

WORKERS' UNITY

Organ of the South African Congress
of Trade Unions

"An injury to one is an injury to all"

Issue No. 30, April 1982

NEIL'S MONUMENT MUST BE TRADE UNION UNITY

NEIL AGGETT, 28, Transvaal Secretary of the African Food and Canning Workers Union (AFCWU), detained last November, is the 46th person known to be murdered in detention since 1963. The regime says he 'hanged himself' in prison and was 'found' in the early hours of the morning on 5 February. The police began an autopsy immediately, refusing to wait for a private doctor or family representative as is the normal procedure.

In a statement, his Union said: 'We hold this government responsible for the killing of Neil Aggett, both the security police that do its dirty work and the Department of Manpower Utilisation, which has condoned the vendetta of the Security Police in East London advising employers to instantly dismiss workers who strike and not to have any dealings with certain Unions; the infiltration of spies and agent provocateurs into Union rank and file; putting pressure on landlords to evict unions from the premises; repeated raids of union offices; detentions and arrests of trade union officials and members.'

On February 11, Black workers carried out a nation-wide work stoppage to demonstrate their outrage. A few days later, thousands of Blacks defied countless laws (including the display of ANC flags) in the funeral cortege that marched through 'White' Johannesburg. At the funeral, the graveside oration was given by Babakhe Makama of the Metal and Allied Workers Union and around the seated mourners were the banners - which were later confiscated by the security police - of FOSATU, CUSA, the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union, the Black Municipal Workers Union, the General and Allied Workers Union, the FCWU and the AFCWU.

Neil's union said that workers would be called upon to engage in decisive actions which could not be ignored by the regime and which will bring an end to death in police detentions.

Neil Aggett was the first White to die in detention, and so this latest murder has raised a storm even in the all-White Parliament in Cape Town where an 'opposition' spokesman read an account written by another detainee describing how Aggett had been tortured.



Thousands defiantly march in tribute to comrade Neil Aggett.

His union, the AFCWU, along with its sister union, the FCWU, has been a model of non-racial trade unionism for the past three decades. In the 1970s, both unions, along with other democratic unions, refused to comply with new, ever more sinister trade union legislation. One of its founder members, Oscar Mpetha, the National Organiser, 72 years of age and a diabetic, has been held in prison for almost two years. He has recently had to undergo two operations.

As the ACWU says, there was no basis for Neil's detention other than trade union activities: '... he had nothing to fear from detention. ... The trade union struggle is an open struggle. Everything that a trade union leader does or says is put before the workers, who are the Union members, for their approval. That is the way our Union works and that is the way Neil conducted himself. ... The authorities seek to convince us that his detention is for other reasons, reasons of state security which have nothing to do with the Union. This is a lie. At the time of his detention the security police took from our Johannesburg office our minute book, petty cash book, bank deposit book, receipt book, letterheads and files on negotiations with employers. ... many of these things were not even used by Neil.'

Neil became involved in the Union in 1978. The AFCWU's Johannesburg Branch had been smashed after the bannings in the

1960's - yet the workers still remembered the Union and form the backbone of its new Johannesburg membership. He was asked to work in the Union in an official capacity but continued to work part-time as a doctor at Baragwanath Hospital so that the Union did not have to use up its meagre resources to pay him. He worked extensively in the Tembisa hostels and his work laid the basis for the establishment of the Union's branch in the Fattis and Monis plant in Isando. Neil 'sought to root the Union in the daily lives and struggles of the working people'. The membership of the Union expanded to such an extent that it became necessary to open a second office in another part of the city, in Kempton Park.

'Neil also played a leading role in building up links of comradeship and solidarity between different unions in the Transvaal. ... His influence and his example contributed to the success of the solidarity meetings between different Unions in the Transvaal, following the Conference of Langa in August last year.'

At his funeral, an organiser from the General Workers Union in Cape Town said, 'The monument we must build to Neil must be the unity of the union movement.'

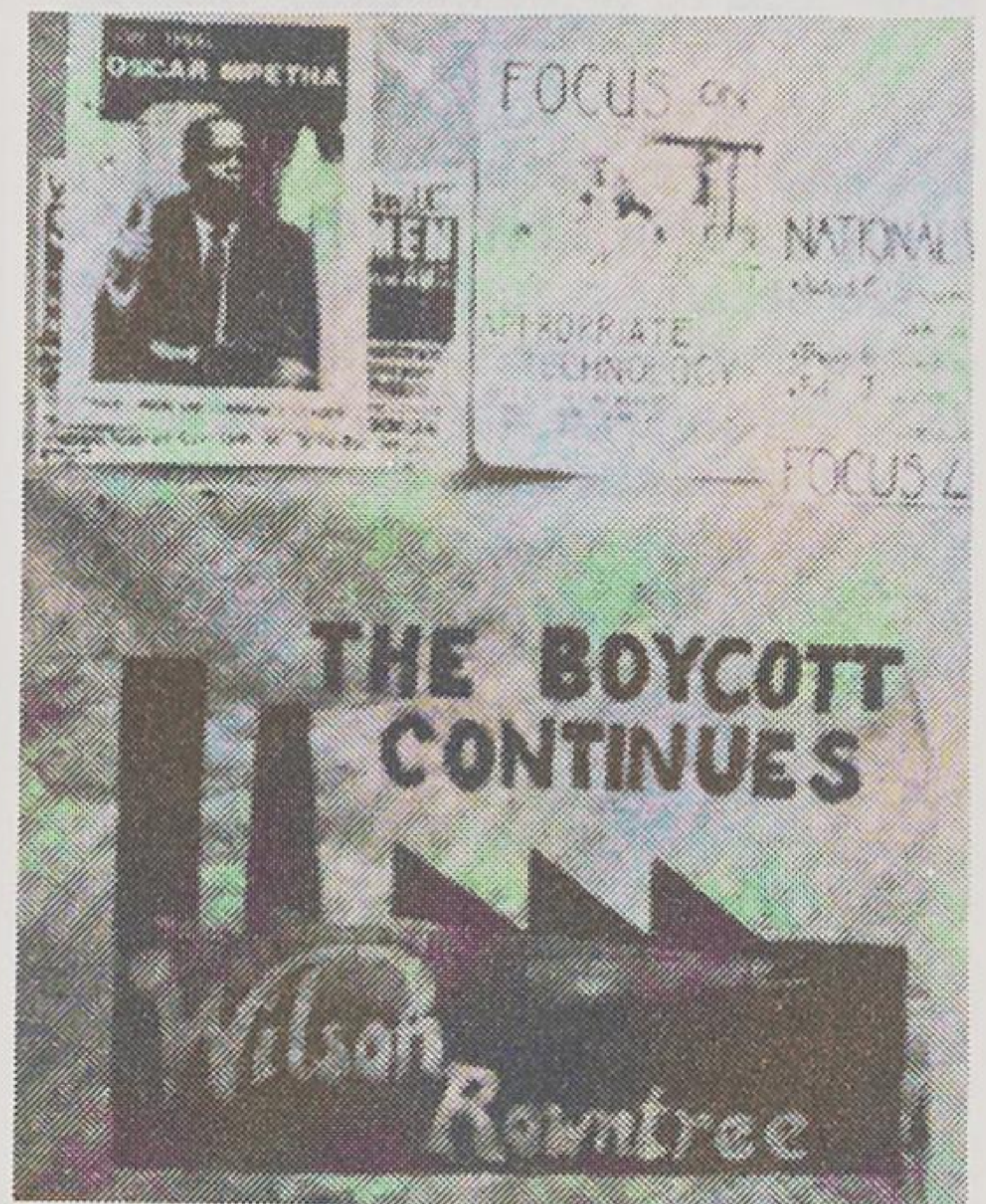
Telegrams of solidarity and support should be sent to: General Secretary, AFCWU, P.O. Box 2678, Cape Town 8000.

