

FOSATU WORKER NEWS

Federation of South African Trade Unions



JULY No. 39 1985

The blame for the escalating violence in the BTR Sarmcol strike, which has already led to the death of two scabs, must surely rest on the shoulders of the company.

Throughout the legal strike which has now been on the go for over two months, Sarmcol has refused to hold any discussions with the Metal and Allied Workers Union because, the company says, it does not have any members at the Howick plant.

Within two days of the beginning of the strike, the company fired all 1 000 of its employees and began to hire scabs from nearby Pietermaritzburg to replace them. At this stage it has taken on some 800 scabs.

This blatant union bashing has understandably led to increased frustration among the strikers who under South African legislation are not protected against sacking even after having gone through the lengthy procedures required to call a legal strike.

Various laws also prevent the workers from peacefully picketing the factory.

And now they have even been prevented from holding their daily strike meetings as the local magistrate, after being approached by

the police, has banned further meetings in Mpopomeni for 21 days from June 26.

MAWU has warned the police that this action would increase the violence as it 'will drastically undermine the union's ability to maintain some order and discipline'.

Difficulties

During the eight-weeks that the 970 workers have been out they have received no wages or strike pay. The union's ability to raise money for the strikers is severely limited by this country's Fund Raising Act.

All of the workers are experiencing difficulties because they have very little money.

A union doctor, who was asked by the shop stewards to provide a health service to the Mpopomeni community, said that over 20 percent of the children between 2-9 years of age who had come to the clinic were suffering from chronic malnutrition.

'When I asked a mother whose child was dying of pneumonia why she didn't go to the doctor earlier her reply was, Asinimali,' the doctor said.

'The same went for those children with severe middle

ear infection and pus pouring out of their ears,' he added.

So far, the union has been able to provide each of the strikers with a food parcel containing sugar, mealie meal, tea, a cabbage, soup and tinned vegetables each week, but clearly this is not enough.

However, in spite of this suffering, the Sarmcol strikers remain committed to achieving their goal — a fair recognition agreement.

Michael Sibiya, who has a family of six to support, told FOSATU Worker News that although the struggle was a hard one, it was an important one for workers.

'The company is going all out to break the union,' he added.

Investment

As BTR Sarmcol is a British-based multinational company, the benefits of overseas investment in South Africa has understandably become an issue in the strike.

One of the strikers' banners reads 'BTR Negotiate with our union or get out!'

Referring to Sarmcol in a recent document, MAWU says, 'Such exercises of union bashing in the South

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Sarmcol negotiate with our union or get out say striking workers



Waving placards, Sarmcol strikers march through the streets of Pietermaritzburg's Imbali township

Union questions benefits of investment

FROM PAGE ONE

African context are certainly not unknown but when they are committed by giant multinational companies one is seriously forced to question whether foreign investment is of value to the oppressed workers of our country.

'Trade unions are one of the few legitimate forms by which black workers can advance their positions. It is for that reason that trade unions come under constant attack from the State.'

'When such attacks are made worse or encouraged by multinational companies, the odds against South African black workers are massively increased,' the union argues.

In the light of the Sarmcol dispute, MAWU also questioned the benefits of the policy of constructive engagement. Multinationals' role in this policy is supposedly to challenge socially unjust legislation in South Africa and pressurise the government to dismantle apartheid.

However, far from challenging the unjust migrant labour laws, BTR Sarmcol continues to recruit migrant labourers and then houses them in 'archaic' single-sex hostels, the union argues.

And instead of upgrading

and improving workers' communities, Sarmcol is actively destroying them by

recruiting scab labour from distant parts which will leave the Howick communi-

ties without finance and people without food, it adds. 'These are the benefits of

foreign investment reaped by the employers of BTR Sarmcol,' MAWU concludes.



Facing hardship but still determined to carry on — strikers with their food parcels

Police raid lawyers' offices

AT the end of April, the police raided the offices of lawyers acting for Andries Raditsela's family and seized a confidential document dealing with the evidence of a key witness.

During the raid the police warned the lawyers not to see other witnesses they had intended to interview.

The documents were later returned when the lawyers took the Minister of Law and Order and two senior police officers to court for interfering in the 'right to confidentiality between a lawyer and his client'.

In the court, the police also agreed not to stop the lawyers interviewing people in connection with Raditsela's death.

The family, with the assistance of Chemical Workers Industrial Union lawyers, is preparing to sue the Minister of Law and Order, Louis Le Grange, for Andries' death.

CWIU also reports that the same key witness has also been harassed by the police.

'She was subjected to so many late night visits by the police that she decided to seek shelter elsewhere,' a union spokesperson said.

'And the elderly mother of Andries was also rudely awoken at 3.30 in the morning by police demanding she make a statement on the spot,' he said.

In a press statement, the CWIU 'totally' condemned this police harassment and interference.

Eight Kohler workers taken back

WORKERS at Kohler Corrugated in Brakpan recently won the reinstatement of eight workers dismissed for attending the funeral of Andries Raditsela and the scrapping of final written warnings given to another 134.

The Kohler workers, who live in Tsakane the home of Raditsela, felt that they must pay tribute to a FOSATU leader who was also an organiser, a comrade and a friend, by attending his funeral.

Especially, as Andries Raditsela had helped them organise their factory into the

Paper Wood and Allied Workers Union.

However, when the workers returned to work after the funeral the company fired eight and gave the rest final warnings.

Workers opposed this. They held two short stoppages. On June 3, after many negotiation meetings, the company finally gave in.

The Kohler workers' demands were also supported by FOSATU's Transvaal Region where many shop stewards put pressure on their own management.

The Tsakane Residents Association also supported their struggle. They said that if Kohler tried to dismiss all the workers then they would discourage Tsakane residents from scabbing.

Meanwhile, at Nettex, a textile factory at Bellville in the Western Cape, workers called an overtime boycott after their management refused to pay them for the two hours they took off in remembrance of Andries Raditsela.

Prior to the memorial stoppage, the Nettex management told workers that they were

only prepared to allow them 15 minutes. However, the workers decided to go ahead with the full two hours.

'The workers refused to accept that this time would be unpaid, so they refused to work any overtime and to work on public holidays until management agreed to pay them,' National Union of Textile Workers organiser, Mike Abrahams said.

They called off their boycott after the company agreed to pay them for half of the two hour stoppage, he added.

Dorbyl workers to decide whether to go on strike at four Transvaal factories

OVER 2 000 workers at four Dorbyl factories in the Germiston/Wadeville area will soon decide whether to take legal strike action in support of wage and other demands.

And it is likely that other Dorbyl factories where the Metal and Allied Workers Union is represented will follow suit.

The union began separate negotiations with management of the four factories — Dorbyl Railway Products, Dorbyl Railway Products Forging Division, Dorbyl Structural Products and Dorbyl Structures Erection — in April this year.

The workers have demanded a R3 an hour increase on top of the present R1,73 minimum wage, a long service bonus of 20c for each hour worked and an agreed severance pay of one month's wages for each year of

service.

Significantly, housing has also been raised as an issue in the Dorbyl talks. Workers have demanded that the company provide proper family accommodation for all its employees close to the place of work.

The talks have deadlocked on all the demands apart from the issue of housing. On this, the company has asked the union to come forward with more concrete proposals.

Dorbyl said it was not prepared to negotiate on any monetary matter, like the wage and long service demand, outside of the industrial council. This position has been opposed by MAWU on the grounds that while the minimums are set at council level, improvements to these should be negotiated at plant level.

