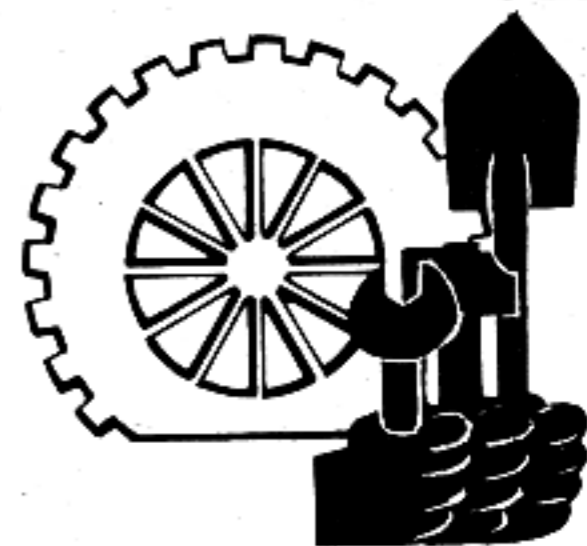


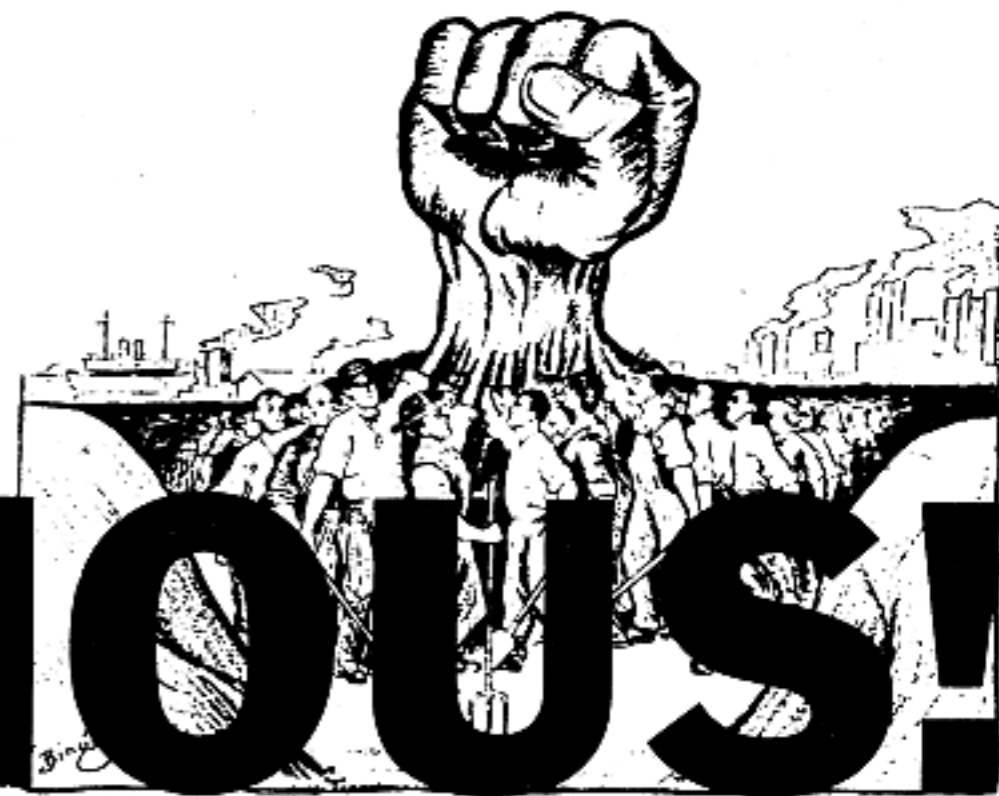
FOSATU WORKER NEWS

Federation of South African Trade Unions



APRIL 1983 NUMBER 20

FOSATU VICTORIOUS!



IN a crucial victory in FOSATU's battle against the Government's racial policies, the Natal Supreme Court has ruled that the Registrar and the Minister of Manpower wrongly gave affiliated unions registration certificates restricting them to certain race groups.

In line with FOSATU's policy of non-racialism, the federation rejected the racial registration certificates given to the unions in 1981 and appealed to the Minister of Manpower to overrule the Registrar.

YEAR-LONG WAIT

However after sitting on the matter for a year, the Minister of Manpower turned down FOSATU's appeal. This led to FOSATU taking the matter to the Supreme Court.

In their judgement delivered on April 15, three judges of the Natal Supreme Court said they found it

'wholly unacceptable' that different races necessarily had different industrial interests.

The effect of this judgement is that when the Registrar examines the membership of a union when it applies for registration, he can only look at industry, job category and area.

IMPOSSIBLE TO REGISTER RACIALLY

In FOSATU's view it will now be impossible for the Registrar to racially register a trade union.

The Supreme Court ordered that the Registrar remove limitations on the Metal and Allied Workers Union, the Chemical Workers Industrial Union, the National Union of Textile Workers and the Transport and General Workers Union.

In terms of the judgment, the Minister of Manpower and the Registrar will have

to pay the costs FOSATU incurred in taking the matter to the Supreme Court.

JUBILANT AT VICTORY

Jubilant at FOSATU's victory, the Central Committee said it now awaited the State's decision on whether it wished to proceed with a similar case that FOSATU is bringing to the Transvaal Supreme Court dealing with the racial certificates given to the Paper Wood and Allied Workers Union and the Sweet Food and Allied Workers Union.

The Central Committee stated that the State should pay heed to the Natal decision and drop the Transvaal case.

The State should now accept that FOSATU has won the battle over race and that it no longer has any place in industrial legislation, the Central Committee said.

R40 000 LARGEST PAY-OUT EVER

IN the largest pay out in a labour dispute in South Africa, workers at Braitex, a Transvaal textile factory, were given R40 000.

And the Braitex workers have finally won their two year battle against a management who has been trying to force them to join CUSA's Textile Workers Union.

A ballot recently held in the factory proved once and for all that the National Union of Textile Workers is the union the workers want. Only nine workers voted for the CUSA union.

The Braitex victory marks a further landmark in FOSATU's battle against minority unionism. FOSATU has always held that only the union which has the majority membership in the factory should be granted recognition rights.

COMPANY UNABLE TO HIDE

The Company also will be unable to avoid negotiating with the NUTW by hiding behind the Industrial Council, as the Industrial Court order, which settled the dispute, clearly awarded factory bargaining rights to the majority union.

The Braitex dispute revolved around the alteration of bonuses and the retrenchment of workers without any consultation with the NUTW. The NUTW also claimed that the recognition of

the minority union by the company was a form of 'sweetheart unionism'.

