

FOSATU WORKER NEWS

Federation of South African Trade Unions



March 1982

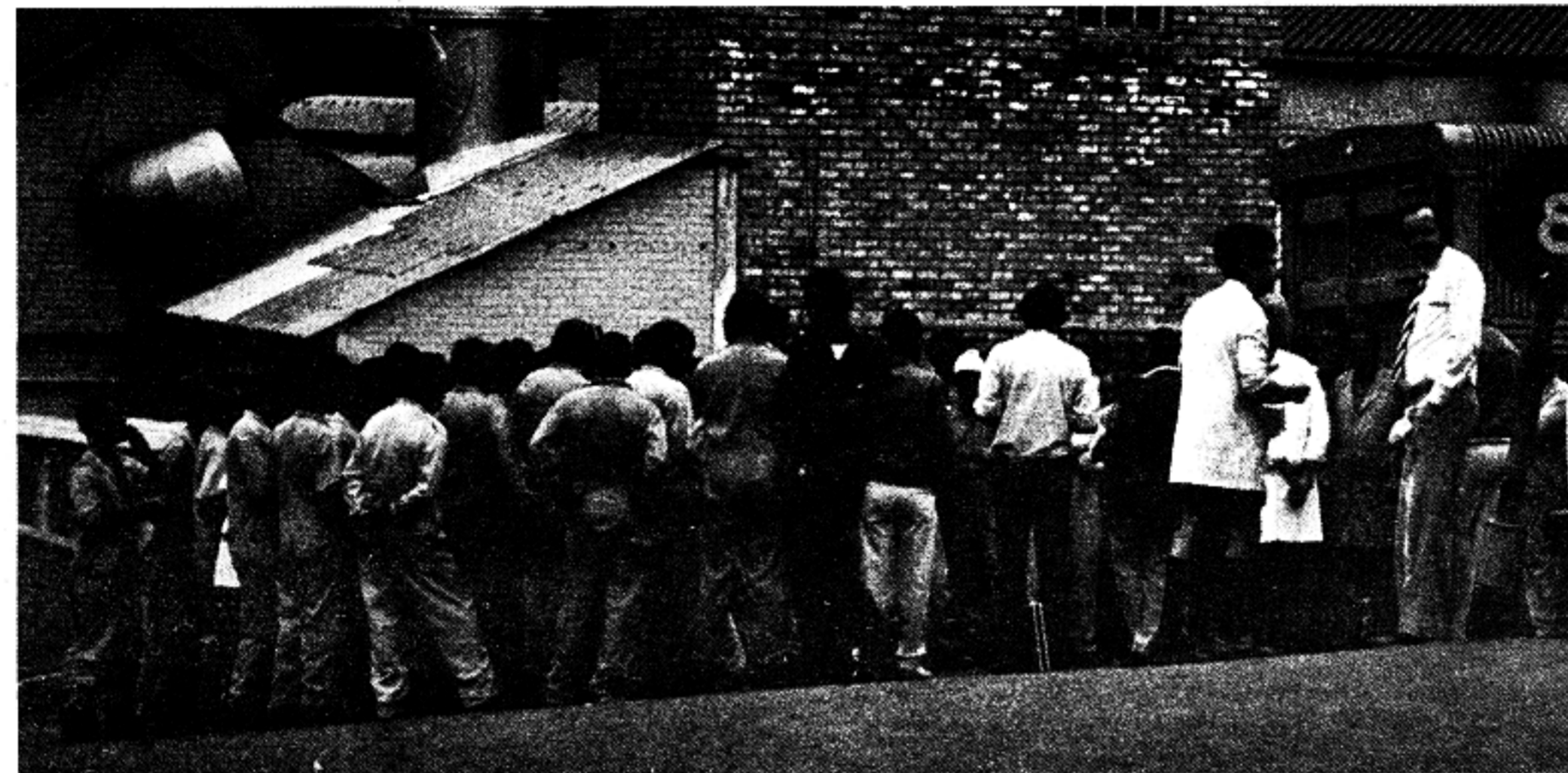
White workers join stoppage at V.W.

