

FOSATU WORKER NEWS

Federation of South African Trade Unions



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THOUSANDS of FOSATU workers demonstrated their opposition to the new constitution by wearing 'One Man One Vote' stickers on the days before the white referendum.

And more than 80 000 pamphlets outlining FOSATU's stand on the constitution were handed out to workers country-wide.

This peaceful protest was an overwhelming success as workers demanded to know from their bosses whether the company supported the 'yes' or 'no' vote.

The most common response was that 'business is separate from politics' and that politics must be kept as a 'private' matter.

This response was completely overshadowed by the fact that a number of South Africa's top businessmen used their positions to publicly campaign for the 'yes' vote.

And when the 'yes' result was announced, employers welcomed the result saying that it would 'stabilise' the political situation in South Africa and therefore encourage foreign investment.

However, it is clear from FOSATU's campaign that workers feel very strongly about the so-called reforms and reject them as merely 'further entrenching apartheid and racism'.

In a statement released after the referendum, FOSATU general secretary, Joe Foster, said 'political stability in South Africa can never be assured until all people, regardless of race, are given equal political and social rights.'

FOSATU rejects the new constitution on the grounds that it is:

* Undemocratic - the vast majority of South Africa's people will still be left without a vote.

* Racist - the old apartheid structures remain unchanged.

* Anti-Worker - the new constitution tries to divide the non-racial strength of workers.

Despite employers attempts to keep 'politics' as a 'private matter', the campaign was carried right into the factories.

The workers stuck up stickers in the factory and wore them all over their overalls.

Although the campaign was carried out peacefully by the workers, not all the employers responded as peacefully.



A number of companies banned the wearing of stickers in the factory and instructed supervisors and security guards to tear off stickers from overalls.

At Kent Meters, a Johannesburg metal factory, two workers were fired during the campaign.

Brother Reginal Pupazana said a manager had come up to him and then just tore the sticker off his overall.

'I asked him why he was doing this. He then accused me of being a politician and of wanting to control the workers.'

'I tried to show him that he must have some respect for the workers but he just said I must go out,' Brother Pupazana said.

He said he had refused to go out and was then called to the manager's office.

There, Brother Pupazana

said, the manager accused him of recruiting for the Metal and Allied Workers Union and suggested that workers should resign from the union as it was a 'political' union.

'I told him that I had already chosen my union. He then said I was too impossible and must get out of the factory,' he said.

Brother Pupazana said he had gone to the changing room to get his things and while there a shop steward had asked what was going on.

'I started to explain when the manager came in and told the shop steward that he was fired also,' he said.

A similar incident also happened at Triomf Fertiliser in Richards Bay.

Senior shop steward, Muzi Buthelezi was hauled off the company bus by secur-

ity guards and had all his pamphlets and stickers confiscated.

The company called in the police but were forced to release him when the workers on the bus got off and refused to leave without him.

From then on armed security guards patrolled the canteen and changing rooms to make sure that no-one wore the FOSATU stickers.

Triomf attempted to have Brother Buthelezi fired for distributing 'political matter', but at the hearing the Chemical Workers Industrial Union had this reduced to a warning.

However, employers have not been alone in their 'interest' in the FOSATU campaign.

At Epol, the Security Police confiscated campaign pamphlets and stickers.

This led to a strike by the entire workforce which demanded that the management get their pamphlets back.

Epol claimed that they had nothing to do with the confiscation of the pamphlets but admitted that an informer within the factory had told the Security Police about the pamphlets.

Eventually after a meeting between the Security Police and the company the pamphlets were returned.

The workers have now demanded that action be taken against 'spies' and that they be paid for the time they had been on strike.

FOSATU condemned these actions and has pledged itself to keep up the fight against 'the farce the present government calls reform'.



WE SAY NO

Workers demonstrate on Referendum day

COMMENT

THE white referendum on the 2nd November proved what we have always said — the Nationalist government and business march side-by-side.

A few lone business voices said No but the rest marched to the government tune. Or is it not a case of the government marching to the tune of business.

If we are opposed to racism and we understand the meaning of democracy then it is impossible to accept the new constitution in any way at all. The new constitution is clearly racist and just as clearly undemocratic. It is a backward step because it keeps power with those who have always done the least to attack racism.

When FOSATU Shop Stewards went to management to find out whether their company supported the proposals, they were usually told that management did not comment on political matters. But these companies are members of the Federated Chamber of Industries which supported a Yes vote. Chris Saunders of Tongaat-Hulett, so-called Liberal, said Yes. Worse still many companies gave money to support the Yes campaign.

Why have business been so strong in their support for the new constitution?

Firstly, it keeps power with the present government and they believe this offers security for their profit making. They fear a change of government.

Secondly, it continues and deepens racial divisions among workers. They hope to avoid their great fear which is a united and organised working class.

Thirdly, they argue that the new constitution shows that there is change in South Africa and that foreign investment and trade should continue.

However, in their greed for profit businessmen are blind to some other political truths.

Firstly, since they have now openly tied themselves to this racist regime, they will have to stand or fall with it in the future.

Secondly, as we in the non-racial trade union movement have shown, we can fight and overcome racial division. Just as liaison committees failed so will these puppet parliaments fail. In fact, just as happened with liaison committees, this will strengthen our determination.

Thirdly, business may persuade reactionary governments such as those of Reagan and Thatcher. However, they will not persuade workers overseas. This unholy alliance of business and the Nationalist regime will only strengthen the pressure for disinvestment by foreign companies.

The policy of divide and rule always has some success, as opportunists try and get their small share of the power and wealth in South Africa. These opportunists will try and cause confusion in their search for support of the Labour Party and suchlike.

We must prepare ourselves for a struggle. Workers will certainly have important allies in this struggle for democracy. We have seen this in the formation of organisations such as the UDF. But the real and final target of the constitutional attack is workers and it will have to be workers who carry the main burden of the struggle for political and economic liberation.

Dunlop chases away its own 'scab' labour

FOR the first time in South Africa's labour history, police have chased 'scabs' away from a factory.

Usually police protect 'scabs' against 'intimidation' by strikers.

However, at Dunlop in Durban the police were called in to remove about 100 workers who had been hired by the company in order to break a strike by members of the Metal and Allied Workers Union.

But the strike did not take place on the day that management expected it but angry scab labour broke into the factory saying that the company had promised them jobs.

Security guards tried to get them out but were unsuccessful so management called in the police.

Police with dogs eventually chased the scabs off the factory premises.

The strike was due to start on November 14 but was called off by the workers when a Conciliation Board was appointed in a bid to settle the wage dispute between Dunlop and MAWU.

In wage talks, MAWU has demanded that the company raise wages to FOSATU's living wage of R2 an hour by next year.

But the company said it would only commit itself to reaching R2 by the end of next year.

A MAWU spokesperson said this was totally unacceptable as all the rest of the tyre manufact-

urers already paid at least R2 an hour.

The starting rate for Dunlop workers is R1,80 an hour.

When the company refused to budge from this position, the union was forced to call a dispute and applied for the appointment of a Conciliation Board.

MAWU also held a strike ballot at the gates of the Dunlop plant at which all 825 members voted in favour of a legal strike — only 6 workers voted against.

During the week of the strike ballot, the company began to gear itself up to breaking the strike and began to test unemployed workers who would be brought in to scab.

Dunlop also began settlement negotiations with the union but broke these off as soon as the Conciliation Board was appointed.

The workers have for the time being called off the strike but at this stage MAWU sees little chance of settling the dispute at the Conciliation Board.

MAWU has started a strike fund to which Dunlop workers are contributing R5 every two weeks and to which contributions from other factories in the area are added — on going to press the fund had about R4 000 in it.

Workers at the Dunlop factory in the Transvaal have pledged their support for their colleagues

in Durban and the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union has said it would "fully support the Dunlop workers".

Meanwhile, at Dunlop's Ladysmith factory, MAWU has called a dispute after the company refused to begin wage negotiations at all

Natal Branch secretary, Geoff Schreiner said the union had completed negotiating a recognition agreement with the company which would cover Ladysmith.

"We sent our signed copy of the agreement to Ladysmith to be signed by local management but Dunlop sent it back saying that they had changed their minds."

He said they had wanted to change certain clauses in the agreement which would make it easier to dismiss striking workers

"We wrote to them saying that as far as we were concerned the agreement was in operation and that we wanted to start negotiating wages," Brother Schreiner said.

When the company refused to begin wage negotiations, MAWU called for the appointment of a Conciliation Board and will be taking Dunlop to the Industrial Court for refusing to act in terms of the agreement and for not negotiating wages with a representative union.

Clash looms at Sarmcol

WORKERS at Sarmcol at Howick are preparing for a major clash with their bosses.

After a long struggle, the workers recently got management to agree to begin recognition talks with the Metal and Allied Workers Union.

The company agreed to complete the recognition talks with the union within three months.

However, negotiations have been held up by the company insisting that MAWU should merely accept the company's policy on severance pay.

This is despite the fact that earlier when Sarmcol retrenched a number of security guards it agreed to negotiate their severance pay with the union as part

of the recognition package.

"But when we came to the issue of severance pay during the talks, they now said that they had changed their minds — severance pay was non-negotiable," a MAWU organiser said.

He said the company policy laid down that severance pay would be 2 days pay for each year of service after 5 years — if a worker has worked less than five years he would get nothing.

"We said we were not prepared to accept this and have declared a dispute," the organiser said.

In the meantime, Sarmcol has said it is going to retrench another 39 workers.

It agreed to discuss the retrenchments with MAWU but once

again insisted that severance pay was non-negotiable.

MAWU has called for the appointment of a Conciliation Board and is considering strike action.

Meanwhile, the company has also called a dispute and is attempting to take the union to court for its unfair labour practice.

The company is claiming that because MAWU did not accept the company's severance pay policy, it was negotiating in bad faith.

MAWU said it would oppose the company's court action by asking the Industrial Court to throw the case out on the grounds that it is frivolous.

Thousands wear FOSATU stickers



Getting into the spirit of the FOSATU campaign — Uniply workers at Cato Ridge in Natal.



Catching the early shift, NUTW organiser Jabulani Gwala hands out stickers at Frametex.

Step forward for worker solidarity

solidarity

IN a major step forward for international worker solidarity, the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union has strengthened its links with one of the world's biggest unions — the IG Metall in Germany.

Recently NAAWU president, Jury Harris, VW branch chairman, John Gomomo and union organiser W Monqo visited Germany and met with people at all levels of the IG Metall.

