

WORK

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EASTERN CAPE

Unions & Community Organisations in Conflict



Anti-Apartheid in Britain, Trade Union Unity, UDF Treason Trial, White Workers, disinvestment, Mine and Metal Talks.

Editorial

South African politics is experiencing rapid realignments. Old and emerging alliances face severe tests in the present climate of recession and revolt. This is as obvious in the realm of popular and trade union politics as it is in the efforts of the extreme right wing to rebuild a power base.

It is too easy to see areas of intense social conflict like the Eastern Cape in television-like images of death and street clashes. It is also too easy to attribute control and authority over events to local organisations.

This issue of Work In Progress begins with a careful discussion of events surrounding the March stayaway in Port Elizabeth, tracing the organisational conflicts that are now being so bitterly fought out. In the intense stress of that crucible, divisions between trade union, political and community organisations have been carried to an extreme. Whether resolution of these competing organisational interests is possible remains unclear. But it does seem clear that few organisations are in control of members and supporters in the Eastern Cape - and this may be the result of an over-emphasis on political mobilisation, with a consequent neglect of the structures of political organisation.

This over-emphasis on mobilisation has sometimes led to a search for simple answers to complex issues. For example, the rising tide of media and government hysteria about effective foreign disinvestment should not conceal the need for South African organisations to evaluate critically the effects of such campaigns at home. As at least some trade unions have found, a progressive policy on disinvestment is more complicated than it at first seems.

As the 'Courts' feature in this WIP indicates, there are more treason trials underway in South Africa at present than at any previous time in history. Precisely why the state has chosen this moment to charge 16 UDF leaders in a trial which, on the face of it, deals with activities that were public and above-ground, is not clear. But from other treason trials before the courts, it seems that the ANC's armed struggle continues despite the Nkomati Accord and other similar agreements with Southern African governments. Of particular interest are state allegations that the ANC is training cadres inside South Africa, and that its military campaign includes township supporters who have not undergone specialised training outside South Africa.

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Cover photograph by Gideon Mendel

The Port Elizabeth Stayaway

Community Organisations and Unions in Conflict

Conflict between community organisations and unions over the March stayaway in Port Elizabeth is the most extreme form to date of such friction. DEVAN PILLAY interviewed those involved on both sides to construct this account of events.

'Hide nothing from the masses of our people. Tell no lies. Expose lies whenever they are told. Mask no difficulties, mistakes, failures. Claim no easy victories' - Amilcar Cabral.

On the long weekend of 16 to 18 March 1985, almost the entire African workforce of Port Elizabeth stayed home. The townships were deserted except for 'youths who roamed the streets', as one newspaper put it.

This was the response to the call for a Black Weekend and a stayaway from work made by the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organisation (PEBCO) and the Port Elizabeth Women's Organisation (PEWO), supported by other UDF-affiliated community organisations and trade unions.

Demands focused on petrol and paraffin price increases, the GST increase, bus-fare increases, massive retrenchments in the area and the Ford-Amarc merger. Demands were not met, but PEBCO claimed a massive success in terms of demonstration of its authority, and the power of the community to unite in action and express opposition to the government and its 'economic blunders'.

A few days before the stayaway and Black Weekend, a number of groups issued a joint statement disassociating themselves from the stayaway. They were the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU), the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA), the General Workers Union (GWU), the Food and Canning Workers Union (FCWU), the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (CCAWUSA) and the Domestic Workers Association of South Africa (DWASA), along with the Azanian Peoples Organisation (AZAPO) and the Azanian Students Movement (AZASM).

They described the stayaway call as 'opportunistic' on the grounds that workers had not participated in the decision to call the stayaway, and that it did not express worker interests.

The conflict was a step backward after the highly successful demonstration of union-community power in the form of the November Vaal stayaway.

On the face of it, the area's rampant unemployment made the employed and their representatives more cautious, while the unemployed became more militant - particularly the relatively educated youth, among whom unemployment is particularly severe.

This stratum more than any other found a means of expression through the re-emerging community organisations.

Terror tactics by sections of the youth were to become a regular occurrence after the stayaway. No longer directed only at collaborators with the state, violence was also directed at organised workers. Finally it erupted between youth groups themselves, in the UDF-AZAPO clashes (fuelled though they no doubt were by the state).

What lay behind the unions' decision to oppose the Port Elizabeth stayaway? Did they seriously miscalculate the depth of community support for the stayaway call? Were they out of touch with the mood and militancy of their membership?

Did most workers stay at home out of fear 'for life and property', as Nomonde Ngumane, the GWU Eastern Cape branch secretary put it, or out of loyalty to PEBCO and the UDF? Were the workers properly consulted, or did community organisations disregard workers' democracy?

Such questions address the central

issues at stake here: democracy and working class leadership, the role and limitations of trade unions, and the nature of their relationship with community organisations.

Both sides have a story to tell. Both claim to be fighting a common enemy, the state and capital. Each accuses the other of 'playing into the hands of imperialism' by doing less than is necessary to build a liberation movement united in its attack on the state and capital, and clear in its direction towards socialism.

THE BUILDUP

Community council elections in 1983 showed extremely low polls throughout the country - clear evidence of popular rejection. Nevertheless, those 'elected' took office, and proceeded to make themselves even more unpopular with their 'constituents'.

In Port Elizabeth the campaign against the community council elections was led by PEBCO, PEWO, the Congress of SA Students (COSAS), the Port Elizabeth Youth Congress (PEYCO), the Zwide Rugby Union (ZWIRU), the PE Dance Association, the Motor Assemblers and Components Workers Union Of SA and the General Workers Union of SA (MACWUSA/GWUSA). These organisations later affiliated to the UDF.

Edgar Ngoyi, Eastern Cape president of the UDF and a PEBCO executive member, explained: 'During the elections the people were promised that the locations would be cleaned, streets would be repaired, there would be creches for children, and nobody would suffer with housing problems. But after the elections, the first step that they took was to attempt to increase the rents'.

The councillors proposed rent increases of up to 150% (a rise from R10 a month for a one-roomed shack, to R25). This caused widespread outcry. PEBCO threatened a three-day stayaway. As a result of this and other pressure, the increase proposals were withdrawn.

According to Ngoyi and to UDF and PEBCO vice-president Henry Fazzie, councillors continued to 'abuse their positions' by evicting tenants from their houses to replace them with 'their own people'.

Deputy mayor Tamsanqa Linda (who later

became mayor) was singled out as particularly notorious. 'He organised vigilante (groups) to beat up people who did not tow his line,' Ngoyi said, adding that Linda armed himself, and did not hesitate to shoot people. In December 1984 Linda banned the use of all community halls by progressive organisations, and, sensing the growing anger of the people in the townships, called in the police.

At all stages, organisations in the area tried to counter his moves. They engaged lawyers to reinstate evicted tenants, approached the local magistrate requesting him to restrain Linda, and appealed to a police brigadier not to allow Linda to be armed. They also approached the town clerk of Khayamandi to get him to reverse the banning on the use of halls. All to no avail.

Popular anger, especially among the youth, was such that buses were stoned, and, said Ngoyi, 'that is how the trouble started'. The final straw was the announcement in January that costs of petrol, basic commodities like paraffin, and GST, were going to increase.

At one of a series of rallies held by PEBCO at the Rio Cinema towards the end of January, a stayaway was called for, to protest against the increases and retrenchments then taking place. According to PEBCO, the organisation was mandated by those present to discuss the proposal with all independent trade unions in Port Elizabeth.

It was reported in the press on 3 February that PEBCO had decided to call on workers to stay away from work. FOSATU officials read this and were perturbed. A regional congress of about 200 officials was held soon afterward to discuss the issue. All shop stewards from organised companies in the Eastern Cape, as well as committee and executive members, were present. The unions were not against the stayaway as a means of protest against the ruling classes. But 'you cannot just decide overnight to participate in a stayaway without looking at the conditions prevailing at the time', said Theminkosi Mkalipi, FOSATU vice-president and shop steward for the Chemical Workers Industrial Union.

The FOSATU congress felt that conditions were against them. The economy was in recession, putting unions on the defensive. The area was hit with high levels of retrenchment, and the

problem was exacerbated by Ford threatening to leave. The congress decided that they could not go onto the offensive at that stage.

FOSATU took this mandate to the first joint meeting between the UDF affiliates and CCAWUSA, FCWU, GWU, CUSA and FOSATU. Officials asked PEBCO why the stayaway was announced before any discussion with other organisations. According to Mkalipi, 'The answer we got was not satisfactory. They said that they did

that workers should strike at bosses and the state, and that this could only be done through united action.

Neither side would budge. It was decided that since organisations present did not have mandates from their full memberships, another meeting should be held later.

FOSATU asked what would happen if the unions came back with the same mandate. According to FOSATU, PEBCO president Qaqawuli Godolozzi replied that 'PEBCO



Photo: Gideon Mendel

The funeral of 14 unrest victims on 27 March was attended by over 50 000 people

not announce the stayaway, it was the press who climbed on the wagon'.

The other unions involved in the unity talks supported FOSATU's position, though GWU was prepared to consider the Black Weekend as a means of testing possible support for a stayaway. FCWU's opposition also appeared less resolute than FOSATU's.

On the 'community' side, COSAS and ZWIRU were reported to be sympathetic to the unions' concerns. But the community organisations were generally unanimous that stayaways do not cause retrenchments, arguing that bosses take such decisions well in advance on grounds of profit, though they might use a stayaway as pretext to retrench. The community organisations felt that it was precisely in times of economic downturn

will decide'. GWU and FOSATU understood this to mean that PEBCO would go ahead regardless, but the community organisations say that the meaning was that PEBCO would decide what their course of action was to be if the trade unions would not participate in the proposed stayaway. Nevertheless, the unions felt this was another example of community organisations' dictatorial attitude towards workers and their organisations.

All unions claim that they consulted their membership factory by factory. CUSA's regional co-ordinator, David Mahambehlala, said that the decision not to support the stayaway was taken at shop steward level, after consultation with workers in the factories.

All FOSATU unions took the congress

decision for ratification to all factories. There was no dissension whatever, according to Mkalipi.

GWU held a special joint meeting of all its workers. The workers, said Ngumane, were not against the stayaway, but were worried about the support for it. GWU's mandate was to propose a boycott of shops in town to assess the depth of support for a stayaway first. Elizabeth Jamba of FCWU said that the union usually followed what the other trade unions do.

But the community organisations seriously doubt whether all workers were consulted. At best, they say, workers were given a line which they had to support. This was especially so where the FOSATU unions were concerned. The organisations claim that they 'went directly to the workers' and found tremendous support for a stayaway. They visited the factories and interviewed workers. Many workers, it was claimed, said that they did not discuss the stayaway with unions in their factories at all. Godolozzi of PEBCO reportedly commented, 'Most union membership supports the stayaway. The leaders are against the idea. This means they do not have a mandate from their members'.

When the unions came back to the joint meeting with the same mandate, the community organisations felt justified in disregarding it in favour of a 'direct response from workers'. This took the form of a mass meeting on Sunday 17 February at the Rio Cinema, where the stayaway call was endorsed by the 4 000 people present. The stayaway was then officially announced.

A stayaway committee was formed, to which the 'unity' unions were invited. They declined. To the unions, this was a slap in the face for workers' democracy. How, they asked, could the youth and the unemployed decide on a stay-at-home on behalf of those who are actually working? 'Can workers decide at a meeting that the students should come out on boycott?' asked Mkalipi.

At the 17 February rally there was a strong feeling that something had to be done in response to the worsening situation, according to a PEYCO member.

Unemployment was increasing, the price increases began to take effect, and students were out on boycott. The tension level in the townships was increasing. Only two people at the meeting opposed the idea of a stayaway. Ample time, it was claimed, was given

for the house to express its feelings. Individuals were allowed to come to the stage and speak. After reports of the previous meetings, 'the rally made the final decision' to go ahead with the stayaway without the 'unity' unions.

It was eventually decided at the meeting that there would be a Black Weekend on 16 and 17 March, and a stayaway on Monday 18 March. No-one was to drink alcohol during that time, and no-one was to venture into town. Buses were also to be boycotted because of fare increases.

A stayaway committee was formed out of all organisations supporting the stayaway, but in effect it was PEBCO which did the preparing and PEYCO which distributed pamphlets. The other organisations merely provided support by monitoring what was happening in the townships. According to the PEYCO member, 'the elderly people did not really attend the PEBCO rallies. They saw it as the "struggle of the children", as students were mainly responsible for confronting (the state)'.

In the month before the stayaway PEBCO held a series of meetings to explain practical aspects of the action. All medical personnel were exempted from the protest, and funeral services were not to be held over that weekend.

By the week before the stayaway, the level of tension in the townships had reached breaking point. Attacks on homes of community councillors and policemen increased and there were violent clashes between the youth and police. Buses could not enter the townships at all for fear of stoning. The scene was set for a highly successful stayaway.

On Wednesday 13 March the trade unions called for a meeting with PEBCO. AZAPO and AZASM, which have a very small following in Port Elizabeth and which opposed the stayaway, also attended. The unions wanted the stayaway to be called off. Their reasons:

* Demands. These were seen as unrealistic or, as one unionist put it, 'completely silly'. The central demands were to stop the GST increase and to reverse the petrol price increase. As Mkalipi put it, 'these are national problems. There is no way that we can localise it. It needs national mobilisation and politicisation, not just in Port Elizabeth. If you expect workers to go out on these issues, you are forcing them into a situation where

they won't be able to defend themselves'.

* **Discrimination.** In practise, the stayaway discriminated between workers, in that some, especially shop and hotel workers, would lose up to three days' pay, while others would lose only one day's pay.

* **Non-racialism.** All emphasis was on a stayaway by African workers: 'There was not a single statement or pamphlet referring to the northern (coloured) areas', said Mkalipi. It was felt this only encouraged employers in attempts to play one section of the working class off against another. Employers were known to hire coloured workers when African workers go on strike, and vice-versa. This undermined unions' determined efforts to build a united non-racial workers movement.

* **Unorganised workers.** There was nothing to secure the jobs of workers who were not unionised, and who faced dismissal if they participated in the stayaway. The unions were in no position to defend these workers, when they were stretched beyond capacity trying to defend their own members. High unemployment in the area meant that the unemployed could seek work at places where workers were fired as a result of the stayaway, causing confrontation between workers. Mkalipi claimed that 'Instead of creating unity, it will create disunity among the people'.

According to Mkalipi, PEBCO was unable to answer all these objections.

The unions offered to help PEBCO call off the stayaway, but this was refused. PEBCO felt that they had received assurances of support from workers and that only union officials opposed the stayaway.

The unions, AZAPO, AZASM and DWASA then issued a press statement disassociating themselves from the stayaway. The statement gave further reasons for opposition to the stayaway: that the workers did not support the call 'at this stage'; that the call did not express worker interests; that workers had not participated in the decision; and that the call was divisive. 'PEBCO will have to bear the consequences of a stayaway not supported by organised labour', it concluded.

During that week the Port Elizabeth Chamber of Commerce, the Afrikaanse Sakekamer, the mayors of Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage and the police issued statements urging workers to ignore the

stayaway.

A few hotels, businesses and factories reportedly gave African staff time off 'because they were terrified of possible reprisals'. GWU workers met, and decided that they would not go to work for fear of their 'lives and property'.

Mkalipi said that the unions told PEBCO that 'our members were not going to go to work, not because they supported the stayaway in principle, but because we knew that violence would be the order of the day. Our members wouldn't go to work because they were intimidated'.

By Friday it was clear that the stayaway was going to be a massive success in terms of numbers. A prominent unionist was heard to admit that perhaps they made a tactical error by not supporting the protest, even though in principle they felt that they were correct.

