SOUTH AFRICAN LABOUR BULLETIN

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COMMENT

COMMENT 1 : DOUBLE STANDARDS

"Political support was bought by an increasing number of concessions to even the most outrageous demands of dissatisfied workers. Today Italy is on the verge of bankruptcy".

Thus the Oosterlig, commenting on the political and economic situation in Italy. But it could be any South African newspaper commenting on the situation in any one of a number of countries. Bashing the workers is a popular sport. But a sport should have rules, and we suggest that the first rule should be that anybody commenting on anybody else's"outrageous" wage demands should first disclose and justify his or her own income. The sight or sound of people in the R10 000 plus bracket throwing up their hands in horror at the crass materialism and unmitigated greed of workers who want a 50% wage increase is not totally convincing. Only the austere really have a moral right to preach austerity.

That some people have the right to large incomes may seem self-evident to those people themselves, but to, say, a British coalminer, the demand for a miner's wage of £100 a week may seem considerably less outrageous than the fact that a managing director might earn £1000 a week, or even that a doctor might earn £15 000 a year.

A doctor, or a journalist, has his or her job by virtue of an education provided by the community. The education itself is a desirable privilege. Added to this the job of doctor or of journalist is easier, more interesting and less dangerous than the job of a miner. Why, in addition to all these advantages, the doctor or the journalist should also expect to be paid more is not likely to be at all clear to the miner.

A second rule might be that the measures taken by workers to protect or increase their incomes

should always be evaluated in the context of the steps taken by other groups to protect or increase their incomes. In an excellent book, "Man Mismanagement", which will be reviewed in a forthcoming issue of the SALB, Alan Fox makes the following point:

> "Some uses of power in our society are far more obvious and attract far more notice than others very much greater. Employee groups can affect management decisions on their own wages, working conditions, and sometimes production methods. In this they are the frequent subject of public comment, usually adverse. Far smaller executive and directorial groups take decisions on production programmes, prices, international plant locations, foreign trade, capital movements, credit terms and the money supply which significantly shape the fortunes of economic regions and indeed entire countries. Their activities come under much less public comment and what comment there is usually takes a measured, matter-of-fact and uncensorious tone. They are mostly presented as legitimate behaviours only to be expected from companies pursuing their legitimate interests within the rules of the system. It is difficult, for example, to recall any condemnation by the media of those who have gravely aggravated Britain's successive balance of payments crises by making profits out of currency movements against sterling. It is much less difficult to recall denunciations of strikers as selfish sectional groups using power unpatriotically to assert their own interests".

One could multiply examples ad nauseam. For instance, if financial institutions aggravate inflation by increasing interest rates in order to offset estimated future inflation, nobody even notices. If workers demand wage increases sufficiently large to offset inflation they are immediately accused of being uniquely responsible

for the whole situation.
This kind of double standard is just not cricket. It is not even rugby.

COMMENT 2 : PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE.

"Nowadays, in launching a new business enterprise, it must surely be clear that the object is not only to pay dividends but also to provide employment and pay adequate and increasing salaries and wages and to open up opportunities for those who work in it. Salaries and wages can no longer be regarded merely as part of the"costs."
And, on the other hand, there is a sense in which the payment of secure and increasing dividends to shareholders must be regarded by management not only as an objective but as part of the "costs"of running their business".

Harry Oppenheimer.

That is a very nice thought. A whole ideology, assiduously taught in all our universities, is wrapped up in the notion that wages are a part of "costs", just like machinery and raw materials. This ideology legitimises the systematic neglect of worker interests in all managerial decisions : there is only one law about costs, and that is that they should be minimised. So it is very good to see somebody as prestigious in management circles as Mr. Oppenheimer attacking this fundamental principle of management ideology.

But whether the statement is an accurate description of what happens even in Oppenheimers' own companies, let alone in other companies, is quite a different question. In the United States the early phase of capitalism was characterised by the "robber baron" entrepreneurs who made no secret of the fact

that personal profit wastheir unique interest. A changing social and political climate lead to the appearance of the "soulful corporation", which continued to seek profit, but at the same time changed its rhetoric and its image.

There is a danger that progressive South African businessmen may fool themselves with their own rhetoric into thinking that they have made fundamental changes in practice. We will remain unconvinced until they begin to recognise and negotiate with trade unions representative of all workers. The watershed between treating wages as costs, and treating wages as a share in the product of the enterprise, comes when workers have a major say in determining what their share should be. That point has not yet been reached by any South African business.

INTRODUTORY COMMENT

"SLANT-EYED MEN IN THE CITY OF FEAR"

In an earlier number of the Labour Bulletin (Vol 1 No. 5) we published an article by Raphael De Kadt in which he wrote of the significance of developments in Mozambique for the South African labour market. In this issue, we return to the question of Mozambique. As De Kadt pointed out, "the supply of labour from Mocambique has always been an important help to the Chamber of Mines in keeping down wages; thus, if the source were to dry up, it could have consequences for the wage structure of South Africa as a whole". This is one important reason why the trade union movement should interest itself in developments in Mocambique.

But Mozambique also has a greater significance than this. Everything indicates that the sort of society which Frelimo aims to create in Mozambique will be fundamentally different from South Africa, and indeed fundamentally different from practically any other society in Africa. Because of this, and because Mozambique is geographically so intimately connected with South Africa, what happens there is likely to influence the way in which South Africans, think about all our problems here, including the particular problems of workers.

For this reason it is vital that we be well informed about Mozambique, and that we take great care in trying to interpret and to understand what happens there. The title of this Comment "Slant Eyed Men in the City of Fear" is the headline given to a story by a usually respected correspondent in the Sunday Tribune. The headline and the story show how not to report about Mocambique...or about anything else for that matter.

Of course, far from all the reports in the South African press have been of this low standard. The Sunday Times, in particular, has carried sober and balanced assessments of Frelimo policies and of the problems to be faced in Mozambique.

One of the occupational hazards of journalism is the felt need to find an "angle" for one's story. There are three obvious and dangerous angles which are likely to distort our vision of what happens in Mocambique: the "communism" angle, the "settler" angle and the "race" angle.

THE COMMUNIST MENACE

In many circles in South Africa the word "communism" is no longer merely a descriptive category. It is an emotive term guaranteed to becloud the best of minds. In the case of Mocambique, it will not really clarify anything to describe Frelimo as "communist" or "socialist", "marxist" or "maoist", although all these descriptions are accurate in some sense. But the question is, in what sense? And to answer that question, it is necessary to get away from the labels, and attempt to watch and describe what actually happens, without any preconceptions.

In particular, if we apply any of those terms to Frelimo, this must not be taken to mean that Frelimo is part of a world-wide military plot to destroy western civilisation. While it will adopt some form of "leftist" internal policy, Frelimo is not likely to become militarily involved in the "cold war". Internal socialist policies must not be confused with the spread of "Soviet imperialism."

CITY VERSUS COUNTRYSIDE

Mocambique is fundamentally a rural society. About 90% of the population are engaged in agriculture, from which come 80% of the country's export earnings. In contrast only 2% of the economically active population are engaged in industry. The basic fact about agriculture is that at present only 5% of the arable land is actually under cultivation. And of the 11 million acres which are cultivated, 4 million are part of the 3000 large plantations owned by foreigners or settlers.
The cities are essentially the product of the settlers, and were built to serve their needs. Most industries and most imports are also settler orientated.
Frelimo is a peasant movement. It is not likely to want to do away with cities and city-based industries, but preserving the cities as settler and tourist enclaves of affluent living is not high on Frelimo'S list of priorities. Frelimo's low view of the cities was clearly expressed in a speech by Samora Machel, made in Cabo Delgado province just after his return to Mocambique:

> Now we are going into the cities...there are many enemies : alchohlism...tribalism, which we have destroyed here...racial discrimination and scorn between people...there are the rich: to be rich there is to be respected; because to be rich is to be a better exploiter, and they respect those who are the best exploiters. Then there are the educated and the uneducated there are divisions between them...and what I am saying is true of the blacks and the whites. Of all, black and white, do you hear. We have many other problems to resolve; the fruits of colonialism; alchoholism, prostitution, capitalism.

> There are veneral diseases in the cities. Children of ten years old are already corrupted. After 10 years of war are we going to permit this in our country.....A new war. We must start a new war, in the same way in which we fought Portuguese colonialism .

Frelimo's economic policies will be directed towards redistributing the land and bringing new land under cultivation. Frelimo's economic strategy will be based on rural development. It will involve increasing food production by using more land: increasing cash crops, and developing rural industries to process agricultural goods for re-export, rather than exporting them unfinished. In the short term, and given the massive underutilisation of land, it would be possible to absorb people from the cities back on to the land, and to provide enough food for an adequate diet for all. This means that what happens in the cities and in international trade is only of secondary importance. Most Mocambiquans will be able to improve their positions even if the country goes bankrupt and the cities have to close down. Of course this is not likely to happen, but we make the point in order to put the cities and the balance of payments into their proper perspective. Accounts of Mozambiquan economic problems must concentrate on what happens in the largely subsistence rural areas, rather than on what happens in the few urban settler enclaves. They must not expect orthodox "sensible" policies designed to attract foreign investment.

"EXPLOITATION IS NOT A COLOUR.
IT IS A SYSTEM"

It is very difficult for South Africans, and especially for white South Africans, not to see things in racial terms.

In regard to Mocambique, this tendency will be encouraged by the fact that Frelimo's membership is predominantly black, and that the privileged elite is predominantly white. So it is important to understand that nonracialism is a basic element in Frelimo's policy. Joaquin Chissano, Prime Minister in the pre-independance provisional government has said:

> "Exploitation is not a colour, it is a system. In our Frelimo constitution it is written that we are going to struggle against oppression. Nowhere does it say that we are going to struggle against the whites."

The same theme is repeated over and over again in the speeches of Samora Machel. Machel has also claimed that the conflicts in Frelimo in the period 1967-8, conflicts which led to the assassination of the President, Eduardo Mondlane, were intimately associated with this very question. The right wing in Frelimo wished to use racist propaganda, and to mobilise the population on anti-white lines. The left refused, arguing that oppression and exploitation were not an exclusive characteristic of whites. In a speech to the OAU last year he gave the following account of the debate:

> Opportunists and adventurists, tactically underestimating the enemy, declared that the struggle could be begun without any political preparation. Failing to recognise the true dialectic of combat, ignoring the real level of consciousness which had been attained, they affirmed that it would be enough to fire a few shots in order for the entire country to rise up spontaneously. Finally, refusing to define the enemy correctly, these forces considered a race and a people to be the target of our arms.

In reality, these people did not want an armed struggle carried through to its ultimate conclusions. Their real aim was to block the popular process of combat and to prevent its full ideological development. They aimed to use the blood and sacrifice of the masses only as a means of pressure which would lead to the substitution for a foreign exploiting class of a national exploiting class."

