

"An injury to one is an injury to all"

WORKERS' UNITY

Organ of the South African Congress of Trade Unions

Issue No. 8, March 1978

Law on "idle Bantu" means: Slave-camps for African unemployed

The South African regime is passing a law which makes unemployment a crime.

Urban Africans who are unemployed for a total of 122 days in any year will be liable to arrest as "idle and undesirable Bantu" under Section 29 of the Bantu (Urban Areas) Act.

They will be endorsed out to the Bantustans, and may be sentenced to:

- ★ Detention in a "rehabilitation centre", farm colony or similar institution under the Prisons Act;
- ★ "Prescribed labour" at any rural village, settlement or "rehabilitation scheme" within a "Bantu area".

Two million

There are an estimated 2 million Africans out of work in South Africa. In their desperate struggle to feed themselves and their families, hundreds and thousands risk arrest and imprisonment under the pass laws by looking for work in the towns.

For most there are no jobs to be found. Unemployment is rising steadily. Recent estimates put the

increase at 27 000 a month.

Now African workers who are made "redundant" and sacked by the bosses because of the crisis in their crazy profit system, are to be punished by the apartheid state — for the "crime" of being unemployed!

It is a crime

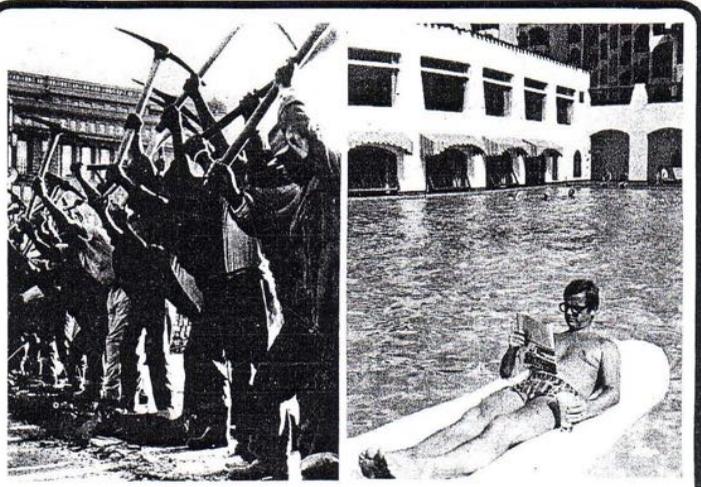
We say: Yes, unemployment is a crime. But it is not a crime committed by those who are unemployed. *It is a crime of the capitalist system; a crime of the bosses against the working people.*

The masses of the unemployed in South Africa are more than willing to work — they are desperate to work.

And is there no work needing to be done?

The two million who need work could be building the homes, hospitals and schools which the people need. They could be building factories, making buses, increasing the capacity of the railways, laying down tarred roads, putting in sanitation and providing electricity to the townships.

And they could all receive a full



Who are the idle ones?

Black workers in South Africa know what idleness and laziness is.

- When we leave the compounds in the dark mornings to clock in at the docks, the mines, the factories and the bakeries for the early morning shift and pass by the sleeping bosses' houses;
- When we go sweating from work into their air-conditioned offices to get our passes signed;
- When we pass their night clubs and bright lights in the evenings on our weary ride home;
- When we shake off sleep to go to trade union meetings, exhausted

by overtime work while they are relaxing on their golf courses;

— When we see them in their swimming pools and shining cars, and hear stories from our brothers and sisters who work for them in their clubs, hotels, houses and gardens;

Yes, we see what idle means.

And when our bones ache from the work we do so that they can enjoy their idleness, we make up our minds that our revolution will once and for all put an end to this system of masters and servants, of idle rich and toiling poor.

living wage of at least R50 a week.

The system

What stops this from happening? *The present system.* In the midst of all the people's needs, about one-third of the existing production capacity of the factories in South Africa is standing still, unused!

Why? Only because, in the present crisis of world capitalism, the bosses who own the factories cannot make profits for themselves out of employing the unemployed to produce goods.

It is the profit system which holds us back. While the bosses own the factories, the mines, the banks and the land, and while they control the government, we will continue to suffer.

Apartheid

The apartheid system which oppresses us is there because it

suits the needs of the bosses and their greed for profits.

