

# AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS NATIONAL CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE JUNE 1985

## C. NPC DOCUMENTS C5. The Labour Front

COMMISSIONED BY THE NATIONAL  
PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE ANC  
CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE, 1985

### REPORT ON THE LABOUR FRONT

#### 1. Introduction

This report, conscious of the fact that the majority of the comrades attending this Conference may not be familiar with the current struggles going on within the labour front, will attempt to give a general survey of a number of trade union activities and their problems.

This paper, very briefly will also endeavour to give account of the historic role that SACTU played and continues to play in the struggle for political and economic emancipation and its attitude towards the working class struggle in a capitalist society like ours.

In discussing the role of SACTU, the report covers briefly the 30th Anniversary of SACTU and May Day activities inside the country; above all SACTU's influence within the labour movement.

An attempt has been made to give a brief account of the strike activities since the early '70s with particular emphasis on the strikes of the past two years. Unemployment is one of the most serious problems facing the trade union movement in our country today.

We have also discussed the problems leading to the appointment of the Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions and the results of their recommendations.

Trade union unity is at the top of the trade union agenda, the report tries to highlight the most important aspects of the unity meetings.

As a result of the growing militancy of the black trade unions, the regime has enacted its labour laws in such a way that would frustrate the unions. A brief examination of these aspects of

the Labour Relations Amendment Act and the influx control laws have been made.

#### 2. The Role of SACTU

##### 2.1 In the national liberation movement

Because of the popularity of Marxism and class analysis, today in our country, there are many organisations and individuals who claim to be fighting for socialism; for working class power. "The Marxist tendency of the ANC", AZAPO, the Trotskyist Group and certain intellectuals within the trade union movement are such examples.

These groups question the role of workers and the role of SACTU in the current struggle for national liberation against apartheid colonialism. They argue that the national liberation movement does not guarantee the leading role of the working class now or in the future.

This school of thought prefaces this argument by posing the question about whether our struggle is a class or a national struggle. Obviously, wrong questions result in wrong answers. It is incorrect to pose the class and national struggle as alternatives. They are mutually reinforcing.

All struggles are basically class, but these struggles take different forms. National oppression in South Africa is an institutional framework within which capitalist exploitation takes place. On the other hand, the national liberation struggle is the form which the struggle takes in our country. Each class aligns itself according to its interests in this struggle.

SACTU and the trade union movement in general are not political parties.



They include in their ranks workers of different levels of development. It would only benefit the enemy, were we to make the struggle for socialism a condition for participation in mass democratic organisations and in the struggle for political emancipation.

The founding conference of SACTU in March 1955, boldly adopted the declaration that:

"The future of the people of South Africa is in the hands of its workers. Only the working class, in alliance with other progressive minded sections of the community, can build a happy life for all South Africans, a life free from unemployment, insecurity and poverty, free from racial hatred and oppression, a life of vast opportunities for all people".

A few months after the Congress of the People in June 1955, SACTU, in conformity with its principles adopted the Freedom Charter as its political programme. The relevant chapters of the Freedom Charter quoted in part, declare that:

"...the national wealth of our country, the heritage of all South Africans shall be restored to the people; the mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole. All other industry and trade shall be controlled to assist the well-being of the people. All people shall have equal rights ... to enter all trades, crafts and professions".

The Charter goes on to say:

"All who work shall be free to form trade unions, to elect their officers and to make wage agreements with their employers; the state shall recognise the right and duty of all to work and to draw full unemployment benefits. Men and women of all races shall receive equal pay for equal work...".

The primary task of SACTU is to organise the unorganised workers and guide the trade union movement in the struggle for political and economic emancipation irrespective of political, ideological, racial and sexual differences. Hence the decision by SACTU in 1955 to join the Congress Alliance led by the African National Congress and its full commitment and participation in the Alliance.

## 2.2 In the struggle inside the country

The working class as the most exploited and the most numerous class should

necessarily constitute the mass base of every democratic organisation. The leadership of such organisations in the course of the struggle, must increasingly reflect the interests of the most oppressed and exploited people of our country – the working class and its allies.

The participation of the trade unions in the broad democratic struggles will deepen and extend the political consciousness of the workers and their role in the revolution. Distancing the trade unions from the mass democratic struggle, hinders the political development of the workers. It is on this basis that SACTU from its inception continues to participate in the campaigns initiated by the Congress Alliance.

It is also for this reason that SACTU continues to call upon the trade unions and workers to participate in the mass democratic struggles, namely, the anti-constitutional campaign, campaigns against repressive laws, campaigns against Bantu Education and against the reactionary features of the Labour Relations Amendment Act.

SACTU calls upon the workers and trade unions to join the broadest mass democratic organisations and fronts. SACTU continues and will continue to work with even those unions who are not affiliated to the UDF. We however urge them to work jointly with the UDF and its affiliates.

The leading role of the working class now and in a future South Africa, will be assumed to the extent that SACTU and the workers successfully participate in the Alliance and in the struggle for national liberation. We in SACTU are determined to ensure that workers play a leading role in the struggle and we are aware that this can only be assured by us, through our participation, determination and consistency.

We also call upon unions affiliated to reactionary trade union centres like TUCSA to disaffiliate and join the main stream of the democratic trade union movement and to support political campaigns launched against the apartheid colonial monster.

In order to give effective political leadership in the country, SACTU is in the process of establishing cells or cores in every factory and every industry. In this way, we can guarantee that the policy and principles of SACTU are entrenched at grass-root level.

In trying to coordinate its external and internal activities, SACTU is in the process of setting up an internal



leadership to:

- i) Work out programmes of action for the trade union movement and coordinate activities at both national and regional levels;
- ii) To create the basis for the understanding of working class politics in the trade union movement;
- iii) To bring workers closer to the struggle for national liberation;
- iv) To educate the workers about the struggle against imperialism and capitalist exploitation;
- v) To ensure coordination between the trade union movement and the rest of the mass democratic movement;
- vi) To assist in the organisation of the unorganised and unemployed workers;
- vii) To assist in the organisation of the agricultural and domestic workers;
- viii) To coordinate the internal and external activities;
- ix) To ensure the formation of trade unions based on the industrial principle; and
- x) To assist in the formation of one national democratic non-racial trade union federation in South Africa under a single leadership.

We in the trade union movement and the working people in general are striving for the seizure of political power and the return of our motherland.

### 3. State of the trade union movement in South Africa

3.1 Statistics released in July 1984, reveal that the union membership in South Africa stands at 1,545,824 of whom 271,934 are unregistered unionists. 4.5 million workers remain to be organised. African membership increased the fastest from 220,000 in 1980 to 670,000.

