

"An injury to one is an injury to all"

# WORKERS' UNITY

Organ of the South African Congress of Trade Unions

Issue No.11, September 1978



## In the national liberation struggle

# Workers are the driving force!



Black workers suffer both exploitation and national oppression. We are compelled to stand up and fight for liberation from these chains.

It is important for workers to join and participate in the struggle led by the African National Congress of South Africa, which is fighting for national liberation in South Africa.

This is important for the following reasons: the black workers are both exploited and nationally oppressed. The Africans are forced to carry pass documents, without which the African workers are arrested and sentenced to prison. The Africans are denied the right to land in the country of their birth, the right to elect the government of their country.

In South Africa, an African is a "Bantu" and not a citizen. In terms of many laws including the Group Areas, the blacks have no right to live where they like but are directed by the government as to where to stay, to live, to walk and even to sit.

It is the government which decides what kind of education is to be given to the African children separate from the education given to other sections of the population of South Africa. They are denied the right to freedom of movement and of association.

In fact the Africans, in terms of

the government laws, have been "Kaffirs", "Natives", "Bantu"—but never Africans. The government discourages the Africans to regard themselves as Africans in case they regard themselves as Africans of South Africa and part of the African continent.

Hence all the laws referring to the Africans only were (until a few months ago) specifically called "Bantu Settlement of Disputes Act", Bantu labour laws, Bantu-

stans, so on and so forth. The laws remain the same, but the word "Bantu" has been changed to black.

### Colour

All these denials are based purely on the natural colour of a person's skin. It is under these conditions that an African is compelled to

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## Strikes sharpen crisis for the ruling class

Since March, there have been clear signs that strike action by black workers in the industrial areas has been increasing, especially in support of wage demands. This action is sharpening the political crisis faced by the ruling class in South Africa and is further threatening the profits which the bosses make from exploitation.

Our oppressors are filled with fear of our strength, and fear of their future. Some of them hope, through a few petty reforms, to blunt the political demands of the working people. Even the apartheid regime is trying to cool down the resistance and buy time by talking of reforms.

### No escape

But there is no escape, either for us or for our oppressors and exploiters, along the road of reforms. Their own system rules this out — the system of making profits for the rich from the sweat

of our labour.

After the mass strikes in 1973, the employers were forced to make some concessions to the workers. In the 146 firms affected by the Natal strikes, R6 million was added to the wage bill. Average wages for African workers in South Africa rose from R48 per month in 1972 to R72 in 1974.

But the benefit to the workers was short-lived. Price rises and growing unemployment soon drove living standards down again, as the bosses battled to raise their profits at our expense. Police action against strikers became more vicious. Almost every strike by black workers after 1973 was attacked by police, often using dogs and baton charges. Strikers were regularly arrested and imprisoned or fined.

### Power

Now, after seeing the great power of the black working class in action

in the general strikes of 1976, sections of the ruling class are again talking of reforms.

But the most recent strikes have shown once again that, while the regime and ruling class may talk of reforms, in practice they act to crush the resistance of the workers whenever they can. Examples of this are the arrest of the Alberton bus drivers and the suspended prison sentences imposed on them, and the police action at the ESCOM strike (both reported in this issue).

### Never relax

When we hear talk of reforms from our enemies, we must never relax our vigilance or slacken our struggle! What the bosses and the government are forced to give with one hand, they always try to take back with the other.

Nowhere is this clearer than in the case of the 4% General Sales Tax introduced on 3 July. It is a tax

on the poor for the benefit of the rich. It covers everything that workers need to live — food, clothing, furniture, school-books and everything else. Workers are being forced to pay for their own oppression.

The Johannesburg Department of Labour has stated that the Alberton bus drivers' strike and the strike at ESCOM were a direct result of the new General Sales Tax.

The action by the rulers of the Transkei in putting a new poll tax of R10 on all residents is a further example of the attacks on the living standards of black workers.

**AWAY WITH GENERAL SALES TAX AND ALL POLL TAX!**

**WE DEMAND R50 A WEEK, AND AUTOMATIC FUTURE PAY RISES WHENEVER PRICES AND TAXES GO UP!**

## Workers are the driving force! ...

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stand up to fight for the liberation from these chains both as a worker and a citizen of South Africa.