How most of the assembled OAU leaders reacted to this accurate description of themselves we do not know, but the point is that what Machel is saying here is that to speak of race is to confuse the issue. One of the more bizarre events in the days before independance, the massive parade of Frelimo prisoners held at the base camp at Nachingwe in Tanzania was used by Machel specifically to illustrate the point that not only whites could be enemies of the people. In a press statement, the head of Frelimo's information department, Jorge Rebelo, explained the significance of the event:

"Reactionaries are not to be associated with white people. We want to show that black people can be as reactionary or as revolutionary as any one else. The same for the white people. It is a difficult lesson to learn for people who have been subjected to 500 years of white Portuguese colonialism."

We cannot assume that action taken against a white individual in Mozambique has been taken because of his or her skin colour. Nor, of course, can we necessarily assume the contrary. There is no guarantee that Frelimo will keep to its principles, or that it will be able to control less politically sophisticated behaviour from people who have noted a 500 year corolation between whiteness and the status of exploiter.

But the point is that Machel and Frelimo are at present working to prevent racial polarisation, and it would be damaging to race relations both in South Africa and perhaps also in Mozambique if the South African press were to force class issues connected with the struggle against exploitation into a racial mould.

It cannot at this moment be assumed either that Frelimo will or that it will not succeed. It is always more difficult to build a new economic and social order than it is to keep an old one going, however bad the old one might be. In judging events in Mocambique, the criterion must be the extent to which the lives of the working people of the country are improved, both materially and spiritually. This involves taking into account not only the question of the standard of living, but also the extent to which the government is able to create institutions which will allow popular participation in government and popular freedom at all levels.

In one of his speeches while touring the countryside on the way to Lourenco Marques, Machel warned his audience:

> "There will be a war in our midst. We who fought the war are going to struggle in the Government. We are going to have to confront ambition:"why was this one chosen as President? Why was that one chosen as Minister. Why wasn't I chosen as a Minister? Why not a Chief in the Frelimo army?" Do you understand? There will be ambition. And immediately, without delay, the struggle will begin.
> It is then that we will have to come to you again.

The fact that Machel is aware of the problem of personal ambition does not mean that he will not be overcome by it.

The question is what institutions will be developed in order to permit the people to control the possible ambitions of the leadership? Here again, we must avoid simple labels or the demand for old solutions, since no society has really found an adequate solution to this problem. Instead we must observe carefully what institutions emerge and how they in fact work. We in the trade movement will be particularly interested to observe and to report the form of industrial relations which are established.

At present there is little information on trade union and worker organisation in independent Mocambique. Meanwhile, we are publishing two documents which we think contribute towards an understanding of labour relations in the past and in the future of Mozambique.

The first document is a report prepared for the Transvaal Chamber of Mines in 1922. It is an unvarnished account of working conditions in Mozambique, prepared confidentially by an agent of the greatest labour recruiting organisation in that territory. Of course, labour conditions had improved somewhat by the time of independence, but what improvement there was was both belated and inadequate. And the report tells us how most Mozambiquans lived after 400 years of Europe's civilising mission.

The second document was apparently first issued in 1972, but was recently published in connection with the First National Seminar on Agriculture, held from 29th May to 2nd June this year.

We have edited out one or two references to the war which was in progress when it was first written. It gives a good idea of Frelimo attitudes towards work, production, education and private property.

With its stress on collectivism and on the

combination of education and organisation with practical production, it also shows what kind of development policy we can expect from Frelimo.

Whether their ideology is viable, and whether they can in fact use these methods in running a whole country, of course remains to be seen.

REPORT ON NATIVE LABOUR CONDITIONS
in the
PROVINCE OF MOZAMBIQUE, PORTUGUESE E.A.

GENERAL.

The Province of Mozambique is divided into various administrative areas. It contains:

(a) Two Chartered Companies -
The Mozambique Company (Beira),
The Nyassa Company (Porto Amelia & Ibo).

(b) The "Prazas" in the Quillimane district
The Zambesia Co.
The Madal Co.
The Boror Co.
The Lugella Co.
and some others of less importance.

The Chartered Companies enjoy complete control of their own internal affairs, and the "Prazas" have a certain degree of autonomy.

(c) The Central Government at Lourenco Marques, controlling the remainder of the Province, which comprises the districts of Lourenco Marques, Gazaland (Chai-Chai), Inhambane, Quillimane, and Mozambique including Angoche. Each district carries a District Governor, with the exception of Lourenco Marques, where the Governor General acts also in that capacity, and each district makes its own labour regulations, subject to the approval of the Governor General.

It will be found that labour conditions vary considerably in the different areas above mentioned.

Speaking generally, labour conditions and the treatment of natives become worse as the distance from Lourenco Marques increases. The force of public opinion has improved conditions considerably in the south. In the north every kind of abuse

flourishes.

There is a marked difference also in the type of officials north and south of the Zambesia. In the South the Administrators and sub-Administrators (Chefes do Posto) are usually men of education and intelligence, frequently ex-officers of the Portuguese military and naval services. A reasonable amount of justice and humanity is to be expected from such, and often exists. The northern districts - possibly being unable to pay men of this type - recruit their officials from a lower class, frequently ex-sergeants and corporals. Many officials are found of very indifferent education. They lack the intelligence to realise any sense of their responsibility, and have no traditions to follow. Being underpaid, they regard their positions (which are usually quite free from any supervision) merely as opportunities to be turned to their own advantage. Often they exhibit a brutality that feeds and grows on its own excesses. In the very worst areas there is no abuse, excess or crime against natives left uncommitted. Even murder is not unknown.

Corporal punishment is usual. The instrument used is the "palmatoria". This is a heavy, thick-handled weapon, carrying a round, flat surface at one end. A heavy knobkerrie, with a short thick handle, and two parallel surfaces of the knob cut down flush with the shaft would resemble a palmatoria. The instrument is used to inflict punishment by flogging the palm of the victim's hand. Rarely causing any permanent injury, such as broken or dislocate bones, its use quickly reduces a hand to a shapeless, swollen mass of lascerated and bleeding flesh.

In the north its use is universal for the most trivial offences on the part of natives. This instrument - the symbol of Portuguese authority in the province of Mozambique - is the most conspicuous ornament on the walls of every administrative office. Its use is not unknown in the south, even in Lourenco Marques itself, while the Fiscal at Rossano Garcia is a noted believer in

its efficiency as a means of native government.

Corporal punishment is entirely prohibited under Portuguese law, unless perhaps by sentence of a Judge, but the law is utterly ignored throughout the whole province, and the authorities wink at the lowest official in the interior inflicting punishment by means of the palmatoria.

The palmatoria is a relic of the barbarous age, and a Government which permits its universal use cannot be said to have emerged from the era of barbarity.

The worst point of the administration is that many officials engage in private business. The senior authorities are fully aware of this, but are either indifferent or unable to prevent it. Agriculture, planting, trading, the collection of beeswax, rubber, etc., and transport of merchandise to the coast occupy the attention of officials and practically the whole of the native labour required is forced, unpaid, and barely fed. Successful officials leave the country rich men. During their residence in the Province, the activities above mentioned leave them little time to give their attention to such matters as hygiene, native grievances, law, justice, and the diverse other subjects which occupy the lives of Administrators in the Colonies of other nationalities. On the contrary they discourage any attempt on the part of natives to discuss any such matters with them, as being a waste of their time, and too much trouble. A subject which offers no pecuniary return is of no interest to them. Especially is it futile for a native to complain of any theft or outrage committed by the native police. These functionaries, uniformed and armed both with authority and weapons, are the mainstay of the Hut Tax collection, and as such are entirely privileged persons; in fact they occupy the enviable position of licenced bandits. When abroad on their otherwise lawful occasions, they invariably steal fowls, foodstuffs, etc., and demand or seize women at every village visited. Should a native complain to a Chefe de Posto that his wife has been outraged by a police boy, the complainant will almost certainly receive a beating with the palmatoria for

daring to lay a complaint against the native police.

In brief, the officials exist not for the good of the country, but solely for the collection of the hut tax, and for their own gain. Native government in the Province of Mozambique means only the collection of taxes, calling in of forced labour, the arrest of criminals, and repression. A large gaol can be seen at every Post, and it represents the sole monument to Portuguese efforts for the benefit of the native population.

Forced unpaid labour for Government purposes was formerly universal. It is now *officially* permitted only for roadmaking. This, however, occupies a large amount of native labour.
During part of 1921 and 1922 some 2000 natives were employed for months on the road between Chai-Chai and Xinavaan. All this labour was unpaid and barely fed In some cases the natives even had to provide their own hoes, which cost about 5s., and were worn out in Government service. Throughout the whole Province roads have to be maintained in fair repair by the local natives without payment; and *actually*, other Government service is also forced and unpaid in most Posts.

No improvement in general conditions can be expected under the present system. There is a complete absence of supervision over officials in the Interior , and each Administrator and Chefe do Posto is a despotic ruler in his own area. Excesses or atrocities coming to the notice of the senior officials on the coast may be deplored, but meet with no adequate inquiry or punishment. The policy of the Government is to hush up each scandal, and the worst that happens to an offender is suspension with the possibility of dismissal from the service. Real punishment of an official for any crime whatsoever committed against natives is unknown. An odd exception may however be found to prove the rule. It is stated that one case is on record in the Mozambique district of a Chefe do Posto being sentenced to a long term of imprisonment for the murder of a native. Such a case merely indicates that the official had incurred the

personal enmity of his seniors.

There is no intention to suggest that murder and atrocities are very common; but on the other hand they are not so very infrequent, as every year or so one hears of a native being done to death. Maltreatment, flogging, etc., is extremely common. Many cases of so-called murder are more correctly manslaughter e.g. a native being flogged to death.

With such examples of official conduct ever before them, it inevitably follows that many private companies and individuals permit themselves similar licence. The natives of the Province of Mozambique live in many areas under conditions but little removed from slavery. The legal minimum wage has to be paid by private employers, and natives cannot be bought and sold. Beyond this their lives are too often made up of neglect, privation and ill treatment. The worst areas are those administered by the Praza holders in the Quillimane district, Angoche, Mozambique and the Nyassa Company's territory. Conditions depend entirely on the character of the local official, who can ensure good treatment if he desires. Just and humane officials can be found,and their posts are often easily recognised by the considerable native population close to the seat of administration. The evil Administrator has for neighbours only his own native police. The trouble is that just and humane officials are rare, and until public opinion is much stronger and more articulate no amelioration of the natives' lot can be looked for.

LABOUR CONDITIONS IN THE VARIOUS AREAS

a) As regards wages in the various areas it should be noted that in connection with the recent Currency Act an intention has been expressed of raising natives' wages in Escudos to a level representing the pre-war standard. It is very unlikely that this can or will be carried into effect, as the local currency is at present depreciated about twenty times.

b) The Hut Tax varies throughout the Province with the rate of wages paid, and usually represents the earnings of one month to six weeks.

c) The very low wages paid are largely due to depreciated currency. Before the war, when the Escudo was stable at about Esc. 5,00 to the £, the usual minimum wage was Esc. 1.20 per month, being nearly 4/10 per month. On the Prazas it is stated to have been Esc. 0.40 per month, about 1/7¼.

d) The principle throughout is forced labour supplied by the Administrators.