African workers are the largest group organised at 43.4%, with whites at 33.9% and Coloureds and Indians at 22.7% of the union membership. There is a recorded list of 194 registered and 46 unregistered ones. 116 of the registered unions are unaffiliated. This figure includes both black and white trade unions. In spite of the unions which disaffiliated from TUCSA since 1983, TUCSA remains the largest trade union federation with 478,000 members and 54 affiliates.

Some of these unions are continuing to withdraw their membership from TUCSA for various reasons. The 54,000 strong Boilermakers Society withdrew from TUCSA in 1983 in protest against a reactionary resolution adopted at the TUCSA Conference calling on the

regime to ban unregistered unions.

CUSA and FOSATU together have a total membership of more than 300,000. CUSA has 12 affiliated unions with more than 200,000 members, whilst FOSATU has seven affiliated unions with more than 100,000 members.

CUSA is organising in the building, construction, mining, chemical, steel and engineering, food, laundry and dry-cleaning, transport and motor industries. On the other hand, FOSATU is organising in the chemical, metal, motor and component, textile, paper, wood, sweet and food industries.

The majority of the 46 unaffiliated and unregistered unions are based on the 'general principle', ie they are organising in many different sectors of the economy. These are commonly referred to by the bourgeois press as "community based trade unions", because they do not see the economic struggle in isolation from the political struggle. They are SAAWU, GAWU, MACWUSA, NFW, MGWUSA, NGWU and many others. Most of these unions are regionally based. Almost all of these so-called community based unions are affiliates of the UDF.

Some trade unions are growing very fast such as the CCAWUSA which has membership in excess of 35,000. The NUM affiliated to CUSA is an example of one of the most rapidly growing trade unions with a membership of 110,000.

According to latest statistics, the number of farm workers has declined since 1970. Then, there were 1,350,000 blacks working in the South African farms. This total dropped to 973,000 in 1980, and it was estimated that it would drop further to only 800,000 by the year 2000.

As the number of farm workers decreases, repression, humiliation and exploitation are on the increase. Their working and living standards are appalling. Wages of farm workers are as low as R36 per month in certain farms with long hours of work and terrible working conditions. This forces prospective farm workers to go to the cities in search of a job with hopefully higher wages.

When workers complain and demand higher wages, the employers threaten the workers with one of the racist and discriminatory provisions of the laws, and order the workers (within 72 hours) to leave the farm and return to a bantustan. Another factor which contributes to the drop of farm labourers, is mechanisation in this industry. Agriculture in South Africa is increasingly becoming capital



intensive. Absence of any legal protection to remain on the farm, deprivation of trade union and political rights, denial of urban rights, mass removals and unemployment, leaves the farm workers with little option but to remain on the farm extremely exploited and humiliated or face being sent to a bantustan or to be an illegal employee in an urban area.

In the Western Cape, farmers have formed an association called the Boere Groep which has organised a common transport for contract workers from the Ciskei or Transkei bantustans to the different parts of Boland. These workers travel all the way from the Ciskei to Cape Town without knowing the terms of their contracts. When they arrive at the offices of the Boere Groep, each of the farmers selects the number of labourers he requires. Each farmer takes his labourers to his farm.

Seasonal workers are widely used on the farms and recruited from the bantustans and paid in-kind. Child labour here is rife. 50% of their wages are paid in cash and the remainder in-kind. According to one Carnegie Report, wages are a third lower than those of permanent workers, with an average wage of R37 per month.

Presently, there is no fully fledged agricultural workers' union. In Natal, farm workers are being organised by the National Federation of Workers (NFW) and OVGWU is also organising workers. Recently, a new union has been formed in the Western Cape. The union's scope of organisation covers 48 farms, all of them in the Western Cape.

A major supply of labour to white farms is through prison or convict labour. At least 90,000 black men in 1976 were used by employers on white-owned farms.

### 3.2 Mining Industry

The Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924, prohibited African workers from legally organising themselves into trade unions. But Africans have always refused to be submissive to any measure of control by the regime. They have always organised themselves into "illegal" trade unions. They organised both political and economic strikes which on several occasions rocked the South African economy.

As a result of the militant struggles of the African workers, like the 1946 African Mine Workers Strike, the number of strikes organised by SACTU during the 1950s and '60s and the 1973 strikes which continued until

the mid-'70s, the regime was forced to appoint the Wiehahn Commission to look into the South African labour laws.

Following Wiehahn's recommendations, the 1979 Labour Relations Amendment Act provided for Africans to form trade unions under certain restrictions. (See section on "Labour Laws")

Even at this time, three main sectors of the South African economy were left out: mining, agriculture and the domestic sector.

Only in 1981, did the regime through pressure from both the mining magnates and the workers themselves, make another concession that miners can form trade unions. The agricultural and domestic workers are still left out of labour legislation in South Africa.

The last two years have seen a proliferation of black unions on the mines. The Black Allied Workers Union (BAWU) formed the Black Allied Mining and Tunnel Workers Union (BAMTWU). This is an unregistered union which has concentrated on organising in the collieries of Natal such as in Kilbarchan, Vryheid, Coronation, Durnacol and Welgedacht. It was first to be formally granted access in April 1983.

In August 1982, the Black Mining and Construction Workers Union (BAMCWU) was formed with the assistance of the ICFTU. It was first granted access by the Chamber of Mines in July 1983. Today, BAMCWU claims a membership of 25,000.

In January 1983, the South African Mine Workers Union (SAMWU) was formed by six unions: SAAWU, GAWU, MACWUSA/GWUSA, NISMAWU and OVGWU. They were later joined by MGWUSA. The President of SAMWU is Sam Ndou and the General Secretary is Sisa Njikelana. The union is being run by a Steering Committee since its formation. It is organising in the West Rand and at the Rustenburg Platinum Mines. This union has not made much progress because the leadership is involved in organising other unions.

The Federated Mining Union (FMU) which has its origin in the South African Boilermakers Society (SABS), is organising along craft and industrial lines. It has recognition agreement with De Beers in Kimberly and Mathey Rustenburg Refinery where it represents 80% of the total black work force respectively. It has already made recognition agreement with T Rustenburg Platinum Mines.

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), is the fastest growing union of



all emerging unions in the mining industry. Today, it boasts of more than 110,000 members over a period of two-and-a-half years. NUM began organising in the mines in August 1982. The NUM from the beginning applied for an access agreement to the Chamber of Mines. As soon as this access agreement was reached, NUM made big strides in organising the mines.

Some people were critical of NUM at its formative stages. They called it a management union because of the access agreement granted to it by the Chamber. The NUM has proved that it is not a management union. It draws its membership from occupations such as clerks, personnel assistants, carpenters, recreation officers and store attendants. Its strength is in the gold and uranium mines. NUM also organises the recruiting agents at the Employment Bureau of Africa (TEBA). — Regarding underground workers, NUM started by recruiting the team leaders. Miners work in gangs of between 25-100 workers. At the head of each gang is the "ganger" or "miner", the white union man and employees from further up the ladder. NUM has been involved in a number of strikes both legal and illegal.