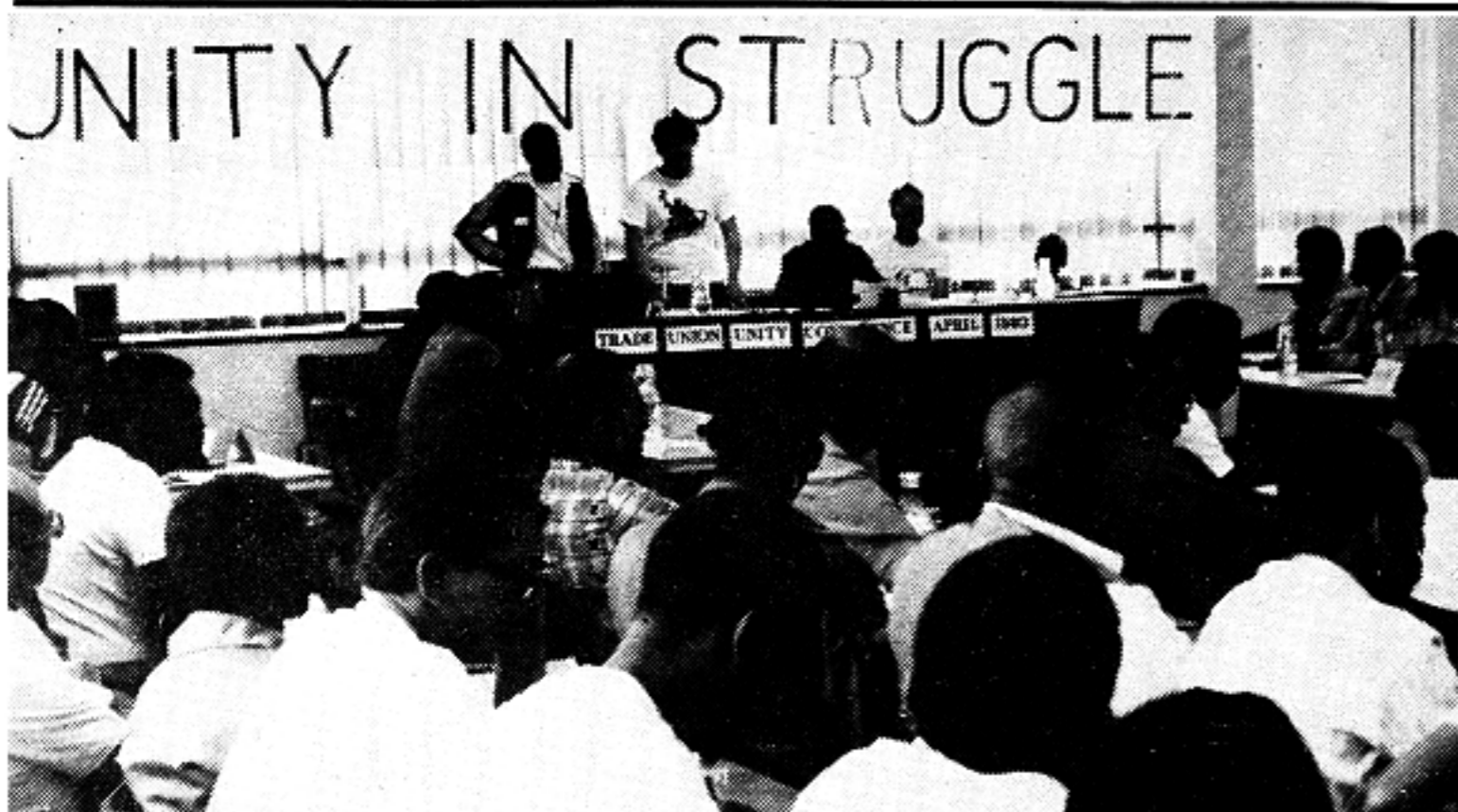
The court ordered the reinstatement of 15 long service employees and said that if NUTW won the ballot, then grievance, retrenchment, disciplinary, negotiation and dispute procedures would come into operation.

RETRENCHMENT PROCEDURES

The retrenchment procedures state that a month's notice is necessary, with time to allow discussion between the union and the employer as to whether there are any alternatives to the retrenchment. Retrenchment must be on the basis of Last-In First-Out and workers must get a severance pay of one week's wages for each year of service.

The court order also laid down a disciplinary procedure in the factory, in terms of which workers cannot be fired without three written warnings, a fair hearing, shop steward representation and a system of appeal.

The Braitex workers at a meeting recently, celebrated their victory and discussed how to distribute the R40 000.



THIRTEEN union groupings, including FOSATU, gathered in Cape Town on April 9 and 10 to discuss the pressing need for unity among the progressive trade unions in South Africa. Although there were attempts made to disrupt the meeting, FOSATU (whose delegation can be seen in the forefront of the picture) and six other unions committed themselves to the formation of a new federation. For a full report see page 2.

SEVEN UNIONS TAKE FIRST STEPS TOWARDS NEW FEDERATION

MACWUSA SLAMMED

THE FOSATU Central Committee has slammed the Port Elizabeth based Motor Assembly and Component Workers Union of SA for spreading confusion through its statements issued after the Cape Town Unity meeting.

MACWUSA and its sister union, the General Workers Union of SA, left the unity meeting a day early and at that stage no commitment had been made by the unions to forming a new federation. In spite of this MACWUSA and GWUSA told members at their congress that a new federation would be formed of unregistered trade unions.

At no stage during the unity summit was it suggested that the federation would be limited to unregistered trade unions and among those which indicated a commitment to the new federation are both unregistered and registered trade unions.

To add to the confusion, on the last day of the unity summit, Donsie Kumalo said he represented MACWUSA and GWUSA and indicated that the two unions could not commit themselves to a federation as they did not have a worker mandate. However, now MACWUSA claims that it had suspended Kumalo.

FOSATU's Central Committee condemned MACWUSA for the confusion and misinformation caused by its statement and said 'such activities did not benefit workers and would do nothing to build unity'.

Chairman of the Eastern Province Region, John Gomomo said the statement was counter productive to the initiative taken at the summit meeting.

THE first steps towards uniting the progressive trade union movement were taken at a unity summit in Cape Town when seven union groupings committed themselves to the formation of a new federation.

For over two years FOSATU has been pushing for the formation of a wider unity among the unions which share common policies but previous summits have been disrupted by certain unions.

Attempts were made again in

Cape Town to disrupt the meeting but these were pushed aside by worker delegates who reminded the meeting that while they were arguing workers on the shop floor were suffering.