THE STAYAWAY

'PE FIRMS HIT BY STAYAWAY' was the Weekend Post headline on Saturday. PEBCO secretary Siphon Hashe, described it as a '100% success'. One bored store owner in Korsten, where shopping normally starts at 5 am, said it was 'like a morgue'. A spokesperson for the normally teeming Constantia Centre in North End said that 'for all the business being done here, the centre could have remained shut'. Hoteliers and other businessmen were reported to have been 'forced to roll up their sleeves today and climb into everyday tasks'. Hotels and service stations felt the effects most over the stayaway weekend.

A leading supermarket chain reported 'an extraordinarily high African trade on Friday. They stocked up for the weekend. We did our normal Saturday turnover on Friday'. Friday was like Christmas Eve, they said.

During the weekend a bogus pamphlet was issued in the name of PEBCO and PEWO calling on residents to go to work on Monday, as they stood to lose their jobs. Ngoyi and Fazzie said that 'the pamphlets were the work of people with sick minds who are worried about the tremendous response to the stayaway call'.

On Monday 'an eerie calm hung over the city centre ... with the streets

virtually deserted and most of the businesses half-manned'. But the two major Port Elizabeth companies, Ford and Volkswagen, were not affected as they were working a four-day week and were closed on Mondays.

Godolozzi was reported as saying he was 'happy with the united action shown by the residents and that the stayaway had clearly been a success'. On the day of the stayaway all businesses in the townships were closed, schools stood empty and youths roamed the streets. Adults preferred to stay indoors.

Incidents of violence during the stayaway were reportedly sporadic. Police claimed that 'the homes of 11 policemen, 14 other homes, a beerhall, three Development Board buildings and four shops had been destroyed by rioters'. According to Ngoyi, 'there were no incidents (of violence) caused by the people. There was intimidation by the police... when they saw a group of people in the location, they used tear-gas. Their excuse was that stones were thrown at them'. The homes of two executive members of PEBCO, Godolozzi and Ernest Malgas, were unsuccessfully petrol-bombed a day after the stayaway.

RESPONSES TO THE STAYAWAY

To PEBCO, the stayaway was an unqualified success. PEYCO president Mkhuzeli Jack said that the main effects of the stayaway were to 'mobilise and politicise the people, to strengthen and popularise the community organisations, to show our power in that we can hit at the white business man if we like at any time. Our effectiveness was clearly demonstrated to anyone who doubted the community-based organisations'.

In the view of MACWUSA's Kobese, the stayaway was 'an action to show protest against oppression'. One could not materially calculate its effects. It was a form of pressure which served to draw attention to certain demands.

None of the demands were met. In fact, the petrol price rose again a few days after the stayaway.

The response of big capital was one of caution. Rod Ironside, immediate past president of the Eastern Cape Chamber of Industries and a retired deputy manager of General Motors, said that PEBCO gave 'due warning to business', and must have

had 'strong support'. He added that the demands were not 'job-related - it was a political issue', and as such he doubted whether it achieved anything.

There was a danger, he said, of the community tending 'to lump government and business together'. The trade unions did not support the stayaway because they recognised that the motive was not work-related, and that 'allying themselves to it would in the long term be detrimental' to relations with management.

Ironside warned that continuous disturbances and instability could lead to increased capital intensity and high technology, such as computerisation, in the motor industry. He conceded though that this was a last-resort option for capital, as 'social costs will rise at a furious rate' with astronomical increases in unemployment.

Graham Hardy, communications manager of Volkswagen, preferred not to comment on the 'delicate situation'. But local capital was rather more forthright in threatening dismissals. Tony Gilson, director of the Chamber of Commerce, said, 'Many employers are keeping employment levels artificially high because of feelings of social responsibility. However, this weekend might have hardened their attitudes'.

Jan Steyn, local manager of Crosswindows, had retrenched nine staff members, and said his firm was considering closing the Port Elizabeth branch because of 'labour unrest in the area'. The general manager of the Elizabeth Sun said that if there was another stayaway, he would change the staff system to 'avoid ever taking back any of the black staff'. The managing director of United Dairies warned that his company would take a closer look at automation if another stayaway was planned.

Sipho Hashe of PEBCO believed that another stayaway would be organised, if there was a need for it, and if the people called for it. He reportedly said that retrenchments, or employing coloureds instead of Africans because of the stayaway, would not help the situation.

According to Mkalipi, 'On Tuesday after the stayaway there was a statement in the Evening Post by black capital - people owning businesses in the townships - that they benefited from the stayaway, and that they would support another'.

The unions saw the stayaway as a numerical success only, with most workers staying away out of fear. Mkalipi said, 'If you go out to any factory and ask any worker, why did you support the stayaway?, the answer you'll get is "I'm afraid of onyana (the youngsters)". You won't get a single answer of "I didn't go to work because I supported the stayaway in principle". Or the worker will ask, "Do you want my house to be burnt?"'

GWU's Ngumane said that the fact buses could not enter the townships helped. 'If buses were able to go into the townships I'm sure many workers would have gone to work'. The unions add that, because of the threat of violence, they advised their members not to go to work.

Who benefited from the stayaway, the unions ask. Big capital in the form of supermarkets like OK, Checkers and Pick 'n Pay 'never, never had such a good Friday in one year'. And black-owned shops in the townships sold out their stock over the weekend.

And, Mkalipi asked, 'Why was it possible that the taximen could operate on that Black Weekend? They are also working. Why were the shops allowed to open? Why were the shebeens allowed to open? But this was not strange to us as workers. We know that some of the PEBCO members have interests in taxis and shebeens'.

PEBCO and the community organisations benefited, unions say, in terms of credibility and publicity. 'But workers lost wages. Therefore to workers the stayaway was not a success,' said Mkalipi.

THE UITENHAGE CONTROVERSY

Workers in Uitenhage were not organised to support the Black Weekend and stayaway in Port Elizabeth. However, Uitenhage workers - mostly African but including a large number of coloured workers - stayed at home from Thursday 21 March (the day of the Uitenhage massacre) to Sunday 24 March. This was a response to the banning of 'political' funerals over weekends, which forced workers to bury their dead during the week.

A controversy arose over FOSATU's alleged involvement in the banning of

the funeral on Thursday 21, and its alleged failure to inform the community of the banning.

From 16 March to Thursday 21:

* Seven Uitenhage unrest victims have to be buried. As funerals are banned over weekends, various organisations decide that funerals should take place on Thursday 21 and Friday 22.

* On Monday FOSATU shop stewards from NUTW, NAAWU, TGWU, SFAWU, and MAWU approach employers in Uitenhage to demand that management pressurise the authorities to withdraw the banning of all 'political' funerals.

* On Tuesday 19 March a meeting of several thousand people is held in a large church in Kwanobuhle to assess support for the stayaway. Organisations represented are the Uitenhage Black Civic Organisation, the Uitenhage Parents Association, the Uitenhage Youth Congress, the Uitenhage Health, Safety and Cultural Society, MACWUSA/GWUSA, the Uitenhage Women's Organisation, COSAS and the Kwanobuhle Rugby Union.

* On Wednesday 20 March the local magistrate bans the funeral for the weekday, and unbans weekend funerals. A late evening meeting is held in Langa at the Old Apostolic Church to finalise arrangements for the funerals. A vigil is held afterwards.

* On their way to the funeral in Kwanobuhle on Thursday, Langa residents are shot by police.

The account of events a few days before the Uitenhage massacre given by MACWUSA's Kobese directly contradicts that of FOSATU, as related by Eastern Cape regional secretary, Makaya Sam.

According to Kobese, 'certain people (at the meeting on Wednesday) said they heard FOSATU shop stewards saying that the funeral was banned and that they should go to work and not respond to the stayaway. (The victims) would be buried on Sunday, because production would be affected and FOSATU is concerned about that. FOSATU members were the (main) participants (at the meeting) but nobody was aware of any banning order until the police came.

'Later it was discovered that FOSATU spoke to management and management spoke to the magistrate, (who) banned the funeral and allowed it for the Sunday... I don't know why FOSATU, on being informed punctually, did not approach the (community-based) organisations on Wednesday afternoon, or did not go to the mass meeting (to inform the

people)... Nobody heard anything from these organisations'.

It was felt that the massacre would not have occurred if FOSATU had informed the people about the banning. But FOSATU is adamant that the people were informed.

Sam said that the initial demand of workers who approached management was that they not be expected at work on Thursday because they wanted to attend the funeral. Their demands did not in

and that he would go to the funeral by force if necessary.

To Sam, therefore, Kobese was 'lying' when he denied knowledge of the banning before the massacre. When the UDF regional and national officials were approached to clarify its position, Sam said, it 'disassociated itself' from Kobese's actions.

On Thursday the following week more than 8 000 workers in FOSATU factories stopped work for about 15 minutes in



Mourners at a mass Port Elizabeth funeral

any way suggest the banning of the Thursday funeral, but concerned the unbanning of all 'political' funerals on weekends.

On Wednesday management informed the unions about the banning of the Thursday funeral. Sam said that he and John Gomomo, NAAWU vice-president, told MACWUSA official Mncedisi Sitoto about the banning at 5 o'clock on the Wednesday afternoon.

'After that Sitoto attended the service at Langa, where he informed the people' of the banning. Most of the community was at the service, said Sam, and after Sitoto had spoken, Kobese stood up and said that he would not accept what the authorities had to say,

memory of people killed in Langa.

On 17 April, NAAWU held a meeting of its members at the Jubilee Park Hall in Uitenhage to 'clarify our position on the massacre', Sam said. The meeting was to discuss the current situation in the townships, the efforts to consult other organisations in the area, and attempts to help the families of massacre victims.

Reports of the NAAWU meeting by Jon Qwelane in *The Star* of 18 and 20 April highlight 'serious charges (levelled)... against the UDF... and COSAS' by FOSATU. Sam denies the reports. He said that during discussion, members from the floor attacked particular individuals like MACWUSA's Kobese, Sitoto and

Miuleki Mali, for their destructive role, but that organisations of the people were not attacked at all.

Sam said he 'did not expect the press to be sympathetic', that 'most reporters give certain organisations coverage and others not', and that it seemed Qwelane was trying to create the impression that AZAPO and FOSATU were aligned, when this was not the case.

On Tuesday 22 May, FOSATU met with UDF affiliates in Uitenhage to try to improve relations. Organisations represented were the Uitenhage branches of COSAS, AZASO, MACWUSA, the Uitenhage Youth Congress, the Uitenhage Women's Organisation and a church ministers' organisation.

The meeting, said Sam, went well, and FOSATU reiterated its preparedness to 'co-operate with any organisation on issues of interest to our members'. It was decided to stop public attacks on organisations, and to prevent physical attacks between members of different organisations.

In Grahamstown on 19 May, a show of unity was made at the funeral of a victim of police violence. Les Kettlebas, NAAWU Eastern Cape regional secretary, addressed the 4 000-strong crowd, alongside speakers from a wide spectrum of organisations including SAAWU and COSAS.

ROOTS OF CONFLICT

Economic hardship and political oppression experienced by the working class in the Eastern Cape is exceptionally severe. It is not surprising that rural disturbance and school boycotts beginning in Cradock rapidly spread to many areas of the region in 1984.

By the beginning of 1985, with further retrenchments and announcement of more price increases, the anger of the youth boiled over, and the demand for mass action was made through the political/community organisations.

Conditions for action were ideal. There was a high level of anger in the townships, and a relatively homogenous African population, with one language predominant. There were strong political organisations, and powerful trade unions which were building an effective unity between African and coloured workers.

And there was a very militant youth and working class waiting for direction and leadership.

The leadership, however, was divided. Historical and national tensions between community-based organisations and trade unions prevented a united response.

Such tensions have strained the relationship between unions participating in the present unity talks and UDF organisations all over the country since the latter's formation in 1983.

Unions are labelled 'economistic' and reformist because of the 'lip-service' they pay to political issues outside the factory gates. Community organisations are labelled 'populist', reflecting a perceived desire to appease the middle-class, and are accused of being responsible only to an activist clique and unaccountable to workers.

These differences and tensions have affected all the major centres of South Africa. While in places like Johannesburg, East London and even Uitenhage, a rapprochement seems to be taking place, in Port Elizabeth the conflict has deepened. The stayaway and events preceding it have crystallised the issues at stake, resulting in an intensification of hostility and antagonism.

The frustrated and impatient youth, ready for militant action, was unable to appreciate the caution of workers in a climate of recession and increasing unemployment. Community organisations, hamstrung by police repression and the banning of meetings, have been unable to provide effective leadership up to now.

Workers had to be convinced of the effectiveness of a particular course of action, especially where it involved high costs. The 'community' leadership failed to guide the youth on this, with the result that a stayaway call was made without proper consultation with worker leaders in the unions, and with unrealistic demands.

Union leaders, on the other hand, were unable to appreciate the potential for a powerful united front to develop between the youth and organised workers. The youth had energy, courage and militancy. Workers had organisation, consistency and access to the means of production. By dwelling on the shortcomings of the call for a stayaway without posing alternatives, union officials and shop stewards missed an opportunity to take the struggle further.

The youth, frustrated by the lack of co-operation from organised workers, resorted in some instances to terror tactics to achieve results. The 'fear' element in the 'success' of the stayaway therefore cannot be discounted. This, coupled with the absence of buses in the township over the weekend, and the fact that the unions in some cases advised membership to stay at home for fear of intimidation, to some extent minimises the '99% success' of the stayaway.

However, the fact that 99% of the community did stay at home, with few reports of actual intimidation, and no organised attempt by workers to get to work, does indicate a significant level of support, both for the action and for the community organisations.

Unions in the area face a number of critical questions. Given their opposition to the stayaway tactic, what alternatives do they propose to fight the economic hardships of the workers and their community?

Do they believe that they can fight as unions and as political organisations, thus playing the role of a political party with no need to actively encourage

co-operation with community organisations?

If not, should they not encourage workers to enter and participate in political/community organisations in an organised way, to help build and give them direction and content?

Youth and community groups, however militant and angry, have likewise to ask themselves whether they can fight without the support of organised workers. If not, are bully-boy tactics likely to be more effective than patient persuasion, with understanding of workers' fears and hesitations?

Workers trust their union leaders. Nothing is likely to be achieved by attacking these leaders publicly or by organising alternative unions.

Finally, the usefulness of the stayaway as a tactic in this instance, and the nature of the demands put forward, need to be critically evaluated.

Meanwhile, in Port Elizabeth hostility is still strong between the unions and community organisations, although there are signs that elements in both camps are beginning to soften their attitudes.

VUKANI MAKHOSIKAZI

South African Women Speak

A book which reflects the lives of African working class women under apartheid. The book talks for and about women in their struggle to make ends meet in the face of rising rents and high costs. It tells of their fight for adequate housing, child care facilities, through church groups and township women's organisations. These women fight for a society free from class exploitation and racial and sexual oppression.

Vukani Makhosikazi was written by a Johannesburg-based women's collective. It is the product of many interviews with women keen to tell the stories of their lives. The participants in the collective are Jane Barrett, Aneene Dawber, Barbara Klugman, Ingrid Obery, Jennifer Shindler and Joanne Yawitch.

VUKANI MAKHOSIKAZI is available from your local bookshop, or write to:
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Anti-Apartheid Movement

Developments in Britain

The British Anti-Apartheid Movement has recently closed down its left-wing City Group. Despite these internal conflicts, and although the AAM has not seen the overthrow of apartheid, it has had its successes. A London correspondent reports.

Only a few years ago, both left and right in Britain agreed on at least one thing: that the South African apartheid regime would inevitably be overthrown. The timing was the only point at issue. Today the right, including Thatcher's government, believes that apartheid may well be in the process of being acceptably 'overthrown' (or at least dismantled, in whole or in part) while the regime that spawned it changes form to remain in power.

Not only must the British Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) campaign against policies based on this interpretation, but it faces intensified debate within its ranks as changing times demand new campaigns and tactics.

CITY GROUP CONFLICT

The AAM's use of direct action was at issue last year in the most severe internal conflict it has faced to date. Direct action involves high profile tactics such as the demonstrations against PW Botha's visit last June, and is used mainly for publicity purposes.