**An injury to one is an injury to all!
Unity is strength!**

In this issue:

- Workers on the march
- Weihahn failure
- 'SA a paradise' says Solidarity member
- Dismissals in the motor industry

CONTINUE THE BOYCOTT!



LAST DECEMBER WORKERS at Wilson-Rowntree rejected terms offered by management who were attempting to end the nation-wide consumer boycott of their products. The boycott was launched at SAAWU's National Conference in Durban in March 1981, after the dismissal of 500 workers who had gone on strike the previous month. Management offered to take back the workers as vacancies occurred but the workers demand nothing less than unconditional reinstatement.

This struggle is one that has come to the attention of workers in the rest of the world, particularly in Britain where the parent company, Rowntree-Mackintosh is based. The Anti-apartheid Movement is urging the Trade Union Congress to convene a conference of all the unions represented at Rowntree-Mackintosh to consider action to help their fellow workers in South Africa.

VUYISILE MINI

The Struggle Continues

VUYISILE MINI WAS a leader of the workers and a hero of the people. He combined his participation in SACTU with dedication to the work of the ANC. He stood by his comrades in Umkhonto we Sizwe to the last moment of his life when he rejected the offer of a reprieve from the gallows by refusing to give evidence against an MK militant. He was murdered by the apartheid regime at the age of 44 and left behind a wife, six children and millions of fellow workers and peasants who will never give up fighting for their freedom. He is remembered not only for how many unions he organised but more importantly for the spirit and dedication he, together with others, brought into the struggle.

Vuyisile Mini was born in Port Elizabeth in 1920 when it was a rapidly developing industrial centre. He began his participation in the Movement at the age of seventeen. He fought against bus fare and rent increases and the crippling injustices to people who could barely afford food. He was active in the campaign against mass removals from Korsten where he lived. He was arrested in 1952 after he became a volunteer in the Defiance Campaign led by the ANC. He was sentenced to three months' imprisonment for entering railway property reserved for Whites only. Because of his arrest he lost his job as a packer in a battery factory.

He became a full-time organiser of the dockworkers in 1955, and in 1956 his and the work of others led to the affiliation of the PE Stevedoring and Dock Workers Union to SACTU. The regime was now seeking other means of harassing the people's leaders. In 1956 the Treason Trial began, in which 156 people were arrested and charged with treason. One of these was Mini. The trial dragged on for four years, disrupting the lives and work of the accused and their families. The State case collapsed and all 156 were discharged.

Immediately after the charges against him were dropped and Mini was released, he threw himself back into the organising of the dock workers.

In 1960, the year the ANC was banned, he and others formed the General Workers Union in PE. He was mainly responsible for organising the metal workers. The union participated in all the campaigns of resistance which kept the spirit of the people alive during those days of brutal repression by the racist regime. He was a leader of the 1961 bus boycott of the Bay Transport Company which was launched in protest at the increase in fares and which occurred soon after 194 drivers had gone on strike in demand of higher wages. The workers were dismissed and later charged. But the pressure placed on management by the community forced the company to back down. Mini was arrested



ted as a result of his participation in this campaign.

While working in the PE Local Committee of SACTU, Vuyisile Mini was arrested on 10 May 1953 and charged with two other prominent ANC members – Wilson Khayinga and Sinakile Mkaba. They were charged with committing acts of sabotage and with being involved in the death of a police

informer. They were detained under the 90-day Act, held in solitary confinement and brutally tortured.

When they were put on trial it was in Port Alfred, far from their home town of Port Elizabeth. Their lawyer was forbidden by the racists to leave Durban, making proper defence impossible. They were sentenced to death in March 1964 (three other men were hanged for the murder itself) and appeals flooded into South Africa for their reprieve.

Before his death he managed to smuggle a note out of prison in which he explained how the fascist police had interrogated him and tried to buy him over even after his sentence. He wrote: '... They then asked me about Wilson Mkwayi.

They said I saw Mkwayi in January 1963. I said yes. They asked me if I was prepared to give evidence against Mkwayi, who they had now arrested. I said no, I was not. They said there was a good chance for them to save me from the gallows if I was prepared to assist them. I refused to assist. They then said, would I make the 'Amandla' salute when I walked the last few paces to the gallows? I said yes. After a few more jokes of that nature they left. – Vuyisile Mini'.

Mini, Khayinga and Mkaba were hanged in Pretoria Central Prison in November 1964. These three patriots went to their deaths singing freedom songs. Through all his arrests and victimisation, Mini reacted with that great gift which heartened all who heard him – his singing. He sang his own compositions in a magnificent bass voice in meetings and on marches, on trial and in prison. He even sang in the Port Elizabeth Male Voice Choir and often joked about this afterwards saying he had carried the 'gospel of Congress' further by way of song.

**His spirit will never be crushed!
His death has not gone unchallenged!**

27 years of
organising

MARCH 5, 1982, marks the 27th Anniversary of SACTU, the first trade union federation in South Africa organised irrespective of race, colour or creed. Against all the odds and despite every conceivable obstacle placed in its path, SACTU's strength continues to grow.

