

SASPU 

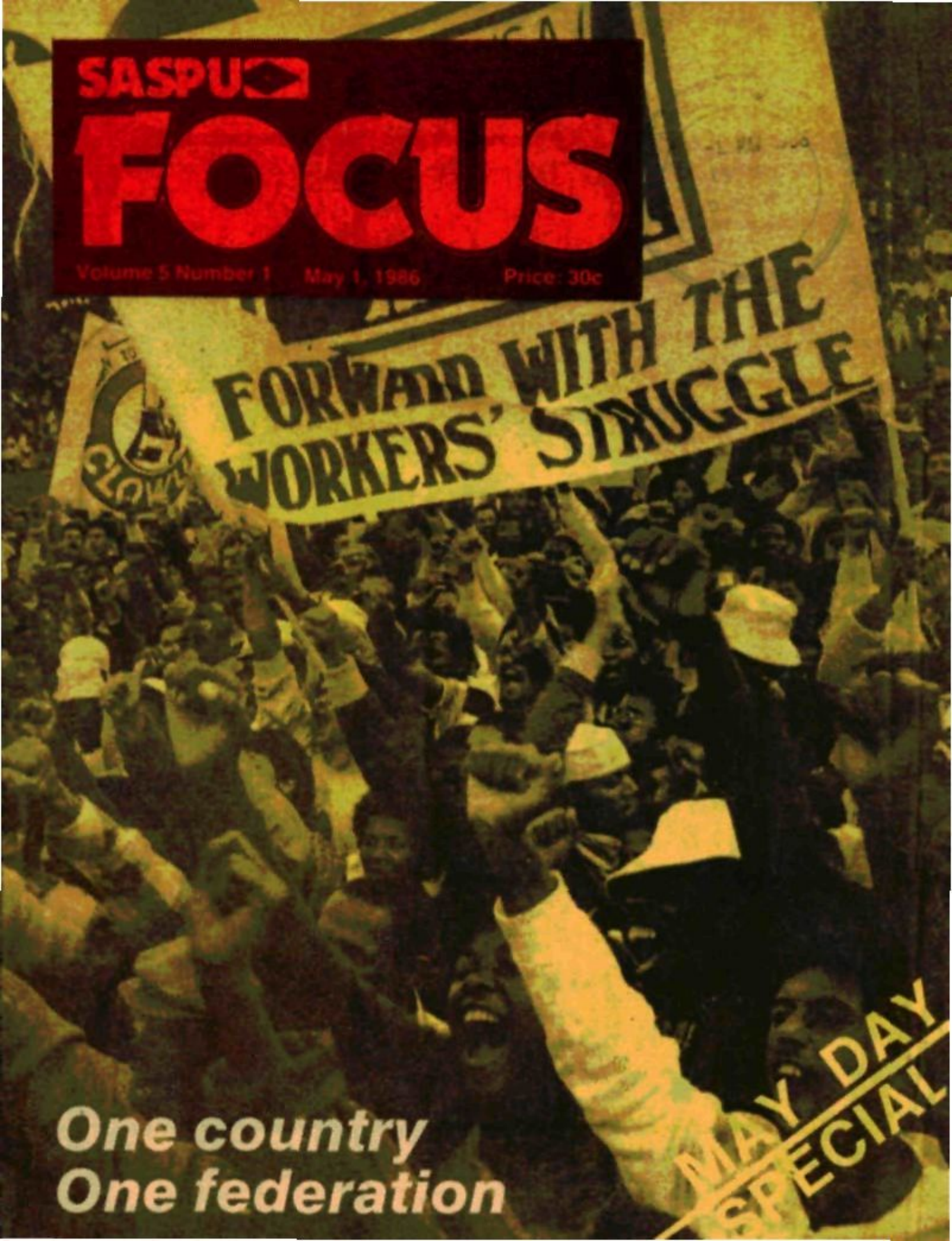
# FOCUS

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**FORWARD WITH THE  
WORKERS' STRUGGLE**

**One country  
One federation**

**MAY DAY  
SPECIAL**



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National Union of Mineworkers shaft stewards at the union's AGM in Soweto — only some of the 650 000 Cosatu members who will participate in May Day activities.

# May Day unites

HUNDREDS OF millions of workers around the world will down tools on May 1.

In hundreds of languages and thousands of cities workers will shout: "Workers of the world unite!" And the worldwide solidarity of workers on Mayday will be celebrated for the one hundredth time.

## Worker solidarity

In the socialist countries Mayday will be an official holiday, celebrating the victory of the working class over small ruling elites.

In capitalist countries, workers will down tools sometimes illegally to celebrate past victories and re-dedicate themselves to future struggles against exploitation and oppression.

SA's workers will be part of this show of worker solidarity.

650 000 members of the Con-

gress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu) the largest federation in SA will lead the Mayday demonstration.

Under Cosatu's banner, workers will attend rallies in all the major centres and take off work for the whole of May 1.

They will celebrate ● 'A hundred years of struggle by the international working class against the domination of monopoly capitalism'.

● 'The historic mineworkers' strike of 1946, and further salute the heroic militancy and resistance under the National Union of Mineworkers at present despite the brutality of the mine bosses'.

## Inkatha divides

This year, Inkatha is also planning a rally on Mayday.

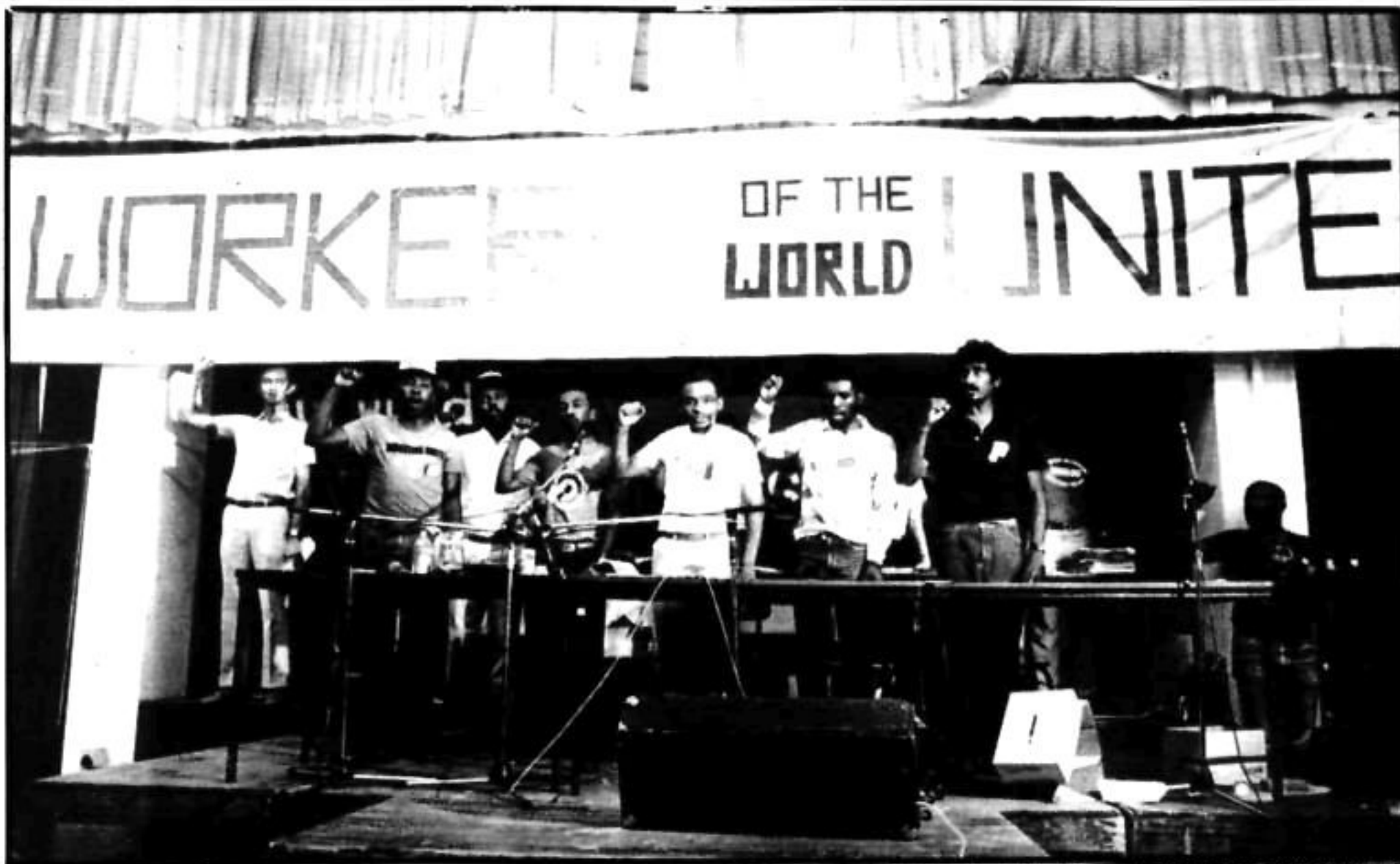
Cosatu says: 'The Inkatha-

## South Africa's workers gather for the biggest ever May Day commemoration

linked United Workers' Union of SA (Uwusa) intends to use the symbol of international working class unity to launch itself, an act which is designed to deliberately undermine the unity we have built.'

The formation of Uwusa by Inkatha is supported by the SA government and the bosses. It aims to divide workers in Natal, says Cosatu. Cosatu has condemned it as 'a reactionary and tragic step', and says:

'Uwusa is being formed not to



Under the international workers' call, the Cosatu executive salutes the workers' struggle. From left to right at table: Makhulu Ledwaba (2nd Vice-President), Maxwell Xulu (Treasurer), Chris Dlamini (Vice-President), Elijah Barayi (President), Sydney Mufamadi (Assistant General Secretary) and Jay Naidoo (General Secretary).

# workers of the world



The slogans of today: 'Workers Unite', 'Troops Out'.

pursue the cause of unionism but to protect the interests of employers and capital in Natal and more generally in SA'.

Hundreds of thousands of workers will be taking part in Cosatu's celebrations. Next to that, Uwusa's meeting will be very small whatever the commercial press says.

## Cosatu demands

Mayday celebrations this year will be especially important for most South Africans because it is being organised by Cosatu, the largest and strongest union federation in our history.

Cosatu will mobilise its membership and the broader community around demands for:

- *the right to organise* all workers of all industries in democratic unions;
- the right to strike;
- *the right to work*, for Mayday to be a paid public holiday, a 40-hour working week on a living wage, with social security, increased UIF, and rent exemp-

tion for all unemployed people;

- equal pensions for all people on a monthly basis;

- full maternity benefits for all working women;

- *the rights of students* to form democratic SRC's and build an alternative system of people's education now.

- the right to free political activity, the unbanning of all banned organisations, the release of all political prisoners and the dropping of all treason charges; and

- *the right to free movement and decent housing*, at rents workers can pay, an immediate end to pass laws, influx control and all laws that control the lives of people.

These Mayday demands mean 'the complete dismantling of apartheid and we commit ourselves to this struggle', says Cosatu.

Cosatu has warned employers

that any victimisation or harassment of workers celebrating Mayday will be viewed as an attack on the whole labour movement

It welcomed the decision of the National Education Crisis Committee conference that students and youth support Cosatu's plans to celebrate Mayday.

With students, youth and communities taking part, well over a million people will commemorate Mayday, making it the biggest and most powerful celebration ever in SA.

## Struggle

All workers believe that 'an injury to one is an injury to all'. Under this banner, workers, their families and their supporters will tell workers of the world that the struggle against exploitation and oppression in South Africa continues.

# SASPU FOCUS talks to

**Cosatu's constitution says South Africa is in a state of crisis. What does this mean?**

The policies of the government and the bosses have caused the crisis. Their policies cannot satisfy the needs of the masses. They cannot meet the demands made by workers and other organisations in the country.

The people do not believe the government when it says it is making changes. The so-called 'reform process' is in tatters. The people have rejected things like community councils and the new tricameral parliament.

The economy is in a bad way. Three million people are unemployed. Big companies are taking over, or monopolising, smaller firms. Factories are closing every day. And the policies of the government and the bosses can do nothing to help.

That's why we say there is a political and economic crisis in the country -- and its getting worse.

The only way for the crisis to end is for the people to fight for their demands and put these into practice.

The launch of Cosatu last year was very important. Because of this organisation, workers can add their strength to the struggle that will end the crisis. Cosatu gives workers a chance to play a leading role in the fight to end apartheid and cheap labour.

**Who are the main actors in the crisis?**

The main actors on the stage are divided into two groups.

On one side we have the masses and their democratic organisations. These organisations include Cosatu, civics in the townships, student organisations and banned organisations like the ANC.

On the other side we have the groups that want no real change: The government, the bosses, the bantustan puppets and other so-called leaders who support the government.

**Cosatu and many other organisations say they will fight to build a democratic South Africa, free of oppression and economic exploitation. What do you mean by that?**

Cosatu knows all about the daily problems of workers — their experience of hunger, starvation, of no political rights, of bantu education which was made to keep workers in wage slavery.

We want our new society to be the complete opposite to that. It must be a non-racial and united nation.

It must be a democracy where all people have political rights. And freedom from economic oppression must go with these political rights.

So change does not mean only a new government with a different colour skin. It must be change to a real democracy that



Elijah Barayi - the Cosatu President



Cosatu's Mufamadi, Ledwaba, Naidoo, Dlamini

# COSATU

## Things you should know about COSATU's policies, plans and principles

benefits the people who produce the wealth of the country — the working class.

Workers must lead the struggle for freedom. And after liberation they must be the leaders in the making of a new society.

**That means we must build democracy at grass roots level.**

We strongly support democratic ways of working in our organisation. Worker leaders must get mandates and direction from members. Workers must control their trade unions.

We believe these methods of worker control must also be used when workers take part in township struggles.

There must also be democracy in the running of factories. Today the bosses alone make decisions about how to run the factories and how to share profits.

Cosatu says this is undemocratic. Workers must have control over the way production in the factory is planned and over the profits that workers make.

That is the way we see the building of democracy - in our organisations and in the whole of our society.

**How do you see the working class reaching this kind of democracy?**

All progressive organisations believe the working class will lead any struggle for national freedom.

For this to happen workers must take part in other organisations and struggles. They must also lead these organisations and struggles.

In this way the main ideas of working class democracy are spreading through SA today



November 29 - and Cosatu is born

— ideas such as mandates from members, reportbacks from leaders and grassroots organisation. These ideas are taking hold in the townships as people build street committees and area committees.

**Why do you say workers are the main force in any struggle for freedom?**

The working class runs the mines, the factories and the farms. They create the wealth of the country. Because of this the workers are very strong in all countries. If the working class is organised, then it has the power

## the first Cosatu executive



Cosatu workers on the march



The launch ends with the singing of 'Nkosi'

# SPEAKS



General Secretary Jay Naidoo and President Elijah Barayi

to force many changes in the way a country is run.

Because of this, it is the working class that will — and should — play the most important part in the struggle for freedom.

***Cosatu has over half a million members. What role do you see your organisation playing in this struggle?***

We do not claim to represent the whole working class. But we believe we are an important weapon of the working class. We are strong in the big factories and most sectors of the economy. If people want any struggle to succeed, then we believe Cosatu must take part in it.

***Cosatu talks about the 'wider working class'. What is this?***

We know we are not the only force in the struggle. People are fighting over many different issues.

We will look closely at the struggles of other organisations. If we agree with them, then we will fight in a disciplined alliance.

But we want a clear idea who our closest friends and allies are. These are the people

who have the same feelings and interests as the workers. The unemployed are a part of the working class. Poor people in the rural areas, the farmworkers and the militant youth are also part of the working class — not only people who work in the factories.

But other classes and groups, outside the working class, are fighting for freedom. We will join their fights. They are our friends.

Like the End Conscription Campaign, which is an important part of the struggle. It is made up mostly of whites.

***What do you mean by a disciplined alliance?***

A disciplined alliance must be between organisations — not individuals. Organisations who fight together in struggle must discuss and take decisions together.

For this to be strong the organisations must have clear and regular arrangements to meet and discuss issues. We see structures emerging where different organisations can meet in this disciplined way.

As many people as possible should be involved in these discussions. So it is best for structures to grow at a local level — in different townships and regions of the coun-

try.

If disciplined alliances are made at local level then shop stewards will be able to meet and plan with the youth and other progressive organisations.

***You recently met with the ANC and Sactu. What is your relationship with these organisations?***

We have no formal relationship with the ANC or SACTU.

We decided to meet the ANC because of the crisis in SA. Many people believe the ANC is a leading organisation in the struggle. So we decide to exchange views, because Cosatu is also an important force.

***What connection is there between strong organisation on the factory floor and the struggle for people's power at community level?***

The growth in township struggles has influenced the way the trade unions fight for their demands.

Workers have taken notice of the bravery of the youth, who have been at the front in the struggle.

And workers' struggles have given the youth an example to follow.

Our experience of organisation, the way we fight campaigns and the way we build our organisation are seen as an important force.

In this way the working class has helped the struggle to grow in places outside the factories.