As a result of the visit, the IG Metall has committed itself to 'fully supporting the struggles of the oppressed workers in South Africa'.

The NAAWU delegation were guests at IG Metall's Congress where the newly elected president, Hans Mayrs, stressed the need for international solidarity.

Apart from this, the delegation visited shop steward councils at the major motor plants, including the giant VW plant at Wolfsburg.

In their report, the delegation said the shop stewards were extremely interested in the situation in South Africa and they discussed FOSATU's shop steward structure.

LINKS

The NAAWU delegation underlined the importance of international links between worker movements to all they met.

The delegation said that management were very co-operative with each other and the flow of information between them was 'very fast'.

'It is high time that workers move away from concerning themselves only with the problems of their factories.

'We should be considering all the workers involved in the same industry right around the world,' the delegation said.

They stressed that this would prevent management using one group of workers against another.

The importance of these links became evident in the visit itself.

The South African delegates were able to discuss with their German colleagues the problem of 'robots'.

ROBOTS

At the Wolfsburg plant, the delegation visited an area which was completely operated by robots and as a result hundreds of workers had lost their jobs.

It was important to discuss how they tackled the problem of robots with German shop stewards, as in South Africa VW is already talking about introducing robots into the Port Elizabeth plant.

During the visit arrangements were made to exchange information between IG Metall and NAAWU on a regular basis.

NAAWU was also represented at another meeting which linked workers worldwide — the International Metalworkers Federation's World Council on SKF.

The World Council meeting was attended by 40 worker representatives from ten countries around the world.

In his report, Eastern Province regional secretary, Les Kettle said the SKF World Council had been very useful because 'detailed discussion took place about a multinational company in the process of restructuring its operations worldwide, and the effects this would have on the workers'.

He said that World Councils could become a great source of information and exchange of views, which would make the carrying out of support action more effective in the future.

NAAWU delegates (right) given a place of honour at the huge IG Metall Congress

Frame tries to wriggle out of Industrial Court case

FRAME is doing its best to avoid recognising the National Union of Textile Workers as the true representative of its workers at the New Germany mills.

Last FOSATU Worker News reported that the Minister of Manpower had finally appointed a Conciliation Board after five months in an attempt to settle the dispute between the National Union of Textile Workers and the giant Frame textile company.

Realising that Frame would never come to the Conciliation Board, the union saw this as a step towards the Industrial Court where it says it will present 'damning' evidence.

Frame appealed to the Minister to reverse his appointment of a Conciliation Board, but he turned this down.

Now the company is appealing to the Supreme Court to review the Minister's decision because,

Frame says, the original dispute no longer exists.

It is obvious that the company is using every tactic it can to keep out of the Industrial Court.

Meanwhile in the heart of the Frame empire — the New Germany mills — workers are flocking to join the NUTW.

At Pinetex, the second largest mill in the complex, hundreds of workers have resigned from the sweetheart Textile Workers Industrial Union (TWIU) and have joined NUTW.

However, the company is refusing to stop deducting TWIU stop orders and is trying to say that only TWIU can tell it to stop deductions for these workers.

NUTW general secretary, John Copelyn said the union viewed this refusal as a 'criminal offence' and would be taking this matter up.

R25 000 for locked-out workers

TWENTY-FIVE thousand Rand has been won by the Chemical Workers Industrial Union for workers who were locked-out at Bonus Fertiliser earlier this year.

And the company has agreed to take back about 30% of the workers.

Earlier this year the 65 union members at this Richards Bay plant arrived at work one morning to find that management would not let them in.

Majority unionism fought for

TRANSVAAL employers have been trying recently to force the Metal and Allied Workers Union to bargain at plant-level together with minority unions.

MAWU has slammed this move as completely unacceptable because it runs against the principle of majority unionism.

All FOSATU unions believe that the union which has the majority of workers as members should be regarded as the sole bargaining representative in the plant.

Branch secretary, Moses Mayekiso said that employers have tried to get MAWU shop stewards to participate in Company Works Councils which include all the unions which have membership in the plant.

'We cannot accept a situation

The company had claimed that the workers had been participating in a go-slow but this was strongly denied by the workers.

The CWIU said it was clear that this action was a 'disguised' retrenchment.

The company had been using the claimed go-slow as a way to avoid negotiating retrenchment with the CWIU, a union spokesperson said.

The union decided to take the company to the Industrial Court

on an unfair labour practice claim.

But minutes before the case was due to be heard in the court, the company began settlement talks.

In terms of the settlement, Bonus agreed to pay out R25 000 and to take back half of the workers who were locked-out.

The money was shared out mainly among those workers who were not taken back.

where we are 90 percent representative, like at Usco Vaal and Klip, yet have to sit at the negotiating table and perhaps sign joint agreements with unions which represent as little as 2 percent of the workers,' Brother Mayekiso said.

'The company must negotiate with the majority union and the minority union and non-members must then fit in with that,' he said.

'We are going to fight this at all levels of our organisation,' he added.

Brother Mayekiso said the companies which had tried to push this on MAWU were — GEC, Boart Hard Metals, EMSA and MCG Plastics.

He said it was clear that the metal employers' association,

SEIFSA, was behind this.

'SEIFSA must realise that good industrial relations in the metal industry will only come about when it stops meddling with companies which want to negotiate with representative unions,' he added.

Brother Mayekiso said that SEIFSA was trying to form mini-industrial councils at every factory.

'But just like Liaison Committees and Works Committees they just won't work as they will be rejected by the workers,' he said.

'We believe that the majority union has the right to negotiate on behalf of all the workers in the plant. And we will force employers to honour that right,' he added.

NUTW wins Patons' ballot

IT'S a big yes for the National Union of Textile Workers at Patons and Baldwin on the West Rand.

In a secret ballot held recently the majority of the workers at this Randfontein factory voted 'yes' to being represented by the NUTW.

NUTW's victory at Patons and Baldwin signals a major defeat for Selora's Textile Workers Union.

Earlier this year Selora 'botched' up the wage negotiations at the factory which led to a strike by the entire workforce of Patons and Baldwin, a union official said.

Since then, he said, workers had said they were fed up with her union and had 'crossed the floor' to NUTW.

Initially management granted both unions stop orders on the understanding that only one union would have stop order facilities when it had proved it was a majority, the official said.

'We then decided to go for a ballot on the basis that the winner takes all,' he said.

The ballot is the second that the NUTW has had to face against Selora's union.

The first was at Braitex where 86 percent of the workers voted in favour of NUTW.

Transvaal Branch secretary, Bangi Solo said that now Patons and Baldwin had 'fallen' all other factories in the area would move across to NUTW.

He said the Patons and Baldwin workers had waited outside the factory for the results of the ballot and celebrated their victory with a braai in the township.

Second FOSATU union joins Industrial Council

THE National Union of Textile Workers has joined the Industrial Council covering the Transvaal knitting industry — making it the second FOSATU union to join an industrial council.

Earlier this year in a strategic move the Metal and Allied Workers Union joined the metal industry's industrial council.

NUTW's move onto the knitting industrial council shatters a TUCSA dominated closed shop.

Up until April last year the Garment Workers Union and the National Union of Clothing Workers had used the industrial council agreement to keep membership in the Transvaal knitting industry.

NUTW general secretary, John Copelyn said an April agreement between the union and the knitting employers' association gave the NUTW full rights at factory level.

'In addition we said we would apply for membership of the council which we did in August last year,' he said.

However, the unions on the council blocked our application saying that the NUTW was not registered for the Germiston area, he added.

'We then applied for the extension of our registration to cover Germiston. This was opposed once again by these two

TUCSA unions,' Brother Copelyn said.

He said the Registrar decided to over-rule their opposition and NUTW had been granted extension of registration.

The TUCSA unions, then had no choice but to let us onto the industrial council, he added.

'Once we were there we then had a clash over the number of seats given to the unions on the council.'

'The NUTW argued for seats to be given according to the size of membership,' Brother Copelyn said.

'Out of the six seats, we said NUTW should get two for its 400 members, the National Union of Clothing Workers should get three and perhaps one for Anna Scheepers' Garment Workers Union,' he said.

'Eventually the TUCSA unions agreed to give NUTW two seats but said that they would split the four remaining seats between them — two each,' he added.

Brother Copelyn said at present the NUTW was happy with this arrangement as the two seats represented about a third of the industry.

'But if we expand we are not going to be satisfied with the Garment Workers Union's thirty members being given two seats,' he said.

The NUTW has also applied for membership of another council governed by a TUCSA closed shop — the clothing industry's industrial council.

TUCSA's Garment Workers Industrial Union has turned down NUTW's application but the union will be appealing to the Industrial Court against this decision.