AT the Volkswagen factory in Uitenhage, 7 000 workers stopped work on February 11 to mourn the death of trade unionist Neil Aggett — the largest single stoppage in the country.

White workers also joined black and coloured members of the National Automobile and Allied Workers' Union (NAAWU) in the half-hour stoppage.

At Cadbury in Port Elizabeth, some section managers and production managers joined the commemorative service held during the stoppage. At Plascon, white foremen did the same.

At all the factories in the Port Elizabeth area which took part in the stoppage, workers observed a three minute period of silence, followed by prayers and the singing of Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrica.



WORKERS at SA Fabrics were among the thousands who stopped work on February 11 to mourn Dr. Aggett's death. The vast majority of them were members of FOSATU unions.

Thousands mourn for Neil Aggett

first national stoppage for twenty years

MANY thousands of workers all over South Africa stopped work for half an hour on February 11 to mourn the death of trade unionist Neil Aggett who died in detention.

It was the first national work stoppage for nearly twenty years and the first in which workers stopped work simultaneously in their factories and did not just stay away from work.

Neil Aggett, Transvaal organiser of the African Food and Canning Workers' Union, was hanged while in detention in John Vorster Square on February 5.

He had been in detention since November 27 last year.

'WE WILL NEVER KNOW'

"We will probably never be sure who was responsible for his death," a lawyer closely connected with the case has said. "But everyone agrees that he would still be alive if he had not been detained."

"The recent admission of three other trade union detainees to hospital after twelve to fifteen weeks of detention is clear evidence of the physical and mental pressures to which political detainees are subjected."

As soon as the news of Neil Aggett's death was made known, FOSATU unions began discussing ways of responding to this situation.

UNION MEETINGS

In Durban, the national executives of the National Union of Textile Workers (NUTW) and the Chemical Workers' Industrial

Union (CWIU) supported the principle of a stoppage during their executive meetings on February 6 and 7.

In Johannesburg, the Metal and Allied Workers' Union (MAWU) discussed similar action and over the same weekend, the national executive of FOSATU also proposed the idea of a national stoppage.

On Monday February 8, the African Food and Canning Workers' Union, to which Neil Aggett belonged, issued a call for a half hour long stoppage on Thursday February 11, and all FOSATU unions then supported this call.

VAST MAJORITY

Despite the short time available to organise the stoppage,

workers in FOSATU unions responded well, and the workers in FOSATU organised factories who stopped work on the Thursday represented the vast majority of the workers called out by all unions in South Africa.

In most areas, workers only had little more than a day's warning and in places like Wadeville, they were only informed about the stoppage at a shop stewards' council meeting the night before.

Despite this short notice, all of the factories represented at the council meeting observed the period of mourning.

This even included workers who were only newly recruited and whose unions have not yet

been recognised by their employers.

TRIBUTE

The way in which they consulted fellow workers, approached management, and then organised the stoppage in only three hours the next morning is a tribute to their determination and to their factory floor organisation.

According to Joe Foster, FOSATU's leading role in the stoppage should kill the idea that registration by a union means that it is controlled by the State.

As he has pointed out, the vast majority of workers that stopped work were in factories organised by FOSATU unions, all of which have been granted registration.

REGRETTABLE ATTACK

Workers and officials from several FOSATU unions also describe as regrettable the attacks made by Jan Theron, general secretary of the two Food and Canning Workers' Unions, on those unions that had accepted registration.

Both attacks took place after the unprecedented unity of workers displayed during the stoppage and at the funeral service for Neil Aggett in Johannesburg.

"This was a time when we reaffirmed our commitment to the struggle," said one CWIU shop steward who attended the funeral.

"It was a time to express unity, not division."

Estcourt workers dodge reprisals

WORKERS at the NUTW Burhose factory in Estcourt faced a difficult problem when they planned their stoppage.

Ever since a strike in May 1981, worker leaders had suffered victimisation by the company, and they expected dismissal if they took a leading part in the stoppage.

Workers therefore decided to organise a stoppage in which no leaders appeared.

