

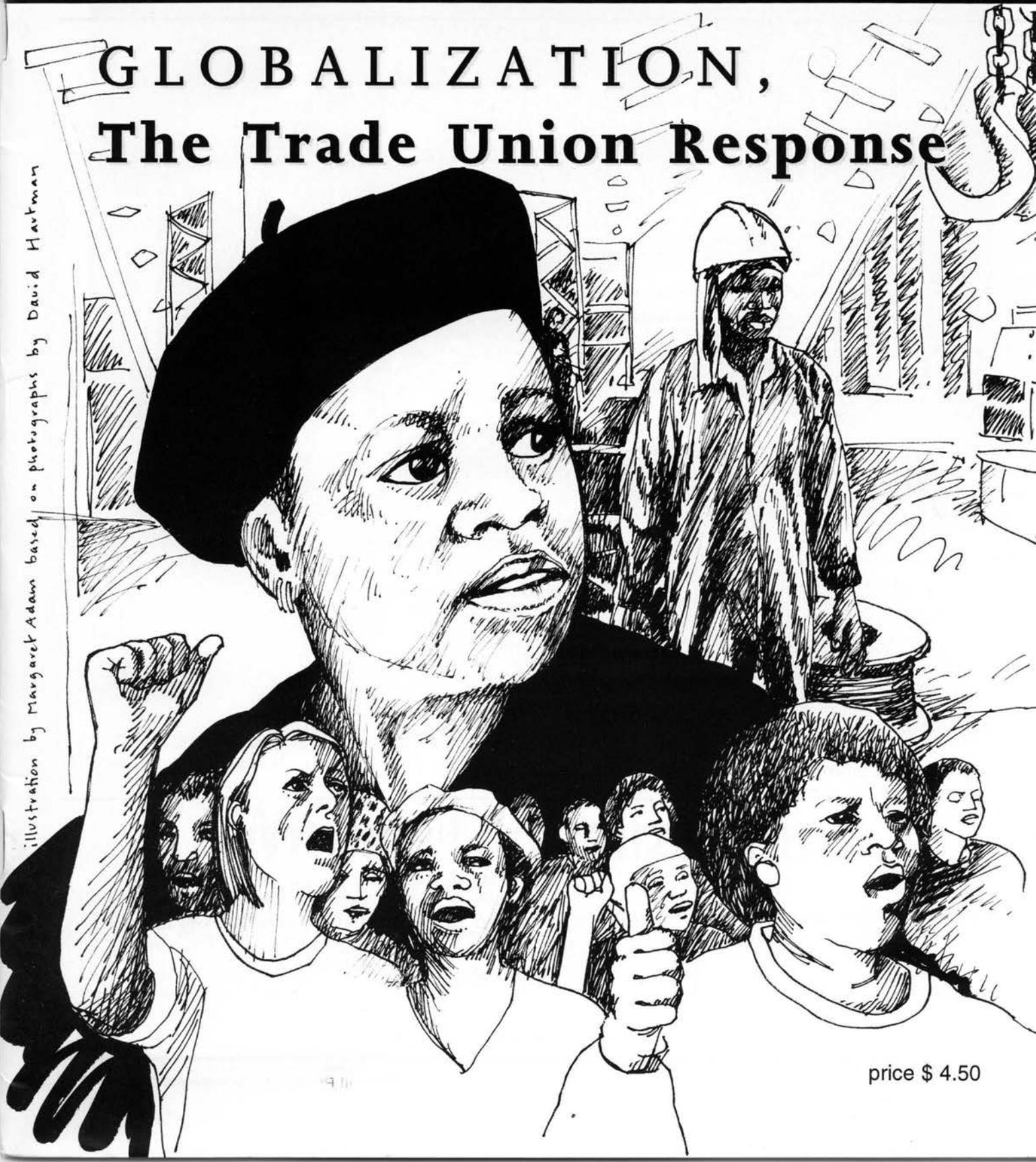
Southern Africa REPORT

Vol. 11 No. 3

April 1996

GLOBALIZATION, The Trade Union Response

Illustration by Margaret Adam based on photographs by David Hartman



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Southern Africa REPORT

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A laid-off worker walks through his recently closed steel plant - 1992

Whose Globalization?

In our last issue, under the general heading "Southern Africa's Tragedy," we sought to locate the troubled circumstances of a number of southern African countries - Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe - in

the context of the stern global economic environment in which they find themselves. We did not, on that occasion, include South Africa within the frame of such a dis-

cussion. After all, South Africa possesses a much stronger economy than any of the countries we did focus upon and is, at least for the moment, much less "tragically" situated than most of its neighbours.

And yet South Africa cannot easily escape the contradictions created by its insertion into the process of "globalization" that it is now so difficult, everywhere, to ignore. Consider, for example, the exchange we feature in this issue between Eddie Webster and Leo Panitch – labour-linked activists both, but also South Africa's leading industrial sociologist and Canada's preeminent political scientist, respectively – regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the South African trade unions' present politico-economic strategies. At the core of their disagreement in this debate is, precisely, a difference of opinion regarding the presumed imperatives of globalization and what, if anything, trade unions might do to resist them.

Thus, where Webster sees new opportunities for working class self-assertion in the apparent compromises with corporate power and a reformist state that the South African labour movement seems compelled to adopt, Panitch fears a "corporatist" outcome that will be increasingly detrimental to the hopes of ordinary South Africans for a better life. And where Webster seems to envision little alternative to the labour movement's seeking merely to "modify" (rather than transform) the capitalist structures that currently drive South Africa's economy, Panitch smells disaster in the logic of "competitiveness" and "business as usual" that underpins such compromises.

We will leave our readers to arbitrate this debate for themselves. However, they may wish to do so in light of the more general article by Colin Leys on the nature of the globalization process that we include in the present issue. His key themes: "The assumptions on which the globalization process rests ... are literally absurd" and that "any society that is not in a position to resubordinate the market will be destroyed by it." While the cast of this article is, precisely, "global" and therefore deals with

Africa only in passing, we have found it – alongside other of Leys' recent writings referred to in the editorial of our last issue – a useful point of reference in our work and, on that basis, recommend it as a brilliant "backgrounder" to current policy debates throughout southern Africa ... and also here at home.

Throughout southern Africa ... and in Canada as well. Here Leys' article also provides a useful bridge to another of the articles that form the core of this, our "labour issue": Judith Marshall's careful and illuminating account, drawn from her own first-hand experience, of some of the novel links that are currently being forged between Canadian trade unions and their South African counterparts. For Marshall emphasizes, quite specifically, the way in which this labour solidarity is increasingly being grounded in a shared understanding, at both ends of the exchange, of the vulnerability of workers to capital's worldwide dictate. And such solidarity can contribute, in turn, to creating the kind of active *global* "civil society" whose political assertions might eventually democratize and socialize a globalization process that currently seems beyond workers' control.

* * *

Of course, workers face the challenges of the global economy and

of governments increasingly compromised in their dealings with that economy elsewhere in southern Africa. For this reason we are pleased to include here Gretchen Bauer's careful and sympathetic analysis of the current status of the trade unions in Namibia – while also noting with interest just how important she feels a vibrant labour movement to be in safe-guarding political and economic democracy in that country.

Moreover, Bauer's attempt to give voice to labour and its "progressive" allies in civil society seems particularly important in a regional context where, too often, popular assertions have now begun to be discredited – in the name of "realism," "responsible planning," and, no surprise, "global imperatives." Such discrediting is occurring in debates about South African urban development, for example: in attacks often launched upon the "unreasonable expectations" that are said to exist, negatively, in the townships. And yet, as Greg Ruiters and Patrick Bond document in these pages, the new South African regime is still very far from discovering effective means for realizing even the most "reasonable" of expectations that are held by township dwellers in that country.

In this issue, too, you will find South African writer and cultural activist Luli Callinicos worrying aloud (during a recent Toronto visit, reported on below) about the dangers of depoliticizing, in the name of "reconciliation," the people's own history of oppression and resistance. This is a history that, Callinicos reports, is struggling to find its voice, with important, potentially positive, implications, within the culture of a new South Africa. Fortunately, she can also report that on this terrain – the terrain of "heritage" – real progress is being made despite countervailing pressures. So, in a phrase: "Historians of the world, unite." Workers, too.



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COSATU: Old Alliances, New Strategies

BY EDDIE WEBSTER

Eddie Webster is professor of Industrial Sociology at the University of the Witwatersrand.

There is a great irony for COSATU in the present political moment. After decades of opposition to apartheid, culminating in their strong electoral support for the African National Congress (ANC) in the April 1994 elections, the unions find their allies participating in a Government of National Unity (the GNU) in which their main enemies are now their partners. They also face a global economy that dictates neo-liberal market-based policies as the only acceptable solutions. This places COSATU in a dilemma: does it continue to operate inside the Alliance and try and shape the agenda of the GNU, or does it "go for divorce" and risk confrontation and possible marginalisation?

There can be no doubt that COSATU played a central role in the transition to democracy in South Africa. However, it remains an open question whether labour can sustain this involvement during the period of consolidating democracy when the "rules of the game" have changed so markedly. Comparative experience suggests both that labour has difficulty adapting to this kind of new phase, and that pro-democracy forces may be dramatically reconfigured. This arises from the fact that there are two transitions at play: a political transition to democracy and an equally profound economic transition to growth, productivity, and global competition.

The GNU has accepted the macro-economic constraints of the liberal international economic order.

It has signed GATT which is likely to send a wave of anti-protectionism and deregulation rippling through one industry after another; abolished the old financial rand; and sharply cutting real wages in the public sector. More recently, the GNU announced its intention to negotiate "the restructuring of state assets" (or, if you prefer, privatisation).

Liberal commentators have welcomed "this realism" as evidence that "normal politics has at last begun" in South Africa, but find it odd that COSATU is willing to accept a policy where it is likely to be the "chief potential victim." Many on the left have also concluded that the ANC has succumbed to neo-liberalism, while the media regularly predict the end of the Triple Alliance between the ANC, COSATU and the South African Communist Party (SACP).

These responses, I argue, miss the innovative part of South Africa's response to neo-liberalism and the crucial role of the Alliance in acting as a "left pressure" on the ANC. This dynamic, where labour is powerful both on the streets and in the centres of power, could be described as a process where Cosatu is both "inside and outside the state." While signalling an acceptance of the need for more open markets, this approach has also strengthened labour and given it a firmly institutionalized voice in decision-making.

The triple alliance

South Africa is one of the few countries in the world in which trade unions have grown over the last decade-and-a-half. This has involved a growth in union density

from 15.32% in 1979 to 57.98% in 1993. Unions provided black workers with a voice, not only an economic voice in the workplace, but also a political voice during the apartheid period.

The existence of powerful 'political traditions' of resistance among black workers forced the labour movement to confront its relationship with the national liberation movement. At the centre of this "hidden world" was the national democratic tradition led by the ANC and the SACP. Shortly after its formation in late 1985, COSATU's leaders travelled to Lusaka and endorsed the exiled ANC as the leading element in the liberation struggle.

The Triple Alliance between the ANC, the SACP and COSATU is deeply rooted in the struggle against apartheid. This has led to significant shared leadership between the Alliance partners. Furthermore, during the anti-apartheid struggle "social linkages" were forged. These shared identities and networks of personal ties that were built up during years of cooperation and shared hardship in detention, prison or exile are likely to endure well into the future.

Besides, Cosatu faces no serious opposition from rival unions on the left that could "poach" its members when they find it costly to support policies which threaten living standards. With a total membership of 1.3 million, Cosatu has more members than all the other federations put together. Neither does the ANC face serious opposition from its parliamentary opponents. In these circumstances, union leaders may decide that continued cooperation with the GNU - in the hope that it

could minimize any negative impact of neo-liberal policies – is preferable to political isolation.

However in spite of the Alliance, the labour movement is relatively autonomous from the state and from its political leadership. COSATU was able to achieve what SACTU, its official trade union wing in exile until it was absorbed into Cosatu in 1990, never achieved: its recognition and acceptance by the ANC as an equal, not subordinate, partner in the Alliance. During the eighties COSATU built up its own leadership cadre, its own democratic political culture and its own constituency.

As a result the Triple Alliance is fundamentally different from the Soviet-style model where the union is little more than a conveyor belt for the party. COSATU is financially independent of the state, and retains a capacity to mobilise through a leadership that is accountable to its members rather than to a political party.

Stresses in the alliance

Does this high degree of labour autonomy and record of militancy point towards a break up of the Alliance after an initial period of cooperation? While the Alliance is likely to be put under considerable strain in the next few years, labour is unlikely to defect before the next elections in 1999.

By virtue of its independent power base labour is able to mobilise outside of state structures, yet through its Alliance with the ANC it is able to influence state policy. By being both “inside” and “outside” the state, labour has the potential to influence the agenda of the ANC in pro-labour directions.

This was best illustrated during the struggle in the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) over the Labour Relations Bill in 1995 when labour “took to the streets” twice during the two-and-half month negotiations over the Bill. Many commentators

saw the mass action campaign in June in support of labour’s negotiating position, as a challenge to the democratic process. Quite the opposite is the case. By engaging in peaceful protest, the leadership of one of the key social partners was signalling to its membership that it was an autonomous actor.

Tripartitism assumes a pluralistic society where autonomous groups with divergent interests recognize each other’s existence while promoting their own distinctive views. By channelling their demands and organising their conflicts within the framework of representative institutions, the conflicts that took place in and around the Labour Relations Bill were playing a real role in promoting labour’s interests and consolidating democracy in South Africa.

Importantly, these tripartite arrangements are not part of neo-liberalism – instead, they are a creative challenge to the global agenda of neo-liberalism. The launch of NEDLAC in February 1995 is the key to this innovative strategy. It provides labour with a central role in the negotiation process. Through creating a statutory body designed to create consensus between labour, government and employers on economic and social policy, NEDLAC institutionalizes the potential power of labour in the heart of decision-making. Through the creation of industry-wide statutory councils designed to jointly negotiate training and industry policy, the Labour Relations Act creates the basis for long term industrial policy.

Above all, through Workplace Forums, workers are potentially drawn into decision-making at an early stage, challenging management’s prerogative to unilaterally make and implement decisions on the shop floor.

What balance?

In short, the GNU has taken a bold and decisive step in the direction of co-determination. At the same time, the resultant new “rules of

the political game” do pose for labour the need to find, on a continuing basis, an appropriate balance between cooperation and protest. Whether labour will have the will and the capacity to walk this tightrope successfully is the big question. Moreover, it must be admitted that some of the initial signs in this regard are not especially encouraging.

Firstly, organised labour has lost significant layers of leadership to government, political office, and the corporate sector. Often labelled “the brain drain,” this has seriously diminished the pool of skilled and experienced senior leaders developed over years of struggle.

Secondly, a growing gap has developed between leadership and base. A union organiser has written of the dilution of the relationship between leaders, shop stewards and the rank and file through the emergence of an alternative set of relationships. In the author’s pithy phrase, the upper echelons of the labour movement begin to share with their counterparts in other spheres an “increasing similarity not only in the style of dress, language and common pubs they begin to share, but also in the style of thinking and the approaches to basic political and economic questions.”

For example, has the move to parliament, under the ANC banner, of key COSATU leaders, opened up possibilities of labour increasing its influence in the heart of the state? Or has there been, as one informant has put it, “an exodus without a map.”

