

# ON STRIKE!



A group of textile strikers outside their union office.

# NEW AGE

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## 600 Textile Workers On Strike

### Protest Against Proposed Wage Cut

From Jacqueline Arenstein

DURBAN.

**T**HE strike of over 600 workers at the Consolidated Textile Mills Ltd., is one of the most critical industrial conflicts that has taken place here since the war.

It represents the courageous fight of a section of the textile workers to stop the first serious attempt by employers to introduce a wage cut

in industry.

In February of this year the Industrial Council met to discuss the National Union's demand for a 10 per cent increase in basic wages. Present wages range from £3.7.0 to £5.14.0 a week inclusive of cost of living allowances. There has been no wage increase for seven years.

At this meeting the employers proposed a wage-cut, suggesting that the basic minimum wage be reduced to £2.6.6 and that the workers rely on the piece-work rates system to augment their basic wage.

The workers feel that the implementation of such a policy would mean the acceleration of the sweated-labour system, and that they would be forced to work beyond physical endurance at the risk of a premature break-down in health.

The Union suggested the alternative of the extension of the expired wage agreement with no wage increase. The employers, however, insisted on a wage reduction and a deadlock ensued.

#### DISMISSALS

Then the management of the Consolidated Textile Mills began dismissing workers until by the end of last month 200 had received the grim ticket: "This serves as one week's notice to terminate your services."

Among the men on the picket-line who have been fired is one grey-haired, sunken-cheeked worker who served the factory for 24 years. He battles to keep a wife and eight children above starvation level. He had spoken out against the ex-union officials who appealed to the workers to accept a wage-cut.

Another worker wove blankets at the factory for nearly 20 years. He walked out when he was instructed to train another man to replace him in his highly skilled job. He is a vice-president of the Union. Numerous other men on the picket-line can tell similar stories.

The reason given for the dismissals was shortage of work. Yet all textile factories are working full-time and wholesalers have told the trade union that they are making the maximum demand for blankets usual at this time of the year.

#### SERIOUS UNREST

The employment of several scabs at the factory at a reduced basic wage has caused serious unrest amongst the textile workers at other factories.

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"The Native Affairs Department works in the dark even in the daytime"

## MAMATHOLA WILL PETITION TO BE HEARD AT THE BAR OF THE HOUSE

From Ruth First

JOHANNESBURG.

#### Economic Boycott

### Congresses To Contest Court Order

JOHANNESBURG.

When the matter comes up in court in July, the five Congresses will contest the order by Mr. Justice Hill on Saturday restraining them from distributing literature supporting the boycott of the Rembrandt Tobacco Company's products.

According to documents before the court, the ANC, SAIC, SACPO, SACTU and COD issued circulars calling upon "all opponents of the Nationalist Government" to boycott the cigarettes and tobaccos produced by the company in order to demonstrate their disapproval of the Government's policies.

These include: Cigarettes—Rembrandt, Rembrandt van Rhijn, Meesters, Consulate, Rothmans King Size, Peter Stuyvesant, Lexington. Tobaccos—Mine Captain, Chapman's Special, Silver Cloud, Greyhound, Wayside, Champion, Iris.

The company denies in its petition that it falls under the control of any group or organisation "whether Nationalistic, imperialistic, communistic or any other ideology."

It states it was founded by Mr. A. E. Rupert and built up to a group with assets of over £5 million over the past 15 years, and has factories in seven different countries.

Last week's New Age containing an interview with Mr. Oliver Tambo on the boycott is one of the documents before the court.

### Tribe will not move: Verwoerd must take next step

**T**HE Native Affairs Department must be biting its fingernails. How it mismanaged the Mamathola removal!

After months, and years, of nice-sounding handouts about how the tribe was taking the Department's good advice and moving to new land, the Mamathola flatly refused to go. The lorries were standing by, the bags of money had been brought into the Reserve and the notes were already being counted out as compensation . . . and then the money had to be taken back to the bank, and the lorries turned about again.

#### Govt. Forgot The Law

The NAD had forgotten, or had chosen to overlook, that if the Government wants to remove a tribe against its will, authority has to be sought from Parliament in the form of resolutions passed by both Houses.