Shortly before 11 a.m they all started singing at their machines. They then all stopped their ma-

chines and continued singing. At 11 they stopped singing and observed a period of silence. At the end of the period of silence, Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrica, the national anthem, was sung, after which the workers resumed work.

No management reprisals have yet been reported.

FOREMEN WORKED

At Industex, a textile factory in Natal, NUTW informed management of their decision to observe a period of silence. Soon afterwards, the union received a call

from the production manager who asked if five machines could be worked by white foremen during the period of mourning since these machines required several hours to restart.

The union referred the problem to the shop stewards who discussed the matter and authorised the foremen to work the machines.

In the rest of the factory the stoppage was thoroughly observed.

BOKSBURG

Management at Reef Chemicals

in Boksburg, agreed to the demands of CWIU workers that the stoppage be held, but said they must observe it outside the factory gate.

When the workers left the factory, the union's 120 members lifted up Aggett placards and marched past several factories before coming back.

Workers waiting outside the pass office burst into worker songs as the procession passed.

Workers had returned to the factory before any police appeared on the scene.

Workers charge the Minister of Police

FORTY WORKERS pressed charges against the Minister of Police in the Boksburg Magistrates' Court last month.

The workers were arrested after stopping work at Rely Precision Castings in May 1980 and claim they were assaulted by the police.

Workers told the court that all 55 workers in their factory had been pushed into a police van which is designed to hold only 30 people.

When they reached the police station, they said, they were taken out of the van one by one and

assaulted with rubber truncheons and wooden batons.

Police hit them on the back of the hand, the knuckles, the elbows and the back of the legs, they said.

Phineas Myeni told the court it seemed as if they were trying to

hit all the joints.

LEGAL AID

The Metal and Allied Workers' Union (MAWU) immediately arranged legal and medical aid and provided the money to get the workers out on bail the next day.

After discussions with MAWU the workers decided to lay charges against the police. This proved to be more difficult than they expected.

When they went to the police station to lay charges, the same policemen that they said assaulted

them took their statements.

One worker complained: "You don't go to a thief to complain about robbery."

'TIMES ARE CHANGING'

The workers are suing the Minister of Police for R60 000 - R1 500 each. As Rodney Mwambi, Transvaal branch secretary of MAWU, has said:

"We want to show the police they cannot assault workers and get away with it. Times are changing and we intend to make them understand that."

New strike wave hits Wadeville

A NEW wave of strikes has broken out in Wadeville.

Five factories organised by the Metal and Allied Workers' Union (MAWU) came out on strike in support of higher wages and the reinstatement of dismissed workers within the space of a few days.

HAWKER-SIDDELEY

The strike wave began on Friday February 26 and spread through most of the next week. First to stop work were workers at Hawker-Siddeley and McKechnie Brothers. At Hawker-Siddeley, workers demanded an R1 an hour increase, the reinstatement of two workers and the recognition of the union.

At McKechnie Brothers the company's 1100 workers demanded a R2 an hour increase. The present minimum is R1,13 an hour.

Both companies agreed to negotiate with MAWU if the workers returned to work. Mass meetings of workers at FOSATU's Katlehong offices agreed to these terms.

The Chubb and Hubco factories in Wadeville were next to be hit by strikes, also over wage demands. Workers in these factories were still in the process of joining MAWU, and negotiations are continuing at these factories.

HARD LINE

A hard line was taken by the management of Transvaal Malleable

Foundry. This is one of the longer established MAWU factories in this area, and workers joined the union early in 1981.

Here, workers struck on the morning of March 3 after the unfair dismissal of two fellow members and a management refusal to negotiate with the union's shop stewards.

According to MAWU the manager stated his intention of re-employing selectively and recruiting new workers from the homelands. He refused further discussions with MAWU, saying he had tolerated the union too long and he would not allow workers controlling his factory.

A successful strike over dismissals took place at the company late last year.

ABSURD CLAIM

Some employers in the area suggested that MAWU was deliberately encouraging the strikes because Industrial Council negotiations over wages were only one week away.