By oppressing the mass of the black people, apartheid provides a cheap labour supply for the capitalists. It gives privileges to the white minority to persuade them to support the bosses and their regime in power.

The new law to declare African workers "idle" when they are unemployed, and sweep them out of the towns into slave-camps in the rural areas, shows more clearly than ever the real nature of the apartheid system.

Struggle

Let us mobilise our fellow workers and all our allies in the struggle against this system — to smash apartheid, overthrow the power of the bosses, take back the wealth of our country and organise production for the benefit of the people as a whole.



Outside the WRAB labour bureau — waiting for jobs that capitalism cannot provide.

DANGER AT WORK!

Capitalist society is based on the profit motive. In exploiting the working people the boss constantly tries to increase his rate of profit. He does this for example by paying the lowest wages possible, and by spending as little as possible on safety precautions so as to get his machinery as cheaply as possible.

The only limit to him doing this is the necessity of ensuring that there is a constant supply of strong and healthy workers to exploit.

New technology

If the use of new raw materials and new processes can increase the rate of exploitation of the workers, the boss will apply this new technology.

Individual bosses are often so greedy that they have to be kept under some sort of control by other bosses and the capitalist state. If this were not done they might poison and kill not only their own workers but also the workers of other factories and even the capitalists themselves.

However, these controls from above are always weak and inadequate, because they put the interests of the bosses and the profit system above the interests of the workers and the general public. This is shown very clearly in the SA government's *Commission of Inquiry into Industrial Health* (1975), which approached the life-or-death problems of health and safety of the workers entirely from the point of view of the bosses and the protection of their profits.

Apartheid

In South Africa, apartheid adds a further dimension to the problems which capitalism creates for the workers. The health and safety of workers varies widely from group



to group, the whites getting the best deal and the Africans the worst.

★ Job reservation forces Africans into the dirtiest, lowest paid and most dangerous jobs.

★ Workmen's Compensation for Africans is much lower than for whites.

★ The apartheid system ensures that African workers are cheap and easily replaced, so bosses need not bother about expensive safety precautions.

★ African workers have no trade union or political rights to enable them to fight for adequate health and safety precautions at work.

★ Africans are deprived of education, are denied access to many major libraries, cannot get specialist help, and generally lack the means of recording and publicising information about health and safety.

★ If the workers challenge the bosses over health and safety they can easily be sacked and endorsed out of the area.

★ Frequently, for example, African mine workers who contract diseases at work are simply sent "home" to a Bantustan by a white company doctor. In the Bantustan, most are unable to claim compensation and medical facilities are so poor that their families cannot prove the disease or cause of death.

★ Many African workers cannot afford to report sick, since most receive no sick pay and few can risk dismissal.

The list of the special problems facing African workers in the field of health and safety in South Africa is endless.

White workers

While white workers are much better off, a white skin is no barrier to industrial poisons and disease.

For example, the Commission of Inquiry found that, on the mines, an average of 444 white and coloured workers and 5194 Africans out of a total of 494,995 were certified each year as new cases of serious diseases contracted through working on the mines.

On average 249 white and coloured mine workers and 581 Africans die each year from these diseases.

The Commission felt that these figures are "not high"! Why? Because accidents on the mines kill 500 a year and injured 22,000 in 1974 alone. (That is supposed to be a consoling thought for the workers!)

White workers must surely realise that under capitalism, even as part of the privileged section of apartheid society, their health and safety are not assured.

We must organise

Safety depends on the strength of the workers organised into trade unions. In South Africa this means the independent unions based on the mass of the workers, the African workers.

At present, all factory inspectors and other committees and boards responsible for health and safety at work are under the control of the government and the employers. Even the white trade unions cannot appoint inspectors. Even the white mine workers do not have the right to inspect mines with regard to safety.

What we need

As part of our struggle for health and safety at work we demand:

★ Safety officers must be elected by the workers in every factory, mine and workshop. In large factories and mines there must be elected safety committees.

★ Safety officers and committees must have direct access to the workers, the trade unions and the management.

★ All information and records concerning health and safety in the work-place must be open for all to see.

★ Workers must have free access to any experts and doctors they choose for advice. These people must have access at any time to all work-areas, machinery and workers for tests and investigations. One of their special jobs would be to advise workers on the dangers of the various processes in the factories and mines.

