

FOSATU WORKER NEWS

Federation of South African Trade Unions



OCTOBER 1985 No 42

The Commission on Detentions set up by the Eastern Province region of FOSATU is mounting a massive campaign in a bid to put an end to the 'merciless' assaults being carried out by police on detainees.

The first step in their campaign was the recent temporary order granted by the Port Elizabeth Supreme Court on September 25.

The order requires that the Minister of Law and Order and several high ranking police officers in the Uitenhage/Port Elizabeth area 'take all reasonable steps within their power' to prevent any member of the SA Police from assaulting or even threatening to assault any person now being detained in terms of the emergency regulations or those who will be detained in future.

The Supreme Court also ordered that the interim order be read to all detainees by the commanding officers at St Albans and North End prisons.

The court order was granted after a young district surgeon, Dr Wendy Orr, told the court that emergency detainees were being systematically and brutally assaulted on a massive scale by police.

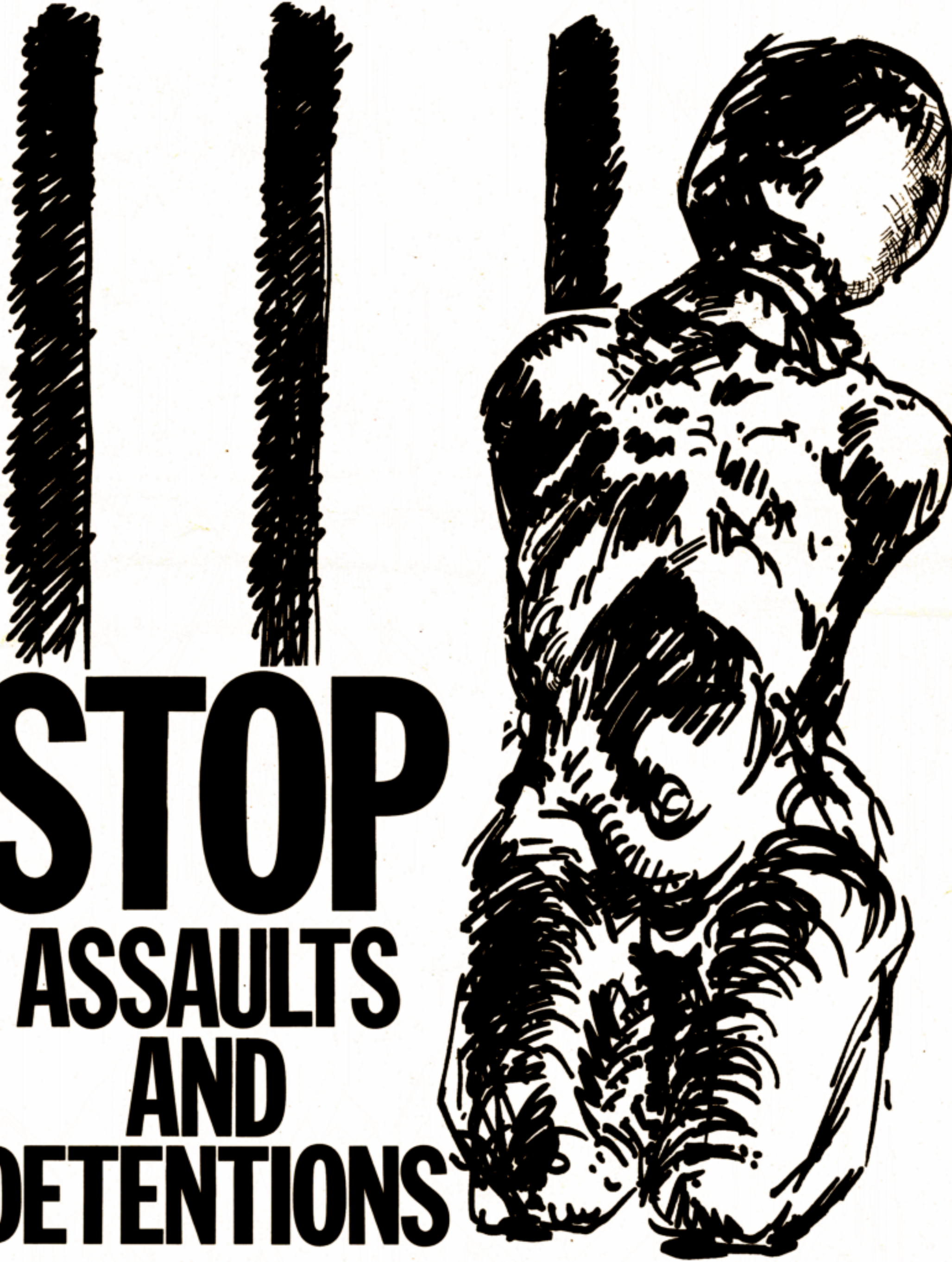
Her evidence was supported by 42 other affidavits mostly from relatives of people being held in detention under the emergency regulations.

Among them is National Automobile and Allied Workers Union general secretary, Fred Sauls, whose two daughters were in detention at that time.

At least 15 members of NAAWU have been detained under the emergency regulations and Samuel Haas, a member from SKF, has been in detention since the State of Emergency was declared.

In her affidavit, Dr Orr says 'there seems to me to be an extensive pattern of police abuse upon detainees held under the emergency

TURN TO PAGE 2



STOP ASSAULTS AND DETENTIONS

New Federation: Mass rally on December 1 see page 2

Detainee made to eat hair

FROM PAGE 1 regulations'.

'The overwhelming evidence presented to me in the St Albans and North End prisons convinced me that detainees were being systematically assaulted and abused after their arrest and before being admitted to prison and also during their imprisonment when they were being interrogated at the Louis Le Grange police station.'

She adds that it had become apparent that the police believe that under the emergency regulations they cannot not be held responsible for the abuses and the department of Prisons and Health are 'unconcerned and have turned a blind eye'.

Since the beginning of August, Dr Orr says, she has examined 20 newly admitted detainees per day at the Port Elizabeth prisons and that an 'inordinately' large proportion of them complained of being assaulted by police.

