Labour Bulletin

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The South African Labour Bulletin

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Editorial note

New Managing Editor

Karl von Holt will be taking up the position of Managing Editor of the South African Labour Bulletin as from the beginning of 1988.

Karl has had wide experience in the fields of worker education and writing. He taught for several years in the Adult Learning Project in Cape Town and co-ordinated writing workshops for Grassroots. In 1986 he took the honours degree in Industrial Sociology at the University of the Witwatersrand. He is at present employed by the Technical Advice Group.

The editors and staff of the South African Labour Bulletin extend a warm welcome to Karl.

National Union of Mineworkers strike

Readers will note that we have not published a piece on the NUM strike. We plan to publish an indepth analysis of the strike for the final edition of 1987.

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6. Participating in the writing of various organisational and research reports.
7. Participating in our research activities, and more particularly giving advice and information on an ad hoc basis to enquirers.

The position requires a graduate who is committed to the labour movement in general, and has well developed research and writing skills. Familiarity with a computer is essential, and some working knowledge of DBase and Lotus 123 would be advantageous. We offer a congenial working environment, a salary competitive with similar servicing groups and fringe benefits. Applications should be made in writing to LERC, P O Box 157, Johannesburg, 2000. Telephone 23-0437/23-2308.

Worker Ownership of Shares at Pick N Pay – Union Comment

The concept of employee share-ownership has entered the South African industrial relations arena and is now generating much interest in the business community. Pick N Pay's new employee share-ownership trust, in particular, is receiving considerable publicity. By all accounts in the media, Pick N Pay's new proposed scheme is being projected as a major advance for worker shopfloor welfare and a step towards the creation of a form of industrial democracy.

For the workers involved it is important to remove the tinsel and see what lies underneath.

Pick N Pay's present share-ownership scheme is based on two criteria - all members of management automatically receive shares and all employees who complete 10 years service also automatically receive shares. Presently 16% (2,793) of the 18,000 employees hold shares. There has been no union involvement or communication with the union regarding this scheme. Recently, amid much fanfare and publicity, Pick N Pay has taken a decision to change this scheme.

The price of shares will be reduced by splitting them four ways and the criteria for eligibility changed. Amount of service will be reduced to five years and employees holding certain positions just below management level will automatically qualify. The money is being lent in the form of a trust and a board of trustees has

been appointed. R25 to R30 million has been allocated to buy the shares. After five years service employees can take up an option of buying out shares directly from the trust. If they don't have the money to do this the shares will automatically become theirs after 10 years service through the repayment of dividends into the trust. The following are some comments and an analysis of this scheme.

- The trustees of the new fund have already been appointed. Workers have not been given the opportunity to elect, or play a role in electing, representatives to this board.
- It is unlikely that workers will be able to buy their allocated shares after five years of service. This means most, if not all workers, will only actually own their shares after the ten year period is completed.
- Workers will be represented by the trustees until they own their shares. Considering workers had no say in the appointment of trustees this raises the question of accountability of the trustees to the workers they will represent.
- Individual votes as shareholders will amount to a small percentage of the total vote. Managing Director, Hugh Herman, has stated that if the company succeeds in increasing the share ownership by staff members to 50%, this would only constitute a small percentage of the total issued share capital of the company.
- Workers automatically qualify to receive shares and there appears to be no consultation involved.
- At no stage have there been negotiations or consultations with CCAWUSA, the majority union in Pick N Pay, on this matter. This applies to the present scheme and the new scheme that Pick N Pay intends implementing. All decisions related to share-ownership have been made unilaterally with no communication with CCAWUSA.
- The Executive Chairman, Raymond Ackerman, in a television interview on 5 October 1987, was asked if the unions had been consulted. His answer was "Yes, we have discussed this with the unions, not this time, but previously". This is incorrect.
- In the same interview Ackerman stated that "Everybody loves the shares" and nobody has rejected offers of shares. Pick N Pay has not carried out the necessary process of consultation and negotiation to know what shopfloor opinion is. Workers have little idea of the nature of the share-ownership scheme and have been linked into the present scheme automatically.
- Ackerman has also stated that employees have indicated a strong

need to have a material stake in the company. Considering the lack of proper consultation the accurateness of this statement is questionable.

In assessing Pick N Pay's new share-ownership scheme it is important to draw a distinction between ownership and control. It is also important to determine the main incentives for Pick N Pay in wanting to introduce this scheme. Ackerman has stated that the new scheme was motivated by experience in America, the aftermath of the strike which hit the company last year, and the results of attitudinal research among employees.

It is clear that as individual shareholders, workers' participation in the decisions of the company is not extended in a meaningful way. As minority shareholders they can no more exert influence over the board of directors than as ordinary workers.

In the union's view this scheme is designed to inculcate a sense of loyalty to the company without acceding a stake into the company. In an attempt to avoid industrial action and to boost worker productivity in an ailing economy Pick N Pay hopes by giving workers shares in the company, it will make worker shareowners identify with and feel a sense of commitment to the company.

Due to the nature of the scheme, a strong impression is given that Pick N Pay wishes to buy the loyalty and commitment of workers without actually giving them anything meaningful. Workers' ability to participate in decision-making will not increase when they become shareholders. The right to manage the company does not change in any way and day-to-day running of the company continues as before.

Ackerman has stated he wishes to give more employees a stake in the company. The company's share-ownership scheme simply gives the impression of getting a stake in the company without this happening in reality. It is not clear to what extent workers would benfit in terms of hard cash. In the light of shares being reduced to one quarter of their present prices and the strong possibility that workers will only receive a small number of shares, it does not appear that there will be significant cash benefits for worker shareholders. Another factor to take into account is the complete lack of consultation with the union representing the majority of Pick N Pay workers. This situation has been further aggravated by Pick N Pay's statements to the media, some examples of which are

given above.

After the wage strike at Pick N Pay last year the union was questioned on its position with share-ownership. Emphasis was placed on present low wages and the urgent need to give this area priority. The union stated that it is essentially defending the living standards of workers, which are in crisis, and that workers want a bigger share of the total revenue of the company to go into wages. With the present minimum of R490 per month in Pick N Pay the question of a living wage tops the agenda for CCAWUSA members.

CCAWUSA will now be further discussing the meaning and implications of ownership schemes with its members at Pick N Pay.

J Daphne, CCAWUSA, 7 October 1987.

Dregs at the Bottom of the Sapekoe Cup

"I arrived at Sapekoe in 1985 and started working in the fields and then I changed to the factory. In the fields the tea was cutting my fingers and I couldn't reap the harvest. Then I went to the factory and I worked from six to six. But I couldn't see the money ... and when I asked for this money from the supervisor, he promised that I would be dismissed."

The 900 workers at *Sapekoe Tea Estate in Richmond, Natal, who joined the Food and Allied Workers Uunion's Farm Project in October last year, echoed this frustration when they demanded that Sapekoe recognise their shop stewards and listen to their grievances about poor wages and working conditions.

The average wage for men and women at Sapekoe is R55 per month. This meagre wage often supports whole families in the bantustans from where most workers are recruited.

Workers' attempts to meet with management was continuously frustrated and in July this year, erupted in one of the biggest strikes in recent farm labour history.

- Sapekoe workers' struggle -

"Hayi! I will simply say what makes me very unhappy at this company called Sapekoe, is that we were chased out like dogs. They did not chase us out like workers, although we worked hard there..."

The struggle of Sapekoe workers for union recognition and a living wage highlights the desperate position of farmworkers in general.

On these big tea farms there is field work and factory work. The work is hard. The pickers carry baskets weighing more than ten kilograms on their backs. They bend down and have to straigthen up again all day long. They walk long distances. They often work for more than ten continuous hours a day, six days a week.

Accidents happen easily in the steep fields with their uneven roads where workers are far away from immediate health care. Protection against dangerous agricultural chemicals is minimal and often impractical in the hot and humid conditions of the fields. Workers have to work in all weather and their clothes rot from the dew and moisture of the plantations.

Workers in the tea processing plant also work long hours in conditions which are very hot and dusty. Many workers suffer from heat exhaustion and find it difficult to breathe in the factory where "tea dust gets in your nose and mouth and then fills up your chest." The company nurse reports that many workers suffer from chest ailments.

"What makes me very unhappy, is that at Sapekoe, when you are sick, money is deducted from your wages. But you got sick while you were at work," a worker explains.

Also on the tea estate there is no overtime, "When I enquired, 'Why is it that we have to clock in our cards earlier than knock-off time?, I was given the answer that the extra hours were a present to the company." This worker maintains he was threatened with dismissal if he continued to ask questions or influence other workers.

The company maintains high levels of control over the workforce through a system of indunas with special privileges and work teams where the indunas are there to "walk on you" and the "the company's security always carry knobkieries to use against people."

In an attempt to pre-empt worker organisation the company introduced a system of semi-indabas or a liaison committee. "I've been an induna at this tea company and I have realised that the semi-indaba people are not allowed to take up the issue of money for the people. It was stated clearly to the semi-indaba, that they mustn't take up the money issue, except the issue of food, which is raw and other useless issues. Even on these useless issues, we don't get a reply from management."

The issue of food is one which angers many workers. They all tell the same story of inadequate and half-cooked meals. This is what one worker had to say about 'breakfast', "in the morning when you eat, when you are preparing to go to work, you just get a slice (a quarter) of bread and a spoon in your tea, meaning that this is just a little food to go to work with for the whole day. You don't get a break or lunch until in the afternoon..."

"One thing painful is that they were not given food if they didn't go to work. They were told, 'No work - no food'", explained the nurse who is a union member and works at the company clinic.

She continues, "The living conditions are not good at all, because people were overcrowded. There are beds which they sleep on. There are those things which they call mattresses. They are not mattresses really. I don't know what to call them. They sleep on those metals. They even come to me at the clinic and ask for some empty cardboard boxes. They tear them up and sleep on them."

The majority of workers leave their families behind when they come to work on the farm. They live in a compound in single sex hostels. As many as eight men sleep in a room and four women, often with their young children, share a room. Where there is a husband and wife who both work on the farm, they live in a room in the mens hostels. But, many couples are separated and men visit the womens hostels upon fear of dismissal.

The position of women workers, who it is estimated make up at least half of the work force, is complicated by the fact that many women have their young children with them. The company creche provides a minimal facility for child care. Food for children is a problem as the company provides one meal a day for children and they have to share their mothers rations. Poor facilities also complicate the womens job of child care. There is no hot water and the use of primus stoves are forbidden.

- Sapekoe workers' struggle -

"Pregnant women are evicted", said the nurse. "They were told to give birth at home.. Some women were taken back when their children are ten months old and can feed themselves. It used to be difficult for a pregnant woman to carry a basket ... Some women could hide pregnancy. But if it happened that she was giving birth and I was called in, they used to shout at me, telling me that I was incompetent in my duties."

Workers say that with the help of police, the company dismissed and evicted more than 1000 farmworkers at the time of their strike from their accommodation and the company premises. Workers were loaded onto trucks and left at Richmond station. Hundreds of workers, some with their young children, were left stranded; many had insufficient funds to get home and nowhere else to go.

"Even some of our clothes were left there. As it is we don't have blankets for sleeping. We also don't have clothes to change with us."

FAWU lawyers applied to the Supreme Court on behalf of two of the evicted strikers for an order challenging the evictions and requesting the restoration of their hostel accommodation as a test case on behalf of all the evicted workers.

As the strikers awaited the outcome of the court action on 2 September, a rural community neary Donnybrook, offered to accommodate stranded workers in a temporary tent settlement.

In a clear show of solidarity, a joint meeting of the community and the strikers was held, at which a spokesperson for the Ezitendeni community asked that the strikers be accommodated in the community.

He explained that as many of the residents of Ezitendeni were also employed at Sapekoe before the strike, and that their children were expecting to find employment there in future, the struggle of the present workers also was the community's struggle.

However within a few days, a visit by certain state officials followed. The accommodation of the strikers in the community became a controversial issue. FAWU was then forced to make arrangements for workers to return to their homes, or to be accommodated with others in the overcrowded Ndaleni.

- Sapekoe workers' struggle -

At present workers and the union are waiting for the judgement in their application before the Supreme Court. However, should the judge pronounce in favour of the workers, this does not mean that the workers would be re-employed. But, they may be in a stronger position to win their jobs back. For farmworkers the struggle has just begun.

*Sapekoe Tea Estate in Richmond is part of a large tea and coffee growing agro-industry, which employs more than 17 000 workers countrywide. As far as can be ascertained the group started in 1963 with help from the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) and the Decentralisation Board. Between 1963 and 1984, the Sapekoe group started eight tea estates in and around bantustan areas. The group has the potential to employ more than 70 000 people nationally. Today its shares are wholly owned by the IDC. This briefing is based on an interview with the workers at Sapekoe Tea Estate.

CWIU PRESS STATEMENT

At a National Congress on Saturday, 12 September 1987 the Chemical Workers Industrial Union finalised resolutions left over from the June Congress.

The political resolution confirms our fundamental principles; worker control, democracy and non-racialism. It calls for working class leadership of the struggle and mandates the union to take political action to protect and advance the interests of the members, whilst the union asserts its economic and political independence by resolving not to affiliate to any political organisation, it favours disciplined and principled alliances with other democratic organisations, and sets out guidelines for these alliances.

The resolution adopts the Freedom Charter as a set of basic demands for the removal of national oppression and economic exploitation, and believes that workers should give leadership to the implementation of its demands. The union will participate in drawing up programmes and in actions with other working class or-

ganisations which will advance the long term interests of the working class. Whilst there should be ongoing open debate and discussion on the political future and how we should get there the union is committed to a truly united, democratic, non-racial, just and socialist future as the only solution to South Africa's economic and political crises.

Women workers were given a high priority. As part of the union's campaign for equitable treatment of women, special positions for women's representatives have been created in the branch executive structures.

Education: The union should play the leading role in alliances with other working class organisations to fight for the dismantling of racial education and the opening of all places of learning.

A major issue at the Congress was housing with speaker after speaker demanding that the State initiate massive housing projects. In view of employer's complicity with the apartheid regime . The CWIU will demand that employers provide decent and adequate housing in a manner that does not increase their control over workers.

Resolutions on violence, health and safety, job security, tax and worker control were also adopted. The CWIU confirmed its affiliation to COSATU and the International Chemical and Energy Workers Federation (ICEF).

15 September, 1987.

Developments Since COSATU's Formation

1.1 **COSATU's formation**

On the 15th of July 1987 when the Second National Congress starts COSATU will have been in existence for nineteen and a half months. During these months South Africa has experienced its most serious political and economic crisis. The National Party regime has proven totally incapable of dismantling apartheid and rules by force.

The formation of a new trade union federation in these circumstances has not been an easy task. We have been confronted by a disastrous economic recession, the draconian powers of successive States of Emergency and a growing campaign of physical violence against COSATU leadership, membership and property. What is remarkable is that we have not only survived this but the membership of affiliates has actually grown.

COSATU's present paid-up membership makes it not only the largest federation in South Africa but a significant national centre in world terms. This growth is a tribute to the determination and militancy of South Africa's workers.

1.2 **COSATU structures**

Affiliates have extended membership to virtually every industrial and mining centre in South Africa and the public sector is being seriously addressed as well. Union organisation is now truly national. Structures have developed rapidly and it is important to identify the basis of this rapid growth.

There is no doubt that the foundation for this expansion is the form of unionism developed by affiliates. It is a unionism that is based on shopfloor organisation and the development of shop or shaft steward structures. Our unions directly and effectively deal with the problems that workers face. The strength of organisation has led to real and significant improvements in working conditions. To join a COSATU union and be active still requires a strong commitment, but unorganised workers can be sure that there are real and concrete gains in store. Our unions are a source of pride, achievement and hope to workers. This is why they continue

to expand in the face of one of the most repressive regimes in the world.

1.3 COSATU's contribution to building democracy

Our grassroots organisation has made our unions militant. The union structures respond to and represent the views and aspirations of workers. Unionism is a day-to-day activity, and this is particularly true at shopfloor level. The result is that thousands of workers have developed the skills of leadership, representation and unionism. This is the basis of democracy in practice. These developments at grassroots which are spreading nationally are certainly COSATU's greatest achievement. There are problems, we have differences and all does not always run smoothly. But it would be a serious mistake not to recognise and build on this achievement.

The working class is developing a real base for the defence of its interests and in doing so it has built a bastion of democracy against repression.

1.4 COSATU and the community

COSATU has increasingly come to occupy a particular position within the present political environment. Its ability to survive and its visible presence in the form of its worker leadership, officials and offices have made it a focus of much activity. This activity has included the growing links between COSATU structures and community based organisations. Such links have been particularly strengthened by the existence of active Local Shop Steward Councils. There is growing pressure on COSATU to assist and provide support in a wide range of activities and campaigns. COSATU organisational base has provided an important support for wider political opposition. This has often placed a very heavy strain on newly established structures. Care needs to be exercised to avoid factionalism and the disappointment of excessive expectations in the process of building these links.

However, the effective consolidation of links between COSATU structures and community based structures is essential not only for support in major strikes and defending our organisation, but also to lay a basis for building real working class leadership in the mass democratic struggle. We see this as a legitimate extension of our trade union activity.

1.5 COSATU and the state

Taken together, these developments have thrust COSATU into occupying a very high political profile. This has attracted increased State attention. Even more unwelcome and dangerous has been the attention of shadowy vigilante groups.

There has been increased sophistication in the methods used by the State. The usual methods of detention, banning of meetings and police activity during the strikes have now been supplemented by an ochestrated media campaign. In particular the role of the SABC in 1987 during the SATS dispute was a new dimension of State repression in response to the effectiveness of our strategies and perspectives.

It is important to see that this constitutes an integrated attack. By using its battery of repressive legislation to criminalise our actions the State is able to make sweeping and false allegations about COSATU's goals and methods. This is joined to more specific allegations relating to worker action in conflict situations and fed into the media, in particular national television news. Allegations untested by the normal process of justice are then constructed into a sinister interpretation. This is carefully fitted into the SABC's endless propaganda campaign. No effort is made to carry COSATU's views or they are deliberately misrepresented.

The campaign then justifies further action against COSATU and vigilantes see this as giving them license to take their own action against us. This concerted propaganda does have an effect on ordinary people and the membership of fraternal organisations. As a result COSATU has had to devote considerable resources to fighting a propaganda war and correcting misinformation.

COSATU is a trade union federation. However, its links with the community, and the political expression of its members views, have made COSATU an effective national opposition to the policies of the ruling class. Central to these policies is the protection of group rights. Ruling class political parties and capital also favour the protection of such group rights. The Kwa Natal Indaba is the clearest example of this. COSATU has been opposed to this. In a society marked by massive wealth gaps, protection of group rights is effectively a protection of wealth and privilege. It is inevitable, therefore, that this serious clash between COSATU and the State will continue.

1.6 COSATU and capital

Affiliates are in growing conflict with employers as economic conditions deteriorate. COSATU has also become a major obstacle to the "reform" designs of capital that are essentially concerned with maintaining the status quo.

On the political front, capital has given very ineffectual opposition to the State's complete elimination of the rule of law. Spokespersons of capital have been timid and hesitant. Most of them have been silent after P W Botha's threats. As a result no possibilities of co-operation between capital and labour against State repression have existed. The bosses have consistently refused to take decisive action against the apartheid regime, arguing that they are lobbying behind the scenes.

The growth of COSATU and its affiliates has also raised fundamental questions about the effectiveness of capitalism in South Africa. The COSATU Living Wage campaign focussed attention on the very basic requirements of workers such as unemployment and housing.

The government reports about 1.5 million people unemployed and the Presidents Council estimates 3.5 million. Both figures are extremely high but the truth is that no-one knows what the unemployment level is because apartheid institutions make it impossible to measure this accurately. Independent researchers estimate unemployment to be in the region of 6 million.

The government admits to a housing shortage in urban areas of 800 000 units. However, since no-one knows what the urban population is this is probably a gross underestimate. State housing policy shows absolutely no sign of being able to deal with such a shortage.

Capital's claim that the dismantling of apartheid and the introduction of a system of free enterprise will remove these problems are not convincing when examined seriously. The essential elements of capital's reforms are privatisation and deregulation. The former will increase the power of monopolies creating few, if any, jobs. The latter offers low wage employment for limited numbers and does little to alleviate poverty.

COSATU as a representative of organised workers has been one of

the very few voices opposed to both privatisation and deregulation. The economic problems that workers live with are clearly structural problems and require a restructuring of the economy to solve them. Such views find little favour with capital and no doubt this clash of perceptions will continue.

1.7 **The road ahead**

COSATU has built organisation based on militant affiliates. This has given strength and resilience to survive nineteen very difficult months. Our survival, in the light of the vicious repression on all fronts against the democratic forces, has placed COSATU in a central political position.

The result has been that COSATU constitutes a major force in the opposition to apartheid. COSATU is also an obstacle to the protection of wealth and privilege. We stand for the economic, political and social liberation of the oppressed majority, COSATU cannot expect easier times ahead. Our priority has to be to strengthen and deepen both union and community organisation.

International Policy

2.1 **Present position**

COSATU has put forward its international non-aligned position very forcefully. This has had a major impact on traditional and established international trade union relations.

We have said before and will continue to say in the future that we believe that the most militant struggles fought by organised workers are those that are being fought in the developing world against the forces of imperialism, neo-colonialism and capitalist exploitation.

As contact and solidarity increases, we are deepening our commitment to strengthen ties with the militant anti-imperialist labour movement that is growing stronger each day, and which stretches from Brazil and Nicaragua in South and Central America, to the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and to the Far East countries such as the Phillipines and Fiji.

We also salute our allies in the developed countries who have always supported us materially and morally. Even when we have not

agreed on certain things they have respected our decisions. In this regard we wish to particularly thank the Swedish LO/TCO, the Norwegian LO, The Danish LO, the Finnish SAK and the Dutch FNV for their support. We look forward to strengthening our ties with you and our other democratic allies in the international labour movement.

Regions

COSATU Congress resolved to have ten regions. The CEC - guided by affiliates based in the Northern Cape Region - decided to combine part of the Northern Cape Region with the OFS Region, and to link Namaqualand to the Western Province Region. The decision to have nine regions was based on the assessment that the level of organisation among affiliates in the area was till too low. Regions which are fully launched and functioning complete with offices and full-time Regional Secretaries are Northern Transvaal, Witwatersrand, Highveld, Western Transvaal, Southern and Northern Natal and the Western Cape.

The Eastern Cape Region was only launched on 15 February 1987 after more than a year of delay. The problems centred on a dispute over the allocation of delegates. The COSATU Executive was eventually forced to intervene. Now that the Eastern Cape launch has taken place, the regional organisation of COSATU in this area has improved greatly.

The Wits region got off to a problematic start after a dispute over the Regional Secretary's election. The CEC urged fresh elections which were held at the end of November returning all members originally elected to the Executive. The Wits region is now fully operational and working to build COSATU in this key industrial centre.

Regions of COSATU have a crucial role to play in the co-ordination and planning of campaigns as well as intervention in problems arising in the regions. As such they need to be strengthened by the strong participation of every affiliate.

Unemployment

The army of unemployed in South Africa is increasing daily. Thousands of our members are joining the ranks of the unemployed every week as a result of the brutal rationalisation programmes of

capitalism and the disastrous economic and political policies of the apartheid regime.

We have also, in the recent times, witnessed well organised national attacks on COSATU and the democratic movement by vigilante and other anti-democratic forces. The elements used to wage these attacks are mainly drawn from the ranks of the unemployed. We have also seen that our major struggles have, on other occasions, been broken by employers recruiting scabs from the reserve army of unemployed. Therefore it is crucial for both our struggles on the factory floor and the broader struggle against oppression and exploitation to cement the unity in action between employed and unemployed workers.

The COSATU resolution inspired spontaneous organising by the unemployed themselves, many of the leading activists in this process being ex-members of our own affiliates. The presence in this Congress of observers from the National Unemployed Workers' Co-ordinating Committee (NUWCC) is a fitting tribute to the efforts of these comrades. However, we must also be forthright in acknowledging that the material assistance offered to these comrades is not sufficient to meet their projected needs.

The CEC has, in its meetings earlier this year, agreed on a programme of systematic assistance to support the NUWCC to achieve national organisation and build a co-operative movement that serves the interests of the working class. The resolution on unemployment that we will be debating in our Congress will go a long way to redressing the weaknesses in this respect.

Assessment

In our brief existence as COSATU we have strengthened many times over our position as the most important and most representative trade union voice in South Africa. Our membership has grown by well over fifty percent and, with the benefit of having consolidated our 33 affiliates into 12 bigger industrial unions/ sectors, it is set to grow even more rapidly.

The organisation and mobilisation by affiliates have seen us take big steps forward in the struggle for, amongst other things, a living wage, a 40 hour week, maternity rights for women workers, the right to strike, against retrenchments, etc. The concrete gains won through struggle from managements committed to putting

profits before workers needs, provides the working class with a formidable weapon in the fight against capitalist exploitation.

