premises (there has been no arrangement concerning check-off) and that it was planning to retrench.
- 1.9 The workers, decided, although they were dissatisfied

with the company's approach to comply with the company's requests. One request was to be given an "authenticated" copy of our constitution as endorsed by the Industrial Registrar and the other request was that the Union's membership should be verified once again. This had been done before, on 2 occasions. Nevertheless, the workers felt that, unreasonable and unnecessary though it was, the company would be allowed to check the union's membership once again.

- 1.10 An agreement had been reached with Mr Story, the previous MD, before he was replaced, and which was set out in a letter from him, that the union's membership would be verified at a meeting with union representatives. Union representatives would bring to this meeting application forms signed by the workers and company representatives would bring full lists of employees at each store. Union membership would be verified by comparison of these two things.
- 1.11 On 1 November 1984, union and company representatives met at the union office to verify membership. However, the company representatives did not come with anything. They said that they did not have a full record of employees at their head office level but only at a store level. They proposed that they take down the names of all the union members and check these against the records of employees at each store. This was accepted to avoid further disputes and delays.
- 1.12 However, instead of doing this, managers at each store were instructed to interview union members personally and to ask them a variety of questions. Union members were called individually to the managers office and asked, inter alia, why they had joined the union, did they think they were doing the right thing, etc. This did not happen to all the members. Certain questions, like the two mentioned above, seemed to have been asked mainly from Indian employees not from the African employees. There had been no consultation on this method with the union nor had any notice to the union been given of this method.
- 1.13 Some workers, unaware of the manager's purpose, denied their union membership while others answered truthfully. In response, the union wrote to the company call-

ing for an immediate halt to the interviews on the grounds that it amounted to harrassment and stated that the company had only to check its records, which was what had been agreed upon.

1.14 This led to a five week deadlock that culminated in the strike.

2. The strike

2.1 On Friday December 7, workers from 4 stores stopped work, followed on Saturday, 8 December, by workers from other stores.

2.2 There were several demands presented to the company:

- a) immediate/prompt recognition of the union
- b) the R80,00 wage increase demand
- c) reinstatement of 2 of their fellow workers who had been dismissed
- d) certain local grievances (which differed from store to store) had to be resolved.

3. Subsequent developments

3.1 The dismissed workers decided, as a form of pressure, to stage one-person pickets outside the stores affected by the dispute to the customers.

3.2 In all cases, store managers telephoned the police who initially arrested the picketing workers and their nearby companions, but released them without any charges having been laid.

3.3 On 4 January, a meeting was held between the general secretary of CCPWUSA, the Natal Branch Secretary and the Spar shop stewards chairperson and management representatives to discuss the issue. Although they agreed to this meeting, management insisted that this was merely a "courtesy meeting" and one in which they wished to clarify the facts. No proposals or offers to resolve the dispute were negotiated at this meeting.

3.4 As a result of complaints by management that the workers' picketing was not conducive to negotiation, workers voluntarily suspended their picketing of the stores for a week.

3.5 The next thing that workers saw was the distribution

of a message from the chairman of Spar (SA), who is also the chief executive of the Brown Group (Pty) Ltd which stated that none of the workers would be taken back, they had mostly been replaced and a series of false accusations paraded as "true facts". Subsequently a telegram was received which conveyed the same message to the union, ie. the workers would not be taken back and the directors were "unwilling" to consider the matter further.

- 3.6 The union has replied by way of an open letter.
- 3.7 In the same period, the union has formed Support Committees in Durban, Hammarsdale and Pietermaritzburg which have been assisting the workers in raising funds and publicising the dispute to the community.

4. Structure of the company - W G Brown Group

It is apparent from the company's various interests, as from Mr P R Heber-Percy's joint capacity as chairman of Spar (SA) and chief executive of Brown (Pty) Ltd, that the W G Brown Group is the chief franchise holder and distributor for South Africa and possibly the South African region.

5. Financial status of the workers

- 5.1 In a word, it is desperate. While the workers morale is still high and they are still full of courage, they face many problems.
- 5.2 Their expenses include rent, food, water and lights (or fuel), transport, H P payments (most of which are now in arrears), school fees and school books for their children, etc.
- 5.3 There are approximately 190 unemployed children of the dismissed workers of school-going age who should start a new school term at the end of January. In addition, there are younger children, wives or husbands (as the case may be), parents, dependants, brothers and sisters, etc.
- 5.4 In relation to the needs of the situation, a small amount of funds has been collected and some of it distributed evenly to the workers.

6. Future Plans

- 6.1 At the time of writing the workers' plans to pressurise the company to negotiate with the union include the following:
- a) joint action by members of other unions to approach their managements, especially those that have business dealings with the W G Brown Group, to approach Browns requesting them to negotiate with CCAWUSA. This has already been discussed with other unions.
 - b) to intensify attempts to inform all sections of our community about this dispute so as to obtain their support.
 - c) a possible consumer/trader boycott of the retail and wholesale outlets owned by the Browns Group is also being considered.*

7. Appeal

- 7.1 We request your support for our struggle.
- 7.2 The workers would appreciate a generous financial assistance, especially if it could be for an on-going period.
- 7.3 Financial assistance for those who hope to be attending educational institutions will also be highly appreciated.

For further details contact CCAWUSA Natal,
phone Durban 316320.

* Postscript - Spar workers have since met to call a boycott of Spar stores. This decision is supported by CCAWUSA.



Shopworkers Fight Retrenchment

On Monday 14th January O.K. Bazaars informed the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (CCAWUSA) and the National Distributive and Allied Workers Union (NUDAW) that they would be retrenching 1500 workers by the following Monday, and a further 500 workers by the end of March, 1985.

At no stage prior to this notice had O.K. Bazaars given any indication to the unions of its intention to retrench. Less than a week's notice was thus being given to the union and the decision to retrench and methods of implementation had been taken without any negotiations. In the end the unions prevented retrenchments although temporary lay-offs will occur.

The union's response to O.K. Bazaars was the following:

- demanded proper notice of intended retrenchments
- demanded financial disclosure to justify the need to retrench
- demanded that all the alternatives to retrenchment be fully explored and negotiated before implementation and that all the necessary information to carry this out be supplied by the company
- demanded full consultations occur at shopfloor level at all O.K. establishments and that sufficient time be provided for this
- demanded that the company should not implement its intention to retrench on Monday and must enter into negotiations with the union.

A meeting was then held with O.K. on January 18th, where a deadlock resulted. On January 19th, a dispute was declared with O.K. Bazaars and O.K. was warned not to implement the proposed retrenchment before it had been properly negotiated with the unions. O.K. then agreed not to go ahead with retrenchments on Monday the 21st. They agreed to enter into negotiations with CCAWUSA and NUDAW's national negotiating teams for O.K. Bazaars, which included shop stewards from

- O.K -

branches throughout the country.

The unions met with O.K. from Monday 21st to Saturday 26th and after lengthy negotiations eventually reached an agreement in respect of the first phase of O.K.'s proposed retrenchments. The negotiations involved calling in an auditor to scrutinise O.K.'s books and exploring a wide range of alternatives to retrenchment.

The number of intended retrenchments was considerably reduced and O.K. agreed that workers would be temporarily laid off instead of being retrenched. 1051 workers would be affected and laid off workers would be guaranteed re-employment on the 7th August 1985.

The laid off workers will be paid 2 weeks wages and will remain members of the medical aid and pension fund. They will be entitled to draw unemployment insurance benefits during the 6 month period and jobs that arise in O.K. during this period will be offered to them, including casual work.

The workers selected to be laid off (following negotiated selection criteria) will be given the option of retrenchment if they so wish, though the unions have advised workers to opt for lay off.

Workers who prefer to be retrenched will be paid their pension in full together with O.K.'s contribution, will receive severance pay based on length of service and can be re-employed when vacancies occur.

The Company shall advise the unions of all vacancies that arise, including new store openings.

The unions remain opposed to any retrenchments. Where cost-cutting exercises do occur retailers will be under pressure to come up with alternatives to retrenchment.

(CCAWUSA communique,
January 1985)



Case Study: The Paterson System at a Factory in Cape Town

This study is an examination of the application of job evaluation at a specific factory in Cape Town. This particular enterprise is concerned with fish processing, and has three factories in Cape Town, which in 1982 (when this study was done) employed a total of 1,400 weekly paid workers and about 163 salaried staff. Altogether, on a national scale, the company employed 6,500 people. The Paterson system has been used since 1975, but neither the union involved nor the workers were consulted about its introduction. It was only many years later that the workers became aware of Paterson and the union took it up as an issue.

This case study only deals with job evaluation for employees in the A and B Bands, for it is in these bands that the majority of employees fall. (See Len le Roux's article elsewhere in this edition) The A Band is at the bottom end of the hierarchy of jobs and wage rates, and consists of workers defined by management as "unskilled". Examples of workers in this Band are fish skinners, packers, cleaners, machine feeders, fish cutters, weighers, tally clerks, drivers, checkers and security guards. According to management, A Band workers' decisions are defined for them, and they are not required to make any decisions "which may materially affect the accepted standard of performance of the Company". A Band workers are regarded as fully trained after 2 - 4 days. There is little or no formal training, and performance cannot be improved with further training. The equipment and movements used in the job are either self-evident or clearly specified. The workers are told exactly and precisely what to do, often down to the last movement.

Workers performing heavy work all the time are graded A2. Workers are usually recruited into A1 jobs and if they "prove their ability and reliability" they may move into A2 work. One subgrade higher, the "Table Heads" or "Leading Hands" are employed as A3 workers. All A Band workers work under close supervision (the supervisors being in the B

- evaluation -

Band) and are thus at no time given the opportunity by supervisors or management to make decisions.

The B Band consists of workers defined by management as "semi-skilled", and, according to management, jobs in this Band require "both training and practice (expertise) to ensure that the operators automatically make the correct judgements required in the execution of their duties." While the overall process of activity is specified by management, the workers make decisions regarding the final details in the carrying out of operations, decisions regarding tools, sequence and timing.

Workers graded B1 are weekly paid. Jobs falling into the B1 category are: various machine operators, drivers, quality inspectors, and refrigeration plant attendants. Of the 1,400 weekly paid workers employed in Cape Town in 1982 by the firm, 1,306 fell into the A Band, of which 932 workers were in A1, 266 in A2, and 108 in A3.

Workers' basic wages are determined by their grade. In mid-1982 the weekly wages were: for an A1 worker R49,44; for an A2 worker R51,30; for an A3 worker R55,90; for a B1 worker R70,15; and for a B2 worker R77,87. Workers might receive an incentive bonus above this basic wage, as well as long service increases.

A grading committee was set up by management with the responsibilities of grading jobs. This committee consisted of eleven managers ranging from the group personnel manager to the managers of the various divisions in Cape Town. No workers or union officials were represented, and thus grading and the decision making about the important criteria of a job occurred totally above the workers' heads.

An important part of the Paterson package, sold to management by the consulting agencies and used by management to acclaim their "fair, rational and scientific" system of grading and wage determination was a collection of graphs and diagrams, as well as a system of job evaluation media, involving slide-tape shows, overhead transparencies and briefing lectures intended to inform workers of the Pater-

son system. At an ideological level, these graphs and diagrams had a scientific and academic allure, often serving to obscure the real situation.

Management claimed that these graphs and diagrams, and the job evaluation system as a whole, could be used to encourage workers to plot their careers and to aim towards promotion. For the majority of workers in the lower bands, however, the prospects of promotion are very slight. Furthermore, by talking (as Paterson recommends) in terms of grades rather than wages, management sought to reduce the "emotional disturbance" of workers during wage bargaining.

The majority of workers at this factory belonged to a registered democratic trade union. The union was not informed about the Paterson system at the time of its introduction and only became aware of it afterwards. Paterson's grades and bands actually corresponded exactly to the Industrial Council grading system, and at negotiations the union simply talked in terms of the Industrial Council grades one to four (corresponding to Paterson grades B1 to A3). The union organisers believed it was important to counter management's assertion about the scientificity and equity of the job evaluation system, to counter the media offensive that management was planning, to develop their own ideology based on a different set of assumptions from those of management and to educate the workers about how job evaluation affected them. Significantly, the union did not use Paterson terminology.

The union felt it was important to realise that management's notion of career-pathing was unrealistic for the majority of workers, that job evaluation did not affect the mobility of workers favourably, and that promotion-seeking encouraged individual advancement and divided the workers. Furthermore, the union strongly rejected the notion that the grading hierarchy and pay structure were two separate issues. The union organisers simply translated grades into wages for the workers.

Why then, if the Paterson grades were exactly the same as the already existing Industrial Council grades, had manage-

- evaluation -

ment invested a great deal of time and money on the installation and maintenance of this system?

The personnel manager claimed that job evaluation was important because it "systematises the whole personnel function". It was also, according to him, "invaluable in the face of union agitation" as it generated a "defensible, logical, scientific" pay structure which he hoped would, for those reasons, not be challenged by workers or the union. The union, in opposition to this, felt that job evaluation could not be seen as scientific and that it was important to attack such an assumption.

Far from eliminating conflict in collective bargaining management therefore increased the terrain of disagreement between them and the union by the introduction of the Paterson system.

(Cathy Mathews, Cape Town)

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The Circle Game

Below we republish an article - based on a report from a carworkers conference - from TIE Europe (Transnationals Information Exchange, No 16, Sept 1983) on the dangers of Quality Control Circles. It is to be expected that as recession deepens more South African firms will adopt this strategy in order to maintain profits. According to the National Productivity Centre, 50 organisations here are using quality circles - including Anglo American Life, ISCOR, ESCOM, CSIR and NPC (Star 21.5.84). Quality circles draw on the knowledge and effort of workers to solve problems and increase productivity and profits ("Quality circles have key role in S Africa", Engineering Week 23.2.84). In addition they have an ideological role: to "improve communications", to foster a corporatist spirit, and to get employees to identify with the company. It also gives management a way around the union to the shopfloor. This ideological function is especially crucial in the South African context where capital has until recently relied upon very crude repressive means of control (see "Dairy Maid boycott" elsewhere in this edition).

Major changes have been introduced on the shopfloor in the last few years and it is likely that most companies will continue to come up with new ideas, affecting working conditions for those who manage to keep their jobs. It's not only technological innovations in product design and improvements with regards to techniques of production and assembly. No less important is the way in which management is trying to gain control over the shopfloor. Sometimes they use well tried methods such as work-measurement, greater supervision and camera-monitoring. But there are also more subtle means: many firms are establishing so-called Quality Control Circles (QCCs). Groups of workers have regular brainstorming sessions on possibilities to improve their production quality and output. The idea is "to get out of them as much as you can, because who knows

- quality circles -

the job better than they" by accomodating them and giving the feeling of being treated as equals.

It will be clear that many shopfloor union activists are not in favour of this development, because they feel it as a threat to the union's position within the plant. Although the phenomenon was introduced first in Japan, it now has become popular among management in many other countries, including the Third World.

Quality Control Circles were introduced into Japan after the management had broken the unions around 1953. Until then, the unions has been similar to British unions. But in a massive confrontation that led to a 100 day strike at the Nissan/Datsun plants, the democratic unions were smashed and so called "Company Unions" put in their place. QCCs were introduced as a method of communication between management and the shopfloor which favoured management. [According to Ichiro Saga of Rodo Joho and University of Tokyo] these QCCs were at first used to try to motivate a young workforce which was disillusioned over the destruction of their union. Management, worried about sabotage, absenteeism and high turnover, invited workers to make suggestions about how the job and general conditions could be improved. By responding positively, management was able to gain the support of many of the workers.

Of course it was not long before the whole thing was turned around, with "special allowances" and bonuses being dependent on the number of suggestions made by a worker and his or her general attitude and motivation.

The Annual Report of Toyo Kogyo, which is 25% owned by Ford, shows that in 1981 a total of 1.7 million individual suggestions were given to management. The report goes on to say: "Once a suggestion has been adopted, it is up to them to prove the validity of their idea on the production line. If it does not work, the group will re-examine its original suggestion and make corrections".

Taking part in QCCs, working overtime, doing the Company's physical exercises, working part or all of your holiday

and generally cooperating with management are certainly a feature of your life in a Japanese car factory. But a look at the wage slip of a Japanese car worker will give you a pretty good idea of how much depends on this kind of cooperation. [Quoting the case of a young Japanese car worker employed by Nissan it was shown that basic pay was less than 20% of total earnings.] The rest is made up by special allowances, bonuses and other benefits, given at the discretion of the foreman or plant manager and dependent upon one thing - good behaviour and cooperation. Foremen and group leaders work alongside workers on the line. There they evaluate their fellow workers and provide management with a valuable source of contacts and sources of information and control on the shopfloor.

The three P's

The QC system represents a largely successful strategy on the part of Japanese management to incorporate trade unions into the managerial process and thus control labour relations. Indeed, often such initiatives arise from the unions themselves. In 1977 the Nissan Labour Union came up with the 3-P campaign. The "three P's are:

- Participation: of labour in management;
- Productivity: to enhance productivity in every branch and every industry;
- Progress: of both enterprises and human beings.

As the union has explained: "The [3-P] campaign seeks to improve both labour's welfare and that of the nation through the sound development of enterprises and industry in general." The campaign brought together Nissan, subcontractors and sales companies with the objective of raising productivity by 30% over two years. Although they fell short by 4%, this didn't put them off a second campaign which started in 1980. As part of this system, regular meetings take place to explore ideas which will increase productivity and quality. For example, if a component is discovered with a hole 1/100 of a millimeter too large, operators, supervisors and technicians immediately get together to work out how this happened and to ensure it doesn't again.

- quality circles -

However, the jagged edges of the Japanese circle movement are increasingly being felt, resulting in a degree of disillusionment from all ranks of the labour movement. On the shopfloor it is being realised that the QCCs are in the business of improving profitability, not working conditions. A profitable idea gets picked up immediately; grievances do not. For example, last year at Nissan a worker explained to a meeting that his machine was dangerous to operate and suggested how it could be made safer. Nothing was done. Some time afterwards the worker was killed by his machine.

