

# FOSATU

## WORKER NEWS

Federation of South African Trade Unions

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# Thousands support stay-away call as anger rises in Transvaal townships

THE growing strength of organised workers was clearly demonstrated by the success of the two-day stay-away in the Transvaal.

Hundreds of thousands of workers heeded the call made by the independent trade union movement and other progressive organisations to remain at home on November 5/6.

Townships on the East Rand and on the Vaal reported that up to 99 percent of the residents observed the stay-away call.

Factories, shops and offices in the Transvaal were forced to close when no workers turned up.

The Transvaal stay-away was the most successful display of wide-spread protest that South Africa has seen for years.

It has its origins in the growing discontent in the country's black townships.

Since the beginning of the year, students in many township have been boycotting school in protest against inferior bantu education.

At one stage an estimated 160 000 students nationwide were involved in the boycott.

They are demanding democratic Student Representative Councils, an end to age restrictions, the reinstatement of expelled students, free books and schooling, and the end to all corporal punishment.

At the time of the new constitution elections, Indian and 'coloured' students joined the boycott in order to show their rejection of the 'new deal'.

During the boycott, student leaders have been detained and numerous school-



Riot police patrol the townships during the stay-away

children have been shot dead by police.

Worker parents are naturally sympathetic to their children's struggle and in many townships joint parent-student committees have been set up to offer support.

On top of this, workers are having to meet ever increasing rent, food and transport costs at a time when employers are using the recession as an excuse to block wage increases.

The dropping of GST off certain 'essential' foodstuffs

has done little to help this situation.

Workers in the townships have also had to face unemployment as industries step up retrenchment.

The government's hopelessly inadequate Unemployment Insurance

Fund offers no relief for them.

This growing frustration boiled over first in the Vaal townships when town councillors announced a rent increase from September 1.

TURN TO PAGE TWO



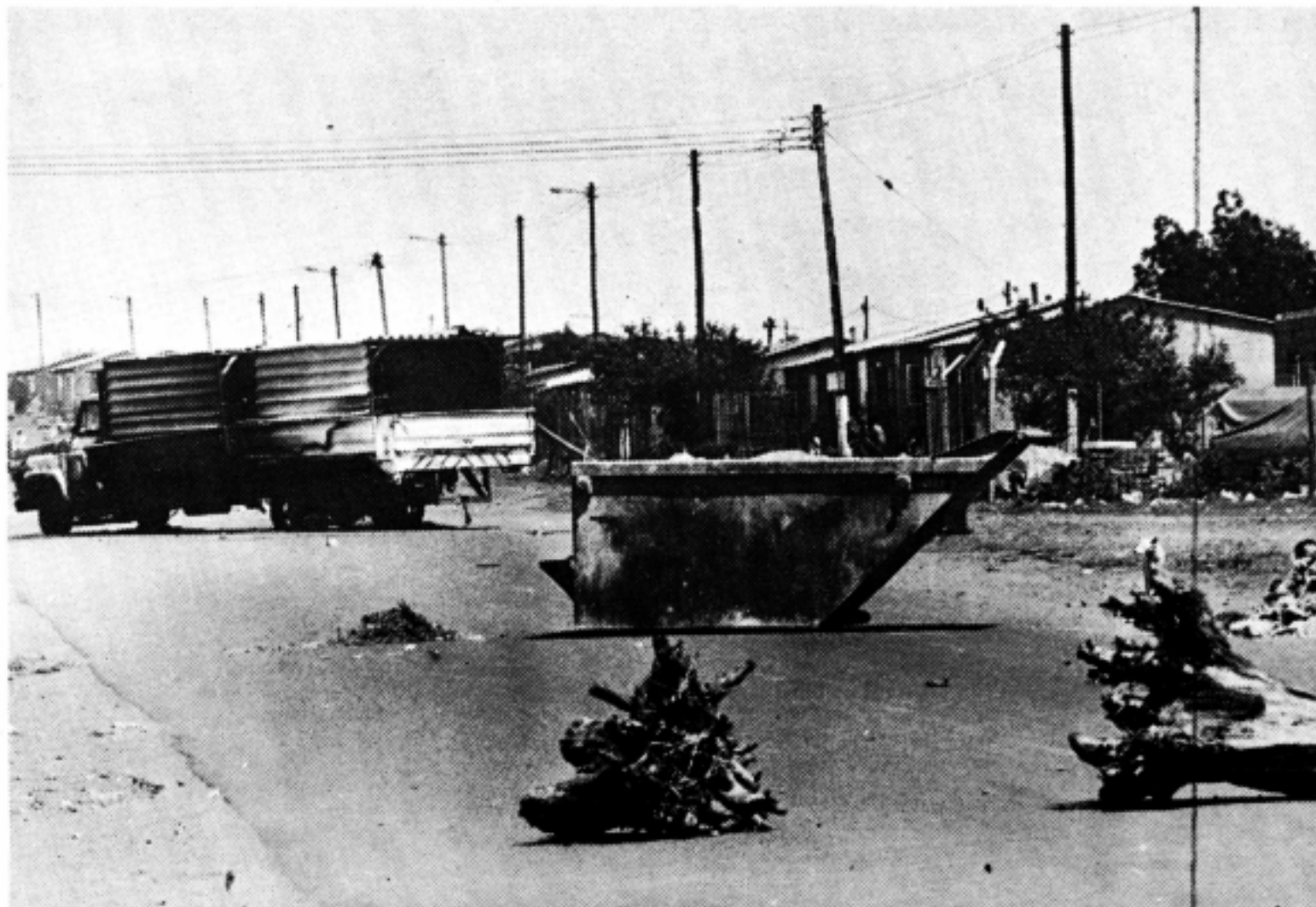
# Comment

CONTRARY to what the present government believes, it will not be able to forcefully suppress the growing discontent in the country's townships forever. Nor can it afford to ignore the justified demands being made by workers and students. How long will it take the government to realise that detaining worker and progressive leaders is not a viable solution? Oppression may dampen the flames but it will not put out the fire. Workers will not give up their struggle for freedom from economic exploitation and social poverty.

And will big business continue to sit idly on the sidelines — hiding behind the weak excuse of 'we are not political'? They say they deplore the repressive actions of the government but it is clear that they have benefited from these oppressive policies. South Africa has become an industrial giant at the expense of the welfare of its workers. The townships were built to provide 'dormitories' for the millions of workers that big business desperately needed. But in order to keep the profits high, as little as possible was spent on providing workers with decent living conditions. And because only a basic education was needed to operate the machines in the factories, little money was spent on schools, technical colleges and universities for the country's blacks.

Conditions in the townships have often in the past become so intolerable that workers and students have taken to the streets to protest. But like at Sharpeville in 1960 and in Soweto in 1976, the government's only response is to use armed force to suppress all attempts to raise natural grievances. Once again in 1984, workers and their student children have demonstrated their discontent by staging a two-day stayaway. High unemployment, increased food costs, bus fare and rent hikes, inadequate housing, low wages, poor education, have all combined to rouse their anger. But once again it is met by the repressive fist of the government. The townships are virtually occupied by the police and the army — worker and progressive leaders are detained.

It is time that the government and big business began to consider real solutions to the problems they have created. Is it unfair for workers to demand to live in reasonable conditions? Is it unfair for workers to demand the right to work and receive a living wage? Is it unfair for workers' children to demand a decent education? FOSATU says, NO IT IS NOT UNFAIR. These are basic human rights. FOSATU will not surrender until these have been achieved.



Township residents barricade the streets to keep the hippos away

## Army doesn't stay-away

FROM PAGE ONE

These were the same councillors who were voted in by less than 9 percent of the township residents as the rest boycotted the elections.

Towards the beginning of September workers stayed away from work.

Angry residents burnt councillors' shops and houses, beer halls and government offices in Sharpeville, Evaton and Sebokeng.

The only response that the government could come up with was armed force.

On October 23, the residents of Sebokeng woke up to face 7 000 gun barrels. The army had moved in.

Police went from door-to-door and arrested hundreds of people for petty

offences.

Carrying machine-guns, the army handed out pamphlets and stickers at road-blocks which said 'Trust me. I am your friend'.

Is it surprising that few township residents believed them?

Soon, the unrest spread to other townships in the Transvaal.

The police backed by the army increased its presence in the townships until a state of virtual civil war existed.

In KwaThema on October 22, workers stayed away from work and sent a telex to the Minister of Law and Order and the Minister of Education.

The telex demanded that the army and the police be

removed from the townships, the release of detainees, the stopping of harassment of students and that the students' demands be met.

As the situation worsened FOSATU set up a special sub-committee to monitor the developments in the townships.

When the stay-away was suggested, FOSATU had no hesitation in backing it — having been fully informed of the crisis that was rapidly developing in the townships.

The massive support for the stay-away clearly shows the extent of the very real frustration of FOSATU members — a frustration, to which the government's only response was to detain worker leaders.



Train platforms usually packed with workers — silent on the morning of the stay-away

## Deadline for detainees release

FOSATU has set a December 1 deadline for the first stage of its campaign to win the release of the detained union leaders.

The federation has begun to mobilise worker members and will be taking up the detentions with employers at all levels.

However, if no response is forthcoming by the beginning of December, then FOSATU

will move on to the next stage of the campaign which will involve specific forms of international solidarity.

The campaign was planned at the recent meeting of FOSATU's National Executive held on November 18.

The federation believes that the detentions are part of a

crackdown on all forms of democratic organisation in South Africa.

It also believes that new forms of political protest are needed to combat the crackdown on the unions.

It is clear that FOSATU's members are prepared to take further action if necessary.

## 'Detentions a direct attack on trade unions'

THE special FOSATU Central Committee meeting wishes to state clearly why FOSATU members participated in the stay-away. We believe that this is necessary because there has been too much focus on reports of violence and too little on the issues involved.

Our reasons for supporting the stay-away were:

- \* We wanted a clear announcement removing the age limit in the schools.
- \* We wanted democratically constituted Student Representative Councils in the schools.
- \* We wanted the army removed from the townships and a stop to police harassment of residents.
- \* We wanted a suspension of rent and bus fare increases.

These factors directly affected our members as workers and parents and we took the action because of this.

We therefore totally condemn the detention of FOSATU office bearers and officials who carried out FOSATU instructions. We call for the immediate release of Chris Dlamini, Moses Mayekiso, Bangilizwe Solo, Jethro Dlalisa and for the release of all persons detained under Security Legislation.

FOSATU is not prepared to stand by and watch its leadership being detained.

Detailed and far ranging decisions were taken by the special Central Committee to protect FOSATU and to ensure the release of those detained. These will be reported back to all regions and affiliates for their approval and implementation.

FOSATU sees this as a direct attack on unions and will be contacting other unions to support it in its actions.

The proposal made by the Transvaal Region for a 'Black Christmas' will be referred back to all regions and affiliates of FOSATU for consideration as a national campaign.

The Central Committee committed itself to the full support of CWIU and the Sasol workers.

(Statement released after a special Central Committee Meeting held in the Transvaal on November 10)



# Sasol: the whole story

SASOL, the pride and joy of the South African government, has become for workers the symbol of repression.

On Wednesday November 7, 6 500 Sasol workers (90 percent of the workforce at the two Secunda plants) were dismissed for participating in the two-day stay-away.

They were then 'escorted' on to buses by gun-toting police and soldiers which took the workers back to the 'homelands'.

Sasol, which produces oil from coal, represents for the government a home-grown answer to

the oil embargo.

Seven of the eleven members of Sasol's Board of Directors are appointed by the government and the remaining four are selected by the Board.

Sasol has become the symbol of the wonder of modern science, new technology and hope for the future.

But workers do not share this gleaming futuristic image.

For them it represents dangerous and strenuous working conditions, barrack-like hostels, racial oppression and rumours of men killed in accidents during the night being whisked away.