That is what the 1927 Native Administration Act says, and it has never been altered. (A recent Native Laws Amendment Act gives the Government power to move individuals and portions of tribes against their wishes, but not whole tribes.) The Governor-General must be empowered by Parliament to move a tribe where the tribe objects to removal. Once these formalities have been gone through, the tribe can be moved by force, but until then the use of force is illegal.

So now the next move must come from Minister Verwoerd. Will he rush through the required resolution? As yet he has not said.

If the Government does try this way of effecting their forcible re-

(Continued on page 4)

### Big Demonstrations for June 26

JOHANNESBURG.

**B**IG demonstrations are expected throughout the country on June 26. The National Consultative Committee (representing the ANC, COD, SACPO, SACTU and SAIC) has asked Congress organisations throughout the country "to plan activities in accordance with the circumstances in each area and the ability of each region to carry out the tasks involved."

While details of plans are thus left to local initiative, the NCC suggests that, in all areas, non-Congress people and organisations should be drawn into the day's events.

A suggested programme for June 26 includes: early morning gatherings, at 6 a.m.; religious services (to which churchmen of all denominations should be invited), at 11 a.m.; sporting and cultural activities in the afternoon, from 2 to 5 p.m., and a torch-light procession in the evening at 7 p.m.

Stress is laid on proper planning of the day's events. "Meetings should be properly arranged and advertised. All details should be methodically checked and faulty plans corrected before June 26."

Speakers' notes issued for the day's meetings recall the nationwide general strike of June 26, 1950, the launching of the Defiance Campaign on June 26, 1952, the Congress of the People and the adoption of the Freedom Charter on June 26, 1955.

Speakers are asked to demand:

- Abolition of Pass Laws;
- Repeal of Group Areas Act;
- General Increase of Wages;
- Minimum Wage of £1 a Day;
- No Taxation Without Representation;
- No Bantu Education;
- No Apartheid in Nursing and Universities;
- Repeal of the Suppression of Communism Act;
- Lifting of Bans on our Leaders;
- Send Home the Deported Leaders and Chiefs.



## Greetings From A Soviet Student

May I, as a Soviet student who is not very old as yet (photo enclosed) and who is very keen on promoting peace throughout the world, send through your progressive newspaper my cordial greetings and best wishes to all youth of the Union of South Africa.



a mutual desire for friendship and understanding can do so much to break down such barriers and bring people from all parts of the world close together.

This is about all I have to say. And—this goes without saying—I would be glad and happy to hear from the youth of the Union of South Africa.

Sincerely,

IGOR MIKHAILUSENKO

A student of the 1st Moscow State Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages.

24 Gorky Street,  
Flat 10,  
Moscow, USSR.

We all, Moscow students, are up to our neck in work for the VI World Youth and Students' Festival (July 28 to August 16).

We study foreign languages so that all our guests from abroad who will come to the Festival, and we ourselves, won't have to remain too dumb in Moscow.

We understand only too well that we must broadly disseminate all those lofty ideas, among people which are indispensable in order to preserve peace.

It is sad when language difficulties create barriers, isn't it? But still, a mutual aim for peace,

## Why Not Use Tear Gas?

Recently the police used bren-guns to quell a disturbance at a hostel near Johannesburg. In this incident the police killed two Africans and wounded another fourteen.

Now let me ask: cannot the police use some other means to quell such disturbances? They have used firearms against the people too many times and unnecessarily. They should learn from other civilised authorities, who quell such small troubles, in a humanitarian way, by the use of only tear-gas.

M. SADIQ

Durban.

## Churches Are Empty Vessels

When Bantu Education was introduced, Church leaders said that they would not hand their mission schools to the NAD. But when the greedy jackals were promised compensation, they willingly offered the African youth to be poisoned by Dr. Verwoerd.

Today they are protesting against the Native Laws Amendment Bill. They realise that they will no longer get the huge sums of money which they used to get from the African people. They say they will tell the Africans to defy this Bill. They forget that Africans are not animals but human beings.

Yes, there are a few individuals who really sympathise with the Africans, but the Church as a whole must not expect any respect from the Africans. Instead of bringing light to Africa they have brought darkness.

