

# FOSATU

## WORKER NEWS

Federation of South African Trade Unions



SEPTEMBER 1984 NUMBER 32

### 2 000 workers fight for their rights

# DUNLOP BATTLE



Dunlop workers vote in favour of continuing their strike

**CLOSE** on 2 000 Dunlop workers from three Natal factories are solid in their refusal to return to work until five fellow workers are reinstated.

The legal strike began on August 17 when over 1 000 workers at the company's tyre plant in Sydney Road voted in support of strike action in a secret ballot.

The five dismissed workers were all from the Sydney Road plant.

Four of them, all with more than 13-years' service, were dismissed for what the company called 'inefficiency'.

The Metal and Allied Workers Union said Dunlop had made no attempt to transfer the workers to

other jobs, to retrain them or even consult with them.

'Once you get too old to work, Dunlop just throws you on the scrap heap,' MAWU branch secretary Geoff Schreiner said.

The fifth worker was fired for 'absenteeism' although he had a doctor's certificate to explain his five-day's absence from work.

The union took steps to try and resolve the dispute but Dunlop said it was not prepared to review the dismissals nor was it prepared to refer them to mediation or arbitration.

Virtually, the only path open to the union was strike action.

Within days of the strike beginning at Sydney Road, 120 workers at Dunlop's sports factory downed tools in support of the demand for the reinstatement of the five sacked workers.

In both these cases, within hours of the strikes breaking out, the company announced that it was dismissing all the strikers.

The legal strike has now swelled to include the company's Ladysmith tyre factory where workers have staged a sit-in at the canteen every day for over two weeks.

Dunlop's Benoni industrial products factory also stopped work for a brief period.

Support for the strikers is

growing daily.

The recent congress of the South African Council on Sport (SACOS) pledged its support.

In a statement released after the congress, SACOS said it was the basic democratic right of workers to strike.

It added that the strike 'in the economic system operating in South Africa is one of their only non-violent means of expressing their rejection of the dictatorial actions on the part of management'.

On September 22, the Executive Committee of FOSATU will be considering what action the federation will take in support of the Dunlop strikers.

The Dunlop dispute was even raised at the recent conference of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) - Britain's national trade union federation.

Meetings have also been held with two British unions which have membership at Dunlop factories in England - the Transport and General Workers Union and the General and Municipal Workers Union.

They are both considering what appropriate solidarity action to take.

Brother Schreiner said it was likely the Dunlop strikers would get a lot of support from overseas unions as the company was known world-wide as a 'union basher'.

# Former general secretary went on spending spree with workers' money

More workers cross the floor to CWIU

WORKERS at another Eastern Cape glass factory have crossed the floor from TUCSA's Glass Workers Union to join the Chemical Workers Industrial Union.

Last year FOSATU Worker News reported that workers at Shatterprufe in Port Elizabeth had joined CWIU.

Now they have been joined by workers from Pilkington Glass who have resigned from the TUCSA union.

CWIU is in the process of negotiating a recognition agreement with Pilkington. So far the company has agreed to stop order deductions.

Members of the Pilkington steering committee told FOSATU Worker News that they had been unhappy with the Glass Workers Union for some time now.

FORMER Metal and Allied Workers Union general secretary, David Sebabi, appears to have gone on a R3 900 spending spree with workers' money.

Investigations conducted by MAWU have revealed that Sebabi, using the union's credit card, bought things for his wedding and for his personal use.

Between December 1983 and June 1984, Sebabi used the credit card to pay for purchases made at various bottle stores, a men's boutique, a number of supermarkets, and motor spares dealers.

He also used it to draw out money from the bank in order to buy other things for his personal use.

MAWU said that these purchases had nothing whatsoever to do with the union business and that no official or committee had given him permission to spend this union money.

The results of the union's investigations have been handed over to the Criminal Investigation Department of the South African Police.

David Sebabi and three other union officials were expelled from MAWU when initial investigations began to reveal financial mismanagement and gross misconduct.

The expelled officials, who

include Sam Ntuli, Andrew Zulu and Enoch Godongwana have since formed their own union - the United Mining, Metal and Allied Workers of South Africa (UMMAWOSA).

The union investigation has also revealed that together with Andrew Zulu, Sebabi secretly started a bank account and paid R790,40 from MAWU's account into this account.

On top of this, cheques, totalling R3 000, belonging to MAWU were banked in the new union's account.

Andrew Zulu also signed cheques for Barclaycard to pay Sebabi's expenses - this was

not reported to the NEC and was just written down as 'travel and accommodation'.

MAWU has also found that R3 000 paid to the former Transvaal administrator, Nabantu Sebabi, for the AGM has disappeared - it was not banked as it should have been.

MAWU will also be suing Sebabi and Sam Ntuli for hiring cars on the union's account for their own personal use.

Sebabi will be sued for over R2 500 and Ntuli for more than R1 500.

MAWU has also found that files, documents, a desk and a chair have disappeared from the union's Benoni offices.

## Sasol workers win changes

SASOL workers at Secunda have begun to use their organised strength to not only take up factory based problems but also issues affecting the community.

Recent talks between a Chemical Workers Industrial Union delegation and the local bus company have led to major improvements in the bus service.

Dissatisfaction with the bus service was initially raised by Sasol II and III shop stewards at an emergency meeting with management.

The meeting was called by the union to discuss the recent wage increases which were given without any negotiations with CWIU.

At the meeting, Sasol agreed to negotiate the 1985 wage increase with CWIU and to hold another meeting this month to discuss the recent wage increase.

The shop stewards then raised the issue of bus fare increases and worker dissatisfaction with a bank ruling which demanded they kept a minimum balance of R200 in their accounts - all the workers' wages are paid directly into a bank account.

In order to offset the bus fare increase, the company agreed to raise the monthly transport subsidy paid by Sasol - workers will now only have to pay an extra 50c per month on bus fare.

Sasol also said it would arrange a meeting between the union and the bus company to discuss other complaints workers had with the bus service.

On the bank problem, the company agreed to give workers the option of receiving their wages in cash.

At the later meeting, the bus company agreed to reduce the cost of the monthly ticket by cutting out non-work trips which are presently included in the ticket price.

It also agreed to improve punctuality, safety, overcrowding and the cleanliness of the bus service.

Furthermore, the bus company agreed to provide half-monthly tickets so that workers going on leave would not have to pay for unused journeys.

## Court's failings revealed

DESPITE the fact that the Progress Knitting strike was provoked by a 'blatant unfair labour practice', the strikers are offered little protection by the industrial court, according to union sources.

The Progress strike has highlighted a growing dissatisfaction in union circles with the industrial court.