The Chemical Workers Industrial Union after recruiting the majority of the workers at the Sasol II and III plants began to work towards changing these repressive conditions.

When the two-day stay-away was called in the Transvaal, the Sasol workers insisted on participating.

On November 5 over 90 percent of the workers stayed away and in the hostels nobody went to work.

The workers who peacefully observed the stay-away were watched closely by riot police and the army who patrolled

the township.

And at six that morning helicopters flew over the hostels dropping thousands of pamphlets - the pamphlets warned workers that they would be dismissed if they did not return to work by 10 am the next day.

At an all-night meeting of shop stewards and union organisers, it was decided to recommend to workers that they return to work.

But when two 'hippos' drove into the next day's general meeting, angry workers vowed to continue the stay-away.

During November 6 the police

and army presence increased dramatically and a 'sneeze machine' was added to their wide variety of equipment.

At 5 am the next morning workers walked to work, accompanied by hippos and police landrovers, but they were turned away at the gates and marched back to the hostels.

The union then held another general meeting where workers decided not to collect their pay and to remain at the hostels.

However, the hippos and landrovers moved in and surrounded the hostel blocks - police told workers that they would have to leave the hostels even if they did not collect their pay.

## Workers had no choice

In the face of such a massive show of force by the army and police, the Sasol workers could do little else but collect their pay and board the buses.

Commenting on the Sasol dismissals, a CWIU spokesperson said, 'Sasol aware of its image in South Africa just could not tolerate the idea of its workers participating in the stay-away and making political protest.'

'They just could not let it go by unpunished and it also provided them with an excellent opportunity to get rid of the union,' he said.

'Their massive command of resources, police, army, political influence allowed the company to accomplish the extraordinary feat of paying off and removing over 6 000 workers in one afternoon.'

'No doubt part of the training of the new workforce will be the suggestion that a union-free plant would be much better than a unionised plant,' the union spokesperson concluded.



Sasol workers gather outside the hostels to discuss the company's deadline



Under the watchful eye of the army and police, workers are paid off



Workers escorted to the buses under armed guard

## World federation condemns 'witchhunt'

THE giant International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) has slammed the South African government for the detention of FOSATU president, Chris Dlamini, and other trade unionists.

And has warned that such acts of repression 'can no longer be tolerated by the international community'.

The ICFTU called for the unconditional release of all those detained and demanded that they be given the freedom to carry out their trade union activities.

In the statement released only hours after the arrest of Chris

Dlamini, the ICFTU said it strongly condemned 'the witch-hunt' being carried out against trade union leaders in South Africa.

It added that this was another example of 'the emptiness, and the mockery of so-called trade union reforms'.

The International Metalworkers Federation (IMF) has also added its voice to the worldwide protest over the recent detentions.

IMF general secretary, Herman Rebhan said, 'If the South African authorities intend to use the recent work stoppages and protests as an excuse to move against

the trade unions, this will have major repercussions internationally.'

He warned that any repression of the independent trade union movement could lead the world trade union movement 'to agree with those who denounce the possibility of peaceful change' and instead call for the 'most extreme measures against the apartheid government'.

Brother Dlamini, a shop steward at Kelloggs in Springs, was taken from the factory by security police on November 9.

Metal and Allied Workers Union Transvaal branch secretary, Moses Mayekiso, was detain-

ed after a pre-dawn raid on his Alexandra home the day before.

And on September 10, the Transvaal branch secretary of the National Union of Textile Workers, Bangi Solo, was also arrested by security police.

Early on November 14, the Transport and General Workers Union's Transvaal branch chairman, Jethro Dlalisa, was detained.

This brings to four the number of FOSATU unionists being held after this recent wave of detentions.

The detentions come soon after the two-day stay-away in

the Transvaal which was supported by FOSATU.

Brother Mayekiso represented FOSATU on the ad-hoc committee which announced the stay-away and which sent a telegram to the Minister detailing the demands.

And Brother Solo had been appointed by the Central Committee to keep FOSATU informed of all the events taking place in the Transvaal townships.

While carrying out the detentions the security police also searched FOSATU's Germiston offices and took photographs and names of all those working there.



# Workers reinstated

BEING in the cloakroom without authority, sounds like the kind of crime schoolchildren are often accused of.

However, Western Cape safety-belt manufacturer, Safety Transport Inter, decided this was a big enough offence to fire three of its workers.

The National Automobile and Allied Workers Union immediately demanded the reinstatement of the three workers — Maureen Mfakala, Dawn Joseph and Gert rude Alberts.

Several meetings were held with senior management with no success so NAAWU decided to launch an unfair labour practice claim.

During the waiting period, the company agreed to take back Sister Mafakala but said they would contest the case of the other two in court.

But, on the third day of the court case, STI settled the matter out-of-court by agreeing to reinstate the other two to positions 'not less favourable to those they had previously held'.

# New bargaining forum in biscuit industry

FOLLOWING the collapse of the biscuit industry's industrial council, a new negotiating forum has been set up in order to accommodate the Sweet Food and Allied Workers Union.

The industrial council fell apart in August when the TUCSA biscuit union blocked SFAWU's entry to the council.

In order to negotiate with SFAWU the industry's two major companies, Bakers and Fed-bisco, pulled out of the council.

Now a new negotiating forum has been set up covering biscuit workers in Natal and the Transvaal.

A SFAWU spokesperson said 'the union believes its strength still lies in bringing all biscuit workers together.'

However, the new negotiating forum has not exactly been free of problems.

The first meeting was called off as the minority unions came without shop stewards so SFAWU refused to begin talks until these unions were 'properly represented'.

At the second meeting in a joint union caucus, SFAWU persuaded the minority unions to back the union's demand for a 32 percent increase across-the-board and a minimum weekly wage of R110.

But the employers were only prepared to offer a 12,5 percent increase and they refused to accept any of the other demands covering hours of work, overtime and public holidays.

The employer's offer was completely rejected by workers and it was decided to continue pushing for a better offer.

At the next meeting the minority unions wanted to settle but SFAWU managed to 'pull them along' to the next step of mediation.

'As they have no democratic structures and no shop floor strength, it was easy for the officials to decide that we were wasting time by pushing,' a SFAWU spokesperson said.



Simba workers at a report-back meeting in the back-yard of a township house

# SFAWU tames Simba lion

THE Simba lion seemed to lose his roar as the boycott called by 393 sacked Simba workers began to spread.

And just over two months after the boycott was launched Simba agreed to take back all the workers.

In this major victory for the Sweet Food and Allied Workers Union, the company has agreed to reinstate the workers in the same jobs and at the same wages when the Isando factory reopens next year.

In the meantime, the company will be paying off the scabs that it hired to replace the sacked workers.

The SFAWU members will also be paid R60 000 as interim relief by Simba.

In turn, the workers have agreed to call off the boycott of

Simba products.

The Simba workers were fired early in August when they went on strike in support of three dismissed colleagues.

The first of the three was dismissed in April for 'damaging the company's property' — he threw a potato into a container.

The other two were fired on May 2 for 'not taking a lawful instruction' — they had refused to fetch and carry boxes because it was not part of their jobs.

When the dismissals were challenged by shop stewards the management refused to reconsider their decision.

At a final meeting between shop stewards and the company, management even refused permission for shop stewards to report back to workers during work time.

Workers felt that Simba had made no real attempt to negotiate with their representatives so when the management issued a notice on August 10 saying their decision was final, the workers stopped work.

Management responded by informing workers that they intended taking disciplinary action against the chairman of the shop stewards and another worker.

On Monday August 13 the company dismissed the workers when they refused to heed an ultimatum which demanded that they accept the dismissals and that they agree to hold no more work stoppages.

When SFAWU president, Chris Dlamini appealed to Simba to reconsider, management told him that they had had problems

communicating with their present black workforce and that they now intended employing 'coloureds'.

The sacked Simba workers on their own initiative formed three committees — fundraising, publicity and organisation.

The workers printed stickers and posters calling on people to boycott Simba products.

The Simba campaign received the support of a wide-range of organisations including trade unions, community and student organisations.

And in many East Rand townships, shops agreed not to stock Simba products.

With the support of SFAWU, the boycott began to spread to other areas of the country and support committees were set up in Durban and Pietermaritzburg.

# Eastern Province chairman elected new vice-president

THE Chairman of the Eastern Province Region, Theminkosi Mkalipi, has been elected as FOSATU's new vice-president.

Brother Mkalipi, who is a senior shop steward at a Port Elizabeth paint factory, was elected to his new post during the last Central Committee meeting.

He replaces Andrew Zulu who automatically lost his position when he left the Metal and Allied Workers Union to form the break-away United Mining, Metal and Allied Workers of South Africa.

Brother Mkalipi was born in the PE township of KwaZakhele back in 1958 — both his parents were workers.

'My father worked for a construction firm as a general labourer and my mother was a domestic worker,' he told FOSATU Worker News.

His early schooldays were spent at a school at Witkleibos near Humansdorp.

'My parents sent me away from the townships to keep me out of trouble,' he said.

But in the strife ridden days of 1976-7 he was back in KwaZakhele.

'The school boycotts were

much rougher than they are now — lots of people were killed,' he said.

Brother Mkalipi said he had been forced to leave school in 1977 'because of the type of activities I was involved in'.

He said he had been a member of the black consciousness linked South African Students Movement, which was banned after 1976.

'Some of my friends were killed, some detained and some left the country,' he said.

'For two years I moved around as it was not easy to settle down because of the situation,' he added.

'I came back to Port Elizabeth in 1979 and started to look for work,' Brother Mkalipi said.

In October, he said, he started working at Plascon and has been working there ever since.

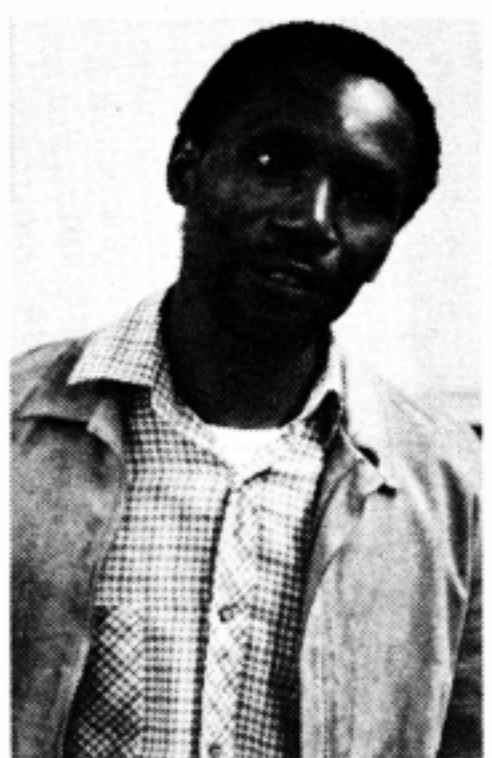
'Before the Ford and VW strikes in the 80's we knew nothing about trade unions,' he said.

'But because of the strikes, some workers at Plascon decided to find out which was the best union to join — we looked at GWUSA, MACWUSA and FOSATU,' Brother Mkalipi said.

He said the two Plascon factories in Port Elizabeth had been split on which union they wanted to join.

'Workers at the smaller car paint factory wanted to join MACWUSA but we at the household paint factory wanted to join FOSATU,' he said.

'Finally, they went it alone and we went it alone,' he added.



Theminkosi Mkalipi

But in 1982 the FOSATU affiliated Chemical Workers Industrial Union signed a recognition agreement with the company as the majority union.

'This gave us shop steward and basic union rights and even covered workers in the other factory,' Brother Mkalipi said.

In the same year he was elected as the chairman of the Port Elizabeth local and recently took over as regional chairman when John Gomomo stepped down.