The black workers know very well that the demand for higher wages and better conditions at work will not release him from the pass laws iniquity and slavery. These are the reasons that led the South African Congress of Trade Unions, from its inception, to adopt the following preamble:

*"History has shown that unorganized workers are unable to improve their wages and conditions of work on a lasting basis. Only where workers have organized in effective trade unions have they been able to improve their lot, raise their standard of living and generally protect themselves and their families against the insecurities of life.*

*"The whole experience of the Trade Union Movement the world over has, furthermore, established the fact that the Movement can only progress on the basis of unity and in the spirit of brotherhood and the solidarity of all workers. Trade Unions must unreservedly reject any attempts to sow disunity among the workers on the basis of colour or nationality, or on any other basis.*

*"Just as the individual worker, or any other group of workers, are unable to improve their lot without organizing into a Trade Union, so is the individual trade union powerless unless there is in existence a co-ordinating body of trade unions which unites the efforts of all workers. For such a trade union federation to be successful, it must be able to speak on behalf of all workers, irrespective of race or colour, nationality or sex.*

*"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.*

*"But the working class can only succeed in this great and noble endeavour if it itself is united and strong; if it is conscious of its inspiring responsibility. The workers of South Africa need a united trade union movement in which all sections of the working class can play their part unhindered by prejudice or racial discrimination. Only such a truly united movement can serve effectively the interests of the workers, both the immediate interests of higher wages and better conditions of life and work as well as the ultimate objective of complete emancipation for which our forefathers have fought.*

*"We firmly declare that the*

*interests of all workers are alike, whether they be European or non-European, African, Coloured, Indian, English, Afrikaner or Jewish. We resolve that this co-ordinating body of trade unions shall strive to unite all workers in its ranks without discrimination and without prejudice. We resolve that this body shall determinedly seek to further and protect the interests of all workers; and that its guiding motto shall be the universal slogan of working class solidarity:*

*"AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL"*

It is therefore clear that the workers through their trade unions should back up the progressive movement that is leading the liberation struggle in South Africa — the African National Congress of South Africa.

### Leading role

We on our part have demonstrated this consistently in the past. We have played a leading role in many stay-at-homes, demonstrating against the laws which are

It is therefore necessary to understand that the workers are in the forefront of the struggle for national liberation because of the nature of the white state power in South Africa, which through its tentacles rests on the exploitation and oppression of the black workers.

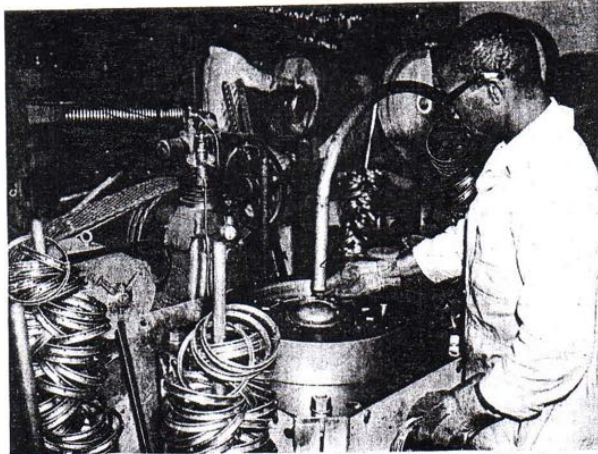
There is no doubt that the above-mentioned denials have left the majority of the blacks as urban and migrant workers in South Africa.

### Monopolies

Our struggle for national liberation cannot succeed until we have smashed the apartheid state, and the big monopolies whose interests it serves. That is why the Freedom Charter (adopted in 1955 by the Congress of the People and supported by SACTU) says:

*"The people shall share in the country's wealth!*

*The national wealth of our country, the heritage of all South Africans, shall be restored to the*



*Workers own no property or businesses, only their ability to work. They have nothing to lose in the struggle and everything to gain.*

affecting us as a nation. Workers participated in the campaign of defiance against unjust laws in 1952, which was followed by other actions in the 1960s. Workers took decisive action in the strikes of 1972-1974 and in the political general strikes of 1976.