***Why do you say workers are the main force in any struggle for freedom?***

The working class runs the mines, the factories and the farms. They create the wealth of the country. Because of this the workers are very strong in all countries. If the working class is organised, then it has the power to force many changes in the way a country is run.

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struggle to grow in places outside the factories.

**Can you tell us about some of the joint struggles workers are fighting outside the factory floor?**

We've seen students in the townships and workers in the factories fight together before - like in the Simba chips boycott when students and workers fought together for workers' rights.

Then in November 1984 workers stayed away from work to support the demands of students.

Workers and other organisations are making the same demands - for the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners, the unbanning of banned organisations, and the lifting of the state of emergency.

We've seen joint action in the Vaal around rents. We fully supported the demands for lower rents in the Vaal.

In Springs the shopstewards local and students are working together.

In the Eastern Cape, trade unions and



A salute from Vice-President Dlamini

community organisations have worked together on the consumer boycott.

In the struggle for a better education, unions and organisations are beginning to work together at national level, through the National Education Crisis Committee structures.

**What has been the response of workers and other groups to Cosatu's formation?**

The launch of Cosatu made organisations feel stronger at a time when they were being attacked in the middle of the State of Emergency. Our decision join political struggles outside the factories encouraged people to fight back.

Thousands of workers came to our offices wanting to be organised — from sectors where we don't even have unions.

Farmworkers from far off places come to our offices when they heard about the decision to set up a farmworkers' union. The unemployed also want to be organised.

We were powerfully strong when we started — and now, after four months, we are over 650 000 strong.

But we have a problem — we don't have the people and the resources to handle all the new members.

**How have employers and the government responded?**

The bosses have said there has been a massive increase in militancy in the last few months. They are very worried and they blame Cosatu. They have often asked us to go and speak to them.

The conservative bosses are getting into a panic. We can see this in the the Lowveld-Nelspruit stayaway. There the employers threatened to fire workers, pull out of the area, and they called in the government and police to help them.

At the other end, particularly with the larger monopolies, employers have lost hope in the government.

They are in a difficult position. The bosses and the government don't know what to do. They have no direction.

That is why leaders from big business went to see the ANC. They want to find out what to do and to try and get some protection in the future.

And the government — it wants to smash Cosatu. They banned the launch of our congress in the Eastern Cape. The police have attacked many striking workers. They've used their tools to fight us — like in Natal, the decision to form Uwusa.

In Bophuthatswana they beat up anyone who wore Cosatu T-shirts.

But we don't think they have a clear idea of how to handle us.

**Do you think these forces have the strength to crush Cosatu?**

It's hard to say. We have more than half a million members, in the most important parts of the economy.



Mass democratic participation at Cosatu launch

And millions of others support us. Any action against our leadership and our organisation will throw this country into chaos. And I think they know this — but you never know what this government will do.

Because the world is watching the government, I think they will first try to use their stooges — like the bantustan police, vigilantes and companies like Gencor — to break our unity.

***Cosatu says it wants to build unity amongst workers. Does that mean you would want to draw in the membership of the old bureaucratic unions — like those in Tucsa?***

We believe that the labour movement will only get stronger when all workers join Cosatu affiliates.

We've said our doors are open.

But any new member must accept our principles — non racialism, workers control, and our political policies. They must also accept that workers must be in the majority in all our structures.

***Other unions took part in the early stages of the formation of Cosatu, but are not in Cosatu at present. Would you have the same policy towards them?***

Most organised workers have chosen to unite around five principles: workers con-

trol, non-racialism, representation based on paid-up members, one industry one union, and national co-operation. Our doors are open, and we will welcome all workers and democratic trade unions to join us.

But this must be discussed at a local and regional level first, and also by the workers in unions in the same industry.

***What links would Cosatu like to have with the world trade union federations?***

We will not join any of the world trade unions or confederations.

They are complicated organisations and we believe they are fighting a war of different ideologies and political ideas.

We don't feel we have enough experience or understanding of that fight.

And in SA we don't have the freedom to choose openly. If we join a confederation that the government does not like then the government could crack down on us.

But we won't stand back and not join up with workers in other parts of the world. We want to build up direct links between workers here and workers in other parts of the world. This is an important way to build solidarity.

For us, solidarity means more than help with money. Solidarity means workers in different parts of the world taking part in each others' struggles.

This is beginning to happen — like Ccawusa who supported the 3M strike in America, during the Coca-Cola campaign in our country, and the solidarity action of VW workers in West Germany with VW workers in Uitenhage.

***Why did Cosatu decide to form industrial trade unions?***

We decided to form industrial unions because this country has massive monopolies. The same firm has many factories all over the country. Seven big firms control most of the factories and mines in South Africa.

The bosses in each industry are united at a national level.

And conditions in each industry are different. For example workers in chemical factories have different needs to workers in the mines.

So the best way to fight for workers' rights is to form strong unions in each industry.

If workers all over the country in the same industry unite, then they will have the power to fight the bosses on a national level. They will be strong when they demand things like more health and safety, more rights for shopstewards, recognition of their unions and a living wage.

It also puts the workers' movement in a powerful position to fight for our national freedom.

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***Cosatu has more than one union in each industry. How will these unions unite?***

Mergers are one of our most important aims. We have said there must be one union in each industry. Different unions in each industry must join together.

Much progress has been made.

In the next few months we will see three important mergers. Unions in the food industry, the metal and motor industry and in the municipalities will join together. New unions are being formed in the construction and building industry, for farmworkers and for unemployed workers.

***What campaigns will Cosatu fight?***

Our members are discussing the issues that were raised at the first CEC — May Day, June 16, a living wage, health and safety and deregulation.

A law for deregulation is now being discussed in parliament. It will give Botha the power to remove minimum wages and reduce the wages our unions have fought for. This is an important law to fight.

We also plan to organise the unemployed and farmworkers.

Cosatu has called for an end to the pass laws. The government knows the old pass laws have failed. But now it is planning to make pass laws in a new form.

These documents will tighten control over the movement of workers. They will not allow people to move about freely in search

of jobs. So Cosatu will fight this law. In so doing it will fight for a central working class demand — an end to the controls that have allowed employers to make such big profits in the past.

This will be a big campaign and we will plan it with many organisations.

We will also demand the release of Nelson Mandela, Oscar Mpetha and all political prisoners, and the unbanning of banned organisations.

***Why is it so important to organise the unemployed?***

In the past, the bosses have used unemployed workers to make the unions and progressive struggles in the townships weak.

Scab labour is often used to replace striking workers and weaken their union.

At the NECC conference in Natal, Inkatha used mainly unemployed workers to attack the organisers and disrupt the conference. A lot of violence against members of unions and other progressive organisations in the townships is by the unemployed.

This has made many divisions for workers and people in other parts of the struggle. So we see the organisation of the unemployed as a crucial way to maintain the unity of the oppressed.

***How will Cosatu help in the struggle against Bantu Education?***

Cosatu fully supports the demands of the students.

We have called for the unbanning of Cosas, for democratic SRC's, and for people's education.

We have called for all students to celebrate Mayday with us, and we support the call for a stayaway on National Youth Day, June 16.

***Will Inkatha's attempts to build a new union federation be a major problem for Cosatu?***

Inkatha's new federation, called Uwusa, might cause some divisions amongst our members. But we believe our organisation is strong enough to stand firm against this attack.

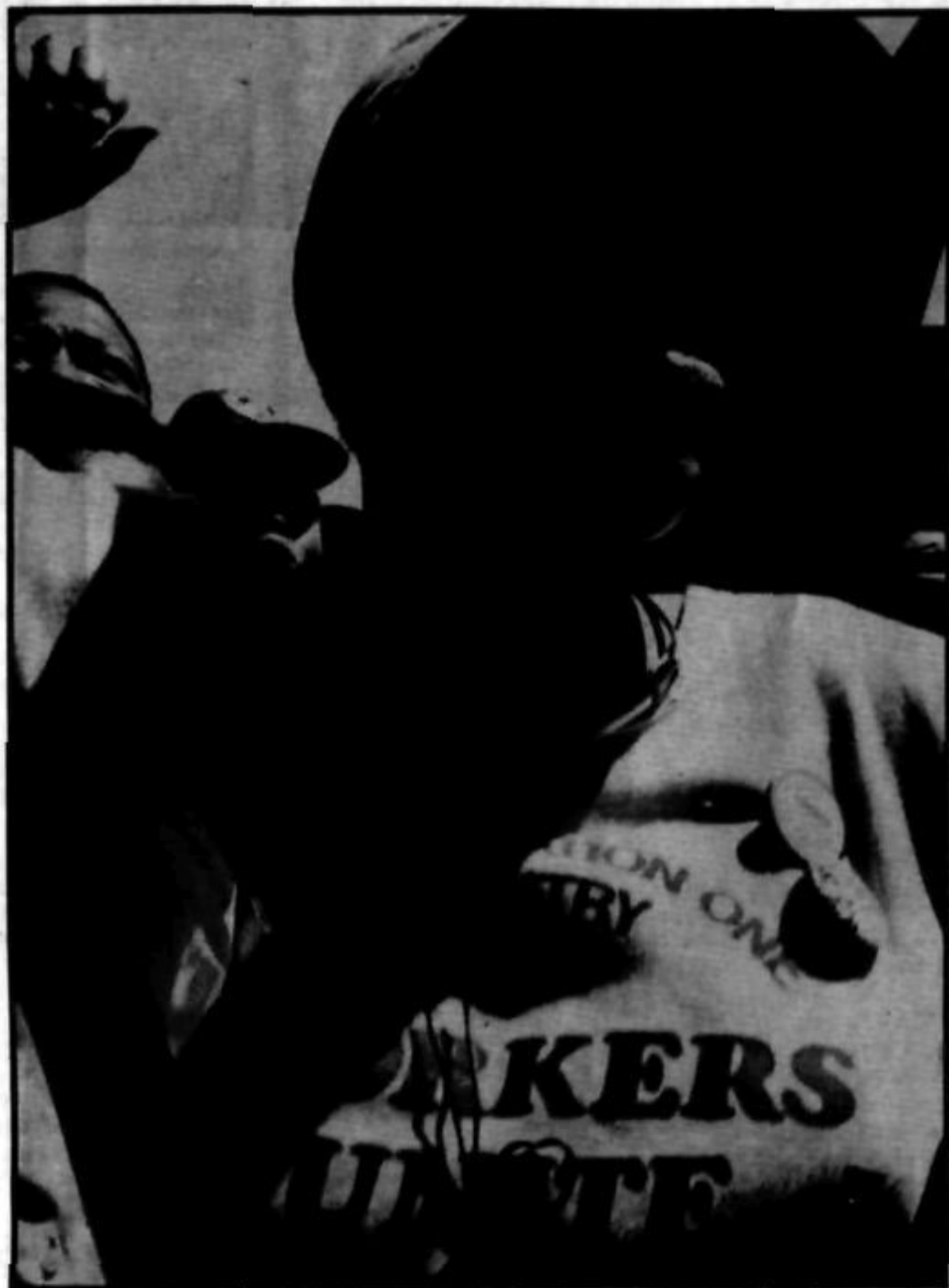
Uwusa and Inkatha do not understand what worker organisation is all about. Their shop stewards are different to ours. They do not consult their members and they control the workers.

Our members meet Cosatu shopstewards daily. These shopstewards are the strength of our organisation and they are loyal to Cosatu.

So we don't believe Uwusa will succeed in the factories.

But outside the factories there has been much violence against our members. The homes of many officials have been burned down. Many of our members have been beaten up — even their children.

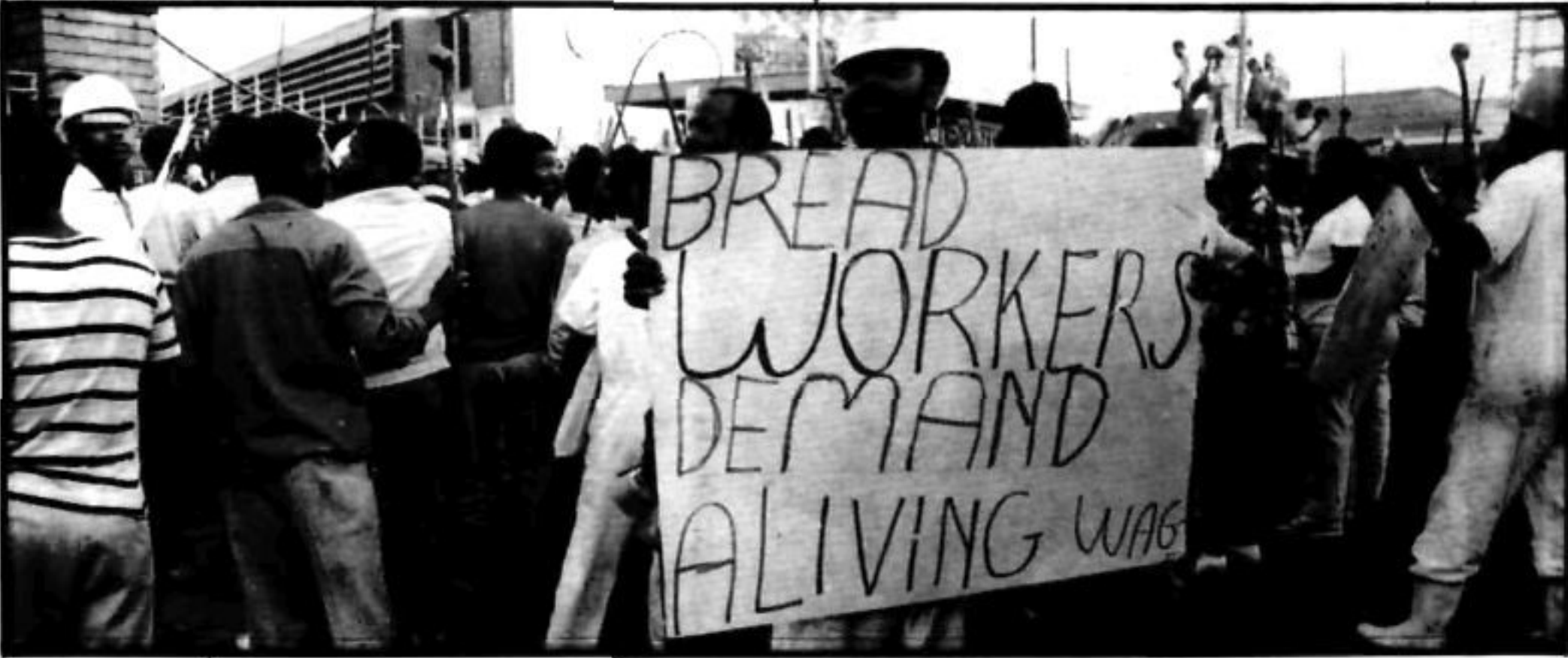
But our organisation is strong — and we are growing stronger every day.



'Workers Unite' in 'One Federation, One Country' - Cosatu slogan



# Workers in, bosses out



Bread workers take over a Durban bakery in their fight for a living wage. When the bosses closed the canteen, workers' families brought food to the gates.

**WORKERS HAVE** a new weapon against the bosses: 'Siyalala la', which means 'we shall sleep here'.

The 'siyalala la', or sleep-ins, have already been used in many factories, as well as on a mine. And they work.

"We must see the sit-ins on two levels", says Siphon Kubeka of the Paper, Wood and Allied Workers' Union (PWAU).

"It makes workers feel the power of ownership and control of the factories. It also puts management on the defensive and gives more bargaining power to the workers."

Normally in a strike workers walk out of the factory, and leave management in control of the area.

But, as Kubeka says, "Management can then lock the gates, dismiss workers and bring in scabs — or rehire the workers it wants back."

"But when workers sit in, the workers are in control of the factory. The bosses have to beg the workers to leave."

Management gets really worried. They have to hang around to see that nothing happens to their factory or their machines.

During one sit-in, workers often saw senior managers pacing around, 'looking nervous'.

## The sit-in strikes — they began as a good idea. They've grown into a movement.

In all the sit-in strikes, workers have told management that if the police are sent in, they can't guarantee the safety of machines. This has protected most workers from police action.

Other advantages of sit-ins are:

- they help prevent dismissals;
- they slow down production — or even stop it completely;
- while workers are in the factory, no scab labour can be hired;
- workers can't be locked out;
- the pressure is kept on management 24 hours a day;
- they build unity between workers;

Workers have used sit-in strikes to demand union recognition, higher wages, to stop dismissals and retrenchments, for the right to plant-level bargaining, and for May Day to be a paid holiday.

The first sit-in strike was at Kellogg's in Springs. It was sparked by the dismissal of a worker.



Workers back demands with action

A shop steward described what happened: "We got all management and foremen out of the factory, first thing in the morning. Then we locked the gates with our own locks."

"Then we started the machines and kept them going while negotiations started. Management was scared of what we might do to the machines. So they switched off the electricity, and the machines stopped."

"But the pressure on management was still strong. They realised if they brought in the police, the workers would do anything to keep them out."

"At 2 in the morning — after

only 17 hours — management gave in to the demands completely. The dismissed worker was re-instated."

Sweet Food and Allied Workers' Union (SFAWU) president, Chris Dlamini, works at Kellogg's. He said, "The significance of the strike was that it showed workers can take over the factories and keep production going."