Recent industrial court judgments have shown that the court will not consider reinstating strikers even if they were provoked by an unfair labour practice.

This clearly alters the balance of power in favour of employers and gives workers little choice but to continue their strike action.

### Overruled hearing

The strike at this Hammarsdale factory began when a company director overruled the results of a disciplinary hearing and fired a woman worker.

At the hearing, which was held in terms of the recognition agreement, the worker was given a final warning.

However, shortly after the hearing one of the company directors decided to overrule the hearing.

Immediately, the worker's colleagues in one department stopped work but were persuaded to return to work by the senior shop steward.

### Refused to back down

Meetings were then held with management who were told by the National Union of Textile Workers that they could not just change the procedures agreed to by the company.

However, the management refused to back-down saying they could not overrule another director.

It was only when the entire workforce downed tools that Progress decided to review the decision and finally agreed to reinstate the worker.

But, the company said, it now wanted to fire 10 workers, including the senior steward, for allegedly causing the strike.

### Over 1 000 strike

For just over two weeks, more than 1 000 workers have refused to return to work until all of them are taken back.

More favourable industrial court rulings would have enabled the Progress workers to return to work once the unfair labour practice had been resolved.

Union sources said that the only alternative open to workers in cases like this was lengthy strike action.

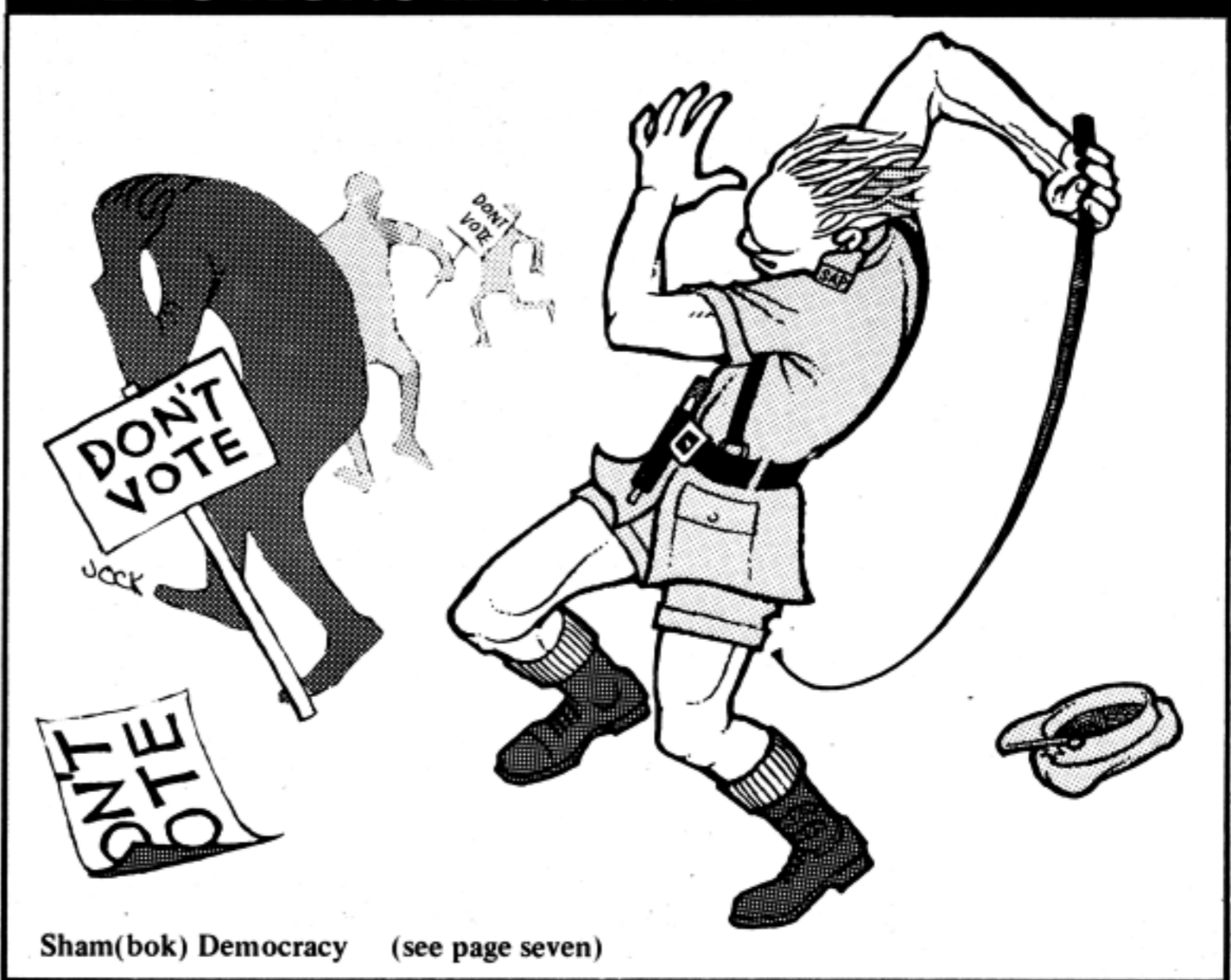
They said that the industrial court was failing to provide 'equal and fair' rights for both employers and unions.

'This will prevent it from becoming an important means of peacefully settling labour disputes,' they added.



NUTW's Obed Zuma speaks to the Progress workers

## ELECTIONS REVIEWED



Sham(bok) Democracy (see page seven)

# Half-day May Day

IN a significant step towards the acceptance of May Day as a workers' public holiday, Sarmcol at Howick has agreed to give its workers a half-day off on May 1 each year.

FOSATU and the other independent unions have embarked on a campaign to have May Day recognised as a workers' holiday — as it is in many countries around the world.

For many years, May Day has not been celebrated by South African workers.

## Wage settlement

However this year, a mass meeting was organised by the independent unions in Cape Town and in Natal workers wore May Day stickers.

The May Day half-day off was negotiated as part of a wage settlement with Sarmcol.

The wage agreement which pushes the minimum wage up to R329 per month was reached after four months of negotiations.

During this time, the union was forced to declare a dispute, hold a strike ballot, ban overtime and it sent a delegation to the company's annual shareholders' meeting.

MAWU said that the final wage offer which resolved the dispute was 59 percent higher than what had been originally offered by the company.



# CHT workers taken back

ROSSLYN components firm, CHT Manufacturing Company, has been ordered to take back 100 workers who it earlier this year fired for refusing to work overtime.

In February, workers at this factory near Pretoria refused to continue working overtime while the company refused to negotiate wages with the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union.