Detainees she examined had bruising, weals, and blisters, on their backs, arms and palms of their hands. Some had lacerated lips and the skin over their cheekbones was split. Several had perforated eardrums.

One case she describes had weals from his shoulders to his buttocks. 'There were so many weals I could not count them. They were superimposed on one another,' she says.

Among the horrific complaints made to Dr Orr were that one detainee had been made to eat his own hair and another was forced to drink petrol. One detainee told her that he had been made to stand barefoot while a policeman dropped a brick on top of his foot.

On November 26, the Port Elizabeth Supreme Court will be sitting again to hear the details of the case being brought by Dr Orr and 42 others against the police.

In order to strengthen this case, the Commission on Detentions has issued a general call for all those who have 'experienced the brutality of the system' to come forward and draw up an affidavit.

As FOSATU Worker News went to print, 50 000 pamphlets were being prepared for distribution in the Eastern Cape Region. The pamphlet reads 'Assaults and detentions must come to an end. But in order for them to come to an end people must be prepared to take action'.

The pamphlet calls on all people who have been assaulted, threatened with assault, or who have witnessed an assault, or even relatives of detainees, to submit an affidavit in support of the case.

PREMER group's Farm Fare locked out about 500 workers at the company's Wynberg factory on October 14 and would not allow them back into the plant until they accepted new conditions of service which include compulsory overtime and extended working hours.

Sweet Food and Allied Workers Union organiser, David Makgema, said the union, which represents over 440 workers at the plant, had been holding negotiations with the company since July 15.

'After several meetings we reached a deadlock when Farm Fare came forward with its final offer of a R9,30 increase per week on condition that the workers agree to compulsory overtime and extended working hours.'

'The union completely rejected that. We are demanding a

Farm Fare workers locked-out of factory



SFAWU organiser, David Makgema, discusses the lock-out with Farm Fare workers

R19 across-the-board increase.'

'On September 29 the company applied for a conciliation board. In the meantime it issued several notices saying that workers must agree to new working conditions,' Brother Makgema said.

'The conciliation board was not appointed within 30 days and when workers arrived at work on Monday October 14 they found the gate locked.'

'A poster on the gate said that only workers who signed a form agreeing to the new conditions of service would be let through the gate,' he said.

'The workers had little choice but to sign the forms under protest,' Brother Makgema said.

'The union has told the company that it reserves the right to raise the matter in the immediate future,' he added.

New federation is a giant

THERE are less than 30 days to go before the launch of the largest progressive trade union federation this country has ever seen.

Thirty-six trade unions, with a total signed up membership of close on half-a-million members (500 000), are moving swiftly towards the Inaugural Congress which will be held in Durban over the weekend of November 30-December 1.

On the Sunday, December 1, a mass rally will be held in Durban to celebrate the federation's launch. Tens of thousands of workers will be bused in from all areas of South

Africa.

For the first time in South Africa's labour history, there will be a federation which will really cover all areas of this country.

Judging from an assessment of where the membership of the unions is located, there could be as many as 10 regions although the federation is likely to initially start off with less than that.

The major goal of the federation will be to form one giant union in each of this country's industrial sectors.

And in order to achieve this

as speedily as possible, the credentials committee has drawn up a list of industrial sectors and meetings have been held between the unions in particular industries to discuss the possibility of mergers.

At the Inaugural Congress, each union will be represented on the basis of one delegate for every 500 members up to 20 000 and then thereafter one delegate per 1 000 members. At future congresses this will revert back to one per 500 members.

The major function of the congress will be to accept the

draft constitution, elect the office bearers (all of who will be workers) and general secretary, and then debate the various resolutions submitted by the unions.

The congress will also have to decide on a name for the federation (at the moment the firm favourite is the 'Congress of South African Trade Unions') and select the symbol.

Designs for a symbol can be submitted on an A3 sheet of paper to the congress convenor, Cyril Ramaphosa, general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers, Lekton House, 5 Wanderers St, Johannesburg.

No union says USA firm

THE manager of American-owned company, Fisher Flying Products, at Empangeni has retrenched 46 Paper Wood and Allied Workers Union members shortly after having told a union organiser that she did not want a union.

The retrenched workers were told on the morning of September 6 that they were to be retrenched that same day.

They were given their week's wages and told to go. They were not given notice pay, severance pay nor were they given their UIF cards.

After having organised 56 out of the 75 workers, on July 15 PWAU asked for a meeting to discuss union recognition but were told that the company did not want a union.

From then on the personnel officer at the factory began questioning workers about the union. Workers refused to answer and demanded a meeting with the manager on August 30.

When they gathered for the meeting at 7 am apparently the manager told workers that they were on strike and instructed them to clean the factory. This they did.

They were told to bring their pass books on September 3. However, nothing happened and work continued as usual until the 46 were laid off.

The union is considering taking the company to court for unfairly retrenching the workers.

Asea Cables fires white artisan

ASEA Cables fired a white artisan who assaulted the senior shop steward at the Rosslyn factory but only after some 800 workers at three Asea factories took strike action.

Metal and Allied Workers Union organiser, Peter Dantjie said the assault occurred on Thursday September 19 after the artisan had accidentally stepped on Brother G Selau's foot.

'Selau asked the artisan to apologise but instead of doing so, he punched him,' Brother Dantjie said.

The case was taken up with Asea Cables' management and the artisan was suspended with full pay pending the matter being resolved.

'But workers were dissatisfied with management's action and demanded the immediate dismissal of the artisan.'

'Management refused saying that they had treated the matter fairly and besides they were being criticised by the artisan's union for their action,' Brother Dantjie said.

So, on Tuesday September 24, the workers at Asea Cables stopped production in protest — they were joined by workers from Asea Pretoria West and Asea Z Division.

Brother Dantjie said management had tried to divide the workers by refusing to recognise the right of the Asea National Executive Committee to handle the matter. They also threatened to dismiss some of the Asea workers.

'But by daily shop steward meetings after knock off time

we managed to control the strike. General meetings were also held every morning at all three factories.'

On September 26 each shop steward committee had meetings with their local management. Eventually,

management agreed that from that day onwards the artisan would 'no longer be in the employment of the company' and that procedures would be amended 'to ensure that a recurrence of this sort cannot be repeated'.