When asked about his earlier links with black consciousness, Brother Mkalipi said, 'I cannot dispute that black consciousness played a relevant role in the struggle.'

'But when I came to the factory things were different. All workers were treated the same whether black or white.'

'I supported FOSATU because of its non-racial policy,' he said.

'As a student I didn't think workers should lead the struggle but now I see that only when workers take the lead will decisions be taken which serve the interests of the workers which are the majority in our society,' Brother Mkalipi concluded.



# Retrenched workers paid R2 500

**RETRENCHED** workers from Triple A Rubber at Prospecton near Durban have won R2 500 in an out-of-court settlement.

On September 28, the company went ahead and retrenched 25 Metal and Allied Workers Union members without any consultation.

When MAWU threatened to take court action, Triple A offered to settle.

As well as the lump sum, the company agreed to take back workers with the longest service first when jobs become available.

# Documents 'mysteriously' vanish

SIX copies of a document which accuses a German multi-national of grossly mistreating workers at its South African plant have 'mysteriously' disappeared.

The copies of the document join the large amount of union mail which has 'gone astray' -- as it tends to do in South Africa.

The document which details the dispute between the Metal and Allied Workers Union and Transvaal Alloys (a subsidiary of Nord-Deutsche Affinerie of Hamburg, Germany) was on its way to the head office of the International Metalworkers Federation.

The IMF has agreed to raise the dispute with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the European Economic Community (EEC).

The ILO consists of representatives from trade unions, employers and governments from countries worldwide whereas the EEC is an organisation consisting of representatives from the various European governments.

In the lengthy document, MAWU has set out the circumstances of the dispute, in which more than 200 workers were dismissed from the vanadium mine and plant near Middelburg.

MAWU has accused Transvaal Alloys of breaking many clauses of the ILO's Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multi-national Enterprises and EEC's Code of Conduct covering companies which operate in South Africa.

The document accuses the company of:

- \* paying starvation wages of 55 cents an hour, which is well below the minimums specified in the codes.
- \* denying workers trade union rights and representation.
- \* subjecting workers to racial discrimination.
- \* subjecting workers to assaults.
- \* breaching international standards on human rights.
- \* failing to promote security of employment.
- \* failing to maintain high standards of health.
- \* failing to consult, examine grievances or attempt to settle disputes.
- \* failure to alleviate the suffering caused by the migrant labour system.

The dismissed workers have appealed to the ILO and the EEC to intervene on their behalf with the multi-national company.

Brian Fredericks, IMF secretary in South Africa, said that the IMF has agreed to do all in its power to assist the workers who have been 'subjected to the full rigours of South Africa's migrant labour system'.

The workers, who were all arrested and fined during the strike, have been sent home to Sekhukhune.

'They and their families have been starving, with no money and no chance of employment, for nearly a year since they were dismissed,' a MAWU organiser said.

# Fear of mass retrenchments

THE Metal and Allied Workers Union fears that metal employers will retrench hundreds of migrant workers during the Christmas break without even bothering to consult unions.

And MAWU has attacked the industrial court for making this possible.

MAWU says that the recent Screenex judgement has effectively removed all the rights of migrant workers to fair retrenchment procedures.

Previous industrial court judgements have set out what it considers to be fair procedures.

The court has said that employers must consider possible ways of avoiding retrenchments -- like transfers, stopping overtime and working short time.

Employers must also consult

worker representatives and these representatives must be given sufficient prior warning of the retrenchments.

The court has also said that employers when selecting workers for retrenchment should consider things like length of service.

In the Screenex case, MAWU charged that this Alrode company unfairly laid off 10 migrant workers because it had not followed established retrenchment procedures.

However, in a judgement issued nearly two years after the original dispute, the court ruled that the migrant workers had not been retrenched when their contracts were not renewed.

The judgement says that the only obligation on the employer

in laying off migrant workers is 'to give the employee reasonable notice'.

The most horrifying aspect of this is that SEIFSA, the metal employers' association, earlier this year suggested that metal employers change migrant workers' contracts to allow them to only give 24 hours' notice.

MAWU said that the court's decision 'just emphasizes that migrant labour contracts are purely an instrument of repression and give workers no legal rights or protection'.

'South African workers will have to ask themselves whether they can still benefit from a court which is becoming highly conservative and which does not protect the interests of workers', the union said.

# Call for one powerful union made at meeting



SINGING workers at the Annual General Meeting of the Transvaal branch of the Metal and Allied Workers Union held at the KwaThema stadium. Well over 4 000 workers attended the meeting in spite of transport difficulties. A Springs bus company refused to send buses into the KwaThema township and only informed the union days before the AGM. In a resolution passed at the meeting, the workers called for all metal unions to merge into one powerful union in order to effectively oppose the giant metal employers' association, SEIFSA. The resolution calling for unity was closely linked with other resolutions condemning SEIFSA for its 'manipulative' role in industrial council wage talks. The workers committed themselves to continuing the fight for a living wage into 1985. Other important resolutions urged the union to oppose retrenchments and to fight for proper family accommodation. The workers also attacked influx control and the 'Koornhof Bills' as 'instruments of apartheid'. The metal workers resolved to fight for proper democracy and a free society where wealth would be more equally distributed.

# Pension fund changes demanded by PWAWU

IN its first national meeting with the Mondi Group, the Shop Stewards Council has proposed major changes to the Mondi pension fund.

Recently, the Mondi Shop Stewards Council, which represents workers at all six of the Group's factories, met with management and officials of the pension fund and presented 15 proposals.

The proposed changes include:

- \* pension money must be paid out as a lump sum on retirement or death.
- \* it should not be compulsory to join the pension fund.
- \* the company should provide loans to workers, interest free,

using the money in the pension fund as security.

\* an early retirement age of 55 years must be introduced for those who wish to retire before they reach 63.

A PWAWU spokesperson said Mondi had agreed 'in principle' to make changes to the pension fund.

'Mondi and the pension fund trustees are now considering the union's proposals before the next meeting with the Shop Stewards Council,' she said.

In 1982, PWAWU negotiated significant changes to the SAPPI Group pension fund through the shop stewards committee at the Tugela mill at Mandini.

# Highest wage in FOSATU

END of year wage talks has hiked up the minimum wage of Reckitt and Colman workers in the Transvaal to R2,94 per hour -- the highest minimum wage in FOSATU.

The wage agreement negotiated with the Chemical Workers Industrial Union wins workers a R20 across-the-board increase.

Branch secretary, Chris Bonner said the union was delighted with the settlement 'particularly as management is tending to use the recession as an excuse to keep increases low'.

Meanwhile, in the union's first negotiations at Pilkington Glass in Port Elizabeth, the minimum wage has been raised by 36c to R2,74 per hour.

# Brits hall burnt out by 'vandals'

BEFORE dawn on October 23, a church hall in the Brits old location, which was extensively used by FOSATU unions, was burnt out.

This is the latest in a series of incidents of vandalism aimed at FOSATU unions.

The Brits hall was the daily meeting place of the B & S workers during their year-long struggle.

A Metal and Allied Workers Union organiser said the hall had made it possible for the workers in the Brits area to organise themselves into trade unions.

'The unions in Brits have made great strides for workers and obviously some people are not happy with that,' said the chairman of the local Shop Stewards Council.

Some months back, the Chemical Workers Industrial Union's office at Evander was broken into and posters were ripped off the walls.

Union organiser, Tsidiso Mothupi said all the files and documents from the filing cabinet had also been taken.

On the typewriter he found a note saying 'pass the message on to the ANC'.

And recently messages were spray painted on to the walls outside the FOSATU offices in Pinetown.

The spray painted writing said 'the ANC was here' and 'Kaffir lover'.

FOSATU believes that the acts of vandalism have been carried out by right-wing elements.



The 'artistic' work of a right-wing vandal on the walls of the Pinetown office





## Chemical union's tenth anniversary

THE Chemical Workers Industrial Union celebrated its 10-year anniversary at the union's first national Annual General Meeting held at Secunda near the Sasol plants. Over 3 000 workers, some from as far as Port Elizabeth and Durban, attended the meeting. Guest speaker, Muzi Buthelezi, the regional secretary of FOSATU's Northern Natal region spoke on the difficulties unions were experiencing in the homelands. Workers at the meeting also discussed the present unity talks in detail and pledged themselves to the formation of a wider trade union federation.

## Years without unions

THE Piet Retief area in the southern Transvaal has not seen unions since the days of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) in the 1920's.

Now the Paper Wood and Allied Workers Union is growing in the area.

About a year ago, workers at Mondi were the first to approach PWAU. They were soon followed by other factories.

PWAU now has majority support in four factories — Mondi, Bisonbord, HC & H, and Charka.

In order to co-ordinate activities in the area a Shop Stewards Council was formed in August.

As the centre for timber and forestry in South Africa, the Piet Retief area holds tremendous potential for the union.

At present about 800 workers have joined PWAU, with more factories wanting to join.

A PWAU organiser said it was 'hardly surprising' that workers wanted to join the union as 'conditions are terrible'.

'Many workers earn less than 35c per hour and with that miserable wage they are still expected to buy their own overalls and safety boots,' he said.

'Also, workers often don't receive compensation for accidents at work,' he added.

The union organiser said many workers lived in conditions 'close to slavery'.

'Even the Security Police are following developments closely and have questioned workers and union organisers,' he said.

He added that the struggle to win union rights and better conditions in the Piet Retief area was likely to be 'a long and difficult one'.

## Congratulations!

FOSATU would just like to congratulate PW Botha on his receiving R300 000 severance pay when he switched jobs from Prime Minister to President.

The federation's members are pleased to hear that their tax money is being well spent.

FOSATU hopes that employers will bear in mind this precedent (or is it President?) in future retrenchment negotiations.

FOSATU WORKER NEWS PAGE SIX

## Is the canteen open to all races...or not?

A FOSATU union recently had great difficulty in finding out from a particular multinational company whether their canteen was open to all races.

The company shall remain nameless in order to prevent any embarrassment — here is how the conversation around the negotiating table went:

**Union:** Can you tell us whether your canteen is segregated on racial grounds.

**Management:** No, it is segregated on the basis of production workers and office workers. You cannot expect a lady with a clean white dress to sit on the same chair as a worker with a dirty overall.

**Union:** Oh, that means that a white foreman is not entitled to eat in the staff canteen because he works in the factory.

**Management:** No, not entirely, the foreman is entitled to eat there.

**Union:** Well, does that mean that the black personnel officer who is an office worker is entitled to eat in the staff canteen.

**Management:** Not exactly, he would not be entitled to eat there.

**Union:** Well, if the white fore-

man, who is a factory worker, is entitled to eat in the staff canteen, but the black personnel officer, who is an office worker, is not, can you explain to us on what basis the canteen is segregated.

**Management:** Well.....

**Union:** We want you to understand that we are not really concerned so much about issues such as desegregating toilets and canteens, although in principle these are important issues which we are surprised a multinational company subscribing to the EEC Code has not put right. What we are really concerned about is whether workers will be treated and promoted on merit.

**Management:** Oh, there can be no doubt about that. Look at these people here (pointing to three black foreman who were present at the meeting as management representatives). A little while ago these jobs were filled by whites. Now blacks have been promoted into these fairly senior positions.

**Union:** Do you mean they can go into the staff canteen?

**Management:** No, not exactly.....

## Paid May Day won

FOR the first time in many years, workers at a South African factory will be able to celebrate May Day — with the support of their management.

In the past May 1 (May Day) was even recognised as a public holiday in a number of industrial council agreements.

But in the early 1960's when the government cracked down on worker organisations, May Day was removed from council agreements.

However, worker pressure has started again for the recognition of May Day as a workers' public holiday.

## Visas turned down

TWO top officials from the Canadian Labour Congress — Canada's giant trade union federation — have been refused visas to visit South Africa.

