

2010 Labour Media Awards

Raising the banner for labour

Unionists, their worker members, support organisations and labour commentators show a high degree of creativity in music, song, writing, poetry, photography and artistic works. The annual Labour Media Awards acknowledge this creativity and strategic and analytic power. *Labour Bulletin's* **Kally Forrest** presents the winners of which she is especially proud as the *Bulletin* won a Lifetime Achievement Award.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

South African Labour Bulletin

Judges' comment (Martin Jansen)

The *South African Labour Bulletin* was started in the 1970s as an integral part of the new labour movement. The *Bulletin* was something of a bible to me. I used to go to the trade union library in Cape Town to read it. It was an invaluable resource as an activist and then later as an organiser.

The culture of reading has declined. Many comrades don't read any more and yet the *Bulletin* still exists, is still read, is still going strong. My appeal is that worker activists regularly read the *Bulletin* because it is relevant and useful to the labour movement.

Master of ceremonies comment (Gino Govender)

As a young worker in Durban I used to go to Central Court where the new unions were to buy the *Bulletin* regularly to find out what was happening in other parts of the country in the labour

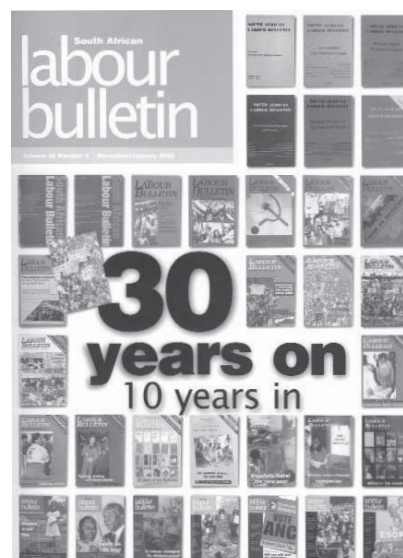
movement. The *Bulletin* truly played an important role in informing young workers like me.

Founding board member Eddie Webster

The *Labour Bulletin* was launched in 1974 to provide a voice for the labour movement that emerged from the 1973 Durban strikes. It has successfully promoted the views and voices of the labour movement ever since. Indeed, it has appeared bi-monthly for over 35! This is an extraordinary achievement.

It straddles the period of apartheid when its early editions were banned under the Publications Act and its board members were banned, arrested and, in the case of Rick Turner, assassinated on 8 January 1978 by the Durban security police.

Importantly, and uniquely for a popular Left journal, the *Labour Bulletin* continues in post-apartheid South Africa carrying the same voice of the need for a strong shop-floor based



democratic and non-racial labour movement to an even larger audience than it did during the apartheid years!

The *Bulletin* mirrors labours' activities on the ground by providing activists and analysts with vital information that is often hidden from the public. It critically evaluates labours' actions, organisations and policies in order

to strengthen its strategic power to act and organise. It also connects the world of labour action with that of intellectual analysis and so transforms the practice and theory of labour studies and industrial relations in South Africa.

In the process of providing a voice for labour it has transformed itself from a quasi academic journal run by white academics into a popular journal with a black woman as the chair of the board, Dr Sarah Mosoetsa. The majority of authors are black and many are from within the labour movement and its readership comes overwhelmingly from the black working class. Here indeed is a successful case of black empowerment in the media!

The *Labour Bulletin* has been run on a shoestring budget largely from the unpaid labour of its authors and dedicated board members and the modest pay of its editors. I am truly glad that it is being publicly acknowledged as an important component of both the struggle for, and consolidation of, our South African democracy. (See also following article by Johann Maree a former *SALB* Board member and its longest running one at that!)



Asanda Benya who wrote the best labour article for *Labour Bulletin* holds her award.

William Matlala



An UASA representative speaks on receiving the award for Best Trade Union Manual.

