

SACTU

Strike Fund

1983: Police were called to 99 strikes. 525 Black workers had been arrested, 64,800 workers took part.

According to official Department of Manpower figures: 1982

- * 'More strikes and work stoppages took place than in any other year in recent South African labour history. The record-breaking strike figures reveal that there were 394 strikes, compared to 342 in 1981.
- * 45% were for higher wages and an additional 48% included this demand.
- * 31% were in the metal industry, 11% in the motor industry and 9% in the textile industry.
- * 60% took place in the Transvaal; 21% in Natal; 13% in the Eastern Cape; and 6% in the Western Cape.
- * More than 188,000 workers took part in strikes – none of them White – which is an increase of around 50,000 on 1981.
- * On average, around 1,000 workers were on strike each calendar day last year.
- * Police were called to 167 incidents of labour unrest.

ANTI-STRIKE FUND

An amount of R2 million had been set aside last year to establish a fund to assist motor industry workers who refused to join strikes but were unable to work because their places of work were strike-bound, the Minister of Manpower, Mr Botha, said in Parliament.

Rand Daily Mail 9/2/83

SOUTH AFRICAN CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS STRIKE FUND

In 1980, as part of the commemoration of the 25th Anniversary of the formation of **SACTU** a Fund was launched to assist Black Workers who take strike action in their struggle for unrestricted trade union rights, within the framework of a fully democratic society.

1. Why SACTU set up the Fund

In South Africa trade unions serving Black workers can operate openly only with *severe* restrictions imposed by the apartheid regime. Therefore the activities undertaken by these unions on behalf of their members must be 'legal' according to apartheid laws. In terms of these laws, strike action by Black workers is 'illegal' and punishable by detention without trial, banning, banishment to the rural Bantustans. In spite of this there were 3 recorded strikes by Black workers in 1983. It is to help these strikers and their dependants that the Fund has been set up.

2. No financial help for Black workers on strike

There is no strike pay for Black workers on strike, nor is there Social Security benefit for them or their families. Strike action is always undertaken with much personal sacrifice. Even in the rare cases where the union involved can give some material help, this help is not only small, but very limited in time length because of the meagre financial resources with which all the unions have to carry on their work.

3. How is the Fund used?

The Fund is used for:

- (a) Hardship grants to the strikers and to support the families of those workers banned, detained or jailed for their trade union activities.
- (b) Educational work during strikes so that strikers are fully aware of the issues involved.
- (c) Promotional activities such as printing of posters, leaflets and pamphlets and transport for organisation etc.

Promoting a strike by Black workers in South Africa is a costly affair because of the apartheid laws which prevent freedom of movement, assembly and speech by the organisers and workers.

4. How the Fund is administered

All donations to the Strike Fund are treated as Special Fund. The money is then forwarded to our Southern Africa machinery for use in South Africa. The money is not meant for those unions that follow the policies of **SACTU** only, but for workers on strike irrespective of the union involved. Because of the laws which prohibit funds for activities deemed to be a threat to the security of the state – and strikes by Black workers fall into this category – assistance to strikers must be channelled to them by underground methods. For obvious security reasons the details of this process cannot be disclosed nor can the unions receiving the money be identified. **SACTU** has the necessary machinery to channel money into the country without this money being discovered or confiscated by the apartheid regime. Through the **SACTU** Strike Fund workers and trade unions the world over are able to directly respond to the material needs of the Black working class and the **SACTU** underground network.

5. Why we appeal to Trade Unions in the UK

Though the Fund is international, we address ourselves particularly to UK trade unions. We do this because Britain is heavily committed in bolstering up the apartheid regime and ensuring its present survival. The British workers have willingly or unwillingly been drawn into this process. For instance through the use of workers' pension funds to finance apartheid through investment in Companies and Multinationals trade with the fascist regime. Britain plays a key role in building up the apartheid war machine; in the transfer of high technology and strategic information; and the emigration to South Africa of skilled personnel. British investment in South Africa amounts to between £8,000-million £15,000-million and is larger than from any other country. South Africa is Britain's largest export market outside the European Economic Community and North America, while Britain is South Africa's third biggest overall trading partner. The British trade union movement has the numerical strength to disrupt and break these links which bolster the apartheid regime. British workers – on whom the British economy depends – are in a powerful position to give such fundamental support to our struggle. This appeal to the British workers should be seen in the light of massive unemployment in the UK caused by Companies closing down plants here and expanding in places like South Africa where Black workers are super exploited.