Of the approximately 759,000 mine workers, less than 200,000 are organised. About 600,000 miners remain unorganised.

### 3.3 Domestic Workers

There are about 800,000 black domestic workers in South Africa. All of them suffer subjugation and immobility in their employment relationship. These are the most exploited of all workers in South Africa.

The case of 'Billings versus Gentle' in the Western Cape is one of the best examples of this gross-exploitation. Barbara Billing was working for a Mrs LM Gentle, a well-to-do Coloured lady of Wynberg in Cape Town, who was respected in the community. She was employed for a sum of R15 per month. After seven years working for the same employer, she had not been paid even this ridiculous sum. This happened because she was brought from the Transkei bantustan without a residential permit to be in Cape Town.

These unbearable conditions of work force the workers in this sector to form trade unions of their choice. Presently, there are about six regionally based trade unions organising in this sector: South African Domestic Workers Union (SADWA) based in the Transvaal, Domestic Workers Associa-

tion of South Africa (DWASA) in Port Elizabeth, East London Domestic Workers Association (ELDWA) in East London, Domestic Workers Association in the Western Cape, National Domestic Workers Union (NDWU) in Natal and the Black Domestic Workers Union, an affiliate of the Azanian Confederation of Trade Unions based in the Transvaal.

It has been relatively very difficult to organise the domestic workers because they have no collective bargaining power. Each worker has one employer. However, there are places like schools, parks, clubs, old-age homes and universities where there is a group of domestic workers under one employer. These are places which are relatively easier to organise.

### 3.4 Types of trade unions

There are four main types of trade unions:

3.4.1) White collar unions: This term refers to office or clerical workers. It originated during the days when office workers used to wear white shirts and ties. Office workers belong to this union in some Western countries.

3.4.2) Industrial Unions: An industrial union represents all workers in a particular industry irrespective of job category or skill. In the same way as the employers belong to industrial associations and take collective decisions on wage negotiations, the workers are able to bargain together. In the event of a dispute, the workers can organise an effective national strike in a particular industry.

3.4.3) Craft Unions: These unions represent workers with particular skills or crafts. Workers in the same factory can belong to as many unions as there are departments in that factory. This type of union can only help to divide workers against the strong arm of the employers.

3.4.4) General Unions: This type of union organises workers from all sectors of the economy. It has the disadvantage of dividing workers, especially during strike actions or when it comes to collective bargaining.

General Workers Unions are used to organise the unorganised workers from any industry or any sector. However, in terms of being able to carry out concrete actions such as collective bargaining or strike actions, General Workers Unions are at a disadvantage. It is true that in our context, the General Workers Unions are the more



politically active of the unions, but at the same time are organisationally weaker.

During the 1950s, SACTU used the same strategy of organising General Workers Unions, but once a certain number of workers in a certain industry were organised, an Industrial Union was formed with its own leadership.

The principle of industrial trade unionism is one which SACTU propagates because it is only once workers have been organised along industrial lines that they can truly challenge the capitalist bosses. In addition, there has to be a careful selection of the most vital and strategic industries in the South African economy and the organisation in these industries. For example, mining and agriculture are strategic industries not because of the number of workers in these sectors but because of the importance of mining and agriculture in the apartheid South African economy.

When we call for the industrialisation of the General Workers Unions, we do not envisage there being no General Workers Unions in South Africa at all, but instead General Unions should earmark certain sectors. For example, the General Workers Union (GWU) of the Western Cape recruits and organises workers mainly in the harbours. Therefore, the General Unions should not see themselves as an end instead they should be used as a channel to organise workers into Industrial Unions.

There needs to be more cooperation of the kind displayed by some of the General Unions who have already passed over membership in certain industries to already existing Industrial Unions. Where no Industrial Union existed, these have been formed.

#### 4. Trade Union Unity

4.1) Eleven unaffiliated unions and two federations (FOSATU and CUSA) met at Langa, Cape Town in August 1981. The meeting discussed ways and means of fighting against bannings and detentions of trade union leaders; they also mapped out a common approach to the 1979 Labour Relations Amendment Act.

4.2) Wilgespruit, April 1982: It was at this meeting that a suggestion for the formation of a new federation was made. Immediately the idea of a federation was introduced, differences arose over the policy and principles of the envisaged federation. Some unions argued that the proposed federation should have a set of principles binding on all its affiliates. The

other school of thought advanced by the unregistered unions was that there could be no unity with registered unions.

4.3) Port Elizabeth, July 1982: In this meeting, a group of seven unregistered unions (MACWUSA, GWUSA SAAWU, BMWU, MGWUSA, SATWU, OVGWU and GAWU) came with seven conditions which should be met by any union with which they felt they could unite. They were non-registration, shop-floor bargaining, federation policy to be binding on affiliates, worker control, non-racialism, participation in community issues and the rejection of reactionary bodies nationally and internationally. All the unions at the talks agreed on some of the principles, but some principles were not accepted by everybody. The Port Elizabeth meeting was a turning point in the unity meetings.

Most of the unregistered unions were also general unions, that is, organising workers in all economic sectors. The industrial unions were also competing amongst themselves for membership. There were complaints of poaching. The industrial unions however, decided to proceed with the proposed federation, thus leaving out the seven unions.

4.4) Athlone, April 1983: Unlike the previous meetings, this one was attended by a number of shop-stewards from a number of industrial unions. The need for a new federation was reaffirmed. The discussions centred around the practical steps to establish a federation.

From this meeting, two main positions arose, namely, the first was presented by the general unions that there should be a return to Regional Solidarity Action Committees, through which unity could be built "from the base up". They argued that a national federation could be entertained once unity had been achieved at local level.

The second position was that of adopting immediate practical steps for the formation of the new federation. The proponents of this view argued that they had already been mandated by their membership to proceed with the federation. The Athlone meeting took a step further and established a Feasibility Committee to discuss the mechanism of the formation of the new federation.

4.5) Feasibility Meeting in Athlone, June 1983: The first Feasibility Committee meeting in Athlone discussed the structure of the federation. Some unions proposed a simple federal



structure comprising a single annual congress and an Executive Committee to deal with the affairs of the federation between the Congresses. On the other hand, FOSATU and CUSA described their structures as a tightly knit system of national, regional and local bodies and secondly, a loose structure with considerable autonomy.

The other points raised at the meetings were demarcation and all participants were to submit audited reports giving paid-up membership and information on industries and localities in which they were organised.

4.6) Feasibility Committee Meeting Johannesburg, November 1983: At the meeting held at Khotso House, in Johannesburg, four unions failed to produce their membership. MACWUSA, GWUSA, GAWU, SAAWU and some CUSA affiliates also failed. The failure to produce the required information by these unions created some doubts by the FOSATU unions on their willingness to participate in the formation of the federation.