At the end of the difficult meeting Food and Canning Workers Union, the African Food and Canning Workers Union, the Cape Town Municipal Workers Association, the General Workers Union, the Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union, FOSATU, the

South African Allied Workers Union and the General and Allied Workers Union committed themselves to the formation of a new federation.

Other unions present at the meeting said they did not have a mandate from their membership to commit themselves to a new federation. Whether these unions will join later remains to be seen, but it is clear that some unions are firmly committed to the federation and with FOSATU see no reason for

delay.

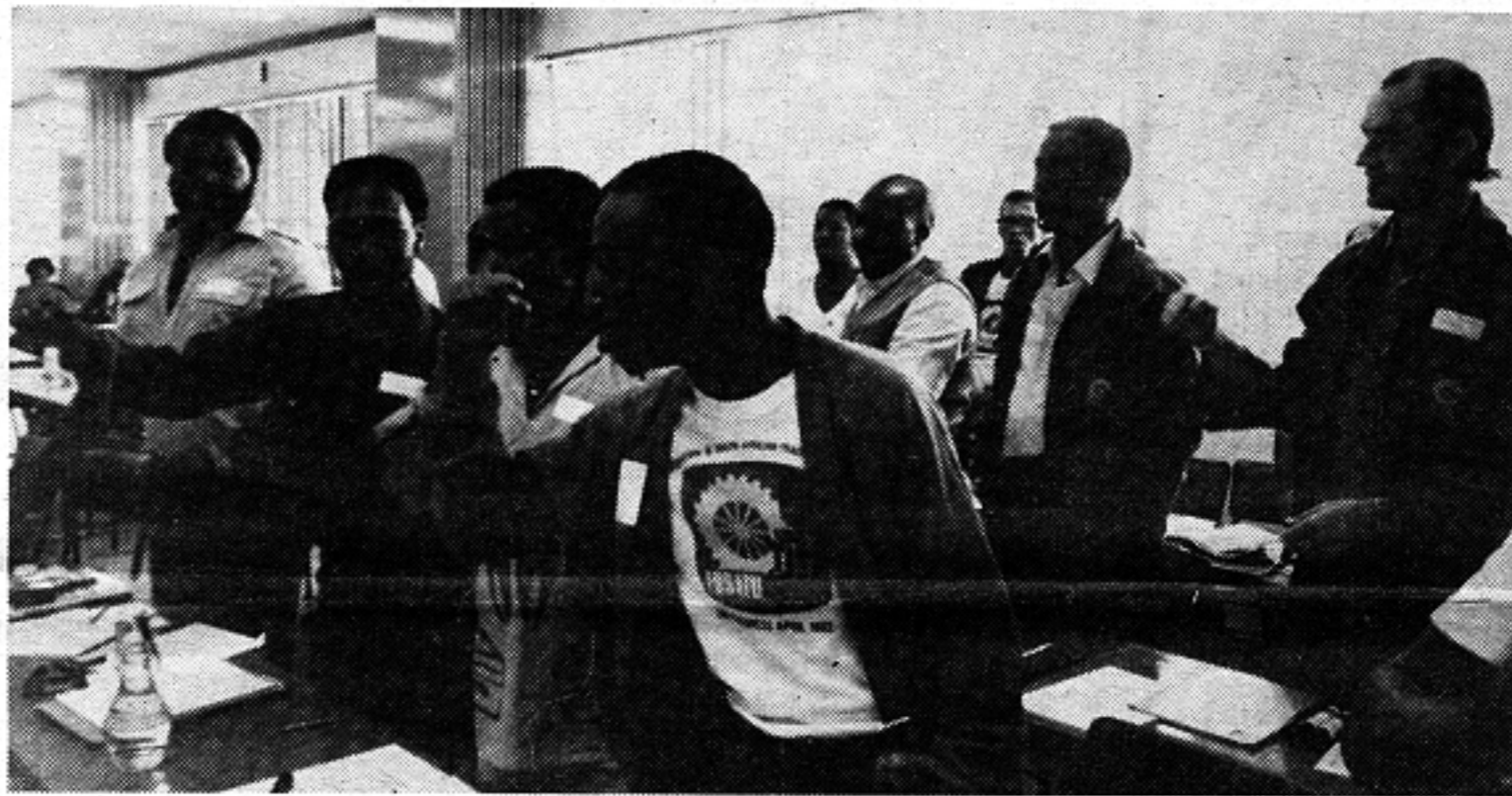
A feasibility committee will now be set up consisting of five members from the different union groupings to discuss the constitution and structure of the new federation. The committee will report back to their worker membership and a further summit meeting will be called some time later this year.

The FOSATU Central Committee meeting at Wilgespruit on April 16 and 17 said it welcomed the commitment of the seven unions 'who were prepared to act in the interests of workers'.

The Central Committee said FOSATU had always believed that moves towards a wider federation based on common policies was crucial to the worker movement in South Africa.

The Committee elected FOSATU's president, Chris Dlamini, vice president, Andrew Zulu, the general secretary, Joe Foster, the general secretary of the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union, Fred Sauls and FOSATU's national education secretary, Alec Erwin as the five FOSATU representatives to the feasibility committee.

The Central Committee said it believed that there was sufficient common ground to lead to constructive and fruitful discussions and it hoped that good progress would be made towards a wider federation.



FOSATU's president, Chris Dlamini, leads the federation's delegation in singing worker songs.

FRAME STRUGGLE FLARES UP

THE bitter ten year struggle between the giant Frame group and the National Union of Textile Workers has reached a new climax.

Ever since the formation of the NUTW in 1973 it has battled against Frame in a bid to represent union members at the various mills. This has resulted in many historic strikes as militant workers struggled against a stubborn management.

In a renewed campaign conducted over the past year, the NUTW signed on more than half of the workers at the giant Frametex Mill in the face of militant sweetheart unionism.

Frame has continually avoided acknowledging majority unionism in the factory and has refused to hold a ballot in the mill.

Workers have over the past few weeks laid their jobs on the line by continuing to wear union 'T' shirts in the mill.

However, in order to put a brake on the oppressive tactics being used by Frame, the NUTW has taken court action against the company.

In affidavits in support of the case, workers say that Frame has allowed the TUCSA affiliated Textile Workers Industrial Union to recruit members on the company premises while making it an offense leading to instant dismissal for workers who recruit for the NUTW.

They also say that the company's labour office forced wor-

kers to sign TWIU joining forms and that in many departments workers were threatened with instant dismissal if they did not join the 'red card' union.

