

FOSATU

WORKER NEWS

Federation of South African Trade Unions



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As elections creep nearer FOSATU goes door to door urging people not to vote

THOUSANDS of homes in the Eastern Cape have been visited by FOSATU organisers and shop stewards as the federation steps up its campaign to urge so-called coloured and Indian workers to not vote on August 22 and 28.

Over the past few weeks in Port Elizabeth alone, the campaign has covered about 2 000 homes.

Regional secretary, Les Kettleidas said they had picked out four townships which they felt would be key areas in the coming elections.

These were Chatty, Arcadia, Windvogel and Schauder townships.

FOSATU, assisted by other sympathetic people, have been spending every Sunday morning since June 28 going from door to door.

'We take pamphlets with us and then go from house to house explaining to people why we feel they should not vote,' Brother Kettleidas said.

And the weather does not seem to matter to these campaigners as FOSATU Worker News found out when we accompanied them on their visit to Windvogel township - it was pouring with rain.

On the whole the majority of the people visited at Windvogel were sympathetic to the Don't Vote call.

One worker asked what organisation we had come from and when we told him, he said, 'Good. I'll listen to you. FOSATU doesn't mess us around.'

Brother Kettleidas said the door to door campaign had been very important as this way they had been able to reach organised and non-organised workers.

A similar door to door campaign has been carried out in the Uitenhage townships.

The Eastern Cape region has also widely distributed FOSATU pamphlets in the factories and has organised a number of general meetings to discuss the elections.

Don't Vote stickers will be distributed in the factories on the last few days before August 22.

Meanwhile, in the Western Cape, all the independent unions, together with other progressive organisations, organised a mass rally which was held on August 6.

Close on 6 000 workers bused in to the Fun City Sport Stadium in Athlone to discuss the new constitution.

Speaking at the rally, Natie Gantana, treasurer of FOSATU, said workers had to organise themselves into effective organisations to achieve their ideals.

He said, 'We see the political role to be played by workers in the struggle as very important.'

'No-one can further the



NAAWU's Cox Xabela explains to a Windvogel resident why she shouldn't vote

interests of the workers but themselves,' he added.

Towards the end of the meeting, a resolution was adopted rejecting the 'new deal' and calling on voters

to boycott the elections.

'On the eve of apartheid dummy elections forced upon us, we as one people, as oppressed workers, say we want to have nothing

to do with this constitution, it said.

The Western Cape region has also distributed pamphlets and stickers to organised factories.

DON'T VOTE

Petrol bombs hit unionists' homes

PETROL bombs were thrown at the homes of two VW full time shop stewards in the early hours of Monday July 30.

VW branch chairman John Gomomo told FOSATU Worker News that he had woken up at about two because his baby had been coughing.

He said just as he was getting back to sleep he heard 'whoomf'.

'I ran into the lounge and out to the front gate to see if I could see anybody. But there was nobody there.'

'At first I did nothing about the flames but then I went back and screamed for my daughter to bring a bucket of water,' he said.

'We then put out the burning curtains,' he added.

The petrol bomb had been thrown through the lounge window and had then exploded against the burglar guards.

The fire burnt the lounge curtains, broke most of the window panes and damaged a chair, table and the radiogramme.

Brother Gomomo said it was lucky that the burglar guards had stopped the petrol bomb from going right into the lounge otherwise the fire would have been much worse.

He said the neighbours had heard a car about the time the petrol bomb was thrown but had thought it was Brother Gomomo coming home.

The other petrol bomb victim was Samuel Mpushe.

He said that a petrol bomb had been thrown on the roof of his house which had rolled off onto the grass at the back of the house.

'It sounded like a machine gun as it bumped down the roof,' he said.

Brother Mpushe said the police had found another four unused petrol bombs in the garden of his house.

These petrol bomb attacks form part of a whole sequence of attacks that have been made on National Automobile and

Allied Workers Union officials.

Over the past few years, a union organiser has been shot at, the general secretary's car has been painted with right-wing slogans and numerous smear pamphlets have been distributed both in Uitenhage and in Port Elizabeth.

In a statement released after the attacks, NAAWU president, Jurie Harris strongly condemned the petrol bombings as 'futile, misguided and an exercise of defeat.'

He said it was obvious that the attacks were an attempt 'to intimidate shop stewards, divert the militancy of workers and attempt to create racial division between so-called coloured and African workers.'

Brother Harris added that these attempts would not succeed.

'The militancy of workers shall not even be stopped by countless casualties on the road to freedom from oppression and exploitation,' he said.



VW Branch Chairman, John Gomomo surveys the damage caused by the petrol bomb thrown through the lounge window

Premier tussles with SFAWU

THE Sweet Food and Allied Workers Union has accused the Premier Group of shifting production from one factory to another in order to crush union organisation.

Earlier this year, the union was involved in a tussle with Premier at Jabula where SFAWU accused the company of provoking a strike in order to dismiss union activists.

This time, SFAWU says, in the middle of wage negotiations at Premier's Farm Fare factory at Wynberg near Johannesburg management suddenly announced that they were going to retrench almost 25 percent of the workforce.

Farm Fare claimed that it had suffered 'huge losses' but was not prepared to explain these losses to the union.

However, SFAWU subsequently established that a substantial volume of the company's production had been shifted to Ladysmith in Natal.

Workers at the Ladysmith factory are unorganised and predictably earn much lower wages than the Wynberg workers.

A SFAWU spokesperson said it was clear that Premier was not prepared to negotiate in good faith, 'but we are determined to organise all Farm Fare plants in order to fight for fair wages'.

Meanwhile, SFAWU has won a major breakthrough in the Natal dairy industry.

'Following months of deadlock with the dairy bosses, Clover in Durban and Maritzburg and Creamline in Pinetown have agreed to talk to the union,' a SFAWU organiser said.

These dairy companies have now agreed to shop steward recognition, access for union officials and stop orders.

They have also agreed to begin discussions on a full recognition agreement.

Executive slams union split

THE FOSATU Executive has strongly condemned the four sacked union officials for forming the splinter United Metal Mining and Allied Workers Union.

The Metal and Allied Workers Union's National Executive Committee fired three of the officials for gross misconduct.

Former general secretary, David Sebabi was fired for financial corruption.

And MAWU will be laying charges against him.

In the statement, FOSATU said it believed that the split was not in the interest of workers, particularly as the independent trade unions were trying to build worker unity.

The Executive said FOSATU would be holding a special Central Committee on August 11 to discuss and assist in resolving any problems in MAWU and in the Transvaal region which have arisen out of the split.

The statement said it still regarded the East Rand metal workers as members of MAWU and would take all steps to resolve any problems.

However, the splinter union is not a part of FOSATU and it would not be able to use the federation's offices.

And because of this, Andrew Zulu, who is acting president of the new union, can no longer be vice-president of FOSATU as he is not a member of an

affiliate.

The special Central Committee, the statement said, would be looking at full documentary information on the problem.

The FOSATU Executive criticised the 'splinter group' for forming a new union 'as a means of solving problems'.

Many of the workers, claimed by the splinter union to be members of UMMAWUSA, have already said they were unhappy with the split and that they would be remaining in MAWU.

Supervisors demand to be recognised union members

ARE supervisors workers or part of management? This question is being raised in many companies as more and more supervisors want to join a union.

At Chesebrough Ponds in Wadeville, the Chemical Workers Industrial Union has been waging a long battle with management on this issue.

The majority of first line supervisors at Chesebrough are union members.

Many have been members for nearly two years and have been previously acknowledged by management as members.

Their union subscriptions have been deducted like all other members.

However, management is now refusing to recognise their rights as union members - to be covered by the agreement and to be represented by shop stewards.

The issue first came to a head late last year.

A supervisor was dismissed and workers held a protest stoppage as they felt his dismissal was unfair.

However, when union shop stewards went to negotiate on his behalf, management told them that they could not represent him as he was part of management.

The union applied for a reinstatement order, which was granted by the industrial court.

Since that time the issue has been contentious.

Huge step towards proper child care

A HUGE step forward has been made towards providing proper child care for workers' children.

For the first time, a FOSATU union has signed a maternity agreement which not only guarantees re-employment.

The company, NCS Plastics in Pinetown, has also agreed to pay 33 percent of the workers' wages for three months of the maternity leave.

Together with the normal UIF Maternity Benefits, the woman worker will therefore receive 78 percent of her normal wage for these three months.

In addition to the three months paid maternity leave, workers have the option of taking an extra three months unpaid leave.

The company has also agreed to give women workers paid time off to attend post-natal clinics.

And for the first time, the maternity agreement makes an allowance for the fathers - the company has agreed to two days paternity leave.

FOSATU Workers News spoke to Chemical Workers Industrial Union shop steward, Dorothy Budokwe, about the importance of the maternity agreement.

'Amongst us black women there is a lot of child mortality because mothers don't have time to be with their children after birth' she said.

'We hope that with maternity agreements like this one, this

death might be reduced,' she added.

'Before women workers were only allowed to be away for a short time and then had to rush back to work even if the child was sick,' Sister Budokwe said.

Initially refused

She told FOSATU Worker News that the company had initially been reluctant to discuss a maternity agreement.

'But after some time, they saw it was necessary to listen to our demands.'

She said that the majority of the workforce at NCS Plastics were women - 'there are only about 10 men'.

Integral part

Explaining the need for paternity leave, Sister Budokwe said, 'Men workers are an integral part of the workforce, so it was necessary that men were also part of the agreement.'

'In the case of pregnancy, men must be given the chance to visit their wives in hospital,' she added.

FOSATU calls for release of detainees

THE FOSATU Executive has condemned the 'inhuman' detention of two organisers from affiliated unions.

Chemical Workers Industrial Union organiser, Xolani Nduna and Paper Wood and Allied Workers Union organiser, Zanevula Mapela were detained by Security Police early last month.

For two weeks the Security Police refused to say whether they had detained the two organisers.

In the statement released after the last Executive Committee meeting, FOSATU said it was 'completely opposed' to South

Africa's security laws and the powers they gave to the State

'This has led to the barbarous and inhuman treatment of people detained,' the statement added.

FOSATU said it fully understood why the oppressed people of this country opposed this regime by all means.

'We believe that no matter what the alleged crime of a person, they must have the right to civilized and human processes of law,' the statement said.

'Our brothers presently being detained are being denied this right and, this being the case, we call for their release,' it added.

KDC's minimum doubled

DUE to the campaigning of Sweet Food and Allied Workers Union members, the KwaZulu Development Corporation has nearly doubled the minimum wage of all its workers.

In October 1983 the workers at Imbali Brewery demanded that the poverty minimum wage of R120 a month be raised to at least R300.

Like many other KwaZulu Development Corporation companies Imbali management hid behind their 'homeland' status.

They said that increases would be decided in Ulundi in March and that there was no money to give such increases.

In March a new minimum wage of R180 was announced for all those working for the KwaZulu Development Corporation (KDC).

Imbali workers rejected this and continued to demand R300.

The company offered another R10,90 but this was also rejected.