LOURENCO MARQUES DISTRICT

Agricultural wages - 12/- per month with food

Industrial wages - up to 24/- per month with food

now paid in Escudos at the rate of the day. The usual period of employment is six months.

Farmers are known who so ill-treat their servants in the final month, that the natives abscond in terror, the farmer thus escaping the necessity of paying any wage at all in some cases. The Administrators in this district are now making a genuine effort to assist and protect their natives, and farmers with bad reputations are being refused further supplies of labour.

With no prospect of engaging much voluntary labour, the outlook for them is unpromising until they amend their ways. Public opinion in this district exercises considerable influence. The Intendente holds just and humane views, which ensure a considerable amount of protection for natives, who enjoy in the Lourenco Marques district a degree of freedom and consideration, which is not found elsewhere in the Province, except perhaps in some areas of the Mozambique Company's territory (Beira). Employers of enlightened views can also be found, among whom may be mentioned certain British ranchers, and the Xinavaan Sugar Estates. The latter Company employs a large number of natives, and

succeeds in engaging many of them voluntarily. The Company pays 20/- per month for adult males down to 10/- for children. Adequate rations and quarters are provided. In the town of Lourenco Marques wages are fairly high, daily labourers receiving 1/6 per day, paid in Escudos at the rate of the day. The Hut Tax is £1 plus Esc. 1.00.

It may be said of the Central Government at Lourenco Marques that they desire to carry out an enlightened Labour policy but are defeated by their own system. Distances, lack of supervision and an inferior class of officials are insuperable handicaps. To this add the national inertia and the national inclination to follow the line of least resistance, and it can easily be understood why the authorities fail to modify the repression and exploitation of natives, which marks in greater or lesser degree the life of the whole Province.

District of Gazaland

There is so little local employment that the district may be ignored, with the assumption that conditions are not so favourable as in the Lourenco Marques district, but better than in the district of Inhambane.

District of Inhambane

Practically no voluntary labour can be engaged, as natives prefer to go to Johannesburg. All labour is forced and supplied by the Administrators. Wages are fixed by a local "Labour Commission" under Government control. The rate was Esc. 6.00 per month until a few months ago, when it was raised to Esc. 12.00 to meet the depreciation in exchange. In each instance the value represented at first about 4/- per month, but continued depreciation reduced this. At the present time natives will not remain on farms for Esc. 12.00, and 15.00 may be stated to be the minimum wage, head boys receiving up to Esc. 30.00. The Exchange being now about Esc. 100.00 to the £, this amounts to 3/- and 6/- respectively. Recent local regulations determine that future agricultural wages shall be

payable in Escudos at a rate corresponding to about 8/- to 10/- per month. This is to come into force in a few weeks time. It may be confidently anticipated that these wages can never be paid. Farming in the Inhambane district is in a primitive and non-economic condition, and no farmers have sufficient capital to carry on, except on the former low wage costs. The only farmers who ever made money were the "Sope" farmers, and since the brewing of this sugarcane-beer has been prohibited, many of them have left the country.

As elsewhere, industrial wages are higher than agricultural wages, but the number of natives so employed (railway, etc.) is inconsiderable.

The Hut Tax is £1 plus Esc. 0.50.

The Mozambique Company (Beira)

Compulsory labour recruited by the Commandants at 26/- per month, of which the 6/- is a recruiting fee, the native receiving 20/- only. Voluntary labour can also be engaged at 20/- per month. In each case the payment is made in notes of the Banco do Beira, which are depreciated 30%, the actual payment being therefore the equivalent of about 14/-. A few hundred contracted labourers are imported occasionally from Mozambique on a system of deferred pay, the wages being 15/- per month, payable in Beira notes, equals 10/- net.

District of Quillimane

The greater part of the Quillimane district is occupied by the various Prazas - Zambesia Company, Madal Company, Boror Company, Lugeela Company, etc.

A Praza is an area of country leased for a term of years, for administrative and revenue collecting purposes, against an annual cash payment, which is determined by sale by auction. The essence of the contract is the farming of the Hut Tax, which the praza holder collects for his own account. He also acquires the right to maintain native police, and to call in forced labour. His chief obligations are to maintain a few roads, which he does

by forced unpaid labour, and to pay otherwise a local minimum rate of wage with food. The food, of course, is grown in his fields by more forced labour.

The wages are Esc. 6.00 per month, which at Esc. 100.00 to the £, is just under 1/3 per month.

Food is expensive, a ration being worth about Esc. 0.70 per day, i.e. for a kilo of any foodstuff. If he needs to buy food the labourer will cost his employer Esc. 21.00 per month for food.

The chief Praza Companies hold praza rights over very large areas in which are situated their plantation concession areas. They practically always make a profit out of the Hut Tax collection, usually a large profit, and they are ensured an abundant labour supply for their plantations. No neighbouring planter may recruit labour within the praza areas, nor are natives allowed to seek employment elsewhere. Being relieved of any pretence of Government control or supervision, it is only to be expected that labour conditions within the prazas are abominable. The praza system is synonymous with abuse and crime. All the praza holders conduct retail stores. Every penny paid out to natives is returned to the employer either as Hut Tax collection, or for purchases made in the stores. A native works here all his life under horrible conditions to buy scanty clothing for his wife and daughters. The men and boys can rarely afford proper clothing, and a small piece of rag, insufficient for decent covering, represents on a praza the reward allowed a native for the labours of a lifetime. Natives have fled from some of the prazas in such numbers that the former abudant supply of labour no longer suffices for the needs of the plantations, and labour has to be recruited outside their areas.

Quillimane and Zambesia areas represent the centre of the sugar planting and cocoanut planting industries, in which many thousands of natives are constantly employed. There is marked ill-treament and neglect of natives on all estates. In 1913 - 1914 the Nyassa Consolidated Company recruited some

hundreds of natives in Nyassaland for work on one of the prazas. The reports of natives who returned was such as to cause the recruiting company to decline to supply any further labour to the Quillimane district.

Outside the prazas labour is supplied by the Administrators at Esc. 6.00 per month. At least one Administrator refuses to supply forced labour, although allowing voluntary engagement.

The Hut Tax is Esc. 6.00.

Mozambique including the district of Angoche

(Angoche, although a recognised port of entry for Customs purposes, is merely one sub-district of Mozambique).

Agricultural labour is usually compulsory at Esc. 6.00 per month with food, which costs about Esc. 6.00 per month. Voluntary labour can be engaged at Esc. 15.00 without food. There is a certain amount of industrial labour, chiefly the transport of stone for building material. This is paid Esc. 7.50 with food. Some Administrators encourage the engagement of voluntary labour, and allow natives to work wherever they may seek employment. Other Administrators in the interior entirely prohibit natives from leaving their own districts, and even prevent them, as far as possible, from engaging the voluntary labour close to their villages, desiring to retain all the labour close at hand, to supply forced unpaid labour for the Administrator's personal advantage. Such labour is chiefly engaged on plantations, either the private estate of the official, or the so-called Government plantations, which are found at every Post. The latter supply a certain amount of foodstuffs for Government native servants, police and prisoners, but are chiefly run for the personal profit of the Administrator, who sells the crops for his own account.

In this district may be found many private properties, now valuable, which were entirely planted by officials using unpaid forced labour.

The Hut Tax is Esc. 5.50.

In Mozambique a certain amount of labour is recruited on contract for Beira at 15/- per month, and for Hornung's Sugar Estate on the Zambesia at 12/- per month, payable in each case in depreciated currency.

Nyassa Company's Territory (Porto Amelia & Ibo)

Compulsory labour at Esc. 4.500 with food, which costs to buy about Esc. 0.50 per day. The labourer thus receives 10.8d per month, nearly elevenpence per month.

The Hut Tax is Esc. 4.50.

In this, the most northern part of the Province, the exploitation of natives reaches its worst degree.

Domestic slavery - trivial in extent and harmless in kind actually continues in the town of Ibo, whose inhabitants are chiefly old-established half-caste families, tracing their decent to the early settlement of the island by the Portuguese. Two generations back these families were engaged in slave trading and in the working of plantations by slave labour, and they accumulated considerable wealth. They are now more or less impoverished, but in many cases descendants of their old slaves still cling to the Patron's family, and remain in voluntary slavery drawing food and clothing from the Patron, and, although unpaid, enjoy a happy and lazy existence: in fact they are much better off than ordinary natives in the country.
So much for the traditions of Nyassaland.

The Nyassa Company is practically insolvent, and in a hopeless condition. Sub-administrators, (Chefes do Posto) were formerly paid Esc. 80.00 per month (£16 per month) plus a commission on the Hut Tax collection. On account of depreciation an increase to Esc. 180.00 has been granted, but the Company cannot afford to pay more. That is £1-16-0 per month pay for a white official.
His commissions amount to something over £100 per

year. The total average pay of an Administrator is not more than £200 per year, and of a Chefe do Posto not more than £150 per year.
It is frankly recognised that they must live on the country. Formerly they were officially prohibited from owning plantations although the prohibition was usually ignored. Now such ownership is openly recognised by the Government. Every official in the country from the local Governor downwards is actively engaged in exploring some avenue of money making, chiefly by the exploitation of natives. Practically every official is the owner or part owner of the plantation, where some hundreds, in some cases some thousands of natives are employed constantly. Officially such labour has to be paid Esc. 4.50 per month, with food, which costs about Esc. 15.00 per month, say Esc. 19.50 per month for each labourer. Obviously an official whose total emoluments only amount to a few hundred Escudos a month can barely live on his pay himself, much less pay and feed hundreds of labourers. The whole of this labour is unpaid, and only half-fed with food also produced by forced unpaid labour. Wives and children of the labourers produce food for them as best they may; but often the wives and children are also seized and compelled to labour, then the entire family will have to subsist on the scanty rations allowed by the employer. The wretched natives, guarded and driven by armed police, are positively being worked to death. The district of Medo, - some 80 miles west of Porto Amelia, - contains large plantations worked by officials. An intelligent Indian trader resident in that neighbourhood estimates the deaths of carriers engaged in carrying to the coast the product of the plantations last year as not less than 1500 persons, - 1500 natives, unpaid, half-fed, carrying 25 Kilos. loads, driven along the roads by their brutal guards, until they dropped exhausted and died. The natives are not constantly employed, being "called" for varying periods; but they are "called" so often, and being overworked and under-fed become so exhausted and discouraged that they have neither time nor strength to make gardens for themselves. Food shortage obtains all over Nyassaland and semi-starvation is the constant

lot of its native inhabitants. Even when they succeed in growing any crops, the native police, more or less driven by circumstances to forage for themselves, and quite immune from any fear of punishment, will certainly steal at least half of the available food.