The company also said it would not discuss severance pay arguing that this should only be negotiated when retrenchments are about to occur.

The shop stewards of the four factories recently decided to hold strike ballots to test whether workers are prepared to stop work in support of their demands. It is likely that they will support legal strike action.

Meanwhile, at a Dorbyl shop stewards council, the other MAWU factories decided to raise the same demands with their management.

MAWU sources predict that management's reaction will be the same as it was at the Germiston/Wadeville factories.

This could lead to a legal strike at all eight of the Dorbyl factories in the Transvaal where the union is represented.

New attempt to break deadlock

FURTHER talks between unions and the Eastern Cape motor bosses were held on June 18 in an attempt to break the long-standing deadlock over wages and working conditions.

A new industrial council agreement should have come into operation at the beginning of this year, but ever since November last year, when the talks began, the unions and employers have been unable to reach agreement.

At the recent meeting the employers presented new proposals, however it is unlikely that these will break the deadlock.

At meetings on June 20 the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union shop steward committees at Ford, General Motors and Volkswagen rejected the new proposals. They are now being discussed by general membership.



Looking for unity — delegates at the meeting of independent unions at Ipelegeng Community Centre, Soweto

Huge gathering of unions

ALMOST all of this country's independent trade union movement converged on Soweto on June 9 and 10 to discuss forming a wider unity.

The meeting was called by the unions which have already committed themselves to forming a new super federation in the very near future.

The feasibility committee, formed after the April 1983 unity meeting at Athlone near Cape Town, has now completed its task and has drawn up a draft constitution for the new federation.

But, before taking the final steps toward the federation's inaugural congress, the unity unions decided to see whether

it was not possible to achieve an even wider unity in the interests of furthering the working class struggle.

So, the unions, which had initially been part of the feasibility committee plus others, which have sprung up since April 1983, were invited to attend the Soweto meeting.

With over 200 delegates from 42 unions attending, this was the first mass gathering of South Africa's independent trade union movement.

The unions at the meeting were from varying political positions — some support black consciousness organisations, others support the United Democratic Front, and then

still others, like FOSATU, choose to remain independent.

In order to encourage as much worker participation as possible, unions were urged to send worker delegates to the meeting. Many of the FOSATU unions brought along their entire executive committees.

Differences

And one of the most significant features of the Soweto meeting was workers' desire to see the new federation get off the ground as soon as possible.

However, differences began to emerge on what should be the basic principles of this new federation.

Cape Town Municipal Work-

ers Association's John Ernstzen outlined the five principles which had been agreed upon by the unity unions. These were: worker control; industrial unionism; non-racialism; membership to be based on paid-up membership; and finally national co-operation between the unions affiliated to the federation.

Significantly, the issue of industrial unionism, which earlier in the unity talks was a stumbling block for the general unions, seemed to be less of a problem. Most appreciated the importance of converting into industrially-based unions.

This time, though, non-racialism was the major issue,

particularly for the black consciousness-linked Azanian Congress of Trade Unions.

Majority

But, at the end of the day, the majority of the unions (about 30) stated that they had 'no problems' with the five principles. Some of those who could not commit themselves to the principles immediately either had 'internal problems' or had to refer them back to their members.

The Soweto unity meeting has paved the way for further discussions with these unions about the possibility of their joining the new super federation.

Two unions' merger plans

MERGER talks between FOSATU's Transport and General Workers Union and the General Workers Union are at an advanced stage and could lead to a new 20 000-strong union being formed soon.

And it is understood that similar talks are taking place between the Food and Canning Workers Union and FOSATU's Sweet Food and Allied Workers Union.

These merger discussions have emerged out of the increased cooperation between the unity unions.

TGWU's general secretary, Jane Barrett, told FOSATU Worker News that in August last year delegates from both unions' executive committees met to test whether there was a possibility of a merger.

'At that meeting we just discussed where we were organising,' she said.

The two unions met again

just before the Soweto unity talks. This time the full executive committees attended the meeting.

'We discussed how we could assist each other in organising factories in companies where the other is organised.'

'For example, GWU is organised at Everite in the Cape, so we have now set aside an organiser to organise the Everite factory in the Transvaal,' Sister Barrett said.

Jane Barrett and GWU's general secretary, Dave Lewis, were asked to examine both unions' constitutions and draw up a draft constitution for the merged union.

Sister Barrett said neither unions had given 'formal notification' of merger, however 'we hope to meet again in a few months and if all goes well we could merge either late this year or early next year'.

Transport workers to fight for shorter hours



A male choir from Sizanani MaZulu Transport sings at the AGM

NATAL transport workers pledged to fight for shorter working hours at their annual general meeting held on May 26 at the Lay Ecumenical Centre near Pietermaritzburg.

Union speakers pointed out that unlike most other industries, the legal working hours for both passenger and goods transport services was still 48 hours per week.

On top of this, long haul drivers and ferry drivers are often forced to work an excessive amount of overtime, often with

insufficient sleep, they said.

Workers at the meeting pledged to curb excessive overtime and to fight for proper weekends and for the 'spread-over' shifts in passenger transport to be shortened to 12 hours.

Over 1 000 workers from as far afield as Port Shepstone and Newcastle attended this Transport and General Workers Union annual general meeting. A bus-load of workers also came down from the

Transvaal.

The plight of Kwa Mashu's women street cleaners, who earlier in the meeting performed Mpondo dances, was also discussed. These women earn only R65 a month!

In a resolution, the meeting promised to fight against the undercutting of unskilled workers' wage levels by local authorities.

The resolution also confirmed the union's commitment to win improved maternity rights for women workers.

Table Spinners' two-year battle

AFTER a two-year battle, the National Union of Textile Workers has finally won stop order rights at Western Cape factory, Table Bay Spinners.

NUTW first applied for stop order facilities in August 1983 but was met with stiff opposition from TUCSA's Textile Workers Industrial Union which is party to the industrial council covering this factory.

Some of the TUCSA union's objections were that only unions party to the industrial council should be granted stop order facilities, that the granting of similar rights to other unions would make it easy for them to recruit and retain members and that industrial rest would be promoted if these facilities were available to such unions.

Set aside

The Industrial Court, to which the matter was referred, ruled in favour of the TUCSA union. But refusing to be defeated, the NUTW then took the case to the Supreme Court, where the ruling of the industrial court was set aside.

Permission for the union to have stop-order facilities was finally granted, with effect



Joyful Table Bay Spinners' workers

from July 1, after the matter was referred back to the industrial court.

Workers at the factory were jubilant when they heard the news earlier this month. Tini Sikota, senior shop steward and one of the first workers at the factory to break away from the TWIU to join NUTW, said he

had always been confident the union would win its case.

'I was sure from the beginning that we'd win. Workers at the factory wanted stop order facilities very much. What right did the TUCSA union have to try to block us from getting these when they only have about seven members at the

factory?' he asked.

'It is a good thing we have won. It was always difficult to collect subscriptions. I would sometimes have to spend about an hour — sometimes longer — collecting money from workers on a particular shift. Now shop stewards will be free to attend to other important worker

problems instead of spending all this time collecting money.'

'It will also be easier for us to get stop orders at new factories we organise. The TWIU won't try the same trick again.'

John Copelyn, NUTW's general secretary, agreed the judgement opened the way for the union at other factories.

'The industrial council tried to block us from having stability at the factory. They first said that although we had majority and recognition with management, this was not enough to grant us stop order facilities because we are not party to the industrial council.'