AAM spokespeople stress that they do not see such direct action as an end in itself. AAM secretary Cate Clark explains: 'We'd welcome more activity of all kinds, obviously. We find direct action useful as a publicity tactic, but we're careful not to over-use certain tactics which then become stale and lose publicity value'.

This stand, together with friction over recruitment, led to conflict with the AAM's most vocal and radical local group, the City of London AAM, also known as City Group.

City Group, which is dominated by the far-left Revolutionary Communist Group (RCG), defied the AAM ruling that members of a given group should be recruited only from the area it is based in, and 'poached' members from all over Greater London, and even further abroad.

It is difficult to ascertain precisely the composition of City Group or the RCG, since both refuse to answer such questions. Nor will they supply information as to their numbers. The RCG is a young, small, ultra-left grouping with a hard anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, anti-racist line. It advocates a strict class analysis of struggles throughout the world, South Africa included.

One source described City Group as consisting of the Kitson family and a core of Trotskyite elements of the British left. A number of critical observers consider City Group to be merely a front for the RCG, as it attempts - on the back of the AAM - to increase its influence and purchase on the left of British politics.

The group's main platform is opposition to the AAM's position as a single-issue movement mobilising on a broad front. The City Group believes the AAM should adopt a more confrontationalist approach, making common cause with other disaffected left-wing British groups.

It accuses the AAM of having 'gone soft', of being dominated by 'bourgeois liberals', and advocates more militant direct action rather than behind-the-scenes lobbying within the establishment.

Widespread opinion in the AAM is that City Group's approach would narrow the base of the AAM, making it indistinguishable from other left splinter-groups.

Differences built up over the last two or three years. City Group's picketing campaign in front of the South African embassy (also outside its designated area) increased strains.

The AAM felt that City Group's picket campaign would detract from a national campaign against the execution of three ANC guerillas, and asked the group to cancel it. City Group refused.

The group's picketing included the much-publicised campaign to improve conditions of political prisoner David Kitson. It was spearheaded by his wife Norma and children Amandla and Steven, who are high-profile City Group members.

(Since his release, Kitson has become caught up in the conflict. His initial involvement with City Group was by default - the group had campaigned for his release, and his family were members. The ANC warned Kitson several times about his association with City Group. He subsequently appeared on a number of City Group platforms. The ANC then suspended his membership).

Conflict climaxed at the AAM's annual general meeting last year. City Group tried to pack the meeting in an effort to get its 12 candidates onto the executive committee.

Violent and disruptive tactics were used, which alienated the majority at the meeting. City Group's motion of censure criticising the conduct of the national AAM was decisively defeated.

An AAM executive committee meeting in February this year considered the position of City Group and recommended that it be closed down. This means that the group would continue to operate without official sanction from the AAM, and marks the first time the movement has taken such disciplinary action. It sparked little or no dissent, reflecting the group's meagre support in the wider movement.

However, City Group has some support from left-wing Labour MP's, twelve of whom signed a petition against City Group's suspension from the AAM.

Its suspension, and its stridently overbearing attitude, isolated it from the rest of the national movement - and from the ANC and SWAPO.

Before the crucial annual general meeting the ANC issued a statement expressing full support for the AAM's national leadership.

This bolstered the national movement, though some AAM members felt the ANC should not have become openly involved

in the affair, as it called into question the AAM's status as an independent organisation.

Meanwhile, the AAM continues to see itself as a single-issue movement, organising and mobilising exclusively around the fight against apartheid. Whatever other interests its members represent are incidental to the purposes of the movement and it will not undertake campaigns around them.

But it will mount joint campaigns with other organisations where there is a common interest, for example with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament against importation of Namibian or South African uranium.

CURRENT CAMPAIGNS

The South African government's 'reform programme' - and the generally positive acceptance of this by Western governments - has triggered a renewed information campaign.

The message that apartheid is still the same old wine despite being poured into new bottles, thereby acquiring some subtler characteristics, needs to be restated frequently in a climate where even the smallest move by the Botha government is hailed as a breakthrough.

Ironically though, Botha's visit here last June - on the face of it a defeat for the AAM - gave it a shot in the arm by providing a very high-profile cause to rally around. AAM membership increased by one third, and local branches were set up all over the country.

Further, the movement finally received official recognition of its representivity, when leaders Archbishop Trevor Huddleston and Abdul Minty were granted an audience at 10 Downing Street. This was the first time the AAM was allowed to state its case directly to the British prime minister.

The Vaal unrest, the Eastern Cape shootings and the recent Cabinda escapade in the wake of South Africa's alleged troop withdrawal from Angola - all highly publicised - have also diminished the base of South African government apologists and bolstered the AAM's position and support.

This year was planned as one of intense activity by the AAM, beginning in February with the 'Month of the

Boycott' - its biggest campaign of this kind to date.

It has also launched an inter-faith committee against apartheid, with members from every religious denomination. It has embarked on a nationwide door-to-door pamphlet campaign to persuade people to stop buying South African goods. It held a day of action protesting against companies that break the oil embargo, and picketed companies selling South African textiles and clothing.

Some time ago the AAM began mobilising on local government level. About 120 local authorities in the UK, mainly Labour controlled, have formed themselves into Local Authorities Against Apartheid. This has a comprehensive anti-apartheid policy which ranges from members divesting their investments in companies with SA links, to boycotting South African goods and denying facilities to entertainers and sportsmen who have been to South Africa.

THE MOVEMENT'S STRUCTURE

The AAM has always organised on a number of levels. Its smallest units are local action groups or committees across the country which undertake local action and recruit in their areas. Last year, the AAM set up trade union, women's and health committees to mobilise opposition to apartheid in their specific areas.

Then there are regional committees for Scotland and Wales, which co-ordinate action by AAM branches in their areas, but have no policy-making function.

Policy for the UK is determined by the umbrella AAM National Committee. This consists of the president, vice-presidents and sponsors, 30 elected members, and representatives nominated by 25 affiliated organisations.

National Committee decisions are implemented by the National Executive Committee, whose officials are responsible for the AAM's day-to-day functioning and communications. The NEC is elected by the AAM's annual general meeting.

In addition to individual membership, which stands at about 4 500, there are over 500 organisations affiliated to the AAM. They include churches, trade unions, local authorities, student groups and political party branches.

On a national level the AAM liaises with a wide range of national and international movements, including national governments.

As a result, a good deal of its work is low-profile and painstakingly diplomatic.

ROOTS OF AAM

The AAM began with the South Africa Boycott Committee, formed in 1959 in response to an ANC call for an international solidarity boycott of South African goods.

The founding meeting was called by the Committee of African Organisations, representing student and liberation organisations throughout Africa. Speakers at the first meeting were Huddleston and Tanzania's Julius Nyerere.

Soon afterwards, the Liberal and Labour Parties, individual Conservative politicians, trade unions, student groups and churches became actively involved.

Working within a broad front became an essential characteristic of the AAM. Its main aims were opposition to apartheid, support for the struggle for black rights in South Africa, and independence for Namibia. It has a long history of co-operation with, and support for, the ANC and SWAPO.

However, as the AAM defines itself as a British pressure group, there is no direct policy input from the ANC and SWAPO. Both organisations regard the AAM as a vital support organisation in the UK and also in international forums like the United Nations and the EEC.

The ANC and SWAPO collaborate closely on AAM campaigns, and the AAM sounds out their views on specific issues, while conversely avoiding comment on their internal policies.

The idea of a nation-wide organisation mobilising against the apartheid system as a whole, rather than simply against South African exports, was in the air even when the Boycott Committee was formed. The 1960 Sharpeville massacre and the subsequent declaration of the state of emergency provided the final impetus needed for the formation of the AAM.

From the beginning, the AAM sought to

mobilise all sections of the British public against apartheid. It saw itself as a front cutting across class and other socio-political lines. This diversity is still reflected in its membership today.

Although it has inspired anti-apartheid movements in most European countries, the British AAM is still considered the premier anti-apartheid organisation. Mainly because of its long experience, it has attained the status of an international body, in touch with a considerable array of British and international organisations.

Huddleston frequently laments the fact that the AAM has not been able to convince Western governments to take firm positive action on South Africa.

Despite this, the AAM has played a significant part in keeping the anti-apartheid campaign in the forefront of world attention. Since the days of the sports boycotts, apartheid has become and remained a household word for unjust discrimination. Though the AAM has not achieved its main aim of playing midwife to its overthrow, it has had its successes.

THE PAPER FOR THE INDECISIVE

There's been a spate of newspapers lately for 'the nation's decision makers'. Now there's a paper for the rest of us ... for the indecisive minority.

The paper's called the Weekly Mail. It's aimed at those of us who can't make up our minds what to believe in the newspapers; who fret incessantly about A-bombs and

asbestos and racism and poverty and unemployment, who can't tell the difference between JR in Dallas and RR in Washington.

Enter the Weekly Mail. The paper for the bewildered minority. On the menu: news of an uncertain world, sometimes a little short on heroes and noble causes. The news other papers prefer to ignore ... or merely skim past. Labour, township unrest, removals, education, economics, politics, law, Southern Africa, Third World.

And for dessert: A comprehensive listings guide to art, entertainment and events on the Reef (what to see, what to avoid). Plus Doonesbury, a cryptic crossword, and a bridge column.

The Weekly Mail will be published every Friday from June 14 onwards. It is owned and edited by retrenched former Rand Daily Mail and Sunday Express journalists. Subscribers are invited to join a Weekly Mail Society, and to elect a committee to liaise with the editors.

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Local Response to Disinvestment

No Simple Equation

The disinvestment issue, clearcut overseas, demands some subtlety of analysis at home. Distinctions between divestment and disinvestment, and evaluation of consequences, are among the questions South Africans have to consider.

The further one is from South Africa, the simpler the disinvestment issue is.

For disinvestment campaigners in the United States, the approximately 300 corporate investors in South Africa are collaborating in an immoral regime, as are institutions which finance government and private activities, purvey Krugerrands or trade with South Africa.

Closer to home, distinctions have to be made, for example between moral and organisational imperatives and between the usefulness of the threat, and the consequences of its execution.

South African trade unions might be expected to have ambivalent feelings about disinvestment. Most support the objectives of the disinvestment campaign, but some believe that probable increased unemployment is hardly in the interests of their membership. The SA Boilermakers Society is one exponent of this view.

But Alec Erwin of the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) outlines a different and more complex policy. FOSATU supports maximum pressure on the South African state. The disinvestment campaign is part of that pressure, and FOSATU would not be party to any attempts to water it down.

But the other pole of FOSATU's position is opposition to any withdrawal of assets from South Africa, 'because we view them not as the simple property of foreign companies, but as assets which have been built up through the sweat and labour of South African workers, and which now absolutely belong to this society'.

Erwin points to a distinction made by US campaigners, between divestiture, which aims to pressure foreign investors in South Africa by refusing to buy their

shares, and disinvestment, meaning withdrawal of existing assets from the country to the detriment of its workers (though the term is often used to refer to the campaign as a whole).

'We support the former and oppose the latter', explains Erwin. 'Pressure for divestment is constructive to internal organisation, while disinvestment would withdraw assets our members have built up. We see absolutely no sense in handing over part of the social wealth of this country in order to place pressure on the regime'.

Dimensions of disinvestment pressure include direct pressure on the state by cutting off foreign borrowing facilities, or indirect pressure on the powerful multinational lobby.

But maintaining and expanding successful internal worker organisation dictates other priorities and options.

'For example, we don't want to get involved with the issue of codes of conduct, which has emerged from that campaign. The codes are too crude for our needs now. Once they assisted unions, constituting a form of general political pressure even though their designers might have had a different purpose in mind. The codes now defuse and divide the growing disinvestment pressure. The logic is that if code guidelines are adhered to, their role is constructive, and therefore constructive engagement works'.

For pressure on multinationals FOSATU looks rather to international worker solidarity. They link directly with unions and federations overseas to put sharply defined pressure on investors to gain specific union objectives.

For unions inside South Africa the background of an effective disinvestment campaign is useful in generating 'a

general environment conducive to better worker-to-worker and union-to-union contact' with overseas counterparts. This in turn allows workers to play an active and involved role in the overseas campaign.

Erwin makes the point that to counterpose investment and disinvestment as though they are the only options South African organisations have to consider is simplistic and misleading.

The Schlemmer survey, often cited by opponents of the campaign as proving black opposition to disinvestment, 'basically posed a question of whether workers would be prepared to lose their jobs as a sign of support for disinvestment. Even such a deliberate simplification did not elicit total rejection for disinvestment, although workers were quite justified in being opposed to disinvestment if the problem was posed in this misleading way'.

In fact, FOSATU regards worsening unemployment as a consequence primarily of South African government policies. These are far more destructive than the prospects of investment lost as a result of the campaign. Erwin points out that

foreign companies in South Africa commonly increase their investment through retained profits, rather than bringing in new capital.

New capital inflow makes up a small proportion - about 4% - of total investment capital in a given year. Also, US corporations employ only 1-3% of the South African labour force. 'So foreign investment, or the loss of it, does not have nearly the same effect as government free-market monetarist policies, which are designed to increase unemployment', Erwin says.

FOSATU's membership has no sophisticated set of prescriptions for a policy package to replace the free-market monetarist system with one more in workers' interests.

'But', adds Erwin, 'certainly government expenditure to create employment would be in our interest. And if the state could be made to stop some of its more extravagant expenditures - such as that on security and homelands - it would be more able to keep the tax burden static, leaving employers with more cash for expansion'.

What are the possible consequences of

In Search of Sanctions

There are more than 20 anti-apartheid bills before the present US Congress. Below are a few of the more significant or indicative bills. The Anti-Apartheid Act of 1985, proposed by Gray in the House of Representatives and by Kennedy, Proxmire and Weiker in the Senate, was passed in the Democratic-dominated House, but is unlikely to do so unchanged in the Senate, with its Republican majority. Ultimately a combination of this Bill and the Republican proposals of Senator Lugar (the influential head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee) is likely to be adopted by both Houses, if a compromise is hammered out in the various committees that will consider the legislation.

SPONSORS

PROVISIONS

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>House: Gray(D) and 145 co-sponsors.</p> <p>Senate:
Kennedy (D)
Weiker (D)
Proxmire (D)</p> <p>Senate:
Lugar (R)
Dole (R)
Mathias (R)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Ban on sales of computers and software to the SA government (total computer sales to South Africa rose 350% between 1978 and 1984 to nearly \$185 million and with aircraft is the leading US export item to SA) * Bars new loans to SA government and parastatals * Bars new investment in SA * Bars import of Krugerrands to the US (the last two provisions may be waived if at least one of the following conditions is met: Elimination of influx control, group areas and separate citizenships for blacks, negotiations with representative black leaders, release of all political prisoners or an internationally recognised Namibian settlement). * Increased aid for economic and social betterment of blacks * US government export financing to aim at creation and expansion of SA black business * Economic sanctions policy (along the lines proposed by Gray |
|---|---|

the disinvestment campaign?

It is unlikely to affect seriously blue-chip multinationals like IBM, 3M, Ford and General Motors. High-earning shares are unlikely to suffer from a lack of demand, despite the size and growing numbers of funds committed to divestiture.

Certainly the 'hassle factor' now attached to investing in South Africa may deter other conglomerates from undertaking new investment. But the combination of economic problems and perceived social instability here are rather more potent discouragements. The campaign in the US has of course had very direct results on the political scene there. Rebellion in the Republican Party produced the McConnell Bill (see box), and the Lugar Bill amendment proposing immediate sanctions in the teeth of administration policy. This indicates the increasing pressure on the Reagan administration to put more teeth into its relationship with South Africa.

The discovery of South African troops in Cabinda after their alleged total withdrawal, evidently on the point of sabotaging an American oil subsidiary,

has made this more likely. Also, the architect of constructive engagement, Secretary of State for Africa Chester Crocker, is said to be likely to lose his position. This further erodes South African defenses in Washington.