Individual sacrifice, including death at the hands of the apartheid regime, only partly explains SACTU's support in the Black working class. More important has been the unswerving adherence to the progressive policies laid down 27 years ago, time-tested policies which guide the Black workers' struggle to this day:

- organising of trade unions irrespective of race, colour or creed
- combining the economic and political struggle
- forging working class unity
- organising the unorganised

Forced to work clandestinely since the repression of the 1960's, SACTU has built underground structures that are reflected in the militant and independent Black trade union movement that emerged above-ground in the 1970's. The ranks of this movement multiply with each passing month, from victory to victory, and the combined force of the State and the employers is failing to control or smash these unions. One does not have to see SACTU banners at the factory gates to identify SACTU policies at work. This is a reality which the regime itself has been forced to acknowledge.

As SACTU gains strength inside the country, international working class solidarity grows accordingly. Principled support and assistance from the socialist world is now added to with increasing political and material solidarity from workers and trade unions in the capitalist world as well. In the latter arena, workers realize that their interests and freedoms are closely tied to the victory of SACTU and the Black workers of South Africa. Similarly, all progressive-minded people the world over, know that only an ANC victory can ensure a peaceful, democratic South Africa.

In this 28th year, it is vitally important that international working class solidarity be raised to the level of the struggle itself. The war against racism, colonialism and imperialism in South Africa cannot, and must not, be fought by the Black majority alone. As long as transnational corporations, banks and governments actively support apartheid, workers and their trade unions in capitalist countries must act in ways that directly challenge the international nature of this one common enemy.

An injury to one is an injury to all!



Workers on the march!



MILITANT OPPOSITION AGAINST CONTROL LAWS

SOUTH AFRICAN WORKERS last year showed without doubt that they were not going to give in to the pressures of the employers and the apartheid regime. The number of strikes and work stoppages *officially* recorded rose by 65% over 1980, and involved over 50% more workers. These statistics conceal the increasing use of effective strategies other than strikes – overtime bans, go-slows, etc. As our unity increases, the threat of action alone, sometimes carries weight with the employers.



These actions prove that the regime's plans for controlling the workers through its new industrial laws and structures are not meeting with great success. The racist Minister of Manpower recently revealed that only 7 trade unions applied for registration in 1981, in spite of intense pressure from both the state and employers. The unregistered unions are fighting for and winning recognition, despite the fascist state which uses its 'security' laws to deal with militant workers and trade unionists. Workers are making a mockery of the so-called legal system. ●

Two day strike wins recognition

RECOGNITION OF UNIONS has been won in some important cases. In December, there was a recognition agreement between the Food and Beverages Workers Union and Unilever in Boksburg. This was the first such agreement signed by Unilever in South Africa. The same union reached an agreement with Willards Foods in Rosslyn, Pretoria, in January. Meanwhile, the FCWU continues to make advances countrywide. The Sweet, Food and Allied Workers Union has signed, after months of bargaining, an agreement with Noodsberg Sugar Company, belonging to the CG Smith Group. This is significant because CG Smith is the largest sugar producer in the country, and the union, affiliated to FOSATU, is not a member of the industrial council.

CCAWUSA won partial recognition from the Edgars Warehouse clothing company after a two day strike by over 350 workers in December.

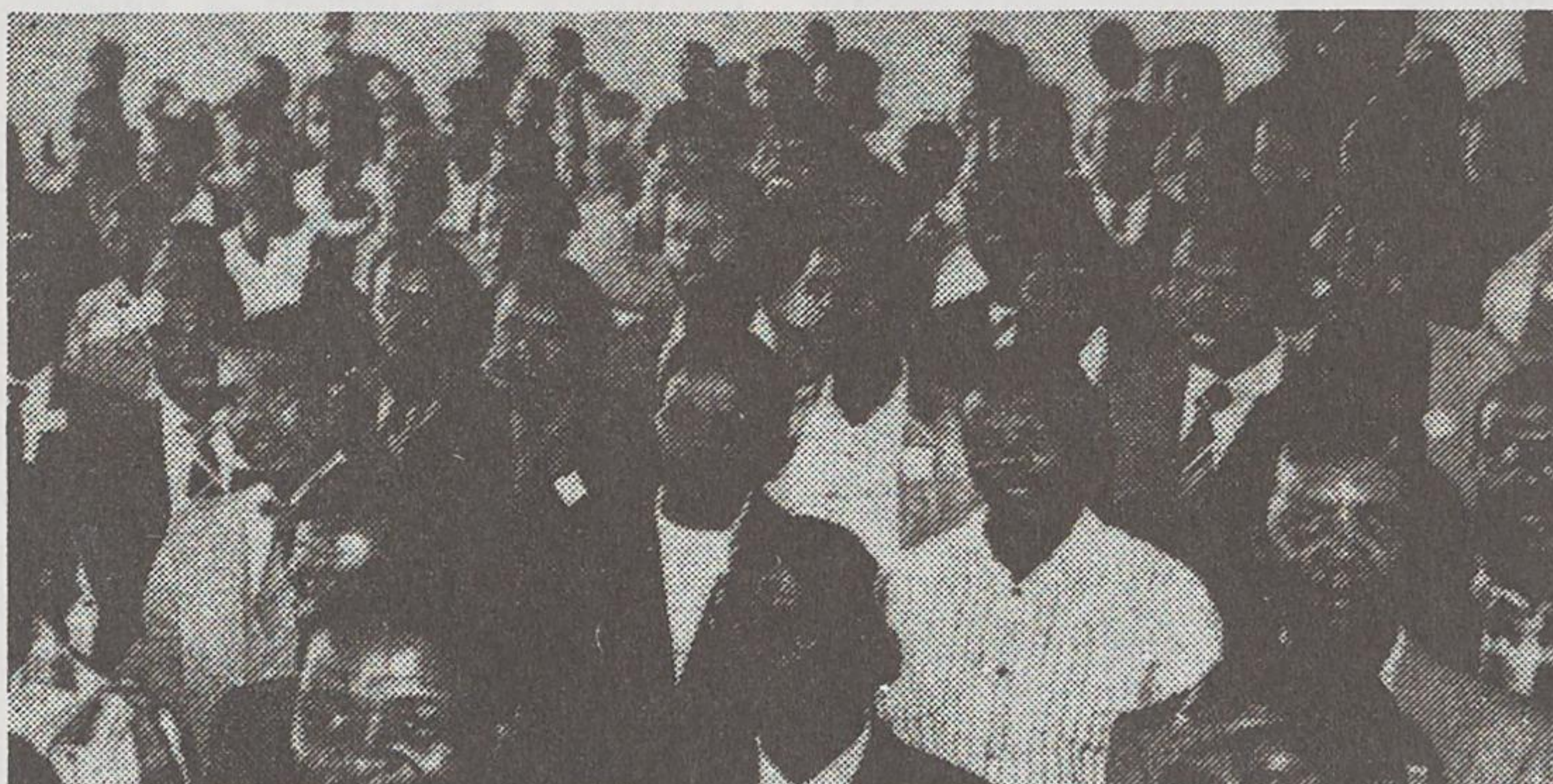
MAWU has reached a settlement over recognition with the German-owned Litemaster on the East Rand. This was the result of a long dispute, a threatened Industrial Court case and a threat by the union to involve unions in the Federal Republic of Germany. The company agreed to rehire 22 workers fired last October. A strike by 1,300 workers at the Krost Brothers

plant at Heriotdate won high-speed recognition for MAWU in February.