Rick Jackson and Paul Purritt from the CLC's international department were due to visit unions in South Africa, including FOSATU, towards the middle of November.

But days before their visit was to have begun, they were sudd-

enly informed by the South African government that their applications for visas had been turned down.

The turning down of their visit, Paul Purritt told FOSATU Worker News, would be regarded in Canada as an insult to the entire Canadian trade union movement.

A FOSATU delegation recently visited Canada as guests of the CLC.

# Normans Transport victory for TGWU

THE Transport and General Workers Union recently won a landslide victory over the TUCSA affiliated African Transport Workers Union in a secret ballot at Normans Transport.

In the ballot, which was held in order to prove which union had the majority support, 109 workers voted for TGWU and only four in favour of the TUCSA union.

Transvaal organiser, Mam' Lydia Kompe said the union had been organising Normans Transport workers for the past eighteen months.

'We started with workers at the small Pretoria depot and then moved on to the Wadeville head office,' she said.

'But when we asked for recognition, the company just refused saying that their workers belonged to the African Transport union,' she added.

Mam' Lydia said the company had an informal closed shop with ATWU 'just because it is the only African union on the industrial council'.

She said the first time the workers had ever seen anything of the TUCSA union was when they arrived at the ballot.

'They just knew that RI was being deducted from their wages everytime,' she added.

Mam' Lydia said all the workers had then resigned from the TUCSA union because they said 'it was not a good union for them'.

But, in the middle of the

union's recruiting campaign, management fired a key union member because he had been seen talking to TGWU organisers.

The union immediately protested and launched an unfair labour practice case against Normans Transport.

In a settlement reached out-of-court, the company agreed to take back the sacked union member and to begin recognition negotiations.

Mam' Lydia said the union had submitted a preliminary agreement 'but after two weeks Mr Norman himself phoned and said he was not too happy about our representivity'.

She said TGWU had agreed to hold a secret ballot to prove 'once and for all' that it was supported by the majority of the workers.

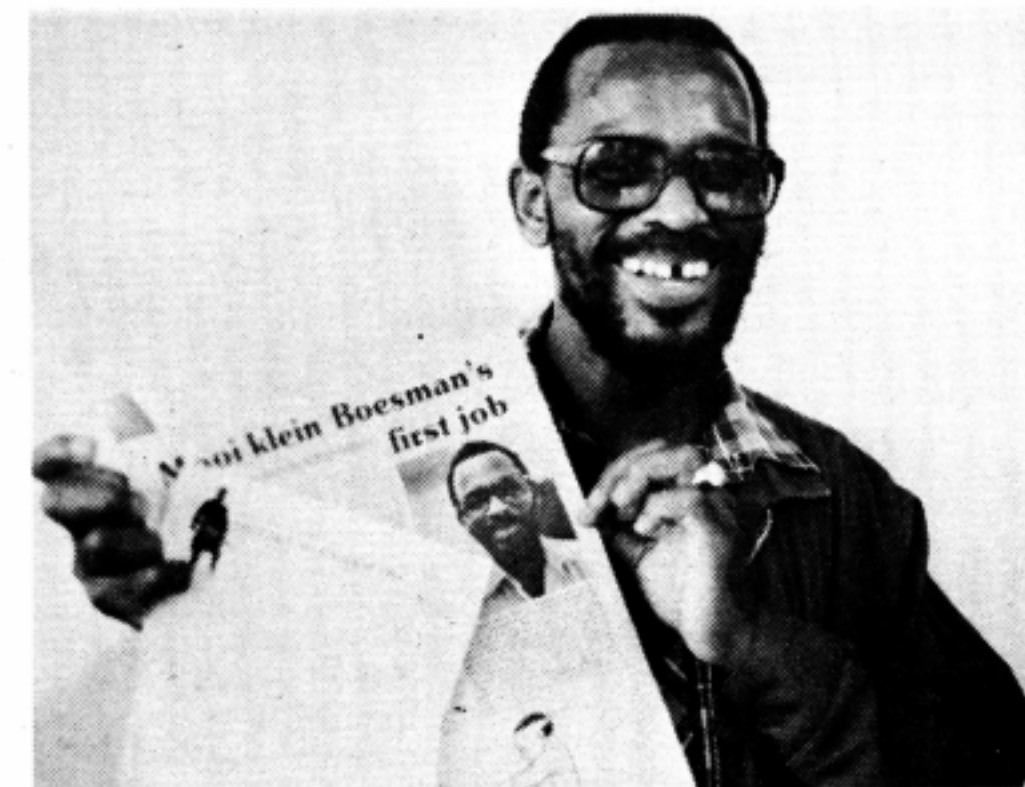
'On the day of the ballot eight officials from ATWU including the general secretary were there at the factory and were given a chance to talk to the workers,' she said.

'All the workers pitched up wearing union T shirts and they wanted to have the TGWU supporters to stand on one side and ATWU supporters to stand on the other.'

'But we persuaded them to go on with the secret ballot and we won,' Mam' Lydia said.

However, she added, in spite of the results of the ballot management seem to be 'stalling' their recognition of the union.

## Dunlop worker wins History Workshop prize for his writing



DUNLOP worker, Alfred Qabula, recently won a R50 prize awarded by Wits University's History Workshop for an auto-biography he is writing. Brother Qabula, who has become well known in FOSATU because of his performance of his Praise Poem, sent in part of his auto-biography to the History Workshop's history writing competition. The auto-biography, which is not yet completed, covers Brother Qabula's experience as a worker both in the Transvaal and in Natal. It also describes the union struggles at Dunlop where he now works. Earlier this year in FOSATU Worker News we carried a section from the auto-biography in which he described looking for a job at a construction site in the Transvaal. Brother Qabula, together with another worker and two union organisers, has just completed an amusing play describing the experience of migrant workers. It had its first performance at a Dunlop strike meeting. Next year in FOSATU Worker News we will carry scenes from this play.



# Frame pinned down!

FRAME has finally been pinned down.

And early next year a large number of Frametex workers will give evidence in the industrial court in support of the union's recognition case.

Since 1982 the workers have been waiting patiently for this moment.

Their employer, meanwhile, has been running from one court to another in an attempt to stop NUTW's case being heard.

The union's case revolves around a meeting with Frame director, Abe Frame, in October 1982 where he agreed to recognise NUTW at Frametex if it could prove it had majority membership.

NUTW then submitted over 2 000 membership forms to management, most of which they refused to accept.

Soon after this, Frame went ahead and recognised TUCSA's Textile Workers Industrial Union

because, it claimed, the majority of workers in the company's New Germany mills belonged to TWIU.

Frame denies that it had agreed to recognise NUTW at Frametex saying it is company policy to only recognise a union which has the majority in the entire complex.

In court, NUTW will argue that Frame deliberately encouraged the sweetheart TWIU and workers will tell how company officials forced them to resign from the union.

Frame's last attempt to block the industrial court case was made on September 17 in the Supreme Court.

The court dismissed the company's arguments and now, at last, the recognition case will go ahead.

While waiting for Frame to finish its journey through the courts, NUTW has been recruit-

ing workers in other mills in the complex.

And the union now believes it, and not the TWIU, has a majority membership in the New Germany complex.

It would appear that the company now has no reason to refuse to recognise NUTW.

Predictably, this makes little difference to the company and so the union has been forced to declare a dispute on this issue as well.

NUTW is waiting for the Minister of Manpower to appoint a Conciliation Board.

Meanwhile, after another court battle, Frame has been forced to cancel TWIU stop orders for workers at the Pinetex mill who have crossed over to NUTW - the company had initially refused to do this.

The New Year could see the end of one of the toughest, and longest, recognition battles in South African labour history.

# American textile union praises Frame workers

THE American Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union singled out the workers at Frame's New Germany mills for special praise during the union's recent convention.

And it has pledged its support for their struggle.

In a report which motivates a resolution on America's Foreign Policy, ACTWU also attacks South Africa's apartheid system.

'The apartheid system through which the minority white government controls and exploits the majority non-white population of the country is one of the most cruel and systematic forms of racial oppression ever devised,' it says.

The report says that an inde-

pendent black trade union movement has emerged in recent years 'despite a continuing governmental policy of arrests, torture, bannings and other persecution of black trade union leaders and those assisting organisation'.

'We commend the textile workers at the Frame company for their courage in pursuing unionisation in the face of great company and government opposition,' it adds.

The report continues to single out the homelands policy as one of the 'worst manifestations' of apartheid because it makes most of South Africa's blacks foreigners in their own land.

# Cape factory's sick visits ended by union

MANAGEMENT of a Western Cape textile company recently decided to start visiting sick workers at home.

But this wasn't a sign of management's thoughtful concern for their workers - the workers' well being was far from their minds.

SA Nylon Spinners at Bellville started the house-visits as part of a plan to cut down absenteeism.

The idea behind the visits was to try and persuade workers to return to work early.

And also to collect information on doctors who gave certificates to SANS workers.

The management hoped to catch doctors who they thought were giving workers certificates when they weren't really sick and then to report them to the Medical Council.

One worker affected by SANS house-visits was Hoosain Ismail - he was put off sick for one week because he had bronchitis.

After only three days, he was visited at home and persuaded to return to work.

Only an hour after starting work, Brother Ismail collapsed and had to drive himself home again.

The National Union of Textile Workers, which represents 840 workers at the factory, strongly objected to the house-visit campaign.

And when the company arranged a meeting with local doctors to discuss the absenteeism, the union decided to approach the doctors and give them the workers' point of view.

NUTW told the doctors that the house-visits were an invasion of the privacy of the individual and an abuse of company power.

The union said it believed the SANS campaign was also a statement of no confidence in the local doctors since the company seemed to think that the doctors were giving workers unnecessary certificates.

SANS was interfering in decisions which were the responsibility of the doctors alone, the union said.

At the union's meeting with the doctors several of them spoke out against the company's absenteeism campaign.

The department of Manpower was also invited and department

officials stated that doctors' certificates were legal documents and companies had to recognise them as the basis for paid sick leave.

Eventually, SA Nylon Spinners at a meeting with NUTW agreed to stop their house-visits of sick workers.

Meanwhile, at Transvaal factory, Braitex, doctors' certificates were also the cause of a dispute between workers and management.

At this textile factory, workers went on strike when the company fired a colleague for being absent in spite of the fact that he had brought a doctor's certificate.

Workers argued that if one worker could be sacked even when he had a certificate then anyone could be dismissed.

They returned to work after a six-hour stoppage when Braitex agreed to discuss the dismissal again with NUTW.

# Clothing workers free from stranglehold of Garment closed shop

AT last! Workers at James North clothing factory in Pinetown can belong to the union they have chosen.

Prior to the change in South Africa's labour legislation, these clothing workers were barred from TUCSA's Garment Workers Industrial Union because of their race.

However, when the new changes opened the way for black workers to legally join trade unions, the TUCSA union was quick to seize this opportunity to increase its membership.

The clothing industry's closed shop was extended to include black workers and letters were sent out to employers telling them to now deduct union dues for their black employees.

All of a sudden the James North workers found themselves members of GWIU - whether they liked it or not.

# Textile workers pack hall



A HALL usually filled with Natal University students was jam packed with workers on September 16. They were attending the Annual General Meeting of the National Union of Textile Workers. Apart from reports on the struggles waged by the union during the year, workers were entertained by numerous workers choirs and a play was put on by Burhose workers. In resolutions taken at the meeting, NUTW said it would continue to challenge the 'stranglehold' that TUCSA unions had over the lives of its members through their 'exclusive control' of industrial councils. Workers also discussed the 'persistent anti-union stand' taken by Frame and resolved to continue by lawful means to pressurise for union recognition at Frame mills where the union held a majority. At the meeting, workers also slammed the government's decentralisation policy which was 'aimed at relocating factories in areas where wages and working conditions can be depressed to abominable levels'. The NUTW attacked the assistance given to employers which encouraged them to close factories in the urban areas and move them to the homelands. The union said it would continue to press at all levels for 'fair wages and conditions for all members irrespective of the area where such factories are situated'.