However the welter of proposed legislation in Congress works itself out, it seems certain that some form of compromise legislation will go through this year. Last year, proposed legislation banning sale of Krugerrands and SAA landing rights in the US was successfully depicted by opponents as being on the left-wing lunatic fringe. In the present sitting it is regarded as an average middle-of-the-road proposal.

The rising tide of public and congressional pressure will make it more difficult for the president to veto whatever emerges.

What possible effects would some of the present 'disengagement' proposals have?

Computer sales are the largest item of US export to South Africa, followed by aircraft. South African buyers, particularly in government and parastatals, are already looking towards

et al) to be adopted if within 18 months no significant progress toward ending apartheid has been made

- * US president should report on extent of such progress and suggest which sanctions should be imposed.

Congressional anger at the Cabinda debacle resulted in the Bill being amended in Lugar's Senate Foreign Relations Committee to include the following immediate steps:

- * A ban on US bank loans to the SA government, except for education, housing and health facilities available to all
- * Ban on all computer exports to SA security forces or agencies implementing apartheid
- * Ban on nuclear trade and co-operation between the US and SA
- * Mandatory compliance with the Sullivan Code by all US firms in SA
- * Total corporate disinvestment
- * Embargo on all trade with SA except in food, medicine and humanitarian goods
- * No landing rights for SA aircraft
- * No tax credits and deductions to US firms for tax paid in SA
- * No new bank loans
- * No Krugerrand sales

House:
Dellums (D)
and 14 co-sponsors

House:
Fauntroy (D)

- * Same sanctions as Kennedy/Gray et al
- * Ban on import of SA coal and uranium
- * Ban of export to SA of nuclear items and any goods or technology for SA government use
- * Additional sanctions if after 18 months 'substantial progress towards establishing majority rule' has not been made
- * Total disinvestment if no substantial progress after three years
- * Undertakes sanctions against foreign companies which replace US companies in SA

Japanese and Western European suppliers, since a ban would cut off supply of spare parts. The local computer industry would also benefit.

Successful disengagement would also cut off access to the high-technology fruits of US research and development. So a turn toward Japanese and West German technology seems likely; while sanctions are coming up for discussion in the European Economic Community (EEC), consensus there, let alone resolution on the issue, is a long way away.

Government and parastatal access to foreign finance is one of the genuinely vulnerable points. It is likely that they will have to pay more for finance, and will pass this on either in increased charges, or raised tax, or both.

The most far-reaching effect of substantial disengagement between SA and the US will probably be felt in the arena of trade.

The South African government has committed itself to a policy of stimulating exports of manufactured goods. Although in terms of numbers of workers employed, the manufacturing sector outdistanced the mining sector during the 1960s, primary produce still makes up most of South Africa's exports, with gold alone accounting for 40% of

the value of exports.

The policy objective is that South Africa should change from being a primary product exporter, with the vulnerability to world market shifts that implies, to become an aggressive competitor in manufactured goods.

At present there are less than a thousand substantial South African exporters. Producers have been reluctant to enter the riskier export game while import substitution and protectionist policies gave them unchallenged access to the domestic market.

The way out of South Africa's present economic malaise towards economic growth is perceived to be a matter of following the example of Pacific Basin countries like Japan, South Korea and Taiwan: breaking into world markets for manufactured goods.

Losing access to the US market, and to US technology, would be a considerable obstacle to fulfilment of this vision. The disengagement objective pursued by opponents of the US administration would at least in part result in such a loss. But meanwhile, South Africa's very own domestic economic mismanagement and its fruits give it a foretaste of what overseas campaigns have not yet achieved.

House:
Berman (D)
and 28 co-
sponsors

- * Restores controls on exports to SA police and military
- * Bans sales of items on the State Department munitions list
- * Bans computer and software sales

Senate:
McConnell (R)
Roth (R)

- * Ban on US bank loans to SA government or parastatals
- * President should enlist the seven-nation summit group to increase pressure on Pretoria
- * Cancellation of SAA landing rights in the US (Pan American World Airways has closed its service. This would sever air traffic links)
- * Closure of at least one SA consulate in the US
- * End US government aid to US firms in SA that do not adhere to the Sullivan Code
- * Ban on sales of nuclear equipment or technology until SA signs the nuclear non-proliferation treaty
- * Black education aid to be raised to \$40-m

(R) = Republican Party
(D) = Democratic Party

Trade Union Talks

Long Road to Unity

The path to trade union unity is a difficult one. INGRID OBERY considers the range of obstacles and disputes which face those involved, and those who wish to be involved, in the formation of a united federation of unions.

SACTU - the South African Congress of Trade Unions - was never banned. But persistent state harassment in the early 1960s forced the union wing of the Congress Alliance underground, and into exile.

Subsequent sporadic attempts to revive SACTU internally resulted in detention and banning of those involved, and trade union and political activists supportive of SACTU faced trial on a number of occasions.

During March 1985, press reports quoted union sources saying that SACTU was about to be revived in South Africa as a fully operational trade union federation. Unions allegedly supportive of this move were named as the South African Allied Workers Union (SAAWU); the General and Allied Workers Union (GAWU), the Western Cape branch of the Media Workers Association of South Africa, and the Clothing Workers Union (CLOWU).

Rumours of revival were fuelled by the announcement of a number of SACTU commemoration meetings. The press reported that a call to revive SACTU was made at a well-attended meeting in Tembisa on 9 March.

Oscar Mpetha, veteran trade unionist in the Western Cape and a past president of the United Democratic Front, reportedly confirmed the intention to revive SACTU as a federation of unions. Subsequently he denied this, claiming that he had been misquoted in the press. Transvaal unions involved in organising the local SACTU commemoration included SAAWU, GAWU, the SA Scooter Drivers Union (SASDU), the SA Domestic Workers Association (SADWA), and the Motor Assemblers and Component Workers Union (MACWUSA). They confirm that there are no current moves to revive SACTU

internally in opposition to the planned new union federation.

Sources in Cape Town, where a SACTU revival appears to have been discussed among groupings peripheral to the union movement, view the revival announcement as a mistake, made without union sanction.

Zubeida Jaffer of CLOWU in the Western Cape said that the work carried out by SACTU in the 1950s laid the basis for the trade union movement in South Africa today. 'SACTU sowed the seeds of the union movement in South Africa. It may have gone to sleep for a few years, but it is still alive. It is waking up again'. She denied however that there had been any intention to revive the federation internally.

'The fact that we commemorated the 30th anniversary of SACTU should not be misconstrued. It is not true that we intended to revive SACTU at the 9 March rally', explained GAWU general secretary Sydney Mafumadi.

Ephraim Butshingi, SAAWU's Transvaal branch secretary, said that the rally aimed to educate workers about the history of SACTU, and to unite them against state repression of trade unions.

Mafumadi claimed that many unions find themselves in a similar situation to that of SACTU in the 1950s and 1960s. 'They were phased out of above-board existence. Today it is the same. Examples are the banning of SAAWU in the Ciskei, and the fact that many unions are not allowed to operate in Bophutatswana. Tight security in the bantustans means that it is difficult to organise workers there. But we are still trying. So in a sense we are also operating underground in the bantustans'.

He said that the problem with a SACTU revival was that it implied the creation of a federation apart from the one envisaged by the present unity talks.

'SACTU is a crucial part of the history of the labour movement in South Africa and its problems should be a lesson to us. But we are committed to the idea of one progressive trade union federation in South Africa'.

Mafumadi said that SACTU has encouraged all unions to participate in the unity talks. 'SACTU is not suggesting that anyone should create division. And we do not want to create a federation in opposition to the proposed one'.

In a statement sent to all trade unions, SACTU's Lusaka office questioned the legitimacy of the present feasibility committee set up by the unions involved in the unity talks - the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU), the Council of Unions of SA (CUSA), the General Workers Union (GWU), the African Food and Canning Workers Union and the Food and Canning Workers Union (AFCWU/FCWU), the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union of SA (CCAWUSA), and the Cape Town Municipal Workers Association (CTMWA).

SACTU has argued that all progressive unions should be invited as full participants in the feasibility committee, implying that it opposes any current moves to revive SACTU internally.

A GENERAL DESIRE FOR UNITY

Reactions from unions not on the feasibility committee indicate considerable debate and criticism on the periphery of the unity talks.

Mafumadi agreed that all independent unions should be part of the unity talks. 'The new federation will be a site of struggle and all unions should be full participants. No union has the right to decide who should and should not have observer status.

'Even after we were kicked out of the unity talks - and we were kicked out, because we had to walk out when we were only given observer status - we were still committed to the idea of one federation'.

He insisted that GAWU has always wanted to be reintegrated into the talks

but 'could not just gatecrash. We have been awaiting an opportunity.

'FOSATU Transvaal invited us to a meeting at their offices on 18 May to inform us about the progress of the unity talks. We have been invited to a formal meeting on 8 and 9 June to view the draft constitution for the new federation and to make our comments and see if it leaves some room for us to return to the unity talks'.

Joe Foster, FOSATU's general secretary, confirmed this FOSATU initiative. 'It was decided at the last (FOSATU) central committee meeting that the draft constitution should be circulated to all other unions. We have also recommended to the other unions taking part in the unity talks that they should do this'.

But Foster was unwilling to say whether this is a move to reincorporate other unions into the feasibility committee. 'As far as we are concerned those unions have never been out. The door was never closed to anyone'.

Interestingly, the Azanian Confederation of Trade Unions (AZACTU), the new federation of black consciousness unions, was also invited to the May meeting. This is the first time that these unions have come close to the unity talks.

Pandelani Nefolovhodwe of AZACTU said, 'The nature of unity is at stake - we believe in principled unity for the purpose of the eventual emancipation of the black working class'.

He was unclear whether AZACTU would be prepared to participate in the feasibility committee. 'Unions in the feasibility committee had reasons for not including us originally. We cannot make a decision until we know why. If we have now become necessary to that group, then they must be prepared to listen to us as equals. If this is the case then there must be a new beginning and all previous decisions must be suspended'.

Donsie Khumalo of the Pretoria-based Retail and Allied Workers Union (not to be confused with the Cape Town union of the same name), said that RAWU would 'very much like to be part of the unity talks. Any federation that excludes important union groupings is not serving the ideals and objectives of the working class. A lot of very important unions are outside the talks at present'.

FOSATU's move is a significant development. With the new federation set to be launched in October this year,

there is not much time for unions to resolve differences of principle which caused the rift between those currently in, and those out of, the feasibility committee.

It remains unclear whether the FOSATU initiative reflects a substantial shift or concession by either side, or even whether the basis for compromise or agreement exists.

The unity talks have been on the go since August 1981. MACWUSA/GWUSA were the first to walk out of the talks in April 1982, over the issue of the presence of registered unions.

In July 1982 MACWUSA/GWUSA, SAAWU, BMWU (Black Municipal Workers Union), SATWU (South African Transport Workers Union), OVGWU (Orange-Vaal General Workers Union) and GAWU presented seven principles which they regarded as essential foundations for unity. They were non-registration, shop-floor bargaining, federation policy to be binding on affiliates, worker control, non-racialism, participation in community issues, and the rejection of reactionary bodies nationally and internationally.

Talks deadlocked as not all unions agreed with all these principles, although most agreed with some of them. The final resolution at that meeting was that it was possible to form a federation of unions with some differences in policy.

A steering committee was formed in June 1983 and proceeded to work out the practical structures such a federation would need.

After this, matters still did not run smoothly. In October 1983 MACWUSA/GWUSA, SAAWU, GAWU and CUSA failed to bring membership figures and other crucial information to a unity meeting to discuss demarcation. At that meeting divisions emerged over industrial versus regional/general union structures. Most unions present agreed that industrial structures were a desirable goal, but were divided on how and when this should be achieved.

OBSTACLES TO UNITY

Differences of principle remained a significant obstacle to union unity. These reflected the major political debates of the time. It is difficult to

assess to what extent these differences were represented among rank and file, or were mainly leadership concerns.

Another serious obstacle lay in differences between organising practices and structures of industrial as opposed to general unions. A major criticism of general unionism has been, and still is, the failure to build up effective worker-controlled structures, and a tendency to recruit but not consolidate.

A further problem was that of regionally-based versus nationally-based unions. With sectoral demarcation, and the possible merger of regional and national unions in the same industry into one large union, the problem could theoretically be overcome in the long term. Moves to this end have already been initiated by unions in the feasibility committee. The independent FCWU and FOSATU's Sweet, Food and Allied, for example, have begun discussions around a possible merger.

But the question remained - and still remains for some unions not party to the unity talks - whether the structures of the existing federations (FOSATU and CUSA) could easily be dissolved under the new umbrella body. For example, while FOSATU publicly states its willingness to disband, its highly centralised structure and system of linkages will not easily be dissolved.

A further issue was how the federation is to be financed. Some unions opted for outside funding while others insisted that such a federation had to be controlled by its members and therefore could not afford to be funded from any source other than workers' dues. This, they argued, would ensure accountability of paid officials and organisers to members.

On 3-4 March 1984 the feasibility committee announced that some unions were not ready or able to join a federation whose members were to be demarcated industrially. General unions, the committee said, could attend as observers until such time as they reformed themselves along industrial lines.

The Municipal and General Workers Union of SA (MGWUSA), SAAWU, and GAWU left the meeting, refusing to accept observer status. MACWUSA was not present. Although there have been some moves on their part to form industrial unions, most are still general unions.

Mafumadi claimed, for example, that

although GAWU has been excluded from the unity talks, it has still worked towards eventual reintegration, and has made strides in setting up industrial unions of its own.

'We formed the South African Railways and Harbour Workers Union. We transferred our domestic worker members to SADWA, our transport workers to SASDU, and our workers from the Soweto Council and the Development Board to the Municipal and General Workers Union'.

RAWU's Donsie Khumalo commented that it would be difficult to restructure general unions along industrial lines immediately.

'General unions are important in a number of sectors, often playing a very important role in educating the working class about the concepts of trade unionism. They are also important because often they organise workers in sectors which do not have an industrial union. For example, we have organised workers in the Defence Force, where there is no industrial union'.

Khumalo claimed that the call to end general unions is not in the interests of the working class. But he agreed in principle that the formation of industrial unions rather than general unions is necessary.

He argued that it is wrong to assume that general unions often fail to consolidate their membership. 'We have consolidated our membership and our union is growing strongly', he said. 'Those unions in the unity talks must take cognisance of the real strengths of the general unions. But I agree that an acceptable starting point for negotiation is the dismantling of general unions'.

Mafumadi of GAWU echoed what seems to be a common position among unions at present not part of the feasibility committee. He said that GAWU is also committed to returning to the talks. But he foresaw a number of problems around the reintegration of unions into the talks.

'General unions in South Africa have their own history. We have committed ourselves to disbanding general unions, but this is a process. We do not have enough resources to maintain organisation of workers and also disband general unions overnight.

'The responsibility for phasing out general unions lies as much with industrial unions in the federation as it does with us. We expect help from

those unions. In fact it should be one of the tasks of the feasibility committee to monitor and assist this process'. He insisted that this process should take place within the federation itself.

A FOSATU spokesperson agreed that it was not possible to set up one union per industry overnight. But he stressed the need to begin the process.

'Workers believe it is the way to a strong working class movement, and we must show our commitment to implementing one union per industry. This is particularly important to avoid divisions. For example if two unions organise in one company but in different regions, management has a great opportunity to sow division'.

A REPRESENTATIVE CONSTITUTION

A major obstacle to reincorporation of 'observer' unions is the status of the constitution drawn up by the feasibility committee. The unions not party to the drafting are unlikely to accept it as it stands.

Mafumadi asked, 'How can we accept a constitution drawn up without representatives from all unions? If we go back into the talks the feasibility committee will have to be enlarged and we cannot rule out the possibility of having to rewrite the constitution'.

He questioned the terms of reference of the feasibility committee and said that if GAWU returns to the talks it will submit proposals about definite functions for the committee.

