

**Unity with management?**

While workers and management at NCZ share similar concerns and fears over the process of restructuring, there is not necessarily a convergence of interests. Faced with redundancy, management tends to stress its unity with workers. According to Chola, “management believe that relations with the union are very cordial and there is close consultation.’ He argues that the union is a “social partner with management in efforts to improve efficiency and avoid redundancies.”

By contrast, workers do not identify with, or seek to defend the interests of management. The existence of a common threat does not remove their belief in the distinctiveness of their own interests, or raise their low opinion of management’s abilities. The solutions the NUCIW shopstewards put forward are, in fact, bad news for management.

The workers’ proposal that the state intervene more effectively in the NCZ implies current management would be replaced by more effective and skilled personnel. Workers are also convinced that their interests would be best articulated through a strong and united workers’ movement. This clearly excludes management from any real participation.

It also contrasts with the views held by the national leadership of the NUCIW. While union leaders are strongly wedded to the ideals of economic liberalisation, workers at NCZ express serious reservations about both privatisation and nationalisation. Their primary concern is the defence of workers’ interests. the policy that best advances this aim is the one they will support.

Whether this perspective will, over time, provide a comprehensive alternative to the current challenges facing the *Zambian* working class remains to be seen.

Unions and shopfloor militancy

Economic liberalisation has resulted in retrenchments, deteriorating work conditions, massive inflation and a government reluctance to pay severance packages. These conditions have met with a militant, if uneven, response from workers.

- A central site of conflict is the civil service. Workers in the *Zambian* United Local Authorities and Allied Workers Union (ZULAWLJ) embarked on a two month strike at Mufumbwe local council for higher wages in 1995. In Livingstone workers who had not been paid for two months also went on strike. In February 1996, the Civil Servants Union of *Zambia* (CSUZ) organised a week-long countrywide strike to demand payment of a 45% wage increase granted by the