Certainly the union movement expects those seconded to parliament “to struggle inside Parliament for labour’s positions.” But parliament is the very antithesis of COSATU members’ notion of direct democracy. As one grass-roots activist, now representing the ANC in parliament, observed:

“One of the most remarkable things about this parliamentary process

is how it has decollectivized us. It has individualised us and the ethos of collective engagement that we had outside Parliament is fast evaporating... There is something about Parliament that is inherently hierarchical."

Parliament, in the words of another informant, "is like a sink hole. You work frenetically, you work very hard, but you do not see immediate material success flowing from the amount of energy you invest in a particular issue."

While COSATU's influence may increase, a very different outcome is also possible, one in which these individuals - now detached from their old federation - are also isolated from the centres of power in the ANC. They do not have a labour

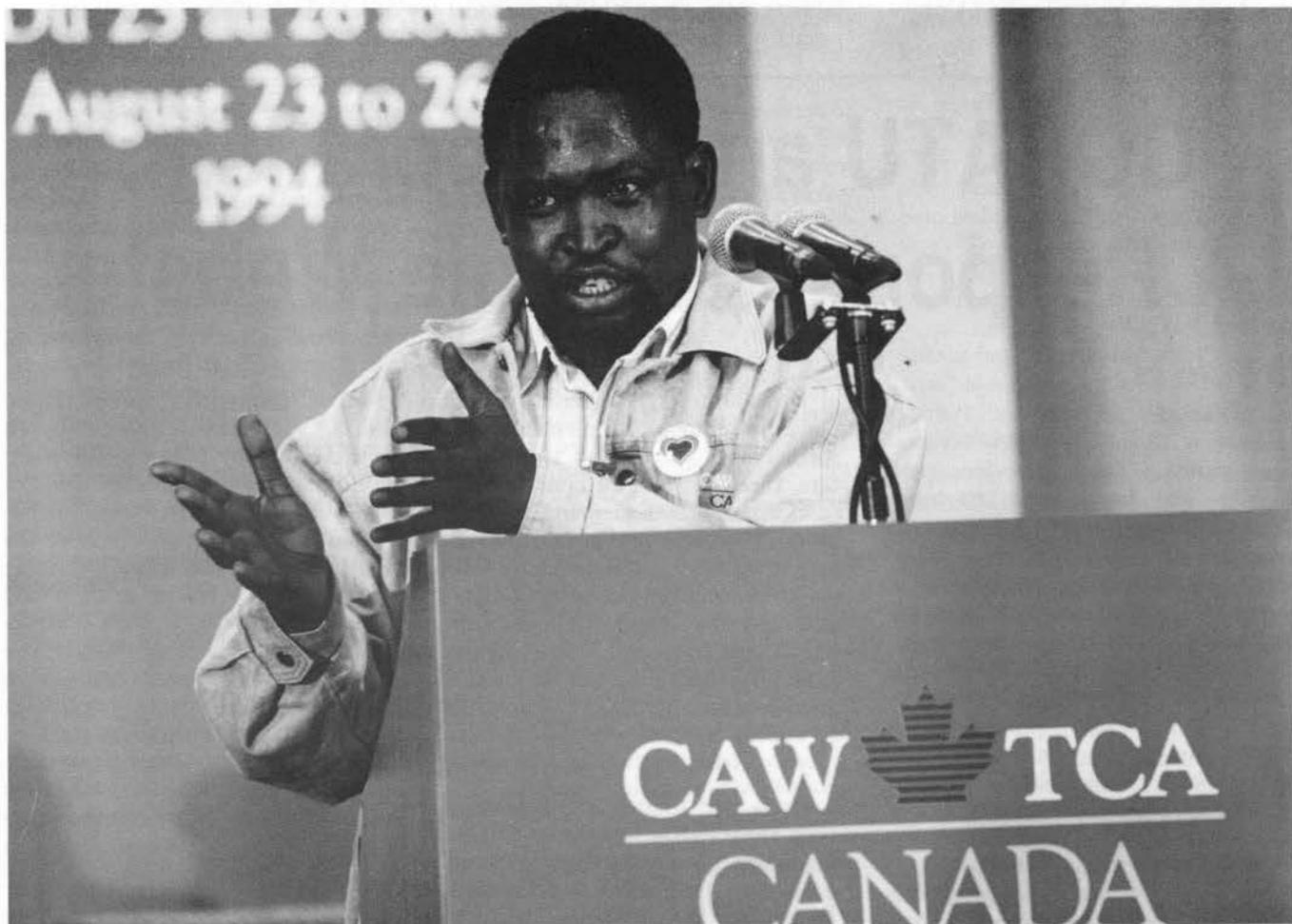
caucus because it is believed any such initiative would be divisive. At the same time, as ANC members they are subject to parliamentary caucus discipline and are no longer formally accountable to the COSATU membership. In addition, a clause in the interim constitution forces Members of Parliament to resign their seats if they leave their party, this providing the party leadership with further powerful sanctions over dissident members.

Of course, the close informal social linkages between the parliamentarians and their erstwhile colleagues in the labour movement remain. But disenchantment is emerging in the Alliance as they see their former colleagues earning high salaries and driving expensive cars.

In the words of one informant who complained about the large amount of money spent on salaries of politicians: "Its a transition ... which we are trapped in ... And we have to get out. People are getting sucked into it and enjoying the benefits of it. It would be very difficult for people to give away what they have now."

Strategies and tactics

Still, to see such strains inside the Alliance as signs of possible rupture would be premature. "To retreat now," Jeremy Cronin, Deputy General Secretary of the SACP argues, "would be to hand over victory to our strategic opponents, whose agenda is also to capture the heart and soul of the ANC, and they are



Enoch Godongwana, NUMSA General Secretary, at Auto Workers convention in Quebec City - 1994

Photo Features

having some successes." A similar point was made rather more picturesquely by a leading COSATU official: "This is a transitional period, that's why we have a GNU, that's why you have to hug the hyenas of the past in order to make advances in the future."

And yet the question persists: is COSATU in a "no-win" situation where it gains little from remaining in the Alliance yet faces possible marginalisation if it withdraws from it? Or does the possibility exist of labour redefining its role and, through a combination of struggles inside and outside the state, find the means of challenging those who wish to embrace the market as the panacea for the meeting of all social needs?

In the words of a leading Cosatu official:

"There's all sorts of pressures, and sometimes you get the feeling that certain individuals are battling in the light of these pressures. But that's where your mass struggles outside parliament come into play because if a person only gets pressure from one side, from the IMF, the World Bank, from John Major and Thatcherite economists - then for a few months with that sort of pressure on an individual, he will begin to soften up and follow. But if there is equal pressure which is coming from left forces outside parliament on the same issues that he is getting pressure from the IMF, then he begins to think as an individual instead of thinking on behalf of other external forces."

As this quotation suggests, and as we have argued above, labour retains the capacity to block the most negative aspects of "economic re-

form." In the longer term, however, there is an additional question to consider: whether labour's power will be used to resist the market through strategies such as nationalisation and the like, or used merely to modify it - through what, to take one example, the Green Paper on new employment standards calls "regulated flexibility" (this regulated flexibility seeking to balance the protection of minimum standards with the requirements of labour market flexibility). While union leadership has, at least for the moment, identified itself with a market-modification approach, it is not clear what the full implications of such an economic strategy are for the unions' own membership. Can we hazard a guess that the very future of the Alliance depends on the outcome of debates about just such issues?

COSATU and Corporatism: A Response to Eddie Webster

BY LEO PANITCH

Leo Panitch, professor of Political Science at York University in Toronto, has written widely on working class politics and trade union strategies around the world.

I was in South Africa in October 1995 as part of a CAW-NUMSA project to analyze the contemporary political economy, as well as to develop teaching modules for trade union leaders and shop stewards on globalization, competitiveness, corporatism and the restructuring of work. Such an experience is hardly sufficient to make one an expert. Yet it would perhaps be irresponsible not to share the impressions and insights gleaned from long and intensive discussions with the na-

tional and regional leadership of one of the country's most creative and powerful unions, supplemented by further discussions with two Ministers, three very senior civil servants (all formerly key figures in COSATU unions), various provincial and municipal political activists and officials, as well as business analysts and socialist intellectuals in Durban, Cape Town and Johannesburg. Eddie Webster's comments on the dilemmas facing COSATU provides an appropriate context and opportunity to offer the following reflections.

It is, sad to say, my impression that the GNU's "response to neoliberalism" has NOT been as "innovative" as Eddie Webster suggests. Borrowing heavily from the Australian Labour Governments, the

strategy adopted is that of a "progressive competitive" accommodation to globalization (as analyzed in the essays by Panitch, Albo and Saul in the 1994 volume of *The Socialist Register*). The term corporatism is used more positively on the South African left than anywhere else I have ever known in my many years of studying tripartite structures. And this is so despite the clear trajectory towards the GNU's sponsoring the type of integration of trade unions with the state that has traditionally - and deservedly - given corporatism a bad name among trade union militants and socialists.

Assessing NEDLAC

There is no doubt, then, that NEDLAC has been designed as

a means of institutionalizing and harnessing trade union power. But the question is: institutionalizing it with what effect and harnessing it to what end?

Webster is correct to see the Labour Relations Act as a major reform which the trade union leadership won through combining tough negotiations in NEDLAC with timely and effective "mass action." (Note, however, that a good many militants and socialists are very uncomfortable with the Act's proclamation of fundamental class harmony between bosses and workers and with what that suggests about closing down class struggle on the shop floor – and in the community – especially through the provisions for workplace forums.)

But it is an illusion to think that this portends the autonomous and effective use of trade union power in the decisions that govern economic life in South Africa. Far from the industrial policy being discussed at NEDLAC amounting to, as Webster suggests, "a creative challenge to the global agenda of neo-liberalism," it is in fact a policy which seeks to integrate South Africa into the framework of free trade, the deregulation of capital flows and exchange rates, the promotion of privatization, and export-oriented competitiveness. The active union role in such a framework is expected to be one of supporting plant closures and wage restraint. It is a policy which runs directly counter to the predominant emphasis in the original RDP on a "people-centred" development strategy of "growth through redistribution."

In the case of NEDLAC, as all other such tripartite bodies, for all the talk about partnership in decision making, the actual decisions about what is to be invested, how, where and when are not made in NEDLAC, but remain the preserve of the capitalist class. Moreover, whereas the union leaders had a clear agenda and a strong mandate on negotiating

a legal framework for collective bargaining, on questions of economic and industrial policy, union leaders have been reacting to an agenda set by capital and the state. Not only do the union leaders not have much confidence in these areas, but they are also expected by state and business officials to play a far more passive role.

Lost potential?

This is especially tragic in the South African case, because it might have been thought that the potential was there for a different story to unfold than the usual corporatist one – and no doubt it is this potential that is still inspiring Webster's vision of corporatism. Certainly there is a level of political sophistication and intelligence among the NUMSA activists I met that is quite remarkable. More than once, hearing it articulated during my visit, I felt a lump rise to my throat. For it brought to mind just how much it has been the case that the more formally educated the North American and European workers have become (and the more institutionalized have their unions and parties become), the more have they become politically illiterate. And it raised the question of whether the workers' enormous political intelligence, developed through years of struggle, might be dissipated, rather than be built on, in the new South Africa.

There was in the original RDP, a significant commitment to the "capacity-building assistance" the democratic government would give to the unions and other popular movements. A measure of how disappointing NEDLAC must be seen in this respect is that it has translated this into the meagre provision of funding one person to "coordinate" union representations. Far from developing union capacities to challenge creatively the political economy of globalization, there has been the "brain drain" from the unions that Eddie Webster refers to. "We have been abandoned by the

intellectuals" was a comment I heard quite often from the trade unionists I met. And what was meant by this was not just that people had gone to work inside the state, but that those very people were the authors of a strategy that left capital rather than labour in the driver's seat and that made no provision for "capacity-building" on the part of the unions to challenge this agenda. Eddie Webster may wish it were so, but the government is not fostering "counter-pressure" from the unions and social movements in relation to its industrial strategy.

The separation between those who have gone into the state and the rest of the movement that Webster points to expresses itself culturally in a most poignant fashion, going beyond the more visible manifestations of high salaries and expensive cars. One middle ranking NUMSA official told me one night at Kippies jazz club in Jo'burg that it used to be the case that when COSATU people went to a place like this, heads would turn – they were seen as heroes in the centre of the action. Today, those who have stayed with the unions rather than gone into the state are seen as "losers" – not only financially, but because that's not where the political "action" is any longer seen to be.

Embourgeoisification

Moreover, the process of embourgeoisification extends far beyond the perks and hierarchies associated with parliamentarism. Just as with the creation of an Afrikaner bourgeoisie in 1948, so is there a strategy on the part of the old ruling classes to facilitate a black bourgeoisie. And this even extends – dangerously – to certain unions. As one particularly perceptive analysis noted of trade union involvement in the partial sale of Anglo-American's Johnnic holdings as part of "the current wave of black economic empowerment equity transfer deals ... [this] will have far-reaching implications not only for the broad thrust of black

empowerment, but also for the trade union movement Trade unions cannot be expected to engage in a business venture on this scale and not expect it to influence their attitude toward capital. Hence it must impact on the character of unionism itself ...” [Business Map, Sept. 4, 1995] It is doubtful if this is what the RDP originally meant by “capacity-building.”

While I was in South Africa last October, 7000 lowly paid black nurses were dismissed for going on strike in the Eastern Cape. I heard one Minister boldly predict the closure of five of the seven auto plants in the country. And I was told by another Minister that the reason for the complete failure of the mass housing program was (a) that the people would rather live in shacks than rent publicly built apartments, and (b) that international investors would not cover South Africa’s trade deficit if price controls existed on construction materials!

How should one explain such behaviour and abject rationalizations? One explanation no doubt is to be found in Webster’s quote from a union organizer who notes an “increasing similarity not only of styles of dress, language and common puns ... but also in the style of thinking” between the old and new rulers in South Africa. A more charitable interpretation would be one that emphasizes the narrow range of manoeuvre open to the ANC in the GNU. After all, the transition from Apartheid was, in the end, a negotiated one, a compromise, and it reflected as such the continuing strength of the old ruling class and state as well as their weaknesses.

This question on how large was the room for manoeuvre was the one I most often asked during my visit. There was virtually unanimous agreement outside of government circles that the room for manoeuvre was rather broader than the government had taken. One business analyst told me, for example, that business would have

been prepared to pay a 5% capital levy across the board as a necessary capitalist recompense for Apartheid had the government insisted on it. This alone would have paid for the mass housing programme – and much else. More generally, there can be little doubt that the GNU could have claimed far more “good-will” space in the international arena – by way of exemption from so quickly accommodating to the rigours of global neo-liberalism – than it has chosen to assert.

Opting FOR capitalism?

In other words, there has not just been a tactical accommodation TO capitalism. Rather, there has been a strategic opting FOR capitalism. It is a depressing story, but, of course, it is hardly one that is unique among erstwhile socialists and communists in today’s world. As Patrick Bond and Mzwanele Mayekiso put it in their important essay in the 1996 volume of *The Socialist Register*: “Indeed, an important reason that neo-liberal compromises characterize South Africa’s transition is that there were so many selective justifications [for such a course to be] drawn from across the world”!