The 'siyalala la' at Kellogg's was such a success that other workers started using the tactic. It grew from a good idea into a movement.

90 Pwawu workers began a two and a half week sit-in at Printpak Gravure in Industria after a fellow worker was dismissed.

"We decided not to go to work, but also not to leave the factory", said shop stewards' committee chairperson, Joseph Nene. "We told management we would stay in the factory until the problem had been solved."

The workers occupied the factory for two days. When they returned after the weekend, they found themselves locked out. "We got one of our members to drive up to the gate with a car and hoot", Nene said.

"When the gate was opened, the workers rushed in and opened the gates properly so

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that we could all go back in again."

Workers made it clear they would sit-in until the dismissed worker was reinstated. Management was forced to re-open negotiations.

Another sit-in was at GB Engineering and Pan African Shopfitters, on the East Rand. Workers there belong to Pwawu and the Metal and Allied Workers' Union (Mawu).

250 workers went on strike when management refused to discuss retrenchment plans.

Workers switched off the machines, kicked out white and coloured workers who had carried on working, and occupied the factory.

But after two weeks, the police were called in. They injured many workers when they used dogs and teargas to get the workers out.

More than a hundred workers were arrested. All but one were released after paying heavy bail.

The remaining worker is being held under the Internal Security Act. He is accused of trying to set fire to the factory with a petrol bomb.

Workers say this charge is nonsense: they say the worker was arrested holding a can of water to use against the teargas.

A Pwawu spokesperson described the police action as "a direct attack on the the 'siyalala la movement'."

"Employers and the government see sit-ins as a major threat," he said, "and are taking steps to develop counter strategies".

Police action isn't the only problem facing workers who sit-in. They also have basic problems like organising food for themselves. During long sit-ins, management may try to force workers out of the factory by starving them into submission.

"We thought there would be a problem with food during the Printpak sit-in", said Pwawu's Kubeka. Management called the police and tried to stop the Printpak workers from leaving or entering the factory.

"We went to management and

demanded to get more food in and out." Workers warned they would fight back if their demand was not met — and could not guarantee the safety of the machinery.

With workers controlling the factory and the machinery, management was forced to re-open negotiations.

When SFAWU workers occupied three bakeries in Durban last year to back their demand for a living wage, management closed the canteens. Workers' families brought food

to the bakeries' gates.

In return, the workers allowed bread to be distributed to charity organisations.

Workers inside the factory during a sit-in depend on people outside for food and support. This gives the rest of the community a chance to get involved, and forge strong ties of unity with workers.

During the recent Haggie Rand and Asea sit-ins, wives and supporters set up support committees and brought food to the workers in the factory yards.

Sit-ins often have a wider impact too. Workers from surrounding factories collected food and money for the Haggie Rand strikes. And during the Durban bakery sit-ins, Clover Dairies workers brought milk, yoghurt and mahewu to the bakeries.

When 250 Chemical Workers' Industrial Union (CWIU) members occupied their factory for two days in January, workers from more than 30 factories in the area came to work early to greet the singing placard-waving workers at Cheeseborough-Ponds.

And during the Printpak sit-in, management was faced with threats of solidarity action by workers in factories which handle Printpak products.

Sit-in strikes are not limited to factories either. At Blyvooruitzicht mine, 8 000 miners went on strike, and 3 000 were involved in an underground sit-in following a dispute over production bonuses.

The sleep-in lasted four days, with workers refusing to attend a meeting with management at the surface. They say a shaft steward was arrested last year at a similar meeting.

"We decided it was safest underground", a shaft steward said. "If we sit in our hostels, it isn't safe. Security is called in and we get teargassed and shot."

The workers eventually called off their sleep-in because of fears for workers on the surface. At the same time, management decided to prevent other workers going underground.

Mine security and the SADF was called in — and by the time they had broken up the workers, ten people were dead and over 100 injured.

Sleep-ins are just as effective for the unemployed. This was proved by a group of workers at the Springs UIF office recently.

After waiting in a queue all day, they were told to go home and 'come back next week'. They replied — "We're not leaving - and we'll sleep here until we're paid."

Their demands were soon met: the officials drove to Johannesburg immediately to get more money, and the workers were paid out.



No bosses or security guards in sight as Cosatu members prepare for a 'siyalala la' strike

# Hit the bosses, hurt the system.

**Workers have found a powerful new weapon in stayaways. And they are willing to use it.**



**Sarmcol workers - their dismissal provoked mass stayaways in Howick and Pietermaritzburg**

"Stayaways draw people together," says Chris Dlamini. "They show that workers care about 'political' issues."

The November stayaway marked the start of an important new development active worker support for the demands of students. Workers showed their strength in large numbers in the broader struggle to end exploitation and oppression.

Later stayaways were most successful when union members and community organisations worked together at grassroots level.

In March, Cosatu and the UDF worked together to organise a hugely successful stayaway in the Eastern Cape. Called to commemorate those who died at Sharpeville and Langa, it was almost 100 percent successful.

And, with the many funerals of those killed in the struggle, workers and other residents have joined forces to organise stayaways to allow all to attend.

Thousands of workers stopped work to protest against the detention of Mawu Transvaal organiser, Moses Mayekiso, and some stayed away to show their support.

## How effective are stayaways?

"Stayaways directly affect business and the government", says Cosatu's Jay Naidoo. "When people withdraw their labour and stay away from work, the bosses lose profits. It also affects the government's political credibility."

Stayaways draw attention to the political and economic issues involved, and make powerful statements about 'people's power'.

Workers often start and organise the stayaways, proving themselves as leaders in the broader political struggle.

But the recent Lowveld stayaway where unions are not strong shows the success of stayaways may spread to other areas. "The number of stayaways in the different areas shows the growth of organisation throughout the country", says Dlamini.

The recent Witbank stayaway pointed to an important area of community unity joint action with mineworkers living in hostels on the edge of the township.

After police raided a community meeting and arrested nearly 900 residents, the community called a stayaway in protest. In the old days, mineworkers kept themselves apart from the struggles of the communities they lived near. But this is changing, say the mineworkers.

Cosatu members have already said they will not work on Mayday. The day will be a national holiday in honour of international workers' unity.

"Stayaways aim to unite people. They have a powerful impact on the state and big business", says Jay Naidoo.

If stayaways affect workers on the factory floor, the workers' representatives and the union must be consulted. If this does not happen, the stayaways can break down unity.

"Without consultation and joint decision-making, a stayaway loses its political value", says Naidoo.

"WE HAVE built the country by fighting" was the chant that began a successful stayaway last year.

950 Mawu workers — on strike because BTR-Sarmcol in Howick would not recognise their union — had gathered for a May Day meeting outside Pietermaritzburg.

Two days later they were dismissed.

Workers and the Mpophemeni community joined forces to hold one of the most successful stayaways of recent times.

Stayaways have a long history in South Africa. They have become popular and powerful tools of opposition in the hands of workers and the community.

"Stayaways use unity of action to build People's Power", says Cosatu's Jay Naidoo. "It is a public show of unity."

Workers have organised stayaways over many issues: wage disputes, retrenchments and union recognition. Workers and members of the community — students, shopkeepers, taxi-drivers and others — have all worked together to make stayaways work.

When dismissed Sarmcol workers were replaced with scab workers, the whole community boycotted white-owned shops in Howick, and held a mass stayaway.

The Pietermaritzburg workers joined in, and brought the city to a standstill. Bus drivers refused to work, and Indian-owned shops stayed closed.

"City factories, shops, experience 100% worker stayaway", read the Maritzburg newspaper headlines.

The success of this stayaway showed the growing strength of links between trade unions and community organisations.

Stayaways have been a powerful weapon against the action of the security forces in the townships.

In March, security forces raided the launch meeting of the Mamelodi Civic Association.

"They started firing teargas into the hall," said a bystander. "People ran everywhere with the security forces chasing them." Several people were hurt.

In protest, people called for a three-day stayaway. The street committees and section committees rapidly made sure in only a few hours that all Mamelodi residents knew about the call.

The stayaway was almost 100 percent successful.

In November 1984, organised workers in the Transvaal stayed away to support students' and residents' demands. Over a million people took part in the stayaway.



Cosatu - staying in touch with workers' demands.

# Cosatu setting the pace

COSATU HAS resolved to change the face of South Africa, and has put the stamp of the working class on SA politics.

Its organisational power is based in the factories and the mines, but Cosatu is also linking workers' issues to other issues facing SA's black communities.

It is also for Cosatu to be involved in broader political issues that affect the community as a whole. The resolutions adopted by Cosatu like the resolution on the scrapping of the pass laws does not only affect workers. They affect all South Africans.

Cosatu says the political struggle is not only to remove the government. Other aims are to end unemployment, improve education and health, and to make sure that SA's wealth is shared among all the people who work in this country.

Cosatu's resolution on federalism sets out clearly the belief of its members in a democratic, unitary state, based on One Person, One Vote. Cosatu rejects the proposed 'federal system', of many states within one country.

The unity of all people, without national borders, barriers or division, will help rebuild this rich land. The chains of poverty and exploitation in SA must be broken, says Cosatu.

The brutal attacks on trade unionists and workers must end. Detention of union members must stop. Cosatu, firmly believing 'an injury to one is an injury to all', will

**The Cosatu resolutions reflect the demands of South Africa's workers. They pave the way for a new South Africa.**

fight this repression.

Cosatu will fight for South African workers' rights. The protection of workers' rights will have an effect on all who live in Southern Africa because the futures of all who live and work in Southern Africa are tied together.

So it plans to build strong ties with progressive unions in other countries to unite all workers in Southern Africa. And it has condemned SADF raids on neighbouring states. Cosatu believes the SA government is major de-stabilising force in the region.

The people killed and injured in these raids are the families and friends of Cosatu members.

The huge monopolies, and the multinational companies, with firms around the world, exploit and oppress workers in other countries as well. These companies work hand in hand with repressive governments

to increase their profits.

Cosatu will build stronger links with progressive worker organisations around the world. This will build effective international worker solidarity against the multinationals.

SA is dominated by a few huge firms. Between them, they set the price of the food, clothes and the wages. Their power will be opposed by Cosatu. It is not only the large companies that oppress workers, but small companies too.

The government is planning to pass a law to protect small firms, so they won't have to pay minimum wages, or agree on working hours, or look after the health and safety of their workers.

This could weaken worker organisation. For this reason, Cosatu is fighting deregulation.

Organising farm workers has always been difficult. Most farm workers live in a state of near slavery, with few rights. The government denies farm workers trade union rights.

But all workers have the right to belong to trade unions, and to fight for their rights.

Cosatu is planning to set up a union for farmworkers, and will back this up with national and worldwide support.

The action Cosatu takes on all these resolutions, and its co-operation with other progressive organisations, will change the face of South Africa.

# One Industry One Union!

**Industrial unions will build worker power so all can speak with one voice.**

WALK INTO any union office and you'll hear talk of 'mergers', 'industrial sector talks' and powerful new 'industrial unions'.

This is not really surprising, because Cosatu committed itself — at its first national congress — to forming industrial unions in each sector.

The resolution calls on unions operating in the same sector to form new industrially-based unions. It also calls for new unions in sectors where no industrial union exists — like in building and construction, and agriculture.

But what will this really mean, on the factory floor?

And what will happen to the general unions, like the General and Allied Workers' Union (Gawu) and the SA Allied Workers' Union (Saawu), which have organised workers in many different industries?

Their members will now be passed over to new industrial unions.

Gawu Acting General Secretary — Amos Masondo — doesn't see this as a problem.

He feels Gawu has always been committed to industrial unions: "We are very enthusiastic about this development. Gawu will be affected by members moving out to other unions — but we don't see this as a loss.

"Rather we see it is a step towards what we believe in. It is in the broad interests of the workers. We are forming bigger industrial unions and building the power of the working class as a whole."

One merger which is well on the way is in the food sector, where five unions are involved: the Food and Canning Workers' Union (FCWU), Sweet Food and Allied Workers' Union (SFAWU), the Retail and Allied Workers' Union (Rawu), Saawu and Gawu.

FCWU General Secretary, Jan Theron, explains why it was essential to have a strong industrial union in the food sector:

"The union must speak for all the workers with one voice. If we are organising workers in the bakeries, for example, then we must also organise workers in the mills which supply the bakeries with flour. Because, after all, it is the same company which owns the bakeries and the mills."



**A metal worker — a single union will give him and his colleagues more power**

The new food union, which is expected to be launched by the end of May, will be one of the biggest in the country.

SFAWU president Chris Dlamini points out that the combined membership of the unions in the food industry is 50 000 members. But, by the end of the year, he expects that figure to be over 60 000.

Membership figures are growing all the time, especially since the formation of Cosatu. Three months after Cosatu's formation, paid-up membership in SFAWU has soared from 19 000 to 23 000 members.

Gawu organisers also report massive membership increases.

And, says Cosatu's General Secretary, Jay Naidoo, Cosatu's membership is now well over 650 000 — 150 000 up from the December figure. Cosatu's

target of a million workers by the end of 1986 seems well within reach.

All these workers will be organised into industrially-based unions.

Another merger well under way is in the paper, wood and printing industry. Sector meetings between the Paper, Wood and Allied Workers' Union (Pwawu), Gawu and Saawu began long before Cosatu's launch, and Pwawu General Secretary Jeremy Baskin described the spirit of the talks as 'very positive'.

These unions were due to meet at the end of April to set deadlines and a programme for the forthcoming merger.

One important development is a new municipal, local government and public administration

union, where three sector meetings have been held since October.

Unions involved are the Cape Town Municipal Workers' Union (CTMWA), Municipal Workers' Unions of SA (Mwusa), Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU), and Saawu.

TGWU is due to merge with GWU at the end of May and the new union will work out how the different sectors are best organised.

The resolution allows for ongoing evaluation of the viability of the different industrial sectors.

Organisers and trade union officials know that workers have strong loyalties to their unions.

How will the change to industrial unions affect members, especially of the general unions?

Masondo believes that because of the democratic nature of all the unions affiliated to Cosatu, this is not likely to be a problem.

"Gawu has been and continues to be a democratic union. This means that all the workers have been consulted and informed about the new development", he said.

Dlamini said all unions have similar shop steward structures through which they have always communicated and consulted with workers on the factory floor.

The formation of industrial unions will be based on these structures. And shop stewards will now be in a better position than ever before to compare notes with stewards from different factories in the same industry.

These shop steward structures will remain intact and will not be affected by the shift to industrial unions.

A strong industrial union also makes it more difficult for employers to play unions off against each other, and this helps unite workers nationally.

The new industrial unions in Cosatu will be bigger and stronger than ever before, giving workers more bargaining power to challenge management and the government.

# Bashing the unions in the bantustans

**Bantustan regimes are trying all means to break the power of Cosatu and its affiliates**



Moutse residents resisting incorporation into KwaNdebele

Workers at Impala Platinum Mines asked Num for help, but Num was refused access because of the Act. This led to a massive strike.

Union officials face constant harassment in the bantustans. Workers in the bantustans are not staying passive just because they are not allowed to join unions. The Impala workers rejected Bonume and went ahead and organised themselves.

On January 1 they were forced to strike after management had repeatedly ignored their grievances. All 30 000 workers were dismissed. The company's profits dropped sharply and next time the workers will be in a

much stronger position.

Bantustan police were called in to assault the Impala workers, and many workers were taken to court. Police and the courts have often been used to 'discipline' workers.

Although South African unions are prevented from organising in bantustan factories and mines, the unions still have many members who live in the bantustans.

Many Ciskei residents work in East London, while many Bophuthatswana residents commute to Pretoria, Brits and Rosslyn. KwaZulu residents also travel to work in Natal towns.

Bantustan leaders have tried to

prevent these commuters from joining unions. In 1981 Bophuthatswana police broke up meetings of the National Automobile and Allied Workers' Union (Naawu), and detained Naawu organisers. Now they are harassing Naawu members.

Bantustan rulers are trying to isolate themselves from the militance and conflict taking place in South Africa.

Despite brutal police harassment, the Ciskei government was unable to stop the Mdantsane bus boycott in 1983.

Bophuthatswana police are now trying to stop Ga-Rankuwa residents from joining in the Pretoria consumer boycott. But police action is making residents more determined to challenge the system.

Clearly the great majority of bantustan residents reject the bantustan system, especially the so-called 'independence' of Transkei, Ciskei, Bophuthatswana and Venda.

Residents in Moutse and Ekangala in the Transvaal are currently opposing their incorporation into KwaNdebele, which is due to become 'independent' in December.

Moutse, with its 120 000 residents, was incorporated on January 1, and more than 21 people were killed in clashes with vigilantes.

Ekangala residents have also been assaulted by KwaNdebele vigilantes for opposing incorporation.

Many Ekangala residents commute daily to work in the Pretoria area and the East Rand. Some of these are members of unions.

Workers in Ekandustria, the industrial area near Ekangala, have protested against working and living conditions. On February 20, they held a stay-away. Like the Impala workers, they are not formally members of unions.

But they are organised, and determined to show their rejection of the system.

Cosatu has dedicated itself to organised workers who either live or work in the bantustans.