'This new judgement means that workers in the cotton industry, who were previously not allowed to have stop order facilities, will now be able to do so. They will be able to join the union of their choice without obstructions being placed in their way.'

'It is ridiculous for a union which does not represent the workers to have raised technical objections to stop order facilities being granted to one which is clearly representative,' he said, referring to the TWIU.



ON Thursday July 19 last year, Mary Manning was cashing up a customer's shopping at the checkout desk in one of the Dunnes Stores supermarket chain in Dublin, Ireland.

When she came to one of the items, a can of citrus fruit, in the customer's shopping basket, she politely explained that she would not be able to cash up that item. The fruit was 'produce of South Africa'.

Mary Manning was carrying out an instruction from her union, the Irish Distributive and Administrative Trade Union, not to handle South African goods. The store management suspended her that day.

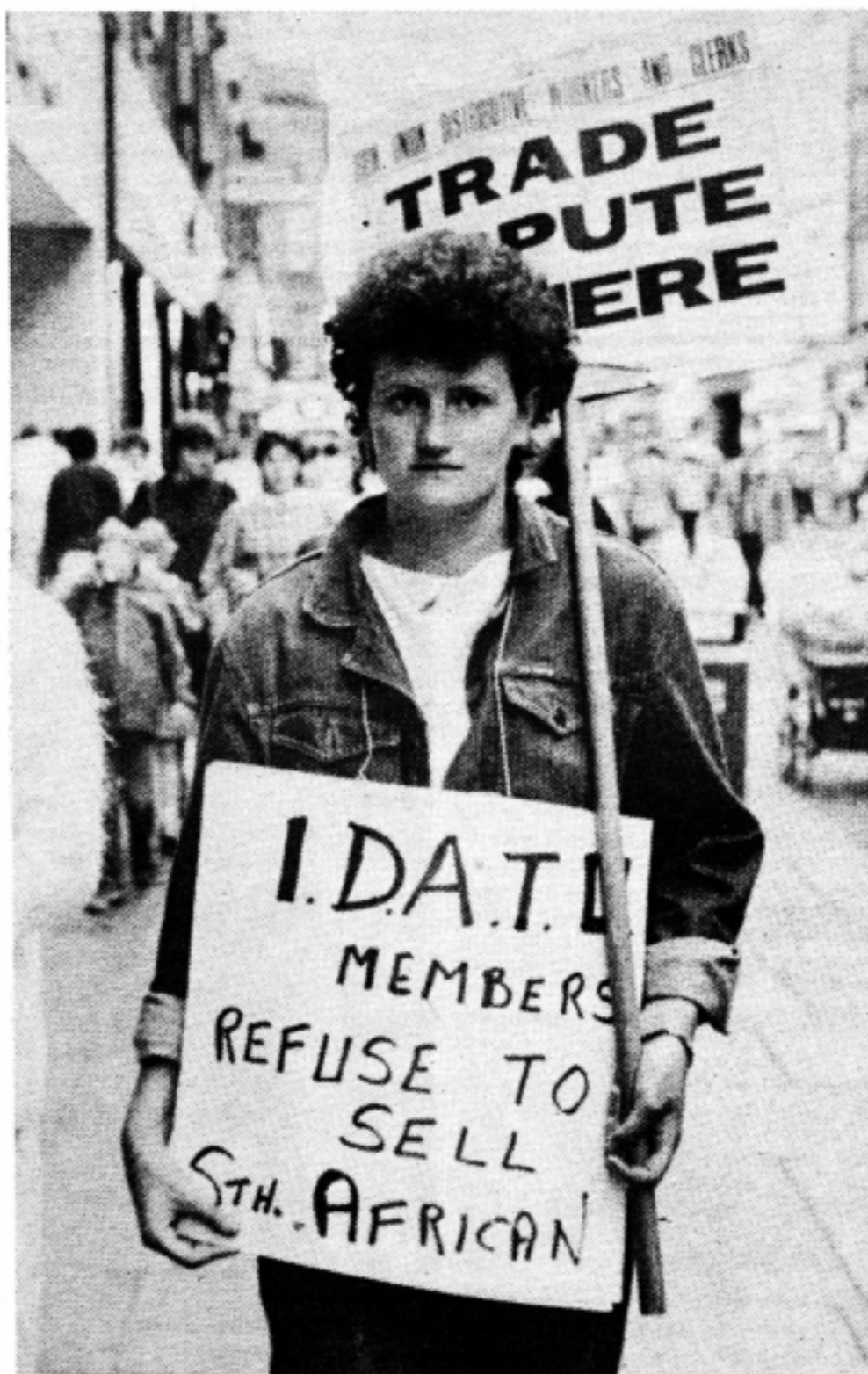
There are 18 full time workers in the shop; the rest of the employees are temporary and part time. All the full timers plus one other are in the union.

When Mary was suspended all but five of them stopped work, contacted their union office and set up a picket outside the store entrance.

They are still on strike. The store has taken on a succession of scab workers to undermine the strike, and makes many deliveries at night to avoid the picketline.

The women readily admit that at the start of the strike, they knew little about South Africa, and were acting more from union loyalty. We reprint here an interview with shop steward, Karen Gearon, from the May/June issue of International Labour Reports.

'None of us knew very much about South Africa when we started the strike. We had had trouble just before all this with the management, and the



Mary Manning pickets the Dublin supermarket

union helped us a lot. So when we received this instruction not to handle goods from South Africa our feeling about it was, well the union had stood by us so we would stick by the union.

'One thing has definitely changed now though — now we will never handle South African goods. Even if the union said we should drop the boycott and go back we would not. We will not touch South African goods again.'

'The thing is that during the strike we have started to learn

about South Africa. When you start to find out something about what it is like to be a black worker in South Africa, well it just makes you determined to find some way of showing solidarity.'

'We do not believe for one second that by our action against Dunnes — or even if the whole of Ireland took the same kind of action — that it would smash apartheid. But we carry on the strike because we want to show our solidarity with the black trade unions

Irish workers refuse to handle S A's products

over there.'

'Some of the public pass our picket in the same way they would ignore any picketline. But we've also had abuse. We've been called nigger lovers. We've been told that the only reason we've been on strike is because we've a thing for black men.'

'We also get harassment from the police. One of the superintendents who is sent to police the picketline is a white South African. One time fourteen cops and two managers from Dunnes literally had us all pinned up against the wall.'

'Another time a couple of the girls were sitting in the loading

bay, which meant that the loading had to be done over their heads. One of the managers brought the shutter down which hit one of the girls badly in the back. But the cops did nothing.'

'Our strike has had quite a lot of attention now. Lots of members of the public do refuse to shop in Dunnes Stores. There has been support from workers in other shops, not in the form of strikes, but other shop workers are refusing to handle South African goods so that non-union shop workers have had to be put on to this work, and some shops have quietly taken South African goods off the shelves.'

'We have been in contact during the strike with unions in South Africa such as the Food and Canning Workers Union who have sent their support to us. We think that in the long term Irish unions should build up their links with non-racial trade unions over there.'

'A lot of unions in Ireland have got policies on South Africa, but I think it's getting a bit embarrassing for them now. Because we are saying — well you have got a policy on boycotting South Africa why don't you implement it. I hope our strike will push more unions to do just that.'

'As for Dunnes, we know the management is not showing any sign of giving in, but neither are we. We know that this is going to be a long strike now, but there is no question of any of us giving up. We would rather give up our jobs than give up the strike — and we're not doing that.'



