

in 1948
 Soon after being elected to power the Nat. Party embarked upon implementing their threats against organised labour. Throughout the election campaign the party hurled abuse at the T. Unions & their leaders. The secret B. Bond, through its subsidiary "cultural ^{religious} organisations" went to great lengths to persuade Afrikaner workers to forsake the t. u. to which they belonged & ~~join Afrikaner Nationalist Unions,~~ & seek ^{protection & support} ~~combinations~~ in "Christian-National" t. u. & play their part in establishing "a free, independent, republican, C-N State," in which "the effective disciplining of the people" would be of prime concern. As part of this campaign, ~~the~~ ^{the} 3 established unions, the G.W.U. of SA & the B.W. Ind. Union ^{the more} were assailed because of their large Afrikaner membership. The ~~former~~ ^{former} gen. secy of the G.W.U. Ernst Solomon ^(Sachs) was singled out for attack. He was a unique union leader, ~~skilled~~ ^{astute} negotiator, determined, courageous, & extremely popular ^{at} among the laics. of Afr. women belonging to the G.W.U. Very few of them responded to the blandishment of the Nat propagandists, who were particularly incensed because Sachs never hesitated to ~~take~~ ^{take} his defamers to court & winning substantial damages.

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 reference
 p 148
 my SA

See TV in
 Travail

p 44
 & Chapter Six

Saamtrek

the CU weekly.

2 (5)

It begins with the
I begin with the story of Saamtrek. ~~This trade union newspaper~~
~~was born when the government imposed a ban~~ ^{imposed by the govt} ~~on the fiery union~~
leader, Emil Solomon (Solly) Sachs, secretary of the Garment
Workers Union of South Africa. ^{Using the powers of the all-encompassing} ~~He was ordered~~ ^{S of C act; the govt} ~~to resign from~~
the union "and not again to become an office-bearer, officer or
member of the union". In addition, he was prohibited from
attending gatherings of any kind and confined to the Transvaal
province. This was a cruel blow to a man who, ^{in 24 years of} ~~by~~ energetic
and ^{devoted} ~~dedicated~~ service, ^{succeeded} ~~had been able~~ in his 24 years as general
secretary, ^{had succeeded in building} ~~to build~~ one of the strongest unions in the country.
He was ~~acknowledged to be~~ an intrepid and skilful negotiator,

popular among the members
and generally respected as

→ had given the union 24
years of ^{devoted} ~~immense~~ service as general
secretary, during which his inspired
leadership had won considerable
benefits for all workers in the
clothing industry. He was popular
among the workers & generally
respected by employers as a skilful &
well-informed negotiator.

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The ban was the fulfilment of a Nat. party desire to oust Sachs from the leadership of a union which had a large number of Afrikaner women members. Since the 1930s the ~~Anti~~ Secret Bond had endeavoured to infiltrate & take over the GWW but without success. The Afrikaner women remained loyal to Sachs because they had seen him win higher wages & better cond. for them: Between 1928 & 1951 their average weekly wage ~~had~~ had risen from £1 to £7. & hours of work reduced from 50 to 40 hrs. a week. After winning the 1948 gen. elect. the Nats showed they would use all that power to "reform" the 2 unions & deal with leaders it did not like. The Trin of hab, Ron Sch. saw his opportunity in Sept. 1948. On the 10th Sept. --- (copy from p48 as marked)

~~2~~ At first Sachs thought there may be a way to get around the ban but the best legal advice convinced him that the restrictions not only ~~ended~~ ended his employment with the union but made it virtually impossible to obtain any sort of job.

Determined not to be easily crushed, Sachs decided to ~~take~~ undertake the publication of a newspaper for workers, something which the unions had hankered after for years. He did not wait for the ~~formation~~ ^{federation} of trade unions, the Trades & Laborers Council, to give the venture their official blessing; he went ahead & when his pilot scheme ~~was~~ for the publication was ^{completed} ready & the first & a dummy first issue ready, he proudly presented these to the unions & asked for their financial & organisational support.

While most unions acclaimed his enterprise they were really very little they could do. Most were financially poor, short-staffed, & suffering from stolid rank-and-file apathy. Sachs was well-acquainted with the state of the unions & from the outset had realised that the paper would have to depend upon ^{commercial} advertising for its income. To this end he devoted all his energies 15

canvassing commercial & industrial firms for a ^{share} ~~portion~~ of their advertising & in this he proved to be a good salesman, ^{initially} ~~soon~~ securing the full quotas of advertising each issue could carry.

* It was named "Saantnik" an Afrikaans word meaning "pull together".

The first issue of "the workers' own newspaper" appeared on 5th September 1952. * The occasion was celebrated in the Jhb City Hall by a large attendance of trade unionists & others, when etc etc (see first issue)

At this ^{early} stage some future difficulties were already apparent. Although not officially owned or controlled by the T. M. C., several leading trade unionists were on ^{Samuel's} the management board, causing uncertainty as to where final accountability lay. A few unions committed themselves to small financial contributions but generally ~~most~~ most could give no more than token support. Most were financially poor, short-staffed & suffering from stolid rank-and-file apathy. The t. u. movement generally ^{was} severely handicapped by ~~the~~ apartheid laws & practices, as well as racial prejudice, which prevented the achievement of essential workers' unity. Africans, comprising more than half to industrial labour force, were denied legal recognition under the IC Act & thus excluded from collective bargaining; white unions registered under the Act were not permitted to enrol African members.

(14) (15)
A few unions succeeded ^{finding loopholes to} ~~infiltrating~~ around the official taboos but the unhappy truth was that most white workers believed in apartheid & race prejudice was commonplace among white workers, and it was they who persuaded successive govts to apply laws & regulations to deny Africans entry into or advancement in many trades & occupations. The Factories Act for example, provided that the races should have separate toilets, locker rooms, etc & whites with few exceptions, were quick to complain if this apartheid was not stringently applied. But even among themselves ~~the~~ white workers were disunited. Since the 1930s there had been a marked increase in the number of African workers in industry, and in consequence ~~the~~ trade union became ~~the~~ numerically stronger. It was ^{during} ~~last~~ this time that the ^{of which} B Bond & its subsidiary ^{spas & Church} ~~organisations~~ ~~embarked~~ upon a systematic campaign to dissuade African workers from belonging to existing t.u., which they labelled as "foreign" ^{an national} "communistic" etc. As one of the B Bond churchmen declared "The African worker is today forced -- etc)"
[see frontpiece + II in TVL]

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The Bond campaign succeeded in creating ^{apathy and} dissent in ~~some~~ ~~of the traditional unions~~ ~~and the white leaders who tried~~ unions organized on traditional lines. Leaders who tried to resist the B's subversion found it virtually impossible to convince their African members that their future lay in remaining limited. In spite of these difficulties some progress was made in improving the status of black workers, even to the extent of getting Smuts to prepare a Bill according to rights to blacks. It was a limited Bill & did not satisfy everyone. Smuts was alive to the fact that the world would be different after the war & much more needed to be done to recognize the rights of S.A.'s blacks. But he ^{was} always nervous about the white electorate to whom the franchise was limited. But Smuts lost his term at the first post-war election in ^{May} 1948 when, to the surprise of his followers, his United party was defeated. From the moment they took office the Harts set about 'breaking the power of the unions'. It soon became clear that the new govt. was determined not only to enforce strict apartheid

in social & political affairs but to legislate against racial mixing in
the unions & to reserve by law jobs on a racial basis

T.M. in Travail. - copies on hand?

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