The African National Congress of South Africa leads the struggle to end national oppression in South Africa and the exploitation of man by man. This objective can only be achieved by the full participation of the most consistent driving force — the workers.

Why are the workers the driving force in the struggle for liberation? They own no property or businesses, only their ability to work. They have nothing to lose in the struggle and everything to gain.

### Organised

The organised workers of town and country will provide the backbone to the struggle for freedom and democracy in South Africa, and guarantee the national liberation for all oppressed people in our country.

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 trade where they choose, to manufacture and to enter all trades, crafts and professions.*

*"The land shall be shared among those who work it!*

*Restrictions of land ownership on a racial basis shall be ended, and all the land redivided amongst those who work it, to banish famine and land hunger;*

*The state shall help the peasants with implements, seed, tractors and dams to save the soil and assist the tillers; Freedom of movement shall be guaranteed to all who work on the land;*

*All shall have the right to occupy land wherever they choose; People shall not be robbed of their cattle, and forced labour and farm prisons shall be abolished."*

# US unions act to end loans to SA

A campaign is mounting in the United States of America to force an end to the financial support which American banks are giving to the apartheid economy and the South African regime.

According to the Committee to Oppose Bank Loans to South Africa, US banks have lent more than \$3 billion to South Africa since 1974. Now major organisations, like trade unions, churches and universities are being urged to withdraw their funds from banks which lend money to South Africa.

Several labour unions in the United States have voted to withdraw funds. According to the Committee, these include: the Furriers Joint Council, the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, and the Fur, Leather and Machinist Workers Union. The executive board of the United Automobile Workers has endorsed the campaign, voting "to withdraw UAW deposits in American banks that are loaning money to South Africa."

District Council 31 of the Steel Workers — the largest local in the United States — voted to endorse the campaign, as did the pension fund trustees of the National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees (District 1199). In a resolution the fund decided to ban investments that aid South Africa. Announcing the decision, union president Leon Davis described US loans and investments that prop up South Africa's repressive regime as "an insult to all Americans."

## International union help for struggle in SA

The International Union of Food and Allied Workers' Associations is calling on its affiliated unions in many parts of the world to take action in support of the Sweet, Food and Allied Workers' Union in South Africa, in its struggle for recognition.

The Sweet, Food and Allied Workers' Union has been struggling for recognition for many years at a number of large multinational companies — Unilever, Kellogg's, Premier Milling and its subsidiary, Weston Biscuits, and Intercontinental Brewers.

So far, the International Union has indicated that it is thinking of a series of "days of action" mounted in various countries against Unilever, in support of the recognition demand of the South African union.



Prices up again! And the 4% sales tax. We need at least R50 a week and automatic further pay rises whenever prices and taxes are put up.

## Workers object to "Kaffirs" insult — sacked

Six workers employed at Goldfields Supermarket in Krugersdorp got the sack in June because they objected to being called "kaffirs".

One Friday morning, the six men arrived late for work because of transport problems. They were confronted by Mr. Goosen, the manager, who said: "Kaffirs, hoekom het julle laat gekom?" When they objected to his insulting behaviour, the workers were told to go home and come back on Monday for their pay.

They arrived on Monday to find that their pay packets were short, and there were no pay slips. They reported this to the Labour Department, and officials from the department then had a discussion with management.

The officials apparently came back to the workers and said that, according to law, any boss can address his employees in any way he likes!

## Caution

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

# Police called in to end wage strikes at Germiston and Alberton

Police were called into the ESCOM plant at Germiston on 31 July, when black workers refused to work because of pay grievances.

The workers reported for work, but refused to go to their posts, as they claimed that they had not received the pay increases which they had been promised. After the

lunch break, the workers returned to work under the surveillance of the police.

Also on 31 July, 87 black bus drivers in Alberton were arrested after they had gone on strike over a wage dispute. The drivers wanted an increase greater than the 5% which they had been given by the municipality, because of the new 4% General Sales Tax.