COSATU's clear principles and militant struggle has made a significant and historic contribution to moulding a clearer political direction - not only for the working class but for all the struggling masses of South Africa. COSATU is asserting the leading role of the working class in struggle; and through our working class discipline, unity and depth of commitment we have won the confidence of all democratic forces. We have also placed socialism even more firmly on the agenda, not just as an academic question, but as the living vision of millions of South Africans fighting to end the capitalist curse of starvation, hunger, degradation and suffering.

One of our shortcomings has been our weakness in consolidating our structures. The building of effective democratic structures is a painstaking process and must be stuck too at all costs. Over the last 19 months working class unity and discipline have triumphed over the division and attacks and we must now move forward again to build even stronger democratic organisation at local, regional and national levels of COSATU so worker unity and worker control can be strengthened.

The delays and weaknesses at these levels is one of the main reasons for our failure, in many cases, to mobilise strong solidarity and national united action (e.g. July 14/December 1, Crossroads, Impala Platinum, GM, Clover and Nels). But having said this, COSATU has still succeeded in mobilising a number of successful national worker actions (May Day, June 16th and May 5 & 6th) and national campaigns (release of detainees, hands off COSATU, living wage and health and safety before profits). In addition, struggles like OK, SATS and Kinross have been greatly strengthened through solidarity action co-ordinated by COSATU. In all these struggles, workers have again and again turned to the solidarity weapons already in the hands of workers - solidarity strikes, blacking action, factory occupations, consumer boycotts and mass pressure. Workers in struggle are showing the way forward for all COSATU workers.

It is possible that stronger regional organisation would have speeded up the organisation of the unorganised, and the growth and consolidation of weaker sectors, such as unemployed, farmworkers and the public sector. The more active and vigilant regions must

be commended for the role they have played in building and strengthening grassroot organisation of affiliates as well as COSATU co-ordination. It is now imperative that affiliates place the highest priority on converting the regions into dynamic structures that become the focus of COSATU activity and power.

Of course this will only happen if a solid organisational basis has been laid at a local level. The building and development of our local shopsteward councils in every area, every town, every small "dorpie" where at least two of our affiliates are organised must be our top priority. Properly constituted shopsteward locals, with mandated worker delegates from every organised workplace in the area or town, will become fortresses of worker unity and power. This will massively increase our ability to organise the unorganised and mobilise solidarity action. On this basis too we will be able to build organisations at a local level. Workers will be able to build their own leadership in the mass democratic struggle from a solid and democratic foundation.

The Launch Congress in December 1985 ended in euphoria and high expectations amongst workers. But the sceptics believed COSATU would be paralysed by differences and would struggle to emerge as a cohesive decisive force. However, they have been proved wrong. Working class unity has triumphed and many of the expectations have been met, although like any other organisation, there are still areas of real weakness. An ongoing democratic openess and honesty with regard to our failures will equip us better to address our problems and to march forward united to our total liberation.

[The above are extracts from the General Secretary's Address at the COSATU 2nd National Congress held at the University of the Witwatersrand, 14-18 July 1987.]

On the Role of Service Organisations – Some Ideas

In a recent edition of the South African Labour Bulletin, Vol.12 No 4, May/June 1987, Jay Naidoo, General Secretary of COSATU, raised a number of crucial issues regarding the practices and politics of service organisations.

This address to a health and safety education seminar was concerned primarily with the relationship of service organisations, generally staffed by committed intellectuals, to mass based democratic organisations in the national liberation movement.

In this paper we try to build upon some of the general comments raised in this address and outline some of the limits and possibilities of service organisations.

At the outset, it must be stated that we do not see the role of service organisations as crucial to the survival of mass organisations or that they have any more than a peripheral role to play. Nor is the question of their relationship to the national liberation movement a priority on the agenda of mass organisations. But there is no doubt that increasing concern has been and is being expressed about that role. It is in the light of this situation that this contribution to the debate is written.

There are four main issues which are addressed. First some of the limits to service organisations are spelt out. Second, a crucial area of the relationship between service and mass organisations is discussed. This is the question of who takes decisions and how are these decisions made? The final section of the paper attempts to look more positively at the issue of service organisations and makes some tentative suggestions as to the way forward.

The work of service organisations is not neutral, and is often overtly political. Generally they provide services, which in both capitalist and socialist societies have come to be carried out by the State. Legal, education, research, health and safety, town planning, technical advice and general development issues are some of the areas in which service organisations are active at present.

Generally however individuals within service organisations, and service organisations themselves, are not governed by the rela-

tions of control which exist within agencies of capital and the state. One of the reasons for this is quite simply the way in which funding is controlled by service organisations.

The lack of constraints and the relative "freedom" service organisations have acquired has allowed a number of these organisations to provide active support for the national liberation movement. Despite this fact however, funding constraints also provide real limits to the level to which they can effectively intergrate themselves into this struggle.

The limits to service organisations - funding

It is clear that critical to the survival and continuance of service organisations has been their access to funding and support. Without money there can be no service and no service organisations and this is the source of contradiction and difficulty. Over and above whether the sources of funding are acceptable to mass organisations there are other problems:

1. Service organisations rely on sources of funding not generated within their own organisational control.

2. The relationship between funders and the service organisation is a delicate one. Funding can be cut off at any time for a whole range of reasons and if this happens, then the services being provided to mass organisations will most probably cease.

3. Responsibility for fundraising, and how funds are used, is often placed in the hands of a few individuals.

4. The fact that individuals employed in service organisations are reliant on that organisation for their subsistence is a real limit to the level to which they, and the service organisations, can be accountable to the mass organisations being served.

5. In order to receive the necessary funding, service organisations are forced to provide budgetary motivations and plans. These plans have to be drawn up a number of months before the service is provided. Funders require that these plans be efficiently carried out. This makes it difficult for service organisations to respond to the day to day demands of mass organisations.

In short, funding is a real constraint on the ability of service

organisations to integrate themselves fully into the national liberation movement.

A second constraint relates to the question of political practice and the way in which knowledge and skills are transferred to mass organisations.

The limits to service organisations - bureaucracy and dependency

In practical and day to day affairs mass organisations simply do not have the skills or the personnel and material resources which service organisations have. Under present day South African conditions, mass organisations are involved in a struggle for survival forcing most of their resources into the practical needs of day to day organisation.

On the other hand service organisations have a number of advantages, namely that their work is funded on a full-time basis, those employed in the organisation work on a full-time basis in providing the service in question and are seen as "professionals", the service organisation has the actual material resources, space, equipment, administrative back-up, to continue to pursue work on a continuing basis, and finally service organisations tend to attract personnel with a high level of commitment, skills and interest in their work - whatever their other limitations.

Yet trade unions, for example, are forced to effectively negotiate with the well-oiled machine of capital and the State. Basic economic and political facts about a particular company can prove crucial at any stage in an industrial dispute. The need for research (factory, economic, political and such like) is perhaps the best example of this but doubtless the difficulty would apply to other areas of need.

In all these areas, the distinction between expert/non-expert is perpetuated because of the way in which knowledge is generated and used. If this division is reinforced, it forces mass organisations back into a terrain of activity in which they are weakest. For example, where mass organisations are forced to rely on "legal experts" as opposed to relying on their own organisational strength. Or if education curricula and the content of education material is left to "experts" to formulate and design.

If allowed to persist, this relationship of expert/non-expert can only reinforce the levels of dependency of mass organisations on service organisations. The nature of this relationship has political and organisational implications for mass and service organisations because of the potential which exists to undermine (even if quite unwittingly) the democratic processes of the trade unions and other mass organisations.

Service organisations begin seeing their role as that of "expert". This fact means that mass organisations will tend not to generate this service through its own organisational structure.

In the extreme, the nature of the services provided, their content and form, politics and practice become shaped more out of the relationship of dependency and pragmatism than of any rigorous evaluative structures.

As the limits and nature of the services provided become increasingly defined by the service organisation, the service organisation itself becomes the axis around which the mass organisations rotate for a particular service.

This relation is often widened by the development of ready-made "packages" of materials or courses to be fed into mass organisations. Certain fundamental principles (such as worker control and accountability) are inevitably subverted and has the potential to create a skilled and bureaucratic elite, which far from building the ability of mass organisations to take charge of certain fundamental political processes, actually retards this development.

In a sense, the starting point of the relationship of dependency we have referred to is to be found in the way in which the constituency of service organisations is organised to receive the services provided.

Approaches to decision making - building committees

There is no doubt that in many cases service organisations are sensitive to the internal democratic procedures of mass organisations. But it is equally true that many service organisations are oblivious of this need.

Some service organisations may at best be tolerant of the structures of mass organisations which they often regard as a hindrance

to the achievement of their service role. But generally they are intolerant of the slowness of the procedures which accompany the acceptance of the work of service organisations.

Unfortunately, this intolerance is at the same time, an intolerance with the speed at which democratic processes are able to develop in South Africa. While it is true that under certain conditions there are massive qualitative leaps in the process of constructing democracy, generally this takes a long time to organise, mobilise and develop. This is especially so against the background of resistance to the development of such forms of democracy in our country.

Such intolerance to the levels of development of democracy within mass organisations forces service organisations to act in a way which stands in opposition to the collective decision making power of mass organisations.

Rather than receiving mandates from the democratically elected committees of mass organisations it is at times seen as being perfectly justifiable to obtain mandates from committees created by the "rank and file" outside the decison making structures of mass organisations. In fact obtaining mandates from the so-called rank and file is seen as being more democratic than "working with officials at the top".

Often this becomes a way of avoiding, for whatever reason, the actual structures of mandates and accountability democratically elected by the organisation as a whole. Inevitably this creates an alternate basis of power to protect individuals within a service organisation or the service organisation itself.

The result of this is that the only control exerted over the service organisation is that by an unelected section of the membership of the mass organsation. Even where a group of workers (who are unionised) attempt to exercise some control over a particular service offered, they would be acting as individuals independent of the structures of their organisation.

As a result service organisations begin creating a "democratic" structure around themselves. This is in fact the antithesis of assisting the process of building genuine and deeply democratic structures in the hands of the oppressed and exploited. A distinction emerges which is barely recognisable because it hides the

real difference between accountability and a shadowy form of control base on the needs of the service organisation itself. The real basis of accountability is cynically turned into its opposite - manipulation.

The way forward - genuine accountability and unity

Service organisations are transitory organisations in the processes of social transformation. Given their limited resources they are forced to be selective about the work done. This is necessarily a slow process and one which is not attractive to those interested only in "active political intervention". But the process of selection is not a random process. It has to be constructed in a principled and disciplined way. The criterion for this is accountability. Accountability is, of course, itself a process. It is a struggle in which service organisations intergrate the services they provide with the needs of mass organisations in a structured way.

Several important issues immediately arise from the practice of accountability:

1. The work of the service organisations should be based on a clear mandate which comes from a definite source of authority in the mass organisation.

2. The service to be provided must be clearly outlined in advance (preferably in writing) so that the mass organisation in question has a clear enough idea of what the process of its delivery would entail.

3. A written report after the service is provided is desirable for evaluative and report making purposes. The nature and extent of the report could differ in each case.

4. The importance of ensuring that the internally coherent structures of decision making in the constituency organisation are not subverted. This can easily occur where the procedure of accounting is selective and inconsistent.

5. Perhaps the most important criterion of accountability is to ensure that the service organisation does not take over the functions of the mass organisation itself. For instance it would be important to ensure that in general shop steward training as a

whole remains firmly in the grip of the trade unions themselves because of the need to ensure controls over the content of that training. Furthermore this is necessary if a dynamic and regenerative form of training is to take root in the mass organisation itself. In a sense this difficulty becomes greatest when the service organisation takes on the job of organiser and facilitator of prepackaged courses.

6. Of course all these conditions presuppose what is obvious, which is that the service organisation must itself be organised in a way as to ensure the internal accountability of its working members. But even the most democratically organised service organisation is not in itself a guarantee against subversions of accountability in relation to mass organisations. That accountability has to be consciously struggled for and with discipline in relation to the constituency being served. Otherwise it could lead to its opposite, the formation of tightly knit and conspirational cabals.

Another difficulty for service organisations and the individuals within them is that they cannot hope to be structurally accountable to many organisations at the same time - especially if these mass organisations are organised differently and have different aims and objectives.

It would be very difficult to be genuinely accountable in any structured sense both to factory based and area based organisation simultaneously unless these are themselves organised to act together. In addition such links must themselves be generated by mass organisations and cannot be effectively facilitated through a service organisation.

Now this does not mean that service organisations cannot work with a whole range of mass organisations. But it does mean that this process has to be painstakingly and carefully structured.

Similarly service organisations are often affected by the differences which exist in the constituency itself - and the political currents within it. Service organisations are often forced to make political choices in the constituencies they service, but they must do so openly. This does not necessarily imply that they need service only one organisation or tendency. What it does mean is that service organisations must openly state the basis of their work and their lines of accountability. Most importantly, they must adopt consistent practices in regard to these.

These difficulties are often compounded by the way in which individuals within service organisations perceive their roles. One of the recurring complaints is that they have a very limited and limiting role to play. There is the feeling of being "used". While they work tirelessly in the interest of organisations they are guaranteed nothing in return - especially not a permanent relation with that mass organisation, and even less a say in the decisions of that organisation.

The challenge of service organisations forming one national and coherent body may go some way to overcoming some of the difficulties raised. At least there will be some common cause about the issues raised.

But there are many difficulties to be overcome since service organisations are involved in a wide range of activities, have constructed differing systems of accountability and represent an array of political and organisational perceptions.
In addition service organisations have their own internal structures of decision making and account, and have a wide array of resources which need to be rationalised, and have to come to terms with their funding constraints.

Any attempts at building one service organisation would have to ensure that this is being done to enhance the control of mass organisations over service organisations and not to bolster the power of a number of disparate service organisations.

Despite the building of this unity, we have attempted to show that service organisations are structurally unable to transcend some fundamental limits which arise from their existence.

Their funding, internal decision-making and organisational structures place severe limitations on their role. And yet, at the same time, they have the potential to play some role in engendering and strengthening the democratic processes in motion within the movement for national liberation.

But in our view this can only be constructed by more than an act of will... In other words, mass organisations bear the responsibility for developing the structures necessary to control service organisations and their work so that they can use service organisation in the way that seem most effective.

- service organisations -

Unless mass organisations engage service organisations in a way as to actively control the decisions they make, and to bring these to account, mass organisations are constantly in danger of being a party to subverting their internal decision making processes. The failure of mass organisations to do so must ultimately undermine the very processes of democracy in the mass organisations themselves.

The strong limits imposed by some mass organisations on their own full-time officials is an attempt at resolving this very difficulty. It becomes so much more difficult to exercise direct controls over the staff of service organisations who are employed quite independently of mass organisations.

As a result, very often mass organisations simply rubber stamp the decisions of full-time staff members of service organisations. Alternatively they will differ in the choice of service organisations they wish to use.
While there is no reson, in principle, for avoiding the services offered by services organisations, these should build around concrete and mandated work which further empower, not the "credibility" of service organisations, but the mass organisation itself. This cannot however be achieved unless mass organisations are willing to themselves clearly define the tasks to be undertaken.

The relationship formed around the mandated work need not create any indefinite obligations on the part of the mass organisation.

In our view, service organisations stand in a contradictory relation to mass organisation. Within certain limits these contradictions can be contained as not to become antagonistic. This is not to say that the relationship in question is based on suspicion and distrust alone. What it is does mean however, is that a great deal of care and vigilance needs to be taken in dealing with service organisations.

Workers, students, women and their organisations need to be made increasingly aware of these limitations so as to take active control of these resources so that they may be used more efficiently.

This article was done collectively by some staff members of Lacom-Sached, Durban.

COSATU LOCALS

Introduction

COSATU locals are forums where mass discussion and initiative are intended to take place to ensure co-operation between affiliates. Local co-operation is necessary for COSATU affiliates since they are supposed to address themselves to the organisational problems in their area of operation,and in addition to ensure and monitor the carrying out of COSATU national policies and resolutions. Local effectiveness and co-ordination between all structures of COSATU is a prerequisite for the success of the Federation's national campaigns. However to achieve this (Local) level of activity requires tremendous efforts by shop stewards and affiliates in the various locals. Recently the question of local involvement in political issues has also arisen . At the second national congress of COSATU, the federation called for permanent structures to facilitate this aim.

This article describes how the COSATU locals are presently operating. The account traces the history of locals and attempts to point out that the nature and development of COSATU locals has its origin in former FOSATU locals. The role of locals; which initially was to build unity between affiliates, developed into an organizing tool. This development was a response to the lack of adequate organizers. Shopfloor worker leadership was also involved in recruiting new members and organisers for unions in FOSATU. Leadership and organisational skills acquired by most shop stewards in locals opened up possibilities for workers initiative in political involvement in township based issues. Worker initiative from locals into township struggles assumed different forms. In townships where community organisation were absent, the utilization of local structures in either dealing with the community problems of the day or contributing in the process of building community organisation took place. Locals also developed different working relations with established community organisations. This varied from consultative to permanent working relationships. However locals' involvement in community issues also posed problems for some locals where participating shop stewards and affiliates had different conceptions about the role of locals. This difference in viewing the political role of locals is reflected in debates that took place and are still continuing in various lo-

cals.

This article however should not be construed as reflecting the present state of COSATU locals nationally. It focuses only on some of the COSATU Transvaal locals, that is the Springs , Benoni, Tembisa, Katlehong, Vereeniging, Pretoria, Brits and Johannesburg locals.

FOSATU Locals

Initially locals were conceptualised by FOSATU as the lowest link in building unity between affiliates and overcoming industrial sectionalism. The first significant shop steward council or local in the Transvaal was formed by mainly metal workers organised by the former Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU) in the East Rand area. This was prompted by a need to respond collectively to the strike waves that took place in Wadeville for higher wages in the 1980-81 period. The Wage Campaign had drawn thousands of workers into the structures of the union. This created a basis for the co-operation of FOSATU affiliates in the area. During the period 1981-83 FOSATU affiliates (Glass and Allied Workers Union and Chemical and Industrial Workers Union) came together with MAWU in the FOSATU local to support all worker action in the area. Shop stewards from most of the East Rand factories, that is, Wadeville, Germiston, Alrode and Alberton attended the local and discussed their factory problems and also dealt with strikes that occurred.[1]

Incorporation into union structures

The locals initially developed a tendency to lead workers independently of existing trade union structures. No clear rules for ensuring representivity were set. No clear policy on the question of representivity existed. Shop stewards from any factory would attend whether the factory had majority union membership or not. Locals however allowed problems and demands to be shared by all members. Through solidarity action and active organising the locals provided shop stewards with organisational skills and brought workers together, to make decisions and to control what was happening in specific areas. In April 1981 FOSATU amended its constitution to formally include the shop steward councils as part of the trade union structure. The move relfected the growing impatience of locals not only in the Transvaal, but elsewhere. In some areas this produced tensions, as some members of some locals

did not feel that they had the same completely free hand as before. A participant in the local made the following remark:

"I think, because the thing became powerful because there were no constitutional restrictions or mandates or things like that where you have to follow the constitution and that and that and that ... then by including it in there ..... its a bit of a mistake. I think it should have been left as it was - controlled by the shop stewards and not elected people that are sitting on the R.E.C., the Congress etc. ... so that guys can make decisions and act now."[2]

FOSATU in other areas

The experiences of the East Rand workers spread and influenced the formation of locals in other areas, particularly where FOSATU had organised factories. The period 1981-83 saw the emergence of FOSATU locals in most of the industrial areas in the Transvaal.

"The strikes that occurred in 1983 at Wadeville/Germiston area and the resultant response to co-ordinate these strikes by forming the local council had an effect in the planning of our union activities in the Vaal. We followed the East Rand shop stewards and established a shop steward council in MAWU, and later a FOSATU local where all affiliates would meet and co-ordinate FOSATU local activities.[3]

Initial activities of locals concentrated on the need to recruit and organise as many workers as possible in the FOSATU trade unions. Shop stewards in local industrial areas formed organising committees that recruited workers at various points where they were found in large numbers. Solidarity action among affiliates was a characteristic of locals.

"The Kempton Park FOSATU local was established in 1982. By then we did not have an office and used to meet at the Elandsfontein station. The local was prompted by an urgent need to meet with other shop stewards from FOSATU affiliates and discuss how to strengthen FOSATU in our area. Participating affiliates were MAWU, CWIU and SFAWU. In 1983 when MAWU joined the Industrial Council, a recruiting campaign was decided on. This included other FOSATU affiliates. Organising committees consisting of shop stewards from Isando, Kempton Park, Edenvale, Sebenza, Olifantsfontein and Elandsfontein were formed. This committee organised workers after

work at bus stops and railway stations. The recruiting campaign focussed on metal workers, even though other workers were also considered."[4]

"In Benoni the FOSATU local was established in 1983. Initially discussion centred on the issues effecting local factories. When CWIU called for support in the dispute with Colgate Palmolive over recognition, the Benoni local decided to ban overtime in the whole area. At the end of the day local employers intervened in the Colgate dispute."[5]

Representivity in locals

Representivity differed in locals. Most locals however adopted a two-fold method of representivity.

"In our local (Vaal) shop stewards represented their own affiliates. They had to get mandates from their own union. This decision was taken by local shop stewards and it was an attempt to force all affiliates to establish their own affiliate shop steward councils or local."[6]

"Shop stewards represent their factory, but at times some issues were presented to the affiliates before a decision is taken.'[7]

Local political role

The major breakthrough by some locals was the extension of their activities into the political arena. Factors that influenced this move ranged from the pressure exerted by the community to the nature of the political issues facing workers in a specific local. The turning point of the following locals; Katlehong, Brits, Vaal and Springs illustrates the pressures which pushed locals in the community based struggle in spite of the tension that existed in most FOSATU locals which were summed up in the Federations mouthpiece as follows:

"Living in Springs township of Kwa Thema, Chris is the first to admit that a worker cannot be separated from his community. But that does not mean, he says, that his union must link up with the many political organisations existing in this country."[8]

"I am convinced that the workers movement cannot be pushed to link up with the non-worker organisations because that might hinder or

misdirect its programme of action."[9]

The political role of FOSATU locals was accepted but with caution. Organisers emphasised the need to spread organisation, built factory based structures and educate members. But shop stewards expected more. They questioned the role of shop steward councils in the community. FOSATU feared the swamping of worker organisation by popular tendencies before an adequate organisational base had been formed and thus the dissolution of worker independence. Nevertheless no clear guidelines were given by FOSATU with regard to political involvement, and thereby locals responded differently to political pressures.

Extension in the community

Not all FOSATU Transvaal locals got involved in political activity. A factor that created less possibilities for political involvement of some locals is their location in cities or central towns.

"Questions of developing the local to be involved in community issues were also raised. Our problem was that our local is situated in town (Central Benoni) and is attended by shop stewards from Daveyton, Wattville, Vosloorus and Katlehong townships. This has entrenced the industrial link of the local to the Benoni industrial area. The local is not exposed to immediate township issues .... when shop stewards from Daveyton raised the problem of electricity hikes in their township, shop stewards from other areas do not really take up this issue .... instead some shop stewards felt the East Rand Peoples Organisation (ERAPO) should take up the issue."

".... with regard to the political struggle in towhships, I must say our local (Pretoria) has not done much practically. I am inclined to believe that this is caused by the fact that our local offices are based in town and not the township like Brits local. Shop stewards from Mamelodi, Atteridgeville, Soshanguve, Mabopane and Ga-Rankuwa find it difficult to co-ordinate local initiative in their various townships..."

Katlehong, Brits, Springs and Vereeniging are some of the locals involved in political activity. The degree of political activity however varied between locals.