But Moses Mayekiso, MAWU organiser in the area, has described this as absurd, as the union was still busy recruiting members at several of the factories involved in the strike wave.

"But," added another MAWU spokesman, "this does not mean we would not do it if we were forced to."



STRIKING workers salute at one of the factories affected by the renewed wave of stoppages in Wadeville.

Colgate workers win R2 an hour

THE CHEMICAL Workers' Industrial Union recently concluded its first round of wage negotiations with Colgate-Palmolive since the company agreed to recognise the union in July last year.

Colgate-Palmolive have agreed to a minimum wage of R1,95 an hour from the beginning of May this year. All other grades will receive over R2 an hour.

A further increase in the minimum wage to R2,04 an hour has



been agreed to and will come into effect in November this year. The other major gain won by

the union is in working hours. The hated Sunday night shift and Saturday morning shift have been scrapped.

Jacob Mabena, shop steward at Colgate, has said: "We struggled for eighteen months for the right to negotiate and called a boycott and strike before the company gave in."

"The workers are pleased that in the first round of negotiations we achieved the FOSATU target of R2 an hour."



WORKERS mass outside their factory during the Wadeville strike wave. Workers demanded pay increases and the reinstatement of dismissed workers.

Contract workers

want more leave

CONTRACT workers are complaining that their Christmas holiday is being cut short by as much as a week because of the time they spend travelling to and from their homes.

Shop stewards' committees in several FOSATU factories on the Rand are discussing ways of solving the problem.

ONLY TWO WEEKS

Workers say that many employers on the Rand give only two weeks annual leave together with the public holidays over Christmas. This adds up to fourteen working days altogether.

Contract workers who live as far as the Ciskei and Transkei complain that many days of their holiday are wasted because of the time they spend travelling.

A workers from one rubber factory interviewed by Fosatu Worker News has said:

"I live 30 km from Idutywa in the Transkei. I got fifteen days leave this Christmas but spent seven days travelling."

'NO TIME TO REST'

"I only see my family once a year and there are too many jobs to do when I get home. Because I rush to sort out all the problems, I have little time with my family and no time to rest."

Committees in several factories are discussing the question. Many feel that at least three weeks plus public holidays should be given as happens for example in the engineering industry.

Contract workers in engineering factories say that is still too little.

Engineering union expelled

THE ENGINEERING and Allied Workers' Union (EAWU) has been expelled from FOSATU.

The decision was taken at a central committee meeting held in February.

EAWU was charged with violating FOSATU's principles of non-racialism, and with failing to cooperate with the local, regional and national committees of FOSATU.

REFUSED TO ATTEND

The union refused to attend several central committee meetings to answer to these charges.

Many of EAWU's members did not agree with the EAWU executive's decisions and the Vaal branch, which contains most of

EAWU's members, invited guest speakers from FOSATU to its Annual General Meeting in Sharpeville, held in January this year.

It subsequently decided to send delegates to meetings of FOSATU's Transvaal regional executive committee as observers.

BRANCH EXPELLED

EAWU's head office, which is based in Springs, then instructed Vaal delegates not to attend, and shortly afterwards expelled the Vaal branch.

The Vaal branch is now exploring ways of rejoining FOSATU and FOSATU has found it new offices in Vereeniging.

Henkel workers down tools

HENKEL workers in Durban stopped work on March 9 after Henkel management had unilaterally broken off negotiations with the CWIU.

Workers at Henkel's Isando plant were considering taking similar action.

Henkel management has been dodging negotiations with the workers for several months. Late last year they refused to negotiate on the basis of the union's wage proposals after shop stewards had travelled from Isando to Durban at their own expense.

CANCELLED

Management cancelled the next negotiations at a few hours notice when the Isando shop stewards had again already left for Durban.

At this point it became clear to the union that Henkel management was trying to break the common front of workers at the Durban and Isando plants.

In February, Henkel management again refused to negotiate with the workers over pensions and wages. They also arbitrarily reduced the wages of shift workers when workers prevented them from increasing the length of the shift.

