



South African Congress of Trade Unions

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Document Two

March 5, 1981

A LETTER TO CANADIAN TRADE UNIONS

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Let me begin by extending fraternal greetings on this important day in the history of our struggle--the 26th Anniversary of SACTU.

The past year has witnessed an intensification of black workers' resistance to the apartheid state's attempt to smash independent, non-racial trade unionism in South Africa. SACTU's policy of opposition to registration under the 1979 trade union legislation is being followed by more and more black trade unions with every passing month. The new so-called "reforms" are nothing but a sham designed to increase control over black workers. Apartheid's propaganda campaign to convince international trade union bodies that significant change is occurring is bound to fail. Black workers are refusing to register and their increased strike activity demonstrates a total opposition to national oppression and class exploitation. Community and workers' struggles are being advanced with unprecedented unity. We are not fighting for reforms--we are fighting for our freedom!

As black workers strike they suffer tremendous hardships. They must rely on their brothers and sisters throughout the world for strike fund donations that are not tainted with conditions that attempt to 'hijack' or direct the struggle away from total liberation from all forms of oppression. SACTU's Strike Fund is capable of getting these principled donations directly to the workers, and I want to commend the Canadian trade unionists who have supported our Fund during the past year.

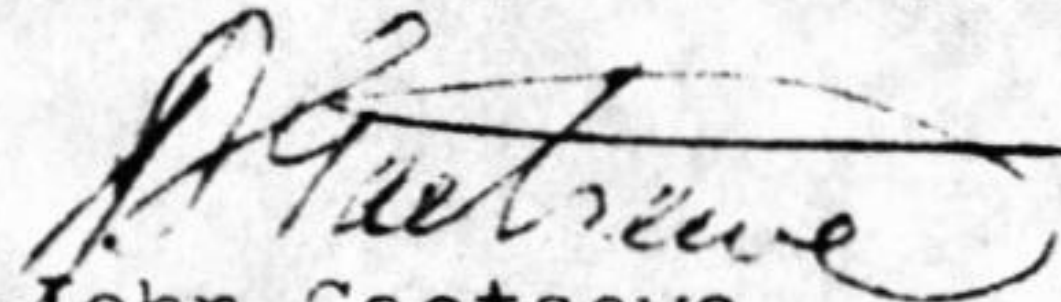
As we gain ground, we also suffer losses. On 29 January and in the early hours of the following day, the racist and fascist regime attacked ANC and SACTU residences in the Peoples Republic of Mozambique. Among the 12 killed was Brother William Khanyile, veteran SACTU leader from Natal who joined us back in 1958. He had spent several years in the prisons of apartheid for his organizing activities and was working deep within the SACTU underground in the mid-1970s before being forced into exile in 1977. Khanyile's death is a great loss to the working people of South Africa. SACTU urges Canadians to join in the international protest against this barbarous attack on the ANC and SACTU.

Finally, brothers and sisters, I wish to recommend that Canadian workers and their unions establish and reinforce links with the SACTU Solidarity Committee, our representative in Canada. The SSC can assist you with educational programs, research and solidarity actions in our common struggle against multinational corporations. Created by SACTU in 1980 as part of the intensification of our work in North America, this Committee is most capable of responding to all of your needs regarding the black workers' struggle against apartheid.

SACTU salutes the struggles of Canadian workers! SACTU urges you to

increase your solidarity efforts for SACTU and the black workers.
'An Injury to One is an Injury to All!

Yours fraternally,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'J. Gaetsewe', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John Gaetsewe,
General Secretary