Management then attempted to get workers to sign a docu-

ment agreeing to work overtime of up to 34 hours per shift — a clear breach of current legislation which limits overtime to a maximum of 10 hours per week.

When workers refused to sign, CHT fired the entire workforce.

NAAWU told the industrial court that the dismissals had taken place while the workers were still working and the shop stewards committee was still negotiating the issue.

The court held that the

workers had a clear right to refuse to work overtime and that their refusal did not constitute a strike.

The court said workers were not required to work hours in excess of the normal hours per week as laid down in the industrial council agreement.

NAAWU welcomed the court decision saying it had come at a time when, in the course of the union's recruitment drive in the components industry, it had uncovered more and more fact-

ories which had equally unacceptable and dehumanising wages and working conditions.

'We have warned the competent manufacturers that we will not tolerate such conditions and if necessary we will turn to industrial action and dispute procedures to remedy these,' a union spokesperson said.

'Workers in this sector of industry have for too long been at the mercy of unscrupulous, get-rich-quick profiteers,' he added.

# Biscuit council crumbles

THE biscuit industry's industrial council is crumbling.

TUCSA's National Union of Operative Biscuit Makers has blocked the entry of the Sweet Food and Allied Workers Union to the council.

However, two major employers, Bakers and Fedbisco, have told the council that they are not prepared to participate in council negotiations without SFAWU, according to union sources.

The union sources also said that the chairman of Bakers had resigned from his position as chairman of the council.

The TUCSA union is now faced with a dilemma — either it lets SFAWU join the council or there is a strong possibility that the council will collapse.

For the past two years, the TUCSA union has been losing ground to SFAWU.

Both Bakers (which is by far the largest company in the biscuit industry) and Fedbisco have agreed to negotiate wages for 1984-5 with SFAWU at plant-level.

Another issue that has brought SFAWU into confrontation with the biscuit union is the principle of majority unionism.

SFAWU argues that where it has majority membership at a factory only it can speak for the workers at that factory.

The biscuit union opposes this saying that it should be able to represent the small pockets of membership it has left in SFAWU dominated factories.

A SFAWU spokesperson said that by blocking SFAWU, the biscuit union hoped to maintain its position as the sole spokesperson for all biscuit workers.

'But to this union's horror the council is crumbling before its very eyes,' he said.

# PWAWU prepares for wage negotiations

IN its first negotiations at the Pulp and Paper Industrial Council, the Paper Wood and Allied Workers Union will be demanding that the minimum hourly wage be hiked up by nearly R1.

This will bring the industry's present R1,38 per hour minimum wage up to R2,30.

The union is also demanding that May Day — Workers' Day — be a paid public holiday for the industry.

In many countries around the world, May Day, is recognised as a workers' public holiday —

it is set aside for workers to show world-wide solidarity.

PWAWU only recently joined the industrial council and will shortly be participating in the annual negotiations for a new industry-wide agreement covering wages and working conditions.

The union submitted its demands to the council after they were agreed to at a National Executive Committee meeting held on August 18 and 19.

A union spokesperson said the

wage demand 'should not prove too much of a problem for the Mondi Group which already pays its workers R2 an hour at most of its paper mills.'

'However, the other major paper employer, Sappi, at present pays wages only just above the industrial council minimum,' she said.

The union has a majority membership at all six of Mondi's paper mills.

In its proposals, PWAWU has also demanded that the present

46 hour working week be reduced to 40 hours.

A union spokesperson said this would mean that shift workers would continue to work the usual hours but six of these would be paid at overtime rates.

Other important demands are:

- \* a holiday bonus of four and a third weeks' pay.
- \* A shift allowance of R2 per shift.
- \* And a service allowance of an extra 3c per hour for each year of service.

# Chris Dlamini renews call for unity

UNITY was the main message of the day at the annual general meeting of the Transvaal branch of the Transport and General Workers Union on Sunday August 25.

FOSATU president, Chris Dlamini, in the key speech of

the day called on workers in all trade unions to unite.

'We must unite to fight the bosses in the factories, and we must unite in the communities,' he said.

'We are facing increases in rents every day and our child-

ren are facing terrible conditions and bad education in the schools,' he added.

Brother Dlamini said the Local Authorities which had been set up by the oppressive government could never serve the interests of workers.



Bashweshwe dancers perform at TGWU's annual general meeting



Ferreirastown slum, Johannesburg, around the time of the First World War

# The making of the WORKING CLASS

TODAY 9 million black people live permanently in towns in South Africa. The black proletariat (this means, workers who own no property and have to work for somebody else in order to survive) is the leading force among the oppressed. This was not always so. For many years most of those who held power in South Africa (capitalists, the government, the white workers, the black chiefs) were strongly opposed to blacks leaving their villages to live

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permanently in towns. In this issue we look at why they were so strongly opposed, and how the black proletariat came to be formed.

Two kinds of worker were originally wanted by capitalists in South Africa. The first was the labour tenant on the white farms (these were workers who laboured 180 days for the farmer in return for some land on which they could grow their own crops and keep their own cattle). The second was

the migrant labourer on the mines. The mines only wanted migrant labourers. They housed their labour in bachelor (that is men only) compounds, they refused to let the wives of these workers join them in the towns, and they made the workers sign contracts for fixed periods of time, after which the workers returned home.

Why were the mine-owners so determined to employ only migrant labourers? The reason is clear.

Migrant labour was extra cheap. The migrant labourer left his wife and family in the rural area. His wife and family were able to supply most of their own needs (in those early days) by cultivating the land. The mines therefore did not need to pay wages which would keep the whole family alive. They only paid enough to allow the labourer to pay his taxes, and to help towards buying cattle. Also when the worker became sick or old or injured, he could be dumped back in the rural area, and the mining capitalists did not have to pay unemployment or sickness or old age benefits.

In the rural areas the chiefs were also opposed to their people leaving to live permanently in town. They were prepared to co-operate with the mines' migrant labour system, as long as the labourer returned home. This allowed the chiefs to take a share of the migrant labourer's earnings and also to retain his labour.

In 1887, for example, the Thonga queen who ruled in southern Mozambique, wrote to the Governor of Natal saying that she was: 'very much indebted to the Natal government for the licence granted to her subjects to enter, pass through, or work in Natal (but she would also) be very pleased if the Natal government would make it compulsory for her subjects to return home after two or three years.'