LOWER WAGES

Workers say Henkel management has been paying wages far below their main competitors. Until recently, the minimum paid by Henkel was R50 a week as compared to R78 at Colgate. The massive expansion of Henkel at its new plant at Alrode is seen by the union as the result of the lower wages it pays.

According to a union spokesman a situation similar to that at Colgate last year has arisen at Henkel. He said: "We hope it won't require the same measures to bring them to their senses."

DEMANDS

The employers' argument is that low productivity is caused by workers being inefficient. The two demands that managements usually make are:

- * reduction of absenteeism and late arrivals at work.
- * that bonus schemes be introduced in place of flat rate wage increases.

Recent examples of this are the Sigma Motor Corporation in Pretoria and Piggott Maskew Rubber Company in Boksburg.

No wonder Transkei doesn't want unions!

THE MINISTER of Social Services of the Transkei has announced new minimum wages for workers in three industries in the Transkei.

He has appealed to all workers to keep up high productivity to make the new determinations worthwhile.

Mr Mlongeni said the new wage levels were in line with his pledge to look after the welfare of Transkeians in the social and labour spheres.

The new wage levels in the manufacturing, building and civil engineering industries have been increased to 34 cents an hour for men and to 32 cents an hour for women.

This means a man will earn R15,64 (without deductions) for a 46 hour working week, and a woman R13,72.

The determination also lays down a minimum increase of 1½ cents an hour each year until further notice from the Wage Board.

Together with the Ciskei, Venda and other Bantustan governments, the Transkeian government is opposed to trade unions operating inside its territory.

Transkeian workers on the Rand say: "It is easy to see why this is so!"



CONTRACT workers on their way home for their annual leave — "We have no time to rest," a worker has said.

Low productivity:

Put the blame where it belongs

BECAUSE industry is growing more slowly in 1982, employers are talking about low productivity.

They are demanding that workers increase production before management increases workers' pay.

Several FOSATU unions are facing this problem. The reply they are giving is that low productivity is mainly management's fault.

Sigma has put forward absenteeism and late-coming as one of the major problems that workers must solve in the plant.

PIGGOTT MASKEW

Piggott Maskew insisted late last year on a productivity bonus instead of any increase at all, and forced the issue before workers were able to put forward proposals for joint union and management discussion on the organisation of production.

The result was a strike, and an attempt by Piggott Maskew to cancel the union agreement.

FOSATU unions involved in these negotiations have stated that low productivity is mainly the result of poor organisation of work in the factory. They argue that workers themselves know where most of the production problems and hold-ups occur, and so should be involved in joint decision-making over the organisation of production.

SHORTGAGES OF PARTS

At Sigma, for example, shop stewards have pointed out that shortages of parts cause the production lines to close down.

The supervisors then speed up the lines so that they can make up for lost time. Workers have to work faster and the quality of the work declines.

The workers get blamed but the fault is not theirs.

Workers are also obliged to work overtime on Saturday. But they still need time at home so they stay absent from work some time during the week.

Then a man who is not as skilled in their job has to take their place. Again the quality and speed of production declines.

So workers say the only real solution to the problem of absenteeism is to make the organisation of production more efficient and to have workers jointly involved in making these decisions.

CONFIRMED BY EXPERT

Expert opinion confirms what workers have long felt. According to Dr Deming, an expert on motor car factories in the United States, 85% of spoilt parts are the result of management mistakes and only 15% are the workers' fault.

Japanese factories have been taking his advice and improving productivity, and some American car companies are also beginning to listen.

Martin Ndaba, NAAWU organiser in Pretoria, has said: "We aim to make more managements in South Africa realise this too."

WITH the economy slowing down, it is clear that 1982 is going to be a tough year for workers.

Already, 507 workers at Sigma Motor Corporation and 150 at Datsun have been retrenched.

Also, various Fosatu unions have reported that many workers were told at shutdown in December last year not to return to work in January.

However, despite the economic slowdown, retrenchments are not inevitable. Many workers believe that once employers have told them they have to be retrenched, this is inevitable. But this is not true.

KELLOGGS

Ways and means have been found to avoid retrenchment. At Kelloggs, workers had a stoppage last year when six of their colleagues were given retrenchment notices.