The drivers were arrested by the police at about 4.15 p.m. at the bus sheds. This brought the bus service to a halt, and the next morning 30,000 workers from the Tokoza township near Alberton had to make their own way to work.

The drivers were brought to court on 1 August, and pleaded not guilty to striking. They were remanded to 18 August, and bail was refused. However, after discussions between the municipality and the magistrate, the drivers were brought back into court. They pleaded guilty, were given four-month suspended prison sentences, and then returned to work.

## Starvation wages drive farm workers to steal

A number of farm labourers in the Parys district of the Orange Free State appeared in court recently on charges of theft. They were found guilty.

The workers claimed that they were being paid R5 per month, and starvation and hardship became so bad that they were forced to steal to keep themselves alive.

These workers were employed by Mr. Henning Kloppers, a wealthy farmer, leader of the Broederbond and the Afrikaner Nationalist movement. He denies that his workers are paid R5 per month. No, he says, they are paid between R15 and R30 per month, with a bag of mielie meal.

He says "his" workers are "happy to live in their mud huts" without running water and lighting, and they "scorned" the houses built for them. He blamed "agitators" and "jaillbirds" for putting his workers up to saying that they were hungry. "If they don't like it here they can leave," he said.

Wages in the Parys area average about R10 to R20 per month for unskilled workers. The press has revealed that African farm workers in this area are prevented from leaving the district to seek better work elsewhere, through an agreement between the local Farmers' Association and the district Bantu Affairs officials.

Local farmers have together agreed not to sign releases for farm labourers to seek work in the towns, where wages and conditions of employment are not quite as bad. Only women who are not needed for work on the farms are allowed to go.

The only way an African man can change his job and work outside the Parys district is to go to the Basotho Qwa-Qwa reserve, and wait six months before applying for a job and permit.



Of all South Africa's workers, the farm workers suffer the greatest hardship.

## Trade unionist deported and exiled

Mr. Pindile Mfeti, an African trade unionist living in the Germiston area, has been "deported" to the Transkei.

In November 1976 Mfeti, along with a number of other trade unionists organising among African workers, was banned. Shortly after that he was detained under the Terrorism Act, and held for 366 days.

Mfeti is South African born and bred. Now, by using the so-called "independence" of the Transkei, the government has stripped him of his South African citizenship. He has been deported and permanently exiled to the Transkei.

We have always said that the Bantustan fraud is just another way for the government to control black people, particularly the workers. Now the government is using this scheme to remove political and trade union activists from the urban areas.

# The brutal logic behind forced removals

22,000 African people in the Crossroads "squatter camp" at Cape Town are living under the threat of the bulldozer.

At Crossroads the people have built a real community, running schools, literacy classes, craft groups, sports clubs and self-help projects—but the government is preparing to give them the same treatment it has given Modderdam, Werkgenot, Unibell and many other communities. Destruction of their homes. Destruction of their livelihoods. Destruction of their family life. Deportation to the reserves.

The apartheid policy of forced removals has been going on for decades. It has two main purposes: Removal of Africans from the farm-land and removal of Africans from the towns.

## Rural areas

In the countryside, the regime has been forcing African communities out of the areas of our country which have been designated "white" (87% of the land). Only the male labourers, needed by the white farmers, are left behind as "contract workers". Their families, together with the sick, old or "redundant" workers, are removed to the reserves. Since 1960, more than 1½ million Africans have been kicked off their land in this way.

In the reserves there is no land for the people. It has either been seized by the corrupt Bantustan rulers (like the Matanzimas in the Transkei) or else has already been overcrowded with poor people for many years.

In the reserves there are no jobs for the people—only unemployment, homelessness, hunger and repression. At least 85% of families live below the breadline. One-third of the children die there before they are 5 years old.

## Towns

In the towns, the apartheid regime carries on an equally brutal policy of forced removals against Africans.

The purpose is to prevent and destroy the settled family life of African workers in the urban areas. Women, old people, children and the unemployed are removed to the reserves.

The employed male workers are allowed to remain in the towns only as migrant "contract workers", living in all-male hostels and separated from their families for 49 weeks of every year.