And if they resigned from the TUCSA union, the closed shop would see to it that they lost their jobs.

But in spite of this, workers decided to join the National Union of Textile Workers.

In a ballot held at the beginning of this year, 219 James North workers supported NUTW and only 43 voted for GWIU.

Immediately after this the company agreed to sign a recognition agreement with NUTW granting it stop order and other union rights.

James North also agreed to support the union in its application for exemption from the clothing industry's closed shop.

Meanwhile, the GWIU decided to change its constitution to allow it to expel workers who became members of another union.

The James North workers had

remained members of GWIU in order to protect their jobs while they waited for the outcome of NUTW's application for an exemption.

When the clothing industrial council turned down NUTW's application, the union challenged this decision in the industrial court.

In terms of the court's judgement the James North workers are now free to resign from GWIU without being dismissed.

And NUTW is now free to negotiate at plant-level for its members at the Pinetown factory.

NUTW has now applied to the industrial council for exemption from the closed shop for members at several other clothing factories.

Early in December the union should know whether it has to once again challenge GWIU in the industrial court.

# TUCSA union deserted

WORKERS from another leather factory have deserted a TUCSA union and joined the National Union of Textile Workers.

The workers from Honey and Sons Tannery at Nigel follow close on the heels of leather workers from Jaguar Shoes at Pietermaritzburg who joined NUTW earlier this year.

NUTW branch secretary, Bangi Solo said the union had held a meeting with the Nigel workers in June which was attended by just over 80 percent of the tannery's workforce.

'When we looked at the workers' pay slips we found they had been paying dues to the Transvaal Leather Industrial Union,' he said.

'But workers said they had been completely unaware that they were members of a union and said that it had held no activities at their factory,' he added.

Brother Solo said the workers had said that 'anyway they did not want a union imposed on them, they want one that they have chosen'.

'In the meeting, workers complained that their foremen abused them calling them kaffirs and baboons and that there were a lot of dismissals for minor things like smoking in the toilets,' he said.

Brother Solo said that by July the union had signed up 90 percent of the workers and decided it was time to introduce themselves to the company.

'We spoke to the Group Personnel Manager who said he was not opposed to the union and asked for proof of membership,' he said.

Shortly after this, Brother Solo said, the TUCSA union went to the factory and tried to address workers.

'In the meeting which was held in the canteen, the workers asked the union official where he had been all this time.'

'When he failed to answer their questions satisfactorily, the workers told him to leave and not to come back and they then left the canteen,' he said.

Brother Solo said workers were still 'pushing' management to deal with the union.

'But they are reaching a stage of frustration and anything could happen,' he added.



**The Federation of South African Trade Unions**

**FOSATU**





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FOSATU HEAD OFFICE: 2 GOODHOPE STREET, BELVILLE SOUTH, W CAPE, TEL. 951412: TELEX 5721682.



## 300 strike at Wispeco over factory negotiations

FOR over two weeks, 300 workers at window frame manufacturer, Wispeco, have held a sit-in strike in the company's canteen.

The workers at this Mobeni factory are demanding that the company negotiate with the Metal and Allied Workers Union at plant-level.

The strike was sparked off when Wispeco went ahead and retrenched 81 workers - including two shop stewards and the senior steward - and refused to discuss severance pay with the union.

Wispeco said it had chosen to negotiate with trade unions only at the metal industry's industrial council.

'The company completely ignores the fact that the metal employers' association, SEIFSA, has said at the industrial council that it cannot deal with severance pay at national level and that this should rather be negotiated at each factory,' Natal branch secretary, Geoff Schreiner said.

## Key metal firm cracks

ONE of the key members of a group of Natal metal companies which are stubbornly refusing to negotiate at plant-level with the Metal and Allied Workers Union has cracked.

Pietermaritzburg's Mckinnon Chain has finally agreed to discuss with MAWU any wage increases granted over and above those agreed to at the industrial council.

Mckinnon Chain along with a number of other Natal factories has blindly followed the line of the metal employers' association, SEIFSA.

SEIFSA has openly advised employers not to negotiate with unions at factory-level saying it will undermine the metal industry's industrial council.

MAWU has clearly shown that this policy is misguided.

The union this year joined in talks at the industrial council as well as holding negotiations at factory-level with a number of companies.

When Mckinnon Chain after this year's council talks refused to negotiate the additional increases the company was giving to workers at plant-level, the union began court proceedings.

The industrial court case was being widely followed as a test case - it would show whether companies had to negotiate additional increases with representative unions.

But when the union filed court papers, Mckinnon Chain suggested that they hold settlement negotiations.

MAWU agreed to these on the basis that Advocate Paul Pretorius be called in to mediate the dispute.

The company initially agreed to negotiate job grades with MAWU.

After another mediation session, it agreed to discuss with the union the additional wage increases.

# Dunlop strike ends with march to work

SEPTEMBER 14 proved to be the turning point in the four-week Dunlop strike.

In the morning the company sent a notice to St Anthony's hall, where the strikers had been meeting every day, saying that it was only prepared to sign on the workers as new employees.

It also said that Dunlop would not take back ten workers who it accused of 'participating in intimidatory acts'.

However, within hours of issuing this notice, the company surrendered.

In a new notice, Dunlop said it would take back all the strikers without any loss of service benefits.

New talks would also be held on the issue of the dismissal of five workers which had sparked off the strike by 1 900 Dunlop workers.

The strikers accepted this offer at a meeting on September 17 and staged a victory march back to the Sydney Road factory.

During the march, the police attempted to arrest three union leaders but released them later.

Outside the factory gates, the jubilant strikers sang union songs as they waited for their clock cards.

The mood soured a little when Dunlop told workers that 10 of them were suspended.

But the suspensions were soon withdrawn when the strikers threatened to walk out again.

The strike brought to a virtual

standstill the production of Dunlop motor car tyres when MAWU members at Ladysmith joined their colleagues at the Durban tyre plant.

Workers at Dunlop Sports at Jacobs near Durban also downed tools in support of the demand for the reinstatement of the five dismissed workers.

For four-weeks workers from the Sydney Road factory and the Dunlop Sports' workers met every day at St Anthony's to discuss new developments.

The Ladysmith workers met in the factory canteen and kept in contact with the Durban shop stewards.

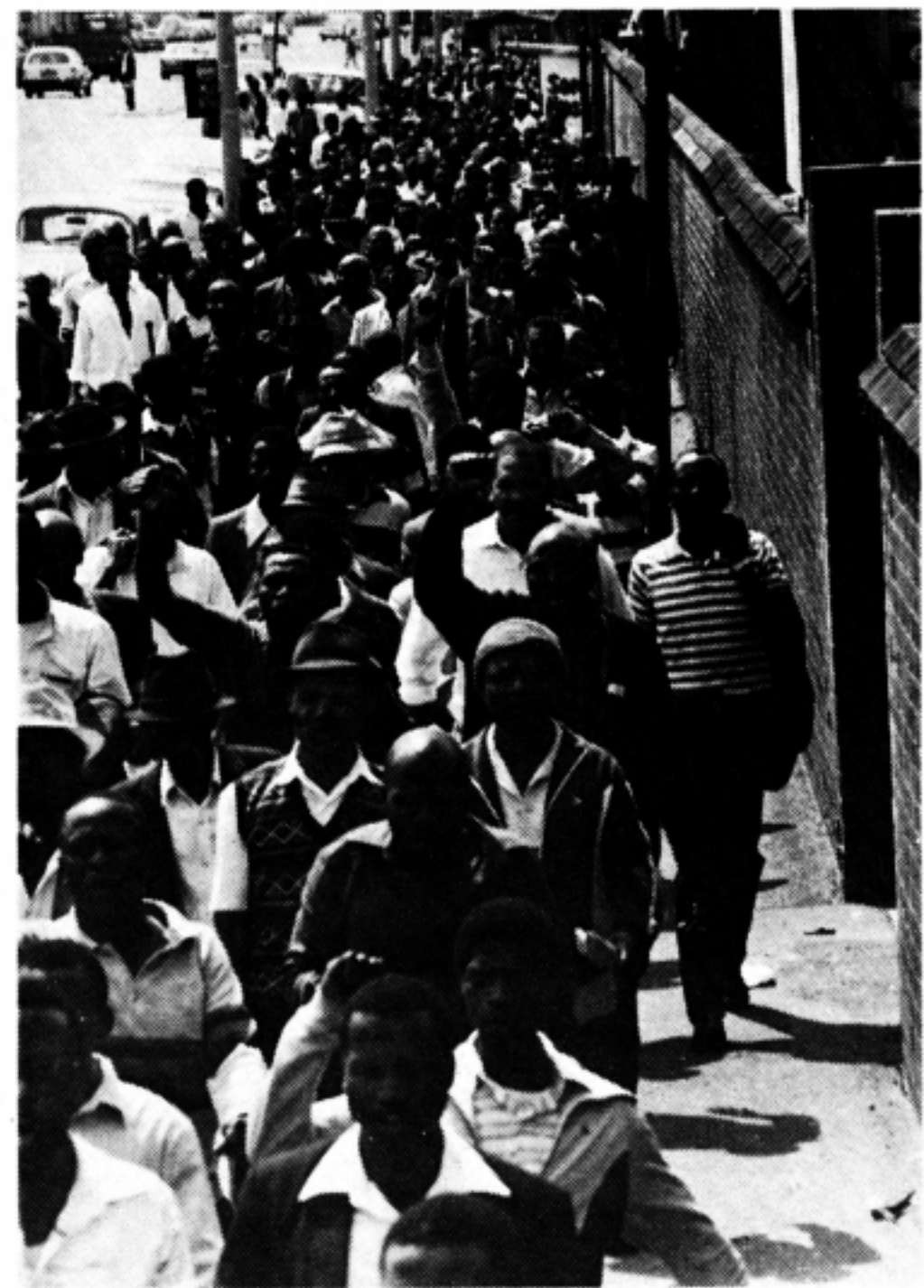
Shortly before the strike was settled, the Dunlop workers decided to launch a boycott of the company's products.

Immediately, the South African Council on Sport (SACOS) pledged its support.

The strike was also taken up by two British unions - the Transport and General Workers Union and the General and Municipal Workers Union - which have members at Dunlop factories in England.

MAWU praised the Dunlop workers who 'have through their unity and solidarity won a massive victory against a very hostile, anti-union company'.

'They have demonstrated very clearly that union bashing policies will not succeed,' the union said.



The Dunlop workers march back to work

## Dunlop wives speak about strike

THE other side to a strike is shown in these two interviews with the wives of Dunlop workers. Lengthy stoppages put an incredible burden on the families of strikers who are often deprived of their only source of income. But what emerges from these interviews is that in spite of the hardships, the wives support their husbands and are sympathetic to their struggle for worker rights. This shows how important it is for workers to teach their families about the worker struggle.

My husband is working for Dunlop Tyre in Sydney Road, Durban. He has been working there since 1966, so he has 18 years' service, says Mrs Beatrice Kheswa of Umlazi.

We are both old. He is 55-years-old and I am 51. I am a housewife.

Ever since my husband started working for Dunlop he has been complaining about many things but not as much as he does now.

One afternoon both my husband and my son arrived home to tell me that the workers at Dunlop had decided to go on strike in protest at the dismissal of their worker leaders.

At first this sounded strange to me. I had heard of strikes for higher wages before, but to take the risk of losing your job because some people had lost their's seemed like madness.

They used to wake up every

morning and whenever they bade me farewell, they would say, 'Bye-bye, see you later in the afternoon, we're just going to the forest.'

