

Party also attended.

Speakers at the rally included James La Guma from the National Liberation League, and D Burnside, a Socialist Party member of parliament.

Both in the speeches and the souvenir booklets produced, the international solidarity of workers was stressed. Messages of greeting were read out from Tom Mann, a British trade union leader, and from John Lewis of the American Confederation of Industrial Organisations.

Worker organisation under attack

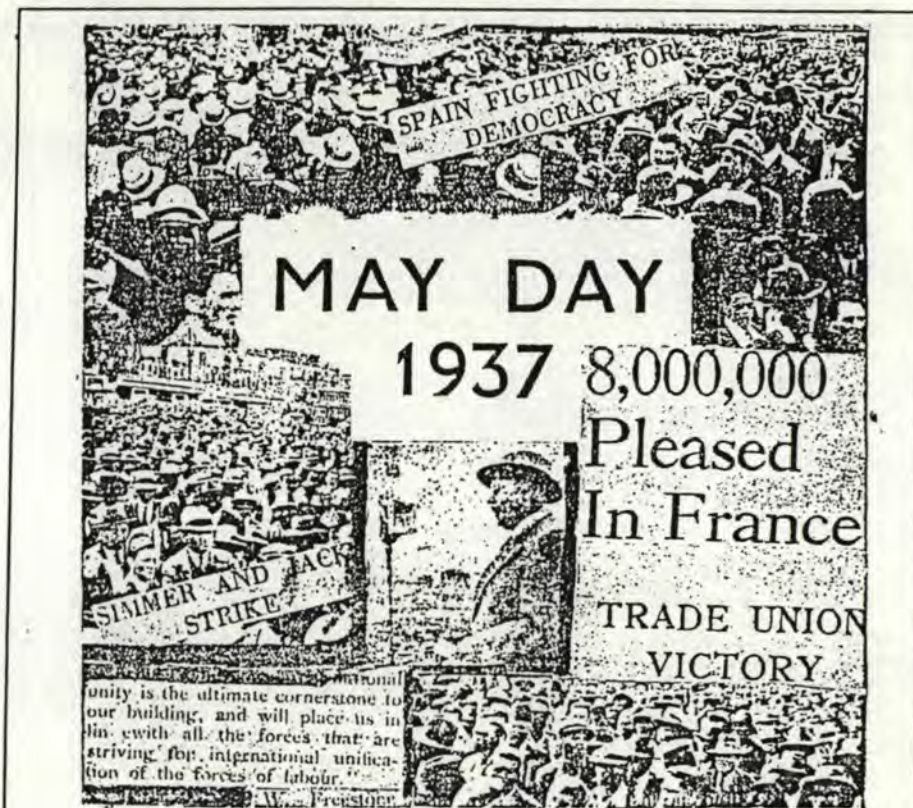
As fascism was growing in Italy, Germany and South Africa, working class organisations came under attack. Another imperialist world war seemed to be just around the corner. Workers' support for international struggles against imperialism were emphasised, as the resolution, adopted unanimously at the end of the demonstration, shows:

'This Mass Meeting of Cape Town workers and other citizens sends May Day greetings to the workers of all lands, irrespective of race, colour or creed. Particularly does it announce its admiration for the heroic workers of Germany, Italy and all other Fascist countries, who are suffering imprisonment, torture and death for their loyalty to the cause of the workers.

'Inspired by the success of the united front of workers, peasants and small business men in France, by the heroic struggle of the government of the united front in Spain against

the invasion of Fascist and Nazi barbarians, this mass meeting pledges itself to assist the Spanish workers by all means.'

Even the souvenir booklet produced, featured the struggles in France and Spain.

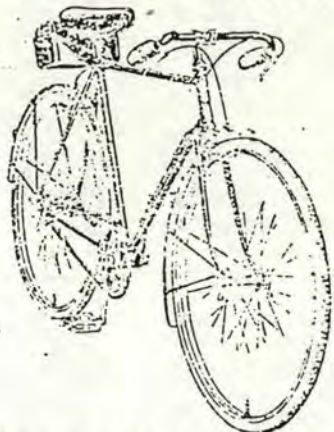


Labour Day is
A Very *SPECIAL* Occasion
WE RECOMMEND
CASTLE SPECIAL

the invasion of Fascist and Nazi barbarians, this mass meeting pledges itself to assist the Spanish workers by all means.'

Even the souvenir booklet produced, featured the struggles in France and Spain.

THEY NEVER STRIKE . . .



- REGAL CYCLES work on uncomplaining, year after year— They earn for you good profits in the saving of train or bus fares and also pay big dividends in health and fitness yet cost but $3/6$ a week.

REGAL
ALL-BRITISH CYCLES
A LIFETIME'S SERVICE

There are 20 different REGAL MODELS
but only ONE Standard of Quality—
the Best.

REGAL CYCLE CO., LTD.

Adverts financed May Day booklets — and businesses' attempts to appeal to worker consciousness were sometimes laughable

Unhappily, the workers depended on advertising to finance their booklets. Using the May Day spirit, the capitalists appealed to workers — as members of the working class — to buy their products. An advert for Pullman Mattresses, for example, assures workers that 'Pullman tradesmen have always been paid the wage laid down by the Wage Board — and better'.

Today, advertisers would never appeal to the working class and stress the value of their labour like they did then.

Higher Wages

produce

Better Work

It is our deep and abiding conviction that by paying a higher wage to the most skilled tradesmen finer craftsmanship is bound to result. This is one reason why our tradesmen have always been paid the wage laid

down by the Wage Board—and better. And that is why Duros Furniture and Upholstery and Pullman Spring-filled Mattresses and Cushions are supreme in quality and value. It will pay you to get the best. Ask for—

“DUROS”

Furniture and Upholstery

“PULLMAN”

Spring-Filled Mattresses and Cushions



LOOK FOR THE LABELS
AND REFUSE SUBSTITUTES...

OBTAINABLE ONLY FROM HOUSE FURNISHERS

Sole Manufacturers

H. OSPOVAT & COMPANY

119, ROELAND STREET, CAPE TOWN

TOM MANN'S May Day Message To South African Labour

LET THE BLOOD-RED BANNERS WAVE, SHOUT THE SLOGANS FAR AND WIDE. DOWN WITH POVERTY, DOWN WITH WAGE SLAVERY, DOWN WITH CAPITALISM! UP WITH TRADE UNIONISM! UP WITH ONE HUNDRED PER CENT. TRADE UNIONISM!

This is the 15th anniversary of the Rand Revolt, which was drowned in blood by the Chamber of Mines and its Government. Some said: "Never again". Let faint hearts falter and faint and yield. Ah, yield again to the exploiting Profit Maker, the Rent Taker. For us, we are opposed to all forms of thieving. Get ready again to live and not to die.

There is no natural necessity for POVERTY. It is our job to drive it out. This we must do, this we will do.

Up with the slogan—**SOLIDARITY FOR EVER.**

Now for it—**NO BLACKLEGGING, ALL IN UNION.** We will soon make the unions what they ought to be.