SANS calls for lifting of State of Emergency

IN an interesting move, South African Nylon Spinners (SANS) has called for the lifting of the State of Emergency, the abolition of detention without trial and all racist legislation, and the granting of citizenship and freedom of movement for all of South Africa's people.

This was contained in a letter to National Union of Textile Workers' members at the company's Bellville plant who have been caught up in the recent unrest in the Western Cape. A number of them were injured on August 29 (Bloody Thursday) when police used birdshot to break up a student march in Bellville.

In the letter SANS says 'the process of real and meaningful reform must be accelerated through negotiation with the acknowledged and accepted leaders of all sections of the community, even though some may be in detention.'

The purpose of this negotiation will be to establish 'an acceptable and workable political dispensation based on power sharing in one constitution, in one country', SANS adds.

However, despite SANS' support for 'a fair and just society within a healthy and dynamic country' there is a barb in the tail-end of the company's letter to its workers.

The letter goes on to say that it must be made clear that the company is 'an economic and not a political entity' and therefore 'irrespective of the sympathies of management, our first responsibility is to maintain a viable business'.

So, although the company sympathises and understands the intentions of action such as prayer days (and presumably stayaways or strikes) these 'could put the company's objectives and thereby the employees best economic interests at risk', the letter concludes.

Apartheid must go, says report

IT is in the interest of all workers that the apartheid regime must go. And foreign investment must assist this process not hinder it, says a FOSATU report delivered at a United Nations hearing held on September 16-20.

'The federation supports and welcomes all forms of pressure against the apartheid state and to the extent that the disinvestment campaign is one of these pressures we believe it should continue for as long as it is an effective pressure on the present government,' the report says.

'However, the federation would not sanction that actual withdrawal of assets by companies from South Africa as we are of the view that this is part of the social wealth of the country created by the workers,' it

adds. Metal and Allied Workers Union's Geoff Schreiner travelled to New York to deliver FOSATU's report at the special United Nations' subcommittee set up to examine the extent to which multinationals operating in South Africa sustained the system of apartheid.

He was to be accompanied by National Union of Textile Workers' organiser, Prof Sineke, but at the last minute the South African government refused to give him a passport.

Focussing on four multinationals — Transvaal Alloys, Tidwell Housing, Bata and BTR Sarmcol — the report shows how these companies have 'chosen to take advantage of the multitude of laws and circumstances generated by the apartheid State which weaken

union organisation'. The report details how these companies have engaged in anti-union activities and have been responsible for harsh exploitation of black workers.

'Far from actively opposing apartheid as the constructive engagement argument would ask, these companies actively use it,' the report says.

In addition to this, these companies have 'blatantly' violated the various codes of conduct including the International Labour Organisation's Tripartite Declaration.

'No wonder black workers' anger is rising and the constructive engagement policy and the codes of conduct are viewed with bitterness and outright hostility,' the report adds.

The FOSATU report said the major problems with the codes was that they were unenforceable, it was not compulsory for the companies to stick to them and they were extremely limited in focus.

'There are no provisions in the codes which actually require companies to actively initiate moves towards the eradication of apartheid,' the report says.

And in issues like the BTR Sarmcol dispute, the codes provide a smoke screen cover for 'more sophisticated anti-union activities,' it adds.

The report says that economic and political stability in South Africa depends upon apartheid being removed.

'Foreign investment will have to participate in economic

and political reconstruction if it is to benefit the people of South Africa.'

In its recommendations to the subcommittee, FOSATU said that there was now a need for 'direct pressure on the multinational head offices by the governments of those countries'.

FOSATU recommended that 'clearly defined mechanisms' be set up so that disputes with multinationals could be raised when they occurred.

And when it had been established that the multinationals had breached international laws, practices and codes, there needed to be a commitment from the various governments that they would take strong and genuine action against such companies, FOSATU concluded.

2 400 textile members lose jobs over past year

LAST year was 'the most difficult year' the National Union of Textile Workers had faced since 1976. Over 2 400 union members lost their jobs through retrenchments and closures.

This was the somewhat depressing news given to over 2 000 NUTW members by the union's general secretary, John Copelyn.

He was speaking at the union's joint annual general meeting held recently at the Edendale Lay Centre near Pietermaritzburg.

But not all the news was bad news. Brother Copelyn reported the success of the Frame struggle which, he said, would 'consolidate the union's presence in the major urban textile factories significantly'.

And in spite of the retrenchments and closures, NUTW's membership has grown by over 1 500 workers over the past

year putting its total membership at more than 25 000.

In his report, Brother Copelyn also focussed on the government's decentralisation programme which, he said, had 'resulted in an increasing number of factories closing down their operations in urban areas and moving to homeland areas where the wages are less than R25 per week for most workers'.

'The attractions of cheap labour and government assistance are so great that in Natal the union is unaware of a single clothing factory being started in Durban while there are dozens growing up every day in Isithebe, Ezakheni, Mnambithi, Qwa Qwa and such homeland places,' he said.

'And each and every homeland government has made it as difficult as possible for workers in such areas to organise themselves.'

'The KwaZulu draft legislation provides that unions not registered under KwaZulu cannot have stop orders nor have access to any remedies in KwaZulu.'

'The effect of this Bill being passed by KwaZulu was that clothing employers in Isithebe broke off negotiations with the union and have now come out as openly hostile to any unionisation in the area. They have also effectively ensured that we do not get any office accommodation in the area.'

'These are very serious setbacks in the struggle,' Brother Copelyn said.

Speaking about the crisis of apartheid, Brother Copelyn said it was time that organised labour started to formulate its own demands as to what future society they would like to see.

'Up to now we have been plagued by the lack of a united trade union movement....If we



Jubilant textile workers at their union's AGM

want to play a role in shaping our society, we have got to overcome the petty differences

and deal with our real common interests with other organised workers,' he concluded.

Transvaal-wide strike threatened

METAL and Allied Workers Union members at 70 companies in the Transvaal are threatening to go on strike if their demand for plant-level bargaining is not met.