When one day I asked them what forest it was that they were visiting everyday, my son butted in and said, 'Look mummy, every morning we used to wake up in order to go to work where we spent most of our waking hours. But now that we are not going to work, but to a meeting elsewhere, then we're going to a forest.'

Well, for five weeks my husband and son kept on going to their 'forest' everyday. It was very tough for the family, I can tell you.

Imagine, I am a mother of seven children. The eldest is living in Johannesburg with his wife. The second eldest is out on

strike with his father, the other is a casual worker and the remaining four are of school-going age.

In spite of all these difficulties, my husband and my son seemed determined to carry on to the bitter end.

Their friends in the neighbourhood were very sympathetic and sometimes they offered them money to enable them to go to the 'forest'.

Would she in future allow her husband to go on strike?

Of course. I learnt a lot through this strike.

My husband's 18 years' service has been sucked by Dunlop. Do you see that?

No wonder that even women workers from Dunlop Sports, who know a lot about family suffering, also joined in the sympathy strike.

Although the company fired them all, the pressure forced the company to call them back. They were also assured that their complaints were going to be attended to.

This must serve as inspiration to the workers in other factories as well.

Mrs MaNgcece Nkosi also of Umlazi is a mother of 10 children, five of whom are school goers.

Things were pretty difficult but my husband would tell me that theirs was a collective decision - so what else could I do but give him all my support, she says.

We survived by selling odd things like candles and so forth.

I used to prepare him food to eat during their day-long meetings which he would carry in his skoff tin.

It is the support from people and their families that has really won the Dunlop workers their demands.



Dunlop wives - MaNgcece Nkosi (left) and Beatrice Kheswa



# A SAFE JOB IS YOUR RIGHT!

WORKERS understandably are interested in the issue of health and safety. As a worker you probably know of someone who was injured at work — perhaps it was something small but painful like a crushed finger. Or maybe it was more serious — like a broken arm. You may even know of another worker who was killed at work.

Why do so many of us know someone who was injured or even killed at work? The answer to that is this, it is because there are so many accidents in South African factories. In 1983 there were 311 648 industrial accidents. According to the Minister of Manpower these accidents permanently disabled 23 305 black workers and killed another 11 816. This is a very high death and accident rate. If you think about these facts and the people whom you know who have been injured then you do not need much more to be convinced that workers have a direct interest in making sure that the factory is safe.

Unsafe or unhealthy working conditions can affect many workers in a factory. It is unlikely that these workers could get conditions changed if they go about trying to do this as individuals. Health and safety problems are therefore something that must be attacked by your organisation in the factory — your union. Changing and improving conditions of work is an important part of the union's role.

## Why do accidents and unhealthy conditions occur in the factories?

Workers have an interest in safety at work because it is their lives that are at stake. Management also has an interest in safety but for different reasons. Management is more concerned about production and profits. The union is more concerned about people.

Crudely put, the view of many managers is: 'It is my factory, they are my profits, these are my machines — and be careful not to damage them — but it is your fault if you have an accident.'

It is often the worker who takes the blame, the pain and the cost of an accident. Workers are lazy, they are stupid. They do not care about themselves or the machines. Workers come to work drunk. They do not wear safety equipment. These are the kind of reasons that managers use to explain away high accident rates.

Some bosses do not even bother to explain. They have found that if an unskilled worker is injured it is cheaper to just pay him Workmen's Compensation and then get a new worker.

But if a semi-skilled or skilled worker is injured then management finds out that this costs them more. This is where management finds its interest in health and safety. Accidents mean lost time and lost time means loss of production. Because of this certain managements are keen to improve safety.

A careful look at why accidents happen shows that most of them are not caused by workers. Poor and inconsiderate management is more usually the cause. What are these causes? There are five important ones:

**\* The design of the machinery:** If management buys and installs machines which do not have safety designed into them then there will be accidents to the workers.

**\* Unsafe layout of the work-**



## 11 000 WORKERS DIE EVERY YEAR IN FACTORY ACCIDENTS, HERE WE LOOK AT SOME OF CAUSES OF THESE ACCIDENTS AND AT THE NEW SAFETY LEGISLATION.



**place:** Management are most encouraged by increased production. Management might want to increase production and cut costs by putting many machines in a room that is too small. This can be the cause of accidents.

**\* Inadequate training:** How many workers are trained when they start a new job? Has anyone ever told you about the hazards of your job? If you are not

told about these things then it is predictable that someone is going to suffer for it. That somebody will be a worker, not the management who do not train workers to avoid hazards.

**\* Inadequate supervision:** Supervisors are in the workplace to encourage production and to get you to work faster. Could this be the cause of accidents?

This duty can certainly make the supervisor blind — blind to the danger of what the workers are being made to do.

**\* The work environment, stress and working conditions:** The work environment can be dangerous to the health and safety of the workers. The chemicals, dusts or fumes can cause illnesses. The noise can make you deaf. Can the worker be blamed if there is an accident after he or she has worked 11 hours in a place that is hot, noisy and dusty? No-one can be fully alert under these conditions.

In 1983 the government passed a law called the Machinery and Occupational Safety Act. This law came into operation in October this year. Before this law was passed the safety of workers in factories was covered by the Factories Act. Even with the old law there were still many

accidents so we cannot expect that the workers are going to be safe just because there is a new law.

The new Safety Act is very similar to the old Factories Act. However there are two important changes which affect workers directly. The first of these is that safety committees and safety representatives must be established in every factory. The second is that the Act has some strict disciplinary measures in it for workers.

### Safety Committees and Safety Representatives.

The new Safety Act says that all employers must designate one safety representative for every fifty workers. The word designate is important because it can mean that management alone chooses the safety representatives. If management alone chooses the safety representative then clearly this committee is no different from a liaison committee. Union members know that a liaison committee is as useful as a boot without laces.

The safety committee will have both management and workers on it. Management can also choose to have other experts on the committee — such as the safety officer or the factory doctor or nurse. The business of the committee will be to make reports and recommendations to management.

### Strict Disciplinary Measures.

As we have already said it is a common belief among managers that workers are to blame for most accidents. The government seems to share this view. The new Safety Act makes it a crime if you do not obey regulations — for example if you do not wear the protective clothing that management gives you (such as gloves, masks or ear muffs). The punishment for this crime is a possible fine of R2 000 or 12 months imprisonment or both.

### Problems with the New Safety Act

If we look carefully at the Act we can see that it makes no mention of unions. It seems that the government and the employers want to keep unions right out of this important area that affects workers directly.

The new Act favours employers by allowing them to designate the safety representatives and by giving them the power to set up a liaison committee for safety. We know that liaison committees are just places for talking and that management uses such committees to pass down orders to the workers. If the union shop stewards became involved as safety representatives it is possible that they too would have to pass on managements' orders. They will also have to spend their time checking that workers are wearing ear muffs, masks or gloves and that they are doing the job safely. If workers do not agree with what they are ordered to do then the shop steward or safety representative will become involved in giving workers warnings and disciplining them. This is exactly what management would like to see safety representatives doing but we can see that this would do nothing about the five main causes of accidents that we listed earlier.

It is also possible that when safety committees have been set up in the factory there will be resistance from management to talk to the unions about health and safety issues.



# Bosses move to homelands to escape from trade unions

GROSS exploitation of workers is not the only problem that unions are having to face in the 'decentralised' industrial areas which have sprung up within South Africa's 'homelands'.

These areas are also fast developing into 'union free' zones.

With no legal protection against victimisation, unionised workers find themselves at the mercy of their employers.

For most bosses in the decentralised areas, belonging to a union is enough of a crime and has led to mass dismissals of entire workforces.

Many have told FOSATU unions that they had moved to the homelands to 'escape' from unions.

Decentralised areas have been developed by the government supposedly to create more jobs for blacks forced by the migrant labour system to remain in the homelands.

However, this has often been at the expense of jobs in the urban areas.

Industrialists in the cities have been known to 'retrench' their workers and then relocate the entire factory in one of the homelands.

The jobs that are created in these homeland areas show little concern for the people that the

jobs are created for.

The wages and working conditions are so appalling that some workers have said they would rather not work than work in a factory in a decentralised area.

The department of Planning in 1974 stated that a labourer in Isithebe (an industrial area in KwaZulu) received a wage of 17c an hour, 14 days leave and R120 a year as a travel and living allowance.

In the past 10 years there has been little improvement in these wages — starting rate for workers at an Isithebe metal factory is as low as R15 per week.

Decentralised areas allow for greater exploitation of workers and for greater profits for the bosses.

## High profits

One of the first factories to move to Isithebe, Skema Engineering, reported a first year turnover of R156 000 but by 1982 this had increased to almost R4 million.

The government's decentralisation policy began way back in the 1960's with the setting up of the Industrial Development Corporation.

As part and parcel of the inhumane migrant labour system, the initial aim was to create industrial zones outside of

the country's cities and towns.

The government hoped to curb the flow of blacks to the 'white' areas by encouraging the development of factories next to the Bantustans — these became known as 'border' industries.

In order to encourage companies to move to these 'border' areas, the government offered tax cuts, financial aid for the buying of machinery as well as providing land and buildings at a 'reasonable' rental.

Employers were also offered the 'advantageous adaptation' of the Industrial Conciliation and the Wage Act.

The government, therefore, encouraged border industries to pay poverty wages and provide working conditions even worse than those found in the urban factories.

As the homelands policy began to take shape, the government started to encourage the development of industries in the various homelands.

Areas like Babalegi at Hammanskraal and Isithebe in KwaZulu were set aside as 'growth points' or decentralised areas.

## Transfer of Ownership

At first white industrialists were not allowed to own land in the homelands and after a period of 20 to 25 years the

company was supposed to be transferred to black ownership.

However, many 'governments' of the homelands have since said that they had no objection to the permanent presence of white industrialists.

## Cash payments

The South African government said it needed to encourage white industrialists to move to the homelands because 'in practice, it was found that although the Bantu were already proficient in commercial matters, they were incapable of handling large-scale industrial development'.

The government now offered cash payments instead of tax cuts for companies that opened up in the homelands.

## Housing Loans

As well as various transport subsidies, companies received a cash payment of 95 percent of the wage bill for the first seven years.

The government also loaned industrialists money at very low interest rates.

The housing of management and white skilled workers was also subsidised.

But, on managements' own admission, one of the major incentives for moving to dec-

entralised areas is that they are 'union free'.

## No protection

Various independent homelands have already taken steps to crush unions — the Ciskei last year banned the South African Allied Workers Union.

Or they have passed legislation which prohibits 'South African unions' from operating in the homeland — like Bophuthatswana.

In KwaZulu a further problem has presented itself as at present this homeland has no effective labour legislation.

## Anti-union laws

As a result, workers at Isithebe are given no legal protection against victimisation or unfair dismissal.

And some Isithebe employers have used strikes by workers trying to improve their disgusting working conditions, as an excuse to get rid of the union presence by firing the entire workforce.

Workers are then only taken back on condition that they agree not to join a union.

If new workers are hired, they are often taken on at wage rates even lower than the wages paid to the ex-employees.

## Interview with four sacked Tidwell workers

Tidwell Housing, a subsidiary of an American company, opened up at Peters near Ladysmith on February 1984. Peters is a decentralised area falling under KwaZulu — although the KwaZulu authorities deny this. The Metal and Allied Workers Union soon after recruiting most of the workforce sent a letter to the company introducing itself and asking for a meeting to discuss recognition. The union never had any response to this letter. On July 16 the workers approached management in order to clarify problems they had with their wages. Workers were told that if they were not satisfied they should leave the premises and then announced that they were dismissing five key union activists. FOSATU worker News spoke to four of the sacked union members (Zakhele Malinga, Thulani Dlamini, Christopher Hadebe and Sifiso Mthethwa) about conditions at the factory and about the events on July 16. MAWU is at present taking legal action against Tidwell on behalf of the four in a bid to have them reinstated.