Comrades, I have had fifty-five years in the trade union. I believe as strongly in unionism to-day as at any time in my life. Not as a fanatic but as a level-headed worker, wishful to drive out poverty and to make conditions enjoyable for all. It can be done. **It is about to be done.**

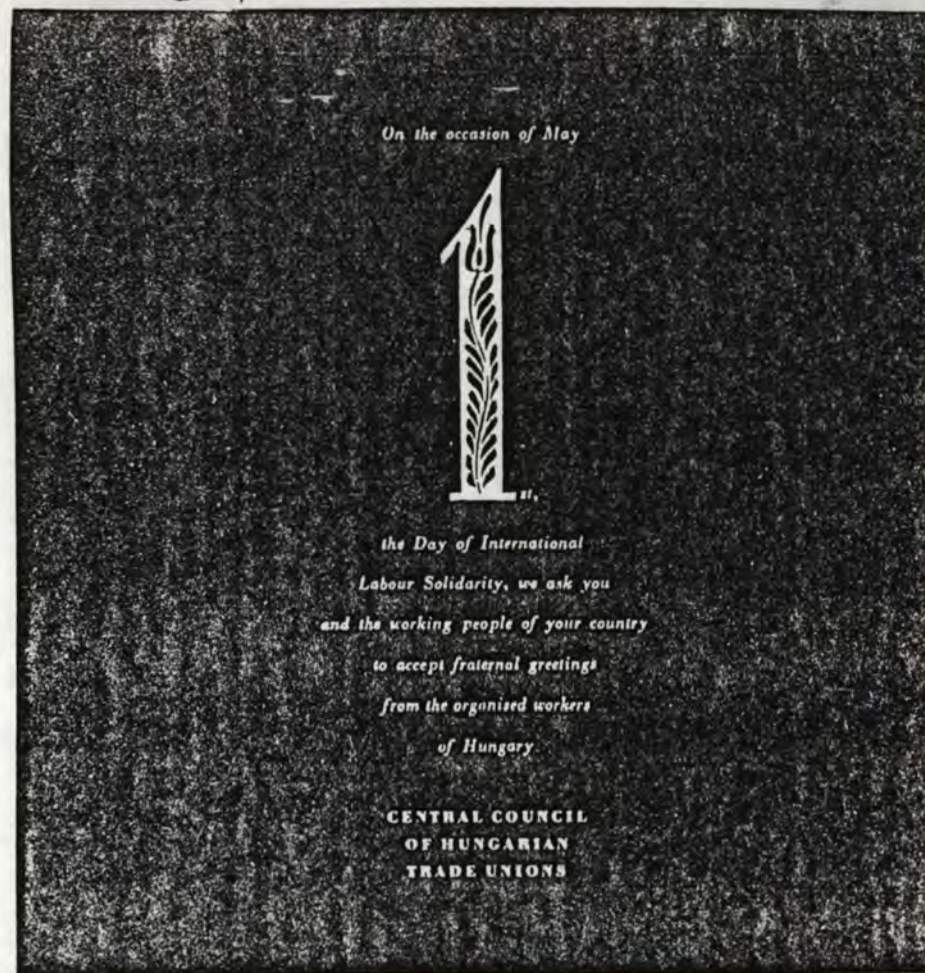
I hope you will have an excellent celebration in May and that real advance will be made. My kindest greetings to all the comrades, those whom I have met during my stay in South Africa and the far greater number that I have not met.

Greetings and Good Wishes to the Great Labour Movement of South Africa.
ONWARD TO VICTORY!

TOM MANN.

Tom Mann, a prominent British trade unionist, sent this fiery and inspiring message to South Africa's workers after visiting them in 1937

1938 again saw the contradiction of white workers celebrating the victories of the working class and international worker solidarity while excluding black workers from the celebrations. Some unions, such as the Furniture Workers Union, refused to take part in the May Day activities on the grounds that they did not recognise the colour bar.



The Central Council of Hungarian Trade Unions sent this message to the 1938 May Day celebrations

Other organisations, such as the all-white Trades and Labour Council, while organising to end working class exploitation, still gave approval to apartheid policies.

International messages of support were received.

Unions demanded a shorter working week, higher wages and an eight hour day. The Chemical Workers Industrial Union called on all workers 'to close ranks in one national trade union body.'

In the 1938 May Day booklet issued by the United May Day Committee, Gomas and Eli Weinberg all emphasised the importance of workers uniting worldwide to fight imperialism and exploitation.

W. H. Andrews

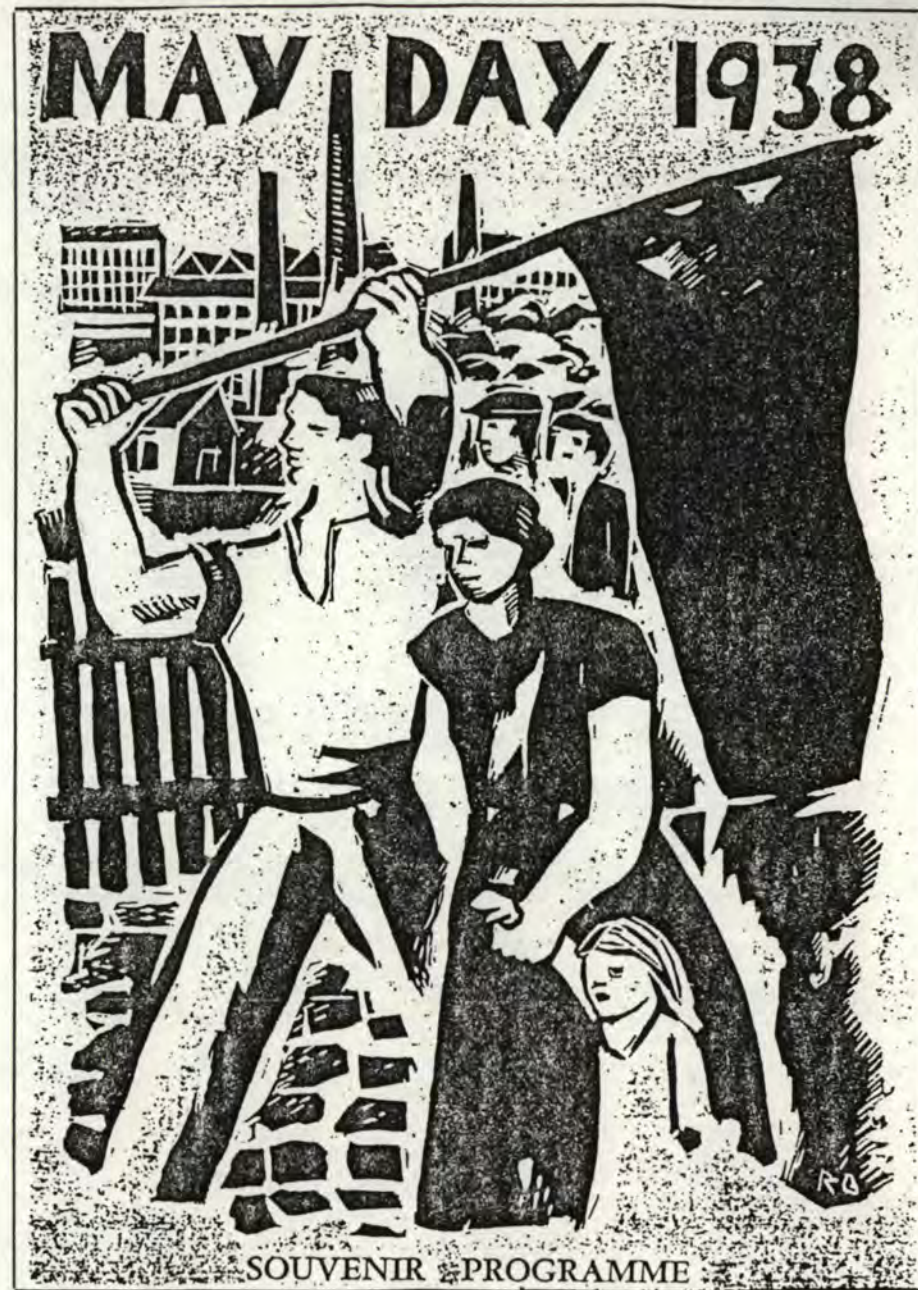
*Executive Member,
S.A. Trades and Labour Council.*