Katlehong local

"The development of the Katlehong local is divided into two periods. The first period (1980-81) was marked by strikes in most of the metal factories. The second period (1981-83) saw the intervention of the local in the community struggle against shack demolition. After the Katlehong Community Council threatened to demolish shacks that housed most of our members, the local decided to meet them and shop stewards in all local factories approached management on this issue. The pressure of organised workers and the boom in the metal industry during that period saved most shacks. However there was tension in the local after this victory. Shop stewards wanted the local to take up all community issues while organisers perceived locals as forums where economic issues had to be discussed and tackled. They (organisers) also emphasised the need to consolidate the factory base. Shop stewards had sensed their power and were impatient to wait."[10]

Brits local

"The Brits local was started in 1983. The Metal and Allied Workers Union was the only union active in the local even though NAAWU was also organised in the area. We started the local by organising new factories and daily factory problems. The absence of any civic organisation in Brits forced us to be involved in Oukasie community issues as residents and youth in the area approached us for assistance. The only time NAAWU came closer and got active in the FOSATU local was when Oukasie was threatened with removals. At that time Young Christian Workers (YCW) was also campaigning on an educational crisis in the area. The youth had wanted discussion between themselves and the local community councillors but this failed as the councillors ignored the invitation. Later on the youth turned to the FOSATU local which was operating from Oukasie. A meeting was held and the outcome was a joint student/parents committee. This committee was not directly linked to the FOSATU local, it was independent. The initial issue the parents\student committee got involved in was the misusing of funds by local school authorities. After this exposureof corruption by school officials most shop stewards in the local began to understand the link between their struggle in factories and in Oukasie."[11]

"Growth of unionism in the Brits area was a great concern for employers. Most Oukasie residents believe the removal of Oukasie to Letlhabile was an attempt to get rid of unions since Mangope

won't allow them in Bophuthatswana (Letlhabile). This argument led most shop stewards in the local to call for a joint campaign with Oukasie residents against removals. This process culminated in the Brits Action Committee being formed on 7 December 1985. The main area of work for the B.A.C. was to fight removals. Meetings that took place between delegates of the B.A.C., FOSATU local, the youth, on the one hand and Federated Chamber of Industries, Steel Engineering Industries Federation of S.A. and Brits Chamber of Industries on the other hand were initiated by the B.A.C. and FOSATU locals. The Brits Action Committee also acted independent from the FOSATU local. The decision to assist in building the Brits Action Committee was decided by the FOSATU local shop stewards because not all shop stewards resided in Oukasie. The Brits Action Committee, the youth and women groupings attended the local but did not have voting rights in trade union matters."[12]

Vereeniging local

"The Vereeniging local was never involved in township struggles until the outbreak of 1984 unrest in the Vaal. During 1985, at the May Day meeting attended by FOSATU, CUSA and the Orange-Vaal General Workers Union, a resolution was taken to respond actively to the rent issue which sparked off the 1984 unrest. A decision was also taken to invite the Vaal Civic Association, youth and student groupings."[13]

"A meeting held with Civics, youth, students and the trade unions under the umbrella of Vaal Trade Unions Co-ordinating Committee (VTUCC) ended with differences of opinion on the rent issue. The Vaal Trade Unions Co-ordinating Committee said they had a mandate from their members to meet with the Vaal Chamber of Commerce, and that Civic organisations could be involved in the delegation. Most civics except the Boiphatong and Bophelong Civic bodies disagreed to be part of the delegation. They argued that trade unions were opportunistic by getting involved in the rent issue, and that civics should handle it."[14]

Springs local

"The historical development of the Springs local during the FOSATU was centred initially on economic activities emanating from factories. Recruiting living wage campaign, and a struggle for a 40 hour week dominated our activities. Our meeting venue was in the township in Kwa-Thema. The fact that most shop stewards working in

the Springs/Brakpan area were from Kwa-Thema justified the township venue. However this also exposed the local to the township pressures exerted by political problems. Community organisation (students, youth and unemployed workers) approached the local for assistance; and the local worked in conjunction with this groups. However this posed problems as other FOSATU affiliates complained that the locals was swamped with community organisations. Dissatisfied FOSATU affiliates began participating less and less in local activities. More effort was put in their specific industrially linked shop steward council, but the situation began to change since COSATU was established."[15]

Relations with community organisation

Different relations between FOSATU locals and community organisation emerged depending on the specific issue that linked the two groups. Three roles emerged:

- Consultation from time to time.
- Local contribution in building community structures.
- Permanent relationships.

A consultative type of relationship between locals and community organisation featured in the Vereeniging local. "Shop steward and civic organisation met only if they were discussing mandates from their constituencies. Report-backs were done separately."[16]

" Meetings between the Chamber, trade unions and community organisation took place between a delegation of six from the employers side and the other six was a combination of trade union and civic organisation. However the majority of delegates in all meetings were usually trade union representatives."[17]

Tembisa local

Working relationships based on consultation also emerged in the Tembisa local. The shop steward council tackled community issues in consultation with the Tembisa Action Committee which later became known as Tembisa Residence Association. A delegation from the local shop steward council would be mandated to meet with a delegation from the civic to discuss an issue. The consultative relationship developed during 1983. " In the past the local had problems in contacting the students and youth groups. This we found later was due to lack of structures in student/youth or-

ganisation. After contact was established, students and youth were advised by the local to build structures that would allow them to be accountable. From there on the local met with this group only if there was an issue to be tackled by both organisations."[18]

Locals build community structures

The Brits experience illustrates the local contribution in building community structures. The presence of MAWU in the community as the only organised force pressurised the local to be involved in the removal issue. The local however played a catalyst role. "Community organization attend the local regularly but don't have voting rights unless the local is dealing with a community issue."[19]

In Katlehong the local also played an important role in building the local civic organisation. Bazner Moloi, Chairman of the local put it as follows:

"The local was the leading force in building the Katlehong Civic Organisation. Most meetings and publicity was initiated by us. The youth was also urged by the COSATU local to be involved in creating structures that allowed the vast majority of Katlehong residents a say in the operation of the civic organisation. In the long form we aim to establish a civic organisation for Thokoza, Vosloo and Katlehong."[20]

Permanent working relations

Springs local had some features that were similar to Brits and Tembisa local. When the local started developing links with students and youth groups it was found that students organisations were badly structured and undemocratic. Students came to the local to report their own high school problems. In some cases different reports were given on the same issue. This situation was unacceptable to the local and students were advised to build structures that would incorporate all schools in the area, and elect representatives who would reflect the demands of all schools. After structures were formed two representatives from both Kwa-Thema Youth Congress and Student Congress started attending the local regularly. They would participate in the local but with no voting rights."[21]

Balance of activities

The different responses of locals to community pressure and the various working relationships between locals and community organisation raises important questions related to the scope of activity of locals.

In consultative types of relationships, locals discuss union problems in the local by not having community delegates in all local meetings. Factory problems and other related union matters can be thrashed out. Political issues are also dealt with but in most cases when raised by certain groupings in the townships and in consultation with the local. It is in locals with consultative types of relationships with community organisations where differences on the role of locals in political issues is still intense. The two views that are prevailing in such locals are characterised by two positions on the political involvement of locals. The first position argues that locals must not be perceived as having to establish permanent relationships with community groups as this will dissolve the independence of locals, instead they should consult with community groups whenever there is a specific issue to be dealt with. The second position argues that the establishment of permanent relationships with community groups will create the basis of worker leadership in the community and thus workers will lead both in the factory and township struggles. The two positions however are not opposed to the involvement of locals in community issues. The problem which is still unresolved is which strategy to adopt.

Free access to local meetings

Allowing community organisations access to local meetings strengthened contact between shop stewards, youth and students groups. The traditional link of local to industrial issues however prompted resistance by some affiliate who felt the local was neglecting its expected role by encouraging the presence of groups that had no immediate problems to raise in local meetings. A NUMSA official in the Springs local sum up the argument as follows:

"Engaging in political issues is not a problem, but having students and the youth in all our meetings tended to shift discussion away from workers immediate problems. Our shop stewards expect to get reports and progress from other affiliates and the presence of other community groups stifle this development. Shop stewards feel

the youth and students should spend most of their time with their own constituency and attend the local if they seek assistance from the local on a specific issue."

problems posed by local political involvement

In some FOSATU locals political involvement posed problems for participation of affiliates in local activities. In the Springs local the biggest affiliate in the area - i.e. MAWU - was at first active, but after questioning the permanent presence of community groups in the local meetings, most shop stewards resorted to passive resistance. They stayed away from the FOSATU local. In the Benoni local, an emphasis on factory and worker issues prompted the withdrawal/abstention of a number of the unions with a more political orientation. Nevertheless what is clear is that in the FOSATU era worker involvement in political issues was already occuring. This refutes the commonly held conception that FOSATU was characterised by a homogenous "workerist" position which called for non-involvement in township based struggles. COSATU endorsed a process which was already occuring. The issue was not whether unions should be involved in community politics, but on what basis.

COSATU locals

The majority of COSATU Transvaal locals were inherited from former FOSATU locals. Basically all features that existed in the FOSATU locals have been transferred to COSATU locals. The introduction of other unions absent in FOSATU for example CCAWUSA or SARHWU, also brought with them new traditions that introduced greater complexities into in the operation of locals. It is these complex situations that make COSATU locals different from the former FOSATU locals.

Participation

All shop stewards and affilates organised in various locals are supposed to participate in local activities. This requirement however is still a problem and one of the weaknesses of locals is that locals can end up being ineffective without the active participation of all shop stewards and affiliates organised in various locals. Different reasons have been given by shop stewards and union officials for the lack of consistent functioning of locals. Among these are:

- COSATU locals -

- absence of major campaigns - e.g. Living Wage Campaign,
- location of locals in cities or towns,
- differences that are brought by the political involvement of locals.

According to the COSATU Wits Regional secretary, Tony Kgobe, shop stewards are more willing to be actively involved in local activities if they perceive those activities as addressing their immediate problems. Strikes, mass dismissal and wage campaigns are known to triple attendance in locals. However in the absence of such campaigns a tendency to attend the local irregularly develops in most shop stewards.

The location of some locals in towns or cities have also contributed to a lack of attendance by shop stewards in locals. In various locals shop stewards have attempted to resolve this problem. In Katlehong local which was situated not far from the township and met every Thursday evenings the local had made arrangements with the local taxi association to provide transport means to shop stewards after the meetings. In the Benoni local inability to get transport after the local meetings created problems for shop stewards to attend the local.

"The Benoni local meets every Thursdays from 6.00 p.m. Most shop stewards are from Daveyton, Katlehong, Wattvile and Vosloorus. Shop stewards from Katlhong and Vosloorus are having transport problems as transport means to these townships is no longer available after 7.00 p.m. This means they can only attend the local for an hour. To resolve this problem shop stewards once decided that the local should meet on Saturdays. This did not work out as most shop stewards never attended on Saturdays complaining that they are dealing with family or other related problems. This problems ranged from buying groceries for the family to attending a funeral in the homeland. All these were problems outside the scope of the locals and as a result we continued holdings meetings on Thursdays. Shop stewards form Katlehong and Vosloorus townships still attend the local for an hour. Sometimes they don't even attend except if there is a strike or mass dismissal in their various factories."[22]

Debates prevailing on the political involvement of locals have also generated the passiveness of shop stewards and affiliates in some locals. This has taken place after some shop stewards and affiliates felt their problems with regard to certain issues were

not addressed in the political debates that were taking place in the local. A NUMSA shop steward active in the Johannesburg local summed up the situation as follows:

"Most of our comrades in NUMSA felt the Johannesburg local was imposing decisions on them and they started viewing the local meetings as undemocratic and thereafter attended the local irregularly."

Links with the community

The COSATU Second National Congress adopted the political resolution which encourages all levels of COSATU structures to develop permanent structures with the community organisation. The developmentin some locals prior to the adoption of this resolution however raises questions with regard to the practical side of the political resolution. Most locals as seen above have links with the community and these links have emerged as a result of pressures or struggles that took place in specific locals. As to whether locals will re-arrange this working relation to be compatible with "permanent structures" is not clear. According to COSATU leadership the "exact nature of the link and permanent structures is largely left to the locals. However the general view is that locals will continue to meet as locals and will not be disbanded in favour of permanent structures."

Locals to decide

Jerry Thibedi, the Chairman of the Pretoria local, highlights the debate on political involvement of locals as follows:

".....discussion on the linking of the local to community organisation has taken two positions in our local. Some unions are pushing that the locals should consult with political organisations when a specific issue is to be addressed. But other unions are of the opinion that permanent structures must be built whereby community organisations are not represented as observers but as active participants."

Locals are supposed to work out guidelines to link with community organisation. This obviously needs a high level of open discussion to decide which organisation is appropriate to enter into a 'permanent structure' with. The conception of UDF on the question of links with COSATU however raises another dimension. UDF sees

the role of locals as confined to economic issues, for example wages and working conditions. When asked how the working relationship would be, UDF spokesperson said:

"Cosatu affiliates will concentrate on the factory floor issues such as wages and working conditions. But outside, in the political arena, workers will participate in existing UDF structures. Not as COSATU or COSATU members but rather as workers. The UDF also envisages a situation where, at local level, COSATU locals will in a sense be part of a range of constituencies. Where COSATU operates at a local level, in Soweto for example, it will then work with an area committee. Decisions will be taken jointly."[23]

This perspective, presumably meant to increase working class involvement in township politics, raises a series of issues around precisely how this will be achieved. Firstly it is not clear why workers should be represented individually and not as an organised force. Secondly the precise status of such worker representives in relation to other affiliates of the area committee is not clear. What will be their voting status? The workings of area committees would also have to be investigated, how democratic are they, to what extent do the representatives carry genuine mandates from their constituencies? To what extent would the politics of such area committees reflect working class interests? Workers numerical presence in such structures cannot be said to amount to working class leadership.

Relationships between COSATU locals and UDF local area co-ordinating committees have already emerged but not in the way UDF perceives these relationships. The linking of locals to the community organisations has also raised structural problems that undermine unity in some locals. The Johanneburg local will be our focus to illustrate this development.

"The Johannesburg local was established in March 1987. All COSATU affiliates except CWIU initially took an active role in the local. The local dealt with problems encountered by affiliates within the local and immediate factory problems, but discussion also took place on COSATU campaigns, i.e., the "Living Wage" and Hands Off COSATU" campaigns.

" Township based issues were also discussed. Representation is two-fold. Shop stewards represent both their specific factory and their affiliate. All local reports are supposed to be given by

shop stewards to both their factories and affiliates."

"I must point out that emphasis is made on factory representation because we believe they should be nearer to the local constituency, that is, factories. We must always be on the alert with what our local constituency is thinking, their mood, etc."[24]

Co-operation

Co-operation between affiliates was cemented by discussion of Regional and Central Executive Committee reports. Issues such as mergers has consolidated inter-union working relationships. The Living Wage Campaign has made tremendous changes in the way affiliates relate to each other. According to Duma Nkosi, the Chairman of the Johannesburg COSATU local, co-ordination on the living wage campaign was characterised by discussion as to what affiliates should demand according to their industrial sectors. This led to an understanding by shop stewards of their industrial sectors across the economy. Reports of local companies on strikes or stoppages over the demand for a living wage were discussed, and strategies to pressurise management were adopted. The absence of the living wage co-ordinating committees however posed problems with regard to implementing decisions that were taken at the local. As a result not much practical activity took place jointly between the affiliates. The State clampdown also affected the campaigns since the local could not mobilise workers. Most of the rallies were banned. Lastly the bombing of COSATU House also deprived shop stewards of a venue to continue their local activities.

Community based action

The local presently has links with the UDF local area co-ordinating committee based in Soweto. A sub-committee consisting of four shop stewards have been elected at the local to attend the DF local area co-ordinating committee meetings.

"At times the UDF area co-ordinating committee also sends its delegation to the local. There is a two-way process which allows discussion between the two organisations. However when decisions are to be taken, the UDF area co-ordinating committee meets separately to take its own decision. The COSATU local also does the same. Shop stewards take decisions together, and this process of decision-making takes place separately in their own affiliate

shop steward councils to discuss the issue or decison that has already being taken by the UDF local area co-ordinating committee and which was presented to COSATU local as a recomendation. This means the recommended decision is discussed by shop stewards both in their various union shop steward councils and lastly in the COSATU local, where decisions are finally taken by COSATU shop stewards together."[25]

Differences

This process of getting mandates from affiliates sparked disunity in the Johannesburg local. "Affiliates like NUMSA argued that not all affiliates follow this process in that they don't have their own local structures. They ended up viewing the practices in the Johannesburg local as 'undemocratic'. According to their argument some affiliates did not have mandates as there are no structures that they are accountable to, instead shop stewards take decisions as individuals, that is, as activists and not worker representatives, for their own union or factory. As a result NUMSA participation in the local deteriorated." A NUMSA shop steward summed up their position as follows:

"At one stage we felt most political issues that were presented in the local for support were not from affiliates themselves but from township organisation. When we argued and demanded to know how other affiliates who did not have their own shop steward council get this mandate we were not considered seriously. As a result NUMSA shop stewards wrote a letter to the region complaining about this issue. The region referred the matter back to the local. The feeling was that the local should resolve the matter, and failure of this conflict being resolved saw most NUMSA shop stewards pulling out of the local."[26]

The allegation about non-existence of shop steward structures or local in some affiliates is also an obstacle in other regions. In the Vereeniging local the situation is as follows:

"One of the problems we are having in our local is the absence of industrial shop steward council in some affiliates. We are presently urging these unions to develop their own industrial locals where they are supposed to get a mandate to present at the COSATU local."[27]

"Since the formation of COSATU, the Vaal Trade Union Co-ordinating

Committee disbanded. CUSA pulled out because of the non-racial political resolution of COSATU ... At present there is no activity. The last meeting with the Chamber was attended by a MAWU (now NUMSA) and CCAWUSA delegation. I must point out that most shop stewards in the local are still interested in seeing meetings continuing to resolve the rent issue, but the problem is that the lack of shop steward councils in other COSATU affiliates creates problems. Individuals from some unions with these structures want to deal with political issues. They raise this issue at the COSATU local without a mandate from either their factory or affiliate. The problem we foresee in this set up is that these individuals want to retain their independence of their unions, but will instead be part of the civic organisation."[28]

Different traditions

As pointed out above the unification of other unions and former FOSATU unions in COSATU made locals more complex and thus more problematic. The absence of industrial shop steward councils in other affiliates is a reality and must be addressed. This necessity is given by the diverse conception of shop stewards on the questions of representivity. According to COSATU (see interview below) shop stewards are supposed to represent their factories, but in most locals shop stewards have adopted a two-fold representivity. They represent both their factories and affilates, and it appears emphasis is made on union representivity.

Conclusion

The development of local structures has assumed a volatile form. Repeated shifts in character and orientation in accordance with specific conditions took place in various locals. No doubt this tradition of reactive response and adaption will continue.

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Below we print an interview with COSATU on locals.

Interview with COSATU on Locals

SALB: What are the constitutional status of locals? Is there any policy set out for representation, i.e. who does shop stewards represent in locals? What is the purpose of locals?

COSATU: The locals are provided for in the constitution. Their composition is all shop stewards or shop steward committees of affiliates in that locality. No power or duties are defined. Shop stewards in a local represent their factory in the local.

One of the reasons why the constitution does not say much more on locals was that the composition and practices of the locals do

vary quite a lot. Increasingly locals have come to occupy more and more important role in COSATU structures. They have been a subject of a lot of discussion within COSATU CEC seminars and in the discussion document of 1986. The general functions of locals are see as:

- unify workers
- strengthen affiliates in the area
- deal with any issue affecting workers in that area.
- establish working relations for effective action with community organisations, youth groups and political organisations.
- defend and mobilise to keep the Federation going in times of crisis.

SALB: Do problems arise if a particular local is dominated by one particular affiliate and what can be done about that?

COSATU: It is often the case that locals are opened up by one affiliate that first organises in that area. So it is relatively common to have one affiliate playing a prominent role. It is also common for affiliates to have their own local shop steward councils in an area. It does not seem to be a major problem if one affiliate is larger in an area or plays an active role. Probably this is because shop stewards in a local represent the interests of workers in their factory and also the wider interests of workers in that area.

SALB: Is there any relationship existing between the locals and COSATU structures, especially the regional structures?

COSATU: Yes, locals that are active and permanent have a seat on the Regional Executive Committee. This is not a constitutional rovision but is common practise. Also local representatives have ten been invited to special CEC meetings to deal with campaigns d crises. In these last two areas the locals have been very imrtant.

ALB: What features of the former FOSATU do you think are still ersistent in COSATU locals? What do you think causes this state f play?

OSATU: The basic structures and experiences of the FOSATU locals ave been carried over into COSATU. In FOSATU last year or two the

issue of the link between the local and the community arose as a crucial issue. Clearly this has been a more important issue for COSATU in view of the circumstances. This has lead to the locals opening up to other organisations.

SALB: Are locals in all regions developed equally? Can you mention list of the locals?

COSATU: No the development of locals in uneven. Some locals are stronger than other and their meetings are very much more regular.

- Wits:
  Johannesburg
  Katlehong
  Benoni
  Springs
  Tembisa
  Heidelburg
- Northern Transvaal
  Pretoria
  Phalaborwa
  Brits

SALB: To what extent have locals contributed to the COSATU National Campaigns, that is, the Living Wage Campaign and the "Hands Off COSATU" Campaign.

COSATU: In campaigns the locals play the key role within COSATU. Their role in the Living Wage Campaign would have been greater if the state had not moved against its propaganda and publicity aspects. The effect was that it was affiliates that were most involved in the campaign because it linked to bargaining and strikes. However, it is locals that spread COSATU's policies and its present in industrial areas and the broader community.

SALB: What is the conception of COSATU's role of locals with regard to both economic and political struggle? What developments have taken place since COSATU was formed two years ago?

COSATU: The locals are the most immediate expression of the unity of organised workers because it is in the locals that workers meet most regularly and act together. The most substantial working links between COSATU and the community is at local level. Locals are therefore the main means of supporting organisation of workers and industrial action. They are therefore, also the main means of

organising the wider working class. Being a democratic structure closely linked to production and the community in an area their significance for the future is fairly clear.

Since COSATU started the major developments have been greater links with youth in particular and other community groups and workers. This development is a little uneven but in general it has grown. New locals have also grown, especially in new towns and areas of organisation. The Highveld region has been particularly active.

SALB: COSATU has declared to develop permanent structures at all levels with other sectors of the democratic movement. Are there any guidelines for the establishment of permanent structures, or are locals in this regard to decide on this issue?

COSATU: The exact nature of the links and permanent structures is largely left to the locals. However, the general view is that locals will continue to meet as locals and will not be disbanded in favour of permanent structures and secondly that we are looking to organise sectors being youth, women, unemployed and civics.

SALB: To what extent does COSATU locals hand over power to the local shop stewards to control affairs of the local area.?

COSATU: Locals have a fair degree of autonomy but they must act within COSATU policy and they cannot take decision that involve the whole of COSATU as a region. Also locals must respect the structures of affiliates.

SALB: What strategy are locals supposed to adopt in local areas where community/political organisations present in that local area are not compatible with the COSATU's conception of 'progressive and democratic organisations'?

COSATU: This issue is left to locals to decide. Obviously we can work much better with organisations which have a constituency and which share our committment to non-racialism, democracy and the leading role of the working class in struggle. And clearly locals would like to strengthen these organisations. However, locals will decide which groups to link with in particular campaigns and struggles, even where all criteria are not met. The most important thing is that other groups respect local shop steward council as well as the COSATU position.

- COSATU locals -

SALB: What do you consider as the strength and weaknesses of COSATU locals as they presently exist?

COSATU: The locals supplement workers experience in the union and the factory in building working class leadership. Workers leaders are strengthened in the locals particularly because they have to get by without assistance of officials. These skills are sharpened further through disciplined interaction with other organisations, as well as in giving leadership in building democratic community organisation. Locals have thus played an important role in the development of an advanced and experienced worker leadership in COSATU.

There are still many weaknesses. Full participation of all unions and factories is still a problem. A union may have strong participation in a local in one region, and no presence in a local in another region. However, during a big struggle in the area, locals have been known to double attendance. Locals will be more effective when they function consistently with strong participation from all organised factories.

EMPLOYEE SHARE-OWNERSHIP – SOUTH AFRICA'S NEW CAPITALISTS?

*Judy Maller

Many South African workers are being offered shares in the companies for which they work: this is called Employee Share-Ownership. In these companies employees are given the option of buying shares and earning dividends if the company performs well. Management hopes that if employees own shares they will work more productively to improve the position of the company on the stock exchange and thereby enhance their own earnings from the shares.

Management journals and newspapers are currently giving a lot of coverage to employee share ownership. It is not a totally new concept: companies have offered shares to their executive employees for many years. What is new is the recent attempt to

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pull all employees into share ownership. Many managers have spoken of turning workers into "new" capitalists - instead of seeing themselves in an adverserial relationship to management, it is hoped that workers will see a common interest with management in improving their company's performance. This briefing will explain some of the ideas behind Employee Share-Ownership Plans (ESOP's) and look at some of the companies introducing these schemes.

1. Types of Share Ownership

The people who own shares in a company are the owners of that company. Managers are not necessarily the owners of a company and are very seldom the sole owners, although they may well own some of the shares. The shareholders pay a certain amount of money toward the total amount of capital held by a company - they then own the proportional amount of shares. They are paid a dividend by the company at the end of the financial year - this is a percentage of the profits made during the year.

Shares are bought and sold on the stock exchange. Each company on the stock exchange is allocated a value according to the price of its shares. These share prices have more to do with the future prospects of the company than what it is actually worth in money terms. If the future appears very good for a company, then more investors will buy its shares and the price will go up. If the prospects are not very good, there will be less demand for the shares, and share prices will fall.

Company ownership can take a number of different forms: the usual structure of a South African company is that of a group of shareholders (often other companies) who elect a board of directors. The directors of a company manage the company on behalf of the shareholders and are paid salaries by the company as well as being shareholders. Some of the directors are usually actively involved the day-to-day management of the company and hire other professionals to assist them in running the business.