Still, it is in a context so defined that the appropriate strategy of the labour movement now needs to be assessed. The issue is not one of leaving NEDLAC or staying within it. Trade unions by their nature must engage with employers and the state. The issue is only what kind of engagement with what effects on union autonomy? Corporatism is the kind of practice that stresses class harmony “in the national interest” despite the continuing existence of class inequality and domination; it is the kind of practice that puts far more emphasis on the ability of centralized union structures to control their members in that “national interest” than it does on their representing them in the class struggle. In a liberal democracy, it is possible to participate in tripartite structures,

as in parliamentary ones, without losing movement autonomy. But this will prove true only if there is a clear appreciation of the corporatist contradictions entailed in such tripartite participation, and a concerted attempt to limit the effects of those contradictions on union autonomy – so as to maximize the capacity to represent and mobilize members, and to retain and develop radical policy proposals and a long-term socialist vision and strategy.

And in South Africa? One union leader told me that the form the transition to democracy in South Africa has taken has reduced the possibility that union leaders like him would end up in prison, but that the question he had now to address was whether union leaders like himself could avoid becoming “imprisoned in NEDLAC.” The jury is still out on the answer to that question.

And there are signs that, at least among some COSATU unions, the approach now to be taken – vis-à-vis NEDLAC in particular and the GNU in general – will be that of developing an autonomous capacity for economic and industrial analysis and policy-making. On this basis, continued participation by trade unions leaders in NEDLAC and similar forums may continue and even be somewhat useful, but always to be undertaken with a clear and autonomous strategic mandate for such participation. (Whether business and government will continue to participate on such non-corporatist terms is another question.) And this will have to mean, in turn, the advancement of an alternative economic strategy through education and mobilization well beyond the confines of NEDLAC so as to build up (as Bond and Mayekiso put it) a “working-class civil society” oriented to “people-centred development” – rather than to the accommodation to neo-liberalism that a strategy of “progressive competitiveness” amounts to.

“Globalizing” from Below: The Trade Union Connection

BY JUDITH MARSHALL

Judith Marshall is a writer and educator who worked for many years in Mozambique in workplace literacy. She is currently the Education and Linkage Coordinator for the Steelworkers Humanity Fund in Toronto.

Popular organizations in South Africa and their global counterparts established significant ties over the course of the long struggle to dismantle apartheid. These ties have come up for redefinition as the political configurations of post-apartheid South Africa emerge. Some of these connections between civil society actors like the trade unions, women's groups, churches, literacy and housing activists have begun to disappear. Some analysts in Canada attribute this to reductions in Canadian government support, the loss of moral purpose associated with the demise of apartheid or the ambiguity of the enemy. But for Canadian Steelworkers – and many others in the labour movement – I would argue that the ties with South African working people have never been stronger.

Canadian workers' global relationships over the years have been organized through three different discourses. These are the discourse of globalization, the discourse of solidarity and the discourse of development. By discourse I do not mean just a way of talking but a fluid constellation of institutions, forms and practices, including language practices, through which international relationships are organized. The social relationships between working people in Canada and South Africa are shaped through these discourses, offering a repertoire of possible roles ranging from donors and victims to competitors and strategic

allies. Each of the discourses asserts itself strongly in particular moments and contexts as the dominant way to make sense of a given historic moment or experience.

The discourse of global competitiveness has come at our members with particular intensity over the past decade. It pits Canadian Steelworkers against working people in other parts of the world, all being urged to greater efficiency and flexibility in order to attract foreign investment. Under global competitiveness, whichever jurisdiction can offer the most plentiful cheap, skilled labour, the biggest tax and tariff concessions, the least environmental protection, the fewest fetters on taking out profits, wins the day. The logic offered by management is “us” – workers and management together – versus “them,” the competition. While global competitiveness may be felt with more immediacy for Canadian workers in the investment flow to the Americas and Asia, there is no doubt that our members also feel connected with working people in southern Africa in facing the global challenge.

The discourse of solidarity is an old one to the trade union movement, whether with fellow-workers, a nearby workplace or internationally. During the long era of apartheid, Canadian labour, like other sectors, built up a practice of political and material support for the forces working to dismantle apartheid. Leaders from the major trade unions in South Africa became familiar figures at Canadian labour gatherings. Steelworker director Leo Gerard likes to reminisce about moments like the time when Cyril Ramaphosa, then a National Union of Mineworkers leader, called him for

a rapid donation towards purchasing tarpaulins. South African trade unionists wanted to use these tarpaulins for a rally as a way to get around the apartheid regime's latest manoeuvre, a ban on outdoor meetings.

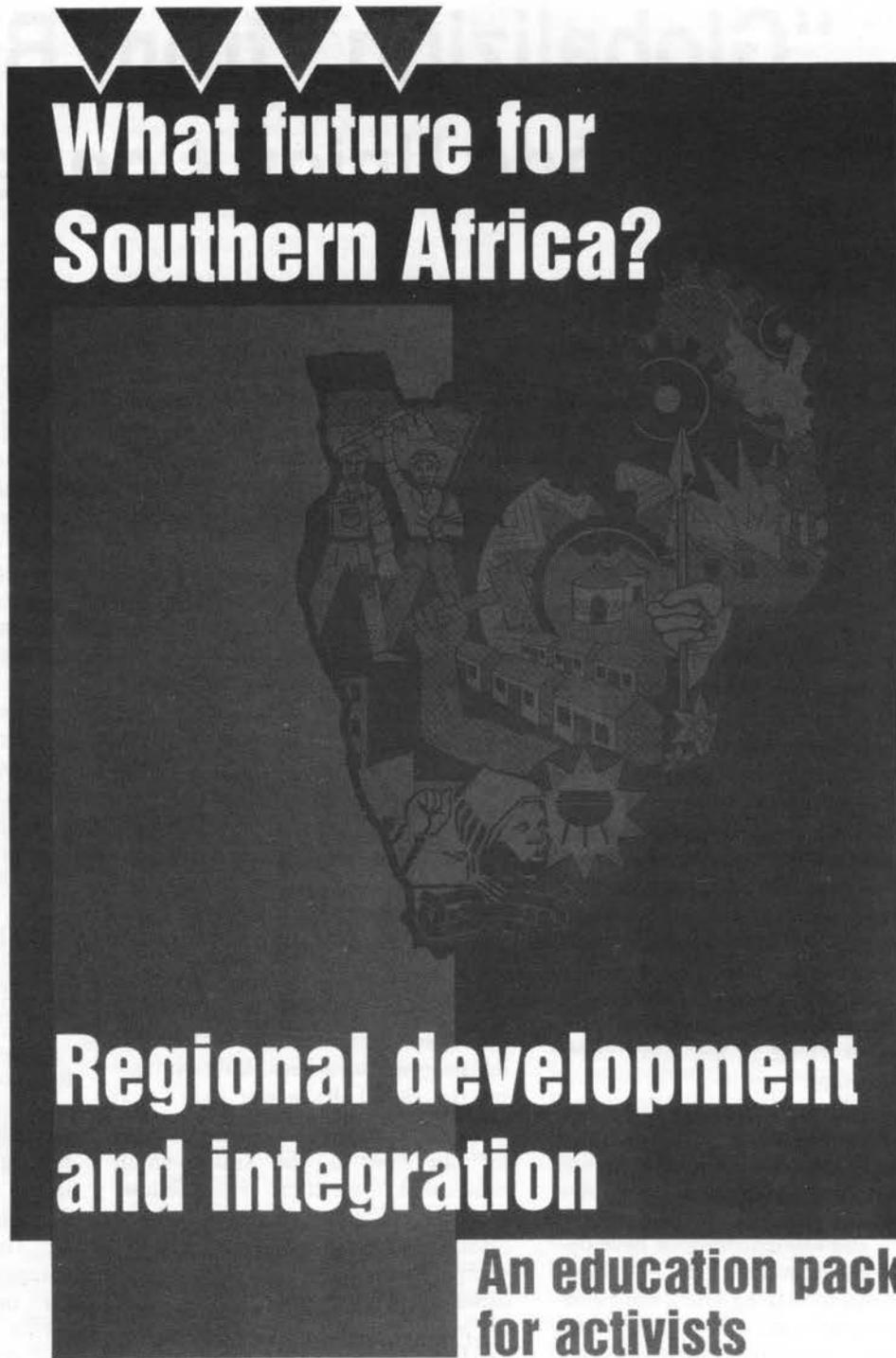
The third discourse that shapes the links between Canadian working people and working people in South Africa is the discourse of development. The standard framing of the development discourse for our members comes through the mainstream media, advertising and travel brochures. It tends to be premised on a stereotypical south uniformly peopled by impoverished masses for whose alleviation we, in countries like Canada, have the remedy. It supports a set of practices that have to do with a flow of financial and human resources from north to south. North-south power relationships tend to be operationalized as a set of donor-beneficiary relationships through the development discourse.

These discourses are, of course, fluid rather than static. Solidarity, which has all too often been something of a one-way flow, is having to take on new dimensions in an era of unregulated capital. The hegemony currently enjoyed by the discourse around global competitiveness makes it urgent for our members to find new forms of north-south connections and strategies for working together. In this new era, workers will either be played off haplessly against each other as rights and standards fall to the lowest common denominator or find ways to work in concert to level rights and standards upwards, inventing new bottom-up forms of globalization.

The prevailing development discourse has also come up under new scrutiny by the creation of international development funds in four major trade unions in Canada over the past decade. The efforts of these funds to put a distinctly labour signature to their work at this historical moment creates an interesting interface between the three prevailing discourses.

Labour-based development funds, a new phenomenon

The increased involvement of Canadian labour in international development emerged more strongly just as the formal apartheid system began to wind down and the forces of neo-liberal fundamentalism preaching the gospel of global competitiveness intensified. Since 1985, four major Canadian unions, three in the private sector and one public sector union, have established funds for international work. The pioneer was the Steelworkers Humanity Fund, established at a policy conference in 1985 and now in its tenth year of operations. After it came the Communications, Energy and Paper Workers Humanity Fund (CEP), established in 1990. In 1991, the Canadian



What future for Southern Africa?

Regional development and integration

An education pack for activists



INTERNATIONAL LABOUR RESOURCE AND INFORMATION GROUP

The Humanity Fund supports ILRIG's educational work on regional economic integration.

Auto Workers (CAW) established the CAW Social Justice Fund. The newest union to create an international development fund is the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), whose Union Aid fund was incorporated as a registered charity in 1993.

The mechanism for these funds is a characteristically labour mechanism, the collective bargaining agreement. There are now, a decade later, close to 400 Steelworker bargaining units that have included the Humanity Fund in their agreements. This means a penny for each hour worked is donated to the fund. About 10 percent of the contracts include a matching penny an hour from management. The other funds have similar mechanisms. For the Steelworkers, this means raised revenue of \$8-900,000 annually which, when matched by CIDA co-funding, becomes a sizeable development fund.

Each of the four unions brought a distinct history of international connections into its development fund, some through a history of active involvement in International Trade Secretariat activities in different regions of the world and some through direct union initiatives. All of them had developed direct working links with counterpart unions in South Africa in the final years of dismantling apartheid.

The Steelworkers Humanity Fund emerged in the wake of the Ethiopian crisis, at a time when people throughout Canada were inventing ways to respond to this human tragedy. If the original mandate of the Fund was relief and development activities triggered by the Ethiopian experience, the events during the ten years of its existence have considerably broadened its mandate. As Jim Saare, a long-time board member who had travelled for the Fund to Nicaragua in the early 1990s commented at a Board Meeting in 1993, "Either we find a way to make the Fund relevant to how interna-

tional questions are coming at our members or we will lose it." For Saare, this meant addressing international questions like NAFTA. It meant a hemispheric trading bloc of the Americas. It meant BC mining companies opening rounds of bargaining by telling Canadian miners what profits they could make from their operations in Chile or South Africa — and how Canadian miners had to lessen wage demands and lean on their governments to lighten up on environmental standards, on corporate taxes, on protection of native people's land rights, if Canadian mining was to be competitive globally.

During 1994 the four labour funds and the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) entered into a series of negotiations with each other and with CIDA about changes in the funding of the Canadian labour movement's international development activities. The four labour funds found themselves in an anomalous position vis-à-vis other NGO development agencies. As "new kids on the block" with substantial capacity for raising revenue, they argued for the same right to matching funds that long-established NGOs enjoyed — and this in an era of shrinking funds.

Another major concern of the labour funds was the large portion of CIDA funding going to private sector initiatives, both through bilateral programmes and programmes like CIDA Inc. Given the historic understanding operative in Canada that the private sector is comprised of both a labour and a management side, the labour funds put forward strong arguments about the need to balance CIDA's much increased support for the corporate side of the private sector with significantly larger CIDA funding specifically for trade union development in the south.

The upshot of all of these discussions was the formation of a Labour International Development Committee (LIDC) made up of

the four funds and the CLC. The LIDC successfully negotiated a 5.2 million dollar programme with CIDA that will channel greatly increased resources to southern trade unions to build up their capacity to represent their members effectively, and to contribute to stronger civil societies in their respective countries.

Post-apartheid labour connections with southern Africa — where next?

The Steelworkers Humanity Fund marks its tenth year with a level of strength and resilience to its connections with African trade unions far beyond its own projections. The most active connection, by far, is with the National Union of Mineworkers where there are now multiple layers of connections weaving in and out of a variety of areas in the institutional life of our two unions. There is a complex and fluid mixture of links, some fuelled by funding and others driven by the similarities of outlook of the two organizations as they face management — at times even the same employers — and the global economy.

The specific projects supported by the Steelworkers Humanity Fund are five, with co-funding from the LIDC programme and the South Africa Special Fund/South Africa Bilateral Country Program. There is a housing project which supports the establishment of a NUM Housing Unit that has made housing a bargaining issue and tackled the complex question of mine hostel up-grading. The second project is with the NUM Education Department. NUM has recently negotiated paid educational leave for its shaft stewards and has acquired a training centre in Johannesburg. It is now piloting courses for stewards on various themes and will carry out exchange visits to look at how labour education is organized in Canada.

A third project is with the NUM legal department. This department will send a senior staff person for a three month training visit. The NUM staff person will be based in the Steelworkers legal department, looking at labour law and the role of unions, corporations and governments in labour governance. The fourth project is with the NUM development department. NUM is supporting laid-off mineworkers returning to their rural region or country of origin with a programme of credit and training for cooperatives and micro-enterprises. Some of the funding comes from bargaining retrenchment packages with management and some of it comes from external funding sources like the Humanity Fund.

NUM's role in labour development goes beyond strengthening its own organization. It is also playing an active role in setting up regional structures such as the Southern African Mineworkers Federation (SAMF), to strengthen smaller mining unions in countries like Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. The Humanity Fund grant will support training workshops in SAMF.

The interweaving of the connections organized through discourses of development, globalization and solidarity is captured by the exchanges between our members. While the focus of a visit may fall solidly within institutional strengthening logic of the "development discourse" woven into any exchange are strands coming out of a deep sense of common interests as trade unions and an urgent need to share experiences and strategies around globalization.

Global labour ties

After ten years of existence, the Humanity Fund has built up a solid practice of development assistance with a \$1.6 million programme supporting projects of about 30 labour and community organizations in 12 countries in

five regions of the world. This development assistance has, at its core, a funding mechanism, with a transfer of monetary resources from a northern trade union-based fund to finance the activities of an organization in Africa, Latin America or Asia.