MAY DAY, 1938, finds the workers and peasants in many countries engaged in a life-and-death struggle with the brutal forces of capitalism, whose latest and most bloody expression is Fascism and Nazism. But in Spain, China and other countries they are heroically fighting back.

On International Labour Day let us pledge ourselves anew to redouble our efforts to bring about that international organisation of all workers and poor people which will enable us to destroy those dark forces which are attempting to plunge the world into chaos and barbarism.



In his 1938 May Day message veteran trade unionist Bill Andrews slammed the 'brutal forces of capitalism'



The front cover of the 1938 May Day programme

According to the booklet, there was 'closer unity between the Cape Federation and the Trades and Labour Council. As we go to press unions are preparing for a joint conference of the two bodies.

'Labour is vigorously taking the field in the parliamentary elections and many trade unions have decided to support the Labour Party and Socialist Party candidates on May 18th.

'Let us unite in common struggle against the capitalist system of oppression, exploitation and war, for a better social order, without race hatred, with the right of work and leisure for everybody!

'Let us keep our working class organisations free and independant of capitalist influences, militant and ready to fight for those who toil and make the wealth of our country.'

The Chemical Workers' Industrial Union

extends to all workers greetings for Labour Day.

We call upon all workers to join their Union, to organise, and to close ranks in ONE NATIONAL TRADE UNION BODY! Continue the fight for a shorter working day, for higher wages, for a better and happier life.

We extend greetings to our comrades in all countries, especially the heroic fighters of Spain, China and the Soviet Union.

H. W. COOKSON, *President.*

R. ALEXANDER, *Secretary.*

Local trade union messages published in the 1938 booklet

MONDAY, MAY 1st, 1939.

DEMONSTRATION

**City Hall Steps, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Prominent Trade Union and Labour
Speakers.**

PICNIC AND SPORTS

**Murray Park Sports Ground,
Belgravia, 2 to 5 p.m.
Free Refreshments to children.
Bring your cups.**

SOCIAL AND DANCE

**Selborne Hall at 8 p.m.
Tickets 2/6. Light Refreshments.**

**Workers of Johannesburg
UNITE ON MAY DAY
Demonstrate the Solidarity of Labour!**

Issued by United May Day Committee.



F & M-1977



The 1939 May Day programme cover — unity to break the chains of capitalism

May Day 1939 was again marked by demonstrations. But social events were also held in Johannesburg.

In Natal black unions declared their opposition to 'all proposals to segregate workers on the

grounds of their race and colour', and formed the May Day Unity Committee. It called for a 'non-European Front to combat all Colour Bar and racial laws.'

Other unions, black and white, sent messages of solidarity.

THE NATAL SUGAR INDUSTRY EMPLOYEES' UNION

extend their greetings to the workers of the world, and in particular to the European and Non-European workers of South Africa.

Special congratulations to the May Day Unity Committee in their wonderful efforts of bringing May Day to the Non-European workers. This is the third year we are celebrating May Day, under the banner of the May Day Unity Committee, and hope that their efforts will march from success to success.

Workers of South Africa! Unite on May Day and resolve to put to end 'all anti-democratic measures with which you are threatened.

Chairman: R. T. Coopan.
Secretary: A. P. Pillay.

'TEXTILE WORKERS' INDUSTRIAL UNION (S.A.)

My Union takes this opportunity of sending greetings, on the 1st May, 1939, to all labour organizations throughout South Africa, with the hope that this year will be marked by increased activity in our movement for a better life, by demanding higher wages, shorter hours and better working conditions.

We also express the hope that this year will bring about unity amongst all workers to fight all tendencies of fascism which appear in South Africa, for fascism, if allowed to grow, will disrupt the workers' organizations, and subject the people of this country to further misery and oppression. A strong working class movement will protect the interests of the workers and maintain all democratic institutions, and will rally around it a big movement for real progress in South Africa.

I. WOLFSON: General Secretary.

GARMENT WORKERS' INDUSTRIAL UNION
----- Natal -----

I am directed by the Garment Workers' Industrial Union (Natal) to extend our most sincere fraternal greetings to the workers of Natal, and our heartfelt wish that the efforts of the May Day Unity Committee will bring about that co-operation so urgently required to enable all workers to have that equality of opportunity which is deprived to so many under the existing capitalistic system.

May this May Day be the start of a more determined effort on the part of the workers to secure solidarity which is so vitally necessary for the establishment of a better system, based on production for consumption and not production for profit.

We extend through this Souvenir Programme our fraternal greetings to all workers of South Africa and throughout the world.

J.C.BOLTON: Secretary.

SOUTH AFRICAN TIN WORKERS' UNION.

Greetings to all workers on May Day 1939. The workers of South Africa are faced with a situation as never before, when, every attempt is being made by the enemies of the working class to split them on racial groups.

Let May Day 1939 be a day of UNITY against segregation and colour bar, for a better and happier life for all.

G.S.CHETTY: Chairman.
M.E.PELTZ: Secretary.

S.A.R. & H. WORKERS' UNION (NON-EUROPEAN)

I am directed by my Executive Committee to send you comradely May Day greetings.

We hope that the workers of South Africa will commemorate May Day 1939, with a clear mind and a firm determination to strive for a true democracy in South Africa and to put an end to the present system of exploitation and misery of the South African peoples.

I.MARNEY: Gen. Secretary.

It was during the 1940's that May Day was most often observed. The council of Non-European Trade Unions (CNETU) played a significant role during this period: it united workers under the slogans of 'We want bread' and 'Work for wages'.

Particularly during the Second World War (until 1945) speeches at meetings focussed on fascism and the war. Initially the war was opposed as it was the imperialists who were fighting one another, and the capitalists who would win. Workers would lose most as they were the 'cannon fodder' of the war.

It was only when the Soviet Union was invaded by Hitler that workers threw their full weight into the war against fascism. The first Workers' State was under threat. Thus, in 1942, the United May Committee, still an all-white body, declared the central themes of its May Day celebrations to be:

'Increased production for victory.

'To sweep away wastage, incompetence and profiteering in industry.