When did people start joining the union?

A shop steward from the nearby Dunlop factory started recruiting workers at the gates. He would travel with us on the buses and explain about the union. We called a meeting in June and at that meeting elected a steering committee.

What were the workers' main grievances?

Wages.

Were people finding it difficult to live on the money they were paid?

It was very difficult as rents and transport costs are very high here. We were paid about R25 a week and out of that we had to pay the rent of R14 a month and bus fare of R15 per month.

Were there any other problems in the factory?

Yes, they didn't give out pay slips beforehand so you never knew how much you were going to be paid. You didn't even

know how much you earned per hour. People also used to get private increases. One person would go and talk to the foreman and then he would be given an increase.

How do the wages compare to the nearby factories like Dunlop?

The wages are much lower. In fact a worker at Dunlop gets three times more than a worker at Tidwell. Tidwell is among the lowest paying factories in the area.

Let's move on to where the steering committee approached management?

On a certain Friday we were told that we were to be given the day off which was strange so we went to management to ask why. Management told us that only Indian and coloured workers would be working as it was stocktaking. They told us not to worry as we would get our full pay. But in the following Friday's pay packet we found that we weren't paid for the Friday



Tidwell Housing in the decentralised area of Peters near Ladysmith. Insert: The four sacked workers outside the factory.

and some found they were R10 short. On the following Monday a whole lot of workers approached management to find out why we hadn't been paid. Management told us that we hadn't worked so we were not getting paid.

There was a general confusion about how this had been deducted so the workers sent the steering committee to go and ask how much we were paid per hour. Management simply told us to calculate the rate of pay ourselves.

We then asked management for an increase so that after all the deductions we would at least have something left. To this they replied that production was very low. But we replied that in some departments workers had run short of material, so it wasn't our fault.

Were workers working while you were meeting with management?

No, when workers arrived at the factory they clocked in but refused to start work. Workers were waiting for the steering comm-

ittee to tell them what happened.

What happened after that?

Management refused to do anything. They said that before we proceed with any negotiations they would like to inform us five members of the steering committee were fired. A sheet of paper was then given to the security guard with the clock numbers of the five. Immediately workers heard that the five had been fired they demanded to know why. Management simply said that before they talk to the workers those five must be outside the gates.

Soon after that management said the entire workforce were now fired. They were told to bring back their overalls the next day.

When we took back our overalls, we were told to come and reapply for jobs. But when we five members of the steering committee came in, the management chased us away and phoned the police to have us removed.

Those who were taken back were asked lots of questions like were you a member of the union. Those who said, yes, were sent out. And now the starting rate has dropped from R25 to R18 per week.

Does it look like the company wanted the union?

No. In fact there isn't any company which wants a union in this area.

Why do you think this American company came and built a factory in KwaZulu?

At first we thought it came to KwaZulu to boost the government and to offer jobs. But now we think they were just moving to a place of cheap labour.

Is there much chance of getting another job in the area?

It's not easy at all. As it is now we have already been chased away from one company. Once they see your pass stamped Tidwell, they chase you away.



# Year-long strike in Arizona, USA

FOR over a year, 2 500 copper workers from Arizona in the United States of America have been on strike.

The strike began in July 1983 when Phelps Dodge Corporation issued an ultimatum demanding that the workers accept a wage cut, give up their cost of living allowance and accept cuts in medical benefits.

During the year-long strike the workers and their families have faced the kind of police and army harassment which is common in South Africa.

On June 30 at a rally held to celebrate the strike's one year anniversary, more than 200 armed state troopers in riot gear attacked a group of 40 men, women and children.

An observer said the troopers 'became irritated by some remarks from the gathering and went trigger happy with tear gas grenades'.

'The cops were edgy for a fight and they had to show off their power,' the observer added.

But military strike-breaking is not the only weapon that Phelps Dodge has at its disposal.

Many of the small towns are 'company' towns where everything from the grocers shop to the hospital is owned by the

company. The workers' houses are also company-owned and selected strikers have been evicted — a tactic that the unions are fighting in the courts.

Phelps Dodge has denied strikers use of the company hospital, even refusing to allow 'striker' babies to be delivered there.

In the town of Morenci a 'Peoples Clinic' has been set up by Jorge O'Leary, a company doctor fired for his pro-union stand.

But in spite of the tremendous hardships faced by the strikers and their families, they have remained solid.

'We intend to secure a just contract (agreement) from this company,' said Angel Rodriguez, the local president of the United Steelworkers of America.

'We have seen two systems of justice imposed on us — one for the strikers and one for the scabs. But they won't bust us if we stay united,' he added.

Despite the multi-million dollar losses that Phelps Dodge has experienced this year, so far there are no indications that the company is willing to change from its strike-breaking position.

# Coal Board offers 'bribe' to strikers

AS the British miners' strike enters its ninth month, the National Coal Board has offered 'a bribe' in an attempt to lure miners back to work.

The NCB has offered miners who come back to work between 1 400 and 1 600 pounds (about R3 200) as a sort of Christmas bonus.

A number of strikers have been attracted by this offer but the majority of miners are determined to continue the strike.

The British miners began their strike towards the beginning of this year when their employers, the government-owned National Coal Board, announced that 20

pits would be closed by February 1985 — an estimated 20 000 miners would lose their jobs through the pits closures.

Backed by their union, the National Union of Mineworkers, the miners are striking in support of their demand for the pits closure plan to be withdrawn.

Recently, Britain's trade union federation, the TUC, pledged its support for the striking miners.

But so far, support from British unions has been patchy.

One of Britain's biggest unions, the Transport and General Workers Union, however, recently decided to step up its support for the miners.

# Giant German metal union tackles high unemployment by reducing working hours

THE 2,5 million-strong German metal union, IG Metall, has decided to tackle the country's high unemployment by fighting for a 35-hour working week.

The union argues that if the 35-hour week was introduced it would create enough jobs to reduce Germany's unemployment by 1,5 million over a two-year period.

At present over two-million workers are unemployed in West Germany.

So far the union has had the working week reduced from 40-hours to 38,5-hours without any loss of pay.

This was achieved earlier this year when close on 450 000 metal workers went on strike in support of the 35-hour week demand.

The strike, which was described by IG Metall as 'the severest struggle since the last War', began on May 14 when 13 000 workers walked off their jobs at 14 plants in the state of Baden-Wurttemberg.

The union focused its strike on the car-components industry

which effectively cut off the flow of parts to the motor assembly plants.

As a result all the major manufacturers like VW, Daimler-Benz and Opel were forced to close their plants.

In May alone the strike cost the auto industry 88 000 vehicles.

Shortly before the strike the metal employer's chief negotiator said that they would defend the 40-hour week with 'tooth and claws'.

And a director of the employers' association said, 'Rather a three to four weeks' strike than one minute less than 40.'

However, the mounting production losses forced the employers to back-down.

In the settlement, workers won a 38,5-hour working week plus a 5,3 percent wage increase — 3,3 percent from July and a further 2 percent from April next year.

The IG Metall said the settlement was 'certainly not grounds for jubilation'.



On a wall painting, Guatemalan workers change Coca Cola's slogan 'The Spark of Life' to 'Spark of Death'

# Guatemalan workers fight for union rights at Coca Cola factory

IN SPITE of gruesome killings of unionists, workers at a Coca Cola plant in Guatemala, Central America, have persisted in their struggle for trade union rights.

Attempts were first made in 1954 and 1968 to form a union at the EGSA bottling plant but both times these were violently suppressed.

When a new attempt was made in 1975 to form STEGAC (their union), the company tried to crush the union by introducing scab labour and by meeting worker protests with police beatings and jailings.

From then on the unexplained murders of unionists began.

When the body of union leader Anulfo Gomez was found by his friends, his lips had been slashed with razor blades, his tongue cut out and put in his pocket, and his toes and fingers were broken.

His killing had followed that of union general secretary, Manuel Lopez Balan, who had been warned three times by management of his impending death.

Union activists have also been falsely imprisoned and others threatened with death unless they sign a petition against the union

In order to give support to the courageous struggle by the Guatemala workers, the International Union of Foodworkers (IUF) launched an international campaign against the American multinational giant Coca Cola in 1979.

In 1980, Coke executives negotiated a settlement with the IUF.

However, from 1981 Coke began to run down the Guatemala plant by transferring the work to non-unionised areas.

And in February this year, the plant declared itself bankrupt and retrenched its entire workforce.

Immediately, the union members occupied the plant to prevent damage and the removal of machinery.

Once again, the IUF stepped in to aid the Guatemalan workers and unions worldwide pledged support.

In Denmark, the Brewery Workers Union told its members not to handle any empty Coca Cola bottles.

In Sweden, Australia, New Zealand and Venezuela Coke boycotts were organised.

Meanwhile, in Mexico ten different Coca Cola plants held

three-day solidarity strikes.

Trade unions worldwide also sent messages of condemnation to Coke — including the Sweet Food and Allied Workers Union.

In his letter, SFAWU general secretary Jay Naidoo urged Coke to 'offer the necessary safeguards to prevent any attacks on the rights of workers'.

On May 27, an agreement was signed between the Coca Cola workers in Guatemala and management from the company's head office.

Coke has agreed to pay the salaries of the workers from the time they occupied the plant until it is reopened under new ownership.

Coke also said it would ensure that the new owners recognise STEGAC as the representative of the workers and that the union is given bargaining rights.

Within Guatemala the struggle of the Coke workers has been regarded as crucial to the continued existence of independent unions.

As a STEGAC leader put it, 'the leaders of other trade unions say that if we don't stand up to the employers their own unions will be destroyed within two months.'



German metal workers on strike at a small spare parts factory in Laufen



# The making of the WORKING



Black workers on strike surrounded by mounted police

IN the last issue of FOSATU Worker News we described the growth of a black population which lived permanently in the towns. This group grew even faster during the First World War (1914 - 18) so that by 1921 the number of black workers in towns had reached 385 321. In this issue we look at the response of black workers in the towns to their worsening conditions and the establishment of the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU).

The 1920's was a decade (i.e. 10 years) of resistance. The conflict began in the towns. During the First World War small factories were established in larger numbers than before. Until then most of the black workers were employed on the mines or on the farms. Now, many were pulled into the factories in the towns. The conditions they found in the towns were bad. No serious attempt was made to provide workers with adequate housing or with adequate health and educational services. Black locations were frequently placed near sewerage farms causing black leaders to claim that this was intended to kill off the black population. Near the end of the war prices also began to increase rapidly, while wages stayed just about the same. Dissatisfaction began to grow. On the Rand black municipal workers struck in the 'shilling' strike of July 1918. They were immediately arrested and sentenced to prison with hard labour for breaking their contracts. The harsh treatment handed out by the employers and the courts, as

well as the growing militancy of the masses, persuaded some sections of the Transvaal Native Congress (TNC) to organise a general strike. One of the TNC's more radical leaders addressed a mass meeting and said: 'The capitalists and workers are at war in every country. The white workers do not write to the Governor General when they want more pay. They strike and get what they should.'

When the government realised that a general strike was likely, they released the municipal workers from prison, but even then some mine

workers still took part in a short strike.

The next period of unrest came in April 1919. This time the problem was passes and money. Passes forced the workers to accept contracts for fixed amounts of money. If they broke the contract they could be arrested. At a meeting on March 30 1919 the Transvaal Native Congress discussed this issue and decided that 'passes prevent money'. The Congress therefore started an anti-pass campaign. Passes were collected and torn up. Hundreds of people were arrested on the Rand, before the campaign was finally crushed.

**INDUSTRIAL & COMMERCIAL  
WORKERS UNION OF AFRICA.**

Established January, 1919.