At an official level the unions are beginning to question who exactly is benefitting from these systems. Indeed the Nissan union has gone so far as to drop the 3-P campaign altogether. However, this arises more from a personal conflict between Nissan's president and the union chairman rather than a born-again militancy on the part of the union

So far there are few signs of any systematic opposition from the shopfloor to the management's schemes. The disillusionment is being expressed more in higher labour turnover and a general deterioration in labour-management relations rather than any organised response. But although marginal, there is some increasing opposition. For the first time two dissidents have been allowed to run in the Nissan Union elections this year. As Japanese workers increasingly see QCCs as black holes which absorb the mechanisms of organised labour, rather than rising suns which radiate material and social progress, the coming years may well see some dramatic changes on the stage of Japanese labour relations.

Brazil

Being introduced in Japan some 30 years ago, the concept of the QCC has spread widely on a massive scale in recent years. Both Ford and GM in the US have their programmes.

Manuel Veloso Falcao, representing the Metalworkers' Unions of Sao Bernardo at the TIE Conference, works in Volkswagen's Brazilian subsidiary. He explains how his union feels about

the QCCs:

VW is now implanting a series of QCCs along Japanese lines. We think this system is absurd. The companies are already exploiting the workers physically. Now they want to exploit them mentally as well. These QCCs are also the cause of a lot of unemployment. A firm takes a worker from the machine, gets him talking for a week about the job and better ways of doing the work and increasing efficiency, and they try to get it into his head that that's good for him as well as good for the firm. It's not good for him at all, because at the end of it all the firm gets more efficient production and he gets the sack.

The firm tries to get over the idea that QCCs are good for both workers and management. If you look at it closely, you find that every idea that is good for management, that increases efficiency and profits, the firm puts into operation. Every idea that's good for the worker to improve working conditions, the firm ignores. The worker on a machine knows alot about that machine, quite often he knows more than the engineer - so he knows if raw materials are being wasted, or the job could be done better, if it were reorganised, even when the company doesn't. So he gets into a meeting and gives all these ideas about how to make it more efficient; he could get so carried away, he also says you don't need so many workers. On his machine there may be 4 workers, and he could say you could probably do the job with 2- and he's probably one of the 2 who loses his job.

The Company says that the idea of the QCCs has come from Japan, and Japan is succeeding in world trade precisely because of this system. We say this may be O.K. for Japan, but not for Brazil. The situation in Brazil is very different - most of the companies are foreign firms. They say, give us ideas and we will make more profits, but what will happen to those profits? They won't stay in Brazil, and they certainly won't go to the workers either - they'll just go abroad.

- quality circles -

After Japan

The circle game is also being played in Europe. Volvo's use of such systems is well-known and widespread throughout the company's plants. At Ford UK QCCs were sprung on the employees in 1981. Following a visit to Japan the firm's senior management came up with their "After Japan" (AJ) programme. The key elements of this system include: QCCs; more automation; improved manning flexibility; reduced manning; different work practices; management restructuring. In their presentation to the unions Ford UK minced no words: "What has changed in the 1980s is the dramatic increase in overseas competition, with particular reference to Japanese, which means quite simply that unless the changes under the AJ programme are achieved For Britain cannot survive as a major motor manufacturer."

Under the AJ scheme production employees are expected to perform maintenance and stock-moving duties and to assist in line feed. They are also expected to accept any changes arising from increased automation. This is therefore breaking down demarcation between trades and attempts to remove issues of technological change from the bargaining agenda.

Many observers see QCCs as an integral part of a concerted management strategy to break the "power" of trade unions. In many of the developed countries, most notably Britain, Italy and the US, auto workers have through strong shop-floor union organisation developed a high degree of job control. Line speed, supervision and demarcation, for example, were controlled by the effective sanction of strike action. During economic expansion the balance of power on the shopfloor was to the disadvantage of management. But with the present crisis of profitability and recession, managers are making up for lost time in the battle for the frontier of control. Trade unionism is increasingly under attack on a number of levels.

Many countries are witnessing a deftly executed pincer movement with an ideological and legislative assault from governments coupled with more sophisticated managerial techniques. The somewhat crude union busters of yesteryear

have been replaced by consulting firms with their emphasis on "communication" and "team spirit". Some of the Japanese methods are adapted to meet particular national conditions within a framework which redefines industrial relations as human, inter-personal relations. Walter Goldsmith, head of the British Institute of Directors explains where this leaves the unions: "Clearly when a responsible and effective management communicates well with employees, then the vacuum into which unions in the past moved is filled by effective management". Thus the unions, close on the heels of many of their members, become redundant.

Although unions have yet to play their final scene in the script of the new managerial ideology, they are sufficiently on the defensive to be largely impotent when faced with the new technologies and redundancies which comprise the restructuring of the world auto industry. The extent to which they can resist the imposition of the circle game, and all it implies in terms of heightening national competition, incorporating workers into managerial perspectives, breaking trade unions and introducing new production technologies, clearly varies according to national and plant-specific conditions.

But even in cases where union traditions run deep changes are taking place. Certainly there are signs that the empty promises of participation may lead to some disillusionment among the workforce as most of the examples show, but managements are becoming more adept in repackaging their policies and thus stave off any resurgence of militancy.

Participants to the TIE [conference] broadly agreed that a priority for active trade unionists is to expose the threadbare nature of these schemes in terms of enhancing working conditions and job satisfaction, and reveal their true guise as tools to strengthen managerial control. But equally important was a need to assert alternatives. Alternatives which follow from a coherent vision of industrial and social democracy. Most importantly, alternatives which harness the shared aspirations of those who work in the industry and those outside it. Without this the circle game may well be lost.

Unemployed Workers on the West Coast

Grapnel Silencers Ltd in Atlantis retrenched 112 workers nearly half its workforce - as motor manufacturers and component suppliers increasingly begin to feel the impact of the recession generally and the slump in the motor industry particularly. The increase in petrol price will only compound the already grave situation.

Atlantis on the West Coast, 50 km outside Cape Town, has become a pathetic sight with its spiralling unemployment (see SALB 10.3). Hundreds of workers queue fortnightly for the unemployment benefits which most acknowledge to be very inadequate, and daily hundreds are seen walking from one factory to the next looking for work. It is not only Atlantis that is affected. Many of the surrounding towns such as Mamre, Malmesbury and even as far afield as Saldanha have been hit by unemployment. While the Department of Manpower in the Western Cape do not see unemployment as "significant at this stage" it is steadily increasing. Figures released by the Department's Western Cape Inspectorate showed 7,976 people registered as unemployed in December. But this is a gross underestimation as it is well known that thousands of workers are either underemployed or unemployed but have not registered at the unemployment office.

Developments in Atlantis are important because of state attempts at fostering decentralised growth points - where workers live near to the industry and where urbanisation in a sense can be curbed. The social engineering of "depopulating" the metropolitan areas through housing incentives encouraged many to take advantage. Whilst they thought that taking a house in Atlantis would assist them in getting employment in the local industry, in practice this did not occur. Many still have to commute to town while others, who did find employment, now find themselves retrenched.

Unionisation in the area is extremely weak making workers vulnerable to management abuse. Where unions have established a presence they have been generally bureaucratic,

unable to secure improved conditions of employment and totally unsympathetic to grassroots issues workers are confronted with in the area. The weakness of unions is clearly evidenced during retrenchments, where no agreements have been negotiated. Even the most accepted principle of last-in-first-out (LIFO) was not applied, contributing to tensions amongst workers. Even worse is the growing suspicion Atlantis workers have of their fellow workers of Cape Town. As one put it: "they come and take our jobs".

Significant, too, is that workers don't know their rights when unemployed (ie. the few they have!) and many lose out on the monies they are entitled to. The workers I spoke to were all unemployed - some were young, others old, but all were angry and bitter. They are angry at the system, the bosses and the government:

Walfadia, 27 and unmarried explains:

I worked for AMC Classic, you know that place that makes the pots. Before that I worked at a clothing factory in Cape Town. I moved to Wesfleur 3 years ago because I got a better job. I earned more money. I was a despatcher at AMC Classic. I earned R65 per week.

SALB: How did you lose your job?

I had an argument with the supervisor. The "boere" (whites) like to push you around. I back chatted. They told me to leave. That was in 1983...early part. Since then I am looking for a job. But damn it I can't find anything.

SALB: How do you survive?

I live off other people. but I feel bad about it. But what can I do? I intended to "smokkle" (smuggle) ...I'm serious, I must do something.

SALB: Did you ever draw unemployment money?

I never. I don't know my rights. No-one explained them to me. When I did go to the office, the clerk told me I was

- unemployment -

too late. So I did not get my money.

SALB: What are the major problems you have?

Money! Money! We have no money. The Council sends us the white paper [reminder of rent arrears]. Everytime we receive the white paper we must pay R2,00 extra. This is our other worry...the house. I might lose the house I'm sharing with people.

Joseline, 23 and Maria, 44 stand outside the factory gate. The time is 10.30 am, Monday 21 January. It is extremely hot already. They are part of a crowd of 70 workers clinging to the gates of a newly-opened factory. They hope to be asked to come through and place their names on the waiting list. The security guards patrol the gate. They shout at the workers not to push. One or two manage to squeeze past and are led to a nearby office. They wait outside the office...

Joseline and Maria both leave the gate and stand on the opposite side of the road. Others decide to sit under a tree, near the gate. I approach the two and ask whether they are prepared to talk about their experiences. They agree. Both lean against the car. Eventually Joseline starts:

We both come from Malmesbury. Everyday we travel to Atlantis. We have done this for the last year looking for work. We were both retrenched from Lemonkloof Braai Chickens. We were packers there until they put off alot of workers early in 1984. There are alot of us who are unemployed in the area. The two of us are lucky that we can still come here and look for work. Most of the workers can't.

SALB: Why? Can you explain?

The money of course! It costs us R2 a day by bus to this desert! The bus leaves at 6.30 am and we arrive here at 7.45 am. We only go home tonight when the bus goes, that is at 5.15 pm.

We walk from factory to factory. We know all the factories

here, but we get the same answer. They say "wait here, come later, come tomorrow, come next week". It is the same story everyday. They let us wait until sometimes two o'clock before they put up a notice or send out someone to say there is no work. They don't tell us early in the morning so we know where we stand.

SALB: How do you survive?

I can't say for Maria, but I have a child and I still live with my parents. Only my father and brother work. Both are at ADE. But they say there will be more retrenchments in March. So they might lose their jobs. So at the moment it is difficult. At home it causes alot of problems because sometimes they think I don't want to work. It causes alot of house problems, you know!

A worker shouts that someone is coming to the gate. Everybody rushes back to the gate. "What do they say?", asks one worker to those who managed to get past the gate to the office. The security guards let the workers out. All the rest surround the 2 workers that managed to get in. "What do they say?", "Is there work?", "What will they pay?". One of the women replies: "They want experienced people. We must come back tomorrow. They can't make a decision." "Why not?", asked another worker. "I don't know, the bosses are playing games with us", is the reply. "But they kept you there for an hour...what did they do all the time", says someone else.

I check the time, its 11.45 am. "You see", says Joceline, "The same story. So it will go on."

Katrina, 32, is married has 2 children (4 and 9 years old). She explains her struggle for work:

I worked for Cape King Foods in Stikland before my husband was transferred to Koeberg. That was in March 1984. Since then I've been looking for a job. But there is nothing. Many of the factories bring their own workers from Cape

- unemployment -

Town. At first the Government said that they were going to build factories for the people of Atlantis to work. But this did not happen. So we in Atlantis have no chance of getting work.

SALB: What do the bosses say when you ask for a job?

You know they all say the same thing. Not today, come later, try next week...everyday the same thing. It's really bad. It is already like a rhyme in our heads.

SALB: What do you intend doing?

I'll probably have to go back to Scottsdene, where I come from, and try to get a job there. I might stand a better chance. I'm not sure. You know what happens here? Workers that have work bring their aunts, uncles, brothers and sisters to take the openings. So we will never get work. This Atlantis is so bad, I would not bring my enemy here

I might have to go alone, because my husband has a job here at Koeberg. I'll just go on like this till the end of February, then make my move.

By the time I leave, 12.30 pm, many workers still sit waiting. About 20 workers decide to go to another factory. Others go home. A group sitting under the tree, starts shouting:

"We want work! We want work!"

(Marcel Golding, Cape Town, January 1985)

Case Study: Introducing Work Study at a Factory in the Transvaal

What is work study?

Work study is the study of how work is done. It looks at the way work is organised. It gathers information about the work process. It tries to work out the most effective way of working. There are two methods of work study:

Method study looks at the way in which work is done or the arrangement of the different steps in one job. Method study records everything that affects the work process. These details are carefully studied. The work study engineer then suggests new ways of working that will be more "efficient".

Work measurement measures the time a worker takes to finish a job. The management tries to set standards by using this method. The work study engineer times the job with a stop watch. Then he rates the performance of the worker. A "brisk and businesslike" rate usually means 100% performance. Then he divides the job into elements and times each element. He writes down the performance rating for each element. At the end of this exercise he works out the standard time for the job. (Usually a rest allowance of about 14% is added to the 100% rating.)

The engineer can also measure work in a different way. He studies the job and breaks it into elements. He uses a set of standards to work out the time for each element. These standards have been worked out beforehand. Each kind of work is given a specific time. He adds them together to get the time for the job.

What does the work study engineer do?

The work study engineer follows these steps:

1. identifies the work process, its beginning and end
2. writes down all the information about the job. This includes a chart showing the elements, the times of the

- workstudy -

elements and how much time is wasted in each element.

(An "activity chart" is used when studying the work of a machine operator. This chart is used to find the best method of loading and unloading the machine to save time

3. examines the work process by using the charts and by looking at the worker doing the job
4. thinks of new methods that will shorten the work process
5. measures the time taken for the new method. If he thinks that the new method saves a lot of time he defines this method as the new work process.

The work study engineer uses a set of principles when he studies each job and assesses its performance. First he looks at the way the human body is used. Both hands must work together and they must rest at the same times. Arms must also work at the same time but in opposite direction. But arms and legs are harder to move than hands and body. So work should be designed to encourage hand and body movements. Also each movement should prepare the body for the next movement. There should be an easy rhythm in each. From swinging movements are easier than sharp, jerky movements

The engineer then looks at the workplace. All the necessary tools and materials should be kept at fixed work stations in definite positions. The worker then does not have to search for his tools before he can start to work. The lighting must be good enough so that the worker doesn't have to strain his eyes. The tools and equipment should be painted different colours so the worker can easily pick up the correct tool. Also the tools must be designed to help the worker do his job. The worker should not have to change position to use a tool.

The work study engineer's aim is to speed up production, rather than to make work more pleasant or interesting.

Why does management use work study?

Work study is mainly used by employers to raise productivity (ie. to produce the same/or more with fewer workers). Management can raise productivity in two ways:

- * by investing in capital. Management buys new machinery

to produce goods more quickly
* by reducing the amount of work needed to produce a product and reducing the time when workers are not working.

Management usually prefers the second way of increasing productivity. This way means that management does not have to spend a lot of money on buying new equipment. With today's economic recession this is very important. Management has to pay high interest rates to borrow money to buy new equipment.

Work study can benefit management in other ways. The study often uncovers other problems in the work process which waste time. Work study increases management's knowledge of the work process - and therefore control over workers. It gives management a standard time for each job. Management expects every worker to keep to this standard and not produce less than standard. Work study can be applied to all workers like typists, boilermakers or loco drivers.

Management also uses work study to select the "right worker for the right job". The job is divided into its basic elements. The skill needed for each element is worked out. Management gives the more skilled work to skilled workers. Lower skilled work is done by less skilled labour at lower wages. The result is that management can reduce their overall labour costs.

In many cases work study is combined with incentive bonus schemes. Bonus schemes give workers higher wages if they produce more than the standard. The result is that workers work harder. Some managements then change the standard so that workers have to work even harder to produce above the standard. In this way management gets more work out of the workers for the same pay. Bonus schemes also divide workers - each worker has to produce more than his fellow worker.

In South Africa some large companies employ fulltime work study engineers. There are also many companies who do not have work study departments. With the economic recession they started to think of ways that they could increase productivity. The one thing they did was ask the National Pro-

- workstudy -

ductivity Institute (NPI) to do work studies in their work places. Most of these work studies look at ways to make people work faster and reduce the workforce. In a recession it is not worthwhile for management to produce more goods because no-one has money to buy them. Instead management needs to spend less money to produce the same goods. So they retrench some workers and reduce the money paid out on wages.

It is this problem that unions in South Africa have to come with. Work study means that workers have to work harder. also means that many workers will be retrenched.

Work study in practice: a case study

The management of a food factory in the Transvaal was losing profits. Their competitors were doing better than they were. They asked the NPI to do a work study at their place and recommend ways of increasing the productivity of work and reducing the costs. The NPI went into the factory. They looked at each department. They timed the jobs in each department. They looked at ways of reorganising the work to make it quicker. They produced a detailed report for management. The report made the following suggestions:

- * 20 out of 200 workers were not needed in the factory
- * some of the remaining workers should be trained to do different work
- * some of the workers will have to work harder
- * some machines should be moved and used more effectively
- * a bonus scheme should be introduced to make workers work harder.

The workers were confused by the work study. No-one told them what it was about. After the study was completed, the management presented the NPI report to the union. The factory committee met and discussed the report. They realised two important things: the recommendations meant that some workers would be retrenched and that the other workers would have to work much harder. The workers were not satisfied with these recommendations.