'That workers would serve on production committees.

'100 percent realisation of South Africa's war potential.

'Improved pay and better pensions for soldiers and dependants.

'Developed relations with the U.S.S.R.'

When the war ended the United May Day Committee was forced to choose new themes. In a pamphlet sent out in 1949 to all workers' organisations, it stressed the importance of issues like the high cost of living, the threat of unemployment and low wages. The unregistered labour movement

The General Foreman;

Dear Sir,

The compulsory holiday on May Day has become increasingly unpopular with Building Workers during the past ten years, because the day has been abused by communistic agitators to such an extent, that respectable workers cannot any longer associate themselves with the celebrations on this day.

It is felt that to us Union day (31st May) is much more suitable.

Would you be kind enough to distribute the attached lists among the building workers in the employ of your firm for signature and return to -

The Secretary,

Industrial Council for the
Building Industry,

Box 3201, Johannesburg,

without delay. Kindly treat this matter as urgent. Your co-operation in this matter will be highly esteemed. If you cannot attend to the matter yourself will you be kind enough to entrust it to one of your subordinates.

WE WANT U_N_I_O_N_D_A_Y; NOT MAY DAY;

The undersigned Building Workers would prefer Union Day (31st May) as a paid holiday rather than May Day which has become a day for communistic agitations, and the Industrial Council is requested to implement this request.

Werkzaam by (naam van Firma).

Employed by (Firms name).

on the other hand, focussed on housing, minimum wages and African trade union recognition.

The working class divided

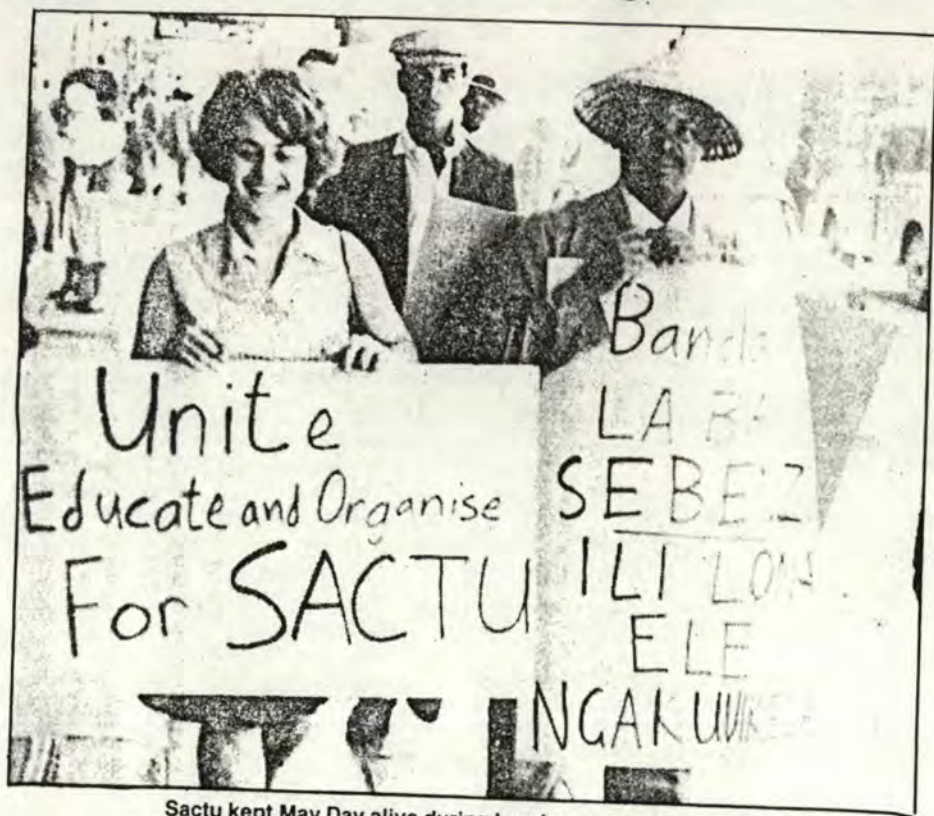
From the late 1940's working class division increased. Political developments smashed what little was left of white-black worker unity. Only a few white unions and activists did not become involved with the growth of right-wing, racist, anti-communist and anti-working class politics. The conservative wing of the South African labour movement stopped observing May Day entirely. The Building Workers Union even petitioned against it, saying May Day had become a day for 'communistic agitation'. (See opposite page)

1950 saw the most significant May Day event in South African history. While conservative trade unions had ceased to observe it entirely, various organisations declared May 1, 1950 a Freedom Day strike.

CNETU, the ANC, the Natal Indian Congress and the Transvaal Indian Congress called for a general stayaway and demonstrations to fight the Suppression of Communism Bill and to support demands for higher wages and better working conditions. Hundreds of meetings were held throughout the country as a build-up to the Freedom Day strike. Extensive agitation took place in the Transvaal.

The Nationalist government - which had been in power for two years - mobilised all its resources. Meetings were banned and army units patrolled the streets. Loudspeaker vans toured

An anti-May Day petition drawn up by the right-wing Building Workers Union. It asked the bosses to distribute the petition.



Sactu kept May Day alive during harsh years of repression

the townships ordering the people to go to work, and the army occupied townships in Pretoria. But, despite attempts by the police and army to force people to go to work, the strike was widely observed.

In the evening police broke up a gathering. The police charged a crowd with fixed bayonets, killing six people. In Sophiatown and Alexandra, the police fired on a crowd and a cinema was burnt down. The final death toll was nineteen, with thirty injured.

In Cape Town 6 000 people marched down Adderley

street shouting: 'Down with apartheid' and 'We want freedom'.

In Durban 10 000 demonstrated against the Suppression of Communism Bill.

May Day 1950 was South Africa's first mass worker stayaway. It became a day of mass political struggle against exploitation and oppression.

SACTU takes up the fight

After the freedom strike May Day activity declined in the face of growing state repression. In the late 50's the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) and the Congress movement struggled to keep the tradition of May Day celebrations alive.

A few of the remaining progressive white unions, such as the Garment Workers Union, continued to try and draw workers together around May Day celebrations.

Protests against war preparations

At this time, America had sent its forces to fight communist influence in Korea. South African troops were called upon to help America.

Progressive unions protested vehemently against the war preparations which had begun in South Africa. Their May Day slogans called for 'Peace and Security' and urged workers to 'Protest against War Preparations!'

A CALL

*FR. U. ...
1st May 1952*

FOR A UNITED MAY DAY DEMONSTRATION TO ALL WORKERS, MEN AND WOMEN, WHO LABOUR FOR PITIFUL EARNINGS



The writer.

Mr. D. J. Jacobs, member of the Central Executive Committee of the Garment Workers' Union and its Representative on the United May Day Committee.

Come in your thousands and demonstrate on the 1st May!
Voice your opinions and feelings!
Fight for your freedom, your wages and conditions, and your trade unions,
as they are threatened!

On the 1st May, 1886, sixty-four years ago, the workers of Chicago (U.S. America), held a demonstration against the injustices imposed on them by their Capitalist bosses. The workers wanted better wages and conditions and shorter hours of work, as in those days they laboured for 14 hours a day, for low wages and under bad conditions. Mounted police were called out and workers were trampled underfoot and many were shot down.