By fighting low wages and appalling working conditions, harassment and oppression, it will play a major role in the struggle to end the bantustan system.

IN BOPHUTHATSWANA, "just wearing a T-shirt can lead to your death," says Moses Mayekiso of the Metal and Allied Workers' Union (Mawu).

Mawu members, youth activists and members of the Roman Catholic Church have recently been victims of a campaign of brutal harassment by Bophuthatswana police.

Andrew Molopyane, who works for Siemens in Pretoria, was so badly assaulted in custody he had to spend three weeks in hospital.

He was arrested because of his union T-shirt, and his hat which had "Viva Mawu" written on it.

He said: "The sergeant looked at my T-shirt and my hat and said, 'What's all this shit?'"

"I said it is my organisation. He said I had a big mouth and Mawu was the cause of the trouble in the schools and he hit me."

Later he was repeatedly sjambokked, beaten and kicked.

This kind of repression is common in the bantustans, which are meant to provide cheap labour and deny people political rights. For those living there, this means high unemployment, starvation wages, constant harassment, and few rights within South Africa.

It is for these reasons that Cosatu has resolved that "the bantustan system be totally rejected".

Employment, wages and working conditions in the bantustans are even worse than in other parts of South Africa. These conditions generate strong support for unions.

But to protect employer's profits and to prevent any challenge to their own frail power, bantustan governments have tried to prevent unions from organising.

In 1983 the South African Allied Workers' Union (Saawu) was banned in the Ciskei.

Bophuthatswana's 1984 Industrial Conciliation Act outlaws any union not based in Bophuthatswana. For example, mineworkers in Bophuthatswana are only allowed to join the local sweetheart union, Bophuthatswana National Union of Mine Employees (Bonume).

In January 1984 National Union of Mineworkers (Num) members went on strike at Union Carbide's UCAR Minerals demanding that Num be allowed to operate there.

## Cosatu unites, Inkatha divides

INKATHA HAS done it again. On Mayday, Inkatha is launching the United Workers' Union of South Africa (Uwusa) to oppose Cosatu.

Even before consulting with its membership - recruitment starts at a rally in Durban on May 1 - Uwusa has committed itself to maintaining the free enterprise system in SA, having foreign investment on any basis, and rejecting 'political unionism'.

The first people to declare support for Uwusa were not workers, but the bosses.

Cosatu itself has 'absolutely condemned' the formation of Uwusa as 'a reactionary and tragic step'.

'The full machinery of Inkatha, the KwaZulu government and, it appears, the SA government, has been thrown behind Uwusa', says Cosatu.

'Members of the KwaZulu legislative Assembly and other Inkatha officials have addressed meetings, urging people to join Uwusa.'

'Inkatha representatives have addressed employer bodies attacking Cosatu and urging support for Uwusa. Certain employers are openly and actively supporting Uwusa, and Cosatu can document these cases in detail', Cosatu adds.

The talk of setting up Uwusa has been given to Dr Conco, a senior Inkatha official and



Left: Robert Makokga was beaten up by Lebowa police.



Right: Imple beat a mourner at Umlazi cemetery.

member of the bantustan 'parliament'.

KwaZulu's labour laws have never protected workers they allow bosses to pay starvation wages.

In places like Isithebe, Pieters, Madadeni and Ezakheni, workers are being paid R15 - R20 a week.

And unions which fight for the rights of these workers have been attacked. In Newcastle, union offices were raided by amabutho. Cosatu officials in Newcastle and Vryheid had their houses burnt. Two union organisers were murdered last year.

At a Shaka Day speech in Ngoye, Chief Buthelezi warned

that he would 'crush those trade union leaders who allow themselves to be used to get at Inkatha and its leadership'.

Inkatha believes unions should only take up factory floor issues. But Inkatha has never done very much to improve the lives of people even beyond the factory floor.

One example is transport costs. When bus fares were raised recently, people in Esikhhawini, Hammarsdale, KwaDengezi and Isithebe boycotted the buses. Inkatha did nothing to support the demand for lower bus fares because the KwaZulu government owns the bus company.

Buthelezi and Inkatha are

against the disinvestment campaign. They say workers will lose their jobs if the foreign companies leave. But the only reason these companies have set up factories in KwaZulu is because they can get away with paying starvation wages.

Amigo is a clothing factory in Madadene, owned by a company in Hong Kong. 'Beginners' at the factory earn R15 a week. Skilled workers earn R20 - R25 a week.

While Inkatha does not want companies like this to leave, it does nothing to improve the wages of these workers.

Firms in the 'white' areas of Northern Natal are moving their factories into KwaZulu, away from areas where workers are organised. Employers say they are doing this because they can pay workers less in KwaZulu.

It is for reasons like this that Cosatu 'totally rejects' the bantustan system. Cosatu is 'completely and absolutely opposed to the super-exploitation which occurs in those union free areas'.

And Cosatu has said it will 'not hesitate to exercise its right to organise plants based within the bantustans'.

Cosatu also rejects Inkatha's support for federalism for separate states within one country.

Cosatu believes Inkatha's moves will not stop worker organisation in Natal. Cosatu's membership is increasing fast, and Inkatha has lost a lot of the support it once had.

On the factory floor, Inkatha has proved already it has little to offer workers.



Inkatha Central Committee member W. Sabelo directs an impi during an attack in Natal. Note the gun on his hip.

# The last to be

**Black women workers are the worst paid and least protected of all. Organising women is an urgent task - which some have started.**

BLACK women workers in South Africa have the worst paid and least protected jobs. They are often the last to be hired, and the first to be fired.

Women's work doesn't end when they get home. They also have housework to do, which leaves little time or energy for involvement in organisation.

Nomvula works as an office cleaner. "I start work at 6pm and work till 3.30 am. When we knock off, the streets are dangerous. There is no transport. And then it is hard to sleep.

"Sometimes we just feel like leaving. But we've got no choice. We must pay rent, we must feed our children.

"My children stay at my mother's. I miss them, but I've got no choice. They can't sleep alone at night.

"My husband is also working at night. He's a security guard.

## **'I must also cook'**

"He doesn't help at home. When he's at home, he rests, and I must cook for him. He just sits there with the paper."

Outside the home, one out of every three black women workers are service workers. They do jobs like domestic work, laundry work, cleaning and shop work.

Few men choose these jobs because the wages are low and workers are badly treated. And employers say they can pay women less than men, because their husbands are also earning money. But even if their husbands or boyfriends have jobs, their wages are not enough. So women have to work as well.

Often a woman has to support her whole family on her wage.

So the fight for higher wages and better treatment for women workers is not a demand from women only. It affects everyone.

Many women are domestic



Street sweeping in Johannesburg

workers. They are not protected by the laws which set down hours of work, sick leave and holidays. They cannot claim from UIF, which gives them money when they are pregnant, or sick, or out of work.

Their average wage is R100 a month.

Eldah Mthuludi is a domestic worker in Johannesburg. She says, "I work very hard. I start work at seven o'clock in the morning, and only finish at 8.30 pm when they have finished supper.

"I have to work later when my madam has people for supper. And on Saturday nights I have to look after the children when my master and madam go out. I don't get paid any extra money for doing it."

But now domestic workers can join unions, like the SA Domestic Workers' Association (Sadwa). But because these women work alone, organisation is difficult. And if they 'strike', they get fired.

"Once you are a domestic worker, you are no longer a human being. Or a wife. Or a mother", says Margaret Nhlapo of Sadwa.

"We are teaching domestic workers to speak for themselves. We are trying to show them, and their madams, what their work is worth."

Women on the farms work very hard. The pay is bad, but they have little choice. There are few jobs in the rural areas. The wages of migrant workers are



Women trench diggers in Soweto: low wages, tough conditions



# hired, the first to be fired



Cheap, exploitable labour in a textiles factory

not enough. And because there is not enough land, they have to go out and work.

And when a woman has a stamp in her pass book to do farm work, she has to stay with farm work for the rest of her life.

They work in the kitchens, or do casual work like picking and weeding. Women are also taking over the jobs men used to do like working in the dairies, on chicken farms, and driving tractors.

Women are paid much less than men for doing the same work.

In Moiketsi, in the Northern Transvaal, women and children often work on tomato farms for no other pay than tomatoes. And in the Mathibeskraal area in Lebowa, women workers on the cotton and citrus farms work for less than R1 a day. When this work is done, there are no other jobs.

Only a small number of farm workers have any contact with the unions. But Cosatu has decided to form a union for farm workers, and to fight for their rights.

## 'We walk for water'

In the bantustans, conditions are harsh. Money is short, there are few shops, and prices are higher than in towns.

Housework in the rural areas is a never-ending task. "To get wood, we have to climb mountains. To get water we also have to walk a long way".

More and more rural women are now coming together to share their work. They have learned that through sharing problems and experiences they gain strength, and can even find answers.

At Overdyk in the Northern Transvaal, small groups of women have started vegetable growing co-ops.

They said; "We were thinking about the struggle we have to get vegetables to eat with porridge. When we tried to buy, we came back with empty hands.

"At Werden we saw women were growing vegetables for their families. They told us they were using trench gardens. They had made their gardens through group work.

"Now the whole village has been excited by this project. Even old ladies have been digging trenches. And as a group we are always ready to go and help."

Other women have started projects like making soap and clothes.

These women are trapped in the rural areas because of the pass laws. They have no rights to work in the towns. But some women come to the towns as 'il-legals' because they are desperate for work.

Black women who work in factories are also badly treated. But they are protected by laws which cover wages and working condi-

tions, and they can join trade unions more easily.

Most work in food, clothing, textile and leather factories, where bad wages are paid.

Mabel was a garment worker for 20 years until she found that the dresses she made each day cost more than one week's wage.

She says, "One Tuesday we were doing tennis dresses. That dress was R59, and I was earning less than that in a week.

"Oh, I was cross. I just put down my scissors and my tape in a drawer and I left."

Sexual harassment, or 'love abuse', faces many women at work.

"Say you are a woman and you are looking for a job", says Nomvula. "When you reach the factory you must ask the induna.

"The induna will say you must sleep with him to get that job. And you've got no choice. You want to work and your children are starving."

Women workers have other problems at work that men workers don't have.

## Maternity benefits

There is no law that protects women from losing their jobs when they have a baby. And the factory does not have to give a woman her job back after her baby is born.

So many women lose their jobs when they have children.

The bosses don't want to pay women to bring up the children. They say it is a woman's choice to have a child. But those children are tomorrow's workers.

Unions have been fighting employers on this.

Through their union, Catering, Commercial and Allied Workers' Union (Ccawusa) women members at Metro now keep their jobs even if they are away for a year, looking after their babies. And they get half their wage in this time.

More and more, women's voices are being heard in the trade unions. But the number of women in trade unions is still small.

For many years, Lydia Kompe worked for the Transport and

General Workers' Union.

"Women have shown commitment in the trade unions", she says. "They have shown bravery. They have been active in the shop stewards' committees. We have got unions where the members are mostly women.

"But why have we not seen a woman chairperson of one of these unions? And where are the women presidents?"

Mama Lydia thinks the problem is pressures at home.

"It is dangerous for a woman to go to meetings late at night. And she knows that when she gets home at night she will find everything as she left it. Her husband will be sitting idle. And he might not believe she's been in a meeting he will accuse her of going around.

"This makes her retreat. So the organisation becomes weakened.

"The people who weaken it are those who say they are committed, but don't see the need to help in the liberation of women."

As a male shop steward said, "This is the struggle, and for the sake of the struggle we should both be hand in hand. If we are both working in the struggle my wife and I and we are both working, then when I get home I must not rest while my wife carries on for 24 hours.

"We should put aside the whisky and make the fire if the wife is not home yet. And also carry the child it's the man's child also.

"Pregnant women's jobs must be protected. If not, we are oppressing our women. And bosses will see to it that they can pay lower wages to women and they'll chuck us out."

Maggie Magubane, a leader in the Sweet, Food and Allied Workers' Union, says, "We need to act now, because we don't want to wake up in years to come and find that women have been left behind in the struggle.

"We need to break down every division between men and women, by taking on the problems face to face.

"One thing is for sure: if we don't address these problems, the bosses will play the women off against the men."

FOR NEARLY 80 years in South Africa, trade unions have brought people together under the banner 'Hlanganani Basebenzi': Workers Unite!

But while worker organisations have a long and rich history, little has been done to organise those without jobs.

This is vital in SA. More than three million people are unemployed, and the figure is rising fast.

The economy is in crisis: between ten and fifteen companies shut down every day.

And with each company that closes, more workers are put out on the street, to join the ranks of the unemployed. Many are bussed back to the poverty of the bantustans.

And for each worker sent back, there will be one more family without food, adding to the poverty and malnutrition that rules the bantustans.

Retrenchments have hit the motor industry hardest. Thousands lost their jobs when factories closed in the Eastern Cape, and more will close soon.

Retrenchments have hit other industries too especially the food, textile and metal industries. Shop workers have also been hit hard.

Possible starvation is just one of the problems confronting the unemployed. They cannot pay rents, transport, and payment on goods like furniture, and they stand to lose everything they have managed to gather over the years.

Unemployment also causes other problems. It can cause tensions within families, when people refuse to sell out and scab, or take jobs with the police force. Or when women are forced to turn to prostitution to support their children.

It can also cause tension in communities between those who have jobs and those who don't.

Trade unions have seen the need to organise the unemployed. But there are special problems with this type of organisation.

Workers in a factory are together in one place, under the same employer who they can present their demands to. They can threaten to use weapons like strikes if their demands are not met.

But it is different for people without jobs.

They are spread out in communities across the country. They do not have an employer to take their grievances to. Their common enemy is the economy, too distant to threaten directly.

Their only weapon is the support of the community, through direct political action.

Unions have tried to keep the unemployed united, and more and more, they are succeeding. But their task is a difficult one. Just keeping in contact with these people raises huge problems.



Fired Sarmcol workers running their co-operative

# Create jobs for all!

**The unemployed are out of work. But they're in the struggle...**

Often it is striking workers who are fired. And, especially during a recession, employers use dismissals to try and break the strength of the unions through firing its members.

Many workers who have been dismissed in this way find that they have been black-listed: their names are put on a list and sent to other employers, branding them as 'trouble-makers'. This makes it impossible for them to get jobs again.

But retrenchment does not only affect striking workers. Companies retrench workers when they decide to cut back on production to 'maintain profit margins'.

Here unions have stepped in and demanded proper retrenchment procedures: fair pay-outs, and the LIFO principle: last in, first out. This means that workers who have been at the factory longest are the last to lose their jobs.

Most importantly, the unions try to ensure that retrenchment takes place only when there is no other way out, and that all other methods of cutting back production have been used.

Through hard work and united action, the unions have got some employers to agree with certain demands. Employers must look at ways of avoiding retrenchment, like transfers, cutting out overtime, and putting all the workers on short-time.

Unions have shown that it is more fair for all workers at a factory to lose some of their pay, than for some of the workforce to lose all of their pay, and their jobs.

The Industrial Court has also decided that companies must discuss retrenchments with worker representatives if they feel they



Organising for better UIF

have to cut jobs.

The retrenchments must then be worked out with these representatives, and workers must be allowed to see the company records to check that the retrenchments are really necessary.

And workers must be told about the

## UNEMPLOYMENT



A sign seen much too often



A self-help group in Zululand

retrenchments long before they happen.

A key area in retrenchments is 'severance pay': money paid out to workers who get retrenched. While this is important for workers, it also makes retrenchments more expensive for the company. Sometimes it can make them think again before cutting jobs.

Unions have also started to take a part in rehiring, through making sure that retrenched workers are the first to fill vacancies.

Although unions have made major cut backs, they cannot stop retrenchments. Under the present system, there will always be people without jobs.

For this reason it is important to organise unemployed workers separately, and look at their specific problems.

Immediate problems facing the unemployed include getting unemployment insurance (UIF), paying rent and transport costs, and paying off HP installments.

UIF payments are badly organised. People often wait for months before getting any

payment, and often the money at the office runs out.

Unemployed Worker Committees (UWC's) have been set up by some unions to tackle this. They argue that employers should give more to the fund, and make sure the fund is not run badly.

Other issues UWC's take up are rents and hire purchase (HP) payments. In some places the committees have written letters to town councils and shopowners explaining why their members can't pay, and have asked for more time.

But, for more and more workers, unemployment is permanent. This means long-term programmes are necessary. So some organisations are looking for ways for jobless people to make money. The Sarmcol workers in Mpophomeni, near Howick, have taken control of their situation.

When BTR Sarmcol fired workers striking for recognition of their union, Mawu, the whole Mpophomeni community 27 000 people were left without wages.

Mawu started a huge campaign to get the workers reinstated, but Sarmcol refused to take them back.

Giving food to the Mpophomeni community was costing Mawu R20 000 a month. Everyone knew this could not carry on.

So the community and the union formed the Sarmcol Workers' Co-operative (Sawco). Its chairperson, Patrick Sibaya, is also the local chair of Mawu's shop stewards' committee.

Sawco has planned five long-term projects. Its first project was a T-shirt co-op, which produces T-shirts for unions and other progressive organisations.

Sawco produced the T-shirts for Cosatu's first congress, in Durban, and has been busy since.