Since 1960, it is estimated that 2,100,000 people have been forcibly removed under apartheid laws—and that is not counting "influx control evictions"! Another 1,725,000 are still to be removed.

The demolition of Alexandra

township since November last year shows this criminal policy in action.

Alexandra, one of the oldest African townships in Johannesburg, has been designated as a "hostel area" only.

After the West Rand Administration Board took over responsibility for Alexandra in 1973 conditions were allowed to deteriorate. Rubbish collection stopped, so did spraying of the township's dirt roads, and the bucket system of sewage disposal became irregular.

## Slum

Nearly 50,000 residents remained as the area declined into a filthy slum, thus providing the WRAB with a "reason" for evicting all remaining residents. At the same time men applying for family accommodation in the township, many of them living with their

wives in unofficial back-yard rooms, were issued with "single men" permits.

## Notices

When the evictions began, notices were issued saying: "You are hereby notified that you will be resettled to the City Deep Compound ... Transport will be available for yourself and your personal belongings such as mattress, suitcase and blankets. Please note: No furniture."

In this way families were broken up, their homes demolished, and all but the breadwinners faced with deportation to the reserves. The City Deep Compound where the male workers were sent, is a disused mine compound on the other side of Johannesburg, with concrete bunks and few facilities.

The most savage application of this apartheid policy has been in

Cape Town, where the regime aims to get rid of African labour entirely.

Virtually no new family houses are built for Africans in the Peninsula. The pass laws are enforced with special ruthlessness. In the "squatter camps", workers and their families, denied the right to live together legally in the locations, have built their own homes with waste materials and are trying to maintain a human existence in the face of constant pass raids and harassment.

At Modderdam, from 8-12 August last year, the authorities smashed down 1,500 dwellings with bulldozers, leaving 10,000 people without shelter in winter. Two weeks later, 400 shacks were bulldozed at Werkgenot. While sympathisers supplied some tents, many of the people had to sleep in the open or take shelter under

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## Police attack Crossroads "squatter camp" with teargas and bullets

As this issue of "Workers' Unity" was being prepared for printing, police in Cape Town launched a violent attack on the Crossroads "squatter" community, killing 3 people.

At 1.30 a.m. on 14th September and again shortly after sunrise, they raided the camp. The aim was to arrest Africans under the pass laws—those with no permission to be in the Peninsula or those harbouring "illegal Bantu" (such as husbands "harbouring" their wives). More than 300 were arrested.

In the first raid, the police shot dead Mr. Sindile Ndlela, and in the second raid they fatally wounded Mr. Fanele Manyisana in the chest. As people stampeded to escape a teargas attack during the second raid, a baby was trampled to death. An unknown number of people were injured.

After Mr. Ndlela was shot, someone said: "There he lies, all for the sake of a pass. A life for a piece of paper."

The people of Crossroads had expected the raids, and spent the night around camp fires awaiting the arrival of the police. They had posted scouts and sentries since other police raids in past weeks, and refused to allow the police into the camp. Their resistance was answered with gas and bullets.

The next day, more than 300 Africans from Crossroads were charged under the pass laws, while another 65 people, including 12 whites, were charged with attending an illegal meeting at Crossroads.



*Under attack by police, dogs and teargas at Crossroads, a woman takes her children out of the path of hundreds of fleeing people.*

Open-air gatherings are banned under the Riotous Assemblies Act.

The Crossroads "squatters" are determined not to be driven out by the oppressors. As one community leader said recently to the press: "We have been sent to live under one bush after another for 20 years and now we are tired of it. I am not moving anywhere." Another added: "If they are going to bulldoze my house, then they do it with me inside."

Crossroads, its community organisation and the defiant spirit of its people, represent a direct challenge to the apartheid authorities. The resistance of the Crossroads community will be put to more harsh tests in the weeks to come, as the regime steps up its violent harassment against

them. Our enemies are trying to break the spirit of the people, before sending the bulldozers to break down their homes and drive them out.