In the court papers, NUTW says it handed 2 429 stop order forms in to the company - which is two-thirds of the workers employed at Frametex - but the company has refused to recognise NUTW and claims that TWIU has majority support.

Since bringing the case against the company, union organisers have reported that the company security officer has been interrogating union witnesses about their affidavits.

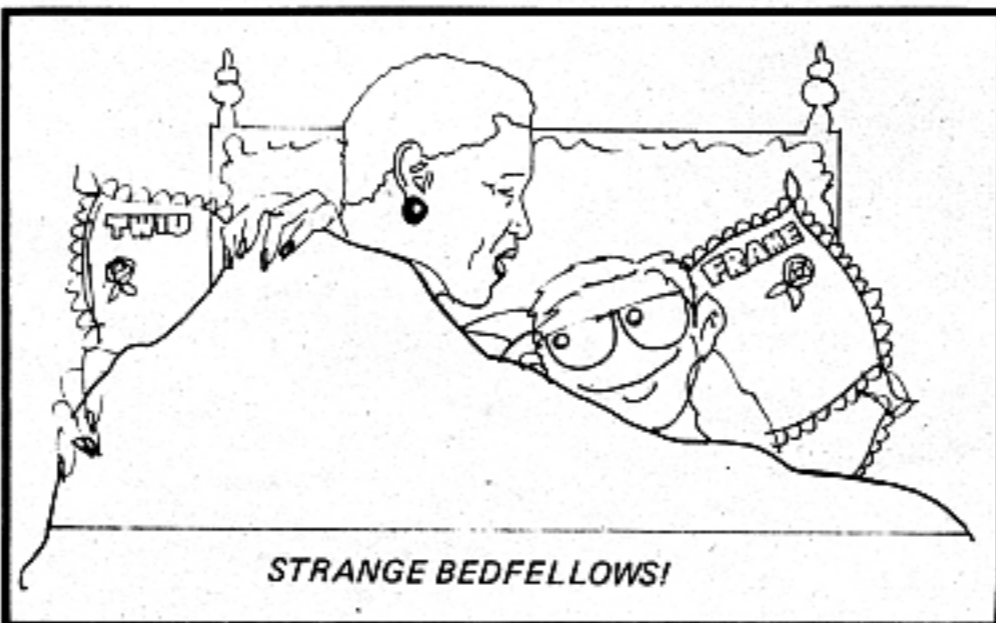
NUTW's general secretary, John Copelyn said the Frame Group for almost ten years had

blocked workers from unionising at their mills.

'Now when it is totally unavoidable to recognise a union, it is hardly a surprise to find them trying to force workers into a TUCSA union which relies on management support', he said.

'This time however, workers are not going to tolerate the unfair pressures of the company. If they want to play it the hard way our members are fully prepared for them', Brother Copelyn said.

The NUTW is demanding the court restrain Frame from recognising TWIU at Frametex and is asking it order a secret ballot be conducted in order to have the union supported by the majority of the workers recognised.



STRANGE BEDFELLOWS!

TWO YEAR RECOGNITION BATTLE WON

THE Transport and General Workers Union has finally won its two year recognition struggle with PUTCO with the signing of an agreement which will give it immediate recognition at the depots where the union has 50 per cent membership.

The agreement which covers annual negotiation of wages and working conditions, grievance, disciplinary, retrenchment and dispute procedures is the union's first agreement in the Transvaal.

TGWU general secretary, Jane Barrett said there had been tough resistance from Transvaal employers who preferred to deal with their own in-company unions or unions belonging to

TUCSA rather than recognising the TGWU.

She said she hoped the signing of the agreement with PUTCO would break down the resistance of other employers.

Up to now TGWU has been operating under a preliminary agreement with PUTCO. The signing of the agreement will now allow TGWU to take part in the company's annual wage negotiations due to take part in May.

Sister Barrett said the union was negotiating three other recognition agreements but was meeting with 'incredible intransigence' from the transport industry and municipalities.

NON-RACIALISM IN PRACTICE

PUTTING FOSATU's policy of non-racialism into practice, shop stewards at Kelloggs in Springs have been negotiating on behalf of the company's white artisans.

After seeing the successes of the Sweet Food and Allied Workers Union's shop stewards committee at Kelloggs, a white artisan approached the committee when he was dismissed for overstaying his leave by two days.

Shop steward chairman and FOSATU's president, Chris

Dlamini said management had first been reluctant to listen to the union but in the end it agreed to discuss the dismissal with the shop stewards.

The outcome of the talks was that the artisan was reinstated and the company agreed to pay him for all the days he had been out of work, Brother Dlamini said.

Since then, he said 95 per cent of the white artisans in the company had joined the union and more were expected to join.

EDITORIAL

WORKERS AND ECONOMICS

THE Worker movement in South Africa is now stronger and better organised than at any other time in South Africa's history. But worker organisation always faces new challenges. Because of our present economic crisis one of the greatest challenges is to understand and criticise the policies that control our economy.

As workers we labour hard to produce the wealth of this rich land, but then before our own eyes the employers and Government carry out policies which benefit them and not us as workers.

We have always been told that the productivity of South Africa's workers is low and not growing. FOSATU did not believe this because our own experience told us a different story. So FOSATU asked economist Charles Meth to investigate the kind of information on which these claims about low productivity were made. The results of the study are carried on this page.

These results confirm FOSATU's suspicions - clearly worker productivity is not the problem. But even more serious - the study shows that unemployment is getting worse.

South Africa has actually been growing at an average of 5.9 per cent each year from 1970 to 1980 and this has created only 101 000 new industrial jobs each year compared to some 200 000 to 270 000 new work seekers each year. The problem is very, very large. In fact this makes a mockery of all Government economic planning. The Government talks of a 4.5 per cent target but clearly this is far too low.

However, the real problem is this - for any country to grow on average at 5.9 per cent per year for ten years is a great achievement. This means that our chances of growing at a higher rate for another ten years are very low indeed - but we would have to do this to solve unemployment.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

It means that it is our whole programme of economic policies that are wrong. It means that the wealth of our land is being misspent. It means that greater worker productivity is being sucked away into expenditure on defence, into buying expensive playthings for the rich and into South African companies investing their money outside South Africa.

None of this benefits workers - they have had to sweat for their wage increases. These increases have only been crumbs from the table and have only been given because our unions fought for them. But even these increases leave millions to starve and others struggling in poverty.

Worker organisation must face these problems. It is our job to prepare clear economic programmes and policies that will benefit workers.

Let us state our economic demands and build the strong organisation we need to win these demands.