The decision to go on strike follows the deadlock of wage negotiations at industrial council level earlier this year.

Employers made a final offer of 17c increase across-the-board while the union demanded 50c across-the-board.

The strike will involve between 300 to 1 500 workers at each factory. The strike ballot will be held shortly at different companies — among them are Dorbyl, Siemens, Barlow Rand and General Electric.

In addition to plant-level bargaining workers are demanding:

- a R3 minimum wage;
- May Day as a paid public holiday;
- a 40-hour working week;
- that overtime pay during the week should be doubled;
- that weekend work be treble paid for not more than 5 hours a day;

● that pregnant women have the right to get their job back after confinement;

A meeting called by MAWU on October 14 to discuss the planned strike with support and community groups was told that SEIFSA, the metal employers' association, had asked the union to discuss the possibility of withdrawing strike action.

But a worker from Siemens said the planning of the strike would continue regardless of SEIFSA's letter.

'We will only stop the strike if there is some concrete change,' he said.

Explaining the problem of negotiating only at the industrial council, a worker said 'We can't make an analysis of who is making profits and who is

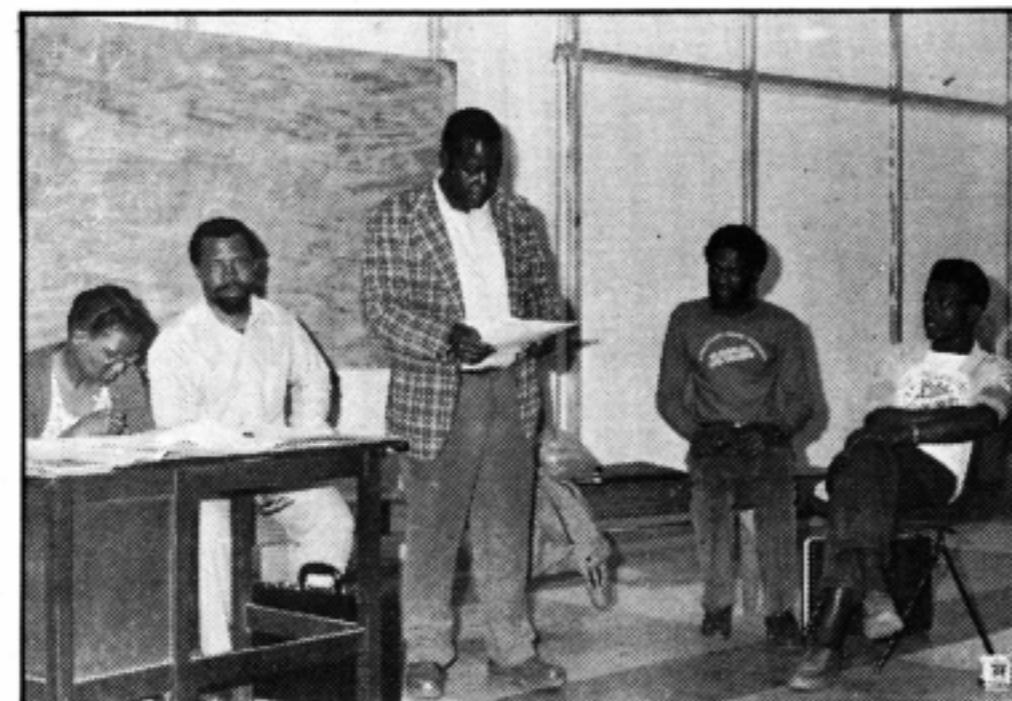
suffering a loss because all the employers speak with one voice. We feel employers must pay according to how much profit they are making.'

'In industrial council negotiations this year all of them said the same thing: that they wouldn't negotiate at plant-level but only through the industrial council. Employers don't want workers to know their rights at the factory.'

'They have had this disease for a long time because they have always only had to deal with sweetheart unions. They didn't have workers sitting on the industrial council. But in MAWU we have worker-control.'

'We must dismantle the industrial council and start afresh. I doubt whether anyone can fix it up.'

'If plant-level bargaining is accepted by employers, industrial council bargaining will change. Employers will listen carefully and talk carefully because they will know that everything will get back to workers at their factories,' a worker told the meeting.



KwaThema branch chairperson, David Matubela, speaks at the support group meeting

Toyota's maternity agreement

IN a sequel to a strike last year, Toyota has concluded a maternity agreement with the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union.

Towards the middle of last year, 200 workers at this Durban motor plant stopped work in support of a demand for guaranteed re-employment after maternity leave.

In terms of the new agreement:

- re-employment is guaranteed on the same conditions as before;
- maternity leave has been extended to four months (one month more than that required by law);
- the company will pay 25 percent of a worker's wage on top of the 45 percent claimed from UIF;
- contributions to Medical Aid and Pension Fund will be kept up by the company;
- the company has agreed to find an alternative position for any pregnant worker whose job endangers her pregnancy.

In the previous issues of FOSATU Worker News we have seen how the Council of Non-European Trade Unions (CNETU) grew to 158 000 strong (mainly in the Transvaal) in 1945, and then quickly collapsed (Part Fourteen). We also saw how the non-racial Trades and Labour Council finally split in 1953/4 over the issue of whether to admit or to co-operate with African workers (Part Thirteen). The majority of its members went into TUCSA, but 14 of its left-wing industrial unions decided to form a new federation. The new federation was called SACTU (The South African Congress of Trade Unions). Its Inaugural Congress took place on March 5 1955.

At the beginning 31 trade unions affiliated to SACTU — the 14 that we have just mentioned from the TLC, and the rest from CNETU who brought with them only 15 000 members. Total membership was 37 203. All of the affiliates were industrial unions, and a number of the most important of these were registered.

SACTU immediately committed itself to political struggle. In fact it went further than this. Other trade unions before it had taken up political issues, and had joined with political parties like the ANC in campaigns. SACTU, however, decided to enter a formal alliance with some of the main organisations struggling for national liberation at the time. These were the African National Congress (ANC), the South African Indian Congress (SAIC), the Coloured Peoples Congress (previously the Coloured Peoples Organisation) and the white Congress of Democrats (COD). Together with SACTU these formed the Congress Alliance which was discussed in Part Fourteen.