At this stage the workers contacted the Technical Advice

Group (TAG) to discuss the report. Together with TAG and their union the workers were able to expose several problems with the study:

- * the factory was operating at a slower speed when the NPI did their study. So the NPI suggestions of increasing the rate of work and using less workers was unrealistic
- * increasing the rate of work will make work more dangerous. Workers will work faster and not worry about safety. There will be more accidents
- * increasing the workload means that workers will get tired and experience more stress. This means that their health will be badly affected
- * the NPI study did not consider absenteeism. If workers are absent from work there will not be enough workers to do the job
- * if the demand for the factory's products increased, there will not be enough workers to produce more goods
- * the company has a duty to prevent retrenchment of its workers. It must look for other solutions to its problems of high costs like short-time and no overtime.

The workers went to negotiate the NPI recommendations with management. They used all these arguments and were able to delay the implementation of the recommendations. But the management would not listen to the union. They did not really care what the workers thought. They did not ask the union to participate in the study until after it was completed. The management went ahead and retrenched 20 workers. The rest of the workers are now working harder and their wages have not been increased. This is the situation that many workers are facing and will have to face in the future. The economic situation is not improving and some industries have been very badly affected. Managements are looking for ways to reduce their costs. The first thing they do is retrench workers and reorganise the work process to speed up production. Work study is the powerful tool that employers use to do this. Workers should understand what work study is and how it works. Only then can workers take action to stop management using it to the disadvantage of workers.

(Technical Advice Group, Johannesburg, January 1985)

New International Labour Studies Confront Traditional International Unions*

This is a brief report of the conference on "Third World Trade Unionism: Equity and Democratisation in the Changing International Division of Labour" held by the Institute for International Development and Cooperation, Ottawa, 25-27 October 1984.

The conference covered a broad range of topics to which one cannot do justice in a brief review. The keynote address by Charles Levinson (Secretary General Emeritus of the International Federation of Chemical, Energy and General Workers Union) shocked many participants present by its evident lack of preparation and its candid admission that the international trade unions mirror the practices of the multi-national corporations. The following day, scholars from Holland, Denmark, Israel and the USA offered various models of "systems of labour control", and "types of accumulation" in the so-called Third World. However worthy, these constructions were somewhat too global and formal to provoke the hoped-for synthesis between academics and trade unionists.

The next session stirred more passions after a defence of nationalism as a trade union perspective was followed by two front-runners of the "new international labour studies". Here we were beginning to come to grips with the problems raised by Levinson's provocative opening remarks. Could improved communications, especially at a grassroots level, overcome these? At the end of the day would/should not the trade unions in a particular nation-state turn to national strategies to defeat the threat of the multi-nationals.

The undoubted highlight of this conference was a set of interrelated papers by a group of intellectuals/

* First published in the Newsletter of International Labour Studies 24

activists associated with the South African Labour Bulletin, together with one by conference organiser Roger Southall. We were introduced to the rise of political unionism in South Africa in the 1950s, the emergence and struggles of Black trade unions in the 1970s, the role of the International Metalworkers' Federation in South Africa, the emergent unions in the multi-national-controlled motor industry and the struggles amongst migrant workers on the East Rand. This provoked the theoretical discussions informed by political practice which many of us had come for.

The papers on Nigeria were, unfortunately, more of a mixed bag. Papers ranged from Althusserian exercises on the nature of the "social formation" to passionate defences of the market economy against "greedy and selfish" trade unions. One speaker accused the trade unions of aggravating, if not causing, the differentials between urban and rural incomes in Nigeria. There was however some constructive discussion of the prospects for Nigerian labour in the 1980s under conditions of recession, retrenchment and military rule. There were in other sessions extremely useful surveys of the changing role of the trade unions under "radical-populist" African regimes and in French-speaking Africa, and an overdue call for reassessing the role of women in trade union struggles in Zambia (an issue obviously of much wider importance).

Another exciting set of papers centred on India and Sri Lanka. The discussion was set in context by two wide-ranging surveys of the impact of the new international division of labour on labour organisations, and the limitations of conventional trade union strategies. A study of the union movement in India's railways was followed by an account of the 1982 Bombay textile strike. A survey of the union movement in Sri Lanka concluded that women workers in the modern "transnationalised" garment industry (in Export Processing Zones) should be seen not only as workers but also as women if they were to be unionised.

A final set of papers tackled topics so diverse it would

- international -

be hard to categorise them: the role of the International Labour Organisation regarding trade union rights, the role of the trade unions in promoting human rights in Africa, workers' participation in the Malta Drydocks and Francophone Africa, the workers councils (shoras) in Iran and surveys of the trade union movement in Argentina, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Fiji. Nevertheless, many important general issues were raised in discussion.

The round table which closed the conference once again pitted the new international labour studies against the established bastions of the international trade union movement, represented this time by Luis Anderson, secretary general of ORIT (Inter-American Regional Organisation of Workers of the Brussels-based ICFTU). He rapidly brushed aside criticisms regarding the dubious sources of financing which have given rise to the accusations of "trade union imperialism".

I was left wondering at the width of the gap between traditional international trade unions and the new community of labour-oriented scholars. A serious dialogue would have required the presence of representatives of such new "social-movement unions" as those of Brazil, Chile, South Africa and the Philippines.

Further details: Plans exist for a special issue of Labour Capital and Society (McGill University, Montreal) that should draw on work from conference participants, as well as an eventual book. Two or three of the conference papers have appeared (at least in draft form) in P Waterman, For a new labour internationalism, (NILS 1984

(Ronald Munck, Sociology Department, University of Ulster, Belfast, Northern Ireland).

Women Workers Strike Over Job Evaluation

In the closing months of 1984, 270 women sewing-machinists struck at Ford's main UK plants at Dagenham and Halewood. The strike, which lasted for six weeks, ended a dispute with management which had rumbled on for 16 years. The struggle for re-grading began as long ago as 1966 when the machinists were first given unskilled status. The women have consistently demanded that their work be upgraded from grade B to grade C, which would increase their basic pay by R13,00 per week and give them parity with skilled metal finishers and welders. The women make seat covers for cars and their job entails the sewing together of scores of pieces of material with great precision. The sexual discrimination which led to their being refused skilled status is obvious: the male workers who cut the material which the machinists sew together are on the higher grade C.

The women, who picketed the plants to ensure that scab seat covers were not brought in from Europe, rejected a management proposal for a new company-dominated job evaluation committee on which their union (TGWU) would have only observer status. The strike ended in late-December 1984 when management conceded the union equal status on an evaluation committee under an independent chairperson. The importance of this as a step towards the right of workers to evaluate the worth of their own jobs may be gauged from management's insistence that this mode of job evaluation was to be seen as a one-off case, and not used in other parity claims. Nevertheless, the strike may yet have important repercussions at Ford plants in other parts of the world, and in other struggles by women seeking recognition for the value of their work.

One member of the Ford management distinguished himself by comparing the sewing-machinists job to "peeling bananas". This gentleman, however, was to slip rather badly: the strike proved the centrality of the machinists' job by halting all car production at the Dagenham and Halewood plants for five weeks, stopping production at Ford's Southampton plant

- Ford strike -

for two weeks, and leading to the laying off of 10,000 manual workers at a cost to the company of R500,000,000.

(Jeremy Krikler, February 1985)

STOP PRESS - Change in Workmen's Compensation

During the past year, a joint certification panel consisting of 8 doctors from both the Medical Bureau of Occupational Diseases (MBOD) and the National Centre for Occupational Health (NCOH), has provided a service to medical practitioners wishing to submit cases of suspected pneumoconiosis to the Workmens Compensation Commissioner (WCC). Xrays and work histories submitted to this panel received a prompt, collective and objective assessment. This assessment was normally accepted by the WCC as a diagnosis, of occupationally-induced disease, and compensated accordingly

In January the panel's authority was restricted, at the request of the WCC, to certification of workers seen at the MBOD clinic only. All other claims have to be submitted in full to the WCC as before. This move is retrogressive:

- a) the procedure is once again more secretive
- b) the basis for making medical decisions about occupational diseases is contracted and bureaucratised
- c) the only route of appeal against future medical decisions is through the WCC court, involving lawyers, inconvenience and expense
- d) bureaucratic delay will again disadvantage workers in obtaining their rightful compensation
- e) with access to the panel closed off, an important means of sharing knowledge and learning has been closed for outside medical practitioners.
- f) The NCOH - a body specifically dealing with occupational health in industry and concentrating much expertise and knowledge in this field - is now excluded from diagnosing occupational disease.

A full report follows in the next edition of SALB.

The Struggle for Trade Union Democracy

Dave Gool

The most immediate question arising from the struggle of Cape garment workers is the question of, and struggle for trade union democracy. The article by Martin Nicol in SALB 10.2 on the "Cape Underwear Strike", fails to draw the lessons from the strike and to link it to this task.

In initiating the debate on the struggle for trade union democracy, this reply will reject the implicit argument that garment workers are passive actors, who "lack militancy" and the will to struggle. This view is implicit in the arguments of Nicol, Bloch and particularly Shefer. (1) They all admit to simmering discontent in the industry, but cannot see how this can crystallise in militant worker action.

This reply will focus particularly on the CLOWU's strategy and struggles of garment workers. It is necessary to consider the nature of the industry and how this engenders class struggles within the labour process. The strategic conception of this argument is situated in the context of struggling to democratise the Garment Workers Union

The nature of the industry

There are more than 60,000 workers employed in over 400 factories. (2) The clothing industry is still highly competitive. The extent of monopolisation is offset by the labour intensive nature of the production process. The industry is characterised by a host of small and medium sized establishments. The following table will illustrate the atomised nature of the labour force. The production process, organised on the basis of targets and piece rates varies in all companies and is strewn with conflict. This conflict is active but unco-ordinated and atomised like the labour force. The nature of the industry is an important factor in understanding the struggle of garment workers.

- debate -

Concentration of Industry

Size of establishments	No of establishments (Total 1220)	No of workers (Total 112,744)
1-99	937	22,067
100-499	249	56,221
500 +	34	34,456

Per Capita Capital Investment in Selected Industries (Cape Town)

Clothing	R 436,50
Textiles	R2,155,00
Wood	R1,968,00
Total manufacturing	R2,385,00

Average Wages in Garment Industry according to size of Establishment

1-99	R33,00 per week
100-499	R29,00 per week
500+	R28,00 per week

Source: Statistical Yearbook 1982, figures based on the 1976 census.

The fierce competition for labour and markets amongst the smaller companies has lead to an increase in the average wage of workers employed by smaller companies. Their rate of profitability will decline further with the tendency by medium and large establishments to acquire new technology thereby increasing productivity.

The atomised nature of the labour force, combined with different conditions of work and intensities of exploitation creates a heterogeneous mass of workers referred to generally as the "rank-and-file" of the GWU.

"Lack of militancy"?

Class struggles in the garment industry generally tend to

focus on the labour process. This is caused by the nature of the industry and the absence of a militant position by the GWU. Martin Nicol argues: "The industry has a reputation for industrial peace second to none." (3) This is a repetition of Joanne Bloch's assertion that there is a "...ment workers". (4) This argument is continued by Shefer "...this lack of militancy has prevailed up until last year!" (with the emergence of CLOWU). (5)

These arguments lack the knowledge of material conditions within the industry and particularly of its labour process. The relationship within the garment industry between workers and union leadership cannot be explained by a "lack of militancy" or controls imposed by the "hierachical" and "partriarchal" structures of the family reproduced in the workplace. (6)

The ability of the Garment Workers Union to exercise political control over its membership rests on the nature of the industry, as Joanne Bloch correctly assesses:

The fact that most clothing factories are small and isolated and that even in the larger factories the nature of the labour process is such that workers are split up into autonomous groups,...militates against industry-wide worker contact and solidarity. (7)

The bureaucracy of the GWU rests on the division and isolation of garment workers, from each other. The inability of garment workers to mount an industry-wide strike against low wages and intense exploitation does not mean that class conflict and class struggle is absent from this industry. The objective weakness of garment workers is clear.

The "lack of militancy" arguments lack a class analysis of the labour process. A romanticised view would see the struggles of workers waged in the labour process as indicative of a high degree of class consciousness. These struggles are the result of intense exploitation and atomisation of the labour force - a response to the weakness of organising united action against capital.

Struggles in the labour process

The labour process in the garment factories can be summarised by the Radio Good Hope slogan "Push up production". The intensification of exploitation is at the heart of struggles for control over the labour process. The workers are divided into "lines" of 30 workers with a supervisor. In the smaller factories one or two lines can compete to "put out" and "push-up" targets. In the larger establishment this process is intensified. Supervisors do not perform a productive function they control and discipline workers to ensure production targets are met.

Larger factories employ two supervisors per line a production supervisor and a quality supervisor. These functions for obvious reasons cannot be combined. This structure of the labour process is engendered by class struggles within it:

This struggle is not primarily about the distribution of income, most fundamentally it is about the control of the labour process. If workers did not resist, if they were...happy and obedient, capitalists would not need the enormous and complex apparatus...to ensure exploitation. (8)

The production targets, coupled with "incentive bonus schemes", ie. piece rates, are sites of intense struggles within the factories. Worker responses and action within the labour process differ. Methods of struggle employed by workers include absenteeism, organised go-slows, go-slows to maintain low targets, demonstration strikes, sabotage etc. It emerges that the Cape Underwear strike resulted from management's constant attempts to increase levels of exploitation. A Cape Underwear striker Mrs Daniels said in an interview:

The worst thing about working at Cape is the high targets we have to reach. Just before the strike I was producing 30 garments an hour. My bonus was then R7,00. Targets are increased all the time, I used to get home feeling more and more tired every day. But all the time targets were increasing bonuses were not.

Because wages were too low:

Individual workers did approach management about decreasing bonuses but nothing happened. We then decided that we had had enough and we got together and downed tools. (9)

Had CLOWU not existed it is doubtful whether this initial demonstration strike would have gained publicity to be marked out as the first example of "emerging militancy" by garment workers or an end to "industrial peace".

At another factory in the Cape, a worker interviewed for biographical details said about the production process:

In January they tried to lower the cost of a unit to five cents; we get ten cents at the moment. They also tried to increase the target from 25 to 30 per hour. We sometimes make R30 bonuses per week. The boss saves on overtime pay and transport allowances if we work for bonuses. We had to do something. After tea-time we all refused to go upstairs. We spoke to the boss. He said no to our demands.

We decided to work to target nothing more. We made less than the target. We weren't striking, we were working, but holding up production. He couldn't fire us. After two days he threatened to call the union.

We wouldn't budge. The next day he gave in. (10)

Struggles within the labour process cannot be rigidly divided into those over wages, or to gain control over production. Later in the same year the same workers had another stoppage because of the manager's "filthy language". The garment workers participating in the "go-slows" illustrates the extent to which they are relied on to produce. The functions of the supervisor are extraneous to production but necessary to police workers and intensify exploitation.

It is necessary to develop these shop-floor struggles into an industry-wide offensive against capital and the union bureaucracy. The necessity for democratising the garment workers union remains the most important task facing workers in the Western Cape.

- debate -

The fight-back: its importance

In themselves struggles within the labour process are limited, their real significance is the fact that the workers are prepared to struggle, but lack co-ordination and industry-wide organisation. To show the limitations and importance of factory floor struggles we will quote from an article "The piece rate: class struggle on the shop floor", where Nina Shapiro-Perl argues:

The greatest importance of the fightback over piece rates probably lies in the summing up of the struggle itself, that has yet to be done. The fightback that workers wage daily over piece work is not recognised as the struggle against management that it is. With the virtual absence...of union drives in the...shops, management prerogatives go largely unchallenged. The fightback appears as an individual war to earn a fair wage or as an unsystematic group strategy...Summing up the struggle can educate the less conscious participants to their existing power as workers, not to mention their potential power. (11)

The struggle on the shopfloor explodes the myth that the garment workers "lack militancy". The "summing-up" of class struggles on the factory floor to challenge capital and to democratise the Garment Workers Union brings the strategy of CLOWU to the fore. The strike by Cape Underwear workers backed by CLOWU contains a number of lessons for this task. Except for Joanne Bloch's analysis of the Action Committee, strategies to bring garment workers into the independent union movement as an organised class force have not been debated or explored.

The GWU, CLOWU and the struggle for democracy

Within a decade we have witnessed two attempts to organise garment workers into a democratic force, the first was the attempt by the Action Committee to democratise the existing Garment Workers Union. Bloch's study is commendable for its analysis. The second attempt is the "CLOWU...a brand new union for clothing workers in Cape Town". (12) These attempts provide us with the parameters for analysis-

ing the GWU. This union is nearly sixty years old. It has a membership of 60,000 workers contributing a membership fee of 65 cents per week; giving it a monthly income of R160,000. The accumulated funds of the union allows it to pay organisers extravagant salaries, it owns Industria House (union offices) valued at R3 million, while details of other investments are unknown. It prints a weekly newsletter distributed free amongst 60,000 workers, printed on its own press. (13)

At an AGM attended by the author in 1981 about 200 workers were present. Clearly there is little active enthusiasm amongst workers for the trade union. The union and Industrial Council provides workers with a set of "benefits". As a result most workers are not prepared to lose these "benefits" by forming another trade union. These benefits include sick benefits, housing loans, sick pay, bursary funds, distress funds etc. The sick benefit fund for instance allows a garment worker to see any doctor on its panel free of charge. This also includes the cost of medicines. Workers pay for this benefit but clearly this is something no worker would want to lose considering the costs of health care. Sick pay now equals about 65% of a workers wages. (14) Clearly these benefits (funeral, retirement funds, social and legal aid) are exploited for control by the bureaucracy.

The corporatist nature of the Garment Workers Union has allowed it to permeate the industry with an ideology of benefits and economism. Yet despite direct opposition of the union and the bosses to stay-aways, the rank and file garment workers provided the backbone for these struggles in 1976 and 1980. During periods of heightened political struggle the garment workers have also struck for wage increases. In 1980, directly linking increases in bus fares to wages, stoppages occurred:

Several firms in the garment industry have experienced short work stoppages since the recent increase in bus fares.

A 10% increase in wages was negotiated after a stoppage at Rex Trueform last week, but dissatisfaction among garment workers still appears to be widespread.