6. Funds to South Africa

Massive funds are being injected into South Africa by organisations, such as the AFL/CIO, Afro American Labour Centre and other organisations. In spite of apartheid laws prohibiting funds from outside South Africa for assistance to Black workers, the regime turns a blind eye to this injection of funds because these organisations claim the policy is for 'Education' of Black workers and their trade union officials. The object of this 'help' is an attempt to divert the Black workers and the trade unions from the broad political struggle against apartheid.

7. Support the struggle!

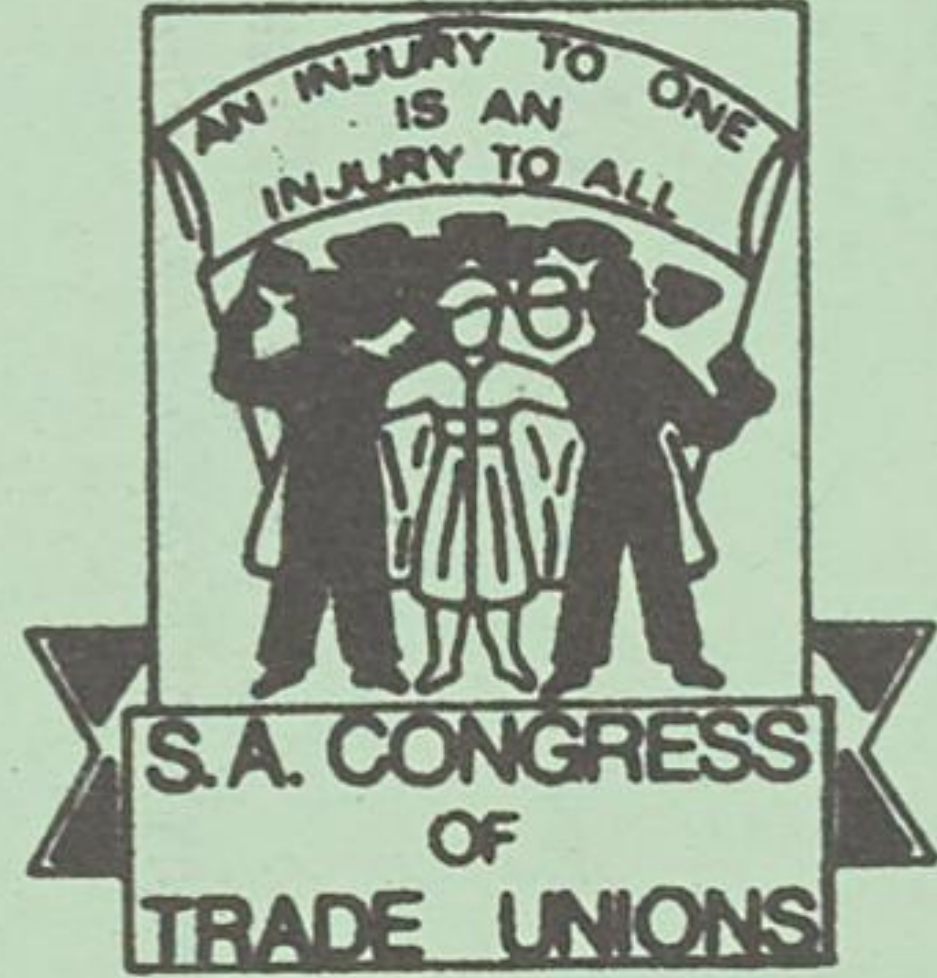
It is against this background we appeal to your union at National, Regional and Branch level to identify with the Black workers struggle through support for the Strike Fund.

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL!

John Nkadimeng
General Secretary

Zola Zembe
Co-ordinator for Western Europe

(April 1984)



South African Congress of Trade Unions

8 FLOWERS MEWS, OFF ARCHWAY CLOSE
UPPER HOLLOWAY, LONDON N19 3TB
Telephone: 01-281-3233

We wish to be associated with the struggle of the Black workers in South Africa for trade union and democratic rights and as an act of solidarity, we enclose our contribution of

£ _____ to **SACTU STRIKE FUND**

Name of Union

Branch

Name of Secretary/Treasurer

Address

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Date

All cheques and money orders to be made payable to: **SACTU** and forwarded to the above address