The Foundation Conference of the South African Congress of Trade Unions on March 5 1955

The making of the W

Why did SACTU take this step? Did it advance or set back the workers' cause? SACTU argued that trade union rights would not be secured without first winning political rights. The policy adopted at its Inaugural Congress noted that: The SA Congress of Trade Unions is conscious of the fact that the organising of the mass of the workers for these demands (ie basic worker rights)...is inextricably bound up with a determined struggle for political rights and for liberation from all oppressive laws and practices. Every move of the workers for their basic rights in South Africa is hampered by general legislation affecting their right of movement, their right of domicile, their lack of political representation. Every struggle of the workers for higher wages, for better working conditions, even for the smallest advance in factory conditions...is immediately met by the full force of the Police State organised to restrict every civil human right.

SACTU also believed that by working in alliance with the nationalist parties it could increase its membership and its strength. Later writers and trade unionists have disagreed. They argue that SACTU became subordinated to non working class interests in the alliance, and that SACTU's participation also allowed it to be smashed by the State.

Let us look at the factors influencing SACTU's decision. Perhaps the most important of these was the weakness of SACTU at the time of its foundation. Thirty-two thousand members is not many and well over half of these were in three trade unions — the Food and Canning Workers Union, the Textile Workers Industrial Union and the National Union of Laundry, Cleaning and Dyeing Workers (each of these unions was closely linked to an unregistered African parallel union). Most of the rest of the unions were tiny, and

there was often more than one SACTU affiliate organising the same industry. For example, in the chemical industry, there was the registered Chemical Workers Industrial Union with 210 members, the Chemical and Allied Workers Union, Natal, also with 210 members and the African Chemical Workers Union with 564 members.

The ANC on the other hand was rapidly growing in strength. After the 1952 Defiance Campaign its membership had grown to around 100 000 and it enjoyed widespread popular support. SACTU leadership, therefore, looked to the ANC as an elder brother — for protection and support.

The second factor influencing SACTU's thinking was the difficulty it had organising the factories. Under a law passed in 1953 strikes were illegal. Later in the 1950's stop orders for African workers were also prevented. Both employers and the police were extremely hostile to African trade unions, and regularly

victimised militant workers and shop stewards. SACTU, therefore, decided it had to build strong factory floor organisation (Previously most African trade unions had not been strongly organised on the factory floor).

It deliberately used political campaigns as a way of recruiting factory militants. In Natal, for example, the Congress of the People Campaign in 1955 was used as a way of starting factory committees.

The third factor that influenced SACTU's thinking was the growing militancy of African workers. In 1956 and 1957 strikes involving African workers broke out all over the country. Other kinds of popular struggles (eg bus boycotts) became increasingly common. The most important of these was the 1957 Alexandra bus boycott which was organised after Putco increased fares by one penny. The entire population of Alexandra boycotted the buses for 14 weeks walking 19 miles to and from work each day.

SACTU feared this wave of militancy was passing it by. At the second congress, SACTU's



The Executive Committee of SACTU's general secretary



PART FIFTEEN: SACTU AND THE CONGRESS ALLIANCE



Pass offenders — found by their families in the Eastern Transvaal and brought back in the sacks given to them as working clothes

WORKING CLASS

president argued that 'failure on our part to act as the spearhead of the working class in its fight for wage in-

creases and a happier life can only lead to the defeat of the magnificent unity that exists today'.

SACTU therefore decided to start a mass campaign. Together with the ANC it called a national stayaway in

1957 and again in 1958. The first of these was more successful than the second. After the 1958 stayaway it was clear that a number of real problems had emerged:

- the day to day organisation of factories through effective factory committees was seriously neglected at times, as large amounts of energy were spent on political issues (eg stayaway campaigns).

- the organisations of strategic sectors of the economy like engineering and mining was delayed.

- SACTU often could not impose a sufficient working class direction on the Alliance. This was clear in the organisation of the 1958 stayaway which SACTU itself later criticised. SACTU's criticisms here were that unwinnable political demands (like 'the Nats must go') were added to winnable workers demands (like 'one pound a day') so that neither workers nor employers nor the government took the demands seriously. It therefore became no more than a protest demonstration.

- SACTU played a leading role in organising the stayaway but the ANC called it off after only one day without consulting SACTU. SACTU therefore only seemed to be a junior partner in the alliance.

Both SACTU and the ANC took steps to correct these problems. In the 1958 conference, for example, the ANC president, Albert Luthuli, coined the slogan 'SACTU the Spear: ANC the Shield' which suggested a leading role for SACTU. In 1959-60 real progress began to be made in the organisation of the engineering sector. By 1961 SACTU's membership had increased to 51 000 grouped into 51 unions.

However, in 1960 the ANC was banned, and shortly afterwards started a sabotage campaign. Many SACTU leaders became involved in this, mixing 'underground' with 'open' activities. This gave the police the excuse to attack SACTU and its affiliates. By 1964, SACTU was destroyed as an effective trade union organisation.



the African Laundry Workers Union — in the middle at the back is John Gaetsewe,

Natal Die Casting strike in fifth month

AS the Natal Die Casting strike entered its fifth month, workers were still determined to push onwards.

The workers went on strike when management refused to up its wage offer of R29. After a few days the company sacked them all and began to hire scabs.

In an interview with FOSATU Worker News, Metal and Allied Workers Union shop stewards said many families were facing problems of hunger and sickness, particularly the bigger families.

The food parcel provided by the Metal and Allied Workers Union consisting of mielie meal, soup, sugar, tea, and sometimes some tins, was not really enough to live on, they said.

However, in spite of this the strike had remained solid and none of the 125 workers had gone back, the shop stewards added.

Some of the workers, they said, had taken on temporary jobs in order to bring in some money.

Some were doing woodwork and selling it, some were sell-



Striking Natal Die Casting workers at one of their fortnightly meetings

ing fruit, and others were working as gardeners, they added.

The shop stewards said the

strikers met every two weeks to discuss their problems and to distribute the food parcels.