On the issue of unions poaching, it was resolved that no union should organise where another has majority membership. The second proposal was that there should be commitment to industrial unions with a view to form one union in one industry. No general agreement was reached on these proposals.

4.7) Feasibility Committee Meeting, Johannesburg, March 1984: In this meeting, the industrial unions, mainly FOSATU, CUSA, GWU and CTMWU argued that the general workers unions were not prepared to form the proposed federation but that they were not saying it publicly. They resolved that these unions who were not ready to form the federation should be given an observer status. SAAWU and GAWU were granted observer status which they rejected. Six unions: Food and Canning Workers Union, CCAWUSA, GWU, CTMWA, CUSA and FOSATU agreed to proceed with the unity talks to the exclusion of the rest of the unions.

SAAWU and GAWU stated their positions vis-a-vis the unity talks before they left the meeting hall. They argued that they were committed to trade union unity but rejected being given an observer status. From the meeting a Constitution was drafted which has been circulated to various unions.

4.8) Obstacles to Trade Union Unity: The unions are divided on their policies and principles upon which the federation must be based. They are

divided according to their political affiliation to national bodies, also about structural organisation: some are general unions and others industrial. Unions affiliated to the UDF are mainly general unions.

Above all the problems that hinder trade union unity, there is the element of mistrust. The general unions are suspicious of the well-established industrial unions. They are afraid that they may be swamped, more so, that most of the industrial unions are not affiliated to the UDF. These unions believe that 'Unity in Action' is more vital, they do not see the need to be divided if unions can agree to organise broad political campaigns jointly.

The general unions are not prepared to compromise on the issue of economic and political struggles. They correctly see the two as inseparable.

The other element which causes suspicion, is that most of the industrial unions, particularly FOSATU and CUSA, are heavily sponsored by the ICFTU. It is already reported that a sum of US\$2 million is already in Botswana waiting for the formation of the envisaged federation.

The Azanian Confederation of Trade Unions (AZACTU), formed recently, which has eight affiliates, believes that unity should be based on four principles: anti-imperialism, anti-racism, anti-capitalism and anti-collaboration.

They do not believe that unity under one federation can be achieved because they cannot compromise on the question of whites in their midst. However, they are convinced that unity in action is more feasible than non-racial trade union federation.

It might be interesting to note that AZACTU is an affiliate of the National Forum which is fighting for "Socialist Azania".

Within the Black Consciousness grouping itself, there are those who take extremist positions on the question of whites and there are also moderates. CUSA, for instance, is divided into two on the question of participation in the unity talks. One trend argues against participation in a non-racial federation whilst others are determined to participate.

5. The 30th Anniversary of SACTU For the celebration of the 30th Anniversary of SACTU, the country was divided into five regions: Transvaal, Natal, Western Cape, Eastern Cape and the Border Region.

In each region all unions were



invited when the committees were set up. Not all the unions who were invited fully participated in the preparatory committees, but none of them raised any objection in principle.

Between 5,000 and 6,000 workers sang and danced at the 30th Anniversary rallies at Thembisa near Kempton Park on the 10th and 11th of March. The rally was attended by various organisations, namely, the UDF, students, civic organisations, trade unions and many others and the speakers included James Mdaweni, President of Cusa; Elizabeth Erasmus, Western Cape SACTU Anniversary Committee; Amanda Kwadi, Federation of South African Women; Samson Ndou, President of GAWU.

In the Eastern Cape, more than 10,000 people celebrated the 30th Anniversary. The "Black Weekend" called by PEBCO in Port Elizabeth, was also reported to have been very successful. Workers stayed at home, school children boycotted classes, shops and shebeens were closed, the Port Elizabeth City Centre was reported empty. Police were patrolling the streets urging people to go to work. Only doctors, nurses and journalists were exempted from working. The regime responded to the actions with brutal violence.

The 30th Anniversary Committees were broadened in some areas into the May Day Committees. In most of the rallies the unions adopted a number of resolutions:

- i) To celebrate the birthday of SACTU annually;
- ii) To organise a campaign against the rising cost of living;
- iii) To organise a joint May Day rally annually;
- iv) As from May 1986, May 1st be a paid public holiday.

SACTU 30th Anniversary T-shirts were printed and circulated throughout the country.

All the speakers at the 30th Anniversary rallies of SACTU emphasised the importance of the role played by SACTU in the late '50s in organising the unorganised workers into the first non-racial trade union federation in South Africa.

The 30th Anniversary was misunderstood in some circles as having been the revival of SACTU, that is, the opening of SACTU offices legally. SACTU wishes to correct this mistake by some of our comrades both inside and outside. We would like to draw a distinction between popularising SACTU and the opening of offices. In November 1984, The National Executive Committee of SACTU issued a statement

calling upon the workers of our country to:

"...through mass action, impose popular legality SACTU, to unban our organisation, to raise high its banners and to keep alive its internationalist slogan AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL!"

This call took into cognisance the fact that for all practical purposes SACTU is illegal in the country, hence the call for popular legality to be through mass action. The workers must defiantly oppose all racist laws governing our people, etc. We are calling upon our workers to form democratic trade unions of their choice which will be guided by the principles upon which SACTU was founded.

The Committees which organised the 30th Anniversary of SACTU are continuing until the end of the year, raising all the issues which were placed before them in the 30th Anniversary programme, eg the anti-conscription campaign, to form an Unemployed Council to organise the mining, agricultural and domestic sectors and to fight against all reactionary and racist features of the Labour Relations Amendment Act. We also called upon the unions to use the 30th Anniversary to ensure that every worker is a union member.

In trying to coordinate its external and internal activities, SACTU is in the process of setting up an internal leadership to:

- i) Work out programmes on what is to be done and coordinate activities at national and regional levels;
- ii) Coordinate activities of different trade unions at regional level, irrespective of their political affiliation
- iii) Ensure the implementation of programmes adopted at all levels
- iv) Coordinate the activities of trade unions and other mass democratic organisations
- v) Coordinate the decisions of the external and internal leadership
- vi) Ensure the organisation of the unemployed workers
- vii) Assist in the organisation of the agricultural and domestic workers
- viii) Set up Workers' Advice Councils and soup kitchens.

## **6. May Day**

May 1st, May Day is celebrated the world over as the International Workers Day. May Day was celebrated in our country in 1895 in Johannesburg, but soon celebrations spread out to other cities.



As far back as 1926, workers won the right, through union agreements and their determined battles to observe May Day.

May Day has been used to voice many of the demands of workers: the right of all adult citizens to vote; against colonialism and imperialism; for the release of all political prisoners, for the right to form political and trade union organisations of our choice.