In April this year, SFAWU declared a dispute and applied for a Conciliation Board.

The Board was appointed but the KDC refused to accept it.

In order to prevent further delays, the union agreed to submit the wage dispute to mediation.

The KDC finally agreed to raise the minimum wage another R40 to R230 per month for all its employees - this is nearly double the R120 minimum which began the Imbali workers' campaign.

UNION organisation at Brits in the Transvaal is growing stronger day by day.

And workers have begun to use this strength to win real gains.

Many companies were originally attracted to Brits by the high unemployment that existed around this 'border' area and by the low wages which this allowed them to pay.

The car company, Alfa Romeo was no exception.

Before the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union began organising in the plant last year, Alfa was the lowest paying company in the industry.

Now all that has changed. After long and tough negotiations, minimum wages have been pushed up to R2,40 an hour from July.

These wage levels are equal to Sigma and Datsun but are still below those paid in the Eastern Cape and at Toyota.

However, the new wages were not gained without a struggle.

Negotiations began on June 28 when an argument immediately broke out over NAAWU's demand to negotiate both wages and working conditions at the same time.

Eventually, the company made a wage offer and working conditions were left over for later negotiations.

The first offer made by the company, 10c an hour, was completely unacceptable to the union negotiating team. So also was the new offer of 11 cents.

The union refused to recommend it to the workers and at a mass meeting of 700 the workers also rejected it.

At this meeting workers decided to down tools on Monday July 9.

On that morning, workers gathered at the factory canteen,

Jubilant Alfa workers return victorious



Jubilant Alfa workers stream back to work after their successful wage strike

singing freedom songs, and then marched on the administration block.

Shop stewards were mandated to approach the company again.

This time Alfa increased its offer to 13 cents.

The new offer was reported back to the workers at the administration block who loudly rejected it.

Another meeting was held the

next day at which a new offer was made - 16 cents from July 1 and another 3 cents in October. This was finally increased by one cent.

The workers then returned to work in high spirits, singing songs.

Much of the trouble at Alfa, union sources said, could have been avoided.

They said that Alfa's manage-

ment helped provoke the conflict by their 'paternalistic' attitude and their 'unprofessional' approach to negotiations.

It also seems that Alfa underestimated the unity and determination of the workers union sources said.

'The question now on the workers' lips is, will they be foolish enough to do this again?' a NAAWU spokesperson said.

Jaguar workers stage mass walk-out

ABOUT 200 Jaguar shoe workers recently staged a mass walk-out of a meeting called by the TUCSA affiliated National Union of Leatherworkers.

The workers from this Pietermaritzburg factory have recently organised themselves into the National Union of Textile Workers in defiance of the industry's closed shop.

In terms of the closed shop all the workers have to be members of TUCSA's NUL.

Back in 1978, the Jaguar workers were in the forefront of the resistance to TUCSA and started the Footwear and Tanning Workers' Union.

However, when this union collapsed they were forced to

remain members of the TUCSA union.

But once again the Jaguar workers have taken up the struggle against TUCSA - this time as members of NUTW.

NUTW organiser, Prof Sineke said the TUCSA union had organised a meeting for the Jaguar workers when it heard how they were crossing the floor to NUTW.

He said after discussions with the workers it was decided that he should go with them to the meeting.

'An NUL organiser said at the beginning of the meeting that it had just been called for Jaguar workers and those who

did not work at the factory should leave.'

'Well, I stood up and asked whether I could stay at the meeting but was told that I had to go.'

'But when all the workers said that they would leave as well, the NUL organisers backed down and said I could stay,' Prof Sineke said.

Shortly after this Brother Sineke asked if he could have permission to speak.

'There was a lot of clapping and excitement when I stood up and explained I was from FOSATU and that we fight for workers' rights,' he said.

'Then I left and everybody

followed me - they were wearing NUTW shirts and singing FOSATU songs,' he added.

Brother Sineke said the workers had then gone to the union offices and had held their own meeting there.

Later in the week, NUTW began negotiations with Jaguar management who had heard about the walkout at the NUL meeting.

Prof Sineke said the company had agreed to give the union stop orders and access and had agreed to discussions on the issue of shop stewards.

He said the union would now be pushing for exemption for Jaguar workers from NUL's closed shop.

Garment union backs down on its threat to fire NUTW members

THE TUCSA affiliated Garment Workers Industrial Union has backed down on its earlier threat to have workers fired for belonging to the National Union of Textile Workers.

In the industrial court, lawyers acting for the TUCSA union admitted that the threats would be seen as an unfair labour practice.

This is the latest news in the battle being waged by clothing workers for the right to belong to NUTW.

Because of a closed shop covering the clothing industry these workers are forced to be members of the Garment Workers Industrial Union or lose their jobs.

Recently, workers at James North at Pinetown in open rejection of the closed shop, voted

overwhelmingly in favour of NUTW.

The TUCSA union immediately amended its constitution to allow it to expel these workers and in turn force the company to fire them.

The GWIU ordered the workers to appear before an enquiry in order to find out whether they were members of NUTW.

'However, it appears as if GWIU's whole strategy of intimidation is being abandoned,' NUTW general secretary, John Copelyn said.

'But it remains to be seen whether it will exempt these workers from their duty to remain GWIU members,' he said.

Meanwhile in another case concerning a clothing worker,

at Natal Overall an active union member was transferred to a different job which involved cleaning toilets and scrubbing floors.

She was then fired by the company when she refused to accept the change of job.

The NUTW has charged that the change of work was done deliberately to humiliate her because she was an active union member.

The union launched an unfair labour practice claim for her in the industrial court.

In court, the company's sole opposition to the claim was that it had not been referred properly to the industrial council.

However, NUTW pointed out that the worker had refused to

submit herself to an interview by council inspectors because they would not allow her any legal representation.

The union charged that the council had showed no interest in settling the dispute.

And in fact the council had handled it in such a manner as to prejudice her case merely because she was a member of a rival union, the union said.

The industrial council on which the TUCSA union sits argued that the worker's claim should be dismissed.

NUTW's John Copelyn said ironically, the Natal Overall worker was still forced to be a member of GWIU.

'But the union made no attempt to help its own member,' he said.

Closed shop victory

AN attempt to block furniture workers from joining the Paper Wood and Allied Workers Union has failed.

An ex TUCSA union, the National Union of Furniture and Allied Workers applied to the Supreme Court for an order barring PFAWU from recruiting furniture workers.

The furniture union argued that because it has a closed shop, workers would be endangering their right to employment in the industry if they joined another union.

The closed shop insists that all furniture workers belong to NUFW.

The union also argued that PFAWU's constitution did not cover furniture workers.

The court action was launched after workers from Brits factory, Pat Cornick, joined PFAWU in March this year.

When PFAWU approached the Pat Cornick management, the company was reminded by NUFW that it was breaching the closed shop agreement.

As a direct result 57 active union members were fired by Pat Cornick.

NUFAW obviously intended to stop PFAWU from organising anywhere in the furniture industry.

However, on the day of the court hearing PFAWU's constitution had been amended to cover furniture workers and so NUFW's application was turned down.

The court ordered that NUFW should pay all the legal costs.

Comment

THE government-backed SABC-TV has begun a major campaign to discredit the progressive organisations calling for people not to vote on August 22 by portraying them as 'intimidators'. Recently, it featured so-called coloured and Indian party leaders who one after the other urged voters not to listen to 'intimidators' but instead participate in this new 'democracy'. But how can any right minded person call the new constitution democratic?

The new constitution sets up three separate parliaments — a 'white' parliament with 178 members, a 'coloured' parliament with 85 members and an 'Indian' parliament with 45 members. You only need elementary maths to see that this new system is heavily weighted in favour of the 'white' parliament. It is clear that the new constitution maintains the same old system of 'divide and rule'. It makes sure that the real power remains in the hands of a ruling National Party elite, headed by the President — which will undoubtedly be assisted by big business. So, giving people a vote does not necessarily make the system democratic!

But what about the African workers? They have been completely excluded from this 'new deal' in spite of the fact that they make up the majority in this country. Instead they have been offered the bantustans as a trade off. And it's not too hard to see who got the raw end of the deal.

Certainly not the bantustan leaders — who at times even make their South African masters blush. In the news recently was Ciskei's president, Lennox Sebe. Yes, he's the one that owns a Mercedes Benz, a BMW, a Cadillac and now a brand new R70 000 imported Daimler. Well, he has now decided to build a R25-million international airport at Bisho. Who would possibly want to land in the Ciskei? He has also sent 20 pilots to be trained in Israel which cost millions of Rands. But the Ciskei has not got any planes for them to fly! Is it surprising that the bantustan system is vehemently rejected by workers.

In FOSATU we have learnt that only when workers stand together can we fight exploitation and oppression. So once again we say 'Workers Unite, Don't Vote'. Reject the divisive and undemocratic constitution. Fight together for a more just society here in South Africa — a society where workers, of all races, can exercise their democratic right.

What charity!

TO THE NYLON SPINNERS MANAGEMENT

What a shock!

When the notice appeared on the company notice board out of the blue.

We workers read and couldn't believe it to be true.

Management wants us to fill in a stop order form,

To give money to the community Chest who send food parcels to the South African soldiers on the Border!

What a shame!

Workers have long been pleading for a mid-year cost of living increase to be able to cope with the rise in the cost of living.

Management says, No.

But at the same time you give R3,500 yearly to the Community Chest!

The workers' plight.

The wages we ask are not even charity.

We work long, we work hard,

We have a right to share in the profits and to tell you our plight.

You don't want to listen.

Are you asking for a fight?

BY A NATIONAL UNION OF TEXTILE WORKERS
SHOP STEWARD.

AECI Vynide workers strike

WORKERS at New Germany factory, AECI Vynide, went on strike for three-days last month when management tried to bring in short time.

A CWIU spokesperson said for the first two days of the strike, the company refused to talk to the union.

However, on the third day,

management cracked and a settlement was negotiated in terms of which the factory would return to full time, he said.

He added that the 40-hour short time would have meant a 15 percent drop in wages for the workers.

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Workers take the lead!

WORKERS must be encouraged to take the lead in the struggle for economic and social liberation, says Transport and General Workers Union shop steward, Jethro Dlalisa.

'We must move forward with collective strength and a firm mandate.'

'We must make sure that all our struggles are bent in the direction of the working class,' said Brother Dlalisa.

He was speaking at a general meeting of the Johannesburg Local held for FOSATU members in the area.

At this meeting, held in Dube in Soweto on July 22, hundreds of workers came from as far as Alexander and Tembisa.

In his talk on the 'Political and Economic Events of 1984', Brother Dlalisa explained how

the recession had made the government feel insecure.

'The State through the white parliament, the police, the army and the courts has looked for ways to suppress and control the working class,' he said.

He said in 1984 this attempt to control could be seen in the introduction of the President's Council and the new racial parliaments.

'And there will not only be three parliaments. We have to remember the nine or so other parliaments in the human dumping grounds called homelands,' Brother Dlalisa said.