- debate -

About 200 workers at the Tej Knitwear factory... stopped work...demanding an increase. (15)

The stay-away from work on 16 and 17 June was supported almost unanimously by garment workers: "Employers said absenteeism was worse among women who make up a large proportion of the labour force." (16) The Cape Times reported: "Production came to a standstill in the 56,000 worker clothing industry." (17)

Amongst garment workers there exists virtually no tradition of democratic organisation. Democratic processes are absent from their trade unions, communities, central government and even the family serves as an instrument of control and domination. In the workplace, class struggles tend to be directed at the labour process, and the high rate of labour turnover and absenteeism also suggests subjective and individual responses to exploitation.

In 1981 the Argus reported about the garment industry: "Recruitment is barely keeping ahead of labour turnover which runs at 50 % a year...!" (18) The Director of Kangasling a factory employing 49 workers said:

I spent about R400 advertising for machinists. In an effort to attract and keep staff we introduced a R10 attendance bonus...

She complains:

I always try to pay above average wages, and I allow my workers to be...15 minutes late each week. But absenteeism is high (this is a common problem)... (19)

The struggle by capital against labour turnover committed the corporatist GWU to police what they call "desertion". GWU warns workers:

As from 13th December a worker who intends to leave her job MUST give notice on the prescribed form.

Desertion causes the factory problems. And it causes problems for you! At the worst you will be at risk of prosecution. (20)

The disjuncture between shop-floor militancy, participa-

tion in political strikes, and the apparent inability to challenge the union bureaucracy must be placed in the context of the atomised nature of the labour force militating "against industry-wide worker solidarity", and the absence of a democratic tradition in the Western Cape amongst the majority of unionised workers, coupled with the ideological control mechanism of "benefits". This allows effective division and policing of the labour force by union bureaucrats.

CLOWU: "A brand new union" and the Cape Underwear strike.

Martin Nichol has written elsewhere:

CLOWU has tried to take the Garment Workers Union by storm. In its brief nine months existence, it has issued over 125,000 pamphlets and newsletters attacking the GWU-WP and agitating on wage, price, housing and transport issues. (21)

CLOWU's strategy is summed up by Virginia Engel in SALB: CLOWU went on a much broader campaign trying to conscientise workers more generally...rather than concentrating on the problems of workers in a particular factory, slowly making small victories in order to build up confidence of people in themselves to be together in a democratic union. We have not used much outside support (NUTW)... We think that it is important to build up the worker leadership... The workers themselves must have the confidence and feeling that it is their organisation and that they are in control of it. (22)

CLOWU's lack of grassroots organisation, disciplined and concrete work on day-to-day issues and the building up of a strong membership amongst workers was evident in the Cape Underwear strike and the Rex Trueform stoppage. In the Cape Underwear strike only 157 out of more than 600 workers struck "and became members of CLOWU on joining the strike". (23) At Rex Trueform the same high-profile strategy of handing out pamphlets and encouraging strike action without organisation is apparent. Grassroots reports:

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On Tuesday, April 24, the workers of the fourth and sixth floor went on strike. In the afternoon they went to CLOWU for help. CLOWU distributed a pamphlet informing other Rex Trueform workers of the demand.

On Wednesday morning all the workers came out on strike ...Floor managers told us different stories...We didn't know what was going on in the other sections so some of us went back to work. (24)

The tactic of CLOWU relies on worker discontent and the absence of organisation illustrates its youth as a "brand new union". There is a clear-cut case for opposing this as a strategy to organise garment workers.

The effects of CLOWU's stormy approach has allowed the GWU to consolidate and activate its bureaucratic apparatus. (25) The flaw in CLOWU's strategy is clear. It reduces the problems of ideological influence, division of workers, political control to an organisational experiment. Generally what has emerged is that "brand new" unionism will not attract the majority of workers.

Lessons of the Cape Underwear workers strike

Nicol argues: "the strikers never had to confront directly the objective weakness of their situation." Yet he fails to analyse the weakness and lessons of this strike. CLOWU he says: "...hoped the demand [R10 increase] would ignite the industry." CLOWU's wish for an industry-wide conflagration is not doubted - but represents a clear lack of understanding of the industry and worker organisation.

The Cape Underwear strikers were not supported by other workers in joint action against the bosses. The workers realised their objective weakness. With no organisation their resistance would crumble. CLOWU had not sunk organisational roots amongst garment workers and therefore the demand in itself could not cause an industry-wide strike.

The unemployment levels in Cape Town are increasing and many workers realised that the clothing industry faces

stiff competition from imported products. The readiness of the state to side with the employers and the union bureaucracy clearly remained at the back of workers minds particularly with the absence of organisation amongst workers. CLOWU clearly relied on publicity and "prominent figures" like "Dr Boesak, Rev Lockett, Professor Wilson, Dr Adonis, Sheikh Najaar" to demand a "speedy solution" to the strike from the Cape Underwear management. They also pressed the "liberal" Woolworths management: "Dr Allan Boesak, patron of the UDF, telephoned the management and made... clear to them...if the employers still refused to sign, CLOWU would call for boycott action against them". (26)

Unlike the strikes by NAAWU in the motor industry, the Dunlop strike and the half-hour work stoppage for Neil Aggett which showed the penetration of organisation amongst workers on the shop-floor, CLOWU remains isolated from the majority of garment workers. The task to democratise the Garment Workers Union remains a prerequisite for united industry-wide worker action.

The lessons learnt from the Cape Underwear strike show the need for patient careful organisation, spanning years of struggle to unite garment workers to democratise their union. The Cape Underwear workers were isolated, the reliance on "outsiders" to assist the workers emphasises the objective weakness of the strike and CLOWU. The diversity of the industry isolates and divides workers, the struggle directed at the labour process needs to be co-ordinated. This can only be done through mass worker intervention. The democratisation of the Garment Workers Union demands an appreciation of every aspect of their exploitation by leading workers in the garment industry.

This contribution hopes to start a fruitful debate about strategies to adopt vis-a-vis reformist trade unions who control all the workers in a particular industry. The strategy of "brand new unionism" isolates the leading militants in the industry from the majority of workers, this could have the effect of strengthening the bureaucracy. Clearly we are entering a period of heightened social tensions and increasing class struggles. CLOWU must abandon

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its isolationism and its leading workers must work to democratise the GWU.

Footnotes:

1. M Nicol, "Strike at Cape Underwear" SALB 10.2, Oct-Nov 1984, and "RAWU and CLOWU: controversial twins", WIP 32, 1984; J Bloch, "The Action Committee versus the Garment Workers Union", in L Cooper and D Kaplan (eds), Selected research papers on aspects of organisation in the Western Cape, (Cape Town 1982), J Shefer "The hand that rocks the cradle, the hand that threads the needle...A study of Coloured women in the clothing industry in Cape Town" in G Bloch and D Kaplan (eds), S A Research Papers, (Cape Town 1984)
2. Clothesline 6.26, 13.7.84 and 6.36, 21.9.84
3. Nicol, "Strike at Cape Underwear"
4. Bloch, "The Action Committee", p72
5. Shefer, "The hand that rocks the cradle"
6. *ibid*
7. Bloch, "The Action Committee", p73
8. D Clawson, Bureaucracy and the labour process, (Monthly Review Press 1980), P24
9. Cape Herald 12.5.84
10. Interview with garment worker, November 1984
11. N Shapiro-Perl, "The piece rate: class struggle on the shop-floor", p298
12. Nicol, "Strike at Cape Underwear", p87
13. Clothesline 6.36, 21.9.84
14. *ibid* 6.31, 17.8.84
15. Argus 28.5.80
16. *ibid*, 16.6.80
17. Cape Times 21.6.80
18. Argus 28.6.81
19. Clothesline 6.28, 27.7.84
20. *ibid*, 6.45, 23.11.84
21. Nicol, "RAWU and CLOWU", p36
22. Interview with V Engel in SALB 10.2, Oct-Nov 1984
23. Nicol, "Strike at Cape Underwear", p98
24. Grassroots May 1984, "Worker Supplement"
25. See Nicol, "RAWU and CLOWU"
26. Grassroots May 1984; Nicol, "Strike at Cape Underwear",



INTERVIEW:

Cyril Ramaphosa

In December 1984 the South African Labour Bulletin interviewed Cyril Ramaphosa, general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers.

SALB: How did you get involved in trade unions?

Cyril Ramaphosa: I was working for a firm of attorneys, serving my articles. But I became disillusioned with law because it seemed to be a mercenary type of career, which I did not want to pursue. I always wanted to be involved in a career

where I could help people. Law, initially seemed the perfect choice, but as soon as I got involved in it, I realised apart from promoting capitalistic ideas for the individual, it did not serve to bring about a new order. Well, that's when I decided to get involved in trade unions.

SALB: Can you give a brief history of NUM?

Cyril Ramaphosa: We started in 1982, after CUSA passed a resolution to establish a union for mineworkers. We started organising on the gold mines, then went to the collieries and later to diamonds and copper mines. We are looking to 1985 as a year where asbestos mines and other base minerals will be tackled. Our membership is 90,000 [110,000 signed up by Jan 1985 - ed.] Our strongholds are in the Orange Free State, Western Transvaal, Carltonville area and Witbank, with Namaqualand growing rapidly.

SALB: How do you explain NUM's rapid growth?

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Cyril Ramaphosa: It has a lot to do with our recruiting strategies. Workers saw us as a union that fights for them. One of our strongest tactics is that we do not impose the union on workers. We do not look at a mine and say we must go and organise that mine. We wait for workers to approach us, then we get them to form themselves into an organising committee, so that, if they want the union they will have to work and organise themselves. And the union organisers will just be there as facilitators. Other unions look at plants and mines and just pick them up and organise, which means that unions are sometimes imposed on workers, who are not really unionised. We believe that workers should not only be organised but unionised as well. There is a big difference.

Organising workers means signing up workers to join the union. But they never really became unionised in terms of understanding what a union is all about, and what a union can achieve in the workplace, as well as in the immediate environment they live in. And, ultimately, the broader environment. So if workers have been unionised, you will see an impact not only in work related matters but also in the environment in which they live. [Hence NUM members have organised boycotts of concession stores and taxis in order to secure fair prices - ed.]

SALB: When organising do you concentrate on specific categories of workers?

Cyril Ramaphosa: No, initially we tried to do that and we realised that it was a mistake. There are, obviously, particularly in the mine situation, workers who are strategic, who are able to influence other workers. Initially we went for certain categories of workers (higher categories such as supervisors, team leaders). But now we are tending more and more to give more attention to the people right at the bottom because they don't have much to lose.

SALB: What is your relationship with other mine unions like BAMCWU? Is there any rivalry?

Cyril Ramaphosa: We are not hostile to them. We can only

be hostile if they try to get into mines where we have already organised. Their presence to us is not a threat because we know we are bigger, more effective and so we do not really regard them as competitors. At the moment we are dominant in mining. We have not come across any area where there is any form of rivalry. That may happen maybe in Natal where workers have asked us to come and where other unions have already started operating and where workers are not particularly pleased with what they have been doing.

SALB: Do you have any formal relations with other mine unions?

Cyril Ramaphosa: We have no formal relationship with the smaller unions. At our Congress we passed a resolution that there should be one union in one industry. So that's the goal we still want to pursue. We are open to unity talks with other mine workers.

SALB: Could you explain how NUM is structured?

Cyril Ramaphosa: We have shaft-committees composed of shaft-stewards, at shaft level. And then you get the branch which consists of all shaft steward committees on the mine. A branch is an individual mine. Several branches form a region. At present we have eight regions across the country. Then we have the National Congress which has 50 delegates from every region.

SALB: There have been rumours that NUM is not satisfied with practices in CUSA and walked out of the annual conference. Could you explain what the issues are?

Cyril Ramaphosa: It is very difficult to say right now because the problems have not yet been resolved. There are problems, some of the ones which came out in the newspaper were basically true and one can just go along these lines [these reports spoke of differences over the unity talks and on questions of worker control and organisation - ed.] We want to leave it there and see how the problems are resolved internally first. If it isn't resolved internally,

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obviously we will have to go more public.

SALB: What has been NUM's role in uniting Southern African mineworkers?

Cyril Ramaphosa: It started about a year ago when we got to meet the Zambian, Zimbabwean miners and the whole idea was brought up by ourselves - that we need to have some form of unity among Southern African miners' unions. Everybody took it up very seriously and was very excited about it. Then we had a further meeting where it was discussed and there is now another meeting in January to discuss certain principles further. The final idea might be to set up an office in Southern Africa - or as some unity or co-ordinating committee that will be formed to co-ordinate activities between unions in the Southern African countries and we might even look at countries like Angola where there are miners, as well as Mozambique. We initiated the idea and would like to believe that we are the leading force behind the concept.

SALB: Were any of the other mine unions involved in the discussions?

Cyril Ramaphosa: BAMCWU, the Tunnel Workers Union and other local union were not invited. Maybe they will be included later on because at that stage we did not even have a working relationship with them. It was a thing that we went out to do on our own. There might even be problems in that the outside unions would prefer to recognise one union in one country as they only have one union in their industries. Zambia has only one, Zimbabwe has one, Botswana has one and so forth. So, if we are going to deal with a number of unions there is going to be a problem.

Now the other important thing is in all this - the most important thing will be exchanging of information and ideas with regard to multinational corporations. None of the other unions have yet won a recognition agreement. One would ask oneself, do they have a legitimate status at discussions such as these because they don't negotiate with the bosses. Some of them have been around for three years

and there is no agreement that they can show. One of the problems we have with them is that they claim to be fighting for workers' rights but how do you fight for workers' rights when you don't negotiate for those workers you represent. We would have been a lot happier if some of them had agreements and we were jointly able to put the Chamber under pressure.

SALB: Is it true that NUM was initially favoured by the Chamber of Mines? Could you explain the history of this?

Cyril Ramaphosa: Initially when we started recruiting we thought we would not go and ask for access. We had not yet realised the problems inherent in organising miners. You do not just go out and recruit without access. It is just virtually impossible. So we had to go to the Chamber, the bosses. They gave us offices, recruiting facilities - the works. We took them. There was no other way we could have got started. That to many people was a new development in the country - where a union got access and such good treatment. It just doesn't sound right. We agree. But being the mining industry there was nothing else we could have done. The rest is an open record. Everyone has been able to see how the honeymoon came to an end and how the Chamber tried time and time again to put barriers in our way and was more and more resistant. They are clamping down on us. Access is being restricted. There is no longer a very easy relationship and it had to come to that.

The other unions thought they would do exactly what we did at the beginning. They thought we would not get access and they started pointing fingers at us which was good enough for them to do but later they realised they also needed access. So they also went for access, and the Chamber wanted to see their constitutions, and many unions were forced to amend their constitutions, to suit the Chamber.

SALB: Could you explain management's attitude at the early stages of NUM's organising?

Cyril Ramaphosa: It is important to note that while management gave offices there was a lot of resistance - they dis-

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suaded workers from joining our union. One of the reasons why workers started joining our union in large numbers is the resistance they saw from management. Management helped us a hell of a lot, unconsciously, because as soon as they gave us facilities and so forth, they hoped we would not succeed in organising these workers and they started doing a number of things to dissuade workers from joining the union. Now mine workers are not fools because - if management had not resisted the union, if they made everything easy workers would have been suspicious. But management then resisted the union which was a very stupid thing on their part. Only when they did this the workers saw this was a union that they should belong to. In one particular mine they had a number of doubts about our union but as soon as I was arrested they said this is the union we want to join. Its leader has been arrested. If the union was a management creation why would he have been arrested?

SALB: Could you talk briefly about the recent strike?

Cyril Ramaphosa: In events that led up to the strike management played a similar part. Management was resistant. They were trying to stop workers from going on strike. They went out of their way to say workers who went on strike at the call of the union would face dismissal and so on - which was a bloody stupid thing to do. Because all they did was to publicise to everybody that on the 17th there would be a strike. Everybody immediately realised that this was a union we should really belong to and membership during and just before the strike really zoomed. Workers saw that management was against it and everything that management is against, to workers, is something that they feel would be of benefit to them.

SALB: According to reports many workers who were not organised by NUM also supported the strike. How do you view this and how do you assess the effects of the strike?

Cyril Ramaphosa: It was significant, very much so. It has affected industrial relations on the mines. Before the strike management still had great doubts about a number of things like our membership strength, the level of support

that the NUM had amongst those workers who had not joined the union. Management still believed that we were just a pushover type of union. But after the strike a balance of power had been introduced. But it is not at equilibrium stage yet.

SALB: Were there any divisions among the employers in the way they handled the strike?

Cyril Ramaphosa: There were divisions. Companies like Goldfields were prepared to fire workers immediately they went on strike and Anglo American and Rand Mines were prepared to sit the strike out and see how far it would go. Some companies were more prepared to settle than others. We can exploit these divisions - and did do so successfully and will do so in the future.

SALB: What is NUM's position on the British miners' strike?

Cyril Ramaphosa: We support the British miners in their struggle and this has been discussed in our regional conferences. We have had a British mineworker visiting us. He went around meeting workers, addressing our regional conferences and so forth. We are squarely behind the British miners.

SALB: Can we turn to the recent stay-away where the mineworkers were visibly absent. Could you tell us why?

Cyril Ramaphosa: The stay-away was discussed extensively. But we had a number of problems. Firstly, we had just come out of a major strike, and we thought it would be too taxing to pull out our members again. Secondly, we believe for an event such as that to be effective, in the mining industry, all the mines must be brought to a standstill. Some of the mines are newly organised and they are in the process of being unionised. It was therefore premature for us to get involved in the stay-away. And, thirdly, it takes us 3 - 4 weeks to mobilise. Mineworkers are aware and some of them actually wanted to go out. But union leadership at branch and regional level thought that it was premature.

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But generally there was support for what took place.

SALB: What is your relationship with white mine unions?

Cyril Ramaphosa: We have contacts with the Federated Mining Union which is the Boilermakers Society's sister union. But otherwise we have no relation to the other white mine unions.