FOSATU STRIKES BACK AT FALSE ATTACK ON WORKERS

STRIKING a gigantic blow against the false attacks on workers by both employers and the State, FOSATU has released the results of a crucial study on worker productivity. The study carried out by economist, Charles Meth, has produced results of great importance to the worker struggle in South Africa.

The main findings of Meth's study reveal that:

- * South Africa's economy grew at an average of 5.9 per cent each year between 1970 and 1980 and not at the 3.6 per cent reported by official Government statistics.
- * The productivity of South Africa's workers has not stood still or fallen as is so often claimed by employers and Government Cabinet Ministers. What is shown is that the wage increases so unwillingly granted by employers are earned by workers through their own sweat and organisation.
- * There are serious problems with Government figures that measure the output and income of our economy. These problems will have to be solved before we can get a true picture of what is happening. However, one thing is clear - workers are not the cause of the unemployment and inflation in South Africa.

What these results mean for the worker struggle is set out in the Editorial.

FOSATU requested the study because it did not believe the claims made by employers and the State that it was workers who were causing the problem. We did not believe that unemployment and inflation were caused by wages rising faster than the output that workers were producing. At a FOSATU national seminar in 1982 Charles Meth - who has assisted FOSATU before - was asked to carry out a thorough investigation.

The first fruits of this study have struck a blow against the attacks made on workers and their unions by the State and employers. However, the study has also made it clear that with the present Government policies great hardship lies ahead. Considering this the FOSATU Central Committee committed itself to developing an economic programme around which workers can organise to achieve a real share of the great wealth of South Africa.

Commenting on the study, FOSATU's president, Chris Dlamini said workers expected

that their productivity would be used to create jobs for their sons and daughters but 'some irrational and selfish lot use our productivity for their own interests.'

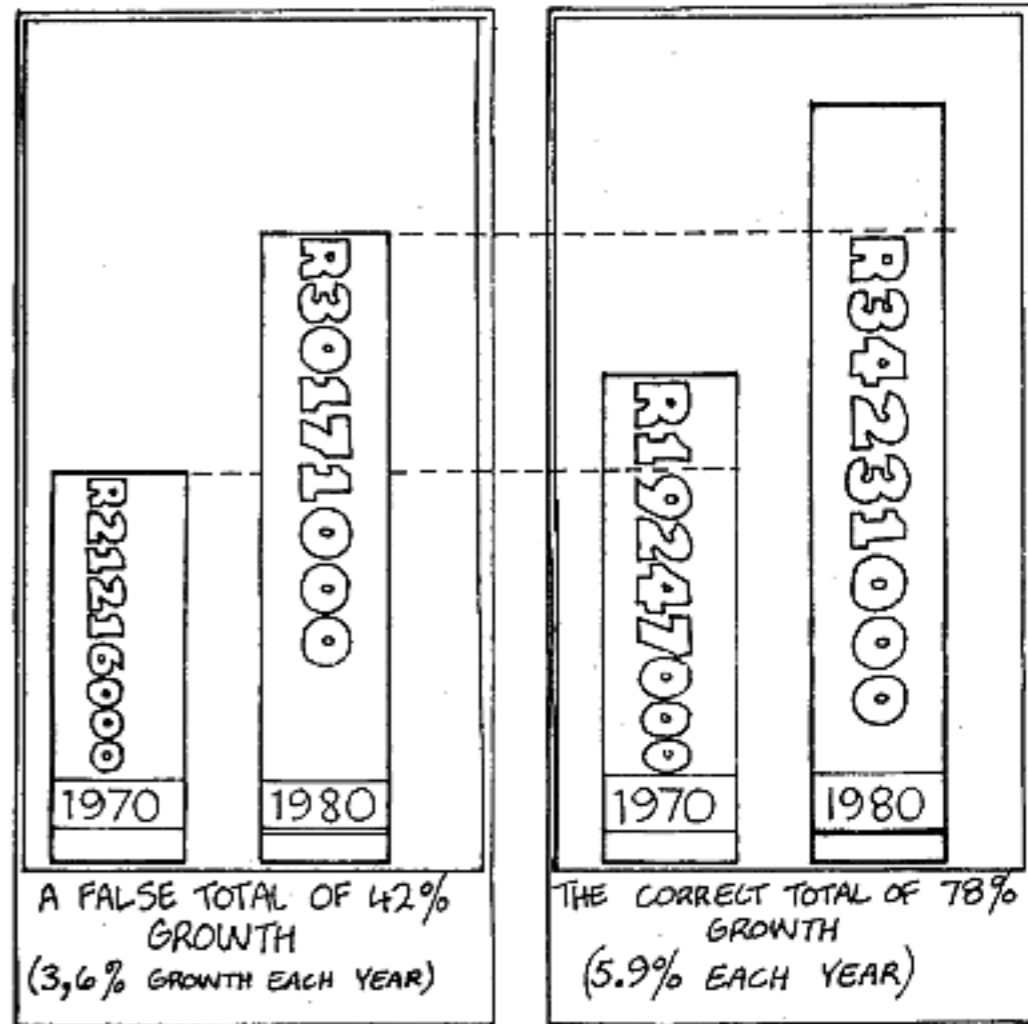
'Hence South Africa is faced with massive unemployment which is unnecessary. If the economic policy was set out and monitored by people committed to the welfare of the working class, in our country unemployment would be minimal,' he said.

'Workers have a right to demand a clear economic policy because it is our sweat and blood that generates the wealth of this country,' Brother Dlamini said.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