Power to enforce

★ The elected safety officers and

committees, together with the trade unions, must have the power to enforce all necessary regulations, and shut down any factory or process (with full protection of the workers' pay and benefits) which they consider dangerous to health and safety.

★ For overall direction of health and safety throughout the country, there should be a central national body *under workers' control*, to lay down standards and conditions, carry out inspections and supervise preventive medicine.

As long as bosses own factories, the workers will have to force them to spend money and pay attention to safety and health. The difficulties are great, but the power of the African workers with their allies is much greater.

Freedom charter

The *Freedom Charter*, adopted by the Congress of the People in 1955 to guide our liberation struggle, contains very important demands which affect health and safety at work. Among these are:

★ that all who work shall be free to form trade unions;

★ that there shall be equal education, free and compulsory for all children, with facilities for higher education and technical training;

★ that a preventive health scheme shall be run by the state;

★ that the mines, banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole;

★ that all other industry and trade shall be controlled to assist the well-being of the people.

Our right

The health of all workers and their families is of the greatest importance. It should be our absolute right.

Only when the workers have taken control of production in South Africa and organise it in the interests of all the people, will the main stumbling block in the way of health and safety at work be removed: the bosses and their greed.

Some examples from the 1975 Commission's findings on industrial health in South Africa:

★ In the monumental masonry industry, 123 out of every 1000 workers contract silicosis.

★ Three factories employing 1635 workers had 160 cases of asbestosis.

★ Of 3745 workers in 60 factories, 35 per cent were found to have lead poisoning.

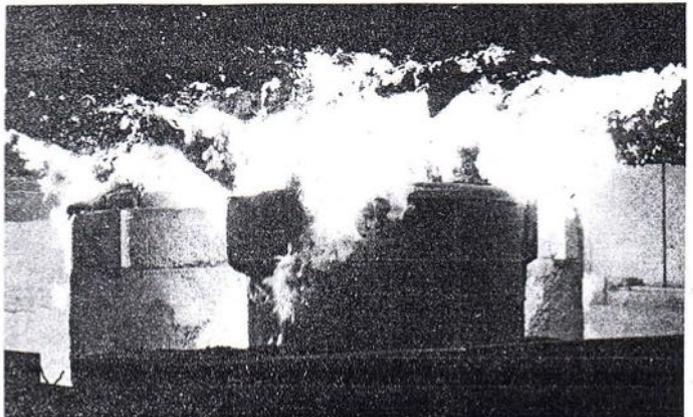
★ In two factories, over half of the workers were poisoned by manganese.

★ In three platinum refineries, 40 per cent of the white workers and 17 per cent of the Africans suffered from platinosis.

★ In a chromate works, 75 per cent of the workers had active lesions in their nasal passages.

★ 28 per cent of workers using mercury in a lamp factory were suffering from mercury poisoning.

How much more is unknown? There are 30,000 factories in South Africa. In 1974 there were 32 factory inspectors employed by the Department of Labour. Each inspector would have to visit four factories every working day in order to visit each factory once in a year!



Chrome smelting in South Africa. In one chromate works alone, 75 per cent of the workers had active lesions in their nasal passages.

SACTU Executive reviews progress

During January, the extended National Executive Committee of SACTU met in Belgrade, where venue and accommodation were generously provided by the Yugoslav trade unions.

The Committee reviewed all aspects of SACTU's work. Reports were given of considerable progress in building up the organisation, including progress which has been made by our cadres working within South Africa.

The General Secretary's political report to the NEC was discussed and adopted as a policy statement of SACTU. This document has now been published as a pamphlet entitled "LOOKING FORWARD — SACTU's view of the political situation and the tasks facing the workers' movement in South Africa."

Drivers victimised after joining union

Drivers and their assistants at Langhoff Transport claim that they are being victimised for joining the Transport and Allied Workers' Union — despite an agreement with management allowing the union access to the premises and certain negotiating rights.

The secretary of the Langhoff works committee said: "When our committee was formed, the Union officials were present, and our employer gave the impression that he was in favour of our activities. Life suddenly turned sour for most of us in November last year. We were made to wash lorries and do other degrading jobs. One foreman even said this was punishment for being union members."

Many workers from Langhoff have since lost their jobs because their passes were not in order. Knowing how vulnerable they were, they demanded that management take them to the Bantu Administration Board to be registered properly.