Negotiations between the union and management followed and the union was given the right to investigate the manning levels in the plant.

The shop stewards found six empty spaces, and all workers were taken back at the same rate of pay and with no change in conditions of service.

The Kelloggs example highlights the need for negotiation between workers and management over retrenchment.

Stoppages can be avoided if only management would talk to the union beforehand.

SIGMA TALKS

At Sigma, where the National Automobile and Allied Workers' Union (NAAWU) is recognised, discussions on retrenchment started two months before they happened.

Negotiations were about the possibility of avoiding retrenchment. Discussions also took place over an acceptable retrenchment procedure. The NAAWU proposals were as follows:

- * The union should be given at least one month's notice of any retrenchment.

- * Proper planning of production should take place to ensure that account is taken of downturns in the economy.

- * Retrenchments should be on the principle of "last in, first out" (Lifo). This means that the oldest workers who have worked the longest in the plant should be the last to be retrenched.

- * Severance pay should be paid to workers on the basis of a month's wages for each year worked.

As a result of these negotiations, Sigma workers were retrenched only after two months of deliberations, and some jobs were saved as a result of union pressure.

In addition, it was agreed that the workers be retrenched on the "lifo" principle.

The severance pay agreed to was one month's pay for workers who had worked for one year, two months' pay for workers with between two and five years' service, and three months' pay for workers with over five years' service.

Also, retrenched workers will be given first choice when Sigma recruits again.

NAAWU's Sigma branch secretary, Martin Ndaba, has described the negotiations as a "mixed victory".

He said: "On the one hand we lost the retrenchment battle as 507 workers were retrenched. However, we were at least able to get them increased retrenchment benefits."

Issued by The Federation of South African Trade Unions, 2 Good Hope Street, Bellville South.
Printed by the Springs Advertiser, 88 3rd Street, Springs.

Tough year ahead for workers...

but retrenchments can be fought

Mr Ndaba went on to point out the necessity of a union to negotiate a retrenchment procedure. At Datsun, 150 workers were retrenched. They received no severance pay and were not protected by the "Lifo" principle.

Management could simply dismiss older workers whom they saw as unproductive. Datsun management gave as the reason for retrenchment the fact that too many workers returned to work after the holidays.

REJECTED

A union spokesman said the union rejected this explanation. "Datsun should have planned properly," he said.

"This shows that, in the absence of a strong union at Datsun management can do what they like with workers and give unacceptable reasons for doing it."

He called on all workers to join a union to prevent management decisions like this.



WORKERS striking at Sigma last year to demand recognition of their union. Now, NAAWU has won workers increased retrenchment benefits.

These Fosatu factories joined the stoppage

DOUBTS have been cast on the claims made for the claims made for the number of workers who took part in the national stoppage to mourn the death of Dr Neil Aggett.

Here, we publish a complete list of FOSATU factories where workers stopped, how many took part in the stoppage, and the unions of which they are

members, so that our account of the stoppage may be verified by anyone interested in doing so.

According to this list, a total of 59 161 workers in 90 factories organised by Fosatu-affiliated unions took part in the stoppage — the vast majority of workers did who so country-wide.

The list is as follows:

EASTERN CAPE

Volkswagen	7 000
Apex	200
Borg-Warner	200
Bosal	120
SKF	130
Motor Via	80
Farm Fare	200
Veldspun	1 100
CDA	3 000
Ford	4 000
GM	3 500
Willard	250
Firestone	800
Veldtex	400
Industex	1 600
Cape of Good Hope Textiles	400
Gubb and Inggis	700
Cadburys	450
Milling and Trading	200
Sidwell Timber	300
Timber Industries	150
Plascon	200

NATAL

Hebox	1 750
Progress Knitting	1 400
Natal Thread	550
Gelvenor	400
Smith & Nephew	750
Ninian & Lester	550
Regina	300
Nelba Prints	100
Stayflex	80
David Whitehead	1 500

