

FOSATU WORKER NEWS

Federation of South African Trade Unions



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FOSATU and other unions put their muscle behind a country-wide consumer boycott

BOYCOTT

FOSATU together with the Food and Canning Workers Union, the Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union, the General Workers Union, the Cape Town Municipal Workers Association and the National Union of Mineworkers have decided to put their weight behind a national consumer boycott in protest at the declaration of a State of Emergency.

And, at a meeting at Wilgespruit near Johannesburg on August 17, the unions set up a national committee to monitor the progress of the boycott on a month by month basis.

The national boycott of shops in the central business districts is in support of four demands:

- the lifting of the State of Emergency.
- the removal of the police and the army from the townships.
- the release of all detainees.
- political rights for all South Africa's people.

Should none of these demands be met, the unions have committed themselves to taking stronger action.

Sporadic boycotts have already begun in a number of areas, however the decision by these strongly-organised unions to involve themselves will spread the consumer boycott to all of South Africa's major towns and cities.

A resolution taken at the meeting warned that the unions would take solidarity action against any employer who dismissed or retrenched workers, particularly CCAWUSA members, because of the boycott.

Miners' strike

At the Wilgespruit meeting the unions expressed 'strong support' for the miners' struggle for a living wage and for their planned strike due to start on August 25.

Union delegates were horrified to learn of the appalling minimum wages being paid on the mines — R136 per month for surface workers and R166 for underground workers (see article on page 10).

The unions said that the National Union of Mineworkers' demand for a 22 percent increase in the light of these wages was 'entirely reasonable'.

They condemned the Chamber of Mines' stubbornness in not accepting this demand.

The unions also expressed concern at the rumours that some mining houses were building up weaponry in preparation for the strike.

At the meeting the unions committed themselves to taking solidarity action in support of the NUM strike.

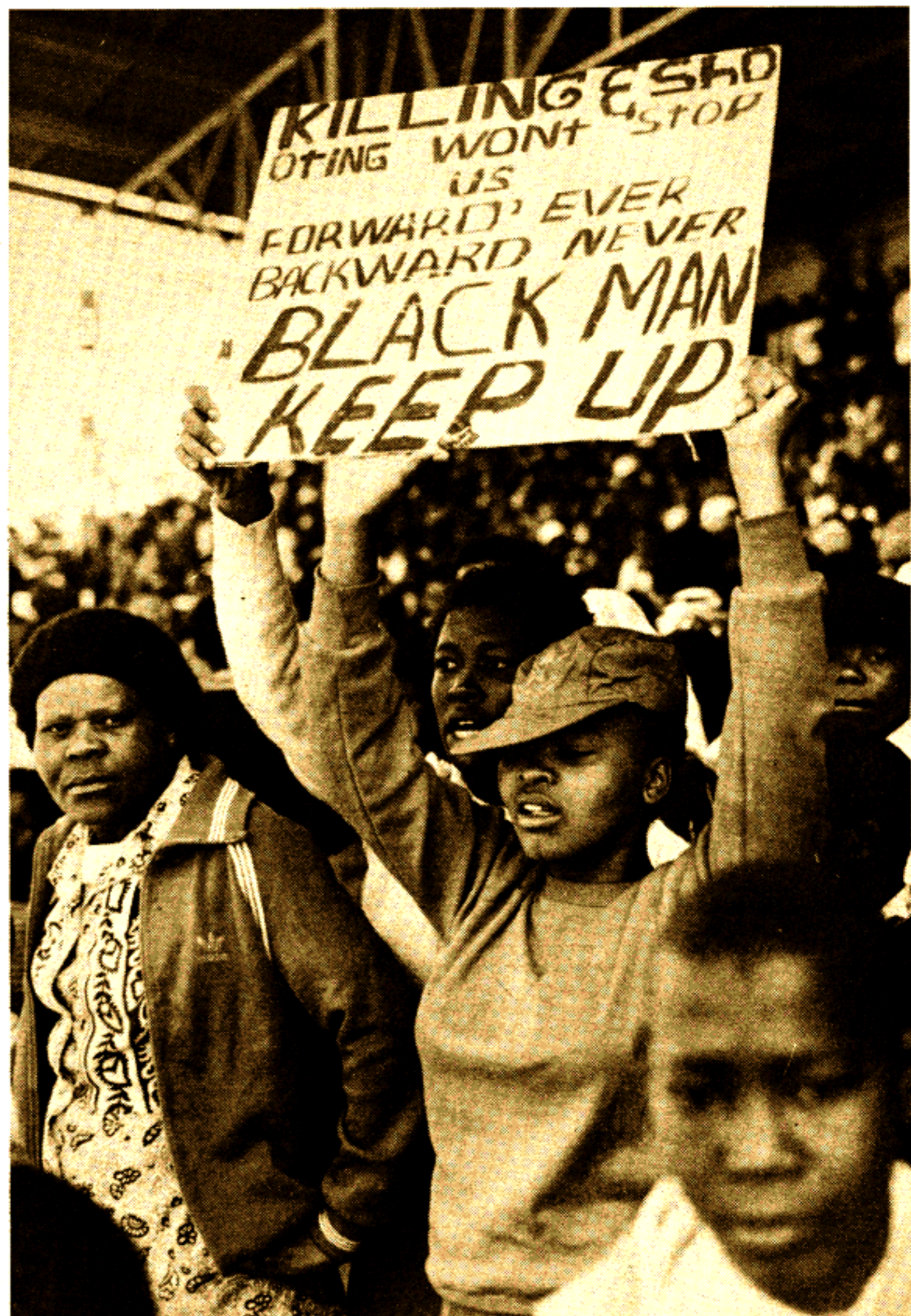
Unity

Meanwhile, a final date has been set for the Inaugural Congress of the new super federation. It is November 30-December 1.

At a recent unity meeting at least 25 unions said they would present paid-up membership figures and their constitutions to a credentials committee in preparation for the launching congress.

The total membership of the new federation could well be in the region of 400 000.

The credentials committee will also assist unions in taking steps towards merging with other unions in the same industrial sector so that in the near future there will be only one union for each sector.



The message is clear, but will anyone listen to it? — an NUTW member waves a placard at the KwaThema funeral