Yet even while this practice, organized through the development discourse, has been consolidated over the past decade, the discourse of development is too narrow to contain the global connections that predated it and are now being fed by it. The expectations of the organizations receiving support from the labour funds are high; they expect a "labour signature" to the work. They want the relationship to a labour-based fund to take them beyond a donor relationships, important as funding may be, towards working links with the union as a social actor in Canada.

The development education programme of the Humanity Fund has, from the outset, situated the development work of the fund in the broader context of the global economy. The week-long "Thinking North South" course gets members working with the concepts of the globalization, looking at their own insertion into the global economy, putting themselves into the shoes of southern workers. It specifically challenges the comfortable relationships organized through the development discourse and reinforced by media images of north-south power relationships that assume "donor-beneficiary" relationships with Canadians as the "developed" offering our resources to the "undeveloped." Role plays explore the differences between relationships of dependency and relationships of solidarity based on mutual interests and strategic alliances.

The education programme includes working visits to the organizations supported by the fund as a fundamental component. We have

resisted the tendencies to make these into "donor inspections" with our members seeing themselves/being seen as "mini-project officers." The objectives of the visits have to do with education of our members about the realities of the south, and solidarity. Members are asked to speak from their own strength and experience, as social activists in Canada, carrying out their activism through their unions. These visits, like the courses, straddle "development," "global economy" and "solidarity" discourses.

Our members are being confronted with international questions on a daily basis, forced to compete globally, with the threat of closure and a move to Mexico or Chile constantly held over their heads. Effective servicing of the needs of our own members forces the union to establish new international practices, ones which cannot be carried out by old forms of labour diplomacy and solidarity. The forces of globalization demand sectoral links between workers in the same industry in different jurisdictions, or working for the same company in different parts of the world.

Arguably the really interesting space being created by the labour funds is the work and the connections they are creating in points of interface between the three all too often unconnected discourse of development, solidarity and globalization. Our members live these interconnections in their daily lives, caught between powerful macro forces of multinational companies and international institutions like GATT and NAFTA and the micro realities of their fights for jobs and communities and social wages and a future for their children. Can the new labour development funds use the institutional space these funds create to promote alternative kinds of labour connections and practices of global solidarity, ones that, over time, contribute towards building up forms of globalization in which working people have genuine input?

Trade Unions and Politics: What Next in Namibia?

BY GRETCHEN BAUER

Gretchen Bauer, a professor at the University of Delaware, is a long time observer of the Namibian scene.

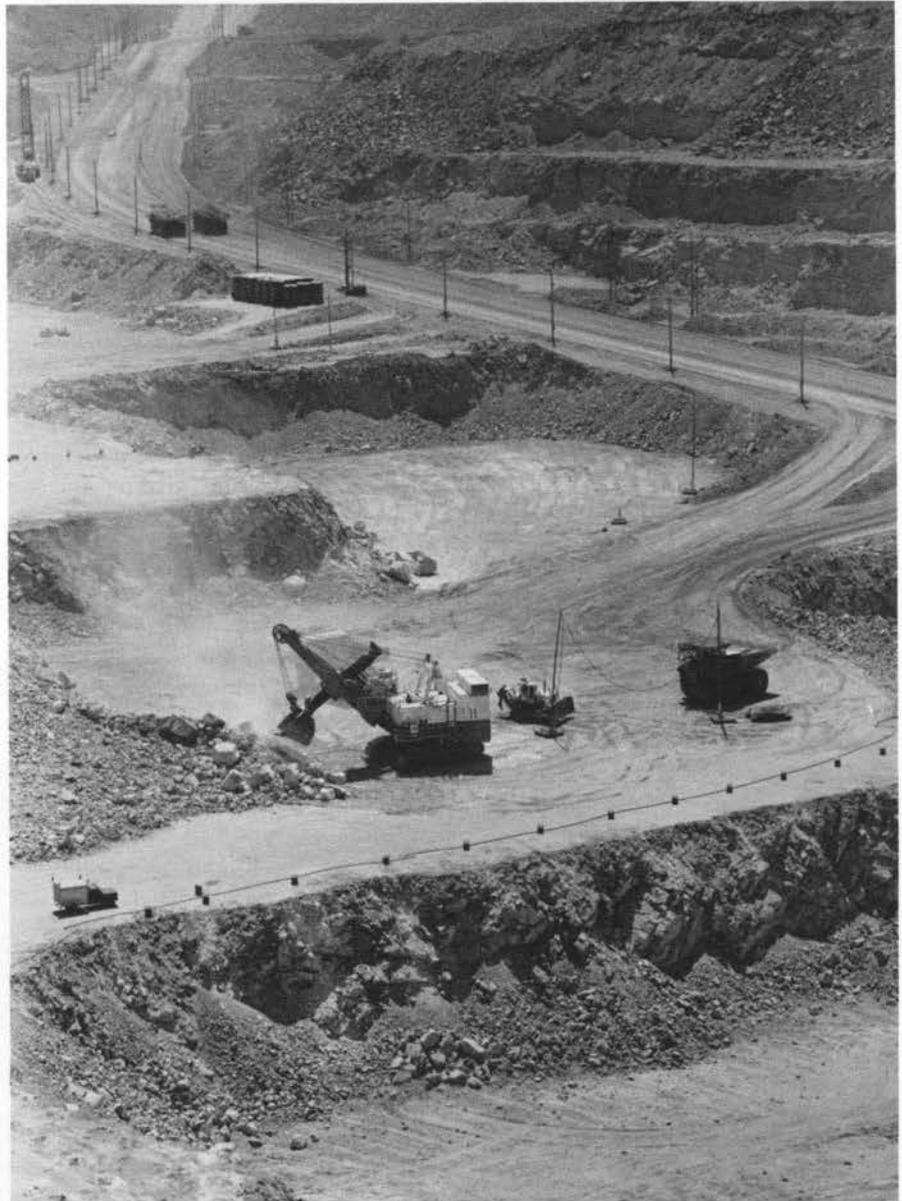
After playing a significant mobilizational role during the final years of the liberation struggle, trade unions in Namibia have continued to struggle in the more than five years since independence. While labour movements in many parts of Africa have provided crucial impetus and support for emerging democratization efforts, organized labour in Namibia has faced numerous constraints and challenges. As in the rest of Africa, however, active engagement by trade unions and other popular sectors is sorely needed if Namibia's fragile democracy is to be consolidated.

Trade unions in their present form have existed in Namibia for just over a decade. There are two trade union federations representing over 118,000 workers [see Box]. The major trade union federation, the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW), is comprised of eight member unions and has an estimated "total rank and file membership" of 88,000. A second trade union federation, known as the Namibia People's Social Movement (NPSM), has a membership estimated to be more than 30,000.

Just as Namibia only gained its independence from South Africa in 1990, decades after most African countries won their independence, so too were workers in Namibia only able to organize themselves into trade unions much later than workers elsewhere in Africa. While initial attempts were made among fishworkers in Luderitz in the 1920s, Luderitz and Walvis Bay in the

1950s, and among mineworkers at several mines around Namibia in the 1970s, none of these efforts survived persistent persecution by colonial authorities and a completely hostile legal environment. Indeed black workers only came to be

legally classified as 'employees' in 1978 in Namibia and thus were only able to form and join trade unions from 1978. At the same time, prohibitions against political party affiliations continued to hamper the emergence of mass-based unions in



Rössing uranium mine, Namibia

Orde Eliason - Impact Visuals/Link

Namibia even after 1978. While a number of the unions of the NPSM grew out of early white staff associations, the unions of the NUNW only emerged in the mid to late 1980s during a groundswell of community-based organizing in urban townships around Namibia.

Today organized workers in Namibia make up roughly half of the formal sector labour force. The formal sector workforce in Namibia is estimated at about 230,000 people out of a total economically active population of about 500,000; those not in the formal sector are primarily to be found in subsistence agriculture. Moreover, workers are particularly well organized in such strategic export sectors as mining and in the public service where they confront the largest single employer in the country – the government.

Just as important as their relatively strong numbers, trade unions in Namibia today face a generally favourable legal environment. For decades the leading liberation organization, the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), drew consistent and loyal support from among Namibia's sizable migrant labour force – not surprising given the link between exploitative labour relations and oppressive colonial relations in South African occupied Namibia. One of SWAPO's early stated priorities after independence, as it took on the role of ruling party in government, was to legislate a new labour relations dispensation. The new labour law, finally implemented in late 1992, represents a dramatic gain for Namibian workers by, for the first time, introducing the notion of unfair labour practices.

Moreover, in the new Labour Act, employees may only be dismissed for a valid reason and in a fair way, and the onus lies with employers to show that disciplinary actions and dismissals have indeed been fair. Minimum wages can now be introduced in specific sectors of the economy following the directives of a

Wages Commission, and Namibian workers have an extensive, though qualified, right to strike. Labour relations have been decriminalized with complaints processed in newly established district labour courts. Union members are allowed access to employer premises for the purposes of organizing workers, and unions must no longer demonstrate 'representativeness' in registering with the Labour Commissioner. In general, the new labour relations dispensation in Namibia is based on the principle of tripartism – of consultation and cooperation among the state, workers and employers. Unfortunately for the unions, an overriding concern remains whether they have the overall capacity, political clout and economic muscle to participate effectively in new tripartite arrangements.

While the formal labour relations framework is a favourable one, current economic and social indicators are less promising for unions and their members. As a result of decades of apartheid policies, Namibia suffers from significant inequalities of wealth and income and access to public services that correspond closely to racial and ethnic categories. The legacy of apartheid rule in Namibia will take years to undo, and early reports indicate that in workplaces throughout Namibia – especially on commercial farms, but also in factories, on the mines and in other smaller worksites – past attitudes and practices endure. To most trade unionists, employers remain a formidable opponent with superior financial, material and human resources and as such are much better positioned to influence government than are the unions.

Limitations of the Namibian economy

Many factors combine to erode the position of organized labour in Namibia. First, the limitations of the Namibian economy, and especially the very small manufacturing sector, do not bode well for a strong trade

union movement. Since independence the SWAPO government has committed itself to a mixed economy in which the private sector acts as the engine of economic growth and recovery. The government's development priorities involve reviving and sustaining economic growth, creating employment opportunities, alleviating poverty and reducing the aforementioned income inequalities. The outstanding characteristic of the Namibian economy remains the overwhelming but declining significance of the primary sector (mining, fishing and commercial agriculture) and the economy's export orientation (minerals, fish and beef).

Given the protracted weakness of regional and international economies and persistent tension in some commodity markets (diamonds, copper, uranium) on which Namibia relies heavily, since independence the Namibian economy has not expanded at rates which could be described as realizing its full potential for growth. Moreover, even economic growth rates of up to 3.5 percent annually barely keep up with the population growth rate. Still, considerable progress has been made in reviving and developing the fishing sector and key industries in the manufacturing sector (construction and fish and meat processing). Steady growth in agricultural output and a post-independence expansion of government functions and services have also been experienced. In general, the atmosphere of peace and stability (and a favourable Investment Code enacted in 1990) have played a significant role in enhancing the investment climate.

The Namibian government's own recent *Economic Review* predicts that Namibia's economic prospects for the mid to late 1990s are favourable. The projection hinges mainly on the mild economic upswing expected in the world economy and in South Africa (Namibia's largest trading partner). Growth rates of more than five percent are predicted for the mid to late 1990s.

A number of factors will determine the future outlook, including: climactic conditions (already improved in 1994) and beef prices, diamond output and offshore marine operations, uranium output and export prices, and the expansion of the fishing industry.

Ties that bind: unions and SWAPO

While the limitations of the Namibian economy do not encourage a strong union movement, a number of other factors combine to further erode the position of organized labour in Namibia. One issue that has dominated the trade union movement more or less since independence has been that of the NUNW's affiliation to the ruling party SWAPO. The longstanding support of many Namibian workers for SWAPO has been noted; but the ties run deeper still. From 1970 among SWAPO in exile an NUNW was established and run out of the SWAPO Department of Labour. Moreover, key SWAPO cadres (former SWAPO combatants released from Robben Island in the mid 1980s) were instrumental in the final formation of the NUNW and its member unions inside Namibia. From the 1989 election onward, the NUNW and affiliated unions have participated actively in SWAPO election campaigns.

The NUNW's affiliation to SWAPO was formally reaffirmed at

the federation's first congress after independence in 1991. Affiliation was challenged by member unions, including MUN and NANTU, at the NUNW's second congress in late 1993 but the challenge was defeated without even being voted upon by congress delegates. During 1995, the NUNW sought to clarify the meaning of its affiliation to SWAPO through the adoption of a formal accord with SWAPO. By mid 1995, however, little progress had been made on the accord, reportedly because of a lack of response from the party.

Those who support affiliation maintain that it ensures union input into party and government decision making processes; in any case, the relationship between workers and SWAPO is considered to be a historically tested and mutually beneficial one. Those who oppose the NUNW's continued affiliation to SWAPO charge that it prevents the unions from developing their own programs and identity as many workers fail to distinguish between the two; many fear that affiliation subordinates the unions to the party making trade union leadership accountable to the party leadership rather than to their rank and file members. There is a strong sense that the unions' support is taken for granted by party leadership. Finally, some fear that political party affiliation prevents those who

are not SWAPO members from joining the NUNW, and it certainly has been an impediment to trade union unity in the past.

Several very unambiguous statements by SWAPO officials since independence have indicated just how seriously and unfavourably some within SWAPO view the potential disaffiliation of the NUNW from the party. When then General Secretary Bernhardt Esau announced in March 1994 that the federation was considering forming its own political party, his comments were "greeted with consternation in some union, SWAPO and even state security circles," according to *The Namibian*. Esau was summoned to SWAPO headquarters and quickly retracted his statement.

During the years of exile, some SWAPO leaders reportedly voiced just this fear, that the unions might ultimately attempt to form a separate party. Indeed, many in Namibia feel that the potential is very strong for a split within SWAPO with, for example, union members joining together with the Namibian National Students Organisation (NANSO), which long ago disaffiliated from SWAPO and has suffered dearly for it. Alternatively, union members could join with the Namibian Non-Governmental Organisation Forum (NANGOF), a recently formed non-governmental organization [NGO] umbrella group,

Major Trade Union Federations

National Union of Namibian Workers

- Namibia Public Workers Union
- Metal and Allied Namibian Workers Union
- Namibia Food and Allied Workers Union
- Namibia Transport and Allied Workers Union
- Namibia National Teachers Union
- Mineworkers Union of Namibia
- Namibia Domestic and Allied Workers Union
- Namibia Farm Workers Union

Total membership: approximately 88,000

Namibia People's Social Movement

- Public Service Union of Namibia
- Namibia Building Workers Union
- Local Authorities Union of Namibia
- Namibia Wholesale and Retail Workers Union
- South West Africa Mineworkers Union
- Bank Workers Union of Namibia

Total membership: approximately 30,000

and perhaps even members of the SWAPO Youth League, to form a new party. Moreover, many speculate that this is the only way in which a viable opposition political party will ever emerge in Namibia.

The issue of affiliation has also been one of the main factors inhibiting unity between the two major trade union federations. Not surprisingly, there has been intermittent talk of the need for labour unity in a country where more than 15 unions represent just over 100,000 workers. In 1995, trade unions came together for formal unity talks, issuing a document containing 20 points of agreement and six of disagreement. At the least, delegates agreed on the need for the establishment of a forum representing all Namibian unions in order to be able to discuss common socioeconomic concerns and input into national policy making. According to *The Namibian Worker*, most of the delegates to the talks indicated their wish to form a single umbrella body for Namibian trade unions.