Shop steward: Karen Gearon

Jaguar settles out-of-court

MUCH of the National Union of Textile Workers' year-long battle to break into the leather industry has been focused around Jaguar Shoes in Pietermaritzburg.

Since the Jaguar workers crossed the floor from TUCSA's National Union of Leatherworkers last year, it has been an uphill struggle to win recognition of NUTW.

Apart from demanding recognition, NUTW has also launched several other industrial court cases revolving around the unfair retrenchment of union members.

Jaguar countered by bringing its own case against NUTW in order to stop an overtime

boycott. The boycott was started by the workers when the company delayed recognition.

Now, however, the battle is drawing to a close and the union has got its foot firmly in the door of the leather industry.

In a recent out-of-court-settlement, the company has agreed to:

- deduct stop orders;
- recognise union shop stewards;
- re-employ the 12 retrenched workers — half now and half in two months time;
- pay the retrenched workers R4 500 in back-pay.

Similarly, an out-of-court set-

tlement has been reached with Pinetown clothing factory, Sea Gift.

More than a year ago the company unfairly retrenched workers.

In the settlement the company has agreed to sign a full recognition agreement; take back all the dismissed workers; and pay out R4 500 in back-pay — this is over and above the three month's wages Seagift was ordered to pay in an earlier industrial court hearing.

At both these factories, TUCSA unions have bitterly opposed the workers' swing across to NUTW.

And they have used their po-



Union lawyer, Halton Cheadle, with the retrenched Jaguar workers

sition on industrial councils to block NUTW's applications for stop order facilities.

However, the settlements,

which were both made orders of court, effectively overcome these technical manoeuvres by the TUCSA unions.

More profit to be made in other lands



The real formation of profit had been discovered. This was not like profit earned in trade. Now the worker got a wage that was needed to keep him or her alive, and the product was sold at a value equal to the amount of time it took to produce. The capitalist had earned his profit by capturing the surplus — produced by the creative power of the working class.

This great new source of profit made the capitalist wealthier. Wealth gave him more power, more education and more knowledge. With these weapons, the parliaments remained firmly in their control. So much so that when workers demanded the vote, the capitalists slowly gave them the vote because they felt confident of their power.

The government passed laws to protect private property, and the police and army became the servants of capitalist greed and the ceaseless whip of competition.

In their greed for profit the capitalists tried to pay as little as possible. Men, women and children were forced to work for starvation wages. But even this was not enough for the capitalists.

The capitalists move out of their own countries

Once the capitalists had discovered the secret to profit in their own countries, they realised that there were other countries where they could do the same. In other words, if they were making profit through trade with far-away lands, then surely they could make even more capital if they introduced wage labour there as well.

Again, however, the capitalists faced big problems. This was because in these lands there were no factories, industries or workers. People were still working on the land, and there was no need for them to look for work. Let us take a closer look at the position in Southern Africa to see how the capitalists went

about trying to solve this problem in their search for bigger profits.

Before 1870 most Africans lived in independent chiefdoms. Some of these chiefdoms were: the Swazi, the Pedi, the Venda, the Zulu, the Basotho of Lesotho, and the various chiefdoms of Ciskei and Transkei, for example the Mfengu and the Pondo. Although these tribal societies had different ways of organising their daily lives, there were many important similarities.

The chief was in control of the land which was handed out to his headmen. These headmen were in charge of individual hamlets or villages. The villages were usually self-sufficient, and each family lived off the land. Whatever they grew (maize, millet etc.), or produced, or hunted was distributed among family and friends. Any surplus which was produced was either given to the chief, or traded with other tribes. Of course, this was not a system without conflict. Not only did the chief and headmen have a lot of power and many privileges which they often used to their own ends, but, as in feudal Europe, there were many battles and wars fought between different tribes. Thus, armies were an essential part of a social system in which people were struggling to eat and live.

Wars and taxes were used to force people off the land

As was the case in Europe, if the capitalists wanted to make more profit they would have to build factories. Before, they could do this, they needed workers, so they would have to force people

off the land. Now this was a long and often violent process, and we can only mention a few of the ways in which they did this.

Firstly, the capitalists had the support of the European governments and their armies. Thus, many wars were fought between the settlers from Europe and the African tribes. In South Africa, soldiers from Britain were often directly involved in these wars. For example, in 1879 they beat the Zulu army which speeded up the breakdown of Cetshwayo's kingdom. With the army defeated, it made it far more difficult for these people to live in the way in which they had before.

These wars were usually fought over the ownership of land. As the capitalists needed more and more labour however, it became necessary to use other ways to force people to work for them. This was especially the case after diamonds were discovered in Kimberley, and gold on the Witwatersrand.

Even before then however, people had to pay taxes with money. But to get money they had to work for the capitalists. Over time, the taxes became more difficult to pay which meant that people had to work for longer and longer periods. For example, the Hut Tax was one of the taxes which people had to pay in the early days of the mining industry. It cost one pound per hut, and a person only had to work for three months on the mines to pay the tax for his family and parents. The Poll Tax was bigger. Two pounds was taxed on every person over the age of eighteen years per year. African unskilled workers were earning between 5 to 19 cents per day. With this money

they had to buy food and clothes for themselves. It took them much longer to work for wages to save enough to pay this tax. This meant that they had to spend less time on their farms.

The pass laws made sure the labour was where it was needed

The government's support for the capitalists' drive for profit can also be seen in the various pass laws which made sure that the capitalists had labour in the areas where it was needed most. The law also helped the capitalists to get labour by passing acts which dispossessed (deprived) Africans of their land.

With the profit the capitalists made on the mines,

and with the capital from Europe, they were able to build factories to make other goods such as clothes, shoes, steel etc. This further increased the need for labour, and has led to the growth in South Africa of a large working class from whose labour capitalists are able to make profits.

As in Europe, workers were not prepared to accept this for ever. The very conditions in which they worked and lived, and the fact that they and their families had very little food or comfort and were very often sick and dying, made them see the need to fight against these conditions.

Next issue: Workers fight back against the capitalists by forming trade unions.

POEM

I arise
I look through the window of my bedroom
And it's time
The clearness of the growing is the end of my joy
Because I know to whom the day belongs
More than a drop of my blood will be sucked
Because I know who profits from my work.

And my money paid in taxes is used to buy more guns
More Casspirs
To assassinate my people
To oppress my people
To detain me when I say I'm exploited.

Ah!

I'm the peasant
From the rising to the setting of the sun
In the black dust of the exploited earth
I'm a fighter for freedom
I'm a poor worker
God bless the workers.

By a student from Newell High School, Port Elizabeth.

BRAZIL A PARTY

Workers' Party president, Luis Igancio da Silva (Lula), addresses Brazilian workers



FOR WORKERS

The man with the beard stood in front of the crowd and began to speak.

'Friends and fellow workers,' he said, 'It's not enough for us to struggle so hard against the employers. Our fight is also against the military who are ruling our country. We cannot change the situation of workers in Brazil without challenging the government, and bringing in a government of workers who will understand our needs. For many years, the military prevented us from organising, but now they are speaking of 'reform'. We must take advantage of this to organise. None of the legal political parties talk about the needs of the workers and the poor. What we need, friends, is a political party to put forward our political demands. We need to form a Workers' Party to take our struggles forward!'

The crowd of workers cheered loudly, and began to chant the name of the speaker over and over: 'Lu-la! Lu-la! Lu-la!'

