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TRADES UNION CONGRESS.

CONGRESS HOUSE,

GREAT RUSSELL STREET,
LONDON, W.C1.

28th February, 1963.

S T A T E M E N T O N S O U T H A F R I C A .

At their meeting today the General Council considered the latest steps taken by the Government of South Africa to enforce their racial aims and to silence and crush those who oppose them. The General Council were informed that eight active trade unionists are being compelled, by order of the Minister of Justice, to sever their connections with the South African Congress of Trade Unions, which is one of thirty-six organisations singled out by the Government under its repressive legislation. Seven of these trade unionists who were officials of unions organising Africans and affiliated to SACTU are being forced to give up their union posts, and all of them are, or have been, subject to various other restrictions imposed without trial by the administrative act of the Government.

The individuals concerned are Mr. Mark Williams-Shope, General Secretary of SACTU; Mr. Leon Levy, National President of SACTU; Mr. Billy Nair, Secretary, Durban Local Committee, SACTU; Mr. Melville Fletcher, Organiser African Textile Workers' Union, Durban Branch; Mr. Alven Bennie, Organiser, General Workers' Union, Port Elizabeth; Mr. Marks Rammitloa, Secretary, Shop and Office Workers' Union, Transvaal; Mrs. Francis Baard, Secretary, African Food and Canning Workers' Union, Port Elizabeth Branch; and Mr. L. Kukulela, Secretary, Hospital Workers' Union and African Laundry Workers' Union, Cape Province.

The restrictions under which these trade unionists must now live are exemplified by those laid on Mr. Williams-Shope. He is prohibited from entering any factory, any African township, hostel or compound, or any area where coloured or Indian people reside; from attending political or social gatherings; from communicating verbally or in any way with persons who themselves are prohibited from attending gatherings; he is to report to the police once a week and is confined to the magisterial district of Johannesburg for five years; within that district he cannot enter areas of the kinds mentioned above.

Moreover, Mr. Williams-Shope will require the permission of the Chief Magistrate of Johannesburg to seek another job, and the Minister of Justice may prohibit him from any employment he may secure.

These disgraceful penalties are imposed on men who have served their fellows as trade unionists and who have not been brought to trial for any offence against the law. Indeed the purpose of the South African Government is not to serve the ends of justice but to further its policy of apartheid and to stifle opposition of any kind to its treatment of Africans and others as members of inferior races. These policies have inevitably led to the denial of the right of workers to join together in trade union organisations under leaders of their own choice. They infringe the liberties of working people, they curtail their rights and they offend human dignity. The General Council call on the Government of South Africa once again to reconsider their illjudged acts, and to abandon the infamous policies which have led to them.



Collection Number: AD1137

FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN 1954-1963

PUBLISHER:

Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive

Location:- Johannesburg

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