When they got there the BAAB officials told them they had no right to be working in the area, and refused to register them.

U.S. miners defy State in strike battle

In the United States of America, 166,000 miners in the United Mine Workers' Union have carried the country's longest national coal strike into its fourth month.

The strike has been marked by violent battles between strikers (who include 800 women workers) and mine security guards and police. It has brought the US government to the verge of proclaiming an "energy emergency".

Anti-strike clause

The strike began when the mine bosses failed to get the union to agree to the terms of a new contract. It would have included financial penalties against miners who went on "unofficial" strikes in local areas. The local union branches were determined not to give up the right to strike over conditions in particular mines.

The coal bosses also aimed to replace the previous industry-wide health and retirement funds with separate schemes for each company — with the result that lower benefits would be paid.

Up-hill battle

The strikers have had to fight an up-hill battle because only about half of American miners are organised in the union. In the key state of Kentucky, only about one-third are organised.

An important part of the struggle during the strike has been to stop coal from non-union mines.

Against the strikers the mine-owners called in hired thugs and gun-men to break the pickets. In January, violence erupted at Prestonburg, Kentucky, when a 65-year-old striker was shot dead by a pit security guard as he was taking coffee to four pickets.

Flying pickets

Then the strikers organised flying pickets to tour areas where the union is weak. They travel in groups several hundred strong, armed with guns, pick-axe handles and explosives.

The workers see this strike as a life-or-death struggle for their union.

At Rochdale Wharf, Indiana, where non-union coal was being handled, 500 strikers firing guns and setting off dynamite charges stormed the loading pier and clashed with riot police.

In West Virginia, FBI agents arrested senior union officials, including a branch president, on charges of dynamiting a railway line which brought coal from non-union mines.

No strike-pay

The workers get no strike-pay from the union, and have had to survive on their savings and government food stamps (which are now to be cut off.) Relief committees have been set up to give aid to desperate cases.

The strike has taken place in the middle of a bitter winter freeze-up



Striking members of the United Mine Workers' Union assemble in Cedar Grove, West Virginia, U.S.A. to reject the mine bosses' offer and press on with their demands.

and snow storms.

The mine bosses have withdrawn the card entitling the miners to free medical care — a serious threat to workers in a country where medical treatment has to be paid for and costs enormous sums.

Pension payments stopped

On 1st February the pension fund, which had been making payments to 82,000 retired miners, "ran out of funds". This only angered the workers further, as some of their statements (quoted in the *Detroit News*) show.

"If they don't take care of the retired miners, the river will run red again," said one. "I put in 37 years in the coal mines. I've got silicosis and I've had two heart attacks, I don't have that much to lose. I can still shoot, and I'm willing to give my life if I have to."

The workers began organising the pensioners and disabled miners. "We figure two-thirds of that 82,000 are still able to picket the mines and fight if they have to. Hell, some of them have told me they'll be out there on crutches or in wheelchairs."

"Nobody going back"

"There ain't nobody going back to work if we get cut out. We'll be at the drift mouth. We'll have our guns with us and there ain't nobody going to get in that mine. My wife can shoot too, and she'll be out there with me."

In the face of such defiance, the bosses and the government have looked about frantically for some means of ending the strike without capitulating to the workers.

In February, they tried to bribe the workers with an offer of a one-third wage increase — in return for

a limit to the right to strike. The union's negotiating team, under firm pressure from the rank and file, rejected this.

Backed down

Eventually, under anxious pressure from President Carter, the mine bosses partially backed down and offered the miners a new contract without any penalty clauses against "unofficial" strikes.

While this in itself was an important victory, the miners decided to reject the offer and press on with their other demands.

As we go to press, President Carter has invoked the Taft-Hartley anti-strike law and "ordered" the miners back to work — but the workers have declared that they will defy the order. A major confrontation between the strikers and the state is now looming.

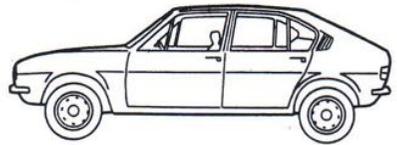
Class struggle

The *London Times* says: "The miners are among the last groups of American workers to view labour relations in the classic terms of class struggle." This newspaper has got it completely the wrong way round!