SALB: What is NUM's position on the national political struggle?

Cyrril Ramaphosa: We have chosen not to be closely allied to any organisation with political objectives. But do support any actions we feel warrants support from our membership. But we want to do it as an independent agent, if we have to support any organisation, but not as part of them. Our priority is to extend our organisation and build trade union unity, and take up issues that affect us as mineworkers, as well as other political issues.

SALB: What are NUM's views on worker unity?

Cyril Ramaphosa: We support worker unity and at our Special Congress, we passed a resolution that the moves for worker unity should be hastened. We believe that when workers are united they can achieve more than when they are not united. That is why we support the new federation.

SALB: What are your priorities for 1985?

Cyril Ramaphosa: On an organisational level, we want to consolidate our position and organise more workers. By next year's negotiations we will have 200,000 members.

POSTSCRIPT

The Third National Congress of the NUM was held on 19 Jan at Thabong, Welkom. Despite severe criticism of CUSA over ICFTU links, worker control, and differences over the unit

talks - no decision was taken to leave the Council.

The Congress was attended by 350 delegates and 3000 members. Significant was the high proportion of young workers present and the large contingent of "coloured" workers who had travelled up from Namaqualand. Another interesting feature of the Congress was the Graduation Ceremony for shop stewards who had completed NUM's education course.

The NUM declared war on job reservation in the mining industry - the first bastion of white working class racism - giving notice that mining apartheid would be placed firmly on the bargaining table alongside wages.

The Congress resolved to register the union in terms of the Labour Relations Act in order to gain automatic stop-order facilities and to maximise the growth of NUM's paid-up membership. Registration also makes it possible for NUM to participate in any future industrial council which might be established for the industry.

The NUM also resolved to organise mineworkers in Namibia and to apply for registration there if necessary. In common with all 24 unions involved in the unity talks, NUM resolved to take industrial action if Sasol failed to reinstate all workers who were fired after last year's stay-away. The Congress noted with "disgust" Sasol's "cruel and cowardly harassment" of the 6,000 dismissed workers.

Cyril Ramaphosa warned that the union would be taking a tough stance in negotiations with the Chamber of Mines this year. He warned that if the Chamber did not negotiate in good faith as from the first meeting in 1985, workers would take action on July 1. Ramaphosa added that a lot of workers were asking themselves if it was worth while going on a legal strike, as they did in September last year, if workers were "still going to be shot down".

(SALB Correspondent January 1985)

The Historical and Contemporary Use of Job Evaluation in South Africa

Jacques Perold

Historical developments

The use of job evaluation systems in South Africa can be seen to have developed in two separate "stages", the first occurring in the mining sector and the second in the manufacturing sector.

The largest company in the mining sector, the Anglo American Corporation (AAC) was the first to introduce job evaluation. Although personnel systems of one form or another had been in use since 1946, job evaluation as a formal system was first used in AAC in 1961. Minimum wages recognised by the Chamber of Mines had not changed since 1955, and the purpose behind the introduction of job evaluation in 1961 "...was to prepare the basis for a new wage scale designed to meet the requirements of the time." (1) A requirement of the new wage scale was that it should allow for greater differentiation of those jobs carried out by Black underground workers than the previous wage structure allowed. The job evaluation system that was developed consisted of three separate 16-factor plans, one each for (i) non-supervisory jobs, (ii) supervisory jobs, and (iii) clerical jobs. This "triple" wage system which allowed for racial discrimination remained in use until 1971.

During the ten years in which this system operated, AAC experimented with other systems in other areas. The most important of these was a job evaluation system in an iron-ore mine in Swaziland that required a single job structure with a single wage system. The job evaluation system that was developed (by W Hudson of AAC) was a 26-factor system which, despite it being a single system, provided for greater job and wage differentiation. The 26-factor system was implemented in all of AAC's gold mines between 1971 and 1973. The

reasons why this system was favoured over the old system var from the need to deal with upward pressure on wage scales (due to an increase in inflation, and growing concern about the very low levels of Black wages) (2) to corporate policy with regard to hierarchical organisation without discrimination and the need for a "progressive wage system".

The implementation of this single "unified" wage system was not without its problems, for as it began to take real effect, resistance to it became evident. This came largely from the mine managers who felt that the system tended to discriminate against white clerical workers. (3) That this feeling emerged was more than likely due to the fact that between 1970 and 1973, the increase in white wages was significantly lower than the increase in black wages - the latter rising by 60% during this period.

The resistance of the mine managers was one reason why AAC decided to look for a new job evaluation system. There were however other important reasons which should be mentioned: firstly, there had been strong resistance from the white Mine Workers Union (MWU) to the installation of a job evaluation system which provided for a "unified" wage structure which challenged traditional wage bargaining on the basis of job reservation and classification by race. There was thus the need for a system which was acceptable to the MWU.

Secondly, there had always been a dispute in the Chamber of Mines over AAC's black pay structure, with the other members of the Chamber arguing that AAC tended to corner their own supply of labour by paying approximately 10% above the market rate. In order to resolve this dispute, it was suggested that a standardised system be used throughout the mining industry. Although the 26-factor plan was suggested by AAC, other members of the Chamber argued against this system by pointing out some anomalies in that system when compared with their own wage structures. Thus there was also a need for a system which was acceptable to all members of the Chamber.

Lastly, AAC had by 1973 diversified its operations to the extent that its investments (in terms of its control over

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subsidiaries) covered a number of sectors in the economy besides mining. A standardised job evaluation system which could be used throughout the corporation would facilitate planning in terms of a standardised wage structure as well as allow for personnel to be transferred from one company to another within the corporation. In this the 26-factor plan was unsuitable since its factors were chosen specifically for the type of jobs found in the mines.

A number of systems were looked into in order to satisfy the above criteria. Amongst them were the more generalised point systems (which were felt to be too arbitrary in their ranking), and the HAY Guide Chart system (which was rejected because it required too much modification) (4). The system that was finally chosen was the Paterson system. It was felt that besides being able to satisfy most of the corporation's requirements, this system was also an international system; and secondly, it had a high correlation with the 26-factor system which meant that few changes would have to be made in implementation. Furthermore, a pilot study which tested the differences between the Paterson system and both the NIPR Q-method and the Peromnes systems also showed high correlations between them. (5)

Since 1975, the Paterson system has been installed throughout the corporation. It achieved two of AAC's aims in that firstly although it had taken some years, the whole of the mining industry was using the Paterson system by 1982; and secondly, seeing that most of the companies within the corporation used the Paterson system, inter-company transfers were facilitated.

One aim that was not achieved was that of justifying the system to the MWU. As with the 26-factor system, the Paterson system provided for a "unified" wage structure which was unacceptable to the union. According to the personnel manager of the Gold Division of AAC, the MWU "hates Paterson's guts" because black jobs were sometimes graded higher than white jobs, and also because the MWU often did not agree with the wages that were generated by the Paterson system (6). This occurred because the union did not intend losing the higher wage rates they had fought for in the past.

The second "stage" in the use of job evaluation in South Africa began with the development of a job evaluation system locally in the mid-1960's - the Castellion system initially researched by Prof S Biesheuvel of the NIPR. Together with Dr L Cortis, Biesheuvel developed and tested the system for the South African Breweries Group. In a joint venture with the Sanlam Group, the Castellion job evaluation system was implemented in various companies within and outside these groups. The number of systems implemented grew to the extent that a salary survey (the Castellion survey) was developed to complement the job evaluation system. This early survey made use of a model company in which certain "key" jobs were defined by means of job evaluation. For the survey, participating firms were required to submit information concerning their own pay levels for each of the key jobs. Once all this information was processed, the wage and salary ranges for each job, together with other information such as conditions of service, fringe benefits, etc. were made available to the participating companies.

In the early 1970's, the Castellion job evaluation system and salary survey was taken over by the Peromnes company. In a slightly modified form, both the job evaluation system and the salary survey have since been marketed under that name. Peromnes was marketed in 1982 by a group of management consultants - Fine, Spamer and Associates (FSA).

In parallel with the development of Castellion and Peromnes was the development of two other salary surveys - the HAY survey (which is linked to the HAY job evaluation system), and the P-E survey. The P-E survey grew out of the survey unit of Urwick International (a group of international management consultants), which itself merged with UAL Management Services in 1973. The P-E survey has since 1979 been based on the Paterson job evaluation system.

Job Evaluation in South Africa in the 1980s

In order to determine the extent to which job evaluation is being used in South Africa today, a postal survey (hereafter referred to as the "Company Survey") of all companies

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listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange was undertaken between June and September 1982.

In addition to this, a further 20 questionnaires were mailed to local Cape Town offices of multinational corporations (MNC's) operating in South Africa. The companies chosen were the first 20 MNC's operating in South Africa that were rated in the Financial Mail's 1982 "100 Top Companies - Global Giants" survey. The aim of this small survey was merely to explore the kinds of job evaluation systems that MNC's were using. Of the 20 questionnaires that were sent, 10 replies were received. Of the 10 responses, 2 used the Peromnes system; 3 used the HAY system; 4 used their own company's (head office) system, while one company was still considering the implementation of a job evaluation system.

The results of the company survey were as follows:

Of the 152 responses,

- 78 were using (or in the process of implementing) a formal job evaluation system.
- 50 were not using a formal job evaluation system, and
- 17 were considering implementing a job evaluation system, and
- 7 did not (or would not) give the required information.

Table 1 : Distribution of Companies' use of Job Evaluation by Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) Economic Sectors:

SIC Economic Sector	Use JE	Not Using JE	Considering JE	Info. not given	Sector Total	Sector as % of Total
Agriculture, Fishing & related activities	2	2	0	0	4	2.6
Mining & Quarrying	21	3	0	1	25	16.4

Manufacturing	33	14	8	3	58	38.2
Electricity, Water & Gas	1	0	0	0	1	0.7
Construction	3	1	1	0	5	3.3
Wholesale trade	1	2	3	0	6	3.9
Retail Trade, Catering & Accommodation	9	6	2	0	17	11.2
Transport, Storage & Accommodation	1	2	0	0	3	2.0
Finance, Insurance & Bus. services	6	16	2	2	26	17.1
Community, Social & Personal Services	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Other sectors not specified above	1	4	1	1	7	4.6
TOTALS	78	50	17	7	152	100.0

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One of the aims of the company survey was to determine the pattern of implementation of job evaluation systems over the last 10 years. Companies were asked to give the month and the year in which the implementation of their system was complete, or indicate whether the implementation of their system was not yet complete. Table 2 shows how there had been an upsurge in the implementation of job evaluation systems in the 3 years leading up to 1982.

Table 2: Number of Job Evaluation systems installed each year from 1972 to 1982.

Year	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	Not Complete
Systems	1	2	1	4	4	3	1	3	7	9	12	25

51 of the 78 companies with a formal job evaluation system had completed the implementation of their systems. The average time taken to install these systems ranged from 3 to 12 months.

Of the 78 companies that used (or were in the process of implementing) a formal job evaluation system, the breakdown of the different systems were as follows:

Paterson - 44
Peromnes - 21
HAY/MSL - 6
Castellion - 2
Own "in-house" system - 16

Nine companies used a combination of 3 of the above systems. Most of the companies that are using a combination of systems used their own "in-house" systems as part of the combination. Combinations of systems are often HAY for senior and top management, and Peromnes, Paterson or Castellion for middle management downwards. (eg. AECI, SAB, Argus)

It can be seen from table 3 that the majority of job evaluation users were the large employers. An analysis of the 78 respondents using job evaluation showed that, if the 10

responses which did not disclose their workforce size are omitted, 55 out of the remaining 68 respondents, ie. 81%, were companies with more than 1000 employees. This suggests that at a certain point (in terms of workforce size), the use of a formal job evaluation system becomes attractive to companies. This was borne out to some extent by the survey to determine how and why job evaluation was being used.

How and why job evaluation was being used

Respondents to the Company Survey were asked to give the three main reasons why they were using (or not using) job evaluation. The five reasons with the highest frequency (in descending order) in each case were as follows:

(a) Reasons for using Job Evaluation

1. It provided the basis for determining the company's wage structure.
2. It provided the means by which jobs could be ranked in an "equitable" manner so that the

Table 3: Distribution of use of Job Evaluation system by company workforce size

Company Size	Paterson	Permones	HAY	Castel- lion	In-house	Totals
<500	2	2	1	0	1	6
501-1000	5	1	0	0	2	8
1001-5000	10	5	2	0	5	22
5001-10000	4	9	0	1	5	19
10000 +	13	4	3	1	3	24
Size not stated	10	0	0	0	0	10
TOTAL	44	21	6	2	16	89

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- "relative worth" of the job could be determined (ie. to determine "fair pay").
3. It enabled the company to participate in salary surveys and relate their pay scales to market norms.
 4. It provided a means by which "career paths" could be defined.
 5. It enabled respondents to identify the "wage gap" and enabled them to create a "unified" wage curve.
- (b) Reasons for not using job evaluation
1. The company did not feel that it was necessary.
 2. Industrial Council agreements provided for job grading and pay scales.
 3. Resistance was experienced from management to having a job evaluation system installed.
 4. There was not a personnel department in the company - more than likely indicating that the company was too small (in terms of workforce size).
 5. The cost involved in implementing a job evaluation system was too high.

Job evaluation and salary surveys

The salary survey most widely used in South Africa in 1982 was FSA's Top Executive survey which has the greatest number of participating organisations, followed by the P-E Top Executive survey, with Hay trailing below. The P-E's General Staff survey is far bigger than the Peromnes or FSA General Staff survey. These surveys were one of many services offered by management consultants such as FSA (who market Peromnes), P-E Consultants and the HAY group. FSA produce two General Staff surveys - the Peromnes survey (solely for use by those using the Peromnes job evaluation system) and their General Staff survey which is based on FSA's new TASK system of job evaluation. (This system is almost identical to the Paterson system and has a direct correlation.)

The surveys consisted of a large number of companies (sometimes well over 1,000) contributing information concerning their own pay scales for each job in their company. Since

job evaluation provided the means by which jobs were analysed, described, graded and assigned pay scales, companies that participated in these surveys were encouraged to implement a job evaluation system, although it was not essential for companies to have a job evaluation system to participate in a salary survey. By linking job evaluation to salary surveys, standardisation was facilitated in that when a company submitted information concerning a particular job, and it was compared with information concerning the same job for other companies, job evaluation's grading process could ensure that the jobs being compared were the same. In other words, besides allowing for the comparison of jobs within a company (ie. in determining the company hierarchy), the job evaluation systems being used also allowed for external comparisons to be made (ie. outside the company).

The collected information was processed and analysed by the management consultants conducting the survey, who publish the results either annually or bi-annually. These results were made available only to the companies that participated in the survey. For each job, the following information was given: median pay; minimum and maximum pay; average pay; the upper and lower quartiles and in some cases the 90th percentile of the pay range; information concerning benefits and incentives; as well as comparisons between different geographical regions, economic sectors, and comparisons over time periods.

The information for all jobs was then pooled so that more general conclusions could be made. These include statistics on pay differentials by sex, race, location and "employee function", eg. clerical, financial, data processing, etc; staff turnover; difference between industries and economic sectors, as well as general notes on benefits that companies provided, their pay policies, and their conditions of employment. It is clear that companies armed with such information were in a powerful position in that the information provides them with a clear picture of what the labour market looked like (ie in terms of the price of labour). It meant that rather than competing with each other on an unknown labour market, companies could price them-

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selves into a particular section of the market - in essence it enabled them to see what they could get away with. This has been clearly stated by Prof Biesheuvel of the Wits Business School who argued against the idea that salary levels could be used by companies to compete with each other. If companies used salary surveys, he maintained "...they would be acting on valid information, whereas without it they are more likely to be guided by guesswork, by the starting salaries demanded by those responding to advertisements, who frequently overstate their current earnings, and by a desire to play safe and not lose out in competition for scarce resources. No one wants to pay more than he needs to, and the survey indicates how much that should be." (7)

The fact that only companies who participated in the salary surveys had access to this information is significant in that it is indicative of the phase of monopoly capital in the South African economy: the use of salary surveys was a very real example of how capitals combined (their information in this case) to maintain their power over labour in general.

Furthermore, the linked salary surveys and job evaluation systems rivaled the industrial council system as a method of wage determination in the country. In fact they probably surpassed the industrial councils since the job evaluation systems set the actual wage rates within fairly narrow limits whereas industrial council agreements only lay down the minimum wage levels for the various grades.

Footnotes:

- 1 W Hudson, 1973
- 2 S Van Coller, 1974, pl
- 3 Interview with Bill Roodnick, Divisional Personnel Manager, AAC Gold Division, 22.4.82
- 4 Interview with Bob Goodbrand, Personnel Manager, AAC Head Office, 19.4.82
- 5 Interview with Bill Roodnick
- 6 Ibid
- 7 Prof S Biesheuvel, unpublished MBA lecture notes, 1976

A Guide to Job Evaluation Systems Used in South Africa

Len le Roux

This article provides a description of three of the most commonly used job evaluation systems in South Africa, namely the Paterson system, the Peromnes system, and the Castellion system, and mentions two other systems also in use.

But firstly, what is Job Evaluation? It is primarily concerned with the description of jobs and their subsequent grading in order to determine their wage levels. "Job Evaluation is a method to describe, analyse, compare and evaluate jobs within a unit, a branch, or an industry on the basis of the work content and the job requirements in order to place them under particular wage or salary grades." *

The Paterson system

The Paterson system bases the grading of jobs purely on the level of decision-making which a job entails. To facilitate the grading Paterson has identified six levels of decision-making, which he has called Bands, and these Bands he correlated with six levels of organisation.