At the International Workers' Congress held in France in 1888, it was resolved to declare the 1st May a workers' day of celebration and remembrance. Throughout the world workers and their organisations celebrate this day.

And still today in South Africa the 1st of May is regarded as a day of demonstration against those tyrants who oppress the workers and for better wages and conditions of work.

These tyrants are on our door-step and are threatening to pass new laws to do away with the trade unions. They want to dictate to the workers, to tell them what to do, what wages to ask for and how many hours they must work. Are we going to stand for such injustice? I say "NO!" And I think the workers of South Africa are not asleep and will also say: "NO!"

Therefore, we, the workers of South Africa must gather on the 1st May and tell the Government that it is in power today, that we are not interested in the Report of the Industrial Legislation Commission of Enquiry. We must tell them that we are quite happy and contented with our present trade unions and we do not want dictators imposed on us. We must tell them in a united voice to keep their noses out of our affairs.

I make an urgent appeal to the workers of Johannesburg and the Witwatersrand to attend the mass meeting on the 1st of May. It is up to us to show that the workers of South Africa mean business.

Workers! It is your wages, your conditions of work and your Trade Unions that are threatened.

REMEMBER!

Thursday, 1st May, 1952

10-30 a.m.

City Hall Steps Johannesburg

Published by Garment Workers' Union, Box 8779, Johannesburg. Printed by Prompt Printing Co. (Pty.) Ltd., 11 Harris Street, Westgate, Johannesburg.

In 1952, the call was for workers to defend their unity and organisations

CELEBRATIONS

Thursday, May 1st 1952

DEMONSTRATION:-

City Hall Steps

11.30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Prominent Speakers will deal with

- THE EVER INCREASING COST OF LIVING
- THE CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS
- THE REPORT OF THE INDUSTRIAL LEGISLATION COMMISSION.

WORKERS ORGANISE AND PROTECT YOUR UNION RIGHTS!



PICNIC AND SPORTS:-

VICKERS PARK, MALVERN

2.30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

- NUMEROUS EVENTS ●

Issued by United May Day Committee Johannesburg

Commercial Printing Co. (Pty.) Ltd.

The issues in the early 50's — war, wages and the constitutional crisis.

As the following May Day greetings show, the workers of South Africa were joining workers from all over the world in protests against colonialism and imperialism, and in the fight to establish working class interests.

May Day greetings from the Netherlands Unified Trade Union Centre in 1951 stated: 'On this May Day the Dutch workers will make again the vow even to strengthen and to extend the fight for Peace and in defence of the standard of living'.

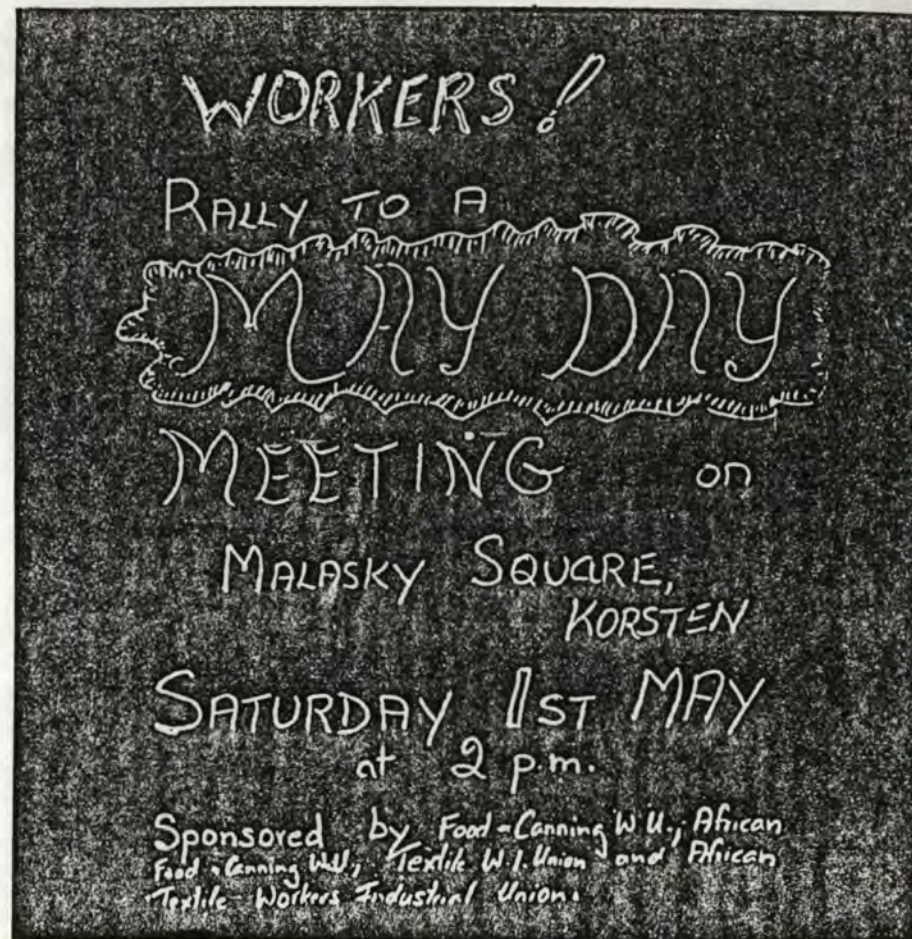
A message of greeting to the Garment Workers Union from the Central Organisation of All Indonesian Trade Unions explained, 'At present the working class and people of Indonesia are celebrating May Day 1951 in its struggle against declining conditions, provocations and war-practices headed by the U.S.A.'

'We are convinced that the struggle of the working class and people of Indonesia against colonialism is not standing alone.'

'So on the occasion of heroic May Day the Indonesian working class and people wish you success in your struggle for a better life and a Lasting Peace.'

Problems of mobilisation

While black unions under the banner of Sactu continued to observe May Day, white unions found it increasingly difficult to get support from their members. The United May Day Committee complained in 1954: 'Because of lack of interest, and consequently representation on



Pamphlets advertising May Day, 1954.

the committee, we are finding it extremely difficult to organise a proper programme for the day.'

A pamphlet issued by the Food And Canning Workers Union, African Food and Canning Workers Union, Textile Workers Union and African Textile Workers Union, explained the ideas and slogans behind the 1954 May Day activities:

M A Y D A Y !! LABOUR DAY!!! 1st of MAY!!!!

How many workers know the actual significance of May Day? Many workers think that it is just something else that the trade union leaders have thought up in order to get them to attend a meeting! We want you to know why we celebrate May Day as the Workers' Day.

Last century when the workers of the world were working very long hours indeed, it was decided that a campaign would be waged for a shorter working day without any reduction in wages. THIS CAMPAIGN WAS FOR THE 8-HOUR DAY. On several occasions when workers were demonstrating for this issue on May 1st, their meetings were broken up by the military or the police - with the loss of workers' lives. The workers of different countries decided that the day on which this happened - the first day of May - should become THE day of the workers throughout the world.