PUTCO, after delaying recognition of the Transport and Allied Workers Union for six months, signed an agreement at the bus company's headquarters in Johannesburg in December that if the union can prove it has a 50% membership at any depot, it will be recognised at these depots. This has already happened in a key Soweto depot. The Vaal Transport Corporation, which is the largest bus company in its area, has also agreed to recognise TAWU after a 2-day strike over pay by scores of bus drivers.

Two plants of Corobrik at Primrose and Bedfordview were immobilised when 500 workers struck to win recognition for their Glass and Allied Workers Union. Some of the workers were dismissed while others returned to work. The management refused to sign an agreement on the grounds that GAWU was not registered – it has applied but has not yet received its certificate.

What is clear from the above examples is that recognition is usually achieved only when the company is left with no alternative. It is not dependent on whether the union is registered but whether it is strongly representative of the workers on the shop floor. ●



Engineering workers meet to make future plans

Wage demands

AS 1982 APPROACHED, bus drivers at United Transport Holding in Middleburg stopped work because they had not been given their Christmas bonuses. Management was forced to reopen talks with the Liaison Committee. Stevedores in East London, PE and Cape Town meanwhile won up to 64% wage increases in negotiations between the General Workers Union and the ports' 3 stevedoring companies.



Victory to the stevedores

In January, 30 members of the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (CCAWUSA), mostly women, were dismissed by Contract Packaging Company in Johannesburg. When they arrived to collect their wages on the Friday, they were not paid because their boss was away on holiday somewhere. Workers said that working conditions, relations with White employees and wages were bad, and complaints were always met with the threat of being fired. The manager blames 'instigators' amongst the workers.

In February, Leyland (SA) asked the state to appoint a statutory conciliation board after declaring a dispute with the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union (NAAWU). This move, which could mean a legal lock-out by the company of 2,000 workers at its two Cape plants, follows the wage dispute which arose last year. A legal lock-out can occur if the Minister does not set up the conciliation board within a set time or if the board cannot settle the dispute.

The CCAWUSA, representing 80% of the workers at the Durban branch of the Game furniture group, called for community support and a nationwide boycott of Game Stores during a prolonged strike over wages and union recognition. The union is not registered, and the management claims this is the reason for their refusal to recognise it.

Among the other wage strikes that have taken place is one at McKinnon Chair in Pietermaritzburg where Metal and Allied Workers Union members won their demands and another in Umlazi, where blind workers from the Natal African Blind Society were evicted from the Society's premises after going on strike. They have lodged an urgent application in the Supreme Court to secure their rights of access to the premises. ●

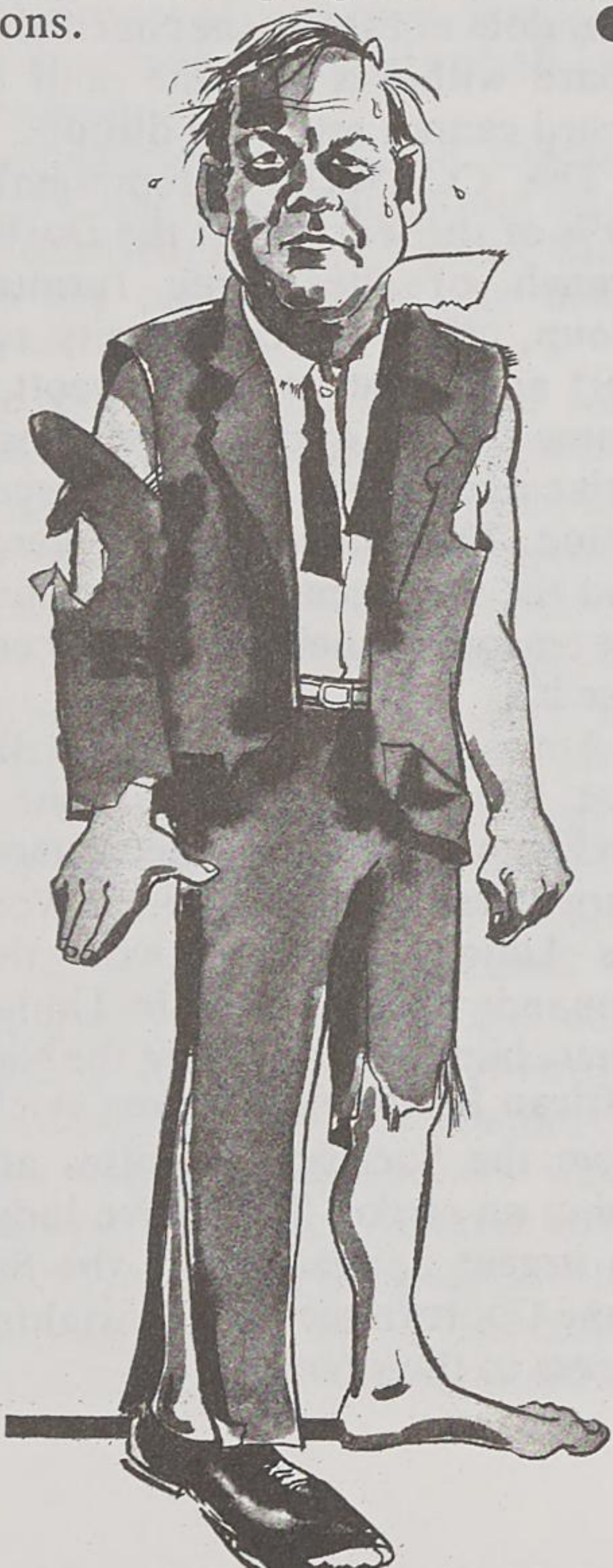
Wiehahn failure

TWO YEARS AFTER the initial Wiehahn report, the apartheid state has now realised that the Wiehahn recommendations have failed to achieve the desired objectives. It will be recalled that Wiehahn proposed several mechanisms of controlling militant Black trade unions. The cornerstone of these were: registration and through registration, control by the Industrial Council; mechanisms to discourage unions which refused to register, such as non-recognition by employers and non-access to stop order facilities. The regime hoped that the unregistered unions would die a natural death. Where these mechanisms failed, the apartheid state has not hesitated to use its repressive apparatus to strengthen Wiehahn's recommendations. Thus over the month, we have witnessed the increasing harassment of unregistered trade unions.