These miners are among the first groups of American workers to once again move into decisive action in the new period of the world capitalist economic crisis. They will be followed by more and more workers mobilising to defend their living standards and to build their fighting organisations against mounting attacks by the employers and the governments.

These are early signs of the strong winds of mass struggle that are beginning to blow through the capitalist countries, rich and poor alike.

S.A. motor industry



Part 2

The growth of the motor industry in South Africa has been of great importance in the country's economic development.

Since the 1950s, manufacturing industry has taken the place of mining as the main contributor to the "national income" of the employers, and its importance has increased ever since. Manufacturing industry expanded particularly rapidly after 1962, and it is during this period that the motor industry has proved vital.

"Local content"

At first, the motor industry in South Africa only assembled vehicles, using parts which were imported from the advanced capitalist countries. In 1961, for example, only 12 per cent of each car assembled in South Africa was made locally. But today at least 66 per cent of each car consists of parts made locally.

This change has been mainly the result of the government's "local content programme"—its strategy of using the motor industry to stimulate the development of manufacturing industry as a whole.

The "local content programme" has aimed to put pressure on the multi-national motor companies to bring to South Africa the giant factories, machinery, skills and technology which are needed by a modern industrial economy.

Field for exploitation

The government's intention has been to create (through the growth of manufacturing industry) a bigger field to enable South African capitalists to share in the greater wealth which results from the greater exploitation of more and more workers.

How does the growth of the motor industry in South Africa help the growth of other industries as well? Because factories which start making parts for motor cars can easily make similar kinds of parts for other industries.

For example, a factory which can make radiators for cars will be able to make complicated metal work for other branches of the economy as well. By getting the motor companies to do their manufacturing (and not just their assembling) in South Africa, the government is able to stimulate local industry in general.

Laid the basis

By encouraging the quick growth of motor manufacturing, the "local content programme" has laid the basis for the local factories to begin exporting vehicles and parts to other countries.

The present economic crisis has forced the government to delay the

next phase of the local content programme until 1980.

The stated aim of the programme is to raise local content to approximately 80 per cent.

Military purpose

Apart from its economic aims, the government's policy towards the motor industry also has a military purpose. A factory that can make cars and trucks from scratch can also produce vehicles for the army and police.

Since the Sharpeville massacre, and even more since Soweto, the apartheid regime has been very anxious to achieve "self-sufficiency" in military equipment, so that it is less vulnerable to arms boycotts.

Therefore, the multi-national motor companies involved in South Africa are directly helping to defend the apartheid system against the struggle of the workers and oppressed people.

Some of these companies have long been supplying military

contract to supply Bedford trucks to the SA Defence Force. These trucks are the main means of transport for the army.

★ Magirus Deutz makes huge military transports for the army.

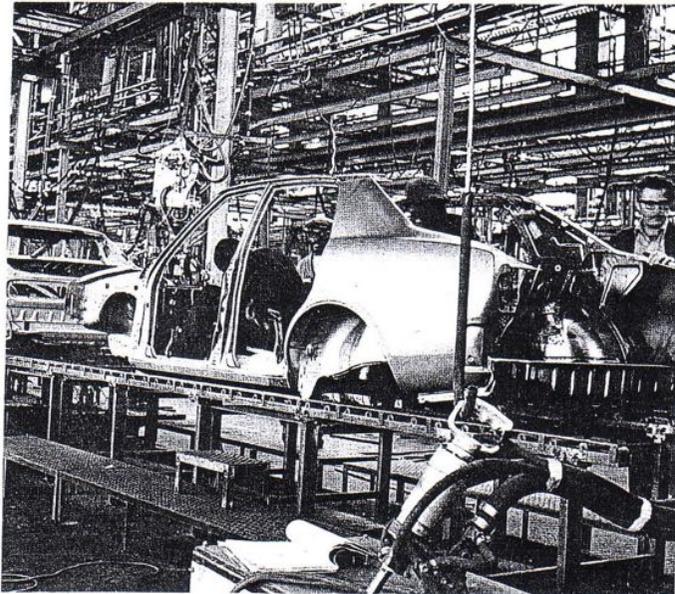
★ Mercedes Benz supplies 4-wheel drive Unimogs which were used in the South African invasion of Angola, and are used in "counter-insurgency" operations.

