

the detentions were 'the actions of frightened people who, realising the deepening opposition to their rule, resort to constant and hysterical police action'.

SAWU officials said that they would be contacting lawyers in Johannesburg to discuss the possibilities of legal action. In the meantime, both local and international pressure mounted against the Ciskei government.

Australia's Council of Trade Unions decided at their congress in Sydney to call a boycott on the handling of South African goods for one week. FOSATU attacked the detentions by the 'tin pot state' and P Casey, general secretary of CUSA, stated that that organisation 'abhorred detentions' (Star, 10.09.81).

Meanwhile in East London Wayne Murro of the firm Johnson and Johnson said that the detentions had disrupted activities at the company.

On 10 September it was reported that Chief Minister Lennox Sebe confirmed that the unionists would be charged 'very, very soon'. He added that 'the unions must stop their bluffs. You cannot tell me they are more interested in the welfare of my people than I am. The unions just seek publicity'. He alleged that the unions were being misused by the same people responsible for a bomb blast at a bus terminal at Mdantsane the previous week.

It was reported (RDM, 11.09.81) that SAWU will ask the East Cape Division of the Supreme Court to order the release of the 205 detained trade unionists. An application filed by SAWU asked the court to declare the detentions null and void. It cited the Ciskeian Ministers of Police and of Justice as respondents and asked the court to order them to pay the costs of the action. The application further stated that the detentions were invalid because the

Ciskeian security authorities had followed the incorrect procedure in detaining the unionists. SAWU's lawyers alleged that as the Ciskei is not yet 'independent', it falls within the Cape and, therefore, within the Eastern Cape Division of the Supreme Court. In addition, the application questioned Sebe's detention of the workers under Proclamation R252 since it was unlikely that the passengers in the 3 buses were all directly involved in actions against the security of the Ciskei.

Meanwhile Fanie Botha, Minister of Manpower, said that he would not involve himself in the matter. He stated that he had no power to intervene. Sam Kikine of SAWU had appealed to Botha to intervene on behalf of the unionists. Botha stated that an appeal should be directed to the Minister of Police.

On 11 September it was reported that some of the unionists had been released. Brigadier Sebe, however, refused to confirm this and stated that the detainees would be appearing in court the next week.

In the meantime, about 400 trade union members boarded buses after a mass meeting in East London on Saturday, 12 September, and travelled to Mdantsane as a direct challenge to the Ciskei authorities. They were singing songs and defying arrest.

A statement issued by Transvaal labour organisations including the Transvaal divisions of SAWU, Food and Canning Workers' Union, FOSATU, General Allied Workers' Union, the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union, and the Hotel, Liquor and Catering Association, added their voices to the protest. This statement said that the real reason for the detentions was the refusal of the Ciskei authorities to recognise the growth of a

democratic union within a bantustan.

The court application was postponed to Friday, 18 September, to allow the respondents to file opposing affidavits.

After appearing in court on 16 September, the trade unionists were all released on R50 bail.

Eric Mntonga, former chairperson of the Wilson-Rowntree workers' committee and presently a SAWU official, and Sibawu Sikwigshi, a former Wilson-Rowntree worker, have also appeared in court, and were both acquitted of arson and damage to public property.

Branch chairperson of the AFCWU, Ernest Qwasha, was given a 3 month suspended sentence after being convicted of possessing banned literature.

Charles Nqakula, acting president of the Media Workers Association of South Africa, was served a 2½ year banning order on 31 July. Chief Minister Lennox Sebe agreed that, as Nqakula was a Ciskei 'citizen', the banning could no longer continue after 'independence' (star, 04.08.81).

Union Comment

CONFERENCE OF TRADE UNIONS HELD IN LANGA, CAPE TOWN, 8 AUGUST, 1981.

STATEMENT AND RESOLUTIONS AGREED ON BY UNION DELEGATES.

WE accept that trade unions are public bodies and accordingly we do not object to providing information with respect to our constitution, finances and representativity. However, we refuse to subject ourselves to control by anybody other than our own members. We therefore resist and reject the present system of

registration insofar as it is designed to control and interfere in the internal affairs of the union.

The meeting specifically agreed to support each other in defiance of any abuse in the powers of investigation given to the authorities by the Industrial Conciliation Act.

The meeting also agreed that unions would support each other in defying the restrictions on supporting striking workers. It is an internationally recognised right of workers to withhold their labour. Moreover, under present conditions and legislation, strikes happen so frequently because of low wages, inadequate bargaining procedures and completely unworkable official dispute procedures. Workers therefore have no alternative to strike action outside of the law. It is, in any event, the duty and function of unions to stand by its members in any circumstances including the payment of strike pay. The prohibition on financial support for strikers will not be obeyed.

Resolution - Industrial Council: The meeting rejected the present Industrial Council system as an acceptable means of collective bargaining. The meeting recommended that unions that are not members of Industrial Councils should not enter any Industrial Council and requested that participating unions refer this back to their respective unions for endorsement. The unions agreed to support each other in the event of any union resisting participation on the Industrial Council.

Resolution - Ciskei: The meeting noted the severe difficulties created for workers by the homeland authorities and in particular by the current situation in the Ciskei, where union members and officials are subjected to

severe harassment and constant attentions. The meeting resolved to send a delegation to Chief Minister Sebe to express our extreme displeasure at his anti-union stance, and to obtain assurances about the security of the workers after the so-called Ciskeian independence.

Resolution - banning and detentions: The meeting resolved to continue resisting banning and detention in any way possible and warned that continuation of the practice could only worsen the already deteriorating industrial relations situation.

Resolution - solidarity action: To give effect to the resolutions at the meeting the unions resolved to establish ad hoc solidarity committees in each region. These committees would discuss and initiate solidarity action arising out of our co-operation.

The meeting also resolved to convene again by November.

The following trade unions were present at the meeting and endorsed the above statement:

The General Workers Union
The Food and Canning Workers Union
and African Food and Canning Workers Union
The Federation of South African Trade Unions
(FOSATU)
Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA)
South African Allied Workers Union (SAAWU)
MACWUSA (Motor Assemblers & Component Workers
Union of South Africa)
The General Workers Union of South Africa
(GWUSA)
The Black Municipal Workers Union
CCAWUSA (Commercial, Catering & Allied Workers
Union of South Africa)
The Orange Vaal General Workers Union
General and Allied Workers Union (GAWU)
Cape Town Municipal Workers Association

INDEX

We publish below an index to material which has appeared in Work In Progress during 1981.

This covers issues 16 - 20. A consolidated index covering the first 15 WIPs was published in WIP 15, October 1980. Copies of this index are available from the editors, as are copies of WIP 15. Certain back issues of WIP (numbers 14, 15, 17 and 19) are available from the editors at normal rates.

COMMUNITY ISSUES AND STRUGGLE

Inflation and the working class:
falling wages. (17, April 1981, 25).
survival strategies. (17, April 1981, 28).
food. (17, April 1981, 30).

Divide and rule in Reiger Park.
(18, June 1981, 38).

'Legalism' and democratic organisation.
(18, June 1981, 10).

Legalism: a further note.
(19, August 1981, 23).

The support alliance: trade unions and
community. (19, August 1981, 6).

Transport. (19, August 1981, 42).

Transport. (20, October 1981, 25).

Crossroads and Nyanga: passes and places to
stay. (20, October 1981, 25).

Inflation and the food monopolies - Jeremy
Keenan. (20, October 1981, 17).

HEALTH

Health care for profit - Cedric de Beer.
(16, February 1981, 16).

Cholera - a tropical disease - Anthony Zwi.
(16 February 1981, 21).

Industrial Health. (February 1981, 58).