Since independence Namibian unions have not only been pursuing unity talks with each other, but they have continued to work closely with other community-based organizations (CBOs). As noted, the NUNW unions emerged during a period of heightened grassroots activity in Namibia, and there has long been an overlap among those active in the unions, churches, student and women's organizations and NGOs in general. This collaboration was manifest most clearly in September 1994 when the unions joined forces with a number of NGOs to convene their own conference on land reform in Namibia. The groups charged that the government had failed to address competently the land question in Namibia. Moreover, according to the unions and NGOs, land grabbing by government officials was rampant in the communal areas of Namibia. The land issue in Namibia is one around which numerous groups remain agitated.

Other issues that have preoccupied the unions since independence have included the enactment of social security legislation (containing maternity benefits for women workers), public sector negotiations and union input into various reform processes, for example, in education.

The most recent concern of trade unionists in Namibia, however, has been the proposed establishment of export processing zones (EPZs) in the country and particularly in Walvis Bay (returned to Namibia in February 1994). While the unions have not objected to the notion of EPZs in and of themselves, they objected strongly to the government's attempt to have Namibia's progressive labour law not apply in the EPZs. For months during 1995, union and government leaders attempted to reach an agreement, with government calling the unions' attitude "confrontational" and the "wrangling" between the two sides "unfortunate," and the unions threatening to take the government to court over the matter.

Ultimately, both sides agreed to a compromise. The Labour Act would apply in EPZs, but EPZs would be considered essential service areas and thus strikes and lock-outs would be prohibited. For the unions, however, this has been just one more instance of the government not consulting properly with the unions on a major policy issue directly affecting them and their membership. In March, NUNW President Israel Kalenga described the problem of the EPZs as one of "gravity and magnitude" for Namibian workers; in the days before the EPZ Amendment Bill was to be taken up in Parliament he warned the government that Namibian workers would not be "sacrificed" for their cheap labour.

An uncertain future?

For the NUNW unions, input into policy making might be both an opportunity and a threat, as they lose more and more of their cadres

to influential government positions. After the December 1994 National Assembly and Presidential elections, the NUNW and member unions lost three more of their top leaders (also SWAPO Central Committee members) – Bernhardt Esau, John Shaetonhodi and Walter Kemba – to SWAPO seats in the National Assembly. On the one hand, this may be merely further evidence of the co-optation of union leadership by the party with little benefit to the unions. On the other hand, it may offer the chance for greater representation of worker interests in Namibia or for a more militant leadership to come to assert itself within the unions.

Ten years after their emergence, unions in Namibia, in particular the unions of the NUNW, continue to face an uncertain future. Overall membership in the federation has grown considerably in the last few years and several member unions have strengthened markedly their organizational, administrative and financial capacities. The unions are servicing their members better than ever before, they are taking advantage of the experience and expertise of regional and international affiliates, and they are conducting myriad educational and training programs for their own members. While still lacking in the requisite research capacity, the unions have recognized the need to represent their members' interests in national policy debates, and on a few occasions have joined together with national NGOs and CBOs to do so.

But in many respects the unions' future direction seems fundamentally tied to that of the ruling party, SWAPO, and broader political developments in Namibia. With every election SWAPO grows stronger and the fledgling opposition parties ever weaker. In such an environment an active and insistent civil society – including vocal trade unions – is all the more crucial to Namibia's attempt to consolidate its nascent democracy.

The World, Society & the Individual

Our citation of recent works by Colin Leys on the African development prospect and the process of globalization (his article "Confronting the African Tragedy" in *New Left Review*, #204 and his new book, *The Rise and Fall of Development Theory*, for example) in the editorial that framed our last issue of SAR sparked considerable reader comment. We publish here a further text by Leys – a talk given at Carleton University last year but heretofore unpublished – that casts his analysis even more broadly. Here at SAR we have found this text a most useful reference-point for situating our own thinking about both southern Africa and Canada – and about the relationship between them. We are pleased to share it with our readers.

BY COLIN LEYS

On October 5th, 1994, 25 members of the Church of the Solar Temple killed themselves, or were killed by their leaders, in a house belonging to the Church in Switzerland. The reaction of the media, and of most people, was one of amazement and horror. A community of people had destroyed itself, or had been destroyed by its leaders, in the name of some far-out utopian ideal. We saw it as sick, pathological. If it occurred to anyone that it might be a symbol of what was simultaneously happening to the surrounding, so-called normal society, I did not see it mentioned. Yet I believe that the self-destruction of the Church of the Solar Temple is a symbol of what is currently happening on the world's stage: that our leaders are directing a process of the self-destruction of our societies in the name of a utopia no less irrational than the beliefs of the Church of the Solar Temple, whatever they may have been. This utopia is the idea of a world-wide market in which the people of the world relate to each other directly as individuals, and only as individuals; "globalization" is the process of trying to reach this ideal.

As an idea, it is strictly nonsense. In reality individuals cannot survive on their own; we are social animals, totally dependent for our very psychic stability, let alone the material means of survival, on complex and constant connexions with others, i.e. on *society*. The doctrine on which globalization is based, however, is positively

opposed to societies. Mrs. Thatcher expressed it accurately, if naively, when she declared that "there is no such thing as 'society', only individuals and their families." The assumptions on which the globalization project rests, then, are literally absurd. But this does not, obviously, mean that the *project* is unreal. On the contrary, it is well under way.

There are some misconceptions about globalization which I don't have time to discuss. Let me just say this: it is not a question of how close we are to having a single global market, or of how big a percentage of total world production is traded internationally, and so on. Globalization is a policy in the service of an irrational idea, not a realizable world. But in the name of this idea a critical decision has been made to accept *capital's freedom to move across national boundaries*. Controls over the movement of capital were the linchpin of the international economic system agreed on at Bretton Woods. As long as capital was not free to leave, states could pursue collective goals such as full employment, equitable income distribution, care for the helpless, preservation of the countryside, decent housing, a more highly educated or healthier population, and so on. Meeting such goals involved ensuring that capital was invested appropriately, through a mixture of incentives and sanctions, including taxes. Private owners of capital were obliged to accept this because they could not take their capital away. But as

soon as capital became free to move across national borders, as it did by the early 1980s, these national policies could no longer be pursued.

The immediate subordination of social goals to the interests of private capital is only made more complete and immediate by the size of some countries' public debt, especially if foreigners are allowed to own it. Once the debt becomes very large, as it now is in Canada, where debt service consumes a third of all tax revenues and poses a problem for the balance of payments, the owners of the debt have the power to veto any new policies they dislike. In industrialized countries like Canada, this power is exercised through the credit ratings that "the market" awards to governments. A budget that meets with disapproval leads to a lowering of the credit rating, which raises the interest rate payable on the outstanding debt. As a result, national goals have been progressively abandoned. For example, corporate taxes have fallen sharply while corporate subsidies have expanded, which accounts for a significant part of the so-called "fiscal crisis" of the state.

According to Canada's former Auditor General, in the late, 1980s corporate "tax spending" (i.e. taxes due from corporations but not collected) came to about \$35 billion annually; but it is not these expenditures that are cut in the budgets. Instead it is the social programmes that we put in place to make this the kind of society we wanted to live in that are cut, while people who try to defend

globalization

them are denigrated as "special interest groups." In underdeveloped countries, the mechanism is cruder. Power over a government's policies is now exercised directly by its foreign creditors, as a condition of further lending. The principle is the same in either case: policies that serve to strengthen societies by serving collective goals are sacrificed in favour of those approved of by creditors.

Those policies that they approve include cutting government spending until the deficit is reduced. In practice, this is not compatible with the kind of society we have had up to now in Canada, let alone with that of Ghana or Malawi. The general impression given by the mainstream media is that things must get worse so that they can get better. But why should they get better?

It is significant that no one is talking about this. I do not have time to discuss the assumptions made by the neoclassical economists whose ideas are supposed to lead to this conclusion. I will only say that my secretary at Queen's has a notice over her desk that seems to me more plausible than the reasoning of the MacDonald Commission on the Economic Union; it says, "to save money, the light at the end of the tunnel has been turned off."

What is most frightening about what is happening is that it has happened before, and its essential logic has been perfectly clear for at least half a century. In his famous book, *The Great Transformation*, the Hungarian Karl Polanyi, wrote that:

To allow the market mechanism to be sole director of the fate of hu-

man beings and their natural environment, indeed even of the amount and use of purchasing power, would result in the demolition of society ... Robbed of the protective power of cultural institutions, human beings would perish from the effects of social exposure; they would die as victims of acute social dislocation through vice, perversion, crime, and starvation. Nature would be reduced to its elements, neighbourhoods and landscapes defiled, rivers polluted, military safety jeopardized, the power to produce food and raw materials destroyed ... (pg. 73)

But is this really what globalization implies? That depends, of course, on where you are starting from. In privileged parts of the world like Canada, we have still a long way to go before that limit is reached. Instead, what we are wit-



David Hartman

Last day at Champion Spark Plug plant, Windsor Ontario, before it shut down and moved away - 1992

globalization

nessing here is a series of staged reductions in expectations. Instead of looking forward to growing real incomes, as we used to be urged to do, people are induced, through the discourse of the deficit, to be grateful for modest annual real income *reductions*; and instead of being mobilized to bring capital back under control, they are set to fight each other over the incidence of these allegedly "inevitable" income losses – young versus old (the discourse of "Generation X"); public sector versus private (the intellectually scandalous discourse of the "Social Contract" of Ontario and Bob Rae, and the cheap rhetoric of "cutting bureaucratic waste"); recent immigrants versus the grandchildren of earlier immigrants (the Reform Party's racist discourse of "the burden on social services"); the employed versus the unemployed (the discourse of "repeat users" and "welfare bums"); and so on. This process also works to accelerate a necessary historical amnesia. What has to be erased is the memory of the 1950s and 1960s, the memory that we once had collective control over our lives, that we formed a society, as Canadians, Ontarians, Québécois, Ottawans and so on, and that as members of this society we made decisions about how it should evolve, and arranged the fiscal regime, interest rates, the money supply, public borrowing and spending to serve these decisions. We did not make these decisions perfectly, but we made them. Today we no longer do so. This we must be made to forget, or at least to look upon that epoch as unrepeatable (the left's fatalistic discourse of "the golden years", the right's discourse of "irresponsible socialistic government").

Furthermore, every month that passes sees the bonds that tie us together in society weakened, not just by the rhetoric of individualism and consumerism, but by the reduced level and quality of the things we do and provide for together, collectively – from garbage

collection and road maintenance to a national train system, and independent public broadcasting service, and, next, unemployment insurance, broad-access higher education, and health care. At each stage in the decline there is less to defend, less we feel proud of, less we feel identified with. This slow way of killing a society through death by a thousand cuts can go on for a long time, but it is death all the same.

In less fortunate places, the death of society comes more quickly, even catastrophically. This is most clear in the countries of sub-Saharan Africa, where pre-colonial societies were chopped up into some 40 colonies which later became 40 would-be post-colonial societies. Through the 1950s and '60s, these new societies were in a process of relatively rapid coalescence, assisted by the steady expansion of production and dramatic improvements in collective consumption, including transport, health and education. Then came neo-liberal globalization: commodity prices collapsed, leading to a decline in per capita incomes and the collapse of trade surpluses, followed by rapid increases in debt.

This opened the way for the imposition of Structural Adjustment Programmes which aimed at forcing these societies to "adjust," within the space of a few years and without serious thought about the social costs, to the alleged "realities" of world market prices. The result has *not* been a market-based social and economic recovery based on individuals and their initiatives in the marketplace. It has been, instead, an ethnic-based regression, as people have been pushed back into reliance on traditional social bonds for survival. And in some cases it has resulted in social and economic catastrophe, aggravated by the legacy of three decades of superpower-sponsored militarization.

Polanyi's statement about what taking the utopian doctrine of the market literally would mean, was

meant as a warning, a dystopia: it was something that had only ever been imposed on colonial peoples, when (as he wrote) "unimaginable suffering [had] ensued." What would he think of a world that, thirty years after decolonization, is imposing it on those same peoples again? I am not arguing that Africa represents the fate of the rest of the world. The global logic of capitalism will work itself out unevenly, with some poles of accumulation appearing, while older ones decline. But what I am confident of is that any society that is not in a position to re-subordinate the market will be destroyed by it – each in its own way, at its own speed and by its own standards, but destroyed. The question then becomes, are there any reasons to think that this process can be reversed?

Polanyi noted that since the doctrine of the self-regulating market was first formulated, capital's attempts to free itself from social regulation had twice been effectively reversed, – once by the "social-liberal" reforms of the late nineteenth century, and a second time by the Keynesian reaction to the depression of the 1930s. In 1944 he wrote, confidently, that it was now "an absurdity" to think that "a community would remain indifferent" to the destruction that any fresh deregulation of capital would cause. But it is not so easy to be optimistic today. One of the most disturbing possibilities about the present project for the emancipation of capital from social control – about globalization – is that unlike the previous ones, the very capacity for collective political action itself is among the first casualties.

First, political action on an international plane is so much easier for capital to accomplish than for any more popular social movement, and the international plane has become increasingly important and difficult for any one even medium-sized state to influence. Second, national states

are perceived as being weaker in a world of deregulated capital movements, and governments are exploiting this perception to reduce their accountability to voters. This aggravates people's sense of inefficiency.

Then there are some closely related changes that are bound up with globalization, though not necessarily resulting directly from it. One, the forms of life have been rapidly individualized over the past three decades, through consumerism, the media, and computers. These and other changes have gravely weakened the labour movements and lethally weakened the mass-membership political parties that used to express the most active sociality of ordinary people. Second, the death of *meetings* (whether public, or intra-party, or union) leaves the diffusion and testing of information, and the formation of opinion, largely to the media, and especially television. But the media have been made into a field of capital accumulation, not a neutral, equal-access arena in which information is circulated, and any idea tested and formed. Third, public education does not provide most people with any systematic understanding of modern history. Its main focus is on adapting young people to be useful employees. For all these reasons we cannot rely on the automatic reappearance of the kind of social forces that twice succeeded in recovering control over capital in the past.

On the other hand, I do not believe in Orwellian dystopias. I conceive that somehow, at some point, some effective coalition of social forces will turn against the rule of capital that is now being represented to us as both rational and inevitable. I think we can already see a belated recognition of the threat to society beginning to occur at the reflective, socially conscious margin of the mainstream liberal intelligentsia in the west: not exactly a counter-current, but more like a sort of nervous hand-wringing about the ap-

parently uncontrollable momentum now reached by unregulated international capital. Maybe I am wrong; but what else can it mean when magazines like *Harpers* and *Atlantic Monthly* and even *Vanity Fair* headline articles full of fin-de-siècle angst, when the *Toronto Globe and Mail's Business Week* runs excerpts from Kevin Phillips's book *Arrogant Capital*, when financial mega-capitalists like George Soros and Sir James Goldsmith publish urgent calls for the regulation of currency speculation, and when the *Economist* suddenly rediscovers the merits of public ownership and planning? Could the organic intellectuals of capital be experiencing some anxiety about the disappearance of the allies they could have turned to in the past, now that the ordinary working population has been so comprehensively neutralized politically?