Both Khumalo and Mafumadi strongly supported the notion of a self-financing federation. Khumalo argued that 'Outside funding always has ideological strings attached, and introduces the possibility of outsiders dictating to the federation. Such a federation must be self-sufficient and funded only by workers'.

Mafumadi acknowledged that there might be difficulties. 'The argument runs that some unions are not yet self-financing. This is true. How then can they be expected to finance a federation? Well, it is up to those committed to founding the federation to make sure it happens. The decisive back-up of the federation must come from its own unions'.

He went on to say that the question of

affiliation or connection to any international trade union body is something to be considered only after the formation and consolidation of the federation. 'For instance the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) has featured in the unity talks. But some unions feel that the ICFTU has been involved in attempts to subvert workers' struggle in South Africa. So establishing links with them is a problem'.

DISPUTES OVER POLITICAL AFFILIATION

One of the central problems will be that of political affiliation. Feasibility committee members seem set on the 'no affiliation' position. GAWU, however, is of the opinion that political affiliation and ideological differences should not be made a stumbling block to reincorporation.

'Our affiliation to the UDF should not be a problem. We are prepared to enter the federation with other unions not affiliated. Discussions about affiliation and other policy matters should also take place within the federation. We expect flexibility'.

Jaffer of CLOWU said that no union can claim to be apolitical. 'Differences should be accepted and unions should work out the basis of compromise. To wish these differences away is short-sighted'.

Khumalo concluded, 'It's difficult to say what the basis of discussions will

be. I imagine that most of the seven unions still adhere to the principles they presented, but must be willing to be flexible about them. And unions in the federation must also have considered the need for flexibility'.

Is this an idle expectation? FOSATU, together with the National Union of Mineworkers, represents the nucleus of power within the unity grouping. Their opinions and positions are certain to play a large part in shaping the form of the new federation. Will they accommodate unions with ideas and practices radically different from their own?

FOSATU's Joe Foster is unwilling to comment about points of friction between those within in and those outside the talks. However he affirms that FOSATU's position remains unchanged regarding continued commitment to one union per industry, and formation of the new federation by the end of the year.

Khumalo believes that FOSATU is not ready to compromise on any issue. 'There have been heated exchanges', he said, as objections to the current unity talks structure were voiced.

The new federation will be a power to be reckoned with, bolstering the strength of those within it. As the new federation moves towards amalgamations to produce one union per industry, those on the outside will face increased pressure within those industries. Unions outside the unity talks will have to decide whether they can face the compromises, and changes, necessary to join the new federation, or whether they can afford to remain on the outside looking in.

Unions and Right-Wing Politics

'You name it, we got it'

The failure of the white right wing to gain a parliamentary foothold reflects its political marginalisation. But discontent is growing among its rank and file and there are plans afoot for a new strategy. KAREN JOCHELSON reviews the effects of unemployment on this group, and points to possible new developments.

White South Africans are learning that they will have to accept a cut in living standards. Taxation and interest rates spiral as the government attempts to control inflation, finance apartheid, and at the same time reform it.

A crucial index of the deteriorating economy is white unemployment. This has risen sharply (see box) from 0,74% of the economically active white population in late 1984, to a current 1,18%.

It is not surprising that a continual refrain in right-wing circles has been 'white impoverishment', 'dropping living standards' and the 'betrayal of white workers by the National Party'.

In its own terms the white right is correct. The reform programme and establishment of the tricameral parliament finally excluded the white working class from its special access to the state.

The past five years have seen the South African power bloc strengthen linkages with organised business interests and lobbies, while the old patterns of influence and consensus of the volk were eroded. Though it is crude to see a direct order - obey relationship between the state and capital, the current language of free enterprise does reflect a new structure of interests in government. White working class and agricultural interests are the prime losers.

The process of political marginalisation was marked by a series of defeats for right-wing parliamentary aspirations. Only now are the Conservative and Herstigte Nasionale Parties beginning to work together rather than fight to the death - though as yet without signs of success.

Their reconciliation may well be too late. There is talk of a new

delimitation of white voting constituencies, at present weighted in favour of the more conservative rural areas. If this happens, it will see the final shift of the National Party's base to the metropolitan areas.

Political attrition coupled with economic erosion are gradually forcing right-wing interests to seek another base.

Recent developments in that bastion of labour conservatism, the Mineworkers Union (MWU), may indicate future strategies of a right wing armed with the realisation that white workers have to revitalise themselves to fight for their fast-disappearing privileges.

THE MINeworkERS UNION

MWU general secretary Arrie Paulus recently retired amid strong rumours that he would enter right-wing party politics.

Six weeks later he was back in his old job. Subsequently the MWU amended its constitution, abandoned the principle of industrial unionism, and applied to extend its scope of recruitment to other sectors.

Black unions are moving towards industrial unionism to consolidate their power base. But the MWU, faced with a decreasing number of white jobs on the mines, is considering general unionism to increase both strength and numbers.

Does this mean that the politically embattled right wing is shifting its base from party politics to union organisation? Paulus replies: 'Union politics is bread and butter, and nothing else'.

The MWU now has members at ISCOR in Pretoria and Vanderbijlpark, and in several ESCOM power stations. Paulus denies that there has been any specific attempt to organise strategic industries. He points out that the MWU has members in a wide range of industries, covering at least 200 categories of workers. These sectors include: iron, steel, chrome, manganese, petrol, oil, electronic engineering, building, breweries, printing and newspapers, jewellery, sweets, tobacco, sugar, motor and allied, cement, tiles, rubber, and batteries. The MWU's latest area of recruitment is a bakery in Benoni.

Job reservation is one of its battlefields. Both the black National Union of Mineworkers and the Chamber of Mines have pressed for the abolition of the country's last statutory remnant of job reservation. This will entail changing the whites-only definition of 'scheduled person' in the Mines and Works Act to a non-racial one, enabling blacks to qualify for blasting certificates. Government has confirmed that legislation to this effect will be introduced next year. The term 'scheduled person' will be replaced with the non-racial 'competent person' in the new law.

Paulus' solution to the white worker predicament is to form a united front 'before it is too late'. 'White workers can only look after their own interests by forming one white union'. In a recent issue of *Die Mynwerker*, Paulus claimed that 'whatever the work of the worker, he will find a home - and security - in the MWU ... They need only approach us. We will be able to accommodate them... You name it, we got it'.

White workers can expect no redress through the National Party. According to Paulus, they 'were formerly protected by a workers' government, now it is a capitalist government. In 1972 the NP said that job reservation was the cornerstone of the party. In 1976 Fanie Botha, the Minister of Labour, said a white will never work under a black.

'But in 1979 the same Fanie Botha accepted the proposals of the Wiehahn Commission and betrayed the white workers of South Africa. The government always said it would protect the worker but now it is on the side of the employers'.

ARTISANS UNDER ATTACK

The privilege of white semi-skilled workers and artisans is under attack and looking increasingly precarious. Their position is threatened by deskilling through mechanisation and fragmentation of work, and by the upward mobility of black workers into skilled and semi-skilled positions.

Ike van der Watt, general secretary of the South African Boilermakers Society (SABS), says that in some sectors, particularly engineering, employers are using black workers to undercut white workers by engaging them at cheaper rates.

'The minimum wage is R5,80 an hour. Most artisans won't accept work for under R7,00. Employers are trying to bring down their wage bills'.

Paulus hints at an employers' conspiracy behind the move to train black apprentices: 'Eventually (skilled) labour supply will exceed demand and employers will be able to pay lower rates. It will be blacks who will get the jobs because they have a lower living standard'.

WHITE WORKER DISCONTENT

White workers are acutely aware of the pressures. A recent HSRC survey into white, predominantly Afrikaans-speaking workers' attitudes found that 70% were dissatisfied with changes on the labour front.

Most complained that whites were being replaced by blacks, and that white living standards were being sacrificed to narrow the wage gap. Many voiced fears about black domination and felt work standards would drop; more whites would become unemployed because of their refusal to accept lower rates.

Fifty-eight percent continued to favour job reservation and 72,5% said they would not accept blacks as equals. Of the latter, 75% said they would change jobs rather than stay on as equals.

Commenting on the HSRC report in *Die Afrikaaner*, Gert Beetge, general secretary of the Blanke Bouwerkersvakbond, argued that the situation of white workers was only

going to worsen.

White unemployment, he maintained, was a direct result of black workers getting more posts. The government's free market policies had not helped matters.

An employer could look for the cheapest labour. 'He has no responsibility towards the volk. His responsibility lies only with his shareholders'.

Die Afrikaner, mouthpiece of the far-right HNP, is clear about whose interests lie behind changes on the economic front. 'The government did not hesitate to put the interests of the Hoggensheimers before those of the whites. It is well known that the wishes of big business carry more weight than the welfare of those who formerly formed the government's political base'.

For Arrie Paulus, the impoverishment of whites is directly related to racial integration and the redistribution of income to blacks.

CIVIL SERVICE CUTS

The position of white workers in the civil service is also looking a little unsteady.

The state employs nearly 40% of working whites. Until recently the civil service, parastatals and development corporations offered secure employment, health, housing and other benefits to their white employees.

Finance Minister du Plessis' March economy package unleashed a fury of indignation. The package aimed to reduce by 5% the estimated R106-m pay and benefits bill. It included measures to increase productivity to save R231-m, and freeze staff complements.

But what drew the greatest fire was the planned one-third cut in the bonus cheque of employees earning more than R500 per month.

Railway workers were most vocal in their protests and held numerous well-attended mass meetings nationwide. There were calls for work-stoppages and strikes. The meetings culminated in a vote of no confidence in the government.

For Die Afrikaner, the bonus cuts were

a culmination of trends that developed over the last year. The paper maintained that public servants were under attack and were the 'main scapegoat for the country's present economic crisis'.

It was clear, announced Die Afrikaner, that the government, prompted by big business, had decided that the public servant was an obstacle to change.

'From the earliest planning of the strategy to create a multi-racial government, the government - and the private sector which asked for it - realised that the state service would determine the success or failure of the plan. More important, they realised that above all else, it was the position of the white civil servant which could be a danger'.

Adding fuel to fire were rumours of the proposed privatisation of the SA Transport Services, and the release of the annual report of the Commission for Administration. This acknowledged that its previous whites-only employment policy was racist, and adopted new 'non-discriminatory' policy guidelines based on principles of merit and efficiency.

The railway workers still have not accepted the cuts. Such militancy, momentary though it was, is an indication of discontent sufficiently widespread to jar the civil service unions' traditionally 'responsible' approach. Said Van der Merwe, general secretary of the Artisan Staff Association, in answer to Botha's plea for patriotic co-operation: 'The government has been fortunate in that they have had labour peace for many years. They must not now disturb the status quo and decide unilaterally'.

It is difficult to judge how significant conservative union growth has been and what effects it may have in the future. The HSRC survey found that though less than half its respondents belonged to a union, 87% of the total sample felt that white unions would have to pay more attention to the interests of the white worker in the future.

Perhaps the MWU's change of organisational terrain reflects awareness of this discontent as well as knowledge of the political vacuum on the right.

A Process of Attrition

Retrenchment, unemployment, liquidation and closure are everyday news in South Africa at present. While black workers bear the brunt of steeply rising unemployment, white workers are also under pressure. As their leverage with the ruling group in government diminishes, so does the prospect of protection against the worst ravages of recession.

Department of Manpower statistics show registered white unemployment rising steeply: from 7 823 in 1982, it rose to 13 052 in 1983 and 14 146 by October 1984. By March this year, only four months later, it had risen to 22 620.

Registered unemployment figures are far lower than the estimate released by Market Research Africa's Employment Index, which recorded more than 100 000 urban white adults unemployed.

Though women account for a third of the total economically active white population group, they comprise 54% of the total number of registered white unemployed. Women are hardest hit in administrative, clerical and sales sectors.

Sid Katham of the Professional Assignments Group, an employment agency, pointed out that general clerical staff are unskilled, and are thus the first to go when the economy is tight. Their workload can be spread among the better-qualified people who remain.

Shop salespeople in consumer durables like furniture, kitchenware, and television sets are also less in demand, he said, simply because consumers cannot afford to buy these products with interest rates high as they are.

The highest number of male unemployed whites is in the semi-skilled/operator and artisan groups. Katham maintained that many artisans have been retrenched because of cancellation both of parastatal projects, such as expansion plans for ESCOM and SASOL, and private sector developments. In the building industry the situation is so serious that the Building Industry Federation of SA has banned overtime and weekend work in an attempt to spread the workload.

Though overall figures for female unemployment are higher than those for male, Katham maintained this does not reflect any uniform employment policy: 'Managements have to weigh up the odds. Do they keep their female staff because they are cheaper, or male staff who are paid higher wages but are family breadwinners?'

Perhaps a more significant trend is the move towards replacing white with black staff. 'Companies are beginning to employ coloured and black workers rather than whites because they are cheaper. This is not only happening in the production field, but even among office staff, for instance secretaries and clerks', commented Katham.

Rising unemployment is not restricted to these categories. Although small, the number of technical, managerial and executive staff seeking work is growing. Significantly, in January 1984 the Department of Manpower added these categories to its tables of registered unemployed by occupational group.

Eric Henderson, president of the Association of Personnel Service Organisations, estimates that in the last 15 - 18 months 15% of management staff have been made redundant due to extensive mergers and acquisitions. Many are unable to find equivalent jobs even after a year and are forced to seek work with lower pay.

A sidelight on worsening white economic straits is provided by Tony Coates and Ian Connell of Truck Tracing Agents, a private detective agency tracing missing persons and debtors, as well as vehicles and consumer goods for repossession on unpaid HP. Connell explained: 'We don't get cases from the lower classes anymore. Triomf, Turffontein, Yeoville and Berea have already been cleaned out. Their vehicles, TV's or whatever they've bought on HP has been repossessed'.

Coates added: 'Now just the middle and upper classes are left. All our work is in the Bryanston-Sandton areas. These are the people who now have problems. Banks aren't giving credit and loans as easily as they used to. Interest rates, housing bonds, insurance premiums have all soared, but salaries haven't kept pace. Businesses aren't giving raises, there are cuts in bonus cheques and incentives'.

Welfare agencies also record higher numbers of people seeking assistance. Neil McCauley, regional director of the Red Cross, stated, 'We're seeing a change in the type of person coming to us. Before we saw mostly the down-and-out tramp type. Now we have more families asking for assistance. Many come from other parts of the country thinking they will get jobs in Johannesburg. But there's nothing available'.

Courts

TREASON TRIALS

Marines Jabu Ngobese (21)
Meriman Mordecai Xolani Nduna (24)
Zane Mvula Mapela (25)

The accused were charged with Treason and counts formulated under the Internal Security Act. In addition, they were charged with Participation in Terroristic Activities, and Terrorism.

The state alleged that, through participation in a series of acts, the accused were guilty of Treason. It was further alleged that Ngobese was an ANC member, and Nduna and Mapela ANC supporters.

According to the prosecution, Ngobese became an ANC member in 1980, when he unlawfully left South Africa, and underwent ANC military training in Angola. Between March 1982 and April 1984 he established six arms caches at Langlaagte, Vosloorus, Dube, Orlando, Naledi, and Daveyton. He made the arms, ammunition and explosives stored in these caches available to ANC members for acts of violence.

On 8 June 1984, according to the state, Ngobese entered South Africa with the aim of showing the weapon storage dump at Orlando to an ANC member, Justice Hlowuka Ngidi.

Nduna, according to the state, provided accommodation for Ngobese and another ANC member named Maxwell, knowing that they were ANC members in possession of weapons, ammunition and explosives. He hid various weapons from the Daveyton arms cache elsewhere, knowing that they were intended for use by the ANC. During May or June 1984, fearing the discovery of these arms, he rehid them with the assistance of Mapela. Finally, although knowing that Ngobese and Maxwell were planning treason, he failed to report this to the authorities.