The fight put up by the workers earned us the RIGHT TO ORGANISE - a right which we must never allow to be taken from us. It is by ORGANISING that we have won the 8-hour day, better wages, payment for overtime, accident insurance, protection against accidents, maternity benefits, unemployment pay, etc.

When we hold MAY DAY meetings we honour the memory and acknowledge the achievements of all workers who have gone before us and also those who are still working and fighting side by side with us today. LET US RESOLVE THIS MAY DAY TO CARRY ON THE GLORIOUS TRADITION OF THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT!!

LET US THIS MAY DAY HONOUR THE MEMORY OF ALL WORKERS WHO HAVE TAKEN PART IN THE STRUGGLE WHETHER THEY ARE WELL-KNOWN HEROES OF THE MOVEMENT OR HUMBLE WORKERS.

Let us again pledge ourselves to carry on the struggle for -

1. PEACE - above all
2. The right to work
3. Adequate wages and better working conditions for all workers
4. Lower living costs (for reductions in the prices of food, clothing and rents)
5. Satisfactory housing for all workers
6. The right to organise
7. Freedom of speech and assembly
8. Equal pay for equal work
9. Education for all
10. Medical and health facilities for all workers
11. The right to strike
12. Pensions for the aged and the sick

THESE ARE THE DEMANDS OF ALL WORKERS WHATEVER THEIR RACE, RELIGION OR COLOUR. ALL WORKERS CAN WORK TOGETHER FOR THESE AIMS WHICH ARE THEIR COMMON DESIRE.

COME! LET US ROLL UP OUR SLEEVES AND GET DOWN TO THE JOB OF ORGANISING OUR WORKERS TO FIGHT FOR OUR RIGHTS.

JOIN YOUR UNION! LET YOUR UNION BE FIRST IN THE STRUGGLE!!

FOOD AND CANNING WORKERS, PORT ELIZABETH EXTEND MAY DAY GREETINGS TO ALL WORKERS.

Issued by F.C.W.U., 13 Court Chambers, PORT ELIZABETH

Sactu and other worker organisations were hard hit by state repression in the 50's. Workers leaders were banned, detained, banished, imprisoned and shot. But May Day was kept alive by progressive newspapers like The Guardian and New Age. These newspapers, however, were also banned.

The Struggle for Union recognition

Few May Day meetings were called, and SACTU used the day for discussions to review the trade union movement, and the struggles of exploited workers. May Day discussions were linked to the One Pound per Day campaign, and the struggle for union recognition and organisation.

The 1960's was a decade of silence. May Day left the streets, along with the organisations that had been unable to withstand the government and bosses' powerful attacks.

Sactu was driven into exile along with the ANC and PAC. Unionists were jailed and others suffered under the variety of weapons the government chose.

While worker organisation re-emerged in the mid 1970's May Day was celebrated only occasionally and quietly.

But with the growth of the progressive trade union movement the tradition of May Day has been recovered. Last year, the 80th anniversary of the first South African May Day celebration, workers took up the campaign to have May Day proclaimed a public holiday.

Many unions included this demand in wage negotiations with employers. Some bosses have, for the first time in decades, given in to this demand. But others have refused to pay workers for time taken off.

These agreements have been an important first step in the battle for May Day to be a paid holiday.

May Day: 1985

This year, 1985, workers are again coming together to celebrate May Day. In Cape Town, unity unions have formed a committee, which has arranged a May Day meeting at Rocklands. Other progressive unions have been invited to participate. Speakers at the meeting will call on all unions to demand that next year's May Day, and all May Days thereafter, become paid workers' holidays. UDF and community organisations have been called on to send messages of support.

In Durban, pamphlets are being distributed in all factories, calling on workers to attend an afternoon May Day meeting. Buses will provide transport for workers who have taken leave to attend. The organisers have called on the UDF and community organisations to send messages of support.

The demands this year

Meetings have been organised in Port Elizabeth and East London.

The Transvaal has also seen much May Day

international struggles against imperialism and fascism.

It also appealed to workers, irrespective of colour or creed, to organise together, in a determined drive for higher wages, and better working conditions.

Towards a better society

Workers were urged to 'unite in common struggle against the capitalist system of oppression, exploitation and war, for a better social order, without race hatred, with the right of work and leisure for everybody!... Let us keep our working class organisations free and independent of capitalist influences, militant and ready to fight for those who toil and make the wealth of our country.'

A year later, on May Day 1939, Mrs Z. Gool, the President of the National Liberation League of South Africa and the President of the Committee of Action of the Non-European United Front echoed these sentiments. She called on workers to commemorate May Day 'by the growing united of the South African working class based on joint action and sacrifice in the struggle for genuine democracy with equal rights for all .

'Let us pledge ourselves loyally in the fight against reaction, against fascism and colour prejudice, against capitalism, poverty and exploitation and build a united nation, free of racial, and class persecution.'

The Natal Sugar Industry Employees Union in the same pamphlet appealed to the workers of South

Africa to 'Unite on May Day and resolve to put to an end all anti-democratic measures with which you are threatened'.

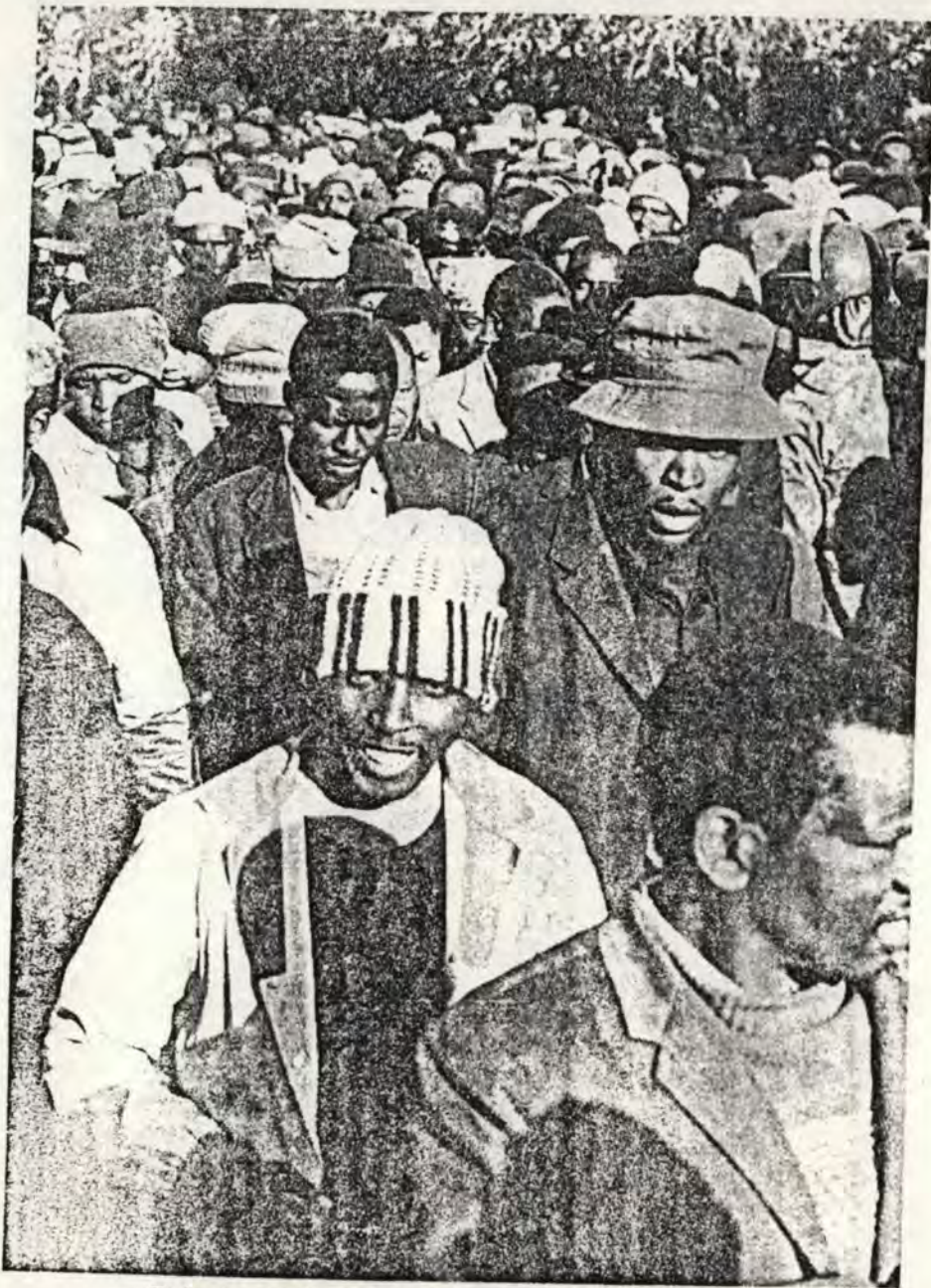
The Durban branch of the Chemical Workers Union, had the following message to all workers: 'Unite against segregation and slave laws, for a better and happier life.'