In 1950 on May Day, the fascist police killed 18 black workers and wounded 30 others during nationwide demonstrations and strikes against the bosses and the regime, called by the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party. Workers brought the factories to a standstill in most big cities, especially on the Rand. Racist police ran wild, stabbing workers with fixed bayonets.

Ever since, May Day has not been marked openly on a mass scale in our country. During the last two years however, a few rallies and commemoration meetings have been held to observe May Day.

Last year, following a call from SACTU to form May Day Committees, organise May Day meetings at the work places, marches in the streets, workers and all democratic forces in our country celebrated May Day.

Union representing over 300,000 workers called for a one-day Consumer Boycott of all goods on May 1st. Celebrations involving thousands of workers were held in all major cities of the country.

This year, 1985, May Day has been widely observed. May Day Committees have been set up and rallies organised in Thembisa, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Pieterburg, Uitenhage, Durban, Pietermaritzburg and the Vaal region. The May Day celebrations this year took place against a background of a continued massive presence of the racist army and police in the black townships and consistent daily killings. With millions of people in a state of seething revolt against community councils and other bodies of minority rule, the undemocratic education system, soaring rate of inflation which has been up to 16% by February this year, General Sales Tax of 15%, rents, transport and the cost of basic food stuffs, unemployment and retrenchments and with thousands of people in prisons and detention.

The May Day meetings demanded the introduction of a 40 hour working week, that women be given paid maternity leave and resolved that May

Day 1986, the Centenary of May Day, be a paid public holiday.

This year's May Day rallies were also supported by community organisations who played a supportive role and also by youth and student organisations like COSAS and AZASO, who made a call to students to support workers and also demanded that May Day be recognised as a national holiday.

The May Day celebrations of the year 1985 which took place in a year of great anniversaries - the 30th Anniversary of the birth of SACTU and the 30th Anniversary of the Freedom Charter, clearly showed the strength of the workers in their united actions.

We urge all trade unions, workers and mass democratic organisations to take up this call and make May Day 1986 a real Workers' Day in South Africa.

SACTU calls on the workers and the entire labour movement to take up their leading role in the struggle for national liberation. Let us take the question of May Day to the factories, mines and farms. Let us take May Day beyond our unions and involve our communities, women, youth, church, sport and political organisations. Let us set up May Day Committees to ensure that May Day is marked locally, regionally and nationally.

### 7. Unemployment

In any economy which is based on the capitalist mode of production, labour is a commodity. The price of labour depends on the number of the unemployed workers. The more unemployed workers, the lower the price of labour on the market. The workers are in a weaker bargaining position.

With the development of technology, companies are becoming more capital intensive. It has become easy to replace 10 workers with one 'robot' machine. The machine needs only one worker to operate it.

The utilisation of the bantustans plays two major roles in encouraging retrenchments. First, the bantustans are a reservoir of cheap labour. When 6,500 workers were retrenched from SASOL, the puppet bantustan leaders were the first to offer to supply the bosses with migrant workers. Owing to the strength of the organised labour force, particularly FOSATU, the SASOL management was forced to reinstate those workers.

Secondly, the Group Areas Act is beginning to yield fruitful results for the capitalist class. Many companies are closing down their



factories in the unionised urban areas, leaving thousands of workers, and are running to the bantustans where they are going to reap super-profits.

Trade unions are not allowed in the bantustans. The Sebes and Matanzimas are claiming to be trade unionists themselves. Employers take advantage of the economic situation and rid themselves of old and sick people whom they consider unproductive. They use the same whip against militant trade unionists who are considered troublesome by the management.

7.1) In the last five years, 51,000 motor industry and component workers have lost their jobs. "Millions of South Africans will never have jobs", writes SASPU National No. 7.

As in all other countries where relations of production are based on private ownership, there has never been work for all in South Africa but the situation is getting worse by the day.

80,000 metal workers have lost their jobs; 37,000 from the South African Transport Services (SATS); 51,000 from the motor assembly and component industry.

The Eastern Cape region is being hard hit by retrenchments and this is one of the reasons for the increasing militancy and daily outbreaks of unrest in the area.

Excluding the 3 million unemployed workers in South Africa, there are 450,000 workers coming from the neighbouring States who have been retrenched between 1974 and 1981. In South Africa, according to a survey, teenagers accounted for 18% of the unemployed whilst 42% of the total unemployed were between the ages of 20-29 years.

The employers' explanation for the retrenchments is that there is a recession. It is true that there is economic crisis. In 1984, the average rate of bankruptcy was 12 companies a day. It is estimated that 5,000 companies will lose business during the course of this year.

It would not be a correct analysis of the South African unemployment crisis to blame it on economic recession alone. Tracing it back to the 1960s, when there was an economic up-swing, researchers have recorded that out of every 100 workers 12 were jobless during the '70s. Between 1979 and 1981, it is reported that out of every 100 there were 20 jobless. This was also a in a period of economic boom in South Africa. The total recorded number of unemployed workers

then was 2 million. It is obvious then that unemployment is inherent in the capitalist system.

Workers have resisted the growing retrenchments, shorter working weeks and unemployment that is engulfing them. One of the major causes of strike actions has been over retrenchment and dismissals. For example, according to figures given by FOSATU during 1982, FOSATU was involved in 93 strikes. Of these 35 were over wages, 16 over retrenchments and 31 over dismissals of workers. Therefore, if combined 47 strikes were because of retrenchments and dismissals, exceeding those over wage increases which is normally regarded as the most important reason for strike action.

### 7.2) Remedies

Many unions have already signed collective agreements with management on retrenchment procedures. The following seem to be the generally accepted conditions by the unions:

- \* Retrenchments should be based on the "last in, first out" principle.

Workers who have been with the company longest must be last out. It is the belief of every unionist that if this is followed, it would be difficult for management to use retrenchment to victimise workers.

- \* Retrenched workers must be re-employed if their jobs become available again. This would protect trade unionists who are victimised and replaced with unorganised workers.

- \* Retrenched workers must get severance pay or compensation for losing their jobs. Presently, many employers are not willing to pay it.

- \* Workers must be allowed to volunteer for retrenchment. This has been used to protect migrant workers since for them losing a job means loss of urban rights and banishment to bantustan poverty.

In 1983, the General Workers Union in Cape Town decided that workers with permanent urban residence rights would sacrifice their jobs to protect migrant workers who were threatened with retrenchment. This sacrifice requires highly conscientised workers and above all organisation.

It is for this reason that we urge workers to join trade unions. We call on every worker to be a union member. Unorganised workers are easy victims of retrenchment and any form of harassment by management.

### 7.3) Organisation and mobilisation of unemployed

Much has been said and various attempts made to organise the



unemployed workers. This is to be regarded as a task both of the trade union movement as well as the civic organisations, women's groups, youth organisations, churches, etc.