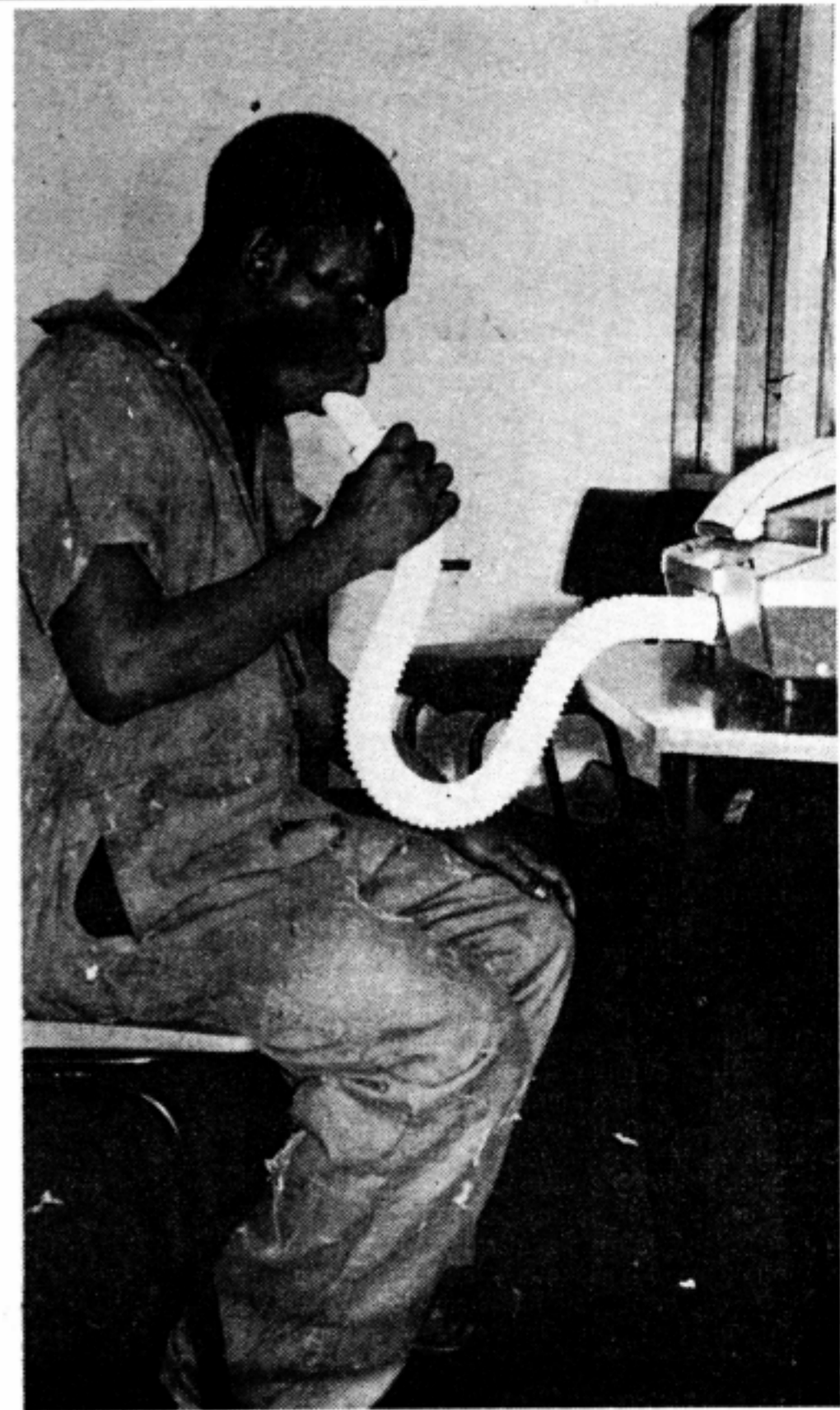
Huge turn-out at textile AGM



The three branches of the National Union of Textile Workers packed the hostel hall at Clermont near Pinetown for the union's AGM. The guest speaker was FOSATU president, Chris Dlamini and the meeting was entertained by the Braitex and Frame choirs. Frame workers also presented a play on their struggles.

COTTON DUST HAZARD

TEXTILE workers are realising the health dangers of cotton dust and are clamouring to be tested by National Union of Textile Workers' new health and safety officer, Dr Neil White. These pictures were taken during a recent Brown Lung campaign at Hebox. The worker below is 'doffing' in the spinning department — his hair and overalls are covered with cotton. As the spinning department is the dustiest department mainly workers from this department were tested. The worker on the left is having his lungs tested.



Workers trap sex offender

A JOB offered in return for sexual favours has long been a hazard faced by women workers.

And as it is often a member of management involved, it is difficult to put a stop to it.

Besides in this time of high unemployment, a women worker is grateful to get a job — no matter what the price.

However, workers at Dunlop were recently able to 'trap' and have a training officer fired, because workers suspected, he was getting women jobs in return for sex.

Dunlop workers said they had often found the door of the personnel offices locked shortly after some worker had been taken on so they plotted to 'catch him in action'.

CHANCE

The workers saw their chance when the training officer employed a women worker on a Friday.

'On the following Tuesday at about one o'clock he called the lady to his office,' workers said.

'One union member rushed to the door to test whether the door was locked. It was.

'He contacted another worker who had access to a phone. That worker then phoned one of the managers,' the Dunlop workers said.

CAUGHT

The workers said the manager came with a spare key and caught the training officer 'taking his payment'.

He was fired on the spot and the worker involved kept her job so all the workers were happy.

Since their success the Dunlop workers who are members of the Chemical Workers Industrial Union have been calling on 'fellow brother and sisters' to put an end to this sexual harassment.

They charged that management knew about it but did nothing about it 'since it does not affect management as much as it does us workers'.

'But we have proved that workers can still fight it on their own,' the Dunlop workers said.



Smith and Nephew strikers on the soccer pitch in front of their factory

Manager resigns after workers strike

A LABOUR relations manager has resigned at Smith and Nephew in Pinetown after workers struck in support of their demand for his dismissal.

The workers said the labour relations manager had made insulting comments about their wives.

When workers demanded an apology from him, they said, he had refused as he said he had been just 'trying to make them wise'.

The shop stewards decided to take the matter up with management and approached the managing director.

According to the workers, the managing director refused to believe that the labour relations

manager had insulted them.

He is reported to have said that black workers were always jealous when they saw another black worker promoted so they were just plotting against him.

At this response, the workers decided to down tools and demand the dismissal of the labour relations manager.

DISMISSAL DEMANDED

So on the Monday the entire workforce went onto the factory premises but refused to go to their machines until he had been dismissed.

For three days the workers gathered on the soccer pitch in

front of the factory buildings while shop stewards and National Union of Textile Workers officials talked with management.

During this time management stuck to their position that they did not believe that the labour relations manager had insulted workers.

MEDIATION

Eventually the company agreed to refer the matter to mediation but first the NUTW insisted that the labour relations manager be suspended until the mediator had finished.

Workers then returned to work.

Three days later the company informed the union that the labour relations manager had resigned 'in spite of efforts by the company to persuade him to stay'.

Be careful of job evaluation

MANY companies, especially in the metal industry, have been introducing the system of job evaluation.

Most companies use the Patterson system or the Peromnes system. Some use the Hey system.

Management usually tells workers that the new system will benefit them. Management says that the system will get rid of racial discrimination in wages.

Usually, the introduction of job evaluation does help the lower-rated workers at the beginning. But we must ask why management is so keen on these new systems.

In the past, skilled workers have been able to demand very high wages because of the shortage of skilled workers.

About four years ago, the chairman of AMIC, Mr Graham

Bausted said white skilled workers were blackmailing management into paying unreasonably high wages because of the shortage. Management, he said, wanted to break this power of blackmail by training black workers in order to overcome the shortage.

That is why in 1978 SEIFSA, the association of metal industry employers, scrapped job reservation in the metal industry.

Up to now, jobs in the metal industry have been graded according to the schedules in the Industrial Council Agreement. This job grading is based only on the skill required for a job.

Skilled workers are getting much higher rates than the ones set in the Industrial Council. For instance, the Industrial Council rate for artisans is about R4 per hour but artisans actually get about R9,10 per hour in most areas.

Management wants to break these high wages for skilled workers. They want to put blacks into the jobs, but first they want to 'deskill' the jobs — they want to break up the jobs so that the skilled workers won't have as much power as they have now.

One of the ways of hiding this is to scrap the Industrial Council

job gradings and to replace them with the Patterson, Peromnes or Hey systems.

These systems don't grade jobs according to skill — they mainly grade according to how much responsibility and how much decision making there is in each job.

So this job evaluation takes out skill as a criteria for job grades, making it easier for management to change the jobs.

Obviously, they are doing this to bring down the wages of skilled workers. They want to put all wage rates on a smooth wage curve.

At present, artisan wages are much higher than other wages, partly because of job reservation and partly because of the shortage of skilled workers.

So the job evaluation will get rid of race discrimination by bringing down the high rates.

Is this what we want? No, we want management to bring UP the lower rates.

Management is using our unions to help them break up the skilled jobs. This is not such a problem for our members now because artisans are generally not our members.

But it will be a problem in the future. So be very careful of job evaluation.

SFAWU organisers arrested

RECENTLY seven unionists from the Sweet Food and Allied Workers Union were arrested while recruiting outside the Beacon Sweets factory at Moberi near Durban and charged with 'obstructing the pavement'.

This action has been condemned by the FOSATU Natal Regional Congress as a 'gross violation of the right to organise'.

Newly elected SFAWU general secretary, Jay Naidoo, who was among those arrested, said that if organisers were arrested every time they recruited outside factory gates 'we will not be able to organise at all.'

He said the union would be contesting the charges.

FOSATU DECIDES NOT TO JOIN UDF

FOSATU has decided not to affiliate to the United Democratic Front although it shares the UDF's opposition to the new constitution and to the Koornhof influx control bills.

This decision follows discussions at all levels of the federation which culminated in a special seminar to discuss the UDF at the Central Committee meeting in October.

The United Democratic Front was launched in Cape Town on August 20 in a mass rally attended by about 12 000 people.

The UDF has about 400 religious, student and community organisations affiliated to it.

It was formed specifically to form a united front against the new constitution and the Koornhof Bills.

A statement explaining FOSATU's reasons for not affiliating to the UDF said 'it was essential to ensure the greatest possible unity of FOSATU's membership on a national basis and affiliation to one organisation could cause division'.

The Central Committee took

the view that the UDF basically united support-based and activist organisations in the community and this shaped its present structure.

However, FOSATU represented membership based in national organisations which received their mandates for action in a very different way.

It therefore believed that major practical problems would arise in trying to link these different types of organisations, the Central Committee statement said.

The Central Committee once again stated its absolute opposition to the new constitution and the Koornhof Bills and it therefore welcomed the opposition being mobilised by progressive organisations such as the UDF.

It added that FOSATU had committed itself to an active campaign of opposition to the new constitution which it hoped would supplement and support the opposition being organised in South Africa.

PWAWU beats selective rehiring

THE Paper Wood and Allied Workers Union has become the second FOSATU union to block an employer selectively rehiring or firing striking workers.

In a full recognition agreement signed with Carlton Paper at Wadeville, the company agreed that if there was a strike, it would either dismiss all the strikers or none at all.

It also agreed that if all the strikers were fired, the company would either take them all back or none at all.

This is the second such agreement to be signed by a FOSATU union. The first was between the National Union of Textile Workers and Natal Thread — a Hammarsdale company.

This strike clause makes it extremely difficult for an employer to sack striking workers as to do so would mean training a completely new workforce from scratch.

It also removes management's strike breaking tactic of dividing the workers by only taking back some of the strikers.

The Paper Wood and Allied Workers Union said it had pushed for the strike clause after watching the selective rehiring tactics of many bosses in the Wadeville area.

The PWAWU hailed the Carlton agreement because it 'put workers on a stronger footing in their negotiations with management.'

IN the first two parts of this serial, we saw how Khoi people were deprived of their land and cattle and forced to become farm workers to survive. By 1820 there were almost no Khoi who had not been subjected to a system of forced labour so harsh that one writer has described it as 'virtual slavery'.

At the same time most farmers in the Cape also actually owned at least one of their workers as slaves. Especially in the Western Cape, much of the work was done by slaves who were forced to work in a system which was even more brutal and bloody. Resistance to this oppression by both Khoi and slaves was constant, though usually disorganised and individualistic.