A second co-op buys goods for the community. Everyone puts their money together and food is bought for the community together. This way they can buy more cheaply through buying big amounts, and it is shared fairly.

An agricultural co-op works with the buying co-op. Using land rented from the church, the workers have begun to grow their own food.

Another group, the cultural co-op, has produced a play on worker struggles, which they put on in factories and communities around the country.

Finally, the workers have organised a health clinic. High levels of malnutrition in the area makes health care an important project.

People from the community are being trained in health care, while others help to run the clinic.

Workers move around from job to job, and enjoy the feeling of controlling what they produce.

Although Sawco's projects are still small,

the workers hope they will grow in the future.

The unity shown in Howick is being matched in Springs.

Springs has a long history of unity and co-operation between the youth, students, workers, and other members of the community.

The unity between those with jobs and those without is shown by the fact that no-one from the Springs' townships has scabbed for nearly five years. Workers at Townsend Brothers were recently locked out of their plant for over three weeks but no-one from the area broke the dispute by selling out and taking the jobs of the fired workers.

And it was because of this understanding that Amalova was formed in March last year, as an organisation to deal with the problems of the unemployed.

Shortage of money is a big problem for Amalova. Until they can raise money, they say they won't recruit more members. But already they have over 400 members.

Amalova members are very clear about the link between employers and the state. They see the government as just the executive committee of the employers, and so they say they will increase pressure on local employers to provide land for them, and provide money for them to learn new skills to support themselves.

Joint action here has been important: a delegation from the shop stewards' local met recently with the Chamber of Commerce, and put forward the demands of the unemployed.

Amalova members are planning self-help schemes, where they can learn skills that will benefit the community. Their projects will include making bricks, burglar bars and gates, doing woodwork, painting, and electrical work.

Workers will need to learn new skills for this work, and the organisation plans to train them. Amalova is confident that a solution will be found to the problems of the unemployed: in the short-term, through these projects; and in the longer term, through a system where everyone shares in making decisions about how this country is run.

Through organisations like Sawco and Amalova, workers are learning to take control of their position and overcome the problems that face the unemployed. And they have proved the importance of joint action and unity throughout the community.

They have learned that they can re-organise production so that they control it, and so they benefit from the work they do.

They have seen the strength of their unity, and learned that in areas where unemployment is a fact of life, they themselves can take care of their needs.

# MAY DAY

On May 1, 1886, workers around the world commemorate historical events of working-class struggle.

In many countries, trade unions and workers' political parties will organize meetings and demonstrations. May Day, May Day is a day of unity between workers in each country in their struggle for a better life. It is a symbol of working-class solidarity that the working class of the world faces the same problems and needs, problems of low wages, long hours, bad treatment and lack of control over decisions that affect their lives.

Workers throughout the world all had the same goal: the eight-hour workday of regular and overtime.

In 1886, May Day workers support themselves by organizing solidarity against the system that exploits and oppresses workers.

In 1886, workers in Chicago, Illinois, organized the Pullman Strike. Workers' lives were ruined when they struck over their fight. May Day is a public holiday in those countries where trade unions and workers' parties and the government commemorate this strike and struggle.

In 1920, May Day is a national holiday in many countries.

Workers in many countries commemorate May Day with May Day rallies, parades and demonstrations. May Day is a day of unity between workers in each country.

**"Workers of the world unite. You have nothing to lose but your chains."**

International Workers' Order

In 1886, workers in Chicago, Illinois, organized the Pullman Strike. Workers' lives were ruined when they struck over their fight. May Day is a public holiday in those countries where trade unions and workers' parties and the government commemorate this strike and struggle.

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## ● From Page 21

national boundaries.

The bosses feared the strength of this, and tried to divide and co-opt workers. In some countries, unions, worker protests and strikes were banned.

May Day was first taken up in SA in 1904 when a group of socialists came together in Johannesburg to call for the rights of workers.

But it was some time before May Day was seen as a yearly day of celebration. The International Socialist League (ISL), formed in 1916, pledged to build up worker solidarity in South Africa. And, for the first time, the ISL began to work to unite all workers non-racially.

In 1921, the ISL dissolved to form the Communist Party of South Africa, which included African and coloured workers and aimed to strengthen worker unity.

## Strike

But the bosses were trying to destroy worker unity. They were replacing expensive white workers with cheaper black workers. White workers felt threatened by this. But, instead of uniting with black workers to fight the mine bosses jointly, turned against black workers. They went on strike and demanded that the mine bosses protect 'white jobs' from blacks. Job reservation was introduced.

Despite this racist approach, all workers' fight for May Day as a paid public holiday grew. In 1926, a Bill was introduced to parliament proposing a public holiday. But instead of May 1, the Bill proposed the first Monday in May. Workers protested, arguing that May 1 had become an international symbol of working class organisation and solidarity. The Bill was dropped when the government refused to grant this.

In 1925, Clements Kadalie of the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) told the all-white South African Trade Union Congress that African workers, as part of the international labour movement, would take part in the May Day celebrations. As the African working class grew in size and strength, so did their participation in the May Day celebrations. In 1928, African workers marched in their thousands — among them, a few white workers.

In the early 1930's, May Day was celebrated in different ways. The all-white registered unions supported solidarity with workers in other parts of the world, but turned their backs on their fellow South African black workers. Their May Day meetings remained closed to African workers.

The Communist Party, on the other hand, held militant mass meetings. Police disrupted these, attacking only the African workers present. Despite police harassment, there were more attempts to organise non-racial May Day celebrations.

One of the most well-known slogans of the



May Day 1985: SA police out in force

day was "Workers of the World Unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains! You have a whole world to gain!"

In 1931, blacks were expelled from the United May Day Committee. In response, the non-racial African May Day Committee was set up to organise May Day celebrations.

At this time, a new enemy of workers emerged: fascism. It was growing in Italy, Germany and South Africa and working

## Solidarity

class organisations were coming under attack. Workers' support for struggles against imperialism were emphasised, and workers' international solidarity strengthened during May Day activities in the 1930's.

In the 1940's the Council of Non-European Trade Unions (CNETU) played a big part in making May Day more popular. CNETU united workers under the slogans "We Want Bread" and "Work for Wages".

After the Second World War the unregistered — largely black — labour movement focussed on issues like minimum wages, housing, and recognition of African trade unions.

Political developments in 1948 — when the

Nationalist government came to power — smashed what remained of white-black worker unity. Most white unions supported the Nationalist Party and its right-wing, racist, anti-communist and anti-working class politics.

1950 saw the most important May Day event in South African history until then. Progressive organisations declared May 1, 1950, a Freedom Day strike.

CNETU, the ANC and other Congress organisations called for a general stayaway and demonstrations to fight the Suppression of Communism Bill and to support demands for higher wages and better working conditions. Hundreds of meetings were held throughout the country as a build-up to the Freedom Day strike.

The government banned meetings and army units patrolled the streets. Loudspeaker vans toured the townships ordering the people to go to work. Despite attempts by the police and army to force people to go to work, the strike was well supported.

After the Freedom Strike, May Day activity declined because of growing state repression. In the late 1950's, the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) and the Congress movement struggled to keep the tradition of May Day celebrations alive.

Workers leaders were banned, detained, bannished, imprisoned and shot. Few May Day meetings were called, and SACTU used the day for small group discussions on the 'Pound-A-Day' wage campaign, and the right to organise.

After the government clamp-down of the early 1960's the next ten years was a decade of silence. May Day left the streets, along with the organisations that had been unable to withstand the government and bosses' violent attacks.

SACTU was driven into exile, along with the ANC and PAC. Unionists were jailed and others banished by the government.

In the 1960's there was a massive growth in size of the working class. Huge monopoly businesses grew and factories got bigger. This growth was the start of a new wave of worker organisation, which began with the 1973 Durban strikes, when 100 000 workers took to the streets to demand wage increases.

Trade union organisation grew. In 1979, ten unions came together to form the Federation of SA Trade Unions (Fosatu). It was the first federation since SACTU, with national and regional structures, democratic principles and committed to worker control and discipline.

After the mass worker-student stayaways of 1976 and 1977, the government began to fear the growth of links again between organised workers and other progressive sectors of the community.

Its Wiehahn Commission aimed to control union growth, and co-opt the members of the new trade unions.



A century of struggle: workers at the launch of Cosatu

Meanwhile, a wave of union organisation and mobilisation was sweeping up the east coast — openly political unions like the Food and Canning Workers Union, the General Workers Union and SAAWU spread rapidly through Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London, Durban and even up to Northern Natal.

In the Eastern and Western Cape there were strikes, schools boycotts, bus boycotts, rent struggles, strike support campaigns, and the mushrooming of community organisations.

The Food and Canning Workers' Union called on everyone to boycott Fattis and Monis products in support of striking workers. This was the first time in twenty years that a union had called for a national consumer boycott.

In 1980, GWU called for community support in its struggle against the meat bosses, and a national red meat boycott was organised.

Saawu also used the boycott weapon in the Wilson Rowntree fight.

Many unions in the early 1980's played an important role in political issues affecting their members, coming out strongly against Ciskei's so-called independence, taking leading roles in the Release Mandela Campaign in 1980, and in the anti-republic day campaign in 1981.

The government's attempt to co-opt and control the independent trade unions failed. The democracy in these unions made sure that workers remained in control of their unions. And instead of being co-opted, these unions grew stronger on the factory floor.

Unions also started forming links with

organisations and issues beyond the factory floor, like school and bus boycotts. Worker and factory struggles are not separate from the broader struggle for liberation, said the unions.

Between 1981 and 1985 the unions grew quickly — both in size and strength. The numbers of strikes increased, and new sectors were organised, the most important being the mines.

In those years as well community and student organisations became more active, fighting hard battles with the government. In the beginning, most of the community-based and worker struggles took place in

the Transvaal.

At first this activity focused on the East Rand, but later spread to the Vaal Triangle and then to the rest of the country after the SA economy went into a deep recession.

The conflict between workers and bosses sharpened. Short demonstration stoppages became long shows of strength as bosses refused to negotiate wages at plant level.

The recession brought with it increasing retrenchments. Many shop stewards and worker leaders lost their jobs.

And while the number of strikes each year grew, so did union membership.

This growing worker organisation did not



May Day 1935: SA police out in force.

ignore politics. Trade union activists saw no separation between the problems they faced at work and those at home. A link was being forged between factory, community and educational issues.

This was shown by the success of the stayaway in the Transvaal in November 1984. The stayaway was not only a major protest against apartheid education and township conditions, it was a show of strength and unity between organised workers, students and community organisations.

Over a million workers and students stayed away from school and work in response to a call by Cosas which was supported by the progressive trade unions.

The boycott of Simba products, called by SFAWU, a Fosatu affiliate, paved the way for Fosatu's participation in the stayaway.

In 1985, trade unions came together in united action to organise May Day celebrations. International Workers' Day was celebrated in all major centres throughout the country. At the many meetings and rallies, worker plays were presented; union choirs performed and workers sang their own songs; and halls were covered in union emblems and banners which said "Workers of the world unite", "Forward with the workers struggle" and "An Injury to One is an Injury To All".

Unity and solidarity was a strong theme during the day. At a meeting held in Port Elizabeth, local Firestone workers showed their unity with striking Brazilian workers employed by Firestone Tyre Company in Sao Paulo.

A key call was for the new federation to be formed without delay.

At every meeting, workers put forward their demands for improved wages, living conditions and political rights.

Workers demanded May Day as a paid public holiday; the right to full employment and a living wage; housing and transport they could afford; a 40-hour week, and free and compulsory education for all; and the scrapping of all racist laws.

They demanded a new society where the interests of workers came first.

This year, many of the May Day demands are the same. But there is one very big difference: workers now have their federation — Cosatu — and the unity last year's May Day meetings resolved to build.

Workers around the world will be united in celebration.

And 650 000 Cosatu members across South Africa will down tools and take part in these celebrations, and remember their struggles against oppression and exploitation, and fight on. On May Day this year, workers demand:

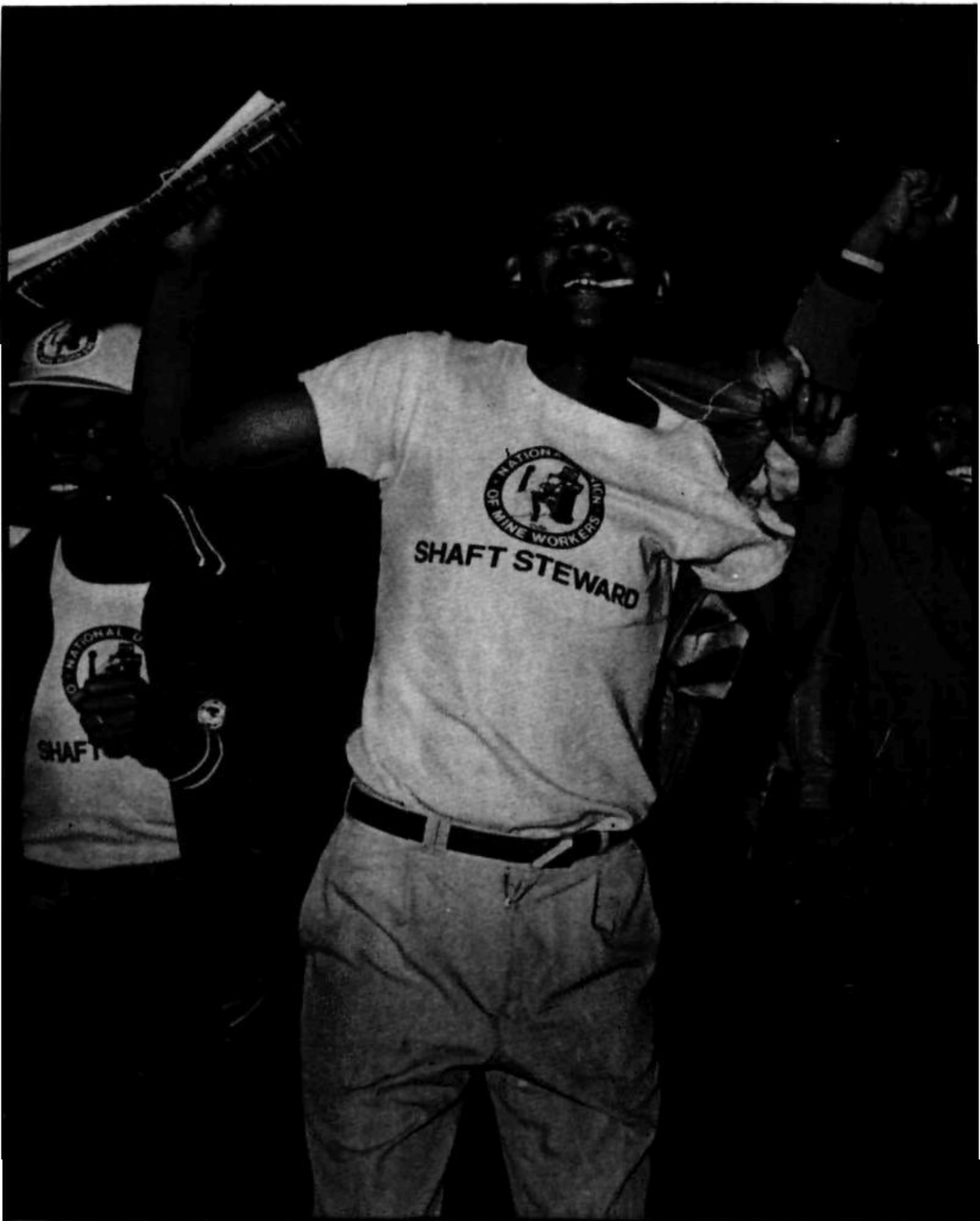
- The right to work;
- The right to organise;
- The rights of students;
- The right to political freedom;
- The right to free movement and decent housing.

Workers have voiced their demands. Through Cosatu they will be won.



May Day in France in the 19th century: the police move in.

THE HISTORY OF MAY DAY



Workers Unite



# Influx control going nowhere

**The dompas makes it easy to exploit workers.**

**Cosatu is determined to fight the pass laws.**

THE PASS laws were designed by the apartheid regime to control and dehumanise the working class, Cosatu said at its founding rally held in Durban in December.

A motion was passed calling for an end to the pass laws and influx control.

The congress said: "Pass laws and influx control help capital make big profits by exploiting and oppressing the working class."

Since 1948, the Nationalist government has controlled the African working class with laws such as the pass laws.

The idea of laws controlling people's movements began in 1652 with the control over the movement of slaves and other groups.

When diamonds and gold were first found in the 19th Century, many cheap workers were needed by the mines. It was then that the pass laws were started.

But the mines were dangerous and no-one wanted to work in them.

The white mine-owners had to pay high wages to get people to work for them.

This hurt the capitalists, so they looked for ways of forcing the workers to accept less money.

They took away African-owned land. They made African people pay heavy taxes in cash.

Although the people resisted, their resistance was crushed by force.

After the Anglo-Boer war the British took more land away and people were made to pay even higher taxes.

Thousands of people were forced to look for work, even at the low wages offered by the mines.

This British plan created large social and political problems.