Unemployed workers unions have been set up, eg. in the Western Cape as well as in the Eastern Cape. This met with little success, primarily because of lack of clarity on how this should be done.

SACTU has discussed at great length and worked out a programme for the organisation of the unemployed workers.

As stated above, a start has been made in some regions of our country to set up unions of the unemployed or unemployed workers' councils. Whilst at the moment the councils are formed by trade unions, the intention is to broaden them to include churches, welfare organisations, students, political organisations, etc.

The purpose of these councils is to educate the unemployed about their rights such as the Unemployment Insurance Benefits and to assist them get Workmen's Compensation benefits.

Primarily, the unemployed councils or unions should fight against unemployment. They should make the regime and the employers responsible for the welfare of the unemployed.

An unemployed worker should remain a member of his union until he gets another job. In this way, the unemployed cannot easily be used by the bosses as scabs.

The process of setting up adult education programmes for the unemployed should be set in motion. The programme should include technical skills for self-help projects and the history of our struggle.

Above all, the unemployed workers should organise meetings, demonstrations against the labour bureaux and demand work; hunger marches demanding food from factories where workers have been expelled or retrenched should also be encouraged. They must organise demonstrations and marches against the regime's institutions and demand "food not guns"!

They should fight against international scabs like the Polish mercenaries and the British mine workers who came to South Africa instead of supporting the struggle of British miners.

## 8. Strikes

For a black worker going on strike means to risk losing your job, your home in the city and to be forced into

the hated bantustans unable to find a job and feed his or her family. But this threat has not weakened the resolve and militancy of the workers. With the sharp increase in the cost of living and General Sales Tax, growing unemployment and retrenchments, increased victimisation and repression of trade unionists and workers, more and more strikes are occurring throughout the country.

According to the racist South Africa's Department of Manpower Director, Piet van der Merwe, there were more than five times as many workers on strike in 1984 as compared to 1983. He told a Potchefstroom University post-graduate Business School that 35,000 workers had downed tools as compared to 7,098 for the same time last year. The number of strikes in 1983 given by the racist Department of Manpower is 336. These figures are never reliable in that these are only reported strikes.

There are a wide range of reasons for the continuing strikes in South Africa:

- \* the highly charged political climate created by the introduction of the new racist constitution and the campaigns by democratic organisations for its rejection;
- \* introduction of a new income tax system for blacks in 1984;
- \* unemployment, retrenchment and victimisation of workers;
- \* workers demanding the right to join unions of their choice;
- \* slave wages.

8.1) The highly charged political climate created by the introduction of the new racist constitution and the campaigns by the democratic organisations for their rejection, also involved the unions.

In November 1983, production at two Zululand sugar mills ground to a halt when 1,400 workers staged a stay-away as a protest against the exclusion of blacks from the new racist constitution. The mills affected were the Felixton Sugar Mills and the Amatikulu Sugar Mills both owned by the Tongaat-Hulett Group.

Also in November 1983, three work stoppages occurred after pamphlets campaigning against the regime's tri-racial parliament were confiscated by racist police and management in Pietermaritzburg at Kent Meyers, a British company.

8.2) The introduction of a new income tax system for blacks:

The first dispute over the new Tax Act came on 16 January when 400 workers at the Wayne Rubber Company in



Durban downed tools in demand of a wage increase of 6% and against the deductions from the pay packets as of 1 March, when the new Tax Act had become the focus of workers' anger at that time because it brought home the reality that blacks will be paying the same tax as whites while having no say in the regime's running of the country. In fact, they will be paying tax to the system that oppresses them.

#### 8.3) Unemployment and retrenchment:

Massive retrenchments are occurring all over the country with an estimated 2,000 workers being laid off every month in 1984 throughout the South African industry.

This massive rise in retrenchments and unemployment has led to a number of strikes throughout the country, like the Ford Sierra plant in Port Elizabeth which was closed down early in 1984 after hundreds of workers downed tools in protest against the retrenchment of 490 workers. Officials of both NAAWU and the Motor Assembly and Components Workers Union, accused the company of using the retrenchments to weaken the unions.

At the end of February 1984, 22 sugar plantations in Northern Natal retrenched more than 6,000 workers without compensation. In the Northern Transvaal bankrupt farmers were dismissing their entire work-force, many of whom had worked on the farms for 20 to 30 years. As agriculture is the second largest employer in South Africa, the crisis in the farming sector could massively add to South Africa's 3 million unemployed.

#### 8.4) Workers are demanding the right to join unions of their choice:

In November 1983, more than 100 workers went on strike at New and Golden Paper Bag Manufacturers over the sacking of a worker and the demand for the recognition of their union. The workers rejected the TUCSA-affiliated South African Typographical Union, which has a closed shop agreement with the management, and said the union has been "forced down our throats".

In February 1984, about 500 workers at the Canadian-owned transnational corporation Bata Shoe Company's Pinetown plant went on strike in support of demands for wage talks and demanded that they be allowed to resign from the TUCSA union and join SAAWU. A woman was shot during the strike by racist police.

Also in February 1984, James North Africa, a TNC operating in Pinetown, Natal, held a secret ballot in which

81,4% of its workers voted to be represented by the National Union of Textile Workers, a FOSATU affiliate and only 16% by the TUCSA affiliated Garment Workers Industrial Union. Previously the GWIU had had a closed shop agreement with James North Africa, forcing all workers to belong to it.

8.5) The slave wages being paid to black workers has been another cause of a number of recent strikes. For example, the National Union of Mineworkers, NUM, declared the first legal dispute in South African labour history between the Chamber of Mines and black mine workers.

The 25% wage increase demanded by NUM and the final Chamber of Mines offer of between 13,3% and 14,4% led to violence and death on the mines during the ensuing strike.

At Anglo-American's Coronation Colliery near Vryheid in Natal, pitched battles between miners and police occurred at the end of June 1984. Several shots were fired by 'unknown persons' from a nearby white residential suburb at the striking miners who were marching to their hostels. One miner was killed and four others injured. In addition, 77 miners were arrested and charged with public violence.

Colonel van der Merwe of the South African Police praised the white residents for the shooting of the miners saying: "They had every right to shoot and in doing so had prevented widespread disorder".

Mine workers at two collieries downed tools in protest against pay increases. On 2 July 1984, about 1,000 workers at Goedehoop and Kriel collieries in the Eastern Transvaal went on strike as the first shift was about to begin.

#### 9. Strikes and Work Stoppages

The 1973 strikes were a sign of class consciousness in an embryonic stage. The workers were demanding higher wages, and better working conditions. They made tremendous gains in these strikes.

The militancy which brought gains for the workers in these strikes encouraged even those who remained outside the trade union movement to join the workers organisations.