Trade unions speak

Soon after the tabling of Wiehahn and the Government white papers, a number of trade unions came out very strongly against the new dispensations. They argued that they did not approve of registration conditions laid down by the state until such a time that the state accepted the principles of freedom of association and workers' control of Unions. They further warned that the new dispensations could not succeed without the active support of trade unions. Therefore if all trade unions refused to cooperate, then the new racist dispensations were destined for the dustbin of history, where they belong.

This prediction has proved true. Over the last two years, it is the unregistered trade unions that have led the struggle to expose the emptiness of Wiehahn's so-called reforms. It is they, who have exposed the true colours of Wiehahn as another mechanism of state control over progressive trade unions. ●



THEIR EDUCATION KEEPS US DOWN

THE POLICY OF the racist minority regime sees as the only link between school, production and society, the aim of exploiting and oppressing Blacks.

School and education should open all avenues towards life – it should develop our understanding and relate closely to the needs of production and the society. Our education does not give us any understanding of the technology that is being used throughout the world. In this way we are prevented from developing our full, creative potential and prevented from being able to be promoted at work. Our work always remains the boring small tasks that we have to repeat again and again on the assembly line. We learn nothing from it.

regime is able to maintain Black workers as a vast reservoir of unskilled and cheap labour. This lack of education condemns us to monotonous, repetative and simple operations from an early age. We will always be at the bottom of the ladder and are often doomed to unemployment. Yet, the bigger the army of unemployed, the better for the bosses in the boardrooms as there are more workers to compete for jobs and so the wages can be kept down.

Unemployment is also increased by the amount of money the regime is spending on arms. They have increased taxes to pay for these weapons which has made the cost of living go up and our standard of living go down.



We will fight if necessary to win our rights

These assembly lines are only useful to the bosses as they increase the number of goods produced and therefore increased their profits.

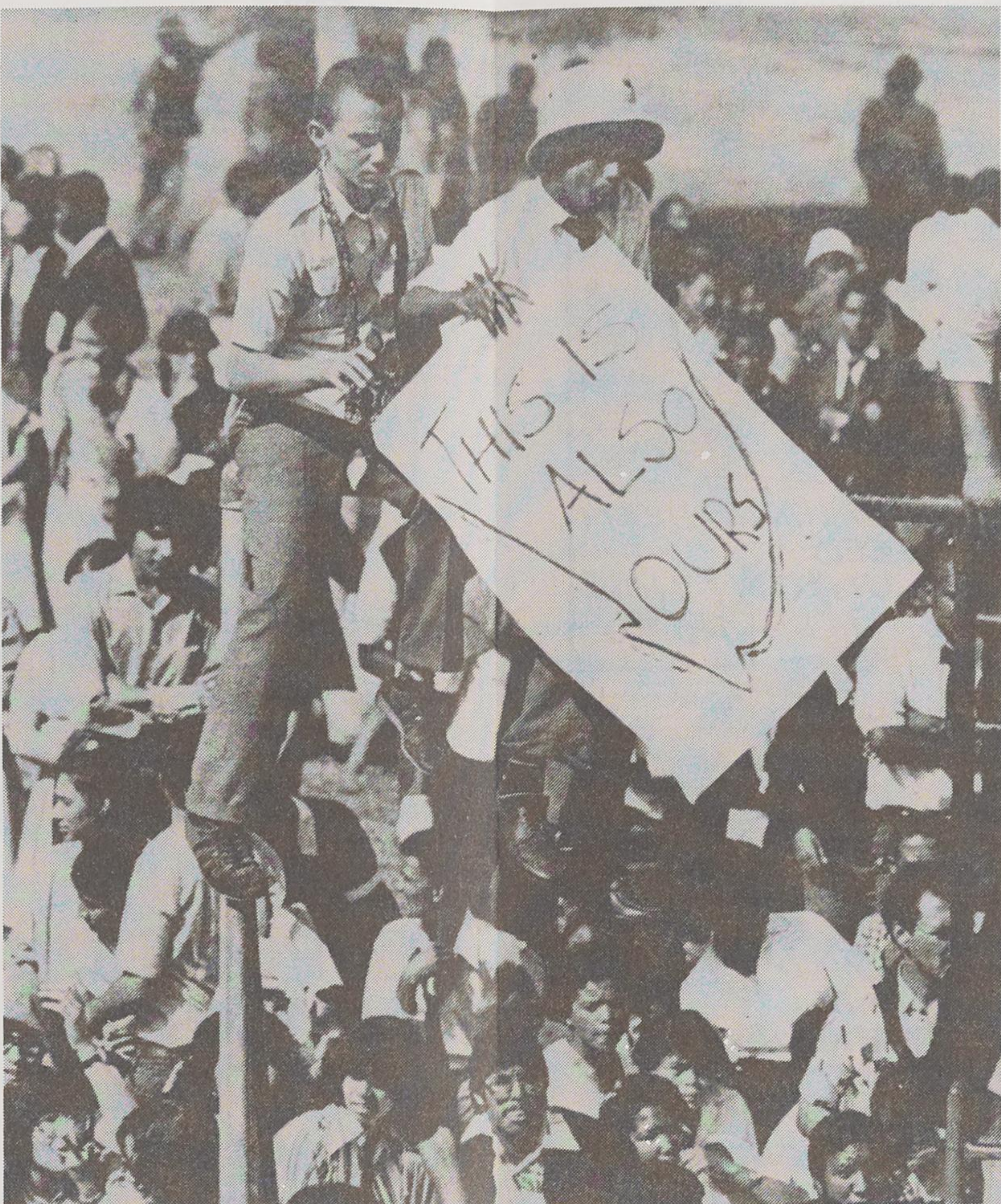
The apartheid regime requires Black workers mainly as unskilled or semi-skilled workers. This does not mean that there is no need for skilled workers – in fact the need for skilled workers is greater than ever before. By keeping skilled jobs out of the hands of Black workers, the regime and the bosses ensure that the wages of the majority of workers can be kept down. There are so many Blacks out of work that for every job there are many workers to fill it. This is only possible in the case of unskilled or semi-skilled jobs because the skilled jobs require too much training. Today many skilled jobs are being broken down into a number of unskilled or semi-skilled jobs which can be done along an assembly line.