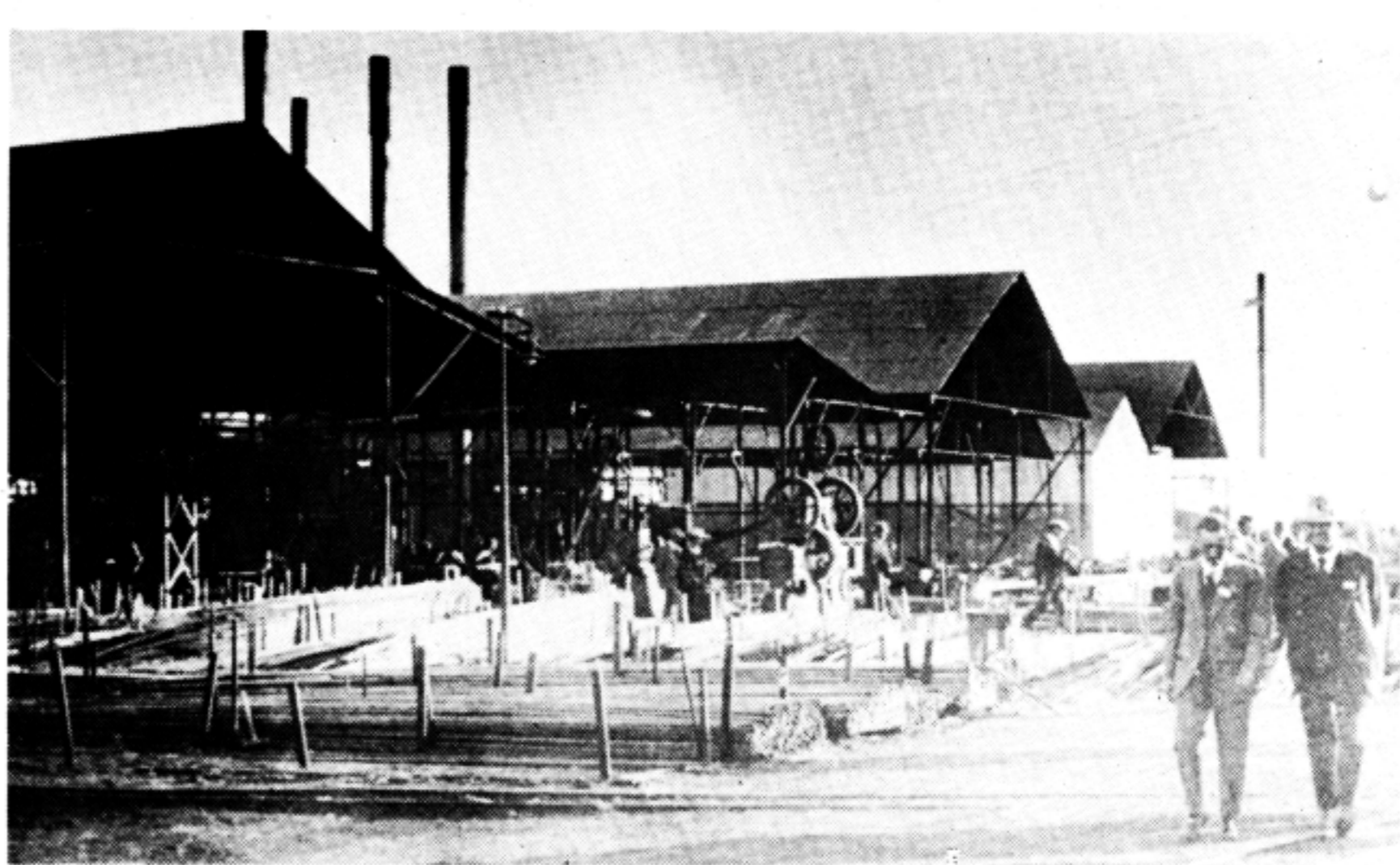
Mozambiquan chiefs also heavily taxed returning migrants. Usually each migrant had to pay £1 to the chief and two shillings to the unnumzane (headman), but in some cases this rose to £5 or £10. In other places, such as Pondoland, migrant workers had cattle advanced to them before they worked, which were placed under the control of the village head. The migrant therefore had a strong reason for returning home.

To summarise, then, there were many obstacles in the way of those blacks who wished to stay permanently in the towns. Wages were too low to support a family. The mining industry only wanted migrants. The chiefs wanted their young men back. The white rate-payers in the towns and the government feared large numbers of poor blacks concentrated in the towns and used pass laws to restrict this.

So how was it possible for a black working class that lived permanently in the towns to be formed? There seem to be four main reasons.

Firstly, conditions were getting steadily worse in the rural areas (especially after the Land Act of 1913) and were pushing people off the land.

Secondly, as the cities of the Witwatersrand grew up around the mines, new industries were established to supply the mines. Because of this other



**Dunswart factory, Benoni, 1923**

jobs outside of mining were created. By 1918 these numbered 67 111 and by 1921, 92 597. However, because most of these new companies were small they were unable to follow the example of the Chamber of Mines and control their labour through contracts and compounds. As a result many workers were able to settle without restrictions in their own accommodation in the towns.

The third reason for an urban working class being allowed to grow up is the attitude of some parts of the mining industry. Several mining companies owned large areas of land in the towns. On this land they allowed slums to develop, because of the huge amount of rent they obtained from the thousands of people crammed on to the land. The mining companies therefore blocked government attempts to move them.

The last and most important reason for the development of a black urban working class was the drift of women to the towns. This was strongly opposed by both black society in the countryside and the white ruling groups in the towns. In KwaZulu, for example, heavy punishments were applied by the magistrates to a woman running away and it was necessary for a woman to be identified by a man known to the pass officer before she was given a pass to leave Zululand.

It was the ability of women to break through

these restrictions which in many ways allowed the black proletariat to grow. Firstly the presence of women allowed marriages to occur and families to form. Secondly, women's earnings allowed a family to survive (since men's wages were fixed at 'migrant' levels and were not enough to maintain a family).

Jobs for women were, however, scarce. They could do washing, and, after a time domestic service (until the First World War most domestic work was done by men). A large number of women consequently earned a living by the traditional activity of beer brewing – which as a result came under a growing attack from the government and the police.

These conditions were to set the scene for the first movement of black urban resistance in the period 1918–1921. The targets of the resistance were several:

- low wages.
- passes.
- poor housing.
- police raids on beer-brewing.

Between them they helped produce the first mass organised political resistance in the towns, in the form of the Transvaal Native Congress and the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU). These we deal with in the next issue.



**Sophiatown, 1920**

I started work at Kempar in 1981. About a month after I had started, the induna came up to me and said he fancied me and wanted to sleep with me.

When I protested and explained to him that I had my own man, he told me that he wasn't expecting me to reject my husband. He was only asking me for sexual favours.

The induna kept on pestering me but I kept on rejecting him. He then threatened to clock me off and then take me to the foreman. He said I would then be fired for refusing his 'request'.