The conclusion I draw from this and other evidence is that a fresh organic crisis (in Antonio Gramsci's sense of the term) is already on the horizon. The hegemony of neo-liberalism has not been firmly established, even among the mainstream Canadian intelligentsia, and its contradictions are beginning to show. We – I at any rate – cannot foresee how it will be resolved, by what combination of social forces: all that presently seems clear is that it will not be a combination just like the last one, any more than that resembled the coalition of the late nineteenth century. But what we can and must do is prepare the ground for a new social project in which the social surplus is used to serve society, not destroy it.

We need to take Gramsci seriously, as Stuart Hall spent the early 1980s reminding us. Historic blocs do not put themselves together and become politically dominant except on the basis of a common project within which each element in the bloc finds its aspirations expressed and potentially fulfilled. Hegemonic ideologies – that is to say, world-

views, interpretations of national history, analyses of the current conjuncture and a moral and practical utopia (a vision of a new social order) – emerge from conscious intellectual effort. Of course, they do not emerge in the form proposed by any one intellectual, or even one intellectual current: their form crystallizes in debates between social groups in the emergent bloc. But intellectual work is an indispensable precondition. Otherwise the commitment of effort and acceptance of costs that any successful political project needs from huge numbers of people will not be forthcoming. There has to be a coherent, convincing, morally persuasive discourse, offering answers to big questions about identity, meaning and dignity, as well as offering practical solutions to material questions, and pointing to a way of living that makes sense, and that appeals.

I think that many elements of such a discourse are present in the various discourses of contemporary social movements of all kinds, but constructing them into a unified hegemonic project remains largely to be attempted. There is also the fundamental problem of capital's control of "the means of mental production" to be confronted, which most social democrats have not yet taken seriously. This set of tasks – the task of analyzing globalization, alerting our society to its real meaning, and working out and propagating a new post-capitalist social project – is very urgent, and one to which anyone with a grounding in the essentials of political economy can, if they wish, make a contribution. There is a distinctive role to be played here by intellectuals (in Gramsci's sense of people who exercise the social function of intellectuals). I think this is the permanent truth in Kautsky's observation that socialism was brought to the working class "from outside," i.e. by people of non-working class origins. Today the boundaries of class have become much less distinct, and the



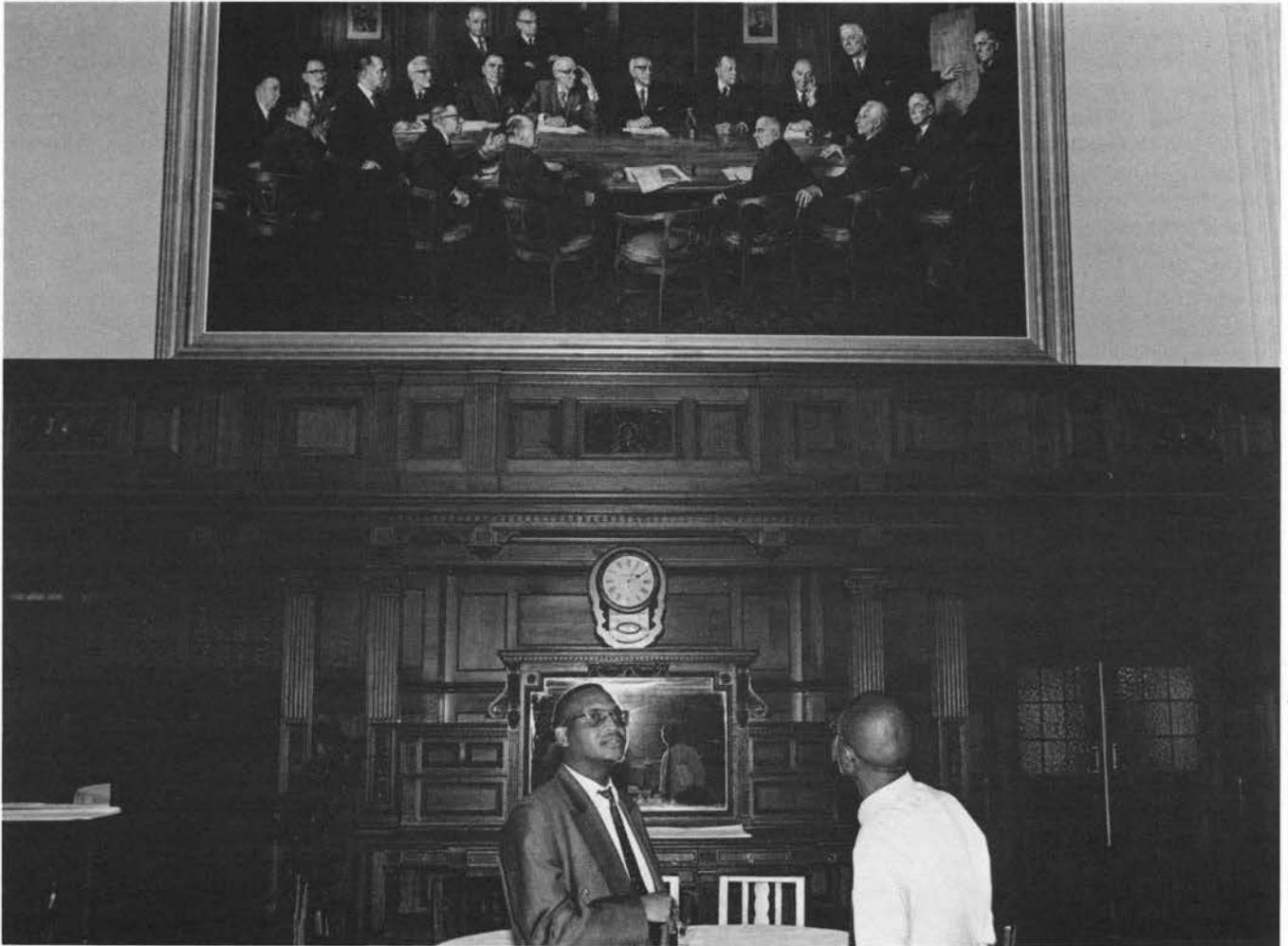
David Hartman

Unemployed Steelworker in his newly emptied plant after it was shut down - Hamilton Ontario 1992

genesis of the new post-capitalist project will occur neither "outside" nor "inside" the working class, but be the work of intellectuals (of varying class origins) involved in a fairly wide range of class and non-class struggles. But the task is still a

task, work that has to be undertaken. The reassertion of Polanyi's "double movement" will not be a revival of either of its two previous incarnations, but a new one, that must be *constructed*. According to Marx, Hegel said that everything impor-

tant in history happened twice, only he forgot to add, the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce. But what if it occurs a third time? We have to ensure that the third time will be the last, and that it will not end in a world-wide catastrophe.



Ansell Horn - Impact Visuals

Members dining room, Parliament, Cape Town - old paintings about to be removed

Democratizing Heritage: The South African Challenge

BY SHELLEY BUTLER

Shelley Butler is a graduate student in anthropology at Toronto's York University.

Heritage has become a contested terrain in post-apartheid South Africa where, historically, state museums and monuments either mirrored the colonial legacy or were tributes to Afrikaner nationalism and apartheid racial ideology. Currently, the future of apartheid-era museums, monu-

ments, place names, signs, public holidays and government buildings is being debated, as the new government seeks to democratize heritage and offer fair representation to South Africa's diverse cultures.

During the last few years, a number of proposals to create museums which document the legacy of apartheid and the anti-apartheid struggle have been put forward. Thus, while heritage is often associated with conservative politics and the preserva-

tion of the status quo, in South Africa heritage promises to become a tool for social change and empowerment. A key challenge in post-apartheid South Africa is to redress past injustice; museums can play a significant role in documenting the past, as well as providing a forum for discussing the future.

A Toronto workshop

The challenges of democratizing heritage in South Africa were the sub-

ject of a recent workshop in Toronto facilitated by Luli Callinicos, a historian and cultural worker. Callinicos is involved with the History Workshop at Witwatersrand University and the new Worker's Museum and Library in Johannesburg; she is the author of books in the series, *A People's History of South Africa*; and she has served on the national Arts Council Task Group (ACTAG), which has recently completed a report on heritage. Drawing on these experiences, Callinicos spoke with a group of cultural workers, activists and academics about the challenges of linking heritage to social change.

Callinicos also stressed the specific challenge for the linking of heritage to social justice issues that is posed by Mandela's current emphasis upon reconciliation. In the highlighting of "reconciliation" – however legitimate that goal may be in its own right – there also lies a risk that history will be sanitized and merely retold in euphemistic terms. For example, many people are disappointed that June 16th – the anniversary of the 1976 uprising by black schoolchildren – has been declared "Youth Day." This name erases the history of Soweto and stresses commonality over conflict. It will be interesting to see how people commemorate June 16th, for even if it is officially called Youth Day, alternative commemorations focused on Soweto will surely take place and make a point about the politics of history.

In the spirit of inclusiveness and reconciliation, the transitional government recognizes two national anthems, eleven official languages, and a flag that incorporates past colonial colours with those of the ANC. Mandela has also promised that white monuments will not be dismantled without careful discussion and negotiation. However, people have acted. In Bloemfontein, for instance, Africans pulled down a twenty foot statue of Hendrick Verwoerd, South Africa's prime minister from 1958 to 1966, who is gen-

erally regarded as the architect of apartheid.

The political challenge of presenting critical evaluations of the past in mainstream public institutions is not unique to South Africa, of course. In Washington, for example, the Smithsonian Museum recently became enmeshed in controversy when it attempted to present a critical exhibit of the Enola Gay and the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. The proposed exhibit was vigorously protested by veterans' groups, and eventually the Smithsonian yielded to them by eliminating the exhibit's most challenging questions and haunting images. Fortunately, and in contrast with the Smithsonian, a powerful exhibit on the destruction of Hiroshima was mounted in the student center of the American Museum. This is an example of how smaller community or university museums are often more successful than establishment ones (which are often big tourist sites) at producing provocative and politicized exhibits.

The community speaks

Similarly, in South Africa, community museums – such as the Worker's Museum in Johannesburg that Callinicos has helped to establish, and the District Six Museum in Cape Town – are on the cutting edge, creating exhibits that include the artifacts and voices of people who have been erased from official history and marginalized from public culture. These projects are remarkable for having responded to the needs of long ignored communities. Moreover, in contrast with traditional museum practices, these museums have been developed with community consultation and participation. The Workers' Museum, for example, has begun an oral history project conducted by the worker members themselves, to record, in the mother tongue, the memories and life stories of older migrants who spent the bulk of their working lives in mining and municipal hostels. Callinicos stated that such commitment to involving

communities in museum collecting and education is also a cornerstone of the recommendations made by the Arts and Culture Task Group. She stressed how current heritage policies are being articulated in relation to the government's Reconstruction and Development Program, reinforcing its emphasis upon developing a participatory democracy.

Cape Town's new District Six Museum, which is located in the Buitenkant Methodist Church, uses street signs and official registers to evoke the texture of everyday life in this culturally diverse community before the periods of forced removals. In 1901 Africans were relocated to Ndabeni, and in 1966 District Six was declared a white area under the Group Areas Act. District Six was renamed Zonnebloem and the state demolished homes and "re-settled" some 60,000 people in the Cape Flats.

Visitors to the District Six museum are invited to add their memories of places in the community to a large map of the district. A pamphlet for the museum explains how this memory project is related to both the past and future: "In this exhibition we do not wish to recreate District Six so much as to repossess the history of the area as a place where people lived, loved and struggled. It is an attempt to take back our right to signpost our lives with those things we hold dear. At one level the exhibition is about signs of the past. We would like to invite you to write your names and addresses and make comments in the spaces around the exhibits or in our visitor's book. This is important in helping us to retrace our past. At another level the exhibition is also about pointers to our future." Clearly, this sort of memory project has the potential to be useful in tackling land reform and reclamation issues.

Contradictions

The new Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa is also



Eric Miller — Impact Visuals

Non-welcoming reception at school in white suburb of Cape Town for new students

evidence of how important memory and knowledge is in relation to redressing past injustice (see, on this subject, Colin Leys' article "Amnesty not Amnesia: Dealing with the Past in South Africa," in *SAR*, vol. 10 no. 4, May 1995). But, as is clear from the title of the commission itself, it too is constrained by the government's chosen priority of forgiveness for (among other reasons, perhaps) the sake of economic stability.

Another challenge for heritage work involves the tension that arises from seeking to deal with symbolic concerns during a period when the majority of the population have urgent material needs. Callinicos noted, for example, that when the Worker's Museum and Library was established in an electricity worker's hostel in Johannesburg, some people felt that the land should have been used for affordable housing. One way of justifying the project was to point to the potential economic benefits that could develop as the museum becomes a tourist site. In this context, the question of heritage is not unrelated to economic development. Still, tensions do continue to arise in the sphere of democratizing heritage in post-apartheid South Africa precisely because of current material conditions. To take one recent instance, in response to the general enthusiasm about changing place names Lebona

Mosia, development director of the South African Institute of International Affairs, stated: "People can't eat a name."

The uses of memory

Heritage sites such as the Worker's Museum may prove to be especially useful for helping people to understand the complexity of relational histories and segregation in South Africa. For example, the physical space of the worker's hostel, which is located immediately next to the artisans' cottages exclusively set aside for white workers, reveals both the commonalities and unequal power relations that existed between Africans and Afrikaner workers: — a testament to the migrant labour system — the homes of white workers even included backyard shacks for domestic servants. By witnessing this reality, communities that have long been isolated by segregation can begin to take stock of their overlapping histories.

A key concern for cultural workers, however, is how to challenge responses of amnesia and nostalgia with regard to apartheid. Without a doubt, there are whites in South Africa collecting apartheid memorabilia in order to create right-wing nostalgia dens. Others may support efforts to commemorate apartheid out of a problematic cathartic desire to neatly dispose of the past. This sort of response to the past is also evident in memory

politics surrounding the Holocaust in Germany and other countries. The problem with such responses in post-apartheid South Africa, is that whites may understand apartheid as being "over," and not engage with the issue of redressing inequalities.

* * *

Memory has always been an important aspect of anti-apartheid activism. And clearly, whatever the challenges inherent in doing so, the past will continue to be invoked to inform South Africa's future. At Robben Island, Nelson Mandela himself recently unveiled a plaque that reads: "Embedded in these stones you will find the pain of our struggle, the sorrow of losses, and foundation of our victory." Triumphant representations of the past are also being questioned as people recall, for example, that the present-day town of Triomf was cruelly so named by white politicians after their destruction of the community that preceded it on the same ground: Sophiatown, a site of defiant resistance to segregation. As Callinicos suggested, such examples may remind us that, in the new South Africa, the role of heritage in the debate over reconciliation versus reappropriation is only just beginning. It reflects a wider struggle over the contradictions of redress and empowerment on the one hand, and detente with the former enemy on the other, in the perilous and often ironic task of nation building.

Zambia

Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA)
Private Bag 13386, Windhoek, Namibia

Dr. Kaire Mbuende
Executive Secretary
Southern Africa Development Community (SADC)

February 7, 1996

Dear Dr. Mbuende,

For three years now, MISA has been highlighting the deteriorating media freedom situation in Zambia. Sadly the abuse of media freedom by Zambia's supposedly-democratic government has now plummeted to new depths with the banning of the Monday February 5 edition of the privately-owned daily newspaper The Post, and the detention of three of the paper's editors.