★ Ford, General Motors and Chrysler (subsequently Sigma) provide police vans and transport vehicles for the Department of Prisons.

The big motor firms also enjoy many other state contracts. For example, General Motors is assembling diesel locomotives for the South African Railways.

New expansion

In Part 1 of this article in the last issue, we pointed out how motor car sales in South Africa have slumped, and we explained why thousands of workers have been dismissed from their jobs in the



Assembly line

vehicles to the regime. For example:

★ Leyland provides trucks, Land Rovers and armoured personnel carriers to the South African Defence Force. Leyland also supplies Land Rovers to the "riot" police for the suppression of demonstrations in Soweto and other black townships, and for crushing strikes by black workers.

Bedford Trucks

★ For more than 15 years, General Motors has had a huge

industry.

At first glance, therefore, it is surprising to discover that, in the midst of the economic crisis, a number of the motor companies have announced massive plans to expand their South African operations. For example:

★ Fiat are to expand investment in South Africa by some R50 million, to produce Fiat tractors as well as lorries, passenger buses and commercial vehicles.

★ Datsun-Nissan is to invest a further R40 million in its South African operation over the next five years.

★ M.A.N. Truck & Bus, a local subsidiary of a German heavy vehicle manufacturer, has doubled the capacity of its Pinetown plant.

★ Ford is to invest a further R7 million in its Port Elizabeth plant

this year.

★ Leyland, which embarked on a R30 million expansion programme in South Africa in 1974, has recently begun a further major programme of new investment.

What is the reason for such expansion at a time when one-third of productive capacity in South Africa's motor industry now stands idle?

Military vehicles

One reason is that the motor companies are hoping for a massive increase of sales of military vehicles and equipment to the apartheid regime, as the liberation struggle in Southern Africa intensifies and military spending is stepped up.

But the main reason has to do with the problems faced by the multi-national motor companies in countries where the trade unions are strong, and the advantages to the employers if they shift production to a country like South Africa where the majority of the workers are oppressed under apartheid.

The profit system of capitalism means that the employers all over the world are constantly trying to outdo each other in squeezing as many products as possible out of each worker employed, every working day. To do this, they bring in machinery to make labour more productive.

Machinery in itself can be a good thing, easing the burdens of the workers. But under capitalism machinery is made an enemy of the workers, because it simply means that some workers are replaced by the machinery (and thrown out of work altogether), while the remaining workers have to work as hard as before, if not harder.

And under capitalism, while the employers introduce machinery, they also do their utmost to maintain or increase profits by driving down the real wages of the workers as low as possible.

Constant struggle

The motor industry is no exception to these processes. The struggle for survival, of the workers and their organisations against the bosses and their government, is carried on constantly in every industry in all capitalist countries.

The big motor companies, because they have plants in many countries, are able to move production away from areas where the workers' organisations are strong, to other areas where the workers are weaker. No wonder the bosses regard South Africa as a haven! — precisely because of the savage oppression of black workers and their unions.

The massive expansion of the motor companies in South Africa is providing a basis for exporting parts and vehicles to other countries. This is possible only because in South Africa they can combine

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"Workers' Unity" is intended for workers and trade unionists both in South Africa and abroad. To continue producing this and other publications, SACTU urgently needs financial support. Readers outside South Africa are asked to send donations to SACTU's London Office at 49 Rathbone Street, W1A 4NL

Motor industry...

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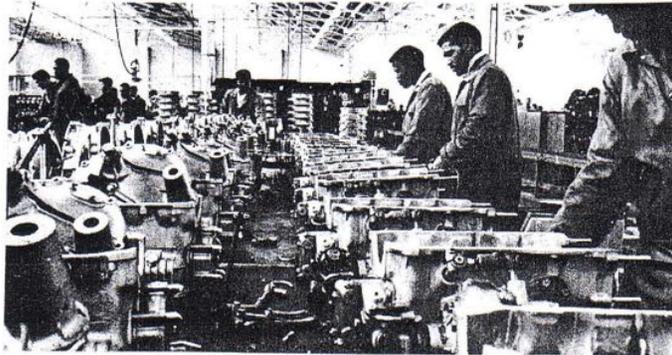
maximum use of the latest machinery with the lowest possible wages to the black workers who are kept on.

