

JOINT STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT, FOSATU, SAAWU, OVGWU, GAWU, CCAWUSA, FCWU, JOSDA, SACWU, SALDCWU, CUSA AND THE DETAINEES SUPPORT COMMITTEE.

We, the United Democratic Front, Fosatu, Saawu, Gawu, OVGWU, Ccawusa, FCWU, Josda, Sacwu, SALDCWU, Cusa and Descom condemn the banning of the South African Allied Workers Union and the repression of the people in the Ciskei bantustan.

This ban on Saawu must be seen in the broader context of the South African political scene in which there is the intensification of repression and the unfolding of the grand design of Apartheid.

By this act the Apartheid government has illustrated that the bantustan structures will increasingly be used to suppress any resistance to their Apartheid policies.

Alongside this ban is reported excesses comparable with those of Nazi Germany. A stadium in Mdantsane has been converted into a concentration camp. Scores of our defenceless people are being herded into and and tortured there.

The ban on Saawu must also be seen as a climax of the persecution of that union and its leadership. All unions in the area have suffered under the current assault on resistance organisations. The aim is to strip the large workforce in Mdantsane of any leadership in its struggle against exploitation.

Viewed in this light the ban on Saawu is the beginning of the process of eradication of whatever unions and resistance organisations there are in the Ciskei. Not only has Saawu been banned but the local offices of the other unions have virtually closed down due to detentions. Henceforth any union which comes out in full support of worker resistance against bus fare hikes, rent hikes and so on will follow Saawu into banning. And yet unions cannot but support struggles beyond factory boundaries if they are to be of any lasting consequence to the workers.

The ban on Saawu is a veiled threat to other unions to stay away from community struggles like the Mdantsane bus boycott. But bus fare hikes eat into the workers' pay packets and unions are obliged to support the campaigns of the working people. To permit the Ciskei puppet government to suppress union involvement in community struggles is to give away a fundamental element of unionism. Without the right to use their organisations to defend themselves workers are utterly defenceless. And there can be no compromise on this right to take up issues beyond the factory floor.

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The UDF takes a very serious view of the right of workers to their unions and the employment of those unions to defend themselves against exploitation. It joins all unions here in condemning this ban.

In keeping with that condemnation it appeals to all progressive unions to stand together in this critical period and jointly oppose the ban.

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KHOTSO HOUSE.

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