There is no need to write at length:- robbery, exploitation, oppression, cruelty, rape, outrages, atrocities, murder, - no words can be too strong, no phrases can exaggerate, no description can exceed the truth. The position becomes worse each year. It is the destruction of a race that is in progress in Portugese Nyassaland.

A brief note on the history of the Nyassa Company will show that Great Britain cannot escape some share of the blame for the evils here recorded. The Company was founded some thirty years ago, the capital being raised in London, Paris and Lisbon, and originally a Board of Directors sat in each country to safeguard the interests of their shareholders, the Governing Board being always the Lisbon Board. The French Board and French shareholders disappeared somewhat later, the French interest being chiefly bought up in London, largely by Messrs. Lewis & Marks, of London and Johannesburg. This firm presently floated a subsidiary Company, the Nyassa Consolidated Ltd., to consolidate their interests and holdings, and to finance the Nyassa Company. Since that time the Nyassa Consolidated Ltd. has always been in a position to control the senior Chartered Company, by virtue of the financial position. It owns large blocks of the Nyassa Company shares, and is also a creditor of the Chartered Company for very large sums of money.

On the outbreak of the late war, it was discovered that Lewis & Marks had sold out most, if not all, of their holdings in the Nyassa Consolidated to German financiers, the active firm being W. Philippi & Co. of Hamburg. The German interest was seized by the Trustee of Enemy Property, and eventually was acquired - at the request of the British Government - by Sir Owen Phillips. It is

believed that the Union-Castle Co. is interested.

There is every reason to believe that the British Government would be unwilling to make effective representations to Lisbon on the subject of Nyassaland, when there is a risk of endangering British capital or offending the feelings of Britain's most ancient ally, and thus the cries of an outraged people remain unheard. Possibly an appeal to the League of Nations would be of service, and such an appeal is now being spoken of by the few persons interested in native welfare in that country.

An unfortunate point is that the Nyassa Consolidated Co. have secured the position of British Vice Consul for their Manager at Porto Amelia. It can hardly be expected that he will report to the Foreign Office contrary to the interests of his employers, so there is no help for the natives in that direction.

The Charter of the Nyassa Company expires in about three years, and efforts are now being made to obtain an extension. If this be granted a further thirty years Government by the Nyassa Company will solve all problems; for the natives will all be dead, and the Europeans will have been compelled to leave the country owing to lack of native labour.

In general the employment of native labour throughout the Province of Mocambique is un-economical. Where wages are so low as here shown, it does not pay to buy machinery or transport vehicles. The fields are still hoed by hand, and all merchandise and building materials are carried on natives' heads often for long distances. The only port showing any large import of agricultural machinery is Beira, and here the goods are chiefly in transit for Rhodesia.

With the exception of the Zambesia sugar and cocoanut industries the labour requirements of the Province are small, and could be much reduced by the provision of adequate machinery and transport facilities.

TO PRODUCE IS TO LEARN. TO LEARN THROUGH PRODUCING IS TO STRUGGLE BETTER.

In a short while we are going to begin preparing the farm land for a new cycle of production. For many people production perhaps appears to be a rite, some kind of necessity in which we are obliged to engage inorder to eat and to dress. It is true that production must satisfy our fundamental biological needs. But it is also necessary in order to free ourselves from poverty and it is necessary in order better to know, dominate and use nature; it is necessary in order to form us politically.

We are revolutionaries; our acts have a political meaning, a political content. For this reason our production, besides having a commercial meaning and content, has a political content.

In the enemy zone, in capitalism and colonialism, people also produce. Men also take up hoes to strike the earth. Men also make objects in factories which we do not have in our zone. In fact, we say that production in the zone of the enemy is exploitation, while in our zone production frees man. Nevertheless, it is the same hoe, the same man, the same act of striking the ground. Why does there exist this distinction?

A Mocambiquan peasant who produces rice in Gaza province;what does his production serve for? Does it serve to feed him, to satisfy the needs of his family? Perhaps, to a certain extent. But what is certain is that with what he gets from his production he has to pay colonial taxes, taxes which finance the police who seize them, taxes which pay the salary of the administrators who oppress him, taxes to buy the guns of soldiers who tomorrow will expel him from his lands, taxes which will pay the transport and installation costs of the colonists who are going to replace him. The peasant is producing to pay his taxes; by his work he finances the oppression of which he is a victim.

Let us follow through this example of a peasant who produces rice. In order to live he needs other things besides rice. He needs clothing, he needs oil, he needs many things which he has to buy at

the trading store. To buy these things he needs money, and money does not fall from the sky.

This is to say that our peasant has to go to the trading store or to the company to sell his rice. He sells his things for a low price, and buys things at prices four or five times as high. With a sack of cotton many metres of cloth and many shirts can be made. But in fact, when he sells a sack of cotton the money which he receives is scarcely enough to buy one shirt. Our production, our sweat combined with the earth, benefits these companies and shopkeepers who do nothing.
These are the most delicate and least cruel forms of exploitation in the zone of the enemy. There are other much worse forms. There is the sale of workers for the mines. The young men are strong when they leave for the mines. Many die in accidents on the mines. More than 2500 die on the mines every year. Others, we do not know how many, come back without an arm or a leg, or with their lungs eaten up by tuberculosis. The masters of the mines are the richest people in the world. The gold taken out of the mines is sold at very high prices, but how much do the men who die in the mines earn?

Along the Zambezi are the rich lands of Sena-Sugar. Sena-Sugar earns many many thousands of contos a year. But what is earned by those who work on the rich lands of Sena-Sugar? In the coal mines of Moatize, in the palm plantations of the Zambezi Company, in the high tea plantations of Gurue, in all the places where the men of Mozambique cultivate rich farms, build high buildings, run factories with complicated machines, it is not those who work, those who sweat on to the earth, those who risk their lives in the mines, it is not they who benefit from the work.

In the zone of the enemy, the work which creates everything is done by the poor, by the "brutes". In the zone of the enemy manual work, physical work, hoeing, is done by the "brutes", the "savages", the "illiterates". The less one works the more educated one is, the less one works the more

civilised one is, the more one exploits the labour of others and the more one despises the workers, the more respected and the more elevated one is in the society. Who can imagine a governor, a doctor, a general, a banker, with calloused hands, with feet sunk into the earth, sweating with the force of his hoe? It would be considered dishonouring, shaming, low.

In the zone of the enemy, the exploiters, like lice, live off the work of the exploited. Everywhere, in the schools, on the radio, in the cinema, one is taught to despise manual work and to venerate the exploiters.

In our zone it is different. Work does not serve to enrich companies and merchants, speculators and parasites.
Work is designed to satisfy the needs of the people and of the war. For this very reason production is the object of constant attack by the enemy.

In our zone, work is an act of liberation, because the result of the work benefits the workers, serves the interests of the workers; that is, serves to liberate man from hunger, poverty, serves the progress of the struggle. In our zone we abolish the exploitation of man, because production is the property of the people, and serves the people.

So we produce for our own interests. It is in our interests to bring up healthy children, free of illness, strong children free from hunger and rickets.
In producing we contribute to the correct feeding of our children, of our people.
In cultivating, we produce food which is rich in vitamins; we produce carrots with vitamins which strengthen our eyesight; we produce an infinity of products, from grain to tomatoes, from beans to lettuce, which give strength to our bodies.
Products which through their diversity and richness enable us to benefit from a varied diet, which, being varied, is not only agreeable but also gives us a more balanced diet which in itself combats many illnesses and makes us more resistant. And

consider also that the physical labour of production, especially in agriculture, not only strengthens our muscles and enriches our bodies, but also keeps us in touch with nature, keeps us in the sun which gives us the vitamins (D,A) necessary for the resistance of our bodies, creates the conditions in which we can enjoy good health.

On the other hand, it is through production and its development, and only through production and its development, that we can satisfy our growing needs. In many regions, because we manage to export our excess production to friendly countries, the problem of clothing is attenuated; what we export gives us means to buy what we do not produce ourselves.

Our needs for clothing, shoes, soap, can only be solved in one of two ways: The first is by increasing our exports which increases the amount that we can buy. The second, and the more effective, although more long term, is to produce these goods ourselves.
We speak intentionally of textiles, footwear and soap. The reason is simple.
In our country our farmers produce the cotton with which cloth is made. Artisanal production of textiles is within the range of our possibilities. We have the hides of cattle, goats, and many other animals, from which leather is made. Artisanal production of leather and of shoes is within the range of our possibilities. We have the vegetable raw material from which soap is made, and experiments in Cabo Delgado show that we are able to produce soap.

On the other hand, the increase of production, through the better use of our resources - using manure and irrigation, the development of horticulture, the breeding of animals etc - is possible, as is proved by experiments carried out at certain military bases and pilot centres.

So production serves to solve the problem of a rich diet for health, and serves our needs. For this reason in our zone those who work are honoured

and praised, while those who wish to live by exploiting the labour of others are criticised, denounced, combatted and despised.

In our zone, because our struggle is to liberate the exploited workers, it is with pride that we see our hands calloused, and with joy that we sink our feet in the earth. The workers in our zone help us to develop a consciousness of our origins, help us to feel proud of our class; help us to liquidate the complexes that the colonialists and capitalists wish to impose on us.
We say therefore that in production we are increasing or reinforcing the conciousness of our origins, we are developing our class conciousness. We must say also that we are strengthening our unity.

When I, a Nyanja, am cultivating shoulder to shoulder, with an Ngoni, when I am sweating with him, drawing life out of the earth with him, I am learning with him, I appreciate his sweat, I feel united with him. When I, from the centre, discuss with a comrade from the north how to lay out a farm, how and what we will plant, and together we make plans, together we combat the difficulties, together we have the joy of gathering the crop growing by our common effort, I and this comrade love one another more.

When I, from the north, learn with a comrade from the South how to make a vegetable garden, to irrigate the plump red tomatoes, when I, from the centre learn with a comrade from the north how to grow manioc, which I have not come across before, I feel myself more united with these comrades.
I live, materially, the unity of our Fatherland, and the unity of our class of workers. Together with them I destroy tribal, religious and linguistic prejudices, all that is inessential and which divides us.
Like the plant that grows, from the sweat and intelligence which we mix with the soil, unity grows.

Constantly in Frelimo we talk of production. We give our army the task of fighting, of producing, and of mobilising the masses. To our youth we

give the task of learning,producing and fighting. Constantly in our discussions and in our writings we speak of the importance of producing, and we say that it is an important front in our struggle and a school for us.

We have seen that production satisfies the necessities of life and at the same time frees and unites us. But we have not yet seen that production is a school: that in production we learn. Perhaps some people are surprised that in our schools the pupils spend long hours doing productive work, and that our army also has this task. These people will perhaps say that it is absurd, that the pupils would spend this time better reading books and attending lessons, that the task of the army is to fight, not to produce. These people think in that way because that is what has been taught to them by the capitalists and the colonialists.