The same essential structure remains when employee share-ownership is offered, because the management of the company remains the same. Employees are never offered enough shares to form a majority of the shareholders and thus change the composition of the board of directors. In South Africa, it appears that employee share ownership commonly amounts to between 1% and 2% of total shares in the companies. (Although there are some significant exceptions

such as Jaguar which has allocated 24% of its shares to employees.) Also managerial employees are often the first employees to be offered company shares - they would certainly not vote against the very directors that appointed them in the first place.

A variation on this structure exists when a certain amount of money is put into a trust-fund on behalf of employees and is used to buy company shares. This means that employees collectively own a certain number of shares and elect spokesmen to represent them at shareholders' annual general meetings. Ford has recently offered SAMCOR workers this option of collectively owning and administering 24% of Samcor's shares. Other than this case, there are no known SA companies which use this kind of structure. This is mainly because employer's motivation for creating Employee Share Ownership Plans (ESOP's) is to make the worker see himself as an individual who stands to gain materially by enhancing his contribution to the company. It means the worker increases his own productivity because he sees personal reward to be gained from doing this. By way of contrast, in Scandanavia "wage earner" funds, which come directly out of company profits, are used to buy company shares on behalf of employees and are controlled by the recognised trade union. But there has been significant employer opposition to this scheme and it is currently being modified.

A very different kind of structure comes into operation where employee ownership is the result of workers buying out their company in response to company closure or bankruptcy. In this case, workers buy up all the shares and take over both the ownership and the management of the company completely. There are a few cases where this has worked successfully primarily in a co-operative form, in Belgium, France, Italy, Japan and Britain. It has never happened in South Africa. (ILO 1981 p.78)

2. The origins of ESOP's

ESOP's form part of a management approach which has been called "participative management". It began essentially with the recognition of trade unions - not simply because managers wanted to encourage workers' participation in the decision-making of the company, but mainly because trade unions became to powerful for management to resist any longer. But it was with the recognition of the unions that managers began to talk about co-operation and common interests between workers and management because they

realised that an antagonistic relationship could be detrimental to profits. After the Second World War (1945-1949) works councils were established in Europe and worker representation on management boards in the coal and steel companies in West Germany took place. The impetus of greater worker participation in the affairs of companies has grown during the last 20 years and has taken many forms - representation at board level, collective bargaining and consultation with trade unions, and workers' committees of different forms with a variety of rights. ESOP's are the latest form of worker participation. The system originated in the US.

ESOP's have been a feature of American corporate life since 1974. Nineteen percent of the top 100 companies have schemes whereby employees hold more than 10% of their company's shares. American tax laws are such that companies are given tax concessions if they operate an ESOP. The result is that seven million workers (or 6% of the entire workforce) own shares in their own company.

British companies jumped onto the ESOP bandwagon a little later. In 1979 only 30 companies had worker ownership schemes, but by 1986 over 1000 companies had introduced them. One of the first was Roadchef, a motorway services company. Service companies are particularly well-suited to employee share-ownership because they rely on the initiative and morale of the individual employee to promote the company's products rather than relying on technology and factory work organisation to increase workers' productivity.

The British initiative should be seen as an important part of Thatcher's aim of making "every worker a capitalist" (Observer 5/4/87). She has initiated a process of selling off all state-owned companies like the airways, the post office, and the telecommunications service to the public by listing them on the stock exchange. The public is encouraged to buy shares, and thereby become owners of property. The aim is to popularise capitalism. The purchase of shares in privatised companies is a somewhat different programme from that of employee share-ownership but they often go hand in hand - employees of these newly privatised companies have embraced their share-offer wholeheartedly so that 87% of the workforce in the privatised companies now own some of their share. Overall though, the percentage of the entire British workforce which participates in ESOP's is much lower - it amounts to a mere 3,5%. Britain also provides tax benefits to employers who introduce share-ownership schemes, so this percentage will no doubt increase in the near future, par-

ticularly with the push provided by Thatcher's "popularising capitalism" campaign.

4. ESOP's in South Africa

South Africa is a relative newcomer to the ESOP scene. The questions must be asked - why are employers getting so excited about ESOP's now and why are many new schemes being introduced? The basic reason is that management is searching for ways to make employees more productive in the context of an economy in crisis. South Africa's economy is characterised by "stagnation". This means that the country's levels of output, employment and investment are all declining. There is no growth in the economy and this can mean a drop in companies' profit levels. There are two ways in which they can boost profits: first by putting pressure on workers to be more productive and cut the costs of production. This has often taken the form of cutting the wage bill by retrenching workers. Secondly, companies can continue to make profits by investing their money on the stock exchange. This kind of investment does not create new factories and generate more employment opportunities. Instead, it simply makes money for the investors.

One of the ways that companies are trying to increase the productivity of their employees is by giving them shares in the company. It is hoped that employee share owners will identify with and feel a sense of commitment to the company and as a result work more productively.

Not all companies in South Africa have chosen to do this. Many smaller companies do not have enough available capital to enable them to give shares to employees. Many employers do not believe in motivating workers by rewarding them for their efforts. And many employers have used other methods, like incentive bonus schemes to try to accomplish the same thing. Also the South African tax laws are not favourable. Few employees can afford to buy shares out of their own pockets. As a result loans are heavily taxed and this may jeopardise the success of these schemes. In addition, hostility to participating in the workings of capitalism is evident amongst black employees because of a widespread perception that most blacks have never reaped the fruits of capitalism and are unlikely to do so in the future. The Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union of South Africa (CCAWUSA), for example, maintains that no meaningful economic change is possible without the complete overthrow of capitalism:

"We are not talking about a reform of capitalism which will make it more palatable." (Finance Week, 22 May 1987)

Employers are asking themselves if share-ownership is too "sophisticated a concept to enjoy popular appeal" amongst black workers (Finance Week, 25 June 1987). This is simply a patronising way of expressing doubt that black workers will accept share-ownership in the companies in which they work, not because they are unable to appreciate the potential material benefits, but because they are sceptical that these benefits will amount to much when they already cannot cope with paltry wages and rising expenses.

A small minority of companies have introduced ESOP's in South Africa, but significantly, there is a lot of publicity around the idea and around each new issue of shares to employees. At least 24 companies operate ESOP's and two others have publicised their intention to do so in the future, including the Anglo American Corporation which, as the biggest company in South Africa, would potentially affect thousands of employees (Finance Week, 16 July 1987). In Anglo's latest annual review, Gavin Relly, company chairman, said that shareholders will be asked to consider allowing a share-holding scheme in which employees can participate on a "wide, if necessarily modest, basis" (Business Day, 14/7/87).

An analysis of 15 companies which have established ESOP's for their employees showed that the following industries are represented:

Sector	Number of Companies
Retail	7
Food	3
Banking	1
Construction	1
Motor	1
Mining	1
Development Corps	1

These companies use different criteria to offer shares to employees. Most insist on a minimum number of years of service prior to employees becoming eligible to own shares (usually 3-5 years). This serves to encourage long service. Other companies

combine this condition with merit appraisals, so that only if an employee's performance is considered satisfactory, can he or she buy company shares. This criteria, in turn, encourages high individual productivity.

A very different set of conditions prevails when foreign companies disinvest as a result of international pressure to pull out of South Africa. Possibly, disinvestment will provide a significant impetus to the ESOP project. Some disinvesting companies which have sold out to local buyers (often the very management which managed the company previously) have insisted that employees benefit from the sale. This benefit has sometimes taken the form of shares in the company. One highly publicised example was that of Coca Cola, which in 1986, sold its 30% share in Amalgamated Beverage Industry, (ABI) to National Beverage Services, which in turn is owned by South African Breweries. Part of the conditions of the sale was that Coke's 3500 bottling employees would be entitled to receive shares in ABI - this amounted to 1% of ABI's equity (ordinary shares).

For other companies, ESOP's form part of their intention to draw black South African's into the benefits of capitalism. For example, the Quantum Group has proposed the construction of a big shopping complex on the Reef in which black investors will hold shares. Lebaka, a Bakery in Lebowa, is the first black controlled company to be listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. Their employees are part of an ESOP.
There is not very much evidence that a new spirit of capitalism is emerging amongst black employees on a large scale. In fact, a recent article claims the contrary: only 2 - 3% of stock exchange investors are black (Star). Thus very few blacks are on the receiving end of capitalist rewards. Part of the apparent failure of this strategy is the scepticism expressed by black trade unions regarding the supposed "benefits" to be gained by workers.

5. Do ESOP's work?

Although it is too soon to evaluate the impact of ESOP's on both employees morale and on company profitability, some preliminary comments can be made.

Trade unions have expressed an overwhelmingly negative attitude toward ESOP's. The major concern of black trade unions over many years has been to improve the real wage levels of their members.

But this has never taken the form of employee share-ownership:

> "There is no point in even discussing profit by investment - including such schemes as profit-linked bonuses or share-ownership - when incomes are so low. When the union states that it wants a share of the profits, it means it wants a bigger share of the total revenue to go to the living wage." (Ibid)

Instead trade unions' answer to management initiatives like ESOP's has been the Living Wage Campaign, launched by COSATU in 1986. Jay Naidoo, General Secretary of COSATU put the position of the Congress:

> "We're essentially opposed to the idea (of ESOP's). Fundamental issues must be redressed first. We're struggling for a living wage, let alone considering buying shares which we see as perpetuating inequality."

Trade union scepticism about employee share-ownership is clearly manifest in the response of NAAWU workers at SAMCOR to Ford's offer of placing 24% of the company's equity in a trust fund on behalf of the workers. NAAWU's Charles Nthiti said that "workers would decline the offer unless they were sure Samcor was going to trade profitably" (Business Day, 16/6/87). He went on to say that the union would have preferred shares to be offered "on the basis of a set amount - either to be distributed among workers immediately, or to be channelled into housing or other workers' "facilities" (Star 15/6/87). Thus doubt was expressed over the value of owning the shares, and also hard cash or benefits which workers could utilise at once, were considered more beneficial.

Employee share-ownership has not stopped workers from taking industrial action when they feel their rights are being transgressed. Pick and Pay operates a share-ownership scheme for employees with over 10 years of service to the company. Eleven percent currently own shares. One of their directors, De Wet describes it as a "tremendous bonding mechanism in the company". But it did not prevent the highly publicised strike by CCAWUSA members at Pick and Pay over their 1986 wage demands. ESOP's do not necessarily buy workplace harmony.

Most companies which operate ESOP's claim to have benefitted from them in the form of better overall performance and higher

profitability levels. Basil Read, a construction and civil engineering group is a case in point. Three hundred and eighty employees bought out their company in 1984. Since then the value of their shares has increased fivefold and this is attributed directly to the employee share-ownership scheme. MAS Holdings, a mail order company was listed in 1985 and employees were offered the opportunity of buying shares. Shares were allocated by the managing director on the basis of seniority, years of service and merit. The MD claims that there was a direct positive effect on productivity and the value of the company's shares increased by 28%. (Finance Week, 25 June 1987)

It is impossible at this stage to establish a direct causal relationship between higher productivity and profitability levels on the on the hand and employee participation in share-ownership on the other hand. The performance of company shares on the stock exchange does to a limited extent reflect the performance of the company as a productive unit, but share prices are also affected by market variations, inflation, the availability of other investment opportunities, and the performance of shares in other industries. The link between share-ownership and employee morale must be seen in the light of employees' increased identification with the company through share-ownership rather than a direct relationship to share prices. If in the long run, dividends remain low or non-existent than there may well be a negative effect on employee morale.

The fragility of the current high values of shares must also be taken into account. The frenetic pace of investment in shares may not be sustainable in the long run, and increasingly, there is a danger of the stock exchange crashing. This will mean that all shareholders will lose their investments completely.

In the meantime, individual workers may certainly profit from owning shares and may also feel a greater sense of identification with the company. But it is clear that as individual shareholders, workers' participation in the decisions of the company is not extended in a meaningful way. Individual workers own a minute proportion of the total shares of a company and as minority shareholders they can no more exert influence over the board of directors than as ordinary workers. If workers owned shares collectively (in the form of a trust) then they might have a greater influence over company decisions. This is the same principle upon which trade unions themselves are built - an individual worker

with a grievance will not normally be able to redress that grievance, but with the organised power of the trade union behind him, he stands a far greater chance of improving his situation.

In South Africa, ESOP's are particularly inappropriate in a context where most black workers do not earn a living wage and would be better off gaining higher wages than shares in a company. It has been estimated that the minimum living wage should be in the order of R850 per month. (The Labour Research Service used building society requirements for home ownership as a basis for this figure.) In the metal industry the new wage for the lowest grade is R2.61 per hour. This translates to an approximate monthly wage of R500. It is clear that very few black workers are currently earning a living wage.

6. Conclusion

There are clearly limits to the extensive application of ESOP's in the South African context, both because of trade union and worker opposition and also because participative management is a relatively new phenomenon among South African managers and regarded with suspicion in most manufacturing environments. However, in companies with a strong trade union presence it is possible that some form of employee share-ownership will be proposed in the next few years in an attempt to combat collective workers action and to boost labour productivity as the economic crisis intensifies.

No rigid guidelines can be given as to how workers should respond to ESOP's. They do seem to offer management opportunities to increase productivity and offer the possibility of some financial gain to shareholders. But the limits to employee benefits must be appreciated early on - in the situation where workers are not earning a living wage, they will in all likelihood sell their shares as soon as possible. This means that they do not stand to gain for long term investments, and apart from a one-off pay-out will be no better off than their colleagues who do not qualify for share-ownership. As a form of participative management then, ESOP's have definite limits and as a means by which workers can extend their control in their companies, collective bargaining through a trade union has more chance of imposing workers' needs and desires than owning (collectively) 1 or 2% of the company's shares.

Namibia Update: Trade Unions and Labour Action, May – August 1987

*Wolfgang Werner

1. Introduction

In the months of May to July Namibia has witnessed a number of strikes, including what is believed to be the biggest mineworker strike in the country's history. Such strike actions have highlighted a number of issues in labour relations. Firstly, by their demands strikers have drawn attention to the abysmal working conditions and low wages which characterise the Namibian economy. Secondly, management had adopted a highhanded attitude in almost all strikes. This was displayed in its reluctance to negotiate with unions or striking workers. Thirdly, the state supplemented management's hardline by intimidating the labour movement in various ways. On the one hand this took the form of violent raids on workers' compounds in Windhoek and Luederitz and the dispersal of a SWAPO meeting in the mining town of Arandis. On the on the other hand, the police raided union offices and detained several union leaders in attempts to silence them. Fourthly, as the SWAL-VEIS and TCL mineworkers' strike show, striking workers were supported by community action of one form or another. In the case of SWAVLEIS organised black business supported the striking meat workers by threatening with a boycott of SWAVLEIS products. In Tsumeb a consumer boycott of white-owned shops preceded strike actin by black miners. Finally, labour action in Namibia is closely tied up with organised politics. In some cases union office bearers are doubling up as SWAPO activists and the exploitation of workers was characterised as "nothing more than a political matter" ("niks meers as 'n politiese aangeleentheid nie").[1]

During the period under review the state initiated two significant developments. In the first place it has decided to close down the

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*This update by Wolfgang Werner on Namibian trade unions and labour action is a valuable follow-on to the coverage of Namibian trade unions by Brian Wood in the South African Labour Bulletin, Vol.12 No.4, May/June 1987. The update is based almost entirely on Namibian press reports. The Bulletin hopes to print a Namibian Update at regular intervals in future.

workers'compound in Katutura by the end of September. Secondly, the Cabinet of the so called Transitional Government of National Unity has recommended to the South African Administrator-General that a commission be appointed to report on and make recommendations with regard to labour legislation and policy as well as systems of labour relations in Namibia. The Cabinet recommended that prof. Nic Wiehahn, Director of the School of Business Leadership of the University of South Africa, should be the chairman of the commission.[2]

Trade union developments

SWAPO affiliated unions

The following unions are affiliated to the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW), which was formally constituted by SWAPO on 24 April 1970:

Mineworkers' Union of Namibia (MUN) : launched on 23 November 1987; claimed membership about 7000 - 12000; General Secretary : Ben Ulenga.

. Namibia Food and Allied Union (NAFAU) : launched on 20 September 1986; claimed membership : 6000; Chairman : Macdonald KaNtlabathi; Secretary-General : John Pandeni.

3. Metal and Alied Namibian Workers' Union (MANWU) : launched on 24 May 1987; claimed potential membership : 10-15000; Chairman : Simon Mbako; Secretary-General : Barnabas Tjizu.[3]

2.2 Metal and Allied Namibian Workers' Union launched.

On Sunday 24 May a new union, the Metal and Allied Namibian Workers' Union (MANWU) with a potential membership of 8000 was formed in Windhoek by more than 100 delegates representing 31 companies nationwide. It will join the Namibian Food and Alied Workers' Union (NAFAU) and the Mineworkers' Union of Namibia (MUN) as an affiliate of the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW). Acting Secretary-General of the union is Barnabas Tjizu, a member of the steering committee of NUNW. With a potential membership of 10 to 15000 workers, the new union could be the second largest in Namibia, after NAFAU. The union is catering for workers in the metal, building, construction and painting industries.[4]

2.3 Registration of Unions

Mr. Ben Ulenga, General Secretary of the Mineworkers' Union of Namibia said in a talk given to the Namibia Educational Forum that his union has applied for registration with the "interim government ... because that is what the members wanted". The union had not yet received a reply.

About 12 unions were registered while several others have been waiting for months to receive registration.[5]

2.4 Harassment of union leaders

On June 12 police raided the offices of NUNW and advocate Anton Lubowski, a member of its steering committee. According to a statement by NUNW, financial documents, minutes of meetings, membership lists, as well as lists of names of workers' committees and shop stewards had been confiscated. The Namibia Food and Allied Workers' Union, the Mineworkers' Union of Namibia and the Metal and Allied Namibian Workers' Union were also raided. The unions strongly condemned "the actions taken by the police of the illegal South African imposed interim government against the trade unions which are under the umbrella of the NUNW." Macdonald KaNtlabathi, chairman of NAFAU, was detained by police early on June 16 for questioning.[6]

In another development police detained Mr. Asser Kapere, the chairman of the Mine Workers Union (MUN), under Section 6 of the Terrorism Act after police violently broke up a SWAPO meeting in Arandis, the township housing workers of the Roessing Uranium Mine. A stayaway by Roessing workers was only averted by Roessing management promising to make every effort to have Kapere released. To this end management was in touch with the so-called Minister of Justice in the Interim Government.[7]

On August 18 police once again cracked down on SWAPO and union activists in countrywide raids. A number of unionists were arrested. At the time of writing three leading unionists were still being detained under Section 6 of the Terrorism Act, namely John Pandeni, Secretary-General of the NAFAU; Ben Ulenga, Secretary-General of the MUN and Anton Lubowski; treasurer of NUNW. On the following day security police raided the offices of NUNW in Katutura.[8]

.5 Accusations against Namibia National Trade Union

Accusations that the NNTU under the leadership of Theo Ngaujake as supported and financed by the government continued to evoke discussion in the press. In a statement released by Ngaujake he described as totally untrue suggestions that his union had received funds from the Department of Manpower for organising rallies on May Day. He alleged that the Namibia Trade Union of Mr. Alpha Kanguehi was behind a campaign to discredit the NNTU as a co-South African Union.[9]

The Chairman of the NNTU, Mr. Veripi Kandenge alleged that he was present when a Colonel Eimbeck of the Security Secretariat had handed a cheque of R4000 to Ngaujake to pay for NNTU T-shirts for May Day. Kandenge was prepared to sign a sworn statement to this effect. Colonel Eimbeck denied having given financial assistance to the NNTU, but confirmed that a meeting had taken place with NNTU officials. Kandenge further alleged that on March 20 a meeting had taken place between Ngaujake, Sean Cleary of the Transcontinental Consultancy (the interim government's public relations firm), Mr. Van Rooyen of the Department of Manpower and Civic Affairs, and Moses Katjiuongua, "Minister of Health" in the interim government to examine several aspects of trade unions in Namibia.

Apart from these allegations, it is known that the NNTU had also received funds form the conservative Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Germany.[10]

In an attempt to re-establish some credibility for the NNTU, Ngaujake reaffirmed his union's support for United Nations Security Council Resolution 435 as the only acceptable formula for an internationally acceptable independence for Namibia, but at the same time argued that he saw no problem with an alternative formula if United Nations Security Council Resolution 435 could not be implemented. An organiser of the union, Mr. Enoch Hendura, added that the NNTU would not gain anything by being linked to a political party. "If that party will come to power, the trade unions will not be able to serve both the workers and the government. They would have no powers of negotiation."[11]

As a result of these allegations a meeting of the NNTU committee and affiliated shop floor committees had dismissed Ngaujake in early June. Ngaujake meanwhile has announced that the name of NNTU had been changed to Namibia National Allied Unions (NANAU).[12]

2.6 Formation of the Namibia National Allied Unions (NANAU)

Following the disbanding of the NNTU a new umbrella union, the Namibia National Allied Unions (NANAU) was formed on July 5. It comprises the Namibia Building Worker's Union (NBWU), the Namibia Wholesalers and Retail Workers' Union (NWRWU), the Namibia Women Support Committee and the Drivers, Transport and Allied Workers' Union. The executive committee consists of Aloysius Yon (president); Henoch Handura (vice-president); Reginald van der Hoven (treasurer); Theo Ngaujake (general secretary); G. F. Brendell (administration secretary); Maria Mokomele (education secretary) and Sarel Louw (organising secretary).

Messrs. Ngaujake and Yon said in a statement that NANAU did not want to affiliate to any political group in order not to divide workers. The umbrella union also did not wish to be part of international trade union federations which were communist inspired.[13] Mr. Yon is also a member of the Department of Manpower's Labour Council.[14]

2.7 On the international front

The Transport and General Workers Union in the United Kingdom has tabled a resolution on Namibia at its recent congress held at the beginning of July in London. The resolution, parts of which were made available to the press, inter alia stated that "The conference welcomes the recent formation of unions affiliated to the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW) and pledges moral and material support. The conference endorses the call from Ben Ulenga, General Secretary of the Mineworkers Union of Namibia, for trade unionists to boycott all trade in Namibian goods, including uranium, until South African troops withdraw and Namibian independence is achieved in line with UN Security Council Resolution 435."[15]

In South Africa COSATU gave its full support to the National Union of Namibian Workers at its congress held at Witwatersrand University from July 15 to 17. The organisation pledged its support for the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 435 and "to promote educational training and resources to consolidate the NUNW." It also condemned "the divisive attempts by external forces and the interim government" to promote NANAU.[16]

3. Labour action

3.1 Consumer boycott and miner's strike at Tsumeb

According to a spokesman for the Mineworkers' Union of Namibia (MUN) more than 1500 mineworkers in the northern mining town of Tsumeb had embarked on the first consumer boycott in Namibia on June 8. A boycott committee had been formed, consisting of worker representatives and prominent community leaders. The boycott was called in protest against low wages, high consumer prices and the general sales tax, as well as the suffering brought about by the war in northern Namibia. Most of the workers involved were employed by the Tsumeb Corporation, living in the TCL Main Hostel nd the Smelter Hostel.[17]

On Sunday, 26 July the biggest strike in Namibian mining history started, when 4600 of Tsumeb Corporation's 5000 strong workforce came out on strike. The dispute had begun about two weeks previously, when workers handed a list of demands to management, which included:

- a 120% increase in wages from the present rate of R1.02 per hour or R195.00 per month;
- a reduction of their 48 hour working time;
- "an unequivocal statement from the company in opposition to the war waged by South Africa in the north 'against workers and their families'";
- the scrapping of the contract system and permission for workers' families to live with them;
- adequate compensation for injuries;
- the abolition of white supremacy, apartheid anddiscrimination;
- granting of paid leave in case of personal emergencies at home;
- the ending of harassment of MUN workers.