Mayibuye.

Alice.

A.K.G.

## This Is A Black Miner's Reward

My husband has been eight years in Modder B and eight in New Modder and one and a half years in New Kleinfontein, two years in E.R.P.M. underground and State Mines five years underground.

He was out of work on account of ill health for two years and I made an appeal to the Mines Labour Bureau, but the Bureau stated that he was suffering from Bronchitis and not Phthisis and therefore there would be no compensation payable to him.

He died shortly after he had been admitted to hospital. That was nine years ago. Since then I contracted heart disease. I have never had any assistance from the mine authorities. Had I been a white widow I would have received an allowance of £25 a month from the Chamber of Mines.

My wages are too little and I am struggling hard.

AFRICAN MINER'S WIDOW

## Nat Govt. Is Helping Us

The Nationalist Government is helping the non-white people to achieve their goal, which is freedom. If it weren't for the straightforward and open enslavement by these people, the political struggle of the non-whites would not have been so much advanced.

General Smuts, who once denounced segregation from a public platform, said the best way of governing a black man in South Africa is to keep him hoping. The Nats are very far from this point, thus making even the illiterate understand what is meant by a one-race Government in a multi-racial country like South Africa.

LAW STEWART JAI

125 Orange Grove, Durban.

## Youth Must Join

The gradual increase of prices over the past five years points to hard times ahead. It becomes necessary for the youth of this country to join the trade unions affiliated to the SACTU, the only non-colour-bar co-ordinating body in this country.

The strength of the African trade unions would be a mighty backbone to the whole nation and it would increase respect not only for the workers in factories and workshops but for Africans everywhere, in towns and villages, in the mines and on the land.

At a time when our leaders are banned, exiled, and accused of high treason we must call upon the youth, the cream of this country, to join the trade unions and be militant against discrimination, exploitation, and poverty.

The struggle of the trade unions is not only for better wages and conditions but also for freedom and democracy in the land of our birth. This is a struggle in which every youth, man and woman must play their part.

B. M. SOMANA

Secretary African Building Workers' Industrial Union, Transvaal.

## Editorial

# Eisenhower Doctrine For Africa?

THE signs are coming thick and fast that American interest in Africa is increasing, and South Africa figures high on the list of countries which are now to be included in the "American sphere of influence."

● American millionaires are taking a hand in the affairs of Central Mining, and are planning to raise a U.S. loan to aid the gold mining industry.

● The Democratic Party's Presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson is visiting the Union for discussions on behalf of certain business interests in the U.S.

● An American trade mission, headed by the director of the office of Trade Promotion in the U.S. Department of Commerce, arrived in Johannesburg on Monday "to boost two-way business between the Union and the United States."

The Nationalist Government has done everything in its power to encourage United States interests to entrench themselves in the South African economy.

The rate of expansion of American capital invested in the Union has far exceeded that of British capital since the war, though the Americans still have a lot of leeway to make up.

"Two-way trade" sounds a fine thing. But the sort of two-way trade the Americans conduct usually turns out to the disadvantage of other countries. They find themselves flooded with U.S. surplus products; they develop dollar shortages; they start borrowing money to meet the deficit; they end up by becoming mere economic dependencies of the American monopolists.

Nor is American intervention limited to the economic sphere. The aim of the American investors is naturally to make profits, and to secure the uninterrupted flow of these profits, the U.S. Government is in the habit of demanding guarantees from the governments of other countries. The capitalist system must be made safe. The export of profits must be assured. The "Communists" and the "agitators" must be put down.

It is no accident that in every country in the world where they have taken a hand, American intervention has had the effect of consolidating the strength of reaction and opposing the march of progress. The Chiang Kai-sheks, Syngman Rhee and Ngo Dinh-Diems who sit shakily on their thrones with the support of the Almighty Dollar are witnesses to the destruction of the freedom and independence of their countries in the name of anti-Communism.

It is a serious mistake to think that the Americans will help free South Africa from the domination of the Nationalists, or use their influence to end the evil of race discrimination. It is precisely the Nationalist type of regime which they are bolstering up in other countries. The extension of American influence in South Africa under present conditions can lead directly to the strengthening of the Nationalist regime and the further intensification of the exploitation of the majority of the population in the interests of a handful of local and foreign shareholders.