2010 LABOUR MEDIA AWARDS

Lifetime Achievement Award

South African Labour Bulletin (SALB)

Best Journal Article

South African Labour Bulletin 33.5 Dec 2009

"If you don't hear the bell you're mince"

Asanda Benya

Best Article within the Labour Movement

'The challenges of being a woman shop steward'

Numsa News

Pinky Ramokoka, Doris Nqetho and

Zingiswa Magoxo

Best Article in the Mainstream Media

Inside Labour 4/12/2009

Terry Bell

Best Trade Union Newspaper

Numsa News No 1 March 2009

Best Poster

BWI 2010 Decent Work Campaign

Best Artwork

Paarl Vineyards

Sandy Esau

Best Artistic Contribution

Nostalgic Waves from Soweto

Sol Rachilo/Solrha

Best Popular Booklet

Solidarity with the People of Palestine

Workers' World Media Productions

Best Trade Union Manual

Between Jobs

United Association of South Africa (Uasa)

Best Book Publication

Weaving our stories together

Southern African Clothing & Allied Workers

Union (Sactwu) (see *SALB* 33.2 for review of this book)



Best Trade Union Newspaper: Numsa News No 1 March 2009.



Best Poster: Building Workers Intenational (BWI) 2010 Decent Work Campaign.

BEST ARTICLE WITHIN THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

'The Challenges of being a woman shop steward' – *Numsa News*
Pinky Ramokoka, Doris Nqetho,
Zingiswa Magoxo

Judges' comment

We liked many things about this article.

Firstly, it gives a vivid and detailed picture of what sexual oppression is about and how it undermines women shop stewards. Too often comrades talk in generalities and thereby pay lip service to gender equality but this article pinpoints the objective issues that women shop stewards face.

A host of people have written on this subject over the years but it is still completely relevant. Many issues are still the same but these writers also bring fresh insights to the topic. It is clear that the issue is

very near to their hearts, they write with passion, but this does not cloud the clarity of their arguments.

The article has a freshness and honesty. The writers acknowledge women's psychological weaknesses such as the 'pull me down syndrome' which makes them afraid to stand as leaders and to decline nomination. And it is honest about the fact that often other female comrades fail to support or nominate women shop stewards.

The writers do not mince their words: they talk about how women know that they are sometimes invited to meetings to satisfy male comrades' sexual desires, and they talk about how at the last Numsa Congress women leaders were evaluated on who they were dating and not on their own strengths and qualities.

There is a strong analytic edge that runs through the article. The writers evaluate why women have low self esteem. They conclude that such factors as women feeling they are token leaders when they stand in front of workers, or that being assessed for

their ability to dispense sexual favours, contributes to their lack of confidence.

What is particularly strong about the article is that it takes us forward, it doesn't just winge about the problem. In this way it is both informative and educative. The writers suggest such things as proper monitoring of Numsa's women's resolutions, including that the union must have very practical

ways of dealing with internal sexual harassment. They moot the running of dedicated workshops in the union to deal with issues that hinder women's growth including how to prevent women leaders ending up as victims, and that women must practise how to articulate their ideas.

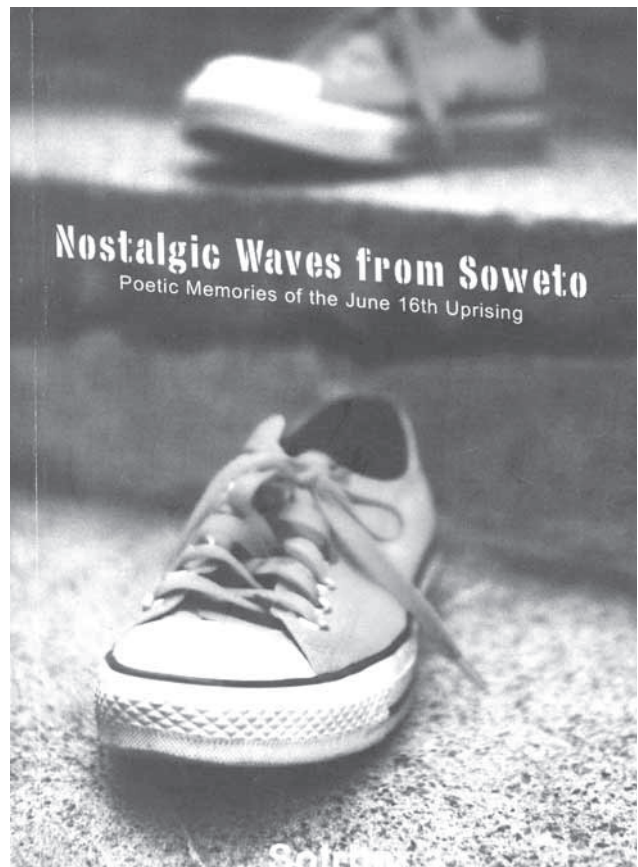
This is an important article written by brave and articulate women.