This scene was repeated in many parts of Brazil, the biggest country in Latin America, where all through the big strikes of 1978 and 1979, Lula had led the car and metal workers union of a big industrial area just outside the city of Sao Paulo.

Lula and his fellow leaders showed workers that for the first time in many years the unions could become instruments of the workers' struggles. Before this, the military had tried to make the unions powerless and many genuine leaders had been locked up in prison or exiled to foreign countries. In many cases the military put its own yes-men in to run the unions.

But Lula and his friends were different. They could see that the workers were sick of accepting bad wages and poor working conditions. They were prepared to stand up and fight for a better deal.

But they also realised that with the backing of their membership and the support received from the community, they could not reach their goals by sticking only to the economic struggles on the factory floor. They also needed to struggle for political rights and political power. That led them to the idea of organising a political party. They decided to call it the Workers' Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores).

Until 1979 those who could not read or write did not have the vote. But after 1979 everyone was allowed to vote. So Lula and his friends thought that it was a good time to create a party for workers. The workers would

lead the party, but they also encouraged others to support them. They remembered that during the strikes, workers received support from people who were not in factory jobs, like teachers, health workers, students, the unemployed and the popular sections of the church. So they invited support from these groups, bearing in mind that most of the party's leaders would be industrial workers.

The idea caught on and all over Brazil there was an enthusiastic reaction. Lula's speeches persuaded many people that it was a good idea. It was a new type of politics as well.

In Brazil for many years the politicians told people how to think and how to vote and the people were given very little say in how politics was run. But the Workers' Party decided it would operate on democratic lines. All the members would have a say in the running of the party. Branches of the party were started all over the country, in the factories and in the community. The leaders must be elected by delegates from the branches. The leaders should respect what was decided by the majority of the members. Everything should be decided by conferences.

The other parties had some respect for democracy, but their branches were only active at the time of elections when they wanted votes from the people. The Workers' Party tried to stay organised from the beginning. It encouraged the branches to be active all the time, not just during the elections.

In any case, the elections could not be trusted to represent the workers of Brazil. When the rules for elections were decided, the workers had never been asked what they thought. In fact from 1964 onwards, it was the army generals who made the rules for the elections. They were not on the side of the workers, and did not want to see the workers in power.

The Workers' Party realised that they could not win power through this system of army-controlled elections. But they still thought it was important to use the elections to get support for their ideas. Their candidates could make speeches all over the country about the need for workers to organise politically and in unions.

This would also be a chance for workers to hear that the party was in favour of a socialist system for Brazil. Brazil is a capitalist country, in which the factory owners and big farmers keep most of the wealth. The richest two percent of the population owns

In March this year, Brazil, the largest country in South America, ended 20 years of rule by a military government. When the army came in to power in 1964, they crushed worker organisations by jailing and murdering trade union leaders. But from 1978 the workers began to fight back and strikes broke out all over Brazil. By 1980 over a million workers had been on strike. The workers were fighting for better pay and working conditions. They also wanted an end to military rule. After the end of the 1980 strikes, the government announced that there would be elections to choose a new government. A number of trade union leaders felt the time was right to form a political party to represent workers' interests. The new party was called Partido dos Trabalhadores (Workers' Party). David Fig of the International Labour Research and Information Group (ILRIG) recently visited Brazil. In this two-part article he looks at the new Workers' Party and discusses its election campaign. It is important for workers in South Africa to see how other workers are fighting their struggles so that we can learn from other countries. But, it is important not to just copy them. The history and political situation in South Africa is often very different to these countries. So, we need to develop our own solutions using the lessons we have learnt from our own experience together with the lessons learnt from the experience of workers in other countries.

50 percent (half) of the country's wealth, while most of Brazil's 40 million workers earn under R55 per week including overtime.

Such low wages for the majority means that there is a lot of poverty, hunger and misery amongst the working class. It is hard for most workers and the unemployed to afford decent houses, and many are forced to live in shanties with no light, water or toilets. As a result there are big health problems.

Under capitalism prices are rising all the time. In South Africa, we are told that inflation is already over 15 percent and rising. But in Brazil inflation is more than 200 percent! For food it is even higher, about 400 percent. This means that if you paid R1 for a loaf of bread last year, this year it would cost R4. And the wages are not going up quickly enough, so people can afford less and less. They often have to go hungry.

By arguing for socialism, the Workers' Party showed that it was interested to see a fairer system in Brazil, where workers shared more in the wealth of the country, where inflation did not rob them of their food and wages, and where they had a direct say in the running of the country.

So the election campaigns were a good chance to ex-

plain that there was an alternative to the capitalist system.

It was also a chance for some candidates from the Workers' Party to get into parliament and local government, to make their voices heard more widely and more often.

The first chance of elections came in November 1982. Voters had to choose MP's for parliament, some senators, municipal councils, mayors and state governors (Brazil is divided into 23 states). Until then, the army had chosen all the state governors; this was the first time in 18 years that the people were given the chance to choose governors for themselves.

In the 1982 elections, Lula was put forward as the Workers' Party candidate for governor of the state of Sao Paulo, the state with the biggest number of workers in Brazil.

But the army government tried to stop him. In the strikes of 1980, Lula and 15 other trade union leaders were arrested by the security police. The army then put its own agents in to run the union, but they were very unpopular, and could not put a stop to the strikes. Lula and the others were charged with being a threat to the national security. But they never served their sentences of three and a half

years and were eventually released from detention. So the army could not interfere with Lula's political plans.

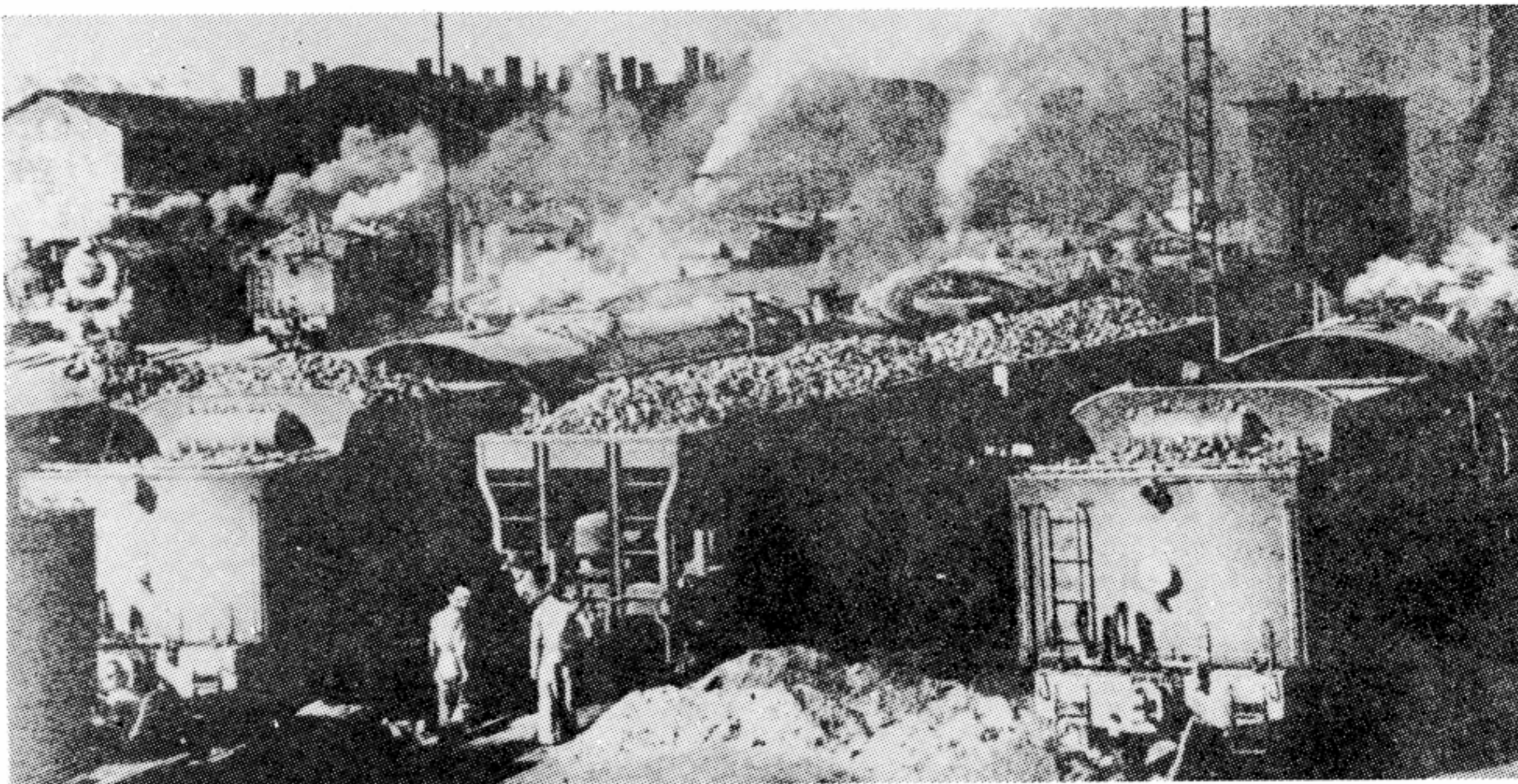
During the elections he and other party candidates went round the country building support for the Workers' Party. They spoke to huge crowds in the big cities and in the rural areas.