'These racial parliaments are contrary to our envisaged, one nation in an undivided South Africa. They are dividing workers,' he added.

On top of this, he said, there

had been the increasing resettlement plans and the tightening up of influx control.

'And there are plans to step up control over the unions, if the Manpower Commission report is followed by the government,' he added.

'So, what can we do to resist these pressures?' Brother Dlalisa asked.

'We have to commend the workers for forcing out the liaison committees in the factories. We must continue to build our unions' he said.

Brother Dlalisa ended by appealing to 'our coloured and Indian brothers' to not vote in the coming elections.

Other speakers at the Johannesburg Local discussed strikes and the problems workers confront in a recession.

Uniply workers pack industrial court case



Paper Wood and Allied Workers Union organiser, Moses Ndlovu, talks to Uniply workers during a break in the day-long industrial court case

HUNDREDS of Uniply workers packed into Bolton Hall in Durban on July 24 to hear union lawyers argue for the reinstatement of two of their shop stewards.

The entire Uniply workforce was fired shortly after they had staged a May Day march at the Cato Ridge factory.

The Paper Wood and Allied Workers Union has taken two cases to the industrial court — one for the reinstatement of two shop stewards and the other for the reinstatement of the rest of the workforce.

On July 24, the industrial court heard the case for the reinstatement of shop stewards, Thomas Makathini and Isaac Mkhize.

The other case still has to be heard by the court.

During the court case, a union lawyer argued that Brothers Makathini and Mkhize had been clearly victimised because they were shop stewards.

'The dismissals relate to their carrying out their functions as

shop stewards,' he said.

He added that management had acted 'inconsistently' by allowing the 'One Man One Vote' demonstration to be held in November and yet firing the shop stewards on May Day because of a similar demonstration.

The union lawyer detailed events which, he said, showed that Uniply had no 'confidence' in the PWAWU shop stewards and had not treated them as the 'true representatives' of their workers.

He said in April Uniply had turned down a shop steward request for protective clothing because management said they did not have sufficient funds.

However, shop stewards pointed out that the company had recently bought new machines and had built a new car park, the union lawyer said.

'It seems it is more important to the company that private cars parked outside shouldn't be damaged than employees walking inside the factory,' he said.

He added that the company on April 24 had communicated directly with the workers about alleged damaging of machines without even consulting with the shop stewards.

'How do the shop stewards feel when they are treated in this manner, surely it must create ill feeling between management and the shop stewards,' he said.

In reply, the Uniply lawyers argued that Brother Makathini had been fired because he had breached the company's rules by clocking out workers during the May Day march.

Brother Mkhize, they said, had been fired for calling a meeting of workers without permission and for causing the stoppage that took place on May 1.

Judgement was not given at the end of the case, so the Uniply workers are still waiting to hear if the industrial court will order the reinstatement of Brothers Makathini and Mkhize.

Wage hike after bitter strike

IN a sequel to the bitter strike at BMW earlier this year, the company and the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union have reached a wage settlement.

About 1 500 workers at this Pretoria motor plant stopped work when the company refused to better its offer of a 10c an hour increase.

During the strike, BMW used a helicopter to drop anti-union pamphlets in the townships and organised a party — all in an attempt to break the workers' unity

The workers returned to work when the company agreed to return to the negotiating table.

Finally in June, the company agreed to give workers increases ranging from 33 cents to 50 cents an hour.

In terms of the settlement BMW workers will also get a service attendance allowance ranging from 5 cents to 15 cents depending on the length of service.

The company also guaranteed a bonus of at least 4 percent rising up to 8,33 percent depend-

ing on length of service.

Meanwhile, NAAWU has recently completed a wage agreement at Wayne Rubber near Durban.

This factory was also the subject of a wage strike earlier this year.

In terms of the agreement, the minimum wage was raised on July 1 from R60,95 per week to R66,44.

Wayne workers will get another increase in January which will take the minimum wage up to R70,76.

SEIFSA heads for collision

SEIFSA, the giant metal employers' association, has renewed its call for its members to resist any trade union pressure for plant-level bargaining.

It is highly likely that this call will lead to a head-on confrontation with the Metal and Allied Workers Union.

Particularly in Natal the union has succeeded in negotiating wages over and above the minimums set at the industrial council with a number of employers.

SEIFSA's call was made in a recent circular sent out to all metal employers shortly after the industrial council negotiations.

The circular says that 'certain trade unions have indicated that they intend to approach member companies to negotiate wage increase over and above those agreed during the industrial council's negotiating process.'

'Specific requests were made to SEIFSA to revoke the advice given to members in this regard. This course of action has been rejected by SEIFSA,' the circular says.

It adds that it is 'imperative' that metal employers resist any approaches by trade unions which 'undermine' the principle

of a centralised collective bargaining system.

SEIFSA says that any employer who is considering entering into plant-level bargaining must understand that they are establishing an 'alternative' collective bargaining arrangement to the industrial council.

Natal branch secretary, Geoff Schreiner said there were a number of companies which had decided to follow SEIFSA's line.

'And as a result MAWU is taking industrial court action against them for refusing to bargain at plant-level with the representative union,' he said.

He singled out CYC Engineering, McKinnon Chain, Hart, Wispeco and Pineware.

At CYC Engineering, he said, the union had signed a recognition agreement with the company which provided for plant-level bargaining.

'But management has refused to comply with the terms of the agreement and has said the company is bound by SEIFSA's policy,' he added.

At Pineware, Brother Schreiner said the company had given increases over and above the industrial council minimums but had refused to negotiate these

with the union.

Meanwhile he said, there were companies who had seen the 'wisdom' of plant-level talks.

At APV Kestner in Maritzburg the union has negotiated an extra R4,50 a week increase over and above the industrial council increase — this pushes the minimum wage at the company up to R100,35 a week.

At another Maritzburg company, Pillar Naco, MAWU negotiated an effective R5,40 increase.

At City Metal Products and Camerons, workers will get an extra R5,85 across-the-board.

And at Forbo Kromenie, the union has won an effective increase of R7,20 a week above the industrial council negotiated increase — by January 1 the minimum wage at this company will be R121,50 a week.

In negotiations, Forbo Kromenie also agreed to pay workers double time on Saturdays and time-and-a-half on weekdays for their overtime work.

Increased worker pressure for plant-level negotiations will surely open SEIFSA's eyes to the benefits of negotiations at both levels.

with metal workers

OVER the years, workers at Hart have belonged to various unions, but there has been no real worker representatives in the factory.

The company used the Works Council to make their oppressive rules work. Fortunately, in 1983, the workers joined the Metal and Allied Workers Union in big numbers and in that way it was granted access as the majority union. MAWU gained recognition in August 1983 and became the workers' representative to bargain for higher wages and better working conditions. And so all other unions disappeared.

It was the first union to introduce shop stewards as worker representatives who were elected by the workers themselves to carry out their wishes.

The union carried on representing the workers but the company refused to negotiate wages, as a result of which the matter has now been referred to the industrial court.

On May 2, the workers downed tools at lunch time until 4.30 pm because we wanted to tell management personally that we were dissatisfied with the wages we were getting.

The boss did not come to us, despite the fact that he had promised to talk to us. We were eventually told that the company would give us an increase after the new industrial council agreement comes into operation on July 1.

From that day on there has been a misunderstanding between the workers and the employers because the bosses failed to honour this promise.

The workers decided to ban overtime work because it is clear that the employers are trying to fool us — they have said that they have money for overtime work but they say they don't have the money to raise our wages.

At the moment the bosses are saying that the production is going slowly. They are trying hard to get the workers to work overtime. We are saying NO! We won't work overtime until the bosses agree to negotiate wages with MAWU. The bosses say they are waiting for the court's decision. But united we shall win.

A HART SHOP STEWARD



For three days during lunch breaks, Wispeco workers demonstrated outside the company's administration building. A Metal and Allied Workers Union shop steward said the workers had held the placard demonstration in support of their demands for wage talks with the union and a 50c an hour increase.

Biscuit union crumbles as workers leave to join SFAWU

FOR the past three years support for TUCSA's National Union of Operative Biscuit Makers and Packers has been crumbling.

Biscuit workers, particularly from the major Bakers company, have been joining Sweet Food and Allied Workers Union.

However, the TUCSA union, under Norman Daniels, has been attempting to keep its position as sole representative of biscuit workers through control of the industrial council.

Union joins council

Wages and working conditions in the biscuit industry are set by this small industrial council. The major employer on this council is Bakers.

In order to represent its members nationally, SFAWU this year decided to join the industrial council.

Challenge to Daniels

A SFAWU spokesperson said, 'We knew that there would be opposition from Daniels as he is scared that our presence on the council will further challenge his position in the industry.'

Only majority union

'And as we predicted at the council's meeting on July 10, Daniels objected to the fact that Bakers did not allow nine of his members from the company's Westmead factory to attend the meeting.'

'Both SFAWU and Bakers

have agreed that only the majority union will represent workers at the Westmead factory,' the spokesperson said.

He added that Daniels 'clearly has no respect for the decision taken by the majority of workers.'

Ends with dispute

The meeting ended with Daniels threatening to declare a dispute with Bakers' representatives at the council.

Meanwhile, workers at the Bakers factory at Westmead near Pinetown report that the TUCSA union is using the small support it has to sow division among the workers.

Security Police arrive

Towards the end of last month three security police arrived at the factory as they thought that SFAWU was having a report-back meeting.

Workers said that the security police told guards at the factory gate that Timothy Zondi — a TUCSA union member — had sent for them.

They then asked to speak to the SFAWU shop stewards.

Bakers workers were furious and demanded the dismissal of Timothy Zondi.

Final warning given

After talks between management and SFAWU shop stewards, Bakers gave Zondi a final warning.

R6 million pay out

THERE was great excitement in all Putco depots on July 19 when the company paid out over R6 million in backpay to workers.

The backpayments were a welcome relief for workers who had been waiting for more than a year for their wage increase.

Last year's bitter wage talks began with Putco starting with an offer of no increase.

The Transport and General Workers Union had demanded an across-the-board increase of R65 and also improvements in conditions of service.

TGWU, joined by CUSA's Transport and Allied Workers Union deadlocked with Putco when the company refused to budge from its final offer of R4.

As bus drivers are barred by law from striking, the dispute was referred to the industrial court for arbitration last September.

TGWU spent many months preparing evidence for the arbitration.

It gathered information on

wages in other bus companies, the cost of living, and the finances of the company in order to present a strong case at the industrial court.

Finally, in March this year an arbitrator was appointed and the case got going.

The wait was made worthwhile when the arbitrator announced on June 26 that workers should get an immediate increase of 15,5 percent.

On that day, hundreds of union members poured out of court singing and chanting.

The increase awarded by the arbitrator was backpaid for six months and, on top of this, an additional three percent interest was paid out.

The unions then sat down and negotiated a settlement for the six months of last year which was not covered by the arbitrator's award.

The final agreement was a 6,15 percent increase for those six months paid with an interest of nine percent.

