Solidarity with black unions important

by Mark Olyan

"We have a responsibility in supporting the black workers' struggle, that we do not just support them with lip service, because that's one of the cheapest commodities we have. We really have to support them by action."

This message was the central theme of a speech by Pat Clancy, Sub-Regional Director of the United Auto Workers Union, last Saturday at a conference held to discuss strategies for changing South Africa's apartheid policy. Clancy, a Toronto native, was

one of several guests scheduled to speak during the three day conference, sponsored by Citizens Against Racism and Apartheid (CARA), Canadian University Students Overseas (CUSO), the Alberta Federation of Labour (AFL) and the U of A Chaplaincy Association. Clancy called apartheid "institu-

Clancy called apartheid "institutionalized and legislated racism," which ultimately "prevents black workers from living a normal life." The basis of apartheid, said Clancy, is economic.

According to Clancy, apartheid "provides large pools of black labour and very low wages, for the purpose of making large profits in South Africa.

"One of the problems we have is that as long as multi-national corporations have the ability to move their operations anywhere around the world, then they will look for the places where they have the least labour resistance and the lowest wages, and move there."

In the area of sanctions, Clancy said boycotting "products from South Africa is not necessarily going to hurt the black workers as much as some people would like to have us believe."

Clancy admitted that some black workers would suffer in the short term, but ultimately, sanctions would be "successful in helping them to rid themselves of the racist

government they now have."

At one point in his speech, Clancy encouraged the formation of strong, united South African trade unions, which would be non-racial and political in nature, and would not "be divided by the gimmicks of government."

Clancy also felt that underground trade unions have a large role to play in South Africa, since freedom of assembly is severely limited. "The role that they (trade unions)

"The role that they (trade unions) have to play is basically to be a catalyst for unity, for dissemination of propaganda, for education purposes, and for training new people to be leaders."

In illustrating how trade unio-

nists are actively involved in the apartheid struggle, Clancy talked of numerous educational programs offered to auto workers, and ongoing contributions by Canadian unions to the South African solidarity unions.

The pension plans of Ford, GM and Chrysler now prohibit the investment of funds in corporations doing business in South Africa. Lastly, Clancy reported that Dennis MacDermott and other union leaders have sent recorded messages of solidarity to workers in South Africa.

Solidarity with South African trade unions, said Clancy, is an essential element in the defeat of apartheid and the continued health of unions in Canada.

Said Clancy, "If we really want to maintain solidarity with those workers, we will understand very simply that it's their struggle. They're the front line; the're the people who are going to suffer the pain and the anguish of defeat, and they're the people who are going to suffer all the problems that you face on your way to victory."

He went on to say that the struggle against apartheid is entirely a South African matter, but that "we (the trade unionists) will support you (black workers) in the manner in which you fight it."



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Saloojee believes the key to resistance is "to make South Africa ungovernable."

During his fiery speech, Saloojee urged Canadians to "take every possible action" to insure the federal government implements a stringent policy of economic sanctions against South Africa." The real purpose of this rigid color-bar is to ensure that the justice dispensed by the (South African) courts should conform to the policy of the country, however much that policy might be in conflict with the norms of justice accepted in judiciaries throughout the civilized world.

that can be used against the white minority government, said Saloojee.

Currently South Africa receives International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans with great ease. Saloojee pointed out that Canada has sufficient voting power withing the IMF to block such loans.

Canada can reduce restrictions placed on loans to Frontline Nations as well. Currently the U.S. resticts loans to these nations fearing their socialist connections. "Write to your M.P.'s and demand a new and just IMF policy," said Saloojee.

Prior to the workshop, Saloojee was presented with a charcoal ketch of a Black woman mourning, with APARTHEID written in bold face at the bottom. In expressing his gratitude, he told the audience that he would insure that the portrait reached Nelson Mandela, the leader of ANC who has been in prison since 1963. -Nelson Mandela in court in 1962 on charges of inciting people to strike illegally and of leaving the country without a valid passport.

Canadian investment condemned

by Neal Watson

Canadian involvement in South Africa is best defined in terms of short-term economic interests, says Carleton University political science professor Linda Freeman.

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South Africa is the second largest market for Canadian goods in Africa, said Freeman, and the government is most reluctant to restrict trade.

Speaking at last weekend's South Africa conference, Freeman, who has travelled and done extensive research on Africa, said there was major Canadian investment in South Africa and any attempt to curb investment or restrict the flow of goods would be met with "strong pressures on government" from the private sector.

"There are structures in place to prevent change," said Freeman. Freeman rejected the argument that economic investment in South Africa is beneficial to blacks and pointed to Bishop Desmond Tutu's statement that despite the economic boom in South Africa, nothing has changed for blacks.

"It is usually people from outside South Africa that want western investment," she said.

Freeman also dismissed U.S. President Reagan's "constructive engagement" argument that holds that American corporations will set an example for South Africa.

The belief that things are getting better in South Africa, said Freeman, is simple-minded. "If anything, the Canadian position is hardening, with the election of the pro U.S. Conservative government," said Freeman who was also critical of U.N. Ambassador Stephen Lewis.

"One wonders about Stephen Lewis' gullibility for being their (the Conservative government) mouthpiece."

"We must keep in mind we are facing a tough reality," said Freeman. "When they start to cut the mustard, it will be when they deal with economic measures."

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