Night Sweepers

The night talk is never dull
As they clean away
The dirt of the day
"Ma-Nkele had a
Secret abortion
And who was the illicit lover
None other than the priest!"

"Shosholoza" they cry
To give themselves steam
To keep the streets clean
"Zuma's pride
A fourth wife
Added to the collection"
"Shosholoza!"
The night is never dull
A burst of laughter
"Do you remember
At the corner of Ngema Street
The scavenger caught with his pants down
In Mam Tshawe's bedroom?
The only way out,
The broken ceiling
Leaving behind two exhibits:
A dompas sand soiled underwear
Uyalayeka!"
(serves him right)
"Shoshaloza!"
The night has a thousand eyes.

Solrha



BEST ARTISTIC CONTRIBUTION

Book of poetry
Nostalgic Waves from Soweto
Sol Rachilo/Solrha

Judges' comment

In judging contributions to the Labour Media Awards we don't look strictly at labour content. We evaluate material for what it contributes to the knowledge and enjoyment of the working class in general.

Solrha's poetry falls into this broad definition as he deals with a wide range of topics that are familiar to

working and poor people all over South Africa. Topics like abortion, infertility, the disabled, abandoned babies, a lovers' tree, an empty grave, dirt and disease, miracles, rape, love, funerals, a lost father, lost dreams and so on.

His poems are short and simply, honestly and directly told, they are for everyone to access and enjoy.

His poetry is often sombre but it is not without hope or warmth, it is not cynical poetry. Solrha cares with a passion for all the ordinary people and events that have come across his path in Soweto both past and present.

BEST POPULAR BOOKLET

'Solidarity with the People of Palestine' Workers' World Media Productions

Judges' comment

In the 1980s there was intense debate about how to make information accessible to workers who often had low literacy levels and who were reading in English as their second language. This led to the production of many well illustrated, accessible and educative booklets. Through these the idea that information is power was given active expression and slogans like 'Education for All', 'Each One Teach One' and 'Power to the People' were given real meaning.

Sadly such attempts have faded away in our new democracy. The Workers' World Media Project (WWMP) however has revisited this way of communicating with its booklet *Solidarity with the People of Palestine*.

The booklet aims to spread information which will promote an understanding of the Palestine/Israeli conflict and solidarity with the struggles of the Palestinian people. It is well structured to keep the focus on solidarity and it makes an ideal book to discuss in a study circle or in a workshop.

The book acknowledges the horrific discrimination that Jews underwent in the Second World War but goes on to graphically illustrate that one wrong does not justify another terrible abuse of human rights. The book charts how the Palestinians progressively lost their land and one moving illustration shows three maps of Israel versus Palestine which shows this loss of land from the 1940s up to the current day - it is much like South Africa's black people under apartheid ended up with only 13% of the land.

The booklet tells of the fierce struggles in the Arab world to get back their dignity, rights and land and how these have been thwarted by imperialist powers who favour Israel, especially the United States. But the book is not only historical. It also charts critical current policies, debates and economic blueprints which impact on



Palestinian people. It is the fascinating detail of how these processes happen that makes this booklet so worthwhile.

This booklet is especially relevant in the light of the appalling Israeli attacks on Gaza last year. For the first time a very large and active global response came into being and the Boycott Disinvestment Sanctions or BDS movement was given a huge boost. Cosatu has also been active in this campaign together with the Palestine Solidarity Committee and if you want to truly understand why this campaign is necessary this is a useful and informative book to start with.

The booklet is full of lively and important information but it is also very moving. A picture of a placard held up by a Palestinian demonstrator at the beginning of the book, simply says: 'You take my water, burn my olive trees, destroy my house, take my job, steal my land, imprison my father, kill my mother, bomb my country, starve us all, humiliate us all BUT I am to blame: I shot a rocket back. **LB**

The judges for the Labour Media Awards were Sakhela Buhlungu a professor at the University of Johannesburg, Martin Jansen director of the Workers' World Media Project and Kally Forrest editor of the South African Labour Bulletin. This is an annual event so submit entries at the end of 2010 to WWMP.