In Britain, the Leyland management have recently announced plans for the probable redundancy of 12,500 British Leyland workers. At the same time, Leyland in South Africa is expanding its operations and has begun exporting locally made sub-assemblies of vehicles to England "to assist" (so they say!) "the parent company with production"!

International solidarity

Such developments in the motor industry are the clearest possible illustration of the need for workers in all countries to unite for their mutual benefit. While workers in any country are weak, the position of workers in all countries is threatened.

It is most important for workers and their trade unions in the developed countries to demand an immediate end to all financial,



Assembling engines for heavy vehicles

trade and investment ties of foreign companies with South Africa, and at the same time to give practical support to the struggle of black South African workers for trade union rights and recognition.

The lead given by the British Leyland workers in their decision to black goods to South Africa during this month's week of action, is a good example of what can be done. (This followed the initiative of the shop stewards at the Rover plant in Solihull, reported in the last issue of "Workers' Unity".)



Datsun-Nissan is to expand its South African operation by R40 million over the next five years.

Recognition struggle: Smith & Nephew plays waiting game

The struggle for trade union recognition at Smith & Nephew in Pine-town continues. Having refused for some months to renew an agreement recognising the (unregistered) National Union of Textile Workers, the company now appears to have back-tracked as a result of union pressure from within and outside South Africa.

It says it will "honour" its former agreement, but will not commit this to writing. Neither will management abolish the stodge works council, which it set up as an

attempt to undermine the union.

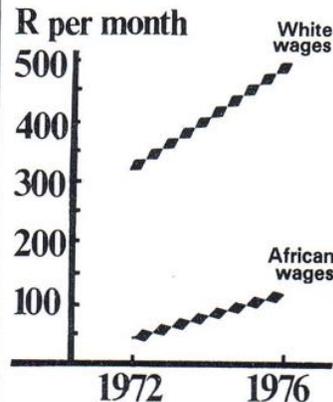
It seems that management's tactic is to make a token gesture of recognition to appease the international trade unions, while maintaining the works council. It clearly hopes that this situation can be kept up until the recommendations of the Wiehahn Commission are accepted by the government.

All the indications are that this Commission will recommend laws aimed to squeeze out the independent unions.

Wage gap widens

The wage gap between white and African workers continues to widen, according to figures recently released by the government. At the end of 1972, average white monthly wages were R324, while average African wages were R48. By the end of 1976, the average white was paid R489 and the average African R106 per month.

This means that from 1972 to 1976 the wage gap widened from R276 to R383 per month.



UIF: most of the jobless get nothing

Hundreds of thousands of unemployed black workers are without any unemployment insurance protection because of the failure of employers to register them properly with the Unemployment Insurance Fund.

In 1976, 2079 employers were actually prosecuted for failing to register workers with the Fund. But this is only the tip of the iceberg. Prosecutions of employers usually take place only in extreme cases, or on the rare occasions when the workers are in a strong enough position to mount a vigorous protest.

Most often, black workers discover the situation only when it is too late — when they have already lost their jobs and are being deported by the government to the rural areas.

The government's disregard for the plight of unemployed blacks is shown clearly enough in the figures given by the UIF. By the end of 1976 its funds exceeded R212 million — showing an increase of R15½ million during a year of sharply rising unemployment and misery among the working people.

In the same year the Fund paid out only R10 million to jobless people. On a basis of roughly 2 million unemployed — that would work out at R5 each! In fact, however, payments are made to only a tiny proportion, while most of those who are jobless get nothing from the UIF at all.

Pensioners wait in vain for pay-out

At least 1000 pensioners at Ga-Rankuwa, in the BophuthaTswana Bantustan, were not paid their pensions in January. They had to wait till February to get their money. A similar fate awaited hundreds of others who gathered at the pay-out centre in January at Mabopane.

Some pensioners waited up to three days in intense heat for their two monthly pay-out of between R26 and R41. Despite the fact that officials knew there would be no pay-out, they did not tell the old people who waited.

One reason given for the delay in payment was that a computer programmer responsible for issuing the pension vouchers had "gone on holiday".

The high price of resistance in S.A.

Since the events of Soweto began, an estimated 1000 people have been killed by the regime. Of the 47 people known to have died in detention under South Africa's security laws since 1963, 25 have died in the past two years.

