

Broadly speaking

LRA agreement soon?

A meeting between SACCOLA, the employer federation, and COSATU/NACTU recently ended with an agreement over certain amendments to the Labour Relations Act. This agreement was reached after two years of negotiations. They also agreed to hold talks with the Minister of Manpower, to discuss the LRA. It will be the first meeting between the independent unions and a government minister.

A legal committee is to draft legislation based on the agreement, which will have to be ratified by both parties. It will then be presented to the Minister. At the time of going to press, no details of the agreement were released.

However, the union demand for domestic, farm and public sector workers to be included in the Act are likely to be on the agenda. Unions also insist that state employers be included in further talks on the LRA.

So where are the women?

Way back in 1981 ANC president Oliver Tambo criticised the "male-dominated structures" within the liberation movement, and the tendency of women to "surrender" to these. Although militant women's organisation stretches back to the 1950s and beyond, it is only now that issues of sexism within the movement are being raised forcefully.

A paper presented by the ANC Women's League to the recent Malibongwe Women's Conference in Amsterdam makes pointed reference to the all-male nature of the ANC's Constitutional Committee, which

drafted the constitutional guidelines. It expresses concern that no-one from that committee protested against the absence of women.

What is even of greater concern is that, according to the paper, apart from "a very few individual voices", no protest was heard from the ANC's Women's Secretariat or the National Women's Executive Committee!

Also worthy of note is the presence of one woman, Ruth Mompati, in the ANC negotiating team which is due to meet the government soon. Ray Alexander, a long-standing campaigner for women's rights (see *Profile*), told the *Bulletin* that she hopes that women from within the country will also form part of the team.

As the paper says, in the same way that black people would object if an all-white group claimed to represent their interests, so should women object if an all-male group claimed to represent *their* interests.

Little to please workers in the Budget

Du Plessis has called for wage restraint as a way of addressing the unemployment problem.

NUMSA's Bernie Fanaroff says that such calls will not be tolerated by an "undemocratically elected government", and unions will continue to "bargain with the best of their ability".

NUM's Martin Nicol said that there was little to please workers in the Budget. The NUM was not excited about the tax concessions to the mining industry. While it might help the industry, the NUM could not give its support as long as workers did not benefit by receiving decent wages. ☆

Government concern about unemployment?

The budget allocation to the Department of Manpower for 1990/91 has increased by 50,3%, from R218,3m to R328,1m. This is the highest percentage increase for any department. Much of it is for the government's job creation and training programme. Finance Minister Bar-end Du Plessis expressed grave concern about the increasing unemployment problem. While the number of jobs in the state sector has increased, private sector em-

ployment, including the mining industry, has decreased.

But just how serious is the ruling class about unemployment, especially black unemployment? There are disturbing reports of thousands of Hungarians queuing outside the South African embassy in Vienna, seeking to emigrate here. In six days the embassy received more than 13 000 applications. The government has also expressed interest in recruiting skilled East Germans, and is reported to be competing with Canada and Australia for Hong Kong's skilled workers. ☆

certain sectors of the economy, the capitalist class in this country has been in a state of high agitation. A 'debate' has raged in the commercial press, but at a level which, to quote the distinguished liberal economist, J K Galbraith, has "been aberrant to the point of insanity". The arguments of those opposed to nationalisation have, in the main, been couched in an approach Galbraith calls Simplistic Ideology - a 'pure' capitalism versus a 'pure' communism. Yet the ANC is committed to a mixed economy and *limited* nationalisation.

But Ken Owen, the editor of *Business Day*, is in a class of his own. In a column on 19 February he says that Mandela's release was celebrated, "appropriately", by the looting which took place in Cape Town. "Appropriately", because "nationalisation is at heart the policy of a hooligan". He states that, by calling for nationalisation, Mandela gave his support to the looting, which was an "early example of the policy of appropriating other people's property". By repeating "the drive" of the Freedom Charter, says Owen, Mandela was displaying his "incompetence to run a modern economy". Judging by the letters written in response to Owen's reasoning, most of his (business) readers loved it!

Now it was reported a few months ago that, after meeting Albie Sachs, a prominent and influential member of the ANC, at the December Paris conference, Owen was emotionally overwhelmed. It seems that Sachs did not turn out to be a nasty Stalinist after all. This, however, does not stop Owen from comparing ANC secretary-general Alfred

RED EYE

MP's earn over R1 800 per week

Minister Stoffel van der Merwe claimed on TV2 the other day that, partly because of sanctions, the state did not have enough money to move fast enough to improve the desperate conditions of black education. Yet those in power have voted themselves a R12 000 a year across-the-board salary increase PLUS another 10% increase PLUS a further 10% non-pensionable allowance which was granted to all public servants.

Cabinet ministers will now receive a total of R185 800 a year, and ordinary MPs will receive R94 500 a year (R1 800 per week)! But this is not all. They are also entitled to a free car, 18 free return flights a year, and

cheap housing while Parliament is in session

And in the same breath the government tells workers in the public sector, most of whom earn below the poverty line, that all the government can afford for them is a 10% increase!!

We hear a deafening silence from the Democratic Party, whose MPs will no doubt reluctantly pocket their share of the booty! (We don't of course expect Hendrickse and Reddy to object - material gain is the main reason why they are in parliament).

The nationalisation 'debate'

Ever since Nelson Mandela restated a long-standing commitment of the ANC to nationalise



Banner seen at the DP march in Johannesburg - what did the MDM members who took part in the march think about it?