At the end of July MUN submitted a compromise proposal, demanding wage increases ranging between 34% and 65% to be effected by September 7 instead of the initial 120% as well as 31 days paid annual leave instead of the 60 days previously demanded.[18]

Both the state and management took a hardline on the workers, with police randomly arresting 16 workers in the local township and management refusing to negotiate wages and other conditions of employment with the MUN until it was registered. It argued that it

would only recognise the MUN "when the union has proved itself to be truly representative" of TCL employees. It was also not prepared to negotiate with striking workers. In the words of Ben Ulenga, General Secretary of MUN, "the problem is TCL do not negotiate. They shout TCL policy. This is hardly realistic negotiation." TCL management threatened further action if the workforce did not report for work on 30 July. Workers defied the threat, and TCL fired about 4000 strikers on 31 July. Strikers did not regard themselves as fired and remained in the compounds, anticipating TCL to obtain a court order. On August 18 the Supreme Court in Windhoek had ruled that striking miners of TCL had to leave the compounds and that their contracts had been legally terminated by the company, but had granted miners leave to appeal against the ruling. In his judgement Justice Levy slammed TCL for "dragging its feet" and being a "reluctant and obtuse negotiator". On August 25 a full bench of the Supreme Court dismissed the miners' appeal against eviction and dismissal. The price TCL had to pay for obtaining judgement in its favour was a total production loss of about R8 million in the month old strike. Mine management was going to start a new recruitment scheme "where everybody can apply ... Even those workers involved in the present dispute will be given equal opportunities to apply for existing vacancies."[19] According to the national secretary of the MUN, Bernard Esau, more than half of the 4000 workers that were dismissed by TCL were not interested in re-applying for jobs with the company.[20]

Tsumeb Corporation Ltd., which operates the Tsumeb, Otjihase and Kombat mines, is owned by Newmont USA, BP Minerals and Goldfields of South Africa as the majority shareholder. The company had reported gross profits of R19 300 000 for the financial year which ended on 31 December 19896. These profits were hardly reflected in wages paid to workers at TCL, where the lowest paid surface workers employed are farm workers earning 68c an hour, while the lowest paid surface mineworkers earn R1.02 an hour. The lowest paid miners get R1.08 an hour. In addition, miners had to buy their own safety equipment.[21]

In attempts to discredit the strike and the union, the mouthpiece of the so-called Transitional Government of National Unity, "Die Republikein", alleged that severe intimidation of workers by "SWAPO's so-called police" had taken place, with threats of necklacing workers wishing to work. Moreover, in the only report of its kind the same paper alleged that the Secretary General of the

MUN, Ben Ulenga was accused by workers of drawing out the strike unnecessarily, thereby causing financial hardships for workers.[22]

3.2 SWAVLEIS strike

A statement released by the management of SWAVLEIS released on 18 May stated that 597 of its 728 workers at its Windhoek and Okahandja plants were sacked after they had come out on strike in support of 12 colleagues who were sacked for allegedly "not completing their work quota". As a result, production was down from about 500 carcasses a day to 100.

The strike was the culmination of a conflict between workers and management which had lasted for the previous two weeks. Workers were demanding the reinstatement of the 12 workers who had been fired, as well as an increase in wages of 60c an hour and improved transport from their townships to the factories in the early morning. It was reported that some of the workers earned as little as 60c an hour for a working day starting at 02h00.

The management of SWAVLEIS refused to talk to the chairman of the Namibia Food and Allied Workers Unions (NAFAU), Mr McDonald kaNtlabathi. In addition, it threatened to hire and train new workers, and regarded the demand for a 60c increase as "absurd". At its Ikahandja plant management had attempted to evict striking workers from their hostel and had called in police.

NAFAU is affiliated to the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW), and applied for registration in October 1986. It was told by the Department of Manpower and Civic Affairs that its preamble was "too political" and has not heard about its application since.[23]

Support for the striking workers came from various quarters. More than forty businessmen from Katutura addressed a memorandum to SWAVLEIS management, urging the reinstatement of the sacked 600 workers. They threatened to boycott SWAVLEIS unless the company took positive steps in this regard. The memorandum condemned the importation of South African workers as unlawful. Workers in several other factories such as the South West Breweries for example, had also urged their management to intervene with the SWAVLEIS management on behalf of the sacked workers. In a statement the Mineworkers Union of Namibia (MUN) deplored the bad conditions

at SWAVLEIS and condemned the unfair dismissal of striking workers. It called on management for the reinstatement of the dismissed workers.[24]

On June 24, barely two weeks after the strike had begun all 600 dismissed workers at SWAVLEIS were reinstated, except those initial twelve who had been paid off at the beginning of May. Management had promised to increase wages once all the workers had reported back for work, but refused to pay workers for the period on strike. While the promises of wage increases were not specific, Mr. John Pandeni, the Secretary General of NAFAU, nonetheless regarded the reinstatement of the workers as a "big victory", since the request to be rehired was the major demand of the workers. "This became a test for the whole labour issue in the country, and although the increased promises are not specific, the workers did get back their jobs. This should prove to workers all over the country that things can be done through unity."[25]

SWAVLEIS reported a turnover of R95 million rand and an operating surplus of R5 million in its first annual report this year. At the same time, a sample of 195 pay slips examined by the Central Chamber of Commerce showed that 115 workers earned less than R1.00 an hour, and the majority of these as little as 62c an hour.[26]

3.3 Raid on Katutura worker compound

On the same day that SWAVLEIS promised to reinstate all 600 dismissed workers, police conducted a six hour pre-dawn raid of the workers compound in Katutura. While police searched workers' rooms, heavily armed solders had surrounded the compound. In a statement the National Union of Namibian Workers claimed that 74 workers had been injured in the police action.

The compound provides accommodation for about 5000 workers in 1388 dormitories, measuring about 17,5 square metres. The NUNW claimed that at the time of the raid about 10 000 workers stayed in the compound, a figure disputed by police, who say that there were 1200 registered workers in the compound and about 3000 living there illegally. An independent source claimed after a visit to the compound that 6000 to 8000 men were residing there at the time. Deductions for compound accommodation ranged from R1.40 to over R20.00 per month and is deducted from wages. Compound residents responded to the police raid by calling a week long boycott of compound food, which was described by some workers as "pig

swill".[27]

3.4 Strike at Taurus Chemical Plant, Luederitz

At the beginning of June about 75 workers from the Aga-Aga Seaweed plant - an affiliate of Taurus Chemicals - in Luederitz went on strike over the sacking of one their colleagues. The company had been hit by extended strike action in 1986. Strikers had demanded the reinstatement of a fellow worker who was dismissed for having taken off a blocked face-mask. Directors of the company in Windhoek had ordered Aga-Aga management not to talk to NAFAU organisers and had refused to reinstate the striking workers, arguing that only "responsible" workers would be re-employed after re-applying for their jobs.

The General Secretary of NAFAU, John Pandeni, criticised industrial safety at the plant, saying in a statement that the union had a record "of a part-time workers who did not know about face-masks and had his face burnt at Aga (sic)". He claimed, moreover, that local prisoners who were used as scab labour, were not wearing masks either.[28]

On June 18 about 200 workers of Taurus Chemicals came out in a solidarity strike because of management's intransigence in reinstating the fired workers of Aga-Aga. This had brought the total number of workers on strike at the sister factories of Taurus and Aga-Aga to 270.[29]

Management had decided to lay-off all 270 workers of its Aga-Aga Seaweed Plant and Taurus Chemicals. On the basis of this management regarded the strike as no longer a strike but a stayaway "and a deliberate avoidance of using workers' committees as the proper channel through which negotiations should take place."[30]

3.5 Raid on Luederitz workers

On July 3 police raided the workers' compound in Luederitz, which accommodates about 1600 workers, mostly on contract from northern Namibia. Figures for arrests vary from 170 to 200. Mr. John Pandeni of NAFAU claimed that most of the arrested workers came from the Taurus Chemical Plant, which is still hit by a strike. It was claimed that about R10 600 600 in cash had been stolen from workers, as well as cameras, a sowing machine and tape recorders. Residents in the town claimed to have heard shots coming from the

direction of the compound. Journalists visiting the scene the next day found "live rounds of the 7,62mm calibre... lying on the ground, as well as dozens of rubber bullets, 37mm baton shells and teargas grenades". It was alleged that police and army sections were brought to Luederitz from the north the day before the raids took place. Over 50 workers were reported to have been injured by rubber bullets, batons and quirts.

John Pandeni, Secretary General of NAFAU claimed that the raid "was connected to the current Taurus, Pescanov and Grindrod strikes in Luederitz. We also see the latest raid in Windhoek and Luederitz as reaction to workers action across the country." NUNW and NAFAU condemned the raid in a joint statement as "criminal action on the part of the 'occupationist police and army'."[31]

3.6 LTA Construction workers' strike

On August 3 about 300 construction workers employed by LTA came out on strike for higher wages.[32] Workers claimed that they were earning between 40c and 60c an hour in the unskilled category and between R2.80 and R3.20 as artisans and demanded increases of R2.00 for unskilled labourers and R1.50 for artisans. Moreover the company did not subsidise board and lodging, which workers found increasingly difficult to pay for from their average wage packets of R30.00 a week.

The strike set off a conflict between the Namibia Building Workers' Union of Aloisius Yon and the Metal and Allied Namibian Workers' Union which is affiliated to NUNW. The chairman of MANWU, Simon Mbako, accused the NBWU of starting to organise LTA workers long after MANWU had established workers' committees at LTA sites. He claimed that MANWU represented 70% of building workers nationally, with NBWU's share being no more than 10%. On account of rumours that the so-called Minister of Manpower, Health and Welfare, Moses Katjiuongua, had visited the scene of the strike, MANWU alleged that the NBWU was "cooperating with the puppets."[33]

Despite such conflicts, at least two newspapers credited the NBWU of having organised the strike. The Director of Manpower had declared the strike as illegal since it took place before an arbitration board could be nominated by the government. The strike was called off the next day, and the general secretary of the union, Aloisius Yon was quoted as saying that "one day was

enough". On 5 August the so-called Cabinet of the Transitional Government of National Unity had appointed an arbitration board, which resolved the conflict and led to wage increases of about 20%. Mr Yon was satisfied with the outcome and stated that this was "clear evidence of what can be achieved by negotiation instead of strikes and other forms of protest."[34]

Smaller strikes were reported at Southern Pipeline Contractors In Okahandka[35], the South African-owned Atlas Organic Fertilisers involving guano collectors[36] and the crew of a fishing trawler at Luederitz.[37]

3.7 Dissolution of workers' compounds in Katutura

Windhoek Municipality has decided to close down the workers' compound in Katutura on September 30 this year. In a joint statement with the National Building and Investment Corporation, better known by its Afrikaans acronym NASBOUKOR, the Municipality stated that all workers who could pay for their accommodation would be housed in NASBOUKOR dwellings under a private ownership scheme. Such accommodation would be of a permanent nature and "not in the form of a tent town". While the nature and cost of houses were not yet made known, some officials believed that NASBOUKOR's cheapest more houses might be beyond the means of the average worker, and suggested that a site and service scheme be launched, which NASBOUKOR ruled out altogether.

It is not clear how the estimated 1000 "legal" and between 2000 and 4000 "illegal" compound residents would be accommodated, since only about 200 shelters would be ready for occupation by the end of September and another 200 in December and April next year respectively. It seems that the state intends to deal with this problem by sending those compound residents who "do not wish to apply for resettlement" into privately owned houses back to the Ovambo homeland "or their home base".[38]

The feasibility of resettling workers in privately owned core houses has to be seen against poverty levels in Katutura township. The Katutura Advisory Board has decided on its monthly meeting in May to approach the "Transitional Government" on low wages and poverty of residents in Katutura. According to one councillor, about 70% of the residents in Katutura did not qualify for housing supplied by NASBOUKOR, as their wages were below the minimum required for purchasing the cheapest core house provided by the

corporation.[39]

References

1. See "SWAPO en die vakbonde", issued by NUNW.
2. The Windhoek Advertiser (WA), 18.8.1987.
3. Windhoek Observer, 6.6.1987; The Namibian, 26.6.1987; SALB, Vol.12 No.3, 1987.
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Regulating Asbestos: Too little, Too late?

On the 10 April 1987, regulations governing the processing and use of asbestos were passed in terms of the Machinery and Occupational Safety Act (MOSA). This is roughly 18 months after the first set of draft asbestos regulations were gazetted under MOSA. While the draft regulations have been improved in certain respects, the final schedule still contains some serious shortcomings. This could well result in a standard that is too lenient for a substance that causes asbestosis and which has been proven to be a cause of cancer and other asbestos related diseases (ARD's).

***What is in the Regulations?**

The exposure limit for asbestos has been set at 1 fibre per millilitre of air (1 f/ml), with an action level of 0,5 f/ml. The action level refers to the concentration of the substance in the air, which is less than the exposure limit, but at or above which level, certain preventive measures have to be taken.

The regulations apply to all employers who use or process asbestos in raw mineral form, and to all employers who process materials

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The following is a summary of main points only. For more detail, refer to the Asbestos Regulations,GG no.10700, 10/4/87. All quotations are from the Regulations.

containing asbestos. The duties of these employers are as follows:

1. They have to ensure that workers are not exposed to average concentrations of asbestos that exceed the limit of 1 f/ml.

2. Every employee working with asbestos, has to be "systematically and thoroughly informed" of the regulations, the hazards of asbestos, the precautions to be taken to protect workers against exposure, and other related issues.

3. Employers have to ensure that airborne concentrations of asbestos dust are measured on a regular basis, except where measurements reveal levels below the action level of 0,5 f/ml. These measurements have to be representative, regular and have to be recorded. "From time to time," the results of measurements have to be posted in conspicuous places in the workplace.

4. Exposure records have to be kept for all employees exposed to asbestos fibres. These records have to be kept for a minimum of 50 years after any employee's services are terminated and copies of these records have to be available for inspection by an inspector. Doctors have to be given access to the records of employees on the written request of such employees.

5. Areas of a plant have to be zoned as asbestos areas, where exposure may be equal to or greater than the action level (0,5 f/ml), and as respirator zones, where exposure may be greater than the exposure limit (1,0 f/ml).

6. Employers have to control and prevent, "as far as possible", the exposure of persons to asbestos dust. This has to be done by a range of engineering controls, proper work organisation, limiting the use of asbestos to quantities that are "reasonably necessary" and through ensuring appropriate work practices.

7. All workplaces, machinery, plant and equipment have to be maintained in a clean state and cleaning is to be carried out by vacuum-cleaning equipment.

8. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

8.1 Where it is not possible, by technical methods, to ensure that exposure is below or equal to the exposure limit, workers

have to be provided with respiratory protective equipment (masks) which will reduce asbestos levels in inhaled air to below the limit.

8.2 Where monitoring results or accidental releases of dust, result in concentrations above the exposure limit, workers have to be supplied with respiratory protective equipment. The regulations state that this should be considered as a temporary measure and not as an alternative to technical control.

8.3 Furthermore, the employer is responsible for proper maintenance of PPE, proper cleaning of protective clothing and equipment and the provision of washing and toilet facilities and separate lockers for protective and personal clothing.

The duties of employees who work with asbestos or materials containing asbestos, are to follow instructions given by the employer with regard to the following:

- preventing asbestos dust being released into the air
- the wearing and use of PPE
- wearing personal samplers to measure exposure
- disposing of waste material containing asbestos and cleaning of premises.

Other features of the regulations are a ban on spraying asbestos and the use of compressed air to remove asbestos dust from any surface. The regulations also cover the processing of materials containing asbestos; packaging, transport and storage of asbestos and materials containing asbestos; the demolition or alteration of any structure containing asbestos; the disposal of asbestos waste and labelling and provision of information on any article which contains asbestos.

Finally, the penalty for contravention of the regulations has been set at a fine not exceeding R1000,00 or 6 months imprisonment, with provision for an escalation of R5 per day (or one day's imprisonment per day) in the case of continous offences. The additional imprisonment shall not exceed 90 days.

Problems in the Regulations

The exposure limit set by the regulations (1 f/ml) is generally in line with the more lenient side of the international spectrum, for

example, the EEC which has a limit of 1 f/ml. However, the UK, USA and the Scandinavian countries have much more stringent standards and here the trend is towards a total ban on the use of asbestos. Equally important, is the fact that the MOSA regulations do not differentiate between different types of asbestos fibre.

It is now widely recognised that fibres such as crocidolite (blue asbestos) are more dangerous than chrysotile (white asbestos) and regulations governing the former are in most cases more stringent. In the UK, for instance, the control limit for crocidolite is 0,2 f/ml, which is five times as stringent as the MOSA standard. This is particularly important for South Africa where, until recently, most asbestos produced and used was crocidolite.

The regulations exempt employers who use asbestos "occasionally and incidental to their main activity", from notifying the divisional inspector of the fact that they use asbestos, from the monitoring requirements and from keeping an exposure record. The terms "occasionally and incidental to their main activity" are not defined and could be widely interpreted. For instance transport workers or building workers could be intermittently exposed to asbestos, and yet be sufficiently exposed for their health to be affected.

The bottom line in the case of asbestos, is that any and all asbestos usage should be controlled. Where the use of this substance is incidental to production the regulatory requirements should act as an incentive to employers to use substitute materials, instead of relaxing exposure control.

Another problem area in the regulations relates to measurement of airborne asbestos fibres. They state that measurements of exposure should be monthly. However, they allow for an increase in the period between measurements to 12 months if the level is below the action level, and 6 months if the level is between the action level and the limit. Monthly measurments need only be resumed if a measurement shows a level in excess of the standard. This means that it is possible for the actual exposure of employees to be above the exposure limit for perhaps 5 months or above the action level for perhaps 11 months without being detected, and without any preventive measures being taken. This is unsatisfactory, and completely negates the concept of an "action level" outlined in the preamble to the regulations, and the normally accepted concept of an "exposure limit".

An additional problem in the procedure for measurements relates to representivity. The regulations state that the exposure of at least one in ten employees should be measured. This is not statistically adequate: international guidelines for sampling strategies which imply a high probability of including those employees who have the highest exposure levels may require that more than this number should be sampled.

The combination of this built-in reduction in frequency of monitoring and the overall lack of a clear sampling strategy in the regulations, means that there is a disincentive for employers to measure exposures frequently enough, and comprehensively enough, to demonstrate compliance or non-compliance with the regulations.

A further problem and a major gap in the regulations, is the complete absence of any requirement that employers provide medical monitoring of employees exposed to asbestos. There is also no mention of access to medical records by doctors, at the request of employees.

Although there is an emphasis on the need for employers to control, and prevent, exposure to asbestos dust, there is no mention of the most effective method of control: substitution. Substitution should be made compulsory contingent upon the availability of substitutes. The regulations mention engineering controls, but not as a priority. After substitution, these are clearly the next best method.

There are a number of other problems in the regulations, such as the reliance placed on the use of unspecified respirators, most of which are known to provide inefficient protection against dust. The penalties laid down are also hopelessly inadequate as a deterrent to dangerous work practices. The procedures covering demolition work are inadequate and should rather be subject to the full legislation as with any other workplace where asbestos is handled.

However, one further point of note, is that relating to employee participation in implementing the regulations. Unfortunately, it is to be expected that representative union structures are excluded from the ambit of the regulations, but that they only once refer to the health and safety structures outlined in MOSA itself, is indeed strange. It would seem that the regulations have been introduced without reference to the safety representative and

safety committee system which completely contradicts the spirit of the act in terms of which these regulations have been promulgated. Provision should, however, be made for the full participation of not only the SR's and SC's, but of any representative body at plant level. Representatives of employees should be involved in every stage of the process of implementing, and monitoring the implementation of, the regulations.

Additional comments

While the regulation of asbestos usage is long overdue in South Africa, this first attempt should be treated with a strong dose of scepticism. This is so firstly, because by setting a standard for asbestos, or an exposure limit, it is implied that at low levels of exposure the risk of lung cancer is insignificant or small enough to be acceptable. However, from studies conducted it is clear that in exposed groups of workers, there is a significant excess of asbestos related disease's (ARD's) when compared with unexposed populations. Secondly, the tendency world-wide has been to continually revise standards downwards as "safe levels" are found to be unsafe. Up to now all "safe levels" have produced their crop of ARD's. In other words, no safe level has been demonstrated in terms of which prevention of all ARD's is feasible.

Because there are no safe levels, because ARD's are incurable and also because compensation is so inadequate and difficult to obtain, the most rational health policy is to prevent ARD's. The only way to do this which would be consistent with current scientific knowledge is to stop using asbestos. In other words, asbestos use should be banned.

As mentioned above, the trend in countries such as the UK and the USA, is towards a ban on asbestos, and in the short term, there is an increasing use of safe substitutes. Technically, adequate substitutes now exist for virtually all applications of asbestos.

The South African regulations, however, do not mirror the more cautious approach that has been adopted in these countries. Despite this, they could certainly improve the situation in the case of a number of firms who pay little heed to international developments, provided that the regulations are properly policed. It should be borne in mind that these regulations do not apply to the asbestos mining industry, where exposure, both at work and in

the surrounding environment, is higher than in manufacturing.

However, there are three important developments which have affected the South African asbestos industry in the last few years and which put the regulations even further out of step with current realities.

Firstly, there has been a dramatic economic downturn in the industry itself. This has been due to the economic recession in the building products industry in particular, but also due to a decrease in demand for the type of asbestos produced in South Africa, namely crocidolite and amosite, the more aggressive carcinogens. This can surely only strengthen the arguments for substitution.

Secondly, some of the companies using asbestos for the production of building products are part of multinational corporations and have, through their parent companies, attained a certain sensitivity to the hazards of asbestos. This has meant the enforcement of standards and exposure controls that are in some cases more stringent than those in the current regulations. It could also be presumed that some of these practices have spread from these companies to others.

Finally, significant improvements in working conditions in the asbestos manufacturing and transport industries, have been gained through effective worker organisation. On the other hand, in mining, building and construction, and the state transport sector there is little, if any, evidence of improvement. These sectors are characterised by primitive industrial relations practices and, to date, little established worker organisation.

These factors, if adequately accounted for, could have provided a background to a set of regulations that emphasised substitution, strict control in line with more progressive international developments, no exemptions and a far more open approach to the participation of worker representatives in monitoring the regulations.

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Aids and Labour Policy

Peter Lurie

In May 1981 a mysterious cluster of five cases of a rare pneumonia was reported in homosexual men in Los Angeles, California.[1] From this seemingly innocuous beginning the Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) has spread to nearly 90 countries on five continents.[2] By October 1986, 33,217 cases had been reported to the World Health Organisation[3] - and these figures are likely underestimates. In addition, one to one-and-one-half million people in the United States alone have been infected with the virus that causes the disease, the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), thus providing a reservoir for future AIDS cases.[3]

Medical science has struggled to remain abreast of the epidemic. HIV was rapidly isolated [4,5] and a test to detect infection with the virus was developed within one year.[6] This test works by measuring antibodies, the body's defence against HIV infection. Despite these advances, the disease remains incurable and the outcome invariably fatal.

Meanwhile the disease rages virtually unchecked among two of American society's historically most beleaguered groups: homosexual men, discriminated against on the basis of their failure to conform with socially (and in some cases legally) prescribed sexual practices, and people addicted to drugs which they inject into their veins, the majority of whom are caught in a web of urban poverty. Society has been forced, somewhat reluctantly, to re-examine the social causes and consequences of the disease and in so doing a veritable pandora's box of social, political and economic issues has been opened.

While foreign countries have often been slow to address these issues, the relative infancy of the disease in South Africa provides the opportunity to openly discuss them before they become mired in factual distortion, social prejudice and misguided government policy.

In this paper the disease itself is first discussed. Thereafter selected public and social policy problems raised by the epidemic and germane to the labour movement are addressed.

profile of the disease

In most people, HIV infection remains dormant although antibody to the virus may be demonstrated in the blood. Years after initial infection, some people will progress to a condition known as AIDS-related complex (ARC), which is characterised by fevers, weight loss, lethargy, multiple swollen glands and diarrhoea. Some HIV-infected people may fall ill with one of a variety of rare infections. It is this event that signals the transition to full-blown AIDS.[7] Current estimates of the proportion of people with antibody against HIV likely to develop AIDS range from 6,4% in 61 months to 34% in three years.[8,9] In one study the average life span after first hospitalisation for AIDS was 224 days.[10]

Infection with HIV can be transmitted by exchange of blood and blood products, during hetero- and homosexual contact and from mother to infant. Groups at high-risk for contracting AIDS are, therefore:

1. Homosexual and bisexual men.
2. Present and past intravenous drug users.
3. Recipients of blood and blood product transfusions.
4. Men and women from Central Africa and Haiti, where the disease is common.
5. Male and female sexual contacts of the above.
6. Children of infected mothers.[11]

While transmission among homosexuals has clearly predominated in most western countries and intravenous drug users constitute a significant proportion of AIDS victims in the U.S., in Central Africa the disease seems to be spread mainly by heterosexual contact.[12,13] The existence of two divergent patterns manifested by a single disease may be the result of differing sexual practices and rates of intravenous drug use in the two regions. Alternatively, the chance introduction of the virus into a particular group of persons may explain the phenomenon.

The disease profile in South Africa reflects both patterns described above. Sixty-five cases have been reported so far, 48 in South Africans, 16 in persons of Central African origin and one in a Haitian. Of the South African patients, 43 have been homosexual, four recipients of infected blood or blood products and one a male with heterosexual contact in Central Africa. To date there has been no reported case of AIDS in an intravenous

drug user, nor has heterosexual contact in South Africa ever been implicated in a case of AIDS.[14] It is clear, therefore, that the major source of disease in South Africa thus far has been Western countries, with a minority of cases originating elsewhere in Africa.