The control and domination the working class faces in every aspect of life of life is clearly reflected in a list of twelve demands published by the Food and Canning Workers Union's Port Elizabeth branch in 1954. The demands covered a struggle for peace, the right to work, adequate wages and better working conditions, lower living costs, housing, the right to organise, freedom of speech and assembly, equal pay for equal work, education for all, medical and health facilities, the right to strike, and pensions for the aged and the sick.

History repeats itself

The demands published 31 years later by the 1985 May Day Committee cover almost exactly the same issues. These include the right to full employment at a living wage, adequate housing for all at a reasonable rent, adequate transport, proper social security in the form of free unemployment benefits, medical and insurance benefits, free and compulsory education for all, the right to strike and picket, freedom of association and a price freeze on basic commodities.

The committee goes further. It demands full



Trying to organise is difficult in the face of police repression

democratic rights for all who uphold the interests of the working class, the abolition of all discriminatory and intimidatory legislation, the unbanning of all banned organisations and individuals, and the release of all political prisoners, the scrapping of racially discriminatory legislation, including influx control and the Group Areas Act, and the scrapping of the existing parliamentary system.

Don't tax the workers!

The committee demands a society that will put the interests of the working class first. It rejects taxation of workers under any capitalist system, and endorses the struggle being waged abroad in the interests of the workers of South Africa.

The scope of the 1985 May Day demands reflects the situation of workers today. The economic crisis has forced the bosses to try to keep up their super-profits by forcing workers to work harder, for longer hours and lower wages.

Bosses have retrenched thousands of workers. In the name of rationalisation, they have moved companies from one area to another, joined companies together, and have even closed down entire plants. These measures have resulted in thousands of jobs being lost. Those workers who remain are under increased pressure to work harder for greater productivity and profits.

At the same time, prices keep rising. Workers lucky enough to have some income are forced to support those who have lost their jobs. At the same time, they they are paying higher prices

for the most basic essentials.

The government is partly responsible for the economic crisis, because of its overspending. It spends fortunes on trying to control the movement of the working class, its housing, its education and its relocation. Now the government has cut back its spending on health, welfare and housing.

Workers carry the burden

Every cutback in government spending means a greater financial burden for the workers. The government ignores the welfare of unemployed workers, but the workers themselves cannot.

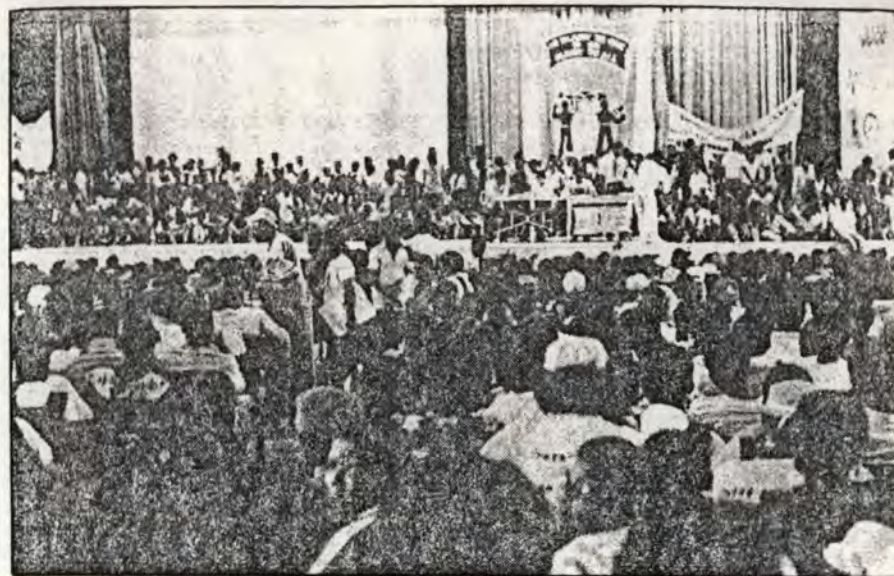
Workers are forced to spend what the government cut back, to make sure that the unemployed and the aged get even a little medical treatment, education and support.

Government cutbacks have resulted in raised rents, an increase in the cost of basic foodstuffs and higher transport costs. The government is also trying to increase its income by raising taxes, including the General Sales Tax.

Controlling the working class

These actions of the bosses and the government have resulted a need for greater control over the working class.