It was partly this resistance which made some missionaries press for more freedom for the Khoi. There were also more people looking for jobs than before. There were migrants entering the Cape Colony from the north and east - some Sotho, Tswana and Mfengu people - and there were Xhosa people who were being pushed off their land by white colonists in the eastern part of the Cape. All these things led to the end of restrictions on the Khoi in Ordinance 50 of 1828, and then to the end of slavery in 1834.

It seems that workers' conditions improved for a time after the removal of passes and the freeing of the slaves. But soon all kinds of new measures were introduced to make sure that the farmers could maintain control of their workers. A system of indentures tied most workers to their employers for periods of seven to ten years. Then in 1841 a new law called the Masters, Servants and Apprentices Ordinance was introduced. It did end legal differences between racial groups. But it made breaking a labour contract a criminal offence. This meant that workers could supposedly sue their employers if they were not paid wages or if they were thrown out of their jobs. But in practice it was only the employers who could persuade the magistrates to convict workers who didn't do as their masters wanted. It was a new way in which the government helped employers to discipline their workers.

Pass system brought in to control the movement of Xhosas

The reasons for the new law are obvious. All through the years up to 1856, the farmers of the Cape continually complained that they could not find enough labour. These were years in which the production of wine, wheat and wool grew rapidly and the farmers needed more cheap and disciplined labour to keep expanding their production. The newspapers, which were owned by the merchants, complained that there was 'no social evil of such magnitude as the want of labour ... any servant is eagerly sought after and snapped up'.

The solution to the farmers' labour problems was soon found. From 1856 Xhosa from the other side of the frontier began flooding into the colony. In fact, by 1858, there were so many people looking for work that the colonial government introduced a new pass system to control the movement of Xhosa people coming into the colony from beyond its borders. How did this come about?

To understand the change we must look at the wars and conquests which put unbearable pressure on the Xhosa-speaking people.

There had been a long series of wars between the colonists and the Xhosa, starting in the 1770s. But although the colonists advanced, they did not succeed in making the Xhosa retreat. Instead the Xhosa were forced into areas which were too small to maintain them.

The Xhosa were a greater obstacles to settlement by the colonists than the Khoi had been. As agriculturalists they were more concentrated and there were many more of them. But internal divisions weakened the Xhosa people. One early conflict between the people of Ngqika and those of Ndlambe ended in the defeat of Ngqika's forces in 1818. Ngqika then formed an alliance with the colonial government and the British troops against Ndlambe and his main prophet, Nxele. A war followed in which the Xhosa were forced back over the Keiskamma River. Nxele was imprisoned on Robben Island, and drowned while trying to escape with a group of other convicts on Christmas Day 1820.

Fifteen years later, new tensions were developing on the frontier. A great drought affected the eastern part of the colony which helped to increase the clashes between the colonists and the Xhosa. Some Xhosa who were living under Chief Maqoma

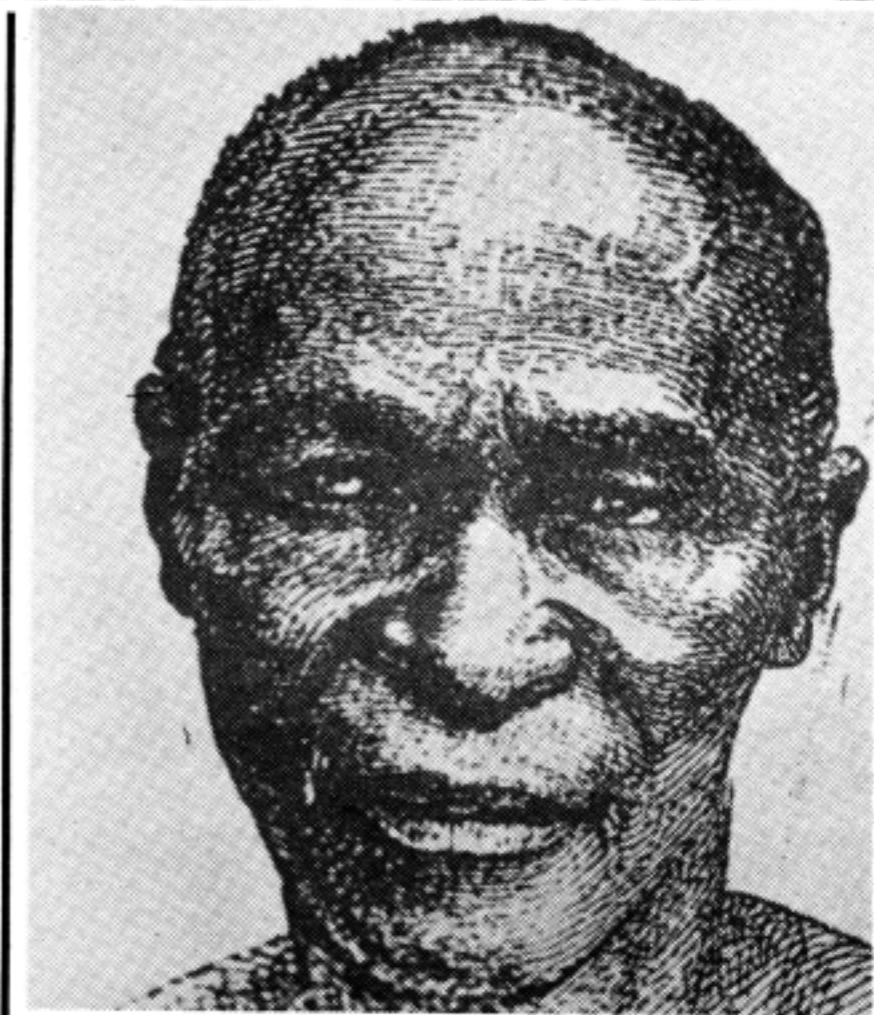


in the Kat River area were driven off their land in 1834. According to another chief who was sympathetic to Maqoma.

'Maqoma's heart was very sore about the land. The subject always set him on fire. He fought in hopes of getting it back'.

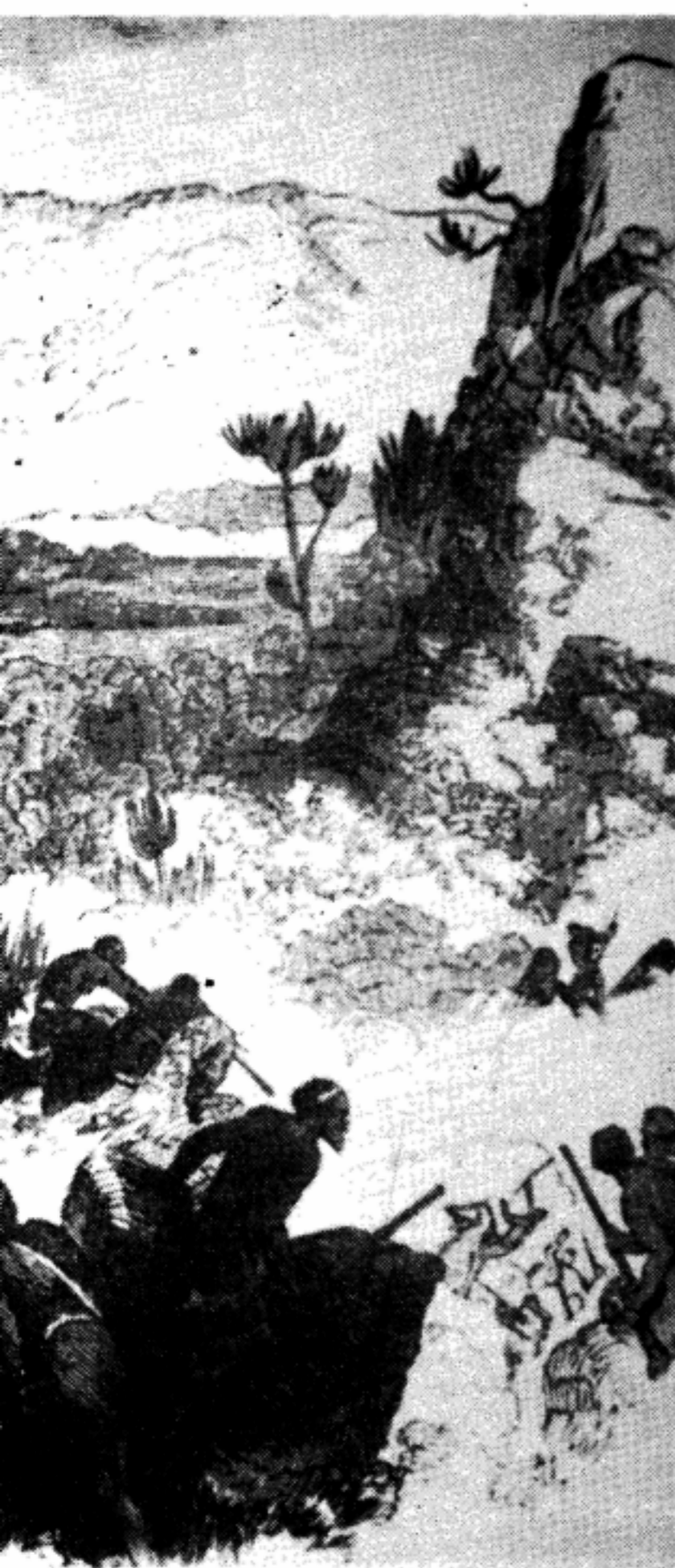
Maqoma therefore invaded the colony with 12 000 men, and got almost as far as Port Elizabeth. But again the Xhosa were forced to retreat this time beyond the Kei River, where Hintsa ruled. The war ended with the killing of Hintsa and the imprisonment of Maqoma on Robben Island. The effect of the war was very severe. The British troops and colonist commandos directed their attacks against the cattle and food supply of the Xhosa. Their fields were burnt and the cattle captured. The exhausted Xhosa were then disarmed and many were compelled by the loss of their food, cattle and land to work on the colonists' farms.

But even this labour soon proved inadequate, however. The market for wool in England and Europe was growing, and the farmers wanted to expand production for those markets. They could only do this if they could find the workers they needed. The colonists also wanted more land. Several thousand trekked away from the eastern districts to the north in search of better conditions in the 'Great Trek' between 1834 and 1838.