It was agreed that all the backpay would be paid in one lump

sum.

Commenting on the settlement, a union spokesperson said, 'It took a very long time and tensions were high at times during the wait — but it was definitely worth it.'

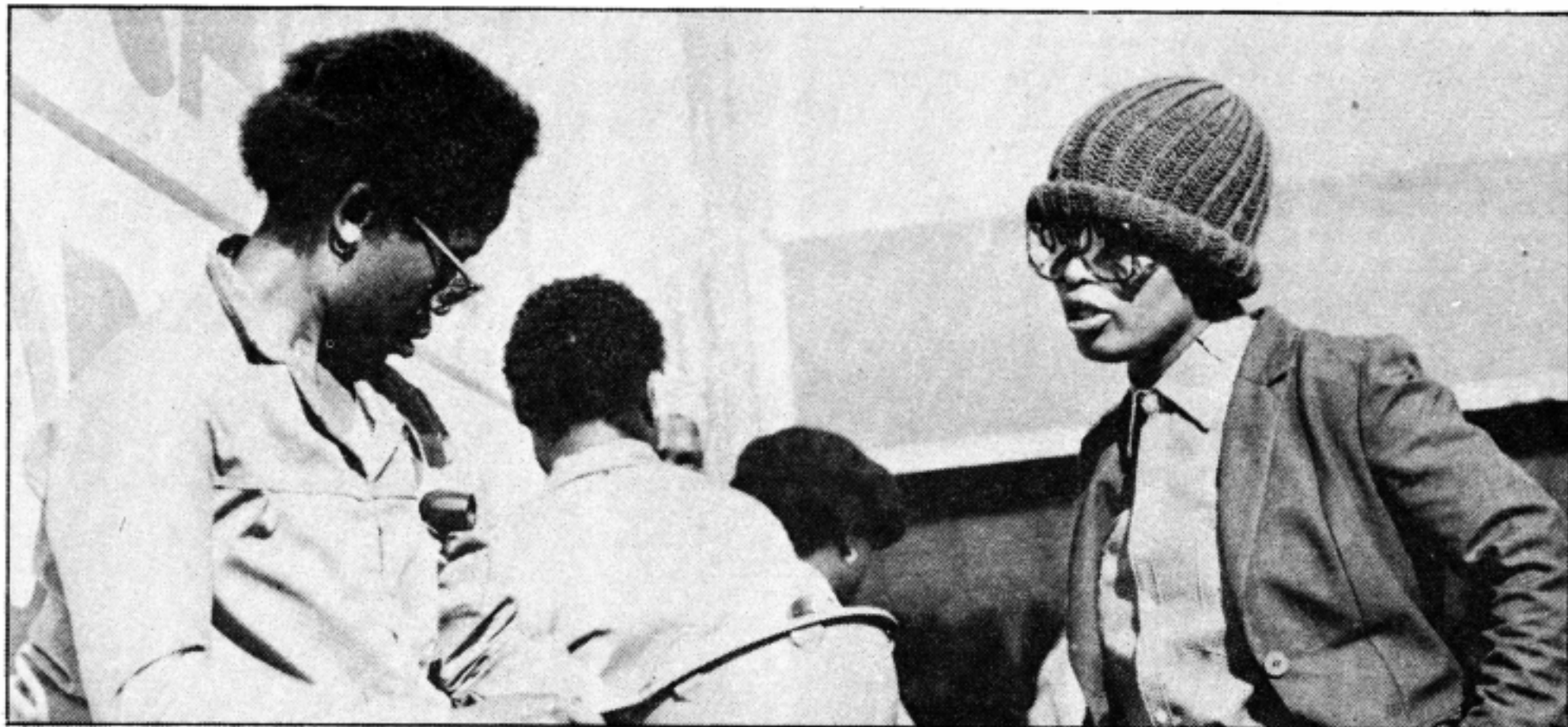
'We have no doubt that Putco has learnt their lesson — wage negotiations need to be taken seriously.'

'In fact, we are already into the next round of negotiations for 1984/5 and we are already feeling the difference,' she said.

'So the outcome was not only a victory because we put wages on a better footing but also because we balanced things out a bit with the company,' she added.

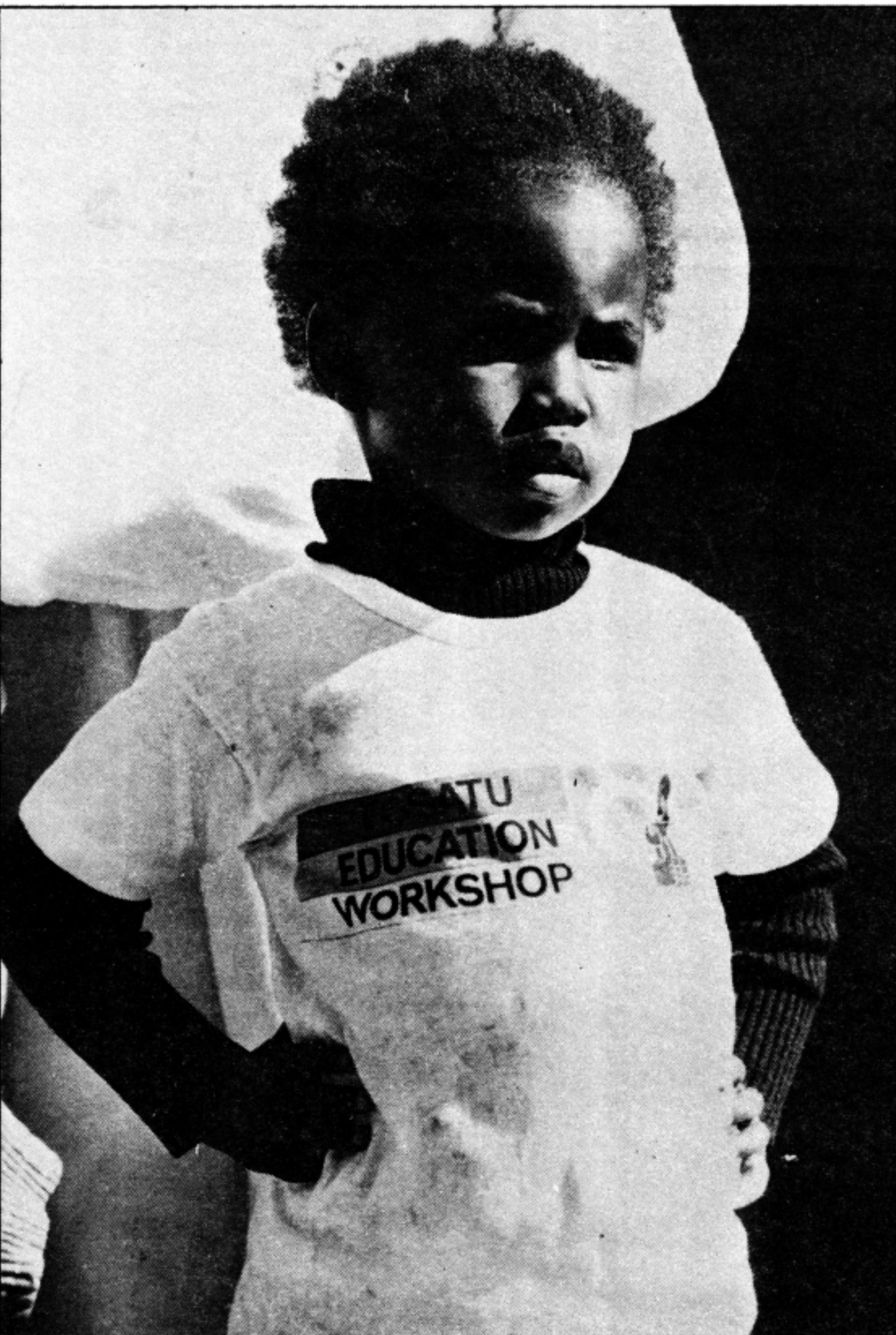
'But the most important result,' the spokesperson said, 'is that all workers in the company can now see that the union has powers to do things which the old liaison committees can never do.'

'The case has been a means of mobilising and strengthening support for the union,' she concluded.



Confrontation – the Farm Fare play.

Behind the stage pro



Everybody had fun even in the stands



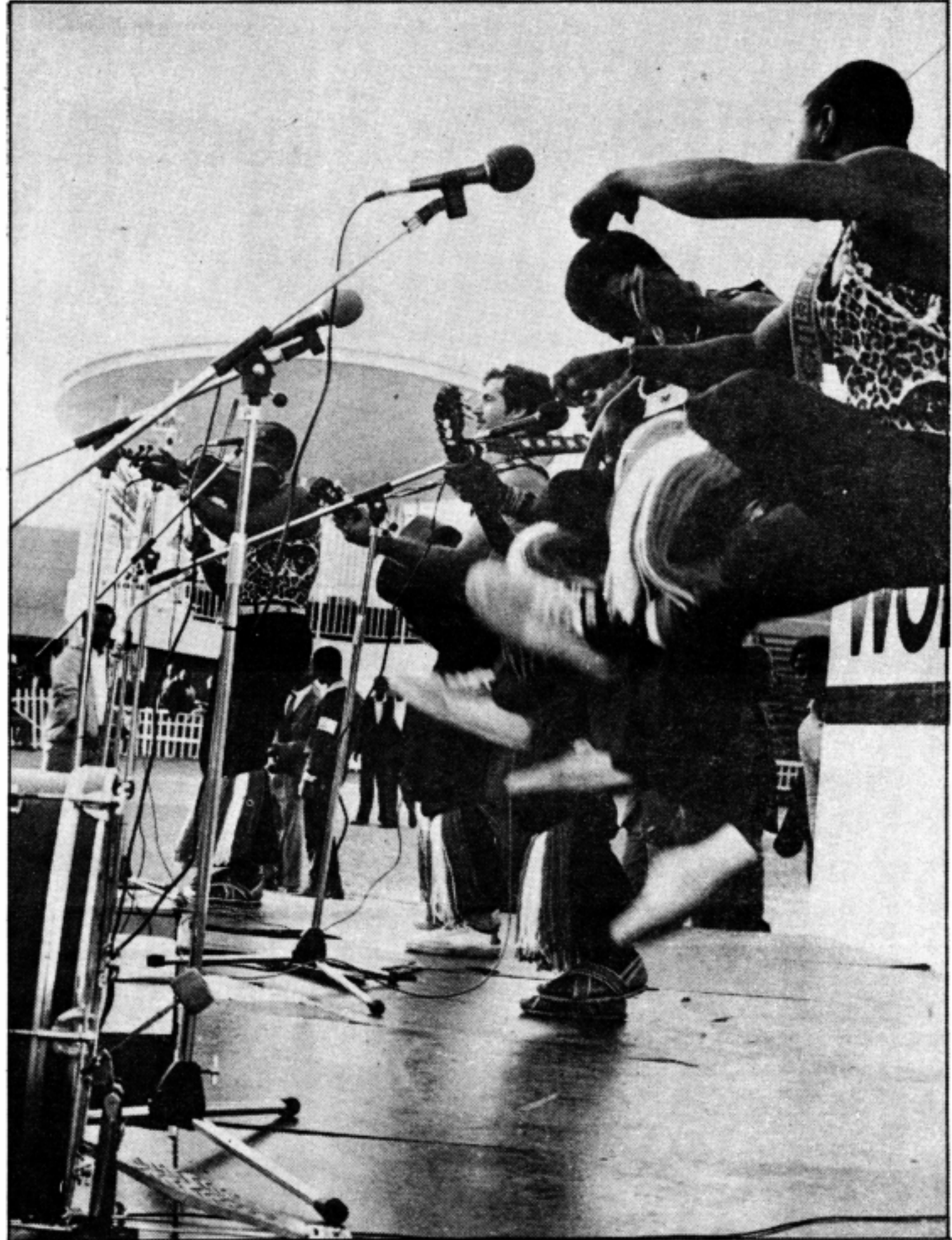
There were worker choirs....