One Friday afternoon the induna gave me money and asked me to buy him some foodstuffs. He said I must take them to his room on Sunday night so that I could spend the night with him and then go to work on Monday morning.

#### Resisted pressures

When I refused the induna accused me of thinking that I was better than other women who offered him what he wanted. After all, the induna said, all women in KwaZulu have five or six private lovers at a time.

This woman worker managed to resist the pressures of the ind-

una but she said her cousin was not so lucky.

My cousin had been sleeping with the induna because she was worried about losing her job.

When one day she felt she had 'offered enough of her body' and decided to refuse she was fired.

#### Tried to explain

The workers approached the manager to try and explain to him that the real reason for my cousin's dismissal was that she was now refusing to sleep with the induna.

The manager just dismissed it as a lie, because, he said, she was not the most beautiful woman in the factory.

Another Kempar woman took up the story saying that the same induna had asked her if she would sleep with her. She refused but he persisted.

Whenever I ran out of material he would take me to the store room and then lock the door.

He would point to some item on the top which I would then have to climb up to. While I was trying to climb, the induna would grab me and touch every part of my body asking me to sleep with him.

I would scream until he open-

ed the door.

Another woman worker said that because she kept on resisting the induna's attempts to get her to sleep with him, he would hide her tools and then accuse her of carelessness.

He kept on threatening me with dismissal because, he said, I was refusing to give him what other women give him.

He even went as far as to make a duplicate of my clock card.

While I clocked in for the whole week, the induna would only clock in 'his' card for three days.

#### Destroyed clock card

He then destroyed my card and produced the duplicate so that I was underpaid.

The Kempar workers said they had begun to organise themselves into the Metal and Allied Workers Union around these issues.

The induna vowed that he was going to destroy our union. He went around forcing us to resign from MAWU.

This sparked off the strike where workers demanded the dismissal of the 'most infamous' induna.

In spite of all the evidence against the induna, the company came out in support of him and

# ISITHEBE WORKERS SEXUALLY HUMILIATED

Sexual harassment is not new. What is new is that women are beginning to say 'Why should we have to put up with it'. And unions are beginning to see it as a trade union issue. Sexual harassment can take many forms from embarrassing remarks or jokes to unwanted physical contact and demands for sexual favours. It is common for the harasser to have a certain degree of authority over the 'victim' - like a manager or supervisor. Here FOSATU Worker News talks to women workers from an Isithebe factory who each tell tales of extreme harassment. However, when they all went on strike demanding the dismissal of the 'harasser' the management kept him on and fired them.

fired all the workers.

Imagine being so sexually humiliated and then you are fired for trying to defend your dignity, one of the workers said.

The workers said it was almost

impossible for them to get a job in Isithebe 'because once the company that hires you finds out that you used to work for Kempar you are immediately dismissed'.

## Cooperation in Highveld Steel strike ballot

IT is rare to see co-operation between white and black workers in South Africa.

Over many years the apartheid system has driven a wedge between white workers and their black colleagues.

This division has been encouraged by employers who fear the power of united workers.

However, a strike ballot at Anglo American's Highveld Steel plant possibly points the way forward to greater worker unity.

In the ballot, a significant number of white workers joined black workers in voting yes for legal strike action.

The ballot was called by the Metal and Allied Workers Union and the SA Boilermakers Society after in-house wage talks at the company deadlocked.

Nearly all of MAWU's 2 846 voted in support of the strike, together with 410 Boilermakers' members and 401 white workers who were members of other unions.

The 401 workers, some of whom were members of the right-wing Mineworkers Union, voted in spite of instructions from their organisers not to do so.

Following the strike ballot, the company agreed to re-open wage negotiations with the two unions.

However, as we went to press no settlement had been reached.

On September 6, 3 500 black members of the two unions stopped work for three hours in protest at Highveld's refusal to improve its wage offer.

As FOSATU Worker News went to press, white members of the Boilermakers Society had not yet decided whether to join the protest action.

A MAWU spokesperson said Highveld's wage offer 'was the worst of all the house agreement offers'.

'Highveld is one of the most profitable companies in the industry, and yet it pays very badly,' he said.

## Henred workers celebrate



NOT even the rain could dampen the spirits of the Henred Fruehauf workers at Isithebe. This was the day that they had set aside to celebrate the recent wage negotiations between the company and the Metal and Allied Workers Union which won them a 24c per hour increase from July 1 and a

further 4c per hour increase in January. The workers started the day off by holding a meeting in a local church hall where they discussed the wage negotiations which were held at a national level and cover all of the Henred factories represented by MAWU. A male choir also sang and a Henred worker performed

a Praise Poem to the 'son of FOSATU'. The workers then moved on to a worker's house in the township where six sheep had been slaughtered and cooked. The Henred workers took advantage of the brief breaks in the rain to go outside and sing worker songs - to the delight of neighbours.

**Kohler  
Plastics  
pays out  
R68 000**

KOHLER Plastics has agreed to pay out R68 160 to the Metal and Allied Workers Union members who were fired after a stoppage earlier this year.

And the company has agreed to re-employ the 142 union members when vacancies come up.

The workers went on strike when the company retrenched 85 workers without any consultation with MAWU.

The retrenchments came in the middle of a dispute over the proposed introduction of a new shift system.

The Kohler workers had rejected the new shift system because the company refused to provide transport home for night workers.

## Lanatex worker told to go down on her knees and beg by factory manager

THE manager forced me to go down on my knees and beg for my job back, a Lanatex shop steward told FOSATU Worker News.

Sister Albertina Madlala is one of four workers who the industrial court recently ordered the company to take back after their cases were taken up by the National Union of Textile Workers.

In an interview with FOSATU Worker News, she said that towards the end of March this Pinetown textile firm had fired three workers.

'The shop stewards approached management to find out why the three had been dismissed,' she said.

'The manager said not only were the three workers dismissed but now myself and another shop steward were dismissed.'

At this, she said, the workers had all stopped work saying that

'if the shop stewards are fired we are also not working'.

Later the management told workers that they were all dismissed and that the company would be re-employing selectively.

'The workers came back the following day to collect their pay and they were taken in one at a time, Sister Madlala said.

'They were all asked who had incited them to strike - was it the union or fellow workers,' she added.

'Then my turn came. The boss asked me who was behind the strike.'

'I told him that we were on strike in protest against the unfair dismissals,' she said.

'He asked me if I was still interested in my job. I said I was,' Sister Madlala said.

'He then said if that was the case I should go down on my

knees as a gesture of apology to him.'

'While I was on my knees, he asked me if I was still going to be a member of the union. I said yes.'