The Government's Story

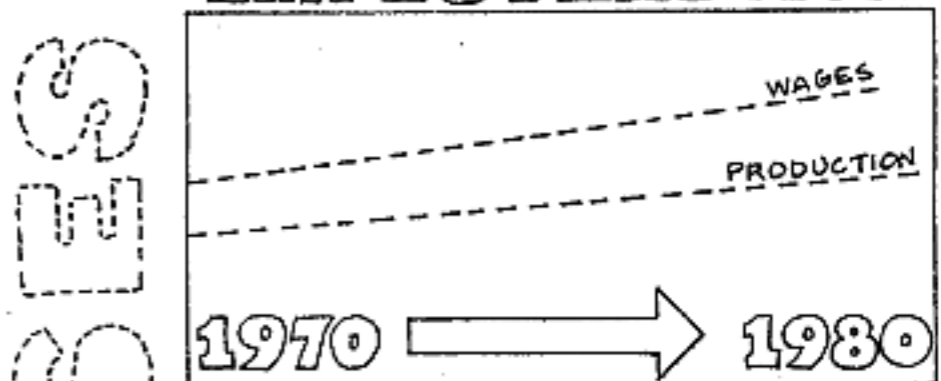
The True Story



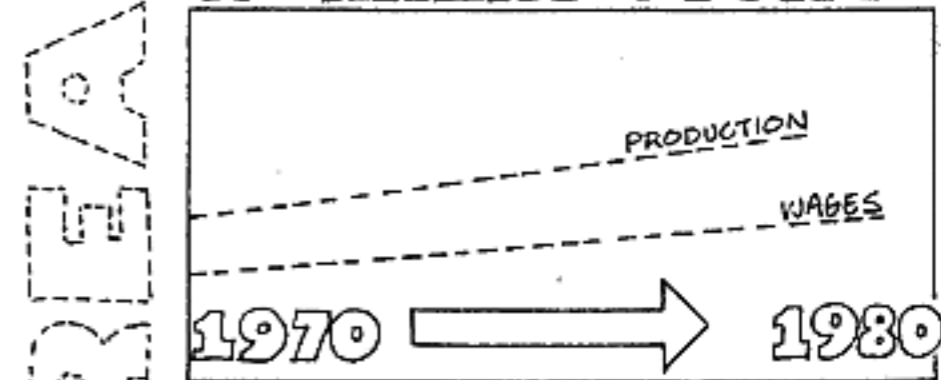
PRODUCTIVITY..

HARD WORK FOR CRUMBS...

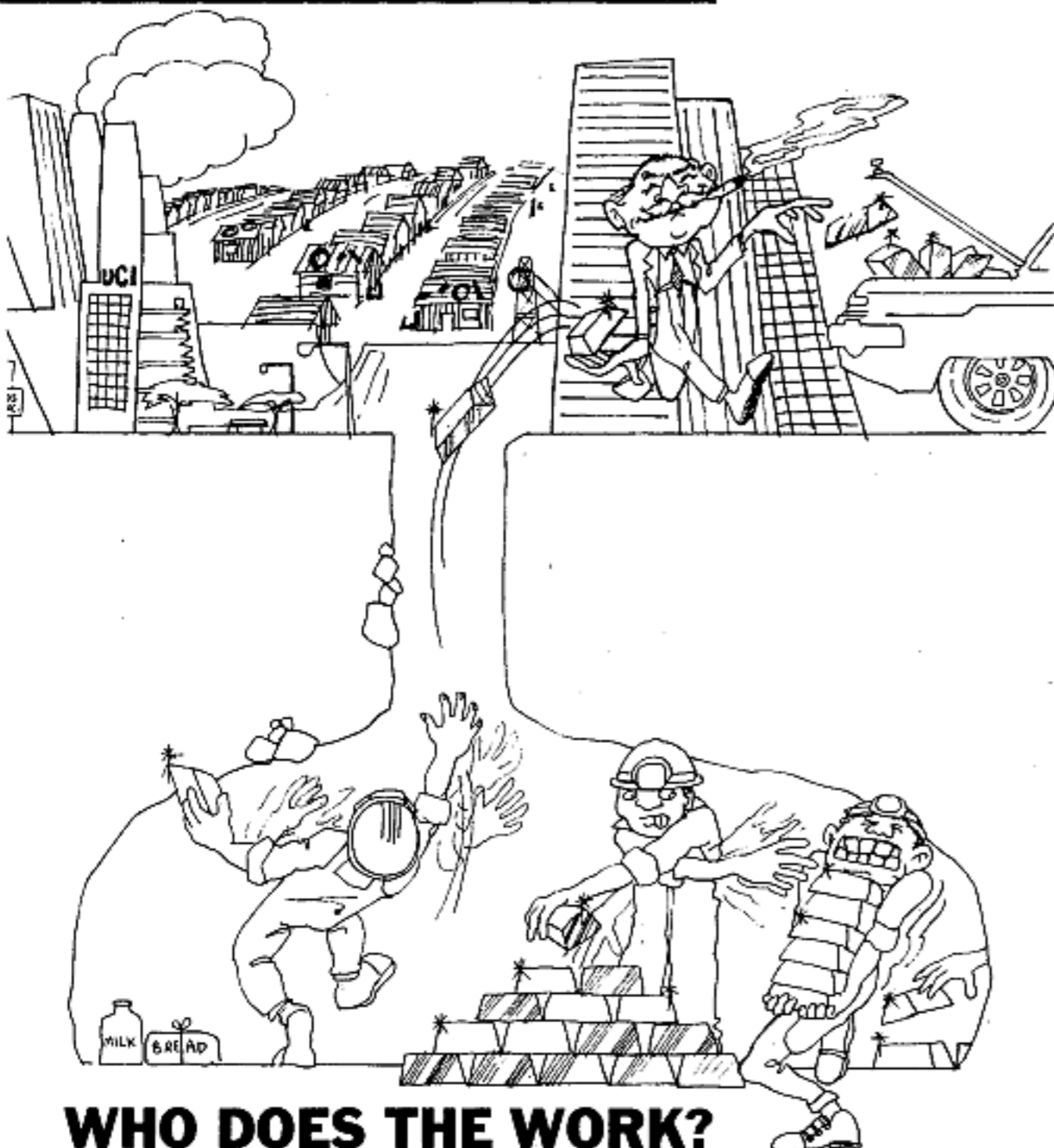
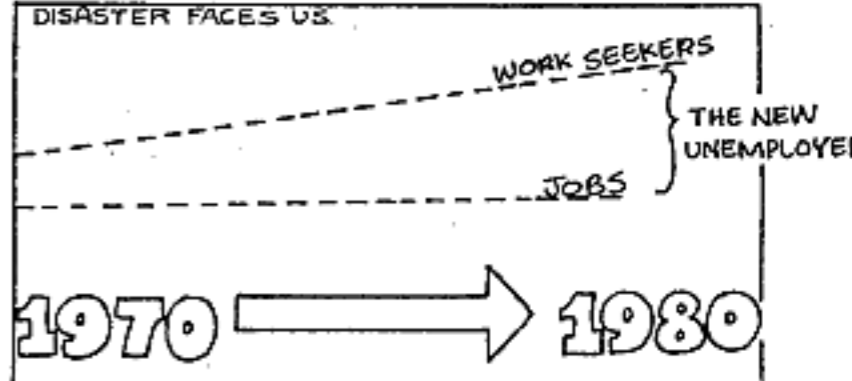
EMPLOYERS STORY...



WORKERS STORY...



UNEMPLOYMENT...



WHO DOES THE WORK?



NAAWU VICTIMISATION OF UNION ACTIVISTS

LEADS TO COURT CASE

FOLLOWING Alfa's refusal to deal with the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union and its dismissal of three union activists, the union has launched an urgent application to the Industrial Court.