Mesmerized – a future worker.

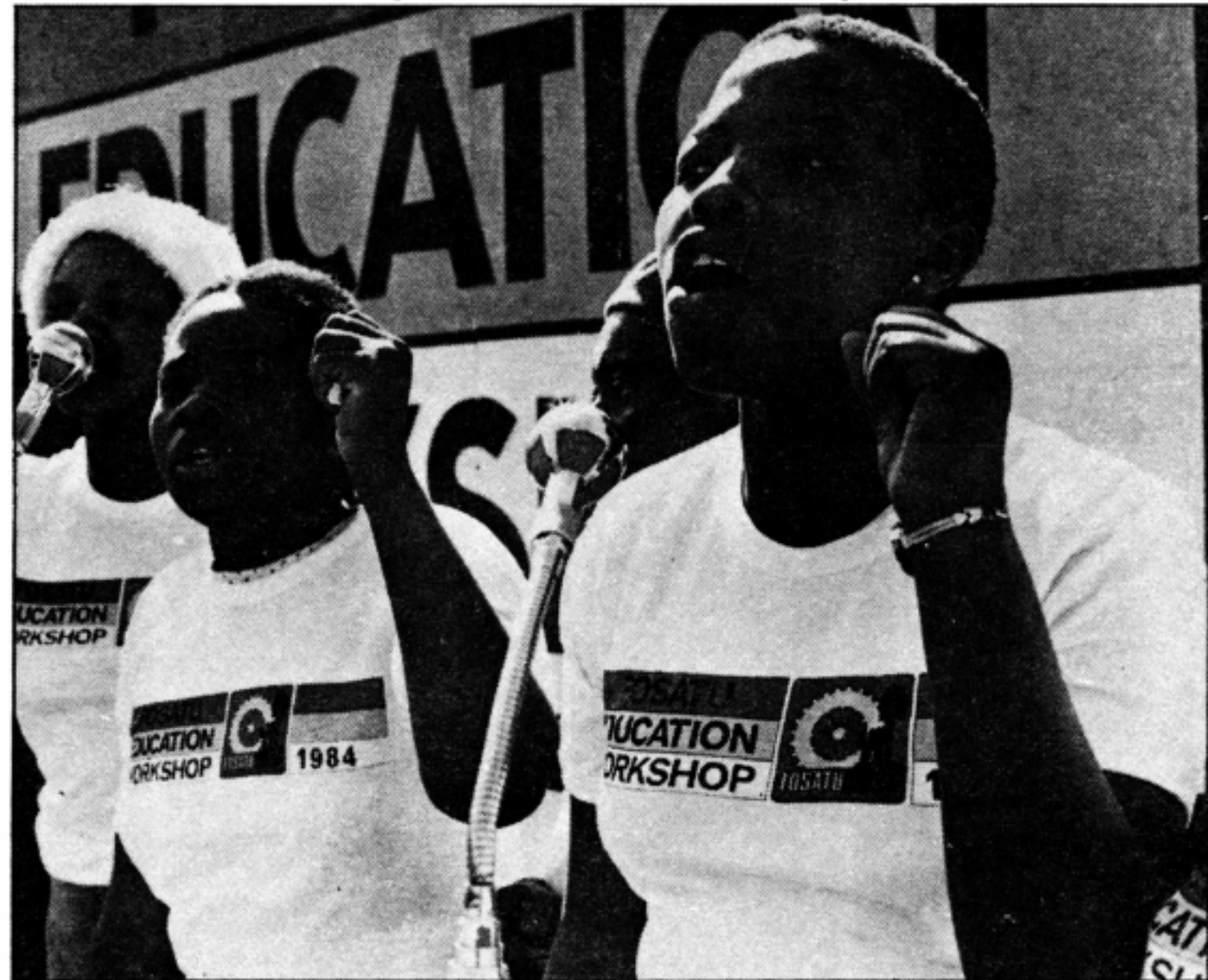
WORKER FESTIVAL



Practice – the Frame dancers.



That's some leap – Abafana Bomoya.



.... And more worker choirs.

CHILD CARE CENTRES NEEDED

IN this the last article in the present series on women workers' issues, Liza Makalela, from the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union, looks at the issue of child care. She looks at the problems worker mothers face once they have had the child and she argues that the employer's responsibility should not just end with maternity. Sister Makalela says many of the large number of infant deaths are caused by improper child care. Because of the lack of child care facilities the mother is often forced to leave her child in the care of inexperienced, and expensive, child minders.

THE unions started looking at the issue of child care after being alarmed by the rate at which infant deaths are running. Statistics show that in 1980 there were 112 deaths per 1 000 black children born. This is unacceptable to us as it is much higher than other race groups. Many of these deaths are caused by improper child care.

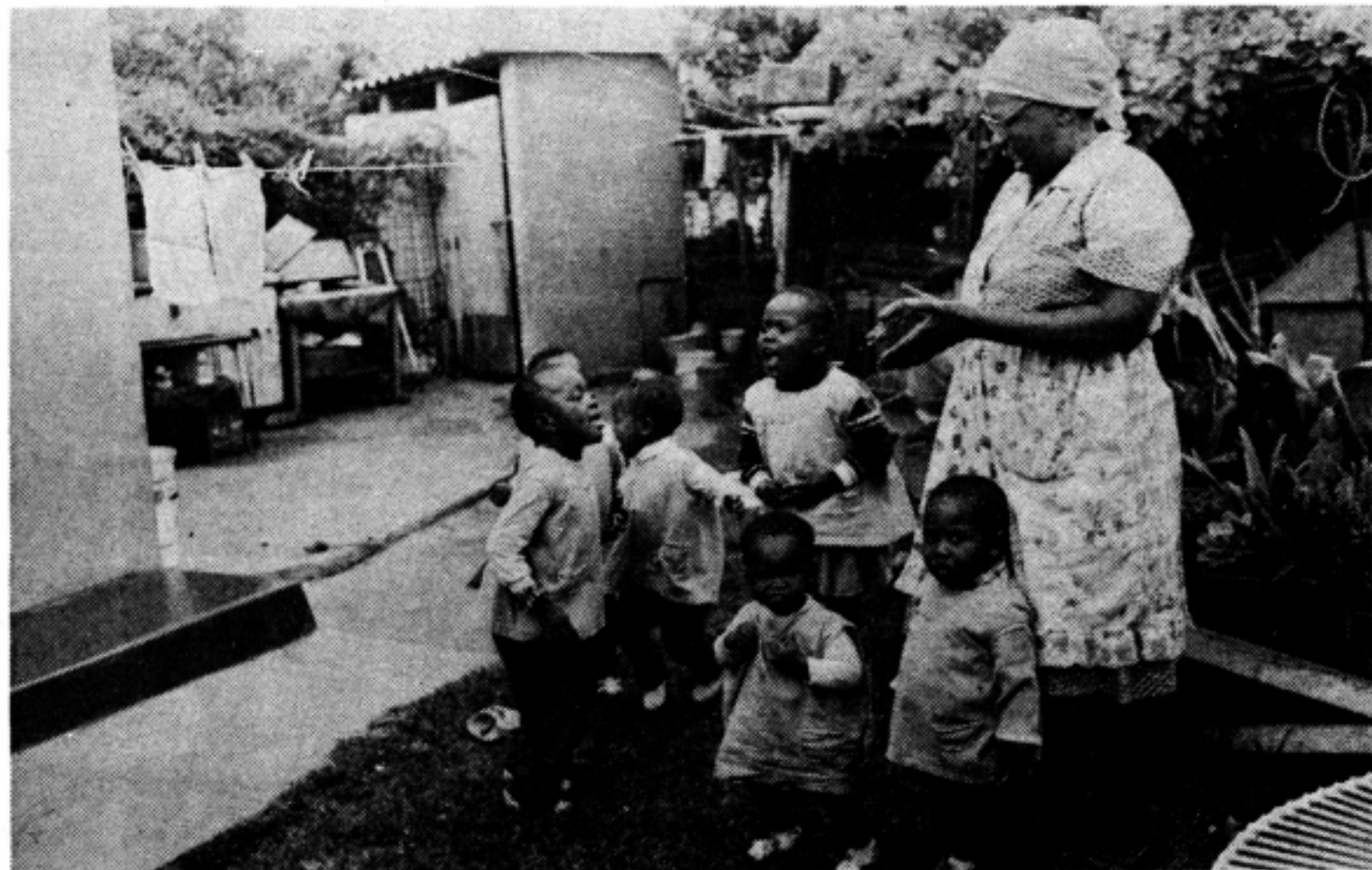
A mother with a young child is forced to leave it with a child minder. In many cases these child minders do not have the slightest knowledge about caring for a baby. Sometimes child minders are minors as well. Thus the child is being deprived of proper feeding and care, especially at the critical age from birth to six months. In Johannesburg there are about 200 unregistered child minders who care for over six children at time. These unregistered child minders belong to the unemployed, pensioned and often illiterate group. Working parents are forced to leave their babies with these people as there are no facilities provided for babies

under the age of three years and there are no qualified child minders.

These child minders do not look after the children free of charge. They regard this as employment and charge high fees which workers cannot afford and on which the child minder has to survive. For example, workers cannot afford R30 per month per child plus food. Whereas the child minder cannot easily live on R30 per month.

Babies are faced with many hazards: illness, suffering, insecurity, frequent and preventable visits to a doctor and most of all — death. On top of all these, you will realise that not only a child suffers, the parents go through a hard time too. Most of us are parents who know how it hurts to have a sick and unhappy child, let alone a hungry one.

Medical evidence has shown that if babies are not breastfed for a period of six months after birth then the chance of their catching killer stomach and lung



diseases is greatly increased.

Okay, it might be argued that parents can prepare meals for their babies every day so as to maintain a balanced diet. This does not work out. Child minders have six or more children to look after and some parents cannot afford to make a double supply. The child minder is also starving so what makes a mother sure that her baby is getting the right food or indeed any food at all?

Now to turn to kindergaten age. The state has built creches for black children. These creches admit children aged three years.