Photo: Steve Hilton-Barber/Afrapix

Nzo to Ceaucescu, Pol Pot and Stalin, simply because he supports limited nationalisation! In reply to MP Dave Dalling's objection to his remarks, Owen said he did not know he was expected to "fawn" over ANC leaders.

If it is not 'pure' capitalism, it is 'pure' communism. If it is not tendentious ridicule, it is fawning. Such, it seems, is the reasoning of a leading voice in the business world. ☆

"Terrorists can't visit other terrorists"

The pace of reform seems to be too rapid for some public officials. A few weeks ago, a prison warden on Robben Island refused to allow Zolandile Ntlokwa to visit a political prisoner because he was wearing an ANC T-shirt. The warden was unmoved when it was explained to him that the ANC was now unbanned. He said the ANC was still banned on the island! Determined to visit his friend, Mr Ntlokwa bor-

A white worker stayaway?

The Conservative Party and their right-wing trade union allies are in a bit of a frenzy after De Klerk's recent reforms. Their first act of desperation was to bring charges of 'high treason' against Mandela, Sisulu and Mothopeng. Then they threatened to bring the economy to a "standstill" by calling on all white workers to stay away from work for three days.

But white workers have shown little militancy since the 1922 mineworkers strike. They still enjoy enormous privileges compared with their fellow black workers, and, as Confederation of Metal and Building Workers' Unions' Ben Nicholson says, only a "lunatic fringe" will be willing to sacrifice their wages. In addition, many white workers are in superfluous supervisory positions. It is no wonder, then, that shortly after making the threat, the CP backed off, saying that "it was not being seriously considered".

Were they afraid that, even if a large number of white workers did go on strike, *no-one would notice?*



"Just answer me this hey — how you going to do the job when I go on strike?"

Cartoon courtesy of The Star, Johannesburg

rowed a jacket and covered his T-shirt. But the warden would still not allow him in, because he was a "terrorist and terrorists can't visit other terrorists"!

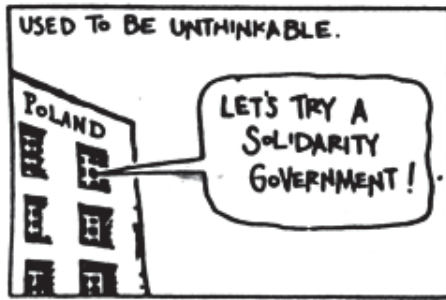
The SA Prison Services regretted the incident, saying it was an "unfortunate error of judgement on the part of the warden".

Mandela and Zionism

When you are an influential public figure respected by a wide range of people, you invite controversy. Such has been the fate

of Mandela since his release. A more recent issue has been Mandela's embrace of the PLO's Yasser Arafat, and his remark that there is a similarity between South Africa's special type of colonialism, and Israel's.

Organisations such as the SA Jewish Board of Deputies and the SA Zionist Federation, and Harry Schwarz MP, have expressed surprise and concern that Mandela might be "anti-Semitic", especially since he had been "very conciliatory" up to then.



in Dube, went on strike over low wages and, according to SACCAWU, "atrocious working conditions". The workers were subsequently dismissed. Since then, say SACCAWU, Maponya has successfully "destabilised" the union at his businesses, such that it no longer has a presence there.

So when we hear of Maponya, the millionaire friend of the struggle, who "gives ceaselessly to his community", we must also remember the poor workers who made it all possible.

Not a blemish on JOT

Another "arch-capitalist", the new head of Anglo-American Julian Ogilvie Thompson (JOT), has also had a good press lately. In fact, the commercial press couldn't find one blemish worth mentioning. We wonder why?

May Day victory for workers

After a long battle by workers to have May 1 declared a holiday for workers, the government has finally given in. May Day is now official. The right-wing SA Confederation of Labour protested in February that May Day was part of the 'communist onslaught'. However, the Minister of Manpower said in parliament recently that only one white union, the Mineworkers Union, opposed Workers Day.

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher also opposes May 1 as a workers' holiday. She proposes replacing it with a national holiday to celebrate the birthday of the queen mother instead. ☆

It is easy for Zionists to dismiss concerns about the rights of Palestinians as "anti-Semitic", if it comes from non-Jewish people. But what do they do about those of 'Jewish extraction', like the ANC's Denis Goldberg, who recently called for a boycott of Israeli goods until the government agrees to talk to the PLO? Apparently such people are 'self-haters'!

Red Mercedes for Mandela

RED EYE thinks it is entirely appropriate for workers to have a greater say over what they produce. It was particularly heart-warming to hear that Mercedes Benz workers in East London have decided to build a special bullet-proof red 500 SE model for Mandela. The company has agreed to the suggestion and Mandela has welcomed the idea.

NUMSA general-secretary Moses Mayekiso commented that the gift shows that workers 'look to Comrade Mandela to initiate a process of political settlement which will incorporate the needs and aspirations of

workers'. All Business Day's editor Ken Owen could say was that a Mercedes Benz 'costs more than Mrs Ceaucescu's shoes'. No doubt Owen's own car does too.

Maponya and his workers

Businessman and millionaire Richard Maponya has been receiving a good press lately. He has been seen embracing Mandela, and both the *Sunday Times* and *Sunday Star* have painted him as a jovial, generous soul who has the interests of the nation at heart.

Maponya apparently gives trays of fatcakes and crates of cold drinks to "radical youths at street meetings". But this is with his one hand. With his other hand, according to a SACCAWU official, Maponya makes his millions by paying his workers "poverty wages". So what he gives is a drop in the ocean compared to what he takes - and the commercial press seem to admire him for it!

A few years ago workers at one of Maponya's supermarkets