**FELLOW SOUTH AFRICANS, THE FIRE IS BURNING AT CROSSROADS. SO STAND UP! SHOW SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF CROSSROADS!**

**SUPPORT THEM IN ALL MEASURES OF ORGANISED RESISTANCE AND SELF-DEFENCE!**

**WORKERS IN ALL COUNTRIES, TAKE ACTION TO SUPPORT YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN SOUTH AFRICA!**

cardboard and plastic sheeting.

### Unibell

Beginning on 16 January, bulldozers destroyed 2,000 homes at Unibell, driving out 12,000 people.

A report from the University of Cape Town medical faculty states: "Children aged two to three weeks spent three or four consecutive nights in the open, and there was rain on two occasions. There was a striking absence of food and other supporting facilities... There were no facilities for boiling water or milk and following the demolition of the latrines, which were demolished at the same time as the homes and with complete disregard for normal precautions, it was not possible further to separate water and faeces... (By) January 20 the Unibell area was an area of stench, enormous numbers of flies and a fair number of stray and hungry animals..."

### Crossroads

Some of the families who now live at Crossroads, waiting for the bulldozer, have experienced as many as 8 previous demolitions of their homes.

At Crossroads, the government is following a policy of constant harassment, hoping to drive people out "voluntarily". But the people have nowhere else to go.

Repeatedly, police and armed inspectors surround the camp on pass raids before dawn, stop people on their way to work, and arrest those without permits to be in the area.

The reported statements of the magistrate Ludloff in a recent trial of a pass offender, Jeffrey Mashalaba, show the complete cynicism and callousness of all the officials enforcing this policy.

### Campaign

The magistrate said that the government had started a campaign in 1974 to have all "illegal people" removed from Crossroads. It would create problems, he said, if 100,000 "Bantu" were needed in the Cape for employment purposes and there were 200,000. Mashalaba, who was in "illegal employment" (i.e. refused a permit) was the sort of person who had to be kept out of the Cape, said the magistrate.

What future for Mr. Mashalaba? "This man needs to work. He has a wife and three children in the Transkei. Surely there must be work in the Transkei," said the magistrate, knowing quite well that there isn't. He sentenced the accused to R50 or 50 days (about 2 weeks' wages in fines).

### Survey

According to a survey of the Crossroads families, which was published in December 1977, the average "head of household" at Crossroads has lived in the Cape Town region for more than 17 years. Yet only 100 of the 3000 families there are legally "qualified" to remain in the Peninsula

# Report charges British TUC leaders with aiding imperialism

On 31 August, the British newspaper The Guardian reported allegations that "British union money is used to subvert Third World labour movements." This is the

charge made in a book called "Where were you, brother? An account of trade union imperialism," published by the War on Want Organisation.

Under a headline, "Why the TUC stands accused of being a US lapdog." The Guardian suggests that TUC leaders should read this book before making their usual denunciations of apartheid and the Chilean military dictatorship.

The book "accuses them, in the most outspoken terms ... of not knowing what overseas organisations they are supporting, of helping to weaken and split trade unions in poor countries, even of being implicated in the downfall of the Allende Government in Chile with its associated killings and torture." ...