These levels are:

Band F - policy making decisions	- top management
Band E - programming decisions	- senior management
Band D - interpretative decisions	- middle management
Band C - routine decisions	- skilled workers
Band B - automatic decisions	- semi-skilled workers
Band A - defined decisions	- unskilled workers

The bulk of workers in South Africa are restricted to the Bands A and B, the lowest levels of decision-making, which limit and restrict the control they have over the operation of their work. A worker in Band A (defined dec-

* H Pornschlegel, Job Evaluation and the role of trade unions, ILO Geneva, p12

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ision) has little choice; the worker is told exactly and precisely, how and when to perform a certain operation. However, there is a further sub-division within these Bands. Each Band is divided into two grades, (except for Band A) to give eleven grades. The upper grade is a supervisory grade and co-ordinates the work of the people in the lower grade of the Band, except for Band A whose supervisors are in Band B. Then there are also a number of sub-grades in the lower grade, to give a total of five sub-grades in each Band, except for the lowest Band A which only has one grade, divided into three sub-grades. This then gives a grand total of 28 grades. Table 1 illustrates what the Paterson job hierarchy looks like.

Table 1: Paterson Job Hierarchy

Band	Decision level	Title	Grade	Kind of grade
F	Policy Making	Top Management	5	Co-ordinating or supervisory
			4	
			3	Policy
			2	
			1	
E	Programming	Senior Management	5	Co-ordinating or supervisory
			4	
			3	Programming
			2	
			1	
D	Interpretative	Middle Management	5	Supervisory
			4	
			3	Interpretative
			2	
			1	
C	Routine	Skilled	5	Supervisory
			4	

			3	
			2	Routine
			1	
B	Automatic	Semi-skilled	5	Supervisory
			4	
			3	
			2	Automatic
			1	
A	Defined	Unskilled	3	
			2	Defined
			1	

Paterson has suggested some technique for subgrading. These are not highly satisfactory, so many South African organisations using the Paterson system make use of four major criteria:

(a) Variety of tasks. The more tasks, or the higher complexity of tasks within a job will require a higher subgrading than less complicated tasks.

(b) Length of cycle. If the cycle of a task is longer, and involves additional activities, then it requires a higher subgrade than a task that is shorter.

(c) Pressure of work. This is usually related to stress - mental or physical, and where the stress related to a job is judged to be higher than a less demanding job, a higher sub-grade is required.

(d) Tolerance or precision. Jobs that require a high level of precision, and where the consequences of error are higher, demand a higher sub-grade within a Band.

Any one, or a combination of these criteria can decide the level at which a job will be sub-graded. However, if one scrutinises these four criteria carefully it becomes apparent that what is being employed here is a mere job ranking technique. Having established what Band a job falls into, (its relative level of decision-making) and then what grade, lower or higher depending on whether it

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is supervisory or not, the final stage of sub-grading simply decides whether job X is more or less important than job Y, and these four criteria merely serve as a guideline to establish the relative importance of a job. Very often company participants in the Paterson system defend the obvious shortcomings of a single factor system (decision-making) by quoting these criteria as additional factors that legitimate the Paterson system. However, as mentioned above, these criteria as additional factors are misleading because the way in which they are used simply hides the real technique, that of job ranking, and all the problems of subjectivity and lack of substantiation that exists in that particular method are encountered.

How Paterson is implemented

Companies in South Africa have implemented the Paterson system in a very random fashion so it is difficult to establish any regular pattern for installing this system. Evenso it is possible to outline some of the general procedures that occur here in South Africa.

Usually the motivation for job evaluation originates from management, and the workers and their unions have little, if any, say in which system is to be used, and how it is to be implemented. The result of this is that a job evaluation system is usually installed by the personnel department of an organisation. The procedure is relatively simple. The personnel department identify the different jobs and decide on the number of job writers who have to be trained to write up the job descriptions. The Paterson system requires written job descriptions that should be read and signed by job-holders. The number of job writers can vary, from a single writer to a writer for each job. These writers can also be employees of the organisation, or alternatively they can be outsiders, although it is more common for them to be employees. Job descriptions get written up, identifying the tasks, conditions and responsibilities of a job, including the skills and qualifications necessary for the job. Standard procedure is for the worker to describe the job, and then the workers' immediate supervisor is asked to verify the description.

Having written up descriptions for all the jobs, these job descriptions then go to an evaluation (grading) committee which proceeds to grade the jobs. Firstly a job is located in a Band, depending on which level of decision-making it falls into. It is then graded, high or low depending on whether it is supervisory or not, and finally sub-graded as described above. A job then has its final grade, either A1 or B3, B5, etc.

Although the Paterson system stresses that evaluation and grading assess the job content and not the wage assigned to each job, any job evaluation structure determines the basis of a wage structure.

The Paterson system is seen as a simple and inexpensive system to install. For management's purposes it formalises wage structures and "positions" each job in the pay structure, using one factor (decision-making) to create a job hierarchy. The implication here is that each job is "fairly" graded according to the level of decision-making, thus justifying the validity of the job hierarchy.

However, from the worker's viewpoint, and especially those confined to Band A, a number of problems arise. Firstly, the large number of grades (28 in total) atomises jobs to a large degree, and yet in Band A there is little differentiation, fixing a lot of jobs into this Band without any chance of moving up the scale. Secondly, the single factor, decision-making, supports the existing hierarchies, in that it assumes higher decisions being made by members of the upper Bands. Effectively this excludes members situated in the lower Bands from decisions that concern their work and working conditions, and supports the pattern of decisions being made from the top downwards. There is no exchange of ideas, all the system allows for is a more efficient way of executing orders from the top, and it formalises channels of communication.

The Peromnes System

The Peromnes system has been applied in South Africa for at least fifteen years, and can best be described as a

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modified point-rating method, based on eight factors.

These eight factors are:

(a) Problem solving. This factor examines the complexity of problems encountered in a job, and the level of decision-making necessary to solve these problems, taking into account the information available and the accessibility of that information.

(b) Consequences of error judgement. This measures the consequences of wrong decisions and their effect on the organisation. The checks and controls that exist to prevent an error must also be taken into account.

(c) Pressure of work. This factor assesses the amount of "stress" inherent in a job, eg. deadlines to be met, volume of work and regularity of decisions to be made.

(d) Knowledge. This is the knowledge necessary to perform a job completely.

(e) Job impact. This assesses the extent to which a job has influence on other activities both within and outside the organisation.

(f) Comprehension. This assesses the general level of understanding, written and spoken, that is expected in the job.

(g) Educational qualifications or intelligence level required of a person for a job. This is the minimum essential requirement necessary for the job, and NOT a measure of the job-holder's qualifications.

(h) Subsequent training and experience. The time needed to achieve a level of competence in the job.

Each factor is divided into nine progressive definitions, which are outlined in a "Peromnes job rating scale" chart. These nine stages are also assigned a numerical scale ranging from 0 - 36, so that when a job is evaluated against each of these eight factors a points value can be given to the description which most satisfactorily describes the nature of the job on that particular factor. The points scored on each factor are totalled to give the number of "rated points", and the job can now be graded according to a conversion scale.

The Peromnes system is a comparatively complex system, and it necessitates a high level of skill and understand-

ing of the system to implement it. Although the multiple factors give a wider range of flexibility than the Paterson system for instance, and possibly a more accurate means of grading a job and individual, the large number of factors can also be very confusing, especially when one has to interpret the degree which satisfactorily describes the job on any particular factor. This generally makes the system inaccessible to workers, and the functioning of the Peromnes system is left to a select few (usually in personnel management) or to an outside consultancy group.

The Peromnes system does not require a written job description when a job is to be evaluated. This verbal job description could possibly result in an inaccurate account of the job content, and then result in an inaccurate grading. The criteria determining a job's grade is hidden from the job-holder making it extremely difficult for him or her to provide a job description that reflects the required information for those particular criteria.

The Peromnes system now has 19 (or perhaps more accurately 21) grades (1982 revision of system)

Table 2: The Peromnes Grading System

Related points	Grade	Example levels
271 - 288	1++	Most senior executives
259 - 270	1+	and specialists,
249 - 258	1	nationally
231 - 248	2	Other top management and
216 - 230	3	very senior specialists
201 - 215	4	Senior management,
187 - 200	5	high-level
173 - 186	6	specialists

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158 - 172	7	Middle management,
143 - 157	8	superintendants and low-
128 - 142	9	level specialists
<hr/>		
113 - 127	10	Supervisors, high-level
99 - 112	11	skilled and
85 - 98	12	clerical
<hr/>		
73 - 84	13	Lower level
61 - 72	14	skilled
49 - 60	15	and
37 - 48	16	clerical
<hr/>		
27 - 36	17	Low-skilled
17 - 26	18	and
0 - 16	19	unskilled

The Castellion System

This system was developed and used for the South African Breweries, by Messrs Cortis and Biesheuvel. The Castellion system is based on three dimensions, each of which has two elements (factors).

This system is a points-rating system, based on these six factors. A numerical value is allocated to each factor and the points scored are totalled to give a points value to each job. "By adding the sub-factor scores and products, the total points value for the job is obtained. Grades are empirically established by the application of the system. The range runs from 4 to 1248 points, and it is divided into 15 grades, from the labourer to the top executive,..."* How these points are allocated, and the procedure for implementing the Castellion system will be discussed below, in broad outline.

* S Biesheuvel, "Job Evaluation: an outline of the Castellion method", Business Management, 8.4, 1977, p22

The first dimension, effort, has as its two components the complexity of decision-making, and the pressure of work. Pressure of work is seen as the time stress under which decisions have to be made, and decision-making is seen as the choice of judgements which a person in a job is expected to make. The points scale is based on the extent of the complexity involved in these judgements.

A major underlying aspect to the Castellion system is that of time period discretion which is defined as the longest period required for a manager to assess whether his subordinate has been working at a substandard level. This is used, for example, in the decision-making scoring where the following periods of discretion are used: 2 months, 6 months, up to 15 months, up to 3 years, up to 10 years.

The second dimension, that of responsibility is broken down into two components; consequence of error which assesses the possibility of losses and their extent, and controls and checks which measures the degree of control exercised over the job. The consequence of error factor measures the extent of losses as a result of wrong decisions or lack of concentration, and includes material as well as human losses. This factor effectively measures the extent of the potential damage that can be incurred by a person in a job. The second factor, that of controls and checks looks at direct and indirect controls exercised over a job-holder.

The third and final dimension is that of competence, dealing with the factors of qualification and experience. Both these factors involve the essential education and experience necessary for the performance of a job, and do not measure the levels of education or experience held by the worker. For example, if a job can be done with no formal education or minimum period of experience, then the score allocated for that job must reflect these facts, even if the job-holder has some educational qualifications above the required minimum.

The usual procedure for job evaluation, using the Castellion system, goes as follows. Once a job has been iden-

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tified a job description gets written up. Usually the person doing the job is consulted, and the details are generally checked by his immediate supervisor. Once again it is usual procedure for the written description to be signed by the worker and supervisor.

The next step is the grading of the job. Ideally the most effective results are obtained through a grading committee who can discuss the job with each other. The job is systematically checked against each of the six factors so that a points score can be allocated for each factor. The total points scored will give a value to the job. This point score will give an indication of the approximate grade that a job will fall into, and not necessarily the final grading. Like most job evaluation systems a job-ranking exercise is carried out to compare the job with other related jobs, higher and lower, to see whether there is a consistency within the job hierarchy. Only then can a final grade be assigned to the job.

The other job evaluation systems

It is necessary to make a brief mention of two further job evaluation systems used in South Africa. The NIPR-Q system was developed in the early 1960's in a study of the CSIR's administrative posts. It is a very cumbersome system and does not seem to have gone beyond the civil service.

The Hays/MSL method is another complex system which enjoys a considerable amount of international success. This system is particularly successful when evaluating managerial positions and more recently it has been successfully used for white-collar jobs.

Is Job Evaluation Scientific?

Bill Cowan

There are a number of reasons why job evaluation is not scientific, despite the appearance - the measurements, graphs, calculations. The simplest reason is that the aim of job evaluation systems is to say what rewards people should receive. In fact, job evaluation systems do not specify the actual amounts which people should be paid, but instead specify the order of value in which jobs should be placed, and how much should be paid for each job relative to the others. But this doesn't make any difference. The issue which job evaluation is addressing is still one of "distributive justice" - of who should get what, how the cake should be divided. And science does not provide answers to such questions. Science depends on empirical proof to test its theories. What empirical proof could be found for a theory which states that one person should be paid twice as much as another?

To give a concrete example: the Paterson system of job evaluation says that people should be paid more when their job entails a higher level of decision-making. This is a non-scientific proposition. How could you prove it or disprove it? If one person drives a truck, delivering heavy goods, and another person sits in an office deciding where the goods should be delivered, perhaps the office worker should be paid more because that person is making the decisions. Or perhaps the truck driver should be paid more, since the work is more strenuous? Science cannot provide the answer. These are matters of opinion, matters of negotiation, whose final outcome depends upon the relative power of the parties involved.

Psychological research

People who develop job evaluation systems sometimes claim their ideas are based on psychological research. The main argument derived from such research is that people are

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primarily interested in how well they do relative to others. The claim is that people will be satisfied if they get more money than someone else who does less valuable work, or also satisfied if they get less money than someone who, they feel, is doing more valuable work. But these ideas don't take you very far.

For a start, how will people decide what is more valuable and less valuable work? It may be possible to do this in a laboratory experiment with simplified and standardised tasks, but not in the complex real world - we can expect people to disagree (and if they disagree, they can't all be satisfied). Secondly, even if people are interested in how well they are doing relative to others, this doesn't mean this is all they are interested in. They might be interested in having enough money to survive, to buy the bare requirements of life - in other words, in the absolute amount they earn, not just the relative amount. It is quite possible for job evaluation systems to indicate wages below the poverty line. If people were paid at this level, would they be satisfied just because they were earning more than even lower-paid workers? Thirdly, you can't in any case take results from a few laboratory experiments (mainly American) and expect them to describe other people in very different situations, with different values and needs. These problems undermine any claim that job evaluation theory has a foundation in psychological research. In fact, one could regard such claims as an attempt to disguise the fact that job evaluation systems impose their own value judgements, with no scientific backing.

The methods of job evaluation systems

When negotiating about a job evaluation system, it is important to know at what phases in the job evaluation procedures these value judgements come in - for these are the "weak points" in the systems, the areas where (as far as a scientist is concerned) negotiating parties are quite entitled to disagree.

Unfortunately, though, while these are weak points from the point of view of scientific validity, they are not necess-

arily the easiest to negotiate. The non-scientific assumptions may be buried so deeply in any given system that to reject the assumptions may mean rejecting the system as a whole. This may or may not be a union's intention. It is safe to say that job evaluation systems present affected employees with both benefits and disadvantages - and workers and their representatives will want to weigh up the balance in their particular circumstances. Nevertheless, even if a union decides that it does not want to work with-in a job evaluation system, it is useful to identify where the system is scientifically faulty, so that desired modifications can be argued for, without being stopped by the mistaken reply: "You can't touch it - it's scientific!" We can start by looking at three phases in job evaluation:

1. The first phase is selecting the criteria for job analysis and deciding how these will be applied. (For instance, in the Paterson system, the "level of decision-making" is chosen as the criterion for distinguishing between jobs.)
2. The second phase is the actual measurement process, where different jobs are assessed in terms of the criteria selected in phase 1.
3. the third phase is the grading of jobs on the basis of the measurements taken in phase 2.

We will stop there. There is, of course, a final phase which is most vital both to employers and employees, and that is making the link between the grading of jobs and the grades of wages. This last stage raises problems of a different kind. Having decided (by phase 3) that one job is of higher "value" than another, the decision must then be made: how much more should that job receive? This would require a separate full discussion and we rather spell out the criteria against which to judge the first three phases.

Reliability and validity

Now the three phases shown above are very familiar to social scientists who are used to making social measurements in their research. The whole procedure is only reckoned to be methodologically acceptable if they are satisfied that the procedure is (a) "reliable" and (b) "valid".

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Reliability has to do with the way measurements are made. In order for a measurement process to be reliable, we want to know that different ways of measuring the same thing will yield the same results, and that if different people measure the same thing - using the same or different methods - they will come up with the same results.

Reliability of measurement is basic to any scientific investigation, but it is not, by itself, enough to ensure "validity". Validity requires, amongst other things, that what people are actually measuring is what they say they are measuring. For example, if an intelligence test was constructed which consisted only of mathematical problems, it might produce consistent, reliable results, but it would not be valid as a measure of intelligence, because intelligence is not just mathematical ability.

Now let's see how job evaluation systems measure up to these two criteria of reliability and validity. In doing so, we will need to distinguish between different types of systems. As we will see, some are weak in phase 1 and relatively strong in phases 2 and 3, while others are stronger in phase 1 (the selection of criteria) but collapse in phase 3.

Phase 1: selecting criteria

In this phase, criteria are selected and applied, to indicate the content of a job, relative to other jobs. Some job evaluation systems employ only one primary criterion. The Paterson system is the commonest example of this in South Africa, and in this system the criterion chosen is the "level of decision-making".

Now to use only the "level of decision-making" as an indicator of job content makes this conceptualisation invalid. It lacks even what methodologists refer to as "face validity" - one can see at a glance that whatever different aspects go to make up job content, there must be more aspects than simply decision-making, and some of these will be quite independent of the "level of decision-making" displayed in a particular job, eg. the effort expended in the

work, the danger or discomfort experienced, the level of training required, and so on. Any method which starts off by ignoring such scope for disagreement is certainly not a valid scientific procedure.

An advantage of such a job evaluation system, which looks at only one primary factor in assigning jobs to "bands", is that it is relatively simple and fast to implement. This is particularly an advantage to management, but it could also be an advantage to unions if they expect their members to benefit from the successful implementation of the system.