These cater for children who are registered in the urban area, but what happens to migrant workers' children who despite what the law says will always be there?

These creches are overcrowded. Many registered children cannot be admitted. This causes a continuous lack of proper care and as a result parents are forced to depend on child minders with all the associated problems.

In addition, the creches do not have enough playing and teaching equipment and the diet is inadequate — pap and soup every day.

Demands:

* We need to have nurseries. Employers should accept collective responsibility for providing facilities for child care. They cannot hide behind the government's failure to provide these facilities. It will be advantageous to employers because it will reduce the number of absentees due to child care responsibility.

* Recreational facilities or youth centres for young people. These would be useful as the young people would be able to use their free time constructively.

'Retrenchment an excuse to get rid of me' says 55-year-old Brown Lung victim

IF it hadn't been for the National Union of Textile Workers' Brown Lung Campaign, Gretta Maphumulo wouldn't have known exactly what she was suffering from.

Gretta is a 55-year-old woman and the mother of three children. Her eldest son has moved from the one-roomed shack which the family is living in at Umlaas near St Wendolins in the district of Pinetown.

She told FOSATU Worker News that she started working at Pinetex — a Frame group factory — in 1974. Her starting wage was R11 a week.

'I was quite healthy and strong when I started working for Frame but now after 10-years, I find myself being a total wreck,' Gretta said angrily.

She has just discovered that she is suffering from a killer disease called Brown Lung. Doctors say it is caused by exposure to cotton dust and is incurable.

Gretta had been working at the Pinetex mill in the spinning department which she described as 'very dusty and airtight'.

After working for several years she started coughing. At first she didn't take much notice although she visited the company doctor regularly.

'A year later I was not only coughing but also sneezing,' she said. At this time she was hospitalised and given cough mixture.

She said she found it strange that the company doctor could not diagnose the disease which is supposed to be the company's 'priority' concern.

Gretta left the Pinetex mill on May 18, 1984 when she was retrenched.

She said that when her sickness got worse, she consulted a private doctor who also treated

her with cough mixture.

'The doctor gave me two days off sick, but soon after that I was among the few who were selected for retrenchment.'

Gretta said she strongly believed that the retrenchment was just an excuse to get rid of her because she could no longer work as hard as before because of the cotton dust disease.

She said she was 'indebted' to NUTW whose health and safety officer, Dr Neil White, was the first doctor to discover that she had Brown Lung.

Permanently disabled

The NUTW recently held a major campaign against Brown Lung at the New Germany Frame mills. During the campaign, Gretta went to be tested and was found to be permanently disabled.

Her condition is now so bad that because of the tightness of her chest, it takes her two hours to walk from the main road to her house — a distance of less than a kilometre.

Recently the NUTW's health and safety officer took her to King Edward hospital for an X-ray and from there to the union's lawyer in order to draw up an application for Workmen's Compensation.

Asked what she thought of the company's promise not to fire any victim of Brown Lung, Gretta dismissed the promise as 'make believe'. 'That company doesn't want sick or old people,' she said.

Gretta still remembers the old strikes for higher wages that took place at Frame. She said that although the union was still struggling to win recognition, she was confident NUTW would

win in the end.

She recalled the time when she was getting R11 a week. At the time of her retrenchment, she was getting R45,85 and she believes that it is the NUTW members who forced the company to increase wages.

But Gretta said even this wage was not enough 'because the cost of food, transport and clothing has gone up so badly.'

Gretta said she first joined the union in 1982.

'I was lured into joining the

'red card' union (TWIU) but it wasn't too long before I realized that this union was useless so I switched to the National Union of Textile Workers' said a smiling Gretta.

As the sole breadwinner, Gretta said she just manages to support herself and her two daughters by selling vegetables and by doing a bit of sewing.

'It is only through the mercy of God, the Almighty, that we are still managing to survive,' she concluded.



Gretta Maphumulo — a victim of the killer cotton dust disease

Equal wages for women!

THE struggle to end discrimination against women recently took another step forward in the Transvaal.

The Chemical Workers Industrial Union has negotiated equal wages for women workers at Recycling Plastics at Elandsfontein.

This factory was paying a miserable minimum wage of 89c per hour.

This minimum applied to women on the bottom grade. These women make up half of the total workforce.

During negotiations management agreed to scrap this 'womens' grade' and bring the minimum rate up to that of male workers.

This resulted in many women receiving an increase of 45c per hour — or R20,25 per week.

In another incident in the Transvaal, intervention by the union prevented pregnant women workers being placed in a position detrimental to their health.

At Hi-Pack Plastics at Germiston, pregnant workers were told that they had to work night shift.

When they refused, the company dismissed them.

CWIU shop stewards and organisers took up the issue with management.

After heated negotiations, the company agreed to re-instate the women on day shift work.

COAL NOT DOLE!

What's the position at this pit?

We reckon there are about 130 production workers in regularly. This would mean about 1500 to 2000 per week is being produced, compared to a normal production of about 15 000 to 20 000 tons. Yet all the newspapers say we're working normally!

The newspapers also say there is a drift back to work. What is the position?

One or two have gone back. But these are single men who have nothing to live on at all and are being thrown out of their homes because they can't pay the rent. For most of us the first six weeks were the worst. After that you learn to manage, you get used to it. We can go on now for a year or more without getting bothered. It's a way of life

What support are you getting locally?

A lot of support from other union branches and from Labour Party branches, and from the Labour Council in this area. Most families are getting food parcels of basic necessities worth about R12 per week, and the women's committee has organised a soup kitchen which provides dinner everyday to those who need it. This is all organised by the local strike committee. They liaise with the region and the National NUM offices (National Union of Mineworkers).

What motivates scabs? (The scabs are miners who are ignoring NUM's call for a strike and who are still working)

It's hard to say. They appear to have no brains at all. They won't look you in the eye if you try to talk to them and if you persist, they call the police - who are everywhere - and we get hammered for 'intimidation'. They do it for the money too: they're getting around R400 a week for not very much work. A lot of them live in the village and are now trying to sell their houses and move to different areas because the atmosphere is bad. But they're stupid - when the strike's over they'll be down the pit with those of us who were on strike, and they'll have to talk to us there. There'll be no policemen down the pit, you know.

There have been reports of scabs taunting strikers by waving money at them, ten and twenty pound notes, as they drive through the picket lines on pay day.

There was plenty of that earlier on. The police were doing it too. But the police are not as happy as they used to be either. At the beginning they were boasting about all the money they were making with the overtime and they away-from-home pay. Some of them were getting R1 000 a week. They were talking about holidays in exotic places. But with the strike going on so long and no end in sight, there are other problems. They are getting fed up with being away from home all the time; their wives are complaining; and what's the use of all that money if you don't get the chance to spend it?

What has been the attitude of the police to the strikers?

At the beginning of the strike we

An exclusive interview with a British miner

TO: ARTHUR SCARGILL, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL UNION OF MINeworkERS.

FROM: JOE FOSTER, GENERAL SECRETARY, FEDERATION OF SA TRADE UNIONS.

THE FEDERATION OF SA TRADE UNIONS FULLY SUPPORTS THE NUM IN ITS FIGHT AGAINST PIT CLOSURES. WITH THE FORMATION OF A WIDER FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICA'S INDEPENDENT TRADE UNIONS NEXT YEAR, WE HOPE IN FUTURE TO BE ABLE TO OFFER YOU MORE CONCRETE SUPPORT. THE FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT TO WORK IS PARTICULARLY UNDERSTOOD BY SOUTH AFRICAN WORKERS AND SUPPORTED BY OUR FEDERATION. WE BELIEVE THAT YOUR VICTORY WILL BE A MAJOR STEP FORWARD IN THE WORLDWIDE WORKER STRUGGLE FOR JOB SECURITY AND FOR A RATIONAL SOCIETY. AMANDLA!

used to talk to the police. Now we don't. They are from different areas of the country and are housed in barracks while here. The worst of the lot are from the big cities like London and Manchester. This sort enjoy being bullies. They even tore holes in our canvas picket shelter and knocked the support down, late at night when they thought no-one was watching. For them it's all just a big laugh.

What about your legal right to picket?

That's a joke. Look there's no law which says there may be only six people on the picket line. That is only a police recommendation. But the police won't allow any more than six. If anyone comes to talk to us while we are on the picket line - so making up seven - the police stop them. 'Too many pickets,' they say.

What if you ignore the instructions on the ground that they are not legal?

You get lifted (arrested). They pick you up bodily and dump you in the van. You're kept overnight in the police cells and then charged with any offence the police like to think up. If we stand in front of the gates on picket duty, we are arrested for 'obstruction'. If we shout 'Scab!' at the scabs, we get arrested for 'intimidating behavior'. There are miners here, men in their 40's and 50's, who have never been in trouble with the police before, who suddenly find themselves arrested four or five times in as many weeks.

What is the attitude of the courts to such trumped-up charges?

You get released on bail on the

condition that you don't picket. The court case is set down for four months later. So there's no way you can challenge the illegality until four months have gone past. This means that the police can do what they like, and they do. But it's not just the illegality of it. It is also the violence. When we go to demonstrations or mass pickets in other part of the country, we often find we are not allowed to get off the motorway, and are forced to turn around and go home. When we do get to demonstrations we have to be quick about getting away at the end. As soon as most of the men have gone home and the police feel they are in a clear majority, they start beating up those who are last to leave. There's been all this stuff in the newspapers about 'injuries to policemen', but it's them that started the violence. From what we've seen, the most likely injuries are bruised toes and cracked knuckles - the results of kicking and thumping miners.

Here in Coventry, the local police have been at it too. Down at the pit village, the local police raided a party last weekend at the home of one of the strike committee. They got told to piss off and get off private property. So they went and got reinforcements and waited outside till the end of the party. As the people came out, they were grabbed one by one on their way home and beaten up. One bloke had his neck broken through having his head hammered against a car bonnet. After they had finished their dirty work outside, they went back to the strike committee bloke's house, bust in, pulled him out of bed and beat the hell out of him. And they say this isn't a police state!

There are reports that the army will be used to open ports if the dock strike continues.

AS Britain's coal reserves begin to dwindle, the strike by hundreds of thousands of coal miners has begun to swing in their favour and victory could be on the horizon. The National Coal Board is getting desperate and has begun a campaign to try and get the miners to return to work by sending letters to their individual homes. But the miners are not budging. Under the slogan 'Coal not Dole' (dole is the money paid by the government to the unemployed), the miners are fighting plans to shut 20 mines and axe over 20 000 jobs. Bitter battles are still being fought between pickets and the police and over 5 000 miners have been arrested. FOSATU Worker News spoke to one of the miners on a picket line outside a mine in Coventry.



British coal strike enters fifth month

Well, the army have been in the coal strike from the beginning, so if they come in at the docks at least the public will see what is going on! There are all sorts of stories going round about miners seeing their sons - who they thought were away in the army - appearing in police uniform on picket lines. We have seen 'police' on duty here who have no numbers on their uniforms. One 'policeman' here had one number one day and another number the next day! But at the mass pickets you can see who the soldiers are: they're smaller than the minimum height allowable for a policeman, and they're often just kids too.