Since they do not produce but live from our production, because they think themselves wise, and say that we are brutish and ignorant, the capitalists and colonialists cannot recognise that one learns in producing, that production is one of the most important schools.
But we know that production is a school, that production, the revolution and the struggle are fundamental schools.
We say this because we are enlightened by the conciousness and the experience of our class.

Ideas do not fall from the sky like rain. Our knowledge and experience does not come in our dreams while we are sleeping. Without ever having been to school, our illiterate peasants know more about manioc, cotton, peanuts and many other things than the learned capitalist who has never held a hoe. Without knowing how to read, our mechanics have deeper knowledge of a car engine, of how to assemble it, how to repair it and how to make the missing parts, than the learned capitalist who has never soiled his hands with engine oil. We see our "ignorant" masons, our "brutish" carpenters and cabinet-makers, despised by the learned capitalists, making beautiful houses, and the most beauti-

ful furniture which the learned capitalist will appreciate greatly, but about the making of which he will know nothing.

This shows clearly that it is *IN PRODUCTION* that we learn. We do not learn everything all at once. A plate full of porridge is not swallowed in one go, but rather bit by bit.

What we learn, we do; when we do it, we see if it looks bad. Thus we learn from our mistakes and from out successes. The mistakes show us the deficiencies in our knowledge, the weak points which have to be eliminated. That is, it is in producing that we correct our mistakes. It is production which shows us whether this ground is in order to give us good tomatoes, would need more manure and what kind of manure, and that more water is needed there . It was in carrying out experiments which failed that our students learned to make soap, and it was in making soap that they improved the quality of the soap.

Where do we apply our ideas? How do we know if our ideas are right or wrong? It was not through reading in the sky or in books that our pupils learned their weak points in making soap. It was not by dreaming that in Tete they began to produce manioc; no angel descended from the sky to give us vegetable gardens in Cabo Delgado.
Production is a school, because from it comes our knowledge, and because it is in production that we learn to correct our errors. It is among the people, working with the people, that we learn, and teach the people.

If our army had not produced, how could we have gone and produced manioc in Tete, when the people did not know manioc? If we had been content to have study sessions about the cultivation of manioc, would the manioc have grown? How could we have reinforced our capacity to resist in Tete, against bombardments, against chemical weapons and against attacks by the enemy, without diversifying our production, without introducing new products resistant to the attacks of the enemy? How could the people correct their methods of production,

see where it was good and where it was bad, without producing?

We usually say that in war we learn war,that in Revolution we learn the best way to make the revolution; it is in struggling that we learn how to struggle better; it is in producing that we learn to produce better. We can study much, read much, but what will be the use of all this knowledge if we do not take it to the masses, if we do not produce? If someone keeps grain in a drawer, will he gather a crop?

If someone learns much and never comes to the masses, does not go towards practice, it will remain dead knowledge, an engraving. He might be able to recite by heart many pages from scientific works, many pages from revolutionary works, but his whole life will not create a single new page, a single new line.
His intelligence will remain sterile, like that seed shut up in a drawer.

We need to apply continually, we need to be plunged into the Revolution and into production in order to develop our knowledge, and in so doing we can carry forward the work of revolution and the work of production.

In the zone of the Portuguese colonialists there are more capitalist scientists and more technicians than there are in our zone. In the city of Mocambique alone there are more engineers, more doctors, more agronomists, and more teachers than in all the rest of Mocambique. But what use are they? We must ask, where are there more people who are vaccinated, in our zone or in the zone of enemy? It is clear that there are more in our zone, even though we have no doctors and hardly any medicine. Before, in Cabo Delgado, in Niassa, in Tete, the people did not know what medical treatment was, in spite of the fact that the enemy has doctors, medicine and a medical budget of thousands of contos. In spite of all his agronomists and economic plans, it was not the enemy who brought manioc to Tete or vegetable gardens

to Cabo Delgado; in spite of all his illustrious professors, it was not the enemy who created schools, and laboratories in primary schools, who began to alphabetize the adults, etc.

The science of capitalism and colonialism is sterile; it is like seed shut up in a drawer. It is sterile because it is separated from the masses, because it is based on the principle that the People are brutish, so that one cannot learn from the People; that since the People are brutish, it is not worth giving scientific knowledge to the people.

The seed of knowledge only grows when it is planted in the soil of production, of struggle. If we have been able to transform our country so greatly, if we have achieved such successes in production, in teaching, in health and in combat, it is because we have continually been with the masses; with them we have learnt, and to them we have transmitted what we have learnt. Continually, in production, in combat and in labour we have applied and enriched our knowledge.

But we must not be satisfied.
It is not enough to apply. It is also necessary to know, to study.

Intelligence without practice, without being combined with physical force, is sterile. Force without intelligence, without knowledge, remains blind, remains brutish. An elephant is stronger than a man, but because man is intelligent, he can,inspite of being the smaller,make a cart which can carry more than any elephant. A man does not have wings like a bird, but because he has intelligence he can make an aeroplane which flies higher, faster and further than any bird.

We in our work still have many deficiencies which we can and must correct. These deficiencies result from an inadequate application of intelligence in our work. All our deficiencies can be reduced to two: political deficiencies, and deficiencies in scientific knowledge.

There are many places where we could produce more and better with less energy and with greater security against the enemy. We do not do it because we do not adopt in its entirety our political line, because we carry strong in us the individualism and the corruption inherited from the old society.

One man and his family, however energetic they are, however hard working they are, cannot at one time cultivate many little plots; they cannot disperse the targets of the enemy and, in other words, protect production. This man and his family can not at the same time be cultivating different plots which will give different products and thus a richer diet. It is impossible for them to organise a system of vigilance and protection for all these plots and all their food stores, and of their house and village, against the incursions and pillaging of the enemy. This man can not be producing and be patrolling different places to watch out for the enemy and to prevent surprise attacks.

By this we mean to say that individualism, the spirit of private property, "I have my land and my cattle, you have your land and your cattle; I have my granary and my house, you have your granary and your house", leads us to disasters and to the loss of cattle, land, houses and granaries.

Individualism, the spirit of private property, is the spirit of capitalism; it divides us and weakens us: if I want to strike a blow with a single finger, I open my fist and my opponent laughs at me; if I bring all my fingers together, with the whole hand, I will knock my opponent over with my blow.

Another serious consequence of limitations in the collective spirit of our production, and of inadiquacies in our collective methods, is that these stop us from learning from one another benefiting from our mutual knowledge and experience. When we work collectively we can discuss collectively and together we can see

failures and successes, together we can ask about the causes of the successes and failures, together we can apply and correct what we have learnt. When we work together and learn together, we create progress, and practices which will enrich our ideas. When we work together there is progress and initiative.
In the past we did not progress because we did not discuss our knowledge and our experience. The knowledge and experience which we were given by the elders turned into a dogma which nobody discussed, and which remained sterile and without initiative.

When we do things we must discuss them in order to see what is good and what is bad; to keep the grain and throw away the chaff, to separate the rice from the stones. We must draw lessons from each success and from each failure, to enrich our knowledge, and, in consequences, to enrich our work. But when we act individually we are giving a blow with only one finger.

As responsible, fighting and militant cadres, we must work energetically to get the masses to adopt and to live the collective spirit, and to use collective methods of production, which will enable them to raise the spirit of unity, of class consciousness, of discipline and of organisation.

To adopt a collective work consciousness means to abandon individualism and to consider that all the plots of land are ours, are the peoples; to consider that all the granaries and houses are ours, the peoples. That is to say, it is to unite with others in a collective, in a production brigade. Together we cultivate and harvest, together we organise vigilance, together we protect what belongs, not to you or I, but to us. This field is neither mine nor yours; it is ours.

The pupil in the school, the soldier in the camp, the patient or the nurse in the hospital, have a collective consciousness. None of them think that that school, that camp or that hospital is his private property, and it is for that reason that each is enthusiastically interested in helping the work of that school, that camp and that hospital

to progress. The result is that there is progress, work goes ahead, the enemy cannot attack with such ease.

Because in this school, this camp, this hospital we abondon the spirit of individualism, the spirit of private property, because we adopt a collective consciousness, we are really able to be with the people, to develop the struggle and to improve our conditions of working and living, we are able to unify ourselves more, we are thereby better able to develop our class consciousness.

It is definitely for this reason, that we obtain superior results: where there exists a collective spirit we are better organised, there is more discipline, a correct division of labour, more initiative and more spirit of sacrifice, and we learn more, produce more, struggle better and with greater determination.

Our leadership at the level of the Central Committee should, after thorough discussion with the masses and the cadres, draw up statutes for co-operatives, both in artisanal and agricultural production and in commerce.

At the same time, and in collaboration with the Departmental and Provincial organisations of Production and Commerce, the Political Commissariat should exert itself to introduce methods of planning and orientation of production and commerce, rationalising labour in order to make it more efficient.

Other insufficiencies are the result of superficial or even incorrect knowledge of the laws of natural phenomena. Our scientific knowledge is insufficient.

Often we live near water sources - rivers or springs - waiting for the rain to bring water to our land, when we have the water that would solve our problems right there. At other times we go lamenting that our land is poor, while we are squandering natural fertilizers, the manure of

animals and people, which enriches the land. We have the raw materials for making soap, but we continue without soap ; we could produce, spin and weave cotton, and we continue without cloth. Many examples could be given, but they all show that the lack of scientific knowledge makes us blind. The solutions to the problems which we face are in our reach, but we do not see them, we do not have the courage to initiate. We must combat our inadequate knowledge by studying, learning, discussing and applying.

There are comrades who despise studying and who are ignorant of its value. Study is like a lantern at night, showing us the way. To work without studying is to go in the dark; we can advance, certainly, but there is a great risk that we will lose our way.
In some camps, among certain groups of comrades, the good habit has grown up of regularly giving some time to study. This is good, but it is not enough.

We wish to propose to all comrades, to all leaders and cadres, that they organise constant and regular study programmes amongst themselves with the units. That they give, depending on the situation, at least an hour a day to study activities. Study must be organised in the spirit of collective work, and collective consciousness, in small groups in which people learn from one another and all together struggle against ignorance.

In this first phase, because we are starting from a very weak position, we advise above all that effort should be given to raising the basic level of knowledge, in particular, to the task of liquidating illiteracy among the units and the cadres.

The Political Commissariat, together with Department of Education and Culture, working in close collaboration with the Provincial structures, must organise the programme of struggle against illiteracy and ignorance, in such a way that each Frelimo base becomes also a base in the struggle against obscurantism.

Entirely connected with this programme there should be introduced another programme, of Seminars to provide our comrades with more advanced scientific knowledge - agronomic, engineering, mechanical, sociological, medical etc. - which will raise the general level of knowledge of provincial and district cadres and leaders. These seminars must be specialised seminars with precise themes, such as irrigation, hygiene, the building of mills, the introduction of new plants and the introduction of new methods of production.

In this way our comrades can link their scientific studies with their practice, and can raise the level of their work and the level of the masses.