Some dangers should be pointed out, however:

- (a) Once one has accepted "decision-making" as the primary criterion for putting jobs into bands, having made this concession (which has no scientific grounding) one cannot expect to make much ground in arguing about phases 2 and 3, because in the Paterson system these can be relatively sound.
- (b) Accepting the "level of decision-making" as the primary criterion could be to the disadvantage of semi-skilled and unskilled workers, who will be crowded together in the lowest categories, with little chance of getting out.
- (c) The "level of decision-making" incorporated in particular jobs will reflect in part the structure of control in a firm or organisation. If superiors prevent those below them from taking their own decisions, as will be the case in a strongly hierarchical organisation, then people at the top will be paid more and people at the bottom will be paid less.

Single factor systems, such as Paterson's, fail the test of scientifically valid procedure at the first hurdle, in phase 1. Measuring the "level of decision-making" cannot provide a valid measurement of "job content". What about more complex systems? The Peromnes System, for instance, which is quite popular in South Africa, pays attention to eight separate factors (problem solving, consequence of error of judgement, pressure of work, knowledge, the influence of one job on other jobs, the level of comprehension required by the job, educational qualifications required, and the degree of further training needed to do the job

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competently). Some systems are even more complex than this, taking account of 26 or more separate factors in assessing job content.

One can definitely say that by applying a variety of criteria, rather than one single primary criterion like "decision-making", there is more chance of including those aspects of job content which different people, in different jobs, think are important. But the story unfortunately does not end in phase 1, for phases 2 and 3 are still to follow. The problem of validity has in fact just been moved to phase 3, where unscientific decisions have to be made about how to combine all the different aspects thought up in phase 1. Are all the aspects of equal importance, or must some be given more weight than others? We will look at this problem in more detail below.

Phase 2: the measurement process

Once the criteria have been selected, the next phase is to discriminate between different jobs on the basis of these criteria. This is the measurement phase, and here (from the point of view of scientific method) the main thing we want to know is: are the methods of measurement reliable? Will different people come to the same conclusions?

In general, this kind of measurement is likely to be more reliable if (a) a fairly rigid measuring procedure is adhered to; (b) if subjective judgements are kept to a minimum; and (c) if the measurements are not too elaborate. But remember that the reliability of measurement does not guarantee overall validity. For example, a rigid measuring system may improve the reliability of measurement, but it may mean that you are measuring the wrong things most of the time, so that the results lack validity.

We can again look first at the Paterson system, as an example of a relatively simple single factor system. In the Paterson system, the usual procedure is to obtain written job descriptions (which should be approved by the person doing the job, and his/her supervisor) and then to take these to a grading committee, who apply the fairly rigid

guidelines laid down in the Paterson system to determine which "band" of decision-making the job falls into. Because the categories of decision-making are quite broad, and because the level of decision-making is the only factor which needs to be assessed at this stage, there is reduced scope for disagreement. There may be argument about borderline cases, but there is not so much room for disagreement as there would be in a more complex system. One would therefore expect the measurements to be fairly reliable at this stage. But one should remember that this gain in reliability comes partly from ruling out all considerations other than the level of decision-making.

In the next stage in the Paterson system of grading, supervisory grades and further sub-grades are made within each of the bands, and here the judgements seem to become more subjective, with more scope for disagreement - ie. more risk of unreliability. The reason for this is that at this stage the judgements become more complex, taking account of various different factors such as work pressure, variety of tasks, etc.

When workers or worker representatives are on the evaluation committee, this is likely to be an area for negotiation, since it is so "visible": by this stage of the proceedings, the evaluation committee is asking more direct questions like, "Should this group of workers get more than this other group, or should it be the other way round?" There is maybe something a bit deceptive about this area for debate, for it can only concern small changes in grading, as the bands have already been settled. For the same reason, though, the unreliability of decisions at this stage of deciding the sub-grades is less serious from the scientist's point of view, precisely because these decisions don't make such a large difference to the overall picture. Overall, one would expect different teams of job evaluators to come to most of the same conclusions about which jobs were in which bands with relatively minor disagreements about the sub-grades within each band. So one expects the Paterson system measurements to be fairly reliable overall, but inaccurate when it comes to details. (And of course most of the relevant "details" have been

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pushed aside by taking decision-making as the single primary criterion.)

It is worth noting that a fairly rigid measuring procedure, such as that in the Paterson system, makes it easier to manage consultations with workers and unions at this stage of job evaluation. It leaves some scope for disagreements and negotiation, but not so much scope to threaten the overall design of the pay structure. Both in the job description stage and in the grading stage workers may be consulted. However there is typically little, if any, consultation about how the terms have been set - why "decision-making" has been adopted as the primary criterion, and how the measuring schedule has been drawn up.

We can turn now to "point-scoring" methods of job evaluation, such as the Peromnes system. The idea here is that jobs will be assessed on a number of aspects, and on each aspect (or "factor", or "dimension") a particular job will be rated as earning so many points. These scores are then combined to give an overall rating for the job. We will see in the next section that arbitrary, non-scientific decisions have to be made in order to combine the scores which a job gets on each different factor. In the meantime, we are mainly interested in whether the measurements, on each factor, are reliable.

There are a number of possible measurement problems in a multi-factor system. First of all, because there are more aspects of a job to be measured than in a single-factor system, and because some of these factors require subjective assessment (for example, in the Peromnes system, the "pressure of work") there is more chance of going wrong than in a simpler system. On the other hand, the errors made in measuring one factor may be averaged out by errors in the opposite direction in measuring other factors. So one can't be sure - which is itself, of course, a problem.

Given that uncertainty, it would seem to be important to be able to check on the results. But multi-factor systems are rather hard to understand and to apply, which means that it is more difficult for job-holders, or other people

who are not experts, to keep a check on how the results are being produced. The three main doubtful areas are (a) the reliability of the job descriptions on which the measurements are based, (b) the way in which the scale of points for each factor is arrived at, and (c) the extent to which subjective judgements are made in deciding a job's position on the scale. We will look at these problems, taking the Peromnes system as an example.

- (a) The Peromnes System uses verbal job descriptions rather than written ones. Because of the complexity of the system, the person who describes the job may not personally know what to describe, but must rely on the expert valuator to ask for all the necessary information. One can argue that this can lead to fairer evaluations, since there is less opportunity for the job-describer to emphasize or exaggerate features of the job to selfish advantage. But it could equally lead to a failure to provide all the relevant information, for the same reason: the job-holder doesn't understand the significance of the questions which the valuator is asking. Also, because there is no written job description and because it requires an expert to evaluate the verbal job description, it is more difficult to carry out an independent check on the valuator's measurements.
- (b) The problem of scaling can be illustrated by an imaginary example. Suppose one factor of a job is the amount of formal education which the job-holder needs to possess. If one job requires a standard ten education while another requires a standard eight education, the first job might earn ten points more on the education factor than the second job. But another job requires a university degree. Should it get an additional ten points? Or an additional twenty points? Or thirty, or two? There is no scientific answer to this question, because there is no way of knowing that a standard ten education is "twice as much" education as standard five, or that it is twice as valuable or four times as valuable, or whatever. We can agree that more education is more valuable than less education, but we can't say how much more, and we can't say that the value increases steadily as

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you go up the scale, or anything like that. Despite this fact, most multi-factor job evaluation systems arbitrarily lay down how many points can be awarded for different levels of education, different levels of stress, and so on. This is not scientific measurement, but a way of dressing up opinions as numbers, and then applying these opinions as a routine procedure. The opinions are embedded into the measurement process when the system is designed.

- (c) The complexity of multi-factor systems requires that a greater number of subjective interpretations have to be made before a job is given a final score. For instance, in the Peromnes system, one of the factors to be considered is how much time is necessary to achieve a level of competence in a job. It requires subjective judgement to decide when a job-holder is just competent, rather than super-competent or a little incompetent. And if it takes one person six months to become competent it may take another only three months to reach this level - so again judgements have to be made about what is "normal". Obviously, the more subjective judgements have to be made, the more chance there is for unreliability, and as stressed above, such subjective judgements are even more uncertain if it is difficult to check them against others' opinions, as is the case when a job evaluation is so complex that only an expert can operate it.

In summary, a scientific enquirer would treat the relative scores awarded to jobs on the different factors in a multi-factor system with a great deal of scepticism. There is no good reason to suppose that the figures are accurate. Even so, this is probably not the major problem with multi-factor job evaluation systems. The great unsolvable problem comes when you try to combine the separate scores awarded for different aspects of a job, in order to come up with a single overall score for the job.

Phase 3: grading

Having selected the criteria for distinguishing between

jobs in phase 1, and having made measurements according to these criteria in phase 2, the task in phase 3 is to convert these measurements into a means for ranking jobs. In the case of a single-factor system such as Paterson there is no immediate problem at this stage. Once jobs have been categorised according to their "level of decision-making" (phases 1 and 2), this automatically places them in one of the six bands. The ranking which the different jobs receive on "decision-making" simply becomes the band ranking of the jobs. No one can object at this stage. The time for objections was earlier: what grounds were there for choosing "decision-making" as the criterion of job content? The grounds were inadequate, and for that reason the Paterson system lacks phase 1 validity. If this is overlooked, then the Paterson system cannot really be attacked for failure in phases 2 and 3, except in points of detail. (Of course, the other side of this coin is that, because of its phase 1 failure, no amount of refinement in phases 2 and 3 could render it into a scientific system.)

What are the "points of detail" in the Paterson system which can lead to difficulties in phases 2 and 3? First there is the problem of borderline cases, where a grading committee disagrees about which decision-making band a particular job should occupy. This is a problem of measurement (phase 2). But the more important "details", as far as employees and their representatives are concerned, are probably to do with the sub-grades which are allocated to jobs within a "band".

After a job is fixed in a band, there is still the question of whether it is a supervisory job or a non-supervisory job, since each band (except Band A) is divided into a supervisory and non-supervisory grade. Usually there would be little difficulty in deciding, because the structure of control in most large organisations is fairly clearly defined. So there is no major measurement difficulty here, deciding which jobs are supervisory and which are not - but there is a problem in deciding what difference this should make in terms of basic pay. The Paterson system has already made this decision. Supervisory jobs should receive more basic pay than a non-supervisory job in the same band, but

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not as much as a non-supervisory job in the next band. Thus the criterion of supervision versus non-supervision always has less effect than the primary criterion, the "level of decision-making". Is this right or wrong? That is surely a matter of opinion.

When one comes to sub-grades it becomes even more a matter of opinion. No clear guidelines are laid down for how different jobs should be allocated to sub-grades, but it seems that a variety of factors can be considered. Le Roux (in this edition of SALB) suggests that these factors can include the variety of tasks in a job, the "length of cycle", the pressure of work and "tolerance and precision". If this is so, which factor is seen as most important, and why? And why should all these factors be less important than the "level of decision-making"? For example, even if a job in Band B is exceptionally varied, non-repetitive, precise and high pressure, it cannot escape to Band C, unless its "level of decision-making" fits into the Band C category.

As suggested earlier, sub-grading can provide an area for negotiation, precisely because the rules for sub-grading are not clear. But this should not obscure two facts. Firstly, the area for negotiation has already been decided, because the additional factors now being considered cannot move a job out of its "decision-making" band. Secondly, when the additional factors are being considered, there is no scientifically valid way of deciding whether one factor, such as work pressure, should carry more weight than another factor, such as the "variety of tasks".

This difficulty in knowing how to play off different factors against one another only hits the Paterson system at the level of sub-grading. But it is a problem which is right at the heart of multi-factor systems.

Multi-factor systems, which look at more aspects of job content than simply "decision-making" have a better chance of preserving phase 1 validity. They may be complex and generally less reliable in the measuring phase, but it is in the third phase that they really knock down the hurdle and fall to the ground in a crunch of non-scientific calc-

ulations. The problem is this: that having taken measurements of different aspects of a job, you now have to combine these figures to come up with a single score.

The problem is easy to illustrate. Suppose that two of the aspects considered relevant are (1) physical effort, and (2) mental effort. And suppose two jobs, Job A and Job B, have been assessed on these two criteria, and have been given scores as follows:

	Physical	Mental	Total
Job A	10	5	15
Job B	5	10	15

Now if the two aspects, mental and physical effort, are held to be equally important, then (as one sees from the straightforward totals) the two jobs must be ranked on a par. Each job collects a total of 15 points. But suppose physical effort is counted as being twice as important as mental effort, or vice versa. Then the scores on these different aspects must be weighted differently. If physical effort counts for twice as much as mental effort, then five points on physical effort is equivalent to ten points on mental effort. So Job A must be graded higher than Job B. But if mental effort counts for more than physical effort then Job B will end up with a higher score than Job A. In other word, however accurate the scores are on each factor, the final result is still indeterminate, because there is no scientific way of deciding how to weight the two factors.

In practice, there are two ways in which different factors can be weighted in a multi-factor system. If the same measuring range is used for each factor - for instance, "level of education" could earn up to a hundred points, "level of stress" could earn up to a hundred points, and so on - then the weighting is done after the measurement. You take each score and multiply it by a number, a different number for each factor, which ensures that the points earned on a factor which is regarded as important count for more than the points earned on a factor which is regarded as unimportant.

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(These are of course matters of judgement, not matters of science.) The other way of weighting different factors is to give them different ranges of measurement, so that "level of education", for instance, might be able to earn up to a hundred points while "stress level" could only earn up to a maximum of twenty points. Either way, the effects are the same, and express the system designer's own view of which factors are more important than others.

Following this road produces a series of measurements for each job - a score or a ranking for each of the factors being considered. These scores, however, are not all on one dimension but are along dimensions which may be independent of one another, and so there is no scientific way of adding up these scores to produce a final uni-dimensional ranking. The only condition under which the separate scores or ranks can validly be added up is if the separate measurements are all along one underlying dimension, and even then we would add certain other mathematical requirements. But if these requirements are met, then we can't have phase 1 validity. So job evaluation is caught in a trap. Either it starts off with invalid assumptions, or it ends up with an invalid procedure for combining scores on different factors.

This does not really come as a surprise, because we saw at the outset that the aim of job evaluation is to make value judgements. These value judgements may appear to be hidden, by the trappings of scientificity and a confusion of numbers, but like a disappearing scorpion, they will turn up again if you lift up all the stones. Either the non-scientific value-judgements are made at the beginning, in choosing the criteria, or they come back at the end, in making unscientific decisions about how to weight different aspects of a job.

Supervisors: Workers or Management?

Mike Sarakinsky & Paul Crankshaw

This article is an analysis of the dispute (1) which took place in a Germiston chemical factory last year, over the question of whether supervisors in the factory should be regarded as part of the workforce or as part of management. It raises interesting questions regarding structural definitions of class, particularly with respect to the boundary between the "new middle class" and the working class. This article is based on a series of interviews held with a shop steward, a supervisor, the personnel manager (a white male), the labour officer (a black male) and a union organiser.

The company in question produces cosmetics, perfumes and toiletries, and employs approximately 300 black workers, 11 of whom are supervisors. The ratio of semi-skilled/unskilled to skilled workers is in the region of 3:1. (According to the personnel manager, an unskilled worker's job requires 1 day's training.) Workers are divided into 4 wage grades: A and B (skilled), C (semi-skilled), and D (unskilled). These grades were originally negotiated with the Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU), and now serve as the basis for wage negotiations between the union and the company. According to the personnel manager, about 99% of the black workers belong to the union, including the black supervisors. The reason why the supervisors are members of the union was because, under the terms of the original recognition agreement, all non-managerial staff were eligible to join: however, the category of "managerial" staff was not clearly defined. Supervisors, therefore, were not unambiguously excluded from joining the union. However, in 1984, when the recognition agreement was being renegotiated, management tried to exclude supervisors from eligibility for union membership by defining them as part of management. A conflict over this issue ensued between management and the union. The terms of the agreement reached

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were that supervisors could remain members of the union but could only be represented in grievance procedures. The union could not negotiate on their behalf.

Supervisors then, unlike workers, fall under the management grading scheme. While workers are paid weekly at an hourly rate, supervisors are paid monthly, directly into a bank account. The company is in the process of setting up a training programme for supervisors, but it is not yet in operation. The official production hierarchy runs from a production manager, to a foreman, to the supervisors, to the workers.

Theories of class

In the theoretical literature on class, the position of supervisors is a source of some debate. In orthodox Marxist theory, capitalist societies are defined in terms of a bi-polar class model: owners of means of production (bourgeoisie), and non-owners (proletarian) (2). Supervisors, as non-owners, would consequently form part of the latter. Poulantzas, however, places supervisors unambiguously into the "new petit-bourgeoisie", which he defines in terms of a failure to qualify in all three of the strict conditions he lays down for membership of the working class. The members of the new petit-bourgeoisie are, in these terms, unproductive workers (not directly involved in material production), and/or those holding a supervisory or managerial position of any sort (involved in the control of the labour process, including the utilisation of labour power), and/or those possessing a skill or amount of information about the production process to which the direct producers do not have access (eg. engineers, accountants). (3)

In a critique of Poulantzas, Wright argues that instead of each and every occupational position being unambiguously categorised into one or another class, one could regard certain positions as occupying "objectively contradictory locations within class relations", or "contradictory class locations". He defines classes according to their particular position in relation to control over the physical means of production, control over labour power, and control

over investment and utilisation of profits. These locations could be stated primarily as:

1. managers and supervisors - situated between the bourgeoisie and proletariat
2. semi-autonomous employees (eg. engineers, accountants) - situated between the proletariat and petty bourgeoisie
3. small employers (eg. shopkeepers) - between the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie (4)

While not overtly discussing class, non-Marxist writers such as Piron, Human and Rajah also recognise the ambivalent position of supervisors vis-a-vis management and workers. (5) They describe the supervisor as experiencing "a great deal of role conflict and role ambiguity (or marginality) within his everyday life". (6) They explain the marginality of supervisors in this way: "Black supervisors are caught in a no man's land not only between the cultural groups but also between more senior level management and workers". (7)

While we are not here concerned with the respective merits of any of the above theories, they shed light on why the position of supervisors is becoming increasingly contested.

A CASE STUDY

This section will focus on some disjunctures between the views of the personnel manager, the labour officer, and the workforce regarding aspects of the labour process and the position of supervisors.