African people were allowed to keep only 13% of the land. This led to overcrowding and poverty.

Many people went to the cities to try to earn money.

The government then decided to make a law to keep people out of the cities, where there were not enough jobs.

Influx control was then introduced to control the working class.

Only people needed by whites as labourers were let into the cities.

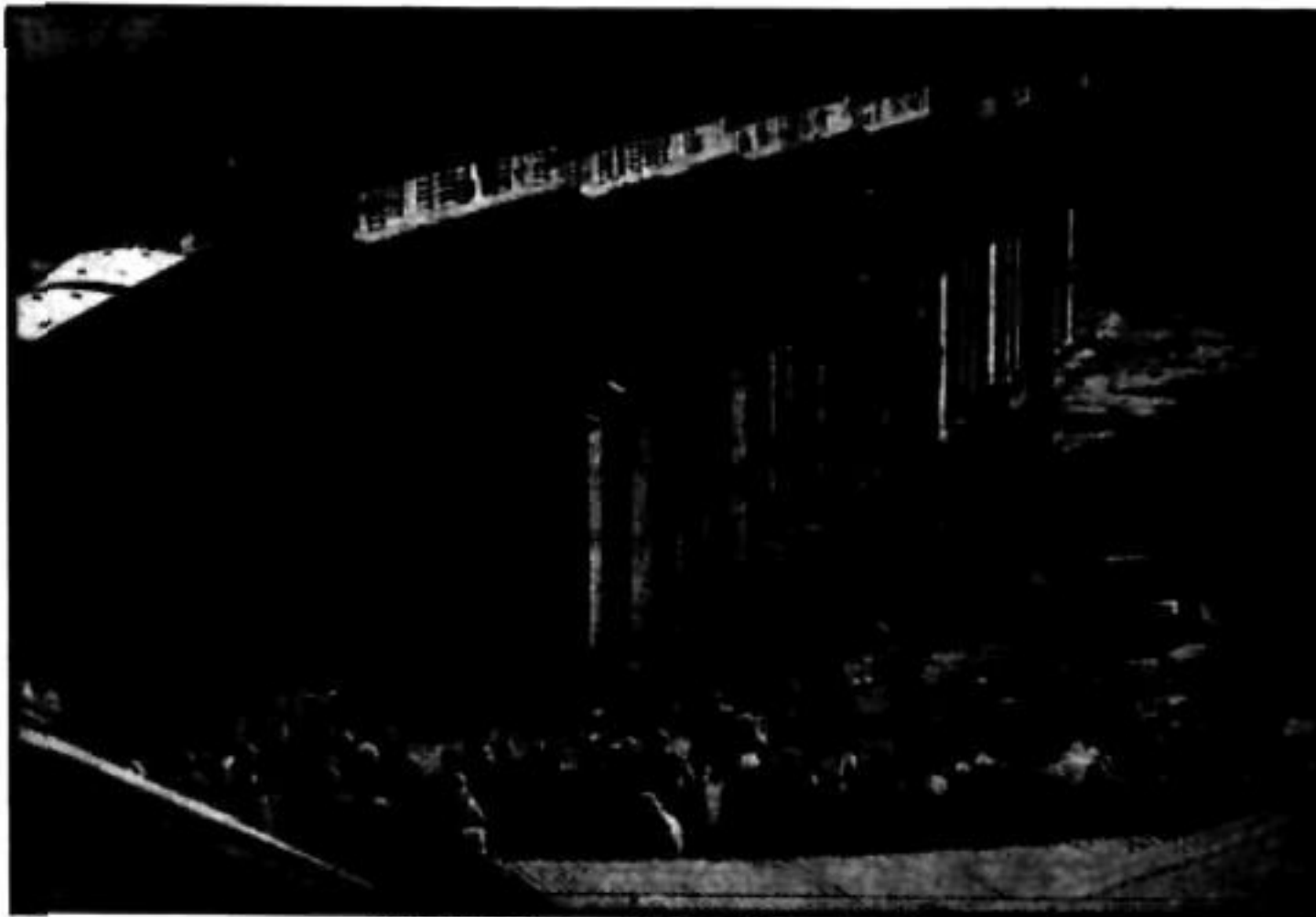
Passes were issued to all black people and they were only allowed in the cities if their passes were stamped.

Any person caught without a stamped pass was arrested.

Influx control was part of a plan to make sure there were plenty of black workers available at low wages.

The compound system, race laws, separate 'townships' for separate races and so on were all part of this plan.

All mine workers had to live in fenced-in compounds guarded by mine police.



**The compounds — total control of migrants**

Black miners were also divided into 'tribes' by the bosses, who were given different areas of the compounds to look after.

The pass laws helped keep the mine workers on the mines because they couldn't break their contracts.

Lots of miners ran away from the mines. But they were then not able to get passes and were returned to the mines if they were caught in the towns.

The pass laws also helped white farmers who paid their workers even lower wages than the mines.

Influx control was used to force people to work on the farms because they were refused passes for the towns.

The Cosatu congress also said the system of migrant labour results in the breaking up of families.

These laws forced workers to leave their families in the rural areas because the families were not allowed in the cities. The mines then claimed the workers' families

were making a living out of farming and that the workers were supporting only themselves.

Although this was a lie, mines and other industries still use this excuse today.

Because of this people in the rural areas have always been hungry and poor.

Hundreds of studies in the past 50 years have shown people in the rural areas are not surviving through farming. These studies show how hard life is in the rural areas.

Things have got worse in the last 30 years, after the 'homeland' system was started.

Almost three million people have been removed to these overcrowded 'homeland' areas.

A leading specialist in children's medicine said recently that because of the lack of food

"one third of rural African children younger than 14 years old are underweight for their age".

## PASSES AND INFLUX CONTROL

Four black children die every hour because of malnutrition — these deaths are mainly in the rural areas.

Because of this, thousands of people have defied the laws and come into the cities to live as families, and to make a living.

Many have settled in the towns even though they haven't had places to stay. Houses have become overcrowded and squatter camps have sprung up countrywide.

At Crossroads, Winterveldt, and many other places, families have settled to try to escape the poverty in the rural areas.

The government has tried violently to stop the people's defiance of the pass laws.

Between 1916 and 1985, government has prosecuted about 18million people for breaking the influx control laws.

In 1984, one person was arrested every three minutes for pass offences — a total of more than 300 000 for the year.

Last year, the government's Hoexter Commission said: "The country's prisons are full-to-overflowing with thousands of breadwinners who have landed there for minor technical offences."

More than 33 000 of the 100 000 people in jail last year had been convicted under the influx control laws.

Even though people were arrested they still went into the so-called white areas. Of all the wealth in South Africa, 97 percent is created in these areas. The hard conditions in the 'homelands' are driving more and more people to the cities.

The Cosatu congress said "the migrant labour system seeks to further divide the oppressed and exploited workers into permanent residents and migrants".

The ruling class' answer to influx control has always been to tighten control.

Since the Riekert Commission, the penalties and controls have become harsher. There have been more pass arrests and more fines in the past few years than before.

Big business and the State needed a new plan, and in the past few years big business and some sections of government have been calling for an end to influx control.

But they don't want to let people move freely into the towns and cities.

The Urban Foundation has called for "a positive urbanisation strategy ... designed to manage urbanisation, but not to prevent it".

Education Minister Viljoen has promised to give education a 'positive' meaning and to remove the 'negative' meaning of the past.

But attempts in the past few years to change influx control show what the minister means with 'positive urbanisation'.

In 1983, the government said it would no longer be against the law to simply be in a white area. But you could not be in those

areas unless you had a job, or a place to live that the government had approved of.

For those who had a job and a place to stay, the laws would be eased. These people would be called Permanent Urban Residents (PURs).

They would allow you to move freely from one area to another to look for new jobs or places to stay.

But the government has made it even more difficult to get PUR status than it was to get 'Section 10' rights.

People from the bantustans would not be able to get these rights. People would have to live in the town/city for 10 years and have parents living in the areas before they could get the rights, the government said.

These bills were called the 'genocide bills' by the progressive organisations. Because there was such resistance to these bills the government was forced to drop some of its plans.

Last year it began a new plan. The main idea in this plan is to split the working class into urban and rural sections. The government wants to give the people in the towns and cities more rights and the rural people even less than they have now.

The figures for 1983 show about 100 000 people were arrested by Development Board officials, and it is thought that police arrested twice this number.

Although there still are pass laws, the government has said everybody, including whites, would have to have their fingerprints taken and would have to carry a 'uniform identity book'.

The government still believes the bantustans are 'independent countries'. Because of this the nine million South Africans living in these areas won't be able to claim these urban rights.

**Millions - mainly women - are left to scratch out an existence in barren bantustans.**





9 August 1956: 20 000 women protest outside the Union Buildings

# We won't carry passes!

**RESISTANCE TO** the pass laws goes back to the last century. But the first organised resistance against passes was started by the women of Winburg, Bloemfontein and Jagersfontein in the Orange Free State.

In 1913, in response to a new law which forced women in these towns to carry passes, a campaign of passive resistance was launched. Thousands refused to carry their passes — and hundreds were arrested.

But the pass laws for women were dropped.

After the First World War, thousands moved to the cities and towns. Passes again became the target of angry opposition. The South African Native National Congress — which became the ANC — launched a campaign to demand better conditions for workers and all Africans living in the towns. It centred on passes.

There had been strikes by workers over wages and working conditions. But it was clear to everyone that it was the whole system of labour controls that kept wages down. Passes were a key part of those controls.

March 31, 1919 saw thousands burn their passes in a mass demonstration.

But organisation was not strong enough then to win the demand to scrap passes.

In 1930 the Communist Party organised an anti-pass demonstration, but again organisational problems weakened the campaign.

During the Second World War, thousands more came to settle in the towns for the first time. Once again, passes became a major issue. Again, people called for the end of passes.

In 1949 the ANC Youth League drew up a plan of action which called for a campaign of defiance against the pass laws.

When this campaign took off in 1952, the pass laws, and more broadly, influx control, were the focus of defiance. Over 6 000 people — including Nelson Mandela — were sent to jail for their defiance.

But the biggest-ever campaign was organised by the Federation of SA Women (Fedsaw), together with the ANC Women's League.

In 1953 the pass laws were changed: women would now have to carry passes.

Many Fedsaw leaders had direct experience of the effects of the pass laws on workers. Many — like Lilian Ngoyi, Frances Baard and Bertha Mashaba — had worked in trade unions.

In 1955 Fedsaw organised a march on the Union Building. 2 000 women went to Pretoria and handed over copies of anti-pass

petitions.

The government then announced it would travel around, using mobile units, to issue passes to women living in the rural area. They planned to start in Winburg — the centre of the 1913 anti-pass campaign.

But these women were not fooled. They got in touch with the ANC, and Lilian Ngoyi went to Winburg.

The women of Winburg marched to the superintendent's office and made a huge fire with their passes. Many women went to jail for this, but the government scrapped its 'mobile units' plan.

Under Fedsaw, the women's anti-pass campaign grew. In most big towns, women marched to local offices and handed back their new pass books.

In Johannesburg, over 300 domestic workers — led by Bertha Mashaba — marched on the Native Commissioner's office. It was the first time domestic workers had organised themselves into action.

Fedsaw also sent round a petition and gathered support for a second march on Pretoria. On August 9, 1956, over 20 000 women came to Pretoria to take part in one of the largest protest marches this country has ever seen.

One delegation, from Port

Elizabeth, had hired a whole railway coach to take them. Many sold their furniture to pay for the trip.

The 20 000 delivered the petitions to the Prime Ministers' office, and then stood in silence for 30 minutes in front of the Union Buildings. Then they sang: "Strijdom, you have tampered with the women, you have struck a rock."

In 1959 the ANC organised a massive anti-pass campaign which would start all over the country at the same time: March 31 1960.

But the Pan African Congress (PAC) launched its own pass-campaign in Sharpeville, on March 21. Police opened fire at this meeting, killing 69 people. In the face of countrywide anger and international outrage, the government declared a State of Emergency two weeks later.

The anti-pass campaign was put aside in the repression that followed.

26 years later, the call has been taken up again.

Cosatu has resolved to fight for the scrapping of the migrant labour system, which includes pass laws and influx control. It will fight for workers to look for work and live wherever they want to.

It will fight for the end of the pass laws. Already, the campaign has begun.

# Shop stewards - carrying the flag on the factory floor

Shop and shaft stewards are the most important people in a union if it is to be democratic and powerful.



National Union of Mineworkers' shaft stewards.

To do this effectively, stewards must be accountable to the workers who elect them. Before taking any action or going to any meeting either with the union or with management the stewards must get a mandate from the workers.

Then they must report back before doing anything else.

In the National Union of Mineworkers, this is particularly important. The shaft stewards are responsible for all union activity on the mines including strikes, what demands are made to management over wages or health and safety, and other issues.

Shop stewards have a broader responsibility than just in their factory, says Dlamini.

"They should also try to politicise and mobilise the broader community in which they live, by making clear the gains made through the shop stewards' structures.

"They should explain the structures of the trade union and the nature of its discipline of strict mandate and responsibility."

Through this approach, shop stewards can join community organisations like civics, women's and youth organisations and influence their direction.

They can also do this through area meetings of shop stewards.

The Springs shop stewards' council brings together 200 workers from nine unions every week. Together they represent workers from every large factory in Springs, and many of the smaller ones.

The council discusses all issues affecting workers and their families not just factory floor issues. Most talked-about issues are housing, May Day, the need for a living wage, maternity benefits, education, and police action.

The Springs shop stewards have built their stewards' council into a leadership body in the area.

They said an East Rand civic body should be formed to lead community organisation. Soon afterwards the East Rand People's Organisation (Erapo) was formed. Although workers are active in Erapo, the shop stewards' council is not directly involved.

It has also helped to form the Katlehong Youth Congress.

Students are invited to shop stewards' meetings to tell workers about developments in the education struggle, and to get ideas on forming SRC's and joint action between workers and students.

Shop steward representatives followed this up in meetings with the school principals and inspectors, who promised to meet their demands. All students were taken back and school fees were not paid.

At a meeting of teachers and students, all agreed that employers in the area should pay for building schools. Teachers and SRC's took the demand to the council, which passed it on to the employers. The council decided this would only be done for organised schools with SRC's.

It was also the shop stewards' council which decided not to bury victims of police action on weekends, but during the week.

This way employers also feel the effects of police action in the townships.

Now Cosatu plans to establish shop stewards' councils nationally.

Says Dlamini, "These will be encouraged in all regions because it is the best way to involve students, women, youth and residents in joint struggles on a local level."

Through these and other structures, one of Cosatu's main aims will be carried out - to encourage democratic worker organisations and leadership in all spheres of our society together with other progressive spheres of the community."

It is the shop stewards, therefore, who have the most important role to play in carrying out this Cosatu policy.

ASK ANY unionist who the most important people in the union are and they'll answer immediately shop stewards.

Shop stewards are workers in the factories chosen to represent union members in the union and before management.

It is from their ranks that the union leadership comes. And it is they who guarantee workers' control in democratic trade unions.

All progressive unions affiliated to Cosatu believe in worker control. This ensures the interests of workers are clearly represented by the union.

It also ensures that unions cannot be dominated by a few skilled or well-educated or charismatic leaders.

This domination by a few leaders is found in bureaucratic unions like those affiliated to the Trade Union Council of SA (Tucsa). None draw their leadership from the factory floor or mine shafts.

And none of those unions have strong shop stewards' structures.

But Cosatu believes in developing worker control of unions through strong factory floor organisation.

At Cosatu's launch in Durban, Cyril Ramaphosa of the National Union of Mineworkers (Num) said in the opening speech:

"Workers' political strength depends on building strong and militant organisations in the workplace."

This is written into Cosatu's constitution. The preamble states that one of Cosatu's tasks is to unite industrial unions in a national worker-controlled federation.

Cosatu Vice President and Sfawu President Chris Dlamini believes that much of the work of developing worker control and worker leadership rests on the shoulders of shop stewards in the factories, and shaft stewards on the mines.

"The role of the stewards is to organise all workers, inform them of their rights, and advise them how to organise other workers", he said.

"Our slogan is: We don't just recruit and service. We politicise, mobilise and organise. Then the workers service themselves."

EDUCATION WAS a key issue at Cosatu's first National Congress.

A resolution was passed which stated that:

- the present education system in SA is designed to maintain the working class in ideological bondage;

- it is designed to continue, and strengthen, the ideas and practices of the ruling class;

- it aims to create divisions, and values that are against democracy, among the working class;

- education is vital in the liberation struggle of the working class;

- education must serve the interests of the majority.

Bantu Education clearly does not benefit the working class.

It benefits the government and the bosses.

And the struggle for democratic education is a struggle that directly affects workers — it is not only the struggle of the students.

The students who are organising for people's education are the sons and daughters of workers.

It is workers who pay for the students' textbooks, and their uniforms, and their fees.

These students are the workers of tomorrow.

And so, increasingly, workers and students are joining together to wage their struggles together.

At a meeting of the Athlone Education Crisis Committee in the Western Cape, Cosatu's Assistant General Secretary, Sidney Mafumadi, said:

"We believe that education is being used to reproduce inequality and exploitation.