What is the feeling about the strike among the miners here at this pit, especially among those who are not picketing?

We have a rota here for picket duty. About 100 do four-hour shifts. A lot of blokes you never see - they stay at home and do odd jobs. Every few weeks we have a mass meeting organised by the local strike committee. Last time 300 to 400 came. We are solid here. We're not going back till we've won. This strike has to get a settlement that lasts for the next ten years, so now we're out we'll stay out till we get what we want. If it takes another year, so be it. And while we're out we'll settle the wage dispute too, and we won't go back to work while the scabs are still employed here.

What will they do with the scabs?

They will probably move them so as to concentrate them in particular pits. But lots of scabs will resign after the strike.

What is the effect of the media propaganda on the strikers. The talk of huge reserves of coal, the promises made by the coal board that there will be no compulsory redundancies?

They think we're stupid but we are not. We have seen the actual report of the coal board where they talk about massive closures and redundancies. We know they are lying in the newspapers. We reckon the coal will run out in September or October. We'll want to make sure that none gets imported from places like South Africa, or Poland.

What is the attitude of the lorry drivers who bring supplies to this pit? How do they justify crossing the picket?

Well, we don't get a chance to talk to them, the police stop that. But sometimes they do stop when they come the first time. Then they say they'd lose their job if they turned back, or they've got to pay off debts and cannot refuse any work. They often say they support us, but then drive right past us into the yard! There are some that are only delivering toilet rolls. You would think they'd say 'Sod it' and forget this delivery, but no, they come in too!

The making of the

WORKING

CLASSES

THE years 1907 to 1922 were a time of violent conflict between workers and capitalists on the Rand. Several general strikes of white workers broke out, which for a time threatened to overthrow both capitalists and state. As a result of these strikes many of the industrial laws which still govern trade unions today were passed. In this issue we look at the reasons for this period of bitter conflict.

White workers at this time had many grievances. On the gold mines of the Witwatersrand conditions were extremely bad. Trade unions were not recognised, and management refused to negotiate with trade union officials. Ordinary members of trade unions were afraid to make complaints, for fear of victimisation. Unpaid union branch secretaries were immediately dismissed once management found out what they were doing. Mine managers had completely arbitrary powers to dismiss, so that workers were continually being thrown out of their jobs. Between January and June 1911 for example, 22 180 white workers were employed on the mines and during the same period there were 17 754 changes in employment. Working conditions were also bad. Many miners contracted miners phthisis, a killer disease of the lungs. Long hours of work were common (from 70 to 78 hours a week in some grades). The only holidays miners were allowed were Sundays (which they often did not get), Christmas Day and Good Friday.

White workers also feared for their jobs in other ways. In the early days most of the white workers on the mines were skilled workers imported from overseas (e.g. from Britain or Australia). They themselves worked on the job, and also supervised low paid black contract labourers. (For Black mine workers, see our previous issue No. 29 May 1984). As time passed the mine owners attempted to break up their jobs into separate smaller and less skilled parts. This enabled the managers to employ less skilled black workers on these jobs at lower pay. It also allowed them to convert the skilled white workers into a less skilled supervisor with less control over his job. White workers resisted this move by the mine managers. When the mines attempted in 1907 to increase the number of drills that the white miner had to control from two to three the white miners went on strike. White workers looked to the new Afrikaner government in the Transvaal for support, but they received no help from them. Instead the government called in British troops to crush the strike and encouraged unskilled Afrikaners to act as scabs. One of the main mining capitalists at the time, Phillips, remarked to a fellow capitalist "As you know, Brother Boer has no sympathy for the working man, quite the reverse".

The strike was broken, but the main effect of

this was to politicise much of the white working class. Union membership increased from 300 in May 1907 to 4 000 by September. Two years later the South African Labour Party was formed to fight for the rights of the white workers, and won considerable working class support.

The growing militancy and politicisation of the white working class worried the government. In 1909 it passed the Transvaal Industrial Disputes Prevention Act which provided for conciliation boards where a serious dispute had occurred. However, the government was not prepared to push the mining industry very far. Conciliation boards could sit but the government gave them no powers to enforce their recommendations. As a result the mining industry could ignore them, and generally did so. The white miners' position remained as bad, if not worse than before.

It was this situation which caused the 1913 strike. Starting on one mine it quickly spread right across the Rand until 19 000 workers were out on a general strike. On a number of mines black workers also struck in support of their demands. The government was caught completely unprepared. In 1910 the Union of South Africa had been formed (out of the 4 previously independent provinces) but still by 1913 no national army had been formed. As a result the government did not have the armed forces to crush the strike, and important concessions had to be made to the strikers (e.g. 10

days holiday on ½ pay, 8½ hour day). Recognition of trade unions was also proposed. Many union members felt much more could have been gained from this position of strength and that union leaders had not been radical enough in their demands.

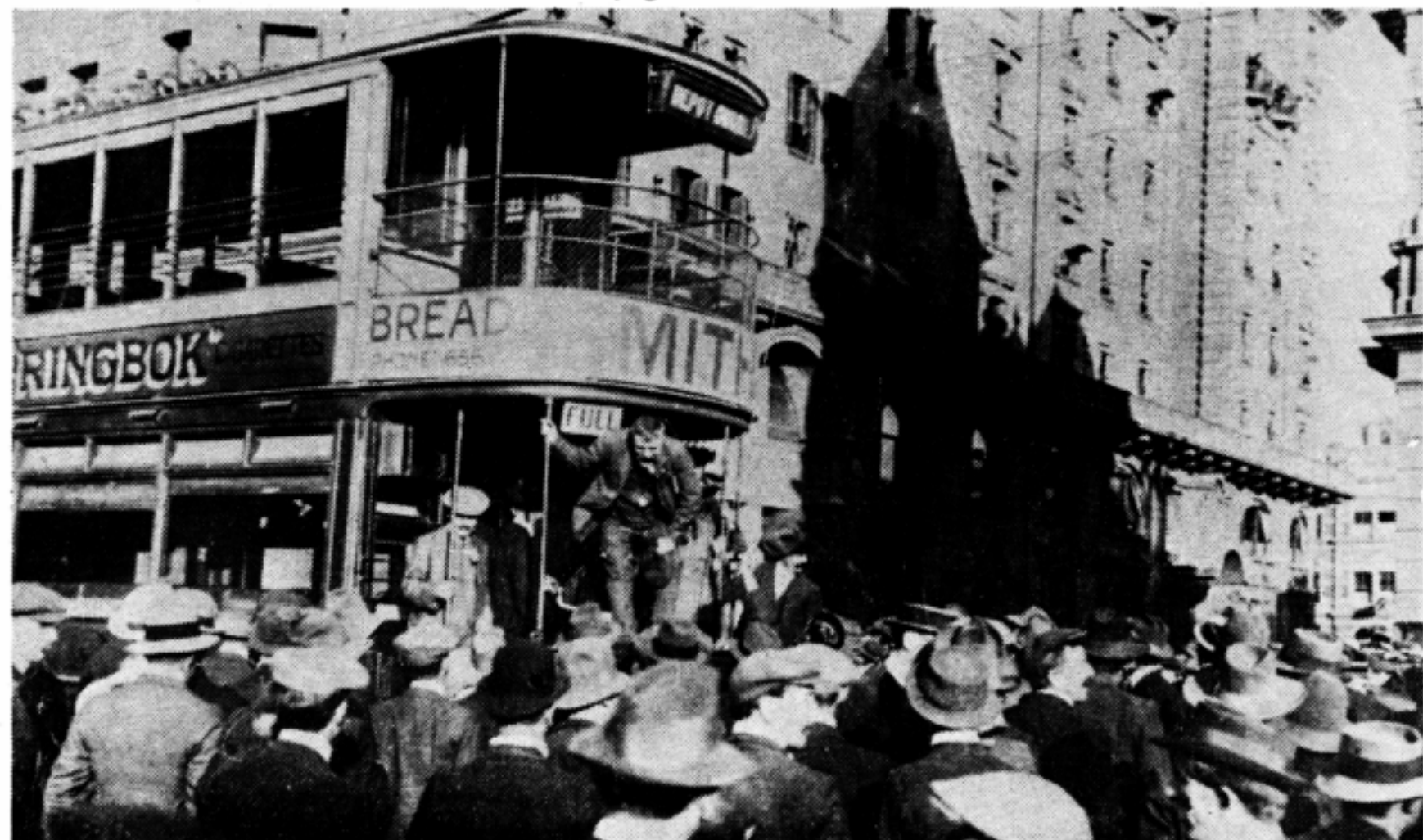
But, at the same time as it made these limited concessions, the government also made preparations to crush the miners in any future conflict. In 1914 the Riotous Assemblies Act was passed allowing the government

- * to prohibit meetings if they endangered peace;
- * to prohibit picketing;
- * to prohibit intimidation (this included swearing and scowling at scabs);
- * to prohibit the breaking of contract by public service workers.

The government also took urgent steps to re-organise its armed forces (including arrangements to transport troops to the Rand by road, if the railway workers also went on strike).

It was this new situation that workers faced when they came out on strike in 1914 after a dispute on the railways. This time however the workers were over-confident. Virtually no preparations were made by the railway union, and the government moved in to crush the strike. The press was censored, the army moved in with artillery and arrested the strike committee. Widespread arrests occurred. The strike quickly broke.

Although the workers had been defeated it seem-



When the trains were held up strike leaders used them as a platform to talk to workers



Mounted police charging strikers in Market Square

ed almost certain that new conflicts would soon arise. In 1914 e.g. the Secretary for Mines reported that:

"It is no exaggeration to say that too many of these men — and those often of the strongest character, loyalty to their union has taken the place of loyalty to their government or to their employers". Both sides prepared for battle. The next conflict however was to be delayed until 1922. In 1914 the First World War broke out, and this shifted the balance of power in favour of the workers. A labour shortage was created by the departure of 3 500 skilled miners for the war. Also both the government and the employers were worried about the disruption of production by strikes while the war was still on. Finally they feared they did not have the forces to crush a serious strike. In this situation the white miners were able to gain many concessions.

For example:

- * conciliation board;
- * works committees of shift and shop stewards which severely restricted management rights over dismissals etc.,
- * the status quo agreement which stopped the substitution of white by the lower paid black miners in semi-skilled jobs.

The balance of power only began to shift decisively against the white miners after the war. By May 1921 there were 5 000 unemployed white workers. In 1921 the price of gold also dropped, causing a profit crisis for the mines. The mine owners therefore decided to attack the miners head on. They demanded:

- * a drop of wages by 25%
- * the substitution of 2 000 whites by blacks in semi-skilled jobs;
- * an end to workers' rights in shop stewards,

committees and conciliation boards.

The miners response was to strike. (Their slogan 'workers of the world unite for a white South Africa'). This quickly blew up into an open war. Between 10–12 March white workers gained control of most of the Rand. Then the government counter-attacked with cavalry, artillery and bombers. 150–200 white workers were killed, 500–600 were wounded and 5 000 arrested. 18 death sentences were handed down by the courts. Four mine leaders were hanged.