In its application, NAAWU has asked the court to order the reinstatement of its victimised members and to restrain Alfa from imposing a works council on the workforce.

NAAWU has also demanded that Alfa recognise the union as representative of its employees at the Wynburg depot.

Alfa has responded by alleging that the union has no right to represent its members in court and that the union has itself committed an unfair labour practice by committing itself to strive for democratic, non-racial trade unions.

The company also alleges that it is not obliged to recognise the union at its plant and that it is not obliged to consult worker representatives or workers themselves prior to retrenchment.

Alfa claims that the workers have chosen to be represented by a works council and that it had good cause to retrench the workers.

A NAAWU spokesperson said that as well as the court case, the union had used its fraternal links with the Italian metal unions as it was believed that a joint effort could force the company to open negotiations with NAAWU.

PAPER WORKERS HOLD SIT-IN

ABOUT 400 workers at Carlton Paper in Wadeville recently staged a sit-in as management had refused to pay any attention to their grievances.

The workers from all the six shifts came to the canteen at 6 am on April 13 and refused to budge until management had dealt with their fourteen demands.

UNDERTOOK

By lunchtime the company had given a written undertaking to:

- * reinstate a dismissed worker
- * provide back pay for a worker whose wages had been cut months before
- * provide safety boots for workers
- * to give all workers, including shift workers, paid tea break - in terms of the Industrial Council agreement there is no set tea break for shift workers
- * pay out pension money within three weeks of leaving the firm instead of the previous six months.

With this written undertaking the workers went back to work and a committee of 20 was set up to negotiate on the other grievances.

PAID

All the day shift workers were paid for time spent not working during the sit-in and night shift workers who had come in specially were paid half their wages.

One shop steward said after the sit-in that the workers had been complaining for months about certain problems but the manager did nothing.

'It took the united action by workers to wake management up and to realise that workers were right', the shop steward said.

Sweet Unions merge to form National Union

THE Eastern Province Sweet Food and Allied Workers Union has merged with the Sweet Food and Allied Workers Union in order to form a broad national based union.

The EPSFAWU developed under the wing of the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union prior to the formation of FOSATU. The union has recruited more than 500 members at the Cadbury's factory in the Eastern Cape.

Eastern Province regional secretary, Les Kettleidas said that becoming part of a broader based union would improve the resources of this small union and would provide a basis for further expansion.

NEW SUGAR INDUSTRY NEGOTIATING GROUP

A NEW negotiating committee has been established in the sugar industry in Natal giving the Sweet Food and Allied Workers Union a firm foot hold in the industry.

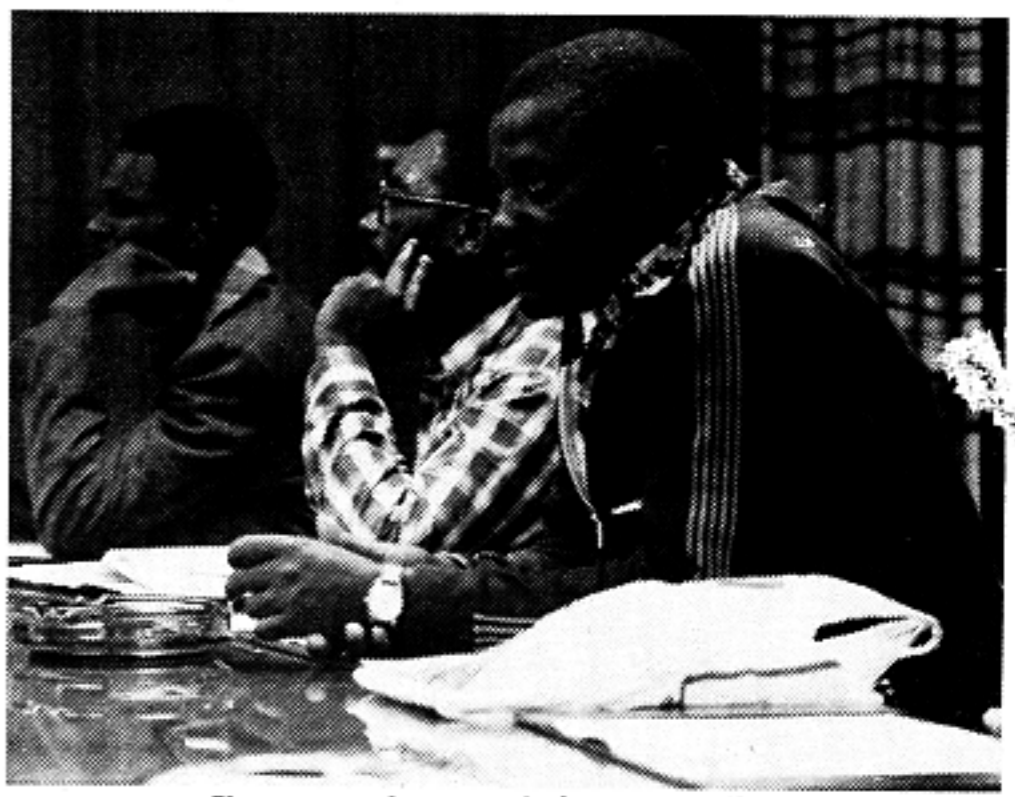
The negotiating group which highlights the importance of worker involvement in bargaining structures and of worker mandates, was set up to negotiate wages and working conditions covering any CG Smith Mill where the SFAWU has a majority.

In terms of an agreement between sugar company, CG Smith and the union, it was agreed to establish this new bargaining forum outside of the industrial council. It consists of six shop stewards for every mill where the SFAWU has a majority, three union officials and management representatives.

The agreement marks an important victory for SFAWU against employers who have refused to negotiate with the union outside the Industrial Council.

A SFAWU representative said the union had refused to join the council at this stage because its present structures did not allow for the involvement of workers in negotiations nor did it allow for the establishing of factory floor organisation.

The importance of worker involvement in bargaining has been underlined in a wage agreement just completed by the new negotiating committee with CG Smith.



Shop stewards caucus before wage talks.

The new committee negotiated a 13 per cent increase for the lowest grades and a 7,5 per cent increase for the highest grades, whereas the secretary of the National Union of Sugar Manufacturing and Refining Employees, Selby Nsibande - who sits on the council - agreed to a 7,5 per cent increase across the board.

Nsibande also agreed to incorporate the food ration into the wage increase in spite of the fact that this sensitive issue led to mass strikes by angry sugar workers last year.

Brother Belford Jila, the chairman of the Noodsberg shop stewards committee, said it was quite clear that Nsibande had reached this agreement with no consultation with his members.