Chief Maqoma
(Pictures courtesy of Wits University Africana library)

The making of the WORKERS



The Masters and Servants Ordinance of 1841 helped to force workers to stay on the farms, as we have seen, but it did not give the farmers everything they wanted. The pressure for land in the east burst into warfare again in 1846. A small incident provided the excuse for an expedition against Chief Sandile by troops from the Cape. Sandile's resistance turned into the 'War of the Axe'. Once more the British troops tried to destroy the sources of the Xhosa's food. The colonial newspapers demanded:

'Let the war be made against huts and gardens ... let there be no ploughing, sowing or reaping.. shoot their cattle too....'

Sandile argued that 'As many people have been killed on both sides, we had better drop the war and cultivate the fields'. In fact the Xhosa were already defeated. The war ended in the annexation of the whole area from the Fish River to the Kei River.

The Xhosa were confined to reserves in areas which are now part of the Ciskei. The people were forced to seek work on the settlers' farms. A colonial government official wrote:

'There is indeed great suffering now, and the opportunity should not be lost of scattering the people far into the colony where they can.... be useful'.

The Xhosa suffered yet another defeat in a war

which ended in 1853. The pressure on land and other resources in the area across the Kei, as well as among the remaining Xhosa and Tembu in the Colony, brought about a tragedy.

After all these defeats, the Xhosa turned to religious leaders (prophets) who promised deliverance from oppression. These promises were eagerly believed by large numbers of the people. To achieve this dream, the people were told that they had to slaughter their cattle and destroy their grain-pits. A prophetess called Nongawuse began to prophesy near the mouth of the Kei River in early 1856. With the support of some chiefs, the movement spread east and west of the Kei.

Each time the movement was disappointed by the failure of the cattle killing to result in the deliverance that was promised, the prophets blamed the failures on the refusal of non-believers to kill their cattle. Renewed killing followed each disappointment, until the final failure of the movement in February 1857. The desperate Xhosa who had destroyed their food supplies, exhausting even tree bark and roots, were forced to throw themselves on the mercy of the colonists to survive. The colonists were not known for their mercy, and did not change their behaviour now.

Almost at once, some colonial officials appreciated that the cattle-killing was likely to force many Xhosa to look for work in the Colony. As early as October 1856, the magistrate at Middelburg was offering to supply the farmers with labourers drawn from the destitute Xhosa entering the colony. From a few hundred in early 1857 the numbers jumped to over 6000 a month by July.

In the colony, the relief desired by the Xhosa was not given for nothing. Food was not given for nothing. Food was supplied only to those who were so weak that they could not travel or work. Of the refugees from the famine 87 per cent were placed in employment under three or five year contracts. The terms of the contract are worth quoting in full.

'I the undersigned a Kaffir of of the kraal ... hereby of my own free will undertake to proceed to any part of the colony of the Cape of Good Hope, and in such fashion and in such manner and mode as I shall be ordered by the Chief Commissioner, and I further undertake faithfully and truly to perform such contract of service as the Resident Magistrate of(district of which sent) shall enter into on my behalf, it being understood that such contract shall not exceed the term of three or five years from the day of agreement, and that he will fix at his own discretion the wages and food to be allowed me during the continuance of the said contract to which I willingly consent'.

Contracts force workers to accept bad conditions of work

Blacks in South Africa were getting their first taste of the freedom of wage labour. The contract spoke of 'free will' and 'willing consent' but because these contracted workers had no property and no food they had no freedom to do anything else. So they were forced to accept whatever bad conditions of work that they were offered. Unless they unite, workers are not in a very much different situation today.

Farmers now collected whole wagon loads of workers from magistrates' offices. With so many Xhosa streaming into the Colony, the government now produced a series of new laws to control them and their labour. A new Pass Act stopped any Xhosa from entering the colony except to find work. An Employment Act compelled Xhosa to leave the colony when their contracts expired unless they found work within 14 days. Under these laws children were 'apprenticed' for indefinite periods to farmers even hundreds of miles away in the western Cape. By the end of 1857 almost 30 000 Xhosa had been registered as workers.

Those Xhosa people working on contracts for the farmers hoped that after some years they might

be able to rebuild their old way of life. But this was prevented by the large-scale seizure of land. Land was confiscated and given to white settlers in the East London - King Williamstown - Stutterheim area. Also, other Xhosa who had managed to hold on to their land during the cattle killing were now crowded together in concentrated villages. Each household had a garden of 4 acres and some grazing land, but this was not enough for the Xhosa to live independently without going out to work. Also, returning migrants found that they had difficulty in getting access to land, and younger sons were unable to inherit from their fathers. As the surveyor of the new plots, a man called Daves, wrote in 1857:

'The smaller the (plots) ... the sooner will the children of the holders be driven to seek employment in the colony'.

By 1858, the large migration of Xhosa into the colony had helped to reduce the farmers' labour problems and to enable an enormous expansion of production, particularly of wool. As the value of the wool clip grew, so the farmers grew wealthier and more goods were imported into the colony from overseas. Merchant companies and banks accumulated capital and activities in the towns expanded. It was at this time that employers in the town began to experience a shortage of labour which helped to drive up wages. In part wages went up because of competition between employers for workers. But the workers also played a role.

First strikes at Cape Town and Port Elizabeth docks win higher wages

Between 1854 and 1860 several strikes took place in the port towns of the colony. The first of these was at Cape Town in March 1854. Workers who handled the cargo in the harbour struck for a 50 per cent increase in wages. Within a week they were back at work, having won their demand. In 1856 when workers struck in the harbour at Port Elizabeth, they too won their demands for increased wages.

Who were these first striking workers? This is not an easy question to answer. In Cape Town the working class was very mixed, including both black and white people. In Port Elizabeth, most of the harbour workers seem to have been either 'Malay' - that is, ex-slaves and their descendants - or Mfengu. Some of those called Mfengu were really Pedi migrants from as far away as what is now the northern Transvaal. What is clear is that the strikes were successful because there was solidarity among all the workers. As one of the first strikers in Cape Town, Francis Dousing, said:

'The whole of them had joined hand and heart when they struck for more wages. We firmly agreed not to work below this price, and that one would not go to work unless all got it If one gets it, all must get it'.

In response to high wages and the shortage of workers, employers turned to new sources of labour, and proceeded to encourage divisions among the workers. For example, to build the first railway from Cape Town to Wellington, Irish and English heavy labourers were brought to the Cape in 1859. And the large migration of the Xhosa into the colony after 1856 meant that some ended up working in the towns. As a result there were fewer strikes during the 1860s.

In the sixties the Cape was in a period of recession. The number of workers needed did not grow as rapidly as before. Yet in the 1870s there were once again numerous strikes and endless demands by farmers and town employees for more labour. A big expansion in the wool trade, and the development of the diamond mines, were responsible. In a future issue we will look at how these events drew many more workers into the first really large workforces in the railways and the diamond mines, and how they dealt with the conditions they found.

NG CLASS

Transport workers fired for collecting scraps of labels

FREIGHT Services in the Transvaal recently fired two union activists and accused the Transport and General Workers Union of being involved in 'industrial espionage'.

This heavy-handed action by the company occurred after the union decided to investigate complaints by the workers of chest problems and rashes.

TGWU general secretary, Jane Barrett said the problems mainly affected the workers whose job it was to clean out the big transport containers.

'We raised the issue with the workers and it was felt that we should take those effected to a doctor to try and find out the seriousness of the complaints,' she said.

Four workers were taken to the Health Information Centre and examined by a doctor.

Sister Barrett said the doctor had said that he needed to find out what chemicals the workers were using to clean and what chemicals were being cleaned out of the containers.

'So we asked the workers to

collect scraps of labels to find this information out for the doctor,' she said.

The union also raised health and safety at the monthly meeting with the management and asked that workers be given protective clothing.

'Management responded by saying that they needed a list of what we required.

'So we continued our investigations which would enable the union to put forward worthwhile recommendations,' Sister Barrett said.

The next day, Sister Barrett said that she had gone to the depot to collect the label scraps from a shop steward and a member who had collected them all.

Shortly after she had left the plant these two workers were told they had been fired for 'theft and disloyalty to the company'.

The TGWU took the dismissals up in accordance with the appeal procedure but management wouldn't budge.

At the meeting, management

threatened to report the TGWU to the companies importing the chemicals and suggested that the union was involved in 'industrial espionage'.

Sister Barrett said the company's attitude was 'absurd' considering the workers' reason for collecting the scraps of labels.

The TGWU decided to take the matter to the Industrial Court.

In papers delivered to the company the union said that the firing of the workers was an unfair labour practice as the investigation of chemicals had been done solely to investigate the working conditions.

Before the matter could come before the court, Freight Services agreed to take back the two workers with three weeks back-pay for the time they had been out of work.

'We also got a commitment from the company to discuss health and safety and it agreed to give to the union the names of the chemicals the workers were cleaning with,' Sister Barrett said.

Criticism of new migrant contract continues

THERE is mounting opposition to moves by the metal industry's employers' association, SEIFSA, to bring in a new contract for migrant workers.

Since the Metal and Allied Workers Union's attack on SEIFSA for changing the contract without any consultation with the workers, both the Council of Unions of SA (CUSA) and the Black Sash have slammed the metal employers' association.

The new contract will enable metal employers to fire migrant workers with only a days notice.

Up to now migrant workers have been given a certain amount of security by the yearly contract—in terms of which it is extremely difficult for employers to fire a migrant worker in the middle of his contract.

However, as migrant workers now prepare for the Christmas shutdown, they are being given contracts with a new stamp on them.

The stamp says that the contract 'shall be for a period of 12 months in its entirety and which shall consist of an initial period of one month and thereafter be continued on a daily basis with one day's notice required to terminate the contract'.

SEIFSA has made this move in order to prevent legal action against employers who retrench migrant workers in mid-contract.

MAWU is at present contemplating legal action against Krost

Brothers for dismissing shop steward, Jethro Mkhize, in the middle of his contract.

In a recent press statement, CUSA criticised SEIFSA for 'attempting to jeopardise normal employment conditions and destabilise the industry by this action'.

Black Sash national president, Sheena Duncan, in a letter to the Rand Daily Mail said 'it is beyond belief that SEIFSA so callously, and without consultation with the workers, has conspired with the Government to remove one miserable protection migrant workers enjoyed.'

In reply to these criticisms, the director of SEIFSA said that the new move was to place migrant workers on the same basis as 'white, coloured and Asian workers and black workers with Section 10 1 (a) and (b) rights'.

However, he forgets that because of the evil migrant labour system, migrant workers do not enjoy the same 'privileges' as these workers.

Losing a job for a migrant worker means being shipped back to the 'homelands' where both poverty and the drought reign supreme.

Meanwhile, MAWU and other independent unions are gearing themselves up to resist the introduction of the new contract.