After the crushing of the strike the mine-owners pushed through most of their demands. A few concessions were granted by a new government in the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924, (e.g. registration of trade unions and Industrial Councils). The white working class never recovered the militancy of 1913 – 1922.



Strikers barricading Fraser Street to break the charge of the police

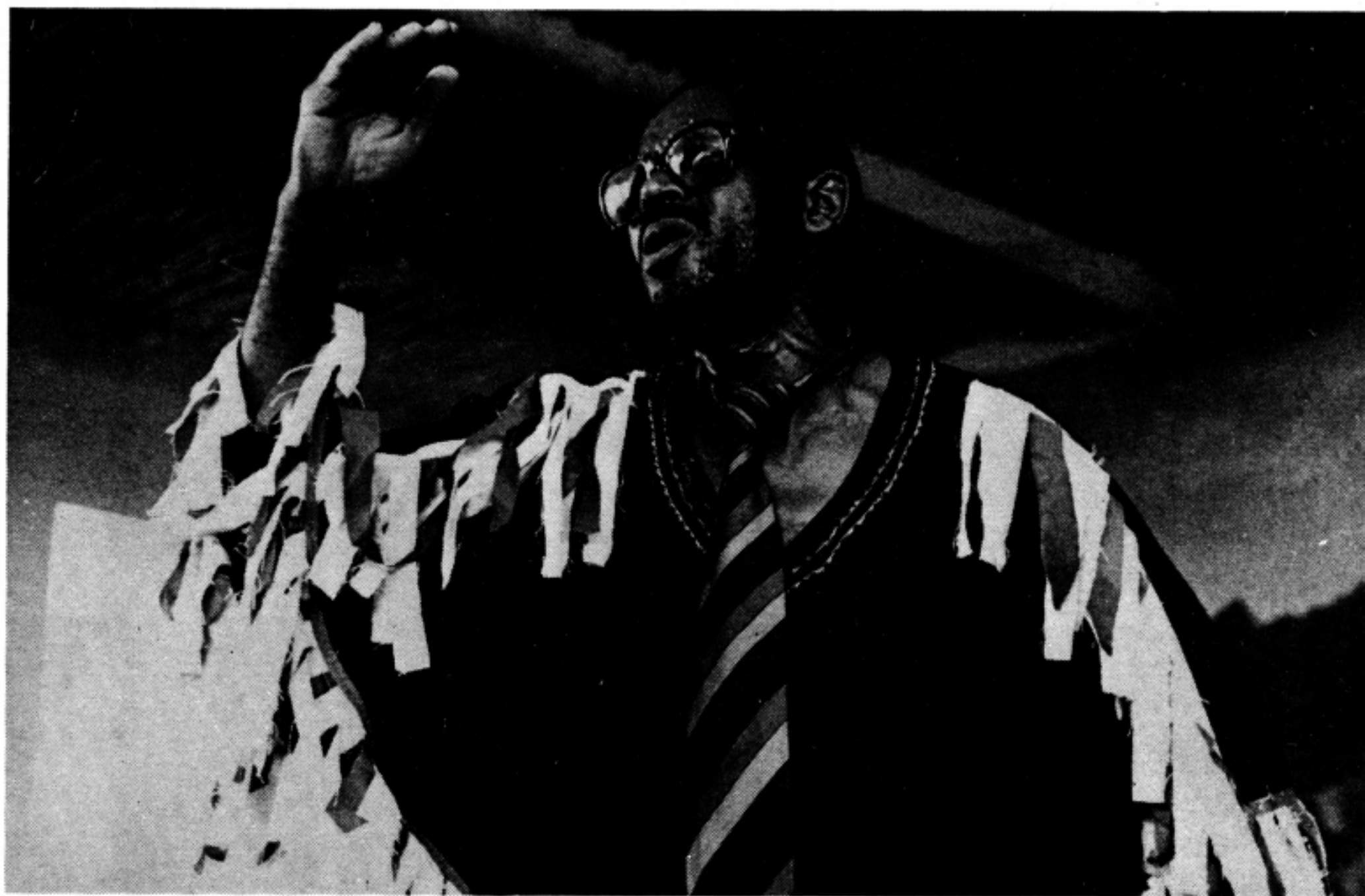
PART EIGHT: 1907-1922 WHITE WORKERS REVOLT

PRAISE POEM TO FOSATU

You, moving forest of Africa.
When I arrived the children were all crying,
These were the workers,
industrial workers,
Discussing the problems
that affect them in the
industries they work for in
Africa.
I saw one of them consoling
others,
Wiping their tears from
their eyes,
I saw wonders, 'cause even
in his eyes the tears did
flow.
Worker, about what is that
cry Maye?
You are crying, but who is
hassling you?
Escape into that forest,
The black forest that the
employers saw and ran
for safety.
The workers saw it too
'It belongs to us', they
said,
'Let us take refuge in it
to be safe from our hunt-
ers.'

Deep into the forest they
hid themselves and when
they came out they were
free from fear.
You are the hen with wide
wings
That protects its chickens.
Protect us too with those
sacred wings of yours
That knoweth no discrim-
ination.
Protect us too so that we
gain wisdom.
Militant are your sons and
daughters.
One wonders what kind of
muti you sprinkle them
with.
Sprinkle us too that we take
after them and act likewise.
FOSATU has given birth
His sons are spread all over
Africa
Even overseas you find his
sons:

FOSATU you are the lion
that roared at Pretoria
North,
With union offices every-
where.
Whilst walking, thinking
about the workers' prob-
lems, I saw a fist flying
across Dunlop's cheek.
Whilst Dunlop was still
shivering,
Perhaps Bakers was asking
'What did my neighbour do
that he is being hurt like
that?'
I saw a combination of fists
bombarding Bakers on his
ribs,
until Dunlop was con-
cerned,
He called the shop stewards
and asked:
'Madoda, please tell us,
Is MAWU now going to
cause trouble at Bakers?'
'No, Banumzane.'
'Who is organising at Ba-
kers?'
'Of course Sweet Food and
Allied Workers Union.'
'But where does it come
from?'
'From FOSATU.'
'This MAWU, where does it
spring from?'
'Also from FOSATU.'
'Same constitution?'



WRITTEN BY ALFRED QABULA

'Yebo.
Same policy, same consti-
tution, don't worry Jim, it's
still another MAWU.'
Chakijana! Wake up and
wear your clothes of power
and wisdom.
Keep your gates closed
FOJATU:
Because the workers' enem-
ies are ambushing you.
They are looking for a hole
to enter through in order to
disband you.
Oh! We poor workers, dead
we shall be if they succeed
in so doing.
Close! Please close!
You are the mole that was
seen by the bosses' impi-
mpis coming slowly but
surely towards the factories.
Fast ran the impimpis and
reported to their bosses and
said:
Baas, Baas, thina bukile lo-
mvukuzane buya losayidi
kalofekhthri kathina.'
'Yah, yah; What is the mvu-
kuzane my boy, tell me,
what is it?
Is it one of FOSATU's
unions?
You are a good muntu.
Mina azi akhela wena 6
room house lapha lohoma-
land kawena.
Thatha lo-machine gun, vala
logates.
Skhathi wena buka lo-union
bulala lo-union
Skhathi lo-union yena nge-
na lapha fekhthri kathina,
amashares phelile.
Lo-union thatha yonke.'
Whilst still wondering what
to do,
There came a messenger and
said:
Better leave everything as it
is,
'Cause the union is already
holding a meeting with the
workers in the canteen.
Not only here - there at
Sasol as well.

FOSATU, we have chosen
you to lead us.
Time and time again we
have been electing leaders,
Electing people whom we
trusted,
Fellow people with whom
we were born and grew up
together.
People who knew all our
sufferings,
Together with whom we
were enslaved.
We had elected them be-
cause we believed they were
a lamp to brighten our way
to freedom.
But to our dismay,
After we had appointed
them, we placed them
on the top of the mountain,
And they turned against us.
They brought impimpis into
our midst to inflict
sufferings upon us.
Some of us, those who were
clever, were shot down to
the dust with bullets.
Others were shut behind
the walls of darkness.
Others opted for fleeing the
land of their birth.
Is FOSATU also going to
hug you with those warm
hands?
His hands that know no
racism?
Prayed we did to our
Mvelinqangi,
Kneeled we did, and prayed
to our ancestors and said:
We pray to you for a leader,
We pray to you for a leader.
Mvelinqangi and the
ancestors have answered us,
And sent to us FOSATU!
Don't disappoint us
FOSATU,
Don't sacrifice us to our
adversaries,
To date your policy and
your sons are comm-
endable,
We don't know what to
happen tomorrow.
Listen, I am a Sangoma,

You have come to me so
that I tell all about you.
I have thrown my bones
and called on my abalozi.
My bones and my abalozi
are telling me this:
Yebo, you have good and
handsome sons.
Also they are intelligent and
quite healthy.
Good Mnumzane, I am
writing you a letter to ask
permission to use this
ground.
We will be discussing and
reporting to our members
about all that we have
achieved.
Here is the agenda so that
you may know about what
we are going to discuss.
There you are big man,
your refusal is a challenge.
Get hold of him and pull
him by the jacket.
Put him into the judgement
box.
Come Senior Judge.
Judge against him for refus-
ing us permission to use this
ground.
Why do you refuse us
permission to use this play-
ground?
The old man said this and
that and he was left
disappointed because the
Judge granted permission.
Don't play with fire, my
boy, because you'll get
burnt.
You are the metal loco-
motive that moves on top
of other metals.
The metal that doesn't bend
that was sent to the engi-
neers but they couldn't bend
it.
Teach us FOSATU about
the past organisations be-
fore we came.
Tell us about their mistakes
so that we may not fall foul
of such mistakes.
Our hopes lie with you,

the Sambane that digs holes
and sleeps in them, whereas
others dig holes and leave
them.
I say this because you teach
a worker to know what his
duties are in his organisa-
tion,
And what he is in the
community.
Lead us FOSATU to where
we are eager to go.
Even in parliament you
shall be our representative.
Go and represent us because
you are our Moses -
through your leadership we
shall reach our Canaan.
They call you the disrupt-
ionist because you dis-
rupted the employers at
their own meeting.
Because you man of old,
asked a question:
'Did you consider the
workers?'
Have you really planned
about FOSATU, the work-
ers' representative?'
No!
Well then we can't continue
because FOSATU doesn't
laugh when they see some-
thing that makes workers
look laughable.
The meeting was disrupted.
All that remained behind
was beers, whiskys, and
disappointment.
The cakes and the cool-
drinks were also disappoint-
ed.
Hero deal with them and
throw them into the Red
Sea.
Strangle them and don't let
loose,
Until they tell the truth as
to why they suck the
workers' blood.
I am coming slowly and I
am watching all that you
are doing.
You're great FOSATU.
Bayethe!
Amandla kubasebenzi!