The strikes spread to the mining industry in the Transvaal and in other sectors of the economy throughout the country and continued until 1976.

These strikes dealt a serious blow to the economy of South Africa thus creating division within the ruling



class. In September 1974, the then Anglo American Chairman, Harry Oppenheimer, suggested that African workers be given the right to organise trade unions and engage in collective bargaining. The racist Prime Minister BJ Vorster strongly criticised him for making such an "irresponsible" statement.

The mining industry faced a chronic shortage of skilled labour and the threat by the labour supplying countries to withdraw their workers from the mines in South Africa, continued to put pressure on the apartheid regime to make concessions.

In 1976, at a conference of the South African monopolies, held in Johannesburg, when the Urban Foundation was formed, Rupert argued: "That we (capitalists) cannot survive unless we have a free market economy and a stable black middle class".

The purpose of this black middle class was to neutralise the militancy which was evidently beginning to yield fruits for the workers. The workers were rejecting liaison and works committees in favour of democratic trade unions.

Whilst black trade unions were never recognised by law, they continued to exist and organised very successful strikes. The regime had no option but to appoint the two commissions of Wiehahn and Riekert.

The events leading to these commissions were:

- \* the mass movement of the mid-seventies particularly the student uprisings of 1976.
- \* The re-emergence of the trade union movement and the radicalisation of this movement throughout the 1970s.
- \* The increasing militant joint action of the masses and the working class.
- \* The global recession and the oil crisis of the 1970s.
- \* The increasing demand for a semi-skilled and skilled labour force, the increasing imperative to stabilise the black labour force and accommodate them into a "Free market economy".
- \* The independence of Angola and Mozambique in our sub-region.

The most significant recommendation made by Wiehahn was the opening of trade unions to African workers. This culminated in the 1979 Labour Relations Act which was amended in 1981 and which imposed very stringent controls on black trade unions. It abolished financial assistance to strikers and placed restrictions on trade unions registered and unregistered to participate in

political activities (See relevant section).

It pleases us to say these manoeuvres yielded good results for the workers, more militant and radical unions emerged and the number of strikes increased tremendously since the beginning of this decade.

Most of the strikes arose as a result of the following demands by the trade unions:

- i) Higher wages and better working conditions
- ii) Union recognition
- iii) Against victimisation of union members
- iv) Refusal to work overtime whilst some workers are being retrenched
- v) Political strikes or work stoppages, eg. protests against the murder of Neil Aggett in detention, Raditsela, May Day rallies, campaign against the tri-racial parliament, etc.

Workers adopted slogans such as: "Away with low wages, away with high prices"; "Away with the group Areas, removals and pass laws"; "Away with puppet bodies"; "Let May Day 1986 be a paid public holiday".

The Black Allied, Mining and Construction Workers Union (BAMCWU) called upon its 25,000 members to support the strike by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) last year. This unity in action could also be seen in the engineering industry. In May 1984, three unions - the Boilermakers Society, Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU) and the Steel, Engineering and Allied Workers Union entered into joint collective bargaining with the employers' organisation, the Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of South Africa (SEIFSA).

The trade unions in conjunction with the mass democratic organisations declared a 'Black Christmas' in 1984, in protest against Government action against trade unions.

There have been a number of strikes both for political and economic demands. These have been enumerated above and we have seen a marked increase in the number of strikes for political reasons, eg. the Neil Aggett work stoppage which was marked by about half-a-million workers; the various stay-at-homes in 1984 and 1985, particularly the November 5th and 6th stay-at-home in the Transvaal.

Most crucial in any strike is the level of organisation by trade unions beforehand, because the strike weapon, if not over-used, is one of the most



effective tools of the workers.

There is a need during a strike to organise and involve the community to support the action being taken by the workers. A classic example, is the 1979 Fatti's and Moni's strike undertaken by the FCWU and AFCWU which involved a boycott of all Fatti's and Moni's products. This was successful because the company could not easily employ scab labour secondly, a 100% successful boycott was carried out against Fatti's and Moni's.

The same principle goes for a political strike whereby community support is needed to ensure the success of such a strike and the level of organisation should be very high. If not, this could result in the victimisation of those workers who participated in such a strike. For example, of the 6,500 workers who were fired from SASOL during the 5th and 6th November stay-away, owing to intense support actions both at home and internationally and owing to the persistence by their union, the Chemical Workers Industrial Union, management has agreed to re-employ 70% of the workers.

During the strike, shop stewards were sent to the bantustans to give support and information to the dismissed workers. Workers from rural areas maintained contact with the unions. In many areas groups of SASOL workers were formed in the bantustans.

If there is no proper support activity or success during political strikes which may be ill-timed, the regime could use this in its propaganda and against the workers to dissuade them from participating in strikes.

Unions and community organisations must ensure support for the families of striking workers through food parcels, clothing and monies for rents and transport, medical fees etc. This is the joint responsibility of the entire community and the trade unions.

There has been a call by the NEC of the African National Congress in April 1985 for unions and workers to work towards a general strike which will cripple the apartheid economy. SACTU supports this call for which both SACTU and ANC must work tirelessly.

## 10. Changes in Labour Legislation

The Labour Relations Amendment Act replaced the Industrial Conciliation Act, and is the cornerstone of the South African system of labour legislation.

The original Industrial Conciliation Act was passed in 1924. In its definition of an employee, it excluded African workers. No doubt, this Act was designed to exclude Africans from organising themselves into trade unions like the other national groups. More so that this Act was introduced immediately after the 1922 Rand White mine workers strike.

A number of amendments have been made to this Act over the intervening period, the most significant being the 1956 amendment which introduced the "job reservation" provisions and the racial divisions of unions (both since repealed); the 1979 amendments which, without changing the name extended trade union rights to all workers in South Africa except the agricultural and domestic workers.

The 1983 amendments to the Labour Relations Amendment Act opened up the Conciliation Board machinery to unregistered unions and brought labour brokers within the ambit of this Act.

In terms of this Act, no union will be registered unless the Registrar is satisfied that:

- \* The union is sufficiently representative of the interests it seeks to represent, and the union will be registered for the areas and interests in which it is "sufficiently" representative.
- \* The Constitution of the union is consistent with the Act and does not contain provisions which are contrary to the provisions of any law, or one calculated to hinder the attainment of the objectives of any law, or one "unreasonable" in relation to the members or the public and the union has not been formed for the purposes of evading the provisions of any law, and is not affiliated to any political organisation.
- \* The amendment provided for unions to organise across the colour line and the unions books are subject to auditing.

Previously, unregistered unions, whilst legal, were not supervised or regulated by the Act. The position has since changed. The conditions and control measures which apply to registered trade unions apply to unregistered unions.