The SFAWU negotiators won a R50 food ration for the Noodsberg mill and a R45 for the Umzimkulu mill.

The new negotiating committee at present represents about 1 000 workers at the Umzimkulu and Noodsberg mills but plans to use its position as a springboard into the rest of the sugar industry.

Workers should control Metal Pension Fund - says MAWU

THE Metal and Allied Workers Union is pushing for worker control of the multi-million Rand metal industries' pension fund.

The fund to which more than 450 000 workers contribute contained 586 million Rand at the end of last year and at present is controlled by a board dominated by management representatives.

MAWU's general secretary, David Sebabi said that it was crucial that the workers who are members of the fund should be able to control the fund.

Workers would then be able to make the changes to the fund

that they wanted, he added.

At a meeting with the employers association, SEIFSA, on April 12 MAWU argued that the unions with the most members in the fund should have the most seats on the controlling board and that employers should have less than half the seats on this board.

SEIFSA said they would never accept less than half the seats on the fund as they said they paid half the money into the fund.

In reply, MAWU said this was nonsense as it was workers' money in that fund and workers should be able to control that

money.

The Council of Mining and Building Unions supported SEIFSA saying that they needed the help and the experience of the employers. Besides, they said, workers would be unhappy if the fund were not continued.

Once again, MAWU attacked this by saying that many workers wanted their money back from the fund.

Eventually it was agreed to hold another meeting on May 27 to allow MAWU, the Chemical Workers Industrial Union and the General Workers Union to discuss this matter with the controlling board of the fund.

METAL WORKERS CALL FOR R90 A WEEK

METAL workers at general meetings held on the Reef and in Durban over the past month have launched a call for a minimum wage of R90 a week.

Besides this, the workers have demanded an R18 a week across the board increase and 'in order to fight the growing problem of unemployment and starvation', they have demanded that the working week be reduced to 40 hours with no loss of wages and that overtime be banned during times of retrenchment.

The general meetings were called to discuss the demands to be put forward by MAWU during the negotiations at the metal industries' industrial council.

SPEEDED UP PRODUCTION

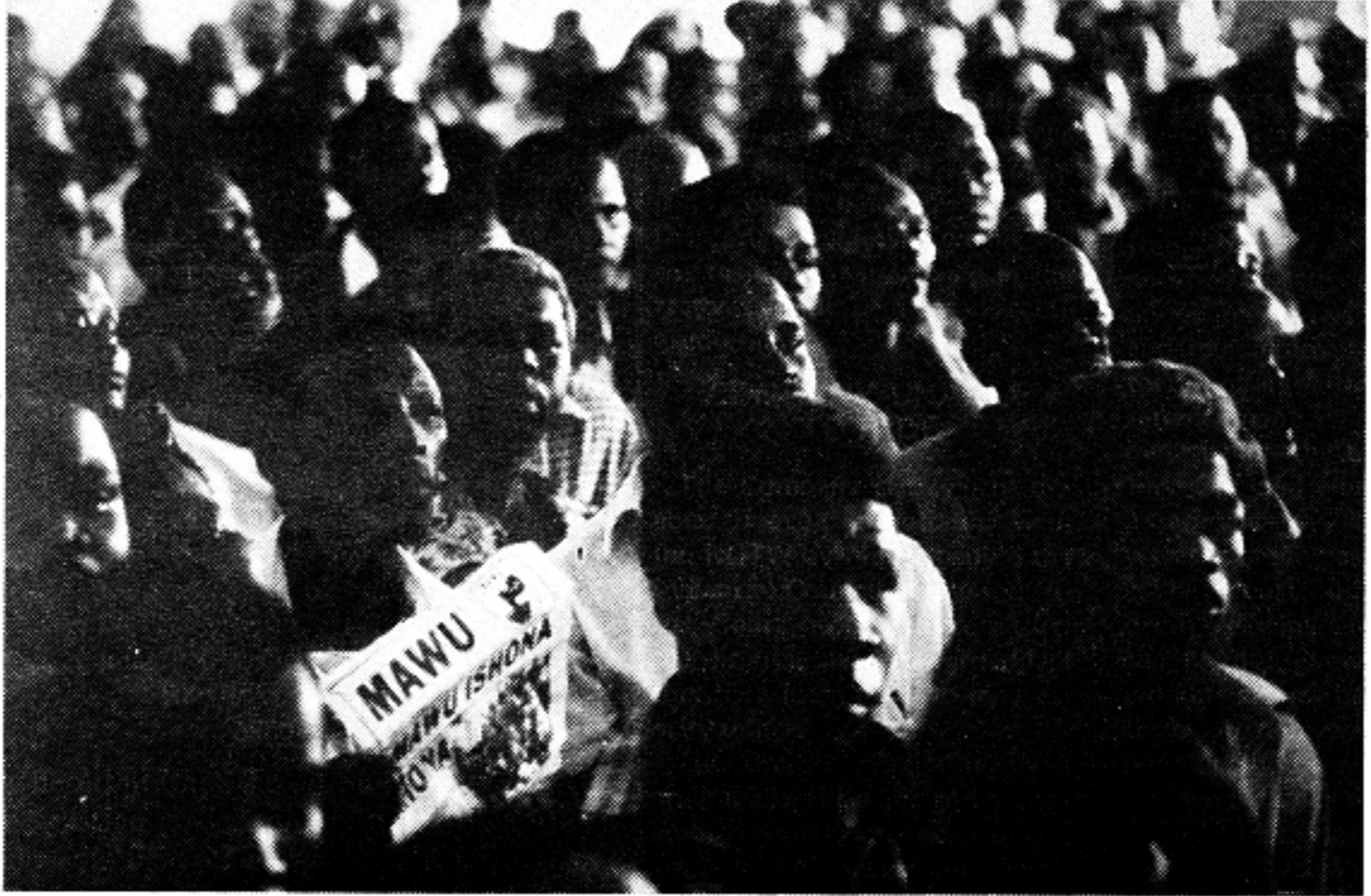
Workers at the meetings said they had noticed that management in many factories had already speeded up production with fewer workers and was talking about higher efficiency and 'getting rid of the dead wood'.

They said they knew that management would not try to rehire workers when the economy improved as after the last economic slump companies had tried to get the remaining workers to do more work for the same wages.

COLLECTIVE STRENGTH

At the general meeting held in Durban, MAWU's president Jeffrey Vilane said 'We can see clearly that the time has come to use our collective strength to push workers demands in the industry.'

'For too long workers real interests have been ignored at the factory level, we cannot allow this situation to continue', he said.



Metal workers crammed into Bolton Hall for the Durban meeting