But, in the end, when the results of the elections were announced, the Workers' Party had not won so many votes as they expected. Lula and many others had failed to win their seats. There were a few successful Workers' Party MP's elected to the parliament and to the state assemblies. There were also a number of city councillors and even a mayor or two elected from the Workers' Party. For example, in the big city of Rio de Janeiro, a black woman from a shanty town area was voted on to the city council to represent the Workers' Party. But all in all it was a disappointing performance.

In Brazil overall, only four out of every hundred voters (4 percent) voted for the Workers' Party candidates. In the industrial areas of Sao Paulo, about 10 percent of the votes went to the party. NEXT ISSUE: We look at the major reasons why so few people voted for the Workers' Party in the elections.

The making of the WORKING CLASS

In the last issue of FOSATU Worker News we looked at the rise and fall of the Trades and Labour Council. Although some African workers were organised into parallel unions by some of the industrial unions in the Trades and Labour Council, little effort was made to organise African workers as a whole. This task was left to the unregistered African unions which joined together to form the Council of Non-European Trade Unions (CNETU). This article looks at the rise and fall of CNETU in the 1940's and the early 1950's



The coal yards: Scene of a succesful strike in June 1940

The Council of Non-European Trade Unions was formed in November 1941. Its membership at that time was 37 000, divided into 25 affiliated unions. By 1945, it had grown to 158 000 members and 119 unions, half of which were based in the Transvaal. Just four years later the power of CNETU was broken. Sixty-nine of its affiliates had collapsed, and it had been weakened by internal splits. In 1955 when the remaining CNETU unions joined SACTU only 12 000 members remained. How did CNETU come to be the largest federation of black industrial workers to grow up in South Africa before the 1980's? What caused its rapid decline? To answer these questions we have to look back at the middle of the 1930's.

CNETU was formed out of two groups of unions which had grown up in the middle of the 1930's. The first, the Joint Committee of African Trade Unions, was led by Max Gordon, secretary of the Laundry Workers Union. The second, the Coordinating Committee of African Trade Unions, was led by Gana Makabeni, an old ICU leader who later became secretary of the African Clothing Workers Union.

Both groups concentrated their energies on the Witwatersrand. Here industry was beginning to expand rapidly after the great recession of the early 1930's. The number of African workers working in industry in the Transvaal grew from 36 153 in 1932 to 80 722 in 1936. Wages were extremely low and working conditions were bad. Workers, obviously, needed trade unions to protect them. However, the new unions faced serious problems. Workers were

slow to join because of the failures of the ICU and of the Communist Party linked unions in the late 1920's and early 1930's. Strikes were also heavily repressed. In 1938, for example, Max Gordon's Laundry Workers Union was almost broken when 13 of its leaders were arrested after a strike. The leaders of the new unions therefore started cautiously. The wages of some African workers were fixed by industrial council agreements and wage determinations. Many employers broke the law and paid lower wage rates. The new unions, therefore, started to take up these cases with the department of Labour, which then forced employers to pay back the money they had withheld.

After 1937 the new unions also used the Wage Board, a government committee, to demand new wage determinations for African workers and in this way won many wage increases. Their biggest success came in 1939 when thousands of workers in the distributive trade (working in warehouses and shops) gained a big wage increase in this way. Thousands of distributive workers met at Wemmer Sports Ground to celebrate the victory when it was announced.

As a result of these gains, the unions grew in size. By 1939 Gordon's group had seven unions and 16 000 members. Makabeni's group had ten unions and 4 000 members. The Second World War, which broke out in 1939 and lasted till 1945, pushed unionisation forward even faster. Industry began to produce metal goods, tyres, clothing and many other things for the armies fighting in Europe, North Africa and Asia. Old factories expanded. New fac-

tories sprang up. Thousands of blacks flooded into the towns to find work. At the same time inflation increased. Prices rose by 50 percent between 1939 and 1942. Workers became increasingly dissatisfied and a strike wave swept through South African industry. In 1941 at least 37 strikes broke out. In the first half of 1942 30 more were recorded, and this continued for the rest of the year.

The government was frightened, but it felt unable to use repressive measures. Japan had joined the war on the side of Hitler and had won many victories. There seemed a chance that Japan might even invade South Africa. Whose side would the oppressed black workers fight on then? So the government softened its policy. Influx control was relaxed. The trade unions were given informal recognition, and were asked to settle strikes.

This was a time of great opportunity for the unions. Workers were militant, the government was on the defensive and new unions were being formed. The most important of these was the African Mine Workers Union which was formed in 1941 with the help of the ANC and the South African Communist Party. Finally, in November 1941, CNETU was formed to help coordinate the activities of the different union groups.

CNETU was the first national federation of black industrial unions to be established in South Africa. Although it was strongest in Johannesburg, it also had many affiliates in Port Elizabeth, Pretoria, East London, Cape Town, Bloemfontein and Kimberly. For a time, there seemed a real possibility that it would become the spearhead of the work-

ers' struggle in South Africa.

But CNETU also faced many problems. By the end of 1942 it became clear that the advance of the Japanese armies had been stopped. The South African government also argued that strikes were causing inflation. They therefore passed a law, called War Measure 145, which said that anyone who went on strike would get a fine of 500 pounds (R9 000 today) or three years in prison.

Strikes now became much less frequent. This was partly because trade union leaders were afraid of the fines, but there were other reasons as well. Many of the strikes in 1941 and 1942 had been spontaneous and had been started by workers without the involvement of the trade union leaders. A part of the trade union leadership had got into the habit of relying on the Wage Board and the Labour Department, and did not pay enough attention to building up a strong factory floor base. Also, when Russia joined the war on the side of Britain and America, many South African communist party activists argued that the most important job of workers was to help the war effort. They felt that production for the war should not be damaged by strikes.