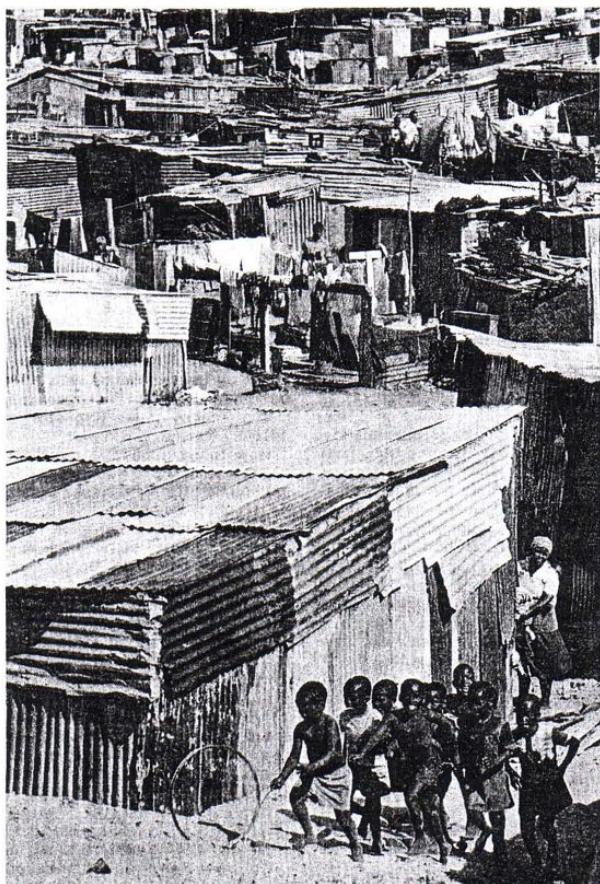
### Ignorant

"I am sure," one researcher told the War on Want investigators, "that the British trade union movement didn't know what was being done with their money in Chile. They were completely ignorant, otherwise I am sure it would have been stopped."

The allegation is that the Latin American offshoot of the TUC-backed International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), worked hand in glove with the Americans in organising "worker resistance" to the Allende regime and flying trade unionists to the United States for "courses" prior to the military coup. Graduates of such courses are now to be found leading the regime's right-wing corporatist unions.

### Influence

The Guardian continues: "Under the influence of George Meany, the American AFL-CIO has developed its own programmes to influence trade union development in Asia, Africa and Latin America, backed by US Government funds."



Crossroads children ... when will the bulldozers destroy their homes?

under the pass laws.

**What is the purpose of all this brutality? Why this grinding oppression of people who are merely trying to live a decent life?**

The aim of apartheid, and of all these forced removals, is to make South Africa into a paradise for profit-making — a capitalists' heaven which results in a workers' hell.

Cheap labour on the basis of starvation wages; docile labour on the basis of systematic repression — that is the programme of the ruling class for the black working people.

### Why

Why do they want to remove all except the employed migrant workers to the Bantustans?

★ They do it because they are interested in Africans only as **labour units** — they are not interested in us as human beings with

our own needs and desires. The Minister of Bantu Administration (now "Plural Relations") said after the Unibell demolitions: "There is no inhumanity or lack of Christianity in what is being done. This is merely a question of putting labour on an orderly footing." (Star 20.5.78).

★ They do it because they want to avoid the pressures for social welfare, unemployment pay, pensions, etc., by shutting our families and old people up in the reserves.

★ They do it because they want to reduce African workers to a **minority** of the population in the towns, so that we can more easily be kept down under white domination.

★ They do it because the system of reserves and migrant labour, which the bosses and the regime have created, helps them to obstruct our trade unions and political organisations; it keeps us in

competition with our fellow workers for jobs; and it makes us live in constant fear of dismissal and deportation to the Bantustans.

★ Finally, they know that their system holds only greater hardship for us in the future — more unemployment, more poverty, more hunger, more oppression. They remove us to the reserves because, while we suffer and starve, they want us to be stranded in the rural reserves — not concentrated in the cities where we can rise up more powerfully against them.

### Incapable

The system in South Africa, economic and political, is totally incapable of providing a decent life for our people. It is capable only of murdering us and our children, slowly but surely, for the benefit of a rich and privileged minority.

**We have got to destroy this system!**

# Education and the workers

In South Africa, the wealthiest country in Africa, nearly half the African people over 15 years of age cannot read or write. Many children have no chance for schooling. Most children of working parents are at school for only two or four years, and for only half the day each day.

The schools are over-crowded, with shortages even of basic textbooks, let alone other educational aids. Teachers are poorly trained, poorly paid, and overworked.

## Knowledge

This situation is intolerable. The development of South Africa is based upon a body of knowledge which has been created over the generations all over the world. That knowledge is the cultural wealth of our society. It should belong to everyone.

Under Bantu education most children are being cut off from this body of knowledge. Most of this knowledge is reserved for the privileged few.

Our children are being starved of knowledge in two ways. They are deprived of access to technical skills, to the vast body of technical knowledge on which production is based. And, along with the few technical skills (like elementary reading and writing) which they are allowed to learn, they are taught lies about society.

They are taught these lies as unchallengeable facts, backed up by the force of the examination system and the authority of the cane.