The Post's Editor-in-Chief Fred M'membe, Managing Editor Bright Mwape and Editor Matsautso Phiri were detained on February 5 after armed police spent several hours searching their homes and The Post's premises in Lusaka. M'membe, Mwape and Phiri appeared in court on Tuesday February 6 and were charged with contravening the Official Secrets Act, and with being in possession of a prohibited publication – namely the February 5 edition of their own newspaper, which President Frederick Chiluba banned in terms of Section 53 of the Penal Code the day it was published.

In its February 5 edition, The Post reported that the Government planned to hold a referendum on a new constitution. It appears the charge of contravening the Official Secrets Act relates to this story, while under the second charge, the three editors are accused of being in possession of the banned edition of their paper. During their raid of The Post's premises on February 5, police reportedly censored articles which were to be published in the following day's edition of The Post, production of which was delayed by the search. The police continued their search throughout February 6. When M'membe, Mwape and Phiri appeared in court on February 6, they were denied bail, and as I write, their lawyers are making further applications to the courts for the three to be released on bail – hearings which have gone on almost the entire day.

This latest clamp-down on The Post is perhaps the most severe in the past three years, during which time the Zambian authorities have become increasingly hostile towards the private media in general, and The Post in particular. The Government has resorted more and more to using arcane legislation inherited from the previous one-party regime of Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, much of which dates back to British colonial rule. Such legislation violates international human rights standards and treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Zambia has acceded, and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, which has been ratified by Zambia. The actions of the Zambian Government also clearly conflict with the 1991 Windhoek Declaration on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press, which Information Ministers from SADC member states – Zambia included – have adopted.

On coming to power, the government of President Chiluba promised to scrap such legislation. With this pledge in mind, the independent Media Reform Committee in September 1993 submitted to the Government recommendations for the reform of legislation affecting the media. Yet the Government has chosen to ignore these recommendations, preferring instead increasingly to apply these out-dated and undemocratic laws in a bid to silence its critics and opponents.

As the 1991 Windhoek Declaration on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic Press points out, media freedom and diversity are prerequisites for social and economic development, as well as for the advancement of democracy. By adopting the Windhoek Declaration, SADC Information Ministers have shown their commitment to promoting media freedom and diversity in the region. The actions of the Zambian government are increasingly undermining that commitment – and thus the development process. Therefore we urge SADC member states, through your good offices, to bring pressure to bear on the Zambian Government to stop its persecution of the media, and to set in motion – as a matter of utmost urgency – an overhaul of the statute books with a view to bringing legislation in line with accepted international norms for media freedom, freedom of expression and other fundamental human rights.

Yours sincerely,

Methaetsile Leepile
Director

Failure in the Townships? The Development Bottleneck

BY GREG RUITERS AND
PATRICK BOND

Greg Ruiters is senior tutor of political science at University of the Witwatersrand. Patrick Bond was, until recently, assistant professor of social policy at Johns Hopkins University. He is currently associated with NIEP, the National Institute for Economic Policy in Johannesburg.

"They make a path directly to my door, asking me for money, healthcare, jobs, housing," says Trevor Ngwane, a newly-elected ANC councillor from Soweto. "But I don't sit on the committees where the big decisions are made. And I don't have the power to do anything."

Like their apartheid predecessors, the ANC councillors of South Africa's impoverished, violent townships are beginning to bear the brunt of popular frustration. This is ironic perhaps, for one of the prime scapegoats for the lack of Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) delivery between May 1994 and November 1, 1995 – the date of the country's local elections – was that previous municipal governments lacked legitimacy.

Today, if freshly-minted local councils are the RDP's "hands and feet," in Minister Jay Naidoo's words, what are the prospects for breaking the townships' so-called "culture of entitlement," and for the implementation of the expansive

social policies promised by the ANC during its national campaign two years ago? More broadly still, what are the prospects for building robust participatory democracy at the local level, revitalising civil society, and ensuring that South Africa's political transition begins to make a socio-economic difference to the lives of at least millions of urban (and rural) residents still trapped in unemployment and the ghetto?

Not good in the short term, we must conclude after reviewing the society's structural contradictions, political compromises and mainstream ANC reactions to both. Consider first the highly-constrained ("low-intensity," as some call it) nature of South Africa's local demo-



Cyril Ramaphosa & Jay Naidoo at COSATU congress in 1991

Abdul Shariff – Impact Visuals

cratic transition. We are all too familiar with the late 1992 "sunset clauses" that paved the way for a Government of National Unity, for an excessive degree of federalism (even big business now concedes), and for the absurd job guarantees that protect apartheid-era civil servants. But there were also several rather less-understood local-level corollaries as well, which together mean that the new-found legitimacy won't run terribly deep:

- the far higher voting weight accorded to whites in the recent election (30% of municipal seats were reserved for formerly white residential areas – or wards – at the outset, added to which is the white proportion of the total vote);
- the lumping of so-called coloured and Indian residential areas into the white wards, hence splitting the unity of "black" South Africa;
- the extraordinary veto power that white councillors now enjoy (with just a third of the local council seats, they can prevent passage of local budgets and town planning bills);
- the failure to develop coherent, fair systems for rural local government (here the voting weight given white farmers was even greater than in the cities);
- the persistence of white bureaucrats at many local government points of contact with the public;
- local government's intensifying budget constraints, accompanied by neo-liberal cost recovery principles and municipal privatisation programmes; and
- the sometimes undemocratic process by which local candidates had been chosen, which led to enormous acrimony and numerous independent candidacies (some by progressive local SA National Civic Organisation leaders).

Add to this two somewhat more subjective political features:

- a surprisingly widespread corporatist commitment by national and

provincial bureaucrats to the enforcement of "social contracts" – meant to involve all "stakeholders" (i.e., government, business and NGOs) – as a precondition to the project-level dispersal of housing and many other developmental goods and services; and

- a wariness by even ANC politicians regarding former allies in civil society that sometimes borders on paranoia.

These conditions are not universal throughout the country, and we would not want to discount courageous efforts by sincere, competent and sometimes radical politicians (like Ngwane) drawn from the rank-and-file of the ANC and SACP, the unions, civics, churches, women's groups and the like. But these women and men are quickly learning the limits of their power, which are not only technical and political in character but also social (all local councillors had to endorse a formal "code of conduct" that prohibits them from participating in mass action). In particular, there is danger that the best councillors will be split from their social base, as is evidently the case with nearly all national and provincial ANC politicians.

Maintaining strong South African traditions of consultation and accountability will be no mean feat, for the local government elections failed to energise and mobilise the masses of township dwellers. Voter registration and turnout were less than reassuring, as no more than a third of potential voters bothered to vote. Far from greeting local government elections with enthusiasm, many expressed the view that if central government cannot deliver under conditions of the power-sharing compromise, how is local government going to.

The primary vehicle for restoring government's links to alienated township residents was meant to have been Operation Masakhane – "let us build" – launched in February 1995 by President Man-

delá and three key ministries (RDP, Constitutional Affairs and Housing) to reverse the "culture of non-payment" that was alleged to have emerged as a cancerous side-effect of the 1980s ungovernability struggle. Masakhane was aimed at both improving services (through the injection of R700 million, a piddling amount compared to the R1.7 billion the defense ministry is requesting to buy four high-speed "corvette" ships) and goading more residents into paying the rent/service bills (as well as, in the process, atomising residents as consumers and deradicalising township organisations). But it was not to be.

In August 1995, Tokyo Sexwale, the leader of Gauteng (Johannesburg-Pretoria-Vaal) province, proclaimed, "The people of Gauteng have rallied behind the call to implement the Masakhane campaign as a vital step in the reconstruction and development process." In reality, official statistics released a month later showed that Gauteng townships from Mamelodi outside Pretoria, to Ivory Park in northern Johannesburg, to Daveyton in eastern Johannesburg, to Sebokeng and Sharpeville in the Vaal Triangle, were all recording payment rates of less than 5%. Masakhane seemed to be having the opposite effect to that desired. In most townships, the R10 million spent on publicity coincided with a 15% drop in rate payments. Following a crisis meeting in January 1996, Department of Housing director-general Billy Cobbett commented, "The campaign and the ideas behind it are correct but it needs to be politically reinvigorated. It's not just about getting people to pay for services but a social contract between government and the people in terms of rights and responsibilities on both sides."

But social contracts – which under South African conditions boil down to a weak appeal for corporatism – are not only untenable in townships, they have not succeeded in the boardrooms either.

To illustrate, by all accounts government's housing programme is a national tragedy. This is mainly the case, we argue, because the RDP's more progressive, decommodified, "people-driven" policy framework was rejected in favour of an all-in attempt at a social contract in October 1994 (see Bond, "Undermining the RDP," *SAR* July 1995). The official policy relies entirely on

developers to provide serviced sites (i.e., put in pipes and toilets), and on banks to hand out subsidies to low-income blacks whom they really did not want to see in their branches. Not surprisingly, the system crashed, and fewer than 15,000 houses were delivered during the national housing programme's first 18 months.

Most embarrassing was the

grandiose mid-1994 claim by Sexwale that with the assistance of the developer Stocks & Stocks – garish builders of Sun City's R1 billion Lost City complex) – Gauteng province would witness construction of 150,000 homes in the coming year. By January 1996, millions of rands in government subsidies earmarked for Stocks & Stocks were withdrawn, since the developer had delivered

Why Rent Boycotts Continue

If you lived in a South African township during the 1980s and early 1990s, there were any number of compelling reasons – related, but not exclusive, to the legacy of undemocratic local government and the 1985 ANC campaign "Make South Africa Ungovernable" – for not paying the monthly bill for rental or service (mainly electricity, water, sewage) charges.

Indeed, sporadic rent boycotts in the Western Cape, East Rand and other sites pre-date the 1983 launching of the United Democratic Front, and represented not merely anti-apartheid campaigning pressure, but a more durable mode of informal struggle based on the survival mechanisms implicit in the township moral economy. This was logical given that the black township was, as SACP intellectual Jeremy Cronin once remarked, "essentially a creation of Colonialism of a Special Type." And the township political economy remains financially barren. Although monthly charges are often less than R100, the vast majority of black South Africans today survive on less than R300 per month, according to a recent World Bank study. Poverty and mass unemployment are the simplest and most durable rationales for not paying the bills.

If authorities responded to non-payment by cutting individual accounts or threatening eviction, then a supply of electricity or water could simply be stolen (with the help of informal electricians and plumbers) or mass action by civic association street committees would prevent a forced removal. Moreover, the quality of the services – and of the decades-old matchbox houses for which residents paid rent without any secure urban tenure rights – was generally abysmal. This was also the case for many of the 150,000 or so houses built by the private sector and financed by banks during the late 1980s, leaving homeowners little choice but to refuse to pay their loan, so as to compel the banks to force the original developers to repair their shoddy work.

Aside from resistance politics, the waning household budget and poor quality homes and services, there were – and in many cases remain still today – other important structural contradictions contributed to the success of the rent and service boycotts. Today, it

would not be surprising if these add, in many residents' minds, to their own justification for disowning Operation Masakhane:

- We must never forget that blacks historically subsidised white residents' rates, because blacks worked and bought goods in white towns from firms and retail outlets that paid their rates to white town councils, thus generously supplementing residential rates (while black townships had only the beer hall for revenues). This reverse-Robin Hood phenomenon was well-understood in the townships, and formed the basis for the civic movement's "One City, One Tax Base" demand.

Only a few municipalities – Johannesburg stands out – have begun to redress the black-white subsidy by introducing progressive tariffs that would allow redistribution to occur in the other direction.

- Due to the effectiveness of earlier boycotts, many local authorities simply neglected to send township residents their accounts (published reports suggest billing rates in many large townships are still at just 50%). This is only beginning to change, and naturally is a high priority for the new government, but it will require accurate township residents' rolls and the identification of addresses in informal settlements, which will not be easy.

- Those townships residents who received electricity accounts from the parastatal Eskom – which had simply left black townships without power until the 1980s – were often most justified in boycotting. Their complaints about much higher average payments per unit of service than in white areas were based on the fact that whites had long ago paid off capital charges. For blacks, capital charges were internalised because services were newer, and that infrastructure provision was far more costly in peripheral areas of the metropolis where most blacks reside. Then, when Eskom began installing individual pre-paid metering points in an effort to break the payment boycotts, these also cost more than ordinary hook-ups, and the interest on the pre-paid funds went to Eskom.

While some progress has been made in equalising the unit rate of electricity in Johannesburg, this is not true in most other areas, and even Johannesburg has not begun to cross-subsidise from rich to poor consumers

only 1,000 of 10,000 serviced sites (not even full houses) that it had contracted for during the previous 18 months. Stocks & Stocks was also deemed ineligible for future funding as a result. Lost City indeed. With what effect on local morale?

Physically and psychologically, the housing crisis contributes to township degradation and continuing unwillingness to pay. And this

is not merely due to broader government fiscal constraints, as many policy wonks argue; more than three quarters of the state housing budget goes unspent. Indeed, it remains eminently feasible to subsidise an Affordable Housing For All programme within present budgetary limits. Hence we would probably conclude, at this stage, that the philosophy of the social con-

tract applied to housing – that is, the developer-driven, bank-centred, fully-commodified, inadequately-subsidised, gender-insensitive, geographically-segregated provision of sites, with the hope of “incremental” housing construction later – constitutes the prime delivery bottleneck.

In contrast, barriers identified by Cobbett and his colleagues in January 1996 included housing indus-

as is called for in the RDP.

- The state of a township’s housing stock signals to residents the merits of paying the rent and service charges. During the 1980s, the apartheid state simply stopped building new township houses, instead turning to banks and developers to take over. Today, notwithstanding detailed policy attention to the housing crisis and huge increases in the state housing budget, fewer than 800 new low-cost houses are being built each month (4% of the rate the ANC RDP promised). Government departments at all levels are failing to construct, or even facilitate construction of, proper houses, and instead – in contradiction to RDP provisions – channel subsidies to for-profit developers. Their developments are, in the words of a *Business Day* journalist, “remarkably like the discredited site and service schemes advocated during the apartheid era.”

- Government subsidies are insufficient to finance a house, and it is nearly impossible to build a solid structure on the serviced sites because of the lack of affordable credit. Commercial banks not only charge 22% for low-cost township housing loans (compared to 17.5% on home loans to the petty and haute bourgeoisie) they also still formally “redline” more than a quarter of all townships. Both these practices ensue with the explicit approval of the government, whose timid goal is simply to have the banks involved at all.

- The long-awaited transfer of existing council houses to long-term residents has been extremely inefficient, with just over one-third completed to date in even the advanced, wealthier provinces.

- In addition to housing policy failures, most household investments in township homes (and hence greater willingness to pay for services in order to avoid cut-offs or eviction) will be financially fruitless because there is still nothing much of a secondary housing market to ultimately recoup the investments.

- Apartheid spatial location and the high cost of (extremely dangerous) transport – the single largest component of the urban black household budget – together have meant that the average township resident pays far more of her household budget on commuting than do whites (incredibly, most new developments are still being sited on the periphery of cities).

- Schools, clinics, creches, libraries, recreation and other publicly funded facilities are of very low quality in townships, if they exist at all, and the physical environment (air, water, hygiene, etc) is lamentable.