There were also other organisational problems. Firstly, most of the CNETU unions had difficulty in building up strong factory floor organisation because of the rapid turn over of workers in their fac-

ories. Workers in many industries only stayed a few months in one job before moving on to another. In transport, for example, labour turn over was 157 percent (that is 157 new workers were employed for every 100 jobs within one year). In the steel industry turn over was 101 percent, while in the food industry it was 90 percent. With so much movement of workers in and out of jobs it was difficult to build up strong factory floor leadership or organisation.

Secondly, CNETU was a national federation, but its affiliated unions were usually not organised nationally. In 1945, for example, when CNETU had 158 000 members, these were divided among 119 affiliates. There were often two or three separate CNETU unions in the same industry. Almost none of them organised beyond one local area.

By 1943 these problems had created serious strains within CNETU. From early on, there had been at least three political 'tendencies' or positions within CNETU. Some of the union leadership supported the South African Communist Party, others supported a 'Trotskyite' position (this was socialist but opposed the South African Communist Party and the policy of supporting the war), still others supported an ANC position. These differences blew up over the issue of strikes. Daniel Koza, who was linked to the Trotskyite group and who led the African Commercial and Distributive Workers Union, demanded more militant strike action and formed

the Progressive Trade Union Group within CNETU. In the 1945 annual conference of CNETU they made their challenge to seize control of the organisation. This failed, and they were expelled.

CNETU was seriously weakened by this conflict. It was finally broken by more repressive government action. After the war ended in 1945 the CNETU unions felt more free to use the strike weapon. By this time, however, it was already too late because the government also felt free to use more repressive action. This became clear in the 1946 mine workers' strike. In August 1946 over 70 000 African mine workers came out on strike for higher wages, led by the African Mine Workers Union. Thirty-two mines out of 45 on the Reef were affected. Police repression was extreme. Striking workers were driven out of the compounds by batons and bayonets and forced to go to work. Twelve strikers were killed and 1 200 injured. CNETU called for a general strike in support, but it was already too weak to carry this out.

More blows to CNETU, came with the arrests of many of its leaders and the banning of many trade union and political leaders under the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950. By 1953 CNETU had split up. The workers' movement was left leaderless. Only in 1956 was this gap filled when the South African Congress of Trade Unions was finally formed.

The families of the 20 people who were shot dead at Langa on March 21 will find no comfort in the findings of the Kannemeyer Commission.

Mr Justice Donald Kannemeyer has acted much like a father who has found out that his child has seriously erred but is scared to give him a good hiding, instead he only gives the child a sharp rap on the knuckles.

And like a rap on the knuckles, the Kannemeyer report will soon be forgotten. There is little chance that a mere rap on the knuckles will get the South African Police to mend their ways. It was Sharpeville in 1960, Langa in 1985 — where next?

Mr Justice Kannemeyer, appointed to investigate the the Langa shootings, found that:

- Captain Goosen deviously obtained an order banning funerals on Sundays by arguing that if they were held on Sunday they would endanger public peace. He then proceeded to obtain another order saying that the funerals could only be held on Sunday because, if held on a weekday work would be boycotted.

- The funerals planned for March 21 having been banned, the scene was set for a confrontation, an eventuality with which the police were not equipped to deal. Those stationed at Uitenhage had no teargas, rubber bullets or birdshot which are the three standard types of equipment used in riot control.

- The fact that Warrant Officer Pentz had no tear gas prevented him from attempting to disperse the crowd at Maduna square by using it.

- The fact that no rubber bullets or birdshot was available is a matter of grave concern. For riot control police to be in a position where, if they are compelled to take action, the death of rioters was all but inevitable, is one which should have never been allowed to occur.

- The fact that only SSG and no birdshot cartridges were issued both at Uitenhage and Port Elizabeth can only be the result of a policy deliberately adopted.

However, Mr Justice Kannemeyer concludes that 'the blame for the deaths of the persons killed in the incident and for the injuries sustained by others cannot be attributed to the error of judgement or the human frailty of any one person'.

This conclusion is reached by Mr Justice Kannemeyer in spite of the fact that he found that 'had the holding of the funerals not unnecessarily been prohibited on doubtful grounds there can be little doubt that the procession would have passed through Uitenhage without incident along the normal route from Langa to Kwanobuhle which happens to pass through part of the town.'

And that 'had proper equipment been available the gathering may well have been dispersed with little or no harm to the persons involved.'

Not surprisingly, the government's only response to the Kannemeyer Report has been to say that it would review the procedures for applications for bans on funerals and that it would constantly review the manpower, equipment and training needed by the police to carry out riot control efficiently.

The government has also set up a Board of Inquiry to consider 'matters relating to certain findings by the commission'.

Although, Mr Justice Kannemeyer clears the police of blame for the deaths, in the report he is highly critical of much of their version of what happened at Langa on March 21.

He dismisses the police's story that the crowd was on its way to attack the white residents in Uitenhage because, he says, if this was their intention 'it is improbable that girls and children would have been included'.

Also, he says, that the police's evidence regarding the weapons carried by the crowd is 'exaggerated'. The police had claimed that the crowd was armed with sticks, metal pipes, planks, petrol bombs and stones.

He adds that 'no petrol bombs were thrown at the police or at their vehicles during the confrontation'.

But, he accepts police evidence which said that a Rastafarian and another man near the front of the procession were in possession of petrol bombs although neither of these bombs were ignited.

On whether a boy on a bicycle was at the front of the crowd or not, Mr Justice Kannemeyer says that the boy's presence 'at or near the head of the procession must be accepted and that the police evidence explaining the presence of the bicycle on the scene after the shooting must be rejected'.

Moving on to the 'hail of stones' police claim was thrown by the crowd, Mr Justice

Kannemeyer says 'surprisingly enough none of the crew members of either Casspir were hit by a stone and not a single stone fell into either of the Casspirs....It is incredible that a hail of stones thrown from a distance of ten paces or less should miss all the people at whom they were aimed.'

'No police witnesses can explain why the tarred surface was not strewn with stones immediately in front of the Casspirs. Fouche's suggestion that they must have bounced back and rolled down the incline is unacceptable,' he adds.

'The inevitable conclusion is that the stone attack as described by Fouche and his men was fabricated in order, in part, to justify the shooting. Fouche eventually admitted that the shooting was not caused by this stoning,' he concludes.

However, Mr Justice Kannemeyer dismisses the evidence given by witnesses who said that after the incident police had gathered stones and put them on the road.

'It is improbable that the stones were placed on the roadway by police. First, had they wished to create evidence, one would have expected far more stones to have been used....Had the police decided to fabricate evidence it is inconceivable that they would not have placed stones close to the Casspir,' he says.

In the report, Mr Justice Kannemeyer is also critical of the taunting remarks made by police in Maduna Square before the shooting.

Witnesses said that police in a Casspir shouted 'throw, throw' and 'Ons gaan julle wys vandag'.

Mr Justice Kannemeyer says these remarks are 'particularly disturbing because they were provocative and would have been likely to incite the crowd to retaliation and violence.'

'These are not the types of remarks which the members of a patrol whose duty it is to maintain law and order should make and show a serious lack of discipline.'

However, having said 'some of the police evidence was exaggerated', Mr Justice Kannemeyer goes on to accept the rest of their evidence and concludes that the police were justified in making a stand where they did and that the 'awesome' decision to open fire was understandable.