They said that the strikers

were awaiting the union's court case against Natal Die Casting which is due to begin sometime in November.

Pefco settles thirteen disputes out-of-court

THIRTEEN disputes declared by the Metal and Allied Workers Union against Pinetown Engineering Foundry Company (Pefco) have been settled out-of-court.

After lengthy negotiations the company, which was regarded by unionists as 'undoubtedly the most anti-union firm next to Sarmcol', has agreed to negotiate a recog-

nition and a health and safety agreement with the union. It has also agreed to pay MAWU R4 400.

A series of industrial court cases dealing with the disputes were due to start at the beginning of September.

The disputes involved a range of issues including racially derogatory remarks made by supervisors, unfair

dismissals, the refusal to negotiate major issues with the union, the refusal to allow the union's doctor to investigate health and safety conditions, and the refusal to recognise shop stewards as the factory's health and safety representatives.

Pending the signing of the recognition agreement, Pefco has agreed to negotiate all

major issues with the union except wages which will be discussed during recognition talks.

In another out-of-court settlement, Pietermaritzburg firm, Ramsay's Engineering, has paid MAWU R2 066.

The union took the company to court after it fired two workers for allegedly sabotaging a machine.

'The company had no evidence to show whether it was one or the other so they responded by firing both workers,' a union organiser said.

Meanwhile, Pineware in Pinetown has paid the union R8 000 in settlement of a retrenchment dispute.

A MAWU organiser said the company retrenched workers according to Last In First Out (LIFO) per department.

'So they shifted workers to whatever department they were applying LIFO to. They got rid of whoever they wanted in that way,' he said.

'As part of the settlement we have concluded a retrenchment procedure which will better protect union members in the future,' he added.

CDA strikers back at work

ALL the workers dismissed from the CDA motor plant in East London last month when they went on a work stoppage in protest against management's insensitivity to conditions in the protest-torn townships have been taken back.

On September 3, 125 workers at CDA's A plant paint shop left work early because of the unrest situation in Duncan Village. They were supposed to finish work at 10 pm but left at 7 pm because they feared there would be problems if they re-

turned home late at night.

On September 4 the workers proposed to management that they change the shift arrangement for paint shop workers. Management refused to do this but workers left early once again. When they returned to work on October 5, the company dismissed the entire shift.

When the morning shift workers heard this they stopped work, demanding the reinstatement of the 125 who had been dismissed. They were also dismissed.

This led to the entire CDA

workforce downing tools on Tuesday, September 10. They remained on strike until September 20 when management agreed to re-employ all the dismissed workers at the same wages they had received before their dismissal. Management also agreed to reinstate their service benefits by the end of the year.

Although the shifts were not changed, as workers had demanded, management did make arrangements to guarantee the safety of workers travelling home late at night.

PG workers block retrenchments

WORKERS at PG Glass near Germiston have cleverly blocked management's attempts to retrench 22 workers — and in the end only two were laid off.

When discussions were initially held about the retrenchments, Chemical Workers Industrial Union shop stewards suggested that the factory should go on short-time but management would have none of it.

So the workers decided to go on short-time on their own initiative. They clocked in half-an-hour later in the mornings and left earlier each day.

The management were furious and threatened to take the union to court for breaching the agreement.

Eventually, the day before the retrenchments were due to take place the company suggested that the shop stewards look to see whether any workers were prepared to volunteer for retrenchment.

The workers began to hold meetings for an hour each day as a form of go-slow until management agreed to postpone the retrenchment for a week.

A week later the shop stewards came forward with their volunteers — the senior shop steward plus other highly skilled workers.

At this the company backed down and decided to retrench only four workers — but two were called back when shop stewards suggested that certain

jobs be created for them.

Meanwhile, workers at another PG Glass factory — at Epping near Cape Town — have also been having problems with management over retrenchment.

Last month, workers heard rumours that the company was going to retrench. In terms of the agreement the CWIU has with the company, all the alternatives to retrenchment have to be explored. So when workers met to discuss the issue, they decided to oppose the retrenchments.

When they approached management, short-time was agreed on. Workers would work one hour less. But after two weeks of short-time, workers

found that the salaried staff were not working short-time.

Again they met with management, who told them that additional export orders had made it necessary for these employees to work normal hours.

The workers disagreed with this reasoning, saying that if the company felt they were losing money to the extent that they were prepared to firstly consider retrenchment and then short-time as an alternative, they had to have all the employees working short-time. If this was not to be the case then nobody should work short-time.

After hearing this argument, management finally agreed to stop short-time.

BRIEFS

Proof enough?

ONE of the issues that often drags out negotiations over union recognition in South Africa is that there is no generally accepted way of proving that a union has majority support.

At Frame the issue was eventually solved by getting three qualified auditors to interview workers who had signed stop order forms.

At Bata, the company has said that the only way to prove majority was if their liaison committee told them that the workers wanted a union.

Recently at FM Clothing in Mooi River, workers signed on with the National Union of Textile Workers.

To cut short queries about majorities, the workers suggested that the easiest way was for the company to come and inspect attendance at a general meeting held outside of the factory.

The company agreed and within a week the meeting was arranged. It was attended by over 90 percent of the workforce. Proof enough?

Prompt action

PROMPT action by the entire workforce at the giant Volkswagen motor plant at Uitenhage probably prevented a lengthy period of detention for VW's four full time shop stewards and a branch executive member.

On hearing of the detention of Brothers P J Gomomo, J C Harris, C S Mpushe, A Balintulo and E Antonie, on August 29 the workers all downed tools and refused to go back until they had been released.

Detainees freed

CHEMICAL Workers Industrial Union branch chairperson, Brian Moholo, and Sasol organisers, Tsedisio Ntaopane and Beki Ntshalinthsali, were released in Secunda after 14 days in detention.

The CWIU's Transvaal branch moved swiftly to try and pressurize Sasol and the State to secure their release.

Shop stewards approached their managements and telexes were sent to the organised companies demanding that pressure be put on Sasol and the State otherwise they would face the consequences.

Printpak strike

ABOUT 90 workers at Printpak Gravure in Industria, Johannesburg, who went on strike on October 9 and occupied the factory in protest at the dismissal of a fellow worker, have been threatened with eviction by management.