The purpose of education, technical and social, should be to release the vast potential of our children as human beings, to advance knowledge, and to enrich culture. Instead, the children in our society have their mental development starved and stunted by the whole system of apartheid education.

## Roots

The roots of this system of education, like the whole of apartheid, lie in the exploitation of the workers under the profit system of capitalism.

The body of knowledge which exists in human society has been built up through labour in production. But, under capitalism, control over that knowledge has been taken away from the producers.

Just as the bosses take the material wealth which we produce, so the bosses and the government take control of the wealth of knowledge and turn it to their own miserable aims.

To do this, the bosses and the government organise the school system to pass knowledge to the children. They claim that they are providing us with access to knowledge in the schools. But the access is on their terms, under their control, and in their interests.

That is the meaning of Bantu Education.

In the schools of the apartheid



## A few facts about Bantu Education

There are 63,000 African teachers in South Africa, excluding the Transkei (for which the apartheid regime has not supplied figures). Of these, two-thirds have a Junior Certificate or lower qualification. Less than 3% have a university degree. Fewer than 1000 non-African teachers are employed in schools for Africans, as a result of government segregation policy.

In 1973 (the latest figures which we have), the starting monthly salaries for male teachers with the same level of qualifications were: Africans R71; whites R209. The salaries for female teachers were 21% lower. Teachers with a teaching certificate and a degree received the following monthly starting salaries:

	African	White
Males	R132	R322
Females	R123	R288

(Source: Rand Daily Mail 26.6.73)

The "double session system" operates in 5,700 schools for African children.

Money spent on education: On every white child, R644 a year; on every African child R42 a year. (Figures for 1975-6.) According to

the Minister of Bantu Education, it is "misleading" to compare expenditure on black children with that on white children "because the circumstances of the two groups differ."

How many pupils are there for every teacher? For whites, 20 pupils per teacher; for Africans, 52 pupils per teacher. (Figures for 1976.)

These conditions, coupled with extreme poverty, inability to pay fees, and the need for children to go to work in order to support their families, are among the reasons which have led so many African children to leave school after only a few years. For instance, 426,827 African children started school (Sub A) in 1962. In 1974, only 6,732 (less than 2 out of every 100) had reached Form V, the final year of secondary school. (Department of Bantu Education, Annual Report 1974.)

Although the regime tries to deny that there is real mass resistance to the Bantu Education system, blaming it on "a handful of agitators", its own figures show that at least 300,000 pupils boycotted the schools for varying periods in 1977.

system, education is designed to serve only one interest: the making of profit.

Through authoritarian discip-

line, the schools aim to make us docile servants of the bosses in the factories and in society.

★ To us they feed technical

knowledge only in scraps, giving just those things which workers need to know for the creation of profit for the bosses.

★ To us they teach lies, to perpetuate racial division and racial oppression, social privilege and social oppression. We are taught lies about ourselves, lies about our history, lies about our struggle, lies about our future.

## Privilege

Only the highly privileged few are allowed to taste more of the fruits of knowledge, in order to maintain the profit system and to rule society. These few are the children of the bosses, of the managers, of the foremen, of the agents and supporters of the ruling class.

The body of knowledge in the world is our heritage. We demand that knowledge for all.

Even the school system, through which access to knowledge is controlled, is paid for by the sweated labour of the workers, taken as profits and taxes. The very school buildings have been built by us.

We do not reject education. But we reject the whole system of apartheid education: Bantu Education, Coloured Education, Indian Education and the Christian National Education of the whites.

We demand a different kind of education.

We demand that all should have access to the technical knowledge which exists. Instead of those skills taught for the purpose of making profit, we demand the skills to understand how society works, how to run it and how to change it.

Instead of an education which teaches how to obey, we demand an education which teaches people to think and to create. Instead of lies and distortions, we demand the whole truth.

This transformation of education will be fully achieved only when the apartheid regime and the power of the bosses is destroyed. Education can be fully liberated only when power is in the hands of the masses of the people.

At the same time, the struggle to change education is part and parcel of the struggle for national and social emancipation.