The third accused, Mapela, was alleged to have stored two AK 47 rifles for Ngobese and Maxwell, knowing that they were intended for use in ANC acts of

violence. He was also charged with assisting Nduna in hiding the Daveyton arms cache, and not reporting the presence and activities of Maxwell and Ngobese to the authorities, nor the presence of the Daveyton arms cache.

All three accused pleaded guilty to the main charge of Treason, and the state withdrew all other charges. Ngobese admitted that he was an ANC member, had undergone military training, and had stored arms in South Africa. Nduna, a member of the Chemical Workers Industrial Union, admitted that he had provided accommodation for Ngobese and Maxwell, assisting them to bury arms, and rehid some of these in his front yard with the assistance of Mapela. Mapela, a member of the Paper, Wood and Allied Workers Union, admitted taking care of two AK 47 rifles at the request of Ngobese, and helping Nduna conceal an arms cache.

Verdict: All three accused were found guilty of Treason, in accordance with their guilty pleas.

Sentence: Ngobese - 15 years
Nduna - 5 years
Mapela - 5 years

(Rand Supreme Court, 27.05.85).

James Mcedise Hamilton Dubasi (28)
Jongunzi Sisulu (26)
Lunkile Happy Mkefa (21)
David Matsoso (24)
Joseph Themba Maja (25)

The accused are charged with Treason, and contravening the Internal Security Acts of 1950 and 1982. They also face alternative counts of Terrorism, and Participation in Terroristic Activities.

The state claims that the accused are members of the ANC, and associate themselves with the aims and objects of that organisation.

The state has set out a summary of substantial facts which, it alleges, render the accused guilty. According to this summary:

1. On 20 August 1983, Dubasi and another ANC member, Donald Modise, sabotaged an

electricity pylon at Mamelodi, Pretoria.
2. On the evening of 11 March 1984, Dubasi, Donald Modise and ANC member Joe Masilela attempted to sabotage a railway bridge over the 'Golden Highway' near De Deur, Vereeniging. While they were involved in this, they were disturbed by two policemen, and opened fire on them. In a subsequent exchange of fire, Donald Modise was wounded while the others escaped. The following day Modise was apprehended by a policeman. Modise threw a grenade at the policeman, who took cover, and subsequently shot Modise dead.

3. On 15 May 1984, a member of the Soweto security police parked his car outside a Soweto house. While the security policeman was inside the house, Mkefa attached a bomb to the car. Early the next morning the car, now parked at Jabulani police station, was blown apart by the bomb explosion.

4. On the evening of 20 May 1984, Mkefa threw a hand grenade at a Soweto house. The occupants chased Mkefa up the street, but he was able to escape after throwing another grenade at his pursuers.

5. During June or July 1984, Dubasi, Sisulu and Joe Masilela attached plastic explosives to an overhead pylon on the railway line close to New Canada station. However, the explosives were subsequently dislodged by a railway worker, and did not go off.

6. On 11 July 1984, Mkefa attached explosives to the kombi of a Soweto policeman. Later that night the bomb exploded, wrecking the kombi and extensively damaging the house of the policeman.

7. Early on the morning of 14 July 1984, two Jabulani policemen on duty left their police station to buy a snack from a nearby fast-foods outlet. Dubasi, Sisulu, Mkefa and Joe Masilela were parked some distance from the food outlet, each being armed with an AK 47 rifle. While one policeman remained in the car, the other went in to the shopping centre to buy food. When he returned, the armed group opened fire on the police from two different directions, killing one and seriously wounding the other.

8. Dubasi, Sisulu and a certain Cecil Kandia were arrested at a police roadblock between Randfontein and Magaliesberg on 31 July 1984. The car they were travelling in contained arms and ammunition, ANC publications, and notes on explosives.

9. Shortly after they had been arrested, police went to a farmhouse at Boons, near Koster, which was rented by Cecil Kandia. Matsose and Maja were found at this farmhouse and arrested, Matsose sustaining wounds in the course of the arrest. Explosives, ANC literature, maps and notes of possible sabotage targets were found at the farmhouse.

10. On 4 August 1984, Mkefa fired a volley of shots at a passing police vehicle containing two policemen from Moroka police station. A passenger in a nearby car was wounded.

11. On 17 August 1984, Mkefa walked into a police trap in Soweto. He was carrying a parcel containing two hand grenades, ammunition, and a rifle cleaning kit.

12. Subsequently, Joe Masilela was traced to a Soweto house by police. In a shootout with police surrounding the house, he was shot dead.

13. In subsequent investigations based on interrogation of the accused and others, police found various arms caches.

The trial of these five accused, who are alleged to have received ANC military training externally or within South Africa, is due to begin in the Rand Supreme Court on 12 August 1985.

Mathews Dime Kekane (27)

Albanos Mathlare Lesotho (26)

Kingsley Stephen Sithole (28)

The state alleges that the accused in this trial are guilty of Treason, and of contravening the Internal Security Act by being ANC members. They also face four alternative counts of Terrorism and Participation in Terroristic Activities.

Kekane, according to the prosecution, left South Africa to undergo ANC military training in 1976. He received this training in Angola and Russia.

On a number of occasions, he illegally entered South Africa to undertake ANC missions. Inter alia, he handed money over to ANC members or supporters, recruited Lesotho as an ANC member, and trained him in the use of weapons and coding and decoding ANC messages. Together with Lesotho, Kekane is accused of being in possession of explosives.

According to the state, Kekane and Lesotho sabotaged a railway line in Soweto on 3 June 1982, and attempted to blow up an ESCOM installation on the same date. In March 1984 Kekane unlawfully entered South Africa with

Sithole, with the purpose of recruiting people as ANC members, and training them.

Between April and July 1984, Kekane allegedly possessed a Makarov pistol and bullets, gave these to Lesotho, and controlled an arms cache near Orlando Stadium. In July 1985, he allegedly incited Nicodemus Mthapo to undergo military training and further ANC aims.

The state claims that, between 1981 and 1984, Lesotho was an ANC member or supporter, received training from Kekane, distributed ANC pamphlets, painted ANC slogans, and provided accommodation for Kekane, knowing he was an ANC guerilla fighter.

Sithole, it is alleged, was an ANC member or supporter between 1978 and 1984. He left South Africa to undergo military training, and returned illegally on a number of occasions to undertake ANC missions, including the handing of money to an ANC member or supporter called Leonard.

The trial begins in the Rand Supreme Court on 12 August 1985.

INTERNAL SECURITY ACT TRIALS

David Hlongwane (28)

The accused faced two charges of Terrorism, one in terms of the now-repealed 1967 Terrorism Act, and the other under the 1982 Internal Security Act.

The state alleged that, between 1981 and 1984, he underwent military training under the auspices of the ANC in Angola.

It was further claimed that, in September 1984, Hlongwane threw a hand grenade in the Khuma township, near Stilfontein, injuring five people.
Verdict: Guilty on both counts.

Sentence: Five years for undergoing military training, and ten years for the grenade attack. Sentences are to run concurrently, making effective sentence ten years.

(Klerksdorp Regional Court, 30.04.85).

Frans Morule

The accused faced three counts under the Internal Security Act:

* undergoing military training in Angola and East Germany between 1979 and 1983;

* serving in the ANC's ordinance department (part of the military wing) in Mozambique, Swaziland, Botswana

and/or Lesotho;

* providing Andreas Sejeng with explosives.

Morule pleaded guilty to the first two charges, and the state withdrew the third count involving Andreas Sejeng, who was charged separately (see below).
Verdict: Guilty.

Sentence: Five years on each count (ie ten years).

(Bloemfontein Regional Court, 19.04.85).

Andreas Sejeng (28)

The accused faced seven counts of Terrorism, one of murder and one of attempted murder. The allegations related to seven bomb blasts in and around Bloemfontein during 1983 and 1984.

The state claimed that Sejeng had undergone ANC military training in Lesotho during 1982 and 1983. The bomb blasts he was allegedly responsible for were listed as follows:

27 January 1983 - railway line near Fort Street;

18 February 1983 - offices of the Administration Board near De Wet Street. Anthony Mokhele killed in blast;

11 March 1983 - De Bloem Station;

12 March 1983 - Henry and East Burger Street;

26 May 1983 - parking lot in Peet Avenue;

8 December 1983 - railway line near Hamilton;

27 January 1984 - Bloemfontein prison;

Much of the state's case against Sejeng was based on a confession he allegedly made while in security police detention. After an ex-ANC member, who may not be named, told the court that she had seen Sejeng at a secret ANC house in Maseru, the defence contested the validity of his confession. Sejeng claimed that he had been brutally assaulted and tortured while in security police custody, and that his confession had been extorted from him.

At this stage, the state withdrew all charges against the accused, and he was acquitted. In dropping charges, the state prosecutor did not concede that the accused had been maltreated by security police while in their custody.
(Bloemfontein Supreme Court, 29.04.85)

Patrick Bobby Sebotsa

The accused initially faced three charges framed under the Internal

- Security Act. These related to
- * undergoing military training in Lesotho during 1983;
- * a bomb blast on the Hamilton-Bloemfontein railway line on 14 December 1983;
- * possession of 'The African Communist', a publication of the South African Communist party.

The accused pleaded guilty to undergoing military training, and the state withdrew the other two charges. Sentence: Seven years. (Bloemfontein Supreme Court, May 1985).

Mpumalolo Shadrack Ndlakuhlolo (29)

Margaret Ndlawanla Mfobo (36)

- The accused, who have been in custody for six months, are alleged to have contravened the Internal Security Act by
- * being members of the ANC and furthering its aims;
 - * endangering the authority of the state;
 - * possessing pamphlets which propagated ANC aims.

The trials continues in the Hermanus Regional Court on 15 July.

Collins Ohm Chabane (23)

The accused faced five charges under the old Terrorism Act and 1982 Internal Security Act. These related to Terrorism, furthering the aims of the ANC, and possession of ANC and SACP literature.

The accused pleaded guilty to possession of firearms, ammunition and banned literature.

Sentence will be passed in the Tzaneen Regional Court on 24 June.

Siswe Matshikiza (28)

Muzi Nkosi (28)

The accused were arrested last year after an arms cache and ANC documents were found in a White City, Jabavu house.

They are charged with keeping weapons in their house, and appeared in the Johannesburg Regional Court with hands and feet chained.

Bail and the Law

The release of 16 United Democratic Front treason trialists on bail has been widely welcomed. Notwithstanding assertions to the contrary, it does not change the rules of South Africa's repressive legal system.

Natal Judge Friedman's recent ruling that, despite an attorney general's order, the UDF treason trialists might be eligible for bail, was courageous. At last a South African judge has suggested that the powers granted a government-appointed attorney general to imprison people without trial are undesirable.

Section 30 of the 1982 Internal Security Act empowers an attorney general to order that accused in certain categories of political trials should not be released on bail. Grounds for such an order are the attorney general's belief that it is necessary 'in the interests of the security of the State or the maintenance of law and order'.

At least one newspaper (The Citizen) claimed that Judge Friedman's ruling was an indication of South Africa's free and independent judiciary. This, it said, showed that the threat of disinvestment was not necessary to hasten the process of reform.

On the facts, however, South Africa

can hardly claim an independent and democratic legal system.

The function of bail is linked to the presumption that an accused is legally innocent unless proved guilty. Bail allows an accused to retain or regain freedom pending a court decision on his/her innocence. But in South Africa, the government-appointed attorney general has for many years had power to refuse bail without reference to the courts.

The 1955 Criminal Procedure Act empowered the attorney general to withhold bail from people charged with certain criminal offences (arson, murder, kidnapping, child stealing, and robbery), if he considered it necessary in the interests of the maintenance of public order or public safety.

While the 1977 Criminal Procedure Act recognises that the withholding of bail should be a juridical function, this seems to apply to non-political cases only. In political trials, the attorney general retains the right to consign people (whether charged or not) to prison.

The 1967 Terrorism Act empowered the attorney general to withhold bail from people charged under this Act.

Until the repeal of the Terrorism Act, it was the usual practice for accused to be denied bail by edict. In addition to this, a 1976 amendment to the Suppression of Communism Act (since renamed the Internal Security Act) empowered the attorney general to withhold bail in non-Terrorism Act political trials.

This 1976 amendment also allowed the attorney general to hold potential witnesses in political trials as detainees - uncharged, without access to family, legal advisors or friends, and often in solitary confinement.

These provisions continue to apply. South Africa's Internal Security Act of 1982 - which consolidates diverse security statutes into one law - again allows the attorney general to detain potential witnesses, and withhold bail from accused.

In the recent ABC 'Nightline' series on South Africa, Foreign Minister Pik Botha told American audiences that it was the decision of South Africa's impartial courts to deny the UDF treason trialists bail.

This lie ignored the fact that at that time bail had been refused because a regional magistrate ruled that he could not interfere in the attorney general's decision to withhold bail. Judge Friedman's finding meant that in this

specific case the attorney general had to justify his decision. But the law which allows the attorney general to withhold bail - and detain potential witnesses - remains intact.

Judge Friedman commented that the attorney general's power to refuse bail 'restricted the role of the courts... It is to me a complete anathema that an attorney general should be, in a manner of speaking, a judge in his own cause. He is not an independent officer; ...he does not exercise his powers free of executive control'.

And, lest there be any ambiguity about this, the Criminal Procedure Act makes the attorney general 'subject to the control and directions of the Minister (of Justice), who may reverse any decision arrived at by an attorney general and may...exercise any part of such authority and perform any...(of the attorney general's) functions'.

Attorney generals' arbitrary powers in practice reveal the nature of South Africa's legal system - not Pik Botha's fictions about the autonomy of the courts. The thousands who have spent months in prison on the authority of such officials can testify to that.

And it has taken many years of such imprisonments for a supreme court judge to reject the practice as clearly as Justice Friedman has.

UDF Treason Trial

Mawalal Rangobin (52)
Chanderdeo Sewpersahd (48)
Mooroogiah Jayarajapathy Naidoo (54)
Essop Essack Jassat (52)
Dundubela Aubrey Mokoena (37)
Ephraim Curtis Nkonde (57)
Archibald Jacob Gumede (71)
Devadas Paul David (44)
Albertina Nontsikalelo Sisulu (66)
Frank Chikane (34)
Ebrahim Ahmed Saloojee (49)
Ismail Jacobus Mohamed (54)
Richard Thozamile Gqweta (33)
Sisa James Njikelana (29)
Samuel Bhekuyise Kikine (37)
Duze Isaac Ngcobo (38)

The state alleges that the accused are guilty of the offence of Treason. Alternatively, the state claims that the accused are guilty of Terrorism, Participation in Terroristic Activities, Furthering the Objects of an Unlawful Organisation, and Furthering the Objects of Communism and the ANC. These various alternative charges are framed in terms

of the now-repealed 1967 Terrorism Act and 1950 Internal Security Act, and the 1982 Internal Security Act.

According to the state the ANC, SA Communist Party, and the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) have conspired together to form a revolutionary alliance which aims at overthrowing the government by violence, means which envisage violence, and other unlawful means.

The Revolutionary Alliance, the state alleges, regards the Freedom Charter as its political programme and policy, and believes that it can only be implemented through a violent revolution. But the Alliance also aims at encouraging non-violent forms of political struggle to create a climate favourable to its aims. These non-violent forms of political struggle include

- * strikes, boycotts and demonstrations;
- * mass mobilisation and politicisation;
- * calls for the release of political prisoners;

- * calls for the return of exiled leaders;
- * the popularisation of leaders of the Revolutionary Alliance; and
- * the popularisation of the Freedom Charter.

The state further claims that a number of legal organisations inside South Africa have associated themselves with the Revolutionary Alliance. The accused are all office bearers or members of at least one of these organisations, which are listed as:

- The South African Allied Workers Union (SAAWU);
- The United Democratic Front (UDF);
- The Natal Indian Congress (NIC);
- The Transvaal Indian Congress (TIC); and
- The Release Mandela Committee (RMC).