Through the denial of genuine trade union rights, through the pass laws and the use of migrant labour on the mines and the farms, the

Not only does the regime discriminate against our children at school (in 1980 the regime spent R41 a year for an African child, R177 for a Coloured child, R230 for an Indian child and R620 for a White child); not only are we discriminated against at work by being denied skilled jobs; but Black teachers are discriminated against as well.

In his July 1981 mini-budget the racist Minister of Finance, Owen Horwood, announced a general increase for teachers and public servants. Two days later the Department of Education and Training released details of how Black teachers would be affected by the increase. It was clear that most Black teachers were disqualified from these benefits.

We have to struggle together as teachers unions, parents associations, trade unions, students and all sections of the community to destroy the system of apartheid which is dependent on cheap, unskilled labour. ●



'SA A PARADISE' SAYS SOLIDARITY

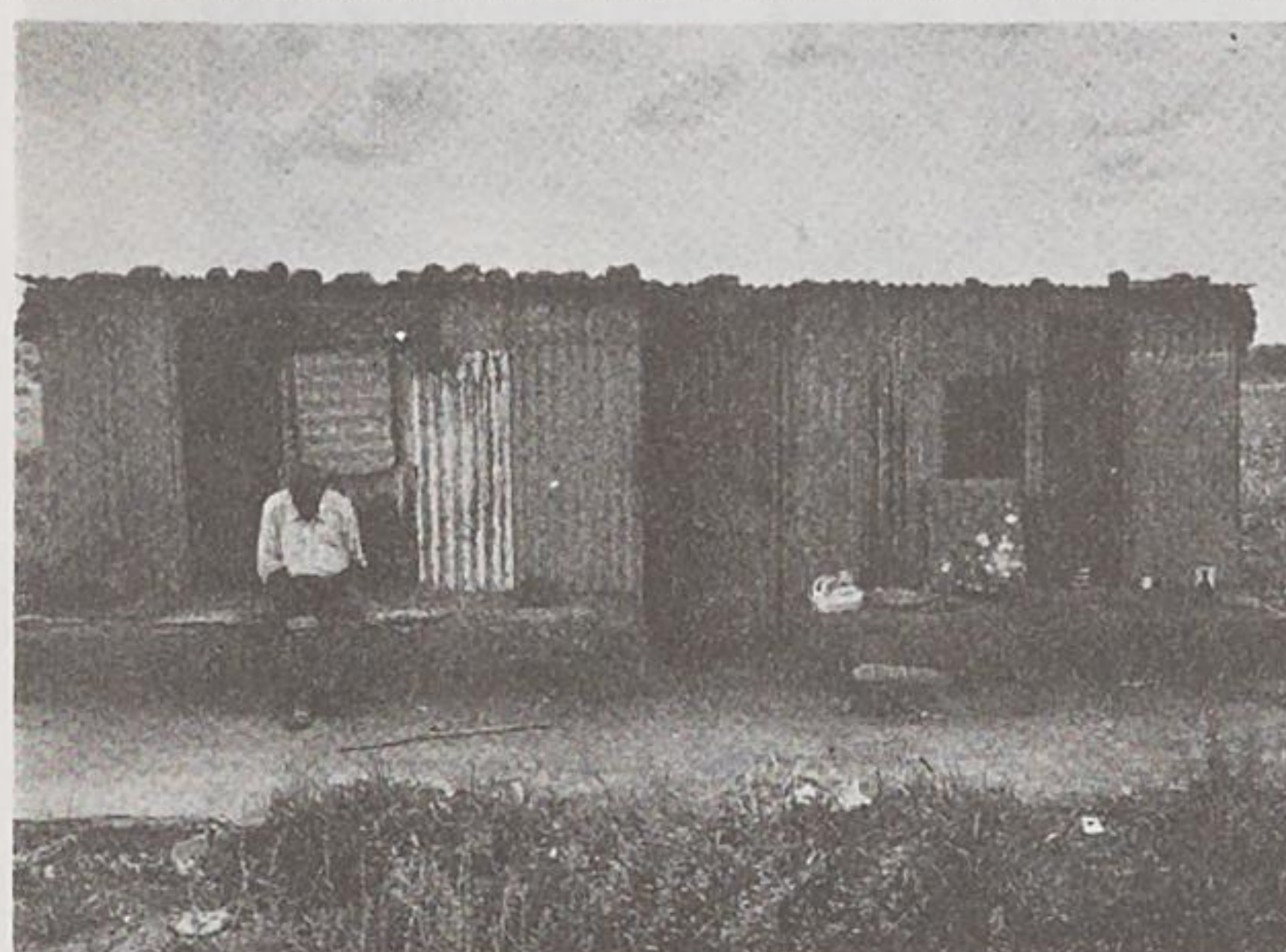
THERE IS A flood of Polish dissidents to South Africa. The South African embassy in Vienna has had to take on extra staff to cope with the flood of applications. According to the Cape Times, 5,000 are expected to go to SA during the course of 1982. In an interview with the Rand Daily Mail, one Solidarity member said: 'We listened to the BBC and Voice of America. We had heard that SA was a beautiful country and that it was a paradise for White people... We find the Black people very interesting. I have the impression that in general they do not understand the way a modern technological society works. It is as if they have been given too much too quickly, instead of being able to grow up with it the way people in Europe have. The White people brought them these things, but it takes time to understand how to cope with them.'

Yes, South Africa is 'a paradise for white people', while Black people are turned into 'foreigners' in our own country, denied the vote, education and forced to live in desperate poverty. For decades, our liberation movement has been calling for a comprehensive boycott and sanctions against South Africa. This includes a call to end all immigration to South Africa, particularly of skilled and semi-skilled White workers whose privileged position turns most of them into ardent supporters of the regime; whose husbands, sons and daughters will be drafted into the racist military machine; whose jobs should have gone to the millions of Black unemployed; and whose skills should have been taught to our people.

Support our call for comprehensive, mandatory United Nations sanctions against South Africa!



The paradise



The reality

'DIRECT LINKS'-STINKS!

WE ARE NOT new to the struggle. We have a history. We have memories of battles – of those who helped us and those who betrayed us, and of those who tried to lead us astray.

There were people from England and from Brussels who asked us not to take part in politics and offered us money. We rejected them. So they used their money for big stooges whose names are remembered only by historians.

There are new visitors who offer money, education, help of all kinds if we will give up following the Congress movement. Over the years we have educated ourselves, we have tried many ways, many paths, our families have starved in order that we may organise ourselves, we have given up our lives to build the Congress movement, why should we give it up now?