- \* The unions must provide the Registrar with a copy of their Constitution, its head office address and the names of its office bearers and officials.
- \* It must keep proper registers and books of account.
- \* It must notify the Registrar of any changes to its constitution.



- \* Its officials may not vote at meetings of its executive committee.
- \* It is prohibited from affiliating to a political party, and from giving any form of assistance or incurring expenditure, or carrying on activities or influencing its members, with the object of assisting any political party or any candidate in any election to parliament, a provincial council or other legislative body.

In terms of the law, disputes between workers and management should be settled through the industrial councils.

A conciliation board is an ad hoc body consisting of an equal number of employer and employee representatives. Where no Industrial Council exists, a Conciliation Board may be set up to settle a particular dispute.

The Industrial Council or Conciliation Board may decide to refer a dispute to arbitration. The Industrial Court which has been described by Tim Trollip, an authority on labour law, as basically toothless, is one such arbitration organ. A point to be made in relation to labour law in South Africa, is that the majority of this country's workforce have no say or part to play in the legislative process.

The stringest conditions attached to the registration caused a lot of resentment by black trade unions. This is an issue which caused divisions between the registered and unregistered unions. An issue which was recognised as being disadvantageous to unregistered unions is that of stop order facilities.

An unregistered union in terms of the law may not sign stop order agreements with management. But the trade unions have already forced a number of companies to recognise unregistered unions and also grant them stop order facilities.

Unregistered unions cannot sit in the Industrial Council. This is a condition which has forced some unions to resort to applying for registration.

The Food and Canning Workers Union and the African Food and Canning Workers Union are negotiating merger. The African Food and Canning Workers Union will join the registered Food and Canning Workers Union.

Two other big unions have also taken resolutions in their conferences to register. They are the National Union of Mine Workers (NUM) and the General Workers Union (GWU). The reasons advanced by these unions is that they will have better chances of

representing their workers in the Industrial Councils.

### 11. Influx Control

Whilst the regime pretends to be making reforms, allowing blacks to form trade unions, it talks of legal strikes and it uses a chain of other laws to frustrate the action of the workers against the employers.

The Aliens and Immigration Amendment Bill defines an 'alien' as somebody who is not a South African citizen. This includes people from the "independent" bantustans of Transkei, Venda, Ciskei and Bophutatswana and those who speak the languages of those regions.

An 'alien' who wishes to enter "white South Africa" will have to comply with the following requirements:

- \* On entering South Africa, an 'alien', must pay a fee to a passport officer to get a temporary permit. The fee will be refunded on leaving the country. But if the passport holder does something which is not in accordance with the law, he/she may lose the fee. Obviously, striking workers or workers fired or victimised by management will suffer the consequences under this Bill. In addition, people who are arrested for political activities whilst visiting South Africa, may be prohibited from re-entering the country. This will no doubt hit at migrant workers working in the mines, docks and agricultural farms of South Africa.

- \* All 'aliens' will have to show proof on the spot that they have a permit or they do not need one. Punishment for not producing a permit will be R600 or six months in prison.

regional level. The unions who have appealed to SACTU to mediate include the Black Consciousness unions. Today, SACTU enjoys respect within FOSATU, CUSA, and AZACTU unions. We believe that even though some of these unions are hostile to SACTU, they are not homogeneous. We now have to move away from working only with the leadership of these unions and create cells and cores in every union operating in our country in order to guard against elements who want to divert our struggle.

There is another problem rearing its ugly head within the trade union movement and creating much confusion and division. This is the Trotskyist elements who are diverting the workers struggle, the "Marxist Tendency of the ANC" as well as the so-called Legal Marxists who are



espousing a struggle for socialism and undermining or negating the national democratic revolution. All these should be dealt with mercilessly by the Movement as a whole.

In addition, we should never undermine the role played by imperialist trade union centres like ICFTU, AFL-CIO etc who sponsor our trade unionists to attend courses in the USA, in addition to pouring huge sums of monies into South Africa in an attempt to create reformist trade unions against the forces of liberation.

SACTU is conscious of the fact that at the factory floor level, not every worker is committed to revolutionary change in South Africa or to the same perspectives advanced by the Congress Alliance. But every worker is a potential member of a trade union. A revolutionary trade union like SACTU has more chances of influencing the political direction of the workers by combining practical activity with trade union politics.

SACTU has the task of creating a revolutionary situation in our country, making South Africa to be ungovernable. Arnold Selby puts it in DAWN in this way:

\* Like the Orderly Movement and Settlement of Black Persons Bill, it will crack down on those who employ or give accommodation to 'aliens' without permits. They could face a R5,000 fine a two years imprisonment. All employers will have to keep a list of 'aliens' working under them.

\* Forging a permit will result in a maximum fine of R10,000 or five years imprisonment.

Statistics show that more than 8,5 million lives will be affected by this Bill if it is made a law. In 1982, 95,508 people were convicted in the urban areas under pass laws. In 1983, this figure rose to 142,067.

It is the duty of every self-respecting South African to challenge these atrocious laws. They do not only end in the balkanisation of our country, they further make the indigenous people aliens in the country of their birth.

## 12. Summation

The most immediate and urgent tasks ahead of us are the organisation of the unorganised workers into industrial unions. It is known that only one and a half million workers are organised into trade unions thus far. It is feasible to launch a campaign for one year stipulating that by such time we should have organised

five million workers into trade unions. This call should come from the ANC and the South African Communist Party and should be stressed especially in the propaganda that "Every worker a trade union member". The ANC should call on all activists in their various organisations, be they women, youth, sport, church organisation, etc, to join the trade union movement.

The other crucial issues are the formation of the Federation which needs our urgent attention to ensure that most if not all the trade unions participate and join the proposed Federation.

SACTU has been a broker in a number of unity moves at industrial and

"It is at the place of work that the toilers can be linked to this struggle in a number of ways: the carrying out of agitational and organisation work; explaining the fight for the winning of workers' social and political rights as set in the Freedom Charter; lightening strikes for immediate demands; strikes for political demands in coordination with armed action; organisation of the unemployed along the lines of mass unemployed unions in urban and rural areas with particular emphasis among the unemployed deported to the bantustans; all mass political activities inside the country are carried out in close coordination with the African National Congress."

## 13. Recommendations

- (1) In order to give the home front all the necessary attention, we recommend that there should be a jointly coordinated programme of action for the whole movement.
- (2) We recommend that there be a control commission to ensure the implementation of decisions taken by each of the members of the Congress Alliance.
- (c) Whilst it is the speciality of SACTU to organise the workers, the whole movement has got to play its part in ensuring the accomplishment of this mission.
- (d) We recommend that the SACTU leadership and SACTU education officers should have a programme to address and conduct lectures to our comrades in the camps.
- (e) We recommend that SACTU be represented in the ECC to facilitate coordination at all levels of the movement.

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