AIDS and the mines

Despite the clear need to focus on HIV infection acquired through contact with Westerners, much attention has been diverted to Central Africans. Foreign Minister Pik Botha, for example, has suggested that African National Congress insurgents are doubly dangerous as they bear both deadly weapons and AIDS bombs in their bodies.[15]

Marginally more subtle, but of greater concern to the labour movement, has been the attention devoted to antibody and disease rates among foreign miners. Results of studies by the Chamber of Mines thus far have provided some reassurance: not a single case of AIDS among miners was detected and the proportion of people with antibodies to HIV was generally low, although the rate among Malawian nationals rose to 6.6%.

Three strategies for preventing disease dissemination on the mines may be identified:

1. Screening foreign nationals for antibodies.
2. Ceasing recruiting miners from abroad.
3. Repatriating infected miners.

Of these, the former two have already been implemented by the Chamber of Mines and the third seriously considered by the State.

Aside from the huge cost it entails, the first approach is doomed to failure by the limitations of the antibody test itself. A brief digression into the nature of medical testing is necessary at this juncture.

Any medical test is prone to two forms of error: 1. The apparent detection of a condition that is not really present (a false-positive) and 2. The failure to detect an existing condition (a false-negative). In the screening of populations not at high-risk for a disease (such as miners for AIDS), the number of false-positives may match or even exceed the number of true-

positives.[16] Although confirmatory tests may be performed, these are costly, time-consuming and themselves prone to occasional error.

In fact the HIV antibody test has proved to be particularly plagued by false-positives in people from African countries. One explanation is that Africans are more likely to be exposed to parasitic diseases such as malaria which can produce false-positive tests.[17] This in turn suggests that the Chamber of Mines' assessment of antibody rates is an overestimate.

The option to cease new recruitment of foreign workers has already been implemented by the Chamber of Mines with respect to Malawian miners. As discussed recently in these pages,[18] the sanctions threat has created an incentive to diminish dependence on foreign miners. If South Africa is perceived nationally as an initially disease-free country beset by the afflictions of foreign black Africans and a decadent (ie. homosexual) Western society, the xenophobia that the State seeks to instill in South Africans will be magnified. Ceasing recruitment should thus be viewed not only as a strategy with little prospect of having a significant impact on AIDS in South Africa, but also as one that dovetails neatly with the State's overall political objectives.

The most rudimentary ethical and humanitarian considerations preclude the final approach, although at one time the State gave it serious consideration.[19] It would hardly seem justifiable to recruit miners from abroad and then send them packing on the basis of a false-positive prone blood test that detects HIV infection but cannot predict whether or not AIDS itself will develop in any given individual.

We have seen, therefore, that the foregoing strategies are either extremely expensive, scientifically unsupportable, subject to political manipulation or simply unethical. Prevention of AIDS among miners will be accomplished through methods identical to those for the general population.

While the State's reasons for concentrating on AIDS on the mines are politically suspect, there is no doubt that the potential exists for an epidemic among black South Africans of the sort that has occurred elsewhere in Africa. In that regard, it should be noted that public health authorities' efforts to educate black South Africans have been minimal.

Ironically, AIDS in South Africa may yet become a graphic reflection of the country's divisions: an epidemic among white male homosexuals and a parallel, but separately developing, outbreak in the black population.

The occupational risk of contracting AIDS

As the number of HIV-infected people in South Africa continues to grow, more interest in the risk of acquiring AIDS in the workplace can be expected. There are two groups of workers with differing likelihoods of contracting disease: 1. Health workers and others (eg. tattooists, ear piercers) exposed on a regular basis to body fluids and 2. All other workers whose only means of becoming infected would be so-called casual contact (shaking hands, sharing eating utensils, etc.). As we shall see, in the former category the risk of HIV infection is extremely low and largely preventable; in the latter it is essentially non-existent.

Tens of thousands of health workers have been involved in the management of AIDS patients, including hundreds who have sustained needlestick wounds with HIV-infected blood. Nonetheless, there have been only three documented cases in which a worker has developed HIV antibodies based on his or her occupational exposure.[20-2] In each case the subject received a large innoculation of infectious body fluid. To date not a single case of occupationally-related AIDS itself has been reported. The risk to health workers, including those who have suffered needlestick wounds with infected body fluids thus remains extremely low. The risk can be still further diminished by proper disposal of infected materials.[23,24]

Despite the isolation of HIV from saliva[25] and tears,[26] the case for casual contagion remains unproven. In two rigorous studies examining the non-sexual household contacts of patients with AIDS and ARC in New York City[27] and Kinshasa,[28] no case in which casual contact resulted in infection was detected.

This implies that workers without direct contact with body fluids are at no risk for occupational infection.

As far as permitted by the infected person's work capacity, there is no justification for precluding such persons from resuming employment. With the possible exception of antibody positive health workers performing surgical procedures, no special precau-

tions are required to minimise the risk of HIV transmission from known infected persons to patients, clients or fellow workers.[23]

Workplace screening

For the reasons noted above, routine workplace antibody screening as a condition of employment is not appropriate. The benefits of determining workers' antibody status and contributing to the fund of medical knowledge should be carefully weighed against the stigma which the mere participation in such studies would entail. Only when each of the three conditions outlined below is fulfilled should screening of employees be considered:

1. Investigators must provide an absolute guarantee of the confidentiality of the result.

2. Prior to participation, workers must give their fully informed consent. This should include a warning that, as has already occurred in the U.S.,[29] a positive result in a test may lead to discrimination in health care, insurance or housing.

3. Participation should be limited to those studies that will contribute meaningfully to disease knowledge and surveillance. The number of workers studied should not exceed the minimum required to realise those ends.

Unions can participate in this process by drafting or monitoring informed consent agreements, exacting guarantees of confidentiality from clinical investigators and providing input on study protocols.

Strategies for prevention

In the absence of effective drug therapy for AIDS or the imminent prospect of an effective vaccine against HIV, prevention must remain the centrepiece of the public health strategy. The disease must be liberated from the anti-homosexual prejudice that has beset it so far and which precludes the rational addressing of the complex issues it raises. Public education on precisely what constitutes "safe sex" should be undertaken and due consideration given to the role of condoms in the possible prevention of disease transmission. While more government resources clearly need to be devoted to the disease, such funds would be most appropriately

spent on public education, disease surveillance and maintenance of a safe blood supply. This is a far more cost-effective approach to disease control than the State's ill-considered plan to establish clinics exclusively to treat the few surviving AIDS patients.

The labour movement in Western countries has undercut the current epidemic of public hysteria by defending its membership against discrimination based on drug habits, sexual orientation or antibody status. In several countries, moreover, unions have been at the very forefront of the public education campaign, in some cases even publishing booklets on the disease.[30] In the South African situation, given the rather meagre resources thus far devoted by the State to public education and the distrust with which government initiatives are often viewed by workers, consideration of similar strategies would seem timely.

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The Extent of Shiftwork in the Manufacturing Sector in South Africa

by T Adler

Shiftwork in South Africa is a comparatively unexamined sphere of working life.[1] It would appear to have no history. No published figures chart it's development or extent.[2] Even the most comprehensive digest of conditions of service in the country allows only a brief mention of shift operations.[3] There is also no South African parallel to the extensive European, Australian and American studies of the numerous social and health problems created by the inversion of normal hours of work from day to night.[4] In short, shiftwork in the South African context is something of an enigma.

Given its prevalence in the mining industry, the original engine of economic development in South Africa, this lack of information of shiftwork is somewhat surprising.[5] The information gap becomes even more glaring as the research done for this survey exposes the extent of shiftwork in the economy. Between one quarter and one third of the industrial activity in South Africa is shift dependent. The proportion of hours worked within a three shift continuous cycle is on the increase, particularly in certain sectors of the economy.[6] What becomes clear from evidence is that manufacturers are increasingly attempting to offset the high and escalating costs of production in general, and of rapidly changing technology in particular, by working their machinery and labour around the clock.[7]

The extension of shiftwork and its growing prominences as an issue at the collective bargaining table, make it important to document the historical development, nature and extent of this form of industrial activity in the South African context. This article represents a step in this task.[8] Its modest aim based on the limited statistical and legislative information available to date, is to outline the legislative development of shift operations. It will also analyse the extent of shiftwork in the manufacturing sector of the economy.

A legislative history

The concept of continuous shiftwork did not receive legal recogni-

tion until the amendment of the Factories Act in 1941. Prior to this date there was no formal recognition of continuous activity as a form of regular operation. The Mines and Works Act of 1911, the first industrial legislation to be promulgated by the newly formed Union of South Africa, permitted certain activities to be carried out on Sundays and public holidays. Authorised operations here included those connected with pumping and ventilating machinery, machinery used for the supply of light, heat, power and steam boilers, as well as any 'continuous chemical, metallurgical or smelting process'.[9] Continuous working was also recognised in the 'first serious attempt to regulate conditions of labour by statute'[10] the 1918 Factories Act. This Act makes provision for continuous activity in a limited number of circumstances relating to[11]:

> "starting motive power for the machinery in the plant, or where the supply of raw material is intermittent or subject to seasonal variations or where raw material is liable to deterioration if untreated or where the exigencies of the business render special hours necessary during certain times or seasons".

In such cases, permission was required either from the relevant Inspector of Labour or from the Minister. The present day requirement that exemptions granted for continuous working be published in the Government Gazette dates from this particular legislation.

In 1931 a further development in the concept of shiftwork took place. The major effect of the 1931 amendment to the Factories Act was to reduce the hours of work from 50 to 48. An important, but little noticed feature of the amendment was the clause extending the legally permitted night hours of female workers from 6p.m. to midnight. This provision, according to the Minister of Labour at the time, F H P Cresswell, was to 'protect women who may have to work long hours'.[12] This somewhat curious form of protection allowed the introduction of two eight hour shifts - an arrangement which had been lobbied for by the employers in the fruit, jam and fish canning industries.[13] These low-wage industries are characterised by seasonal peaks, requiring long hours at certain times of the year. During the parliamentary debate on the amendment, the MP for East London, Mr J A Bowie, noted that the time had long passed for legislation to be promulgated which dealt comprehensively with shift operations. His views were not to bear fruit for another 10 years.

The legislative provision of continuous shiftwork

In 1941 the Factories Act was amended. Once more the major parliamentary debate raged around the proposal to reduce the maximum weekly hours of work from 48 down to 46. As significant an issue, however, was the amendment which for the first time gave formal legal recognition to continuous working by means of a three shift system.[14] The new Act permitted the Minister to declare by notice in the Government Gazetter, that a particular activity might be worked continuously. It also permitted the working week for shift workers to extend to 48 hours (compared to the new legal maximum of 46 hours), of which two hours should be paid at overtime rates.

One explanation for this new clause emerged in the speech of the Minister of Labour when he introduced the Bill. Discussing the provision of power and electricity he noted that the demand for these around the clock operations was on the increase.[15] Recognition and regulation of shift operations was therefore required in the interests of economic development.

Such regulation would also have been required in the manufacturing sector which expanded considerably during the war years. Manufacturing output increased by 116% between 1939 and 1945, and the industrial workforce grew by 53% over the same period.[16] Despite this increase in the workforce, industry remained severely hampered by labour shortages. This was especially true of skilled workers, many of whom had joined the armed forces. Shiftwork was one means to overcome this shortage of labour. Others included the increasing use of black and female workers, both of whom were absorbed into the industrial workforce in large quantities at this time.

An examination of the exemptions published in terms of the new shiftwork provision bear out the Minister's explanations. Table 1[17] lists the exemptions gazetted since 1942 by sector and decade. Of the 506 exemptions gazetted since 1942[18], 235 or 46.4% are in respect of establishments concerned with the generation of power, or the provision of services such as water, sewerage disposal and electricity. Of these 235 exemptions for the provision of services, 122 or 51.91% were granted in 1943 - two years after the Act was passed. The vast majority of service sector exemptions, some 69.36% were granted in the first nine years following the passing of the Act. However, from 1950 onwards most

Table 1

Gazetted exemptions by sector and decade 1941 - 1986

	1941-49	1950-59	1960-69	1970-79	1980-86	Total
Total Service	163	52	19	0	1	235
Total Manuf	55	54	69	53	40	271
Grand Totals	218	106	88	53	41	506
Food	3	4	9	3	5	24
Beverages	3	1	2	5	1	12
Textiles	0	1	9	10	3	23
Paper.Wood	3	11	7	0	7	28
Printing	0	0	0	1	0	1
Ind.Chem	9	8	17	8	5	47
Other Chem	0	4	4	8	2	18
Rubber	0	0	2	1	1	4
Plastics	0	0	1	1	3	5
Brick	10	2	3	0	0	15
Glass	1	1	0	0	1	3
Basic.Min	10	7	3	4	1	25
Iron/Stl	2	4	1	2	0	9
Non-fer Metals	0	1	0	0	1	2
Metl Prdcts	0	2	2	o	1	5
Elec.Mchn	2	0	0	0	0	2
Motor	0	3	0	3	1	7
Other Manuf	1	1	0	0	0	2
Cement	6	0	0	0	4	10
Water/Elec Municipal Provincial Services	163	52	19	0	1	235
Petrol. Coal.Gas	5	4	9	5	4	27
Prof and Scientific	0	0	0	2	0	2

exemptions were granted in the manufacturing sector. In the decade 1960-69, years of unparalleled economic development in South Africa, 78.41% of the exemptions granted were in respect of manufacturing operations. This would coincide with the coming of age of the manufacturing sector in this country.[19]

Tracing the development of shiftwork by means of the published exemptions presents an inadequate picture of production performed on a continuous basis. The small number of exemptions granted in the 1980's, or even the total number of exemptions granted to date (i.e. 506) does not equal the number of establishments working on a continuous basis. In 1983 there were at least 1389 plants working on a Sunday, of which 879 were working shifts.[20] In fact, all that can be said of the plants where exemptions have been granted in terms of the Factories Act (now the Basic Conditions of Employment Act) is that they have been given authority to work on a continuous basis without paying the double time premiums legally required for Sunday work and work done on paid Public Holidays. As has already been shown, there are a number of plants which are working continuous shiftwork on Sundays and Public Holidays without an exemption. In such cases, workers should be paid the premiums laid down by the Act. That this does not always happen has emerged in the course of research. Examples here would include two major parastatals, Iscor, which employs 50,000 workers,[21] and SASOL which employs 12,000 workers and whose exemption was only published in 1985 after the plant at Secunda was organised by the Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU).[22] It is clear that in some instances the enforcement of basic legal rights only occurs after the organisation of workers into trade unions.

Table 2[23] : Number of Industrial Council Agreements and Wage Determinations providing shift allowances.

	Total No. of Agreements	No. with Shift Allowance	No. with Night Shift Allowance
Industrial Councils	94	15	31
Wage Determinations	61	0	11
TOTAL	155	15	42

The extent of shiftwork in South Africa

Some indication of the extent of shifts currently being worked is available from an examination of the published Industrial Council Agreements and Wage Determinations. Table 2 above sets out the number of published wage regulating measures which at the end of December 1984 provided for shift allowances.

As we can see from the Table, out of 155 statutory wage regulating instruments, covering an estimated total of 2 083 339 workers, only 15 provide for shiftwork allowances, while another 42 provide for night shift allowances. Information on the nature and extent of these allowances or how many workers in these industries actually work shifts is currently not available. The most detailed picture to date is provided by an examination of two unpublished surveys undertaken by the Central Statistical Services.[24] Table 3
below gives an indication of the extent of shifts being worked. From it we can see that in 1981, almost a third of the hours worked in the manufacturing sector were worked by shiftworkers. Of these hours, 14.42% were worked by establishments working on a 2 shift system, while 17% were worked by establishments on a three shift system.

If we then compare this situation to the position in 1983, we see a decrease in the total number of weekly hours worked of 1 889 510 hours or 3.78%. Within this general decline, there has been an absolute increase in the number of weekly hours worked by non-shiftworkers of 5.20%. The weekly hours worked by non-shiftworkers as a proportion of the total number of weekly hours worked increased from 68.58% in 1981 to 73.78% in 1983 - an increase of 5.2%. Hours worked by shiftworkers concomitantly decreased by 19.69%. The proportion of weekly hours worked on shift declined from 31.42% to 26.22% of the total weekly hours worked, a decrease of 5.2%.

Although there has been a significant decrease in the hours worked on shift, as significant has been the change within the shiftworking sector in favour of those establishments working a three shift system. Absolute hours worked on two shifts declined by 31.20%, while those worked on three shifts declined by only 10.4%. The weekly hours worked on two shifts, as a proportion of total weekly hours, declined by 4.11% while the decrease in weekly hours worked on three shift system has declined by 1.09% of total weekly hours

worked. A closer examination of the figures therefore reveals that within the general decrease in hours worked on shift, there has been a swing in favour of those hours worked on a three shift roster. Continuous operations would therefore seem to be on the increase even though the economy as a whole was going through a recession during the period covered by the survey.[25]

Table 3 : Weekly hours worked on shift : Total manufacturing 1981 and 1983

	1981	1983	Increase Number	(Dec) %
Hours worked :total	49 983 862	48 094 352	(1 889 510)	(3.78)
Hours worked: Non Shift	34 278 552	35 482 348	1 203 796	3.51
% of Total hours	68.58	73.78		5.20
Hours worked: Shift total	15 705 330	12 612 004	(3 093 326)	(19.69)
% of Total hours	31.42	26.22		(5.20)
Hours worked: Two shift	7 207 965	4 958 852	(2 249 113)	(31.20)
% of Total hours	14.42	10.31		(4.11)
Hours worked: Three shift	98 497 365	7 653 152	(884 213)	(10.40)
% of Total hours	17.00	15.91		(1.09)

Despite recessionary conditions, certain sectors have shown an absolute increase in the number of hours worked on shift. Tables 6 to 12 found in Appendix One give an outline of the situation in the rubber products, plastic products, motor vehicles, parts and accessories, textile, paper, printing industries and non-ferrous metal industries.[26] In all of these there has been an increase in the number of weekly hours worked by shiftworkers over the two years between 1981 and 1983. This increase is most marked in the printing and publishing industry, (see Table 11), where the weekly

hours worked in the course of three shift operations increased by a staggering 259.55%. A similarly dramatic increase took place in the non-ferrous basic metals sector, where weekly hours worked on shift operations as a whole increased from 33.77% to 46.36%, while weekly hours worked on three shifts increased by 183% over the period (see Table 12). In the rubber products industry (see Table 6) the proportion of weekly hours worked on shift increased from 56.8% to 76.51%. The increase in three shift operations has moved from 35.44% to 50.02% of total weekly hours worked. Other increases in three shift operations are clearly seen in the plastics, (Table 7) and textile industry (Table 9). Greater use of two shift operations has also taken place in the paper (Table 10) and motor vehicle industries (Table 8).

There has been little change in the pattern of hours of work in the glass and chemicals industries. (See Appendix One, Tables 13 to 15). In the processing sector of the glass industry, shift operations were common from inception. In both the industrial chemical industry and the category of other chemical products, continuous shiftwork remained a feature of the industry despite a large decline in the total weekly hours worked.

Table 4 : Extent of shiftworking in the major industries in South Africa: 1983

Ranking	Industry	% Hours worked on shift
1	Rubber	76.51
2	Paper	53.28
3	Textiles	49.88
4	Industrial Chemicals	47.84
5	Plastics	47.83
6	Glass	38.91
7	Printing	27.81
8	Food	26.00
9	Motor	24.79
10	Other Chemicals	23.46
11	Metals	19.98

In the metal industry as a whole there has been a massive decline in the total weekly hours worked over the period. Shift hours declined by 40.11%. However, even within this decline, the hours worked by workers on a three shift system declined less than those working a two shift system, indicating a move in favour of three shift operations (see Appendix One, Table 16). Table 4 below lists the order of industry in terms of the % hours worked on shift. International comparisons (see Table 5) reveal an interesting similarity in the order and nature of shiftwork patterns in other countries.

International comparisons

Similar developments in shiftwork patterns have occurred in Europe, America and Japan. The extension of shiftwork appears to have increased dramatically over the past 15 to 20 years. In the United Kingdom, between 1968 and 1976, the percentage of manual workers on shiftwork increased form 19.4% to 23.2%. In West Germany the percentage moved from 12% to 27% for all workers over the period 1960-1976, while in the United States over the period 1960-75, the percentage increased from 23-28%. An ILO study done in 1978 found that the known figures show a constant progression in continuous shiftwork in industrialised countries both in absolute and relative terms. The same study estimates the overall number of workers engaged in shiftwork to have approximately doubled between 1950 and 1974. More recent studies confirm that the trend towards increased use of shiftworking has, if anything, continued unabated.[29]

International comparisons also reveal that the sectors which are most prone to shiftworking are reasonably common to all countries. Table 5 below indicates the sectors and extent of shiftworking in the European Economic Community. Comparative South African data has been included in the Table.

The data below indicates that the shiftwork phenomenon in the South African economy mirrors developments elsewhere. What has not kept pace are the monetary and other compensations offered to South African shiftworkers, nor the international concern with the social and health consequences of working shifts.[31]

Conclusion

The information presented in the paper reveals for the first time

the extent of shiftwork in the South African economy. It is also clear that three shift continuous work patterns are on the increase, especially in certain sectors. These figures give a statistical backdrop to the increasing awareness of shiftwork amongst the organised trade union movement over the past two years. Larger numbers of workers are now facing the shiftwork issue, either as a result of its unilateral imposition by management, or as a management demand at the negotiating table. The die is cast for a developing struggle over the conditions under which shifts will be worked in the future.

Table 5 : Extent of shiftworking in manufacturing in the E.E.C. and South Africa.

Country	% Industry involved in shiftwork	Sectors with most shiftwork
Belgium	26.6	Cars, energy, minerals
Denmark	14	Paper, chemicals
FR Germany	20	Energy, chemicals, metals
France	31.3	Metals, paper, textiles
Ireland	18.8	Textiles, chemicals, paper
Italy	22	Metals, paper, non-metallic minerals
Luxembourg	41.5	Metals, chemicals, fibres
Netherlands	10.6	Food and allied products, textiles, metals
United Kingdom	30	Cars, metals, chemicals
South Africa	26.2	Rubber (chemicals), paper, textiles, food, motor, metals

Notes

1. For an initial exploration of this area, see T Adler, "Sleep for Sale: A Consideration of Shiftwork with Specific Reference to the Tyre and Rubber Industry in South Africa.' South African Labour Bulletin, Vol.11 No.6, June-July 1986.
2. In the course of research, two unpublished surveys done by the Central Statistical Services (C.S.S.) at the request of the Federation of Chamber of Industries (F.C.I.) have been uncovered. I am grateful to Mr J De Jager, of the FCI, for

making these available to me. The surveys cover the years 1981 and 1983. They represent the only comparative statistics available on shiftwork. The C.S.S does not intend to do any other surveys of this nature. Given the growing importance of shiftwork in the South African economy, it is highly unsatisfactory that statistical surveys covering this sector will not be continued.

3. Schroeder, Ighsaan and Young, Gordon, Conditions of Employment: An analysis of the conditions of employment set by the Industrial Councils and the Wage Board.. SALDRU labour Research Series, Vol.4, Cape Town, December 1985. Shiftwork is noted only in relation to whether the shift provisions apply to all workers in that industry or not. See Tables 9 and 10, pp.65-69.
4. For a discussion of this literature, and its absence in South Africa, see Adler, op. cit., pp101-102.
5. For a discussion of the role of mining in the South African economy see D. Hobart Houghton, 'Economic Development 1985-1966' in Wilson M and Thompson L., (eds), The Oxford History of South Africa, Vol 11, O.U.P., 1971 pp18, 19 and 33.
6. See p.10 and Appendix 1 below.
7. Similar developments have occurred in Europe, America and Japan. See p.12 below.
8. In addition to Adler op,cit. other articles dealing with shifts in South Africa include Health Information Centre, 'The Health and Social Effects of Shift Work', Johannesburg, 1983. P Arenson and I Molzen, 'An Investigation into the Health and Social Effects of Shift Work on Women Office Cleaners'. Industrial Sociology 111 Research Project, University of the Witwatersrand, 1983: C Hartford, L Rampini and D Feigenbaum, 'Effects of Nightwork on Health', Dept. of Community Health, University of the Witwatersrand. n.d.: Schreiber, K A, "Black Women Shift Workers and the 'Second Shift'. Honours Dissertation, Dept. of Sociology, University of the Witwatersrand, 1987: International Labour Organisation, Application of the Three Shift System to the Iron and Steel Industry., Geneva, 1922. Mets J T., 'Adverse effects of working 12 hour shifts'. Paper presented to the Second Annual Conference of the Ergonomics Society of Southern Africa, Cape Town, 14-15 April, 1986. (A summary of which appears in Productivity S.A. 12, 5 October 1986) and Van Niekerk S., Shiftwork: Motivation, Conditions and Patterns of Shiftwork in 20 Manufacturing Companies in the Cape Peninsula. Honours Dissertation, Dept. of Sociology, University of Cape Town,

February 1987.

The above represents the sum total of studies on shifts in South Africa.