A new tokolosh has appeared. This new voice is dressed in new clothes. It carries a red flag. It talks of Marxism. It cries revolution, but if you listen carefully, it sings the same tune – give up following Congress, follow us. They try to trick us with a new slogan 'direct links'. They say trade unionists from Britain, the Federal Republic of Germany and other capitalist countries should come to visit us in our South African prison and we should visit them in America or wherever.

The Special Branch stands at the gate of our prison – at the borders and the airport. All who enter or leave are controlled and followed. Rita Ndzanga and Emma Mashinini who travelled overseas and Sean Hosey who came to South Africa all ended in jail. It is true, not all who visit us are arrested but then we ask the question, why? It is because they are doing what the Special Branch wants them to do



Contact between SACTU and CGTP-IN (PORTUGAL) grows

and are acting as a lead to us in the underground or because your reformism does not threaten the regime. Why do you visit us? It does us no good and puts us and our organisation in jeopardy.

It is difficult for some to refuse your invitations to America or Britain. But what can we learn there? What can the AFL-CIO teach us about revolution. We don't need lessons in class collaboration!

'Direct links' an apparently reasonable slogan: in fact, in practice, we have already long-established direct links between the workers of South Africa and the world. There is hardly a country in the world that a SACTU speaker and organiser has not visited except those where the workers are not free to receive us, such as Chile or El Salvador. There is no trade union organisation from which support has been offered that SACTU has not channelled that support to the workers and their organisations in South Africa.

It is not that these new voices

want direct links, it is that they want to bypass the peoples' revolutionary organisations, the ANC (SA) and SACTU. Such actions can only create divisions. It is not SACTU that picks and chooses which strikes or trade unions to support in South Africa, it is those who call for direct links who pick and choose. It is well known that certain people, certain trade unionists, in South Africa are paid and supported by internal and external forces who are against our revolution. Lucy Mvubelo is only one such a person.

If overseas trade union bodies want to work for unity in South Africa then let them ensure that their aid, their money goes to all the trade unions not only those which accept their aid along with their reformist philosophy. Apartheid is beyond reform.

'Direct links' are nothing more nor less than a new form of colonialism in which the far Left joins the far Right in opposing the Congress movement in South Africa.

UP-IN-ARMS OVER PENSIONS

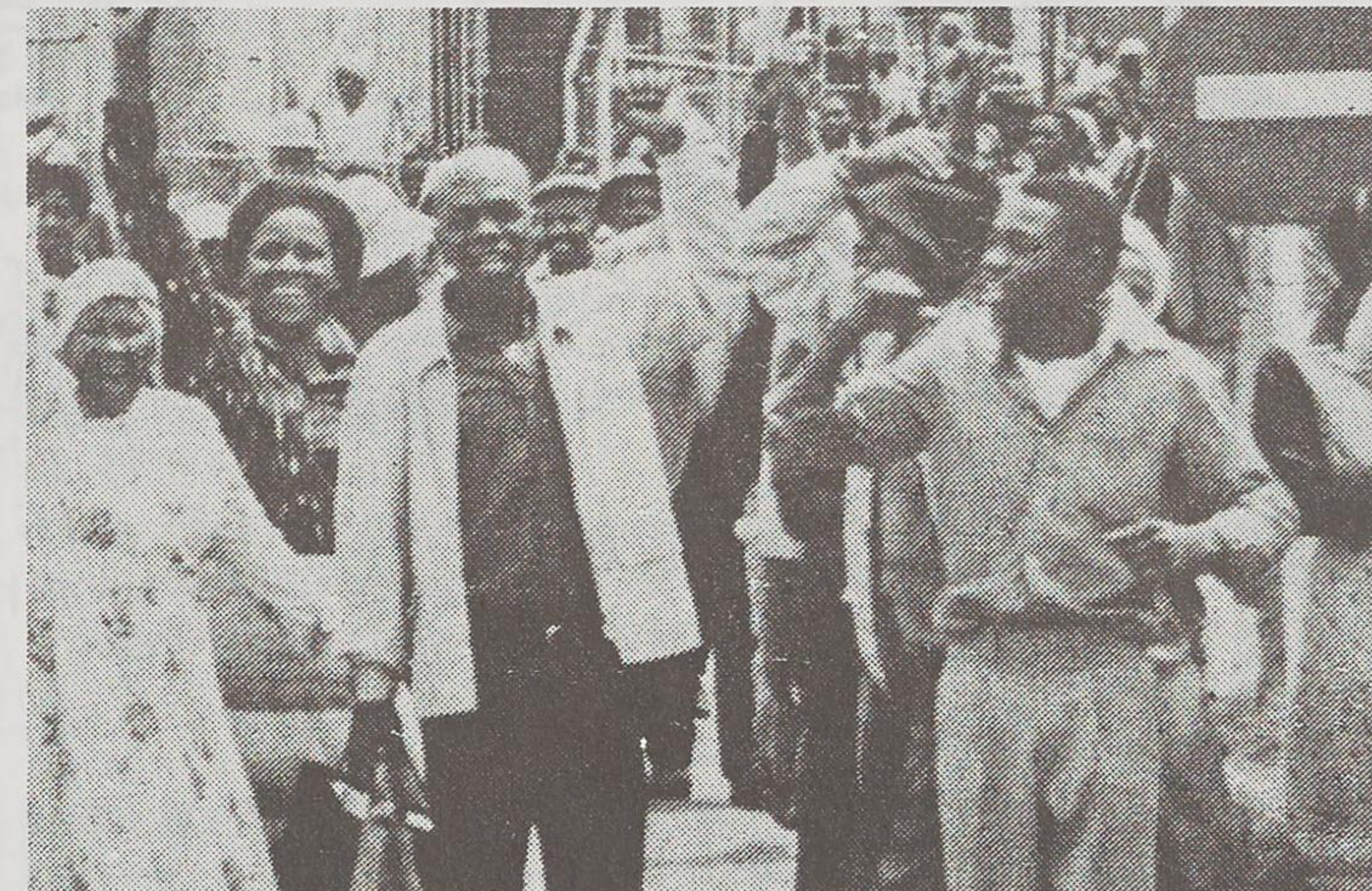
THE QUESTION OF pensions, one of the key issues of 1981, where workers forced the Pensions Bill to be withdrawn, is still a cause of dissatisfaction. Workers are demanding a say on how their money which they have paid to the pension funds is used and when it will be available for them.