Branches throughout the  
Union of South Africa and  
South-West Protectorate.

• HEAD OFFICE •  
24 LOOP STREET, CAPE TOWN.



# CLASS

## PART TEN: ICU FORMED

Two problems faced the Congress in these campaigns:

\* It was not strongly enough organised in the townships, and had almost no organisation in the factories.

\* The state used all its strength to crush these campaigns.

### POLICE CRUSH MINERS' STRIKE

The same problems can be seen in the biggest strike that happened during this time. On February 19 in 1920 a mass strike broke out on the mines. Twenty-one out of thirty-five mines on the Rand were affected. 71 000 workers took part in the strike. Again, the strike was not strongly organised. There was no union organising black workers on the mines. Workers on the West Rand mines went out on strike a week after those on the East Rand mines when the East Rand miners had already been forced back to work. Police sealed off the compounds and stopped food going in. They also stopped miners moving between different mines. Finally they attacked workers in some compounds and forced them back to work. The strike showed clearly that the government would not tolerate any threat to the profits of the mines, which were then the most important part of the South African economy.

Conflict spread to most of the major towns in South Africa in this period – to Bloemfontein, East London, Potchefstroom, Durban and Pietersburg. There was even a general strike among miners at Pilgrims Rest. But the two most important areas of conflict in addition to the Rand were Cape Town and Port Elizabeth. It was here that the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) first began to grow.

### ICU FOUNDED IN CAPE TOWN

The ICU was founded in Cape Town in 1919. Its general secretary was Clements Kadalie who had been born in Nyasaland. It first organised among Cape Town dock workers and recruited both African and so-called coloured workers from the docks. It helped organise a strike on the docks in 1919. The ICU expanded during the 1920's until it numbered between 100 000 and 200 000 members. It had branches in most of the large and small towns in South Africa, and stretched even as far as South West Africa and Rhodesia (as they were called then).

Until 1924 the ICU was based in the Eastern and Western Cape. In the Eastern Cape dock workers started to organise themselves in 1920. Their leader was Samuel Masabalala. In 1920 a dock workers' strike was called. The strike was crushed and Masabalala was arrested. Hundreds of people demonstrated outside the prison. The crowd was fired on by police and some local whites. Twenty-three blacks were killed and the workers called for a general strike. Negotiations followed (led by Selby Msimang who was organising in Bloemfontein) and a small wage increase was given. Masabalala joined the ICU in 1921.

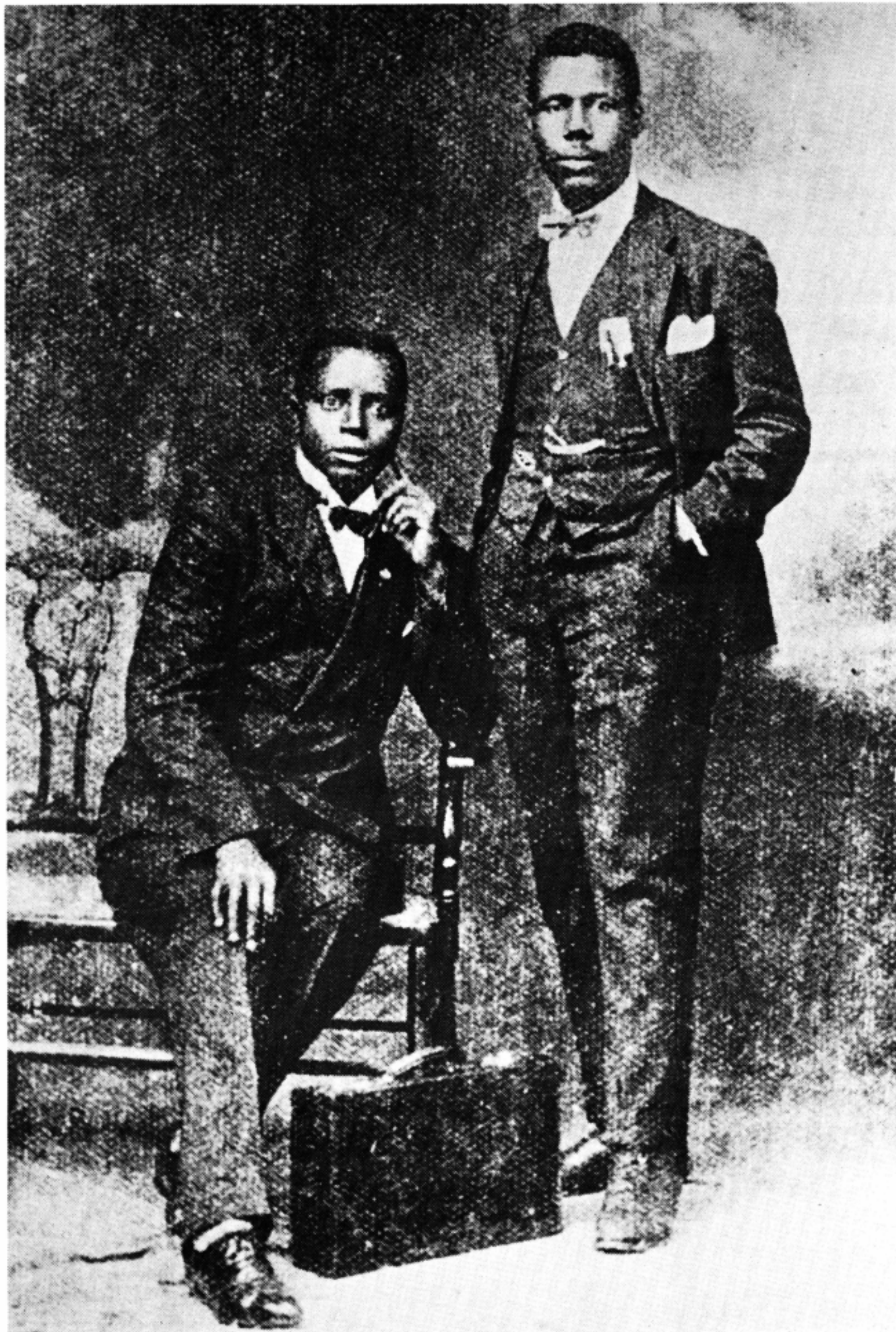
The ICU was a general union. At its first conference in 1920 it decided not only to organise workers in the towns but also to organise farm labourers and women. They opposed pass laws and other discriminatory legislation. But to begin with it does not seem to have tried hard to carry out these aims. Very few farm workers were recruited until

1926. Workers were not mobilised in the factories and other places of work and there were very few strikes before 1924. The ICU criticised the ANC leadership at the time and called them 'good boys' but the ICU does not seem to have been much more militant than the ANC.

Although the ICU leadership up until 1925 was mainly drawn from workers, it spent most of its time sending deputations to the white political

parties and trying to get concessions from them. The reason they thought this strategy might succeed was because some Africans in the Cape had the vote. In 1924 the ICU leadership supported the Afrikaner Nationalists in the elections. By November 1924 they had 11 000 paid up members.

Much of this was to change after 1925 when the ICU began organising in the Transvaal and Natal. We cover this in the next issue.



ICU leaders Clements Kadalie (left) and AWG Champion



The Victors of wars,  
But then retreat.  
The Builders of nests,  
But then like an ant-eater  
you then desert.  
Heavy are your blows,  
They leave the employers  
unnerved.

On your side are your  
brothers even at the New  
Jerusalem  
Let it be workers! they say,  
The heaven above also  
approves.

Ngudungudu, the woman  
who married without any  
lobolo,  
Busy boiling foreigners'  
pots,  
Yet yours are lying cold.

The humble bride,  
Affianced with the  
bridegroom's consent,  
Yet others are affianced  
with their father's consent,  
Even the Japanese have now  
come to be your  
bridegrooms,  
So! Bride why entwined by  
chains,  
Instead of being entwined  
with gold and silver like  
others.

The Black mamba that  
shelters in the songs,  
Yet others shelter in the  
trees.

Ancestors of Africa rejoice,  
Here are the workers  
coming like a flock of  
locusts,  
Here is the struggle,  
Sikhumba and Mgonothi  
are mesmerized,  
Asking what species of old  
mamba is this?  
Dying and resurrecting like  
a dangabane flower.  
It was stabbed good and  
proper during the day,  
At Sydney Road right on  
the premises,  
To the delight of the  
impimpis,  
And the the delight of the  
police.  
There were echoes of  
approval there on the TV at  
Auckland Park saying:  
Never again shall it move,  
Never again shall it revive,  
Never again shall it return,  
Yet it was beginning to  
tower with rage.

The old mamba that woke  
up early in the morning at  
St Anthony's,  
On rising it was multi-  
headed,  
One of its heads was at  
Mobeni,  
Njakazi, the green calf of  
MAWU, can bear me out,  
Another of its heads was  
at baQulusi land at  
Ladysmith,  
On rising it was burning like  
fire.

Even Sikhumba — the  
leather that overcomes the  
tanners,  
Sikhumba who knows no  
race,  
Who stabs an old man and  
a young man alike,  
Using the same spear,  
Who stabs a man's bone,  
Inflicting pain in the heart.  
But he is now showing a  
change of heart,  
Let's sit down and talk, he  
now says.

The spear that thundered at  
dawn at St Anthony's,



**A Praise Poem to the Dunlop workers written by Mi S'Dumo Hlatshwayo (above) who works at Dunlop Sports in Mobeni.**

The spear that devoured the  
father and the sons and the  
daughters,  
Then the men came  
together,  
Devouring them whilst  
singing,  
Yet the songs were just a  
decoy.

Rife are the rumours,  
That those who defied the  
unity have sunk,  
To the throbbing hearts of  
employers.

You black buffalo,  
Black yet with tasty meat,  
The buffalo that turns the  
foreigners' language into

confusion,  
Today you're called a  
Bantu,  
Tomorrow you're called a  
Communist,  
Sometimes you're called a  
Native.  
Today again you're called  
a foreigner,  
Tomorrow again you're  
called a Terrorist,  
Sometimes you're called a  
Plural,  
Sometimes you're called an  
Urban PURS.

You powerful black  
buffalo,  
Powerful with slippery  
body,  
The buffalo that pushed  
men into the forest,

## WORKERS AND TALKERS

**The labour cage is still locked  
So, workers started taking stock**

**Whiteman is boss  
For 300 years we are at a loss**

**He dreams, his might is right  
But he forgets, RIGHTS is a greater might**

**Talking all the time did not help  
Less wages, education, opportunities, and of oppression  
did we yelp**

**We know we are Blacks  
So better fast  
Of Africa, the last  
Get off our backs!**

Written by Jamalludien Hamdulay, Western Cape

# The Black mamba rises again in victory

In bewilderment the police  
stood with their mouths  
open.

Rife are the rumours,  
That those who defied  
being pushed into the  
forest,  
In exile they are,  
One Smit is in exile across  
at the Bluff,  
One Madinana is in exile  
across the Umgeni river,  
Both can bear me out.

Praise poets, messengers,  
observers,  
Run in all directions,  
Stand on top of the  
mountains,  
Report to Botha at Pretoria,  
Report to our heroes on the  
island,  
Report to the angels in your  
prayers,  
Say unto them — here is a  
flood of workers,

The employers have done  
what ought not to be.

Why tease the mamba in its  
century-old sleep?  
The writing is on the wall,  
No stone shall stand on top  
of the other till eternity,  
Tell them — the borrowed  
must be given back,  
Tell them — the chained  
must be chained no more,  
Tell them — these are the  
dictates of the black  
mamba,  
The mamba that knows no  
colour,  
Tell them — these are the  
workers demands,  
By virtue of their birth  
right,  
By virtue of their struggle.

Dunlop workers I'm taking  
my hat off  
I'm bowing to you with  
respect.

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