The state alleges that the Revolutionary Alliance uses the national Executive Committee of the UDF, and other UDF leaders, to unite, mobilise and politicise the masses; to propagate the release of all political prisoners; and to popularise the Freedom Charter and leaders of the Revolutionary Alliance.

The conspiracy which the state seeks to prove is very wide in its scope. It is claimed that each accused conspired with

- * the Revolutionary Alliance, the Congress Movement and the Congress Alliance;
- * members and supporters of the Revolutionary Alliance, the Congress Movement and the Congress Alliance;
- * the other accused;
- * Oscar Mpetha, Terror Lekota, Billy Nair, Dorothy Nyembe and Stephen Tshwete;
- * the speakers, organisers and those attending a lengthy list of public meetings the state lists in the charge sheet;
- * those responsible for over 25 documents and pamphlets listed by the state;

- * people unknown to the state; and
- * certain witnesses whose identity the state is not prepared to disclose.

The bulk of the 588-page charge sheet covers various public meetings which, the state alleges, the accused convened, organised, attended, addressed and participated in to further the aims of the Revolutionary Alliance, Congress Movement and Congress Alliance.

Both the meetings and documents listed by the state cover the period 1980 - 1985. The state alleges that the accused participated in the meetings, and produced and distributed the documents, with the overall aim of furthering the aims of the Revolutionary Alliance. This involved a campaign to create a situation ripe for revolution, and included the following tactics:

- * fomenting racial hostility between the different population groups;
- * attempting to convince the masses of the inevitability of revolution;
- * labelling the government and its institutions as the enemy;
- * undermining the institutions of authority in South Africa.

The state will attempt to prove that the accused employed these tactics by organising and participating in the various meetings, and associating themselves with the proceedings, where 'revolutionary, inflammatory and bellicose songs were sung, slogans chanted and speeches made'; by committing the organisations they represented to the campaign to create a revolutionary climate; and by issuing and distributing various documents and pamphlets.

The trial proceedings begin in the Pietermaritzburg Supreme Court on 11 July, when it is expected that various legal points will be argued by both the prosecution and defence. The leading of evidence by the state is only expected to begin on 5 August.

Labour Action

Metal Talks Deadlock

Wage talks in the giant metal industry ended in deadlock on 24 May, and the existing agreement expires on 30 June. Negotiations are being conducted in the industrial council between the Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of SA (SEIFSA) and two major union groupings - the local co-ordinating council of the International Metalworkers Federation (IMF) and the Confederation of Metal and Building Unions (CMBU).

The first round of talks began in March. The IMF, consisting of representatives from the Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU), the South African Boilermakers Society, the Steel, Engineering and Allied Workers Union, and the Engineering Industrial Workers Union, represents mainly unskilled and semi-skilled workers. This group proposed that the minimum wage, currently standing at R1,73 an hour, be raised to R3,50. There was also a demand for a 50c across-the-board increase.

The IMF group made several demands which it believes will save jobs. These include:

- * a curb on overtime, with workers being paid double-time during the week and triple-time over the weekend. At present overtime rates stand at time-and-a-third during the week, time-and-a-half on Saturdays after the first six hours and time-and-two-thirds on Sundays;
- * a 40-hour working week with no loss of pay instead of the present 45-hour working week;
- * four weeks paid leave instead of the usual three;
- * retrenchments to be negotiated with the representative unions and a minimum severance pay of four weeks' wages per year of service.

The IMF unions also called for the recognition of 1 May (Labour Day) as a paid public holiday.

The unions demanded that employers

double their contributions to the metal industry's pension fund and that this money be invested in family housing available to all workers regardless of whether they have Section 10 rights, which enable Africans to live legally in urban areas.

MAWU called on employers to demonstrate their sincerity about reducing costs by cutting all management perks. MAWU demanded that company cars be paid for, there be no free petrol for company cars, no 'large, cheap housing loans' for management and directors, and that directors' emoluments be cut 'so that their standard of living approaches that of the rest of the population'.

The CMBU and a South African Confederation of Labour affiliate, the South African Iron, Steel and Allied Industrial Union, representing skilled and semi-skilled workers, put forward similar proposals. They called for a 42-hour working week, an increase in overtime rates and a 20% increase in the minimum wage rate of R2,50 an hour. Where workers earned more than the minimum, it was recommended that they receive an increase of 20% of the minimum wage. They also called for increased consultation between unions and management over retrenchments, and a 30-day notice period for retrenchments.

The first round of talks ended in deadlock when SEIFSA rejected union demands.

The second round of talks began early in April. SEIFSA proposed a wage freeze for another year as a way to save as many jobs as possible. SEIFSA argued that employers could not afford wage rises because of the recession. The unions immediately declared a dispute.

The executive of the industrial council decided to reopen wage talks at the end of April in a bid to solve the dispute.

On 30 April, 39 MAWU members were arrested outside the City Hall where the

metal industry wage talks had been resumed. Workers and negotiators had marched peacefully from their offices carrying placards, some of which read: 'Stop Retrenchments' and 'MAWU Demands a Living Wage'.

The following day the unionists appeared in court. They were charged with attending an illegal gathering, and released on R100 bail. On the way back to the MAWU offices, a number were rearrested. Police said they were arrested for 'starting an illegal gathering immediately after being released on bail'.

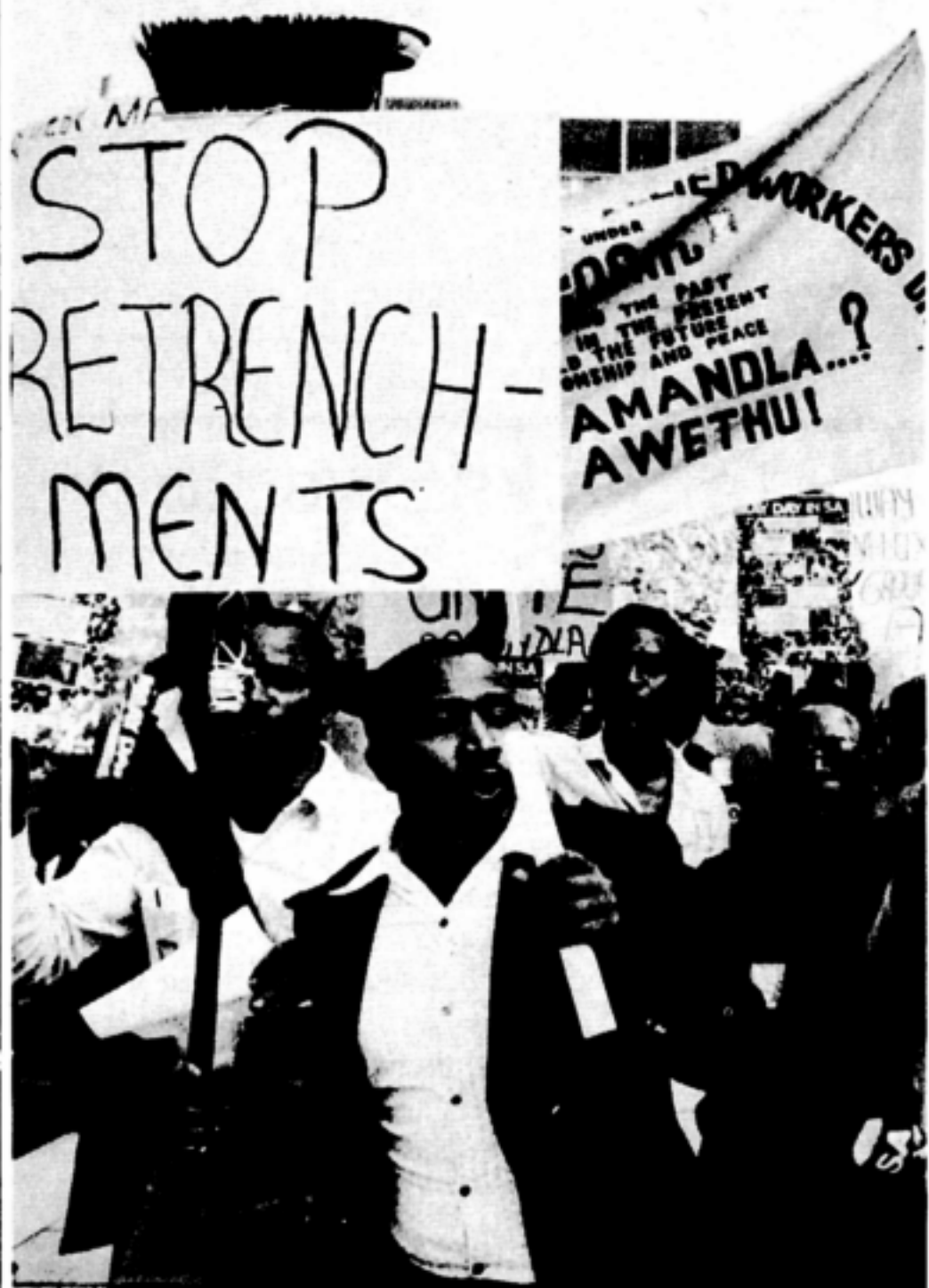
On 2 and 3 May this group of unionists were granted bail of between R50 and R100. Those not arrested had in the interim decided that the talks should continue so that they would be able to report back to their members.

The unions rejected a SEIFSA offer of a 17c per hour pay rise for artisans and 8c for unskilled workers. This was later raised to 20c and 10c respectively, but the unions still felt that this was not sufficient to meet the increased cost of living.

Talks were again adjourned until 15 May without any agreement being reached.

This meeting was postponed by SEIFSA. On 23 May, when the talks reopened, SEIFSA offered a 17c increase for the lowest grade minimum wage and 40c for the top grades. This was rejected by all the unions. For workers earning above the minimum wage, SEIFSA offered an across-the-board increase of 14c for the lowest grade workers and 24c for the top grade. This was acceptable to the CMBU but not the IMF unions.

For the first time in metal industry negotiations, a large contingent of shop floor representatives accompanied the MAWU negotiating team.



MAWU members make their demands clear

The unions met later in May to discuss their course of action following the deadlock with SEIFSA. They decided to approach SEIFSA informally about resuming talks, but have not ruled out the possibility of taking strike ballots among members. The IMF and CMBU will meet again on 18 June. SEIFSA has a board meeting scheduled for 10 June and is unlikely to respond to union moves before then.

No date has been set for resuming negotiations.

NUM Tackles Job Reservation

Negotiators from the Chamber of Mines and the National Union of Mineworkers meet in mid-June to conduct what promise to be gruelling wage talks.

NUM is demanding a 40% wage increase, danger pay and the abolition of job reservation.

The union has also called for May Day to be recognised as a paid public holiday. The outcome of the negotiations affects 500 000 black mine workers.

The demand for abolition of job reservation is particularly sensitive

against the background of the dismissal of 17 400 miners from the Vaal Reefs and Hartebeesfontein mines.

On the 26 and 27 April the Vaal Reefs workforce went on strike following the dismissal of 700 workers who had refused to perform certain jobs reserved for whites under the Mines and Works Act. Anglo American responded by firing 14 400 mine workers.

There was an almost simultaneous strike at Anglovaal's Hartebeesfontein mine. Three thousand workers were fired

after they went on strike following the dismissal of four shop stewards.

At both mines workers were paid out and bused home to the Transkei, Lesotho, Swaziland and Mozambique.

Anglo American management justified the dismissals, arguing that they were a climax to several weeks of go-slows, half shifts, individual work stoppages and boycotts of mine concession stores and liquor outlets. They maintained workers had 'dismissed themselves' as the strike had not been preceded by any explanation of union grievances.

The dismissals were complicated further by a dispute declared in an earlier strike. On 20 March 42 000 miners, almost the entire Vaal Reefs black workforce, went on strike claiming that discriminatory wage increases had been granted to a small number of monthly-paid employees.

NUM declared a dispute with Anglo American and Gold Fields of SA (GFSA) on the 23 April. The dispute affects about 220 000 workers on 13 mines.

The Vaal Reefs managing director claimed that after the strike NUM had guaranteed the situation would return to normal.

NUM maintained, however, that the dismissals after the April strike were a breach of good faith.

The union demanded unconditional reinstatement of the dismissed workers. Both Anglo American and Anglovaal eventually agreed to give preference to miners who reapplied for their jobs.

However, at Vaal Reefs 7 000 of the 14 400 workers were replaced by new migrants recruited through TEBA (The Employment Bureau of Africa). A NUM official said the problem arose because certain employees' company numbers were not given to the recruiting agencies. She said this was not accidental, but reflected a breach of agreement by Anglo management.

At a recent address to the South African Institute of Race Relations, Cyril Ramaphosa, general secretary of NUM, warned that the union had decided to embark on a campaign of resistance aimed at changing the system of labour relations on the mines.

This will include

- * physical retaliation to assaults by whites on blacks at the workplace;
- * a refusal to allow racist practices by white mineworkers to continue;
- * work-to-rule by black miners to ensure they do not contravene the provisions of

the Mines and Works Act until job reservation is abolished.

With NUM's membership standing at 110 000, the work-to-rule principle will have widespread effects and is likely to slow production at every mine where the union is organised.

NUM's demand for a 40% wage increase is also likely to stir controversy among the mining houses. The Chamber of Mines is reportedly finding it difficult to establish consensus among them. Unconfirmed reports claim that Anglo, possibly supported by JCI, is offering a 23% wage increase, while the other houses are offering only 10%.

In 1982 Gold Fields and Gencor were hit by wildcat strikes because of differential wage increases. The following year the two houses managed to persuade other Chamber members that a uniform wage policy should be adopted. But last year Anglo American bore the brunt of a legal strike by NUM and had to negotiate a separate wage agreement to settle the strike. NUM was recognised on eight mine divisions, of which seven were Anglo mines.

This year the situation is more complicated. NUM is now recognised on 11 Anglo mines, three GFSA mines, and one each on Anglovaal, Gencor and Rand Mines.

Finance Week states that: 'One of the most tempting solutions for Anglo would be to settle with the NUM and let the rest defend their lower wage offer. For the NUM such an approach would be almost as enticing. It would offer a split among Chamber members, house level wage negotiations and a wage increase precedent against which to fight the rest'.

The Chamber has also been beset by the demands of the Council of Mining Unions whose affiliates include the right-wing Mineworkers Union. The MWU has made it clear that it intends to defend job reservation.

The CMU has also refused to modify its demand for an overall wage increase of 20%. The Chamber began with an offer of 8,5% which it later improved to 9,5%. The CMU declared a dispute with the Chamber. The Chamber raised its offer to an across-the-board 10,5% increase, but would not meet the CMU's modified demand for an 11,5% increase. The talks deadlocked and the CMU threatened to hold a strike ballot. Talks resumed at the beginning of June. On 3 June both parties agreed to an 11% pay rise dating from May.