Workers in the Transvaal furniture industry were reported in December to be up-in-arms about not receiving a full refund after their old Provident Fund was phased out. Instead, half the money was paid into a new pensions fund. Their union, the National Union of Furniture and Allied Workers (affiliated to TUCSA) had told them that they would receive a full pay-out. Workers say that the general union meetings were cut short by their leaders when the subject of pensions was raised. If such leaders continue to betray the workers' interests they must be replaced.

Unions in the metal industry have met with the employers organisation, Steel and Engineering

Industries Federation in an effort to change the National Metal Industries Pension Fund. The workers object to the contributions only being withdrawable at retirement age. At the Defy Industries plant at Jacobs, Durban, workers in February struck for the second time in a few months over this issue. The work force of about 1,400 was

demanding that their pension money be refunded. Defy fired them all and announced they could re-apply for employment but would lose certain long-service benefits. At Mondi Timber Mill at Port Dunford, the company reacted in a similar way when workers struck in February demanding they be given their pension contributions.



BOYCOTT SOUTH AFRICAN COAL!

OVER THE PAST decade the number of workers in coal mines has increased by thousands each year. In 1980 they extracted 114 million tons of coal and this increase in production has meant huge increases in profits for the racist regime.

Capitalists own our wealth

There are nineteen coalfields in South Africa. Six of them are major suppliers of coal. These are Witbank-Middelburg, Soutpansberg, and Waterberg in the Transvaal; Vryheid-Utrecht and Ermelo in Natal; and Vereeniging in the Orange Free State.

Most of the coal mines are owned by two companies – Anglo American and General Mining who together own 25 collieries in different countries and whose declared profits from the sweat of the miners were about R80 million each in 1980. Mines owned by these two companies together supply 65% of South Africa's coal. The other major owners of coal mines are Rand Mines, JCI, Goldfields of SA and Lonhro. ISCOR and SASOL and the oil companies – Shell, BP and Total – also own collieries.

Coal props up regime

Coal has always been an important mineral to the successive regimes in South Africa, because it is available locally and so could be readily used to generate power. Coal supplies 80% of the current energy needs. Most of the coal is used for generating electricity. The rest is used to produce liquid fuels for example, at SASOL. In addition, in 1980, nearly 30 million tons were exported. South Africa with 6% of the world's reserves, was represented at the first international conference for coal trade, transportation and handling by capitalist countries held in London in 1981.

The regime is using coal to strengthen the economy's defences



against the international boycott and the rising price of oil (to ensure its supplies of oil for the running of the tanks and other military vehicles used against our own people and the people of southern Africa).

Secret plans of mineowners

Job Reservation that serves to further divisions among all working people in South Africa is particularly rigidly enforced on the mines. White miners fought to lay down in the Mines and Works Act that only they could obtain blasting certificates. There is much 'open' talk about so-called lifting of Job Reservation while the secret documents of the mineowners reveal their real intentions.

The mineowners' plans to 'deal' with the militancy of the Black miners were revealed in one of their secret documents leaked last year. They stated that any union of Black miners that is not registered or is 'subversive' will not be recognised and prevented from functioning openly. In other words they are looking for a tame union to defuse any tensions, while at the same time they negotiate with the racist Mineworkers Union to 'safeguard White miners' job security.'

The need to organise

Miners overseas must not be hoodwinked by claims of 'reforms'. They must increase their efforts to ensure that these international links with South Africa are broken. South Africa miners, like all other workers in South Africa, are not going to wait for laws and 'reforms' to tell us what to do. We have begun a concentrated effort to mobilise the miners and this organisation is gathering strength. We must and will redouble our efforts. ●

STOP THE REPRESSION OF TRADE UNIONISTS IN SOUTH AFRICA!

AS THE WORKERS and people of South Africa strike further and ever more telling blows for freedom, the apartheid state is attempting to prolong its existence by revising its legislation and above all increasing repression. The high levels of worker and community action in 1980 were maintained in 1981, while armed actions and sabotage more than doubled. The working class particularly has paid a heavy price for this heroic resistance. Where in 1980, 21 workers and trade unionists are known to have been detained, the figure for 1981 is at least 306. Figures for the early part of this year show that the overall number in detention continues to rise.

The concentration of the repression on the working class occurs against a background of trade union resistance to the new racist industrial laws heralded particularly by the Wiehahn Commission.



Sam Kikine tortured

nesburg hospital in mid-February and Sam Kikine has been admitted to a psychiatric hospital in Durban. Several other detainees have been admitted to hospitals since the beginning of the year.

The apartheid state is attempting to destroy the democratic trade union movement in South Africa. Last November, Colonel Chris Coetzee of the police is reported as saying 'The best weapon of the silent terrorist is the spreading of rumours of better pay, more time off and better benefits. If you hear of these rumours in your organisation, you could have a dangerous terrorist on your hands.' In February, the Minister of Defence, General Magnus Malan, speaking to the White Iron and Steel Union in Pretoria, claimed that labour unrest had been planned by the ANC, which was using 'front organisations'.

The struggle for political and economic rights can never be divorced and the state's attempt to encourage trade unions to view the two as separate has not been successful. Coetzee's statement shows that even those who put forward basic economic demands are a target of the state. Working class activists will be treated as 'terrorists' and dealt with under the security laws.

For this reason, the recently published report of the Rabie Commission into the security laws has particular significance for trade unionists. It has made proposals for the streamlining and strengthening of the security laws. Its recommendation to create the crime of 'intimidation' is particularly sinister in its implications for any strike action. Now all strikes will be called 'acts of intimidation'.

The workers' struggles for trade union and political rights have developed in spite of ferocious attempts to crush them. The blows of our people are weakening and dividing the enemy, and no amount of manoeuvring by the racists will end our resistance. The unity in action of the people, the workers and their organisations – the ANC and SACTU – is the guarantee of final victory.



Release Oscar Mpetha

Those unions who have refused to succumb to registration and so legally binding the union to rigid state control, have been a prime target. Leading SAAWU officials including Thozamile Gqweta (President), Sisa Njikalane (Vice President) and Sam Kikine (General Secretary) were siezed. Rita Ndanga (Treasurer of the General and Allied Workers Union) whose husband, a SACTU NEC member, was murdered in detention in 1977, has been detained together with all the full-time employees of the union. Leading members of the African Food and Canning Workers Union (AFCWU), the General Workers Union of South Africa were also amongst those detained.

The treatment of the detainees at the hand of the racists is brutal and often fatal. Torture and murder are on the increase and workers and their leaders are bearing the brunt. Neil Aggett, the Transvaal Regional Secretary of the AFCWU, was murdered. Thozamile Gqweta was admitted in a serious condition to the psychiatric ward of the Johan-