After hearing of the success of the worker culture day held in the Transvaal, the Natal Region decided to hold its own. The Dunlop play was once again the main event but the Frame choir (left) and the group, Abafana Bomoya, also performed (below right).



FOSATU FUN DAY IN NATAL

Workers also have rights!

IN the past South African employers have felt it was their right to fire workers at the slightest excuse.

But with the growth of the independent union movement, they are having to learn that workers have rights too!

So as fast as textile employers fire workers, the National Union of Textile Workers has had them taken back.

Recently the union has won the re-instatement of six of its members in the Transvaal.

At Polyknit, management started by firing the senior shop steward, Moore Mehlokhulu.

The NUTW took this to the Industrial Court which ordered that the company re-instate him.

REFUSED

However, the company thought otherwise and refused to take him back. It then fired the acting senior shop steward and three other workers.

The company claimed that it was 'restructuring' the workers.

Once again the NUTW took the company to court demand-

ing that Polyknit take back Brother Mehlokhulu and the four other workers.

The union argued that the company had broken an agreement that it had made with the union by retrenching the workers.

HOLD OFF

In the agreement, Transvaal knitting employers agreed not to retrench any workers this year. In return the union agreed to hold off the wage increase.

The court once again ordered that the workers be taken back and that they be paid back-pay for the time they had been out of work.

The NUTW has now cancelled its agreement with Polyknit because the company broke its part of the bargain and is demanding that it pay its workers an 11 per cent increase backdated to July.

At Braitex, the union won the re-instatement of Rosalina Moeketse who was fired after she complained that she was being underpaid.

Sister Moeketse signed a griev-



Maxie Dreyer (centre) together with the three women workers who gave evidence during her court case. Also with them is NUTW Western Cape organiser, Virginia Engel (far right) and FOSATU regional secretary, Titus McKinnon (far left). STOP PRESS: Sister Dreyer has been re-instated by the court.

ance form along with 11 other workers saying that they were being underpaid in relation to other workers.

The company upped the wages of the other 11 but did not put up Sister Moeketse's wages. So she filled in another grievance form.

In response to this, a manager called her in, insulted her and threatened to fire her.

Sister Moeketse then decided to fill in another grievance form complaining that she had been 'abused' by a manager.

On getting the grievance form, the company fired her without any hearing for making 'inflammatory' allegations about a manager.

In an out-of-court settlement with the NUTW Braitex agreed to pay her R250 in back-pay and

to take her back. The company also agreed to look at her wage complaint if she withdrew the complaint against the manager.

Her wages have since been raised to the level of the other workers.

Meanwhile in the Western Cape, the NUTW is waiting for the court judgement in another case of unfair dismissal.

At Franz Falke, management fired Maxie Dreyer for supposedly getting workers to sign a petition during working hours.

The petition had been suggested by Franz Falke in a Conciliation Board as a way that the union could prove it was supported by the majority of workers in this Belville factory.

However, the company not only fired Sister Dreyer for

allowing workers to sign the petition, it also posted management at the gates to prevent workers signing anywhere on factory premises.

In spite of this the NUTW was able to prove that it was supported by the overwhelming majority of workers at Franz Falke.

The union took the company to court in a bid to win the re-instatement of Maxie Dreyer.

The NUTW argued that as a supervisor Sister Dreyer was authorised to allow people to leave work for short periods of time.

It also argued that Franz Falke would never have fired her if she hadn't been a member of the union.

The union is expecting the court to order that Sister Dreyer be taken back.

NUTW sets picture straight for International's officials

A NUMBER of key TUCSA unions have been trying to deceive senior officials of the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers Federation.

During a recent visit to South Africa by the international's president and general secretary, the TUCSA unions tried to make out that the independent unions, particularly the National Union of Textile Workers, was causing the division in this country's

worker movement.

The TUCSA unions claimed that 'overseas money' was being used to 'disrupt and divide' established unions instead of being used to organise the unorganised workers.

The unions also claimed that 'threats and intimidation' were being used against workers to 'pressurise' them to leave their union and to join other unions.

'The friction which exists tod-

ay in our industries did not emanate from the established unions, and we would certainly like to see it ended in the interest of all workers concerned,' the TUCSA unions told the international

Luckily the picture was set straight by the National Union of Textile Workers which underlined the divisive practices of the TUCSA unions in a report given to the international's senior off-

icials.

NUTW said when it was formed in 1973 it used to co-operate with the TUCSA unions.

However as soon as the State began to 'harrass' the NUTW by banning and detaining its officials, 'we found that the TUCSA unions chose to desert as rapidly as possible', the report said.

In November 1976 when some 26 union activists were banned by the State, the TUCSA general secretary told the press that 'people who disturb public peace should not be surprised when the State clips their wings'.

And more recently when trade union leader, Neil Aggett, died in detention, the TUCSA unions refused to join in with the independent unions' outrage as they had 'no knowledge of Neil Aggett's activities'.

The National Union of Textile Workers also told the international's officials that TUCSA had called for the banning of unregistered unions and for the prosecution of illegal strikers at its recent congress.

The report said that to find a union movement calling for the State to prohibit worker organisation when migrant workers from neighbouring countries were prohibited from joining registered unions was an 'absurdly anti-worker position'.

On top of this, the NUTW said the TUCSA unions had assisted in 'smashing' strikes, used industrial councils to block the union and had been brought in as 'sweethearts' by employers.

So who is causing the division?

National paint wage talks flounder

THE first-ever national wage negotiations in the paint industry are floundering as unions and employers battle over the issue of plant-level bargaining.

A spokesperson for the Chemical Workers Industrial Union said that some of the members of the South African Paint Manufacturers Association had insisted there should be no negotiations at factory-level once a national wage minimum had been set.

'This is totally unacceptable to our union which will never give up the right to plant-level bargaining,' he said.

'There should be no condition on plant-level bargaining except that the union should be representative,' he added.

He said that if an agreement was reached on wages and working conditions it would lead to substantially better conditions for workers in non-unionised plants.

However, the deadlock over plant-level bargaining rights could lead to a collapse of the talks, he said.

The CWIU would then continue to negotiate wages and working conditions at their members' factories and shelve the idea of industry-wide negotiations, he added



ITGLWF general secretary, Charles Ford, together with two members of NUTW's National Executive

58 000 left homeless by Katlehong shack demolitions

MORE than 58 000 people have lost their homes in the East Rand Administration Board's campaign to clear out 'illegals' from the Katlehong township near Germiston.

Over the past year, ERAB officials have systematically broken down shacks and have sent more than 29 000 people back to the drought-stricken 'homelands'.

Recently, three FOSATU members who all live in Katlehong gave a public talk on the issue of shacks.

Brother Ronald Mofokeng said that the shacks were make-shift homes made out of corrugated iron, timber, cartons and plastic.

He said that with the establishment of the capitalist system in South Africa, rural people were forced to leave their land to seek work in the cities and mines.

And because the State did not ever take the responsibility to build houses for the workers, people were forced to build shacks.

He said in some cases the employers took up this responsibility and built large corrugated compounds.

However, because the shacks were a 'health hazard' and as illness would affect production, the State eventually built 'ash-brick shacks'.

'But since it is not in the interest of the profit hungry bosses and their State to meet the needs of workers, a large section of the working class never received any accommodation,' Brother Mofokeng said.

He explained that during the boom period, industry developed and a large number of workers were drawn from the 'labour camps' in the rural areas.

'With the housing shortage already high, these workers were forced to build more shacks.'

'But today,' he said, 'the capitalist system is experiencing an economic recession and the bosses are shifting the burden of the crisis on to workers by making them redundant.'

'A large number of workers now find themselves unemployed and the State wants to drive them back to the homelands to avoid the responsibility of granting them social benefits.'

Brother Mofokeng said these unemployed workers were seen as a 'political threat' by the State so it was demolishing the shacks and sending these workers away from the urban areas.

'However, the workers have been resisting in different parts of the country and have shown their resistance by squatting,' he said.

Brother Baznaar Moloi said that in Dukathole in Germiston there were so many shacks that one cannot even walk through them.

'But up to now nothing has happened with those shacks because they are not owned by migrant workers.'

He said a shack was only a shack because it did not have the approval of the authorities — this was a political decision.

Brother Moloi said shacks had been built in Katlehong as early as 1945 when people were moved from the old location leaving only 'coloureds' and 'Indians' behind.

Why did they move people?

He said this was done to separate the different race groups and to make it easier for the new industries to draw on their labour.

'Because the economy was booming and the employers needed labour, they never complained about the shacks — but now the recession has cursed our acceptable houses,' he said.

The last speaker, Brother

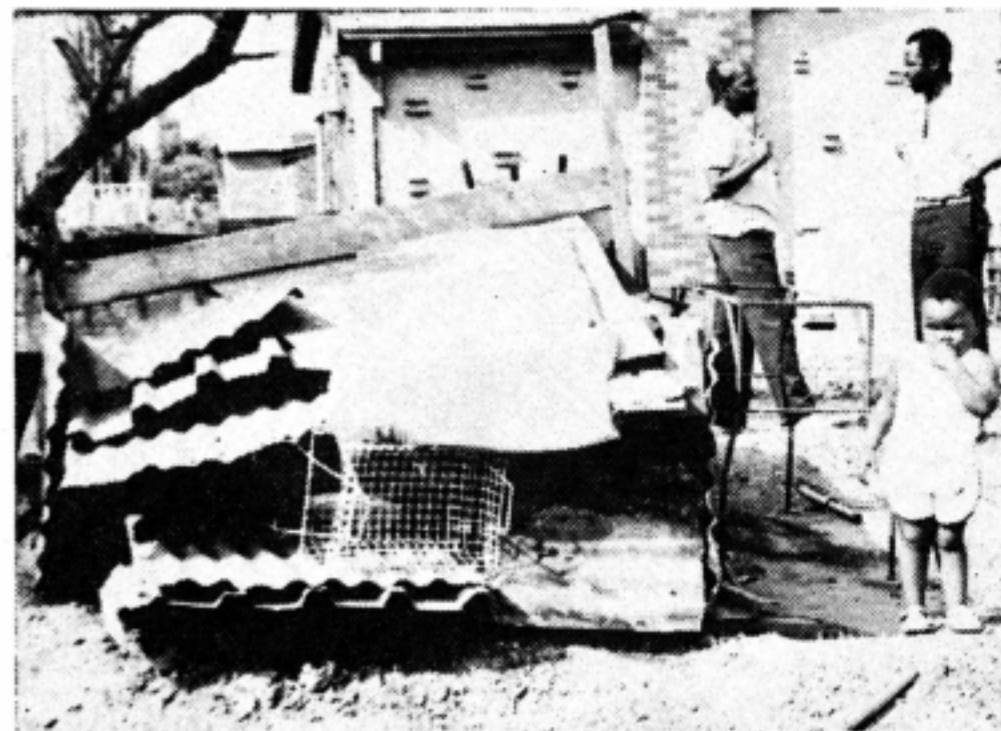
Calvin Makgaleng said the East Rand Administration Board was building 'heavenly mansions' in the 'homelands' of Lebowa and KwaNdebele.