Earth without manure gives weak plants, but manure without earth burns the seed and nothing grows at all. Our intelligence and our knowledge are like manure; it is necessary to mix manure with earth, and it is necessary to mix intelligence with practice.
Capitalism and colonialism, because they need to exploit us in order to survive, must keep us ignorant and must keep knowledge separate from the masses and create a cultural elite which does not work and only serves to exploit the masses who are kept in ignorance.
We say that it is the workers who should know, who should govern, and who should benefit from their work. We say and practice this. It is for this reason that our armed struggle is transformed into a revolution, and it is for this reason that everything is in constant transformation, and it is for this reason that we are liberating the creative energy of the masses. It is for this reason, finally, that the enemy hates us.

Nothing exists without production, nothing exists without the workers. The aeroplanes and bombardments, the crimes of the colonialists, have the aim of keeping the workers producing for the capitalists, of keeping them exploited. The target of our arms, the objects of our struggle, definitely, is to destroy the exploitation of man by man, of which colonialism is today the principal

form in our Fatherland. Our aim is to devote the creative capacities of the masses to production.

We are about to enter our eighth year of war. In the next year we are going to celebrate the Tenth Anniversary of the foundation of our Front. We have grown much, but in order to grow more, in order to respond to the growing needs of the war and of the People, it is fundamentally important that our production be increased in quantity and in quality, and that more products be created in our country.

The revolution frees man and his intelligence, and frees his work. This liberation shows itself by the development of our knowledge, and by the development of our production; development which serves the people and which serves the struggle.

For this reason, at this moment at which our agriculture is preparing to begin another cycle of production, we say to all our comrades:

TO PRODUCE IS TO LEARN. TO LEARN THROUGH PRODUCING IS TO STRUGGLE BETTER.

THE LABOUR SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

by Foszia Fisher and Harold Nxasana

Most black South Africans are workers. We believe, therefore, that to understand the problems facing black South Africans we must begin with the labour situation. It is the situation in which there is the greatest potential for forging new organisations through which blacks can reclaim their human dignity.

In this paper we shall begin by showing how conquest was institutionalised in a system of exploitation of cheap labour. The black workers and the other black classes play different parts in this system, and we have to understand these differences if we are going to work out a programme for a renaissance which will satisfy the needs of all.

Having discussed these differences, we shall go on to show why trade unions are at present the best organisations through which black workers can assert their human dignity.

The present situation was created by conquest. The conquest divided South Africans into two species: the conquerors, who controlled the country and have full social and political rights; and the colonised, who lost control over their country through the conquest and so are in practically every way second class citizens. Seen in this way, all black South Africans are similarly deprived, and have one common aim: to be restored to full citizenship in their own country.

But it is not as simple as that. The conquest was used to impose a particular kind of social system on South Africa. The blacks were deprived of most of their land. This means that they had to go out to work for those who now had their land. By keeping up a continuous pressure on the land, by taxation, and by measures which made it difficult for black farmers to compete with the subsidised white farmers, the state was able to make sure that there would always be more workers than there were jobs. So wages were low and remained low.

The conquest was used to impose a system of econom-

ic exploitation through which the blacks were forced to work and to create wealth which enriched the whites. This economic system produced, and continues to produce, more white wealth and more black poverty. The reserves get poorer, the cities get richer.

The original conquest was carried out by soldiers. But to impose an economic system and to make sure that it continues to reproduce itself, more is needed than just soldiers. The new system needed chiefs who could be used to keep the peace in the rural areas. It needed a religion that would teach the people the virtues of obedience and poverty and it needed priests to teach that religion. It needed schools that would teach people what they needed to know in order to obey orders and to do their work, and it needed teachers who would teach them these things. It needed a new legal system which would ensure the dominance of the new order, and to make this system work it needed clerks, interpreters and lawyers. It needed minimum health care to make sure that the workers reached their jobs and stayed alive, and it needed doctors and nurses to provide this care. In the factories it needed clerks, and now it needs personnel managers to help in operating the system.

So to operate the new economic system of exploitation of cheap labour, it was necessary for the colonists to train some of the colonised to do all these jobs. These people, quite unconsciously, then became important cogs in the machinery of exploitation. As such, they also received greater rewards. They earned higher wages than black workers, and they also had a bit more prestige.

In this way the colonised were divided into two groups: the workers (and their families in the reserves) who were the source of the country's wealth, and the others, the functionaries, who played some part, however small and however unintentional, in making the system operate smoothly. Both groups, the black workers and the black functionaries, are oppressed: they are second class

citizens. Both groups are discriminated against because of their colour, the symbol of their sub-human conquered status. But each group experiences oppression and discrimination in a special way. The groups have some interests in common, but they also have conflicting interests. To understand how they can work together, we must understand both the similarities and the differences of interest.

In order to play their part in keeping the system of exploitation going, the functionaries had to be trained in the rules of the system. That is, they had to learn many of the same things as the colonists themselves learned: they had to be "educated". Because they were educated in the same way as the colonists. and came to share their culture, they experienced the situation of oppression essentially as *discrimination*. They were deprived of equal chances within the system because they were black. In Africa, many of the independence movements were started by, or most strongly supported by,black civil servants who found that they were confined to the bottom rungs of the civil service. Their struggle for independence was a struggle for the right to move to the top of the civil service. After independence they africanised the civil service, but the civil service continued to perform its function of ensuring that the system of exploitation functioned properly.

The workers on the other hand, experience their situation of oppression as one of *exploitation*. Discrimination exists but it is not the central issue. Whether the foreman or the personnel manager is black or white makes no difference to the essential situation of the workers when they have no power over what happens in the factory. This is what exploitation means. To be exploited means to have no control over how you work or over how the product of your labour is to be used. It means that your body can be used to produce wealth for other people.

An end to discrimination would not necessarily mean an end to exploitation. It would not change the

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fact that there are a small group of exploiters and a large group of exploited. It might only mean that there would be equal competition between black and white for positions among the exploiters.

The point that we want to make is that the functionaries have an interest in the abolition of discrimination while the workers have an interest in the abolition of exploitation. The functionaries want an end to discrimination in salaries; they want equal pay for equal work. The workers do not do "equal work", and would not be helped by such a principle. They want a change to the whole way in which wages are set. They want trade union rights which would enable them to use the power of their numbers to get a more equal division of wealth than they produce.

Now if the colonists in South Africa were clever, they would not do what has been done elsewhere in Africa. They would accept the functionaries as equals, and co-operate with them in a new way to keep the system of exploitation going. Some people want to do that here. This is what a lot of fuss about "petty apartheid" is about. The right to dine in 5 star hotels means nothing to the workers. However, it is likely that the colonists in South Africa are too blinded by their own propaganda to use this division of interest between black functionaries and the black workers in order to divide people successfully.

What this means is that the functionaries cannot hope to act independently to end discrimination. They can only hope to end it through a policy which will also end exploitation. Of course, the other alternative will be to accept discrimination as the price to be paid for the relative privilege of being a functionary, and many functionaries will doubtless choose this course. But many will not. We believe that the growth of "Black Consciousness" among the black middle classes indicates a growing awareness of the extent to which they have up till now been used as functionaries to keep the system running. They are beginning to realise that the "western culture" to which

they have been given access is nothing but a set of tools for domination. But "black consciousness" does not as yet seem to have got beyond a simple rejection. It does not seem to have made a clear analysis of the relation between conquest, discrimination and exploitation. This is why we welcome this opportunity to focus upon the problems of the workers. We believe that it is only by a careful consideration of the relation between the interests of the exploited workers and the interests of the discriminated against functionaries, that the nature of a black renaissance can emerge.

The main problem facing the workers, then, is the problem of exploitation. This exploitation is based on two principles:

1. The continued underdevelopment of the "reserves" (whether inside South Africa or outside), which ensures a continuous supply of workers to the industrial areas;
2. The fact that African workers do not have institutions through which they can combine and use the power of their numbers to negotiate for a fare share of the product.

This means that the workers have an interest in policies and stategies which:

1. Ensure rapid development of the rural areas throughout Southern Africa, with an increase in the employment capacity of the rural areas;
2. Help in the growth of worker organisations through which workers can begin to assert some control over their labour.

In this paper we shall deal only with this second aspect. The rapid development of South African economy brings about changes in the role of the African work force. African workers have always been predominant in the farming sector. But, for a number of different reasons, it is usually very difficult for farm workers to organise. African workers have always been predominant on the mines but, the compound system and the migrant labour system as practised on the mines make possible a very tight control over workers. It has been equally difficult for black mine workers to organise.

However, what is happening now is that the industrial sector of the economy is the fastest growing, and over the past 15 years African workers have also achieved predominance here. Firstly, the percentage of white workers in industry has continuously declined. Less than 25% are now white. Secondly, black workers are moving into semi-skilled operative jobs. In these jobs their skill is more important to production. The result is that they have more power. Employers can dismiss unskilled labourers and replace them without any loss of production. But it is not so easy to replace a workforce of experienced machine operatives.

The Durban strikes, and increasing worker militancy throughout South Africa, are made possible by this change. Unless there is a very serious recession in the rest of the world, the South African economy will continue to grow, and with it will grow the potential power of the black workers. But this power will remain a potential power unless it can find organisational form. This is where trade unions come in. Trade unions will not grow of their own accord. There are three main obstacles in the way of trade unions.

The first is the state. It is legal for African workers to form trade unions, but nevertheless the government does not like them. There is no legislation which protects workers' organisations adequately against employers. Most African trade unions suffer a lot from security branch harassment, and a number of trade unionists have been banned. However, the state is subject to a lot of external pressure to recognise, or at least not to ban African trade unions. Also, at least some people seem to be beginning to realise that trade unions must come.

The second obstacle is the employers. The employers have long benefitted from high profit rates and from total control over their black workers. Very few employers are willing to recognise unions unless they are forced to do so by the organised power of the workers. Meanwhile they use every trick they can. They victimise active workers,

even when such workers are on legally recognised works committees. They co-operate with the department of labour and with the police in trying to harass unionists. And they spread lies to the workers about trade unions.

The third obstacle is bad leadership and bad strategy. The most obvious danger here is corruption, and many unions in South Africa and elsewhere have suffered from corruption. But there are more insidious dangers. It is very easy for a trade unio to become a complaints office, to which workers come with individual complaints. Then the office solves these complaints for the workers. In this way the union becomes something separate from the workers themselves. Even if the workers pay subscriptions, they remain essentially unorganised. As such, they can never exercise any collective power.

A real trade union is something different. It must be based on the organisation of the workers within each factory. The workers, through their organisation, must be able to deal with most of their own problems. The union organisers should act only as expert advisors in very difficult situations.

The factory organisation is the most important unit of the trade union. It is only on the basis of a strong factory organisation that it is possible to build up a union which can negotiate for all workers in an industry.

The shop steward organisation within each factory has three functions:

1. to deal in concrete terms with the problems of that factory;
2. to keep the rank and file members in close contact with the union, to keep them informed, to collect subscriptions, and to mobilise them when necessary;
3. to act as a training centre and as a recruiting ground for potential union leadership. Through strong factory organisation the union can produce its own leaders, instead of being dependent on outsiders.