"The students have begun the process of changing that situation.

"Cosas was working for democratic SRC's to be recognised. The banning of Cosas has left a vacuum.

"For everyone who is working towards a non-racial, democratic South Africa, free of exploitation, the struggle for alternative education is not the struggle of the students alone.

# Building worker, student unity

**The struggle for democratic education is being supported by workers & parents**

"The government cannot make changes to the education system, without making other changes to its policies.

"The people who are organised into trade unions are the people who are paying for this education system.

"It is this fact which makes unity between workers and students possible, and essential."

Students have organised against Bantu Education ever since it was introduced.

In 1976, students in Soweto and in schools around the country took to the streets to protest against gutter education.

At that time, the students

believed they would lead the struggle. They were not clear on the role of workers in bringing about real change.

They tried to force workers to down tools in support of their demands.

But they soon realised that they couldn't win their demands without the support of workers — only together, with all the oppressed, would they be able to bring the government and the bosses to their knees.

The government banned the student organisations that had led the 1976 revolt.

But in 1979, Cosas and Azaso - the Azanian Students' Organisa-



The demands of the students are clear. Students march at the funeral of a fellow student

## EDUCATION STRUGGLES



No school facilities in the rural areas

tion — were formed.

And the next year, 1980, boycotts and protests spread across the country.

This time they were joined by the workers, who were demanding that the bosses recognise their trade unions.

A new level of struggle began to develop, which united youth, students and workers. Their demands went beyond the mandate of any one of these groups on their own.

By 1982, Cosas was organising under the banner of 'Student - Worker Action'. The students' demands were for compulsory, free and democratic education

in a democratic society.

Cosas president Shepherd Mati explained why Cosas chose this theme.

"Students were realising slowly after 1978 and 1979 that they are a specific group, and that they play a limited role in the broader struggle.

"Cosas aims to teach the students that when they finish their studies, they have a role to play in society.

"Students are the workers of tomorrow, so they must be educated and organised.

"Although students have different experiences to workers, we feel that by bringing the work-

ers' struggle to the students and community. Students will actually play a very supportive role in the overall struggle led by the workers".

The link between worker and student struggles began to be spelled out more clearly.

Both groups experience oppression — in schools, and in the factories.

Their demands in the community are the same.

By bringing together these common experiences, they can form a united challenge.

In 1984, students started to boycott again. They were demanding democratically elected SRC's, free textbooks, and an end to corporal punishment and sexual harassment.

They realised the education system would only be changed when they joined the workers, residents and youth.

This joint action was shown clearly in the massive stayaway in November 1984 in the Transvaal.

The call for a stayaway was first made by Cosas, but through joint discussions and planning, trade unions, youth and community organisations took up the call.

The stayaway was a massive success — nearly a million people stayed away for two days.

It brought together unions, Cosas, and other organisations in common action.

The demands showed clearly what the people wanted:

- the democratic demands of the students must be met;
- the army and police must be withdrawn from the townships;
- all rent increases must be scrapped;
- all community councils must be scrapped;
- all detainees and political prisoners must be released;
- all dismissed workers, including the Simba-Quix workers must be re-instated;
- all bus fare increases must be stopped;
- unfair taxes — like GST — must be scrapped.

In 1985 these struggles intensified until, in July, Cosas was banned and the State of Emergency was declared. Since then, the link between student and worker struggles has become even clearer.

In April this year, democratic organisations from around the

country came together in Durban for the National Education Consultative Committee.

They came to discuss the education crisis, and the government's failure to respond to the demands drawn up by the SPCC in December.

Cosatu's National Executive Committee was there, representing over 650 000 workers organised in industries around the country.

Worker leaders had played a key role in the discussion that led up to the conference, and their contribution to the discussions at the conference was crucial.

The first resolution passed at the conference called for May Day to be a public holiday for all workers, and students were called on to celebrate May Day as well.

June 16 was declared National Youth Day, to mark ten years since the start of the Soweto uprising. The conference called for a national stayaway, on June 16, 17 and 18.

The conference resolved that students must go back to school, and make the schools the battleground in the education struggle.

Cosatu's General Secretary Jay Naidoo explained how Cosatu will take up the education struggle.

"We have already committed ourselves to supporting the demands of the students.

"We believe these are democratic demands.

"The demand for democratic SRC's is very similar to our demand for recognition of our trade unions.

"The demand for free textbooks is very similar to our demand for free overalls in the factories.

"The students' demand for an end to beatings and sexual harassment are very similar to our demands for an end to unfair dismissals and the abuse of women workers.

"So there is a direct relation between the demands made by students and demands made by us.

"National organisation is crucial, like we have our national trade unions.

"We fully support the demand for the unbanning of Cosas.

"We will throw the full weight of our organisation behind the demands of the students."



# How Cosatu will build a powerful worker leadership

With 650 000 members, it is not easy to get mass worker participation in decisions. But this is how Cosatu will do it ...



Worker delegates at the Cosatu launch listening to speeches in their home languages.

OUR MAIN political task as workers is to develop organisation among workers and to develop strong worker leadership. We have, as unions, to act decisively, and ensure that we lead the struggle.

This was said by National Union of Mineworkers' general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa in his opening address at Cosatu's first national congress.

Because Cosatu has 650 000 paid-up members, it has to make sure that all its members are represented democratically so that true worker leadership can be built.

So Cosatu has decided to build structures which will guarantee workers control of the federation.

Workers in the factories are represented by shop stewards. Shop stewards take part in shop stewards' councils or 'locals'. These are structures in which shop stewards from a particular area participate. Here different issues in a particular area can be discussed.

At the moment not all areas have these structures, but Cosatu is planning to start shop stewards' councils where they don't exist so that workers' grievances can be taken up effectively at a local level.

An advantage of the shop stewards' council is that it provides a good structure for other members of the community. Students and youth and community organisations can support the unions' work through these structures.

As well as representing workers at the shop stewards' councils, shop stewards also represent workers in the local union branch. These local branches are managed by a Branch Executive.

If a worker issue cannot be resolved by the local branch of the union, the issue can be taken further to the Regional Executive, which looks after the union's affairs in a particular region.

If national action is needed — like a national strike — this can be discussed either at the trade union's congress, or by the National Executive which co-ordinates the union's activities between national congresses.

In this way, each union is autonomous. As long as the union does not go against Cosatu's policy, it is free to take action on behalf of its member-

ship. Each union is accountable to its membership, which is represented by its elected shop stewards.

This structure fits in with Cosatu's constitution, which states that one of Cosatu's tasks is to 'organise national industrial unions', which are financed by their worker members through democratically-elected committees.

How does union representation relate to Cosatu structures?

Worker problems, suggestions and so on, are taken to Cosatu's own Regional Executive Committees (REC's). Because Cosatu has divided the country up into ten regions, there are ten REC's.

They meet once a month to administer the region between

meetings of the Regional Congress.

This is how representatives are elected to the REC. Two delegates are elected from unions with less than 8 000 members, and four delegates from unions with more than 8 000 members.

This form of proportional representation takes place in all Cosatu structures. It ensures maximum democracy, by making sure that workers are fairly and equally represented.

When a Regional Congress is held, each affiliate union which has a branch in the union elects five representatives for its first 1 000 members, and one representative for every 250 members beyond that.

The purpose of Regional Congresses is to discuss and carry out

decisions made in Cosatu's national structures — the National Congress, and the Central Executive Committee — and make decisions that effect that region.

In this way both the regional structures — the Regional Congress, and the REC — are controlled through worker representatives. This ensures that it is the workers on the shopfloor who provide direction for Cosatu.

The Central Executive Committee (CEC) is the committee which meets to manage the national affairs of the federation. It does this between meetings of the National Congress.

The CEC is made up of two delegates from unions with less than 15 000 members, and four delegates from unions with over 15 000 members.

If the CEC cannot agree on a motion, then a vote is taken. A motion can only be passed if over two thirds of the CEC vote is in favour of it.

The National Congress is the highest controlling body of Cosatu. It meets at least every two years. Here policy decisions are made, through resolutions put forward by Congress delegates.

At the National Congress each affiliate union has one delegate for every 500 members.

It is at the National Congress that the national office bearers are elected.

These office bearers were elected at the first National Congress in December:

- President: Elijah Barayi
- First Vice-President: Chris Dlamini
- Second Vice-President: Makhulu Ledwaba
- Treasurer: Maxwell Xulu
- General Secretary: Jay Naidoo
- Assistant General Secretary: Sidney Mafumadi

Cosatu president Elijah Barayi said: "The ideal union must represent the views and interests of its members. It must be democratic, and under worker control."

Asked how he saw his role as president, he said: "I am a servant of the workers."

"I was elected to carry out their wishes. As a worker leader I have a duty to see that workers' interests are advanced."

And it is on this principle of worker control that Cosatu's structures operate.

# DISINVESTMENT

## Foreign firms get out of South Africa

Is your money in... principles?

**ARE YOU PROFITING FROM OPPRESSION?**

**WE DO NOT INVEST IN SOUTH AFRICA**

U.S. companies - too scared of public opinion to invest

But some still argue against the campaign.

They claim that 'disinvestment will cause unemployment, especially for black South Africans'.

But less than one percent of all workers would be affected if every US company pulled out of SA.

This would not have to mean these companies closed: SA companies could take over, and no jobs would be lost.

There are over three million people without jobs in SA. Investment will not change this — only economic and political change will.

Most investment in SA is through buying shares in companies. This money does not create jobs, and it is often used to pay for the machines that cut jobs more.

And a lot of the investment in SA goes into factories in the bantustans, where workers are paid starvation wages.

Others say that 'disinvestment would harm the many African countries that trade with SA':

But Southern African countries who belong to the SADC alliance say they are prepared to make sacrifices.

They say the goal of ending apartheid is more important, and they will benefit in the long run because they will not depend so much on SA, and they won't have to fear SADF raids and other SA action inside their borders.

Some say 'Foreign investment and foreign investment will help bring about reform in SA'.

Those who disagree say it is SA's cheap labour that brings foreign business to SA. This cheap labour is the heart of Apartheid.

So companies who put their money in SA are using that cheap labour, and are not really calling for change.

Millions are being spent in advertising, and laws have been passed to stop people calling for disinvestment. This shows how afraid the government and big business are.

As an American supporter of disinvestment said, 'to say that disinvestment will put blacks out of work is like saying that you can't end slavery — because then the slaves won't have jobs'.

As one worker said, "The foreign bosses must leave with what they came. They must leave with their coats. We have built the wealth of SA. The factories, the mines, the shops and the farms belong to us."

COSATU'S RESOLUTION calling for world pressure on the SA government, and disinvestment, shows clearly how strongly SA workers feel about the issue.

Cosatu has said it believes all types of world pressure on the South African government - 'including disinvestment or the threat of disinvestment' — are necessary in the struggle.

Cosatu also said if the government does not change its policies, these pressures must be increased.

This resolution came at the end of a year of growing economic pressure against the South African government. TV stations and newspapers around the world showed the heroism of South Africa's people against the authorities.

This strengthened the work of anti-apartheid movements, and friends of the South African struggle throughout the world.

By the end of 1985, all countries with money in companies in SA were under pressure to call for change within SA.

The SA government depends on this money, and foreign loans, to keep Apartheid. The loans get spent on things like weapons for the SADF, the bantustans and the new parliament.

International banks, who lend the government money to keep the country running, were threatening to stop lending money if the government didn't show signs of changing fast.

This wasn't because their consciences were bothering them: the crisis in SA made it a risky place to lend money to.

The international trade union movement thought of ways of stopping SA getting oil, weapons and other goods that allow the country to carry on running the way it is now.

The disinvestment campaign calls on all foreign companies with money in SA to leave, and calls for no new foreign investment in SA.

The government and its allies began to panic. They tried to show how this action would harm all South Africans.

Government representatives, business leaders, politicians and bantustan leaders all spoke against the plans for the disinvestment campaign.

Gatsha Buthelezi attacked the campaign, saying 'disinvestment hits the victims of apartheid themselves'.

While the debate raged internationally, people began to look

at why the people of SA themselves are also calling for disinvestment.

The ANC has called for a ban on the sale of goods to the SA government, and for the isolation of SA.

A wide range of democratic organisations are calling for more international pressure on the government.

Cosatu's resolution throws the weight of the largest trade union federation in this country's history behind the campaign.

It is clear most people in the country support economic pressure, including disinvestment, against the government, and Cosatu's resolution means the biggest workers' organisation in SA supports this too.



# The world is at war with SA's apartheid

Workers, anti-apartheid organisations and even governments are taking action against apartheid.

In November last year, Welsh dockers refused to allow South African coal to leave the dock. A list of Welsh companies with South African links has been circulated and this has been important in mobilising trade unionists.

● In Finland, transport workers have boycotted trade with South Africa, and since last October the value of South African goods entering Finland dropped from R19 million to R1.95 million.

● In Ireland, eleven workers went on strike in July 1984 - for the right not to handle South African goods. The strike has now lasted more than eighteen months, with trade unionists, the churches, students and people from all over the country supporting the workers.

● The Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement has

had a campaign against imports of South African coal and anthracite. It has demanded all exports of computers and electronic equipment to South Africa be banned. The movement sent food, milk, books and clothing to the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College in Tanzania, and medical kits have been sent to SWAPO.

● Last year, Britain's Trade Union Congress (TUC) threatened action against ten large companies in Britain if they did not report on the conditions of workers in their South African factories. The TUC, which represents 10 million workers, asked union trustees on company pension funds to take their fund's investments from these firms if they didn't.

● About 100 health service workers in Portsmouth, in England, have been refusing to handle South African goods. Workers have been sent home early and have lost as much as R40 per week because of their solidarity action. The workers are supported by their union, the National Union of Public Employees.

● The National Union of Teachers in Britain is affiliated to the Anti-Apartheid Movement. They are teaching people in Britain about the education system in SA.

● In America, on January 9, a national campaign began against Dutch Shell's money in SA. The campaign was announced by the United Mine Workers' president, and a member of the Free South Africa Movement. For the first time in American history, the biggest American unions have promised help to the anti-apartheid campaign.

● At an international conference of Maritime Trade Unions on the Implementation of the United Nations Oil Embargo against South Africa, a warning was given to all shipowners, shipping companies, shipping agents and oil companies; unless their involvement in the delivery of oil to South Africa is stopped, the trade union will take action against them. Workers agreed to swap information on ships breaking the United Nations oil ban on SA. Workers said they were concerned by the worsening situation in SA under apartheid.

● In San Francisco, anti-apartheid protesters set up a picket at the docks, where South African cargo was to be offloaded. The dockworkers would not cross the picket line, and offloading was delayed.

Solidarity action has been both ways. South African workers have supported the struggles of workers in other countries against their bosses.

On February 28 this year, 300 workers from a factory in Elandsfontein — an American multi-national, 3M — held a two hour sympathy strike. This action was in solidarity with 450 American workers who face retrenchment from 3M's plant in Freehold, New Jersey.

The South African workers, members of CCAWUSA, went on strike after they had been approached by the American workers, who have supported CCAWUSA struggles in the past.



Randall Robinson (in centre) at a demonstration outside the South African embassy in Washington.

## *The economy is weak. But the rich get richer...*

### **Workers are carrying the economic burden**

**WORKERS ARE** the worst hit by the crisis in the economy. They are affected most by increasing inflation, high prices, low wages and no jobs.

The economy is in big trouble. More than 16 companies close every day. Those that survive are struggling to make a profit. Costs are rising. Sales are down, leaving them with stockpiles of unsold goods.

In their attempts to keep profits up, bosses are bringing in more machines to try and boost productivity and cut labour costs. They are laying off workers, and merging with other firms to 'rationalise' production which means more jobs are lost.

Instead of creating jobs, they are destroying them. SA needs to find 2 000 jobs every day to cut unemployment, and provide jobs for new work seekers. To do this, the economy will have to grow. But for over ten years now, the economy has not been expanding and developing enough. It's unlikely that this will change for some time.

Workers pay the price for the economic depression, even though they didn't cause it.

The pattern is well established: companies set out to make profits at all costs. This means they cut back on wages, raw material and equipment costs, and push up production and prices.

The problem is that all companies are trying to cut costs, boost production and income as they chase after the same customers.

Not all of these companies survive. The more customers one firm gets, the less business is left over for others. They are then forced to cut wages and costs still more, squeeze even more productivity out of people and machines, and hope to win back some of their customers. If they can't, they have to close.

# On the backs of the poor



Either way, it's the workers who suffer. Their wages get sliced, and they have to work harder and harder. The prices of basic goods keep going up, and wages buy less than ever before.

The millions of unemployed have no protection and so depend on their employed family and friends for survival. This strains the falling wages even further.

This would be bad enough if it just happened every couple of years when the economy took a dive. But it's a permanent feature of the profit process. Competition, the need to survive, and the ruthless necessity of making more profit all the time, mean that workers' wages and working conditions are always under attack.

Take the motor industry. All motor producers have had to cut back production by more than half. They are able to produce

350 000 cars a year, but they can only sell 200 000 of these.