The South African people are not prepared to accept this sort of meddling from America or anywhere else. The Freedom Charter says "The People Shall Govern" and "All Shall Share in the Country's Wealth." That means American imperialism must keep out.

## More Trials In Zeerust

JOHANNESBURG.

In Zeerust further trials opened this week arising from the refusal of the women of the tribe to carry pass books and the incidents last month following the deportation of the chief.

About 20 people are charged with extortion. At the time of going to press the exact charge had not yet been furnished, but it is believed the extortion charge arises from incidents over the women's pass books. All Zeerust men and women detained by the police after the flare-up in the area have now been bailed out. Tribesmen and relatives in town levied their families £2 10s. each to help pay fines and provide bail.

Further arrests took place 11 miles from Zeerust when the chief of Braklaagte Stad and 32 tribesmen were arrested after passing cars had been stoned. Police on the spot ordered a baton charge to disperse the African crowd. All 33 are in custody till the case comes on.

## A.N.C. Youth League Conference

JOHANNESBURG.

The 14th Annual Conference of the African National Congress Youth League (Transvaal) to be held in Johannesburg on June 15 and 16, will take the form of a mass youth conference.

This decision to depart from usual routine was adopted after taking into consideration current political developments in the country, said a statement issued by the Youth League. "It is our view that a situation exists more than ever before for the building of a mighty youth organisation capable of withstanding and resisting the Nationalist onslaught on the people."

Among the items to be discussed at the conference will be passes for African women, the deportation of chiefs who have stood by the people, the increase of poll-tax, Nursing and University apartheid, and the Native Laws Amendment Act.

## WHAT GREATER HARM CAN YOU SUFFER

WE are glad to see that our friends and supporters have rallied to greater support of their paper over the past week. For the last month donations have averaged the meagre sum of £72 a week, but this week's total shows that you can do it if you want to.

However, even the sum of £200-odd does not even cover the cost of printing one edition of the people's paper, and if greater efforts are not made we will find ourselves in dire straits. One reader has described New Age as far surpassing any other paper in the country. He is quite right. But if greater efforts are not made to support it apart from the sixpence per copy, there is a very strong likelihood that we will have to close up shop. And the freedom movement cannot allow that to happen!

Times are bad, we all say. But without New Age things will be worse. What greater harm can the people's movement suffer

than to be deprived of their voice . . . New Age?

This is your paper. Help it, support it, or else you will lose it. Send us whatever you can afford.

### LAST WEEK'S DONATIONS:

#### Cape Town:

Sister £2; In memory of Mrs. Alexander £1; In memory of Hardy £1; Sundries £64.6.

#### Johannesburg:

Mrs. N. £1; Professor in England £25; J. £15; Friend £5; Misc. £10; Bob Collections £8; Izzy £1.12.6; Old Socialist £25; Self £2.10; L. £1.

#### Durban:

Anonymous 10s.; N.P. £20; M.H. £2; Mike 10s.; Gokul £1; N.P. £2.10; J.F. £2; Anonymous £2.8; Seven teachers £1.2.6.

#### Port Elizabeth:

Arnot L. £2; Friend £1; Jumble odds £3.

TOTAL—£200 9s. 0d.

# The Farmer Just Took His Cattle

JOHANNESBURG.

FARMERS in the Eastern Transvaal always deny that forced labour is being used on their farms and that their policy is one of ruthless exploitation of their African labourers. But daily, evidence piles up to contradict their assertions.

The latest example is the case of Mr. Joseph Myeni. A farmer in Trichard in the Bethal district has virtually confiscated his span of 16 oxen. Two of his sons have been made to work on the farm by force.

Mr. Myeni told New Age that last year he entered into an eight months' contract with the farmer in terms of which he hired out his span and in return was to be paid in kind at the rate of two mealie bags an ox. Two of his sons were to work

for the farmer during the same period and were to be given a piece of land to till.

From the start the farmer was reluctant to sign a written agreement and kept on postponing discussion on the matter. After three months Mr. Myeni again nagged the farmer to sign the contract. In reply the farmer told him that he was giving him three months' notice to leave the farm.