Sister Madlala said the manager then told her to come back after two weeks and he would give her a job.

She returned after two weeks but was told to come again after Easter.

'When I came back after Easter, he asked for my reference book, signed me off and told me that I had been fired,' Sister Madlala said.

NUTW took the company to court for the unfair dismissal of the shop stewards and the workers initially fired and won their reinstatement.

The court also ordered that Lanatex pay the workers the

wages they had lost during the time that they were out of work.

Meanwhile, the NUTW has won another reinstatement case - this time concerning a Natal Overall worker.

Sister Florence Ntuli was fired for refusing to accept a change of job - management wanted her to wash overalls and scrub toilet floors.

NUTW argued that this was done deliberately to humiliate her because she was a key union member.

The court ordered the company to take her back but within two weeks they fired her again.

A union organiser said Natal Overall had once again tried to get her to clean overalls and scrub floors.

NUTW will be taking the case back to court.

## 10 unionists detained during pamphlet drive

SHORTLY before the elections, eight Sigma shop stewards and two organisers from the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union were detained by police.

They were picked up by police on the outskirts of Eersterust, a township near Pretoria, where they had been distributing leaflets as part of FOSATU's campaign against the new constitution.

NAAWU's Lisa Makalela said they had stopped to give a lift to three UDF people and soon after this they were stopped by the riot squad.

'They ordered us out of the kombi, searched the men and then the kombi,' she said.

'The police then asked us to follow them to Eersterust police station,' she added.

Sister Makalela said the police

had kept them there for two hours while they tried to locate a senior police officer.

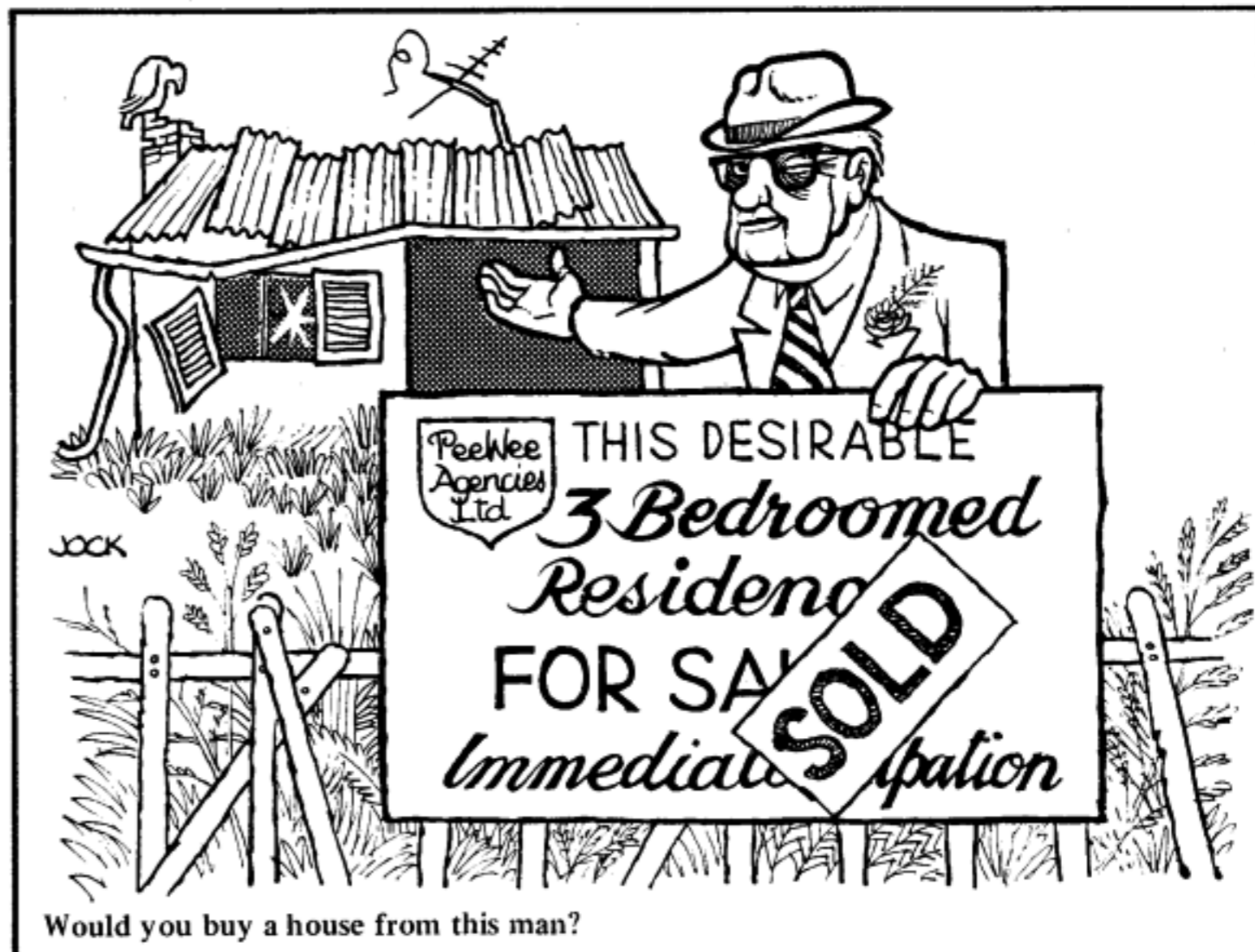
'He told them that what we were doing was not illegal, but before they released us, the policemen demanded our pass books,' she said.

'Only myself and Martin Ndaba had our passes with us, the rest were then taken to Mamelodi police station,' Sister Makalela said.

She said she had then phoned the union lawyers who had contacted the police and informed them that the people should have been given 24-hours to produce their passes.

Everybody was released some four hours after they had been picked up.

In a press statement, NAAWU slammed the police action as 'clear intimidation'.



Would you buy a house from this man?

# Sham democracy!

IN the peace and tranquility of the Houses of Parliament in Cape Town eighty-five so-called coloured and forty-five Indians this month were sworn in as members of parliament.

Far from their minds was the nightmare elections as they sat in their privileged seats and dreamt of their new fat salaries.

But the farcical elections will not be forgotten by the hundreds of thousands of workers who clearly showed their rejection of the government's new deal.

Polls of between 20 to 30 per-

cent were recorded in the elections for the two new houses of parliament - the House of Delegates and the House of Representatives.

Significantly the lowest polls were recorded in the urban areas where workers would have voted.

It is clear that the overwhelming majority of workers heeded the Don't Vote call made by FOSATU and other progressive organisations.

The elections were a tremendous victory for worker unity.

Apart from the low polls

there were other aspects to the elections which turned them into a farce.