Management gave workers until 3 pm on October 16 to return to work or face an eviction order but as FOSATU Worker News went to print this threat had not yet been carried out.

The workers, all members of the Paper Wood and Allied Workers Union, are demanding the unconditional reinstatement of a worker who was dismissed because he refused to do two jobs at the factory. They are also calling for management to replace their foreman.

Discussions between management and the union have deadlocked.

What is education? Education is not simply being able to read and write. In the past, education was very different to what it is now. Many years ago, for some people education meant learning how to grow crops well, or learning how to fight well. These were some of the important things they had to know to live and survive. Today there are many different jobs which have to be done. Some people have to operate machines. Others learn to be teachers, doctors, lawyers etc. Different people are taught to do different jobs. These jobs require different types of skills.

Education has a long history which started long before there were any books to read. Education began when the first people learnt ways to survive. So education means having the skills which are needed for society to keep going. Education is the way that we learn these skills. The skills learnt depend upon what a particular society needs to continue functioning. In other words — how that society is reproduced.

Education also involves the learning of beliefs, attitudes and values which are accepted as 'normal' and 'good' by the society which we live in. What do we mean by this?

People have to live and work together. They have to do this in an organised

ago, people were organised differently to produce the food and shelter which they needed to survive. The type of education which was provided suited these conditions. There were no schools, technical colleges, or universities as they are today.

In England, at this time, the king and the church owned all the land. The king got the support of nobles by giving them large areas of land to control. The nobles supplied the king with armies and some of their wealth.

Most people lived and worked on the land and were very poor. They were the serfs (small farmers) who produced all the food and built anything which the nobles demanded — the serfs did all the manual work. The serfs were not paid for their work with money but with food and protection by the noble's army. Very often the serfs fought in this army.

The serfs were allowed to use a small piece of land for themselves. They could work on this land for a short period every week in between working for the nobles. The serfs had to pay large taxes to the church and the nobles. There were strict controls on their movement.

This kind of society, where the serfs worked on the land under the control of the king, the nobles and the church, was known as feudalism.

society was organised was explained through religion. It was believed that God decided who should be rich and who should be poor; who should rule the land and who should do the work.

But, as we know, society has changed since then. In England, feudalism no longer exists. It has been replaced with capitalism.

Great changes in history do not happen overnight. The growth of a new economic system which was more powerful than feudalism took many years. Under capitalism production is organised in a very different way than under feudalism. Capitalism runs on wage labour and profits.

Capitalism grew alongside feudalism. It slowly displaced many of the ways that people were organised for production under feudalism. It took a long time for the capitalist class to weld itself into a strong force in society. Changes in education — the way people learnt to organise for production under capitalism — also took a long time.

It was the discovery of trade which started the downfall of feudalism. Kings and queens sent explorers from Europe to different parts of the world to bring back rare spices and cloths. The

ideas.

By the 1600s and early 1700s there were still no schools for the majority

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one



what is education?

way. For example, when one person meets another, they don't start fighting. They will say 'hello' and maybe even shake hands. In the same way that we learn the skills, so do we learn the beliefs and behaviour of a particular society.

So education happens all the time through our lives. It is not something that we only do at school. We keep learning new things which are necessary for us to play our part in the way that society is organised. But, over the past thousands of years, the way that society is organised has changed and is still changing. Education has also changed.

Because education is related to the way that society has been organised, it is not neutral. Throughout the history of society, one group of people with power and wealth has dominated others. Education has played a very important part in this. Certain groups have been able to dominate others by controlling what and how they learn. So, if we are going to understand what education means for us today, we have to look at its history. We also have to understand the history of society.

People have not always earned a weekly wage by working on farms and in factories. Many years

In feudal society very few people could read and write. In fact, there were no printed books. All books were written by hand. There were very few books and the main book was the Bible. Monks, who were religious men and lived on church land in large houses (monasteries) used to write these books.

People in the church (the clergy) were the only people who knew how to read and write. They learnt in small schools attached to the monasteries and the churches. They also read the Bible to others.

The serfs received their education through the family. If the serfs wanted to survive they had to learn to farm with very few implements. The methods used to farm stayed the same for hundreds of years. The children learnt the skills they needed by working with their parents in the home and in the fields. When they were old enough, they married and continued to live the same way as their parents and grandparents.

The other major part of education in society is the learning of beliefs and attitudes. In feudal society, there were no wide differences in ideas, thoughts and behaviour as there are today. There was only one church — the Catholic church. The ideas of this church dominated society. The way that

traders made a profit from this trade by selling the goods for a higher price than they paid.

Traders in the small towns also began to appear. Some people worked in these towns. They were mainly craftsmen who were their own bosses.

Over time, the traders began to get more powerful. They got their wealth and power, not from God, but through money and trade. The traders were a threat to the old feudal system. They wanted to make profits which feudal society and the Catholic church did not allow.

The ideas of this trading class came into conflict with the ideas of the Catholic church. A new type of religion began to grow which was suited to the needs of the trader class. It was known as Protestantism. Profits were seen as good and as proof of success in God's eyes.

With the rise of the traders, education began to change. The traders wanted to learn about government, law and administration. They believed that this would make them more powerful. So schools were set up for the sons of the rich — the nobles and the traders.

Both the Catholic and the Protestant churches started schools for the sons of the rich because they wanted the rulers to believe in their

of people. The education which the children of the small farmers (peasants — who were freed serfs) received was the same as under feudalism. In the towns, if children were going to become craftsmen, they went to work in the shop of the craftsman and learnt the trade by working with him.

We have looked at how education began to change from the feudal times with the growth of trade. Education in schools was dominated by the churches and was provided for the sons of the rich traders and nobles. Here they learnt the things that were necessary to govern the land.

Most people still received their education from the family. Children learnt what was necessary for them to work on the land. The rulers saw no need to provide any other kind of education for the masses. The level of education suited the needs of the way society was organised to produce goods to survive.

In the next issue we will look at how this began to change as the trader class grew into more powerful capitalists. We will see how education changed as the capitalist class increased its power in society and how it had to meet the needs of production organised around profit.