The death of Steve Biko in detention has highlighted the sufferings which face all prisoners at the torturing hands of the security police. How many people without names have met a similar fate without press coverage?

Political prisoner

Who is a specifically *political* prisoner in a country where the politics of the rulers is based on the savage exploitation of more than three-quarters of the people under a system of semi-slavery?

South Africa is a giant prison for the vast majority of its people. Detention without trial, the torture and murder of prisoners by the security police—these are really only the most striking features of the whole system which weighs down the lives of black South Africans.

Main burden

While apartheid oppresses all black people, the *main* burden of oppression in South Africa is suffered by the black working class. This is because apartheid, with its pass laws, Bantustans, "contract" labour, compounds and repression of trade unions, is basically a system for the exploitation of the workers.

And it is no accident that workers' leaders have always been the foremost target for imprisonment and brutal treatment.

Many killed

Many workers' leaders have died at the hands of the regime. These are some examples:

★ Vuyisile Mini, Wilson Khayinga and Sinakile Mkaba (all members of the Port Elizabeth local committee of SACTU) were hanged in November 1964 for alleged sabotage and complicity in the death of a police informer.

★ Caleb Mayekiso (former secretary of the Railway Workers' Union in Port Elizabeth) died in jail in 1969—"of natural causes" according to the police, although he was fit and well when detained.

★ Luke "Storey" Mazwembe (a leading worker from Cape Town) was "found hanging" in his security police cell two hours after being detained on 6th September 1976.

★ Lawrence Ndzanga (a member of the National Executive Committee of SACTU) died in the police cells on 9th January last year, while detained without trial under the Terrorism Act.

★ Elijah Loza (a well-known SACTU leader in Cape Town) died

in detention on 1st August last year after sustaining injuries at the hands of the security police.

Pietermaritzburg Nine

The trial of the nine SACTU militants in July last year revealed details of the barbaric tortures which are systematically used by police interrogators (reported in *Workers' Unity* No. 5). It also showed the outstanding courage of our comrades.

Harry Gwala, Anthony Xaba, John Nene, Mathews Meyiwa and Zakhele Mdlalose (who had all previously served 8 years or more on Robben Island) were jailed for life. Joseph Nduli, Vuzimuzi Magubane, Cleopas Ndhlovu and Azaria Ndebele received sentences ranging from 7 to 18 years imprisonment.

Joseph Mdluli did not appear at this trial because he was tortured to death by the security police.

Price of commitment

Among the many comrades who have suffered imprisonment and torture over the years as the price of their commitment to the liberation struggle, is Wilton Mkwai, a SACTU NEC member.

Having been captured following the "Treason Trial", he spent months in solitary confinement and after repeated interrogation and torture, he was unrecognisable according to friends who saw him at his trial. He is serving a life



Vuyisile Mini

sentence on Robben Island.

There are many other comrades whose cases we have not mentioned here.

Persecuted

Militant workers have always been and, until the revolution is carried through, will always be sought out by the regime and persecuted.

It is precisely because they express the most advanced aspirations of workers that they are forced to run a daily gauntlet of danger in South Africa, in their

efforts to organise.

But, as the events of Soweto and thereafter have shown, when there is a forward movement of the mass struggle and when the workers are on the march, this movement cannot simply be crushed by the regime.

During such periods, for every workers' leader that falls, two more arise to take that person's place.

BASEBENZI MANYANANI!

Mineworkers face high risk of TB

The latest report of the Compensation Commission for Occupational Diseases reveals that, during the year March 1976 to March 1977, just over 6000 miners received compensation for occupational diseases. Over 5000 of them were black.

The chief complaint was tuber-

culosis—some 2600 of the blacks received compensation for this disease. The Commission estimates that 570 out of every 100,000 black miners contract TB in a single year. Twenty-five white miners contracted the disease in the year up to March 1977.



Pay refused

In Boksburg, 40 black insurance agents (men and women) have gone on strike because, they say, they have not been paid since August. A spokesman for the group said that they had repeatedly demanded their pay, only to be told that "due to complications" this was not possible.

The strikers say that one of the directors threatened to shoot them if they protested about not being paid. The managing director of the company dismissed their complaints as "trash".

Caution

Readers in South Africa should take care not to be found with "Workers' Unity" in their possession, as it is banned.