'Why is workers' money being used to promote separate development — why is our money being used to promote homelands?' he asked.

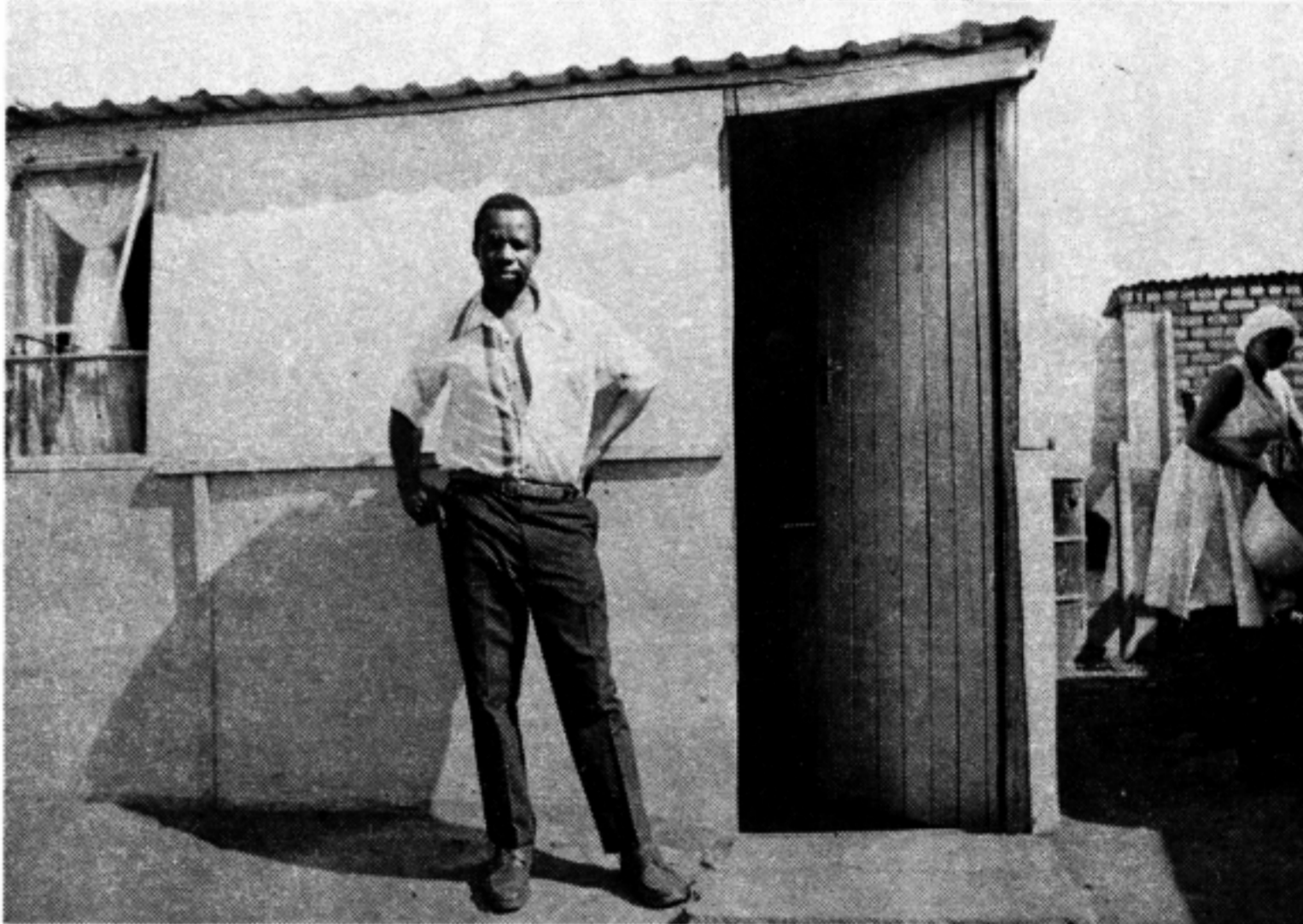
He said that influx control had been introduced to the gain of employers and therefore the employers should take on the responsibility of worker housing.

But this did not mean building 'unchristian' hostels, he added.

He said workers must begin to 'pressurise' employers to provide 'decent' houses for them or to buy land so that workers can build their own houses.



Above: This pile of corrugated iron was once somebody's home
Below: A FOSATU member stands outside his 'shack'



Urban rights for 300

ABOUT 300 workers from Mooi River Textiles have been given section 10 rights after a campaign by the National Union of Textile Workers.

It is believed that this is the largest single group of workers to be given section 10 rights since the independent union movement together with the Black Sash began to urge workers to apply for urban rights.

The Rikhoto court judgement earlier this year opened the way for workers who have 10 years or more service with one company to get section 10 (b) rights.

Section 10 (b) gives workers the right to look for work and to live permanently in 'prescribed' areas — areas outside of the 'homelands'.

It also means that if a worker loses his/her job, the worker cannot be sent back to the 'homelands'.

PRIVILEGE

However, although Mrs Rosina Rikhoto in a further court case won the right to live with her husband, Tom Rikhoto, not all women married to husbands with section 10 rights will be granted the same 'privilege'.

A new law passed in August this year says a person with section 10 rights will only be allowed to bring his wife and children to town from the rural areas if he has a house of his own.

The only way to get round this is if the worker can prove that his wife and children were living with him before August 26.

RIGHT

So, although the Rikhoto judgement has paved the way for more workers to live permanently in the urban areas, they are still deprived of the basic human right of living with one's family.

Meanwhile, the Sweet Food and Allied Workers Union reports that it is becoming more and more difficult to get a job in Pietermaritzburg unless a worker has section 10 rights, 'even if your KwaZulu home is as little as 15 kilometres outside of town'.

'It was clear to SFAWU that there was little point having a clause in a retrenchment procedure which guaranteed first option on employment if your non-urban status prohibits you from returning to the same job,' a union organiser said.

She said a retrenched worker from Epol Feed Mill had been offered a job but a Drakensberg Administration Board official had told him that the wages were too high for a 'rural' person.

SFAWU approached the Administration Board and threatened to take legal action as the Board was 'interfering in a legal agreement between the company and the union'.

The organiser said soon after this the Board agreed to register the retrenched worker.

'Now SFAWU is including a clause in retrenchment procedures which says that the company has to inform the relevant Administration Board of its intention to take back specific workers,' she said.

New union for FOSATU

A NEW affiliate has been admitted into the ranks of FOSATU — the Natal Sugar Industry Employees Union.

The NSIEU was one of the first unions to be formed in the sugar industry, way back in 1937 when sugar workers earned R3 a month.

It was formed as a non-racial union and at present has a membership of about 1 000.

Brother R R Pillay has been general secretary of the union for 26 years.

The NSIEU was admitted as an affiliate at the October meeting of the Central Committee on the recommendation of the Natal Region.

The Natal Region said it had worked for some time with the new affiliate to ensure that it met the requirements of affiliation — that it operated as a non racial, democratically controlled worker organisation.

Retrenched workers found jobs after workers down tools

MEADOW Feed workers in Pietermaritzburg have successfully blocked the retrenchment of 26 workers.

But because of the deafness of management to their demands, the workers had to down tools before their bosses would listen to them.

In September, the company informed the Sweet Food and Allied Workers Union shop stewards that it intended to retrench 53 workers.

The company said it had to lay off these workers because their work was going to be done by a new machine.

The bosses also wanted to take people off the trucks in order to 'pass on the savings in transport to the customers'.

The management agreed to meet with the union shop stewards and officials to discuss the alternatives to retrenchment but during the meeting it became clear that they were not taking the workers' demands seriously.

The Meadow Feed workers were demanding that their bosses:

- * postpone the introduction of new machinery until 1984.
- * keep as many people as possible in employment.
- * absorb the 53 workers into the

departments where the workers felt they were needed.

* first fill the jobs of outside contractors like security and the gardens with Meadow Feed workers.'

* pay two weeks severance pay for each year of service.

The day before the company was due to give notice to the retrenched workers, a petition was handed to management by the workers.

The petition laid out the workers' demands and requested that the managing director address them the following morning.

'As he was not taking our representatives seriously, he was asked to speak directly to the workers,' a worker said.

At 6 am the next morning the entire workforce waited for their manager who only arrived at 8 am.

In response to this united action by the workers, management agreed to seriously negotiate with the shop stewards.

Knowing that the meeting would soon be in progress, workers returned to work at 10.30 am.

As a result of the negotiations that followed 26 workers were protected against retrenchment by being placed in other jobs.

Lamontville turns into a battlefield

LAMONTVILLE, a township near Durban, was recently turned into a battlefield.

And it is believed that at least three people have died as a result of attacks by SJ Smith hostel 'impi'.

The Natal region of FOSATU has called on the SJ Smith Hostel workers 'to carry out the real task of workers which is to create unity and not to destroy it'.

Since the residents of Lamontville decided they had had enough of continual price increases and decided to resist both the bus and rent increases, they have been the focus of violence.

Last year the Lamontville people voted to boycott the buses of the Durban Transport Management Board when the Board announced a hike in the fares.

For nearly a year the residents have refused to board the buses and have walked up to 5 kilometres to the nearest railway station or have caught the taxis.

A central figure in the bus boycott was Lamont councillor, Harrison Dube.

However, earlier this year he was shot dead at point blank range by assassins alleged to have been hired by Lamontville Mayor, Moonlight Gasa.

At this point the violence in the township erupted as township residents showed their anger at the death of their respected councillor.

People stormed out of the memorial services held to commemorate his death, stopped a bus, emptied the passengers and then set it alight.

From then on riot police patrolled the township, fired tear gas, chased people with dogs and allegedly fired shots which wounded completely innocent people.

At this stage the Port Natal Administration Board announced that it would be increasing the rents from May this year.

In community meetings, the residents planned to continue to pay the old rents but not the increase.

They said they would not pay higher rents for houses which were 'wrecks'.