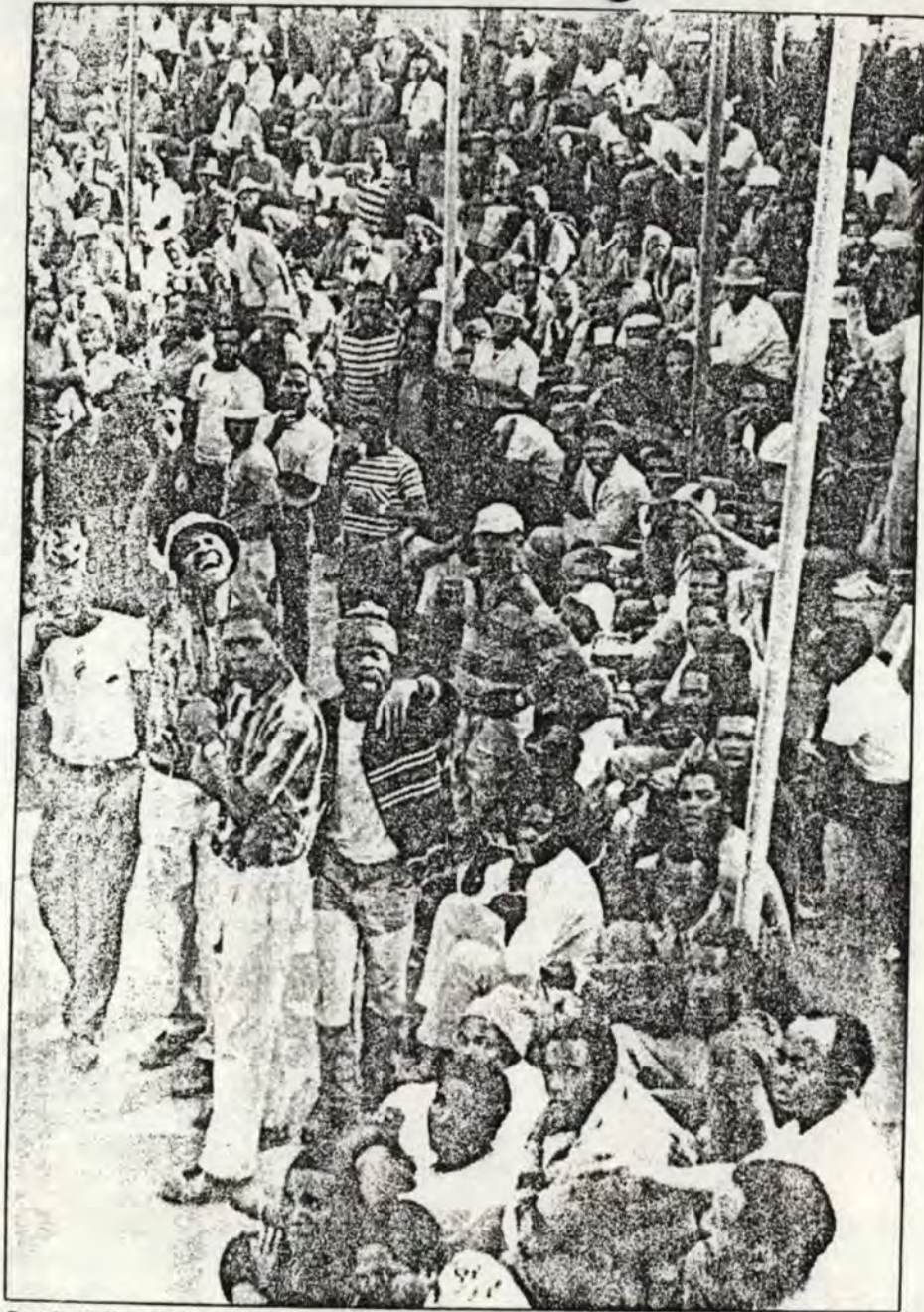
An organised and conscious working class is ready and able to fight these measures. So the government and the bosses have stepped up their campaign to discipline and disorganise workers.



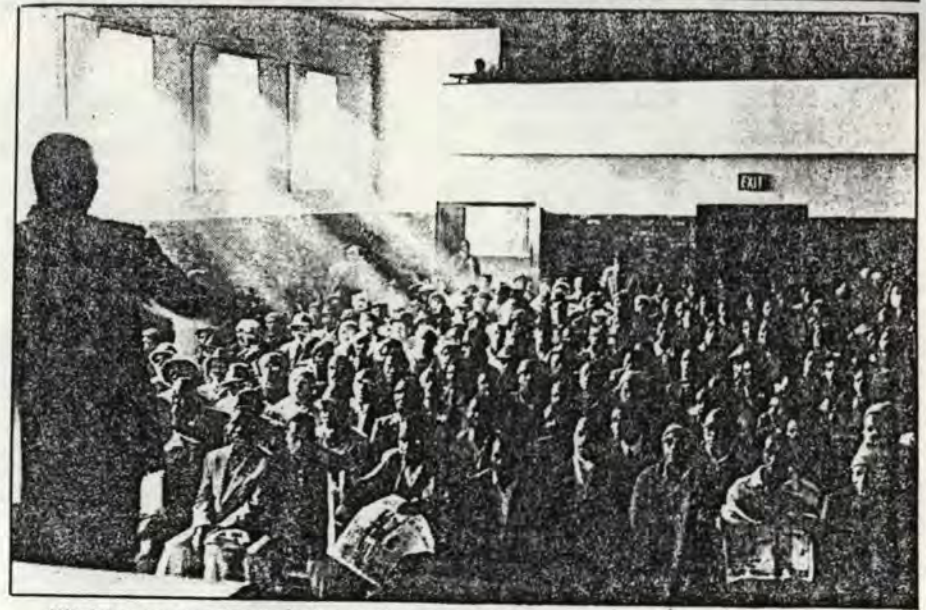
1985 SACTU anniversary rally — remembering past struggles

The government has been enforcing pass laws more strictly. Community councils, which are doing the government's dirty work, are becoming stricter in the allocation of houses. The rate of removals has increased. Bantustan leaders have a greater responsibility than ever before to contain the surplus population - the unemployed and those who will never have a chance of finding jobs.

A united working class movement is being built to fight attempts by the government and the bosses to lower wages, increase productivity, raise prices, and impose higher taxes, rents and transport costs. The fight is also against attempts to extend control over the working class in the townships, in the schools, factories and rural areas.



South African trade unions are signing up many members, and building strength in new industries



Workers are coming together to fight for better working and living conditions

A working class movement is being built that combines the grievances and desires of people in their workplaces, townships, schools and universities, as well as in the bantustans and rural areas.

This movement has as its focus the development of a society in which the exploitation of one class by another is abolished. It aims to build democracy, not just in parliament, but in every sphere of society - the school, the home, the community and above all, the factory.

The demands of the May Day Committee in 1985 provide a platform for uniting in action youth, student, civic, trade union and political organisations.

The demands stress that the struggle against

exploitation must result in the creation of a society that will put the interests of the working class first.

This year's May Day commemoration has brought together a wide range of unions.

With such unity in action, and with such goals, the May Day demands of the working class will be won.

What is CRIC?

The Community Resource and Information Centre (CRIC) was established in 1983.

It aims to assist progressive organisations with :

- * Information - things you need to know in the course of your day-to-day organisational work - anything from the number of schools in Soweto to the latest increases in the cost of food or transport.

- * Research - we undertake in-depth research to provide organisations with the facts they need to organise, mobilise and educate more effectively.

- * Education - we can help design and run education programmes for leadership and membership in your organisation.

- * Training - CRIC runs training programmes at the request of organisations. These deal with the specific skills that organisers, officials or members need, eg. wage negotiations; how to run meetings, take minutes etc; how to organise; bookkeeping and administration.

Groups which have made use of CRIC resources and training programmes include student, youth, women and community organisations and trade unions.

If you require further information, please phone : 339-1303 (Information and Research) or 339-3356 (Training and Education). Or come around to our offices to discuss your organisation's needs.

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DELMAS TREASON TRIAL 1985 - 1989

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