Detainees speak out!

THE HELICOPTER: The victim's hands are handcuffed beneath his knees and he is suspended somehow on a stick between two tables. He is kicked so that he spins on the stick. While he is spinning on the stick, the victim is beaten with sjamboks.

This is how Siyolo Mashiqana, a worker at Pilkington who was detained on July 25, describes a common form of torture allegedly used during interrogation at the Louis Le Grange police station in Port Elizabeth.

His is just one of the many tales of police assaulting detainees. Brother Mashiqana's affidavit along with others was used in support of a Supreme Court application brought against the Minister of Law and Order and several high ranking Eastern Cape police officers on September 25.

In another affidavit, Vusumzi George describes how on July 21 at about 2.30 am the police woke him up by throwing stones on the roof of his house and hammering on all the windows and doors.

'Eventually the police gained entry by breaking and climbing through the window.'

'Two plainclothes policemen entered my bedroom where my wife and I were sleeping. My wife was nine months pregnant but the police nevertheless beat her and myself with quirts.'

'Shortly after the arrest but before I was placed in the back of the landrover, I was assaulted by being dragged violently across a wooden fence pole and having my foot heavily stamped upon.'

Vusumzi George was taken to St Albans prison where he was placed in a cell with 10 to 15 other detainees.

One week after he had arrived in prison, he says, he was taken to Louis Le Grange police station for interrogation.

'While questioning



me...they made me sit on the floor with my hands handcuffed behind my back and forced my legs open by beating the insides of my thighs with sjamboks. They then attempted repeatedly to kick me in my private parts.'

'They then asked me if I had seen Dennis Neer. I said I had and that he had a bruised face. They then said that if I did not tell the truth I would end up like Dennis.'

'They then beat me with a sjambok on my back and chest and smashed my toes

and head with a short wooden stick. They then took me to another room and four black policemen forced me to do physical exercises until I was exhausted.'

'They then made me hold a chair above the heads of the other detainees, while I was forced to crouch in an uncomfortable position. During this no questions were asked.'

'Then Tungata, another security policeman, came in and ordered me to stand as if I was embracing a metal filing cabinet. He then began punching me in the kid-

neys from behind and hammering me on my shoulders with two fisted blows. He repeated this type of assault a number of times and then beat my ears with open hands. He then threw me onto the floor while kicking me and asked me questions.'

'Two other policemen entered the room and assisted with the general assault which lasted about half-an-hour.'

'Tungata and two other policemen who had recently entered the room, took me to the next door room and beat

me with their fists and open hands until I began screaming. Two or three white policemen then came into the room and one of the three brought a wet towel which was placed tightly around my face and head. While the towel was suffocating me they beat me. They then removed the towel from my face and throttled me,' said Vusumzi George in his affidavit.

A National Automobile and Allied Workers Union shop steward at General Motors, James Tamboer, was detained at 3.30 am on July 22.

He writes in his affidavit that during interrogation two policemen instructed him to sit on the floor.

'The white policeman held my hands behind my back while the other walked on my ankles. It was very painful....He then put his hand against my forehead and banged the back of my head hard against the wall twice. He said 'Sit daar jou striker'. I still have headaches from these blows.'

Other detainees in their affidavits speak of how fellow detainees would arrive back from interrogation with gashes, bruises, swollen faces and some were hardly able to walk.

Siyolo Mashiqana describes how Dennis Neer, general secretary of the Motor Assembly and Components Workers Union of SA, left the cell one morning 'well and able to move normally' but when he came back in the evening 'he moved very slowly as if in great pain.'

'His right cheek was bruised and swollen and he cradled one forearm with the other. When he removed his jacket I saw that the arm was swollen from wrist to elbow. He also had swollen marks on his back near the kidneys.'

Siyolo Mashiqana in his affidavit says that Dennis Neer was eventually taken to Livingstone Hospital on July 25. He returned to the cell on August 30 with his arm bandaged in a sling.

Workers clock-out early after police assaults

AFTERNOON shift workers at a Uitenhage textile factory, Cape of Good Hope, clocked-out early for three nights after five of their colleagues were sjambokked by members of the security forces on September 17.

The workers who knocked off at 5 pm instead of the usual 10 pm demanded that management take some form of action to ensure the safety of its workers.

The company threatened to fire the shift workers but backed down when the entire workforce pledged solidarity with them.

The workers agreed to return to the usual knock-off time

when the company said it would do all in its power to reason with the police.

Cape of Good Hope also said it would get the Uitenhage Chamber of Industries to look into the problems faced by workers because of the curfew regulations. It said it would get the Chamber to meet FOSATU representatives.

Workers have further demanded that the company pay them full pay for the hours they did not work and that the assaulted workers be paid compensation. Management have agreed to consider this request.

In an interview with FOSATU Worker News, Wil-

liam Dondashe, one of the assaulted workers, said they were on their way home from work when they noticed that a Hippo was following them.

'It went past and blocked us by stopping across the road in front of us. Immediately police jumped out singing in Afrikaans and came running towards us wielding their sjamboks,' he said.

'Two came towards me and asked for my permit. One grabbed my clothes and started boxing me hard with his fist. And as I was trying to defend myself the other kept on hitting me on my back with his sjambok.'

'All along I was trying to pull my permit from my pocket. Eventually after a long struggle I was able to get it out and show it to the policeman who had been punching me.'

'The man then went away to inspect it. He noticed a cancelled word and wanted to know from me why the word was scratched out. I told him that a mistake was made at the factory as they thought we were staying in KwaNobuhle.'

'Suddenly the policeman ordered me to 'Hardloop Kaffir'. He gave me my permit and walked away,' Brother Dondashe said.

'The following day I rounded

up the others to find out what had happened to them as I was worried about Billy Mkrakra who had been assaulted the most.'

'I told people that I felt some pain in my ribs. Everybody reported the same feeling in different parts of their body.'

'It was then we decided to report the matter to the police. When we reported the incident at the police station I asked the policeman there whether the police were right in assaulting us whilst we were in possession of permits. He showed no concern,' Brother Dondashe said.

The police are investigating charges of assault.