At this point KwaZulu leader, Gatsha Buthelezi, intervened saying that if Lamontville were incorporated into KwaZulu the rents would be lower.

This was totally rejected by the people of Lamontville who rightly feared that if they were incorporated into KwaZulu they would lose their section 10 rights.

The right to look for work in the nearby Durban would then be a 'privilege' governed by the whim of the Administration Board.

However, at a meeting at the SJ Smith hostels, the local councillor criticised Lamontville's decision to not be incorporated into KwaZulu.

The scene was now set for a confrontation between the workers at SJ Smith and the residents of Lamontville.

The opportunity came when a Lamontville councillor invited the SJ Smith councillor to a meeting in the township.

'When they came into the hall it was already packed with people who were singing. The councillors then tried to chase the youth out of the meeting with sticks,' a person at the meeting said.

'There was havoc inside and the youth came out and started to burn cars,' he said.

At that point an SJ Smith 'impi' came across to the township 'to teach the Lamontville people a lesson'.

Scores of people had to be treated for severe head injuries and a woman, a man and a young schoolboy were killed in the fighting.

The next day FOSATU issued a statement urging workers to 'not allow yourselves to be used'.

The statement said 'workers must build a just and equal society for all - they must not plunge into the darkness of attacking children'.

However, the local Zulu newspaper, Ilanga, misrepresented the FOSATU statement claiming that along with the Joint Rent Action Committee, the federation had slammed the SJ Smith workers.

In fact FOSATU's statement

slammed the violence and the police for not intervening sooner to prevent the riot. It was also not a joint statement with JORAC.

Efforts to get the Ilanga to correct this misrepresentation have been unsuccessful.



Above: Since last year police have continually patrolled the township
Below: KwaZulu government cars smoulder outside the Lamontville Community hall - this sparked off the hostel 'impi'
(Pics courtesy of the Daily News)

Wave of metal strikes by Transvaal workers

THE metal industry in the Transvaal has been hit by a wave of strikes over the past few months as Metal and Allied Workers Union members battle against stubborn management.

And in spite of the employer practice of firing all the strikers and rehiring selectively, MAWU has managed to get the majority of the workers taken back.

This is no easy task in the present economic climate where retrenched and unemployed workers are desperately looking for jobs.

At Boart Hard Metals at Springs, workers struck for two hours when the company refused to take back a worker who, workers said, had been unfairly dismissed.

Talks between MAWU and Boart Hard Metals have at this stage deadlocked and the union is considering further action.

At another Springs factory, Union Carriage, workers downed tools for two days when management brought in a white union into retrenchment negotiations with MAWU.

MAWU boycotted the meeting arguing that as the majority union it should have sole bargaining rights.

At VSP Steel workers went on strike when the company suddenly announced that it would not pay any bonuses this year.

On the same day the company dismissed all the workers and closed the factory 'until further notice'.

However after negotiations between MAWU and the comp-

any, management agreed to re-employ all the strikers.

About 200 workers at Coalquip near Johannesburg have also been taken back after a strike over the dismissal of a worker.

Meanwhile, at Rheem SA workers have refused to accept selective rehiring.

The workers went on strike demanding the dismissal of a supervisor who had said to management that union members were intimidating non-members.

This was dismissed as 'lies' by the workers.

Rheem fired all the strikers and has tried to selectively rehire workers in order to weed

out the 'hot heads'.

At Pretoria factory, Asea Cables, workers have struck on three occasions recently.

The latest strike was sparked off by the dismissal of a worker.

The company fired all the workers and began to hire retrenched workers from other plants.

After long negotiations between Asea and MAWU, the company finally agreed to take back the majority of the workers and guaranteed employment to the rest when there was sufficient orders.

However, three shop stewards were not taken back and MAWU will be making an appeal for them.

Retrenchment blocked

A STRIKE by 200 workers at Port Elizabeth's Carborundum Universal factory recently successfully blocked the retrenchment of seven security guards.

The company told Metal and Allied Workers Union shop stewards that it was bringing in an outside firm to handle security at the factory in order to cut costs and would therefore have to retrench the security guards.

This was not accepted by the workers so the following day they stopped work in sympathy with the security guards.

Negotiations between the Metal and Allied Workers Union and the company resulted in management agreeing to absorb the security guards into production.

Carborundum agreed also not to reduce the security guards wages.

Earlier, it was discovered by the union that the security guards had been working a 60 hour week but were being paid for only 45 hours a week - R117 instead of R169.

After negotiations the company agreed to back-pay the guards the amount they had been underpaid - which in total meant the company had to pay out about R5 000.

MAWU believes that the Carborundum's retrenchment of the security guards had been influenced by this massive back-pay claim.

Christmas cheer

CHRISTMAS is going to be a real time of celebration for Shatterprufe workers in Port Elizabeth.

They have just won a 250 percent increase in their annual bonuses.

And all because they swapped over from the tame Glass Workers Union to FOSATU's Chemical Workers Industrial Union.

For as long as they can remember, Shatterprufe workers have been getting one week's wages as a bonus.

But now in terms of the new wage agreement just completed, workers will get three and a half week's wages as a bonus.

For the bottom grade, this will mean an additional R205 at the end of the year.

The workers have also won a 12.4 percent wage increase

which will push the minimum hourly wage from R1,86 to R2,10.

These wage negotiations have meant a lot to the Shatterprufe workers - not only because they were able to achieve massive increases but also because it was the first time that they had ever participated in negotiating their own wages.

Under the Glass Workers Union, the general secretary would talk to management and then the workers were merely told what their increases would be.

The next step for the Shatterprufe workers is to have the Provident Fund, which was set up by the Glass Workers Union, liquidated.

A new pension fund will then be set up which will cater for workers' needs more adequately.

BUS BOYCOTT TURNS INTO A HORROR STORY



Police road-block outside Mdantsane — set up to harass boycotters. (Picture courtesy of the Daily News)

'The buses smell of blood. We will not ride them even if the fares go back to normal'

EFFORTS to squash the four month-old bus boycott in the Ciskei township of Mdantsane have backfired.

The horrifying acts of violence being carried out by soldiers and Ciskei-backed vigilantes has merely strengthened people's resistance to boarding the buses.

The bus boycott got off to a slow start in July when the Ciskei Transport Corporation, which is virtually owned by the Ciskei government, announced it would increase its fares by 11 percent.

However, since then the Ciskei government has declared a state of emergency in the township, detained hundreds of people, brought in a 10.30 pm to 4 am curfew and is believed to have shot over 90 people.

All this was done in an attempt to force the residents of Mdantsane to use the buses.

Today the Ciskei Transport Corporation's buses run virtually empty and the company has reportedly lost over R6 million.

NEWS BLOCK

Although, the Ciskei government has tried to totally block any information about the atrocities being committed by the Ciskei authorities and Ciskei-backed vigilantes, news has leaked out.

FOSATU Worker News recently visited the Border area and although workers were scared to talk for fear of further violence, they were keen that other workers know what is happening in the Ciskei.

The situation is best illustrated in the tragic story of one of our members:

'I haven't seen my daughter for four months. The police took her from my house for being a member of COSAS. And my son was shot dead by police. I heard from an eyewitness that he and some friends were playing with a tennis ball at the back of a shop. She said that a police

van came and stopped and the boys ran away. The police got out and fired at them. My son was shot in the leg. He ran to a nearby house and hid next to a window. The police shot him again — dead. The owner of the shop came out and asked them why did they shoot him. They replied that the boys had been singing freedom songs. Now they are trying to say that my son and his friends had been trying to burn down the rent offices. But the rent offices are far from where they were and there is not even a scratch on the offices.'

HOUSES SEARCHED

This event is not unusual, most Mdantsane people have their own story to tell. But few understand why this is happening to them.

Another worker told FOSATU Worker News how police came to his house and in their search found a National Automobile and Allied Workers Union membership card.

'They never told me why they were searching the house they only said that whoever was a member of a union must be locked in. I was detained in a cell for two months and not once did they ask me anything. I wasn't assaulted but there were people in the cell who had been beaten up.'

CROWDED CELLS

Detained workers said they had been kept in crowded cells and for three days they had waited for blankets.

Whilst they were there people had come into their cell saying they had just come from 'the field'.

'The field' is the Siza Dukashe Sports stadium where the Ciskei-backed vigilantes would indiscriminately assault the people they had arrested.

The vigilantes are an unofficial police reserve consisting of loyal members of the Ciskei Nat-

ional Independence Party — Sebe's party. The vigilantes mostly come from the rural areas.

The vigilantes have been used to patrol the township streets where they 'arrested' people for breaking the curfew, not having the right documents or for wearing a union t-shirt.

The vigilantes also tried to stop people using the trains and when the boycott spread to the schools, they forced schoolchildren to go to school.

Those arrested were taken to 'the field' where they were sjamboked, the women were often raped and some reported that they had been hung up on a water pipe by the wrists and then thrashed.

However, the vigilantes are not alone in their torturing of people.

Detained workers said that students who were being interrogated had told them that the

police had taken the inner-tube of a tyre and pulled it across their faces until they couldn't breathe anymore.

Some said the police had handcuffed their hands to their feet and then made to swing for hours from a rod suspended between two tables — this method of torture is called the 'boeing' or 'helicopter' by Ciskei Security police.

Over the past few months hundreds of people have been detained including officials of a number of independent unions.

'We don't want any unions in the Ciskei,' a security policeman told one of our members.

And recently the Ciskei authorities went as far as to ban the South African Allied Workers Union.

It seems the Ciskei will go to any lengths to try and stamp out the bus boycott including shooting people.

POLICE FORM BLOCKADE

On August 4 the police formed a blockade to stop commuters from reaching Mount Ruth and Edgeton stations.

The commuters tried to go round the blockade but the pol-

ice drew their firearms and fired without warning at the people.

It is not known how many people were killed or wounded in this incident. Official figures say that 30 patients were admitted to the 'disaster ward' of the local hospital and 15 were in the intensive care unit. More than 5 were killed.

NEVER ENDING HORROR

The horror stories of the Ciskei 'war' are never ending.

But what has been the South African employers' response to this attack on their workers.

At a meeting with FOSATU representatives, the Border Chamber of Industries said they had 'on public record' condemned the banning of SAAWU and had called for the lifting of the curfew but they have had no 'direct' communications with the Ciskei government.

They said they had raised the issue with South African government officials but their response had been that South Africa could not interfere in the affairs of an 'independent' state.

FOSATU now plans to take the Ciskei issue up with the Federated Chamber of Industries, which represents the majority of South African employers.



The Field — behind these walls people were beaten and tortured.