9. Mines and Works Act, 12, 1911. Section 6.
10. Report of the Industrial Legislation Commission. UG37-1935 p11. For a discussion of the Factories Act see Budlender D., Labour Legislation in South Africa, 1924-1945, M.A. dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1979, Chapter 5.
11. Act 28, 1918, Section 13.
12. Hansard, Vol.16, cols. 2229-2230.
13. ibid.
14. Factories, Machinery and Building Work Act.22.1941. Section 19.
15. Hansard, Vol.42, col.5037.
16. See Hobart Houghton, op.cit, p36.
17. Information in this table was extracted from notices published in the Government Gazette between 1942 and 1986, as well as correspondence with the Department of Manpower, I am grateful to SALDRU for providing copies of the relevant government notices.
18. None of these exemptions have been withdrawn, although some will have lapsed as factories in respect of which they were granted ceased to produce. Telephone conversation with Mr. van den Bergh, Department of Manpower, 26 November 1986.
19. See Davies Rob, O'Meara Dan, and Dlamini Sipho, The Struggle for South Africa, Zed Publications, 1986, pp.28-29, and Hobart Houghton op.cit p.32 and 34.
20. Central Statistical Services, 'Shift Work in Manufacturing, 1983', Table 1.
21. See 'Memorandum on the Obligation of the Iron and Steel Corporation of South Africa (ISCOR) to pay Sunday premiums to its employees.' Unpublished memorandum done by the Labour and Economic Research Centre for the Metal and Allied Workers Union dated 12th November 1986. This memorandum finds that ISCOR worrkers are entitled to double pay on Sundays. According to MAWU, ISCOR does not pay this premium.
22. Interview with Chris Bonner, Transvaal Branch Secretary, Chemical Workers Industrial Union, 6th December 1986.
23. Source: Schroeder and Young, op.cit., pp1-2 and 67-69.
24. Central Statistical Services 'Shift Work in Manufacturing, 1981' and 'Shift Work in Manufacturing, 1983'. Unpublished surveys made available in 1986. The only comparable statistics in these surveys is that of hours worked. Other figures, suc-

as number of establishments and number of workers are given in categories of Monday to Friday, Saturday and Sunday and it is not possible to combine these three to get a reliable statistic.

25. The index of Physical Volume of Manufacturing Production revealed a decline of 9.1 over the period 1981-1983 from 106.4 in 1981 to 97.3 in 1983. (Base 1980=100). Source: Manufacturing Statistics: Indices of the Physical Volume of Manufacturing Production January 1980 - June 1986: CSS Statistical News Release, November 1986.

26. Figures for these tables have all been derived from the C.S.S. surveys noted previously.

27. According to a study made by the National Productivity Institute in collaboration with the South African Printing and Allied Industries Federation, the printing industry was one of the few industries in South Africa which succeeded in increasing physical volume of production, employment and labour productivity between 1980 and 1985, Star, 10/6/87.

28. Figures for this table were derived from C.S.S. Survey of Shiftwork in Manufacturing, 1983.

29. These figures are drawn from Blyton, Paul, Changes in Working Time, An International Review. Croom Helm, London, 1986, p63. and International Chemical and Energy Federation 'ICEF Continuous Shift Work Project: Resource Report. Geneva, 1985, p6. See also Greater London Council, The London Industrial Strategy., London 1985 and Hart, R A., shorter Working Time. A Dilemma for Collective Bargaining. OECD, Paris, 1984.

30. European Data derived from ETUI. Reduction of Working Hours in Western Europe, Part one, Brussels, 1979, p59, quoted in Hart, op.cit., p61.

31. The South African data was derived from Central Statistical Services 'Shift Work in Manufacturing, 1983'. Unpublished surveys made available in 1986.

32. See Adler op.cit. pp101-111 for a description of monetary and non-monetary premiums paid to shiftworkers, as well as trade union demands for shiftwork.

Appendix One : Tables 6 to 16

Weekly Hours Worked on Shift : Selected Industries

Source: Central Statistical Services. Shiftwork in Manufacturing. Unpublished Surveys, 1981 and 1983.

Table 6

Weekly hours worked on shift: Rubber products 1981 and 1983.

	1981	1983	Increase/Decrease Number	%
Hours worked: Total	639 869	451 361	(188 508)	(29.46)
Hours worked: Non shift	276 455	106 025	(170 430)	(61.64)
% of Total hours	43.20	23.49		(19.71)
Hours worked: Total shift	363 414	345 336	(18 078)	(4.97)
% of total hours	56.80	76.51		19.71
Hours worked: Two shift	136 658	119 584	(17 074)	(12.49)
% of total hours	21.36	26.49		5.13
Hours worked: Three shift	226 756	225 752	(1 004)	(0.44)
% of total hours	35.44	50.02		14.58

Table 7

Weekly Hours Worked on Shift : Plastic Products 1981 and 1983

	1981	1983	Increase/Decrease Number	Increase/Decrease %
Hours worked: Total	874 443	937 312	62 869	7.20
Hours worked: Non shift	373 886	488 954	115 068	30.78
% of total hours	42.76	52.17		9.41
Hours worked: Total shift	500 557	448 358	(52 199)	(10.43)
% of total hours	57.24	47.83		(9.41)
Hours worked: Two shift	309 330	228 129	(81 201)	(26.25)
% of total hours	35.37	24.34		(11.03)
Hours worked: Three shift	191 227	220 229	29 002	15.17
% of total hours	21.87	23.50		1.63

Table 8

Weekly Hours Worked on Shift: Motor Vehicles, Parts, Accessories, 1981 and 1983

	1981	1983	Increase/Decrease Number	Increase/Decrease %
Hours worked: Total	2 357 970	2 042 810	(315 160)	(13.36)
Hour worked: Non shift	1 759 469	1 536 485	(222 984)	(12.67)
% of total hours	74.62	75.21		0.59

Table 8 (contd)

	1981	1983	Increase/Decrease Number	%
Hours worked:				
Total shift	598 501	506 325	(92 176)	(15.40)
% of total hours	23.38	24.79		1.41
Hours worked:				
Two shift	372 132	429 565	57 433	15.43
% of total hours	15.78	21.03		5.25
Hours worked:				
Three shift	226 369	76 760	(149 609)	(66.09)
% of total hours	9.60	3.76		(5.84)

Table 9

Weekly Hours Worked on Shift: Textiles, 1981 and 1983

	1981	1983	Increase/Decrease Number	%
Hours worked:				
Total	5 545 686	4 601 103	(944 583)	(17.03)
Hours worked:				
Non shift	2 402 631	2 306)97	(96 534Ø	(4.02)
% of total hours	43.33	50.12		6.79
Hours worked:				
Total shift	3 143 055	2 295 006	(848 049)	(26.98)
% of total hours	56.68	49.88		(6.80)
Hours worked:				
Two shift	1 622 988	943 Ø89	(679 899)	(41.89)
% of total hours	29.27	20.50		(8.77)
Hours worked				
Three shift	1 520 067	1 351 917	(168 150)	(11.06)
% of total hours	27.41	29.38		1.97

Table 10

Weekly Hours Worked on Shift: Paper and Paper Products, 1981 and 1983

	1981	1983	Increase/Decrease Number	Increase/Decrease %
Hours worked: Total	1 053 606	1 130 429	76 823	7.29
Hours worked: Non shift	538 913	528 149	(10 764)	(2.00)
% of total hours	51.16	46.72		(4.44)
Hours worked: Total shift	514 693	602 280	87 587	17.02
% of total hours	48.85	53.28		4.43
Hours worked: Two shift	96 762	162 092	65 330	67.52
% of total hours	9.18	14.34		5.16
Hours worked: Three shift	417 931	440 188	22 257	5.33
% of total hours	39.67	38.94		0.73

Table 11

Weekly Hours Worked on Shift: Printing, Publishing and Allied, 1981 and 1983

	1981	1983	Increase/Decrease Number	Increase/Decrease %
Hours worked: Total	846 803	1 028 912	182 109	21.51
Hours worked: Non shift	664 623	742 805	78 182	11.76
% of total hours	78.49	72.19		(6.30)

Table 11 (contd)

	1981	1983	Increase/Decrease Number	%
Hours worked:				
Total shift	182 180	286 107	103 927	57.05
% of total hours	21.51	27.81		6.30
Hours worked:				
Two shift	133 779	112 082	(21 697)	(16.22)
% of total hours	15.80	10.89		(4.91)
Hours worked:				
Three shift	48 401	174 025	125 624	259.55
% of total hours	5.71	16.91		11.20

Table 12

Weekly Hours Worked: Non-Ferrous Metal Basic Industries: 1981 and 1983

	1981	1983	Increase/Decrease Number	%
Hours worked:				
Total	652 354	885 785	233 431	35.78
Hours worked:				
Non shift	432 011	475 0871	43 070	9.97
% of total hours	66.22	53.63		(12.59)
Hours worked:				
Total shift	220 343	410 704	190 361	86.39
% of total hours	33.77	4.36		12.59
Hours worked:				
Two shift	91 151	44 738	(46 413)	(50.92)
% of total hours	13.97	5.05		(8.92)
Hours worked:				
Three shift	129 912	365 966	236 774	183.27
% of total hours	19.80	41.31		21.51

Table 13

Weekly Hours Worked on Shift: Glass and Glass Products, 1981 and 1983

	1981	1983	Increase/Decrease Number	%
Hours worked: Total	396 470	458 426	61 956	15.63
Hours worked: Non shift	240 745	280 066	39 321	16.33
% of total hours	60.72	61.09		(0.37)
Hours worked: Total shift	155 725	178 360	22 635	14.54
% of total hours	39.28	38.91		0.37
Hours worked: Two shift	1 320	1 200	(120)	(9.09)
% of total hours	0.33	0.26		(0.07)
Hours worked: Three shift	154 405	177 160	22755	14.74
% of total hours	38.95	38.65		(0.30)

Table 14

Weekly Hours Worked on Shift: Industrial Chemicals, 1981 and 1983

	1981	1983	Increase/Decrease Number	%
Hours worked: Total	940 680	808 947	(131 7339	(14.00)
Hours worked: Non shift	448 670	421 932	(26 738)	(5.96)
% of total hours	47.70	52.16		4.46
Hours worked:				

Table 14 (contd)

	1981	1983	Increase/Decrease Number	%
Total shift	492 010	387 015	(014 995)	(21.34)
% of total hours	52.30	47.84		4.46)
Hours worked:				
Two shift	8 054	3 345	(4 709)	(58.47)
% of total hours	Ø.86	Ø.41		(0.45)
Hours worked:				
Three shift	483 956	383 6706	(100 286)	(20.79)
% of total hours	51.45	47.43		(4.02)

Table 15

Weekly Hours Worked on Shift: Other Chemical Products, 1981 and 1983

	1981	1983	Increase/Decrease Number	%
Hours worked:				
Total	44 148	23 244	(20 904)	(47.35)
Hours worked:				
Non shift	29 609	17 790	(11 819)	(39.92)
% of total hours	67.07	76.54		9.47
Hours worked:				
Total shift	14 539	5 454	(9 085)	(62.49)
% of total hours	32.93	23.46		(9.47)
Hours worked:				
Two shift	8 582	3 518	(5 064)	(59.01)
% of total hours	19.44	15.14		(4.30)
Hours worked:				
Three shift	5 957	1 936	(4 021)	(67.50)
% of total hours	13.49	8.32		(5.17)

Table 16

Hours Worked on Shift: Metals Industry, 1981 and 1983

	1981	1983	Increase/Decrease Number	Increase/Decrease %
Hours worked: Total	18 237 495	16 005 977	(2 231 518)	(12.24)
Hours worked: Non shift	12 897 142	12 807 385	(89 757)	(0.70)
% of total hours	70.72	80.02		9.30
Hours worked: Total shift	5 340 353	3 198 592	(2 141 761)	(40.11)
% of total hours	29.28	19.98		(9.30)
Hours worked: Two shift	2 446 474	1 280 242	(1 166 232)	(47.67)
% of total hours	13.41	8.00		(5.41)
Hours worked: Three shift	2 893 879	1 918 350	(975 529)	(33.71)
% of total hours	15.87	11.99		(3.88)

Note: The above table was generated by combining the figures for the various metal sectors given in the C.S.S. Surveys.

Recent Trends in Collective Bargaining in Industrialised Countries – Some Implications for South Africa

Judy Maller

Summary

The last decade has seen the beginnings of a radical transformation of the labour process in industrialised countries. The need for high productivity and the opportunities occasioned by developments in technology prompted the emergence of autonomous work groups and flexible working systems. Changing economic requirements and social mores have altered the composition of the workforce. This is accompanied by a sectoral shift in employment away from the traditional site of manufacturing.

What are the implications of these trends for workers and their trade unions? While unions in industrialised countries have begun the process of reassessing their priorities and re-organising their structures to deal more adequately and creatively with these profound changes, South African unions are late in recognising the changes taking place and their implications for worker organisation.

1. Background

Between World War II and the mid-seventies, industrialised countries experienced a period of relative prosperity and expansion. Trade unions were able to successfully negotiate for the direct indexation of workers' wages to the cost of living and unionised workers' wages generally rose in real terms during this period. In addition the attention of management, trade unions and behavioural scientists was focussed on "humanising" work to promote job satisfaction. In a context of relatively low unemployment, behavioural scientists drew a direct link between absenteeism and job dissatisfaction. Thus the emphasis was on improving working conditions both physically and psychologically to in turn minimise rates of absenteeism and job turnover.

A variety of workplace experiments were designed to facilitate a greater contribution by workers to their companies, often involving real improvements to work design and organisation. In the fifties Britain experimented with autonomous work groups; in the

sixtie's various national work reform programmes like the Industrial Democracy programs in Norway were launched; and in the early seventies the "sociotechnical" school associated with the Tavistock Institute directly linked the social and technical systems of organisations. Experimentation in the relationship between workers and their technical environment took place - mass production and ongoing assembly lines gave way to group technology, autonomous work groups and internal flexibility.

Such was the context of an ambitious "Humanisation at Work" programme launched in West Germany in 1974. This was a national programme sponsored by the Ministries of Labour and Technology and supported by the major employers' organisations and trade unions. It involved, at its height, approximately 250 projects which aimed to improve working life and organisation by focussing on environmental factors like noise, lighting, safety as well as factors which affect the psychological work environment like job design, group organisation, supervisory practices. many factories radically changed the organisation of work with the introduction of small production groups and the rejection of assembly line production with short cycle times. The emphasis was on counteracting boredom and stress and providing opportunities for social contact, worker co-operation on the job, and allowing a degree of worker autonomy and control over his/her own working environment and pace. [1]

Similar processes of workplace reform took place in Scandanavia. In 1972 the Swedish Employers' Confederation (SAF) and the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO) established jointly the "Rationalisation Council" to consult on productivity, job satisfaction, the working environment and job security.[2] This article looks at more recent developments both in the industrialised world and South Africa as regards management approaches to the organisation of work and the effects for workers and their trade unions.

2. Focus on productivity - management strategies in the eighties

Enthusiasm for the humanisation projects waned with the advent of the worldwide economic recession in the mid-seventies - partly attributed to dramatic hikes in the price of oil, the chief energy source for industry at this time. Government and employer attention reverted to traditional economic issues and effected a retreat from "quality of life" issues. Humanisation of work programmes took second place to balance of payment problems. This

trend was mirrored throughout the industrialised world: concern with the quality of working life was replaced with a concern to improve productivity.

This new found emphasis on productivity is illustrated by changes in employers' approach to wage fixing. Wage increases were no longer automatically linked to increases in the cost of living. Rather they were traded off for productivity improvements. Governments almost uniformly introduced incomes policies with the start of the economic crisis in 1973/74 whereby large increases were only possible through a proportional improvement in productivity. Although the official incomes policies were not particularly successful in holding wages, prices or inflation down, the practice of linking wages directly to productivity remained. Trade unions at first vigorously opposed this initiative and argued for the right to negotiate for wage increases without taking responsibility for productivity increases. But in the long run unions have been forced to gradually accept productivity bargaining as a integral part of wage bargaining primarily because of their increasing loss of strength.

The weakened position of trade unions in most industrialised countries is most simply illustrated by their numerical loss in membership. For example in the US unionisation fell from 35% of the total workforce in the 1950's to 18,7% in 1984; in France unionisation dropped from 25% to 15-20; and in the United Kingdom the Trades Union Congress claimed an affiliated membership of 44% of the workforce in 1979 which dropped to 37% by 1985. [3]

For some trade unions the link between wages and productivity has reduced real wages or revoked hard won benefits previously granted under collective agreements. This practice has been dubbed "concession bargaining" in the US. Why have trade unions accepted these terms? A number of factors contributed to the gradual undermining of the power of trade unions in industrialised countries.

*Firstly the rates of unemployment have shot up in these countries. The following table shows average increases in unemployment in the EEC between 1970 and 1984.

Year	Percentage Unemployment
1970	2.0%
1981	7.8%
1982	9.4%
1983	10.4%
1984	10.9%

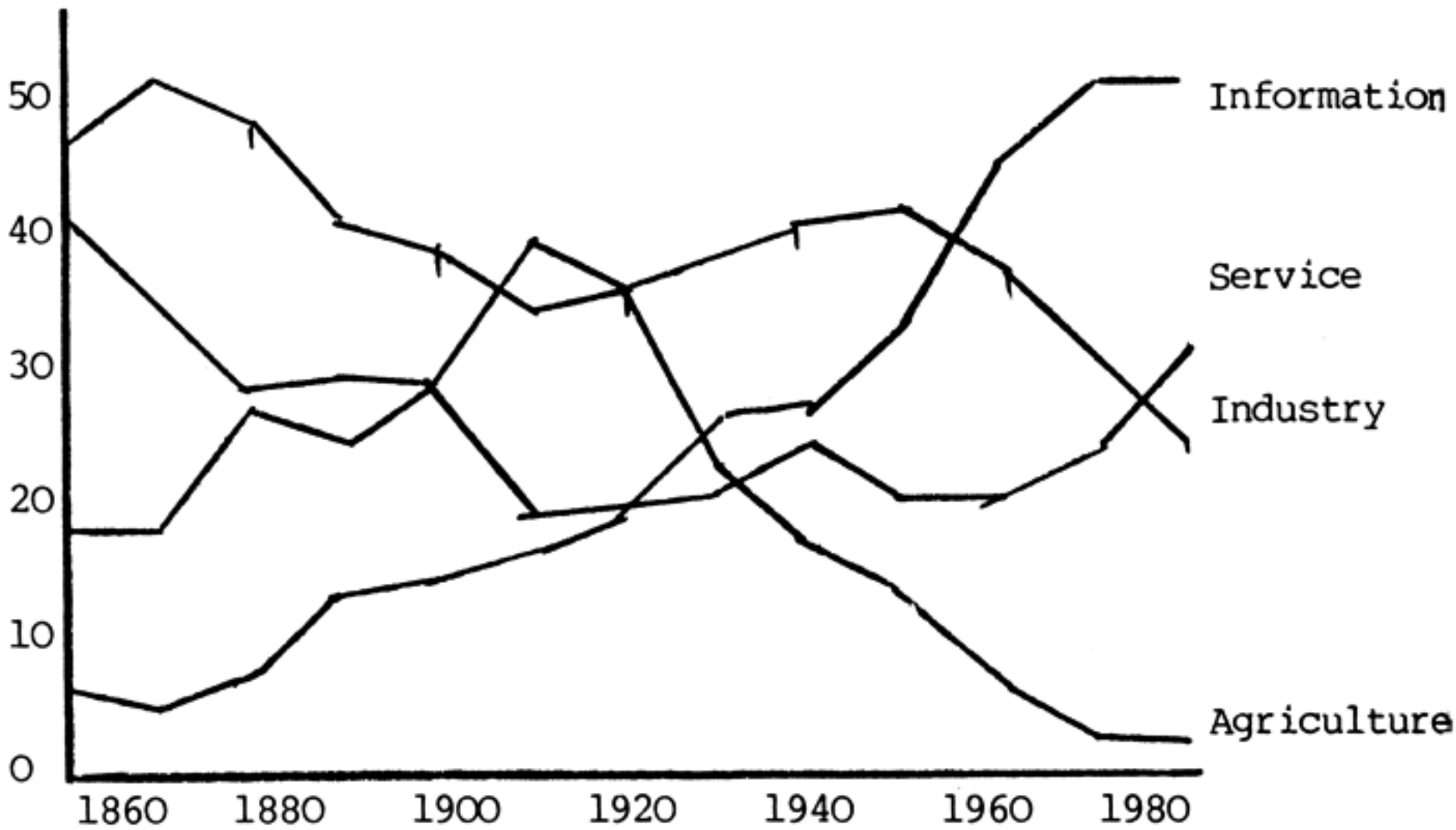
New technology too, has taken its toll. A debate continues to rage over whether new technology and automation necessarily reduce employment opportunities. The IMF contends that its does, with a concomitant loss for trade unions of membership. Competition with highly successful Japanese manufacturing sector has, according to the IMF, forced American and Western European industries to adopt automated production machinery and management techniques based on worker discipline and company loyalty.

The productivity improvements occasioned by the use of new technology have not been accompanied by corresponding increases in output due to the limited availability of energy and materials. Productivity increases thus derive directly from the displacement of workers. The IMF reports that this displacement is not accommodated in the service sector because it too is the site of new technology application and cites the French NORA report which estimated that computer technology banks over the next ten years will reduce staff by thirty percent. This projection is supported by another survey, carried out in West Germany, which predicted that by 1990, forty percent of present office work will be carried out by computerised systems at the loss of two million jobs. [4]

*Secondly the eighties has witnessed significant changes in the composition of the workforce. The depressed world demand for primary manufactured products like steel has led to this shift in employment away from manufacturing into the service industries. Figure 1 below illustrates this shift as it took place in the United States.

The "sexual revolution" has ensured that women maintain their position in the workforce on an ongoing basis. Women workers tend to predominate in the service sector. thus women represent almost half of the workforce in industrialised countries.

Figure 1 : Change in the Composition of the US Workforce by Percentage 1860-1980.



Source : IMF, "Technology, Unions and Human Needs" p.8.

Table 2 Population, labour force and working women

Country	Population (millions)	Total labour force	Of which women (percentage)
Australia	15.0	7.1	37
Canada	25.0	12.0	42
France	55.0	23.0	39
Germany (FR)	61.0	27.0	38
Italy	57.0	23.0	34
Japan	119.0	59.0	40
Sweden	8.3	4.4	47
U. Kingdom	56.0	27.0	40
U. States	234.0	113.0	43

Source : International Metalworkers' Federation 1986.

The following tables present further evidence of the employment shift away from manufacturing towards the service sector in all of the highly industrialised countries. Percentage employment in the "Goods Production" sector dropped consistently in all countries depicted in the first table while a similarly dramatic increase in service sector employment is evident in the second table.

Table 3 : Percentage of employment in goods and service production selected countries, 1960-1982, percentage distribution.

Goods production employment percentage

Year	U.S.A	Italy	Japan	France	Germany	G.Britain	Sweden
1960	41.9	66.7	58.0	60.7	59.9	51.4	55.9
1970	37.6	59.9	52.6	52.8	56.2	46.3	46.2
1980	32.9	52.3	45.2	48.8	48.8	39.4	37.1

Service production employment %

Year	U.S.A.	Italy	Japan	France	Germany	G.Britain	Sweden
1960	58.1	33.4	41.9	39.3	40.1	48.6	44.1
1970	62.3	40.1	47.4	47.2	43.7	53.6	53.9
1980	67.1	47.7	54.8	56.2	51.2	60.6	62.9

Source : U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics quoted in IMF Special Report, 1986, p.3.

A direct transfer of personnel from manufacturing to service work has however not occurred. Instead women workers in atypical employment arrangements characterised by part-time, short-time, sub-contracting, temporary work, home-work or shiftworkers are the major recipients of such jobs. In the United Kingdom, for example, by the end of 1984 manufacturing employment had fallen to approximately 5.4 million, almost 25 percent below the 1979 level. The majority of the jobs lost were those of male full-time workers. This must be juxtaposed against the 343 000 jobs created in 1985 of which 187 000 (or 55%) were female part-time jobs. [5]

Thus not only has the composition of the workforce itself changed, but also the nature of employment has undergone substantial changes with the emergence of different types of employment contracts.

This shift must be seen in the context of a radical restructuring of the organisation of work. Since the beginnings of industrialisation, work was organised along Taylorist lines and was characterised by the separation of planning and execution. This meant that on the one hand a large management staff drew up detailed plans for each step of the production process, while on the other hand, workers experienced the fragmentation of jobs and skill by performing minute tasks often on assembly lines. Their work was also subject to the principle of measurement to maintain constant performance.

Changes in the market and in technology, together with developments in the thinking behind human resources management, have made possible the current emergence of new forms of work organisation. Above all, flexibility in the labour process is required to enable rapid adaptation to changes in the market demand. Computerisation allows rapid machine changeovers and set-ups, thereby making possible short runs of variable products. Workers were increasingly alienated from the production environment by the sheer monotony of their Taylorised jobs. This led to the search on the part of industrial psychology for new ways of motivating workers.

