

## **SAAWU — Response to Sebe**

*This is a news release giving SAAWU's response to President Lennox Sebe's speech at the opening session of the Ciskei National Assembly, April 1983.*

Accusations that SAAWU's aims and objects are of a subversive nature as alleged by President Sebe at the official opening of the parliament at Bisho and by General Sebe in many previous statements, are fabricated lies of the most misleading kind. Their allegations go even further to claim that SAAWU is a front organisation for the ANC. What a politically naive statement!

SAAWU has on numerous occasions explicitly and unequivocally declared itself a trade union movement from its very inception in 1979. This declaration automatically gives it a public status as such and all our activities are above board. Subversion and violence is nowhere to be found in our activities and our constitution bears testimony to this. Our association with a person therefore goes as far as his activities as a worker and a card carrying member of SAAWU. SAAWU does not dictate (and has no right to do so) to its members as to what they can or cannot do in their own private capacities outside of their scope of membership to SAAWU. If one is therefore found with subversive literature or engaged in subversive activities of any kind such actions are not and will never be sanctioned by SAAWU. The fact that one might be found in possession of a SAAWU membership card does not mean that SAAWU has anything to do with subversive activities that particular individual might have been engaged in. SAAWU has never had anything to do with the ANC.

However it seems that homeland leaders have a tendency of turning a blind eye to the fact that our main concern as a trade union is the capitalist exploitation of the workers, which is the real cause of poverty to which millions of our people are subjected. In order to do away with poverty we must destroy the cause of the whole system of apartheid, of which the homelands are a product. Who in his right mind can really think it is just that the minority, through this evil apartheid system, should be allowed to continue to prey upon ourselves and our children forever. No man must find his profit in another's loss. The benefits and pleasures conferred upon mankind by science and civilisation must be enjoyed equally by all. What is more

brutal and senseless than to opt for homelands and hope that they will ever be a viable alternative to apartheid and capitalist exploitation. Homelands are like the seed in the parable of the sower which fell on the stony ground and withered away because it had no depth of proper soil.

All the evils which we have referred to are only symptoms of one disease that is sapping the moral, mental and physical life of our nation. All attempts to cure these symptoms are doomed to failure simply because they are symptoms and not the disease.

Finally, it could have been more to the point if President Sebe and General Sebe, as advocates of these character assassination campaigns, had taken some particular SAAWU doctrine and proved it to be subversive instead of adopting their cowardly methods of making vague and general allegations which they cannot substantiate. In fact they find it far more difficult to do that than it would be for us to show that what they have been telling the world is nonsensical claptrap of the most misleading kind. It further seems that those in authority in the Ciskei are under the delusion that due to their constant harassment of SAAWU members and officials within the Ciskei SAAWU will at some stage be confined to only areas outside the Ciskei. This is a gross miscalculation of the real state of affairs. No one who has been a true trade unionist can ever cease to be one. It is impossible for a man who has acquired knowledge ever to relinquish it. A trade unionist in the true sense of the word is one who truly understands the real causes of the poverty, misery and degradation we see all around us, who knows the only remedy to it is the abolition of the present state of society which is the only alternative to the subjugation of the working people.