Uitenhage	NAAWU
Uitenhage	NAAWU
Uitenhage	NAAWU
Uitenhage	NAAWU
Uitenhage	NAAWU
Uitenhage	TGWU
Uitenhage	SFAWU
Uitenhage	NUTW
East London	NAAWU
Port Elizabeth	NAAWU
Port Elizabeth	NAAWU
Port Elizabeth	NAAWU
Port Elizabeth	NAAWU
Port Elizabeth	NAAWU
Port Elizabeth	NUTW
Port Elizabeth	NUTW
Port Elizabeth	NUTW
Port Elizabeth	SFAWU
Port Elizabeth	SFAWU
Port Elizabeth	PWAWU
Port Elizabeth	PWAWU
Port Elizabeth	CWIU

Hammarsdale	NUTW
Hammarsdale	NUTW
Hammarsdale	NUTW
Hammarsdale	NUTW
Pinetown	NUTW
Pinetown	NUTW
Pinetown	NUTW
Pinetown	NUTW
Pinetown	NUTW
Tongaat	NUTW

Mooi River Textiles	1 000	Estcourt	NUTW
SA Fabrics	650	Roseburgh	NUTW
Prestige	120	Maritzburg	MAWU
Pillar	60	Maritzburg	MAWU
CYE Engineering	100	Maritzburg	MAWU
Scottish Cables	450	Maritzburg	MAWU
McKinnon Chain	120	Maritzburg	MAWU
APV Kestner	100	Maritzburg	MAWU
Robertson Stone	120	Jacobs	MAWU
Krommenie	120	Jacobs	MAWU
Ferralloy	550	Cato Ridge	MAWU
SA Tyoxide	450	Umbogtswini	CWIU
AE & CI Paints	270	Jacobs	CWIU
Rivertex	150	Jacobs	CWIU
Durapenta Plastics	450	Pinetown	CWIU
Omega Plastics	120	Pinetown	CWIU
Incorporated Laboratories	100	Maritzburg	CWIU
Bonus Fertiliser	50	Empangeni	CWIU
Meadowfeeds	350	Maritzburg	SFAWU
Epel	180	Maritzburg	SFAWU
Noodsberg Sugar	400	Dalton	SFAWU
Hulett's Paper	4 000	Stanger	PWAWU
Richards Bay Town Board	250	Richards Bay	TGWU
TRANSVAAL			
Hendler & Hendler	1 800	Boksburg	MAWU
Vaal Metals	200	Boksburg	MAWU
Light Castings	140	Boksburg	MAWU
Chloride	130	Benoni	MAWU
Nickel Chrome	120	Boksburg	MAWU
Siemens (Isando)	450	Isando	MAWU
Henred Fruehauf	450	Wadeville	MAWU
Stone Street	60	Elandsfontein	MAWU
National Spring	400	Wadeville	MAWU
National Bolt	1 117	Boksburg	MAWU
Fenner	150	Isando	MAWU
Automatic Plating	84	Isando	MAWU
Litemaster	320	Wadeville	MAWU
Siemens (Spartan)	180	Spartan	MAWU
Domani Steel	90	Wadeville	MAWU
TMF	350	Wadeville	MAWU
Vesankor	90	Wadeville	MAWU
Krost	1 100	Heriotdale	MAWU
Dresser	200	Wadeville	MAWU
Salcast	400	Benoni	MAWU
Reef Chemical	150	Boksburg	CWIU
Abecol	80	Isando	CWIU
Rolfes Chemicals	400	Boksburg	CWIU
Colgate	180	Boksburg	CWIU
S & CI Chemicals	80	Wadeville	CWIU
Matthey Rustenburg Refinery	250	Wadeville	CWIU
Henkel	100	Isando	CWIU
Kelloggs	180	Springs	SFAWU
Weston Biscuits	250	Springs	SFAWU
Plate Glass	400	Germiston	GAWU
Premier Paper	350	Kliprivier	PWAWU
Nampak Recycling	90	Edenvale	PWAWU
Carlton Centre Employees	250	Johannesburg	TGWU
Sigma	4 000	Pretoria	NAAWU
WESTERN CAPE			
Leyland	2 000	Bellville	NAAWU