Imported parts have shot up in price as the value of the rand has fallen. The manufacturers have to buy from German, American and Japanese suppliers, and pay them in their currency. All of their money is worth more than the rand, so they are more expensive.

Car sales have fallen almost 30 percent in the last year. GST, the new tax on company cars, the high interest charged on hire purchase, the rise in the petrol price, and the rising costs of insurance and tyres have all put buyers off. And car prices themselves have gone up 30 percent.

The crisis in the motor industry affects all related industries as well. 220 motor car parts manufacturers depend completely on the motor industry for business, and 300 are partly dependent.

Then there are 600 tyre dealers and retreaders, 550 engine reconditioners, 80 body builders, 650 parts dealers, 5300 garages, 3500 repair shops, 1800 new car dealers, and 1000 used car choppers.

Other industries like paint, rubber, steel, textile and plastics also suffer.

The 16 motor manufacturing plants in SA employ 238 000 workers. 40 000 lost their jobs last year.

In the manufacturing sector, over 200 000 workers have lost their jobs since 1983.

Jobs in the steel and engineering sector have shrunk by 100 000 since the early 1980s.

Bosses are bringing in more machines to try and boost productivity and cut labour costs. They are laying off workers in an effort to keep profits at their previously high levels, and merging with other firms to 'rationalise' production.

In the long run however, the basic motive of economic activity has to change. As long as profits guide the production and distribution of goods and services, workers and consumers are going to be exploited. And in order to ensure this, the bosses will enlist the aid of government to keep workers weak and under control.

But then government also plays a key role in managing the economy. It tries to guarantee the right climate for business to make super profits by providing infrastructure like the railways and by regulating things like the banks and insurance companies, and key products like fruit.

Some of this is necessary, and can benefit everyone. But most of the time the only people to benefit are the bosses, and they have even been getting messed around.

The chronically high rate of inflation is a good (or bad) example. The prices of everything from food to furniture to



This Soweto woman has no decent house. She will not get one without a redistribution of wealth.

### ● From Page 35

fuel have been rising uncontrollably. The average is about 20 percent per year at the moment, and it hasn't been below 12 percent for ten years now. This obviously hits producers as well, and they would be able to keep costs down (and push profits up) if inflation was brought down.

Business is partly responsible for the high rate of inflation because they keep raising the prices of their products, but there are other major causes as well.

When there are a lot of buyers for a certain product the seller can push up the price and still be sure of finding a buyer. This sets

up a chain reaction in which all producers are paying more for goods and passing the increased cost to consumers by charging more. Consumers, who are being forced to pay more, will therefore demand higher wages. It's called demand-pull inflation.

But in SA prices have gone up even when there are no buyers. This is because the prices of many of the materials used in production are high.

Local manufacturers are very dependant on imports, which are particularly expensive when the rand is worth so little on the international market. This is called cost-push inflation and is really hurting at the moment.

The government is largely to blame for the fall in the value of the rand and hence for the added cost of imports.

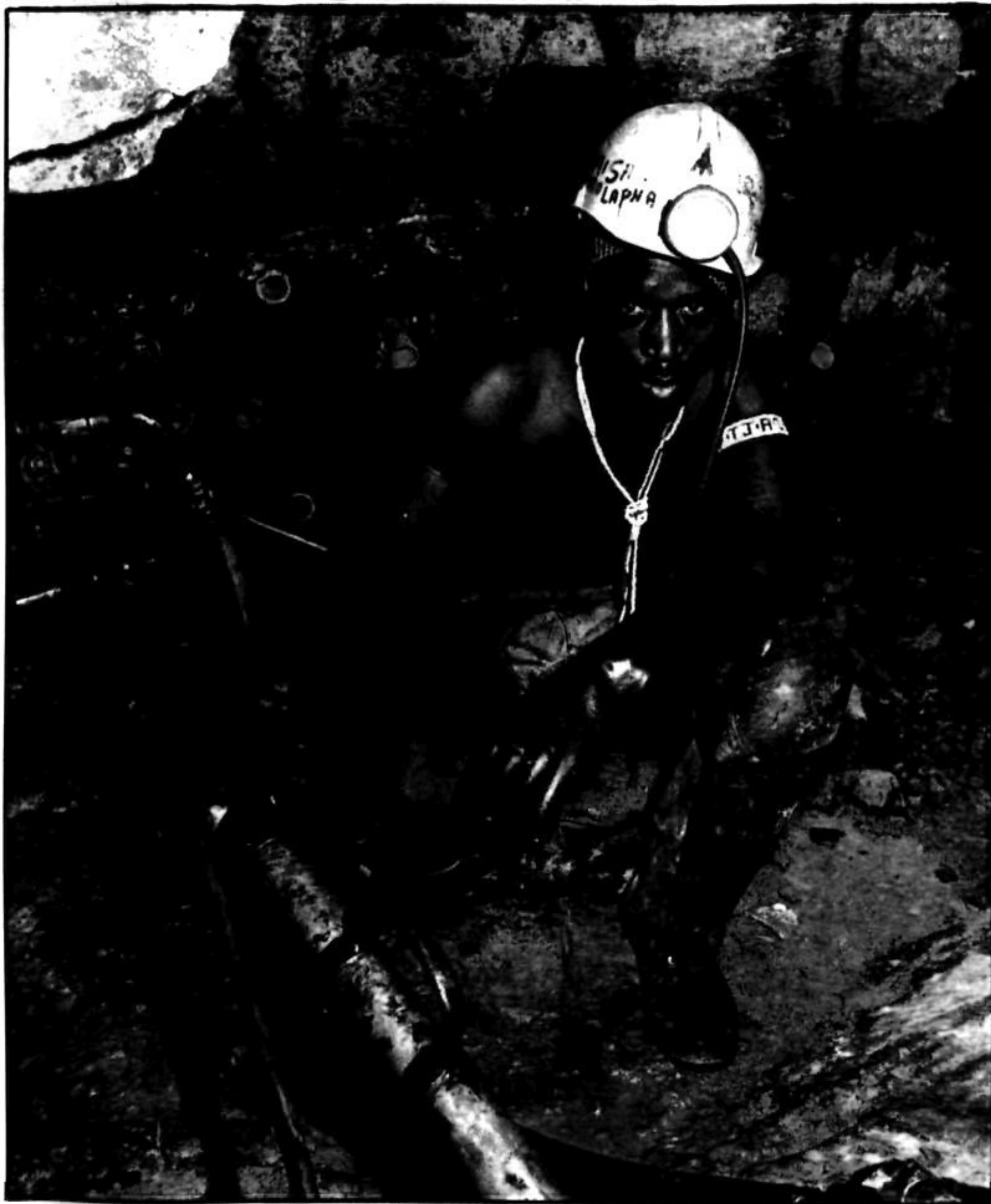
There are also the famous government control boards which regulate the prices of certain products like meat, mealies and eggs. What they basically do is guarantee producers a set price for everything they produce.

This means the producer doesn't have to worry about efficient or economical methods of production because they know they have a buyer. The government, in turn, is forced to charge the public more for the products it has paid so much for, and this sets the chain reaction in motion again.

The government spends billions of rands every year on items like the pass laws, bantu education, community councils and so on. The money of course comes from taxes, mainly those paid by workers, who in fact pay much more than companies. Last year individuals paid 56% of the total tax, whereas companies only paid 23 percent.

In effect we are paying for our own oppression and exploitation. This will continue until we make the decisions about what is produced, how it is produced, what happens to the finished products, and who benefits from the wealth generated by those products.

THE ECONOMY



In dangerous conditions this miner digs for gold. His sweat produces the wealth. But he gets little back.



Militant members of the Metal and Allied Workers Union during a work stoppage.

## We'll break the power of the monopolies say Cosatu workers

they hide the fact that they are part of Barlows.

The disputes of workers at Dairy Belle in Cape Town, at Dorbyl on the East Rand, at Albany in Durban, at Metal Box in Rosslyn, at Spar in Natal, at Bosch in Brits, at Volkswagen in Uitenhage, and Blyvooruitzicht mine near Carltonville, all have one thing in common: Barlows. All these companies are run by Barlows.

The unions involved in these disputes are all Cosatu affiliates: FCWU, Mawu, SFAWU, Saawu, Ccawusa, Naawu and Num.

It shows how important national industrial unions are: all workers in the food sector, for example, can work against a single company and against the other big companies controlling the food industry.

Cosatu is committed to having the wealth of the country shared amongst the people who create that wealth. In this way it can reach its goal of "social and economic justice for all".

To do this, Cosatu believes it is important that all workers understand how the economy works, so that they can make decisions that will change the economy to benefit the working class.

Today, SA's economy is run so that companies get the greatest possible profit from the labour of the workers.

These profits are then shared amongst the bosses.

But in a restructured economy, workers will share in the fruits of their labour.

All will have the right to work, and to get a living wage.

The wealth they produce will be shared fairly.

The struggle against monopolies is a central struggle in this process because monopolies are hugely powerful - not only economically, but politically.

Some of the profit goes to the government in taxes. And because the government needs this money, it does its best to make sure these companies do well.

One of the ways is through keeping the laws that guarantee the supply of cheap labour — like the pass laws and influx control.

The government also helps out by not making laws about minimum wages, or the right to work.

Sometimes, big business does protest over the government's policies. It criticised the State of Emergency.

But this was because the emergency was threatening economic security, making control over workers and overseas business links more difficult.

Few people have been fooled by the loud calls for reform made by these giants. These companies are really looking for an easing of the crisis that is hitting their profits.

Free enterprise has never been something separate from racism, oppression and exploitation, particularly in South Africa.

If they were really serious about real change in this country, they would raise wages.

They would also negotiate with trade unions and stop calling in the police to deal with striking workers.

Cosatu will give workers the economic muscle they need to challenge the power of the monopolies, and the economic system.

SEVENTY PERCENT of South Africa's wealth is owned by ten huge companies.

This means that most of SA's wealth is owned by a few people. Most of SA's people don't earn a living wage.

The biggest companies are Anglo American, SA Mutual, Sanlam and Rembrandt. Of these, Anglo-American is by far the largest.

These companies control a wide range of industries: the mines, the food industry, metals, motor cars, chemicals, textiles, farming, building and construction. Think of anything you buy — the chances are that it comes from one of the big companies.

And because these companies control the production of so many goods, they can set the prices.

This can also happen through the shops they own: Checkers, Game, Dion, and Russels are all owned by one company: Sanlam.

Sanlam also controls Gencor.

Take just one company: Barlow-Rand.

Do you buy Albany bread? Renown meats? Induna or Ace mealie meal? Tastic rice? Fattis and Monis macaroni? Sunshine D margarine? Jungle Oats? Black Cat peanut butter? Dairy Belle milk? This is one small part of Barlows' food section.

Barlows also owns companies that produce clothes, cement, paint, computers, furniture, drugs, skin creams, carpets, radios, fridges, stoves, motor cars — and thousands of other products.

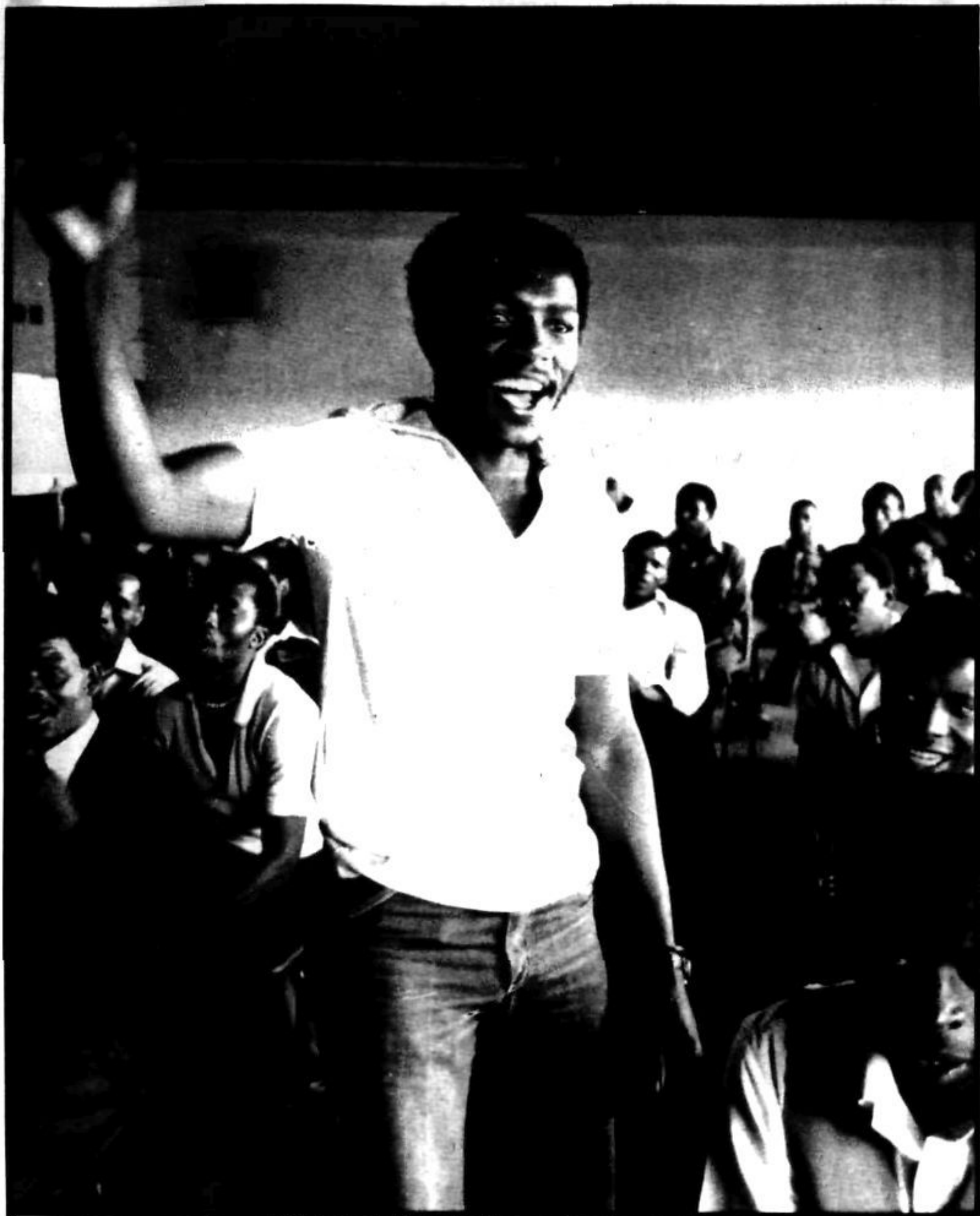
Barlows employs nearly 250 000 people. So a lot of the money it spends on wages comes straight back to the company, when its workers buy Barlows' products.

But most people who work for Barlows cannot afford to buy the goods they help produce.

Although Barlows is extremely rich, it pays bad wages.

The companies Barlows owns often claim they can't afford to pay higher wages. But

THE MONOPOLIES



Workers are organising against the power of the monopolies

# A MESSAGE FROM THE COSATU PRESIDENT



# COSATU

5th Floor Lekton House, 5 Wanderers Str. Johannesburg 2001 Tel: 294561

## MAY DAY MESSAGE PRESIDENT OF COSATU

Comrades, this is the 100th anniversary of May-Day, the 100th year since workers organised themselves to fight against the exploitation and domination of big business.

In SA itself we know that the discovery of gold in 1886 brought slavery to our people. Our people spend their lives in the dark pits of the mines, the inside of factories and working long hours in the sun on the farms. We made South Africa rich. We built the roads, the cars, the clothes we wear, the shops, houses, factories and the food we eat.

But in South Africa millions of workers and their families live in poverty, hunger and starvation. Our lives and families are broken by the pass laws and migrant labour, we live in matchbox houses with no families. Our children are given a slave education which condemns them to the factories and mines.

While a minority live in wealth so great that they are amongst the richest in the world. Their wealth is made through the blood, sweat and toil of the working class.

Therefore as Cosatu we must challenge this domination. Our demands our clear. We want our freedom from apartheid and the cheap wage system. We must mobilise and build organisation everywhere in the factories, farms, mines, schools, townships and rural areas.

We must build Shop Stewards, Shaft Stewards, street and area committees everywhere. This is the basis of our people taking power. The working class must play a leading role in the struggle for freedom. We must involve ourselves in all spheres of struggle from fighting for a living wage and the right to strike, to support the struggle of students for democratic SRC's, the unbanning of Cosas, to demand the release of Comrade Nelson Mandela, Oscar Mpetha and all political prisoners, the unbanning of all political prisoners, the unbanning of all banned organisations, and the end to influx control and the pass laws.

Cosatu is committed to campaign for these rights for our freedom, and we urge all worker leaders, members and all patriots in South Africa to work together, plan and co-ordinate our actions to win our freedom and break the chains of poverty and cheap labour which bind the majority of people in South Africa today.

Let us make this one hundredth May Day the biggest and most successful in our history. Let it inspire us to redouble our efforts to organise and mobilise South Africa's workers so that it will not be long before we achieve our liberation.

VIVA COSATU!

AMANDLA NGAWETHU! MATLA KE A RONA!

ALUTA CONTINUA!

*E. BANYI*  
COSATU PRESIDENT