When he and his sons prepared to leave at the end of that period the farmer refused to hand over the oxen. The two boys were arrested, fined £1 each and taken back to the farm.

Mr. Myeni complains that though his oxen are used by the farmer and his sons forced to work for him, they get no wages and he receives nothing.



Mr. Myeni.

## 600 Textile Workers On Strike

(Continued from page 1)

With tremendous difficulty, the 1,000 African workers at the factory are being restrained by the Union from joining the Indian strikers.

The situation is complicated by the action of certain ex-union officials who are now functioning as strike-breakers. These men have caused a minor division in the ranks of the workers by accepting the employers' proposal for a wage-cut and other compromises detrimental to the workers.

New officials have been elected by the majority of workers, but some of the former officials are apparently determined either to regain their grip on the union or to smash it.

If this strike is not won, most of the 200 dismissed men, with their wives and children, will face a dismal future of unemployment and hunger.

### ARRESTS

Two strikers, T. G. Govinder and A. P. Govinder, have been arrested and charged under the Riotous Assemblies Act. Both have been released on bail of £25 and £20 respectively. The case was adjourned to June 21.

On the second day of the strike, after the union had protested against police intimidation of strikers, Captain Fourie, of the South African Police, personally informed union officials that the police had been instructed not to interfere with the strikers as long as there was no violence and the laws were observed.

On the following day, however, police cleared the area of pickets, warning them that they would be arrested if they stood anywhere near the factory.

On one occasion strikers reported to detectives that three scabs were carrying arms and threatening strikers. The scabs were searched. A revolver was found on one and daggers on the other two. The three men were arrested.

Subsequently, one scab was cautioned and discharged by a magistrate after being found guilty of being in possession of a dangerous weapon.

### BOYCOTT THREAT

In a letter to the Consolidated Textile Mills, Ltd., the African National Congress, Natal, threatens to launch a boycott, within and without the borders of the Union, of all products manufactured by the firm if the strike is not settled through the machinery provided by the Industrial Conciliation Act.

The letter condemns the management's tactic of attempting to employ Africans as scabs at lower rates of pay in order to break the strike, which is legal.

# WHAT DE KLERK DID NOT TELL THE I.L.O.

## SACTU Reports On Slave Labour In South Africa

JOHANNESBURG.

THE S.A. Congress of Trade Unions was not consulted about the appointment of a "workers' delegate" from South Africa to the current session of the International Labour Office at Geneva, at which Minister "Swaer Jan" De Klerk is representing the Union Government. The Trade Union Council was not consulted either.

The so-called workers' delegate, hand-picked by the Government, is Mr. Nel, an official of the Federal Consultative Council of Railway Trade Unions (all-white).

Among items on the agenda are: Conditions of Plantation Labour; Discrimination in the Field of Employment; Forced Labour.

### WFTU AID

SACTU has decided to present its own case for the South African workers, through the permanent representative at ILO of the World Federation of Trade Unions, to which SACTU is affiliated.

In a letter to the WFTU representative, signed by Leon Levy, president, and Leslie Massina, secre-

## Seven Evaton Men Acquitted

JOHANNESBURG.

Of the 11 Evaton bus boycott leaders facing trial on charges of public violence, seven had been acquitted by the beginning of this week. The trial of the remaining four is continuing at the Rand criminal sessions. Those acquitted are Joseph Molefi and V. Make (both among the treason trial accused) also Dennis Matipwili, Lombard Mbata, Victor Ntechane and Alpheus Kubeka. Earlier this month Paulus Nhlape was acquitted.

Still standing trial are Mohamed S. Asmal, his brother Abdul Asmal, also Abie Nhlape and Mofirifire Nquatho.

tary, SACTU states that Mr. Nel's Consultative Council is one of the smallest and least representative of any section of the South African workers, "supports the Government's racial policies and co-operates with it in its anti-Non-European labour policies."

"In the hope that you will be able to see to it that the facts about labour conditions in our country are presented in their true light, and not as they may be represented by Messrs. de Klerk and Nel," SACTU presents certain relevant facts.