Indian and so-called coloured political parties in their eagerness to get elected revealed the depths of skulduggery they will stoop to.

Reports of people voting twice, of dead people voting and of intimidation of pensioners undermined any semblance of democracy which remained.

The government's hands are not exactly clean, either.

Shortly before the coloured elections the Security Police

detained over a hundred key activists from various progressive organisations.

Many of them have since been released but a significant number have been served with detention orders which will keep them in gaol until February next year.

Even a recent successful court attempt to have seven detainees released has been counteracted by the government - it merely drew up new detention orders.

On the election days themselves, the riot police attacked protesters with sjamboks and seized all banners.

They were assisted by members of the various political parties fighting the elections who obviously saw beating up protesters as part of their election campaigns.

The SABC also waged a ceaseless campaign calling on the so-called coloured and Indian voters to 'exercise their democratic right'. It was supported by almost every newspaper in the country.

However, the independent unions, community and other progressive organisations won the day.

## 'Only worker unity will safeguard SA's future'

WORKERS in the 'true spirit of resistance' had fought against racism in their factories and workshops, in every day life and in society, FOSATU's Les Kettle-das told a mass meeting of over 4 000 people held in the Eastern Cape recently.

The pre-election meeting was called by independent trade unions, community and church organisations to show their rejection of the government's new deal.

Continuing his speech, Brother Kettle-das said now that the independent trade union move-

ment had eradicated this evil, 'we see again attempts on another level to introduce apartheid.'

'This we reject, as it is only through the unity of workers, that our future will be safeguarded.'

'And we will be able to successfully fight for a society where all people will be equal and where no-one will be oppressed and exploited - a society free from racist and capitalist exploitation,' he said.

Brother Kettle-das called on the press to stop labelling anti-

election organisations as 'boycotters'.

'Name us what we are, the resistance, because that is what we are the resistance to capitalist and colonialist exploitation,' he said.

Brother Kettle-das said it was only when workers had a decisive say in the things that affected them that there could be a just society.

'And in order to do this, worker power should be based on effective organisation at the point of production - in the

factories, the shops, the farms and wherever workers are,' he said.

'Unless it is a democracy, in which representatives carry out the mandates and are accountable to the people, it is a false democracy and should be re-

jected out of hand,' he added.

In conclusion, Brother Kettle-das said, 'Worker organisations will be crucial in developing a new and just nation and we await the day when we can ensure a democratic government of the people.'

## Independent unions promise to continue struggle for free SA

IT is ridiculous for the Minister of Internal Affairs to call the results of the recent elections an 'acceptable' mandate to go ahead with the new constitution.

Particularly, when the low polls indicate exactly the opposite - the majority of eligible voters overwhelmingly reject the government's new deal.

This was said in a statement released shortly after the elections by the independent unions involved in the current unity talks.

The unions said that they rejected any attempts to blame the low polls on intimidation.

'The government swung the whole power of the state in support of the elections - weeks before it mounted a high-powered publicity campaign urging so-called coloureds and Indians to vote.'

'On top of this, it set out to harrass progressive organisations

campaigning for a boycott,' the statement said.

'This culminated in the despicable detention of over a hundred key activists from these organisations,' the statement added.

'But despite these efforts the government failed.'

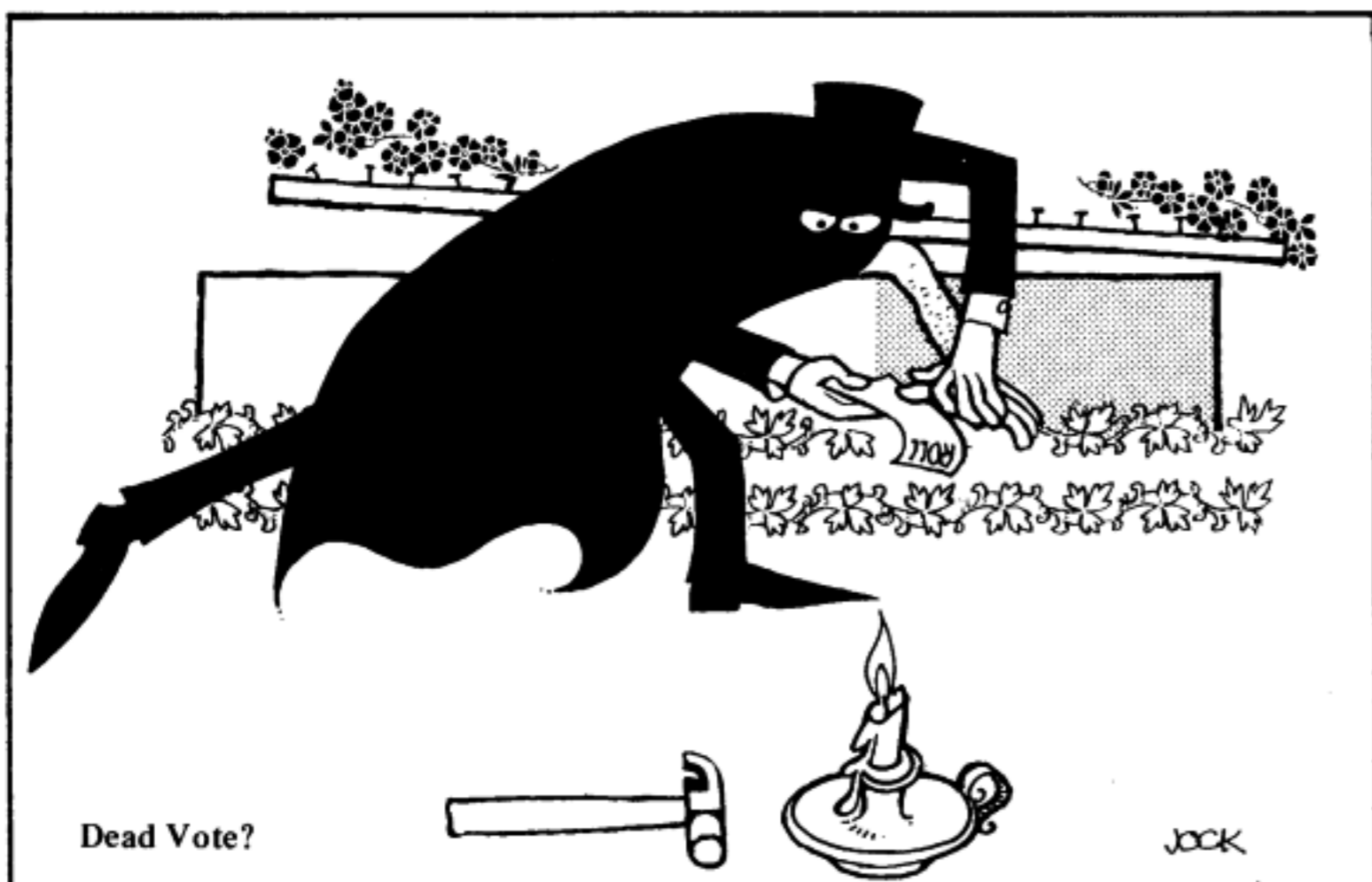
'We believe that it is time that this racist government realised that apartheid in whatever guise is unacceptable to the majority of workers,' the unions said.