The main organisational principle is that the workers' organisation should be able to combine short term benefits with an awareness of long term goals. One of the difficulties with many organisations in South Africa is that they often talk about excellent long term goals like freedom and justice, but are not able to work out tactics which will help to solve people's immediate problems.

For the trade union, the long term goal is not just higher wages. In fact higher wages is always a secondary goal. The main goal is human dignity. We said earlier that exploitation is the situation in which the workers have no control over the way in which their own bodies are used. Exploitation is above all a denial of human dignity, a way of turning a person into a means to somebody else's satisfaction. The aim of trade unionism is to change the workers from being part of the machinery into being full participants in industry. The aim is to help the workers to participate in deciding how work should be done and to participate in deciding how the product should be distributed. Higher wages are merely a bye-product of human dignity.

The trade union is itself a beginning of the affirmation of human dignity. Through the trade union the workers can immediately begin to assert some control over their own lives. They can do this through their power within their own workers' organisation, and through the power which they can exert through the organisation within the factory. A democratic trade union organisation is in itself an assertion of human dignity, and a means to greater human dignity. And at the same time it can offer immediate short term benefits of a material kind.

It is for this reason that we believe that the development of trade union organisation is central to any "black renaissance" in South Africa. Most black South Africans are workers. They experience the problems of oppression most acutely at their work place, and it is there that they must begin to fight back. This means that the struggle of the workers

through their trade unions must be the pivot of any attempt to reassert the right of black people to full humanity.

Foszia Fisher,
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I.I.E.

BOOK REVIEWS

EDDIE ROUX:TIME LONGER THAN ROPE

by Luli Callinicos

There has been an increasing interest show in *Time Longer than Rope* in spite of its many drawbacks. For one thing, most of the book was written decades ago and is therefore partly outdated. Again, although it is sub-titled *A history of the Black man's struggle for freedom*, it is neither altogether a history nor was it written from a Black man's point of view. Rather, the book is *about* Black opposition, first, to the colonials' conquest and dispossession of the land and then to the supression of the emerging working class.

Nevertheless, the book makes interesting and informative reading, and in the absence of a Black history, particularly a labour history, this book is a substitute, however incomplete and partial. (Class and Colour in South Africa by H.J. and R.E. Simons is banned and the new Oxford History of South Africa does not deal with labour history). Besides, the core of the book which deals with the inter-war year, that era of the making of a white labour aristocracy and the suppression of the Black trade unions, is a period of Eddie Roux's active years in the Communist Party and has a vitality normally missing from history books. In spite of the strides made recently in our historiography, re-interpreting the old cclonial history, and in the case of the new Marxist school, going beyond the liberal interpretation, much remains neglected. *Time Longer than Rope* is still well worth reading.

The book falls roughly into three parts. It starts with a brief sketch of pre-colonial history, then moves into an interpretation of 19th century South Africa, largely in the liberal tradition of Macmillan and de Kiewiet. In this survey, an attempt is made to point out some Black heroes - it is interesting to note that this section, according to Roux's preface, started as a series of lessons for African workers in night schools during the 1930's. (Ironically, after 40 years, the need for a lucid workers' history still remains).

Roux relates the tragic tale of two heroes, Makana and Nonqause. Makana tried to fight the steady erosion rought on his society by the Christian missionaries by founding a counter-religion for the Xhosa people. Nonqause, the "Black Joan of Arc" was a visionary thrown up by the circumstances of her time - her message would not have been relevant otherwise. The disastrous cattle-killing of 1857, like other milenarian movements, was a last-ditch response of people trapped by the realities of the power structure. Both these folk heroes lived through a time of conquest and dispossession. They tried to play their part in blocking the drive towards the eventual creation of a landless proletariat.

The era of military resistance was almost over by the end of the 19th century. Industrialisation in South Africa had already begun. The discovery of the mines, the imposition of forced labour taxes and the South African version of migrant labour was steadily depriving the rural peasantry of an adequate means of subsistence from the land. The struggle was gradually being transferred from a conflict over the land to a struggle over wages.

The second section of Eddie Roux's history is semi-biographical and has "a personal and perhaps not altogether unprejudiced flavour". Roux's analysis of the Rise and fall of the Industrial and Commercial Union of the twenties for example, focuses a great deal on the personality of its founder and leader, Kadalie. He describes the "favourable circumstances" of poverty and discontent during the time of inflation after the war. The dock workers' strike in 1919 brought its first members. Strikes and the ICU spread, punctuated by periodic massacres of workers at open-air meetings. Thus, for example twenty one people were killed at a demonstration in Port Elizabeth in 1920, five killed and twenty four wounded at Bloemfontein in 1923. As the ICU gained ground, whites became alarmed and a sedition clause was inserted in the Native Administration Act. The systematic persecution of the ICU created an internal crisis. The militant strategists, who agitated for strikes,

pass-burning and tax boycotts clashed with the "hamba kahle" (go carefully) advocates. Roux describes how at this point "large numbers of private individuals witnessed with increasing nervousness this manifestation of the growing will to unity among the Bantu". He adds sarcastically, "It was amazing how, almost overnight, many Europeans, hitherto seemingly indifferent to the plight of the Africans, now emerged as philanthropists, became 'interested in the poor Natives' and wished to do something to help them ...They saw in the ICU a powerful influence for good, if only those extremists and communists who were leading the organisation astray could be eliminated".

He goes on to describe how the establishment attempted to diffuse the ICU by co-opting it into institutions where it could be controlled more easily. "The ICU... freed of its red incubus, could affiliate to the International Federation of Trade Unions". With the prospect of recognition and status, Kadalie initiated the move to expel the communists from the ICU.

This controversy was one which was to be repeated during the Pan Africanist breakaway from the ANC in the fifties and by subsequent Black movements in the sixties and seventies against multi-racial organisations. Like the Christian Church, one of the primary weaknesses of the Communist Party was that it had an imported ideology. And as the Soviet Union was its solitary reference, it had a differential and therefore an uncritical attitude towards the decision of the Comintern. Roux gives several examples of how the SACP suppressed its own creative response to local conditions, such as the squashing of the "League of African Rights" on receiving directives from "Moscow". The Communist Party therefore laid itself wide open to the charge that it was "white-dominated", although most of their members were Black.

The long-term result of the expulsion of the communists from the ICU, Roux maintains, was the removal of that vital ginger group which challenged the ICU, not only on policy issues but on ad-

ministration as well. "The radicals ceased not, in and out of season, to demand popular control of funds and stricter supervision of the finances".

In spite of the removal of the communists, persecution of the ICU continued. Its reformist friends failed to save it and over the next decade, through mismanagement and inefficiency, the movement fizzled out. Roux concludes: "The most tragic feature is that the opportunity (Kadalie) thus squandered was unique in the history of the Black man's struggle for freedom in this country. Black leaders are needed. Who can doubt that they will arise? But it may be that never more will it fall to the lot of any leader to enjoy a trust so absolute as was given to Kadalie. Remembering the ICU, the Africans are wary. No single mass movement of the Black workers in South Africa has ever even remotely approached the power that was in the ICU". In laying so much stress on individual factors in the decline of the ICU, however, Roux neglects to examine the structural constraints of South African society on the mobilisation of African workers during those relatively early years of industrialisation. The ICU was too weak to assert itself against the combined strength of White government and capital, plus the collaboration of the White workers, who seemed to lose no opportunity to scab against the Black workers.

After the debacle of backing the white workers, in the hope that the 1922 strike was a further step towards the solidarity of the working class, and particularly when it became quite clear that the new Nat-Labour Pact government was as reactionary as the Smuts government had been, more and more communists moved towards the idea that Blacks were "the real proletariat" of this country. The picture that emerges of the Communist Party from Roux's lively description of their activities is of a band of energetic and enthusiastic propagandists. In 1930 they managed to lead a huge, combined demonstration of Black and White unemployed, who attempted to enter the Carlton Hotel and the Rand Club shouting, "We want bread!" They started night schools and literacy classes, held weekly

demonstrations outside Black townships and in town squares, staged demonstrations which were regularly attacked by irate whites, plain clothes policemen and dogs, often ending in wholesale arrests, deportation and even death. Communists participated in the 1930 anti-pass campaign, put up candidates for elections amidst determined government persecution, changed their newspaper from the White-oriented *S.A. Worker* to *Umsebenzi*, fought campaigns against the Lodger's Tax (lodgers' permits), the pick-up-vans" and the Fascist Grey Shirt. These campaigns were not always initiated by communists, but wherever there was opposition, they were optimistically and dedicatedly there. In 1936 the non-European Railway and Harbour Workers' Union was formed and two years later other African trade unions were formed by communists.

In the process, government machinery became more efficient at containing their activities. Throughout the reading of the book, one is struck by a sense of *dèja vu*. The weapons used by the state to crush opposition before the Second World War were taken out, dusted and used again by the National Party to crush the African National movements in the fifties and sixties.

For instance, the Hostility Clause to the Native Amendment Act in 1927 "aimed ostensibly at agitators who sought to create feelings of hostility between black and white" was used mostly against the ICU communists. The Riotous Assemblies Act was amended in 1929 to give the Minister of Justice the power to banish those who, in his opinion, were responsible for causing "feelings of hostility" between the black and white races. The Natal Native Code was amended in 1932 to empower the Governor General (in practice the Minister of Native Affairs) to imprison without trial for three months any "Native considered dangerous to the public peace" and to re-arrest him at the end of every three months, if the Governor General deemed it fit.

The third part of the book deals with the era of mass movements, that period of resuscitation, of

passive resistance, boycotts, stay-at-homes. With the decline of the unions in the forties, especially after the miners' strike in 1946, and the alliance of South African Congress of Trade Unions to the ANC in the fifties, emphasis shifted to the workers as consumers and in their numerical power. But the basic themes remained: the chronic housing shortages, police persecution of pass-law offenders and farm convict labour, endorsements out of the urban areas, migratory labour, the reserves of labour held in the rural areas now called Bantustans - old wine in new bottles.

This section of the book was written at a time when Roux had withdrawn from effective politics but remained an interested observer. It is the period of the rise and the crushing of the African National movements, the Unity Movement, and their withdrawal underground. Again, in the absence of any other easily available book on this section of South African history, Eddie Roux's book has become a popular reference book.

These last few chapters were written years after the rest of the book and have a distinctly "liberal" flavour. Considerable emphasis is placed on apartheid, for example. It is seen to be the villain of history. "Faced with opposition within and without their borders, the Afrikaner nationalists now cultivate a back-to-the-wall or laager mentality, and they seek to involve the whole country in a campaign of defence against aggression from without". This interpretation ignores the English-Afrikaans collaboration in maintaining the unequal structure of South African society.