The chain of command: the relationship of supervisors to both workers and management

As was mentioned earlier, the official hierarchy within the factory is headed by a production manager, whose responsibilities range from monitoring inputs and outputs of materials and products to implementing formal disciplinary procedures to solving minor disputes in the factory. Beneath him is a foreman, who acts as an intermediary between him and the supervisors. The supervisors must follow the

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production plan as instructed by the production manager, although they have some autonomy as to how they implement this plan. This involves mental rather than manual labour, according to the personnel manager:

We once cautioned a supervisor who was in fact working on the lines himself. We don't want him to actually stand with the packers or machine operators and work on the lines. His job is in fact to supervise and to manage rather than to do.

According to management, the powers of supervisors include:

1. issuing verbal reprimands
2. stopping the lines for safety reasons
3. allowing or disallowing workers to leave the lines for short periods
4. deciding to speed up the lines
5. monitoring quotas
6. allocating tasks amongst the workforce and monitoring their execution

When asked whether supervisors were aware of the extent and limits of their power, the personnel manager replied:

They certainly are, although they weren't eighteen months ago...They have been repeatedly told that they are responsible for the people under their control, and we keep on reinforcing this all the time...

He perceived there to be a high level of conflict between supervisors and workers, and expressed concern at the inability and/or disinclination of supervisors to perform their jobs adequately "for fear of being got on the train on the way home. They are concerned about their popularity rather than doing their job. They often put their jobs on the line rather than take action against the workforce". This has created a tension in the relationship between managers and supervisors because management, while acknowledging their problems, is not prepared to accept the situation: "They get paid to do a job and we expect it to be done".

The labour officer, while agreeing that there is a degree of conflict between workers and supervisors, suggests that the real source of management's dissatisfaction with super-

visors is the latter's incompetence:

The quality of supervisors we have promoted to that position might not be the right quality. They are not really trainable. They cannot handle problems. They have never had sufficient exposure to management training courses.

He pointed to a divergence between the way in which the production hierarchy should work in theory and the way it works in practice:

Supervisors regard shop stewards as senior to themselves. Shop stewards should report to supervisors as their immediate bosses but that is not happening. What is happening is that they have given shop stewards the upper hand because they [shop stewards] deal with management at an executive level.

The formal production hierarchy dictates that supervisors regard the foreman and production manager as their immediate superiors, and that all problems (including discipline) should be taken to them. However, as members of the union, supervisors regard shop stewards as their superiors, and they try and solve all disciplinary problems through them. This reflects the strength of the union amongst the workforce. The labour officer put it this way, "We admit we were beaten by the mere fact that we had to recognise the union."

Supervisors don't perceive themselves as having any powers: "I don't believe we've got powers", said one supervisor.

"If I've got a problem, I'm supposed to refer to the foreman. Then he is supposed to refer to the production manager." But in practice, as the labour officer noted, the procedure is different. According to a shop steward:

If any problems arise, the supervisors come to the shop stewards before they go to the foreman. They discuss the problem with the shop stewards, who try and solve the problem with the workers concerned.

Shop stewards are aware of the potential for conflict between workers and supervisors, and how this could weaken the collective strength of the workforce:

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We are trying to remove conflict between workers and supervisors. We tell our members they must respect their supervisors, and supervisors must respect the workers.

"Black Advancement": the contradiction between "promotion from within" and managerial control

In response to the Sullivan Code, the company adopted a policy of "Affirmative Action" of which the policy of "Black Advancement" became a part (8). This is defined by the personnel manager as a programme aimed at the progression of blacks up the managerial structure. Some of the reasons put forward by the company's personnel department for instituting the programme are as follows:

1. the removal of "social injustice" in the form of job discrimination
2. to promote industrial and political stability through the encouragement of a black middle class (supervisors, defined by the company as part of the management structure, are included in their definition of this class)
3. to alleviate the national shortage of management personnel, as well as that within the company. This, together with the need to counter the disinvestment lobby, "are related to the company's future in South Africa" and are motivated "primarily [by] self-interest". (9)

More generally, we would tentatively suggest that the emergence of black supervisors coincides with the emergence of the independent trade union movement; viewed in this light, policies of black advancement would seem to represent attempts by management to divide and co-opt sections of the black workforce to retain control over industrial relations and the labour process. In line with "scientific management" principles, attempts are made to further remove control of the labour process from direct producers by extending management influence on the shop-floor in the form of compliant supervisors.

But the policy of black advancement contains a potential contradiction, one which has manifest itself in this instance. The labour officer put it thus:

You can imagine, if you have been working with guys for years and then all of a sudden they promote you senior to them; the guys are used to your habits, they know all your weaknesses. So for you to now change and immediately say "Gents, I want you to listen to me. I am now your boss." Its just a mere waste of time. The position of supervisor is a critical position. I would say rather than promoting a guy from within, you'd rather recruit a guy from outside, who's not known by any of the guys.

He is supported in his view by the personnel manager:
If they don't do their jobs properly, we'll have to get people who won't be intimidated, or who don't live in the same township, or who belong to a different race group.

Black advancement, then, while presenting potential advantages to the company, at the same time introduces potential risks for opening up "space" in which the union can operate.

Supervisors: workers or management?

The ambiguous position of supervisors is well illustrated by the different perceptions of their position, by workers, management, and supervisors themselves.

According to the personnel manager, the criteria for promotion to the position of supervisor include:

1. "they must stand out from the rest of the workforce"
2. they must be "co-operative"
3. they must have an ability to "communicate" with both management and workers
4. they must be "natural leaders"
5. they must be recommended by the production manager

The personnel manager defines supervisors as part of management because their job entails management of workers, as well as planning, organising and controlling the labour process. Supervisors are "white collar" workers and are therefore on the management grading scheme. However, he says:

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I think they see themselves as part of the workforce rather than as part of management and this is a very big problem area.

In his view, the reason why supervisors don't see themselves as part of management, and why workers don't see them as part of management, is because they (the supervisors) are black. If the supervisors were white, the workers would see them as part of management. This he sees as contradicting the union policy of non-racialism.

The labour officer suggests that workers see supervisors as part of the workforce because they are members of the union. If they were not members, they would be regarded as management. The reason why the union accepted supervisors, he said, was purely in order to boost their membership. Also, the workers and supervisors saw the union as a "black organisation" and therefore accepted all blacks as members.

Workers and supervisors are most emphatic that no amount of management talk will convince them that supervisors are part of management. A supervisor said:

We were promoted from the lines, we know what it is all about. We know the difficulties on the lines from long ago, so we can't just shout at a man. I don't feel I'm part of management.

Management tried unsuccessfully to prevent supervisors from working the lines, as one supervisor said:

But we told them that it's not easy just to stand and look while other people are working. If somebody needs to leave the line for an hour or two, you can't block him. So I've got to go on the line and help that guy.

Management is extremely unhappy about this situation. One clause in the recognition agreement stipulated by management, is that supervisors cannot become shop stewards.

Management strategy to isolate supervisors

The personnel manager said, "they (the supervisors) don't

accept that they are different from them (the workers) but we are trying to change their perception". He believes there has been minimal success so far in these attempts, but:

Recently they have been sitting separately at lunch time and possibly this is a result of the input management has been giving them. I hope that is the case.

The labour officer puts the "mistrust of management's motives" at the centre of his explanation of the behaviour of supervisors and workers in joining the union:

Most companies believe that all blacks go for the unions; they reckon that every black man likes seeing himself as a member of a union. I am totally against that; it is not true! There are reasons that make people join the union and basically they are: simply because of the lack of security. If management played its part as a human resource, I don't think any of the guys would have gone for the union, because they're quite aware of the union's weaknesses. The union is only concerned with selling itself to employees by saying, "We will protect you". Although the workers might be aware of the company's benefits being greater than what the union can offer, they still feel, because of the mistrust they have in management, their only alternative is to go for the union.

This mistrust is because, firstly, management is seen as "white", and secondly, because management is not providing the benefits which it should, he explained.

The workers and supervisors see the attempts by management to draw supervisors away from the rest of the workers as "intimidation". A supervisor told us:

We had a meeting of only supervisors with the personnel manager. He told us it was not wise for us to join in or participate in the union because we are no more work-force, we are management. He said if we resign from the union he will pay us more. What he is giving us now is peanuts, but we told him: "No, we will keep our peanuts." Even if we get R3000 for one month, we can still be fired or victimised. We did not resign [from our union].

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A shop steward supported this statement:

He [the personnel manager] wanted to divide the workers at the company. He wanted to create a division and a conflict between supervisors and workers. So what we have done is try and prevent this happening by telling our supervisors and workers they must respect each other.

He explained further:

He wanted supervisors to victimise workers so he could weaken the union. They are using black against black. We have realised this and that's why supervisors disagree to resign from the union.

It is clear that it is management policy to try to differentiate the workforce. According to the shop stewards, the issue of supervisors' membership of the union arose out of the dispute over the unfair dismissal of an Indian supervisor, who was a member of the union. The Industrial Court ruled in favour of the supervisor concerned. It was as a result of this that the personnel manager wanted to renegotiate the terms "non-managerial/managerial" staff in the recognition agreement.

Conclusion

There are a number of objective influences overdetermining the class identity of supervisors in this particular case study. We have isolated the following (there may well be others which have not been revealed in this short study):

- strength of organisation within the factory. Almost all of the black workforce belong to the union, with a few white women also considering membership.
- the policy of promotion from within tends to create supervisors who share common workplace and social experiences with other workers.
- both supervisors and other workers tend to come from the same residential townships (ie. Natalspruit/Katlehong) and socialise together.
- both supervisors and other workers share a common racial identity.
- the supervisors have occupied their positions for a relatively short period of time, during which their exposure

- to management perceptions has been limited.
- as yet, the company has not implemented a training scheme for supervisors.
 - the overt attempts by management to differentiate supervisors from workers seems only to have increased their suspicion of management as well as their general feelings of job insecurity.

This case study would seem to indicate limitations to attempts to define the new middle class in purely structural terms. We have seen how conflict has emerged over the identity of the job category, "supervisor", and the range of influences on the perceptions of incumbents of this position. If we see class as a set of relationships rather than a thing or category, then it is these relationships which need to be concretely investigated. They cannot simply be read off from individuals' particular places within economic or political structures.

This case study points to the necessity for a distinction to be made between class structure and class identity with regard to the "new middle class" or the "new petty bourgeoisie" or the "contradictory class locations" (whatever one chooses to call them) with the class identity being open to conjunctural analysis.

Footnotes:

- 1 We do not use "dispute" in the strictly legal sense, ie. referring to industrial confrontation which has gone to the level of the Industrial Court, but simply in the sense of a disagreement between management and the union which gave rise to high level negotiations between the two.
- 2 For a brief overview of this position, see E Olin Wright, "Varieties of Marxist conceptions of class structure", Politics and Society, 9.3, 1980
- 3 N Poulantzas, "On social classes", New Left Review, 78, 1973, pp 27-50; also Classes in contemporary capitalism, (Verso, Great Britain 1979)
- 4 E Olin Wright, "Varieties"; also Class, crisis and the state, (Verso, Great Britain 1983), pp 30-110

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- 5 J Piron, L Human, and M Rajah, "The men in the middle: supervisors in South African organisations today", ASSA conference, Johannesburg, 1984
- 6 *ibid*, p7
- 7 *ibid*, p21
- 8 A M McGregor, "Management development and adult education: putting the theories into practice", (Unpublished abridged version of Honours dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1984), p3
- 9 *ibid*
- 10 Eddie Webster identifies a "crisis of control" during this period in the metal industry. See E Webster, "A new frontier of control? Case studies in the changing form of job control in South African industrial relations", Second Carnegie inquiry into poverty and development in Southern Africa, University of Cape Town, 1984. Our hypothesis is that this "crisis" was not confined to that branch of industry.

REVIEW: POWER! Black Workers, their Unions and the Struggle for Freedom in South Africa

D MacShane, M Plaut, D Ward

(Spokesman UK 1984, 4-95 pounds sterling; distributed in SA by Ravan, R14.95)

The aim of the authors was "to explain to people outside South Africa the immense growth in trade unions organising black workers in that country" - and this is certainly the best book to attempt such a task so far (see also SALB 9.7)

There are inevitably a few complaints - but by and large the material is very reliable - much of it drawn from the SALB (as the authors acknowledge). It should however be pointed out that CCAWUSA is not non-racial (p107) and that the CUSA affiliate, Transport and Allied Workers Union, as well as FOSATU's Transport and General Workers Union, represents PUTCO workers (p109).

The last point is indeed symptomatic. This account favours FOSATU - described as the "best organised" grouping (p38) - with much less attention paid to CUSA despite the latter's greater claimed membership (p35: 148,000 compared with 106,000). The section dealing with the chemical industry is dominated by FOSATU's Chemical Workers Industrial Union, with CUSA's South African Chemical Workers Union - actually larger than CWIU - receiving hardly a mention. CUSA's relative absence from the text is a weakness - an absence which in the past has been matched in the pages of the SALB, it might be added.

Even as Power! was being printed some of its contents were overtaken by events. CUSA's newspaper Izwilethu has been substantially upgraded (p73). NUM now claims 110,000 members (p102) and has led a disciplined and partially successful strike against the Chamber of Mines (p17-18: the authors had argued that such a strike was impossible given the present balance of forces. See SALB 10.2). Also mention of

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the new Black Alliance of black consciousness unions is necessary to complete this overview of South African trade unions (see SALB 10.2).

The books contents include details of several struggles over recognition and wages, as well as recent material on health and safety and women's rights at work. The historical sections are of necessity brief - and we still await a detailed analysis of the development of the last ten years of the labour movement. Lack of space means that some issues are dealt with inadequately - eg. the role of whites in the unions. (Why not the role of intellectuals generally? - JL) Despite these reservations, those interested in the workers movement in South Africa will find this book useful. Recent political debates in the unions are reviewed and several important documents are reprinted as appendices.

Of equal interest to trade unionists both in South Africa and internationally are the last two chapters of the book which deal with questions of international solidarity. This section includes criticism of the South African Congress of Trade Unions in exile for trying to prevent direct links between the new unions and trade unions overseas. SACTU's analysis of South Africa as an all-powerful fascist state made them initially sceptical about the possibility of genuine and independent open trade unionism. Additionally SACTU found its traditional role as sole representative of South African workers challenged by the re-emergence of a trade union movement within South Africa. The new unions have demonstrated their independence by refusing to be used against SACTU by the right-wing of the international trade union movement. In the meantime the emerging unions have built up overseas links with workers at all levels - with federations, trade secretariats, individual unions and plant leaderships. These links have provided concrete support for South African unions during a number of recent disputes. By publicising these the book will play a valuable role in encouraging direct links and solidarity between South African workers and fellow workers overseas.

(Jon Lewis, SALB)

Obituary: Eddie McCarthy 1943 – 1985

Eddie McCarthy died by drowning at St Georges Beach, Port Elizabeth, on January 3rd 1985.

Eddie was employed at the General Motors Electromotive Division at Port Elizabeth, where he joined the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union (NAAWU). He was elected as a shop steward in 1981. Since then Eddie has moved through the ranks of the union and sat on the General Motors Branch Executive Committee and the Port Elizabeth Area Committee. He also sat on the Union's National Executive Committee and its Management Committee. He was part of the union's delegation to the recent International Metalworkers Federation Africa Workshop held in Lesotho.

Not only was Eddie active in his own union's affairs, but he actively gave of himself to FOSATU (Federation of South African Trade Unions). He sat on FOSATU's Eastern Cape Region and on its National Executive Committee. He was a NAAWU delegate to FOSATU Central Committee.

Eddie's years of union activity span the period when the Eastern Cape developed worker militancy unknown in South Africa. He was active during the 1981 "living wage" strike when over 20,000 workers, almost the entire industrial workforce of Uitenhage, stopped work in support of the demand for a living wage. Workers at the Port Elizabeth car plants, where Eddie was working, supported this demand. The strike succeeded in raising the wages of assembly workers in the Eastern Cape to R2,00 per hour – a massive worker victory, not only in monetary terms, but also because for the first time the living wage concept had overthrown the dominant "poverty datum" measurement used by management to justify starvation wages.

It was after 1981 that Eddie began to play a leadership role in the union. His hand was seen in the first strike involving all three assembly plants in the Port Elizabeth/Uitenhage area, Ford, Volkswagen and General Motors. A

- obituary -

massive 10,000 workers stopped work for between 5 and 15 days while the union moved employers from their original offer of an additional 5c per hour or a minimum wage of R2,15 per hour to an increase which would bring the effective minimum to R2,70 by 1984. It was the first time that General Motors workers had participated in a strike of this nature and suffice it to say that Eddie was in a leadership role during that period.

Eddie's funeral was attended by over 1000 people, workers, colleagues from the rugby clubs where he played a role as an administrator, friends and family. The final tribute was paid to him by his friend and comrade in arms, Jurie Harries, President of NAAWU:

Workers at General Motors will know Eddie is not there when they return to work on Monday. His presence will be sorely missed. But Eddie worked for the struggle of the workers, and while we cannot replace Eddie McCarthy, another leader will take his place to continue the struggle of which Eddie was part.

Eddie made a substantial contribution to the growth of NAAWU and of FOSATU. He was deeply committed to the advancement of the working class and to a better South Africa for all of us.

NAAWU SALUTES HIS MEMORY AND EXPRESSES
ITS CONDOLENCES TO HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN

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

- Constructive criticism of unions or federations in the independent labour movement is welcome. However, articles with unwarranted attacks or of a sectarian nature which have a divisive effect on the labour movement will not be published.
- Contributions to the Bulletin must not exceed the following lengths:

Analytical articles	8000 words
Debates, reviews, Documents	3000 words
Briefings	800 words
- Contributions must be written in language which is clear and understandable.
- All contributions to the Bulletin must be typed and where applicable include proper footnoting and references.
- Except in the case of public documents, all submissions to the Bulletin will be treated in confidence.

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