- Police are far worse at combatting township crime – which in any case is far more extensive and violent – than they are at tracking criminals in well-fortified white neighbourhoods.

- Promises made by government to those community-based organisations (especially the civics) that were charged with implementing Operation Masakhane – promises ranging from financial support for organisational capacity-building and basic infrastructure, to funding for explicit projects – were mainly broken, and most community organisations are still overlooked by the major non-governmental donors.

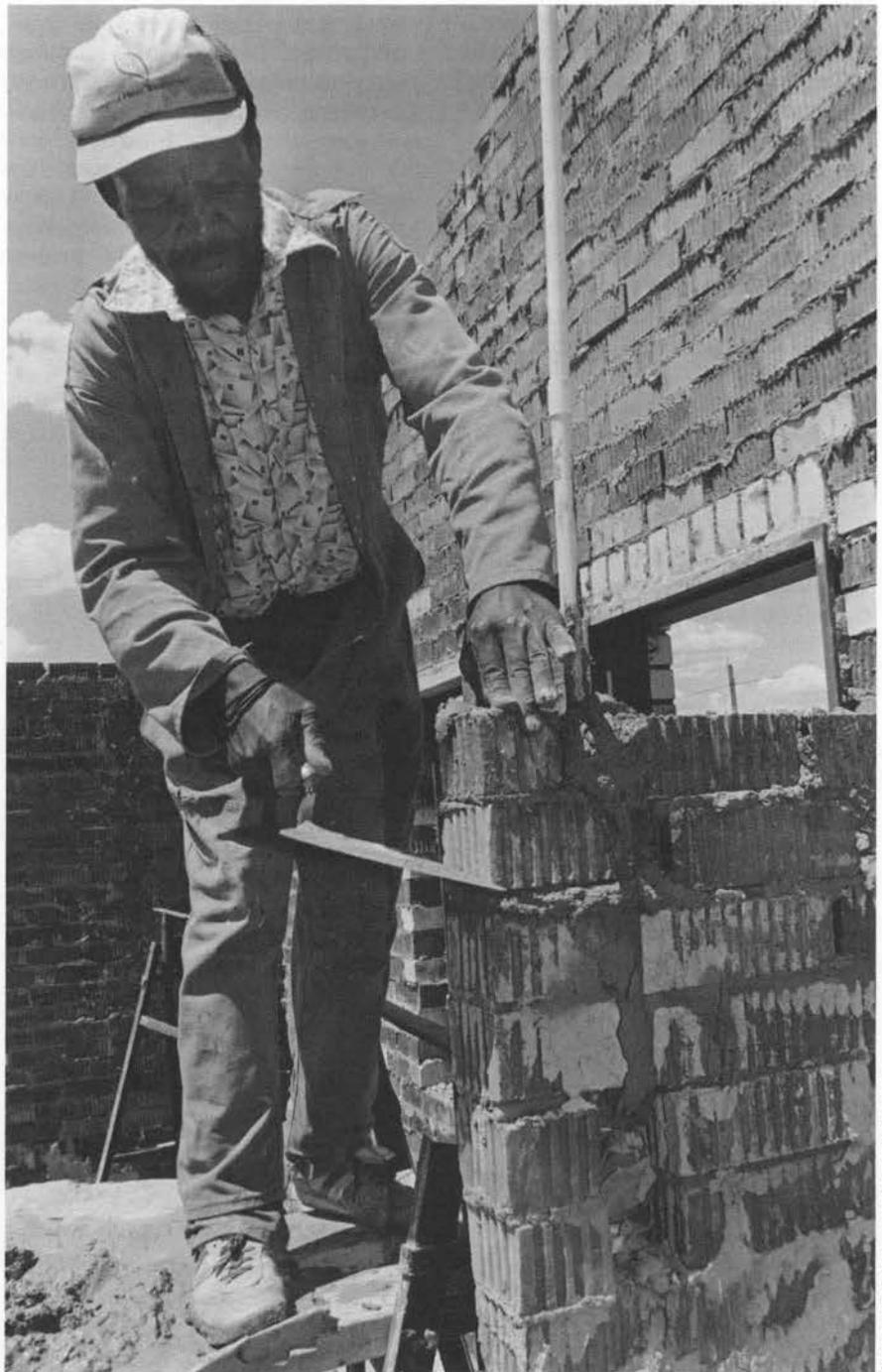
- Perceptions of racial, class and gender injustices run very deep. Reports (and public perceptions) of increasing inequality between low-income blacks and upper-income whites contribute to these, and feed a general social alienation that is entirely understandable if one considers what hell it is to live in apartheid townships. In many cases, such rationales for rent/services boycotts flow easily from the apartheid era to the present day. No amount of multimillion rand Operation Masakhane advertising campaigns (featuring the likes of Archbishop Tutu and former SANCO leader Moses Mayekiso) can change the material realities and the psychological aversion many township residents have to spending declining take-home pay on inferior services and rented matchbox homes.

To reverse these causes will require far more serious policy and financial commitments by the new government and by society at large than appears possible in the near term. A tough first question often posed by our own sources is this: in a middle-income country like SA, why should anyone pay anything to live in a typical township? Reviewing a list of reasons for the legacy and durability of rent boycotts – or merely taking a close look at one of South Africa’s open township sores – makes it difficult to argue. Yet at this stage of the country’s political development, to even pose such a question in policy circles is to run the risk of being labelled “dangerous ultra-leftist” by ANC politicians.

try “perceptions” of differences between the Housing Department and Ministry. (In July 1995, Minister Sankie Mthembu-Nkondo had publicly criticised the programme she had inherited from the late Joe Slovo as unacceptable “toilets-in-the-veld,” generating much hand-wringing amongst fiscal conservatives, but she was brought back into line.) Symbolic blame-shifting aside, Cobbett also identified actual bottlenecks in the operations of the nine provincial housing boards. But these multi-stakeholder boards reflected the social contract mentality brought from national to provincial level, and Cobbett had a major role in their constitution and membership.

Most striking about the housing boards were the heightened conflicts of interest implicit when banks and developers were granted a decisive role in doling out the subsidies. Banks, for instance, were vigorous opponents of situating low-cost developments in the (generally well-located) apartheid-era buffer zones between black and white areas, for fear of dragging down property values (i.e., their collateral) in the latter. The solution that Cobbett now favours is to give more responsibility for housing facilitation to local government, an artful bit of buck-passing.

Again, there is no chance for this incremental reform to a fundamentally-flawed policy to deliver the goods, given enormous local-level fiscal constraints and power imbalances. Effective control still largely lies in the white bureaucracy, with white councillor vetoes standing by. In short, the real social problems – mass poverty, intensifying income inequality and the ongoing cementing of apartheid geography – are simply not being recognised and grappled with. Hysterical demonisation of those low-income South Africans allegedly suffering a “culture of non-payment” – coming as it usually does from those white, petty bourgeois and



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bourgeois South Africans who exhibit what Mzwanele Mayekiso has termed a “culture of privilege” (*SAR*, January 1995) – is no substitute, though we can expect the whining to increase. And for progressives committed to a sustained campaign for social justice, there is

no substitute for the back-breaking work of rebuilding mass organisations. Now that official racial oppression is being supplanted by neoliberalism, those organisations – perhaps with a few sympathetic councillors – will have to tackle South African urban capitalism head on.

“In Search of Hope”: Zimbabwe’s Farmworkers

BY BLAIR RUTHERFORD

Blair Rutherford is an Ottawa-based graduate student in anthropology at McGill University.

“The government must really force these farmers. This is very crucial, otherwise they don’t want to give protective clothes. From next month on we’ll have a big problem of mosquitos, flies and disease spreading. We get good water from the borehole, but there’s no tap in the compound, not even one. The money we’re being paid is not enough. Look at the housing. We are badly treated. We are people and we are the producers ...”

These words of a Zimbabwean farm worker plainly but accurately express the long history of neglect facing the nearly two million men, women, and children who work and live on the predominantly white-owned 4,500 commercial farms in Zimbabwe. More than fifteen years after Zimbabwe’s Independence in 1980, the colonial legacy of poorly regulated working conditions and typically grim living conditions of farm workers and their families has continued without much sustained discussion in government and media circles. Sporadic attention to the predicament of Zimbabwean farm workers, including on these pages (see *SAR*, March 1994), has done little to challenge concretely the power that individual commercial farmers hold over the lives of their workers. However, a newly launched report, from which the above quotation comes, seems to be making a positive impact in the struggle to improve the situation of Zimbabwe’s farm workers.

In Search of Hope for Zimbabwe’s Farm Workers is a report written by Dede Amanor-Wilks (with

contributions from seven Zimbabwean journalists) and put out jointly by the Panos Institute and Dateline Southern Africa. Through a mixture of political economy analysis, journalistic detail, and first-person testimonials, *In Search of Hope* powerfully captures the objectionable predicament of commercial

farm workers in Zimbabwe and provides a number of recommendations. Unlike other studies with similar analyses and prescriptions, however, this report appears to be spurring on changes which could help the nearly one-fifth of the national population that has been forgotten by Independence.



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In Search of Hope demonstrates how political and social disenfranchisement combined with paternalistic control of commercial farmers has produced ill-effects on the health and rights of farm workers. Characterising its findings as a "huge failure of policy," *In Search of Hope* stresses that government departments need to re-assess their responsibilities vis-à-vis farm workers. It points out that working conditions are rarely monitored, despite the fact that the agricultural sector annually competes with mining for the most occupational fatalities a year and that an estimated 160,000 people are poisoned by pesticides each year in the country. Living conditions for the majority of workers and their household members are not covered by any legislated regulations.

Although these issues have been raised by the General Agricultural & Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe (GAPWUZ) in their negotiations with the Agricultural Labour Bureau (ALB) and the Commercial Farmers' Union (CFU), there has hardly been any progressive change coming from the collective bargaining agreements. As *In Search of Hope* details, GAPWUZ has a hard time enforcing the industry-wide regulations that do exist given its limited resources (it has 48 field staff to liaise with 80,000 members) and its own organizational weaknesses.

The Zimbabwean government has not only neglected the situation; its own policies have exacerbated matters. *In Search of Hope* provides example after example of the marginalisation of farm workers from social development programmes, such as education and primary health care. It also argues that the government's trade liberalization policies (see *SAR*, January/February 1996) have adversely affected farm workers by providing a context in which increasing casualization of farm labour and lowering of real wages have become the daily reality. The report even notes the shocking fact that the gov-

ernment continued the colonial-era disenfranchisement of non-property-owning ratepayers or rent-payers on commercial farms (i.e. farm workers) from local government elections in its amendments to the relevant legislation in 1988.

Given that farm workers are "so marginalised politically and socially," the report shows how farm workers fall under a paternalistic regime, or what it terms a "domestic affair." Commercial farmers tend to treat relationships with their workers as a "family matter," where "farm workers are at the mercy of the individual farmer [and] everything depends on his goodwill." As *In Search of Hope* explains, the "master-servant relationship that exists between the farm owners and farm workers today is the legacy of a system developed under white minority rule." The report emphasizes that this colonial legacy has been nurtured by the "huge failure in policy" of the Zimbabwean government to the point where farm workers' "problems presently seem insurmountable."

But the careful documentation of this "huge failure in policy" has set in motion some important dynamics. *In Search of Hope* has had initial success because the author has included a broad spectrum of organisations, including the key actors involved, in the discussion of its findings. Also important has been the involvement of the Zimbabwean media in carrying out the project and in the one-day seminar that has made this discussion a public event.

A few days after the launch, the Minister of Local Government, Rural & Urban Development announced that the government is planning to amend legislation this year or in early 1997 to allow farm workers to vote in local government elections. Although this major policy change is not a direct consequence of the report itself, the timing of its announcement likely was. Just as momentous, the one-day

seminar that launched the report led to the formation of the Farm Workers Action Group (FWAG). Composed of representatives of various non-governmental organizations (NGOs), GAPWUZ, ALB, CFU, the Ministry of Education as well as two farm workers, a woman farmer, and a journalist, FWAG will seek solutions to the problems facing farm workers and act as a lobby group. By the end of January, it has already established an agenda of priority issues, with housing being the first one.

The formation of FWAG is a significant move in the struggle to improve the situation of farm workers in Zimbabwe. A key ingredient in the predicament of farm workers has been public neglect and the lack of sustained advocacy on their behalf. FWAG should act as a forum in which viable policies and programmes are developed and are strongly promoted to government, the ALB/CFU, GAPWUZ, donors and NGOs on a consistent basis. Will FWAG lead to an improvement for farm workers in Zimbabwe? Maybe. Like all struggles for progressive change, its success depends on tactics, commitment, and historical circumstances. Its chances of success rest on the activities and impact of five relevant groups - politicians, commercial farmers, GAPWUZ, development organizations and farm workers themselves.

The commitment of the government to progressive change for farm workers is uncertain. With its current fiscal crisis, it is hard to imagine the government providing development funds for farm workers, unless donors specifically earmark funding for farm worker programmes. This is especially so since many Ministers and senior bureaucrats are themselves owners of commercial farms and have been shown to be more sympathetic towards the CFU than GAPWUZ. The lack of representatives on FWAG from ministries more directly connected to farm work-



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ers (such as Ministries of Agriculture, Local Government, Rural & Urban Planning, and Public Service, Labour & Social Welfare) is also disconcerting.

Then there are the commercial farmers. The CFU and ALB sidestep any questions concerning ways to ensure that their members obey regulations. When Dede Amanor-Wilks raised the issue with them, they told her that they can "only apply moral pressure" and that aside from a "few rotten eggs, 80% of their members are 'looking after their labour.'" Ms. Amanor-Wilks believes that advocates need to try to amplify the moral pressure on farmers - the report suggests the increased vulnerability of commercial farmers to bad press given their growing reliance on international markets. However, given the weight of farmers' "domestic" authority on the lives of farm work-

ers, there needs to be more concrete ways to ensure that farmers will buy into the plans proposed by FWAG.

The third group is GAPWUZ. Ms. Amanor-Wilks notes that GAPWUZ has been plagued by internal disputes and that it is well-known that they have organizational problems. The report suggests donors and academics work with GAPWUZ to develop their capacity to effectively represent farm workers. Such steps desperately need to be taken.

Development organizations comprise the fourth group. There is a danger, as witnessed in other development activities, that NGOs will only help those few people who happen to be involved in their specific project, or that they will set their agenda without any input from those they seek to help. If the advocacy and programmes urged by FWAG and NGOs for farm work-

ers are not intimately connected to a group that represents farm workers (such as GAPWUZ), progressive change for all farm workers is unlikely to happen.

As for farm workers themselves, they live with the knowledge that advocating for change leaves them open to reactions from their bosses. Only a strong GAPWUZ that can truly represent them both with the commercial farmers and the government is likely to be able to protect the workers from negative repercussions of this sort. *In Search of Hope* has helped to set in motion the possibility that the basic, but long neglected, demands of farm workers are met. At the very least, it has helped to publicize the predicament of farm workers in Zimbabwe as expressed in the words of the farm worker above, "We are badly treated. We are people and we are the producers..."



BUILDING A SOCIAL MOVEMENT

Unions were born out of struggles to change the status quo. Our successes extend progress beyond the workplace. Our struggles are part of a social movement for a more humane society here, and for peace and justice internationally.

Together, in coalitions with others committed to social justice, we are confident that progressive change is possible. We are committed to building social solidarity and a better tomorrow.

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