Strikes and Disputes: Transvaal

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
Afrox Sweisware Brits	Steel, Engineering and Allied Workers			A dispute was declared by the union after Afrox refused to negotiate and allegedly victimised union members.
Barlow Rand Boksburg	MAWU	63 families	15.05.	Workers and their families staged a sit-in at Barlow Rand's head office over a housing dispute. Workers had bought, with company assistance, houses through the Wrightech Housing Scheme. Some have now been retrenched, and together with others still employed face eviction for not being able to keep up with building society payments. If evicted, it will be impossible for them to obtain rented accommodation because of the chronic township housing shortages. Several workers have already been evicted because they have fallen behind on repayments. 'MAWU believes that this is an inherent weakness in most company housing schemes now in operation. These schemes almost invariably result in workers incurring huge debts', the union said.
Blyvooruitzicht Mine (Rand Mines) Carletonville	NUM	9 000	18.05	Nine thousand mine workers struck over the dismissal of two NUM members, dismissed after a disciplinary hearing found them guilty of intimidating a fellow worker. Strikers also boycotted liquor outlets at the mine hostel. Two days later workers returned when management agreed to meet a delegation over the dismissals and other grievances (infringements of Mines and Works Act, issuing of overalls, bonus schemes, bar prices). Teargas had been used by mine security and police during the strike. NUM is only recognised for certain categories of surface workers at the mine, but is about to apply for recognition for underground workers.
Brollo Africa Elandsfontein	MAWU	400	04.06	Workers downed tools demanding the reinstatement of a shop steward fired after company disciplinary proceedings.
Continental China Rosslyn	SAAWU	650		In November last year, 650 workers struck to back a wage demand, and were all dismissed. SAAWU has threatened a consumer boycott unless they are reinstated, but management said they cannot all be rehired. On 10 April, about 250 fired workers picketed the factory, but were arrested by police and charged with intimidation. The next day, workers travelled to the Johannesburg head office of the holding group (Federale Volksbeleggings), demanding that the group intervene. They met with management, which agreed to call a meeting between Continental and SAAWU in attempt to resolve the strike.
Cumar Abrasives		100	April	Towards the end of April, workers struck over wage demands.
Dorbyl (Barlows) Railway Equipment Benoni	MAWU	100		This Barlows' company was taken over by Dorbyl last year, when a contract on working conditions was signed by the two groups. MAWU has claimed that not all clauses are being honoured, and has appealed to Barlows to intercede with Dorbyl. On 27 May, 100 workers 'sat in' on the lawn of Barlows' Sandton head offices while representatives met with management. Barlows agreed to facilitate a meeting between MAWU and Dorbyl. On 4 June, it was reported that 200 workers had struck at the Dorbyl plant.

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
Kohler Corrugated Iron and Cores Brakpan	PWAWU	142		<p>Workers attended the funeral of FOSATU unionist Andries Raditsela on 14 May. Eight who had previously received final warnings were dismissed, and 132 were given final warnings. Workers at Kohler staged two brief stoppages in protest, and union members at six Kohler suppliers threatened solidarity action. At a mass meeting in Brakpan's Tsakane township, residents resolved that no-one would accept a job to replace fired Kohler workers.</p> <p>After negotiations between PWAWU and management, Kohler agreed to withdraw the final warnings, and reinstate the eight dismissed workers.</p>
Litemaster Wadeville	MAWU	65		<p>Nearly two years ago, 65 workers were fired after a strike protesting management's refusal to negotiate retrenchments. The Industrial Court has now ordered their reinstatement with back pay of nearly R800 000. But the Court refused to reinstate 30 other workers who were fired when they struck against the initial dismissals. Litemaster intends appealing to the Supreme Court against the decision.</p>
Minesteel Products Boksburg	UMMAWSA	110	02.05	<p>Workers struck over the dismissal of a colleague, and were all dismissed on 6 May.</p>
National Chemical Products Germiston	SACWU	1 200	11.04	<p>Over 1 200 workers struck demanding a wage increase of R2,50 per hour, and improved working conditions. The following day management and worker representatives agreed to negotiations.</p>
Pilkington Tiles Meyerton	BCAWU	400	23.03	<p>Workers downed tools over the transfer of a shop steward. They were arrested after management called in police when workers refused to leave the factory. The union and management subsequently reached agreement, and all workers were reinstated.</p>
Saveall Industria and Alrode	PWAWU		05.03.85	<p>Workers struck on 5 and 6 March over the dismissal of a PWAWU member shortly after a letter had been handed to management about union recognition. Striking workers chased away people from the unemployment office sent on management request. After PWAWU negotiations with management, the dismissed worker was reinstated, and management agreed to hold recognition talks with the union.</p>
Siemens Cable Pretoria	MAWU		02.04	<p>Almost the entire workforce downed tools in the company's second strike of 1985. (In February, 1 500 workers struck over the dismissal of colleagues). Workers claimed that they had been racially abused by a white supervisor.</p>
Sun International Sibasa		50	End-May	<p>Employees at the Sun Hotel struck in protest against the dismissal of a colleague. They were also objecting to working conditions. Management claimed that the dispute was settled after a few hours.</p>
Tedelex Booysens, Johannesburg	MAWU	500	27.05	<p>This strike over wage demands was not related to the industry-wide negotiations at present being held at industrial council level. Here, workers demanded a 50c/hour increase. They ended the strike when management agreed to start negotiations with shop stewards. Subsequently, management agreed to a 14c/hour across-the-board increase from July, with the promise of further negotiations in July.</p>

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
TFM Wynberg and Olifantsfontein	United African Motor Workers Union (UAMWU)	800	May	Management asked for names of Olifantsfontein workers who stopped work during Raditsela funeral (14 May), to dock an hours' pay. Workers downed tools, and Wynberg workers struck in sympathy. All strikers fired, and police were called in at Olifantsfontein while they were paid off. Subsequently TFM agreed to rehire 150 workers, claiming that only 300 had been fired.
Townsend Brothers Brakpan	MAWU	300	24.04	Workers struck after wage talks between union and management deadlocked. Workers were demanding R3,50/hour increase, which management said it could not meet in a recession.
Triomf Fertilizer Potchefstroom	SACWU	400		Workers were fired last year after a strike over dismissals. Management has now agreed to negotiate over re-employment. The company has also agreed to approach the Department of Manpower and Western Transvaal Administration Board over the financial position of the workers, who have not been getting unemployment benefits. The Board is attempting to evict them from their houses because of unpaid rent.
Vaal Transport Corporation Vereeniging		100	29.03	Workers downed tools over the firing of a co-worker. They returned to work at the beginning of the following week.

Strikes and Disputes: Natal

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
AECI Newcastle	SACWU	600		A wage dispute began last year, with SACWU demanding that minimum pay at Newcastle be raised from R339 to R408 per month, in line with other AECI plants. Management claimed that Newcastle plant suffered from losses caused by eight work stoppages last year. SACWU declared dispute, but three conciliation board hearings failed to resolve issue. Workers struck legally on 25 March, but returned to work on 1 April when management threatened to hire replacements. On 3 June, workers struck again. AECI applied for an urgent court interdict preventing the union from organising sympathy strikes at AECI plants at Sasolburg, Umbogintwini, Somerset West and Modderfontein, which collectively employ over 10 000 workers. Rand Supreme Court judge refused to grant the interdict, ruling that no illegal action had been disclosed by AECI. This was based on the judge's finding that the strike at Newcastle was legal, as will be the envisaged sympathy strikes at other AECI plants.
BTR Sarncol Howick	MAWU	970		British Tyre and Rubber (BTR) is Natal's largest rubber manufacturing plant. It has a long history of conflict with MAWU, which began organising there in 1974, but was only granted preliminary recognition in July 1983. Since then, MAWU and BTR have been locked in negotiations over formal recognition, and negotiations have been punctuated by a number of strikes. During March talks again deadlocked, and over a thousand MAWU members struck after an independent mediator failed to resolve the deadlock. After three-and-a-half days,

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
				<p>workers returned, and BTR and MAWU agreed to present the dispute to a conciliation board. The board, which during March and April, was unable to resolve the dispute.</p> <p>On 30 April, almost the entire workforce downed tools, and were fired four days later. MAWU claims that the strike is legal. BTR disagrees.</p> <p>Striking workers have called for a boycott of white shops in Howick, to force white business to pressurise BTR to grant 'basic union rights'. There have been conflicting reports of the boycott's success. Striking workers meet every day to discuss the situation, and are well supported by their communities. MAWU has claimed that BTR is using scab labour from outside Howick to break the strike. Over 2 000 workers at Dunlop (a subsidiary of BTR) have threatened to strike unless Sarmcol concludes a recognition agreement with MAWU.</p>
Crosby Carpets (Romatex) Reunion, near Isipingo		800	03.05	Workers downed tools in support of wage demands. Three days later they returned to work, having accepted management's offer to increase wages in October.
Die Castings Pinetown	MAWU	120		Workers fired after MAWU conducted strike ballot over company refusal to negotiate bonuses. Negotiations unable to resolve issue, management having claimed ballot invalid.
Farmfare Ladysmith	SFAWU			Workers claimed that a senior supervisor constantly victimised SFAWU members. A series of work stoppages occurred in protest, and against management's refusal to recognise the union. Finally the supervisor was dismissed. SFAWU claims majority membership at farmfare factories in Uitenhage and Johannesburg.
Hans-Merensky-Clan Crammond	PMAWU	600	12.04	The entire workforce struck over the suspension of a co-worker, who had refused to do overtime. 250 strikers fired, and those living in the company compound ordered to leave or face trespass charges. Three workers convicted of intimidation, and sentenced to a R30 fine or 30 days. The company has rehired some of those fired, but PMAWU claims management has a blacklist of those it will not re-employ.
Hart Durban	MAWU			MAWU approached hart to negotiate a funeral benefit and wages above the industrial council minimum. Hart refused to negotiate issues already determined in the industrial council. MAWU has claimed that this refusal is an unfair labour practice, and taken Hart to the Industrial Court. The important issue at stake is SEIFSA's opposition to plant-level bargaining.
International Harvester Pietermaritzburg		132		Workers struck over company's refusal to pay out pension benefits. Company agreed to do so.
Kellogs Durban	SFAWU			White artisan allegedly abused and assaulted a union member. When other workers intervened, the union member was dismissed. A protest sit-in led to management agreeing to arbitration, and the dismissed union member was rehired.

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
Mitco Tools Ezakheni	MAWU			Ezakheni is a decentralisation point, and accordingly not covered by the labour Relations Act. Mitco Tools has, along with other employers in the area, refused to recognise MAWU. The union has claimed that employers have set wages at R23 a week.
Natal Overall Manufacturers	GWIU TWIU			The TUCSA-affiliated GWIU enjoys the benefits of a closed shop at this and other plants. NUTW has challenged this in a series of legal actions. In this case, the Industrial Court ruled that a secret ballot be held to determine which union holds majority support. In a surprise result, GWIU won ballot 533 - 321 (out of a total workforce of 883). TWIU has been refused entry to the industrial council unless it can prove membership of 25% of the 11 000 workers which fall under the council.
NCS Plastics Pinetown	CWIU			Pinetown's largest employer in the chemical industry is, according to the CWIU, shutting down its packing division and moving it to Gazankulu, where labour is cheaper. 212 of the 270 workers employed are to be retrenched.
Scottish Cables Pietermaritzburg	MAWU		03.05	Workers struck over warnings allegedly issued by management in connection with May Day celebrations.
Union Flour Mills (Premier Group) Durban	Baking and Allied (SAAMU affiliate)			Management cancelled its agreement with SAAMU, in force since October 1983, after a series of work stoppages. Management claims that the union violated agreed procedures.
WG Brown (Spar Group)	CCAMUSA	150		Boycott of Spar outlets in support of reinstated of 150 dismissed workers extended from Natal to Transvaal. On 18 April, a bomb exploded at a Durban Spar store. CCAMUSA disassociated itself from the blast. On 21 May, management and union jointly announced that the workers would be reinstated in jobs similar to those held at the time of dismissal. Service would be treated as unbroken, strikers would receive pay ranging from 10% of last month's salary to full pay while waiting to be re-engaged, the consumer boycott would be called off, and the company agreed to negotiate a recognition agreement with the union.

Strikes and Disputes: OFS/E Cape/W Cape

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
Abattoir Corporation East London	SAAMU	150	24.04	Striking workers were fired after a strike over a pay demand. They have called for a boycott of red meat in support for their demands for their unconditional reinstatement, recognition of SAAMU, and cold storage protective clothing. Meanwhile, management has employed 110 new staff to replace the strikers.
African Spun Concrete Blackheath	GMU	150		Wage negotiations over a seven-month period failed to produce a settlement. Both mediation and conciliation boards also failed to resolve the dispute. On 22 April, workers went on strike. GMU believes the strike is legal. Management issued an

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
				<p>ultimatum to workers to return or face dismissal on 8 May. Workers rejected this, and continued their strike on the factory premises despite an attempt to lock them out.</p> <p>The next day they left the factory after police threatened to arrest them for trespassing. GWU has accepted management's wage offer, but wants it backdated to August last year. Management has refused this demand.</p>
Cape Town City Council	CTMWA			<p>Both parties agreed to a wage arbitration after talks broke down last year. The union presented the arbitration board with a case for a living wage, based on interviews with over 6 000 of its members. A union meeting mandated the CTMWA to demand a 100% wage increase for the lowest paid workers, scaling down to 15% for the higher paid workers.</p> <p>Union was very disappointed in eventual award: R4;60 a week increase for workers earning between R73,20 and R87,92 per week.</p>
Car Distributors Assembly (CDA) East London	NAAMU	3 800	09.04	<p>Workers walked out following a wage dispute. Subsequently they accepted a management offer of 14c - 24c per hour increase; and that an across-the-board increase planned for August be brought forward, and implemented from February 1985.</p>
Corobrik 4 Western Cape plants 1 Pietermaritzburg plant	GWU	2 000		<p>A breakdown in wage negotiations was followed by GWU declaring a dispute, and holding strike ballots at the affected plants. Mediation was unable to resolve the deadlock. The union claimed that the wage increases offered by management would leave real wages in the Western Cape below their 1978 level, and below the Minimum Living Level. Corobrik offered increases of between 14% and 17%, while the union demanded 40%. GWU pointed out that Corobrik's holding company (Toncoro) increased its profits 220% in the financial year to March 1985.</p> <p>Workers struck at all affected plants on 20 May. Next day, renewed talks between GWU and management began. The union claimed management was using scab labour to break the strike. Corobrik admitted internal company transfers to keep plants going, but denied use of scabs.</p> <p>GWU revised its demands, claiming a minimum wage of R1,50 an hour. Management refused to up its offer of R1,37 an hour.</p> <p>On 28 May, the union 'reluctantly' accepted management's offer, claiming Corobrik was not prepared to negotiate in good faith, and aimed to break the union.</p>
Motor Industry PE/Uitenhage Volkswagen Uitenhage Volkswagen PE Ford PE Borg Warner PE Firestone PE General Motors PE	NAAMU MACWUSA (Firestone only)	3 500 3 500 2 070 300 1 300 3 000 <hr/> 17 470		<p>After a strike earlier this year, NAAMU won substantial increases for workers at Mercedes Benz (21% in minimum rates, and 14-24c/hour), and at Toyota (increase to R3,00/hour minimum from July).</p> <p>Since November last year, NAAMU has been locked in wage talks with motor employers, demanding a minimum wage of R3,50/hour, reduction of working hours to 40 per week, better job security, and improved retrenchment provisions.</p> <p>Talks between NAAMU and the Eastern Province Automobile Manufacturers Association (representing Ford, GM and VW) began on 26 April, but deadlocked when union demanded same increases granted Mercedes workers.</p> <p>A strike broke out at VW's Uitenhage plant, where 3 500 workers downed tools demanding an interim wage increase pending industrial council talks. Workers granted</p>

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
				<p>interim increase, but they struck again, claiming it was not sufficient.</p> <p>NAAMU explained that, in the past, six-monthly wage increases were negotiated, but the last one was in mid-1984. The union felt employers were delaying increases by insisting on industrial council, rather than plant-level, bargaining.</p> <p>On 25 April, a strike began at the GM plant when workers heard of the interim offer made to VW workers. Management granted an increase back-dated to February.</p> <p>On the same day, workers at Ford, Borg Wargner and Firestone downed tools, demanding an interim increase. All workers returned after accepting increases of between 1½c and 2½c per hour.</p>
SAPPI Novoboard PE		425		<p>During mid-May, workers struck over a wage demand. Company fired all who refused to return to work after an ultimatum issued.</p>
Table Bay Spinners Cape Town	NUTW (FOSATU) TWIU (TUCSA)			<p>A closed shop agreement holds at Table Bay Spinners, whereby TWIU has stop order facilities for members, but NUTW is excluded.</p> <p>Last year, NUTW applied to the industrial council for exemption from the closed shop, but this was refused. NUTW took the matter to the industrial court, which ruled in favour of the TWIU, and against NUTW's application for exemption from the closed shop.</p> <p>But the Cape Town Supreme Court set aside the industrial court decision, and has ordered the industrial court to re-hear the matter.</p>

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