### PLANTATION WORKERS

In addition to the workers on Natal sugar plantations (who "live in abject poverty, in compounds and inadequate quarters"; are "excluded from unemployment provisions, old age, sickness and other benefits" and whose treatment is "beyond belief"), SACTU refers to farm labourers in the Transvaal and Western Cape. Their conditions are "closely analogous to those in plantations."

On farms in the Bethal and other Transvaal areas, workers are indentured, housed in compounds at wages of thirty shillings a month, and "under conditions of brutality which have frequently been the object of court proceedings for assaults and murders."

Wine farmers in the Western Cape "employ Coloured child and adult labour under semi-servile conditions in which as part of their 'wage' they are given a daily ration of liquor which notoriously undermines them physically and morally."

Racial discrimination, says the letter, is "the scourge of our country and the basis for the most inhuman oppression of the non-white workers . . . we speak for nine million non-white South Africans in our support for the adoption of a convention abolishing and prohibiting all types of discrimination in all countries throughout the world, supported by sanctions, and to be effected immediately, without delay."

The letter lists a number of examples of racial discrimination, especially against Africans, who number 88 per cent of workers in agriculture, 89 per cent in mining, 44 per cent in manufacture, 50 per cent in construction, power and water supply, and 73 per cent in domestic service.

Yet Europeans have 84 per cent of the skilled jobs, Asians and Coloured people ten per cent, Africans only five per cent, says the memorandum. Of unskilled work, Europeans do 1 per cent, Africans 80 per cent. Figures are also given to show the wide gap between wages for skilled and unskilled work in the Union.

### FORCED LABOUR

The letter indicts the Government for "the most heinous of crimes in the field of forced labour, one of the items on the ILO agenda.

"A huge number of arrests are made daily of Africans for innumerable petty technical offences which apply only to them, for example failure to produce passes and tax receipts or permits on demand

by the police, living in urban areas without permits, etc.

"The victims of these mass arrests are hired out to farmers and other employers as convict labour. This is not really a system of punishment of criminals. The men arrested are not criminals. The whole system is designed to supplement the flow of labour to farms and other spheres of employment which owing to their harsh conditions and poor remuneration are unable to attract workers voluntarily.

"Farm jails are numerous throughout the country where convicts are hired out at 9d. per day, and housed in one room no matter how many there are."

As "the only multi-racial trade union co-ordinating body in South Africa," SACTU asks the WFTU delegate to give the communication his "urgent attention."

## Uganda Demands Independence

KAMPALA, UGANDA.

THE Uganda National Congress has issued a manifesto outlining what it describes as a practical party programme. The manifesto states that the Congress demand is for complete independence of Uganda now as a full member of the British Commonwealth.

To this end it outlines four immediate aims: (1) Direct elections throughout Uganda on universal suffrage; (2) Unity of Uganda's tribes as an African nation with preservation of tribal institutions; (3) Africanisation of the Civil Service; (4) African participation in the means of production, distribution and exchange "all of which are now under foreign control."

# Complete Victory For Bus Boycotters —Nzo

JOHANNESBURG.

"COMPLETE victory for the people" is how Mr. Alfred Nzo, prominent leader of the bus boycott and a member of the Co-ordinating Committee, described the introduction by the Government of the Bill to increase the levy on employers for the further subsidising of African transport.

The Bill introduced by the Minister of Transport, Mr. Ben Schoeman, provides for the increase of the levy from 6d. to 1s. This will enable the bus boycotters to ride at the old fare of 4d. when the temporary Chamber of Commerce subsidy expires at the end of June.

Mr. Nzo told New Age that the victory had been made possible only by the united action of the people

who during the three-month-long boycott had been disciplined and had stood firm in the face of ruthless police intimidation. "Schoeman," said Mr. Nzo, "has now been forced to swallow his irresponsible words when during the boycott he said that the Government would not be intimidated and threatened to smash the boycott."

Asked to comment on a statement made in a Johannesburg daily that the Government had "cut the ground from under the feet of the troublemakers," Mr. Nzo replied that this was an age-old song.

"People make trouble when their conditions are intolerable. Leaders would be only too pleased if the sources of dissatisfaction were removed. That is our aim."

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