I have said that the book is liberal, rather than Marxist: at the time of first publication, Roux had for more than a decade dissociated himself from the Communist Party and was later to join the Liberal Party, although he had subsequently to resign as a "named" person. "If I were asked if I were still a communist and a Marxist I would say 'no'. Marx, I believe, has contributed largely to our understanding of society. Marxism goes wrong, I think, when it ceases to be an empirical study

and becomes a dogmatic creed...In South Africa the communists did pioneer work in organising the oppressed people at a time when members of the other creeds and parties were not interested, and history will remember them for this". Like many other sensitive and committed South Africans of the twenties and thirties, joining the Communist Party, for Eddie Roux, was probably a gut reaction to the racist exploitation of a crude colonial society. If there had been a Liberal Party at the time, many would have joined it instead.

Nevertheless, Roux's lack of a socialist perspective is surprising. There seems to be little evidence of the fifteen years of communist influence in his conceptualisation of history. The Marxist tools of analysis, such as the use of historical materialism or the examination of social and economic structures are missing from this (at times) almost episodic account. In so far as there *is* a theme, it is mostly confined to references to the development of the racist tradition of white colonials.

Clearly, it is necessary to go beyond racism. However, a man must be judged against his time. First published in 1948, this is a pioneering work, and what is remarkable is that we have progressed so little since Eddie Roux wrote this book.

Luli Callinicos.

THE DURBAN STRIKES 1973

(Institute For Industrial Education / Ravan Press 1974)

By Richard Hyman.

Most British observers recognised the strikes by African workers in Durban in early 1973 as events of major significance, even though their precise implications could scarcely be comprehended at the time. The immediate effect here was to focus attention on the intensity of the exploitation endured by Black workers, most of whom earned substantially below the government's own Poverty Datum Line. In consequence, the employment and wage policies of South African subsidiaries of British firms were subjected to sharp critical scrutiny, and it was revealed that the practices of many of the best known companies were bad even by South African standards. In the aftermath, the Trade Union Congress was shaken from its normally lethargic attitude to the South African question.

In two respects the Durban strikes were clearly unique. The first was the capacity of over 30 000 non-unionised Black workers to sustain militant action over a relatively protracted period, displaying a high degree of solidarity and self-restraint, and ultimately winning significant improvements in wages. The second was the passive stance adopted by the government and its agencies of repression, which in the past have consistently intervened brutally in order to smash acts of revolt by Africans. This non-interventionist role may be seen as one of the first notable instances of the Vorster government's endeavours to cultivate an image of "racism with a human face", in an attempt to remedy its increasingly desperate international isolation. The Bantu Labour Relations Regulation Act, following swiftly after the strikes and offering a minimal legal basis for work stoppages by Africans, was another sign of this partial and often contradictory process of "liberalisation".

What explains the extent, cohesion and effectiveness of the strike movement itself? This excellent

study by the Institute for Industrial Education provides a convincing answer. The book falls into four parts. In the first, a fairly straight forward account of the strikes is compiled, largely from press reports; particular attention is given to the disputes in textile factories, especially those of the Frame Group. Typically the stoppages seem to have followed spontaneous mass meetings at the workplace; wage demands were not normally specified at the outset, but once formulated these involved ambitious increases. Serious bargaining did not occur, for no worker representatives were prepared to come forward and risk victimisation; works committees were ineffectual; while the textile union (the only one to operate in any of the undertakings affected) was weak and discredited. Commonly the employers offered increases of up to R2 a week which, though usually rejected initially at mass meetings, were normally accepted when it was clear that no further improvements were forthcoming.

The book's second part provides a survey of the attitudes of different groups to the strikes. The authors freely admit the methodological limitations of their findings, but these are illuminating nonetheless. The exceedingly low wages of African workers are clearly demonstrated: over three quarters of respondents earned less than the R18 poverty line. Their replies show that the stoppages were a spontaneous response to economic grievances which employers proved unwilling to remedy. The strikers felt that their action had achieved concrete results, but that far more remained to be achieved; most were prepared to strike again. The survey shows that a high proportion of Indian workers were also very low paid. About half of those who joined the strike did so out of solidarity with the Africans, or because they themselves stood to gain; there is little support for the widespread assumption that most Indian strikers acted only out of fear of intimidation by Africans. It is interesting that the large majority of Indians were willing that their trade unions should be able to admit Africans.

The English-language press at the time gave extensive coverage to the disputes, publicised

the strikers' wage grievances, and expressed qualified support for their action. These attitudes were endorsed in the survey of Whites. Moreover, a majority believed that Africans should be permitted to form trade unions. On most questions, the attitudes of English and Afrikaners did not diverge substantially. Not surprisingly, the employers who were questioned were far less sympathetic. Though all appear to have conceded wage increases, the majority thought that these were unjustified; they tended to blame the strikes on "agitators", and only a small proportion favoured unions for Africans.

In their third part the authors seek to explain why the strikes occured. Wages in Durban were not exceptionally low by South African standards, even taking account of local living costs. Nor was the make-up of the labour force exceptional. Explanations in terms of "agitators" and "intimidators" cannot be taken seriously: it is scarcely credible that one of the world's most effective police states could have failed to detect some clandestine organisation masterminding the stoppages. At the same time, the Black workers' spontaneous militancy almost certainly developed on the basis of informal networks of social communication, and may have been partly stimulated by such external agencies as the press and Black consciousness movements. The authors conclude that a cumulation of objective circumstances and material grievances, none of which would alone have been decisive, sufficed to cause the explosion of militancy.

The final section of the book discusses the broader social, political and economic implications of the conflict. Public debate immediately after the strikes tended to focus on the causes of the wage gap between Black and White workers, and on the possibility of African trade unions. The authors show how superficial was most public comment, as Whites sought to come to terms with the new phenomenon of Black aspirations and self-confidence which would not simply be suppressed (particularly given the desire for international goodwill) yet threatened the traditional basis of White supremacy.

These issues are analysed in their broader context - a prerequisite of any serious understanding. Low wages for Blacks were the historical foundation of rapid capital accumulation in South Africa, and were derived in turn from the forcible dispossession of Africans from their traditional territories. Blacks were turned into propertyless wage-labourers by White violence: this brute fact underpins the current reality of the South African labour market. Employment relationships based on crude exploitation served White interests effectively enough for roughly a century; but important contradictions have now emerged. For with economic and technological development, the Black labour force - like the working class in every industrialised economy - becomes more qualified, less easily replaceable by the employer, possessed of strategic bargaining power. For such an economy to operate smoothly, workers must accept the legitimacy of their situation; if they feel themselves forcibly oppressed, the consequences will inevitably be disruptive.

The Durban strikes were the first serious intimations of the impact of just such disruptive contradictions. In most developed nations, conflict of this kind is moderated by the normative and social integration of the working class, on the basis of political and trade union rights. But while Black South Africans are excluded from such rights, the crisis of legitimacy can only escalate; further explosive outbreaks will inevitably succeed those of 1973.

This study compares most favourably with other recent accounts on individual strikes and strike movements. The description of the particular set of disputes links effectively with the book's general theoretical framework. While the authors admit candidly the limitations of their evidence, their explanation of the Durban strikes has the ring of plausibility. Given the development of a measure of strategic power in the context of deeply experienced grievances, a combination of relatively minor incidents or conditions can easily spark off a major conflict. When this occurs, the precise

mechanisms through which the pressures erupt into strike action can rarely be documented precisely. In this respect, what happened in Durban mirrors many other stoppages which have been analysed sociologically.

For the British reader, the book suggests fascinating parallels with the movement of "new" or "general" unionism around the turn of the present century. Labourers in docks and road transport, municipal services, and a range of factory industries, long considered beyond the pale of effective collective organisation and action, became involved in a series of dramatic and spontaneous disputes. The strike wave won important improvements in wages and conditions, provided an impetus towards stable trade unionism, and - perhaps most important of all - gave the submerged strata an ineradicable sense of their own collective strength. Such consciousness was later to survive the most adverse conditions. For this reason, the prediction that the Durban strikes will herald increasing Black self-assertiveness is wholly reasonable. By the same token, it is impossible for any student of the history of labour in industrial nations to dispute the authors' argument that only through legal and recognised African trade unionism can the militancy unleashed in 1973 conveivably be contained.

Even this may well be insufficient. Where class antagonism is overlaid by racial oppression, the institutionalisation of conflict through trade unionism alone may prove impossible. This at least is suggested by the recent experience of Black workers in Britain and of Southern European migrants in such countries as France and Germany. It is hard to believe that the "liberalisation" of labour relations which the authors advocate will suffice to curb the antagonisms rooted in South Africa's elaborately institutionalised racism. It is hard also to believe that such liberalisation is in any case seriously in prospect. The preface to this study notes that three members of the research team cannot be associated with the publication because of banning orders. This matter-of-fact announcement is humbling to those of us who

publish and research under comparatively unrestrictive conditions. It also suggests that the struggle of Black South Africans for trade union rights which are taken for granted in most industrialised societies, like the struggle for social and political liberties, is likely to face bitter and even violent resistance from those whose material interests are most directly challenged.

Richard Hyman,
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ERRATA - "DURBAN STRIKES 1973"

Textile Workers' Industrial Union (S.A.)
209 Malta House,
Malta Road,
Salt River, Cape.

27th June, 1975.

The Institute of Industria Education,
4 Central Court,
125 Gale Street,
D U R B A N.
4001.

Dear Sirs,

By a unanimous decision of my National Executive Committee at its meeting held in Johannesburg on the 20th June, 1975, it was decided that your attention be drawn to a serious error appearing on page 28 (paragraph 3) of your publication "The Durban Strikes 1973". My Executive requests that the paragraph referred to be deleted and that the following errata be published in your monthly Bulletin as well as in all furture copies of this book which otherwise, is a very interesting one.

CORRECTION: "Following the breakdown in negotiations, both parties to the National Industrial Council agreed that the Minister be requested to appoint an Arbitrator to make an award on the subject matter under dispute. The dispute was referred to the Industrial Tribunal which commenced at Compensation House, Pretoria on the 21st June, 1972 where the chairman was Mr. F.T. Viljoen.
At the commencement of proceedings the Chairman announced that the parties to the dispute had no jurisdiction to discuss Annexure E (a previous arbitration award) which brought into being a differential wage based on sex in certain categories in the Textile Industry. Neither could the parties discuss the African workers. He also informed the trade union that in terms of the Industrial Conciliation Act fifteen

months' notice must be given to the Minister to have Annexure E removed from the Agreement.

In view of the advice given to us by various influential sources and also the remarks of the Chairman of the Tribunal, the trade union delegation very reluctantly concluded that in the interests of our workers it would be best to re-negotiate with the employers' association and not to proceed with the arbitration".

My National Executive Committee is disappointed and regrets that your Institute did not contact either the President of our Union - Mr. Warren - who is resident in Durban, or Mr. Daniels, General Secretary of the Union, both of whom attended the arbitration sittings in Pretoria.

Yours faithfully,

N. DANIELS
General Secretary.

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