They said that in the independent unions, so called coloured, Indian, African and white workers had seen the benefits of unity and non-racialism.

'The real democracy practiced in our unions shows up the new constitution for what it really is - a farce,' the statement said.

'We will continue our struggle for a free and just South Africa for all workers,' it added.

The independent unions also called on the government to release all those it had detained.



Dead Vote?

JOCK

# STOP PIT CLOSURES

The picketing in the coal strike in Britain is not limited to the coal mines themselves, or to the steelworks. Pickets are regularly stationed at power stations to stop the bringing in of more coal supplies. In this interview FOSATU Worker News talks to miners from south Wales who are picketing the Didcot power station. As the strike by hundreds of thousands of miners enters its sixth month, the giant Trades Union Congress (Britain's national trade union federation) has pledged its support. Meanwhile, the National Coal Board and the National Union of Mineworkers have begun new talks in a bid to settle the dispute.

## What is the position at Didcot Power station?

There are only a few pickets at each gate. There is no coal going in. ASLEF (the train drivers' union) has backed our strike and there are no trains to bring in the coal. The management at the power station asked the joint shop stewards committee at the plant to accept coal brought in by road but they refused. At present two of the three huge generators are being serviced. Only a small amount of power is being produced. It's very quiet down there. There are no police stationed at the site. They just drive past two or three times a day to check on things. But this situation is typical of the strike as a whole. The conflict happens only where the National Coal Board and the government pick targets and use police force to keep back the pickets while scabs cross or coal is brought in.

## What's the position at your own pit in South Wales?

South Wales is a unique situation. If the pits close down there at our pit there will be no jobs at all. In the area everything depends on the coal industry. There are no alternative jobs. Since closing down the steel plants in 1980 there have been no jobs for the steel workers laid off. They took redundancy money at the time because they believed they would get other jobs. Now they are regretting not having fought to save their jobs. We've learnt from that. We're not falling into the same trap. It is a community issue in our area. Everybody will suffer if the pits close. Even the mine manager is on our side. His own job is on the line. He calls the scabs 'bloody parasites'. The pickets at our plant are just token - there is no-one working. But the pickets are not on the street, they are in the pit yard, with management approval. We even have free use of the NCB (National Coal Board) phone.

## Is your pit in line for closure?

Most of the South Wales pits are under threat. They are high up on the list of the so-called uneconomic pits.

## What does 'uneconomic' mean?

That's a good question. The

newspapers give the impression that we want to keep open pits that have no coal in them. That's nonsense. What we're saying is "Don't close pits with coal left in them." What the NCB wants is to shift production to mines like the Nottinghamshire mines. There you've got seams six feet high. You can automate pits like that to a high degree. But in Wales the seams are thinner, more broken up. It's harder work to dig it out. What we're on about is this: we've produced profits from the Welsh pits that have enabled the NCB to develop fields like the Nottinghamshire field. We don't expect to be kicked out of our jobs now that the investment capital we've raised has been poured into other pits. If it's easy now to dig coal in Nottinghamshire then the whole industry should benefit, not just the wealthiest pits.

## What is behind the attitude of the Nottinghamshire miners in refusing to join the strike?

In fact many of the miners there are out on strike. But those that are working are blinded by the money. They're earning between 300 and 400 pounds a week (between R600 and R800), with their bonus scheme and those ideal conditions for production.

## What was the attitude to the press calls for a national strike ballot at the earlier stages of the strike?

As far as we're concerned our National Conference has the authority to call a strike. That is in our constitution. That is good enough for us. As a matter of fact, right at the beginning of the strike our pit voted against striking, because we thought that the strike was just about the closing down of one pit in Yorkshire. But when we learnt what it was really all about, we changed our minds. Now we support the strike. And anyway, once pickets from the other areas started picketing, we were not going to cross them. Were we? So what use was the ballot? You also have to understand the problem in our industry with ballots. Out of 180 000, 40 000 are clerical, managerial and so on. They always vote against strike action. So for us to get a 50 percent strike vote we have to get 75 percent among production workers



A woman narrowly escapes serious head injuries when attacked by a truncheon-wielding mounted policeman on the picket line outside Orgrave. The Orgrave coking plant has been the site of bitter battles between miners and police.

## More generally, what do you think of the picture of the strikers presented by the newspapers?

Well, they've shut up now about the ballot because it is clear we support the strike and would vote for the strike if there was a ballot. But what gets us is the lies about no compulsory redundancies. We know that is just

wisely and then refuses to pay you any dole. All the money boils down to is unemployment pay in a lump sum, which you are forced to live off until it's all gone. Another lie is the 'political strike' line. We're just striking for our jobs that's all. We'll work under any government as long as we have jobs.

## The degree of organisation in

# Fight for jobs

a line they are pushing to get us back to work, but the media reports it like Gospel. The media also reports the NCB propaganda about redundancy payments, saying there's 1 000 pounds (R2 000) for every year of service. In fact that is a theoretical maximum while some may get it, but nobody we know would get that. And anyway there is no point in accepting money because you'll never work again afterwards and when the money has gone, what will you do then. You can't even spend the money on buying a house because the dole office (unemployment office) classes that as spending the money un-

## providing transport, accommodation and food for the pickets here is impressive. How is all this co-ordinated?

It wasn't co-ordinated to start with. It was chaotic. One day we would be picketing at Leicester, next day it was somewhere else. There were no food supplies, whereas now we even have a cook! Gradually things got organised by NUM Wales and the regional offices. In our area, the Labour Council provides the Community Centre and free phone calls, we organise food parcels, free dinners three times a week for single miners. There is a weekly meeting to arrange

collection of donations and distribution of food. People realise it's an all or nothing situation, so the support is incredible.

At the end of the day people know that there are no alternative jobs in South Wales. There are hundreds of new factories in the area which have been built and never used. Now they are boarded up. If the mines close, that's it. There is over 4 million unemployed in Britain and there has to be a fight about where things are going or there will be 8 million unemployed. If we lose this strike we have no future. We have got to win.