These developments coalesced in the phenomenon of "socio-technical systems" based on the principle that "any form of work organisation should be based on adjustment between the workers' needs as social beings and the techniques of production used, both of them interacting factors being also subject to independent variation."[6]

This approach has developed into a new, embryonic form of work organisation with the following characteristics:
- work is organised along group lines;
- workers are provided with work of increasing complexity to retain their interest and initiative;
- job assignments are consolidated;
- the sociability needs of workers are met.

Autonomous work groups have been associated with high levels of productivity as well as meeting modern industry's needs for

flexibility. To understand the full impact of this catchword "flexibility", it is necessary to break it down into its constituent parts:

* Wage flexibility has primarily taken the form of a two-tiered wage structure - a core of multi-skilled workers receive higher wages, guaranteed job security and benefits, whereas a peripheral sector characterised by relatively lower wages, less skills, no job security, fewer social security benefits and unequal access to training and promotion opportunities. Peripheral workers often start off on a different pay scale with few possibilities of upward mobility.

* Employment flexibility has meant a lack of job security for peripheral workers. Employers argue for a less rigid system. A typical management statement is "if you can't fire then don't hire". In a period of increasing structural unemployment managements argue for flexible employment arrangements so that they an fire workers easily in case of market fluctuations. This has sometimes taken the form of a pool of buffer workers who come into employment on a temporary of seasonal basis in the food industry or on a subcontract basis in the refineries sector, as they are needed.[7] This kind of arrangement has been justified by arguing that less regulation of job security and wage levels will encourage the creation of more jobs.

* Flexibility in working time arrangements has involved the extension of working hours beyond the traditional day-time work of blue-collar manufacturing to include the increased use of round-the-clock shiftwork, weekend work, night work and part-time working arrangements. Unions have generally accepted this trend - they have however sought to negotiate allowances for anti-social hours of work and the provision of extra services to workers on shifts, like meals, transport and rest facilities.

* Geographical and occupational flexibility allows for redundant workers to be relocated to plants where there are jobs available for their skills or retrained to learn skills that are needed in the company.

* Flexibility of work organisation involves workers learning a variety of skills and being placed where there are bottlenecks or increased work loads. The breaking down of rigid job demarcations has proceeded apace, particularly in the engineering industry.

- collective bargaining -

This was the site of 19 and early 20th century British craftworkers' successful opposition to deskilling by enforcing strict job demarcations to protect their relatively privileged wages and positions. New job grading systems are being implemented which act against rigid demarcation. Instead they reward workers for each new skill that is mastered. Some of the previous experiments in work reform have informed the development of multi-skilled workers and their ability to work effectively in a variety of jobs and places in a factory. This has facilitated the organisation of autonomous work groups because jobs can be rotated and fellow workers can be assisted by workers with a variety of skills.

The consequences of flexible working systems cannot be wholly described as detrimental to workers. It is clear that workers on the periphery stand to lose many of the rights that trade unions have fought for over many decades - rights such as employment security, a minimum wage and social security benefits. However, for workers at the core, multi-functionality is serving to "re-skill" blue collar workers and reconstitute jobs that were fragmented during the era of machinofacture.

However, there are potentially serious consequences for trade unionism. New forms of work organisation cut across craft demarcations that traditionally formed the basis of trade union organisation, particularly in the United Kingdom. Trade unionism needs to adapt to a changing workforce that is no longer male dominated, blue collar, craft-based and organised along Taylorist lines. Instead a picture is emerging of, on the one hand, multi-skilled workers at the core of production, who are relatively secure in their jobs and benefits, and of peripheral workers in atypical forms of employment, increasingly drawn from the female workforce on the other hand. For different reasons, both groups may be less attracted to trade unionism - core workers' relative security obviates the need for trade union protection (its major function for many years), and peripheral workers fear the loss of their jobs and are aware that their needs as part-time workers and/or women are not directly addressed by present-day trade unionism.

Management has established new workplace structures which have had social, psychological and in some cases material benefits for workers. Autonomous work groups and quality circles enable workers to participate in planning and directing the production process, albeit within defined parameters. This has extended the scope of

any blue and white collar workers' jobs by giving them more discretion, more opportunities for social interaction and more recognition in their day-to-day working lives.

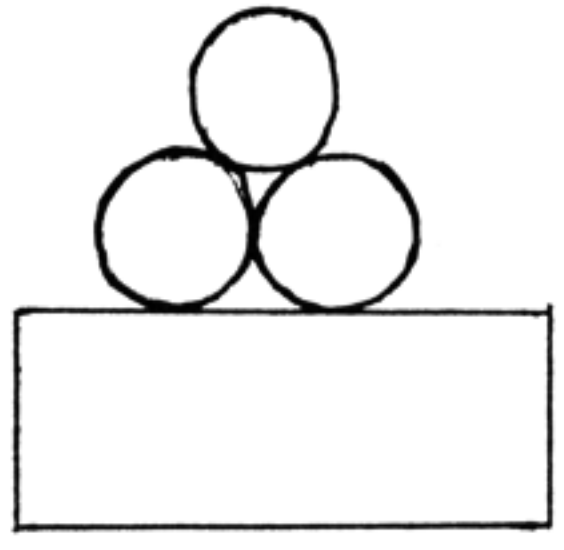
But, it must be remembered that these structures have primarily been established to improve productivity and accommodate flexibility in production. Quality circles are designed to solve production problems and streamline the labour process. Participator workgroups facilitate the effective implementation of new technology, allow for extremely rapid changeover times when different products are processed, and house groups of workers whose multiple skills can be utilized when and where they are needed.

3. Changes in management structure and function

It has been suggested that the structure and function of management is undergoing a thorough transformation. This has manifested itself in a reduction in the volume of managerial cum professional positions in manufacturing companies.[8] This trend is attributed to the changing function of management in a working environment when direct supervision has given way to autonomous work groups which look after the quality of their products and allocate tasks and times independently. Thus the need for first line management has been drastically reduced and instead co-ordination is needed.

This changing function has in turn given rise to changes in the structure of manufacturing businesses - the traditional structure is that of a pyramid with production workers in the majority at the bottom of the structure, fewer skilled workers and middle management in the middle and senior management at the apex. It is claimed that a new structure is gradually emerging in place of the pyramid taking the form of a "clothes hangar":

Pyramid structure



Clothes hangar structure

Source : B Gustavsen and L. Hethy "New Forms of Work Organisation: A European Overview in Labour and Society Vol.11 No.2, May 1986; p.180.

Senior and middle management are positioned in the three "humps" at the top of the "clothes hangar". Their work is increasingly collectivised - evidence of this is the quality circle structure commonly operating at top management level and subject to the principles of "management by objectives". Managerial work is also increasingly decentralised: hence the separation of management activity into three discreet "humps". Management has also expanded thereby widening the structure out from a triangle shape. There is a growing equalisation in the numerical representation between management and workers, which is also reflected in the model. Shopfloor management has disappeared in the form of supervisors and foremen. Their responsibilities have been transferred to workers in autonomous work groups who represent the rectangular shape at the bottom of the clothes hangar model.

Associated with this model is a significant change in the relationship between the shopfloor and the top floor. There is more contact between the two levels which increasingly takes the form of direct contact, bypassing traditional bargaining processes between management and trade union. There is thus a developing trend of transferring bargaining issues from a collective sphere to a basis of individual relations.

The clothes hangar structure does not yet accurately reflect the reality of management structure and function in industrialised countries, although some of the characteristics ascribed to it are certainly features of modern management. It remains a projected model of future employee heirarchy and relations developed by Gustavsen and Hethy. These authors do concede some control is still bound to be exerted, but its form remains a "contested terrain", following Edwards. In fact they posit that a choice still remains for management, namely a revival of Taylorism, consisting primarily of the use of work study and strict supervision, or the extension of participative management, in which work is carried out by groups of workers with collective competencies. These two avenues reflect different approaches to improving labour productivity, with the latter seemingly gaining an upper hand at present. Therefore it is in the light of productivity requirements that any changes in management must be considered.

4. The response of trade unions

Trade unionism has on the whole not adjusted to the changing conditions as outlined above and tends to concentrate on organising and representing blue-collar manufacturing employees, assuming Taylorist methods of production, and defending guarantees negotiated in a previous era. Not only have technologies and new management systems altered dramatically the nature of work in manufacturing, but also the workforce itself has shifted increasingly into service sectors where women workers are becoming more important numerically and atypical employment relationships are becoming more widespread.

Although trade union power and influence appears to be on the decline, it would be a mistake to assume that workers have passively accepted unfavourable terms or duped into accepting terms unwittingly which disadvantage the. Even with concession bargaining in the US which has been held up as the shining example of workers realising their foremost allegiance to their companies and making the necessary sacrifices, trade unions have made sure that workers have gained substantially in terms of power and influence within their company - lower wages have in fact been traded off for guarantees of long term job and income security and for increasing representation on the committees that control the activities of the company.

Strikes remain one of the most important weapons open to any worker organisation. It is clear that the number and duration of strikes in industrialised countries has declined during the eighties, as shown by Table 4 below.

In most countries the number of working days lost to strikes has decreased consistently in the eighties. This can probably be attributed to the increasing vulnerability of striking employees given high unemployment, offensive managements and insecure jobs. But in part it shows that workers in atypical forms of employment do not lend themselves to strike activity and also service sector employees do not have historical links with unionism and may in fact resist strike activity.

In this situation unions have sought alternatives to strike action. One example is the series of "no-strike" deals negotiated by the British electricians' union in exchange for sole representation of the work forces of the new Japanese plants in

Table 4 : Working days lost per thousand employees in selected industries (mining and quarrying, manufacturing, construction, transport and communication).

Country	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
Australia	2630	1370	1440	610	850	1580	1360	1710	910	590
Canada	2600	2780	2560	830	1930	1650	1510	1870	1410	600
France	250	390	420	260	200	350	170	160	260	160
Germany	60	10	40	---	360	40	10	10	---	---
Italy	1800	1730	2310	1560	880	2650	1590	950	1920	1490
Japan	450	390	150	70	60	40	50	20	20	20
Sweden	10	20	20	20	10	20	2250	60	---	10
U. Kingdom	1280	540	300	840	840	2410	1160	330	460	330
U. States	1480	990	1190	1100	1100	910	850	670	no data	

Source: ILO quoted in IMF Special Report 1986, p.15

Britain.[9]

However it mus be remembered that the significance of strikes is not only confined to the number of working days lost. What is also important is the impact strikes can make. The 1985 IG Metall metalworkers' strike for shorter working hours demonstrates the potential of well organised yet limited strike action.

A relatively small group of workers were able to use their control over new technology to halt a substantial amount of production while the union did not have to bear the crippling costs of supporting the entire workforce out on strike. The dispute finally ended in a compromise of a 37,5 hour working week instead of the 35 hours demanded by the striking workers.

Trade unions have also attempted to respond to the unemployment crisis in more creative ways than simply negotiating severance packages and delaying the implementation of retrenchment proposals. These initiatives have however not become widespread tactics and have met with limited success. Some examples are:

* The manufacture of socially useful products when the market for existing products deteriorates. The most famous example of this initiative was the programme launched by workers at the British Lucas Aerospace plant. Early into the seventies management proposed a rationalisation programme which would result in the retrenchment of 22% of the workforce. A combined committee representing all involved unions gathered ideas of socially useful products that could be produced at the plant, for example power units for card, medical equipment, road/rail vehicles, helium-driven airships, an many other. Many of these products were subsequently produced by Lucas workers who would otherwise have lost their jobs.[10]

* Worker co-operatives and collectives have been in existence since the early 19th century in Britain as founded by Robert Owen and taken up by the Pioneers in the 1840's. In particular consumer co-ops flourished during th next century and in the 1970's British workers formed producer co-ops in answer to the threatened closure of their factories under recessionary economic conditions. This happened for example at the Triumph Meridan motorbike factory affecting 1750 workers and also at the Kirby Manufacturing and Engineering Company where 50% of the companies 1100 workers faced unemployment.[11] This initiative has not been confined to

Britain but has taken place on a small scale throughout the industrialised world, with notable examples in Italy, France and Spain.

* Many unions are negotiating for reduced working time while maintaining pay levels so that the number of jobs are increased by a sort of job sharing. There is a raging debate as to the effectiveness of this strategy in actually creating jobs - management representatives have argued that the productivity increases effected by better work organisation and new technology more than compensates for the loss of working time and that it is cheaper to pay overtime rates when greater output is needed; trade unions have on the other hand argued for maintenance of the wage level to promote consumer demand thus employment opportunities and claim that with government commitment to this system and the appropriate subsidies, substantial employment can be created. The State would in turn gain from this situation in the form of a larger taxable population and lower expenditure on social welfare benefits.

In France for example this strategy has proved effective; the Ministry of Employment announced in January 1984 that:
- 200 000 young workers had found jobs as a result of early retirement schemes in 1982;
- in 1983 these schemes created job openings for a further 195 000 people;
- 15 000 new jobs were created in 1982 in terms of a reduced working hours programme.[12]

Unions have also attempted to negotiate the design of new technology to minimise the disadvantages to workers and maximise the benefits. This often goes hand-in-hand with "quid pro quo" agreements which maintain employment levels at the time of the introduction of the new technology.

The above responses are either defensive and reactive, or limited in scope - a tendency that has on the whole characterised the approach of trade unions to the transformation of the labour process. However, an appreciation for the need to develop more creative alternatives which exploit the potential advantages inherent in the new flexibility is emerging. Increased workers participating in the decision-making processes of undertakings has been enhanced by the advent of autonomous work groups. Unions initially resisted these developments because they were seen to bypass union structures; however they can also be used to deepen

the level of workers' involvement in decision-making. Bonus payments are no longer directly linked to output, but rather to the amount of skills mastered by the individual worker. In addition, "multi-skill" has certainly enriched the working lives of thousands of shopfloor workers. Control over technology and the tendency towards slashing inventory levels and work-in-progress on the factory floor has provided workers with strategic leverage in industrial disputes, which has been used to great advantage. Despite these considerable opportunities provided by the new forms of work organisation, the trend toward increasing structural unemployment in industrialised countries continues together with the increasing vulnerability of the peripheral workforce. Therefore, for trade unions, the singular most important issue to be tackled is that of control of the labour process. Peripheral workers are being forced to cede all rights to control over conditions of employment to management. Core workers have gained extended control of their productive environment, but only on management terms and at the expense of their independence and collective organisation.

Trade unions face a direct challenge to their future participation in the control of the factory and the office. At the same time, this challenge provides trade unionists with the opportunity to extend the boundaries of their traditional vision of worker control. On the whole, this objective has been pursued in terms of national co-operation between government, business and worker organisations. But at factory and office level, control of the work process itself has largely been left to management to plan, direct and supervise.

5. What is happening in South Africa?

While some of the new developments concerning work organisation and employment in industrialised countries have parallels in South Africa, the context into which they are being introduced is substantially different.

The international recession of the mid-seventies drastically affected the South African economy and led to a rationalisation of resources on a large scale. One of the most important effects was the permanent exclusion of thousands of black workers from the formal labour market. The increased use of new technology, new systems of work organisation and management practices have improved plant and labour efficiency. In the eighties the

predominant approach by management has been extensive rationalisation to reduce excess manufacturing capacity. Plants have been closed down, assembly lines halted, and masses of workers retrenched. More efficient use is then made of remaining resources - many three-shift systems have been introduced and machinery is more extensively used.

Trade unions were in turn forced to respond to these developments, and in particular to the widespread retrenchment of workers. The negotiation of retrenchment and dismissal procedures emerged as a major industrial relations issue.

In South Africa, unlike most of the industrialised nations, the state does not intervene in anyway to ameliorate the effects of mass retrenchments. Firstly there is no provision of social security benefits besides the patently inadequate payouts from the UIF. Secondly there has been no concerted attempt by the state to create employment opportunities or facilitate trade union and employer attempts to do so. Instead unemployed black workers have been discarded to be cared for by communities in the impoverished homelands or urban townships, or simply left to die of starvation - as in the case of five MAWU workers who lost their jobs at Transvaal Alloys during 1986.[13]

Management strategies have however undergone a rapid transformation following the impact of the recession and the rapid process of unionisation. Managements were faced with a labour force that would no longer settle for starvation wages and had increasingly necessary skills for the manufacturing process. Managements were also faced with limited internal markets and an inability to compete successfully on overseas markets. The result was a movement towards the rationalisation of the labour process throughout the manufacturing sector. While new technology has played an important role in this respect, it appears that technology is applied selectively because of the high costs involved in importing technology and borrowing capital to finance it. Other, non capital-intensive forms of work rationalisation are probably being applied in a more systematic and widespread fashion.

Unlike the industrialised countries where employers are faced with a choice between Taylorist and participative forms of management, in South Africa this polarisation does not exist. Instead many managements appear to be using the two approaches in a complementary manner in order to effect an improvement in labour produc-

tivity.

This is one area where managements can most easily show relatively rapid improvements, while markets, capital investment and stocks and shares are dependent on factors often out of the immediate control of the individual manager.

This focus on labour productivity is evident in the increasing usage of two particular management strategies:
- work study which has been accompanied by a revival of interest in incentive bonus schemes, whereby wages above the minimum are directly linked to productivity and workers are encouraged to work more effectively through the promise of greater remuneration;
- Japanese management techniques based on a participative framework, in particular quality circles which are based on limited worker participation in improving quality and productivity in his/her immediate working environment.

South African managements are using quality circles without negotiating their implementation with unions. Instead they are used as a forum for workers to express their ideas to management, in similar fashion to the industrialised countries' "model".

South African managements are also beginning to emphasise the concept of flexibility in employment conditions. This is manifesting itself in the revamping of job grading schemes in such a way as to move away from rigid job descriptions. One engineering employer inserted a clause in each workers' job description to the effect that the worker will do any other task as instructed by his/her supervisor. A retail employer attempted to do a similar thing when instructing cashiers to do cleaning work in quiet trading periods. In both cases the unions refused to accept these changes, arguing that the result would be reduced employment and intensification of work.

While local managements may follow the lead of the highly industrialised countries in re-organising the work process, the trade union situation remains fundamentally different in South Africa. Thus new management techniques are bound to receive a very different reception here.

The local trade union movement is growing steadily : Webster estimates unionisation to be in the region of 19% of the total workforce.[14] Given a growing union membership and an increas-

ingly volatile political situation, it is not surprising to find that union militancy has also not waned during the recession. Between 1983 and 1984 the number of strikes and workers involved in strike activity increased significantly as reflected by the following Department of Manpower statistics:

Year	No of strikes	No of workers involved
1983	336	64 499
1984	469	181 942

Source : G Jafee and K Jochelson; "The Fight to Save Jobs : Union Initiatives on Retrenchment and Unemployment" in SA Review; Ravan Press, p.52.

Trade unions have typically negotiated retrenchment agreements which include a commitment to pursue alternatives like short-time, part-time, lay-offs; early retirement; retraining and relocation. In addition, where retrenchment cannot be prevented unions have advocated retrenchment on a Last-In-First-Out (LIFO) basis and have included preferential re-employment clauses. Many of these demands have been established as rights through trade union action in the industrial court.[15]

South African unions have also attempted to deal with unemployment in other ways:

- Trade union supported co-operatives have been established by retrenched workers for example in Brits, a MAWU workers' co-operative of about 30 people produces clothes and bricks[16] and in Howick, workers retrenched from BTR Sarmcol have established a T-shirt and button making co-operative. While these are the first worker co-operatives in South Africa, they involve an extremely small number of the retrenched workforce.

- Some unions have established benefit funds for retrenched workers - for example NAAWU introduced a weekly R25.00 benefit for workers during the first six weeks of their retrenchment. In 1984 alone the union paid out more than R300 000 in this scheme.[17]

- COSATU has recently launched a programme to organise unemployed workers - this is not a new initiative. Both FOSATU and SAAWU at-

tempted to organised unemployed workers previously, but this remains an extremely difficult task in the face of the migrant labour system and the lack of social welfare for the unemployed. For those permanently marginalised from the market economy, the future is extremely bleak. The lack of an organisational base seems insurmountable as unions cannot afford to devote all their energies to the unemployed - their task to advance the rights of employed people.

- Unions are also looking at the reduced working hours option. However in South africa the difference is that unions are negotiating for a 40 hour working week in the motor and metal industries, while European unions are demanding 35 hour weeks and in some cases even less. It remains unclear as to how effective these union strategies will be in alleviating unemployment in the light of managements' emphasis on improved labour productivity.

In general, the responses of trade unions to new working conditions designed to increase flexibility and productivity remain at best embryonic. With the continuing struggle to enforce living wages, secure union recognition and institute basic rights such as retrenchment and grievance procedures, these issues have not been systematically addressed.

6. Conclusion

Trade unions recognise the need to broaden the scope of their activities to include all areas which concern and determine work if they are to make any significant contribution to the enhancement of workers' rights under prevailing conditions. Their demands need to acquire a social orientation because the problems they are addressing cannot simply be resolved within the confines of the individual workplace. A major component of the drive to improve the quality of life of working people is situated in the workplace, but by no means stops at the factory gate - rather it extends into housing, transport, social services, etc. This conceptualisation of trade unionism is one of long-standing amongst South African labour organisations - the denial of the franchise to black people has highlighted the commonality of the bid for rights on the political front as well as on the shopfloor. Trade unions have become prime protagonists in the struggle against apartheid as well as asserting workers' rights on the shopfloor.

South African unions can well learn from developments in in-

dustrialised countries because local managements strategies will not be far behind. Traditional trade union action and organisation have to be reconsidered. Some groups of workers are bound to increase in size and importance - particularly workers who would be less likely to support collective forms of action for example part-time workers, home-workers, temporary workers - and may even resist direct strike action.
New forms of technology too may prompt changed union responses. New technology is essentially a double-edged sword : technology can centralise significant activities so that selective and strategically placed strikes can cripple an entire enterprise. On the other hand certain forms of technology can enable employers to hold out against striking workers demands with minimal loss of production. Therefore some labour analysts are predicting the rethinking of strike action in many future industrial disputes. This does not necessarily mean the dawning of an era of industrial peace - rather the strategies employed by trade unionists might be somewhat different from those used in the past. Flexibility too, has implications for union organisation - it enables a greater drive for worker participation in production, but also requires that unions fight for the protection of vulnerable peripheral workers.

The employers on their side are trying to shift the terrain of labour relations form the bargaining table to the office of the human resources manager who develops programmes enabling individual workers to influence work organisation, health and safety programmes, production schedules and working conditions from outside his/her trade union. Trade unions have responded unevenly to these initiatives with some ignoring them and other embracing them wholeheartedly. A reassessment of the situation is needed to develop more innovative trade union responses. It is clear that economic expansion and extensive job creation in the manufacturing sector is crucial both for the economic well-being of the industrialised societies as whole, as well as the continued survival of trade unions as we know them. It would be counter-productive for unions to resist entirely new developments and the required flexibilities which could facilitate economic growth.

However, at the same time it is vital that unions are able to discern the ill-effects that certain changes promise to have on workers particularly those that threaten to intensify work, reduce manpower and jeopardise crucial rights workers already have. In South africa these questions are especially important for trade

unions since the economic crisis and level of structural unemployment is even more intense than that experienced in the industrialised world.

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Economic Notes for Trade Unions

Inflation

The annual rate of inflation for South Africa was 16,3% in July 1987, just below the 17,2% figure for June.

	Consumer Price Index (1980=100)	Annual rate of inflation (% increase over 1 year)
Area	**July 1987**	**July 1987**
Cape Town	266.9	17.5%
Port Elizabeth	262.0	16.8%
East London	246.2	15.8%
Durban	260.9	14.7%
Pietermaritzburg	265.0	15.8%
Witwatersrand	266.4	16.0%
Vaal Triangle	271.9	15.6%
Pretoria	279.6	17.9%
Klerksdorp	263.8	21.7%
Bloemfontein	245.0	13.6%
OFS Goldfields	275.4	17.0%
Kimberley	254.8	16.1%
SOUTH AFRICA	266.2	16.3%

Source : Central Statistical Services

Economists expect that the annual rate of inflation will fall to 15% or even 14% in the coming few months. This means that prices will still rise, but not quite as fast as before. Price rises are expected to speed up again by the start of 1988. The Old Mutual expects that the annual inflation rate may move above 20% again in 1988. Some of the biggest price rises in the last year have occurred on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. Share prices overall have risen by 45%. This is because "listed companies...have become leaner and stronger...and are producing a whole string of massive profit increases." (Financial Mail, 4 September, 1987). Meanwhile, the Bureau for Economic Research expects worker's wages in 1987 to rise by 20%, about 2.8% above the inflation rate.
(Compiled by Labour Research Service, Box 376, Salt River, 7925)

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