It is difficult to understand how Mr Justice Kannemeyer can accept that the crowd was on its way to a funeral and not on its way to kill whites in Uitenhage and yet conclude that the police were justified in shooting at least 20 people and injuring at least 137 others.

And his only message to the police at the end of the report is: next time make sure you are properly equipped to disperse 'riotous crowds'. This is hardly enough to prevent the same thing happening again.



Police photograph taken moments after the Langa shooting

Kannemeyer Report



A Bata home-worker sews the uppers of a pair of shoes for which she will be paid 40c

Bata

'Proud partners in KWAZULU'S progress'



CLC's Roger Southall speaks to the Keate's Drift workers (on the right is Canadian Consul Ed Willer)

Hidden away in the middle of rural KwaZulu, Keate's Drift seems the most unlikely place to put a factory. However, the generous incentives paid to companies for the 'inconvenience' of moving to decentralised industrial areas has attracted giant multinational, Bata Shoe company to this small village.

Under the smokescreen of its declared aim of providing much needed jobs for the people living in the homeland of KwaZulu, Bata is also able to operate a system of exploitation which reminds one of early industrial Britain. A large number of women workers slave away at home sewing the uppers of shoes all because the company says 'there is no room at the factory'. Bata employs these workers on a temporary basis and pays them a piece rate of about R3-R4 for 10 pairs of shoes.

Under this out-work system there are many 'savings' for Bata. It does not have the expense of expanding its factory to accommodate these workers, nor does it have to pay them a standard weekly wage. The out-workers' wages fluctuate depending on how many shoes the company decides to hand out to them. If there is no work they don't need to be paid at all. But, even when there is a lot of work, their wages are still way below the poverty wages being paid to the more 'fortunate' workers employed inside the factory.

Since the early 1980's when Bata began removing workers from the factory and em-

ploying them as out-workers, the company has been able to quietly carry on with this highly effective system of exploitation. After all, rural workers are more pliable than their more knowledgeable urban counterparts. Or so the company thinks. However, these 'simple' rural workers committed a grave offence. They dared to join a union — without even letting Bata management know that they were doing so! Over 580 employees out of a total workforce of 700 have signed up with the National Union of Textile Workers. Not surprisingly almost 100 percent of the out-workers have joined.

The National Union of Textile Workers is not unfamiliar with Bata's operations in the homeland areas of South Africa. Back in 1981, workers from another Bata factory in the homelands, KwaZulu Shoe Company, joined the union. At the time, the union exposed the appallingly low wages being paid at this factory at Loskop. The majority of the workers were being paid less than R117 a month.

Although, the union represented the majority of the Loskop workers, Bata refused to meet union representatives. Letters, telexes and telephone calls requesting a meeting with the company were unanswered. When the Loskop workers eventually went on strike in an attempt to force Bata to meet NUTW, the company was able to smash the union by shifting production to other fac-

ories and drastically reducing the workforce to about 225 workers.

But, now the union is back, having learnt many lessons from the Loskop saga. Predictably, NUTW's requests for a meeting with company representatives have once again gone unanswered.

However, FOSATU's policy of developing strong links with unions worldwide is beginning to pay off. Canada's major union federation, the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) has promised to support the struggle of the Keate's Drift workers. So, Bata not only faces the campaign being waged in South Africa by the NUTW, it also faces a campaign back in its home country.

The Canadian press has slammed Bata for not keeping to the Canadian government's Code of Conduct for firms operating in South Africa. Bata has violated the Code by paying poverty wages and by refusing to meet the union that the workers have chosen to represent them.

Bata has responded to these criticisms by saying that it pays 'some of the highest wages in the industry' and 'provides the most equitable and best working conditions'.

'By creating massive employment for blacks and providing basic footwear requirement at affordable prices, we feel that we are positively contributing to the present and future standard of living of the majority of the population,' Bata said in a reply to criticisms levelled at it in Canada's Globe and Mail newspaper.

The Keate's Drift workers certainly do not believe that the company is 'positively' contributing to their standard of living. 'Hawu,' exclaimed about 100 workers when a representative from the CLC told them that Bata in Canada had said that it 'takes care of its employees and pays them very well'.

Roger Southall, a CLC representative, and Ed Willer, the consul responsible for labour affairs at the Canadian Embassy in Pretoria, recently travelled to the remote village of Keate's Drift to hear what the workers themselves had to say about Bata's employment practices.

The weekend meeting

was held at the local school. Most of the Bata employees arrived dressed in colourful traditional Zulu costume — bright purple cloaks, bangles, bead necklaces, and red headresses. Only one feature of their costume revealed their work environment — they all wore Bata takkies.

Many of the workers arrived sewing the uppers of shoes — sewing as they walked.

CLC's Roger Southall told the workers that the Canadian unions were committed to 'intensifying its efforts to see that you are properly represented by the trade union of your choice in these plants.'

He said the CLC 'deplored' the failure of the Canadian government to demand a meeting with Bata's head office in Canada.

Roger Southall said that the CLC would like to see Bata following Canada's Code of Conduct but obviously 'moral pressure' was not enough to force the company to stick to the Code.

'We want to see Keate's Drift workers freely represented by the union of your choice and to see Bata engaging in collective bargaining with that union,' he said.

He told the workers that the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions had chosen Bata Shoe Company as a target company for this year. And that the International Textile Garment and Leather Workers Federation together with the CLC would be holding a seminar on Bata towards the end of this year 'with special emphasis on South Africa'.

Initially, the workers were slightly reluctant to speak about conditions at the factory at the meeting because, as one worker said 'if we say something here it will get back to management on Monday and we will be victimised. And victimisation here means dismissal'.

The workers began by outlining the wages they received. The average wage after 10 year's service was about R52 per week for employees working inside the factory itself.

Out-workers are paid R4 for sewing the uppers of 10 pairs men's shoes, R3,92 for women's shoes and R3,13 for 10 pairs of children's shoes.

The company decides how many pairs of shoes to give

to each outworker. The women said that sometimes they are given 30 pairs to do a day which meant that they had to work 'all day and night' or get family or friends to help out.

Workers said that when they complained to company management about their wages they were told 'to go and get more money from the union'.

The Bata workers reported that the company had only introduced paid sick leave in October last year after NUTW began organising in the area.

One worker complained that a death in the family was not considered a just excuse to stay off work which, she said, made things difficult as traditionally 'a wife must not work while there is a body in the house.'

Among the workers at the meeting were eight employees who were dismissed in December last year.

One told of how she together with another six were called in to the manager's office and asked who were the other strong union members. 'We refused to say as we did not want to expose the others,' she said.

They were then questioned about NUTW. 'The manager told us that he was disappointed that we had mixed ourselves with outside people. We were then given five minutes to decide whether we wanted to continue with an outside organisation or continue with Bata,' she said.

'The manager also told us to take a group of people to tell the others not to continue with an outside organisation. But when we reported back to workers they said that they had wanted to join the union and would not be bossed around by management,' she added.

On December 14 the eight union activists at the plant were dismissed. No reasons were given.

'We are putting our hope in our union, the Canadian unions and all people interested in our struggle to help us.'

'For us who were dismissed we are just praying that the struggle for recognition is a success even if just for those in the factory,' one of the sacked workers concluded.

FOSATU EDUCATION WORKSHOP



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UNION STALLS
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**PLAYS
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WORKER LECTURES
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